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**From National to Human Security:  
Undocumented migration in transit through  
Mexico**

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*Diana Donaji Baldenebro Alcalde*

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Members of the Examining Committee:

Mahmoud Meskoub

Roy Huijsmans

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***Inquiries:***

**Postal address:**

Institute of Social Studies  
P.O. Box 29776  
2502 LT The Hague  
The Netherlands

**Location:**

Kortenaerkade 12  
2518 AX The Hague  
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

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To my parents, my inspiration and support through this and all my journeys.

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## List of Acronyms

CNDH	National Commission of Human Rights
INM	Mexican National Migration Institute (acronym in Spanish)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OAS	Organization of American States
REDODEM	Documentation for the Rights of the Migrants Network
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency

## **Abstract**

The Mexican government, based on the feeling of insecurity that prevails in the country, has created a security discourse in which has based the decision making process and the creation of policies and programs on migration. While the speech is based on protecting migrants from insecurity and the risks they face during their transit through Mexico, its policies are based on national and border security, without taking into account the human security of migrants and the networks and migration systems that exist in the country and that clearly can not be removed so easily.

The following text is an attempt to chronicle the genealogy of the discourse in the management of migration; a mapping of the process gradually established through police legal provisions and practices that currently criminalize transit migration of Central Americans in Mexico.

The national security discourse implemented by the Mexican government is contested through the actions and networks created by civil society organizations on a local, national and international level. Shelters and Non-governmental organizations work together not only to protect migrants during their transit through the country, but also to showcase the lack of adequate public policies from the government to protect them, with a particular criticism on the national security approach that the government policies are based on, as well as documenting the insecurities and difficulties that migrants encounter throughout their journey.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Migration is has become a main issue in the global political agendas of the past decade. However, the situation of migrants in transit is a framework of analysis that is often neglected in migration studies. This paper contributes to the debate towards migration and the securitization policies used by governments in order to contain it, which has an impact on the protection of human rights.

## **Keywords**

Mexico, Migration, Governmentality, Security, Transit, Undocumented.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*“Since always, butterflies and swallows and flamingos fly fleeing the cold, year after year; and whales swim in search of another sea, and salmon and trout in search of their river. They travel thousands of miles through free roads of air and water. Not free, however, are the ways of the human exodus. The fugitives of the impossible life march in immense caravans. Traveling from south to north and from the rising sun to the west. They have stolen their place in the world. They have been stripped of their jobs and their land. Many fleeing wars, but many more flee exterminated wages and washed away soil. The castaways of globalization pilgrimage inventing ways, wanting a house, knocking on doors... Some manage to sneak. Others are corpses, delivered by the sea to the prohibited seashores, or nameless bodies that lie beneath the earth, in the other world they wanted to reach”.*

*Eduardo Galeano, The Migrants*

Migration is has become a main issue in the global political agendas of the past decade. However, the situation of migrants in transit is a framework of analysis that is often neglected in migration studies. The south-north undocumented or irregular mobility of people from Central America to the United States is a transnational phenomenon that has gained importance in the region in recent decades. Most of these movements are done by land and due to multiple causes. Among the main reasons for migration in the region are: labour, insecurity and violence, as well as family reunification, and for some communities as historic migration tradition.

Available figures on undocumented migration through Mexico do not shed much information on the number of people who enter the country, since a person can attempt to enter several times; and the number of apprehended people depends heavily on the resources devoted to their search by immigration authorities. Between estimates of migrants crossing through Mexico and those who are arrested and returned to their country of origin by the Mexican authorities, there are no exact statistics.

Historically, due to its geographical position between the United States and much of the rest of America, Mexico is a country in which human mobility is visible and constant. Mexico is a country of origin, transit, destination and return of migrants and concentrates one of the borders with greater migratory influx in the world. Each year, according to figures from the National Population Council, about 550,000 Mexicans migrate to the United States. Also in the last 3 years, the National Migration Institute estimated an annual average of 140,000 undocumented migrants, mostly from Central American countries and for the most part, with the intention of reaching the United States. The magnitude of this migration is a particular challenge because of the complexity that characterizes the international migration. (SEGOB, 2016)

This situation is compounded by the large size and high risk of journeys they have to travel throughout the Mexican territory, which makes them vulnerable to any kind of violation of their human rights. Irregular migration is

the most vulnerable to abuse and human rights violations. It is estimated, according to the IOM (2003), that almost half of migrants entering illegally in the country are victims of trafficking. Human trafficking, as well as cases of mass kidnapping of undocumented migrants, are some of the risks that undocumented migrants face on their journey through Mexico. (Carrasco, 2013; 4)

However, the main focus of the Mexican government in terms of migration in recent years is on the securitization of the borders. Although the governmental agenda and policy sets the protection of human rights of migrants as one its main objectives, in practice the role of migration agents in the country is the detection, detention and deportation of undocumented migrants in transit to the United States through police and law enforcement.

Despite the strategies to strengthen the security in the country, control migration flows, and discourage migration, the phenomenon of human mobility in Mexico remains constant, it continues to innovate and reinvent itself. What does not seem so clear is the development of strategies aimed at shifting the paradigm centered on national security and fear, towards an approach that emphasizes human rights and human security, which includes ensuring living conditions in the places of origin, seeking alternatives to poverty and violence that are forcing migration; and to ensure the same rights recognition for migrants both in places of transit and destination. (Redodem, 2014)

The following text is an attempt to chronicle the genealogy of the discourse in the management of migration which led to a securitarian governmentality nowadays; a mapping of the process gradually established through police legal provisions and practices that currently criminalize transit migration of Central Americans in Mexico.

This research paper is composed as follows; a first chapter with the concepts used for the analysis of the topic, followed by a chapter explaining the relationship between governmentality and securitization of migration. In this chapter I attempt to analyse the hegemonic discourse of securitization and the externalization of borders from the U.S. to Mexico. In this chapter I explain how the U.S. immigration system has related the borders with threats of national security, police and military management of human migrations, as one of its conditions to start neoliberal economic treaties with Mexico and how it has shaped Mexican policies. In particular, I will emphasize the Southern Border Program as a concrete example of the latest outsourcing policy of securitization from US borders to Mexico and a clear example of the securitization of migration discourse used by Mexican authorities through their policies and actions. Then, I do an analysis of the concept of security and migration in Mexico throughout recent history, and the contributions of civil society towards a human security approach to migration. Finally, I remark that other actors, such as civil society organizations, are contesting the securitization frame and proposing a human security approach, concluding with an analysis of human security as a basis for migration policies towards a new security discourse.

## **Research Question**

This study seeks to analyse the relation between security and migration as a political discourse in Mexico created through specific moments in history, as well as the role of the United States in the securitization policies applied by the

Mexican government. Furthermore, I will study the alternative views of migration and security, mainly supported by non-governmental organizations in Mexico, Central America and United States, which have created networks and support for undocumented Central American migrants with hopes of providing the protection that the Mexican government fails to give them, as well as changing the discourse of security and fear created by the authorities.

The purpose of this exercise, that studies the contemporary history of migration in transit through Mexico through governmentality lenses, is to transform the established idea in the imagination of the actors involved in the "management" of these human movements that believe that migration is a national security problem, as observed through their actions and policies related to migration. Human movements are one of the main features of our species and one of the screws on the motor of history; what is new and artificial is the creation of migration policies with a securitarian border management approach, and the consequences it has on the protection of human rights of people on the move. Particularly, this research seeks to analyse the different historical developments of migration in Mexico and how these developments have shaped the discourse of migration and security in the country. Additionally, I will try to understand the gap between discourse and reality in terms of security of migrants in Mexico and how civil society organizations are trying to change the paradigm of the relation security-migration, specifically talking about the human security approach, which is proposed as the new migration discourse by several NGOs in the country.

The research questions that I try to answer through this paper are:

- How have migration policies in Mexico created a security discourse in relation to migration?
  - How has this discourse affected undocumented Central American migrants in transit through the country?
  - How is this discourse being contested by civil society?
  - What alternatives of security have been proposed to contest the national security approach?

## Methodology

This work presents a chronological analysis of the governmental policies related to the migration of undocumented Central American migrants in Mexico, as well as the work that civil society has done in relation to it. It is based on a review of studies and reports documenting this migration made by non-governmental organizations, newspapers, governmental institutions and international organizations, as well as academic literature and reviews of the topic. Instead of focusing only on information from the point of view of the origin or destination countries, this article seeks to have a comprehensive approach to shed light on different aspects of migration in transit through Mexico.

Among other documents, I focus the analysis on: official reports of the National Institute of Migration, with data and statistics of the government based on the amount of detained undocumented migrants; special report made by the Mexican news website *Animal Político* called "Southern Border Program: a hunt of migrants" which includes opinion articles, interviews to civil society

organizations, interviews to undocumented migrants in Mexico, articles related to the actions and consequences of the Southern Border Program, and official documents from the government; finally, reports by non-governmental organizations and networks such as Amnesty International and Redodem.

Through this study I seek to relate the various public policies created regarding transit migration of undocumented Central Americans through Mexico with the discourse of national security, through the lenses of governmentality. With this exercise, I seek to show how the national security discourse has shaped public policy on migration in Mexico and the consequences this has had on the lives of migrants in transit through the country. In addition, I study the alternative discourses that civil society has attempted to establish towards migrants in transit, which could be more comprehensive and inclusive to protect the rights and safety of migrants.

While it is important to understand how the discourse used in relation with migration affects the type of public policies created, and the technologies used to rule it, as well as the consequences they have for the lives and safety of migrants in transit; it is also important to establish the limitations of a study of this type. The reasons and situations behind the violation of human rights of migrants in Mexico are related to the lack of adequate public policies to protect them, but also to other issues such as corruption, widespread insecurity in the country, impunity and many other aspects that are not analysed in depth in this study.

It is also imperative to mention that the migration of undocumented Central Americans, and the situations that they live during their transit through Mexico are not fully analysed and documented, despite the efforts of civil society to document violations of human rights of undocumented migrants. Doing this research based solely on secondary data restricts the type of information used for the analysis. Nevertheless, the detailed investigations by journalists, academics and civil society, as well as the official documents regarding migration policies, provide a thorough mapping of the current situation of undocumented migration in transit through Mexico.

## **Conceptual Framework**

First, it is necessary to define the main concepts that will be used in the analysis. In this chapter I give a brief explanation of three main concepts used throughout this research: migration, protection and security.

### ***Migration***

Migration is a personal right recognized in most legal frameworks such as the principle of freedom of transit. In the case of Mexico, according to the Constitution:

Everyone has the right to enter the Republic, leave it, travel through its territory and change his residence without a letter of security, passport, safe-conduct or other similar requirements. The exercise of this right shall be subject to the powers of the judicial authorities in cases of criminal or civil liability, and the administrative authority, which concerns the limitations imposed by the laws on emigration, immigration and general health of the Republic, or on undesirable foreigners resident in the country. Everyone has the right to

seek and receive asylum. The recognition of refugee status and the granting of political asylum should be conducted in accordance with international treaties. The law will regulate their origins and exceptions. Renovated paragraph D.O.F. 15/08/2016 (Mexico, 1967)

According to the United Nations Organization (UN), migration is a right when you specify that the migrant seek decent living conditions and moral quality. Article 13.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizes "the right of everyone to freedom of movement and residence within the territory of a State", in the article 13.2 it recognizes that "everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country ". Thus migration appears to be justified and endorsed as a faculty not only of subsistence and improvement of life but also as a human condition and a right as such. (Morales, 2010)

Migrants in transit can be defined as those who are making the journey from their country of origin to the destination country. Often, not having the legal requirements of the countries of transit and destination, the movement is carried out irregularly. (Echart, 2011) Regardless of the displacement mechanisms implemented by migrants, they are subjects of universal rights, which have to be respected and protected by the governments of the countries they are moving through. In the particular case of Mexico, all international treaties signed by the country are guaranteed by the Mexican Constitution (1917):

Article 1o. In the United Mexican States every person shall enjoy the rights recognized by this Constitution and international treaties to which the Mexican State is a party, as well as guarantees for their protection, whose exercise may not be restricted or suspended except in cases and under the conditions established by this Constitution.

For its part, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990, in force since 2003), Article 6 states:

For the purposes of this Convention: a) 'State of origin' it will be understood by the State of nationality of the person concerned; b) 'State of employment' means the State where the migrant worker is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity, as appropriate; c) 'State of transit' means any State through which the person concerned passes on a trip to the State of employment or the State of employment to the State of origin or the State of habitual residence.

Immigrants are considered as undocumented or in an irregular situation when they are not allowed to enter, stay or work in compliance with the laws. "Irregular migrant" is a term commonly used to describe a migrant in an irregular situation in a country of transit or destination because of their illegal entry, or because the validity of their visa expired; these people may also be defined as "undocumented migrants", "illegal migrants" or "irregular migrants". (Calleros, 2013)

### ***Protection***

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2012): "Protection encompasses all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with human rights law, international

humanitarian law (which applies in situations of armed conflict) and refugee law”.

Conforming to international law, protection of human rights is the responsibility of the States, and it applies for every individual on their jurisdictions, regardless of their legal status in the country.

Furthermore, the United Nations Convention for the Protection of The Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990) establishes that states parties are to afford to undocumented, as well as documented migrants a range of civil, social and labour rights. “These include, but are not limited to, rights to due process of law in criminal proceedings, free expression and religious observance, domestic privacy, equality with nationals before the courts, emergency medical care, education for children, respect for cultural identity, and process rights in the detention and deportation context. They also include the rights to enforce employment contracts against employers, to participate in trade unions, and to enjoy the protection of wage, hour and health regulations in the work? Place”. (Part III of Convention, Articles 8-35)

Mexico signed and ratified the Convention, which would constrain the abusive exercise of state power against undocumented immigrants under certain circumstances, and guarantee them a degree of social protection. However, as Bosniak (1991: 742) puts it : “the Convention's net value for these migrants is threatened by its overriding commitment to the principle of national sovereignty”. Nevertheless, protection of undocumented migrants is one of the main issues discussed by governmental and non-governmental organizations in Mexico, with different views on what is the most effective way to guarantee it.

### *Security/Securitization*

Throughout this study I analyse the relation between migration and security, how this relation has been created and how this has affected public policy and migration in Mexico. Nevertheless, security can be analysed through different angles and perspectives, some of which this research looks at more in depth, such as national and human security:

**Public security.** "A set of rules, policies and actions and articulated that tend to ensure public peace through the prevention and suppression of crimes and offenses against public order through the criminal system of administrative control and police." (Calleros: 319, 2013)

**Border security.** “Set of actions taken to keep the border security and integrity and human rights, both residents of these areas and migrants”. (Calleros: 319, 2013)

Importantly, one of the strategic lines of the program for the Southern Border Program in Mexico refers to border security; its actions for the strengthening of migration control inputs and outputs in that area, the best verification of legal stay of foreigners in the same, improving the same assurance processes (retention) and repatriation in the southern border contemplated as well as boosting the fight against corruption among immigration officials and combating kidnapping, smuggling and trafficking. (Calleros: 319, 2013)

**National security.** "Actions for the preservation of sovereignty, national institutions, democratic governance and the rule of law." Based on the National Security Act, the definition applied by the Mexican government security ba-

sically refers to identified threats from abroad over the preservation of democracy.(Calleros: 320, 2013)

**Human security.** It is a concept adopted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1994, as a theoretical outline in order to humanize security as a universal condition for universal citizenship, which seeks to ensure freedom from fear and freedom from the need for humans. It is a concept that focuses on the individual and not the State, unlike other security concepts: public, border and national, and is closely linked to human development and human rights. (Calleros: 320, 2013)

The term securitization of migration refers to the appropriation of an epistemic national security model, built from criminology and the field of study of international relations. Specifically, it is a term coined and progressively densified by the Copenhagen School of Critical Security Studies, which proposes understood as an epistemic process in which the "securitarian optics" is inserted as a paradigm in the governmentality of different contemporary social phenomena, including the migration of people. For the Italian jurist Giuseppe Campesi, "[...] the Securitization is the process by which a matter is transformed into a security problem, independently of their objective nature, or the specific relevance of the alleged threat. The optical securitarian is a concrete frame (field) political theory, by an increasing plurality of issues are thematized". (Arango, 2011)

The concept of securitization, developed by Ole Wæver (1995) refers to the process through which a phenomenon becomes framed as a security problem; process in which intersubjectively a phenomenon as existential threat is established and carries political implications (Buzan , Wæver and De Wilde, 1998: 25).

Applied to migration, securitization means that migration begins to be constructed by the discourse as a problem, and as such, a threat to security, regardless of whether or not it objectively constitutes a threat, it becomes perceived as such. Securitization as a concept related to migration is particularly illustrative of the concept of national security and the ways in which authorities use police powers and law enforcement with the justification of state sovereignty. The performance of this process is twofold: on the one hand, in a context of social and economic uncertainties, migrants become the scapegoat that concretized part of insecurities and which therefore must be fought (Huysmans, 2000: 769), on the other hand, the State's interventions while defending society from threats are legitimized by sovereignty. (Permuy, 2015) Looking at the phenomenon of securitization management of human migration, it brings light to understand the widening control devices that have been replicated globally, and the control strategies of population with a security justification. (Varela, 2015)

## Chapter 2 Securitization of the borders: a governmentality issue

This chapter tries to explain the link created between migration and security through a governmentality approach. Governmentality, as an approach that analyses the relations between the institutionalization of a state apparatus and historical forms of subjectivation, emphasizing how the modern state and the modern autonomous individuals codetermine each other's emergence, is useful to determine the relations historically created between migration and security in the sense of it been conceived through the actions and reactions of the actors related to migration. (Lemke, 2002)

As Wendy Larner and William Walters put it:

“[G]overnmentality can offer a particular kind of historical perspective that is often lacking in the global governance literature. This would involve seeing global governance as a particular technology of rule and placing it within the much longer trajectory of liberal political reason”. (2004)

Migration is a crucial issue in contemporary societies as well as a major object of modern governmentality. First of all, a main point of analysis for governmentality is the idea of sovereignty, and how this shapes people's identity; therefore it is related to the creation of national borders and boundaries. “On the other hand, it is located at the crux of what constitutes the three pillars of governmentality, that is, economy, police, and humanitarianism”. (Fassin, 2011) Therefore, the policies used as an instrument to govern the people that come from outside those borders and identities, and the factors that shape those policies – such as economic and humanitarian- can be unpacked and analyzed with a governmentality framework. (Fassin, 2011)

Scholars and academics have done extensive research and developed different theories regarding the ideologies and technologies at work in the policing of borders and the production of boundaries.

Foucault proposed the concept of governmentality for the first time in his lectures at the College de France in 1978 and 1979 (2004; 2007). “The notion derives from the French word *gouvernemental*, meaning 'concerning government'. For Foucault, governmentality represents the rationalisation of governmental practice in the exercise of political sovereignty” (Lemke, 2002).

This approach takes up methodological and theoretical considerations that Foucault developed in his 'history of governmentality’. It has three analytical dimensions:

“First, it presents a nominalist account that stresses the central importance of knowledge and political discourses in the constitution of the state. Secondly, an analytics of government uses a broad concept of technology that encompasses not only material but also symbolic devices, including political technologies as well as technologies of the self. Third, it conceives of the state as an instrument and effect of political strategies that define the external borders between the public and the private and the state and civil society, and also define the internal structure of political institutions and state apparatuses”. (Lemke, 2002)



The definition that a government set of security, as well as the process by which it gets to this definition is a convergence between national and international concepts of security, and the experiences and daily lives of the actors involved in the definition. In that sense, I will try to analyse the relation between governmentality and migration through the three aforementioned analytical dimensions.

### *Knowledge and political discourses*

Part of the concept of governmentality is the focus on the relation between power and the techniques of power, and the creation of knowledge, which has an effect on the regimes of representation and governments' modes of intervention. In that sense, governments rationalize their use of power through the definition of specific discourses. "Ways in which this occurs include the delineation of concepts, the specification of objects and borders, and the provision of arguments and justifications. In this manner, government makes it possible to address a problem and offers certain strategies for managing or solving the problem". (Lemke, 2002)

Sovereignty and nationalism have become important arguments on the migration debate, but it is important to analyse how, why and who are using this concepts to define the difference between citizens and immigrants in a country, in terms not only of how they are perceived but also the rights and protection that they are entitled to. Using a sovereignty narrative in the political debate of migration can be understood as a narrative with "the specific purpose of playing with positions of symbolic authority so as to force social practices to bend in a required way". (Bigo, 2002)

From that point of view, the idea or notion that there is a relation between migration and security could be a constructed discourse created by politicians and authorities, since there is no natural relation between them. Therefore, creating a relation between migration and security is a political strategy to mobilize policies and strategies from the differentiation between citizens and migrants. "It is not a legal status that is under discussion but a social image, concerning, to quote Erickson, the social distribution of bad." (Bigo, 2002)

The cultural nationalism that comes from creating a difference between the outsiders and insiders of a State turns migration into a political problem that is solved through the securitization of the country for national security reasons. This entails the justification of "security professionals" to adopt measures in terms of intelligence, military or police control. "In this perspective, securitization results from power positions, not from individuals creating new frames, new roles for differences and repetitions in different contexts; it results from struggles inside institutions and between institutions for what is to count as the legitimate truth. To focus only on the role of political discourse in the securitization process is to underestimate the role of the bureaucratic professionalization of the management of unease". (Bigo, 2002)

Furthermore, governors in democracies justify themselves by arguing that they are legitimized by being elected by citizens of a country, associating the limits of the State with democracy. Following that notion, a distinction is created between national citizens and foreigners or migrants who arrive to that nation. Therefore, migrants are framed through various cultural discourses as people who do not fit the "national standard" of norms and values. (Bigo,

2002) So, “migration is always understood, through the categories of the national and the state, as a danger to the "homogeneity of the people." The activation of the term *migrant* in *immigrant* is by definition seen as something destructive. The metaphor of the body politic embedded in the sovereignty myth—in the need to monitor borders to reassure the integrity of what is "inside," in the practice of territorial protection, in the technologies of surveillance—creates an image of immigration associated with an outsider coming inside, as a danger to the homogeneity of the state, the society, and the polity”. (Bigo, 2002) The creation of these distinctions through the political discourse frames and shapes policies that govern migration in a country, with real life consequences that affect migrants and their security.

### ***Broad concept of technology: material and symbolic devices***

Governmentality seeks to extract the power relations of the institution, to analyse them from the standpoint of technologies, to use them from a strategic analysis, and release the privilege from the object trying to restore them from the point of view of the constitution of the fields, domains and objects of knowledge.

The main role in terms of the technology of governmentality is not political actors but technicians, bureaucrats and security experts, whose activity goes unnoticed in terms of the discourse they use. From this perspective the important thing is not so much the speech that builds new threats without resorting to sensationalism, but the practice, bureaucratic practices daily management of risks linked to freedom.

Governmentality looks at the field of power relations, which are mobile, transformable, and reversible. The types of conduct or "conduct of conduct" that characterize the government and are then established within it. So, governmentality is not seen as a structure but a 'singular generality', which variables that interact and respond to social situations. Governmentality is the rationalization of micropowers, and therefore can be applied to try to understand any level of analysis between the individual and the government.

This set of techniques and calculations that operate in the strategic field of power relations, in certain historical junctures, by random and varying interaction, is a flexible construct that could perhaps be used to unpack the notion of migration governance in the sense of the "driving behaviour of migrants". It could analyse the relationship between the individual and the public authorities in this specific field of migration in terms of intervention and state regulation.

Bigo (2002) explains that the securitization of migration is a “transversal political technology” used by politicians and governmental institutions as a mode of governmentality that helps them define the idea of security in order to maintain their role as providers of protection for society, and also to hide or mask some of their failures. Therefore, what created the relation between security and migration is the correlation between the discourse of political leaders and the actions that emerge from that discourse, as well as the administrative practices that emerge from them, such as populations profiling, category creation, statistical calculation, etc.

The security process is then the result of interactions of stakeholders, local, national and international, and the strategies that these political actors use

to disseminate knowledge on the subject. This process involves establishing a "truth" about security and measures necessary to achieve it. "Securitization is then the conversion operator by which the struggle of political discourses (within the political field, which adds or subtracts value) is validated as a truth process by professionals of threat management, according to the violent transformations they observe and their interests as institutions". (Bigo, 2002)

The shift of the discourse of migration towards one that sees migrants as a national threat is a securitization discourse spread from state officials, political actors and security bureaucrats who use this rhetoric to "steer" the understanding of the origins and consequences of a social phenomena specific to the idea that they are a danger, a risk. Specifically, in relation to migration, when speaking of securitization of the policies on the movements of people, we mean that strategies for control are based on a "criminal logic", because the rules and their disobedience translate into sanctions of criminal order against irregular migrants. (Varela, 2015)

"The transformation of security and the consequent focus on immigrants is directly related to their own immediate interests (competition for budgets and missions) and to the transformation of technologies they use (computerized databanks, profiling and morphing, electronic phone tapping). The Europeanization and the Westernization of the logics of control and surveillance of people beyond national polices is driven by the creation of a transnational field of professionals in the management of unease". (Bigo, 2002)

Ulrich Beck defined that our time is that of "risk societies", and governments that administer our territories remain on permanent alert to defuse threats to the sovereignty of States and the daily lives of the people. That premise of risk and danger is what has launched a network of permissive public policies that violate traditional modern law with the premise of protecting the social pacts that used to be based on the defense of our individual rights. If danger lurks, then it is "understandable" that governments suppress freedom that they engage in arbitrary arrests, and that prisons such as Guantanamo or detention centers for migrants and asylum seekers worldwide are characterized by the absence of standards for due process. (Beck, 2002)

This model of governmentality in migration tries to discourage it through the interception, detention and deportation of migrants through a complex network of outsourcing economic and political devices that involve the same detention centres for asylum seekers and "economic" migrants, building military infrastructure for the "containment" of human movements. (Varela, 2015)

The control of immigration involves bureaucracies as well as technologies for the surveillance of the borders and the territory in order to detain and deport undocumented immigrants. "The surveillance and identification system has become increasingly sophisticated, from paper documents to biometric systems. It includes the points of entrance onto the territory, particularly airports, but its extension follows a dual movement on both sides of the physical border" (Fassin, 2011). Although this surveillance apparatus seems technical, impersonal and administrative, it produces human costs in terms of violations of human rights. (Fassin, 2011)

The deployment of restrictive and repressive policies of immigration is then accompanied by the development of an administrative apparatus at the

borders and within the territory to control immigration and hunt down the undocumented, to adjudicate the refugee status and guard the detained migrants. Nevertheless, even though these policies and decisions are proposed by politicians with power, the daily decisions involve micropowers related to street-level bureaucracy composed by women and men that affect others' lives. "The state thus delegates the dirty work of selecting the good immigrants from the bad ones to local bureaucrats who sometimes experience moral dilemmas between their obligations as civil servants implementing a policy and their emotions when confronted with tragic situations". (Fassin, 2011)

The meaning of such violent practices implying roundups, hunting, arrests, expulsions, and sometimes deaths needs to be analyzed in terms not only of effectiveness but also in where these ideas come from and how this notion of national security was created. (Fassin, 2011)

*The state as an instrument and effect of political strategies that define the external borders between the public and the private*

The State, conceptualized as the container for the polity, is the one in charge of the securitization of the country. Nevertheless, the State is not a black box that makes decisions uniformly and unilaterally; therefore securitization is embedded to politicians and politics, the decision making processes and the strategies that decision makers take in order to achieve their goals. In this regard, securitization of the immigrant as a risk is "anchored in the fears of politicians about losing their symbolic control over the territorial boundaries" (Bigo, 2002). Politicians and security professionals structure securitization through their habitus and interests on the foreigner as an immigrant, and the technologies of control and surveillance to govern national borders. Furthermore, politicians base their decisions on the unease of the citizens, the uncertainty that they face, or in words of Bigo (2002) the "risk society" as a structural unease "framed by neoliberal discourses in which freedom is always associated at its limits with danger and (in) security".

As explained by Burles (2012), "governmental practices not only work within a given political order, but also work to determine the limits of that order. If governmentality does not only function 'once the state has been founded', but also works to found it, it cannot be kept on either side of the line dividing political order from its outside". In other words, 'Governmentality is at once internal and external to the state, since it is the tactics of government which makes possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not' (Foucault, 1991: 103).

Furthermore, in this analysis of how liberal governmentality "works" it is important to talk about migratory governmentality, which is defined as the ability of governments to reconcile the characteristics, causes and effects of migratory movements with the social expectations and demands about them, and the real possibilities of States to give answers. (Marmora, 2003: 119). This definition shows the governmental reasoning explained by Foucault (1991) through this intention of reconciling interests, which also appears in the notion of "mutual benefits" (for States and migrants) linked to migration governance.

Another important aspect of governmentality is the relation freedom-security-risk. Foucault says the governmental reason "consumes freedom" since it requires producing, organizing and managing it; hereafter, that liberalism is in some way the administration and organization of the conditions in which we can be "free". And a main way to calculate the production cost of freedom is through security; the problem of security is then to protect the collective interest against the individual interests and, conversely, protect individual interests against anything that might appear as an intrusion of collective interest. Control becomes the driving principle of freedom, and from this logic we can analyze governmentality as a field of analysis to address migration governance, since at the nodal point of this construct is the relationship between free transit and control. (Foucault, 1991)

Within the process of securitization related to migration there has also been critiques against it; non-governmental organizations, academics and politicians have talked about the benefits and opportunities of development that migration brings to a country. Nevertheless, we can see an increase on the idea that security issues and migration are correlated, more so with the so-called refugee crisis in Europe of recent years, and the terrorist attacks related to ISIS in the continent. It is therefore important to analyze the conception of migration as a security issue as a historical process, since these views and ideas have been molded over time and through different international events, national experiences and technologies of government. Communities, to deal with things in a particular way, name certain things security problems and by doing that, the relation and interaction around that issue changes.

In that sense, the discourse of migration is not set in stone; society and individuals contest it. It is also necessary to remember that Foucault's idea of knowledge admit of a change in the exercise of power, since it is not possessed, given the social interactions. In the particular case in Mexico, it is possible to see how the discourse related to migration has changed throughout the time and moulded by those in power nationally and internationally. In that sense, the next chapter tries to show how the modern discourse of migration in Mexico was shaped.

## Chapter 3 The history of Securitization of Central American migration in Mexico

Central America has historically seen many interregional migration flows. Temporary migration to Mexico has been common since the second half of the 19th century. The main form of migration consisted of temporary workers that travelled to the country from indigenous communities and worked in agriculture. This type of temporary migration continues to this day in agricultural farms of southern Mexico. These processes of migration are also part of territories that have maintained historical ties; for example, Mexico and Guatemala experienced a complex process of defining their limits; even the state of Chiapas belonged to Guatemala for a period of time. (Sandoval, 2015)

Because of its particular position in the hemisphere and its proximity to the United States, Central American countries also serve as a bridge of a large influx of people who migrated from other countries in the same region, other regions of the hemisphere or from other continents. Apart from the above, due to changes in migration flows, Central American and Caribbean countries have become places of reception of immigrants from other regions and even from other continents, which use Central America and the Caribbean as a path in their attempt to reach to the United States. (Carrasco, 2013)

Nowadays, migration flows from Central America to the United States consist not only of people from the region; but it also includes transcontinental migration. In the last decade there has been a marked presence of transcontinental migrants in Mexico looking to cross the northern border into the United States. While the vast majority of people who pass through the country in their attempt to enter the United States come from Central America; the presence of some migrants from Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, as well as African, Asian and Eastern European can be observed.

The National Migration Institute in Mexico reports that in 2015, 198,141 undocumented migrants were stopped by migration authorities and kept in migratory stations, from which 179,618 were Central Americans. From this group, 14,048 came from the rest of American continent; 163 from Europe; 2,224 from Asia -where Bangladesh, India and Nepal stand with 702, 574 and 507 detainees respectively-; and 2,078 from Africa where Somalia and Ghana had 864 and 631 cases. (SEGOB, 2016) Although migration through Mexico consists of a varied group of people from different nationalities that use the country as a bridge to get to the United States, governmental policies and actions focus mainly on Central American migration to the country, given the majority in numbers that they represent.

With the ephemeral or no possibility of entering the Mexican nation under legal norms, most Central American migrants enter the country through an undocumented way, crossing the border either on their own or by hiring the services of specialized people in the illegal traffic, people popularly called *coyotes*. In this way, migrants are referred to a situation of exclusion which various actors, such as entrepreneurs, authorities, tenants, service providers and even other migrants, take advantage of to exploit and extort them. In this sense, vulnerability is a characteristic of migrants, due to its irregular situation and the

fear of being deported to their countries, since they cannot go to the authorities to demand the protection to which they are entitled. (Morales, 2010)

Contemporary migration in Central America is a structural dimension of Central American societies, resulting from processes of exclusion and at the same time supplement of what neither the state nor the market provide. In this chapter I analyze the migration dynamics of undocumented Central Americans in transit through Mexico, and how policies have changed and modified these dynamics.

## *La Bestia*

Mexico has a land area of 1,964,375 square kilometers and consists of 31 states, plus Mexico City. The country has 4,301 km of land border in the north and south. The northern US border measures 3,152 km; under it are the states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. The southern border measures 1,149 km, of which 956 km are bordering with Guatemala and Belize 193 km. The southern border states are Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche and Quintana Roo.

The routes followed by undocumented migrants in transit through Mexico coincide with the routes of the railroad. On these routes, the train is vitally important because it is the means of transport of thousands of undocumented immigrants who cannot afford a *coyote*, or smuggler. However, the train ride is not free, easy, or without of hazards. In this train, which the Central Americans call "the Beast", migrants face accidents, extortion, assaults, kidnappings, and sometimes even death.



**Illustration 1** Map of the main routes used by undocumented migrants in Mexico

The Beast, also known as the Death Train, travels south to north through Mexican territory. To make the journey, migrants take up to 14 trains and delay about three weeks or more before reaching the northern border. The Gulf and the Pacific are the main routes, which go through at least 13 states. In each train an estimated of 200 to 500 migrants are seen everyday; but this can reach higher numbers: a thousand, 1,500 and even 2,000 people climbing on the train. (Márquez, 2015)

However, the number of migrants using The Beast as a mean of transport has decreased dramatically since the enforcement of the Southern Border Plan. Although this measure was not announced in the presentation of the Southern Border Program in 2014, the Interior Minister, Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong, stated at a news conference that Mexican authorities would no longer allow for migrants to climb the train. This, according to the official, was decided in order to protect their physical integrity. Nevertheless, according to several activists and non-governmental organizations, this has led for migrants to take different and more dangerous transit routes (such as walking through forests and territories controlled by criminal gangs, and even through water in boats used by smugglers) as well as increased the fees that they have to pay to smugglers, corrupt officials and criminals, making them more vulnerable. (Animal Politico, 2015)

In its Fifth Report (May 2009) on the situation of human rights of migrants in transit through Mexico, *Belén*, a migrant shelter in Chiapas, said that in the first access to the railways, the chaos of the agglomeration of people is perfectly regulated by organized crime, which is represented by machinists, coyotes or guides, who charge migrants a minimum of 200 pesos to allow them to board the train.

The routes of trains in their hundreds of kilometers, can be described as "lawless land" because they are controlled by organized crime, without the authorities intervening to put a stop to this situation. Therefore, besides extortion and violation of their human rights from the governmental authorities, undocumented migrants face kidnappings by drug gangs and drug traffickers. Nevertheless, migrants keep using The Beast as a main mean of transit through the country; first of all because it is cheaper, but also because other routes- such as highways- have several immigration controls from the government. (Carrasco, 2013; 180)

The Beast is key to understand the conditions of precariousness and vulnerability of migrants, as well as how policies and discourse from Mexican government affect them during their transit. Its use is a reaction to the restrictive policies that seek to contain migratory flows to the United States, thereby promoting irregular migration characterized by risks; but it can also be seen as a reflection of the differentiation created within the discourse between Mexican citizens and immigrants, between people with freedom of transit and the ones that have to hop on a train and risk their lives to move across the country.

## **Conflicts in the Region**

The economic factor was the main cause of migration that prevailed until the seventies, but political factors in the region forced displacement of large numbers of people. Armed conflicts in Central America during the decades of



the seventies and eighties forced many people to leave their countries, especially in Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and more recently Honduras. Since the late seventies, emigration became a leak of massive proportions due to the deepening of the political crisis and the intensification of the civil wars in those countries. (Carrasco, 2013; 175)

The presence of undocumented migrants from Central America, both in Mexico and the United States was tolerated, given the political-military conflicts in the region. Nevertheless, the scenario changed during the 1980s, after peace agreements in the region were signed. The United States began to introduce more requirements for the granting of visas and new border controls, particularly on its southern border. During the 90s, and since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the border with Mexico established more security and control that combined physical barriers (fences in strategic locations), subjective barriers (more personal for the Border Patrol, now part of the Department of Homeland Security), as well as new equipment and sophisticated technology to control the borders. (Castillas, 2008)

On the other hand, Central American migration was not seen as a problem in Mexico, since they were seen as just “passing through”. Migrants that arrived to the country buy goods and contract services (transportation, lodging, etc.), benefiting businesses in the different localities through which they pass, and staying for a very short time. (Castillas, 2008) However, migration began to be seen as a problem in the country when the United States changed its immigration policy toward Central America, specifically when they started putting pressure on the Mexican government to have greater control of its southern border. Mexico established a new immigration policy aimed to control the flows of transit migration from the south to the north of the country. Therefore, Mexico came to the twentieth century with an important part of its administrative structure and migration oriented personnel seeking to contain the Central American migration as close to the southern border as possible. The creation of the National Migration Institute in the early 90s is the material and symbolic fact of the new era of Mexican migration policy. (Carrasco, 2013)

In the early twentieth century the Mexican government began the construction of local migrant detention centers, dedicated exclusively to the detention of undocumented foreigners pending their return to the country of origin. By 2005 the country already had 52 migrant detention centers mostly located in the states of the south-southeast, especially in the state of Chiapas. In other words, the intention to contain the unregulated migration in the south remains being the main policy of the Mexican government. To this day, the strengthening of registration systems, arrests, driving and return of undocumented immigrants is the main job of the National Institute of Migration.

Faced with the accumulation of legal and administrative obstacles for obtaining visas, a new dynamic of transit migration was generated in the country, with an increase of actors involved in the process and involving the communities in the transit routes. Again, these administrative barriers represent the securitarian discourse of the Mexican government towards Central American migrants, to whom it is made harder and harder to legally cross the country.

The year 2001 marked a turning point in national security policy in the hemisphere. In July of that year Mexico launched South Plan in coordination with various agencies of the three branches of government. They sought to

strengthen actions to detain undocumented migrants transiting the country, with the southern border as the checkpoint to stop undocumented migration. From the attacks on the Twin Towers in the United States, on September 11 of that year, the agenda of relations between countries in the region, with special impact for Mexico was redefined. Migration and organized crime were positioned as priority issues: by establishing a treatment of migration issues from a security approach, which decanted in an open criminalization of migrants, considering them potential terrorists. (Redodem, 2014) The discourse of the “War against terrorism” started a new era of politics of fear and securitization of the borders.

Linking migration with intelligence efforts to ensure national security against terrorist attacks involved the transformation in the existing imaginary that, since the early twentieth century, looked at migration as a phenomenon inherent to global capitalism and market needs. Thus, with emphasis on the period after September 11, 2001, migration, rather than a labor or demographic phenomenon, is a problem for governments’ national security. (Varela, 2015)

In 2002 the Alliance for US-Mexico Border action plan is signed, which included 22 points to strengthen security in the area. In 2004 the Action Plan for Border Security between the United States and Mexico, which provides technological improvement, to facilitate repatriations and strengthen mechanisms between officials of the two countries is signed. (White House Archives, 2002). In 2003 the South Plan is replaced by the "Strengthening Regional Delegations of the Southern Border" project in which the Beta Group was created. This group is responsible for "supporting migrants" by providing them of aid and protection without asking for papers or deporting them. Nevertheless, according to defenders of migrants and different journalistic works, this group has become a kind of special force to manage more efficiently the deportations of Central Americans by telling immigration officers where to find undocumented migrants. (Animal Político, 2015)

In 2005 the Alliance for Security and Prosperity of North America (SPP) as a permanent trilateral process that aims to implement common border security strategies and biosecurity is signed. In 2005 it also comes into force the bilateral program to prosecute traffickers of migrants (OASISS) and Secure Border Initiative that sought to bring a new level of priority to stopping illegal migration; more agents, better detection capability and expulsion and inspections at workplaces. That same year the Integrated System for Migration Operations (SIOM) was launched, which improved the computerized monitoring the Mexican border, as well as incorporating the INM to the System of Homeland Security decision that integrates, in turn, databases and information systems INM to the National projected on the National Security Law information Network. (Varela, 2015)

These new changes on Mexican and American policy forced migrants to establish new and diverse routes and dynamics of transit, which became increasingly dangerous over time.

In Mexico, between 2006-2010, spending on public safety increased from 49,461 million pesos to 89,020 million, in other words, almost doubled (Escalante, 2012: 113). In this regard, Fernando Escalante (2012) argues that this escalation of security spending requires the elaboration in the discourse of a threat that makes the increase of spending towards security necessary.

## **Merida Initiative**

The effect and relationship that US policies have in terms of the vision and policies that the Mexican government implements regarding migration was strongly reflected with the implementation, starting in December 2008, of the Merida Initiative. With more than 2.3 billion USD of funds allocated by the United States Congress, the Merida Initiative has delivered 1.4 billion USD in equipment and training to date. The strategic framework to implement the variety of programs and activities of the Merida Initiative is known as the Four Pillars, each of which groups together the initiative programs under strategic objectives. Together, these four objectives seek to strengthen both countries in the fight against organized crime and violence and “help drive the transformation of the bilateral security relationship”.

Although the Merida Initiative is based on security and the eradication of organized crime in Mexico, one of its main pillars is to “Create the border structure of the XXI century”. The main objective is to “facilitate legitimate trade and movement of people while the illicit flow of drugs, people, weapons and cash is restricted. The Merida Initiative seeks to provide the basis for better infrastructure and technology to strengthen and modernize border security at the northern and southern border of Mexico, as well as its ports and airports. Professionalization programs bring new skills to the agencies responsible for border management, and a greater number of non-invasive technologies will help in detecting criminal activity”. (Embajada y Consulados de Estados Unidos en México)

Being the securitization of the borders one of the main objectives of the Merida Initiative, it began the main focus in terms of policy regarding migration in Mexico for the last decade, with a great effect on undocumented migrants who travel through Mexico to get to the United States. The clear relation created between national security issues and migration through the Merida Initiative, without differentiating one from another, not only made it harder for undocumented migrants to transit through Mexico, but it also made a more explicit discourse of securitization of migration in the country.

## **Southern Border Program**

The Southern Border Program was formulated within the context of the so-called humanitarian crisis experienced at the Southeastern border of the United States in 2014. On this year, tens of thousands of women and children were herded into military bases and detention centers on its border. After the crisis of the unaccompanied migrant children in July 2014 the "Southern Border Program" was established, which is not clearly such a plan or program, because it is not translated into concrete public policies and the only document that supports it is the decree that announced its creation and its publication in the Official Journal of the Federation. The Mexican government has not made any official document, a sheet or even minimal path that explains the specifics of the program.

In June 2013, a year before the presentation of the program, the Interior Minister, Miguel Angel Osorio Chong, placed the 'cornerstone' of this initiative during a security cabinet meeting in Tapachula, Chiapas. He announced the

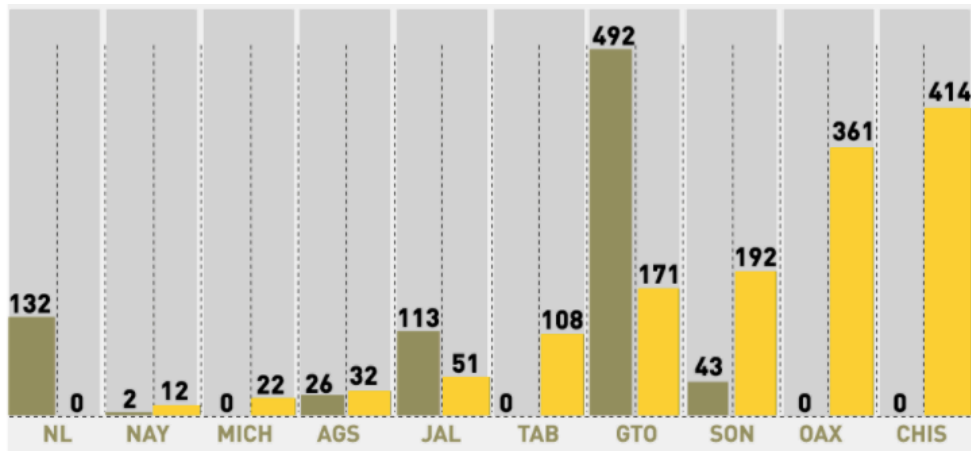
launch of "a comprehensive development program" to address "the problems of security and migration" on the southern border. Osorio Chong said that "public policy attention and control that allow to know what happens at the border" would be promoted. (Animal Politico, 2015)

According to the official decree, the Southern Border Program articulates actions to "detonate the social and economic development of the region and establishes measures to protect the rights of migrants". The objectives are two: "to protect migrants who enter Mexico, and second, to manage the ports of entry in a way that promotes the security and prosperity of the region". (SEGOB, 2015)

One aspect to consider is that some of the Southern Border Plan strategies have had a direct US support under Pillar 3 of the Merida Initiative. In this sense, it is known that the Department of State gave 112 million dollars to Mexico to improve the technology of border security and infrastructure, as well as staff training in security, including 14 million dollars for the creation of a database of persons crossing the border legally. This confirms the statement of the Undersecretary for International Affairs Department of Homeland Security in the US, Alan Bersin, who said: "now our southern border is with Guatemala." (Redodem, 2014)

When the operation of the Southern Border Program started, the Federal Government, together with the authorities of the region strengthened the coordination activities to "prevent migrants from jeopardizing their integrity when using a cargo; second, to develop specific strategies to ensure the safety and protection of all people in transit through our country and third, to combat and eradicate the criminal groups that violate their rights". (Willson, 2014) These activities include a series of measures to "eradicate" the use of the network of railways known as "The Beast" to cross Mexico, through the reconstruction of physical infrastructure that prevents the rise of migrants to that train, such as hiring private police to guard the train and, above all, the creation of a network of checkpoints of immigration control, a virtual "migration cap" including, for example, in the most important access corridor to Mexican territory, between Tapachula and Tonalá in Chiapas, a safety catch every 20 kilometers, in addition to the incursion of INM agents in hotels and restaurants in the cities of the most important migratory corridors. (Animal Politico, 2015)

**Illustration 2 Number of undocumented migrants detained on the railways by state (2013 vs. 2014) Source: Animal Político (2016)**



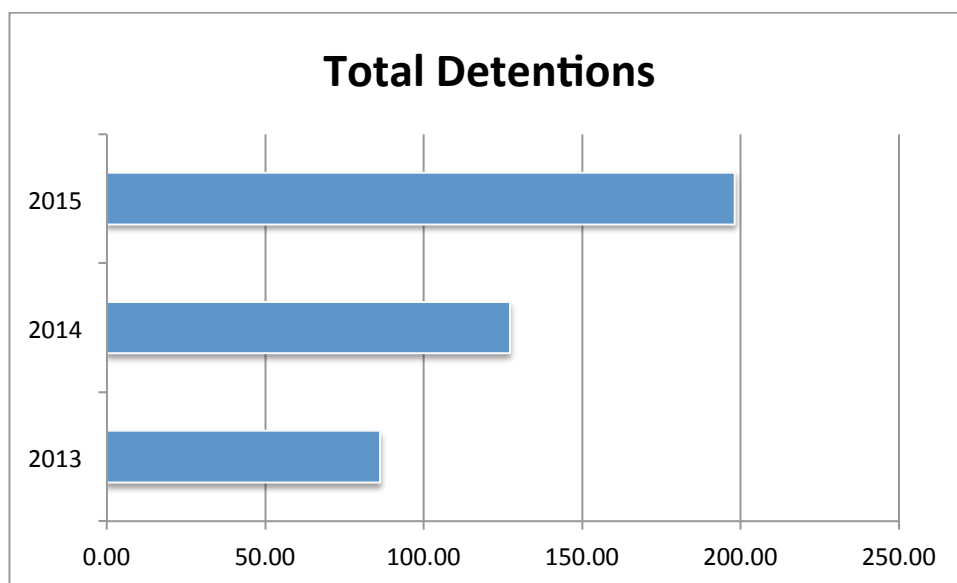
To facilitate human mobility and services for the countries of origin of migrants, Mexico began issuing free Regional Visitor cards, so that people of Guatemalan and Belizean citizenship could enter in the states of the southern border through regular channels. Again, this is a program that is alien to the reality and needs of migrants, it serves a profile of selected migrant population likely to pay a fee of around nine thousand pesos, although covering the period of four years offered by the program, it is a very difficult amount to gather for an average migrant that goes through an undocumented manner in the country. Adding the no authorization to work, showing in this way that the process is neither practical nor appropriate, since for labor it requires an additional step. (Redodem, 2014)

Furthermore, the Mexican government announced the creation of cooperation schemes between the three orders of government through the “Comprehensive Border Crossing Attention Centers”. These centers allow the presence of all federal, state, and municipal institutions that provide care to migrants so to facilitate their transit through the country. According to the decree, “the attention centers will offer migrants medical care and will have special facilities for unaccompanied migrant children who are awaiting repatriation”. (Willson, 2014)

The complex scenario on the treatment of migration is completed with the newly announced Temporary Migrant Regularization Program (January 12, 2015) that seeks to regularize the immigration status of foreigners who wish to reside temporarily in the country, with the regulatory framework of the national security perspective. Mexican officials argue that the new strategy is designed to regain control of the southern border, and to protect migrants from transnational crime groups. But the Southern Border Program measures have been widely attributed to pressure from US authorities, which do not want the mentioned crisis of 2014 to be repeated. For human rights defenders this, instead of alleviating abuses suffered by migrants in the country, exposed them to greater dangers. (Redodem, 2014)

In relation to migration, the main objective of the strategy of the Southern Border Program is the capture of migrants in transit before they reach US, therefore it has a securitization approach, which conceptually means a shift toward policies that see the flows of migrants as a threat that must be controlled, instead of assuming human mobility as a humanitarian phenomenon

that must be managed, based on the protection of the vulnerable population. (Project Counseling Services, 2015) The program fulfills the role of increasing arrests and deportations of migrants from Mexico. According to INM, in 2013 86,929 migrants were arrested and in 2014 they reached 127,149, an increase of 46 percent. In 2015, 198,141 migrants were deported, an increase of 28 percent from the previous year (OAS, 2015). Furthermore, the detention of children and adolescents exceeded 400 percent between 2011 and 2014, according to the Human Rights Centre *Fray Matias de Cordova* (2013).



**Illustration 3 Total detentions of undocumented migrants in Mexico. Source SEGOB (2016)**

From the standpoint of the governments involved, the Southern Border program proved effective between 2014 and 2015. Mexico detained more than twice as Central American migrants: "In the first four months of 2015, Mexico has arrested 83 percent more undocumented immigrants than in the same period last year (57 000 892 against 31 000 642) and has deported 79 percent more migrants (51 000 565 against 28 000 736), mainly Central Americans, according to the authorities". (INM, 2016)

The INM (2016) reports that at the end of 2014, the events of detention of migrants in Mexico increased 48% compared to 2013. The figures for catches of juvenile show that Mexico stopped 140% more young people between 0 and 17, and 375% more children aged between 0 and 11 years. Arrests of children under 11 years traveling alone for Mexico increased up to 520%.

However, the program has resulted rather in institutional violence against migrants in transit to the United States. That is, far from safeguarding the fundamental rights of these populations, since its inception, the Southern Border program has only involved police actions, which include a wide range of "dissuasive" measures for migrants attempting to migrate, especially from Central America.

The arrest of Central American migrants in Mexico is characterized by the violation of human rights. Due process is not respected and therefore adequate legal defense and consular attention is obstructed, while asylum claims of those

fleeing violence and threats of gangs and criminal groups are rejected. In addition, in the centers and facilities of the Integral Family Development (DIF) poor conditions persist, with discrimination and psychological harm to minors who arrive alone happening everyday. (Márquez, 2015) For example, according to the national human rights commission (2016), of the 36.174 unaccompanied migrant children detained by the National Migration Institute in 2015, only 12,414 were channeled to one of the DIF systems.

The detention of migrants, especially in the case of unaccompanied minors, in migration enclosures is one of the most criticized issues. Considering that the irregular situation of a foreigner in the country is an administrative offense, detention and, sometimes, the imprisonment of undocumented migrants is seen as an extreme consequence.

This sum of measures has caused the transit of migrants to travel through more remote territories, thereby expanding violations of their human rights. Which is obvious, because when migrants are aware that traditional migration routes are filled with seals of different police forces with a reputation for extortion, torture and even disappearances of migrants, the latter choose to move further in territories under control of paramilitary groups: the Zetas, la Familia Michoacana, etc. (Suárez, 2016)

According to reports of several non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International, Redodem and The Washington Office for Latin America (WOLA), in Mexico the Southern Border Program is generating a series of conditions and circumstances that intensify facts of violation of human rights. In this sense, it can be noted that the main feature of the new context, the growth and proliferation of the presence of security and military forces, has its counterpart through a decrease in the mechanisms that guarantee and protect human rights, which remain scarce and ineffective in terms of tackling the crimes committed by the authorities against migrants. (Redodem, 2014) An example of this can be seen when comparing the number of asylum granted by Mexico to undocumented migrants with the increased number of detentions. “The number of people recognized as refugees or granted some form of protection in Mexico is shockingly low when compared with the total number of migrant apprehensions. Mexican authorities detained 425,058 migrants between 2014 and July 2016. In the same period, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance (COMAR), the agency responsible for screening and processing refugee claims, only resolved 6,933 asylum applications. From these, COMAR granted asylum in just 2,982 cases”. (Suárez, 2016) Furthermore, the budget of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid only increased by 4% between 2014 and 2015, compared to 112 million dollars contributed by the US to improve the security in the border. (Redodem, 2014)

	2013	2014	2015	2016 (JAN-JUN)
TOTAL DETENTIONS	86,298	127,149	198,141	86,288
DETENTIONS OF CENTRAL AMERICANS	80,757	119,714	179,618	75,429
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS COMPLETED	846	1,370	2,400	2,317
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS GRANTED	280	546	949	1,207
ASYLUM APPLICATIONS GRANTED TO CENTRAL AMERICANS	214	414	878	1,149

**Illustration 4 MIGRANT DETENTIONS VS. ASYLUM REQUESTS GRANTED. Source (Suárez, 2016)**

Although the program clearly states the importance of respecting the human rights of migrants, and ensure their safety, there are reports and extensive research by non-governmental organizations working with Central American migrants who state that the immigration authorities in Mexico have increased the detention of undocumented migrants, along with the fees for letting them go. Alberto Donis, coordinator of the shelter *Hermanos en el Camino* (Brothers in the Path) in Oaxaca, explained that the plan is focused primarily on detaining undocumented migrants, disregarding their human rights and security. In addition, the southern border program's main objective is the arrest and deport of as many undocumented migrants from Central America as possible. According to Alberto Donis, all that this policy achieves is that deported migrants try again to travel in Mexico, through different and riskier routes every time. (Animal Politico, 2015)

The Southern Border Program has the objective of bringing order to the southern border of the country while protecting migrants from the insecurities they face throughout their journey in Mexico. Reading the objectives from a superficial level, the government seems to try to protect migrants and their human rights. Nevertheless, the actions taken since the launch of the program denote a securitization strategy that doesn't protect undocumented migrants but rather treats them as criminals and make their journey harder. From the rise of security controls and deportations, to the creation of physical barriers to stop undocumented migration -such as the increased security in the trains- this program evidences the security discourse used by the Mexican government in relation to migration, and the lack of understanding of the actions needed to effectively protect migrants and guarantee their rights, regardless of their undocumented status.

The Mexican state legitimizes the implementation of regulatory and repressive policies—framed as securitization—that, in effect, allow new forms of violence to flourish. Christine Kovic (2010:94) characterizes this dynamic as the “violence of security” whereby, through security policies, migrants are equated with drugs, weapons, terrorists, and gangs, thus becoming targets of state violence. (Vogt, 2013)

Therefore, for Central American migrants that every year attempt to escape violence in their countries, Mexico has launched a rhetoric of national



security, with an external discursive approach of human rights, that in reality has further included a police approach to the control of migratory flows, and the privatization of services that such an approach entails.

This brief historical analysis of the public policies focused on migration in Mexico for the past decades shows two things. First, the process of securitization that Mexico has had based on the change of discourse to one that related migration with security issues, as well as the negative consequences this has had towards undocumented Central American migrants. Second, the transnational governmentality that exists as to the creation of knowledge related to migration and policies that governments, in this case specifically Mexico, created around it. The influence of the U.S. in the understanding of migration and security of the Mexican government is clear, and is something that should be noted when analyzing how the discourse has shifted in the country.

## **Increase of insecurity during transit**

Over two decades more than 2 million Central Americans crossed Mexico with hopes of getting to the United States. Central Americans crossed the border in Tapachula, Chiapas and took buses there to the northern border. At the beginning, the traffic was fluid, but it soon became much more difficult. Corrupt Mexican agents of all kinds (customs, immigration, municipal and federal) began to make a business out of migration. The journey became a nightmare as mafias of Central American and Mexican *coyotes* began to emerge, who offered their services to “facilitate” the transit to the border.

The criminal industry has priced undocumented migrants as human merchandise, which can get them easy money that shapes a spurious gain. Being monetized, lives are depreciated and devoid of dignity: to free the kidnapped money is required; to capitalize on women's bodies they are sold to commercial sex mafias; to nourish the army of assassins some migrants are forcefully recruited. In the worst cases, migrants are bodies to torture, dismemberment, rape and murder. (Amnesty International, 2010)

Vogt (2013) explains this social phenomenon as the “commodification” of migrants, who are seen by the different actors as a means to obtain some sort of profit by exploiting their vulnerabilities during their transit:

“We see how kidnapped migrants become valuable commodities to be exchanged for handsome ransoms or to have their bodies or body parts sold, trafficked, or discarded. These stories also exemplify the kinds of fears expressed by migrants that fuel demands for hired smugglers within the *cachuco* (derogatory term against Central American migrants in Mexico) industry”. (Vogt, 2013)

Organized crime weaves a web of crime and impunity that traps the undocumented migrants as an easy prey. The drug trafficking organizations control large sections of migratory routes and subordinate local criminal gangs and traffickers (smugglers or coyotes), also co-opt the forces of law and order. Traffickers are no longer the community character of the social networks if they ever were- that inspired confidence migrants who resorted to their services to cross borders and transit. Criminal groups now control traffickers operating in the northeastern and southeastern Mexico; to let them continue to operate these organizations require the payment of fees and, if necessary, en-

gage in kidnapping and extortion. As if that were not enough, various police forces and immigration agents are said to be in collusion with criminal groups. (Márquez, 2015)

Since 2006 there were reports of abductions of migrants; however, they were considered isolated events, and the authorities and public opinion considered them of little relevance. Nevertheless, two cases of mass kidnapping of undocumented migrants made visible the lack of security that they live during their transit through Mexico, as well as the involvement of several groups of organized crime and corrupt authorities.

The first case was the kidnapping in June 2008 of 33 Cubans and four undocumented Central Americans apprehended by an armed group allegedly dedicated to human traffic. The other emblematic case is that of San Fernando (Tamaulipas), where in August 24 of 2010, the authorities discovered the slaughter of 72 people, 58 men and 14 women. (Carrasco, 2013;180)

The appearance of reports on the phenomenon of kidnapping of undocumented migrants in Mexico, around 2006, coincided with the upsurge in the fight against drug trafficking, and it is more prevalent in the corridor of the Gulf of Mexico (in the states of Tabasco, Veracruz and Tamaulipas) which is one of the most important routes of undocumented migrants in transit and where clashes between criminal gangs for control of space transit of weapons and narcotics have occurred. Before 2006, one of the most recurrent complaints by undocumented migrants in transit was the extortion by authorities of various types (municipal, state and federal) in order not to give them to the immigration authorities and be deported. In several complaints of alleged human rights violations between 2005 and 2007, authorities (municipal police among the most mentioned) charged around 1500 pesos as a fee imposed to irregular migrants to let them continue with their journey. (Calleros, 2009)

According to the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH, 2011) between 2008 and 2011 criminal organizations kidnapped 20 thousand migrants in various parts of Mexico. Only between April and September 2010, 11,333 undocumented workers were kidnapped. According to the INM, migrant kidnappings increased 10 times between 2013 and 2014, with 62 complaints registered in 2013 and 682 in 2014. Some civil organizations have estimated that everyday 62 migrants are kidnapped (Redodem, 2015). The figures are not very accurate, but give an indication of the seriousness of the problem.

In Mexico, detention and deportation of Central Americans put thousands of children and families in a highly vulnerable position, because after the deportation they are not provided of protection or shelter. Non-governmental organizations that work with migrants denounce violations of due process to asylum seekers. (Márquez, 2015)

Changes and intensified migration controls modify the routes through which people try to cross Mexico to enter the United States as well as the number of times they try. This has resulted in the deaths since the mid-1990s in damage estimated at around 5 000. The more than 30 billion dollars to increase border surveillance have not content itself migration and have generated an unfortunate dynamic: more surveillance, higher rates; higher rates, more interested in participating organized crime of human trafficking; more organized crime, more violence. More surveillance in urban centers, more risks for mi-

grants to resort to more inhospitable and dangerous areas; more risks, more deaths. (Sandoval, 2015)

What is clear with this is that undocumented migrants are not a security problem for the country, but particularly vulnerable victims of the insecurity that prevails in Mexico, which they have to face during their transit. When a relation between migration and security within the discourse is created, and public migration policies based on securitization are created, what we get in return is enforcing their vulnerabilities rather than caring for and protecting their human rights.

All irregular migrants are at risk of abuse, but women and children - particularly unaccompanied children - are especially vulnerable. They travel with serious risk of being trafficked and sexual assault by criminals, other migrants and corrupt officials. Although few cases are officially recorded, and virtually none becomes prosecuted, some organizations and human rights experts on the subject estimate that up to six out of ten women and girl migrants experience sexual violence during the journey. (Amnesty International, 2010) Today, the lack of coordination between the various agencies continues to hamper the adoption of legal and medical measures to prevent and punish the violation of migrant women and to provide treatment to survivors. Nevertheless, these issues are not addressed in the Southern Border Program.

The violence that Central American migrants suffer from corrupt Mexican authorities is an issue that must be solved. However, it differs from securitizing speech used by the Mexican government regarding migration. When I refer to the securitization of migration, I talk about the actions of the Mexican state that, instead of protecting migrants, seek to control, detain and deport them with a base of national security.

Although within the discourse of the Mexican government, undocumented Central American migrants are not defined as a security risk, but as agents who must be cared for and protected; in reality the treatment towards them by the authorities is like criminals, fugitives from justice who must be found, detained and returned to the countries of origin. The relationship that has been made in the social imaginary between organized crime and undocumented immigrants facilitates and justifies the actions of the government within the national vision of "security". These decisions have put aside important aspects that should be considered to protect migrants in transit, such as the rise in abductions, sexual violence and lack of legal protection and medical care.

## Chapter 4 Civil Society Participation

Foucault talks about the techniques of governing and power relations, noting not only by the way the actors in power create and spread knowledge, but also through the resistance they encounter. In the next chapter I will briefly explain how national and international civil society organizations act for the protection of migrants in transit, and in what form these actions differ from the government's discourse of national security. Some of these organizations explicitly express the problems caused by the official discourse of securitization, but most of them act independently with the aim of helping migrants in the absence of effective action by the government.

Historically, there is a strong relationship between migration and the Catholic Church in Mexico. Among the projects that started support networks for migrants in the church are houses sponsored by the Scalabrinians, an order that belongs to the Catholic Church and that arises particularly in the context of Italian migration to Argentina. In 1887, the then Bishop of Piacenza in Italy, Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, questioned about the future of hundreds of people waiting for the train at the station of the city of Milan in search of opportunities that many would take them to Argentina. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, hundreds, thousands, were also seen waiting for the train in Chiapas and Tabasco in Mexico. Unlike the Italians, Central Americans did not travel by passenger train, but on top or on the sides of freight cars. In 1987, the Scalabrinians opened the first *Casa del Migrante* (house of migrants) in Tijuana; two years later, in 1989, it opens the Casa del Migrante in Ciudad Juarez. In the south, in 1996, it begins offering its services in Tecúm Uman, near the Suchiate River, one of the borders between Guatemala and Mexico. (Sandoval, 2015)

Shelters, or houses of migrants (most of which have emerged within the Catholic Church and are part of the Human Mobility Pastoral from the Mexican Bishops) are the epicentres of a civil society network on migration: the basic reference point to obtain reliable information on the abuses committed against migrants. Its main function has been to provide humanitarian assistance and temporary shelter to migrants in transit along the different routes. Over time, some have been collecting statistical information and testimonies of victims of attacks and violations of human rights, enabling a vital input to the exercise of transnational pressure from civil society as a whole. (Aikin, 2013: 156)

The number of shelters along the Mexican territory is estimated around 80, although there is no updated data, especially if you take into account that there are projects that often arise as community initiatives, which are not always formally registered as organizations or form part of support networks. Civil society engages in a range of efforts of various scale, scope and objectives, which have as common endeavour to respond to the humanitarian drama that arises in the context of forced migration.

Coordination of shelters is grouped into three regions: south, center and north. In the southern region, located near the border with Guatemala, one of the main challenges lies in coordinating with local authorities, diplomatic missions and NGOs. In the central area, in addition to attending the passage of

people from Central America, shelters also help the sending communities of Mexican immigrants. Meanwhile, in the North, deportations of Mexicans from the US constitute the main challenge. (Sandoval, 2015)

With the support of local and international non-governmental organizations, some of the shelters began to gather, systematize and disseminate critical reports with evidence of abuses and violations of human rights of migrants. On the other hand, a group of these shelters were key players in the generation of statistical information on the abductions of migrants by organized crime, which was systematized and made public at the time by the National Commission on Human Rights.

Some founders and leaders of these shelters, like the priests Alejandro Solalinde and Pedro Pantoja, or the Bishop Raul Vera of Saltillo, are prominent activists with a great national and international media presence. In the latter regard, the international dimension of their work and their interaction with other actors is exposed by Father Alejandro Solalinde as follows: "since 2007 we have formed an advocacy community of migrants where we all know each other and interact, either to accompany us to Geneva to speak before the Committee on Migrants of the United Nations, or to go to the thematic hearings of the OAS to influence immigration legislation or to accompany the caravans of Central American mothers in their tours through Mexican routes. (Aikin, 2013)

Defenders of human rights also help combat xenophobia against migrants that sometimes erupts in local communities. The courage and conviction of these individuals, often supported by lay volunteers and congregations that donate food and clothing, shows a deep commitment to the protection of human rights of the most vulnerable. Advocates irregular migrants are themselves victims of frequent attacks. Some have received death threats. There are shelters that have been physically attacked. Other defenders have been subjected to smear campaigns and threats of false charges of trafficking. (Amnesty International, 2010)

The Collective "Migration for the Americas" brings together virtually all organizations and networks working on migration issues in Mexico, including several in the US and Central America. This group was created in 2012 to influence the development of the National Development Program of Mexico, which created the Special Immigration Program. From this process, organizations, universities, and important actors have articulated a more structured network to influence the immigration policy in the country. This is done denouncing cases, doing advocacy, systematizing law violations, among other things. Some migrant shelters are part of the group and the work of the organizations is generally in connection with many of them.

Furthermore, there are two networks of migrant shelters: *Codemire* (Collective of defenders of migrants and refugees) and *Redodem* (Network of documentation for migrant advocacy organizations).

Civil Society Organizations and shelters work from the logic of human rights and protection of people, demonstrating rights violations, crimes and lack of access to justice. Moreover, various social organizations and networks have underlined the urgent need to protect migrants, with a comprehensive human rights and human security approach. Several shelters and civil organizations have dedicated to assisting migrants in transit, in a work that goes beyond

welfare: it includes, for example, counseling and legal defense in Mexico. In recent years, civil organizations also documented and reported cases, and personnel was involved in doing local, national and international advocacy. Although sometimes they work, to varying degrees, with some government institutions, it is necessary to strengthen the commitment, coordination and inter-agency work between government and civil organizations.

In 2008 the Human Rights Center Fray Matias de Cordova (Tapachula, Chiapas) and the Shelter Home of Mercy (Arriaga, Chiapas), in conjunction with the Foundation for the Due Process (based in Washington), presented to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants in UN a report on the human rights crisis in the southern border of Mexico. The document describes the situation in the southern border of Mexico as a "serious human rights crisis," noting the international responsibility of the Mexican State and the need for legislative reforms to ensure access to justice and curb the abuses by gangs, the organized crime and public servants against migrants. (Akin, 2013)

Since 2003, Central American groups hold caravans through Mexico, along migration routes in search of missing people, and with the aim of denouncing and raising public awareness of the situation. On the way, they are received and accompanied by members of the shelters and the homes of migrants (their closest allies in Mexico). Along with many local and national NGOs, these groups organize masses, silent marches and other symbolic acts to evidence and denounce the situation. They also get the support and solidarity of many local and national NGOs.

By March 2010, and as part of a thematic hearing in Washington to the international human rights commission on the rights of migrants in Mexico, ten Mexican organizations presented the report of Central American migrants in transit through Mexico. The report highlights the cruelty of abuses, impunity and lack of access to justice and the responsibility of the Mexican State. In the report, the Mexican NGOs denounced the Commission their "concern about the lack of proper prevention and investigation of systematic and widespread practice of kidnappings in Mexico against migrants in an irregular situation, and publicly encouraged the Mexican government to harmonize its domestic legislation with inter-American standards on the subject". (Akin, 2013)

In 2011, Mexican non-governmental organizations presented a "shadow report" to the Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers UN, in which they acknowledged that the new Immigration Law (adopted in 2011) represents some progress in meeting the Convention on the rights of migrant Workers to establish access to education, health and acts of civil registration for migrants, regardless of their immigration status. However, the report also emphasized that human rights language that contains the immigration law is merely declaratory, and denounced that still shows a clear trend towards the framework of national security in the migration agenda, and has numerous gaps and inconsistencies with regard to international standards. (Aikin, 2013)

Furthermore, major international human rights' NGOs have also adopted in their agenda the situation of human rights of migrants in transit through Mexico, interacting with Mexican counterparts, in a clear dynamics of transnational network, for example Amnesty International and the Washington Office for Latin America. (Aikin, 2013)

For this discussion, the concept of transnational advocacy network is of central importance. Such networks are mainly formed by national and international organizations specialized on human rights (such as the UN, the OAS and the Council of Europe) and agencies or officials of non-governmental organizations; which informally and horizontally, exchange information and services to promote and defend human rights (or other "principled ideas," such as environmental protection or gender equality). These networks are composed of a set of actors or "nodes" decentralized and seemingly disjointed that if they act together, may be able to generate high levels of pressure. (Aikin, 2013; 149)

One of the main policies that NGOs propose is seeing the forced migration of Central Americans as a humanitarian crisis, with an acknowledgement of them as refugees from the Mexican government. This, as a response to governments in the region making an instrumental use of the experience of human rights organizations to print in the speech a "humanitarian face" on migration management. NGOs, religious networks and migrant organizations in the region have radicalized their speech to defend the rights of those who they now openly call refugees and victims of forced migration. In this regard, it is important to differentiate between the use of security and human rights as the excuse used by the government to try to stop migration in order to "protect them from the dangers they may encounter" and the proper protection of migrants' security and rights. (Amnesty International, 2015)

The efforts of civil society to change the way in which undocumented migrants are seen and treated in Mexico are an example of the resistances that Foucault talked about when describing the new economy of power relations. In that sense, anti-authoritarian struggles question the government of individualization that breaks the links between individuals and ties them to their own identity, relations with the power of knowledge, and determination of individuals. Therefore, these struggles do not direct their attack on the institutions but certain techniques of power: those that produce individual subjects who impose a truth about his own self, the subject themselves and others (Permy, 2015)

Furthermore, civil society participation through transnational advocacy networks illustrate the extended discussion of governmentality proposed by Ferguson and Gupta (2002) towards modes of government being set up on a global scale:

"These include not only new strategies of discipline and regulation, exemplified by the WTO and the structural adjustment programs implemented by the IMF, but also transnational alliances forged by activists and grassroots organizations and the proliferation of voluntary organizations supported by complex networks of international and transnational funding and personnel. The outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs and other ostensibly nonstate agencies, we argue, is a key feature, not only of the operation of national states, but of an emerging system of transnational governmentality". (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002)

The national security discourse implemented by the Mexican government is contested through the actions and networks created by civil society organizations on a local, national and international level. Shelters and Non-governmental organizations work together not only to protect migrants during their transit through the country, but also to showcase the lack of adequate public policies from the government to protect them, with a particular criticism

on the national security approach that the government policies are based on, as well as documenting the insecurities and difficulties that migrants encounter throughout their journey.



## Chapter 5 From National to Human Security

Reports of civil society organizations in Mexico advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of security in policies related to migration in Mexico. Particularly, the organizations that form part of *Redodem* propose using a focus on human security when creating migration policies. According to them, it is necessary to develop strategies aimed at changing the paradigm from one focused on national security and fear towards others, towards approaches that emphasize human security. (Redodem, 2014)

Human security could be considered a most appropriate approach to form a comprehensive protection of life, security, integrity and physical and mental health of migrants in transit. This approach gives priority to personal safety and rights of migrants, while emphasizing migrants' agency and life goals.

The concept of human security is an emerging term, which is still in a maturation process since several definitions proliferate without predominating one in particular. The Human Development Report 1994 UNDP is generally recognized as the fundamental reference for the emergence of the concept and its positioning in the international community of human rights. The antecedent for this term is found in the "Four Freedoms" of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who, on 6 January 1941, said that "all people anywhere in the world have to enjoy four freedoms: freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of worship, be free to get what they want and be free from any kind of fear." The latter two freedoms (freedom from want, freedom from fear) constitute the fundamental conceptual anchors the human security concept. (Calleros, 2009)

The 1994 UNDP report displays a range of seven dimensions to human security, namely:

- Economic security,
- Food safety,
- Health security,
- Environmental safety,
- Personal security,
- Community Safety and
- Security

It should also be noted that human security is not so much an analytical concept as a significant of political and shared moral values, with a cooperative, universal and preventive vision that has been applied in areas such as the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, the situation of women in wars, arms trafficking, genocide and displacement of people. In this sense, it is very important to consider that "in many cases, the state itself is a source of insecurity through their actions and sometimes due to their lack of actions and abandonment." (Calleros, 2009)

Human security is a dynamic and practical regulatory framework to address crosscutting threats and pervasiveness with which governments and people face. Because threats to human security have large differences in the national and international level, the application of the concept of human security requires a comprehensive, people-centred, context-specific and prevention-

oriented approach. This approach helps to focus on existing and emerging threats to security and well being of individuals and communities. (Calleros, 2009)

Also, in determining the specific needs of the affected populations, human security directly and positively affects the daily lives of those threatened in their survival, livelihood and dignity. As a result, the promotion of human security produces more immediate and tangible results that comprehensively address the root causes of these threats; determines what the priorities based on real needs, vulnerability and the capacity of governments and people are; and highlights potential inconsistencies between policies and national, regional and international responses. The combination of these elements helps to strengthen the measures taken by governments and other actors in support of human security. (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security)

“The ‘human security’ language conveys more than did the older language of ‘basic human needs’ alone. Security language adds a number of important themes. One is the significance of stability in fulfilment of basic needs, and of avoiding certain types of loss. Second is a sense of danger, the danger of triggering fundamental damage when we lapse below certain thresholds...Third is the importance of attention to feelings and subjectivity as well as to objective life circumstances; losses can include not only the loss of things but the loss of major meanings and even identity”. (Des Gasper, 2009)

The application of the concept of human security is largely a result of a regulatory framework based on two mutually reinforcing pillars: protection and empowerment. The application of this framework allows for a comprehensive approach combining standards, processes and institutions designed downstream with instruments up character, in which participatory processes support the important role of people as agents in the definition and exercise of their fundamental rights. (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security)

Governments maintain the primary function of ensuring the survival, livelihood and dignity of its people. At the same time, recent crises have shown that some threats are beyond the control of any government considered individually. These threats have highlighted the need for greater cooperation between governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and community-based agents.

In addition, agents, particularly those close to the reality on the ground and familiar with it, are especially important in forging answers that are proactive, preventive and sustainable, so they should have the assistance of the international community. Similarly, regional and local organizations play a key role in mobilizing support and promoting collective action. With knowledge of the political nuances and cultural sensitivities of their regions, these organizations are essential partners in promoting human security. (Calleros, 2009)

In any case, it should be noted that academics and scholars agree that human security is not opposed to state security, but complements it. This implies that human security can never be achieved by a single state, but it can only be achieved through close cooperation between governments, civil society organizations, communities and businesses. (Calleros, 2009)

However, the concept has also received some criticism as: its analytical imprecision, having little practical use and carrying the risk of justifying "hu-

manitarian interventions" by developed countries under the pretext of intervening in cases of failed states. Other critics suggest that it is an idealist concept that is not as useful when faced with the real world.

In the context of unregulated transit migration through Mexico, human security of undocumented migrants is primarily threatened by sub-state actors (traffickers and drug cartels) and adult predators (human traffickers, government officials involved with organized crime and individual criminals) who take advantage of the vulnerability of migrants in transit. (Calleros, 2009) Thus, one crucial dimension is the dimension of "personal security", as it relates to threats to individuals coming from the State, other States, population groups (ethnic tensions, for example), individuals or gangs, against women (rape and domestic violence) and against minors (human traffic and abuse).

Given the current situation of migration in transit through Mexico, it is necessary to consider a human security approach to form a comprehensive protection of life, security, integrity and physical and mental health of migrants. To achieve this, we must strengthen the involvement of civil society and community in protection of their human rights, in conjunction with the apparatus of enforcement and administration of justice really doomed to detection, punishment and deterrence of crime.

Beyond the protection of migrants of the dangers they face on the road, specifically criminal organizations and corrupt officials, the framework of human security seeks to create a global ethic based on solidarity and protection of people beyond their nationality. In that sense, "the term 'human' is inherently global in coverage, and contains—for humans—a moral appeal. Combined with 'human', the term 'security' too makes a normative appeal, for priority; 'human security' conveys a message about basic life quality and a claim for its priority in policy." (Des Gasper, 2009)

While it is still necessary to consider what policies would be appropriate based on a vision of human security, a good way to start would be to change the discourse. If the actors involved in the formulation of public policies on migration include in the process the needs, ideas and knowledge of migrants and civil society working with them, a better understanding of reality and the real problems such as lack of security and protection of rights of undocumented migrants live day to day during their transit through Mexico would be achieved. As Des Gasper (2009) put it:

"Adoption of a human security perspective may influence, even reconfigure, how we see ourselves and others and our interconnectedness, and thereby reconfigure how we think about both ethics and security. According to its advocates, such a framework can contribute to ethical globalization: to globalization of ethical thinking and to doing globalization ethically". (Des Gasper, 2009)

In order to move towards a human security discourse in Mexican policies, it is necessary to take local voices seriously, allow the participation of communities and involve migrants in the definition of what is needed in terms of security. Unifying policies with human security requires a multidimensional approach, one that takes into account civil society's experience and knowledge, as well as migrants' agency and their own definition of security and protection. This will lead to the definition of human security as defined by the communities and people together. For that, Mexican authorities should establish a bot-

tom up approach to human security, and broaden their understanding of security.

## Chapter 6 Conclusions

This paper has addressed a detailed chronology of the process of securitization of migration in Mexico, as well as the opposing ideas that try to shift the discourse of migration towards one based on human security. I established a governmentality approach to analyse the underlying securitization of borders as a device for border control of human migration.

Through this study I analysed how public migration policies have been modified over time, with a strong influence of the United States. Analysing the history of Central Mexico migration, it is clear that the Mexican government went from being permissive and open- although with lack of protection programs from the outset- to restrictive and closed.

The relationship created between migration and security is clearly visible within the programs created between Mexico and the United States to control drug trafficking and criminal organizations. These programs, specifically the Merida Initiative, mix these issues with migration and the need to securitize borders, creating an unnatural relationship between (in)security and migrants. From the perspective of the government of Mexico, influenced by the relations and programs with the U.S., transit of undocumented Central American migrants is an issue of "national security" because they create a relation between it and issues of trafficking of drugs and weapons, which intermingle in a climate of rising violence. This has led to the use of police which work for the detention and deportation of migrants through the implementation of measures of deterrence such as the impediment to board the train, and the militarization and sealing of the southern borders, instead of focusing on protecting migrants in transit.

While the government's policies have become increasingly focused on the safety of migrants and their human rights, especially based on recent migration crises of unaccompanied children in the United States and Mexico, their actions show a discourse of national security and border control that barely consider the situation of migrants in transit through the country and have increased the risks they take during their transit.

I also highlighted the efforts of national and international organizations and the academic community to analyse the relationship between dynamics of migration, vulnerability of human rights and the notion of threat used by the government to manage "irregular" migration. Although migration in the region has existed for decades, today more than ever these different logics of human mobility are subject to two types of severe problems; on the one hand, the recurrence of stigmas and discrimination circulating in receiving societies of immigrants that looks at them as commodities, and on the other hand, the concrete implementation of measures and "preventive" actions covered in certain perceptions of national security, that violate the human rights of migrants.

Civil society, which involves the church, shelters, academics and non-governmental organizations, have proposed alternatives of analysis and the creation of public policies that put forward the idea of human security rather than national security. Nevertheless, human security has two major flaws: conceptual widening and the difficulty of putting it into practice to achieve con-

crete results. The agency and participation of migrant groups can achieve to expand their rights in countries of transit and destination.

As seen in this paper, one of the main reasons that why human security has not been embedded to the discourse when creating public policies related to migration is the prevalence of securitization, and the artificially relation created between it and undocumented migrants. While the government continues to prioritize the securitization before the protection of human rights and free movement, undocumented migrants will continue to take dangerous routes during their way becoming vulnerable.

Changing the securitization discourse does not mean simply mentioning human security or human rights in government speeches, or official documents or policies. It requires a paradigm shift, it involves a deep analysis of the government technologies used for the management of migration, the knowledge and ideas disseminated, and the intrinsic power relations between the actors involved in the undocumented migration of Central American migrants in Mexico.

There are other structural and institutional problems in the country that must be taken into account and resolved to protect undocumented migrants, such as corruption and impunity. However, the discourse formulated to create policies matters, it has consequences on the policies and decision making, and affects the lives of thousands of migrants that transit through Mexico every day; as shown throughout the history of undocumented Central American migration through Mexico. Therefore, it is necessary to start focusing on the discourse, the power relations, the creation of knowledge and the processes and actors involved in it in order to advance the discourse towards one more inclusive and grounded view of migrants in transit through Mexico.

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