

Vargas, A; Wabgou, M; Ramírez, D; and Raigosa, M. (2019). Migration and security in the Andes: Colombian migrations to Ecuador and Venezuela. In: Vargas, A. and Wabgou, M. (ed.) Migrations and security. A challenge for the 21st century. Bogotá: National University of Colombia. Pp. 183-268.

To characterize the political and social context in which the migratory flows of Colombians abroad are developed, specifically towards Ecuador and Venezuela.

It includes the considerations on the armed conflict in Colombia; the characteristics of the international migration of Colombians to Ecuador and Venezuela; immigration policies in Ecuador and Venezuela; the migration policies of Venezuela-Colombia; and security policies in Ecuador and Venezuela.

The migration of Colombians abroad is a situation that confronted, for more than fifty years, the Colombian State, insurgent forces and counterinsurgent paramilitary groups. Although the origins of the armed confrontation and migration of Colombians lie within the ideological-political framework of the Cold War, it should be noted that it was boosted by the trans nationalization of illegal economies, the smuggling of natural resources, and the illegal trafficking of weapons.

The two case studies presented show the growing relationship that exists between migration, security and the challenges on this topic that the 21st century holds. The governments of the receiving countries tend to securitize the migration issue, particularly with regard to irregular migration. The juxtaposition of criminal phenomena and migratory flows in border areas has generated that security measures, which are applied to deal with illegal phenomena, are used to manage public policies on migration.

The dynamics of the migratory flows of Colombians to Ecuador and Venezuela is related to the regionalization of the armed conflict in Colombia, which added to the war on drugs, become factors that affect the displacement of Colombians to neighboring countries. Thus, Colombian migrations to neighboring countries respond to political reasons such as asylum, refuge and displacement.

In Ecuador and Venezuela, resources have been mobilized to attend to Colombian migration, essentially made up of displaced people, especially in those areas that may have some eventual political significance: votes, support, political mobilizations, etc. In these cases, immigrants are often used as scapegoats responsible for situations that the national population perceives as detrimental to their safety.

The securitization strategy establishes political coalitions that consolidate a public policy of strong migration policies and, at the same time, gain the support and political loyalty of populations in situations of extreme vulnerability. Venezuela's immigration policy is related to the wide border that both countries have, where informal trade in merchandise and gasoline are part of the securitization agenda. On the other hand, Ecuador is always on the defensive due to the conjuncture of the internal armed conflict and the peace process in Colombia, amid the migration agreements of both countries.