

International Security and New Threats: Securitisation and Desecuritisation of Drug Trafficking at the Brazilian Borders

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Abstract: The expansion of the security agenda was at the basis of the emergence of new theoretical concepts in the field of studies on international security. One example is the concept of securitisation, developed by the Copenhagen School, which makes it possible to examine, on the one hand, new threats to the security of countries and, on the other hand, the policies through which they seek to address them. Based on this concept, the article argues that drug trafficking was securitised by the Brazilian government in the period of 2011-2016. From 2016, with the issue of Decree nº 8903, the matter returned to the stage of 'politicisation' as understood by the Copenhagen School. The decree marked, therefore, a process of desecuritisation of the issue in Brazil, since it revoked the Strategic Border Plan, resulting in the loss of the temporary and emergency nature of the 'Ágata' operations. This article analyses the development of Brazilian legislation since 1976 on this matter and carries out, for the period 2011 to 2016, content analysis of the narrative on securitisation. In addition, this work examines the guidelines and nature of the Brazilian government's public policies aimed at combating drug trafficking.

Keywords: Brazil; drug trafficking; securitisation; desecuritisation; Operation Ágata.

Introduction

The third theoretical debate on international relations highlighted the need for new studies on international security that question the assumptions of 'realism,' which is the prevailing classical theory of international relations. In this sense, new theoretical approaches to international security discussed the effectiveness of traditional theories of

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international relations, and some European research centres have developed studies on peace. The Copenhagen School was created in this context, in 1985 originally named the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI).

The studies of the Danish school began from the dissatisfaction with the inflexibility of the theory of realism, which considered only the state and the military aspects at the centre of security matters. This dissatisfaction was stimulated by the international environmental and economic agendas of the 1970s and 1980s (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde 1998). According to Barry Buzan and Lene Hasen (2009), developments in international security studies led many scholars to change the concept of security from the 1970s, moving away from the idea of limiting it to the military sector or seeing it only as a synonym for defence or war. This is the case of Joseph Nye (1974), Richard Ullman (1983) and Jessica Mathews (1989), and many other authors who carried out their studies using an expanded concept of security that includes other threats of a political, economic, social and environmental nature.

Based on this expanded concept of security, Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap Wilde (1998: 23) argue that security 'takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or above politics.' For the authors, securitisation may be considered 'a more extreme version of politicisation,' and they propose that an issue can be classified as non-politicised, politicised or securitised. An issue is non-politicised when the state is not directly involved in dealing with the issue and does not produce a public debate or decision about it. It is politicised when it requires a government decision and is part of the public policy agenda. Finally, the issue is securitised when it is considered as an existential threat, requiring urgent action and justifying measures outside the normal political process.

Based on the concept of securitisation of the Copenhagen School, this study argues that drug trafficking was securitised by the Brazilian government in the period from 2011 to 2016. From 2016, with Decree n° 8903/2016, the issue was again politicised. This was actually a process of desecuritisation (Wæver 1995, 2000), as the decree modified the emergency and temporary nature of the 'Ágata' operations – which consisted in coordinated actions involving the armed forces and different government agencies in order to combat drug trafficking at Brazilian borders – and turned the activities that were conducted in the format of an operation into a routine of border surveillance and control. The processes of securitisation and desecuritisation of drug trafficking in Brazil occurred between 2011 and 2016. This article will analyse: (i) the Brazilian legislation to show the evolution of the issue within the state; (ii) the content of the narrative on securitisation; and (iii) the emergency measures adopted to combat drug trafficking, included in the Strategic Border Plan, with emphasis on the Ágata Operations and the role of the armed forces.

This work is divided into six main sections following this introduction. The first presents the concept of securitisation developed by the Copenhagen School. The second section presents the methodology used in the empirical study that underpins this article. The third section discusses the Brazilian legislation and the public policy agenda concerning the issue of drug trafficking. The fourth analyses the narratives on securitisation of the issue of the Brazilian border, as well as the roles of the securitising agent and the audience.

The fifth section discusses the nature of emergency measures and how the issue was desecuritised by Decree n° 8903. This section intends to identify the movement of securitisation and desecuritisation of the issue by analysing the nature of these emergency measures. The last section presents the discussion of the results and the final considerations.

Securitisation and desecuritisation according to the Copenhagen School

One of the main theoretical contributions of the Copenhagen School is the concept of securitisation derived from the influence of constructivism. This influence is expressed in the understanding that the securitisation of an issue is the result of a social construction. The issue is designated as a security matter and is accepted by an audience as a threat based on the statement made by securitising agents, who play a fundamental role. According to Buzan, Wæver and Wilde (1998: 24): 'In the case of security, textual analysis suggests that something is designated as an international security issue [...] and should take absolute priority.'

The theory presents three operational categories to guide empirical studies on securitisation: 1) referent object; 2) securitising agent; and 3) functional actor. Referent object is a unit under threat. The securitising agent is the actor who claims there is a threat that can present risks to the existence of the referent object. Finally, the functional actors do not belong to either of the two previous categories but participate directly or indirectly in the security dynamics of a sector (Villa and Santos 2011).

An issue goes from 'non-politicised' to 'politicised' and then to 'securitised' and can retreat at any point – this is called desecuritisation. Buzan et al (1998) explain that the securitising agent discusses the nature of the referent object whose confrontation demands measures outside the normal political logic. Addressing security matters leads states to establish differences between security matters dealt with using the normal course of politics, and from those demanding emergency action. This means that there is a difference between politicised and securitised threats (Buzan and Hansen 2009). The actor seeks to gain the right to deal with the issue by exceptional means, setting aside the normal rules of politics.

In the development of the securitisation theory, Buzan et al (1998) emphasise the importance of emergency measures, the adoption of which is justified by the need to ensure the survival of the state and the protection of its population. For the authors, the realisation of a securitisation process depends on three essential components, namely: (i) identification of an existential threat; (ii) legitimisation for the temporary suspension of the rules; and (iii) the adoption of emergency actions.

Buzan and Wæver recognised that the management of security matters by governments would be better with desecuritisation, i.e., when the issues are dealt with under normal politics and within the rules of democracy. The authors recognised securitisation as a danger to democratic regimes (Carmali 2008: 122). Buzan et al emphasise the exceptional and temporary nature of the measures adopted in securitisation contexts. For Ole Wæver (1995: 57), desecuritisation is more desirable than the securitisation of problems insofar as the handling of security issues is driven by the normal operation of the policy without the

need for exceptional measures. Desecuritisation can be defined as the return of the issue to normal political logic and may involve three strategies according to Ole Wæver (2000): (i) not addressing the problem as an existential threat; (ii) preventing securitisation from becoming a spiralling effect; and (iii) making the problem return to normal policy scope. The third strategy was the one observed in the empirical study presented here.

In this way, empirical studies on securitisation can lead to its analysis through two connected strategies: on the one hand, in the form in which certain issues are approached as existential threats that demand emergency measures, surpassing normal politics; on the other hand, through the construction of the threat made by the narrative of the securitising agents. The empirical section of this article aims to follow these two strategies. Before going into the empirical part, however, the following section presents the methodology for empirical analysis.

Methodology and empirical analysis

As part of this study, an empirical analysis of the securitisation of drug trafficking in Brazil was carried out. The first step was to reveal what leads an issue to be securitised. As the authors of the Copenhagen School do not clarify the process of transition of an issue from being considered ‘non-politicised’ to ‘politicised’ and then to ‘securitised’ and do not offer methodological tools to identify these transitions, the study adopted variables that allowed identification of this process for the issue of drug trafficking in Brazil. The process was observed and is presented in this article in four stages: non-politicised, politicised, in process of securitisation and, finally, securitised. In each of the stages, variables of analysis (Table 1) are proposed and used when examining the case study.

Table 1: Process of evolution of an issue

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Non-politicised | Government does not participate There is no exclusive legislation There are some articles in the legislation for specific cases |
| Politicised | The issue is discussed by the government Some legislation is improved and specific laws are created There is government participation through production of specific public policies and allocation of resources Authorities stand out as possible securitising agents |
| In process of securitisation | All the variables of the stage ‘politicised’ Mechanisms for an potential governmental intervention are created The issue is considered a threat The governmental agents’ narrative to the audience reveals that the issue is considered a threat |
| Securitised | All the variables of the stage ‘in process of securitisation’ Identification of the functional actors Government action: emergency, punctual, limited in time and territory, and of a transitory nature Governmental resources are allocated to the emergency action The population legitimates the adoption of emergency measures |

Source: Created by the authors based on the theory of securitisation (Silva 2013).

In examining the securitisation of drug trafficking in Brazil (and also when examining other issues), the study suggests the use of the intermediary stage ‘in process of securitisation’ while observing the evolution of the issue, adopting the variables as described in Table 1. In this stage, the emergency measures have not yet materialised. It is a stage of transition, which methodologically helps the understanding of the boundary between the politicised and the securitised.

The existential threat (drug trafficking) was identified through analysing the Brazilian legislation, which materialises the debates and governmental involvement. In addition, the legislation provided a historical overview of government decisions on the issue. This research also analysed other materials such as: (i) official interviews of President Dilma Rousseff; and (ii) an interview with a representative of the armed forces who participated in the working group responsible for drawing up the Strategic Border Plan.

In addition to the analysis of documents and government decisions, the empirical evidence of securitisation demands the analysis of the narratives that consider drug trafficking as an existential threat. Content analysis here was organised in three stages: pre-analysis, material exploration and treatment of results. At the time of the pre-analysis, the documents were selected taking into account the object of the study and the need to identify the securitising agent. The speeches by Brazilian presidents Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Brasil 2018a) and Dilma Rousseff (Brasil 2018b) were examined considering the importance of these presidents in the Brazilian political system and in leading the Brazilian security agenda. These speeches form the research corpus and the study was based on the content analysis of the discourse (Bardin 2011: 125).

The selection of speeches to form the research corpus used the keyword ‘trafficking’ (*tráfico* in Portuguese). The material was collected in the Brazilian presidency speech repository, considering the period 2003-2010 (President Lula) and 2011-2016 (President Dilma Rousseff) (Brasil 2018a, 2018b). The material included speeches, interviews and radio programs with the participation of the presidents. From the time of President Lula’s government, 13 speeches and 2 radio programmes were collected (Brasil 2018a), whereas from President Rousseff’s government, 8 speeches and 17 radio programmes were studied (Brasil 2018b). President Lula’s speeches were examined for the purpose of comparing the two presidents’ narratives, and the study revealed that Dilma Rousseff had greater prominence in the securitisation of drug trafficking, not ignoring that the issue was also on the agenda of the previous government. In her mandate, however, it was still in the process of securitisation, as shown in the next section of this article. In total, 15 statements by President Lula and 25 statements by President Dilma were analysed. As for the process of data analysis, the research used the software NVivo.

In summary, to empirically demonstrate the securitisation and desecuritisation of the fight against drug trafficking in Brazil, the article: (i) examines Brazilian legislation using the variables described in Table 1; (ii) conducts a content analysis of the speeches of the two presidents, especially President Dilma Rousseff; and (iii) analyses the contents and nature of Operation ‘Ágata,’ which is the set of emergency measures adopted by the Brazilian state to deal with the threat of drug trafficking. The next sections show the empirical analysis.

The securitisation of the issue at the Brazilian border: legislation

Brazilian legislation has dealt with the topic of illicit drug trafficking for many years. The first record is from 1890, demonstrating that the issue has been on the country's legislative agenda, but at that time without major concerns, being characterised as non-politicised. It is possible to systematise the history of laws on drugs, observing the stages of the issue's securitisation process. Table 2 presents a systematisation of this history according to the four stages described in the previous section.

Table 2 shows that until 1976 the focus was on short-term laws that sought to solve specific problems observed in society. Therefore, the issue of drug trafficking in this period can be classified as non-politicised: there were specific laws, but there was no significant government involvement. In 1976, the first anti-drug law was launched, referring to illicit trafficking. This law marks the change in the status of the issue that, from then on, can be classified as politicised, since the government began to produce specific policies to fight drug trafficking.

After 1976, the problem of trafficking was clearly an object of Brazilian policy and the aim was to control the social problems resulting from drugs. Another indication that the issue had become politicised appears after 1988 with the new Federal Constitution, when the state started to provide not only legislation but also specific public policies. Among the indicators that the issue was politicised in this period are the 1990 legislation that classified drug trafficking as a heinous crime and the formation of a repressive state apparatus, materialised in a National Secretariat for Narcotics, created in 1993. For Thiago Rodrigues (2012), the reform of the Brazilian state's anti-drug apparatus started under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's mandate (1995-2002), through the creation of the National Anti-Drug Secretariat (SENAD), linked to the Military Office of the Presidency. This secretariat was established on the basis of the Provisional Measure n° 1669, which conferred jurisdiction on the military to

coordinate and integrate government actions related to prevention and repression to trafficking, abuse or production of narcotic substances and drugs that cause dependence, as well as those actions related to recovering of addicted persons (Rodrigues 2012: 28).

General Paulo Roberto Uchôa was the head of this secretariat and was maintained by President Lula for the eight years of his term (2003-2010). Rodrigues (2012) mentions the development of the Amazon Surveillance System (SIVAM), which aimed to establish control of the airspace, soil and subsoil of the Brazilian Amazon by means of fixed radars, satellites and radar planes within the Amazonian Protection System, led by the air force. These measures adopted in the 1990s and during the Cardoso administration indicate the continuing politicisation of the issue, which is expressed by the involvement of the federal government in combating drug trafficking.

Table 2: Review of Brazilian legislation on drugs

| SECURITISATION STAGE | YEAR | LEGISLATION | CONTENT |
|------------------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Non-politicised | 1890 | Penal code, Art.159° | Categorised the conduct associated with the use of psychotropic substances |
| | 1936 | Decree n°780 | Created the Permanent Monitoring Committee |
| | 1938 | Decree 2953 | Create the National Narcotic Drugs Monitoring Committee |
| | 1938 | Decree-Law n° 891 | Regulation on drugs |
| | 1940 | Decree-Law n° 2848, Art° 281 | Regulation on narcotic drugs production, trafficking and consumption |
| | 1964 | Decree n° 54216 | Established the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs |
| | 1967 | Decree-Law n° 159 | Considered as equivalent to narcotic drugs the substances that cause physical or psychic dependence |
| | 1968 | Decree-Law n° 385 | Regulation on narcotic drugs commerce, possession or access facilitation |
| | 1971 | Law n° 5726 | Adjusted Brazilian legislation to international guidelines |
| | Politicised | 1976 | Law n° 6368 |
| 1977 | | Decree n° 79388 | Established the Convention on Psychotropic Substances |
| 1986 | | Law n° 7560 | Created the Fund for Drug Abuse Prevention, Recovery and Combat (FUNCAB) |
| 1988 | | Federal Constitution, Articles 5° and 144° | Regulation of drug-related crimes |
| 1990 | | Law n° 8072 | Considered drug trafficking as heinous crimes |
| 1991 | | Law n° 8257 | Provides for land expropriation |
| 1991 | | Decree n° 154 | Established the Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances |
| 1993 | | Law n° 8764 | Created the National Secretariat on Narcotic Drugs |
| 1995 | | Law n° 9017 | Provides for the control and monitoring of chemical products or inputs that can be used to produce cocaine and its derivatives |
| 1998 | | Ordinance n° 344 | Published the technical regulations on substances and medicines subject to special control |
| In process of securitisation | 2000 | Decree-Law n° 3696 | Provides for the National Anti-Drug System |
| | 2001 | Decree-Law n° 3887 | Provides for the use of the armed forces to guarantee law and order |
| | 2002 | Law n° 10409 | Provides for monitoring, treatment, control and repression of drugs production, use and trafficking |
| | 2003 | Resolution n° 1 CONAD | Provides for strategic guidelines to the National Anti-Drug System |
| Securitized | 2004 | Decree n° 5144 | Shoot-down law, allowing hostile aircraft to be shot down |
| | 2005 | Resolution n° 3 CONAD | Established the National Drug Policy (PNAD). |
| | 2006 | Law n° 11343 | Established the new anti-drug law |
| Desecuritized | 2006 | Decree-Law n° 5912 | Regulated Law n° 11343 and issues related CONAD and SISNAD |
| | 2011 | Decree n° 7496 | Established the Strategic Border Plan |
| | 2016 | Decree n° 8903 | Established the Border Protection Integrated Programme |

Source: Created by the authors based on data from Silva (2013).

The initial milestone in the process of securitisation of drug trafficking may have been in 2004, through the approval of the so-called 'Shoot-down Law,' through which it became possible to overthrow hostile aircraft. This law aimed to contribute to the fight against drug trafficking in a context characterised by the increase in crimes related to this issue. In 2006 the Brazilian state worked to overcome the new challenges that drug trafficking brought to society. At that time there was an expectation that a joint action by state and civil society organisations would be in place to combat this issue (elements characteristic of the intermediate stage, referred to in Table 1, defined 'in process of securitisation'). This expectation was matched years after, with the new anti-drug law. Brazilian laws and public policies confirm the existence of the securitisation process that materialised in the Strategic Border Plan in 2011.

In 2011, the creation of the Strategic Border Plan confirmed that illicit trafficking became a security issue for Brazil. In this plan, the group designated to handle trafficking issues was no longer just the judicial police. The issue became the responsibility of a group of federal, state and municipal agencies. The treatment of the issue, therefore, evidences the securitisation of the threat. The Strategic Border Plan is the milestone for the change of status, from the stage 'in process of securitisation' to 'securitised.' Decree n° 7496 established the Strategic Border Plan and President Dilma Rousseff expressed the objectives of the plan: strengthening the activities of prevention, control, enforcement and repression of cross-border and border crime. The decree established the following guidelines: (i) the integrated action of the public security agencies, the Federal Revenue Secretariat of Brazil and the armed forces; and (ii) integration with neighbouring countries (Brasil 2011a). Another important change was Decree n° 8903, of 2016, which marked the desecuritisation of the issue by making integrated actions at the borders with the participation of the armed forces as a routine measure. These topics are covered in greater detail in the fifth section of this article. Before, however, it is necessary to examine securitisation through the narratives collected.

Content analysis of speeches and of the main agent of securitisation

In a comparative analysis between the speeches of President Rousseff and her predecessor, it is possible to note some outstanding differences. The first of these relates to the number of speeches on the issue of drug trafficking. The search for the term 'traffic' in the speeches of President Rousseff reveals a greater result in comparison to her predecessor: there is a difference of 10 moments of speech between the two presidents, considering the difference between the time of mandate of each of them. Dilma Rousseff's second term was discontinued in 2016 and therefore she ruled for six years while Lula ruled for eight years. The analysis of the moments of speech of President Lula during his two terms (8 years) through the software NVivo resulted in a word tree for the keyword 'trafficking' (*tráfico* in Portuguese). The tree allows visualisation of the articulation of the topics by showing which sentences are linked to the term 'trafficking', as can be seen in Figure 1 (in Portuguese).

Figure 1: Word tree: parts of President Lula da Silva's speech



Source: Created by the authors.

The word tree shows that the word ‘trafficking’ is associated in the president’s speech with ‘illegality, crime’ (*ilegalidade, do crime*), ‘violence, youth, crime, prostitution’ (*violência, juventude, criminalidade, prostituição*). Other important phrases link trafficking with statements such as ‘we pledge to fight’ (*comprometemos a lutar contra*); ‘represent corruption’ (*representam a corrupção*); ‘a network that involves the state’ (*uma rede que envolve o Estado*). All of these statements indicate that President Lula’s speech was aimed at securitising the issue, but he still treated it as if in the politicised stage by attributing to the state the responsibility for addressing the issue.

The second difference relates to the intensity of the construction of the threat when analysing the speeches of President Dilma Rousseff. In them, it is possible to note the construction of the threat by the occurrence of particular words. Using NVivo software for President Rousseff’s speeches, it was possible to get to the word cloud represented in Figure 2 (in Portuguese).

The word cloud produced with the speeches of Dilma gives evidence of the securitisation of drug trafficking. The most recurrent word in these lines is ‘security’ (*segurança*), with 109 occurrences, followed by ‘country’ (*país*), with 103, and ‘drugs’ (*drogas*), with 99. It is important to note that other revealing words also appeared in President Rousseff’s speeches, such as ‘public’ (*público* or *pública*), ‘defence’ (*defesa*), ‘combat’ (*combate*), ‘weapons’ (*armas*), ‘armed’ (*armadas*), ‘force’ (*força*), ‘forces’ (*forças*) and ‘borders’ (*fronteiras*). President Rousseff’s speeches are alarming as far as trafficking is concerned and highlight the use of force to address this threat. Contributing to this construction, it is possible to observe the same results in word trees. Figure 3 presents the term ‘trafficking’ (*tráfico*) and its connections in the speeches of the president.

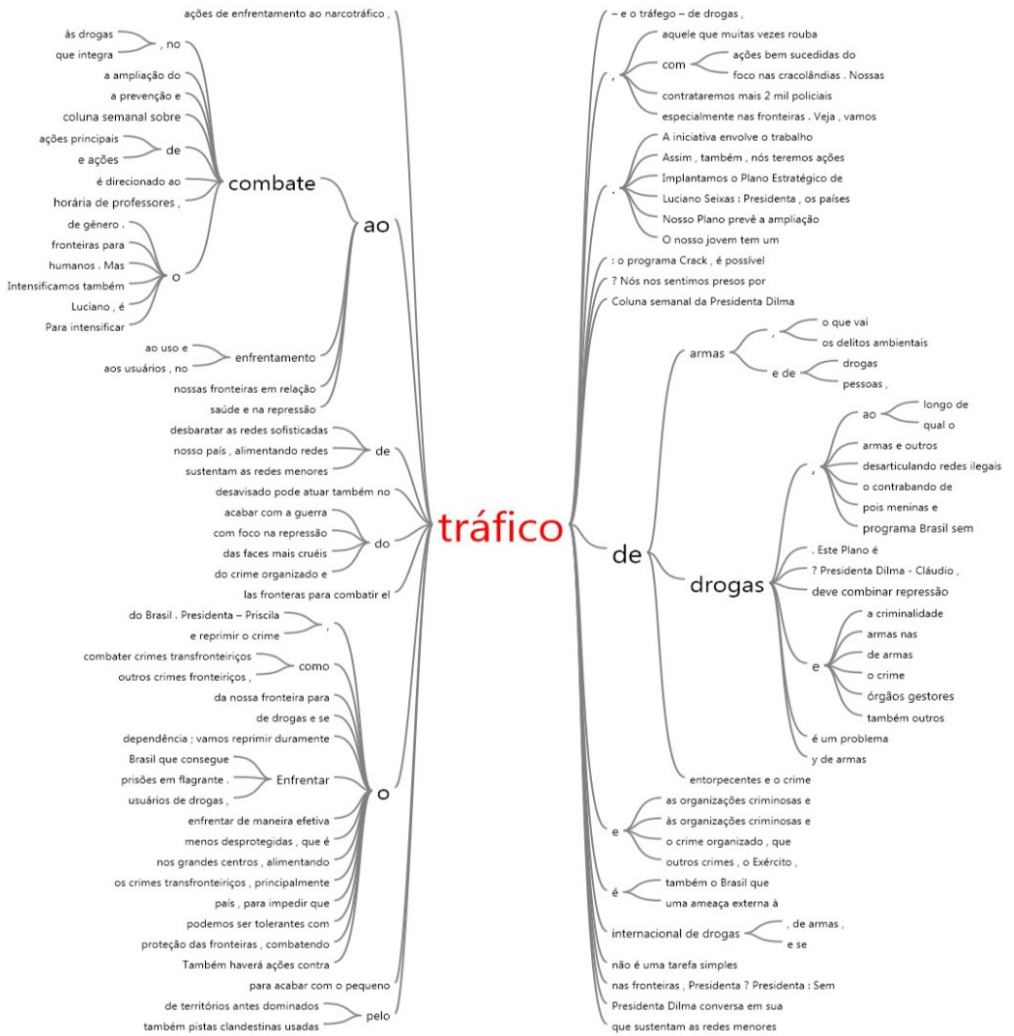
Figure 2: Word cloud: parts of President Dilma Rousseff's speech



Source: Created by the authors.

In Figure 3, it is possible to note that the tree relating to the speeches of President Rousseff is noticeably larger than the word tree formed based on the speeches of President Lula. Figure 3 shows a ramification with the word ‘combat’ (*combate*), which demonstrates that the term ‘trafficking’ was related to that word in several sentences of the president’s speeches. These sentences, for the most part, also reveal links with words such as ‘crime’ (*crime*), ‘criminality’ (*criminalidade*), ‘criminal organisations’ (*organizações criminosas*) and ‘weapons’ (*armas*). In addition, in the speeches there are phrases such as ‘we will have 2,000 policemen’ (*contaremos com 2 mil policiais*), ‘dismantling illegal networks’ (*desarticulando redes ilegais*) and ‘effectively face’ (*enfrentar de maneira efetiva*). All the phrases related to trafficking reveal the progress of the securitisation movement through the speech of President Rousseff, who became the main securitising agent of drug trafficking. The role of the president can be observed: (i) in the construction of the threat through the narrative; (ii) placing the issue of drug trafficking as a priority on the governmental agenda; (iii) in the constant defence of the options adopted and expressed in the emergency measures of the Strategic Border Plan; and (iv) because she moved the central management of the issue to the presidency of the republic by appointing the vice president to take on a prominent role in leading these emergency measures.

Figure 3: Word tree: parts of President Dilma Rousseff's speech



Source: Created by the authors.

It is possible to note in certain speeches how the president identifies the threat, suggests the need for coordination of government efforts, and seeks to give the presidency a key leadership role over the emergency measures. In her speech on the launching of the Strategic Border Plan, on 8 June 2011, Dilma Rousseff defended the Brazilian government's capacity for effective action to combat drug trafficking and other illicit trafficking at Brazilian borders:

[...] allows us to establish with our neighbour countries a coordinated action, an effective action, a strong action that take us **to combat all forms of organised crime that choose our borders in the**

most fragile regions and, therefore, easier for them to act. What we want is **to get stronger borders**, turning them into areas where the organised crime cannot operate (Brasil 2018c, emphasis added).

The above speech emphasises the need for cooperation among the countries of the region. But it also shows the fragility of Brazilian borders that favour the action of organised crime, such as trafficking of drugs and weapons. The existential threat is located within the boundaries, which demands a response from the Brazilian government. This response should be the strengthening of border control through the coordinated and integrated action of various governmental actors, who would work alongside the armed forces.

Moreover, in this same speech, the president uses the direct involvement of the presidency in the operation of the measures as an argument to show the importance of the issue on the government agenda. This involvement occurred with the appointment of then Vice President Michel Temer to coordinate the actions of various government agents. **'It is the Presidency itself that takes on an active role in the control, evaluation and provision of instruments** so that this Plan is, in fact, a victorious and vigorous plan' (Brasil 2018c, emphasis added).

In subsequent speeches by Dilma Rousseff on the presidency's radio programme, she emphasises the risks posed by drug trafficking. In these official interviews, the president identifies relationships between drug trafficking in major cities and the development of organised crime, which are said to be responsible for urban violence. According to the president, the response to these problems demands concerted action at the borders, as she highlights below in the excerpt from the speech delivered on 7 December 2011, at the launching of the Plan to Combat the Use of Crack and Other Drugs.

[...] and, when the authority is concerned, **it is a matter of strong repression. We created, in network, a vision when it comes to authority.** This vision [...] of the Strategic Border Plan, the protection of our borders, guaranteeing that the country will be able to close the entry, will contain and dismantle the sophisticated networks of drug trafficking, which support the smaller networks [...] **We will invest in intelligence, we will use our 'Vants', and use more trained police and this strategic integration between the Brazilian Army and the public security system of the federal and states polices** (Brasil 2018d, emphasis added).

In the speech above, the president emphasises the construction of the issue as a threat to the Brazilian population. Thus, there are elements in this and other speeches of President Dilma that indicate the need to adopt emergency measures, understanding that the problem lies in the borders and in the activities of drug trafficking. In the next subsection, it is possible to see how this narrative is compatible with the public's perception and interest, thus providing support for emergency measures.

The assimilation of the speech by the audience

One of the main difficulties of empirical application of securitisation theory is the role of the audience. Sarah Léonard and Christian Kaunert (2011) identify a contradiction in the approach to securitisation by the authors of the Copenhagen School. At first, Buzan et al (1998) argue that securitisation will be successful if there is acceptance of the security speech act by an audience. At another time, they attach a relevant role to the securitising agent, arguing that they decide whether or not something should be securitised, that is, treated as a threat. In any case, Léonard and Kaunert suggest that the audience is important, although its definition in theory is vague and undeveloped, especially with regard to the identification of the target audience of a movement of securitisation. Some authors have argued that the audience may involve different audiences, with distinct characteristics (such as Balzacq 2005; Roe 2008; Léonard and Kaunert 2011). In this way, certain acts of securitisation may involve a general audience, while others, in crisis situations, may require the support of an elite. Balzacq (2005) proposes a separation between formal support (of decision-making institutions) and moral support for the movement of securitisation (provided by the general audience). Roe (2008), based on Balzacq's work, suggests that the movement of securitisation highlights the importance, for example, of national parliaments that would provide formal support for the adoption of extraordinary measures.

As is noted in the next section of this article, the Strategic Border Plan has the formal support of the main decision-makers on the issue in the executive branch, considering that the plan is the result of a working group composed of representatives of the armed forces, the Federal Police, the Federal Highway Police and the National Security Force. With regard to the general public, it was possible to identify a recognition of the importance of public safety issues among their concerns. The research institute IPEA (Institute for Applied Economic Research) carried out an extensive survey in 2011, called '*Sistema de Indicadores de Percepção Social*' (System of Indicators of Social Perception), using a representative sample of 3,796 people from all units of the federation who answered 30 questions on national defence with a confidence level of 95%. In this research, the interviewees were consulted about the perception of threats. They could provide more than one response to the issue and revealed that organised crime (at 54.2%) and environmental or climatic disaster (38.6%) were the main threats identified by them. Wars with foreign or neighbouring countries appeared in 34.7% and 33% of the answers, respectively. These data show that organised crime was seen as one of the main threats in the interviewees' perception. The importance of these threats by the population favours the adoption of the emergency measures included in the Strategic Border Plan.

The survey conducted by IPEA (2011) also shows the high degree of confidence of the interviewees in Brazilian military institutions at that time (see also IPEA 2012; Ceratti et al 2015). The interviewees revealed a significant percentage of confidence in the armed forces, whether to deal with traditional threats (such as wars with other countries) or to deal with other issues in the absence of war. The degree of confidence in the armed forces (with small variations by region and level of schooling) is 82.2%. Another significant

percentage of the survey points out that the respondents rely on the armed forces to ‘fight crime together with the police.’ The results showed that 58.1% believe that this role is the most important, although the interviewees had the possibility of choosing other roles such as ‘defending the country in case of war’ and ‘to participate in peace missions in other countries.’ Most respondents (70.3%) believe that spending on military equipment should increase. Another interesting fact is the perception about the use of the armed forces in the fight against crime: 47% of respondents believe that they should always be used, while 44.8% consider that they should be used in some situations.

Data on trust in the armed forces can be contrasted with another IPEA survey on public security (IPEA 2012). In this research, trust in police institutions is small. It is worth noting the percentages related to the military and civil police, highlighted in Table 3 below, which could explain the recognition of the role of the armed forces in combating organised crime.

Table 3: Trust in police institutions (Brazil)

| | Very trustworthy | Trustworthy | Somewhat trustworthy | Untrustworthy | No response/ Do not know |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Military Police | 6.2% | 31.3% | 40.6% | 21.4% | 0.5% |
| Civil Police | 6.0% | 32.6% | 39.6% | 20.6% | 1.2% |
| Federal Police | 10.5% | 40.4% | 31.4% | 14.5% | 3.2% |
| Federal Highway Police | 8.9% | 40.6% | 31.2% | 15.2% | 4.1% |

Source: IPEA (2012: 6, emphasis added).

The data above point out a ‘moral support’ from the audience to the movement of securitisation, to use the terms of Balzacq (2005) mentioned above. To some extent, this support shows that the securitisation movement has succeeded, as there was audience support as advocated by the securitisation theory of the Copenhagen School.

The Strategic Border Plan and the ‘Ágata’ operations: from securitisation to desecuritisation

Decree n° 7496 established the Strategic Border Plan (SBP). The legislation is composed of 10 articles and was slightly amended in December of the same year by Decree n° 7638, which inserted the Federal Revenue as an instance acting with the state agencies and the armed forces. The decree and the launch of the SBP marked the end of the ‘politicised’ stage for the issue of drug trafficking, and it became ‘securitised.’ Decree n° 7638 materialises the securitisation, observed particularly in the second article of Decree n° 7496, which provides for the integrated action of public security agencies with the armed forces. The decree significantly broadens the border monitoring activities already provided by Complementary Law n° 136/10, which amended numerous items of another complementary law (n° 97 of June 1999). The complementary law attributed subsidiary assignments

to the armed forces, including 'actions of: I – patrolling; II – searches of people, land vehicles, vessels and aircrafts; and III – arrests in flagrante delicto' (Brasil 2010). In this way, the armed forces started to perform police roles, as provided in Complementary Law n° 136/10.

This law and the SBP reinforce, therefore, a trend observed in developed countries, pointed out by Andreas and Price (2001), who study the role of the armed forces. Andreas and Price (2001) noted a shift in the role of the armed forces in developed countries, where emphasis on crime-fighting roles has increased, making the distinctions between the armed forces' traditional roles (such as the country's defence against foreign hostile forces) and the roles of police, more diffuse. The authors note, however, that these distinctions have always been little explicit in developing countries. Souza (2015) confirms this perception when observing the difficulty of separating the limits between the armed forces, the police, security and the private means of surveillance in Brazil. The predominance of the 'militarisation of public security' is, thus, further evidence of the difficulties of separating these limits. For Souza, the militarisation is evident in the maintenance of the tripartite structure of the police forces, composed of the Federal Police, the Civil Police and the Military Police, the latter being understood as auxiliary forces of the Brazilian army and subordinate to it. The trend towards militarisation of the police is observed in other countries, according to Souza, which are concerned about the fight against transnational organised crime and the firepower of criminal organisations. Militarisation, according to Souza (2015: 219), 'is expressed in the adoption of models, doctrines, procedures and military contingents in activities of a civil nature,' but also in the 'change in the configuration of contemporary wars' and in the roles of the 'armed forces.'

This trend, however, does not mean that the armed forces readily accept police duties in Brazil. In this sense, Zaverucha (2001), Souza (2015) and Mathias and Guzzi (2010: 51, 53) observe that there is some resistance in the armed forces regarding the performance of these tasks. For Mathias and Guzzi, this resistance is based on the argument that training for the military is required to act within the requirements and specificities of public safety. This resistance refers mainly to action in large urban centres, but also involves the fight against criminal activities at the borders. However, it is possible to relate this resistance to the lack of equipment, weapons and other material resources to face possible situations of conflict that could result from the action of the armed forces. At the same time, the use of the armed forces in the area of public security serves as an argument for seeking new resources for the military, as noted by Mathias and Guzzi.

In the elaboration of the SBP, the armed forces agreed to play a relevant role. They were directly involved during the design and formulation of the SBP. For this reason, it is possible to consider the armed forces as functional actors, within the theoretical perspective of the Copenhagen School. They contributed to the securitisation of drug trafficking as they actively participate in the design of the strategic plan and, at the same time, in the implementation of the emergency measures – Operation 'Ágata.' The armed forces advocated the necessity of these operations, given the fragility of the Brazilian border. At the same time, they have an active participation in the security dynamics of the political

sector – according to the analysis of authors such as Zaverucha (2001) and Souza (2015) – either by their positions in the Brazilian state bureaucracy or by their direct involvement in the formulation of public security policies.

The decisive participation of the armed forces was reported by Colonel Luiz Antônio Marques (2012). According to him, the formulation of the plan can be attributed to a working group formed by officers of the three armed forces (related to the Ministry of Defence), and by representatives of the Federal Police, the Federal Highway Police and the National Security Force. According to the colonel, the armed forces were already carrying out operations in 2010 to combat illicit practices at the Brazilian border (the area legally known as *'faixa de fronteira'*), as provided by Complementary Law nº 136/10. The Federal Police, in turn, carried out Operation 'Sentinela,' which is presented below. According to Colonel Luiz Antônio, the synergy between these operations – the work of the armed forces in 2010 and the 'Sentinela' operations – stimulated the working group to formulate the SBP. This working group played a decisive role in the development of the emergency measures adopted by the Brazilian state.

The justification for the creation of the SBP revealed the perceptions of its formulators about the existential threat posed by drug trafficking. The justification in the text of the decree establishing the plan considered the fragility of Brazilian borders and the difficulties of monitoring them. In its introduction, the SBP clarifies that 27% of Brazilian territory is the border region, divided in: 11 states; 710 municipalities, 122 bordering municipalities and 588 non-bordering municipalities. The territory has 23,415 km of federal highways and 10 border countries. The crimes carried out at the border, according to the document, involve: trafficking of drugs, weapons and people; tax and financial crimes such as smuggling, evasion and illegal export of vehicles; environmental crimes; and homicides. In order to deal with these crimes, it is necessary to shift significant military contingents to the border region, an operation that will require the use of land, air and water resources.

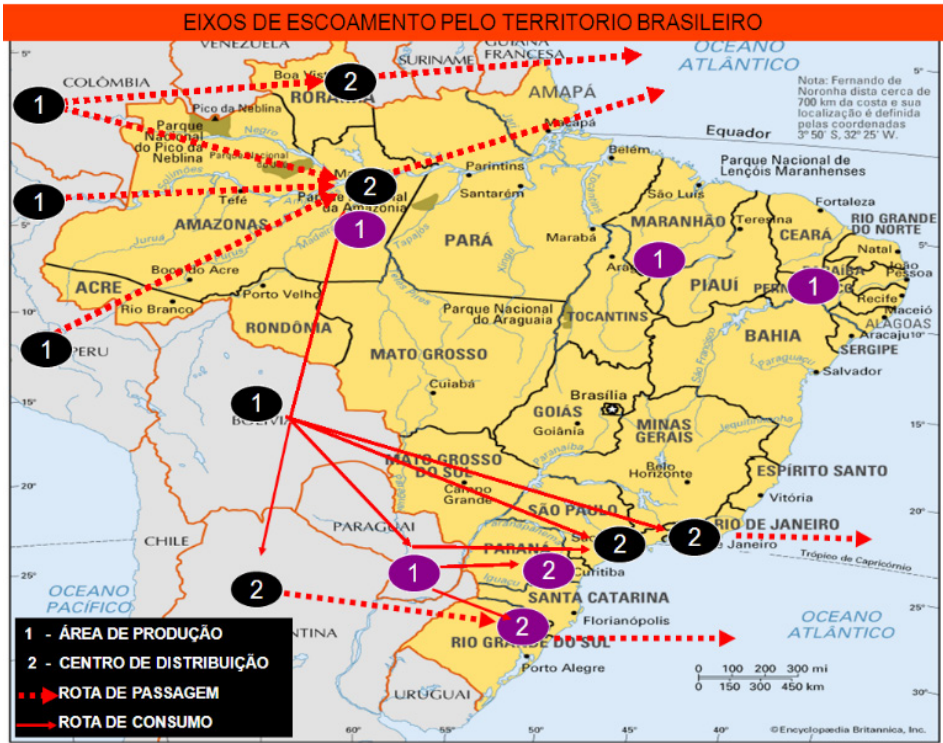
The SBP envisaged two separate operations: 'Sentinela' and 'Ágata.' 'Sentinela' was led by the Ministry of Justice, mainly the Federal Police, with the support of the Ministry of Defence. It has a permanent nature and a focus on intelligence. It was created in 2010 during the government of President Lula, maintained by Dilma Rousseff's government and integrated, with more human resources, in the SBP. 'Ágata' was different from 'Sentinela,' with specific nature and content. Led by the Ministry of Defence and with the support of the Ministry of Justice, Ágata was: (i) temporary; (ii) punctual and impact focused; (iii) with a start and end period; and (iv) territorially limited. It involved immediate action whose purpose was to combat drug trafficking. These characteristics make the securitisation of drug trafficking clear. Operations, in turn, can be considered as the main emergency measures adopted by the Brazilian state.

'Ágata' is divided into two phases. The first involves the armed forces in coordination with the Joint Operations Centres. Preventive and repressive measures were undertaken in previously designated areas. The second phase focuses on agreements with border countries. The strategic objectives of 'Ágata' were: (i) neutralization of organised crime; (ii) reduction of crime rates; (iii) coordination of planning and execution of military and

police operations; (iv) cooperation with border countries; (v) intensification of the presence of the armed forces; and (vi) support for the population.

In order to decide how many and where 'Ágata' operations would be carried out, the working group produced an updated and integrated report, together with the studies of the Brazilian Intelligence System (SISBIN). This report identified organised crime as the main focus of border tensions, and within organised crime was drug trafficking. The studies that supported the elaboration of the plan identified the main routes of drug trafficking, expressed in Figure 4 below:

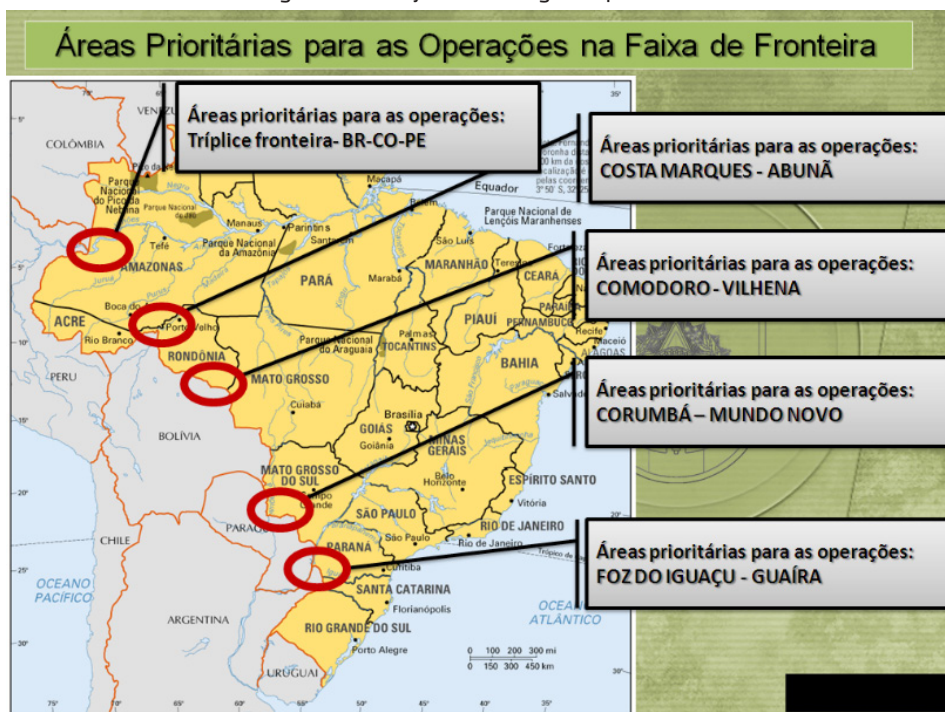
Figure 4: Flow of drugs to Brazil



Source: Marques (2012); Silva (2013: 103).

In Figure 4, it is possible to observe that the main external production areas are: Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay. Internally it is possible to identify areas of production in the states of Amazonas, Maranhão and Pernambuco. Most of the distribution centres may be located in Brazilian territory, with only one exception in Argentina. The others are located in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Amazonas and Roraima. From this information, the use of 'Ágata' involved the following priority areas expressed in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5: Priority areas for 'Ágata' operations



Source: Marques (2012); Silva (2013: 104).

In the announcement made by the Ministers of Defence and Justice in the launching of the SBP, it was informed that, at first, 34 border points where there is a greater incidence of criminal activities were identified (Brasil 2011c). From these sites, five areas were prioritised for the activities of the 'Ágata' operations, which would have an available force of 33,000 soldiers. Table 4, below, summarises 'Ágata' operations data for the regions, implementation period and the number of military personnel involved.

Operations involved military personnel from the three armed forces: army, navy and air force, as well as 12 ministries and 20 government agencies, forming a contingent of military and civilian forces. The results were impressive. Some official data exemplify the scale of the results obtained with the operations. Drug seizure increased fourteen times compared to the first months of 2011. Until 2008 the Federal Police seizures were accounted for in kilograms but have since been accounted for in tonnes. At the end of 2011, with the completion of three operations, 115.3 tonnes of marijuana and cocaine were seized. At the end of Operation 'Ágata' 5, the Brazilian state opted for the continuity of operations for an indefinite period. At the same time, operations gradually oscillated between maintaining operations in specific geographic areas or covering the entire Brazilian dry borders (land routes).

Table 4: 'Ágata' operations: regions and dates

| OPERATIONS | REGIONS | PERIOD | MILITARY PERSONNEL |
|------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|
| ÁGATA 1 | Border of Amazon, involving the municipalities of Tabatinga and São Gabriel da Cachoeira | August 2011 | 3,500 |
| ÁGATA 2 | Borders of the South and Central-west regions, covering the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul | September and October 2011 | 8,000 |
| ÁGATA 3 | States of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul and Rondônia | November and December 2011 | 6,500 |
| ÁGATA 4 | North region of the country, covering the states of Amapá, Pará, Amazonas and Roraima | May 2012 | 8,500 |
| ÁGATA 5 | South region, in the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, covering an area of more than 450,000 km ² | August 2012 | 11,000 |
| ÁGATA 6 | Region of 4,216 km, from Corumbá (MS) to Mâncio Lima (AC) | October 2012 | 7,500 |
| ÁGATA 7 | Dry border of the country, covering a total of more than 16,000 km | May and June 2013 | 31,000 |
| ÁGATA 8 | Dry border of the country, from Oiapoque (AP) to Chuí (RS) | May 2014 | 32,000 |
| ÁGATA 9 | West border of Brazil | July 2015 | 9,700 |
| ÁGATA 10 | Military command of Amazônia and the North region, Manaus (AM) and Belém (PA), respectively | October 2015 | 9,800 |
| ÁGATA 11 | The entire dry border of Brazil | June 2016 | 23,000 |

Source: Created by the authors based on approximated data from the Ministry of Defence.

In 2016, the Federal Court of Audit (FCA) submitted a report in which it stated, *inter alia*, that the SBP was not a structured state policy capable of integrating the government actors involved. In addition to the difficulties of integrating these actors, the FCA pointed out problems for the rendering of accounts of the results obtained through the 'Ágata' and 'Sentinela' operations. The criticism of the FCA led the Temer government to repeal the decree creating the SBP, establishing instead the Integrated Border Protection Programme (IBPP), through Decree n° 8903/2016. The decree's purpose was to 'strengthen[ing] prevention, control, monitoring and repression of cross-border crimes' (Brasil 2016). Among its guidelines there is the need for 'integrated and coordinated action by the public security agencies, the intelligence agencies, the Brazilian Revenue Secretariat of the Ministry of Finance and the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces' (Brasil 2016). It provides for 'cooperation and integration with neighbouring countries' (Brasil 2016). In other words, the content of this decree maintained the main guidelines of the SBP. However, it created a public policy that consolidates these guidelines and removes the emergency and time-bound nature that characterised the 'Ágata' operations.

The decree, therefore, consolidates the process of desecuritisation of the issue. It consolidated, in formal terms, the transformation of the roles carried out by 'Ágata' operations into regular and routine activities. In this way, the decree represents the return of the issue

of drug trafficking to a status of normal policies. The IBPP consolidates the integration of the various governmental agencies and the armed forces into the border actions, however no longer as emergency, but as routine practices with the purpose of facing one of the main challenges on the public security agenda in Brazil, which is to curb trafficking of weapons and drugs across the country's borders.

Discussion of results and final considerations

Based on the stages drawn from the assumptions of the theory of securitisation (Table 1), this article sought to empirically prove the securitisation of drug trafficking through three complementary strategies: (i) an analysis of the legislation and the resolutions regarding the issue of drug trafficking in Brazil, summarised in Table 2; (ii) a study of the movement of securitisation of the issue, based on the content analysis of the discourse of the main securitising agent, observing speeches and complementing the analysis by observing the reception of the audience; (iii) by analysing the exceptional, temporary and localised nature of the 'Ágata' operations, which correspond to the emergency measures adopted by the Brazilian state. Finally, the desecuritisation was demonstrated through Decree n° 8903, which modified the temporary and emergency nature of the 'Ágata' operations, making them routine and integrated activities at the borders, with the participation of the armed forces.

Securitisation theory gives higher priority to the analysis of the discourse on security. Thus, it is important to evaluate how particular political actors are able to include an issue on the governmental agenda, making it a priority in relation to other issues. In this sense, Jef Huysmans (2006:04) says that the inclusion of an issue on the security agenda of a certain state may be the result of the context in which the issue is inserted not exactly a result of the act of declaring it as a threat. Referring to the example of asylum, Huysmans suggests that certain issues can be framed institutionally and discursively in political structures based on policing and defence. The empirical case analysed here shows that it is possible to identify discursive practices that seek legitimacy for the type of political and institutional framework of public security problems in Brazil. This type of framework has been adopted by the Brazilian governments since – at least – the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002). It is characterised by the permanence of militarisation as a characteristic of public security policies (Souza 2015). In this sense, the drug trafficking securitisation movement is following a trend in the management of public security problems in Brazil. In particular, this movement reinforces the practice of integrating civilian and military forces in the management of border issues. In this practice, the military assumes police roles provided by Complementary Law n° 136/2010 on the grounds that they are temporary, emergency-based and territorially limited. The continuity of the border problem and its importance within the public security agenda made these roles permanent.

The securitisation of drug trafficking was also impacted by the international context. Brazil launched the National Anti-Drug System in 2000 and later introduced the National

Drug Policy in 2005 in the context of intensifying the 'War on Drugs' in the region, promoted by the USA through the deepening of the Andean Strategy, which was developed in the early 1990s. The aim was, among other objectives, to build (i) stronger political institutions of the main South American countries that supply illicit drugs (Bolivia, Colombia and Peru); and (ii) stronger military and police units responsible for combating the drug circuit (destroying cultivation, laboratories and dismantling routes and money laundering schemes) (Villa and Ostos 2005: 02).

The militarisation of the fight against drug trafficking by the USA expresses the securitisation of the issue in that country. The evidence of this is the rhetorical discourse of the 'War on Drugs,' used by President Bush Sr. (1989-1993), although this combat can also be traced back to the 1980s in the Reagan Administration (1980-1988). In 1989, the Bush administration launched the National Drug Control Strategy through which it sought to establish the fight against drugs through foreign policy (Villa and Ostos 2005: 2). In this sense, it is necessary to recognise that the process of securitisation of drug trafficking in Brazil occurs in the international context characterised by the growing presence of the USA in South America, through its Andean Strategy and the 1999 Colombia Plan. According to Procópio and Vaz (1997) and Rodrigues (2012), the USA pressured President Cardoso's government to involve the armed forces in the fight against drug trafficking, in addition to the logistical support that had been carried out so far. Despite this pressure, however, the most effective participation of the Brazilian armed forces occurred later, in 2004, and became part of the strategic action coordinated through the SBP.

Finally, it is important to notice the difficulties of empirically operationalising securitisation theory, especially with regard to the analysis of the securitisation discourses and the audience reception. In this sense, the contribution of Léonard and Kaunert (2011) is useful because it suggests an approximation between John Kingdon's (1984) public policy analysis model and the analysis of securitisation processes. Kingdon's model allows identification of connections between the political entrepreneur responsible for highlighting specific issues on the public policy agenda and the securitising agent, as described by the theory of the Copenhagen School. In practice, this is what the securitising agents do, as they take some issues to the top of the priority list of the decision-making agenda, as Dilma Rousseff did in 2011. At the same time, it is crucial to analyse the public policies' content, since this analysis allows verification of the extent to which certain decisions exceed the limits of the normal policy, becoming empirical evidence of the securitisation. Finally, as Buzan et al (1998:141) put it, 'all security is political. All threats and defences are constituted and defined politically. Politicisation is political by definition and by extension, securitisation is also a political act.' It is not surprising, then, that the securitisation and desecuritisation of drug trafficking in Brazil are the result of specific political choices about the role of the armed forces in the public security agenda.

Notes

- 1 Several authors discuss the predominance of the executive branch in the formulation of the legislative agenda and of public policies in Brazil (See Abranches 1988; Limongi 2006).

- 2 For the role of the Brazilian armed forces, see Zaverucha (2001), Souza (2015), Mathias and Guzzi (2010), Proença Júnior (2011).
- 3 The states are: Amapá, Pará, Roraima, Amazonas, Acre, Rondônia, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul (IBGE 2017a).
- 4 Border countries are: French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolívia, Paraguai, Argentina and Uruguai (IBGE 2017b).

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Segurança Internacional e Novas Ameaças: Securitização e Dessecuritização do Tráfico de Drogas nas Fronteiras Brasileiras

Resumo: A ampliação da agenda de segurança serviu de base para o surgimento de novos conceitos teóricos no campo de estudos de segurança internacional. É o caso do conceito de securitização da Escola de Copenhague, a partir do qual se tornou possível examinar, por um lado, novas ameaças à segurança dos países e, por outro, as políticas por meio das quais eles procuram enfrentá-las. Com base nesse conceito, o artigo argumenta que o narcotráfico foi securitizado pelo Estado Brasileiro no período de 2011-2016. A partir de 2016, com a edição do Decreto nº 8903, o tema retornou à fase de politização nos termos da Escola de Copenhague. Houve, portanto, um processo de dessecuritização do tema, pois esse Decreto revogou o Plano Estratégico de Fronteiras e, com isso, as operações Ágata perderam seu caráter temporário e emergencial. A edição do Decreto nº 8.903/2016 marcou a dessecuritização do tema pelo Estado brasileiro. Para desenvolver seu argumento, o artigo analisa a legislação brasileira desde 1976. Em seguida, analisa o conteúdo de discursos de securitização e examina as diretrizes e a natureza das políticas públicas do governo brasileiro, destinadas ao combate do narcotráfico no período de 2011 a 2016.

Palavras-chave: Brasil; narcotráfico; securitização; dessecuritização; Operação Ágata.

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