Border Security: Implementing the "Memory Effect" Theory in Irregular Migration

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Abstract : This paper focuses on studying the conjunction between the new emerged theory of "Memory Effect" in Irregular Migration and Related Criminality and the notion of securitization, and its impact on border management, bringing about a scientific advancement in the field by identifying the patterns corresponding to the linkage of the two concepts, for the first time, and developing a theoretical explanation, with respect to the effects of the non-military threats on border security. Over recent years, irregular migration has experienced a significant increase worldwide. The U.N.'s refugee agency reports that the number of displaced people is at its highest ever - surpassing even post-World War II numbers when the world was struggling to come to terms with the most devastating event in history. This is also the fresh reality within the core studied coordinate, the Balkan Route of Irregular Migration, which starts from Asia and Africa and continues to Turkey, Greece, North Macedonia or Bulgaria, Serbia, and ends in Romania, where thousands of migrants find themselves in an irregular situation concerning their entry to the European Union, with its important consequences concerning the related criminality. The data from the past six years was collected by making use of semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of migration and desk research within some organisations involved in border security, pursuing the gathering of genuine insights from the aforementioned field, which was constantly addressed the existing literature and subsequently subjected to the mixed methods of analysis, including the use of the Vector Auto-Regression estimates model. Thereafter, the analysis of the data followed the processes and outcomes in Grounded Theory, and a new Substantive Theory emerged, explaining how the phenomena of irregular migration and cross-border criminality are the decisive impetus for implementing the concept of securitization in border management by using the proposed pattern. The findings of the study are therefore able to capture an area that has not yet benefitted from a comprehensive approach in the scientific community, such as the seasonality, stationarity, dynamics, predictions, or the pull and push factors in Irregular Migration, also highlighting how the recent 'Pandemic' interfered with border security. Therefore, the research uses an inductive revelatory theoretical approach which aims at offering a new theory in order to explain a phenomenon, triggering a practically handy contribution for the scientific community, research institutes or Academia and also usefulness to organizational practitioners in the field, among which UN, IOM, UNHCR, Frontex, Interpol, Europol, or national agencies specialized in border security. The scientific outcomes of this study were validated on June 30, 2021, when the author defended his dissertation for the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management, a two years prestigious program supported by the European Commission and Frontex Agency and a Consortium of six European Universities and is currently one of the research objectives of his pending PhD research at the West University Timisoara.

Keywords : migration, border, security, memory effect