

The Securitisation Dilemma between Covid-19 and Gender-Based Violence in Colombia

Master Thesis



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STUDENT REPORT

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has had detrimental global effects and governments have attempted to limit the impact of the virus both on health and on other sectors. Covid-19 has had disproportionate consequences for women and girls, in particular on gender-based violence which has increased on a global scale as a result of lockdowns (GBV).

In Colombia, GBV has also increased immensely as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions which have been implemented by the government. Measures have been initiated, but still, the number of GBV is increasing. This led us to wonder about scales of securitisation and how the Colombian government prioritises security threats. Ultimately, we decided to examine how and why scales of securitisation matter in the securitisation dilemmas that the Colombian government could produce in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and GBV as security issues.

We have used the Copenhagen school of securitisation studies to analyse how the securitising actors have labelled Covid-19 and GBV as a threat and convince the relevant audience of its urgency (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5). We have examined the speech acts of President Iván Duque Márquez and Vice President Marta Lucía Ramírez, to determine their construction of threat in regard to Covid-19 and GBV.

We first considered the speech acts of the president and vice president regarding the threat of Covid-19. We discovered that they frame Covid-19 as an existential threat, from which they must protect the people of Colombia. Furthermore, it was argued that they macrosecuritise Covid-19, as they frame it as an overarching threat to all sectors of society. Despite it not being our primary focus, we discovered that the securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and the economy cannot be disregarded as the economy is mentioned in many of the speech acts in the context of Covid-19.

The next section considered the speech acts on GBV during the Covid-19 pandemic. We found that the president and the vice president label GBV as an existential threat towards Colombian women and attempted to justify the use of extraordinary measures to the public. We discovered that the actions taken to securitise Covid-19 created a securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV.

We have further explored the securitising measures taken in response to the threat of GBV as a result of Covid-19. It was discovered that these measures had failed to address the threat of GBV, leading to the need for further speech acts and measures. Despite this effort, we found that

the threat of GBV continued to increase. Consequently, in dealing with both the threat of Covid-19 and the securitisation dilemma of GBV, the government prioritised the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 over GBV. We found that the securitising actors placed the threat of Covid-19 highest on the scale of threats, which in turn meant that every measure taken to address GBV was organised within the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19.

The reaction of the audience was then considered as they determine the success or failure of a securitisation. It was discovered that many protests had occurred as a response to the measures implemented, or lack thereof, to address GBV and the economic crisis. Therefore, we concluded that both the securitisations of GBV and the economy were unsuccessful.

We conclude the study by stating that scales of securitisations matter because it is a tool used by the securitising actor in a time of crisis as with Covid-19. It is a tool, in which the securitising actor can convince an entire population of a macrosecuritisation on the scale of Covid-19, despite other threats occurring as a result of it.

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1.0 Introduction

Covid-19 became a global threat when the World Health Organisation (WHO) in March 2020 declared the virus a pandemic, initiating national mandated lockdowns and quarantines all over the world (Ibn-Mohammed et al., 2021). This has had massive consequences on an economic level, where the major decline in the global economy has been called the worst global recession since the Great Depression (Jones et al., 2021; The World Bank, 2020; Marchisio, 2021; Ibn-Mohammed et al., 2021; Szmigiera, 2021).

Besides this, public health and the livelihoods of people have also felt the devastating consequences of the pandemic. Many more people are at risk of extreme poverty as a result of jobs being lost and the pandemic affecting the entire food system (World Health Organisation, 2020; Jones et al., 2021; Marchisio, 2021; Ibn-Mohammed et al., 2021; Action Against Hunger, 2020; Cooperazione Internazionale, 2020; Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). The consequences of the pandemic are therefore extensive and severe to people all around the world.

However, one half of the world's population is facing a much greater negative impact of the pandemic; women and girls (World Health Organisation, 2020; Plan International, n.d.; Landis, 2020; United Nations, 2020; UNHCR Staff, 2020, UNDP, 2020; Mahajan et al., 2020). Women are more impacted by the pandemic because they are overrepresented in care roles and low-paying insecure jobs. As a result of the pandemic, a rise in unpaid domestic care work has been seen on a global scale (World Health Organisation, 2020; Plan International, n.d.; United Nations, 2020). The economic crisis has driven millions of girls into forced child marriage and women into prostitution and survival sex due to extreme poverty (World Health Organisation, 2020; United Nations, 2020).

Also, during a crisis women and girls are at a much higher risk of being exposed to GBV and this is no exception for Covid-19. GBV has increased drastically as a result of economic and social stress combined with lockdowns, in which women are forced into isolation with their abuser (United Nations, 2020; Landis, 2020; UNHCR Staff, 2020, UNDP, 2020). The problem of increased GBV as a result of lockdown has been documented all over the world and has become so extensive that it has been called “the Shadow Pandemic” growing alongside the Covid-19 pandemic (United Nations, 2020; Mahajan et al., 2020; UN Women, n.d.; Zulver et al., 2021, p. 1).

The region of Latin America is no exception to this tendency, and Colombia is one country

that has experienced a drastic increase in GBV during the lockdown. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, rates of GBV in Colombia were already high, but with the lockdown taking place GBV has spiked in the country (Averis, 2021, p. 91; Lima, 2020, p. 85; Londoño et al., 2021). On March 20, 2020, a national lockdown was mandated in Colombia by President Iván Duque Márquez to contain the spread of Covid-19. The lockdown started on March 25 and was meant to last 19 days, but was prolonged several times and lasted until August 31, when it was partially lifted (Averis, 2021, p. 93).

In this period, the president mandated that people should stay home and were only allowed out for necessary tasks, such as attending essential jobs, going to medical appointments and one person per household being allowed to shop and walk pets (Duque, 2020a). Hence, opportunities to leave one's house were scarce, and victims of violence were forced to stay quarantined with their perpetrator (Averis, 2021, p. 92; Cuesta & Pico, 2020, p. 1561). In the first two months of quarantine, the hotlines established to help victims of GBV had an increase in calls of 91 per cent compared to the same period the year before (ICCO, 2020; Raygada & Mendoza, 2021; UNHCR Staff, 2020; Cuesta & Pico, 2020, p. 1560).

In Colombia's capital Bogotá, an 8.6 per cent rise in femicides has been reported as well as 5,717 incidents of domestic violence from March 20 to May 8, 2020, compared to the 1,782 reports of the same period the year before (Averis, 2021, p. 93) Nevertheless, statistics on increased GBV during the period of lockdown only tell a partial story. Only the reported incidents are taken into account and combining a lack of systematic data collection and reluctant victims, many incidents are unreported or unaccounted for (p. 93).

In Colombia, additional hotlines have been established to help victims of GBV, however, it has not been taken into account that many are unable to call when trapped under the same roof as their aggressor and under constant surveillance (López-Calva, 2020; UN Women & World Health Organisation, 2020; UN women, 2020; Zulver et al., 2021, p.5). As such, the rise in GBV may be much more extensive. The increase in GBV is thus an unintended consequence of well-intentioned measures to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus (Zulver et al., 2021, p. 1; Lima, 2020, p. 84).

The wave of Covid-19 infections between March and August 2020, has seen the longest lockdown in Colombia. When it was partially lifted, restrictions were loosened up, but people were still urged to stay home as much as possible (Gobierno de Colombia, 2020). Since then, the country

has been in a state of selective isolation, in which there are certain restrictions on public movement for the entire country, and lockdown can be implemented locally to halt any increase in Covid-19 cases (Gobierno de Colombia, 2020). As of May 19, 2021, two more waves of Covid-19 have hit the country, first in December to January, then in April to May (WHO Health Emergency Dashboard, n.d.). During both waves, restrictions were introduced again, but these were not as strict and extensive as what was seen during the first long lockdown (Gobierno de Colombia, 2020).

Considering the massive impact the Covid-19 lockdown has had on women in Colombia, this problem could be viewed as a security threat to Colombian women. To address a potential threat to security, state actors or governments may attempt to securitise the threat. Securitisation is the process of political actors labelling something as an existential threat and convincing the relevant audience that extraordinary measures are necessary to deal with the threat (Waeber, 2014). In Colombia, several extraordinary measures have been implemented to address the threat of GBV, such as local and national helplines, and the training of supermarket employees to respond to women seeking help (Averis, 2021, p. 93; Lima, 2020, p. 86). Despite these governmental measures, GBV has continued to increase in the lockdown period (Statista Research Department, 2021.).

Although the lockdown was initiated as a 19-day quarantine it was extended eight times due to the Covid-19 threat, despite the increasing numbers of GBV (El Tiempo.com y Política, 2020). As such, when mandating and continuing the lockdown for almost half a year, in which the problem of GBV has worsened, the Colombian government is facing a security issue. Continuing lockdown to control the spread of the virus decreases the overall risk to public health but results in the insecurity of women and girls all over Colombia. This poses a securitisation dilemma, which is, according to Olesker (2018) when securitising one sector creates more insecurity in another (p. 316). One could therefore ask, why the lockdown is prolonged if it poses this dilemma.

This made us wonder about the scales of securitisation in the securitisation dilemmas occurring as a result of addressing the Covid-19 situation. In their theory on macrosecuritisation, Buzan and Waeber (2009) speak of a hierarchy of threats, in other words, scales of securitisation. They propose that some threats rank higher than others, due to their overarching and urgent nature (p. 257). Thus, in the case of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia, we wonder why some security issues are prioritized over others by governmental actors. This leads to our problem formulation:

How and why do scales of securitisation matter in the securitisation dilemmas that the Colombian government could produce in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and GBV as security issues?

This project aims to examine the security speech acts of the president and the vice president of Colombia, both in regard to the securitisation of Covid-19 and the securitisation of GBV. Security speech acts are defined as the utterance of security issues by relevant state actors, which allows for extraordinary measures to deal with the issue at hand (Waeber, 1995, pp. 51-52). We will use this information to attempt to understand the way the governmental actors frame Covid-19 and GBV as threats and to get an understanding of the role of scales in securitisation. We will then consider the securitisation dilemma which has occurred and the actions of the government to securitise this. Lastly, the response of the audience will be considered. To aid in the analysis, the following research questions will be examined:

1. How do President Iván Duque Márquez and Vice President Marta Lucía Ramírez present Covid-19 as a threat in their security speech acts from March 24, 2020, until May 1, 2021?
2. How do President Iván Duque Márquez and Vice President Marta Lucía Ramírez present GBV as a threat in their security speech acts from March 24, 2020, until May 1, 2021?
3. How does the government of Colombia attempt to resolve the securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV?
4. What is the audience response to the securitisations of GBV and Covid-19?

Question one will delve into the speech acts of President Duque and Vice President Ramírez relating to the Covid-19 situation in Colombia. We will examine their word choice and their rhetoric to get a picture of how they frame Covid-19 as a security threat. From this, it will be argued that they macrosecuritise the Covid-19 threat.

Question two will consider how the president and the vice president frame GBV in their speech acts. It will also be examined if the president and the vice president make use of the same scales of securitisation when it comes to GBV as they do with Covid-19. Further, we will examine how these actors perceive and use the concept of security in relation to GBV. The findings in research question two will be compared to those of question one to understand the difference in scales when securitising Covid-19 and GBV.

Question three focuses on the securitisation dilemma where it will be argued that the increase in GBV as a result of the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 is a securitisation dilemma. Furthermore, the governmental actions taken to address the increased GBV will be considered to understand these measures. We will discuss the role of the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 in connection with the securitisation of GBV to understand how these are interlinked. The fourth question will consider the audience's acceptance or rejection of the securitisations of GBV and Covid-19. This is important to consider because the success of the securitisations depend on the audience response.

2.0 Research overview

This section will discuss the concepts and definitions of GBV and VAW. Following this, there will be a thorough review of the current literature on the topics of GBV in Latin America and Colombia as well GBV during the pandemic and securitisation.

2.1 Defining concepts

The term Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Violence Against Women (VAW) will be used heavily in this project, and it is therefore important that we define these terms. The UN General Assembly adopted in 1993 the Declaration for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW). This defines VAW as “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” (UN General Assembly, 1994, p. 3). Article 2 emphasises that VAW should be understood to include all forms of “physical, sexual and psychological violence” against women, in the family, community and condoned by the state (p. 3). As such, this definition covers a multitude of violations against women, where violence is any act that can cause harm to women. Hence, this definition is very broad, and it is one of the most agreed-upon definitions internationally (Blanchfield et al., 2008, p. 3).

This definition is used in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a comprehensive declaration for advancing women’s rights and is also widely used by institutions and scholars (The Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995, pp. 48-49; Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott, 2005, p. 2; Fox, 2002, p. 15; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014.; Aghtaie & Gangoli, 2014; Russo & Pirlott, 2006; Spiring, 2016; Blanchfield et al., 2008).

While this definition of VAW speaks to the forms of violence that are included in VAW, it also speaks to the root causes when describing the violence as “any act of gender-based violence”. ‘Gender-based highlights the structural gender inequalities and it describes how this VAW is shaped by gender roles in society. As such, this definition does not encompass every violent act that may happen to women but focuses on those violent acts that are carried out as a result of cultural values, societal norms and beliefs.

Spiring (2016) also subscribes to this definition of VAW, which he uses interchangeably

with the concept of GBV (p. 16). Nevertheless, he argues that this definition lacks consideration to any type of economic violence and that a definition of VAW and GBV should include “four defined violences: physical, sexual, economic, and psychological” (p. 16). This problem is also described by Blanchfield et al. (2008) who argue that though the definition is broad and is widely agreed upon as an international definition, some wish for a broader definition of VAW (p. 3)

Concerning GBV, a comprehensive universal definition is lacking in comparison to the UN definition of VAW that is widely used among scholars as displayed. Instead, a wide range of definitions can be found. Also, some scholars, instead of defining GBV, subscribe to the UN definition of violence against women when speaking of GBV and therefore use the concepts interchangeably (Russo & Pirlott, 2006; Krantz & Garcio-Moreno, 2004; Brysk, 2018; Spiring, 2016). The Council of Europe (2021) describe that the reason for this is that “most violence against women is inflicted (by men) for gender-based reasons”, thereby allowing for interchangeable use of the concepts.

Buchholz et al. (2020), all working with the Women’s Health Sciences Division, National Center for PTSD in Boston, focus on sexual and GBV in their research. They define GBV as: “acts of violence that disproportionately impact one gender, typically women, and arise from normative gender role expectations and unequal distributions of power” (p. 5). This puts focus on women as the ones being violated and on gender roles and power relations being the root causes of the violence.

The UN Refugee Agency defines GBV as “harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms” (UNHCR, 2021). They further specify the types of GBV as: “sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private” (UNHCR, 2021). In contrast to the previous definition, the UN Refugee Agency does not highlight women as the ones violated but instead focus on any person who is violated as a result of their gender. However, there is also a focus on power relations, gender inequality and norms, and as such, there is an assumption that primarily women are suffering from GBV.

In recent documents, the concepts of VAW and GBV have been merged, an example being from the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). In article 3, it provides the definition: “Gender-based violence against women shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she

is a woman or that affects women disproportionately”, including all acts of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence (Council of Europe, 2021). This definition thus focuses on GBV and VAW and also describes how women are violated as a result of their gender and how they are more affected by this in comparison to others.

Consequently, there are several definitions of GBV, but still, these have in common that they either focus on one gender, women or assume that women are the ones affected. Furthermore, they all mention root causes as unequal power relations, norms and gender inequality, and hence, these root causes are present both in the definition of VAW and in GBV. This is an important aspect of this project, when addressing the increasing GBV in Colombia during the pandemic because this violence has roots in gender inequality, norms, and machismo, which will be displayed later in this section.

This project will also use the concepts of GBV and VAW interchangeably, also because different terms are used in the speech acts by the president and vice president, including femicide and domestic violence. Both are types of GBV with femicide being the worst form of GBV and which can be defined as “the killing of females by males because they are female” (Russell, 2009, p. 27). Russell (2009) as the first, defined this concept in 1976 where she linked it to gender theory and provided a definition that is widely used (p. 27; Joseph, 2017; Prieto-Carrón et al. 2007; Carrigan, 2016).

When it comes to domestic violence, there is no universally agreed-upon definition, and what domestic violence specifically includes differs from each definition (Hamberger and Phelan, 2004, p. 241). However, a definition of the term is presented in the aforementioned Istanbul Convention, which focuses on physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence that “occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim (Council of Europe Treaty Series, 2011).

2.2 GBV in Latin America

GBV is a problem that occurs in all countries of the world in many different forms, the most serious being femicides, the killing of women because of their gender (Joseph, 2017, p. 4). Latin America is one region where GBV is an extensive problem, and much research has been conducted on the area attempting to explain the problem as well as understanding the reasons for it and how to

address it (Carrigan, 2016; Grzyb & Hernandez, 2015; Panther, 2011; Prieto-Carrón et al., 2007; Palma-Solis et al., 2008; Joseph, 2017). As argued by Prieto-Carrón et al. (2007), who are all three members of CAWN's (The Central America Women's Network) management committee and all specialising in gender issues, GBV in Latin America is a consequence of unequal power relations and gender discrimination (p. 35). According to them, a lack of education and skills combined with informal jobs play a role in the continuous prevention of women gaining independence, thus sustaining gender inequality, and increasing GBV (p. 35). At the same time, the literature states that women gaining the needed independence to decrease gender inequality increases the risk of GBV (Prieto-Carrón et al., 2007; Palma-Solis et al., 2008; Panther, 2011)

According to Joseph (2017), Professor of Criminal Justice at Stockton University and with a long history in women's advocacy, increased independence is seen among women in Latin America during the last couple of decades, which in turn is threatening the patriarchal norms that thrive all over the region (p. 15). As a result, GBV occurs because the increasing independence of women is challenging male dominance, making GBV a means to control and dominate women to maintain the patriarchy (p. 15).

To this, Joseph points out that a crucial factor for the continuance of GBV is the high rates of impunity in Latin America, where she states that widespread corruption within the police results in suspects rarely being charged or convicted (p. 9). In general, the literature agrees that GBV stems from patriarchy and a culture of machismo and that its continued existence is due to impunity, gender inequality and a lack of political will (Joseph, 2017; Evans et al., 2015; Panther, 2011; Grzyb & Hernandez, 2015; Mujica & Tuesta, 2014; Palma-Solis et al. 2008; Prieto-Carrón et al. 2007). Regarding this, Prieto-Carrón et al. (2007) argue that discrimination against women has become institutionalised considering the failure of Latin American governments to protect the rights of women as well as to investigate and charge perpetrators (p. 35). Despite that most countries in the region have legislation in the area of GBV, Prieto-Carrón et al. state that governments continually ignore legislation, which they argue stems from a lack of interest and political will (p. 31).

The literature agrees that governments have the responsibility to protect women and their rights, but researchers also agree that governments often do not live up to this responsibility (Joseph, 2017; Panther, 2011; Evans et al 2015; Mujica & Tuesta, 2014; Grzyb & Hernandez, 2015; Prieto-Carrón et al.2007; Palma-Solis et al., 2008). When it comes to femicides, Palmo-Solis et al.

(2008) argue that government expenditures and gender progress can be used as indicators for femicide rates, and therefore, these factors are crucial when addressing femicides (p. 326). They argue that government expenditures impact gender equality in that GBV increases in connection with government funding being cut down in specific areas, including education and health. This ultimately results in a decline in gender equality. For this reason, Palmo-Solis et al. propose to increase government expenses and to include more women in political institutions. Here, they refer to research arguing that female participation in politics increases the likelihood that gender inequality will be addressed in a political context (p. 327). They end their study by concluding that:

The proportion of female representation in parliament can be used as an indicator of women's status within any given society as a means of developing effective approaches to women's health problems, such as femicide. (p. 327)

They call this a “gender progress indicator” (p. 327).

2.3 Colombia and GBV during the pandemic

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the rates of GBV in Colombia were already high, but with lockdown taking place in a context of already structural VAW, GBV has spiked in the country (Averis, 2021, p. 91; Lima, 2020, p. 85; Londoño et al., 2021). Averis (2021), lecturer at the Universidad de Antioquia in Colombia and with a research focus on feminism and transnational women's writing in the Americas, argues that GBV has in recent decades been a focus point in Colombia. This is with consideration to equality among women and men being codified in the 1991 Constitution as well as laws of 2008 and 2015 that “enshrine mechanisms of recognition, prevention and punishment of violence against women and girls” (p. 92). However, with Covid-19 and lockdowns, GBV has increased drastically (p. 93).

There is consensus in the literature about confinement being a risk factor for an increase in GBV but combined with financial stress, unemployment and uncertainty, the violence is exacerbated (Raygada & Mendoza, 2021; Araujo, 2020; Cuesta & Pico, 2020, p. 1561; Averis, 2021, p. 93). According to Averis (2021), the circumstances that “produce, enable and authorise violence against women and girls have been exacerbated by the lockdown” (p. 93). She points out additional factors besides those occurring because of the pandemic, namely a state that allows for “low-level

war” against girls and women and institutional misogyny (p. 92). She further quotes town councillor Ramón Cardona, who at a meeting in June 2017 said that “women, like laws, are to be violated”. To this, Averis expresses that “such institutional misogyny is echoed in the speech acts of everyday sexism” (p. 92). Moreover, she calls Colombia’s institutions “notoriously weak”, failing to investigate and prosecute incidents of GBV (p. 93). Therefore, she believes that a culture of political leaders justifying and tolerating GBV is an important cause of the exacerbated violence during the lockdown.

Other scholars are also critical of the response to address the increased violence, a responsibility that many believe lies with the government (Averis, 2021, p. 93; Araujo, 2020; Raygada & Mendoza, 2021; Londoño et al., 2021). Raygada & Mendoza (2021) are both communications consultants for the Inter-American Development Bank’s (IDB) Gender and Diversity Division. They argue that the increase in violence is due to confinement and isolation, but also because of the “public and private sectors’ limited capacity to respond”. Araujo (2020), Chief of the IDB Gender and Diversity Division, agrees with this statement. She adds that governments that before the pandemic had more human and financial resources available, more efficient processes, and proper information systems, are more equipped to respond to the challenges of the crisis. Londoño et al. (2021), affiliated with the faculty of Social and Human Sciences and Political and Social sciences, suggest that GBV is the responsibility of the state and calls it a lack of state protection in a patriarchal system.

Nevertheless, the Latin American countries, Colombia included, were relatively fast to establish emergency responses, attempting to incorporate a gender perspective in their actions (Carvajal, 2020). In Colombia, different projects were initiated. These included among others establishing several helplines at the local and national level providing an emergency response 24 hours a day and training 630 supermarkets and pharmacies in responding to women seeking help and calling for the police (Averis, 2021, p. 93; Lima, 2020, p. 86; UNDP, n.d.; Zulver et al., 2021, p. 1; Monash University, 2020; UNDP, 2020; Carvajal, 2020, p. 7). Despite these initiatives, the effectiveness of state responses has been limited (p. 7). According to Averis (2021), the home is the most dangerous place for women to be during lockdown (p. 93).

Londoño et al. (2021) disagree with this notion and state that public and community space pose a greater threat to women. According to them, the belief was that confinement would increase GBV, including femicides, intrafamilial violence and GBV. However, as they explain, statistics

show a drop both in femicide, GBV and sexual violence. They argue that GBV is not limited to violence performed by a partner or a family member and is more commonly seen in non-intimate forms in the public space. They further explain: “The most dramatic indicator is that of the homicide of women which dropped dramatically, in large part due to the decreased exposure of women to public space” (Londoño et al., 2021). To explain the decrease in the reports of incidents of GBV, they propose two hypotheses. First that a limited operation of public institutions due to the pandemic has resulted in more underreporting of incidents of GBV. Second, that GBV is more prevalent in the public sphere due to it being carried out more often in the context of criminal violence by non-intimate actors.

They conclude their study by stating that “the presence of criminal violence has made it so that public and community spaces represent even greater risks of violence for women, and that the household is a protected space, strengthened in the periods of confinement with the social accompaniment that this represents” (Londoño et al., 2021). They, therefore, conclude their second hypothesis to be true. Nevertheless, other literature suggests that the decrease in reported incidents is not due to a decrease in violence, but instead because women are prevented from reporting a crime or even calling for help when quarantined under the same roof as their perpetrator (López-Calva, 2020; UN Women & World Health Organisation, 2020; UN women, 2020, Carvajal, 2020; Zulver et al., 2021, p. 5).

2.4 Securitisation

The focus of this project is the scales of securitisation in relation to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, it is important to consider the previous research written on this topic. Although it is still a relatively new topic, there have been many studies of securitisation of Covid-19, which consider different consequences and methods of approach. The information used in this section is from academic sources which mainly take a starting point in the Copenhagen School of security studies. Some focus on the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19, others only on the speech acts of the securitisation actors, and some consider the importance of the audience in the securitisation of Covid-19.

Much of the research on the securitisation of Covid-19 has a focus on the discourse of political actors. They consider the rhetoric of the speech acts by the political leaders in their study regarding how they frame Covid-19 as a threat (Eves & Thedham 2020; Kuteleva & Clifford,

2021; Al-Sharafat, 2020; Byaruhanga, 2020; Vankovska, 2020, p. 74, Li, 2020; Lukacovic, 2020). Eves and Thedham (2020) are affiliated with Sheffield Hallam University and specialising in International Security Studies, with one conducting research focusing on Balkan studies and the development of nationalism. They researched securitisation in Serbia. They found that the president frames the virus as a direct threat to human security. Byaruhanga (2020), a researcher within Global Studies, Social Work, and human rights, found that the USA had a similar way of framing Covid-19 as a threat. He saw that there had been a shift in “security discourse from human to human aggression to contagion of pathogens” (Byaruhanga, 2020). These are just to name a few, all of the studies have some manner of framing Covid-19 as a threat, as it is a vital part of the securitisation theory (Murciano, 2020; Murphy, 2020, pp. 492; 494-502; Polko, 2020; Rolland, 2020; O’Meara, 2021). Interestingly in the study of securitisation of Covid-19 in the Balkans, Vankovska (2020), political scientist and peace researcher, found that many leaders framed Covid-19 as a threat but others dismissed it completely, effectually desecuritising Covid-19 (p. 74).

A number of the research found that some political actors use nationalistic language, in an attempt to unify the people against a common enemy of Covid-19 (Eves & Thedham 2020; Kuteleva & Clifford, 2021; Al-Sharafat, 2020). Much of the research has found that the theme of solidarity is very prominent when speaking about the Covid-19 virus and the pandemic in general (Eves & Thedham 2020; Kuteleva & Clifford, 2021; Al-Sharafat, 2020; Baysa-Barredo, 2020). An example of this is Kuteleva and Clifford (2021) who are affiliated with the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs at National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow and with the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen. They study the nationalistic rhetoric of Putin. Putin frames Russia as a family which will stand together when it is threatened, in this case by Covid-19 (pp. 10-14; Lukacovic, 2020). The political actors in Jordan also used similar family and nationalistic rhetoric when securitising Covid-19 (Al-Sharafat, 2020). Eves and Thedham (2020) found the same tendency in Serbia, the president uses nationalistic rhetoric. It is, however, taken a step further as the president securitises the Serbian national identity and attempts to convince the people that abiding by the regulations will protect the elderly and preserve the national identity, reiterating the pre-established macrosecuritisation of national identity (Eves & Thedham, 2020).

Other studies have found that the political actors use war rhetoric as their dominant speech acts (Kuteleva & Clifford, 2021; Baysa-Barredo, 2020; Polko, 2020, pp. 15; 20-27; Dwamena-

Aboagye, 2020; Murciano, 2020; Rolland, 2020; Li, 2020; Lukacovic, 2020; Hoffman, 2019). One study that found this was Kuteleva and Clifford (2021), who study the speech acts of Trump. This research finds that his rhetoric is very similar to the historical rhetoric of the ‘war on terror’ and the ‘war on drugs’, only now it is a war against the virus (p. 8). They find that he is using the same ‘us vs them’ discourse, portraying the national we as the “guardians” and the undocumented immigrants as the ones who brought the virus to the country (pp. 5-6). Trump further focuses on China as the source of the threat (pp. 5-6). Similarly, in Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that they were “at war with an invisible enemy, the virus” (Hoffman, 2019). Several of the studies that saw this war rhetoric also found that countries that utilised this type of discourse, had harsh punishments for the citizens who did not follow the mandated restrictions (Baysa-Barredo, 2020; Polko, 2020, pp. 15; 20-27; Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020). Baysa-Barredo (2020) is programme director at Strengthening Human Rights and Peace Research and Education in Southeast Asia (SHAPE-SEA). He considered the Southeast Asian Covid-19 measures and found that there were detrimental consequences for the citizens, and as there was this wartime rhetoric, the people must follow the extraordinary rules or face sanctions by the state. There was a similar tendency in Poland with the use of phrases like ‘combat Covid’ and ‘threat to your life’. At first, the citizens were simply urged to follow the restrictions, but this developed into punishments for breaking the rules (Polko, 2020, pp. 15; 20-27).

Not much of the research has a great focus on the audience, although it is mentioned by some. One research example where the audience has a prominent role is in the research of Ganjanakhundee (2020). He is a visiting Fellow in the Thailand Studies Programme, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and has a research focus in international conflict, international relations, and international security. He studies the securitisation of Covid-19 in Thailand. His research found that the political leaders, who were not successful in their speech acts, had to turn to the police to maintain a semblance of order (pp. 4-5). This resulted in the dissatisfaction of the public with their government and around 400,000 people used a hashtag against the government on Twitter (p. 3). He argues that the public or relevant audience rejected the securitisation Covid-19 (p. 7). In general, there is not much research that explores the reactions of the audience. Murciano (2020) is a research associate within the divisions of Africa and the Middle East, focusing on defence and security policy, armed forces, Middle East conflict and interstate conflicts. He mentions the public support of those who were given the power to act as a response to Covid-19 and the implication

of this; it considered how a non-military crisis was dealt with by a security unit authority (pp. 1-8). Li (2020), a researcher in politics, languages, and international studies, suggests that as the USA is a democratic system, then the “democratic consensus” can be equated to the acceptance of the securitisation of Covid-19.

When the lockdown was implemented, and the people did not comply with the mandated restrictions, multiple studies found that governments turned to the use of force (Al-Sharafat, 2020; Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020; Baysa-Barredo, 2020; Vankovska, 2020, p. 78; Polko, 2020, pp. 15; 20-17; Ganjanakhundee, 2020; Hoffman, 2019). One study found that in many African countries, fines were not practical as many people could not pay, so they used force (Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020). Ganjanakhundee (2020) states that the prime minister of Thailand failed to use speech acts to securitise Covid-19 and resorted to violence, police force and harsher measures (pp. 4-7). He suggests that desecuritisation is the way forward with non-traditional threats, to avoid a recurrence of this type of securitisation (p. 7).

Several other studies also found that there had been an alarming increase in arbitrary arrests and the use of military and police to enforce the restrictions on movement in the countries (Al-Sharafat, 2020; Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020; Baysa-Barredo, 2020; Vankovska, 2020, p. 78; Polko, 2020, pp. 15; 20-17; Hoffman, 2019). When the securitisation of Covid-19 happened and there was a lack of governmental compensation and help to the poorer parts of the population, some political actors turned to violence and the use of the military to make the public comply with the strict measures (Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020; Baysa-Barredo, 2020). Other security actors turned to the military to be the quarantine watch dogs, also using missile-alert sirens to signal the curfew (Al-Sharafat, 2020). Vankovska (2020) focuses on the increased authoritarian trends in the Balkans and the threat to human rights and freedoms because of the securitisation and desecuritisation of Covid-19, further describing how this all shines a light on the opposing rhetoric used by Eurocentric and periphery states (pp. 75-84).

Some of the research has focused on the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 and the resulting securitisation dilemmas (Eves & Thedham, 2020; Rolland 2020; Grancayova, 2021). Others have discovered securitisation dilemmas but have not named them as such (Al-Sharafat, 2020, Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020). Al-Sharafat (2020) is a former brigadier general in the Jordanian General Intelligence Directorate and researcher focusing on issues involving globalisation and inter-

national terrorism. He found that Jordan prioritised health over the economy, however as the government saw the economic consequences, they attempted to help their citizens by making it easier to get loans.

Eves and Thedham (2020) consider the securitisation of Covid-19 in the UK, and they describe the securitisation dilemma between public health and the economy. As public health was favoured over the economy, they argue that Covid-19 has been macrosecuritised and that other threats are always put in the context of the pandemic. O'Meara (2021) considers securitisation of Covid-19 and the United Nations (UN), further looking at the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 as the UN began to frame Covid-19 as a security threat to all countries, stating that everyone must battle it. The study concludes that the UN has not successfully acted against Covid-19.

A common theme of the research considers the surveillance and the monitoring that governments engaged in, which was considered by the researchers as an alarming tendency and a threat to democracy, civil liberties and freedoms (Vankovska, 2020, pp. 75-84; Al-Sharafat, 2020; Baysa-Barredo, 2020; Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020; Rolland, 2020). Intellectuals in Jordan voiced concerns that these securitising actions would harm freedoms such as press, speech etc. and their democratic norms could erode (Al-Sharafat, 2020).

Some studies saw that when public health was prioritised, human rights and freedoms were limited (Dwamena-Aboagye, 2020; Baysa-Barredo, 2020; Vankovska, 2020). In Cambodia, limitations were put on the freedom of telecommunications and social media (Baysa-Barredo, 2020). Some studies found that citizen tracking systems were implemented by many governments. Some countries used voluntary solutions, usually in the shape of an app, while other countries used involuntary mobile/data tracking through telecommunication operators. Other involuntary initiatives were also seen, where governments would use different methods, such as tracking personal data, and in Israel, counterterrorism tools were used to track the spread of Covid-19 (Rolland, 2020; Murciano, 2020, p. 6; Hoffman, 2019).

2.5 GBV and gendered approach

Kuteleva and Clifford (2021) consider how the securitising speech acts of the US and Russian presidents “instrumentalise hierarchical gendered identities to securitise Covid-19” (p. 15). They discuss how Trump frames America as the masculine, dominant, as able to fight the virus and the protector, while framing China and other actors as feminine and weak (pp. 5-10). While Putin does

not equate Covid-19 to war, he demilitarised it but does not downplay its dangers. Putin projects “traditional values of a heterosexual nuclear family” when speaking of the crisis, and when Russia is threatened, they become a family with him as the patriarch (pp. 10-14).

Baysa-Barredo (2020) calls for a gendered approach to the securitisation of Covid-19 where the “needs of women and girls, homeless and displaced, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable sectors” and LGBT+ communities are also included. This research showed a rise in domestic violence and violence towards the LGBT+ communities. They state that the securitisation of Covid-19 has been detrimental to the people living on the edges of society, like women and LGBT+ people, and those working on the frontlines; all living in a state of uncertainty and fear.

Chen (2020), affiliated with the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science at Universidade Nacional Timor Lorosa’, studies the gendered effects of the securitisation of Covid-19 in Timor-Leste. She calls out the research for its silence on gender in the previous studies on securitising a health crisis. She states that women and girls are disproportionately affected as they are “exposed to higher risks of sexual and gender-based violence and intimate domestic violence” (Chen, 2020). However, she only looks at the situation in which women find themselves in and not the speech acts and the securitisation of Covid-19.

2.6 The gap in the research

This section has delved into the research which has been done so far on the securitisation of Covid-19. As previously discussed, the securitisation of Covid-19 has been researched with a wide range of focal points and in many different countries. There has been a decent number of studies done in both single and multiple case studies, which have considered the speech acts of the securitising actors and the consequences of this securitisation. A finite number of scholars have also considered whether the audience has accepted or rejected this securitisation of Covid-19. Few have discussed the desecuritisation of Covid-19 of certain political actors and others have looked at securitisation from a gendered perspective. A fair number of scholars have considered the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 and the securitisation dilemmas which have resulted.

Throughout this literature review, we have discovered that there is a gap in the research considering securitisation on Covid-19 in Colombia, especially in relation to the securitisation dilemma of GBV. There has also not been conducted this type of case study concerning Colombia.

Therefore, we hope to examine the securitisation of the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia and the scales of securitisation in relation to this, to fill this gap. We will do this by analysing the speech acts of relevant political actors, in this case, the Colombian president and vice president, considering their rhetoric and framing of both Covid-19 and GBV. From this, we will apply the theories of macrosecuritisation and the securitisation dilemma. We will then examine the actions of the political actors following the securitisations in their attempt to address the securitisation dilemmas which arise. We will examine the response of the audience to understand whether or not the audience has accepted the securitisation of Covid-19, and thereby if the securitisations were successful. Throughout the analysis, the scales of securitisation will be considered, and we will attempt to answer why they matter in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and GBV.

3.0 Methodology

This section will outline the methodological considerations made in this project. We will first elaborate on the relevance of the topic of the securitisation of GBV and Covid-19 in the context of the pandemic. Then we will delve into the research design of the project and our theoretical considerations, where we will outline how the theory will be utilised throughout the project. Hereafter we will explain the methods. Then, we will evaluate our data and explain the collection of data. Finally, the limitations and delimitations for this project will be discussed.

3.1 Relevance of the topic

This project aims to examine the scales of securitisation in relation to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 has had extensive consequences on a global level, especially for women. Therefore, it is essential to examine the scales of securitisations during the pandemic in Colombia, when considering that a securitisation dilemma of GBV has occurred as a result of the Covid-19 response. Throughout the project, we aim to understand the hierarchy of threats during the pandemic when it comes to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia. Further, we aim to examine how these threats are interlinked in dealing with the securitisation dilemma of GBV to understand how and why scales of securitisation matter in addressing these security issues.

Considering the extent of the problem of the increase in GBV and how this is posing a security threat to Colombian women, it is a field that needs to be examined and emphasized. At the same time, it is important to shed light on this specific consequence of the response to the pandemic, as this tends to be a more overlooked area than that of the economic impact or the general concern to public health. Nevertheless, this is also a consequence that could continue to impact women negatively in the long term (UN Women, 2020; Mahajan et al., 2020).

Moreover, Covid-19 and its impact on GBV is yet an emerging research field. Despite the available research on this topic, there is a gap regarding the securitisation of GBV and scales of securitisation during the pandemic. Though some research has focused on securitising Covid-19 itself, no research has been carried out with the focus of applying securitisation theory to GBV in relation to Covid-19 by considering the scales of securitisation. We believe this specific research area is important to examine, especially considering its continuing relevance due to the ongoing

pandemic and lockdowns still being mandated around the world. Therefore, the securitisation dilemma of GBV persists as a result of lockdowns.

3.2 Research design

This project takes a qualitative approach when examining the scales of securitisation in relation to Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia. When defining our problem, we began with an interest in Latin America, GBV and the Covid-19 consequences, which led us to the theory of securitisation. Further research into different countries in Latin America, specifically Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador, gave us an idea of the situation in each country. We chose to focus on one country, Colombia, as it is an interesting case about Covid-19 and GBV. This will be elaborated on further in the next section. Thus, the scope of our project was narrowed to the securitisation of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia, and how these are interlinked.

With our general idea for the project developed, we formulated our problem formulation: How and why do scales of securitisation matter in the securitisation dilemmas that the Colombian government could produce in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and GBV as security issues? To aid in our research, we decided to include four research questions to split the analysis into comprehensive and logical phases. Question one and two will consider the speech acts of the president and the vice president of Colombia and how they securitise Covid-19 and GBV. The third question examines how the Colombian government attempts to resolve the securitisation dilemma of GBV, and the fourth will examine the response of the audience.

Throughout our analysis, we subscribe to the idea of speech acts which Buzan et al. (1998) have put forth (pp. 32; 46). We will consider the speech acts of relevant political actors who hold credible social positions i.e., the president and the vice President of Colombia. As securitisation is security as a speech act (p. 32), we will include speeches, press releases and social media posts of these political actors. We will analyse their word choices, messages, and general rhetoric to determine whether a securitisation has happened. As speech acts are both linguistically and socially constructed (p. 32), we will also consider the audience and whether the speech acts were accepted. To support this, we examine the actions after the speech acts to determine if the securitisation was generally accepted or rejected by the audience.

3.2.1 Case study

This project is a single intrinsic case study, as we wish to gain a better understanding of this specific case (Punch, 2014, p. 121). We want to understand the particular case of Colombia and how the securitisation of the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted GBV. We chose to examine the situation in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic, as it gives a good indication of the issue of Covid-19 lockdowns and their effects on GBV. Although the case in Colombia has certain aspects which are unique to the country, it is still applicable to multiple other countries and situations in the world during the pandemic.

The benefit of conducting a case study is that it will allow us to delve deeper into this case and to get a comprehensive understanding of the situation (Punch, 2014, p. 124). This will allow us to consider the case of Colombia and the securitisations of Covid-19 and GBV as a singular case in its own right. Which makes it possible for us to explore the unique circumstance of this particular case and to get an in-depth understanding (p. 124). As our research topic is relatively new, it is necessary to research individual cases to discover “the important features, developing an understanding of them and conceptualising them for further study” (p. 124). As we are using an academically accepted and accredited theory for our analysis, this case study will contribute to the field of securitisations studies. We consider the single case study as a relevant approach that contributes to this budding research field.

When considering our choice of country, we knew that we wanted to work with a country in Latin America because it is a dynamic and politically interesting region. We began to consider the different countries we could use as a case study, looking at the effects of Covid-19, the government response, and the consequences. We considered doing a comparative study of two or three countries but decided on doing a single case study to be able to delve into the unique dynamics of that specific country. We settled on three potential choices: Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador. We researched the history of feminist movements in the countries, the effects of Covid-19, the governmental response to Covid-19, and its impact on women in the countries. The results of our research demonstrated that all of the countries were greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and that they had many different governmental initiatives in an attempt to halt the spread of the virus. When considering the impact of women in the countries, we saw that they all had troubling numbers of GBV. Further variables we considered for the case study were femicide rates during Covid-19, an increase in emergency calls, and government initiatives to address the violence. We

found that all three countries had had an increase in emergency calls and that there had been governmental action to attempt to address this.

All three countries would have made a great case study, but we settled on Colombia. We found that Colombia was an interesting case as they had implemented a long lockdown and the effects of GBV were extensive. The government-imposed lockdowns, as a response to the increase in Covid-19 cases, resulted in an increase in GBV which the government responded to by allowing women and men to leave the house on alternating days that instead had negative consequences for the transgender community (Carvajal, 2020, p. 7). We found this very interesting and wanted to explore the country's response and the consequences further. Although, upon further research, we found no evidence that the gendered movement restrictions were meant as a response to the increase in GBV, but that it to contain the spread of the virus (NoticiasRCN.com, 2020). Nevertheless, the lockdown and the rhetoric of the political actors, along with the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 and the resulting securitisation dilemma of GBV made the case study of Colombia fascinating and relevant.

3.2.2 Ontological and epistemological considerations

The epistemological orientation of this project is interpretivist, as we believe that the meanings which people bring to situations are essential to the “way that they make sense of the world”, which in turn helps to explain their behaviour (Punch, 2014, p. 17). It is thus the job of the researcher to understand the general way of thinking of their research subjects, to understand what their common knowledge includes and what their version of normal is, which may differ from the researchers (Bryman, 2012, pp. 28-30). This project has a constructivist ontology, we, therefore, consider reality and meanings as socially constructed and that it is continually being altered and changed by the individuals that live with these realities and understandings (Bryman, 2012, p. 33; Punch, 2014, 17).

Our backgrounds have given us the ability to accept and understand different cultures than our own, to connect with the mindset of people raised differently than us and to accept their perception of reality as being equal to our perception of reality. As we both have academic Danish backgrounds within Development and International Relations, we have international experiences and backgrounds which have added to our understanding of the world and our perceptions. Because our perception is shaped by the values of the Western hemisphere, we acknowledge that we

have preconceived notions of GBV. Furthermore, we have conducted previous research on the topic of GBV and femicide, thus we have inherent ideas of what it entails and who the victims and perpetrators are. We attempt to address this by discussing the topic and using a variety of sources to combat our own bias, keeping an open mind to the possibility of our preconceptions being challenged. Another bias is that we have also been through a lockdown and experienced the Covid-19 pandemic in the Danish context; this may give us some inadvertent bias when studying the effects of the pandemic in another country.

3.3 Application of theories

This project focuses on scales of securitisation in relation to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, securitisation theory with a starting point in the Copenhagen School of security studies is relevant to apply. It is a useful tool that challenges the traditional approaches to security and focuses on other referent objects, e.g., those vulnerable to a threat, than necessarily the security of the state (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5).

Buzan et al. (1998) describe securitisation as the process by which a securitising actor labels something an existential threat to a referent object, which justifies to the relevant audience the use of extraordinary measures to address it (p. 5). As such, securitisation is a socially constructed process and is thus useful for understanding the social construction of threats. This theory is therefore relevant for this project when examining the scales of securitisation in relation to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic. We will examine the speech acts of the securitising actors, in this case, the Colombian President and Colombian Vice President, to examine the process of securitisation in relation to these threats to understand how these actors socially construct the meaning of the threats.

Moreover, securitisation studies also aim to understand “who securitises, on what issues (threats) for whom (referent objects), why, with what results and, not least, under what conditions (i.e., what explains when securitisation is successful)” (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 32). Accordingly, when examining the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the pandemic, we will consider these aspects in the speech acts We will describe who the securitising actors are, what the threat is, who they argue are vulnerable to that threat, why they argue this, what measures were taken, and if securitisation was successful. Consequently, we expect that this theory can give

insight into the securitisation processes in relation to Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Macrosecuritisation and the securitisation dilemma, both additions to the Copenhagen School's theory of securitisation, will also be used in the analysis. The Copenhagen School mainly focuses on middle-level securitisations, e.g., securitisations performed by political actors on the national level. Instead, Buzan and Waever (2009) suggest a focus on the gap between the middle-level and the above system level, where all of humanity is the referent object to examine higher-level securitisations (p. 254). They argue that security is sometimes organised around one overarching threat to which they speak of a hierarchy of threats (p. 257). With macrosecuritisation, they, therefore, introduce a sense of scale into securitisation theory. This hierarchy of threats is thus relevant for us to consider when examining the scales of securitisation in relation to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia during the pandemic.

According to Olesker (2018), a securitisation dilemma occurs when securitising one sector increases a threat in another, and therefore a dilemma of whether to securitise the issue or not occurs (p. 316). This theory will be applied when examining the increase in GBV in Colombia as a result of the national response to Covid-19. Further, the theory of macrosecuritisation and the securitisation dilemma will be considered in relation to each to examine how the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 and the securitisation of GBV are interlinked. From this, the scales of securitisation will be discussed.

3.4 Methods

The research method of this project is qualitative, in which we conduct a document analysis. For this purpose, we use government documents, NGO reports, reports from UN institutions, news articles, official statements, social media posts, and academic research on the topic. This is done systematically based on the different aspects of our case study. The document analysis was chosen as it will help us to reveal the nuances of the situation, the responses, and the consequences; this is achieved through extensive research and comparison of the documents. The benefit of doing a document analysis is that it will show the perspective and experiences of the relevant political actors and audiences, like the people of Colombia, which may not be represented in the available statistical data. This will support the analysis of the securitisation process, while statistics will be used to show the situation alternately and to fact-check our sources.

Considering the focus on speech acts of this project, it is necessary to consider how to examine these following the Copenhagen School. Buzan et al (1998) used the linguistic research of Pierre Bourdieu (1991) and Judith Butler (1996) to develop their concepts of speech acts, thus securitisation (as cited in Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 32; 46). As they define: “a successful speech act is a combination of language and society”, which includes both the actual process of speech acts but also the acceptance of the relevant audience (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 32). According to language theory, a securitisation process is a speech act and “it is the utterance itself that is the act” (p. 26). Buzan et al., use Pierre Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of the importance of “cultural capital” in their theory of securitisation (as cited in Buzan et al., p. 46). Therefore, speech acts are social as well as linguistic, as it also includes the “social position” of the speaker and their credibility (p. 46). Buzan et al., use John Austin’s (1975) idea that for a speech act to be effective, the speaker must have the relevant authority for it to be valid (pp. 8-15, as cited in Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 46). The successful speech act is important as it can establish a new meaning of a particular concept, as Bourdieu suggests that a speech act “has a magical efficiency, it makes What it says” (as cited in Buzan et al, 1998, pp. 46).

3.5 Data collection

During this project, we will use government documents, NGO reports, reports from UN institutions, news articles, official statements, social media posts, and academic research. These will be used for information on the situation on Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia from the beginning of lockdown on March 24, 2020, until May 1, 2021. Secondary sources, such as news articles, statistics and journals will be used to support our analysis of the security speech acts on Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia. Primary sources will be used when collecting speech acts by the relevant political actors. In the Copenhagen School of security studies, Buzan et al. (1998) focus on the state as the securitising actor, stating that it is those in power, usually the state, who define a certain threat (p. 40; Waever, 1995, p. 51). As such, this project will focus on the speech acts by Colombian President Duque and Colombian Vice President Ramírez during the previously mentioned period.

These speech acts will be found in quotations from the president and vice president. Through research, it became evident that the most prominent sources to find these speech acts are governmental websites, speeches from media appearances, and lastly, from the Twitter accounts

of the actors. When researching for speech acts, we quickly discovered that any research had to be conducted in Spanish to find the relevant sources and that the language barrier posed a small obstacle in our search for primary data. Nevertheless, to overcome this obstacle we made use of different translation programs to be able to search for data in Spanish, and this helped the research process.

We discovered that many statements by both the president and the vice president had been posted on the official government pages of Colombia [Presidencia de la República de Colombia and Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia], where several speech acts from the relevant period could be found. Furthermore, we saw that during the pandemic, both the president and the vice president have made several speech acts on media appearances, in speeches, on television and during press conferences. In these, they speak of Covid-19 and GBV, and thus, these sources helped find speech acts.

Lastly, both the president and vice president have several times during the pandemic posted Covid-19 and GBV related content on their Twitter profile, providing us with the last needed speech acts for our analysis. From these, we expect to examine the president's and vice president's construction of the meaning of security in labelling the issues of Covid-19 and GBV as threats. Furthermore, news articles were used in finding speech acts displaying the public construction of the threat relating to Covid-19 and GBV.

In most circumstances, an uttering on Twitter would not be perceived as a credible source. Nevertheless, as we are examining speech acts and therefore the direct quotations of the president and vice president, Twitter is a prominent source for us to use because we can find direct statements from their profiles @IvanDuque and @mluciamirez.

When conducting our research, we found that there were limitations that made the research difficult. The speech acts were readily available in general, but more speech acts could be found during the Colombian lockdown from March 24 until August 31, 2020, compared to what could be found after this lockdown. This was seen both in the speech acts by the president and the vice president and both on Covid-19 and GBV. Nevertheless, it would make sense that more speech acts are present during the time of the first lockdown as the threat of Covid-19 is still very new at this point, and the increase in GBV is starting to make itself evident. Despite this small limitation, several speech acts were still available.

This was not the case with the secondary data used to support the analysis. While news

articles and journals could help fill in most missing pieces, we found that statistics were very difficult to find in relation to GBV in Colombia. When statistical data was available, we found that the time frame, in which the researcher had examined, was different to the time frame that could be found in another year. This made the comparison of numbers difficult when attempting to understand to what extent the problem of GBV has increased during the lockdown of 2020 compared to the numbers from 2019. When we found comparable data in the periods needed, we often discovered that GBV was categorised differently depending on the source, with one source having a focus on femicides and another on domestic violence. This made it difficult to understand the full extent of the problem. This leads back to what was described in the introduction that many Latin American countries do not have systematic data collection on GBV. This caused a lack in the data and provided us with very different numbers depending on the source. To work around this, we have compared statistics and created a general picture from the numbers. While this does still leave certain gaps in the numbers, it gives an overall idea of the extent.

The primary sources used were all in Spanish and as such, we have had to translate this to English. However, we realise that by examining speech acts and focusing on the specific wordings of the president and vice president, our translations would have to be accurate to provide the most reliable picture of them labelling Covid-19 and GBV as threats. Therefore, we have used several translation platforms to crosscheck translations and ensure that the same words are used in all translations. First Google Translate was used, the standard translation option when using Google Chrome and which has proven to be 92 per cent accurate in Spanish translations (Khoong et al., 2019). Second, our translations from Google Translate were then cross-checked with other platforms, including DeepL Translator, Translate.eu and Yandex Translate. This was to ensure that our speech acts were correctly translated, and especially the keywords used by the president and vice president, which we highlight in the analysis.

3.5.1 Reliability and Validity

To reflect on the reliability of our research and whether others would reach similar results, we will reassess our approach in answering our problem formulation: How and why do scales of securitisation matter in the securitisation dilemmas that the Colombian government could produce in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and GBV as security issues? As our entire study is concerned with securitisation, it is logical that we will follow the theory closely. To ensure that we adequately

cover the important parts of the theory, we developed four research questions. The first two are focused on the speech acts of the relevant political actors, one focusing on Covid-19 and one on GBV. The third question considers the actions which the securitising actors have taken to address the threat. The final question investigates the response of the relevant audience, mainly the Colombian public.

This organisation of the analysis is to ensure that we sufficiently examine the different aspects of this case with the theory. It is also done to make it easier for the reader to navigate the project and to make it easy for other researchers to replicate our study. In our opinion, this division of the analysis into the main aspects of the theory is a logical method of approaching securitisation. Securitisation includes considering the security speech acts of the securitising actors as well as considering the audience response (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 5). Although the parts are interlinked and affect each other, there is a natural order to the research using the securitisation theory. That is, to start with the security speech acts, then the initiatives to tackle the threat and lastly, the audience response. We, therefore, feel that this strengthens the reliability of the project, and other scholars would find that this structure reasonable and coherent for using this theory. Also, that they would likely reach similar results if they were to replicate the study in this manner.

As this research is qualitative and highly based on the subjective interpretation of the researcher, there is a chance that other scholars would interpret the data differently. This is especially true as this analysis is reliant on discourse and how the researcher understands this discourse. However, we feel that certain speech acts leave very little to be interpreted differently. An example of this is the use of war rhetoric by President Duque (2020a) when he compares Covid-19 to war. There is always a risk with discourse studies that researchers will interpret the results differently and of researcher error, this is no less true for this project. To combat this, we engaged in thorough discussions of any dataset we were unsure of, but also the ones we felt were obvious.

The main focus of securitisation theory is the securitising actors' construction of an existential threat to the relevant audience (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5). This is also the primary focus of the analysis, and as such the discourse and rhetoric which is analysed is considered in a very specific way to determine how the issue is labelled as a threat by the securitising actor. The audience response to this particular threat is then examined. Therefore, we feel that other scholars would likely reach the same results and that it strengthens the reliability of the analysis of the speech acts.

To reflect on our collected data and to determine if it is adequate to examine what we intend, we have considered the validity of our project. The purpose of our data is ultimately to answer our problem formulation, and our data reflects this focus on securitisation theory and scales of securitisation. As mentioned, we divided our analysis into sections corresponding with the Copenhagen school of securitisation theory (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5). This is done to focus on the hierarchy of threats projected by the political leaders of Colombia, in relation to the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV. We wanted to examine the securitisations done by the political leaders of Colombia, as the theory of securitisation suggests that as they are democratically elected, then they have the right to represent the opinion of the state and act on their behalf (Buzan et al. 1998, p. 41; Waever, 1995, p. 51). For this reason, we examine the speech acts and measures of President Duque and Vice President Ramirez.

To get a comprehensive representation of the speech acts and the way the political actors identify an existential threat, we included multiple different speech acts from these actors. This includes both official speeches, daily broadcasts and Twitter posts. We felt that this would give a broad picture of their construction of security and security threats. This strengthens the validity of the project because it is more probable that we have gotten an accurate representation of their speech acts. This also makes it more plausible that other scholars would have similar findings.

We include multiple speech acts from Duque and Ramírez, to provide a comprehensive understanding of their construction of the threat in relation to Covid-19 and GBV, and therefore in which scales they view these threats. As previously discussed, we have split the analysis where we first examine their construction of security through their speech acts in regard to the threat of Covid-19, then concerning GBV. We then consider the securitising measures which they take and lastly, we consider the audience response. The data for which was used in the last two sections consist of speeches, tweets, and news sources. This data allows for an extensive examination of the measures taken and whether the audience accepted or rejected the securitisation. Through much cross-referencing and research, we feel that the dataset adequately provides the information we need for answering our problem formulation which strengthens the validity of the project

3.6 Limitations and delimitation

Through the course of this project, there were certain limitations we encountered regarding certain aspects of the topic. As we used a large number of Spanish sources, we relied heavily on online

translations of these. To combat any translation mishaps, we cross-referenced our information and made sure that we found the same data in multiple reliable sources. To prevent mistranslations, we used multiple translation services to make our final translations more accurate. The quantitative sources were less affected by this language barrier.

Another limitation we experienced was both a limitation and an advantage, which was the fact that this is a relatively new research field. This is a great advantage as it allows us to explore a contemporary issue that is currently affecting people worldwide. We are contributing to a budding new branch of research in the pandemic genre. However, there are limitations to working with such a new topic from a geographical distance; as we are not present in our chosen country, we rely on secondary sources for our information. Because the topic is so new, there is a finite number of peer-reviewed academic sources available, therefore we rely on news articles and general reporting on the topic. The lack of consistent statistical data available is a hindrance for comparing the increase in GBV in the country, as the data varies in their timeframe and the type of GBV they study. As such, this makes it difficult for us to gain an accurate representation of the GBV numbers before, during and after Covid-19 and lockdown.

Another potential limitation is that the situation is still happening and evolving, though we do deal with this by setting a limit on the time which we are studying. We decided to set the limitations on our project of confining our research to include March 24, 2020, to May 1, 2021, to set the scope of our project. This period was chosen because, on March 24, 2020, President Duque of Colombia appeared on a nationally televised program to announce the national quarantine which began the following day. This was the first lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19 in Colombia which ended on August 31, 2020.

Although the data available is mainly from 2020 and during the national lockdown of March to the end of August, we did not want to limit ourselves when researching the speech acts of the political actors. Therefore, we expanded the time frame till May 1, 2021, to include more recent information as the pandemic is ongoing. We decided to limit our research to one country, Colombia, to delve deeply into the speech acts of the president and the vice president to understand their framing of Covid-19 and GBV, as has been previously discussed. Another limitation which we placed on the project was on the topic, as we decided to focus our research on the securitisation of Covid-19 in Colombia and the resulting securitisation dilemma of GBV. This was done to focus the research on the securitisation of GBV and Covid-19.

4.0 Theory

This section will examine and outline the theory of securitisation. First, the concept of security will be examined which leads into the Copenhagen school on security studies and securitisation theory. Then, the theory of macrosecuritisation will be explained and lastly, the securitisation dilemma will be presented.

4.1 Security and securitisation

Security is a very complex concept used in many different fields, such as “social security, health and safety, financial security, policing and community safety, national security, military security, human security, environmental security, international relations and peacekeeping” (Zedner, 2009, p. 9). Hence, it is not a single concept, instead, it is very complex with several different meanings depending on the field because the concept of security is “too big of an idea to be constrained by the strictures of any single discipline” (p. 10).

The main concept of security in the last century has been that of national security within the domain of international relations and military studies, made central as a result of the two world wars and especially the Cold War (Zedner, 2009, p. 5; Walt, 1991, p. 212; Buzan et al., 1998, p. 22). This is today called the traditional view on security, where security has traditionally been researched with a focus on either power or peace (Buzan, 1983, p. 1). In the traditional view, security is thus achieved either as a result of “an actor with enough power to reach a dominating position” or it is reached as “a consequence of peace,” understood in the sense that enduring peace would mean security for the actors involved (p. 2).

The traditional view of security studies assumes that the prospect of inter-state conflict is always present and “that the use of military force has far-reaching effects on states and societies” (Walt, 1991, p. 212). Walt (1991) subscribes to the traditional view on security studies and identifies the main focus of security studies as the study of “the phenomenon of war” (p. 212). He further states that the scope of security studies is difficult to pin down as it is subjective depending on the discipline (p. 212). Walt subscribes to Nye and Lynn-Jones (1988) definition of security studies as “the study of the threat, use, and control of military force” (as cited in Walt, 1991, p. 212).

The traditional security studies identify with the realist paradigm of international relations; like realists, they consider the international sphere in a state of anarchy, in which the security of

states is equated to their power to defend themselves. Furthermore, the referent object is traditionally the state and the threat is in the military sector, the referent object being “something or someone that is vulnerable to that threat” (Betts, 2009, p. 60). That being said, “military power is not the only source of national security” and there are other threats than just military; therefore, traditional security studies also include “statecraft” which is “arms control, diplomacy, crisis management,” and so on. These alternate foci still fit into the main focus of military threats and power and have a direct effect on war and the character of the perceived threat (Walt, 1991, p. 213). Traditional security studies thus focus on military power as the threat with the state as the referent object. Nevertheless, at the end of the Cold War a shift in the perception of security studies was seen as a result of more complex threats to national security and security in general.

This led to the Copenhagen School of security studies, in which Buzan et al. (1998) widened the study of security by expanding what is defined as a threat (pp. 4-5). Consequently, the definition of a threat now included military and nonmilitary threats, considering different sectors such as military, political, economic, societal and environmental (pp. 22-23; Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 253). They consider the military sector in much the same manner as the traditionalists with the state as the referent object and the threat, and solution, are the military. Walt (1991) is against the widening of security studies as he states that the focus should be on war studies and that widening the scope of security studies would “destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems” (pp. 212-213).

Buzan et al. (1998) acknowledge that there is merit to the criticisms of the widening of security studies, specifically in that the “wider agenda extends the call for state mobilization on a broad range of issues”, not only limited to military threats (p. 4). Furthermore, the wider agenda seems to “elevate ‘security’ into a kind of universal good thing” the goal which all states should strive towards (p. 4). To address this, Buzan et al. argue that security should not be seen as an inherently good thing. Instead, actors should be cautious with what they define as a security issue and that the action taken to address security issues should be aimed at shifting the security issue into the realm of normal politics (p. 4).

Waever (1995) of the Copenhagen school or widened approach to security studies suggests looking at security differently than the assumption of the traditionalists that “security is a reality prior to language (...) [and that] the more security the better;”. Instead, he considers security as a concept and as a speech act (p. 46). To this, Waever states:

With the help of language theory, we can regard ‘security’ as a *speech act*. In this usage security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance *itself* is the act. By saying it, something is done. (pp. 51-52)

Thus, speech acts are the uttering of security by political actors, and as stated further by Buzan et al. (1998):

It is important to note that the security speech act is not defined by uttering the word security. What is essential is the designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that designation by a significant audience. (p. 27)

The speech act is therefore not defined by the political actors directly uttering the word ‘security’ but by the description of a threat by these actors and how this is received by the relevant audience.

When considering security as a speech act, the elites or the state define a certain threat or development as a security issue and “in naming a certain development a security problem, the ‘state’ can claim a special right” to address the threat with extraordinary means (Weaver, 1995, p. 51). This process is the securitisation of an issue or threat which the power holder can use to gain control of the issue and justifies extreme or unusual methods; in this manner security is a speech act (pp. 51-52).

Securitisation is a tool of those in power, usually the elites, and it can be used to benefit themselves, therefore, when the general public or organisations are attempting to affect change, they aim to address the topic in a non-threatening manner so that the issue will not become a security issue (pp. 52-53). The issue, the securitising actor is attempting to securitise, must be more urgent and pose a greater threat than a ‘normal’ political issue. It must be framed as an “existential threat to a referent object by the securitising actor” which needs acceptance and the endorsement of the audience for the use of emergency or extraordinary measures, which go beyond their normal political power (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5).

Weaver's (1995) concept of using security speech acts to convince the relevant audience of the extensiveness of the threat of Covid-19 and GBV will be useful when considering the security issues of Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia (p. 51-52). Thus, we will examine the security speech acts of the Colombian president and vice president during the pandemic when speaking of Covid-

19 and GBV. We will examine how they frame the threat of Covid-19 and GBV and it will further be demonstrated how they use these speech acts as a tool to convince the audience that extraordinary measures must be taken to gain control of the Covid-19 situation and the increase in GBV.

The basic idea of securitisation is “a situation where a referent object depicts an existential threat [which] justifies, to the relevant audience, the use of extraordinary measures” (Waever, 2014). The referent object is the entity that is “seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival” (Buzan et al, 1998, p. 36). In traditional security studies the referent object has been the state or nation, but with the widening of the field, “securitizing actors can [in theory,] attempt to construct anything as a referent object” (p. 36).

Identifying the issues or threat is relatively simple for the traditionalists, unlike for the wideners. For the traditionalists, security issues are equated to military issues and the referent object is the state. It is not so simple to identify the issues for the wideners, as their referent objects and threats can be a multitude of actors or entities. Furthermore, “the existential threat can only be understood in relation to the particular referent object in question”. Therefore, there is not a “universal standard” for the wideners, it will vary greatly depending on the nature of the threat and the sector that is threatened (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 21-22). Through the speech acts on Covid-19 and GBV by the securitising actors, we will demonstrate who the referent object is and how the securitising actors argue that an existential threat is posed to them. Hence, they justify to the relevant audience that extraordinary measures are taken.

The securitising actor is the one “who performs the security speech act,” typically political leaders, government officials, etc.; their discourse is usually focused on the defence of the collective in some manner (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 40). Within the speech act approach, it is the securitising actor who defines the security issue and labels something a threat (p. 34). The audience is those who the securitising actors are attempting to convince that the issue should be considered as an existential threat and that extraordinary measures are justified (p. 41). The audience plays an important role in the securitisation process as the issue must be “accepted by a sufficient audience to sanction extraordinary defensive moves” (p. 204). Therefore, the success of securitisation depends on the acceptance of the threat to the referent object by the audience. Considering this, the audience response during the pandemic will also be considered in this project to understand if the securitisations are successful.

Buzan et al. (1998) introduce “desecuritisation: the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (p. 4). Waever (1995) suggests that security studies should focus on the analysis of “the processes of securitization and desecuritisation” and on the reasons why and how certain issues are defined as security threats (pp. 53-54). He further argues to consider the failure or success of securitisation and the process of desecuritisation of previously securitised issues (pp. 53-54). In the analysis, when examining the scales of securitisation, we will consider desecuritisation and if this tool is used by the securitising actors at any point in the securitisation process of Covid-19 and GBV and for what reason.

McDonald (2008) criticises the Copenhagen School’s perspective of security studies as it focuses on the speech acts by political actors, which dismisses the view and experiences of actors not affiliated with the state (pp. 573-575). According to McDonald, this provides a limited view of global security and to combat this, it is important to consider the speech acts of other actors and how security issues are constructed by them such as NGOs or the media to get a comprehensive depiction of security (p. 582).

Buzan et al. (1998) also speak of this when stating: “one danger of the phrases securitisation and speech act is that too much focus can be placed on the acting side, thus privileging the powerful while marginalising those who are the audience and judge of the act” (p. 41). Buzan et al. thus acknowledge the danger in focusing on the speech acts of the securitising actors as this could result in the interests of other possible actors or the audience not being considered. Nevertheless, they also say:

The state (usually) has explicit rules regarding who can speak on its behalf, so when a government says ‘we have to defend our national security,’ it has the right to act on behalf of the state. The government is the state in this respect. (p. 41)

They, therefore, argue that the speech acts of the political securitising actors are those of importance because these actors are the ones with the power to construct the meaning of security and to take political action.

McDonald’s perspective would include the views of the most vulnerable in society and would eliminate the definition of security being defined by the elites of society, which would ideally provide a complete understanding of the complex dynamics and truths of the issues (Sethi,

2015). However, Sethi (2015) criticises McDonald's assessment as it would make the conceptualisation of the word security too ambiguous; it implies that the process of securitisation is open to all, and that "any actor can securitise any issue or referent object".

Buzan et al. (1998) consider a securitising actor as being successful and legitimate if extraordinary measures, which lay outside of ordinary political practices, are used to address an issue (pp. 23-24). Furthermore, they state that "it is always a political choice to securitize or to accept a securitisation" but they do not explain the thought process behind such decisions (p. 29). McDonald (2008) considers this a key limitation of the theory and suggests that it is important to study why certain issues are considered security issues by securitising actors. This would illuminate how actors understand security in different circumstances (pp. 564; 570-571).

4.2 Macrosecuritisation

According to Buzan and Waever (2009), there is a gap in securitisation theory, as the Copenhagen School's securitisation theory has primarily focused on middle-level security studies in which "egoistical collective political actors (often but not always states) mainly construct their securitisations against (or in the case of security communities with) each other" (p. 254). The middle-level of securitisation therefore primarily focuses on states and the securitisations taken against them to increase one's security, and as such, this level takes a starting point in the realist view of self-help and anarchy (p. 254).

The Copenhagen School has proposed that securitisation at the middle level, in general, is easier, and more complicated both at the individual level, with people being the referent object, and at the system level, with all of humanity being the referent object (p. 254). Buzan and Waever (2009) believe that a discussion about what happens above middle-level securitisation is lacking in the literature, and thus, they introduce macrosecuritisation that aims to revisit securitisation theory by considering 'higher-level securitisations' at the system level. According to Watson (2013), macrosecuritisation is an essential addition to securitisation theory as "it acknowledges that multiple security frames compete to shape our understanding of issues and shows how security frames can be 'tied together' or 'arranged hierarchically'" (p. 267).

Macrosecuritisation refers to an "overarching securitization that relates, organizes and possibly subsumes a host of other middle-level securitizations" (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 256).

Buzan and Waever further elaborate this by stating that international security is sometimes organised from one overarching threat or conflict, the most prominent example being the Cold War. Here, whatever securitisations existed between states, were all framed within the overarching conflict between West and East (p. 253). Therefore, other middle-level securitisations may take place as well, but one overarching securitisation is what structures a given conflict or threat. Macrosecuritisation, therefore, refers to a “higher order of securitisation” in which securitisations “speak to referent objects higher than those at the middle level” (p. 253; p. 257).

Buzan and Waever (2009) further state that the most powerful macrosecuritisation “will impose a hierarchy on the lower-level ones incorporated within them”, while the less powerful ones will “bundle other securitisations together without necessarily outranking them” (p. 257). Therefore, Buzan and Waever speak of a hierarchy of threats. Macrosecuritisation is hence relevant to consider when speaking of the Covid-19 pandemic, a global threat that is being securitised on a global scale within national borders. When speaking of a hierarchy of threats, macrosecuritisation is also evident when considering other threats that occur as a result of the securitisation of Covid-19 in Colombia, for example, the threat of the increasing GBV. In Colombia, the government has had to somehow securitise the increasing violence but within the frame of the pandemic and without compromising the securitisation of the overarching threat of Covid-19. Accordingly, we will examine how the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 and the securitisation of GBV are interlinked and from this how scales of securitisation matter when speaking of these security issues during the pandemic in Colombia.

The same rules that define other securitisations also apply to macrosecuritisations, which is the “identification of an existential threat to a valued referent object and the call for exceptional measures” (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 257). The main contrast is that macrosecuritisations are on a larger scale than those at the middle level, e.g., nations and states and that macrosecuritisations aim to bundle together middle-level (or individual-level) securitisations into a larger and higher-order (p. 257). This also means that macrosecuritisations have a structure more complex than other securitisations; because they consist of both lower and higher-level securitisations, permanent tensions between these levels take place (p. 257). This makes them susceptible to breakdowns through “desecuritisation of the macro-level threat (or referent object) [...], but also by middle level securitisations becoming disaffected with or pulling away from, subordination to the higher level one” (p. 257).

With a macrosecuritisation, a securitisation dilemma is likely to occur (Watson, 2013, p. 268). When this happens, different strategies, such as stressing the hierarchical ordering or desecuritisation, can be used by the securitising actor to improve the securitising dilemma and maintain the macrosecuritising frame. If the actor chooses to desecuritize, this process “may be used to facilitate the subordination of one security frame under another” (p. 268). There is no reason, in theory, to believe that macrosecuritisations will function in a different way than the securitisations at the middle level; despite their complex structure and larger scale, they operate in the same way.

Likewise, macrosecuritisations require, as other securitisations, securitising actors, proper speech acts, and a supportive audience (p. 265). Balzacq (2005) argues that “effective securitisation is audience centred” (as cited in Thomas & Lo, 2020, p. 364). Taking a starting point in the model of Buzan and Waever, Thomas and Lo (2020) argue that this means that should there be competing interests between lower-level audiences, the process of macrosecuritisation would be imperfect and perhaps even unsuccessful (p. 364). This leads back to the aforementioned complex structure of macrosecuritisation, in which constant tensions between the levels are present. This will be demonstrated in the analysis when we examine the complex nature of the process of macrosecuritising Covid-19 in Colombia when securitisation dilemmas and tensions occur, which again will display the scales of securitisation.

4.3 The securitisation dilemma

As described by Olesker (2018), the securitisation dilemma occurs when the securitisation of one issue in a sector impacts negatively upon another sector and therefore, a dilemma occurs of whether to securitise the issue or not (p. 316). The concept had a central role during the Cold War in neo-realist and realist international relations theory to describe how self-help behaviour, as a result of anarchy, left actors of the international society less secure than they had to be (p. 316). In other words, actions taken in one state to increase its security impacted negatively upon another state by increasing insecurity there, thereby forcing this state to respond and thus leaving both states insecure.

Many developments in the meaning of security have been made in the post-Cold War literature. Alexander Wendt (1992) and other social constructivists have critiqued the assumption and the neorealist framing that self-help behaviour inevitably follows anarchy (as cited in Olesker,

2018, p. 316). Collins (2004) perceives self-help and anarchy as circumstances for a security dilemma to occur but argues that a security dilemma does not necessarily take place just by the mere existence of anarchy (as cited in Olesker, 2018, p. 316). Others have challenged the neo-realist focus on the primary actors being states to demonstrate how certain groups can also be affected by a security dilemma (p. 316). Nevertheless, according to Olesker (2018), the most essential development is that of the Copenhagen school by Buzan et al. (1998) who, in an attempt to broaden the understanding of security, put a focus on nonmilitary sectors and conceptualised security to include threats from societal, political, economic, and environmental sectors. These can occur both between states and within them (pp. 22-23).

The securitisation dilemma has only recently been conceptualised in the literature and is yet to be developed. Watson (2014) first recognised the security dilemma as an intersectoral competition, in which the securitisation of one sector, e.g., political, can have the unforeseen consequences of producing a threat in a different sector (as cited in Olesker, 2018 p. 316). However, according to Olesker (2018), this conceptualisation lacks uncertainty, fear and tragedy, the key features of the security dilemma, and only focuses on *what* should be securitised and not *if* securitisation should happen (p. 317). A different view is that of Van Rythoven (2015), who describes the security dilemma as “one of unintended consequences” (as cited in Olesker, 2018, p. 317). He states that securitisation paves way for political mobilisation by presenting a problem as immediately threatening, which is described as attractive to Van Rythoven. Nevertheless, he also states that the process of securitisation is characterised by uncertainty with the “potential for a cascade of unpredictable and perverse consequences” that are not predicted by the securitising actor at the time (p. 317). Consequently, the dilemma is within the risk taken by the securitising actor. When a securitisation dilemma occurs, the securitising actor can attempt to resolve it through different strategies, such as imposing hierarchy and desecuritisation (Watson, 2013, p. 266).

The securitisation dilemma is therefore prominent in times of uncertainty, and therefore, this approach to securitisation is useful for this project, when considering the pandemic and GBV. The theory of the securitisation dilemma will be used to argue that the increase of GBV as a result of the Covid-19 response in Colombia is a securitisation dilemma. Further, it will be examined if and how this securitisation dilemma affects the securitisation of Covid-19 and if any desecuritisation have occurred to resolve the dilemma.

5.0 Analysis

The analysis is divided into four sections. The first two will consider the speech acts of President Duque and Vice President Ramirez. These will consider how the securitising actors use these speech acts to convince the audience of the urgency of the threats of Covid-19 and GBV. Section three will consider the securitising measures which the political leaders have taken to secure the threat of GBV. This section will explore the securitisation dilemma that occurred between Covid-19 and GBV. The final section will consider the response of the audience and whether they have accepted or rejected the securitisation of Covid-19 and GBV.

5.1 Security speech acts on Covid-19

This section will consider the security speech acts by President Duque and Vice President Ramírez on Covid-19. Different themes will be examined, including saving lives, protection, war rhetoric and solidarity to understand how the securitising actors label Covid-19 as a threat. Furthermore, it will be argued that the securitising actors macrosecuritise Covid-19.

5.1.1 Speech acts on saving lives

Shortly after the WHO declared Covid-19 as a pandemic on March 11, 2020, the Colombian government initiated three responses. First, they closed the Venezuelan borders, second, international organisations were requested to limit their operations by half in Cucuta, and third, a national quarantine was implemented. This quarantine mandated that citizens must isolate and remain in their homes, with only a few exceptions (Zulver et al., 2021, p. 344).

The president of Colombia, Iván Duque, appeared on the television program “Lineamientos para el Aislamiento Preventivo Obligatorio” (Mandatory Preventive Isolation Guidelines) on March 24, 2020, along with government representatives to outline the restrictions to stop the spread of Covid-19, which would come into effect the next day until April 13. The program was intended to inform the Colombian people about the restrictions and to reassure them that public transport, vital services, and emergency care would still be available (Duque, 2020a). President Duque led the program and gave an introduction, outlining the main reasons for these emergency measures, he also made some concluding remarks, both of which will be examined here.

When directly addressing the Colombian people on this program on March 24, 2020, President Duque communicates:

You know that from tomorrow Tuesday, at the end of the night, we will be beginning this exercise of the national quarantine, for 19 days, which will go until April 13. It is an unprecedented exercise in our country and its purpose is to save lives. (Duque, 2020a)

In this speech act, the president is the securitising actor, while the audience is the entire population of Colombia. In relation to the widening of security studies, the referent object, as well as the threat, can be a multitude of factors (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 36). Considering this, the threat of this speech act is Covid-19, while the referent object in need of protection is the lives of Colombians.

A common theme of the public addresses by the president is to save lives and care for each other by following the quarantine guidelines from the government. According to Buzan et al. (1998), speech acts are defined not by the utterance of the word security, but by the securitising actor's description of a threat to the relevant audience (p. 27). As seen in this speech act by the president, he labels Covid-19 as life-threatening to the people of Colombia and justifies the use of "extraordinary measures" in the shape of a national quarantine to save lives (Waever, 1995, p. 51).

In this program on March 24, he further mentions that these restrictions will save lives two more times: once more in the introduction and once in the final remarks of the conclusion. At the start of the introduction, he urges solidarity stating that "together we protect and save lives" (Duque, 2020a). In the last sentence of the address, he states that by complying with the restrictions, all Colombians act "with a single purpose: to work for Colombia, save Colombia, save lives for Colombia. If we take care of ourselves, we take care of others" (Duque, 2020a). Waever's (2014) idea of securitisation is when a securitising actor, in this case, the president, labels something as an existential threat to a referent object, which justifies the use of extraordinary measures to the relevant audience. As seen in this speech act, President Duque solidifies the 'existential threat' of Covid-19 to Colombia and the lives of the Colombian people, when stating that the only purpose is to save lives. He is reminding the people of the seriousness of the threat and that only by extraordinary measures can they save Colombia. He, therefore, justifies the use of extraordinary measures to the relevant audience, the people of Colombia.

The extraordinary measures taken to control the threat of the virus is further demonstrated

on March 21, 2020, when President Duque (2020) posted the tweet: “As a government, we have taken drastic measures to confront the coronavirus pandemic. We must understand that our discipline saves lives, and it is time to collaborate” (Duque, 2020c). Here, the president attempts to convince the audience that these extraordinary measures are needed because they save lives.

The president continues this rhetoric when speaking of the quarantine in his speech on May 5, 2020, on the daily broadcast ‘Prevención y Acción’ (Prevention and Action):

We take all of these steps to serve various purposes. The first, take away the exponential spread of the virus. The second, save lives. The third, that we could guarantee that the health system would not collapse due to the growth that could occur from the pandemic. (Duque, 2020b)

Considering the emphasis on the need for extraordinary measures two months into the lockdown, the president continues the attempt to convince the audience of these measures. The message the president is presenting is that these quarantine measures in Colombia will save people from Covid-19 and death. His choice of words is “save lives” and it presents a hopeful image and suggests that the lockdown will save them from Covid-19; effectually giving lockdown the attribute of saving lives. The chosen words are loaded, stating that it is a life-or-death situation, that Covid-19 is a dangerous, life-threatening virus and that the government is attempting to provide security for the people. This is one of the phrases which Duque utilises to present Covid-19 as a direct threat to people's lives; he is presenting it as an existential threat that merits extraordinary actions to handle it, following the thoughts of Buzan et al. (1998, p. 5). Using the life-or-death analogy, the president frames Covid-19 as a security threat, which the citizens need protection from in the form of national quarantines.

By continuously stressing the need for extraordinary measures to save lives, the president uses security as a speech act to gain control of the threat. Waeber (1995) argues that the process of securitisation can be used as a tool that “the power holder can use to gain control of the issue and justifies extreme or unusual methods” (p. 51). Considering this, securitisation is a tool used continuously by the president to control the virus by reiterating his point; that Covid-19 is an existential threat to the people of Colombia, meaning that extraordinary measures must be taken to save lives. In this case, securitisation is thus also a tool for the president to make people comply

with restrictions.

Buzan et al. (1998) state that if a securitising actor uses extraordinary measures that are outside of the boundaries of normal political practices, they consider the securitising actor as being successful and legitimate (pp. 23-24). Following this logic, President Duque would be considered successful and legitimate after the implementation of the national quarantine because he has managed to convince the people of Colombia that Covid-19 is an existential threat and that extraordinary measures must be taken to address it.

5.1.2 Speech acts on protection

President Duque frames Covid-19 as a threat by saying that the government's primary concern is to save lives. This is supported further as he uses the word 'protect' or 'protection' 16 times during the March 24 program, when speaking of the national quarantine due to the threat of Covid-19 (Duque, 2020a). The president states: "this national quarantine, what it seeks is the solidarity of all; that together we protect and save lives; that we protect ourselves, to protect others" (Duque, 2020a). This quote speaks to both the unity that the Colombians feel as a people, and it places everyone on equal footing as he is stating that everyone must do their part to protect one another. He goes on to identify particularly vulnerable groups which the government is attempting to help (Duque, 2020a). This is further displayed when the president states: "I also want to emphasize that our essential task is to protect life and protect health. The second is to protect the most vulnerable families in the country" (Duque, 2020a).

From these speech acts, it is evident that the president justifies the use of extraordinary measures because people need to be protected from the virus. He especially emphasizes the need to protect the most vulnerable, which is used to convince the audience to comply with restrictions to protect others. As stated by Buzan et al. (1998), the audience is important in securitisation because the securitising actor has to convince them that an issue should be perceived as an existential threat and that extraordinary measures are justified (p. 41). Failing to do so, and the securitisation will be unsuccessful (p. 204). As such, the securitising actor needs to use convincing words so that the audience will consider the extraordinary measures as a necessity to fight the existential threat. Besides highlighting Covid-19 as a threat to the lives of Colombians, the president further states the implications of the vulnerable in an attempt to unite the people in protecting the vulnerable against a common enemy. This is a way for the president to emphasise the threat and make people

comply with restrictions.

President Duque has been very prominent in the discussion about Covid-19, both during official speeches or television programs and on Twitter. Vice President Ramírez has also posted on Twitter, although not as much as the president. Because of her positive Covid-19 test, the vice president posted on her Twitter on October 23, 2020:

I reiterate the call to Colombians not to lower their guard and to abide by biosafety measures since the pandemic is a reality, which can affect us all. It is time to strengthen our spirituality, to take care of each other and protect each other. (Ramírez, 2020a)

From this example of her tweet, it is clear that Vice President Ramírez agrees with President Duque on the Covid-19 protection speech acts which were previously discussed. Buzan et al. (1998) consider the political leader “who performs the security speech act” as the securitising actor (p. 40). Therefore, like the president, the vice president is also a securitising actor in Colombia. She also frames Covid-19 as an existential threat by emphasising the need to “protect each other”, highlighting the threat to the referent object, the Colombian people. By emphasising the need to protect each other is also how she justifies the use of extraordinary measures, to which she reiterates the importance of complying with these measures and not lowering one's guard seven months into the pandemic.

Another example of this protection rhetoric is seen at the OECD-LAC Virtual Social Inclusion Summit on July 13 2020, a meeting between the Latin American countries and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) to address the consequences of Covid-19. At the meeting, the vice president stated: “we must work to protect the health of our population but also to stimulate the gradual recovery of the economies” (Ramírez, 2020b). In this quotation, the vice president emphasises the goal to protect the health of the Colombian people from the Covid-19 threat, but another issue is presented as well; the consequences the pandemic has had on the economy. As such, the vice president speaks both of protecting the health of the population and the economy.

The articulation of both the protection of people and the economy is further seen in the presidential tweet on April 29, 2021: “We are facing difficult times due to the pandemic and our duty is to continue protecting the most vulnerable and cleaning up finances” (Duque, 2021a). The

words used in this tweet shows that the securitisation of Covid-19 continued into 2021; Colombia is still facing difficult times as a result of the pandemic, and the government still has to protect the most vulnerable against the existential threat of Covid-19. Although the nature and severity of the virus remain the same, another urgency has appeared as also displayed in the previous statement by the vice president, namely the economic impact of the virus. The president states the government is trying to “clean up finances” which suggests that the economy of Colombia suffered due to the pandemic.

Therefore, the securitisation of Covid-19 continues but at the same time, the suffering economy has become a focal point in both the statements by the president and the vice president. It has previously been established that the president and vice president label Covid-19 an existential threat that takes extraordinary measures to address this to save lives. Thus, it is noticeable that the economy would also be an issue uttered in the same context with protecting the most vulnerable. It can therefore be assumed that the economic deterioration is also of great concern to the president and vice president and an issue they must address at the same time as Covid-19.

5.1.3 Speech acts on war rhetoric

In his address to the Congress on July 20, 2020, President Duque states that “we are capable of acting for the protection of the homeland in the hardest moment that our globality has experienced since the Second World War” (Duque, 2020d). In this security speech act, the “securitising actor”, President Duque, is addressing the “relevant audience”, Congress. To the Congress, the president labels Covid-19 an “existential threat” by comparing it to the Second World War and the “referent object” in need of protection is the homeland, following the thoughts of the Copenhagen School of security studies (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5).

This security speech act displays how President Duque considers the Covid-19 pandemic to be as devastating as war and military conflict. Following the thoughts of Buzan et al. (1998), the issue the securitising actor is addressing must pose a more urgent and greater threat than an issue that can be dealt with in the range of ‘normal’ politics (p. 5). Considering that the president places the threat of Covid-19 on the same level as that of the Second World War, this is labelled as a much greater and more urgent threat than what is usually dealt with within the political sphere of Colombia. Furthermore, this comparison to war is a way for the president to convince Congress that Covid-19 poses an existential threat to “the homeland”.

Furthermore, the president is using phrases like “protection of the homeland” which is more commonly associated with war rhetoric than with a health crisis. Also, considering that ‘the homeland’ is the referent object of this speech, the referent object has changed compared to seen previously. In the previous two sections, the referent object has been the lives of the Colombian people. Following Walt’s (1991) thoughts on traditional security studies, the state is the referent object, which is also the case in this instance with the homeland as the referent object (p. 213). Nevertheless, in traditional security studies, the focus would be on military power as the threat, which is not the case with Covid-19 being the existential threat (p. 213). However, the Copenhagen School widened security studies by expanding the definition of threat, thus considering other non-military threats as well (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 4-5). Therefore, the president can label a health crisis as Covid-19 as an existential threat. It is interesting though that the president uses war rhetoric and has the state as the referent object, leading the thoughts to traditional security studies, when in fact, the threat is non-military. The president, therefore, does this as a way to emphasize the extent of the threat and convince the audience that extraordinary measures, to the same extent as in war, must be taken

When President Duque is stating “we are capable of acting for the protection of the homeland”, he presents himself and the government as good securitising actors, who will be able to provide security for the Colombian people through these hard times (Duque, 2020d). The national “we” is thus portrayed as the guardians of Colombia who are capable of bringing security to the country. This is a way for the president to convince the audience that the government is capable of taking the extraordinary measures needed to address the Covid-19 threat.

Furthermore, he states that this is the “hardest moment that our globality has experienced since the Second World War” (Duque, 2020d). This opens for the assumption that Covid-19 has been macrosecuritised on a global scale. Following Buzan and Waever (2009), they introduce a sense of scale in securitisation theory by speaking of a hierarchy of threats in their theory of macrosecuritisation (p. 267). They propose that international security is sometimes organised around one overarching and urgent threat (p. 253). This threat is then placed highest in the hierarchy and thereby any other securitisation must be organised around this macrosecuritisation (p. 256). Therefore, when the president compares the threat to that of the Second World War and states that it is the “hardest moment that our globality has seen” since the war, it can be argued that Covid-19 is a macrosecuritisation. This emphasises the extent to which the president perceives the threat of

Covid-19.

Another example of this war rhetoric is also present in his address to the Congress on July 20, 2020, where Duque states:

Those thousands of men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting the health of others (...) their courage always inspires us, as does their inexhaustible patriotism. Their courage on the front line[s] of the war against Covid-19 is an example for all Colombians.

(Duque, 2020d)

Duque recapitulates the bravery of those workers and calls them patriots which is someone who has fought or is fighting for their country. Duque continues with this urgent tone and this type of speech acts as he states that they show “their courage on the front line[s] of the war against Covid-19” (Duque, 2020d). He directly calls the struggle to contain and limit the spread of the virus a war against Covid-19. This is accentuated by him saying that the healthcare workers are on the front lines of the war “dedicating their lives to protecting the health of others” (Duque, 2020d). This is blatant war rhetoric and allows him to use “extraordinary measures” to combat this virus (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5). Using the analogy of war, President Duque presents Covid-19 as an “existential” threat to the lives of the Colombian people. He frames healthcare workers as the soldiers risking their lives and as the leader of the country, he is framed as a general leading his people through the war. In this way, he is securitising Covid-19, which is used to justify the extraordinary measures which are implemented to fight this ‘war’.

Vice President Ramírez does not share this strong and loaded discourse of the president; however, she does use words that are in line with the tone of the president’s speeches. An example of this is when she is speaking about the vaccination plan on February 12, 2021, which can only work if they, the different regions, collaborate “so that this vaccination plan can be fulfilled and we can all, united, defeat the Covid-19 virus.” (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2021). She uses the word defeat which plays into the war rhetoric of the president, as it is usually associated with a battle or struggle for victory. Ramírez is stating that together they can win over the Covid-19 virus as long as they are united against it.

5.1.4 Speech acts on solidarity

As seen in previous quotes, there is a strong message that it is important for Colombia to unite and to show solidarity. Examples of this call for solidarity in the face of the Covid-19 quarantine is seen when the president states, during the previously mentioned television program “Lineamientos para el Aislamiento Preventivo Obligatorio”, on March 24, 2020:

May this also be an opportunity for us to do that great national 'thought', where collective intelligence leads us to be in solidarity; that we can all think about how we adopt a family that may be in need because it will not have the daily income. (Duque, 2020a)

In this quote, the president is asking the Colombian people to think of their neighbours and consider the more vulnerable people in society and help where they can. President Duque is asking for and urging solidarity of the nation and compassion for those who are less fortunate; because only then can security be achieved. In this tweet on March 18, 2020, he states that in the face of this challenge, Colombians must stand together: “(...) As a nation, united, we can move forward” (Duque, 2020e). He still asks for solidarity in his tweet on May 1, 2021, where he states that they “(...) must unite to move forward, protecting the most vulnerable (...)” (Duque, 2021b). By consistently asking the Colombian people to unite and have solidarity, President Duque is saying that only together can they fight Covid-19 and save the country from this virus.

This is an example of the securitising actor, the president, using nationalistic language in an attempt to unify the Colombian people against the common threat of Covid-19. It further emphasizes Covid-19 as a threat that cannot be dealt with in the range of ‘normal’ politics because it is so great that it takes all of the Colombian people to defeat Covid-19 (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5). Calling for solidarity is thus a way for the president to highlight the urgency of the threat to convince the audience that extraordinary measures are necessary.

Another example of the need for collective action can be seen in the president’s use of the word “we”. In his address to the Congress on July 20, 2020, he stated: “we are capable of acting” and on May 1, 2021, he tweeted: “we must unite to move forward” (Duque, 2020d; Duque, 2021b). In his statements, President Duque uses the word ‘we’ continuously, which also reinforces that they as a country are united and only through collective action can they slow the spread of Covid-

19 and safeguard the country against the virus.

Vice President Ramírez agrees with this idea of solidarity to fight the virus, which is clear in her public statement on February 12, 2021, made in connection with Colombia initiating its vaccination plan. Here, the vice president stated: “if we are united, we will be able to pass this painful moment of the pandemic (...)” (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2021). The vice president, therefore, constructs the meaning of threat as something that can only be defeated through solidarity and unity. This is following the thoughts of Waeber (1995), stating that the securitising actors have the power to define the threat and thus construct the meaning of security (p. 51). This is thus a way for the vice president to convince the audience that Covid-19 is an existential threat that can only be defeated through solidarity.

In this way, both the president and the vice president are framing Covid-19 as an existential threat that they must combat together as a country to be secure, stating that only through solidarity can they be safe. As stated by Buzan et al. (1998), the securitising actor defines the security issue and thereby the meaning of security (p. 34). Thus, in this case, President Duque and Vice President Ramírez present Covid-19 as a threat to the individual as well as the nation and define security as something that can only be achieved in solidarity.

5.1.5 Macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 in Colombia

Considering the security speech acts by President Duque and Vice President Ramírez on the Covid-19 situation in Colombia, it can be argued that these actors are macrosecuritising Covid-19. As described, the president states that Covid-19 is the worst threat that the international system has faced since the Second World War and by comparing Covid-19 to war he is assigning an urgency to the issue justifying the need for extraordinary measures (Duque, 2020d). He also emphasises that the quarantine restrictions are extraordinary for Colombia and for many other countries stating that “there are many countries in the world that are doing it [restrictions] in the midst of very difficult, very complex situations” (Duque, 2020a). This proves that this securitisation of Covid-19 is happening on a global scale and due to this it is a macrosecuritisation as the global crisis is affecting the individual policies of all nations. This is consistent with the thoughts of Buzan and Waeber (2009) who argue that one threat can rank higher than others and pose an overarching threat to the extent that international security is organised around it (p. 253). This is the case with Covid-19 that affects the entire globe and therefore, international security, as well as the national

security in Colombia, is organised around this.

As discussed in the previous sections, President Duque uses nationalistic language and calls for the Colombian people to stand together, united in the protection of the most vulnerable in society. By emphasising the urgent need to protect others, it indicates the palpable danger of Covid-19 to the individual as well as the nation as a whole. The president is attempting to convince the ‘relevant audience’, the Colombian population, that Covid-19 is an ‘overarching threat’ because the ‘referent object’ is the entire population of Colombia. This is in line with Buzan and Waever’s (2009) theory of macrosecuritisation as they state that “macrosecuritisations are on a larger scale” (p. 257). Thus, as Colombia and its entire population are in danger due to Covid-19, this threat is ranked higher than any other threat in Colombia, which is also evident the many times the president states that the purpose of the securitisation against Covid-19, the national quarantine measures, is to save lives (Duque, 2020a; Duque, 2020b).

As previously mentioned, the president addressed the people on March 24, 2020, to discuss the national quarantine which would be implemented the following day (Duque, 2020a). During and after the national lockdown of 2020, lasting from 24 March until 31 August, President Duque appeared on a nightly program called ‘Prevention and Action’ to discuss the Covid-19 situation for the day (El Tiempo.com y Política, 2020). The usual message from this program is to thank the people working to protect Colombians, to reiterate the importance of following the guidelines, and to give an update on the Covid-19 numbers in the country and globally (Duque, 2020f; Duque, 2020g; Duque, 2020h; Duque, 2021c). This program has run uninterrupted, except for holidays, until May 2021 as a result of national protests and negotiations between the president and protest representatives from the people (El Tiempo.com y Política, 2020; Redacción Política, 2021; Semana, 2021).

This continuous broadcast is also evidence of the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 in Colombia, as President Duque considers the threat of Covid-19 dire enough to justify the ongoing broadcast. He states that the point of the program is to inform the people with new and correct information on the current situation and to explain the government's measures and initiatives (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2020a). The program is not only informing the Colombian people but also serves as a reminder of the preventative measures which they must follow. It also has the purpose of reiterating that Covid-19 is an existential threat, and that people must not loosen

up on preventative action but must remain vigilant. This is a way for the president to macrosecuritise the virus daily.

The national quarantine was only meant to be a 19-day lockdown until April 13; however, it was extended eight times and was only lifted at the end of August 2020 (Duque, 2020a; El Tiempo.com y Política, 2020). On March 18, 2020, President Duque tweeted the following:

Given the new conditions due to the coronavirus pandemic, we decreed a State of Emergency, protected by article 215 of the Constitution. Tomorrow we will reveal a set of economic measures that we will apply. As a nation, united, we can move forward. (Duque, 2020e)

He is identifying Covid-19 as a threat and because of this, Colombia is in a state of emergency. This state of emergency also demonstrates the overarching threat and urgency Covid-19 poses to Colombia, following Buzan and Waever's (2009) thoughts on macrosecuritisation (p. 257). Furthermore, this speech act is another example of the president speaking of the economy in the context of the pandemic. As such, despite the security issue of the economy not being of our preliminary concern, we believe it is necessary to address this. When the president speaks of this issue in the context of the Covid-19 threat, we believe considering the economy could add to examining the scales of securitisation.

That the Covid-19 threat is macrosecuritised can further be seen in the president's address to the Colombian people on May 5, 2020. The president here acknowledges that many citizens are worried about how the country will recover financially from the state that they are in, to which he states that: "(...) clearly, we have to start from the premise that there is no dilemma between the defence of health and life, with the social, economic, and labour development of [the] people" (Duque, 2020b). In this quote, the president is making it clear that it is not up to debate that saving people's lives comes before anything else, despite any doubts that the Colombian people may have with the actions taken to securitise Covid-19. Covid-19 is considered the overarching threat, while the economy is addressed within the confines of the pandemic. This follows the theory of macrosecuritisation, in which lower-level securitisations must be organised around the macrosecuritisation (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 257).

Following Watson (2013), a securitisation dilemma is likely to occur with a macrosecuritisation, which by Olesker (2018) is defined as a threat that increases in one sector as a result of

securitising another, creating a dilemma of whether to securitise this issue or not (p. 268; p. 316). Thus, it can be argued that the failing economy is a securitisation dilemma that has resulted due to the Covid-19 securitisation. The dilemma is then between public health or the economy. To resolve or improve the dilemma, the securitising actor can have different strategies; to desecuritize the threat that resulted in the dilemma, to begin with, in this case, Covid-19, or stressing the hierarchical order of securitisations (Watson, 2013, p. 268). In the above statement, the president is reassuring the people that there is no dilemma between saving lives and improving other sectors of the country. Therefore, he is stressing the hierarchical order of securitisation to justify the continuance of the Covid-19 lockdown despite it resulting in a threat to the economy. Therefore, the securitising actor is attempting to control the tensions and protect the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 by justifying that extraordinary measures must continue (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 257).

In this sense, it is safe to assume that the president considers the economy as a secondary security issue. This demonstrates the scales of securitisation during this crisis; despite the struggling economy which poses a securitisation dilemma to Colombia, the overarching threat of Covid-19 is prioritised, and the economy is perceived as a secondary threat. This follows in line with the thoughts of Buzan and Waever (2009) who argue that the most powerful macrosecuritisation will “impose a hierarchy on the lower-level ones incorporated within them” where these securitisations must be organised around the macro frame (p. 257). This is also the case with Covid-19 in Colombia being the overarching threat and a powerful macrosecuritisation. This means that every other threat, like the failing economy, must be organised around the macrosecuritisation.

It further demonstrates the constant tensions between securitisations. Buzan and Waever (2009) argue that because of the large scale of a macrosecuritisation, the structure is also more complex than with other securitisations. They consist of multiple securitisations within them and thus, permanent tensions between the different levels occur (p. 257). This can also be seen in this case when the Colombian people start to question how the country will financially recover from the Covid-19 securitisation. This is displayed in the above statement from the president on May 5, 2020, who then attempts to control the tensions and reassures the public of the Covid-19 securitisation.

Vice President Ramírez agrees with this hierarchy of threats. Covid-19 is ranked highest in the hierarchy of threats and the economy, while still important, is a secondary security issue.

When speaking at the OECD-LAC Virtual Social Inclusion Summit on July 13 2020, Vice President Ramírez made the following statement:

It is very important also to achieve a balance between looking after the health of our country and preventing the spread of this pandemic. We have been obliged to implement measures to try and minimize as far as possible the death rate resulting from the virus, but at the same time, we must act to protect our government, to overcome the shock of job loss and the shutting down of our industries (...) We are facing one of the greatest economic and industrial crises the world has seen in decades. (Ramírez, 2020b)

Ramírez states that they are facing an economic crisis that needs to be addressed, however, they still must protect the lives of the people. She is demonstrating the tensions between the economic sector and the health sector, where the economic situation in the country has worsened to the point where inaction would have detrimental effects. It must be done in a manner that does not compromise the lives of the people, in other words, the economic sector should be securitised within the context of the Covid-19 macrosecuritisation (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 257). It is clear that the economic sector is important but that the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 is more urgent as they frame it as saving lives, again displaying the scales of securitisation during the crisis.

The scales of securitisation are also clear in the president's attempt to support the development of other sectors of the country, such as economic, social, and labour development, certain shops and services were reopened to "(...) give the opportunity to other sectors to also boost our economy" (Duque, 2020b). This included automotive, furniture and other important wholesale shops, also including bookstores and other similar services (Duque, 2020b). He is reassuring the Colombian people that they are attempting to reopen certain parts of society as he states that it "shows that we are taking responsible steps as a country to reactivate our economy and at the same time-saving lives and protecting health" (Duque, 2020b). He reiterates that they are attempting to open certain services while still having a handle on the virus, and this displays how the securitising actor is attempting to securitise the economy, but still within the macrosecuritisation because they must protect health at the same time (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 257).

As stated previously in this section, when faced with a securitisation dilemma, the securitising actor can attempt to improve it by either stressing the hierarchical order or through desecuritisation (Watson, 2013, p. 268). This initiative to open certain parts of the country is indicative of a slight desecuritisation of Covid-19, while still being within the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19. Buzan et al (1998) introduce desecuritisation, which they describe as “the shifting of issue out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (p. 4). Considering this, it can be argued that President Duque is attempting a ‘slight’ desecuritisation of Covid-19 as he scales back on restrictions to securitise the economy. He is stating that they will open these services to help the economy, but that it is within the confines of the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19.

However, this slight desecuritisation is dependent on what consequences will occur by scaling back, which is evident when the president states: “If we see warning lights, we will not fail to make drastic decisions necessary to protect life and health” (Duque, 2020b). It is clearly stated that the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 is more important than the other sectors and that it will be prioritised if they see signs that there is an increase in Covid-19 cases. In the hierarchy of threats in Colombia, Covid-19 is at the top, while the other sectors and societal issues are middle-level securitisations. Covid-19 is macrosecuritised and all other security threats are addressed in the context of the pandemic, following the theory of macrosecuritisation, in which the macrosecuritisation imposes a hierarchy on other securitisations (Buzan & Waeber, 2009, p. 257).

This section has considered the scales of securitisation in the speech acts of President Duque and Vice President Ramírez on the threat of the Covid-19 pandemic in Colombia. The results are threefold. First, they have categorised Covid-19 as an existential threat that needs to be securitised. Second, the Covid-19 threat was considered as such an overarching threat and danger to the lives of their citizens that it was macrosecuritised. Third, it is evident that scales of securitisation are used to determine the correct course of action to take against an existential threat. This was seen as the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 has been prioritised over other threats such as the economy, social, or labour. The other securitisations were only considered in the confines of the macrosecuritisation, and the president made it clear that if initiatives to, for example, boost the economy prove to have a negative impact on the health sector and cause an increase in Covid-19 cases, they would be desecuritised to protect the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19.

This use of scales of securitisation is essential in a crisis because it is a tool for the securitising actor to convince and assure the audience that one security issue takes precedence over another. As such, scales of securitisation give power to the securitising actor to determine what action is to be taken. It further displays the tensions that occur when considering the scale of a macrosecuritisation, in which the securitising actor through desecuritisation can attempt to lower tensions and secure the macrosecuritisation.

5.2 Security speech acts on GBV

The following section will consider the security speech acts on GBV by President Duque and Vice President Ramírez during the Covid-19 pandemic. The speech acts will display how they label GBV as a threat and how they attempt to convince the audience that extraordinary measures are needed. It will further be argued that the increase of GBV poses a securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV in Colombia. From here, it will be examined how the securitising actors have attempted to resolve or improve the dilemma. In the relevant sections, the theory of securitisation, macrosecuritisation and the securitisation dilemma will be applied.

5.2.1 Security speech acts on GBV by President Duque

On May 6, 2020, six weeks into lockdown, President Duque was in a virtual dialogue with the CEO of the Spanish debate Platform ‘Nueva Economía Fórum’ (New Economy Forum) José Luis Rodríguez about domestic violence and what initiatives the government has taken to address this within the framework of the mandated isolation (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2020b). At this event, the President stated:

I believe that the great conversation also has to be, and it must be said bluntly, to defeat machismo. If we want to change the trends of domestic violence, let us think about how we are educating men, how we should be more respectful in this training and how men have to be more respectful. (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2020b)

In this security speech act, it can be considered what the threat is and who the referent object is. Following the Copenhagen School of security studies, it is more difficult to determine the threat

and referent object in widened security studies compared to traditional security studies (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 21-22) In traditional security studies, the threat is equated to military issues and the referent object is the state, while in the widened approach to security studies, the threat and the referent object can be a multitude of actors or entities (pp. 21-22). According to the president, the problem of domestic violence stems from machismo, and he uses the phrase ‘defeat machismo’, implying that machismo is something threatening and an ongoing battle, which must be won. Thus, he perceives machismo as a source of insecurity to women, making machismo the threat.

Moreover, there is the assumption that women are the ones who suffer from domestic violence, because men are the perpetrators, making women in Colombia the referent object. In this security speech act, the president is very straightforward about naming the ones who perform domestic violence; men, who must be educated and become more respectful. He is thus very clear on who brings about the insecurity to women and that this insecurity stems from a societal problem of machismo.

President Duque is therefore attempting to convince the audience, the public of Colombia, that machismo is posing an existential threat towards Colombian women, meaning that extraordinary measures must be taken (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 36). These measures are extraordinary because they indicate a complete societal change; the president is suggesting to defeat machismo and educate men, which can only be done by completely changing the culture and norms in the country because the country has a history of GBV even before Covid-19. This also emphasizes the extent of the threat of machismo, considering how he describes the “trends of domestic violence”, thereby highlighting that this security threat towards women has become ingrained in everyday life in Colombia.

On November 25, 2020, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, President Duque held a speech to the Colombian people where he spoke of the problem on VAW and the progress that has been made in regard to this (Duque, 2020i). In his speech, the president stated when speaking of VAW: “we find phenomena of violence against women that are practically incubated from the end of adolescence” (Duque, 2020i). In this citation, the president emphasizes how extensive the problem is by calling it a phenomenon and thereby something that is very real and can be observed in society, not only as a once-in-a-while situation but instead as something that is ingrained in the upbringing of young people.

As previously mentioned, in securitisation studies, the speech act is not defined by the

securitising actor uttering the word ‘security’. Instead, the threat is defined by the description of threat by the securitising actor (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 27). Considering this, the phenomenon of VAW is therefore the threat in this security speech act and Colombian women are the referent object (p. 5). This is therefore a problem that threatens the security of all Colombian women. Labelling it a threat this way, calling it a phenomenon that is incubated from the end of adolescence, is also how the president justifies to the audience, the Colombian people, that extraordinary measures are needed.

In the same speech, President Duque further states: “I think about how many women are victims of all kinds of abuse every day” (Duque, 2020i). In this speech act, the threat is ‘all kinds of abuse, the referent object is ‘women’ and the audience is still the entire population of Colombia (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 5). The president refers to the referent object as victims, which brings connotations of someone weak and powerless and in need of protection, justifying his argument that extraordinary measures must be taken to address VAW. He further highlights that this abuse is an existential threat when stating that this happens every day. This implies an urgency to the problem as it poses a threat to Colombian women who daily are at risk of becoming victims of abuse. Thus, in these speech acts, the president is framing VAW as a security issue as it is an existential threat to women.

5.2.2 Security speech acts on GBV by Vice President Ramírez

In the context of the pandemic, Vice President Ramírez has had more statements on GBV than what could be found on the president. Especially on her Twitter account has she made her opinion on the issue known. She is also more verbal when speaking of GBV in the context of the pandemic, whereas the president speaks of GBV in general terms as it being a problem that has always been present, nevertheless a problem that must be addressed.

On June 18, 2020, the vice president wrote on her Twitter addressing the Colombian people: “Violence against women is the other pandemic that we as a society must face. Eradicating it requires identifying and modifying those behaviours that, for years, have been normalized in our society. Women, you are not alone” (Ramírez, 2020c). In this Twitter post, Ramírez refers to VAW as a ‘pandemic’, emphasizing the extensiveness of the problem and as a problem that affects the entire country. Following Waever (1995), when considering security as a speech act, the state can label a certain threat a security issue and in doing so “the ‘state’ can claim a special right” to

address this threat with extraordinary means (Waever, 1995, p. 51). Considering this, the vice president defines VAW as an existential threat to women by calling it a pandemic.

She further argues that they must face this pandemic, implying that change has to happen without any debate and that everyone has to take part. She thus justifies action by using the word pandemic to describe the situation, thereby framing it as an existential threat and a security issue. To address the situation, she further applies the word ‘eradicate’, stating that this is not a security issue that they can address lightly to simply decrease the problem; instead, it must be eliminated from everyday life in Colombia. Therefore, in labelling VAW as an existential threat and speaking of the threat in these words, she claims a “special right” to address this with extraordinary measures that have the purpose to eradicate the violence (Waever, 1995, p. 51).

Also, she describes VAW as being normalized, again highlighting how widespread this problem is and hence justifying why measures must be taken; it has become the norm that Colombian women must live with insecurity, making VAW a security issue for all women in Colombia. At the same time, while naming women as the ones who are violated, the perpetrator remains unnamed, but there is an assumption that these are men when speaking of societal norms and thereby machismo. The vice president thus applies strong language when speaking of VAW, the threat it poses and what must be done, and this is a clear example of how the vice president uses security speech acts to label VAW as a threat in the context of the pandemic.

On June 27, 2020, the vice president in a tweet stated: “We can no longer remain contemplative in the face of this brutal, almost animalistic violence against women. Together with the President @IvanDuque, we have set ourselves the goal of marking a before and after in this fight.” (Ramírez, 2020d). In this Twitter statement, Ramírez calls VAW brutal and animalistic, implying that these attacks on women are vicious and with little care for anything but immediate instincts committed by a predator. This makes the situation for Colombian women very dangerous as they are at constant risk of becoming the prey of a predator who acts purely on instincts and without self-control. This situation creates great insecurity for women all over Colombia as they can never know when such an attack might come. She further refers to the eradication of VAW as a ‘fight’, implying that there is a battle or combat situation of good vs. evil, a fight that good must win. In this speech act, she is placing herself and the president on the good side of the fight as the securitising actors who are going to bring security to Colombian women. The vice president thus frames VAW to be an existential threat to women in Colombia, which calls for extraordinary measures.

This tweet was posted concerning a Council of Ministers meeting on June 26, 2020, in which the vice president participated, and where the government agreed on intensifying measures to address the increasing violence against women during the Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted in the National Security Council beginning permanent monitoring of cases of GBV. It was the vice president herself that presented the problem to the Council of Ministers who in turn adopted measures to increase the governmental response to the increased GBV during the pandemic (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b). Considering this, it can be argued that the previous securitisation against GBV had failed. According to Buzan et al. (1998), it is key to consider both successful as well as unsuccessful securitisations and keep in mind that an act, for which “the formal resources and position are in place may fail”, resulting in the need for new security speech acts by the securitising actor (pp. 46-47). Therefore, a securitisation will be unsuccessful if the measures in place fail to address the security threat and thereby, new speech acts are needed. At the meeting, it is stated that measures were already in place but that GBV continued to increase during the pandemic, resulting in the measures being intensified. As such the previous securitisations on GBV, including the measures taken to address the security issue at the beginning of lockdown, has failed, calling for new speech acts and new extraordinary measures, presented at this meeting.

The security speech acts by Vice President Ramírez continues at the actual meeting with the Council of Ministers correspond with her Twitter post:

Here there is a sickly, brutal, totally unacceptable behaviour, which we - together - have to help confront, prevent, punish, [and] correct. This is not just an issue of the state, of the police, of the authorities, it has to be an issue of society, to put corrections to these brutal practices, which are almost animal practices (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b)

Considering that previous securitisations against GBV during the pandemic failed, which urged this meeting, this security speech act is used by the vice president in an attempt to gain control of the situation. Following Waever (1995), securitisation is a tool the securitising actor can use to gain control of the issue (pp. 51-52). Accordingly, the vice president presents this new speech act

as a tool to gain control of the issue, which the other securitisations failed to do. With this new speech act, she states the urgency of the threat after the failed securitisations.

Moreover, in this security speech act from the meeting, the strong language here continues where the vice president refers to the violence as ‘sickly’ and ‘brutal’, urging society to take this seriously and help in stopping this behaviour (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b). This is another example of the vice president using strong and loaded wording on VAW in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is also how she highlights the exacerbated situation and justifies action, where she states that she and the president have made a goal to make positive change. As stated previously, the audience plays an important role in the securitisation process because the security threat must be “accepted by a sufficient audience to sanction extraordinary defensive moves” (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 204). Considering this, the use of strong, very negative language about GBV is a way for the securitising actor, the vice president, to highlight the existential threat and convince the audience that this “sickly”, “brutal” and “animalistic” behaviour justifies extraordinary measures and calls for urgency in light of the failed securitisations.

On July 3, 2020, Ramírez participated in a security council discussing VAW in Valle del Cauca because the numbers of femicides had been increasing significantly in this area the past year preceding the meeting. At this council meeting, the vice president stated when speaking of femicides: “we have seen these extreme risks of women who could be victims of violence and this forces us to have a permanent presence” (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020a). The vice president with this phrase argues that women in Valle del Cauca live in great danger and insecurity because they are at ‘extreme’ risk of being victims of violence, emphasizing the severity and urgency of the situation. This security speech act is also given in light of the failed securitisations because the previous speech acts and measures failed to address the threat of GBV (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 46-47). Thus, this also highlights the urgency of this speech act. That the government is forced to have a permanent presence in the area further puts focus on the urgency of the situation; action has to be taken immediately before more women become victims of violence.

Moreover, these initiatives of permanent presence in the area demonstrate how the government is taking securitising action against this threat. As they state that the numbers of femicides have increased since the last meeting, it is safe to assume that the pandemic and lockdown has had a negative impact on GBV as previously discussed. Hence, the permanent presence of authorities is a securitising act against GBV during the pandemic following the security speech acts of the

vice president.

Through this securitising act, the government is actively attempting to decrease the threat of GBV but at the same time comply with the Covid-19 macrosecuritisation, which is evident as lockdown continues to persist despite the increasing GBV numbers. This is in line with Buzan and Waever's (2009) thoughts on macrosecuritisation, in which all other securitisations place lower in the hierarchy and must therefore be organised around the macrosecuritisation (p. 257). Also, as proven in the previous section on the securitisation of Covid-19, the government describes Covid-19 as the overarching threat, and therefore, it would also make sense that any measures taken to address GBV would have to function within the macrosecuritisation. This, therefore, demonstrates the scales of securitisation when it comes to addressing GBV in Colombia during the pandemic and to how the securitising actors are limited by the macrosecuritising frame in the measures they can take to address this.

5.2.3 GBV and the scales of securitisation

In all Vice President Ramírez's statements, the perpetrator remains unnamed and only women are named as the ones suffering the violence. The assumption is though that men are the ones imposing insecurity on women when she speaks of normalised behaviours in society. These statements are in contrast to President Duque's, who in several quotes name men as the perpetrator and those who are at fault for women in Colombia living in insecurity. This is also why the president puts a big focus on men and their behaviour as a main part of the problem but also the solution.

In his speech on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the president stated: "If we want to change the way violence against women occurs, we have to reflect on the way men are educated in our society" (Duque, 2020i). Again, the president directly names 'men' as the ones violating women and he perceives the behaviour of these men as a source of insecurity to women. At the same time, security can be achieved if men receive the proper upbringing and education of behaviour, which is "not an issue that we are going to solve in one day, or in two, or in three. But, for that reason [...] what we hope is to consolidate our thinking in the next generations..." (Duque, 2020i). As such, the president is stating that achieving change and security for women is a process that will take a long time, and this demonstrates the scales of securitisation when speaking of GBV and Covid-19. Stating that GBV is a societal issue that will take generations to change implies a different urgency compared to the threat of Covid-19. While

Covid-19 is framed as an urgent, overarching threat that requires immediate attention, GBV is framed as a societal problem that will only change over time, as changing the mindset of people is necessary. As such, when comparing the president's statements on GBV with his speech acts on Covid-19, it is evident that the threat of GBV is not as critical to him, demonstrating how Covid-19 ranks much higher on the scale of securitisation than GBV.

Both the president and the vice president state the importance of addressing impunity and punishments in cases of VAW. At the aforementioned meeting of Council of Ministers in which the vice president expressed her concern for the rising violence, she stated:

We have to condemn all femicides because this is one of the worst expressions of violence in society, hatred against women's bodies. This Government does not tolerate any type of violence against women, whoever they are, and the faster we can apply life imprisonment against the rape of minors, the faster we have to show the forceful rejection of Colombian society against the impunity of these cases or very mild penalties. (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b)

In this statement, Ramírez utilises very strong language when speaking of femicides, using words as 'condemn', 'worst expressions of violence' and 'hatred', demonstrating her strong stance that VAW cannot be accepted in the Colombian society. Considering the importance of the audience to the security speech act, this is a way for the vice president to convince the people of Colombia that VAW is an existential threat to women (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 204).

Also, this is another example in which she does not name a perpetrator, only the ones violated, but again, there is the assumption that the perpetrators are men because she is speaking of femicides and impunity. As such, there is the assumption that men are at fault for Colombian women's lack of security, which cannot be 'tolerated'. Therefore, she suggests putting a primary focus on impunity and mild penalties, a widespread problem when it comes to GBV in Colombia. She suggests applying life imprisonment of perpetrators, at least as the penalty for the rape of minors.

The president agrees with this when stating in his speech on the International Day for the

Elimination of Violence against Women: “I believe that in these 27 months [since he became president] we have taken assertive steps. A very clear one. Life imprisonment for rapists and murderers of children” (Duque, 2020i). Both the president and the vice president are therefore very clear on their stance that tougher penalties will bring greater security to minors and that addressing impunity and ensuring that perpetrators are punished for their crime will decrease VAW. Following Buzan et al (1998) it is the securitising actor who has the power to define a threat and thereby the meaning of security (p. 34). As such, considering these statements by the president and vice president, the threat is VAW, and security can only be achieved through tougher punishments.

Furthermore, they describe VAW in ways that give different connotations to security. While the president in his statements utilises the wording VAW, domestic violence and “all kinds of abuse” and thereby speaks of the problem in very general terms, involving all forms of violence such as physical, emotional, and sexual etc., the vice president uses phrases as ‘hatred against women’s bodies’ and ‘brutal, animalistic violence’, which describes a very physical form of violence. Her statements therefore primarily focus on physical insecurity with a focus on achieving physical security. Thereby, not saying that she does not focus on other non-physical threats to women as well, but physical threats seem more urgent to her.

Thus, from her speech acts, security to her can be argued to be safe from physical harm and living a life without fear from physical violence. In contrast, it can be argued from his speech acts that to the president security is about being free from harm in more general terms and living a life free from all forms of violence. This also means that they are describing the threat of VAW in different ways. They both perceive it to be a security issue that is a threat to women daily, but her statements make the threat appear more urgent as a result of the very physical description of the violence. In her statements, the message is clear; women are at extreme risk and dying every day from brutal and animalistic attacks and therefore, this poses an existential threat to women all over Colombia. From the vice president’s speech acts, it may therefore be that she places GBV higher on the scale of securitisations than the president.

A difference that can be found in their statements is that he in general does not speak of GBV in the context of the pandemic, while she does. His statements in the period of the pandemic focus on the general aspect of GBV as a problem that has always been, speaking of GBV primarily on special occasions, as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In contrast, while she speaks of GBV as a problem that was also present before the pandemic, she

also focuses on the violence in the context of the pandemic. This is evident when she speaks of “the other pandemic” and when arranging a meeting with the Council of Ministers to address the increasing violence of women as a result of quarantine procedures. This indicates that GBV as a security issue is more urgent to the vice president than the president at least during the pandemic, although not saying that he does not see it as an urgent problem that needs to be promptly addressed. This is further supported by her security speech acts at the meeting with the Council of Minister on June 26, 2020. These speech acts, she made as a result of the failed securitisation against GBV, where implemented measures did not lower the threat (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 46). This therefore also speaks to her urgency in addressing the threat.

In general, more security speech acts on GBV from the vice president during the pandemic can be found compared to security speech acts by the president, implying that she is more concerned with this security issue than the president. This would make sense, considering the many security speech acts on Covid-19 given by the president, in which he emphasises the overarching threat of the pandemic (Duque, 2020a; Duque, 2020b; Duque, 2020c). Thus, it would only be reasonable that the president is more concerned with Covid-19 than with the increase in GBV. Also, despite the vice president appearing more urgent in her speech acts on GBV than the president, it can be argued that she is also more concerned with the overarching threat of Covid-19. In her speech acts on Covid-19, she also focuses on this as the pressing threat and how every other problem they address must function within this (Ramírez, 2020a; Ramírez, 2020b). Accordingly, this demonstrates the scales of securitisation when it comes to GBV; that GBV is an existential threat towards Colombian women that must be addressed with extraordinary measures, but only within the frame of the macrosecuritisation (Buzan & Waeber, 2009, p. 257).

5.3 The securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV

This section will consider the securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV. First, it will be argued why there is a securitisation dilemma between these threats. Second, the measures taken to address the dilemma will be examined. From this, we will discuss the effect of these measures, where we will examine if the securitisations were successful or unsuccessful.

5.3.1 The dilemma

As previously stated, Olesker (2018) argues that the securitisation dilemma occurs when the securitisation of one threat increases another threat, resulting in a dilemma of whether or not to securitise the issue (p. 316). When considering the speech acts on GBV by the president and vice president, they speak of GBV as an existential threat to women that existed before Covid-19 but also as a threat that has been exacerbated because of the pandemic. Moreover, statistics have shown that the problem of GBV has been exacerbated by isolation measures in place to address Covid-19 (Averis, 2021, p. 93). As such, the Colombian securitisation against Covid-19 creates a securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV. Here, the government is faced with the decision to either continue securitising the threat of Covid-19 and thereby continuing lockdown with the risk of further increasing the threat of GBV or desecuritise Covid-19 to improve GBV but risk the spread of the virus.

As established previously, President Duque and Vice President Ramírez macrosecuritise Covid-19 in their speech acts, meaning that all other threats will be organised around this (Buzan & Waeber, 2009, p. 257). Therefore, the government somehow has to resolve the security issue but at the same time, they cannot compromise their macrosecuritisation of Covid-19. The government is therefore limited in the actions they can take to resolve the securitisation dilemma, which again displays the scales of securitisation when it comes to Covid-19 and GBV. Because the threat of Covid-19 takes precedence, GBV is a lower-ranking threat in the hierarchy, and whatever measures are taken to address the threat must operate within the boundaries of lockdown.

The securitisation dilemma also becomes evident when considering the aforementioned Council of Ministers meeting discussing security measures taken to address the increasing violence during the pandemic (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b). At the meeting, it was mentioned that a 155 per cent increase in one of the hotlines for victims of violence was seen in the period between March 25 and June 18, 2020, within the three first months of lockdown in Colombia (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b). It was further stated that the government, since March 25, has remained in a “state of emergency to deal with violence against women” (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b). Accordingly, at this meeting, it is directly stated that the increase in GBV is a result of the lockdown, emphasising the occurrence of the securitisation dilemma because the securitisation of one threat has increased another (Olesker, 2018, p. 316).

Van Rythoven (2015) describes the securitisation dilemma as “one of unintended consequences” (as cited in Olesker, 2018, p. 317). He states that the process of securitisation is followed by uncertainty and the potential for unpredictable consequences, which was not predicted by the securitising actor at the time (p. 317). This can also be argued to be the case in Colombia, where the Covid-19 securitisation led to the unintended consequences of increasing GBV. Considering this, the dilemma lies within the risk taken by the securitising actor (p. 317). In this case, the dilemma is therefore in the risk that the president and vice president take in securitising Covid-19 to address this threat, leading to other threats increasing. As such, despite the president and vice president securitising what they perceive to be the most urgent threat in Colombia, unintended outcomes have followed.

Therefore, the attempt to decrease the threat of Covid-19 has resulted in an increased risk of Colombian women becoming victims of violence. This further means that every time the Colombian government was reviewing its lockdown measures in the quarantine period from March 25 until August 31, 2020, it was faced with a dilemma; continuing lockdown to protect the public health from Covid-19 or easing or stopping lockdown to prevent further incidents of GBV. Easing lockdown measures too early increases the risk of a new wave of Covid-19 and an increase in deaths, while prolonging lockdown bears the risk of a bigger increase in GBV. Nevertheless, as previously stated, the government has prolonged quarantine measures eight times in an attempt to control the virus and thereby choosing to macrosecuritise Covid-19 and continuing the securitisation dilemma of GBV.

5.3.2 Resolving the dilemma

When attempting to improve or resolve a securitisation dilemma, different strategies can be applied. According to Watson (2013), the securitising actor can among others desecuritise the threat that created the securitisation dilemma, or the securitising actor can stress the hierarchical order of securitisations (p. 266). Considering this, there are different strategies President Duque and Vice President Ramírez can take in resolving the dilemma.

Throughout the analysis, it has been argued that the president and vice president macrosecuritise Covid-19 and have done so throughout the pandemic. Furthermore, the president and vice president have made it evident through their speech acts that the number one threat is Covid-19 and that all other threats come second. The strategy utilised by the president and vice president is

thus to stress the hierarchy of threats. In their speech acts, they make it clear that despite other threats occurring as a result of the pandemic, the securitisation against Covid-19 still ranks higher. Stressing the hierarchy of threats is a way for the president and vice president to control the situation with the occurring securitisation dilemmas, as both seen with GBV as well as the economy (Watson, 2013, p. 266). In their speech acts on Covid-19, they justify why extraordinary measures are necessary to address Covid-19, despite it posing threats in other areas when doing so. As such, the president and vice president attempt to resolve the securitisation dilemma of GBV and at the same time maintain the macrosecuritisation, thereby focusing on both threats at the same time.

Already at the beginning of lockdown, the need for additional hotlines to support victims of violence was seen, and as such, different national and local helplines were established and already existing lines were strengthened (UNDP, n.d; Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2020c). To name a few, the helpline 155 of the National Police functioning at the national level was created and strengthened during the quarantine with the aim to council victims of violence, available 24 hours of the day, the existing line 122 of the Office of the Attorney General of the Nation was reinforced to receive reports of GBV, as well as line 141 of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare for the protection of adolescent and children was strengthened (UNDP, n.d.).

On March 26, 2020, the day after lockdown started, the vice president made a statement urging people to make use of the hotline 155:

There is no excuse for exercising acts of violence against any member of the family: we are obliged to protect more than ever our girls, adolescents and women in general. I want to tell all Colombians that they do not hesitate to contact Line 155, in case of being victims of any type of physical or psychological aggression in the environment of a family. (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2020c)

The hotline 155 is therefore a governmental action in the securitisation against GBV during the pandemic, to which the vice president states that this is a time, where they, more than ever, must protect girls, adolescents and women. Hence, the vice president emphasizes the threat that GBV poses towards the female population in Colombia as a result of the pandemic response, in which measures taken to address the Covid-19 situation have resulted in girls, adolescents and women

needing protection more than ever. With this speech act, she thus emphasises the severity of the securitisation dilemma; the government has to continue the macrosecuritisation, despite it posing this threat towards women and therefore the vice president urges the public to use these helplines in an attempt to address this. This is in line with the thoughts of Buzan and Waever (2009) displaying that within macrosecuritisation, all other securitisations must be organised around this.

Further, the government decided to strengthen the call centre by including psychology experts to aid in cases and increasing the number of policewomen at the centre (Presidencia de la República de Colombia, 2020c). Also, different virtual initiatives were established to support victims of GBV, including local campaigns with the intent to inform women of where to seek help when at risk of violence, an example being the campaign #MujeresSegurasEnCasa (Women Safe at Home) on social networks (UNDP, n.d.). Also, the vice president has on different occasions arranged press conferences where she informs the public about the challenges as well as the advances in responding to GBV during the pandemic (UNDP, n.d.).

Moreover, the state has ensured that protection orders for victims of violence or women at risk of violence can be obtained remotely and that victims of violence during the pandemic will be provided with healthcare as well as the Presidential Council for Women helped in adapting 65 buildings to be used as shelters for women (UNDP, n.d.).

Bogota is especially impacted by lockdown, where incidents of GBV have had the most drastic increase in the country, and several initiatives have been implemented to address this. Among others, locations for women to report violence have been expanded by the Secretariat for Women, including service stations and stores located in Bogota, where women can seek help 24 hours a day. This initiative is part of the #EnCasaSinViolencia campaign (At Home Without Violence), in which the government launched the program MASCARILLA-19 (Mask-19).

The Mask-19 program is part of an alliance between the Secretariat for Women and the National Federation of Merchants (FENALCO), a national trade organisation in Colombia, and the program involves the training of 630 supermarkets and pharmacies in responding to women seeking help and contacting the police (UNDP, n.d.; Lima, 2020, p. 86). Mask-19 is then a code word, where women who need help can approach the clerk and request a 'Mask-19', in which case the store worker will ask into their situation and call the emergency services (Albert, 2020). Since the implementation of the project, a report has shown that a vast majority of public administrations believe that it has increased awareness of GBV in society and has demonstrated that this is a social

problem and not a personal matter (20 Minutos, 2020).

Further, to ensure effective and speedy investigations, a protocol for investigators and prosecutors has been adopted, in which complaints are received 24 hours a day through line 122, and the National Prosecutor's Office has also taken initiatives to "improve access to justice for women survivors of violence", including dialogue with local organisations and listening to their proposals and needs in addressing GBV, the expansion of hotlines, and monitoring GBV during the first month of quarantine (UNDP, n.d.). The government has furthermore established a platform, in which coordination between the national and local level in their response to GBV can happen to ensure the best possible coordination between the different levels (UNDP, n.d.). These were all measures taken at the beginning of lockdown on the national and local level to address the increase in GBV in Colombia.

Nevertheless, there was a continuous increase in GBV in the first few months of lockdown, which prompted the vice president to bring the problem to the Council of Ministers on June 26, 2020, as previously mentioned (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b). At this meeting, it was presented that a massive increase of 155 per cent in the hotlines in the first three months of lockdown had been witnessed, making it evident to the Council of Ministers that measures to address GBV had to be intensified. This resulted in a "package of measures to redouble the efforts of the State entities" being adopted (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b).

As argued previously, this is an example of a failed securitisation. Following Buzan et al. (1998), it is important to consider the success or failure of securitisations. They argue that there is a possibility that a speech act, which had previously succeeded and for which "formal resources and position are in place", may fail, resulting in the need for new security speech acts (pp. 46-47). Considering this, it can be argued that previous securitisations and measures taken to address the threat of GBV before the Council of Ministers meeting have failed. This would call for new speech acts and measures to address the threat, which was presented at the meeting as displayed earlier in the previous section. The first securitisation of GBV was thus unsuccessful and called for new securitisations.

The measures implemented from this meeting include establishing exclusive monitoring and control of GBV and providing immediate response to extreme cases from the hotlines, establishing a technological platform that will collect information on GBV across platforms to prevent

and monitor cases as well as help with online identification of perpetrators, implementing a national campaign against machismo, implementing protocols to prevent sexual violence at universities and establishing a program for helping women victims of violence economically (Vicepresidencia de la República Colombia, 2020b).

As such, the government has taken many initiatives to resolve the securitisation dilemma of GBV in Colombia during the pandemic, and the extent of these measures demonstrates the use of extraordinary measures to securitise the threat. These actions are justified by the speech acts of the president and vice president as demonstrated previously. Buzan et al. (1998) consider a securitising actor as legitimate and successful if extraordinary measures that lay outside the ordinary political practices are used to address a threat (pp. 23-24). Following this, President Duque and Vice President Ramírez would be considered legitimate and successful securitising actors after initiating the abovementioned extraordinary measures to address the threat of GBV. However, despite the extensiveness of these initiatives, the problem of GBV continues to increase throughout lockdown, even when considering the package of security measures adopted in late June 2020 to double the efforts of the state. This questions the success of the securitising actors and also the success of the securitisation.

In Bogotá especially, the situation is dire as the only crime that did not decrease during the months of quarantine from late March to late August was femicide, which instead had an increase of 8.6 per cent compared to the same period the year before (Torres, 2020). In general, the number of femicides has almost been increasing consistently in Colombia in the period of lockdown, reaching the highest number of femicides in September 2020 (Statista Research Department, 2021; Observatorio Femicidios Colombia, 2020).

There is, however, some disagreement as to the specific number of femicide cases. Statista Research Department, a statistics website, presents the following numbers on femicide: March 18, April 27, May 31, June 54, July 50, August, 63 (Statista Research Department, 2021). With some deviations, the Colombian Femicide Observatory, an information system tracking cases of femicide and VAW in Colombia based on the press on the local, regional, and national level, present the femicide numbers: March 38, April 26, May 31, June 54, July 51, August 69 (Observatorio Femicidios Colombia, 2020). In some months, these statistics agree on the numbers of femicides, but in general, the Colombian Femicide Observatory has more femicides registered.

Being a local organisation tracking GBV in Colombia, it may be that the Colombian Femicide Observatory has tracked some femicides through news cases that the general statistics have not. Furthermore, these organisations may categorise femicide differently as there are different categories of femicides, for example, intimate femicides or intrafamily femicides, which could make a difference in the final registration numbers. Also, it could be that a woman was murdered, where one source registered this as femicide and another did not, which would also affect statistics. Further, as argued by Averis (2021) previously, there is a lack of systematic data collection on GBV in Latin America (p. 93) and combining this with the fact that only reported cases are taken into account, the actual number of femicides may be even higher. This also explains the difference in statistics by different sources and why statistics are difficult to find. This is further supported by El Tiempo, a Spanish news article that criticizes that there is not kept proper track on femicides during the pandemic (Torres, 2020).

Nevertheless, there is an agreement, regardless of the precise statistics, that GBV has increased during the period of lockdown, despite any measures initiated by the government (UN Women & World Health Organisation, 2020; UN women, 2020; Zulver et al., 2021; Averis, 2021). Moreover, it can be seen that September has the highest rates of femicide throughout the year of 2020 with 85 registered femicides, which is also the highest rate reported since 2017 (Observatorio Femicidios Colombia, 2020; Statista Research Department, 2021; Observatorio Femicidios Colombia, 2020). Despite the lockdown being partially lifted on August 31, 2020, the people in Colombia were still confined to strict isolation measures. They were urged to stay inside, if they had no purpose for leaving their homes, e.g., work or grocery shopping (Gobierno de Colombia, 2020), and as such, the stress of confinement continues, which can be seen in the September 2020 numbers of femicides.

The extensiveness of the situation is also seen by domestic violence is the second most reported crime, following theft, in Colombia during the pandemic, and during the time of lockdown, a 40 per cent increase in incidents of GBV was reported compared to 2019 (UNHCR Staff, 2020). As such, despite the president's and the vice president's speech acts on the security threat of GBV, where they, several times, frame it as an existential threat to women in Colombia, and despite the many initiatives taken to address the securitisation dilemma, it can be argued that the dilemma persists throughout the lockdown period.

Consequently, the Colombian securitising actors, the president and vice president are still

faced with a securitisation dilemma with Covid-19 on one side and GBV on the other. Statistics, speech acts of the securitising actors and governmental measures have highlighted the severity of the security issue of the increase in GBV as a result of the Covid-19 securitisation. The securitisation dilemma has seemingly been given much attention in the context of Covid-19. However, the president and vice president have attempted to deal with both the threat of Covid-19 and the threat of GBV at once, and in this process, they end up prioritising Covid-19 over GBV. This is evident when considering the many times the 2020 lockdown has been prolonged, despite GBV continuing to increase. This again demonstrates the scales of securitisation in that the macrosecuritisation has been prioritised throughout the pandemic.

As will be demonstrated in the following section, this failure to properly address the dilemma creates protests in the public sphere, ultimately emphasising the extent of the securitisation dilemma.

5.4 The response of the audience

Considering the importance of the audience in the success of securitisation, this section will delve into the response of the audience. This will be done by considering protests that arose during the pandemic, both in relation to GBV, the economy and Covid-19. The economic protests are considered because the economic threat was found to be a focus in the security speech acts on Covid-19 by President Duque and Vice President Ramírez and because this focus adds to the scales of securitisation, which will also be displayed in this section.

5.4.1 Tensions between securitisations

According to Buzan et al. (1998), securitisation occurs when a securitising actor, to the relevant audience, labels something an existential threat to a referent object, which justifies the use of extraordinary measures (p. 5). Therefore, for a securitisation to be deemed successful, it must be accepted by the relevant audience (p. 31). It is thus important to explore how the audience, in this case, the Colombian people, has reacted to the securitisations, as it cannot be considered successful unless the audience accepts it. Protests and social movements which are sparked due to securitisation of a threat are valuable when considering the audience response, as it demonstrates a direct rejection of the securitisation, which in turn is a failed securitisation. This section will consider the

public protests that have occurred in response to the securitisations of GBV, the economy and Covid-19. This will be used to determine whether the Colombian people have accepted or rejected these securitisations.

In the middle of the national quarantine, on June 28, 2020, people took to the streets in protest of the increase in the number of GBV cases (Al Jazeera English, 2020). As mentioned, the lockdown resulted in a decrease in the rates of all crime in Bogotá except for the rates of femicides, which increased by 8.6 per cent (Al Jazeera English, 2020; Torres, 2020). Although Congress had passed a law that allows for life imprisonment for sentences of rape against minors, many of the protestors felt that this law is useless (Al Jazeera English, 2020). This protest clearly shows the dissatisfaction of the people with the attempt of the government to securitise GBV during the pandemic. They are expressing their frustration with the lack of real action against the state of fear many women live in. (Al Jazeera English, 2020).

Following McDonald's (2008) critique of the Copenhagen School, he argues that focusing only on the speech acts by political actors dismisses the view of actors not affiliated with the state (pp. 573-575). Instead, he suggests considering the security speech acts from other actors as well, which, in McDonald's perspective, would give a more complete understanding of the security threat. Following this, a security speech act from one protester is as follows: "We are being killed more for being women than from the corona virus. We are sick and tired. We all fear getting the virus, but we can't accept this violence anymore" (Al Jazeera English, 2020). From this speech act, it is evident that the protestors reject the securitisation against GBV, but it is also evident that the protestors oppose the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19. According to the protestors, GBV poses a bigger threat to women than Covid-19, because they are killed more for being women than by the virus. Thus, following the thoughts of McDonald (2008), considering the speech acts of the protestors brings a new construction on the meaning of threat than previously seen (pp. 573-575). Whereas the president and the vice president label Covid-19 as the overarching, more urgent threat, the protestors believe addressing the threat of GBV is more urgent. Considering other actors' security speech acts therefore adds to the scale of securitisation in relation to the securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV, and brings new perspectives to the hierarchy of threat.

This further displays the tensions between the different level securitisations and how the macrosecuritisation becomes susceptible to breakdowns when people as a result of the securitisation dilemma start to question the macrosecuritisation (Buzan & Waeber, 2009, p. 257). However,

due to the limited number of protesters and next to no media attention, it can be argued that this protest does not represent the majority of the audience or a sufficient percentage of the population when it comes to opposing the macrosecuritisation. Thus, their protesting has little to no impact on the macrosecuritisation. Nevertheless, it could create a call for further securitisation against GBV or perhaps even a desecuritisation of Covid-19, if the securitising actors deem the problem more urgent in light of the protest.

The women's rights movement called “Estamos Listas” is proposing that the threat of VAW be declared as a humanitarian crisis and they urge President Duque to declare a national emergency because of the high number of femicides in the country (Correa, 2020). They proclaim that VAW is a pandemic that is worse than the Covid-19 pandemic. The reasons for this is that “more women are victims of violence than are infected with Covid-19” and that as of June 30, 2020, VAW has increased by 47 per cent in that year (Correa, 2020). This sentiment is shared by “women from the 32 regions of the country and from more than 500 municipalities” who also “request that a national emergency be declared” to fight the rising numbers of VAW (Bedoya, 2020). Following the previous argument made, this is another example of how including the speech acts of other actors besides the state would bring a new construction on the meaning of threat than previously seen (McDonald, 2008, pp. 573-575).

Considering this, the government is on one side, attempting to convince the relevant audience, the Colombian people, that Covid-19 is the overarching threat that must be addressed above all. On the other side, the women's rights movement “Estamos Listas” is asserting that GBV should be taken more seriously than the pandemic. The members of this movement question the actions of the state and the extent of the securitisation of Covid-19, as they assert that VAW is a pandemic that is more urgent and claims more lives than Covid-19. This demonstrates the tensions between the securitisation of GBV and the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19, as the movement “Estamos Listas” questions the urgency of Covid-19 in comparison to GBV. This follows Buzan and Waever's (2009) thought that tensions between the different levels are constant in a macrosecuritisation (p. 257). Buzan et al. (1998) are aware of this danger in speaking of “securitisation” and “speech act” as this may place focus only on the acting side and thereby “privileging the powerful while marginalising those who are the audience and judge of the act” (p. 41).

Another example of the rejection of the audience on the securitisations against GBV can be seen on the international day for the elimination of VAW on November 25, 2020, where protests

known as the 25N movement took place in Colombia (Santana, 2020). The movement aims to bring awareness to the problem of GBV and to give the victims of GBV a voice, and this protest in Colombia was also specifically in demonstration of the high number of femicides and cases of VAW (Santana, 2020; Publmetro, 2020; Suárez, 2020; Infobae, 2020). The protestors felt that these troubling trends had not been properly addressed by the politicians and they felt they had been neglected and abandoned by the state (Santana, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, VAW has worsened as “victims were forced to live with their attackers” and these “confinement conditions made it difficult for many women to report their assailants”, therefore the protestors “demand justice in the face of impunity” (Santana, 2020). A spokeswoman for the 25N, Laura Torres stated that “to date, we continue with a quarantine where everything stops, but violence against women does not stop” (Publmetro, 2020). Considering that this protest took place on November 25, 2020, and new measures to address the threat of GBV were implemented after the meeting with the Council of Ministers on June 26, 2020, it is evident that these measures failed to address the increase in GBV.

This protest is another example of the audience’s dissatisfaction with both the securitisation against GBV and the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19, criticising the prioritisation of the government when it comes to the biggest threat to their security. This also demonstrates the extent of the securitisation dilemma between Covid-19 and GBV. The problem of GBV as a result of Covid-19 measures has become so exacerbated that several protests have occurred to demand change. It further displays how different actors view the securitisation dilemma at different degrees of urgency. As seen in their speech acts, the securitising actors of Colombia, the president and vice president, label the threat of Covid-19 as the most urgent, overarching threat. In contrast, the protestors of the 25N movement present their construction of the meaning of a threat, in that they perceive GBV to be more urgent and overarching than Covid-19. This protest, as well as the previous, suggest that any action which the government has taken to secure women and decrease the rate of GBV has been insufficient for the public. Following Buzan et al. (1998), the lack of audience acceptance on the GBV securitisations done by the government proves the securitisation to be unsuccessful (p. 204).

It is questionable whether the 25N protests have impacted or threatened the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19, despite them also protesting the extent to which Covid-19 is securitised in

comparison to GBV. This is evident when considering that the government continued the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19, thereby prioritising this threat. This is evident in the speech acts of the president on December 3, 2020, when he still refers to Covid-19 as the overarching threat to the people, despite this protest on November 25, 2020, demonstrating different views (Duque, 2020j).

One way for the government to address this immense dissatisfaction of these groups of the audience and to halt the increase in VAW could be to desecuritise the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19. This is following Buzan and Waever (2009), who state that desecuritisation is a strategy to improve the securitisation dilemma (p. 31). However, no examples of a desecuritisation of Covid-19 in relation to GBV can be found. It could be argued that the intensity of the threat of VAW would lessen if the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 was desecuritised. Nevertheless, despite the increase in the numbers of VAW during the pandemic, it was already a threat to women before Covid-19 and lockdowns with the immense amount of systemic violence and machismo in society. Therefore, more actions are needed besides the slight desecuritisation of Covid-19 (Correa, 2020).

The macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 has not been affected by the securitisation of GBV and the securitisation dilemma which has occurred; instead, it is only GBV that is impacted as a result of the lockdowns. The protests have had little impact on the Covid-19 macrosecuritisation; however, it has created tensions in the securitisation dilemma as parts of the public are doubting the hierarchy of the threats and the measures taken to secure them. This again demonstrates the scales of securitisation between the securitisation dilemma and the macrosecuritisation (Buzan & Waever, 2009, p. 31). The securitising actors of Colombia have prioritised the securitisation of Covid-19 while only addressing GBV as a securitisation that must function within the macrosecuritisation, despite the permanent tensions between these levels (p. 31).

5.4.2 The economic securitisation dilemma

Despite the project's focus on scales of securitisation in relation to Covid-19 and the securitisation dilemma of GBV, it was clear in the security speech acts by the president and vice president that economy is another securitisation dilemma resulting from Covid-19 that cannot be disregarded when speaking of scales of securitisation. It is clear from these speech acts that the economy ranks very high on the scale of securitisation, as they mention it regularly and have attempted to securitise it.

In his speech on May 5, 2020, amid the national quarantine, President Duque spoke of another extension of the lockdown but emphasised that they were going to start to “recover productive living space” (Duque, 2020b). He states that they “are going to give the opportunity to other sectors to also boost our economy” (Duque, 2020b). Duque then specifies certain sectors which will be allowed to open and reassure the audience that they are now “taking responsible steps as a country to reactivate our economy and at the same time saving lives and protecting health” (Duque, 2020b). It is clear when looking at the president's speech that he considers the economic crisis as an important security threat, and he is attempting to open certain sectors to boost the economy and address the threat. He is trying to reactivate the economy and doing that by slightly scaling back on the restrictions. The president does reiterate that if they see signs that the rate of infections increases as a result of the more open society then they will “make drastic decisions necessary to protect life and health” (Duque, 2020b). This demonstrates Buzan and Waever’s (2009) concept of how a middle level securitisation must function within the macrosecuritisation (p. 257). In this case, the economic securitisation still has to function within the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 and exist within this higher-level threat without compromising it.

The slight desecuritisation of Covid-19 to make room for the economy to activate shows the importance of the economy for the president and vice president. This is further demonstrated in the termination of the national quarantine of 2020. The country has seen a rise in numbers of Covid-19 cases and has experienced three waves of increased spread but has not implemented another national lockdown. This is a clear indication of the importance of the securitisation of the economic crisis.

Another indication is the tax reform proposal of the president and the Colombian government which aimed to boost the economy and help the most vulnerable. This tax reform bill “the Sustainable Solidarity Act” was submitted to Congress on April 15, 2021. It would “modify the corporate income tax, value-added tax (VAT) and personal income tax”, and it also “includes rules to increase social expenditures, adjust the government indebtedness rules, and adjust some provisions of the 2021 budget” (EY Global, 2021). The reform was intended to “raise \$ 23 billion [Colombian pesos] to alleviate a fiscal deficit that, during the pandemic, increased to \$ 90 billion [Colombian pesos]” (Redacción Noticiero 90 Minutos, 2021). This tax reform was in an attempt to address the detrimental effects which the pandemic and the resulting national lockdown had caused.

The audience did not accept the tax reform initiative and resulted in national protests. The protesters were dissatisfied as it specifically affected the middle class (Redacción Noticiero 90 Minutos, 2021). The protests which started April 28, 2020, were sparked by the tax reform (Suárez and Cano, 2021). These protests show the audience discontent with the actions of the government in regard to the tax reform, they rejected the initiatives within the securitisation of the economic crisis. According to Buzan et al. (1998), these protests illustrate the failure of the securitisation of the economic crisis in Colombia, as the audience rejects it (p. 31). The impact of these protests is clear as the president entered into talks with representatives from the unions and social movements and later withdrew the tax reform (BBC News, 2021; Al Jazeera, 2021; Cobb, 2021). The president listened to the people and withdrew the reform, but only until a new one could be drafted (Mur, 2021).

As proven in this section, President Duque is attempting to securitise the economy in a way that does not compromise the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19. When the unions and social movements sent out a collective call for protests, the government attempted to stop it. The government stated that they would listen to the protesters but that no permits would be granted and those that had been granted already would be revoked. This was done to limit the further spread of Covid-19 as they were in the midst of the third wave of infections (Bocchacci, 2021). Considering this, the president was attempting to protect the macrosecuritisation, by stressing the hierarchical order, stating that Covid-19 is the biggest threat and thus, protests should not occur because it risks further spread of the virus. This is one strategy for the securitising actor to address a securitisation dilemma (Watson, 2014, p. 268). The protests happened despite this and as previously stated, resulted in the withdrawal of the tax reform (Cobb, 2021).

This proves how macrosecuritisations are susceptible to breakdowns, as the president chose to desecuritise the economy to protect the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19. Had he not done this, the protests would likely continue and intensify, as they had already turned from peaceful to violent (Cobb, 2021; Redacción Noticiero 90 Minutos, 2021). The attempt to stop the protests shows how the president wants to safeguard the macrosecuritisation. It also demonstrates how middle level securitisations have to function within the frame of the macrosecuritisation.

Considering both the securitisation dilemmas of GBV and the economy within this Covid-19 macrosecuritisation, it is clear that they both must function within the macrosecuritisation. It is, however, also clear that these dilemmas cause tensions within the macrosecuritisation and that it

is susceptible to breakdowns. According to Buzan and Weaver (2009), when a securitisation dilemma occurs within a macrosecuritisation, then the securitising actors have two options: to desecuritize the macrosecuritisation or rank the dilemmas in a hierarchy to address the most urgent within the macrosecuritisation frame (p. 257). In this case of Covid-19, the referent object of the economic securitisation is the economy as a whole, which affects the entire population and the prosperity of the country. While in the GBV securitisation, the referent object is half the population, the women and girls. This could be one reason why the economy is ranked higher than GBV in this hierarchy of threats. Moreover, as the president attempted a slight desecuritisation of the Covid-19 macrosecuritisation to address the economic securitisation dilemma, it proves that the economy ranks higher than GBV.

Consequently, despite the securitisation dilemma of the economy not being a preliminary focus when starting this analysis, it was soon discovered that this dilemma cannot be ignored when speaking of scales of securitisation in relation to Covid-19 and GBV. This dilemma adds to the scale by placing it between Covid-19 and GBV in the hierarchy of threats. Therefore, considering the scales, the securitisation dilemma of the Colombian economy adds more nuances when it comes to examining the threat of GBV in relation to Covid-19.

6.0 Discussion of findings

As established in the first section of the analysis when considering the speech acts of the president, there is what we call a ‘slight’ desecuritisation of Covid-19 in an attempt to resolve the securitisation dilemma of the struggling economic sector. By labelling it as a slight desecuritisation, we indicate a desecuritisation in which the macrosecuritisation persists and is perceived as an existential threat, but some restrictions have been loosened. According to Buzan et al. (1998), desecuritisation is when the existing threat is no longer an existential threat and as such, it can be dealt with within normal politics, but we argue that there is a lack of scale to this perception of desecuritisation (p. 4). In a macrosecuritisation, the securitising actors have applied several extraordinary measures to securitise the threat, but at some point, they may scale these down despite the continual existential threat. This was seen in the speech acts by the president, in which the macrosecuritisation of Covid-19 persists throughout the ongoing pandemic, yet some scaling down of measures has been done to securitise another threat, in this case, the economy. Therefore, we believe that a comprehensive term for this ‘scaling down’ is missing.

When looking at desecuritisation from the perception of Buzan et al (1998) it could be argued that because the president still speaks of the pandemic as an existential threat and because extraordinary measures still have to be taken to address it, there is no desecuritisation, despite their scaling back on restrictions (p. 4). But considering the actions of the Colombian government, it can be argued that to resolve the securitisation dilemma of the struggling economy, they have attempted a ‘slight’ desecuritisation, in which the macrosecuritisation persists and is perceived as an existential threat but still allows the securitisation of other threats. Therefore, there is a need for a scale of desecuritisation in regard to macrosecuritisations. Scales of desecuritisation would also be applicable and useful to the securitisation dilemma of GBV. We found no evidence that the government has desecuritised the macrosecuritisation to resolve the securitisation dilemma of GBV, to which we argued that this is because Covid-19 is the more overarching and urgent threat. Nevertheless, with scales of desecuritisation, certain areas could perhaps be desecuritised while still upholding the macrosecuritisation in an attempt to resolve the securitisation dilemma. That is if the Colombian government pursued this dilemma in the same manner as that of the economy. As such, scales of desecuritisation are important to consider as well as scales of securitisation.

When examining the theory of securitisation from the Copenhagen school, it is focused on the state as the primary securitising actor (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 34). This means that the state

alone decides what is labelled a threat and what defines security. Nevertheless, shifting the focus from the state to other actors as well, such as the public, movements or NGOs, could impact the scales of securitisation. This was demonstrated in the analysis when considering how the state describes GBV as a security threat compared to Covid-19 and how parts of the population describe it at public protests. Whereas the securitising actors of Colombia label Covid-19 the biggest threat to human life, the women of the country argue that GBV is more lethal to them than the pandemic. As such, the involved actors subscribe to different meanings of a threat and present an opposing hierarchy of threats, in the end demonstrating the different scales of securitisation depending on the actor.

That the state is the primary securitising actor could also pose a problem when considering the case of the increasing GBV during the pandemic in Colombia. Despite the government taking initiatives to resolve the securitisation dilemma, it persists, and the public protests the lack of governmental action. As it is the securitisation of Covid-19 that has resulted in the insecurity of women in Colombia, it shows an example of how the state is both a source of security and insecurity. Therefore, it could be argued that securitisations against the state are sometimes necessary, when in fact the state is also the source of insecurity.

As presented by the Copenhagen School, they primarily focus on the state as the securitising actor, meaning that the state is the one constructing the meaning of security (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 34). Therefore, it could silence securitisations against the state itself because security is only defined according to the interests of the state. As such, political actors have absolute power over the construction of what defines security. Hence, it is likely that issues that are important to perceive as security issues, GBV in the case of Colombia, could be ignored or not given the needed attention because it is not in the immediate interest of the state.

As demonstrated in our analysis, the speech acts of the president and vice president demonstrate their interests, framing Covid-19 as an overarching threat that is more urgent than addressing the securitisation dilemma of GBV. The interests of the audience are therefore not considered, and as seen with the protests against the inaction of the government, it is evident that the securitising actors and the protestors have opposing interests.

Based on our findings, we would argue that focusing solely on the state as the securitising actor, when examining the scales of securitisation, limits our perception of securitisation. Instead, we would suggest to in fact consider the perception of other actors, such as the audience, as we

have demonstrated that this presented a different construction of security when considering the audience as actors. It can therefore be argued that other securitising actors than the state should be considered because the interests of the actors involved directly impact the hierarchy of threats and thereby the scales of securitisation.

7.0 Conclusion

As displayed during the analysis, the scales of securitisations are key to consider in relation to the covid-19 pandemic and GBV as security issues in Colombia. Throughout the analysis, it has been argued that Colombia is macrosecuritising Covid-19, while GBV is a securitisation dilemma that has occurred as a result of the macrosecuritisation.

This is evident when looking at the speech acts by President Duque and Vice President Marta Lucia Ramírez where they speak of Covid-19 as the overarching threat. It was further seen that scales of securitisation were used as a tool by the president and vice president in convincing the audience that Covid-19 is the overarching threat. Here, it was also found that the economic securitisation dilemma could not be disregarded.

Furthermore, the speech acts by the president and vice president on GBV displayed that they frame GBV as an existential threat to women. Nevertheless, it was discovered that this threat is not as overarching and urgent as that of Covid-19. Considering this, the securitisation of GBV has been dealt with within the frame of the macrosecuritisation. This includes the many measures taken to address the dilemma. However, these were unsuccessful, and the dilemma persists.

This was also evident when considering the audience response, who not only protested against the lack of governmental action in relation to Covid-19, but they also disagreed with the extent of the macrosecuritisation. Instead of Covid-19 being labelled as the overarching threat, they believe GBV should be the biggest concern of the government.

Considering these aspects, the scales of securitisation has been demonstrated throughout the analysis. In labelling Covid-19 the overarching threat, both GBV and the economy are placed lower in the hierarchy of threats. Nevertheless, the economy still places higher than GBV considering the scaling back on restrictions to securitise the economy. This also meant that these securitisation dilemmas had to be addressed within the macrosecuritisation.

In the analysis, it has become evident that scales of securitisation matter especially because this is a tool the securitisation actor can use. In dealing with the securitisation dilemma of GBV and the economy, scales of securitisation and reiterating the hierarchical order is a key tool for the securitising actor to convince the audience of a threat that calls for extraordinary measures. Especially when considering a securitisation on the scale of Covid-19, scales of securitisation is key when securitisation dilemmas occur. When these occur, tensions are constantly taking place and

the macrosecuritisation is susceptible to breakdowns. As such, scales of securitisation can be used as a tool by the securitising actor to convince the audience that the macrosecuritisation is still the most important despite other threats increasing as a result of it.

Considering the pandemic in Colombia and the securitisation processes that have taken place, it is evident that scales of securitisation is a tool for the securitising actor. When a securitisation on the same scale as Covid-19 is in place, it would be likely that the securitising eventually will be questioned at some point. Nevertheless, throughout the pandemic, we have displayed that the securitisations of GBV and the economy are protested, while it seemed that only a portion of the Colombian people opposed the macrosecuritisation. As such, the securitising actors have succeeded in convincing the audience of the continued need for this Covid-19 securitisation by continuously using scales of securities and stressing the hierarchical order. Consequently, this is how and why scales of securitisation matter in the securitisation dilemmas produced by the government in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic; that the government with this tool can convince an entire population of securitisation on the scale of Covid-19, despite other threats occurring as a result of this.

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bajar la guardia y a acatar las medidas de bioseguridad, pues la pandemia es una realidad, que nos puede afectar a todos. Es momento de fortalecer nuestra espiritualidad, de cuidarnos y protegernos. Es una prueba que, sin lugar a dudas, debemos afrontar con humildad y sabiduría, siguiendo las recomendaciones médicas para continuar honrando la promesa de valor que le hice a los colombianos. [Tweet]. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/mluciamirez/status/1319688611646869504>

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