

Bare Life as a Theoretical Proposal for the Analysis of Migration Dynamics*

[English Version]

Nuda vida como propuesta teórica para el análisis de las dinámicas migratorias

Vida nua como uma proposta teórica para a análise da dinâmica migratoria

Received 18 August 2022. Accepted 7 September 2022

› How to quote:

Mambuscay, J. D. & Duarte-Molina, T. M. (2024). Bare Life as a Theoretical Proposal for the Analysis of Migration Dynamics. *Ánfora*, 31(56), 97-120. <https://doi.org/10.30854/anfv31.n56.2023.995>
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Colombia

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* This article is a product of the research project «Vidas suspendidas: Derechos fundamentales en la Población migrante de Santiago de Cali en los años 2015-2020» of the Research Group «Problemas Contemporáneos del Derecho y la Política»- GIPCODEP, category A in Minciencias, of the Universidad de San Buenaventura, Cali in co-execution with Centro de Estudios Sociales y Humanísticos. Project code: 34803006. Funding: Universidad de Buenaventura. Declaration of interests: The authors declare no conflict of interest. Data availability: All relevant data can be found in the paper.

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Abstract

Objective: Present-day migratory dynamics, owing to their characteristics and scale, have increasingly become subjects of discussion and debate, forming an integral part of the political agendas of various countries and their governments. At the mercy of this, the life of the migrant becomes a State matter, contingent upon their qualification, determined by legal-political decisions. With this in mind, the life and body of the immigrant are positioned as consistent targets of sovereign decisions, bolstered by progressively stringent measures, including but not limited to control systems, anti-immigration laws, and administrative procedures. **Methodology:** In alignment with this, the current study embraces Giorgio Agamben's concept of bare life as a theoretical framework, and adopts the rhizomatic model proposed by Deleuze and Guattari as a methodological approach. **Results:** Following its application, the study identifies how variables within the Colombian social, legal, and administrative landscape impact the lives of migrants, with interconnections being amplified, especially under irregular circumstances. **Conclusions:** This scenario offers a novel avenue for interpretation, grounded in fundamental categories that underpin the formulation of policies and strategies about the subject.

Keywords: migratory dynamics; bare life; immigrant; sovereignty; rhizome.

Resumen

Objetivo: las dinámicas migratorias actuales, motivo de sus características y dimensiones, han sido convertidas con mayor solidez en motivos de discusión y debate, integrándose así mismo en las agendas políticas de distintos países y sus gobiernos. A merced de ello, la vida del migrante se torna un asunto de Estado, expuesto a su cualificación o no, producto de decisiones jurídico-políticas. Con esto en mente, la vida y cuerpo del inmigrante se sitúa como un objetivo constante de decisiones soberanas, sustentadas en ajustes cada vez más rigurosos, entre los que, por ejemplificar, se enlistan los sistemas de control, las leyes antiinmigración, los procesos administrativos, entre otros. **Metodología:** en línea de ello, el presente estudio toma como marco teórico la nuda vida de Giorgio Agamben, acogiendo el modelo rizomático propuesto por Deleuze y Guattari como apuesta metodológica. **Resultados:** tras su aplicación, se identifica cómo diferentes variables de la realidad social, jurídica y administrativa colombiana inciden en la vida del migrante; interconexión maximizada en condiciones de

irregularidad. **Conclusiones:** este escenario brinda un nuevo espacio de interpretación, desde categorías que resultan fundamentales en la creación de políticas y estrategias relacionadas con la materia.

Palabras clave: dinámicas migratorias; vida nuda; inmigrante; soberanía; rizoma.

Resumo

Objetivo: a dinâmica migratória atual, por suas características e dimensões, tem se tornado cada vez mais objeto de discussão e debate, passando a fazer parte das agendas políticas de diferentes países e seus governos. Como resultado, a vida do migrante se torna uma questão de Estado, sujeita à sua qualificação ou não, como resultado de decisões jurídico-políticas. Com isso em mente, a vida e o corpo do imigrante passam a ser alvo constante de decisões soberanas, baseadas em ajustes cada vez mais rigorosos, incluindo, por exemplo, sistemas de controle, leis anti-imigração, processos administrativos, entre outros. **Metodologia:** para tanto, este estudo toma como marco teórico a vida nua de Giorgio Agamben, utilizando como abordagem metodológica o modelo rizomático proposto por Deleuze e Guattari. **Resultados:** após sua aplicação, identifica-se como diferentes variáveis da realidade social, legal e administrativa colombiana afetam a vida do migrante; uma interconexão maximizada em condições de irregularidade. **Conclusões:** esse cenário oferece um novo espaço de interpretação, a partir de categorias que são fundamentais para a criação de políticas e estratégias relacionadas ao tema.

Palavras-chave: dinâmica migratória; vida nua; imigrante; soberania; rizoma.

Introduction

This research article demonstrates how migrants, within the framework of the nation-state, can form a collective entity in which Agamben's concept of bare life resides. In other words, it entails a collection of living beings who are encompassed through exclusion within the host society, and this process signifies the embodiment of sovereign power over life and the physical forms of these individuals. This stage of analysis is established through the premises inherent to the diverse theoretical foundation laid out by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. This aligns with the migration issue as a paramount concern on the global policy agenda, wherein territories serve as the primary wellspring of strategies, thereby reshaping the paradigms through which it has conventionally been approached.

Considering this perspective, the character of migratory waves —stemming from an increasingly assertive and technologically advanced market system (as well as the crisis and ensuing erosion of the legitimacy traditionally vested in nation-states)— has heightened the discourse surrounding immigrants and the requisite legal, political, and economic approaches that ought to be extended to them. One of the primary limitations identified arises from the persistent notion that migrants, as external agents, pose a threat to the accomplishments of more developed societies. It is not widely recognized that this very level of satisfaction stems from the accumulation and concentration of capital, which arises from the exploitation endured by the migrant's countries of origin. With this issue being problematized, the living conditions of immigrants are progressively becoming integral to the sovereign matters incorporated into the political agendas of various governments.

Positioned within political coordinates and governmental strategies, the migrant's body becomes a focal point of sovereign determinations and progressively rigorous adaptations. These are rooted in control systems, anti-immigration statutes, administrative procedures, and segregation processes —a legitimizing approach to support electoral undertakings and legitimize the State amid crisis. Consequently, the contemporary significance of migratory control rests within bio-political inclinations, where life transforms into a subject of State concern, particularly in instances where its qualification (or lack thereof) is determined by juridical-political verdicts.

Similarly, the influence of policies solely dictated by the State shapes the perception of individuals among themselves. This amplifies the discourse surrounding the significant "other," from which factors that either complicate or facilitate the presence of migratory groups within host communities, whether

through tolerance or acceptance, emanate. Consequently, the migrant's situation is subject to arbitrariness, stemming not only from the State and legal-normative mechanisms that predicate their residence upon a series of constraining factors but also from society at large as a daily catalyst for progress. It's a realm where the sense of belonging must wane to endure within an environment inherently unfamiliar, upheld by overarching values and principles.

This viewpoint is further heightened by the abundance of assertions presented by Bauman (2016). By invoking the insights of Michel Agier, a dynamic arising from contemporary migration policies is illuminated (p. 82). This dynamic seeks to partition the world into sanitized spaces, distanced from the predicament, while others are marked by the residual, constituting an everyday backdrop and a point of contention among governing bodies. While this approach is commonly employed to depict refugee camps, these attributes align with irregular migratory flows driven by fear. In such contexts, both economically and politically, the migrant's physical body assumes a distinct status amid the cohesive fabric of the host society.

Therefore, this article is divided into two sections for a theoretical review, thereby aligning its attributes with the analysis of the prevailing migratory landscape. This exercise, though not firmly situated within an abstract context, functions as an interpretive framework for understanding the circumstances prevalent in the migrant's reality. Through this framework, an analysis of the States' migration policies is facilitated, gauging the degree of rights accorded to migrants.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach rooted in the hermeneutic paradigm. It employs Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome as both a method and technique to attain interpretation and comprehension of the categories embedded within the research process. From the aforementioned perspective, qualitative research assumes an approach oriented toward the exploration of phenomena, inherently interpretive in nature as it pursues the interpretation of experiences through continuous reflection (Verd & Lozares, 2016; Niño, 2019).

Hermeneutic research has been regarded as a form of investigatory inquiry, aiming to bestow significance and substance upon particular concepts and categories (Agudelo, 2018). Within the realm of social sciences, hermeneutics stands as a cornerstone tool employed for dissecting the subject-object relationship. It

bestows significance upon the image crafted of the object using interpretation (Angulo & Solís, 2021).

When proposing research with a hermeneutic approach, there are some necessary assumptions: (I) the signifier, (II) the concept or its corresponding meaning, (III) the contextual backdrop of this concept, and if relevant, (IV) the novel context in which the concept is to be apprehended. These are essential, as the interpretation necessitates grounding in pre-existing knowledge of the data, encompassing— the historical, philosophical, and cultural —dimensions of the reality under scrutiny (Ortiz, 2015). It has been said in this regard that:

The interpretive phenomenon stands as a pivotal cornerstone within all natural cognitive occurrences, encompassing social life as well. Significance emerges in connection with a clearly defined identity, and it does not stem from the mere absorption of information from an external source. (Maturana & Varela, 2004, p. 46).

The aforementioned enables embracing Deleuze and Guattari's (2014) rhizome approach as both a hermeneutic method and technique. The rhizome is employed as a metaphor by the authors to facilitate both entry and exit in the depiction and interpretation of data. Concisely, it is illustrated that a rhizome lacks a distinct beginning or end; it invariably resides within the middle. It functions as a coalition of signifiers, woven together by the interplay of the signifieds and signifiers that form its structure (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014). The alliance between signifiers is directed by a series of principles:

- I. Connection.** "Any point of the rhizome can be with any other and must be. [...] A rhizome would not fail to connect semiotic links, organizations of power, junctures referring to the arts, to the sciences, to social struggles" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014, pp. 15-16). The *rhizome* must be connected to all the elements that compose it.
- II. Heterogeneity.** "A rhizome-type method can only analyze language by decentering it on other dimensions and other registers. A language is never enclosed within itself [...]" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014, p. 17). Despite the connection between the elements, none is hierarchically superior to the other.
- III. Multiplicity.** "In a rhizome, there are no points or positions, as one finds them in a structure, a tree, a root. There are only lines. [...] Multiplicities are delineated by external factors: by the abstract line, line of flight, or deterritorialization that directs their transformation as they engage with others" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014, pp. 18-20). The concept or signifier

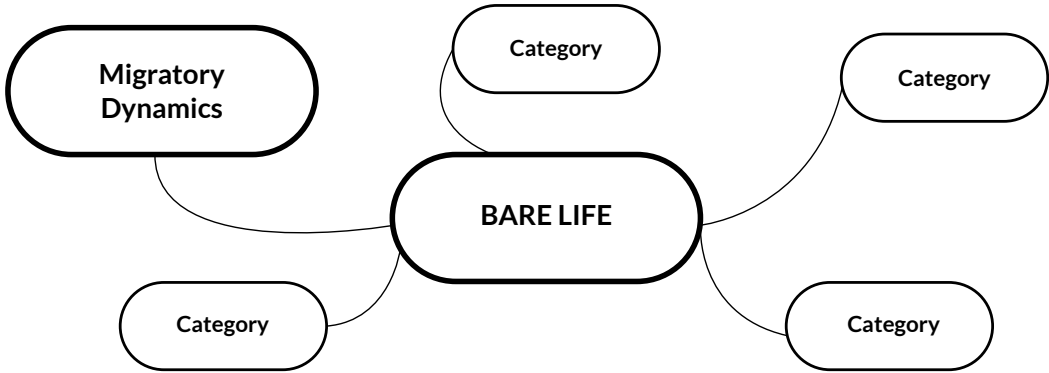
undergoing rhizomatic construction must be examined comprehensively, with a focus on comprehending all its constituent elements.

- IV. Allocating Rupture.** "A rhizome can be broken anywhere, it resprouts again following this or that of its lines and even other lines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014, p. 22). The *rhizome* cannot be disrupted. The interruption would entail the formation of a new construction stemming from that very signifier, with the possibility of resuming the interrupted one.
- V. Cartography and Decalomania.** "A rhizome does not adhere to any structural or generative model. [...] The map doesn't replicate a self-contained unconscious; instead, it constructs it. It contributes to the connection of the fields. [...] The act of tracing has already translated the map into an image and has already metamorphosed the rhizome" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014, pp. 28-29). There is no prior idea of the *rhizome*. A map that serves as a conditioning factor for its conformation. It has no structure, and no depth, hence rhizome 1 can be the starting point of a new rhizomatic conformation: rhizome 2.

Adhering to these principles as a hermeneutic criterion, this article has advocated for the rhizomatic construction of the concept of "bare life" within a specific context, namely that of human migration. Hence, the center of the map is "bare life" and precisely the cartography of this concept leads to the construction of a rhizomatic map where the connections of this notion with the necessary ones are established (as evidenced in Figure 1) to facilitate the understanding of the migratory phenomenon.

Consequently, through the proposed methodology, a signifier has been established: bare life and meaning will be attributed to it in the Agamben context. Additionally, the new context in which this concept will be interpreted is presented, which in turn transforms the context into a new signifier: migrations. It is under this map that the enunciated principles will be applied, and by which the rhizome 1 will be generated. For this exercise, the following rhizomatic map is considered as a starting point.

Figure 1. Rhizomatic Map of Bare Life in Migratory Contexts.



Deconstruction of the Category of Bare Life: Its parts

Addressing the proposal of Giorgio Agamben regarding the bare life characteristic implies a chronological review of how life and how it has been contemplated has taken place. Far from providing metaphysical details, the Italian philosopher persists in showing the existence of the human being in a social environment, adjacent to legal, political, and economic mechanisms, under a division between public and private life.

The above space occurs primarily in the concepts ζωή (*zōē*) and βίος (*biós*), adapted from fundamental texts in Greek philosophy and from which, according to Agamben, politics finds an angular substrate (Acosta, 2013). To exemplify a brief difference between both terms, according to the Agambenian vision on the matter, already in Acosta (2013) how the *zōē* implies life in the most biological sense possible, while the *biós*, in the Greek *polis*, alluded to forms or styles of life is exposed.

Feeding the divergence between both forms, seeing them as parallel situations in ancient Greece and with space in current Western politics, Hernández (2018) affirms that “Here we have the politically qualified life (*biós*), on one hand, and the natural life common to all animals (*zoé*), on the other” (p. 4). In turn, the *zōē* is relegated to the field of the οἶκος (*oikos*) (the private), while the *biós* is that scenario that, having politics as an element of exercise, turns it from the very scenario of just living, to living well (Quintana, 2006).

According to the aforementioned approaches, the subject is frequently exposed to two moments, according to their conditions, in which their life practices and/or integration into a community as an active participant, with

rights and duties, are circumscribed. In this order of ideas, the subjection of existence to a natural life (*zōē*) and a qualified and willing life on the political stage (*biós*[/i]) has as its main condition the very act of separating. The latter, without a doubt, finds development in the legal-political devices and tools that the State's —categorical form of life in society contains and deploys, or fails to deploy, on those who inhabit a territory, which attaches to it very close notions such as citizenship, nationality, etc. From them, the act of differentiating as a method of coexistence and identification has a starting point, which gives meaning to how the *other* is interpreted.

Accordingly, the conceptualization of bare life has a background based on the division of the parts that make up social life. Therefore:

The idea is that the “bare life” is that life is separated from its form. What this means is that the production of bare life occurs through separation or, in other words, that the production of separation is equivalent to the production of bare life. (Hernández, 2018, p. 5).

In this historical transition, a second figure addressed in the work of the Italian philosopher takes place in archaic Roman law under the concept of “*homo sacer*.” Such an analysis, developed chronologically, although it implies a different behavioral situation in each of the phases addressed, does not imply an abandonment of the rescued and treated concepts. In the words of Lemke (2011), the “*homo sacer*” is defined as “a person who could be killed with impunity, since they were prohibited from a political-legal community and reduced to the status of their physical existence” (p. 55). In addition, Laurencich (2012) states that “since *homo sacer* is exposed to a violent death and whose murder is not punishable, it is also the one who lies in a sort of absolute political abandonment” (p. 30). Such an indication of separation, considered from those who can be part of the community along with the rights and duties that this entails and those who cannot, accentuates the idea of a bare life as a result of sovereign decisions about existence itself.

In this sense, the set of ideas proposed by Lemke (2011) situates the analysis of bare life as a situation. In addition to placing the bodies in a marginal situation, living or dying depends on the sovereign decisions, which produce bodies through devices.

As a way of expanding the previous proposal, the position of D'alonzo (2013) is appropriate when concluding that “Bare life, although included in political values, is marked not only by isolation, that is, the solitude, but also due to mutism” (p. 105). In this dialogue of sovereignty, there is, on the one hand, the division previously indicated between *biós* and *zōē* and, on the other, bare life

is embodied as a condition in which one becomes a part precisely in a segregated way. In this sense, the terminology around biopolitics and bio-power acquires an essential character in Agamben's work, thinking about it through a kind of devices and/or applied forms of power existing on bodies, which fragment society and determine the quality of life of its components.

Under a Foucaultian explanation, Tejada (2011) refers to “biopolitics” as the capacity of power to influence life, not only from the legal point of view, but also from its administrative, organizational, regulatory, and inhibition capacity. In this order of ideas, biopolitics converts earthly and human power into one with the capacity to intervene in the lives of others, which even determines issues such as population growth, migratory phenomena, and the quality of life of the population.

Looking for an extension on how these last two terms are expressed in the political sphere, the analysis of the institutional legal model and the biopolitical model of power acquire an inseparable condition among themselves, without which it is impossible to detail the implications of bare life and the core of sovereign power (Agamben, 1998). On this dynamic, returning to the notion of “biopolitics” worked on in Foucault's mature work, Benente (2012) details: “Foucault affirms that, for a long time, one of the privileges of sovereign power had been the right of life and death over his subjects” (p. 12). Their deployment, however, demanded a tangible danger to the sovereign's existence.

Postulated both affirmations, bare life as sovereign production or the result of its decisions, sovereignty itself and biopolitical mechanisms function as an inseparable triad in the modern vision of Western politics for the studied philosopher. In this sense, as stated by Hernández (2018) “Agamben finds [...] that life has been incessantly divided or separated through the law: the law or legal rule, he will tell us, it lives only putting life in an exceptional situation, separating it from the legal order” (p. 4). In greater detail, Schindel (2017), in a study on bare life and the condition of migrants or refugees in European countries, defines that “One of the essential characteristics of modern biopolitics is its need to return to define at each moment the threshold that articulates and separates what is inside and what is outside of qualified life” (p. 22).

With this in mind and, according to the purposes of the study in question, the condition of the migrant in a receiving country or, even, whether transit is their main motivation, it cannot be ruled out that their status in the society they become a part of is implied by certain bio-political tools and decisions in the State as a sovereign entity—decisions that can configure bare life; which, ultimately, finds correspondence to a specific territory and the population that lives there. One of the reasons for making such a statement has as its starting point the idea presented in Barrera (2017) according to which, the configuration

of biopolitics does not escape being a current fact inseparable from the concept of “*population*,” [*/i*] *being, in the same way, its primary objective*. This last term, in the words of Yuing (2011) “emerges as a political-administrative category at the moment when sovereignty is withdrawn in favor of political representation, and when, precisely, the Legal theory establishes a political pact between the citizen and the State” (p. 9).

Until now, the constitution of bare life, a fundamental concept in the Agambenian theoretical construction, has been subject to an explanation based on a binary behavior, that is, as has already been seen, through the naturalization or qualification of life —*zoé* and *bíos* Greeks, respectively— or *homo sacer*, legal figure of archaic Rome where the sovereign act of separating was gestated, as a form of totalizing individualization. However, as bare life has been broken down into its parts, elements of greater analytical importance have been mentioned, such as bio-politics.

In this commitment to affirm that sovereignty is materialized when it manages to exclude and, at the same time, continue to have control of the bodies that are no longer included, the notion of a “*State of exception*” takes shape and validity. Adhering to the sovereign nature of the decisions that make up bare life, Bolton (2012) mentions the state of exception that “constitutes a moment of radical suspension of the law based on its conservation [...] If the state of exception constitutes a moment of suspension, it is because this is nothing more than the pragmatics of the sovereign decision” (p. 163). In the same way, Ruiz (2019) delimits the state of exception as a device of power that operates on the bare life of people. The latter is exempt from the clothing of civility and, contrary to this, sheltered by the condition of the citizen. Regarding an explanation of the concept mostly linked to the legal institution of the States, it is necessary to assert that:

The topology of sovereignty configured here shows that the exception is the “outside” that the legal order itself opens in its “inside,” since sovereignty will be nothing more than the pragmatics of the decision capable of articulating the “outside” with the “inside” of law in a single movement. (Bolton, 2012, p. 163).

A more detailed approach to the concept is developed by Silva (2016), who delimits it by determining that “it is nothing other than the rupture of legal security to rescue or preserve control against any threatening event of the system, altering the rules of the game for the benefit of the holder of power” (p. 47). A more general advancement is provided by Laurencich (2012), who focuses on the act of excluding itself and defines it as “sending someone or anything outside or referring to someone who is outside of us while we inhabit the inside” (p. 24).

According to this line of reasoning, the bare life develops from considerations that marginalize the condition of a particular group of people, but unlike other instances, it is not the right that places them outside of it; rather, it is the right that excludes and includes them. Once again, the juridical and political disappearance of life, rooted in this condition in the Greek *zōē*, is the product of a movement that the State and its institutions carry out, reasserting their power.

Such a state of affairs subjects the beings, placed in bare life, in a situation called a *side*, on which the law takes shape through its non-application (Berrío, 2010). According to the same author, Agamben's theoretical composition on the subject states that life, by arranging itself into a band, gives rise to bare life or *zōē* before the sovereign, who then leads it to a limbo-like zone of political indifference to life (Berrío, 2010).

The Agambenian perspective is further developed in Bolton (2012), whose words come to signify the entirety of the ontological-political structure of the state of exception. This structure is characterized by serving as a device by which the sovereign power captures life, disproves law, and leaves only the first, which only refers to a single object apart. The legal-political issue with the exception is demonstrated as a biopolitical dilemma. The bare life is an exceptional reversal of how citizens live their lives, just like the exception state is a reversal of the legal system (Bolton, 2012).

In summarizing what has been said, the political debates over the very existence of humans and the factors that influence their decisions extend our understanding of bare life as a biopolitical experiment in which power is tied to factors that go beyond the scope of invisible and abstract networks. Which transforms into something highly productive and materialized in dictates or control devices that are, for the most part, visible to the general public. Regarding this last point, Zamora (2005b) asserts that "The power is before all other power over life and finds expression in relationships of dominance, specifically relationships of inclusion and exclusion" (p. 57); the suspension of rights is, therefore, a manifestation of the power of inclusion-exclusion.

To apply the elements intrinsic to the bare life as an analytical horizon, on the condition of the migrant and migration itself viewed as a challenge in crescendo of the current nation-state—the results contained in Zamora (2005a), Zamora (2005b), Moreno (2014), Ocampo (2014), De la Lastra (2016), and Aguilar (2018) serve as a practical example of the issue, since, in them, the question of the configuration of bare life on migrants plays a fundamental role.

The problematization of human movement over the same territory or, as will be studied in the following section, toward a different country, compels reflection on issues like the sense of attachment that a being holds to a place, which is loaded with symbolism and meaning. In violent crime cases, Ocampo (2014) examines

the phenomenon of deterritorialization, which is defined as “the deconstruction of the relationship with the place of origin, from the loss of the fixed residence and domicile to the meaning and significance ascribed to the places habited and frequented” (p. 12). Although this relationship is permeated by internal conflict conditions, the bare life begins to take shape whenever a migrant's access to new opportunities is restricted after entering a new country or territory, whether as a result of ideological or philosophical viewpoints that are directed outside of that country or territory or administrative procedures that “normalize” that state of affairs.

Regarding this prevailing norm, Ocampo (2014) defines a full citizen as someone who enjoys equality in all spheres of social life, as opposed to someone who is in a position of displacement because they are adrift from their intended destination.

In this act of separating, a condition for the establishment of bare life and, as already mentioned, the result of the sovereign decision, the contrast of the subject as a migrant takes place with those categorized as citizens. Through a dynamic in which two spheres are considered, territorial (concerning the citizen) and exogenous (concerning the immigrant) as an outside agent in the setting, the binarization of existence as a whole takes shape.

Regularization, Binarization and (Dis) Citizenship

The development of bare life, on a global scale, is based on this duality. The access and subsequent “regularization” of the migrant subject in the new environment involves a legal-political scaffolding which, depending on the decisions of the sovereign entity in its coordinates of legitimacy, may vary, placing the existence of those admitted into uncertainty.

Keeping a dual reference, the concept and status of citizen is one in which, at least in the face of the migrant, the materialization of sovereign power does not harbor a relationship of inclusion-exclusion. With this, the citizen behaves as an endogenous agent, belonging to a political community with distinct characteristics and whose legal and institutional framework protects contractual freedom and equality in treatment (Zamora, 2005b). As such, Aguilar (2018) sees in the citizen a medium through which the State chooses who receives rights, services, and freedom of movement on a national level. However, it would be incomprehensible to censure cases in which even the migrant, regular or irregular, has access to certain social rights; the problem in such a concession lies in the ambivalence of the category “citizenship” and what is contemplated as such.

In similar terms, Kymlicka (1996) points out that the category “citizenship” brings with it “fears” consisting of rights differentiated according to each of the groups. Differentiation can lead to disunity. However, the idea of a “distinct citizen” refers to the adoption of rights that differ from the norm in terms of autonomy participation, and ethnic politics. Zamora (2005b) establishes that:

The problem is that, without a rethinking of citizenship itself, rights, permanently threatened by the logic of power and the market, remain at the mercy of the vagaries of immigration policies [...] If the link between citizenship and nationality is maintained, immigrants will always depend on external protection offered from sovereignty to which they do not belong and which can cancel the offer at any time (p. 147).

The nature of this offer, which is random and subject to conditions with political overtones, leaves the phenomenon of migration on the verge of bare life; based on the fact that the enjoyment of existence and the facilities to do so rest on sovereign decisions to make or not to make concessions through political, legal, economic, or even biopolitical devices. In addition, “By being denied inclusion in society and confined to the mere fact of living —by being animalized— these bare lives are left at the expense of the determinations or needs of the State” (Aguilar, 2018, p. 23).

Corresponding to this, the possibility of conjuring states of exception through legislative or executive bodies increases the creation and adaptation of legal loopholes in which bare life takes place. Of course, these gaps are shaped as vehicles with which, par excellence, a specific population is configured as the ultimate recipient of the provisions. An example of this in practice may be seen in Moreno (2014) and his notion of “de-citizenization” concerning the September 11 attacks of 2001.

Although the events forced the government to declare a state of emergency, the treatment of irregular migrants, who are frequently associated with terrorists and dangerous subjects, involves biopolitical tactics. Without such mechanisms, the human being is transformed into a homo sacer, with a bare life and a willingness to be sacrificed to protect the true citizens (Moreno, 2014, p.129). The process undertaken by the Congress and the executive branches of the United States was charged with creating and making operational such mechanisms that extract citizenship, rights, and qualities. In the same way, the topic of immigration is reframed as “migration problems,” which gives it a contentious tone and causes the public to develop preconceived notions about how immigrants are perceived (Yuing, 2011, p. 17).

Now, assuming that the expelling countries are characterized by their weakness in meeting the demands of their citizens and that these, then, cross borders in search of better living conditions (Moreno, 2014), it is useful to delve into the paradox that persists in a capitalist world system; fundamental encouragement in the liberalization and deregulation of capital and merchandise flows while, simultaneously, border controls and selection criteria become increasingly demanding as a form of sovereign representation of the State (Zamora, 2005a).

As a result, the contemporary state's sovereignty is primarily defined by its ability to exert authority over a territory and the subsequent order it imposes through its judicial apparatus. Regarding these issues, the immigrant releases the boundaries of such connection, which are supported solely and more through strict and violent controls over spatial movements (Zamora, 2005a, p. 58). About this,

In relation to immigrants and refugees, it is clear how the state transforms citizens' unique way of life from something everyone once possessed to something that no longer belongs to anyone. Hence, the lack of a valid rationale for this constraining transformation becomes apparent. The demarcation delineating "humanity" from citizenship can be flexible, and the dynamics of constellations of power can alternately influence specific individuals depending on the conditions of inclusion and exclusion. (Zamora, 2005a, p. 58).

The status of immigrants would undergo a de-subjectification process from the inherent human identity. This implies that only the freedoms and rights attainable through an abstract classification referred to as citizenship become feasible. Upon entering a de-subjective dynamic, characterized by a lack of attributes necessary for a full life, or at the very least, living conditions meeting acceptable standards, the migrant's susceptibility to sovereign authority and occurrences and unforeseen situations is increased. This, in turn, raises great uncertainty. In this regard, De la Lastra (2016) states that "the migrant body materializes in modern borders as an outcome of the process of ontic reification of the body. During the process of migration, migrants experience a detachment from their subjective attributes, consequently being reduced to a mere physical entity" (p. 670).

The parameters that define the concept of bare life, as observed within the framework of migratory movements, are prior established by the host nations. In the course of cross-border migration, irregular migrants become detached from the rights acquired at the national level (De la Lastra, 2016). Furthermore, migrants operating within these legal constraints, where their rights are withheld, find themselves susceptible to sovereign violence because of their vulnerability. In

unfamiliar and uncharted territories, violence is provoked by factors that surpass economic or social orders (De la Lastra, 2016).

Considering this viewpoint, the concept of bare life as it advances according to executive and legislative procedures, and manages to configure itself in the lives of migrants, prompts inquiry into the circumstances that warrant its establishment, if deemed necessary. To this respect, concerning the comprehensive status of the citizen—defined as an individual embodying the highest capacity for agency within a designated territory—three distinct categories emerge for measuring the adequacy of bare life. These categories comprise legal and political concessions, along with economic accessibility, each susceptible to the potential influence of administrative decision-making.

Within these categories, as elucidated in the subsequent section, lie the conditions of existence wherein the potential manifestation of bare life endures, regardless of whether access to these conditions is intentionally withheld as deemed suitable. Similarly, across all three of these categories, there is an adjacent influence of the State and its decision-making power, which, as previously mentioned, facilitates the establishment of exceptions within the system, wherein a select few or broader multitude become the recipients.

Theoretical Deconstruction for Contextual Interpretation

After explaining the aforementioned aspects, assimilating the migratory dynamics—particularly those framed within legal irregularity, using theoretical heritage inherent in the Agamben's concept of bare life—an interpretative coincidence emerges wherein its constituents converge as asymptotic lines. However, after the examination of bare life into its constituent components and foundational factors, the rhizomatic analysis used in this paper allows for an exercise of relational order. Within this framework, each concept related to a category maintains proximity to its root.

To engage with the categories comprising the existence of migrants within the Colombian legal, political, and administrative framework, the methodological and contextual background established by Rúa and Londoño (2020) as well as Castillo and Oliveros (2020) are used as a point of reference. According to their appraisal, the different variables exerting influence upon the condition of Venezuelan migrants in the country are identified. These variables show a heightened interdependence particularly, within the context of irregularity.

Following this line of reasoning and to delve into the theory and its constituent factors within real scenarios for building the rhizomatic model, the initial step involves the presentation of a segment of the compilation of the interviews

conducted with Venezuelan migrants in an irregular status. These migrants currently live in the city of Santiago de Cali, Colombia, in accordance with the framework and objectives delineated by the research project. In this regard, a total of 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted at visible locations designated by Migration Colombia, where resources and guidance were made available for obtaining the Temporary Protected Status (TPS). During these interviews, the necessary categories were explored to carry out an interpretation based on Agamben's theory.

Table 1. *Standardized Interview with Migrant.*

P 2 4 5	L A V	As I previously mentioned, I have already obtained the documentation and have been registered within the system
2 4 6	L A V	Colombia, no? So, what about that register [...] What is it called?
2 4 7	E G I P C O D E P	From the statute?
2 4 8	L A V	From that statute, yes, it allows us, as I did mention, to have access to education
2 4 9	L A V	Access to health and so are we, accessing a registry, we are legally here in
2 5 0	L A V	Colombia, we are in a place where anything is used to find out about us/ and the information appears,
2 5 1	L A V	We already exist/

2 5 2	E G I P C O D E P	Okay, legally speaking
2 5 3	L A V	Legally speaking

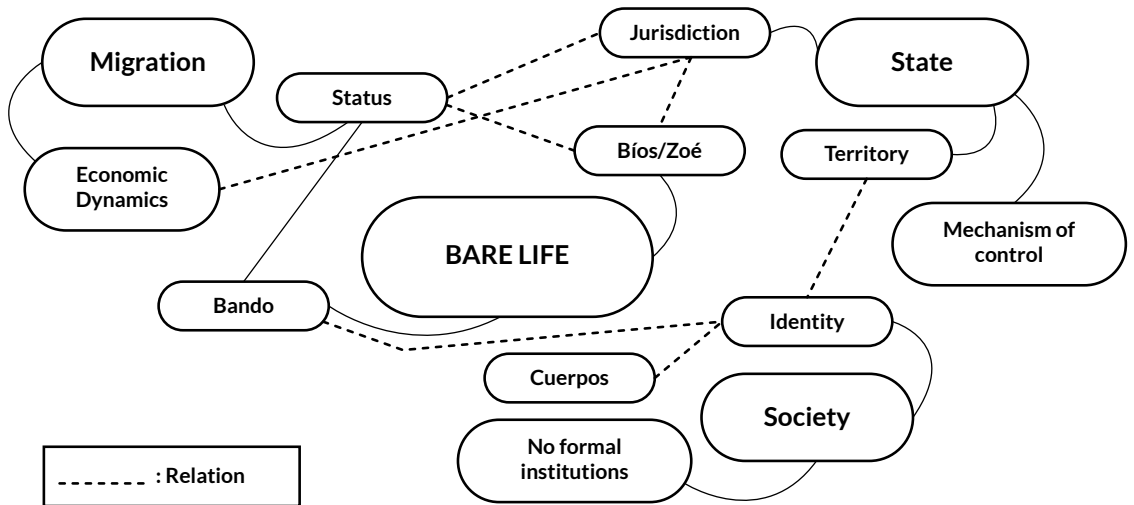
*LAV: initials of the Migrant Interviewed.

EGIPCODEP: interviewer

Primarily, the migrants refer to a document, namely, the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) as a mechanism through which they discern certain advantages that, transcend mere provisions and services. Instead, this document provides them a sense of existence once its tangible manifestations come to fruition. The concept of existence is then composed through a record according to which migrants in irregular situations are empowered to assert “we already exist” (Line 251). The process of regularizing their residency status, far beyond a specific circumstance, serves as a conduit through which they establish a sense of belonging and are no longer the object of indifference by the State. In the interviews, this State identity was exhibited under the heading “Colombia.”

The application of the principles for the construction of rhizomatic mapping (Deleuze & Guattari, 2014) is illustrated in Figure 2. In this representation, the core category is the bare life concept, around which revolves the categories of State and migrants. Through their components, these categories intersect and broaden the perspective of interpretation and interpellation.

Figure 2. De-constructed Relation Among the Categories Explored.



In terms of *relation*, the signifier of the bare life concept is not only the beginning of the rhizome, but can also be the end and, therefore, it is a node serving to relate all signifiers. This assertion ensures *heterogeneity*, as the analysis of the bare life concept is proposed within the context of migration. In this context, the rhizome does not present a hierarchical order, since the initial node may be the final node. In turn, this represents *multiplicity*, as the construction is subjected to a comprehensive analysis through deconstruction to understand its elements.

In the event of a rhizome breakage, a new one could be started. However, this rhizome does not exhibit interruption, and its construction leads to addressing the signifiers —currently— proposed; finding here the *assignifying rupture* principle. Finally, the sum of all these principles leads to *mapping and cartography*, since the rhizome of the bare life concept did not follow any structural model and contributed to the relation of different fields and signifiers such as *State*, *jurisdiction*, *territory*, *identity*, *bodies*, *side*, and *biós/zōé*.

Conclusions

Today, the migration phenomenon has emerged as a suitable scenario for bio-political analysis. Within this context, the figure of the sovereign entity is

manifested through institutional and legal procedures persisting regardless of its abandonment in modernity. Considering the meanings encompassed within the bare life concept that were proposed by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben constitutes a profoundly critical endeavor. Such an undertaking enables a more insightful comprehension of the mechanisms of control inherent within the States. Here, the existence itself is revealed as a political matter, susceptible to sovereign volition which is noticeable in the actions and governance policies.

Consequently, existence becomes a recurrent uncertainty, thereby, involving a strict division or qualification process which serves as a contemporary political anchorage. The conception of individuals as citizens, or otherwise, creates a binary dynamic in which one becomes subject to legal regulations whether from a passive or active capacity. The former is evidenced by an inclusion and protective perspective; while the latter is from one of inclusion and exception.

These spaces of exception within the normative framework serve as the initial point for reducing a population —adhering to specific characteristics with which they are identified in a community— to the bare life concept. As previously mentioned, they are elucidated to a form of power in which the right assumes an amorphous nature, delineated through its denial. Within the Venezuelan diaspora context, the attainability of circumstances that ensure a complete existence or, even within sufficient developmental standards, is subject to administrative pronouncements and decisions. This exacerbates the vulnerability to the sovereign authority to which migrants, regardless of their regular or irregular status are subjected. Existence itself depends on consulting and deciding who can have it or not.

In light of this, the migration phenomenon worldwide persists in being a tool that serves to legitimize electoral speeches, governmental agendas, and so on. This also aids in amplifying the perceptibility of the susceptibility of existence to evaluative frameworks predicated upon an undesirable other, which are characterized by constructs of affiliation to abstract notions. Otherwise, digressing within an inclusive legal-political order, under the sense of exception and what is not as it should be.

The elements presented here, not far from an abstract connotation serve as inputs for a theoretical analysis of the worldwide migration circumstances and guide the identification of certain transversal factors in the daily environment of individuals. These factors make the situation complex and sharpen the response capacity from the local authorities, in the end, subject to the migratory waves. This establishes the need for methods for the construction of strategies and proposals to guide the actions of the State, as evidenced in the nuance's manifestations concerning this phenomenon.

Furthermore, the rhizomatic model rather than complexifying how migration processes are scrutinized—particularly those framed in irregular dynamics—broadens the spectrum of observation encompassing different variables at play. Hence, the administrations, as representatives of the State, are empowered to formulate mechanisms that address each of these variables at their foundational origin. While acknowledging the influence of migration policies subject to the existence of the migrant body, the incorporation of factors from diverse perspectives such as societal identity processes serve as an instructive approach for facilitating an inclusive reception within the framework of human rights.

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