

**EXTERNALIZATION OF MIGRATION POLICY: EFFECTS OF EU
AND U.S. POLICY ON TURKEY AND MEXICO**

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AND U.S. POLICY ON TURKEY AND MEXICO**

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ABSTRACT

EXTERNALIZATION OF MIGRATION POLICY: EFFECTS OF EU AND U.S. POLICY ON TURKEY AND MEXICO

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Mexico

With rising border externalization, third countries are increasingly taking on the burden of border control and migration management. Yet these states are not mere objects of border externalization policy, but implementers in their own right. This thesis investigates how two ‘transit states’—Turkey and Mexico—respond to EU and U.S. imposition of border externalization. It asks whether the policy priorities that Turkey and Mexico set and the selection of cooperative or coercive bargaining strategies differ according to the state with whom they are negotiating. Using a most different systems design, it hypothesizes that the identity of the border externalizer determines prioritization and strategy selection. Drawing on previous research about European external governance and the agency of states as participants in the border regime, this study adds to the literature by comparing Turkish and Mexican responses to border externalization to each other and identifying shared priorities and negotiation strategies. It finds that the preferences, priorities, and viewpoints of Mexican and Turkish leadership, not the identity of the externalizing state, are the primary determinants of priority-setting and strategy selection. Both states focused on securing aid and funding and improved treatment for their citizens. Turkey also prioritized the silencing of EU criticism on democratic backsliding, a domestic political priority. Turkey adopted a coercive bargaining strategy, while Mexico’s strategy shifted from cooperative to coercive over time.

ÖZET

GÖÇ POLİTİKASININ DIŞSALLAŞTIRILMASI: AB VE ABD POLİTİKASININ TÜRKİYE VE MEKSİKA ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

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Meksika

Göçmen politikasında artan sınır dışılaştırılmasıyla, üçüncü tarafların sınır kontrolü ve göç yönetimi konusundaki yükü gitgide artıyor. Ancak bu devletler sınır dışılaştırma politikalarının yalnızca nesnelere değil, aynı zamanda uygulayıcılarıdır. Bu tez, iki 'transit devletin' – Türkiye ve Meksika – AB ve ABD'nin sınır dışılaştırma politikalarına nasıl tepki verdiklerini inceliyor. Çalışmanın ana sorusu, Türkiye ve Meksika'nın pazarlık stratejilerini oluştururken ve 'işbirlikçi' ya da 'zorlayıcı' stratejiler arasında seçim yaparken pazarlık yaptıkları ülkenin bu seçimlerin bir belirleyicisi olup olmadığıdır. Bu çalışma 'farklılık usulü' perspektifinden yola çıkarak, sınır dışılaştırıcının kimliğinin, politika empoze edilen ülkenin önceliklendirme ve strateji seçiminde önemli rol oynadığını varsayar. Avrupa dışılaştırma politikaları literatüründe bulunan çalışmalar ve devletlerin sınır idaresi konusunda aldıkları aktif rollerin ışığında, bu çalışma Türkiye ve Meksika'nın sınır dışılaştırma politikalarına verdikleri cevapları karşılaştırıp, bahsedilen devletlerin ortak önceliklerini ve pazarlık stratejilerini tespit ederek literatüre katkıda bulunmak amacındadır. Dışılaştırıcı devletin kimliğinden, Meksikalı ve Türk liderlerin tercih, öncelik ve bakış açılarının öncelik belirleme ve strateji seçme konusunda birincil belirleyiciler olarak karşımıza çıkması, bu çalışmanın ana bulgularıdır. Her iki devlet de, yardım ve finansman akışlarının devamını sağlamaya ve kendi vatandaşlarının şartlarını geliştirmeye odaklanırken; Türkiye, pazarlıktaki kozlarını AB'nin demokratik gerilemeye yönelik eleştirilerini bastırma amacı ile de kullanmıştır. Türkiye bu pazarlıklar esnasında 'zorlayıcı' bir strateji izlerken, Meksika ise 'işbirlikçi' ve 'zorlayıcı' stratejilerin her ikisini de yer yer kullanmıştır.

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*For mom, dad, Scooch,
and of course Doug & Lucy*

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AKP Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi [Justice and Development Party].....	25
AMEXCID Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo [Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development]	25
AMLO Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador	2
CAITF Center for Comprehensive Management of Border Traffic.....	56
CBP Customs and Border Patrol.....	26
CCTE Conditional Cash Transfers for Education.....	37
CFSP Common Foreign and Security Policy.....	21
CHP Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi [Republican People’s Party].....	7
DHS Department of Homeland Security	26
EC European Commission	3
ENP European Neighborhood Policy	22
ESSN Emergency Safety Social Net	37
EU European Union	2
EUR Euros	34
FRONTEX European Border and Coast Guard Agency.....	13
GDP Gross Domestic Product.....	7
ICE Immigration and Customs Enforcement.....	27
INM Instituto Nacional de Migración [National Institute of Migration].....	51
IPA Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance	33

MPP Migrant Protection Protocols.....	58
NAFTA North American Free Trade Agreement.....	7
NGO Non-Governmental Organization	38
OPIC Overseas Private Investment Corporation	58
PFS Programa Frontera Sur [Southern Border Program].....	16
PRI El Partido Revolucionario Institucional [Institutional Revolutionary Party]	7
TOBB Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği [Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey].....	35
U.S. United States.....	1
USAID United States Agency for International Development	25
USD United States Dollars	7
USMCA United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement.....	23

1. INTRODUCTION

“We will build a great wall along the southern border. And Mexico will pay for the wall. One hundred percent. They don’t know it yet, but they’re going to pay for it. And they’re great people and great leaders but they’re going to pay for the wall. On day one, we will begin working on intangible, physical, tall, power, beautiful southern border wall. . . Mexico you know that, will work with us. I really believe it. Mexico will work with us. I absolutely believe it. And especially after meeting with their wonderful, wonderful president today. I really believe they want to solve this problem along with us, and I’m sure they will.” - *President Donald Trump, campaign rally on August 31, 2016 in Phoenix, Arizona (Trump 2016)*

When referring to states aiding in the American border security regime, politicians and scholars have tended to focus on their importance relative to United States (U.S.) goals. Much like former President Trump, they often take the participation of these states for granted. His speech about building the wall, now infamous, casts Mexico as an unknowing but cooperative partner, all in the name of American national security. Likewise, in the European context, non-European states, both those in the immediate neighborhood and those beyond European borders, have traditionally been viewed as mere objects of European policy, not policy implementers in their own right. As borders become increasingly dispersed and ‘remote-controlled,’ third countries have taken on the burden of border control and migration management for states like Australia, the U.S., and Europe in a phenomenon called border externalization (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2016; Spijkerboer 2018).

Yet border externalization is not simply imposed on third countries nor accepted by them unconditionally. Through a comparative case study of contemporary Turkish and Mexican responses to border externalization, this thesis investigates how the label of ‘transit state’ gives each state leverage vis a vis its neighboring receiving

country. I ask how transit states set priorities when it comes to exercising leverage. Do priorities differ depending on the receiving country with whom they are negotiating? Second, how do transit states exercise this leverage? Does this differ depending on the receiving country with whom they are negotiating? I hypothesize that the identity of the border externalizing state is the determinant of the strategies that Turkey and Mexico adopt and the priorities that they select.

Based on my findings, I argue that Turkey and Mexico converge on their priorities when exercising their leverage: they both have used their position to secure additional financial compensation, adjust benefits to fit domestic priorities, negotiate better treatment for their own citizens, and distract from other issues in the bilateral relationship. Priorities do not differ significantly depending on the receiving country. Yet they differ in their approaches: while Mexico has traditionally taken a more cooperative stance, Turkey has taken a coercive stance. But Mexico's approach changed with the election of AMLO, when migration diplomacy shifted from cooperation to coercion. This finding suggests that the identity of the receiving state—i.e., the United States or Europe—in question may not exert an effect on the bargaining strategy employed, but instead the political elites are more important, suggesting a focus for future research. Ultimately, my findings suggest that Mexico and Turkey are not passive recipients of border control policy, but active participants in its creation.

1.1 State of the Literature

Much of the existing literature about European external governance, which incorporates methods of migration control, is focused on EU-based explanations for its effectiveness and outcomes. Institutionalist approaches to external governance, for example, consider internal EU modes of governance and rules when seeking explanations for its function and efficacy. As a result, they focus only on EU-specific, not third country factors. Power-based explanations also focus on the EU, not third countries, in order to examine external governance. They explore EU power relations with third countries and the role of external poles of influence, such as other powerful countries or international organizations (Lavenex 2004; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2011). According to both approaches, the formulation of migration and border externalization policies, as well as their end results, are shaped by the EU or other powerful state actors, not the third country that is the target of such policies (Boswell 2003). Using this line of thinking, third countries refuse to

accept EU external governance because the incentives offered by the EU are not attractive enough or because the EU does not have enough leverage, cohesion, internal cooperation, or credible conditionality to accomplish its goals (Panizzon 2012; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004). Although this literature emphasizes that the European Commission (EC) must tailor its external policies to better meet the needs of third countries and faces considerable challenges to cooperation, it puts the third countries in question in an inferior position to the EU (Lavenex 2006).

A number of studies, however, have reversed this trend and taken states not simply as mere objects of border externalization, but as decision-makers and actors in their own right. Reslow (2012) uses the case of Senegal and Cape Verde, arguing that the EU mobility partnership “implied significant, unacceptable costs” for the Senegalese government, while it was considered acceptable according to the Cape Verde government according to its own domestic concerns. She argues that it is thus not the EU’s negotiation strategy, but the interests of the state, that determine the outcome. By considering EU conditionality from the third country perspective, she articulates that third countries play an important role in EU external migration policy. In another instance of this reversal, el-Qadim (2014) investigates the Moroccan case as an instance of resistance to French attempts to use it as a third party border enforcer. Focusing on how mid-level Moroccan and French officials interact, she finds examples of asymmetrical negotiations and strategies of avoidance. Additionally, el-Qadim argues that ‘transit country’ classifications are a postcolonial imposition that take migrants’ destinations as the global North for granted and imply one-sided readmission agreements, deportation, and intervention in border policies. Instead of considering the countries and actors in third party states as mere objects, she suggests that research focus on the agency of state actors as they resist, respond to, and negotiate their role in migration policies.

Literature investigating border externalization through this lens has taken Turkey as a case study. Karadağ (2019) explores the ways in which Turkey asserts agency vis-à-vis Europe. She finds that Turkey’s role as a gatekeeper gives it bargaining leverage and, through a study of Turkish border guards responsible for implementing the EU-Turkey Statement, observes politics of condemnation, antagonistic relationships among border guards, and strategies of superiority, all signs that Turkey is employing agency in its relationship with the EU. Meanwhile Üstübcü (2019) investigates the effect of border externalization on migrants themselves, finding that it has produced a “multi-layered” and “differentiated” construction of migrant illegality in Turkey.

Previous studies have also investigated Mexico’s role as a transit country and border externalizer in relation to the U.S. Kimball (2007) embarks on a comparison

between Moroccan and Mexican roles as transit states and conducts fieldwork in Mexico in order to support her work. She argues that transit states “do more than simply comply with northern desires” and finds that both Morocco and Mexico were able to achieve “significant economic and regional integration gains” through their positions. Whereas Durand (2013) argues Calderon’s term ushered in a “demigratization” of the U.S.-Mexico foreign policy agenda, Covarrubias (2021) focuses on the era of Donald Trump and AMLO, arguing that there has been a “migratization” of foreign policy in Mexico that forced AMLO to abandon more humanitarian approaches, subordinating other issues in the U.S.-Mexico relationship. She observes that AMLO’s determination to achieve his domestic policy drove him to accept less-than-ideal bargains with Trump. A number of studies have also mapped the U.S.’s policy of externalization towards Mexico (Coleman 2005; Garibo García 2016).

Literature has also explored the agency of third countries in the midst of border externalization in Costa Rica (Winters and Izaguirre 2019), Libya (Tsourapas 2017), Argentina (Vammen 2019), and Morocco (Tyszler 2019), among others. Faist (2019) more generally characterizes negotiations, contestations, and other third country responses to border externalization as a form of expressing their discontent with global inequalities. He provides an overview of modes of maneuvering and calls for additional research about the practices of transit states, particularly as they impact migrants’ journeys.

Scholars have employed comparative approaches in order to differentiate strategies of exerting agency. Norman (2020) contrasts Moroccan and Turkish enactment of migration reform, arguing that international influence, not human rights concerns, may have affected domestic decision-making and that diplomatic considerations ultimately affected the final outcome, efficacy, and implementation of the reform. Üstübcü and İçduygu (2018) also contrast Morocco and Turkey, but focus specifically on their bordering practices—both physical and legal. They term Turkey and Morocco not ‘transit’ but ‘anti-transit’ states, tracing the temporary nature of closures and their effects on migrants themselves. Borders, they argue, are a form of unresolved governance between countries and emphasize the need for responsibility sharing, not shifting, when it comes to border externalization.

A variety of studies have focused on specific dimensions of border externalization in third countries. For example, el-Qadim (2018) explores the symbolic meaning of visa negotiations in Morocco, finding that Moroccan officials and elites exerted agency and contested their role in readmission agreements through visa liberalization dialogues. Wolff (2014) likewise analyzed the negotiation of European readmission agreements through a comparison of Turkey and Morocco. Affirming that “policy

instruments are inherently political,” she finds that both Turkey and Morocco challenged EU imposition of readmission agreements as ‘hard bargainers’ and concludes that domestic political dynamics, not EU priorities, are key to understanding the politics of EU migration instrumentalization. Tsourapas (2019) focuses on international aid, classifying it as a form of ‘rent’ for three ‘refugee rentier states’: Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Through a within-case analysis, he argues that states in which elites perceive their country as having geopolitical importance vis a vis the target state will engage in blackmailing strategies, while states who don’t perceive their status as geopolitically important will be more likely to opt for back-scratching strategies. Through case studies of Morocco, Moldova, and Turkey, Laube (2019) also highlights the role of visa liberalization in border externalization and argues that the EU’s reliance on border externalization allows Moroccan, Moldovan, and Turkish governments to use mobility regulation as a foreign policy tool. However, she finds that even though it gives each state some form of leverage, this does not always translate to foreign policy successes in terms of visa liberalization.

1.2 Puzzle in the Literature and Study Significance

How do countries that are targets of border externalization navigate their role, select their priorities, and adapt their bargaining strategies? This study focuses on Turkey and Mexico, two countries subject to border externalization policies from the EU and the U.S., respectively. It seeks to compare Turkish and Mexican priorities while exercising agency and their strategies used vis a vis the EU and U.S. in the midst of border externalization.

As discussed in the Literature Review, previous studies have investigated Turkish and Mexican responses to border externalization separately, but have not compared them to each other. This study therefore addresses a gap in the literature by embarking on a comparison between the two. It also adds to the growing body of literature not only asserting that transit states exert agency, but assessing how they set their priorities, how they negotiate, and how their strategies change over time. It responds to el-Qadim’s (2014) call for research that focuses on the agency of state actors as they respond to border externalization.

The global stock of migrants in 2020 reached 281 million, its highest yet. The European Commission calls migration a “megatrend”; it anticipates that international migration will continue to increase in the future and that the EU will continue to be a “prime destination” (European Commission 2022*b*). Migration, whether as a re-

sult of global warming, violence, economic opportunity, education, or other factors, is set to play a significant role in interstate relations going forward. Not only are migration flows increasing, but border externalization is becoming more and more prevalent. ‘Remote control’ of borders is increasingly seen as a convenient, cheap, and politically expedient way to reduce pressure on ‘destination’ countries. Going forward, states will “continue to probe for ways to ratchet up remote controls,” writes FitzGerald (2020, 18).

Considering these trends of continuing migration and rising border externalization, it is thus vital to understand how state actors leverage their roles as ‘transit states.’ Migration may give states, particularly those in the Global South, a new source of leverage in relation to the Global North. It is important to understand how domestic actors and priorities shape responses to border externalization, not just for the states involved, but for the migrants themselves. In addition, this study will add to the literature on asymmetrical imbalances and the ways in which third countries subvert this asymmetry.

1.3 Methodology

This study employs a most different systems design. As articulated by Mill, this design—also known as the method of agreement—selects cases which are different on the explanatory variables, but converge on their dependent variable (Levy 2008). The dependent variable for my first set of research questions is the selection of priorities in response to border externalization. The dependent variable for my second set of research questions is the type of strategy—coercive or cooperative—employed in the face of this externalization. The key explanatory variable that they differ on is the country with which they are engaging in migration diplomacy and reacting to border externalization. In the case of Turkey, this is the EU and in the case of Mexico, this is the U.S.

This study hypothesizes that Europe and the United States exert differing pressures and thus evoke differing responses to border externalization. Other explanatory variables, meanwhile, are held relatively constant. This is a purposeful choice; the two case studies were selected because they share many of the same characteristics, particularly those relevant to migration and policy formation. In selecting a set of cases that are similar on the dependent variable and different with the dependent variable, I acknowledge that there are limitations to this study’s generalizability but I believe that Turkey and Mexico are important cases to study nonetheless.

1.3.1 Case Selection, Sources, and Time Span

Mexico is the third most populous country in the Western Hemisphere after the U.S. and Brazil (*Mexico* 2022). Turkey, meanwhile, is the second most populous country in Europe after Germany (*Turkey* 2022). According to the World Bank's rankings, both Mexico and Turkey are classified as "upper middle income" countries; GDP per capita in current USD was \$8536.40 in Turkey and \$8329.30 in Mexico in 2020. Historically, the economic trajectories of Turkey and Mexico have exhibited similar characteristics as well. Both shifted from a state-run economy with import-substitution and protectionism to a free-market model in the 1970s and 80s. The Turkey-EU Customs Union and North American Free Trade Agreements (NAFTA) allowed for deeper regional integration while also creating deep wage disparities and encouraging the movement of trade while restricting the movement of people (Fernández-Kelly and Massey 2007; Yilmaz 2011).

Politically, Turkey and Mexico also share a number of commonalities. The PRI and CHP both dominated Mexican and Turkish politics, respectively, as dominant parties for decades. Currently, Turkey and Mexico are both governed by populist leaders, one far right and the other far left. AMLO is classified as a socio-economic populist, one that pits "hard-working, honest members of the working class" against big business, capital owners, and international financing institutions. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, meanwhile, is a cultural populist; one who frames his worldview in terms of the battle between 'the people'—native members of the nation state—and 'outsiders'—immigrants, ethnic and religious minorities, and cosmopolitan elites (Kyle and Meyer 2020).

Importantly for this study, both states have experienced a rapid rise in so-called 'transit migration' in the last two decades. In Turkey, migrants from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and other Asian and African countries increasingly used Turkey as a transit state starting in the mid-1990s (Içduygu 2005). With the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, Syrians also arrived in Turkey, which was conceptualized as a 'temporary' destination for Syrians before they could move onwards. Meanwhile in Mexico, migrants from South and Central America have traversed Mexican territory to reach the United States. Particularly in the last 20 years, natural disasters, poverty, and violence have induced many migrants to go to Mexico in search of a better life. These transit migration flows are both South-North and face tremendous pressure from the 'receiving state' to stem the tide of migration. Meanwhile, in both the EU and the U.S., populist and right-wing parties have capitalized on fear of the 'other,' xenophobic discourse, and economic anxiety to gain electoral victories. Mexican and Turkish officials, too, have been adopting increasingly restrictive

policies to control migration within their territories.

One difference between the two to note is the presence of significant populations outside their borders. In Europe, Turks are concentrated primarily in Germany. Approximately 1,484,500 Turkish-born people are residing in Europe, but this is only 1.7% of Turkey's population (Destatis [German statistics] 2021; Eurostat 2022). Turkey has a net positive migration rate, meaning that more migrants enter than leave. In contrast, the U.S. hosts a large number of Mexicans residing outside Mexican territory. Migration Policy Institute (2020) estimates that 10.9 million people born in Mexico reside in the U.S., which is equal to 8.4% of Mexico's total population.

Sources for this thesis include policy analyses, official government and nongovernmental reports, legislative documents, and journalistic sources. In line with its goals to shift the center of analysis towards the periphery, this study prioritizes the use of Turkish and Mexican perspectives over American and European ones. It makes use of sources written in English, Spanish, and Turkish. In accordance with its focus on elite responses to border externalization, it focuses on speeches, statements, and comments given by leaders, including heads of state, secretaries, and other government officials, of Mexico, Turkey, the U.S., and the EU.

Rather than encompassing the entirety of U.S.-Mexico and EU-Turkey relations, the study focuses specifically on the time period when Turkey and Mexico began to be recognized as 'transit states' by their respective neighbors. In Mexico, this means that though immigration has traditionally been a major focus of diplomatic relations between the two, the scope of the study will be limited to the late 1990s until the present. Transit migrants, though present in Mexico prior to the 1990s, only became a major focus of American policy-making and a concern of American politicians in the 1990s, particularly in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in 1998. As the number of Central Americans arriving at U.S. borders started to increase, Mexico came to be recognized as a 'transit state' and the U.S. began exploring policy options to, in essence, externalize its border to Mexico. In Turkey, the study focuses on the period between 2013 and the present, starting when Turkey began to receive large numbers of Syrian refugees and became a target of European border externalization policy.

1.4 Outline

First, the study will provide an overview of the literature about borders, border externalization, and origin, destination, and transit states and will assess Turkey and Mexico's relative status as transit states. Then, it will review the theory surrounding migration diplomacy and how border externalization complicates the picture of migration governance. In the next section, the study will discuss the role of American and European institutional contexts in shaping diplomatic relations, particularly migration diplomacy, with Mexico and Turkey. Because this study uses a comparative model, the institutional contexts are an important difference between the two and thus are necessary to understanding in order to make educated comparisons. In Chapters 4 and 5, the study will assess how Mexico and Turkey, respectively, have made use of migration diplomacy to exercise agency. It will trace the status of negotiations, the types of priorities set, and discourses used. In the research findings section (Chapter 6), the study will compare and contrast the two case studies, exploring how strategies used and priorities set differ and assessing whether or not the externalizing actor played a role. Finally, the study will conclude, offering final remarks about border externalization, the importance of the migrants themselves, and areas for future research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Border Externalization

Borders constitute an essential part of modern nation-states. Demarcated on maps, within legal discourse, and in the national imagination, they define the extent of state sovereignty (Starr 2006). Yet borders, as Karadağ (2019) suggests, are becoming increasingly mobile, itinerant, and dispersed. They are no longer located simply at the intersection of two states' borders, but at airports, embassies, ports, and even within third countries (Collyer 2007). This changing concept of borders is essential to understanding transnational migration. When migrants set out on international journeys, they not only face borders at national boundaries, but also at checkpoints manned by border patrol agents, during passport control at international airports, or when applying for a visa.

In this way, borders are extended into third countries in order to control and monitor international mobility. Through a process known as border externalization, border management and migration policy are outsourced both territorially and administratively (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2015). Border externalization results in a proliferation of institutions to deal with mobility and the relinquishing of state border control to third-country security forces (Karadağ 2019). In the process, it redefines what it means to be a 'sovereign territory' and results in the "spatial and legal stretching of the domains of migration control" (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2016, 233).

Border externalization has long been part of the international migration regime. The United States, for example, issued visas to prospective European immigrants to control and monitor their arrival in the States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Zolberg 2006). Yet since the 1970s, movement has entered a new era of remote control, one which invokes human rights discourse, employs route-thinking, and relinquishes increasing levels of state sovereignty to third party

actors (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2015; Faist 2019; Walters 2021). According to the literature, today the European Union, United States, and Australia are three primary implementers of this ‘remote-controlled’ border externalization (Stock, Üstübeci, and Schultz 2019). For these states, borders are controlled not only at the edge of their territory, but within third party states where the migrants begin their journeys, travel through, or make a plan to leave.

In political realms, particularly in the Global North, border externalization is seen as a useful tool to ease the burden of hosting migrants and outsource the social, political, and economic ‘costs’ of migration (Castles 2010; Farahat and Markard 2020). It provides justification for the transfer of moral responsibility and allows states to simultaneously claim that they are upholding human rights norms while also preventing migrants from reaching their borders and being able to claim asylum (Faist 2019). In essence, it is a work-around to the non-refoulement principle of the Geneva Convention. Hosting migrants can have political consequences for politicians and parties; as such, border externalization is seen as a convenient alternative. Mayda et al. (2022), for example, find that an influx of low-skilled migrants results in a significant increase in votes for the U.S. Republican Party. Likewise, in a study of Italian municipality-level voting patterns, Barone et al. (2016) conclude that immigration produces a causal increase in votes for the centre-right coalition in national elections. Finally, hosting migrants is often perceived as a costly endeavor, even though research indicates that refugees have positive or neutral impacts on local economies (Clemens and Hunt 2017; Evans and Fitzgerald 2017; Uçak, Holt, and Raman 2017, for e.g.). States often reason that the financial lift of providing development aid, border patrol money, or other resources associated with externalization is less than the cost of hosting those migrants in their own territory. Stock et al. (2019) draw comparisons between border externalization and the practice of outsourcing in global business: “migration management appears to bear resemblance to outsourcing strategies in financial transactions, where costs are transferred to third parties in order to increase profit margins.”

Border externalization has costly implications for migrants themselves. With more surveillance, policing, and preemptive controls to prevent migration from occurring, migrants are forced to undertake dangerous clandestine journeys in order to evade those controls (Andersson 2014; Collyer 2007). Border externalization policies have also resulted in the practice of trapping migrants in ‘safe’ third countries, preventing them from moving onward and claiming asylum at their final destination (Frelick, Kysel, and Podkul 2016). In addition, Frelick et al. warn that many of the countries designated as holding zones lack the same recognition of human rights and ability to adequately provide for the migrants, which ultimately puts the migrants at risk.

Border externalization can, in practice, take many forms. A common example is visa procedures, where would-be migrants must preemptively obtain proper documentation, apply for a visa, and even interview with an immigration officer in order to embark on their journey. Visa procedures often occur not at the border, but in the halls of embassies and at airport check-in counters. Another common example is border checks and policing. At the border ‘zone’, sometimes delineated by a fence or other barrier, agents monitor border crossings and demand passports, visas, and other documents. The border does not stop right at the edge of the state, but often exists in a shared zone of influence between two states that can stretch for feet or even miles (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2015; Walters 2021). Border externalization also takes the form of readmission agreements, which give states power to organize and deploy deportations of migrants illegally residing in their territory. Kruse and Trauner (2008) observe that the signature and implementation of readmission agreements has multiplied since the 1990s.

Other forms of border externalization rely on ‘route-thinking,’ a type of discourse that assumes each migrant is on a route with a designated itinerary, an end destination, and a series of institutions, authorities, and agencies governing their stops along the way (Walters 2021). Above all, Walters cautions, route-thinking is underpinned by a hierarchical structure with countries deemed the final destination at the top and those where migrants are originating from at the bottom. One example of border externalization that employs route-thinking is internal border policing. Patrols in a third country not only monitor clandestine migrants at a state boundary, but also in cities, along roads, and near coastal areas. They set up checkpoints to catch would-be migrants before they even embark on their journey or cross a state line; in essence, the mere idea of migration in their minds and the presumed route that they will take is enough to render them illegal (Andersson 2014).

Route-thinking is key to justifying another form of border externalization demonstrated in Ruben Andersson’s (2014) ethnography of clandestine migration practices and the business that has sprung from them. Andersson joins a Senegalese border patrol group funded by Frontex and supported by Spanish partners. The group is responsible for monitoring Dakar’s beaches and detecting illegal migrants before they begin their journey to Spain. One officer explains how to differentiate would-be migrants from beach-goers: “They don’t come one by one, they come ten to fifteen of them together, all with a backpack.” Clustered in groups, stocked up with biscuits and Euros, dressed in several layers, and wearing trainers or plastic sandals, migrants can be designated as “candidates for illegal migration,” questioned, detained, and prevented from onward movement even before they embark on a journey — all while on Senegalese soil (Andersson 2014, 102-105).

Another theme common in instances of border externalization and illustrated in Andersson’s ethnography is the subversion of state sovereignty. He observes that at the height of the ‘migration crisis,’ Spanish or FRONTEX boats patrolled Senegalese waters to detect any vessels that made it offshore and look for signs of ‘illegal’ migrants. In this way, European ships effectively controlled Senegalese borders, but the presence of a Senegalese officer onboard provided “legal cover” and creates the “appearance of sovereignty” (Andersson 2014, 101).

Border externalization also extends beyond policing and monitoring strategies. Development aid or targeted funding that seek to address so-called ‘root causes’ of migration can also be considered a form of border externalization (Aliverti and Tan 2020; Crane 2019; Stock, Üstübcici, and Schultz 2019). Again, these strategies employ route-thinking, assuming that those affected by these targeted funds were considering migration in the first place, were planning a direct route to Europe, America, or another destination in the Global North, and will change their minds and decide not to migrate as a result.

2.2 Destination, Origin, and Transit States

Attempts to control migration have led to the classification and categorization of migrant journeys. Points of departure are referred to as ‘origin states,’ while the endpoints are called ‘destination states.’ Other states have come to be classified as ‘transit states,’ an in-between zone between ‘origin’ and ‘destination’ (Walters 2021). Increasing border externalization in recent years has resulted in a proliferation of spatial controls imposed on migrants. They are forced to stretch out their journey, waiting in designated ‘safe third countries’ to be granted legal status, raising money to make expensive clandestine border crossings, or biding their time until making another attempt to cross the border (Collyer 2007). Migrants’ experiences in ‘transit states,’ thus, are not one-size-fits-all. Whereas some migrants merely pass through and spend a day, others may spend weeks, months, or even years in ‘transit.’ Walters (2021) argues that this label is largely arbitrary and disregards the lived journeys of migrants. It imagines that migrants follow a pre-defined route instead of a circular, constantly changing path with multiple or undefined destinations. Collyer et al. (2010) also criticize the term, pointing out that it is almost exclusively used in the context of migration to Europe and that it groups people with heterogeneous aims, reasons, and backgrounds in order to serve European political purposes. Furthermore, Crawley and Jones (2020) expand on the idea of a

‘transit’ state and its assumptions about destination and illegality. They emphasize that “the representation of countries outside Europe as places of ‘stuckness’ and ‘un-being’ not only limits our understanding of migrant journeys but feeds into anti-immigration discourses across the countries of the Global North.”

‘Transit migration’ as a term entered migration policy discourse in the early 1990s during a United Nations conference. European nations in particular viewed transit migrants as a threat, warning about migrant routes through Central and Eastern European countries and post-Balkan states aiming to reach the EU and claim asylum (Düvell 2010). There is no one agreed-upon definition. In 1993, the UN Economic Commission for Europe defined transit migration as “migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination” (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 1993). In 2005, the Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union claimed that “transit migrants are defined as aliens who stay in the country for some period of time while seeking to migrate permanently to another country” (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2005, 26). Yet the legality of the migrants’ status in the transit country, the duration of their stay, and even their final destination remains unclear in both international law and political discourse.

In order to clarify the definition of a transit state, Kimball (2007) offers a typology to classify transit states. She assesses geographic placement, migratory flows, function, and state response and deems Russia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mexico transit states. Per Kimball, transit states must border fully developed nations; exhibit high emigration, low immigration, and increasing transit migration; serve as a staging ground for migrants planning clandestine journeys to heavily-guarded destination countries; and enact restrictive policies to control transit migration (Kimball 2007, 13-15).

2.3 Turkey as a Transit State

2.3.1 Typology

According to Kimball’s (2007) typology, Turkey can be classified as a transit state. It borders Greece and Bulgaria and thus, the EU, is ranked as a highly-developed entity, and is widely recognized as a destination for migrants (Azose and Raftery 2019). In 2020, net migration in Turkey, meaning the total number of immigrants minus the total number of emigrants, reached 1.4 million (United Nations Population

Division 2020). Studies have explored Turkey’s status as a staging ground for clandestine migrant journeys (Andersson 2014; Ataç et al. 2017, for e.g.). For example, Kaytaz (2016) traces the journeys of Afghan migrants to Turkey, finding that many are suspended in a temporary status legally, socially, and physically and ultimately intend to move westward. Finally, often at the direction of the EU, Turkey has responded to rising transit migration by enacting more restrictive policies to control migrant routes and pathways. Though Turkey initially took a relatively generous approach to migrants, particularly Syrian refugees, it later suspended its open border policy and constructed walls along its Syrian and Iranian borders Ustubici and İçduygu (2018).

2.3.2 Current Trends in Turkish Transit Migration

Previous studies have explored Turkey’s particular status as a transit state both qualitatively and quantitatively. İçduygu (2005) finds that between 1995 and 2005, Turkey increasingly became a country of transit and immigration, particularly for Afghans, Iranians, Pakistanis, and other Asian and African countries. He argues that political clashes in Turkey’s immediate neighborhood, Turkey’s geographical proximity to Europe, increasingly strict European border policies that force migrants into illegality, and the potential for migrants to earn a living in Turkey given its relative economic prosperity induce migrants to transit through Turkish land (İçduygu 2005, 6). İçduygu and Yürkseker (2010) call for a multidimensional approach to understanding transit migration that considers the securitization and economization of international migratory regimes. Using this approach, they conclude that Turkey is in reality a transit country, but that its status as transit country has also been politically constructed through the European lens of border security. They demonstrate that migration patterns in Turkey also include circular labor migration and the suitcase trade, as well as asylum-seeking.

As a result of the Syrian Civil War and ensuing conflict, by 2022 approximately 3,650,000 Syrians are currently in Turkey. The total has increased from 1,558,149 in 2014 and peaked at 3,685,839 in 2021 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2021c). The situation of Syrian refugees in particular illustrates the arbitrary label of transit migration. Crawley and Jones (2020) emphasize that many Syrian refugees did not flee with an end destination in mind or changed their route in light of changing restrictions and new information. They did not merely ‘transit’ through Turkey, but settled there for months or even years, establishing social networks, finding jobs, and attending school. Even if Europe remains a ‘destination’

in their minds, Turkey became a destination for them its own right. The authors find that many decide to stay in Turkey instead of moving on due to shared cultural or religious ties, economic opportunities, and perceived uncertainty about their reception in Europe.

2.4 Mexico as a Transit State

2.4.1 Typology

Kimball’s typology also classifies Mexico as a transit state. It borders the United States to the north, a highly-developed state that has traditionally served as a migration destination (Azose and Raftery 2019). Mexico has a net immigration total of -300,000, meaning that the amount of emigrants exceeds immigrants. Yet the number of immigrants in Mexico is rising rapidly in recent years; in 2020, the number reached 1.2 million, an increase of 72% since 2000 (United Nations Population Division 2020). Studies and news reports have identified Mexico as a common staging ground for attempts to enter the United States (Hiemstra 2019a; Leyva-Flores et al. 2019). For example, Vogt (2018) documents the lives of Central American migrants in Mexico as they encounter state security apparatuses, spend time in the ‘in-between,’ and ultimately attempt to make the perilous journey to the U.S. Lastly, Mexico has in recent years adopted a more restrictive policy stance towards irregular migration. Vega (2017) documents the trajectory of rising immigration restriction in Mexico between the 1990s and 2010s, particularly after 9/11. *Programa Frontera Sur* (Southern Border Program, PFS), he argues, “is the latest in a series of incremental, though disjointed, efforts to tighten Mexico’s southern border against alleged threats, both real (i.e., organized crime) or imagined (i.e., undocumented, in-transit migration)” (Vega 2017, 6).

2.4.2 Previous Studies and Current Trends in Mexican Transit Migration

Qualitative and quantitative literature supports Mexico’s current status as a transit state. Cornelius (2018) provides an overview of modern Mexico-U.S. migration trends, starting with labor migration in the 1880s to the Bracero Program in the 1950s and the economic crises in Mexico in the 70s, 80s, and 90s that drove migration northward. In the current decade, he finds that it has transitioned from

an emigration state to a transit state, particularly for residents of the ‘Northern Triangle,’ a term to refer to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. The three are distinct nations, but often grouped together in policy circles because of their similar economic backgrounds, the “triangular” border point that connects all three, and the similar challenges that each face in combating poverty, corruption, and violence. Saad et al. (2018) explore the factors affecting Mexico’s status as a transit state. They point to shifts in climate and droughts, especially for the rural poor; other environmental disasters; the presence of a family network to support migration; high homicide and femicide rates, particularly due to organized crime; and food and economic insecurity as important drivers of migration from the Northern Triangle towards Mexico. Rodríguez Chavez (2017) backs up Mexico’s transit state classification with evidence from Mexican and American border patrol agencies. He estimates that 377,000 irregular migrants transited through Mexico in 2015, up from 184,000 in 1995. Furthermore, approximately 98% of those passing through Mexico were from the Northern Triangle (Rodríguez Chávez 2017). It is important to note that Northern Triangle migrants are not the only ones entering Mexico. Haitians, Cubans, and migrants from African, Asian, and South Asian countries have also been officially documented in Mexican migration routes (Cornelius 2018).

2.5 Migration Diplomacy

In 2020, the total number of international migrants reached 280.6 million, which is 3.6% of the world’s population and the all-time highest proportion of people who have crossed international boundaries to settle elsewhere (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2022). Cross-border movement is increasingly a matter of bilateral, multilateral, and international concern. In this context, states increasingly treat migration management not only as a matter of internal policy, but as an element of diplomatic relations.

In response to this trend, Adamson and Tsourapas (2019) propose the concept of migration diplomacy to encompass the range of tools, processes, and procedures that states use to manage cross-border population mobility. Though previous scholarship has addressed how migration features in diplomatic relations, Adamson and Tsourapas (2019) theorize ‘migration diplomacy’ as a particular object of study (Greenhill 2010; Thiollet 2011). Not all migration policies are necessarily components of migration diplomacy; they are only relevant, Adamson and Tsourapas stipulate, “when states include them as part of their foreign relations and diplomacy.” Labor agree-

ments that allow citizens from a certain country to work in another country for a designated period of time, if accompanied by diplomatic aims, are one feature of migration diplomacy. Visa agreements, when they are negotiated, proffered, or withheld in order to achieve a certain diplomatic outcome, can also constitute migration diplomacy. Other forms of migration diplomacy can include financial incentives, threats to ‘release’ or ‘withhold’ migrant flows, or readmission agreements (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019).

Migration diplomacy can occur in coercive or cooperative contexts. Cooperative migration diplomacy aims for mutually-beneficial outcomes, while coercive migration diplomacy pits states against each other via violence, the threat of violence, or unilateral bargaining tactics (Tsourapas 2017). One way to conceptualize coercive and cooperative bargaining strategies, Adamson and Tsourapas (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019) suggest, is through game theory. In a zero-sum situation, states will be incentivized to succeed at all costs, without considering the other state’s interests or behavior. Zero-sum situations lead to coercive migration diplomacy. In contrast, positive-sum situations, where a state incorporates other states’ interests and goals into the bargaining process, can result in a mutually-beneficial outcome with absolute gains on both sides. In this case, migration diplomacy is carried out through cooperation, not coercion.

Greenhill (2010) focuses on a particular element of migration diplomacy: ‘coercive engineered migrations,’ defined as “cross-border population movements that are deliberately created or manipulated in order to induce political, military, and/or economic concessions from a target state or states.” Since 1951, Greenhill identifies 56 groups of people who have been used as “weapons of mass migration” in order to target states and extract concessions. This tactic, she explains, is particularly relevant for weaker actors, who can take advantage of crises to achieve otherwise unattainable positions of strength in negotiating.

When migration diplomacy involves bargaining strategies employed by states hosting forced migration flows, Tsourapas (2019) terms these states ‘refugee rentier states.’ Through a study of how Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon used the presence of Syrian refugees in their territories to extract concessions, Tsourapas argues that the states employed either cooperative or coercive strategies depending on the size of the refugee population and the interests and perceptions of the domestic elites. In Turkey’s case, domestic elites perceived themselves as strategically important vis-a-vis Europe and the refugee population was substantial, which Tsourapas suggests led to the use of coercive refugee rent-seeking behavior. In contrast, the relatively smaller number of refugees and domestic elites’ less important perceptions of Jordan

and Lebanon's status vis-a-vis Europe resulted in the use of cooperative bargaining strategies.

Both in coercive engineered migrations and migration diplomacy overall, states engage in issue linkage, tying migration diplomacy to other political, economic, or cultural goals. For example, Gaddafi's Libya regularly engaged in migration diplomacy with both Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. While encouraging African migrants to consider Libya as a destination and engaging with Europe to gain leverage as a host of transit migrants, Gaddafi tied migration to the pursuit of both pan-Arab and pan-African policies, the lifting of an arms embargo, a formal apology for colonial brutalities, cooperation agreements to police irregular migration, and financial incentives (Tsourapas 2017). In addition to the political and economic issues illustrated in the case of Libya, Adamson and Tsourapas (2019) also suggest a public diplomacy component of migration diplomacy. The Fulbright program, the U.S. Peace Corps, or the Japanese Exchange and Teaching program might be considered forms of exporting soft power via state-sponsored temporary migration.

Whether a state is an 'origin,' 'destination,' or 'transit' state is theorized to impact the types of migration policies that a state focuses on, as well as the bargaining strategy that they employ. 'Destination' states, for example, are assumed to be primarily concerned with immigration, while 'origin' states are considered to be focused on emigration flows. Meanwhile, 'transit' states implement a transit migration diplomacy strategy (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019). In addition, the literature expects that a state's migration type is an indication of whether it will attempt to secure absolute or relative gains from migration diplomacy. Adamson and Tsourapas suggest that origin states pursue a zero-sum game approach, while destination states are more likely to seek relative gains. Meanwhile, a transit state is expected to employ a zero-sum approach.

As this paper will explore, both Turkey and Mexico have made use of migration diplomacy in order to achieve leverage vis-a-vis Europe and the United States. They have also pursued issue linkage, tying migration flows to economic and political aims. Their roles as perceived transit states also impact the type and nature of migration diplomacy that they engage in. Finally, border externalization, by increasing EU and U.S. reliance on Turkey and Mexico in order to achieve their own migration-related aims, further influences the ways in which Turkey and Mexico are able to engage in migration diplomacy and the types of concessions that they can secure. The next chapter will explore the institutional contexts and historical settings in which EU-Turkey and U.S.-Mexico relations take place. The chapter will set the stage for understanding the nature of border externalization involved and the ways

in which Turkey and Mexico exert leverage.

3. HISTORICAL SETTINGS AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS

3.1 Comparing Historical Settings

Relations between Turkey and the EU and Mexico and the U.S. take place in the midst of unique historical settings. These settings, in turn, affect their shared priorities, level of economic integration, and approach to migration. Ultimately, their respective historical settings are an important factor contributing to how they engage in and respond to border externalization.

3.1.1 EU-Turkey: Accession and the Customs Union

EU-Turkey relations date back to 1957 with the establishment of the European Economic Community. In 1964, the two signed an association agreement, which opened up the possibility of accession. After officially applying for membership in 1987, Turkey was officially named a candidate country by the EU in 1999, meaning that after fulfilling the Copenhagen Criteria it could begin accession negotiations. EU member states accepted Turkey's application in principle but the European Commission determined that it did not sufficiently meet the *acquis communautaire*; among other things, it lacked a consolidated democracy, faced economic difficulties, and could not resolve conflict with Cyprus. From 1999 to 2005, the country embarked on a series of political and judicial reforms (Keukeleire and Delreux 2014). Yet since then, only one chapter of the *acquis* has been closed (European Commission 2022*d*). Today, Turkey remains a candidate country on paper and continues to be subject to official accession expectations. Yet its decreasing alignment with EU CFSP, declining standards of democracy, and growing anti-EU rhetoric signal a shift away from Europe (Aydın-Düzgüt and Kaliber 2016; European Commission 2021*e*; Lippert 2021; Müftüler-Baç 2018; Schimmelfennig 2021).

EU-Turkey relations involving migration are thus shaped in the context of European enlargement and neighborhood relations. Enlargement, considered by some to be the EU's most successful foreign policy tool, uses accession conditionality to achieve policy transformations and reform in prospective candidate countries (Sedelmeier and Avery 2018). The EU has used policy tools already at its disposal — namely enlargement and the adoption of the *acquis* — to promote strict immigration control standards in neighboring countries. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) also supplements its efforts, offering visa liberalization agreements, development aid, materials and money to support border policing, and even the promise of accession to third countries. In exchange, third countries take on the burden of the EU's border control and relinquish a degree of state sovereignty to the EU (Lavenex and Uçarer 2004; Reslow 2012).

The Turkey-EU border externalization relationship is affected by an EU-specific approach to migration and movement. While internally promoting freedom of movement through the Schengen Zone, Europe seeks to limit entry to foreign nationals beyond its borders. Starting with the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, Europe sought to amend its common definition of refugees, extend its asylum procedures, and develop other elements of the EU internal migration regime. Hand in hand with the 'internal deepening,' however, was 'external widening' — a concerted effort to control migration flows and externalize EU migration policy (Lavenex 2006, 335). Agreement amongst EU member states in terms of internal policy harmony was hard to come by. In contrast, the evolution of cooperation on externalizing European borders to third countries has been "formidable" (Lavenex 2006, 337). Indeed, the benefits of border externalization for EU member states are evident. Once an irregular migrant reaches European territory, it becomes increasingly difficult to remove them (Joppke 1998). Border externalization thus prevents unwanted flows of migrants while releasing the burden of control at immediate borders.

Trade is another important element of EU-Turkey relations and ultimately affects their bargaining strategies, including in the realm of migration control. The two signed a Customs Union agreement in 1995, which permits the free movement of goods between the two countries, excepting agricultural products (*Decision No 1/95 of the EC-Turkey Association Council of 22 December 1995 on implementing the final phase of the Customs Union, 96/142/EC (1996)* 1996). For the EU, Turkey is its 6th largest trade partner, representing 3.6% of EU imports in 2020. On the Turkish side, the EU is its largest importer, (33.4% of imports to Turkey) the recipient of the largest share of Turkish exports (41.3% of exports to the EU), and the top source of foreign investment (European Commission 2021g).

3.1.2 U.S. - Mexico: USMCA and Post-9/11 Security Priorities

Mexico and the U.S. have an institutional relationship dating back to 1821, when the state of Mexico gained independence from Spain. The two share the longest land border in the world. Yet, migration did not become a focus of public policy until the late 90s (De Haas and Vezzoli 2013; Vega 2017). The border was largely porous and characterized by circular migration patterns. From 1942 to 1964, the U.S. began the Bracero program, which brought 4.5 million temporary agricultural workers from Mexico to the U.S. (Alba 2013). In part due to the success of this program, as well as a widely-held perception of opportunity and success in the North, Mexicans continued to migrate temporarily. By the 1980s, increasing U.S. border enforcement changed the logic of many Mexican migrants, encouraging them to move permanently instead (Alba 2013). Mexican migrants in the U.S. totaled 2.2 million in 1980 and tripled to 9.4 million in 2000, comprising 29.5% of all immigrants in the U.S. (Alba 2013). Particularly after 9/11, migration became a major priority for U.S. policymakers and an increasingly important element of U.S.-Mexico relations.

Mexico-U.S. relations are characterized by increasing regional integration, particularly in the realm of trade and security. After a Mexican debt crisis in the 1980s, political elites turned their focus away from import-substituting industrialization towards international trade to jumpstart growth (Vega 2017). Mexico joined the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1986, began an era of trade liberalization, and expanded Foreign Direct Investment capabilities (Aguila et al. 2012, 94). NAFTA, enacted in 1994 and later replaced with the USMCA in 2020, fostered free trade and investment amongst Mexico, the U.S., and Canada. The agreement established ties between Mexico and the U.S., not only economically but culturally (Aguila et al. 2012; Rodriguez 2005). As of 2021, total trade between Mexico and the U.S. reached \$661.2 billion, making Mexico its second largest trading partner (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). The two are interdependent; Mexican exports, which comprised 39% of its GDP in 2019, were overwhelmingly delivered to the United States (Villarreal 2020). Likewise, Foreign Direct Investment is a central part of both economies. The two share interconnected supply chains that economists argue has improved the global competitiveness of U.S. industry, particularly car manufacturing (Villarreal 2020). The highly intertwined trade environment between the two ultimately affects Mexican and American approaches to border externalization, as well as their relative position in negotiations.

Another element affecting bilateral relations and migration in particular is security. In the aftermath of 9/11, the U.S. began pursuing a policy of border externalization via Mexico, first through Plan Sur in 2001 (Hiemstra 2019*b*). Particularly in recent

years, border policies have been framed in terms of terrorism prevention (Aguila et al. 2012). The United States also sees Mexico as critical to its counter-drug trafficking efforts, which began in the mid-20th century and intensified with the Reagan administration in the 1980s. Counternarcotics cooperation between the two was formalized through the Merida Initiative, which allocated money to the Mexican government starting in 2007 to fight trafficking and cartels. The Merida Initiative also introduced the concept of ‘shared responsibility’ to fight crime and reinforce bilateral security priorities (Seelke 2022).

3.2 Comparing Institutional and Political Contexts

Institutional and political contexts are important factors in Turkey and Mexico’s respective responses to border externalization. These contexts dictate the forums and means through which they can engage and the stakeholders who play a role.

3.2.1 Institutional Arrangements

The EU offers the prospect of enlargement for Turkey. Accession, albeit an unlikely scenario for Turkey given stalled negotiations, is a form of leverage that the EU can exert. Accession-related negotiations also dictate some of the institutional arrangements between the two, including the Association Council, which meets twice yearly for high-level talks, and the Association Committee, which convenes experts to discuss specific chapters. The Customs Union between the two also incorporates the Customs Union Joint Committee, which is an institutional setting of its own (Delegation of the European Union to Turkey 2022). Other institutional settings in which the EU and Turkey come together include leaders’ meetings between Turkey’s president and presidents of the European Council and the European Commission. In addition, EU heads of state have met with Turkish leaders at high-level international summits to address urgent crises, including a series of meetings in 2015 and 2016 that resulted in the EU-Turkey deal (European Council 2022).

In comparison, the U.S. and Mexico operate as two distinct entities with no prospect of joining together. They come together in settings dictated by their bilateral relationship, including the U.S.-Mexico High-Level Economic Dialogue, High-Level Security Dialogue, and the North American Leaders Summit (White House Press Secretary 2021*b*). The Binational Bridges and Border Crossings Group, which meets

three times yearly, convenes state and local leaders and private-sector representatives for a discussion on border infrastructure. Both sides meet at least every six years to discuss and review the USMCA. They also cooperate at the agency level, including a Memorandum of Understanding signed between American and Mexican agencies for international aid and development (USAID and AMEXCID) to respond to needs at the border (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs 2021). Finally, the 21st Century Border Management Initiative, started in 2010, brings together Mexican and American delegations annually to discuss trade flows, border security, and joint migration management (U.S. Embassy Mexico 2020).

3.2.2 Political Systems and Settings

Political systems and settings, which have important implications for resulting responses to border externalization, vary between the two.

For Turkey, political cycles do not dramatically shift its policy stance on migration because its leadership, despite elections, has not changed in the last two decades. It has had the same leader since 2003, first as a prime minister and then as a president in 2014 after its switch to a presidential system. The new system empowered the executive branch at the expense of the judiciary and legislature (Esen and Gumuscu 2018). Likewise, the AKP has emerged since 2002 as a dominant party, enabling it to weaken opposition and seize control of resources and institutions (Gumuscu 2020; Keyman 2014). Given processes of state capture and democratic backsliding, prospects for a new presidential administration and new party in power are tentative at best (Tansel 2018). Furthermore, Turkey is not classified as a democracy; political scientists have classified Turkey's political regime as competitive authoritarianism, meaning that despite elections, partisan use of state institutions makes it difficult for new politicians to attain power (Esen and Gumuscu 2016). In terms of the entities involved in crafting its response to European externalization, Turkey's president plays a large role in shaping policy priorities. Parliament, given the new system, does not have many policy decision-making capabilities. Lastly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays a role in working directly with the EU and its member nations.

Meanwhile, in the EU, one of the primary entities involved in border externalization are European heads of state, represented by the European Council and chaired by a President elected every 2.5 years. The Council negotiated the 2016 EU-Turkey deal and was the direct implementer of border externalization, particularly during a series of bilateral summits in 2015 & 2016 (Tarhan and Wessels 2021). European Parliament, which changes every 5 years and is elected via direct democracy, passes

resolutions regarding border externalization, among many other topics. Parliament is also responsible for approving the EU budget, which often includes funds for border externalization efforts (European Union 2020*a*; Kaeding and Schenuit 2021). The European Commission, the EU’s executive branch, proposes legislation, sets priorities, and implements policies decided on by the Council and European Parliament. Its President, selected by heads of state and elected by European Parliament, serves for a renewable term of five years. Due to the accession framework, the Commission monitors Turkey’s progress on the *acquis* and disperses funds to support Turkish alignment with EU standards. The Commission is a “crucial” actor in migration policy in particular; it oversees implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement and disburses EU funding (Bürgin 2021, 225). Furthermore, it tracks Turkish compliance with EU visa liberalization standards and has blocked progress on lifting visa requirements for Turkish citizens (Bürgin 2021). Every six years, the European Council sets a strategic agenda with key goals for the EU, which are implemented by the European Commission and other institutions (European Union 2020*b*). This strategic goal-setting results in a migration policy that, despite frequent national and EU-wide elections, does not shift dramatically depending on who is in charge.

Election cycles in the U.S., in comparison, result in major shifts in policy and direction. Given its democratic system, presidential elections change the direction of executive power, while Senate and House elections also result in a realignment of the Congressional balance of power. In the two-party American system, surveys show that Republican and Democratic politicians and voters “are deeply divided along partisan lines” (Hammer and Kafura 2019, 2). Republicans are far more likely than Democrats to view immigration as a security threat, seek increasingly strict border control, and oppose efforts to legalize immigration (Hammer and Kafura 2019). This polarization has significant impacts on Congressional attempts to legislate migration policy, preventing consensus and delaying the passage or funding of programs that implement U.S. migration policy vis a vis Mexico (Kandel 2021). Congressional legislation involving border externalization includes the Merida Initiative, funding for the Bureau of Homeland Security, and the National Defense Authorization Act (Bruno, Kandel, and Wilson 2020). Presidential action, particularly executive orders, can also play a role in border externalization policy. For example, in February 2021, the Biden administration announced an Executive Order on Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework to Address the Causes of Migration, to Manage Migration Throughout North and Central America, and to Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border (White House Press Secretary 2021*a*). Lastly, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which incorporates both U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), also plays a role in enforcing and enacting border externalization of the U.S. Both institutions are part of the executive branch and thus transition leadership and strategic direction following each presidential election.

Following the PRI's relinquishing of power in 2000 after 72 years of rule, Mexico transitioned from a single-party system to a multi-party electoral democracy (Ugalde 2001). Since 2000, subsequent presidential administrations have held power in Mexico from both left and right-leaning parties, each with varying policy objectives. Like the U.S., Mexico has a federal administrative system, meaning that its 31 states are under the leadership of governors (Ramírez 2021). Power is vested in the president, elected every 6 years, the bicameral legislature, which consists of a Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and the judicial branch (Ramírez 2021). As a result, its migration policy also shifts depending on the party and president in power. Mexico's current president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, came to power via personalistic politics and a loosely organized, fledgling party organization that put the future of other, more established parties in Mexican politics in question (Greene and Sánchez-Talanquer 2018).

In the next chapter, the study will turn to the first of its two case studies: Turkey. It will employ the knowledge of institutional settings and historical contexts discussed in this chapter. In addition, as it documents Turkey's use of migration diplomacy to achieve political and policy-based aims, it makes use of the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2.

4. TURKEY

The chapter will trace Turkey’s use of migration diplomacy between 2013 and the present through speeches, documents, statements, and other primary sources. In doing so, it seeks to answer both research questions of the study: which priorities Turkey pursues in its use of migration diplomacy and which strategies are selected. It explores, in turn, Turkey’s pursuit of silence on de-democratization and legitimacy, funding, and visa liberalization. It finds that Turkey has regularly employed coercive tactics to accomplish its migration diplomacy aims.

4.1 Loud Silence

Classified as ‘not free’ in Freedom House’s annual report on democratic conditions, Turkey under President Erdoğan has seen increasing attacks on the rule of law, targeting of opponents, particularly following the 2016 coup, anti-democratic constitutional changes, and crackdowns on civil liberties (Freedom House 2021*a*). Initially ranked 0.51 on the v-Dem Liberal Democracy Index at the start of Erdoğan’s rule, the country has since plummeted to 0.11 in 2020 (Varieties of Democracy 2022*b*). For its part, according to Article 8 of the Treaty of the European Union, the EU seeks to promote “prosperity and good neighborliness” in its immediate neighborhood through relationships founded on the Values of the Union: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights (European Union 2020*c*). Internally, the EU sees itself as a ‘protector of democracy’ and engages in democracy promotion through linkage and leverage (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2011). Yet Turkey has been able to brandish the presence of migrants as a weapon to prevent the EU from reacting to its rapid democratic regression. As a result, the European Commission and European leaders have been repeatedly reluctant to condemn Turkish actions on the global and domestic stage.

Turkey's role as 'gatekeeper' has given it the ability to silence or weaken the impact of public criticisms about its democratic declines. One example of this is the delay in the release of the European Commission's Annual Progress Report on Turkey's progress in fulfilling accession criteria. Originally slated to be released on October 14, 2015, the Commission initially delayed its release until after a Summit on Migration with EU leaders and Erdoğan (Barker and Zalewski 2015). Other member states, including Britain, were reportedly in favor of waiting until after the November 1 general elections to release the report (Barker and Zalewski 2015). Likewise, Erdoğan demanded that the report release be postponed as part of ongoing negotiations with the EU, citing potential interference with the election campaign (Barker and Wagstyl 2015; Karadağ 2019). The Commission conceded, ultimately waiting an extra month and allowing the election to occur before its eventual release on November 11, 2015. Notably, the report condemns attacks on the freedom of assembly and expression and notes a marked decrease in the rule of law (European Commission 2015*d*).

Threats to open the borders and flood Europe with refugees are another tool through which Turkey maintains EU silence on violations of democracy and the rule of law. On November 24, 2016, European Parliament voted to suspend the accession process with Turkey (The Independent 2016). Though the vote was non-binding, it served as a signal to Turkey that European politicians disapproved of declines in democratic freedom of expression, crackdowns on the media, and attacks on political opposition. The next day, Erdoğan responded with a threat, using the leverage of Syrian migrants in Turkey to oppose the Parliament's position. "If you go any further, these border gates will be opened," he said. "Neither I nor my people will be affected by these dry threats. It wouldn't matter if all of you approved the [European Parliament] vote." He continued, "We are the ones who feed 3-3.5 million refugees in this country. . . You have betrayed your promises" (Deutsche Welle 2016). In this way, Erdoğan makes use of the presence of migrants in Turkey to assert Turkey's agency and contradict policies or decisions that are not in Turkey's favor.

Erdoğan has also used threats to demand assistance from European and American leaders with the creation of a 'safe zone' in Syria for refugee resettlement. In September 2019, he stated, "Give us logistical support and we can go build housing at 30 km depth in northern Syria. This way, we can provide them with humanitarian living conditions. . . This either happens or otherwise we will have to open the gates. Either you will provide support, or excuse us, but we are not going to carry this weight alone," he warned (EuroNews 2019). Erdoğan once more demanded support for the creation of a safe zone via threats on November 7, 2019, indicating that this is an important goal for him (Reuters 2019). According to Human Rights Watch,

these safe zones are far from safe; the group tasked with administering the territory is charged with looting, summary executions, disappearance of aid workers, and unjust treatment of Kurdish families in particular (Human Rights Watch 2019). In this way, Erdoğan is attempting to brandish the presence of migrants as a weapon to extract concessions from European leaders that would constitute violations of human rights, may be a form of demographic engineering, and would require a full-scale military intervention (Adar 2020).

Erdoğan again made use of threats to warn European leaders against referring to a Turkish offensive operation in Syria as an ‘occupation,’ another form of extracting silence on regressions in the rule of law (Turak 2019). Speaking at the Meeting of Provincial Leaders on October 10, 2019, he warned, “Eyy European Union, if you describe our army as an invader, our job is easy. We will open the doors and send 3.6 million refugees to you. . . [The EU] was not going to send the second installment, 3 billion Euros. Have you kept your promise so far?” He continued, “We have spent 40 billion dollars until today, we will spend it again, but we will also open the doors. You have not been sincere. You’ve been stalling us since 1963. Let me say one more thing. Our border operation is working to prevent the establishment of a terrorist state in the South” (Sözcü 2019). His statements not only dissuade European leaders from speaking of the operation in Syria as an ‘occupation,’ but also imply that Turkey is the only entity preventing the establishment of a terrorist state in Syria, making Europe even more indebted to them.

Instead of criticism of human rights and democratic violations, Erdoğan also gains political legitimacy through negotiations and meetings with European leaders. For example, in October 2015, while internally the peace process with the Kurds failed and freedom of the press continued to be at risk, European leaders welcomed Erdoğan at a meeting in Brussels to discuss new migration measures (Barigazzi 2015; European Commission 2015*a*). To kick off the official state visit, Erdoğan was knighted with the Order of Leopold by Belgian King Philippe, sparking criticism in the Belgian press while also signaling Turkey’s elevated importance abroad (Vlassenbroek 2015). He then met with European Council President Donald Tusk, European Parliament President Martin Schulz, and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. In remarks following their meeting, Council President Tusk spoke of his decision to “intensify our contacts. . . in light of the refugee crisis.” He stressed Europe’s readiness to act and called on Turkey to come to its aid. “It is indisputable that Europe has to manage its borders better. We expect Turkey to do the same.” The remarks focused on cooperation, particularly with regards to migration, without calling Turkey out on other issues. For example, referencing the dispute over Cyprus, Tusk merely said, “Finally, on the Cyprus settlement process

we reiterated our support and readiness to assist it, in whatever way possible” (European Council 2015). In years prior, the EU did not refrain from harsh criticism of Turkey’s position on Cyprus. For example, when negotiations to resolve the dispute over Cyprus reached an impasse, European Commission President Barroso, in an April 2008 speech at the Turkish Grand National Assembly, did not back down from calling Turkey out on its lack of progress on the accession criteria (Ulusoy 2008). Among other criticisms, he demanded resolution of the Cyprus issue and called for a “comprehensive strategy” to solve the terrorism threat and problems in Turkey’s Southeast while also ensuring rights for Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin (European Commission 2008).

Commission President Juncker also fell short of criticisms following the 2015 meeting in Brussels, instead emphasizing Turkey’s crucial role in assisting Europe. “It is obvious that we need Turkey to protect our external borders, and the Commission will do its utmost to support the valuable efforts of the Turkish Republic,” he stated during a speech to Parliament on October 6. Ostensibly responding to those who called the meeting a ‘tea party,’ Juncker defended the decision to meet. “Who actually gives some here the right to say that we had a tea party with Mr. Erdoğan yesterday? We have tried very hard to reach an agreement with Turkey on the issue of refugees. This is extremely important, not only for Greece but for Europe as a whole. But of course we also talked about other issues. Do you really think that we held hands with Mr. Erdoğan?” (European Commission 2015*c*). Yet he did not specify what ‘issues’ were discussed, nor did he expand on how the issues were raised. Instead, he mentioned that Turkey should be designated as a safe third country and extended his gratitude to Turkey for their role in assisting Europe.

Another meeting that lent legitimacy to Erdoğan was a visit from German Chancellor Angela Merkel two weeks prior to the Turkish elections. Merkel visited Istanbul on October 18, 2015, meeting with President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu. The visit added gravitas to Erdoğan at a critical time in the election cycle and put a spotlight on him on the global stage. After their meeting, Erdoğan commented on two major topics that were, coincidentally, two of the primary issues for Turkish voters in the upcoming elections (Sayarı 2016). Following the terrorist attacks outside of the Ankara station only 9 days prior, he called attention to his own country’s commitment to fighting terrorism. “I would of course also like to thank the Chancellor in particular for calling me in connection with the assassination and the people who lost their lives—there were 102 people—and also expressing her sympathy, expressing her sympathy, thank you very much. The sensitivity we show, especially when it comes to working together against terrorism, continues.” Erdoğan also remarked on the refugee crisis, saying “Turkey must be helped when

it comes to burden-sharing, because Turkey has taken on a great burden” (Die Bundesregierung 2015*b*). For her part, Merkel reaffirmed Germany’s support for burden-sharing, continued accession negotiations, visa-free travel for Turks, and the joint fight against terrorism (Die Bundesregierung 2015*b*). The meeting acted as a political boost for Erdoğan, allowing him to highlight key issues and display continued support from Germany. Furthermore, Merkel’s comments were entirely positive and did not make any mention of other issues in the Turkey-Germany relationship or the de-democratization process in Turkish domestic politics. A group of Turkish academics noted this contradiction in a letter to Merkel prior to the visit. “We are extremely uncomfortable because your visit will be seen as a show of political support in the campaign climate and you may praise politicians who violate the most important values of the EU. We request you to bring these issues to the agenda at the joint press conference you will hold with Mr. Erdoğan and Mr. Davutoğlu, and we hope that you will visit our country in the days when our democracy will be strengthened,” they requested (Birgün 2015).

As predicted, in the joint press conference with Merkel and Davutoğlu, democratic violations and concerns were left off the table. Davutoğlu articulated Turkey’s list of demands, which included fair burden sharing, visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, acceleration of EU-Turkey relations, and Turkey’s place at the EU ‘table.’ He asked that Turkey be “included in the family photo,” noting that “this will of course also be a corresponding message to our societies” (Die Bundesregierung 2015*a*). In her remarks, Merkel merely echoed his demands, explaining how Germany and the EU will work to make each happen. She made no mention of disagreements over Cyprus, one of the primary reasons for delays on visa liberalization. Furthermore, she shared how the migration crisis could lead to closer ties between Turkey and Europe. “I think we have used the crisis we are experiencing through a very disorderly and uncontrolled movement of refugees, to again achieve closer cooperation on many issues, both between the European Union and Turkey, and between Germany and Turkey,” Merkel stated (Die Bundesregierung 2015*a*).

Indeed, in other cases of democratic regression, the EU has been prompt to deploy both leverage and linkage tools at its disposal. In the case of Ukraine for example, the EU was swift to publicly condemn attacks on democracy and the rule of law, rather than exhibit deference and capitulate to demands. When Ukrainian president Yanukovich began to implement non-democratic measures in 2013, the EU imposed conditionality in its negotiations with Ukraine for an Association Agreement, released public statements condemning de-democratization, and demanded specific progress in democracy and the rule of law (Börzel and Lebanidze 2017).

In this way, Turkey exercises agency over its internal affairs, preventing EU intervention. It does not simply accept the EU imposition of border externalization, but uses it to its advantage and effectively prevents the EU from reacting to rapid regressions in democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Threats, manufactured crises, and official meetings act to serve Turkish goals and weaken the EU's own bargaining position.

4.2 Money, Money, Money

A common component of border externalization is joint border policing, which can entail training, money, or resources to supplement a third country's border security strategy. This is not simply an imposition of EU demands, but another chance for Turkey to negotiate, engage in migration diplomacy, and exert agency. In addition to migration management-specific funding, border externalization can also entail additional funding to 'sweeten the deal.'

One of the ways Turkey benefits from its position as an implementer of EU border externalization is funding for border control and migration management programs. Turkey has received more border assistance from the EU than any of the other pre-accession countries on EU borders (Dikilitaş 2019). As of 2006, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) became the primary tool through which the EU provides financial assistance to pre-accession countries, including Turkey. From the period between 2007 and 2013, Turkey received 4.79 billion EUR, 48.2% of the total IPA funds to all nine pre-accession countries allocated in that period. Of that 4.79 billion, approximately 3.4% was allocated for border management (European Commission 2015*b*). In the IPA-II period between 2014 and 2020, Turkey received 3.53 billion EUR, 45.5% of the total IPA-II allocations. The percentage of funds directed towards border management and migration as a proportion of the total IPA-II budget more than doubled compared to that of IPA-I; it reached 6.42% of the total funding package. In fact, Home Affairs, which incorporates the priority areas of integrated border management, migration and asylum, and the fight against organized crime, was the second highest sub-sector of the IPA-II budget. Its funding surpassed other sub-sectors like civil society, judiciary, and fundamental rights (Dikilitaş 2019). Increased EU funding for border management is not only an indication of European priorities, but a sign of Turkey's ability to negotiate and secure higher funding totals based on its own priorities. Funds have gone, among other things, towards the construction of removal centers for irregular migrants, the ex-

pansion of an irregular migrant tracking system, staff capacity training, and Coast Guard training (Delegation of the European Union to Turkey 2016).

Starting in 2014, Turkey began to host increasing numbers of Syrian refugees. By April 30, 2014, the total registered population reached 735,864, an increase of 31% from the start of 2014 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2014). Consequently, Turkish policymakers and politicians began to ask for increased international assistance and burden-sharing. In May 2014, Turkey's director of the Disaster and Emergency Administration (AFAD) called for help, pointing out the disparity in spending levels. "Turkey has spent over \$3 billion for Syrian refugees according to U.N. statistics. We are providing extra aid near the borders to serve people who are [stuck] between Syria and Turkey. Apart from that there is another \$400 to \$500 million being spent by the Turkish aid organizations inside of Syria. International aid is only limited to \$220 million so far," he said (Soylu 2014). Complaints about Europe's relatively lower number of refugees accepted, worldwide unwillingness to provide sufficient aid to Turkey, and the disproportionately large burden that fell on Turkey's shoulders were frequent talking points for Erdogan and other public figures. Speaking in July 2015, Erdogan went so far as to accuse the EU of essentially leaving refugees to die: "the attitude they have or the groundwork they lay is such that these people end up drowning in the sea," he claimed (Al Arabiya 2015).

These public calls for action, coupled with negotiations and a series of talks with EU leadership, resulted in the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan in November 2015. In this instance, the EU was not simply imposing its policy of border externalization on Turkey, but also reacting and responding to Turkish demands. Many of the points in the plan met Turkish needs, not just those of the EU, and changed as a result of Turkish-driven negotiation. Money was a key element of this; initially, the EU indicated that it was willing to provide up to 500 million EUR to Turkey (Connolly, Traynor, and Letsch 2015). On October 6, the EU signaled that it was willing to fund up to 1 billion EUR (European Commission 2015a). After more talks, the aid was upped to 3 billion EUR, more than 12 times the original amount (European Commission 2015b). The final iteration of the Joint Action Plan is just as much a product of Turkish agency as it is an indication of European border externalization. Turkey was an active participant in the border externalization process, shaping its demands and securing funding to match its own needs.

By March 7, 2016, the two sides finalized an agreement. Turkey committed to accepting all migrants returned from Greece and reducing irregular migration in exchange for 3 billion EUR and an additional 3 billion EUR by the end of 2018,

acceleration of the visa liberalization roadmap, re-energization of the accession process, upgrade of the Customs Union, and work to improve humanitarian conditions in Syria (European Council 2016). After securing funding through the EU-Turkey Deal, Turkey has continued to exert agency to renegotiate the terms, call out perceived injustices, and point out delays in funding. One of the points of contention of the Turkey-EU deal is the allocation of funding towards Turkish and non-Turkish agencies. In the aftermath of the deal, this has become a frequent complaint for Turkish politicians and policymakers (Antypas and Yildiz 2018). Of the 3 billion EUR in the second tranche of payments between 2018 and 2019, only 875 million is contracted to Turkish agencies, including the Ministry of Family, Labor of Social Service, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of National Education. Of that 875 million EUR, only 519.6 million (59.38%) had been paid out as of January 1, 2022. In the first tranche of payments between 2016 and 2017, 675 million was contracted out to the Directorate of Migration Management, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and TOBB. 99% of this amount has been paid out as of January 2022 (European Commission 2022*a*).

Erdogan refers to this allocation of aid to Turkish agencies as insufficient and an insult. He has repeatedly called for more aid to be directed to Turkish agencies instead of international NGOs (Aydıntaşbaş 2020). Speaking to a German newspaper, Foreign Minister Cavuşoğlu called the delay in payments a sign that Europe “hasn’t kept their word” (Republic of Turkey, Directorate of Foreign Affairs 2020). In February 2020, Erdoğan took his comments about the lack of money a step further by making good on his threats. On February 28, Turkey announced that the borders were effectively open and that Turkish border guards would no longer prevent migrants from crossing into the European Union. Erdoğan vowed, “We will not close those doors... Why? Because the European Union should keep its promises” (Al Jazeera 2020*a*). His remarks came as 33 Turkish troops were killed in Syria (Al Jazeera 2020*b*). Thus the threat not only referred to the European Union’s alleged failure to honor its financial commitments from 2016 EU-Turkey deal, but also the lack of EU assistance in Syria (Deutsche Welle 2019). Not only did Turkey refrain from preventing border crossings, but it also began facilitating the movement of migrants, an operation that Pierini and Siccardi (2021) term a “paramilitary assault.” According to reports, border officials bought migrants bus tickets and drove them to the border (Stevis-Gridneff and Kingsley 2020). Special forces officers shuttled approximately 5,800 migrants to the Greek border under the false premise of an open border (Pierini and Siccardi 2021). At times, the migrants were even reluctant to go: one video clip shows Afghan migrants being forced off buses at gunpoint and beaten if they showed signs of resistance (Tolis 2020). In addition, the entire scene

was broadcast live by Turkish media, ostensibly targeting two audiences: worried European officials and other hopeful migrants (Stevig-Gridneff and Kingsley 2020).

This artificially-created ‘crisis’ at the Turkey-Greece border is another example of Turkey’s own agency in its role as the EU’s external border implementer. In this case, Turkey had goals, both domestic and foreign policy-related, in mind. As Erdoğan reiterated in a speech on March 1, “The doors are now open. Now, you [Europe] will have to take your share of the burden” (Deutsche Welle 2020a). In this case, the manufactured crisis worked to capture the attention of European politicians and the public. Vice President of the European Commission Josep Borrell conceded, “Turkey has a big burden...and we have to understand that.” He added, “But at the same time, we cannot accept that migrants are being used as a source of pressure” (Guarascio and Gumrukcu 2020). He went on to indicate that the EU was prepared to give additional money to Turkey beyond the initial amount pledged in the 2016 deal (Guarascio and Gumrukcu 2020). The crisis also resulted in meetings with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel. Erdoğan also participated in a 75-minute phone call with, Macron, Merkel, and Johnson on March 17 (Wintour and Smith 2020). These meetings had a twofold effect. Erdoğan was able to request additional cash and assistance from the EU, using the migrants as a bargaining chip. In addition, he was able to signal to supporters and his audience at home that he had made progress on the issue of Syrian refugees residing in Turkey, essentially allowing him to place the blame on the EU and specific European leaders if an agreement was not reached.

Leadership in Turkey is not the only group exercising agency in light of the payments. As Karadağ (2019) observes, security forces themselves respond to these policies using a politics of condemnation vis-a-vis Europe, with ad-hoc security practices, and by claiming the moral high ground. They are the recipients of EU funding, but see the EU as a lesser entity who is responsible for putting migrants at risk. Karadağ also observes that many border patrol and Coast Guard officers echo Turkish leadership’s rhetoric, accusing the EU of failing to meet its promises and providing inadequate funding. One officer Karadağ spoke with highlighted his perceived role as a gatekeeper for the EU: “...Our burden is much heavier. The other side generally expects us to handle everything. Actually, they should thank us. We not only guard our border but also theirs. Their security also depends on us. Turkey’s burden is quite heavy in this regard.” In this way, Turkish implementers of border security exert agency by taking the moral high ground, contesting and responding to the funding they receive, and positioning themselves as essential to Europe’s security.

By the end of 2019, all of the 6 billion EUR initially promised to Turkey through the Facility for Refugees in Turkey had been contracted out (European Commission 2019). The EU did not initially indicate that it was willing to continue providing funding. Turkey again used its position to demand additional funds. In a speech on March 2, 2020, Erdogan claimed that the EU had offered 1 billion EUR, which Turkey refused, asking for more. He also demanded more autonomy over the funds (Aktan 2020; Kucukgocmen 2020). The staging of a crisis at the Greek border, as well as public statements, served to express Turkish demands for additional funding. In the first public indication of support for more aid to Turkey, the October 2020 conclusion from the European Council saw European leaders voice their support for a “positive political EU-Turkey agenda” and invited Turkey to join negotiations “with an emphasis on the modernization of the customs union, people-to-people contacts, high level dialogues, and continued cooperation on migration” (European Council 2020, 8). European Council conclusions in December 2020 reiterated this invitation and called for Commission action (European Council 2021). By December 2020, the Commission announced 2-year extensions to funding for the Conditional Cash Transfers for Education (CCTE) and the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programs (European Commission 2020). Yet Turkey’s push for advantageous terms and attempts to secure better monetary benefits continued.

According to the EU, the terms of the EU-Turkey Statement are indefinite and do not expire; yet Turkey has made it clear that they are willing to break the deal when their needs are not met (Die Bundesregierung 2021; European External Action Service 2021). One of the main ways in which Turkey has responded is by refusing to accept returnees. On March 17, 2021, Deputy Minister of European Affairs Faruk Kaymakçi made Turkey’s position clear: “We are not taking back migrants because the EU is not fulfilling the March 18 deal” (AFP 2021). Additional pressure appeared to push European leaders to support additional funding. Answering a question at a press conference on March 15, 2021, European Commission Vice President Borell affirmed continued EU support for Turkey. “And I think that in the future, some kind of agreement of this type has to be done. The refugees are still there. They continue needing our support” (European External Action Service 2021). On March 19 and once more on April 7, Erdoğan met with Presidents Michel and von der Leyen. Among other topics, the three discussed migration cooperation (European Commission 2021*c, d*). By June, a new funding package for Turkey was suggested in Council conclusions and put forward by the Commission. Initial drafts of the funding proposal reportedly provided 3 billion EUR to fund migration control and refugee aid in Turkey (Rankin 2021). After Parliamentary approval, the final iteration allocated 3 billion EUR to migration control and border management, as well as an additional

530 million EUR to support educational programs (European Commission 2021 *a,b*).

Yet Turkey remains unsatisfied with EU monetary support. In January 2022, Erdoğan stated that “Turkey has not received meaningful support from the EU in its battle with migration” and voiced the need for updates to the 2016 agreement (Gumrukcu 2022). As recently as March 2022, international NGOs reported that Turkey continues to refuse returnees (Refugees International 2022). Whether Turkey can successfully renegotiate the terms of the 2016 agreement and secure additional funding remains to be seen, but it is clear that it has not merely accepted EU terms, but created its own.

Ultimately, Turkey’s success in securing funding from the EU is evident in overall EU aid statistics. Between 2007 and 2022, the EU has disbursed 31.23 billion EUR in aid to Turkey, making Turkey its top recipient (European Commission 2022*b*). The amount is 186% higher than EU aid to Afghanistan, the next highest recipient. Other EU neighbors have not received similar amounts of aid from the EU. Serbia, the next highest recipient of aid in the European continent, was disbursed only 8.19 billion EUR between 2007-2021 (European Commission 2022*c*). In the Southern neighborhood, Morocco received the highest amount, 14.66 billion EUR between 2007 and 2021 (European Commission 2022*c*). Though the amount far surpasses other Southern neighbors, it does not come close to Turkey’s totals.

Furthermore, Turkey is not the only country hosting large numbers of migrants nor the only country being targeted by EU border externalization measures. Yet other countries also implementing EU border externalization or hosting large numbers of migrants have not received nearly as much aid. For example, Jordan and Lebanon also host large numbers of Syrian and other refugees; an estimated 1.3 million in Jordan and 1.5 million in Lebanon in 2021 (ACAPS 2021; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2021*a,b*). Yet EU aid to them totaled only 6 and 5.54 billion EUR between 2007-2021, respectively (European Commission 2022*c*). This is equal to 4616 EUR per refugee in Jordan and 3693 EUR per refugee in Lebanon. In comparison, Turkey’s totals are equivalent to 7966 EUR per refugee. With almost double the amount of funding received per migrant, it is clear that Turkey has been able to use the EU’s reliance on it to meet border externalization needs to its benefit. The Ivory Coast is another prominent implementer of EU border externalization (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, and Pickles 2015). Between 2007 and 2021, it received 7.62 billion EUR (European Commission 2022*c*). Even Syria, where many of the migrants entering EU territory came from and which suffered from a war that was the primary impetus driving the EU-Turkey deal in the first place, only received 10.95 billion EUR between 2007-2021 (European Commission 2022*c*).

Another sign of Turkey’s success in securing funding and exercising agency is the substantial increase in aid following the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal. Prior to the deal, EU aid to Turkey in 2007-2014 totaled 13.35 billion EUR, an average of 1.67 billion per year. From 2015 to 2021, aid totals increased to 17.86 billion EUR, an average of 2.55 billion EUR per year (European Commission 2022*c*). The increase, in large part, can be attributed to the parameters of the EU-Turkey deal. Ultimately, the numbers indicate that Turkey exerted agency and used its status as a target of EU border externalization measures to obtain high levels of aid and funding.

4.3 Visa Liberalization

One of the key ways in which Turkey has attempted to exercise agency as the implementer of the EU’s border externalization regime is through visa liberalization. Of all of the pre-accession countries, Turkey and Kosovo are the only two that do not currently benefit from visa-free travel in the Schengen Zone (European Commission 2021*h*). Turkey has thus tried to make use of its status as a ‘gatekeeper’ to extract concessions on visa-free travel to the EU.

Prior to the EU-Turkey deal, visa liberalization talks went hand in hand with a readmission agreement. In June 2012, in exchange for initialing a readmission agreement that accepted the return of third country nationals who arrived via Turkey or Turkish citizens who overstayed their visas, the EU agreed to launch a liberalization dialogue (European Stability Initiative 2017). Readmission preceded visa liberalization; once the EU drafted a roadmap to liberalization, it expected Turkey to sign the readmission agreement, the final step prior to ratification by the Turkish and EU parliaments (European Stability Initiative 2017). As a result, Turkey was not negotiating from a position of strength. Many of the conditions were unilaterally imposed on them by the EU and readmission was prioritized over visa liberalization. Indeed, Turkey signed the Agreement on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorization on December 16, 2013. European Parliament ratified the agreement on May 29, 2014 and Turkish Parliament ratified it on June 25, 2014 (European Union 2014*a*; Hürriyet Daily News 2014). By October 1, 2014, the readmission agreement entered into force, independent of visa liberalization (European Union 2014*b*).

Yet as of October 2014, the visa liberalization process remained stalled; Turkey took issue in particular with alleged “unfair” and “unjustified” treatment of Turkey in the

dialogue, requested financial resources through the IPA to assist with meeting requirements, and pointed out that in monitoring and protecting “all the borders,” as the roadmap requires, borders between Turkey and Greece remained undetermined (Republic of Turkey, Directorate of EU Affairs 2013). It also stipulated that many of the requirements, including alignment with the visa regime and the geographical limitation to the Geneva Convention, would only be met upon Turkey’s accession to the EU (Republic of Turkey, Directorate of EU Affairs 2013). Turkey’s initial responses to the roadmap also included a threat to back out of the readmission agreement. In the annotated roadmap released by the Turkey Directorate for EU Affairs in 2013, Turkey stated, “In case the [amendment of EC Regulation 2001/539 to include Turkey as exempt from the Schengen visa requirement] is not realized at the same time of the entry into force of the Readmission Agreement for third country nationals, Turkey will consider to take the necessary steps according to Paragraph 5 of Article 24 of the Readmission Agreement.” In response, the Commission highlighted that readmission would begin three years following the ratification of the readmission agreement. The Commission stressed that the Dialogue was capable of producing “rapid” and “successful” results, “provided of course that both the sides would engage into it in an effective and constructive manner” (Republic of Turkey, Directorate of EU Affairs 2013).

Two progress reports on visa liberalization were released prior to the EU-Turkey deal and the beginning of Turkey’s role as implementer of border externalization. In the first progress report, released on October 20, 2014, the European Commission deemed 27 requirements of 72 not fulfilled (European Stability Initiative 2016). At the conclusion of its first report, the Commission vowed to “issue a second report within the next twelve months” (European Commission 2014, 40). Yet the second report did not come until March 4, 2016, more than 15 months after the first. In it, the Commission acknowledged “significant” progress in the fields of document security, migration management, and readmission of irregular migrants. Still it pointed to a number of requirements that remained unfulfilled in the realms of public order and security and fundamental rights (European Commission 2016*a*). In the second report, 12 of the 72 requirements remained unfulfilled (European Stability Initiative 2016).

In the scope of the 2016 deal, Turkey was able to approach the topic of visa liberalization from a new perspective with more leverage (Norman 2015). Davutoğlu, speaking on Turkish television, announced Turkey’s demands on October 16, 2015. “We will absolutely not sign any agreements if no steps are taken regarding Schengen and if Turkish citizens are not granted the right to travel to Europe without a visa. We have been saying this since before the Syria crisis began” (Connolly, Traynor,

and Letsch 2015). Ultimately, Turkey succeeded at incorporating the promise of visa liberalization into the March 2016 statement, which states, “The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016. Turkey will take all the necessary steps to fulfill the remaining requirements” (European Council 2016).

Indeed, in the third iteration of the progress report, issued on May 4, 2016, efforts to accelerate the visa liberalization process are visible. First, the timing is an indication of acceleration: the previous report was issued only 2 months earlier. The May 2016 release date was considerably sooner than the March 2016 report predicted. Second, in the report, the Commission indicates that although biometric identifiers in passports and implementation of the readmission agreement are not yet fulfilled, it is willing to accept interim solutions in order to achieve a visa-free regime more quickly (European Commission 2016*a*).

However, five key requirements remained unmet: proportional and EU-aligned anti-terrorism laws, data protection law, appropriate anti-corruption measures, and cooperation with European law enforcement and courts (European Commission 2016*b*). Turkey insisted that the EU should grant it a visa-free regime without adhering to the roadmap, while the EU affirmed its commitment to visa liberalization only in the event that all roadmap terms were fulfilled (Deutsche Welle 2020*b*). The EU-Turkey statement target date of June 2016 did not produce any results. In 2018, Turkey fulfilled one of the outstanding requirements on biometric passports (Grigoriadis and Uslu 2021). But since May 2016, no subsequent visa-specific progress report has been released, nor have any of the 5 remaining benchmarks been declared fulfilled by the EU (European Commission 2021*f*). Turkey has continued to publicly demand visa liberalization and call for better treatment. Erdoğan maintains that Turkey has upheld its side of the 2016 deal and calls on Europe to do the same (Gumrukcu 2022).

4.4 Concluding Remarks

In my first research question, I ask what priorities transit states select and hope to accomplish through the use of leverage. As discussed in this chapter, Turkey’s priorities included silence on democratic regressions, aid and other financial assistance, and visa liberalization. Turkey has repeatedly used its leverage as a ‘transit state’ to silence criticism on democratic backsliding. It successfully delayed the EU’s

Annual Progress Report and criticized European Parliament's condemnation of the declines in freedom of expression, independence of the press, and rights of political opposition. Instead of garnering criticism from European leaders, Turkey gained legitimacy, backing for its agenda, and even a European show of support in the midst of election season. Its efforts to secure additional funding included money to aid with the treatment of Syrian refugees residing in Turkey, particularly through the EU-Turkey Deal. As indicated by my research, through negotiations, Turkey upped the funding amount in the deal from an initial 500 million EUR to 3 billion EUR. In terms of IPA funding, Turkey is the largest recipient of EU funding among pre-accession countries on EU borders. It received 48.2% of the total IPA-I allocations (2007-2013) and 45.5% of the total IPA-II allocations (2013-2020). Of that, migration funds were a major subset. Turkey also focused on ensuring that the aid allocated arrived on time and in full; it frequently accused the EU of insufficient funding to Turkish agencies and delays in payments. Furthermore, Turkey secured additional aid of 3.53 billion EUR in 2020 to extend support for Syrian migrants, as well as migration cooperation. Turkey also made use of threats to demand EU support with the creation of a safe zone in Syria, something that would have required significant funding and military support. Finally, as explored in Section 4.3, Turkey negotiated for visa liberalization for its citizens in exchange for implementation of a readmission agreement in the context of the 2016 EU-Turkey Deal.

As explored in Chapter 3, Turkey-EU relations take place in the midst of a unique historical context. I find that the prospect of visa liberalization, European neighborhood-specific funding instruments, and Turkey's candidacy status have contributed to the priorities that Turkey selects while engaging in migration diplomacy. In terms of silence on de-democratization, as Chapter 2 explores, EU enlargement policy makes use of accession conditionality to achieve policy transformations, including in the realm of democracy and human rights. The EU sees itself as a protector of human rights in third countries and proclaims its commitment to promoting democracy. It regularly speaks out against democratic and human rights violations in third countries (Sedelmeier and Avery 2018). Turkey's decision to prioritize EU silence on de-democratization was influenced by this EU commitment. Annual Progress Reports, for example, include updates on Turkey's progress in human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Because the EU has chosen to focus on these policy areas, Turkey in turn has decided to focus on them through its use of migration diplomacy as well.

Turkey's pursuit of visa liberalization too was not random, but inspired by European precedent. The EU has regularly tied visa liberalization to other policy priorities. Delcour (2018) suggests that this is due in part to the expectations of partner

countries and in part because visa liberalization is one of Europe's strongest, most tangible incentives. In particular, visa liberalization has been offered as a 'carrot' to induce states to sign readmission agreements and to promote other security-related requirements (Wolff, Wichmann, and Mounier 2009). Turkey had been a prospective candidate for visa liberalization since December 2013, when it signed the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement. From the start, visa liberalization went hand in hand with the regulation of transit migration in Turkey. Turkey's decision to incorporate visa liberalization into its use of migration diplomacy, therefore, was not only due to domestic interest in obtaining improved conditions for its citizens, but also the expectation that visa liberalization and acceptance of Syrian migrants went hand in hand.

Yet ultimately, though the unique institutional and bilateral setting affected Turkey's selection of priorities, I find that domestic priorities were the strongest determinant. For funding, Turkey selected aims and specific funding priorities that would benefit it the most. In terms of silence on de-democratization, Turkey not only used migration diplomacy to delay the publication of the Annual Progress Report, but also to gain legitimacy, backing for its domestic agenda, and an election season show of support. Visa liberalization was not originally included in the EU's offering for the EU-Turkey deal, but an additional demand that Turkey asked to be included.

My second research question asked how transit states exercise their leverage in the context of migration diplomacy. I sought to identify whether Turkey used coercive or cooperative strategies, and whether this strategy stayed constant over time. I find that Turkey employed a coercive strategy for the entirety of the time period under study. Rather than seeking mutually-beneficial outcomes, it employed threats and other tactics to extract benefits at the expense of the EU. Turkey regularly issued threats to open the borders and flood Greece with migrants. In February 2020, it made good on its threats, announcing that the borders were open in order to extract monetary concessions from the EU. Turkey has continued to threaten to open the borders, whether to demand assistance from the EU in creating a Syrian safe zone and to criticize delays in fundings or the quantity allocated to Turkish agencies.

This finding is aligned with Adamson and Tsourapas' (2019) expectation that transit states will employ coercive strategies. They theorize that transit states will employ a zero-sum approach and secure absolute gains from migration diplomacy. As evidenced by my research, Turkey indeed pursued absolute gains vis a vis Europe in its pursuit of migration diplomacy goals. Furthermore, Turkey's decision to open the borders and orchestrate a 'crisis' at the Turkey-Greece border falls under the

categorization of ‘coercive engineered migrations,’ as defined by Greenhill (2010). Greenhill elaborates that this tactic gives otherwise weak actors more leverage to negotiate and attain their migration diplomacy goals. I find that this was the case in Turkey. Turkey’s pursuit of the creation of a safe zone in Syria, I suggest, is not only an element of migration-specific policy. I suggest that this policy aim is an instance of issue linkage, defined by Tsourapas (2019) in the realm of migration as a way to tie migration diplomacy to other political, economic, or cultural goals. The creation of a ‘safe zone’ would not only allow Turkey to relocate migrants from Turkey to Syria, but would also benefit its foreign policy aims. Between 2011 and 2014, Turkish safe zone aspirations also would have helped Turkey to counter the Assad regime and establish a EU-supported ‘no fly zone’ in Northern Syria. After 2014, when the U.S. partnered with the Kurdish-led YPG, Turkey’s motivations for establishing a safe zone shifted from countering the Assad regime to preventing the rise of an autonomous Kurdish territory in Northern Syria (Adar 2020).

The next chapter will explore the case of Mexico between 1996 and the present. It will identify Mexican priorities and explore whether and if so, how, those priorities have changed. It will also document Mexican migration diplomacy strategies, noting whether it sought absolute or relative gains.

5. MEXICO

Given new presidents every six years in Mexico and every four years in the United States, policy priorities, forums, and diplomatic relations change as well. Leadership transitions, particularly those in Mexico, in turn result in new forms of exercising agency vis a vis the United States and new ways of responding to border externalization tactics. Mexican policy and goals have not remained static, but shifted with new presidents, crises, new priorities, and different forms of bilateral relations. This chapter will explore the ways in which Mexico has exercised agency in the midst of border externalization from the 1990s until the present. Because changing domestic political settings are a major determinant of migration diplomacy priorities, the sections are divided into time spans, not issue areas. It will explore the migration diplomacy priorities that Mexican political leadership pursued vis a vis the U.S. and document how these priorities changed over time. In addition, it will track the types of strategies that Mexican elites employed in their exercise of migration diplomacy.

5.1 1990s - 2001: Negotiations for Improved Status of Mexicans in the United States

One of the primary ways in which Mexico has attempted to exert agency is in the realm of treatment for its citizens residing in the U.S. or aiming to visit. In addition to serving as a transit state for Northern Triangle migrants, particularly since the 1990s, Mexico has also been classified as a sending state for Mexican migrants. Starting in 1990, the number of Mexican-born individuals in the United States began to increase rapidly; between 1990 and 2000, the number of Mexican-born individuals increased by 113.5% (Israel and Batalova 2020). In 2010, the population peaked at 11.7 million and by 2019, it dropped slightly to 10.9 million, due in part to increased immigration enforcement and to a rise in economic opportunities in Mexico (Israel and Batalova 2020). Notably, citizens of 42 countries, including EU member

states and Canada, do not need visas to visit the United States (U.S. Department of State 2022*b*). In contrast, even though Mexico is also party to NAFTA and one of two states to border the United States, Mexican visitors must obtain a visa or Border Crossing Card (U.S. Department of State 2022*a*). Between 2000 and 2022, the aims of Mexican policy with regards to its citizens abroad and Mexican citizens' freedom of movement have remained relatively similar, but the bargaining strategies employed have shifted. Particularly as migration of Northern Triangle citizens became an issue of concern for the United States, Mexico increasingly offered control of transit migration as a strategy to secure additional benefits for its own citizens.

Prior to the 2000s, transit migration was not a focus of Mexican officials. In fact, Mexico's lack of attention to its southern border was a frequent point of contention between the U.S. and Mexico. The U.S. argued that its lack of enforcement was opening up the North American continent to narco-trafficking, illegal migration, and insecurity; in response, Mexico refused and called for more humane treatment of Mexican migrants (Flynn 2002*b*). In 1996, the Mexican government, along with Central American, Canadian, and American officials, launched the Regional Conference on Migration, also known as the Puebla Process. Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo reportedly hoped to take advantage of the forum to advance Mexican interests and enlist the assistance of other countries (Castillo 2006).

However, Hurricane Mitch, which struck Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador in 1998, brought about a shift in Mexico's approach to transit migration. An estimated 3 million people were forced to leave their homes due to the hurricane (Branigin 1999). As a result of widespread devastation, many people living in areas hit by the hurricane decided to head north towards the United States. For example, according to Mexican officials charged with protecting immigrant rights, 3000 Central Americans received services in Mexico in December 1998, compared to approx. 300 in December 1997 (Thompson 1999). Though Mexico initially did not plan to add immigration enforcement and control measures to its southern border, U.S. pressure and a dramatic increase in crossings changed its policy. The U.S. Committee for Refugees reported that Mexico had turned back "tens of thousands" of migrants (U.S. Committee for Refugees 2002). Oscar Gonazalez, a Mexican human rights advocate, told Newsweek "the inspiration is coming from the U.S. government" (Newsweek 1999). In one instance, the U.S. paid for buses to transport migrants from the Guatemala-Mexico border back to their home country (Flynn 2002*a*). Though this instance of border externalization did not include any explicit benefits to be accrued to Mexico in return, it likely was a form of ensuring "goodwill" from Mexico's northern neighbor. As Flynn (2002*b*) also notes, increased border en-

forcement also worked in Mexico's own interest: its own systems were increasingly overwhelmed with Central American migrants.

2000 marked the end of the PRI's 72-year rule and the beginning of Vicente Fox's term as president. On the campaign trail, Fox frequently called for the free movement of goods and people in North America and vowed to be a president "for all Mexicans" (Falk 2002). Indeed, NAFTA, entered into force 6 years earlier, had not incorporated any provisions for Mexican migrants or short-term tourists. Many in Mexican political circles acknowledged that this gap was an oversight and that Mexico, so to speak, 'got the short end of the stick' (Martin 1998). Fox thus began his term in office in December 2000 by pushing rights for Mexicans — including visa liberalization and regularization of migrant status for those already in the United States — to the top of his agenda. In the Fox administration's National Action Plan, one of the action areas is "Defensa de los mexicanos en el extranjero" [Defense of Mexicans abroad]. The plan writes, "It is important to point out that although Mexico has achieved a host of agreements and mechanisms to ensure better treatment for our nationals abroad, the migration issue, particularly in the United States, requires a new long-term approach that allows the mobility and residence of Mexican nationals to be safe, dignified, legal and orderly, and that the phenomenon of police persecution be abandoned and it be conceived as a labor and social phenomenon." Ultimately, the action plan terms migration reform a "shared responsibility" and calls for negotiations with the United States in order to address it (Presidencia de la República 2000, 61).

President George W. Bush, who took office in the U.S. in January 2001, shared President Fox's commitment to tackling migration. In fact, Bush traveled to Guanajuato, Mexico on February 16, 2001 on his first trip as president, a signal of the elevated importance of Mexico in the eyes of the Bush administration. Furthermore, the trip marked the first time an American president had traveled to Mexico for their first trip abroad (Flores, Rafael, and Schiavon 2008). The Guanajuato Proposal, issued jointly by both presidents following the meeting, called for high-level negotiations to achieve "short and long-term agreements that will allow us to constructively address migration and labor issues between our two countries" (White House Press Secretary 2001c). The two sides began negotiating in February for what has been termed "the whole enchilada" by the Mexican secretary of foreign affairs or "the grand bargain" by other observers (Papademetriou 2002). Negotiations incorporated a path towards regularization for Mexican citizens residing in the United States, temporary worker programs, securitization of the border, expedited family reunification, and money to be put towards development and social infrastructure in high emigration regions of Mexico (Papademetriou 2002). Fox's top priorities included access to legaliza-

tion, driver's licenses, and higher education for undocumented migrants, reduced violence against immigrants, and temporary work permits (Associated Press 2001; White House Press Secretary 2001*d*). The Bush administration voiced similar goals, including a plan to grant amnesty to Mexicans living in the U.S., increased border safety, and a temporary worker program (Associated Press 2001; Storrs 2005).

Fox and Bush met 3 more times over the course of the spring and summer. In July 2001, the Fox administration implemented *Plan Sur* [Southern Plan], an effort to upgrade its migration control systems, particularly along the southern border of Mexico. It deployed hundreds of new border agents, set up roadblocks in the narrow isthmus of Mexico and along its southern border, and added military units to police the borders (Flynn 2002*b*). In addition, the Mexican government also began a controversial program to deport third-country migrants back to Guatemala, on the basis of their having traveled through Guatemalan soil on their way to Mexico. Nationals from India, Pakistan, Sudan, China, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Ecuador were sent back to Guatemala; many of them denied having ever set foot on Guatemalan soil (U.S. Committee for Refugees 2002). The rationale for *Plan Sur* offered by Jesús Preciado, Mexico's immigration commissioner, was telling: "The problem of the undocumented is very serious in Mexico. Imagine the migratory populations in Mexico headed for the United States, increasing the levels of criminality, unhealthiness, drug trafficking, prostitution. The fact that [smugglers] operate in Mexico is a problem that the government has to solve, which will benefit the United States" (BBC 2001). Instead of focusing on the benefits for Mexico, he zeroed in on how it would ultimately assist the United States, perceived as the end destination for many of the migrants. As one human rights defender from Mexico noticed, his speech echoed similar sentiments to U.S. authorities and employed the same rationale (BBC 2001).

From the beginning, the motivation behind *Plan Sur* was not simply the protection of Mexican borders, but the receipt of additional benefits for Mexican citizens in the United States. Flynn (2002*b*) writes, "Although the government insists that the plan is only about ensuring its own "national security," most observers see it as part of the Vicente Fox administration's efforts to persuade the U.S. government to 'normalize' the legal status of the 6–8 million undocumented Mexicans who live in the United States." An unnamed U.S. official commented positively on *Plan Sur*: "There have been a lot of problems down here. You can't end it overnight, but finally a Mexican government is recognizing the problem and trying to do something about it" (Flynn 2002*b*)(Floyd 2002). Pickard (2005) affirms the existence of this compromise, writing that "Fox had asked for a special and privileged treatment for Mexicans, in exchange for hunting down migrants from third countries before they could make their way to the U.S. border. The measure had the effect of 'displacing'

tasks of the U.S. southern border to southern Mexico.”

In September, Fox became the first foreign leader to participate in a State Visit of the Bush administration (White House Press Secretary 2001*b*). The visit again signified the increased importance of Mexico in the eyes of the U.S.; not just by accident, but due to efforts from Fox and others in the administration. As a New York Times article following the visit wrote, “Rarely has a foreign leader shown up on the South Lawn of the White House and declared that he and the president of the United States “must” remake the fundamental rules that have governed his country’s uneasy relationship with the United States — and get it done in the next four months.” The article continues, “Such assertiveness is especially notable because it did not come out of the mouth of the leader of a nuclear power or an economic juggernaut” (Sanger 2001). As this study argues, it is in fact Mexico’s unique position as a transit country for Central American migrants that gave Fox the leverage to assert Mexico’s needs in the bilateral relationship and demand progress within a certain time frame.

During his remarks following the meeting, Fox highlighted Mexican progress on migration control and cooperation with anti-trafficking initiatives. “In the field of migration, or in drug trafficking and combatting organized crime, where we have been rendering extraordinary results, we have extradited criminals that the U.S. justice has been after more than whatever was done in past years” (Bush 2001). Fox also addressed a Joint Session of U.S. Congress during his visit, where he outlined a few Mexican priorities: suspension of the need for drug certification for 3 years (S. 219), regularization of Mexican workers, and access to the United States for Mexican trucks. In the process of elaborating on Mexican demands, he emphasized Mexico’s willingness to “improve border safety, save lives, and crack down on criminal smuggling gangs” in exchange (Fox 2001). On September 9, the two also announced the Partnership for Prosperity, a public-private partnership that seeks to encourage economic growth in Mexico (White House Press Secretary 2001*a*).

Yet on September 11, prospects for immigration reform and improved treatment for Mexicans in the United States changed dramatically. 9/11 shifted the focus of American politics away from regularization of migrants towards securitization of U.S. borders and xenophobia towards foreigners (Flores, Rafael, and Schiavon 2008; Weintraub 2002). Fox’s attempts to secure benefits for Mexicans residing in the U.S. and for those crossing U.S. borders were pushed to the back-burner as security and anti-terrorism efforts took precedence. Indeed, in the framework of the Puebla Process (also known as Regional Conference on Migration, RCM), which was originally intended to serve as a forum for sharing information and best practices, security

concerns began to dominate. The U.S. co-opted the agenda and concentrated the RCM's efforts on 'regional security initiatives' instead (Hiemstra 2019a). In spite of U.S. dominance, Mexico continued to attempt to exert agency in this forum; led by the foreign secretary of Mexico, a 'Pro-Migratory Alliance' was established in 2005 to "show a face of Latin unity" and oppose restrictive immigration legislation in U.S. Congress (Castillo 2006).

5.2 2001 - 2016: Securitization Drives New Mexican Agenda

In response to 9/11, the Fox administration increasingly turned its attention to securitization. With this securitization, efforts to secure rights for migrants remained a priority, but money and aid also became a focus of Mexican efforts. Between 2001 and the present, Mexico has been a major recipient of U.S. funding, not just for border security but also for economic initiatives and development aid. Taken together, the quantities, timing, and public demands for funding are an indication of Mexico's ability to exert agency as a 'transit state' for migrants heading towards the U.S. Post-9/11, Fox administration officials emphasized their shared commitment to North American security and called for funding and aid from the U.S. in order to implement reforms. As Mexican National Security Advisor Adolfo Aguilar Zinser put it, "Security is... not strictly a national question anymore... If we do not do things with the United States and Canada, none of us will be secure" (Smith 2001). Using the idea of a 'North American Security Perimeter,' Mexico proposed intelligence sharing, customs coordination, and visa harmonization in exchange for free travel of Mexican citizens within the 'perimeter' (Flynn 2002b).

An example of Mexican cooperation immediately following 9/11 was its detainment of 100s of Middle Easterners in Mexico, restriction of entry for Central Asian and Middle Easterners, and provision of data to the U.S. about 'possible suspects' in Mexican territory (Andreas 2003a). In addition, Mexico implemented new travel-monitoring practices, including the creation of a data bank for foreigners residing in Mexican territory (Nevins 2010). As part of its efforts to create the database, INM officials visited Washington to share best practices, secure funding, and meet with American officials (Becerril 2001). Fox also offered to target suspected terrorists' bank accounts and proposed a law to Congress that would give the government enhanced intelligence-gathering capabilities (Andreas 2003b). Furthermore, as part of the 22-point Smart Border partnership, Mexico and the U.S. agreed on a range of initiatives, from financing for infrastructure and joint training for border offi-

cial to visa policy consultations and technology sharing (U.S. Department of State 2002). In 2005, Mexico agreed to join the Security and Prosperity Partnership, which entailed information sharing and cooperation between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, particularly in the fields of border management and migration control (Villarreal and Lake 2009). Fox also called for additional border control technology and incorporated the National Migration Institute (INM) into Mexico's National Security System in 2005 (Castillo 2005; Vega 2019). Andreas (2003*a*) calls these efforts a "thickening of the U.S. border" and termed Mexico's southern border a "quasi buffer zone."

In many ways, the security-centered discourse worked to Mexico's advantage. First, the Fox administration was able to justify immigration cooperation with the United States, typically a controversial topic for Mexican voters, under the guise of anti-terrorism efforts (Andreas 2003*a*). Second, given its reliance on American goods and the U.S. market, particularly as a result of NAFTA, Mexico wanted to ensure the continued free transportation of goods across the U.S. border and back (Andreas 2003*b*). Lastly, Mexico was able to gain additional financial support from the U.S. that it had not been receiving prior to 9/11.

The new focus undoubtedly reduced much of Mexico's leverage, particularly with regards to immigration legislation. But Fox continued to exert agency over how immigration reform was conveyed to the Mexican public and who took credit for its proposal. Most noticeably, on January 7, 2004, Bush announced a new proposal that would grant temporary legal status to Mexicans working in the U.S. Fox initially took credit for the plan; he thanked Washington for its "show of collaboration" and again reiterated his call for a North American zone with free movement of both goods and people (Mohar 2004; Venegas 2004*b*). His remarks framed the Bush administration's announcement as a continuation of Mexican policy initiatives. In contrast, observers in both Mexico and the U.S. criticized the deal for being unilateral in spirit and devoid of Mexican input (Papademetriou 2004; Venegas 2004*b*). A few days after the announcement, Fox began to adopt a subdued tone, saying that it was "below his expectations," but that it was "a good first step" (El País 2004). Yet he continued to insist that Mexico played a role in the formulation of the plan (Venegas 2004*c*). On January 10, Fox, in reference to the securitization of Mexican borders, told reporters "frequently, [Bush] asks me to do certain things, I also ask him to do others" (Venegas 2004*a*). The comments added to the idea that Bush had taken Fox's suggestion in terms of the migration deal. Fox's framing of the migration deal, despite a lack of input from Mexico and a failure to meet Mexico's full expectations set for a deal in 2001, asserted agency over the negotiation process and made it seem, to both domestic and American audiences, that he, and thus Mexico, played a larger role.

In December 2006, Felipe Calderon took office as president. While campaigning, Calderon promised to fight organized crime and enhance domestic security in order to gain support and lend legitimacy to his candidacy (Wolf and Morayta 2011). From the outset, he treated migration not as a humanitarian issue, but a security one. At the start of his term, he announced the *Plan de Reordenamiento de la Frontera Sur* [Plan for Reordering of the Southern Border] in his administration's National Development Plan 2007-2012. For the first time, Mexico's National Development Plan incorporated clauses for migration control and border security (Perez Casanova 2014). As part of the plan, Calderon vowed to re-devote resources to Mexico's southern border for "making [border] regions more secure and more prosperous" (Presidencia de la República 2006, 1.9). The plan also affirms Calderon's commitment to conduct a foreign policy that simultaneously looks out for Mexicans abroad and Latin American citizens entering Mexico. "As a result, the improvement of migration policy, through collaboration and understandings with nations of the North and South, occupies a prominent place in the objectives and strategies of foreign policy," the plan writes (Presidencia de la República 2006, 5.9).

Calderon used this focus on security to his advantage in negotiations with the Bush administration and when shaping his foreign policy agenda. Following the release of the National Development Plan, Calderon created a Border Police Unit in Chiapas (Perez Casanova 2014). Yet beyond this, no concrete action was taken to implement it (Leutert 2018; Ramos 2007). Presidential progress reports post-2007 do not mention the plan again (Vega 2017). But in March 2007, Calderon referenced his hard work in enforcing Mexico's southern border in order to demand additional funding from the U.S. to support his initiatives. In January, Calderón told Bush that Mexico needed the U.S. government to partner with Mexico to restore security. "I'm ready to do my part," the president-elect told Bush. "But I need a partner" (Corchado 2014, 175). A Joint Statement released during Bush's visit to Mexico on March 14, 2007 affirmed that "the important efforts of the Mexican Government to confront organized crime head-on, as one of the most important priorities of its own domestic agenda, would benefit from increased support from and cooperation with the United States. In this connection, they reiterated their commitment to intensify cooperation and information sharing between the law enforcement agencies of Mexico and the United States, especially along the border region" (White House Press Secretary 2007).

After negotiations amongst the two leaders, President Bush released a request to Congress in October 2007 for \$500 million to be allocated to Mexico "to support their unprecedented efforts to confront organized crime and narcotics trafficking" (Arám-bula Reyes 2008). Funding was to be directed towards the purchase of equipment

like helicopters and aircraft for Mexican security forces, support for counternarcotics operations, technology for secure communications systems, and technical assistance for Mexican police, including case management software (Arámbula Reyes 2008). One of the primary talking points reiterated by members of the Calderon administration is that the budget request was the product of Mexican initiatives, not an imposition of American goals. During a speech to the legislative Federal Relations Committee, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Patricia Espinosa underlined, “It was at the proposal of the government of Mexico, and I reiterate it emphatically, it was at the initiative of Mexico, that based on what was agreed in Mérida, a series of consultations of a technical and political nature were developed” (Arámbula Reyes 2008). Another theme common in Merida Initiative messaging from the Calderon administration was the concept of ‘shared responsibility,’ which Espinosa, an official press release from the Foreign Ministry, and statements from the Calderon administration each highlighted (Arámbula Reyes 2008).

In addition to its messaging, the Merida Initiative constituted an exercise of Mexican agency as a use of its role as a transit state in order to secure additional funding. Starting in 2008, Mexico began receiving money from the U.S. under the framework of the Merida Initiative. Congress approved H.R. 2642, which incorporated \$400 million for Mexico into the ‘Supplemental Appropriations Act’, on June 30, 2008 and later that day, Bush signed it into law (*Supplemental Appropriations Act* 2008). In terms of security-specific assistance, Mexico ranks 15th of all U.S.-funded countries; the Security Assistance Monitor calculates that it has received \$3.38 billion in funding from the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of State since 2000. Between 2000 and 2007, security aid averaged only \$42.1 million per year. But in 2008 the total increased to \$174.9 million, due in large part to Calderon’s negotiations and efforts. Chabat (2010) writes that the change in magnitude of aid represented an instrumental shift in U.S.-Mexico relations.

2009 saw the election of President Barack Obama. In remarks following Obama’s first meeting with Calderon as president-elect in January 2009, Calderon switched to English as he said, “The more secure Mexico is, the more secure the U.S. will be” (Lee 2009). Calderon’s focus continued to be security; he framed his demands in terms of U.S. needs in order to exert more pressure and demonstrate how important Mexican security was to the U.S. Indeed, in 2009, Mexico received \$743.3 million in security assistance from the United States, its highest between 2000 and 2020. This total was no accident; Calderon’s efforts were instrumental in securing this amount of aid. In December 2008, a report about the initiative from the U.S. government acknowledged that it “may be appropriate” to increase the funding in 2009 to \$700 million (El Universal 2009). Calderon actively called for additional funding, both

publicly and behind closed doors. For example, in March 2009, Calderon accused the U.S. of conducting a ‘smear campaign’ against Mexico and again called for additional funding. He blamed the U.S. for the proliferation of weapons in Mexico, pointed to drug consumption in the U.S. as the root cause of drug trafficking, and ultimately demanded “co-responsibility” (Cardoso and Rodriguez 2009). During a joint press conference in April 2009, Calderon again called for additional U.S. security assistance, specifically mentioning Mexican borders and their importance to the United States. “I hope, in the course of time, to be a safer border and a more efficient border... One way to measure this — and here U.S. cooperation is essential — is to have the right technology, particularly nonintrusive technology that will enable us to have safe borders. And the initiative, the Merida Initiative, is very much focused on this” (White House Press Secretary 2009). Calderon also mentioned an agreement that the two had reached to speed up the disbursement of Merida Initiative funds, including the accelerated delivery of aircraft and inspection equipment (White House Press Secretary 2009). Ultimately, between 2008 and 2010, Congress appropriated a total of \$1.5 billion for the Merida initiative (Seelke and Finklea 2017).

Between 2011 and 2017, the Merida Initiative delivered \$1.103 billion to Mexico. The Obama and Calderon administrations, after a year-long period of negotiation, decided to update the terms of the agreement in 2011 to incorporate four ‘pillars’: (1) Disrupting organized criminal groups, (2) institutionalizing the rule of law while protecting human rights, (3) creating a 21st century border, and (4) building strong and resilient communities (Seelke and Finklea 2017). A number of initiatives have also affected border security. For example, within the first pillar, \$75 million went towards a biometrics system “to help agencies collect, store, and share information on criminals and migrants” (Seelke and Finklea 2017, 15). Within the scope of pillar three, the U.S. and Mexico established the “A Twenty-First Century Border Bilateral Executive Steering Committee,” which, among other aims, works to “ensure secure flows of people.”

Not only Mexican leadership, but border officials themselves exerted agency vis a vis the United States. Kimball (?), who conducted field work along Mexico’s Southern border in 2006, noted that INM personnel and other officials often relied on the rhetoric of human rights to justify their presence and actions. While asking about immigration, transit migration, and the southern border, she notes that, “My subjects almost always explained Mexico’s southern border in relation to the northern border, and they were quick to point out that Mexico is not building any walls or replicating U.S. militarization tactics at the border.” Furthermore, the level of cooperation with the U.S. became a point of pride. An INM official in 2006

bragged, “There are many countries in the world that would like to have three thousand kilometers of border with the United States. It is a special position, and it puts us in the middle... When we talk about immigration policies, we have to take this into account” (Kimball 2007, 97). Officials also recognized that security cooperation had, in effect, externalized the U.S. border post 9/11. “We are in the middle. Everything is done for the United States. We are their border,” one said.

The Merida Initiative, writes Velasco (2013), “was, without a doubt, the most important project of the Calderon administration which clearly bound together internal and external ambitions.” Furthermore, the initiative signified that traditional attitudes of mistrust toward the Mexican government had diminished (Chabat 2010). Merida, for the first time, saw the United States acknowledging that it had a role to play in combating drug trafficking and cross-border crime and a responsibility for the problem in the first place (Flores, Rafael, and Schiavon 2008). Importantly, the Merida Initiative not only targeted cross-border crime, but transit migration. Isacson et al. (2014) find that especially after 2011, funding increasingly went towards Mexico’s southern border. In 2011 the U.S. Department of Defense began a \$50 million program supplying “patrol boats, night vision equipment, communications equipment, maritime sensors, and associated training” to Mexico and Guatemala, called the Mexico-Guatemala-Belize Border Region Program (Isacson, Meyer, and Morales 2014). They discover that Merida funding also went towards the creation of “belts of control” across Mexico, checkpoints with scanning equipment and advanced technology, and large facilities to scan luggage and monitor passengers. For example, while at one such facility in Huixtla in Chiapas, they noted “gleaming” equipment and brand new technology. “As our luggage passed through a scanner, we asked an official, ‘Is all this from Mérida [Initiative]?’ He smiled and said ‘Yes’” (Isacson, Meyer, and Morales 2014, 27). The goals of the Merida Initiative imply more surveillance and monitoring of Mexico’s southern border. Targets were thus not only criminals and narco-traffickers, but ‘illegal’ immigrants from the Northern Triangle ultimately heading towards the United States. As Hiemstra (2019a) writes, “immigration was increasingly conflated with terrorism in public and political discourse, and conceptualised as a security threat.” The initiative is thus a key example of Mexican usage of transit migration in order to boost its leverage, strengthen the bilateral relationship, and secure additional funding.

In 2012, Enrique Peña Nieto replaced Calderon as President of Mexico. Peña Nieto came into office promising to tackle hunger, improve the Mexican economy, and restore security not just by force, but through laws and justice (BBC Mundo 2012; Partido Revolucionario Institucional 2012). Peña Nieto advisors also began planning new initiatives for Mexico’s southern border, including the creation of a Mexican

Border Patrol and the addition of checkpoints along the line. They also sought to issue work permits to allow Guatemalans to work legally in Mexico. The coordinator of Migratory Affairs on the Peña Nieto transition team, in an interview with *El Universal*, framed this initiative in terms of its utility for Mexico in relations with the U.S., particularly in terms of immigration reform. “It is convenient for Mexico that instead of having an army of undocumented immigrants working, we have them documented and that later on we can say to the Americans: ‘Look, that’s how it works’” (Otero and Benavides 2012).

In terms of Mexico-U.S. relations, though, Peña Nieto primarily focused on economic opportunities, such as the Trans Pacific Partnership, the integration of North America, and the improvement of conditions for Mexicans living in the United States (Santa Cruz 2019; White House Press Secretary 2012). Secretary of the Interior Osorio Chong likewise pronounced the Merida Initiative “in its terminal phase” and emphasized Mexican abilities to tackle border security on its own (Lopez 2017). Yet after a renegotiation of its terms and an adjustment of the pillars, the Merida Initiative quietly continued at slightly lower levels of overall assistance, allocating \$222.2 million in 2013, \$178.1 million in 2014, and \$143.6 million in 2015 (Seelke and Finklea 2017). In particular, funding increased significantly for equipment, training, and other initiatives on Mexico’s Southern border, one of the stated priorities of the Peña Nieto administration (Isacson, Meyer, and Morales 2014).

In 2014, the arrival of many women and unaccompanied minors on the U.S.-Mexico border sparked a ‘crisis’ within American media and political circles. Ostensibly in response, the Mexican government announced *Programa Frontera Sur* [Program for the Southern Border] (PFS) on July 7, 2014. The ‘crisis’ had been building up for over a year; in 2013, 36% of U.S. migrant apprehensions were classified as ‘other than Mexican,’ an all-time high. The total number of non-Mexican migrants apprehended nearly tripled from 54,098 in 2011 to 153,055 by 2013 (Isacson, Meyer, and Morales 2014). Plans for PFS had been in the works since 2013, when Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano visited Mexico and discussed U.S. assistance to Mexico for enhanced migration control on its Southern border. The two apparently sought to keep the deal quiet; press releases from the Mexican government following the meeting reportedly removed references to Southern border cooperation and evidence of U.S. cooperation with Mexico (Gertz 2013; Martinez 2013).

Programa Frontera Sur was a Mexican-driven program, funded in part by the United States, to set up new infrastructure along routes used by migrants throughout Mexico. The program added checkpoints, roadblocks, border personnel, and CAITFs (Centers for Comprehensive Management of Border Traffic) to Mexican migration

control policy (Vega 2017). The Merida Initiative is speculated to be one of the primary sources of funding for PFS: a newspaper found that \$86 million of funding was transferred from Merida to PFS in the days leading up to the announcement of the program (Vega 2017). PFS constituted a way in which Peña Nieto's administration took advantage of increased U.S. concern and attention to secure more funding. In the midst of the crisis, Mexican Secretary of the Interior Osorio Chong called for coordinated public policy and a sense of shared responsibility in addressing the crisis and blamed the United States for the influx of migrants at the border. "The United States, with its migratory proposal and some speeches that have been heard, has made the countries of Central America, the parents who are in the United States, believe that they can receive their children and that they are going to give them the possibility of permanent registration," he said during an interview in June 2014 (Chouza 2014). The 2014 crisis also added to Mexico's importance in the eyes of the United States; it was seen as increasingly critical to engage with Mexico, develop 'deep' bilateral relations, and foster a productive relationship between the two.

5.3 2018 - 2022: Attempts to Return to Humanitarian-Centered Policies

AMLO, who came to office in 2018, has publicly pronounced his administration's migration agenda to emphasize protection, with pillars of human rights, decriminalization of migration, and cooperation with Latin America (Dominguez-Villegas 2019). Between 2018 and 2020, AMLO took a more confrontational stance than his predecessors, framing his own policies in direct contrast to those of the United States. AMLO has been able to secure U.S. funding to meet his own priorities, both domestically and internationally. He has also publicly criticized and responded to U.S.-driven initiatives, another example of Mexican agency in response to U.S. border externalization.

Initial contact between Trump and AMLO was focused on migration and immediately took a more direct, if not confrontational, tone. In a letter addressed to Trump following his win, AMLO said, "There will be many changes, Mr. President Trump. And in this new environment of progress with well-being, I am sure that we will be able to reach agreements to face together both the migratory phenomenon and the problem of border security, on the basis of cooperation for development and under the premise that peace and tranquility are fruits of justice. All this with absolute respect for human rights" (Lopez Obrador 2018). AMLO called for U.S. participation in a Central American development plan, 75% of which would be devoted to

combating poverty and 25% of which would go towards border security. He based his requests on the assertion that while the U.S. is home to the largest number of Mexicans outside Mexican territory, Mexico is also home to the largest number of Americans living outside of the United States.

In December 2018, the Trump administration announced that it would commit \$5.8 billion towards AMLO's "Marshall Plan" for Central America and \$4.8 billion for Southern Mexico (Harris and Ahmed 2018). Notably, much of the aid had already been committed or relied on the identification of "commercially viable projects." For example, of the \$5.8 billion for Central America, the administration counted the \$1 billion that had been mobilized through OPIC since 2017, noted that OPIC "could invest and mobilize up to \$2.5 billion more," and that Department of State, USAID, and regional funding between 2015-2018 added up to \$1.8 billion. Also counted towards the total was \$320 million from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, whose activities towards infrastructure, education and governance were already in progress. Only \$180 million of the \$5.8 billion total was actually requested in the FY2019 Trump administration request (U.S. Department of State 2018).

At the same time, the U.S. government declared its intention to begin what has become known as the "Remain in Mexico" program. Formally known as Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), the program sends migrants with pending asylum applications back to Mexico while they wait for determination of their status (Vega 2019). Negotiations for the MPP between Mexican and American officials dated back to November 2018. MPP, in essence, classifies Mexico as a safe country for asylum seekers to stay temporarily and relies on Mexico to provide migrants with humanitarian visas, work authorization, education, health care, and shelter while they wait (Ruiz, Tenison, and Weyandt 2020). In their respective press releases announcing the program, the American and Mexican governments each downplayed AMLO's role in formulating the policy and seemingly characterized it as a unilateral U.S. action imposed on Mexico (Ruiz, Tenison, and Weyandt 2020). This coordinated messaging was likely a condition of the AMLO administration; plausible deniability about a potentially controversial policy to host thousands of migrants was ostensibly important to secure.

On June 7, Trump announced via Twitter a deal reached between the U.S. and Mexico in regards to migration, particularly enforcement along Mexico's Southern border (Trump 2019). In return for accepting the imposition of MPP and further expanding its reach, Mexico stood to gain a number of concessions and benefits that worked to its advantage. In June 2018, Trump threatened to impose 5%-25% tariff on all Mexican exports to the U.S. if AMLO failed to sufficiently stop the

flow of illegal migrants into the United States (Ahmed and Villegas 2019). By accepting the expansion of MPP, the AMLO administration was thus able to avoid the imposition of tariffs on Mexican exports to the United States. Foreign Minister Ebrard discussed the achievement: “At the end of the day we cannot say that we won all the points that Mexico raised, because that would not be honest to say; we did achieve things, we did achieve the most important thing: that on Monday there will be no tariffs, we will not have a loss of jobs, nor are we going to lose the possibility of ratifying the Free Trade Agreement” (BBC Mundo 2019). Importantly, Mexico refused to accept a treaty that would have granted it ‘safe third country’ status and allowed the U.S. to send migrants who had not yet claimed asylum in the U.S. to Mexico. Mexican ambassador in Washington Martha Barcena stated, “we have said once and again that we are not ready to sign” any agreements that would make Mexico a ‘safe third country’ (Esposito and Renteria 2021). During the negotiations, Mexico offered to post up to 6,000 National Guard troops to the border, apparently “using a PowerPoint presentation to show their American counterparts that doing so would be a breakthrough in their ability to stop migrants from flowing north through Mexico, often in buses” (Shear and Haberman 2019). The offer, which was accepted by the Trump administration, reportedly assuaged U.S. concerns that immigration flows would continue. Though the deal entailed drawbacks for Mexico — deploying National Guard to the Southern border instead of using them to fight organized crime and compromising on AMLO’s promise to take a more humanitarian approach to the border — it ultimately ended in a positive if pragmatic result for AMLO.

Mexican lawmakers also took a confrontational stance towards U.S. security cooperation; for example, in December 2020, Mexican parliament approved a law that regulates the activities of foreign agents, imposes information-sharing requirements, and lifts diplomatic immunity (Lopez 2020). AMLO, at a press conference, defended the law. “In other countries there are rules, there are norms, in the United States, of what they can allow members of other governments to carry out in their territory, as independent, free, sovereign countries.” Asked whether the U.S. was critical of the decision, he denied any friction. “Those of the US government are very respectful of the decisions we make, just as we are also respectful of the decisions made in the United States and in any other country” (Presidencia de la República 2020).

Perhaps one of the leading examples of successful bargaining by AMLO was in the case of an ex-General who was arrested in the U.S. on October 15, 2020 on charges of drug-trafficking and corruption. The arrest sparked outrage from Mexico and the AMLO administration threatened to end security cooperation with the U.S. (Kahn 2020). In November, Attorney General William Barr announced that, “in recog-

nition of the strong law enforcement partnership between Mexico and the United States, and in the interests of demonstrating our united front against all forms of criminality, the U.S. Department of Justice has made the decision to seek dismissal of the U.S. criminal charges against former Secretary Cienfuegos, so that he may be investigated and, if appropriate, charged, under Mexican law” (U.S. Department of Justice 2020). Indeed, the judge accepting the dismissal of the charges commented that such a request was extraordinary (Kahn 2020). Mexico successfully extradited the general and to the surprise of U.S. officials and despite promises to the contrary, a Mexican court decided in January not to bring any charges against the general and exonerated him of any wrong-doing (Lopez 2021). In this case, Mexico’s implication that it would not cooperate with future security initiatives also implied that it would not assist with U.S. border externalization efforts and would not participate in U.S. outsourcing of its border. This instance marks successful usage of Mexico’s position as a transit state to secure additional leverage.

Right before the newly-elected President Joe Biden took office and in the first months of the Biden administration, AMLO continued to take on a more confrontational stance vis a vis the U.S. government. One of the first signs of this stance was AMLO’s delayed recognition of the Biden victory; he waited until December 15, 6 weeks after the November 3 election, to send him a letter of congratulations. In the letter, AMLO reminded Biden of his responsibility to recognize Mexican sovereignty. “We have the certainty with you in the [US] presidency it will be possible to continue applying the basic principles of foreign policy established in our constitution; especially that of non-intervention” (Lopez Obrador 2020). But he switched to a friendlier tone when it came to the topic of migration: “I also express my gratitude for your position in favor of migrants from Mexico and the world, which will allow us to continue with the plan to promote the development and well-being of the communities of southeastern Mexico and the countries of Central America” (Lopez Obrador 2020).

Indeed, during the Biden administration, AMLO again secured some U.S. assistance with his plan to promote development in southern Mexico and Central America. The announcement that the Trump administration made in December 2018 was largely seen as lip service; only \$180 million of the \$5.8 billion promised was requested in the FY 2019 budget. But due to administration’s announcement to suspend aid to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, none of it had been allocated as of July 2021 (Meyer and Martin 2021). In June 2021, the two countries signed a U.S.-Mexico Memorandum of Understanding. In an “unprecedented” level of cooperation in Central America, the two countries announced a high-level economic dialogue, cabinet-level security dialogue, \$130 million in labor assistance, development and

youth empowerment groups, joint operations on human trafficking, and \$250 million of private investment in southern Mexico (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores 2021). This cooperation is an instance of Mexican agenda-setting and use of American reliance on Mexican border control as a strategic advantage. In this instance, unlike the Trump administration, the request was not suspended due to allegations of failure to secure borders. Furthermore, the aid totals are significantly higher. In FY2021, \$250.8 million was allocated towards the Northern Triangle. For FY2022, the request was increased to \$319 million. The administration also announced its commitment to fund \$4 billion towards Central America over four years (Meyer 2022). The Biden administration requested a total of \$860.6 million for Central America in FY 2021 and is further requesting \$986.8 million for Central America in FY 2023 (Meyer 2022). But AMLO continues to criticize this funding: “It’s inexplicable to me that approval has been delayed so long. It’s been four years, since President Donald Trump, and there’s still nothing,” he said in Guatemala on May 5, 2022. On May 6, he commented, “It would be expected that the U.S. government and Congress would hand over the \$4 billion that President Biden offered to invest in these programs” (Agren 2022).

Another way that AMLO has repeatedly exerted agency was by responding to the Merida Initiative. Even during his campaign, AMLO contested the conditions of the Merida Initiative, calling it “a shame” that the American government saw fit to withdraw funding based on violations of human rights (Lopez Obrador 2015). Three years later, AMLO — to the surprise of the U.S. — called for the full dissolution of the initiative during a press conference. “We want the Merida Initiative to be completely reoriented because that hasn’t worked, we don’t want there to be cooperation for the use of force, we want there to be cooperation for development. We don’t want the so-called Merida Initiative, the proposal we are making is a development plan for the southeast and the Central American countries, we want the investment to be dedicated to productive activities and job creation,” he announced on July 5, 2019 (Ponce Lopez 2019). On July 29, Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard told the Washington Post, “The Merida Initiative is dead. It doesn’t work, okay? We are now in another era” (Sheridan and Sieff 2021).

Ostensibly, this criticism worked: by October 2021, Mexico hosted the first U.S.-Mexico High-Level Security Dialogue since 2016; the talks resulted in the replacement of the Merida Initiative with a Bicentennial Framework for Security, Public Health, and Safe Communities (Seelke 2022). The new plan incorporates three pillars: (1) “protect people by investing in public health solutions to drug use, supporting safe communities, and reducing homicides and other high-impact crimes,” (2) “prevent transborder crime by reducing arms trafficking, targeting illicit supply

chains, and reducing human trafficking and smuggling,” and (3) “pursue criminal networks by disrupting illicit financiers in both countries and importers of precursor chemicals and synthetic drug producers in Mexico, while strengthening security and justice” (Seelke 2022, 2).

Finally, MPP has continued to be a source of contention between the two. Though it was suspended as a result of the pandemic, it was reimplemented on December 6, 2021. In January 2021, the Biden administration again announced its suspension (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2021). As Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas put it, “Any benefits the program may have offered are now far outweighed by the challenges, risks, and costs that it presents” (Mayorkas 2021). Yet in August a Texas district court ruled that the Biden administration must restart it, with the condition that Mexico agrees. In December 2021, the two announced that they had come to an agreement on the re-implementation of the program. In exchange for again accepting asylum-seekers on Mexican territory while they wait for a verdict on their case, Mexico secured U.S. support with its goal of promoting development in Central America (Miroff and Sieff 2021). Just one day earlier, the U.S. and Mexico issued a joint statement agreeing to the implementation of *Sembrando Oportunidades*. Through the program, USAID and AMEXCID agreed to cooperate on development assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (USAID 2021).

5.4 Concluding Remarks

In answering the first research question, I explored the types of priorities that Mexico voiced and aimed to achieve in its exertion of migration diplomacy. I find that Mexico employed migration diplomacy to secure additional funding, aid, and security cooperation, as well as improving the treatment of its citizens in the U.S.

Funding priorities have focused on security and later, humanitarian aid. During the Fox administration, in exchange for controlling its borders, U.S. funding supported economic growth through the Partnership for Prosperity, a public-private partnership which involved OPIC funding, financial cooperation, \$1.4 million in infrastructure feasibility studies, and educational scholarships. After the 9/11 shift in U.S. priorities, Mexican funding priorities shifted as well. Mexico under Fox secured U.S. money to support its 22-point Smart Border Partnership and technology for migration control. When Calderon took office, he too focused on funding for Mexican security, asking for a “partner” to secure the southern border. In 2007, Mexico

received \$500 million to go towards military equipment, technology, technical assistance for Mexican police, and support for counternarcotics operations. With the Merida Initiative, funding for Mexico was renewed on a yearly basis, starting with \$400 million in 2008 and increasing to \$743.3 million by 2009. With the election of Calderon, the focus on security assistance remained; Calderon created *Programa Frontera Sur*, which funded new security infrastructure, checkpoints, and roadblocks in southern Mexico. Between 2000 and 2022, Mexico has received an estimated \$3.48 billion in security-specific funding. But starting with the election of AMLO, Mexico shifted from a focus on security to humanitarian aid. AMLO requested funding for southern Mexico and Central America to address the root causes of migration. Some security-based aid continued, but AMLO and his administration spoke out against the Merida Initiative and publicly criticized the previous administrations' level of security cooperation with the U.S. Instead, he sought to obtain funding for development, infrastructure, agriculture, and even the construction of a railway.

In terms of improved treatment for its citizens, Mexico focused its efforts on legalization and temporary work permits for Mexicans in the U.S. during the Fox administration. I find that while subsequent administrations continued to voice their support for pathways to legalization and better status for Mexicans in the U.S., they did not incorporate such demands into their negotiations involving migration control.

Funding priorities shifted over time, in part due to the changing of Mexican political regimes. New domestic priorities and presidents affected the setting of migration diplomacy priorities, particularly with regard to funding. In terms of improved treatment for Mexican citizens, this was a major focus during the Fox administration. Yet because U.S. political priorities shifted following 9/11 and because of the crucial role of Congress, not the executive branch, in instituting immigration reform, Mexico shifted its migration diplomacy priorities away from improved treatment for Mexicans in later years.

In assessing my second research question, I find that Mexico employed various bargaining strategies to achieve its policy priorities. These strategies differed depending on the political leadership in charge, both in Mexico and the U.S., as well as external circumstances and crises that affected the bilateral relationship.

During the Fox administration pre-9/11, there was a concentrated effort to reach a compromise on migration. The Fox administration employed a cooperative strategy, offering to increase policing along its southern border through *Plan Sur* and control migration on its northern border in exchange for legalization of Mexicans in the U.S. and issuing of temporary work permits. Following 9/11, prospects for immigration

reform changed, but the Fox administration continued to pursue a relative gains strategy. This time, Fox offered border security in exchange for free travel of Mexican citizens within the ‘perimeter’ of North America from the U.S. During the Calderon administration, Mexico continued to seek mutually-beneficial compromises with the U.S. Calderon implemented the *Plan de Reordenamiento de la Frontera Sur* and in exchange, demanded funding from the U.S. to support Mexican security initiatives, including migration, counter-narcotics, and organized crime. The Merida Initiative, inaugurated in 2007, introduced a theme of ‘shared responsibility’ and again affirmed the cooperative nature of U.S.-Mexico relations. In exchange for policing its borders, Mexico wanted U.S. recognition of its share of the blame for drug trafficking and cartels in Mexico, funding, and other technological support. During the Peña Nieto administration, this form of mutually beneficial cooperation continued. *Programa Frontera Sur*, initiated by Mexico in response to the 2014 ‘crisis’ at the U.S. border, in turn increased U.S. funding.

Yet this strategy of cooperative migration diplomacy has shifted with the coming of AMLO. At first, his approach was more cooperative. He asked for additional funding to support development in Central America and southern Mexico, in exchange for acceptance of the Migrant Protection Protocols program, which forced transit migrants with pending U.S. asylum applications to remain in Mexico while they wait. By allowing the expansion of the Migrant Protection Protocols and deploying the National Guard to the Southern border, Mexico avoided the imposition of significant tariffs on Mexican goods. Yet starting in 2020, the AMLO administration began to take a more confrontational stance, including with the extradition of the ex-general. Parliament passed a law limiting the activities of foreign agents in Mexican territory, AMLO began to emphasize Mexico’s position on non-intervention, in essence implying that the U.S. was trying to intervene in Mexican domestic politics, and Mexican courts exonerated the ex-general after promising to bring charges against him. Despite these more confrontational public stances, U.S.-Mexico security cooperation continues. Yet in the last two years, the AMLO administration has begun to employ a more coercive strategy, making threats to end security cooperation or discontinue its efforts on the southern border if its needs are not met.

I find that Mexican migration diplomacy strategies up until 2020 were not in line with Adamson and Tsourapas’ (2019) expectations that transit states will employ coercive bargaining. Instead, Mexico took a cooperative approach, pursuing relative gains with the U.S. Until 2001, U.S. immigration reform and Mexican regulation of transit migration were pursued concurrently. After 2001, Mexico sought funding and aid in exchange for security cooperation, another mutually-beneficial strategy. Yet more recently, AMLO has begun to approach migration diplomacy in pursuit

of absolute gains. I suggest that this shift in approaches was due to both domestic and external factors. First, AMLO, whose term began in 2018, has taken a more confrontational stance in his foreign policy and pursued domestic interests above all else. His political leanings may also play a role: he is a leftist and a populist who has eschewed foreign influence and ‘subordination’. Second, this may be due to a shift in the U.S. approach as well: President Trump took a highly confrontational approach to U.S.-Mexico relations, placing the blame for migration and security squarely on Mexico and ending the policy of shared responsibility pursued during the Obama administration. Trump initiated an absolute gains strategy vis a vis Mexico, which may have influenced AMLO’s decision to do the same.

In the case of U.S.-Mexico migration diplomacy relations, there has also been considerable issue linkage. Migration has been closely tied to security and the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime. This not only served U.S. policy interests, but also Mexican domestic priorities: Calderon and Peña Nieto both came into office with avowed interests in fighting crime and reducing the influence and resources of the drug cartels, which U.S. funding could support. Furthermore, the policy of ‘shared responsibility’ allowed Mexican elites to shift the blame for rising crime and security problems from Mexico to the U.S.

The next chapter will compare the cases of Turkey and Mexico, pointing out differences and similarities between the two in terms of their priorities and their strategic approaches.

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter will summarize the research findings and compare the two case studies that were investigated. It will first discuss how priorities in both Turkey and Mexico mirrored each other and suggest reasons as to why this may be the case. It will also identify priorities that differed between the two, explaining why this may be the case. Next, it will explore the differences between the two in terms of their strategies used and assess reasons for these differences. Finally, it will briefly assess whether the priorities and strategies could be considered ‘successes’ or ‘failures’ and suggest avenues for future research in the realm of assessing migration diplomacy outcomes.

6.1 Priority-Setting

The first research question asked:

How do transit states set priorities when it comes to exercising leverage?
Do priorities differ depending on the receiving country with whom they are negotiating?

This study finds that the priorities set by Turkey and Mexico did not vary significantly depending on the receiving country with whom they were negotiating. This indicates that so-called transit states may select similar types of policies that they see as achievable through migration diplomacy when faced with migration control demands. Though priorities set were largely the same, the types of improvements sought for citizens varied slightly between the two. In addition, whereas Turkey demanded silence on de-democratization, this was not a major focus of Mexican negotiations. I argue that domestic factors, not the identity of the externalizing state, are the determinant of state priorities in the midst of border externalization.

Based on my research, whereas Turkish funding priorities have remained relatively static since 2013, Mexican priorities have changed over time. I argue that these changes depend on domestic preferences. Turkey's political leadership has remained relatively static since 2013, when this study started its investigation. The party in charge has not changed, nor has the president (initially the prime minister). In contrast, each Mexican president sought aid from the United States to aid with their respective domestic political agendas.

Within the priority area of improved treatment for citizens, there were a few key differences between Mexico and Turkey. Whereas Turkey focused on visa liberalization, Mexico targeted improved conditions for its citizens already in the United States. I suggest that this difference can be attributed to the distribution of their citizens; 10.9 million Mexican-born people (8.4% of Mexico's population) already reside in the U.S. and seek better pathways toward legalization, while only 1.48 million Turkish-born people (1.7% of Turkey's population) are currently in the EU with many more who seek to enter.

Another difference between the two was the level of integration of visa facilitation and improved treatment for citizens into negotiations about migration control. Turkey fully incorporated visa liberalization into its negotiations with the EU, while Mexico did not incorporate visa liberalization into its negotiations with the U.S. after 9/11. This is not due to a lack of Mexican interest in legalization; instead, I attribute this to the actors and institutions involved in the EU and U.S. In the case of Turkey, Turkey frequently calls for visa liberalization and fulfillment of the roadmap criteria in its meetings with the European Commission. The EC is wholly responsible for visa liberalization frameworks; it has supremacy over mobility in the EU. Thus, Turkey can negotiate with a singular actor and place the blame on one entity when its demands are not met—something it has done frequently, as evidenced by my research. In the case of Mexico, it was not the lack of U.S. executive interest in legalization and improved conditions for Mexican citizens. In fact, Obama, who was president during Calderon and Pena Nieto's administrations, publicly announced his support for a pathway to legalization (Pereda and Monge 2012). Though presidents set the agenda, Congress is the ultimate decision-maker when it comes to legalization, temporary work permits, or other immigration legislation. Mexico thus seems to have removed progress on legalization or other improved treatment for citizens from the agenda in its negotiations with the U.S. It has also been less publicly critical of the U.S.'s failure to reach a deal than Turkey.

Missing from Mexico's set of priorities was a similar focus to Turkey on silencing criticism of de-democratization. I find that Mexico did not focus on this goal in its

use of migration diplomacy. The extradition of ex-General Salvador Cienfuegos and subsequent exoneration is an instance of silencing, not of democratic criticism but of the rule of law. Yet beyond this, Mexico has not, up until now, prioritized silencing criticism. I suggest that this difference in priority-setting is due to three reasons. First, Mexico's recent democratic trajectory, though moving in a negative direction, is not as steep nor as prominent as Turkey's. Freedom House rates Mexico 60/100, a classification of 'partly free' (compared to Turkey's 32/100 'not free' rating) (Freedom House 2021*b*). Likewise, Mexico ranks 0.39 on the v-Dem Liberal Democracy Index (compared to Turkey's 0.11) (Varieties of Democracy 2022*a*). Second, though democracy promotion is a tenet of U.S. foreign policy, up until now it has not taken precedence in U.S. relations with Mexico. Ackerman (2016) criticizes this stance, writing, "The United States is working under the false premise that Mexico is a functioning democracy, one where federal authorities are doing their best to strengthen public institutions and uproot rampant organized crime and corruption." In addition to its assumption that Mexican democracy is functioning, the U.S. has decided that security cooperation, including in the realm of migration control, is more important than criticizing democratic declines. Finally, even though my research found that Mexico has not specifically tied silence on democratic declines to its implementation of U.S. border externalization measures, it has not held back from threats and other bargaining tactics, especially since the beginning of AMLO's presidency.

Taken together, these findings refute my hypothesis that the identity of the border externalizer is the determinant of the 'transit migration' state's priorities. Instead, I argue that domestic concerns play a more important role. For the selection of which issue areas to secure funding, this is not merely due to the areas that border externalizers are willing to fund, but due to the priorities that domestic elites adopt in the 'transit migration' state. In addition, the selection of how to pursue improved treatment for citizens in the EU and U.S. is not dictated by EU and U.S. priorities, but navigated according to domestic concerns and demographics.

6.2 Strategy Selection

The second research question asked:

How do transit states exercise this leverage? Does this differ depending on the receiving country with whom they are negotiating?

In answering this second research question, I refer to Tsourapas' (2017) categorization of migration diplomacy strategies. As discussed in the Theoretical Framework (see Chapter 2), states engaging in migration diplomacy employ coercive or cooperative strategies. Cooperative methods, also conceptualized as a 'positive-sum' situation, result in a net benefit for both states involved. Meanwhile coercive strategies, also conceptualized as 'zero-sum' situations, make use of violence, the threat of violence, or unilateral bargaining tactics to secure one-sided gains (Adamson and Tsourapas 2019).

Throughout the time period under study, Turkey employed a coercive strategy. It sought to extract benefits at the expense of the EU, not mutually-beneficial outcomes. This strategy is in line with Adamson and Tsourapas' (2019) expectations: they hypothesize that transit states will employ a zero-sum strategy, seeking to secure absolute gains. Meanwhile, Mexico's strategy has shifted from a mutually-beneficial to zero-sum approach.

I argue that strategy selection, first and foremost, depends on the domestic elites' preferences in the 'transit migration' state. If their stated political and foreign policy priorities put them at odds with the border externalizer, then they will adopt more coercive strategies. Conversely, if they see the border externalizer as a potential partner for domestic initiatives, they are more likely to adopt a cooperative strategy. In addition, I propose that the elites in the externalizing state do play a secondary role in strategy selection. If they adopt a coercive approach towards the 'transit migration' state, then the domestic political elites in the transit state will be more likely to respond with their own coercive approach, rather than pursuing partnerships and cooperation. These findings refute my hypothesis that the identity of the border externalizer plays an important role in the strategy selection of the 'transit migration' state, but indicate that the border externalizer does have a role to play in selection of strategic approaches.

6.3 Success or Failure?

Over the course of my research, I identified instances of migration diplomacy in relations between Turkey and the EU and Mexico and the U.S. Yet I did not distinguish between successful and unsuccessful migration diplomacy — any instance of Turkey or Mexico attempting to exert agency in the bilateral relationship was incorporated into my research. The relative success of these strategies was not the focus of my research, thus I do not draw conclusive arguments. But I think it is valuable to note

those priorities and strategies that were successful and those that were not. After identifying successes and failures, I suggest reasons for why this may be the case.

For Mexico, despite Fox's attempts to reach a compromise and the continued Mexican interest in immigration reform, there has been no significant progress on visa liberalization or better treatment for its citizens. On security cooperation, Mexico successfully convinced the U.S. to accept 'shared responsibility' and struck bargains to secure U.S. funding and support. AMLO was successful in securing U.S. assistance with humanitarian aid to be put towards development in Central America and southern Mexico.

Turkey too has not achieved any progress on improved treatment for its citizens. Five unfulfilled components of the visa roadmap remain, which Turkey continues to contest. Turkey achieved significant progress on securing EU funding to support refugee hosting, development, and other domestic priorities. It also achieved concessions on democratic regressions and ensured a lack of conditionality from the EU. It was not successful with the creation of a safe zone in Syria, another goal that it attempted to achieve using migration diplomacy.

Ultimately, these instances of success or failure indicate that achievements in migration diplomacy are only possible if it is in a policy area in which the border externalizer—in this case, the U.S. or the EU—was already willing to accept concessions. Furthermore, it indicates that success is only possible if the concession matches the border externalizer's own goals. When it comes to visa regulations and improved treatment for citizens, for example, the EU and the U.S. were unwilling to concede because it did not match political elites' goals. Lifting restrictions on mobility was evidently too high a cost for elites to accept in exchange for decreased migration pressure. In contrast, providing monetary compensation or other aid was generally a more successful priority area for both Mexico and Turkey. This indicates that the political cost of providing monetary compensation in exchange for supporting 'transit migration' states was acceptable for EU and U.S. domestic elites.

My study finds that while Turkey employed a coercive bargaining strategy, Mexico approached migration diplomacy from a cooperative standpoint until recently, when it shifted to a coercive approach. In terms of visa liberalization, Turkey used coercion, while Mexico used cooperation; neither strategy was successful. For security cooperation, Turkey again made use of coercion, while Mexico used cooperation; both approaches worked in this case. To secure other forms of funding, including humanitarian and development aid, Turkey utilized coercive bargaining strategies, while Mexico started with cooperation and shifted to coercion. Coercion was more

productive in both instances.

Overall, my findings do not indicate a trend in terms of which strategies are more relatively successful. This may indicate that strategy selection is not the most important factor in determining success. If cooperation can produce beneficial bargains, then it may be an advantageous approach. If coercion can convince the border externalizer to accept conditions or bargains it would not otherwise accept, then it may also be an effective approach. Or, this is merely an indication that more research is required; relative success or failure of bargaining strategies was not the focus of my research. In order to assess strategy effectiveness, I suggest that future research is needed to investigate strategy selection and relative success or failure. Future studies could add cases of transit states that have used cooperation, coercion, and neither strategy vis a vis border externalizers to fully explore this idea. In the next chapter, I conclude my study, summarize my findings, offer suggestions for future research, and comment on how its findings can be applied.

7. CONCLUSION

This study, by exploring the case studies of Turkey and Mexico, attempts to explore the priorities and strategies used by transit states to respond to border externalization. It hypothesizes that the identity of the border externalizer, the EU or the U.S., affects priority selection and strategy adoption. It bases this hypothesis on the difference in institutional settings, political elite preferences, and historical backgrounds between the two. In order to assess this hypothesis, I engaged in an extensive review of the migration diplomacy relationship between the EU and Turkey and the U.S. and Mexico, starting from the introduction of ‘transit migration’ into the relationship. I find that priorities and strategies are, first and foremost, determined by domestic preferences, priorities, and outlooks, not those of the border externalizer.

Both Turkey and Mexico focused on securing aid and funding to meet domestic priorities, improved treatment for their citizens, and additional money to meet priorities. Turkey also prioritized the silencing of EU criticism of its backsliding on democratization, the rule of law, and other freedoms, another instance of priority-setting based on domestic priorities. In terms of strategy selection, this too did not depend on the border externalizer. Instead, I argue that strategy selection was largely driven by the preferences, priorities, and viewpoints of Mexican and Turkish leadership. In the case of Turkey, this means that Turkey adopted a coercive bargaining strategy to achieve its migration diplomacy aims. For Mexico, strategies shifted over time, from cooperation during the administrations of Fox, Calderon, and Peña Nieto to coercion during the AMLO administration. This is not to say that factors in the border externalizing state do not play any role at all, but I argue that domestic preferences are more important. Above all, this study emphasizes that transit states are not mere objects of border externalizers. They do not just accept the terms and bargaining strategies handed to them, but select their own priorities, change the terms of negotiation, and shift bargaining strategies.

In addition to focusing on the agency of states as they negotiate strategies of border

externalization, is important to recognize the agency of individual migrants as they respond to and cope with these policies. Indeed, in refugee rentier states, refugees become the ‘rent’ that the state is using to exert power and influence (Tsourapas 2019). While studying the exertion of state agency, this study does not seek to diminish the agency of migrants themselves. Migrants are ultimately the ones choosing how to navigate border closures or checkpoints, formulate journeys and new pathways, and face the aftermath of these state policies.

This study also acknowledges that states, even while negotiating and navigating migration diplomacy on the macro level, may be simultaneously causing more harm for migrants passing through on the micro level. Frelick et al. (2016) assert that the policy of border externalization, by putting transit states in charge of ensuring human rights for migrants, makes migrants more vulnerable. As they explain, “asylum seekers who would otherwise have been able to avail themselves of asylum procedures, social support, and decent reception conditions are often consigned to countries of first arrival or transit that have comparatively less capacity to ensure rights and process claims in accordance with international standards.” Many of the ways in which states exert agency and the policies that these strategies produce place migrants in the middle, using them as bargaining chips to gain advantages. For example, the Turkish decision to stop policing the Turkey-Greece border led migrants to travel many miles and face dangerous conditions, all under the false conception that they would be able to cross into Greece easily. In fact, many of the migrants were marooned at the border in a no-man’s zone. Greece deployed additional military personnel to the area and pushed migrants back with tear gas and riot gear (Stevis-Gridneff and Kingsley 2020). Mexico, too, while asserting its agency vis a vis the U.S., has repeatedly put migrants at risk. For example, its acceptance of the Migrant Protection Protocols created dangerous and even life-threatening situations for migrants, who often do not have access to healthcare, protection, or housing. Human Rights First documented 1,544 cases of rape, kidnapping, assault, and other crimes committed against individuals sent back under MPP between January 2019 and February 2021 (Human Rights First 2021). Border externalization also creates new hierarchies and power dynamics that ultimately harm migrants. For example, border externalization may in turn export gendered effects to target countries. Tyszler (2019) finds that in Morocco, EU policies created male-dominated, racialized spaces of control that put female migrants in particular at risk.

It would be interesting to apply the same research questions to other transit states. Do other transit states exhibit similar prioritization strategies? Do they employ coercive or cooperative strategies in the face of border externalization? A future it-

eration of this study, rather than selecting the border externalizer as the independent variable, could examine the hypothesis that the political leanings of elite politicians determine their migration diplomacy strategies. In addition, it would be interesting to explore the multi-tiered responses to border externalization; while Mexico and Turkey are placed in the middle as ‘transit states,’ Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and other ‘origin countries’ also play a role in border externalization and employ their own diplomatic strategies in response. Finally, as suggested in the Research Findings section, future research is needed to assess the factors that determine success and failure of policy priorities and strategies. This particular line of research would benefit from a more expansive selection of case studies, as well as a more well-honed definition of what constitutes ‘success’ in migration diplomacy settings.

Ultimately, I believe that this research makes a contribution to the literature on migration diplomacy. It embarks on a case study of two transit states that have not previously been compared together, considering their priorities and strategies for exercising migration diplomacy. It emphasizes the importance of considering how transit states are negotiating their own positions in the framework of migration diplomacy. I believe that migration will continue to play an important role in diplomatic relations between states. In my view, it is crucial for research to not only focus on those states that are externalizing their borders, but on those states who are targets of this externalization policy and who are in turn affected by it.

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