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Necropolitics of Migration at the Mexico-United States Border

Tesis que, para completar los requisitos del Programa de Honores presenta la estudiante

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Introduction

Mexico's northern border is a dangerous place for migrants. They have crossed the entire country, facing several challenges due to the necropolitical tools of the Mexican State, only to face a raw reality: not all of them will be capable to cross to the United States, and even if they do, they might be back in the Mexican-United States border in a matter of time. Migrants are pushed to scenarios where they have to escape and survive to threats such as cartels, pollution, lack of resources, massacres, femicides, murders, human-trafficking networks, and others. As Ariadna Estévez (2018) mentions, violence and poverty are 'necropolitical tools of production and administration of forced migration'. State of exception plays a big role in this matter; exception produces the perfect scenario for the necropolitical tools to act and produce migrants' deaths.

If we go back in time, we will find out that narcotrafficking and migration –mostly from Mexican citizens to the US– were very polemic topics between the United States and Mexico since President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Later, during President Ernesto Zedillo and Bill Clinton's mandate, it was President Clinton who decided to help Mexico's economy in order to, in a certain way, decrease migration and narcotraffic. In addition, the meeting that The Working Group on Migration and Consular Affairs held in February 1995, started the annual meetings to exchange information on Human Rights violations ([IILSEN], 2003). More recently, during the mandate of President Vicente Fox, bilateral meetings regarding migrant's rights and a migratory reform where held. During those meetings, these two main topics were priority for President Fox since migration was seen as a fundamental component on social politics of Mexicans abroad (Senado de la República, 2004).

After the brief recapitulation on migration, we might ask ourselves two important questions: if both governments addressed migration differently in different periods of time, how can we say that there is a continuity of necropolitics? Or is there even a question of necropolitics towards the migrant population? Both will help us to navigate across the present thesis, because of that, the main objective of the thesis is to demonstrate the existence of necropolitical tools towards the migrant population in the northern Mexican border. At the same time, we will answer the question of: how necropolitics and the creation of a narrative of 'us' vs 'them' affects the migrants in the northern Mexican border?

In order to do so, we will first explore necropolitics in the literature review, starting with what is necropolitics and why is it related to migrants in the first place. Mainly focusing on Achille Mbembe's ideas and critiques as the pioneer to the term, but we will also review prominent figures on necropolitics in Mexico that point out how migrants are being targeted by necropolitical tools of the Mexican State. In the same section, we will analyze the construction of the Politics of the Other, focusing on how the creation of a narrative that put 'us' –the non-migrants– against 'them' –the migrants– allows the Mexican government to, almost freely, use necropolitical tools against migrants. Finally, we will review the militarization process on the Mexico-US border, focusing on why it mattered for National Security –specifically to the United States– and what meant to Mexico.

Then, during the first chapter of the present thesis, we will start focusing on the process of militarization on the Mexico-US border, starting with the attacks of 9/11 and how it affected the security on the North American region and migrants, following with the militarization in more recent times from the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto

to the administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. Next, in chapter two, we will analyze the administrations of Peña Nieto and López Obrador, but we will explore how necropolitics are being displayed. In order to achieve it, we will gather data from Mexican migrants that expose to us the migratory flow on the border, age, gender, and additionally we will make a brief analysis on the nationalities of the migrants, and if they think that suffered some sort of violence during its journey to the northern Mexican border. Finally, in chapter three, we will gather testimonies from migrants in order to have a more 'human touch', and not only numbers. We intend to display the forms of violence that they suffer, as well as some forms of resistances that they have developed –like poems, books of short stories, songs, etc.–.

Lastly, on the conclusions and recommendations, we will go back to the research question of: how do necropolitics and the creation of a narrative of 'us' vs 'them' affect the migrants in the northern Mexican border? In order to give a final answer, we will recapitulate the main points of the thesis discussed during the discussion and give a few recommendations on how civil society, NGOs, or even certain areas of the Mexican Government can help migrants during its journey to decrease its vulnerability to necropolitical tools used by the State. At the very end, we will review some of the limitations that the thesis might have, and give recommendations to future researchers on what can be investigated.

Justification

The importance of the present thesis relies on its capability to show to the reader many of the problems and barriers that a migrant faces on the Northern Mexican border. By doing so, the

migrant is no longer dehumanized and othered, but presented as a human being with human rights and a will to live a better life. At the same time, this research will add to the body of knowledge of the Mexican school of necropolitics, which have been recently introduced by Sayak Valencia in 2010. As a consequence, it has recently aroused the interest of Mexican scholars that have been exploring necropolitics in different periods of time or different groups of people.

If we took a moment to think about the migrant caravans during 2018, we could remember that othering took a big role on creating a dominant narrative about migrants being ungrateful, some of them when offered food[1]. This facilitated the fact that necropolitical tools were easily applied: if the majority of the Mexican society thinks that migrants are ungrateful or robbers, it would be easier for the government to use force on a bigger scale. If we continue to (re)produce narratives like the one in the previous example, we will continue to have the same results, or even worse ones. In the end, the migrant will be affected the most and the people who believes in the narrative created to other them may feel a certain degree of relief when hearing that the National Guard or the army is containing the migrants and/or using force against them.

Now, the reason to use necropolitics to explain the troubles and dangers that a migrant faces during its journey through Mexico and while is on the Northern Mexican border, is due

[1] For example, the case of Miriam Celaya, a Honduran woman, who complained about the food that was given to migrants, and later had to apologize for saying that beans were food for *chanchos* (pigs) due to the cyberbullying from both Hondurans and Mexicans. For more information read: https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2018/11/22/frijoles-y-fake-news-por-que-esta-migrante-hondurena-suplica-perdon-a-mexico/ in Spanish, or https://dailycaller.com/2018/11/28/migrant-complains-free-pig-food-sorry-apologizes/ in English.

to its intrinsic nature of resistance during a postcolonial era. Necropolitics arise with the necessity to name the pain of certain groups that face difficulties to live due to the State administrating its death. Necropolitics contributes to create a resistance that exposes the necropolitical tools that the vulnerable groups face and might not be able to speak about it.

And, even if necropolitics emerged during a post-colonial era, we could ask ourselves, are we really living in a post-colonial era? With several reports of migrant women being forced to work on the maquilas, as sex workers, or in poorly paid jobs; kids having to work on the traffic lights, selling on the streets, or asking for money; and men doing intense physical work that is also poorly paid, who are the ones that are getting any benefit from it? Which group of people or organizations are the ones profiting at the expense of the vulnerable?

Even if this thesis is not completely focused on answering the previous questions, it is true that poorly paid work will be analyzed later as a technology, which is part of a necropolitical assemblage –which can be the sum of social, political, and economic forces organized in ways that can perpetuate and facilitate the destruction and/or death of certain groups of people – that is not necessarily implemented by the Mexican State, but from people who see the opportunity to profit from the vulnerable, from the other.

Objectives

As mentioned before, the main objective will be to demonstrate the existence of necropolitical tools towards the migrant population in the northern Mexican border. Following, the specific objectives will be:

- Identify the necropolitical tools that the Mexican State use directly and indirectly towards the migrant population.
- Gather data of Human Rights violations from migrants through interviews and surveys.
- Analyze data of migrants in order to discover which countries are the main migrant producers and if there is a relation with the utilization of necropolitical tools.

Literature review

Due to the novelty of the concept of 'necropolitics', the current body of literature is limited and has yet a big potential to fully explore the topic. The scarcity of research can be attributed to the relatively recent creation of this concept in 2003. That is why, this literature review will deeply analyze three main works: Achille Mbembe's *Necropolitics* (2003), Ariadna Estévez's *The necropolitical dispositif on production and administration of forced migration at the United States-Mexico border* (2018b), and *Necropolitical and biopolitical wars of asylum on North America* (2018a). At the same time, other authors' ideas will be discussed throughout in order to explain, clarify or complement these three main works.

In order to understand what are necropolitics, we have to understand its counterpart and complement: biopolitics. Foucault (1997) explained biopolitics as the way that the life of the population is regulated and administrated, for biopolitics, the population is "a mass of living and coexisting beings that have biological and pathological particularities and that because of that are placed under specific knowledge and technologies" (Foucault, 1997: 71). Thereby, biopower, inherent in biopolitics, is the new art of government that complements

sovereign power –power of the king–, that can be summarized as the power to making live and letting die, and is only interested on the way that people live, not on how exactly they die.

Biopower is interested in the processes inherent to life: born, growth, reproduction, sickness, death, etc. the body is no longer the objective of biopower, the regulation of the population is (Foucault, 2006a; 2006b). In order to regulate the population, the population has to be fragmented, biopower creates a hierarchy of race; those on the bottom are left to die since they threaten the survival of those on the top, and are omitted from public policies and other services provided by the State (Foucault, 1997; 2000; 2006a; 2006b; Foucault, Senellart & Davidson, 2007). A perfect example of this through history are slaves during colonialism, Jews during Nazism, and migrants during our times. Since the migrant is frequently seen as the illegal, it can be easier to label it as 'the other', 'the third-class citizen'. Even the label of third-class is already saying that for it to exist must be a first- and second-class citizen, contributing to the hierarchy that Foucault suggested.

In that sense, racism would be a technology that permits the State to exercise biopower, letting die an entire sector of the society just because they are no good to the rest (Foucault, 1997). But how will the State administer the death if it is not defining how a person will die? To answer this question, Agamben (2001; 2004) suggested that the State of exception –in which the State will not do something to rescue those who might die– is not an exception anymore, but the group of norms, rules, policies and laws that we live by in modern democracies. The concept of *homo sacer* appears to talk about the person that can be

murdered but not sacrificed, due to its nature of being excluded from their rights, a subject to violence, and vulnerable to the dangers that exist (Agamben, 1998).

On the other hand, Achille Mbembe's work, *Necropolitics* (2003), paved the way for necropolitical studies by reaching scholars around the world. In its thirty pages, Mbembe is capable of explain that necropower is the claim of the State on its sovereignty and legitimacy in order to define who is and who is not disposable in order to administrate its death. Thus, necropolitics can be summarized as the power of death to subjugate life. He explains that the State is capable of doing that by keeping vulnerable groups in a state of injury (Mbembe, 2003). The state of injury can be seen as a state where the person lives controlled by fear and can only think about surviving, producing a form of death-in-live where death is a constant shadow of the life.

In other words, necropolitics is the power of making die and letting live, but the State has the legitimacy to do so because it is the society the one that decides who dies in order to let another live. Thus, it is the society who, through a series of prejudices, othering, and a social and historical context, allow the State to decide the worth of a social group. For example, many Mexicans decide, consciously or unconsciously, that indigenous people's lives are disposable when comparing them to the middle or upper classes. That is why, for the State, it is easier to take from indigenous communities to give it to the middle or upper classes, because society would not make a big scandal about it –at least until they get hit by the hard truth of the inequalities that these communities face thanks to activists, journalists, other sources of information, or simply because they know someone from these communities–.

We are all potential victims of the necropolitical tools that administer death, and as a consequence, we have reached a certain degree of the internalization of death, where we see death as a part of life. We choose to not walk on the streets at a certain time of the day or night, we choose to avoid the areas that we have designed as dangerous, and we choose to wear or not to wear certain pieces of clothing because we 'choose to live'.

Achille Mbembe (2003) then focuses on explaining us more about the state of injury and the death-in-life state by giving examples of what happened during slavery. By analyzing what Susan Buck-Morss (2000) suggested about the master possessing the slave's life, Mbembe infers that "the relations between life and death, the politics of cruelty, and the symbolics of profanity are blurred in the plantation system" (Mbembe, 2003: 22). This leads to the idea that the favoritism to preserve certain races over others is indeed a phenomenon, and it is in fact a 'war without end' because "the colony represents the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of a power outside the law… [and] colonies might be ruled over in absolute lawlessness stems from the racial denial of any common bond between the conqueror and the native." (Mbembe, 2003: 23, 24).

Thus, it is the 'savage life', the other, the vulnerable, and the oppressed the one that is more likely to be on the state of injury and the death-in-life state due to the privileged, the majority and the powerful who sees them as a work force or as disposable. As a consequence, this leads to the sovereign right to administrate the death of the other if this preserves the privilege and/or wealth of the conqueror. And even though Mbembe focuses on (post-) colonial societies, his work of necropolitics can be applied to a broader range of contexts,

both within and beyond the colonial or post-colonial framework, just as Sayak Valencia and Ariadna Estévez demonstrated.

Just when we think that Mbembe is focusing on explaining necropolitics on a more or less distant era, he then brings out Frantz Fanon's ideas, where spatialization is "regulated by the language of pure force, immediate presence, and frequent and direct action; and it is premised on the principle of reciprocal exclusivity" (Fanon, 1991, in Mbembe, 2003: 26). This is also how necropower operates, because pure force is used by the State, criminal groups or even the society to almost display who is and who is not disposable. In other words, we contribute to the necropower by allowing the force to express itself, and we contribute to the creation of these conditions. The things that we say or the things that we allow helps necropower to, through spatialization, define that the other can be ignored in order to give attention to us.

But how do we know who the targets are? In order to answer this question, Mbembe goes back to Weizman (2002) ideas, where the idea of verticality is explored. On a vertical sovereignty[2], is the state who is above, offering strategic assets, and converting surveillance as a weapon to precisely target the disposable population. At the same time, surveillance gives power to the State, since it is the one watching all the time the evil and good behavior. Thus, freedom can only be granted to those under the State's direct orders and those who

[2] Which according to Weizman, is the redefinition between sovereignty and space, where three-dimensional boundaries across sovereign bulks are created, resulting in 'politics of verticality'. Under this framework, the "resultant form of sovereignty might be called 'vertical sovereignty'. " Under a regime of vertical sovereignty, colonial occupation operates through schemes of over- and underpasses, a separation of the airspace from the ground" (Weizman, 2002, in Mbembe, 2003: 28).

obey them, the others that live under some sort of 'illegality' and 'clandestinity' cannot access to a full freedom, and will be more vulnerable to be targeted by the State.

The State can then proceed and use its necropolitical tools in order to eliminate – either fast or slowly– the other. The more obvious tools that Mbembe (2003) suggests is the army and all the things that we associate with it: guns, bombs, high-tech and low-tech means of war, etc., but he also suggests other methods since "the "regular army" is no longer the unique modality of carrying out these functions… [because some] states can no longer claim a monopoly on violence and on the means of coercion within their territory" (Mbembe, 2003: 31, 32).

The other *war machines* are born when the State stops monopolizing violence. The idea of the war machine was developed by Deleuze and Guattari as part of a larger philosophical inquiry into the potential for change and resistance in a world ruled by state and capitalist authority. They contend that the war machine is an organizational and operational framework that operates outside the conventional state's borders and is distinguished by its fluidity, dynamism, and decentralization (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The desire for freedom, innovation, and experimentation drives the war machine, in contrast to the state, which aims to create rigid and stable hierarchies and categories, to continually adapt and change (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

As Deleuze and Guattari explain, these *war machines* "are made up of segments of armed men that split up or merge with one another depending on the tasks to be carried out and the circumstances" (1980, in Mbembe, 2003: 32). These machines can change depending

on its context and space, they are mobile and even can be helped by the state to be created. One key difference between Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the war machine and Mbembe's is the emphasis on violence. While Deleuze and Guattari view the war machine as a creative and potentially non-violent force, Mbembe sees it as inherently tied to violence and conflict. As they are complex and somewhat linked to the State, "*war machines* function by borrowing from regular armies while incorporating new elements well adapted to the principle of segmentation and deterritorialization. Regular armies, in turn, may readily appropriate some of the characteristics of *war machines*." (Mbembe, 2003: 32).

Even if Mbembe explains *war machines* giving examples from Africa, he mentions something that can be translated to the Mexican context: "*war machines* forge direct connections with transnational networks" (Mbembe, 2003: 33). A very clear example of a war machine like that would be organized crime, it is not only locally, but it goes from state to state within Mexico, and have connections with cartels, human trafficking networks, and other similar organizations across Latin America and even around the world. Organized crime would be among the main necropolitical tools that the State can use to let migrants die.

However, this does not mean that the ones who die are forgotten, this means that some of the deaths can become, in a certain way, martyrs. It can be a form of resistance, since the martyr's death is "a moment of supremacy in which the subject overcomes his own mortality", their body, then,

> is invested with properties that cannot be deduced from its character as a thing, but from a transcendental nomos outside it. The besieged body becomes a piece of metal whose function

> is, through sacrifice, to bring eternal life into being. The body duplicates itself and, in death, literally and metaphorically escapes the state of siege and occupation (Mbembe, 2003: 37).

Finally, we can conclude that Achille Mbembe explores a very interesting series of phenomena that are part of what he called necropolitics. In simple words, Mbembe expose that life is not equally recognized among every human being, we can divide them among 'us' and 'them' (the other). The experience that *we* live is different from the experience that *they* live, but only because *we* are the ones that allow the state to act a certain way. Also, we can say that death operates through bodies, territories, and subjectivity; where oneself live and where oneself developed will shape our relationship with death. Vulnerable groups such as migrants have to change their lifestyle due to their relationship with death, trying to escape from the *war machines* that the state use as necropolitical tools.

Now that we have understood necropolitics, we can finally review Ariadna Estévez's works that are applied to the migrant's Mexican reality. First we will review its paper titled *The necropolitical dispositif on production and administration of forced migration at the United States-Mexico border* (2018b). Here, Estévez presents forced migration as a necropolitical tool because it forces them to live on unfavorable urban spaces that makes them vulnerable to other necropolitical tools such as drug cartels, massacres, or homicides by local authorities, at the same time, those spaces serve as a necropolitical tool itself, due to its lack of basic necessities and unsanitary situations.

Estévez (2018b) first states that the neoliberal State is the one implementing public policies that control social actions and encourage them to take care of themselves. In other

words, the State is "expecting public policies to regulate health and growth population" (Foucault, 1997:70-71, in Estévez, 2018b: 4). Since the citizens are in charge of taking care of themselves, those on the upper and medium classes are prone to use private institutions than those on the lower classes. Since we can see it as an enterprise, "[human lives] are assets, and its trading, a market" (Valencia, 2010, in Estévez, 2018b: 4), thus, those who cannot generate profits to the State are targeted to die by administrating its death.

In the case of Mexico, it is the State the one who "shares its technologies and techniques of domination and administration of death with the subjects of privatized violence –in particular criminals– giving place to what can be denominated the necropolitical governmentalization of the Mexican State or the legal-criminal State" (Estévez, 2018b: 4). Thanks to Estévez, we can complement Mbembe's ideas on necropolitics by focusing on the Mexican case, where norms and public policies converge giving place to public necropolitics that are used to "administrate and regulate the adjacent effects of death administration, like social suffering" (Estévez, 2018b: 5). Thereby, we could say that in Mexico, necropolitics is not only a form to administrate death, but a form of administration of death and suffering by using the laws and norms which we live by, and the subjects of privatized violence created by the State –even if the State has no longer control over it–.

On the issue of using forced migration as a necropolitical tool, we can say that "it refers to how people who is subject to legal and criminal violence, death, sexual and labor trafficking, forced work, and criminal economy, are left to die on their countries of origin or while they try to cross the border" (De Génova, 2002, in Estévez, 2018b: 6). All these factors

contribute to the death-in-live state that Mbembe mentioned, because migrants will be always alert to the dangers that they are prone to and have to face every day.

And, if we think specifically on the Northern Mexican border, there are three interconnected necropolitics, which are:

> a) forced displacement, which produces asylum seekers, refugees and the so-called undocumented migrants; b) asylum as administration of suffering, which utilized legislation and asylum institutions to control the time and space of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, instead of facilitate them legal protection to persecution; and c) the *disposable bags*, which are the spatially defined death points in which asylum seekers, migrants and deportees are confined when asylum as tool for administrating suffering fails against them. (Estévez, 2018b: 6-7).

These necropolitics can be implemented due to the violence and criminal forces that make migrants move from their country/state of origin and try to find a better place to live in. However, those are not the only reasons, "femicide, murders of environmental activists, and political murders and enforced disappearances" (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights [IACHR] and Organization of American States [OAS], 2015, in Estévez, 2018b: 7) also play a big role on 'cleaning' areas where people try to resist dispossession, and as a consequence this creates forced displacement.

On the same topic, neoclassical macro migration theories suggest that migration is also caused by the "geographical differences in the supply and demand of labor, mostly between the rural traditional agricultural sector and the urban modern manufacturing sector"

(Hagen-Zanker, 2008: 6), and these models of migration will continue until there is an equilibrium within wages of those on the urban sector compared to the agricultural sector (Lewis, 1954; Ranis & Fei, 1961). However, in the case of migrants, they are more likely to end up in the 'undesirable' jobs that the natives do not want because "they do not consider themselves as part of the destination society" (Hagen-Zanker, 2008: 7), and, in reciprocity, society is more likely to think that migrants do not belong in their societies.

In contrast, scholars like Zolberg (1981) suggest that economic factors are not the only ones that affect migration, but also political reasons, and Zelinsky (1971) suggests that migration is inherent to the modernization process. However, Hagen-Zanker, Lewis, Rains & Fei, Zolberg, and Zelinsky, try to encapsulate migration flows in a generalized way, thereby, their explanations might be incomplete and vague, and putting them together while adding to them could help us to create a more complete theory.

However, another reason to forced displacement is, surprisingly, richness on natural resources. If a region is rich in minerals, water, nature, or any other natural resource, the State or criminal organizations will be interested in controlling that area. It is here when a variation of necropolitics, necrocapitalism[3], appears. Displacing or letting die these groups of peoples become a strategy to appropriate land and make the zone free of any conflict, and easier to exploit (Estévez, 2018b). It is not a coincidence that the states in which organized crime and

[3] Coined by Bobby Banerjee, he explains necrocapitalism as "the practices of accumulation in (post)colonial contexts at hands of specific economical actors… that involves dispossession, death, torture, suicide, slavery, habitats destruction, and general administration of violence… it is a new form of imperialism" (2008: 15).

violence thrive the most, are the richer states on a certain type –or types– of a valuable natural resource(s).

In order to justify this idea, Guadalupe Correa (2015) suggests that there is a spatial coincidence on what we have called *war machines*, social inequalities, and any of the following global flows: *maquilas* industry, extraction industry, migration, and transnational networks of crime –such as cartels, human trafficking networks, etc.–. As a consequence, the gap between those on the top and those on the bottom only increases and social inequality is reinforced (Correa-Cabrera, 2015). Furthermore, Estévez (2018b) concludes that this phenomena involves not only the State and *war machines*, but also corporations that are, "tacitly, supporting violence, because it allows them to argue that investing on those regions is too expensive as a way of hiding their true interests. At the end, these corporate actors allow criminals to make the extractions for them" (Estévez, 2018b: 9). Which could lead us to the conclusion that, in a certain way, corporations are also *war machines*, ergo, a necropolitical tool used indirectly by the State.

Finally, *disposable bags* can be explained as the places where migrants go to –like dumpsters, drainage system, the peripheries of the migrant's shelters, or other improvised refugees– when waiting to cross the border (Estévez, 2018b). In other words, these artificial areas are "areas of spatiality injustice in which vulnerable groups, especially the migrants, are forced to live under inhumane conditions and illegal labor markets with a tacit approval of the government that should, in theory, and under the human rights legislation, be the protector" (Estévez, 2018b: 15).

In order to complement previous Estévez's ideas, we have to take a brief look to Estévez's (2018a) work, *Necropolitical and biopolitical wars of asylum in North America*, she starts by explaining what necropolitics is, but adds that, especially in Mexico, It has "influence through decolonial and feminist thinking, due to the growing numbers of femicides, executions and forced disappearances" (Estévez, 2018a: 30). She also points out that these studies were introduced to Mexico by Sayak Valencia in 2010, *Gore Capitalism*, but became popular thanks to Diego Enrique Osorno in 2012 with its book *Zetas' war. Travel through the necropolitical border* (Estévez, 2018a). Because of that, one could say that the Mexican school of necropolitics is relatively new with only eleven years of Mexican and Mexico-based scholars producing necropolitical knowledge.

Until now, we know necropolitics as the conjunction of elements that, through its actions, can administrate people's death. However, for Estévez, necropolitics is "the armed arm of *deterritorialized* migratory biopolitics on destroyed and dispossessed places" (Estévez, 2018a: 32). And on both hyper-consumerist and impoverished societies, the bodies became objectified, seen as an asset. This creates what Sayak Valencia names as necropractics, which are "radical actions with the purpose of causing pain, suffering and death, for example: murder, torture and kidnapping" (Valencia, 2010, in Estévez, 2018a: 48). Here, the *war machines* are no longer working for the State, but competing with it to gain territory, security and the control of the population, creating worsened necropolitical scenarios for the population.

Now that we know what necropolitics involve, it is time to analyze the construction of the Politics of the Other, for this, we can trace the concept of the Other to Hegel. For him,

"the Other Self is the only adequate mirror of my own self-conscious self; the subject can only see itself when what it sees is another self-consciousness" (Berenson, 1982: 77). For Hegel, introspection is not enough to know oneself because the human being does not live in isolation, thereby, it is important to base introspection based on the relationship with others (Berenson, 1982). In addition, through Hegel's ideas, we could infer that once we have a concept about something, once we *get to know it,* it does not matter if the knowledge that we have about the object corresponds or not, as we can see below:

> Consciousness is on the one hand consciousness of the object, on the other hand consciousness of itself: consciousness of that which is for it the true, and consciousness of its knowledge of this. In as much as both are there for the same consciousness, it is itself their comparison; it is a fact for consciousness whether its knowledge of the object corresponds to it or not. (Hegel, 1910: 141).

As we can see, it would be difficult for the object to change the idea of what it is for the consciousness, and that practical application is what Edward Said (1978) explored through its work *Orientalism*. He explains that orientalism is the containment and representation of the Orient by dominating frameworks that creates authority over the Orient. This creates a narrative full of dichotomies: 'Us' vs 'Them', the strong vs the weak, the civilized vs the uncivilized, the West vs the Orient.

For Said (1978), this was necessary in order to generate power through the knowledge that the West had over the Orient. By accomplishing that goal, the Orient is no longer a free object of thought of action, and was seen as deficient in the logical faculty by nature. As we see, knowledge gave power to the West, facilitating them reinforce stereotypes to maintain

their domination over the Orient. Finally, Said (1978) stated that there were many types of Orient, like the Linguistic Orient, the Freudian Orient, Racist Orient, or the Islamic Orient, and the reason why there was never a 'pure' Orient, but a changing Orient that was articulated by the dominating culture.

This is what Walter Mignolo (1978) called Colonial Matrix of Power, which was characterized by Western Christian men who monopolized knowledge, meaning that the world would only be conceived only from their perspective. Thereby, only Greek, Latin, and their derivates could 'speak knowledge', and the other were left outside. As a consequence, this evolved into class and racism that maintains until our days, Mignolo gives us an example of it: "In the New World, then, racism was an epistemic operation that institutionalized the inferiority of the Indians and, subsequently, justified genocidal violence, as Dussel pointed out, and exploitation of labor, as Quijano underlined" (Mignolo, 1978: 479).

On top of that, he explores the role of modernity as a tool that justified the appropriation of land, resources, and knowledge of the 'others'. For him:

> the conception of modernity as the pinnacle of a progressive transition relied on the colonization of space and time to create a narrative of difference that placed contemporary languages 'vernacular' (indeed, imperial) languages and categories of thought, Christian religion and Greco-Latin foundations in the most elevated position. Hence, men of letters in the European Renaissance invented the idea of the Middle Ages in order to locate themselves in the present of a history that they could trace back to Greece and the Roman Empire and, after the dark centuries, re-emerged in the radiant light of Antiquity (Mignolo, 1978: 470).

We can observe that, for Mignolo, ‘newness’ is the motor of history, which makes people from the ‘outside’ to think from the experience from where the ‘inside’ is thinking, which at the same time constantly (re)produces coloniality. Even in recent times, “the concepts of development and underdevelopment are new versions of the rhetoric of modernity insofar as both concepts were invented to re-organize the temporal and spatial colonial differences” (Mignolo, 1978: 472).

After reviewing the previous ideas, we can see some similarities with the actual scenario on migration. Migrants are presented as the ‘Other’, as the object knowledgeable for us, however, as Hegel started developing, once we have certain knowledge about them it would be difficult to change the stereotypes we have about migrants. And as Said and Mignolo suggested, it is important for the government to produce certain types of knowledge about them in order to make the Mexican citizen to have stereotypes about what a migrant really is, sometimes even dehumanizing and criminalizing them, making it easier for the State and *war machines* to administrate their death.

It is now time to review the militarization process on the Mexico-US border, which has been a contentious issue for several decades, with both Mexico and the United States implementing measures to secure their respective borders. The militarization of the border has been primarily driven by concerns related to national security, with both countries implementing strategies to control the movement of people and goods across the border.

From the perspective of the United States, the militarization of the border is driven by a perception of vulnerability to security threats. After the 9/11, the ‘war on terror’ started, and as Mabee (2007) points out:

> The impact of a ‘war on terror’ is important in many ways for scholars of international relations: for what it means generally for international security, for the kinds of changes that have been implemented in US grand strategy, and for specific analyses of the efficacy of antiterror policy-making (386).

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the US government shifted its focus from traditional military threats to non-traditional threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration. These threats were framed as "existential" and "unconventional," and therefore required new, fast, and more robust security measures. The militarization of the border was seen as a crucial component of these measures, as it was believed that a more secure border would help to prevent the entry of individuals who posed a threat to national security.

This process since 9/11 can be understood through the lens of securitization theory, which posits that security is a discursive process that involves the identification of threats and the construction of narratives that justify the use of extraordinary measures to address those threats (Buzan et al., 1998). The militarization of the border can be seen as a response to the securitization of immigration and drug trafficking, which have been framed as existential threats to the United States.

Thereby, the militarization of the border with Mexico has been seen as a necessary step to protect United States national security interests. This has been driven primarily by concerns related to the flow of illegal drugs and undocumented immigrants into the United States. The United States has viewed the border as a porous entry point for drugs and individuals who pose a threat to national security, and has therefore sought to increase security measures along the border. The militarization of the border has included the deployment of troops, the installation of physical barriers[4], and the implementation of advanced surveillance technologies.[5]

On the other hand, the militarization of the border has also had implications for Mexico's own internal security situation. The drug trafficking organizations that operate in Mexico have been the primary target of the increased security measures on the border, and this has led to a shift in the dynamics of drug trafficking in Mexico. As US authorities have stepped up their efforts to interdict drugs at the border, drug trafficking organizations have increasingly turned to overland routes through Mexico to transport their product. This has contributed to a significant increase of violence in Mexico, as drug trafficking organizations fight for the control of these routes[6].

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[4] To have a visual of the Border Wall System, visit the official site of Customs and Border Patrol here: https://www.cbp.gov/border-security/along-us-borders/border-wall-system.

[5] For example, the autonomous surveillance towers, which are solar-powered and use thermal imaging, cameras, radar and a specialized artificial intelligence (AI) whose work is to analyze the data and determine if any moving object is a human being or not. For more, visit: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/03/11/mexico-border-surveillance-towers/.

[6] For more information read the report of the Congressional Research Service: *"Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations"*, more specifically the box on page 7, which briefly describes the fighting over the routes during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can find the report here: https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R41576/45.

The militarization of the border also has had significant implications for Mexico. While the Mexican government has also sought to increase security measures along its border with the United States, the militarization of the border has raised concerns related to sovereignty and human rights violations. On the one hand, the increased focus on border security has put pressure on Mexico to cooperate with the United States in implementing security measures, including increased surveillance and the deployment of Mexican military forces to the border region.

The deployment of troops along the border has been viewed by some as an infringement on Mexico's sovereignty[7], and there have been reports of human rights abuses committed by Mexican military personnel in the border region[8]. This has specifically raised concerns about the erosion of Mexican sovereignty and the subordination of Mexican interests to those of the United States. Which has had repercussions in terms of its relationship with the United States. Additionally, the militarization of the border has had economic implications for Mexico. The implementation of stricter security measures has led to increased wait times at border crossings, resulting in lost productivity and economic opportunities for Mexican businesses.

[7] And more recently, the threat of US troops in Mexican territory has started to look more likely. López Obrador responded to the situation by stating that he would not permit any interventions on Mexican territory. See more on https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-president-rejects-us-lawmakers-calls-military-intervention-against-2023-03-09/.

[8] To read an article about human rights violations and the opinion of WOLA and Tony Payan on the matter, read https://www.borderreport.com/regions/mexico/mexicos-use-of-soldiers-to-stem-migrant-flow-to-u-s-will-lead-to-abuse-experts-say/.

In conclusion, the militarization of the Mexico-US border since 9/11 can be understood as a response to the securitization of immigration and drug trafficking. From the perspective of the United States, the militarization of the border is seen as a necessary step to protect national security interests, while from the perspective of Mexico, it raises concerns about sovereignty and internal security. However, the militarization of the border has also had significant implications for Mexico, including concerns related to sovereignty and human rights violations, as well as economic implications related to lost productivity and disrupted cross-border commerce[9]. As such, the militarization of the border remains a contentious issue, with both countries grappling with how best to balance national security interests with the broader economic and human rights implications of increased border security.

Methodology

For the present thesis, we will use both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data. The quantitative approach will use the rolling window analysis, which will be displayed through graphs and tables, while the qualitative approach will be based on the analysis of interviews and reports from the migrants themselves. The study will begin by collecting quantitative data on migration trends over a period of six years. The data will be collected from official statistics and will be analyzed using the rolling window analysis. This approach involves dividing the data into three-year periods, analyzing the trends within each period, and then moving the window forward to the next three-year period. The advantage of using

[9] For example, a very recent case where organized crime disrupted cross-border commerce would be the case of the threats that received an American inspector of avocados, as a result, the United States suspended temporarily avocado's imports, even if the Super Bowl was few days ahead. For more read https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/02/15/mexican-avocado-import-ban/.

a rolling window analysis approach is that it allows for the detection of trends that might not be visible if the data is analyzed as a single time series.

This is because trends can vary over time, and by analyzing the data in smaller subsets, we can capture these variations and identify patterns that might not be visible in a larger dataset. Overall, using a rolling window analysis approach to analyze data over time can help to identify trends, patterns, and relationships between variables, which can then be used to make informed decisions or predictions. Thereby, the years of 2012, 2013, and 2014 would be the first ones to be analyzed, followed by 2015, 2016, 2017, and finishing with 2018, 2019, 2020. We will focus on the migrants flow on the border, the main nationalities, age, gender, and if they suffered some sort of violence during its journey to the northern Mexican border. The last point will be the one that can prove the existence of the *war machines* in the Mexico-United States border, together with data from newspapers, reports, and others.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, the study will also collect qualitative data through interviews with migrants and reportages of their daily experiences, which will be presented on Chapter 3. The interviews and reportages will be sourced from media outlets that cover the issues and challenges that migrants face. The qualitative data will be analyzed using a thematic approach, which involves identifying recurring themes and patterns within the data. The themes will be derived from the transcripts of the interviews and the reportages, and will be organized into categories to enable analysis and comparison. Finally, the results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be integrated to provide a comprehensive picture of the experiences of migrants in the target society. The findings will be presented

later in the conclusion, which will include the results of the rolling window analysis, key themes from the qualitative analysis, and recommendations for policy and practice.

Chapter 1. Building the other

The process of militarization[10] on the Mexico-US border precedes the 9/11, the migrant flow between Mexico and the United States, too. For example, between 1942 and 1964, Mexico and the United States, as a consequence of the World War II, implemented the Bracero Program. Motivated by the "urgency of importing workers that could carry out the crops and give maintenance to the railroad tracks" (Córdoba-Ramírez, n.d.: 1), Mexican workers migrated to United States, some even formed families there, making it difficult for them to accept going back to Mexico.

As a result, Operation Wetback, created by Joseph Swing, initiated tactics of search and capture of *illegal*[11] Mexican residents on the United States (Hernández, 2006). The main reason for Operation Wetback was Mexico's decreasing economy due to the workforce leaving to the United States. However, as a consequence of this operation, the construction of a narrative about Mexican migrants as undesirable or as those who would steal the jobs

[10] Which, to us, will consist of the deployment of military elements on the border, and an increase on technology to detect illegal substances, undocumented people, and/or smuggling of goods.
[11] And I put 'illegal' in cursives because according to the Cornell Law School, something illegal means "any action which is against or not authorized by the law or statute… It can refer to an action that is in violation of criminal law, like assault, arson, or murder" (Last ed. March, 2022). Therefore, we cannot call a migrant illegal, since the migrant is not against the law, their action of trespassing the border is. Some scholars and NGOs suggest replacing the term with 'irregular' or 'undocumented', and following their recommendations, during this thesis I will be using these terms instead of 'illegal', and only using it when it is on a direct quote or paraphrasing an author's idea.

from Americans became even more popular (Astor, 2009). With this example, we can observe the construction of the other in order to deport Mexican nationals to Mexico with a justification beyond the legal perspective. However, we will analyze a bigger and more recent example of this on the following pages: the 9/11.

Militarization process post-9/11

"At 8:46 on the morning of September 11, 2001, the United States became a nation transformed" (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States [9/11 Commission], 2004) is the phrase that the 9/11 Commission use to start explaining the events occurred on the day that the terrorist attacks occurred. A powerful phrase that points out the phenomenon in which we will focus on: transformation. The attacks into the North and South towers of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan and into the western face of the Pentagon, and also a possible fourth attack to either the Capitol or the White House that was frustrated by the passengers on that morning on September became an important date not only for the United States, but for most of the international community.

These attacks proved that the United States, even as the victorious world power of the Cold War, was vulnerable within its own territory. The attack was headquartered in Afghanistan, and with the help from Arabs living on the United States and only "small knives, box cutters, and cans of Mace or pepper spray, they had hijacked the four planes and turned them into deadly guided missiles" (9/11 Commission, 2004: 2). The next thing that the 9/11 Commission does, is to point out to an executioner, a culprit. Not surprisingly, and with all

the history, they point out to Usama Bin Ladin, a leader of various groups of Islamic extremists.

They build the other by specifying in the report that it is through "history, culture, and body of beliefs from which Bin Ladin shapes and spreads his message" (9/11 Commission, 2004: 3). It is him who takes Qur'an and its interpretations in order to appeal "to people disoriented by cyclonic change as they confront modernity and globalization. His rhetoric selectively draws from multiple sources-Islam, history, and the region's political and economic malaise (9/11 Commission, 2004: 3). In other words, Islamic and Muslim culture soon became to many Americans the cultures of terrorism[12], making it easier for Americans to construct the image of the other. Soon, the majority of those brown skinned, with a Middle Eastern heritage, living by the word of the Qur'an, and having an accent became the synonym of the 'other', the terrorist, the outsider. Therefore, the 'us' was majorly white, with an American heritage, Christian, and with a perfect English.

As a result of building the other, migrants were also affected, even the 9/11 Commission make sure to clarify that "neither the State Department's consular officers nor the Immigration and Naturalization Service's inspectors and agents were ever considered full partners in a national counterterrorism effort. Protecting borders was not a national security issue before 9/11" (9/11 Commission, 2004: 14). 9/11 is among the main causes of the

[12] Many Americans criticized the US Government about not having enough security in the United States, others committed hate crimes against the Islamic and Muslim population. As an example of the first point, here is a critic from 2005 about Muslim Terror: https://www.city-journal.org/html/if-problem-muslim-terror-then-what-12895.html, and a news article based on a declaration of the FBI about Muslims and people who were or looked Middle Eastern were victims of hate crimes during 2001: https://apnews.com/article/5e249fb6e4dc184720e3428c9d0bd046.

securitization on the borders, including the Mexican-US border, which mainly affected –in that time, as we will see in Chapter 2– migration flows.

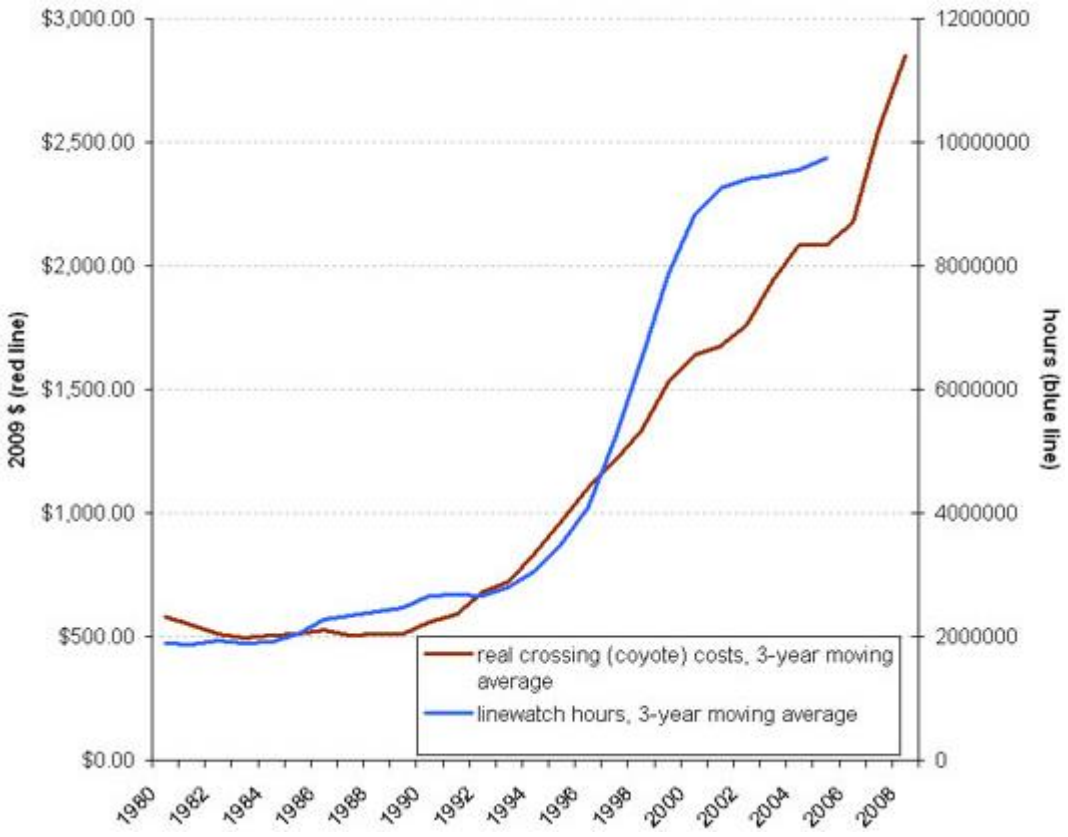
Scholars have argued that it is true that the United States has explicitly linked migration with ideas about it being a threat to US national security (Isacson & Meyer, 2012). This linkage creates a logic where the migrant soon is seen as a potential threat, as explained by the 2004 National Border Patrol Strategy:

> Some would classify the majority of these aliens as 'economic migrants.' However, an ever-present threat exists from the potential for terrorists to employ the same smuggling and transportation networks, infrastructure, drop houses, and other support and then use these masses of illegal aliens as 'cover' for a successful cross-border penetration (U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Border Patrol, 2004, in Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 15).

The narrative was soon propagated by different authorities, starting with the declarations of Representative Tom Tancredo (R-Colorado) on 2001: "The defense of the nation begins with the defense of its borders'' (Tancredo, 2001, in Ackleson, 2005: 177) and from the US State Department: "We are faced with a more diffuse and insidious threat by our open borders" (Taylor, 2001, in Ackleson, 2005: 177). Then, on 2002 the narrative remained, with the words of Attorney General John Ashcroft: "The menace of terrorism knows no borders, political or geographic" (Ashcroft, 2002, in Ackleson, 2005: 177), and again in 2004, with Representative J.D. Hayworth (R-Arizona): "'In these trying times, border security is synonymous with national security'' (Hayworth, 2001, in Ackleson, 2005: 177). As a result, securitization of the borders became a reality and, for many, a synonym of national security.

Among the consequences for undocumented migrants, many undocumented migrants, hired the services of *coyotes* (smugglers) in order to cross to the United States. However, hiring the services of *coyotes* also represented a big risk for migrants, because when the danger of being captured by the border patrol led to the abandonment of their clients on the desert or sea, and the quality of the transportation was not the best, since overcrowding situations also led to death by suffocation (Kyle & Dale, 2001; Inter American Commission on Human Rights [IACHR], 2002). Thereby, Mexican migrants and migrants from other nationalities became potential victims of abandonment and/or death when trying to cross the México-United States border.

Graph 1
Smugglers' Fees and Linewatch Hours



Elaborated by the Mexican Migration Project

The new risks that securitization brought to migrants was also represented on the costs that smugglers had, provoking a bigger economical loss for the migrant or the migrant's family. Accordingly to the laws of the market of supply and demand, and adding the risks that the smugglers also faced, it is logical that their fees –that were high on that time– presented an increase (see Graph 1). These fees continued to increase in the following years, as Bryan Roberts, Gordon Hanson, Derekh Cornwell, and Scott Borger from the Office of Immigration Statistics in the US Department of Homeland Security suggested,

> the increase in enforcement on the Southwest border accounted for all of the increase in smuggling costs in the period 2006-2008, but only about half of the increase during 2004–2008. This can be explained by non-enforcement factors increasing smuggling costs during 2004–2006 (Roberts et al., 2010: 17).

Going back to Isacson and Meyer's report (2012), they point out that the narrative of migrants being potential terrorists did not only affect *coyote's* fees, but also helped to create new institutions, special rules, strategies and initiatives on both Mexico and the United States. We will review some in chronological order, starting with 2001 and finishing with 2005 in order to have a general context of what we will discuss during the presidential mandates of Enrique Peña Nieto (2012-2018) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2018-).

Just after de 9/11 attacks, the US Congress approved increasing the border security funds, and The Texas initiated Operation Border Star, within the Texas State Department of Public Safety, "which includes the state criminal investigative body, the Texas Rangers" (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 26). The same year, the Mexican government "highlighted the importance of migration flows and the government's inability to control areas used by

migrants to enter the country" (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 15) on the 2001-2006 National Development Plan.

On the year of 2002, the High-Level Border Security Group (GANSEF, by its acronym in Spanish) between Mexico-Belize and Mexico-Guatemala reflected the importance that "terrorism, organized crime, crimes related to migration, illicit merchandise trafficking and border public security" (Senado de la República, 2008). In the same year, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was created (Isacson & Meyer, 2012). Within the principal agencies under the charge of the DHS for border issues, we can highlight Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which moved to the DHS in 2003 (CBP, n.d.).

Passing through 2003, we can highlight the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), also under the charge of DHS. The ICE is "a merger of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (formerly in DOJ) and the U.S. Customs Service's law enforcement capabilities (formerly in the Treasury Department)" (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 21). In addition, on April 30, 2003, United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) was established under the DHS supervision. Its execution implemented "several statutes designed to enhance immigration controls, the integrity of our national borders, and, ultimately, our national security (CBP, n.d.). And 375 additional border patrol agents were deployed on the Mexico-United States border on July (CBP, n.d.).

Later, in 2004, the Border Field Intelligence Center (BORFIC), the main intelligence facility of Border Patrol, was founded (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 21), and, in March, the US Supreme Court upheld CBP "authority to disassemble and thereby search a vehicle's gas tank

for terrorist weapons, drugs, and other contraband, without the need to obtain a warrant or probable cause" (CBP, n.d.). This was also the year where the National Border Patrol Strategy was announced, reflecting the changes that 9/11 provoked on border security (Isacson & Meyer, 2012). At the end of the year, US-VISIT is being implemented in "50 busiest land border ports of entry… [providing] visa-issuing posts and ports of entry with biometric technology that allows a traveler's identity to be established and verified" (CBP, n.d.).

Finally, in 2005, the Mexican National Migration Institute (INM, by its acronym in Spanish) became part of Mexico's National Security Council (Diario Oficial de la Nación [DOF], 2005). The United States, on the other hand, begins operations of its first unnamed aircraft system (often referred as "drones") program, using unarmed Predator B aircraft to patrol the U.S.-Mexico borderland (CBP, n.d.; Isacson & Meyer, 2012). However, later it would be informed that UAS were "less effective than manned aircraft in supporting apprehension of undocumented aliens" (DHS, 2005, in Isacson & Meyer, 2012). Later, on November, the DHS announced a multiyear, multibillion-dollar program, the Secure Border Initiative to secure the Mexican-United States border (US Government Accountability Office, 2008).

Until now, we have been seeing the beginning and sophistication of well-known agencies that guard and operate the Mexico-United States border. We can observe that the securitization process on the border started with terrorism as an issue of national security, and soon both Mexico and the United States reinforced their own security on the border that interested them most. As a result, we could infer that securitization on borders resulted in the

lack of security for migrants inside the Mexican territory, where the *war machines* took care of eliminating the migrants. At the same time, securitization on borders can be seen as a *war machine* in its own right, detaining and/or eliminating the migrants when possible.

It is now time to review some of the securitization and militarization processes during the presidential mandate of Enrique Peña Nieto (EPN), but before, we have to through a few facts to know the context in which EPN started its presidential mandate. Former President Felipe Calderón started the war on drugs and organized crime, later, in 2009, a report from the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH, by its acronym in Spanish) about the kidnaping cases against migrants was released. The next year, Human Rights Watch addressed the human rights violations in 2009 on its World Report.

The report by the CNDH was based on testimonies from migrants who were kidnapped –which will be addressed on Chapter 3–, CNDH complaint files, national and regional media, among others since official statistics were nonexistent at the time. It was highlighted that:

> Due to their irregular migratory situation, [migrants] do not go to the authority and, on the contrary, they distance themselves from it; their undocumented nature makes them suitable victims of bad public servants and common and organized crime… They are frequently victims of organized gangs and on many occasions of federal, local, and municipal authorities, especially those in charge of public security, who brutally beat, humiliate, and extort them with threats of depriving them of life, liberty, or deportation to their countries of origin, practices that constitute violations of their human rights. (CNDH, 2009: 5).

The number of kidnapping cases is an approximate from different sources in the period of September 2008 to February 2009, which is why the number could be even higher, since the migrants who were kidnapped and then disappeared is not taken into consideration. The CNDH (2009) reports that, based on their sources, there was a total of 9,758 victims, which can be translated into 1,600 kidnapped every month. The Commission also highlighted that impunity was a big factor for the frequency of the crime, since, as mentioned before, migrants are frequently afraid to go to the authority and denounce the kidnapping. As a result, only from the 9,758 reported victims, the kidnappers obtained approximately 25 million dollars from the ransom money (CNDH, 2009).

The report from Human Rights Watch (2010) focused more on general human rights violations in Mexico by the Mexican armed forces deployed to fight against drug-related violence and organized crime. These violations included "killings, torture, rapes, and arbitrary detentions" (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Mexican soldiers were accused of impunity for army abuses by Human Rights Watch, this impunity was provoked by lack of independence in the military justice system and absence of transparency (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The report also highlighted that "the number of alleged army abuses presented before Mexico's National Human Rights Commission increased six-fold between 2006 and 2008, and reached 559 in the first six months of 2009" (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

In addition, there is a fear of the army among the population, "which inhibits civilian victims and witnesses from providing information to military authorities" (Human Rights Watch, 2010). As a result, many of the crimes committed by Mexico's armed forces were not denounced to the authorities, and therefore, left unpunished. Now, we realize that both

reports converge in one point: crimes were (re)produced because of impunity, whether it was impunity due to fear of denouncing, or impunity due to corruption within the Mexican legal system.

Another important event before Peña Nieto's mandate, was the Mexican Migration Law, published on the Official Journal of the Federation (DOF, by its acronym on Spanish) in 2011, during Calderon's mandate. The migration law repeals the migration provisions of the General Population Law and is part of legal reforms implemented by Mexico as a strategy to control migration processes in the country. It is divided into eight chapters the first one defines Mexico's migratory policy as "the set of strategic decisions to achieve specific objectives that are based on the general principles and other precepts contained in [the Mexican Migration Law]" (DOF, 2011: 2). The second chapter is about the rights and obligations of migrants, and specifies that the Mexican State has to guarantee an equal treatment to foreigners and Mexicans on Mexican soil, without distinction of their nationalities or migratory situation (DOF, 2011).

In addition, the third chapter clarifies the functions corresponding to the Ministry of the Interior –which formulates and directs the Immigration Policy– the National Institute of Migration –which coordinates the Immigration Policy– the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other auxiliary authorities on migration issues (DOF, 2011). Chapter fourth is about the requisites that foreigners require to enter into Mexico, and assign new migratory categories, and the fifth chapter stablish the guidelines of the immigration administrative procedure, adding that authorities have the obligation of protecting migrants rights under the procedure (DOF, 2011).

Chapter seven stablish the sanctions that the persons who violate the Migration Law will receive, without distinction of nationals or foreigners, individuals or corporations, highlighting those applicable to public servants from the INM (DOF, 2011). Finally, Chapter eight abords immigration crimes and their punishments, there are three crimes stipulated, which are:

> I. With the purpose of trafficking, take one or more people to enter another country without the corresponding documentation, in order to obtain a profit directly or indirectly;
>
> II. Introduce, without the corresponding documentation, one or several foreigners to Mexican territory, in order to obtain a profit directly or indirectly, or
>
> III. Shelter or transport through the national territory, in order to obtain a profit directly or indirectly, one or more foreigners in order to evade immigration review (DOF, 2012: 29).

In addition, dictates a jail sentence of "four to eight years and a fine of five hundred to one thousand days of the general minimum wage in force in the Federal District[13]" (DOF, 2012: 30) to any public servant offering help, covering up or inducing anyone to violate any provision on the Migration Law. This migration law is also special because it is the first time that migrants rights are expressly written within the constitutional bloc.

On the other hand, it is also important to give a brief context of what was happening in the Unites States before Enrique Peña Nieto's presidential mandate. In the year of 2006, under George W. Bush administration, Operation Jump Start was launched, deploying "6,000

[13] Now Mexico City.

National Guard troops to assist CBP law enforcement personnel at the U.S.-Mexico border" (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 25). Later, during Obama's administration,

> President Obama requested US$500 million in supplemental funding for several border purposes, including another National Guard deployment to the border, and signed an executive order authorizing the use of the Guard, this time a more limited 1,200 personnel, for the same general purpose as Operation Jump Start (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 25).

The deployment was authorized to last one year; however, Obama announced a three-month extension in order to let CBP to train new border patrol agents (Isacson & Meyer, 2012). In addition, since 2006, with the Secure Fence Act, a double-layered fence was constructed, and staffing and technology at the Mexico-United States border increased (Cohn, 2015). By the year of 2011, there were 18,506 "Border Patrol agents stationed along the entire U.S.-Mexico border" (Isacson & Meyer, 2012: 18).

Another important event was the Merida Initiative, which was a bilateral agreement on security between Mexico and the United States since 2008. This Initiative provides an aid package to judicial and public security institutions in Mexico, since 2009 to 2019, the United States

> have donated the equivalent of US$16 billion in equipment, training courses, and institutional capacity building assistance to the Government of Mexico, including an amount in excess of US$190 million for institutional capacity building, technical assistance, and equipment to support the professionalization of the police in Mexico (Mcanultyso, 2019).

However, as seen before, even if there are Initiatives that try to professionalize Mexican police and develop Mexican institutions, the fear of migrants to denounce human rights violations is still present.

Finally, The Heritage Foundation issued a report titled *15 Steps to Better Border Security: Reducing America's Southern Exposure*. On this report, they proposed various measures to enhance the security of the U.S.-Mexico border. While the paper covers a range of topics, it places significant emphasis on the use of militarization and physical barriers to stop migration. The steps provided ideas like increasing the number of border patrol agents, deploying the National Guard to assist in border security operations, and expanding the use of surveillance technologies such as drones and ground sensors. It also recommends building a physical barrier along the entire length of the southern border to prevent illegal crossings (Baker McNeill, 2009).

It also focused on three main points to secure the border, which were; 1) expanding the Merida Initiative, 2) leaving NAFTA alone, and 3) provide full funding for the Coast Guard. The first point, due to the United States needing "to go further to ensure that all of [the money for the program is] spent to provide this valuable assistance" (Baker McNeill, 2009). The second point due to the economic benefits that both Mexico and the United States obtained, and highlighted that "[President Obama] should also urge President Calderon to continue efforts to reform Mexico's economy by breaking up monopolies and other oligopolies, and look for ways to assist with the agricultural and commercial development of rural and southern Mexico" (Baker McNeill, 2009). Finally, the last point referred to the fact that land borders were becoming more securitized, thus, *coyotes* would see sea as a better

option, which is why “maritime security efforts must be enhanced in conjunction with land security” (Baker McNeill, 2009).

Militarization process during Peña Nieto’s administration

Now that we have settled the context, we can start reviewing securitization through militarization on the border and changes on migration normativity during Peña Nieto’s mandate. His mandate was marked by a significant increase in the process of militarization at Mexico’s northern border with the United States. This militarization was driven by a series of laws and agreements between both countries, as well as by the increase in the flow of migrants crossing northward.

Here we will first address what happened on June 2014, when a humanitarian crisis became more visible on the Texas border. A report from The Guardian exposed that “Texas has become the deadliest state in the US for undocumented immigrants. In 2012, 271 migrants died while crossing through Texas, surpassing Arizona as the nation's most dangerous entry point” (del Bosque et al., 2014). On the other hand, The Washington Post reported that “every day, hundreds of Central American migrants, in groups as large as 250 people, are wading across the muddy Rio Grande and turning themselves in to the Border Patrol as helicopters and speedboats with mounted machine guns patrol the river” (Miroff & Partlow, 2014).

As a result of this crisis, Homeland Security Secretary, Jeh Johnson, told the Senate Appropriations Committee that the emergency funding that President Obama approved was not enough, and “the 57,000 who crossed the Texas border in the past nine months have

overwhelmed the immigration system, causing overcrowded holding facilities and a huge backlog of cases awaiting hearings that can take years to schedule" (Cohen, 2014). It is worth to clarify that, this $3.7 billion emergency fund, was purposed to hire more border patrol officers, judges, among other personnel dealing with migration issues in order to keep the border safe.

Later, in November 2014, President Obama announced that he would grant "millions of undocumented immigrants a work permit and a reprieve from deportation proceedings" (Aguilar, 2014). As a result, many members of the Republicans reacted outraged, some even make declarations where they threatened with impeachment, like Greg Abbott did (Aguilar, 2014). As a result, the pro-securitization discourse was soon retaken and used Obama's actions as a reference, specifically focusing on the problems that the criminal exclusion grounds could have.

In addition, we can highlight the Special Migration Program (PEM, by its acronym in Spanish) for the 2014-2018 period, which was a government initiative to regulate migration and promote economic and social development in both the areas of origin and destination of migrants. The PEM aimed to reduce irregular migration to the United States, improve the living conditions of migrants in Mexico, and promote economic and social development in both the areas of origin and destination of migrants (Gobierno de la República, 2014). The PEM included several actions to achieve these objectives, such as the creation of temporary employment programs, improvements in health and education services in the areas of origin of migrants, and the establishment of a system of care for migrants in transit (Gobierno de la República, 2014).

However, the PEM was also criticized by some sectors who argued that the program did not adequately address the structural causes of migration, such as poverty and violence in the areas of origin of migrants. For example, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) of the United Nations stated that:

> Among the challenges identified for the fulfillment of the goals, they highlighted the lack of budget, the lack of a mechanism that allows evaluating the effective impact of the indicators established in the goals, the harmonization of regulatory frameworks on migration with federal legislation, knowledge of the dynamics and profiles of people who present themselves in Mexico, the management and economic activity of the borders and the strengthening of capacities for the instances that provide comprehensive care to migrants (IOM Mexico, 2018).

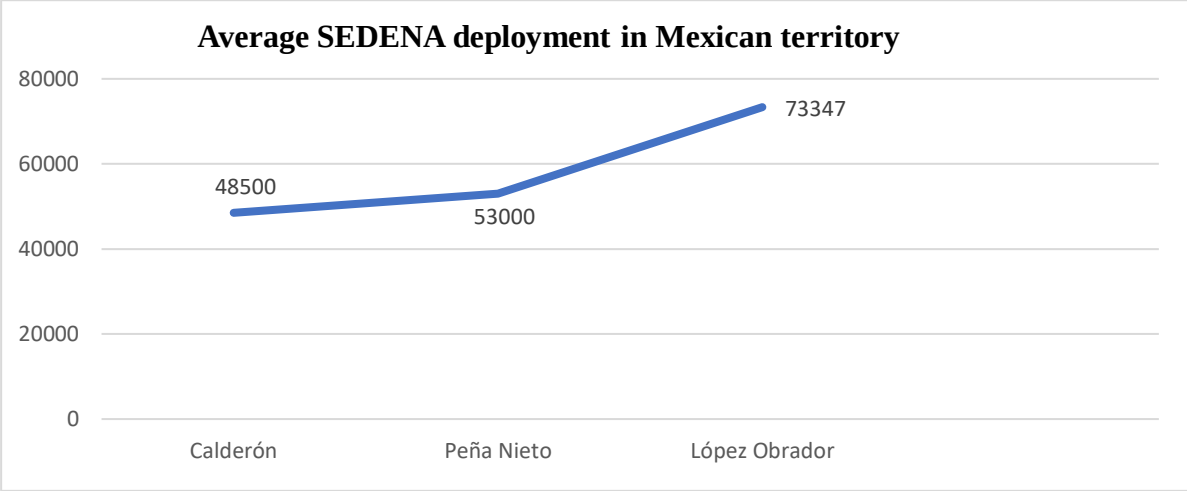
Another important event that contributed to the securitization on the border is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), but more specifically, the displacement of workers that NAFTA generated. One of the major impacts of NAFTA on the Mexican economy during Peña Nieto's presidency was the further liberalization of the Mexican energy sector. The government of Peña Nieto passed a series of energy reforms that opened up the sector to foreign investment, particularly in the areas of oil and gas. This led to the displacement of workers in the Mexican energy sector, particularly in the state-owned oil company, Pemex (Sánchez-Jiménez, 2016).

The displacement of workers in the energy sector had a ripple effect on the Mexican economy, leading to the displacement of workers in other sectors. For example, Mexican farmers, and especially corn producers due “to competition from heavily subsidized U.S.

agriculture" (Chatzky, McBride & Sergie, 2020). The Center for Economic and Policy Research "estimated that NAFTA put almost two million small-scale Mexican farmers… out of work, in turn driving illegal migration to the United States" (Weisbrot, Lefebvre & Sammut, 2014, in Chatzky, McBride & Sergie, 2020). Many of these displaced workers saw the US as a place where they could find work and provide for their families, leading to an increase in migration.

In response to the increase in the flow of migrants crossing the northern border, both Mexico and the United States increased the number of personnel at the border. "Under the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, the U.S. Border Patrol nearly doubled the number of agents working on the southwestern border to over 17,000" (Wagner, n.d.). In Mexico, the military and police were deployed to the border region, particularly in the states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila. Checkpoints were established and surveillance and detention operations of migrants were intensified. This resonates with the increasing on the National Defense Secretariat (SEDENA, by its acronym in Spanish) soldier deployments (See Graph 2).

Graph 2



Own elaboration, with data from The Wilson Center https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/infographic-militarization-public-security-mexico.

However, militarization on the border was sometimes criticized by EPN himself, the perfect example of it would be when Donald Trump decided to deploy National Guard troops on the border. Peña Nieto even praised opposition candidates that were contesting for presidential elections that also criticized Trump's move, and, addressing Trump, he said "if your recent statements are derived from your frustration with (U.S.) domestic politics, with your laws or your congress, deal with them, not with us Mexicans. We will not allow any negative rhetoric to define our actions" (AP, 2018). Even the Senate "passed a resolution … calling on Mexico's government to suspend cooperation with the U.S. on illegal immigration and drug trafficking in retaliation for Trump's move" (AP, 2018).

Finally, due to the migrant caravans the Pentagon announced the mobilization of 5,200 army members to the Mexico-United States border. "These army members would join the more than 18 000 Border Patrol agents and 2 092 National Guard members who had been deployed in April 2018. Joining these were 1000 CBP officers supported by Black hawk helicopters and C-130 and C-17 cargo planes" (BBC News, 2018, in Díaz-Carnero, 2021). These caravans were very polemical since it worsened the relations between Mexico and the United Stated on the migration issue. The Mexican side, they already had problems dealing with the quantity of migrants in the country, and the pressure from Trump was not helpful.

From EPN's mandate, we can conclude that securitization on the Mexico-United States border grew, since the border patrol agents, police, and military agents increased. Also, discourses on migrants as a threat were still present, but gained popularity only when any

government implemented controversial actions on the migratory issue. When this happened, there were always people in favor and against of the actions, and from the Mexican side, EPN was mostly preoccupied about the negative rhetoric. It could be said that an example of it, is the program *Estás en tu casa* (You are at your home), which was announced on October 26, 2018, with the purpose of giving migrants from Central America support (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2018). However, it is important to point out that EPN's administration deported 604,355 people –including a big number of children– from 2013 to 2017, which put Mexico on the second place of the countries with the bigger increase of migratory detention of the Global Detention Project, just behind the United States (Centro de Análisis e Investigación y Sin Fronteras, 2019).

Militarization process during López Obrador's administration

Now, we will start reviewing securitization through militarization on the border and changes on migration normativity during Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) presidential mandate. Since AMLO is still the President of Mexico, we will review from December 2018, until December 2022, but will add information from 2023 if it meets the criteria of giving new data on National Guard and Border Patrol officers on the border, or if there are any significant changes on the laws that potentially could change the migratory scenario.

During the mandate of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), the issue of immigration and border security between Mexico and the United States has still been a topic of considerable debate and controversy. First, we have to know that the creation of the Mexican National Guard began in early 2019, as part of President Andres Manuel

Lopez Obrador's efforts to address the country's ongoing issues with violence and organized crime. The Guard was officially established in March 2019 through a constitutional reform, which allowed for the integration of members of the military, navy, and federal police into a new security force under civilian command (DOF, 2019).

The creation of the National Guard represented a significant shift in the role of the military in Mexican society, as it marked the first time that soldiers have been deployed for domestic security purposes since the end of the country's authoritarian period in the 1980s. However, it is still a polemic topic within Mexico's society, and opinions are divided. Now, in terms of militarization, there has been a notable increase in the presence of both Mexican military and National Guard troops on the country's southern border with Guatemala, where many Central American migrants enter Mexico on their way to the US (INM, 2021).

Mexico's priority is to prevent migrants from entering through the southern border, which is why

> [On June 18, 2019, members] of the National Guard began operations on the southern border of the country to stop the migratory flow to the United States. The deployment was made after the call made to Mexico by the then president of the United States, Donald Trump, to reduce migration to his country (INM, 2021).

Three months later after the deployment of the National Guard troops, President Donald Trump publicly acknowledged and recognized their operations.

It is important to highlight that AMLO announced a new migration policy for the period from 2018 to 2024, which focuses on addressing the underlying causes of migration,

particularly through investment in economic and social development programs in southern Mexico and Central America (Gobierno de México, 2019). The aim is to create employment opportunities and improve living conditions to reduce the need for migration. In addition, measures have been implemented to ensure the rights of migrants and reduce violence against them (Gobierno de México, 2019). However, militarization was –and is– still playing a big role on AMLO's agenda.

At the border, the situation did not get any better, both the Mexican and United States government continued to deploy agents to guard the border. On the President's FY 2019 Budget (2019), Donald Trump requested:

- $1.6 billion for the year for the construction of a 65-mile border wall system.
- Increase existing funding levels for hiring and retention initiatives of Border Patrol Agents.
    - $164.3 million for "750 additional Border Patrol Agents and necessary support personnel" (DHS, 2019: 30).
    - $46.2 million for recruitment and applicant processing, in order to "improve CBP's ability to recruit, hire, train, and develop a highly qualified, diverse, effective, mission-focused, and resilient workforce" (DHS, 2019: 30).
    - $45.1 million for "funding for USBP Relocations and Retention activities, which will allow USBP to relocate BPAs to meet mission requirements, reduce the number of agents leaving USBP for preferred

locations, and promote USBP's recruitment and hiring initiatives" (DHS, 2019: 30).

- "Provide an additional $600 million for technologies like (a) $183 million for aircraft and other aviation assets; (b) $149 million for equipment and stations facility needs; and (c) $182 million for surveillance technology, such as towers, radars, cameras, and sensors" (UNIDOS US, 2019: 2) (To see a full breakdown of the budget request, see Figure 1).

Figure 1

BUDGET REQUEST

Dollars in Thousands

	2017 Enacted		2018 President's Budget		2019 President's Budget		2018 - 2019 Total Changes	
	FTE	**$000**	**FTE**	**$000**	**FTE**	**$000**	**FTE**	**$000**
Operations and Support	47,630	$11,175,449	46,460	$11,592,341	47,544	$12,119,643	1,084	$527,302
Procurement, Construction, and Improvements	-	$771,017	-	$2,063,719	-	$1,841,548	-	($222,172)
COBRA FTA	1,569	$250,453	1,287	$265,536	1,287	$265,000	-	($536)
User Fee Facilities	69	$9,067	80	$9,314	80	$8,941	-	($373)
Net Discretionary	**49,268**	**$12,205,986**	**47,827**	**$13,930,910**	**48,911**	**$14,235,132**	**1,084**	**$304,221**
Offsetting Collections	96	$155,099	416	$160,073	416	$165,961	-	$5,888
Gross Discretionary	**49,364**	**$12,361,085**	**48,243**	**$14,090,983**	**49,327**	**$14,401,093**	**1,084**	**$310,109**
Total Mandatory/Fees	**9,369**	**$2,078,629**	**11,319**	**$2,236,357**	**11,319**	**$2,289,224**	**-**	**$52,867**
Total Budget Authority	**58,733**	**$14,439,714**	**59,562**	**$16,327,340**	**60,646**	**$16,690,317**	**1,084**	**$362,977**
Less prior year Rescissions	-	($107,226)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**58,733**	**$14,332,488**	**59,562**	**$16,327,340**	**60,646**	**$16,690,317**	**1,084**	**$362,977**

The amounts and FTE displayed for the FY 2018 President's Budget for all user fees reflect revised collection estimates based on current economic factors.

Elaborated by US Department of Homeland Security in Budget-in-Brief, fiscal year 2019.

However, no one was expecting one major issue that would change migration and the militarization process: the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the pandemic, from the Mexican side, 15,000 National Guard elements were deployed on the northern Mexican border, and 2,400 on southern Mexican border (Arista, 2019). As a result, the official numbers of

irregular migrants dropped from 144,266 to 64,000 between May and August 2019, and 52,700 were deported (Vanguardia, 2019).

It is until now that another type of securitization besides military power is presented on the analyzed scenario, and we can start talking about the securitization of health, that could also be seen as a type of *war machine* that separated the disposables –work force– from the indispensable –the elite, people with the money to buy medicines and medical attention, to fly to another country to get early vaccinated, to do quarantine, etc.–. However, while the securitization of health has received increased attention due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not a new concept. Precedents such as the creation of the World Health Organization (WHO) demonstrate that governments around the world have long recognized the importance of addressing global health concerns. Eventually, the concern on infectious diseases led to the creation of the Global Outbreak Alarm Response Network (GOARN) in 2000 by the WHO. The first months during the COVID-19 pandemic the United States expelled approximately 7,000 migrants to Mexico (Del Monte-Madrigal, 2021).

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States implemented Title 42 in March of 2020. Title 42 allowed the immediate expulsion of migrants arriving at the US-Mexico border, without providing them with the opportunity to request asylum or other forms of protection in order to "stop the introduction of communicable diseases" (Ellis & Kuhn, 2023). Title 42 is a great example produced by another event more significant than 9/11 that produced securitization processes around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, soon infectious diseases were retaken as threatens to national security, on a bigger scale of what happened with Ebola or the H1-N1 flu in 2009-2010.

Title 42 was later criticized by many, among them would be the Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas (WOLA), which highlighted that it was harmful to the migrants due to it blocking their right to asylum, and this forced them to live on the disposable bags that we already mentioned. On their Q&A, they mention:

> Partial data collection efforts have found migrants expelled into Mexico suffering frequent assaults, robberies, rapes, and ransom kidnappings. Human Rights First, working with local organizations, has managed to document 9,886 cases of violent abuse in Mexico's border cities just since January 2021. During March 2022 visits to Mexican border cities bordering Texas, humanitarian workers told WOLA that organized crime groups' members wait every day near border bridges, watching for expelled migrants to abduct (WOLA, 2022).

Finally, it is worth to mention other militarization processes on the post COVID-19 scenarios. The first one, is the deployment of more troops on July 2021, which were "up to 3,000 [US] troops to serve on the mission, which is down from the 4,000 approved to serve at the southwest border for fiscal 2021" (Thayer, 2021). These deployments were followed by AMLO's promises of investing "$1.5 billion on border infrastructure between 2022 and 2024", also, "President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law includes $3.4 billion to undertake 26 major construction and modernization projects at land ports of entry on the northern and southern border" (The White House, 2022).

However, an important event also includes a fake attempt of militarization on the borders. On April 12, 2021, "United States authorities report that an agreement was reached with Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras to deploy security elements on the borders. In the Mexican case, there will be about 10,000 soldiers" (Monroy, 2021). However, the very next

day governments from Guatemala and Honduras denied the agreement. The Guatemalan government issued a statement which said:

> In relation to the statements recently made by the White House spokesperson, where it is stated that Guatemala reached an agreement with the United States for the protection of borders, we clarify that there is no signed document on this matter… The 1,500 elements of the security forces referred to in the statements [by Psaki], correspond to the specific deployment that Guatemala announced before the arrival of massive flows of people with migrant characteristics, in January of this year (Secretaría de Comunicación Social, 2021).

On the other hand, Honduras also denied the agreement, and the Honduras ambassador on Washington mentioned that "The alleged agreements between the US, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala to mobilize the military and police on their borders 'are incorrect and do not exist'" (DW, 2021).

Finally, it is worth to mention two more recent events of securitization, the first one would be the recent transportation of some migrants from Canada to Texas in order to process them or expel them (Alvarez & Mattingly, 2023). The second one, is the agreement of the INM, Ferromex and Ferrosur to coordinate actions in favor of migrants, however, 'dissuading' the migrants in order to stop them to use trains and railways to cross Mexico was among their plans (INM, 2023; Rodríguez, 2023). Again, highlighting that there was a commitment to "maintain safe, orderly, regular migration and respect for the rights of those who enter, transit and leave national soil, with special attention to vulnerable groups that include women, minors, the elderly or those with disabilities" (INM, 2023).

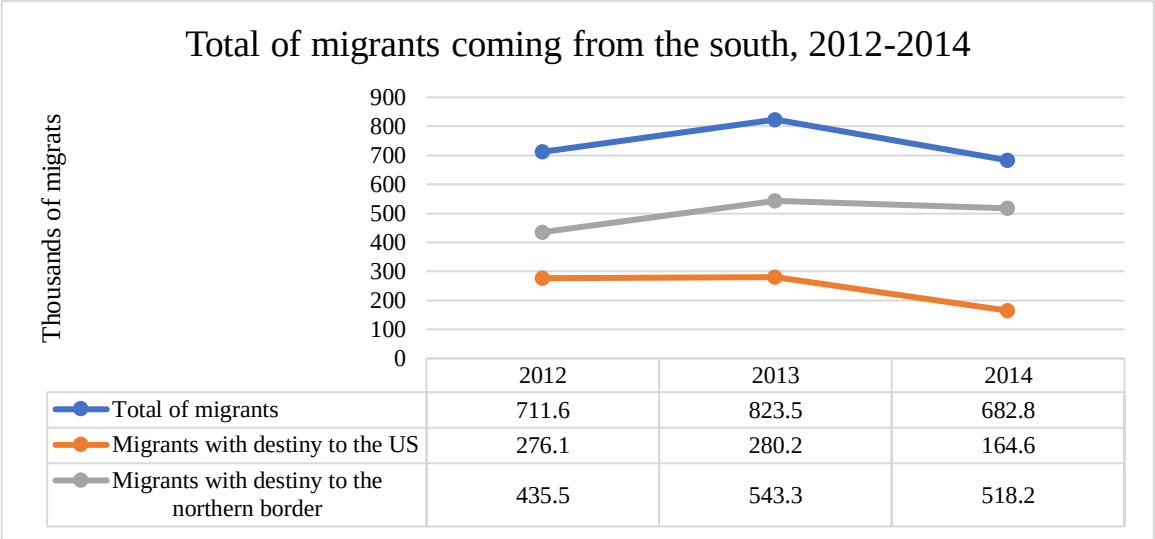
Chapter 2. Knowing the other

Now that we have a broader knowledge about the securitization process on the Mexican-United States border, it is finally time to analyze the migratory flows on the border. In order to do so in an organized manner, we will first analyze EPN's mandate and later AMLO's, to achieve it, we will analyze it with the rolling window technique explained in the methodology. Thereby, the years of 2012, 2013, and 2014 would be the first ones to be analyzed, followed by 2015, 2016, 2017, and finishing with 2018, 2019, 2020. We will focus on the migrants flow on the border, the main nationalities (although for practical reasons we will analyze only Mexican migrants, we will only talk about migrants from other countries – like those on Central America– when we are analyzing the main nationalities of migrants at the border), age, gender, and if they suffered some sort of violence during its journey to the northern Mexican border. The last point will be the one that can prove the existence of the *war machines* in the Mexico-United States border, together with data from newspapers, reports, and others.

Once that is explained, we will start analyzing what we would call our first window. Graph 3 shows the migrants that are trying to reach the northern border, either to stay in the border states or to cross to the United States. We can observe that there was an increase of migrants from 2012 to 2013, which goes down again on 2014, however, the fact that the majority of migrants wanted to just arrive at the border was a constant. On the other hand, Graph 4 show us the distribution by age of the migrants, if we analyze the data, we will realize that the majority of migrants from both groups have ages from 20 to 29. Another

important observation is the fact that groups from age 50 or older is growing on both groups, it is worth noting that this is not normally an age that is associated with labor migration.

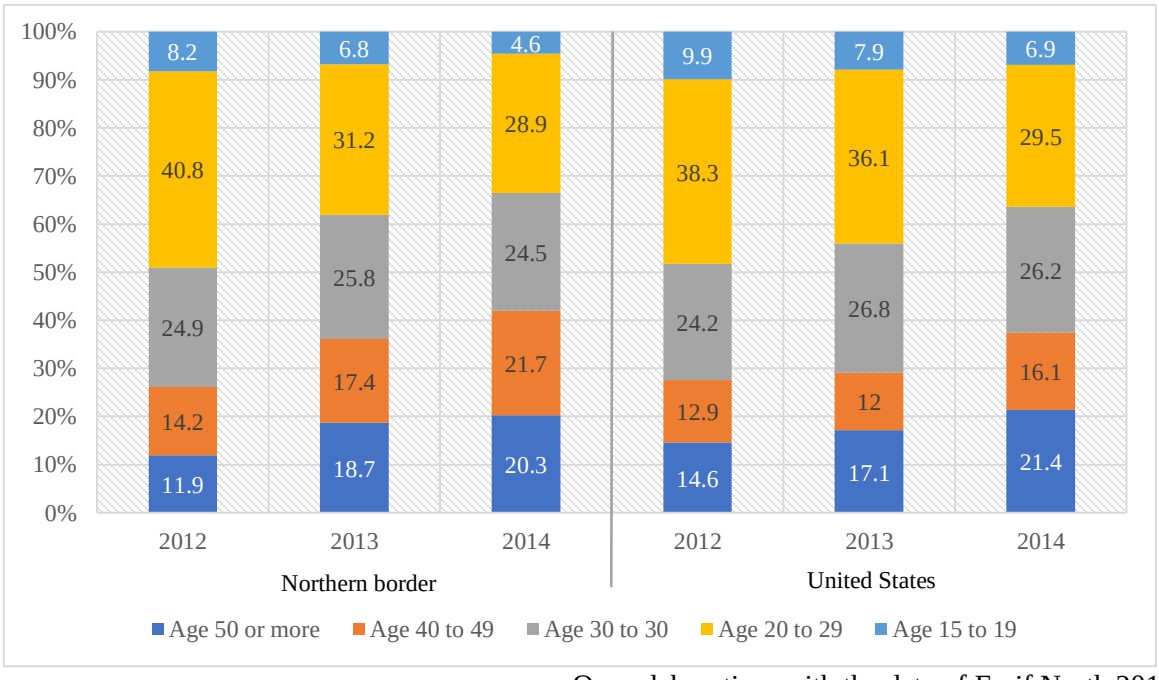
Graph 3



	2012	2013	2014
Total of migrants	711.6	823.5	682.8
Migrants with destiny to the US	276.1	280.2	164.6
Migrants with destiny to the northern border	435.5	543.3	518.2

Own elaboration, with data of the Survey on Migration at the Border (Emif, by its acronym in Spanish) North, 2016.

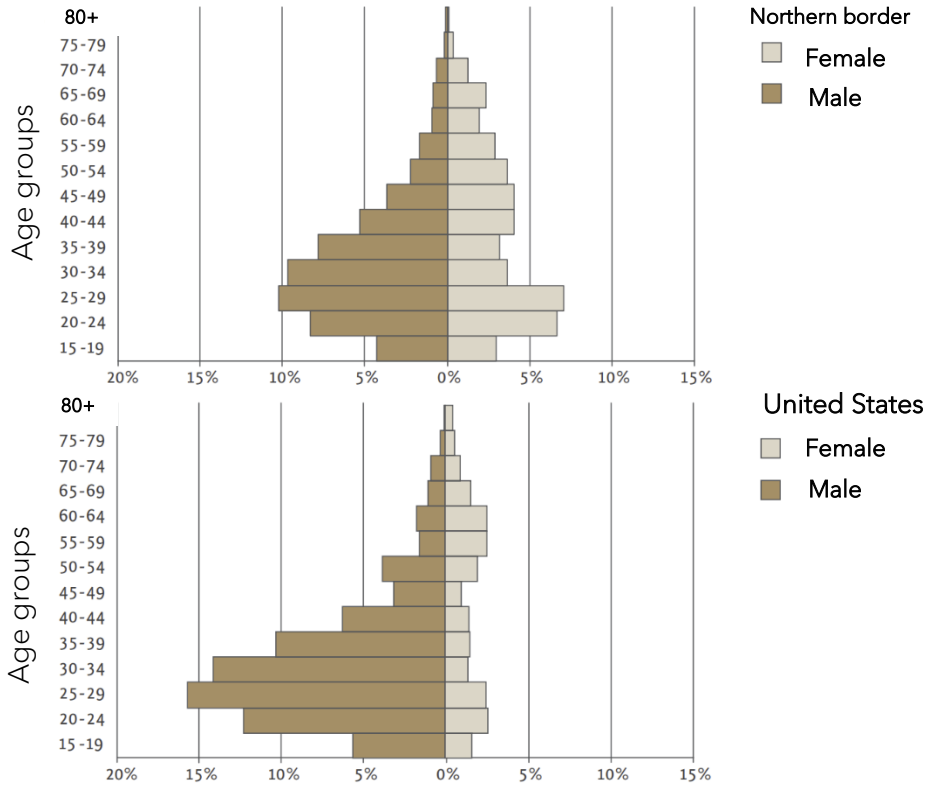
Graph 4
Distribution by age of migrants coming from the south, 2012, 2014



Own elaboration, with the data of Emif North 2016.

Now, if we focus on the gender of the migrants[14] (see Graph 5 and 6), we will notice that the majority of men and women on 2013 was between the ages of 20 and 39 for those who were going to the northern border. On the other hand, for those going to the United States, the majority of men had ages from 20 to 39, while on the case of the women the majority had ages between 20 to 29, and 55 to 64. However, it is notable that the pyramid looks more proportional between the male and females going to the northern border than those going to the United States. For the last ones, the majority of the migrants were male, and female population was scarce.

Graph 5
Population pyramid of migrants coming from the south, 2013

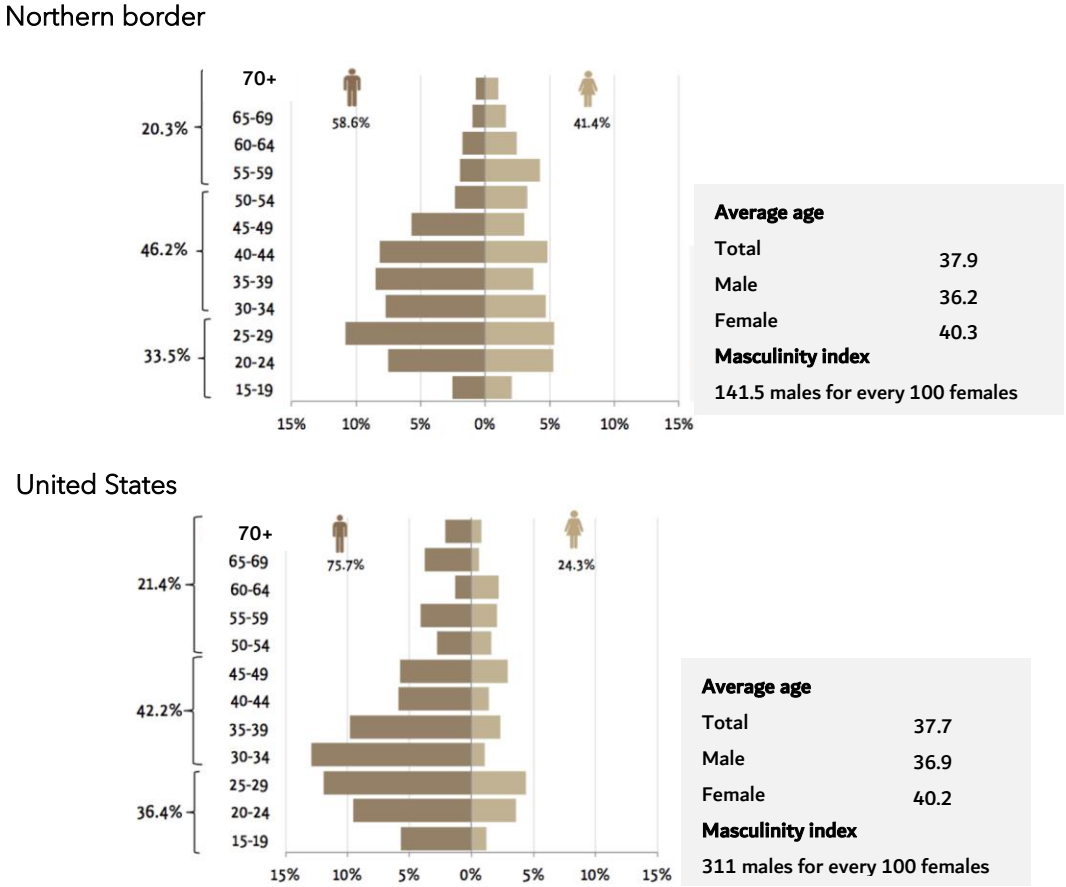


Elaborated by the Emif North, 2014. Own translation.

[14] Data from 2012 is not available, which is why was not taken into consideration this time.

On the other hand, in 2014, the population pyramid was almost the same as on 2013, however there are important differences: 1) the majority of women was between the ages of 20 to 34, 40 to 44, and slightly behind, 55 to 59 for those who were going to the northern border; 2) the majority of men was between the ages of 25 to 29, and slightly behind, 35 to 44 for those who were going to the northern border; 3) the majority of women was between the ages of 20 to 29 for those who were going to the United States; and 4) the majority of men who were going to the United States was between the ages of 20 to 39, but those on the ages from 30 to 34.

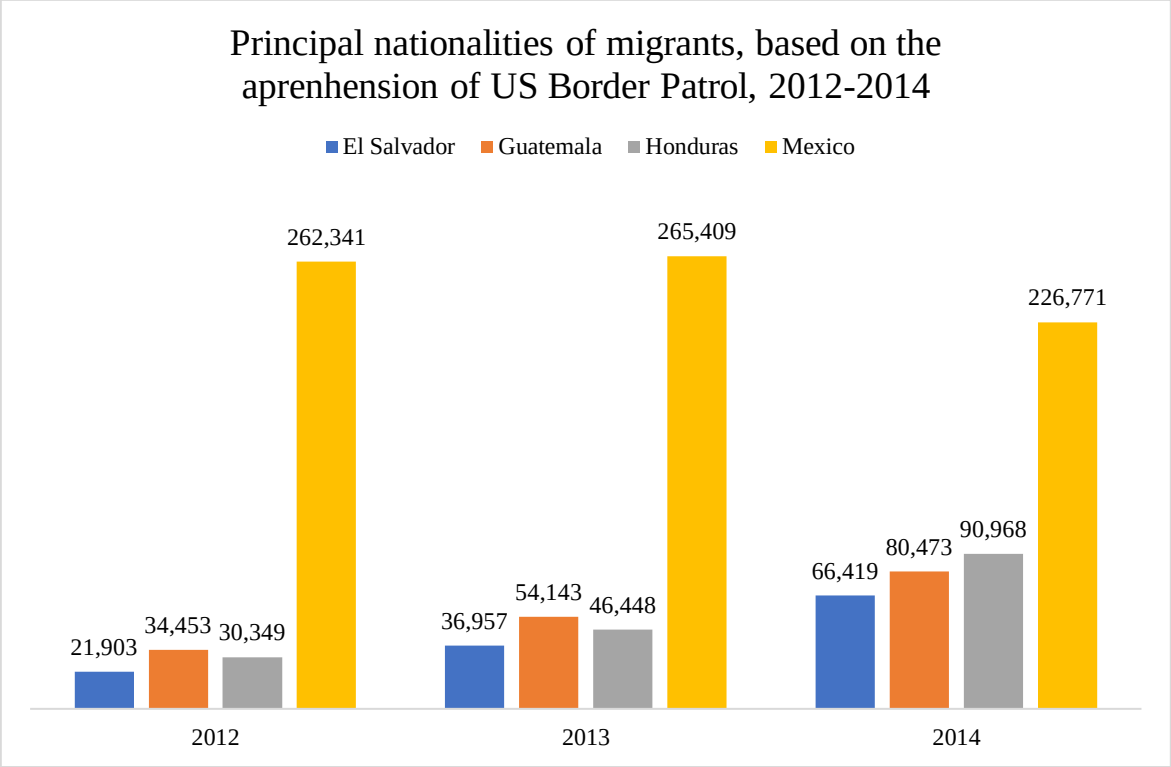
Graph 6
Population pyramid of migrants coming from the south, 2013



Elaborated by the Emif North, 2016. Own translation.

Next, we will analyze from which nationalities the migrants are, to do so, we will analyze the US Border Patrol nationwide apprehensions by citizenship, and for the Mexican nationals, we will additionally use data collected by the Emif North to deepen into their states of origin. If we analyze Graph 7, we can realize that the majority of migrants are Mexican on the entire window, next, we can observe Honduras in the second place the majority of time, followed by Guatemala and El Salvador.

Graph 7



Own elaboration, with data from US Border Patrol (2020).

In addition, on Table 1, we can observe that in 2012 the majority of Mexicans were from Tamaulipas (10.8), followed by Veracruz (9.8) and Jalisco (8.0) for those going to the northern border, and from Chiapas (13.6), Michoacan (10.7), and Guanajuato (9.7) from those going to the United States. In 2013, the majority of Mexicans were from Sinaloa (10.2),

followed by Sonora (8.5) and Jalisco (7.9) for those going to the northern border, and from Jalisco (11.7), Michoacan (9.0), and Chiapas (8.6) from those going to the United States. Finally, in 2014, the majority of Mexicans were from the D.F. (9.4), followed by Jalisco (9.1) and Sinaloa (7.0) for those going to the northern border, and from Michoacán (9.1), Jalisco (8.5), and Durango (8.4) from those going to the United States.

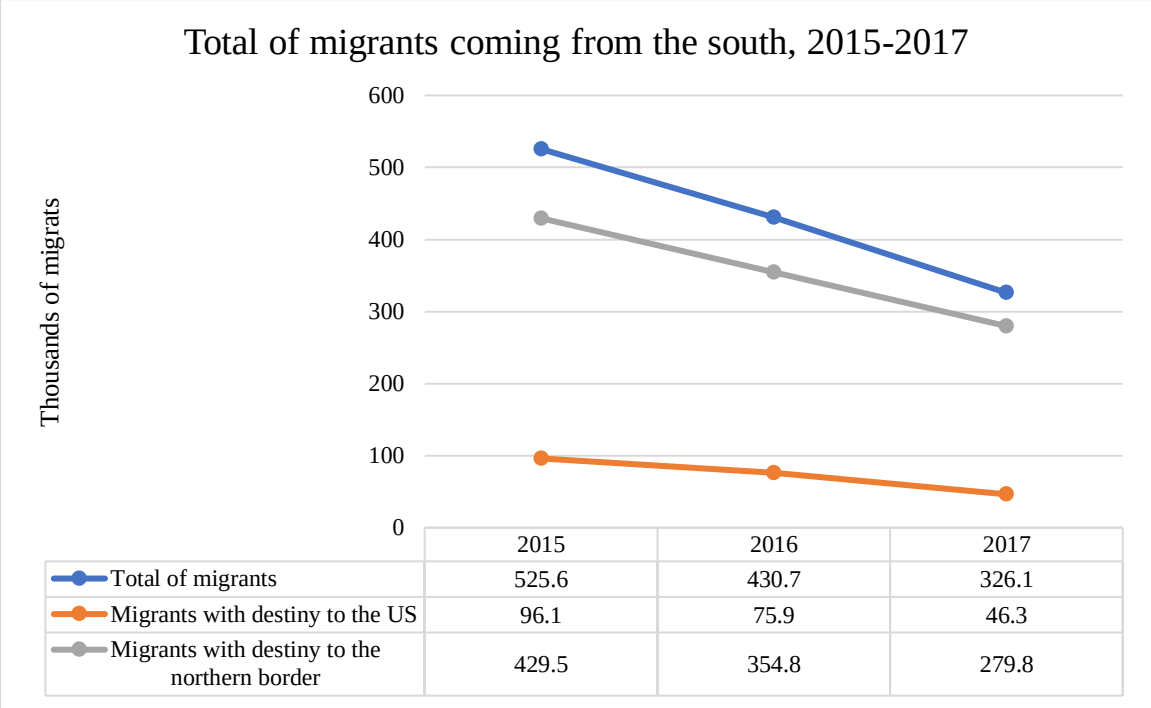
Table 1
Percentual distribution of the migrants from the south, according to state of origin, 2012-2014

State	Total			Northern border			United States		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Jalisco	8.1	9.2	8.9	8.0	7.9	9.1	8.1	11.7	8.5
Distrito Federal	3.4	6.0	8.1	4.2	7.0	9.4	2.1	4.1	4.2
Sinaloa	4.7	8.5	6.9	5.1	10.2	7.0	4.1	5.2	6.6
Durango	1.4	3.5	6.2	1.2	3.9	5.5	1.7	2.9	8.4
Veracruz	7.6	5.2	6.2	9.8	6.4	6.9	4.2	2.9	3.8
Sonora	3.6	6.2	6.1	5.1	8.5	6.8	1.2	1.9	3.7
México	5.4	6.2	5.3	5.5	6.6	5.8	5.1	5.6	4.0
Tamaulipas	7.2	5.3	5.3	10.8	7.2	6.5	1.5	1.6	1.5
Michoacán	8.3	6.2	5.1	6.8	4.8	3.8	10.7	9.0	9.1
Chihuahua	1.6	4.7	4.7	2.1	5.4	5.1	0.8	3.5	3.5
Coahuila	4.6	3.8	4.7	6.4	3.7	4.0	1.7	4.1	6.9
Guanajuato	6.7	4.4	3.7	4.8	2.7	2.7	9.7	7.7	6.9
Nuevo León	4.4	2.9	3.3	5.6	3.3	3.5	2.5	2.0	2.5
San Luis Potosí	3.7	3.1	3.1	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.1	1.7	1.5
Guerrero	3.3	3.7	2.7	2.7	3.0	2.4	4.3	5.2	3.3
Zacatecas	2.2	2.3	2.6	1.8	2.2	2.5	2.9	2.4	3.0
Chiapas	6.1	3.8	2.1	1.4	1.3	1.5	13.6	8.6	4.2
Puebla	4.2	3.0	2.1	3.9	2.2	1.8	4.6	4.4	3.0
Oaxaca	4.6	2.7	1.9	3.0	1.5	1.7	7.1	5.2	2.8
Colima	0.6	0.8	1.7	0.6	0.9	1.7	0.8	0.7	1.5
Nayarit	0.8	1.2	1.6	0.8	1.3	1.8	0.7	1.1	1.0
Hidalgo	1.7	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.3	2.4	2.2	2.5
Querétaro	1.1	1.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.2	2.2
Baja California Sur	0.3	0.6	1.1	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.3	2.2
Aguascalientes	1.0	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.4	0.7	1.8	1.5	1.3
Morelos	1.5	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.7	0.7	1.8	0.8	0.7
Baja California	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.3
Tabasco	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1
Yucatán	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.4
Campeche	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.0
Quintana Roo	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.4
Tlaxcala	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.1
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Elaborated by Emif North, 2016. Own translation.

Now, we will focus on the second window, which goes from 2015 to 2017, Graph 8 show us the migrants that are trying to reach the northern border, either to stay in the border states or to cross to the United States. We can observe that there was a decrease of migrants from 2015 to 2017, once again, the fact that the majority of migrants wanted to just arrive at the border was a constant. On the other hand, Graph 9 show us the distribution by age of the migrants, if we analyze the data, we will realize that the majority of migrants from both groups have ages from 20 to 29. Another important observation is the fact that groups from age 50 or older is predominant on those having the border as their final destiny, while they are the minority on those who have United States as their final destiny.

Graph 8



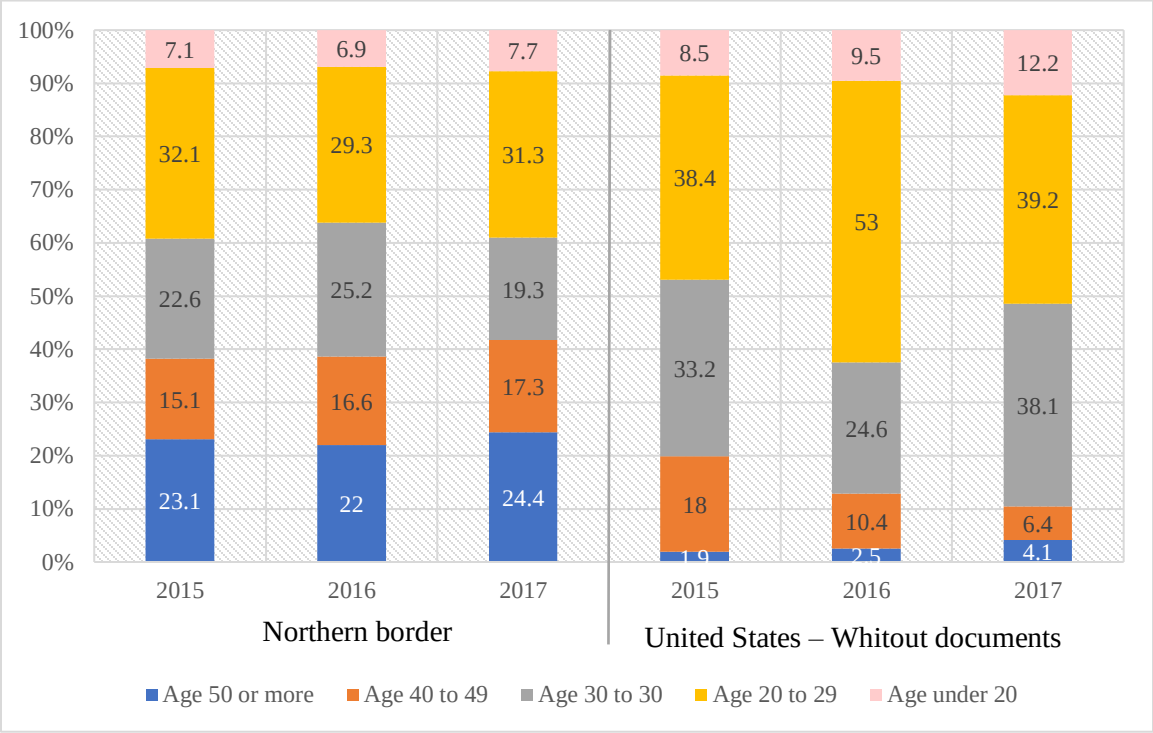
	2015	2016	2017
Total of migrants	525.6	430.7	326.1
Migrants with destiny to the US	96.1	75.9	46.3
Migrants with destiny to the northern border	429.5	354.8	279.8

*Due to budgetary reasons, information from the fourth trimester of 2017 was not obtained. However, an estimated of the migratory flow was made with estimations of the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Colef).

Own elaboration, with the data of the Emif North, 2018.

Graph 9

Distribution by age of migrants coming from the south, 2015-2017

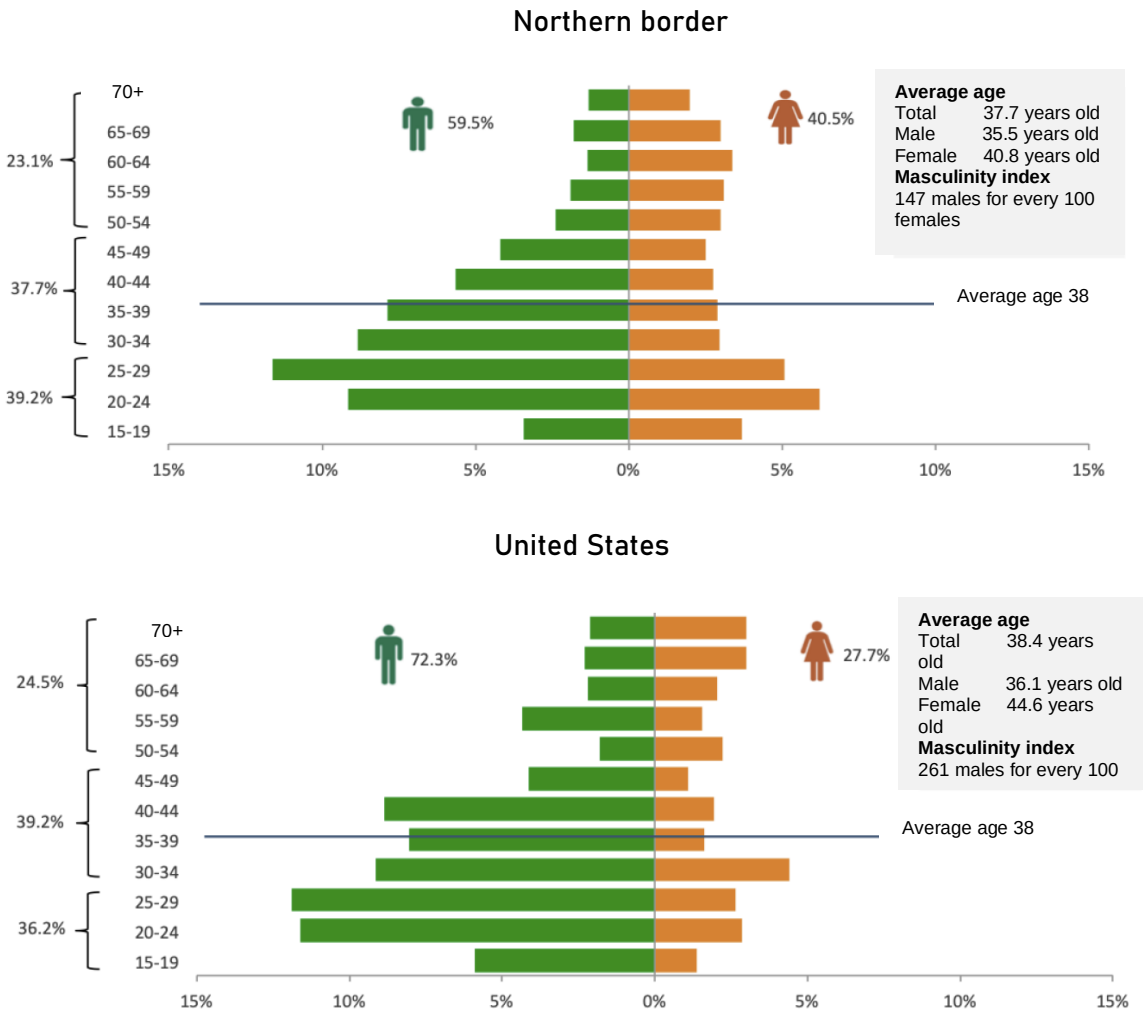


Own elaboration, with the data of the Emif North, 2018.

Now, if we focus on the gender of the migrants (see Graph 10, 11, and 12), we will notice that the majority of men and women on 2015 was between the ages of 20 to 29 for those who were going to the northern border. On the other hand, for those going to the United States, the majority of men had ages from 20 to 29, while on the case of the women the majority had ages between 30 to 34, followed by 20 to 25, and 65 to 70 plus years old. However, it is notable that the pyramid looks more proportional between the male and females going to the northern border than those going to the United States, with the exception of ages 30 to 39. For those going to the United States, the majority of the migrants were male, and female population was low, as we can see on the masculinity index, with 261 males for every 100 females.

Graph 10

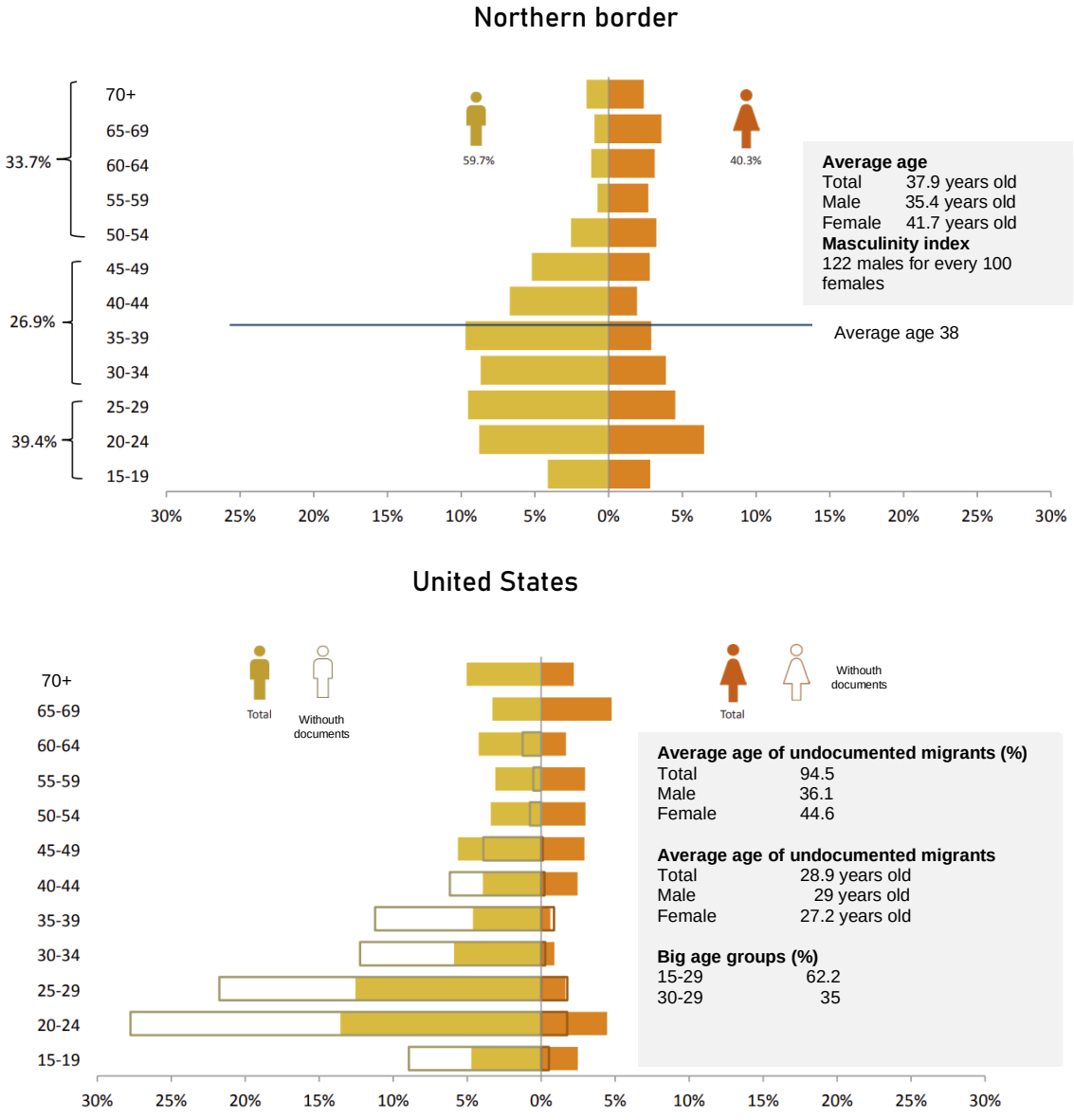
Population pyramid of migrants coming from the south, 2015



Elaborated by the Emif North, 2018. Own translation.

Graph 11

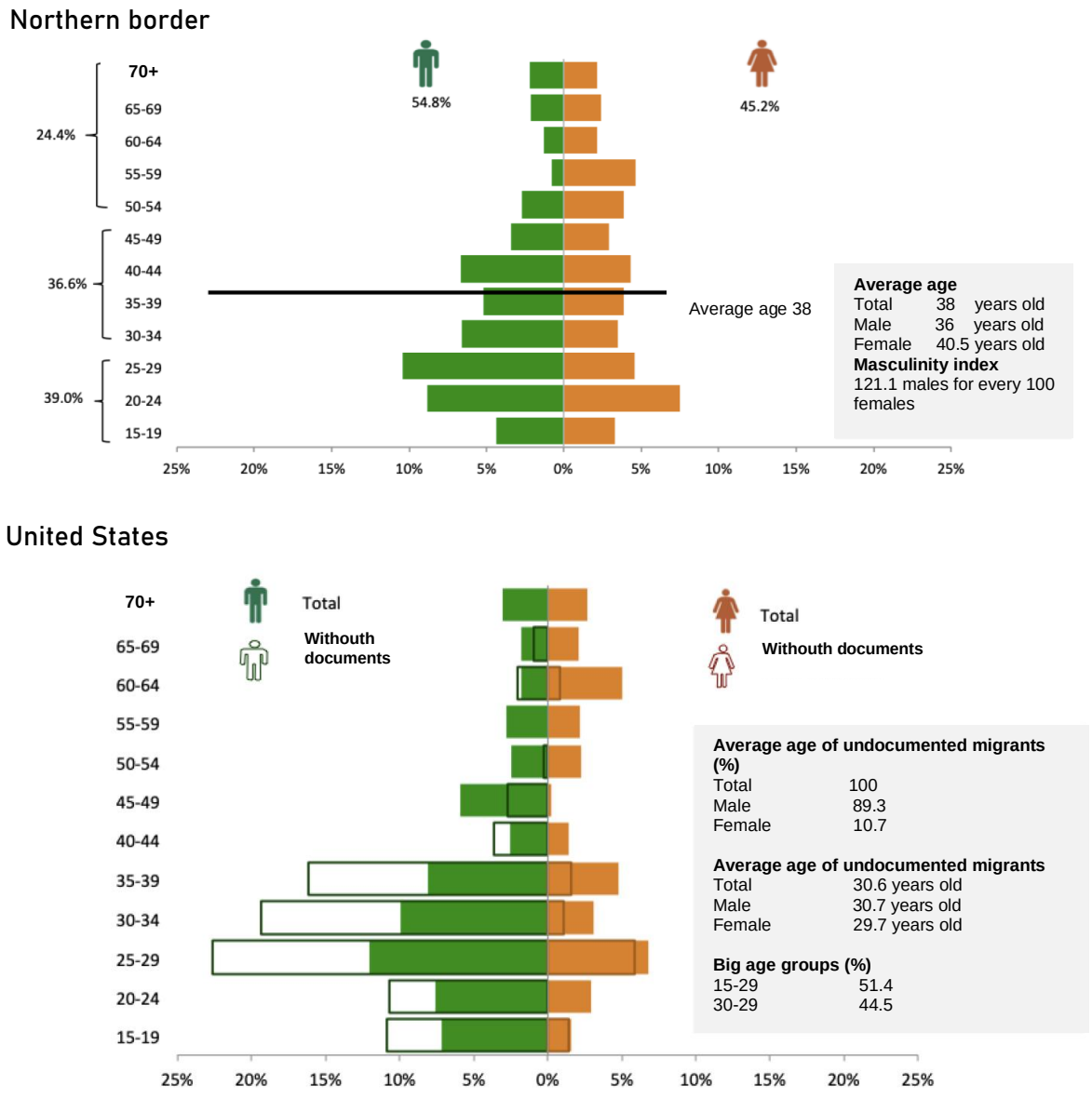
Population pyramid of migrants coming from the south, 2016



Elaborated by the Emif North, 2019. Own translation.

Graph 12

Population pyramid of migrants coming from the south, 2017

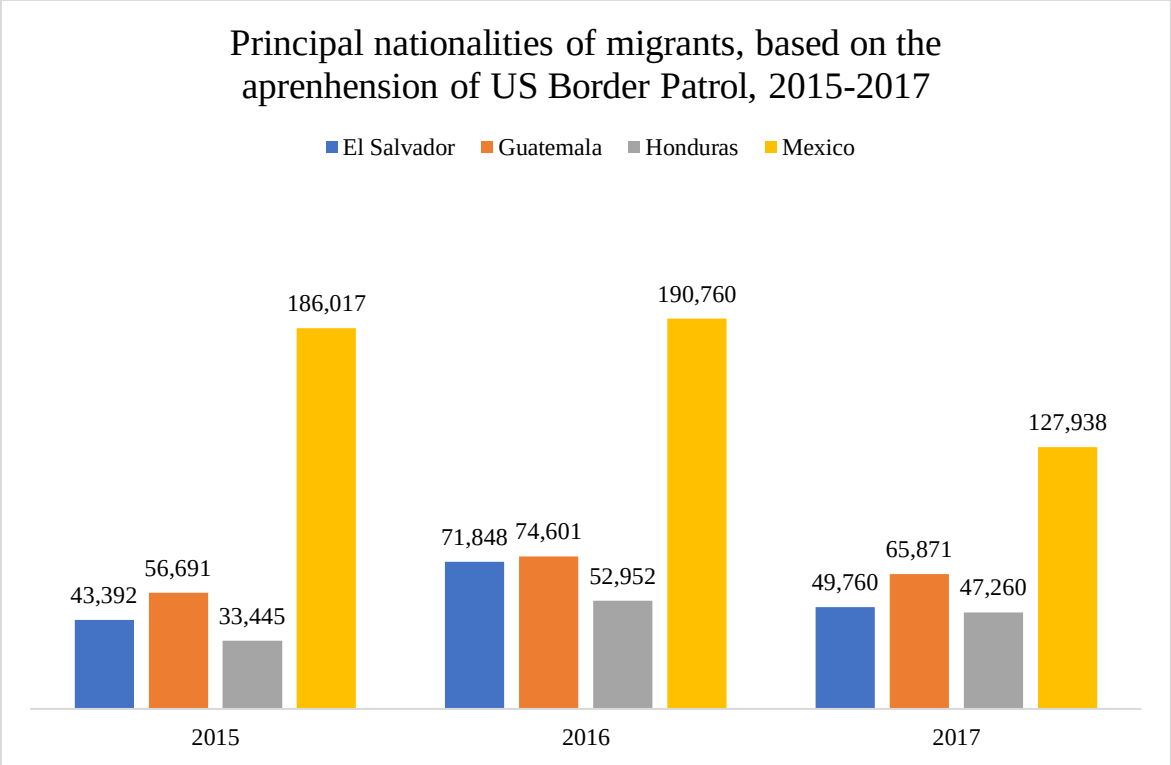


Elaborated by the Emif North, 2018. Own translation.

Next, we will analyze from which nationalities the migrants are, to do so, we will continue to use the US Border Patrol nationwide apprehensions by citizenship, and for the

Mexican nationals, we will additionally use data collected by the Emif North to deepen into their states of origin. If we analyze Graph 13, we can realize that, just like on window 1, the majority of migrants are Mexican on window 2. Next, we can observe Honduras going down to the third place, Guatemala and El Salvador went places up, having the first and second place, respectively.

Graph 13



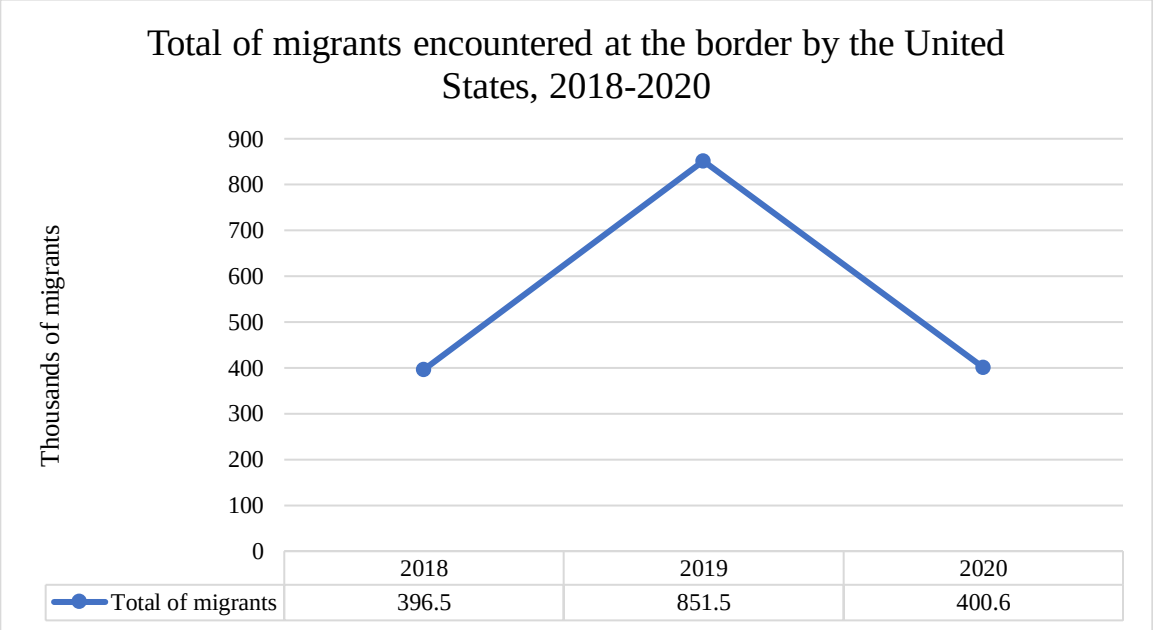
Own elaboration, with data from US Border Patrol, 2020.

Finally, we will focus on the third window, which goes from 2018 to 2020, however, as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, modifications to Emif's methodology, and other contributing factors, the analysis of the third window will incorporate data obtained from the US CBP. In terms of determining the sex and age of migrants, the Colef dataset for the years 2018 and 2019, which specifically focuses on Mexican nationals, will be utilized.

Conversely, for the year 2020, data from the US CBP will be used, with a specific focus on Mexican nationals. However, it is worth noting that age-related data for this year was not available.

Once that was clarified, Graph 14 show us the total of encountered at the border by US Customs and Border Protection officers. We can observe that there was a peak in 2019, the year when COVID-19 pandemic started, and that it decreases on 2020, which may be due to the securitization on the Mexican southern border also due to the governments taking more seriously the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, Graph 15 show us the distribution by age and sex of the migrants from 2018 to 2019, if we analyze the data, we will realize that the majority of migrants with Mexican residency are between the ages 18 to 29. On the other hand, those with US residency are among the ages of 30 to 45.

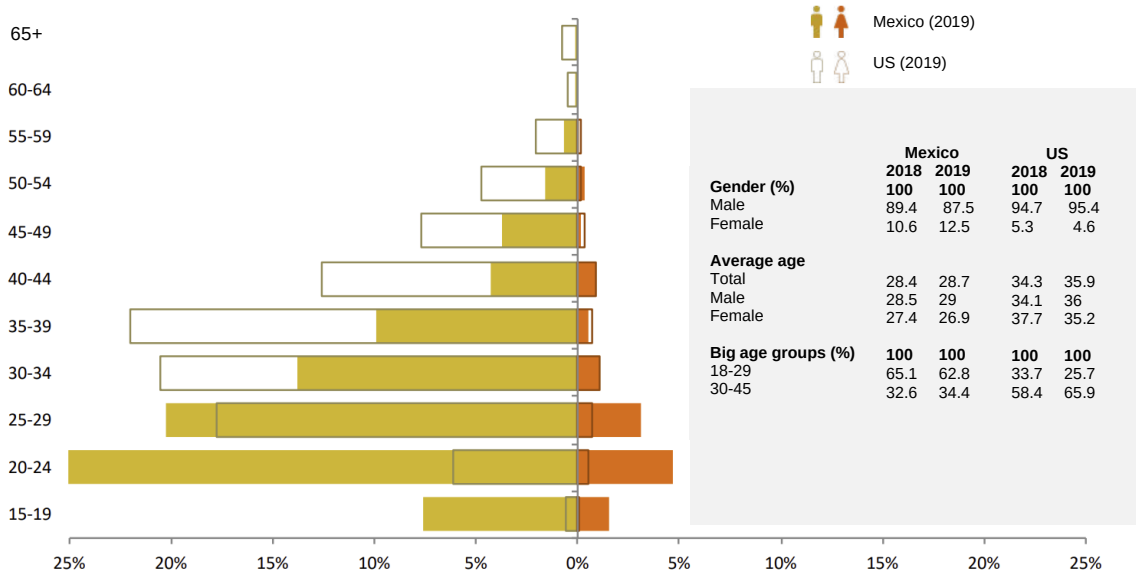
Graph 14



Own elaboration, with data from the US Border Patrol, 2020.

Graph 15

Population and age pyramid of migrants returned by US authorities, by country of residency, 2018-2019



	Mexico		US	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Gender (%)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Male	89.4	87.5	94.7	95.4
Female	10.6	12.5	5.3	4.6
Average age				
Total	28.4	28.7	34.3	35.9
Male	28.5	29	34.1	36
Female	27.4	26.9	37.7	35.2
Big age groups (%)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
18-29	65.1	62.8	33.7	25.7
30-45	32.6	34.4	58.4	65.9

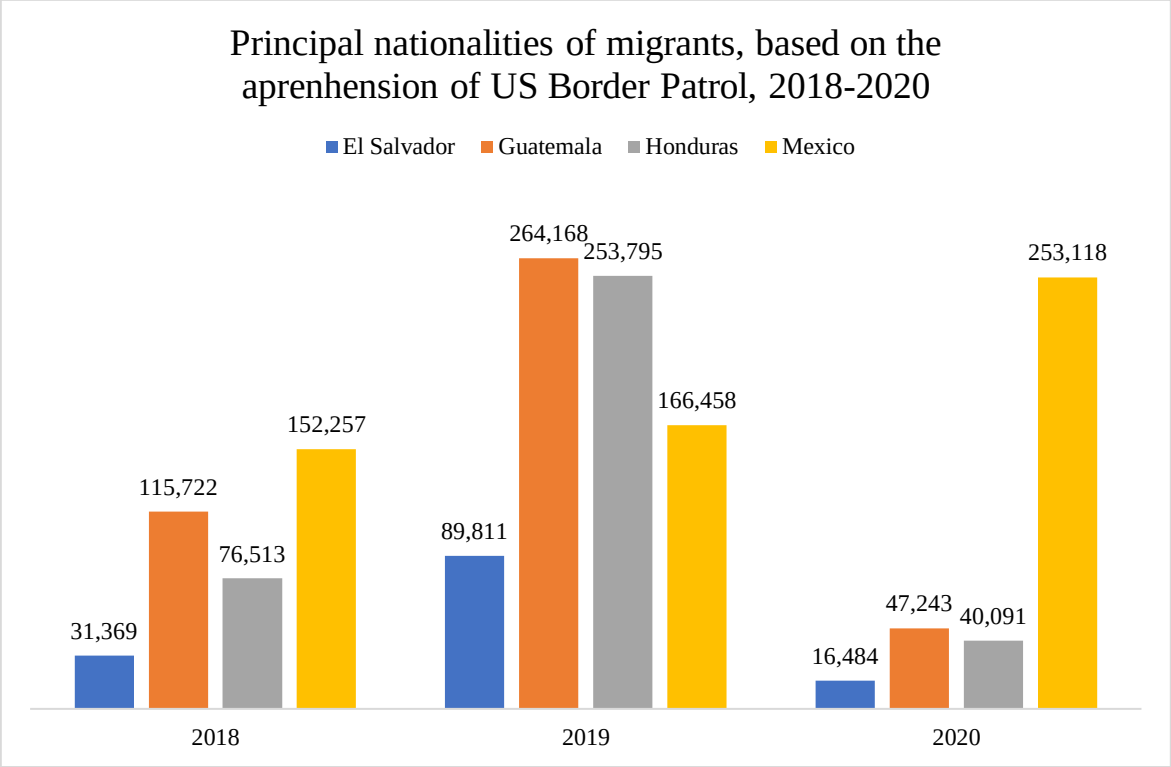
Elaborated by the Emif North, 2019. Own translation.

Now, if we focus on the gender of the migrants, we will notice that the majority of men and women with Mexican residency, were between the ages of 18 to 29. On the other hand, for with the US residency, the majority of men had ages from 30 to 45, while on the case of the women the majority had ages between 15 to 19, followed by 30 to 34, and 40 to 44. However, it is notable that the pyramid looks disproportional between the male and females, with a clear male majority. As for the year of 2020, 56% of the total of migrants encountered by CBP were Mexican males (CBP, 2020), which lead us to think that, just on window 1 and 2, 2020 gender pyramid would also have males as the clear majority.

Next, we will analyze from which nationalities the migrants are, to do so, we will continue to use the US Border Patrol nationwide apprehensions by citizenship, and for the

Mexican nationals, we will additionally use data collected by the Emif North to deepen into their states of origin. If we analyze Graph 16, we can observe that there are variations from the other windows. This time, the main nationality of the migrants was no longer Mexican in 2019, it was Guatemalan, followed by the Honduran and the Mexican, respectively. However, in 2020, Mexico positioned itself on the first place with a clear difference.

Graph 16

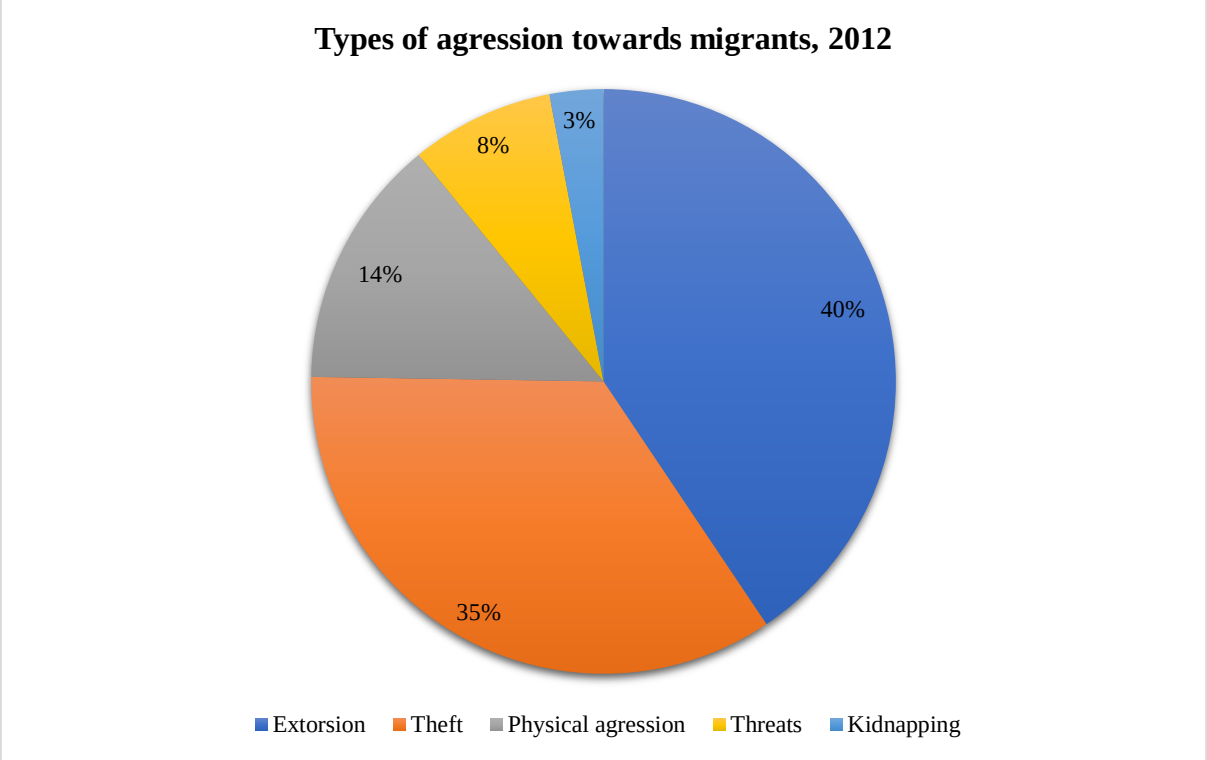


Own elaboration, with data from US Border Patrol (2020).

Finally, it is time to analyze the results of surveys about migrants who have reported having suffered some type of aggression or abuse in Mexican territory. According to a survey conducted by the Colef between October 2011 and September 2012, from 514 thousands of deported migrants from the United States –69.4% from Mexico, 13.9% from Guatemala, 10.7% from Honduras, and 5.7% from El Salvador– 28,695 reported having suffered some

type of aggression or abuse in Mexican territory (Colef North, 2015). For Mexicans, the majority of the aggression or abuses happened on the states near the Mexico-United States border (Tamaulipas, Sonora, and Baja California), while the Central American migrants on southern states (Chiapas, Tabasco, and Mexico State) (Colef North, 2015)

Graph 17

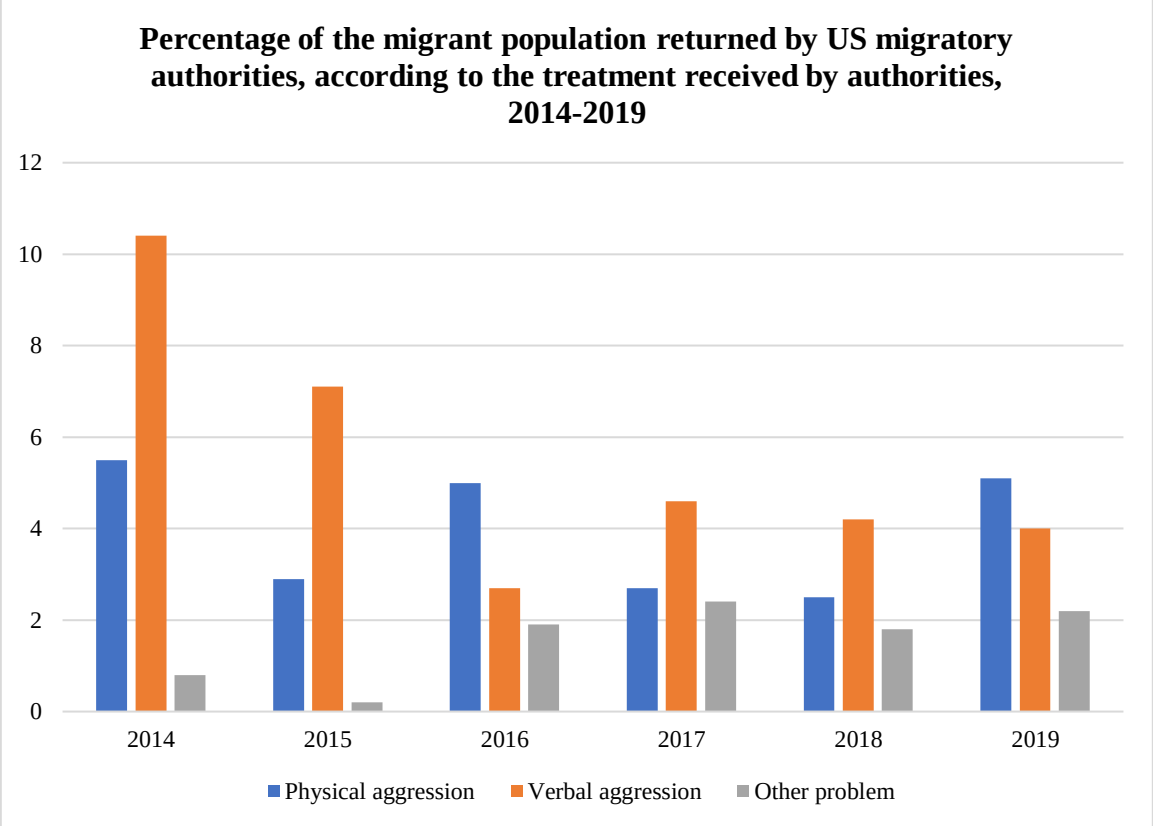


Own elaboration, with data from the Colef North, 2015.

Graph 17 show us the type of violence the migrants said they faced, being extorsion and thefts the clear majorities. From the great total, 34% of the aggressions were perpetrated by criminal organizations, 16% by *coyotes*, 31% by the police and the military, and 8.8% by public officials or migration authorities (Colef, 2015). On the other hand, Emif North applied a survey to Mexican migrants returned to Mexico by US authorities on 2013, from the total

population, 9.7% faced verbal aggressions, 5.3% presented physical aggressions, and 11.1% confiscation of belongings (Emif, 2013). If we now look Graph 18, we can observe that Mexican residents suffered more from verbal aggressions than from physical aggressions in 2014, thus, it is visible that there was an increase in these abuses.

Graph 18

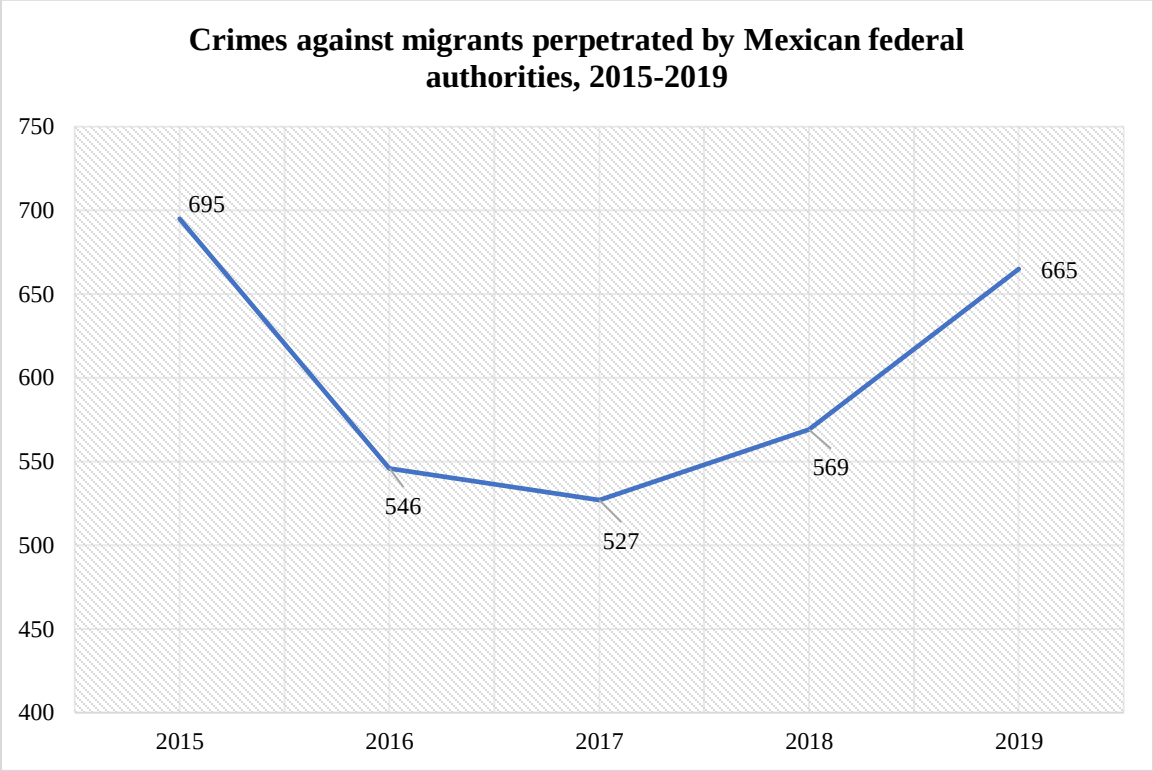


Own elaboration, with data from the Colef North, 2020.

However, the next years abuses decreased, but verbal aggression maintained the first place of abuses almost all the years, excepting 2016 and 2019, where physical aggression took the first place. If we contrast the information with Graph 19, we can observe that the pattern has almost the same variations as Graph 18. The difference relies on the place where

these crimes occurred, according to the Strauss Center (2020), the southern Mexican border, especially Chiapas, was the place where more migrants' rights were violated.

Graph 19



Own elaboration, with data from the Strauss Center, 2020.

About the year of 2020, the Strauss Center for International Security and Law (2020) reported the following:

> Along the northern border, crimes against migrants have increased due to [Migrant Protection Protocols]. From January 2019 to February 2020, there were more than 1,000 publicly reported cases of violence against asylum seekers in [Migrant Protection Protocols], including murder, rape, torture, and kidnapping. There are geographic distinctions among the criminal actors who commit these crimes. In the northeastern states of Tamaulipas and

> Coahuila, the Gulf Cartel and the Northeast Cartel control the smuggling and kidnapping of migrants and are the most common criminals. In the northwestern states of Chihuahua, Sonora and Baja California, the perpetrators were mostly smaller criminal groups. There have also been reports that Mexican police have collaborated in crimes against migrants along the border.

Another report by Doctors without Borders, discovered that from a sample of 26,171 migrants at various migrant health care posts between January 2018 and September 2019,

> over half (57.3 %) of those interviewed had been exposed to some kind of violence along the migration route. During their transit through Mexico, 39.2 % were violently attacked, and 27.3 % were threatened or extorted. The actual figures are known to be much higher than the official statistics, since many victims do not report attacks out of fear of reprisals or due to corruption and lack of trust in the system (Doctors Without Borders, 2020: 14).

Finally, about the crimes reported to the Mexican authorities, we will next focus on Table 2, this table exposes the quantity of undocumented migrants who declared being victims of a felony on Mexican territory, and were identified during the entry process to migrant's stations. It is worth highlighting that Chiapas, Oaxaca and Tamaulipas were the top three places where the majority of crimes were reported, respectively. We can see that acts related to migration like illicit migrant trafficking and theft, were the main crimes migrants faced, and these increased in 2018. However, we have to consider that this is just an estimate, because as stated early in the Chapter, and in Chapter 1, a part of migrant population stated that was afraid of going to the authorities due to fear of being deported.

Table 2

Undocumented migrants who manifested being victims of crimes in Mexican territory, according to type of felony and gender, 2016-2020

Type of felony	2016			2017			2018			2019			2020		
	M	F	Subtotal	M	F	Subtotal	M	F	Subtotal	M	F	Subtotal	M	F	Subtotal
Total	**626**	**228**	**854**	**495**	**206**	**701**	**949**	**465**	**1414**	**327**	**234**	**561**	**124**	**53**	**177**
Acts related to migration	48	29	77	23	2	25	414	184	598	65	38	103	67	20	87
Illicit migrant trafficking	48	29	77	23	2	25	414	184	598	65	38	103	67	20	87
Acts under universal jurisdiction	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Torture	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Human trafficking	2	10	12	1	29	30	20	27	47	27	23	50	8	10	18
Human trafficking with other purposes	2	10	12	1	29	30	20	27	47	27	23	50	8	10	18
Acts against liberty	133	38	171	70	23	93	168	46	214	12	3	15	2	1	3
Child kidnapping	15	8	23	4	5	9	26	7	33	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other forms of child kidnapping	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kidnapping	115	30	145	63	15	78	126	39	165	10	3	13	1	1	2
Illegal retention	3	-	3	3	1	4	15	-	15	2	-	2	1	-	1
Sexual violence	1	25	26	3	4	7	1	13	14	5	4	9	-	-	-
Rape	1	17	18	3	3	6	1	8	9	2	2	4	-	-	-
Child rape	-	6	6	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical aggression	-	2	2	-	1	1	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-physical aggression	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	5	-	-	-
Tentative intentional murder	5	6	11	1	4	5	3	1	4	-	1	1	-	-	-

Other acts causing death or with the intention to cause it	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44	42	86	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aggressions and threats	11	8	19	2	-	2	6	-	6	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Critical aggression	9	8	17	2	-	2	5	-	5	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Threat	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coercion	13	9	22	2	2	4	30	11	41	33	31	64	6	4	10					
Extorsion or blackmail	13	9	22	2	2	4	30	11	41	33	31	64	6	4	10					
Negligence	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-					
Run over migrants	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-					
Theft	406	98	504	381	141	522	254	135	389	170	125	295	30	11	41					
Theft to people	406	98	504	381	141	522	254	135	389	170	125	295	30	11	41					
Theft to people in public spaces	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3					
Fraud	-	-	-	1	1	2	4	2	6	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Corruption	7	5	12	9	1	10	5	-	5	6	6	12	3	1	4					
Abuse of power	7	5	12	9	1	10	5	-	5	5	2	7	3	1	4					
Passive brive	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	-	-	-					
Non-specified	-	-	-	3	5	8	1	-	1	5	1	6	-	-	-					

Own elaboration, with data from the Gobierno de México, 2021.

We can conclude that, in the first window, there was a peak on the migration flow in 2013, where the majority of migrants were male, and among the ages that are mostly related with labor migration. Also, we can infer that it is due to geographical reasons that the majority of migrants that want to reach the Mexican northern border –either to cross or stay– are Mexicans. This pattern maintains over window 2 and 3, with slight variations on the mode of migrants age and gender. Also, extorsion, theft, and illicit migrant trafficking were the

main crimes committed towards the migrant population, and from the US authorities, the main kind of abuse was verbal aggression. This indicates that the main *war machines* the migrants face are related to both governmental and non-governmental organizations, like organized crime, human trafficking networks, and migration authorities.

Chapter 3. Understanding the other

Among the problems that migrants face, is that they are often reduced to mere numbers, statistics, and data points in policy debates and media coverage. However, behind these figures are real people with real stories of struggle, pain, and resilience. In this chapter, we aim to amplify the voices of migrants by collecting news and migrants' testimonies to present their experiences. We will focus on the forms of violence that migrants face, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, and connect those experiences to the *war machines* from both governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Additionally, we will also highlight some of the ways in which migrants resist and overcome these challenges. This can take many forms, such as writing poems, books of short stories, songs, and other artistic expressions, we will showcase a few writing extracts, and the story behind the artistic expressions. By showcasing these works, we hope to illustrate the resilience and creativity of migrants, as well as the importance of providing them with opportunities to express themselves. Also, we will include other forms of resistance that come from civil society and organizations in favor of human rights.

First, it is important to know why migrants are leaving their countries. In a national survey of migrants in transit across Mexico, the CNDH collected testimonies from migrants

on different migrant shelters, the majority of them on the center and south of the country, being Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua and Tamaulipas the only cities on the northern border. Table 3 contains the reasons why migrants left their countries, some are testimonies –which will be signaled between quotation marks–, and other are notes that the interviewers took about the testimony of the interviewed:

Table 3

Details about why migrants had to migrate

Reason they leaved their country	Nationality, gender, and age
"To look for a better future".	Salvadoran, female, 31 y/o.
In Honduras, his family does not have a place to live, and also the wish and need to help their parents.	Honduran, male, 18 y/o.
Went out of their country due to a health issue. He was attacked in his country and needs an operation, he is still chased in Mexico, and does not have money for the operation, he needs $8,000 pesos.	Honduran, male, 20 y/o.
Had health issues that could no longer be treated in his country	Honduran, male, 35 y/o.
"I am leaving my country because there are no jobs, I earn very little".	Guatemalan, male, 35 y/o.

“In Guatemala we were suffering, I earned 30 quetzales a day, –about 60 pesos– now you earn 80 to 100 quetzales since the change of government, but it was not even enough to eat”. “ You leave your country because there is extorsion You leave your country because there is extortion everywhere, from the authorities, from the gangs, you go out to work, but you don't know if you are going to return, if the head of the trucks doesn't pay your dues to the gangs, they can kill you”.	Guatemalan, male, 23 y/o.
“I leaved because of the war on my country, the tax that criminal groups collect and the gangs”.	Honduran, male, 57 y/o.
“I leaved due to the murder of my husband and my daughter of six years perpetrated by the *maras**. I travel with my 4-year-old son, without a clear destination”.	Honduran, female, 28 y/o.
“Gang members of the Mara Salvatrucha killed my brother and thereby the next victim would be me”.	Guatemalan, male, 35 y/o.
The 13 and the 18 (*maras)* demanded a quota for them to work and practically take everything from them, so there is no way to live in their country with so much extortion and violence.	Honduran, male, 26 y/o.

She has a death threat from the Mara Salvatrucha, because she helped a 14-year-old girl who was shot by a gang member, this action to save her life cost her to leave her home fleeing with three children and with the girl whose life he saved.	Nicaraguan, female, 37 y/o.
He left El Salvador because he could not pay the rent for his work to the gangs. Initially he was dedicated to being a farmer, but due to bad harvests he almost ran out of profit. “We are left without corn or anything to pay the debts,” he said. "There are municipalities in extreme poverty and with winters without rain there have been a lot of losses, whic**h** has worsened the economic situation, they are in extreme poverty, but even when we are gang members charge us rent." The gang members left a message at his house advising him that now they were going to charge him $40 more than the initial fee, even though he had lost his job. He first had to move in with his family, trying to flee, but they could no**t**. "In my country you cannot live, it is at war."	Salvadoran, male, 59 y/o.
Leaved their country due to gang threaten**s**.	Honduran, male, 26 y/o. Honduran, male, 18 y/o. Honduran, male, 17 y/o.

	Honduran, male, 45 y/o. Salvadoran, female, 21 y/o. Salvadoran, male, 23 y/o. Honduran, male, 21 y/o. Salvadoran, male, 26 y/o. Honduran, female, 34 y/o.
The government of his country is implementing a repression policy to control gangs, which consist of forming extermination groups made up of veterans who participated at the civil war. He says that he left his country because they forced him to belong to that paramilitary group.	Salvadoran, male, 21 y/o.
Because he was kidnapped.	Guatemalan, male, 36 y/o.
An ex-soldier had to flee his country because the gangs asked him for firearms, or if they did not threaten to kill his daughter, they also asked him for 20 dollars a day. Later they asked for his house, and threatened to kill him if he refused. He decided to flee when a cousin was killed to give him a "message."	Salvadoran, male, 26 y/o.

***** *Maras* are the gangs from the Mara Salvatrucha, an international criminal gang organization, they originated in Los Angeles, and since then have been expanding to the US, Canada, Mexico and to countries on the northern triangle.

Own elaboration, with data from the CNDH, 2018.

As we could observe, there are many reasons why migrants leave their country, many of them coincide in the same: violence on their countries originated by the gangs. Like the Honduran woman who lost her husband and her six-year-old daughter, or like the Guatemalan men who was afraid of being the next after the murder of his brother. Or what about the Nicaraguan woman, who was taking care of three children and had to run away with them and a 14-year-old girl after helping her when she was shoot by a gang member. We know why they had to leave their country, but we do because they told their story despite the pain those memories could bring them.

If we pay attention to what they are telling us, we can also discover what all are looking for, and we cannot put it in better words as the 31-year-old Salvadoran woman did: "to look for a better future". A better future for the 4-year-old who lost their father and sister, for the man who lost his brother, for the four children running from the violence, for the marriages who survive paying the maras, and for those who just want a better life.

As we mentioned before, gangs are a *war machine* that generate violence, and as a consequence, it occurs what Ariadna (2018) calls 'forced displacement'. In this situation, we can see necropolitics in the action of the gang members, and necropolitics on the inaction of the State, it is through indirect violence where the State makes die vulnerable population considered disposable.

An example of this situation is the tragedy occurred in San Antonio, Texas, were 53 migrants died suffocated in the back of a trailer. On this tragedy, Biden (2022) commented that the incident made clear "the need to go after the multi-billion-dollar criminal smuggling

industry preying on migrants and leading to far too many innocent deaths". The smuggling industry can also be considered as a *war machine*, a necropolitical tool, however, this tool specifically is both wanted and unwanted by the State. Wanted because some members of the cartels or the smuggling industry are within the authorities or the government, thereby, the money that is generated by this criminal activities goes to their pockets. And unwanted because the State present economic losses, as well as the perception of the society could have about the State not being competent enough to protect the population on the country could rise, thus, questioning the legitimacy of the State.

Continuing with the case of the 53 migrants, reports exposed that the migrants were "hot to the touch", and that "the survivors did not appear to have access to water and were too weak to get out of the truck on their own" (BBC News Mundo, 2022). When this tragedy came to the ears of other migrants, some organized a vigil for the dead migrants, and among them, people shared their own stories. Jessica, a Honduran woman, mentioned: "I came here [to the United States] at the age of 14, also in a trailer (18-wheeler) and I lost consciousness due to the heat" (Ventas, 2022). Wanda Pérez manifested her rage by saying:

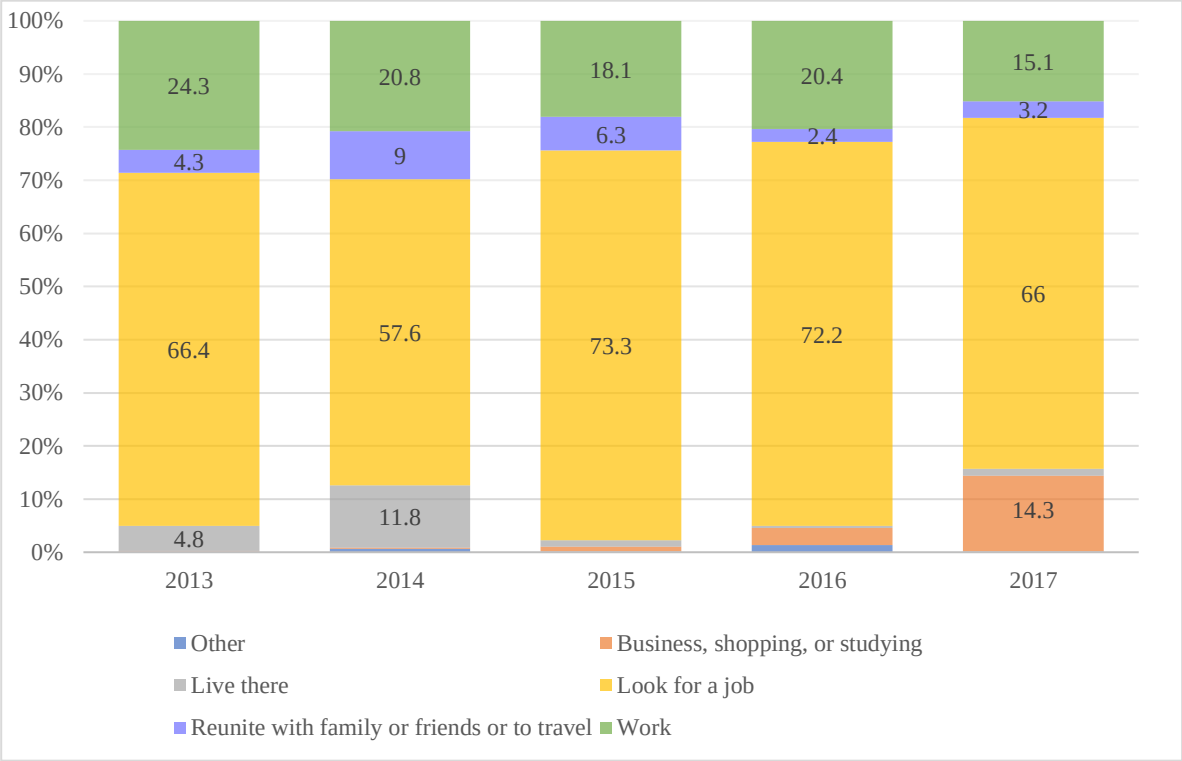
> Look at me: do I look like an American to you? Do you know how many times they called me a bean-eater in school? How did I see my mother slave away to get some papers? And they ask me why I'm so affected (Ventas, 2022).

And this was not the only time where migrants lost their lives at the back of a trailer, on the Southern Mexican border, another accident happened the year before, where a group

of more than 150 migrants were being transported, the truck overturned, and 55 migrants lost their lives (Noticias ONU, 2021).

Graph 20

Percentual distribution of undocumented migrants coming from the south with destiny to the US, by main reason of crossing the border, 2013-2017



Own elaboration, with data from the Emif North, 2018.

Until now, we know some of the reasons why they leave their countries, but now we also have to discover what they are looking for at their destination. On a survey by the Emif, where they asked to active migrant population –no more than 200 surveys per year– why they migrate, the results obtained were the following: from 2013 to 2017, the main reason of going to the United States was looking for work, followed by work, and reunite with family or friends or to travel (See Graph 20). The reasons they gave us can be contrasted with those

of why they travel, some of them have to leave their countries in order to be safe from the maras or other criminal organizations, and as a result, they have to look for a job on their destinations. Others leave due to lack of money, and on these cases the result will be the same: they go to the United States looking for a job that can pay the bills and food.

However, others migrate in order to reunite with their families and friends, this was the case of Exelina, a Salvadoran, female of age 31, who was “looking forward to reuniting with her two young children, Ana and Javier, and her husband, Gustavo, whom she hadn't seen since her exile to El Salvador months before” (del Bosque et al., 2014). She voluntarily returned to El Salvador in hope to gain legal residency in the United States, however, due to gang violence, she had to cross the border again (del Bosque et al., 2014). As the team from The Guardian described,

> It had taken her three weeks to arrive at the Texas border from San Salvador, and she spent another 11 days at a safe house in Brownsville. The privilege of being crammed into a windowless warehouse with several dozen unwashed strangers and being forced to hike for several hours through desolate ranches of thorn scrub and prickly pear would cost her $3,200… Just 5-foot-2, Exelina was chubby with long, wavy, dark brown hair. The smugglers called her "gorda." They joked that she was too fat to endure hours of hiking through the brush to get around the Border Patrol checkpoint in Brooks County. But she insisted she could endure the hike. What choice did she have? Her children and her husband who were US citizens were waiting for her in Irving, as were her mother and stepfather. Every few days, a group would leave the Brownsville safe house for the journey north. But the smugglers refused to include her. Instead, they offered to smuggle her in a tractor-trailer for $5,000. Another traveler warned Exelina that it was a trick to extort more money from her family,

which could scarcely afford the $3,200 in the first place. So she turned the offer down. After 11 days of insisting she could make the hike, and after they received half the smuggling fee, the men decided to let her make the trip. She left with a group of 20 men and boys and three other women… It was Friday, Nov. 1, 2013. They would walk all night and into the next day until they reached a highway north of the immigration checkpoint in Falfurrias. There, more SUVs would come for them and they would drive five hours northeast to Houston. Once they reached Houston, their families would pay the other half of the fee to the smugglers and then they'd be free… Darkness fell and the two guides beckoned them forward. La migra were all around them, the guides warned. They had helicopters, surveillance balloons and truck patrols looking for immigrants. There were also the ranchers who could shoot you on sight for trespassing, and there were wild animals, snakes and roving gang members who would rob and rape you in the brush. She'd heard these stories during her stay at the safe house in Brownsville… One of the guides, still just a teenager, offered her a pill. "So you can endure it," he said. Exelina swallowed the pill. It was an old trick of the coyotes to give the pollos, as they called their clients, cheap over-the-counter diet pills, or amphetamines, to keep them alert so they could walk all night. But the amphetamines caused even greater thirst. By midnight it was 68 degrees but the humidity had climbed to 94 percent. The heat felt unbearable. Her head ached and throbbed. Growing dizzy, Exelina veered away from the trail, then stumbled to the ground. "I can't walk any farther," she said…

It was Sunday morning, and Elsy was at home in Irving getting ready for church when her husband Salvador's cell phone rang. Elsy was planning to ask the congregation to pray for her daughter Exelina's safe arrival. Finally, she thought. It had been nearly unbearable waiting so many days for a phone call from her daughter, saying she was okay and waiting for them

in Houston. The cell phone showed that it was a private caller. "This could be her," Salvador said to Elsy, answering the phone.

"Is this Exelina's father?" a woman asked.

"Yes, I am her stepfather," Salvador said.

"We prayed with your daughter," the woman said. He could tell she was Salvadoran by her accent. She sounded older than Exelina. "I told her, ‘Don't give up. Think of your children. They are waiting for you.'"

"I don't understand. Where is she?" Salvador said. Hearing his words, Elsy felt panic rise in her chest.

"The men carried her on their backs," the woman said. "Even one of the smugglers carried her for a while. They didn't want to leave her, but they just couldn't carry her anymore, and she couldn't walk. She couldn't do her part."

"Where is she?" Salvador asked again.

"We prayed with your daughter that she could walk again," the woman continued. "We poured water over her forehead, her hair. She had stripped off her shirt and her sweater. She told us to leave her. She was starting to foam at the mouth."

"But where did you leave her?" he asked.

"We left water for her," the woman said. "The guide said she was 40 minutes from a ranch, so she could get help, or immigration would fly over in a helicopter and see her there and rescue her."

> They had left Exelina at 7:30 in the morning, the woman explained, and walked all day until they reached the highway north of the immigration checkpoint. They were picked up by men in trucks and driven to Houston. They arrived that Saturday around 9 p.m. (del Bosque et al., 2014).

There are many stories like the one of Exelina, the risks that migrants have to face in order to reach to their destinations is enormous, which is why, the next thing that we will look to discover is what kind of dangers, crimes, or other problems they have faced trying to reach their destinations. It is during this part where the *war machines* would be easier to identify. First, we will start with Graciela's testimony when she and the group she was in crossed the dessert:

> We were attacked in the desert. We were approached by a group of men wearing hoods and they told us to give them everything we had or they would kill us. There were four men. They were fair haired with light colored eyes. We were afraid for the young girl, but since we gave them everything we had they left us alone. After, they told us ""Good luck!" (imitating an accent in English) (COLEF, 2011, in Isacson and Meyer, 2012).

In addition, Verónica, a Salvadoran woman stated:

> There is a lot of crime. We already have been through years on the move. We were living in Guatemala and migrated to Mexico because there is also crime in Guatemala. When we crossed the river into Mexico, they seized us and deported us. When [later] we arrived in El Salvador, [the gang] asked us for 'rent' because we hadn't lived there before. So we had to pay, because if you don't pay, they come for you. People suffer a lot by having to run away from our country. Now I don't have anywhere to go in El Salvador; I sought asylum but they

> rejected me. I had no alternative but to leave and walk. We arrived in La Venta [Mexico], and there the migration authorities beat us. A human rights organization took photos of the wounds on my back. We are looking after each other. We have crossed mountains, passed through dangerous places, traveling by other ways; we have jumped onto moving trains, although they say that on the train you run the risk of being kidnapped or attacked. There are some people who lost parts of their body while trying to get onto the train, but we don't have any other choice. We have to migrate in order to be able to live a little better (Doctors Without Borders, 2020:15).

Another danger that migrants face, just as Exelina and Verónica mentioned early, is kidnapping. The Doctors without Borders (2020) mentions that the so called "express kidnapping" has been on the rise and it generates an important amount of incomes for the criminal groups. This method

> is used against those traveling with cash or who have contacts in the US. Victims are forced to hand over what they are carrying or quickly transfer large sums of money, sometimes between US$2,000 to $3,000. In the border city of Nuevo Laredo, it is almost impossible to leave the shelters because so-called "hawks" from the gangs are watching the entrances (Doctors Without Borders, 2020:17).

We can say that the express kidnappings are part of a *war machine*, however, it is not a *war machine* by itself, but a tool to keep the *war machine* going, since they ask for big amounts of money that will be used to fund the guns, fuel, cars, salaries, etc. of the criminal organization. In addition, the fact that the Mexican military is acting against the express kidnappings of migrants, is proof that it is an unwanted necropolitical tool. For example, in

2019 the Mexican military rescued a group of 34 migrants –15 of them underage–, in Altamira, Tamaulipas (Reséndez, 2019). In addition, on March 7, 2019, a group of migrants were kidnapped near Palo Blanco, Tamaulipas, their kidnapping was the event that then would lead to the Operative Search in Life Tamaulipas, "in which elements of the Tamaulipas state police, the Secretary of National Defense, the Federal Police, the Tamaulipas Attorney General's Office, as well as the National Commission and State Search for Persons" participated (Reséndez, 2019). However, the Operative started three days after the reports by National Commission Search for Persons, and lasted approximately three days (Gobierno de México, 2019).

Thanks to the testimonies of migrants, we can know what kind of abuses they go through during the time they are kidnapped. As José, a Guatemalan in Nuevo Laredo described:

> In the abandoned house where they take you by car, as soon you enter, they start to beat you. Then they order you to strip, and if you refuse, they hit you. There are three or four of them as security. And until they get the number out of you [telephone number of a family member or a friend in the US], they don't stop the beatings. It's like an interview: 'What's your full name, what job do you do, what are you going to do in the US?' It's a small room made of wood, and from there, when they get the number, they put you in the room with mattresses. There I saw boys, girls and women of all nationalities, including Mexicans, and they all have to pay up. If they find a number that you haven't given them, they say that they'll kill you. It's hell on earth. They're all high or on coke [cocaine], talking all the time. Even Hondurans and Guatemalans are forced to work for them, either because they are detained themselves or

> because they don't have any other way to earn money. They are made to extract information and identify other possible victims (Doctors Without Borders, 2020: 18).

And Roberto, another migrant in the same city, also describes:

> They have already caught and kidnapped me twice. Once in the square and the other time at a street corner. The first time, they asked me for money, and I didn't have any. I told them that I didn't have family in the US. They told me that they were going to kill me. 'Do what you want,' I told them. They released me. They took us to a darkened room with 10 people inside; it was full of people they had abducted from the bus station when they arrived from elsewhere. There were three women with children and four men there, they were asking for $3,000 to free them.… Now I can't walk about even in the daytime. Or go to the supermarket. On Sunday I went out to buy biscuits and cola. I'm scared of being abducted for the third time, and that this time they won't release me. Only God knows what's going to happen (Doctors Without Borders, 2020: 27).

We also found the case of Gabriel, a Honduran in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, who was express kidnapped by Mexican authorities:

> From Mexico City, the authorities were marking the route to follow the caravan. The leader who was taking us was deported in Mexico City. Finally, upon arriving there [in Piedras Negras], they locked us in the factory and only let us leave to go to the supermarket and the bank. The treatment wasn't bad; they gave us food, a quilt and a mattress.… There were people that they theoretically took to seek asylum, but they deported them.… On the Monday, payday [visit to the bank], they boarded us onto a combi [small bus] escorted by the police. Someone from migration called me out, made me get off and forced me into a double cab

> van. There they beat me hard. On my head, back, face and ears. I completely lost consciousness. [Later] I was kneeling down, crying. My son was in the factory with some girls who were looking after him for me. 'We are going to deport you,' they told me. They made me sign some papers that agreed to the deportation. They made me see a doctor, and I lied to them that I didn't know how I had received my injuries. They told me to tell them I had been the leader of the caravan, but I don't know for certain why they beat me. They took my cellphone and even called my family, who were sending me money every week from the US. As I knew that we were being kidnapped and extorted, I told my family that if it wasn't me calling them from this cellphone, they shouldn't answer and they didn't. They hung up on the police, so I don't know what they wanted from them (Doctors Without Borders, 2020: 34).

On top of that, we also found that the situations on the State's migration center, are not the optimal for migrants to have a dignified treatment. The findings of the Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment are presented on Table 3

Table 3

Conditions observed on the migratory stations of Tijuana and Saltillo of the National Migration Institute

Observations	Location of the migratory station
• Overcrowding and poor conditions of the people housed, women, children, and adolescents who were in a cell with very poor hygiene conditions and without access to clothing, especially in the case of the smallest girls, despite the cold. • The food was scant and of poor quality, with no differentiation between adults and children.	Tijuana.

• Access to telephone calls to relatives outside of Mexico was limited since they could only make calls with cards that they had to buy themselves.	
• Unaccompanied girls had good housing conditions. • Unaccompanied boys were in a very cold room. • Some of the children interviewed reported having received little clothing to keep warm and cold water to bathe. • Adults and accompanied minors spent almost the entire day in a very cold covered court and people did not have access to more than one blanket each. • At night, all adults and their children were placed in closed rooms (women and children separated from men). • The women's and children's room had no light and the men's room could not be turned off. • Regarding access to food, the authorities informed that children received food adapted to their needs and that other special needs were also considered. Some mothers reported that not all children received food adapted to their needs. • All migrants had daily access to telephone calls, including outside of Mexico.	Saltillo.

Own elaboration, with data from the Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 2017.

In more recent years, the Committee confirmed that the situations of overcrowding continued, and that "information is not provided to migrants about detention" (Avilés, 2018). In addition, the Committee

> pointed out that migration officials do not assist migrants, for example to contact their families and for those issues necessary for their return to the country of origin. At the same time, it confirmed worrying acts of threats that particularly affect women, mothers and children who remain in those places of detention (Avilés, 2018).

The situations that these migrants face on the migratory stations are due to the "reproduction of penitentiary structure, and a need of control and surveillance" (Mourliere,

2015, in Centro de Análisis Sin Fronteras, 2019). On top of that, we can also say that necropolitics manifest itself in the overcrowding of the migration centers and the lack of resources on them. Making migrants die due to lack of resources, rapid response, and a dignified treatment is a choice that the State makes when not giving enough funds to the INM for this purpose. Thereby, the low fundings can be seen as a necropolitical tool that the *war machine* (the State) uses to dispose vulnerable groups like migrants.

Next, we will review the role of the *coyotes*, we could observe with the case of Exelina that *coyotes* have more organization, and even resources to smuggle migrants to the United States. This is due to the organized crime, who shifted the scenario before 2010, they either displaced the traditional *coyotes* or absorb them, however, this has generated even more risk for migrants (Ruíz, 2010, in Garduño, 2010). As a result, migrants are not only left abandoned like on the case of the trailer, but also being trapped in the middle of territorial fights between criminal organizations. We can see an example of that in the case of Tamaulipas in January of 2021, where 16 Guatemalans and 3 Mexicans were brutally killed, and their bodies were found seven weeks later on a truck near the Northern Mexican border (BBC News Mundo, 2021a).

Investigators believe that a rival gang attacked the group, including the smugglers, and then burned their bodies due to the competition they have over the money that the migrants pay, which sometimes can go above the 10,000 USD (BBC News Mundo, 2021a). Among the victims, the family of Santa Cristina García (19) told the media about her life; they mention that she left to work in Zacapa, but due to her low salary, she could not earn enough money to pay the cleft lip surgery of her 16-months sister, his father gave the house

deed to the *coyotes* as a guarantee (BBC News Mundo, 2021a). On the following days, authorities from Tamaulipas ordered the arrest of 12 state police officers for their alleged participation in the murder, under the charges of "qualified homicide, as well as abuse of authority, poor performance of administrative duties, and false reports submitted to an authority" (BBC News Mundo, 2021b).

Art as a way of necropolitical resistance

It is now time to go through some forms of resistance from civil society, organizations in favor of human rights and migrants. We will start by the compilation of different poems, then we will compilate different artistic expressions, and we will close the chapter with other forms of resistance by the civil society and human rights organizations. It is important to review this, because these actions are against necropolitics since it is through these actions that they refuse the erasing of their pain and deaths by the State and other *war machines.* It is through these expressions where their voices can be heard by those who are willing to heard them, and those who do not understand them because they continue to see migrants as the other.

The first book of poems that we will review is called *Libro centroamericano de los muertos* (Central American Book of the Dead) by Balam Rodrigo. One of the poems in the book, describe us the reasons why a migrant left their home:

Abandoné el olor a cuerpos quemados de mi aldea,	I abandoned the smell of burning bodies from my village,

la peste militar con sus ladridos de "tierra arrasada",	the military plague with its "scorched earth" barks,
mordiendo hueso y calcañar con metrallas y napalm,	biting bone and heel with shrapnel and napalm,
su huracán de violaciones y navajas	his hurricane of rapes and knives
que aniquilaba a los hombres de maíz con perros amaestrados	that annihilated the men of corn with trained dogs
por un gobierno que alumbra el camino de sus genocidas	for a government that lights the path of its genocidal
con antorchas de sangre y leyes de mierda.	with torches of blood and laws of shit.
Hui del penetrante olor a odio y podredumbre;	I fled from the penetrating odor of hate and rot;
caminé descalzo hasta el otro lado del inframundo	I walked barefoot to the other side of the underworld
para curarme los huesos y el hambre.	to cure my bones and hunger.
Nunca llegué.	I never arrived.

(Rodrigo, 2018, in Ruiz-Núñez, 2018). Own translation.

This poem is a powerful commentary on the devastating impact of war, violence, and government oppression on individuals and communities. Balam Rodrigo express the disgust at the military forces and their brutal tactics that afflict and destroy the village, and at the government with "laws of shit". Unfortunately, the attempts to escape to a better future are futile, with the ending, the author left it to the imagination of the reader the reason they never

arrived. Overall, the poem offers a view of the destructive and dehumanizing effects of war and oppression, and highlights the ongoing struggle for survival and dignity in the face of overwhelming violence and trauma that a migrant face.

Another book of poems, called *The Tijuana Book of the Dead*, by Luis Alberto Urrea also narrate us through poem the situation of the migrants at the Tijuana border. He wrote the book due to the book bannings in Arizona, where the government took books of Latino and indigenous writers out (WNYC Studios, 2015). He writes to and for the forgotten, having his father as an inspiration, who migrated to the United States and married an American woman, and with his work, he wants to make people notice that it is not an 'us' vs 'them' situation (WNYC Studios, 2015).

Sasha Pimentel is another writer that tries to portrait the violence along the Mexico-United States border, she created *For Want of Water* to show her experiences of living in the border, and as a response to the normalization of violence and disappearances. The poem is the following:

"For Want of Water"

an ant will drown himself, his body submerging
into ease, his mandibles, head, antennae, baptized. How lovely
to lose your senses to the cup of your want. A boy
drags his mother's body across the desert, her fluids rising
to heaven in order to quench her skin. How divine
her body must have looked, clutched at the ankles, her
arms reaching out in exultation, her head stippled in rings
of sand and blood as he walked with her, slowly, her fallen
and moving shape the fork of a divining rod, her body shaking
with each of his steps, and for water, shaking to find
that deep and secret tributary. I have dreams of letting go
of water, of waking my lover to a bed of my urine

as my brother did to me, his thin limbs shaking to discover
the shame of his inside self. And what did we know that to have
an inside wet enough to free was luxury? The boy
walks with his mother—he is only thirteen—the age I learned
to stroke on the toilet the blood off my fingers, and he can-
not cry, because to cry would mean the waste of his own
wetness, to cry would mean to stop, to think, to differentiate
the liquids moving down his face, to cry would mean
to cry, so he goes on, and—this is a common story, the boy
is not a boy now but every boy we have ever known—people
find him, they help him to lift his mother onto their hands,
their necks, they lift her to their own dark and desperate
dryness, and they make it, yes, when they make it over the border
to a mall parking lot, they lay her down, they fall with her
body as a clump of bodies behind a city
dumpster, and people make calls from behind windows, not
to the immigrants with the dying core, but to the police, who come
with their handcuffs and call her *dead*. No. To call
would be to give her life a name. Roundness to where there are
now only angles. To call would be to remember all
the other times that he has called for her, and the boy plugs his
ears, shakes his head, doesn't know that he cannot physically
produce tears anymore—such thirst can rid us of these symbols—
only that now there are mouths around him calling other names
as men run and other men give chase, because how much do you need
to give up in order to stay? a boy? a mother? your land and inner
land? Nothing. Nothing can be given, and he will remember
nothing as he sits in a cell waiting for his sister to come to release
him from his cellular pain. He will only remember water, that want
for the clouds to let go their rain, and how seeing

them dropping, he kept pulling forward, their bodies steady towards that
dark, uneven line.

(Pimentel, 2017).

In this poem, Sasha Pimentel describes the desperation and pain of those who are forced to flee their homes and endure the journeys in search of safety and a better life. Through the poem, Sasha weaves together narratives of loss, employing descriptions like that of the boy dragging his mother's body across the dessert, not wanting to cry because he cannot have the luxury of wasting water, only to left her on a city dumpster after crossing the border. And after the people notice the body, the author points out: "to call [the police] would

be to give her life a name", recognizing that most of the migrants' stories are soon hidden under numbers and statistics, not recognizing their stories.

Lastly, Martín Espada's poem *Floaters*, took inspiration of the deaths of Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez (25), and his young daughter, Angie Valeria, whose bodies were found in the water along the Rio Grande on June 24, 2019, after they tried to cross the river. Here is an extract from the poem:

> Like a beer bottle thrown into the river by a boy too drunk to cry,
> like the shard of a Styrofoam cup drained of coffee brown as the river,
> like the plank of a fishing boat broken in half by the river, the dead float.
> And the dead have a name: *floaters*, say the men of the Border Patrol,
> keeping watch all night by the river, hearts pumping coffee as they say
> the word *floaters*, soft as a bubble, hard as a shoe as it nudges the body,
> to see if it breathes, to see if it moans, to see if it sits up and speaks.
>
> And the dead have names, a feast day parade of names, names that
> dress all in red, names that twirl skirts, names that blow whistles,
> names that shake rattles, names that sing in praise of the saints:
> Say *Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez.* Say *Angie Valeria Martínez Ávalos*.
> See how they rise off the tongue, the calling of bird to bird somewhere
> in the trees above our heads, trilling in the dark heart of the leaves (Espada, 2021).

Through this poem, Martín Espada explores the realities of death and migration, comparing their dead bodies to everyday objects such as a beer bottle and a Styrofoam cup in order to underscore the dehumanization and objectification of these individuals in the eyes

of those who view them as simply "floaters", and then, he focus on giving the names of the dead. In this poem is a sense of urgency and desperation to remember these individuals and to honor their lives. The use of the Border Patrol as a framing device underscores the political and social context in which these deaths occur, as well as the complex and often complicit role played by those tasked with policing the border.

Next, we will review some of the artistic expressions, starting with *The Border Wall in Tijuana. Photographic Prints of the Art Oblations/Interventions in Memory of the Dead Migrants 1999-2021*. A photo-essay made with the compilation of different photographs that expose "sociocultural and artistic guerrillas against the strategic oblivion promoted by the governments of the U.S. and Mexico towards the deaths of migrants and the border walls as necro-artefacts in which art, solidarity and memory meet[15]" (Meneses, 2022). Through his work, he documented "the impact of the wall on the clandestine mobility of migrants in the border area" (Meneses, 2022), and

> aspire to circulate freely as symbols of memory and denunciation of the tragedies of irregular migrants, undocumented because they do not carry passports and visas, clandestine because they have to hide from authorities insensitive to injustice. The images also show examples of street and urban art, condemned by nature to the elements, which degrades it and makes it ephemeral, to keep alive the memory of the migrants who died at the border. The repeated

[15] The photo-essay can be found on the next link: https://encartes.mx/en/ensayos-fotograficos/alonso-tijuana-muro-intervenciones-artisticas-memoria-migrantes-muertos/. Among the photos there is a collection called *llaga y necroexpositor, 11 años de Guardían y altar*, among others.

> denunciation is: how many more, how many more deaths, how many more dead migrants are needed to find a solution? (Meneses, 2022).

Throughout the photo essay, Guillermo Alonso Meneses show us the pictures that he took on the border, and also tell us the story behind it and what it represents. He recapitulates several moments through history by telling us about the deaths and the ongoing events, also explains some of the symbolism on the photos, like the crosses and flowers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Cruces, photo from Guillermo's photo essay

Photo by Guillermo Alonso Meneses, Playas de Tijuana, October/November 2009.

With the same objective but with a different process, the Portland State University opened an exhibit called *Terrain 94* on April 20, 2022, hosted by the Anthropology Department. The purpose was to honor migrants deaths across the Northern Mexican border, it consisted "of a large wall map of the U.S. Mexico border with ~3,200 tags pinned to it, representing migrants who died during the crossing due to inhumane border policies between 1994 and the present day. Each tag is filled out by volunteers" (Portland State University, 2022) (See Figure 3).

Figure 3

Terrain 94, close up to the art exhibit

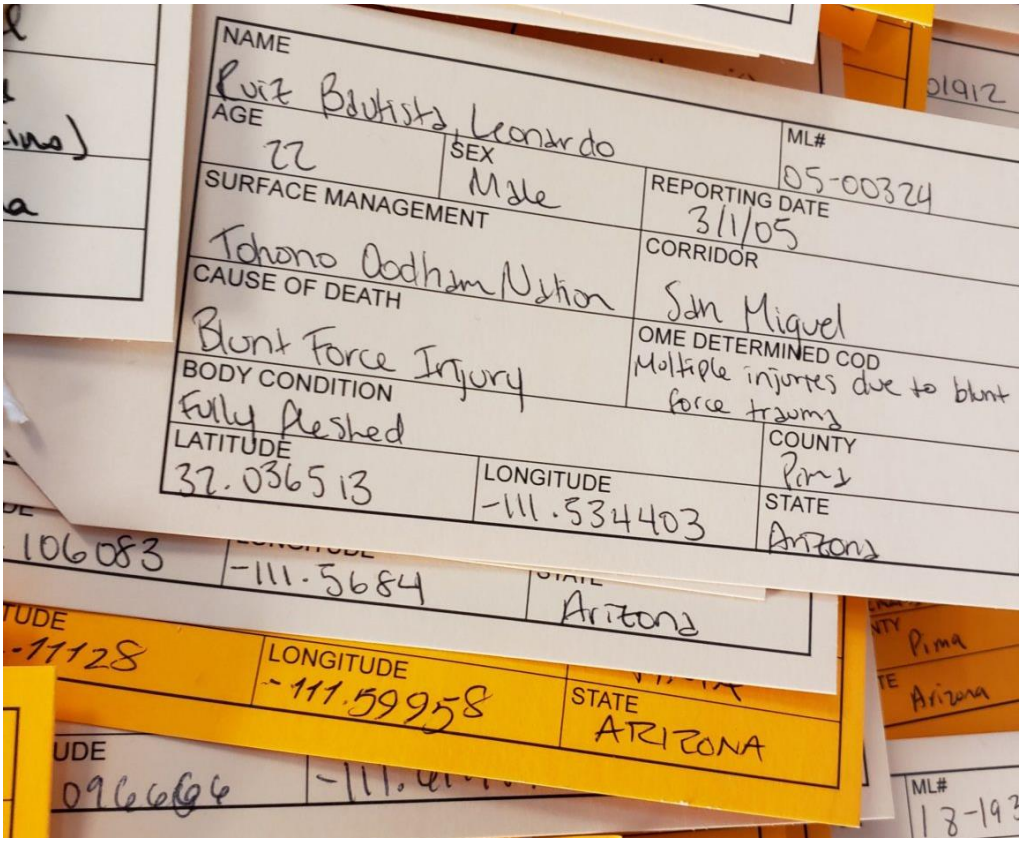


Photo by Tom Travis, 2021.

By showcasing an approximate of the number of deaths that have occurred over the years, the exhibit draws attention to the human cost of policies that prioritize border security over the well-being and safety of migrants. The use of tags is a particularly effective way to represent the migrants who have lost their lives. The tags are personal and tangible, and they serve as a reminder that each of the more or less 3,200 individuals represented on the map, portraying them as a unique human being with hopes, dreams, and loved ones.

And once again, with the same objective but with a different process, John Craig Freeman used Google Earth to make the *Border Memorial: Frontera de los Muertos*, "an augmented reality public art project and memorial, dedicated to the thousands of migrant workers who have died along the U.S./Mexico border in recent years trying to cross the desert southwest in search of work and a better life" (Freeman, n.d.). It is built for smartphones and uses "geolocation software to superimpose individual augments at the precise GPS coordinates of each recorded death, enabling the public to see the objects integrated into the physical location as if they existed in the real world[16]" (Freeman, n.d.).

This is a notable project for its focus on the human stories behind the statistics. By incorporating images and information about individual migrants who have lost their lives, the project reminds viewers that each person who attempts to cross the border is a unique individual with a story to tell. The use of augmented reality technology is particularly

[16] Instructions to access the project: you have to install the free Layar Augmented Reality Browser and then scan the QR code that can be seen in the following link: https://bordermemorial.wordpress.com/border-memorial-frontera-de-los-muertos/. The instructions are on the link as well.

effective in this context, as it allows viewers to see the virtual memorial in a way that feels both tangible and otherworldly. Figure 4 shows some screenshots of the project.

Figure 4

Screenshots of Border Memorial: Frontera de los Muertos

Took from the Project Description of Freeman, n.d.

Finally, Maite Zubiaurre from the University of California in Los Angeles, led the creation of *Mujer Migrante Memorial*, a mural and accompanying website[17] with the objective to pay respect to remains of women found near the Mexican-United States border. On the mural, the names of different women are written on "389 pink and purple wooden crosses affixed to a 90-foot panoramic backdrop of cacti, sand and desert brush" (Adamo, 2021). On the other hand, the website "includes poetry, background information and statistics and photos. There's also a map that indicates the exact locations where remains were recovered" (Adamo, 2021).

[17] Link to the website: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5a0f3d3b42634812b33ae64b1924cd9a.

As promised, we will finish this chapter with some acts of resistance from the civil society and some human rights organizations. First, we will start with those of the civil society, however, some were mentioned before, like the vigil to the death of the 53 migrants in Texas. Another action would be the celebration of a *misa* on the Rio Grande, between Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, in memory of dead migrants. According to the priest Francisco Javier Calvillo, director of the Casa del Migrante in Ciudad Juárez, which houses some 400 people, the objective was "to pray for the deceased migrants, but also to raise their voices for everything that is happening with Venezuelans, Haitians, Africans, who are seeking asylum or refuge in the United States" (AFP, 2022).

We can say that those are forms of resistance because they are remembering the dead, they humanize the dehumanized migrants by the discourse of the other. On the vigils and religious ceremonies they often tell the stories of the migrants who died, or their own experiences as migrants. Thus, they challenge necropolitics by not forgetting the 'disposables' of the society. On the other hand, the human rights organizations also contribute to this labor, and again, some actions from them were mentioned before, like the labor that Doctors Without Borders did by giving medical attention to the migrants, or Sin Fronteras by contributing to the "promotion, protection, and defense of Human Rights of migrants… to dignify their life conditions" (Sin Fronteras, n.d.). Also, actions from organizations like the CNDH, which often promote the protection of human rights not only from migrants, but from the population living in Mexico.

In conclusion, Chapter three recuperates different testimonies from migrants and their families, which exposed the difficulties they have to live day by day. Some of them ended

up scared to even set a foot out the migrant shelters, others could not tell their own stories, but their families had to do it. We also understood the reasons that some of them have to leave their countries, and what they are looking for on their destinations. Also, through poems, photos, murals, and digital projects, we could revise the resistance that migrants and non-migrants made with the purpose of challenge necropolitics, to remember those who are often forgotten.

Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, through the thesis we could demonstrate the existence of necropolitical tools towards the migrant population in the northern Mexican border, and how the creation of a narrative of 'us' vs 'them' affects the migrants. In Chapter 1, we observed events of securitization on the border, realizing that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, besides securitization through militarization, there also exists securitization of health. In this case, the *war machines* purpose is to avoid migrants from living on the border or crossing it, and it is through violence, detentions, denial of healthcare, and other necropolitical tools that *war machines* deal with migrants. In addition, the State can use these tools directly or indirectly in order to get rid –or try to do it– of the population that considers disposable.

Next, on Chapter 2, we put numbers on the migration flows, this chapter helped us to record the approximate quantity of migrants that cross the country to either cross to the United States or to stay at the border, we get to know their ages, their gender, and some of the types of violence they encountered in Mexican territory. We discovered that the majority of migrants were men, mostly on ages from 20 to 34, which are related to labor migration.

This chapter also exposed the existence of *war machines* because the violence that the migrants experienced were either the *war machines* themselves, or necropolitical tools that these *war machines* normally use.

Finally, on Chapter 3, we deepened into the reasons that migrants had to leave their countries. We discovered that gang violence, especially from the Mara Salvatrucha, was the main reason they left, this *war machine* took advantage from the people in order to have resources. And when people did not want to be a part of it, or could no longer continuing paying the imposed taxes, became disposable, thus, either killed or forced to leave their countries. Also, we realized that on Mexican territory, their suffering did not stop, because other necropolitical tools were against them. Overall, the State, organized crime, inhumane conditions, and natural and climate resources, were the main problems that they had to face on their journey. Chapter 3 also exposed the existence of forms of resistance to necropolitics, and why it is important to continue with them.

The recommendations that can be made to the government, non-governmental organizations, and society in general are the following:

First, the government should improve funding on programs to manage migration and respond to the needs of the migrants. Commitment from the migration authorities, National Guard, and the military is needed.

Second, the government should enable and strengthen the already existing cooperation mechanisms that deal with the migrants, in order to guarantee their safety and human rights.

Third, the Mexican government should coordinate efforts between governments, especially from the United States, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, in order to facilitate governance in migrations.

Fourth, along with the third point, bilateral and multilateral forums should continue, including migrants, civil society, and specialized organizations on the topic should be a priority on the forums.

Fifth, common protocols on migration should be created and respected by the governments, including their military and other authorities.

Sixth, civil society should continue their labors to sensitize the public about the problems that migrants face on their journey through Mexico, in order to dismantle the narrative of the other.

Seventh, civil society should continue their humanitarian labor, and the government should provide them resources or help from specialists on the matter, depending on the needs of the organization.

Eighth, human rights organizations should continue their labors on making reports of human rights violations, at the same time, create programs or protocols for migrants to know their rights, and the processes to denounce human rights violations.

Finally, one of the limitations of the thesis is that we did not have the real statistics of the undocumented migrants, due to their nature. That is why all of the statistics were based on approximations, and the results may vary. Another limitation was the fact that the Emif

North changed the methodology of the survey in 2018, thus it suddenly presented different data in 2018 and 2019. COVID-19 was also a big limitation, not only for the present thesis, but also for the organizations and their labor of compilation of data, due to the quarantine, losses, and lack of resources. Thereby, some recommendation for future research would be to obtaining more accurate data during the pandemic, and how it changed the necropolitics on Mexico. Another research could focus on the psychological consequences of necropolitics on migrants, from the moment they are displaced to the journey they make.

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