



## Gatekeeper Countries

### Key to Stopping Illegal Immigration

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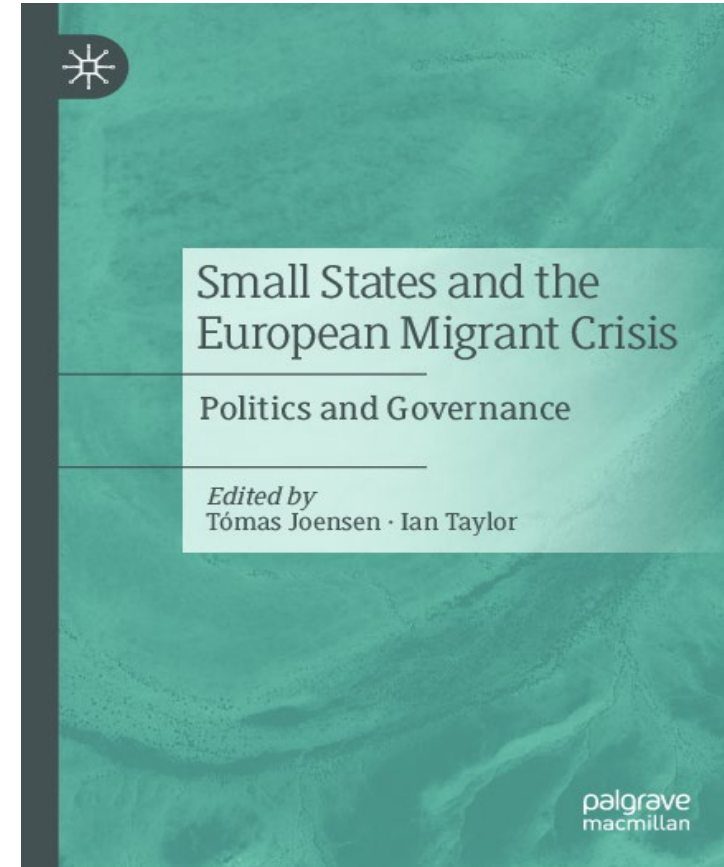


# Research question and hypothesis

- US (FY 2022): 2,2 illegal border crossings in SW – EU (2022): 330,000
- Why there is so significant difference? For the EU:
  - more open borders (sea)
  - a prolonged crisis since 2013
  - Huge crises in the direct neighborhood (state collapses, civil wars, food inflation, economic woes)
  - Lack of consensus
- The answer is perhaps not the EU and Europe itself, but its collaboration with other countries: the gatekeepers

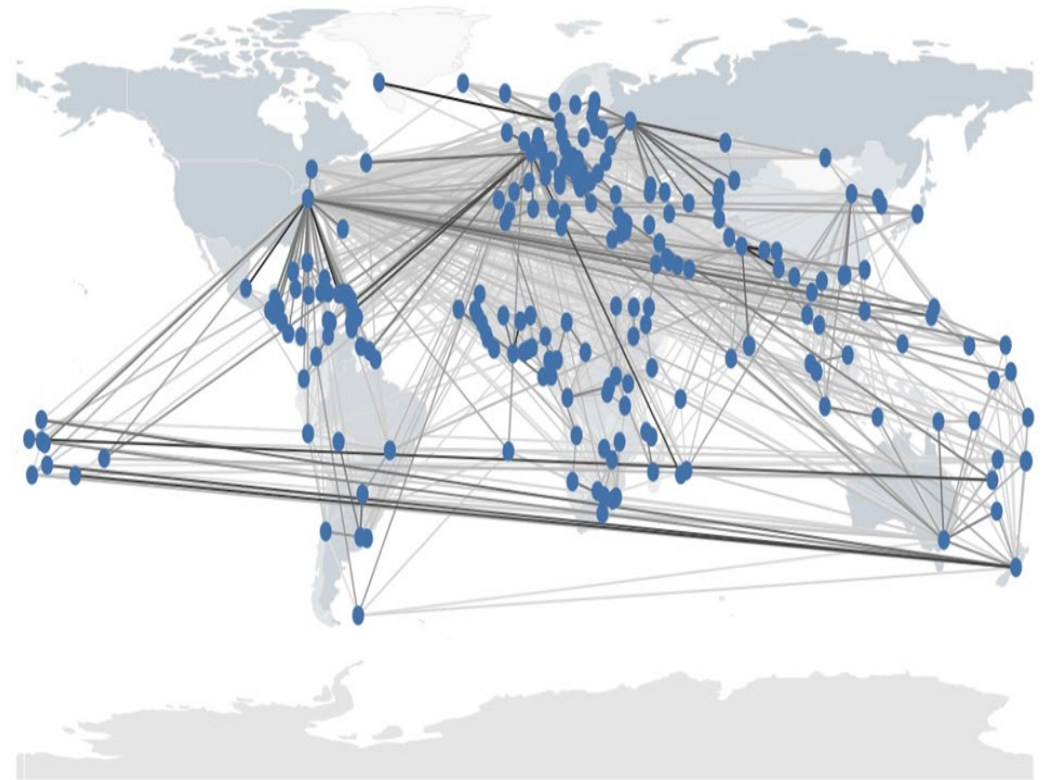
# A conceptual framework

- Old in practice and policy, new and almost unknown in Migration Studies
- What is *not* gatekeeping in this context
  - Gatekeeper States in Africa (Frederick Cooper)
  - Operation Gatekeeper (1994)
  - Dana Lusa: Small EU countries as gatekeepers



# A conceptual framework

- Geographic approach
  - Countries of origin – **transit countries** – countries of destination
- Thematic approach
  - Migration critic/realist – stopping/reducing the number of irregular arrivals
  - Externalization - outsourcing
  - Securitization – not only opportunities and humanitarianism – threats and challenges also
- Policy practice
  - EU and European states – but also the US



# A conceptual framework

- Gatekeeper countries are entities
  - On transit routes towards countries/regions of destination
  - Relatively close – in most cases, in the direct neighborhood – to the countries/regions of destination (Niger?)
  - With some capacities and intentions to mitigate the flow of illegal mass immigration
  - They can be also countries of origin – but it is not their main characteristics (how can they help to stop third country citizens?)
- Turkey, Morocco, Niger, Libya, Serbia – Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras

# Practical considerations

- It is almost impossible to defend a single border
- EU and US: who get in, stay (EU: 80-85% chance) – repatriation, voluntary return, resettlement and deportation are ineffective –
- outsourcing of long and costly asylum procedures
- Lower expenditures for maintenance
- Power of deterrence
- Higher possibility for return (close to their home)
- More familiar cultural, social and historical patterns

# Practical considerations

- A wide toolkit – negotiation between states
  - diplomacy; foreign policy; defense policy; development assistance; trade; humanitarian assistance
- Stick and Carrot
  - Migrant Protection Protocols
  - EU-Turkey Statement
- Win-win – Assistance to stop arrivals in the neighboring country
  - Austria – Hungary – Serbia Agreement October 2022
  - UK-France Agreement March 2023
  - Southern Border Plan 2014/5
  - US-Guatemala Cooperation (CBP)



# Implementation

- The EU and member states
  - Long historical tradition: invasions from the peripheries of Europe (Huns, Germans, Arabs, Vikings, Hungarians, Mongols, Ottomans; Russians)
  - Colonization
  - Cooperation with the gatekeepers is the part of strategic thinking
  - Libya, Morocco (since the early 2000s); Turkey, Egypt, Niger (2016)
    - In Egypt: at least 9 million immigrants and refugees (three millions more than before COVID-19)
    - Libya: between 660,000 and 1.5 million
    - Turkey: almost 4 million Syrian refugees and 0.7-1.2 million immigrants from other countries (Afghanistan, Iraq) – for 9.5 billion EUR (10.3. billion USD) since 2016
    - Morocco prevented 40,000 illegal crossings in 2022 – for 500 million EUR



# Implementation

- And the US?
  - It is a relatively new challenge (1980s)
  - Ocean Shield concept – and limited geopolitical attention towards the South
  - Some efforts and new recognitions (MPP, SBP) – Root causes; Darien-agreement – but there is no systematic approach

Long-term solution is unimaginable without gatekeepers

Both the EU and the US should focus on more gatekeepers and win-win situations

Thank you for your  
attention!

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