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Abstract (English)

Migration is one of the defining issues of our time. In the recent past, political actors have repeatedly tried to exert pressure on the European Union and its member states through migration. This paper examines, through two recent case studies, the susceptibility of the European Union to this form of political coercion. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the strategies of the aggressors, as well as the countermeasures of the EU and its member states. Finally, taking into account the lessons learned, those factors that particularly contribute to the susceptibility of the EU will be highlighted. Finally, approaches are presented to increase the political resilience of the Union against this form of coercion.

Abstract (German)

Migration ist eines der bestimmenden Themen unserer Zeit. In der jüngeren Vergangenheit haben politische Akteure mit Hilfe von Migration immer wieder versucht Druck auf die Europäische Union und ihre Mitgliedsstaaten auszuüben. In dieser Arbeit wird, anhand zweier aktueller Fallbeispiele, die Anfälligkeit der Europäischen Union gegenüber dieser Form des politischen Zwangs untersucht. Dabei wird ein besonderes Augenmerk auf die Analyse der Strategien der Aggressoren, sowie die Gegenmaßnahmen der EU und ihrer Mitgliedsstaaten gelegt. Unter Berücksichtigung der gewonnenen Erkenntnisse, werden schließlich jene Faktoren aufgezeigt, die besonders zur Anfälligkeit der EU beitragen. Abschließend werden Ansätze vorgestellt, um die politische Widerstandsfähigkeit der Union gegen diese Form des Zwangs zu erhöhen.

Pledge of Honesty

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Alexander Schelischansky

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Introduction and relevance of the subject

Current and historical perspectives on migration in Europe

While authoring this thesis, Europe finds itself amidst the largest refugee crisis after World War II. As a result of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, as of June 2022, more than 4.7 million people have fled to neighboring countries, with a vast majority going to central and eastern European states like Poland, Romania, and Hungary.¹ Once again, Europe faces the consequences of a brutal war. Besides the current developments in Ukraine, the 21st century has already repeatedly proven to be filled with fundamental challenges for mankind. Most prominently, climate change and, recently, the Covid-19 pandemic reminded us that even highly developed societies are not immune from the challenges of our time. In recent years, one issue that has been particularly visible and highly politicized in North America and Europe is migration. Migration played a role in many European internal and external political events in the recent past. For example, one of the major arguments by pro-Brexit parties was the free migration of European workers to the British labor market.² As Brexit fundamentally changed the face of the European Union, also the rise of right-wing populist parties did. The German “Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)” reached 12.6 % in the federal elections of 2017 and entered the German Bundestag for the first time.³ On the first ballot of the French presidential elections of 2017, the right-wing extremist Marine Le Pen was separated by less than 2 % from the current French president Emmanuel Macron. While Macron won the second ballot with a clear two-thirds majority, it became clear that larger parts of the population were in support of far-right positions in France.⁴ France and Germany were chosen as examples as their political orientation is most significant for the future of the European Union. But similar developments could be observed in Austria when the right-wing populist “Freedom Party (FPÖ)” became part of the coalition after receiving more than a quarter of the votes in 2017.⁵ All of the examples

¹ UNHCR, “Ukraine Refugee Situation,” accessed June 7, 2022, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.260570767.365248914.1649056358-942087003.1649056358&_gac=1.117190004.1649056358.CjwKCAjwrqqSBhBbEiwAlQeqGt3smOXD6bRMPGnqAZG1rLwGPVd5OAg5y_R65OtvhskpWjfpKE84VRoCduoQAvD_BwE.

² Rohit Sudarshan, “Understanding the Brexit Vote: The Impact of Polish Immigrants on Euroscepticism,” *Humanity in Action* (blog), 2016, https://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledge_detail/understanding-the-brexit-vote-the-impact-of-polish-immigrants-on-euroscepticism/.

³ Bundeswahlleiter, “Bundestagswahl 2017: Endgültiges Ergebnis,” October 12, 2017, https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/info/presse/mitteilungen/bundestagswahl-2017/34_17_endgueltiges_ergebnis.html.

⁴ Ministère de l’Intérieur, “Résultats de l’élection présidentielle 2017,” http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle-2017, accessed April 4, 2022, http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Presidentielles/elecresult__presidentielle-2017.

⁵ Bundesministerium für Inneres, “Nationalratswahl 2017,” accessed April 4, 2022, https://www.bmi.gv.at/412/Nationalratswahlen/Nationalratswahl_2017/start.aspx.

mentioned above are from the year 2017 and therefore in relative proximity to the unfolding of the European migrant crisis which started in 2015. While the reasons for the rise of right-wing populism are manifold, the recent influx of migrants and refugees certainly played a central role.⁶ This shows that migration can have significant consequences for political systems in liberal democracies.

However, migration is not a modern phenomenon. Throughout history, Europe has repeatedly been exposed to high levels of immigration and exodus. With the exploration and settlement of the new world, many Europeans were seeking a more liberal life away from the political repression of European state systems at the time. But also, *within* Europe, migration movements were common. In this regard, the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s triggered a large number of refugees.⁷ Many of them permanently resettled in other regions of Europe and significantly shaped their destination countries' demographic structure and economy up until today. Since the establishment of the common European market and the Schengen system within the institutionalized framework of the European Union, principles like the freedom of establishment allow and encourage the free movement of European citizens. Therefore, migration became a matter of European politics. With the relative stability and prosperity that persists in Europe since the Yugoslav Wars, the migration dynamics on the continent have shifted. Europe has become an attractive destination for refugees and migrants from regions of turmoil, war, and oppression in recent years. The vast majority of people were displaced due to armed conflicts, persecution, unemployment, and other push factors.⁸ This development peaked with what became known as the European migrant crisis when in 2015, over 1.3 million applications for asylum were filed in the member states of the EU.⁹ In absolute numbers, the countries most affected in 2015 were Germany (745,000 applications) followed by Italy (123,000) and France (84,000). But also smaller member states like Austria, with 42,000 applications for asylum, were, in relation to their population, quite heavily affected.¹⁰ Besides the humanitarian dimension, the 2015 crisis also had far-reaching political consequences. It led

⁶ Lars Geiges, "Wie die AfD im Kontext der „Flüchtlingskrise“ mobilisierte. Eine empirisch-qualitative Untersuchung der „Herbstoffensive 2015“,“ *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 28, no. 1 (March 1, 2018): 49–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41358-018-0126-3>.

⁷ United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, "U.S. Committee for Refugees World Refugee Survey 1998 - Yugoslavia," January 1, 1998, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a8b92c.html>.

⁸ European Parliament, "Exploring Migration Causes – Why People Migrate," January 7, 2020, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/world/20200624STO81906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate>.

⁹ European Parliament, "A Welcoming Europe?," n.d., https://www.europarl.europa.eu/infographic/welcoming-europe/index_en.html.

¹⁰ Ibid.

to a polarization between pro and counter migration factions in societies and among the heads of European states and governments.¹¹ While some member states¹² took a relatively liberal stance, accepting the vast majority of refugees and migrants during the crisis, others¹³ systematically refused to open their borders.¹⁴ This dividing line within the EU exists until today and is the reason for many political blockades and deadlocks in policy areas that go beyond migration. Also, outside the political sphere of Europe, there is widespread agreement that migration poses an issue on “planetary scale”¹⁵. The most elaborate, comprehensive, and prominent development agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, established by the United Nations, reflects on migration in Goal 10 and underlines the severity of the issue. Since 2010, the proportion of the global population who are refugees has more than doubled. In 2020, 311 out of 100,000 persons were refugees.¹⁶ In most cases, migration movements are the byproduct or result of man-made or natural crises. One major factor for a future increase in migration is expected to be climate change. Conflicts about water, living space and scarce goods have the potential to result in even larger migration movements.¹⁷ The question of what leads to migration is multilayered and complex and shall not be at the center of the respective thesis project. However, the awareness that migration is a major issue of our time and will likely increase in the future is necessary to comprehend the relevance of the thesis.

The securitization of migration

In a survey from 2018, Germans were asked about what they believe to be the three greatest dangers to democracy. While 47 % indicated right-wing extremism, 27 % stated that migrants are the predominant danger to democracy.¹⁸ This shows that migration is perceived as a security threat by certain parts of society. It will be subsequently argued that the concept of securitization supports the explanation of this observation. Looking into the question of how and why

¹¹ “Flüchtlingspolitik: Der EU-Gipfel beginnt mit einem Streit,” *FAZ.NET*, accessed June 7, 2022, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/der-eu-gipfel-beginnt-mit-streit-um-fluechtlingspolitik-15340939.html>.

¹² Most prominently Germany.

¹³ Especially central European member states.

¹⁴ Deutsche Welle, “5 EU States Urge Others to Take in More Migrants,” March 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/5-eu-states-urge-others-to-take-in-more-migrants/a-56940912>.

¹⁵ Arthur L. Dahl, Augusto Lopez-Claros, and Maja Groff, eds., “The Challenges of the 21st Century,” in *Global Governance and the Emergence of Global Institutions for the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 3–29, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/global-governance-and-the-emergence-of-global-institutions-for-the-21st-century/challenges-of-the-21st-century/429DCB93303BFD26F788902FC68E4D0E>.

¹⁶ United Nations, “Goal 10 - Reduce Inequality within and among Countries,” n.d., <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>.

¹⁷ Dahl, Lopez-Claros, and Groff, “The Challenges of the 21st Century.”

¹⁸ Lisa Inhoffen, “Die Hälfte der Deutschen sieht die Demokratie in Gefahr,” September 12, 2019, <https://yougov.de/news/2019/09/12/die-halfte-der-deutschen-sieht-die-demokratie-gefa/>.

migration became a securitized matter further contributes to a better understanding of the paper's scope and the aim.

The nexus between migration and societal security was introduced by Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, Morten Kelstrup, and Pierre Lemaitre in 1993.¹⁹ As the name indicates, societal security focuses on society instead of the state as the referent object. A shared identity characterizes societies. Societal security is threatened if other identities challenge the prevailing shared identity. The constructivist conceptual framework of societal security and securitization led to a new understanding of security in the post-Cold War era. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the omission of the ongoing nuclear terror, the threat perception of European societies shifted and diversified. Migrants and refugees were increasingly perceived as endangering cultural values, exploiting social assistance, and jeopardizing public safety and health. The authors even find migration to be the main societal threat in the western hemisphere after the end of the cold war.²⁰ The Copenhagen school developed the term “securitization” based on societal security. It is described as “a more extreme version of politicization”²¹ and defined as a speech act characterized by three criteria. First, an actor states that a referent object is existentially threatening. Second, the right to take extraordinary countermeasures to deal with the existential threat is claimed. Third, the actor convinces an audience that rule-breaking behavior to counter the threat is necessary and justified.²² What is critical to understand is the relative and constructivist nature of securitization. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde emphasize this as follows:

That quality is the staging of existential issues in politics to lift them above politics. In security discourse, an issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of supreme priority; thus, by labeling it as security, an agent claims a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means. For the analyst to grasp this act, the task is not to assess some objective threats that “really” endanger some object to be defended or secured; rather, it is to understand the processes of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat.²³

¹⁹ Ole Waever, Barry Buzan, and Pierre Lemaitre, eds., *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, 1. publ (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Pub, 1998).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Therefore, the question is not if migration is a “real” danger but the understanding that it is now primarily perceived as a societal threat. The negative consequences of securitization on the rights of refugees, the rule of law, and shared European values were broadly discussed in the literature.²⁴ However, for the scope of this thesis, the perception of migration as a threat due to systematic securitization is a key finding to build on.

The use of migration movements as a policy tool against the EU

Among scholars, it is commonly acknowledged that migration is an issue on a global scale. However, the approaches to potential solutions are diverse and contradicting. One question that comes up repeatedly in the context of this thesis is whether a “solution” for migration is needed at all. Maybe migration can also be seen as a natural phenomenon that increases and decreases like the tide. Humans have never sought to resolve tides but accepted them as a natural reality. Nevertheless, both tides and migration come with difficulties and challenges that need to be addressed. In the past decades, Europe was repeatedly confronted with a phenomenon in close connection with the existence of migration. State actors, especially along the European borders, used migration to put political pressure on the EU and its member states. A state or non-state actor can purposely use migrants and refugees as an instrument to strengthen negotiation positions and gain political leverage through exercising a specific form of coercion. In IR theory, this phenomenon was first comprehensively described by Kelly M. Greenhill as coercive engineered migration (CEM).²⁵ Greenhill has shown that this political method was, especially in the period after World War II, more frequently used than one might expect. Examples of recent cases where the EU was exposed to attempts of CEM include the cases of Libya in 2004 and 2006 under Gaddafi, Turkey in 2016, and Belarus in 2002, 2004 and 2021.²⁶

While the general theoretical framework of coercive engineered migration is subsequently discussed in more detail, the question arises of how CEM has affected the EU. The research in the respective thesis focuses on the question of the extent of exposure and vulnerability of the European Union to coercive engineered migration. This also includes the sub-question of whether the EU’s sui generis nature makes it more vulnerable to coercive engineered migration.

²⁴ See, for instance, Idil Atak and François Crépeau, “The Securitization of Asylum and Human Rights in Canada and the European Union,” in *Contemporary Issues in Refugee Law*, by Satvinder Juss and Colin Harvey (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013), 227–57, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782547662.00018>; Jef Huysmans, “The European Union and the Securitization of Migration,” *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 38, no. 5 (December 2000): 751–77, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00263>.

²⁵ Kelly M. Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*, Cornell paperbacks, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca London: Cornell University Press, 2016).

²⁶ Ibid.

After a thorough analysis of the implications of the given phenomenon on the EU, the findings and insights are used to carve out the main factors that influence vulnerability and resilience and develop approaches to lower the Union's susceptibility. An aspect that is to be explored and that is connected to the above-stated research question, is the subject of how the diversity of thoughts, convictions, and values among European leaders affect its resilience against outside foreign political interventions like migration-driven coercion²⁷. When dealing with the EU, it is necessary to consider the distribution of power and competencies between the Union and its member states. This consideration is taken into account when developing potential solutions. Subsequently, not only the question of how to deal with coercive engineered migration is covered but also what the EU can do within its legal framework and how much power remains at the member state level. The importance of the research question is based firstly on the observation that the European Union was repeatedly identified as a target of coercive engineered migration and secondly, the assumption that migration movements towards Europe, as a "conditio sine qua non" for this phenomenon, will continue if not increase in the future. Based on the conviction that science shall contribute to resolving the problems of our time, the respective thesis covers a recent and fundamental challenge of the European Union.

Coercive engineered migration: concepts, roles, and definitions

A classification of CEM in IR studies

The main concepts used in this research project are neither particularly new nor extremely specific. Terms like securitization, reputational costs, or methods of coercion are well known and frequently applied in IR studies. The approach to answering the research question applies well-proven concepts and methods to a specific subject, namely the European Union. To migration there are so many approaches, viewpoints, and subordinate concepts that further specification is necessary to limit the scope. The model of CEM deals with migration from one particular viewpoint, namely how it can be used to perform pressure on a political actor. Therefore, Greenhill's theory of CEM serves as a basis. Building on her findings, more recent papers contribute to the existing literature with additional arguments and opinions. Indeed, quite some scholars have complemented and further developed the primary theoretical basis by Greenhill since it was first published in 2010. Aras has analyzed engineered Syrian mass

²⁷ Migration-driven coercion is used interchangeably with the term coercive engineered migration.

migration in the EU-Turkey relations.²⁸ Adamson and Tsourapas have contributed to the development of the concept of migration diplomacy, which has certain overlaps with the theory of migration-driven coercion.²⁹ A connection between migration and diplomacy was also made by Thiollet³⁰ or Oyen³¹, as they have applied the concept to case studies in the Arab world, as well as the US-China relations.³² In addition, Greenhill herself has further elaborated on coercion in international politics³³ and has, similar to Aras, applied the framework of coercive engineered migration to the case of the EU-Turkey migration deal.³⁴ Since the research project concentrates on Europe, it makes sense to complement the used literature with works on the topic of EU migration policy. Especially after the 2015 migration crisis, there was a strong scientific focus on the subject, and numerous papers were published.³⁵

It has already been questioned to what extent migration can be politically influenced at all. This approach has also been pursued among experts. Bossong, for example, argues that comprehensive border control is an illusion.³⁶ Consequently, the question arises as to what extent migration policies actually influence migration flows. Among scholars, this question is disputed, yet strong arguments are being made for a general overestimation of the effects of

²⁸ Nefise Ela Gokalp Aras, “Coercive Engineered Syrian Mass Migration in the Turkey Relations: A Case Analysis for Future Reference,” *International Migration* 57, no. 2 (April 2019): 186–99, <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12566>.

²⁹ Fiona B Adamson and Gerasimos Tsourapas, “Migration Diplomacy in World Politics,” *International Studies Perspectives* 20, no. 2 (May 1, 2019): 113–28, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/eky015>.

³⁰ With a specific focus on Arab regional politics.

³¹ Concentrating on migration diplomacy between China and the US during the Cold War period.

³² Helene Thiollet, “Migration as Diplomacy: Labor Migrants, Refugees, and Arab Regional Politics in the Oil-Rich Countries,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 79 (2011): 103–21; Meredith Oyen, *The Diplomacy of Migration: Transnational Lives and the Making of U.S.-Chinese Relations in the Cold War*, The United States in the World (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

³³ Kelly M. Greenhill and Peter Krause, eds., *Coercion: The Power to Hurt in International Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁴ Kelly M. Greenhill, “Open Arms Behind Barred Doors: Fear, Hypocrisy and Policy Schizophrenia in the European Migration Crisis: European Migration Crisis,” *European Law Journal* 22, no. 3 (May 2016): 317–32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/eulj.12179>.

³⁵ See, for instance, Hugo Brady, “Europe’s Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko,” December 15, 2021, <https://www.icmpd.org/blog/2021/europe-s-sharper-edges-eu-migration-policy-after-lukashenko>; Natasja Reslow, “Horizontal and Vertical Diversity: Unintended Consequences of EU External Migration Policy,” *The International Spectator* 54, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2019.1548840>; Alex Barker and Duncan Robinson, “Migration to Top Agenda as EU Rethinks Diplomacy: ‘Partnership Framework,’” *Financial Times*, June 6, 2016, 1802068698, ABI/INFORM Collection; Grigore Silasi, Monica Boldea, and Ovidiu Simina, “POLICY AND DIPLOMACY ON MIGRATION IN THE E.U.,” *Quaestus*, no. 9 (June 2016): 115–30; İbrahim İrdem and Yavor Raychev, “Syrian Mass Migration in the 2015 EU Refugee Crisis: A Hybrid Threat or Chance for Implementing Migration Diplomacy?,” *Insight Turkey* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2021): 235–58, <https://doi.org/10.25253/99.2021232.13>.

³⁶ Bossong was interviewed in, Kim Son Hoang, “EU-Asylpolitik zwischen Illusion und Abschreckung,” *DER STANDARD*, accessed April 8, 2022, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000130592756/eu-asylpolitik-zwischen-illusion-und-abschreckung>.

migration policies on migration flows.³⁷ Bhagwati argues that “paradoxically, the ability to control migration has shrunk as the desire to do so has increased. The reality is that borders are beyond control and little can be done to really cut down on immigration.”³⁸ Czaika and De Haas find that migration policy is ineffective due to three “gaps”: the discursive gap: the gap between public discourse and actual migration policies on paper; the implementation gap: the gap between migration policies on paper and their actual implementation in practice; and the efficacy gap: the gap between migration policy objectives and their actual impacts on migration flows.³⁹ Considering the developments of EU migration policy in recent years,⁴⁰ it becomes clear that the framework by Czaika and De Haas describes the flaws and shortcomings quite accurately. Other scholars find that immigration policies have an important effect on immigration flows and that comprehensive border security is not an illusion.⁴¹ While questions about effectivity are not at the center of the given thesis, it is indispensable to understand the current nature of EU migration policy. Only then an accurate assessment of the robustness or vulnerability of the EU against outside efforts of coercive engineered migration is possible.

In summary, the review of the existing literature shows that there is a solid basis of secondary sources. However, the approach of a comparative case study, where attempts of coercive engineered migration from different regions of Europe, with different member states affected and unlike challengers involved are analyzed through the lens of migration-driven coercion, is not yet in existence. The respective thesis, therefore, claims to fill this gap and to further contribute to the scientific exploration of the intersection between migration, coercion, and diplomacy.

Basic roles in the CEM-framework: active manipulators and passive exploiters

A fundamental part of every scientific endeavor is a theoretical framework. A professional theoretical framework shall consist of concepts and theories that are useful and applicable to the particular field of study covered by the research project.⁴² Most prominently used in this

³⁷ Mathias Czaika and Hein De Haas, “The Effectiveness of Immigration Policies,” *Population and Development Review* 39, no. 3 (September 2013): 487–508, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2013.00613.x>.

³⁸ Jagdish Bhagwati, “Borders beyond Control,” *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2003): 98, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20033431>.

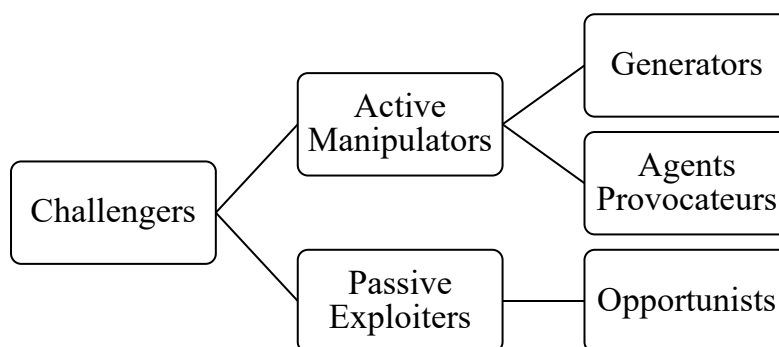
³⁹ Czaika and De Haas, “The Effectiveness of Immigration Policies.”

⁴⁰ See the chapter on EU migration and asylum policy for details.

⁴¹ Marc Helbling and David Leblang, “Controlling Immigration? How Regulations Affect Migration Flows,” *European Journal of Political Research* 58, no. 1 (February 2019): 248–69, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12279>.

⁴² Robert V. Labaree, “Research Guides: Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Theoretical Framework,” Research Guide, January 2022, <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/theoreticalframework>.

research project will be the framework of coercive engineered migration, developed by Kelly M. Greenhill in her book “Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion and Foreign Policy”, published in 2010.⁴³ The book “offers the first systematic examination of this unconventional policy tool”.⁴⁴ To better understand coercive engineered migration, it shall, as a first step, be categorized within the discipline of Political Science. As the terminology indicates, the phenomenon marks a particular sub-category of coercion. In the literature, several definitions of coercion exist. Subsequently, attention is drawn to two definitions that precisely contribute to understanding the concept. Greenhill and Krause describe coercion as, “the ability to get an actor – a state, the leader of a state, a terrorist group, a transnational or international organization, a private actor – to do something it does not want to do.”⁴⁵ Greenhill furthermore finds that “*Coercion* is generally understood to refer to the practice of inducing or preventing changes in political behavior through the use of threats, intimidation, or some other form of pressure – most commonly, military force.”⁴⁶ After having outlined the superordinate category of coercion, the subordinate and specific phenomenon of coercive engineered migration is defined as, “cross-border population movements that are deliberately created or manipulated in order to induce political, military or economic concessions from a target state or states.”⁴⁷ The author also describes who engages in it, and differentiates between active manipulators and passive exploiters (opportunists). Within the category of active manipulators, there is a further distinction between “generators” and “agents provocateurs”.



Graphic created by the author

As the terminology indicates, active manipulators generate migration crises while passive exploiters use already existing crises created by other actors. Generators are the easiest to

⁴³ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Greenhill and Krause, *Coercion*.

⁴⁶ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

recognize as they, “directly create or threaten to create cross-border population movements unless targets concede to their demands.”⁴⁸

An essential characteristic of migration-driven coercion is that challengers are usually significantly weaker than their targets. Also, the second type of challengers, called “agents provocateurs”, typically fulfills this criterion. The term agents provocateurs is a well-known concept in security studies. Commonly, it describes a person who instigates others to commit crimes or purposely escalates situations to trigger legal action against the target or damage its reputation.⁴⁹ This could also be achieved through incitement or defamation. Typical targets are groups like peaceful protesters, activists, or political parties. Therefore, the idea of agents provocateurs is close to the legal concept of entrapment. Greenhill uses the term to describe actors that “do not generally create crisis directly, but rather deliberately act in ways designed to incite others to generate outflows.”⁵⁰ The classic actors in this regard are not individuals, like in the traditional understanding, but whole states or larger entities. Agents provocateurs aim is to put themselves into a victim role and generate moral outrage in the international community, which can create political, economic, and even military support for their effort. Like all challengers, also agents provocateurs are usually weaker than their target. However, in crises, the difference in power between the challenger and the target decreases. Challengers even possess relative strength against targets as they have or claim to have the ability to make a crisis disappear. The claim that they are in control of the crisis gives the challenger significant leverage in negotiations. In crisis situations, political or financial claims from challengers that would not have been heard under normal preconditions are more likely to be recognized.⁵¹ Overall, it is argued that “generating a crisis can help level the playing field, enhance the credibility of weak actors, increase the potency of their threats, and thereby improve their coercive capabilities in several distinct ways.”⁵² The third category of challengers, namely “opportunists”, do not actively create but passively exploit migration movements that already exist. In this role, opportunists are more diverse in their character than generators or agents provocateurs. Recent history shows that opportunists are not always weak relative to the target and have various forms of state and government. Typical behavior for opportunists is that they

⁴⁸ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁴⁹ Collins English Dictionary, “Agent Provocateur Definition and Meaning,” accessed June 7, 2022, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/agent-provocateur>.

⁵⁰ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁵¹ William Mark Habeeb, *Power and Tactics in International Negotiation: How Weak Nations Bargain with Strong Nations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Scott Snyder, *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior*, 2. print (Washington, DC: United States Inst. of Peace Press, 2002).

⁵² Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

offer to alleviate an existing crisis. In exchange, they demand political or financial concessions from the target.⁵³

Framing vulnerability: factors for success and failure in CEM strategies

The phenomenon of coercive engineered migration is neither new nor particularly uncommon. Only in the afterwar period between 1951 and 2006 56 attempted cases were identified by Greenhill. Concerning objectives and success rates, the study shows that almost three-quarters of the attempts were at least partially successful.⁵⁴ Success, in this regard, is defined as “persuading a target to change a previously articulated policy, stop or reverse in action already undertaken or disburse side-payments, in line with a challenger’s demands; in other words, most of a challenger’s demands were met.”⁵⁵ What is especially helpful for the purpose of this research is the fact that the framework indicates the chances of success and failure of coercion attempts. It also includes a comprehensive description under which circumstances and preconditions CEM is likely to succeed or fail. A central component of the research question is vulnerability. Therefore, a closer examination of the factors that influence the vulnerability of states shall be conducted. In this context, vulnerability is understood as the likelihood of success of the challenger state. An attempt is marked as a failure if few or none of the original objectives were met.⁵⁶ What is crucial to consider is that success and failure do not solely depend on the defensive behavior of the target but also the offensive strategy of the challenger. The factor that coercive engineered migration can be executed poorly by the challenger, independent from the target state's reaction, must be considered when applying the theoretical framework. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to emphasize the defensive perspective as there are certain preconditions in target states that affect the outcome of attempts of migration-driven coercion. These conditions can be examined independently from the individual strategy of the challenger. The main factors that influence the vulnerability of targets are presented subsequently.

The core logic of coercive engineered migration is that through manipulating opinions and attitudes of a country’s civilian population, the leader’s behavior shall be affected. Therefore migration-driven coercion can be labeled as a coercion by punishment-strategy. In this regard, the strategy can also be understood as a two-level game where threats by the outside challenger influence the domestic population. This then affects the behavior and response of the target to

⁵³ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

the threat. Greenhill differentiates between two “pathways” that coercion can take. “Capacity swamping” manipulates the ability of targets to deal with a group of migrants, while “agitation” targets their willingness. Evidence suggests that overall agitation has a higher likelihood of success.⁵⁷ However, recent cases have shown that not only in the developing world but also in western countries, capacity swamping can be effective if a crisis is large and sudden enough to overstrain the management capacities. What is essential to understand is that capacity swamping and agitation are not mutually exclusive and can complement and influence each other. It can be observed that political agitation is almost naturally connected to migration-driven coercion. One major component is the level of polarization in a given society. Targets are most vulnerable if the pro-, and the anti-migration camp, are highly mobilized. This creates broad disagreement on how to deal with a migration crisis. Actual or threatened migration influxes are likely to “exploit the heterogeneity”⁵⁸ in western societies. This leads to increased polarization through separation in a pro and a counter migration camp. If both camps have a high level of mobilization and polarization, political leaders of the target state are trapped in a dilemma. Satisfying the demands of one group antagonizes the other and vice versa. In effect, this means that independent of the policy towards migrants and refugees, leaders may have a large part of the domestic society against them when managing a migration crisis. The apparent exit strategy would be to give in to the demands of the challenger to stop the cause of further polarization, which has the ultimate potential to endanger the power status of decision-makers profoundly. The challenger intends this dilemma. The target state decision-maker should weigh the current and potential future costs of the crisis against giving in to the challenger's demands and then conclude that giving in is the more rational option.⁵⁹ To sum it up, “targets will be most vulnerable not when their publics and / or elites are unified but rather when there is broad and intense disagreement about the way in which a target should respond to an incipient or ongoing migration crisis.”⁶⁰ Indicators to measure the extent of polarization and mobilization include “public opinion data; the level and nature of media coverage[...]; the size and existence (or absence) of public protests; the quantity and content of constituent mail; and the nature of legislative discussion and action.”⁶¹

The second major factor that influences the vulnerability of target states is referred to as “hypocrisy costs”. Greenhill defines them as “a special class of political reputational (or

⁵⁷ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

audience) costs”.⁶² Hypocrisy costs arise when politicians overstate or exaggerate the moral commitments of their countries. Such overcommitments can create a gap between discourse and practice and potentially backfire on the credibility of a state’s aspirations.⁶³ Hypocrisy cost must not be understood as a necessary condition but rather as a “force multiplier”⁶⁴ for the potency of coercive engineered migration. The concept is closely connected to the self-perception of political actors. In the example of the European Union, it becomes visible that there can indeed be a large gap between aspiration and reality. The EU likes to see itself as a global guardian of norms, like human and fundamental rights. However, EU member states and even EU agencies⁶⁵ have repeatedly failed to live up to their ideals in managing migration influxes. Pushbacks and other means of deterrence, which are also a clear violation of EU law, have significantly harmed the Union’s reputation as a normative power. Hypocritical actions that are in contrast to an actor’s aspiration can then be used by the pro-migration/refugee camp to inflict reputational damages on decision-makers.⁶⁶ Moreover, the challengers themselves or other rivals on the international stage can legitimize their actions through a political strategy that is commonly referred to as “whataboutism”⁶⁷. Hence hypocrisy costs have the potential to further weaken a target by pressuring political actors to change their positions and concede to the demands of the challenger.

The theoretical framework furthermore implies that liberal democracies are particularly vulnerable to the imposition of hypocrisy costs and, in general, to coercive engineered migration. For this observation, Greenhill offers two explanations: First, most liberal democracies are committed to protecting human rights and, in this context, especially to the distinct humanitarian situation of refugees and migrants. In political science, this circumstance is identified as normative or embedded liberalism. Such commitments not only have the potential to lead to hypocrisy costs but could also result in legal duties for states. Second, liberal democracies have a “transparent and inherently conflictual nature of political decision making”.⁶⁸ This characteristic feature allows parties of the political opposition or the media, or the general public to take reactionary counter positions or continuously criticize missteps and

⁶² Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁶³ Suzanne Dovi, “Making the World Safe for Hypocrisy?,” *Polity* 34, no. 1 (September 2001): 3–30, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3235505>.

⁶⁴ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁶⁵ See the example of Frontex on page 23.

⁶⁶ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁶⁷ *Whataboutism* is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as follows: the practice of answering a criticism or difficult question by making a similar criticism or asking a different but related question.

⁶⁸ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

failures of the government. Such institutions, which are indispensable for a working system of checks & balances within democracies, can contribute to a more polarized and politically mobilized society, thus making the target state more vulnerable to coercive engineered migration.⁶⁹ While this CEM can be effective and efficient especially for smaller actors on the international stage, it is important to emphasize that it should not be understood as a super weapon. Many attempts in the past have eventually failed. In addition, depending on the specific case, there is also the risk that migration-driven coercion backfires on the challenger. Even military operations against the challenger might be launched as a response. Also, potential migration flows were used in the past to justify threats of foreign military intervention in South America by the former US President Ronald Reagan.⁷⁰ However, due to the expectation that migration will increase in the future and the observation of a reasonable success rate, this instrument will likely be used more frequently, especially against liberal democracies.

Terminological remarks and clarifications

Concerning terminology, some clarifications shall be made at this point. First, the classification of CEM as a form of hybrid warfare is addressed. While there is lately an inflationary use of the term, especially among politicians, its scientific meaning is vague and disputed among scholars. Are humans fleeing war and destruction a form of warfare? Based on the conviction that language creates reality, a militarized understanding of migration does not contribute to a better understanding of the issues at hand. Therefore, the more precise categorization of coercive engineered migration as a special form of non-military coercion will be used in the following.⁷¹ Generally, the terminological weaponization of migrants and refugees should be seen as critical. Such terminology plays into the - often purposely - created image of migration flows as a direct threat to a target state and its citizens. What is usually overlooked in such a narrative is the exploitation of individual human beings for geopolitical interests. In order to counter this image, the political actors affected by coercive engineered migration will be referred to as target states instead of victims, as the actual victims of this phenomenon are the refugees and migrants themselves.

Furthermore, to avoid confusion, the use of the terms “refugee” and “migrant” in this paper shall be defined. The difference between the two groups is often emphasized in the current

⁶⁹ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

⁷⁰ Michael S. Teitelbaum, “Immigration, Refugees, and Foreign Policy,” *International Organization* 38, no. 3 (1984): 429–50.

⁷¹ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

political debate. Also, in this paper, the terms are not used interchangeably. Without going into legal detail, refugees are defined as “persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution”.⁷² They enjoy special legal protection under international law. Migrants, instead, “choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons.”⁷³ States deal with migration under their domestic legal provisions.⁷⁴ As recent migration movements to Europe never solely consisted of either refugees or migrants, the terminology of “refugees and migrants” is used where both groups may be present. The United Nations High Commissioner also recommends this approach.⁷⁵

EU migration and asylum policy: current state and future aspirations

Developments, legal basis, and limitations.

The given research question is based on the assumption that the EU is an existing and capable political actor in migration and asylum policy. Before going into detail about what the EU *should* do against CEM, this section will discuss what the EU *can* do. How are competencies distributed between member states and the EU, which measures were taken in the past, and what is the current status of the EU’s migration policy? First, the complexity of EU asylum and migration policy must be considered, as it concerns various legal fields and political challenges. Therefore, it makes sense to use a chronological approach. The need for a common European policy toward asylum and migration arose with the introduction of the Schengen treaty in 1985. The abolition of many borders within Europe created the need for harmonizing asylum and visa regulations and protecting the external Schengen borders. With the treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, EU institutions received more comprehensive competencies regarding migration and asylum.⁷⁶ At this point, it is essential to differentiate between the policy fields of asylum and legal migration. While the EU has wide-ranging competencies in the field of asylum, legal migration remains largely a responsibility of the member states. EU’s competencies in the field of asylum are stipulated in Articles 67, 78, and 80 of the TFEU.⁷⁷ Art 67 (2) is the foundation

⁷² Adrian Edwards, “UNHCR Viewpoint: ‘Refugee’ or ‘Migrant’ – Which Is Right?,” UNHCR, July 2016, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>.

⁷³ Edwards, *UNHCR Viewpoint*.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Marion Schmid-Drüner, “Einwanderungspolitik - Kurzdarstellungen zur Europäischen Union,” European Parliament, accessed June 7, 2022, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/de/sheet/152/einwanderungspolitik>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

of the Schengen treaty. It sets that the EU “shall ensure the absence of internal border controls for persons and shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States, which is fair towards third-country nationals.” Art 78 then further conceptualizes the development of “a common policy on asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection with a view to offering appropriate status to any third-country national requiring international protection and ensuring compliance with the principle of non-refoulement.” In addition, the requirement of compliance with the Geneva Convention and the Protocol of 1967 relating to the status of refugees is explicitly mentioned. Subsequently, in Art 78 (2), the requirements for a common European asylum system are listed:

- (a) a uniform status of asylum for nationals of third countries, valid throughout the Union;
- (b) a uniform status of subsidiary protection for nationals of third countries who, without obtaining European asylum, are in need of international protection;
- (c) a common system of temporary protection for displaced persons in the event of a massive inflow;
- (d) common procedures for the granting and withdrawing of uniform asylum or subsidiary protection status;
- (e) criteria and mechanisms for determining which Member State is responsible for considering an application for asylum or subsidiary protection;
- (f) standards concerning the conditions for the reception of applicants for asylum or subsidiary protection;
- (g) partnership and cooperation with third countries for the purpose of managing inflows of people applying for asylum or subsidiary or temporary protection.

The basic principles of the EU’s asylum policy can be derived from the legal text. Procedures shall be harmonized, and minimum standards for the treatment of asylum seekers are set. In addition, the aspect of externalization, which will be subsequently looked at, is explicitly mentioned as the EU shall seek partnership and cooperation with third countries to manage inflows of asylum seekers better. Ultimately, in Art 78 (3) and Art 80, the principle of solidarity among member states is laid down. In case of a “sudden inflow of nationals of third countries”, the EU shall take measures to support that country, and member states should be aware of their shared responsibility when dealing with migration movements. At this point at the latest, it becomes clear that there is a significant gap between the legal theory set out in the TFEU and the political reality in Europe. Especially when it comes to the distribution of migrants and

refugees, solidarity among EU member states has shown to be weak. This displays a well-known flaw of the EU. Even in policy fields where the EU has significant competencies, the realization and implementation of fairly vague legal concepts like “solidarity” leave space for political interpretation by the member states.⁷⁸ This lack of solidarity has led to the overstrain of some countries, especially along the Mediterranean border, as they do not have the infrastructure and overall capacity to handle large migration influxes. The inability to cope with migration results in humanitarian tragedies like the devastating fire in the refugee camp Moria on the Greek island of Lesbos or the death of thousands of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean Sea.⁷⁹

What also needs to be mentioned in this context is the infamous Dublin system. In the past, it was widely criticized for being outdated and unable to manage contemporary challenges concerning migration effectively.⁸⁰ While the Dublin system consists of several regulations, the first-country-of-entry criterion was at the center of criticism. This criterion states that the (border) state where the asylum seeker enters the EU is responsible for processing the asylum claim. In practice, this criterion leads to an immense administrative and financial burden for a few border states while others remain relatively unaffected. Hence it can be argued that the Dublin system, as it is currently practiced, is contradictory to the principle of solidarity in EU migrations policy. Because of the unsatisfactory status quo, the Commission presented a legislative proposal in 2020, which commenced with a fundamental reform of the Dublin system. Overall, the proposal had nine key points:

- 1) replace the Dublin system with a new asylum and migration management system that allocates asylum applications better between member states by means of a new solidarity mechanism and guarantee the timely processing of applications
- 2) provide for temporary and extraordinary measures to address crisis and force majeure situations in the field of migration and asylum
- 3) reinforce the Eurodac regulation to improve the EU fingerprint database for asylum seekers

⁷⁸ Eleni Karageorgiou and Gregor Noll, “What Is Wrong with Solidarity in EU Asylum and Migration Law?,” *Jus Cogens*, May 4, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42439-022-00059-4>; Shoshana Fine, “All at Sea: Europe’s Crisis of Solidarity on Migration – European Council on Foreign Relations,” *ECFR* (blog), October 14, 2019, https://ecfr.eu/publication/all_at_sea_europes_crisis_of_solidarity_on_migration/.

⁷⁹ Missing Migrants Project, “Migration within the Mediterranean,” accessed June 7, 2022, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

⁸⁰ See, for instance, Susan Fratzke, “Not Adding Up: The Fading Promise of Europe’s Dublin System” (Migration Policy Institute, March 16, 2015), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/not-adding-fading-promise-europes-dublin-system>.

- 4) establish a fully fledged EU asylum agency
- 5) introduce new compulsory pre-entry screening, consisting of identification, health and security checks, as well as fingerprinting and registration in the Eurodac database
- 6) replace the asylum procedure directive with an amended regulation to harmonise EU procedures
- 7) replace the qualification directive with a regulation to harmonise protection standards and rights for asylum seekers
- 8) reform the reception conditions directive to ensure that asylum seekers benefit from harmonised and dignified reception standards
- 9) create a permanent EU resettlement framework⁸¹

When comparing these initiatives to the current asylum system, it becomes clear that the proposal would mean a significant development toward a more centralized EU asylum policy. While single projects like the foundation of an asylum agency were realized, a universal consensus for the entire legislative proposal could not be reached.⁸² The political positions of member states regarding the creation of a permanent resettlement framework or the replacement of the Dublin system are fundamentally different. Therefore, an agreement on which a broad reform of the asylum system could be based is not in sight.

Externalization and deterrence in EU migration and asylum policy

Generally speaking, there are two basic strategies to tackle migration. Either a functioning system can manage influxes effectively, or, in the absence of a functioning system, the number of refugees and migrants entering the EU must be kept as low as possible to avoid the overstrain of certain member states. Indeed, due to repeated setbacks and dissent in the pursuance of a comprehensive common system, the strategy shifted towards a more “robust” and externalized approach with the objective to keep migration to a bare minimum. While the externalization of migration is explicitly mentioned in Art 78 (2) lit g TFEU as part of a common asylum system, the question of whether the development of more robust management of external borders to the east and south and the unfavorable consequences that came with it, was based on the common will of all member states is up to debate.⁸³ However, a group of member states consisting of

⁸¹ European Council, “EU Asylum Reform,” EU migration policy, accessed April 9, 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/eu-asylum-reform/>.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ On intended and unintended consequences of EU external migration policy see, Reslow, “Horizontal and Vertical Diversity.”

Austria, Poland, Greece, and Lithuania has recently openly demanded more restrictive border protection.⁸⁴ In the following, first, the externalized and then the increasingly robust character of EU asylum policy is discussed.

Externalization is generally understood as “the process by which the EU norms, policy instruments, policy programmes, procedures, institutions and administrative agencies are fully or partially adopted by non-EU states in the broader European neighborhood.”⁸⁵ Concerning the narrower field of migration, externalization is referred to as “extraterritorial state actions to prevent migrants, including asylum seekers, from entering the legal jurisdictions or territories of destination countries or regions or making them legally inadmissible without individually considering the merits of their protection claims.”⁸⁶ The concept of externalization is vital within the scope of this paper as it was one of the key underlying motivations of the EU’s migration policy in recent years. As an immediate reaction to the 2015 European migrant crisis, the EU sought cooperation with non-EU member states on the Western Balkan migration route.⁸⁷ Consequently, this effort was expanded to Turkey, which was identified as a main transit country for migrants and refugees from the middle east to Europe. In addition to the cooperation with Turkey, the sea border to Africa is an ongoing matter of concern in European migration policy. Therefore, the EU is trying to revive and strengthen its efforts to create migration partnerships with African countries.⁸⁸ The effectiveness of externalization in reducing migration toward Europe is disputed. On the one hand, it is argued that the externalization of migration policy can generally alter the bargaining power between the EU and third countries. It could then be used as a bargaining chip in negotiations apart from and beyond migration.⁸⁹ Reslow, in this regard, argues that there is a risk that, due to cooperation with countries that have a poor human rights record, the EU’s reputation as a normative power in the international system could be undermined and damaged. The EU often perceives itself as a promoter of norms like democracy, human rights, and the rule of law on the international stage. “However, these norms

⁸⁴ Oliver Noyan, “Austria Pushes for More Restrictive EU Border Protection,” www.euractiv.com, January 20, 2022, https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/austria-pushes-for-more-restrictive-eu-border-protection/.

⁸⁵ Gokalp Aras, “Coercive Engineered Syrian Mass Migration in the Turkey Relations: A Case Analysis for Future Reference”; See, also, Sandra Lavenex and Emek M. UçArer, “The External Dimension of Europeanization: The Case of Immigration Policies,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 39, no. 4 (December 2004): 417–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836704047582>.

⁸⁶ Bill Frelick, Ian M. Kysel, and Jennifer Podkul, “The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants,” *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 4, no. 4 (December 2016): 190–220, <https://doi.org/10.1177/233150241600400402>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Greenhill, *Open Arms Behind Barred Doors*.

and principles are weakened if the EU is willing to put them aside when strategically important topics (such as migration) are at stake. If the EU's global power derives from its normative status, then the EU's external migration policy may weaken the EU in the international system as a whole."⁹⁰ Others view externalization as an indispensable part of a more humane migration policy if done properly. The migration expert Gerald Knauss, who played a central role in drafting the EU-Turkey migration deal, favors future cooperation with countries in the MENA region if the partners are willing to uphold basic human rights standards for migrants and refugees. He argues that such cooperation would also minimize pull factors. In return, the EU could offer visa-free travel within its borders, financial support, or other benefits.⁹¹ While plenty of literature can be found on the effects of externalization on EU foreign policy, the emphasis of the respective paper is on how externalized migration policy has affected the EU's vulnerability to coercive engineered migration.

Building on the two basic paradigms in international relations, one can understand externalization as the liberal approach as it uses international cooperation to address the problem at hand. The second approach towards lowering the migration influx, namely the fortification of borders and an overall deterrence strategy, follows a realist logic. This approach to European asylum and migration policy was described critically as "in-between illusion and deterrence".⁹² When the German political scientist Raphael Bossong was asked for the "holy grail" in migration politics, meaning a fully-fledged solution to control migration to Europe, he stated that "there can only be relative improvements in the process. This idea that you can completely control who comes, who stays and who goes is an illusion."⁹³ Nevertheless, this illusion manifests in a strategy. States along the eastern and southern EU border increasingly base their policy on the illusion that a comprehensive control of migration and borders is possible. Through deterrence in the form of physical barriers, armed soldiers, and the practice of pushbacks, current migration flows shall be suppressed, and future movements deterred. While walls and fences are increasingly popular among decision-makers, their effectiveness in controlling and limiting migration movements is unclear and disputed. Generally, it can be observed that border walls have the effect of redirecting rather than stopping migration movements.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the development of border defense potentially creates a better

⁹⁰ Reslow, Horizontal and Vertical Diversity."

⁹¹ Hoang, "EU-Asylpolitik zwischen Illusion und Abschreckung."

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ On the example of border enforcement in the United States, Douglas S. Massey, Jorge Durand, and Karen A. Pren, "Why Border Enforcement Backfired," *American Journal of Sociology* 121, no. 5 (March 2016): 1557–1600, <https://doi.org/10.1086/684200>.

market for human trafficking. Migrants and refugees are more dependent on professional smugglers if border control and security become increasingly sophisticated.⁹⁵ Besides the question of effectiveness, the EU and its member states are bound to legal principles which entitle them to respect and support human rights. The recent proceedings, especially concerning pushbacks, which are a clear and blatant violation of EU law, have further undermined the EU's reputation as a normative power.

Current flaws of EU asylum and migration policy on the example of Frontex

In conclusion, the EU's asylum and migration policy is currently at a crossroads. While joint initiatives from Brussels fail to gain unified support, individual efforts to control migration become more and more rigorous. The gap between aspirations on an EU level and the reality on the borders is ever-growing. In this regard, the European character of this strategy is questionable as it is increasingly the member states that take action on their initiative with the connivance of the EU. Symbolic for this unilateral approach is that some member states have even rejected support offered by Frontex.⁹⁶ The "European border and coastguard agency" was established in 2004 in Warsaw. In the aftermath of the 2015 European migrant crisis, its budget increased significantly. Also, its mandate was extended as it should play a central role in protecting EU external borders.⁹⁷ The legal basis of Frontex is found in Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council.⁹⁸ While the EU's dependency on executive power in the member states was often seen as a flaw, the problem has now reached a new dimension. Frontex is one of the few examples where the EU has developed a relatively potent executive agency with currently around 1,500 personnel as well as vessels, planes, drones, and vehicles.⁹⁹ Despite its expansion since 2015, Frontex is far from a European success story. As border security is not an EU competence, Frontex can only get involved if a member state explicitly requests support. Recent examples in Hungary and Poland have shown that these member states have preferred to take matters into their own hands and use their national

⁹⁵ Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, "The Global Illicit Economy: Trajectories of Transnational Organized Crime," March 2021, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Global-Illicit-Economy-GITOC-Low.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Adam Bodnar and Agnieszka Grzelak, "In Poland, Where Is Frontex?," POLITICO, November 4, 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-frontex-belarus-border-migration-crisis/>; Monika Pronczuk and Benjamin Novak, "E.U. Border Agency Pulls Out of Hungary Over Rights Abuses," *The New York Times*, January 28, 2021, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/27/world/europe/frontex-hungary-eu-asylum.html>.

⁹⁷ Frontex, "Who We Are - Origin & Tasks," accessed June 8, 2022, <https://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/who-we-are/origin-tasks/>.

⁹⁸ "Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and Repealing Regulations (EU) No 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624," 295 OJ L § (2019), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/1896/oj/eng>.

⁹⁹ Frontex, "Who We Are - Origin & Tasks."

executive organs to stop and deter migration movements. In addition, also Frontex itself was repeatedly confronted with accusations regarding the violation of human rights. One example in this regard was published by investigative journalists and claims that Frontex tolerated and, in at least one case, participated in illegal pushbacks of migrants and refugees in the Aegean Sea in 2020.¹⁰⁰ As a result, several EU bodies, among them also the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), began to investigate the grievances.¹⁰¹ What can be derived from this analysis is that in the absence of a comprehensive common system, European asylum policy is failing to perform a balancing act between human rights and functioning border control. In effect, member states take matters into their own hands, often prioritizing robust borders over human rights protection. This leads to a de-facto decentralization of asylum policy in the EU. While the EU is still eager to implement a revised asylum system, a disconcerting new reality unfolds along Europe's borders to the east and the south.

Case selection and methodology

As the principal idea of the research project is to apply the previously presented theoretical framework to analyze the EU's vulnerability to coercive engineered migration, two cases in which the EU was exposed to this phenomenon shall be identified and analyzed. In this regard, both the behavior of the primarily affected member state(s) as well as the reaction of the EU as an entity are subject to analysis. By selecting cases from different regions of Europe, the results of the comparative case study are expected to be more informative and significant.

- The first case examined is the EU-Turkey migration deal in the larger context of the 2015 European migrant crisis. The countries most affected were primarily Greece, states in the western Balkans along the so-called “Balkan route”, and destination countries like Germany, Austria, and Sweden.
- As a second case, the repeated attempts by Belarus to put pressure on the EU and especially its member states on the eastern border, Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, since the early 2000s, with a particular focus on the recent attempt in 2021, is studied.

¹⁰⁰ Giorgos Christides et al., “Frontex in illegale Pushbacks von Flüchtlingen verwickelt,” *Der Spiegel*, October 23, 2020, sec. Ausland, <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/fluechtlinge-frontex-in-griechenland-in-illegale-pushbacks-verwickelt-a-00000000-0002-0001-0000-000173654787>.

¹⁰¹ Bodnar and Grzelak, “In Poland, Where Is Frontex?”

The differences and similarities of both cases on the level of the challengers, their methods and objectives, as well as the behavior and response of the targets, are discussed. In this regard, an emphasis is put on analyzing the policy developments that happened on the European level since 2015 in response to the migration crisis and the recent escalation on the Belarusian border. The analysis of both cases is conducted through the lens of coercive engineered migration. While long-term authoritarian leaders rule both states in the case selection, their geographical, demographic, and historical prepositions are quite different. A similarity is that both countries faced severe internal turmoil during the last decade. In July 2016, an attempted coup to overthrow the Turkish government under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan by parts of the Turkish military failed its intended objective. However, it succeeded in influencing Turkish domestic and foreign politics for consecutive years until today.¹⁰²

Also, Belarus recently experienced internal unrest as a consequence of the presidential elections in August 2020. The elections were internationally criticized as basic electoral principles were reportedly violated. Furthermore, the political opposition was oppressed and effectively hindered from participating in the elections. Therefore, large parts of the international community condemned the elections as they were neither free nor fair. Domestically, widespread protest against the long-term authoritarian leadership of Alexander Lukashenko arose as a result. The regime reacted to the protest with brutal violence. Protesters were detained, and some were even tortured and killed. As a reaction to the regime's brutality against its population, the EU imposed comprehensive economic sanctions.¹⁰³ In return, Lukashenko unsuccessfully attempted to put pressure on the European Union through coercive engineered migration, with the ultimate goal of achieving the redemption of the sanctions.¹⁰⁴

What is interesting to consider is that the outcome of the cases differed. While the case of the EU-Turkey migration deal is largely seen as a success for the challenger Turkey, the recent attempts by Belarus to exercise coercion through artificially created migration movements failed, as the original objective, a withdrawal of EU sanctions, was not achieved.¹⁰⁵ A question in this context is whether the target state's reaction or the challenger state's strategy was causal to the different outcomes. Therefore, one has to look at the behavior of the challenger and the

¹⁰² BBC News, "Turkey's Coup Attempt: What You Need to Know," July 17, 2016, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36816045>.

¹⁰³ Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Belarus: Widerstand gegen Lukaschenko," bpb.de, accessed March 4, 2022, <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/hintergrund-aktuell/338800/belarus-widerstand-gegen-lukaschenko/>.

¹⁰⁴ Brady, "Europe's Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko."

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

target state to understand which factors were causal and can explain whether the attempt turned out as a success or a failure. After discussing the chosen cases' relevance, the comparative elements' structure shall be briefly presented. In this regard, special attention will be drawn to:

- The political system of the challenger state.
- The geographic location: The type of border (land or sea), the length of the border, and other geographic particularities like the Turkish emplacement between two continents.
- The type of challenger.
- The composition of the migration movement: The size and factors like ethnicity and religion could potentially influence the effects on the target state.
- The intent of the challenger state: What was the intended outcome that the challenger tried to achieve through coercive engineered migration?
- The reaction of the target state(s), plus the reaction of the EU. This point will receive particular attention. Is the EU's reaction coordinated with the reaction of the member state?
- The outcome of the attempt. Did the challenger state achieve the intended outcomes?

This approach shall provide the reader with a clear and objective analysis of the two cases. Conclusions and findings for potential policy recommendations can then be developed based on the comparative case study.

The selected research question, theoretical framework, and methodology, including a comparative case study, suggest the outline of a qualitative research design. In the following two case studies, the qualitative method of structured, focused comparison is used. Both primary and secondary sources are used in the research. Regarding primary sources, mainly interviews, and statements by state officials and decision-makers, statistical data about the extent of migration movements and countermeasures, are consulted. As the EU migration policy, especially concerning the 2015 European migrant crisis, has been broadly discussed in the literature, secondary scientific sources certainly contribute to the purpose of the research project.

The 2016 EU- Turkey migration deal

“...or otherwise, we will have to open the gates.”

- Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey

This threat issued by President Erdoğan stands symbolic of Turkey's role in European migration policy during and after the 2015 migration crisis. In the context of the civil war in Syria, Erdoğan was pushing for establishing a safe zone in northern Syria: “This either happens or otherwise we will have to open the gates,”¹⁰⁶ he said in 2019. In this short statement, many aspects of CEM become apparent. “Opening the gates” in this context uses the metaphor of perceiving migrants and refugees as a destructive flood that pours out over Europe. The phrasing brings up memories of the - in some instances - chaotic and overwhelming events of 2015. Erdoğan furthermore stages himself as the “gatekeeper” of Europe, conveying the message that the stability and security of Europe lie in his hands. The threat to “release” a large number of migrants and refugees is used to achieve an unrelated foreign political goal, namely the creation of a zone of Turkish influence in Syria. Examples like this demonstrate that the behavior and communication of Turkey during and after the 2015 migration crisis and the subsequent creation of the EU – Turkey migration deal serve as recent textbook cases of coercive engineered migration against the European Union.¹⁰⁷ Another reason why this case is fascinating to examine is the longstanding, multilayered, and complex relationship between Turkey and the EU. Besides political challenges and diplomatic quarrels, the mere geographic location of Turkey, as it is located both on the European as well as on the Asian continent, is symbolic of its ambivalent relation to the EU. However, around the turn of the millennium, Turkey's prospects for EU membership were much more promising than they are currently. In 1999, Turkey became a candidate country for EU membership. In 2005, the accession negotiations started, but both sides soon faced fundamental differences, which complicated and prolonged the process. Some of the central conflict points concerned the status of Cyprus, the Turkish position on the Armenian Genocide, as well as democratic values like freedom of speech, the rights and protection of minorities, and the role of women in society. Furthermore,

¹⁰⁶ Deutsche Welle, “Turkey Threatens to ‘open the Gates’ to Europe for Refugees,” DW.COM, September 5, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-threatens-to-open-the-gates-to-europe-for-refugees/a-50317804>.

¹⁰⁷ Greenhill herself has analyzed the case through the lens of CEM in: Kelly M. Greenhill, “Open Arms Behind Barred Doors: Fear, Hypocrisy and Policy Schizophrenia in the European Migration Crisis: European Migration Crisis,” *European Law Journal* 22, no. 3 (May 2016): 317–32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/eulj.12179>.

some member states had concerns that the accession of Turkey as a full member would have negative economic consequences and would harm the common market. In November 2016, the EU Parliament decided to suspend the accession negotiations. Since then, the EU-Turkey relations have significantly worsened.¹⁰⁸

Turkey's role in the 2015 migration crisis

In this regard, the migration deal, which was concluded in March 2016, contributed to what is now referred to as an “uncomfortable partnership”.¹⁰⁹ Subsequently, Turkey repeatedly used the political leverage it had gained through the deal. The Turkish President, Erdoğan, realized that his negotiating position with the EU had significantly improved. He was well aware of the tool of migration-driven coercion and deliberately used migration movements to push Turkish foreign political interests. One thing that must be considered when examining the case of Turkey is its special role in the Syrian civil war. Turkey was not the source of the migration flows but merely a transit country for Syrian migrants and refugees that wanted to reach Europe. That means that Turkey acted as an opportunist, using the circumstances and consequences of war as negotiation leverage on the international stage. The methodology of coercive engineered migration also covers this particular constellation.

Turkey as an opportunist challenger, the EU as a target

When analyzing the case at hand through the lens of CEM, some basic clarifications need to be made before going into further detail. Turkey is a textbook example of an opportunistic challenger. In its role as a passive exploiter, the country understood the potential of its geographic location between the middle east and Europe. Turkey's political and military involvement in the Syrian civil war does not qualify it as an active manipulator. It was never their primary objective to trigger a large migration influx. In addition, not all migrants and refugees coming through Turkey were displaced due to the civil war in Syria. Among them were also significant numbers of Afghan and Iraqi citizens.¹¹⁰ While Turkey certainly is a regional power in the middle east, the enduring turmoil in the region was not only caused by Turkish intervention but is much more complex. Therefore, it is argued that Turkey developed

¹⁰⁸ European Commission, “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations - Turkey,” accessed June 8, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/enlargement-policy/negotiations-status/turkey_en.

¹⁰⁹ Kyiliah Terry, “The EU-Turkey Deal, Five Years On: A Frayed and Controversial but Enduring Blueprint,” [migrationpolicy.org](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on), April 8, 2021, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on>.

¹¹⁰ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015 - Asyl, Migration Und Integration,” n.d., https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Statistik/BundesamtinZahlen/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=16.

a strategy to instrumentalize the instabilities in the region for their benefit. Another argument that supports the understanding of Turkey as a passive exploiter is that it is characteristic of opportunists that they present cooperation as an attractive exit strategy and an option for target states to alleviate the crisis. This qualifies them as an opportunist in the CEM framework. While the categorization of the challenger is rather straightforward, the question of the target, in this case, needs to be examined more closely. During the 2015 migration crisis, most people first used the eastern Mediterranean route crossing the sea border between Turkey and Greece. Once they reached the shore, they continued on the western Balkan route through Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, and Hungary towards destination countries like Germany, Austria, Sweden, or France.¹¹¹ Most countries that were affected by the influx were EU member states. Due to its Geographic location, Greece was under the most immediate pressure. Nevertheless, not single member states like Greece or Germany were the main target of the Turkish coercion attempts but the entire European Union. The border between Turkey and Greece is not only a bilateral border but also an external border of the EU and the Schengen area. As one of the characteristics of the EU is the common border system to delimit the internal market, the overstrain of external borders is not only an issue of the affected member state but also of the whole EU. The existence of Frontex is an example of the awareness of this shared responsibility between the Union and the member states. Furthermore, certainly not only Greece was affected by the migration crisis. In general, member states of the EU were implicated in three roles: (1) Countries of entry to the EU: The primary country of entry was Greece. (2) Transit country: Mainly the countries in the western Balkans. (3) Destination Countries: Mainly northern and western European countries. This shows a significant part of the EU were affected. The root of the EU's dissent in migration policy lies in the different reactions of the individual member states. Some had a more open policy toward migration, while others chose a restrictive approach. In addition, those member states that were not affected were interested in maintaining their status and avoiding any involvement that could potentially result in an obligation to take responsibility. This diversity of interest contributed to the weak European response as no compromise among the member states for a common solution was in sight. What furthermore strengthens the argument of defining the EU and not single member states as the target is the behavior of the challenger. Turkey's threats, demands, and political messages were always directed at the EU and not at single member states. Two core demands of Turkey were a revision of the customs regulations

¹¹¹ Frontex, "Migratory Routes - Western Balkan Route," accessed May 4, 2022, <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-routes/western-balkan-route/>.

and visa-free travel in the EU for Turkish citizens.¹¹² Both demands can only be negotiated and granted on an EU level. Also, communication and negotiations on how to manage and alleviate the migration crisis took place between Turkey and high-level representatives of the EU.¹¹³ The outcome of this exchange was the EU Turkey migration deal. The question of how the deal fits in the CEM framework shall be subsequently analyzed.

The EU – Turkey migration deal as a result of CEM

What is particularly interesting to observe in the given case is the rapid development from a positive notion of migration to a stage of chaos and panic among European decision-makers in the course of the 2015 European migrant crisis. One of the critical statements in an early phase of the migration crisis was made by the former German chancellor Angela Merkel. Her notion of *Wir schaffen das*¹¹⁴ was an attempt to communicate a positive and optimistic image. The consideration was that Germany could serve as an example for the rest of Europe, showing that migration, even in large quantities, can be managed and does not have to have negative or even dangerous consequences on the society if the burden is split among the member states.¹¹⁵ Through the lens of CEM, the counterstrategy of appeasement is in theory a reasonable approach. Suppose politicians can successfully convey the message that migration is not a fundamental threat and state institutions are able to handle the situation quickly and effectively. In that case, the factors of mobilization and polarization in a society are expected to remain relatively low. However, the exact opposite happened. More and more member states refused to follow the German example and instead fortified their border security. This created an ever-growing inflow into Germany as people who originally planned to settle in other destination states now were forced to change their route to Germany. This failed strategy, complemented by videos of people overrunning borders between EU member states, quickly shifted public opinion against migration in. The political results became visible shortly after Merkel admitted that the “*Wir schaffen das* – approach” was a mistake. Merkel’s Christian Democratic Party was punished in three regional elections while the right-wing populist AfD gained significant support from the voters.¹¹⁶ Germany’s strategy has backfired spectacularly. The message now was the following: “If not even Germany can handle the crisis, who can?” As the public opinion

¹¹² France 24, “Turkey Threatens to Back out of EU Migrant Deal over Visas,” April 19, 2016, <https://www.france24.com/en/20160419-turkey-migrant-deal-eu-visa-free-travel>.

¹¹³ European Council, “EU Enlargement - Turkey,” accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/turkey/>.

¹¹⁴ Translates to “we can do this.”

¹¹⁵ Greenhill, “Open Arms Behind Barred Doors.”

¹¹⁶ Madeline Chambers and Tina Bellon, “German Voters Batter Merkel over Migrant Policy,” *Reuters*, March 12, 2016, sec. Europe News, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-election-idUSKCN0WE0ZQ>.

towards migration further shifted from an initially optimistic view towards a stronger polarization of the viewpoints,¹¹⁷ and decision-makers feared the results of upcoming elections, the circumstances for using CEM became ideal. Turkey understood the situation and increased the pressure on the EU during the negotiations. Erdoğan repeatedly used the metaphorical threat of “opening the gates”, as leaked content from a meeting between the Turkish President and high EU representatives shows: “We can open the doors to Greece and Bulgaria anytime... So how will you deal with refugees if you don’t get a deal? Kill the refugees?”¹¹⁸ On another occasion, Erdoğan said: “We do not have the word ‘idiot’ written on our foreheads. We will be patient but we will do what we have to. Don’t think that the planes and the buses are there for nothing.”¹¹⁹ Within the framework of CEM, these statements made perfect sense. As the EU has proven to be ill-prepared and overwhelmed, an externalization of the migration crisis was the only reachable solution to regain control over the situation and calm the domestic population. Turkey understood that and further strengthened its negotiating position by escalating the crisis. They gave the impression that they were fully controlling migration flows to Europe. The understanding and utilization of a (perceived) crisis through CEM enabled the Turkish side to negotiate a highly beneficial deal. The Commission summarized the main points of the EU Turkey migration deal as follows:

- 1) All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey;
- 2) For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU;
- 3) Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU;
- 4) Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated;

¹¹⁷ Infratest dimap and ARD, “Stimmen Sie Dieser Aussage Zum Thema ‘Flüchtlinge’ Eher Zu Oder Stimmen Sie Eher Nicht Zu: „Es Macht Mir Angst, Dass so Viele Flüchtlinge Zu Uns Kommen.“?,” November 2015, <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/468854/umfrage/umfrage-zur-angst-vor-der-vielzahl-an-fluechtlingen/>.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in “Turkey’s Erdogan Threatened to Flood Europe with Migrants: Greek Website,” *Reuters*, February 8, 2016, sec. Media and Telecoms, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-turkey-idUSKCN0VH1R0>.

¹¹⁹ Agence France-Presse, “Turkish President Threatens to Send Millions of Syrian Refugees to EU,” *The Guardian*, February 12, 2016, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/12/turkish-president-threatens-to-send-millions-of-syrian-refugees-to-eu>.

- 5) The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016. Turkey will take all the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements;
- 6) The EU will, in close cooperation with Turkey, further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Once these resources are about to be used in full, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the Facility up to an additional €3 billion to the end of 2018;
- 7) The EU and Turkey welcomed the ongoing work on the upgrading of the Customs Union.
- 8) The accession process will be re-energised, with Chapter 33 to be opened during the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union and preparatory work on the opening of other chapters to continue at an accelerated pace;
- 9) The EU and Turkey will work to improve humanitarian conditions inside Syria.

CEM in this regard was not causal for the creation of a migration deal but rather for the far-reaching concessions the EU granted.¹²⁰

When examining the key statements of the deal more closely, it becomes visible that the price for regaining control over migration flows to Europe can be found in points 6, 7, and 8. Shortly after the agreement, the Turkish foreign minister again emphasized the key benefits for his country: “The deal we struck with the EU is very clear. We want this human tragedy to end, our citizens to travel visa free, and the customs union to be updated. [But] if the EU doesn’t keep its word, including the migrants deal we will cancel all agreements.”¹²¹ In this statement, he again connects a threat with the fundamental demands. This simple but consistent strategy has proven to be successful. Who would have thought that in 2016 all member states could agree on a revitalization of the accession process of Turkey to the EU or comprehensive visa liberalization for Turkish citizens? The argument that CEM was causal for these fast concessions will be subsequently further elaborated on.

Outcomes, and consequences

In summary, three main factors contributed to the successful attempt of CEM in the case at hand. First, the size of the migration movement in 2015 was large enough to be perceived as a threat in the EU. Second, the inconsistent political approaches on how to deal with migration among member states and the self-perception of the EU as a normative power created an ideal

¹²⁰ European Commission, “EU-Turkey Statement: Questions and Answers,” accessed May 5, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_16_963.

¹²¹ Quoted in France 24, “Turkey Threatens to Back out of EU Migrant Deal over Visas.”

stage for the attempt. Third, Turkey understood the situation and played its role as an opportunistic challenger well. These three basic ingredients were combined into a situation that was described as follows: “Consistent with the CEM theory, key EU member states (and the leaders within them) plainly found themselves trapped politically between a rock and a hard place, and the Turks knew it.”¹²² At this point, it is necessary to understand the precise effect of CEM in the given case in order to neither over- nor underestimate its power. Mere cooperation with a third country like Turkey to limit migration through externalization is not yet a case of CEM. The aspect where CEM made a difference was the comprehensive concessions made by the EU. Turkish demands, which were previously perceived as attempts of blackmailing,¹²³ were suddenly on the negotiating table. Indeed, every form of externalization is realized in some form of deal or agreement where all parties have to make contributions and concessions. Nevertheless, I argue that Turkey would not have been able to include a renewal of the accession process, a revised and more beneficial customs union, visa liberalization, and a total of €6 billion in financial aid without the instrument of CEM.

While some factors which contributed to the weak negotiating position of the EU were already presented, the importance of one aspect should be emphasized at this point. In Europe’s initial strategy to manage the crisis, which was characterized by Germany’s notion of *Wir schaffen das*, the securitization of migration was neglected. As outlined previously, the threat perception of the population shifted after the end of the cold war from the traditional military menaces. Significant parts of the European societies perceive migration as endangering cultural values, exploiting social assistance, and jeopardizing public safety and health.¹²⁴ The composition of the migration movement in 2015 nurtured the securitized understanding of migration. Data from Germany shows that the majority of asylum seekers were under 30 years of age, male, Arab, and Muslim.¹²⁵ The differences in culture, appearance, language, and religion supported an increasingly securitized sentiment that was often based on racist prejudice and narratives. Right-wing parties then further exploited the political potential for their benefit and therefore

¹²² Greenhill, “Open Arms Behind Barred Doors.”

¹²³ Matthew Holehouse, “EU Chief: Migrant Influx Is ‘campaign of Hybrid Warfare’ by Neighbours to Force Concessions,” accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/11915798/EU-chief-Migrant-influx-is-campaign-of-hybrid-warfare-by-neighbours-to-force-concessions.html>.

¹²⁴ Thomas Raines, Matthew Goodwin, and David Cutts, “The Future of Europe Comparing Public and Elite Attitudes” (Chatham House, June 2017), <https://b.ds.at/2017/06/20/2017-06-20-future-europe-attitudes-raines-goodwin-cutts-final.pdf>; Manuela Honsig-Erlenburg and Noura Maan, “Zwei Drittel fordern Stopp der Einwanderung aus muslimischen Ländern,” DER STANDARD, accessed June 8, 2022, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000059278682/studiemehr-als-die-haelfte-der-befragten-eu-buerger-lehnen-muslimische>.

¹²⁵ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015 - Asyl, Migration Und Integration.”

played a role in securitization. This observation concludes that the composition of migration flows concerning gender, age, ethnicity, and religion influences the level of securitization, polarization, and mobilization. As these factors are key to determining vulnerability, the composition of the migration movement itself is a crucial part of a CEM risk assessment. The greater the cultural differences between the group of migrants/refugees and the target society, the greater the target's vulnerability to CEM.

The case of the 2016 EU – Turkey migration deal and the migration crisis, in general, was sobering for the EU on multiple levels. First, it has shown that the EU's resilience to crises is still limited. The very basis for a common approach does not exist as political agendas among European decision-makers are still too different. This leads directly to the second observation, namely that the national interests of member states prevail over a common European approach, especially in times of turmoil. Also, the EU's motto "united in diversity" seems odd in this context. European diversity materialized in dissent and chaos rather than unity in the given case. Furthermore, it was shown that externalization is still a fundamental pillar of European migration policy due to the absence of adequate internal mechanisms. While it certainly makes sense to include externalization as one aspect of a comprehensive migration policy, it needs to be considered that, especially in crisis situations, it sets a stage for attempts of CEM. In the case of Turkey, the CEM attempt is predominantly interpreted as a success for the challenger. However, in the subsequent case, it will be shown that attempts of CEM can fail and even backfire on the challenger.

CEM on the Polish – Belarusian border

"We will not hold anyone back. We are not their final destination after all. They are headed to enlightened, warm, cozy Europe."

- Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus

The main actor that will be discussed in this case is the state of Belarus. Its geographic position on the verge between the EU and Russia gives it a distinct political and strategic importance on the European continent. When trying to comprehend and analyze the recent attempt of CEM by Belarus, it is necessary to consider the country's past. As a former Soviet republic, it gained independence in 1991. Shortly after, in 1994, Alexander Lukashenko came into power and has ruled the country ever since. Due to its repressive and authoritarian political system, Belarus was often referred to as "the last dictatorship of Europe". In global rankings like the Freedom

in the World Report¹²⁶ or the Democracy Index,¹²⁷ the country's quality of freedom, basic human rights, and democracy is rated poorly. In recent years, the country experienced domestic turmoil in conjunction with the undemocratic 2020 presidential elections. The regime reacted to the public unrest with brutality and repression.¹²⁸

The ruthlessness of the regime had two significant foreign political consequences. First, the European Union imposed comprehensive economic sanctions against Belarus; and second, the country became even more reliant on one of its few allies, namely Russia. While Lukashenko managed to silence the protest and stay in power, the increasing insolation of his country became problematic. He was in a position where he needed concessions from the EU. However, his negotiating position could not have been worse. Militarily as well as economically, he was clearly inferior to the EU. After the brutal suppression of his population and the forced landing of a Ryanair flight from Greece to Lithuania in Belarus,¹²⁹ no European decision-maker was willing to negotiate with Lukashenko. Therefore, he needed to regain the initiative, put pressure on the EU, force them back to the negotiating table and try to obtain concessions that would have been considered impossible in advance. CEM appeared to be an appropriate tool for potentially regaining some political leverage against the EU. Moreover, an attempt of CEM was attractive for two reasons. Firstly, only a few years earlier, on the example of the previously discussed case, it became visible how vulnerable the EU can be to CEM. Secondly, the recent attempt by Lukashenko was not a premiere - he was familiar with the practice. In 2002 and 2004, Lukashenko already targeted the EU, threatening to flood it with refugees and migrants, but both attempts failed. The reason for the attempt in 2002 was a ban on participating in a NATO summit in Prague that year.. At this point, the threat had some credibility as 150,000 people, a part of them refugees from Chechnya, were on Belarusian territory. Despite his exclusion from the summit, Lukashenko eventually did not follow through on his threat. The second attempt happened two years later, in 2004, and is especially interesting as it marks the birth of Frontex. This time Lukashenko's demands were more of a financial nature. He requested millions of euros from Brussels. If the EU refuses his demands, he will release hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees towards the Polish and Baltic borders. Again, the EU did not comply but reacted to his threat. They invested more than 500 million euros in

¹²⁶ Listed as unfree with 8 out of a total of 100 points in 2022, see, Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2022 - Belarus," n.d., <https://freedomhouse.org/country/belarus/freedom-world/2022>.

¹²⁷ Ranked on position 146 out of 167 states in 2021.

¹²⁸ David Marples, "History of Belarus," Britannica, accessed June 8, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Belarus/History>.

¹²⁹ BBC News, "Belarus Plane: Ryanair Boss Says Pilot Had No Choice but to Land in Minsk," June 15, 2021, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57480835>.

border security to the east. In addition, it was decided to create a new *European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders*, later known as Frontex. While both attempts failed, the EU and especially its eastern member states were alerted that Lukashenko would not hesitate to use CEM again in the future.

The Belarusian practice of CEM in 2021

Although Lukashenko's past efforts against the EU were not crowned with success, he commenced a further attempt in 2021. The perquisites for the recent endeavor were different than in 2002/2004. First and foremost, from the perspective of the target, the EU was highly sensitized to migration due to the experiences of 2015 and eager to prevent a similar scenario by all means. It is questionable if this sensitivity made the EU more, or less vulnerable. Preparation and investments in infrastructure make capacity swamping more difficult. A high mobilization in society and among politicians, however, increases vulnerability. Secondly, the circumstances for Belarus as a challenger were not ideal. The regime could not resort to an existing migration flow or a large number of foreigners willing to leave the country. An attempt is destined to fail if the challenger lacks people willing to migrate as the indispensable prerequisite of CEM. Belarus tried to resolve this issue by creating an "artificial" migration stream. The idea was to bring people from war-torn and unstable countries, mainly in the middle east and Africa, to Belarus and then send them towards their western border. For this, the regime made false promises to lure desperate people in the hope of a better life in the EU to Belarus. The migrants and refugees were provided with single-entry visas, put on planes, and flown to Belarus. After the EU could stop this practice on scheduled flights, the regime began to charter flights to bring more foreigners into the country. Once they arrived in Belarus, they were broad to the EU border and forced to cross it.¹³⁰ The fact that Belarus directly created a cross-border movement qualifies the regime as a generator in the CEM framework. Due to the fact that Lukashenko could not resort to a preexisting migration movement, he had to exploit and manipulate the instabilities in the middle east actively.

Target reaction and countermeasures

The reaction of the concerned member states was similar. Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania declared a state of emergency in their border regions to Belarus, allowing their border authorities to respond more robustly. In several reported cases, they used force to prevent border

¹³⁰ Brady, "Europe's Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko."

crossings.¹³¹ As part of their counterstrategy to increase border security, the countries improved surveillance, erected fences with barbed wire, and even sent heavily armed soldiers. This led to migrants and refugees being trapped in the border regions without food, shelter, and medical care.¹³² The precarious humanitarian situation resulted in at least ten deaths along the Polish border in the second half of 2021.¹³³ Besides the robust and, in many cases, even brutal reaction of the member states on the eastern border, the EU itself also reacted to the Belarusian attempt on a diplomatic level. Being aware of the EU's global market power, the vice president of the European Commission, Margaritis Schinas, visited Dubai, Baghdad, Beirut, and Ankara in November 2021 within only eight days. As a result of the diplomatic effort, local airlines and authorities agreed to cooperate with the EU and limit flights to Minsk. In addition, passengers from the region flying to Minsk had to prove Belarus as their final destination.¹³⁴ From an economic perspective, cooperation with the EU was the only reasonable choice for airlines in the region. Why jeopardize the substantial European market for a few extra flights to Minsk? Turkish Airlines, for example, was partly involved in the airlift but also had billions invested in the European market. The EU, in this case, understood its economic leverage and successfully made use of it. Around the same time, it was announced that the EU would blacklist companies involved in smuggling and human trafficking.¹³⁵ This practice effectively marks a new stage of externalization. Private companies become responsible for border control and security. The staff of transport companies can now be seen as "proto-EU immigration officials"¹³⁶, as they are directed to look out for suspect cases.

The combined effort by Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, complemented with a demonstration of the EU's diplomatic and economic power, led to the failure of the Belarusian attempt against the EU. Belarus did not achieve its goal, namely the lowering/repeal of sanctions. The case also shows that attempts of CEM have the potential to backfire on the challenger on multiple levels. First and foremost, the EU and the USA have announced the fifth round of sanctions against

¹³¹ BBC News, "Poland Border Crisis: Migrants Tear-Gassed Trying to Cross from Belarus," November 16, 2021, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59302919>.

¹³² Anna Noryskiewicz, "Tension Mounts as Soldiers and Migrants Mass at Belarus-Poland Border, EU Accuses Belarus of 'Hybrid Attack,'" accessed June 8, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/belarus-poland-border-crisis-migrant-soldiers-mass-as-eu-claims-hybrid-attack/>.

¹³³ ORF.at, "Erneut Toter an polnisch-belarussischer Grenze," November 1, 2021, <https://orf.at/stories/3234967/>.

¹³⁴ Brady, "Europe's Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko"; "Statement by Vice-President Schinas in Lebanon," Text, European Commission - European Commission, accessed May 30, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_5995.

¹³⁵ Brady, "Europe's Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko."

¹³⁶ Ibid.

the regime.¹³⁷ One particular focus was the Belarusian aviation industry. Due to the sanctions, the state-run airline “Belavia” had to cut its fleet in half as it became prohibited for European companies to lease planes to the airline.¹³⁸ Besides the additional sanctions, which put the Belarusian economy, according to Lukashenko, “under external pressure on an unprecedented scale and depth”¹³⁹, Belarus struggled with a significant number of asylum seekers unable to cross the fortified borders to the EU and therefore remained in the country. Unwilling to accept migration from the middle east, the regime deported many asylum seekers back to their countries of origin. Another undesired side effect of the recent attempt was the sharpening of the political profile of Lukashenko’s prime adversary, Svetlana Tsikhanouskaya. During and after the attempt, Tsikhanouskaya received plenty of attention from western media and politics. She was received by state officials in multiple European countries and was able to strengthen her position as opposition leader.¹⁴⁰ Another aspect of the Belarusian attempt shall not be left unmentioned. The primary objective of the challenger was to exercise political pressure on the EU. However, also financial aspects played a role. Asylum seekers were charged up to \$ 12,000 for passage to Germany.¹⁴¹ Therefore, the respective case is not only an example of CEM but also of a state engaging in smuggling and human trafficking. This financial aspect potentially provides additional reasoning for challengers to consider CEM as a strategy to pursue political goals. However, it is highly questionable if the example at hand was overall profitable for Lukashenko. After Europe’s borders to the east were effectively blocked, Belarus had to provide at least the most necessary basic needs for the refugees and migrants. Also, the transfer back to their states of origin meant a financial burden for the regime.

After concluding that the Belarusian attempt was marked a failure, the factors and reasons behind it are subsequently discussed. One primary reason why the Belarusian attempt eventually failed was the relatively small size of the migration influx. According to Frontex, 8,184 illegal border crossings were detected in 2021.¹⁴² Although this is more than ten times the number of 2020, such low figures do not even come close to what the EU faced in 2015. Overall,

¹³⁷ Council of the European Union, “Belarus: EU Adopts 5th Package of Sanctions over Continued Human Rights Abuses and the Instrumentalisation of Migrants,” accessed June 8, 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/12/02/belarus-eu-adopts-5th-package-of-sanctions-over-continued-human-rights-abuses-and-the-instrumentalisation-of-migrants/>.

¹³⁸ Reuters, “Belarus State Airline Cuts Fleet by Nearly Half Due to Sanctions,” accessed May 30, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belarus-state-airline-cuts-fleet-by-nearly-half-due-sanctions-2021-12-03/>.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Brady, “Europe’s Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko.”

¹⁴⁰ See, for instance, Dexter Filkins, “The Accidental Revolutionary Leading Belarus’s Uprising,” *The New Yorker*, December 6, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/12/13/the-accidental-revolutionary-leading-belarus-uprising>.

¹⁴¹ Brady, “Europe’s Sharper Edges: EU Migration Policy after Lukashenko.”

¹⁴² Frontex, “Migratory Routes - Eastern Borders Route,” accessed June 8, 2022, <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-routes/eastern-borders-route/>.

it is estimated that Lukashenko has gathered approximately only 20,000 asylum seekers for his recent attempt. Compared to the 2015 European migrant crisis, where more than 1.3 million applications for asylum were filed in the EU, the different scope becomes visible. The manageable size of the migration movement had consequences on the threat perception of the EU. If the migration movement is not large enough to be perceived as a credible threat to the political and social stability of the target, the attempt has already failed. Belarus could only mobilize a relatively small number of migrants and refugees because of the complex sourcing process. Belarus could not rely on an already existing stream like Turkey but had to create one. This comes with significant logistical challenges. The Belarusian regime tried to establish a large-scale airlift from the middle east to bring in asylum seekers. According to media reports, in 2021, Belarus planned to schedule up to 40 flights a week from the middle east to Europe.¹⁴³ The following example shows that an airlift operation, as Belarus conducted it, is unlikely to create a migration movement that has the potency to destabilize the EU.

For reasons of simplification, it is assumed that Belarus is able to organize 40 flights per week from the Middle East to Minsk. The Airbus A320 is the most frequently used aircraft for medium-haul flights and can carry about 170 passengers.¹⁴⁴ Under the condition that all passengers on board are asylum seekers, 6,800 people can be transferred to Belarus per week and a maximum of 353,600 per year. While these are undoubtedly significant numbers, even with 40 flights per week, a challenger cannot approach the scale of the 2015 crisis even remotely. In practice, the slow buildup of asylum seekers leads to further problems for the challenger. In order to successfully engage in a strategy of capacity swamping, the challenger wants to build up a large and sudden influx. Continuously sending a few thousand people every week decreases the chances of putting enough sudden pressure on the target. In general, speed is a decisive factor in CEM. If the challenger is too slow, the target has time to adapt to the situation and take countermeasures. This is also what happened in the individual case. Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia fortified their borders. Simultaneously, the EU conducted a large-scale diplomatic mission to cooperate with the countries of origin in the Middle East to stop flights from the region to Minsk. Due to these countermeasures, the Belarusian initiative quickly lost momentum and eventually failed. The third attempt of CEM by Belarus was also not crowned with success. The pressure exercised by the regime was too low to build up political leverage and force the EU to alleviate the restrictive measures. The case has shown that a CEM strategy

¹⁴³ FAZ, "Mehr Flüge aus dem Nahen Osten: Heizt Belarus den Flüchtlingsstrom weiter an?," accessed June 8, 2022, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/heizt-belarus-den-fluechtlingsstrom-weiter-an-17622430.html>.

¹⁴⁴ "Airbus A320-200," accessed May 26, 2022, <https://www.austrian.com/at/de/airbus-a320-200>.

that is too elaborate and complex is more likely to fail. Belarus had to act as a generator, actively manipulating migration movements instead of passively using existing ones. This role comes with additional risks and challenges.

Main findings and prospects

Recent events have shown that the EU has a certain level of susceptibility to attempts of CEM. In this section, the main findings of the case studies shall be further combined and complemented with the theoretical framework to firstly draw conclusions about the nature and extent of the EU's vulnerability to CEM and secondly develop policy recommendations and overall strategies to lessen the susceptibility and increase the resilience of the Union. The table below shall provide the reader with a structured overview and comparison of the main factors discussed in the case studies:

	Turkey	Belarus
Political system	Hybrid Regime	Authoritarian Regime
Border geography	Land & Sea: Borders two member states, Greece (206 km land border) and Bulgaria (240 km land border)	Land: Borders three member states, Poland (416 km), Latvia (173 km) and Lithuania (679 km)
Type of challenger	Passive Exploiter: Opportunist	Active Manipulator: Generator
Intent of the challenger	Political and financial concessions (Renewal of the accession process to the EU, revised customs union, visa liberalization and financial aid)	Repeal or alleviation of economic sanctions, recognition of Lukashenko's authority, financial gains from human trafficking.
Reaction of the target	Negotiations and agreement with the challenger.	Hybrid approach: Strict border security, negotiation with countries of origin. No negotiations with the challenger.

Structure of the migration stream	1.3 million asylum applications in the EU in 2015. ¹⁴⁵ The majority from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, male and under the age of 30. ¹⁴⁶	Approximately 20,000 migrants and refugees from the middle east (Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq). Around 8,200 illegal border-crossings. ¹⁴⁷
Outcome	Success	Failure

The particular vulnerability of the EU

Why is the in general EU particularly vulnerable? The theoretical framework of CEM suggests that “soft democracies,” meaning democracies with high levels of political and normative liberalism, are more vulnerable than other regime types. Empirical evidence indicates that challengers ironically make use of the following democratic strengths:” (1) their moral and ethical constraints and impulses, (2) their level of societal transparency, and (3) the nature and consequences of their domestic political divisions.”¹⁴⁸ Conversely, authoritarian or totalitarian governments are the least vulnerable. This is explained by higher centralization and policy autonomy levels, giving authoritarian leaders more room for maneuvering in crisis situations.¹⁴⁹ The factors of morals, societal transparency, and domestic political divisions also influence the EU. “Domestic political divisions”, in this context, must be understood as different standpoints among member states. Nevertheless, the same aspects that influence the vulnerability of single nation-states also influence larger entities like the European Union. A state union consisting of soft democracies must therefore be just as, if not more, vulnerable compared to its members.

The two main borders where attempts of CEM are most likely to occur are the southern and the easter border. When examining the vulnerability of the EU, it makes sense to look at those two border regions more closely. Therefore, the comparative case study also consists of one case from the EU’s eastern border (failure) and one from the southern border (success). The two cases generally align with what the theoretical framework suggests concerning vulnerability across regime types. When comparing the rankings of Greece and Poland in the 2021

¹⁴⁵ European Parliament, “A Welcoming Europe?”

¹⁴⁶ Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, “Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015 - Asyl, Migration Und Integration.”

¹⁴⁷ Frontex, “Migratory Routes - Eastern Borders Route.”

¹⁴⁸ Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration*.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

democracy index, Greece is ranked 34th with a score of 7.56 out of 10, and Poland 51st with a score of 6.8.¹⁵⁰ One supposedly obvious conclusion could be that the Greek regime type is a more liberal and normative democracy and, therefore, more vulnerable to CEM. However, both countries fall under the category of “flawed democracies”, and the deviations seem not significant enough to explain the different outcomes. While the regime type might not have been the causal factor in the cases at hand, the empirical evidence in Greenhill’s research suggests that the factor does play a significant role in determining the vulnerability of an actor. When comparing the average democracy scores of member states on the southern border¹⁵¹ to member states on the eastern border,¹⁵² their scores are relatively similar.¹⁵³ Both regions, on average, fall into the category of flawed democracies. While the differences between the eastern and the southern border are marginal, the overall score of EU member states is relatively high. This observation does not come as a surprise as it is one of the EU’s objectives to strengthen liberal democracies and normative values.

At this point, a fundamental question arises. Is a departure from liberal values the only way to reduce the EU's vulnerability? Not necessarily. Also, hard dictatorships are not immune to CEM. The question is rather how to influence factors that generally influence vulnerability and how to react in case of a concrete attempt. In fact, the Belarus case shows that the EU has learned from the 2015 crisis. It has reacted to the attempt with a hybrid strategy consisting of a combination of effective border control and externalization. Against the relatively weak effort by Belarus, this strategy was sufficient. It can serve as a basis for future attempts on a larger scale. Subsequently, a strategy with the ultimate goal of lessening the susceptibility and vulnerability of the EU to CEM shall be conceptualized.

Differences in the strategy of the challengers and the targets response

Two significant differences in the presented cases were the strategy of the challenger and the target’s response. Starting with the challenger, Turkey acted as a passive exploiter of the ongoing instabilities in the middle. As a transit country for refugees and migrants from the region to Europe, it opportunistically made use of the circumstances. Most importantly, Turkey could rely on a central precondition for CEM: a large migration movement. Belarus instead acted as a generator, actively manipulating migration. The country did not have the advantage

¹⁵⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit, “Democracy Index,” 2021, <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/>.

¹⁵¹ Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus.

¹⁵² Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

¹⁵³ Average score of 7.71 on the southern, and 7.22 on the eastern border.

of being a transit state. Therefore, it had to artificially create a migration stream. This effort eventually failed. What can be derived from this is that the threshold to engage in CEM is lower for opportunists. It is less complex and comes with fewer risks than an engagement as an active manipulator. Consequently, the EU should anticipate and prepare for situations where neighboring countries use future migration movements for their own benefit. A likely scenario for the European Union, in this regard, would be a large migration influx from the African Continent, exercising pressure on the EU border along the Mediterranean Sea. North African countries could act as gatekeepers, similar to Turkey in 2016. This would give them significant political leverage in negotiations with the EU. At this point, it also makes sense to look into the future. The most prominent generator for migration is expected to be climate change. The need to trigger a migration movement will be less important, while the efforts for manipulation and exploitation will be at the center of future coercive engineered migration.

From the target's perspective, the EU and its member states reacted somewhat differently to the attempts. Due to the overstrain of countries on the EU border as well as destination countries in the heart of Europe during the 2015 European migrant crisis, an agreement with Turkey to contain migration was seen as the only viable option by many EU decision-makers. Indeed, as a result of insufficient infrastructure on the borders and no internal mechanism to alleviate the crisis, the alternatives to respond were limited. By comparison, in the Belarus case, the counterstrategy was more effective. First, the member states to the east have made significant investments in border security after previous attempts by Lukashenko in 2002 and 2004. Therefore, they were better prepared and could avoid a large and sudden influx. However, border security can only be understood as "symptom relief", as it does not resolve but only delay and redirect the problem. Nevertheless, the EU conducted a successful campaign to manage the source in the middle east, using its political and economic leverage. This hybrid approach on two levels can serve as a role model for future countermeasures against CEM.

The interplay of externalization and a common asylum policy as core strategies

The basic logic of an effective strategy against CEM is simple: If the EU wants to become more resilient against CEM, it has to find ways to deal with large migration influxes effectively to avoid the overstrain of certain member states. If EU member states or regions are overwhelmed by a large and sudden influx, the case of Turkey has shown that this can swiftly lead to increased polarization in society due to the mobilization of those in favor and those against migration. If tensions and social unrest are rising, decision-makers find themselves in a situation where

conceding to the challengers' demand is perceived as the only solution. Such a situation must be avoided at all costs. The core counterstrategy to any attempt of CEM must therefore be to avoid an overstrain. The two general approaches to reaching this objective are apparent. Either the EU can absorb migration influxes through distribution among all member states, or it seeks partnerships with third countries to externalize migration. Both approaches have their benefits and drawbacks. As outlined previously, a lack of political will among certain member states has so far prevented an agreement on allocation mechanisms in the EU. However, the efforts for a highly controversial common European distribution key must be discussed not only in light of the vague concept of solidarity but also as a countermeasure against migration-driven coercion. What is necessary to understand is that the better prepared a target is, the less likely it is that an attempt will happen. This argument follows the logic of the millennia-old Latin adage: "Si vis pacem, para bellum." If the EU would implement a distribution key that is able to quickly relieve heavily affected member states or regions, the coercive character of artificial influxes would decrease along with the attractiveness of the tool for potential future challengers.

Nevertheless, the political reality over the last years has shown that the EU strongly relies on regional and international partnerships to handle migration. The evaluation of the EU's externalization efforts so far is mixed. While some experts see it as the future of European migration management, others criticize it as making the EU susceptible to extortion. Indeed, when choosing externalization as a strategy, actors must be careful not to set a stage for CEM. Externalization always requires some form of a deal between two or more parties. That means that aspects of negotiation play a vital role. Actors have to consider their negotiating position and act accordingly. If an actor wants to lower the risk that a strategy of externalization develops into an attempt of migration-driven coercion, it makes sense to reduce one's dependency on the agreement. Strong dependency relationships have the potential to be exploited by a party to the agreement. The message must be, "we want to cooperate, but we do not have to cooperate". A standpoint like that is only possible if the actor has a credible "plan B" at hand. Such a plan could include an internal allocation mechanism for migrants and refugees. Interestingly enough, developing an internal mechanism would also strengthen an actor's leverage in negotiations for migration agreements. Therefore, internal and external approaches are connected and influence each other. Without a plan B, the counterpart has a much stronger stance, and the target might be forced to make substantial concessions. This argument has less to do with the concept of CEM as it builds on general considerations concerning negotiation.

The role of border security as a supporting factor

Another fundamental question that needs to be addressed concerns the role of border security in CEM. It was previously pointed out that efforts to increase border security are disputed and often criticized among scholars. Comprehensive border security was even described as an illusion. While a mere increase in border security alone is certainly not enough, I argue that it is nevertheless an essential fundament of a strategy against CEM. If the target can rely on robust and functioning border security, it will become harder for the challenger to engage in efforts of capacity swamping successfully. A common argument is that fortified borders cannot stop but only redirect and slow down migration flows. The example of Belarus has shown that such an effect can indeed be highly valuable. In crisis situations, time is a crucial factor. Slowing down or redirecting a large migration influx gives the target time to react, prepare and negotiate. Furthermore, border security influences the level of securitization of migration. Media coverage of large groups of migrants and refugees overrunning borders during the 2015 crisis supported the securitized narrative that migration poses a threat to the stability of society. If border security is able to ensure orderly and regulated migration, it can contribute to a de-securitization of the issue. Finally, another finding in the Belarus case shows that increased border security has the potential to deter challengers. After Lukashenko realized that only very few asylum seekers could actually cross the border towards Europe, he had to deal with an accumulation of migrants and refugees on the Belarusian side of the border. Without food, shelter, and medical care, a larger group of frustrated people is unpredictable and can swiftly turn against the challenger. Overall, border security must be understood as a supporting factor for both core approaches, externalization, and a common asylum policy. In a comprehensive joint asylum system, effective border control is necessary for implementing further measures like pre-entry screenings and allocation systems. But also in situations where the EU seeks cooperation with third countries or negotiates with the challenger, robust borders can strengthen the bargaining position, increase the political leverage and buy time. Besides border security, other supporting factors, like the level of securitization or hypocrisies cost, influence the core strategies.

The relation between securitization and hypocrisy costs

The factors of securitization and hypocrisy costs, as well as their effects on CEM, were mentioned in different parts of the paper. However, both concepts follow a similar logic. Interestingly enough, hypocrisy costs and securitization represent the polarization regarding migration in society. Both concepts give migration a normative spin that only benefits the challenger. To logical consequence for the target must be to lower securitization and hypocrisy

costs as they serve as catalysts for CEM. Securitization tends to overstate the threats and dangers of migration without considering the economic and cultural benefits. The higher the securitization of society concerning migration, the higher its vulnerability to CEM. It, therefore, must be in the interest of the target to lower securitization, support integration, and emphasize the beneficial aspects of migration. At the same time, politicians, usually representing the pro-refugee/migrant group, tend to advocate and embrace migration-related human rights norms which they cannot uphold in reality. While, at first glance, promoting human rights is a noble cause, it is somewhat cynical to do so, knowing that there is neither the capacity nor the political will to guarantee these rights to migrants and refugees coming to Europe. Technically speaking, such political behavior leads to the imposition of a particular class of reputational costs, called hypocrisy costs. The EU was repeatedly criticized for its hypocritical behavior concerning migration. While the Union perceives itself as the guardian of human rights and a normative superpower, its migration policy does not live up to these high standards. Especially when it comes to externalization, the EU was blind to see the catastrophic humanitarian standards for asylum seekers in partner countries like Libya or Turkey.¹⁵⁴ In order to avoid hypocrisy costs, a more sober and less noble self-perception is necessary. Only if the Union's aspirations are consistent with its capacities, it can regain credibility as a normative power.

In general, the relation between the increased importance of norms in international politics and coercive engineered migration is quite fascinating. Greenhill puts this strange and counterintuitive link as follows: "Perversely and tragically, it appears that the growth of humanitarian norms since the end of World War II – and particularly since the early 1970s when the number and influence of NGOs truly began to blossom – has actually inadvertently strengthened weak actors prepared to employ this kind of coercion, particularly (but not exclusively) against liberal democratic targets." CEM can therefore be seen as an unwanted side effect that came along with the growth of humanitarian norms. Especially decision-makers in liberal democracies must be familiar with migration-driven coercion, the decisive factors that influence a target's vulnerability, and measures to prevent or counter attempts effectively. The cases of Belarus, Turkey, and many others over the last decades have proven that CEM is used too often to be surprising.

¹⁵⁴ Deutsche Welle, "UN kritisieren Flüchtlingspolitik von EU und Libyen," May 26, 2021, <https://www.dw.com/de/un-kritisieren-fl%C3%BChtlingspolitik-von-eu-und-libyen/a-57673292>.

Concluding thoughts

Coercive engineered migration is a strange phenomenon. How can humans seeking a peaceful and prosperous life be used as a weapon and perceived as a threat? Building on the constructivist argument of a securitized understanding of migration, the mechanism behind CEM were explored throughout this work. Nevertheless, I would like to critically question this understanding at the closing of the paper. For this, I refer back to the previous analogy between migration and tides. It is well known that ebb and flow have enormous powers that can pose a threat under certain conditions. However, humans have adapted and learned how to manage tides. Everyone knows about the destructive force waves can have, yet no one denies the necessity of water for our lives. The relationship of water to waves has metaphorical proximity to the relation of refugees and migrants to migration. While dangerous and destabilizing under extreme circumstances, one must not overlook its fundamental necessity for a functioning society. No sailor in his or her right mind would try and fight waves as it is utterly hopeless to control this natural force. Nevertheless, one can try and minimize their destructive power through thoughtful maneuvering. It would be desirable if political decision-makers would also choose a less acrimonious approach toward migration. The destructive force of the phenomenon would lessen automatically.

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