

# **The Merida Initiative : A Case Study in International Drug and Security**

## **Policy Negotiation**

A Senior Honors Thesis by Nickolas Emilio

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The United States' relationship with Mexico and other Latin American states has been thrust into the limelight in recent years as a result of increasingly frantic rhetoric about immigration and drug smuggling across the southern border. The popularity of this issue in contemporary political discourse is underscored by the legacy of decades of US involvement in bilateral counternarcotics operations in Latin America. This has given birth to a wealth of explanatory and critical literature. I aim to add to this discussion by looking at how US foreign policy makers and their counterparts in Mexico have cooperated or clashed on certain issues and how those interactions have led to the formation of a bilateral agreement in the form of the Merida Initiative. I will do so by addressing the following question: How can a model of international negotiation explain the adoption of the Merida Initiative and assess the distributional gains that resulted from it?

I believe that the adoption of the Merida Initiative can be explained through an analytic framework that examines the period of negotiation prior to the adoption of bilateral agreements and compares ideal outcomes at the outset of negotiations with the distribution of gains in formalized agreements. Preferences expressed by both parties can be seen as a function of two-level gamesmanship, where policymakers must factor the constraints of domestic politics into foreign policy decisions. This will be tested through the application of an existing model that has been modified to fit the specific type of negotiation that is being examined. In this paper, negotiations between the Bush and Calderón administrations in the lead up to the signing of the

Merida Initiative in 2008 will be evaluated through a case study that focuses on the negotiation process as a mechanism for the translation of preferences into a finalized agreement.

## Literature Review

Some critics of US foreign policy in Latin America and academics attempting to explain or analyze it have emphasized to role of power structure frameworks to account for the types of behavior that have been observed over the past few decades. Critics assert that the relationship between the US and many Latin American countries can be characterized as the protection of US economic interests under the guise of security (Paley 2015)<sup>1</sup>(Mercille 2011)<sup>2</sup> or as the imposition of US domestic policies on the international community (Patten 2016)<sup>3</sup>, among other things.

Academics attempting to explain the relationship between US and Latin American countries in the context of drug policy have continued to push a power-centric native. For example, some have highlighted the significance of pressure from the United States as an influence on Mexican foreign policy in the twenty-first century (Ghotme, Leguizamón & Garzón 2013)<sup>4</sup>, while other analyzed Plan Colombia using principal-agent relationships that assume that power differentials enable the US to use local governments to carry out their policies. (Grossman and Mejia 2007)<sup>5</sup>.

The overarching narrative of these analyses is that policy is based on US preferences because the United States holds an inordinate amount of power in comparison to Latin American countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Paley, Dawn. 2015. Drug war as neoliberal trojan horse. *Latin American Perspectives*42, (5) (09): 109, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1735016056?accountid=14524> (accessed November 7, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Mercille, Julien. 2011. Violent narco-cartels or US hegemony? the political economy of the 'war on drugs' in Mexico. *Third World Quarterly* 32, (9) (10): 1637-1653, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1283635397?accountid=14524> (accessed November 27, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Patten, Daniel. 2016. The mass incarceration of nations and the global war on drugs: Comparing the united states' domestic and foreign drug policies. *Social Justice*43, (1): 85-105,121, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1820251319?accountid=14524> (accessed November 27, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Ghotme, Rafat, Leguizamón, Jesica, & Garzón, Ingrid. (2013). Narcotráfico en México. ¿Nuevo direccionamiento en la política exterior? (2003-2012). *Estudios Políticos*, (43), 136-155. Retrieved November 28, 2018, from [http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0121-51672013000200008&lng=en&tlng=](http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0121-51672013000200008&lng=en&tlng=)

<sup>5</sup> Grossman, H. I., & Mejía, D. (2008). The war against drug producers. *Economics of Governance*, 9(1), 5. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10101-007-0036-1>

A novel approach to the issue of power differentials comes in the form of an article by David Lake entitled “Regional Hierarchy: Authority and Local International Order.” Lake views politics through the lens of economic analysis, focusing specifically on comparative advantage in the ability of states to produce security, which is broadly defined to include both physical and material well-being. Under this analytical framework, “regional hierarchies” are the unit through which we can evaluate interactions between states. Simply put, Lake contends that international security policy is shaped by comparative advantage in security production within regional blocs. In this framework, policy is set by a regionally powerful state with the capabilities and incentives to oversee and provide assistance to “subordinate” states. These smaller have an incentive to work with the regional hegemon to improve their position relative to their neighbors and increase their own capabilities at a lower cost than developing individually(Lake 2009).<sup>6</sup> Under this model, we would expect the United States to play the role of regional hegemon in the Western hemisphere. Less powerful Latin American states would be expected to take what they can get from the US and integrate into the regional security hierarchy lest they draw the ire of their powerful northern neighbor. To Lake’s credit, this relationship has been observed in the historical record in Latin America. The United States has often taken a leading role in matters of drugs and security and had its preferred policies implemented by its regional partners.

While Lake’s explanation for regional security is built on a solid foundation of cost-benefit analysis by powerful and less powerful states and offers much in the way of explanatory potential, it does not explain how states interact to determine the depth of security integration. If, for example, a smaller country wants to capitalize on the lower opportunity cost

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<sup>6</sup> LAKE, D. A. (2009). Regional hierarchy: Authority and local international order. *Review of International Studies*, 35, 35-58. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0260210509008420>

that a powerful state incurs in providing security, to what extent must the former allow the latter to penetrate its territory with its military or dictate its foreign policy with other states? This thesis seeks to address this gap in Lake's regional hierarchies framework by examining how factors present in the negotiation process influence both the depth and terms of security integration.

Analysis that focuses on gains and losses relative to preferred outcomes for each actor in specific instances of interstate interaction hold the most promise for understanding how foreign policy is created. The results of such analysis often goes against what one would expect from interactions between states with disparities in military and economic power. For instance, Mark Aspinall and Simon Reich find in their whimsically titled article "Who is Wile E. Coyote? Power, Influence and the War on Drugs," that Mexico has a track record of achieving their policy goals in the face of asymmetrical power dynamics. They show that Mexico has been able to extract material gains and push for some of its policy preferences in all of the major bilateral counternarcotics policies of the latter half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century<sup>7</sup>. Here we see a shift that gives a greater degree of agency to Mexico, the smaller economic and military power. The ability of Mexico to assert its influence in its dealings with the United States is bolstered by an analysis of NAFTA negotiations in which Mexico was able to successfully limit the ability of the United States to enter into its natural energy sector.<sup>8</sup>. These findings open a space for discussion about US-Mexico relations (and perhaps US-Latin American relations) that is more dynamic than one would assume given the disparities in

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<sup>7</sup> Aspinwall, M., & Reich, S. (2016). Who is wile E. coyote? power, influence and the war on drugs. *International Politics*, 53(2), 155-175. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/ip.2015.43>

<sup>8</sup> Mena, Antonio. "Getting to "No:" Defending against demands in NAFTA energy negotiations" .Odell, John S. *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 11-13. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

economic and military power and allows for more agency and influence on the part of the less powerful country.

This paper takes a unique look at international security integration in general and US-Mexico in particular by focusing on the negotiation process through a modified international trade negotiation model. The model is applied to the Merida Initiative negotiations to explain how a specific international counternarcotics program was formed. Rather than an explanation grounded in evaluations of power, this model focuses on strategic interaction by both actors to push for specific issues within the context of broad agreement to cooperate. Focus on the negotiation process through such a model is distinct from a game theory modelling in that utility values are not assigned to specific behaviors or their outcomes. Rather, an explanation of preferences in specific areas of drug and security policy are given for both Mexico and the United States and then compared against the terms of cooperation in the final agreement.

### **Brief Summary of Proposed Model/ Research Design**

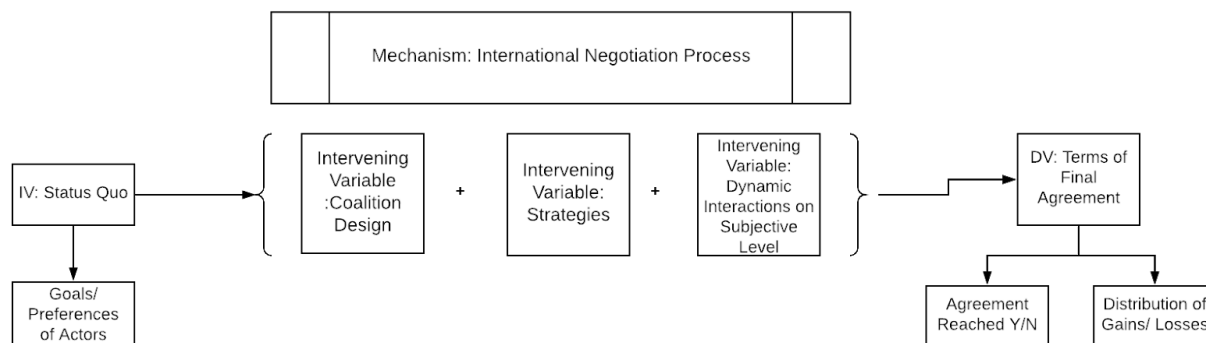
To further explore the possibility of a dynamic relationship with openings for Mexico to assert some level of control over policy, I plan to focus on the negotiation process. In a book entitled *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*, John Odell analyzes international trade negotiations between developing and developed states through the lens of the negotiation process itself.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Odell, John S., ed. "Introduction". *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610. Pp.



## Odell's Analytic Framework



In this framework, the independent variable is the set of preferences that arise from the status quo that exists for a given issue prior to a specific set of negotiations between actors. These are determined by a myriad of factors that includes constraints imposed by domestic politics. The dependent variable is the content of a finalized agreement which may be evaluated using two measures: (1) whether a final agreement is reached at all and (2) the distribution of gains and losses for each actor under a finalized agreement. The mechanism by which the dependent variable and the independent variable are linked is the international negotiation process which Odell defines as “a sequence of actions in which two or more governments address demands and proposals to each other for the ostensible purpose of reaching an agreement and changing the behavior of at least one party.” (Odell 2006) <sup>10</sup> Inherent in the negotiation process are three intervening variables which Odell claims explain the development of international agreements from a given status quo. These include “coalition design,” “strategies,” and “dynamic interactions on the subjective level.” Coalition design refers to the advantages and

<sup>10</sup> Odell, John S., ed. “Introduction”. *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 2. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

constraints inherent in membership in coalitions of coordinating governments that themselves were created through negotiation. States enter and leave coalitions strategically and may try to interfere in the coalition of rivals. Strategies are patterns of behavior rooted in the furtherance of the goals of a given individual actor or coalition. The final variable takes into account interactions in which one or more actors attempt to frame an issue or to alter the perceptions of negotiating partners.<sup>11</sup> A rough schematic of the framework is presented below, omitting some of the complexity for the sake of clarity. Notably missing are typologies of available strategies and variations in coalition design that Odell argues has an effect on the final results of negotiations which will be examined later.<sup>12</sup>

Odell's framework for analyzing international trade negotiations was selected due to the nature of the proposed research question. The focus of my paper on policy formation as a function of international negotiation comes with a set of limitations that preclude some other methods of analysis. The contextual differences in negotiations between states opens up cross-country analysis of selected variables in an attempt to explain patterns of international negotiations to a host of confounding variables. The nature of negotiations themselves makes getting data difficult. Negotiations often are not held in the open and negotiators may not be willing or able to release raw data publically. If it was released, the limited breadth of data could also prove to be a problem. Therefore, the best method to understand the formation of the Merida Initiative is through a case study that applies the framework of analysis developed by Odell. Although the topic of negotiations is different, the nature of the negotiation is similar given that

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<sup>11</sup> Odell, John S., ed. "Introduction". *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 11-13. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

<sup>12</sup> Odell, John S., ed. "Introduction". *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 13-14 28-30. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

there are large sums of money at stake in a bilateral drug and security agreement. The exchange of value that underlies both type of negotiations differ only in what value is tied to. In this model, material exchange is tied to counter-drug operations and security as opposed to commercial activity.

The independent variable in this case study will be initial goals of the Bush and Calderon administrations. The dependent variable is, of course, the terms of the finalized Merida Initiative at the end of negotiations. This will be analyzed in the context of its differences from the values associated with the independent variable. The mechanism connecting the two is the international negotiation process with the inclusion of the intervening variables of “coalition design”, “strategies,” and “interactions on the subjective level” present in Odell’s framework<sup>13</sup>. In this paper, initial policy preferences are either stated outright in official government documents or inferred with the use of contextual clues found in the reconstruction of the status quo that may include existing patterns of policy preferences, historical context, and the existence of domestic political factors that limit integration in certain areas.

### **Application of the Model to US-Mexico Relations**

I now turn to the translation of Odell’s model from its focus on trade to being applied to drug and security policy. I find precedent and potential for success by examining existing analysis of negotiation between the two countries that will be in my case study on the terms of economic integration under the North American Free Trade Agreement. In a book chapter entitled “Getting to “No:” Defending against demands in NAFTA energy negotiations,” Antonio Mena applies Odell’s analytical framework to US and Mexican negotiations on the North

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<sup>13</sup> Odell, John S., ed. “Introduction”. *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 11-13. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

American Free Trade Agreement. Mena find that Mexico is able to maintain control over its energy sector despite the asymmetrical power relationship between the United States and Mexico and US interest in gaining access to Mexican energy. It does so through early and clear framing, letting US negotiators know that sovereignty over Mexican energy is sacrosanct and not to be negotiated.<sup>14</sup> There are contextual similarities that show that this analytical framework could be useful in a negotiation on US-Mexico drug and security integrations. Both agreements entailed a step towards integration of policy in the US and Mexico. Additionally, the most fundamental issues that will come up in this paper can be traced back to different preferences over the transfer of resources and the conditions under which that transfer will occur. A clear difference between the subject of Mena's paper and this one is that NAFTA was a formal treaty that was subject to oversight and ratification by the legislatures of both states. This somewhat changes the way in which we infer national interests. This is accounted for in our translation from a trade to drug and security agreement. Drawing from Antonio Mena's analysis of NAFTA negotiations, I propose a set of hypotheses that predict the behavior of Mexican negotiators and the result of Merida Initiative negotiations.

*H1: Mexico will take a mostly integrative approach, but will hold firm on a few key issues, especially those that relate to Mexican sovereignty.*

This is where one should observe a similar pattern of behavior from Mexico to the one that was laid out by Antonio Mena. I expect that Mexican negotiators will clearly communicate that they want to take steps to integrate and find a partner in the United States, but that there is a limit to the depth of integration that they are willing to tolerate.

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<sup>14</sup> Mena, Antonio. "Getting to "No:" Defending against demands in NAFTA energy negotiations" .Odell, John S. *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 11-13. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

The issue areas that I expect for Mexico to take a distributional approach will be those in which there is a risk for the infringement of Mexican sovereignty.

*H2 : The results of negotiations will lead to an agreement in which Mexico is able to achieve its preferred outcome on some of its most important issues, but will have to give concessions in other areas.*

This will gauge the success of Mexican negotiators in the face of an asymmetrical power dynamic. I believe that the distribution of gains and losses at the end of negotiation will show both joint gains and some clear distributional gains for Mexico on issues related to national sovereignty.

## **Chapter 2 - Reconstructing the Status Quo in 2007**

The origin of the Merida Initiative is generally traced to a meeting between Presidents George W. Bush and Felipe Calderon in Merida, Mexico in March 2007 where the two discussed cooperation on the issues of drugs and security.<sup>15 16</sup> To understand the preferences of American and Mexican negotiators at the outset of negotiations in 2007, it is necessary to have a working understanding of the history of US-Mexican relations broadly and relations on issues related to drugs and security in particular. This chapter will serve to build context for the meeting between presidents Bush and Calderon in March 2007 that would result in the announcement of the Merida Initiative shortly thereafter and approval of appropriations in the United States Congress in 2008. Here attention will be paid to the manner in which the history of domestic and foreign policy choices created an environment in which the Merida Initiative was born. By constructing the status quo that precedes the creation of the Merida Initiative, we can tease out the specific areas where interests diverge between the Calderon and Bush administration in the context of US- Mexico security and counternarcotics integration. Especially salient here are the issues of sovereignty created by historic interactions between the United States and Mexico, the steps toward economic and security integration of the two states in the latter half of the twentieth century, and the emergence of dominant schools of thought about the best domestic and foreign policy responses to drug trafficking and addiction in the US and Mexico in the twenty-first century.

### **Reconstructing Flows of Drugs, Weapons, and Currency**

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with Rafael Fernandez de Castro on 11 December 2018

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The flow of drugs northward and of guns and currency southward is the main driver behind the proposal and eventual approval of the Merida Initiative. Before the bilateral relationship and the respective domestic political contexts that underscore the Merida Initiative can be examined, it is important to understand the nature and scale of the transnational trade in drugs and arms in 2007. In this section, I will give a brief explanation of how the trade functions.

The US-Mexico drug trade in 2007 can be summarized as the trade of illicit drugs coming North and arms and bulk currency coming South. Drug trafficking organizations operating out of Mexico (DTOs) compete for entrance into the United States market and their partners in the US send down cash to pay for their products. This competition, coupled with the prospect of an aggressive government stance against the DTO's, necessitates armament. The flow of arms southward is made possible by relatively lax gun control laws in the United States that allow guns to be bought legally and be transferred to smugglers who move them to Mexico. Although most commercial gun dealers are required to perform a background check, private sellers are not required to perform them, a disparity colloquially referred to as the "gun show loophole."<sup>17</sup> Arms smuggled into Mexico are welcomed by drug traffickers, who face significant obstacles in acquiring weapons domestically. The sole legal gun dealer in the country is the Directorate of Arms and Munitions Sales in Mexico City that requires extensive documentation for civilians.<sup>18</sup> The restrictive conditions that prevent criminals from acquiring guns legally in Mexico opens up the floodgates for trafficked American arms to enter Mexico.

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<sup>17</sup> Goodman, C., & Michel, M. (2010). *U.S. firearms trafficking to Mexico: New data and insights illuminate key trends and challenges*. [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Chapter%206-%20U.S.%20Firearms%20Trafficking%20to%20Mexico%2C%20New%20Data%20and%20Insights%20Illuminate%](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Chapter%206-%20U.S.%20Firearms%20Trafficking%20to%20Mexico%2C%20New%20Data%20and%20Insights%20Illuminate%20) Accessed 25 Feb., 2019

<sup>18</sup> Wagner, Nick. "At Mexico's Lone Gun Store, Even the Boss Discourages Sales." AP NEWS. August 17, 2016. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://www.apnews.com/c29ecc229f0846b0bfa4f4ecf8eca7d5>.

## **Domestic Context in the United States**

In the United States, the Bush administration's preferences in a potential bilateral drug and security agreement can be inferred from existing domestic policy and the shift in security priorities brought on by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In this context the US is no longer concerned about the spread of communism in Latin America, but about weak states and the capacity of international criminal and terrorist organizations. There is a degree of fear that the Mexican government is not exerting sufficient control over swathes of its territory. The US sees weak Mexican institutions as a potential problem. Areas of concern include the Mexican judicial system, local and national governments that are subject to widespread corruption, and poor policing in many areas. Another issue is a limitation on Mexican extradition that does not allow for extradition for capital offenses.<sup>19</sup>

## **Plan Colombia: The US Model for Drug Control in Latin America?**

Plan Colombia can be seen as an example of what drug policy looks like in Latin America when the United States able to successfully exert control over the depth and terms of an agreement. The contextual similarities between Plan Colombia and what would become the Merida Initiative are striking. Both were plans driven by large amounts of American spending to help a Latin American country in an aggressive fight against drug traffickers. It can also be argued that Plan Colombia and the Merida Initiative were the result of the same US foreign policy team as George W. Bush took over control of Plan Colombia rather early on and expanded the program during his presidency. Therefore a short examination of Plan Colombia yields some insight into how the United States would have been looking at drug policy in Latin

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<sup>19</sup> International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (2007). "Mexico". State Department Archives



America during the Bush years. A brief summary of the development of Plan Colombia goes as follows: Colombian president Andres Pastrana proposed an ambitious plan for economic and social change in Colombia that required foreign investment. He went to countries in the region, the European Union and the United States with his plan to secure funding. However, the Europeans reject his plan and he was forced to turn to the US for funding. The United States limited Plan Colombia to mainly fighting drug traffickers and eradicating drug crops, a far cry from Pastrana's original proposal. Because the United States was the sole provider of foreign assistance for the plan, they were able to control the terms under which cooperation between the US and Colombia take place. The United States pushed its preferred approach to fighting drug traffickers in Colombia. The characteristics that have come to define the United States's approach to drug policy in Colombia included the use of military and paramilitary groups to fight the FARC, on-site training of through advisory troops, and the manual eradication and aerial fumigation of drug crops. This strategy arose through a process of competition among government agencies, Congressional leaders, and lobbying groups that sought to influence Plan Colombia. The final result was a militarized drug policy in which the United States oversaw and assisted an aggressive campaign against drug trafficking organizations that spanned from 2000 to 2015.<sup>20</sup>

After the announcement of the Merida Initiative, both Bush and Calderon were subject to questions about the similarities between their proposed plan and Plan Colombia. A critical issue at the time was the inclusion of US troops in Mexico. Of course, both Presidents took care to

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<sup>20</sup> Tate, Winifred. *Drugs, Thugs, and Diplomats: US Policymaking in Colombia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015.

reassure the public that the Merida Initiative was not a copy of Plan Colombia and as such did not include the presence of US troops on Mexican territory.<sup>21</sup>

### **Domestic Context in Mexico**

Felipe Calderon is the primary actor on the Mexican side of negotiations. An analysis of his appointments, rhetoric, and actions early in his sexenio and the political context in which they occur allows one to deduce the general interests of the Mexican government in 2007-2008. Understanding the political context in which Calderon is operating in the first two years of his term is crucial to understanding the preferences of the Mexican side of negotiations in this model. Calderon came into office in December of 2006 following a contentious election in which he beat his opponent, by less than one percent of the vote. Questions about the president's legitimacy pushed him to demonstrate his competence by making security and the fight against drug trafficking organizations his priority.<sup>22</sup> Calderon set a tough tone on drugs and crime by deploying troops to Michoacan in 2007.

The role of the Mexican Congress in setting the terms of negotiation is limited. Since the Merida Initiative is not a formal treaty, the Calderon administration had more freedom in its side of negotiations. Mexican congress therefore only asks to remain informed and outlines some core principles that they believe should be present in the final agreement.<sup>23</sup>

### **Historic Interactions Between The United States and Mexico**

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<sup>21</sup> "Ayuda de EU a México contra narco sin militares, dicen Bush y Calderón". *SUN (Mexico)*. August 21, 2007 Tuesday. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:4PGF-BCM0-TXN1-H1KM-00000-00&context=1516831>.

<sup>22</sup> Rafael Flores and Jorge Schiavon. "La Iniciativa Merida En El Marco De La Política Exterior De Felipe Calderon Y La Relación México- Estados Unidos." Rafael Velásquez and Juan Pablo Prado Lallande. *La Iniciativa Mérida: ¿Nuevo paradigma de cooperación entre México y Estados Unidos en seguridad?* Pp. 90-91

<sup>23</sup> Burguete, Alejandro, C. "La Iniciativa Mérida Y El Congreso Mexicano." Rafael Velásquez and Juan Pablo Prado Lallande. *La Iniciativa Mérida: ¿Nuevo paradigma de cooperación entre México y Estados Unidos en seguridad?* Pp. 55-71

US-Mexican relations in 2007 are subject to the lingering effects of US invasion and interference in Mexican affairs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The United States invaded Mexico in the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848, a conflict that resulted in the loss of huge swaths of territory for Mexico. The United States was also involved in Mexico in the 1910's. The context of US involvement in Mexican affairs created a sense of value for the ideas of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-intervention. Despite this, the US and Mexico have become increasingly close through trade.

### **Areas of Interest and Preferences**

Policy preferences for the US and Mexico are presented below. Given that the Merida Initiative is primarily built on US spending, there is a temptation to frame preferences in terms of dollars spent on a given program. However, the secretive nature of international negotiations and the subjectiveness of the intensity of policy preferences means that reconstructing the calculus that gives us a link between policy preferences and dollars spent is impossible. Preferences here are substantive points of contention about the depth and terms of security integration and are inferred from the observed actions and rhetoric of each actor at the outset of negotiations. The issues and the respective positions of each country for each position comes from the context that has been laid out for the status quo in 2007, government documents, and statements by individuals connected to the negotiations. On the United States' side, the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report is a valuable resource in that it provides a picture of what the United States was concerned about in the area of narcotics control for a given country in a given year. The Mexican preferences draw from contextual evidence, news coverage of the developing Merida Initiative, and academic writing on the Merida Initiative. A critical resource for

reconstructing the Mexican side of the preference schedule is the book, *La Iniciativa Mérida: ¿Nuevo paradigma de cooperación entre Mexico y Estados Unidos en seguridad?*. This book, written by academics affiliated with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and edited by Rafael Velazquez Flores and Juan Pablos Prado Lallande, offers a comprehensive view of the agreement from a variety of perspectives in Mexico and the United States.

Issue:	US Preference	Mexico Preference
US Military Role	**Deployment of US military advisors to assist in training (see Plan Colombia)	No US troops in the United States under any circumstances, but will accept technology transfer.
Gun Shipments into Mexico	US will not impose politically costly gun control legislation to take more guns out of circulation. Possible increased border enforcement and interdiction.	Mexico wants to limit the flow of guns into its territory from the US through straw buyers and the “gun-show loophole.”
Mexican Institutional Reform	US wants demonstrable improvement on issues of corruption, policing, and judicial processes.	Mexico does not want interference in its domestic affairs.
Human Rights Certification	Mexican military units must be certified for human rights.	Little to no conditions on Mexican military units.
Demand for Drugs in US Markets	No substantial change to US domestic drug enforcement. Prefers heavy sentences and incarceration for users and	More concerted effort on the part of the US to curb domestic demand for illicit drugs.

Figure 1: Preference Schedule for US and Mexico on five key issues.

\*This is inferred from the United States' approach to drug control in Colombia. We have no way of knowing if this was offered by the US and Mexico rejected it or if the United States chose not to pursue this policy.

### Ch. 3 Reconstruction of the Negotiation Process:

Moving out of the status quo that was established in the early days of the Calderon administration, I look to the centerpiece of this thesis, the negotiation process. Armed with a set of policy preferences for the United States and Mexico, I will examine how both parties set out to push for their preferred outcomes during the negotiations in 2007. Special attention will be paid to the three intervening variables in the negotiation process: strategies, coalition design, and framing.

#### Strategies:

Once preferences are established for both the United States and Mexico, one can begin to look at the strategies that both actors employ during the negotiation. Here we classify strategies using the typology offered by Odell. Strategies are placed along a continuum that ranges from purely distributive on one end to purely integrative on another.<sup>24</sup> Strategies at either extreme would not be conducive to the creation of an agreement in the mold of the Merida Initiative and are therefore regulated to the realm of theory on the basis of an agreement being reached. Strategies for both actors are then somewhere between the purely distributive and the purely integrative. Once purely distributive and purely integrative approaches are precluded, the analysis of strategies centers on how the two are mixed and the extent to which actors employ one over the other.

We begin an analysis of strategies by looking at the Mexican side of negotiations. Here, a review of Mena's analysis of US-Mexico NAFTA negotiations is instructive as it informs the proposed hypothesis regarding the strategy employed by Mexican negotiators in this case study.

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<sup>24</sup> Odell, John S., ed. "Introduction". *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 11-13. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

Mena claims that “Mexico displayed a sequentially mixed strategy, opening with mostly distributive moves and mixing in some integrative ones near the end,” and highlights the importance of framing on the Mexican side NAFTA negotiations to clearly communicated areas in which it would not give concessions.<sup>25</sup> I contend that Mexican negotiators used a similar strategy by holding firm on certain issues related to national sovereignty while working to establish some areas of deepened security integration and cooperation. In this regard, we see that Mexico is willing to collaborate in areas where the principles of national sovereignty and nonintervention are not at risk of being violated. However, certain practices that had been used by the United States in Latin America, namely the involvement of US troops and federal agents as seen in Plan Colombia, would be off the table completely.

The United States takes a similar approach to Mexico, but is allowed to be slightly more judicious on areas of integration due to the institutional advantages that are inherent in the agreement. The structure of the Merida Initiative gives US Congress final approval of the appropriations associated with the agreement. The United States, as the provider of funds, is able to control the agenda and push its preferences. However, it also must recognize the limits of integration imposed by Mexican negotiators if it wants to have a willing and enthusiastic partner in the fight against drug traffickers. Some of the limits on Mexican distributional gains are associated with Congressional oversight of funds appropriated under the Merida Initiative. The area of human rights certification is the most obvious example of this. Human rights certification as a prerequisite for aid was a prominent feature of Plan Colombia and arose as a result of the

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<sup>25</sup> Mena, Antonio. “Getting to “No:” Defending against demands in NAFTA energy negotiations” .Odell, John S. *Negotiating Trade: Developing Countries in the WTO and NAFTA*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. 11-13. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511491610.

success of the human rights lobby and their allies in Congress, namely Patrick Leahy.<sup>26</sup> This is a clear example of members of Congress being able to wrest some control over foreign policy away from the executive branch. The human rights certification requirements were brought forward into the Merida Initiative.

### **Coalition Design:**

The coalition design for the Merida Initiative is defined by two characteristics. The first is that it is fundamentally bilateral. Although some Central American states are included in the Merida Initiative, their addition to the substance of the agreement is ultimately inconsequential. While the inclusion of additional parties could be seen as beneficial for Mexico, the Central American States are given a comparatively small portion of total Merida funding and are eventually siloed into a separate program in 2010.<sup>27</sup> This makes the negotiations between the US and Mexico effectively bilateral. The second characteristic that defines the Merida Initiative and shapes the outcome of negotiations is that the Merida Initiative is not a formal treaty, but an agreement between George W. Bush and Felipe Calderon with promised US spending attached to it. This has benefits and drawbacks for both sides. The structure of the proposed agreement decreases limits on Mexican executive negotiators by not involving Mexican congress in the process. However, the spending portion introduces more stakeholders onto the US side of negotiations. The inclusion of the United States Congress means that the Merida Initiative is subject to some of the same oversight for Mexican authorities that was observed for their counterparts in Colombia.

### **“Dynamic Interaction on the Subjective Dimension” or Framing**

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<sup>26</sup> Tate, Winifred. *Drugs, Thugs, and Diplomats: US Policymaking in Colombia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Clare Ribando Seelke and Kristin Finklea. “U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond.” Congressional Research Service Report. 29 June, 2017. <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>



The way that the issues are framed in this negotiation plays an important role in determining what the end result of negotiations looks like. I will begin by examining the role of Mexican negotiators in framing the substantive issues of the Merida Initiative, paying close attention to the rhetorical strategy employed by the Mexican president, Felipe Calderon. Calderon stresses the idea of mutual responsibility in the fight against international drug trafficking organizations. While Mexico has a responsibility to fight drug traffickers in its territory, the United States also has responsibilities because it is the state with the largest market for Mexican drugs. The US should assist Mexico in its fight against drug trafficking organizations while also working to reduce its demand for drugs and stemming the flow of arms and cash South to Mexico.<sup>28</sup> Calderon was deliberate in his messaging and chose his words carefully to play to various audiences at home and abroad. This is evidenced by an analysis of Calderon's speeches during his presidency. Gustavo Fondevila finds that Calderon frames the issues of drug policy and security differently depending on his audience. When addressing international audiences, he pushes the narrative of mutual responsibility and calls for help from the United States. However, his domestic speeches, especially those given to the military, downplay the role of the United States.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> FONDEVILA, G. and QUINTANA-NAVARRETE, M. (2015), War Hypotheses: Drug Trafficking, Sovereignty and the Armed Forces in Mexico. *Bull Lat Am Res*, 34: 517-533. doi:[10.1111/blar.12328](https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.12328)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

#### **Chapter 4: Final Outcomes of Merida Negotiations: Winners and Losers or Joint Gains?**

Here we examine the final result of negotiations in the form of funds appropriated for the Merida Initiative for 2009 and the programs created under the Merida Initiative in that year. By understanding how and where money was allocated, we can start to make judgements about distributional gains in relation to preferences at the beginning of negotiations. This analysis of preferences in relation to results, of course, comes with the caveat that international negotiation does not have to be a zero-sum game in which gains for one party must come at the expense of another. Thus, there should be both joint gains and mutual gains at the end of negotiations in 2008.

If one of the main goals of the Calderon administration was to secure the support and resources of the United States in support of its domestic policy, then the negotiation of the Merida Initiative can be deemed a rousing success. The Merida Initiative drastically changed the amount of US foreign aid that went to Mexico. According to USAID, for the fiscal years 2001-2008, the United States earmarked on average \$97.8 million for its Southern neighbor, with the grand total over those years amounting to \$783 million. For fiscal year 2009 the listed foreign aid obligations to Mexico totalled \$500.5 million. In 2009, the top four “activities” that aid money was used for were “International Narcotics & Law Enforcement: Anti-Crime Programs,” “International Narcotics & Law Enforcement: Country Program,” “In-Country Counternarcotics Program,” and “DOD - Foreign Military Financing (FMF) Program, Payment

Waived". These programs total \$417 million or 83% percent of all aid destined for Mexico in fiscal year 2009<sup>30</sup>

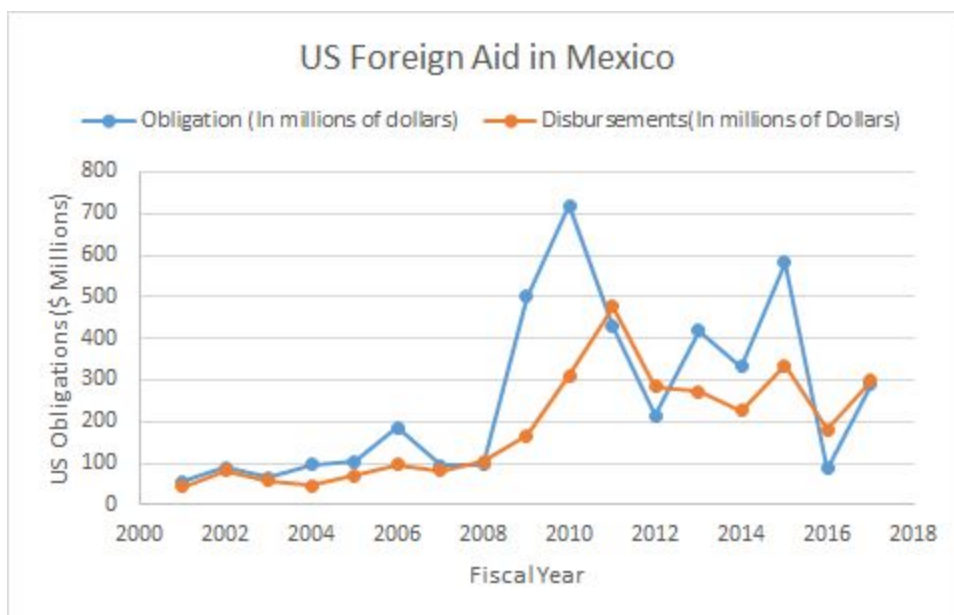


Figure 2: This graph was constructed from USAID data. Here US Foreign Aid Obligations and Disbursements are presented for the years 2001-2018. Note the drastic increase in obligations in 2009, the first year of appropriations under the Merida Initiative, and the lag in disbursements.

### United States' Distributional Gains and Losses

The analysis of issue-specific distributions will begin with a view from the United States' perspective. On the issue of US military involvement in the Merida Initiative, the United States is not able to establish a military presence in Mexico as it did in Plan Colombia. Although there is no substantial evidence that the United States sought to copy exactly its approach in Colombia, the asymmetrical power inherent in the Plan Colombia negotiations serve as justification that the United States, especially military-aligned interests within the United States, are not averse to

<sup>30</sup> (USAID Foreign Aid Explorer- Mexico [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/MEX?fiscal\\_year=2009&measure=Obligations](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/MEX?fiscal_year=2009&measure=Obligations)).

stationing troops in Latin American countries as part of counterdrug operations. Depending on the level to which one believes that Plan Colombia reflects the ideal drug policy prescription from the United States' perspective, this could be viewed as either neutral or a loss for the United States.

### **Gun Shipments into Mexico**

Although the first official joint press release for the Merida Initiative stresses the importance of mutual responsibility to combat the flow of drugs north and the flow of money and arms south, the United States is able to get away with implementing reforms that are relatively low in cost. The US deepens its cooperation with Mexican authorities, but does not impose any substantial new restrictions on gun purchases that would be politically costly at home. Where it does provide some assistance is in expanding the ATF e-trace program to allow Mexican authorities to submit requests for the ATF to trace guns seized from criminals in Mexico.

### **Mexican Institutional Reform**

The United States is able to earmark funding for programs that would seek to improve Mexican institutions. The amount of funding set aside for strengthening Mexican institutions and promoting justice in fiscal year 2009 equalled \$343.3 million dollars, with \$315 million dollars going to programs aimed at anti corruption, transparency, and human rights.<sup>31</sup> This is an issue area where the United States takes advantage of the structure of the Merida Initiative to make sure that its concerns with Mexican legal institutions, government, and military units are addressed. There is certainly a case to be made that funding for improving Mexican institutions is an example of a joint gain, but these gains would be accompanied with a healthy dose of

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<sup>31</sup> Raul Benitez Manault & Angel Armando Roriguez Luna. "Iniciativa Merida, Seguridad Nacional, Y Soberania." Rafael Velásquez and Juan Pablo Prado Lallande. *La Iniciativa Mérida: ¿Nuevo paradigma de cooperación entre Mexico y Estados Unidos en seguridad?* Pp. 48-51

skepticism on the part of the Mexicans.

### **Human Rights Certification**

Members of the United States Congress are able to make human rights certification a requirement for receiving US foreign aid. This falls in line with the process that was observed during the formation of Plan Colombia. Despite resistance in Mexico, the US Congress made human rights certification for Mexican authorities a prerequisite for receiving US foreign aid associated with the Merida Initiative and even withheld a portion of funding for fiscal year 2009. This withholding specifically targeted military equipment and technology transfers to the Mexican armed forces.<sup>32</sup>

### **US Efforts to Cut Demand:**

According to the principle of mutual responsibility for the fight against drug trafficking organizations, the United States was supposed to tackle the task of reducing demand for illicit drugs in the United States. It committed to doing so in broad terms in the joint press statement issued on October 22, 2007.<sup>33</sup> In reality, the US seems to have done little to actually reduce its own demand. The first few years of implementation saw meager increases in funding for demand reduction and treatment programs. In this issue area, the United States seems unwilling or unable to make the broad changes necessary to truly tackle the issue of illicit drug consumption and addiction, opting for the continuation of the same supply-side strategies that it had employed over the last several decades.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Silke, Clare R. "Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues." Congressional Research Service Report. 21 January 2010.

[https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121\\_R40135\\_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121_R40135_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> "Joint Statement on the Merida Initiative: A New Paradigm for Security Cooperation." U.S. Department of State. October 22, 2007. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/oct/93817.htm>

<sup>34</sup> Silke, Clare R. "Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues." Congressional Research Service Report. 21 January 2010.

[https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121\\_R40135\\_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121_R40135_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf)

## **Mexican Distributional Gains and Losses**

### **US Military Involvement**

The greatest achievement that comes out of the Merida negotiations for the Calderon Administration was that they were able to secure US assets in their domestic fight against drug trafficking organizations while still adhering to the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Unlike Plan Colombia, no United States troops were allowed to enter Mexican territory. Mexico was however, able to benefit from US military technology transfers which included helicopters, airplanes, ion scanners, and communications technology.<sup>35</sup> This is a clear example of the Calderon Administration being able to successfully employ a mixed strategy. While the two countries committed to deeper integration, Mexico was able to establish a hard limit on the United States that was not observed in Plan Colombia. This issue area can be considered a win for Calderon and shows that he is able to effectively play two-level games by balancing his foreign policy goals with the limits imposed by nationalistic constituencies at home.

### **Gun Shipments into Mexico**

Mexican gains on the issue of gun shipments include the expansion of the e-trace program for firearms. Mexican law enforcement were able to get funding and training for ATF tracing of firearms seized from drug trafficking organizations. Expansion of US interdiction efforts through increased funding for domestic programs to complement Merida Initiative funding. A notable example of these are the “Project Roadrunner” and “Armas Cruzadas” which received additional

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<sup>35</sup> Raul Benitez Manault & Angel Armando Roriguez Luna. “Iniciativa Merida, Seguridad Nacional, Y Soberania.” Rafael Velásquez and Juan Pablo Prado Lallande. *La Iniciativa Mérida: ¿Nuevo paradigma de cooperación entre Mexico y Estados Unidos en seguridad?* Pp. 48-51

funding during the negotiation period.<sup>36 37</sup> In this issue area, modest gains for Mexico are observed, but extend only so far as to not impose significant political costs on US elected representatives.

### **Mexican Institutional Reform**

Mexico does have to give concessions to the United States on the issue of institutional reforms. The second “pillar” of the Merida Initiative, labelled “Institutionalize Capacity to Sustain Rule of Law” received a substantial portion of total Merida funding. This shows that the United States is doing something to address its concern with the state of Mexican institutions that were observed in the status quo in 2007. Gains on the US side of course, come at the expense of total Mexican sovereignty over its internal affairs. This concession is most likely a function of the one-way flow of resources that characterizes the Merida Initiative. While Mexico was able to make some headway on other issues, there were certain areas in which its material gains were contingent on its acquiescence to terms favored by the United States, especially those favored by the US Congress .

### **Human Rights Certification**

Here we see Mexico having to comply with restrictions imposed by the United States Congress to get access to Merida Initiative funding. Congress held a portion of the appropriated funds that would only be released to Mexico if it was up to standards on human rights. This is one of the areas in which Mexico is not able to employ a distributive strategy based on the structure of the

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<sup>36</sup> “ Goodman, C., & Michel, M. (2010). *U.S. firearms trafficking to Mexico: New data and insights illuminate key trends and challenges*. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Chapter%206-%20U.S.%20Firearms%20Trafficking%20to%20Mexico%2C%20New%20Data%20and%20Insights%20Illuminate%20> Accessed 25 Feb., 2019

<sup>37</sup> Silke, Clare R. “Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues.” Congressional Research Service Report. 21 January 2010. [https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121\\_R40135\\_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121_R40135_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf)

agreement. Because Congress alone is able to set the terms under which funds are appropriated, the Mexican government is unable to do anything but accept the terms of Human Rights certification lest they lose access to the resources provided under the Merida Initiative. Given the skepticism toward human rights requirements in Mexico<sup>38</sup>, this issue area can be seen as one in which Mexico lost to the benefit of the United States.

### **US Efforts to Cut Demand**

The Calderon administration built its case for the Merida Initiative on the premise of mutual responsibility for fighting drug trafficking organizations. On the United States end, this mutual responsibility entailed a greater commitment to limiting the flow of trafficked arms south and limiting demand for drugs in the US. This is an area in which Mexico does not see significant gains. Making significant progress in demand reduction would have most likely required the US to commit to a sweeping change in its existing policies. A Congressional Research Service report in 2010 showed that the United States had failed to make such changes and had rather continued to pursue a drug control strategy that spent about seven times as much on supply-side reduction as it did on demand-side reduction.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Juárez, Mario Arroyo. "CONTRAPUNTOS / Iniciativa Mérida ¿Ayuda sin reservas?" *El Norte*. 8 June 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Silke, Clare R. "Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues." Congressional Research Service Report. 21 January 2010.  
[https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121\\_R40135\\_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf](https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100121_R40135_536ec58b7c9d87a6a4f32c68b6869f8db2943e5c.pdf)



## Chapter 5: Review of Results

In this chapter, I will give a brief summary of the overall premise of this paper, discuss the findings of my analysis and assess the hypotheses offered in the introduction. I will also offer some potential for expansion or improvement of the concept offered in my thesis. The results of my analysis were generally in line with what I hypothesized, but were somewhat limited by the secrecy under which negotiations took place between the initial meeting between Bush and Calderon in March 2007 and the joint announcement of the Initiative in late October 2007. The product of this limitation is a somewhat stylized version of the negotiation process. Since preferences are only sometimes communicated clearly by both sides, it becomes necessary to infer preferences from existing policy, historical context, and the framing of issues before negotiations begin. Similarly, the strategies employed must be inferred from the content of the final agreement and from the context under which the negotiations took place. It is difficult to ascertain the level of disagreement on some of the relevant issues and how those differences in preferences made their way through negotiations prior to the request for funding being submitted to the US Congress for approval.

*H1: Mexico will take a mostly integrative approach, but will hold firm on a few key issues, especially those that relate to Mexican sovereignty.*

Evaluating this hypothesis requires studying the preferences, strategies, and framing sections for Mexico. The principle of the Merida Initiative as a whole is quite integrative as it was underscored by the narrative of mutual responsibility that was so often articulated by Calderon. The title of the joint press release for the Merida Initiative was “A New Paradigm for Security Cooperation,” a title that alludes to deeper security integration between the two countries. The areas in which I expected some resistance related to determining the depth of that cooperation. Carrying forward Mena’s explanation of Mexican negotiators’ refusal to allow US encroachment in certain parts of the Mexican energy sector, I expected some hard limits to be placed on issues related to Mexican national sovereignty or the perception of it in the eyes of certain groups in Mexico.<sup>40</sup> The most obvious example of this is the question of how much military assistance will be included as part of the Merida Initiative. The preferences on the Mexican side that I constructed in Chapter 2 show that the desire to have a partnership with the United States is tempered by the strong value for national sovereignty that is based in historical interactions between the two states. The limit for Calderon is clearly the entry of US troops onto Mexican soil. Whether or not this was strongly desired or even brought up by US negotiators is unclear. However, a portion of a joint press release announcing the Merida Initiative that states, “Our strategies for expanded cooperation are based on full respect for the sovereignty, territorial jurisdiction, and legal frameworks of each country, and are guided by principles of mutual trust, shared responsibility and reciprocity, ” shows there are clear limits to the depth of security integration.<sup>41</sup> This is a demonstration of the mindset of Mexican negotiators in 2007. They were

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<sup>40</sup> Mena, Antonio. “Getting to “No:” Defending against demands in NAFTA energy negotiations.”

<sup>41</sup> Office of the Spokesman (Washington D.C.) “Joint Statement on the Merida Initiative: A New Paradigm for Security Cooperation.” Released October 22, 2007. US Department of State Archive <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/oct/93817.htm>

willing to work with the United States, but would set limits that fell in line with the principles of national sovereignty and non-intervention.

*H2 : The results of negotiations will lead to an agreement in which Mexico is able to achieve its preferred outcome for some of its most important issues, but will have to give concessions in other areas.*

While the idea of giving something to get something seems relatively obvious in the context of negotiations, the motivation behind proposing this second hypothesis is to build off of the first one. I expected the Calderon administration to have some success with the mixed integrative-distributional approach. The area where I suspected the Mexican negotiators to have the most success was in setting clear limits on the depth of security integration as it related to Mexican sovereignty and the presence of US troops in Mexico. This was borne out in my analysis. The Calderon administration was able to extract resources from the United States through military technology and resource transfers while being able to keep a US military presence off the table. They were also able to get some US concessions on stemming the flow of guns into Mexico in the form of an expanded ATF gun tracing program that integrated Mexican law enforcement with their counterparts in the United States and increased funding for “Operation Gunrunner” that was appropriated outside the umbrella of the Merida Initiative. These gains are offset by the refusal of the United States to pass meaningful gun restrictions, most notably the “gun show loophole.”<sup>42</sup> This, although surely irritating to the Mexicans, is a natural extension of the principles of national sovereignty and reciprocity that Mexico insisted

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<sup>42</sup>Goodman, C., & Michel, M. (2010). *U.S. firearms trafficking to Mexico: New data and insights illuminate key trends and challenges*. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Chapter%206-%20U.S.%20Firearms%20Trafficking%20to%20Mexico%2C%20New%20Data%20and%20Insights%20Illuminate%20> Accessed 25 Feb., 2019

upon. Under these principles, Mexico can ask for greater effort on the United States' part in combating arms trafficking, but has no say over the domestic policy of the United States. In a joint statement with Condoleeza Rice in 2008, Calderon's Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Patricia Espinoza communicated this sentiment.<sup>43</sup>

The analysis of the outcome of Merida negotiations shows that the United States was also able to limit the distributional gains of Mexico in some areas. The imposition of required human rights certification is a clear example of this. Human rights certification faced criticism and opposition in Mexico, but could not be avoided due to the institutions that undergirded the agreement. The US Congress was able to effectively use the power of the purse to force certification as a requirement for access to US funding. Mexico could then either concede on this issue or be forced to give up the larger gains of US help in its domestic campaign against drug trafficking organizations.

### **Potential for Expansion of This Thesis:**

This thesis takes a novel approach to understanding international cooperation on the issues of drug and security policy by examining the negotiation process that gave way to the Merida Initiative. While the findings of this thesis add another layer of information to existing models of international security cooperation, there is ample room for expansion and improvement of the concept offered by this thesis. A more in-depth reconstruction of the negotiation process that looks at how multiple sets of interests in each country are aggregated into the "national interest" would add some valuable insight and perhaps find some information

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<sup>43</sup> "Joint Press Conference On the Merida Initiative." Factiva. December 19, 2008. Accessed February 25, 2019. [https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#/?&\\_suid=1553481975269016391885116526228](https://global.factiva.com/ha/default.aspx#/?&_suid=1553481975269016391885116526228).

that is generalizable across countries in Latin America. Another way to expand upon what has been presented here would be to analyze the negotiations through a game-theory based model that assigns utility values to funding based on the receiving institution or program and accounts for time discounting. This is an approach that would probably shed more light on the ideas of “winners” and “losers” in these types of agreements, but is contingent on being able to set up functions that could accurately translate dollars spent on x program at y time to a utility value.

Another way to expand upon this thesis would be to expand the temporal limits of the negotiation process to account for reevaluation of the Merida Initiative under the Obama and Trump administrations in the US and the Peña-Nieto and Lopez-Obrador administrations in Mexico. There are certainly limits to this approach as the limited period of negotiation between the US and Mexico in 2007 before the announcement and proposal to Congress does not seem to have been repeated. It appears that changes in Merida funding have come about as a result of unilateral reevaluation of the strategy under different US presidents. In this case, a reevaluation of US and Mexican interests and distributional gains would probably suffice as a supplement to the existing thesis as it stands. The sections on strategies, coalition design, and framing would change somewhat, but most of the change would probably come on the US side.