



WHAT IS A MIGRANT DEATH? AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Regional Working Group on Migrant Mortality Accounting
Tucson, Arizona
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WHO WE ARE

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National
Science
Foundation

Human Networks and Data Science (HNDS) – Infrastructure grant

Migrant Mortality Mapping Portal Project(M3P2)

COUNTING THE LIVES LOST AT THE BORDER

[RESEARCH & INNOVATION](#) Aimee Roundtree | August 17, 2022

Texas State Researchers in the Departments of Anthropology and Geography and Environmental Studies receive \$1 million in NSF Funding to Map Migrant Mortality at the Border



[\(Roundtree, 2022\)](#)



How do we develop a more representative account of migrant mortality along the southwestern US border?



What are indicators used by southwestern US border jurisdictions to distinguish a probable migrant forensic case?

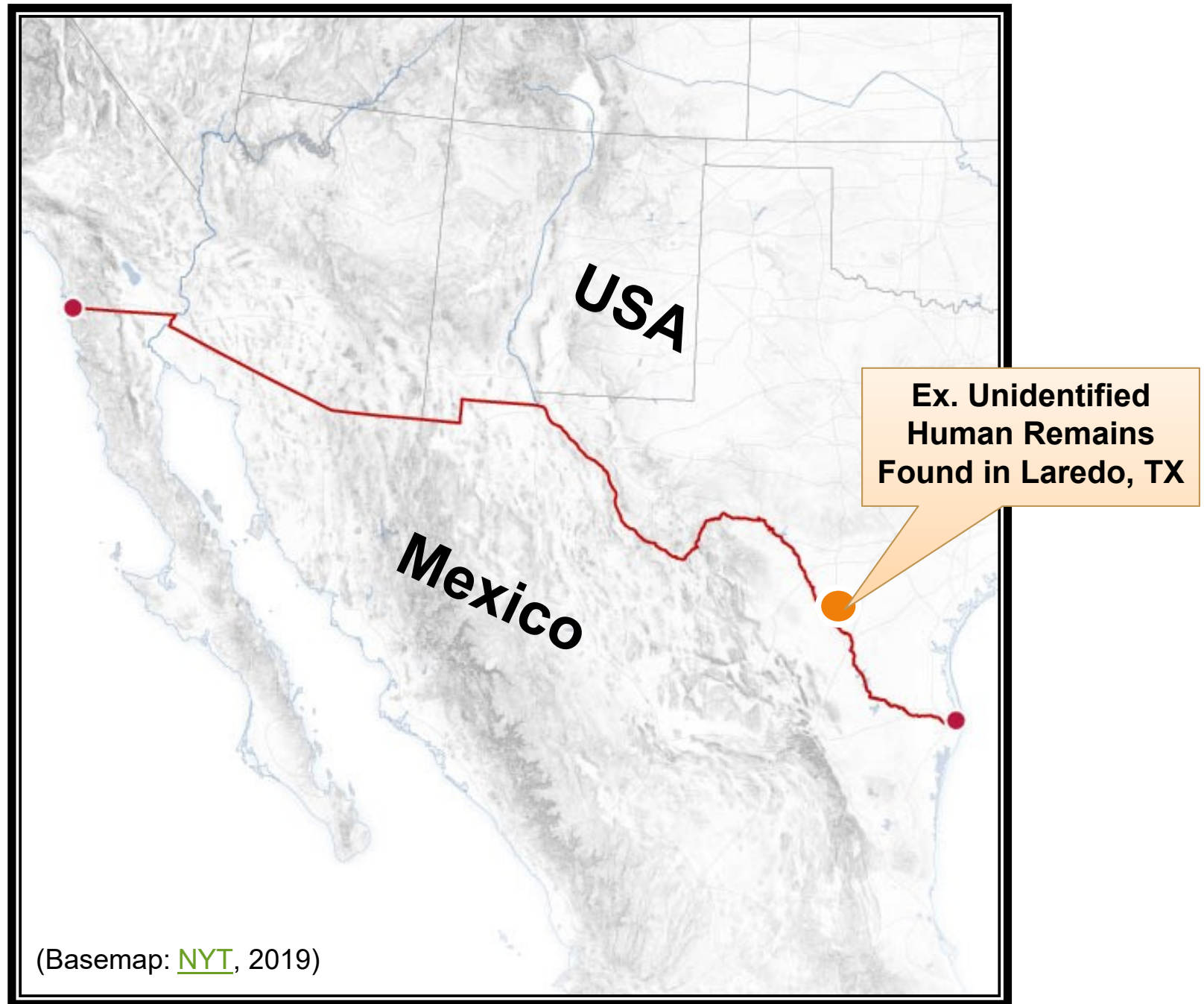


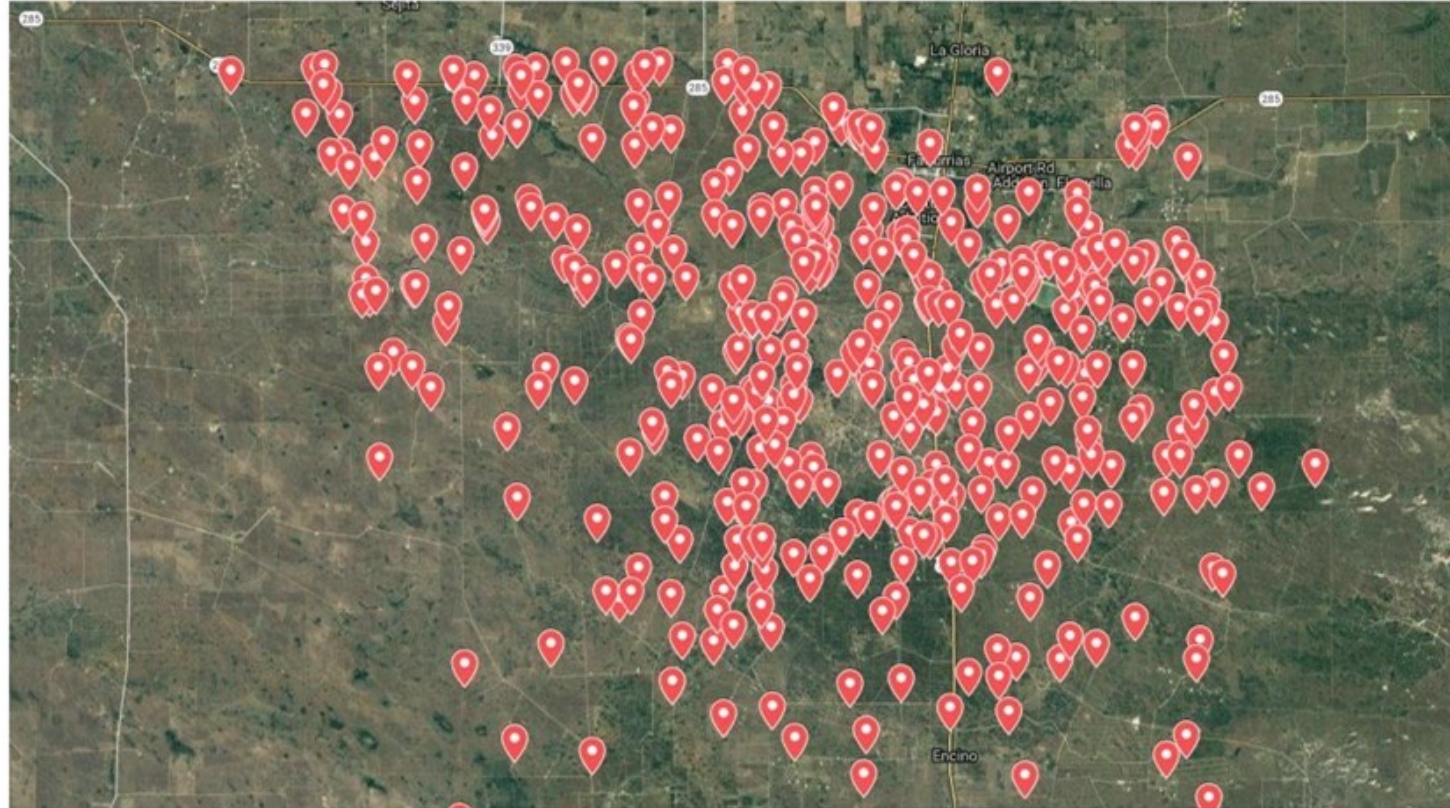
How can we summarize situational clues into a set of criteria for inclusion of specific forensic cases as “migrant?”



NSF SCOPE

Start = Moment of Discovery





Each marker is the geolocated coordinates of a recovered body within Brooks County (2009-2019). [Courtesy Stephanie Leutert, [Director of the Mexico Security Initiative at the University of Texas at Austin in LawFare Blog](#), statistics via Brooks County Sheriff's Office.]

(Spinoza, 3 Feb 2022)

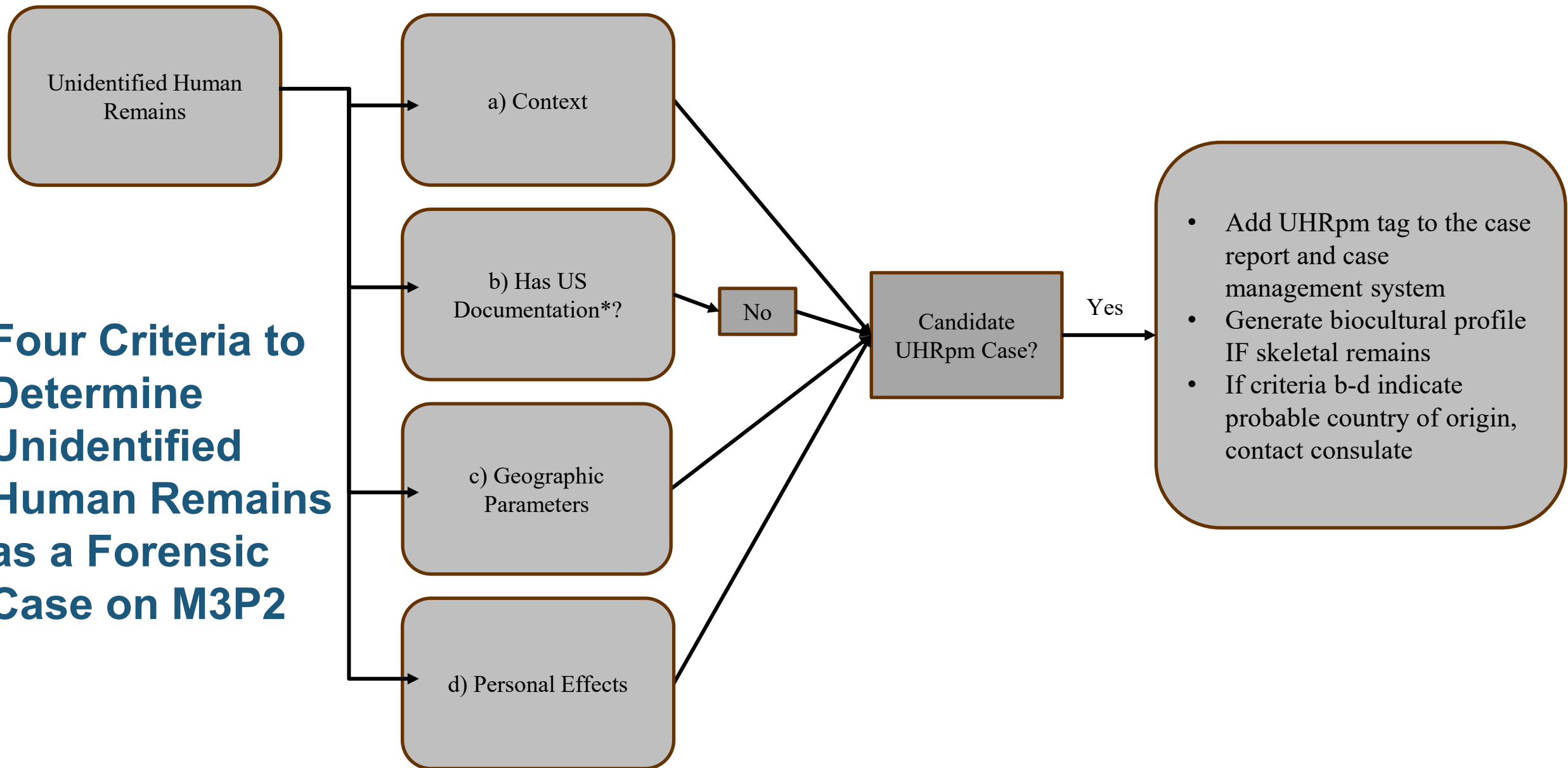
Towards an accurate accounting of migrant deaths
along the southern US border

Images exemplifying some map
visualizations of migrant
mortality locations

Unidentified Decedent Cases per Data Source in the Regional Demonstration Dataset

Data Source	Unidentified Human Remains of probable migrants
San Diego Medical Examiner Office, CA	100
NamUs CA	9
NamUs AZ	23
NamUs NM	3
NamUs TX	15
Humane Border's Open GIS of Migrant Mortality, AZ	100
Brooks County Sheriff's Office, TX	99
Office of the Medical Investigator, NM	13
Total	362

Four Criteria to Determine Unidentified Human Remains as a Forensic Case on M3P2



CRITERION

CONTEXT

For Example:

- CA – In the American Canal
- AZ – On Tohono O'odham lands
- NM – Near the town of Santa Teresa
- TX – In the Rio Grande; On Private Ranchland

CRITERION

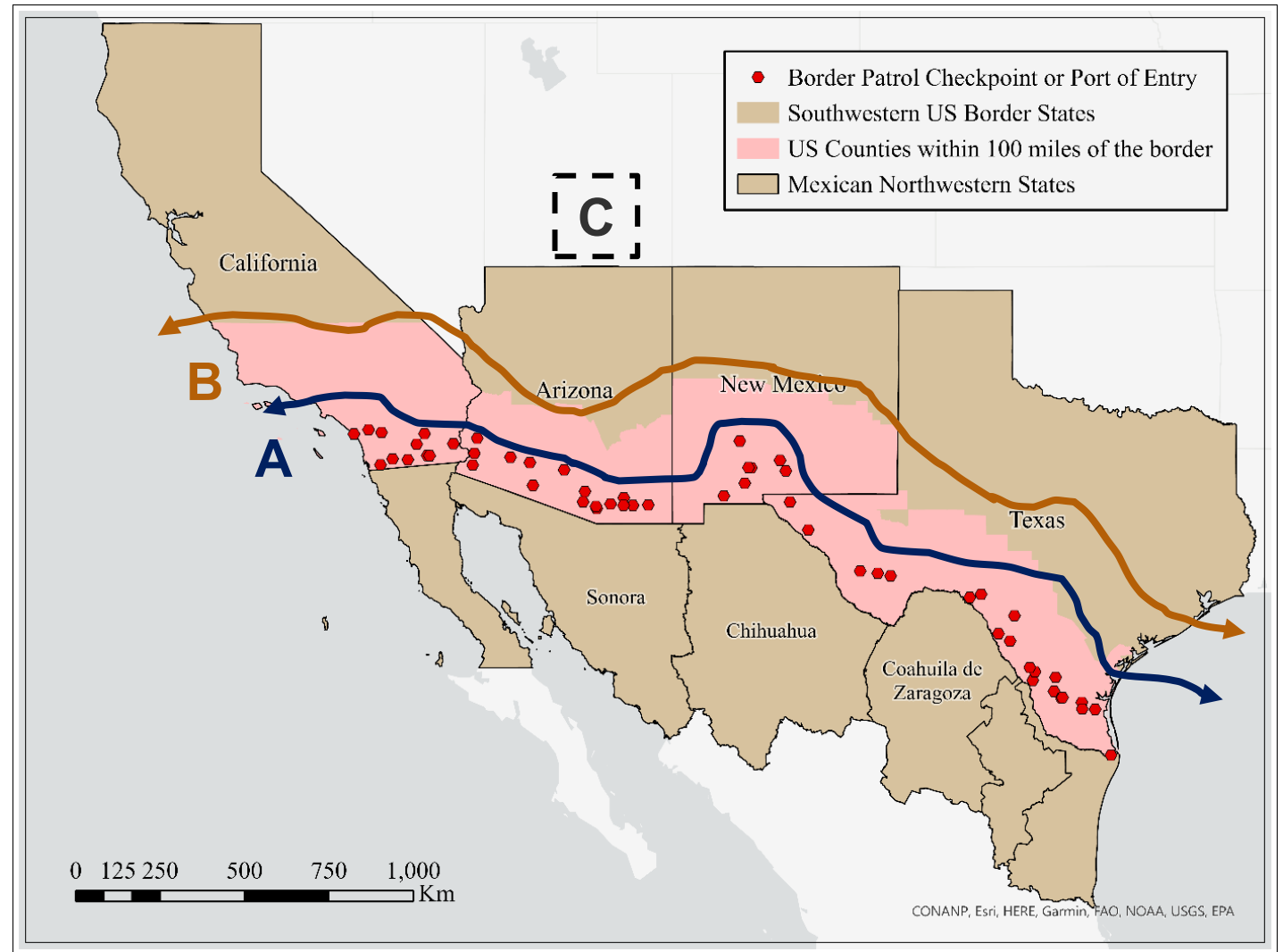
IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTATION

For Example, Non-US IDs such as a:

- Voter Card
- Birth Certificate
- Multiple ID Cards
 - Or ...No Identification

CRITERION

*GEOGRAPHIC
PARAMETER(S)*



CRITERION

PERSONAL EFFECTS

For example:

- Foreign money
- Prayer books, beads, etc.
- Indicators of “active transit” such as toothpaste and other hygienic items

CONCLUSIONS

- Our criteria highlight jurisdictional observations of migrant death along the US-side of border. Working towards a **regional** view and approach.

*Eventually, our process will be **expanded to/inclusive of** Mexican and Central American authorities', nonprofits', and, even, affected families', observations of migrant mortality.*

- Taken together, the four criteria will facilitate the determination of the probability that human remains found along the border may be from a migrating person.
- Ultimately, our tag of UHRpm (or others' such as UBC) supports the **identification process and humanitarian interventions**

Thank you

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