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Homeland Security in the Trump Era: On the Border by the Sea

Symposium

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Front Cover

The cover photo was taken by **Scott Nicol**, an artist, activist and educator who is an assistant professor at South Texas College in McAllen, Texas. Trump's border wall, 30 feet tall and painted black, and a Border Patrol truck are reflected in a display window at an adjacent shopping mall in Calexico, California, in February of 2020. The wall and the border militarization that it represents are omnipresent in border communities like Calexico.

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In 2017, the Trump Administration implemented their "Zero-Tolerance" policy regarding irregular migration to the United States. This change altered implementation of existing U.S. immigration policy regarding the handling of minor children crossing the border as well as asylum seekers. Department of Homeland Security and immigration officials implemented the new policy, which resulted in the immediate detention of asylum seekers and separation of migrant parents from their minor children. The government detained thousands of migrant children, whom they separated from their parents, in migrant detention camps along the U.S.-Mexico border. Using the framework of narrative policy analysis, this paper examines narratives used by President Donald Trump and his Administration to construct a sense of "invasion," the "criminality" of the migrants, and justification for child separation. The author argues the othering language surrounding this policy transforms the humanity of migrants and asylum seekers into that of *homo sacer*, removed from the normal juridical order.

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Symposium

Homeland Security in the Trump Era: On the Border by the Sea — An Introduction

Terence M. Garrett and Arthur J. Sementelli

This symposium analyzes, deconstructs, and interrogates aspects of "borders" from Brownsville, Texas, westward to San Diego, California, from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific, and across international barriers — into Mexico. In fall 2018, the Trump administration and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sent federal troops to the southwest border, laying concertina wire and supporting DHS operations. Here, borders refer to physical, geographical, metaphorical, and/or philosophical spaces that tend to separate us or, alternatively, bring us closer together. The primary aim of the symposium is to theorize and discuss perspectives on borders and what constitutes "homeland" security on the international border between Mexico and the U.S. The papers consider how the border affects communities who dwell there and visitors who are passing through for political, safety, and economic reasons, including migrants and asylum seekers. If successful, this symposium should emphasize the continued need for a discussion as to why borders simultaneously separate and unite us. The reader may note that these manuscripts were written and reflect border and homeland security issues and realities *pre-COVID-19* though they are still relevant today.

This symposium presents theoretical groundings in ways to create inclusive communities, increase citizen/public collaboration, improve governance, boost administrative prowess, and enhance what we know and understand concerning the concept of border security. We have grouped the articles in a manner that follow themes, including: (1) public and private efforts of border security apparatchiks – government personnel in the Department of Homeland Security, vigilantes and the corporate aspects of the "border industrial complex;" (2) narratives, contested concepts, propaganda and memes used for building walls and victimizing border crossers; and, (3) legitimizing migrant apprehension and detention through the process of "othering."

The first article is titled, "Border Security and Immigration Policy Management in South Texas by the Numbers: Perception, Stories and the Knowledge Analytic" by Terence Garrett. The theme here is that numbers used to assess the morale of federal employees via the Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) indicate that Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agency personnel have the lowest scores annually and that DHS secretaries are frequently called by Congress to

explain why they are chronically the worst of all 15 departments. The secretaries say they will raise the numbers, i.e., get higher FEVS scores. Garrett makes the case using phenomenology with the *knowledge analytic* that the numbers will not go up until the organization uses alternative methods such as narrative analysis – gathering and evaluating stories of agents in the field and the nature of their work as well as their managers and agency executives – to find systemic problems and to address them.

The second article by Willie Costley is titled "Online Vigilantes: The Virtual Semiotics of AZ Border Recon." Costley analyzes and examines the case of the (Arizona) AZ Border Recon (AZBR), a paramilitary vigilante group, who fashion themselves as armed soldiers weaponizing anti-immigrant rhetoric using technology and are engaged in a low-intensity conflict against migrants on the Mexico-U.S. border. AZBR alleges that the U.S. federal government security apparatus has failed the public, hence the need for AZBR to voluntarily intercede to prevent the alleged onslaught of illegal immigrants crossing the border. Costley utilizes the visual semiotics of Fox and Castells using the fear of invasion by "illegal" border crossers as justification for their militant actions. These actions are not strictly limited to the Mexico-U.S. border and are part and parcel of the global vigilante group movement phenomena taking place elsewhere in the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Fuminori Kawakubo in the third symposium article "Privatizing Border Security: Emergence of the 'Border–Industrial Complex' and Its Implications" examines the historical creation of the border industrial complex – as borders move from lines simply marking sovereignty to the interdiction of private corporations making profits, as borders become increasingly militarized. Kawakubo contends that increased technology – and the profitability of it – leads to governing decisions that are no longer in the best interests of the citizenry, thereby bringing about the need to reexamine border governance by having a public discourse that reflects their values.

Article four in this symposium is submitted by Arthur Sementelli and is titled "Good Fences Make Good Neighbors: Simulacra and Border Narratives." This paper uses a poem by Robert Frost as a backdrop to understanding divergent perspectives on borders. Specifically, the narratives about why borders are considered necessary if not essential parallel the discussion between the two property owners in the poem *Mending Wall.* Sementelli contends that border security narratives might reflect the emergence of essentially contested concepts focusing on the administrative and constitutive approaches to public administration.

Article five in the symposium by Charles F. Abel and Richard J. Herzog titled "Populist Border Policies: The Meme Connection and Administrative Pragmatism" examines border narratives focusing on how memes impact perspectives, distort narratives, and raise concerns about both policies and managerial practices. They highlighted the ideologically charged memes including classics like "we're number one" and memes about invasion to the more recent expressions including MAGA. Abel and Herzog point to the need for pragmatism as a mode to navigate the emerging influence of memes in politicized environments.

Isla A. Schuchs Carr, Deborah A. Sibila, and Beth M. Rauhaus provided a sixth paper titled "Trump's Twitter Tales: Policy Implications of Stories of Crime and Crisis along the Southwest Border." They used a content analysis of presidential tweets and newspaper coverage to examine

narratives of crime and crisis in the context of the president's McAllen, Texas, visit. Illustrating how law and practice can be subverted using contemporary storytelling practices AKA twitter, the authors show the frailty of contemporary public policy in the face of the emergent platform for storytelling and narratives.

Paul Pope provided the article "From U.S. Zero-Tolerance Immigration Policy to Immigrant Detention Camps: The Narrative Construction of *Homo Sacer*." In this article, the author claims that narratives of invasion can be used to create a *homo sacer*. The consequence of this is that if successful, the narrative diminishes immigrants and their status as human beings. Pope briefly examines this phenomenon using tweets and narrative analysis to make sense of it. He concludes that the president initially used twitter as a campaign-marketing tool and later – to frame or reframe policy problems as a mechanism to advance his goals. This differs from other presidents in the sense that he interfaces directly with his base without media filters creating what some might argue is a populist approach to public policy.

The original idea for this symposium emerged from discussions by conference participants that occurred at the *Homeland Security Conference – On the Border by the Sea* held May 23-24, 2019 at the Brownsville, Texas campus of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). Three of the key presenters at the conference, Paul Pope, Willie Costley, and Rick Herzog, were part of the first conversations with guest editor Terry Garrett. Those scholars' work, as well as the other submissions, eventually made it through the double-blind peer review process and were included in this symposium. The conference was sponsored by a grant from the Texas National Security Network (submitted by Terry Garrett), The University of Texas System, Austin, Texas (https://www.txnsn.org/), and supported by the UTRGV Office of Global Engagement (https://www.utrgv.edu/oge/). The symposium discussions continued later that month through the *2019 Public Administration Theory Network Conference* in Denver, Colorado – theme: Post-Truth in the Public Realm – May 30-June 2, 2019. Art Sementelli and Terry Garrett discussed the conference papers and the themes of both conferences and decided to create a symposium to capture the creativity engendered by these conferences and to offer to others the opportunity to participate. *Public Voices* has provided us with a platform, and we are pleased with the result. We hope that the reader is, too.

Border Security and Immigration Policy Management in South Texas by the Numbers: Perception, Stories and the Knowledge Analytic

Terence M. Garrett

Introduction: A Brief Historical Background of the DHS and CBP

DHS was created in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as part of an overall strategy to protect the borders of the U.S. The Office of Homeland Security was originally designed to provide President George W. Bush with direct advice on how to manage the domestic side of the "War on Terror" that was part of the federal government's plans to ostensibly combat terrorist attacks on USA territory. Congress wanted more "accountability" in the homeland security policy-front and urged President Bush to reorganize 22 separate agencies for other components of the federal government (e.g., agencies primarily from the Departments of Justice, Interior, Treasury, Energy, and Transportation) thereby affecting over 170,000 federal employees (Kettl 2007; Sylves 2015). This was one of the largest bureaucratic reorganizations in U.S. history second only to the Department of Defense creation in 1947.

There are three signal events that the DHS has been involved in since its beginning. Each is briefly examined to get an idea of what is important to the development of the newest cabinet-level department. The first was the creation of the DHS since September 11, 2001 (hereafter "9-11"). The 9-11 Commission Report outlined actions to be followed in terms of reorganization for homeland security. One of the issues included the National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Counterterrorism Division to foster increased communication, collaboration, and cooperation for intelligence operations particularly within the borders of the U.S. (Kettl 2007). The overall recommendations and attention drawn toward these separate agencies affected the entire reorganization of the DHS although the aforementioned agencies were not effectively changed. As Kettl (2007) noted, "The reasons used to develop the DHS came from political instead of safety motives" (53). One of the major consequences nonetheless was that the DHS took as its mantra "the War on Terror" and made it its primary focus – as depicted in its mission statements, dating back to its beginning with the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Title I, Section 101:

> The primary mission of the Department is to …

> (A) *prevent terrorist attacks* within the United States;
> (B) reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism; and
> (C) minimize the damage, and assist in the recovery, from terrorist attacks that do occur within the United States (DHS 2002, Sec. 101, italics added for emphasis).

The mission statement exemplifies the primary executive-centered direction for the DHS. This departmental direction will have severe consequences later as natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina figure more prominently in what the DHS actually has to do in terms of protecting the homeland. The 2002 mission statement is a direct consequence of the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

The second event was Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 that drew public attention towards DHS in a very negative manner. In that catastrophic event, nearly 2,000 Americans lost their lives mainly due to the collapse of levees in New Orleans. DHS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were determined to be primarily culpable for a weak and delayed response. The Department of Homeland Security was in a period of transition and transformation since its inception in 2003. DHS was created primarily as a direct result of the events surrounding 9-11. Hurricane Katrina also had the effect of causing DHS to reassess its mission because of that calamity that moved onshore impacting Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Florida on August 29, 2005. The "National Strategy for Homeland Security, October 2007" reads thusly:

> The National Strategy for Homeland Security guides, organizes, and unifies our Nation's homeland security efforts. Homeland security is a responsibility shared across our entire Nation, and the Strategy provides a common framework for the following four goals:
>
> > Prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks;
> > *Protect the American people, our critical infrastructure, and key resources*;
> > *Respond to and recover from incidents that do occur*; [and] ….
> > Continue to strengthen the foundation to ensure our long-term success.
>
> This updated Strategy, which builds directly from the first National Strategy for Homeland Security issued in July 2002, reflects our increased understanding of the terrorist threats confronting the United States today, incorporates lessons learned from exercises and real-world catastrophes – including Hurricane Katrina – and proposes new initiatives and approaches that will enable the Nation to achieve our homeland security objectives (DHS 2008a, para. 3, italics added for emphasis).

Despite the apparent change in focus away from being exclusively terrorist attack-oriented and movement towards more of an emphasis on natural disaster recovery, DHS through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as of 2008 remained primarily centered on terrorism. DHS officially defined homeland security in the "National Response Framework" as "a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur" (DHS 2008b, para. 2). As such, DHS maintains that the terrorist attacks of 9-11 were acts of war against the U.S. The nation was at risk prior to 9-11 – vulnerable – yet the new DHS is designed to protect against terrorist threats, evolving and moving away yet again from primarily focusing on protecting the

American public from natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. First and foremost, the war on terror remains on center stage due to the implications of 9-11. This tendency leads to the third event: the building of the border wall between the U.S. and Mexico.

The third event for consideration of DHS since its inception is the public works project of the border fence on the U.S.-Mexico land border, especially involving CBP. The development of DHS and CBP primarily from this point onward is analyzed in terms of the knowledge analytic (KA) in this assessment. The 2005 REAL ID and 2006 Secure Fence acts enabled the construction of border fence and surveillance apparatuses, portions of which were constructed at various points from San Diego, California to Brownsville, Texas. Border security was emphasized after 9-11 and the fence (or wall) construction was part and parcel to the convergence of migration policy and 9-11 terrorism issues. The cost of the fence was $7.5 million per mile with 110 miles just for the Texas-Mexico border in the lower Rio Grande Valley, and there were approximately 670 miles of new construction total for the Boeing's SBI-Net contract representing billions of U.S. dollars (Garrett 2012). Border security became effectively the "new" defense industry for government contractors. Criticism from border communities, environmental and civil liberties groups ensued as resistance to the fence began. DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff in 2008 declared to those who opposed the border fence because of cultural, social, political, or environmental concerns,

> It's time to grow up and recognize that if we're serious about this threat, we've got to take reasonable, measured but nevertheless determined steps to getting better security. I can guarantee if we don't make this change, eventually there will come a time when someone will come across the border exploiting the vulnerabilities in the system and some bad stuff will happen. And then there'll be another 9/11 commission and we'll have people come saying "Why didn't we do this?" (*El Paso Times* January 17, 2008, para.3).

With the secretary's words defending the need for the border fence, opposition to it was supposed to be discredited. The public works project of DHS was underway.

The border fence initiative of DHS brought further criticism from academe. Maril (2011) concluded that the border fence represented an obstacle to be overcome by communities living on both sides of the Rio Grande in South Texas and Northeastern Mexico. Garrett and Storbeck (2011) criticized the border fence as being a simulacrum – an image of security that resulted in *insecurity* – that created heterotopic conditions between the fence and the actual border designed to keep out the *homo sacer* (undocumented border crossers) (Agamben 1998). Garrett (2012) noted, "The wall construction came about through an alliance of anti-migrant groups, who wanted a border fence, and the events of 9-11 that gave the political impetus for its completion, with corporate interests, under the guise of security" (36). Corporate influence combined with an "attentive-to-their-needs" DHS Secretary created the necessity and ongoing reality of the border wall.

All three of these events have shaped what comprises DHS and its constituent agencies today. The newest federal department in the U.S. government has dealt with crises as it has been established after combining agencies from other departments and creating essentially new entities.

Next examined is what the reorganization means to executives, managers, and workers within the department. Previous qualitative research approaches are examined to place the knowledge

analytic in a scholarly context, focusing on methods involving storytelling. The importance of "numbers" to the CBP and DHS is analyzed by workers and managers in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The knowledge analytic is recounted, developed, and placed in the context of understanding personnel in affected government agencies. Then one agency will be evaluated primarily – CBP subordinate unit, the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) – within the DHS organizational milieu, although consideration of other DHS agencies is included.

Previous Qualitative Theoretical and Methodological Explanations and Stories for Understanding Worker Knowledge in the U.S. Border Patrol

Analyses of the USBP are not numerous since joining DHS. The federal law enforcement agency is difficult to obtain direct information, whether stories or data, particularly concerning its personnel operations (Garrett et al. 2005). USBP is considered overall to be a historically secretive agency as whistleblowers have had difficulty getting internal problems exposed to Congress and the public (Washington 2017). However, some scholarly work is available employing qualitative methods. Rivera and Tracy (2014) used an interpretive participant observation study method demonstrating that the Border Patrol agents are "dirty workers" as they work in harsh conditions dealing with stigmatized populations, undocumented border crossers or criminals, who seek to "capture and deport undocumented immigrants with the use of coercion and force" (203). USBP agents learn their knowledge "through tacit understandings gained by experience and sense making" acquired "on the job" working with others in the organization (Rivera et al. 2014, 203). One of the authors further elaborated with an interpretive ethnographic research approach analyzing USBP agent work as "emotional dirty work" (Rivera 2015). After following agents in the field for 2.5 years, she described their work as "work that society considers physically, socially, or morally objectionable … perform[ing] emotional duties and emotional labor, which are often stigmatized by the public" (198). These studies are important to understanding what USBP does, and they parallel the knowledge analytic here insofar as agents working in the field do the actual hands-on job based on dealing with others in a tough environment under difficult conditions. This work separates agents in the field from their office supervisors (managers) and executives higher up the administrative ladder.

In the next section, differences between everyday working experiential knowledge, or dirty work, and management and executive knowledges, is illustrated with a story from the Border Patrol in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. The Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey of 2015 was discussed by the Rio Grande Valley Sector Chief and the local National Border Patrol Council (union) leader. The methodological approach taken here is to make use of stories available through various media sources, congressional testimony, and personal accounts given to the author over a period of fifteen years.

Numbers as Seen from the Customs and Border Protection, Rio Grande Valley Sector

When the numbers are on the low side to the point where they are worst in the entire federal government according to the FEVS, then executives are held to account by Congress and the USA public. This problem is analyzed and assessed by examining CBP sector personnel in the Rio

Grande Valley. CBP agents are not too excited or happy about their work, with the notable exception, perhaps, of the Rio Grande Valley sector. Kristian Hernandez, staff writer with *The Monitor* newspaper in McAllen, Texas, interviewed the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) Sector Chief, Mr. Manuel Padilla and the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC) union local president, Mr. Chris Cabrera, concerning the 2015 FEVS Survey and how it was interpreted by them (May 28, 2016). According to Hernandez, the FEVS data specific to the CBP RGV Sector indicated 54% of CBP employees were satisfied with their job, 27% were unsatisfied, with 18% neutral (para. 5-6). With 3,000 employees in the RGV Sector, Chief Padilla said the FEVS numbers do not reflect an accurate picture because of the low response rate (para. 8). Padilla further stated,

> We have a lot of work to do …. We need to increase the responses to the survey. We had about a 19 percent response rate to those surveys and what I would like to get is a 60 or 70 percent response rate (para. 9) …. On the positive side, if you compare this sector to other areas, we actually scored higher …. If you were to do a survey of the people that you saw today out there working, I would venture to say that you would get very high numbers, but what happens is because of the low response rate you get people that want to express their frustrations (para. 22-23).

The contextually embedded story (Boje 1991; 1995) here is that upper management wanted better performance by the workers on the FEVS in terms of the number of employees who respond to the survey in the hopes that the overall job satisfaction rate would go up – thus making the RGV Sector look better to DHS leadership in Washington. In order to improve the numbers, the Sector Chief is "working with local union to help them meet their goal in the coming years" (para. 10). Local union leader Mr. Cabrera said, "Padilla is the first chief to approach the union to discuss solutions to the low morale numbers reflected by the annual survey" (para. 11). Here we have key components of the KA demonstrated as then-DHS Secretary Johnson's concern (as an executive) with the poor FEVS data addressed by the RGV Sector Chief Padilla and the Local NBPC President Cabrera. Cabrera puts the situation in a different manner:

> Overall people in the sector love their job …. DHS-wide people are unhappy with their jobs, but that doesn't mean that the guys hate their jobs. They are just dissatisfied with certain aspects of what we do or don't do …. They see a lot of crap that comes along with it, with some of these rules and policies that come down from D.C. as far as how to do things or what's needed. What's needed is people need to come down here and take a look at what we actually do and how to do it instead of letting the decisions be made from the glass palace up in D.C. (para. 12-13).

Management is top-heavy and the cause of wasteful, bloated bureaucracy in the eyes of the local union chief. According to the union leader, the primary problems are DHS managers and executives who make rules, shuffle paper, and make policies detrimental to the CBP agents who are doing the actual work.

Mr. Cabrera previously testified before the US Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on March 17, 2015, where he made a number of points indicating that more agents in the field were needed along the border and that there were too many in management positions as compared to agents on the ground. He also said that the apprehension rate of illegal immigrants

and drug traffickers was significantly lower than the 75 percent management and executives in the DHS were giving Congress:

> I want to be crystal clear – the border is not secure. That is not just my opinion or the position of the NBPC. Ask any line Agent in the field and he or she will tell you that at best we apprehend 35-40% of the illegal immigrants attempting to cross. This number is even lower for drug smugglers who are much more adept at eluding capture. How can this enormous gap exist between what the DHS tells you here in Washington and what our Agents know to be the truth in the field? Frankly, it is how you manipulate the statistics and let me give you one example. A key metric in determining our effectiveness is what is known as the "got aways." If we know from footprints or video surveillance that 20 individuals crossed the border and we ultimately catch 10 of them, then we know that 10 "got away" (National Border Patrol Council March 17, 2015, para. 5-6).

With the union leader's comments, there is revealed another important aspect of the KA: respect for the work of the agents in the field and worker knowledge that *cannot be known* in Washington, D.C. The implication that the higher-ups in D.C. are too far away physically and in the organizational hierarchy to know actually what they (the locals) were doing. Or, put in terms of the KA, DHS leaders do not understand and are unable to perceive the workers' knowledge, relying on numbers imposed from executives and managers instead of the agents' reality. The testimony by Mr. Cabrera also had an added effect: it made the US-Mexico border appear more dangerous than what DHS executives and management presented, effectively upping the ante for more funding for CBP agents and border security equipment and apparatuses. In this case, the NBPC is effectively working alongside with the homeland defense industry to procure more resources – personnel and equipment – from Congress and the American taxpayer.

The Knowledge Analytic (KA) and the Phenomenology of Perception Briefly Defined

The knowledge analytic has implications for understanding organizations in a way that allows for knowledges (plural) to be judged in a manner that exposes political power relations in institutions such as DHS and CBP. Human organizations are better understood by examining all manner of how people know their work – and the important implication thereof. Executives, managers, and workers know their work *differently* in modern organizations, and yet have to work together. Problems occur in modern organizations as executive and management knowledges are valued more than worker knowledge (See, for example, Garrett 2001; Garrett 2004). These knowledge differences are analyzed in the following sections.

The best illustration of phenomenological theory with regard to the problem of arithmetic knowledge and experiential knowledge was first indicated by Husserl (1931/1969) as illustrated in Garrett (2001, 84) as the tension between quantitative knowledge and knowledge based on experience that is key to knowledge differences between managers and workers. Husserl's phenomenological insight uncovers the difference between arithmetic (quantitative) knowledge and everyday experiential knowledge in understanding the life world and is the foundation of the knowledge analytic. The arithmetic world versus the natural world, or fact-world – or every day lived experience – are at times incompatible. Modern organizations such as DHS are established

in a pyramid form based on hierarchy, with executives at the top of the pyramid who are farthest away from the actual fact-world of the workers who dwell at the bottom of the organizational structure. Executives are at the pinnacle of the power relationship structure and work primarily with numbers, and this insight is based on Husserl's philosophical concept of the arithmetic world, or standpoint, of knowledge. Managers know their work as intermediaries between the more abstract, arithmetic world of executives and the everyday fact-world of workers who do the actual hands-on work of the organization. Hummel (2006) also acknowledged Husserl's importance to the KA in terms of the power relationship between executives, managers, and workers in the organizational pyramid and what they know.

The work of Merleau-Ponty (1962/2009; 1968) is also important in terms of understanding the phenomenology of perception. His work is critical to the further development of the KA as "perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out and is presupposed by them…When I return to myself from an excursion into the realm of dogmatic common sense or of science, I find, not a source of intrinsic truth, but a subject destined to the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1962/2009, xi-xii; in Correa-Cabrera et al. 2014, 243). Courses of action taken by workers, managers, executives in DHS, members of Congress, the American public, undocumented border crossers, and others perceive how to achieve preferences and upon reflection offer after-the-fact rationalizations whether to use arithmetic, scientific, or experiential-based knowledge. Merleau-Ponty (1968) further notes through reflection and interrogation that "the illusion of illusions is to think now that to tell the truth we have never been certain of anything but our own acts, that from the beginning perception has been an inspection of the mind, and that reflection is only the perception returning to itself, the conversion from the knowing of the thing to knowing of oneself of which the thing was made, the emergence of a 'binding' that was the bond itself" (37). In terms of the KA, the position between knowing where we are in the world as "philosophy is not science, because science believes it can soar over its object and holds the correlation of knowledge with being as established, whereas philosophy is the set of questions wherein he who questions is himself implicated by the question" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 27). Science in public organizations such as DHS and CBP dominates working knowledge – the dirty work. With the KA, executive rationality – mathematics and management science in the modern hierarchy – can lose embodiment, self-reflection, and interrogation, thus losing the value of "dirty work" knowledge, without being situated in the world. The perception is that worker knowledge is dominated by the executive and management suites and *does not belong* at the same level in the world. An appreciation of understanding these aspects of the knowledge analytic is critical in context to organizations and society. Perception, based on reflection and interrogation of the relationship of self to others and things in context, matters. Stories and narratives are a reflection of perception.

DHS Reorganization from 2003 and the "Morale Surveys" of 2007 to 2017

DHS senior executives at its inception controlled the overall organizational-management narrative, imposing its power at the top of the organizational pyramid downward. As noted by Garrett (2010), "the reorganization process and the impetus for restructuring driven by … catastrophic events [e.g., 9-11] as a pretext to change and politicize the pay system by giving more discretion to handpicked managers to control raises and wage increases, preclude union participation,

streamline the grievance process in favor of management over labor, and enabling executives and managers to fire employees more easily without the due process procedures previously in place under the [previous] civil service merit system" (350). Garrett and Peterson (2005) attempted to conduct a survey based on the knowledge analytic of the Border Patrol in 2003 (then still under the Department of Justice) as requested by the McAllen Sector Border Patrol leadership. The survey never took place as the Undersecretary of Management for the "new" DHS would not allow the local agency to implement it. Questions that were to have been asked generally related to attitudes about the new DHS leadership, communication between local sector personnel and Washington, whether the new organization would be executive and management or employee-centered, and other issues such as union representation and equity issues (2005, 49-51). Also added was an open-ended question designed to get narrative responses to matters related to the transition from DOJ to DHS. The general idea behind the survey was to gather data (i.e., numerical for arithmetic knowledge apprehension) to give executives in Washington, D.C. impressions of what managers and workers were experiencing given the organizational transformation. The survey attempt did not transpire. The missed opportunity to measure – or to get a snapshot in time and space of – the McAllen, Texas, Border Patrol Sector prior to the transition from DOJ to DHS, all 1,800 employees, did not occur. The article became a call for the new department to find the state of perceptions, attitudes, and values of federal workers and management.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) (and the DHS) eventually began to measure employee attitudes – towards their immediate supervisors and upper management – in 2007, well after the department was established. The Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is the closest approximation to the Garrett and Peterson (2005) Border Patrol Survey in 2003 that was an attempt to measure quantitative data and qualitative differences, and what they know, between executives, managers, and workers.

If someone were to attempt to measure the success of the DHS transition, one measuring stick might be the annual FEVS, which while somewhat useful for the KA is perhaps limited because of the lack of clear discernment between workers, management, and executives in the overall instrument. *The important thing to note here is that the DHS organization – executives, managers, and workers – believes that the measuring tool is valid or has some merit in determining where the employees are –where they stand – in each annual survey. FEVS is executive and management driven. Perception is key here and matters*. Executives know their work by the numbers, or Husserl's arithmetic knowledge, hence the high value they place on the survey as a blunt instrument of power over managers and workers implemented to improve morale. DHS reorganization occurred in 2002-2003, but nothing was quantitatively measured by surveys in a comprehensive manner until 2007 with FEVS. A reporter for *The Washington Post* in January 2015 noted that the DHS has consistently the lowest employee morale in the entire federal government:

> Since taking over the department in late 2013, [DHS Secretary Jeh] Johnson has focused on raising morale and stemming high turnover, problems that date to the George W. Bush administration. Many DHS employees have said in the annual government "viewpoint" survey of federal employees that their *senior leaders are ineffectiv*e; that the department discourages innovation, and that promotions and raises are not based on merit. Others have described in interviews how a stifling bureaucracy and relentless congressional criticism

> makes DHS an exhausting, even infuriating, place to work (Markon 2015, para. 8, italics added for emphasis).

Even more remarkable from the Markon article under the subsection "We hid it" is this section:

> Three years ago, officials in the department's office of health affairs, which provides expertise on national security medical issues, began to wonder about the health of one of their own programs. In response to low scores on the viewpoint survey, officials had set up a program, DHSTogether, aimed at making DHS "one of the best places to work in the Federal government." But it wasn't working out…."It was not a very good light to shine on any of us, so we just hid it," said one DHS employee familiar with the report, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of fear of retaliation by supervisors. The report, released in September 2013, concluded that DHSTogether had been starved of money and support from DHS leaders ... (para. 14-18).

The recommendation by the office of health affairs was to get senior leaders (executives) to become more involved in improving morale. The DHS, with the lowest, or near lowest, morale of any federal department or agency in the federal government for many years running (Katz October 2, 2015), is negatively affected – this phenomenon is explored more below by assessing the latest surveys (Table 1 below) – and this has been so since its creation.

The FEVS is conducted annually from 2007 to the present. The results provided here represent the attitudes that workers have towards management and executives in DHS as manifested by the survey. The 2015, 2016, and 2017 DHS surveys (grouped together in the three-year increment by OPM) show dissatisfaction by federal employees concerning their immediate supervising managers and upper management – also compared with the comprehensive FEVS total (See Table 1). However, the importance of the surveys lies in the fact that executives, managers, and, in some instances, workers believe in the power of the instrument to demonstrate where they stand in the organization. Brandon Judd, National Border Patrol Council president, in his testimony before the US Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee noted:

> …the survey paints a harrowingly bleak picture of the Border Patrol as an agency. In almost every survey question, the Border Patrol was ranked lower than CBP, who was ranked lower than DHS, who was ranked lower than the rest of the Federal Government. The results of the survey are manifesting themselves in our current and historical attrition rate (HSGAC March 22, 2017, para. 15).

Similarly, Chris Crane, president of the National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council 118, testified at the same HSGAC on March 22, 2017, "As with DHS in general, and other component agencies within DHS, such as TSA, the Secret Service and Border Patrol, ICE is suffering from a toxic and failed management culture; an absence of leadership. In 2014 ICE was dead last in morale among 314 federal agencies surveyed; in 2015 ICE was second from last, and last year sixth from last" (para. 6).

Table 1:
Selected Questions from the 2015-2017 Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey Results

	*Percent Positive**
24. In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way. (2016-**34%** All FEVS**/+**1** [2015]); 2017-**36.1%** All FEVS***/+2 [2016])	**25.67 (2016)/ +2.27 (2015)** **29.4 (2017)/ + 3.73 (2016)**
30. Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes. (2016-**44.8%** All FEVS/**+1.9** [2015]; 2017-**47.3%** All FEVS/+2.3[2016])	**31.42 (2016) +2.83 (2015)** **37.2 (2017)/ + 5.78 (2016)**
37. Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated. (2016-**53%** All FEVS/**+2** [2015]; 2017-**54.8%** All FEVS/+1.8 [2016])	**36.92 (2016) +3.08 (2015)** **41.5 (2017) +4.58 (2016)**
39. My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission. (2016-**74%** All FEVS/**+1** [2015]; 2017-**76.3%** All FEVS/+2.3 [2016])	**60.78 (2016) +0.93 (2015)** **68.8 (2017) +8.02 (2016)**
40. I recommend my organization as a good place to work. (2016-**64%** All FEVS/**+1** [2015]; 2017-**66.3%** All FEVS/+2.3 [2016])	**48.65 (2016) +2.87 (2015)** **55.7 (2017) +7.05 (2016)**
53. In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce. (2016-**41%** All FEVS/**+2** [2015]; 2017-**43.2%** All FEVS/+3.2 [2016])	**27.85 (2016) +2.55 (2015)** **33.5 (2017) +5.65 (2016)**
54. My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. (2016-**52%** All FEVS/**+2** [2015]; 2017-**54.5%** All FEVS/+2.5 [2016])	**39.32 (2016) +2.47 (2015)** **44.2 (2017) +4.88 (2016)**
61. I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders. (2016-**53%** All FEVS/**+2** [2015]; 2017-**55.6%** All FEVS/+2.6 [2016])	**40.39 (2016) +2.28 (2015)** **46.2 (2017) +5.81 (2016)**

* "Percent Positive" is defined in the survey as "strongly agree" and "agree." The remainder are "neither agree or disagree" or "disagree" or "strongly disagree," are also correspondingly higher for DHS than all combined federal employees.

("DHS employees provided feedback through the 2016 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), which was conducted by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) between May 5 and June 16. The survey was sent to a sampling of employees randomly selected by OPM. Of the 93,709 DHS employees who received the survey, 46,991 responded answering questions in the areas of leadership and knowledge management, results-oriented performance culture, talent management and job satisfaction." Retrieved April 25, 2017 at https://www.dhs.gov/department-homeland-security-annual-employee-survey.)
**Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey 2016, Office of Personnel Management. Retrieved 4/25/17 at https://www.fedview.opm.gov/2016FILES/2016_FEVS_Gwide_Final_Report.PDF.
*** ***Source*****:** *Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey 2017 – Part 1* and *Part 2*.) The questions presented here are from a three-year period, 2015-2017, by the Office of Personnel Management, and represent a sample of the questions in the FEVS related to the knowledge analytic. Please note that the data generally represent an incremental improvement by DHS over the three-year survey period, however, DHS still lags well behind the overall federal employee average.

In the following sections, stories and narratives will be contrasted and compared with the FEVS findings and the problems that have been occurring in the DHS since its inception.

Border Security and DHS Transition: Worker and Manager Testimonials on the DHS Reorganization in the RGV

While conducting research on border security issues and during the initial stages of the DHS reorganization, Garrett (2010) interviewed DHS employees who expressed themselves concerning "the job." Some of the comments recounted here are as follows:

> • The [Border Patrol] agency hires and promotes incompetent people nowadays who rise through the ranks based on their ability to suck up to the boss. It wasn't nearly as bad under the old rules. (A Former Agent of Nine Years in Brownsville, Texas)
>
> • ICE (Immigration, Customs and Enforcement) is a screwed-up entity. I came over from Customs and the INS folk and others haven't a damn clue about law enforcement. They're dangerous! (An ICE Supervisor of more than 20 years in McAllen, Texas).
>
> • I had to get the hell out before the transition to DHS. As a member of the union, my boss's boss was out to get me and all of the union guys out of the [local Customs] place. We all feared what was going to happen to us (A former U.S. Customs Supervisor of 15 years in Hidalgo, Texas) (Garrett 2010, 343-344).

The central theme of all these complaints came from these employees right around the time of the transition to DHS (2003-2004) from the previous governmental department (e.g., Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury) within the "new" DHS agencies. The workers were clearly angry with executives and upper-level managers deciding the work during the departmental reorganization. As noted previously, effectively abandoning civil service protections offered to workers under their "old" departments in the wake of the reorganization allowed for multiple changes to take place, including in grievance representation, collective bargaining from unions, pay banding, and a loss of organizational culture and identity (Garrett and Peterson 2005). These stories, complaints, and issues are not captured and reflected in large-scale quantitative data surveys.

On the Riverboat: Worker Knowledge Ignored

In 2011, a Customs and Border Protection airboat officer told the author the story of how she was fired upon while on duty along the Rio Grande. The work is dangerous in that when shots are fired from the Mexican side of the border, the boat team is required by the book to beach the craft on the USA side, seek cover in the usually high ground cover along the banks of the river, and then call in back up support. The officer described the shooters as possibly being "coyotes" (human traffickers smuggling undocumented border crossers into the USA), drug cartel personnel, or other criminals, all who have incentives and opportunities to take out CBP personnel – particularly airboat agents relatively vulnerable and exposed on the river. The officer said she was shot on one occasion in a location where the border wall was close enough to the bank that it was not possible to beach the craft and get under cover in the brush. (**Note** that the border fence, for the most part, is not near the actual river rather it often is located several hundred yards or more away from the flowing water and up to well over a mile or more away from the border in many places. The middle of the Rio Grande is the actual border by treaty between Texas and Mexico).

The act of being wounded in the line of duty may not seem to be much of a story other than recounting the sacrifice that the workers in the CBP face in securing USA borders. However, the officer had more to say concerning what she believed to be an unnecessary burden on CBP airboat officers and their physical safety. The agents in her group as well as herself had expressed concerns to their supervisors about the border fence where it would impede their ability to avoid being shot. She and her coworkers were effectively shut out of the discussion and were told not to bring up the subject of the impact of the border fence location again. Direct experience and worker knowledge were ignored by management.

A CBP Agent's Description of a Section of the Border Fence

Sociologist Lee Maril (2011) interviewed Agent "Sparrow" concerning the building of a section of the border fence in the Rio Grande Valley. The story involved fence construction near the town of Donna, Texas, in response to pressure from the White House in 2008. The statements by Agent Sparrow are as follows:

> You got to remember that CBP is not calling the shots on the barrier [border fence.] You and I and the agents at the Weslaco [Texas] station know Donna is not a hot spot. But DHS is under the gun from Washington. They have to build so many miles of fence by such and such a date. The rumor at sector is the barrier at Donna is supposed to cost $50 million. They have the money. DHS says build the barrier, they build the barrier…
>
> It's a rumor about President Bush's State of the Union Address. He said he was going to build sixty miles of border fence by such and such a date. DHS did not plan for sixty miles. But the president says it to a national audience, so DHS has to get it done. What I hear is that it was a mistake. Shit happens. We really don't need it [the wall] at Donna, but DHS builds it so the naysayers can't call the president a liar. I do know for a fact they never asked CBP about it...
>
> You could say it was politics (Maril 2011, 223-224).

Executive pressure based on political priorities is brought to bear with this story that superseded professional judgment at the midlevel and lower levels of CBP.

In the next section, the aforementioned stories described above are framed and analyzed employing the knowledge analytic.

Border Security, the DHS, and Other Federal Agencies: Perception and a Knowledge Analytic

The knowledge analytic is applied to DHS and border security stories presented previously. Starting with DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, there is a strong desire to complete the building of the border fence on time and on budget. With the backdrop of terrorism and keeping "illegal aliens" out of the U.S., his focus is temporal/spatial, concentrating on numbers and deadlines – the level of knowledge for executives – with a political agenda making an impression on his work. Additionally, Secretary Chertoff was responsible and "survived" the political failure of the Hurricane Katrina debacle in 2005. DHS leaders were attempting to show the Bush administration and

Congress that the huge public works program – the building of the 670-mile long border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border – could be successfully accomplished, and it was successfully concluded by 2010. As of 2017, the Trump administration wants to continue the wall all the way across the 1,954-mile U.S.-Mexico border.

In the story of the CBP Rio Grande Sector, Chief Padilla, as the manager, exhibits feeling the pressure of the low FEVS numbers in response to the DHS Secretary's call for improved morale, defined as better FEVS scores and that more CBP employees needed to respond to the survey, thereby improving the "numbers." The local union president believed that the local workers loved their jobs, but that nationally DHS workers were unhappy with theirs. Most of the "crap" that comes along with the workers' jobs comes from the "glass palace" in D.C. from those executives who knew nothing of the actual work agents did in the field and misrepresented the "real" numbers of illegal immigrants and drug traffickers to Congress and American citizens. Also, the NBPC has pushed for additional numbers of border agents in Congress, although CBP has trouble getting enough border patrol agents to maintain current operational levels as, for example, most recently, CBP is supposed to have 21,370 agents but has 19,500 or about 1,870 fewer than required (Moran 2017).

The previous Secretary of DHS, Jeh Johnson, as of 2013, was concerned also with the numbers. In this case, the emphasis is on DHS employee morale, as demonstrated through the FEVS, and maintaining enough employees at all levels of the organization for it to function well and accomplish departmental objectives. DHS has so far undergone through three major events – the reorganization aftermath of 9-11 (after having been effectively created by the terrorist attacks), Hurricane Katrina, and the continuing building of the border fence – but overall agency morale has been comparatively low when considering the rest of the federal government's departments and agencies. Again, there is a preoccupation at the top of the organizational pyramid with the numbers. Secretary Johnson voiced some empathy for employees of the organization. The question is whether Johnson has a genuine care for DHS workers or is simply concerned with getting the work of the department accomplished without the annoyance of constantly being subject to congressional oversight committees. Much of this was due to the fact that the department scored poorly on the FEVS. The numbers demonstrated by the survey place pressure on the executive.

There are several examples of workers subjected to the numbers, time, and space limitations imposed from above. The CBP riverboat captain was shot and wounded when the border fence was placed too close to the Rio Grande whereby she could not beach the craft for her own safety. This happened even when she and her co-workers complained about the safety hazard. In the instance of the border patrol agent in Weslaco, Texas, that was interviewed by the sociologist Lee Maril, a section of the border fence was built on a whim. The agent commented that the fence was not needed in a location near Donna, Texas. The fence section was placed there upon an interpretation of an unspecified directive from President George W. Bush by an executive in the DHS simply because 60 miles of fence needed to be completed by the time of the president's speech – even though the section of fence was deemed unnecessary. Finally, there are various examples of workers commenting on aspects of DHS's reorganization that did not make any sense to them in terms of what they interpreted as actually getting the border and homeland security work done, with their expert knowledge ignored.

The *knowledge analytic* is useful in ascertaining differences in knowledges within complex organizations such as DHS and its constituent agencies working in homeland and border security in the USA. As a result of the initial events creating DHS, the department has faced a number of obstacles that have been difficult to overcome. Perceptions matter as poor morale in DHS based perhaps previously, though not conclusively, on terrorist and natural disasters beyond its capacity to cope adequately with accomplishing its missions and long-term reorganization. There is a possibility that these issues involving the organization were reflected through the ongoing scores in the FEVS. Demonstrable differences between appreciation of separate working, management, and executive knowledge – all contribute to misunderstanding problems and the lack of finding solutions that persist in reorganization and management reforms pursued by executive leadership in the organization who are primarily concerned to *get the morale survey numbers higher*. Since the Trump administration has come into power, DHS agencies such as CBP and ICE may have increased morale due to increased attention and "The … administration's far-reaching plan to arrest and deport vast numbers of undocumented immigrants has been introduced in dramatic fashion in the early months of 2017. And much of that task has fallen to thousands of ICE officers who are newly emboldened, newly empowered and already getting to work" (Kulish et al. 2017, para. 3). Furthermore, changes may be on the horizon as "'Morale amongst our agents and officers has increased exponentially since the signing of the orders,' the unions representing ICE and Border Patrol agents said in a joint statement after President Trump issued the executive orders on immigration late last month" (para. 8). The 2017 FEVS numbers are in as "of the 15 cabinet-level agencies surveyed, DHS achieved the largest increase in both the Employee Engagement Index (EEI) and the Global Satisfaction Index (GSI). The DHS EEI increased four percentage points from 2016-2017 and the GSI increased six percentage points during the same time period" (DHS Releases Results of 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, para. 2). DHS, nonetheless, is still near the bottom of the FEVS. These problems in the bureaucracy may persist due in large part to the lack of appreciation of the differences between knowledges and the lack of reflection and interrogation of the relationship between executives, managers, and workers. Power rests at the top of the organizational pyramid and worker knowledge is devalued at best and ignored at worst although in the case of the NBPC union leader workers may on occasion exhibit the potential for power. The story of how effective DHS and its agencies such as CBP is cannot be told simply by the numbers. Narratives presented by workers, managers, and executives and the perceptions generated by them matter as to how they know their work and tells the story of the organization. Executives and managers should make themselves aware of worker stories and take them fully into account to improve DHS and CBP, reflecting upon what they mean, and making improvements in the affected organizations.

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Online Vigilantes: The Virtual Semiotics of AZ Border Recon

Willie Costley

Introduction

The early 2000s saw a rise of anti-immigrant sentiment that mobilized into vigilanteism with a distinct paramilitary character and an enunciation on defending national sovereignty. This millennial phenomenon took form with now defunct groups such as the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps (MCDC) but has survived in a range of more recent groups such as AZ Border Recon. Their ascendancy has occurred concomitantly with the rise of new media technologies— from web pages and blogs to a multiplicity of video-sharing websites and social media platforms. These groups have not just exploited technology; they have come to be constituted largely *through* digital technologies of mass communication. Their movement has created new kinds of actors at the border in addition to new ways of acting in the borderlands, not least by opening a performative space that propagates anti-immigrant sentiment while simultaneously constructing it. The dynamics regulating the movement are revealed through an examination of how AZ Border Recon (AZBR) frames its mission, spreads its message, delineates group membership, and projects its identity to both virtual and real publics. I argue that their activities in the real world,[1] along with their self-representation in a virtual one, *deterritorialize* traditional anti-immigrant discourse as they *reterritorialize* offline identities that reify established U.S. imaginaries of nation, belonging, and citizenship. The Internet as a conduit for discourses once regarded in the mainstream as regressive and antidemocratic ironically gives the lie to the widespread optimism that surrounded the emergence of digital communication technologies in the 1980s and 1990s—a perspective still broadly shared by Internet users that continues to be actively propagated by corporate technology actors.[2]

The Visual Semiotics of the Border(lands)/Frontier

The modern vigilante movement has for the past fifteen years generated a sensational response in local and national media. To cite one recent example, in April 2019 Reuters news agency reported the arrest of Larry Hopkins, leader of the New Mexico-based militia group United Constitutional Patriots (UCP) (Hay 2019). The article details his unlawful stopping of migrants at the U.S.-

Mexico border and mentions his past criminal record, but there is little mention of the UCP as a body or of its history. It is a typical example of media coverage dominated by dramatic events involving group leaders, often characterized as lone-wolf actors, with no attempt to contextualize the movement within broader historical frameworks.

The tendency to highlight the movement as a uniquely twenty-first-century phenomenon communicates a lack of understanding of the complex semiotic history of the U.S.-Mexico border. Although the U.S.-Mexico border is a unique site with a unique history, the way it tends to be deployed discursively does not spring directly or inevitably from its geography. The field of semiotics was originally developed to explain how language, which is essentially arbitrary, acquires meaning. For Saussure, the relationship between an object and its meaning, or *sign,* is composed of a *signifier* (such as a word) and its *signified* (the idea it communicates): "[t]he linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept" (66). It is primordially important to approach the meaning of the *U.S.-Mexico border* from a semiotic lens since the border itself is imaginary. Not intelligible as a space on its own, in the American lexicon the border has become closely associated with its metonyms *the borderlands* and *frontier.* This coupling originates at least as early as the late nineteenth century when American historian Turner (1893) argued that there were qualities peculiar to the "American intellect" such as a "dominant individualism" and an "exuberance that comes with freedom" that were "traits of the frontier" (37). For Turner, these qualities were not merely incidental. As he affirms earlier in his work, "[t]he growth of nationalism and the evolution of American political institutions were dependent on the advance of the frontier" (1893, 24). It is impossible to understand Turner's argument without seeing movement into the American Southwest as a necessary ingredient of American-ness, and the late nineteenth-century discourse of Manifest Destiny meant white Americans of European descent largely already believed this. Some attempts at greater precision to locate the border can be seen in the photographic images on postcards of the Mexican Revolution documented by Fox (1999). These images, produced in the second decade of the twentieth century, are rife with visual signifiers such as soldiers, weapons, and skirmishes staged at the border—many of which feature overlaid commentary and line drawings to indicate the exact location of the border for the viewer. These postcards were circulated in vast quantities throughout the U.S., particularly among Americans in the urban centers in the Midwest and Northeast that had never been to the border but were insatiably curious for visuals of a far off, exotic space. These images were easily reproduced, and as a consequence, they can and should be situated among other cultural forms such as the photography and travel writing of Charles Fletcher Lummis, an adventurer from Chicago who also helped to produce and curate the iconography of the West as a wild and savage region, as well as the Western film genre. By the mid-twentieth century, the U.S.-Mexico border had coalesced into an *idea* that all Americans, regardless of where they lived, could easily imagine through their near incessant exposure to the signifiers of the *border, borderlands,* and *frontier.* Even as cultural forms change, the imagery retains its currency in the twenty-first century. As a consequence, the U.S.-Mexico border remains indissolubly connected to American national identity. It is into this complex discursive space that vigilante groups emerged in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Their emergence mobilized Turner's century-old thesis of the frontier as a perilous hinterland in need of taming, and there is little of the novel to be discovered in the imagery that comprises vigilante groups' self-representation. What *is* new is that these organizations in general, and AZBR in particular, have simultaneously grounded themselves with what Doty (2009) calls a "politics of exceptionalism" through

paramilitary spectacle. As I will discuss later, this unique linkage has become possible through the strategic deployment of new media digital communication networks.

The Historical Antecedents of Modern Vigilanteism: From Posses to Paramilitary

The ubiquity of digital technologies of communication has created modes of social interaction that were previously unavailable. This transformation has turned vigilanteism from a local phenomenon—in which violence was typically localized, spontaneous, and reacted to specific social and economic conditions—into a deterritorialized one. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, government was usually not involved or only nominally involved in vigilante activity; private individuals tended to join for the common cause of intimidation of and violence against immigrant and minority communities and disbanded once the perceived threat was eliminated.[3] Twenty-first-century border patrol vigilante groups depart from their antecedents in several important ways—first, they directly involve government by framing their existence as a response to the United States' failure to control unauthorized immigration. They may be based in different locales and promote specific objectives that respond to their respective geographical situation, but they have all issued a call to arms and gathered recruits to protect national sovereignty with armed patrols.[4] Doty (2009) affirms that "such groups are extremely concerned with borders as powerful symbols of sovereignty and the specter of *la linea* out of control is a powerful symbol for these groups that enables their cause to resonate with broader audiences" (25). Rodríguez (1997) also qualifies this commonly-cited trope, indicating the existence of "an everyday life 'reality' that the U.S. southern border is out of control, that immigration is overwhelming U.S. institutions (especially public ones), that present levels of immigration threaten the established social order and underlying U.S. core values and identity" (225). For a member of Jim Gilchrist's Minuteman Project, one of the earliest citizen patrol groups, they were there to "'do the job our government refuses to do' and 'protect America' from the 'tens of millions of invading illegal aliens who are devouring and plundering our nation'" (qtd. in Holthouse 2005). As specified by Sohoni (2009) in "'The Immigrant Problem': Modern Day Nativism on the Web," one of the only available studies of anti-immigrant websites, "[a] primary aim . . . is to create public attention to what they see as government-condoned flows of Mexicans across the border into the US. Hence, the discursive strategy for these groups is to emphasize the 'criminal' nature of these migration flows" (836). This line of thinking requires nonstate actors to step in to defend the homeland. Military metaphors proliferate throughout their web pages, and a post-9/11 discourse of security frequently serves as further justification for heightened patrolling and enforcement along the border.[5]

Although the preoccupation with law and the protection of national sovereignty that characterizes modern vigilante groups is intelligible through the existing trope of the border as a space that is out of control, a question remains about why these groups have adopted the visual iconography and operational modes of a paramilitary organization. Sociologist Timothy Dunn (1997) explains that it was in the mid-1970s that saw the discourse of "border control" first become a "salient topic in U.S. politics" (1). The so-called doctrine of "low-intensity conflict" began to govern U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, as "social control over targeted civilian populations" was established through the "implementation of a broad range of sophisticated measures via the coordinated and integrated efforts of police, paramilitary, and military forces" (3). While originally developed as counterinsurgency tactics to combat the spread of communism in Central America, these strategies

were transplanted north to the U.S.-Mexico border, where they continue to flourish as the *modus operandi* of border security, both in the field and discursively in the public sphere. This shift, like those it targets, is transnational. In *Border Games* (2000), political scientist Peter Andreas documents the gradual assumption of responsibility for fighting drug cartels on the Mexican side of the border to that country's military under the Zedillo government of the 1990s. These policies and enforcement measures serve to articulate the U.S.-Mexico border not just as a space of immanent violence, but one overwhelmingly populated by "clandestine transnational actors (CTAs) defined as nonstate actors who operate across national borders in violation of state laws and who attempt to evade law enforcement efforts" (78). Under this formulation, extreme state force is considered the appropriate response, and it is here that the vigilante groups of today make their intervention.[6] They prefer to see themselves as working *in tandem* with the state to control unauthorized immigration flows while simultaneously positioning themselves as the state's more effective (and thus necessary) counterpart. As Chris Simcox, former MCDC president, states in the border documentary *389 Miles,* their purpose is to "assist our government when it's weak, and our government is weak right now." His statement strategically aligns vigilante activity with the group's paramilitary impulse, which in turn becomes a highly visible, citizen-based manifestation of the discourse of border security.

The Rise of Arizona Border Recon: Self-Representation as/is Reality

The dissolution of MCDC in 2010 began a multi-year decline in the number of active vigilante groups; however, their numbers are experiencing a recovery as new collectives such as AZBR have emerged to fill the space. Operating out of the small town of Sasabe, Arizona, the home page of their website describes their mission to "provide intelligence and security services in partnership with the United States Customs and Border Patrol." They unequivocally claim to not be a militia, but a "non-government organization" that diligently vets its members by performing background checks to ensure that all volunteers are "acting appropriately, are safe," and that they provide the individuals they encounter with "humane and civil treatment." Their "About" page states that this treatment includes "food, water, and medical aid." Rather than generally focusing on unauthorized immigrants, the group purports to target drug and human traffickers and terrorists (i.e. criminal immigrants). Potential volunteers are subject to background checks and must commit to AZBR's "Standard Operating Procedures" and "Rules of Engagement." By foregrounding their objective as humanitarian and emphasizing the importance of these checks, the group appears to self-regulate in the interest of producing responsible border citizens. The "Volunteer" page of the site reads, "We are not too concerned about your past, as long as we are made aware of it. Male, Female *(sic),* able-bodied or disabled, it doesn't matter to us, we have a place for everyone." Their primary litmus test for membership seems to be allegiance to their motto, *Pro Patria et Unitate:* "For Country and Unity." The language of their motto and the repeated emphasis on notions of responsibility and duty contributes to the framing of the group's activities as an unassailable moral imperative.

While initially appearing inclusive, the motto manages to exclude through the rigid parameters of nation, unity, and sovereignty embodied in the group's performative activities. The group's Facebook page has over 19,000 "likes" as of May 2020. Further statistics are not easily obtainable, thus rendering an accounting of the demographics and motivations of the site's visitors difficult.

Nevertheless, a series of photographs taken by *al-Jazeera America* photographer Johnny Milano provides a window into the group's membership.[7] The group's claim that they are composed of "100% Americans" is rendered through the images, which collectively convey a narrative of the border as a space that must be constantly surveilled to contain the ever-present threat of violence—a narrative, as Doty and Rodríguez show, that has long held a privileged position to define the U.S.-Mexico Border. Carrying over from the twentieth century's gradual but consistent thickening of the border through statecraft and increased enforcement, it is reinforced and circulated more broadly through an amalgam of old and new media. Many of the images show the group's founder, Tim Foley, in various poses that range from pensive to menacing. The photos reveal a steely, middle-aged white male veteran (i.e. he claims veteran status in his own voice across the site's pages); he is the group's unequivocal leader. Several of the group's members appear in an imposing low-angle shot with an ominous storm looming in the background, unquestionably intended as a metonym of the border itself, where the specter of potential violence interminably looms. Dressed in full combat fatigues and conspicuously brandishing sidearms and surveillance equipment, AZBR seems to both stand in for and supersede the Border Patrol (despite the claim on its website that "we are not here to replace enforcers"). Their uniforms convey rich notions of *country,* and the uniform horizontal line formed by the men spatially constructs their unity and delineates who is allowed to participate in the group. It is curiously resonant of the words of Anderson (2006), for whom the nation "is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (qtd. in Appadurai 2013, 89); these images begin to coalesce what Anderson (2006) calls a "grammar" of nationalism (xiv). In the next shot, they relax together after a long patrol, basking in the glory of a job well done and the camaraderie of their shared mission. It evokes triumph—the threat of violence seems to have been stayed, at least for now, as a result of their armed paramilitary response. Even if the use of their weapons was not required—and even if they never encountered any migrants during this patrol, everything about their appearance functions as a signifier of the potential for *perpetration* of violence against those they meet and deem unauthorized.[8]

It would be facile to assume that these photographs, whose subjects obviously had a significant hand in staging what are highly performative images, document the group's reality. Members come from various U.S. states as far as Wyoming and mostly claim to be former police officers and ex-military. *Al-Jazeera America* journalist Tim Gaynor (2014) even reports that one member from Puerto Rico who says he suffers from PTSD from an Iraq bomb blast that killed a fellow soldier calls the patrols "therapeutic," adding that the experience of joining his "fellow veterans … is making new memories for [him]." The testimony from the group's volunteers continues the virtue signaling from the group's website, reminding readers and viewers that their activities are as psychologically beneficial to its members as they are morally edifying for the nation.

The (Re)construction and Thickening of Offline Identities

It is all too tempting to view these images as reflective of a unique confluence of events, a specific moment in time that could only happen at the U.S.-Mexico border. Yet despite their intensely local and temporal lens, the self-representation of vigilante groups connects to a larger phenomenon that surpasses mere attempts to increase the security of a specific geographical border. These representations indicate that AZBR has built what Internet scholar Castells (2010b) refers to as a *"defensive identit[y]* . . . culturally constituted; that is, organized around a specific set of values whose

meaning and sharing are marked by specific codes of self-identification of the community of believers, the icons of nationalism, the geography of locality" (68-69, italics added for emphasis). While Castells' characterization of defensive identities might hold true for all kinds of online communities, the emphasis on iconography, nationalism, and locality fortuitously intersects with the preoccupations of vigilante patrollers. Because the enunciation of a specific locality is vitally important to the meaning of what these groups do, this concept in particular merits further examination. Modernity scholar Appadurai (2006) identifies "locality" not as a place, but as an "an active, sustained, and ongoing *process"* that is constituted through the "exercise [of] social, technical, and imaginative capacities, including the capacity for violence ... [that] literally produce the environments within which they function" (66, italics added for emphasis). In his analysis, localities are the antithesis of permanence since they are simply a superstructure or "temporary negotiation between various globally circulating forms" (69). We can call it a product, or rather the byproduct of social activity that, in the present case, manufactures the very violence it pretends to interrupt—ensuring a perpetual cycle in which the dominant culture reproduces that violence against those at the margins of a transnational world. Ironically what we might call the group's *localness,* i.e. their attachment to place and their self-designated authority to represent it and act at that place, becomes constitutive of Appadurai's *locality* that contains the imaginative capacity for violence.

Offline Identities, Digitally Enacted

There is without question an electronic frontier that has created new forms of participation in virtual spaces that have often been marked by anonymity, giving birth to neologisms such as "trolling" to index the bad behavior it facilitates. Conversely AZBR and all vigilante groups—in the interest of projecting localness, as indicated above—reject the default anonymity of the digital world. This is a necessary precursor for online media to be a vehicle for the reinvigorated affirmation of what I call *offline identities.* The public sphere, an idea cultural critics largely considered exhausted with the emergence of the Internet, has actually ramified into a *multiplicity* of public spheres. The anti-immigrant online network is one of these multiples. A constant motif of Castells' work explained throughout the three volumes of *The Information Age* is that the new media has erased the old-media paradigm of vertical, top-down networking by supplanting it with an essentially infinite number of horizontal networks. Or, to frame it as Appadurai might, old and new media collide and coalesce into rhizomatic circulatory systems of information. Political participation under this model is no longer about debate, but about *positions*—instead of being worked into some kind of compromise through the resolution of cognitive dissonance, positions reify and only continue to harden as long as they can exist in separate virtual spaces (that nevertheless spill over into *real* localities). Modes of political participation also multiply as new forms of membership become available in collectivities that easily form in the digital world across space and time, but these collectivities are capable of re-forming themselves in the real world and enacting strategies that look like resistance but which are actually at the service of maintaining the hegemony of their offline identity.

One might be led to wonder whether groups like AZBR, few in members as they are, really matter. The answer to this leading question appears to be no, until we realize that the group's diminutive number of volunteers engaged in armed patrols represent an inconsequential fraction of the group's power. AZBR's power to act at the border might be infinitesimal, but this quality of smallness

completely disappears as they become part of a horizontal online anti-immigrant network. As mentioned previously, as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century the Internet continues to be conceptualized as a deterritorializing impulse, one that flattens experience as it networks individuals into an imagined equality of access to information. But what increasingly emerges is digital media's role in *reterritorializing* identities. Individuals, both alone and in groups, now have the power to construct, unearth, and reconstruct notions of belonging, of nation, and citizenship in ways that are even *more* strongly connected to real-world physical spaces. This respatializing tendency is leading to the proliferation of *cultural communes*—Castells' phrase for the vehicle of a new type of "resistance" through "sources of identity by breaking away from civil societies and state institutions" (2010b, 70). As important, the breaking away *from* is the simultaneous movement *toward* new forms of identity and membership that might be virtually constructed and enacted, but which are also physically reenacted and maintained.

The Global Implications of Virtual Representations

Cultural communes function as more than just an alternative to civil society. In the example of politics, they seem to be supplanting civil society as voting blocs are realigned with nationalisms based on antidemocratic discourses. During the last half of the second decade of the twentieth century, public discourse on immigration became saturated with xenophobic rhetoric that permeated with extreme rapidity into the highest apparatuses of power. Its power is not merely discursive, since it drafts or stands in for policy. This is not to suggest that anti-immigrant sentiment has not been an important historical and political force in many societies; what is new, however, is its global character as anti-immigrantism metastasizes across national borders. All over the world, majorities are mobilizing, as exemplified in the election of Donald Trump in the U.S. in 2016, the vote to initiate Brexit the same year, and the coming to power of populist leaders with anti-immigrant platforms such as Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Viktor Orban in Hungary, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, and Narendra Modi in India (the world's largest democracy). The effects of globalization—in particular, the socioeconomic destabilization of the poor and working classes through the transnational circulation of capital—seem to be galvanizing a tendency to ultra-nationalism that is itself, ironically and appropriately, also being subjected to globalization.

Globalization is a complex leviathan—simply articulating a definition is elusive, let alone its connection to what can at first seem like specific phenomena in specific places, such as the vigilante patrol movement (assuming one exists). There are further lessons to be taken from Appadurai (1990), long known for his critical insights about the global electronic media's ability to render populations and ideas into "ethnoscapes," "ideoscapes," and other "scapes." In the twenty-first century he has turned his efforts to theorizing the disproportionate effect of minority groups on hegemonic discourse (rather than the inverse, his original preoccupation). It is not coincidental that the accelerating flow of information has become aligned with globalization's dark side, the logic of which is embedded within discourses of ethnicity. These discourses, functioning in concert with new media, result in "a very complicated circulatory system for the formation of public opinion and for the mediation of fear, panic, and the sense of emergency." The mediation, already described by Appadurai (1990) in his work on the concept of the mediascape, is now amplified through "Internet-based news and opinion flow, which allows a large variety of interest groups to disseminate their views and news and to select constituencies without regard to national

boundaries" (2006, 102). This permeability of "views and news" paradoxically serves to reinforce national borders, leading to the creation of what Appadurai (2006) calls "predatory identities." These identities rely on the existence of so-called "mobilized majorities," which fear being "turned into a minority unless another minority disappears…. Thus, predatory identities arise in those circumstances in which majorities and minorities can *plausibly* be seen as being in danger of trading places" (52, italics added for emphasis). I would argue, in the case of border vigilante groups, that the plausibility of the minority trading places with the majority needs not even be plausible, but merely *utterable*.[9] Rhetoric about the impending erasure of national sovereignty and the need for security, ensured through the steady acceleration of militarization, leads to a politics of fear that operates by mere suggestion and becomes self-sustaining.

Conclusion

It is without question reasonable to doubt the potency and reach of the kind of discourse enunciated by vigilante groups to affect national political discourse or the American mediascape on immigration. But in the current era, which has seen "fake news" entered into the Oxford English Dictionary (Steinmetz 2017) and when national immigration policy is largely informed by the editorial programming of cable news networks (Rupar 2019), the shock of the assertion diminishes greatly. *Border security* as a prevailing, totalizing discourse at the intersection of physical space and national sovereignty is not without antecedents: its origins lie no earlier than forty years in the past with the rise of low-intensity conflict doctrine in Central America, which itself emerged out of almost a century of representations of the borderlands as a wild region in need of taming. The developments of recent years—as seen not just in vigilante patrol activities, but in broader political developments such as the deployment of National Guard troops to serve as a "force multiplier" for the Border Patrol (Fernandez 2018)—suggest the persistence of a military inflection to the popular imaginary of the border into the foreseeable future. Concomitantly, the scope and reach of vigilante patrol groups seem likely to increase as they gain political currency and enhance their visibility through savvy use of the new media, and the result is likely to be a further proliferation of what Castells (2010a) dubs "self-constructed image worlds" that break down the traditional dimensions of human life but which then become "reintegrated into functional networks" that exist in a "culture of real virtuality" (406). It may be more useful to pluralize to "cultures," since these image worlds may each constitute their own online culture that can subsequently become a culture that exists in an offline social space. The consequences are easily foreseen, although Appadurai (2006) warns that "...modernization theory did not understand that education and information would come radically apart in the world of 'the web' and 'the net,' making it possible for messages of hate and suspicion to circulate at vastly greater speeds than those of hope and compassion" (220). The tendency of digital networks to disintermediate the information we receive (whether in the old or new media, since their circuits now travel along the same routes) would seem to suggest new ways of defining membership through shared ideas—but not necessarily *knowledge*—while it also suggests a bleak prognosis for immigrant and refugee politics. However, the Internet is the door to democratic as well as antidemocratic discourses. Scholar-activists such as Sasha Costanza-Chock (2006) have described the formation of pro-immigration movements through what Castells has referred to as "mass self-communication" via mobile networks. These movements can organize events very quickly and have had some success at countering anti-immigrant demonstrations. Such uses of digital technology are poised to subvert the disintermediated mediascape, especially as information

increasingly travels along decentered flows rather than mediated channels. These decentered flows travel through networks that include the sites of citizen vigilante groups, the corporate media actors that report and editorialize on them, and the concentration of political power in social media platforms. Because corporate media is increasingly aligned with new media protocols and meaning-making processes, it will be the prerogative of private citizens to continue to reflect and enact strategies that can make interventions to disrupt this new/old media dynamic.

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Endnotes

[1] So that the reader will not misconstrue the use of the phrase as a cliché, a clarification is merited: I employ "real world" retronymically as a necessary counterpoint to the "digital world" that comprises the information, networks, and communicative space enabled by digital technologies such as the Internet and mobile devices. Although this latter phrase is also quickly becoming cliché, distinguishing these two realities becomes particularly important as they increasingly interact with each other to produce novel ways of making meaning. For nuanced explorations of the way meaning is exchanged and fortified between the real and digital worlds, see for example Castells' (2010a) description of the "culture of real virtuality" (403-406).

[2] For the history of the optimism toward early digital networks, see Negroponte (1995). For an analysis of the tools that allow users to narrow rather than broaden their information sources, see Shapiro (1999). For the social ramifications of the proliferation of digital technologies, see the work of Sherry Turkle (1995) and (2011).

[3] Even the most massive repatriation of immigrants of the twentieth century, occurring during the 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression in the American Southwest and targeting Mexicans, was undertaken almost entirely by local communities. Publicity campaigns were developed with the express purpose of "scareheading" Mexicans and even Mexican-Americans into leaving the country, such that self-deportation became the largest driver of de-Mexicanization (Guerin-Gonzales 78).

[4] A literal call to arms is quite possibly responsible for the disbanding of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps in 2010 when the group's president, Carmen Mercer, issued a press release to their members urging them to return to the border "LOCKED AND LOADED" to combat what she viewed as then Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano's failure to secure the border (Lehrer, emphasis original).

[5] For an explanation of post-9/11 security discourse as the impetus to the creation of a "virtual borders," see Muller (2009).

[6] It is worth noting that members of vigilante patrol groups, in the performance of their self-imposed duties, would also be classified as CTAs under Andreas's framework.

[7] Photographs appear in Gaynor (2014).

[8] Although vigilante groups tend to justify their activities as needed to prevent the violence of clandestine transnational actors, there is extensive documentation of abuse against migrants and citizens by these groups such as verbal abuse, unlawful detention, and even murder. See, for example, the case of Shawna Forde, leader of Minuteman American Defense, who was convicted of the murder of two Arizona residents in 2011. For more information, see Smith (2011).

[9] The overwhelming evidence for the infiltration of U.S. social media networks by foreign agents in anticipation of the 2016 election illustrates that the mere "uttering," albeit electronic, of misinformation influenced the results of a national election. See McCarthy (2017) for an analysis of the use of social media to sow internal division in the 2016 U.S. election.

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Privatizing Border Security: Emergence of the "Border–Industrial Complex" and Its Implications

Fuminori Kawakubo

The border has never been simply a line demarcating a sovereign state. We have seen shifts in the practices of sovereignty, and a new paradigm of sovereignty is emerging with some implications for how borders are governed (Agnew 1999, 2003). In recent years, various security agencies in the United States have been establishing new modes of border spaces that tend to channel and monitor the flow of people and goods, rather than closing borders. This new type of border function does not remove the border as a line but rather creates a different form of border management and control (Newman 2006; Passi 2009; Popescu 2012).

The traditional models of the territorial state border are outdated by the presence of border functions at the edge of the state. States, private actors, and individuals generate the meaning for the border through their interactions. It can be argued that these actors have enacted a new border function that exists as a mixture of market mechanisms and border control. Numerous corporations that depend on military spending have expanded into the field of border security. Borders require increasingly elaborate technology, which has led to a new industry and new markets in which the private sector plays a crucial role. In the context of securitizing borders, the "border–industrial complex" has emerged since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

First, this article outlines developments in new types of border control that represent the expansion of state sovereignty into the new space of border control and technology. Second, we examine the US government's outsourcing of border control to private actors and the ensuing development of corporate interests for border militarization, which has led to the emergence of the homeland security state and the border–industrial complex. Then, we demonstrate that the symbiotic relationship between border militarization and corporate involvement further impedes meaningful immigration reform and fosters the violation of human rights. The conclusion argues that the concept of public values is a key element in activating democratic society, among other border stakeholders, to conceive an appropriate form of governance. Finally, we consider who can become involved in border control and how they can do so in a democratic way.

New Forms of Border Control: The Changing Nature of Sovereignty and Border Militarization

The global trend toward walled and secured borders has been characterized by the changing nature of sovereignty over the past 200 years (Jones et al. 2016). Brown (2010) argues that wall construction and border militarization are signs of weakening states and, more specifically, the "detachment of sovereignty from the nation-state, that is generating much of the frenzy of nation-state wall building today" (24). In this sense, the territorially defined nation-state is outdated, implying a partial unbundling and reallocation of state sovereignty to private actors (Sassen 2006). Border militarization has been propelled in part by the mushrooming of the border security market as private corporations vie to obtain government funding for border security projects. However, Sassen's explorations on sovereignty, authority, and rights suggest the re-articulation of sovereignty, not its decline. We see the new forms of border control described in this article as both quantitative and qualitative shifts that expand state sovereignty and power along with private corporations.

The increasing involvement of national governments in border control must be viewed as part of the historical process of the invention of the nation-state (Torpey 2000). Torpey (2000) states that control over the movement of people is the "monopoly of legitimate means of movement" that states have seized from other actors such as churches and private corporations (Torpey 2000, 1). In the field of public administration and border studies, we have seen various ways in which national governments have attempted to operate over the last two decades. Border control has been intensified in terms of funding, the actors involved, and the use of technology. These changes represent quantitative shifts in border control.

These changes occurred simultaneously in Western countries, including in North America, Europe, and Australia (Cornelius 2004; Tholen 2010). The multiplication of borders requires the involvement of numerous actors and the exchange of information such as traveler's data. Taking note of these compounding changes allow us to comprehend that they represent a shift toward a new type of border control (Tholen 2010, 264–268). These methods do not simply protect the border as a line itself but also manage the flow of people, goods, and information. This is no longer simply reactive, but proactive. It is aimed not only at keeping specific individuals out of state territory but also at impeding the movement of "potentially dangerous peoples" in advance. This fundamental shift represents a qualitative change in the nature of border control.

The deployment of private contractors has been carried out since after the Second World War, but the delegation and transfer of public power to private actors have rapidly expanded in a new direction over the past two decades. The combination of public power and privatization is no longer limited to the production of military equipment and weaponry. Privatized duties and forces are not just generated by the military. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been delegating a significant number of public duties to private hands since its creation in 2003.

The United States Border Patrol (USBP), housed within the DHS, not only recruits from the military and trains in military tactics and strategy but also widely uses military equipment and technology. The low-intensity doctrine facilitates coordination between the military and law enforcement with the aim of controlling undocumented immigrants as the "perceived threat" (Dunn 1996). This, in turn, implies that the military is taking on ever more police-like tasks and the USBP is becoming ever more militarized (Miller 2018a).

While the military and police forces are both agents of the sovereign state, their designated methods and equipment have considerable differences (Heyman and Campbell 2012). However, the distinctions between security and policing on the one hand and militarization on the other have been blurred in the context of the War on Terror (Bigo 2014, 2016; Neocleous 2014; Walker 2016). Kraska (2007) defines militarism as

> a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that stress the use of force and threat of violence as the most appropriate and efficacious means to solve problems. It emphasizes the exercise of military power, hardware, organization, operations, and technology as its primary problem-solving tools (503).

Border militarization can be most narrowly explained as the "deployment of military troops, rather than civilian border patrols, along borders" (Jones et al. 2016, 188). A broader understanding of border militarization is the prevailing influence of "military strategies, culture, technologies, hardware and combat veterans that are now policing the border" (Jones et al. 2016, 188). Hence, the blurring of the distinction between the military and the police discloses the "long-term symmetry" in their expansion and reinforcement of the sovereign power of the state (Neocleous 2014).

Border militarization is driven by the expansion of the border security market associated with security-related private corporations vying to obtain government funding for all kinds of border security projects. Building walls and implementing technology-based security practices reflect the outdated version of sovereign power that has been challenged by the cross-border movements of people and goods over the last two decades. A recent study shows that despite a fivefold increase in the number of the USBP agents, a fourfold increase in hours spent patrolling the border, and a twentyfold increase in nominal funding for border control in the period between 1986 and 2008, the undocumented migrant population has grown from 3 million to 12 million (Massey et al. 2016; Triandafyllidou 2017).

R. A. Falkenrath, former Deputy Assistant to President George W. Bush and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor, drew an analogy likening the revolution in military affairs of the 1990s to the "revolution in border security," in which technological development has the potential to transform border security practices (Kawakubo 2017; Kostro et al. 2012). This "revolution" largely consists of the DHS using technology as a "force multiplier" to increase the capabilities of officers, as well as embracing a strategy of "pushing borders out" beyond US territorial boundaries (Flynn 2000). This technology is designed to monitor borders and create a "virtual border." The deployment of new technologies in border spaces results in a transformation of how borders are monitored and securitized. The older model of tight security at discrete crossing points and dispersed monitoring of spaces in between has been replaced with a model that strives for "total awareness" and "effective control" over the entire border zone (Jones et al. 2016, 194). Payan (2016) describes the recent situation of border militarization in the US–Mexico border as follows:

> There is a much larger investment now in the use of high technology, turning the border into a veritable panopticon border where soon no one will be able to move without being seen or heard or noticed…The Border Patrol and [US Customs and Border Protection (CBP)], its parent agency, leverage technology to control ever more inches and yards of the borderline and gain information on individuals, vehicles, etc. They use biometrics,

> mobile surveillance systems, mobile video surveillance systems, vehicle and cargo inspection systems, night-vision devices, thermal handheld imaging devices, unattended ground sensors, personal radiation detectors, radiation isotope identification devices, Z backscatter X-ray vehicles, integrated fix towers, UAVs, helicopters, over 10,000 SUVs, and even horses and dogs—not to mention ditches, walls, and fences, and so on (187).

The focus on border security is crucial as the US–Mexico border becomes a significant symbol for political and corporate leaders. The escalation of enforcement measures by U.S. border security agencies is the result of policy failures in managing and controlling the border region with Mexico. Consequently, it has become difficult to maintain a "sense of order" with respect to corporate interests along the border and other symbolic acts. Andreas adopts a "game" metaphor not only to highlight the game of cat and mouse but to imply that US border security is merely a game, a kind of "ritualized spectator sport" contrived to make the American people believe that borders are guarded and protected by making the border look secure (Andreas 2000; Pineda 2003).

Klein (2007) argues that

> the dismantling of borders, the great symbol and promise of globalization, has been replaced with the exploding industry of border surveillance, from optical scanning and biometric IDs to the planned high-tech fence on the border between Mexico and the US government, worth up to $2.5 billion for Boeing and a consortium of other companies (303).

She also notes that the size of the DHS and the surveillance industry has increased rapidly. This sector grew "exponentially" after the September 11 terrorist attacks, when the Bush administration launched a never-ending War on Terror in which "everything that could be outsourced would be" (Klein 2017, para. 16).

This means that the state is increasingly devolving some of its functions to the private sector. Therefore, it is important to look at the structural transformation of the nature of the state: the unbundling of sovereignties and the reconfiguration of state power from a vertical to a horizontal dimension, among which are the partial denationalizing of state territory (Sassen 1996). This leads us to the understanding that state power is exercised by delegating state sovereignty to local, transnational, and private actors outside of the traditional realm of the sovereign state. Multiple actors become involved with security policies. The devolution of state power contributes to the "commercialization of border security" (Doty et al. 2013) and the "fetishization of the border" (Miller 2018b) which invoke the responsibility for state sovereignty and the ambiguities of the boundary between public and private entanglement in border security.

The Emergence of the Homeland Security State and the "Border–Industrial Complex"

The United States has a border–industrial complex as mighty as the military–industrial complex that President Dwight Eisenhower warned of in his 1961farewell address. Since that time, the influence of the US military and the industries associated with it has accelerated by leaps and bounds. During the past 40 years, a multibillion-dollar border–industrial complex has been created, bearing

a striking resemblance to the military–industrial complex. The foundation of the complex is the private sector. President Eisenhower stated:

> In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence…by *the military–industrial complex* [emphasis added]. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.[1]

During Eisenhower's last term in office, from 1957 to 1961, the top five military contractors were North American Aviation (part of the present-day United Technologies), General Electric, Lockheed, Boeing, and General Dynamics., A 2003 Pentagon report showed that after years of consolidation, the "fifty largest defense contractors of the early 1980s have become today's top five contractors" (Turse 2008, 23). Whereas the core of the military–industrial complex is said to be the iron triangle of Congress, the Pentagon, and military contractors, the border–industrial complex comprises Congress, the DHS, and border security corporations, which substantially overlap with military contractors.

The private military industry emerged at the beginning of the 1990s from a "confluence of three momentous dynamics": 1) the end of the Cold War and the global vacuum this created in the market for security, 2) transformations in the nature of warfare, and 3) the normative rise of privatization. Together, these produced "a new space and demand for the establishment of the privatized military industry" (Singer 2001, 193).

The United States has become increasingly reliant on private military corporations (PMCs) and civilian contractors to carry out fundamental parts of its security policy since the end of the Cold War. The industry reached its peak during the 2003 Iraq War. The number of PMC employees involved in the Iraq War was around 20,000—approximately ten times the ratio of private contractors in the Gulf War (Singer 2005, 27). Vice President Dick Cheney's former company Halliburton and its then subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root division won contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan totaling between $11 and $13 billion—more than double what the first Gulf War cost US taxpayers (Stanger et al. 2006, 4).

Many corporations dependent on military spending have gradually expanded into the field of border security as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have drawn down. Borders require increasingly sophisticated technology, which has led to a new industry and new markets in which the private sector plays a crucial role. In the context of securitizing borders, the border–industrial complex conflates security with private actors (Ackleson et al. 2015; Dear 2017; Krahman 2005).

In the US, the federal government financed the construction of border fences around southern border cities such as San Ysidro, Nogales, and El Paso prior to the 1990s. The southern border near San Diego has been recognized as a high-volume zone of human smuggling and drug trafficking. The Clinton administration began building border fences and escalating border control

measures in 1994 through a comprehensive set of strategies that called for "prevention through deterrence" (Saddiki 2014, 183).

Through the mixing of border security with the private sector, border control itself is becoming more sophisticated than ever before. Although the idea of a "closed" border never vanished from the traditional landscapes of geopolitics, new systems and formulations of border security have been developing since the September 11 attacks. After September 11, the Global War on Terrorism solidified the migration–security nexus in which undocumented immigration was placed in the same category as terrorism and security threats (Tirman 2004). Border security has become a crucial component of the US War on Terror. Shortly after the creation of the DHS in 2003, the USBP formulated a new National Border Patrol Strategy that sought to handle a wide range of potentially dangerous threats. The USBP's strategy consists of five main objectives (US Customs and Border Protection 2005, 2):

- Establish substantial probability of apprehending terrorists and their weapons as they attempt to enter illegally between the ports of entry;
- Deter illegal entries through improved enforcement;
- Detect, apprehend, and deter smugglers of humans, drugs, and other contraband;
- Leverage "Smart Border" technology to multiply the effect of enforcement personnel;
- Reduce crime in border communities to improve the quality of life and economic vitality of targeted areas.

New strategies have tended to introduce high-tech mechanisms into the field of border security, fostering the development of the border–industrial complex and an increasingly booming market worldwide. Market projections show that the global border and homeland security market is poised to nearly double between 2011 and 2022 from $305 billion to $546 billion (Miller 2017). The border–industrial complex has grown strong enough to help shape national immigration policies and further stimulate the militarization of borders.

The homeland security state not only includes the DHS and its agencies but also represents a network of state institutions and social forces that have emerged to govern the entire society in the context of neoliberalism (Gonzales 2016). In terms of neoliberal policies within the various domains of border security, Braedley and Luxton (2010) offered a critical perspective on the ways in which neoliberalism has come to permeate our social and political fabric, thereby affecting our daily lives. Ettinger (2011) noted that "[p]rivatization is a single institutional strategy in a broader syndrome of policies that constitute economic neoliberalism," which is the "conditioning of the modern state" (744, 749). It follows that privatization and neoliberalism are not interchangeable concepts.

This understanding of the relationship between privatization and neoliberalism allows us to grapple with the social forces working to expand the traditional meaning and reach of the state apparatus and to transform it to meets their interests. The border wall initiative clearly shows the drive for corporate interests and profits under the homeland security state. The politics of fear surrounding immigration and border security, which aims to keep undocumented immigrants out of the US, is combined with the "market spectacle" of procuring revenues in the emerging border security

market and symbolizing the promotion of corporate interests with sovereign power (Altheide 2006; Furedi 2005; Garrett 2014, 2018).

As a form of the capitalist state, the homeland security state is characterized by a "highly developed repressive apparatus" that is exempt from democratic accountability and transparency (Gonzales 2016, 90). The USBP not only hires from the military and receives military training, but also uses military technology and equipment. Defense contractors such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Elbit Systems have long been adjusting their technologies for use in homeland security operations, which are deeply embedded in the "border security bonanza" (Miller 2018b). Public–private partnerships have taken shape in the security complex, including the "Homeland Security & Defense Business Council," which was established in 2004. In its materials, the council notes that it provides "a forum among the leading private-sector companies and senior federal government homeland security leaders to implement the administrative and legislative landscape by the creation of the US Department of Homeland Security" (Barry 2009a). Its missions are stated as follows:

> Our unique programs and initiatives are developed around the business needs, capabilities, and priorities of our members in the homeland security market. Focused on the most important issues impacting homeland security/homeland defense, they bring together industry and government leaders to build and strengthen relationships, increase knowledge sharing, and improve the way we conduct business together (Homeland Security and Defense Business Council, n.d.).

A new report entitled "More than a Wall" examined 14 corporations that are considered giants in the field of border security: Accenture, Boeing, Elbit Systems, Flir Systems, G4S, General Atomics, General Dynamics, IBM, L3 Technologies, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, PAE, Raytheon, and UNISYS (Miller 2019, 34–48) (See Table 1 in the Appendix). These corporations are not only security and technology firms, but also global arms companies that benefit from a huge amount of military spending. The main contractors with CBP are also the biggest campaign contributors to the members of Congress in charge of border security policy. These contract recipients include Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Atomics, General Dynamics, and Raytheon, which collectively gave $27.6 million and $6.5 million in total to members of the Appropriations Committee and Homeland Security Committee, respectively (Miller 2019). They are also the most active in lobbying Congress. In 2018, the largest immigration and border budget in US history, totaling more than $23 billion, was enacted by the 2018 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 3355), prompting concerted and widespread lobbying activities by these companies: General Dynamics lobbied 44 times, Northrop Grumman 19, Lockheed Martin 41, and Raytheon 28, in addition to lobbyists from L3 Technologies, IBM, Palantir, CoreCivic, and Geo Group (Miller 2019; Transnational Institute 2019).

There is also a "revolving door" between government and corporations. Between 2003 and 2017, at least four CBP commissioners and three DHS secretaries were hired by homeland security corporations or consulting companies after they left government (Miller 2019; Transnational Institute 2019). They routinely moved back and forth between the public and private sectors, building a familiarity that reinforced the relationship, while offering lavish rewards to all actors involved. The homeland security state has created a deep bench of government-trained lobbyists and consultants. Increased privatization substantially increases the "number and size of contracts, thereby

increasing the potential for 'cozy politics' or conflicts of interest, corruption, and violations of professional ethics" (Wendell 2004, 141–142). In 2006, Lipton of *The New York Times* reported:

> At least 90 officials at the Department of Homeland Security or the White House Office of Homeland Security—including the department's former secretary, Tom Ridge…—are executives, consultants or lobbyists for companies that collectively do billions of dollars' worth of domestic security business.
>
> More than two-thirds of the department's most senior executives in its first years [2003] have moved through the revolving door (Lipton 2006, para. 2–3).

Another new report reveals that Wall Street investors are positioned to benefit financially from the Trump administration's border wall (The Partnership for Working Families 2017). In addition, many of these investors have ties to Trump's campaign or administration. It can be said that they are financially linked with Trump and the nationalist right wing, which support an anti-immigrant agenda. One of the largest investors is the Sterling Construction Company, which is the parent company of border wall prototype contractor, Texas Sterling. Other investors include Renaissance Technologies, Dimensional Fund Advisors, Blacklock, JPMorgan Chase, and Wells Fargo (The Partnership for Working Families 2017, 4–8). These firms are united by the Trump administration and intend to benefit financially from the administration's anti-immigrant agenda and policy. Their stocks have increased rapidly from the administration's effort to increase immigration enforcement and detention under its zero-tolerance policy. This policy, which began with the onset of "migrant caravans" from Central America in recent years, separates "unaccompanied alien children" from their families.[2] The relationships between the Trump administration and investors in private prison corporations indicate that the anti-immigrant agenda and policy are not only a primary issue for right-wing political circles in Washington, DC, but also a source of power for the financial elite on Wall Street.

In 2005, the DHS began the Operation Streamline initiative, making it a federal crime for undocumented immigrants to enter and re-enter the United States (Diaz et al. 2015). This policy criminalized more immigrants than ever before. The rise in detention rates over the last 15 years is a direct result of this policy, which is enforced by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Darby 2019). ICE is attempting to prevent immigrants from entering the United States by housing immigrants in detention centers. Private prison corporations also view stronger border control measures as a way to secure payments for detaining immigrants, thereby increasing their profits. The private prison industry in the United States increased 1,600% between 1990 and 2010 (Diaz et al. 2015). Golash-Boza (2009) coined the term "immigration–industrial complex," which represents the fusion of public and private interests in the criminalization of undocumented immigrants, immigration law enforcement, and the promotion of "anti-illegal" rhetoric.

Priest and Arkin, Washington Post reporters, describe the rise of a "New American Security State" as an "alternative geography" of secretive government agencies and private security corporations (Priest et al. 2011). This new geography has grown so rapidly that it defies belief; its network of cutting-edge operations centers comprises around 10,000 locations across the US, nearly as ubiquitous as Starbucks coffee shops. Many people misunderstand the costs and benefits of expanding the use of private security contractors. Government agencies seem to be working under the idea

that cooperation with private companies will help control spending and lower costs compared with hiring permanent government employees. Priest and Arkin (2011) argue that the reverse is true.

Conclusion: Suggestions for Public Values and Democratic Society

The ramping up of border security has occurred without any political intention to develop a better immigration system or prioritize the fundamental rights to human dignity. Combined with President Trump's use of the border and immigration issues to incite racial discrimination and antagonism, the United States is moving toward a fully militarized border region that will further undermine constitutional protections (Pompa 2018). As borders become increasingly militarized and privatized, human rights and due process of law will weaken and deteriorate. President Trump regards the border mainly as a route through which aliens and invaders will bring crime and drugs, and consequently danger and chaos, into the US. The Trump administration's policy is to make the border as impassable as possible with a "big, beautiful wall," constructed by preferentially selected private companies.[3] Furthermore, borders also represent the "absurdity of political leaders taking the world as it is and trying to make it as they think it ought to be" (Grandin 2019, para. 31). In the end, the corporate-led militaristic control of the border might lead to more violence and death, with a lessened sense of responsibility. It has generated a zone of "legal exceptionalism," where even citizens and legal border crossers are denied their basic rights in the name of the largely manufactured "border crisis."

Powerful interests are the sources of momentum for further intensifying border security. Every single aspect of the border has become industrialized, from border agents' socks to the vehicles they drive and the surveillance towers they work in (Miller 2019, 79). The border security apparatus has affected the lives of ordinary people and forcefully separated so many families. The recent trend for more border walls, more privatization, and more deportation is significant, especially when combined with corporate interests and a neoliberal doctrine.

In this context, the privatization of immigration and border security raises significant issues regarding the government's ability to oversee and control private actors (Verkuil 2007). Much of the criticism of the DHS has focused on the department's inability to manage and monitor its private sector contracts (Barry 2009b; Kawakubo 2017). The toughest critics of the DHS come from within the government itself—congressional committees, the Government Accountability Office, and the department's own Office of Inspector General (Barry 2009b). Although congressional critics and government reports express concern about the waste of taxpayer money because of the lack of adequate procurement and oversight procedures, there is little evaluation of the DHS's public–private partnerships and how much the government should rely on private companies for services that it formerly provided itself.

Critics also express a common concern about accountability and transparency in terms of public values (Davis et al. 2009). Minow (2009) examines the accountability of government outsourcing, including the bidding process, contract enforcement, market competition, and congressional oversight hearings. Verkuil (2007, 2009) focuses on the implications of outsourcing sovereignty and the duty to govern, while Bozeman (2007) points out that transparency has lessened. Wedel (2009) observes that policymaking is now carried out among many actors and that a large number of such

actors wreaks havoc on systems of accountability. Others contend that the root cause lies in the decrease of public trust and democratic ethos (deLeon et al. 2002). It can be argued that security institutions have become detached from the general public, which has led to the creation of a shadow elite comprising government and corporate actors (Wedel 2009).

In this article, I have sought to examine the development of a new type of border control based on border militarization, which has been bolstered by the border–industrial complex. As I have shown, the border-governance process has been delegated by state authority, from those who are accountable to the public, to corporate actors who answer to only a limited few with particular interests. Even though national governments have spent enormous amounts of money on all kinds of border control measures, there is little to show for it in our daily lives. Moreover, people are routinely screened, and their personal information stored by the border–industrial complex, making it more difficult to identify who governs our society and less clear where the responsibility for governance lies. These changes have failed to improve the quality of life and the prospects for a democratic society (Popescu 2012, 155). Public values inform the actions of a democratic society and should be reflected in border governance, both public and private. Public values promote interaction between input and output, creating a process for who becomes involved in border security and how they do so in a democratic way.

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Endnotes

[1] Transcript of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address. 1961. https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=90&page=transcript [accessed 23 November 2019].

[2] In May 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Department of Justice was implementing a zero-tolerance policy toward illegal border crossings. The family-separation policy has been controversial. Proponents of the Trump administration's policy maintain that it was necessary to discourage immigrants from entering the United States, whereas immigrant advocates assert that immigrant families are fleeing threats of violence in their home countries and that family separations are inhumane and violate fundamental human rights (Congressional Research Service 2019).

[3] A construction firm that has been touted by President Donald Trump on many occasions was awarded a major border wall construction contract valued at more than $1.3 billion. Fisher Sand and Gravel of North Dakota was awarded a $1.275 billion contract on May 6, 2020. The company had been directly lobbying President Trump and his allies for border wall construction contracts, and the president reportedly demanded a deal (Browne et al. 2020, para. 1; Silverstein 2020, paras. 1–2).

Appendix

Table 1: The 14 Border Security Giants (2005–2019)

Corporations	CBP contracts (in millions)	Description	Examples of other relevant border and immigration contracts	Work for border control	Headquarters
Accenture	$200	A multinational professional services company in strategy, consulting, technology, and operations		Administrative support/hiring	Dublin, Ireland
Boeing	$1,400	A US multinational corporation that designs and manufactures airplanes, rocket satellites, communication gear, and missiles	Boeing 737 planes used by ICE for deportations; $117 million to subsidiary Inisitu in 2016 for small unmanned aircraft	Land surveillance system	Chicago, IL
Elbit Systems	$187	Military, homeland security, and commercial aviation company		Surveillance towers	Haifa, Israel
FLIR Systems	$157	Company that specializes in the design and production of thermal cameras	$50 million contract with the Coast Guard in 2017	Night vision, thermal cameras on mobile surveillance cameras systems	Wilsonville, OR
G4S	$653	Global security company	Contracts with ICE for armored transportation	Transportation for arrested migrants	London, UK; Jupiter, FL (G4S Secure Solutions)
General Atomics	$504	A military and technology company founded in 1955 as a division of General Dynamics		Unmanned aerial vehicle systems	San Diego, CA
General Dynamics	$167	A global aerospace and military company and the six largest company in terms of arms sales	Contract with Dept. of Health and Human Services for detained children;	Surveillance towers	Falls Church, VA

			contract with the Coast Guard in 2016 worth $125.6 million		
IBM	$1,700	Information technology company		Technological infrastructure support	Armonk, NY
L3 Technologies	$894	A command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems company	$500 million contract in 2019 with Transportation Security Administration	Surveillance systems, cameras, sensor systems	New York City, NY
Lockheed Martin	$1,000	Defense and security firm; world's number one in military sales	$11 billion contract with the Coast Guard in 2002	Surveillance planes, cybersecurity	Bethesda, MD
Northrop Grumman	$340	Global arms and security company; fifth largest producer of weapons in the world	$11 billion contract with the Coast Guard in 2002; $12 million IT services contract with ICE in 2009	Biometrics, border screening, radar surveillance	Falls Church, VA
PAE	$1,200	Military and government services contractor founded in 1955		Maintenance and refurbishing of vehicles	Arlington, VA
Raytheon	$37	World's second- largest defense company and largest producer of guided missiles	Border contracts for the Philippines and Jordan; over $1 billion in Defense Threat Reduction Agency contracts; other contracts with the Coast Guard, including one in 2001 worth $49.2 million	Surveillance radar systems for maritime Drones	Waltham, MA
UNISYS	$2,000	Global information technology company		Biometrics, license, passport detection	Blue Bell, PA

Note. The table was created by the author using information from Miller (2019, 32, 34–48).

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Good Fences Make Good Neighbors: Simulacra and Border Narratives

Arthur J. Sementelli

Introduction

There is a perception associated with certain narratives in the United States that cohere around the idea that politically motivated interpretations of borders are somehow new. Upon reflection, we find that the claim something new is unsubstantiated. Some narratives claim that insecurity can be rectified through the creation of a wall on the southern border of the United States, even though such a wall has existed prior to 2014. The context of these disputes can be deemed new, but the logic, the substance and argumentation are not. They are essentially contested concepts (Gallie 1955) highlighted with expressions of dogmatism, skepticism, and narratives that can be interpreted in multiple perspectives. Essentially contested concepts are not new. If we consider the poem *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost, it can help us better understand and appreciate tensions among essentially contested concepts through an examination of its verses including "good fences make good neighbors" in the context of the border debate. More generally, instrumental and constitutive (Cook 2014) approaches to public administration can also be expressed as essentially contested concepts.

Dogmatic narratives have political appeal to individuals while essentially contested concepts create challenges for the theory and practice of professions. Understanding the poetic sense of invoking a springtime ritual helps us to come to grips with the gravity of dialogue. In *Mending Wall*, the ritual forces neighboring property owners to engage in a contested dialogue about the merits of the repair ritual while clarifying their understanding of each other's property. In public administration, it represents the inherent tension among the instrumental (Box 1999; Moynihan 2003; Svara 2001) and the constitutive (Cook 1998, 2014) practices of the profession. At the same time, it challenges the utility of the wall itself: "…he is all pine and I am apple orchard. My apple trees will never get across and eat the cones under his pines, I tell him…" *Mending Wall* is a poem of perspective that illustrates the enduring problems associated with essentially contested concepts in general and border narratives specifically, making it potentially more relevant today than when it was written.

Mending Wall echoes many of the philosophical issues brought forth by Gallie (1955) alongside the administrative issues highlighted by Cook (2014, 187). In particular, it highlights inconsistencies about what Americans want government to do while revealing narrative challenges and impacts on continuing issues of administrative discretion (Leys 1943; Sowa et al. 2003) in contemporary public administration. The conversation in *Mending Wall* highlights the profound difference in perspectives that are part of the political landscape. Despite such differences, both property owners engage in the annual ritual of *Mending Wall* arguably to maintain some notion of order. To better understand how this impacts administrative theory and practice, this paper employs Agamben and Baudrillard to gain insights into politicized behaviors in the context of the border wall with Mexico supporting the claim that we are dealing with an essentially contested concept (Gallie 1955). We begin with Baudrillard, discussing the concepts of proclamations and sovereignty. Later we develop the case for how Agamben enhances these concepts. Afterward, we use contemporary border narratives and the poem *Mending Wall* to illustrate parallel logic that exists among them revealing an essentially contested concept.

Underlying Theme: Baudrillard

To understand the utility of using the poem *Mending Wall* we must also understand how walls are being used in both the poem as well as in contemporary border narratives. Baudrillard helps us to understand the nuances by establishing a discussion of symbolic exchange (Baudrillard, 1976) as a basis for action, and the manipulation of imagery (Baudrillard, 2000). Symbolic exchange specifically can help us understand the confusion around walls. From the instrumentally rational perspectives of utility and efficiency, it makes little sense to build a wall that already exists. However, if we view the wall and its construction using the lens of symbolic exchange (Baudrillard, 1976), then we can make some sense of it. Furthermore, if we reconsider the wall itself as a reaction to narratives of insecurity, it becomes apparent that the symbolic benefits of a wall could supersede both the social and economic logic for building it. Much like the poem *Mending Wall*, the practice of improving or repairing something that lacks economic utility might become sensible through alternative lenses.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.

One widely accepted theme in the poem involves the creation of self-imposed barriers. Multiple critics have used terms that include "pointless" and "harmful" to refer to the process of mending a wall in the poem. Similarly, economic, and social research has provided evidence that walls do

very little to control immigration given that the primary means of entry is often by air rather than land travel. Given this context, it is important to understand that border narratives and the administrative actions associated with them are more appropriately understood using Baudrillard (1976) and through essentially contested concepts as expressed by Gallie (1955) rather than instrumental logic.

Baudrillard's (2000) precession of simulacra in general and the understanding of a symbol without a referent in particular, presents a mechanism to understand the symbolic exchanges that cohere around border wall narratives in America. If we examine this further, there is evidence to claim that border narratives might be understood as a symbol without a referent. If we understand the border wall as a symbol without referent, then there is no need to be concerned about the economics, effectiveness, or environmental ramifications of wall construction or maintenance. Reconsidering the wall as a symbol without a referent can help us understand why it is a contested political decision. Moreover, the narrative surrounding the construction and maintenance of the border wall mirrors the tension between two neighbors in the poem *Mending Wall*.

The emergence of the second point explicitly requires the work of Baudrillard (2000). It focuses on how people understand the wall itself. Arguably, the border wall might easily be understood as a simulacrum. Briefly, a simulacrum is a representation that replaces something that was once real. What this means in practice is that the image of the wall and its associated narratives are understood best, and most valuable as a sign independent of its initial signifier. One might argue that the border walls do not fulfill their intended purpose (i.e. to keep people out) given that technology, including air travel, limits its economic value. However, if we disconnect the value of the border wall from its economic impacts and logic, it is possible to uncover what value it might have.

As a symbol, the border wall can be seen as useful simply because it looks like it should work. It is quite postmodern in the sense that the narrative needs only sound appealing to become appealing. One such narrative can be linked to the phrase that "good fences make good neighbors." In *Mending Wall* there is a secondary set of arguably independent narratives focused on seemingly goading the other property owner throughout the poem in the hopes of communicating at least some of the absurdity associated with mending walls. Despite these narrative engagements, both neighbors find themselves repairing a wall that serves little practical purpose to one while being deeply valued by the other. The value of a wall in this case is essentially contested, and neither neighbor is moved by either opposing logic or the expression of evidence leading to the continued ritual of maintaining the wall.

The narratives, politics, and policies regarding the southern border with Mexico in many ways reflect the dynamic of Frost's poem. Specifically, the poem invites the reader to reconsider the complexities associated with the creation and maintenance of walls in contemporary society. In more abstract terms using *Mending Wall* to unpack our understanding of border wall and its associated services can raise questions about definite boundaries, meaningful property lines, and ownership. These concepts become interwoven with narratives about safety concerns, economics, and social responsibility. The street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980) and the services they provide are impacted by narratives about the creation and maintenance of a wall.

One might argue that the neighbor who articulates "good fences make good neighbors" is almost blissfully unaware of the lack of a referent for why the wall exists. In the case of Robert Frost, the wall might be deemed unnecessary because:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? …"

In such a case, the absence of a referent, the absence of common logic for engaging in an activity signals that border wall narratives represent the presence of Baudrillard-esque icon. In such a situation, the easiest way to make sense of it emerges from the two incommensurable perspectives highlighted in *Mending Wall*. In addition, the border narratives act as something separating properties, impeding relations, and limiting communication. Beyond these issues, the general incommensurability enables the possibility of power separate from shared meaning. Such power divested from meaning can be seen in other treatments in public administration particularly in the work of Cook (2014) in the context of good administration and politicized democracy, which raises a host of related questions about administrative discretion (Leys 1943; Sowa et al. 2003) and other constitutive (Cook 2014) aspects of the administrative state. Yet the border wall narratives continue to express this problematic elegantly.

The emergence of a context where power is divested from meaning has specific challenges to administrative discretion. Specifically, there are significant opportunities to engage in political behavior based on prevailing, persuasive narratives often detached from instrumental logic and associated decision practices that have consistently addressed differences of opinion, led to common ends, and dispute resolutions. Instead, we are left with the possibility of no shared meaning, a lack of cohesiveness, and unresolved differences of opinion. Power in general and political power in particular become key determining factors to understand governmental responses to differences of opinion.

The emergence of such behavior creates spaces for both a state of exception (Agamben 2005) as well as the more individuated *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998). This increased politicization and unresolved differences of opinion have specific consequences in that it enables organizations and political institutions to redefine who is and who is not eligible for a service. Citizenship and service delivery become fluid. In the case of border crisis narratives, governmental actors can be charged to engage in differential treatment of individuals and groups of people based on inchoate labels such as "refugee," "immigrant," "or asylum seeker." The narratives around the border wall can support the creation of states of exception (Agamben 2005) through these crisis narratives while portraying these groups of people as *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998), othering them. Both people and practices are reshaped to meet some politicized goals through applications of narrative shifts to maintain contestation. The specific tool, proclamations, can use simulacra to express authority, which makes proclamations important to understand in the context of formalized political narratives.

Proclamations

It is almost an a priori assumption that political actors seek power. Amassing power as a goal underlies much of the behavior of political actors regardless of the sort of politics they practice. Political actors often desire to create contemporary sovereignty and its associated power structures consistent with the work of Carl Schmitt (2005). This contemporary notion of sovereignty has been debated at length, but the important element of this paper involves the ability to *proclaim*—to issue an official edict that carries some political weight.

Unpacking the notion of proclamation involves understanding its origins. The ability to proclaim is premodern as argued by Ricoeur (Vines et al. 1987). Consistent with sociological phenomena, proclamations are powerful tools of sovereignty based on politics, birthright, and other sources. Consequently, authority can be expressed through multiple aspects of social power (French et al. 1959), often drawing from coercive, legitimate, and reward, while relying less on expertise. These areas of emphasis impact sovereignty by opening spaces for examples of symbolic exchange to occur (Baudrillard 1976), or more accurately symbolic *reproduction*. This shift from power driving production to power driving reproduction eliminates, for the most part, the demands for expertise, internal consistency, and what we typically understand as instrumental logic. Freed from the burdens of reference, these narratives function as simulation (Baudrillard 1976, 71). Such a function enables the possibility that a sovereign might grant themselves additional or other power simply by reshaping the meaning of the simulation essentially at will.

The granting of additional power by a sovereign is an inherently political act. If unchecked, it might be wielded to manage expectations, smooth over inconsistencies, and drive politicized agendas similar to what was expressed by Cook (2014). Such possibilities, in turn, ease the tension associated with amalgamating often divergent perspectives on administrative thought toward some end (Sementelli et al. 2007). It is politically expedient for the logic of a language game (Wittgenstein 1953) to supersede the logic of individual or amalgamated practices. The person or persons directing the language game can direct multiple facets of symbol and symbolic communication through their sovereign authority (Schmidt 2005). In essence, the practice of hegemonic control might be guided by a combination of sovereignty and symbolic reproduction.

The emergence of political power as a combination of sovereignty and symbolic reproduction has specific consequences to governance in general and public administration in particular. On one level, it undermines the constitutive nature of the administrative state (Cook 2014) making the day to day practices of administration less constitutive if even only narratively. Specifically, this combination of sovereignty and symbolic reproduction infuses politics and political behavior into situations typically handled apolitically. In practice, it creates situations where one might take something that is considered modern and infuses it with postmodern characteristics.

A consequence of this infusion of free-floating simulations with inconsistent language games into organizations includes the creation of social contagions (Roediger et al. 2001) from these simulations. The lack of a coherent logical structure can impede apolitical professionalism while affording possibilities for deinstitutionalization (Oliver 1992). More generally in managerial thought, the introduction of social contagions into ordered processes has specific impacts. One of the most interesting aspects of these phenomena involves how the inconsistent language game becomes

integrated into day to day practices. Specifically, it creates opportunities both for hegemony (Gramsci 1971, 1992) and resistance (Alvesson et al. 1992; Ackroyd 2012; Huault, et al. 2014). The creation of a simulation with the possibility of incompatible yet intertwined elements allows for the possibility of unfettered meaning making (Krauss 2005) to occur. Unfettered meaning making, in turn, allows hegemons to craft wherever narratives they see fit to achieve social, political, or economic ends, making it difficult to govern using regular administrative practices.

At first blush, this political power appears to create a state of social invulnerability. However, the lack of consistent logic and shifting meaning allows for a different sort of micro-level resistance to emerge, consistent with what some call critical postmodernism (Voronov et al. 2003; Chen et al. 2005). This micro-level resistance might be expressed through wars of imagery (Gruzinski 2001), where often opposing sets of images, representing opposing viewpoints, might be wielded as part of a combat of discourse among hegemonic leaders and their opposition. These phenomena simultaneously exhibit elements that are both premodern and postmodern. Morstein-Marx (2012) identifies premodern imagery in the case of plebeian imagery in the late Roman Republic highlighting discussions that include examples of resistance discourses and "safe places" (194). Contemporary postmodern accounts in contrast, often rely on the narrative of anonymity (Savage 2016), while lacking the practical safety articulated by Morstein-Marx (2012).

This creates an interesting problem for our contested viewpoints. When dealing with simulacra, we often return to the tools of modern and premodern resistance. Symbolic resistance like memes remains, but often is expressed digitally. Memes can be edited, reproduced, and repurposed. Consequences of this change include a loss of logically consistent friend or foe identifiers that were common up to a few years ago. Rather, they are fluid. The one element of logical consistency becomes the opposing viewpoints, or at least their positions. Beyond this, we are left with seemingly indeterminate social agents (Laclau et al. 2001, 41) and a lack of logical consistency around opposing viewpoints. Unpacking this fluid meaning making can lead to expressions of alienation based on absurdity (Santangelo1970; Sagi 2002). One such expression, consistent with the work of Lippmann (2017, 2017b), could involve situations where participation might become functionally suppressed due to alienation.

Another side effect of reactions to both alienation and absurdity might be expressed as practical changes in oversight as well as in politicized practices. This helps to reflect the inconsistencies described by Cook (2014, 187) and others. More specifically, the changes in meaning making around the use of symbols and narratives allow hegemons to reframe wants and needs of the governed while managing resistance, guerrilla governance (O'Leary 2006), things that might be described as "administrative overreach" with only the points of opposition as contrast. In such cases, public values and their safeguards (Rutgers 2010) can become eroded, functionally deinstitutionalizing the political and administrative arms of government.

The conscious choices and actions to shift narratives and symbols to suit political ends or personal goals can result in situations where one might be able to redact, alter, or otherwise influence processes like shared memory simply by altering symbolic cues.

"…Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Engaging in meaning making by altering narratives and other symbolic cues is akin to attributing different logic to existing practices, which can undermine both hermeneutic approaches and practices of ritualized testimony. The loss of these two has specific impacts on legal systems. Specifically, it becomes possible to alter the perception of events, possibly by manipulating narratives (Ricoeur 1984) using simulacra absent logical reference. In other words, engaging in symbolic meaning making can be used to functionally rewrite one's understanding. In *Mending Wall*, this is akin to attributing the damage by hunters to elves. Subtle meaning making can be used to craft and reinforce docile bodies (Foucault 1977). In *Mending Wall*, cleaving to the phrase "Good fences make good neighbors" stymies discussion and debate reinforcing the status as an essentially contested concept.

The docility born of meaning making enables notions of sovereignty as expressed by Schmitt (2005) to emerge and be tolerated if not accepted. The establishment of such sovereignty in turn allows for the emergence of expressions of power that include the creation of permanent or quasi-permanent states of exception. The states of exception can be reinforced through the application of unencumbered language games (Wittgenstein 1953), meaning making, and the shifting of narratives and their associated symbols. To understand the impact of this we must next understand how states of exception can emerge or are created using what has already been presented while linking it to the work of Agamben (2005).

State of Exception

A state of exception, commonly understood as a state of emergency or even as martial law in some circles, is a legal theory that emerges from the work of Carl Schmitt (2005). In the case of the U.S.-Mexico border, the state of exception is a reaction to some perceived threat. The notion of sovereignty through these contemporary meaning-making processes is disconnected from rational hermeneutic processes through the use of symbols with fluid expressions. These symbols can allow actors to reshape and deploy narratives and their associated symbols to respond in moments of crisis. In such situations, hegemons can create simulacra and employ them as tools to foster opportunities, and create a state of exception as needed, or more appropriately is wanted.

While creating a state of exception, power shifts towards a governing actor (politician), who can recreate or at least redefine the boundaries, context, and environment of the precipitating crisis in

question. The part that is challenged if not contested by Agamben (2005), involves the manner in which people can trigger a state of exception. On one hand, it is understood as being extrajudicial, while on the other hand, a norm becomes annulled (34), making it something that is not inherently a part of the judicial order. More troubling is the historical tendency for states of exception to become permanent fixtures. Most troubling, however, is the potential for states of exception to become self-referential in the sense that a sovereign can stand outside the purview of the judicial order while belonging to it (35). Simulacra provide the means to achieve each of these ends.

In practice, this has specific implications for public administration and governance. In the abstract, a state of exception creates possibilities where the sovereign actor is both above the law while potentially executing his or her understanding of it. To trigger the state of exception, there must be a state of necessity that exists without law taking form from the anomie (Durkheim1996; Marks 1974) that occurs from the suspension of law (Agamben 2005, 51). Complicating things further, when a state of exception is created and law is suspended, any actions taken are situated "in an absolute non-place with respect to the law" (51). Third, the creation of a state of exception fractures the body of law irreparably (56), allowing for the possibility of unfettered action by some sovereign actor. Agamben (2005) captures this elegantly by stating, "One day humanity will play with law just as children play with disused objects, not in order to restore them to their canonical use but to free them from it for good" (64). The final implication of a state of exception coheres around the narratives of urgency (86). Specifically, the insistence that there is an immediate need to create this empty space that is devoid of law emerges as a contemporary power for governance.

Creating a null space, devoid of law has specific implications for the theory and practices of public administration and governance. Briefly, it undermines the constitutive elements of public service (Cook 2014). More generally, it raises serious questions for critical management thought. Implicit in most discussions of critical management and critical theory more generally is the existence of the hegemon as well as people resisting the hegemon. Often enough in studies of political arenas and linguistics, we discuss this as part of a larger discussion of legitimate resistance (Gabriel 2008; O'Brien 1996; Taleb et al. 2018). Yet, a troubling outcome that emerges from a state of exception is the notion of anomie (Durkheim1996; Marks 1974) and space that is devoid of law. One might read this as a situation where a hegemon has the ability, through the state of exception, to functionally remove any veneer of legitimacy that a resistance group might have since the hegemon is acting outside of a legal frame and thereby does not need to conform to logic associated with such a legal frame.

Within such a state of exception, any and all resistance can become criminalized and possibly wholly illegitimate. This creates a malleable "other" (Dean 1997) that is disconnected from discussions of societal order and legal practices. More specifically, as states of exception tend to emerge from times of crisis, the people who become othered as a result of the creation of a state of exception also would likely embody elements of *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998). Such a shift in meaning making has the capacity to broadly impact people in a society. These people can be redefined as outsiders rather than citizens, or in the case of the border wall as criminals rather than refugees. They are thereby vulnerable, subject to narrative shifts, and might be easily manipulated to maintain certain hegemonic authority and practices.

The Case of The Border

Let us examine how differences of perspective are susceptible to narrative and symbolic shifts and how they impact public administration. Using the narratives and symbols of the border wall, a theme I have explored previously (Sementelli 2017), we uncover similarities to *Mending Wall*. Rather than two property owners mending a fence on their property line, we instead have a focus on other individuals akin to the rabbit hunters causing some of the damage in the poem. In the case of the border narrative, similar to the poem, people migrating into the United States are cast as dangerous, criminal, and otherwise undesirable. A conservative news source used murder rate data to attempt to argue that asylum seekers might be better served by staying in Mexico given comparatively lower crime rates than they would experience in the U.S. (Lott 2018). One secondary observation might also be made. Though they were referring to Mexican migration, they noted that these *Honduran* asylum seekers are willing to stay in Mexico depending on the state they were traveling through. This is interesting because there is little if any differentiation between Mexican and Honduran citizens. When creating a notion of *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998), fluid narratives and symbols are desirable to shape and reshape the boundaries of the other transforming an asylum seeker into a criminal requiring different types of public services.

These issues are exacerbated by a few structural problems. The first is that both the U.S. and Mexico are ill-prepared for dealing with an influx of immigrants (Campoy 2018). The second structural problem grows out of the use of Tijuana as a point of entry which reinforces the restriction narrative. Further restrictions include the extension of border fencing, border aggression both by migrants and U.S. officials, and accounts of tear gas use (Domonoske et al. 2018) by public administrators. Combined, these restrictions and practices delay the processing of asylum seekers which includes deportation to Mexico (Averbuch 2019), creating a number of issues including the provision of basic services. The narratives and practices presented above make a case that these immigrants /refugees embody Agamben's (1998) notion of *homo sacer*. They meet the criteria for being identified as the cursed man in Roman law. In practical terms, they are seen as less than human, are frequently victimized, all while remaining subject to the simulacra and narratives crafted by hegemons.

Understanding at some level that these refugees, migrants, or immigrants are playing the role of the rabbit hunters recasts them as targets on both sides of the wall. It is simpler and more consumable that way. Introducing complexity in this case, such as noting that these individuals identified as *homo sacer* are neither Mexican nor American but Honduran or from another Central American country, does not improve the outcomes. It remains important to note that despite the complexity of the situation, the narratives in imagery are distilled into simplistic us vs. them language implicating and indirectly incriminating the Mexican government by conflating them with the asylum seekers. The narrative is even more fragmented if we include partisan differences that exist inside the United States. Narratively, this viscerally can trigger feelings of being surrounded, feelings of fear, and feelings of threat that can be repackaged and sold (Sementelli 2017) arguably for some political or economic ends that can change moment to moment. In the context of *Mending Wall*, it might sound like: "those hunters broke the wall again" or "that was actually a burning man concert." In this instance, the label is more important than evidence.

We can now link these narratives back to Baudrillard more explicitly. Understanding the importance of symbolic exchange (Baudrillard 1976) is imperative. The embodiment of *homo sacer* is not limited to a consistent target, ethnic group, nationality, or other social construction. It represents a symbolic exchange of oppression based on fluid identification. As such, there does not need to be a consistent, reproducible logic underlying the decision to "other" (Dean 1997). This linguistic and conceptual flexibility allows for the creation and embodiment of *homo sacer* by anyone deemed threatening. It simplifies argumentation in that someone might politically, economically, or socially ostracize someone in the moment that the narrative is being used. This has the further benefit of being simultaneously ahistorical while being momentarily contextual. It creates opportunities for political freedom to act while undermining the constitutive (Cook 2014) elements of the profession of public administration.

These emergent narratives and symbols are particularly challenging to public administration as they embody at least two seemingly incompatible states. They are first temporary and fleeting, while simultaneously durable. What I am saying here is that narratives communicated on the Internet, for example, remain a permanent part of the Internet itself. One of the most challenging things people have come across is managing their Internet presence effectively. This is arguably a function of the surprising 'durability' of digital information over time. Simultaneously, this information, these residues of the narrative or narratives are created in a moment and reproduced (Baudrillard 1976). The symbols can be taken, edited, rearranged, and otherwise manipulated for any number of ends. The penultimate expression of this comes from the refusal to accept a narrative that has some historical logical consistency but is not consistent with your beliefs. Symbolic reproduction allows people to maintain differences of opinion and perspective similar to our two property owners in *Mending Wall*. There is no productive discussion about the need to repair the wall.

> There where it is we do not need the wall:
> He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
> My apple trees will never get across
> And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
> He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."

Conclusions

Border narratives force people to consider power issues that have long been considered in the critical theory literature. The differences of opinion, beliefs, essentially contested concepts, and narrative approaches are not new. Using *Mending Wall*, we have uncovered that these differences have been a more common and less novel problem than we might have imagined either administratively or politically. Consistent with Baudrillard's (1976) discussion of symbolic reproduction, border simulacra can be wielded to reshape narratives about migrants, refugees, and others including asylum seekers. These narrative shifts reproduce meaning and can be wielded to achieve some specific goals. Images can be shifted away from seemingly innocuous identifiers such as refugee or asylum seeker (implying that someone is victimized simply by existing within a hostile government/ nation) to those of hostile narratives such as an invader or a criminal. This shift represents the creation and embodiment of one who is *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998), as someone who is not

a citizen, an outsider. As we unpack this practice further, the process of linking overtly a discussion of sovereignty to notions of proclamation can lead to the emergence of a state of exception that allows political actors to narratively circumvent concerns about individual rights (Humphreys 2006), individual worth, and even relative humanity. This, in turn, can create spaces where "lawful" states can transgress individual rights (Humphreys 2006, 678) and impede the constitutive elements of public administration (Cook 2014).

Thus, both the empowered and the powerless are fundamentally changed by the simulacra being used. The powerful can lawfully engage in lawless behavior, while the powerless can be recast not simply as an outsider, or an "other" (Dean 1997), but as something that is – "not." Let me explain what I mean by "not." If someone is understood as being an "other," they in effect have a relationship, regardless of how arbitrary with something or someone else in a societal framework. Put another way, they reflect some sort of reality (Baudrillard 1976, 2000), while someone has been redefined as "not" is at least masking or perverting a reality if not creating a reality with a fluid or empty signifier. The idea of not can be expressed as not us, not people, not citizens (i.e. *homo sacer*). Such people become defined as what they are not instead of who they are. In an odd sort of way, it normalizes a "space without law" or a "zone of anomie" (Humphreys 2006, 680).

The emergence of a zone of anomie fundamentally enables action without consequence. It undermines public administration particularly its constitutive elements (Cook 2014) allowing the political the operate outside of the law. A sovereign, operating in a state of exception, might act on whatever stimulus, whim, or persuasive narrative they experience in a moment. The experiences and moments are not logically connected, meaning that a previous experience or a previous moment has little or no bearing on the current moment. To the outside observer, such behavior might be seen as random or aberrant. To the insider, the narrative actions themselves can become inscribed onto existing narratives and subsequently curated for future use. Depending on one's perspective, annexation might occur (Humphreys 2006, 680) counter to Agamben. Yet, in practice, to the outsider, it remains an expression of anomie (Durkheim1996; Marks 1974), not annexation.

The possibility of curated yet disconnected narratives creates some interesting political and social problems. Not only can people become redefined narratively as *homo sacer* but in many ways this redefinition removes or limits the need for the powerful to even justify the logic or reasoning for such decisions. Arguably, this creates challenges for public administration that are both uncomfortable and unfamiliar. A lack of a referent has specific consequences to the theory and practices of public administration. One of the most troubling, of course, comes from an inability to discern what good governance might be when it is recast through fleeting political narratives and easily digestible phrases such as: "good fences make good neighbors."

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Populist Border Policies: The Meme Connection and Administrative Pragmatism

Charles F. Abel and Richard J. Herzog

> *The first duty of anyone who wants to understand the signs of the times is a critical examination of current shibboleths and catchwords. It is quite easy to hypnotize oneself into imbecility by repeating [them] in solemn tones …*
>
> —Warwick Chipman (1911, 195)

Introduction

Over the last decade, the United States has witnessed the emergence of a *populism* that is opposed to the values and institutions of liberal democracy. A repertoire of supporting *memes* has emerged simultaneously and is employed to undermine not just the institutions of government but the dignity, equality, and liberty of immigrant groups and communities. This repertoire now constitutes a common populist discursive front utilized by political actors, opinion leaders, and everyday people. The impact of this front on immigrants, immigrant communities, administrative agencies, and administrative practice is significant. In particular, it contributes to the erosion of those features of social life that enable diverse populations to get along positively and act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1996; 2000). Additionally, it impacts substantially the decline in trust and confidence in leaders and public institutions; this trust has fallen significantly over the last several decades for cultural, political, and economic reasons (Lipset and Schneider 1983).

The neutralization of this discursive front is vitally important for several reasons. First, the struggles of various immigrant groups, historically and contemporarily, reveal the critical role of language in the creation, transmission, and perpetuation of anti-immigrant prejudice. Although it has long been understood that language is inextricably linked with prejudice, the investigation of the role of language, and attendant memes, in creating, transmitting, and perpetuating anti-immigrant prejudice remains undeveloped. Second, as these populist memes spread, they clearly influence not only immigrant communities but society's trust in public agencies as well. Finally, decades of

public administration research indicate that organizational norms and values determine what public servants do to a significantly greater extent than do laws, rules, policies, and procedures. Accordingly, the norms and values of border security personnel and the perceived need for immigration system reform cannot help but be affected by the discursive front.

This paper considers populism not as an ideology or a worldview, but a rhetoric or language used by speakers to marshal groups of people to act in support of ends (Gidron et al. 2016, Hawkins 2009, Poblete 2015, Stavrakais et al. 2014). Accordingly, a study of populism reveals (1) that the force and persistence of populist anti-immigrant border policies, and the problems of trust and prejudice they engender, are due in some significant part to the successful creation and dissemination of certain identifiable *linguistic meme themes,* (2) that the success of these memes is understood by reference to the psychoanalytic theory of Lacan, and (3) that these memes may be obviated successfully by a particular form of pragmatic administrative praxis.

We present our argument by first clarifying our use of certain concepts, principles, and theories. Next, we identify consistent themes associated with populist memes generally, themes that distort the narrative concerning border issues and national security. We then explicate populist border-memes that constitute the discursive front contributing to the erosion of trust in both administrative agencies and those features of social life that enable cooperation toward shared objectives. The success of the memes is noted before the implications for administrative praxis are discussed. Finally, we argue that a form of pragmatic administration is an effective counter to this discursive front.

Clarifications

Before proceeding, we would like to clarify four foundational elements of analysis: The concept of *memes*, the concept of *memeplexes*, *word memes* (the focus of our analysis), and our theoretical ground. We are informed on all of these elements by scholarship on the interdependent relationships among individuals and contexts as influenced by beliefs, motivation, perception, cognition, information processing, socialization, and attitude formation. This literature, we believe, helps us to illuminate the dynamics of important real-world phenomena in ways that yield information that is valuable pragmatically as well as important to the enhancement of basic theories of the relationships between cognitive processes and socio-political relations.

Memes

Memes are of many forms. So, when reflecting on memes and their impact, Rosen (1993) notes, "we need to reexamine our most basic vocabulary and put it in working order" (48). This is important to avoid what Viteritti (1990) calls a "conceptual [meme] confusion [that] is symptomatic of a more general deficiency in public sector research" (425). For our purposes, *memes* are quantifiable and replicable elements of cultural information that spread by imitation (Dawkins 1976). Memes, like genes, carry information, encode behavior, and are transmitted from one person to another. Memes are analogous to zebra mussels that spread in fresh water and most often have undesirable effects. Memes might take a variety of forms, including words, phrases, pictures, skills, tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, fashion trends, tool making instructions, or architectural

techniques. According to Knobel and Lankshear (2006), a meme is used to describe "the rapid uptake and spread of a particular idea presented as a written text, image, language 'move,' or some other unit of cultural 'stuff'' (202). The success of a meme depends upon the extent of its replication or copied behavior (Blackmore 1999). Knobel and Lankshear (2006) also believe that in a virtual environment memes evolve into permutations of "widely propagated ideas or phenomena" (201). These phenomena include images, animated GIFs (graphics interchange formats), videos, cultural practices, artifacts, themes, subjects, and jokes that proliferate rapidly online. (Knobel et al. 2006, Shifman 2012, Weng et al. 2012, Da Silva et al. 2012, Shifman 2012).

Memeplexes

Memes propagate in a *meme pool*, which refers to the totality of cultural ideas and practices in a given population; memes leap from brain to brain and replicate profusely because they play into shared emotions and experience (Dawkins 1981, 143). They are a means of sharing values, priorities, ideologies, and norms within society by coding-in ideas so that they are passed from one individual to another subconsciously by practice and habit. Memeplexes are groups of memes that replicate together (Blackmore 1999, 19). These are shaped and shared among individuals in groups, communities, institutions, and organizations alike. Overall, the memeplexes within all of these alliances create to a significant extent the values and meanings to which the people adopting them adhere and respond. To affect behavior significantly, memes must be easily understood, absorbable verbally and behaviorally through connections to existing cognitive structures, easily retained and capable of entering "into a physical shape that can be perceived by others" (Heylighen 1999, 2). According to Miller (2000), they must become "enacted social practices" (100).

Word Memes

This paper focuses on linguistic memes, memeplexes, and word memes (phrases and linguistically expressed themes). These are convenient and common vehicles of social exchange and evolution which are easily accessible, understandable, and replicable, and which encode satisfactorily the behaviors or ideas they reflect (Blackmore 1999). We are interested particularly in those linguistic memes that are employed as a form of political persuasion, grassroots action and models of both critique and public discussion (Shifman 2014, Knobel et al. 2006). For our purposes, *word memes* refer to written or spoken single words, phrases and themes as opposed to expression in the form of emoticons, physical behaviors, pictures, or any other category or form of expression. *Populist word memes* are limited here to memes that are employed to undermine not just the institutions of government but the dignity, equality, and liberty of immigrant groups and communities as well.

Theoretical Ground

It is our position that pragmatic administrative praxis can address helpfully those problems where the understanding of memes is needed to formulate good praxis. As a first step, though, it is essential to fully understand populism and how memes function in populist discourse. We understand populism as

> a political/discursive logic that considers society ultimately separated between two groups, "the people" and "the elite," and that argues that politics should be an expression of the will of the people … A discursive approach emerges thus as the underlying, yet all too often marginalized, kernel of a minimal definition of populism, a position it can claim to have consistently occupied for the last three to four decades (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014, 120).

Understanding populism in this way, through discourse theory, enables us to understand that populism's

> … social meaning is articulated with an emphasis on the political and often antagonistic character that different discourses acquire through their articulation around distinct nodal points (such as "the people") and their differentiation from other discourses in a bid to hegemonize the public sphere and to influence decision-making (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis 2014, 120).

Memes function as such *nodal points*. To understand how they work as such, we suggest that Freud and Lacan's theorizing concerning neurosis provide a helpful starting point (Brunßen 2019). Essentially, the idea begins with Lacan's observation "that the unconscious is that which goes unnoticed … that there is no unconscious except for the speaking being, and in so far as the unconscious speaks, it depends on language" (Gassperoni 1996, 78). Memes, then, are part of the language of the unconscious that relates the unconscious to behavior. Through a Freudian-Lacanian lens,

> Meme propagation and political polarization starts with an individual seeking to combat fear of uncertainty over the impossibility of ideological absolutes, with an establishment of a myth including an absolute enemy. This myth takes the form of an opposer of the individual's own needs for political self-ascription and ends in the accumulative production of an ideological in-group which sustains an established political identity. [In other words], the externalized mythical enemy serves as a legitimization of self, or identity (Brunßen 2019, 13).

According to Žižek (2006), what is of particular interest is "precisely in how the gestures of symbolization [of the unconscious fears in this case] are entwined with and embedded in the process of collective practice" (15). Most helpful, for example, is the Lacanian insight that "human speech never merely transmits a message, it also self-reflectively asserts [a] basic symbolic pact between the communicating subjects" (Žižek 2006,12). Maintaining the social link of the pact requires "embracing freely what is imposed upon us" by a whole system of symbolic exchanges (Žižek 2006, 13). Discerning what is the right or wrong thing to do in many situations, then, is a matter of identifying substantially with others in the pact and performing according to the gut feeling of right and wrong that is emergent from what is imposed by the emotional commitment communicated in the symbolic exchanges. For example,

> Brecht gave a poignant expression to this feature in his play *Jasager*, in which the young boy is asked to accord freely with what will in any case be his fate (to be thrown into the valley); as his teacher explains it to him, it is customary to ask the victim if he agrees with his fate, but it is also customary for the victim to say yes. Belonging to a society involves

> a paradoxical point at which each of us is ordered to embrace freely, as the result of our choice, what is anyway imposed on us (we all must love our country or our parents) (Žižek 2006, 13).

Here, assent is not merely utilitarian, not simply calculated to maintain membership in the group. It reflects a deep, emotional commitment expressed in a practice that is against self-interest (allowing oneself to be thrown into the valley). Memes function as just such self-reflective assertions among communicating subjects. They address the emotions, expecting to elicit an appropriate emotional commitment and attendant (irrational) practices.

As the theoretical analysis of memes is a nascent strategy for understanding public policy and political behavior (see, for example, Blackmore 1999, Dawkins 1981, Miller 2002), this article suggests that consistent with the above theory, certain populist memes distort the popular understanding of immigration and account for a significant number of policies and practices that are not only antithetical to human need, dignity, equality, and liberty, but hostile to the positive role that government must play in securing the common good, as well. Therefore, these memes must be unsettled, unpacked, and resisted through pragmatic administrative praxis.

Populist Meme Themes

Many of the memes related to border security assert a dichotomy of "the people" and "the elite" (Jansen 2011, Laclau 2005, Moffitt 2016, Mudde 2004, Weyland 2001). A broader theme of the same ilk exploits anxieties related to demographic change. Apprehensions concerning immigration, race, and religion (e.g., Islam), lean into white identity politics with explicitly xenophobic and racist appeals (Halpin et al. 2016). As Mudde (2004) puts it, "the people in the populist propaganda are neither real nor all-inclusive, but are in fact a mythical and constructed subset of the whole population. . . . the people of the populists are an 'imagined community'" (546). The populist "people" and the opposing "elite" are flexible categories, allowing populists to choose how to define the two. Groups that are commonly included in the elite or undeserving minority groups, according to Knight (1998), are "domestic class or sectoral groups . . . political vested interests (a common pattern seems to pit populist executives against vested interests in the legislature) . . . the political establishment . . . foreign powers, foreign representatives . . . and/or 'foreign groups' resident within the borders of the nation-state, against whom the interests of the ('real') people can be set" (229-230).

Populists' themes focus as well on protecting economic and cultural conditions for the people. The conditions can be threatened by *foreigners*. Foreigners can include groups "such as asylum seekers, migrant workers, or particular minority groups" and they are portrayed by populists as "as enemies of 'the people'" (Moffitt 2016, 55). Populists often define "the people" in terms of race or immigration status, making populist rhetoric often racist but also culturally xenophobic as well. For example,

> 68 percent of white working-class voters said the American way of life needed to be protected against foreign influence, and nearly half agreed with the statement "Things have changed so much that I often feel like a stranger in my own country" (Cox et al. 2017).

These themes resonate with the primordial *America* of the popular imagination. Therein,

> folks pray hard, work hard on the land, and have rightful recourse to violence. In this imaginary place, people [are] white, Christian, English-speaking. They [have] God-given dominion over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. All of this inevitably informs the way American nationals apprehend one another and their country. They feel in their bones that some people are Americans and other people are merely citizens of the United States . . . when it comes to the crunch, [this] America trumps the United States and its papery constitutional affirmations (O'Neill 2019).

As such, this primordial America is a special kind of nodal point. It signifies Lacan's *big Other* (explored in more detail below) acting in the capacity of the symbolic order, the overarching objective spirit of trans-individual socio-linguistic structures configuring the fields of inter-subjective interactions. In this sense, the memes evoking this signifier are *master signifiers*, signifiers that subjects most deeply identify with, and which accordingly have a key role in the way they give meaning to life, the universe, and everything. This structural functionalism underlies the crucial Lacanian claim that master signifiers are actually *empty signifiers.* That is, they are,

> Self-referential epiphenomena . . . utterances that refer to little but themselves. They are second order phenomena as their connection to events on the ground is poorly tethered. They are cultural expressions that seem to float around in public space, vaguely attached to anything that actually happened (Miller 2000, 96-97).

This is important regarding border memes because although we can never quite completely or simply state what it is to be American (to explicate *American-ness* in opposition to immigrants) the word is nevertheless efficient in generating our belief in and identification with whatever American-ness is, along with a conviction that other people certainly know the nature of American-ness and so can feel in solidarity against *non-American-ness*.

Many memes, that distinguish one group from another, cause great concern among public administrators. The U.S. Bureau of the Census had to wait on a U.S. Supreme Court decision to place a citizenship question on the 2020 census. If the citizenship question were not rejected, noncitizens may have been compelled not to complete the survey which would then underreport the populations in states like California, resulting in a loss of representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. Therefore, if the shibboleths (those that make distinctions about human attributes) were allowed to query, it would have had political impact.

Populist Border-Memes

Make America Great Again (MAGA)

Bullshit is a term of art designating what results when speakers conceal from their audience a lack of concern for anything other than eliciting their ends (Frankfort 2005). Accordingly, bullshit is not concerned with truth or falsity. Its only concern is to produce a sufficient quantity of itself for securing its purposes under the circumstances. Among the more efficient forms of bullshit are rhetorical flourishes lacking any determinable sense, scope, and validity. These include words and

phrases so maximally imprecise that they are empty signifiers, expressions without content, empty vessels into which can be poured the most noble (or most noxious) contents. They are signs whose meanings are indeterminate and fluid and are employed to signify whatever arbitrary referents an audience might supply.

Make America Great Again is maximally abstract bullshit that exploits already established negative and positive clichés and sentiments, resentments, and antipathies that may be thought of as a memeplex. For example, "we're number one," America is the "last best hope of earth," "let freedom ring," "America must remain American," "the race which has made our country great will pass away," "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,'' can be considered memeplexes. Taken together, these phrases reflect not only ambiguous and conflicting affective biases but explicitly linguistic stereotypes, habits, and beliefs as well. Historically, for example, America celebrated being a nation of immigrants even as immigrants were suspected of and feared for weakening social cohesion, diluting cultural mores, worsening economic woes, and being disloyal. The ambiguity of this memeplex is subsumed by the single meme, making it possible to convey the meaning of one constituent meme (e.g., America must remain American) without any requirement for strict coherence with any other constituent meme. In other words, the subsuming meme conveys one thing instead of another as if the constituent memes were one and the same, reducing differences and hyperbolizing the similarity.

Culturally, MAGA gains force through its connections to existing cognitive structures. It echoes, for example, our perceptions of life and nature as growth, decay, and rebirth. It also embodies the culturally reinforced image of America as a "shining city on a hill," referring to a mythic notion of uniqueness that motivated early American settlements (Winthrop, 1630) and its intertwined image of a manifest destiny assigned by God. This is echoed in popular projections of what America is (the land of opportunity, the land of the free, and the home of the brave) as well as our idea of history as progress. Briefly, the meme makes reference to the noble ideals that define our civic identity, but does so only symbolically, making no real connection between the ideals and the actual actions or opinions defended by appealing to them.

In Lacanian terms, the unique shining city of destiny is the big Other. It asks something of us, it is our cause calling us to do what is necessary, to make any sacrifice, to pay any price. It is an uncanny subject that stands above the interaction of real human individuals. The big Other, is "the symbolic order, the order of symbolic fictions which operate at a level different from direct material causality" (Žižek 1997). It does not exist, of course, and the "'inexistence of the big Other' is strictly correlative to the notion of belief, of symbolic trust, of credence, of taking what other's say 'at their word's value'" (Žižek 1997). As it does not exist, trust in it is misplaced; after all, its very inexistence assures the inevitable failure of its promise. The resulting disappointment is directed back at the Other (reified perhaps as the government of the shining city) as both a failure of the Other and a demand for the Other to intervene, to set things straight, to make recompense for that of which we feel denied.

Makers and Takers

Current populist memes about economics are of two sorts. First, there are memes feeding a narrative to the effect that the economic system is rigged and unfair. At the heart of this narrative is a conflict between the privileged makers and the good, hardworking, ordinary people, the takers.

> Leftwing populists champion the people against an elite or an establishment. Theirs is a vertical politics of the bottom and middle, arrayed against the top. Rightwing populists champion the people against an elite that they accuse of favouring a third group, which can consist, for instance, of immigrants, Islamists, or African American militants. Rightwing populism is triadic: it looks upward, but also down upon an out group (Judis 2016).

Second, there is the more or less tacit assurance that barriers to upward mobility are exacerbated by an immigrant population that is taking jobs away from American citizens. Takers, then, are on multiple fronts. There are those who are taking jobs away by replacing them with technology or exporting them for economic advantage, and those who are taking their jobs by accepting lower pay to escape poverty in other countries.

The makers and takers meme resonates with the American paranoid predilection. This "old and recurrent phenomenon in our public life," emerged in the 1700s and includes widespread belief in an 18th-century conspiracy by the Illuminati, a 19th-century Masonic conspiracy, a mid-19th-century Catholic immigrant conspiracy led by the Pope, and a 20th-century communist conspiracy at the highest levels of American government (Hofstadter 1964). American paranoid politics inclines toward periods of rapid social change and economic crisis when significant numbers of Americans feel their way of life threatened and do not see any salvation in conventional politics. In Freudian-Lacanian terms, the narrative of this myth always involves an absolute enemy, an "opposer of the individual's own needs for political self-ascription and ends in the accumulative production of an ideological in-group which sustains an established political identity." (Brunßen 2019, 14). "The externalized mythical enemy serves as a legitimization of [one's] *self*, or in other words, identity" (Brunßen 2019, 13).

Invasion

Anti-immigrant groups have been able to demonize immigrants by promoting theories and conspiracies that paint immigrants as outsiders who are planning to invade the country and take it over. A Freudian-Lacanian dynamic suggests that this constitutes a defense response, a denial of a changing reality that is perceived as threatening, distasteful, corrupt, or degenerative, and a projection of the cause of the threat onto a mythologized absolute enemy, a process which simultaneously confirms one's ingrained self-identity as in opposition to the myth. This process involves

> 1) a selective suppression of information, 2) an allegiance to the ego's subjectively established framework for reality, including seeing in-group [and outgroup] identifications as objective behavioral markers, 3) which yield the mythologization of an absolute truth, namely the opposing side's behavior being absolutely intolerable in terms of ideological self-ascription and thereby serving as an absolute enemy (Brunßen 2019, 12).

This meme resonates culturally in a brand of American nativism that has long relied on menacing images of immigrant invaders, including the Chinese (West 1873), the German "'race of barbaric raiders'" (Little 2019), and the Irish, Italians and Jews. Senator Ira Hersey of Maine lamented, "We have thrown open wide our gates and through them have come other [these] alien races, of alien blood, from Asia and southern Europe … with their strange and pagan rites, their babble of tongues" (Zeitz 2015).

Caravan of the Diseased/An Infestation

The *invasion* meme goes hand in hand with similar tropes of contamination and infestation. "A guest on Fox News [Former Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent David Ward] claimed without evidence that migrants traveling in a caravan up through Mexico were carrying diseases such as leprosy, smallpox and tuberculosis and that they were going to 'infect our people in the United States'" (Le Miere 2018). This assertion is devoid of substantiation currently and historically (Herrera 2019). It is effective, though, as it mirrors ancestral dangers in order to exploit evolved human fears. Calculated to target the greatest possible audience, it targets one of our common fears of contamination and contagion by invisible pathogens, bacteria, and viruses. Selection pressures from these types of danger evolved into a special sensitivity toward such dangers (Orians 2014). This special sensitivity of the fear system to contagion is expressed often in purity concerns (linked psychologically with disgust and contamination sensitivities) and not only leads people to make character inferences about others but to increase *social distancing* more strongly than other moral concerns might lead them to, as well (Mohammadian et al. 2020, Dehghani et al. 2016).

Projections of impurity tend to come to the fore at times of personal or political crises (Erickson 1973, 241). Even though denigrating activities are aimed often at the targets of projection, the true source of such negativity is ultimately almost always found in the projector's sense of personal vulnerability. In Lacanian terms, by entering the symbolic order, people divorce themselves from the materiality of whatever is the real source of their feelings of vulnerability, disorientation, and paranoia.

The Border Crisis and The Just World Theory

According to Stuart Anderson, a Senior Contributor for *Forbes,* "Current and historical data shows that … there is no crisis at the border" (Anderson 2019). Still, populists often invoke the presence of an imagined threat, as populism "gets its impetus from the perception of crisis, breakdown, or threat and at the same time aims to induce crisis through dramatization and performance" (Moffitt 2016, 55-56). Populists promise to rescue "the people" from threats and enemies (Weyland 2001, 14). They "claim to protect 'the people' from above, from below, and, today especially, from the outside" (Brubaker 2017). The *Dope traffickers, criminals, and rapists,* or *Border Crisis* meme displaces the blame for crime and corruption, explaining the cognitive dissonance experienced as Americans confront the realities of addiction and the perception of increased crime given their cultural expectations.

The American cultural creed includes beliefs in the Protestant work ethic, meritocracy, and elite permeability (Jost and Hunyady 2005). Each is grounded ultimately in the *Just World Theory*. As Lerner (1980) puts it, this theory "has as its basic premise the notion that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get" (512). Motivated by the psychological needs for stability, meaning, and the anticipation of a positive future (Lerner 1980, Kay et al. 2009), the theory is associated with feelings of optimism, greater well-being, more effective coping, and less intense negative emotions (Hafer 2000, Dalbert 2002).

At the same time, endorsement of the Just World Theory legitimizes the status quo, the social hierarchy, and the perception that those who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy deserve to be there (Jost et al. 2005). Consequently, it can result in increased prejudice toward, and

discrimination against, disadvantaged social groups (Sakalli 2002). This occurs often when expectations aroused by a Just World assumption are frustrated. In these cases, people experience cognitive dissonance and need to make sense of what appears as a paradox. This may be accomplished by reinterpreting the character of people of lower social-economic status, or by reinterpreting events or causes of problems in ways that cast blame upon them in order to preserve the Just World presumption.

The Just World mythology is expressed by another cultural tradition in the U.S. whereby poverty and criminality are ascribed to a disinclination to work and an inclination to laziness, drinking, drug taking, or gambling, or to an otherwise flawed character. Accordingly, many populists find comfort in the confidence that character flaws in the Other are the root of the Other's economic disadvantage. Second, there is a conviction that when ordinary people turn to economic pursuits, they embody the work ethic expressed by the Calvinist pilgrims who settled our nation in their pursuit of the American Dream. It is only natural, then, that the lazy and the profligate fail to prosper while the hardworking and upright flourish (Lakoff 1996). When these expectations remain unfulfilled, the frustrated individual resists accounting him or herself among the profligate and projects the blame for their disappointment onto others. "Self-reproach is repressed in a manner which may be described as *projection*. It is repressed by erecting the defense mechanism of *distrust of other people"* (Freud 1896).

The *Border Crisis* memes exploit this psychological tendency, inspiring opposition to the immigration of the poor as ready-to-hand targets of projection. The theory is that not only do immigrants impose a perpetual dependence on government at the expense of the industrious, hard-working citizens, the welfare extended to them is harmful because it undermines the societal responsibility which citizens should have for one another. Helping the poor is the responsibility of civil and religious groups. In sum, government is usurping social responsibility with its welfare programs, weakening the moral obligation to help those in need, and indulging the human inclination to corruption, laziness, and criminality without thought of the social, cultural, and economic stress this imposes on its most upright citizens.

The meme, as well as the Just World hypothesis that it is based upon, under-recognizes the complex situational factors at play. *Dope traffickers, criminals, and rapists* are subsets of the entire population (immigrant and native) that are generalized to the entire immigrant population as though that is the primary if not single locale of the problem.

It's OK to be White

White has become a populist propaganda label. It pretends to be unambiguous although it subsumes disparate, and often mutually irreducible sorts of people. Employed in this way, the term becomes a largely empty signifier, combining people with very little in common into a quasi-fixed category. *White* is then available for a range of discursive possibilities. This is what turns it into a political weapon.

The resulting discourses appeal to mass sentiments by means of this simple subsumation, often accompanied by a conspiracy theory, a kind of floating signifier that can be appropriated by different political interests to obtain a minimal picture (cognitive map) of what is in reality highly complex and fluid. The subsumation and minimal cognitive map will not, of course, survive

careful, nuanced analysis and research, but it precludes such analysis, and even meaningful debate, relying on an extreme simplification of reality and on the creation of a black-and-white picture of victims and villains. This allows the appropriation of victimhood by those opposing progressive values and societal change, and by those who are purveyors of oppression as well. The concept of *white genocide* is a clear example. The idea that immigration is engineered by political and economic forces, either for economic or political advantage (or, in the extreme, to achieve the extinction of *the white race*) through forced assimilation is an appropriation of victimhood by a dominant majority.

While *White* is an imagined subset of the entire population, *It's OK to be White* subsumes all of the actual complex genetic configurations and color schemes of the entire population by resonating culturally with the populist perception that the America they inhabit currently is neither just nor fair, that the American dream is being sabotaged and that our right as Americans to control our own destinies is denied currently by government policies favoring certain minorities. Psychologically, it is attention-seeking behavior intended as self-justification for calling attention to what populists see as the deviant behavior of immigrants while raising their own moral status. Beset by the world, populists portray themselves by this meme as disadvantaged because of other people's machinations or lack of consideration. Additionally, populists may get a perverse thrill from showing off the injury caused by others and creating a sense of guilt (De Vries 2012). Sustaining a movement built around this sense of loss of privilege and social status, a desire to re-create the social hierarchy and the psycho-dynamic of victimhood requires a state of constant fear and victimization. Populists, therefore, must create and sustain a narrative of rampant crime, drug crises, and immigrants as either terrorists or job-robbers, and of the government funneling money to undeserving immigrants.

The Success of the Memes

The populist acceptance of memes such as those delineated has many causes. King and Stivers (1998), for example, observe that Americans tend to tolerate rather than support the government enthusiastically and to believe that "not only does government exercise too much power and in the wrong ways, not only is it inefficient and wasteful, but it appears to care little about ordinary citizens, their lives, and their problems" (11). Hummel and Stivers (1998) also note that government is "a specialized enterprise increasingly devoted to the exercise of technical rules and procedures . . . reason, especially instrumental reason, overwhelms care" (29). This results in a top-down approach to governance that institutionalizes the authority and the control through technocrats of the decision-making process.

While to some extent these culturally conditioned attitudes, values, and beliefs, and this tendency to a top-down praxis have been present since the founding, they were both exacerbated over the last half-century. Vietnam, the Pentagon Papers and the civil disorder in the late 1960s, Watergate, stagflation, inflation, out-of-control deficits, Iran-Contra in the 1980s, the Clinton scandal of the 1990s, the crony capitalism of the 2000s, and a media characterized by the pursuit of scandal have all contributed to the acceptance of the populist memes delineated above (Nye, Zelikow, and King 1997; Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2001).

Reinforcing the delineated memes is the associated disappearance of those features of social life (networks, norms, and trust) that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam 1996; 2000). For example, Fiorina (2001) notes,

> (1) the near half-century decline in the public's regard for government and politics; (2) the similarly long-term decline in voting turnout and other forms of political participation; and (3) the more general long-term decline in civic engagement and social capital that is currently the subject of much academic and popular discussion (1).

In brief, confidence in leaders and institutions both within and outside the political sphere has fallen significantly for both cultural and concrete reasons (Baltatescu 2005). Concurrently, feelings of disorientation, vulnerability, paranoia, victimhood, loss, and betrayal provide the opportunity for the articulation around the distinct nodal points that populist memes provide.

Implications for Administrative Praxis

Meme Reaction

The communication and spreading of memes impinge on administrators in ways that influence decisions, behavior, and policy. Political memes have become more prevalent since the U.S. 2016 presidential election and the start of the Trump administration. The *children in cages* meme, although spread by pictures, lead to media, public, and political outcry and eventually a policy change ending the separation of children and parents with an executive order from the president:

> "I think the president has been clear that family separation is not on the table," McAleenan, the former Customs and Border Protection commissioner, told NBC's Lester Holt when asked whether he would reconsider the policy, before falling back on the administration's defense of the issue. "And again, this was a zero-tolerance prosecution initiative that was targeted at adults violating the law," he said. "They were always intended to be reunited" (Oprysko 2019).

Administration is ordinarily discussed as the art of "'getting things done'" (Simon 1976, 1). Memes tend to upset rationality as consequences can be unexpected. For instance, when President Trump announced that he was going to *close the border*, a meme, and illegal immigration would stop. By many accounts this led to a surge in unauthorized immigration and the intensifying of another meme, the *Border Crisis*. Closing the border would have had other consequences: cutting off bilateral trade, stopping tourism, and creating economic declines.

Pragmatist Public Philosophy

The analysis so far suggests that public administrators might look favorably on a praxis that obviates what is most troublesome about both the memes themselves and their success. We are arguing that the necessary practice would follow upon the formulation, pursuit, and execution of what we now understand as a pragmatist public philosophy. That philosophy would ground an expanding program of pragmatist social science (praxis) that is not only problem-driven and reflexive but a deliberative participant in the elucidation of the values and ideas that promote and guide civic

engagement, as well. In addition to weakening the cultural and concrete underpinnings of the harmful populist memes, a pragmatic praxis (reflective relationship between theory and practice) would stress fallibilism, context, collaboration, perspectivism, experimentalism and instrumentalism. This praxis promises not only to moderate the influence of populist memes and to mitigate tendencies for the propagation of new disadvantageous memeplexes, but also obviates the problems associated with the traditional distrust of government agencies and their top-down, disengaged, technical, and expert-driven solutions.

Current pragmatist thinking suggests that public agencies might function as linchpins in democracies by building consent for public policy through engaging the public in active problem identification and resolution (Ansell 2011). More so than legislatures, bureaucracies can solve problems and aid in efficacious change through small-scale institutional experimentation that provides the scaffolding for the articulation, elaboration, and transformation of meta-norms that can either produce large-scale institutional and societal change or stabilize society and its institutions as the situation requires (Ansell 2011, 45–49). To realize these ends and to obviate populist memes, bureaucracies should dedicate themselves to implementing evolutionary, learning-oriented, problem-driven, reflexive, and deliberative practices that render them capable of overcoming the strains endemic to hierarchies, the tension between centralization and decentralization, the obstacles to engaging in more strategic problem-solving, and the impediments to collaborative governance among public stakeholders.

Toward establishing such a praxis, pragmatists stress two principles. First, action at a community or lower level is preferable to action at a higher level, and second, good governance requires communities capable of and disposed toward democratic self-governance. They suggest that public agencies have a role in empowering individuals and groups at the local level to buffer memes and resolve issues that affect them without directing the resolution or requiring a particular outcome. Their role is to provide resources and expertise when needed to contextualize memes, but not to guide the resolution. The second principle includes the implication that public agencies should provide resources, opportunities, and expertise toward encouraging civic engagement (Putnam 1993, 172) that will counter the success of memes. That is, public agencies might act usefully as bridges between citizens and governments, assisting both people on the local level and those in civil service to identify, understand in more nuanced ways, and better deal with concrete problems, including memes, in reflective and deliberative ways (Ansell 2011). Accommodating and assimilating memes with the proper context, culture, local experience, and the broader knowledge of skilled and practiced professionals is essential to this praxis. This approach has the advantage not only of integrating popular sovereignty with on-the-ground governance, but of increasing trust between government agencies and the citizens they serve as memes are unsettled, unpacked, and resisted. Additionally, it mitigates the proliferation of memes that often develops in walking the tightrope between group and individual interests, centralization and decentralization, conflict and cooperation, and accountability and discretion that can stymie humane border policies.

If this praxis is to work, public agencies must take ownership of border policy problems and exercise a degree of autonomy in problem-solving (Ansell 2011, 139–140). Additionally, public institutions might separate complex problems into manageable pieces while not losing sight of the interconnectedness of policy problems (Ansell 2011, 89, 94) and memeplexes. Effective border policy problem-solving should follow through recursive, "strange loop" iterative exchanges across

organizational levels. These exchanges can help individuals at different levels of the bureaucracy communicate beyond populist memes. The result is multilevel problem-definition and problem-solving that is less influenced by memes and more influenced by a desire for responsible, humane, and effective border policies. In this way, bureaucracies can be decentralized and retain central direction by infusing its guiding principles and values into the institutional fabric (Ansell 2011, 71–72). All of this might be facilitated in bureaucracies by fostering communication across functional divisions and levels of hierarchy.

Pragmatic Administrative Praxis

When bombarded with memes and populist dogma, administrative behavior is compromised with "knee jerk" reactions, ignorance of situations, the breaking of rules, or ethical malfeasance. These behaviors further compromise national security and border protection. Pragmatic administrative praxis is a buffer to memes and memeplexes. It could be argued that the warrants for discourse are *meme-weeders* (Miller 2000, 99). Pragmatic administrative discourse can provide a higher level of meme-weeding protection when it comes to border protection and homeland security.

How does pragmatic administrative discourse unpack and resist these memes? Professional training of Homeland Security agents (e.g., Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) agents) offers some hope. The minimum qualifications of Homeland Security agents include the following:

> Homeland Security agents need strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills to be successful in their careers. The ability to work with a team is also important, as investigations cannot be conducted alone. As Homeland Security agents frequently investigate crimes, the ability to research, collect data, and gather evidence is also important. Homeland Security agents should also be able to handle high-stress situations, use firearms, and write reports (Criminal Justice USA 2019).

The fact that teamwork is encouraged is important and creates a buffer against memes, as their influence often depends on copied/replicated behavior and groupthink.

Conclusion

Placing public agencies at the nexus of democratic processes and governance would be useful in obviating the populist memes as it forestalls the use of agencies as instruments of policies formulated and pursued in a top-down fashion. Instead, public agencies can develop independent democratic mandates through consensus-building by stakeholders. As it stands, these stakeholders include administrators, citizens, property owners, immigrants (unauthorized and authorized), the media, and elected officials that often pontificate populist memes.

We have many questions to answer about the impact the populist discursive front and memes on border policies. Will we ever know the total impact of memes on Homeland Security agents? Can quantitative measurements (e.g., number of unauthorized crossings, number of deaths on the border) provide indications? But how do we measure the impact of memes on the conditions in central processing centers? Perhaps one must see these conditions firsthand? How do we know the impact of memes on immigrants and immigrant communities?

We can at least conclude that when discussing national security, border issues, and immigration topics, language and memes matter. Myths and memes become perception and perception becomes reality. The best defense against memes that force irresponsible narratives is administrative pragmatism.

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Trump's Twitter Tales: Policy Implications of Stories of Crime and Crisis Along the Southwest Border

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Introduction: Texas's Southwest Border

The U.S.-Mexico border, commonly referred to as the Southwest border, is an international boundary separating the United States and Mexico. The Southwest border is one of the longest borders in the world (1,954 miles) and runs along the U.S. states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas on the northern side and the Mexican states of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas on the southern side. The Texas border with Mexico comprises approximately 1,254 miles of the Southwest border and is far longer than the part from El Paso over to the Pacific. The border of Texas with Mexico starts at a point just upstream from El Paso and Ciudad Juarez and ends at the mouth of the Rio Grande near Brownsville/Matamoros. Texas and Mexico are joined by 28 international bridges and border crossings.

The flow of illegal drugs and the movement of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico into the United States via the Southwest border have long been areas of contention in U.S.-Mexico relations (Andrews 2012; Dominguez et al. 2009; Payan 2006; Seelke 2010). Concerns about the vulnerability of the border in recent decades have led to the increasing integration of U.S. military resources and personnel in support of law enforcement missions along the Southwest border. While the use of the military is seen as vital to securitize the Southwest border, the militarization of the border has contributed to the problematic image of the region.

United States President Donald J. Trump made the building of a wall along the Southwest border a major linchpin in his presidential campaign ─ promising that the wall would stem the tide of undocumented "criminals" into the U.S. (Lee 2016). Since assuming office, President Trump has continued his push for a wall along the Southwest border despite the fact that Congress has refused to fund the wall and that a solid majority of Americans oppose any major new construction of walls along the U.S.- Mexico border (Norman 2019). Additionally, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) statistics show that illegal border crossing apprehensions have steadily fallen since 2000 (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2017). This trend is at odds with statements made by

President Trump, the secretary of DHS, and the attorney general when they defended the administration's immigration detention and prosecution policies by saying that the number of people crossing the southern border has increased.

There are inconsistent media messages surrounding discussions of defining the immigration problem and prospective policies as well as the necessity of building a wall along the U.S-Mexico border. In this paper we examine President Trump's own words, expressed as tweets from his personal Twitter account (@realDonaldTrump), and the local news coverage in the Texas border town of McAllen related to Trump's visit to the area on January 10, 2019, to evaluate the presence of rhetoric for and against the border wall and increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. Differences between Trump's tweets and the local news coverage are discussed as well as the possible intentions and effects of his use of political narrative and framing on Twitter.

Theoretical Frameworks: Political Framing, Storytelling, and Agenda Setting

President Trump has earned many distinctions in his first term in office, among them the title "Twitter President" (Harris et al. 2019; Guynn 2019). Although other modern presidents have used social media, including Twitter, the way President Trump has used Twitter has been novel. Since his early days on the campaign trail, he has used Twitter as a main line of communication between himself and the people in a sort of populist approach to information dissemination. He has been able to bypass the traditional news media, whose coverage he often describes as "fake news" and present his messages directly to his followers (Baldwin-Philippi 2019; Boucher et al. 2019).

Since June 16, 2015, when Trump announced his candidacy for U.S. President, he has mentioned the border in around 850 of his almost 21,000 tweets made during this time (Trump Twitter Archive, 2019). The promise of a wall along the Southwest border was an essential part of his "Make America Great Again" campaign. Trump commonly describes the Southwest border as a dangerous place overrun with criminals and has said numerous times that building a wall is essential to border security (Wright, 2019). On January 6, 2019, he tweeted:

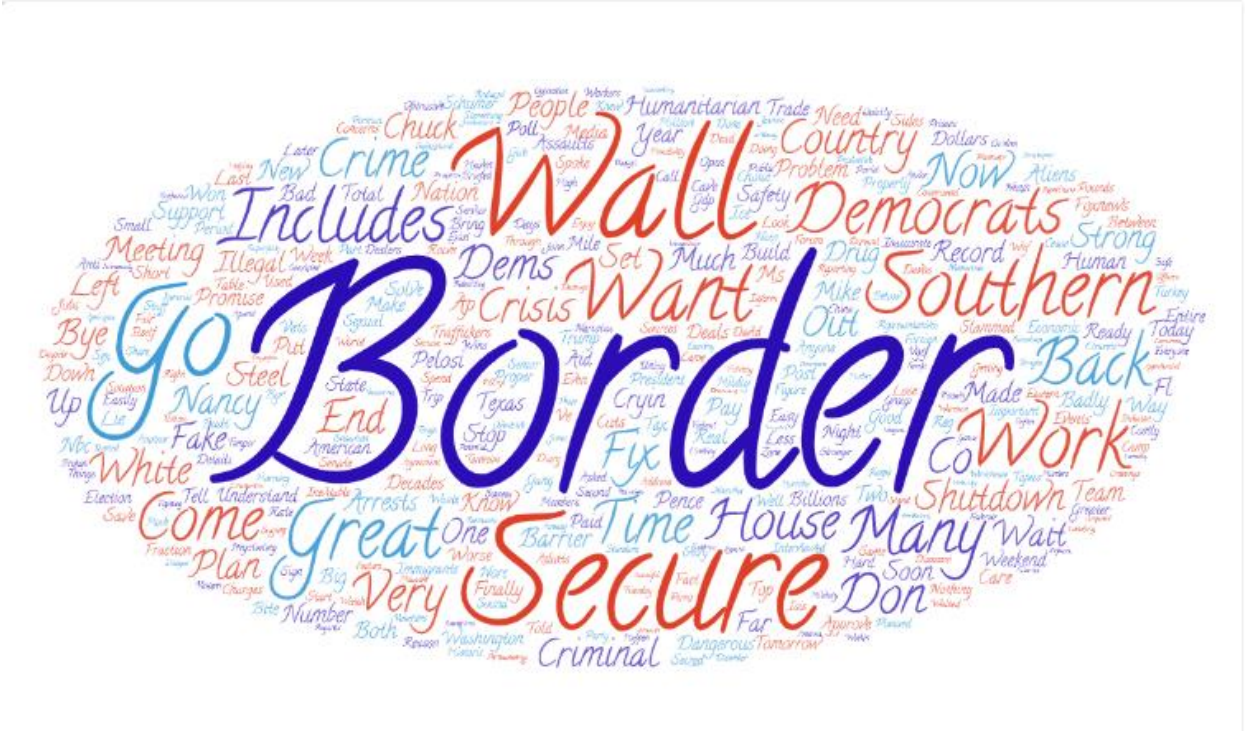
> AP-NORC POLL: "Immigration among the top concerns in 2019." People want to stop drugs and criminals at the Border. Want Border Security! Tell the Dems to do the inevitable now rather than later. The wait is costly and dangerous! (Trump, 2019a).

President Trump has a history of negatively framing immigrants and immigration along the Southwest border extending back to even before he became president (Alamillo et al. 2019). To define the act of "framing", is to "emphasize aspects of a phenomenon, and to render them recognizable and more salient in a text in such a way as to communicate and promote a specific understanding of a problem and to persuade us of the appropriate treatments for that problem" (Entman 1993; Pajnik 2010, 47). Framing in politics is more than just how a story appears in the final version; it also illustrates how the story was developed by those who produce news, as well as how the story is received by the public (Oates 2008).

Storytelling has long been used in politics to spread a candidate's message or vision. Stories help individuals make sense of complex issues (Gabriel et al. 2010; Orr et al. 2016). Stories bring

together historical beliefs, traditions, and desires that are often used to create, reinforce, or challenge an overarching narrative (Bevir 2011; Brown et al. 2009). In President Trump's individual stories about criminal immigrants and the dangerous Southwest border, he is able to provide support for his larger narrative implied in his promise to "Make America Great Again": the country has lost its way and needs course corrections to return to its former glory. In his role as a storyteller and in his development of this larger narrative, he is able to portray himself as a hero who will restore the country to this promised previous greatness and to cast others as villains, criminals, or victims (Gabriel et al. 2010). Through Twitter, President Trump is able to develop, produce, and distribute his message directly without any of the gatekeeping functions normally performed by traditional news media.

Figure 1
Word Frequency Visualization of Trump's Tweets about the U.S.-Mexico border from January 5 to January 15, 2019



In addition to framing and storytelling, Baumgartner and Jones' theory of agenda setting is also important in understanding political communication (Wolfe et al. 2013). Agenda setting theory explores how the public perceives the issues that are most frequently covered by the news media to be of greatest importance. Therefore, the issue of framing, or shaping the message, combined with agenda setting will have an effect on the public perception of the message. For example, previous research has found evidence that President Trump has used negative framing to shape public discussion on several issues of immigration such as sanctuary cities, family reunification, and the diversity lottery. These issues were not often covered by the mainstream media and his frequent mentions of these topics have increased the news coverage of them. This coverage often uses terms that reflect Trump's negative framing of programs such as family reunification as "chain migration" in his apparent attempts to negatively stigmatize these issues (Alamillo et al. 2019).

Framing immigration issues has been a global task, as many nations have defined and addressed immigration policy, immigration integration, and assimilation. Theoretical models used in framing immigrant integration focus on wording and social classifications, which may have a distinct impact on governing, public perception, and social equity. Scholten (2011) offers a theoretical explanation of framing immigration integration and stresses the importance of defining whose problem it is, why it is problematic, and carefully using appropriate terminology when referring to social classifications. The manner in which media frames and names social groups "conveys public images and perceptions of power positions of specific groups" and may result in "significant political risks or opportunities in terms of burdening the advantaged and independent or, in contrast, providing benefits to contenders and deviants" (Scholten 2011, 37). This, in turn, may lead to problems in social equity or worse—discriminatory claims.

The Myth of the Criminal Immigrant

Trump's framing of immigrants as criminals is related to a myth that has evolved and persisted over the nation's history (although it is not unique to the United States) of immigrants as scapegoats for crime and other societal problems (Sibila et al. 2016). The current image of the Southwest border as a region plagued by violence and crime is intrinsically linked to the rising tide of drug-related violence in Mexico during the last 20 years (Beittel 2009; 2011; Carpenter 2012; Payan 2006). Mexico's President Felipe Calderon's declaration of war against his country's drug cartels in December 2006 led to the significant worsening of drug-related violence in his country. The preoccupation of the U.S. media, especially those along the Southwest border, with the drug violence and bloodshed in Mexico significantly contributes to the perception that the turmoil in Mexico is no longer confined to that country (Andrews 2012; del Bosque 2009; Correa-Cabrera 2012). Many Americans are convinced that Mexico's drug-related violence has "spilled over" into communities along the Southwest border. Moreover, media coverage has significantly contributed to the perception that a "flood" of unauthorized immigrants moving across the Southwest border is largely responsible for the purported increase in drug-related violence along the Southwest border (del Bosque 2009).

Proponents of stricter immigration controls argue that increased border security (i.e. the border wall) will significantly impede the flow of undocumented immigrants thereby reducing rates of drug-related and other types of crime in border communities (Nevins 2002; Payan 2006). Politicians also play a key role in perpetuating the myth that the Southwest border is an unsafe region overrun by drug and gang violence. Governor Greg Abbott and Senator Ted Cruz are two well-known Texas politicians who have called for federal funding to supplement state resources to help fight "unprecedented" levels of crime and violence in the border region. In April 2017, during a visit to El Paso, former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions declared the border "ground zero," a "beachhead against the cartels," echoing previous comments by former Drug Czar (i.e., Director of National Drug Control Policy) retired General Barry McCaffrey who described the conditions along the border as "tantamount to living in a war zone" (Wilson 2018). President Trump has tweeted on multiple occasions about the criminal Mexican immigrant and the need to secure the border (i.e. border wall) in order to stop the spread of violence from Mexico into U.S. communities (Trump 2019a; Trump 2019d).

It is anticipated that the militarization of the Southwest border will continue to accelerate under President Trump. During his first week as president, he signed an executive order authorizing the construction of a 1,900-mile-long border wall. In February 2019, President Trump declared a national emergency in order to bypass Congress and move ahead with plans to divert military funding for the construction of the border wall. President Trump has also signed executive orders increasing the number of border patrol agents by 5,000, tripling resources for immigration officers, and targeting so-called "sanctuary cities" for immigrants. In 2018, President Trump ordered approximately 10,000 National Guard soldiers to the border to assist in immigration enforcement activities. It must be noted that although President Trump's stepped-up border militarization may make it more difficult and dangerous for people to successfully cross the border, research has found that criminalizing unauthorized entry into the U.S. does not deter those fleeing violence, and may only delay those seeking to reunite with family (Martinez et al. 2018).

Regardless of the much-publicized media stereotyping and harsh political rhetoric, empirical evidence simply does not support the popular misperception of the Southwest border as a violent crime-infested region (Nowrasteh 2019). The reality is that rates of violent crime along the U.S.-Mexico border are at levels comparable to or lower than the national average (FBI 2017). National crime statistics show that border (and near border) cities such as El Paso, San Diego, Phoenix, and Austin are among the nation's safest (FBI 2017). In Texas, crime statistics show that living on the border is actually safer than living elsewhere in the state (Aguilar et al. 2016). Additionally, counties along the Southwest border have some of the lowest rates of violent crime per capita in the nation (Nowrasteh 2019). Rates of violent crime in those counties have dropped by more than 30 percent since the 1990s (FBI 2017). In September 2019, the FBI released its most recent U.S. crime statistics showing record-low crime rates (FBI 2018). Those statistics once again indicate that the narrative and rhetoric coming from President Trump and his administration about the dangerousness of the Southwest border is simply not true.

Trump's Visit to McAllen, Texas

President Trump's insistence on the necessity of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border has been met with resistance from Congress and was one of the factors leading to the partial federal government shutdown that spanned 35 days from December 2018 to late January 2019 (Pramuk 2019). On January 7, 2019, President Trump tweeted that he would be visiting the U.S.-Mexico border near McAllen, Texas: "I am pleased to inform you that I will Address the Nation on the Humanitarian and National Security crisis on our Southern border. Tuesday night at 9:00 P.M. Eastern." (Trump 2019b). The same day the McAllen Monitor published a local news update "Trump to visit McAllen Thursday" (Staff Report 2019a).

In 2018, one of the fastest-growing cities in America was McAllen, Texas (#22), located on the Texas-Mexico border (Sharf 2018). McAllen is the largest city in Hidalgo County and is the 21st-most populous city in Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). More recently, McAllen has gained notoriety for its immigration processing center which has been at the epicenter of the Trump administration's child separation policy. McAllen was also the location of Trump's first official trip to the Texas portion of the U.S.-Mexico border on January 10, 2019 (Egland 2019).

His visit to the Southwest border came during a time when the federal government was still shut down and he was engaged in negotiations with members of Congress to provide funds for a border wall in exchange for an end to the shutdown (Pramuk 2019). The day before he left for McAllen he tweeted:

> Just left a meeting with Chuck and Nancy, a total waste of time. I asked what is going to happen in 30 days if I quickly open things up, are you going to approve Border Security which includes a Wall or Steel Barrier? Nancy said, NO. I said bye-bye, nothing else works! (Trump 2019c).

Figure 2
Image Tweeted by Trump on January 5, 2019

In some ways, Trump's visit itself could be viewed as an attempt to politically frame immigration policy and an effort to further his narrative legitimizing the necessity for the increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. In a McAllen Monitor article published the day of President Trump's visit to his city, McAllen Mayor Jim Darling is quoted as referring to the border wall as a "political football." According to the same article, the day before Trump's visit he was interviewed by CNN and stated: "We've had politicians, Republicans and Democrats, come down for photo ops since 2014 … The Democrats would go to the detention center; Republicans would go on a river boat (on the Rio Grande)" (Staff Report 2019b).

Methodology

To examine President Trump's framing of the border and in illustration of his storytelling, we utilized a content analysis of his tweets and the local newspaper coverage from the McAllen Monitor surrounding his presidential visit to the U.S. Mexico border in January 2019. Tweets were collected from an online archive, the Trump Twitter Archive (n.d.), that has been used in similar projects on President Trump's use of rhetoric and other language nuances on the Twitter platform by Thomas Gallagher, Isobelle Clarke, and Jack Grieve (Gallagher 2019; Clarke et al. 2019), and is used by major news sources including the Washington Post, The Atlantic, and BBC News (Brown, 2019). All of his tweets were collected from five days before and five days after his trip to McAllen, Texas (from January 5, 2019, to January 15, 2019). During this time, President Trump tweeted 100 times, however, most of those tweets did not mention the border or his trip to McAllen, Texas.

A similar method was used to collect the data for local news coverage. The McAllen Monitor is a daily newspaper owned by AIM Media Texas, LLC that covers McAllen, Texas, and the surrounding areas (AIM Media Texas 2012; The Monitor n.d.b). The McAllen Monitor website has a publicly accessible online archive that was searched for mentions of the President's January 2019 visit (The Monitor n.d.a).

The McAllen Monitor ran its first article related to President Trump's visit to McAllen on Tuesday, January 7, 2019, "Trump to visit McAllen Thursday" in which Trump's visit is announced, although the article notes the city officials have not been formally notified or given details by Monday evening, January 7, 2019. Between this first article on January 7, 2019, and January 10, 2019, the McAllen Monitor ran six local news stories and one editorial related to the president's visit (The McAllen Monitor n.d.a).

After collecting the tweets and local news articles into separate Microsoft Word documents, the data was then analyzed qualitatively utilizing content analysis. No specialized software was used in this analysis, apart from using the find function in Microsoft Word to identify each instance of the word border. Similar to an analysis of Trump's tweets done by Thomas Gallagher (2019), the categories were formed inductively following data immersion. After cleaning and reading the tweets and news articles several times, distinct patterns emerged in the use and characterization of the United States-Mexico border. The category Crime and Crisis was created for content supporting the negative framing of the border as a dangerous place in desperate need of a wall. A more neutral category, Logistics, was constructed for instances of the word border when it was used to detail the logistics of his visit, construction efforts, or in reference to the names of places such as the U.S.-Mexico border. Content contradicting the assertions that the border is more dangerous than the rest of the United States and that a wall is necessary or desired was categorized as a Compassionate Community.

The context of each use of "border" was then analyzed in both sets of data collected from the president's Tweets and the local news coverage and categorized into one of the three categories: Crime and Crisis, Logistics, or Compassionate Community. Tables 1 and 2 show examples of data that was coded for each category. Table 1 provides examples of President Trump's tweets

demonstrative of each of the three categories and Table 2 provides examples taken from the McAllen Monitor's local news coverage of the president's visit.

Table 1
Coding Categories with Example Tweets made by President Trump

Coding Category	**Description**	**Illustrative Tweet**
Crime and Crisis	Depicts the border as a place facing a crisis of epic proportions, a source of crime and criminal elements, a place that needs secured in order to restore order the country.	"We lose 300 Americans a week 90% of which comes through the Southern Border. These numbers will be DRASTICALLY REDUCED if we have a Wall!"
Logistics	Mainly serves an informative function detailing logistics of Trump's visit, wall construction or as a title such as U.S. Border Patrol or the U.S.-Mexico border.	"Will be interviewed at the Border by @seanhannity on @FoxNews tonight at 9:00. Enjoy!"
Compassionate Community	The border as a safe and stable place, providing compassion to migrants escaping horrible conditions, a place that needs increased humanitarian aid, and/or increased personnel, but where a wall or other physical barrier would be a waste of resources, unnecessary, or detrimental.	-none found-

The word "border" was directly mentioned once in 31 Tweets, and there were two direct mentions of "border" in three separate tweets. No tweets made during this time, January 5, 2019, to January 15, 2019, contained more than two direct mentions of the word "border". The content of the six local news stories was analyzed for direct mentions of the word "border", but not the editorial, captions, titles, or subtitles. There were 80 direct mentions of the word "border" in the local news coverage published by the McAllen Monitor related to President Trump's trip to McAllen.

Each instance of the word "border" was coded separately, even when they appeared in the same tweet or sentence. There were several cases where two instances of border were coded differently despite their proximity. For example, in the following sentence from the McAllen Monitor article "The Latest: President Donald Trump's McAllen Visit", quoting State Senator Juan Hinojosa, the first use of the word border is categorized under Logistics—as it refers to an official place, and the second use is categorized as a Compassionate Community due to its depiction of the wall as unnecessary for public safety: "However, as a resident and representative of a community along the Texas-Mexico border, I can assure you that it is unnecessary to allocate billions of dollars for a border wall." (Staff Report 2019c).

Table 2
Coding Categories with Example Quotes from the McAllen Monitor Articles

Coding Category	Description	Illustrative Quote from Articles
Crime and Crisis	Depicts the border as a place facing a crisis of epic proportions, a source of crime and criminal elements, a place that needs secured in order to restore order the country.	"Standing along the Rio Grande, President Donald Trump says "a lot of the crime in our country is caused by what's coming through here." Trump is touring a section of the U.S.-Mexico border as he seeks to bolster his case for spending billions of dollars on a border wall."
Logistics	Mainly serves an informative function detailing logistics of Trump's visit, wall construction or as a title such as U.S. Border Patrol agents or the U.S.-Mexico border.	"This week's visit also comes only about a month from when border wall construction is due to begin in the Mission area, where contractors have been seen in the last months surveying land in anticipation of new construction that was funded in last year's omnibus bill."
Compassionate Community	The border as a safe and stable place, providing compassion to migrants escaping horrible conditions, a place that needs increased humanitarian aid, and/or increased personnel, but where a wall or other physical barrier would be a waste of resources, unnecessary, or detrimental.	"The only border crisis is the one created by President Trump for political gain at the expense of the rights and the lives of migrants who have the right to seek asylum at the U.S. border," said Astrid Dominguez, director of the ACLU Border Rights Center in the statement."

Findings

Of the 37 specific mentions of the word border in Trump's tweets, three were made in reference to the logistics of his trip or in the name of a place, for example; "Will be interviewed at the Border by @seanhannity on @FoxNews tonight at 9:00. Enjoy!" (Trump 2019e). The remaining 34 direct mentions of "border" were in the "Crime and Crisis" category and mentioned the border in the context of crime, criminals, national security. This is consistent with Trump's wider activity on Twitter, as he is known for his attacks and negativity on Twitter (Ross et al. 2019). During this time, the President made no tweets that fit into the "Compassionate Community" category, describing the border in a positive light. He seems to use his Twitter platform to reinforce his

narrative that the border is a broken place in dire need of a wall to keep Americans safe from the criminal immigrants. This use of Twitter is consistent with findings on his use of rhetoric in other studies (Boucher et al. 2019; Gallagher 2019; Simunjak et al. 2019).

Figure 3
Pie Chart Demonstrating the Magnitude of the Identified Themes in Trump's Tweets

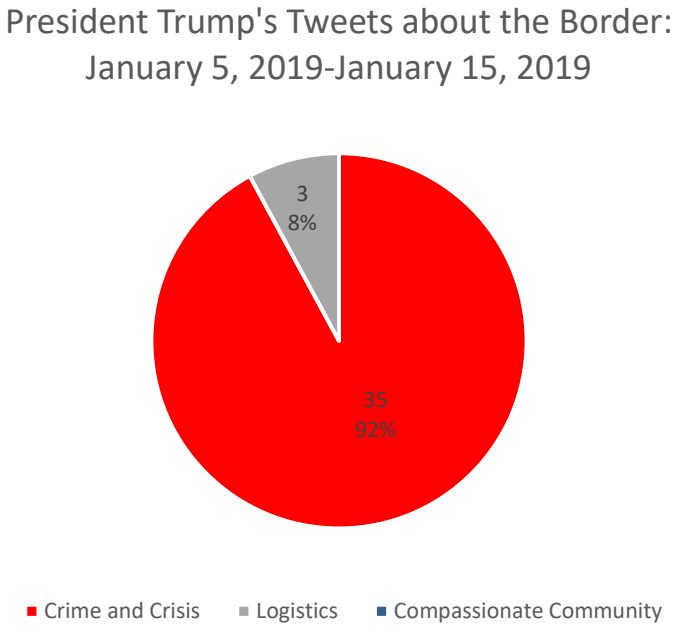
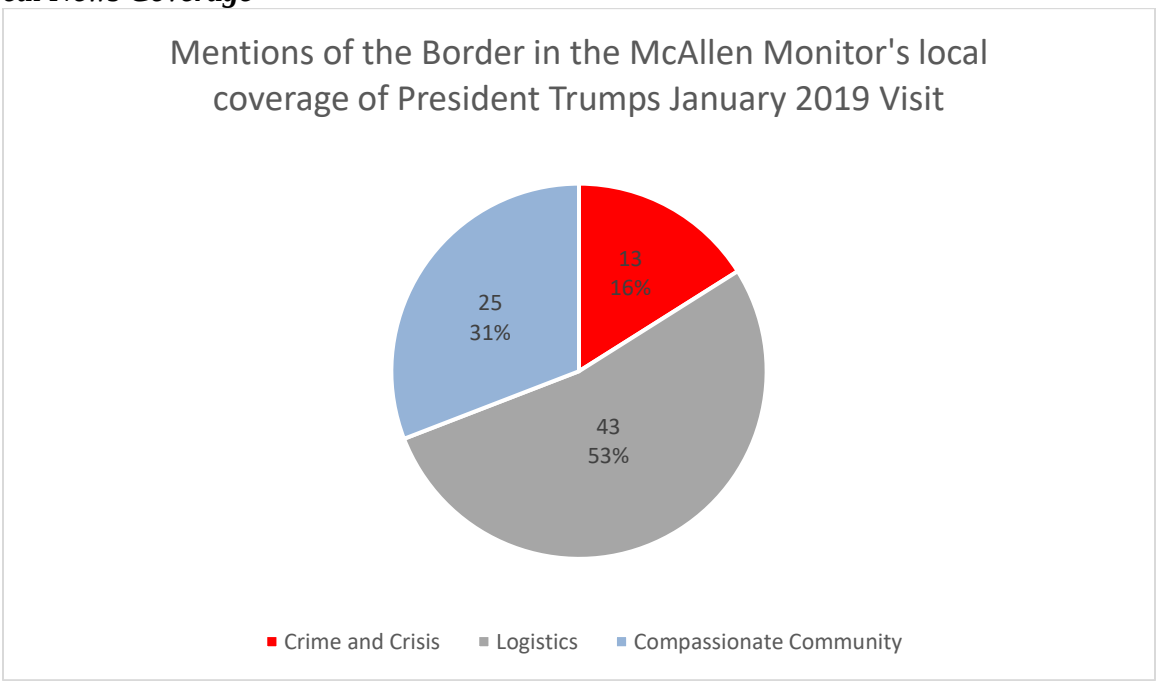


Figure 4
Pie Chart Demonstrating the Magnitude of the Identified Themes in the McAllen Monitor Local News Coverage



In comparison, most of the instances of the word border (53 percent of the instances) in the McAllen Monitor article mentioned the word in the context of the logistics surrounding the construction or expansion of wall-related projects. For example: "Despite plans to have that contract awarded in May, the refuge was spared during omnibus bill negotiations, essentially saving it from border wall construction" (Zazueta-Castro et al. 2019). The representation of the border as a place of "Crime and Crisis" is only depicted around half as often (16 percent of the instances) as the representation of the border as a safe place (31 percent of the mentions) in more need of humanitarian aid than militarization, as is consistent with the crime statistics and data for this region.

Implications

During his presidency, President Trump has continued to divert money from other defense programs to fund construction of a wall along the Southwest border, despite congressional objections. In a reprogramming request dated February 13, 2020, the Trump administration notified Congress that it intends to divert $3.8 billion in addition to the previously allocated $11 billion to fund the construction of a border wall along the Southwest border of the United States (Booker 2020). President Trump has increased militarization along the Southwest border during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite border crossings and apprehensions being down. Through the use of emergency powers granted to him during the pandemic, on March 20, 2020, he closed the border to nonessential traffic, closed the asylum system, and expelled over 10,000 asylum seekers. The next month he sent 540 additional troops and electronic surveillance equipment to the U.S.-Mexico border (La Porta et al. 2020).

Some residents blame President Trump for using his bully pulpit to unjustly frame the border at the expense of those seeking asylum. According to Michael Benavides, a co-founder of Team Brownsville, a non-profit organization that works to feed asylum seekers waiting at U.S. entry points, "There's no crisis, there's a humanitarian crisis on the bridge — people are hungry, they've been there for a very long time. I wish he would come with us and feed them dinner. They tell us their stories; they tell us why they're fleeing their country." (Garcia et al. 2019).

In addition to distracting from aid efforts for those seeking asylum at the Southwest border, his framing of the border as a place filled with crime and crisis has potential economic impacts for those who live and work in this region. Michael Seifert, a border advocacy strategist for the ACLU of Texas, chided the president for not taking the time to talk to border residents during his visit to McAllen and the Rio Grande Valley and blames President Trump for creating a crisis at the Southwest border. He stated,

> …He has created a humanitarian crisis in our region that has terrorized our children, embarrassed us before the world, and threatens our region's fragile economy. His hysteria and his lies about our region have made visitors afraid to come to some of the most beautiful and safest communities in the nation (Staff Reports 2019c).

According to Gallup Poll results released on February 4, 2019, 60 percent of Americans oppose the expansion of the existing wall construction, and 81 percent are in favor of providing a path to citizenship for current U.S. residents who are living in the U.S. illegally (Norman 2019). If a clear

majority of Americans are in favor of a path to citizenship, why is our federal government not addressing that issue? An analysis of Trump's use of populist rhetoric on Twitter to frame the public discussion on trade found that he was successful in using Twitter to dominate and influence the foreign policy debate (Boucher et al. 2019). Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric and insistence on a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border despite the views expressed by many of the residents of the region and reflected by American public opinion complicate if not obfuscate any real attempts at immigration policy reform.

His narrative of crime and crisis, and his determination to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border also threaten his legitimacy as president and raise constitutional issues such as his authority to declare funding for the wall a matter of national emergency (Saunders 2019; State of California et al. v. Trump et al. 2019) and to refuse to sign a budget, resulting in a 35-day shutdown, unless the legislative branch gives him funding for the wall. Senate Armed Services Committee ranking member Senator Jack Reed said,

> Declaring a trumped-up national emergency in order to skirt congressional approval is wrong. Defense spending is for national defense, not the Trump campaign's political wish list. I will work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to block any attempt to take money that has been dedicated for our troops and redirect it to construction of a wasteful, ineffective wall (Bertuca 2019).

One of the preeminent symbols of the United States is the Statue of Liberty, whose inscription bears the following words from Emma Lazarus's poem:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door! (NPS 2019).

The majority of the stories coming from the Southwest border reflect these sentiments, expressing empathy for those crossing the border in search of asylum, while President Trump continues to spin stories and push his narrative necessitating a wall to keep out the criminal immigrants. Which depiction is used to inform the policy decisions and governing practices regarding immigration and further militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border will have lasting impacts not only on the Southwest border region but in shaping the future American narrative as well. America is increasingly becoming a place where national security is valued over the universal human rights of immigrants not unlike those mentioned in the poem above or those who founded the county in search of better lives (Balfour et al. 2018).

Conclusions

In this paper we looked at one specific event, President Trump's visit to McAllen, to evaluate President Trump's use of storytelling and political framing of the Southwest border and explore how this negative framing and the resulting narrative potentially impact immigration and border-

related policy-making through agenda setting. As this project was qualitative, the findings are limited in generalizability. Further studies examining the effects of storytelling, narrative creation, and political framing of the Southwest border region should evaluate other locations along the U.S.-Mexico border over a greater length of time and include additional levels of news coverage as well as President Trump's tweets since taking office. It may also be interesting to include Tweets by other politicians along the Southwest border, although not many politicians use Twitter in nearly the same manner or frequency as President Trump.

While it does not currently seem as if the majority of Americans or Congress are convinced by President Trump's narrative in support of building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border (Garrett 2018), his persistent negative framing of the issues at the Southwest border have other consequences such as affecting border and immigration policies as evidenced by increased militarization of the Southwest border. By furthering the myth of the criminal immigrant he is also indirectly defining what it means to be an American. The persistence of this myth in juxtaposition with the crime statistics serves to unjustly "other" those who come to the Southwest border seeking asylum, deeming them unworthy of that which is most quintessentially American—their pursuit of the American dream.

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From U.S. Zero-Tolerance Immigration Policy to Immigrant Detention Camps: The Narrative Construction of *Homo Sacer*

Paul James Pope

Introduction

Public policy narratives are stories people tell (or construct) to present ideas, establish context, and to present their own perspective regarding a particular policy problem. Policy narratives are the primary way of expressing one's political beliefs and support for a policy. They often employ symbolic language that can be empirically studied and is just as rigorous as any other research (Pope 2017, 54; Bold 2012, 6). Policy narrative content refers to what the narrator asserts the story is about (Shanahan et al. 2018, 335). These policy stories establish a frame, which characterizes the story plot, the characters, and identifies the problem. "The concept of framing refers to the effects of presentation on judgement and choice" (Iyengar 1996, 61). According to Shanahan, McBeth, and Hathaway (2011), these policy frames define the problem by selecting only the information that may bolster a particular policy outcome (374). Therefore, policy narratives are constructed to offer a strategic advantage in the policy process. Narrative policy analysis utilizes literary devices to analyze policy stories for characters, plots, strategic language, and metaphors used in political narratives (Stone 2012, 158; McBeth et al. 2005, 414). Narratives in general are the principal means of constructing knowledge about public policy problems and use symbolic language to give meaning and subtext to the preferences of the narrator. Brunner (1991) contends that such narratives are designed to increase comprehension in support of the narrator's perspective (16).

In April of 2018, the Trump administration announced its Zero-Tolerance policy, which was intended to discourage migrants from crossing into the United States (Garrett 2018, 91). The Zero-Tolerance policy called for the separation of migrant children and attempts at unilaterally refusing all asylum seekers along the US-Mexico border. President Trump and his administration deployed aggressive national security rhetoric to justify this new policy; rhetoric which characterizes migrants as a national security threat—an invading force along the border. This new policy, derived from an executive order, created a significant legal and human rights conflict regarding the welfare of migrant children and asylum seekers along the southern US border. Three questions emerge

from this conflict. How are immigration policy narratives used to construct irregular migrants as a national security threat and invasion? How are narratives about migrants used to construct their "criminality"? Lastly, how are narratives about irregular migration used to justify the child separation policy? This research utilizes narrative policy analysis, along with content analysis, to deconstruct (or unmask) the meaning and desired policy outcomes within the Trump administration's application of their Zero-Tolerance policy narrative strategy. Subsequently, President Trump's policy narratives present a heightened state of perceived foreign siege of the nation, which transforms the migrant children and asylum seekers into, what Giorgio Agamben (1998) describes as *homo sacer*—a person devoid of their humanity and reduced to a state of bare life. *Homo sacer* is an ancient Roman legal concept regarding one who is placed outside of the normal legal protections of society. This research utilizes Agamben's theory of *homo sacer* to describe and explain the Trump administration's construction of irregular migrants as an "other" outside of the normal juridical order.

The Zero-Tolerance Policy Problem

In Donald Trump's 16 June 2015 announcement of his candidacy for the President of the United States, he asserted, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists" (Lee 2015, para. 1). Later, during his 2016 campaign, then-candidate Donald Trump vowed to build a new border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and have Mexico pay for it (Bump 2016). Trump's aggressive tone regarding immigration policy, and mercurial character, played a central role in his campaign platform agenda that invigorated his voting base, which aided in his election victory. The narrative Trump is presenting here is first, one of invasion. His rhetoric depicts migrants being sent, not choosing to come to the United States, this strongly implies invasion. In other statements, Trump literally labels irregular migration as an "invasion" (See Table 1 in Appendix). Second, his rhetoric depicts criminal behavior, which he claims they are bringing into the United States. Trump's narrative is that migrants are villains and crossing the border without permission is a national security threat.

On 25 January 2017, shortly after his inauguration, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13767. The executive order titled "Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements" served as an enhancement of existing 8 U.S.C. 1101, the Secure Fence Act of 2006, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 (para. 1). Executive Order 13767 elevated irregular migration enforcement status to "significant threat to national security and public safety" (para. 2). This new executive initiative the Trump administration later branded as their "Zero-Tolerance" policy. This executive order is consistent with Trump's 2016 campaign rhetoric. The Zero-Tolerance policy became the starting point of a strategic narrative used to bolster support of stringent immigration policy changes.

Such immigration security enhancements are not new. Following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, then-President George W. Bush used the attacks as a "triggering event" to rationalize building a steel barrier between San Diego, California, and Brownsville, Texas. Additionally, Bush also elevated concern for border control to that of national security by placing military troops to reinforce U.S. Border Patrol during border fence construction—militarizing the border. The Trump

administration's Zero-Tolerance policy has increased the militarization of the border and has intensified the national security narrative as well. Their security narrative constructs citizenship and citizenship status as a national security problem rather than a bureaucratic one. Irregular migration becomes a national security threat to citizenship itself.

The Zero-Tolerance policy reached a tipping point and became "hot news" in the summer of 2018. In May of 2018, it had been reported that the Trump Zero-Tolerance policy had separated 2,342 migrant children from their parents after crossing into the United States; most separated families were asylum seekers entering through legal ports of entry (Domonoske 2018, para. 1). The public outcry, protesting the family separations grew loud and undeniable. Even the President's own political party pressured him to end the family separation policy.

By June of 2018, public support for reunification and a federal court order pushed the Trump administration and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials to return children to their parents. President Trump, though touting separation was required by law he could do nothing about, issued Executive Order 13841, ordering reunification by shifting responsibility for the separation onto Congress to resolve the issue. In this executive order, Trump cites immigration law, 8 U.S. Code § 1325 Improper Entry by Alien. In this executive order, he presents the argument his administration will be "enforcing this and other criminal provisions" (para. 2), suggesting this is primarily a criminal statute. There are no criminal penalties in this statute for improper border crossing. He continues that improper entry under this statute will result in "a fine or imprisonment" (para. 2). The statute only provides for imprisonment regarding marriage or business fraud related to immigrant entry.

By the end of summer 2018, reunification had begun. Prior to the Trump administration's 2017 executive order, the Office of Refugee Resettlement handled the care and placement of all children entering under irregular migration. The Trump administration's Zero-Tolerance policy triggered a cascade of problems as agencies struggled with the fallout from family separation that completely "blindsided" agency officials (Alonso-Zaldivar 2018, para. 1). Unfortunately, as documentation during separation was nearly non-existent, DHS moved separated children into tent camps surrounded by barbed-wire-topped chain link fencing (Domonoske 2018). As reunification proceeds at a very slow pace, by August 2018, 500 migrant children remained in U.S. Custody, many due to their parents having already been deported by the government before reunification (Sacchetti 2018, para. 4).

By late September 2018, less than 200 separated migrant children remained in U.S. detention, primarily because of their parents' prior deportation without first discerning what child belonged with what parent (Barajas 2018, paras. 1-5). However, by December 2018 the number of all migrant children held by the government ballooned to almost 15,000 (Burnett 2018). According to Burnett (2018) the largest migrant camp, hosting nearly 3,000 separated children in tents, is nearly at capacity on a patch of desert along the Rio Grande River (para. 5). January 2019 the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General released findings from a study regarding the separation of migrant children from their parents under the zero-tolerance policy (Office of Inspector General 2019). According to the OIG's report, their investigation found there were thousands more migrant children separated from their families than the nearly 3,000 children

the Trump administration admitted to separating at the time (Alvarez et al. 2017, para. 1, Office of Inspector General 2019, 13-15).

On 18 October 2018, three weeks from a midterm election, President Trump threatened to close the southern border with Mexico to stop Central American asylum seekers from entering the U.S. and characterized them as an "assault on our country by Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador" (Rosenkrantz 2018, paras. 1-3). The choice of words here strongly suggests the "assault" is orchestrated by these three countries, not simply migrants originating from these countries. The securitized rhetoric of Trump and immigration officials characterizes irregular migrants as "invaders" or "criminals," which dehumanizes them and constructs them as an "other," a symbolic villain. A villain the normal legal process should not, or is unable to, address—an inhuman other—*homo sacer* (Agamben 1998).

Othering Narrative

Human beings are social animals, as such; a person derives much of their identity from interactions with other people and social institutions. To a degree, one's identity is dependent and constructed, at least in part, from our social interactions (Berger et al.1967). Stemming from post-colonial theory, othering is associated with identity construction (Jensen 2011, 63). The othering process presents an "us" vs. "them" paradigm, which emphasizes different characteristics like race, ethnicity, and religion (Nurullah 2010, 1021). A person's identity, in part, can be derived both by defining who one is as well as who one is not. Van Houtum and Van Naerssen (2001) argue that there is a discursive difference constructed when defining "us" vs. "them" (125). The discursive nature of othering lends itself directly to narrative story telling. Narrative stories about politics are the principal means for defining and contesting policy problems that characterize people as either heroes, villains, or victims (Stone 2012, 158). These characterizations are used—strategically—to objectify the other. This process of othering Michel Foucault (1982) referred to as a "dividing practice" (777). The subjugation of the person to state power is intended to divide them from the rest of acceptable society (Foucault 1982, 778).

The work of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has explored Foucault's idea of "divided practice." Agamben (1998) reintroduced the concept of *homo sacer*, an ancient Roman concept that refers to the "sacred man" who is divided from normal political life and reduced to that of bare life—something less than human, devoid of political life. This concept is similar to ancient Scandinavian law of the Viking Age when a dishonorable or untrusted person may be legally declared an "outlaw" (one who is excluded from legal protections) and labeled a *niðingr* (nithing), meaning "nothing to everyone" in English (Ciklamini 1963, 178-181). At the very least, the community ostracized the *niðingr* as dishonorable. At the most, the *niðingr* was banished from the community by the king and could be killed without legal punishment identical to the social condition of *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998). Agamben's theory of *homo sacer* is inspired by Foucault's analysis of the modern man and his political concept of "biopolitics" (Snoek 2010, 46). When the mechanisms of state power intertwine with natural life, politics turns into biopolitics (Agambern 1998, 3; Foucault 1978). Therefore, following Agamben and Foucault's theories, state power is often used to regulate identity that may rely on the othering process to construct the preferred identity of us vs. them. Perhaps even us "over" them.

In the construction of the other, particularly distinctions drawn along racial lines is an idea derived from social interaction. Aho (1999) asserts that the social construction of "race," which he refers to as "race-genesis," is constructed through public media and within public space (63). Seeing the world through this racialized lens also influences how we think about this "us" vs. "them" question. Therefore, how we think about these differences influences how we speak about these differences.

The circular nature of this discursive phenomenon creates a progression in the othering narrative. Racialized discourse moves from simple distinction to what Aho (1999) describes as "serving as a rhetorical device to mystify differences in power, class, and honor, making them harder to overcome" (70). The othering narrative becomes a type of obstacle placed by us to prevent them (the other) from asserting anything resembling equal status in "our" society. Said (1978) argues that the construction of anti-Semitic animus is easily transferred to the Arab, as their facial features and regional origins are similar; and their depiction in popular media and entertainment often portrayed them as a villain (286). I would argue here that the "foreign" nature of a villainized Arab is merely one-step removed from all other foreign people depicted as invaders—villains to be feared. The "othering" of one group makes it an almost seamless transition to "other" any group who share even the slimmest connection or similarity.

Before dehumanization occurs, and one is moved outside of the normal political or juridical order (removal of legal protections), they must first be othered—made to seem unworthy of protection or equal status. "Othering" obfuscates humanity and is used to justify ignoring suffering and indignity (Butler 2009). This is an assertion of biopower, which Fiaccadori (2015) argues Foucault defines as the power over life and death (151). The othering process then identifies those who may be different from oneself (often those of the majority or mainstream) which produce domination and subordination (Johnson et al. 2004, 253). This domination-subordination dichotomy constructs the other as a thing to be dominated—unprotected in the *polis—homo sacer* (Agamben 1998).

Research Methodology

Narrative policy analysis (NPA) is a method of analyzing policy stories in relation to policy development and advocacy. NPA is well suited for discerning and identifying strongly held policy positions and the dominant narrative (Hampton 2005, 262). Hampton (2005) asserts that the "methodological aspects of narrative analysis… enables values and goals and their meaning and cultural context to be socially constructed, retained and shared in social interaction" (263). Narratives about policy problems are a form of political strategy and meant to frame the narrator's support or opposition to a particular issue as well as shape beliefs and actions. The application of NPA in this article is to identify the othering narratives, employed by President Donald Trump and his administration's policy agenda, which targets immigrants and asylum seekers. The Trump narratives were analyzed and coded into three distinct themed areas; invasion, migrant criminality, and blame for child separation (see Table 1). Whooley (2006) contends that narratives about political issues employ powerful suggestion and establish emotional identification (295). Therefore, evaluating Trump immigration policy narratives, particularly those targeting undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, by scrutinizing the President's negative framing of migrants gives shape to his desired policy outcomes. Twitter serves as a proxy social interaction in which the particular

narratives are expressed for public consumption. Though the interaction is artificial, the modality of Twitter provides concise isolation of Trump's policy narratives for study.

This research employs content analysis (combined with NPA) to identify and evaluate linguistic cues within each speech event (each tweet) as an interpretive approach to analyzing text data. These cue words are used to code the speech event (each tweet) into one of the three narrative categories (invasion, migrant criminality, and blame for child separation). Since the text data is fixed by the chosen modality here, the focus is on meaning and intent of both the cue word(s) and the narrative story within the tweet. The analyzed tweets (see Table 1) have bolding added to cue words to distinguish them from the surrounding text to illustrate key aspects of the narrative and its frame.

Twenty-four tweets from President Trump, targeting the Central American migrant caravan phenomenon were selected and analyzed. Between June 2018 and January 2019, all of President Trump's statements on Twitter regarding the caravan and border security were collected from his Twitter account and coded into three policy narrative categories to illustrate the President's strategic use of policy narratives, his framing of border security issues, and his characterization of migrants along the southern U.S. border. Despite of the character length limitations of a tweet, using Stone's (2012) NPA approach, President Trump's tweets have a fully realized narrative structure in each tweet, complete with plot, heroes, villains, and victims.

Constructing the "Invasion" Narrative

The dehumanizing, repressive, and xenophobic monikers we apply to undocumented immigrants are, today, a representation of the post 9/11 securitization of borders (Furman et al. 2016, 1). Marrying a constructed identity to that of a major act of terrorism, even thinly veiled comparisons, instills fear of those holding such an identity. A policy narrative, which constructs the problem of immigration as a national security concern, is reliant on creating a sense of siege (Pope 2017, 59). Fear of the other is established to characterize the incursion of the other as dangerous or causing harm. The harm from the "other" can be as basic as their mere presence or some general threat. The harm can be real or imagined. In the post 9/11 world, the terror attacks act as triggering events, concentrating a heightened sense of geopolitical anxiety of those beyond the U.S. border who intend to do America harm. This sense of pending siege results in an unintended impact on immigration-related concerns with policing practices geared more toward anti-terrorism warfare than undocumented labor migration (Coleman 2007, 55). Terror and criminal threats abroad become localized at the border under these heightened conditions and under this kind of securitized rhetoric.

President Trump and his administration routinely present problems of irregular migration along the southern border with Mexico as a desperate and growing national security problem. This securitized rhetoric, which constructs a narrative about irregular migration and migrants as an "invasion," presents irregular migration as a military-like problem. Linguistically speaking, constructing a problem as military-like makes a military solution appear appropriate and the securitized rhetoric rational. The securitized language transforms a normally bureaucratic issue into a security issue.

Two days prior to the 2016 presidential election, then-candidate Donald Trump presented a grim characterization of the Somali-American community by claiming at a Minnesota rally, "Some of them [are] joining Isis and spreading their extremist views all over our country and all over the world" (Jabos et al. 2016, paras. 1 and 3). Candidate Trump's narrative equates Somali migrants with terrorism—the villain. In early 2017, newly inaugurated President Trump indicated in a phone call to Mexican President Pena Nieto, "You have a bunch of bad hombres down there. You aren't doing enough to stop them, I think your military is scared. Our military isn't, so I just might send them down to take care of it" (Salama 2017, para. 8). This threat from the President of the United States signifies the desire for a military response to the problem of irregular migration. Since the US military has no domestic policing authority, the implication is the migrants in question are such a danger they require a military solution. In a 24 June 2018 tweet, President Trump stated,

> We cannot allow all of these people to invade our Country [*sic*]. When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no Judges [*sic*] or Court Cases [*sic*], bring them back from where they came. Our system is a mockery to good immigration policy and Law [*sic*] and Order [*sic*]. Most children come without parents...

This tweet exemplifies the President's invasion narrative with the President's literal use of the word "invasion." Additionally, the tweet presents the desire to summarily suspend and dispense with due process and criminal justice protections with regard to irregular migrants. President Trump consistently uses the modality of Twitter and public rallies to characterize undocumented border crossers as dangerous invaders to be guarded against (see Table 1). The policy rhetoric President Trump expresses through his tweets presents a narrative, which constructs irregular migrants entering the United States as an invading other, unworthy of protections within the normal juridical order—a *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998).

Constructing Migrant Criminality

It has been said, in various iterations, that how we treat others reflects who we are. Certainly, such an argument can be made about how a nation treats immigrants. When the people of a society perceive their circumstance through a positive frame, it is easier to be accepting of others. When that society is under stress, our exchanges with different people generate fears (such as about economics or terrorism). People can become closed off and less accepting of "outsider" immigrants into their society (Flores 2003, 362). From these fears stems reactionary rhetoric intended to interpret and explain such fears. Those seeking to capitalize on growing stress and fear within society may construct narratives to define the parameters of the problem and suggest action. Lebov (2006) argues that narratives are constructed when someone desires to tell others about something that alerts the audience to something important and worth reporting (38). Narratives about policy issues become the central means, which is mediated, to present political stories about that policy concern.

Flores (2003) asserts that narratives regarding immigration in the U.S. since the turn of the 20th century has been a struggle over identity and the role immigration has in the development of that identity (362). Similarly, racialized discourse and policy narratives are directed toward people outside of our politically defined and bordered society. The spectacle of enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border constructs those crossing the border without permission as "illegal" (Genova 2013,

1181) and much of the rhetoric within U.S. immigration discourse is racialized (Flores 2003, 365). Racialized narratives often construct the other, especially a foreign other, as an invader. Fear discourse, stemming from global mobility, is a significant part of manipulating fear as central to the state for maintaining the appearance of having control, especially those associated with security or terrorism (Pope 2017, 66; Pain 2009, 4).

Donald Trump's presidential campaign ran on a platform anchored by his position on immigration policy. His governance style is heavily reliant on narratives as the primary function of his policy-making process. In particular, he engages in aggressive and incendiary attacks on all manner of migrants and undocumented immigrants—particularly those originating from Latin America. According to McBeth and Lybecker (2018), then-candidate Trump's narratives regularly presented immigrants from Mexico as villains, US citizens as victims, and himself as the hero (2). President Trump's immigration narrative commonly portrays migrants as invaders, rapists, and criminals (McBeth et al. 2018, 2), never recognizing their humanity as desperate people in need of help. Trump exemplifies the lack of recognition of human rights with regard to asylum seekers and refugees. Bell (2018) describes this as "the right to have rights" (15). A fitting definition for Agamben's (1998) concept of *homo sacer*.

President Trump regularly uses the modality of Twitter to speak directly to the public without filter, and often without much context (See Table 1). These short statements have a magnitude in meaning greater than the sum of their characters, especially when characterizing who are the heroes, villains, and victims in his narrative. In a 2 November 2018 tweet, President Trump stated,

> Republicans believe our Country [*sic*] should be a Sanctuary [*sic*] for law-abiding Americans – not criminal aliens. And Republicans will ALWAYS stand with the HEROES of ~~@~~ICEgov, ~~@~~CBP, and Law Enforcement!

This tweet contrasts "law-abiding Americans" with "criminal aliens." This narrative, even in an abbreviated format, establishes the heroes as Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection; the villains, illegal aliens; and the victims, law-abiding Americans. In a 21 November 2018 tweet, Trump stated,

> There are a lot of CRIMINALS in the Caravan [*sic*]. We will stop them. Catch and Detain! Judicial Activism, [*sic*] by people who know nothing about security and the safety of our citizens, is putting our country in great danger. Not good!

With no reasonable means at his disposal to know, the President asserts there are criminals in the caravan (from Central and South American countries crossing Mexico) with the claim of there being "a lot of criminals in the caravan." One must assume, given the narrator, when he writes "we" the assumption is the government. This statement positions the federal government as the hero, the people in the caravan as the villainous criminals, and citizens as the victim.

This discussion of Trump's bombastic immigration narrative is not without its real policy and human impact. In August 2018 the Trump administration accused thousands of US citizens, born in South Texas, of using fraudulent birth certificates when applying for passports—resulting in many being jailed in migrant detention centers to be processed for deportation (Kilgore 2018, para.

3). A 13 September 2018 report from *The Washington Post* revealed that the Trump administration's crackdown, on what officials perceive as a fraudulent birth certificate in South Texas, resulted in the arrest and deportation of American citizens with nothing more than suspicion and Hispanic heritage (Sieff 2018). The perception of criminality transitions to the practice of depriving migrants of their humanity, who possess nothing more than bare life.

Constructing Blame for Child Separation Policy

Narratives about security often place the government, or government officials, as the hero, the "other" as the villain, and citizens as victims. In narratives about national security concerns, we often see security efforts framed as either preventative or as an ongoing emergency. Border security is certainly no different. President Trump frequently uses the metaphor of migrants "flowing" or "spilling" into the country (See Table 1). This kind of metaphor conjures up imagery of throngs of people quickly filling up, or overfilling, a space (Stone 2012, 175). Stone (2012) points out these metaphors are used to frame narrative stories about policy. The politically defined borders divide us from the "others" outside. When this division is not distinctive enough or the desire to create a sense of siege exists, borders are framed as a security problem. "Walls and fortresses, fences and moats—securing borders is how people have always protected themselves from those they perceive as dangerous outsiders" (Stone 2012, 147). To justify a particular border security policy, narratives about the outsiders (people on the other side of the border) construct a person to be feared as an enemy. Once perceived as a dangerous enemy, any harm inflicted on an "enemy" appears appropriate, rather than inhumane. Interestingly, the treatment of the other as an "enemy" is made possible when that treatment is hidden, even when their "dangerous natures" are meant to be perceived as immediate and present. The weighty life or death nature of national security narratives offers to the audience a story demanding action, regardless of the truthfulness of the story.

The manner in which the President has constructed blame for his stated necessity of separating minor migrant children from their parents presents a kind of "conspiracy plot." In conspiracy narratives, according to Stone (2012), control is in the hands of the few whose actions are hidden and self-serving (166). An example of a "conspiracy" story presented by President Trump here in his 15 June 2018 tweet.

> The Democrats are forcing the breakup of families at the Border [*sic*] with their horrible and cruel legislative agenda. Any Immigration Bill [*sic*] MUST HAVE full funding for the Wall, [*sic*] end Catch & Release, Visa Lottery and Chain, [*sic*] and go to Merit Based Immigration. Go for it! WIN!

The above tweet constructs the "Democrats" as the villains responsible for "breaking up families at the border." This statement obfuscates President Trump's own Executive Order 13767, issued January 2017 creating the Zero-Tolerance policy, which resulted in the separation of migrant children from their parents. This tweet simultaneously asserts that the separation of children from their parents is the direct result of a Democrat conspiracy. President Trump's tweet recognizes the cruel nature of the act and attempts to place blame on the opposing political party, highly critical of his immigration policies. Throughout the summer of 2018 Trump continually blamed Democrats, previous legislation, or former President Obama for the immigration problem itself, and the

"requirement" to separation families at the border. Bad immigration policy and child separation is the fault of Democrats and not his administration's (see Table 1).

The optics of children in jail-like facilities, and later fenced-in tent camps, presented the Trump administration and Homeland Security officials in an incredibly negative light. The administration chose to shift blame for the problem of their own making in this case. This circumstance is highly unusual regarding the imprisonment of migrants along the border. In his attempt to mobilize resources for his border security agenda and shift blame to the Democrats, President Trump provided the visuals necessary to oppose his own executive order. Macia-Rojas (2016) argues that these kinds of mobilizations make visible to the public prisons and detention centers, which are normally hidden from public view (161). The visual nature of imprisoning children short-circuits the othering process here by creating an empathetic connection between the migrant children and the audience. The President inadvertently, while attempting to portray himself as the hero and the Democrats as the villains, provides a temporary restoration of the migrant's humanity as the victims of his administration's border security policy. It is now impossible to see these migrants as an enemy other. Shifting the blame this way is done in order for the President to portray himself as the hero but serves as an argument against his constructing the migrants as *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998).

Conclusion

Public policy narratives are stories people construct to present their ideas, establish context, and to present their own perspective regarding a particular policy problem. Presenting a policy story tells the audience what the narrator feels is important with the intention of gaining support from the audience for the narrator's perspective and framing that story's plot. This research deconstructed many examples of President Trump's narratives regarding the framing of border crossers as "invaders," migrants as "criminals," and the separation of migrant children from their parents as either necessary or the fault of a past administration. This research presents the narrative framing of undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers as an "other"—devoid of humanity—a *homo sacer* (Agamben 1998). The analysis of presidential policy narratives presented here, appearing in public media and the President's personal Twitter feed, offers an explanation of the story plot, heroes, villains, and victims. This narrative framework gives shape to the President's strategic policy demands and justification for his Zero-Tolerance policy. These policy narratives appear as an expression of power, directed at powerless migrants and stateless people. By deconstructing policy narratives, we can demonstrate how policy narratives operationalize power, which is an aspect of force.

Much of the President's use of Twitter began as a campaign-marketing tool to bypass the mass media, whom he regularly demonized. However, as president, he has routinely utilized his Twitter feed as a means of presenting his unfiltered perspective, his framing of policy problems, and his desired policy solutions. No previous president has utilized social media in this manner, advocating a desired policy outcome in an almost one-to-one relationship with the citizenry. Social media is a powerful tool for public figures for constructing and maintaining their image, and it capitalizes on a politician's celebrity status (Enli 2016, 59). Continued analysis of policy narratives must take into account the use of social media, and its ongoing professionalized use to construct policy stories

as an expression of power when implementing public policy. This expression of power through social media aids othering like no medium before.

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Appendix

Table 1: Trump Twitter Narratives

Invasion	Criminality	Migrant Children/Camps
"We cannot allow all of these people to **invade** our Country. When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no Judges or Court Cases, bring them back from where they came. Our system is a mockery to good immigration policy and Law and Order. Most children come without parents..." -24 Jun 2018	"Thousands of **illegal aliens** who have committed **sexual crimes against children** are right now in Texas prisons. Most came through our Southern Border. We can end this easily - We need a Steel Barrier or Wall. Walls Work! John Jones, Texas Department of Public Safety." (re-tweet from @FoxNews) -13 Jan 2019	"The **Democrats are forcing the breakup of families** at the Border with their horrible and cruel legislative agenda. Any Immigration Bill MUST HAVE full funding for the Wall, **end Catch & Release**, Visa Lottery and Chain, and go to **Merit Based** Immigration. Go for it! WIN!" -15 Jun 2018
"....Border is eventually going to be **militarized and defended** or the United States, as we have known it, is going to cease to exist...And Americans will not go gentle into that good night. Patrick Buchanan. The great people of our Country demand proper **Border Security** NOW!" (re-tweet by Trump) -13 Jan 2019	"The damage done to our Country from a badly broken Border - **Drugs, Crime** and so much that is bad - is far greater than a Shutdown, which the Dems can easily fix as soon as they come back to Washington!" -13 Jan 2019	"**Children are being used by some of the worst criminals on earth** as a means to enter our country. Has anyone been looking at the Crime taking place south of the border. It is historic, with some countries the most dangerous places in the world. Not going to happen in the U.S." -18 Jun 2018
"....I do have a plan on the Shutdown. But to understand that plan you would have to understand the fact that I won the election, and I promised **safety and security** for the American people. Part of that promise was a Wall at the Southern Border. Elections have consequences!" -12 Jan 2019	"**23% of Federal inmates are illegal immigrants**. **Border arrests** are up 240%. In the Great State of Texas, between 2011 & 2018, there were a total of **292,000 crimes** by **illegal aliens, 539 murders, 32,000 assaults, 3,426 sexual assaults and 3000 weapons charges**. Democrats come back!" -12 Jan 2019	**"Separating families at the Border is the fault of bad legislation** passed by the **Democrats**. Border Security laws should be changed but the **Dems can't get their act together**! Started the Wall." -5 Jun 2018
"Humanitarian Crisis at our Southern Border. I just got back and it is a far worse situation than almost anyone would understand, an **invasion**! I have been there numerous times - The Democrats, Cryin' Chuck and Nancy don't know how bad and dangerous it is for our ENTIRE COUNTRY...." -11 Jan 2019	"...The Steel Barrier, or Wall, should have been built by previous administrations long ago. They never got it done - I will. Without it, our Country **cannot be safe**. **Criminals, Gangs, Human Traffickers, Drugs & so much other big trouble** can easily pour in. It can be stopped cold!" -11 Jan 2019	".@60Minutes did a **phony story about child separation** when they know we had the exact same policy as the Obama Administration. In fact **a picture of children in jails was used by other Fake Media to show how bad (cruel) we are**, but it was in 2014 during O years. **Obama separated...."** -25 Nov 2018
"Catch and Release is an obsolete term. It is now Catch and Detain. **Illegal Immigrants trying to come into the U.S.A**., often proudly flying the flag of their nation as they ask for U.S.	"The most important way to stop **gangs, drugs, human trafficking and massive crime** is at our Southern Border. We need Border Security, and as EVERYONE knows, you can't have	".... **children from parents, as did Bush** etc., because that is the policy and law. **I tried to keep them together** but the problem is, when you do that, vast numbers of additional people **storm the**

Asylum, will be detained or turned away. Dems must approve **Border Security** & Wall NOW!" -18 Nov 2018	**Border Security** without a Wall. The Drones & Technology are just bells and whistles. **Safety for America**!" -23 Dec 2018	**Border**. So with **Obama seperation is fine**, but with Trump it's not. Fake 60 Minutes!" -25 Nov 2018
"The Mayor of Tijuana, Mexico, just stated that "the City is ill-prepared to handle this many migrants, the backlog could last 6 months." Likewise, the U.S. is ill-prepared for this **invasion**, and will not stand for it. They are causing crime and big problems in Mexico. Go home!" -18 Nov 2018	".... however, for strictly political reasons and because they have been pulled so far left, do NOT want **Border Security**. They want **Open Borders** for anyone to come in. This brings **large scale crime and disease**. Our Southern Border is now Secure and will remain that way....." -11 Dec 2018	
"The Caravans are made up of some **very tough fighters** and people. **Fought back hard and viciously against Mexico** at Northern Border before breaking through. Mexican soldiers hurt, were unable, or unwilling to stop Caravan. Should stop them before they reach our Border, but won't!" -31 Oct 2018	"**Illegals** can get up to $3,874 a month under Federal Assistance program. Our social security checks are on average $1200 a month. RT if you agree: If you weren't born in the United States, you should receive $0 assistance." -27 Nov 2018	
"Sadly, it looks like Mexico's Police and **Military are unable to stop the Caravan** heading to the Southern Border of the United States. Criminals and **unknown Middle Easterners are mixed in**. I have alerted Border Patrol and **Military** that this is a **National Emergy**. Must change laws!" -22 Oct 2018	"There are a lot of **CRIMINALS** in the Caravan. We will stop them. **Catch and Detain**! Judicial Activism, by people who know nothing about **security** and the **safety of our citizens**, is putting our country in **great danger**. Not good!" -21 Nov 2018	
	"Isn't it ironic that large Caravans of people are marching to our border wanting U.S.A. asylum because they are fearful of being in their country - yet they are proudly waving...." ".... their country's flag. Can this be possible? Yes, because it is all a **BIG CON**, and the American taxpayer is paying for it!" -16 Nov 2018	
	"If you want to protect **criminal aliens** – VOTE DEMOCRAT. If you want to protect **Law-Abiding** Americans – VOTE REPUBLICAN!" -3 Nov 2018	
	"Republicans believe our Country should be a Sanctuary for **law-abiding Americans** – not **criminal aliens**. And Republicans will ALWAYS stand with the **HEROES of @ICEgov, @CBP, and Law Enforcement!"** -2 Nov 2018	

Bold = keyword or key phrase. Source: Donald J. Trump Verified account @realDonaldTrump

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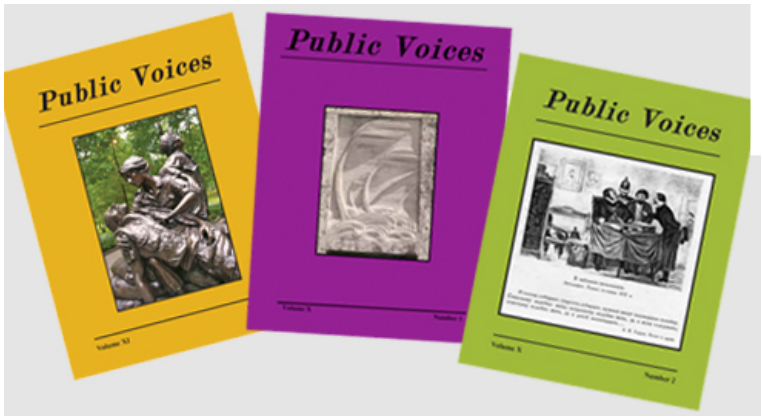

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