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The State Effect and the Politics of Immigration in Arizona

By

Emine Fidan Elcioglu

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor in Philosophy

in

Sociology

in the

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Michael Burawoy, Chair

Professor Kim Voss

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Professor Kathryn Abrams

Spring 2016

The State Effect and the Politics of Immigration in Arizona
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by

Emine Fidan Elcioglu

Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Michael Burawoy, Chair

Despite its unprecedented militarization, the U.S.-Mexico border continues to be the world's most crossed border, with Arizona serving as a key site for unauthorized entry. Moreover, although immigration policy remains a federal prerogative, day-to-day immigration enforcement has increasingly required the involvement of local actors. That there is a large undocumented population despite border buildup, and devolved enforcement despite federal preemption, has sparked political struggles at the local level. This dissertation examines these struggles. Drawing on 16 months of ethnography (2010-2012) with two pro-immigrant and three immigration restrictionist organizations in Arizona, as well as 70 interviews with activists, I show how contrasting assessments of the state's strength shape each movement's worldview, goals, and strategies.

To explain this variation, I propose the concepts of 'strong-state effect' and 'weak-state effect.' A group experiencing the strong-state effect sees the state as a powerful, predatory, and well-coordinated structure, while the weak-state effect produces the perception of the state as feeble, inept, and internally incoherent. In this study, the pro-immigrant movement subscribed to the idea of a strong state, while the restrictionist countermovement experienced the weak-state effect.

Pro-immigrant activists contended that the problem of undocumented immigration was the result of the state's unrestrained coercive power. These activists used the metaphor of 'Nazification' to articulate the fear that the state was growing stronger and more exclusionary. In response to this strong-state effect, pro-immigrant activists in this study strategized how to weaken the state while also building up society's capacity to resist the state's power. By contrast, restrictionist activists attributed the problem of undocumented immigration to the state's weakness as a policing body. The specter of 'Mexicanization' was the particular way in which restrictionists conveyed their anxieties about a state that had lost physical control over its territory and its resources. In response to this *weak-state effect*, restrictionist tactics tried to extend the state's reach while also building up the ability to aid the state. In sum, grassroots

immigration politics unfolded in a highly patterned way, as a struggle to change the scope and power of the state.

This study addresses two limitations in previous research. First, sociological studies often intuit that there is a relationship between the two competing sides of immigration politics, but few works have empirically examined both sides together and their relationships to each other. Second, previous research has struggled with theoretically bridging on-the-ground micro processes of mobilization with macro-level structures. In addressing these limitations with a relational political ethnography of the field, this dissertation makes three theoretical contributions.

First, this dissertation empirically illustrates that the state, as an effect of ideology, is not always successful. In fact, the very place that scholars have predicted the state effect to be the strongest—a nation's border—is exactly where this effect is only *sometimes* experienced. Second, to theorize this variation in perceptions of state power, I rely on the concepts of the strong-state effect and the weak-state effect. In doing so, I show how disparate perceptions of the state's power can be basis of contentious politics. Third, the emphasis on activists' assessments of the state contributes to our understanding of social movements' tactical repertoires. This study illustrates how a movement's beliefs about the state inform its strategies. Finally, the state-effect lens is a tool that helps us see how tactics are *oppositional* and referential across political lines. With this lens, I argue, we can see the 'field' of social relations that constitute immigration politics.

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Chapter 1
Introduction:
The State Effect and the Politics of Immigration in Arizona¹

Part I

Renee² often fantasized about getting into her truck and crashing it into the U.S.-Mexico border fence. She first told me about this fantasy as we were driving to a border town in Southern Arizona. We were on our way to attend a silent vigil that had been organized by the family of a 19-year old Latino who had been shot in the back three times by a U.S. Border Patrol agent. The young victim had been an American citizen. He was shot while fleeing across the border into Mexico, reportedly transporting marijuana. He bled to death afterwards. The victim's family created a memorial and shrine at the border fence where he had been shot. A short while later, the Border Patrol hand-delivered a letter to the family demanding that the memorial be removed because it was obstructing the agents' view of the other side. On the encouragement of several pro-immigrant groups, including the one that Renee belonged to—the Advocates—the family decided not to comply with the Border Patrol. To support the family's commitment to keep the memorial up, the Advocates organized a caravan to bring other group members to the border to attend the vigil. Border Patrol was scheduled to remove the memorial the following day.

As we held our vigil candles, Renee spotted Border Patrol in the distance and pointed in their direction. I looked over and saw two parked Border Patrol vans. Three agents leaned against one of the vehicles, as they watched our gathering. 'Even if they figure out which agent pulled the trigger and take him to court, they'll never find him [the agent] guilty of murder,' she mumbled, shaking her head.³ When I asked her what made her so certain, she recalled another similar case, this time involving a young man from the nearby Tohono O'odham Reservation, who had died after being run over by a Border Patrol van. The driver had been tried, but not found guilty. For Renee, there was a clear pattern. That a state agency could kill a citizen without fear of consequence, and in this more recent case, stop his family from memorializing him, was indicative of how strong and punitive the state had become. Despite Renee's conviction that the shooter would never truly be brought to justice, the Advocates and other allied pro-immigrant organizations encouraged the family to publicize their grief through a series of press conferences and bring a lawsuit against the agency. There was no choice but to resist the state and weaken it.

While for Renee, the U.S.-Mexico border fence served as a painful reminder of the state's strength and impunity, Dale thought otherwise. On a ranch 40 miles west of where the Advocates had convened for the silent vigil, Dale and I stood in front of a vehicle barrier that marked the

¹ This dissertation builds on Timothy Mitchell's concept of 'state effect' and it is for this reason I borrow the term for the title.

² All names of individuals and organizations mentioned in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

³ Single quotation marks indicate approximate utterances that were recorded into my fieldnotes while double quotation marks indicate direct quotes that have been audio-recorded.

U.S.-Mexico boundary. He told me about how, as a kid, he used to think that a border meant a tall, sturdy wall, manned by armed government agents. Growing up, he had seen images of the Berlin Wall before it fell and he imagined that this kind of fortified walling existed around the world, including, and perhaps especially, at the U.S.-Mexico border. “I mean, it’s supposed to be a *secure* border, right? I was sure that nobody could come across and hurt America.” He told me about how when he first visited a ranch on the Arizona-Sonora boundary, Dale was surprised to see that there were only a few vehicle barriers to separate one nation from another and that he could walk into Mexico, turn around, and walk right back into the U.S. without the Border Patrol even showing up. To see if other parts of the border were also poorly guarded, he flew over the rest of Arizona and New Mexico in a small airplane with other members of his organization, the Engineers. There were swaths of territory along the boundary where there was “nothing,” Dale explained. To prove his point, he climbed onto the barrier we stood next to, straddled it, touched one foot onto the Mexican side, and then hopped back over to the U.S. side. He was right. Border Patrol was nowhere to be seen. The flimsiness of the border, Dale concluded, was a symptom of a jarringly weak state.

A few weeks later, I watched Dale’s lanky figure walk across a field. I was watching a projector screen set up in the Arizona State Legislature. At the invitation of a state senator, the Engineers were livestreaming a demonstration of the newest surveillance equipment that the group had developed—highly-sensitive ground sensors—for a state senate committee. As Dale walked, he tripped a sensor located 400 feet away from him. The screen lit up with a map showing Dale’s exact location. An Engineer explained to the audience of legislators that if their sensor-based system was installed at the boundary, it could detect people walking northward long before they even crossed the line. The early detection would give U.S. Border Patrol ample time to dispatch agents and resources to the area where crossers were expected to make illegal entry. Dale and his group argued that the Border Patrol needed these sensors because the agency did not have a comprehensive surveillance system. The agency dispatched field agents haphazardly and belatedly. Moreover, border officials lacked accurate counts of how many people were actually getting through on a daily basis. The flaws in Border Patrol’s current system along with the arbitrary placement of the border fortifications seemed like clear indications of the state’s weakness. Dale hoped that his group could do their part to help strengthen it.

Despite their geographic proximity to each other, Renee and Dale came to completely different assessments of Border Patrol’s competence. While Renee saw the agency as a dangerous, often fatal force—whose victims included U.S. citizens—Dale was incredulous that he could, literally, straddle the border without any reprimands from the state. What explains these different assessments of Border Patrol? How did they come to such contrasting conclusions about whether or not the U.S.-Mexico border was consequential? Moreover, how did each side translate these convictions into social movement strategy? What is the nature of grassroots immigration politics⁴ in the U.S.? These are the questions that animate this dissertation.

To answer these questions, this study draws primarily on ethnographic and interview-based data that I gathered in Central and Southern Arizona from February 2011 to May 2012. I focus on five grassroots organizations, all of which were deeply frustrated with undocumented migration and the state of the U.S.-Mexico border. Renee belonged to the Advocates, a group

⁴ In this dissertation, ‘politics’ refers to extra-electoral mobilization of groups in pursuit of social change.

that was *pro-immigrant* in political orientation. The Advocates, along with another likeminded organization, the Humanitarians, wanted to reduce the deportability of noncitizen groups by *weakening* the state. The two non-profit organizations worked towards this goal in different ways. As a 15-person operation based out of a medium-sized city in Southern Arizona, the Advocates strived to equip noncitizen (and especially undocumented) residents with the tools to resist the state in their daily lives. Meanwhile, the Humanitarians first gained public notoriety in the mid-2000s for putting out jugs of water along migrant paths in Arizona's Sonoran Desert. At the time of my fieldwork, the group had expanded its repertoire of activities, but always with the goal of curtailing the state's reach—in the desert and elsewhere.

The remaining three groups in this study—the Engineers, the Soldiers and the Arpaiositos—were *restrictionist*: these organizations wanted to increase the deportability of noncitizens by strengthening the state. Dale was one of the six core members of the Engineers. Funded by almost 150 donor-members nationwide, the Engineers used a ranch in Southern Arizona as a laboratory for researching and developing border surveillance methods that they hoped to contract out to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Like the Engineers, the Soldiers also worked out of a ranch near the U.S.-Mexico border. However, in their outward appearance and their activities, the Soldiers were far more reminiscent of Minutemen-like nativist border groups. The 20-member organization patrolled the 55,000-acre ranch as part of a reconnaissance program for the Border Patrol. This study also focuses on a third restrictionist group, the Arpaiositos. Unlike the Soldiers and the Engineers, the Arpaiositos operated away from the rural Arizona borderlands, in the city of Phoenix. There, as an organization of 20 people, the Arpaiositos spent most of their time publicly supporting a restrictionist local official, Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).

The close study of these two pro-immigrant and three restrictionist organizations sheds light on how and why immigration has become politicized in the ways that it has.

Why Study Arizona?

According to both Renee and Dale, Arizona captured the 'problem' with how the U.S. managed migration. For Renee, circumstances in Arizona illustrated the strength and impunity of government actors, while Dale believed that the conditions in Arizona suggested the very opposite. How was it that pro-immigrant and restrictionist activists read state power in such divergent ways?

In this section, I argue that two ambiguities of immigration enforcement create the conditions for different understandings of the state. One ambiguity stems from the way in which border enforcement has expanded since the 1990s: despite the unprecedented buildup of the U.S.-Mexico border since the 1990s (Miller 2014), undocumented immigration, via this border, has persisted (Cornelius 2005; Nevins 2007). Or put differently, *the border has simultaneously become more fortified and more porous*. There is also a second ambiguity in how immigration policing has developed. Although the federal government has maintained that only it has the power to enact immigration policy, day-to-day immigration enforcement has increasingly required the involvement of local actors, like the police (Coleman 2012). That is, *immigration enforcement has become simultaneously a federal prerogative and a local affair*. That there is a large undocumented population despite border buildup and localized enforcement despite federal preemption can lead to opposite assessments of state power.

To pro-immigrant activists, these circumstances indicated state strength. It was precisely the state's coerciveness that instigated migration, then illegalized it, and eventually, made cyclical migration so dangerous that a large undocumented population came to form in the U.S. By contrast, restrictionist activists believed that the feebleness of the state as a policing body was what allowed the number of undocumented people in the U.S. to reach its present proportions. Similarly, activists perceived the devolution of immigration enforcement in two different manners. According to pro-immigrant activists, this localization revealed a dominant state that was spreading its punitive logic across all spheres of life. However, to restrictionists, this very same devolution suggested that the state needed local help because it was too weak to enforce immigration laws on its own. Thus, these ambiguities in the way that enforcement has developed have created a context in which groups can experience the strong-state effect and the weak-state effect at the border. Neither tension—in the nature of border control or immigration enforcement—is unique to Arizona; they extend out to the rest of the U.S. However, as I discuss below, the effects of these two tensions are best observed in Arizona and it is for this reason that the southwestern state provides an excellent setting for studying immigration politics.⁵

* * *

Although Arizona appeared to be the center of the U.S. border 'crisis' during the period of the present study (2010-2012), this was not always the case. To the extent that public commentators talked about undocumented immigration in the 1990s, the topic was often associated with California. This made sense, given that in this period, approximately two-thirds of migrants coming from south of the border, crossed through California (Massey et al. 2002: 107). Migrants entered the country at urban and populated points of entry along the U.S.-Mexico border—most significantly, along Imperial Beach in San Diego. This pattern of crossing changed, however, when the federal government embraced a new approach to managing migration.

In 1993, the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) developed a program called 'prevention through deterrence'. This initiative called for the deployment of border enforcement resources in well-populated and urban points of entry, with the expectation that rural, isolated, and rougher terrain would serve as a natural barrier (Nevins 2002). Indeed, earlier that very year, the Border Patrol had experimented with this philosophy of deterrence in El Paso, Texas. Operation Blockade, as the El Paso program came to be called, involved posting hundreds of Border Patrol agents and dozens of vehicles along the 20-mile stretch of the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez boundary (Dunn 2010). While a government report acknowledged that the maneuver did not deter migration but simply shifted it to other places, the initiative was still considered a

⁵ Note that while this section discusses the ambiguities that emerged out of the way in which immigration and border enforcement has developed, this study is not intended to be a Skocpolian polity-centered approach (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six). In her study of the politics of social provisions, Theda Skocpol (1995) places the "polity as the primary locus of action" so that what matters is the effect that these political institutions have on social groups and the level of "fit" between social groups "goals and capacities" and "the nation's political institutions" (41). Within this perspective, social movements exist, but only insofar as they fill roles that are pre-structured by the polity. In the last instance, therefore, it is the state that matters. While I recognize the importance of the conditions that are created by state institutions, this study's main emphasis is on the ways in which social groups perceive the state, and how these assessments of state power in turn shape and are shaped by their mobilization practices. As I explain in more detail in the rest of the chapter, I deploy a more Bourdieusian approach that takes immigration politics as a field of struggle encompassing state institutions, but not limited to them.

success (Office of the Inspector General 1998 I.C.; Cornelius 2001: 663). Some argued that the program's popularity was connected to the fact that it moved undocumented migration—and with it, immigration enforcement—out of sight (Fan 2008).

With the launch of Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego the following year, the prevention-through-deterrence program became a central feature of U.S.-Mexico border policing (Nevins 2002). The effects of the program were immediately palpable: as traditional urban crossing points were fortified, migrants were funneled towards Arizona and forced to cross into the U.S. through the arid terrain of the Sonoran Desert (Andreas 2000; Nevins 2002; Cornelius 2005). The nature of crossing thus began to change. The riskiness of the endeavor increased, culminated in an estimated 4,000 migrant deaths between 1994 and 2006 (Nevins 2007: 229). Crossers began paying steep fees to hire professional smugglers to guide them through the sparsely-populated rural terrain of Southern Arizona (Andreas 2000; Cornelius 2001: 666). Drug-trafficking organizations also worked their way into this growing market (Slack and Whiteford 2011).

In tandem with these developments, the U.S.-Mexico border became one of the most heavily fortified land-crossings in the world (Dunn 1997; Nevins 2002; Miller 2014). U.S. Border Patrol grew in numbers from 4,000 agents in 1994 to 21,000 agents in 2013 and its umbrella agency, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, became the largest federal law enforcement agency in the United States (Miller 2014: 27). Thus, the government's policy of prevention may have rendered migration less visible in urban places along the border. However, it also led to the tense coexistence of unprecedented border fortification, on the one hand, and unabated migration, on the other. Arizona became the place along the U.S.-Mexico border where this paradoxical development was most acutely experienced. As the vignettes of Dale and Renee illustrate, opposing groups came to read the very same stretch of the Arizona-Mexico border quite differently—as a place with weak state presence or as a place with strong state presence.

Arizona also became a site where the paradoxical effects of immigration enforcement in the interior were felt. The 1990s and 2000s were a period in which the federal government and state legislatures fought over power to enact immigration policies. This struggle never resolved the jurisdictional issue. However it did lead to a tag-team effort of experimenting with localized approaches to immigration enforcements, culminating in the passage of a controversial restrictionist measure in Arizona in 2010. To understand Arizona in 2010, however, it is necessary to once again look at what was happening in California in the early 1990s.

A year after the federal government began experimenting with 'prevention-through-deterrence' program, voters in California passed Proposition 187 by an overwhelming margin. The measure made it so that street-level government bureaucrats—from police officers to public school teachers to healthcare providers—had to collude with immigration authorities. These public institutions had to verify the legal status of the people they serviced, and report anyone with an irregular status to the INS (HoSang 2010: 161). Although the measure was eventually found to be unconstitutional, it nonetheless helped shape federal immigration reform in the years that followed. In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) into law. One component of IIRIRA directly echoed Prop 187: Section 287(g) of the Act allowed the federal government to train and authorize state and local law enforcement in immigration enforcement. By deputizing police, the program served as a 'force multiplier' for the INS (Michaud 2010: 1085). The implementation of the 287(g) program was followed by a dozen other similar federal government initiatives that fell

under the umbrella of “Agreements of Cooperation in Communities to Enhance Safety and Security” or ICE ACCESS programs (2010: 1094-5). Together, ICE ACCESS constituted a systematic effort to partner immigration enforcement agencies with police and sheriff’s departments throughout the country.

It was within this context of devolving immigration enforcement that Arizona legislators, in 2004, managed to pass a measure that resembled California Prop 187. Arizona Proposition 200 mandated social service providers to look into the immigration status of applicants while also requiring proof of U.S. citizenship to register to vote. Worried that the successful passage of Prop 200 would encourage more state-level restrictionist bills, Arizona’s Democratic governor at the time, Janet Napolitano, brokered an agreement between ICE and an Arizona Sheriff—Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County—to bring the 287(g) program to her state (Shahani and Greene 2009: 23-29). Once again, this maneuver was intended to put the power of enacting immigration law back into the hands of the federal government. Ironically, however, it did so *not* by getting rid of localized immigration enforcement, but rather by spreading the practice further.

Indeed, federal initiatives like 287(g) were the very ones that Arizona state legislators had in mind when they introduced restrictionist legislation in ensuing years—including Arizona Senate Bill 1070 (Michaud 2010). Signed into law in 2010, SB1070’s key provision required immigration status checks during law enforcement stops. In conservative circles, the measure became the gold standard for immigration reform, generating a flurry of ‘copycat’ bills in other states. From the get-go, the federal government expressed disapproval of SB1070: two months after it was signed into law, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against Arizona (U.S. Department of Justice 2010). In 2012, however, the Supreme Court upheld the measure’s central provision, in part, because it remained unclear how different SB1070 was from the federal government’s existing enforcement practices (Howe 2012a, 2012b; U.S. Supreme Court 2012: 9-11). Thus, the struggle over which layer of government could and could not enact immigration law was never really resolved. The back-and-forth maneuvering did however culminate in the devolution of federal immigration control to local entities.

The localization of immigration enforcement, in turn, localized immigration politics.⁶ That is, it made the state’s reach something that local groups believed they could directly shape. For example, as we will see in Chapter Four, pro-immigrant organizations worried that local institutions were no longer safe from being implicated in immigration control. As a result, much of these organizations’ day-to-day activism was geared towards preventing local entities from cooperating with federal immigration agencies. Meanwhile, restrictionist groups strived to keep immigration control localized. As we will see in Chapter Five, the Arpaiositos, for instance, spent most of their time defending Sheriff Arpaio’s ability to *keep on using* his 287(g) powers. The devolution of policing prompted local groups to mobilize in ways that they felt they could directly alter the state’s reach.

Thus, as a place where the paradoxes of the migration system are most visible, Arizona is a fitting site to examine the nature of immigration politics. To anchor this study’s sociological significance, the next section turns to a discussion of how other scholars have theorized grassroots struggles around immigration.

⁶ Walter Nicholls (2013) has made a similar observation (see pages 148-150).

Part II: Theories of Immigration Politics

A rich and growing scholarship has engaged with the topic of immigration politics, and particularly how these struggles unfold at the grassroots level. However, there are two overarching problems with this literature. The first limitation is related to research design. While the scholarship often intuits that there is a relationship between the two competing sides of immigration politics, few studies have empirically examined both sides and their relationships to each other. Second, this literature has struggled with theoretically bridging on-the-ground micro processes with macro-level structures. As a result of these shortcomings, four relatively disparate strains of research have emerged, which are summarized in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1: SCHOLARSHIP ABOUT IMMIGRATION POLITICS

	Macro Without Micro	Micro Without Macro
Restrictionist Activism	Restrictionism as derivative of state policies	Restrictionism as apolitical civic engagement
Pro-Immigrant Activism	Pro-Immigrant activism as mobilization process	Pro-Immigrant activism as religious practice

Beginning with the top row of Table 1.1, the research on restrictionist activism can be divided into two broad categories. On the one hand, some scholars have tried to make sense of restrictionist activism by discussing the legal, political, and socioeconomic conditions that may have fostered this kind of mobilization, without in fact empirically studying this activism. In other words, this strain of scholarship has described the popularity of restrictionism by relying solely on an analysis of the macro-structural context—particularly the state’s ideological power—without examining its micro-effects of this productive power on its recipients. As a result, restrictionist activism gets characterized as the residue of state policies, rather than a productive form of social action in and of itself. I refer to this framing as “macro without the micro.” Meanwhile, other studies about restrictionism suffer from the opposite problem: albeit empirically-engaged and highly-descriptive, such studies do not situate restrictionist mobilization in its larger political context. As I show below, this kind of “micro without the macro” framework lends itself to a discussion of restrictionism as an apolitical, or non-conflictual, form of civic engagement.

To a lesser extent, similar shortcomings characterize the literature about pro-immigrant activism, which once again results in two groups of studies. Starting with the lower-left hand corner of Table 1.1, one strand of scholarship about pro-immigrant activism has focused on the religiosity of mobilization. Scholars in this group describe the micro features of this activism in an ethnographically rich manner. However, just as with ethnographies of restrictionist activism, this variety of scholarship fails to adequately analyze the sociological conditions that made this politics so religious in the first place. At the same time, scholars of pro-immigrant politics have also been interested in understanding the factors that allowed for such rapid and large-scale mobilization around the country in 2006. Using Table 1 as a heuristic device, this literature about the 2006 protests is another, more nuanced, version of ‘macro without the micro.’ That is, the effort to list mobilization mechanisms overshadows the analysis of any other characteristics of this politics, including the particular ends that participants hope to achieve. Below, I discuss each

of these four threads of scholarship in more detail, as well as how, together, they imply the need for a field analysis.

Restrictionist Activism: Politics without the Data and Data without the Politics

A group of studies that has strived to make sense of the resurgence of grassroots restrictionism tackled the subject without empirically examining restrictionist organizations. That is, this line of scholarship has ignored the actual micro effects of the macro political context. Instead, scholarship in this vein endeavored to link the broader political context to what secondary sources – particularly the news media – reported that restrictionist organizations did and said. The resulting analysis is what I have called elsewhere a trickle-down model of nativism (Elcioglu 2015). In this model, the state was thought to engage in racist, exclusionary discourses and practices which non-state actors—like restrictionist grassroots groups—absorbed and perpetuated (Massey and Sanchez R 2010; Romero 2011; Kil et al. 2009; Navarro 2008; Nevins 2008; De Genova 2004; Nevins 2002; Massey et al. 2002).⁷

In particular, scholarship of this variety placed tremendous weight on the expressive and symbolic effects of laws and legal codes (Calavita 1996; Cacho 2000; Ngai 2003; De Genova 2004; Bosniak 2008; Newton 2008). For instance, many studies noted how immigration laws since 1965 have not only placed severe restrictions on ‘legal’ migration from Mexico. Such laws also spawned a system of “inclusion through illegality” (Coutin 2000) or “legal production of Mexican/migrant illegality”, in turn naturalizing Mexican migrants’ “illegality” and racialized associations between Mexican-ness and “illegal alien” (De Genova 2004). Similarly, the state’s targeting of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands for militarized enforcement obscured the dynamics of the transnational labor market and perpetuated a ‘nostalgic’ myth that “borders once constituted effective shelter” (Andreas 2000:142). In all these accounts, the state—in particular its laws—was the main unit of analysis. As such, nativism was thought to trickle down from the legislator’s pen into the institutions of civil society.

While restrictionist activism should certainly be placed in its broader political and legal context, this top-down approach runs into two problems. First, because this scholarship sees the state as the primary source of exclusionary politics, it presumes what grassroots restrictionist activism is like, rather than actually investigating it. As such, this approach forecloses the study of how the state’s frameworks are actually interpreted and acted upon by activists on the ground.⁸

Second, because this top-down approach precluded close examination of activists’ micropractices, it often fosters misleading appraisals of groups and their relationships to the state. For example, some have referred to restrictionist mobilization as instances of ‘anti-immigrant hysteria’ (Massey and Sanchez R 2010:70) and to restrictionist organizations along

⁷ Although none of these scholars explicitly refer to it, this top-down approach to nativism is reminiscent of, and seems to be an extreme example of the Skocpolian polity-centered perspective that is discussed in footnote 3 above and is explicated further in Chapter Six.

⁸ An important exception to this trend is the work of René Flores (2014) which examines how a restrictionist ordinance in Hazelton, Pennsylvania “motivated anti-immigrant activism, hardened native views of Hispanics...and increased native whites’ fears of lawlessness and crime” (13). While Flores did not necessarily seek out activists who had been involved in organization either for or against the ordinance, he did conduct interviews with “elite” and “non-elite” residents in order to understand the effect of the measure on interethnic relations.

the border as ‘vigilante’ groups (Massey and Sanchez R 2010:70-1; Navarro 2008; Neiwert 2013). Terms like ‘hysteria’ and ‘vigilantism’ suggest that these groups operate at the margins of society, lack ties to state actors, and/or do not want to cultivate relationships with the state (Massey and Sanchez R 2010; Kil et al. 2009; Navarro 2008; Nevins 2002, 2008; De Genova 2004; Massey et al. 2002). Ironically, therefore, the effort to give grassroots restrictionism a political context leads to the reverse analytical conclusion: groups that are thought to be shaped by the state are still characterized as operating in a political void.⁹ However, as this dissertation shows, this kind of depiction of restrictionism is far from accurate. Restrictionist groups, in this study, were highly aware of what state actors did (and failed to do) and looked for ways to work with them. In response, restrictionist activist help was often tolerated, if not welcomed, by state actors.

Thus, this group of studies about restrictionism has ignored the micro effects of the macro context created by the state. As a result, restrictionist mobilization is painted as nothing more than derivative of state policies. This approach forecloses the study of how activists actually interpret and respond to the state’s frameworks and practices. In doing so, this approach ironically reinforces the idea that restrictionist activists, as hysterical agents, operate in a political void.

Another group of studies about restrictionism has departed from the tendency to take the state as the main unit of analysis, focusing instead on restrictionist groups themselves. However, as I explain in more detail below, the most successful of these efforts—Harel Shapira’s ethnographic study of the Minutemen movement—has stripped the discussion of its political context. That is to say, instead of adopting a lens that loses sight of the micro in considering the macro political context, this line of research has suffered from the opposite problem: It focuses on the micro without the macro, by offering data without situating it in a field of political struggle.

The inclination to study the actual ways in which restrictionist activists mobilized was prompted by the emergence of the Minutemen. The Minutemen was a restrictionist movement in Arizona that attracted significant public attention (Eastman 2012; Johnson 2011; Oliviero 2011; Shapira 2013). To make sense of the Minutemen, Roxanne Lynn Doty (2009) offered the term ‘popular sovereignty’ as a way to begin to conceptualize the state’s relationship to nativist activism. She suggested that the Minutemen tried to get the state to be more sovereign by perpetuating the socially-constructed distinction between the citizen and undocumented Other. Nevertheless, with limited ethnographic data, her analysis collapsed into a conventional account of Minutemen activism as ‘extra-legal’ (2009: 15), ‘vigilante’ (2009: 14, 23, 101-2), and therefore unclearly linked to the larger political context.

By comparison to Doty and other scholars who have discussed restrictionism before him, Harel Shapira (2013) provided a far more detailed account of the Minutemen’s actual day-to-day practices and the meanings they drew from them. Despite its ethnographic vividness, however, his study loses sight of what made the Minutemen political. In *Waiting for José*, Shapira argued that the Minutemen’s activism, ostensibly devised to accomplish exclusion, really revolved about

⁹ Other scholars of the Right have documented a similar analytical bias in sociological studies of rightwing and conservative movements. For example, Jerome Himmelstein (1990) notes that by treating far right political tendencies as fringe elements which occasionally surface as “discrete political eruptions” (73), we lose sight of how they may be connected to the larger political economy.

the sense of inclusion it afforded the Minutemen themselves. That is, the Minutemen's discussions of 'José'—the undocumented Other—were really musings about how the Minutemen themselves fit into a changing world. The men used the border as a "resource for restoring conditions of life that they have struggled to maintain: soldiering, securing the nation, protecting family members, and establishing masculine camaraderie" (152). Casting the Minutemen as "Robert Putnam's ideal democratic actors" (18) against a background of declining associational life, is sociologically compelling. While not mentioned by Shapira, this conclusion dovetails other scholars' observations about the growing popularity of "bowling alone, policing together" (Klinenberg 2001) and, more broadly, the unexpected ways that securitization has intersected with societal participation (Garland 2001).

However, Shapira's analysis did not go beyond reframing grassroots restrictionism as a form of civic life. Despite his vivid account of the social world that the Minutemen created for themselves, *Waiting for José* did not explain what about the border—as opposed to any another political, social, and geographic space—transformed it into this "resource" for associational life (152). In other words, how and why did the border provide the material for the Minutemen's activism? Shapira's proclivity to downplay the significance of the conflictual aspect of the object of his study is particularly surprising, given that he supplemented his research about the Minutemen with "over 250 hours" of fieldwork with a pro-immigrant organization (126). In fact, he documented an encounter between the two opposing groups in the desert, which deeply challenges his own argument.

During this encounter, Fred, a Minutemen, told a group of pro-immigrant activists that his organization also gave migrants food and water. Fred explained, "What we do...is we give the illegals food and water and then we call the Border Patrol." In response, Heather, a pro-immigrant activist replied, "Well, what *we* do is give them food and water and ask them if they want us to call the Border Patrol" (127). Following this vignette, Shapira asked his readers whether "the difference between asking...to call the Border Patrol or simply calling the Border Patrol" was "a big or small difference?" (132) While he did not directly answer this question, he stated, "That there are differences between the two [groups] is certain, but what is also certain is that they, and many of us, imagine this difference as much larger than it is" (2013: 132). In this framework, Shapira read the two groups' actions as simply two forms of volunteering, each of which was linked to a distinct "project of the self" (22) and "a way of living" (23). Getting hung up on the groups' ideological differences missed the point, Shapira argued. Instead, grassroots immigration politics represented efforts to build community and make activists' "ideas...about themselves, make sense" (22).

This encounter in the desert, however, can be read differently. That it was a state agency – the Border Patrol – against which Heather and Fred defined their respective groups, is highly significant. Much like Renee, who we met earlier, Heather strived to curtail the state's reach. By being present at the border, with the intent of giving 'humanitarian aid' to crossers who were committing a misdemeanor (illegal entry), and often, an aggravated felony (illegal re-entry), Heather's organization cast the border as a site where civilians could (and in fact, should) mitigate and limit the state's impact. At the same time, Heather and her colleagues gave undocumented crossers an opportunity to avoid encounters with the state altogether. That is, if a traveling migrant did not want to be 'rescued' by Border Patrol, he or she could drink the water and eat the food that Heather's group provided, and then, continue on their way. By contrast, Fred's organizational protocol was to call the Border Patrol under all circumstances. Indeed, as

Shapira documented in his book, the Minutemen stayed in touch with the agency at all times and tried to get the Border Patrol to recognize their group as a helpful civilian partner (62-69). The Minutemen thus cultivated a very different relationship with the state. Like Dale and his group, Shapira's Minutemen acted with the understanding that the state needed outside help. Thus, by capturing contrasting interactions each group had with the state, Shapira's data organically suggests a different story. To ignore the oppositional and relational nature of this civic engagement is to miss a central element of immigration politics.

Pro-Immigrant Activism as Religious Practice or Mobilization Process

Compared to research about restrictionism, empirical studies on pro-immigrant groups have been more abundant and more analytically-nuanced. Nonetheless, the problems highlighted earlier—of emphasizing either the micro at the cost of losing sight of the macro, or vice versa—are arguably also present in studies about pro-immigrant activism.

On the one hand, many highly-descriptive, ethnographic studies about the religious aspects of pro-immigrant politics have not convincingly provided an analytical framework about the larger socio-political conditions that has fostered this mobilization (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008; Van Ham 2011; Cook 2011; Kotin et al. 2011). This strain of scholarship has been highly attentive to documenting and describing the myriad ways in which religion has manifested itself in pro-immigrant activism. For example, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, in her aptly-titled book *God's Heart has No Borders*, explained how religion “offers a tool box that, in the hands of skillful advocates and activists, can help build a more welcoming, democratic, inclusive society” (2008: 8). One of her case studies in particular—an annual ceremony called the Posada sin Fronteras—unambiguously depicts how religion facilitated interaction between otherwise socially-distant groups. Held at the San Diego-Tijuana border, this yearly event, literally, brought together participants from both sides of the fence. Hondagneu-Sotelo explains how by knitting together Mexican Catholic traditions and Christian beliefs, the Posada gave participants an opportunity to perform “Christian anti-borderism,” or to “imagine themselves with a collective identity” that transcended national boundaries (2008: 168). Other scholars have also discussed the use of religious rituals to enact “a common humanity” (Van Ham 2011) and promote multiculturalism (Kotin et al. 2011). Still others have described the more instrumental actions taken on by faith-based groups on behalf of immigrants—such as educating U.S. citizens about the border, putting out humanitarian aid in the desert, and publicly justifying these and other actions in moral terms (Menjívar 2007; Cook 2011).

However, across all these studies, it remains unclear how or why religion has provided the ‘toolbox’ that it has to pro-immigrant activists. Instead, this scholarship tends to be very descriptive. This descriptive bent is linked to the fact that this literature emerged largely to document a relationship between religion and immigration that previous immigration scholarship had neglected: how faith plays an important role not only in the quotidian lives of immigrants, but also in political mobilizations on behalf of immigrants and their rights. Hondagneu-Sotelo's confession of her own tense personal relationship with religion, and therefore her personal surprise at her findings, perfectly captures the motivation of this scholarship. “I began with a healthy dose of skepticism toward religion, and during the time I spent in the field, the front page news...fed my antipathy toward religiosity in general.” However, “[i]nterviewing religious-based activists for this book...opened my agnostic eyes to the progressive potential of organized

religion. In fact, I developed deep respect and admiration for these people, who, acting out of religious faith, work to make the social world a better place” (x-xi).

What captivates Hondagneu-Sotelo, therefore, is how religion, conventionally the handmaiden of *rightwing* politics in the U.S., has become a resource for the Left. She notes that “mainstream observers often think of religious activists as inherently conservative, exclusively focused on abortion, marriage, sexuality, and curtailing gay rights,” but that “a segment of these religious-based activists has been working to expand and protect the labor, civil, and migration rights of newcomers” (6). This framing – of genuine surprise about the potential of religion – becomes the endpoint of the analysis.

What remains unclear is how state actors and oppositional groups, have helped shape the conditions of the struggle so that faith has become an important resource. That is, just as with Shapira’s ethnographic study of the Minutemen, an analysis of the field is missing. To the extent that there is discussion of oppositional entities and forces in the political struggle, they are relegated to ‘background’ sections and painted with broad brush strokes. For instance, to explain how and why the Posada sin Fronteras has emerged, Hondagneu-Sotelo discusses the rise in migrant deaths at the border as a result of changing border enforcement policies (2008:138-141). In a similar manner, Cecilia Menjivar (2007) prefaces her empirical analysis of two pro-immigrant organizations that were “serving Christ in the borderlands” with a brief background discussion of border militarization and “anti-immigrant legislation” at the federal and state level. She argues that these enforcement measures constitute “an aggressive system of exclusion and marginalization, expressed in multiple forms of violence against immigrants. [T]his multifaceted concept of violence...provides a *context* within which faith workers carry out their mission” (106, my italics).

By contrast, this dissertation does not take the context of mobilization as simply a backdrop to be described before the presentation of the data. Rather, the field of struggle is precisely the analytical starting point for understanding the nature of mobilization. As Chapters Two and Four show, the salience of religion in pro-immigrant activism has to be understood in relation to participants’ perceptions of a highly-coercive state. While some pro-immigrant practices that are described in this study—such as the two annual pilgrimages—were explicitly religious in nature, their sociological significance lay in the fact that these religious practices embodied two state-weakening tactics. At the same time, these pilgrimages served as foils to the kinds of state-strengthening strategies deployed by restrictionist groups. Thus, it is necessary to see how these religious moments fit with the rest of the pro-immigrant tactical repertoire as well as their relationship to other stakeholders in the field of struggle.

This relational lens and acknowledgement of macro field dynamics is far more apparent in another stream of research, which was prompted by the nationwide pro-immigrant mobilization in May 2006. The timing of the marches drove some scholars to discuss the passage of a restrictionist measure—H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act—which had been passed in the House of Representatives several months earlier. In addition to increasing investment in border buildup and devolving immigration enforcement to local authorities, H.R. 4437 would have criminalized undocumented immigrants as well as those who assisted them (Pantoja et al. 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Salas 2008; Bloemraad et al. 2011; Gonzales 2013, see chapter 2). Indeed, the marches were thought to be the reason why the U.S. Senate refused to even consider the bill (Bloemraad et al. 2011). The implication of this approach, therefore, was that to understand the nature of pro-immigrant

mobilization in this instance required an analysis of opposing political forces, just as the failure of the pending restrictionist legislation required a discussion of the pro-immigrant marches.¹⁰

Among scholars, Hondagnue-Sotelo and Salas (2008) emphasized the importance of relational political context the most. The authors stated that “the immigrant rights movement developed in reaction to growing restrictionism. It emerged in reaction not to growing immigration but, rather, in response to the urgencies posed by racialized nativism (directed largely, but not entirely, against Mexicans), xenophobia, and *restrictionism*” (310, my italics). Likewise, the stymieing of the pro-immigrant movement since 2006 prompted a similar, broader approach that contextualized the movement. Using a Gramscian framework, Alfonso Gonzales (2013) argued that “anti-migrant bloc,” or “constellation of forces composed of elected officials, state bureaucrats, think tanks, intellectuals, and charismatic media personalities” were responsible for delimiting the immigration debate to “narrow questions of criminality and anti-terrorism” ultimately leading to piecemeal “reform without justice” (Gonzales 2013: 5). Together, these studies implied the need for a more relational approach to the study of pro-immigrant politics, one which looked beyond just the social movement in question. Moreover, in a few cases—such as Gonzales’ discussion of “anti-migrant hegemony”—scholars searched for explanations about the nature of the pro-immigrant movement by referencing the opposing movement.¹¹

However, this stream of scholarship about the 2006 marches and their aftermath, arguably neglected key aspects of the micro effects of this field of struggle, namely the specific ideological ends of mobilization. Using primarily a social movement lens, sociologists and political scientists were interested in understanding the factors that facilitated such rapid and large-scale mobilization around the country. The role of religion and religious institutions was highlighted (Shaw 2011; Heredia 2011), alongside other factors such as Spanish-language media (Félix et al. 2008; Ramírez 2011; Hondagnue-Sotelo and Salas 2008), ethnic solidarity (Martinez 2008), youth and family (Getrich 2008; Pallares and Flores- González 2011; Bloemraad and Trost 2011) as well as links with an array of established institutions including organized labor (Shaw 2011; Martinez 2011), community-based organizations (Cordero-Guzman et al. 2008; Martinez 2011), and civic organizations like hometown associations (Fox and Bada 2011) among others. Albeit meticulous in its level of detail, taken together, this research on the 2006 protests reads like a long list of mechanisms that facilitated mass mobilization. What gets left out, as Andrew Walder (2009) notes in his critical review of the social movement framework, is any

¹⁰ Other immigration scholars have been prompted to analyze the popular appeal of restrictionism in order to better understand the obstacles to immigrant assimilation. For example, in lieu of seeing assimilation as a “one-way street” (1) whereby successful integration depends exclusively on immigrants’ own actions, Douglas Massey and Magaly Sanchez R. (2010) propose that immigrants have to “broker” the boundaries of social categories that they confront in the receiving society. One factor that shapes an immigrant’s ability to successfully broker boundaries (and thereby assimilate) has to do with “the frames and boundaries [natives] deploy to define and characterize immigrants as an out-group” (16). The authors then dedicate one chapter to discussing the “rise of anti-immigrant times” (58-80) including a brief description of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps (70). Thus, even within scholarship that is not directly concerned with immigration politics, but rather with the traditional concern of immigration scholars—immigrant assimilation—there has been a growing interest to examine oppositional politics.

¹¹ Walter Nicholls (2013) also employs more of a field analysis as he explains the emergence of the grassroots Dreamer movement. While prominent pro-immigrant organizations “created the public figure of the ‘DREAMer’” (13), over time the undocumented youth movement gained its own momentum and political identity through opposition to these established pro-immigrant organizations. However, this oppositional politics is examined *within* the pro-immigrant movement, rather than vis-à-vis restrictionist politics.

discussion of “variation in the political orientation of movements: their ideologies, aim, [and] motivations” (393). That is, the focus on movements’ *means* overshadows and overtakes any consideration of movements’ political *ends*. As I show later, the study of opposing political sides, by contrast, provides an opportunity to relationally examine both means and ends.

Immigration Politics as a Field of Struggle

In sum, there are two main limitations in the scholarship about immigration-related activism. First, these studies, to varying degrees, tend to either hone in on the micro or the macro, leading, in the most extreme of cases, to politically-decontextualized ethnography or to speculative discussions of grassroots movements. Compared to the literature on restrictionist mobilization, the scholarship about the 2006 pro-immigrant marches are more attentive to the macro-structural context as well as the specific mechanisms of mobilization. However, here too the theoretical link between the macro and micro remains vague. Or put differently, the sociological relationship between the ways in which state institutions regulate immigration, the rising popularity of restrictionist ideas, and specific ways in which pro-immigrant groups have mobilized, is not entirely clear when the primary analytical focus is exclusively on the means that a social movement deploys. By contrast, this study heeds a movement’s orientation as closely as it does its mechanisms. It does so by using the concept of “state effect,” which gives us a tool to anchor the micro worlds of social movement participants to the larger macro context of devolving immigration enforcement.

Second, this literature has the tendency to bypass explicit discussions of the field of struggle that includes *both* the pro-immigrant movement and the restrictionist countermovement. In many cases, however, the importance of this kind of holistic and relational analysis is implied. For instance, in her discussion of the religiosity of pro-immigrant mobilization, Hondagneu-Sotelo cannot help but provide an elaborate “background” section that lays out the context of mobilization. Similarly, Shapira describes an actual encounter between the two sides, one which is telling of how each group makes sense of their work in the desert. In both of these instances, there is an *intuition* that while the object of study may be a particular, bounded organization, there is something problematic about limiting the analysis (or in Shapira’s case, the portrayal of data) to a singular focus on the organization. In other cases—particularly in discussions about the 2006 marches and its aftermath—scholars have discussed relational dynamics in a more explicit manner. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Salas (2006), for instance, have argued that a key cause of pro-immigrant mobilization is not the growth in the immigrant population, but rather the rising tide of restrictionism. Thus, the intuition about the relationality of immigration politics is woven into this literature.

Indeed, the impulse to examine politics in a relational manner has also emerged outside of the immigration scholarship (Luker 1984; Ginsburg 1998). A burgeoning subfield of the social movement literature has considered “movement-countermovement” dynamics across a variety of domains, including between cults and countercults (Kent 1990), pro-life and pro-abortion activists (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), Scientology and its Internet critics (Peckham 1998), and progressive and conservative women’s organizations (Rohlinger 2002). Similarly, Mary Bernstein (1997) argues that to understand the particular form that a movement’s identity

strategy takes, one must consider the interaction between the social movement, state actors and the opposition.¹²

However, with the partial exception of Bernstein (1997), scholars in this tradition have not made the strong claim that to understand a movement, or any strategy that it deploys, it is necessary to study its countermovement, when it exists. Instead, the interactional dynamics are thought to be analytically useful insofar as they constitute an *additional* exogenous variable shaping a movement's resource mobilization and political opportunities. For example, many factors—including a countermovement—can constrain which resources a movement can exploit (Kent 1990; Peckham 1998; Rohlinger 2002). Similarly, a countermovement can alter the political opportunities available to a movement, by, for instance, attracting away elite support (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). Ironically, studies with an exclusive focus on conservative “countermovements” have been more eager to highlight interactional dynamics (Lo 1982). Their discussion of how progressive movements *created* these countermovements, forefronts the relationship between opposing movements. Hence, scholars in this vein have argued that just as feminism fostered the anti-feminist men's rights movement in Canada (Blais and Dupuis-Déri 2012), so did the scientific consensus around the anthropogenic causes of climate change spawn a climate change countermovement (Bruille 2013). Older research has also echoed this point about the potential for movements to generate their countermovements (Zald and Useem 1987). However, it remains unclear how these studies can speak to instances when opposing movements emerge simultaneously and/or in response to the state or other institutions. Nonetheless, taken together, this literature suggests that we can gain deeper insights on contentious politics when we study the relationship between social movement, state, *and* countermovement.

At the same time, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of “field” also sheds light on why we should attend to both sides of a political struggle. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu defines a field as a domain of the social structure akin to both a “magnetic field” and a “battlefield”. Like a magnetic field, a field is made up of “a relational configuration” of “objects and agents” each with a “specific gravity” (1992:17). At the same time, a field is like a battlefield because it is “a space of conflict and competition...in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it” (1992:17-18). The nature of the field, and indeed, the sociological nature of the actors in the field, is derived from the relationships, conflicts, and high-stakes competitions that these actors have with each other.

According to Bourdieu, politics also constitutes a relatively autonomous domain that is simultaneously a “field of forces” and a “field of struggles” (1991:172). That is, the political field “tends to be organized around the opposition between two poles.” By extension, political identities like “left” and “right”, “progressive” and “conservative” only make sense in relation to each other. In other words, “[t]he field as a whole is defined as a system of deviations on different levels and nothing...has meaning except relationally, by virtue of the interplay of

¹² Armstrong and Bernstein's (2008) multi-institutional politics approach to social movements also opens up the scope of study to entities beyond the social movement and the state. They argue that the way in which domination is organized is variable, and our model of society and power should not be assumed *a priori*. By extension the target of mobilization, goals, strategies, and the definition of politics, among other important aspects of a movement, are also empirically variable. This approach also suggests that how we define the field (and whether or not it includes the countermovement) can vary from movement to movement. At the same time, the multi-institutional politics perspective is reminiscent of Bourdieu's field. Specifically, by taking culture as a constitutive of rather than derivative to structures of domination, this perspective allows for the consideration of structuralist and subjectivist factors simultaneously.

oppositions and distinctions” (1991:186). By way of example, Bourdieu argues that ideas and practices once associated with one political orientation, can, over time, be associated with its opposite. While

belief in progress and science, between the wars, in France as well as in Germany, were a characteristic of the left...today, in these two countries, [the very same belief is at] the heart of the new conservative creed, based on confidence in progress, ethical knowledge and technocracy, while the left finds itself falling back on ideological themes or practices which used to belong to the opposite pole, such as the (ecological) cult of nature, regionalism and a certain nationalism, the denunciation of the myth of absolute progress... (1991:186).

In other words, “belief in progress and science” has no inherent or timeless political nature. A sociological study of the politics of progress and science, therefore, requires an investigation of the larger context or field, at a particular historical moment. Immigration politics takes place within a field structured by two opposing poles—immigration restrictionism and pro-immigrant expansionism. The nature of one pole only becomes evident in relation to the other pole.

Scholars of ‘political articulation’ have also underlined the importance of examining political conflict to understand how demands assume significance and groups form (De Leon et al. 2015). That is, a matter that is presently contentious – like immigration or citizenship – was never *fated* to be contentious. Nor is the formation of any group and its self-identification as a collectivity – such as pro-immigrant leftists – historically preordained. Instead, groups and cleavages form and assume meaning *in conflict*.

In line with these ideas, this dissertation explores immigration politics as a field of struggle. I show how groups reference each other as they figure out how to mobilize. I also show that in order to make theoretical sense of the manner of mobilization of one side, we must consider activists’ ideas and practices in relation to those of their opponents. I now turn to explicating the main conceptual tool for this field analysis—the state effect.

Part III: The State Effect and Immigration Politics

How should we analyze political order and struggle? In the 1980s, one group of sociologists believed that the answer to this question had to involve the direct study of the state. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (1985) urged scholars to “bring the state back in[to]” the study of politics. They were responding to a broad tendency—common in both neo-Marxist and pluralist political sociology—to neglect the study of government actors and state institutions in analyses of power. Evans et al. argued that the state, as an organization claiming control over a given territory often pursued projects that did not reflect the interests of any single social group. ‘Bringing the state back in’ meant looking at the state as an actor that was relatively autonomous from society. The study of social phenomena, therefore, required a focus on the structure and actions of the state as well as its relationship with different parts of society.

By the end of the decade, however, some scholars began to question this framework. To assume that the state was a bounded entity separate from and above society was *itself* political (Abrams 1988; Trouillot 2001; Mitchell 2006). That is, as Philip Abrams (1988) argued, the

apparent unification of political power in an entity called ‘the state’ was nothing more than a chimera that helped legitimate the illegitimate. In a similar manner, Timothy Mitchell (2006) claimed that the apparent boundary between state and society was an illusion. The organization of space, the regular distribution of bodies, and the systematicity of surveillance were not indications of an autonomous state. Rather, the organized management of space, bodies, and surveillance, together, *created* the “state effect”; that is, it produced the *appearance* of the state as a structure-like thing. For Mitchell, therefore, scholars who studied politics had to be careful not to be taken in by the state effect themselves—by assuming the state was an “actual structure” (90). Instead, scholars had to examine the state “as a powerful, apparently metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist” (2006:90). In other words, the study of politics had to consider how the “appearance of order” was produced (Mitchell 1988: 14).

Within this framework, however, it remained unclear how one was to make sense of situations when state institutions failed to create an appearance of order. Indeed, how did one theorize moments when government actors created an appearance of *disorder*? Joel Migdal (2001) suggested that the effectiveness of the state effect could not be assumed *a priori*. Instead, it had to be empirically investigated. In some cases, the state’s everyday practices reinforced the way in which the state presented itself. That is, the actions of street-level state bureaucrats were in line with the state’s self-image as a “dominant, integrated, autonomous entity [separate and above society] that controls...rule-making” in a claimed territory (16). But at other times, state actors’ daily activities *contradicted* what the state claimed to do. Migdal’s formulation suggested that the extent to which there was a ‘state effect’, therefore, was variable.

However, neither Migdal nor the state-effect theorists empirically examined how groups outside of the state determined whether the state was orderly or disorderly; nor did these theorists empirically study the consequences of these assessments of the state. Nonetheless, a growing scholarship has begun to consider how groups experience the state (Gupta 1995; Yang 2005; Brissette 2015). For example, in her study, Emily Brissette discussed how social movement participants’ “implicit cultural assumptions about the state” (2015: 4) shape political subjectivities and determine how terrains of struggle emerged. In a similar manner, this dissertation considers how movements’ understandings of the state—and particularly, their experiences of its coercive capacity—inform the tactics that movements use. In doing so, this dissertation makes four theoretical contributions.

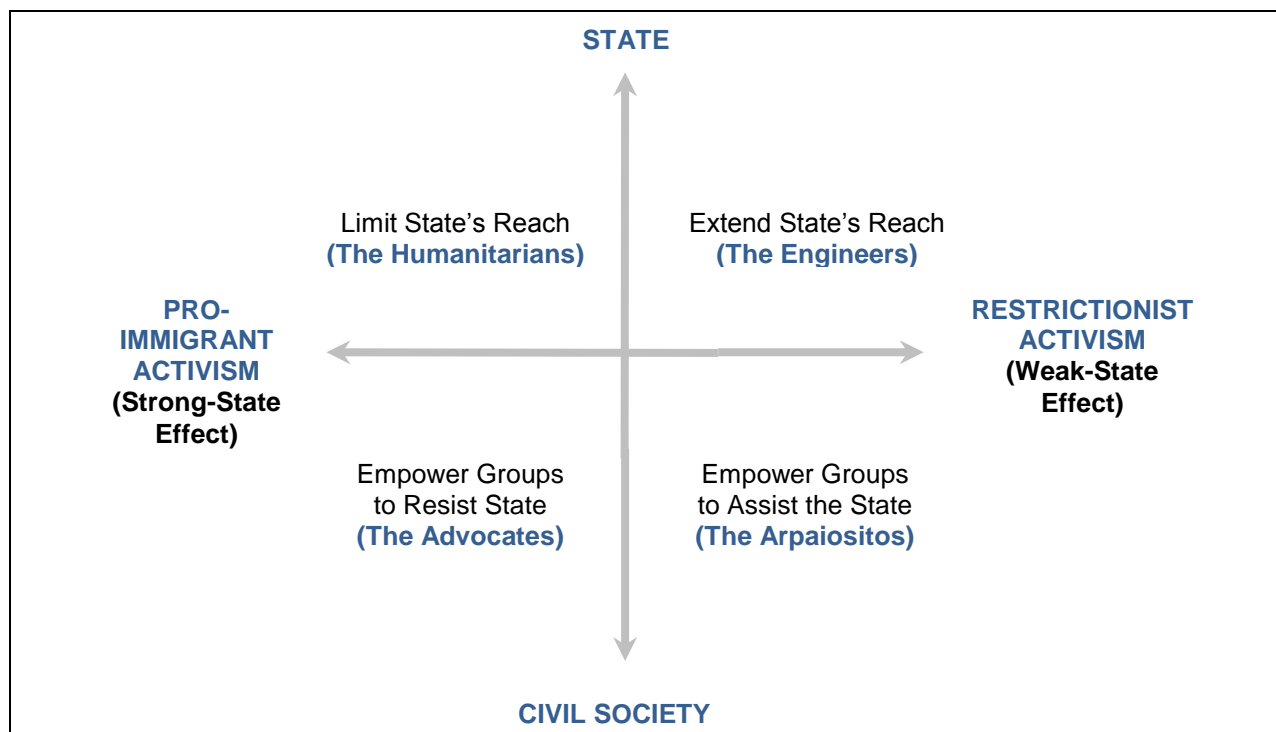
First, building on Migdal’s work, this study empirically illustrates that the state, as an effect of ideology, is not always successful. In fact, the very place that scholars have predicted the state effect to be the strongest—a nation’s border—is exactly where this effect is only *sometimes* experienced. Timothy Mitchell, for example, posited that “the mundane arrangements” of border policing “help[ed] manufacture an almost transcendental entity, the nation state. This entity comes to seem something much more than the sum of the everyday activities that constitute it, appearing as a structure containing and giving order and meaning to people’s lives” (1991:94). Others have also argued that the border is a place in which the state engages in visible policing in order to communicate its resolve (Andreas 2000) and sovereignty (Brown 2010). The state’s intended self-presentation is not the same as its effect, however. As this dissertation shows, differently-positioned groups can have disparate understandings of the state’s policing capacity.

Second, to theorize this variation in perceptions, this dissertation distinguishes between what I call the *strong-state effect* and the *weak-state effect*. While both pro-immigrant and

restrictionist activists saw the state's central function in terms of its right hand—that is, its ability to wield coercive power—they disagreed about how competent it was in this function. Recall the contrasting ways that Renee and Dale experienced the border. Renee's experience captures the idea of a "strong state effect." In her worldview, the everyday actions of state actors like border and immigration enforcement agencies strongly suggested that there was a coherent, dominant structure wielding physical control over society. It was this apparent powerfulness of the state that Renee and her fellow pro-immigrant activists believed was responsible for undocumented migration. By contrast, the restrictionist countermovement observed the weak-state effect. As they watched state actors engage in immigration enforcement, activists like Dale came to believe that the state was internally incoherent and not capable of policing what it was supposed to police. It was this ostensible weakness that restrictionist activists believed was the cause of undocumented migration. Thus, the strong-state effect and the weak-state effect was how the two movements made sense of why unauthorized migration persisted. It was how Renee and Dale came to see the social effects of the U.S.-Mexico boundary so differently.

This dissertation also makes a third contribution. By considering activists' perceptions of the state, we can better understand how social movements' tactical repertoires are constituted. Scholars have discussed how a movement's target—be it the state (Smith 2001) or other institutions (Walker et al. 2008)—shapes the tactics that movements deploy. However, social movement scholars have generally focused on what these target institutions *are*, rather than how they are *seen*. This study illustrates how different beliefs about the nature of the state informed each movement's strategies. I employ ideal-types to theorize the link between variations in the state effect and variations in each movement's strategy. Given the strong-state effect, pro-immigrant activists tried to reduce the state's power over society. Toward this end, these activists employed strategies to confine the reach of the state as well as to expand society's capacity to struggle *against* the state. Meanwhile, immigration restrictionists, experiencing the weak-state effect, strived to make the state into a decisive, coordinated, and unified actor. Restrictionist tactics were thus geared towards either expanding the state's reach or building society's capacity to *aid* the state. As ideal-types, these distinctions in movement strategies do not capture every single endeavor in which a group engaged. Nonetheless, the typological distinction between efforts to reduce or expand the state's policing power, describes a critical aspect of how this political struggle played out at the grassroots level. Figure 1.1, below, summarizes the relationship between variations in state effect and movement strategies.

FIGURE 1.1: STATE EFFECT AND OPPOSING MOVEMENT STRATEGIES



Finally, this study also contributes to our understanding of how colorblind racism can anchor itself to everyday practices. Scholars have discussed how racism in the post-Civil Rights Era has taken on a more “subtle, institutional, and apparently nonracial” form (Bonilla-Silva 2010: 3). In this new “colorblind” (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Carr 1997) or “laissez-faire” (Bobo and Smith 1998) racism, opposition to racial inequality is coupled with denial of the existence of racial discrimination. To explain differences in outcome across ethnoracial groups, new racism invokes cultural rather than biological differences and justifies continued racial domination by appealing to values like individualism and choice (Petigrew and Meertens 1995; Bonilla-Silva 2010: pp. 28-36). Others have argued that contemporary immigration restrictionism must also be understood as a manifestation of colorblind racism (Bloch 2014; Chavez 2001; Cacho 2000; Hasian and Delgado 1998; Feagin 1997; Johnson 1997), wherein discussions of “acculturation” or “sovereignty” conveniently “cloak race talk” (Chavez 2001: 214).

Yet most of the studies on how colorblind racism is reproduced in and through immigration restrictionism have focused primarily on written discourse, and how race talk is rendered invisible in this discourse. To this end, scholars have analyzed media accounts, legislative measures, and online forums to document the ways in which immigration is discussed using colorblind rhetoric (Bloch 2014; Chavez 2001; Cacho 2000).¹³ By contrast, this

¹³ Robin Dale Jacobson’s (2010) work is an important exception to this trend. In *The New Nativism: Proposition 187 and the Debate Over Immigration*, Jacobson interviews proponents of Proposition 187 and analyzes the frames they used to renegotiate the relationship between race and citizenship in California in the 1990s. However, while she

ethnography extends beyond an analysis of written material. It does so by focusing on what day-to-day restrictionist practices are like. As such, I show that *what helps make the racism of restrictionism subtle and hegemonic is that it is a state-strengthening and institution-building endeavor in which participants directly work with state actors*. In other words, that contemporary restrictionist activism is *not* unlawful, *not* anti-state, *not* politically marginalized, in a word, *not* ‘vigilante’, is precisely what gives it the hegemonic nature that is attributed to new racism. As we will see in more detail in Chapter Five, restrictionist organizations are state-builders. As immigration control is devolved and structural opportunities emerge for more local participation in enforcement, these activists step up to the plate and their activism takes on an institutionalized and race-neutral form. Thus, this study sheds light on the concrete mechanisms by which colorblind racism is produced in immigration politics.

Political Ethnography

This dissertation draws on political ethnography, or “close-up and real-time observation of actors involved in politics” (Baiocchi and Connor 2008: 139). This kind of ethnography of the field is unique among empirical studies of grassroots immigration politics. While there has been significant ethnographic research on pro-immigrant organizations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008; Van Ham 2011; Gonzales 2013; Nicholls 2013), participant observation and/or interviews with restrictionist activists are few and far between (Shapira 2013; Jacobson 2008). Moreover, with few exceptions (Eastman 2012; Shapira 2013: Chapter 5), the comparative angle does not exist in the literature. This is unsurprising. The dearth of empirical research on nativism has to do with the problem (and often, just the *anticipation* of the problem) of access. After all, in mainstream conservative discourse, the university is thought to be the hotbed of liberal causes and, by extension, academics are assumed to be unsympathetic to conservative political programs (Binder and Wood 2013).

Ethnography, however, is a very useful tool for examining politics (Auyero and Joseph 2007; Baiocchi and Connor 2008; Schatz 2009). By attending to how ordinary people make sense of and act on “official rhetoric,” we move away from “stylized facts” or “oversimplified descriptions” that may otherwise serve as the basis for theory-making (Auyero and Joseph 2007: 5-6). Indeed, the critical insights that ethnography can offer are clearly illustrated when we consider how the concept of ‘vigilantism’ has been employed in discussions of immigration politics.

In both scholarly and popular discourse, the term ‘vigilantism’ has been conventionally used to describe nativist restrictionist activism. This characterization, however, masks restrictionists’ efforts to position themselves on the terrain of ‘respectable’ politics. That is, it obscures these groups’ efforts to work directly with state actors—whether it is as civilian extension of the Border Patrol (the Soldiers), as a private ‘border security’ contractor (the Engineers), or as a champion of local law enforcement (Arpaiositos). The term ‘vigilantism’ also hides the fairly widespread tolerance and even support that these restrictionist groups enjoy—among conservative leaders, Department of Homeland security officials and agents, local law enforcement, the media, technology companies, organizers of ‘border security’ expositions, and others. To the extent that any of the groups in this study fit criminological or popular definitions

discusses new racism, she is highly critical of this body of literature for its static notion of race and racism. For this reason, I do not include her work as part of the larger scholarship on colorblind racism in immigration politics.

of ‘vigilante’, they are the pro-immigrant organizations. As we will see in Chapters Two and Four, the Humanitarians and the Advocates were motivated by a visceral sense that self-evident norms (human rights) were being violated by an outside force (the state). In response, these activists took it upon themselves to “offer assurances of security” to particular social groups (Johnston 1996: 232). Thus, ethnography is well-equipped to expose popular misconceptions through careful study of what organizations actually do and how they fit into the larger political terrain.

In addition to being a political ethnography, this study moves away from what Matthew Desmond (2014) calls “substantialist ethnography” to being a “relational ethnography.” As such, it gives “ontological primacy” to “configurations of relations” (554) rather than taking only one bounded group or organization or site as the object of analysis. This kind of relational approach allows for the study of politics as a field of social relations. In the field that I study, I focus on five differently-positioned groups that are bound up in relationships of struggle and cooperation.

Theoretical sampling informed the research design of this study.¹⁴ I selected both pro-immigrant and restrictionist organizations in order to examine the worldviews and strategies of the two sides. Additionally, to capture intra-movement variation and range, I increased the number of cases on each side: I selected two pro-immigrant organizations and three restrictionist groups. In this manner of selecting cases around different lines of comparison, the ethnographic study of the five groups allowed me to build a theoretical framework about immigration activism (Glaser and Strauss 2012a [1967a], 2012b [1967b]). A more detailed discussion of my case selection, and how it was informed by field dynamics, can be found in the methodological appendix.

This study primarily draws on 16 months of participant observation, from February 2011 to June 2012, in Central and Southern Arizona. During this period, I participated in meetings, protests, conferences, and other events organized and attended by the members of restrictionist and pro-immigrant groups.¹⁵ I either wrote down my observations in the moment or memorized them in order to transcribe them immediately afterwards. Often, I took audio-recorded notes on the drive back home from events.

Repeated interactions with activists during ethnographic fieldwork also allowed me to conduct 70 formal, semi-structured interviews. The trust, rapport, and shared understandings that I developed with activists while I was in the field helped me successfully request interviews and generate questionnaires that were more sophisticated than if I had done interviews without initial participant observation. Thirty of these interviews were with restrictionist activists and 40 with pro-immigrant activists. I also draw on content analysis of materials produced by the organizations in this study, including websites, reports, short films, and so forth.

My ethnographic foray into Arizonan immigration politics began in Southern Mexico. There, in a Spanish-language immersion course, I happened to meet a member of the Humanitarians, who invited me to come to Arizona and meet her group. It was a serendipitous meeting because it seemed that the topic of Arizona was a recurring theme in my everyday conversations with Oaxacans. The then-governor of Arizona, Jan Brewer, had signed Senate Bill

¹⁴ For a discussion about how the cases in this study fit into the universe of organizations, see the methodological appendix.

¹⁵ An examination of the perspectives of state actors themselves is beyond the scope of this article. Such an inquiry would be a fruitful area of future research.

1070 into law just a few months earlier. Meanwhile, in Oaxaca, everyone with whom I spoke seemed to know someone who was either living in Arizona or was headed there. It was striking to me that a measure, which had been framed by its author and supporters as a local measure to protect local interests, was having repercussions in places almost 2,000 miles away. I decided to take up the Humanitarian's invitation to meet the rest of her organization.

At my first meeting with the Humanitarians, I introduced myself and my project. After going through a 'request to research' protocol—where I wrote an essay discussing my research aims—the Humanitarians agreed to have me observe and participate in their meetings and other events. The Humanitarians believed that I could not really understand the nature of pro-immigrant activism unless I also talked to the Advocates. While their memberships did not overlap, many Humanitarians believed that their own organization's work in the desert was complementary to what the Advocates were doing in the urban context. I showed up at the Advocate's weekly meeting, introduced myself, and explained that I was there on the Humanitarians' suggestion. The Advocates allowed me to stay, and as I attended meeting after meeting, they grew acclimated to my presence and let me get more involved in their work.

I gained entry to the Soldiers and the Engineers by contacting them over email, introducing myself, and asking if I could attend their open meetings. The Soldiers held monthly meetings. Attending these meetings gave me an opportunity to learn about the group's concerns and how they understood their own activism. However it was after the official meetings were over that I was able to have more meaningful conversations with members. The Soldiers were intrigued that someone from 'the People's Republic of Berkeley' wanted to learn about them and, in many cases, this intrigue led to invitations to join them on patrols in the desert.

The Engineers did not hold open meetings. However they did invite me to the ranch where they were based. The timing of my initial contact with them was opportune: the Engineers were experiencing a significant bottleneck in the development of their latest technological project. They were, literally, waiting around doing nothing. I used this opportunity to ask lots of questions about their organization.

In the case of the Arpaiositos, I learned about their meetings through a conservative online forum. I simply showed up at a meeting. Once again, I was very lucky with my timing. The Arpaiositos were in the midst of transformation; old members had recently dropped out and new members had joined. The organization was trying to figure out what its mission was and how it was different from other politically likeminded groups, including local tea parties, as is discussed in Chapter Three. In other words, I caught them in a period of change, so my showing up was not an extraordinary event. Once I shared my contact information with the Arpaiositos, I was invited to other events and meetings that they organized. I quickly realized that precisely because restrictionist groups were trying to challenge their public image as racist 'vigilantes', was the reason why they were open to having a graduate student observe their day-to-day activities.

A more detailed discussion of my methods, case selection, the challenges I faced in the field and how I tried to overcome them, can be found in the methodological appendix.

The Structure of the Argument

Chapters Two and Three begin the discussion of grassroots immigration politics by analyzing the worldviews of pro-immigrant and restrictionist activists. Together, these two chapters illustrate how the two sides shared the conviction that what was at stake in the struggle was the coercive capacity of the state. This shared conviction – that what ultimately mattered was the state’s repressiveness – was articulated through two racial metaphors: the Nazification of America and the Mexicanization of America. Each metaphor sheds light on how activists associated a larger constellation of meanings, observations, and ideas with the state’s right hand. That is, the way in which each side thought about how repressive the state was, was linked to how activists understood the (a) *state as a whole*, including its redistributive component, (b) *immigrants* and their relationship to Americans, (c) the nature of the political *opposition* and (d) the problems with *mainstream politics*.

Specifically, Chapter Two describes how pro-immigrant activists relied on references to fascism to articulate the fear that the state was growing stronger and more exclusionary. Moreover, pro-immigrant activists saw themselves and other actors in the field in terms of this understanding of the state. Borrowing a religious framework that had been popular during the U.S. Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, activists attributed a sacred quality to immigrants. Because of the suffering they experienced as victims of the state, immigrants were thought to hold truths about life. By extension, pro-immigrant activism was considered to be ‘transformative’ because it had the potential to change participants’ hearts and minds in the midst of Nazification. By contrast, restrictionist mobilization was described as an uncritical, racist, and sheeplike enterprise. Restrictionists were thought to be objects of manipulation who were driven to mobilize out of racialized fears rather than reason. However, pro-immigrant activists also worried that Nazification had consequences on the mainstream Left. Mainstream allies appeared to be growing accustomed to racist measures. On the basis of this analysis, pro-immigrant activists came to believe that the defeat of Nazification of America required a collective effort to rein in the state.

Meanwhile, Chapter Three describes how the specter of Mexicanization was the particular way in which restrictionists conveyed their anxieties about a state that had lost physical control over its territory and its resources. Restrictionists worried that in addition to becoming a feebler policing entity, the state was also channeling resources away from the deserving (American citizens) to the undeserving (noncitizens). Restrictionists’ perceptions about the state’s weakness shaped their understanding of other stakeholders in the field as well. According to restrictionists, immigrants were not victims of the state; instead, the state was the victim of immigrants. As such, immigrants were described as a profane group. Their presence in the country exposed Americans to the crimes and social problems of Mexico and the rest of the global south. Similarly, restrictionists made sense of pro-immigrant mobilization as another aspect of the country’s Mexicanization. Pro-immigrant activists interfered with the state’s ability to protect its Americans from Mexico. Restrictionists also harbored criticisms about Republican politicians and even Tea Partiers, who they believed did not understand the urgency of immigration politics.

Building on this discussion of worldviews, the next two chapters focus on strategies of the two sides. Chapter Four examines how pro-immigrant activists’ concerns about growing state strength – or what I call the strong-state effect – were translated into movement strategy. The chapter analyzes the tactics that two pro-immigrant groups adopted to *weaken* the state. One pro-immigrant group, the Humanitarians, tried to restrict the state by claiming the borderlands as a

space for international humanitarian aid, by acting as a watchdog on Border Patrol's activities, and by waging anti-deportation campaigns. While the Humanitarians trained their focus on the state—particularly the Border Patrol—in an effort to delimit its reach, another organization, the Advocates, was more concerned with building up society's capacity to avoid and resist the state. The Advocates pursued this goal in three main ways: by training noncitizens to protect themselves from the state; by linking noncitizens to networks; and by urging entities with ambiguous relations to immigration policing apparatus to not cooperate in immigration enforcement.

Chapter Five turns to the other side. The chapter examines how the fear of waning state presence – or the weak-state effect – structured restrictionist mobilization. Specifically, I discuss the different ways that three restrictionist organizations – the Soldiers, Engineers, and Arpaiositos – strived to strengthen the state. Groups like the Soldiers and the Engineers worked to expand the state. Believing that the Border Patrol lacked adequate manpower and resources in the field, the Soldiers developed a system of gathering information about migrant crossers and sharing it with the agency. Meanwhile, the Engineers tried to develop a more comprehensive system of border surveillance that they hoped to contract out to the Department of Homeland Security. Both of these efforts to expand the state's scope, served as a foil to the Humanitarians' endeavors. Meanwhile, the Arpaiositos worked to build society's capacity to assist the state. In direct opposition to the pro-immigrant Advocates, the Arpaiositos endeavored to put local law enforcement *in service of* federal immigration enforcement efforts. Toward that end, the group started off by participating in a restrictionist sheriff's 'volunteer posse' and then, over the years, turned to publicly supporting the sheriff's office.

By way of conclusion, Chapter Six discusses how this study can shed light on the current era of populisms. Using broad brush strokes, the chapter considers how two pillars of mainstream American political sociology – Seymour Lipset and Theda Skocpol – have provided unsatisfactory readings of populism, as either irrationality *tout court*, or as rationality inscribed from above. In lieu of these frameworks, I consider Ernesto Laclau's powerful insight that populism is the quintessence of politics, and Gillian Hart's emphasis on the importance of locality and relationality. Building on these insights, I suggest that populism should be understood as local politics. Within these local political struggles, participants *negotiate* the meanings of official discourses and practices with their own lived realities. And they do so not in a void, but in relation to and in opposition to other groups. The framework of strong and weak-state effects, I suggest, offers one way in which populism can be analyzed as a local political struggle in this manner.

Chapter 2

The ‘Nazification’ of America: The Worldview of Pro-Immigrant Activists

As the opening vignette of this study suggested, Renee, a pro-immigrant activist, and Dale, a restrictionist activist, had conflicting theories about why there was a large undocumented population in the U.S. Renee believed that this population had reached its present proportions because of the circumstances that a coercive state had created. Meanwhile, Dale argued that unauthorized border crossings occurred for precisely the opposite reason: the state was so weak and permissive that migrants slipped into the country unnoticed. Despite their differences, Renee and Dale did agree on something: that what mattered—what was at stake in this struggle—was *the repressive capacity of the state*. Ultimately, when they mobilized, activists were trying to sort out how to reconfigure the state’s punitive capacity. Renee wanted to weaken the state’s right hand, while Dale hoped to strengthen it.

To begin making sense of these divergent assessments of the state, this chapter pieces together the worldview of pro-immigrant activists like Renee, while the next chapter discusses the body of ideas that were common among restrictionist activists like Dale. Specifically, this chapter and the next one describe two powerful metaphors— the Nazification of America and the Mexicanization of America, respectively—which capture the core ideas of each side. Pro-immigrant activists believed that they were witnessing the Nazification of America as the state grew more coercive, racist, and masculine. Meanwhile, as the next chapter illustrates, the Mexicanization of American was the nightmare scenario among restrictionist activists, all of whom feared that the state was becoming weaker, more inclusive, and emasculated. These worldviews *reinforced* and were, in turn, *reinforced by* the practices that are described in Chapters Four and Five. That is, I use a Bourdieusian field analysis to understand the homologous relationship between disposition (ideas) and position (social action): Disposition and position create and recreate each other.

Each metaphor sheds light on how the state’s repressive capacity fit into the worldviews of activists. That is, activists associated a larger constellation of meanings, observations and ideas with the state’s right hand. As this chapter begins to illustrate, the state’s coerciveness was also linked to how activists made sense of the state as a whole, including its redistributive component; how they understood immigrants and immigrants’ relationship to Americans; how activists’ perceived their opponents; and the kinds of criticisms that activists harbored about mainstream politics. Table 2.1 below summarizes each worldview.

TABLE 2.1: ACTIVISTS' OPPOSING WORLDVIEWS

Perceptions of:	PRO-IMMIGRANT WORLDVIEW: NAZIFICATION OF AMERICA	RESTRICTIONIST WORLDVIEW: MEXICANIZATION OF AMERICA
State	State is strong and exclusionary	State is weak and inclusionary
Immigrants	Immigrants are sacred	Immigrants are profane
Mainstream Politics	Democrats are wishy-washy	Republicans (and Tea Partiers) are elitist
Opposition	Restrictionist activists are racist and manipulated	Pro-immigrant activists are childish and ungrateful

Specifically, this chapter discusses the pro-immigrant worldview. In interview after interview, pro-immigrant activists used the metaphor of Nazification to characterize state domination and its variegated effects on American society. According to this narrative, the tendencies towards fascism were unsurprising when they were considered in historical context of U.S. aggression, intervention and oppression both domestically and internationally. Specifically, U.S. involvement in Central America during the 1970s and 1980s served as a key part of this historical narrative. There were two reasons why this period assumed such significance for activists. First, among older activists, it was during this era that their own political consciousness crystallized as a result of personal encounters with the state's coercive apparatus. That is, older activists attributed their radicalization in the 1970s and 1980s to direct experiences with police and other law enforcement agents. U.S. intervention in Central American held a second layer of significance: pro-immigrant activists understood these events as being illustrative of the way in which the state's repressiveness *caused* undocumented migration to the U.S. Activists applied this historical analysis to make sense of the contemporary period as well. According to activists, it was precisely the state's aggression today that was responsible for the growth of an undocumented population and the persistence of unauthorized border crossings.

Pro-immigrant activists believed that, since the 1980s, the state had grown more coercive, and concomitantly, more racist and exclusionary. The logic of repression, pro-immigrant activists believed, also encroached on other parts of the state, like its welfare component. Legislators introduced laws that were designed to simultaneously persecute immigrants of Latin American descent and minimize their access to resources. As a result of these laws, today's migrants suffered, just as Central Americans had in the 1980s. In witnessing this suffering, some activists described migrants as 'heroes', and their interactions with them as spiritually 'transformative.'

Pro-immigrant activists also saw other actors in the field in terms of their understanding of the state. For instance, pro-immigrant activists understood the mobilization of a restrictionist countermovement to be another feature of the country's Nazification. Pro-immigrant activists described restrictionists as racist and manipulated people who were driven by fear rather than reason. However, pro-immigrant activists also worried that Nazification had consequences on the mainstream Left. Mainstream allies appeared to be growing accustomed to racist measures and institutions. On the basis of this analysis, pro-immigrant activists came to believe that the defeat of Nazification of America required a collective effort to rein in the state.

The Strong and Exclusionary State

In nearly all interviews, pro-immigrant activists alluded to Nazi-era Germany and fascism more generally. These references to Germany powerfully described the future that activists feared. For instance, I asked a longtime member of the Humanitarians, Sally, to describe the factors that shaped immigration policy. She immediately began discussing how an insular American identity was responsible for how immigration was regulated. Sally believed this insularity was dangerous and that the American identity had to be 'opened up'. She explained her reasoning in the following manner:

Because I think that would help people accept people from other countries a lot more. People are so focused on nationalistic ways of thinking, that's what Germany fell into.

This nationalism is such a destructive cause of what happened. I think nationalism is a terrible thing. I don't know how you get rid of that.

Later in the interview, I asked Sally to elaborate on what she saw as the worst-case scenario, if things continued in the same fashion. She broached the theme of fascism again. For Sally, the evidence for fascism was in the state's growing coercive presence throughout society:

Well, I think that the nightmare scenario would be, one, Congress would move even further to the Right. And that whole way of thinking, the whole border enforcement or militarization of the border strategy and cracking down on immigrants throughout the country, that whole [Arizona Senate Bill] 1070 mindset would take off even more than it already has and go into place. Laws would be passed in many states and people would be deported in higher and higher numbers and that would lead to more and more people dying in the desert trying to get back to their families here. We would move more and more towards fascism in this country, with more and more enforcement, not just at the border but throughout the country. I think there's a possibility of it moving in that direction if people aren't vigilant.

For many activists the similarities with Nazi Germany were so self-evident that it was a theme they could not avoid in their everyday lives. Celia had volunteered with both the Advocates and the Humanitarians for many years. Many of her family members and relatives were in federal law enforcement, including Border Patrol. Yet, the analogy with fascism was so compelling to her, and so urgently relevant to everyday events, that she could not hold herself back from mentioning it even during family get-togethers.

And so for my sister's graduation that happened two weeks ago, I was speaking to an uncle and I made a comparison of the Border Patrol being modern-day Nazis. And then people just kind of started drinking and ignored me and kind of like, whatever.

Similarly, another Advocate, Beatriz, was stunned that her brother-in-law did not recognize the obvious parallels between historical Nazism and present day American politics, despite his own personal background.

We made a deal that we're not gonna talk about this [immigration politics] during Thanksgiving dinner. My sister's married to a Jewish guy. It's trippy because they went through the Holocaust. His grandparents did. But they don't see a similarity with the struggle [today], they don't see that. They're always talking about the anchor babies. They're talking about how if they're gonna come here, then they should do it the right way. I don't get it.

While Sally, Celia and Beatriz used the metaphor of fascism in an abstract fashion, Graham used it as a starting point for a more precise historical comparison. Graham rejected the analogy that likened the current moment to the Holocaust. Instead, present-day Arizona reminded him of the period in Germany that immediately preceded the Holocaust.

SB1070 and HB2281 and SB1611 and all these other measures, they target every single aspect of the people's way of life. They open windows of perception, that these people shouldn't have rights, and they should not be humanized. It doesn't matter if they're enforced because, for anything to be enforced anyway, it has to be accepted and it has to be legitimized, and it has to be administered. And I see it through this specific historical lens of 1930s Nazi Germany and the Nuremberg laws and the disabling acts and the specific administrative measures that were deliberately tailored to be a precursor to establishing political power that focused on a certain group of people...Every ensuing legislative act or bill or new ordinance inculcated more fear and hatred towards a specific population. And then logically, the bills got more and more brutal, and the means of enforcement got more and more brutal. I mean, the mass killing operations didn't even start until 1942. There's a 10-year long administrative process.

When people bring up the Holocaust in this situation, I don't think it's helpful. I think that it's a distraction and it's not a serious analogy. A more serious analogy is the administrative measures themselves, the specific laws that banned Jews from hospitals in 1937. Or the Reichstag's Citizenship Act which in 1935 laid out the people who were rightful citizens and those who weren't. Or 1933, when civil servants were targeted, like the Jewish civil servants that couldn't be in civil service anymore. Or the welfare system, like more and more extricating and disassociating Jews from real citizens. And so even if you were a German Jew born in Germany, you're subject to the laws of aliens because you are an alien class, you're an enemy class. And so the Holocaust, like I said, it was ten years before a Holocaust could even take place.

For Graham, the contemporary moment resembled 1930s Germany, a period during which lawmakers laid the administrative and ideological groundwork for the exterminations. I did not hear any other pro-immigrant activist make this particular comparison with the Nuremberg Laws. However, like other pro-immigrant activists, Graham grouped SB 1070 together with House Bill 2281 and Senate Bill 1611 and saw these measures as part of a frightening pattern. HB 2281 prohibited the instruction of ethnic studies in Tucson's primary and secondary schools. Activists saw this measure as an attempt to sterilize American history, by not discussing the oppression that minorities endured and the struggles they had to wage to overcome these conditions. Moreover, supporters of ethnic studies programs argued that such classes lowered the dropout rate in public schools, particularly among Latino students. For these reasons, pro-immigrant activists believed that the measure to ban ethnic studies was basically a way to propagate racist ideologists while making certain resources—like education—less accessible to particular groups.

Graham's understanding of the state, as an entity growing in its aggressiveness *and* its racialized oppressiveness, was also evident when he mentioned SB1611. This measure, unlike HB 2281, had been defeated three months earlier. Nonetheless, like other pro-immigrant activists, Graham saw the measure as highly significant because it too captured how America was growing increasingly Nazified. An omnibus bill, SB 1611 would have made proof of legal status a requisite for accessing a range of services, from federal public benefits and schooling, to vehicle registration and the acquisition of any sort of license. The measure also included sanctions for employers and law enforcement members who did not abide by immigration laws. By "target[ing] every aspect of a person's life," all these bills seemed to bear remarkable

resemblance to the systematic racial persecution of Jews and other stigmatized groups in Nazi Germany.

Even though he did not reference the Nuremberg Laws, Sergio also worried about the web of legislative proposals that made the state more violent *and* exclusionary towards immigrants. Sergio referred to these measures as “attrition laws.” This was a term that I heard many others use as well. “Attrition laws” were supposed to make it so difficult for undocumented people to live in the U.S. that they would eventually leave the country of their own accord. Sergio explained the attrition laws that went into effect in 2011. “Last year, everybody declared victory that no new laws were passed after 1070. But they’re wrong. Three of the most effective attrition laws passed last year.” One law made the consequences of deportation harsher, by making it harder for undocumented people to retain rights over their U.S. citizen children and U.S.-based property. The other two laws made it more difficult to access basic everyday services that required government-issued ID—like banking—and to apply for the Arizona ‘food handler card’ in order to work in the food service industry. Sergio summed up the effect of these measures in the following manner:

[Undocumented] people find ways around them [attrition laws]. But again, it becomes normalized and people have to find a way around it and they have to find loopholes. [...] *All these little laws are fucking with people.* And it’s also very frustrating because it’s these laws that don’t affect documented people and that [documented] people don’t fight back on. [Author’s emphasis.]

According to Sergio, the political drama around SB1070 (a law that strengthened the right hand of the state) distracted the pro-immigrant movement from resisting other “attrition laws” that reduced undocumented people’s access to resources. In fact, Sergio surmised that these three laws promised to create the same amount of hardship as SB1070 would have. In the minds of Graham and Sergio, these kinds of bills followed a clear pattern. By gradually alienating a particular group from the rest of society, this “administrative process”, encompassing both coercion and exclusion, reminded pro-immigrant activists of how fascist regimes emerged in the past.

To make sense of contemporary fascist tendencies in the U.S., pro-immigrant activists traced the ways in which the state’s repressiveness had been growing for decades. With this historical contextualization, pro-immigrant activists did not think that the Nazification of America was a surprising trend. For instance, Justin, an Advocate, explained why the state had been growing more coercive:

The economy is cyclical, and we’re just on that down-slope. But, the down-slope gets deeper and the peaks don’t go as high. Marx talks about the demise of capitalism. I mean, it’s like capitalism is following the script, you know, that it’s really that it’s becoming a second-rate system of doing things. And you can see that things are just getting worse and worse, and what’s happening is we’re headed to fascism and totalitarianism, where they’re just going to have so much control, they’re going to have the military and the army...because when people start getting upset and start asking for more, they’re going to unleash the police. Look what happened in front of the school [when the students were protesting HB 2281] – you know, a real show of force. Whenever there’s a police action, instead of sending a couple of cops, they send a whole bunch of ‘em in. It’s partially to

intimidate, but it's to show everybody, to get into people's mindset that if we dare do anything that the power structure thinks is not right, they're going to intimidate us with all these cops. And like that one guy that was shot at 71 times and hit 60 times – give me a break, you know?

That the state was exhibiting fascist behavior was not surprising. After all, the proclivity to use force whenever there was a peaceful protest or any other disruption of the status quo was a logical response of capitalism. In a similar manner, Max discussed how this use of raw force had been a key aspect of the U.S.'s relationship with other countries. “[American] foreign policy for the last hundred years has raped more countries across the world and taken more resources from more people than in the history of the world...I mean, it's a foreign policy based on using, taking.”

Lara also saw a historical pattern of state coercion that had profound consequences both domestically and internationally. In the 1980s, she participated in a group that was dedicated to studying Central America. In particular, her study group tried to learn more about the nature of American involvement in the region, which was information that was hard to access from within the U.S. I asked Lara if she was surprised by the things that she learned during this period:

Because I had studied Mexico, I wasn't surprised. After all, the war between the U.S. and Mexico, then Manifest Destiny and all of that, slavery...It was part of what the United States was... And in order for us to understand the role of the U.S. today, we have to understand all these different strands and analyze them. I mean, the massacre of Native Americans. The Chinese Exclusion Acts. The Cananea mine strikes.¹⁶ When we were at the Chicano House, we would get students from Mexico who were fleeing the persecution of students after 1968.¹⁷ We knew all of this and we knew about their interconnections with the U.S. It was just natural for us to try and understand the violence in Central America by analyzing U.S. foreign policy there. The same thing is happening today: people flee their countries because of American policies.

Lara attributed the domination of a number of groups—American slaves, Native Americans, Chinese immigrants, mineworkers and students in Mexico, Central Americans of the 1980s, and undocumented immigrants of today—to the repressiveness of the state. This narrative about oppression, spanning more than a century, illustrates the overarching power of the state in her

¹⁶ Cananea is a city in the state of Sonora in northern Mexico that has experienced a number of important labor disputes in the history of its copper mine. At the turn of the twentieth century, the U.S.-owned mine had a dual labor force of well-paid skilled American overseers, on the one hand, and Mexican mine workers who suffered from low pay and poor working conditions, on the other. When workers went on strike in 1906, management used armed American civilians—the Arizona Rangers—to force miners to return to work. The Arizona Rangers killed 23 strikers. In the 1960s, the Mexican government purchased the mine from its U.S. owners, turning it into a state industry. However, the government privatized and auctioned off the mine to U.S. mining companies in 1988. The miners struck shortly afterwards and the government responded with repressive tactics. For Lara, the Cananea mines were the site of the repression of Mexican workers by American capital. For more, see Gonzales (1996).

¹⁷ Again, Lara is referring to American complicity in the violent repression of Mexicans—in this case, students rather than mine workers. In 1968, the Olympic Games were scheduled to be held in Mexico City. Fearing that the games would be disrupted by student protests, the Mexican government enlisted the help of the Pentagon. The Pentagon sent riot-control equipment and training material to Mexico, and the CIA and the Mexican security forces were in close communication in the days before the massacre. For more, see Doyle (1998).

analysis. According to Lara, the U.S. government was inherently a violent actor. In fact, to make sense of violence in other countries, she intuitively looked for indications of U.S. involvement. This was also the lens that she used to analyze contemporary immigration patterns, just as many of her likeminded colleagues did. It was precisely the U.S. government's racist and aggressive policies that were responsible for the persistence of unauthorized migration today. Like Justin and Max, she did not think that the fascist tendencies in the contemporary period were unusual at all.

For older activists, the 1970s and 1980s in particular held special significance because it was the period during which activists had personal encounters with the right hand of the state. For example, I asked Manny to explain how he arrived at his pro-immigrant activism. Manny immediately began recounting his time in the Special Forces and how he had been deployed to El Salvador during the civil war. There, he became friends with a husband and wife, and one night, they invited him over for dinner. At the dinner table, the husband placed his day's earnings—a stack of coins—onto the dinner table and counted them. Manny quickly realized that the man's earnings amounted to less than what he had spent earlier that day on a desert. At that moment, Manny had a visceral realization that political forces, particularly the U.S. government, had created the oppressive conditions that his host faced.

I was mortified [...] I asked myself, 'Manny, American gringo, American Special Forces, at this table of justice, at this communion table where you are sharing bread, on which side of justice are you sitting? Are you supporting a military dictatorship which keeps these people economically oppressed, or do you advocate for social justice for him and his family? Which master do you serve?'

Like Graham and Sergio, Manny also made an allusion to the relationship between coercion and exclusion from resources. According to Manny, poverty and economic oppression in El Salvador was maintained by the violence of the Salvadoran military dictatorship, which was supported by the American government. It was his contact with what he believed to be the consequences of state repression that was instrumental in his own political consciousness-raising.

In a similar fashion, Justin traced the turning point in his life to his time as an American soldier in Vietnam. "I could see the injustices that the American government was committing in Vietnam...And even the way they train you [U.S. soldiers] and indoctrinate you, they try to dehumanize the Vietnamese people." Upon his return to the U.S., Justin was wrecked with remorse. "I felt guilty, not knowing how many people I may have been responsible for killing. Then, we find out that this war is an unjust war, based on a lie?" Manny and Justin were horrified by how they had become tools for state repression abroad.

Other activists, like Helena, traced the origins of their pro-immigrant politics to encounters with state violence that was directed at reducing welfare access. In 1976, a Tucson-based organization providing social services to undocumented people was raided by the federal government and members of the organization's steering committee were charged with aiding and abetting as well as smuggling. The raid marked a clear turning point in Helena's life: "I was still a first year law student. They raided. That was on a Friday. On Monday, I went to volunteer [with the organization] and the rest is history. I've never quit since." Beatriz also remembered the raid vividly. She had been volunteering at the organization's office on the day the raid happened. She recalled: "Can you imagine sitting here in the office and the whole SWAT team

and Border Patrol just breaking down the doors and ransacking everything? It was scary! It was awful! [...] That raid – it changed a lot for me.”

Lara, who had been involved in the study group, explained how these encounters with the state’s right hand were exactly what created the momentum to mobilize.

So while we’re discussing the issues around Central America, all of a sudden you have real people from El Salvador and Guatemala appearing on the doorstep. Pretty soon, we begin to see that there are people being detained in the detention centers around here. So we began to bond them out, and that’s how the centrifugal force came together to bring together all those people that will eventually emerge as [the] Sanctuary [Movement].

In the narratives of older activists like Lara, the Sanctuary Movement was an organic response to the growing aggressiveness of the state. The form that the movement’s initial mobilization took was to raise funds to post bonds that would free Central American immigrants from detention. It was an effort to protect groups from the state’s enforcement apparatus, albeit temporarily.

Activists used a similar narrative—of sudden encounters with state violence—in order to explain the emergence of local pro-immigrant organizations. Silas succinctly captured this idea, when I asked him to explain how the Humanitarians emerged as a group: “The Border Patrol created us,” he said. Peter, one of the founders of the Humanitarians, also relied on a similar story about the organization’s origins. For him, the Humanitarians mobilized in the desert to provide basic relief in the same manner that Sanctuary workers bonded out detainees a few decades earlier:

Well, basically, [a former sanctuary movement worker] came to me and said, ‘they found 37 [migrant] bodies last year in the Tucson Sector¹⁸, we gotta do something about that.’ And we basically said, ‘well let’s pull together the folks that were involved in the Sanctuary Movement.’ So we just called a meeting of all the folks that were still around Northern Sonora and Southern Arizona on a Sunday afternoon. By the end of the afternoon, folks had decided to form an organization to put water out in the desert. You know, I still have this strange idea that you really can whoop the U.S. government if you’re persistent and organized enough, that I learned in the Civil Rights Movement and the Sanctuary Movement.

The Sanctuary Movement made its last crossing in 1991, and the movement officially ended with the peace accords in El Salvador the following year. According to Peter, seven years later, a number of former sanctuary workers began to notice that border enforcement in Texas and California were funneling migrants through Arizona. Mounting numbers of human remains, presumably belonging to migrants, were recovered from Arizona’s Sonoran Desert. Networks that had been formed during the Sanctuary Movement were reactivated and a new group was born.

Thus, a historical narrative of a state that was increasingly aggressive and racially exclusionary was very present in activists’ minds as they described the Nazification of America. Activists sometimes relied on more abstract historical analyses, such as discussions about the

¹⁸ This term is used by the Border Patrol to refer to the 262 miles along the border stretching from the New Mexico State line to the county line of Yuma.

cycles of capitalism and the patterns of imperial pursuit. More often, however, activists – particularly older ones – made sense of the present moment in light of their direct and indirect encounters with the state’s right hand during the 1970s and 1980s. Stories of mobilization were interlaced with descriptions of these encounters and the urgency with which activists tried to provide relief to the victims of this violence.

Immigrants as Sacred and Transformative

The perception of the state as a powerful and predatory entity colored how activists made sense of immigrants. Many older white pro-immigrant activists, for instance, characterized their interactions with migrants—and therefore their activism—as transformative. A remnant of the 1980s Sanctuary Movement, this religious framework suggested that the “persecuted were closer to God than were middle-class North Americans and hence were sources of knowledge about God, society, life, and spirituality” (Coutin 1993: 71). For instance, Margaret and Shane argued that pro-immigrant activism gave participants an opportunity to critically examine their worlds. They explained the “transformative” aspect of their politics in the following manner:

Shane: It’s the migrants who are causing the transformation, no doubt about it. Even when it’s our community repeating stories about migrants and their encounters with them. It influences volunteers.

Margaret: Even [by] being out there [in the desert] for a week or two weeks with not seeing any migrants, but knowing that they’re out there and some of them are dying.

Shane: Yeah.

Margaret: It’s profound.

Shane: Yeah, that’s the most fascinating part of this whole thing. We learned it when we were working with refugees. The refugees we’re saving, the people doing the work, transforming the people doing the work, and the same thing is happening now. Migrants are doing the transforming. Even though, maybe because they’re poor and they have different life experiences and they come at us from a whole different world.

EFE: What is being transformed?

Margaret: Their [volunteers’] hearts.

Shane: Well, some of my worldview is being transformed now. Some of my ability to deal with my own situations, that I am a person of privilege, that I can learn, be moved by and inspired by people who have no privilege.

Undocumented migrants of today, just like Central American refugees of the 1980s, were a source of salvation for Americans. Their experiences of oppression made them closer to God. Thus, pro-immigrant activists gained valuable insights about their own privileges and social worlds through interactions with migrants. As Margaret suggested, even those volunteers who

did not encounter migrants while they were doing work in the desert, were still ‘saved’: the mere knowledge that crossers were making the hazardous journey through the desert, had a transformative effect on activists.

In a similar manner, Sally ascribed a sacred quality to immigrants. She explained how the stories that she heard from people who crossed the border without papers were ‘beautiful’ and ‘transformative.’ These stories were thought to be illustrative of immigrant resilience in a context of Nazification. Hearing them, Sally told me, helped sustain her commitment to the movement.¹⁹ She recounted one such story: a woman was crossing the border with her husband when she fell very sick with pneumonia. Her husband decided to go and fetch help. While he was away, she grew sicker with a respiratory infection and fever. She heard voices telling her to “come” and felt pulled towards them. “She probably heard voices from another world, she was probably dying,” Sally said. But eventually, the woman was able to pull herself back to this world, telling herself over and over again ‘I’ve gotta stay.’ Meanwhile, her husband was able to find a Border Patrol agent and they were able to come back and take her to the hospital in the nick of time. For Sally, this story taught her about “courage and stamina and the intense will to continue.” Like Margaret and Shane, she attributed religious meanings and profound meaningfulness to her interactions with migrants. These ideas about learning, transformation, and salvation served as foils to how most pro-immigrant activists described restrictionist activism—the product of manipulation, fear, and irrationality.

The Racist and Manipulated Restrictionists

Pro-immigrant activists’ understanding of other actors in the field were also fashioned by their perspective of the state. In this context of state authoritarianism, pro-immigrant activists articulated their lack of surprise that grassroots restrictionist groups had emerged in support of more immigration policing. According to many pro-immigrant activists, restrictionist activists were driven primarily by fear and more generally, by emotion, rather than by reason. This fear fueled an irrational racism that made restrictionist activists even more vulnerable to manipulation by powerful institutions like the media.

I think it’s out of fear. I think they’re brainwashed. The media manipulates people to be fearful of the border, of the Other. I mean the fear is on many levels, I guess. People hear about the drug violence. People hear about the high numbers of people coming into the U.S. There’s racism built into that. There’s a lot of media manipulation of people. They think that their way of life is threatened by immigrants coming to the U.S. –Sally

Fear is a huge driving factor in this. So, you can line up all the rationale and all the information and education and arguments, and it’s not going to make a whole lot of difference because people operate more out of emotions and fear particularly, than they do other things. –Shane

Like [Maricopa County Sheriff] Arpaio has a real ego. It’s all about Arpaio. And he’s picked his cause and he gets a lot of the ruffraff, which I consider ruffraff...maybe I

¹⁹ Susan Coutin (1993) also found that the framework of personal transformation and conversion sustained Sanctuary workers’ commitment to the cause (see page 66).

shouldn't say that, but basically, they're uneducated people who live out in the middle of nowhere. They're rugged individualists and they think that these brown people are going to come here and change their lifestyle and they're going to take over. They just get all this misinformation that's put out by the media. –Justin

I think that these people are really cynical and they're playing on the gullible and they're using racist catch phrases that have worked throughout time: the Other and the whole concept of its us against them. –Silas

According to Sally, Shane, Justin and Silas, restrictionist activists were 'brainwashed,' 'misinformed,' 'manipulated' and 'gullible.' Any amount of information was not going to alter their racist ideas, because these ideas were founded on fear, rather than reason. Indeed, this fearfulness caused restrictionist activists to have an irrational attachment to laws, even 'bad' laws. Longtime activists, Shane and Margaret referred to this phenomenon as "law and order thinking." Margaret elaborated this idea further:

Yeah, if you're looking at developmental models of how people grow and mature, the level for 'justice' is about a seven and 'law and order' is about a four [...] It's the law and there's no challenge of it, even if it's being misapplied. Or if it's a bad law, you just accept that it's the law and that's what you follow, and if you don't, then you should be punished. There's a higher level of thinking that needs to go on in our country.

According to pro-immigrant activists, fear crowded out the capacity for higher order thinking. In a word, restrictionists were brutes: manipulated by the media and brainwashed by demagogues, they could not but help promote 'bad' laws.

What did restrictionists fear, according to pro-immigrant activists? Restrictionists were afraid that Latinos and people of Latin American descent would eventually outnumber whites.

Within the foreseeable future, white folks are not going to be a majority in the United States, and that scared the hell out of my white brothers and sisters... If you're no longer going to be a majority, and no longer going to be in control, that and your children sure as hell aren't going to be: that's scary. – Peter

So I was talking to [a restrictionist activist], and she had always been really crazy and yelling, and then, she almost broke down to me. She was like, 'I'm really afraid that my grandchildren are going to grow up and be ruled by you guys. That they're not going to be able to live the same freedoms that I did.' I remember looking into her eyes and realizing that her fear was very authentic. – Sergio

I think more than anything, people are scared because they see that we're millions. We're millions of people from other countries. They feel like the immigrants are going to take over, sooner or later, so they're scared. – Gabriela

In the pro-immigrant worldview, therefore, restrictionists' support for more immigration enforcement was a blatantly racial project. That is, restrictionists tried to increase the state's

repressive power to maintain a white majority and this effort was in line with the Nazification of the country.

Wishy-Washy Democrats

Restrictionist activists and the Right were certainly a source of deep concern for all the pro-immigrant activists that I interviewed. However, several activists (all of whom were men and women of color, mostly younger) were more distraught by the political Left, and particularly its disunity around the issue of immigration. For instance, when I asked Mariella to describe the groups that she saw as her opponents, I expected her to discuss restrictionists and other figures on the Right. Indeed, this had been the immediate response of half of my respondents. Instead, however, Mariella kept steering the interview's focus back to the Democratic Party. I asked her why.

Part of the reason why I focus on the Left is at this point, it's not a surprise for me that that [extreme restrictionist politics] comes from the Republicans. But I'm underwhelmed by the Democrats. I mean, it's just amazing to me how the [Democratic] Party is associated with worker protections and minority rights. You know, just the rhetoric about who the Democratic Party is and yet, they just sit around on the sidelines when it comes to these issues [related to immigration and border security]... The Left to me is just sort of like, 'What are you doing?' But, in a lot of ways, it just seems like issues around immigration should not be that hard for the Democrats to champion because there's a way to connect it to the worker protections that everybody should have. It is impressive to me that they make it as difficult as they do to be a champion of immigration stuff.

Mariella criticized the Left for not uniting around the pro-immigrant cause and making too many concessions to restrictionist Republicans. She was surprised that such behavior was being exhibited by a party that had a history and a reputation for defending the rights of minorities and the working class. I asked her why she believed the Democrats were disappointing in this regard. She referred back to the racialized nature of immigration politics:

People are not going to go to bat for something that seems removed from their personal experience or is not connected with their own well-being. When they get involved, it's sort of like 'it would be nice if I did this thing for these poor brown people.' But it's so much easier for white progressives to just ignore it [the issue of immigration] completely.

The nationwide immigrant marches of 2006, she went on, had been led by immigrants, and there had been a striking absence of white allies at the marches. To the extent that white liberals in Arizona were concerned with the buildup of the border, it was related to negative effects of the fence on the environment, not on migrants. For Mariella, white privilege caused Democrats to ignore the topic of immigration completely or to advocate for immigrant rights out of a sense of charity, and therefore, in a limited manner.

Manny was also worried about the disunity of the political Left around the pro-immigrant cause and referred back to the Spanish Civil War to make sense of what was happening in the U.S.

This internal bloodletting on the Left reminds me of the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Left could never get it together. They were more content with slaughtering each other than fighting Franco... And in the meantime, Franco was acquiring more territorial gains because the leftists were killing each other. I think that's what contributed to the rise of the fascist dictatorship in Spain, and Spain regressed for several decades and didn't come out of the dark ages until 1975 when Franco finally died. You know, 1939 to 1975, Spain was the sick man of Europe. Could the Left have won the [Spanish] Civil War if it had been truly united? Possibly. I just sort of draw that analogy. The rise of fascism can happen here in this country. Is the Tea Party and the Minutemen the precursors to fascism? Is this [the rise of fascism] happening here? I think so.

While Manny did not get into the causes of this disunity in the manner that Mariella did, both activists were very worried about its consequences. Manny specifically saw the Left's "bloodletting" as creating the space for fascist elements to grow and thrive.

Reymon also voiced deep concerns about Democrats. Indeed, he even told me that he "admire[d] them [restrictionist activists and Republican politicians] in a weird way" because, unlike Democrats, they did not equivocate.

I appreciate that vicious white supremacy that's very open and uncompromising and clear. I know where they [restrictionist politicians and activists] stand, as opposed to liberals or Democratic politicians that say things that are politically correct, but their agenda is white supremacist. I'd rather deal with a Tea Party Minuteman KKK-type politician than Gabrielle Giffords²⁰ or just brown or white liberal politicians who are themselves feeding into the white supremacist agenda... I feel like when politicians speak from both sides of their mouth [...], it hurts more than helps. It creates a false sense of the system can work for us. [...] I mean, Reagan, as a Republican in the '80s [was] a piece of shit, evil person, but he has amnesty, so to speak. Yet, now we have a black Democrat president and we have almost half a million deportations and no immigration reform in sight. That's how much things have moved to the Right, in my head.

Reymon admired the brutal honesty that accompanied the racism of the Right. For him, it contrasted sharply against the wishy-washy ideology of Democrats when it came to matters of immigration and the border. This kind of equivocation gave immigrants and their advocates a false sense of certainty that meaningful social change could emerge under the Democrats' leadership. In reality, however, the kind of broad immigration relief that had been enacted under Reagan was missing in the Obama Administration's agenda. The state's singular reliance on a coercive logic had crowded out any possibility of relief. The effect of this enforcement-first approach to immigration was deeply ideological: It limited the imaginative capacity of the mainstream Left. As a result, there was a collective rightward shift among Democrats.

²⁰ Representing Arizona's 8th Congressional District (abutting the U.S.-Mexico border), Gabrielle Giffords served as a Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 2007 until 2012. While she did not support SB 1070, Giffords hoped it would serve as a "wake-up call to Washington politicians who for too long have refused to take seriously their responsibility to address the crisis on our border." Giffords' (2010) press release went on to explain that "Southern Arizona...has paid a heavy price because of drug smuggling and illegal immigration."

Indeed, the politics of the mainstream Left even caused “politically conscious” activists to grow acclimated to the rightward shift. Reymon reflected on himself:

Even as a person who resists and is politically conscious and who can try to analyze this for that, I’m still falling into that trap. Within the movement, I feel that the movement also has been shot with tranquilizers. Our community [of pro-immigrant activists and immigrants], which are basically neo-slaves in a neo-fascist society, are tranquilized. [...] I think that’s why the Right and the anti-migrant agenda is winning rapidly. [...] All we have is the push to the right.

Reymon vividly described a Left that had become too sedated and slavish to resist fascist conditions.

Sergio, who had described the “attrition laws” earlier, broached the same theme of normalization among activists. To illustrate his point, he shared an anecdote about a friend who had visited Arizona in 2008 to help with his organization. Having heard about Maricopa County Sheriff Arpaio’s infamous tent city, the friend asked Sergio whether one of the organization’s demands was to shut down the outdoor detention center. Sergio responded: “why should we shut it down? That’s the way things are. Tent city has been there for 15 years... We have other things to worry about.” Reflecting on his answer years later, Sergio could not help but feel startled. To him, it seemed as if the state not only encroached on every aspect of an undocumented person’s life; it also colonized the minds of the very people agitating for change:

For me and others doing this work, we’ve just become numb to everything. It all just becomes normal. Right now, we wouldn’t even think about fighting for [drivers’] licenses, even though, it’s been almost 16 years, since people haven’t had licenses. We wouldn’t conceive of the notion of fighting for [...] English to not be the only language. [...] We’re always fighting against the next, most horrible thing. It’s been like a process.

What Sergio called “attrition laws” not only had the effect of eroding the will of immigrants to live in the U.S. Such measures also wore down the opposition by attrition. The mainstream Left kept shifting rightward, unable to unite around the pro-immigrant cause. Meanwhile, pro-immigrant activists themselves felt that they had grown accustomed to the status quo and lost imaginative capacity in their work.

Conclusion

This chapter showed how, for pro-immigrant activists, the specter of fascism was an obvious way to make sense of what was happening in the U.S. Citing, on the one hand, the laws targeting every aspect of life and, on the other, the use of force to maintain the racially stratified status quo, pro-immigrant activists believed that they were witnessing the Nazification of America. The trends in contemporary American society bore remarkable resemblance to the run-up to fascist regimes in Europe during the early twentieth century: lawmakers and other state actors, supported by the media and other institutions were fueling popular racism by making a scapegoat of a specific group of people.

The Nazification of America was not a surprising development. In trying to explain the history of the present, activists, older men and women in particular, referred to the 1970s and 1980s. The war in Vietnam and, later, U.S. involvement in Central America, were memorable periods for older activists and they often traced their own initial politicization and mobilization to these moments. During these periods, activists recalled their encounters with a strong and exclusionary state. In the minds of activists, this state coercion was intimately linked to projects of racial inequality. Since the 1970s, the state had only grown more aggressive, but, according to older activists, so had the efforts to resist fascist tendencies.

Pro-immigrant activists referenced the state in order to make sense of themselves and other actors in the field. Borrowing a framework that had been popular within the Sanctuary Movement, activists ascribed a sacred quality to immigrants. As a result of the suffering they had endured at the hands of the state, immigrants of today, just like the Central American refugees of the 1980s, were thought to hold truths about life. Pro-immigrant activism, therefore, was thought to be a transformative enterprise: it held the potential to radically change the hearts and minds of participants, a particularly remarkable feat within the context of Nazification. By contrast, restrictionist activism was described as a sheeplike response to fascistic trends. Restrictionists were thought to be gullible and manipulated people who were driven to mobilize out of racialized fears and uncritical 'law-and-order' sensibilities.

Older white pro-immigrant activists and their younger colleagues of color disagreed about the strength of the resistance. Both sides did so, however, with the shared understanding that the state was growing strong and exclusionary. Older activists, particularly those who had participated in the Sanctuary Movement, argued that the state's egregious actions organically created a sense of collective urgency that mobilized people to provide relief to the state's victims. Meanwhile, younger activists of color did not hold the same unwavering faith in the resilience of pro-immigrant activism and, more generally, the political Left. In particular, younger activists worried about how Democrats were not of one mind on the question of immigration. Democratic politicians equivocated on matters related to immigration and gave their constituents false hope about the possibility of meaningful reform. Some activists also worried about their *own* commitment to real change, given that they, too, experienced the ideological effects of Nazification. Activists feared that, perhaps, fascist tendencies were handicapping the movement's ability to imagine a future without an aggressive state.

Chapter 3

The 'Mexicanization' of America: The Worldview of Restrictionist Activists

While pro-immigrant activists explicitly and consistently referred to the specter of fascism in their everyday discourses, restrictionists did not rely on a single metaphor. Nonetheless, I argue that the idiom of Mexicanization provides a fruitful way to understand the various elements of the restrictionist worldview. 'Mexico,' for restrictionists, meant more than just a southern neighbor; it represented every nation of the global south. At a very basic level, the Mexicanization of America captured the idea (and all accompanying fears) that as the U.S. absorbed more immigrants from the global south and as the nation became more exposed to the global south, it would become *a part of* the global south.

Specifically, the fear of Mexicanization was based on a perception that the state was growing weaker and more inclusionary. The previous chapter discussed how pro-immigrant activists believed that it was precisely the state's aggressiveness that was responsible for the persistence of unauthorized migration. Additionally, pro-immigrant activists linked the strength of the state's right hand with the exclusionary nature of its left hand. 'Attrition laws' served simultaneously as mechanisms of repression and ways to prevent immigrants from accessing basic services. Thus, Nazification of the country meant more coercion and more racial stratification.

By contrast, restrictionist activists believed that the undocumented population reached its present proportions *because* the state failed to police borders and regulate immigration adequately. Restrictionists linked state weakness with its inclusiveness. That is, these activists worried that in addition to becoming a feebleness policing entity, the state was also channeling resources away from the deserving (American citizens) to the undeserving (noncitizens). These two features of the state – weakness and inclusiveness – reinforced each other. Immigration regulation was legislated, but not enforced. Immigrants took advantage of the inadequacies of the state's enforcement apparatus and slipped into country unnoticed. Once in the U.S., noncitizens preyed on the vulnerabilities of the system, including its unrestricted welfare programs. These circumstances, in turn, reinforced the state's weakness.

Restrictionists' perceptions about the state's weakness shaped their understanding of other stakeholders in the field as well. As far as restrictionists were concerned, immigrants were anything but suffering. Immigrants were not victims of the state; the state was the victim of immigrants, who preyed on the system's vulnerabilities. As such, immigrants were described as a highly profane group: they were sly, crafty, and dangerous. Their presence in the country exposed American families to the crimes and social problems of 'Mexico.' Similarly, restrictionists made sense of pro-immigrant mobilization as another aspect of the country's Mexicanization. Pro-immigrant activists interfered with the state's ability to protect its citizenry from 'Mexico.' At the same time, restrictionists harbored deep criticisms about the mainstream Right: Republican politicians were, more often than not, 'Republicans In Name Only.' In fact, in addition to their disapproval of the mainstream Right, restrictionist activists often felt that Tea Partiers failed to understand the urgency of immigration politics. When they ignored the perils of

unauthorized immigration, both Republicans and Tea Partiers showed how out of touch they were with the plight of ordinary Americans.

A gendered analysis of the state can shed further light on these worldviews. According to Iris Marion Young (2003), a dominant moral framework in the United States is masculinist protectionism. Within this moral code, men are defined as good based on their willingness to protect others, particularly women and children. By extension, good women and children are those who obey the male protector and trust his better judgment. These expectations can also be extended to the state. Within this gendered logic, a morally good state acts as a masculine protector, ready to wage war on the rest of the world. Meanwhile, good citizens assume “a subordinate status like that of women in the patriarchal household” (2).

According to pro-immigrant activists, this was a norm that fit neatly with the Nazification of America; it was a standard that the state sought to live up to in myriad ways, often successfully. To counter this kind of celebration of masculinist protectionism, pro-immigrant activists offered alternative moral frameworks. For instance, activists ascribed a sacred quality to immigrants. In doing so, pro-immigrant activists suggested that the nation’s outside was not a source of threats for Americans but rather a source of their salvation. By extension, a morally good American was someone who tried to help rein in the state’s aggressiveness and who offered relief to its victims.

In the worldviews of restrictionist activists, however, the state did not live up to the moral standard of masculinist protectionism.²¹ When the government failed to regulate immigration adequately, it also failed to *protect* both the safety of Americans as well as the safety of their resources. Restrictionists therefore were engaged in a project of reinforcing the state’s masculinity. Pro-immigrant activists tried to emasculate the state that was trying to protect them and for this reason, restrictionists painted their counterparts as naïve and ungrateful. Rebels without a cause, pro-immigrant activists were obsessed with racial identity and other types of ‘PC nonsense’, which helped drive the popularity of their ideas. Mexicanization of America became a certainty unless concerned citizens joined together to prop up the state and put an end to illegal immigration.

The Weak and Inclusionary State

Jack was a white man in his mid-40s. When he was not doing odd jobs in construction, he drove to the U.S.-Mexico boundary to patrol it with a restrictionist organization that I call the Soldiers. I asked him a hypothetical question: What if the border remained as it was? What if it was not built up any further? What would happen? In response, Jack vividly described the Mexicanization of America:

²¹ Jennifer Carlson (2015) has also noted the relevance of this gendered norm in another rightwing mobilization. In her study of gun culture in Detroit, Michigan, Carlson showed how gun carry, particularly among white middle class men, served as a response to perceptions of state weakness in the context of decline and alienation. Given the findings of the current study, we might expect that the countermovement in gun politics—advocates of gun control—may have contrasting intuitions about the distribution of power and particularly, about the state’s policing abilities. Considering social agents’ intuitions about the power dynamics between state and civil society, therefore, provides a useful tool for unpacking the contrasting worldviews that are often the basis of polarized political struggles.

Okay, the nightmare scenario is more and more drug cartel involvement here in the U.S., and the graft and corruption that comes with government officials involved in that, because they would have to operate with some impunity [...] People are paid to look the other direction and that would happen here. And there's already been plenty of murders by drug cartels here in the United States. If the border is allowed to remain as porous as it is, that will only increase.

With a porous southern border, the U.S. would begin to fall apart in myriad ways. "Mexican" problems like drug trafficking, graft, corruption and murder, would continue to creep into the U.S. Over time, Americans' loyalties to their own nation would be compromised. Government officials—the very people charged with upholding the rule of law and protecting the nation from outside threats—would become complicit in drug trafficking with Mexican cartels.

Later in the interview, I asked Jack whether his analysis of drug trafficking overlooked a factor endogenous to the U.S., namely that there was a significant market for illicit substances in the country. Jack shrugged off this idea. "You can't just create a demand out of nothing," he explained. To elaborate his point, he described how a friend had become a drug addict. According to Jack, the friend had picked up the habit precisely because someone had exposed him to it at a party. Before that moment, the friend had never expressed any interest in drugs. Exposure to drugs, alone, had been sufficient. Following this logic, Jack attributed the problem of drug addiction in the U.S. to the fact that Mexican drug cartels made these substances available in the first place. Therefore, to address addiction in the U.S., one had to cut off the supply of drugs through stringent enforcement of the southern border.

Another member of the Soldiers, Chris, also worried about the fate of the nation. In colorful language, he too expressed concern about how migration from Mexico, threatened to suck the U.S. into the global south.

Don't come here from some crap-ass country and *try to change this into the shithole you came from*, when you should stay there and fix the mess you came from. Whether [it's] revolution or whatever it takes, fix the mess you came from. And that goes for Mexico. Mexico's had, for centuries, problems with corruption in the government and the people have been squashed, and they need to fix it. [Author's emphasis.]

As if speaking to immigrants directly, Chris demanded that rather than crossing the border, they needed to "fix the mess you come from." Migration not only threatened to make the U.S. into a "shithole." It also perpetuated the very problems from which migrants were trying to escape. In this worldview, lax enforcement of U.S. borders augured undesirable change in America *and* in the global south. To sum up his ideas, Chris offered to let me borrow a DVD that he had brought with him to the interview and which he believed 'explained everything.' The documentary was appositely called *Southern Exposure*. As its title suggested, the film described how a porous southern border 'exposed' the United States to numerous dangers stemming from Mexico, among them spillover cartel violence, environmental damage, and disease.

Besides its physically observable effects, southern exposure also had ideological consequences in the U.S. The documentary featured an interview with a Soldier, Jane, who discussed the growing popularity of 'anti-gringo' and 'la reconquista' ideas in the U.S. When I later spoke with Jane, she explained the theory of 'la reconquista' in the following manner: as the

numbers of Mexican migrants in the U.S. grew, so did the likelihood of a violent effort to recover Mexico's "lost territories" in the U.S., including the state of Arizona.

These ideas, according to Jane, were conveyed to impressionable students in ethnic studies classes. Believing that the classroom could be the gateway for 'southern exposure,' she went through the entire list of reading material that were assigned in ethnic studies classes and highlighted every instance of what she believed to be an anti-American idea. She was particularly concerned that there were numerous passages that called into question the legitimacy of the America's borders. Like pro-immigrant Graham, Jane also saw the politics around ethnic studies courses as being closely tied to the struggle around immigration. As discussed earlier, Graham regarded HB 2281, the ban on ethnic studies instruction, as another tactic of racial domination by an authoritarian state. Jane, on the other hand, believed that the ban was a feeble effort to protect a basic consensus around American sovereignty. For this reason, she like other restrictionist activists, were advocates of the ban.

Restrictionist activists always emphasized that even though they opposed *illegal* immigration, they always welcomed *legal* immigrants. Often, however, as they elaborated on their worldviews, activists contradicted this statement. In the minds of restrictionist activists, any exposure to Mexico, even via legal avenues, threatened to create third world conditions, including a scarcity of resources. For instance, Connor discussed the negative effects of short-term legal migration by Mexican nationals with border crossing cards (BCCs). BCCs were short-term visas that allowed their holders to visit and shop (but not work) in American towns on the border within a prescribed distance of the border. In his discussion of this type of short-term migration, Connor touched on several nodes of insecurity in social life. At the time of the interview, he was attending paramedic school and doing his clinical work in an Arizonan border town. He quickly noticed that many of the patients that they were seeing were Mexican nationals with BCCs.

Connor: I can't remember one person that came in that had insurance. None of them spoke English. A lot of them live across the line [in Mexico], and they come there and get free service, because [hospitals] have to: All hospitals have to provide an initial assessment...and then an appropriate transfer to another facility, possibly to help them. So, whether or not they have insurance is irrelevant... There was a guy yesterday, a Mexican gentleman, 76 year old, I think. No insurance. Had [a heart attack]. Flew him to [a hospital in Tucson]. So right there, with the medications and the treatment he got in the hospital was probably upwards of two or three thousand dollars, and then he took a [...] twenty thousand dollar helicopter ride to the Tucson hospital, where he's [...] going to [get a catheter put in], and they're going to put stents in [...] How much does that ultimately cost? Well, at the end of care, probably close to \$100,000 [...] that won't be paid, because he doesn't have insurance or anything. He most likely came across the line to get seen.

EFE: But is there any way of knowing that he came across the line?

Connor: Oh, they'll have border crossing cards. They can actually legally come across the border, and then go to the hospital [*laughs*]... Everybody knows that you can go to the hospital and be treated whether you have insurance or not. We have enough people in our own country that are doing that, and these people are coming in and

working odd jobs, whether it be in the field or construction and no insurance, and flooding it even more. And unfortunately, the border [region] is the worst hit. There's no trauma center here... None of these [health care] facilities here can afford to have anything more than basic care for people.

EFE: But that's like a larger problem that you're sketching, right? There's no law being broken here.

Connor: No, there's no law being broken.

I asked Connor whether he thought legal migrants should not be able to access health services in the U.S.

Connor: I can't say that, because I'm helping people [as a paramedic]. But it's a symptom of the ultimate problem. *Because illegal immigration reaches in so many different areas.* They tend to be on the poorer side, because they're not getting jobs where people are really checking to see if they're American citizens or not. Therefore, these people know that they can pay them a lesser wage, so they end up living in neighborhoods together that are...where crime is just skyrocketing in those locations.

EFE: But now you're talking about illegal immigrants.

Connor: No, no, [I'm talking about] legal. They come in and go to work somewhere. They don't get jobs in places that are really checking really hard to see if you're an American citizen. You know, 'you've got these [border crossing] cards. I'll give you the job.' [The employers] have done the bare minimum to ensure that they have the documents necessary, [and then] here's \$50 at the end of the day, have a nice day. And so they're living in less than middle class conditions, and therefore those neighborhoods bring crime, and those neighborhoods are where those children are going out and getting involved in... And, so crime rates, you know, Mexican gangs, things like that. *Like I said, the immigration problem has fingers that stretch all over society.* But ultimately, you just, it's like in your house. You don't want people walking in and out of your house, so you don't want people walking in and out of the country, without checking [them] out.

As the interview transcript indicates, I was often confused if Connor was referring to unauthorized or authorized migration and I had to ask for clarification several times. In part, the slippage occurred because Connor was specifically trying to make sense of Border Crossing Cards, which allowed legal status to fluctuate across time and space in confusing ways. He described how after cardholders entered the country legally, they could do things that the card did not authorize them to do—like seek employment.²² Connor then generalized his frustrated observations about BCC-holders to all forms of migration: he painted a picture wherein authorized and unauthorized border-crossing basically had the same, undesirable consequences

²² Scholars of migration have documented how BCC holders effectively straddle the boundary between documented and undocumented. For instance, see Hernández-León (2008). Restrictionists understand this phenomenon as an unfair way in which migrants *take advantage* of a generous legal system.

for America. In other words, the source of all kinds of social problems in the U.S. was Mexican migration.

Specifically, for Connor, the crux of these social problems had to do with an inclusionary state, which offered precious American resources to noncitizens. These resources included healthcare and decently-paying jobs. Besides the depletion of resources, Mexicanization was productive; it facilitated the rise of nontraditional forms of work like day labor, the growth of neighborhood poverty, and the spread of violent crime. Just as Jack believed that drug addiction in the U.S. was not a problem that could be addressed in America, Connor too argued that American border towns' social problems had exogenous (read: Mexican) roots.

In some cases, restrictionists believed that the weak and inclusionary nature of the state had dire consequences for noncitizens as well as American citizens. For instance, at a monthly meeting of the Soldiers, Sarah, one of the group leaders, discussed how illegal immigration created opportunities for gendered violence. Women and girls were vulnerable to attack, she explained, when they made unauthorized entry. In fact, the border region was full of 'rape trees'—or trees that were strewn with the undergarments of women who had been raped by fellow travelers and/or their *coyotes* during the journey northward. Moreover, Sarah continued, porous borders allowed for the trafficking of young girls, 'as young as 12.' These girls were forced into the sex trade in the U.S. Were the U.S. to have a more stringent system of enforcement, these girls would be better off. Sarah also commented how while everyone thought that the problem of illegal immigration was a 'Mexican versus American' conflict, it really was a Mexican versus Mexican issue. Unauthorized migration and drug trafficking had been harmful for American border towns, but calamitous for their Mexican counterparts. What were once quiet little towns—like Nogales, Sonora—now experienced tremendous violence that were directly linked to U.S. government's inability to police the border. Thus, the Mexicanization of America portended disaster for Mexicans as well as Americans.

Immigrants as Defilers of America

Restrictionists saw immigrants as the harbingers of undesirable Mexican conditions. As the previous chapter illustrated, migrants were a source of 'personal transformation' for some pro-immigrant activists. A legacy of the Sanctuary Movement, this framework of personal transformation was still relevant for many older white pro-immigrant activists. According to this idea, undocumented migrants, by virtue of their persecution and suffering, were closer to God than privileged white middle-class American citizens. Encounters with migrants had a sacred quality to them, providing valuable spiritual sustenance to activists.

By contrast, in the restrictionist worldview, migrants were profane and they profaned America. For instance, Sarah, who mentioned the 'rape trees' earlier, cited another metaphor—about contagion and disease—that was also a popular topic among restrictionist activists. Sarah described how strains of polio and viral infections that had not appeared in the country in years were starting to reemerge. She blamed these strains on unauthorized migration, particularly that of children. Legal immigrants had to pass health checks. However, 'when they come through the back door,' she explained, 'no one knows what kinds of diseases they bring in.' Sarah painted an image of undocumented children attending schools and spreading these diseases to other children. 'You know how children are,' she stated.

Joseph, a white man in his late 60s, also saw migrants as the harbingers of undesirable Mexican conditions and, out of all the restrictionist activists with whom I spoke, he narrated the most personalized version of this idea. He was moved to tears as he explained to me how undocumented immigration and drug trafficking from Mexico had led to a number of tragedies in his family. Joseph's wife was a naturalized U.S. citizen of Mexican descent. When they got married, he adopted her three U.S.-born children all of whom had been fathered by a Mexican man. As teenagers, Joseph's two stepsons were killed in separate incidents involving drugs. One son was killed during a drug transaction while the other was shot and killed by his Latina girlfriend who was high on cocaine at the time. "I still see them dead in my dreams. They died all because they wanted to be Mexican and do drugs and get rich... My wife and I cry everyday over it." Joseph blamed this tragedy on the various threads of third world influence on his stepsons' lives.

In retrospect, Joseph explained, there were clear warning signs that something terrible would happen to his stepsons. As the boys grew into teenagers, they began to "drive [Joseph] crazy" because they decided to "become Mexican," by adopting a "la Raza attitude." Specifically, Joseph's stepsons began to identify as "Mexican" instead of American, wear different clothes (baggy pants and large t-shirts), not take school authority seriously, and interlace their rebellion against their stepfather with discussions of his whiteness. According to Joseph, they learned this behavior from "Mexican friends" in the neighborhood and at school. Joseph and his wife tried to talk some sense into the boys. When they could not, they enlisted their pastor's help. The more the boys were exposed to "Mexicans" however, the more they defied *all* authority including that of the church. When the pastor failed to change the boys' ways, the couple began contemplating moving to another neighborhood and putting their children in a different school. They even considered moving from Arizona to a state that did not border Mexico.

According to Joseph, however, moving somewhere else probably would not have made a difference. The boys were too far gone in their self-destructive habits, having fully embraced a non-American, racialized identity, and with it, drug use. Joseph and his wife were convinced that the drugs their sons were killed over, had been smuggled into the U.S. from Mexico. At this point in the interview, Joseph paused and summed it up this way: "My two sons got stupid and used their race to get them murdered." He contrasted his stepson's fate against his stepdaughter's. Because his stepdaughter "never used her race," Joseph contended, she managed to stay away from drugs. Not only that, but she put herself through college, became a successful businesswoman, and married a nice man with whom she had a daughter. However, his last visit with his stepdaughter and granddaughter—now a teenager—worried Joseph. His step-granddaughter had told him that she was "Mexican." Joseph had tried to correct her, saying that she was first and foremost an 'American' and a 'U.S. citizen.' He had asked her to say the pledge of allegiance, emphasizing the part that they were "one Nation under God." While she had humored him, the girl seemed unmoved by her grandfather's efforts to rethink her identity. Joseph concluded, "I wonder about [her]...if she's doing drugs, 'cuz they tell you they're Mexican. But then again, who knows?"

To Joseph's mind, the source of the tragedy that had befallen his family—that could still befall his granddaughter—was outside of the U.S. He associated certain objects (like drugs) and behaviors (like divisive identity, racial animosity, and irreverence to authority) with Mexico. Migrants were the transporters of these destructive objects and behaviors. Indeed, this third

world influence had sown division in his household, alienating him and his wife from their children, and potentially, their granddaughter. Joseph used this personal experience as a lens for understanding what was happening throughout the nation: if the country's sovereignty was jeopardized further, then these third world objects and behaviors would continue to seep into the nation and wreck havoc in the lives of ordinary Americans. Mexicanization threatened to tear families apart.

That immigrants were defiling the nation, restrictionists believed, was unsurprising given the weakness of enforcement. Many restrictionists worried that not only was there an absence of strength on the part of federal immigration agencies, but that that laxness in immigration regulation was *productive*. It conveyed a dangerous message to the world that it was acceptable for noncitizens to take advantage of American resources. For instance, Jack opined about deportation in the following manner:

We need to have stiffer criminal offenses for re-entry. It would take a little bit of time, but once the word got out that we meant it, that if you come here a second time you're going to spend five years in jail and you're not going to be able to support your family because you're going to be in jail, it would have a huge deterring effect once they figured out that we actually meant it. As it is now they can come back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, and they just get deported, sent back, come again, there's no penalty for it.

At the time of this interview, deportation rates were at the highest that they had ever been in recent U.S. history. In Jack's view, however, high deportation numbers illustrated the incompetence of the federal government's border enforcement system. Jack surmised that after deportation, people tried to cross again and, more often than not, succeeded. Deportation served as a mild inconvenience rather than a punishment that had a deterring power. Other restrictionist activists also described deportations as the sign of a weak state and emphasized how immigrants took advantage of this system.

What do I worry about? I mean, look, there are [immigration enforcement] raids and whatever, and they [undocumented people] get deported. But what does it do? Absolutely nothing. They just come right back. [*Swipes hand from right to left*] Why? Because they can. And if they're deported again, 'oh good, free trip home. I can visit my sick grandma.' Then they'll come right back here [to the U.S.]. [*Swipes hand from right to left*] What kind of message are we sending the world with that kind of BS? – George

Sure, Border Patrol is finding [apprehending] and sending people back every day. They just drive'em to the border, let'em go. Not even a slap on the wrist. Sometimes they get flown back! And who pays for these bus rides, these plane rides? Us! The American taxpayers! But no one talks about it. [...] No, Americans are asleep in front of their TVs. Had an argument about it with my brother-in-law. He's like, 'Hank, you're crazy. The borders are secure. Why are you so worried?' [*Rolls his eyes.*] – Hank

The previous chapter described how, for pro-immigrant activists, the mounting number of deportations was telltale sign of the country's Nazification. These statistics about expulsion were evidence of the formidable power of the state's right hand. Deportation inflicted pain on

immigrants and their families. Even just the threat of deportation caused immigrants to suffer. Meanwhile, restrictionist activists like Jack, George, and Hank believed that the reverse was true: deportations indicated governmental incompetence and immigrant power. George and Hank described deportation as a free trip ‘home’ for the immigrant deportee. George characterized expulsion as almost a gift to immigrants: deportees probably took advantage of their return trips to visit with their family, before setting out again for the U.S.

All three men suggested that a lax system of enforcement was almost as bad as, and perhaps even worse than its complete absence. There were a number of reasons that activists held this conviction. First, the existing enforcement regime was costly to Americans. Hank’s frustration that American taxpayers were paying for ‘free trips home’ for migrants was a common theme. Others, like Connor the paramedic, worried that even those who entered legally were becoming an economic burden for Americans. Second, the existing enforcement system failed to accomplish what it set out to do, which was deter unauthorized migration. This failure was related to a third reason, which had to do with the communicative aspect of a lax system: namely, it conveyed the wrong kind of ‘message’ not only to the world but also, as Hank suggested, to Americans themselves.

This theme about how the veneer of enforcement lulled Americans to sleep was popular among restrictionist activists. For instance, as soon as I began the interview, Phil, the founder of the Engineers, steered us to a discussion of the fate of recent federal initiatives. Both the Secure Fence Act of 2006 (which called for more fencing) as well as the Secure Border Initiative of 2005 (which contracted Boeing to develop border enforcement technology along the U.S.-Mexico border) had failed. After five years of delays and problems, the Obama Administration had finally halted most of the Secure Border Initiative project and diverted \$50 million in allocated funds to other projects.²³ Phil followed these developments closely. He read the government accountability office reports which had documented the myriad technical mistakes that were made throughout the process of border buildup. Phil believed that there was only one way to make sense of this failure:

The systems that they designed wouldn’t work. I don’t think they were ever intended to work, okay. What the Secure Fence Act, and the Strategic Border Initiative were, was to lull the people into thinking that they were really going to this time secure the border, so they would pass amnesty. Ok, oh my gosh, the boys out there are going to put up this thing, they got a fence going it, ok we’re all set, go ahead and pass it. Well, they didn’t pass it. So now they’re sitting around, going, wait a minute, we’ve got this fence thing we’re supposed to build. Never intended to build that. Let’s kill it. They killed it. Look at that stupid SBInet, we never intended that, but it’s ok, that’s not going to work anyway. Just let it die. Am I cynical? Well, yeah, for a reason.

According to Phil, these failures were disconcerting because of the message they conveyed to Americans who were otherwise unfamiliar with the circumstances at the border. Projects of this sort created the false impression that the government was securing the border. Or put differently, the government’s costly, but not well-considered efforts at the border and all the accompanying hype were nothing more than spectacle. These spectacles would be harmless, if it

²³ For more on this, see Hsu (2010) and U.S. Government Accountability Office (2010).

was not for the fact that they had made it harder for ordinary people to recognize the specter of Mexicanization.

The Childish and Ungrateful Pro-Immigrant Activists

Restrictionist activists were also concerned that a group of Americans had taken up the mantle of immigrant advocacy and they made sense of this counter-mobilization in reference to a weakening state. Just as pro-immigrant activists believed that grassroots restrictionism was a symptom of the country's Nazification, restrictionist activists saw the mobilization of their opponents as a sign of the country's Mexicanization. Not only did the state fail to meet its moral obligation as a strong, protective entity, but American citizens failed to *recognize* this moral violation, and indeed, exacerbated it by trying to further weaken the state. Joseph, whose family tragedy I explained earlier, articulated this logic of masculinist protectionism:

The sun never sets on spilled American blood. The whole earth, the sun is always shining on spilled American blood, for somebody's freedom. But a lot of Americans don't look at it that way. They protest and do all kinds of crap. 'Don't fight these wars.' 'Shouldn't do this, shouldn't do that.' Well, tell that country to leave us alone and we'll come home.

Joseph was an Air Force veteran and like Justin the pro-immigrant activist, the experience of being in Vietnam during the war shaped his self-understanding in a profound way. Like Justin, Joseph recalled how he had been traumatized by the violence that he had witnessed. However, while Justin returned home feeling guilty for having done the bidding of an oppressive government, Joseph believed that he had helped the state do whatever was necessary to protect Americans at home. When he got out of the army, Justin sought out ways to atone for his time in Vietnam. He grew critical of U.S. intervention abroad and got involved in Central American solidarity work. Meanwhile, Joseph stayed in the Air Force despite his PTSD. "I stuck it out," he told me, because he loved the Air Force and he believed it was his "duty to protect [his] country." Over time, it seemed that the entire world was covered in "spilled American blood, for somebody's freedom." His fellow Americans, however, were ungrateful for these sacrifices. Ordinary Americans took their freedom for granted, he kept telling me, and they failed to understand that that freedom required protection. The same feelings of anger and frustration that he had harbored against anti-war protestors in the 1970s, came rushing back as he heard about pro-immigrant mobilization.

Other restrictionist activists also characterized pro-immigrant activists as ungrateful, naïve, and childlike. For instance, Janice became incensed as she recalled how a bunch of 'impressionable kids' who had been 'bussed in from Tucson' had chained themselves to the state capitol after the governor of Arizona had signed Senate Bill 1070 into law. Pro-immigrant activists not only questioned the authority of the protector. They also channeled more resources to immigrants. For example, Bill was angered when he read in the newspaper about a new project that a group of pro-immigrant activists had undertaken at a local Greyhound bus station. Several nights a week, an ICE van dropped off people recently released from immigration detention. A group of pro-immigrant activists showed up at the bus station with water, food, socks and bags to give to the former detainees. Occasionally, activists also offered to house people overnight. Bill was angry at the activists. "Bunch of Americans, kids, don't know any better," he told me. "But, here they are, giving out all this stuff. If you want to be a do-gooder,

why don't you work at a soup kitchen? There are plenty of poor, hungry Americans." According to Hank, pro-immigrant activists were American "kids" who "didn't know any better" because they helped undeserving noncitizens rather than deserving citizens. In the worldviews of Joseph, Janice, and Bill, pro-immigrant activists acted like ungrateful and naive children when they questioned the authority of the protector and helped undeserving groups.

Masculinist protectionism shaped my own interactions with restrictionist activists. On the one hand, as a young woman, I often became the object of protection and tutelage, which facilitated my access to restrictionists. Because I was significantly younger than most restrictionist activists, and, in many cases, one of the few women (or the only woman) in the group, I was considered unthreatening. In fact, as I explain in more detail below, I often became a substitute for the vulnerable nation. On the other hand, the intersection of my age and darker skin color, also made me seem suspicious. Restrictionists assumed that I harbored 'childish' leftist sentiments and this conviction sometimes made them reluctant to talk to me. Even respondents who spoke to me in great length—men like Joseph and Jack—worried that these leftist inclinations (like assuming that restrictionist activists were all racists) would cloud my analysis. From the moment we first met, Valerie, a middle-aged Latina woman and a member of the Phoenix-based restrictionist group called the Arpaiositos, assumed a maternal demeanor towards me. She initially welcomed me into the group because I (phenotypically) 'reminded [her] of [her] son's girlfriend.' At the same time, she felt compelled to tell me what she told her son, that I should not let race and other 'PC nonsense' prevent me from understanding the dangers of pro-immigrant politics.

The tension generated by masculinist protectionism also informed my interaction with Rudy. Rudy was a member of the Soldiers, a group that I discuss in more detail in Chapter Five. The Soldiers' main activity was to conduct armed patrols in the desert near the Arizona-Mexico border. I joined Rudy and a few other Soldiers on one such patrol. I noticed immediately that I was flanked by Rudy and another Soldier, both armed with rifles that they held in the ready position. When I strayed slightly off the path we were on, or slowed down, my companions also stayed by my side, as if to protect me. We eventually came across piles of personal belongings—clothes, bags, water bottles—that had presumably been discarded by undocumented border crossers. When I knelt down to pick up a water bottle, Rudy stopped me, instructing me not to touch anything. He pulled out a pair of gloves from his bag and handed them to me. 'They don't get immunizations,' he said sternly, 'we don't know what diseases there might be on that stuff.'

Later, when we sat down to rest, he laughed that I wore the wrong kind of shoes for the desert. My sneakers were covered in burs that poked my feet when I walked. After watching me unsuccessfully try and pick them off, Rudy reached into his bag again, took out a comb, and showed me how to comb them off of my shoes. I thanked him. We chatted, as we waited for the rest of our group. At one point, Rudy said he found it "disheartening" that "illegal aliens and their supporters", who were "young kids", had been "disrespecting" the police. He was referring to a recent protest where pro-immigrant activists had protested police involvement in immigration enforcement. When we were about to part ways, he said he was glad to have met me. 'Even though you're from Berkeley and you probably support illegal aliens,' he said, 'you're interested in learning, and you're respectful.'

The logic of masculinist protectionism made it hard for Rudy to quite categorize me one way or another. On the one hand, I was young and hailed from Berkeley, characteristics that he associated with the morally-problematic opposition. On the other hand, I was a woman in need

of protection and a student in need of political guidance. Rudy, like other Soldiers, felt strongly about keeping me safe when we were in the desert, whether it was by walking by my side, or by ensuring that I did not touch anything that carried diseases. After all, the state could no longer be relied upon for protection.

Republicans In Name Only

While a gender, race, and age-based logic informed how restrictionists viewed pro-immigrant activists, a more class-based understanding shaped their critique of others on the political Right.²⁴ Just as some pro-immigrant activists were critical of Democrats, restrictionist activists were frustrated with Republicans. Restrictionist activists adopted a term popularized by the Tea Party movement—Republicans In Name Only, or RINO—to characterize Republican figures who were irresolute in their commitment to border security. For instance, Phil often invited local politicians to the ranch from which his organization—the Engineers—operated. The ranch abutted the U.S.-Mexico boundary, so the tour was supposed to give politicians a better sense of the problems in the border region. Some politicians accepted these invitations while others declined them. Still others initially accepted and later turned them down. Connor and Dale, also Engineers, both characterized some of the politicians who had declined invitations as RINOs. To Connor and Dale, RINOs were part of ruling establishment and out of touch with the lived experiences of ordinary Americans. Invitation-decliners were RINOs because local politicians who were committed to Republican values would care enough about the border to visit it in-person.

Restrictionist activists also used this class-based lens to criticize the Tea Party. During my fieldwork, I also attended meetings and events of local Tea Parties, believing that these would be key sites where I could also interact with committed restrictionist activists. I quickly realized, however, that there was very little overlap among involved Tea Partiers and restrictionist activists, particularly in Tucson. Hank was the exception: in addition to participating in desert patrols with the Soldiers, I also spotted him at Tea Party events. When I asked him about it, Hank agreed with my observation. It seemed to Hank that Soldiers were critical of Tea Partiers for ‘talking the talk but not walking the walk.’ Rather than actually trying to *do* something to secure the border, Tea Partiers discussed and debated the issue. Hank felt that he had to be a liaison between these ideologically likeminded groups. However, he too was troubled by the RINO inclinations of the Tea Party, particularly in the aftermath of the national Tea Party Conference in 2011.

The national conference had been held in Phoenix precisely to push back on the anti-SB1070 Arizona boycott that was in effect at the time. However, no plenary sessions about immigration or border security had been scheduled. Hank had been part of a group of outraged Arizonans who had confronted one of the conference emcees about this omission. The emcee had explained the Tea Party was concerned with “economic” issues whereas the topic of immigration was a “social” one. Hank was disappointed by this response. It seemed like a convenient way to evade an important topic facing Americans. He, and to a greater degree, other

²⁴ Although they shared the fear that the country was in danger of Mexicanizing, two of the restrictionist groups in this study – the Soldiers and the Engineers - were very critical of each others’ methods of mobilization. The nature of these criticisms, and what they reveal about each group, are discussed in Chapter Five.

restrictionist activists believed that even the conservative critics of the GOP could themselves suffer from RINO tendencies.

The Phoenix-based restrictionist organization, the Arpaiositos, had a closer relationship with Tea Party groups, but they too had similar reservations as Connor, Dale, and Hank. When I first met the Arpaiositos, the organization was embroiled in an internal debate over, what seemed to me initially to be a trivial issue. Some Arpaiositos believed that they should keep posting on the regional Tea Party website, while others wanted to create their own website. I realized, however, the question of their web presence was interconnected with the organization's identity and understanding of the political field. The Arpaiositos opposed to using the existing website worried about the consequences of being so closely associated with the Tea Party, and whether it would eventually turn them into RINOs.

Conclusion

This chapter, along with the previous one, illustrated how the repressive nature of the state was at stake in this politics. Pro-immigrant activists relied on references to fascism to articulate a fear about a highly coercive and exclusionary state. Albeit less explicit than the pro-immigrant allusion to 'Nazification,' the metaphor of the country 'Mexicanizing' ties together the different strands of the restrictionist worldview. The nightmarish specter of America becoming Mexico-like was precisely how restrictionists conveyed their anxieties about a state that had lost physical control over its territory and its resources.

This chapter described how, as far as restrictionists were concerned, exposure to the south was destroying the very fabric of American society. The enforcement of the border was lax and the regulation of immigration, haphazard and lenient. The state's weak presence at the border was responsible for unauthorized immigration. Moreover, restrictionists believed that immigrants were carriers of 'Mexican' objects—like diseases and drugs—and 'Mexican' behaviors—like rape, crime, racial conflict, and defiance. This kind of southern exposure was responsible for the suffering that ordinary Americans endured. On some occasions, restrictionists argued that the porousness of the border was detrimental to migrants themselves, particularly women, who traversed areas that were under-policed (and therefore, dangerous) in order to arrive at their destinations. Besides being too weak, restrictionists believed that the state was too inclusive. Resources – like job and healthcare – were being channeled away from deserving citizens to undeserving noncitizens. These circumstances of inclusion further exacerbated the state's weakness.

By this logic, the state's coercive authority had to be restored in order to rescue America from Mexicanization. However, pro-immigrant activists on the Left and RINOs on the Right stood in the way. On the Left, 'illegal alien supporters' acted like unruly children who did not know any better. Rather than rallying behind the state and addressing the country's problems, pro-immigrant activists sowed more division among Americans by getting caught up in race and other types of 'PC nonsense.' Meanwhile, Republicans, and even the Tea Party movement, always faced the danger of becoming too elitist to notice the concerns of ordinary Americans.

Thus this chapter and the previous one laid out the ways in which conflicting orientations towards the state also shaped how each movement made sense of itself as well as other actors in the field. In Bourdieusian parlance, the 'Nazification' and 'Mexicanization' of America captured

the disposition of the pro-immigrant and restrictionist movement, respectively. The next two chapters, meanwhile, turn to a discussion of each movement's 'position', or the actual ways in which they mobilized. That is, the specter of Nazification or Mexicanization helped sustain certain strategies and tactics, which, in turn, reinforced these worldviews further. Specifically, the next chapter examines how two pro-immigrant organizations, the Humanitarians and the Advocates, tried to rein in the power of the state.

Chapter 4

The Strong-State Effect and the Pro-Immigrant Activism

Introduction

The state took on an ‘appearance of order’ for pro-immigrant activists. Indeed, the strength of the state was what activists believed was responsible for decades of unauthorized immigration. As Chapter Two illustrated, the particular way in which activists discursively articulated this strong-state effect was with the metaphor of Nazification. ‘Nazification of America’ encapsulates the larger collection of ideas and observations that activists associated with the intensification of the state’s right hand. One aspect of Nazification was that the state’s escalating repressiveness was accompanied by a more racially exclusionary system of redistribution. Thus, immigrants were understood to be the targets of state repression and exclusion. On the basis of this assessment, pro-immigrant activists mobilized in an effort to weaken the state’s repressive capacity.

This chapter describes this endeavor. Specifically, the effort to weaken the state took on two forms. The Humanitarians worked to restrict the state’s scope, while another pro-immigrant organization, the Advocates, tried to make noncitizens more resilient to the state. In some cases, these endeavors to weaken the state were simultaneously DIY welfare efforts; that is, both organizations also occasionally filled the resource gaps created by the exclusionary state. They did so by providing immigrants with basic forms of relief and facilitating their access to the welfare resources.

The Humanitarians had been originally founded to mitigate the effects of the state’s actions in the borderlands. This group established and maintained a domain of ‘humanitarian’ activity in the desert region where migrants crossed into the U.S. Within this domain, the organization provided food, water, and basic medical services. By claiming that this domain necessitated humanitarian intervention, the organization challenged the legitimacy of how the state managed the border region. The Humanitarians’ activities in the desert allowed the organization to scrutinize the state’s day-to-day enforcement activities and, over time, they transformed themselves into a watchdog of the Border Patrol. The anti-deportation campaigns that the Humanitarians began to wage in the city simply extended the battlefield from the border into the interior. Just like the humanitarian domain in the desert, the anti-deportation campaigns tried to impose limits on what the state could do.

Although they experienced the same strong-state effect as the Humanitarians, the Advocates did not have the same kind of adversarial relationship with Border Patrol. This is because rather than trying to limit the power of state actors, the Advocates tried to weaken the state in a more indirect manner: they worked to equip groups—particularly noncitizens who were vulnerable to deportation—with the tools to resist the state. In this vein, the Advocates organized workshops and trainings to teach noncitizens how to protect themselves from the state. They also plugged people into networks of neighbors and resources in order to make it easier for households to respond to the deportation of a family member. These two tactics focused on noncitizens and the goal was to provide these legally-precarious groups with the tools to avoid and manage interactions with the state. However, the group also worked with what I call ‘third

parties’ – relatively powerful institutions and social actors that had ambiguous relationships with the immigration enforcement arm of the state. In some instances, the Advocates tried to stop these third parties from collaborating with the state; in other cases, they used these third parties to broadcast the pro-immigrant cause.

Despite the differences in their approaches, a striking similarity between the two groups was how they incorporated strong religious elements into everything they did. The religiosity of the movement is not at all surprising. Scholars have documented the myriad ways that U.S.-based pro-immigrant activists have incorporated religious symbols and practices into their work, especially at the U.S.-Mexico border (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2007, 2008; Van Ham 2011). Indeed, this chapter begins with the description of two “pilgrimages”—the idea for which emerged out of conversations between the Humanitarians and the Advocates—and which quickly turned into annual endeavors drawing eager participation from both organizations. Thus, the observation about the role of religion in pro-immigrant mobilization is certainly pertinent to the current study. However, as this chapter shows, the religiosity of these tactics as well as the faith-based motivations of the activists should not be the only, or even the primary lens through which we analyze pro-immigrant mobilization. A singular focus on religion often forces the discussion to collapse back into a description of these events rather than their sociological analysis. To inject theory back into the picture, it is necessary to see how these religious moments fit with the rest of the pro-immigrant tactical repertoire.

That is, while these pilgrimages were explicitly religious in nature, their sociological significance lay in the fact that they embodied the two state-weakening tactics that are discussed in this chapter. As processions moving deliberately through spaces that were usually solely occupied by the state, the pilgrimages exemplified the Humanitarians’ struggle to restrict the state’s reach. At the same time, these annual events also epitomized the Advocates’ efforts to reinforce the buffer against the state. Participants emerged from the pilgrimages with the feeling that they now had the tools—specifically, a more visceral understanding of migrant suffering—to discuss the urgency of the pro-immigrant cause with other Americans. The pilgrimages therefore were another way in which activists responded to the strong-state effect.

The Pilgrimages

The Advocates and the Humanitarians intermittently worked together. The main occasions for this collaboration were two pilgrimages that took place every year. The Day of the Dead Pilgrimage occurred at the end of fall, while the Migrant Pilgrimage, was slotted for late spring. These pilgrimages exemplified the two main tactics that are discussed in this chapter. At one level, these events served to critique and confine the state’s reach—a strategy which best characterizes the work of the Humanitarians. As public spectacles during which participants walked for miles to commemorate migrants who died while crossing Arizona’s Sonoran Desert, these pilgrimages openly questioned the legitimacy of state-sanctioned borders while venerating border crossers. At another level, the pilgrimages also embodied the main approach of the Advocates, which was to build up groups’ capacity to resist the state. The pilgrimages were opportunities to bring together likeminded people (including members of the two groups, as well as many others) and give them a common purpose achieved through the shared experience of physical hardship. At the end of the arduous journey, activists hoped that participants would be more committed to the pro-immigrant cause than they may have been before.

Started in 2000, the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage took a Mexican holiday dedicated to remembering loved ones who had passed away, as an opportunity to commemorate migrants who had died while crossing the desert. The event was a one-day affair, during which participants walked for nearly eight miles through the dusty roads of Southern Arizona. In 2011, the year that I participated, fifty to sixty people gathered together behind a Catholic church very early in the morning. I spotted almost all of the Advocates and ten Humanitarians. A man pulled a large plastic container out of the back of someone’s truck and placed it on the ground in the middle of the crowd. The container had been neatly filled with handmade wooden white crosses (see Image 4.1). Renee encouraged participants to take as many crosses as they wanted to carry. I pulled out two. A young man after me took out four crosses, attaching them to his backpack. Each cross, Renee later explained, represented one of the 183 human remains recovered from the desert that year. Each cross bore the age (if known) and the name (if known) of the person, as well as the year, 2011. Scrawled on many of the crosses were the words *desconocido* or *desconocida*, meaning that the remains could not be identified (see Image 4.2).



IMAGE 4.1: Several tubs of crosses were used during the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage.



IMAGE 4.2: Many of the crosses were labeled “desconocido/a.”

The event immediately took on a solemn and religious tone that was heightened by the shared, physical experience of walking. We were instructed to walk in a single-file line. This way, we would not get distracted from ‘bearing witness’ to migrant suffering. A young man, who I had spotted at both Advocate and Humanitarian meetings, led the procession. He carried a large sign that read *presente*. Behind him, another young man carried an enormous banner depicting the Virgen de Guadalupe. The line did not stay single-file for very long as people began grouping off. I began talking with a Humanitarian, and later a chatty woman who worked with a pro-immigrant organization in Los Angeles. As we walked on, the energetic conversations I heard around me trailed off. Everyone seemed engrossed in the task at hand: to walk to our destination. After nearly three miles, my right hip began to ache. I ran out of water and began to feel dehydrated. The dust that we kicked up set off my allergies. I had run out of tissues. A Humanitarian offered me his bottle of water. Another person, who I had never met before, offered me a crumpled napkin to blow my nose. The chatty woman from LA had stopped talking to other people and I noticed that she suddenly looked very worn out.

The pilgrimage ended near another church. The Advocates had neatly laid out more than 2,000 white crosses in a large circle on the ground (see Image 4.3). The crosses in the center of the circle represented the remains recovered in the year 2000, and each outward concentric circle represented the years ever since. The group gathered silently around the circle. Speaking through a portable microphone, Renee explained that these crosses only represented the human remains that had been recovered, and therefore, less than the total number of people who had actually died in the desert. Two people standing to my right shook their heads as if in incredulity. The enormous circle of crosses before us, she emphasized, did not capture ‘the full scale of the calamity.’ The media often ignored it completely, she pressed on. Then, a stack of pamphlets were passed around. They were programs containing the names of all the crossers who had died since the previous fall. Renee began reading the names from the program; many were not names at all, but rather *desconocido/a*. After each name was read, the group chanted “*presente*.” Those who had walked with crosses gently placed these items along the rim of the circle. After reading about fifty names, Renee handed the microphone to another Advocate, Claudia, who kept going down the list. After all the names had been read, a priest slowly sprinkled holy water on the circle of crosses “to bless the victims and their families.”



IMAGE 4.3: A large circle of crosses marked the endpoint of the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage.

The somber atmosphere lingered long after the ceremony ended. Half the participants left. The other half stayed on to help gather up the crosses and place them into plastic tubs that had been demarcated by year. I overheard someone say that the crosses for 2005 needed more than one bin. ‘That’s when a lot of people died,’ another person replied quietly. Claudia, who had read some of the names, looked like she had been crying for some time. I was on the brink of tears. Another Advocate sobbed quietly, whispering, “there are so many, so many.” The collective mourning lasted until the very last cross had been cleared away.

The 75-mile Migrant Pilgrimage was a far more complex affair than the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage, but the two events bore a lot of resemblance. The Humanitarians and the Advocates had organized the first Migrant Pilgrimage a few years after the first Day of the Dead Pilgrimage. The Migrant Pilgrimage also provided participants with an opportunity to mourn border crossers and to use the act of walking as a way to question the legitimacy of borders. An email advertised the event as a chance “to walk...in defiance of the borders that attempt to divide us.” Once again, participants carried white crosses. And again, the Migrant Pilgrimage was framed as a time to “bear witness.” The orientation booklet that participants received explained that this was a “journey...in solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers who have walked this trail and lost their lives. We bear witness to the lives that are lost, the families who mourn, and the communities that suffer the divisions that borders wreak on all of us.”

However, unlike the Day of Dead Pilgrimage, the Migrant Pilgrimage was a far more physically-arduous event that took a week to complete. Over the course of seven days, participants followed a route that was designed to emulate the path that migrants may have taken if they started out in Sasabe, Sonora, Mexico and walked to Tucson. Indeed, in past pilgrimages, participants had actually encountered migrants. These encounters became rarer over time as migrants changed their routes to evade the authorities. In the spring of 2012, when I participated alongside nearly 50 other people, we did not encounter any migrants. Nonetheless, organizers intended for participants to emerge from the pilgrimage as witnesses, who had gained a deeper understanding of the border and felt more committed to the pro-immigrant cause.

On the first day of the pilgrimage, we carpoled southward to the border and crossed into Sasabe, Mexico. Roughly half of the group members were from out-of-state, while the rest were from Arizona. Each of us had the same wooden, handmade, white crosses that had been used at the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage. After a quick lunch, we walked to a brick church. Three small wooden caskets stood in front of the pews. A pastor spoke to us in Spanish. He explained that the congregants of the church were primarily migrants who were about to cross into the U.S. He explained how the caskets symbolized men, women, and children who had died crossing the border. Our group would act as pallbearers, carrying the coffins to its ‘final resting place’, the U.S.-Mexico border fence. In doing so, he explained, we would ‘carry’ the pain of our migrant sisters and brothers. ‘Already this year 100 people had died in this area.’ Then, he said he would bless the group. He explained that, in this case, he was happy to perform a blessing because ‘I know that none of you will perish. Normally, when I bless a group, I know that at least one person in that group will die.’ After the blessing was over, several volunteers from our group helped carry the three coffins to the 15-foot posts that marked the U.S.-Mexico boundary. The rest of us quietly followed the coffins. We were instructed to walk in a single-file line (See Images 4.4 and 4.5).



IMAGE 4.4 & IMAGE 4.5: On the first day of the Migrant Pilgrimage, volunteers carried the three coffins while the rest of the participants followed in a single-file line. The coffins were set down next to the U.S.-Mexico border fence.

By the fence, the volunteers gently set the coffins on the ground and a woman named Tamara began performing an indigenous ceremony. Tamara had participated in the annual pilgrimage since the very first one. The ceremony began with her gently unwinding a long red ribbon that we would carry at the front of the procession for the rest of the week. She explained that each prayer tie on the ribbon represented the spirit of someone who had died while crossing. Each person who had passed away was a loved one: someone's mother, someone's father, someone's child. As she listed the networks of people each death affected, her voice trembled. A woman standing next to me wept softly. We ended the ceremony by reading the 'migrant prayer' together.

After the ceremony, we were instructed to form a single-file line behind the ribbon bearer. In this fashion, we crossed the port of entry into the U.S. An organizer then walked by us with a black metal box. As she did so, we were instructed to place our passports and drivers' licenses inside the box. The box would be locked and stowed in a safe place; we would retrieve our documents when we arrived at our last stop in Tucson. For the rest of the week-long journey, our only identifying documents would be the lanyards that the organizers had made for each of us. A young man and I were the only noncitizens in the group and we could not participate in this symbolic ritual. We kept our documents on us and had to show them to a Border Patrol agent a few days later when we crossed a checkpoint.

Four days later, we were camped out in a desert region of a wildlife refuge. By 3 am, we were awake. It was still dark, and the stars shone brightly. We got ready to start walking so that we could beat the midday heat of the early summer. We began moving in a long line. Sandra, an Advocate, ended up by my side and we spoke in hushed tones about the numbing cold. The light from my headlamp was enough to see the ground right in front of me, but everything else was shrouded in darkness. At times, the dirt underneath our feet gave way to sand. Each footstep sank deeply into the earth. My legs seemed to trudge forward independently of the rest of my body. I felt disoriented and as if reading my thoughts, Sandra commented on how she had lost her sense of direction. 'I'm surprised more people don't run into cacti,' Sandra murmured. At first I thought she was referring to an unfortunate accident in a previous pilgrimage; she had participated several times in the past. Then, I realized that she was reflecting on the experience of actual migrants who traveled through the desert. A few days later, she would tell the rest of the

group about how the experience of walking allowed her to reflect on ‘how desperate they [migrants] must be’ to undertake such a hazardous journey.

Besides its physical arduousness, the pilgrimage created opportunities for encounters with the state. After exiting the wildlife refuge where Sandra and I had walked side-by-side, our group began moving alongside a freeway. At 7 am exactly, the first Border Patrol car sped by and we stepped to the side of the road to avoid getting hit by it. I heard someone behind me say he was going to ‘start counting the number of times they almost run us over.’ I counted 14 Border Patrol cars pass us by in the next two hours. Eventually, we turned off the freeway and started walking along a dusty road. At one point, we spotted a cross that had been staked into the ground on the side of the road. After several hours, when we stopped to rest, we spotted two Border Patrol agents on the opposite side of the road. One agent was driving an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and another was on foot. They were inspecting the ground. We stared at them, but they ignored us. Tamara, the woman who had performed the ceremony in Sasabe, told me that once, she watched a young undocumented teenage boy die in the hospital where she worked. The boy had been brought in because he had run for nearly two hours trying to escape an agent who was riding an ATV. ‘Eventually, he was run down,’ Tamara said. ‘He just collapsed from exhaustion.’ The topic of our conversation turned to an incident that had taken place on the second day, we had had another encounter with a Border Patrol agent. A field agent had asked us whether we were ‘camping’ in the desert. I had been struck by a Renee’s stern reply. She responded by saying that this was the annual Migrant Pilgrimage. She then chastised the agent: ‘you should have been told by your higher-ups.’

The sixth day of walking brought us directly south of Tucson. In the afternoon, I settled down to chat with other members of the group. Chris, an older white man who volunteered with a pro-immigrant group in a nearby town said he felt so angry when he saw the Border Patrol agent on the ATV. ‘How could they be so aggressive?’ he asked. Another man, Vince, choked up as he recalled a cross on the side of the road. It was probably in remembrance of a migrant, he said with some effort. Seeing the cross made him remember his son, who had died several years earlier. Vince began sobbing quietly and someone sitting next to him hugged him. Cory, a young white woman from the northeast, recalled how before she had left for the pilgrimage, an acquaintance had facetiously concluded that she must be ‘a supporter of illegal immigration’. At the time, she could not find the words to respond. But now, after this experience, she felt like she could tell others how migrants suffered. Other nodded in agreement. Sandra spoke up next. She reflected on how hard the pilgrimage was for us, despite the food, water, bedding, and relative safety. ‘Imagine how hard it is without those privileges,’ she stated matter-of-factly. Several people concurred by snapping their fingers.

Of all the events that the Humanitarians and Advocates helped organize, the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage and the Migrant Pilgrimage were by far the most ritualistic in nature. Despite their highly ritualistic character, however, these annual pilgrimages should not be theorized separately from other tactics in the pro-immigrant activists’ repertoire. Certainly, at an empirical level, activists did not draw a strong distinction between the pilgrimages and other events that they organized. In fact, most activists with whom I spoke attributed the same level of significance to these pilgrimages as they did to publishing a report criticizing Border Patrol practices or running a know-your-rights training. On occasion, activists did voice concerns (as they did with all the tactics in their repertoire): were the annual pilgrimages frivolous? Had they had become more rote, and therefore meaningless, over time? Did they distract the group’s focus

away from more instrumental and confrontational tactics? These concerns, however, were infrequent and they were often prompted by my inquiring questions. Those who had grown disenchanted with the pilgrimages, or were never really interested in being a part of them in the first place, simply did not participate. On the whole, though, the Humanitarians and the Advocates were committed to organizing, taking part in, and recruiting people for these pilgrimages year after year. Politically-likeminded individuals and allied groups responded to these efforts with enthusiasm: they donated resources and time, with the understanding that they would do so again in the future. Thus, the empirical thread connecting the pilgrimages to other tactics suggests that these annual rituals must be theorized in relation to the pro-immigrant groups' two larger strategies.

First, the pilgrimages echoed the main strategy of the Humanitarians: they presented opportunities to question the legitimacy of the state's reach. On one level, the pilgrimages literally redefined who was entitled to traverse certain geographic spaces. Large processions of people moved slowly and defiantly through places that were usually bereft of white U.S. citizen civilians. During the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage, participants walked on dusty roads and along the sides of freeways where socio-legally privileged civilians were not often spotted. The Migrant Pilgrimage provided a similar opportunity, but on a far grander scale: participants followed migrant trails and camped in regions of the borderlands that were deemed 'dangerous' by the state. The fact that state authorities allowed these pilgrimages to take place and Border Patrol field agents rarely harassed the group—and were even supposed to be informed about it beforehand—is important: it suggests that the pilgrimages had become sufficiently institutionalized, effectively curtailing the state's monopolistic hold over particular geographic spaces for brief periods of time.

The pilgrimages were acts that critiqued the state's reach in another manner as well. Like the *posadas sin fronteras* that used to take place at the San Diego-Tijuana border, these pilgrimages were a form of "Christian anti-borderism" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008: 133-150). That is, the purpose of the religious rituals was to convey the idea that borders were dangerous, and often deadly. Laying out 2,000 crosses on the ground, each of which was labeled with information retrieved from medical examiners' offices, was one example of how this message was relayed. Another instance took place on the first day of the Migrant Pilgrimage when participants held a veritable funeral for migrants. A priest officiated the memorial service at a parish church. Afterwards, several participants volunteered to be pallbearers, while the rest of us formed a funeral cortege. The procession took the caskets to their 'final' resting place at the border fence where Tamara performed an indigenous ritual and the group read the migrant prayer together. Meanwhile, other acts were more explicitly concerned with defying borders rather than commemorating migrants. For example, by stowing away their government-issued papers (passports and drivers' licenses), some participants symbolically rejected the state's classification of populations.

The overarching frame used in the pilgrimages—the act of 'bearing witness'—also exemplified Christian anti-borderism. This framing captures the mindset of the activists. On one level, 'bearing witness' describes the ethical obligation that activists believed participants had towards migrants. The term's etymology is the ninth commandment: "thou shalt not bear false witness to thy neighbor." In this case, 'neighbor' referred to migrants from Mexico and the rest of Latin America, and it was the state that was thought to bear false witness. In particular, Lane Van Ham (2011) notes that Arizona-based activists were interested in countering a public

discourse that often relied on “figurative language about ‘shadows’” to discuss undocumented immigration (124). According to Van Ham, pro-immigrant activists felt “there is an ethical imperative to observe proactively, making sure they ‘see’ and trying to make others ‘see’ as well” (125). This ocular frame has been used by Leftist groups in the past. For instance, the organization ‘Witness for Peace’ was founded by faith-based groups in the U.S. in the early 1980s with the purpose of ‘bearing witness’ to the Nicaraguan Civil War. By accompanying Nicaraguans in war zones, U.S. citizens documented “the ‘human face’ of the Reagan Administration’s military policy” and disseminated this information when they returned to the U.S. (Witness for Peace 2016). Similarly, the pilgrimages were also supposed to allow ordinary Americans to ‘bear witness’ to state-induced suffering.

On another level, however, the main intent of ‘bearing witness’ had less to do with observing the victims of the state, and more to do with (symbolically) restraining the state. Activists argued that there was moral imperative for Americans to observe undocumented migration, archive this information, and be ready to convey it, as testimony, at some point in the future. However, unlike bearing witness in a war zone, the victims were rarely observed: during the pilgrimages, participants hardly ever encountered actual migrants. Following a route well within the nation’s interior, traversing an urban and relatively well-populated area, the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage was not designed for pilgrims to run into migrants. Such a chance occurrence was far more likely during the longer Migrant Pilgrimage. Indeed, veteran pilgrims told me that in the first few years of the Migrant Pilgrimage, encounters with migrants were common. Extra medical supplies were brought along in anticipation of exactly this possibility. Over the years, however, these encounters became increasingly rare. To my knowledge, we never came across anyone during the pilgrimage in the year that I participated. Nonetheless, the organizers of the pilgrimages did not dispense with the frame of ‘bearing witness’. As a familiar Christian concept *and* as a familiar tactic among faith-based Leftist groups, ‘bearing witness’ described the kind of relationship that activists hoped participants would have with the state. That the border necessitated ‘witnessing’, suggested that the state was acting unethically and that it had to be restrained in some manner. Thus, ‘bearing witness’ serves as another example of Christian anti-borderism.

In addition to claiming certain geographic spaces and enacting anti-border rituals, participants questioned the state’s reach in a third, more overt manner, through direct encounters with state actors. For example, at a checkpoint—a place where the state’s gaze is particularly heightened—participants in the Migrant Pilgrimage crossed without carrying their government-issued papers. By doing so, participants symbolically refused to be objects of Border Patrol scrutiny. Other encounters with state agents also provided opportunities to problematize the state’s presence. Renee chastised a field agent for not knowing about the pilgrimage. Another encounter with the state was more indirect: Border Patrol agents rode an ATV and ignored our group completely. We never spotted the person that the agents were tracking. Nonetheless, participants expressed horror and used the frame of state violence to make sense of what they saw. Tamara summed up the collective sentiment when she recalled the case of a teenager being chased to his death by an agent of the state. Thus, the pilgrimages presented opportunities for participants to call into question the state’s reach.

The pilgrimages simultaneously exemplified a second pro-immigrant strategy, which was to develop a group’s capacity to resist the state. As later sections of this chapter illustrate, this strategy largely characterized the day-to-day work of the Advocates. Normally, the target of this

kind of capacity-building was undocumented individuals and members of their households. For example, as we will see later, the Advocates conducted know-your-rights trainings to teach undocumented people and their families how to manage their interaction with the authorities. The Advocates hoped that such trainings would equip individuals with the tools to avoid the state completely, or, at the very least, minimize their vulnerability to detention and deportation.

In the case of the pilgrimages, however, the activists' target audience was not socio-legally precarious. Rather, this group was mainly composed of U.S. citizens, many of whom were white and middle class. Capacity-building, in this case, was the act of eliciting the commitment of privileged people to a cause which did not necessarily feel urgent to them. From the activists' perspective, this commitment to resisting the state depended on bridging the experiential gulf between a typical participant (often, a white U.S. citizen) and the 'victim' of the state (an undocumented, non-white, migrant). The pilgrimages helped solve this problem of social distance through emotion work. That is, they were occasions for participants to work on and alter their feelings towards the state and towards the pro-immigrant cause. They were, in the language of the activists, opportunities for 'transformation.'

Activists deployed many religious ideas and symbols to facilitate this emotion work. For instance, as I described earlier, a solemn funeral service kicked off the Migrant Pilgrimage. Similarly, the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage claimed a Mexican Catholic holiday which was usually reserved for remembering family and friends who have passed away. By doing so, this pilgrimage created an opportunity for participants to mourn unfamiliar—often unidentified—border-crossers. Likewise, the crosses were also important tools in this emotion work because they de-anonymized the 'victims' of the state and served as objects of sorrow. Each instance of a human remain was represented by a cross that was hand-labeled with basic information—often, ironically, just 'desconocido/a'. Each participant then selected a cross or several crosses to care for over a period of time. On the Day of the Dead Pilgrimage, we carried crosses, laid them out on the ground, photographed them, chanted over them, and watched them be blessed by a priest. Later, as we gathered together and organized the crosses into bins, we grieved. During the Migrant Pilgrimage, participants looked after their crosses for a far longer period of time. For seven days, participants carried their crosses in backpacks, attached to string around their necks, and, often, just in one's hand. Several times a day, in call-and-response style, each of us intoned the names on our crosses, followed by a chant of *presente* from the group. We ate, socialized, and rested with our crosses by our sides. Many participants gently placed their crosses inside their tents when it was time to turn in for the night. As tactile objects of care and mourning, the crosses helped close the social distance between the cross-bearers and those the crosses represented.

The physical exhaustion of the pilgrimage also facilitated this kind of emotion work. At a very rudimentary level, the act of walking was supposed to allow participants to 'witness' the physical process of making unauthorized entry into a country. Pilgrims rarely encountered migrants, however. For this reason, participants' own bodies became the vehicles for understanding how state actions affected migrants. To facilitate this witnessing, we were repeatedly instructed to walk in a single-file line and organizers often emphasized the importance of walking "with intention." The organizers wanted to structure the walking in a way that would deter participants from getting caught up in conversations with others (presumably about unrelated topics) and instead, to individually reflect on this physical experience. This kind of intentional walking had its desired effects. Near the end of the Migrant Pilgrimage, Cory and

Sandra reflected on their fatigue and solemnly noted their deeper understanding of migrant suffering. Cory, for instance, felt that as a result of this insight, she could speak more confidently with others about her political commitments. Sandra, likewise, was struck by how much hardship we experienced, despite the fact that we had many ‘luxuries’ like food, water, camping gear, and safety. Throughout the Migrant Pilgrimage, I heard other participants make similar remarks. Just as with the crosses, the organizers used the physical experience of the pilgrimage to help participants *feel* more connected to migrants, and by extension, to the pro-immigrant cause.

The pilgrimages were a joint effort on the part of the Advocates, the Humanitarians and other likeminded groups. These collective endeavors embodied the two main pro-immigrant strategies outlined in this study. By claiming certain geographic spaces, enacting anti-border rituals, and interacting critically with state actors, participants questioned the state’s reach. At the same time, the physical and symbolic aspects of walking as well as the emotion work therein, built up the group’s capacity to resist the state. The rest of the chapter separates out these two strategies by focusing on each organization and its tactical repertoire. I show how, on a broad scale, the Humanitarians strived to restrict the state’s reach, while the Advocate tried to bolster groups’ resistance to the state.

The Humanitarians: Restricting the State

Pro-immigrant activists worried that the state’s coercive arm was fast encroaching into spaces that had previously been safe from it. In response, the Humanitarians struggled to limit the state’s reach. They deployed three tactics. First, they claimed the borderlands as a space for international humanitarian aid. Second, they fashioned themselves into a watchdog on Border Patrol’s activities, and finally, they waged anti-deportation campaigns.

Humanitarian Work

The concept of humanitarianism provided a powerful way to push back on state presence in the borderlands, while simultaneously justifying the creation of civilian-led relief efforts. The term ‘humanitarian’ saturated the organization’s discourse and self-understanding: group members saw themselves as ‘humanitarian workers’ and the objects that they left in the desert—ranging from socks and hydration kits to water and canned food—as ‘humanitarian aid.’ Graham summed up the strategic importance of the framing in the following way:

Framing [our work in the desert] it that way [as humanitarianism] is a way of showing how ridiculous and how abusive the government, as the antagonist, is. Because as soon as you say that...[people] have immediate sympathy because it isn’t a crime—that kind of humanitarian aid, like giving a ride to migrants who are about to die, giving them a ride to medical care is not a crime. Giving water to migrants is not a crime. And so when you’re transporting and quote ‘littering’ – that’s what the government is saying – it shows their inhumanity.

The framework of humanitarianism therefore allowed the group to challenge the idea that the border region was the exclusive domain of state agents. Instead, the group reframed the borderlands as a place of collective suffering that required the intervention of concerned

civilians. As another member put it, the group's goal was to be an "unhindered humanitarian presence" in the borderlands.

On a day-to-day basis, this meant that the Humanitarians drove deep into the desert and hiked on rough terrain carrying gallon-sized jugs of water. The cat-and-mouse pursuit between Border Patrol field agents and crossers meant that the paths that migrants took to reach Arizona's interior changed often. The Humanitarians tried to determine where the freshest trails were. There, they left jugs of water and other forms of aid. If over time they found that the water jugs were not being used, the Humanitarians moved them to other sites.

On a warm day in late fall, I accompanied two young Humanitarians, Lori and Alyssa, on one such water drop. Early in the morning, we drove for an hour in a well-used SUV to a town near the border. The trunk and part of the back seat of the vehicle were filled with crates of water, along with a dozen plastic baggies stuffed with food and socks. On the drive to the border, Alyssa encouraged me to flip through the Humanitarians' volunteer manual, specifically the part about how to interact with Border Patrol. The manual instructed new volunteers that they were obligated to answer an agent's questions about their legal status. However, it was a volunteer's legal prerogative to then say 'I'm doing humanitarian aid work' and walk away. Despite one's inclination to be polite, the manual explained, it was acceptable to be rude in this situation, because it was more a "legal" encounter than a "social" one. Just as it was the Border Patrol's job to stop and interrogate whomever they deemed suspicious, it was the Humanitarian volunteer's job to distribute aid, the manual explained.

Nonetheless, I was surprised to see that the manual described the agency and the Humanitarians as having a "working relationship." I asked my two guides what they thought about this characterization. Lori shook her head, saying that the manual was outdated. 'Border Patrol's stance towards us changes with each new sector chief,' she said. 'It wasn't really a working relationship, but a relationship that worked,' she explained, necessitated mostly by the agency's efforts to improve its own public image. Alyssa added the field agents were usually not trained about humanitarian aid work, despite what the agency officials claimed. Moreover, the charge of 'aiding and abetting' was broad and vague, which encouraged field agents to make discretionary enforcement decisions in the desert.²⁵ She explained that if Humanitarians encountered a migrant, they could provide food, water, and basic medical care. They could also provide 'general orienting directions' but not maps, because that would be considered 'aiding and abetting.' Additionally, volunteers could make two phone calls on behalf of migrants, either to Border Patrol or to paramedics. In most cases, volunteers encouraged migrants who wanted to call for help, to make the call to an ambulance rather than to the agency, even though there was no guarantee that the Border Patrol would not also show up, having intercepted the call.

We parked the car on a road near the first of the five trails we would explore that day. I carried the medical pack and a gallon-sized plastic jug of water, while Lori and Alyssa each carried two gallon-sized jugs. We climbed up a small hill with the sun beating down on us. After about fifteen minutes of hiking, we found the water drop site. Six jugs from a previous water drop, still filled with water, were sitting on the ground. Lori and Alyssa decided we should return

²⁵ Indeed, on a number of occasions, Border Patrol as well as agents from other agencies like U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife Services, have arrested pro-immigrant activists in the desert. In one particularly famous case, two activists were arrested for alleged smuggling when they tried to drive two medically compromised migrants out of the desert and into the city for medical treatment. For more about this case and others, see Van Ham (2011), particularly page 75, and Lacy (2010).

to the car with our water and find the next water drop site. We repeated this process several times for the next two hours. At every site, the water from a previous drop had not been touched. In two cases, we decided to leave additional water, but the rest of the time, we just lugged the water back with us to the car. I wondered out loud if the routes had shifted and whether these paths were no longer in use. Lori and Alyssa did not think so. It was just the regular ebb and flow of the season, they explained.

Lori and Alyssa seemed nervous throughout the day and their jumpiness became particularly apparent when we took a lunch break. We were still far from town in the middle of a desolate area. We settled down on some large rocks near the dirt road where the SUV was parked. Every time there was the sound of a vehicle in the distance, the two women fell silent, straining to hear if the vehicle's motor sounds were getting louder. Lori said that she would rather encounter people where we were sitting—on a path near the main road—rather than on a walking trail far from the car, but we never encountered anyone. We only saw civilians as we drove on the main unpaved town road on our way to the migrant trails. A half a dozen trucks and RVs were parked on the side of the road. A handful of empty camping chairs had been pulled up next to the vehicles. Nearby, several (mostly white) men stood around, as if waiting. They were dressed in elaborate camouflage clothing and had rifles slung over their shoulders. Lori wondered if they were the Minutemen. When we stopped at a store on our way out of town, we asked the storeowner about them. He told us that it was deer season and that these men were hunters. While we were driving, we did come across Border Patrol vans several times but they never stopped us.

Alyssa later explained that she was nervous because there had been several instances of 'water vandalism' in the past. Plastic jugs had been slashed and the water inside the containers had been poured out. One time, she explained, the group she went out with noticed that the jugs in a particular area had been destroyed twice in a row. They decided to move the water to another spot five feet away and the jugs were never destroyed again. Alyssa explained that anyone could be responsible, including frustrated ranchers who lived in the area, hunters who frequented it for sport, and just 'random people' who happened to come across the water sites. In most cases, however, it was probably the Border Patrol, Alyssa said. Lori claimed that a couple of Humanitarians had recorded a video of an agent following their car to a water station, and later, committing water vandalism. After a moment's reflection, Alyssa said, 'look, putting out water is not just about putting out water. I mean it is, but it's also a symbolic thing. When we put out water, it's telling the world that these are migrants. It's a message we're sending to Border Patrol, to hunters, to Minutemen, to everyone.'

By putting out water, the Humanitarians saw themselves as reducing the effects of the state's prevention-through-deterrence program. As described in Chapter One, this program had been developed in the early 1990s to increase border enforcement near urban points of entry so as to push migration to rural regions with the hope that border areas, like Arizona's Sonoran Desert, would serve as natural deterrents to crossers. Migration was pushed to rural areas, but the rate of crossing did not slow down, and in fact, picked up over time. Yet this system of border enforcement remained intact. As Chapter Two illustrated, pro-immigrant activists made sense of this arrangement as an aspect of Nazification. That is, activists concluded that migrant deaths were not simply the unintended consequences of the program. Rather, the state was intentionally killing people at the border.

With this understanding, the Humanitarians came to see the desert as a sort of battle site, where they tried to establish a domain outside of the state and, as Van Ham has observed of similar groups, “challenge the government’s efforts to monopolize all legitimate interface with migrants” (2011:68). Silas, a Humanitarian, explained how maintaining this domain of ‘humanitarianism’ required activists to constantly push up against the state (and their restrictionist supporters). “Every year,” he told me, “we get new young people and they’re gun-ho and they want to push the boundaries. So we started in the early 2000s. We knew where two trails were and a year after [the organization was founded], we knew maybe where six trails were, and now it’s nearly...scores of trails all over...” Lori and Alyssa were some of the young people to whom Silas was referring. The women’s anxiety indicated how aware they were of the fact that the Humanitarians pushed up against the state. Group members went out to the desert with the anticipation that the Border Patrol would try to upend their efforts.

In this battle with the Border Patrol, the Humanitarians tried to work out how to retain their stronghold in the desert. A year later, for instance, the Humanitarians debated whether to remove any stickers on the exterior of their vehicles bearing the group’s name. Some Humanitarians, including Alyssa, wished to make the group less visible to the Border Patrol. Meanwhile, others believed that transparency was the only way to ensure the group’s ability to maintain their presence in the desert without being charged for a crime. This kind of discussion again suggests how conscious the group was of the fact that they were confronting the state every time they ventured into the desert.

Alyssa’s comment about the communicative aspect of the jugs of water is also important and echoes Graham’s comments above. ‘Humanitarianism’ offered a way to denaturalize state discourse and convey an alternative set of ideas about migrant suffering. That is, the jugs of water were intended not only to quench thirst but also to remind state agents and American civilians that the wellbeing of a group of people was being jeopardized at the border. That humanitarianism had to be administered at the borderlands implied that the conditions there were like the conflict and crisis in areas stricken by wars and natural disasters in other parts of the world. Moreover, just as areas impacted by wars and natural disasters necessitated outside intervention, the border region also merited similar relief efforts.

In a related manner, ‘humanitarianism’ also suggested that activists, their practices, the objects they brought with them, and the people they treated, were outside of the purview of any one state. The concept reframed the desert as a region subject to international law and the Humanitarians as the self-designated members of the global human rights community charged with documenting the state’s transgressions of this law. The Humanitarians referenced international institutions’ codes, reports, and rulings in order to justify actions that could easily be construed as ‘unlawful’ behavior (like ‘littering’.) In that vein, for example, the Humanitarians testified before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) about abusive conditions in Border Patrol’s holding cells (explained in more detail below). Additionally, the Humanitarians often referenced international institutions’ codes, reports and rulings—such as the IACHR’s 2003 ruling that the U.S. violated international law at its southern border—in order to justify actions that could easily be construed as ‘law-breaking behavior’ (like ‘transporting illegal aliens,’ ‘conspiracy,’ and ‘littering’.) When the state *did* interfere with the Humanitarians’ work in the desert, activists deemed such actions to be violations of *international* law.

Making this case was an ongoing struggle, however. For example, at one meeting of the Humanitarians, activists discussed ways to keep Border Patrol from interfering with their efforts in the desert. Prior to the meeting, a member had explained to me that that agents would “sit up on the hill with their binoculars, watching [the medical] camp” in which activists treated dehydrated crossers. Then one year, alleging that activists were ‘harboring’ illegal immigrants, Border Patrol had raided the camp. The agency threatened to conduct more raids in the future. The Humanitarians brainstormed ways to keep the agents from entering the camp. One suggestion was to get members of the city’s medical community to publicly acknowledge that the desert region where migrants crossed constituted a humanitarian crisis zone and, following the international principles of humanitarian aid, publicly ordain the Humanitarian tent an official medical unit outside of the purview of enforcement agents. By establishing the camp as something akin to a care unit run by Doctors Without Borders in a disaster zone, the Humanitarians tried to create a space that was safe from state intervention.

Watchdog on Border Patrol

Framing the border region as a humanitarian crisis zone was only one way that the Humanitarians worked to circumscribe the state. Over time, the group also fashioned itself into a human rights watchdog on a state agency that seemed to have growing latitude—the Border Patrol. The Humanitarians interviewed crossers who had been apprehended by Border Patrol and deported to Mexican border towns. Based on their findings, the group wrote several reports.

In one such report, the Humanitarians concluded that what the Border Patrol referred to as its ‘processing centers’ were not just waiting rooms where apprehended crossers stayed until they were deported. Instead, these spaces were detention facilities where agents systematically abused their charges. Whether it was the habit of keeping the temperature in holding cells very low or refusing to provide adequate food, these incidents were not the work of a few rogue agents. Rather, the Humanitarians’ report argued, this kind of treatment followed a pattern, and was therefore, intrinsic to the agency. The activist group launched a campaign to disseminate the report’s findings. The Humanitarians presented the report’s findings to international institutions like the IAHCRC. The group also spoke about the report with journalists, policymakers, and the public.

After the publication of the report, the Humanitarians doubled their documentation efforts. The group created new surveys that focused on other aspects of deportees’ experiences. They administered these surveys and produced another report. At the same time, this kind of systematic documentation was expanded to the desert. Volunteers who went into the desert were asked to fill out a form every time they encountered vandalism of water and other supplies. In some places, the Humanitarians installed hidden cameras that overlooked water drop sites. When they captured a video of agents interfering with the supplies, they posted it on Youtube and shared it with the media. Thus, as a watchdog, the Humanitarians worked to bring public attention to the state’s day-to-day practices and to reframe these practices as egregious violations of human rights. The group hoped to create enough public pressure so that one state organ—the Border Patrol—would be more restrained in what it could do.

Anti-Deportation Campaigns

Anti-deportation campaigns were another way that the Humanitarians curbed the state. By bringing public attention to a person who was in deportation proceedings, the group put pressure on the state to stop the individual's removal from the country. In one instance, the Humanitarians organized a campaign to stop the deportation of a young woman, Sonya, who had been brought to the U.S. as an infant. She had been caught on a minor drug-related charge and then handed over to immigration enforcement. Her removal from the country was imminent. The Humanitarians designed an action alert that summarized Sonya's circumstances and urged readers to contact the DHS, asking that the deportation be halted. Three days after the action alert was circulated, the Humanitarians organized a press conference at a church. Members of the Humanitarians stood behind the pulpit holding signs that urged viewers to call the DHS to stop the deportation. Meanwhile, Sonya's friends, family, and the minister of the church all spoke at the pulpit about Sonya's achievements and aspirations. Sonya's lawyer noted that over a thousand people had already contacted the DHS. Her deportation was halted a day later.

In some cases, the very threat of making an individual the focus of a public campaign was sufficient to stop a removal. Three months after the anti-deportation campaign on Sonya's behalf, the Humanitarians circulated a flyer about an upcoming action that was scheduled to take place at ICE's local office. A forty-year old father of two children, who had lived in the U.S. for half of his life, was facing deportation. His lawyer, who had also been Sonya's lawyer, was going to turn in a petition for a stay of deportation at the ICE office. Activists planned to organize a press conference in front of the ICE office, right before the lawyer walked into the building and turned in the petition. Afterwards, the assembled group would caravan to a nearby church that had offered the man sanctuary. Not long after the flyer was circulated, however, ICE preemptively contacted the lawyer to let her know that they would grant the man a one-year deferral from deportation. The Humanitarians surmised that in an effort to avoid the bad publicity of another campaign, ICE had decided to grant relief.

Thus, the Humanitarians adopted a three-prong approach to rein in the state. The group strived to be an 'unhindered humanitarian presence' in the desert, thereby challenging the state's monopolistic hold over the border region. The group curbed the state's repressiveness in large part by establishing domains of relief in the desert. Over time, this kind of service provision in the border area led the group to more systematically document the experiences of the migrants and deportees that they encountered. This data gave the Humanitarians the basis for fashioning themselves into a watchdog of the Border Patrol. When Senate Bill 1070 became law, the Humanitarians saw it as a sign that enforcement in the interior was going to be stepped up. In response, the activist organization expanded their 'humanitarian presence' from the border to the interior by conducting anti-deportation campaigns.

The Advocates: Building Groups' Resistance to the State

While the Humanitarians trained their focus on the state—particularly the Border Patrol—in an effort to limit its power, the Advocates were more concerned with building up *society's* capacity to resist the state. The Humanitarians' interaction with undocumented groups was largely in the form of providing a one-time service, such as medical treatment in the desert. By contrast, the Advocates tried to give noncitizens the tools to be less vulnerable to the state. Toward this end, the group taught noncitizens how to avoid deportation and they also created 'protection networks' linking undocumented individuals to other households and legal resources.

The goal of these two tactics was to arm noncitizens with the means to either evade the state altogether or avoid interactions that could lead to deportations. The third tactic targeted what I call third-parties—institutions like the police and the Medical Examiner’s Office (MEO)—which had ambiguous relations with immigration enforcement. From the perspective of the Advocates, these institutions could align themselves with the state and reinforce its capacity. Or, they could just as easily side with pro-immigrant groups like the Advocates, and serve as an additional layer of resistance to restrictionist elements of the state.

The Advocates tried to cultivate a buffer against the state in three main ways. First, the group organized workshops, trainings and fairs to teach noncitizens how to protect themselves from the state. Second, the Advocates facilitated the creation of ‘protection networks’; these networks linked households with undocumented members to other nearby households as well as to legal and other resources. These first two tactics targeted noncitizens and the goal was to arm them with the means to avoid the state altogether or, at the very least, avoid the kinds of interactions with state actors that could lead to deportations. The third tactic, by contrast, targeted third-parties, including government entities, like city police and the Medical Examiner’s Office, as well as institutions and actors not affiliated with the government. In some cases, this meant trying to prevent these third parties from cooperating with the immigration enforcement state. In other instances, the Advocates targeted these third parties so as to broaden the appeal of the pro-immigrant cause and indirectly pressure the state.

Just as the Humanitarians’ actions to curb the repressive state were sometimes simultaneously efforts to mitigate its exclusionary nature, the Advocates’ tactics also occasionally had a double function. That is, when the Advocates tried to give groups the tools to resist the state, the activist organization also facilitated immigrants’ access to resources. However, while the Humanitarians provided resources like medical care or legal aid to immigrants directly, the Advocates did so more indirectly. The rest of the section will examine each of the Advocates’ three tactics.

Helping Groups Avoid the State

The most frequent way that the Advocates reached out to people with irregular status was through ‘*prepárete*’ or ‘prepare yourself’ workshops. In these workshops, the Advocates explained the basics of immigration law and encouraged attendees to create emergency plans in case they or their family members were detained. These plans were intended to mitigate the confusion that could ensue if a household member suddenly disappeared. In households with school-age children, for example, the Advocates encouraged guardians to entrust someone with the keys to the house and designate them to pick the children up from school. This way, if the guardian was detained, the children would be in trusted hands. The Advocates also urged household members to grant power of attorney to trusted others, so that their affairs could be handled in their absence. Important documents, such as birth certificates, marriage certificates, passports and any immigration-related documents, were to be placed somewhere that household members could easily access; copies of these documents were to be shared with trusted others. They advised households to find immigration lawyers with experience in deportation cases, and memorize their contact information.

In addition to taking these precautions, the Advocates encouraged individuals to make longer-term contingency plans. For instance, the group urged undocumented guardians to decide

whether or not they wanted their children to stay in the U.S. or be reunited with them in case of deportation. The preparate sessions were intended to mitigate some of the many, often unforeseeable, repercussions of the state's actions. By predesignating someone to take charge of the children and ensuring that that trusted person had important documents pertaining to the children, guardians made it less likely that their offspring would be picked up by another organ of the state (Children's Protective Services), which would make family reunification even more difficult.

Besides helping make emergency plans, the Advocates organized other sessions during which they trained noncitizens to be more immune to the state. The group explained the reach of the state—or 'trigger sites' where individuals could get pulled into the deportation pipeline—and how best to avoid them. For instance, the Advocates advised people to keep their personal vehicles well-maintained in order to reduce the likelihood of coming into the contact with the police and initiating a chain of events that could result in deportation. Similarly, the Advocates discouraged people from sharing information about their legal status with places like welfare agencies and hospitals. In other instances, the Advocates served as a conduit of information about which places and institutions at different times. After hearing rumors that Border Patrol agents lurked in the parking zone of a particular emergency room, the Advocates advised people to avoid that hospital.

In addition to describing the state's reach and how to avoid it, the Advocates hoped that these training sessions could reduce the individual's vulnerability to the state in the event that he or she attracted its attention. The group tried to teach people how to avoid deportation proceedings even after they came into contact with an officer. During these know-your-rights trainings, individuals were trained to not open their house door to an officer unless they were certain the officer had a warrant, and even then, to step outside and close the door behind them. If they were pulled over in traffic, they were instructed to refrain from divulging anything besides their names. If they were placed in an immigration detention center, they were coached not to sign anything, such as a voluntary removal form, without consulting a lawyer first. The Advocates even had the training attendees role-play what they would say and do during a lawful contact. An Advocate remarked that even during role play, people often got nervous and gave information that made them more vulnerable to deportation. For this reason, the Advocates encouraged attendees to continue doing this kind of role-play at home. By teaching noncitizens about the state's reach and suggesting strategies for avoiding the state, as well as tactics to interfere with the ability of the state agents to carry out immigration enforcement, activists tried to make individuals more immune to the state.

The Advocates also worked with the other end of spectrum of noncitizens—legal permanent residents through citizenship fairs. During these citizenship fairs, the Advocates helped legal permanent residents apply for U.S. citizenship. Over the course of three or four hours, Advocates and other trained volunteers would help applicants fill out the cumbersome N-400 Application for Naturalization forms, which volunteer immigration lawyers would check over afterwards. The service was free to applicants. I was surprised to learn that the Advocates organized naturalization drives at all. After all, such affairs seemed to me to grant legitimacy to the very citizenship regime of which the group was so critical. When I asked her about them, Renee explained that the Advocates began organizing citizenship fairs soon after Arizona Proposition 200 was passed in 2004. Reminiscent of California Prop 187, Prop 200 required proof of citizenship to register to vote and to cast a vote. It also required state and local agencies

to verify the immigration status of applicants before dispensing non-federally mandated public benefits, and to report any applicants who were out-of-status to immigration authorities. The citizenship fairs were a twofold response to this measure, she explained. First, Prop 200 and other similar measures were clearly ‘anti-immigrant’ and it was important for alternative voices to be heard in the political system. For people to acquire the basic right to vote, as well as to engage in riskier forms of activism, like direct action, they had to be U.S. citizens. Second, and more importantly, naturalization was a way for individuals to protect themselves and their families.

This message was relayed in an orientation video that the Advocates made. Applicants were required to watch this video prior to receiving legal assistance. Renee explained to me that the video ‘was an answer’ to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services videos about citizenship. Most USCIS public service announcements, she explained, framed naturalization as a way to choose responsibility and freedom. By contrast, the Advocates’ video framed citizenship as simultaneously a self-protecting and community-serving endeavor. At one such citizenship fair, I watched the video. In it, Gabriela explained that she naturalized right after the attacks of September 11. ‘Racist legislators began scapegoating people of color, particularly Latinos.’ Citizenship allowed her to protect herself from being the target of immigration enforcement, to ‘help immigrate’ other family members, and to be ‘counted in our society.’ Meanwhile, another Advocate, who was also an immigration lawyer, stated more explicitly that naturalization was a safeguard against deportation. Finally, a man explained that naturalization gave him the protection he needed to be his true self – an activist who advocated for his community.

There was a third reason that the Advocates organized citizenship fairs. Given that the process of changing one’s legal status required an interaction with the state, this moment, just like an encounter with a police officer on the street, could potentially trigger a deportation. Thus, the Advocates used the fairs as occasions to find and warn individuals who wanted to naturalize but who could risk deportation if they in fact initiated the process. Prior to one such citizenship fair, I attended a training that the Advocates had organized for volunteers who would help applicants fill out the N400 forms the following day. At the training, Renee instructed the volunteers to always retain physical control over the forms. This meant that they should never hand over the forms to the applicants after they had completed them. Instead, volunteers were supposed to take the completed forms to the immigration lawyers, who would be standing by. The lawyers would then check over the application for any potential problems. ‘There are times,’ Renee explained, ‘when we may refuse to let the applicant go home with the completed application.’ This kind of refusal occurred if the applicant had committed an offence in the past that could potentially trigger their deportation. After the passage of IIRAIRA and AEDPA in 1996, deportations became more likely because the number of deportable offenses increased more than tenfold, the definition of ‘aggravated felony’ was expanded, and—importantly—the grounds for deportation could be applied retroactively.

During the volunteer training, Renee recalled a time when the Advocates had advised an applicant *not* to naturalize. Apparently, a man had committed a deportable offense in the past and the group feared that bringing this incident to the government’s attention would lead to his deportation. So the group had refused to give him back his application and the man had become very angry. In desperation, he had promised the Advocates that he would not mail his application in, but instead take it to a pricey lawyer to have it checked over again. Renee had told him that

the lawyer would certainly take his money and help him turn in his application; afterwards, however, he would probably still get deported. The Advocates had therefore refused to give the application back to the man, advising him to remain a legal permanent resident. Thus, like *preparate* workshops and know-your-rights trainings, citizenship fairs also gave noncitizens the tools to protect themselves against the state.

Protection Networks

To strengthen undocumented communities' buffer against the state, the Advocates also tried to connect individuals to networks. For instance, the contingency plans mentioned earlier, relied on linking individuals to 'protection networks'—relatives, friends, neighbors, immigration lawyers, and others—who could step in and take care of a targeted individual's immediate concerns. Additionally, if someone in the network was detained during an immigration raid, for example, the chain of communication cautioned others in the network to stay away from that area for the time being.

For example, Gabriella explained how, when SB1070 was first signed into law, a handful of police officers would pull over drivers who they believed were not in the country legally. The Advocates noticed that the officers who were carrying out this kind of enforcement, did so in particular neighborhoods, and they often targeted cars with families. In response, the Advocates created a 24-hour hotline and advertising it widely. They asked people to call the hotline anytime they saw the cops together with the Border Patrol. Once they received a call on the hotline, the Advocates would send text alerts along the protection networks. Those members of the protection network who had irregular status could avoid the place where law enforcement had been spotted with Border Patrol. Meanwhile, others could go out to the address and film what was taking place. These videos were then posted on websites like Youtube in order to pressure the police department to stop working with federal immigration agents. (This kind of effort to disrupt cooperation between local law enforcement and immigration agencies is discussed in more detail in the following section.)

In these ways, the social capital that protection networks generated was supposed to shield noncitizens from a strong and punitive state. At the same time, protection networks, along with the citizenship fairs that were described earlier, were also actions that channeled resources to immigrants. The protection networks simultaneously buffered noncitizens from the state's right hand while also facilitating their access to resources like legal aid. In a similar manner, the citizenship fairs also served a dual function. On the one hand, the Advocates understood naturalization as a way for people to protect themselves and their family members from deportation. On the other hand, naturalization also helped people access resources, like welfare. Thus, the Advocates efforts to make noncitizens more resilient to the state's enforcement apparatus also entailed an effort to expand access to resources from which noncitizens were excluded.

Forging Alliances with Third Parties

When they trained people to avoid the state in their everyday lives or plugged them into protection networks, the Advocates worked directly with undocumented people and other noncitizens. The purpose of these efforts was to help potential victims of enforcement—

noncitizens—steer clear of and resist the state as much as possible. However, the Advocates also cultivated another approach, this time targeting third-parties.

These third-parties were relatively powerful institutions and social actors that floated in civil society and had ambiguous relations to the immigration enforcement state. From the perspective of the Advocates, these actors could align themselves with the state and reinforce its capacity. Or, they could just as easily side with pro-immigrant groups like the Advocates, and serve as an additional layer of resistance to the state. During the time of my fieldwork, I identified three sets of actors that the Advocates were consistently trying to attract away from the state. The first was comprised of a variegated group of cultural producers, including writers, singers, and artists. Some in this group were locally-based, but most were from other parts of the country and the world. Additionally, the Advocates targeted two other third parties, which were local institutions that had frequent encounters with migrants and the Border Patrol: the Medical Examiner's Office and the city police.

The Advocates began training their focus on cultural producers shortly after the boycott against the state fizzled out. When Senate Bill 1070 was first signed into law in 2010, pro-immigrant organizations in Arizona and allied political figures called for an immediate boycott of the state. Coalitions like *Alto Arizona* (literally meaning 'Stop Arizona') were formed to dissuade firms, municipalities, organizations, and others from doing business in Arizona. Conventions and conferences were cancelled in significant numbers. Performers called off concerts; or, when they did not, they nonetheless felt compelled to explain their stance on SB 1070. A year later, however, support for the boycott began to dwindle. The organizations that had originally called for the boycott, including most of the original founders of *Alto Arizona* said that the action was over. Others, like most of the Advocates and some members of the Humanitarians, disagreed. At the same time, the Advocates came to realize that sustaining a boycott on their own was futile. For this reason, the group struggled to put together their own modified action, which came to be known as the 'culture strike.' In many ways, the culture strike was the reverse of a boycott. Rather than stopping cultural producers from coming to Arizona, the Advocates invited them to the southwest to give them 'alternative' tours of the border region. In a manner much like the pilgrimages, these alternative tours were supposed to help privileged people – in this case, artists – 'bear witness' to the suffering of migrants. In this way, the Advocates hoped that these visits would inspire cultural production that conveyed pro-immigrant messages to broader audiences.

In one instance, the Advocates told me they were hosting an award-winning novelist, James, who was in town and they asked if I could volunteer to show him around. James had visited Southern Arizona with a group of artists and writers several months earlier as part of a culture strike tour. He had come back for a follow-up visit. The Advocates asked me to drive him to a meeting with the chief medical examiner. I agreed. I picked him up from his hotel and drove him to Medical Examiner's Office. On the drive over, he mentioned that he had contributed to *The New Yorker* in the past and thought that perhaps this visit could inspire a photo essay that could be featured in the magazine. We arrived at the hospital complex and found the building that housed the medical examiner's office. Inside, we were greeted by the chief medical examiner.

The doctor explained the complex forensic process by which his office tried to identify the human remains of migrants that were recovered from the desert.²⁶ Later, he led us on a tour of the premises. He showed us the rooms where he and his staff conducted autopsies. Nearby, he showed us a wall lined with lockers. In each locker, there were several plastic baggies filled with personal effects, like identification cards, cell phones and suchlike; these belongings had been removed from the corpses that had been brought in from the desert and were used to try and make identifications. Afterwards, the doctor took us outside to a cooler that supplemented the morgue. Most of the bodies in the cooler, the doctor explained, were those of migrants. He pulled open the door of the cooler. I staggered back from the sickly-sweet odor of decomposing bodies while James managed to step inside the cooler and snap photos. After our visit was over, I drove James to the cemetery where the unidentified remains were eventually buried. We found the county-owned section of the cemetery where unidentified border crossers had been buried. James took more pictures.

A key feature of these culture strike events were the interactions with the Medical Examiner's Office. I noticed that the Advocates often asked the Chief Medical Examiner to present on the process of identifying human remains to different audiences and the doctor usually complied. However, this working relationship between the Advocates and the doctor had not emerged instantaneously. Nor had it been guaranteed from the start. Rather, the Advocates had intentionally cultivated this collaboration over time. In fact, other medical examiner's offices in Southern Arizona were far more averse to even the most basic forms of cooperation. Renee explained how other offices in the region, depending on who was at the helm, sometimes refused to give out information about the numbers of remains that had been recovered in the border area in the past year, let alone allow the Advocates to organize culture strike stops at their offices.²⁷ When I had visited him with James, I asked the doctor why their office worked so closely with the Advocates. The doctor explained that the activist group had been highly instrumental in helping their Office identify remains. This was because family members of the deceased, particularly if they themselves were undocumented people living in the U.S., did not want to talk to a government office. In these cases, family members were far more willing to speak with the Advocates. As unidentified bodies from the desert piled up in their morgue, and later, their auxiliary morgue, the Office staff became increasingly grateful for the Advocates' help. As this collaboration continued, the Advocates began requesting that the Office staff to present their work to the public. Sometimes, these types of presentations entailed one-on-one meetings with people like James. Other times, the doctor agreed to speak to far larger audiences.

This was the case when two prominent members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus organized a community hearing in the city hall of an Arizonan border town and asked the doctor to be a guest speaker. I learned afterwards that the Advocates had been responsible for the doctor's invitation to the hearing. The group had used their ties with one of the congressman to urge him to invite the doctor. Other speakers at the forum included the town's mayor, the county sheriff, the CEO of an American firm that conducted business in Mexico, and a DREAMer who had started his own business. The relatively large conference room was packed. All the chairs

²⁶ According to state statute, a body cannot be cremated or buried until it has a death certificate. So for victims of violence such as homicide, incarceration, suicide, accident, or some other reason that's classified as unknown or unnatural (particularly when there's no known chronic condition to have triggered the death), the police or the senior center or any other institution may get in touch with the medical examiner's office.

²⁷ Ever year, the Advocates culled the total number of migrant deaths from several medical examiners' offices in Southern and Central Arizona. The group then publicized this estimate.

were filled, forcing many people to sit on the floor. The room was flanked with standing reporters and there were a dozen news cameras set up in the back. The speakers were supposed to represent the diverse array of stakeholders in the border region. However, most of the hearing was framed around the ways in which increased border security conflicted with valuable aspects of America, particularly the freedom to do business. Among the speakers, only the DREAMer and the doctor spoke about the experiences of undocumented immigrants. The DREAMer discussed the effects of enforcement on young undocumented people like himself, while the doctor discussed the scale of migrant deaths in the desert. The doctor's presentation prompted one of the congressmen to ask whether the deaths on the border constituted a 'humanitarian crisis.' The doctor responded with an analogy: 'it's like a mass disaster, like a plane crash that happens every year... But unlike a plane crash, there isn't a list of missing identities. So we end up with hundreds of bodies that are never identified.' A clip featuring the doctor's response was aired on the local news that evening. The Advocates thus strategically used their ties to the medical examiner's office to convey their message to broader audiences.

The medical examiner's office itself, however, was an ongoing target for the Advocates' messages. At another presentation a few months after James' visit, I witnessed how the Advocates, while carefully managing this relationship, were also always trying to push the Office to take a more openly pro-immigrant stance. When we had visited the Office a few months earlier, James had asked the doctor about his own personal outlook on migrant deaths. The doctor had explained that while he and his staff sympathized with the plight of migrants, he wanted to uphold the 'professionalism' of the Office so that they could keep doing their work as effectively as possible. So, he tried to refrain from making political comments in public. A few months after that visit, the Advocates asked the doctor to present his work to a small group of artists and a handful of Advocates. The presentation would be video recorded so that the group could show it to others at future culture strike events. The doctor agreed. Towards the end of his presentation, Sandra asked the doctor to reflect on what impact his work had had on him 'at a human level.' The doctor skirted the question, saying that despite his staff's as well as his own best efforts, many human remains would never be identified, which was 'not easy'. Gabriela then asked the doctor what he thought should be done in response to these deaths. The doctor shifted his weight uneasily. He tried to skirt the question again. Afterwards, Gabriela vocalized what clearly seemed to be a collective wish among the Advocates: 'I wish he would be less clinical and more human in his presentations to the community.' Just as they did with cultural producers, the Advocates tried to cultivate a closer alliance with the medical examiner's office.

Another ambiguously-aligned third party that the Advocates targeted was local law enforcement. The Advocates were aware that these local institutions were increasingly becoming key players in immigration enforcement around the country. Certainly, in Arizona, several sheriffs, including Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County and Paul Babeu of Pinal County, were very vocal about their restrictionism. Moreover, the Advocates frequently heard rumors about how certain officers were overzealously working with Border Patrol. At the same time, however, local law enforcement also displayed the opposite tendency around the time that Senate Bill 1070 was under discussion. One police officer had brought a lawsuit challenging the measure. Meanwhile, the chief of police publicly criticized the bill for burdening officers with a task that would hinder their other duties. Realizing that there was room to maneuver, the Advocates pressured police to be more loyal to the city's denizens than to the federal government's mandates. The group urged the police department to more openly resist the Department of Homeland Security and refuse to become part of the immigration enforcement apparatus.

In the summer of 2011, the Advocates found an opportunity to pressure local state actors to distance themselves from federal immigration agencies. ICE had just invited the city's police chief to participate in a national task force. The task force would hold community hearings about how a federal immigration enforcement program called Secure Communities could be implemented without impeding "community policing" or creating "the possibility of racial profiling." Soon after the police chief accepted ICE's invitation, the Advocates began putting public pressure on him to resign from the task force. The group gathered and protested in front of the police department on several occasions. They also told the media that it was hypocritical for a police chief, who had criticized Senate Bill 1070 for burdening local law enforcement with a federal responsibility, to then turn around and voluntarily cooperate with ICE. I asked Renee why protesting the police chief's involvement in the task force was significant, given that even if he resigned, it would hardly slow down the devolution of immigration control in the long run. She responded that it was still important for the police chief to take "the symbolic step" of excusing himself. By being part of the task force, the chief effectively 'legitimized' Secure Communities. The chief did not end up resigning from the task force. However, he was visibly upset by the protests, much to the Advocates' pleasure.

A year later, the Advocates targeted the city police again. Working with other pro-immigrant groups, the Advocates tried to bring a moratorium on all arrests on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The coalition's goal was to make it so that during these three days of the week, the city police would refrain from checking immigration status and from communicating with Border Patrol. The coalition decided to pursue this aim by mobilizing clergy and faith-based leaders to broach the issue with the city council and the police department. The faith-based group drafted a resolution that called on the city police to make the enforcement of immigration laws of lowest priority on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays so that people could be free to worship without fearing arrest and deportation. The final resolution that the city adopted did not enact a moratorium. However, it did note that the police *were* committed to protecting the public safety of all the city's residents, regardless of immigration status. Thus, the resolution did concede an important part of the Advocates' contention—that local state actors should first and foremost be committed to the welfare of local denizens than a federal immigration program.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the repertoire of tactics that pro-immigrant organizations relied upon in order to weaken the state. For both the Humanitarians and the Advocates, the state appeared as a highly repressive and coordinated entity that exercised its will over society. The organizations adopted two basic responses to this strong-state effect: the Humanitarians tried to restrict the state while the Advocates strived to build society's capacity to resist the state. Sometimes, the very efforts to weaken the state were also simultaneously actions that channeled resources to noncitizens.

The Humanitarians used a three-pronged approach to limit the state's reach. First, by framing the borderlands as a humanitarian crisis zone and the Border Patrol as an important cause of that crisis, the Humanitarians called into question the legitimacy of the state's presence at the border. The group established a domain of 'humanitarianism' in the desert to abate this state-induced crisis: volunteers put out 'humanitarian aid' along migrant trails and administered

medical care to the border crossers that they encountered. In short, the group challenged the state's attempt to monopolize interactions with migrants at the border. Over time, the provision of aid at the border became the basis for developing a second method to restrict the state: the group fashioned itself into a watchdog of Border Patrol. Time spent at the border gave volunteers the opportunity to study and document the agency's practices. Armed with this data, the Humanitarians concluded that the Border Patrol, as an institution, violated the basic human rights of migrants. The Humanitarians publicized their findings through reports, which they shared with international human rights organizations. Eventually, the group also adopted a third approach to curb the state's range. Anti-deportation campaigns challenged the idea that the state was the sole arbiter of who was and was not allowed to stay in the country. Thus, the anti-deportation campaigns extended the front along which the Humanitarians pushed up against the state.

The Advocates were just as critical of the state's power. However, by comparison to the Humanitarians, the Advocates had far fewer run-ins with the Border Patrol. This was because the Advocates primarily trained their focus on the state's victims, rather than its agents. The group's goal was to make these victims more resilient to the state. That the state could pull people into the deportation pipeline and disrupt the lives of their families, the Advocates believed, had to do with the isolating and individualizing effect of enforcement. Without being fully versed in their rights, undocumented people could hardly avoid being ensnared by the state. Meanwhile, households lacked the necessary social capital to mitigate the disruption that followed the deportation of a family member. To overcome this problem of isolation, the Advocates plugged households into protection networks. Additionally, the Advocates taught undocumented people how to manage, if not completely avoid, everyday encounters with the state. The citizenship fairs that the group organized were an extension of the same philosophy: by facilitating naturalization—and in some cases, averting the process from being initiated altogether—the Advocates strived to protect noncitizens from deportation. In addition to working with noncitizens, the group also targeted relatively powerful actors and institutions with ambiguous relationships to the immigration enforcement apparatus. In some cases—like the 'culture strike' and the Medical Examiner's Office—the Advocates tried to get third parties to work directly with their organization. Other times, the Advocates tried to disrupt existing relationships of cooperation, as was the case with the city police. Thus, the Advocates responded to the strong-state effect by reinforcing groups' capacities to withstand and resist the state.

Additionally, this chapter illustrated how the annual pilgrimages were themselves also prompted by the strong-state effect. Albeit more overtly religious in nature than the groups' other activities, the pilgrimages were nonetheless extensions of the two main tactics that this chapter outlines. The sociological significance of these rituals, therefore, is not immediately clear when they are analyzed on their own or only in relation to other explicitly religious tactics. Rather, these pilgrimages have to be contextualized against the larger repertoire of actions in which the groups engaged.

First, the pilgrimages were occasions to challenge the state's reach and they emulated the very way that the Humanitarians confronted state actors. Just like the water drops in the desert, the pilgrimages – temporarily – created civilian domains that defied the state's monopolistic hold over particular geographic spaces. Processions of American civilians moved through spaces where they were not normally encountered. The pilgrimages also mimicked another component of the Humanitarians' work. Just as the Humanitarians watched, documented, and disseminated information about the Border Patrol's practices, pilgrims 'bore witness' to the circumstances at

the border. Even when they never actually encountered border-crossers during the journey, pilgrims—through their own experiences of exhaustion—‘bore witness’ to the ways in which state actions affected migrants.

The pilgrimages also captured the Advocates’ main approach of reinforcing groups’ resistance to the state. We saw, for example, how the Advocates strived to reach out to relatively privileged third parties—like artists and writers—who floated in civil society and had indefinite relationships with the state. Just like the culture strike, the pilgrimages were supposed to equip participants with an alternative set of ideas about the border. The pilgrimages created opportunities for collective emotion work as when participants collectively grieved over migrants who they had never met and horrified by the Border Patrol agents who they encountered. The emotion work therefore fostered a particular collective consciousness about the state as aggressor and about migrants as its suffering victims. Participants emerged from the pilgrimage—particularly the longer Migrant Pilgrimage—with stronger ties to each other and a deeper commitment to resisting the state.

Thus, the pilgrimages are certainly a lot like the *posadas sin fronteras* and other instances of Christian anti-borderism that scholars have described in the past. However, the sociological significance of the pilgrimages only become clear when they are put in conversation with everything else that the movement did in relation to the state.

Just as each event that the pro-immigrant movement organized makes more sociological sense when it is analyzed with respect to the rest of the movement’s repertoire, pro-immigrant strategy takes on more meaning when it is considered in relation to that of the opposing side. When Alyssa put out water in the desert, she thought of her action as conveying a message to the entire field of actors; this field was comprised of not only the state, but also of restrictionist organizations. In other words, pro-immigrant activists diligently worked to weaken the state because they knew that there were concerted efforts on the part of their opponents to shore up the state. The next chapter will examine these efforts and how they served as a direct foil to pro-immigrant activism.

Chapter 5

The Weak-State Effect and Restrictionist Activism

Introduction

In the very same places that pro-immigrant groups experienced the state's efficacy as a repressive entity, restrictionists perceived incompetence. Where pro-immigrant activists blamed unauthorized immigration on state's escalating coerciveness, restrictionist activists believed that it was the product of state's weakness. As Chapter Three showed, restrictionist activists expressed their frustrations about the state's feebleness in terms of the country's Mexicanization. According to this highly racialized narrative, the state was losing control over its territory *and* its resources. Immigrants were thought to be the winners in this arrangement: after they slipped into the U.S. unnoticed, noncitizens accessed scarce resources like jobs and healthcare to which they were not entitled. If nothing was done to reverse these trends, and if the problem of state weakness remained unaddressed, restrictionists believed that the U.S. could become just like Mexico.

With this understanding in mind, restrictionist groups mobilized to strengthen the state's coercive ability and this chapter describes these efforts.²⁸ The strategy to prop up the state can be analytically divided into two types of endeavors. First, the Arpaiositos strived to build society's capacity to assist the state. In this way, the group's work contrasted with the tactics of the Advocates. Meanwhile, the remaining two restrictionist organizations – the Soldiers and the Engineers – tried to expand the state's reach. As such, the tactics of the Soldiers and the Engineers were in opposition to those of the Humanitarians.

Both of these restrictionist strategies – to expand the state's scope and to facilitate groups' ability to aid the state – were motivated by a desire to make noncitizen access to U.S.-based services more difficult. That is, all three groups' tactics of strengthening the state could also be read as indirect efforts to make the welfare state more exclusionary. In fact, many restrictionists did talk about their mobilization as a way to 'protect' American resources for Americans. However, with the exception of the early-stage Arpaiostios, the restrictionist groups in this study did not specifically target welfare or resource distribution. Thus, I never observed a corresponding action on the part of restrictionists that foiled the DIY welfare provision of pro-immigrant groups.

By considering restrictionist mobilization as a state-strengthening effort, this chapter shows how conventional analyses of nativism as a type of 'vigilantism' is not accurate. Despite the criticisms that restrictionist activists harbored about the state, the nativist organizations that they participated in were not anti-state groups. Nor did these organizations operate on the fringes of society in the manner that far-right militias like Sovereign Citizen Movement² did (Fleishman 2004). Instead, these nativist groups constructed relationships with state actors. They did so by fashioning themselves into experts on enforcement-related matters. As this chapter shows, the Soldiers tried to become a civilian extension of the Border Patrol in the desert. The Engineers, meanwhile, sought to be a border security contractor for the Department of Homeland Security.

²⁸ This chapter is based in large part on Elcioglu (2015).

Finally, the Arpaiositos became a protection posse for a local law enforcement agency headed by a restrictionist sheriff. Each of these endeavors were geared towards either strengthening the state directly (the Soldiers and the Engineers) or indirectly, with the aid of institutions in civil society (the Arpaiositos).

Border Patrol agents, Department of Homeland Security officials, and Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office deputies were not the only actors with whom these nativist organizations interacted. All three civilian groups also cultivated ties with local restrictionist politicians. For example, in the opening vignette of the introductory chapter, I described how Dale and his fellow Engineers were invited to present their new sensor-based surveillance system to a committee at the Arizona State Legislature. This kind of public presentation to state officials was not out of the ordinary. The Engineers, just like the Soldiers, fashioned themselves into experts who could speak with authority on matters related to border. In addition to politicians, journalists interested in understanding the conditions at the U.S.-Mexico border often used the Soldiers and the Engineers as their sources. As politicians and reporters turned to these organizations for analyses of the border, it bolstered these organizations’ self-understanding as experts. Each organization drew tremendous pride from its ability to use its expertise to work directly with state actors. Indeed, their multilayered relationship with the mainstream political arena and their pro-state demeanor was precisely how these organizations morally differentiated themselves from other groups, especially on the far Right. Protecting and building up the state, rather than engaging in “vigilantism” (Navarro, 2008; Massey and Sanchez R, 2010; Neiwert 2013), therefore, better describes the nature of grassroots nativism.

To highlight the similarities and variations across the three groups, this chapter is organized along three axes of comparison: the group’s relationship to the local; the habitus that members tried to cultivate in themselves; and each organization’s goal with respect to the state. Table 5.1 summarizes the differences and similarities between the three groups.

TABLE 5.1: RESTRICTIONIST GROUPS

	ARPAIOSITOS	SOLDIERS	ENGINEERS
Relationship to Local	Protecting the city from sanctuary	Protecting a family on the frontier	Studying a locality
Desired Habitus	Civilian deputies, then professional counterprotestors	Civilian soldiers	Techies and border experts
Organizational Goal	Facilitator of local immigration control (build society’s capacity to aid state)	Border Patrol’s civilian extension (expand state)	DHS’s border security consultants (expand state)

As Table 5.1 indicates, the locality of concern among the Arpaiostios was the city, and specifically, Phoenix. According to the Arpaiositos, Phoenix was vulnerable to the disorder of sanctuary that plagued other urban centers like Tucson. To protect Phoenix, the Arpaiositos initially saw themselves as a civilian wing of the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) deputies, and later, as professional counter-protestors. By helping the MCSO hold onto its powers of immigration enforcement, the Arpaiositos tried to keep an avenue open for local institutions to assist the state.

The Soldiers were also interested in protecting a locality from disorder. However, the space of concern for them was a ranch set near the border, through which migrants crossed. Well-versed in the rancher's stories of daily struggle, the Soldiers patrolled the area in order to be an additional 'deterrent' to migrant crossers. They also set up a mobile reconnaissance system: the group tried to keep track of the locations of shifting migrant paths, sharing the information that they gathered with the Border Patrol. The Soldiers thus fashioned themselves into a civilian extension of the agency.

The Engineers were similar to the Soldiers in important ways: they too operated out of a ranch near the border and were working towards expanding the state's reach. Rather than protecting the ranch by collaborating with Border Patrol, however, the Engineers used the ranch to *study* Border Patrol. The Engineers thought of themselves as techies and experts on all matters related to border security. As such, the group saw itself as a potential contractor for the Department of Homeland Security. For the Engineers, expanding the state's reach required revamping the way the Border Patrol conducted surveillance and dispatched its resources.

The Arpaiositos: Building Society to Reinforce the State

The Arpaiositos were the polar opposite of the Advocates. As we saw in the previous chapter, the pro-immigrant Advocates strived to strengthen society's ability to resist the state. One prong of this endeavor was to pressure local law enforcement to side with the city's denizens and refuse to act as deputized agents of immigration control for the federal government. The Arpaiositos, by contrast, helped put local law enforcement *in service of* federal immigration enforcement efforts. Toward that end, the group started off by participating in a restrictionist sheriff's 'volunteer posse.' Over the years, the Arpaiositos turned to protesting any effort to remove the sheriff from office.

From the perspective of the Arpaiositos as well as many other restrictionist activists that I interviewed, Maricopa County represented one of the last vestiges of order in Arizona. According to the Arpaiositos, the problem was not only that undocumented immigration had negative consequences for Americans living in Arizona. It was also that these negative effects were aggravated by lax responses at the municipal level. An important exception was Sheriff Joe Arpaio. After ICE granted immigration enforcement authority to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) in 2007, through the 287(g) program²⁹, the Sheriff enthusiastically began putting local law enforcement resources and know-how into immigration control. Restrictionist activists admired Sheriff Arpaio for exactly this reason. But the Arpaiositos worried that even Maricopa County was in danger of adopting sanctuary policy like other parts of Arizona. Indeed, at the end of a three-year civil rights investigation by the Department of Justice in 2009, ICE began curtailing MCSO's 287(g) powers.³⁰ With every federal criminal investigation and grand jury

²⁹ Devolution of immigration enforcement was first introduced through Section 287(g) of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). The statute enables the federal government to bestow state and local employees with the powers of immigration officers—a drastic change from a previously strict federal power over civil immigration enforcement. To do so, the state or local institution must enter into a written agreement with federal government, and arrange for training of deputized public servants in immigration enforcement. Under the program, there were two kinds of agreements – street-level and jail.

³⁰ In October 2009, ICE showed ambivalence about meeting Arpaio's request to renew 287(g) agreements with MCSO. ICE finally decided to renew Maricopa County's jail model agreement, but not its street authority (Archibold 2009). However, less than a year later, this power was also curtailed: in March 2010, ICE only

probe into the daily operations of the MCSO, the Arpaiositos came to believe that there was a concerted effort to undermine an effective arrangement. To prevent this system of local immigration control from being dismantled, the Arpaiositos took it upon themselves to work with the MCSO.

Protecting the City from Sanctuary

The Arpaiositos feared that the lawlessness and disorder of other cities—particularly Tucson—could infect Phoenix at any moment. This fear became apparent during my first meeting with the group. When I mentioned that I was living in Tucson and not Phoenix, Valerie, a longtime Arpaiosito, flatly stated that there was ‘no hope for Tucson.’ I asked her what she meant. She replied that city officials, under pressure from ‘illegals and their supporters,’ had basically made Tucson a sanctuary city. As far as she was concerned, the cops in Tucson could no longer perform their duties and uphold the law—that is, perform immigration enforcement. She was particularly appalled that the police chief of the Tucson Police Department was ‘pro-sanctuary.’ When Senate Bill 1070 was first introduced in the legislature, she explained, the police chief had plainly stated that the measure was a terrible idea and that his department would refrain from checking immigration status. Valerie knew that a Tucson-based tea party group had organized a rally or two in downtown Tucson to protest the police chief’s stance. But it was a futile effort. Valerie doubted anything would change even if SB 1070 was upheld by the Supreme Court. Tucson was a lost cause. As she grew silent, another Arpaiosito piped up the concern that the group harbored: ‘if we’re not careful, it [the adoption of sanctuary policy] could happen here [in Phoenix]!’ For the Arpaiositos, Phoenix could easily become Tucson.

Animated by this fear, the Arpaiositos became dedicated supporters of a beacon of restrictionism: Maricopa County Sheriff Office. Key members of the Arpaiositos first met each other in 2006 and 2007 when they gathered to protest the presence of day laborers near a home furnishings store in East Phoenix. For years, day laborers had been gathering in the parking lot of a local Home Depot to solicit work. In 2005, however, Home Depot stopped allowing this practice and the day laborers assembled further up the street near M.D. Pruitt’s Home Furnishings. The storeowner solicited the help of Phoenix Police Department to chase the day laborers away. Under pressure from pro-immigrant groups, however, the cops stopped publicly policing the area. The storeowner then hired off-duty Phoenix officers and MCSO deputies as private security guards for Pruitt. Claiming that the guards were racially profiling the area near the store, pro-immigrant activists gathered at the site. They videotaped the security guards, held signs, and chanted together in protest.

Valerie first heard about the daily battle in front of the furniture store at about this time. She saw the protesting activists on the news and remembered feeling infuriated. It seemed unfair that a small business owner had to bear the brunt of ‘illegals.’ But she found it even more

authorized MCSO deputies to screen inmates who had already been booked into county jails. In response, Arpaio said that he would continue enforcement under an Arizona state law that allows undocumented immigrants to be charged as ‘co-conspirators of human trafficking’ (Teo 2010). By December 2011, ICE ceased all 287(g) agreements with MCSO (DHS 2011). A year later, 287(g) had been phased out in Arizona (Duda 2012) as well as the rest of the country (Rivas 2012). This phasing out has by no means ended collaboration between local law enforcement and immigration authorities. The Secure Communities replaced 287(g). As the program came under growing public scrutiny, it too was phased out, only to be replaced by another system called the Priority Enforcement Program.

disconcerting that the police could not intervene because of ‘pro-illegal’ supporters. Valerie decided to drive to the store to see what was happening. There, she immediately noticed that another group had gathered opposite the protestors. This group, according to Valerie, held ‘patriotic’ signs and were ‘orderly,’ unlike the ‘pro-illegal’ protestors. Striking up a conversation with a member of the group, she quickly realized she was not the only one frustrated by the situation. Others in the group were also troubled that a small business had to contend with the problem of ‘illegals.’ Others were also frustrated the police were not allowed to ‘do their jobs.’ Others were also upset with the troublemakers who, according to Valerie, were ‘bused’ in from places like Tucson³¹. Valerie returned the next day with her own homemade ‘patriotic’ sign. That week, she had met other men and women with whom she would form the Arpaiositos.

The timing of Valerie’s story is significant. The furniture store battle overlapped with a shift in Sheriff Arpaio’s approach to undocumented immigrants, which was prompted by the introduction of a federal program of localized immigration control in Arizona. As recently as June 2005, Arpaio was ambivalent about participating in immigration enforcement. Indeed, the Sheriff told *The Associated Press* that he “[didn’t] expect to concentrate on some guy in a truck with six illegals,” adding that he preferred instead “to go after the professional smugglers who do this for money, the top people” (Gabrielson and Gibling 2008). But this ambivalence changed a year later. After vetoing several restrictionist measures proposed by the Republican-dominated state legislature, the Democratic governor of Arizona at the time, Janet Napolitano looked for an alternative way to showcase her party’s toughness on immigration. She asked ICE to grant 287(g) authority to her state. This authority would give local law enforcement officers the civil powers to make immigration-related street arrests and issue detainers in jails. ICE granted the request (Greene 2013: 27-28). By deputizing 100 MCSO detectives and patrol deputies as well as 60 detention officers, the federal agency set a new national precedent (Shahani and Greene 2009: 37). Before this moment, there had been only 200 deputized officers throughout the country and no local law enforcement agency had immigration enforcement authority both on the streets and in jails. But in late 2006, ICE effectively gave the MCSO “the largest and most comprehensive 287(g) contract in the nation” (Greene 2013: 38). Concomitantly, Arpaio’s policing priorities swung in the opposite direction. A year after expressing ambivalence about it, Arpaio turned his full attention to immigration control. By 2007, MCSO deputies were arresting hundreds of undocumented immigrants (Gabrielson and Gibling 2008), and by late 2007, MCSO targeted the day laborers’ gathering place near the furniture store for regular immigration raids.

Valerie, Paul, and the other men and women who would form the Arpaiositos met each other around this time. They gathered almost every morning in front of the furniture store to face off with pro-immigrant activists. John got involved fairly early and witnessed how the group’s tactics evolved. At first, everyone just brought homemade signs, held them up, and shouted. Then, a member of their group noticed that it was not just journalists but pro-immigrant activists who were taking photos of the restrictionists. According to John, the restrictionists returned the next day with cameras of their own. They took photos and videos of pro-immigrant activists, day laborers, and their potential employers. The restrictionist activists threatened to hand over the footage to ICE. It was not clear from my conversations with the Arpaiositos whether the footage

³¹ Valerie was partially correct. In interviews, a member of the Humanitarian and two members of the Advocates did confirm separately that they carpooled to Phoenix and joined local pro-immigrant activists to rally in front of the furniture store. But the sentiment that it was unlikely that pro-immigrant activists in Phoenix were homegrown is suggestive of how Valerie understands the relationship between the two cities.

was ever actually shared with any authorities, local or federal. However, it was in line with the idea that American resources—in this case, jobs—needed to be protected from noncitizens.

The documentation effort did give the group coherence and a sense of purpose. By taking photos and videos, the restrictionist protestors tried to scare off the day laborers and their supporters. The furniture store became a metaphor for the rest of Phoenix. Valerie, for instance, got involved out of a sense of frustration that a small business owner had to cope with what seemed like two exogenous threats—undocumented workers, on the one hand, and their Tucson-based supporters, on the other. Valerie, Paul, John and the others were also exasperated that the authorities’ ‘hands were tied’: allegations of racial profiling drove the cops to moonlight as security guards. Open policing resumed when the federal government granted immigration enforcement powers to MCSO through the 287(g) program. But the immigration raids were met with a lot of objection from the public. A niche emerged for the Arpaiositos. The group began to see itself as a public advocate and partner of local law enforcement.

Supporting MCSO as Civilian Deputies

The 287(g) program created a new opening for the already-mobilized Arpaiositos. After weeks of counter-protesting at the furniture store, many Arpaiositos wanted to be more directly involved in ‘protecting’ Phoenix. For this reason, group members began joining MCSO’s volunteer posse to act as deputies’ ‘patrol support.’ As posse members, or civilian deputies who accompanied Maricopa County officers, the Arpaiositos gained firsthand experience in day-to-day policing, including immigration enforcement.

Even before the furniture store protests wound down, the Arpaiositos began volunteering with the MCSO’s posse. John noted that some highly-determined activists among them, for a period, participated in both efforts: they “protested half the time [and] rode with Joe [Arpaio’s deputies] the rest of the time.” As volunteers with the posse, the Arpaiositos accompanied MCSO deputies, often in traffic stops, and occasionally, on designated immigration sweeps at workplaces and neighborhoods. In physical appearance, posse volunteers looked remarkably like actual deputies: they wore uniforms, rode in vehicles with official-looking insignia, and some, after undertaking extra training, could carry arms. Although the volunteer posse was active during the time of my fieldwork—having grown into a complex organization with several branches since Sheriff Arpaio came to office in 1993³²—only one Arpaiosito, Mark, participated in the volunteer posse.

Wearing a uniform with an insignia that had been issued by the ‘jeep posse’, Mark rode with deputies in patrol. Other times, he rode in his own personal vehicle which had the insignia of the MCSO. Often, Mark accompanied deputies to conduct traffic control. Several times, he had ridden along with deputies who had stopped vehicles that turned out to have undocumented drivers and passengers. Mark proudly described the support role he played on one such occasion. He and a deputy had pulled over an old Toyota with a broken taillight in a residential

³²In 2013, journalists estimated that MCSO had anywhere between 2400 and 3000 active posse members. See Dillingham, J (2013) “Armed MCSO Posse Patrols Begin at Arizona Schools.” *AZFamily.com*. January 7. <http://www.azfamily.com/news/Armed-MCSO-Posse-patrols-begin-at-Arizona-schools-185966272.html> (Retrieved April 3, 2015). See also Lemons S (2009) “Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s Active Posse Roster, Presented for Your Perusal (w/ Update Re: Marshall Trimble).” September 21. *Phoenix New Times*. http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/bastard/2009/09/joe_arpaio_active_posse_roste.php (Retrieved April 3, 2015).

neighborhood of Southern Phoenix. It was nighttime. The driver—who ‘appeared Mexican’, according to Mark—could not produce a driver’s license or registration. Nor did he answer any of the deputy’s questions. The deputy suspected that the driver did not have papers. Meanwhile, a group of six or seven people gathered nearby; two of the bystanders started video-recording the scene on their cellphones. Mark walked over to the group and asked them to put their cameras away because it was ‘an ongoing investigation.’ One of the cellphone users complied. Another asked ‘confrontationally’ why the driver had been pulled over. Mark explained ‘politely’ that he had a broken taillight and no license. The driver was eventually arrested and taken to jail. Afterwards, the deputy told Mark that he was glad to have had him there as backup. According to Mark, the episode typified the experience of MCSO deputies: a simple traffic stop of an ‘illegal alien’ in a residential neighborhood could easily become very tense and confrontational. Mark thus saw himself as a ‘peacekeeper’: he could calm down onlookers while deputies did their jobs.

Although he enjoyed fraternizing with deputies and although he believed the posse provided an invaluable service to MCSO, Mark volunteered less and less. Like other Arpaiositos, he had grown weary of other volunteers because they were ‘unprofessional.’ He along with another Arpaiosito, Sam, had even filed a complaint with the MCSO about a posse member. The irresponsible volunteer had driven recklessly while on patrol, wore his uniform while ‘off-duty’ (i.e. when he was not accompanied by a deputy), and disrupted the deputies’ operations. The group believed that this kind of unprofessional behavior could create additional bad publicity for Arpaio and the MCSO. Put off by other posse volunteers, who the Arpaiositos believed were threatening the MCSO’s ability to continue enforcing immigration laws, the group found other ways to support Arpaio’s office.

Public Advocates of MCSO

This alternative form of pro-Arpaio support was to counter-protest any event that was critical of the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office. Soon after Arpaio’s office had been granted 287(g) powers, a coalition emerging out of a construction workers’ union, began filing complaints against the MCSO with the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. The coalition eventually fizzled out. Not giving up, a key leader of the coalition established Phoenix-based group called Citizens for a Better Arizona (CBA). CBA went on to successfully recall Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce from office; Pearce had spearheaded the restrictionist cause in the state legislature and had been a lead sponsor of Senate Bill 1070. With Pearce out of office, CBA decided to turn back to an earlier effort to curtail Arpaio’s power. The group launched a campaign to recall the controversial sheriff from office.

The Arpaiositos, meanwhile, learned about this organized campaign at a press conference in early 2012, and turned their full attention to disrupting it. An Arizona state senator sponsoring a bill to repeal Senate Bill 1070 organized a press conference in front of the state capitol building in Phoenix. State legislators from the opposing political camp convened on the other side of the lawn; they animatedly spoke to restrictionist supporters of SB1070. I stood with Valerie, Mark, John and Alex. Together, we listened to the speeches of the restrictionist legislators. Valerie and Mark each held signs saying “we support Joe Arpaio” while John’s read “we are a nation of laws / Sheriff Joe Arpaio = law enforcer.” Mark and Sam both also wore shirts with the Arpaiositos’ logo. Alex listened for a few minutes before walking over to the anti-SB1070 side of the lawn. Moments after I asked Valerie about Alex’s whereabouts, we heard the blare of a siren. I quickly

realized that Alex was using the siren feature of a bullhorn megaphone to disrupt the speakers on the other side of the lawn. Meanwhile, John noticed that there were “anti-Arpaio people” manning a folding table to the side of the lawn. Valerie and John wandered over to the recall petition table. They told me afterwards that they had “politely” inquired about the recall effort. The duo had learned the name of the organization – Citizens for a Better Arizona – and that it was trying to collect enough signatures to recall the sheriff. John jotted down his contact information on a CBA clipboard. He wanted to get on the group’s email listserv and be notified of upcoming meetings.

After that event, the Arpaiositos began monitoring CBA closely. Alex, who usually opted for more bare-knuckle tactics like blaring a bullhorn siren, reported that he and his wife, Alana, went ‘undercover’ as CBA members. From an email that John received on the listserv, the group learned of an upcoming meeting. Alex and Alana attended the meeting. At the end of the meeting, Alana took fliers of all upcoming events. Alex later showed me a few blurry photos that he stealthily took of other people attending the meeting. I asked him why he had taken the photos. He replied that he planned to post them on the Arpaiosito’s website so that others could recognize CBA people on sight. Alex and Alana also scanned the fliers to post onto their website. Additionally, they emailed the scanned fliers to local tea party groups and restrictionist organizations. The group then encouraged these likeminded organizations to join the Arpaiositos in their efforts to counter-protest and disrupt CBA-organized events. When these events passed, the Arpaiositos continued their reconnaissance efforts. Other Arpaiositos besides John also managed to get on the CBA listserv. Members also closely monitored the CBA facebook site to keep track of any future anti-Arpaio events and organize counter-protests.

The Arpaiositos thus represented one type of response to the weak-state effect: the group tried to expand the ways in which local actors could assist the immigration control state. Believing that the MCSO was responsible for ICE’s effectiveness in Maricopa County, the Arpaiositos worked to keep immigration control localized. This political project was in direct opposition to the efforts of the pro-immigrant Advocates, a group that strived to decouple local police work from immigration enforcement. The Arpaiositos started out as volunteers in the Sheriff’s Office. Later, as the Office became the target of growing criticism, investigations, and a recall effort, the Arpaiositos transitioned into a more public role as Arpaio-supporters.

The Soldiers and Engineers: Extending the State

As the Arpaiositos encouraged the delegation of immigration enforcement powers to local officials in order to increase society’s capacity to assist the state, the Soldiers and Engineers worked to directly *expand the state*. Believing that the Border Patrol lacked adequate manpower and resources in the field, the Soldiers developed a system of gathering information about migrant crossers and sharing it with the agency. Meanwhile, the Engineers tried to develop a more comprehensive system of border surveillance that they hoped to contract out to the Department of Homeland Security. Thus, civilianization and privatization of border control served as two avenues through which restrictionist organizations tried to strengthen the state.

The Soldiers: Border Patrol’s Civilian Extension

The Soldiers were the former local chapter of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (MCDC). They were founded in 2005 as a Minuteman chapter, but became a formal organization in their own right between late 2008 and early 2009, when MCDC disbanded.³ In that time period, this local chapter evolved from an organization that primarily served to create a media spectacle about an ‘out-of-control’ border, to a far more media-shy group whose main purpose was to help local Border Patrol agents. To that end, the Soldiers had changed their ‘standard operating procedures’ to embrace a more proactive approach to intelligence-gathering than that of their predecessors. Several Soldiers characterized the original Minutemen’s approach as ‘lawn chair vigilantism’: activists, sat in their ‘lawn chairs,’ often unarmed, waiting for border crossers to come to them. The Soldiers, by contrast, were better armed than their predecessors. Members sometimes opted to carry two assault rifles at a time on patrols. Indeed, at the first meeting of the Soldiers that I attended, I was asked whether I owned a gun and then urged to purchase one immediately.

The reason why the Soldiers armed themselves was directly related to their conviction that the state needed their help. The local Border Patrol station, according to the Soldiers, was not equipped with the manpower or the resources to effectively police the area. Under these circumstances and despite the best intentions of individual agents, the agency simply could not stem nor even deter the unauthorized flows of people in the area. Thus, the Soldiers fashioned themselves into a civilian extension of the Border Patrol. In order to serve as ‘extra eyes and ears’ for the agency, the Soldiers engaged in three main activities. First, they acted as guardians of a family operated ranch that had become a thoroughfare for undocumented travelers. The Soldiers saw this locality as emblematic of how the state’s inability to rein in migration was negatively impacting the entire nation. Second, as they protected the ranch, group members continually tried to work out how to be effective civilian border agents, both in appearance and in action. Third, the Soldiers created and maintained a system of documenting unauthorized crossers. Among other purposes, this documentation served as a concrete way to partner with the Border Patrol.

Protecting a Family on the Frontier

Just as the Arpaiositos thought that the furniture store in Phoenix was emblematic of the nation’s encounter with immigration, the Soldiers also saw deep symbolic meaning in the day-to-day affairs of a family-operated cattle ranch in Southern Arizona. The Soldiers spent almost all of their time patrolling the ranch’s 55,000 acres. The ranch sat on state and federal land approximately 30 miles north of the border. Laura and Jack, a married couple in their early 60s, ran the ranch and welcomed the Soldiers’ presence. Laura likened the Soldiers’ actions to the civilian defense her forbears provided during World War II:

In the Second World War, my aunt stood at night and watched the skies for planes, and she had this chart on her wall that identified all these different planes that could be approaching, and Jack’s mother, same thing [...] That was civil defense. [In addition], they had men, who had vision problems or flat feet or hearing problems and they worked here in the United States. At night, [these men] would patrol power plants and things that were vulnerable to enemy attack. And, that’s what the Soldiers are.

For Laura, the Soldiers’ practices were comforting and historically familiar. Just as her aunt and mother-in-law had scanned the skies at night, and others had volunteered to patrol power plants

at home during wartime, the Soldiers, too, were helping the nation defend itself against its enemies.

In this case, of course, there was no war and there were no declared enemies. Since the late 1990s, however, it felt increasingly like ‘war’ for Laura and her family. The ‘enemies’ were furtive and ubiquitous: they crossed through the ranch land, day and night, cutting fences, damaging water pipes, scaring cattle, and leaving behind refuse. Each cut fence required costly mending and compelled time-consuming searches for the cattle that had wandered away in the meantime. Each severed water pipe required replacement, and led to many hours of manually hauling water to cattle. Over time, Laura grew to think about these occurrences as malicious acts of vandalism, rather than the desperate efforts of crossers trying to survive.

By the late 1990s, the ranch also began to feel physically unsafe. Laura forbade her teenage daughter from riding around the ranch land by herself. Several years later, husband and wife decided that the ranch house could never be left alone in case someone tried to break in. Holidays became complicated affairs: Jack and Laura went to a relative’s home to celebrate Christmas Eve, while their son and daughter-in-law stayed at the ranch; then they switched on Christmas Day. In the late 2000s, it was unthinkable for Laura and Jack to let their grandchildren play outside without adult supervision. Thus, when the Soldiers volunteered to patrol their land, supplementing the Border Patrol—whose presence seemed very limited—Laura was overjoyed.

The Soldiers, in turn, made the ranch into the main setting for their operations: it represented a tangible way in which undocumented migration was affecting the U.S. On a number of occasions, I heard the Soldiers repeating the stories that Laura had told me, such as the time she and her husband had to borrow a water tanker from a neighbor when a water pipe was cut and the cattle’s troughs had to be manually replenished with water. These tales of how the ranch had evolved over the years from a safe home for a hardworking American family to a place ‘overrun with armed intruders’ offered the Soldiers tangible evidence of the effects of southern exposure.

The ranch itself became a makeshift museum, a place where visitors could see and Soldiers could be reminded of the effects of unauthorized migration. After one patrol, a Soldier named Sam showed me a cache of abandoned, rusting, and broken bicycles. Apparently, the bicycles had been gathered throughout the years from all over the ranch land; they had been piled together behind a shed to show visitors how much unwanted traffic passed through there. When I interviewed him later, Sam deeply commiserated with Jack and Laura. Although not a rancher himself, he lived on a property that intersected the route of undocumented crossers.

It’s just not right, the lack of respect—being stolen from, hearing noises under my house, being woken up, somebody’s trying to crawl under my house to sleep to stay warm [...] I couldn’t even have chickens, they killed them all, for food. So that got me kind of riled and that’s why I joined the Soldiers.

At least, he later explained, he was not trying to live off of his chickens; by contrast, Jack and Laura’s livelihoods were being directly impacted by migration. For Sam, as for other soldiers, the ‘trash’ left behind by crossers on the ranch land, together with the ranchers’ stories of hardship, provided concrete ways to conceptualize the country’s Mexicanization.

The Soldiers pegged the problem of insecurity to the barrenness, the lack of physical presence and protection, at the border. They believed that the border could be sealed, using a combination of strong fences and Border Patrol agents. As a result of the state's weak presence, localities were left vulnerable. The group took it upon themselves to provide one locality—Jack and Laura's ranch—with a modicum of protection. The Soldiers hoped that by their presence they could help apprehend unauthorized crossers, redirect them elsewhere, or even deter them entirely.

Civilian Soldiers

As they protected the ranch, the Soldiers tried to work out what it meant to be a serious civilian extension of the Border Patrol. They did so primarily by developing rules for how to look and act as a civilian force patrolling an area that they deemed to be unsafe.

Like the Arpaiositos who came to physically resemble MCSO deputies when they volunteered with the posse, the Soldiers also looked remarkably similar to Border Patrol agents. The Soldiers wore militaristic-style uniforms: many had long-sleeved shirts that were adorned with the group logo and 'Search and Rescue' patches. They wore combat boots and some also wore canvas snake-proof leggings. Despite the scorching hot weather, a Soldier told me that he always wore a pair of thick woolen socks that he had kept from his days in the Air Force; the socks helped protect his skin against small cactus thorns. They carried utility vests and backpacks filled with food, ammunition, and occasionally, first aid kits. The patrolling groups also carried radios and GPS devices, and one member always had a cell phone that could get reception in the desert. Participants strapped handguns to their belts and often carried assault rifles in the ready position. On one patrol, the 'mission commander,' Russell, opted to bring along his assault rifle, but to leave behind his large water bottle. When I asked him about it, he replied sternly that we were more likely to die from enemy gunfire than from dehydration.

The Soldiers continuously worked out how to straddle the boundary between civilian and soldier by determining how to appropriately equip their bodies. For example, one Vietnam veteran, Rudy, had acquired an expensive bulletproof vest which he used to wear underneath his uniform. He soon realized how much he suffered from carrying its immense weight over long periods of time. Other members—including Russell, who anticipated gun battles in the desert—discouraged him from wearing this heavy body armor, arguing that Border Patrol agents rarely wore vests because they interfered with quick movement. Rudy shed the vest. In a separate instance, at a monthly meeting, those present laughingly recalled a former member who used to wear a Kevlar helmet on patrols. While they agreed on the sensibility of bearing arms, wearing a combat ballistic helmet was considered ridiculous. Figuring out what members should wear and carry was not only an important process by which the group readied itself for the uncertainties of the border, but also a communal activity that allowed members to carve out their identities as civilian soldiers.

Besides dress and equipment, the Soldiers also sought to acquire a soldier's habitus. For example, patience and bodily discipline were characteristics held in high esteem. Many Soldiers spoke with great respect about David for exactly this reason. A retired Air Force mechanic in his late sixties, David had fallen on his back during his very first patrol. He skidded on loose gravel while making his way down to the bottom of a dried out wash. While his hospitalization was short, he was bedridden for nearly a year. Once David was able to walk again and stand for

longer stretches of time without experiencing pain, he returned and became an avid participant in Soldier patrols. Despite his frequent outings, as of my last conversation with him he had not yet encountered ‘activity.’ When I asked whether that was discouraging for him, he replied that he preferred *not* to encounter anyone, since that meant that the Soldiers’ presence was successfully deterring illicit flows. For David, a good soldier-civilian remained committed and patient despite the obstacles that the patrols presented.

In addition to patience and discipline, careful observance was an admired trait; a diligent soldier-civilian was always mindful that clues were hidden everywhere. I experienced a number of episodes that illustrated this. The first time that I accompanied a Soldier patrol, we immediately came upon a large concentration of footprints in a wash. Although they might have belonged to migrants, there were surely many other feet that might have traversed that space, whether to hunt, to bird-watch, or, like the Soldiers, to track unauthorized crossers. Ben noted that though it was difficult to date the footprints, the moisture around some of them indicated that they were fresh. I silently doubted whether any of the Soldiers could even differentiate which footprints belonged to their team from the previous night, much less to hunters, to migrants, or to *coyotes* (professional human smugglers). As if sensing my doubts, Ben explained that the smaller footprints probably belonged to women and children, and that ‘those over there,’ created by ‘cheap plastic Wal-Mart shoes,’ belonged to migrants, while heavier footwear here probably belonged to the *coyotes*.

As we scrutinized the footprints, Sam, another younger member with no military experience, brought up a favorite conversation topic among the Soldiers—a unit of Native American professional trackers that aided the Border Patrol on the nearby reservation. This group had been mentioned numerous times at meetings I attended. Sam recalled the story of a friend who had known such a tracker and been invited on a search and rescue patrol with him. On the basis of a single footprint, they had been able to locate and notify Border Patrol about a group of migrants. A helicopter had been dispatched, and when they saw it, the migrants had flattened themselves against the ground instead of scattering; this had led to their being promptly apprehended. For Sam, the moral of the story was that any footprint was an important sign stuffed with potential, as long as it was decoded properly. One simply needed the right training.

Becoming Border Patrol’s Civilian Extension

When the Soldiers solicited donations—at meetings, at their booths in public events, and online—it was often for the repair and replacement of their cameras. I quickly learned that the cameras occupied a central place in the group’s practices and ultimately provided the Soldiers with a major component of their *raison d’être*. Once or twice a week, a team of Soldiers went on camera check patrols on the ranch. Well-armed and clad in heavy military gear, they navigated the rough desert terrain in order to locate the cameras that they had hidden in the earth’s crevices. Once the cameras were found, the group replaced their batteries, downloaded the footage the machines had captured over the course of the week, and repositioned them to overlook a well-travelled migrant path. Through trial and error, the Soldiers developed methods to keep the cameras from being detected, yanked out, and broken—like using black tape to cover any lights the cameras emitted and chaining the machines to surrounding rocks. If a camera was no longer recording crossers, the Soldiers placed it somewhere else where they thought ‘activity’ might be more likely.

On one camera patrol in which I participated, we wandered aimlessly for what seemed like several hours searching for the cameras. The temperature range of the desert was unforgiving: we had started in the numbing cold of the pre-dawn hours but we were soon subjected to the blazing heat of midday. Though the previous week's camera handler had taken down the GPS coordinates, some of the cameras' locations had gotten lost in the shuffle. Russell, who was leading the patrol that day, patiently listened to the vague and static-ridden verbal directions that the previous camera handler provided over the phone. We eventually found one machine after circling the same patch of land for the third time. Another camera was located at the bottom of a steep wash. There was some discussion about whether it was safe for me to wait, alone and unarmed, at the top of the wash. I insisted that I would be fine in their absence. Despite my protestations, however, Russell had one of the men stay behind with me. The rest of the team awkwardly balanced their assault rifles and other heavy gear as they climbed down a slippery path, with only prickly *ocotillo* shoots and mesquite tree branches for support. When we were finally done for the day, Russell grinned with satisfaction. He had completed the patrol successfully, in defiance of arduous conditions, relying almost solely on memory and observation.

Finding all six of the cameras in a 55,000-acre area turned out to be a time-consuming and fatiguing task. I assumed that this outing was unusual, given that we had little information to go on. But it soon became clear that my experience wandering around the desert with Russell was typical: the cameras' existence and locations were haphazardly recorded, if at all. In fact, Ben, the software developer who handled the cameras the most, was unsure whether the Soldiers had 'six or seven' machines.

The cameras served three main purposes. First, they presented occasions for honing one's habitus as a civilian soldier—an endeavor that, as the previous section illustrated, the Soldiers approached with great seriousness. The day that I joined them, Russell and his team had to orient themselves in a vast open space, with few artificial markers, in order to find the camera equivalents of six needles in a haystack. In addition, the day's obstacles required endurance, persistence, and strength. There was even an opportunity to demonstrate masculine protectiveness over me, the only woman in the group. Even if the lack of proper recordkeeping did occasionally result in a lost camera, from a positive standpoint, it justified frequent forays out into the ranch and occasions for soldiering.

Second, the cameras were also important for documenting and publicizing the Soldiers' understanding of the border. For the Soldiers, the raw footage of brown bodies, often carrying large box-like bundles on their backs—presumably marijuana—thirty miles north of the international boundary, constituted indisputable proof that the state was absent in this region.

These video clips were widely disseminated. The clips were uploaded onto the Soldiers' website and the group's Youtube channel, and were embedded into their electronic newsletter. The footage was often used for directly recruiting new members as well. For instance, at a Tea Party rally in 2011, the Soldiers decorated their booth with two large posters that featured printed stills from the group's footage. Ben told me that they took similar posters to gun shows, another place where they sought out prospective members. The footage was also circulated among politically sympathetic power holders and media outlets. As an example, when he was invited as a guest speaker to the Soldiers' monthly meeting, one Arizona state senator mentioned that he sometimes showed the group's footage to fellow politicians. In later months, the very same state senator starred in a short documentary about Arizona's 'open border,' produced by a conservative

talk show host and filmmaker; the documentary featured several clips that had been taken by the Soldiers' cameras. On two other occasions that I know of, such clips were also featured in segments about the border and immigration by mainstream news outlets.

In addition to providing opportunities for soldiering and helping publicize how 'out of control' the border had become, the cameras also served a third purpose. By documenting crossers, the Soldiers, much to their pride, were able to cultivate a working partnership with the Border Patrol. From what I gleaned, the Soldiers encountered crossers very infrequently. Although my respondents were ready with stories of other members' encounters, no one I spoke with directly had come across a migrant during a patrol. Shapira (2013) made the same observation among the Minutemen (160). Nonetheless, the Soldiers believed themselves to be of great service to the Border Patrol, thanks to their system of documentation. Every Monday, Ben gave a local Border Patrol contact any video recordings that the Soldiers' cameras had made of unauthorized crossers, as well as the time and location of the footage. Although he did not know for certain, Ben maintained that the agency benefited from this 'intel.' Like others in the group, he thought that by being an 'extra set of eyes and ears' for the Border Patrol, the Soldiers could help the agency deploy their resources more strategically.

The Soldiers morally distinguished themselves from other border watch groups by judging whether or not another civilian group had as 'good relations' with law enforcement as they believed they did. For instance, after we had completed a patrol, Michael, a middle-aged Soldier, told me that many border watch groups were indeed 'vigilantes' because they did not bother to cultivate working relationships with law enforcement and, often unwittingly, disrupted an agency's operations or 'did something stupid.' By contrast, the Soldiers collaborated with the Border Patrol, he proudly assured me. When I pushed him to explain further, Michael detailed the Soldiers' standard operating procedures: before a patrol, the group always informed the agency of their location; moreover, the Soldiers immediately notified the agency if they encountered any sign of 'suspicious' activity, and they gave the agency the weekly 'intel' that was collected on the cameras.

The importance of fostering positive relationships with the Border Patrol was broached again during a general monthly meeting. A Soldier explained that during a recent camera patrol he led, a Border Patrol agent had given him his business card and thanked him for the work the Soldiers were doing. Sarah, the group's executive director, chimed in that this was not unusual. When the Soldiers 'did gun shows,' she explained, agents in civilian dress would often come by and express gratitude. Even if the extra help that the Soldiers provided was not something the agency could acknowledge publicly, individual agents often thanked the Soldiers privately, she explained. It was this sense of collaborating with, rather than disrupting or ignoring, law enforcement that Michael, Sarah, and other members believed distinguished the Soldiers from 'vigilante' groups.

This section has illustrated how a border watch group, the Soldiers, acted on its nativism by extending the reach of the state. Specifically, the group fashioned itself into the civilian counterpart of the Border Patrol. The Soldiers achieved this aim by patrolling a locality where the state appeared to be absent. The stories of the ranchers' daily struggles and the physical experience of patrolling their land became the prism through which the Soldiers viewed the impact of undocumented migration the nation. The Soldiers believed that the ranch had become unsafe because the local Border Patrol station simply lacked adequate resources to be a constant presence there. For this reason, the civilian group took it upon themselves to be the agency's

‘extra eyes and ears.’ The Soldiers let agents know of their whereabouts, called them if they encountered ‘activity,’ and, most importantly, shared any video footage of crossers that they acquired. On both ‘Search and Rescue’ and camera patrols, the Soldiers tried to figure out how to look, behave, and think like the civilian extension of law enforcement. The group drew great satisfaction in helping a shorthanded agency protect a piece of the nation that the state had apparently left open and unattended.

The Engineers: The State’s Border Security Consultants

Like the Soldiers, the Engineers’ day-to-day work was geared towards expanding the state’s reach. However, unlike the Soldiers, the Engineers were not a civilian patrol group. Rather, the Engineers were concerned with studying existing border enforcement structures and sponsoring, researching, and developing technological alternatives. They hoped to eventually win a DHS contract to change the way the state conducted border surveillance. Phil, the founder of the Engineers, was heavily involved in the 1994 campaign to put Proposition 187 on the ballot in California. Disillusioned with the political atmosphere in California, he moved to Arizona in 2000, where he founded the Engineers.

The Engineers operated from a ranch on the U.S.-Mexico border that functioned as a laboratory in which to develop and test border enforcement methods. From the ranch, the civilian organization scrutinized the Border Patrol’s practices of detection and apprehension. Based on this close study, the Engineers drew on interdisciplinary knowledge, from engineering to seismology to computer programming, to develop technologies for alternative systems of border surveillance. To publicize their new system, the Engineers conducted live demonstrations for the media and local supporters, including immigration restrictionist politicians. The group joined the ranks of other “white collar boundary builders” (Miller 2014: 58) by attending and participating in conferences and exhibitions about ‘border security.’ As they did so, the Engineers began to think of themselves as “border experts” who could advise the state on matters of border security.

The Local as Laboratory

Located right on the border, the ranch from which the Engineers operated, served as a laboratory. On the ranch, the Engineers imagined, developed, and tested technologies of surveillance that were intended for regions far beyond the local. For this reason, too, the Engineers perceived the Border Patrol differently than the Soldiers did: rather than a prospective partner, the Engineers viewed the agency as an object of study and criticism.

Phil, the founding member of the Engineers, acquired the ranch in the early 2000s because it abutted the U.S.-Mexico boundary, so it therefore seemed like the ideal place to ‘study’ the border. While one of the buildings served as his private residence, the rest of the ranch was converted into a test site. About 500 feet from the steel and rebar border fence, the Engineers had built a large workroom and stocked it with expensive surveillance instruments. An adjoining room was empty, save for several computers that monitored the ground sensors located throughout the ranch. Outside, an old bus had been moved to a clearing on one side of the ranch buildings so that it forked the possible paths of anyone walking away from Mexico; by manipulating movement, the Engineers had, for the purposes of a previous surveillance project, ensured that potential crossers would be within signal range. The thermal camera mounted on the

roof of a building was also a remnant of an earlier project. Operated remotely by an Engineer living in Texas, the camera had once produced footage that was broadcast over the internet in real time.

As part of their early efforts to figure out why the border was ‘out of control,’ the Engineers put the Border Patrol’s practices under the microscope. The border watch group acquired a small airplane to conduct ‘aerial surveillance’ of agents in action. John, a young Engineer, explained the project enthusiastically:

We had a lot of fun! Because, what we were doing, we had scanners, and we would listen to the [Border Patrol’s] radio frequencies which were open at that time, they were broadcasting in the clear. We would launch the airplane, we had the scanner aboard, we’d listen to their traffic and say, “Ok, we’ve got a target.” We knew where they were going, because of the landmarks they were using. So what we did was we would document how the Border Patrol worked. When they’d hit some action, we’d go over and we’d videotape it. We learned a lot that way.

The group combined the footage of Border Patrol that they captured from the airplane with what they heard on the agency’s unsecure radio frequencies in order to recreate how the agency detected ‘activity,’ deployed its resources, and then went about apprehending migrants. By documenting and studying the agency’s actual methods and procedures, the Engineers concluded that law enforcement activities at the border were haphazard and insufficient.

The criticisms that the Engineers leveled against the Border Patrol were compiled into an hour-long video that drew on real ‘case studies’ to illustrate the ineffectiveness of the agency’s methods. In one such case study, a Border Patrol drone had detected a group of 30 crossers in the evening and a helicopter was dispatched. Although the crew on board had night vision goggles, the helicopter itself was not equipped with infrared cameras or a spotlight. The agents ended up flying to a location that was a quarter of a mile off in the wrong direction and, with limited night vision capability, they engaged in a futile and loud search for a period of time. After much radio transmission between the crew, the local Border Patrol station and a drone operator, the agents aboard the helicopter realized that they were searching in the wrong place and they rerouted. In the meantime, presumably, the crossers heard the helicopter’s noise and hid. While half of the original group of migrants was caught, the other half escaped. This ‘case study’ along with many others convinced the Engineers that the Border Patrol’s practices were ineffective.

The Engineers were aware that publicly criticizing the Border Patrol was a risky enterprise that could cost them support in politically conservative circles. While I was speaking with him, Phil received a phone call inviting him to present at a conference on national security that was going to be held in Phoenix the following month. Over the years, Phoenix had become the hub of such conferences. At these gatherings, representatives of law enforcement mingled with technology contractors and strategists (Miller 2014). In this particular conference that Phil was invited to, the keynote speaker was going to be the producer of the National Geographic show, *Border Wars*.

Phil agreed to present. He was familiar with these kinds of conferences, having attended a similar ‘border security’ event in Southern California a few weeks earlier. But when he got off the phone, Phil wondered whether the organizers would call him back to disinvite him once they

researched his work further. After all, the conference was framed around *Border Wars*, a show that glorified the Department of Homeland Security, and particularly the Border Patrol. For Phil, the television show was nothing more than “a puff piece”: “It’s not analytical. It doesn’t ask questions. It raises more questions, you know, than it answers. I happen to know a lot about the Border Patrol and how it works, and it’s just dumb,” he told me matter-of-factly. Phil’s invitation was not rescinded, however. The following month, he deliberately skipped the opening keynote address, which, as he suspected, did lionize the agency and earned the television producer a standing ovation from the dozens of uniformed DHS officials and agents who were in the audience. At the beginning of his own session later, Phil took pains to clarify that he was critical of the agency, not of individual agents. Then he discussed how the Engineers offered a more systematic approach to ‘border control.’

In their daily activism, the Engineers used the local as a laboratory. The ranch was converted into a test site, while the local Border Patrol became an object of study. What made this endeavor an engaging one for the Engineers, however, was not simply identifying the problems and limitations in existing methods of border enforcement. The Engineers’ activism was motivated by the prospect of developing an alternative, technologically savvy system of surveillance that they hoped would let them work as a private contractor for the DHS.

Techies on the Border

The Engineers thought of themselves as ‘techies’ rather than as ‘activists’ and this self-understanding was made apparent in two interrelated ways. First, this self-image was evident in individual Engineers’ narratives about their participation in the group. For instance, consider Connor’s story. Although he joined the National Guard as soon as he finished high school, he believed that growing up with a rocket scientist as a father had poised him for a career in engineering. While in the National Guard, Connor also worked as a manager for an information technology company. The company tanked when the dot-com bubble burst in the early 2000s. He decided to join the Engineers when he saw Phil on the news discussing the need to technologically improve border security. I asked him what he liked the most about the Engineers. I expected him to respond by telling me about how the group gave him an opportunity to participate in the restrictionist cause. Indeed, he had just finished telling me how angry he and his girlfriend were about the problems that unauthorized immigration caused in the U.S. Instead, however, Connor compared working with the Engineers to working for Lockheed Martin, a defense company:

It was the freedom and possibility of developing something really, really cool, like we have now. And working on really neat technology and then being in charge of it. I mean you go work for Lockheed - it’s going to be 20 years before you’re in charge of anything, and pretty much you’re going to be bowing down to everybody else’s wishes.

According to Connor, the Engineers’ activism was analogous to the kind of work that was done in security and technology companies, minus the hierarchical organization. For Connor, therefore, taking part in the Engineers’ work gave him an opportunity to be a techie in a way that was not easily available elsewhere.

Despite having no background in engineering, another young member, Dale, grew to see himself as a techie as well. Because of an accident that left him deaf in one ear, he could not join law enforcement as he had hoped and became, instead, a ‘jack of all trades’. He began to get involved with the Engineers by doing odd jobs around the ranch. Before long, Dale was also actively involved in the operation and testing of technologies—whether it was manning infrared cameras, participating in ‘aerial surveillance’ of the Border Patrol, or figuring out how to best test the new sensors. He was particularly excited by the ‘cool’ sensors the group had developed.

Besides individual members’ narratives about themselves, this sense of being a ‘techie’ rather than an ‘activist’ also surfaced in a second way. The Engineers’ self-presentation as techies dovetailed with the manner in which the group distinguished itself from other border watch organizations. When I happened to mention the Soldiers, for instance, Dale shook his head. The Soldiers, he told me, were not to be taken seriously. How could a bunch of guys ‘playing dress-up on the border’ be fighting unauthorized immigration? I found out later from the Soldiers that members of the two groups had unsuccessfully tried to collaborate on a number of occasions. In one such instance, the Soldiers had invited the Engineers to Laura and Jack’s ranch to test the sensor that the Engineers had been developing and fly a surveillance drone. The sensor had not worked and the conditions had been too windy to fly the drone. From the Soldiers’ perspective, the failure of the technologies stemmed from the Engineers’ comparably limited experience in the desert: the Engineers, the Soldiers believed, had neglected the way in which the outdoor conditions would affect a sensor or a drone.

The Engineers, by contrast, thought that their technological savvy made their efforts far more effective than that of either the Soldiers or the Soldiers’ predecessors, the Minutemen. The Engineers had a history of distinguishing themselves from ‘traditional’ restrictionist border groups. For instance, in 2005, just as the Minutemen Project was being launched in Tombstone, AZ, the Engineers set up thermal cameras near the border. Because all these cameras could be operated over the internet, they dubbed the volunteers who operated them the ‘millisecond men’ and named the whole project ‘operation virtual vigilance.’ The labels they chose suggest how they cast their work as the technologically sophisticated foil to traditional forms of nativist activism on the border.

As they distanced themselves from groups like the Soldiers, the Engineers increasingly associated themselves with the more ‘serious’ border security industry. Likewise, this self-positioning meant that the group saw security and defense contractors as its partners and competitors. This became particularly evident when I was chatting with Dale and Connor in front of the workroom one day. Phil drove up and, by way of greeting, joked that Dale and Connor should be careful not to divulge too much information about what the group was working on because I might be a spy for General Dynamics, an aerospace and defense company.

The Engineers’ main way of associating with other techies concerned with border management was by attending ‘border security’ conferences. In these conferences, ‘white collar boundary builders’ (Miller 2014: 58) assembled to peddle their wares and discuss matters of border enforcement. At these settings, the Engineers rubbed shoulders with defense contractors, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders. And as they did so, the Engineers began marketing their latest product, sensor-based system of surveillance.

At one conference session, Phil, presenting himself as a ‘border expert,’ explained the problem with border enforcement, and then discussed how his group’s sensors could address this

problem. He explained how, currently, the Department of Homeland Security assesses the security of the border on the basis of one set of numbers—apprehensions at a given time. Phil argued that that number should constitute only the numerator of the correct measure of apprehension; what DHS also needed, he argued, was the ‘denominator,’ or the actual number of people making unauthorized entry. Without this crucial number, he insisted that it was impossible for the federal government to make any accurate claims about ‘operational control.’ In addition to making the border apprehension rate more calculable, he argued that the Engineers’ sensor-based system could provide real-time information about where unauthorized entries took place, so that enforcement resources could be mobilized in more targeted ways. At another conference several months later, the Engineers exhibited their system and claimed that it provided the only way to have ‘seamless coverage of the entire border.’

Becoming DHS’s Border Security Consultants

As mentioned earlier, the Soldiers went on documentation patrols to be the extra eyes and ears for the Border Patrol. Although the Engineers were also interested in extending the reach of the state, the group believed that the agency’s methods of detection and apprehension had to be completely revamped. For this reason, the Engineers turned to creating a new boundary, one that relied on a surveillance system that was more comprehensive than what the government had. As one Engineer put it, the question that drove the border watch group’s work was this: ‘How do we know *everything* that’s coming across the border?’ To answer this question, the Engineers embarked on an iterative process of dismantling, reassembling, and testing technologies that they hoped would let them acquire comprehensive information about the border region. By developing this new system, the Engineers hoped to become a contractor and consultant for the Department of Homeland Security.

In their very first project, they mounted a satellite internet video onto an all-terrain vehicle, hoping that it would enable ‘mobile coverage’ of a local piece of the border. They reasoned that even if the coverage were only of a small area, it could still have a significant impact when streamed in real-time over the internet. Multiple computer users—including those far from the U.S.-Mexico border—could install a software program that the Engineers had developed. This program would run in the backgrounds of their computers, and if the mobile system ‘detected’ anything out of the ordinary, an alert would appear on the taskbar; it would be sufficient for just one user then to pick up the phone and contact immigration authorities in Arizona in order to initiate action. The system would not only allow concerned citizens to monitor the border from the comfort of their homes, wherever they might be, but would address the problem of human error: even if one user missed the alert, another would see it.

The mobile system frequently broke down, however. The harsh weather conditions and rough terrain were formidable obstacles. But by 2003, the Engineers re-embarked on the quest for mobile surveillance: this time they acquired an unmanned aerial vehicle and mounted it with a system to send live video feed over cable networks. By the following year, they had made their drone night-vision capable as well. They gave up on the venture only when the Federal Aviation Administration forced them to ground their drone. Despite being forced to halt their project, they saw the experience as a success, and claimed that it was through their efforts that the DHS had finally been ‘shamed’ into using drones at the border.

The technology approach always served as the backbone of the Engineers' work, but the group was not content to use sophisticated devices simply to apprehend unauthorized crossers. They sought systematicity, which required the development of technologies that could be used to count, measure, and classify. As discussed earlier, the group had used a lightweight manned aircraft that had been fitted with a camera to record and study the Border Patrol's practices. In 2009, the Engineers embarked on a grander effort to 'document' the border. This time, a crew flew over all nine of the Border Patrol Sectors that spanned the U.S.-Mexico border. They noted where fences were located and what types they were. After assembling the information into maps, the group concluded that the DHS claimed that the border was much more fortified than it in fact was.

At the time of my fieldwork, the group was trying to work out other ways to measure and assess the government's existing efforts at border enforcement. They launched another project in hopes of determining, for a given area of the border, how many people in total crossed on any given day. An infrared camera, fitted with a special lens, was fashioned into a detector. This camera had an adequate range of a few hundred feet; the Engineers envisioned such detectors eventually being installed along the entire length of the border. However, one serious drawback of the camera was that the slightest movement—human or nonhuman— would set it off. Phil recalled the group's first decision to find an alternative:

We were sitting there a little frustrated. Connor [another Engineer] was saying, 'That darned [infrared detector]. It's the ground sensors that make more sense.' So, I contacted a seismic exploration company in Texas. [Afterwards], we decided to install a half-mile of seismic equipment on the ranch here. [...] We put these together with all our electronics, and it was picking people up regularly at 600 feet. And that's because we were taking twelve sensors and joining them all, adding their signals together [...] like an antenna. But you couldn't tell within 240 feet where they were crossing, but you knew they were coming this way. But we installed that, and began testing it.

The new sensor system's intent was to produce real-time, intelligible information about the borderlands. It consisted of ground sensors connected to solar-powered seismographs that digitized signals for computers; the computers, in turn, were supposed to help distinguish between 'threatening' and 'nonthreatening' movement. Then, depending on what had triggered the signal, mini-drones stationed nearby would be dispatched to film the area in question. What proved to be a bottleneck was developing the software to analyze the signals in real time.

At 600 feet, it takes over two minutes to walk up to the line [boundary]; so we can grab data thirty seconds at a time, which gives us the time to analyze it and see [whether] this is a person [or a] horse, or whatever. One of the problems with the little sensor at thirty feet is that you don't have very much time to analyze the signal. [What is giving off the signal] is here and then it's gone.

The group contacted a firm that had created software which enabled live access to data collected from sensors. The Engineers also began developing additional software that could recognize what was being detected. They created an algorithm based on the contrast between how people and animals walked: while animals placed their feet down, humans dropped their weight onto

their feet. While a group of humans walking together would multiply the frequency of the signal and therefore muddy it, the data produced would nonetheless create a unique signature and raise red flags.

After installing the new sensor system on the ranch, the Engineers conducted ‘live demonstrations’ to publicize their work. For instance, the opening of Chapter One described how Dale simulated a crosser by walking through the Engineers’ ranch. As he did so, the sensor system was activated and Dale’s location was immediately recorded. In Phoenix, meanwhile, another Engineer projected a map onto the screen in the Arizona State Legislature showing Dale location and the direction he was moving. In another similar demonstration, the Engineers invited a group to their ranch. Among the attendees were a state senator, two prominent ranchers, other local supporters of the group and a handful of journalists. In addition to Connor, the main hosts of the event included experts in seismic data and digital signal processing. An Engineer flew an ultralight aircraft over the border, triggering the sensors and sounding a loud alarm. Later, a group of volunteers, as mock ‘illegal aliens,’ walked northward on the ranch. When the sensors detected the group’s footsteps, an alarm again sounded and the Engineers’ drone prototype automatically flew over to the area where the mock crossers were, feeding live footage back to a computer. This live demonstration, the Engineers hoped, would help spread the word about the group’s alternative border surveillance system.

While they engaged in nativist activism differently than the Arpaiositos or the Soldiers, the Engineers were nonetheless also involved in a state-building endeavor. Rather than partnering with the Border Patrol in order to defend a local site as the Soldiers and the Arpaiositos did, the Engineers wanted to revamp the agency’s enforcement methods along the entire border. To work out a better ‘solution’ to the ‘border problem,’ the Engineers studied the agency, devised new systems of surveillance by drawing on interdisciplinary fields of knowledge, and tested out the new technologies that they developed on the ranch. The group’s point of entry to the state was through the growing ‘border security industrial complex’ (Miller 2014: 27): the Engineers exhibited their work at border security conferences, reinforcing their belief that members were ‘techies’ and ‘border experts.’ The Engineers hoped that, by bringing public attention to the absence of systematic border surveillance, they could eventually convince the state to use the systems they had developed.

Conclusion

This chapter’s ethnographic comparison illustrates that nativist groups acted on the conviction that the state was a weak policing body. In response to this weak-state effect, each organization then worked on constructing a relationship with the state. Ultimately, each group hoped to improve the state’s ability to ‘see’ and therefore more effectively manage the problem of immigration (Scott 1998).

The Arpaiositos, for instance, wanted to ensure that the state could depend on local groups and institutions in society for immigration control. Towards that end, the Arpaiositos started out as volunteers with a law enforcement agency that had been deputized with the powers of immigration control. Later, as the MCSO came under increased scrutiny, the group publicly defended the Sheriff and his office, under the strong conviction that local authorities should participate in immigration control. Meanwhile, the Soldiers and the Engineers worked on extending the state’s reach. The Soldiers became the Border Patrol’s civilian extension: they

patrolled the border in order to conduct reconnaissance on behalf of the agency. The Engineers, by contrast, did not work directly with the agency. Instead, they hoped to restructure the Border Patrol by becoming a contractor for the DHS. Thus, restrictionist activism was geared towards localizing and expanding the state's gaze. That all three groups were tolerated and even welcomed by several state actors suggests that state-building rather than 'vigilantism' more accurately characterized the nature of their activism.

To understand grassroots nativism as a state-strengthening endeavor requires us to recognize that these organizations were not operating in a political void. *Each group took advantage of the 'niche-openings' created by the state* (Nicholls 2014) although we should not assume that these niche-openings would *inevitably* attract activism. The Arpaiositos, for instance, were unnerved that the federal government was trying to reverse localized immigration control—an arrangement that federal authorities had initiated. Similarly, the Engineers saw an opening for their work as the mushrooming border security industry fostered opportunities for public-private partnerships. The Engineers joined the ranks of other 'white collar border builders' at expos and university tech parks to fill the profitable niches created by the privatization of immigration and border control. The Soldiers, meanwhile, boasted not only of the protection that they believed they provided for border ranchers like Laura and Jack. The group was also proud of the ties that they had cultivated with Border Patrol field agents. Thus, in each of the three cases highlighted in this chapter, nativist activism took advantage of state-created opportunities. Its state niche-filling nature is precisely why contemporary restrictionism in the U.S. exemplifies the 'now you see it, now you don't' variety of racism (Bonilla Silva 2010). The weak-state effect motivated a type of collective action that took place in the legitimate center rather than on the margins and was dedicated to institution-building.³³

Furthermore, by illustrating how grassroots restrictionism took on forms that served as a direct foil to pro-immigrant activism, this chapter continues to illustrate the theoretical fruitfulness of a field approach to immigration politics. Like the Advocates, the Arpaiositos trained their focus not on federal government agencies, but on institutions in civil society—specifically, local authorities. What role police and sheriff's departments played in immigration control was highly contested. From the pro-immigrant group's perspective, the MCSO, in particular, represented how restrictionist Phoenix had become. The Advocates and their allies feared that it was only a matter of time before local authorities in Tucson followed suit. Fearing this scenario, the Advocates put public pressure on city police to sever its ties with ICE.

The Arpaiositos, meanwhile, were troubled by the possibility of the opposite scenario. They worried that Phoenix would become a de facto 'sanctuary city' like Tucson and MCSO would be forced out of its partner role in immigration control. The Arpaiositos thus strived to protect the MCSO from negative publicity. As the Advocates gathered to protest in front of the police department, the Arpaiositos convened in front of organizations that were seeking to oust Arpaio from office and put constraints on what MCSO deputies were allowed to do. The

³³Bonilla-Silva (2010) argues that because of its subtle nature, new racism is hard to detect through surveys on racial attitudes. For this reason, he uses interview-based research to uncover the main frames that define colorblind racism. This dissertation suggests that ethnography is also an excellent tool for studying racial ideology because it provides a way for a researcher to see how respondents link their conceptions of the social world to everyday practices. In particular, this study uncovers one mechanism—cooperation with state actors in order to strengthen the state's right hand—by which the racist nature of contemporary restrictionism can be rendered invisible.

question of where to draw the boundary between civil society and the state was what motivated the activism of these competing groups.

Meanwhile, the Humanitarians, the Soldiers, and the Engineers fought over the scope and reach of the state. On the surface, both the Humanitarians and the Soldiers hiked deep into the desert in search of migrant routes. Both groups often referred to their work as ‘search and rescue’. But the meanings ascribed to these practices contrasted sharply depending on whether the group experienced the strong-state or the weak-state effect. The Humanitarians saw the desert as a space in which the state exercised unchecked power through a punitive system of enforcement that victimized people. It was a key terrain of Nazification. As a ‘humanitarian’ presence in the desert, therefore, the group tried to mitigate the consequences of the Border Patrol’s practices. By contrast, the Soldiers went into the desert out of a conviction that the Border Patrol needed the help of concerned civilians. The civilian border group tried to undo the exposure of the American borderlands to Mexico.

Similarly, the Humanitarians and the Engineers both scrutinized the Border Patrol’s methods of detection; however, their reasons for doing so diverged radically. Seeing the Border Patrol as an oppressive force, the Humanitarians observed the agency to report on how state power had abusive consequences. By doing so, the group strived to shift the public understanding of immigration enforcement—from a morally neutral requirement of national sovereignty to egregious violation of human rights. The Engineers also watched the Border Patrol closely. Despite being restrictionist in their ideological outlook, the Engineers, also, had a tense relationship with the agency. However, while the Humanitarians did not hide their deep hostility towards the agency, the Engineers navigated this tense relationship cautiously. At every public opportunity, the Engineers argued that they were simply using their technical expertise to solve the agency’s structural problems in order to improve detection and apprehension methods. The Soldiers did not watch the Border Patrol in the same way that the Humanitarians or the Engineers did. Rather, they watched the border on behalf of the agency. They used their collaborative relationship with the agency as a way to morally distinguish themselves from other groups. Ultimately, however, like the Engineers, theirs was a project to make the state more potent.

What if we were to look beyond the world of the Engineers, Arpaiositos, Soldiers, Advocates, and Humanitarians? What light can the theoretical framework of strong and weak-state effects shed on other parts of social life? The next chapter addresses this question. I suggest that perhaps the state-effect lens can be a useful tool for understanding populism.

Chapter 6

Populism as Local Politics

Over the past few months, the term “populism” has surfaced again and again in the coverage of the U.S. presidential race. Commentators have breathlessly discussed whether the unexpected rise of presidential candidates Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders should be chalked up to populism (Chotiner 2016; Brooks and Collins 2016; Lind 2016). Analysts on the Left have questioned the accuracy of labeling Trumpism and Sandersism as variations of the same populist phenomenon (Kazin 2016; Perlstein 2016) while on the Right, conservative intellectuals have wondered how the popular support for Trump could be made into a truly “conservative” populism (Ponnuru and Lowry 2016) or “enlightened Republican populism” (Bauer 2015). Meanwhile, others have revived the qualifier, *authoritarian* populism, coined by Stuart Hall in relation to Thatcherism, to try and distinguish Trump’s popular following from that of his opponent (Mudde 2015; Norris 2016). This flurry of discussion should prompt political sociologists to ask: what exactly is populism and how might we study this phenomenon?

Using broad brush strokes, this chapter begins to address these questions by analyzing how two key figures in mainstream American political sociology – Seymour Martin Lipset and Theda Skocpol – have contended with the topic of populism and how, given the findings of this study, we can push the sociology of populism forward.

Specifically, I consider Lipset’s (1983 [1959]) discussion of ‘working class authoritarianism’ in *Political Man* alongside Skocpol and Williamson’s (2012) analysis of the Tea Party. Arguably, the works of Lipset and Skocpol and Williamson represent two poles in the political sociology of popular mobilization. Put simply, Lipset’s understanding of a stable democracy as the *absence* of ‘extremist’ parties and extra-electoral mobilization, leads him to characterize populism as irrational expressions of working class authoritarianism. By contrast, Skocpol and Williamson attribute a coherent worldview to the Tea Party movement and as such, provide an important corrective to Lipset’s discussion of populism. However, in Skocpol’s state-centered framework, this ideological coherence or ‘rationality’ has to do primarily with the way in which Tea Party politics is driven from above. Taken together, Lipset and Skocpol/Williamson provide two equally unsatisfactory readings of populism, as either irrationality *tout court*, or as rationality inscribed from above.

To find a way to move beyond these two poles, I turn to Gillian Hart’s (2013a, 2013b) incisive critique of Ernesto Laclau. I argue that Hart’s commentary about Laclau’s (2007) analysis of populism is instructive and it can be extended to the Skocpolian take on the Tea Party as well. Echoing Hart, I argue that rather than interpellation from above, populism should be understood as a local politics in which participants negotiate official discourses and practices with their own lived realities. The concepts that I propose in this dissertation – the strong and weak-state effects – serve as one set of tools to analyze populism as local politics. That is, examining social groups’ assessments of state power, within a particular structural context, can provide a way to understand mobilizations in the name of the ‘people’. (Table 6.1 summarizes the argument that is laid out in the rest of the chapter.)

TABLE 6.1: CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF POPULISM

	SITE OF POLITICS	WHAT IS THE NATURE OF POPULISM?
LIPSET	Society and state, but especially society	Populism is an irrational expression of working class authoritarianism. It lacks a coherent worldview.
SKOCPOL & WILLIAMSON	State	Populism is neither irrational nor ideologically incoherent. But its coherence is the product of interpellation from above.
HART	Locality (in a global context)	Populism is a local struggle over conditions of life. Participants of populism have negotiated worldviews.

* * *

Populism as Working-Class Irrationality: Lipset

A largely society-centered analysis of politics, *Political Man* discusses the conditions that allow for a stable democracy, and specifically, the relationship between social stratification and democracy. According to Lipset, the primary attribute of a stable democracy is a balance between conflict and consensus. This balance is fragile: ‘extremist parties’ and extra-electoral mobilization for extremist causes jeopardize democracy. The main force behind this anti-democratic extremism is the working class, even though this stratum has not always assumed this role. Prior to 1914, “the workers...were often the backbone of the fight for greater political democracy” (1983[1959]: 89). However, in the era following the First World War, “working-class groups have proved to be the most nationalistic sector of the population” taking up the vanguard of “the struggle against equal rights for minority groups” and “limit[ing] immigration” (89). The working class, according to Lipset, is simultaneously the group that has the most to gain from democracy as well as the agent that most threatens the viability of such a political system.

In short, the working classes today have a propensity towards authoritarianism and intolerance. Lipset lists a number of attributes that predispose the lower strata to extremism: low education (1983: 102), apoliticism and lack of interest in voting (102), cultural, spatial, and occupational isolation from the middle-class mainstream (104), economic insecurity (106), and exposure to punishment during childhood (107). Out of these circumstances emerges a series of interconnected predispositions rather than a coherent worldview. Among these predispositions are:

“a tendency to view politics and personal relationships in black-and-white terms, a desire for immediate action, an impatience with talk and discussion, a lack of interest in organizations which have a long-range perspective, and a readiness to follow leaders who

offer a demonological interpretation of the evil forces (either religious or political) which are conspiring against him” (115).

Within this framework, populism is one such expression of authoritarianism and intolerance among the working classes. It is a rejection of moderation and complexity in favor of extremism and simplicity. In sum, populism is animated by a desire for “easy and quick solutions to social problems” (90).

Ironically, however, populism exacerbates these social problems. As an expression of extremism, it stands in the way of the very thing that could alleviate societal ills—namely, a stable democracy. Although Lipset believes that stratification is an inherent feature of all complex societies, democracy is the only political system that can provide the underprivileged with the resources to mitigate the oppressive conditions that they face (xxii-xxiii). Thus, populism is inimical to the “good society” (439).

Populism From Above: Skocpol and Williamson

The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism provides a very different model of how political sociology has contended with populism. Several distinctions immediately stand out. While Lipset is largely concerned with leftist populist extremism among the working classes³⁴, Skocpol and Williamson examine an instance of rightwing populism, whose participants are largely well-educated and well-off (2012: 23-4). Moreover, Lipset’s desire to understand populism is driven by the conviction that any form of extremism is irreconcilable with stable democracy. Meanwhile, Skocpol and Williamson cannot help but “admire” and “applaud” the participatory civic engagement of grassroots Tea Partiers, albeit with some reluctance (2012: 200).

Most importantly, rather than dismissing it as an irrational phenomenon, Skocpol and Williamson take the ideological content of the Tea Party seriously. The book’s second chapter is dedicated to explicating “what [Tea Partiers] believe.” Indeed, the authors write that “it is rarely helpful for analysts simply to denigrate the intelligence or autonomy of citizens who believe one false thing or another” (12). They find that Tea Party activists show an earnest desire in restoring the government back to the principles that they believe were articulated by the Founding Fathers (48-52). Towards this end, grassroots Tea Partiers spend a lot of time studying the constitution, sustained by the belief that its meanings are clear-cut and true across time. A return to the founding principles, Tea Partiers believe, entails getting rid of ‘big government’ regulation of business. What the government should do, instead, is police immigrants, ‘freeloaders,’ and nonwhite groups that are thought to be the harbingers of undesirable change. Taken together, the scenario that Tea Partiers fear is of a ballooning deficit, exacerbated by out-of-control social spending on behalf of undeserving groups, culminating in the country’s collapse (77).

With this kind of analysis, Skocpol and Williamson offer an important corrective to Lipset’s discussion of populism. In both *Political Man* and *The Tea Party*, the authors note that intolerance – particularly, towards immigrants and ethnoracial minorities – is a significant

³⁴ While anti-democratic extremism can assume leftist, rightist and centrist forms, the social strata that seems to have the most affinity to authoritarianism, according to Lipset, is the working class. The particular kind of extremism that working class people are most associated with is leftist – specifically, communism and Peronism.

feature of populism. However, while Lipset understands this intolerance as the very thing that makes populism irrational, Skocpol and Williamson place this xenophobia and racism within a larger, internally-cohesive worldview. Moreover, Tea Party activists' fears about swelling deficit is grounded in kernels of good sense: "there is real-world basis for worrying about the U.S. fiscal situation," they write, and "worries about national debt...refer to real problems," albeit "magnif[ied] out of all proportion (2012: 76). Grassroots Tea Party activism grows out of participants' authentic observations and experiences of the social world.

This openness to examining Tea Party activism may, in part, have to do with the distinct definitions that Lipset and Skocpol have of a thriving democracy. For Lipset, populism exacerbates cleavages and therefore threatens the integrative features of democracy. Within such a schema, arguably, it does not matter what the specific ideological content of an extremist movement is; what matters is that its adherents have patterned socioeconomic characteristics across countries. However, when civic engagement is taken to be the fundamental building block of American democracy (Skocpol 2003), populism assumes a different significance. Nonetheless, Skocpol and Williamson find themselves at a loss on the question of the relationship between democracy and Tea Party activism, only turning to it in the last eight pages of the book. "What is the normative bottom line for the Tea Party as a force in American democracy?" they ask (Skocpol and Williamson 2012: 197). "Our heads are left spinning," they conclude. Tea Party activism paradoxically "marries participatory engagement and considerable learning about the workings of government with factually ungrounded beliefs about the content of policies" (2012: 200). At the same time, Tea Party activism combines "generous, tolerant interaction within the group" with "an almost total lack of empathy or sympathy for fellow Americans beyond the group" (200).

To get out of this normative and analytic bind, Skocpol and Williamson make sense of the most intolerant aspects of Tea Party ideology in terms of manipulation from above. In the final section of the book's concluding chapter, appositely entitled "bottom line," the authors state that "the more pathological aspects of Tea Party activism³⁵ are arguably fueled by the content of right-wing media programming, above all the putative news delivered on Fox television...Fox News makes viewers both more conservative and less informed" (201). Ostensibly, this claim stands in tension with the argument in the book's opening pages, where Skocpol and Williamson emphasize that "the Tea Party is neither a top-down creation nor a bottom-up explosion" but rather the product of three "intertwined forces" consisting of "grassroots activists, roving billionaire advocates, and right-wing media purveyors" (12-13). However, given Skocpol's state-centered scholarship over the years (Skocpol 1985; 1995) and her contention that democracy has 'diminished' as professionally-managed advocacy groups colonize the civic universe (Skocpol 2003), it is not surprising that the media and billionaire-backed advocacy organizations take on a particular explanatory significance that grassroots activism does not in "the remaking of Republican conservatism."

The problems with the Skocpolian approach to populism are perhaps better explicated by a domain outside of political sociology. Specifically, Gillian Hart's (2013a, 2013b) critique of Ernesto Laclau's *On Populist Reason* may serve as a fruitful starting point for understanding what is missing in the mainstream sociology of populism.

³⁵ It is not entirely clear which aspects the authors consider to be "more pathological."

Moving Away from “The Manipulated Mindless Masses” Model of Populism

In a manner similar to Skocpol, Laclau (2007) also worries that the political Left has been quick to “either dismiss or downgrade [populism] as a political phenomenon” (67). Populism has been written off as “marginality, transitoriness, pure rhetoric, vagueness, manipulation” (63). The irony, Laclau argues, is that the dismissal of populism is basically the dismissal of politics itself. After all, “populism is the royal road to understanding something about the ontological constitution of the political as such” (67). The study of the political *requires* the study of populism.

What then is populism as a political logic? For Laclau, the key feature of popular mobilization is the drive for an “unattainable fullness [of community]” (Hart 2013b: 305). Importing the Lacanian concept of *objet petit a* or the ‘unattainable object of desire’, Laclau argues that populism and “the need to constitute a ‘people’” emerges only when the “social fullness” of community is not achieved (2007: 116). That fullness, however, “will always evade us because it is purely mythical” (116). Or put differently, populism is a “hegemonic” moment during which “a partiality” (or one demand among many or one group interest among many) “assumes the representation of a mythical totality” (116). To be sure, Laclau writes, the attachment to a partial object—or more plainly, the self-identification and mobilization of a group as ‘the people’—is “not ersatz” (116). It is the very stuff of mobilization, “the rallying point of passionate attachments” (116). However, populism is always motivated by the drive for something that is ultimately mythical and therefore unattainable.

Hart argues that this kind of analysis assumes “a split between those who recognize that any fullness of community is purely mythical, and the mystified ‘people’ who launch the populist challenge” (2012: 306). In other words, Laclau’s discussion collapses back into the “manipulated mindless masses model” of populism (Hart 2012: 306). That is, despite his best efforts, Laclau’s reading of populism reverts to an Althusserian conception of social action: all social agents are the products of ideology and interpellation from above. Only the theoretician is able to see through these false representations of the world. Participants of populism, by definition, lack the wherewithal to recognize the unattainability of what they want as ‘the people.’

Skocpol and Williamson’s analysis also frequently slips into an account of Tea Party activism as ‘interpellation from above.’ Beyond the chapter that outlines “what they believe,” the rest of the book is a discussion of how billionaire-backed, ultraconservative organizations, with the help of the conservative news media, successfully harnessed and directed Tea Party grassroots energy to push the Republican Party to the Right. The micro-mechanisms of this process read like an Althusserian story of interpellation by powerful ideological institutions. For example, one way that conservative elites steered grassroots activism was through “ideological organizations like Americans for Prosperity,” which circulated their ideas by providing local Tea Party groups with speakers and a “constant flow of programming” (Skocpol and Williamson 2012: 113-4). In fact, the authors suggest, organizations like Americans for Prosperity were what gave the Tea Partiers the ideological coherence to become a potent force. “These outside speakers, we think, are one way for politically consequential idea...to circulate among local Tea Parties” (115). Meanwhile, Fox News gave initially-reluctant Tea Partiers the courage to attend rallies: “To go to an angry political protest may have seemed out of character for most of them [grassroots activists] until it was framed as an opportunity to ‘celebrate with Fox News’” (133).

Overall, this kind of analysis easily lends itself to the conclusion that a panoply of institutions and forces inscribed their ideas onto the *tabula rasa* of grassroots Tea Party activists.

What is the alternative to this kind of reading of populism as interpellation from above? Here, Gillian Hart's work is once again instructive. What an analyst must consider are the "interconnections between populist politics 'from above' and popular understandings arising from the social and material conditions of everyday life" (Hart 2013a: 197). In her own work, Hart (2013b) considers a local site – the local government engaged in the delivery of scarce services – in a country (post-Apartheid South Africa) that is simultaneously experiencing the contradictory processes of 'denationalization' (basically, neoliberal globalization) and 'renationalization' (bordering). Populism, then, is an ongoing negotiation between official articulations and the lived experiences of people on the ground, within a particular—often contradictory—structural context. The concepts of strong and weak-state effects can serve as tools for analyzing exactly this kind of negotiation.

Populism as Local Politics

This dissertation suggests one way that political sociology can make sense of populism without having to dismiss it as an expression of irrational mass psychology or as rationality that is inherited from above. Instead, *populism should be understood as local politics*. Within these localized political struggles, participants *negotiate* the meanings of official discourses and practices with their own lived realities. Moreover, conceptualizing populism as local politics prompts us to analyze it as a *relational* phenomenon. Specifically, the framework of strong and weak-state effects offers one way in which populism can be analyzed as a local political struggle in this manner.

In this study, I illustrated how the lens of strong and weak-state effect helped to theoretically bridge on-the-ground micro processes with macro-level structures. I argued that activists were operating within a contradictory structural context, (which can also be understood in terms of simultaneous processes of denationalization and renationalization, *a la* Hart). There was a significant undocumented population despite border buildup and localized enforcement despite federal preemption. These contradictory circumstances lent themselves to divergent assessments of state power.

The strong-state effect motivated pro-immigrant organizations to confine the state's scope and increase groups' ability to resist the state. The particular way in which pro-immigrant activists narrated the strong-state effect was with a story about how America was degenerating into a fascist country. Meanwhile, an opposing strategy grew out of the weak-state effect: restrictionist activists strived to expand the state's reach and enhance society's ability to help the state. Restrictionists discursively narrated what they were doing as an effort to prevent the Mexicanization of the country. Taken together, I found that grassroots immigration politics unfolded in a highly patterned way: it was a struggle over how to change the scope and power of the state, understood primarily as a repressive force. If we were to dispense with the lens of state effect, a specific tactic would appear only loosely connected to the rest of an organization's strategic repertoire. Similarly, in the absence of the state effect lens, an activist's narrative about what he or she is doing would seem rational but hard to theorize (consider, for instance, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo's descriptive discussion of the religiousness of pro-immigrant ideas) or cohesive but pathological (take Douglas Massey's analysis of grassroots restrictionism). Thus,

the framework of state effect illuminates how activists negotiate contradictory macro-level structures.

At the same time, the state-effect lens is a tool that helps us see how tactics and worldviews are *oppositional* and referential across political lines. That is, this framework prods us to look beyond the bounds of a particular organization and consider the field of social relations in which it is embedded. In this study, the sociological significance of an organization's discourses and actions became clearer when they were conceptualized as efforts to counteract the opposition and complement allied groups. As such, the framework of state effects – and the relationality it suggests – helps move us away from a Putnamian fixation on the scale of civic engagement, towards a more nuanced, Gramscian reading of civil society as a space in which people like Renee and Dale struggle to curtail or extend the state's power.

Methodological Appendix

In what follows, I describe how I approached my research and case selection, the characteristics of the activists that I met, the difficulties that arose during my research, and the ways in which I tried to overcome these challenges.

Case Selection and the Study of a Field

While I began this study through contact with one organization—the Humanitarians—the initial data that I collected organically led me towards a relational ethnography of the field. As I mentioned in Chapter One, I happened to meet an eager Humanitarian when I was in Mexico, and she invited me to come out to Arizona to meet her organization and learn more about local immigration politics. Not long after I became acquainted with the group, however, I realized that there were a lot of gaps in my understanding of what was going on. Indeed, in interviews and informal conversations, many Humanitarians described their own work as *complementing* the work that other local pro-immigrant groups were engaged in. These kinds of comments suggested that just to understand the Humanitarians, I needed to consider other types of pro-immigrant mobilization. At the same time, the Humanitarians' abundant references to 'anti-immigrant people,' 'vigilantes' and the 'Minutemen' caught my attention. It indicated that the grassroots opposition constituted another set of actors to which I had to attend if I wanted to understand the Humanitarians. My initial respondents were literally telling me that I needed to treat immigration politics as a field of social relations.

I settled on the Advocates after carefully considering other likeminded local groups. Specifically, seven other pro-immigrant groups, all 501(c) organizations, came up over and over again in my discussions with the Humanitarians. I followed up on these seven organizations: I interviewed their leaders and I attended two or more meetings or events that they organized. Among them, I selected the Advocates because they were the most unlike the Humanitarians. The Humanitarians effectively provided a one-time service to migrants during their passage across the border. The group ventured into Arizona's Sonoran Desert with the express purpose of putting out water and other aid supplies. Meanwhile, the Advocates cultivated more long-term relationships with undocumented communities in urban settings. Their primary activities included trainings, workshops, and the creation of protection networks. The Humanitarians and the Advocates constituted two poles of local pro-immigrant mobilization and the remaining six organizations fell somewhere in between these poles.

It is more difficult to enumerate the universe of local restrictionist organizations for three reasons. First, many restrictionist groups do not have a clear web presence and are invisible to outsiders. This invisibility may be a strategic response to the negative publicity that the Minutemen movement has garnered over the years (which is explained in more detail below). Second, groups that do have a lot of online presence do not necessarily engage in collective activity offline. For instance, I tracked down a group that had a very active blog. The blog was run by an outspoken local restrictionist figure and it was probably for this reason that the Southern Poverty Law Center had listed the group as a key 'hate organization' in Arizona. However, when I dug deeper, I learned that members of this group rarely met each other in real

life. Instead, they preferred to confine their interactions exclusively to the online world: they posted comments, shared links, and advertised events organized by other groups. It is not clear whether an online group like this one should be included in the universe of local restrictionist organizations.

There is also a third reason that it is hard to determine the population of local restrictionist organizations. The landscape of local restrictionist activity is fragmented and scrappy. That is, grassroots restrictionist activity does not assume an *organizational* form. Sometimes, such activity is undertaken by a sole individual or by two friends. For instance, when a rancher found out I was interested in studying restrictionist groups, he put me in touch with a retired DEA agent, Gus, who, along with a retired Border Patrol agent, conducted surveillance at the border a few times a week. Using their old law enforcement connections, the two men set up an informal system whereby they could get in touch with locally-based Border Patrol field agents directly, if they ever encountered a crosser. Eventually, the former Border Patrol agent stopped participating because he found the endeavor too physically taxing and Gus continued to do this work by himself. Gus never sought out another partner. Although the duo effectively did the same kind of work as the Soldiers, Gus and his friend did not try to recruit others into their group, even when one of them quit. Nor did they solicit donations in the manner that a formal organization might. Thus, groups that were not formal organizations were also part of the local restrictionist landscape, complicating the task of enumerating all the restrictionist actors in the field.

I selected the three restrictionist groups based on “points of contact and conflict” (Desmond 2014: 555). While the Humanitarians did not know specific Minutemen-like groups by name, the pro-immigrant organization had encountered restrictionist activists in the desert. For this reason, I assumed that there were still active border watch groups in the desert. Through a listserv that I had joined at a Tea Party meeting, I came across a link to the Soldiers’ website. I quickly learned that the Soldiers were quite active offline too, particularly in the desert. In the meantime, I learned about the Engineers through the Advocates. A member of the Advocates had had several heated, public debates with a member of the Engineers. Moreover, the Soldiers and the Engineers also knew of each other and had tried to collaborate a few times. However, as Chapter Five describes, the groups were critical of each other and defined themselves against each other. Finally, I learned about the Arpaiositos through the Advocates and the Humanitarians. A few members of the Advocates and the Humanitarians had traveled to Phoenix to participate in the furniture store protests in 2006, which are described in Chapter Five. There, they encountered counter-protestors who later formed the Arpaiositos. Moreover, during my fieldwork, the Advocates traveled to Phoenix for protests or marches, and during these events, they also encountered members of the Arpaiositos. Thus, contact and conflict points guided my case selection.

Characteristics of the Activists

Using interviewee sampling and ethnographic observation as guideposts, I found a marked demographic difference between the two sides. The majority of restrictionist activists were white men and the median age in this group was 63 years. Pro-immigrant activists were an equal mix of men and women, as well as a roughly equal mix of white and non-white members.

Interviews with pro-immigrant respondents revealed a median age of 40 years.³⁶ Pro-immigrant organizations consisted of young adults in their 20s and 30s, on the one hand, and those nearing retirement age, on the other.

I also found that there was patterned difference across the two sides in terms of areas of employment: activists' occupations (or former occupations) can be typologized using the Bourdieusian distinction between the Left and Right hands of the state. Street-level bureaucrats of welfare agencies or 'social workers' (in the broad sense of the term) constitute the Left hand (Bourdieu 1999). Meanwhile, the state's right hand is made up of the institutions of coercion – most notably, the police, the courts and the prisons (Wacquant 2009). In this study, most pro-immigrant activists were employed or had retired from jobs associated with the (feminine) Left hand of the state. By contrast, restrictionist activists occupied or had retired from positions typically associated with the (masculine) right hand of the state.

Pro-immigrant activists reported that they were or used to be teachers, public university lecturers, nurses and nurses' aides, emergency medical technicians, public defenders or working in public defenders' offices, social workers, and counselors. Others were not directly employed by the state, but held or had held jobs that were related to social protection: nongovernmental organizations providing healthcare or legal aid, school teachers, day care workers, and private university instructors. Moreover, as Hondagneu-Sotelo (2007; 2008) has noted, many pro-immigrant activists also had strong ties to or held leadership positions in religious institutions. Despite not being directly related to the state, arguably religious institutions are extensions of the Left hand because they step in to do the work of social protection.

Restrictionist activists, by contrast, had stronger ties to the right hand of the state. Among the Soldiers, many older members were Army and Air Force veterans, a finding that echoes other ethnographies of the Minutemen (Shapira 2013). A handful of members were former police officers and Border Patrol field agents, and another handful had family members who were or had retired from the Border Patrol. Across all three restrictionists groups, there were younger activists who had wanted to join law enforcement, but, for a number of reasons, were not successful and had to turn to other types of employment. In addition, prominent group members who had never been employed by the state had backgrounds in industries like engineering and computer technology that have become a core part of the penal state.

The Effects of My Positionality

As a 20-something, dark-haired and dark-skinned woman with Turkish heritage, on the one hand, and a graduate student from University of California-Berkeley, on the other, I did not fit neatly into the predominant categories of the field and this shaped my access in unexpected ways. In Southern Arizona, the predominant ethnoracial categories are Latino and Anglo (white), and the majority of my respondents identified with one of these categories. Among restrictionist activists, I also stood out because of the intersection of my age, gender, and identity as a student. One instance that was particularly illustrative of my outsider status occurred at a meeting of the Soldiers. Before the meeting began, I seated myself next to an older, white, heavily-bearded gentleman who I had never met before. He extended his hand to introduce himself and then asked me if my husband was coming. The encounter suggested that a man—presumably also

³⁶ The demographic differences between the two movements echo the findings of other studies (see Shapira 2013).

similar in age to me and therefore younger than everyone else in the room—belonged in that setting more than I did.

This outsider status solicited three kinds of responses from restrictionist activists: a refusal to engage with me, paternalistic engagement with me (as the young, female student), and suspicious engagement with me (as the unknown other). First, some restrictionists simply did not want anything to do with me: they either ignored me or explicitly told me they did not want to speak with me. This flat-out refusal to speak with me only happened with the Soldiers, however, and I surmised that it, in part, had to do with how the group had evolved from its days as a chapter of the Minutemen. An important *raison d'être* for the original Minutemen organizations was to produce a media spectacle that would attract public attention to the U.S.-Mexico border. As scholars have documented, the Minutemen movement did just that (Chavez 2013). Indeed, when the world was first introduced to the movement in April of 2005 in Tombstone, Arizona, it was reported that journalists outnumbered actual Minutemen activists (Cooper 2005; Kelly 2005).

Over time, the Soldiers became its own organization as it evolved out of the Minutemen chapter. In this transition, the group also changed their standard operating procedures. As Chapter Five explained, the Soldiers sharply contrasted their more armed and proactive approach to the unarmed, lawn-chair-sitting and reactive strategy of their predecessors. This shift in organizational procedure also entailed a change in how the group interacted with the media and others (like graduate students) who reported on their activities. The Soldiers tried to move away from being merely a media spectacle. Instead, the group strived to fashion itself into a more 'professional' outfit, whose main goal was to collaborate with Border Patrol. At the same time, the negative publicity surrounding the Minutemen mounted, giving the Soldiers even more reason to distance themselves both from the movement and from the limelight. This negative publicity had largely to do with two developments: the murders of Raul Flores, Jr. and his 9-year old daughter, Brisenia Flores, by a group claiming to be affiliated with the Minutemen, and the infighting and scandals among movement leaders. Given these two developments, it was unsurprising that a number of Soldiers were highly reluctant to speak with me.

Many restrictionist activists, including Soldiers, did speak with me, however, and this access was facilitated in large part by masculine protectionism. As Chapter Three explained, restrictionist activists saw the state as failing to uphold its moral obligation to protect its citizenry from external threats. In response to this moral failing, the Soldiers strived to prop up the state by going into the desert and conducting reconnaissance on behalf of the Border Patrol. When I accompanied the Soldiers into the desert, such as the time I was with Rudy, I became the stand-in for the vulnerable and feminine nation. In other words, my physical presence made it easier for the Soldiers to imagine what they were trying to protect. Masculinist protectionism also informed how the other two restrictionist groups interacted with me. I was frequently likened to activists' daughters, granddaughters, nieces, and sons' girlfriends. In these situations, respondents felt they needed to take me under their wing to help me finish my 'school project' and to set me straight about the world's state of affairs.

Third, some restrictionist activists were initially suspicious of my intentions, but engaged me out of intrigue. My fieldnotes from a winter day in 2011 capture one such instance:

Don, who upon finding out I'm from UC Berkeley, says 'never in [his] wildest imagination, did [he] picture a Berkeley student out on patrols with us.' I feel

uncomfortable and don't know what to say. But I see Don trying to find a way to accommodate my presence, in his own way: 'at the very least,' he continues, 'you'll find what we're doing interesting even if we can't agree on anything else.' He then chats with me for another hour and eventually agrees to an interview.

In other similar instances, respondents would half-seriously, and sometimes very seriously, ask me whether I was a "mole." Depending on the rapport we had, I would joke back, while trying to explain my project as well as ask them to verbalize more of their suspicions. Albeit awkward and uncomfortable, these sorts of interactions also constituted valuable data, because they forced respondents to articulate their understandings of themselves and their sources of insecurity in the world. For instance, Alex the Arpaio who liked to take photos of his political foes and then post them online, shoved his camera in front of my face and took photos of me when I first met his group. As he was doing this, Valerie, another Arpaio asked me if I was a spy for 'the occupiers and the Parraz group.' She was referring to the young, black-clad members of Occupy Phoenix who had started becoming visible in anti-Arpaio events. 'Parraz group,' meanwhile, referred to Citizens for a Better Arizona, which had been founded by Randy Parraz. This moment revealed to me immediately who the Arpaios understood as their primary opponent. By contrast, the Engineers had a completely different conception of who 'Fidan the spy' worked for. As I explained in Chapter Five, the Engineers joked that I may be spying on them for General Dynamics, a defense contractor.

I enjoyed a far more welcoming atmosphere among pro-immigrant activists but I still had to contend with two barriers. First, some respondents—many of whom were white men and women in their 20s and 30s—were skeptical that my research could benefit their activism and did not want to be interviewed. Interestingly, I found that the skill sets I had gained from graduate school—the ability to research a complex topic and synthesize it quickly—was a huge asset for my ability to stay in the field. Week after week and month after month, state legislators proposed new bills, think tanks churned out new policy proposals, and media outlets of varying political stripes reported about the state of affairs at the U.S.-Mexico border. I kept track of all this information and I took it upon myself to provide periodic updates to my respondents. In time, I was asked to be more directly involved on the research aspect of their projects – like writing press releases, working on reports and so forth. This role of 'teacher-researcher', thus, helped me stay in the field for as long as I did.

There was also a second barrier that I had to contend with in my interactions with pro-immigrant respondents. In some cases, I was too successful in gaining an "insider" status. As a result, respondents' answers during interviews could be vague because they assumed shared meanings with me. In such cases, I changed my questions to try to clarify the contours of a respondent's worldviews. For example, I never asked what a respondent thought of deportation. Instead, I preferred to solicit their reactions to complex scenarios: to what extent did they think it acceptable for a noncitizen who had committed a heinous crime to be subject to deportation? Is it fair to deport an undocumented individual who arrived last month and has no family ties to the U.S.? These questions provided me with a greater sense of the political and moral boundaries respondents drew. Especially when a ready answer was not available, these sorts of questions allowed me to document the way in which my interviewees stumbled and worked their way through their responses.

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