FIGHTING THE WALL: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION AND BORDER SECURITY ON LOCAL BORDERLAND IDENTITY IN BROWNSVILLE, TX

by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

FIGHTING THE WALL: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION AND BORDER SECURITY ON LOCAL BORDERLAND IDENTITIES IN BROWNSVILLE, TX

By

LAURA K. NECK

Adviser: Professor Kirk Dombrowski

As part of the Secure Fence Act of 2006 approximately 850 miles of the roughly 2,000 mile U.S.-Mexico border was slotted for the construction of a border wall. Between 125 – 150 miles was scheduled to be completed in Texas by December 31, 2008. This dissertation explores how the U.S federal government's actions had direct and almost immediate consequences on its relationship with local borderland residents. Borderland residents are uniquely positioned both geographically and culturally within the nation-states they inhabit. The people who reside in the borderlands have a fundamentally different relationship with the state, not only because they live at the edges, but because they live in a space filled with obvious and physical manifestations of state power. The power of a nation-state is never more evident than at its borders, where it must necessarily assert and defend its territorial sovereignty through obvious control of the local, but more importantly for the state's objectives, national space. The construction of the border wall intensified this difference, increasing stresses on a population where issues of citizenship and racial and ethnic identity are already heightened, and shifting local focus away from citizenship as a primary identity marker and towards race and ethnicity instead, in many ways achieving the opposite of the federal government's stated intensions. The violence of seizing property and

erecting a border wall resulted in the erosion of local borderlanders' sense of belonging as Americans while heightening their identity as culturally and ethnically Mexican, a fundamental shift from previous conditions in which local populations were more likely to stress their identity as U.S. citizens in direct, and favorable, opposition to Mexicans in Mexico and immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, in the United States. Using a multi-method approach including Respondent-Driven Sampling, interviews, and participant observation, this study follows the specific story of the border wall's construction in south Texas in order to trace out the exact ways, and in some cases, the specific moments, in which the state's actions to strengthen its claims over local spaces and citizens actually resulted in weakening those citizens self-consciously identified and internalized connections to the U.S. state.

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List of Tables

List of Charts

Introduction

In October of 2006 the Secure Fence Act of 2006 was signed into law and plans began to build fencing along approximately 850 miles of the roughly 2,000 mile U.S.-Mexico border. A December 31, 2008 deadline was dictated for 370 miles, of which between 125-150 miles were assigned to the border in Texas. While some parts of the Texas-Mexico border already had border fencing, mostly in El Paso, the majority of the state was accustomed to having relatively unfettered access to the Rio Grande River, which serves as the international border in Texas, and local borderland residents proved overwhelmingly hostile to the idea of a border wall cutting off access to the river and standing between them and their Mexican counterparts. The data for the study was funded through a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant. Fieldwork was conducted in the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas over the 2009 calendar year

At its surface, this is the story of what happened in Brownsville Texas, situated at the southern and westernmost point of the U.S-Mexico border, when the U.S. government began implementing the border wall construction dictated by the Secure Fence Act of 2006. More than the individual narrative however, this dissertation explores how the state's actions had direct and almost immediate consequences on its relationship with local borderland residents. Through an aggressive seizure of control over the production of local space, the federal government changed local identity politics, shifting the focus from citizenship to race and ethnicity, prompting local citizens to confront and challenge the federal government and the racial categories which a particular regime was utilizing to advance its agenda. This dissertation shows how this shift in identity politics took place and explains its significance, not only in Brownsville, Texas, but to the larger anthropological study of state power and the production of both space and identity.

Borderland residents are uniquely positioned both geographically and culturally within the nation-states they inhabit. (Sahlins 1989 and 1998) The people who reside in the borderlands have a fundamentally different relationship with the state, not only because they live at the edges, but because they live in a space filled with obvious and physical manifestations of state power. The power of a nation-state is never more evident than at its borders, where it must necessarily assert and defend its territorial sovereignty through obvious control of the local, but more importantly for the state's objectives, national, space. The construction of the border wall intensified this difference, increasing stresses on a population where issues of citizenship and racial and ethnic identity are already heightened, and shifting local focus away from citizenship as a primary identity marker and towards race and ethnicity instead, in many ways achieving the opposite of the federal government's stated intensions. It is important to note that local border residents never rejected their U.S. citizenship, but they began identifying with non-citizens, and with each other, on the basis of their race, using the language of ethnic solidarity, to demonstrate not only that they disagreed with the federal government's decisions regarding border security and immigration policies, but that they felt personally targeted by the federal government because of their race and regardless of their citizenship.

The violence of seizing property and erecting a border wall resulted in the erosion of local borderlanders' sense of belonging as Americans while heightening their identity as culturally and ethnically Mexican, a fundamental shift from previous conditions in which local populations were more likely to stress their identity as U.S. citizens in direct, and favorable, opposition to Mexicans in Mexico and immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants, in the United States. Through the analysis of data collected in interviews, surveys, archival research, and participant observation, this study follows the specific story of the border wall's

construction in south Texas in order to trace out the exact ways, and in some cases, the specific moments, in which the state's actions to strengthen its claims over local spaces and local citizens actually resulted in weakening those citizens self-consciously identified and internalized connections to the U.S. state.

Since the 1990s the U.S. state has been increasing security measures along the U.S.-Mexico border but that increase has risen exponentially with the recent socio-political-economic panic about immigration and border security. Local borderland residents in the Rio Grande Valley are currently engaged in a struggle with the federal state over the right to control their homeland. Issues of class, race, ethnicity, and gender compound the larger panic about the Mexican border and Mexican immigration. Moral panics surrounding immigration are nothing new and neither are the sometimes real but often exaggerated connections to illegal drugs and gang violence drawn by anti-immigrant groups and echoed in the media. One of the most interesting and problematic aspects of the current immigration panic has to do with the geographical realities of bordering the country currently supplying the largest immigrant population to the U.S. Not only do Americans fear the job loss they associate with Mexican immigrants, but panic is setting in about cultural contamination within the U.S., particularly within the southern U.S. borderlands.

This dissertation examines how local borderland residents and institutions are adjusting to and fighting against nationalized pressures, specifically the federal border wall and the current anti-immigration movement within the United States. The project explores how the border shapes the local community's relationship to and understanding of the federal state and how the struggle over the construction of the federal border wall affects the production (and reproduction) of local space in an international border town. How are local residents and

institutions defending their right to define and control local space against the U.S. state's assertions that these same spaces are now "national" and therefore beyond the power of the residents and institutions who inhabit them? It compares ethnographic data on the localized struggle against the border wall with nationalized perceptions about securing U.S. borders. In making this comparison, it problematizes and redirects contemporary public and academic treatments of U.S. borders and borderlands by examining the impact of federal state power expressed through the seizure of both public and private lands and the construction of large physical barriers in Brownsville, Texas, a border town within the Rio Grande Valley.

At this project's center lie questions of particular importance to anthropology—a question about the connection between the local and the national and a question about the ways in which local spaces are constructed and reproduced through localized struggles between national and local forces. While it seems obvious that the national affects the local, in what ways does the local push back against nationalized discourses, even as it seeks to understand and adjust to the effects of national polices and discursive constructions of itself? Can an international border even be considered local space or does it remain a nationalized space within a local setting? Questions like these have deep roots in anthropology, from Maine's early work on village India, to the Manchester School's move to complex societies in South Central Africa, to Wolf's revisiting of the concept of the "closed corporate community" (Roseberry 1989) to Low's more recent work on the multilayered constructions of local public and urban spaces and Rabinow's explorations of the connection between space, power, and knowledge (Low, 2003 and 2000; Rabinow, 2003;). None of these studies was concerned, however, with borderlands.

By integrating multiple forms of data and using recent advances in research methods, including Respondent Driven Sampling, this project examines how dramatic changes in the

nation's literal and figurative presence on the borders impacts both private and public space in borderland communities. Understanding these shifts will help develop critical insights into the delicate relationship between the state and its borders, exploring not only how the state affects the borderlands (through the fact of the border), but also how the borderlands absorb and alter both nationalized discourses and the border itself in ways often unanticipated by the center. This dissertation develops an understanding of the relationship between the national debates about security and illegal immigration and the local communities that actually inhabit the "borderzones" such debates seek to characterize. In doing so, this project furthers anthropology's long interest in the state, the production of space, and the construction of identity, through an examination of localized struggles for control in the face of national level projects.

Dissertation's Structure

This study is presented in five chapters: Chapter 1: Historical Background; Chapter 2: Methodology; Chapter 3. UTB vs. The United States of America; Chapter 4. Borderlands Attitudes about Immigration and Border Security; and Chapter 5. Understanding Stakeholders' Perspectives.

Chapter 1: Historical Background provides a brief overview of the history of immigration policies, and politics, within the United States as they pertain to the construction of the current U.S.-Mexico border. It explores the particulars of how specific policies, laws, and cultural understandings of immigration and U.S. borders led to the construction of a border wall in Brownsville, TX, among other cities and regions, despite local resistance to and disapproval of the project. While the border wall is a part of the long history of anti-immigration policies in the United States, it was not an inevitable event and was only possible because of specific historical events. The U.S. would not have considered building a border wall during the Cold War, and

even afterwards it would still have been seen as anti-thetical to "American values" had it not been for 9/11. The fear of terrorism that rocked the U.S. in the wake of 9/11 also increased fears of the other in general, namely immigrants, and the fear of immigrants and terrorism wove together to form a political landscape in which the Secure Fence Act of 2006 was possible.

Chapter 2: Methodology covers the multi-method approach used in this study, explaining the various methods used and why each one was useful for the project. It provides an overview of the research design, including how it was initiated and implemented. I situate myself as a researcher and explain my multi-method approach of participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, archival research, and Respondent Driven Sampling. Finally, the chapter reports on the findings from the Respondent Driven Sampling methodology, which generated data on the social barriers between groups within the sample population through homophily and affiliation scores. The homophily and affiliation scores provide concrete data on the social barriers that exist between different groups, including categories of citizenship. It is important to note that citizenship does still operate as a significant social barrier. This would indicate that the shift in identity politics from citizenship as a primary category of difference to race and ethnicity is still in progress, the result of a recent shift that has not yet had time to affect sizeable changes to local social networks. Thus the Respondent Driven Sampling data provides evidence that the identity shifting established in the other data sets is a recent and change, further strengthening the argument that this shift is the direct result of the federal state's actions in the building the border wall. Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for the dissertation, explaining how each research method was essential to the project, as well as how they all connect with each other. Further, it provides evidence that citizenship plays a critical role in identity construction and social networking in the

borderlands, making its rejection as a category of identity by borderland residents faced with the border wall of critical significance to scholars of the borderlands.

Chapter 3: UTB vs The United States of America, draws on the data surrounding the legal battle between the University of Texas at Brownsville ("UTB") and the United States of America, including legal transcripts and archival research as well as event narratives collected in interviews with University personnel and their legal counsel. This chapter examines how the border wall represents a physical manifestation of state power that cannot be denied or explained away and explores why it is important to examine the moments in which the state shows itself to be a direct actor, not only on citizens' lives, but in the very production of the spaces in which they live their everyday lives.

The University's fight to save over 35% of its physical campus, including its dormitories, public golf course, and technology campus from being cut off by the wall serves as a case study for the analysis of the power differentials involved in the strugge to control local space on the border. It also provides a narrative timeline, providing a temporal context for the dissertation as a whole. The University's struggle was the impetus for much of the local social movement to stop the wall and both the survey participants and the local letters to the editor can be better understood in context with the events that transpired during UTB's mostly successful battle with the state. A thourough examination of this process allows me to tease out the socio-cultural implications of building a wall through the middle of downtown Brownsville, bisecting a college campus, cutting off the second oldest neighborhood in the city, and trapping farms, ranches, and houses behind an 18 ft concrete, steel, and razor wire fence situated as far as two and a half miles from the actual boder.

Within the Brownsville area, the local University is a mark of pride and with its recent growth and imporvements, its importance as a symbol of local ambitions, cultural strength, and economic progress has only grown. That the federal state would threaten the University and seize its lands, effectively putting an end to the University's future improvement and expansion plans, was a blow to the local community that served as the impetus for much of the resentment and anger that eventually led many locals to reject citizenship as a preferred category of differnce in favor of race and ethnicity. Chapter 3 lays out how that struggle developed and why it was so central to the larger story of national state spatial production and the resulting shift in identity politics.

Chapter 4: Borderlands Attitudes about Immigration and Border Security is the statistical heart of the dissertation. It analyzes the data collected with the fixed-choice questions in the survey, breaking down answers across social categories and identifying statistically relevent differences among those categories. This chapter is grounded in current scholarship concerning the attitudes of citizens about immigrants and explores how social factors such as race, class, and gender affect individual attitudes about immigrants, immigration, and border security. The data shows that residents of the Rio Grande Valley tend, as a whole, to possess more accepting attitudes about immigrants, be more supportive of immigration, and more opposed to the border wall than the general U.S. population, which can be traced to their unique geographical and cultural positioning within the United States. While the specific particulars of residing in the borderlands creates a unique relationship with the central state, Chapter 4 shows how the construction of the border wall strained local trust in the federal government while simultaneously generating a renewed cohesiveness of the local population as a group with shared cultural, geographic, and racial identities.

Chapter 5: Understanding Stakeholders' Perspectives expands out from the specific context of the University to examine the more personal stories I collected from property owners, anti-wall activists, politicians, and Border Patrol agents. It explores both what the border wall represents to these individual informants as well as examining the wall as a physical structure that impedes and even denies access to both privately and publically owned land. The interviewees not only discussed the progression of the wall and its direct impact on their lives, but also what they believe the wall says about the United States and its place in the larger global world. Within the national discourse on the wall, the focus has primarily been on domestic national security, but for those on the border, even those who support the wall, the decision to build the border fence has a more international context, one that they see as promoting a range of problematic statements including fear, racism, xenophobia, and the failure of the state to control its own affairs. This chapter examines the critial differences between local and national socio-cultural constructions of the border wall and explores the unique impact of the border wall on the production (and unproduction or erasure) of local space on the border. The ways in which local borderland residents understand the wall has a direct impact on their relationship with the central U.S. state. Not only do borderland residents feel that the U.S. has rejected them, they in turn are rejecting what they see as an incompetant, at best, and racist, at worst, national solution to a mostly local problem. Chapter 5 makes clear how, as a result of the construction of the border wall and the federal seizure of local lands, borderland residents now question their place in U.S. society and are choosing to construct their personal identities areound social markers other than citizenship.

Border Studies Literature

Over 20 years of border studies now exists ranging over many academic disciplines including geography, economics, history, political science, anthropology and sociology. This dissertation is not an examination of the entire body of work that encompasses border studies, however, and its purpose is not to present a single theory of the border. The border presents an useful object of anthropological inquiry and much of the border studies literature, regardless of its academic discipline of origin, contributes to this inquiry. The anthropological literature of borderlands remains a growing body of work founded on the assertion that national borders not only retain significance in an increasingly transnational world, but that, for large sectors of the world's population, they remain very real obstacles (Donnan and Hasting 1999; Heyman 1991). Yet while borders may remain barriers, they are not impermeable, particularly to people residing in the zones directly surrounding them (Whiteford 1979; Sadowski-Smith, 2002). Thus more recent literature on the borderlands has explored the political-economic constructions of border communities and the effects of national policies (immigration, security, economic, environmental) on these communities (Andreas 2000; Kiy and Wirth 1998; Maril 2004). My project studies the processes through which long-term borderland residents understand and interact not only with the border itself, but more specifically with the borderland space in which they live their everyday lives and situate their national, cultural, and geographical identities.

This study contributes to a better understanding of the social and political dynamics of an increasingly critical domain, borderlands, from a perspective often missing in national debates about borders: the ethnographic. Drawing on Lefebvre's understanding of space as both the "setting of the struggle" and the "stakes of that struggle" (1991[1974]: 386), it examines the processes through which borderland space is defined and produced as a socio-political

construction rooted in historical specifics (Harvey, 2000, De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003). Cultural constructions of difference, whether socio-economic, racial, ethnic, gendered, or based in national identity politics and citizenship rights, are used to both define and regulate spatial divisions while simultaneously obscuring and justifying the power differentials and divisive socio-cultural fears of the other that remain at the root of centralized state solutions like the U.S.-Mexico border wall. Just as increasing numbers of middle-class and upper-middle-class Americans have been making the move to live behind walls in gated communities (Blakely and Snyder 1997; Lang and Danielson 1997; Marcuse 1997; Low 2001), America's fears of the other, primarily the Mexican immigrant other, pressured Congress to "solve" the problem by legislating the construction of a border wall, essentially making the move to turn the U.S. into one large gated community. [1]

Cultural constructions of difference are manifested in the production of space across numerous landscapes in both the U.S. and elsewhere, (Low 1996, 2001, 2008; Harvey 2000; Villa 2000; Gregory 2003; Richardson 2003), but the U.S.-Mexico border wall is larger than these examples, not only in actual physical terms, but in what it represents and says about the acceptance of state power within the U.S. Centralized state power balances precariously at borders; in many ways the federal state has its strongest presence and exhibits the most control at the border. But the border is also where state power begins not only to fray but where it abruptly ends, at least in terms of physical territoriality. (Andreas 2000; Andreas and Biersteker 2003; Sarat 2006; Lugo 2008; and Nevins 2010) Any quick political survey of the globe demonstrates that the perilous equilibrium that exists between nation-states and their borders is easily upset.

[1] This notion of America as one large gated community applies primarily to the southern border, as for the most part the U.S. has not shown much desire to wall itself off from Canada. The majority of American citizens do not view Canada as an alien place, stressing the similarities between the two nations instead of the differences. In

Borders present useful political pawns in the power games of nation-states, but they are often rather rebellious pawns over whom nation-states exercise much less control than they claim. (Maril 2004; Heyman 1999, 2008**;** and Andreas 2000**)** While national troops can be sent to police borders and government agencies can set up ports of entry to regulate flows of people and goods, the borderlands are more than geographical territories for capital and people to pass through. Even though governmental policies affect borderlands, they neither determine nor control the socio-cultural construction of those borderlands.

Nation-states can make legal crossings more irritating and time consuming and illegal crossings more dangerous, but the evidence suggests they have little control over the actual number of crossings. (Lorey 1999; Andreas 2000; and Heyman 2008) It is these crossings that occupy the imagination of the center, however, for they symbolize a crucial aspect, perhaps the most crucial aspect, of the border – nation-states end at borders. Even in today's world of global markets and transnational communities, nation-states remain physically and spatially bounded by borders. While some scholars argue that physical borders are losing their significance because of the growing global economy and transnational movement of people (Greider 1997; Appadurai, 1996; Ohmae, 1995**)**, at the same time much of the world is also experiencing heightened fears about border security, terrorism, and defense. The importance of physical space may have shifted with the rise of a wireless world, but it has not decreased and with a growing global concern about "security" borders remain critical sites of control, security, and defense. Borders help protect nations, not only from military invasions and acts of terror, but from the invasion of of foreigners, of racial and cultural others. (Bornstein, 2002) Physical territory remains vitally important to nation-states and the importance of borders in delineating this physical space is crucial. In the case of the U.S.-Mexico border, the construction of the border wall sent a

message to the body politic of the United States that the federal government was invested in keeping Mexicans out and protecting the future of the United States as a white Protestant nation. This was clearly not the government's only, or even primary, reason for constructing the wall, but it certainly sent that message to the American citizens of Mexican-ethnicity who live in the Rio Grande borderlands.

Borders and borderlands are well recognized for the unique perspective they provide on the nation-state and much of the current anthropological border theory is built on a center-periphery dynamic. (Alvarez, 1995: Donnan and Wilson, 1998 and 1999) Donnan and Wilson's[2] work, in particular, is rooted in the analysis of state power. The discourse around border studies (Cold-Ravnkilde, Singh, and Lee, 2004; VanNijnatten and Boychuk, 2004; and Smith, 2004) stands in opposition to globalization theories that describe the decreasing significance of the nation-state while celebrating increasing trans-border mobility and predicting the eventual irrelevance of geographical borders. (Appadurai, 1996; Ohmae, 1995) Much of the current anthropological literature regarding borders argues that peripheries/borders offer a critical analytical tool for understanding the ways in which nation-states still affect the processes of daily life, particularly the lives of poorer individuals attempting to cross borders for increased opportunities. For Donnan and Wilson, borders furnish both physical and theoretical proof that the nation-state cannot be disregarded as a giant from a past era. Borders and frontiers are more than the rough outskirts of the center, however, as American historians have demonstrated in their analysis of the frontier's importance to American identity. (Turner, 1920; Limerick, 1987) Frontiers and borders may reference the center, but they also reflect back images necessary for

[2] The works of Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan provide the basis for much of the early theoretical framework concerning the anthropological study of borders. See their edited collection of essays, *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 and their book reviewing and analyzing early border theory, *Borders: Frontiers of Identity, Nation and State.* Oxford: Berg, 1999.

the center's own self-identification. Borders retain a physical and localized structural presence within the construction of the nation-state, not only for the people living along them or attempting to cross them, but also for the political centers of power. While Donnan and Wilson recognize the border's dependency on the center, they do not explore the co-dependent relationship between center and periphery; namely, they do not examine the center's dependency upon its borders.

Peter Sahlins' work in the Pyrenees Mountains between France and Spain provides a much needed reminder that borderlands can be critical to the construction of national identity.[3] Sahlins argues that the importance of national identity is always heightened at the edges of national territory, but that it gains even more significance when, as in the Catalan borderlands, the locals on either side of the border share language, economy, and socio-cultural practices. In such a situation, simply "being" French or Spanish can structure individual realities along borders in ways it never could for residents of Paris or Barcelona where national identity remains primarily an abstract notion. Sahlins maintains that borderland locals find themselves both defining and defending national identity in ways that echo back to national centers.

Given the strategic importance of borders in the global world, there is an acute need for border scholars to return to localized, territorialized studies. Scholars have already begun the process of determining the consequences of race and class on the border. Although some studies have examined gender (Anzaldúa: 1987; Biemann 2002; Castillo and Córdoba 2002; Moreno and Herrera Mulligan 2004; Staudt 2008; and Cantú 2009), more work on this subject is needed. Donnan and Wilson are right in calling attention to the unique perspective borders provide on the

[3] See *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees.* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989; and "State Formation and National Identity in the Catalan Borderlands during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" in *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers.* ed. Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998.

nation-state, but we also need to examine the nation-state's perspective on the border. Geopolitical borders exist to confine the territory of particular nation-states but they are not inherently liminal spaces, caught forever in a disconnected, peripheral world. Border zones belong to specific nation states. While one can examine the shared experiences of adjoining border zones, life in the U.S. borderland remains separate from life in the Mexican borderland just as life in the borderlands remains related, but distinct from, life in the interior. Studies of the border allow scholars to examine where the lines fall between shared and singular experiences of the border and in doing so we can provide insight into the ways in which nation-states use borders to perpetuate and protect their own agendas. Borders are crucial to protecting hegemonic understandings of national politics and policies and of promoting ideologies based on ethnocentric views of the nation, and border studies, like anthropology, provide critical insight into these processes because they provide us with views from the periphery, the local, and sometimes the outside.

This project examines how the U.S. nation-state isolated U.S. border space, resulting in a situation in which the U.S. border community began to search for, identify, and stress shared cultural histories and experiences with Mexican citizens as a direct reaction to and rejection of U.S. federal border policy. The construction of the border wall in Brownsville, Texas, a city that remains openly hostile to the border wall and the new spatial regime, has created a unique set of circumstances that highlight the different ways that identity can shift in relation to borders. In this particular case, instead of strengthening the influence of the nation-state on the shaping of the local community, the overt and oppressive nature of one nation-state's (the U.S.) actions created a unique situation in which the local community conceived of the border as a unifying spatial structure rather than a divisive one. By seizing land and forcibly and physically making

visible the geopolitical border line, the central U.S. state strengthened the impact of the border as a dividing line on the production of local space while diminishing the state's impact as a socio-cultural unifying agent on the local community.

Politics of Border Security

Politically and socio-economically, increasingly our borders are extending into a larger arena. The debates surrounding how to and even whether we should secure our borders have as much, if not more to do, with questions surrounding immigration, a failing American dream, racism, terrorism, security, and the current tug-of-war between "conservative" and "liberal", blue vs. red states than they have to do with the people who live their lives along these borders. The U.S. state seeks to calm the nation's fears by projecting the image of a controlled southern border onto the national imagination. Current border policies are designed to construct a site of visible defense even as most of the two thousand mile border remains relatively unsurveilled and the pace of illegal immigration into the United States from Mexico continues unabated. Beginning in the mid 1990s major crossings and their immediate surroundings experienced an increase in personnel and technological equipment unheard of in an era of government cutbacks. (Andreas 2000; Andreas and Biersteker 2003; Nevins 2010; Dunn 2010**)** Since September 11, 2001, the money spent on and attention paid to both the southern and the northern border continue to increase with the stated objective of stopping terrorism, but it is the southern border that continues to capture the nation's attention, serving as a flash point for numerous objectives on both sides of the political aisle.[4] Midwestern Democrats find the border, or rather the idea and

[4] For an example of political investigations on the U.S.-Mexico border please see *A Line in the Sand: Confronting the Threat at the Southwest Border*. A report prepared by the Majority Staff of the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Investigations, Michael T. McCaul, Chairman. 2006. The report focuses on the dangers of cross-border gang violence, sexual predators, murderers, and drug cartels, as well as providing photos of 'Arabic military badges' that were 'found' by the Border Patrol, the implication being that terrorists had discarded them while crossing illegally into the U.S. from Mexico. I leave it to you to question why the terrorists forgot about

image of the southern border, useful in rallying voters who already fear for the loss of their jobs and way of life. Republicans use the border as a way to remind their supporters that the United States remains vulnerable to attack, drawing on a fear of the unknown and conflating that fear with a fear of terrorism.

It would be easy to claim that America has two Mexican borders, the border that borderland residents know, and the border that exists in the national imagination and that neither has anything to do with the other, but that is too clean an explanation. In truth, the U.S.-Mexico border, as it exists for borderland residents, is as multi-faceted as the land that stretches over two thousand miles from coast to coast. Different places and spaces along the border have different histories and therefore share different realities, all of which combine to make up a vast and varied borderland. The Mexican border, as it exists in America's national imagination, is separate from, yet born out of, selected experiences of the borderlands. For over a decade the former Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS"),[5] the current Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and the Border Patrol have succeeded in keeping the media's attention, and thus most of America's attention, on specific experiences of the border as a barrier by focusing on localized sites of surveillance and containment on both the Mexican and Canadian borders.

The borders, however, are only a portion of the borderlands. They help provide structure to a space, but they are exactly that: structures around which societies must necessarily mold

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the badges, one of which had an image of a plane flying into the Twin Towers, until they were well into the U.S. and then chose not to destroy them, but to leave them on the border for the Border Patrol to discover. A copy of this report can be found at http://www.house.gov/mccaul/pdf/Investigaions-Border-Report.pdf

[5] In March 2003 the Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS") was dissolved and reorganized under new agency titles with different, if similar objectives to the former INS. The Border Patrol was transferred to the new Customs and Border Protection Agency ("CBP") while the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency ("ICE") became the largest investigative unit under the Department of Homeland Security. You can find out more about both agencies on their websites: http://www.ice.gov/ and http://www.cbp.gov/

themselves, but not the societies themselves.[6] Borderland residents understand and experience the border as a part, but not the whole, of the social structure in which they live their lives. One of the major problems with the borders as they are projected and imagined outside of the borderlands, is that they are understood as single physical entities that have nothing to do with the borderlands that surround them. Borders, however, are more than lines on a map or simple barriers between nations, and no amount of money or personnel can make them easy to control. The image of the border, however, can be controlled and in the end, the illusion is conveniently manageable. The image of a controlled border can soothe those who worry about the southern border as a site of "foreign" invasion and contamination, but this illusion can also be pierced when it is politically expedient to do so because sometimes the best way to draw support and additional funding is to highlight the permeability of America's borders, and the government's apparent inability to control them.

Local U.S.-Mexico borderland residents, however, are aware that the federal government is engaged in an elaborate performance involving the border. They watch the national news programs along with the rest of the country, but their specific locality allows them to see past the illusion of control in two main ways. First, they witness the inadequacies, inconsistencies, and irrationality of the border policies as they are played out on the ground. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, they suspect that this performance of control is not just meant to convince the American public that it remains safe from illegal immigrants but from Hispanic borderland residents as well. As the political scientist, Joseph Nevins has pointed out, however, while border politics and boundary policing are a form of performance:

[6] For more on the distinction between the "border" and the "borderlands", see Manuel Luis Martinez, "Telling the Difference between the Border and the Borderlands: Materiality and Theoretical Practice," in *Globalization on the Line: Culture, Capital, and Citizenship at U.S. Borders.* ed. Claudia Sadowski-Smith. New York: Palgrave. 2002, pp. 32 – 53.

"this is not to suggest that state elites are engaging in manipulative practices merely to fool the public and serve their own ends. Rather, what we are seeing is 'social role taking' (Edelman 1985:20), boundary construction and maintenance being one of the nation-state's most important functions. And, arguably, in no matter is the modern territorial state more sovereign than in matters of immigration control (Zolber 1978) and, by extension, boundary enforcement." (Nevins 2010: 8)

Thus, while the state is undeniably involved in a form of political theatre, it is a performance designed to do exactly what it purports to do, namely, exercise control and power over the border.

Within the Brownsville area borderlands, residents feel insulted by the governments elaborate performance of control in two main, and connected, ways. First, they believe that the border wall is doomed to fail and the fact that the local community was neither consulted with, nor listened to, is symptomatic of a larger problem. Namely, local borderland residents believe that the U.S. central state is more concerned with the opinions and desires of white citizens who do not love on the border than they are with the concerns and opinions of local Hispanic borderland residents. Second, they believe that the U.S. would not be so quick to seize public and private lands if the majority of the community was not Hispanic and that the seizure of these lands and the erection of the border wall represents a rejection of them and their history as Americans. This dissertation shows how these understandings of the U.S. central state and the performance of security in Brownsville led to the shift in identity politics that resulted in the prioritization of socio-cultural and racial identity over that of citizenship, a marker typically prioritized in the borderlands.

Citizenship and Identity Politics in the Borderlands

In the Rio Grande Valley, even among those locals most opposed to the federal border wall, the federal state's right to police both immigration and the border were never brought into question. The territorial sovereignty of the United States was accepted as a given; what the local

community objected to were the methods, in essence, the performance of security and sovereignty, of which the border wall remained the most significant and offensive. Significantly, however, the agents of the state charged with seeing to the construction of the wall understood the locals' objections to the wall as a rejection of the U.S. itself, and often reacted as if U.S. sovereignty were being challenged, lobbing charges of "un-Americanness" at local stakeholders. For border patrol, customs, and ICE agents, charged with enforcing (and reinforcing) the territorial sovereignty of the U.S. on a daily basis through both border and immigration enforcement, the world is shaded in terms of territorial and spatial belonging, i.e. people and goods that belong in the United States (or are allowed to cross the border) and those that do not. In such a binary, it becomes difficult to find a place for those who reject the very methods by which the state agents are enforcing the spatial lines of belonging. In other words, given a "you are either with us or against us" mentality, what do you do with the people who are against you but still cannot be evicted from the circle? While it is not possible to strip the protestors of their citizenship (their belonging) it is possible to accuse them of "un-American" behavior, thereby placing them in a discursive liminal purgatory in which they may possess citizenship and the rights associated with it, but they are not deserving of them and therefore their opinions and protests are not deserving of serious consideration.

While it may seem unimportant, like children calling each other names, it was not easy for locals to dismiss the accusations of "un-American" behavior. On the contrary, many of my informants were deeply troubled by such accusations and made real efforts to demonstrate how very "American" they really are. The importance of belonging in connection to citizenship status is critical to an understanding of the borderlands. The power of citizenship as a category of difference and belonging cannot be underestimated and within the borderlands it takes on a

heightened importance that often cuts across other socio-economic lines such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class. Those without proper papers exist in a position of vulnerability that colors every other aspect of their lives. Those who do possess U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, current visas, and/or green cards have a tendency not only to stress their right to belong, their right to be in the U.S., but to compare themselves favorably to those without documents. U.S. citizens and permanent residents talk about how they or their ancestors "came to the U.S. the right way," accepting with little scrutiny the myth that gaining U.S. citizenship is just a matter of patience and diligence, as if it is divorced from the economic costs, transnational labor flows of global capitalism, and racial and ethnic preferences that have so long dominated U.S. immigration policies. (Daniels 2004)

Citizenship, ethnicity, and class intersect with one another in a complicated and fluid dance of identity within the borderlands and the lines that people draw are often determined by the situational context. As Nevins has shown, the now widely accepted and generally unexplored category of "illegal alien" is actually a relatively recent discursive category rooted in historical and socio-economic specifics. (Nevins 2010) It is also a spatially bounded construct in which "territorial boundaries [serve as] the lines of inclusion and exclusion." (Nevins 2010:119) One of the main reasons that one's legal status is not easily identified through the physical body is that it is created by spatial territoriality, a geo-political category bounded by nation-states rather than an individual category bounded by the physical body. As Nevins argues:

"In terms of the illegal immigrant, the state has not simply responded to the supposed crisis of illegal immigration. Rather, it has been the primary shaper of the category (and thus the 'crisis') through its practices establishing the geographical and social boundaries …..Similarly, in terms of the representation of unauthorized immigration in the media, it has been the state that has been most responsible in constructing the illegal as a category of social identity and as a threat to the socio-territorial fabric of the United States. ….The power of state discourse vis-à-vis the national citizenry illustrates the ability of the state to construct not only political-juridical categories, but also ways of seeing. (Coorigan and Sayer 1985:3)" (Nevins 2010:149-150)

Unlike categories of difference such as gender and race, which are often, if not always, written on the body, or class, which can also be signified physically through socio-economic stylistic and fashion markers, being "illegal" is not something that is visible on the body.[7]

As Pablo Vila has pointed out, citizenship operates as a critical category of difference in the borderlands, and while his work was based in the border cities of El Paso and Juarez, much of what he has to say about citizenship can also be applied to Brownsville and Matamoros. What I found, however, was that for many of Brownsville's residents, citizenship was not as significant a category of social belonging as one might have expected. The government's decision to build the border wall was understood as such a grave insult to the local population that it was overrode the state's influence in the social construction of illegal as a disdained category. Border scholars have noted the complexities of identity in the borderlands and the ways in which identity is often switched according to situation (Heyman 2001; 20002; Vila 2000; Moreno and Herrera-Mulligan 2004; Griest 2008; and Dunn 2010), and other scholars have looked specifically at the ways in which "Mexican" itself is a word that is used situationally, ranging from referring widely to anyone of Mexican ancestry (or even Hispanic ancestry) to narrowly pinpointing Mexican citizens (DeGenova 2005; DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Millard and Chapa 2001; Rivera 2006; and García 2009).

[7] In defense of Arizona's SB 1070, a controversial immigration bill that required police in Arizona to stop anyone they suspected of being in the U.S. illegally and demand proof of citizenship from them, different Republican politicians have suggested that illegal immigrants can be identified through their clothing, or most infamously, their shoes. See http://washingtonindependent.com/87028/rep-king-spot-illegal-immigrants-by-their-shoes-grooming-accent-or-a-sixth-sense; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/22/brian-bilbray-gop-rep-cla_n_547710.html The suggestion prompted numerous responses from immigration rights activist including slide shows and YouTube videos of different feet in shoes challenging people to identify which feet were illegal. ICE and the Border Patrol maintain, however, that one of the major reasons that a border wall is needed in urban areas such as downtown Brownsville is that illegal immigrants do not look any different from anyone else, particularly in the borderlands, and so they must be stopped from crossing in heavily populated areas where they can easily blend into crowds. (personal communication with Agent Lopez)

While such situational identity shifting occurs in Brownsville, whether someone identified as a citizen or as a Hispanic could be predicted with remarkable accuracy based on the specific conversational context. When discussing border security locals tended to identify strongly along ethnic and racial lines. It was only if the topic at hand was the economy (i.e. local job availability or wages) that locals identified along lines of citizenship. In contrast, both Vila and Dunn have reported that in El Paso the local population was most likely to stress their difference from Mexicans (who live in Mexico) and "illegals" in the U.S. choosing citizenship as their primary identity marker. (Vila 2000; and Dunn 2010) In fact, Dunn argues that this tendency to draw socio-cultural lines using citizenship status as the primary social marker was largely responsible for the overwhelming local support for Operation Blockade (later renamed Operation Hold-the-Line) in El Paso during the late 1990s. Operation Blockade changed the way the U.S. polices its borders, moving from a pursuit and capture model to a deterrence program and was the original precursor for the current border policy that resulted in the eventual construction of the border wall in Brownsville, Texas. When Operation Blockade was launched, El Paso residents were largely supportive of the new deterrence program because they felt that it was keeping the Border Patrol focused on "illegals" and stopped them from harassing U.S. citizens on suspicion of being "illegal". (Dunn 2010).

Brownsville residents, however, did not react with support for the border wall, instead they interpreted the border wall as a grave insult to the local community, choosing instead to understand the border wall as being aimed at all borderland residents, particularly those of Hispanic ethnicity, instead of simply targeting illegal border crossers. That residents would choose to stress ethnicity in a conversational situation involving the state (the primary architect of citizenship as a category) rather than citizenship demonstrates that the decision to build a

border wall in Brownsville changed the local populations' understanding of its relationship to its own federal government. It is not yet possible to determine whether this change is permanent, and given the fluid nature of cultural understandings of identity, I would guess that given time the local population's relationship to the federal government will shift again, particularly if federal policies regarding border security and immigration also change. Perhaps even more important than the specifics of this shift is that we are able to point to a specific and marked shift in identity as a direct result of federal policies and the interpretation of the motives and attitudes behind those policies.

While Brownsville is not El Paso, I argue that it is not merely a locational geographical difference. Something has happened in the intervening years between the implementation of Operation Blockade in 1993 and the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006. Citizenship is a legal and spatial category of belonging separate from the notion of being "American" or a "patriotic" American. While the two categories are undeniably related, one can be an American citizen and yet "un-American." I would argue that in many ways the categories of difference that Vila and Dunn identified as citizenship markers, were in many ways actually questions of "Americanness." While undeniable legal and economic rights and benefits, and vulnerabilities, of citizenship exist and are defended fiercely, when many people talk about citizenship, what they are really trying to stress is that they belong in the U.S.; that they are "good Americans." By deciding to build a wall, to forcefully seize land and fundamentally alter space in Brownsville, TX, the federal state broke a form of trust with Brownsville residents and while they continue to stress their legal and financial advantages as citizens, they have largely replaced identifying themselves as "American" and instead choose to stress their identity as Hispanics, a category they increasingly see as targeted by the U.S. state as well as white, middle America.

Citizenship, ethnicity, and class identities are situational and changeable categories of difference and belonging and this dissertation shows how with the construction of the border wall, the federal state exerted direct and explicit influence over the situational switching of complex identity politics in the borderlands that resulted in the unexpected, and undesirable from the state's perspective, diminishing of citizenship as a chosen category of belonging in relation to the central state.

Chapter 1: The National Politics of Immigration and Border Security

Introduction:

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the history of immigration policies, and politics, within the United States as they pertain to the construction of the current U.S.-Mexico border. It explores the particulars of how specific policies, laws, and cultural understandings of immigration and U.S. borders led to the construction of a border wall in Brownsville, TX, among other cities and regions, despite local resistance to and disapproval of the project. While the border wall is a part of the long history of anti-immigration policies in the United States, it was not an inevitable event and was only possible because of specific historical events. The U.S. would not have considered building a border wall during the Cold War, and even afterwards it would still have been seen as anti-thetical to "American values" had it not been for 9/11. The fear of terrorism that rocked the U.S. in the wake of 9/11 also increased fears of the other in general, namely immigrants, and the fear of immigrants and terrorism wove together to form a political landscape in which the Secure Fence Act of 2006 was possible.

The history of U.S. immigration policy and politics boomerangs between positive descriptions of the United States as a "nation of immigrants" and negative fixations on immigrants as undesirables. U.S. immigration policy itself is primarily a history of restriction, a long litany of laws enacted to ban entire categories of people from immigrating to the United States, while simultaneously promoting the immigration of more desirable immigrants, historically understood as white immigrants from Western and Northern Europe. Immigration policy has long been used as a tool to shape a particular America, a white, English-speaking, Christian America, but it has never been an especially successful tool, for a myriad of reasons, chief among them the influence of global capital, labor flows, and corresponding American business interests. And while the American public proudly hails its immigrant roots, both

historically and currently, a large percentage of Americans have little use or liking for immigrants themselves. (Epenshade & Belanger, 1998; Borjas, 1999; Daniels, 2004)

19th Century

In 1892 the federal government passed the 1892 Immigration Act, marking the beginning of a federal immigration service and opening Ellis Island as an immigration station for processing immigrants upon entry to the United States through New York City. The federal immigration service grew rapidly and from the beginning the men in charge of the immigration service lobbied for increased restriction of immigrants, particularly immigrants from outside northern and western Europe. Ten years prior to the 1892 Immigration Act, the federal government had already passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which banned Chinese laborers from entering the country for ten years as well as excluding Chinese immigrants already in the U.S. from the right to citizenship. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1892 further increased and strengthened existing immigration laws, namely the Page Act of 1875 (Sect. 141, 18 Stat. 477, 1873-March 1875). The Page Act restricted the entry of "undesirable" immigrants, defined as contract laborers from Asia, Asian women suspected of entering to work as prostitutes (although in practice it was used to ban almost all Asian women from entering the U.S.) and immigrants defined as "convicts" in their country of origin. While the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was originally set to expire in 1892, Congress continued to extend the law and it was not until 1943 that it was struck down when it was officially repealed by the Magnuson Act (The Magnuson Act Pub.L.No.78-149, 57 Stat. 600.), which allowed Chinese nationals currently living in the United States to become naturalized citizens. In addition, the Magnuson Act allowed for a national quota of 105 Chinese immigrants to enter the U.S. each year. This quota continued until

1965 with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. **(**Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 Pub.L. 89-236, 79 Stat. 911**)**

20th Century

In addition to concerns about immigration from Asia, in 1902 the heads of the federal immigration service began complaining about the numbers of immigrants entering the U.S. from Mexico and making demands that their budget be increased in order to accommodate staffing increases. Whatever name the immigration service has gone by in the intervening years, the bureau has continued to demand more money for staffing and equipment and often, if not always, cited Mexican immigrants as a major reason for these budgetary and staffing increases. Between 1903 and 1917 the United States made a series of changes to immigration administration, laws, policy, and naturalization procedures. The Immigration Act of 1917 codified all the changes made in the previous two decades and added the literacy test to immigration policy. This was the first general restriction to apply to all immigrants, regardless of race, ethnicity, nation of origin, class, or gender. The federal government also made a number of administrative changes, which ended with two separate bureaus, a Bureau of Immigration and a Bureau of Naturalization, both housed under the Department of Labor.[8] Additional restrictions were passed in 1906 requiring immigrants to speak English and barring anarchists and polygamists. During WWI anti-immigrant sentiment continued rising and throughout the post-war years small changes were made to further restrict immigration to the U.S.

[8] In 1903 the Bureau of Immigration was transferred out of the Department of the Treasury and into the newly created Department of Commerce and Labor. Three years later, in 1906, the Bureau of Immigration became the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. In 1913 the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization split into the Bureau of Immigration and the Bureau of Naturalization. The Department of Commerce and Labor was also split into two Departments. Both the Bureaus of Immigration and Naturalization were then housed in the Department of Labor. (See Daniels, Roger. 2004. Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882. Chapter Two: The 1920s: The Triumph of the Old Nativism. New York: Hill and Wang. for a more detailed break-down of the various laws and administrative changes to immigration policy and administration in the early part of the 20th century.

In 1921 the first law to restrict immigration on the basis of numerical quotas passed. The quotas were divided by national origin and based on the 1910 census. Quotas were calculated at 3% of the number of foreign-born from each country listed in the 1910 census, excepting immigrants seeking asylum based on religious persecution.[9] The total immigration cap was set at 350,000 immigrants per year. The quota system was deliberately based on a racial and cultural hierarchy that privileged white northern and western Europeans and was explicitly calculated to keep the United States a "white-man's country" (Daniels, 2004). The 1921 Act was renewed on a yearly basis until it was finally codified into law with the Immigration Act of 1924. The Immigration Act of 1924 did make a few changes to the 1921 Act, most notably it pushed the baseline of the quota system to the 1890 census and lowered the percentage from 3% to 2 %, with the intention of further restricting the immigration of eastern and southern Europeans.

Due to the influence of legislators from the southwestern and western states, who were protecting agricultural business interests dependent on Mexican agricultural labor, the Western Hemisphere, a large source of immigration to the United States, was excluded from the numerical limitations set on other nations. (Bach, 1978) The exception was only applied to independent countries, plus Canada, Newfoundland, and the Canal Zone, but it still included a large portion of the Western Hemisphere. Countries still under colonial control were bundled in with the quotas applied to their colonial "mother" country. In practical terms this was a provision designed primarily to exclude black immigrants. While it would also apply to Asian immigrants from colonized nations, Asian immigrants were still restricted from entry to the United States under the category of "non-whites ineligible for citizenship."

[9] Immigrants seeking entry to the United States on the basis of religious persecution still had to meet the other immigration requirements but they did not count against the national cap of their country of origin.

The Immigration Act of 1924 also instituted procedural changes that increased the number of documents and the cost of immigration for immigrants. Immigrants were now required to have visas and photos. In addition, the cost of a visa was set at $9 and a head tax of $9 was also collected. These additional costs did not affect most Europeans as they were small in comparison to the larger cost of trans-Atlantic immigration, but they did substantially change the cost for Mexican immigrants who were used to crossing and recrossing the border at will. The new law also added a $3 charge to aliens who left and reentered, a cost that only added additional incentive for Mexicans to cross the border informally without declaring their visit in order to evade the additional costs of sanctioned formal crossings.

The next major change to immigration policy came with 1952's Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"). INA removed the category of aliens ineligible for citizenship, which had previously excluded Asians from naturalization, and provided 100 spaces to each of the previously excluded Asian nations. It also made it easier to legally deport individuals and incorporated provisions of the "Wetback Bill" from earlier in the same year, extending the range of the Border Patrol's authority on the U.S.-Mexico border from a "reasonable distance" to twenty-five miles. It also empowered Border Patrol agents to conduct warrantless searches of "any railway car, aircraft, conveyance or vehicle" and "to have access to private lands, but not dwellings." (66 Stat 26) In addition INA made "harboring" an illegal alien a felony punishable with up to five years in prison and a $2000 fine. This provision was somewhat negated, however, by the "Texas proviso," which stipulated that employing an illegal alien did not constitute "harboring." This resulted in situations where employers of illegal aliens caught transporting undocumented workers across the border could be neither jailed nor fined. The

workers themselves were generally sent back across the border without any formal procedure. (Daniels, 2004)

From 1942-1965, in another immigration policy driven primarily by the labor needs of the agricultural industry, the United States ran a large collectively managed labor migration program known as the Bracero Program. Braceros were contract laborers who entered the United States for limited labor contracts with U.S. employers, primarily agricultural employers. The migrant workers were expected to return to Mexico after their contracts ended and they did not have rights to settle permanently in the United States under the Bracero Program. The Bracero Program was instituted as a war time expedient to handle labor shortages, however the majority of its operating years were post-war. The Bracero Program ended in 1965, the same year that the next major change in immigration policy was implemented into law. The migration of Mexican laborers to the United States did not stop with the end of the Bracero Program, but the legal status of Mexican migrants did change significantly. While some laborers were able to transition into legal permanent residency with the assistance of petitions from their employers, many simply became undocumented workers. (Heyman, 1998; Daniels, 2004)

Post 1965

1965 was a landmark year for immigration policy in the United States. With the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 the United States did away with the percentage quota system of visas that had organized immigration policy since the 1920s, replacing it with a system based on hemispheric caps. Visas were now offered on an equal numerical basis to all nations. Potential immigrants had two primary ways of petitioning for immigration: 1) kin-based petitions; and 2) petitions based on occupation (usually made by employers). As a result of the new law, the numbers of Asians, Carribbeans, and Latin Americans immigrating to the United States quickly

outnumbered European immigrants. The shift was so dramatic that scholars of immigration refer to post 1965 immigration as "new immigration." (Reimers, 1985) The Immigration Act of 1965 set a total ceiling of immigration at 290,000 immigrants per year and each individual nation was capped at 20,000. These numbers are deceptively small, however, as the numerical caps did not apply to large numbers of immigrants including spouses, unmarried minor children, and parents of U.S. citizens. Large numbers of people were now eligible for naturalized citizenship through their kinship networks. Between 1965 and 1993 the number of foreign-born persons in the U.S. increased from under 10 million to over 22 million. Calculated as a percentage of the total population the number rose from just under 5% of the population to approximately 8.5%. (Fix & Passel, 1994, p. 20) While the numbers are understandably incomplete, cyclical illegal immigration also rose during this time period.

1965 changed patterns of immigration for Mexican immigrants. Not only did the legal standing of many Mexican migrants become more precarious, the places where these migrants settled within the United States shifted. Prior to 1965 most Mexican migrants to the U.S. were agricultural laborers who remained primarily in the southwestern and western United States. After 1965, however, more Mexican immigrants began settling in urban and suburban settings outside of the southwest and western U.S. (Cornelius, 1989a; 1989b) In spite of the significance of these changes in Mexican immigration, the overall pattern of Mexican migration to the U.S. remained relatively consistent with historical patterns. It was the perception of Mexican migration, and Mexican immigrants, that changed considerably. As more Mexican immigrants moved into non-border, non-western states and into non-agricultural labor markets, the perception grew that more and more Mexican migrants were immigrating to the United States and that these immigrants were in the U.S. illegally. Illegality quickly became a critical part of

how most Americans perceived Mexican migration to the United States. Heyman argues that "[D]espite continuity with the past, illegal entry appeared to be a sharply new phenomenon in how Americans perceived Mexican migration" (1998, p. 24) after 1965, due in part to different settlement patterns and in part to the increase in media imagery and coverage about Mexican laborers and the U.S.-Mexico border.

In the mid 1970s immigration anxiety in the United States settled into patterns of anxiety that would be recognizable to current observers and these fears eventually resulted in additional changes to immigration policy in the 1980s. In 1986 the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) passed based on 1981 recommendations made by the Commission on Immigration Control and Reform. IRCA was a much debated law before it was passed and the disagreement over it continues to inform attitudes about immigration in the U.S. today. IRCA was an attempt to halt undocumented immigration through employer sanctions while still allowing legal immigration in the same numbers as the 1965 law. It made hiring an "illegal alien" illegal but it left a large enforcement loophole because all it required for employers to be in compliance with immigration and labor laws was that they look at employees' documents. Employers were not provided with a means to verify immigration/citizenship documents but neither were they required to verify documents. The result was a system in which undocumented workers were encouraged to supply fraudulent documents to employers and employers were encouraged to look the other way if they suspected document fraud. IRCA also passed what is known today as "amnesty" by legalizing undocumented immigrants who could prove continuous residence in the United States from January 1982 forward. Once again American agribusiness interests were able to influence immigration policy and the Special Agricultural Workers Provisions were added to IRCA, legalizing undocumented agricultural workers under even more liberal provisions than the

main amnesty. (Pub.L. 96-603, 100 Stat 3359 (codified as 8 USCA §1101) Given the American public's concern with increasing immigration numbers in general and illegal immigration in particular, IRCA did little to reduce growing anti-immigration sentiments and most likely increased anti-immigrationism within the United States.

The 1990s saw an unprecedented increase in spending on border security, particularly after 1996, as the federal government attempted to forcefully curtail illegal immigration across the U.S.-Mexico border. The Immigration Act of 1990 reformulated some technical immigration processes, including reformulating visa preferences and some clauses governing legal entry, but it had very little impact on Mexican migratory flows. In 1994 California's Proposition 187[10] (Prop 187) gave political voice to, and became representative of, a growing anti-immigration contingent, not only in California, but across the U.S. During the 1990s, changes to the public benefits system in the United States made publically redistributed resources unavailable to immigrants, no matter their legal status.[11] The immigration focus within the United States, both in terms of government action and public sentiment, increasingly focused on undocumented Mexican immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border even though the majority of immigrants to the U.S. were neither undocumented nor crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. (Heyman, 1998, pp. 26-27)

In the mid-1990s the federal government reacted to anti-immigrant pressures with a border crackdown that increased spending in unprecedented amounts. The crackdown focused

[10] California's Proposition 187 (Prop 187) was a ballot-initiative that established a state-run citizenship screening system. It was the first time a state had passed legislation related to immigration. It banned illegal aliens from access to public education, health care, and other social services within the state of California and required law enforcement agents and other state agents to report any person they suspected of being in violation of immigration laws to both the state and federal authorities. Prop 187 was challenged in court almost immediately upon its passage in November 1994 and was ultimately found unconstitutional by the federal courts.

[11] Fix and Passell have shown that the majority of immigrants do not come to the United States for public benefit programs. (Fix & Passel, 1994, pp. 62-63)

on drug enforcement and illegal immigration and military style "Operations" were launched at various high-profile regions across the border.[12] In February 1994, then Attorney General Janet Reno and INS Commissioner Doris Meissner implemented a border enforcement strategy designed to treat the border as a "single, seamless entity" (INS) and the federal government launched the following Operations: 1) Operation Hold-The-Line (originally Operation Blockade) in the El Paso Sector, Texas, 1993; 2) Operation Gatekeeper in the San Diego Sector, California, 1994; 3) Operation Safeguard in the Tucson Sector, Arizona, 1995; and 4) Operation Rio Grande in the McAllen and Laredo Sectors, Texas, 1997. No similar Operations were launched on the U.S.-Canada border.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act of 1996 continued a growing trend of focusing immigration policy on controlling illegal immigration. It promoted a policy of "prevention through deterrence," a policy that continues today. It authorized the hiring of one thousand new Border Patrol agents every year until 2001 and significantly increased spending on technical surveillance, providing funding for infrared scopes, night-vision goggles, underground sensors, and IDENT terminals. IDENT is an automated fingerprint identification system. Border fencing was also added at key points and new roads were constructed and paved for Border Patrol vehicles along the river with mobile light towers to light the border at night.

Post 9/11

After the events of September 11, 2001, the federal government established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which began operating in 2003 with an annual budget of $37 billion that has only increased since that time. In 2012 DHS requested a budget of $57

[12] For detailed examinations of the effects and repurcussions of militarizing the border, see Dunn, Timothy. (1996) The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border 1978-1992: Low Intensity Doctrine Conflict Comes Home. Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas at Austin and (1998) Blockading the Border and Human Rights: The El Paso Operation that Remade Immigration Enforcement. Austin: University of Texas Press

billion from the federal government. (DHS, 2012) The creation of the Department of Homeland Security was the largest and most significant reorganization of the federal government since the early days of the Cold War. (Andreas, 2003) Not only did DHS establish new agencies and departments, many existing agencies were folded into DHS, including the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) and the United States Coast Guard.[13] INS, Customs, and the Border Patrol were all placed under the control of DHS and reformed into different agencies. Currently the various aspects of immigration and border security are primarily handled by three different departments within DHS: (1) US Citizenship and Immigration Services; (2) US Customs and Border Protection; and (3) U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services department is responsible for processing and examining citizenship, residency, and asylum requests. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection functions as the law enforcement branch. It polices the international borders and enforces immigration, customs, and agriculture laws while monitoring all U.S. ports-of-entry. The third branch, ICE, is further divided into two bureaus, one of which focuses on investigating and enforcing national and international criminal activities believed to threaten the homeland (Homeland Security Investigations). The other bureau (Enforcement and Removal Operations) investigates violations of the Immigration and Nationality Act as well as handling the detention and removal or deportation of individuals who have violated U.S. immigration law. Even though the attacks of September 11th were perpetrated by individuals who had been issued visas by the United States and thus were not in the country due to a lack of border security at either the Mexican or Canadian borders with the United States, both the political consequences of and financial budgetary decisions made in the wake of 9/11 were heavily focused on "border

[13]DHS also houses the Transportation Security Administration (aviation, land, and water transportation security), the United States Coast Guard, the United States Secret Services, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

security" including large budgetary and security personnel increases and legislative and policy changes. The U.S. Patriot Act of 2001 significantly increased the federal enforcement, surveillance, and detention powers of the United States government. (Andreas, 2003)

In addition to the creation of DHS and the expansion of border security and immigration enforcement, the federal government also changed the travel and passport requirements for travel within the Western Hemisphere, changing the rules for travel between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Caribbean nations and the Bahamas. On January 23, 2007 the federal government initiated Phase 1 of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), meaning that people traveling by air between the United States and other Western Hemisphere nations were now required to carry passports. Previously travelers were not required to carry passports and merely had to show a government issued ID or a birth certificate, and in practice many travelers, particularly white travelers, were simply asked to verbally confirm their citizenship. On June 1, 2009 Phase 2 of the WHTI was enacted and the new travel requirements went into effect for land and water travel as well as air travel. In order to expedite travel across the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders for frequent travelers, individuals can apply for entry into one of the "Trusted Traveler Programs". The trusted traveler programs are NEXUS, SENTRI, and FAST. Individuals are pre-approved for expedited travel by land. In practice this means they can cross the border using special lanes rather than having to wait in the lengthy lines that have sprung up as more and more border security regulations go into effect, rather like taking the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) commuter lanes during rush hours on urban highways.

U.S. citizens can either apply for a regular passport or they can apply for a U.S. passport card, which is less expensive than a full passport is only valid for travel to Canada, Mexico, the

Caribbean and Bermuda via land or sea. Michigan, New York, Vermont, and Washington states are also currently offering enhanced driver's licenses that prove citizenship and can be used to cross the border into Canada via land and sea. (WHTI, 2012) While the new passport requirements may not at first glance seem like a significant change, in many cases the cost of obtaining even the cheaper passport card for every member of a family has proved cost prohibitive and many of my informants find themselves stranded on one side of the border unable to visit family members who live on the other side, most often grandparents. The new passport requirements have, at least in the short term, fundamentally changed the patterns of crossing in border towns to the financial detriment of local businesses on both sides of the border. In addition the insurmountable financial barriers of obtaining the passports has resulted not only in the emotional pain of dividing family who live only miles from one another but it has also limited the buying power of these families who for generations have crossed the border for affordable health care and household necessities when they could not afford them on the U.S. side of the border. (interviews with informants, 2008-2009)

State Legislation concerning Immigration

In recent years individual states have started legislating immigration within the state boundaries, arguing that the federal government has failed to enforce its own laws to the detriment of specific states and thus they feel they have the right to 'take matters into their own hands.' Perhaps the most well-known of these laws is Arizona's SB1070 law[14], which when it passed in April of 2010, was both the broadest and strictest U.S. anti-illegal immigration legislation in recent years. Since its passage sections of the law have been struck down while others have been narrowed in their implementation, but it remains a problematic immigration law

[14] SB 1070 is shorthand for the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act.

for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it encroaches on the federal government's previously exclusive jurisdiction over U.S. immigration. SB 1070 made it a state misdemeanor for a non-citizen to be in Arizona without carry proper immigration papers with them at all times. In addition, it required state law enforcement officers to ask for that documentation from anyone they suspected might be in the country without the proper papers during any "lawful stop, detention or arrest" or during a "lawful contact". (Act of April, 23, 2012, ch 113, 2010 Ariz. Sess. Laws page no. 100) In practice this meant that state law enforcement officers would be required to ask for immigration papers from any individual whom they might suspect of being undocumented during routine traffic stops, or while issuing a speeding ticket, or even when speaking with people in the course of regular investigations. Many state law enforcement officers protested that this law would negatively impact their ability to perform their main duties, protecting and serving the community, because it would erode the Hispanic community's trust in law enforcement and make people less willing to come forward to either report crimes or act as witnesses. (Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police, 2010)

Critics of the law argued that the law encouraged racial profiling because state law enforcement officers would be required by law to ask suspected "illegals" for papers and realistically the main reason for suspicion would be a person's ethnicity. Thus it would become problematic for any Hispanic in the state of Arizona to have any dealings with the police. Not only would non-citizens, whether legal or illegal, be targeted, but American citizens of Hispanic origin would have to carry legal documentation of their citizenship status at all times, something that the United States does not require of its citizens. The law allowed for any individual to be detained on suspicion of being in the county illegally, meaning that a citizen who was suspected of being an illegal alien could be detained by the police and put in jail until such time as the

police were able to verify that individual's citizenship. While verifying citizenship might seem a simple matter, it is actually neither simple nor quick, as the local police would have to contact federal authorities who would then need to track down that individual's records, which are not necessarily in a national database. They would need to know where the person was born and even then it can be very complicated to determine who has been detained if the individual shares a name with anyone else, think John Smith or Juan Lopez. Thus the Arizona law was not only granting police officers the right to trample on individual citizen's rights, it was requiring them to do so. In spite of the controversy over the Arizona law, both Alabama and Georgia followed suit with similar laws.

The United States Department of Justice sued Arizona over the law in *Arizona v. United States* and on June 25, 2012 the Court ruled that Sections 3, 5 (C), and 6 are preempted by federal law, thus striking down those provisions. The sections struck from the law were: (1) Legal immigrants are required to carry registration documents at all times; (2) State police are allowed to arrest individuals they suspect of being undocumented; (3) It is a crime for illegal immigrants to either search for or hold a job within Arizona. (Arizona et al v. United States 132 S.Ct. 2492 (2012)) The federal courts have so far continued to block specific provisions of these laws, arguing that they violate constitutional rights and undermine federal laws. It is important to note, however, that the courts have allowed the provision for police officers to check the immigration papers of people they suspect of being undocumented.

Immigration Reform Debates

Individual state's passing their own immigration bills are just a part of the larger debates over comprehensive immigration reform, a form of state grandstanding if you will, on the part of Republican state legislatures who claim that they are only taking matters into their own hands

because the federal government has "failed" to act. What they mean of course, is that the federal government has failed to act as they would wish, and it is not a coincidence that these state bills were passed while the Democrats held control of the White House, and in the case of SB 1070, while the Democrats still held both the Senate and the House before the 2010 elections swept the Tea Party into the House over Democrats. It is important to note that despite claims that President Obama has not done anything about immigration or border security, under his administration the United States has actually increased deportations . (PEW, 2011) and spending on border security, including but not limited to the border fence, has continued to go up each year.

The federal government has been in gridlock over the issue of comprehensive immigration reform for decades as bill after bill has been struck down by both Republicans and Democrats. Immigration has become both a political football and a political nightmare, with neither side of the political aisle particularly willing to step too far into the complicated mess of overhauling the current piecemeal immigration system, mostly because there has been, at least until recently, no political gain big enough to take on the political losses that most certainly would ensue. There are many political landmines in the immigration debate, but the largest of them is probably the issue of what to do about the estimated 12 million undocumented people currently in the United States. Amnesty has become a dirty word but at the same time almost everyone agrees that it would be next to impossible and certainly cost prohibitive to deport all of the individuals currently living in the United States without legal current paperwork.

One of the other major debates in the immigration debate has been over the Dream Act,[15] first introduced in the Senate on August 1, 2001 by Senators Dick Durbin (D) and Orrin Hatch (R). Opponents of immigration reform, and specifically of amnesty, generally make two primary claims about immigration and why it should be more severely limited. The first, and probably most politically influential, is a financial argument about the cost of "supporting" immigrants being too great (the "America just can't afford it" argument). This argument ranges from people arguing that there is already too much poverty in the United States and that the government needs to take care of citizens first and foremost to those claiming that immigrants are just coming here for government handouts, ignoring the fact that non-citizens are not eligible for such government assistance such as food stamps or Medicaid.[16]

The other main argument used against immigration is the assimilation argument, the crux of which is that immigrants, particularly Mexican immigrants, are not learning English or "becoming" American fast enough. This argument ignores the fact that, compared to white European immigrants in the 20th century, current Mexican immigrants are actually learning English at a faster. (Fennelly, 2010) As for the "becoming American" portion of the assimilation argument, cultural assimilation, particularly within a nation as diverse as the United States is a very difficult thing to gauge, mostly because it is hard to measure such an amorphous and

[15] DREAM Act stands for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. Although different versions of the DREAM Act have been introduced in the last decade the basics remain the same. The DREAM Act would grant legal status to immigrants who meet the following qualifications: 1)Were brought to the United States before turning 16 years of age and are no older than 30; 2) Have been in the United States for a minimum of five years; 3) Have never been convicted of a serious crime; 4) Have a high-school diploma, high-school equivalency such as a GED, or have served in the U.S. military. Some versions of the bill also require that the immigrant be actively enrolled in college or university classes, serving in the military, or holding down a job.

[16] The most common exception to this law is when undocumented mothers receive government benefits on behalf of their American children, who are eligible for assistance. In this case it is not the mother who is receiving the benefits but the child, although the mother will be the individual using those benefits to purchase food either through food stamps or WIC (Women, Infants, and Children). In some states, such as Texas, during her pregnancy an undocumented mother is also eligible for Medicaid, the theory being that she will be giving birth to an American citizen who will benefit from its mother receiving proper prenatal medical care.

indefinable quality. It would be difficult to make the claim that a native New Yorker who has never lived outside of the city shares the exact same cultural traditions and understandings as a farmer from Iowa but both are equally American. And yet the argument about the speed of assimilation continues to be trotted out whenever someone wants to object to whatever it is they have deemed "un-American" about individuals who are actively seeking to become American citizens.

The Dream Act has been through various iterations since it was first introduced in 2001 but at its core it remains a bill that would provide either conditional legal permanent resident status or a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who meet its conditions. If anti-immigration concerns are at root about economics and assimilation, one might expect that a piece of legislation like the Dream Act would be easily accepted, as only immigrants who are in, or have successfully completed, college or a military tour would benefit from the legislation. In addition, these individuals have to have been children when they entered the U.S. without proper documentation, meaning that they did not knowingly or of their own volition break any laws. It is their parents who remain culpable. In addition immigrants eligible for the Dream Act would need to have graduated from a U.S. high school, or have earned a high school equivalency such as the G.E.D. in the U.S., and have lived continuously within the U.S. for a minimum of five years. And finally, they would already need to speak English, a major complaint of the anti-immigrant side of the debate. But the Dream Act is not proving an easy bill to pass. Instead, anti-immigrant advocates argue that it rewards lawbreakers, if not the children, then their parents and more specifically their mothers, and would only encourage more women to bring their children to the U.S. where they would continue to have babies that would then be U.S. citizens. Instead of passing the Dream Act, the anti-immigrant advocates are calling for the passage of

legislation that would deny these women's children citizenship even if they are born in the U.S. And in recent years both state and federal legislators have introduced, or considered introducing laws that would deny citizenship to babies born to immigrants in the United States. (Preston, 2011)

In a recent development, President Obama issued an executive action in June of 2012 that granted immigrants who would be affected by the DREAM Act a temporary reprieve from deportation as well as work-authorization papers to work legally in the United States. (Obama, 2012) Immigrants must apply with the federal government to be granted the reprieve and the work papers but Dreamers, as the young immigrants who qualify call themselves, have been coming out in large numbers to take advantage of the opportunity to come out of the shadows and these numbers are expected to increase now that President Obama has been re-elected for a second term. There was some trepidation about applying before the 2012 elections as there was some fear that if Romney was elected President he would reverse the executive order and take action against anyone who had already applied for the program. Currently the executive order is set to expire in two years. There is expectation that the DREAM Act will be passed in the next two years along with a comprehensive immigration reform bill, although Obama has indicated that if this does not happen he will extend the executive order.

Conclusion

As this short, and admittedly narrowly focused, history has shown, the history of immigration policy in the United States is a history of conflicting interests and the intersection of business and labor with cultural expectations about what it means to be an American. American businesses, and agribusiness in particular, has had a driving influence on immigration policy within the U.S. as the need for inexpensive labor has led business leaders to lobby for

immigration policies, that if not friendly to immigrants, has at least left loopholes in enforcement allowing businesses to continue to profit from hiring "illegal" labor. At the same time everyday Americans have come to fear immigrant labor, arguing that it drives down wages for citizens and fosters job insecurity. The exploitation of undocumented workers does allow businesses to profit at the expense of their workers but it is also true that many immigrants are willing to do jobs that many Americans would not want to do.

In truth the fear of immigrants and immigration is driven more by fears of cultural contamination and the loss of a white non-urban America than by the fear that a low-skilled immigrant is going to steal American jobs. In fact there continues to be high demand for highly educated, higher-skilled workers. But fears of job loss and wage deflation, particularly in the manufacturing sector, are real concerns and immigrants serve as easy scapegoats. Changing labor needs and global capital flows combined with the ability to place manufacturing plants in other nations where safety regulations are looser and wage rates significantly lower has resulted in many businesses closing their American plants in favor of overseas production. While American workers are aware of this, these fears still get projected onto immigrants, particularly those from Latin America, and Mexico in particular. And it is not just about job loss. Americans fear losing the "America they grew up in" and as America moves closer to being a majority-minority nation, immigrants become the target for this fear. As the fastest growing minority group, Hispanics bear the brunt of much of this immigrant-bashing born of fear. As the rest of this dissertation will explore, the fear of immigrants and immigration has also combined with fears of terrorism resulting in a political climate that not only made the construction of a border wall possible, it continues to foster anti-immigration legislation and increase border security spending.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Fieldwork for this dissertation was conducted in the Rio Grande Valley in south Texas over the 2009 calendar year with funding from the National Science Foundation. Chapter 2: Methodology covers the multi-method approach used in this study, explaining the various methods used and why each one was useful for the project. It provides an overview of the research design, including how it was initiated and implemented. I situate myself as a researcher and explain my multi-method approach of participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, archival research, and Respondent Driven Sampling.

Finally, the chapter reports on the findings from the Respondent Driven Sampling methodology, which generated data on the social barriers between groups within the sample population through homophily and affiliation scores. The homophily and affiliation scores provide concrete data on the social barriers that exist between different groups, including categories of citizenship. It is important to note that citizenship does still operate as a social barrier. This would indicate that the shift in identity politics from citizenship as a primary category of difference to race and ethnicity is still in progress, the result of a recent shift that has not yet had time to affect sizeable changes to local social networks. That citizenship would operate as a sizeable social barrier among local residents is not surprising and neither is it incongruous with my respondents' tendency to emphasize racial and ethnic solidarity over national solidarity when discussing the border wall or immigration with me. Citizenship has always operated as a significant and concrete category of difference. What citizenship an individual holds has a direct impact on that individual's life, not just in terms of identity, but in terms of everyday access to employment, benefits, education, and healthcare among other things. Immigrants who live and work in the U.S. without the proper paperwork live much of their lives in the shadows, attempting to make a living and take care of their families without risking undue

attention by the authorities. While it would be difficult to find an individual in the Rio Grande borderlands who does not know an undocumented immigrant, this does not mean that they move in the same social circles. Undocumented immigrants have a vested interest in keeping to themselves and Mexican-American U.S. citizens have also, until quite recently, tended to stress the differences between themselves and Mexicans (both in Mexico and in the U.S.) as a way of reinforcing their own status as Americans. Citizenship is a complicated and nuanced concept, particularly in the borderlands, and even as the cultural ties to Mexico and Mexicans were acknowledged and celebrated, the rights of citizenship were also fiercely protected, often through language, and actions, that drew sharp divisions between Mexican-Americans and Mexicans.

While many family, friendship, and occupational social ties cross the citizenship line, it remains a real social barrier that has been reinforced from both sides of the divide for many reasons. That the Respondent Driven Sampling data provides evidence that citizenship remains a social barrier is thus not surprising and strengthens my conclusion that identity shifting established in the other data sets is a recent event directly resulting from the federal state's actions in building the border wall.

Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for the dissertation, explaining how each research method was essential to the project, as well as how they all connect with each other. Further, it provides evidence that citizenship plays a critical role in identity construction and social networking in the borderlands, making its rejection as a category of identity by borderland residents faced with the border wall of critical significance to scholars of the borderlands.

Situating myself within the field

While the fieldwork for this dissertation was conducted during a single calendar year, 2009, in many ways this project had been ongoing for many years before fieldwork began. I

conducted preliminary fieldwork for several years before beginning the formal research for the project, including following local media sources and building relationships with local borderland residents. In addition, I was born in the lower Rio Grande Valley and spent the first 18 years of my life in the Laguna Madre area, approximately 20 minutes outside of Brownsville, Texas, where the majority of the research was conducted. I have regularly returned to the area for summers and vacations since I left for college in 1994 and in 2004 I returned to Port Isabel, Texas for a period of a year and a half to set up an afterschool program for the local middle school. In addition, my father's family has lived in the area since the early 1800s and in many ways the Rio Grande Valley functions as a small town, meaning that this history allowed certain doors to be open to me because of my "native" and familial status.

More directly related to the research described in this dissertation, my parents continue to live in the Laguna Madre area and my father became quite active in the anti-border wall movement after the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006 was passed. Like many borderland natives he was surprised and even shocked when the Act passed, having dismissed my concerns for years (as the fears of a young person who doesn't know enough to believe that eventually common sense will prevail). With the passage of the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006 my father not only began to worry, he contacted an activist from Del Rio, Texas, a border town further north along the river, whom he had seen on local television. The local news had reported that Jay Castro was about to begin A Walk Against the Wall in Laredo, Texas, which would end in Brownsville several weeks later. My father called Jay and left the next day in his truck to provide vehicle support for the walk. This proved to be the first of many walks, rallies, and other anti-wall and pro-cross-border promotion events my father would attend. Interestingly, until construction began in Brownsville, many people continued to assure my father that the wall

would never be built and that he should trust that common sense would prevail. His activism, however, opened yet other doors for my research.

All of this is to explain that in many ways I functioned as a native anthropologist, with both the advantages and disadvantages that come with that status (Aguilar 1981; Blum 2006; Bunzl and Matti 2004; Messerschmidt 1981a, 1981b Narayan 1993; Ohnuki-Tierney 1984; Ryang 2005) I may have had increased access to certain individuals or a unique understanding of the area and its people, but I also recognize that with such familiarity comes an unavoidable loss of objectivity and the possibility of blind spots in my perception of the problem. I have strived to avoid such a blind spot in my analysis and can only hope that with the help of my committee and colleagues I have done just that.

I relocated back to Texas in May of 2008 to prepare for fieldwork and begin both reinforcing existing contacts and making new ones in anticipation of beginning fieldwork the following calendar year. While no interviews were conducted before 2009, I did contact people at the University of Texas at Brownsville, as well as other local residents and stakeholders, to inform them that I would be interested in interviewing them once my fieldwork began and I had received my human subjects research clearance. Almost everyone I contacted had something to say about the border wall and was willing and often eager to speak to me.

I also contacted Dr. Antonio Zavaleta, who was then serving as the Vice President for External Affairs for UTB as well as temporary Provost, to discuss the possibility of establishing a formal connection with the University. Dr. Zavaleta is also from an old Brownsville-Matamoros family and had recently been in contact with my father through my father's activist activities. Dr. Zavaleta arranged for my appointment as a Cross Border Institute for Research and Development (CBIRD) Research Fellow, providing me with an office at UTB's International

Technology, Education, and Commerce Center (ITECC), located approximately one mile from the main campus. This office provided me with a neutral space in which to conduct the survey interviews and my official affiliation with UTB also helped to legitimate my study in the eyes of many locals, making it easier to recruit initial seeds for the survey and easing the minds of the participants whom the initial seeds recruited.

My research design utilized a multi-methods approach that incorporated participant-observation, archival research, semi-structured interviews with border stakeholders, and a Respondent Driven Sampling Survey designed to elicit common borderland responses to questions of immigration and border security.

Participant Observation

While the formal interviews and respondent driven sampling survey form the core of this dissertation, the informal interactions I had with people in their everyday lives as I went about both fieldwork and my own daily life formed the backdrop for the entire study. During my fieldwork the border wall was a common topic of conversation among many locals even before they were aware of my research, and I found that almost everyone had an opinion they wanted to express after they found out about my study. I did my best to let each person express their own feelings on the subject before answering their inevitable questions about my own opinions. Once they had shared their thoughts with me, however, I generally told them how I felt about the wall; to avoid doing so placed us in the uncomfortable position of "researcher" and "subject," positions that felt particularly incongruous in what amounts to my "homeland." Instead I found it more honest and generally more conducive to further conversation to share my own thoughts on the subject with people. I followed the same pattern when people brought up the subjects of immigration and immigrants, another common topic in the area.

As a white native of the Rio Grande Valley, I am well aware of the racial and ethnic barriers that can and do exist in the area, but I have found that even the most wary individuals will relax and accept my "native" status as either more or equally important to my racial status as long as I am honest about my opinions and open to conversation. It helps that my speech patterns have a local cadence to them and that I am comfortable with both the people and the area, having grown up there. To avoid answering people's questions about my own opinions in the interest of preserving a frankly fictional objectivism would have hampered this acceptance, however, making it difficult or even impossible to continue talking with informants in a productive manner.[17] I must also acknowledge, however, that for certain locals, my ethnicity has a different effect, one that while uncomfortable for me, does allow me certain access to a different mindset. Socifically, my "racial status" often was assumed by some segments of the community to indicate a subjectivity that remains uncomfortable with immigration and Hispanics in general, and which supports the border wall as a barrier to further immigration. To put it bluntly, some people, and not all of them white themselves, felt surprisingly comfortable telling a "white" researcher that they think Mexican immigrants are poor and dirty and bad for America and that they hope the wall will keep them out.

It would be impossible to list the entirety of locations where such informal interactions took place as they occurred during my daily activities over the entire course of my fieldwork. Checkout clerks and baggers at grocery stores would talk to me about the wall. I would find

[17] I am not arguing that I should not be held to an objective standard, or even that I should not hold myself to a standard of objectivity in my work. I am merely pointing out that I have my own opinions on the border wall, immigration, and national security and to pretend to my informants that this was not the case would not only be deceptive and ring false, but would create a divide between me, as the ethnographer, and my informants that would hamper my ability to obtain honest opinions for my research. It is up to me as the researcher to be as truthful as possible with my informants as a form of respect in the hopes that they will reciprocate both with honesty and respect. For more on the debates about the possibility of objectivity in anthropology and ethnography, please see Conquergood 1991; Clifford and Marcus 1986; D'Andrade 1995; Geertz 1988; Rosaldo 1989; Tyler 1986

myself discussing immigration and the need for reform at restaurants with wait staff or other patrons. Students at the local schools where I worked part-time would find out about my research from a teacher and want to talk to me about their or their parents' stories. Former students of mine who were new to the United States when I first knew them and who were now applying for college wanted to talk to me about my research and share their thoughts on both the wall and immigration. Friends and acquaintances and local colleagues talked to me about the wall: I found myself talking about immigration and the border after my yoga class, at the gas station, while buying water at bodegas out in the country, at local wildlife refuges and national parks, with other dog owners while out walking my dog. There was nowhere I went where the topic might not come up. And so, for the duration of my fieldwork, I lived and breathed borders and walls and immigration.

My method for recording these interactions was straightforward. During my time in the field I developed the habit of taking time most days to engage in a freewriting exercise in which I wrote down my impressions of how the fieldwork was going, whom I had met and talked to recently, where my thoughts were on the project, and any other impressions of my daily life. These daily writing sessions and my field journals were where I recorded my interactions with other locals, writing down my impressions about the things that people had told me and the opinions they had shared with me. Occasionally I took out a notebook and wrote things down as people told them to me, but this was a rare occurrence as I found that conversations tended to flow more smoothly when I kept my notebook safely in my bag. Instead I would take out my notebook afterwards, if there was time, or record my thoughts during that day's writing exercise. As I knew that I would take more direct research notes during formal interviews and while administering the survey, I felt it was more important to preserve the natural flow of

conversation during informal interactions, maintaining my status as participant as much as observer. At its core these exercises functioned in large part as my field diary, recording my mundane daily thoughts and feelings as much as my research frustrations and breakthroughs but the process became an important part of my fieldwork and I have frequently referred back to thoughts recorded in the journal while writing this dissertation.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In the spring of 2009 I began conducting semi-structured long interviews with border stakeholders. Starting in the spring of 2009 and concluding in early 2010, I met with and interviewed local, state, and federal officials, local University administrators and personnel, and local property and business owners. During these interviews I collected individual event-based narratives about the construction of the border wall and its impact on informants' lives. Event-based narratives provide evidence not simply of the events themselves, but of their construction from a common set of taken-for-granted understandings about the people, issues, and realities involved in the events, and the ways they are causally interrelated. (Harkin 1988; Bourdieu 1977; Pachter 1974) It is a versatile method best employed for getting to know the 'lived experience' of local informants, and the manner in which that experience is framed by social conventions, practices, and unstated assumptions. (Bernard 2002: 206)

Each interview was approximately two hours long. As each informant had a distinct relationship to both the border wall and the border itself, it was not practical to develop an interview questionnaire or schedule that could be used with each informant. It simply would not have made sense to ask someone suing the federal government over the private land the same questions as a border patrol officer or an activist without land. I did ask each stakeholder

questions about their opinions on the wall and how they first became involved in the border wall controversy. I also kept in contact with each stakeholder for follow-up questions.

In general each interview began with an explanation of who I was and what I was researching. I would explain that I was an anthropologist working on my doctorate and that I was conducting research for my dissertation on the fight against the border wall in Brownsville, Texas. This meant that I was interviewing local people who were involved in the border wall controversy and that as an anthropologist it was important for me to collect stories from people, that their stories would form the backdrop for my research and help me tell not only their story but the larger story of the area's struggle to deal with both the border wall and the changes it brought about. I found that informants felt more comfortable with me if they understood both who I was and the basics of my research. It helped not only put them at ease but helped them to understand how their stories and opinions mattered to my work. I would then tell them that I simply wanted to hear their story and then prompt them by asking how they first became involved in the border wall controversy. This was generally enough to get the conversation going and further questions were tailored to fit the discussion.

Each interview was conducted at a place of the informant's choosing as I wanted them to be as relaxed as possible. As a result each interview, with the exception of two informants who happened to both choose to meet at the coffee shop on UTB's campus, were conducted in distinct locations.[18] Several informants chose their private offices at their place of work while I interviewed a few people at their homes and others at coffee shops or restaurants and yet another at an outdoor table under trees on a college campus in McAllen, Texas. I took care to make sure

[18] (In practice even these two interviews were conducted in different locales as one informant chose to talk indoors in a corner of the coffee shop while sitting in comfortable armchairs while the other chose to sit out on the patio in 25mph winds and a pleasant 80 degrees before the winds threatened to blow my notebook away and we moved inside to finish the interview in a secluded corner of the bookstore.

that each location provided as much privacy as possible. This was easy to accomplish in private offices or homes and I found that even public coffee shops provide a certain measure of privacy as steady noise levels cover up the specifics of most conversations.

This dissertation draws on the data gathered from 15 of those interviews. The interviews were not taped due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the tendency of most informants to feel nervous discussing their critical feelings about, and in some cases their legal battles with, the federal government. Instead I wrote extensive notes during each interview, including the notation of direct quotes from each informant when it was important to have the informant's exact words rather than a paraphrased statement. Following every interview I would immediately write down further impressions and notes on the interview so that my comments would be as fresh as possible. The interview notes were then typed up and entered into Maxqda, a qualitative data analysis software program, where they were coded for further analysis. I coded the data to look for patterns in each respondent's stories, their opinions about the wall and the government, and their feelings about how the wall was changing the area.

Archival Research

During my time in the field I read a number of blogs that dealt with issues concerning immigration and the construction of the border wall. I also followed local and national media sources including newspapers, magazines, and television and radio coverage for stories about the border wall, immigration, and national security policies. The blogs included smartborders.wordpress.com, nonviolentmigration.wordpress.com, notexasborderwall.blogspot.com, www.borderlinesblog.blogspot.com, and blogs.swarthmore.edu/borderwall. I regularly read the local paper *The Brownsville Herald* and the local internet newspaper *The Rio Grande Guardian* (riograndeguardian.com). I watched the

local news daily news programs on KRGV (local ABC affiliate), KVEO (local NBC affiliate), and KGBT (local CBS affiliate). In addition I followed coverage of the border and immigration on the national news channels (CNN, FOX, and MSNBC) and read national newspaper and magazine coverage (most often *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post* and *The Washington Times*) and regional state publications such as *The Texas Observer* and *Texas Monthly.*

Respondent Driven Survey

Soliciting interviews and building a sampling frame for border residents and border crossers during a time of heightened insecurity about these very issues presented a significant problem. Yet given my status as a quasi-native anthropologist with strong feelings on the issues at the center of the research, I sought a more objective means to assess the breadth of opinions and thoughts on these topics that was not restricted to my established social circle, and which would prove open to a variety of responses to a variety of constituencies, including those in the U.S. illegally at the time of the interview.

To remedy this situation, I chose to use a peer driven sampling methodology, referred to as Respondent Driven Sampling (Heckathorn 2002, 2007; Magnani et al. 2005).[19] Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) uses an incentivized peer recruitment strategy to reach populations not amenable to conventional random sampling methods. In RDS, interviewees are paid for participating in the interview, and provided the opportunity to recruit up to three others—ordinarily members of their own social circle—who would also be willing to participate in the research interview, and receive the same interview fee. For each eligible recruitment, the

recruiter receives a recruitment bonus. The recruitment process is managed with the use of unique, numbered coupons.

Thus when a respondent comes in for an interview, his/her recruitment coupon number is recorded as the main respondent identifier. After the interview, the respondent is paid for the interview and given instruction on the eligibility of respondents for the survey, and then given three new coupons to give to eligible associates. After a period of, normally, one to two weeks, the original respondent returns, and the database is searched to determine if any of his/her coupons were presented by interviewees. He/she is then paid for the successful recruitments.

With each new interview, the process is repeated. The result is that a large number of recruitment coupons come into general circulation fairly quickly, usually expanding out from the initial "seeds" in geometric progression. The advantages of this system are several:

- All respondents after the initial seeds come to the interview having already spoken with a peer who had completed the interview process. This ensures a high level of research transparency, as well as maintaining the privacy of potential research subjects who do not wish to participate (as they never enter the research process or encounter the researcher because no direct recruitment takes place by the researcher herself).
- Anonymity can be maintained via the use of numbered coupons, while still allowing the researcher to take advantage of the social connections and contacts of the interviewees.
- A diversity of populations can be explored once the coupons begin circulating within that particular social network, ensuring broad-based recruitment despite a single recruitment strategy.

- And given sufficient sampling depth—a sufficient number of recruitment "waves", mathematical sampling models can allow for population-wide estimates which correct for issues like homophily (the tendency of individuals to recruit other "like" themselves in some way—such as age, gender, or ethnicity).[20]

Using the Respondent Driven Sampling methodology, in the fall of 2009 over the course of two months (beginning at the end of September 2009 and concluding in mid November 2009) I recruited and interviewed over 260 residents from both sides of the border via a chain referral system. (Heckathorn 2002; Wang et al 2005) 258 of the collected surveys were useful for this study.[21] Initial seeds were selected to insure representatives with different education backgrounds, citizenship statuses, socio-economic classes and genders, a profile designed to represent population categories often featured in national level discourses on "border zones." Following RDS protocols, interviewees were paid $15 for their interview, and a recruitment fee of $10 was paid for referrals who agreed to participate in the study. The survey asked a series of 72 fixed-choice and 8 open-ended questions designed to assess the respondents' feelings about immigrations, border enforcement, border crossing, international commerce and trafficking, and federal/state activity in the local community. It also collected demographic information including income, housing status, length of residence, and immigration history data.

[20] C. Wejnert, "An Empirical Test of Respondent-Driven Sampling: Point Estimates, Variance, Degree Measures, and Out-of-Equilibrium Data," *Sociological methodology* 39, no. 1 (2009): 73–116; D. D Heckathorn, "Extensions of Respondent-Driven Sampling: Analyzing Continuous. Variables and Controlling for Differential Recruitment," *Sociological Methodology* 37, no. 1 (2007): 151–207; Cyprian Wejnert, "Social network analysis with respondent-driven sampling data: A study of racial integration on campus," *Social Networks* 32, no. 2 (May 2010): 112-124; Cyprian Wejnert et al., "The Dual Homophily Model: Disentangling the Effects of Affiliation Preference and Differential Degree on Homophily.," *Conference Papers -- American Sociological Association* (Annual Meeting 2008 2008): 1; Matthew J. Salganik and Douglas D. Heckathorn, "Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations Using Respondent-Driven Sampling.," *Sociological Methodology* 34, no. 1 (December 2004): 193-239.

[21] . A small number of the survey questionnaires were not complete enough to include in the final data set. This was generally because an informant had opted to skip questions during the course of the survey, resulting in a questionnaire that did not include key data, either demographic data and/or qualitative opinion data.

Employing fixed-choice questions was an efficient technique for the collection of data which can then be compared across predetermined social categories, including gender, legal status, and length of residence in this border area. Using SPSS, I analyzed the statistical data for multivariate, positive and negative correlation. The RDS software used to keep track of the survey participants also allowed for the generation of estimates for various population segments and homophily figures for their interaction. While fixed-choice questions have advantages for data analysis, open-ended questions are generally better suited to obtaining responses to inquiries of a more sensitive nature. (Bernard 2006; Schaeffer, 2000) As with the event narratives collected in the semi-structured interview with border stakeholders, discourse analysis of more open-ended questions invokes classic ethnomethodological insights into attitudes, dispositions, and collective co-constructions of everyday symbols and meanings. (Kulick 1998)

In preparation for the survey 500 coupons were printed up and stamped with unique identification numbers between 1001 and 1500. An example of the coupon is provided in Appendix A. Each coupon explained that the holder of the coupon was entitled to participate in a research project answering questions about their opinions on the border wall and would receive $15 as compensation for their participation and might also receive the chance to earn more money by recruiting other participants. The coupon also provided information on where and when to go to participate. Due to lack of space the information was provided in English only. I did not anticipate that this would be a problem as I expected that non-English speakers would know someone who could explain the coupon to them and as this was a survey based on participants recruiting other participants I predicted that participants would be getting most of their information on the project from the person who recruited them rather than the coupon itself.

My hypothesis proved true and despite the English coupon, 44.2% of all survey participants chose to take the test in Spanish.

The survey was administered at my office on UTB's ITECC campus. I held open office hours for the survey on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 3pm and on Saturdays from 12pm to 5pm. Each coupon also provided two phone numbers that participants could call to make an appointment outside of office hours. Limited office hours were required because on days when large numbers of participants came by the office it was necessary to stay long past office hours to complete the day's interviews. The time limit provided an acceptable cut-off time for the day's waiting list.[22]

I selected five initial participants to serve as seeds for the survey. I chose contacts from the community who I knew to have a large number of local contacts across a wide socio-economic stratum and who were representative of different education backgrounds, citizenship statuses, socio-economic classes and genders, a profile designed to represent population categories often featured in national level discourses on the U.S.-Mexico border. None of the seeds moved in the same social circles although the area is small enough that it is possible that they might have met one another at some point outside of my knowledge. All of the initial seeds had strong ties to the community and had lived in the area for an extended period of time. They had different levels of education ranging from a high school education to Master's degrees and

[22] After two weeks of slow office hours with few respondents, one morning I arrived to find a line of over 20 people waiting to be interviewed. People continued to arrive throughout the day and I eventually had to start a waiting list for the following day as I was not able to accommodate everyone in a single day. Friends of mine volunteered to assist me with organizing the survey and I could not have done it without the assistance of Jimmy Vela, Vanessa Hinojosa, and Jennifer (-----_). A woman who worked for the Mexican Consulate who had become interested in my study took it upon herself to help me organize everyone that day and for the remainder of the project my father would come with me and sit at a desk in the waiting room managing the line and helping to keep everything running smoothly. The woman from the Mexican Consulate (who shall remain anonymous because she was also a respondent in the survey) also continued to assist me by answering questions about both the survey and my project and starting the day's waiting list for me before office hours began. She even came into the building on her day off to assist and I owe both her and my father a hearty thanks for their invaluable assistance.

one informant was working on a PhD. Three of the initial seeds were women and two were men. Two of these initial participants had family living in Matamoros. Three of them had children.

I interviewed each initial seed at my office on the ITECC campus following the same interview protocol that I used throughout the entire survey with each participant. My office had both a private office area and a waiting room which was separate from the office area, providing both visual and audible privacy for each interviewee. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes, although depending on the individual and how much they had to say or how many questions they might have for me, this time could vary. The shortest interview was over in just over 20 minutes and the longest interview, conducted on a slow day with a talkative informant, lasted an hour.

Each interview began with a short explanation of the project and the types of questions that would be asked during the interview. Each informant was then read an Informed Consent Script and Waiver of Written Consent. The Informed Consent Script is provided in Appendix B. After each participant had been given the opportunity to ask questions they were asked for their consent to participate in the study. After consent was given basic demographic data was collected using Respondent Driven Sampling software. This data included the participant's age, gender, place of birth, date of birth, their self-defined racial identity, citizenship status, and marital status and they were assigned a unique numerical identifier. In the case of recruited participants this number was their coupon number. In cases where the participant did not have a coupon, such as with the initial seeds or with the occasional walk-in, I assigned a number below 1000 that had not been used before. In order to preserve each participant's privacy, no names were collected.

Each participant was then paid $15 for the interview and given three recruitment coupons to distribute to qualified potential participants among their existing social networks. For each recruit who subsequently participated in the survey, the recruiter was paid a recruitment incentive of $10 (up to three). In turn each new respondent was given three coupons of his/her own with the same potential incentives. After I had reached 200 participants I stopped distributing the coupons. At this point respondents were paid $15 for their participation but were informed that the recruitment portion of the survey was closed. Through successive "waves" of recruitment, the recruitment method quickly became self-sustaining and a large number of participants were recruited in a relatively short time period at comparatively low cost. Each person's coupon numbers were recorded in the software. The software kept track of the coupons so that as each new recruit came in to take the survey the software would mark which person had recruited them and how much money we owed to that participant. When the participant came in to collect money they would provide us with their unique number and I would pay them and mark their status as paid in the computer. Each participant was informed at the beginning of the interview that they were responsible for remembering their unique number so that they could be paid if they successfully recruited other participants. I also gave them the option of providing me with a phone number so that I could call them when someone they had recruited came into the office to take the survey. If they chose to provide me with a phone number I would call them to inform them that I owed them money and then I would delete the phone number. Most informants chose to provide me with a phone number, making it easier to distribute the recruitment money in a timely manner.

Each participant was also informed of the parameters for recruitment. My objective was to recruit a sufficient number of local borderland residents in order to obtain a snapshot of the

range of local residents' opinions on the border wall, immigration, and their impact on the local area. To this end the recruitment parameters were deliberately wide. Each participant was allowed to recruit up to three adults (18 and over only) from their social networks who were local residents of the lower Rio Grande Valley, or the corresponding geographical area on the Mexican side of the border. While most locals understand the geographical parameters of lower and upper Valley, I asked them if they had any questions about which towns were considered part of the lower Valley. Some participants asked if Harlingen and San Benito were considered part of the area, which they were. Most did not have questions and I did not have any problems with participants recruiting outside of the specified geographical area.

After the participant was handed their coupons I administered the questionnaire orally. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in both English and Spanish in Appendix C. Before we began the survey each participant was reminded that participation was voluntary and that they were not required to answer any question with which they felt uncomfortable. This would not affect whether they received money for their participation. I also reminded them that they could ask for clarification at any point in the survey. I then advised them that I was about to ask a series of questions. The first part of the survey would consist of a number of fixed answer questions and the second part was a short set of questions about the border wall and the general area. This was the section of the survey in which they would be able to give longer answers and express their opinions as they chose. They would also be given the opportunity at the end of the survey to add any comments about anything they wanted to say that they felt the survey had not covered.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit participants' opinions about the border area, the border wall, immigration, immigrants, and current federal state policies regarding national border

security procedures. At different points in the questionnaire respondents were asked questions that at first glance might appear to be repetitive but this was intentional. A respondent would often give different answers to similar questions when those questions were either separated or phrased differently or both. For example, in one section of the survey a respondent might answer that the border wall and the new border crossing policies had not affected her life at all yet later in the survey she would explain that she could no longer cross the border to shop for cheaper goods and services because she could not afford the cost of a passport or a crossing card. Respondents often interpreted a question about how the border wall or border crossing policies had changed their lives to mean that I was asking about whether they regularly crossed illegally and no longer could do so. Even if the number of times they crossed the border had dramatically declined or even stopped, they would answer that nothing had changed because they were legal citizens of the U.S. It was not until they were asked specific questions about why they crossed, or if they had a passport, that they would mention that they could no longer cross because of the cost or because they felt uncomfortable with the increasingly invasive security procedures.

The final portion of the survey asked a series of open-ended questions about how each participant felt about the area, the border wall, immigration, and recent changes at the border. These questions were designed to discover whether respondents' felt positively or negatively about the region and whether they saw the border as being central to the region's cultural and geographical identity.

SOCIAL BOUNDARIES AND THE RECRUITMENT SAMPLE

As above, one strength of the RDS method is that it allows the researcher to track referral chains, and thus generate data on social barriers between groups within the sample population through homophily and affiliation scores. In the case of this research project, I

wanted to recruit members of the general public across a wide spectrum of socio-economic networks; but I also wanted to trace the topology of social boundaries across this spectrum. As pointed out by Weijnert, RDS methodology allows for this possibility.[23]

To accomplish this, RDS tracks homophily among the respondents using the recruitment data. Homophily is the tendency of people to associate with other individuals similar to themselves and can be tracked across any number of demographic categories including, but not limited to, gender, income, education, race, and age. The shared transmission of information, opinions, and cultural mores across localized social networks can result in the appearance that sharing specific characteristics such as gender or race in and of themselves results in shared behavioral predilections. McPherson *et al* explains that the

> "distance in terms of social characteristics translates into network distance, the number of relationships through which a piece of information must travel to connect to two individuals. It also implies that any social entity that depends to a substantial degree on networks for its transmission will tend to be localized in social space and will obey certain fundamental dynamics as it interacts with other social entities in an ecology of social forms." (416)[24]

The existence and influence of homophily has also been documented among peer groups, members of organizations, and other social networks**.**

In the RDS methodology, homophily is measured on a scale from -1 to 1, with the lower end of the scale (-1) indicating that members of a group are entirely likely to associate with someone outside of their own group, rather than with someone inside their group. The high end of the scale (1) indicates that members of a group are entirely likely to associate only with other

[23] Cyprian Wejnert, "An Empirical Test of Respondent-Driven Sampling: Point Estimates, Variance, Degree Measures, And Out-of-Equilibrium Data.," *Sociological Methodology* 39, no. 1 (2009): 73-116; Wejnert, "Social network analysis with respondent-driven sampling data"; Wejnert et al., "The Dual Homophily Model."

[24] See McPherson et al for a review of homophily and social networks.

members of their own group. A score of 0 indicates that members of a group are just as likely to associate with members of another group as with members of their own group.

For example, in certain situations U.S. citizens might tend to associate primarily with other U.S. citizens (with a high measure of homophily, say for example 0.7) and non-citizens might also tend to associate primarily with other non-citizens (a score of, for example, 0.8). In such a case it would be unlikely that a U.S. citizen would distribute her coupons to a non-citizen, and vice versa. In this hypothetical situation, peer referral recruitment methods, such as respondent-driven sampling, would be unable to cross the social barrier created by citizenship status and coupon distribution by both citizens and non-citizens would be "locked" within each group. In contrast, if the homophily scores were low instead of high (for example, if both groups had a score of 0), then it would be as likely for citizens to recruit non-citizens as other citizens, and the same for non-citizens. In such a case, citizenship status would not pose a significant barrier to peer driven recruitment.

These same tendencies can be used for analytical purposes as well. Thus where we find that few or no coupons passed between groups, the high homophily indicated there may be assumed to extend beyond the simple passing of recruitment coupons. Rather, it can be seen as evidence that a social boundary exists between these groups which guides the distribution of recruitments away from intergroup dynamics. Toward this end, we can use the evidence of the presence of lack of coupon distributions between groups as a measure of the social barriers that exist between them.

Toward this end, the level of association (or disassociation) between groups is tracked using the same calculations that track homophily, though here the term "affiliation" is used to refer to the tendency of group members to connect with members of another group, as opposed

to “homophily” which refers to the tendency of group members to connect only with other members of their group. An example would be the tendency of members of one ethnic group to have social connections with members of a different ethnic group. Like homophily, affiliation is scored on a scale of -1 to 1, but in this case a positive score indicates intergroup association and a negative score indicates intergroup disassociation. For example, an affiliation score between Hispanics and African Americans of 0.355 would indicate a tendency of Hispanics to affiliate with African Americans at a moderate level. A negative score of the same magnitude, in contrast, would indicate a preference of Hispanics not to affiliate with African Americans.

It is important to note that, in the case of more than two sub-groups, mutual affiliation scores are not necessarily symmetrical. This means it is possible, perhaps even likely, that group A’s preference for affiliation with group B will be different from group B’s preference for affiliation with group A. For instance, using the example above, there is no reason to assume that Hispanics will seek to affiliate with African Americans to the same extent that the African Americans will seek to associate with Hispanics. Such social asymmetries provide researchers with important information about the ways in which local social boundaries function as more than simple barriers to association.

RDS analysis allows the researcher to track homophily/affiliation for any categorical variable (ethnic identity, birthplace, gender) as well as for continuous variables (age, income, citizenship). Following Heckathorn, a homophily score of 0.3 or higher will be considered an indicator of strong in-group preference, and a score of -0.3 would indicate a meaningful level of disconnection with or avoidance of those in the same group. The same measure of importance is used when tracking affiliation, except that the researcher is tracking the tendency for affiliation/disaffiliation between groups.

HOMOPHILY AND AFFILIATION IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

The results of the recruitment procedure regarding homophily among the sample are worth noting. The largest group of participants in the survey was born in Brownsville and shows a low rate of homophily at 0.206, meaning they do have a slight tendency to recruit other participants with the same birthplace.[25] The most isolated group of participants were those born in Tamaulipas, with a homophily score of 0.29. This means that this group has the highest tendency to recruit from within itself, although it is still not a particularly high homophily score. All of the other groups show even less of a tendency to recruit other participants from the same birthplace, with those born in Texas and the frontera being most likely to recruit from outside their own group with homophily scores of -1, though the small sample size of recruitments from these groups render these figures statistically insignificant.[26]

The homophily score of 0.206 from participants from Brownsville can be explained two ways. First this is the largest group and represents a large group within the entire town of Brownsville, and so it is likely that most people with large social networks will know a large number of people from Brownsville. Secondly, this group is also be more likely to be interested in participating in a survey about Brownsville and the effect of the border wall and immigration on the area. The tendency of those born in Tamaulipas but not in the border area (la frontera) or

[25] The homophily and affiliation scores discussed in the analysis that follows were calculated using the RDStat RDS analysis tool (RDStat 2007). For more on the mathematical model used in respondent-driven sampling, see Heckathorn, Douglas D. 1997. "Respondent-Driven Sampling: A New Approach to the Study of Hidden Populations." *Social Problems.*, Heckathorn, Douglas D. 2002. "Respondent-Driven Sampling II: Deriving Valid Population Estimates from Chain-Referral Samples of Hidden Populations." *Social Problems.*, and Salganik, Matthew J. and Douglas D. Heckathorn. 2004. "Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations Using Respondent-Driven Sampling." *Sociological Methodology.*

[26] As with any cross-tabulation statistic, a level of minimum population must exist in each category to allow for estimation beyond that expected by random assortment. Where such minimums are not met, the tabulation of rations of found to expected can be determined, but the effect cannot be distinguished from the likely effects of randomness and errors due to small sample size. Such figures are considered statistically "insignificant" regardless of value.

in Matamoros specifically can be attributed to the fact that this group, while small, is still large enough within the area that they can form an extensively sufficient social network for in-network recruiting and still close enough to home that they might not feel the same amount of pressure to form entirely new social networks, such as those from further away in Mexico or the United States. The standard rate of error for each of these scores meets the general standard of $p<0.05$, meaning that we can have high confidence in the significance of these figures.

Table 1: Affiliation Matrix by Birthplace

	Browns-ville	Rio Grande	TX	Tamaul-ipas	Fron tera	U.S. (not TX)	Mata-moros	Mexico
Brownsville	0.206	0.011	0.03	-0.631	-0.39	-0.356	-0.097	-0.494
Rio Grande	0.165	0.08	-1.0	-0.381	-1.0	0.031	-0.585	-0.294
TX	0.699	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-0.023	-0.66	-0.711
Tamaulipas	-0.471	-0.024	-1.0	0.29	0.032	-0.099	-0.004	-0.097
Frontera	-0.23	-1.0	-1.0	0.113	-1.0	-1.0	0.23	-0.127
U.S. (not TX)	-0.232	0.03	0.005	-0.25	-1.0	0.121	0.068	-0.306
Matamoros	-0.047	-0.518	-0.656	-0.267	0.016	0.02	0.026	0.051
Mexico	-0.193	0.008	-0.559	0.0	0.002	-0.074	0.142	0.005

The chart above shows the affiliation matrix for the survey sample by birthplace, meaning that it breaks down the tendency of each group to recruit from each other group, allowing for the tracking of social barriers across networks. For example, participants who were born in Brownsville have a serious negative tendency to recruit from certain groups but not others. They do not show a large tendency to recruit from Brownsville itself or from Matamoros.

Brownsville and Matamoros have functioned as "sister cities" since Brownville was founded in 1848, so it is not surprising to find similar recruitment patterns for both cities. Serious social barriers appear to exist, however, between people from Brownsville and people from elsewhere in Mexico, including the immediate frontera region surrounding Matamoros and elsewhere in the United States, with the exception of Texas. Brownville has remained, in many ways, an isolated and insular border community and this could account for the social barriers that exist between people born in Brownsville and those who have relocated from a distance. People born in Brownsville demonstrate neutral homophily scores with people born in the Rio Grande Valley, Matamoros, and Texas at large, all areas that residents think of as both culturally and geographically close to Brownsville.

People born in the Rio Grande Valley (outside of Brownsville) demonstrated either low or neutral affiliation with Brownsville, the Rio Grande Valley, and the U.S. (outside of Texas.) They showed a strong disaffiliation with people from Tamaulipas, Matamoros, and Mexico at large. The results were statistically insignificant for the affiliation between the Rio Grande Valley and Texas the frontera because the sample size was too small. I am not sure why such strong social barriers appear to exist between those born in other towns in the Rio Grande Valley (who are now living in the lower valley) and those born in Mexico, be it Matamoros, Tamaulipas, or elsewhere, but it does bear further study.

People born in Texas (outside of the Rio Grande Valley) demonstrate a close affiliation with Brownsville. They show neutral affiliation with the U.S. (outside of Texas) and a strong disaffiliation with people born in Matamoros and Mexico at large. The scores for all other categories were statistically insignificant. That strong social barriers exist between Texans born outside of the Rio Grande Valley and people born in Mexico, and even in Matamoros, is

significant in terms of understanding Brownville as a border city. While Brownsville identifies strongly with Matamoros, people who have relocated to Brownsville from elsewhere in Texas do not appear to have adopted a similar border-sister city attitude, at least within their social circles. It could indicate that most of these people have relocated to the area for family or local business reasons and have not expanded their social networks outside of local family and friends or it could indicate that they have not adapted fully to the transnational cross-border cultural identity of Brownsville.

People born in Tamaulipas show some marked homophily (0.29). This group had neutral affiliation with the Rio Grande Valley, the frontera, the U.S. (outside of Texas), and Mexico at large. They also demonstrated disaffiliation with Brownsville.

People from the frontera demonstrated weak affiliation with Matamoros and Tamaulipas. They showed a neutral or small disaffiliation with Mexico and Brownsville but the overall sample size was small and so not very significant.

People born in the U.S. (outside of Texas) showed low homophily with one another. They demonstrated a neutral affiliation with the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, and Matamoros. They also demonstrated a low disaffiliation with Brownsville (and Tamaulipas, and a moderate disaffiliation with Mexico.

People born in Matamoros showed neutral homophily. They demonstrated a neutral affiliation with Brownsville, the frontera, the U.S. (outside of Texas), and Mexico. They showed a strong disaffiliation with the Rio Grande Valley and Texas and a weak disaffiliation with Tamaulipas.

People born in Mexico showed no homophily. They demonstrated a neutral affiliation for the Rio Grande Valley, Tamaulipas, the frontera, the U.S. (outside of Texas), and

Matamoros. They showed a weak disaffiliation to Brownville and a strong disaffiliation to Texas.

Other categories of potential social division turned out to have little effect on the homophily and affiliation patterns in the recruitment data.

Neither those over 40, or under 40 (when taken categorically) showed particularly strong homophily or affiliation, although the younger group did have a slight tendency to recruit from within rather than from the older group. It does not appear that age poses any significant social barrier to this population. Neither did gender appear to pose any significant social barrier within this community, with women showing a homophily rate of 0.14, and men a rate of 0.012.

Ethnic affiliations raise other issues, however. The majority of the respondents in the study were Hispanic, which is consistent with population data from the census in the area (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). While Hispanics demonstrate an almost neutral homophily score, (-0.001), and thus are just as likely to recruit from outside their ethnic group as within it, each of the other ethnic categories, white, black, and American Indian, have homophily scores of -1, meaning that they are very unlikely to recruit from within their respective ethnic groups, though again small sample sizes make these figures difficult to interpret. Given the small population size of each of these groups within the geographical area of Brownsville, it is not surprising that these groups would tend to recruit people from other ethnic groups. Yet while it is likely that because non-Hispanic ethnic groups are so small in the area most individuals have social networks primarily made up of Hispanics and so would recruit Hispanics, the affiliation scores indicate that this cannot serve as the only explanation.

Table 2: Affiliation Matrix by Race

	Amer Ind	Black / AA	Hispanic/Latino(a)	White
Amer Ind	-1.0	-1.0	1.0	-1.0
Black / AA	-1.0	-1.0	-0.117	0.152
Hispanic/Latino(a)	0.001	-0.204	-0.001	0.002
White	-1.0	0.063	-0.016	-1.0

While no especially strong negative affiliations exist between Hispanics and the other ethnic groups, it is important to note that there do appear to be some social barriers between Hispanics/Latinos and blacks/African-Americans (-0.204). While not entirely symmetrical, African-Americans also show a negative affiliation score of -0.117 for Hispanics. And while both whites and blacks were enrolled in such small number that no ingroup recruitment took place for either group (homophily score of -1.0), both groups did show a small positive tendency to recruit from one another. This could be interpreted to mean that some small homophily exists among non-Hispanics, though if so it appears to be weak. Such a finding hints at the possibility that both of these groups might feel a slight sense of isolation in the predominately Hispanic region, thus driving a tendency to build social networks that include one another, although this does not explain why they also demonstrate a strong lack of homophily.

The final homophily and affiliation data is for citizenship status, a social identifier of strong import in a border region.

Table 3: Homophily

Homophily	
U.S. Citizen	**0.298**
U.S. Perm Resident	**0.191**
Mexican	**-0.017**

U.S. citizens show the strongest tendency to recruit among themselves with a homophily score of 0.298. Mexican citizens show a slight tendency to recruit outside of the group (-0.017), perhaps because this group has a vested interest in creating social connections with U.S. citizens while residing in the United States. Permanent residents, non-U.S. citizens who filed papers with the U.S. government to declare their permanent residency within the U.S. and have received legal documentation of this fact, also have a slight tendency to recruit in-group (0.191) although this too is very slight.

Table 4 Affiliation Matrix by Citizenship

	U.S. Citizen	No Answer	U.S. Perm Res	Mexican
U.S. Citizen	0.298	-0.284	-0.331	-0.276
No Answer	-0.005	-1.0	-1.0	0.164
U.S. Perm Res	-0.091	-1.0	0.191	-0.524
Mexican	0.112	0.025	-0.494	-0.017

The affiliation scores for citizenship show that some significant social barriers exist between U.S. Permanent Residents and Mexican citizens with affiliation scores between the groups at -0.524 (U.S. Permanent Resident –> Mexican) and -0.494 (Mexican –> U.S. Permanent Resident). While this could use further study, it is important to note that these barriers could exist as a reflection of the social boundaries between Mexican citizens with the means and opportunity to become permanent residents in the U.S. (which generally requires more money and thus is also a reflection of higher socio-economic status) and those who have moved into the U.S. and live here as undocumented workers. It could also be a reflection of the social divide between Mexican citizens who have chosen to live in the U.S. and those who prefer to remain in Mexico (living in Matamoros or another border town). Both naturalized citizens and permanent residents often express disdain for "illegals" and stress their own legality as proof both that it can be done and that they are not like "those" people. Citizenship status remains a critical marker of social identity in the border region, more so than further inland, although this is changing under the current political climate, and the social barriers that appear to exist between

permanent residents (many of whom are working towards full U.S. citizenship) and Mexican citizens remains a reflection of the important and sensitive nature of legal status in the borderlands.

Another reflection of this can be seen in the affiliation scores for U.S. citizens, who show a tendency to disassociate with both Permanent Residents (-0.331) and, to a lesser extent, Mexican citizens (-0.276). Citizenship, more than ethnicity, remains a precious and mutable category within the borderlands and one that must be defended and protected as there are real consequences to citizenship status. Citizenship, however, is not something that is stripped from U.S. citizens for associating with non-citizens, so it is interesting that there does appear to be a real tendency to disassociate from non-citizens, whatever their legal status. Mexican-Americans, however, have found themselves the targets of political and social derision because of the immigration debates within the U.S. so it is not uncommon for Americans of Mexican heritage to want to disassociate with Mexicans who are not U.S. citizens but are in the U.S., as if associating with these groups (of both legal and illegal status) would somehow taint their own status within the U.S.. Like permanent residents, U.S. citizens of Mexican ethnicity, often show marked disdain for "illegals," stressing that they are not "Mexicans" but U.S. citizens fully vested in the U.S. and thus it is not surprising that social barriers would exist between these groups (Bejarano 2007; DeGenova 2005; DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Ochoa 2004).

Conclusion

The homophily and affiliation scores for citizenship prove that citizenship plays a key role in identity construction and social networking in the Rio Grande borderlands, a fact that makes its rejection as a category of identity by borderland residents faced with the border wall a shift of critical significance to borderlands scholars. The data shows that within the local area

citizenship has shaped social networks and worked as a social boundary between groups of people. Even as informants reject citizenship as a primary category of difference in the present, their social networks, as indicated by their recruitment practices, reflect different patterns. This suggests that the rejection of citizenship in favor of race and ethnicity as a chosen category of inclusion (and exclusion) is a recent change, instigated by recent events, most notably the construction of the border wall and the seizure of public and private lands by the U.S. state.

Questions of inclusion and belonging were frequently raised in the interviews and conversations I had with local residents about the border wall. Along the international border, questions of citizenship and belonging have long held heightened importance for residents. A number of scholars have noted the ways in which citizenship functions as a category of difference, operating alongside class, race, ethnicity and gender in a complicated dance of identity construction (Bejarano 2005; DeGenova 2005; DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Gutiérrez 1998; Limón 1998; 2004; Richardson 1999; Richardson and Resendiv 2006; Vila 2000). An individual's nationality is a critical factor in everyday life along the border and must be guarded as a precious commodity, which both protects and secure one's position and access to certain privileges, or guarded as a secret, which could limit economic and social possibilities. In terms of citizenship, it is still both possible and potentially beneficial to 'pass' as a member of the other group, and as with any social division that inspires passing as a means of access, one must examine the power differentials that create this need.

Pablo Vila's work examines the ways in which race and class are inextricably linked to nationality, and even more importantly, national citizenship status within the borderlands. Access to a greater state power, however limited, fundamentally changes the circumstances of life for working-class Mexican-Americans from those of their counterparts *en la otro lado* (the

other side). Vila highlights the problems that develop across international borders between groups of people who might otherwise be expected to share a particular ethnic or racial solidarity. His book, *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders* questions the very notion that ethnic or racial solidarity are natural social states. Instead, by focusing on how the border divides Mexicans from Mexican-Americans generally, but also family member from family member more specifically, Vila examines how citizenship and its connection to socio-economic status create tension and even hostility along borders where nationality is often more important than ethnicity. (Vila, 2000)

Chad Richardson's work in the Rio Grande Valley looks at the ways in which class mingles with legal status. Looking at the relationship between Mexican maids and their Mexican-American employers, Richardson demonstrates how difficult it can be to separate whether the power that wealthier U.S. citizens hold over poorer undocumented immigrants has more to do with economic class or citizenship status. (1999) Gilda Ochoa's book, *Becoming Neighbors in a Mexican American Community,* takes the questions of power and discrimination between Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans even further, examining how Mexican-American discrimination against Mexican immigrants is often born out of the fear that they themselves will be discriminated against by white America. However, as anti-immigration, and anti-Mexican rhetoric in particular, rises within the U.S., many Mexican-Americans find themselves reversing their former positions and siding with the Mexican immigrants, both out of a sense of ethnic solidarity and the sense that they cannot escape being tied to Mexican immigrants so they might as well stand up for them. (Ochoa 2004)

Citizenship cannot be divorced from the law, however, and Timothy Dunn's insightful analysis of the ways in which a defense of citizenship and the rights attached to U.S. citizenship

have been used to strip non-citizens of basic human rights within the context of the American justice system is both striking and frightening. (2009) A recent compilation of essays, *Legal Borderlands: Law and the Construction of American Borders* makes it clear that just as borders are constructed through forms of legal control by the state, they are also constructed from the rights of citizenship (and noncitizenship) and increasingly the U.S. state is arguing for its right to act outside the boundaries of its own legal system when it deals with non-citizens both within and without its borders. (Dudziak and Volpp) That basic human rights might now be tied to citizenship status within the borders of the U.S. makes it clear how critical citizenship has become, particularly along the borders, and provides some insight into why this social marker might be likely to create significant social barriers.

For borderland residents, citizenship and national belonging are critical, and their fear that the U.S. state and "middle America" are rejecting their very identity as Americans is about more than semantics and word play. When borderland residents emphasize that this is "our" America too, they are making a powerful statement about their rights as full citizens and they do not take what they see as a threat to those rights lightly. Local property owners and regular citizens do not believe that the state would have condemned and seized lands to build a fence in other parts of the United States without consulting the local citizens and the fact that the state has not acted with the same level of impunity along the U.S.-Canada border suggests that they are correct. While local borderland residents can list any number of reasons for this discrepancy, including the fact that the area is mostly Hispanic, a primary concern remains the suspicion that they are not considered "real" Americans, regardless of their citizenship status, and the questions of vulnerability that this fear raises are endless. If their local spaces are no longer theirs to control or inhabit, what is left to them; what will be taken next?

Interestingly, it appears that instead of choosing to stress their status as U.S. citizens, further dividing Mexican-Americans from Mexican immigrants and Mexicans in Mexico, residents of the Rio Grande borderlands are reacting to what they see as a rejection by the U.S. state of their rights and history as Americans with a rejection of their own. Whereas other scholars have noted that the heightened pressures of immigration and security policing in the borderlands often results in local Mexican-American populations withdrawing from and even rejecting their ties to immigrants and Mexicans in general, (Vila 2000; Dunn 2010) the opposite appears to be happening in the Rio Grande Valley. Faced with new vulnerability and the fear that the U.S. does not accept them as fully "American," local Mexican-Americans are choosing to identify with an even more vulnerable and rejected population than themselves, that of the Mexican immigrant, whether legal or illegal. These citizens are not walking away from their citizenship, however, but continuing to exercise their rights as citizens, even in the face of accusations of "un-American" behavior, they are demanding their rights to protest the actions of the state, to call for change, and to demand that their voices be heard. What is critical, here, is that borderland residents have taken the construction of a quite literal and figurative national dividing line and chosen to see it as a unifying racial and cultural line, standing on the opposite side of their own government and with the population the border wall was supposed to keep on *el otro lado*.

Chapter 3: UTB
Introduction

Chapter 3 lays out how the struggle over the control of land and fencing between the University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College (UTB) and the United States federal government developed and why this lawsuit was so central to the ways in which borderland residents understood and reacted to the border wall in the lower Rio Grande Valley. UTB's fight to retain control of both its land and the ways in which it would be used and its refusal to allow the federal state to erect the border wall on campus is central to the larger story of national state spatial production in the borderlands and the resulting shift in local identity politics from citizenship centered to a prioritization of racially and culturally defined categories of identify.

On October 26, 2006 President George W. Bush signed into law H.R. 6061, more commonly known as the Secure Fence Act of 2006, passed by the 109th Congress earlier in September. This law would forever change the landscape of the border areas where Congress dictated that the fence be built, particularly in the small Texas towns and cities unused to border fencing and accustomed to having unfettered access to the Rio Grande river for irrigation, livestock, fishing, and recreation. The Secure Fence Act of 2006 is "An Act To establish operational control over the international land and maritime borders of the United States" (Secure Fence Act of 2006). It dictated that two layers of reinforced fencing be installed along with other physical barriers, roads, lighting, cameras, and sensors along approximately 850 miles of the approximately 2000 mile U.S.-Mexico border. The law directed that approximately 370 miles had to be completed by December 31, 2008, with approximately 125 - 150 miles of the border fence slated for construction along the Texas-Mexico border. The act also dictated where the fencing was to be built and provided deadlines for the construction. While the majority of

the 370 miles had to be finished by May 30, 2008, the final section of the fence, from Laredo, Texas to Brownsville, Texas was subject to the December 31, deadline (Secure Fence Act of 2006). Thus, with the passage of a single bill, the state reasserted its right to control its borders and unknowingly entered into a struggle with its borderlands over how such a right would be both physically and spatially enforced. The struggle had larger consequences than the construction of a border fence, or even the forced re-shaping of local space, however, for in seizing local lands and building a wall dividing local spaces in the name of federal authority, the federal state damaged its relationship with local borderland citizens. In a region where citizenship has long been an active and daily marker of privilege and power (or at least better access and claim on privilege and power), individual identity has long turned on categories of citizenship and those with U.S. citizenship have protected their status and privileged it in personal identity construction. The state's actions surrounding the construction of the wall changed this long-standing practice and local borderland citizens have begun privileging racial and cultural markers of identity over citizenship, a move that stresses their solidarity with both immigrants and Mexican citizens while weakening their relationship to a United States they believe has already rejected them based on their racial and cultural identities.

Literature

During the 1990s an anthropological literature of borderlands developed around the central idea that despite the growing theoretical fascination with transnationalism and deterritorialized states (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994; Ohmae 1995; Appadurai 1996) borders still mattered in very real ways to the majority of the world's population. (Kearney 1991; Heyman 1991; Gupta 1992; Driessen 1998; 2000; Vila 2000) The majority of the anthropological literature on borders from the last two decades applies a center/periphery

analysis and is itself built on a larger theoretical focus on the development of nationalism and the growth, and decline, of state power (Anderson 1983; Armstong 1982; Basche 1994; Brake 1998; Hobsbawm 1992; Gellner 1983; and Smith 1979). This center-periphery approach, rooted in the analysis of state power, questions both the notion that globalization and transnationalism are weakening the significance of the nation-state as a modern political entity and the prediction that geo-political borders are growing increasingly irrelevant (Clementi 1994; Alvarez, 1995; Donnan and Wilson 1998, 1999; Harvey, 2000; Sadowski-Smith 2002; McDougall and Valentine 2004). Donnan and Wilson's work in particular argues that peripheries/borders offer a critical analytical tool for understanding the ways in which nation-states still affect the processes of daily life, particularly the lives of poorer individuals attempting to cross borders for increased economic and political opportunities. While the center/periphery analysis provides a useful theoretical base, it fails to recognize fully the political center's dependency on its borders for geo-political structure. Borders may reference the center, but they also reflect back images necessary for the construction of national identity (Sahlins 1989 and 1998). And in the case of the lower Rio Grande Valley, the fight for control of borderland space and the meaning of the border had direct consequences on the state's relationship with local citizens and the construction of identity within the borderlands, weakening the traditional emphasis on nationalized identity based in categories of citizenship and instead stressing racial and cultural categories of difference, strengthening the construction of a borderland other within the United States .

Another common approach to studying borders and borderlands involves broad theoretical claims about the general structure of border communities as a whole in the attempt to categorize borderlands as an established "type" (Bustamante 1995; Pfau 2001; Witt 2001; and Brunet-Jailly 2004). Following Linda Whiteford's 1979 article, "The Borderland as an Extended

Community," which helped to break border studies away from the notion of borders as impenetrable social boundaries and helped establish that borderlands exist as cross-border political-economic realities, scholars have continued to explore the relationship between borders as geo-political boundaries and the transnational borderlands that surround them (Martinez, 2002). This has led to some interesting if problematic emphases. Thus one of the major attractions of borders, whether for the casual observer, tourist, or scholar, is the sense of otherness they represent (Anzaldúa 1987; Arreola and Curtis,1996; Biemann and Ursula, 2002; Webb, 2003). Yet for too many anthropologists, borders represent liminal spaces that, while continuing to reference the center, ignore the stability and, in fact, mundane nature of border towns.

While the border remains an important and ever present structure in the local borderland space, locals do not orbit exclusively around the border. When asked about the local area they complain about potholes, local politics, and the economy and talk about the local shopping options at the mall, fishing in the river, and taking their children to the zoo. In short, their daily lived experiences are much like the lives of any other American, with the added option of living some of those experiences, often shopping, eating, or visiting family, in another country. In many ways the disconnect between the central state's actions in constructing the border wall and the locals' reactions to it is based in the federal state's failure to recognize that the border space it was seizing and walling off, while "national" space in the eyes of the state, was very much local space in the eyes of borderland residents. The federal government attempted to solve a national problem without taking the time to understand the myriad ways in which locals lived in the spaces the United States was carving out of the local landscape. Because the federal state also understood the border space as liminal, as a space waiting to be shaped and controlled by the

state, it failed to understand the locals' connections to the space, and its refusal to listen to locals when they attempted to explain that they lived in these spaces was read as a rejection of locals as fellow Americans and thus locals in turn rejected the state.

More recently, studies of borderlands have moved away from broad theoretical constructions of borders and borderlands towards more on-the-ground ethnographic approaches. Studies of U.S. borders, and the U.S.-Mexico border in particular, have been critical to the development of an anthropology of borderlands (Alvarez 1995). Localized studies of the processes of control along U.S. borders have drawn increasing attention to the disruptions of traditional environmental patterns across international borders, (Kiy and Wirth 1998; Alper 2004; Bukowczyk 2005; Regier 1998) while other scholars focus on the effects of increased security measures, a phenomenon that has proved to be more display of power than actual control (Andreas 1998, 2000; Andreas and Biersteker 2003; Clarkson 2003; Dunn 2009; Flynn 2003; Chavez 2004; Drache 2004; Maril 2004).

Studies of borderzones as social systems examine the networks created by immigration and labor streams, (Andreas, 1998; Baker et al 2003; Smith 2005; and VanNijnatten and Boychuk 2004) while also pointing to cross-border migration, folklore, and daily border life to develop a picture of borderland communities as vibrant transnational spaces (Paredes 1993; Heyman 1998; Limón 1998; Suárez-Orozco 1998; LaDow 2002; Huesca 2004). Unlike studies focusing on borders as liminal (and thus marginal) spaces, celebrations of border areas as transnational spaces recognize their importance to economic and cultural centers, but many continue to overemphasize border towns as sites of crossing and transgression, ignoring structural, physical, and social realities at the local level.

Taken together, these various approaches bring attention to the significance of borders in the broader theoretical construction of nation-states, and more recently, as unique sorts of communities and structures. Yet the primary focus of all of these studies remains on the border's relationship to the nation-state, rather than on the nation-state's relationship with its borders. While subtle, this distinction is critical as it leaves the state's need for boundaries largely unexamined. For residents of borderlands, functionalist notions of state boundaries lack resonance, and borders remain a manifold social fact. Thus, while in prior accounts the realities of the border are not ignored, the analysis of the impact of the border is often reserved for discussions about immigrants, migrant workers, or other disenfranchised groups who embody movement and transgression as much as, if not more than, they embody the border (Martinez 1996; Bieman, 2002; LaDow 2002; Castillo and Solís, 2004). This dissertation seeks to examine how the border is dealt with, talked about, understood, and enacted within borderzones by the residents who live their everyday lives in the borderlands.

Beyond furthering understandings of the socio-political construction and reproduction of space within the borderlands, the specifics of this localized struggle provide a unique perspective from which to examine perceptions of nationalized space far from the border, making it possible for people in New York and Illinois to fear they are losing control of both nation-space (i.e. the country at large) and local space because Mexicans have crossed the border and moved in next door (De Genova 2005; Dolgon, 2005; Millard and Chapa, 2004; Ochoa, 2004; and De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003). The fact that the Mexican-Americans next door could be descended from people who lived in the southwest before it was claimed by the United States only adds to the distrust; that they might press their older claim to American soil only makes them more suspicious and dangerous (Buchanan 2006). Ironically, when such processes feed back into the

broader national milieu, they place further pressure on the U.S. nation-state to control "its" borders, heightening the tensions surrounding the border and exaggerating the already fragile relationship between the state and its edges. Even as the movement of global capital has risen and transnational communities have increased, the need to delineate and defend physical borders and national space has not. While connected to global markets and the labor economy, the United States' desire to "defend" and "protect" its borders are in large part motivated by the fear that immigrants (and Mexican immigrants in particular) will erode current constructions of American identity, and the construction of the border wall and the performance of border security is as much about demonstrating the central state's commitment to defending America as a culture as it is about defending it as a space. Local borderland residents understand this distinctions and it is this understanding that causes them to ask where they belong within American constructions of identity. They may be citizens, but they are also Hispanics and it is their racial and cultural identity that many Americans fear will change American culture. While this was never an easy balance to maintain, most borderland residents proudly self-identified as American, stressing that they or their ancestors had chosen the United States in favor of Mexico, but with the construction of the border wall, and the political storm surrounding that construction, many borderland residents began to question if the United States wanted or even accepted them and with those questions came a choice. Would they continue to identify with a federal state that appeared to be rejecting them or would they identify with their racial and cultural heritage, throwing their lot in with the many immigrants and Mexican who also live in the borderlands of the U.S.? The answer to this question was not inevitable as other scholars have noted in other parts of the borderlands (Dunn, 2010; Vila 2000; Nevins 2010) but in the

case of the Brownsville, TX, borderland residents chose race and culture over citizenship, a significant and critical change in the recent history of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

The disjunction between the stated interests and purposes of United States' border policies and the reality of border policing on the U.S.-Mexico border speaks to a larger anthropological question regarding the relationship between a nation-state and its borders. In Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism,* Anderson defines the nation as a community that is "imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson, 2002: 6). The processes whereby a nation is both imagined and maintained lend insight to the critical nature of borderlands in the construction of nation-ness. Borders provide the physical limits to sovereignty that define nation-states, but do borders define nations? Immigration can stretch the boundaries of nationhood beyond borders, (Aretxaga 2003; Ballinger 2003; Cole 1997; DeGenova 2005; Stolcke1995), but it also highlights the flexibility of borderlands and raises questions about the construction of imagined borderland communities and their relationship to their respective nations. Borderlands remain significant geopolitical, socio-cultural spaces for a number of reasons, not least of which is that the processes of state formation and national identity construction are dependent upon boundaries. Somewhere on the ground, the state, and its power, must stop; in order to define a nation those within must be able to point to those whom the nation excludes (Smith, 1979). Borders provide both a physical and symbolic ending, where it is acceptable for state power to end and for other peoples to exist. With the construction of a concrete and metal physical barrier along the southern border, the United States might have made the visible border line more prominent but instead of this line stressing the differences between the nations and their people,

it managed to reverse, stressing instead the similarities and further blurring the cultural line for local borderland residents.

As with most lines, borders can be crossed and the areas surrounding them reflect those crossings, with people and socio-cultural practices and traditions leaking across borders into an ill-defined borderland space. The national traditions that help a nation-state to define itself[27] take on added relevance in borderlands, where the nation-state is constructed and defined on a daily basis. Just as nations and states find themselves inventing traditions in times of historical flux, (Hobsbawn 1983) national borderlands, even those along historically stable borders, represent the potential for geographical flux, and national traditions help to stabilize these areas. However, a large influx of immigrants across a border can lead to destabilization, not only of the borderlands, but more importantly, of national centers. And ironically, as this dissertation proves, in the case of the Rio Grande borderlands, the state itself destabilized the local community through its attempts to increase national control and stability in the local area.

Henk Driessen's work on the Spanish-Moroccan border speaks to issues of national identity and immigration that remain critical to understandings of the U.S.-Mexico border. Driessen argues that the key questions asked by border ethnographies of self-described nation-states center on the processes of inclusion and exclusion of immigrants. He maintains that the Inner Sea has become "*the* spatial, political, and cultural boundary between Europe and the Third World," (Driessen 1998: pp 100; italics original) creating a borderland much like the borderland that exists on the U.S.-Mexico border. Just as for the interior of the United States, where the

[27] For a detailed examination of the importance of national traditions in the construction of the nation-state, see Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, ed. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1983.

Mexican border has come to represent the divide between American values and economic prosperity and Mexican – or even South American – corruption and poverty, the southern Spanish border has increasingly come to represent, for northern Europeans, a barrier between European democracy and secularism and Eastern totalitarianism and religious fanaticism.28

At its core, the story of the border wall is a story of state power, of how the state, for many reasons all its own, decided to exercise its power to reinforce its peripheral edges, both spatially and ideologically. A number of anthropologists have addressed issues of state power and the development of a state theory (Aretxaga 2000, 2003; Geertz 2004; Gupta 1995; Gupta and Ferguson 2002; Herzfeld 1994, 1996; Kapferer 2004, 2005a, 2010; Marcus 2008; Nagengast 1994; Nugent 1994; Taussig 1992; Trouillot 2001). The meaning and veracity of Radcliffe-Brown's description of the state in the now classic *African Political Systems* as a "fiction of philosophers," remains under debate (Aretxaga 2003; Herzfeld 2008; Kapferer 2008; Marcus 2008a; 2008b; Rubenstein 2008). Phillip Abrams' seminal paper further expands on the notion of the state as fictional arguing that:

> [T]he state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice. It is itself the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is. There *is* a state-system: a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centered in government and more or less extensive, unified and dominant in any given society. There *is*, too, a state-idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in in different societies at different times. […] It starts its life as an implicit construct; it is then reified—as the *res publica*[…] and acquires an overt symbolic identity progressively divorced from practice as an illusory account of practice. The ideological function is extended to a point where conservative and radicals alike believe that their practice is not directed at each other but at the state. The world of illusion prevails (Abrams 1988: 58).

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[28] For a detailed reading of this situation, see Driessen, Henk , *On the Spanish-Moroccan Frontier: A Study in Ritual, Power and Ethnicity.* Oxford: Berg. 1992; 'The 'New Immigration' and the Transformation of the European-African Frontier' in *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*. ed. Thomas Wilson and Hastings Donnan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998. pp 96-116; and 'The Centrality of Borders: Euro-Mediterranean Instances' in *Mediterranean Ethnological Summer School,* Vol. 4. ed. Bojan Baskar and Irena Weber. Piran/Pirano, Slovenia, 1999 and 2000.

But Abrams is not so much arguing that the state itself is fictional, but that it is enough for the scholar to examine state-systems and state-ideas and their practices and consequences. For Abrams, searching for the state as separate from its ideas and systems results in a perennial search for the man behind the curtain rather than an exploration of the everyday political practices and consequences that exist within the state. In essence, searching for the state, according to Abrams, actually results in further obfuscation of the state. In a 2008 *Dialectical Anthropology* article, "Interrogating the neo-pluralist orthodoxy in American anthropology," Anthony Marcus argues that anthropology has too easily accepted the notion of the state as illusory "high theory" and questions whether the state can be understood through the "'experience' of either everyday life or 'public culture,'" suggesting the possibility that the state is in fact "bigger, more variable, and more durable than this 'experience. " (Marcus 2008a: 71).

At the heart of the debate raised about the illusory state is a question about whether it is enough to talk about government or politics or everyday practices and experiences or whether we must also examine the state as a larger entity wielding power separate from either individual governments, political practices, or the everyday experiences of the people living within the state's boundaries. Aretxaga argues that "to talk of the state as a fiction does not necessarily mean falsity [but…] a certain genre of representation, a particularly powerful one" (Aretxaga 2003: 401). At the borders, however, the state and its power remain very real concerns, and while shifting political practices may change, the state itself exists beyond government and politics in the form of border guards, immigration officials, and architectural structures at official crossings and checkpoints. Nevins' work, in particular, is useful in understanding how state practices and their consequences create the border, the borderlands, and the center, leading all three in an intricate dance choreographed by the performance of security and the construction of

legal and cultural categories such as the "illegal" (Nevins 2010). The struggle over the border wall was, and is, to the extent that it is still ongoing, not about whether the state is fictional or real. For borderland residents struggling to adjust to a new reality, the state remains a powerful factor in everyday life. The struggle of the border wall was, and is, about the extent of the federal state's power, about whether or not the central state has the right to shape the very land and control the spaces in which locals live their lives; it is about discovering where exactly state power ends.

UTB/TSC vs The United States of America

Initially the Secure Fence Act of 2006 did not receive much attention, even from residents who lived in the areas where the fence would be built. In the Rio Grande Valley, the final location specified in the Act, residents occasionally discussed the bill but did not believe that the federal government[29] would ever build the fence. There seemed to be a general consensus that the wall was security posturing on Congress' part and that the United States would eventually reverse its decision on constructing a wall. Locals believed that the federal government would weigh the cost of such an endeavor against the likelihood of its strategic success and the ramifications of walling off the Rio Grande river and decide that a border wall was not a viable solution to either immigration or smuggling problems. As the months went by and the federal state failed to contact local landowners about building the fence, this complacency grew and almost no one even discussed the possibility any longer (Zavaleta 2010; personal communications with locals 2006 - 2010).

In early June of 2007, almost seven months after the passage of the Secure Fence Act of 2006, the state sent notices to local stakeholders inviting them to a public informational meeting

[29] Within this dissertation "the state" refers to the United States of America and not the state of Texas. Texas will be referred to as Texas rather than as the state throughout in order to avoid confusion.

to be held at the Border Patrol Station in Harlingen, TX. These local stakeholders included town and county officials, landowners, and representatives of public and private institutions with landholdings along the river. The stakeholders were told that the meeting would discuss the impact of border security on their holdings. Earlier in May of the same year, Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") fence plans had been leaked to the media providing proof that the state was planning on building a border fence in the Rio Grande Valley.

During the course of the meeting held on Monday June 4, 2007, a DHS representative announced "[i]n the area of Brownsville, the fence will be built on the north side of the levee" (Zavaleta 2010; personal interview with Dr. A. Zavaleta 3-25-2009). Dr. Antonio Zavaleta, then Vice President of External Affairs for the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College ("UTB/TSC") was attending the meeting as UTB/TSC's representative. UTB/TSC owns approximately 500 acres of land between the Brownsville and Matamoros Bridge and the Veterans Bridge, making it the largest local landholder of riverfront property. At that time Dr. Zavaleta was also the administrator in charge of the university's International, Technology, Education, and Commerce Center ("ITECC"). The ITECC campus is located in the former Amigoland Shopping Mall on the south side of the levee system approximately one mile from the main campus. In addition to providing office and classroom space for UTB/TSC, ITECC also houses a number of small businesses, small business development and training centers, and the Mexican Consulate. The pronouncement that the fence would be built on the north side of the levee made it immediately clear that the entire ITECC complex would be on the south side of the wall, the Mexican side of the wall. In addition to ITECC, the university's main campus includes several structures on the south side of the levees, including but not limited to a public golf course, historical sites, and almost the entirety of the land slated for university

expansion in the next 30 years. All in all UTB/TSC was set to lose access to over 37% of its physical campus to the border fence.30

Dr. Zavaleta waited until the meeting was drawing to a close before asking what the state planned on doing about the fact that a significant portion of an American university would be on the "wrong" side of the wall, on the Mexican side. According to Zavaleta, and to newspaper accounts of the meeting, the DHS representative had no answer to the question. Meeting attendees described the DHS representative as appearing shocked by the question, even shocked that the fence he was discussing would run across the campus. Zavaleta described the official as appearing baffled and "going white" (Personal interview with A. Zavaleta on 3-25-2009). It quickly became clear to the stakeholders in the room that the DHS representatives in the room had neither consulted with locals or themselves been on the ground to examine the land they were now proposing building a fence across (Personal interview with A. Zavaleta 3-25-09). The DHS representative eventually announced "[W]e will have to look into that" and promised to "get back to them on that" and then closed the meeting (Personal interview with Zavaleta on 3-25-2009).

After the official close of the meeting several members of the local media who were in attendance approached Dr. Zavaleta for interviews and to inquire about the university's position on the proposed fence. They asked him if it was true that the fence would cut off part of the university campus and what he thought about that. He told them that he didn't "think it would be appropriate to fence off the university on the Mexican side of the fence" and that he "wanted to go on the record pointing out a couple of things that are important that (the DHS representative) may not have thought of" (Martinez 2007). Although Dr. Zavaleta initially described the

30 See Appendix D for map of original plans for border fence across UTB campus .

dialogue with the Border Patrol as "very positive," (Martinez 2007) in a later interview with me he described the federal officials as unprepared for any objection, unfamiliar with the landscape they were calmly announcing would be fenced off, and complacent in their assumptions that Valley residents would simply accept whatever they claimed had to be done in the name of security. This assumption on the part of the state that locals should just be grateful that the Department of Homeland Security was doing something about their "safety" became a running theme and a point of contention in the coming months and years. Dr. Zavaleta's objections were reported in local papers as the University throwing a curve ball at the state's plans and in the wake of local reports Dr. Zavaleta found himself at the center of growing outrage over the state's plans to fence off an American university and an entire river in the name of national security.

In the wake of the meeting in Harlingen, Dr. Zavaleta estimates that he did approximately 25 interviews with various media outlets, an experience he described as "banging the federal government in the head" (Field interview with Dr. Zavaleta). While he remained an unofficial university spokesperson, he continued to speak out as a UTB/TSC administrator, as a long-time local, and as a border property landowner.31

What the state had not taken into account was that the levee system in the Rio Grande Valley does not run along the banks of the river. Like any river, the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo curves and meanders along the landscape as it makes its way to the Gulf of Mexico. The levee system is built to allow the flood plains next to the river to flood while preventing the river from flooding neighboring towns when the water overflows the river's banks. Although the levees do

31 Shortly after the meeting a reporter from the New York Times contacted Dr. Zavaleta and set up an interview with him. Ralph Blumenthal's story "Some Texans Fear Border Fence will Sever Routine of Daily Life" not only discussed the implications of the border fence for UTB/TSC but also showcased the Rio Grande river as a thriving site for ecotourism and highlighted the potential damage that the fence would do to both the environment and the economy, bringing national attention to the issue and causing some embarrassment for the federal government. (Blumentthal, June 20, 2007, Personal communication with Dr. Zavaleta)

run in slightly straighter lines than the river itself, which like any river changes course over time, they also do not run in a straight line at a consistent distance from the river. In some areas the levees can be as far as 2.5 miles from the river and entire neighborhoods in Brownsville exist south of the levee system.

Much of the land along the river is active ranch and farmland that relies on the river for crop irrigation and watering cattle in a landscape prone to extended droughts. In an interview with Dr. Jude Benavides, a UTB professor and a hydrologist who worked as an expert for UTB/TSC on the fence issue, he expressed his belief that the DHS had initially planned to build the fence along the levee system because the state already held right of way on the levees and it believed that this would keep it from having to deal with property issues (Personal interview with J. Benavides 3-3-2009). Many of my informants were surprised at what seemed a total lack of familiarity with the landscape on the part of the state. "They seemed not to realize that the university had buildings and golf courses on the 'wrong' (south) side of the land. They didn't seem aware of the second side of the levee" (speaking about the government officials he dealt with on the university's behalf during the fight over the wall – in personal interview with J. Benavides 3-3-2009).

Not only did the state seem unfamiliar with the homes, ranches, neighborhoods, and businesses it would leave stranded on the south side of the levee once the wall was built, it also refused, in the interests of national security, to inform border/riverfront property owners of its plans for their land, including informing them of exactly how much and what parts of their land would be seized by the state for the border wall and when the seizure would take place. While the state continued to inform the media that they were talking to property owners, those same property owners say that government officials refused to talk to them other than to demand

access to their property (Personal interviews with J. Garcia 3-27-09; S. Mannett 10-21-09;E. Tamez 4-14-09; A. Zavaleta 3-25-09; Personal communications with locals 2007-2009) According to Dr. Benavides, not only was there a "complete lack of communication from the start," but the state failed to conduct any soil tests or tests of any kind which would determine what the impact of the fence would be on flood management or on the environment more generally (J. Benavides 4-3-2009).

During the planning stage for the border wall the state did not conduct environmental tests or research the potential flood impact of a physical barrier along the levee. When Dr. Benavides, or other university officials, inquired about the environmental impact of the wall or tried to open discussions along those lines, they were informed that there was no time for testing or research because the state had a Congressional deadline to meet (Personal interview with J. Benavides 4-3-2009).

In 2005 Congress had passed the Real ID Act as part of a rider to an Iraq War funding bill. The Act had originally failed to pass as a stand-alone bill. The Real ID Act of 2005 grants unprecedented power to a single individual, not even an elected official but a political appointee, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The law gives the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security "sole discretion" (Real ID Act of 2005, §109-13 2005) to override local, state, and federal laws if he or she determines these laws to be a hindrance to national security.

The law passed with little fanfare in 2005 when then DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff wanted to construct border fencing through a delicate environmental estuary near San Diego, CA. A coalition of environmental groups sued to block the fence because it would violate several environmental laws. The Real ID Act of 2005 provided Secretary Chertoff with the legal

authority to authorize the construction of the wall from surplus World War II metal landing mats. This wall now stretches through the wetlands outside of San Diego and into the Pacific Ocean. In order to build this fence Chertoff waived the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Clean Water Act, the Federal Pollution Act, and the National Wildlife Refuge Act among others. While initial Congressional debate seemed to imply that the impact of the Real ID Act of 2005 would be limited to this specific fence in San Diego, no stipulations to that limitation were included in the law's language and no time limits on the law were imposed. After using the Real ID Act of 2005 in San Diego, Chertoff went on to waive laws near Yuma, Arizona as well (McConahay, 2007). On April 8, 2008 Chertoff once again used the Real ID Act of 2005 to waive 36 federal laws for the border fencing required by the Secure Fence Act of 2006.32 In a press statement about the waivers, Chertoff stated:

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32 5 (These laws include the The National Environmental Policy Act (Pub. L. 91190,83 Stat. 852 (Jan. 1, 1970) (42 D.S.C. 4321 et seq.)), the Endangered Species Act (Pub. L. 93-205, 87 Stat. 884 (Dec. 28,1973) (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)), the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (commonly referred to as the Clean Water Act) (33 D.S.C. 1251 et seq.)), the National Historic Preservation Act (Pub. L. 89-665, 80 Stat. 915 (Oct. 15, 1966) (16 D.S.C. 470 et seq.)), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 D.S.C. 703 et seq.), the Clean Air Act (42 D.S.C. 7401 et seq.), the Archeological Resources Protection Act (Pub. L. 96-95, 16 D.S.C. 470aa et seq.), the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 D.S.C. 300f et seq.), the Noise Control Act (42 D.S.C. 4901 et seq.), the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 D.S.C. 6901 et seq.), the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 D.S.C. 9601 et seq.), the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (Pub. L. 86-523, 16 D.S.C. 469 et seq.), the Antiquities Act (16 D.S.C. 431 et seq.), the Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act (16 D.S.C. 461 et seq), the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Pub. L. 90-542, 16 D.S.C. 1281 et seq.), the Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 D.S.C.4201etseq.),the Coastal Zone Management Act(Pub.L.92-583, 16D.S.C. §1451et seq.),the Wilderness Act (Pub.L.88-577,16U.S.C. 1131 et seq.),the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (Pub L. 94-579,43 D.S.C. 1701 et seq.), the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (Pub. L. 89-669, 16 D.S.C. 668dd-668ee), the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (Pub. L. 84-1024, 16 U.S.C. 742a, et seq.), the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (Pub. L. 73-121, 16D.S.C. 661 et seq.), the Administrative Procedure Act (5 D.S.C. 551 et seq.), the Otay Mountain Wilderness Act of 1999 (Pub. L. 106-145), Sections 102(29) and 103 of Title I of the California Desert Protection Act (Pub. L. 103-433),50 Stat. 1827, the National Park Service Organic Act (Pub. L. 64-235, 16 D.S.C. 1,2-4), the National Park Service General Authorities Act (Pub. L. 91-383, 16 D.S.C. la-l et seq.), Sections 401(7), 403, and 404 of the National Parks and Recreation Actof 1978(Pub.L.95-625),Sections301(a)-(f)of the Arizona Desert Wilderness Act (Pub. L. 101-628), the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 D.S.C. 403), the Eagle Protection Act (16 D.S.C. 668 et seq.), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 D.S.C. 3001 et seq.), the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 D.S.C. 1996), the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (42 D.S.C. 2000bb), the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 D.S.C. 1600 et seq.), and the Multiple Dse and Sustained Yield Act of 1960 (16 D.S.C. 528-531). See the Department of Homeland Security's Press Waiver from April 4, 2008 at http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1207080713748.shtm

[C]riminal activity at the border does not stop for endless debate or protracted litigation […] Congress and the American public have been adamant that they want and expect border security. We're serious about delivering it, and these waivers will enable important security projects to keep moving forward. At the same time, we value the need for public input on any potential impact of our border infrastructure plans on the environment -- and we will continue to solicit it" (DHS Press Release, 4-1-2008).

According to locals in the Rio Grande Valley, however, the state not only failed to solicit public input, it actively ignored public opinion, arguing that the construction of a physical barrier was the only 'acceptable solution' to border security (Personal interviews with J. Benavides 4-3-09; M. Putegnat 3-27-09).

After the embarrassment of the June 4 meeting in Harlingen and the slew of local and national articles about the border fence and its impact on UTB/TSC and the Rio Grande Valley, the state decided to redraw the maps to move the proposed wall south of the ITECC campus. The state did not inform either the university or the general public of its decision, however (Zavaleta 2010). The section of the main campus south of the levees would remain walled off. During this time Dr. Zavaleta continued to brief UTB/TSC President, Dr. Juliet Garcia about his ongoing interviews with the media. She was aware both of the threat to the university and of Dr. Zavaleta's outspoken opinions on the matter but as the state never contacted her about building a fence on university property, she did not take any action. The summer months passed and the Fall 2007 semester was well under way before anyone contacted Dr. Garcia about the fence. While the June 4th meeting had caused a local uproar over the potential of a border wall, when the state failed to move on their proposal or even contact local landowners further, the fear of the border wall slowly dissipated and many locals went back to thinking that the state had "come to

its senses" and decided not to pursue the wall after it witnessed the local outrage and realized that it would be walling off not only part of an American university, but numerous private agricultural, domestic, and business properties.

In October 2007 it became clear to local stakeholders, including UTB/TSC, that the state had not "come to its senses." The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Department of Homeland Security delivered a "Right-of-Entry for Survey and Site Assessment" to Dr. Juliet Garcia requesting that the "owner" (UTB/TSC) grant The United States of America temporary right of entry to their property for an irrevocable period of 18 months from the date of the document. The university property included in the Right-of-Entry was listed as "UTB Property (0-20) Parking Area" (Zavaleta 2010). It was signed by Renee Smoot, Executive Director of Customs and Border Protection, Office of Finance, Asset Management, Washington, DC. The Right-of-Entry stated that U.S. Customs and Border Protection would need access to university land for eighteen months in order to survey the land for the possible construction of a border fence, to store supplies and equipment, and to take any samples as well as to do any other work it deemed necessary after accessing the land. It also held that the state would not be responsible for any damage it did to university property during this time and if it later decided it needed the land for the fence the state would pay UTB/TSC what it determined to be market value for the land (J. Garcia Open Letter 1-8-08 and personal interview 3-27-09).

Dr. Garcia refused to sign the Right-of-Entry, a move she said seemed to genuinely shock the state. In an interview with Dr. Juliet Garcia on March 27, 2009, she described her refusal to sign the document as the central moment for her, the moment from which there was no turning back, although she admits that she did not realize that at the time. She thought that someone else

in the UT system would be able to sign for her and likely would do so, but she knew that she, herself, could not do it (Interview with Dr. Garcia 3-27-09).

After her refusal to sign the Right-of-Entry, Dr. Garcia began to gather people behind her. Knowing that her position as University President might be threatened by her decision she says she went into "survival mode" (Personal interview with J. Garcia 3-27-11). While she could count on local community support, and finding UTB/TSC personnel who agreed with her decision was not difficult, for Dr. Garcia it was also key to find a way to get the University trustees and the Board of Regents for the entire University of Texas system behind her. Before she made her decision public, Dr. Garcia contacted Daniel Rentfro, one of TSC's lawyers, asking him for legal advice and comment on the document. He advised her not to sign it (Personal interview with D. Rentfro 4-2-09).

In an interview with Daniel Rentfro on April 2, 2009 he stressed that it took "great courage" on Dr. Garcia's part not to sign the document and then to go on to announce her decision in a public statement to the University community and the press. All of the Regents at the time were Republican appointees from Republican governors and there were people in the University of Texas system who believed that the border fence was a good idea. Dr. Garcia could not have fought the state without the full weight of the UT system behind her and she had gambled that she would be able to maintain good relations with UT Systems in Austin during this time. Not only had she chosen to defy the state, but she would have to convince the Board of Regents and other UT administrators and officials, some of whom were very resistant to the idea at first (Personal interviews with D. Rentfro 4-2-09 and J. Garcia 3-27-09). The Board of Regents did not withhold their approval long, however, and there was never an official rift between UT Systems in Austin and UTB/TSC. After agreeing to stand behind Dr. Garcia and

UTB/TSC, both the Regents and the trustees used their political connections to help UTB/TSC in their struggle with the state (Personal interview with J. Garcia 3-27-09).

During a board meeting on Thursday, October 25, 2007 the Texas Southmost College District Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution against the border fence and urged the U.S. federal government to find alternatives to a border fence in order to avoid dividing the institution and the community. The resolution stated that "UTB/TSC's mission involves the creation of knowledge and the exchange and diffusion of ideas, a mission that by its very nature tears down barriers of difference, distance, and ignorance" and that not only would the proposed fence "inhibit the movement of students, faculty, staff, and the general public," it would adversely affect the university's ability to function as a center of higher learning. (FIX CITATION Texas Southmost College District Resolution Urging Alternatives to the U.S./Mexico Pedestrian Border Fence) After reading the resolution aloud, Board Chairman Chester Gonzalez stated that the city of Brownsville, the University, and Matamoros, Mexico "are connected economically, culturally, socially, and geographically" (UTB/TSC Press Release 10-26-07). Other board members argued that instead of building fences, the state should be helping to build bridges and that they needed to send a message to Congress that this fence was not the right solution to border security (UTB/TSC Press Release 10-26-07).

Daniel Rentfro explained that part of the problem was that no one at UTB could get a clear picture of what the state wanted to do when it came on campus to survey, or even the exact physical location it wished to survey (Personal interview with D. Rentfro 4-2-2009). The initial Right-of-Entry area listed a large 40 acre area across the entire campus that included both the campus bookstore and Starbucks coffee shop overlooking a resaca and the Student Union. When UTB/TSC asked for clarification on the survey location the state was unwilling to be more

specific. As any surveyor know, the first thing you need for a survey is a clear starting point, but DHS was either unclear as to where they wanted to begin the survey or they believed that they did not need to inform the university or other landowners of this point.

In addition to right of entry, the state was also demanding a temporary construction easement to park equipment on campus with language in the document releasing the state from all liability and financial responsibility for any damage it caused while on campus. When UTB/TSC looked at the site on campus where the state was planning on parking equipment, they discovered that the state had chosen wildlife acreage covered in native brush and situated at the end of the drainage system for the entire main campus. Not only would reaching the area with heavy construction equipment be difficult, the equipment would suffer from prolonged exposure to such a damp area prone to flooding in heavy rains or storms (Personal interview with D. Rentfron 4-2-09 and J. Garcia 3-27-09). When Dr. Garcia and other UTB/TSC officials asked the government officials they were in contact with if they had ever set foot in the area they had to admit that they had not. The university suggested to them that they might want to do so. Three days later Dr. Garcia received a letter from the state informing her that it would not need to park equipment in that location after all (Personal interview with D. Rentfro 4-2-2009).

In December 2007 the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers notified UTB/TSC that it would be suing the university for right of entry in order to evaluate the campus for the possible construction of a border security infrastructure. On January 8, 2008, Dr. Garcia released an open letter to the community announcing that the state was indeed seeking to gain entry to UTB/TSC in order survey for a border fence and that she had refused to grant it the right to come onto university property for this purpose. She stated her belief that to have allowed U.S. Customs and Border Protection such access would have opened the university up for serious

harm and laid out her reasons for refusing them as follows: 1) risk to property investment in land and buildings; 2) proposed border fence would pose a security risk to the campus due to the state's plan to leave an opening in the fence that would be used to channel illegal activity onto campus for easy apprehension; 3) the fence would be in direct conflict with UTB/TSC's mission, in particular its mission to be an academic leader in the fostering of bi-national cooperation in the local community; 4) interfere with UTB/TSC's interest in promoting the local ecotourism industry; and 5) violation of the important historical significance of the campus and damaging to the growing local historical tourism (J. Garcia Open Letter 1-8-08). Dr Garcia's letter ended with the following: "[O]f course, we believe in protecting our borders. Of course, we believe in strong immigration policy. But we also understand that a fence, no matter how high or how wide is no substitute for either" (J. Garcia 1-8-08).

Approximately one month after Dr. Garcia's official announcement to the university community the University of Texas System Board of Regents issued an official Resolution urging all parties involved to continue to examine alternatives to the fence that would both "ensure border security and allow UTB/TSC to fulfill its educational mission" (UTS Resolution 2-6-08). The state continued to insist on gaining right of entry to UTB/TSC and remained unwilling to discuss alternative solutions and in March of 2008 UTB/TSC found itself in court facing The United States of America. In an interview a year after the initial court date, Dr. Garcia told me that during this time she would wake each morning thinking that this could not be happening. She said that there was student pressure to make it a "Tiananmen Square" scenario and that while in her darker moments she was tempted, she did not want to make this struggle about her and her students in front of a tank, or construction equipment as it were, but to live up to her responsibility to find a solution that would be to the benefit of the University while also

serving as a model for others in the similar situations. "It is a terrible thing to be sued by your own government," (Personal interview with J. Garcia 3-27-09) she told me, but upon reflecting she added that a friend had reminded her during that time that she was not fighting her country but only the current leaders of the government and that these are two very different things.

In mid-March 2008 Dr. Garcia entered the courthouse with both paid and pro-bono lawyers on her side to fight the phalanx of government lawyers who were there to argue that she had to turn over access to her university in the interests of national security. The core of the university's argument, much to the surprise of the state, was that through its very mission as a center of higher education the university was helping to defend national security. It was an argument that none of the three federal agencies involved, the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or the Army Corp of Engineers were prepared for or would ever successfully address. Instead of focusing on why the border fence was a bad idea for the nation, UTB/TSC chose to focus on their special significance as an institution of higher learning and call for joint-committees to develop alternatives to an 18 foot steel, concrete, and razor wire fence across the campus.

On March 15, 2009 Judge Andrew S. Hanen issued an Order of Dismissal which allowed the state access to a much smaller portion of the university campus for a period of only six months, instead of 18. It also held that the state would be responsible for any property damage and would be required either to return the property to its original state or pay for any damages it caused. In addition, the state was required to gain UTB/TSC's consent before clearing any land, mowing any grass, or in any other way altering the physical landscape. The state was also ordered to inform UTB/TSC and campus security before entering the property and to inform the university of its actions on campus prior to carrying them out. The judge also warned the state

that it was to "consider" UTB/TSC's "unique status as an institution of higher education" and ordered it to consult with the university "in order to minimize the impact of any tactical infrastructure on the environment, culture, commerce, and quality of life for the communities and residents located near the property" (Order of Dismissal 3-15-08). Perhaps, most importantly, Judge Hanen ordered the state, through the Department of Homeland Security as its agent, to "jointly assess with Defendants [UTB/TSC] alternatives to a physical barrier." (Order of Dismissal 3-15-08)

Dr. Garcia and UTB/TSC were pleased with the order and walked out of court feeling like they had accomplished at least part of their goal. In a March 19, 2008 press release Dr. Garcia stated "[I]t has been my duty to be a good steward not only of the resources entrusted to me, but also of the values and principles of our democracy." In an interview with Dr. Garcia during March 2009, she stressed that she envisions her role as a University President as preserving the democracy of the United States because educated people vote and are vested in democracy.[33] The March 19, 2008 press release went on to explain the Order of Dismissal and to celebrate the opportunity to cooperate with the state in the development of a mutually acceptable solution that would both preserve the university's institutional mission and commitment to the community and secure the border area near the university.

After the Order of Dismissal, UTB/TSC began to assemble experts to work on alternatives to a border fence and reached out to the state to begin meetings that would discuss these possibilities. According to informants, DHS and CBP demonstrated reluctance, and even hostility, to working with UTB/TSC from the beginning of the negotiations. The federal agents and officials insisted that any meetings they had with UTB/TSC representatives be at a

[33] Dr. Garcia credits the President of Miami Dade University with this thought. She says that heard him describe his job that way and that she has since adopted his description as her own.

Brownsville Border Patrol station. Whenever Dr. Garcia arrived with the university's lawyer and a select few other UTB/TSC personnel they were ushered into a conference room filled with federal officials and whose walls were lined with armed border patrolmen. Dr. Garcia told me she was surprised at these tactics. She felt that they would be trying to physically and militarily intimidate the President of a University seemed not only beyond the bounds of civility but also to fly in the face of Judge Hanen's orders that the state cooperate with UTB/TSC. Several members of the university's fence team described the state's tactics as flagrant attempts at intimidation. Daniel Rentfro did stipulate that he was unwilling to guess at the state's motives beyond the fact that it was trying to gain the upper-hand in negotiations, something he said he understood as a lawyer and had experienced in different ways over a variety of negotiating tables over the course of his career.

Dr. Benavides, the UTB professor and hydrologist expert that Dr. Garcia added to the university's team described the government agents and officials as insultingly dismissive of him and his opinions. Dr. Benavides grew up in the area but moved away as a young man. Before his current career as a university professor he had held a career in the United States Navy and he said he was surprised at how dismissive DHS and CBP were of all of the university representatives. It bothered him that these uniformed agents would speak to him as if he was "just some left-wing academic with no real world experience," particularly since, as far as he could tell the state had not taken hydrology or flooding into account at all (Personal interview with J. Benavides 3-3-09). Dr. Benavides emphasized that the border wall would have "real world" consequences and that the state knowingly dismissed the possibility of potential flooding and environmentally disastrous consequences as just academic excuses. The state remained focused solely on the fastest route to construction and acted as if his objections to the potential

flooding problems the wall could cause were merely personal political opinions and not the result of years of research and expertise. Dr. Benavides told me that whenever he or another UTB/TSC team member would bring up a problem the government officials would simply look and them and ask why they did not understand how serious this issue was. But Dr. Benavides still wonders why the state was not doing more about the problem if it is truly that serious. He describes the border wall as the "cheap" option, an expensive symbol, but still much less expensive than actually addressing the root causes of illegal immigration, drug smuggling, and the illegal arms trade into Mexico. (Personal interview with J. Benavides 3-3-09)

In early 2008, when the state reached an agreement with Hidalgo County, the county just upriver from Cameron County, whereby it would build the wall on top of the levees while also repairing and rebuilding the levees where necessary. Dr. Benavides hoped that maybe the state would consider the same option in Cameron County. To him, it seemed that this might be the best solution, but Hidalgo County had just passed a bond for the repair of the levee system and the state decided that this money should be used to build the fence/levee combo. This was the moment when Dr. Benavides says he "got jaded" (Personal interview with J. Benavides 3-3-09). The levee systems are the responsibility of the state but it had been leaving the financial cost of upkeep to the cities and counties for decades. Now the state wanted to build a federal border wall on top of the levees and it was not even willing to bear the full cost of the construction, even when local authorities did not want the border wall. Instead the state found a way to throw the cost of the unwanted structure back on the county, all the while insisting that it had the right to build a border wall on private, city, and county land because it was protecting national borders, albeit on local tax dollars wherever possible. When the idea of a combined fence/levee system was proposed in Cameron County the state responded that a bolstered levee would be too

expensive. While a fence/levee combo would technically increase the size of the wall by many more feet, a goal of the state, it was unwilling to accept this solution in Cameron County, where the state would have to bear the full cost of the construction without the help of local tax levies. Even as the state was arguing that an eighteen foot fence was not tall enough, it was rejecting an option that would increase the fence's height because it would also increase the cost. Eventually the fence/levee combo alternative was taken completely off the table because, as a Border Patrol agent informed the university, the City of Brownsville, and Cameron County, "That's not a fence so we can't do it because the Secure Fence Act says a Fence, not a levee" (Personal interview with J. Benavides 3-3-09). No comment was made as to why the fence/levee combo was an acceptable solution in Hidalgo County.

After two months of unproductive meetings at the Border Patrol Stations in which the state continued to insist that there was "no alternative to a physical barrier" (Personal interviews with D. Rentfro 4-2-09, J. Garcia 3-27-09, and M. Putegnat 3-27-09). Dr. Garcia decided that she needed to add a professional consultant and negotiator to the university's team. In May 2008 UTB/TSC hired Michael Putegnat, a local strategist for non-profits, as the Project Leader and gave him a clear directive, to keep the state from seizing UTB/TSC property and building an eighteen foot wall on the campus. Michael viewed his role on the team as a mechanic whose job was to set traps for the government and then box them in (Personal interview with M. Putegnat 3-27-2009). One of the first steps Michael took was to insist that the state stop bringing armed Border Patrol agents to the meetings. The only purpose for the agents, as he and several other team members saw it, was intimidation. They did not have any authority to negotiate and no expertise to offer that their superiors did not also have and so they served no useful purpose in the meetings.

After getting rid of the extra armed bodies in the meeting rooms, Michael set about figuring out who actually had the power to negotiate and began talking to them directly to figure out what they believed they needed to accomplish. A DHS official told him simply, "[W]e are trying to secure the borders of the United States" (Personal interview with M. Putegnat 3-27-09) Michael found this an unsatisfactory and paternalistic argument, one designed to confuse and obfuscate the issues. The government officials would ask the UTB/TSC team "[D]on't you want to secure the United States? Are you anti-American? You must be if you don't want the wall" (Personal interview with M. Putegnat 3-27-09). It was an unsatisfying and circular argument, particularly since the state remained unwilling to discuss any alternatives to a border fence, simply ignoring the university's argument that they were interested in security and believed that educating a workforce was a better way to secure the nation's border by producing more people who could come up with real workable solutions. Eventually Michael asked the federal officials, "Is there no limit to what you would do for security?" When they could not think of any limits he asked them if land mines wouldn't work better than a fence, or if not land mines because they kill indiscriminately, why not agents with machine guns with orders to kill anyone they see crossing at unsanctioned crossings? The DHS officials and Border Patrol agents were understandably horrified by these comments but Michael felt he had made is point. There were limits. They just needed to discover where those limits lay. When Michael moved on to a discussion of the fence, and specifically why it needed to be 18 feet high at minimum, he was informed that the Border Patrol had done a study and that 18 feet was "the height above which a mother will not throw her child" (Personal interview with M. Putegnat, 3-27-09). They refused to discuss it further than that.

By June of 2008 it had become clear to UTB/TSC that the state had no intention of negotiating in good faith with the university. Months had gone by and the state continued to insist that there was no alternative to a physical barrier. While UTB/TSC had hired experts, including Washington D.C. based Modern Technology Solutions, Inc. ("MTSI"), a well established systems engineering, testing, evaluation, and operational concept development firm specializing in homeland defense, and put in hundreds of hours of time researching and developing alternatives, the state continued to proceed with its original plans to construct an eighteen foot high fence across the campus and refused to discuss any alternatives or compromises with the university. While the state remained unwilling to share the exact location of where it would build the fence, for reasons of national security, UTB/TSC was able to ascertain that at minimum the fence they wanted to build would cut off up to 180 acres of university property, leaving this acreage in a "no-man's land." The fence would include a gap that would be used to funnel illegal activity onto campus behind the baseball stadium, next to the entrance and exit of the university golf course, and close to the newly built Recreation, Education, and Kinesiology Center, in other words the heart of the campus's recreational area. The only explanation that the state was willing to provide was that they had a deadline to build a fence as set out in the Secure Fence Act of 2006. So on June 19, 2008 UTB/TSC returned to federal court, this time to file a Motion for Relief in response to a notice from the United States Army Corp of Engineers informing the university that they were going to seize 2.11 acres of university property on which they would then proceed to build the border fence as originally planned. The Motion of Relief asked the court to enforce the provisions it had set out in the

March Order of Dismissal. Federal Judge Andrew Hanen heard the motion and immediately set a new court date for June 30, 2008.34

In an interview with Dr. Garcia she told me a story about a meeting she had with a federal official just before they returned to court at the end of June 2008. Dr Garcia was asked to meet with a high official in Customs and Border Patrol on the Friday before their second court date, which was on a Monday. The state wanted to meet at 1:00 pm on the levee between the baseball stadium and the golf course. Only Ben Reyna, another member of UTB/TSC's fence team, and Dr. Garcia were invited to the meeting. She tried to get them to come to her air-conditioned office instead but they insisted on the levee. Dr. Garcia and Ben drove up in their white university suburban looking at the cameras watching them. The Border Patrol was late and when they eventually arrived Ben and Juliet first spotted dust clouds along the levee. First came three ATVs with agents in light armor uniforms and masks. Dr. Garcia remarked to me that they looked like Ninja turtles and reminded her of her grandchildren because they loved the Ninja turtles. She described standing on the levee in the sweltering heat and humidity with thoughts of her grandchildren and the reptilian superheroes in her head while she watched this advance squad clear the area, riding up and down the levee "like Shriners in a parade" all around Ben and herself (Personal interview with J. Garcia 3-27-09). Then came three black suburbans. She reiterated that "you couldn't make this stuff up." The black suburbans stopped and all the doors opened at once, in unison. Agents all in green uniforms emerged from the vehicles, except for one man in a golf shirt, the main guy. He stood with 17 – 18 uniformed guards surrounding the three of them, Ben, Dr. Garcia, and the important guy from the state. Ben Reyna was furious because it was supposed to be a one on one meeting and they had been informed that only the

[34] See Appendix E for copy of Motion for Relief 1057AL

two of them would be allowed to attend the meeting on the levee. The state agent started by giving them a speech about how UTB should just give up. Dr. Garcia argued back and the guards started to close in on them. He just kept repeating "[T]hings are so bad. You just don't know" (Interview with Dr. Garcia on 3-27-2009). It did not escape Dr. Garcia's notice that he was a Hispanic. She told me they had sent a Hispanic to talk to her, an obvious and patronizing move designed to make her more comfortable so that she would not notice that he was also clearly sent to intimidate her. She continued to argue with him that if it was really that bad she wanted to see the reports. She needed to know. She had her students' safety to think of. But neither he nor any other state official would provide her with any proof. No one would explain the particulars of how and why it was dangerous. She told me, "[h]e just kept saying things are so bad. You just don't know and trying to get me not to come to court on Monday, to give up before court" (Personal interview with J. Garcia 3-27-2009)

Dr. Garcia declined to give up and eventually the state official returned to his SUV with all the armed agents and the three black SUVs and ATVs drove off in another cloud of dust back down the levee. Dr. Garcia and Ben Reyna watched them go and then returned to their single white SUV and drove back to her office. They entered court as planned on Monday and the judge reiterated his orders that the state sit down with UTB/TSC and discuss viable alternatives to the border fence. Both parties were told to return to federal court on July 31st and report to the court on their progress (7-1-08 Federal Court Order Doc. 22 Case 1:08-c-00056). The judge did not accept the state's claims that DHS's "operational and security requirements are solely within DHS's discretion and therefore, are not subject to assessment by a private entity," instead reminding them that the federal court system had ordered them to cooperate with the University, private entity or not (Motion for Relief 1057). He also rejected their argument that "UTB/TSC's

… suggestion that we create a task force to consider alternatives … confirms that neither UTB nor TSC has any alternative to present for DHS's consideration at this time" (Motion for Relief 1057). Instead Judge Hanen stressed that he did "think a joint assessment means sitting down with people in the same room with authority and expertise to exchange ideas" and urged both sides to work together as the situation cried out for a solution (UTB/TSC Press Release 6-30-08).

The meetings between UTB/TSC and the state continued, but this time they were more productive, and on July 31, 2008 both parties returned to federal court to report that they had reached an agreement. UTB/TSC would upgrade campus security by augmenting campus fencing near the levees to a height of ten feet and they would also install high-tech security devices. In return the state agreed to stop all condemnation actions against UTB/TSC, thereby allowing them to retain ownership of all campus property. DHS/CBP also agreed to jointly establish with UTB/TSC a center to study border issues, including the use of technology solutions for border security (UTB/TSC Press Release 7-31-08 and Settlement Agreement Doc. 30 Case1:08-cv-00056).

UTB/TSC quickly set about finding a construction company to enhance their campus fence, as part of the agreement was that the campus fence must be fully built by December 31, 2008, the original deadline set by the Secure Fence Act of 2006. The call for bids went out in mid August 2008 with a deadline of September 9, 2009 for all vendors' bids. Six vendors submitted bids and by October 2, 2008 UTB/TSC had made their selection. The winning bid was $1.04 million and was submitted by Construction Rent-A-Fence of Thrall, Texas, a temporary fencing company. The campus fence was extended approximately 1,100 feet and raised to ten feet, from the previous fence, which had varied from six-eight feet in height. In addition UTB/TSC made commitments to spend approximately $250,000 on security technology

(UTB/TSC Press Release 10-2-08). Dr. Garcia and other members of the university community hope to one day see the fence taken down, but it will take a serious change in national politics before this is possible. The selection of a temporary fencing company to build the fence, however, makes a strong statement about their stance on the federal border wall.

On February 14, 2009 the university hosted a flower planting ceremony called "Seeds of Hope" in which over 350 community and university volunteers planted 300 budding Caroline Jasmine vines along the base of the fence. In time the campus fence will be covered in climbing vines and flowers. The state has contacted Dr. Garcia to express its condemnation of this act and to inform her that she had no right to authorize such an action because the vines could compromise national security. The state has yet to take any real action in the matter, however.

Conclusion

Debates within the social sciences about both the state and state power often center around the illusory nature of the state. It can be surprisingly difficult to pin down an entity as large and amorphous as the state. Its actions are too easily hidden through the machinations of bureaucracy and government. Is the state responsible for budget cuts that further increase economic suffering at the individual level among the working and middle classes or is it the Republican or Democratic parties or both? The aftermath of Katrina is too easily blamed on any number of actors and the slow erosion of civil rights in the name of security can be spread among countless government and private entities. With the increasing privatization of traditionally state-run sectors, i.e. prisons, 'public' education (through school vouchers), garbage collection, policing, and even military action, the state has become even more obscure (Aretxaga 2003; Tabarrok 2003; Jurik 2004) While scholars, journalists, activists, and citizens spend time trying

to track down the sources of the state's actions, the state continues exercising and expanding its power, hidden safely behind the proverbial curtain(s).

The story of the border wall in Brownsville, TX, and in particular of UTB's struggle to stop the erection of one small section of that wall, is important because it remains a singular moment in which the state could not hide itself. When UTB refused to acquiesce and allow the Army Corp of Engineers onto campus and when it continued to refuse demands by the Department of Homeland Security, it forced the state to unveil itself and walk into court. The United States of America sued the University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College for the right to seize university property and erect an unwanted structure on campus land and the state lost. While the loss is important, even more critical is the fact that in this instance the state had to declare itself as a direct actor and openly press its right to power. This declaration remains even after the conclusion of the suit, meaning that wherever the state has erected the wall, it cannot escape claiming responsibility for its actions, or try to obscure its direct actions behind the misdirection of politics or the obfuscation of different bureaucratic agencies.

This chapter laid out the struggle over the border wall that developed between the University of Texas at Brownsville and the federal government and explained how this struggle became so central to the larger story of national state spatial production and the resulting shift in identity politics with Brownsville, Texas. Chapter 3 draws the state out of hiding, revealing it as a direct actor, not only within the borderlands as a whole, but in Brownsville, Texas specifically. Not only do the interviews, documents, and fieldnotes used to construct this chapter reveal the state as a direct actor, but much more importantly they demonstrate that in order to sue UTB, the state revealed itself as an actor to the local community. Without the publicity of the lawsuit and the university's fight it is possible that the state might have been able to act with more impunity,

but having revealed itself as the actor behind the new spatial regime, the local community understood that each land seizure, each new policy, was part of a larger process of national spatial reproduction. Because the state could no longer hide or obfuscate its actions by blaming various and differing agencies, the local community saw the federal state itself as responsible for the border wall and the land seizures and they blamed the federal state for what they understood as s racially and culturally motivated rejection of themselves and responded in kind with a local shift in identity politics that stressed racial and cultural connections over state connections such as citizenship.

State borders have always been a site of visible state power. It is part of what makes borders important in the development of a theory of the state and why the examination of borders remains critical to understanding state power. On the geographical boundaries of states, state power is not illusory. It cannot be dismissed as a theoretical discussion with little import on everyday practices. With each official crossing a physical structure stands and announces the state's presence and power. Each border guard exists as an embodiment of the state. And the newly constructed border wall stands as a literal concrete and metal manifestation of state power. The state's power is writ large upon the landscape, dominating the production of borderland space. In order to build the wall the state had to declare its power to do so, to seize property against the wishes of property holders and local citizens and build a wall that locals found both offensive and invasive.

While the Secure Fence Act of 2006 was passed under the 109th Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush, the construction of the wall continues to this day under the 112th Congress and President Barack Obama, and is likely to continue on past them as well. When President Obama's administration was asked whether it would continue with the

construction of the border fence, and initially there was some hope on the part of anti-wall activists that it would cease construction if not tear down the already existing sections, it responded that the state had made commitments and would be honoring them (Essex 2008; Lillis 2009). The implication was that it was more important for the state to honor its financial contracts with construction companies in a bad economy than to listen to the concerns of local borderland citizens. Even more telling, President Obama, with this statement, declared that the border wall was a product of the state, not of an administration, or a government agency, or a political party, but solely of the state, serving the state's interests whether they coincided with the interests of borderland citizens or not.

While the state may remain illusive, and its power may seem both obscure and indefinable, it is important to search for moments, such as UTB/TSC's fight over the border wall, in which the state is forced to reveal itself as a direct actor. These are the moments in which state power becomes a tangible force that can be examined directly, as a force capable of reshaping space in order to continue to reproduce itself. States exist beyond and outside of the governments that hold sway in any given moment and they use their power to produce and reproduce themselves and it is on their borders that this is often most clearly understood. No matter the congress or the President, the borders remain and even as economic borders have further eroded and globalization has continued its steady march forward, the United States of America has steadily built up its borders, particularly its southern border. It is at the borders, after all, that state power both begins and ends, and the state has a vested interest in strengthening and displaying that power at its boundaries, a site where power also begins to fray if it is not properly tended. In the case of Brownsville, Texas and the fight against the border wall, the state managed to both strengthen its physical display of power while simultaneously

eroding its connection to, and therefore some of its ideological power over, local borderland citizens. That local community members in a border town would opt to de-emphasize their citizenship, which remains a critical factor in daily life along the border, in favor of stressing their Hispanic ethnicity and heritage in conversational contexts involving the United States as a governmental and cultural entity is significant to understanding the ways in which the federal state can act directly upon cultural constructions of identity and individual and regional connections to the nation-state as a sustainable entity.

Chapter 4 A Borderlands Perspective: Attitudes about Immigration and Border Security in Brownsville, TX

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected with the respondent driven survey. Using respondents' answers to the fixed-choice questions, it breaks down data across social categories including gender, citizenship status, and income, as well as categories of personal beliefs and opinions as measured by individual responses to questions about border security and immigration. Statistically relevant differences among these categories are identified and explained using existing literature, the data from the open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews with border stakeholders, and conversations conducted during participant observation over the course of my fieldwork. Grounded in current scholarship concerning the attitudes of citizens about immigrants, chapter 3 explores how social factors such as race, class, and gender affect individual attitudes about immigrants, immigration and border security. The data from the survey illustrates that residents of the lower Rio Grande Valley tend, as a whole, to possess more accepting attitudes about immigrants, be more supportive of immigration, and are more opposed to the border wall than the general U.S. population, which I argue is a direct result of their unique geographical and cultural positioning within the United States. In addition, the federal state's actions surrounding the construction of the border wall eroded local trust in the federal government and created a general hostility towards state enacted border and immigration policies while also inciting a general increase in local cultural, geographical, and racial community cohesiveness in opposition to previous local preferences for group identity construction along national (i.e. categories of citizenship) lines.

Within recent years, increasingly heated debates about immigration reform and border security have raged in U.S. politics, but along the U.S.-Mexico borderlands these arguments are

more than political semantics. Property rights, businesses, and families are threatened by new policies and many U.S. borderland residents believe the central state is denying them a voice.

In 2006 Congress passed the Secure Border Fence Act, which mandated physical barriers be built for 700 miles along the U.S.-Mexico border, 370 miles by December 31, 2008. The Act detailed where the fencing barrier would be built, including 150 miles in Texas, much of that in the Rio Grande Valley in deep south Texas. Using the 2005 Real ID Act the Department of Homeland Security waived over 36 federal laws including the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act , the Clean Air and Water Acts, and the Native American Graves Protection Act in order to gain access to both public and private lands along the border for the fence. Brownsville, TX, a border town across from Matamoros, Mexico, was deeply shocked to find itself in the middle of a national debate about border security, particularly after local institutions, including the local branch of the University of Texas, local landowners, and the City of Brownsville found themselves in federal court being sued by the state.

While the state insisted that the border needed to be secured through fencing, and proceeded with land seizures and wall construction, locals attempted to deal with losing access to the river as a source of both income and recreation. In addition to the Secure Fence Act of 2006, Congress also passed the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative ("WHTI") in 2007, a new law requiring passports or crossing cards to enter Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean and debates about tougher immigration laws and border security continued in both the government and the national media. While both the border wall and the debates remained largely theoretical and/or political for the majority of Americans, for the residents of the Rio Grande Valley, and Brownsville in particular, these issues had very real consequences. This chapter examines local

attitudes about both the border wall and immigration in the lower Rio Grande Valley and explains how those attitudes differ from the opinions of the nation at large.

This chapter uses data collected using Respondent Driven Sampling ("RDS") methodology. Over 260 residents from both sides of the border were recruited via a chain referral system (Heckathorn 2002; Wang et al 2005). Initial seeds were selected to insure representatives with different education backgrounds, citizenship statuses, socio-economic classes and genders, a profile designed to represent population categories often featured in national level discourses on "borderzones." Following RDS protocols, interviewees were paid for their interview, and a recruitment fee was paid for referrals that agreed to participate in the study.

The survey asked a series of 73 fixed-choice and 8 open-ended questions designed to assess the respondents' feelings about immigration, border enforcement, border crossing, international commerce and trafficking, and federal/state activity in the local community. It also collected demographic information including income, housing status, length of residence, and immigration history data. Employing fixed-choice questions is an efficient technique for the collection of data which can then be compared across predetermined social categories, including gender, legal status, and length of residence in a border area. Using SPSS, I analyzed the statistical data for multivariate, positive and negative correlation. In addition to examining the results of my survey, this chapter draws on the existing literature on attitudes about immigration, allowing for a comparison and highlighting the ways in which the border and/or the particular socio-cultural and economic realities of life in the lower Rio Grande Valley have affected how locals feel about both border security and immigration. In addition, it looks at how the federal state's actions have affected its relationship with the residents of the Rio Grande borderlands,

resulting in a shift in local identity politics that deemphasizes citizenship in favor of racial and cultural (including geographical cultural identification as cross-border people) identities.

Theoretical Framework

A number of studies conducted in the last two decades have attempted to ascertain the effects of different of sociocultural and economic factors on native-born attitudes towards immigrants. While most scholars agree that economic factors exert a definite influence, there is debate as to whether personal/household income is more reliable in predicting an individual's response to immigration or whether it is more important to determine whether someone has negative vs. positive feelings about the national economy. The results of studies examining non-economic factors such as gender, age, and geographical proximity to immigrant populations have been even more inconclusive than those looking at economic influences.

Economics/Income - Numerous academic studies have examined whether a correlation exists between income status and attitudes about immigration or immigrants. The general expectation has been that individuals with higher personal or household incomes would be more liberal in their attitudes about immigrants and less likely to oppose restricting immigration on a national scale. This hypothesis was formulated on the theory that most Americans perceive immigrants as low-skilled, low-wage earners and thus individuals with higher incomes would be less likely to perceive immigration as a direct personal economic threat. A number of studies, however, found that income did not appear to affect individual opinions about immigration as much as an individual's perception of the national economy influenced their view regarding immigration (Citrin *et al.* 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Wilson 2001; Fennelly and Federico 2008).

Individuals, regardless of personal income, who fear for the state of the national economy or who believe that immigrants present an economic threat to them, whether this threat is real or imagined, are more likely to favor restrictionist immigration policies (Citrin *et al.* 1997; Fennelly and Federico 2008). Unsurprisingly, researchers have also discovered a positive correlation between people who believe that immigration stifles employment and job growth and individuals who oppose immigration (Fetzer 2000; Wilson 2001). Ilias *et al.* (2008) established that individuals with negative opinions about the national economy are more likely to oppose not only immigration but also more specifically policies that promote temporary guest worker programs. Epenshade and Hempstead (1996) also found that both anti-immigrant sentiment and support for pro-restrictionist policies go up during times of economic depression or decline but that as individuals regain faith in the economy support for immigration rises.

It is important to note that while economics clearly play a role in both individual and societal opinions about immigration and immigrants, it appears to matter more how people feel about the economy as a whole, and their future prospects within that economy, than the reality of their current economic circumstances. Individuals with high incomes are still likely to see immigration as a threat and support restrictionist policies if they believe that the economy as a whole is in decline and that this could affect them at a future date. Attitudes about immigration, at least as far as they correlate to economics, seem to be more affected by the threat, real or perceived, of job competition, loss of tax resources, and economic decline on a national, or even regional scale, than by any concrete effect on personal income.

This discrepancy can make predicting attitudes about immigration based on income demographics problematic, as it is more often the fear of decline rather than actual economic realities that affects how individuals perceive immigrants and immigration. The survey used in

this study asked respondents about their income but did not ask any specific questions designed to ascertain how they felt about the economy as a whole or their place within it. Individuals, however, who responded to questions about the local area with stories of job loss, immigrant access to welfare or Medicaid, and/or difficulty in finding a decent paying job or even a job at all were more likely to hold negative opinions about immigrants and immigration in general, although this was not universally true. Some respondents, although at the bottom of the income scale, and clearly concerned about local job loss and pay rate, remained sympathetic to immigrants and immigration, arguing that everyone deserves a chance at a better life. For example, the majority (68.4%) of respondents who reported making $0-50 per week also responded that they did not believe that illegal immigration posed a threat to the United States. It is possible that respondents with the least personal income remain hopeful that their economic situation can only improve and thus are less fearful that an immigrant will somehow make things worse. In other words, those with the least to lose are less likely to be influenced by fear of loss in their personal opinions about immigrants and immigration.

Age -- Studies dealing with perceptions of immigrants and immigration have generally concluded that older individuals have a tendency to hold more conservative and restrictionist views of immigration (Citrin *et al.,* 1990; Epenshade and Calhoun, 1993; Chandler and Tsai, 2001; and Ilias *et al,.* 2008). Not every study, however, has been able to discover a consistent connection between a respondent's age and their attitudes regarding immigration (Hoskin and Mishler, 1983; Epenshade and Hempstead, 1996). The upward trend in conservatism regarding issues of immigration is consistent with my findings, although it is important to note that like some other studies, the trend is not an unwaveringly upward trend. While the under 20 age group is clearly the most liberal concerning immigrants, the 30-39 age range is slightly more

liberal than either the 20-29 or the 40-49 and the 60+ age group is approximately 9% less likely to describe illegal immigration as a problem than the 50-59 group.

Race/Ethnicity -- The overwhelming majority (95.7%) of the respondents in the survey identified as Hispanic/Latino, so the ability to run useful comparisons based on cross-racial or ethnic categories is limited but it is still useful to review the literature regarding the impact of race and ethnicity on attitudes about immigrants. There are two main competing arguments about how race/ethnicity should affect preferences about immigration. Marginality theory proposes that African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and other members of historically disadvantaged groups should be more likely than white Americans to identify and thus sympathize with immigrants as another marginalized group (Burns and Gimpel, 2000; Fetzer, 2000). Interminority conflict theory, however, suggests that African-Americans and Asians will not support immigration and will actually be more hostile towards immigrants because they will be influenced by perceived socio-economic competition with Latinos, who currently make up the largest group of immigrants to the United States (Esses *et al.*, 1998; Ilias *et al.,* 2008).

Studies have found that while Anglo, or white Americans, are most likely to harbor anti-immigrant sentiments and be pro-restrictionist in their immigration politics, Latinos in the United States are most likely to have positive attitudes towards immigrants, and this trend has been intensifying throughout the last two decades (Citrin *et al.,* 1997; Hood and Morris*,* 1997; Binder *et al.* 1997; Chavez and Provine, 2008; Ilias *et al.*, 2008). A 2004 Pew Hispanic Center study also found that slightly more that 50% of Latinos residing in the U.S., both native and foreign born and regardless of citizenship status, now believe that discrimination against Latinos is a major problem within the U.S. It is likely that as more Latinos identify discrimination as a problem, more Latinos will also support immigrants and immigration as they are more likely to

view the current socio-cultural attacks on immigrants as attacks on all Latinos, whether they be American citizens, legal immigrants, or undocumented workers.

Education and skill levels -- Most of the literature agrees that higher levels of education correspond positively with both support for liberal immigration policies and positive attitudes about immigrants in general (Epenshade and Calhoun, 1993; Citrin et al., 1995; Chandler and Tsai, 2001; Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007). While some researchers propose that higher levels of education allow individuals to think more broadly and in general more liberally (Ilias et al., 2008; Fennelly and Federico, 2008), others have argued that higher levels of education also have a tendency to correspond with higher skill levels and thus those individuals may feel less threatened by labor market competition and lower skilled immigrants (Mayda, 2006). The Hecksher-Ohlin trade model and the factor proportion model both argue that opposition to immigration will correspond to native skill levels with higher skilled natives opposing higher skilled immigrants and lower skilled natives opposing lower skilled immigration.35

Gender -- Although most studies regarding native preferences towards both immigrants and minorities have collected gender data, the results on whether gender influences perceptions of immigrants and minority groups remains both inconclusive and controversial. The data reported in Sidanius *et al. (*2001) made some tentative suggestions that males might hold more negative views about minorities than females but as this was not the focus of the studies they looked at, the data remains suggestive at best. Other studies have not been able to make any conclusive statements regarding the effect of gender on attitudes about immigrants and

[35]See Scheve, Kenneth and Matthew Slaughter, 2001. "Labor Market Competition and Individual Preferences over Immigration Policy" in *The Review of Economics and Statistics,* 83(1): 133-145 for an examination of the Hecksher-Ohlin trade model and the factor proportion model in a U.S. context. See Anna Mayda, 2006. "Who is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Individual Attitudes toward Immigrants" in *The Review of Economics and Statistics,* 88(3): 510-530 and O'Rourke, Kevin and Richard Sinnott, 2005. "The Determinants of Individual Attitudes Towards Immigration, in *European Journal of Political Economy*, 22: 838-861 for a cross-country comparison.

minorities (Epenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Hood *et al.* 1997; Burns and Gimpel 2001; and Mayda 2006). Hainmueller's and Hiscox's (2007) cross-country comparison within the EU found that women are more likely than men to oppose immigration from richer countries but less likely to oppose migration from poorer countries whereas Knight *et al. (*2007) found that gender, especially among non-Latino whites, does affect feelings about immigration within the Chicago area, with women significantly more in favor of immigration.

Dorantes and Puttitanum (2009), using data from a San Diego survey looked specifically at whether attitudes about immigrants, both legal and illegal, differed between men and women. Their findings suggested that while attitudes about immigrants as a whole might be similar, it appeared that the motivations for those attitudes differed slightly between men and women. Dorantes and Puttitanum found that both men and women's views were influenced by their concerns about the cost of immigration, particularly as related to "public finance and welfare concerns," (2009, p.6) i.e. worries about the cost of immigration, additional tax burdens, and fear of over-use of social services. The authors concluded, however, that women, in addition to the concerns mentioned above, were also influenced by what they referred to as the "*prejudice* factor." Dorantes and Puttitanum concluded that their findings were consistent with those from an earlier study (Citrin *et al.* 1990) which claimed that women are more preoccupied with "Americanism" than men, as Dorantes and Puttitanum found that the women in the study were more concerned than the men with the speed at which immigrants assimilate culturally and learn English, as well as displaying a fear that they will bring down property values. The results from my survey are mixed, showing differences of little statistical significance, although I did note a higher preoccupation with the dangers of crime, particularly from drug trafficking, in relation to

children on the part of female informants when responding to open-ended questions about the local area.

Contact Theory -- Contact theory argues that the more contact an individual has with another group, in this case immigrants, the less fearful he or she will be of members of the other group and thus the more open that individual should be to policies that are favorable to immigrants (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). Studies have shown that populations in high-immigration states are more likely to support pro-immigration policies (Ilias, 2008; Fennelly and Federico, 2008). California, however, appears to challenge this theory consistently, as people who live in California have been found to be more likely than people in other states to favor reducing immigration (Epenshade and Hempstead, 1996; Hood and Morris, 1997; Chavez and Provine, 2008). Some of these studies argue that it is possible that this anomaly is the result of a backlash, that immigrant population levels are so high in California that the state has reached a threshold beyond which increasing contact with immigrants begins to create negative rather than positive reactions. It is also possible that California's particular history and its tendency to isolate communities geographically, or ghettoize neighborhoods, according to ethnicity and income, has led to a situation in which, even with high immigration levels, the average non-immigrant has limited contact, outside of the service or domestic industries, with immigrants. Non-immigrant contact with immigrants within California, while frequent, is often routinized and channeled through very specific and problematic hierarchical relationships, such as the relationship between an employer and a domestic service worker. Even more common is the belief that because one "sees" Latinos on a regular basis, one "understands" immigration or "knows" immigrants, even when personal interactions are highly limited and there is no actual knowledge about whether the "Mexican" you saw was a U.S. citizen or an immigrant from

Mexico or another country. When immigrants live in the same neighborhood, attend the same schools and churches, shop in the same stores, and, as in the Rio Grande Valley, work the same jobs as citizens, fear and hostility tend to dissipate. When contact is limited to the employer/employee relationship particularly in domestic work, to sightings on the freeway or in parking lots as day laborers, or contact with service workers, or in the local news, while individuals might believe that they have knowledge of immigrants through extended contact, it is a uniquely restricted and deceptive form of contact that does more to stigmatize and increase fear of the other than to reduce fear and encourage openness.

Within the Rio Grande Valley, and along the Texas borderlands more generally, contact with immigrants is not only a daily and uneventful occurrence, the sociocultural and ethnic barriers that exist in other parts of the country, even within high immigration areas, are severely limited. According to data from the 2000 census, the Hispanic population in the city of Brownsville, TX was 91.3%, exceeded only by Laredo, TX at 94.1% and East Los Angeles at 96.8%. McAllen, TX, a city in the upper Rio Grande Valley, had the 5th largest Hispanic population for a city at 80.3% and El Paso, TX was not far behind at 76.6% and the 6th largest Hispanic population in the United States. Hispanics made up 32% of the entire population in both Texas and California but in the counties along the entire Texas-Mexico border, with the exception of 3 counties, the Hispanic population was at minimum above 50%. It is significant that the majority of respondents (59.7%) in this survey did not believe that illegal immigration poses a threat to the U.S., that 84.1% think the U.S. needs to enact immigration reform, and that 76.7% believed that it should be easier for immigrants to immigrate legally to the U.S. By contrast, a 2006 PEW report found that approximately 60% of Americans believe illegal immigration is a serious issue within the U.S. It would be easy to dismiss the results from this

survey as resulting from racial or ethnic identity but this would be a mistake. Not all respondents dismissed illegal immigration as a threat, although 95.7% of respondents identified as Hispanic. The significance is not in the racial/ethnic identification of the respondents but in the extensive contact with immigrants, both legal and illegal, that defines daily life in the Rio Grande Valley and how this contact changes attitudes about immigration.

Data results

The following section breaks down the significant demographic variables as well as examining how beliefs about factors such as the wall's effectiveness or the need for immigration reform affect respondents' responses to specific questions.

Gender - 56.6% of the respondents were female and 43.4% were male. The data from the survey shows that women are less likely to favor the border wall. The results showed that there was approximately a 6% gap between men and women in their responses to the question about whether they were in favor or not in favor of the wall. Approximately 10% of both men and women responded that they did "not care" about the wall. When asked if they believed illegal immigration to be a threat to the U.S., both men and women were equally likely to respond that they did believe it to be a threat but 60.7% of the male respondents did not believe illegal immigration was a threat while only 56.2% of the women did not find illegal immigration threatening. Women were more likely to talk about the rise of crime and the danger to their children when discussing immigration and perhaps this accounts for the slight statistical difference in responses. It is important to note that the majority of both genders did not believe that illegal immigration was a threat to the U.S.

Language - Respondents who opted to take the survey in Spanish were approximately 14% more likely to be against the wall and 17% less likely to support the wall than the

respondents who chose to take the survey in English. In all likelihood, respondents who felt uncomfortable with English were often recent immigrants, of lower socioeconomic status, and had stronger and more recent ties to Mexico, all factors that would influence their feelings about a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border. 55.8% of the respondents opted to take the survey in English with 44.2% taking it in Spanish. I do not refer to these respondents as Spanish or English speakers because many of the respondents who took the survey in English were bilingual. This was also true of some of the respondents who took the survey in Spanish, although to a lesser extent.

Citizenship Status - Non-U.S. citizens who participated in the study were significantly more likely to be against the wall than U.S. citizens and very unlikely to support the wall, although approximately 8% of those who responded claimed not to care about the wall. As some of these respondents were Mexican citizens residing in Mexico and others were recent immigrants to the United States from Mexico, it seems logical that they would be strongly opposed to the U.S. state's decision to build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. The wall stands as a symbol of both the political and cultural division of Mexico from the United States and while American citizens unfamiliar with both the U.S.-Mexico border and Mexico in general might not find this offensive, and might even find it comforting depending on their cultural views, the majority of Mexicans find it to be an degrading insult (Stephens, 2006). Non-citizens were also slightly more likely (62.5%) to disagree with the statement that illegal immigration poses a threat to the U.S. than citizens (56.5%). The relatively small difference between citizens and non-citizens on the issue of illegal immigration suggests that local residents hold generally similar beliefs regardless of citizenship status, even on issues that would appear to have more of an effect on the non-U.S. citizen population. These results indicate a high degree of community

integration across categories of citizenship status and speak to the importance of immigrant contact and integration in the construction of belief systems regarding immigration and border security. **Hit either thesis statement or key point or two here**

27.9% of survey respondents were not U.S. citizens. See tables below.

Table 5: Illegal Immigration Threat Perception

			Is illegal immigration a threat?			
				No	Yes	Total
U.S. Citizen	No	Count	2	45	25	72
		% within Citizen	2.8%	62.5%	34.7%	100.0%
	YYes	Count	2	105	79	186
		% within Citizen	1.1%	56.5%	42.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	4	150	104	258
		% within Citizen	1.6%	58.1%	40.3%	100.0%

Table 6: Stance on Wall

			Stance on Wall			
			Don't Care	In Favor	Not in Favor	Total
U.S. Citizen	No	Count	6	12	54	72
		% within Citizen	8.3%	16.7%	75.0%	100.0%
	YYes	Count	20	56	110	186
		% within Citizen	10.8%	30.1%	59.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	26	68	164	258
		% within Citizen	10.1%	26.4%	63.6%	100.0%

Income - The results showed that respondents across all income categories had approximately the same opposition to the wall, ranging from 61% to 77% opposed. Some categories showed a greater discrepancy but these were in the higher brackets of personal incomes and had so few respondents as to be statistically unreliable. I expected that there would be more of a difference between the higher and lower income brackets but this did not prove to be the case.

Within the category of household income, however, a larger discrepancy appears between income brackets with the outlier being the poorest household income of $0 - $50 per week. This group had the strongest opposition to the wall at approximately 77%. The other income brackets ranged from the low 50th percentile to the upper 60th percentile opposed to the wall. The respondents in the poorest category are more likely to be recent immigrants and also to be the most vulnerable to the economic difficulties presented by the changing border crossing rules and regulations. In the Rio Grande Valley, it has always been common practice to cross the border for access to cheaper goods and services, including medical care. The wall, whether it actually

prevents legal crossings or not, is seen as a symbol of the new regulations, including the need for a passport, which even at approximately $50 for just the crossing card, is a prohibitively large fee for someone with a household income of $0 - $50 per week.

The $0-50 per week group also strongly disagreed (71.8%) that illegal immigration was a threat to the U.S. In the case of this question, however, two other income brackets were equally opposed. The $601-800 per week bracket disagreed at 73.3% and 71.4% of the more than $2000 a week bracket responded no. All other income brackets responded no within the 50th percentile. As earlier studies have shown, income remains an unreliable predictor of an individual's perceptions of immigration but it is significant that the lower income brackets were so supportive of immigration and these results point to a need for further study on this issue. See tables below.

Table 7: Household Income/Is Illegal Immigration a Threat Cross Tabulation

			Is Illegal Immigration a Threat?			
				No	Yes	Total
Household Income		Count	0	0	3	3
		% within HouIncom	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	a. $0 - 50	Count	1	28	10	39
		% within HouIncom	2.6%	71.8%	25.6%	100.0%
	b. $51 - 100	Count	2	16	10	28
		% within HouIncom	7.1%	57.1%	35.7%	100.0%
	c. $101 - 200	Count	0	21	19	40
		% within HouIncom	.0%	52.5%	47.5%	100.0%
	d. $201 - 400	Count	1	34	26	61
		% within HouIncom	1.6%	55.7%	42.6%	100.0%
	e.$401 - 600	Count	0	18	16	34
		% within HouIncom	.0%	52.9%	47.1%	100.0%
	f. $601 - 800	Count	0	11	4	15
		% within HouIncom	.0%	73.3%	26.7%	100.0%
	g. $801 - 1000	Count	0	6	5	11
		% within HouIncom	.0%	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
	h. $1001 - 1500	Count	0	8	6	14
		% within HouIncom	.0%	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
	i. $1501 - 2000	Count	0	3	3	6
		% within HouIncom	.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	j. More than $2000	Count	0	5	2	7
		% within HouIncom	.0%	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	4	150	104	258
		% within HouIncom	1.6%	58.1%	40.3%	100.0%

Table 8: Household Income/Stance on Wall Cross Tabulation

			Stance on Wall			
			Don't Care	In Favor	Not in Favor	Total
Household Income		Count	0	0	3	3
		% within HouIncom	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	a. $0 - 50	Count	2	7	30	39
		% within HouIncom	5.1%	17.9%	76.9%	100.0%
	b. $51 - 100	Count	3	11	14	28
		% within HouIncom	10.7%	39.3%	50.0%	100.0%
	c. $101 - 200	Count	3	13	24	40
		% within HouIncom	7.5%	32.5%	60.0%	100.0%
	d. $201 - 400	Count	6	14	41	61
		% within HouIncom	9.8%	23.0%	67.2%	100.0%
	e.$401 - 600	Count	5	11	18	34
		% within HouIncom	14.7%	32.4%	52.9%	100.0%
	f. $601 - 800	Count	1	4	10	15
		% within HouIncom	6.7%	26.7%	66.7%	100.0%
	g. $801 - 1000	Count	2	3	6	11
		% within HouIncom	18.2%	27.3%	54.5%	100.0%
	h. $1001 - 1500	Count	3	2	9	14
		% within HouIncom	21.4%	14.3%	64.3%	100.0%
	i. $1501 - 2000	Count	0	0	6	6
		% within HouIncom	.0%	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	j. More than $2000	Count	1	3	3	7
		% within HouIncom	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	26	68	164	258
		% within HouIncom	10.1%	26.4%	63.6%	100.0%

Age Range - The results demonstrate fairly consistent opposition to the wall through all age ranges until age 50. Respondents age 50 and over were approximately 10% less likely to oppose the wall than those 49 and under, although in all age categories the majority of the respondents opposed the wall. As with questions regarding the wall, the majority of respondents, regardless of age, did not believe that illegal immigration posed a threat to the U.S. but the youngest age group, those under 20, were significantly more likely (80% disagreed) to disagree with the sentiment. The other age groups were closer in their responses, although the 50-59 age range was the most likely (52.4%) to find illegal immigration threatening. The differences between responses among the age ranges could be the result of more conservative political and social opinions on the part of the older community. Some older respondents expressed concern about how the current immigrants are "different" than the immigrants they remember from their youth and they felt that today's immigrants were more dangerous or somehow less responsible or hardworking. This anxiety about the "dangerous" differences between recent and older immigrants is a common interpretation of immigration throughout American history (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963; Handlin, 1973; Kessner, 1977, Archdeacon, 1984; Roediger, 1991).

Home Ownership - The data showed that homeowners were the least likely category to oppose the wall, with renters being the 2nd most likely and the respondents who neither owned nor rented being the most likely to oppose the wall. Results were similar when respondents were asked about whether they believed illegal immigration poses a threat to the U.S.. This is not surprising given that this category is the most likely to include younger respondents and the poorest respondents, who are most likely to oppose the wall.

Education Level - The results showed that across education levels respondents had similar percentages of opposition to the wall with most in the 60th percentile. A slight drop in

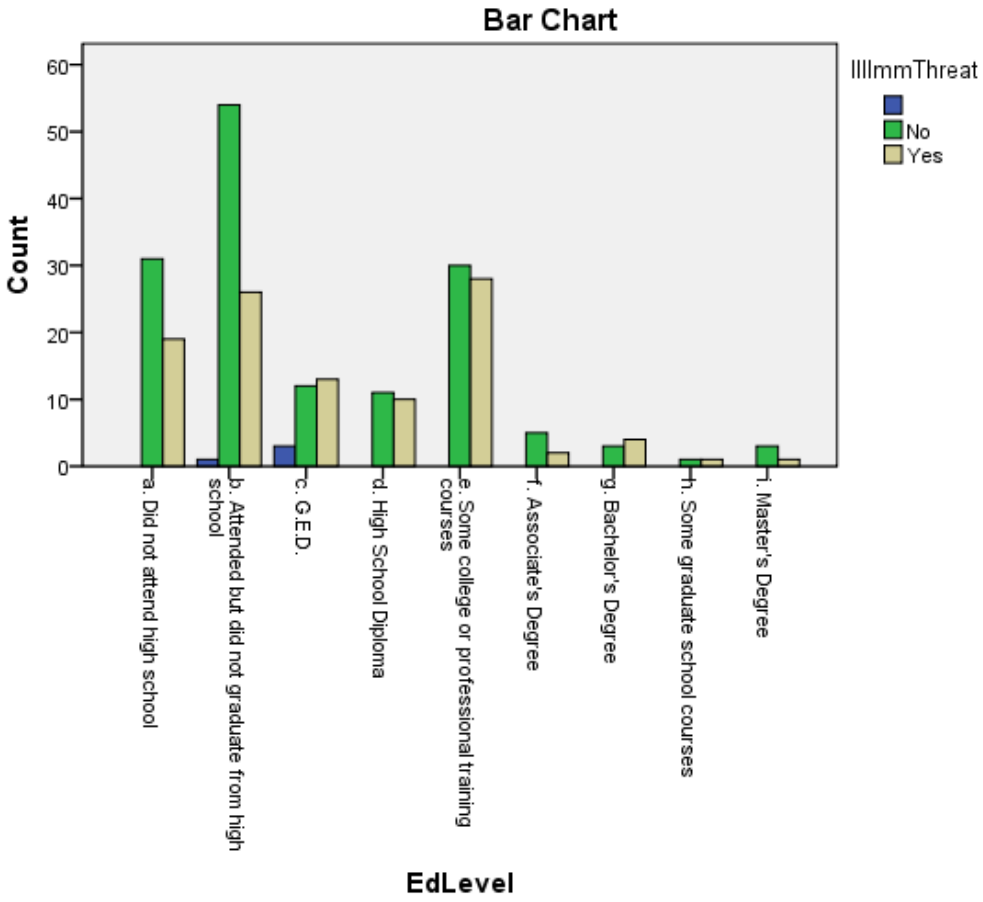
opposition appears among respondents who stopped their education after receiving a high school diploma, likely the result of a higher percentage of those respondents answering that they do not care about the wall rather than more of them responding that they are in favor of the wall. At the higher levels of education, starting with an Associate's Degree, opposition rises but the sample sizes for the respondents with higher education degrees are so small that they are difficult to interpret. One might expect to see a larger difference between education levels but this does not appear to be the case, once again indicating a large degree of community integration, even among those with radically different degrees of education.

When respondents were asked whether they believed illegal immigration is a threat to the U.S., the results were mixed across educational categories. Existing scholarly literature suggests that the more educated respondents should be the least likely to find illegal immigration threatening, but this was not the case in this study. While those with Associate's degrees and those with Master's degrees were the least likely to find immigration threatening, the least educated respondents, those with no high school education or very little high school education, also overwhelmingly responded no to the question (at 62% and 66.7% respectively). The respondents in the other education categories were all closer to 50/50 on the issue. See tables below.

Table 9: Education Level / Is Illegal Immigration a Threat Cross Tabulation

			Is Illegal Immigration a Threat?			
				No	Yes	Total
Education Level	a. Did not attend high school	Count	0	31	19	50
		% within EdLevel	.0%	62.0%	38.0%	100.0%
	b. Attended but did not graduate from high school	Count	1	54	26	81
		% within EdLevel	1.2%	66.7%	32.1%	100.0%
	c. G.E.D.	Count	3	12	13	28
		% within EdLevel	10.7%	42.9%	46.4%	100.0%
	d. High School Diploma	Count	0	11	10	21
		% within EdLevel	.0%	52.4%	47.6%	100.0%
	e. Some college or professional training courses	Count	0	30	28	58
		% within EdLevel	.0%	51.7%	48.3%	100.0%
	f. Associate's Degree	Count	0	5	2	7
		% within EdLevel	.0%	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	g. Bachelor's Degree	Count	0	3	4	7
		% within EdLevel	.0%	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%
	h. Some graduate school courses	Count	0	1	1	2
		% within EdLevel	.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	i. Master's Degree	Count	0	3	1	4
		% within EdLevel	.0%	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	4	150	104	258
		% within EdLevel	1.6%	58.1%	40.3%	100.0%

Chart: 1: Perception of Illegal Immigration Threat by Education



Residence Time in the Rio Grande Valley **-** Respondents were asked how long they had lived in the Rio Grande Valley area, including both sides of the border. Recent residents, those who have lived in the area between 2 and 5 years, most favored the wall and showed the lowest opposition to the wall at 39.3%, however, 5% of these respondents also answered that they did not care about the wall, and 35.7% declared themselves opposed to the wall. Given that this group would be less likely to have developed strong ties to the area and particularly to its borderland culture and would also be less dependent on the traditional cross-border socio-economic practices, it is predictable that they would most favor the wall. Although also the smallest sample, the category with the largest opposition were those who had resided in the area

less than two years. Of those who had resided in the area longer than 6 years, opposition remained in the 70th percentile, with the two exceptions being those who had lived in the area between 21 and 30 years (at 61.4%) and those who had lived in the area the longest, at over 40 years (at 55.6%). While I do not have an explanation for the dip at 21 -30 years, the group who has lived in the area for over 40 years would obviously be comprised of the older respondents, who have consistently shown slightly more support for the wall than their younger counterparts.

Belief in Racial Motivation to the Wall - Respondents were asked whether they believed that the people who want to build the wall want to stop people who are not white from coming to the United States. Approximately 52% of respondents answered that they believed that yes, the wall did have a racial motivation. If nothing else, these results demonstrate that the state has done a bad job locally in defending the wall as a purely tactical security measure. Of those who believed that the wall has a racial motivation, 76.7% opposed the wall. 6.8% claimed not to care about the wall and 16.5% remained in favor of the wall. 49.6% of those who did not believe the wall to be racially motivated still opposed the wall but a strong 36.8% were in favor of the wall and 13.6% said that they did not care about the issue. It is not surprising that the majority of those who believe the wall to be racially motivated are opposed to it or that those who do not believe it has anything to do with race are more likely to be in favor of the wall than those who see it as a racial issue. In the United States, admitting that you support a policy or practice that you believe to be racially motivated is socially taboo and even in an anonymous survey it would be difficult to admit such a thing. Surprisingly, of those who claimed to believe that the wall had a racial motivation, almost a quarter (23.3%) either still supported the wall or did not care about it. It is possible that many of these respondents have simply inured themselves to what they

consider the "inevitability" of racial prejudice and believe that the need for the wall outweighs their belief that it is being constructed out of racial fear.

Belief in the effectiveness of the wall - Respondents were asked whether they thought that the wall would be an effective deterrent to immigration. Only 38.8% believed that the wall would be effective in slowing immigration, both legal and illegal. Of the 60.5% that believed the wall would be ineffective against immigration, an overwhelming 78.8% opposed the wall with only 9.6% remaining in favor of the wall. Of the respondents that believed that the wall would be an effective tool in stopping or slowing immigration, 53% favored the wall and only 41% were opposed to the wall. One might expect that people who do not believe the wall will work are more likely to oppose its construction while those who believe it will be effective are more likely to support it, as long as they believe that whatever the wall is supposed to deter, in this case immigration, should be stopped. Tellingly, 41% of those who believed the wall would be an effective tool against immigration are still opposed to its construction, making them more likely to support immigration to the United States, although they could merely be opposed on principle to the building of walls between nations whether they are effective walls or not.

Respondents were asked whether they believed that the wall would be an effective deterrent to drug smuggling. Approximately 55% did not believe that the wall would be effective in slowing or stopping the drug trade. Isolating just the respondents that did not think the wall would be effective, approximately 80% of them opposed the wall. Roughly 11% claimed not to care about the wall and 9% remained in favor of it despite their belief that it would be an ineffective tool against the drug trade. Of the 42% who believed the wall would be effective in deterring drug smuggling, 48% were in favor of the wall and 43% remained opposed to the wall.

Respondents were also asked whether they felt that the wall would be effective in deterring human smuggling or gun trafficking. The results for these questions were similar to those for the questions about the wall's effectiveness in stopping immigration or drug smuggling. Close to 60% of respondents said that they did not believe the wall would be able to stop or slow these illicit trading systems. Of those who did not believe the wall would be effective, roughly 75% opposed the wall and of those who believed that the wall would work, approximately 45% were still opposed to the wall. As previously mentioned, it is not surprising that the vast majority of respondents who believe that the wall will not work are not in favor of the wall.

The survey asked respondents if they believed that the wall would help in the fight against terrorism. 55.4% did not believe that the wall would help in the fight against terrorism and of that 55%, 78% were opposed to the wall. The 44.6% who believed that the wall would help fight terrorism were split approximately 45/45 over their stance on the wall with 10% claiming they did not care about the wall. These results are consistent with the results from other questions about the wall's perceived effectiveness.

Belief in illegal immigration as a threat **-** Respondents were asked if they believed that illegal immigration is a threat to the United States. 58% responded that they did not. Only 40% of survey respondents claimed to believe that illegal immigration poses a threat to the United States. When this question was crosstabulated with respondents' answers to whether they favored the wall or not, significant statistical differences emerged. 72% of respondents who did not see illegal immigration as a threat were opposed to the wall while only 52% of those who saw illegal immigration as a threat were opposed to the wall. It is not surprising that among those who do not see illegal immigration as a threat the overwhelming majority is also opposed to the wall, which the state is claiming is necessary to stop illegal immigration. If one does not

believe that illegal immigration poses a real threat it is hard to justify the expense and potential public relations debacle of building a wall to stop illegal immigration. It is significant, however, that even among those who believe immigration poses a threat to the U.S. the majority still oppose the wall. Some of these respondents believe that the wall will not work, so they do not see the reason to build it while others remain opposed to the wall for personal or political reasons that they feel supersede the potential threat posed by illegal immigration.

Immigration Reform - Respondents were asked whether they believed that the United States needed immigration reform. A vast majority, 84%, responded yes to the question. Of those, approximately 67% also answered that they were opposed to the border wall. The results were closer to a 50/50 split among those who did not believe that immigration reform should be enacted. Given the high percentage of immigrants in the local area, the local economy's reliance upon immigration and cross-border trade, and the likelihood that an individual resident will either be related to or close friends with an immigrant, if not an immigrant themselves, it follows that a high percentage of respondents would show support for immigration reform. It is also not surprising that the majority of those in favor of immigration reform would also be opposed to the wall, a symbol for many of the rising anti-immigration rhetoric within the United States, and suggests a correlation between those seeking a legislative solution to the problem of immigration and those opposed to a physical barrier as the solution.

Family or close friends in the federal government - Respondents were asked whether any of their family members or close friends work for the federal government. They were subsequently asked the same question in relation to the Border Patrol, the City of Brownsville, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Department of Homeland Security, separate from ICE and the Border Patrol. No meaningful statistical difference emerged between

those who responded yes and those who answered no in relation to their stance on the border wall. One might expect to see a higher percentage of respondents in favor of the wall among those whose family and/or close friends worked for the federal government, or a higher percentage of respondents related to employees of the City of Brownsville opposed to the wall, but this was not the case. Results were similar when respondents were asked about family or friends who worked for the Border Patrol, the City of Brownsville, and the Department of Homeland Security. However there was a statistically significant difference among respondents with family and/or close friends working for ICE. Those with a connection to ICE were approximately 13% less likely to be opposed to the wall than those without friends or family in ICE, although they were still 53% opposed to the wall. I am not sure why the family and friends of ICE officials would be more likely to favor the wall than respondents related to or friendly with other federal employees.

Military family or friends **-** Respondents were also asked if any of their family or close friends had ever served in the U.S. military. Of those who did have family or close friends who had served, or were serving, in the military 31.4% favored the wall and 59.7% opposed it. These respondents were approximately 10% less likely to oppose the wall than those with no family or friends with a history of military service. It was hypothesized at the beginning of the study that the family and friends of military would be less likely to oppose the state constructing the wall, not only because they would be more concerned with national security, but also because they would be slightly less likely to oppose the state's decisions on national security matters.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that the local community in the lower Rio Grande Valley maintains different attitudes regarding both immigration and the U.S. federal border fence than

the majority of the nation, at least according to national polls on the issues. A July 2010 Rasmussen Report found that 68% of Americans are in favor of continuing the construction of the fence along the U.S.-Mexico border.[36] In comparison, my survey found that 63.6% of respondents opposed the wall and only 26.4% favored it. 58% of respondents also answered that they did not believe that illegal immigration posed a threat to the United States as opposed to the 2006 findings from a PEW report that found that 60% of Americans believe that "illegal" immigration is a serious issue in the U.S. and a much more serious problem than legal immigration (PEW 2006).

A number of factors mark the Brownsville area as unique within the United States, not least of which is the physical fact of the border itself. The history of socio-cultural and economic integration across the Rio Grande River dates back to the 1800s, before even the founding of Brownsville in 1849, or the settling of the river as the border in 1848. Hispanics make up approximately 92% of the entire population and immigrants, both recent and long-standing, and

[36] This is the highest recording of support for the fence, demonstrating that support has increased slightly from March 2010 when the Obama administration halted funding for the fence. Only 21% opposed the fence. The report also found that 76% of mainstream voters support the fence while 67% of the political class opposes the wall. For more information see http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/current_events/immigration/support_for_mexican_border_fence_up_to_68 (accessed 10/22/2010) for the report. Also see http://dailycaller.com/2010/07/29/support-for-mexican-border-fence-up-to-68/ (accessed 10/22/2010) for more information on the report. Rasmussen divides respondents into categories of mainstream voter and political class based on a person's response to three questions designed to gauge whether the respondent is 1. more likely to trust the American people or America's political leaders on major issues; 2. thinks the federal government is a special interest group and; and 3. believes that the federal government colludes with big business to the detriment of the American people. Respondents who lean towards trusting the American people and distrusting government are defined as mainstream or populist while the political class is defined as an elite class that supports the federal government. For more detailed breakdowns of the process, different opinions on its validity, and for the exact wording of the questions see
http://www.dailykos.com/story/2010/9/30/18488/7808 (accessed 10/22/2010)
http://www.newscorpse.com/ncWP/?p=1248 (accessed 10/22/2010)
http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=103x516466 (accessed 10/22/2010 and
http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/ideology/55_of_americans_are_populist_7_support_the_political_class (accessed 10/22/2010)

legal and undocumented, are an integral part of the community. Given the extensive cross-border integration, the high levels of immigration and the ethnic make-up of the region, local residents have a different reaction to issues of immigration and border security than the nation at large. Strong socio-cultural and economic integration have shifted the local discourses on both immigration and national/border security and the fear of cultural change and lack of assimilation that so many other researchers have noted, is practically non-existent. In addition, the physical fact of the border reduces local residents' fears of the border and what might be coming across it. They do not have to fear the unknown or use their imagination to conjure up images of illegal bogeymen. What they do have to fear is the seizure of both public and private land, the altering of the landscape they know and love, and permanent loss of control over and access to local space.

While statistical differences can be identified across both demographic and belief markers, the survey participants did not respond as previous studies done in other locations would predict. While most of the literature suggests that those with the least income are also the most threatened by immigration, it was precisely the respondents with the smallest household incomes who were most opposed to the wall and least threatened by immigration. While further research on these specific results will be necessary, I propose that this group is most likely to be adversely affected economically by the new border regulations, including the wall which limits access to the Rio Grande River as a source of subsistence fishing and crabbing. In addition this group now finds it more difficult to cross legally for access to cheaper goods and services, including medical care, because they cannot afford to purchase passports or crossing cards. They are also likely to be either recent immigrants themselves, or, even more likely, to live and work,

when they have work, in industries that employ immigrants, thus increasing their social contact and helping to alleviate any fears of this group.

Within the Rio Grande Valley high contact with immigrants and a tendency to identify with other marginalized groups impacts local responses to both immigration and border security. The locals' general sense of the area as a forgotten and marginalized region within the U.S. exacerbates this trend, resulting in a regionalized opposition to the border wall and more open attitudes towards both immigrants and immigration. This trend is further heightened by local fear that the state is out of control and seizing private and public lands out of panic over issues that are better resolved at the local level. The survey respondents, taken as a representative sample of the local community, reveal a high level of community integration across demographic categories of difference such as class, citizenship and education, as identified by belief markers concerning immigration and border security. Further, the high level of community integration illustrates that the shift in identity construction, away from citizenship as a primary category of difference in favor of racial, cultural, and/or geographical categories, is taking place within the majority of local borderland community. While the specific cultural and geographical positioning of the Rio Grande Valley borderlands produces a unique relationship with the central U.S. state that exists across historical time periods, this chapter shows how a specific historical moment, i.e. the construction of the border wall, strained local trust in the federal government while simultaneously generating a resurgence of cultural, geographical, and racial identity positioning on the part of the local community. Local borderland residents have long accepted the federal government's right to control the border itself; what they reject is the federal state's expansion of the definition of border to include private and public spaces that are merely border adjacent. In the seizure of land and subsequent forcible shaping of local space in the name of

national interests, the federal government eroded local trust in and identification with the larger United States, creating a local community of largely disenfranchised and disheartened citizens who reacted to what they perceived of as the nation-state's rejection of them with a reciprocal rejection of the nation-state, at least in terms of identity construction. As for the rights attached to U.S. citizenship, border stakeholders continue to cling fiercely to those rights, using their status as citizens to press their rights to control their own land and space and forcing the federal state to reveal itself as a direct actor while fighting for every inch of borderland it claims in the name of national interests.

Chapter 5: Stakeholders
Introduction

One cannot talk about the U.S.-Mexico borderlands first and foremost as "cross-borderspace" any longer. The power differential between the U.S. and Mexico and the choice on the part of the U.S. state to "secure" *its* border with walls and troops has made glaringly apparent something that was perhaps more hidden and subtle in the past, the fact that the U.S. considers the border as *its* to control as it sees fit. Under current constructions of U.S. nationalism the U.S.-Mexico border cannot be a shared international border space, let alone Mexico's border. Nativists within the U.S. see the U.S.-Mexico border as the gateway to the promised land, which they envision as *their* territory, a space that is theirs and theirs alone to control. Those borderland locals who argue against this conception and who instead insist on pointing to the cross-border culture of the borderlands are easily dismissed by the state, the national media and nativists as un-American, unpatriotic, and although never explicitly stated, as Mexican, as racial and cultural others and therefore without a *real* American voice in the matter. It is hard to ignore the implied notion that these borderlands have only been allowed to exist as cross-border spaces at the discretion of the U.S. state, which has finally decided to finish what it started in the U.S.-Mexican War, the complete division of a space and a people through conquest as both ideological statement and physical proof of "American" superiority.

Chapter 5 examines the personal stories of border stakeholders including property owners, anti-wall activists, politicians, and Border Patrol agents, exploring the wall as both representation (individual informants' understandings of the wall) and as a physical structure that impedes and denies access to privately and publically owned lands. This chapter presents border stakeholders discussions about both the progression of the wall and its direct impact on their lives and what they believe the wall says about the United States and its place in the larger global

world. While the national discourse about the border fence has primarily focused on domestic national security, for those on the border, even those who support the wall, the decision to build the border wall has a more international context, one they see as promoting a range of problematic statements including fear, racism, xenophopia, and the failure of the federal state to control its own affairs. Chapter 5 examines the critical differences between local and national socio-cultural constructions of the border fence and the unique impact of the wall on the production (and unproduction) of local space on the border. Local understandings of the border wall have a direct impact on the local borderland community's relationship with the U.S. state. Locals largely understand the border wall as both a physical manifestation of the central state's disrespect for and rejection of them as U.S. citizens and as an expensive and largely ineffectual federal mistake that is merely incompetent at best and racist and xenophobic at worst. Given this view of the wall, it becomes easier to understand how as a direct result of the construction of the border wall and the federal seizure of lands, borderland residents now question their place in U.S. society and have begun to construct their personal identities around social markers other than citizenship.

Literature Review

Begoña Aretxaga has written about the "untenable hyphen" in reference to the concept of the nation-state, arguing that it has become "difficult to think of the state outside the hyphenated dyad." (Aretxaga 2003:396) The concept of the nation-state, in which the state's boundaries encompass and house a single nation, or people, has not only proven problematic on the ground in terms of political and human consequences (Ballinger 2003; Danforth 1995; Karkasidou 1997), but it has also shown itself to be highly theoretical and impractical, although that has not stopped states from attempting to establish themselves as nation-states or press nationalist causes

as justification for either statehood and/or national culture. (Armstrong 1982; Barth 1969; Brubaker 1992; Handler 1988) In the case of the United States of America, the term nation-state has always referenced a fiction of homogeneity at odds with U.S. realities, whether these realities are referred to as "melting-pots" or "multi-culturalism" (Dalmage 2004; Kaup and Rosenthal 2002; Swain 2002; Walsh 2004). While the U.S. nation, if one can refer to the U.S. people as a nation, does not imagine itself as racially or ethnically homogenous, it does imagine that there is a particular "American way of life," an "American culture" if you will. American culture remains a slippery concept, however, open to endless interpretations and arguments, but the entire scope of that discussion is too large to be handled here. Therefore, this discussion will remain limited to a small section of the debates, namely the immigrant question: is the U.S. a nation of immigrants, or are immigrants destroying current constructions of the U.S.? And where does the U.S.-Mexico border figure into the discussion?

Although it focuses on Europe, Verena Stolcke's analysis of a phenomenon she calls "cultural fundamentalism" is useful in understanding how immigrants, immigration, and the U.S.-Mexico border figure into the U.S. national imagination (Stolcke 1995). Stolcke argues that rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion based on an understanding of national identity as rooted in cultural heritage and national traditions has risen in Europe since the 1970s. Cultural fundamentalism remains distinct from older racist rhetoric, but does share certain assumptions with racially defined ideologies. Cultural fundamentalism targets immigrants, not as racially inferior, but as strangers, aliens to the body politic, who pose a real threat to the viability of a culturally homogenous nation-state. Historically, within the U.S., as each new wave of immigrants has entered its borders, the nation has imagined its way of life to be under assault (Archeacon 1983; Daniels 2004; Handlin 1950; Higham 1955; Kessner 1977). Currently,

Hispanics in general, and Mexicans in particular, hold the nation's attention as the largest body of foreigners immigrating to the U.S. and as the most common point of entry for Mexican immigrants, the U.S.-Mexico border has become a localized site on which to focus nationalized fears about the erosion of U.S. culture (Alba and Nee 2003; Castañeda 2007; DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; DeGenova 2005; Doty 2009; Garrison 2006; González 2001; Madrid 2001; Rivera 2006;)

The recent rise of the Minutemen movement in the U.S., in which self-proclaimed border vigilantes and watchers voluntarily spend time watching the border for illegal immigrants, is representative of a nationalist movement focused on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Minutemen's argument is that the state has abdicated its responsibility to protect its borders and so it is up to regular citizens, i.e. the people of the nation, to see that the laws are enforced and that "illegal aliens" do not successfully cross the border and settle in the U.S. (Gilchrist and Corsi 2006). Roxanne Doty argues that the Minutemen are an example of the "politics of exceptionalism […] in which individuals and groups are turned into an *exception* by the exercise of sovereign power, resulting in their exclusion from basic rights guaranteed by the law or the constitution" (Doty 2009:10). Such politics of exception are useful in explaining how both the state and the nation can accept the practices of Maricopa County Sheriff Arpaio who brags about female and juvenile chain gangs, forcing male detention center inmates to wear pink ladies' underwear, housing detainees in non-air-conditioned tents in the Arizona desert, and feeding them expired and moldy food (James 2009). The fact that these detainees have 'broken the law' means, for many Americans, that they are now an exceptional group, and even basic human rights do not need to

be extended to them (Dunn 2009).[37] In the case of the Minutemen, the sovereign power in question is popular sovereignty, rather than state sovereignty, and serves as both a source of legitimacy for the civilian border groups and a justification for their actions (Doty 2009). As Doty notes, however, even as the Minutemen groups focus on illegal immigration and immigrants, their primary focus remains on the state and how it has failed "the people" by allowing the border to remain relatively open and porous.

The question of whether the U.S. can control its borders while still adhering to its own ideologies of freedom and democracy remains a viable question. Numerous studies have focused on the various ways in which the U.S. state has dealt with, and continues to deal with, its borders. This literature ranges over issues of security (Andreas 1998 and 2000; Andreas and Biersteker, 2003; Chavez, 2004; Clarkson 2003; Drache, 2004; Dunn 2009; Flynn, 2003; Heyman 2008; Maril, 2004)**,** environmental issues (Kiy, and Wirth, 1998; Alper, 2004; Bukowczyk, 2005; and Regier, 1998)**,** immigration and labor streams, (Andreas, 1998; Baker, Bean, Latapi, and Weintraub, 1998; Coates, 2002; and Sadowski-Smith, Claudia, 2002)**,** and economics (Adamson, 2002; Hufbauer and Vega-Cánovas, 2003; Smith, 2005; and VanNijnatten and Boychuk, 2004**).** What all of these works have in common, however, is that they are about the impossibility of controlling the uncontrollable. Almost every study agrees that while individual factors can be managed, the porous nature of the borders, the physical facts of their great length and changing topography, make true control unattainable. What can be controlled are the images of borders and so each state must play its own part in a complicated dance in which just the right amount of control is exercised so as to project whatever image of border is best suited to current political and policy agendas. For some, the image of control, or

[37] For more on the discussion of civil, international human, and American citizenship rights in the politics of immigration and national security see *Blockading the Border and Human Rights: The El Paso Operation that remade immigration enforcement* by Timothy J. Dunn. Austin: University of Texas Press.

even limited control over specific factors such as official customs crossings, is sufficient proof of state power and authority and its ability to expand on both**.** For others, interest lies in the farce of control, in the complicated and often circuitous routes along which the U.S. state in particular travels to justify its border policies, which are designed to encourage the flow of money and goods while simultaneously slowing or stopping the flow of people**.** Even a superficial survey makes clear that where money and goods are allowed – even encouraged – to flow, people cannot be kept out with any meaningful degree of success. While borders may not be the free-for-all zones of otherness that some imagine, there is a certain element of chaotic order that cannot be controlled without acknowledging the futility of the project and opting for a form of limited control, resulting in limited chaos. Instead of real control, the state has opted for a form of spatial governmentality, or policing through deterrence, in which the state chooses to erect a wall and arm it with guards in order to govern the local population by shaping and controlling the space around them (Dunn 2009; Foucault 1979, 1991; Merry 2001). For the border stakeholders in the Rio Grande Valley, the struggle over the border wall was in large part a debate over how the state should be controlling the border, and how it should not. For many locals one of the main objections to the border wall centers on the belief that it is an ineffective tool whose real purpose is to limit local popular sovereignty, relegating local border residents into a state of exceptionalism in which their citizenship rights do not count as equal to the citizenship rights of citizens who live far from the border. This study contributes to the literature by examining the local consequences of national policies on border control, showing how the central state's decision to control the border through the seizure and control of local space resulted in a shift in identity politics on the local level. In seizing land, denying local citizens a voice in their own governance, and constructing a border wall in opposition to local borderland

wishes, the federal state carved out the Rio Grande borderlands as an exceptional space within the United States. The federal government's attempts to control its borders and strengthen its connection to and power over its borderland citizens resulted in a spatial strengthening of control while simultaneously diminishing the locals' respect for, and socio-cultural connection to, the nation-state.

Local stories

Local property owners with land that the national state had marked for border fence construction tell the same story about their dealings with the federal government, regardless of the size of their property, the various ways in which that property was used, their relative positions in terms of political or economic power, or their previous relationship with the state. When asked to tell their story they all begin by explaining that the federal government never contacted them to explain the project or to get their feedback or opinions. Their first contact with the central state concerning the construction of the border fence on their property began with a demand that they sign paperwork and give the United States unlimited access to their property for surveying purposes as well as for the storage/parking of construction vehicles. In most cases this contact was not even in person but took the form of a phone call demanding that they give the state permission over the phone (Personal communications with property owners).

Dr. Eloisa Tamez, a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel[38] and current director of nursing at the University of Texas at Brownsville, owns property along the border. Dr. Tamez's house sits on approximately three acres of land along the border, her small portion of the approximately 12,000 acres of river land once owned by her ancestors as part of a Spanish land grant. Almost half of her family's portion of the land was seized without payment by the state in the 1930s to

[38] Dr. Tamez retired from the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel but has since returned to active service in the Texas State Guard as the Commander of the Rio Grande Valley Medical Response Group and is now a Colonel.

build river levees and Dr. Tamez sees her current struggle as part of her family's longstanding fight to hold onto their land in the face of state power.[39]

Dr. Tamez's story of her dealings with the state over the issue of the border wall and her property is fairly typical of most property owners' stories, although she was able to keep the fight up longer than many other landholders. During my interview with Dr. Tamez she recalled receiving a call from Rick Cavazos of the Border Patrol in August 2007 while working in her office at the university. He had called her to inform her that the state would be building a border fence across her property, splitting her land and cutting off her access to the river. He told her that the fence would be built north of the levee but south of the Military Highway and that they needed her "to sign papers so [they] could do a survey" (Personal interview with E. Tamez 4-14-2009). Dr. Tamez informed Mr. Cavazos that she did not conduct business like that over the phone and told him that he could come and see her in person at her place of employment. Dr. Tamez told me that the "threats started right away" (Personal interview with E. Tamez 4-14-2009). He refused to come see her in person and asked her if she knew about eminent domain.[40] She describes Mr. Cavasos as becoming upset and asking her in a belligerent tone if it was safe to say she was against the wall.

Dr. Tamez was surprised by both the tone and the content of the phone call. This was the first time anyone from the state had contacted her in any way regarding the border wall and she felt that they were both hostile and disrespectful to her from the beginning. She could tell that she was on a speaker phone and that there were other people in the room on Agent Cavazos' end

[39] Dr. Tamez traces her ancestry back to Spanish citizens in the New World, Mexican mestizos, and indigenous people in Mexico and the southwestern United States including the Lipan Apache.

[40] Eminent domain is the power by which a government entity, (i.e. federal, state, county, city, school district, or other agency) can seize private property for public use with or without the permission of the owner. The government is required to offer just compensation in exchange for the property. The government entity usually declares the need to condemn the property for the public need, arranges for an appraisal of the property, and makes a monetary offer. The property owner can dispute the offer is they believe it is not just compensation but the government becomes the owner while the trial is pending.

of the phone call but he never introduced her to anyone else on the call. Dr. Tamez said that Mr. Cavazos was patronizing her and at one point in the call an unidentified agent said "I'm from Los Indios," a community situated close to El Calaboz, the community where Dr. Tamez lives. She said the unidentified man said this as if it should somehow appease her to know "someone like her" was on the federal goverment's side and participating in the process of seizing her land (Personal interview with E. Tamez 4-14-2009). According to Dr. Tamez the entire incident "was insulting" (Personal interview with E. Tamez 4-14-2009).

Her initial dealings with the state concerning her property and the border wall are fairly typical of most of the stories collected by both myself and various journalists covering the story of the border wall.[41] Months after Congress passed the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006 it was left up to Border Patrol agents and representatives of the Army Corp of Engineers to contact property holders about the border fence. Most of these state representatives appeared to believe that the property access rights they were demanding, as well as the property they wanted for the fence, would simply be signed over to the federal government at their request. As more and more landowners along the south Texas border refused to grant the U.S. state access to their land or turn over their property, the federal representatives grew increasingly frustrated and belligerent towards local property owners.

Dr. Tamez, for instance, heard nothing further from any branch of the federal government for two month until she received a phone call one Saturday evening in late October of 2007. This time it was a member of the Army Corp of Engineers demanding that she "sign paperwork so that the government can take possession of [her] land" (Personal interview with E. Tamez 4-14-2009). Again she refused to discuss the matter over the phone and invited the man to come

[41] For particularly detailed coverage of the struggle against the border wall in south Texas please see the online archives of the local paper, *The Brownsville Herald,* www.brownsvilleherald.com, and *The Texas Observer*, www.texasobserver.org. A search for border wall or border fence will pull up the appropriate articles.

see her in her office at the university on Monday morning. Dr. Tamez once again heard nothing further until the Saturday after Thanksgiving when the same engineer from the Army Corp of Engineers called her at home insisting that she really needed to sign the papers giving the state legal access to her property because they were running out of time. This time the federal state did accept her invitation to come to her office and Rick Cavazos met with her at the university on the following Monday to provide her with the paperwork. After looking it over she refused to sign because she felt that the federal government did not need a full year to survey her land or park equipment in her yard. In late December she received a letter dated December 7th that offered her a second opportunity to sign the paperwork and informed her that if she did not sign it within 30 days of the date of the letter than the United States of America would initiate legal proceedings against her and move to condemn her property. Dr. Tamez did not sign. Neither did she accept the $10o the U.S. offered her in exchange for her property. The state agents who dealt with Dr. Tamez remained unwilling to explain how they had arrived at the $100 amount, but Dr. Tamez reported that her neighbors were also offered $100 for their property, regardless of the amount of property the state was proposing to condemn or the assessed value of the land (Personal interview with E. Tamez 4-14-2009).

Dr. Tamez was able to secure a pro bono attorney through the Center for Human Rights and her legal battle with the federal government continued for well over a year, although she did eventually lose and the state built the border wall across her property on April 22, 2009.[42] Dr. Tamez's stories of confused state representatives, threats and intimidation, and patronizing behavior are repeated over and over by property owners along the border throughout Cameron

[42]Dr. Tamez is still involved in legislation with the United States of America.

County. Many gave in long before Dr. Tamez, and the border wall was erected on either side of her property line months before the state was able to extend the wall across her property.

The question of how the central state selected the properties for border wall construction remains somewhat confused. It is important to note that not only is the border wall not a continuous barricade along the entire U.S.-Mexico border, it is also not a continuous barricade even in smaller regional areas selected for construction. Instead the wall snakes along the ground in fits and starts, skipping entire neighborhoods while running through the center of others.[43] A group of researchers looking at where the border wall was being built in Cameron County in Texas found that the populations residing in the areas where the state had chosen to build the wall had lower incomes on average, were more likely to be Hispanic and/or Spanish speakers, had lower education levels, and had a higher percentage of foreign-born residents, both non-citizens and naturalized citizens (Wilson *et al.*).

During an interview with Border Patrol Agent, John Lopez in September of 2009, I asked him how the state had decided where the wall was needed. Agent Lopez talked at length about "tactical infrastructures," and the "persistent impedance of entry" and provided me with four main factors that he says were used to decide on the location of the wall. These four factors were: "1) Operational Assessment; 2) Engineering Assessment (where and how much money); 3) Environmental Assessment; and 4) Input from stakeholders (landowners/border groups/businesses along the border, etc." (Personal interview with J. Lopez 9-25-2009). According to Agent Lopez "people [were] saying they [were] being overrun" (Personal interview with J. Lopez 9-25-2009). At the time of our interview the U.S. had selected 55 miles for fencing locally and approximately 33 of those miles had been completed.

[43] See Appendix F for a map of the border wall.

When I asked Agent Lopez "Why urban areas?" he replied that the Border Patrol had time to respond in the more remote rural areas and that it was also safer to respond in remote areas because there were not people on the streets who might be put in danger. The purpose of the fencing in the urban areas, according to Agent Lopez, is to divert illegal traffic away from urban neighborhoods and into specific areas in the countryside where it would be easier to catch suspects (Personal interview with J. Lopez 9-25-2009). This explanation fits with the statements made by state officials to my other informants, particularly those involved in the University of Texas Brownsville's legal battle, that the fence was needed in urban areas and along the UTB campus, because illegal aliens, human traffickers or *coyotes,* and drug dealers were too difficult to separate from local residents and college students as they all looked and dressed alike. The government invoked a similar defense for not erecting the border wall across the River Bend Resort and golf course, a private property that draws many white Winter Texans from out of state who have either retired full time to the Rio Grande Valley or who reside in the area part-time during the winter months.

The answers to questions about how the state has chosen to wield its power in order to carve up local space along the border are critical to understanding both the causes and the effects of the decision to build a border wall. Both the state's response to questions concerning how the locations for the border wall were chosen and the evidence that these locations consistently, at least in the lower Rio Grande Valley, house populations with lower incomes, lower education levels, and higher levels of Hispanic and foreign-born residency demonstrate that this border wall is about more than simply stopping illegal immigration and drug trafficking. At the core of the border wall is an issue of control; control of citizens, control of space, control of bodies, and perhaps most importantly, at least for the state, control of imagery, or rather the image of control.

The border wall, in the state's own words, will not stop illegal immigration or drug or human trafficking or illegal activities of any sort. It will not "control" anything, but it will provide the state, and the nation, with a symbol of control. The state has a vested interest in demonstrating to a public consumed with fear of change, fear of job loss, fear of immigration, fear of the other, that it is "doing something" (Critcher 2003; Glassner 1999; Thompson 1998). The proven, or disproven, effectiveness of that "something" remains beside the point. In the words of Michael Chertoff, former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, while he was still Secretary:

"Fencing has a symbolic value, and it has usefulness in some parts of the border. And we're going to use it where it is effective. The idea that you are going to solve the problem simply by building a fence is undercut by the fact that yesterday we discovered a tunnel. So the idea that fencing alone is a solution I think is overly simplistic " (CNN Late Edition July 1, 2007).

That the state recognizes that the primary importance and effectiveness of the border wall lies not in its ability to stop crime or immigration, but rather in its symbolic value, and that it deems this symbol worth the multi-billion dollar financial cost means that, at least in terms of national security at the southern border, it has become more important to reassure a frightened public, most of whom live far from the border, that they are being protected from immigration than to actually solve either the problems of immigration or national security. If you can symbolically control the space than you can control the image and therefore the country and its people enough to remain in power. What this study shows, however, is that control is a balancing act and too much control in opposition to the wishes of individual citizens or communities can fray the control the central state exercises over its citizens. As in the Rio

Grande Valley, when the federal state forces their power on a region that region can begin to distance itself from the nation-state, resulting in a rejection of state-centered identity, as in categories of citizenship, in favor of racially, culturally, and/or geographically centered constructions.

Local property owner, Sam Mannet, found himself in the middle of the national state's power struggle when the federal government contacted him about its plans to build the border wall across his property in downtown Brownsville. Sam Mannet owns or retains controlling interest in over slightly more than nine acres of land that lie between two of the international bridges to Mexico in downtown Brownsville, which gives him control over the majority of the 15 or so acres that stretch along the riverbank between the bridges. He runs his company, 5 Amigos Trading Company, out of a warehouse on part of this land and lives in a house located on the same property as his business. Unlike most of the other property owners I interviewed, Mr. Mannet was quick to inform me that he is not against the wall in principal and wants me to understand that he is not a "radical" (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009). He explains that he can see why the federal government might need a fence in rural locations; what he is against is the building of the border wall through downtown Brownsville.

Sam Mannet is a proponent of former Brownsville Mayor Pat Ahumada's River Walk Project. Like many of the local stakeholders involved in this debate, Mr. Mannet believes that legal recreational and commercial activities will displace illegal activities and thus the real solution is to build a river walk that provides recreational park spaces as well as places for people to shop and eat and drink. Many local residents believed that this project would be a much more effective means of controlling the border/river space than the central state's plan to wall it off, effectively creating a no-man's land with limited oversight as no matter how many

agents patrol a landscape, they cannot be as effective at displacing criminal activity as the continual oversight of hundreds of people using the space on a daily basis for recreational and entertainment purposes. Cities such as New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans have followed similar logic in the development of gentrification, urban renewal and recreational policies (often referred to as disneyfication) designed to turn formally gritty urban environments into havens of tourism (Chesluk 2007; Delany 2001; Parenti 1999; Reichl 1999; Rofes 2001; Smith 1996; Souther 2007).

Up the valley in McAllen, a kayaking group, Los Caminos del Rio, has had some success with this theory in action. The group's original mission was to promote the natural and cultural history of the river corridor from Laredo to South Padre Island. The idea behind the group is conservation through recreation, namely that the way to conserve the river is to get as many people out on or alongside the river as possible, thus making the preservation of the natural river environment in the interests of local residents. Los Caminos del Rio was founded in 1991 as a binational recreational conservation non-profit organization. They remain the only non-profit organization currently generating binational income on the U.S.-Mexico border (Personal interview with F. Nuño 10-30-09). Mexican citizens can wade out into the river to meet kayacking guides and other patrons, either in the water off the banks of the river or on the islands in the middle of the river, and pay for the tour in Mexican pesos. The group is primarily run by volunteers who take people out on the Rio Grande river in kayaks for a nominal fee. In an interview with Frank Nuño, a leading member of the group, he told me that in the beginning they used to see a lot of debris such as clothing and litter left behind by immigrants who had crossed the river illegally during the night. Over the years, however, as the group has increased the

number of people recreating on the river, this debris has diminished as immigrants have migrated to other locations along the river (Personal interview with F. Nuño 10-30-09).

Initially the group experienced resistance from the local Border Patrol agents assigned to the area but that has changed as the individual agents have become more familiar with the group and seen the results of their activity. Eric Ellman, the director of Los Caminos del Rio, managed to secure permits allowing the group access to areas along the river previously only available to state agents, which is a large part of the success of the group. Frank said that in the beginning the group was given a hard time by County Parks' employees, by the local Constable, and by Border Patrol agents but as the group became a familiar sight the state and local authorities relaxed and eventually became interested in going out on the river themselves. A local Border Patrol supervisor was the first state agent to go out with the group and while he spent the first hour reporting back to headquarters on his walkie-talkie, by the second hour he had it away and just enjoyed being out on the river. Before the volunteers could even pack away the day's boats, three more Border Patrol agents who had been waiting on their supervisor's report had already booked trips for themselves and their families (Personal interview with F. Nuño 10-30-09). Los Caminos del Rio has hopes that they will be able to expand their operation into the lower Rio Grande Valley on a regular basis.

In spite of the evidence that recreational activity along the Rio Grande was viable, and potentially successful in displacing illegal crossings, the federal government refused to consider Brownsville's River Walk Project, maintaining that building a border fence through downtown Brownsville is the only way to deal with federal enforcement problems in the areas of illegal trafficking and undocumented immigration. To this end the central state has run a fence through the property along the river between the two downtown bridges, including a stretch of land

known as Hope Park. Sam Mannet's property is not far from Hope Park and through the border fence slats you can still see the remains of Hope Park looking out across the river into Matamoros, Mexico.

Like most stakeholders, Sam Mannet's personal story of his fight with the state begins with his initial refusal to allow the state access to his land when it requested access for surveying purposes. Mr. Mannet had to withhold certain details from his story as he is still engaged in active legislation over the issue but he was able to share the general details. Much like other property owners, Mr. Mannet talked about the state's unwillingness to discuss anything with him or to explain its plans in any detail. He talked to me about the state officials and said he was willing to give them the land on the riverside of the levee for their fence if they would leave the rest of his land free and clear, but the state refused. He responded by presenting the state with his own personal "Wish List" for the construction of the wall on his property (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009). This was a list of demands he had in exchange for his cooperation. It included items such as building him new dog kennels because the state was running the border wall through his current kennels. He also wanted the state to move his wife's fruit trees so that they would not be torn down, provide him with a gate to his property on the other side of the fence and create and build an appropriate drainage plan for the site so that his property would not flood as a result of the wall. The federal state was willing to build him new dog kennels but they refused his other demands. Interestingly, when the state contractors did arrive to tear down any structures or foliage in the path of the fence, they carefully dug up the fruit trees but did not give them to Sam and his wife. Instead they transported the trees across town and planted them in the local subcontractor's yard (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009).

Sam Mannet had problems with central state throughout the construction process. During our interview he shared with me that the federal state had condemned the wrong property several times and he had to keep clearing up the problem. He had erected his own security fence around his property and on three separate occasions different Border Patrol Agents lost control of their vehicles while driving on the levee and crashed into his fence, costing at least $2500 in repairs (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009). On a different occasion Mr. Mannet found a Border Patrol agent hiding under a tree on his private property who informed him that he had been dropped off and told to watch for illegal activity. When Mr. Mannet told the agent that he was trespassing and had to leave the agent did get up and walk away from the tree. He then walked over to the gap in Mr. Mannet's security fence that was the result of a Border Patrol agent's driving accident and told the private guard the construction company had provided to watch the gap while they were rebuilding the fence that he was not allowed to be there because he was standing on federally restricted property since that was land that had been condemned for the federal border fence. Mr. Mannet argued with the agent and the private guard remained but not without causing Sam Mannet more trouble (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009).

Sam Mannet's frustration with the state and the individual agents and representatives he dealt with over the issue of the border wall stemmed primarily from his feeling that they did not respect his rights as a lawful citizen and property owner. State officials repeatedly trespassed on his land and invaded his private property and then chastised him for walking on land that it had yet to claim as its own according to U.S. law. Mr. Mannet had owned his riverfront property for almost eleven years at the time of our interview and he had invested his time and money in making the space his own. Now the state was threatening to take all of that away, with little to no explanations, as if his property, his space, his land had no value.

In many ways Sam Mannet's relationship with the central state can be explained through a story he told me during our interview in October of 2009. He walked me out to the back of the property to show me his new dog kennels and the federal border wall that now runs through his property, cutting off access the rest of the property he owns on the riverside of the levee. While we were standing by the fence Mr. Mannet described standing up on the levee on his property just before the state built the fence. He was taking pictures of the river and his property when a Border Patrol vehicle drove up the levee and stopped near him. A female agent stepped out of the SUV and Sam walked over towards the vehicle to greet her but before he could say anything she demanded to know what he was doing there. Without waiting for an answer she told him that he had no right to be there, that he was neither allowed on the levee nor allowed to take pictures of the area. When he tried to talk to her and explain that this was his property she repeated herself and began shaking her finger in his face. Sam Mannet had had enough and told her to get off his property. He told her that this was his land and she could go drive on the road down by the river but she needed to get off his property right now. The agent argued with him and began yelling at him that this was federal land and he was the one who had to leave. Mr. Mannet again informed her to leave and told her that he "had had it" with the Border Patrol and the state on this issue (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009). He was locking them out of his land if this was the way they were going to treat him. After the agent finally left Mr. Mannet called the head of the Department of Homeland Security assigned to the Brownsville area and informed him of the incident and then he locked all of his gates and they remained locked for weeks, eventually costing the state hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction delays (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009).

In talking to Sam Mannet it became clear that the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006 and the ensuing struggle over the border wall had dramatically changed his general attitude about both the border wall in general and his relationship to the state more specifically. He told me that he felt that the Border Patrol had helped reduce crime levels and had been good for Brownsville before the border wall issue but that after the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006 was passed they had "been terrible, like bulldogs, pushing everyone around, bullying, not caring what people thought or what they did to people, just power-tripping" (Personal interview with S. Mannet 10-21-2009). Sam was honest about the fact that the state's bullying attitude annoyed him and that the dismissive treatment that he and other property owners received was a big reason for his anger and a large motivation for the fight he undertook. While he had always believed that the wall was unnecessary in downtown Brownsville, at first he had tried to cooperate with the state. He had offered it land on the riverside of the levee for the wall free of charge but it had refused him and eventually condemned a tract of his land between the levee and his store. The federal government forced him to move his property fence back 40 feet so that it could build the border wall where his security fence had formally stood. The issue over the dog kennels was a matter of five feet and could have been adjusted for but the federal officials were unwilling to work with him and he grew angry and stubborn and dismissive of the Border Patrol and the local DHS representatives in response to their own apparently angry, defensive, and stubborn dismissal of him and his fellow property owners.[44].

Sam's story is representative of many of the border property owners in the area, but it resonates even more because Sam was hoping to cooperate with the federal government and in

[44] I have left out certain details about Sam's story because he and his neighbors are still engaged in a lawsuit with the federal government over access to the property they still own on the other side of the wall and until the lawsuits are resolved some details remain confidential. These details in no way change the larger story or my analysis of the situation. If anything they would only strengthen my arguments further.

many ways was not even opposed to the border wall. His primary objections to the border wall were centered on its, to him, seemingly unnecessary place in urban downtown Brownsville and in the federal state's treatment and dismissal of locals and their viewpoints on the issue. Sam is a self-described and self-identified proud American but his dealings with the central state over the border wall on his property had strained his faith and his pride in his federal government. He finds himself in a difficult position, questioning the federal government's actions and policies as well as their motives and trying to process what he understands and experiences as a dismissal and rejection of him and his neighbors as American citizens. He is acutely aware of his rights as an American citizen and just as acutely aware that the federal government continuously trampled on his private property rights and dismissed his opinions and concerns about their seizure and remaking of local space, including his personal and private space. While Sam may not doubt his place as an American, he is now questioning whether the federal government fully recognizes him as such because he lives and owns property on the U.S. border.

One of the most vocal anti-border wall advocates in Brownsville was Mayor Pat Ahumada. I had the opportunity to interview Mayor Ahumada in August 2009 about the border wall. Mayor Ahumada proved to be a very vocal, opinionated, and outspoken man and one of his primary concerns in his early term was trying to stop the federal state from building the border wall through downtown Brownsville. After his election in 2007 Mayor Ahumada began reaching out to other politicians, activists, and citizens to rally support to fight the wall. He contacted the Mexican Consulate and joined the Texas Border Coalition. He proposed that Brownsville build a river walk along the Rio Grande River instead of a wall, going as far as

commissioning initial plans for the project from a Landgrant Development, a company out of California.[45]

Mayor Ahumada was very clear in his opposition to the wall and the reasons for that opposition. He told me that "fear has produced the fence" and that he found it "offensive" and believed that it "stands against everything America is" (Personal interview with Mayor Ahumada 8-21-2009). Mayor Pat Ahumada is well aware of the problems that exist along the border, the criminal trafficking of drugs and the issues of immigration but as a border mayor he believes that the wall will not solve these problems and in fact argued that "America is being foolish by not addressing our problems" (Personal interview with Mayor Ahumada 8-21-2009). One of the biggest objections to the border wall by local borderland residents has been that the wall does not actually solve any of the problems, but just wastes money on an ineffective tool that restricts local rights without stopping criminal activity. Mayor Ahumada takes this argument further and points out that: "Fences keep people in, not out. Fences keep our property in, our dog, our children, our livestock, our property" (Personal interview with Mayor Ahumada 8-21-2009). He questions the state's motives in building the border wall, arguing that no national border wall has ever worked and that the state is aware of this. Mayor Ahumada sees the border wall as an attempt to stake a property claim on American national space and he argues that in doing so the United States is insulting Mexico and its citizens. He told me that he sees the border wall as "part of a racist agenda" and added "it is sad and says something poorly about us as a nation" (Personal interview with Mayor Ahumada 8-21-2009). He also places the blame for this agenda on the non-border states, on "middle America," who he describes as having a "prejudiced bone to pick, to blame Mexicans for their problems" and suggests that these people are welcome to build

[45] Initial ideas and plans for the River walk can still be seen on Landgrant Development's website at www.landgrant.net

a wall around their own states but that they should stop building walls in his city (Personal interview with Mayor Ahumada 8-21-2009). Mayor Ahumada has a point, given that during a visit to Brownsville to discuss the border wall, then U.S. Representative from Colorado, and Republican presidential candidate Tom Tancredo, a supporter of the border fence, told a local crowd who had made their opposition to the border wall evident, "I suggest that you build this fence around the northern part of your city," (Sherman, 2008) thus effectively shutting Brownsville and its discontented citizens out of Tancredo's United States of America.

Mayor Ahumada and most of the local residents I interviewed, both in the survey and in the stakeholders' interviews, expressed dismay over what they felt was a rejection of them and their city and the surrounding area by both the state and a larger white middle America. Brownsville and the Rio Grande Valley are U.S. spaces, but local residents feel as if they are under attack from the rest of the United States for not being "American" or "white" enough to care for their own land and country. The state did not consult with locals about the border fence and dismissed local concerns about the border wall and its impact on residents, the local environment, and the local culture. Local residents were accused of being unpatriotic when they questioned the need for the border wall or refused to turn over their private lands without a fight. The accusations of "un-American" behavior and the implied, and explicit, rejection of border residents and their suggestions of possible solutions to border security were hard for locals to accept. Along the U.S.-Mexico border, citizenship, and its associated American identity, have long been a source of pride for those who possessed it and often a coveted prize for those who did not. U.S. border citizens wear their American identity with pride, or did before the construction of the border wall. Now they question whether the United States ever accepted them as full citizens with full rights and they are responding in kind. Whereas citizenship has

long been a critical self-promoted identity marker in the borderlands, now citizens are distancing themselves from this connection with the federal state, choosing instead to emphasize their identity as Hispanics or as borderlanders, showing a clear rejection of citizenship as a primary category of difference in favor of geography, culture, and or race and ethnicity.

In spite of the accusations of un-American and unpatriotic behavior, a number of local and regional groups organized against the wall, participating in walks against the wall, local protest marches, hosting rallies, and other forms of political protest in efforts to draw attention to the issue. Shortly after the Secure Fence Act of 2006 was passed, Del Rio resident Jay Johnson Castro announced that he would walk the Texas border from Laredo to Brownsville in protest of the border wall. Over approximately three weeks, with the support of John Neck, he walked the roughly 170 miles. Mr. Castro and Mr. Neck covered an average of ten miles a day and stayed in churches, in the homes of supporters, and sometimes in motels paid for by local supporters. Along the route the two men were joined for short distances by locals who had heard about the walk on local media outlets. Ranchers and farmers whose land lay along the Rio Grande river would meet them on the road and donate money to help cover expenses. Different activist groups and political groups including La Unión de Pueblos Entero (LUPE) (a community rights organization founded by labor rights activist César Chávez in 1989), United Farmworkers of America (UFW), ARISE (a women's issue grassroots organization involved in the colonias of south Texas), and Migrantes Unidos Sin Fronteras/United Migrants Without Borders (a local branch of the Southwest Workers Union), marched alongside the two men on different days. The walk culminated with a ceremony at Ringold Park across from the Gladys Porter Zoo where the walkers were greeted with cheers by a large crowd of supportive Brownsville residents (Personal communications with J. Castro and J. Neck).

Over the next two years Jay Castro and John Neck would participate in numerous other walks, marches, and rallies, building coalitions up and down the border. These groups would join together not only to protest the border wall but to try to raise awareness of issues affecting the border region, such as environmental polluters, cross-border cooperation, workers' rights, immigration, prison rights, and education. These groups, while largely unsuccessful in stopping the border wall, have built lasting coalitions such as the Border Ambassadors and the No Border Wall coalition, who remain active in their struggle for regional borderland improvements and civil rights.

One local Brownsville activist and small business owner, Mark Clark, the owner of Galeria 409, an art gallery located in downtown Brownsville, was involved in numerous local protests against the border wall. Mark Clark has been a political activist for most of his life. He was a member of the Youth International Party in the 1960s and spent much of his professional life in Washington DC. After retiring from a 22 year career at the Smithsonian Museum he and his wife moved to Brownsville, hoping for a peaceful retirement restoring an old house and running an art gallery out of the front of their property in a remote border town. Shortly after leaving DC, however, the Secure Fence Act of 2006 passed into law and Mr. Clark found himself once again involved in active political protests. He and his wife were the only two protestors at a March 3, 2006 public[46] binational press conference in Alice Wilson Hope Park attended by then DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff. Mark's protest signs were noted by the local

[46] There is some debate about how public this press conference really was as federal security agents turned away then Brownsville Mayor Eddie Treviño Jr., City Manager Charlie Cabler and other local officials who were known to oppose the border wall. The state officials claimed that they could not allow the Brownsville officials to attend the event, despite having invited them on the previous day, because of security concerns. The security agents did allow reporters, other dignitaries, and UTB students to attend the event, many of whom were not asked for personal identification or subjected to bag inspection. The event was Secretary Chertoff's first official visit to Brownsville. He met with Mexican Secretary of the Interior Carlos Mara Abascal Carranza and Mexican Secretary of Public Safety Eduardo Medina Mora in order to announce that the U.S. and Mexico had reached an agreement to improve border security (Chapa 2006).

media and soon he was in touch with the No Border Wall Coalition and in the years that followed he remained active in the No Border Wall movement, hosting events at his gallery and even throwing a retirement party for Secretary Chertoff that involved both a cake and piñata in the Secretary's likeness.[47] While the idea of the retirement party is amusing, and Mark clearly had fun organizing interesting events to protest the wall, when I interviewed him about his participation in the No Border Wall movement, his frustration and sadness over the wall were palpable. He described it as a "futile feeling," knowing that the "wall is coming closer with each passing day" and that soon enough it would block off the view of the river from his home (Personal interview with M. Clark 9-18-2009) The "god awful ugly" (Personal interview with M. Clark 9-18-2009) wall does stand between Mark and the river now and he is no longer able to take his lunch breaks along the levee while looking at the river.

When I asked Mark what he found most offensive about the wall he told me that it was the "colossal arrogance and the xenophobic people who have foisted it off on us. They know it is not a real solution but they won't confront their real problems of drugs and immigration. Instead they exhibit this total disregard for the rule of law" and build a border wall (Personal interview with M. Clark 9-18-2009). Mark described the border wall as a "wonderful political solution" that would "line the pockets" of their friends in the private sector with engineering and construction contracts. Mark believes that the pressure for the wall is coming from Americans who are "afraid of brown people, of Catholics, of anybody who doesn't look and act and sound like them" and by private government contractors who stand to make billions in both construction fees and in prison fees for the detention and incarceration of undocumented workers (Personal interview with M. Clark 9-19-2009). With all of his outrage, however, the most

[47] See Appendix G for an image of the invitation to Chertoff's retirement party at Galeria 409.

striking thing about Mark Clark was the deep sadness he clearly felt over the loss of the river and the land walled off by the border wall. He had chosen to retire in Brownsville because he said he wanted to get away from the increasing national paranoia that was taking over Washington DC after 9/11 and instead he found himself in a futile fight to stop that same paranoia from changing a remote border town in deep south Texas. Whether you accept Mark's beliefs that it is fear and paranoia driving the state's decision to build t he border wall, it is undeniable that the border wall has changed Brownsville, Texas, remaking both public and private space and changing the core of local identity construction

Mark was not the only recent transplant to take up the cause of the anti-border wall movement. The Brownsville Independent School District hosts a number of Teach for America positions each year and several of the Teach for America recruits assigned to Brownsville began using the border wall and the national debates over immigration as teaching tools in their middle school and high school classrooms and eventually found themselves active in the movement as well. At least two of these teachers chose to begin blogging about their experiences.[48] In an interview with Matthew Paul Webster, Smart Borders blogger, told me that he became interested in the border wall when he started talking to his students about the subject and began to understand how much the border wall was going to change the community he had come to love. Growing up in a small town in Pennsylvania he had not thought much about the border until he moved to Brownsville to teach. Once in Brownsville the border and the river became just part of the local landscape, a place to enjoy his evening and weekend runs or sit and relax while looking at the water. And then the Secure Fence Act of 2006 passed and he found himself participating in protest walks, attending community meetings, and writing a blog about the border and the

[48]See John Moore's blog NonViolent Migration at nonviolentmigration.wordpress.com and Matthew Paul Webster's blog Smart Borders at smartborders.wordpress.com

struggle to find a balance between security and freedom (Personal interview with M.P. Webster 8-18-2009).

Matthew said that after talking to his students about the wall and hearing the resignation in their voices as they told him that no one cared about them or their community he felt that he had to participate in the protests because he wanted to show them that in the U.S. you could try to do something about injustice. Matthew truly believes that the border wall and immigration are education issues, that there is the possibility of reconciliation if the various sides can be brought together to listen and hear one another. He remains hopeful that the pro-wall, anti-immigration proponents will eventually come to understand that this is a civil rights issue and he draws parallels between the anti-border wall walks and the civil rights marches of the 1960s. He said that if nothing else he knew that he had changed the minds of at least a few people back in Pennsylvania and that his students had come to believe that if Mr. Webster and his "crazy walk" were willing to try then maybe there was hope for change.[49] When you talk to Matthew you can hear the joy in his voice when he talks about Brownsville and his time there but you can also hear the sadness and the loss of hope when he discusses the border wall and its impact on the border town and his former students. The words of his friend, and fellow teacher and blogger John Moore sum up the sadness that both of them feel over their students' feelings of alienation from the nation at large. John Moore is discussing why only five of his 121 8th grade students chose to write an essay for a contest hosted by Princeton University, in spite of the fact that Princeton University specifically requested that Mr. Moore's students participate.

I asked the rest of my 121 students to speak honestly about why they had decided not to write for the contest. The overwhelming number of students responded that it wasn't worth

[49] Matthew Webster is no longer teaching English in Brownsville but decided to go to law school and become an immigration attorney.

trying because they felt that because Princeton is in the North, they would prejudge their work since they live on the border. This experience reminded me once again just how excluded these children feel. Even though this wall will be South of *most* of my students, my students are smart enough to know that the same motive behind this wall is also shouting at them, saying, " You are not us; keep out!" (Moore January 23, 2008 entry "Hold onto Hope" nonviolentmigration.wordpress.com).

Mr. Moore's students have captured the feelings of the larger Brownsville community, however. For local borderland residents the wall is not merely a security structure designed to "secure the border." It is a wall designed to carve up the landscape, staking a nationalized claim on local space and proclaiming for all the country to hear that the people who live on the border are not worthy of the full rights of citizenship, whether they live south or north of the wall. Mr. Moore's students are reacting to the rejection they feel from the U.S. nation-state, expressing their sense of alienation from the larger U.S. and from their own federal government. That the central state would build the border wall across their local lands says to them that they do not matter to the U.S., that because they live on their border their citizenship is not equal to the citizenship of Americans north of the borderlands.

Spatial control

While the construction of a fence along the border has obvious and concrete effects on the landscape, the ways in which the federal border wall has changed, and will continue to alter, local spaces in the Brownsville area are manifold, some clearly visible while others will only become apparent in the future. In deep south Texas, the Rio Grande Valley is in many ways the definition of a peripheral community. While its residents do have access to the same basic services as other U.S. citizens, and are also more familiar with state power in the form of border

security and international trade enforcement, in many ways the Rio Grande Valley feels very remote from the central authorities in Washington DC. While the business of the border requires an extensive federal presence on the border, it is not necessarily a presence that engages fully with the local community, certainly not outside of the very specific particularities of the border, i.e. trade, security, and immigration. Its geographical remoteness and minimal political power make it an easy place to overlook, to the extent that even with a high percentage of military veterans, totaling a population of nearly 100,000 veterans, the Rio Grande Valley has been unsuccessful in its attempts to secure a VA hospital, making it one of the only places in the country where veterans must drive almost five hours before reaching a VA hospital where they will be able to receive inpatient care (Taylor 2011).

Geographically removed with no interstate within a four hour drive and comfortable in their mostly forgotten communities, the residents of the Rio Grande borderlands were not prepared in 2006 for the state to change tactics and suddenly declare that not only were the - borders important to the larger nation, securing them had become a national priority and would require the construction of physical walls. Residents were perhaps a little less surprised by the United States' notion that locals were not up to this task and so were not to be consulted in any meaningful way about how best to control the area. The central state, however, was astonished by locals' reactions to the new security plan. Having expected compliance in the face of state power and clearly expecting the locals to be ignorant of both politics and legal rights, agents of the state were baffled and even insulted when locals refused to turn over their land, without asking any questions, and allow thethe dermal government to do what it wished in the name of national security. While most if not all of the resistance would ultimately prove legally unsuccessful, it was not the easy walk-over the state had been expecting.

The central state's miscalculation concerning locals' interest in the new security policies was perhaps understandable. The counties that make up the Rio Grande Valley are some of the poorest in the U.S. and average education levels among the lowest (Maril 1992, 2004; Richardson 1999; Richardson and Resendiz 2006). Each political cycle sees minimal voter turn-out and in general the area has a reputation for being out of sight and out of mind for both Texas and national politicians and the locals have not made much of an effort to change this reputation (Cadik and Glanz 2010). Generally accepting of federal and Texas state regulations, at least politically, if not in practice, the residents of the Rio Grande Valley have a reputation for "putting up with" anything those in power choose to decide for them. The United States' error, however, lay in a failure to understand the significance of both the river and the border (both separately and as a single unit) to the socio-cultural and economic identity of Rio Grande Valley residents, particularly those residing in the towns along the river/border. This was not simply a request for citizens to put up with a little extra surveillance and some new border crossing and immigration regulations; it was an attack on the fundamental ability of residents to engage with the established landscape. The border wall and the new security regime were designed to limit access, essentially to erase entire spaces from the landscape.

The wall represents a physical structure designed to finalize the spatial claims of both the state and the nation. The problem remains, however, that no single populace has been able to define absolutely what it means to be an American and competing claims of national identity now stand like a scar across the landscape with one side protesting that they have the right to wall off their territory and another side arguing that the wall itself is an affront to the very nature of American identity. What my data demonstrated was a preoccupation with questions of freedom and inclusion or belonging and the importance of symbols in the discourses surrounding

border security and immigration. Informants repeatedly asked me what are we striving to be free to do or to be free from. If by freedom we mean that we should be free to follow our own dreams and live as we see fit than walls make little sense but if by freedom we mean that we want to be free from terror, free from having to adjust to other lifestyles, than walls make more sense. After all they are meant to keep the other out. Locals demanded that the state and those "northerners" look at the implications of walling in our country. And they were very clear about it being "our" country, not "their" meaning white or middle America's country. "We are part of this country" and "We are Americans too" were commonly expressed sentiments (Personal communications 2008 – 2009). The United States is clearly drawing a line dividing a non-border, white "us" from a non-white, non-American "them," a physical proof that they are "other" regardless of citizenship status. That this wall is being built primarily along the U.S.-Mexico border makes a racial, cultural, and linguistic statement about what is considered "American" and what, and more importantly who, is not.

The most recent rising tide of nativism and nationalism in American politics is inextricably tied to current immigration debates and questions of border and/or national security. The multiple Minutemen groups that host border watches and freedom rallies on the border in an effort to "protect" American soil from the "invading" immigrants crossing the border without papers promote their cause with easily recognizable images and quotations drawn from American history, generally American revolutionary history. The Tea Party activists draw their very name from the iconic Boston Tea Party, making a priori claims of American identity before they even have to explain their policies. Tea partiers make statements about independence and freedom, claiming they are standing up to the liberal cultural elite who have stolen America and they are going to take it back for 'real Americans' (Harris 2010; Von Drehle, 2010). Border wall

protestors, on the other hand, point to the Berlin Wall and the United States' cold war objections to walls and what they represent as proof positive that the border wall is itself un-American and pro-immigration activists argue that as a "nation of immigrants" current anti-immigration rhetoric is not only insulting to hardworking immigrants, it is an affront to the Americans who helped build this country as immigrants (Bowden 2007; notexasborderwall.blogspot.com). The situation remains infinitely more complex than either side is willing to admit, however. The wall itself has provided the ideological debates with a physical structure that carves up the landscape, dividing the issues not only in words and ideas and lines on a map, but quite literally in very real and tactile lines on the actual ground.

Nancy Munn's article "Excluded Spaces" proposes that negative spaces can be carved out of the landscape through the avoidance of those spaces by individuals. She uses the concept of a "mobile spatial field" to discuss the ways in which Aborigines in Australia use their avoidance of certain sacred places to create mobile boundaries for those cultural sites that shift over the course of a person's lifetime according to age, relational cultural position, and life events. As an individual moves through both space and time these excluded or negative spaces can and do shift both in relation to that individual and any other people involved in the construction of that space. Munn argues that individual actors are the organizing centers of space and that the spatial fields that surround them can be

> "understood as a culturally defined, corporeal-sensual field of significant distances stretching out from the body in a particular stance or action at a given locale or as it moves through locales. This field can be plotted along a hypothetical trajectory centered in the situated body with its expansive movements and immediate tactile reach, and extendable beyond this center in vision, vocal reach, and hearing (and further where relevant). The body is thus understood as a spatial field (and the spatial field as a bodily field)" (Munn 2003, 94).

If individual actors thus define space as they either access it, or not as in the case of negative space, it becomes critical to examine situations in which an external entity such as the state decides, not only in individual cases, but for a people as a whole, to deny access to places. When, in the case of the border wall, the state erects a physical barrier designed to deny local actors access to the border/river space which has consistently defined the area both geographically and socio-culturally, the state is not only declaring that it has the power and thus the right to define space; it is declaring that it has the power to restrict and manage the bodies of its citizens.

Borderland space is defined and produced as a socio-political construction rooted in historical specifics and it is through an understanding of space as both the "settings of the struggle [and] the stake's of that struggle" (Lefebvre 1991[1974]: 386) that we can begin to consider how the struggle over the border wall will end up shaping the borderlands, the state, and the nation in the years to come (Harvey, 2000, De Genova and Ramos-Zayas, 2003). DeGenova has examined the historical processes of migration and labor that have led to what he calls a "Mexican" Chicago, a localized space spread throughout modern Chicago that is tied to racial and ethnic categorizations that not only link this space to Latin America, but, according to DeGenova, make it as much a part of Latin America as it is part of the United States (DeGenova 2005). The Rio Grande Valley, in south Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border, in many ways remains "Mexican" space and locals often refer to the border region as an extension of northern Mexico. The borderlands' connections and ties to Mexico are in large part at the root of American nationalist fears that Mexican immigrants are invading the U.S., seeking to change it into Mexico rather than seeking to become American themselves. This fear, however, is rooted in a clear understanding of the world as divided into "us or them," part of the mentality of "you

are either with us or against us" and does not reflect the historical and socio-cultural complexities that make up either the borderlands or the larger U.S. nation-state as a whole. The borderlands have established themselves as a cross-border space, with the exact meaning, boundaries, and nature of that space shifting over time, but the state's policies regarding the construction of a wall designed to exact control and limitations over that space is a violent act that not only removes space from the landscape but violates locals' understandings of their own place within that landscape. The wall is at its core about control, power, and violation, and it is about targeted control and violation, a specific flexing of state muscles aimed directly at a people who have chosen to live on the geographical fringes of the nation, most of whom are also of Mexican ethnic origin and thus constitute both a racialized and ethnic other within the larger United States, even if they have always been the majority along these borderlands. They represent a threat to those Americans who continue to envision the United States as a "white" nation and the wall gives the state another tool to control these Mexican "others," whether they are American citizens or not, by controlling the very space they occupy within the nation as well as erecting a physical structure designed to send a message that both nation and state end here, beyond this point is other, beyond this point is Mexican space and it is not welcome or wanted within the United States.

Conclusion

Because space is created by the very act of bodies moving through it, the federal state's erection of a wall designed to control and limit, even erase, local space is a violent act and makes this issue about more than "just a fence" for local residents. It is about removing their access to space, taking something fundamental from the landscape and in essence erasing it because of fears generated far from the border. The Secure Border Fence Act of 2006 and its consequences

for the borderlands are about control and power and violation. State agents and officials remain perplexed that locals would not only object to state control but would have the audacity to protest the loss of their public and private property in a post-9/11 world. Property rights and the protection of those rights are an embedded part of U.S. history and, for many Americans, remain a symbol of what it means to be an American, so why exactly was the state so surprised when local borderland residents refused to surrender their property? This question remains at the core of the border wall debacle and involves the construction of the borderlands as exceptional space, exempt from the protections of lawful rights and protections. The southern borderlands of the U.S. are constructed as exceptional space, not only because they are borderlands, but because they are home to a large population of Mexicans, both legal citizens, residents, and documented and undocumented immigrants, who are conceived of as racial, ethnic, and cultural others, strangers to the body politic. The border wall embodies a form of racialized spatialized control. It is a tool for controlling a region, an overwhelmingly Hispanic region, and while this might not be the state's explicit aim, it is about controlling the Mexicans who live along the border, whether they are Americans or not.

It is important to understand, however, that the federal government's decision to build a border wall was not made out of a sense of malice or the desire to punish or even injure the southern borderlands. While the border wall stands as a racialized spatial marker, this does not mean that the federal state intended it as such. The truth is perhaps more insidious; that the state is not consciously aware of the inherent racial factor because it is so ingrained in the machinations of state spatial planning that the federal government no longer necessarily sees it. The federal state was attempting to solve a problem it had identified along the U.S.-Mexico

border, the problem of a porous border[50]. The federal government viewed the border as a whole, not as a set of different borderland spaces, and once it had identified the problem it moved forward without careful consideration of the local specifics of different historical, environmental, political, or geographical contexts along the border. From the central state's perspective the border wall provided a simple solution to a problem. While not all illegal crossings and smuggling could be stopped, the state could construct a wall to control the space, hopefully resulting in the ability to slow the flow of illegal trafficking over the border, whether of people, drugs, or other goods.

Other scholars have noted the move towards spatial governmentality, or control through the management of space (Merry 2001; O'Malley 1993; Perry 2000). Spatial governance is about the control of outcomes through the use of architectural structures, such as freeways, walls, enclosures, etc., to manage risks and control populations. Urban design and planning in cities can determine policing practices (Davis 1992) and legitimate class and race-based community segregation (Low 2001). Space is used to support and reify capital on both global and local geopolitical landscapes (Harvey 2000, 2001). Scholars have noted how communities themselves engage with space to carve out culturally defined and protected spaces, even embracing a history of spatial displacement and segregation in order to fuel the struggle against the destructive forces of urban renewal programs (Villa 2000). The border wall makes sense if the federal state's desires, namely to continue the uninterrupted flow of capital across its borders, are taken into consideration. The wall is not designed to stop either capital or laborers (in point of fact a form of human capital) from crossing the border but to exert its spatial claim on the borderlands, in essence serving as an 18 foot concrete and steel flag of ownership. The border wall allows the

[50] Whether the pourousness of the border was or is really a problem remained one of the many points of contention between the state and Rio Grande Valley border residents.

federal government to direct the flow of both licit and illicit capital across the border, meaning that it can stop or "catch" smuggled goods and people at will without actually acting against its monetary interests.

The border wall stands as an example of spatial control and governance whereby the central state exerts control over a population, in this case those people crossing the border unofficially (not at official checkpoints and crossings) through the control of space rather than through any direct policing interaction with the populace. This technique is about the prevention of future criminal activity rather than the apprehension and punishment of criminals. While the Border Patrol does continue to police the area, because of the wall, the idea is that the space they are now expected to police has effectively shrunk, resulting in a "funneling" of criminal activity that allows the state to enhance its image as the entity in control of the border without actually having to control the border.

If space is created as bodies move through place, thereby imbuing it with meaning beyond physical location, then the erection of a wall intended to cut the general public off from the border and the river is an exercise in state power calculated to exert a form of ultimate control over local space. If locals can no longer access a space for any reason, whether business or recreational, than that space no longer truly exists for a population. It may have a new meaning, as in the demilitarized zones that exist along other country's borders, such as in North Korea or Russia, but it is no longer a local space, no longer a part of the local landscape. It is, in essence, a "disappeared" space, merely a memory for locals. Unusually, it remains a memory that locals can still see through the slats of the border fence, but no longer space, it has reverted to mere place for local residents, although state officials retain the right to access it, thus making it oddly both state "security" space but only local place, a situation that continues to foster

resentment between local residents and the state, adding to a sense of insecurity on the part of locals and imbuing federal agents with powers of superiority over the local population.

As this chapter shows, the spatial reconstruction of the borderlands instigated by the construction of the border wall and the federal seizure of lands caused local borderland residents to question their place in U.S. society and this questioning resulted in a restructuring of local identity politics, shifting the construction of personal identities to social markers other than citizenship. While the federal state and its representatives and agents might neither have seen or understood the border wall as a racialized solution to border security, most local borderland residents did interpret the border wall through a racialized lens. Even those who did not believe that the federal government was racially motivated in its border policies did tend to believe that the federal government was overly dismissive and disrespectful of borderland residents because of their geographical locality. Whether local borderland residents believed the nation-state was unconcerned with local opinions and wishes because of race or geography, the belief that the federal government was dismissive of local rights, property, and desires resulted in a local rejection of state-centered identity, essentially galvanizing local citizens around racial, cultural, and/or geographical identity markers as opposed to state-centered markers such as citizenship. Ironically, it was the federal state's over-confident assumption of local borderland citizen loyalty that was partially to blame for the problem. In many ways the federal government took the loyalty of its border citizens for granted, assuming a homogeneity of culture and political understandings of the border with middle (non-border) America that did not exist. In doing so it assumed that the borderlands would share the desires and wishes of other Americans, failing to take into consideration the impact of unique local cultural, historical, and geographical positioning as a strong influence on local understandings, not only of the border itself, but of the

position of the borderlands within the United States. The overconfident assumption that local borderlanders, as American citizens, would necessarily agree with the federal government's decisions resulted in the federal state's unintended projection of itself as racially and culturally biased, resulting in the alienation of locals and weakening previously cherished and cultivated ties to the nation-state as expressed through citizenship as primary identity marker in the borderlands.

Conclusion

This dissertation explores how the state's actions had direct and almost immediate consequences on its relationship with local borderland residents. Through an aggressive seizure of control over the production of local space, the federal government changed local identity politics, shifting the focus from citizenship to race and ethnicity, and in some cases to a geographically defined borderlands culture, prompting local citizens to confront and challenge the federal government and the racial categories which the federal state was utilizing to advance its agenda. The complicated and multi-layered specifics of how the shift in identity production occurred required a multi-method approach to trace them out and explain the link to central state's actions. Semi-structured interviews, participant observation, open-ended survey questions, and close readings of blogs, local media, and letters to the editor revealed that local borderlands citizens interpret the construction of the border wall as an insulting betrayal by their own government. Beyond this betrayal, locals resent the loss of space, both pubic and private, and believe that the federal government has overstepped itself and taken a vital part of their spatial landscape from borderlands residents. This data further showed that local residents are identifying strongly as "borderland" residents and, in many cases, they are rejecting the former primacy of their "American" identity and rapidly realigning as "border" or "Mexican." The

homophily and affiliation data demonstrates that this is still a new trend, but one that will likely remap the social landscape for generations

The preference for identification as “border people” or as Hispanics and/or Mexican-Americans was almost exclusively tied to discussions about the border wall and other recent border security policies or the current national anti-immigration discourse. Essentially the border wall while leaving borderland residents mostly on the American side of the wall, is stranding them on the "wrong" side of a metaphoric wall, leaving local residents feeling like they have been pushed out of the U.S. When an informant was discussing the economy, or issues that did not involve immigration or border security, many informants still showed a tendency to identify as U.S. citizens and stress their “American” identities but when the conversation returned to the border wall or the immigration debate, these same informants would once again favor identities constructed around race, ethnicity, and borderlands geography. That this shift in identity politics can be traced directly to the state’s actions, specifically to its actions to seize and reshape the local production of space, is critical because unlike many manifestations of state power, this action was neither hidden nor muted and the citizens of the borderlands hold the federal state responsible. That they now reject citizenship as a primary marker of social identity production may be a small point, but it demonstrates a small hole in the hegemony of federal power in the borderlands and means that in the future the local population might not be as willing to accept the federal governments’ power and authority, forcing the central state to either rethink its approaches or further reveal its power to achieve its ends.

Key Points

Several factors shaped the locals’ reaction to the border wall, including the spatial and physical consequences of the border wall, the interactions and negotiations between local

stakeholders and the federal government over the border wall, and the national discourse over border security and immigration that helped to drive the call for the border wall. The rising tide of anti-immigrant, and more broadly, anti-Hispanic, rhetoric within the United States, not only contributed to the federal decision to build the wall, it contributed to the local borderlanders' sense of isolation and alienation from the national body politic, further dividing locals from the central U.S. nation-state and resulting in a shift in local identity politics based on race, ethnicity, and borderlands culture instead of on citizenship and shared "American" identity. The data collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and the open-ended questions from the survey revealed that locals feel alienated from the U.S. nation-state as well as revealing the mixture of sadness, confusion, and anger from what they interpreted as a rejection of them as Americans. It also revealed that his sense of rejection focused them on their identity as borderlands residents as well as their shared identity as "Mexicans" (excepting the Anglo residents who primarily stressed their place in the borderlands culture). The homophily and affliation data from the RDS survey demonstrate that this is a recent shift and is the direct result of recent events and actions by the federal government and further exacerbated by the national discourse on immigration and border security.

This dissertation makes 11 key points:

1. Within the borderlands, the border shapes the local community's relationship to and understanding of the federal state. Following the passage of the Secure Fence Act of 2006 the struggle over the construction of the federal border wall, and the disagreements over the spatial footprint of the border (and thus the spatial footprint of federal power over the border), and shaped the production (and reproduction) of local space in Brownsville, TX and the surrounding borderlands.

2. By seizing land and forcibly, physically making visible the geopolitical border line in such a forbidding and militarized way, the central U.S. state strengthened the impact of the border as a dividing line on the production of local space while diminishing the state's impact as a socio-cultural unifying force on the local community.

3. The U.S. central state's performance of security in Brownsville led to a shift in identity politics that resulted in the prioritization of socio-cultural and racial identity over that of citizenship, a marker typically prioritized in the borderlands.

4. In the borderlands, at the edge of the nation, "American" identity has always been fiercely protected, even more so along the U.S.-Mexico border where many, and in the case of south Texas, the overwhelming majority, of U.S. citizens are also Hispanic. That federal representatives would accuse locals of not being real Americans, or of not loving the United States, stung deeply. While it may seem unimportant, like children calling each other names, it was not easy for locals to dismiss the accusations of "un-American" behavior. These accusations wounded locals, especially since many borderland locals believe that it is the federal government that is acting un-American, seizing lands from citizens, refusing locals a say in how local space is organized and shaped, and fostering a climate of fear and the restriction of civil rights.

5. While situational identity shifting occurs regularly in the borderlands, after the construction of the border wall began in Brownsville, whether someone identifies as a citizen or as a Hispanic can be predicted with remarkable accuracy based on the specific conversational context. When discussing border security locals tend to identify strongly along ethnic and racial lines. If the only topic at hand is the economy (i.e. local job availability or wages), however, locals continue to identify along lines of citizenship.

6. Brownsville residents did not react with support for the border wall as their El Paso counterparts did at the onset Operation Blockade in the 1990s. Instead they interpreted the border wall as a grave insult to the local community, understanding it as a federal security policy aimed at all borderland residents, particularly those of Hispanic ethnicity, rather than a security measure responsible for targeting illegal border crossers.

7. While Brownsville is not El Paso, I argue that the difference in Brownsville's reaction to border policies is not merely a temporal or locational geographical variation. The rise in anti-immigrant, and in particular anti-Mexican, discourse within the United States combined with the locals' beliefs that the central state is stealing lands from them, and is comfortable doing so because the borderlands are not only geographically removed from the center but also majority Hispanic, has changed the relationship of borderlands citizens to the nation-state. As a result, borderlands residents are more suspicious of the federal government's motives and distrustful of its border policies, believing that they are not merely designed to regulate undocumented immigration. The national anti-immigrant discourse the changes in national security brought about after September 11, 2001 have changed the situation on the border in the intervening years between the implementation of Operation Blockade in 1993 and the Secure Border Fence Act of 2006.

8. In many ways the categories of difference that Vila (2001) and Dunn (2010) identified as citizenship markers, were actually questions of "Americanness" – something that was not obvious at the time of their studies. The identity break in Brownsville, however, has finally made this clear – citizenship, while intimately tied to questions of "Americanness," remains distinct and separate in the socio-cultural construction of identity.

9. The borders are only a portion of the borderlands. They help provide structure to a space, but they are exactly that: structures around which societies must necessarily mold themselves, but not the societies themselves. Using multiple data sets, this dissertation studies the processes through which long-term borderland residents understand and interact not only with the border itself, but more specifically with the borderland space in which they live their everyday lives and situate their national, cultural, and geographical identities. The recent flux and transitions within the lower Rio Grande borderlands are the direct result of external pressures applied by the central state, not the byproduct of international geography.

10. Contrary to globalization theories predicting the decreasing relevance of geographical borders (Appadurai, 1996; Ohmae, 1995), this project demonstrates that the importance of physical space may have shifted with the rise of a wireless world (Castells 1998), but it has not decreased. Physical territory remains critically important to nation-states and the importance of borders in delineating this physical space is crucial. If physical territoriality and the delineation of national space were not important then the border wall, as a physical marker of national territory, would not be necessary.

11. While there are important shared experiences in adjoining border zones, life in the U.S. borderland remains meaningfully separate from life in the Mexican borderland. Border studies needs to examine the specifics of each side's lived experience, searching for both the similarities and differences that exist between them. We also need to continue searching for the similarities that exist between the border and the interior. It is only through recognition of where the lines fall between shared and singular experiences of the border that we can develop a viable theory of borders and borderlands. While my

dissertation examines the impact of the U.S. border wall solely on the U.S. side, this should not be taken to mean that the impact is the same on the Mexican side of the border. On the contrary, even though a shared borderlands does exist along this border, the border wall created a situation that threatens to divide this shared borderlands. It was partially this threat of division that resulted in local borderlands residents' rejection of citizenship-based identity in favor of identities structured on social markets that stretch across the border such as race, ethnicity, and a shared spatially and geographically-based borderlands culture.

Review

Through an exploration of the local community's relationship to and understanding of the federal state and how the struggle over the construction of the federal border wall affected the production (and reproduction) of local space in an international border town, this dissertation asks how local residents and institutions defended their right to define and control local space against the U.S. state's assertions that these same spaces are "national" and therefore beyond the influence and power of the residents and institutions who inhabit them. By integrating multiple forms of data and using recent advances in research methods, including Respondent Driven Sampling, this project examines how dramatic changes in the nation's literal and figurative presence on the borders impacts both private and public space in borderland communities. Understanding these shifts provides critical insights into the delicate relationship between the state and its borders, exploring not only how the state affects the borderlands (through the fact of the border), but also how the borderlands absorb and alter both nationalized discourses and the border itself in ways often unanticipated by the center. The homophily and affliation data provide evidence that citizenship is still an important social marker in the borderlands in relation

to the social boundaries that structure social networks. This data is consistent with other scholars findings (Vila 2000; DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Dunn 2010), however, the data generated from respondents' answers to survey questions as well as the data from the stakeholders' narratives, demonstrate that the primacy of citizenship as a social boundary marker in the borderlands is a specific choice and as such its relative importance can fade if individuals choose to stop defining themselves in terms of citizenship.

The residents of the lower Rio Grande Valley borderlands combat the federal government by exercising their rights to organize and protest as well as turning to the federal courts for protection from the federal government. Even as the federal state accused locals of un-American behavior for disagreeing with the government over its chosen method of border enforcement and local spatial control, local citizens argued that it was their right as Americans to protest the central state's treatment of them and the seizure of both public and private lands. As Dr. Juliet Garcia explained, it is a terrible thing to wake up each morning and remember that you are being sued by your own country, but it is important to remember that you have the right to fight for your beliefs (Interview with J. Garcia 3-27-09). Being sued by the United States of America does not strip one of their status as an American and Americans in the borderlands do not accept without question the decisions of a federal government that appears more interested in the opinions of non-border Americans than those of local borderland residents. Even as local borderland residents asserted their identities as Americans, stressing in particular their rights as American citizens, they began to question their connection to a federal state and nation that seems not only uninterested in their opinions but willing to reject them as fellow Americans should they continue to protest the border wall.

Whereas scholars have identified the fluidity of identity in the borderlands, what the data from this project shows is that individual citizens react in direct relation to their feelings and understandings concerning the federal state. The charges of un-American behavior, rather than inspiring local citizens to "get on board" and accept the federal government's decisions, instead further inflamed their sense of disconnection from a central state that was imposing its will without understanding of, or concern for, local contexts. Local citizens reacted by rejecting the construction of an identity that links them to the state, choosing to construct their identity around racial, ethnic, and geographical markers rather than using citizenship, a previously privileged marker of identity. Identity is a nuanced and multi-variant construction and individuals can and do inhabit multiple identities as once, flowing from one to another as the context requires or allows. Neither has American identity ever perfectly overlapped with citizenship status. The critical point here is that U.S. citizens in the borderlands are symbolically turning away from their citizenship, from their identities as "Americans" because of the actions of the American federal state. While it is an abstract rejection of American identity, a holistic rejection of their sense of themselves as predicated on citizenship, it is no less significant or powerful than more concrete rejections might be. It is not a simple rejection in response to a perceived rejection of them on the part of the central state either; it is as much a response to local citizens' perception that the U.S. itself is acting in an "un-American" fashion, violating citizen and human rights in the name of racial and cultural fears of the other, namely the Hispanic and border other that inhabits the southern borderlands of the United States.

Through the comparison of ethnographic data on the localized struggle against the border wall with nationalized perceptions about securing U.S. borders and immigration, this dissertation problematizes and redirects contemporary public and academic treatments of U.S. borders and

borderlands. The power of the federal state as expressed through the seizure of both public and private lands and the construction of large physical barriers in Brownsville, Texas directly impacted the local community's spatial production and identity construction. Borderland locals often refer to the rest of the United States as "the north" as in "I'm going north" or "they believe X up north." Throughout my fieldwork I was regularly told by residents that those people up north didn't respect the people "down here" and that they thought "we were all stupid" and that was why they (meaning the rest of the United States) thought it was okay to build the border wall even though the majority of local borderlands residents opposed it. While this sense of isolation and alienation from the rest of the United States is not entirely new, it has been exacerbated by anti-immigrant rhetoric in the national discourse and the construction of the border wall provided literal concrete proof that local borderland opinions matter little to the federal state, even when the issues at hand are borderland issues. While in the past, most borderland residents have chosen to address this sense of alienation from the rest of the U.S. by stressing their U.S. citizenship while deemphasizing their shared racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage with Mexico and Mexicans, within the Rio Grande borderlands, the border wall acted as a catalyst for the reversal of this process of identity construction, now stressing their shared racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage with Mexicans while deemphasizing the importance of their citizenship.

Is an international border also local space or is it exclusively nationalized space within a local setting? The answer to this question is complicated and intimately tied to who is answering the question and when. The federal state, when discussing its decision to build a border wall, argues that the border is national space and beyond the control of the locals but when faced with the cost of upkeep and maintenance, that same federal state is likely to suddenly see at least part of the border as local space, thus making locals partially responsible for maintaining federal

structures, such as river levees, that exist along the border. Locals, in turn, prefer to have the federal government handle the maintenance costs as well as the expense of border policing, but they do not want to relinquish all control over or access to the border. Such a question is also further complicated by what exactly is meant by border. Is the border merely the line that divides two nation-states, or is the border a spatialized zone extending outwards from the border to encompass the borderlands? If it is a larger border zone, how far does the border extend into either country? Even if the border is more narrowly constructed, does it extend 100 feet, 1,000 feet, a mile, outwards from the actual border line? Are such border zones of equivalent size in the countries on either side of the border? While these may seem like unimportant rhetorical questions, the answers have real consequences, not only for how states control and secure their borders, but for the production of local space by borderland residents. In large part, the fight over the border wall in Brownsville, TX is a disagreement over these very questions with the U.S. government arguing for control and power over a much larger "border" than locals are willing to accede. Locals do not question the federal state's right to control the border but they do question how far into local space that control should extend. Beyond questions of spatial limits, these are also questions of spatial governance. Who controls what space and how? Can spaces be shared between different parties and if so, who determines how these spaces are shared and who has primary control or right of way. Not only are locals angry about being barred from local space along the river, and elsewhere, they have questions about how they are expected to share space with the federal government, especially when the federal government remains vague about where the spatial lines fall and what the new rules are for operating within the newly delimited federal border spaces. Even where the federal state does not assert total control and bar access to locals, sharing border space between the central state and locals is an uneasy

negotiation of competing rights, responsibilities, and priorities. There remain no clear answers to these questions because the reality is that the control of border space remains a constant negotiation between federal and local interests, always in some state of flux dependent on current cultural, political, and economic conditions and considerations.

Negotiations are further complicated by the divided interests and obligations of the individuals involved in the process. While locals do not want the federal government to have full control over the borderlands, for the most part they do not want the federal government to withdraw its attention, power, support, and money from the region either. The local population has a complicated relationship with the border patrol. While they do not want to be personally harassed by "la migra," they do benefit from the policing actions of the Border Patrol in relation to crime reduction, particularly regarding drug trafficking. With the recent surge in drug cartel violence, locals see themselves as even more reliant on the federal government to prevent violence from crossing the border into Brownsville. But locals also resent the Border Patrol, believing that Border Patrol agents abuse their power and bully locals regardless of citizenship.

The relationship between local residents and the federal state is further complicated by the fact that locals join the Border Patrol, I.C.E, and the DHS and because of a recent policy shift, these locals can end up working in their native region. Even those federal agents who did not grow up in the Rio Grande Valley often end up seeing themselves as locals after years of living and working in the region. Locals also do not want to be financially responsible for the bureaucratic structure necessary for operating the border and keeping the legitimate flow of people, goods, and capital open. While locals might often resent the various federal agencies working in the area, they do not want them to withdraw completely either resulting in the

complicated and constant give and take relationship between local borderland residents and the federal state.

A large part of the frustration that border stakeholders feel with the federal government relates directly to the fact that the majority of the federal representatives they deal with in regard to the border wall have no real negotiating power. When the Border Patrol agents and I.C.E. officials claimed that they had no other choice but to build a physical barricade along the border in pre-designated locales by the December 31, 2008 deadline, they were mostly correct. Congress had legally bound them to build the border wall by a certain deadline and with the help of the Department of Homeland Security, federal legislators had even chosen the locations for the wall, all without ever checking with anyone from the Rio Grande borderlands. Having been bound by Congress, local representatives of the federal government were uninterested in negotiating for alternative solutions, believing that alternatives were impossible and that searching for alternatives might actually harm their careers in the government.

In the Rio Grande Valley borderlands, citizenship has long been an important category of difference, not only structuring social boundaries but also structuring access to different economic, educational, and social opportunities. It is not a category that local borderland residents would easily or lightly turn away from, and yet, the locals *are* turning away from citizenship as a primary identity marker, choosing instead to emphasize race, ethnicity, or geographically bounded cultural markers (i.e. "border culture") and they are doing so in direct reaction to both the federal state's actions and the nationalized discourse on borders and immigration. Local borderland residents believe that the nation has rejected them as Americans because of their racial and geographical positioning and that the federal state has chosen to support this rejection rather than embracing the borderlands as an important part of the United

States. In turn they have responded by choosing to embrace their shared racial and cultural heritage instead of their citizenship status. This reaction, while not necessarily unprecedented, was certainly not anticipated or desired by the federal state and while it may not matter much how the residents of an isolated region of the United States construct their social identity, it does matter that a national discourse and the federal state's response to that discourse can affect how citizens relate to the state through their most personal connection to it, namely their ownership of their own citizenship. In large part the power of the United States over its citizens rests on their acceptance of it and their desire to be Americans; when this desire wanes so does the power of the United States to control its citizens. Even more grimly, when citizens opt out of willing participation in the national project, the only options left to the central state to gain adherence and compliance involve force.

Policy Implications

After 9/11 and the U.S. government's subsequent declaration of "War on Terror," a hegemonic shift occurred within the state's ideological conception of freedom. During the Cold War the U.S. defined American freedom in opposition to Eastern communism, as the absence of overwhelming state surveillance, relatively open borders, and a lack of walled perimeters. Post 9/11, however, U.S. policies shifted the focus on freedom, arguing that to be in U.S. was itself to be free and this freedom must be protected through state surveillance, closed borders, and border walls. Even in the heightened security climate of the Cold War, such border defenses would have proved problematic, raising the specter of the Berlin Wall. The War on Terror, however, presents a different political challenge, namely how best to demonstrate to the American people that the government is protecting them.

The War on Terror, rather than protecting the U.S. populace from terror, has increased fear and panic for many American citizens. This fear has not remained centered on acts of terrorism either, but has spread outward, encompassing a larger fear of the other, particularly the immigrant and Hispanic other. The result has been an exponential increase in the "anti-immigrationism" and negativity of immigration politics identified in Heyman's "Finding a Moral Heart for U.S. Immigration Policy" (1998). Undocumented immigrants, more often referred to as "illegal aliens" or just "illegals" are regularly portrayed as uneducated, poor, welfare recipients, who increase crime and poverty in the U.S. while simultaneously stealing jobs from American citizens. Various ways in which immigrants are accused of "destroying America" abound, including accusations of stealing tax payer money through welfare or healthcare, accusations of stealing jobs from Americans by undercutting salaries, accusations of destroying American culture with high birth rates and lack of assimilation and even accusations of leprosy and other diseases,[51]. The discourses surrounding the national debates over immigration are almost shocking in their panic-driven nature and a seemingly general disregard of actual statistics and facts. The claims of leprosy for example, made most famous by Lou Dobbs, who spent months talking about it on CNN, were proven false almost immediately but continued to receive national press coverage for months afterwards and are still occasionally repeated.

Increasingly the media, and particularly conservative pundits, report on “birth tourism” and “anchor babies,” a phenomenon for which there is little factual evidence. In a recent political maneuver, legislators in 15 states have announced legislation to deny birthright citizenship to the children of illegal immigrants. Numerous states are debating, or have already passed, laws similar to Arizona's SB1070 and Alabama's even more recent immigration law. In

[51] See NPR coverage of fear of third world diseases, Pat Buchanan and former CNN anchor Lou Dobbs

general, recent U.S. national political discourse has centered on negativity, showing a preoccupation for destruction, or fear of destruction, and punishment of 'wrong-doers' over positive reform or restructuring. Rather than providing incentives for investing in immigration in order to reap the economic benefits such investment would generate, the U.S. discourse has centered on "catching illegals" and putting them in prison to punish them before deporting them. In the case of Mexican immigrants, the U.S. has even begun deliberately deporting individuals to locations hundreds, and even thousands, of miles from their homes and/or original points of entry to the U.S. in an effort to cause enough additional hardship to further deter them from crossing into the U.S. again. There is little to no evidence to support that this policy has had any effect on immigration numbers. The American public has demonstrated a preoccupation with the "illegal immigrant" as a bogeyman, blaming him, or her, for any number of sins from job loss, to the erosion of the public education system, to the failure of the healthcare system, to the Latinization of U.S. culture. Instead of addressing these problems[52], politicians and media pundits trot out the shadowy figure of the "illegal" and the U.S. public accepts this rhetoric, further fostering a hegemonic sleight of hand and igniting moral panic after moral panic[53], supporting restrictive laws that violate the civil rights of citizen and non-citizen alike. A rhetorical and hegemonic shift in the opposite direction is necessary. The U.S. discourse needs to withdraw from its extreme negativism. Instead of focusing on building more prisons and walls while using fines to punish, a system that requires that one be caught first, the U.S needs to move towards a more positive restructuring of policy. The U.S. should be pushing policy agendas that address

[52] While the U.S. is most definitely facing vast socio-economic problems, I would state for the record that the "Latinization" of U.S. culture is not a genuine problem. The fear of cultural erosion, however, is a serious problem because it is tied into the panic and fear that drives much of the politics of hate that in turn drive the creation of restrictionist laws that violate civil rights as well as impeding the potential economic benefits of immigration.

problems and improve situations before they become critical national issues that force the federal government to act quickly rather than smartly. While not a simple process, the first step is to reject the current negative political framing.

National security and immigration need to be treated as separate, if related, policy issues within the United States. The United States needs to move beyond policies that treat Mexico either as the enemy or as a lesser and subservient neighbor. Fostering an improved relationship with Mexico, both financially and politically, would encourage cooperation in security interests, ultimately improving the domestic national security of both countries. The conflation of national security and "illegal immigration" is responsible for a number of highly expensive and ineffective U.S. policies, not the least of which is the construction of the border wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

If nothing else, decades of failed government policies to stop undocumented immigration should prove that the United States need a new approach. While not the most politically feasible, I do believe a more open borders approach makes sense. The United States already has policies that allow for increased flow of capital and goods across its border. The U.S. need to be more realistic about labor and human flows. Heyman's ideas for a reformed immigration policy go some way in suggesting a potential path for immigration reform (1998). Heyman's proposal is grounded in two main ideas: 1) that the flow of immigrants to the U.S. (he refers to this as recruitment) should be open-ended and flexible; and 2) that local communities should regulate this open-ended process for themselves. Heyman argues that a more open-ended and flexible recruitment process should replace the current system based on numerical controls or quotas because it would better reflect actual migratory numbers and needs and be better able to adjust as global processes and capital affect those migratory patterns. Such a plan would allow the actual

needs of immigrants, their kin, and employers to control the volume of immigration, rather than Congress.[54] (Heyman 1998)

The second part of Heyman's plan involves the creation of local compacts within immigrant receiving communities that would address the social costs of immigration to those communities. The local compacts would be made between host communities, the employers of immigrants, and immigrant groups organized to recruit immigrants to communities, a process he outlines in his recruitment plan. Thus, local communities would assess the costs of immigration, such as expanding educational, healthcare, and housing needs and any other local issues that an individual community might identify. The employers of immigrants and the immigrant organizations would then pay fees to the community to offset these costs, thus reducing potential problems. Because each community would be able to individualize its local compact, communities would have the flexibility to address their needs as they see fit.[55] Communities that remained truly hostile to immigration would self-select for reduced immigration while those open to immigration would receive the majority of immigrants, and the economic benefits of that immigration.

I suggest that just as Heyman's proposal makes local communities active partners with the federal government in regulating local immigration flows, thus making the system more responsive and adaptable to local needs in real time, a similar partnership should be enacted between border communities and the federal government in regards to border security. The federal government would remain the general overseer and ultimate national authority, just as in

[54] For more on how this open-ended, flexible recruitment process would work, and how it differs from the current numbers-based system, see chapter 6 "The Basic Plan: Recruitment and the Receiving Situation" Heyman, Josiah McC. Heyman, *Finding a Moral Heart for U.S. Immigration Policy: An Anthropological Perspective*. American Ethnological Society Monograph Series, Number 7. Mary Moran, Series Editor.

[55] For more on the specifics of how local compacts would work, see chapter 7 "Local Compacts: Basic Format, Process, and Examples" Heyman, Josiah McC. Heyman, *Finding a Moral Heart for U.S. Immigration Policy: An Anthropological Perspective*. American Ethnological Society Monograph Series, Number 7. Mary Moran, Series Editor.

Heyman's proposal the federal government remains responsible for overseeing immigration to the U.S. and issuing visas and other necessary documentation while also setting general guildelines such as a ban on violent offenders. In the case of border security, the federal government would remain responsible for national security and border regulation but it would cooperate with local communities in the development of individualized security plans. The U.S.-Mexico borderlands are made up of different communities with varying histories of cross-border cooperation and very different needs and wishes concerning the border and its place in each community. To treat the entire border as if it is a single problem with a single solution is not only misguided, it is problematic and lays the groundwork for future problems. Treating Brownsville, San Diego, Yuma, El Paso, Sonora, Calexico, or any of the other numerous border communities as if they are all the same and share the same needs and problems makes little sense, not to mention the vast expanses of rural borderland that are not incorporated as part of any town. It is unreasonable to expect Congress to be able to anticipate the various complexities and individual needs of each seciton of the borderlands and even more unrealistic to expect that the fears and desires of non-border communities are better suited to shaping border policy than those of the border communities themselves.

Cooperation with local border communities in the development of individualized security plans that take into account the complexities of local situations including local needs, desires, and problems would solve many of the current problems with national border security problems. Local borderland residents know better than federal representatives where the weak points in local border security exist. Any number of my informants, when walking or driving along the old military highway that runs along the border, could point out well-used smuggling corridors. Locals, however, have limited interest in assisting the federal government with border security, a

difficulty that has only increased with heightened feelings of alienation from the U.S. nation and state over the border wall and anti-immigrant/anti-Hispanic discourse. A mutual partnership over security concerns would have benefits for both the federal state and local communities. The U.S. federal government would gain access to local knowledge and expertise while local communities could help structure a security plan that would take into account local specifics. At both the federal and local level such cooperation would also foster mutual respect thus alleviating the disconnectedness that develops between local borderland communities and the federal government, such as the current situation in Brownsville, TX.

Cooperative local border security plans would also have advantages for communities that support structures such as the wall. If a local community believed that a border wall was the best option then they could request that the federal government spend the security funds allotted for that area on a border wall. This would alleviate the concerns of some communities in Arizona that have argued they need the border wall without allowing those border communities to dictate border policy in other areas such as Texas. The cooperative plans would need to be kept local, however, so that state legislatures beholden to non-borderland interests in different parts of the states could not direct local border policies. The interests of Dallas or Phoenix constituents should no more determine the local needs of Brownsville or Sonora then the interests of constituents in Cleveland or Denver. Such cooperative local border security plans would likely have long-term effects on migration patterns to the U.S. Communities that chose security plans such as border walls and increased armed patrols would likely experience lowered immigration rates over time, thus achieving their goal. Communities such as Brownsville, whose local economy remains dependent on cross-border cooperation and immigration and thus want to continue fostering historically amiable cross-border relations, would draw larger migration

numbers but would also benefit from the increased economic prosperity such immigration would bring, particularly if immigration reform such as that suggested by Heyman were implemented in tandem with cooperative individualized local border security plans.

Individualized Border Security Plan for Brownsville, TX

The immediate problem concerns what to do with the existing border wall in the Rio Grande borderlands. The local borderland residents remain hostile to the border wall and numerous lawsuits are still being fought in the courts over access to private lands that remain behind the wall, unavailable to the individual property owners who still own the land. I would suggest that in a region so hostile to the border wall, and one in which a natural barrier already exists as the border, the border wall should be taken down. Instead the levee system should be improved and the City of Brownsville's alternative suggestion of constructing a riverwalk system of shops, restaurants, parks, and recreational businesses should be instituted. A riverwalk that provided places for both locals and tourists to recreate would draw enough people to make using the space as a crossing point for either undocumented entry or the smuggling of people, drugs and other illicit goods difficult. Non-profits such as Los Caminos del Rio, along with for-profit businesses renting and selling fishing and boating goods, could be incentivized to set up along the riverwalk, thus encouraging people to use the river for fishing, crabbing, and small craft boating such as kayaking or canoeing. The construction of hiking and biking paths along the river would also make it easier for locals and tourists to enjoy the river space and further displace illicit with recreational activity.

While such recreational, shopping, and dining options might not be as viable outside of the city limits, the continuation of the biking and hiking paths could continue for many miles outside of town. The federal government has already argued that the wall is not as necessary for

either containment or prevention in the country so other options for controlling the border could be explored outside of city limits. Border Patrol agents already regularly patrol these areas and with decreased patrolling necessary within city limits, Border Patrol could refocus its energies on the more remote locations for crossing in the country.

Appendix A

No. 101

This coupon entitles you to participate in a research study about what your thoughts and feelings about the border and the border fence. With it you can earn $15 for a 30 minute interview, and the chance to earn more by referring others to the project.

Drop by our office at the UTB ITECC building, or call XXX-XXXX with any questions, or to make an appointment outside office hours. We are there from 10:00 to 3:00, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. This coupon expires on ____/____/_____.

This project is being conducted by Kym Neck, Research Fellow at the Cross Border Institute for Regional Development and doctoral candidate at CUNY Graduate Center.

Appendix B

The Graduate School and University Center
The City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York. NY 10016-4309
TEL 212.817.8005 fAX 212.817.1501
http:l/web.gc.cuny.edu/anthropology

Mi nombre es Kym Neck y soy estudiante en el Programa Doctorado de Antropologia en El Centro Graduado de Ia Universidad de Ia Ciudad de Nueva York, e investigadora de este projecto titulado "Lucbando contra el Muro: La produccion de espacio local en presencia de pamco moral en el bordo internacional en Brownsville, TX." Este es un estudio sobre coma Ia gente usa Ia frontera entre Mexico y los Estados Unidos y el sentimiento sobre el muro. Espero que Ia informacion que juntemos, ayude a las instituciones locales como el 'Cross Border Institute for Regional Development,' (Institute de Dos Fronteras para Desarollo Regional), en el cual yo soy becaria, para aprender mas sobre como Ia comunidad local usa Ia frontera y sus sentimientos sobre el muro.

Me gustaria su permiso para entrevistarle durante 20 – 30 minutes, porque usted es un residente de esta comunidad y por tener mas de 18 aiios de edad. Yo le hare preguntas acerca de con que frecuencia y por que razones usted cruza Ia frontera, como se siente sobre el muro en Ia frontera, y lo que usted piensa las consecuencias de Ia construccion de esta valla sera por tanto Ia comunidad local y los EE.UU.

La informacion que usted nos de es completamente confidencial. Tu nombre y todos los nombres que se mencionen, seran convertidos a numeros de codigo que no podran ballarse de origen a usted o a cualquier persona que usted mencione. Espero que esto les permita participar completamente y honestamente. Voy a tomar notas durante Ia entrevista. Las notas solo estar.in disponibles para miy mi consejero. Toda Ia informacion sera guardada en un gabinete con candado, al cual solamente yo y mi consejero tendremos acceso. Durante cualquier memento usted puede negar contestar cualquier pregunta o terminar esta entrevista.

Desde que estoy interesado en entrevistar a personas como usted que son residentes de el sur del Vaile de Rio Grande, despues de su entrevista nos gustaria .explicar como nos puede ayudar a reclutar a otros personas para participar en este estudio de investigacion. Si usted no desea participar mas, no es necesario. Habra aproximadarnente 250 participantes tomando parte en este estudio.

Como agradecimiento por su tiempo en contestar las preguntas, le pagare $30 a! final de Ia entrevista. Si usted esta de acuerdo en participar para ayudar este proyecto a reclutar mas personas para entrevistar, usted sera pagado/a $5 por persona, por un maximo dehasta 3 personas elegibles que usted reclute y que completen Ia entrevista.

Los riesgos de participar en esta entrevista no son mas que esos encontrados en Ia vida diaria. Podre publicar los resultados del estudio, pero los nombres de personas, y cualquier informacion de identificaci6n, no sera usada ellos publicaciones. Si quiere recibir una copia del estudio, me puede proporcionar su direcci6n y le mandare una copia en una futura fecha.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre esta investicaci6n, puede ponerse en contacto conmigo en Texas a! kymneck@gmail.com, o con mi consejero, Kirk Dombrowski a!(212)237-8288 o kdombrowski@jjay.cuny.edu. Si tiene preguntas solore sus derechos como participante en este estudio a si siente que ha sido daiiado/a, puedo ponerse en contacto con Kay Powell, Administradora de IRB, El Centro de Graduadaos/Universidad de Ia Ciudad de Nueva York, (212)817-7525 o Kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

Gracias por su participacion. Les dare una copia de este formulario.

My name is Kym Neck and I am student in the Anthropology Ph.D. Program at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and researcher on this project, entitled "Fighting the Wall: The Production of Local Space in the Face of Moral Panic on the International Border in Brownsville, TX." This is a study about how people use the border between Mexico and the U.S. and how they feel about the border fence. I hope that the information that I collect will help local institutions such as the Cross Border Institute for Regional Development, of which I am a Fellow, to learn more about how the local community uses the border and feels about the U.S. government's border fence.

I would like permission to interview you for 20-30 minutes because you are a resident of the community and you said you are at least 18 years of age. You will be asked questions about how often and for what reasons you cross the border, how you feel about the border fence, and what you think the consequences of building this fence will be for both the local community and the U.S..

All information will be kept strictly confidential. Your name and any names you mention will not be used and will be turned into code numbers that cannot be traced back to you or to any of the persons you mention. I hope this will allow you to participate fully and honestly. I will be taking notes during the interview. These notes will only be available to me and my advisor. All information will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisor, will have access. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview.

Since I am interested in interviewing people like you who are residents of the lower Rio Grande Valley, after the interview I will explain how you can help us recruit other people to participate in the study. But if you do not want to participate any further, you do not need to. There will be approximately 250 participants taking part in this study.

To account for your time in answering questions, I will pay you $30 at the end of the interview. If you agree to participate in helping the project recruit additional people to interview, you will be paid $5 for up to three eligible people that you recruit who complete the interview.

The risks from participating in this study are no more than those encountered in everyday life. I may publish results of the study, but names of people, or any identifYing characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me in Texas at:or kymneck@gmail.com, or my advisor Kirk Dombrowski at (212) 237-8288 or kdrombrowski@jjay.cuny.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study or if you feel that you have been harmed, you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your participation. I will give you a copy of this form.

Appendix C: RDS Survey - English

1.	Informant ID from Coupon		
2.	Birthdate (Month/Day/Year)		
3.	Gender	Male	Female
4a.	Are you a citizen of the United States?	Yes	No
4b.	If no, are you a Permanent Resident of the United States?	Yes	No
4c.	Do you have a green card?	Yes	No
4d.	Do you have a visa?	Yes	No
4e.	What type of visa?		
4f.	Is your visa current?	Yes	No
5.	Choose one or more that applies to your Race.	a. American Indian or Alaskan Native b. Asian c. Black or African American d. Hispanic or Latino(a) e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander f. White	
6.	If Latino(a) do you prefer the term Hispanic or Latino(a) or do you prefer to be called Hispanic? Latino? Mexican-American? Mexican? Honduranian? Etc.		
7.	What is your personal weekly income?	a. $0 – 50 b. $51 – 100 c. $101 – 200 d. $201 – 400 e. $401 – 600 f. $601 – 800 g. $801 – 1000 h. $1001 – 1500 i. $1501 - 2000 j. More than 2000	

8.	What is your household weekly income?	a. $0 – 50 b. $51 – 100 c. $101 – 200 d. $201 – 400 e. $401 – 600 f. $601 – 800 g. $801 – 1000 h. $1001 – 1500 i. $1501 - 2000 j. More than 2000		
9.	How would you describe yourself politically?			
10.	What is your marital status?	a. Married b. Divorced c. Single and not in a relationship d. Single and in a relationship e. Widowed		
11.	How many people live in your household including you?			
12a.	How many children do you have?			
12b.	How many of those children live with you?			
13.	How many married people other than your spouse live in your home?			
14.	How many people under 18 live in your home?			
15.	How many people over 60 live in your home?			
16.	Do you rent or own your home?	Rent	Own	Neither
17.	What is your level of education?	a. Did not attend high school b. Attended but did not graduate from high school c. G.E.D. d. Some college or professional training courses e. Associate's Degree f. Bachelor's Degree g. Some graduate school courses h. Master's Degree i. Terminal Degree (PhD, MFA, .J.D.,M.D)		

18.	How long have you lived in your current residence?	a. Less than 6 months b. 6 months to 1 year c. 1 -2 years d. 2 – 5 years e. 5 – 10 years f. More than 10 years
19.	How many residences have you had in the last 2 years?	
20.	How long have you lived in the lower Rio Grande Valley area?	a. Between 1 month and 1 year. b. Between 2 and 5 years. c. Between 6 and 10 years. d. Between 11 and 20 years. e. Between 21 and 30 years. f. Between 31 and 40 years. g. Longer than 40 years.
21.	Address a. GPS Coordinates: _____ °N _____ °W or b. Home address: Address _____ City/St/Zip _____	
22.	Have you heard about the border wall that is being built on the U.S.-Mexico border?	Yes / No
23.	How did you hear about the wall? Choose all that apply	a. General word of mouth (don't remember) b. From family or friends c. From the local newspaper d. From national newspaper e. At work f. From the internet g. From local television or radio programs h. From national television or radio programs

24.	Have you heard about the protests against the wall?	Yes	No
25.	How did you hear about the protests?	a. General word of mouth (don't remember) b. From family or friends c. From the local newspaper d. From national newspaper e. At work f. From the internet g. From local television or radio programs h. From national television or radio programs	
27.	Have you demonstrated in favor of the wall?	Yes	No
28a.	Have you heard of anyone crossing over and/or under the newly constructed wall?	Yes	No
28b.	Do you know the person who did this?	Yes	No
28c.	Do you know anyone who knows this person?	Yes	No
29.	Do you believe that people who want to build the wall want to stop people who are not white from coming to the United States?	Yes	No
30.	Have you attended any local meetings about the wall?	Yes	No
31.	Would you say you are in favor, not in favor, or don't care about the wall?	In Favor	Not in Favor / Don't Care
32.	Do you think the wall will be an effective deterrent to immigration?	Yes	No
33.	Do you think the wall will be an effective deterrent to drug smuggling?	Yes	No
34.	Do you think the wall will be an effective deterrent to human smuggling?	Yes	No

35	Do you think the wall will be an effective deterrent to gun trafficking?	Yes	No
36a.	Do you believe that it is more important to stop drug smuggling or human smuggling?	Drug	Human
36b.	Why		
37.	What do you think is the main purpose of the wall?	a. Stopping illegal immigration b. Stopping terrorism c. Stopping smuggling d. Stopping drug trafficking e. National Security f. Stopping gun trafficking g. Enforcing current laws h. Stopping human trafficking i. Preventing people of non-white ethnicity from immigrating to the U.S. j. Demonstrating that something is being done k. Stopping drug cartels from coming into the United States	
38.	To the best of your knowledge, where is the wall being built? (Please choose all that apply)	a. Directly along the border/river b. Away from the border near the levy system c. In a continuous non-stop line along the border from Texas to California d. In small sections along the border from Texas to California	
39.	Do you have a passport?	Yes	No
40a.	If yes, is this your first passport?	Yes	No
40b.	Did you get the passport because of the new regulations about needing a passport to go into Mexico and Canada from the U.S.?	Yes	No
40c.	When did you apply for your passport?	a. Between 1 month and 1 year ago b. Between 1 and 2 years ago c. Between 2 and 5 years ago d. Between 5 and 8 years ago	

		e. More than 8 years ago	
41a.	If no, do you plan on getting a passport?	Yes	No
41b.	If you are getting a passport, do you plan on getting the full passport for the full fee, or applying for the passport card that allows access to Mexico and Canada only for a reduced fee?	Full Passport	Reduced Fee Card
42a.	If you have children, do they have passports?	Yes	No
42b.	If yes, how many of your children have passports?		
43a.	If no, do you plan on getting them passports or reduced fee passport cards?	Yes	No
43b.	Which type?	Full Passport	Reduced Fee Card
44.	Do you believe that illegal immigration is a threat to the United States?	Yes	No
45.	Do you believe that we need immigration reform?	Yes	No
46.	Do you think that it should be easier for immigrants to enter the U.S. legally?	Yes	No
47.	Do you think that it should be easier for Mexicans to immigrate to the U.S. than immigrants from other countries?	Yes	No
48.	Do you think that the U.S. should create a guest worker program for immigrants so that they can come here to work for a specified period of time and then return to their country of origin?	Yes	No
49.	Do you think that local border residents and local border governments should have a say in whether or not a wall	Yes	No

	is built on their land?		
50.	Assuming that the wall cannot be stopped, do you think that local border residents and local border governments should have a say in where the wall gets built?	Yes	No
51.	Do you consider yourself well-educated?	Yes	No
52.	Do you consider yourself knowledgeable about the border wall?	Yes	No
53.	Looking at this map, please circle the areas and towns that you consider to be a part of borderlands.		
54.	Do any of your family members or close friends work for the federal government?	Yes	No
55.	Do any of your family members or close friends work for the border patrol?	Yes	No
56.	Do any of your family members or close friends work for the city of Brownsville?	Yes	No
57.	Do any of your family members or close friends work for Immigration and Customs Enforcement?	Yes	No
58.	Do any of your family members or close friends work for the Department of Homeland Security other than ICE or Border Patrol?	Yes	No
59.	What is your occupation?		
60a.	Have you ever worked for the federal government, the Department of Homeland Security, the Border Patrol, or	Yes	No

	Immigration and Customs Enforcement?		
60b.	Which agency?		
61a.	Have you ever served in the armed forces in the U.S?	Yes	No
61b.	What branch?		
62a.	Have you ever served in the armed forces in Mexico	Yes	No
62b.	What branch?		
63a.	Are you a veteran of a war?	Yes	No
63b.	Which war?		
64.	Have any of your close friends or family members served in the military?	Yes	No
65.	Are any of your family members or close friends currently serving in Iraq or Afghanistan or have served there since September 11, 2001?	Yes	No
66.	Do you think that building a wall will help in the fight against terrorism?	Yes	No
67.	Do you think that closing the border with Mexico will help fight terrorism?	Yes	No
68.	Do you think that closing the border with Canada will help fight terrorism?	Yes	No
69.	Do you know anyone who works or has worked for the federal government?	Yes	No
70.	Do you know anyone who works or has worked for the	Yes	No

	border patrol?		
71.	Do you know anyone who works or has worked for the city of Brownsville?	Yes	No
72.	Do you know anyone who works or has worked for Immigration and Customs Enforcement?	Yes	No
73.	Do you know anyone who works or has worked for the Department of Homeland Security?	Yes	No

1. How would you describe this area to someone who had never been here?

2. If you were going to say one thing about the wall what would it be?

3. What kind of message do you think the wall presents to people outside the U.S.?

4. Do you think that the current immigration wave and/or immigrants to the U.S. are different than the immigration wave/immigrants of the past? If so, how?

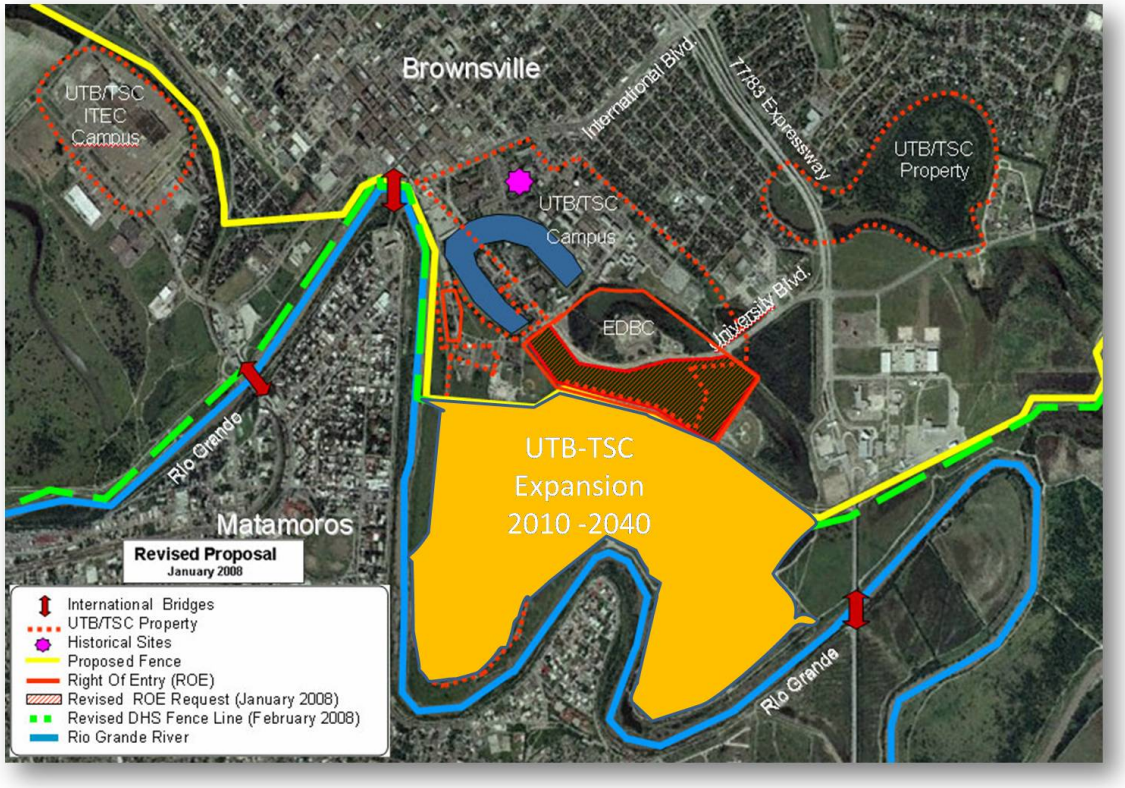
5. How have your close friends or family been affected by recent changes at the border? (i.e. border wall/passport regulations/increased security)

6. What do you like best about Brownsville? About the Rio Grande Valley? Do you think the wall will impact what you like best? How will it do that?

7. What do you like least about Brownsville? About the Rio Grande Valley? Do you think the wall impact anything about what you like least? How so?

8. How often do you cross the border? What are your primary reasons for crossing?

Appendix D: Map of UTB Campus with Border Wall Overlay



Appendix E: Motion for Relief

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
BROWNSVILLE DIVISION

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Plaintiff, v.	)	
	)	Civil No. B-08-56
37.52 ACRES OF LAND, more or less, situate in CAMERON COUNTY, STATE OF TEXAS; and TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE DISTRICT, ET AL.	)	

DEFENDANTS' MOTION FOR RELIEF UNDER ORDER OF DISMISSAL

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE OF SAID COURT:

Come now Texas Southmost College District; Kenneth I. Shine, Interim Chancellor, The University of Texas System;[1] the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System; and The University of Texas at Brownsville and file this motion in order to obtain enforcement of the provisions of an Order of Dismissal issued by the Court in this proceeding. The respondent, United States of America, is the Plaintiff in this cause and may be served through its attorney of record, Charles Wendlandt, at 800 N. Shoreline, Suite 500, Corpus Christi, Texas 78401.

I.

On March 19, 2008, the Court in the above-entitled and numbered cause duly rendered and caused to be entered an Order of Dismissal, which required the United States of America (acting through the Department of Homeland Security), the Plaintiff, to "jointly assess with Defendants alternatives to a physical barrier." Said order further required Plaintiff to "consider Defendants' unique status as an institution of higher education," and "to conduct such

[1] Effective May 1, 2008, former Chancellor Mark G. Yudof resigned his office. Dr. Shine assumed the post of Interim Chancellor that day, and should be substituted as a party pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 25(d).

investigations as will permit it to consult with Defendants in order to minimize the impact of any tactical infrastructure on the environment, culture, commerce, and quality of life for the communities and residents located near the property subject to this Order." A true and correct copy of this Order is attached to this motion as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference.

II.

Plaintiff failed and refused, and continues to fail and refuse, to obey the commands of this Court as set forth in the above-described Order. In particular, as will be set out more fully below, despite repeated requests from Defendants, Plaintiff has failed and refused to carry out a **joint** assessment of alternatives to a physical barrier, and has limited itself to surveys and studies designed to lead to the construction of the planned physical barrier. Plaintiff, through the United States Army Corps of Engineers, has now served on Defendants notice that it intends to acquire, through eminent domain proceedings, approximately 2.11 acres of land for the construction of a physical pedestrian barrier. Therefore, Defendants request the assistance of the Court to compel compliance with its Order.

III.

Attached to this Motion as Exhibit B is a June 6 letter from Erin Vespe, Counsel for U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP"). That letter is remarkably candid in its expression of Plaintiff's disregard for the Court's order. Among the more telling statements are:

x "[T]he Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) operational and security requirements are solely within DHS's discretion and therefore, are not subject to assessment by a private entity."

x "[W]e have asked UTB/TSC to present alternatives to a physical barrier for DHS's consideration. To date [TSC and UT] have not presented any alternative for our assessment, nor have they formally replied to DHS's proposal to utilize a removable fence."

x "UTB/TSC's … suggestion that we create a task force to consider alternatives … confirms that neither UTB nor TSC has any alternative to present for DHS's consideration at this time."

x "Therefore, DHS has concluded that there are no known alternatives to a physical barrier that would provide an adequate level of persistent impedance to secure our border within the time frame mandated by Congress."

x "Accordingly, DHS will proceed with its plans to construct the border fence in the current proposed location pursuant to our operational requirements."

The above statements demonstrate the failure of Plaintiff to comply with the Court's order. The following summary of events puts those statements in perspective.

IV.

1. March 19, 2008: This Court dismisses Plaintiff's Complaint in Condemnation, and enters the previously referenced Order of Dismissal, which includes the order that DHS "jointly assess with [UT/TSC] alternatives to a physical barrier." (Exhibit A).

2. April 4, 2008: Counsel for TSC writes to David Pagan, State and Local Liaison for the Department of Homeland Security, informing him of members of the UT/TSC working group for the joint assessment, and requesting that DHS identify corresponding persons from DHS. (Exhibit C).

3. April 15, 2008: Mr. Pagan responds to that letter, states that "CBP stands ready to lead efforts to discuss potential alternatives to physical barriers with UTB/TSC" and proposes a joint meeting on April 23, 2008. (Exhibit D).

4. April 18, 2008: Counsel for TSC confirms an April 23 conference call, preliminary to an April 28 meeting that would begin the joint assessment of alternate ways of achieving DHS's security goals. (Exhibit E).

5. April 29, 2008: Representatives of UT, TSC, DHS, and the International Boundary and Water Commission ("IBWC") meet. DHS makes no proposals for alternatives to a physical barrier, and proposes instead as its sole alternative the placement of a "temporary" fence on the north side of the levee, while UT/TSC attempted to persuade IBWC to allow a fence around the golf course. UT/TSC notes that the temporary fence as proposed poses the same security problems and adverse impact on
the educational mission of UT/TSC as a permanent fence. (Exhibit F).

6. May 9, 2008: Counsel for TSC again urges DHS to participate in a joint assessment of alternatives to a barrier and informs DHS that UT/TSC is "in the process of assembling a team that will include security consultants, hydrologists, biologists, and archeologists." (Exhibit F).

7. May 19, 2008: Counsel for TSC informs DHS via email that TSC has appointed Michael Putegnat project coordinator and that TSC is in the final stages of hiring two subject matter consultants, and requests that DHS disclose what activities DHS has taken in connection with the joint assessment of alternatives to a fence. (Exhibit G).

8. May 27, 2008: CBP, through counsel, responds to May 9 letter and May 20 email, stating:

a. The only assessment of alternatives by DHS was done prior to Court order;

b. The only proposal currently in play by DHS is a temporary fence. (Exhibit H).

9. May 30, 2008: TSC, through counsel, suggests that June 2 meeting be audio-recorded. DHS refuses. (Exhibit I).

10. June 2, 2008: Parties meet. The meeting begins with Border Patrol Chief Ron Vitiello stating that assessment of alternatives to a fence is a "waste of time." UT/TSC introduces members of working team to assess alternatives to a physical barrier and to discuss how to minimize impacts on the campus area. The UT/TSC team includes respected experts from Modern Technology Solutions, Inc. (MTSI) a company recognized for systems engineering, testing and evaluation, and operational concept development in the field of homeland defense. In reliance on the Court's order of March 19, UT/TSC has entered into a contract with MTSI for the assessment and has committed funding and resources to the project. DHS refuses to name any corresponding persons, other than its counsel.

11. June 3, 2008: USACOE informs UT/TSC of its intent to acquire TSC real estate, and makes offer to purchase. Offer is not supported by appraisal. (Exhibit J).

12. June 4, 2008: Frank Perry representative of MTSI, requests information from DHS to further TSC assessment. (Exhibit K).

13. June 6, 2008: DHS, through its counsel, informs UT/TSC that it will provide no information in response to the Perry request and reports that it is proceeding with construction of the fence as originally planned without any joint assessment of alternatives. (Exhibit B).

V.

Plaintiff's behavior, culminating in the June 6 letter (Exhibit B), demonstrates basic disregard for the Court's order and authority in this matter, and indeed for the very agreement made by Plaintiff. Specifically:

x Plaintiff says, "the Department of Homeland Security's operational and security requirements are solely within DHS's discretion and, therefore, are not subject to assessment by a private entity." However, the order, to which DHS agreed, says "Plaintiff, acting through the Department of Homeland Security, will jointly assess with Defendants alternatives to a physical barrier." Defendants agree that they have no power to dictate operational decisions to DHS. However, this Court clearly has the power to order DHS to review those requirements with Defendants. Moreover, Plaintiff has the power to voluntarily do so, as it agreed in the Order of Dismissal. It would appear to be disingenuous to agree to jointly assess alternatives to a physical barrier, and then say that DHS's operational and security requirements are not open to discussion or review.

x Plaintiff says, "We have asked UTB/TSC to present alternatives to a physical barrier for DHS's consideration. To date [TSC and UT] have not presented any alternative for our assessment, nor have they formally replied to DHS's proposal to utilize a removable fence." As much as anything, that sentence indicates Plaintiff's complete disregard for the Court's authority in this matter. Instead of working with Defendants to jointly assess alternatives, Plaintiff demands that Defendants present alternatives, presumably to be accepted or rejected in Plaintiff's sole discretion. The only "alternative" to a physical barrier proposed by Plaintiff is a physical barrier. When Defendants name a working group to move forward with a joint assessment, Plaintiff – virtually by return mail – refuses to name participants in the working group, refuses to provide Defendants' consultant with any information, and unilaterally terminates the joint assessment before it ever began.

x "UTB/TSC's belated suggestion that we create a task force to consider alternatives, offered more than two months after the Court's order and six weeks after we first solicited input,

confirms that neither UTB nor TSC has any alternative to present for DHS's consideration at this time." That assertion is simply not true. As the correspondence shows, Defendants first informed Plaintiff that they were organizing a working group, and requested participation by Plaintiff, on April 4 2008. Defendants restated that request on May 9 and May 20 2008. The Order of Dismissal does not order Defendants to present alternatives for DHS's consideration. It orders the parties to jointly assess alternatives. Defendants have attempted to do so and stand ready to move forward. DHS's assertion, on the other hand, demonstrates its intentional disregard for the Court's order. Consequently, it is clear that Plaintiff will not comply with the order without Court intervention.

x Plaintiff says, "Therefore, DHS has concluded that there are no known alternatives to a physical barrier that would provide an adequate level or persistent impedance to secure our border within the time frame mandated by Congress. Accordingly, DHS will proceed with its plans to construct the border fence in the current proposed location pursuant to our operational requirements." Once again, Plaintiff manifests its disregard for the Court's order, by unilaterally terminating the discussions, without even a passing attempt to comply with the Court order that the parties jointly assess alternatives to a physical barrier.

VI.

The Court's order also requires Plaintiff, in conducting its studies to "consider Defendants' unique status as an institution of higher education." Plaintiff has wholly failed to honor that portion of the order. (Exhibit A).

VII.

TSC/UTB stands fast in its support of the United States' effort to secure its borders. However, Plaintiff's action to attempt to fulfill its congressional mandate based on an arbitrary deadline is forcing TSC/UTB to take this stance.

VIII.

WHEREFORE Defendants request that the Court order Plaintiff, the United States of America, through the Department of Homeland Security, to appear at a time and place to be set by the Court and that, on hearing, the Court order Plaintiff to comply with the Order of March

19, 2008, to wit, to jointly assess with Defendants alternatives to a physical barrier, and further enjoin Plaintiff from proceeding with the acquisition of any property interest of Defendants in furtherance of the construction of a physical barrier on the property of Defendants, and from constructing a physical barrier on any property adjacent to the property of Defendants until such time as Plaintiff has complied with the Court order dated March 19, 2008.

Defendants further request that the costs of this proceeding be assessed against the United States of America, through the Department of Homeland Security. Date: June 19, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

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Admitted Pro Hac Vice

ATTORNEY FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM

CERTIFICATE OF CONFERENCE

I certify that on June 18, 2008, I conferred with Charles Wendlandt, Jr., and he opposes this Motion.

s/ Daniel Rentfro, Jr. Daniel Rentfro, Jr.

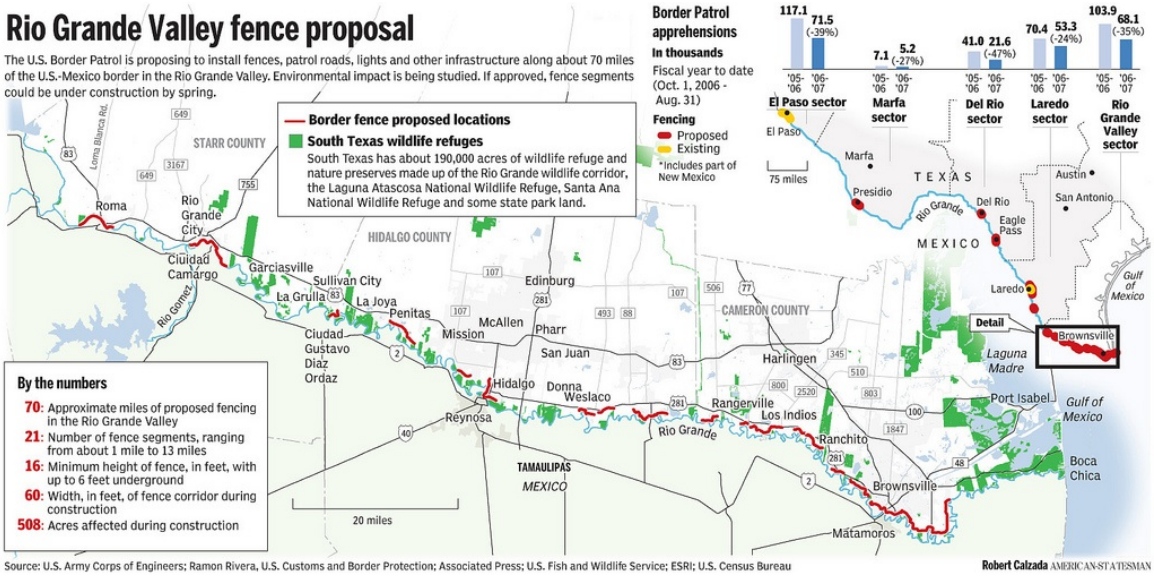
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on June 19, 2008, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served upon counsel of record as follows:

Charles Wendlandt
Assistant United States Attorney
800 N. Shoreline, Suite 500
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401
VIA CERTIFIED MAIL AND EMAIL

s/ Daniel Rentfro, Jr. Daniel Rentfro, Jr.

Appendix F: Maps of Border Wall




Proposed fence on the southern border
The proposed fence to prevent illegal crossing of the 1,920-mile US-Mexico border would consist of a two-layer wall.
0 150 mi
0 150 km
Proposed fence
698 miles
Existing fence
83 miles
Proposed fence
CALIF.
ARIZONA
NEW
Tecate
Calexico
Douglas
Columbus
El Paso
TEXAS
22 miles
88 miles
Del Rio
51 miles
Eagle Pass
Pacific Ocean
361 miles
MEXICO
Laredo
176 miles
Brownsville

Appendix G: Chertoff Retirement

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