Social Problems, 2017, 64, 239–255
doi: 10.1093/socpro/spw060
Article

OXFORD

The State Effect: Theorizing Immigration Politics in Arizona

Emine Fidan Elcioglu

University of Toronto

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

ABSTRACT

How do perceptions of the state shape social movements' strategies? Drawing on 16 months of participant observation and 70 interviews with activists in Arizona, this article illustrates how the politics of immigration plays out at the grassroots level as a struggle between expanding and restricting the state. Pro-immigrant activists in this study contended that the problem of undocumented migration resulted from the state's unchecked coercive power. Experiencing this strong-state effect, pro-immigrant activists' tactics focused on limiting the state's reach and reinforcing society's capacity to resist the state. Meanwhile, immigration restrictionist activists attributed the problem of undocumented immigration to the state's feebleness as a policing entity. In response to this weak-state effect, restrictionist tactics tried to expand the state's scope and build society's ability to aid the state. The article concludes by discussing how the strong/weak-state effect framework helps illuminate the field of social relations in which an activist group is embedded and provides an avenue for exploring the relationship between state practices and social movements.

KEYWORDS: state; state effect; immigration politics; social movement; border.

Renee[1] often fantasized about getting into her truck and crashing it right into the U.S.-Mexico border fence. She told me about this fantasy as we were driving to a border town in Arizona. We were going to attend a vigil that had been organized by the family of a Latino teenager who had been shot in the back by a U.S. Border Patrol agent. The young man had been an American citizen. He was shot while fleeing across the border into Mexico, reportedly transporting drugs. He died soon afterwards. The man's family created a memorial at the border fence where he had been shot. The Border Patrol ordered the family to remove the memorial because it was obstructing the agents' view of the other side. For Renee, the fact that the agency could kill someone with no fear of the consequences was indicative of how strong and punitive the state had become.

Meanwhile, Dale had a completely different assessment of state strength. Forty miles west of where the vigil was held, Dale told me about how, as a kid, he used to think that a border meant a

The author wishes to thank Michael Burawoy, Kim Voss, Abigail Andrews, Rafael Colonna, Angela Fillingim, Margo Mahan, Benjamin McCord, Marcel Paret, Kara Young, and the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful feedback on this article. She is also grateful to Marni Elci for her help proofreading the article. The author especially thanks the research participants for sharing their worldviews and experiences. This research was supported with funding from the Center for Latino Policy Research and the Department of Sociology at University of California-Berkeley. Direct correspondence to: Emine Fidan Elcioglu, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto, 725 Spadina Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M52 2J4. E-mail: fidan.elcioglu@utoronto.ca.

1 All names of individuals and organizations mentioned in this article are pseudonyms.

© The Author 2017. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems.
All rights reserved. For permissions, please email: journals. permissions@oup.com

tall, sturdy wall guarded by armed government agents. Growing up, he had seen images of the Berlin Wall before it fell and he imagined that this kind of fortification existed at the U.S.-Mexico border. "I mean, it's supposed to be a *secure* border, right?"[2] When he first visited a ranch on the border, Dale was surprised to see that there were only a few vehicles placed as barriers and that he could cross into Mexico and walk right back into the United States without the Border Patrol even showing up. The flimsiness of the border, Dale concluded, was a symptom of a weak state.

How to conceptualize political power and whether or not there is a "state" separate from and above society has been the subject of much debate among scholars (Abrams 1988; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985; Mitchell 1991). Studies that examine how social movements *perceive* the state's strength in relation to society, however, are far more limited. This article adds to this scholarship by showing that we cannot adequately theorize social movements' goals and strategies without examining activists' understandings of state strength.

This study finds that Renee and Dale's divergent experiences of the U.S.-Mexico boundary capture the disparate ways that pro-immigrant activists and immigration restrictionist activists make sense of the state and its relation to society. Pro-immigrant activists like Renee contend that the problem of undocumented migration has resulted from the powerful coercive control of the state. In response to what I call a *strong-state effect*, pro-immigrant activists in this study strategized how to weaken the state while also building up society's capacity to resist the state's power. By contrast, restrictionists like Dale attribute the problem of undocumented immigration to the state's feeble physical control. In response to this *weak-state effect*, restrictionist activists have tried to extend the state's reach while also building up the ability to aid the state. Thus, this article illustrates how the politics of immigration, at the grassroots level, was a struggle between restricting and expanding the state as a repressive force.

FROM STATE-CENTERED THEORIES TO STRONG-STATE AND WEAK-STATE EFFECTS

In the 1980s, political sociologists urged scholars to "bring the state back in[to]" the study of politics. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (1985) were responding to the tendency, among neo-Marxists and pluralists alike, to neglect the study of state institutions in analyses of power. Evans and colleagues argued that the state, as an organization, often pursued projects that did not reflect the interests of any one social group. The state had to be analyzed as an actor that was relatively autonomous from society. The study of social phenomena required a focus on the actions of the state and its relationship with different parts of society.

The conceptualization of the state as a bounded entity separate from and above society came under fire, however (Abrams 1988; Trouillot 2001; Mitchell 2006). The apparent unification of political power in an entity called 'the state,' Philip Abrams argued, was nothing more than a chimera that helped legitimate the illegitimate. Similarly, Timothy Mitchell (2006) argued that the apparent boundary between state and society was an illusion. The organization of space and the distribution of bodies created the "state effect" or the *appearance* of the state as a structure-like thing. Scholars of politics needed to "examine [the state] not as an actual structure, but as a powerful, apparently metaphysical effect of practices that make such structures appear to exist" (p. 90). In other words, the study of politics examined how the "appearance of order" was produced (Mitchell 1988:14).

To what extent *do* government institutions successfully create an appearance of order? State-effect theorists left this question unexplored. However, a growing scholarship has considered how social groups perceive the state (Auyero 2012; Brissette 2015; Gupta 1995; Yang 2005). For instance, Emily Brissette (2015) discussed how movement participants' "implicit cultural assumptions about the state" (p. 4) shape political subjectivities and determine how terrains of struggle emerge.

2 Single quotation marks indicate approximate utterances that were recorded into my field notes while double quotation marks indicate direct quotes that have been audio recorded.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

Similarly, the current study considers how activists' understandings of the state inform the tactics that movements use. In doing so, this article makes three contributions.

First, this study empirically illustrates that the state, as an effect of ideology, is not always successful. In fact, the very place that scholars have predicted the state effect to be the strongest—a nation's border—is exactly where this effect is only *sometimes* experienced. Mitchell (1991) posited that "the mundane arrangements" of border policing "help[ed] manufacture an almost transcendental entity, the nation state. This entity seems much more than the sum of the everyday activities that constitute it, appearing as a structure containing and giving order and meaning to people's lives" (p. 94). Others have also argued that the border is a place where the state communicates its sovereignty (Brown 2010). The state's intended self-presentation is not the same as its effect, however. As I show, groups can have disparate assessments of state power, even at the border.

Second, to theorize this variation in perceptions of state power, I rely on two concepts: the strong-state effect and the weak-state effect. A group experiencing the strong-state effect sees the state as a powerful, predatory, and well-coordinated structure, while the weak-state effect produces the perception of the state as feeble, inept, and internally incoherent. In this study, the pro-immigrant movement subscribed to the idea of a strong state, while the restrictionist countermovement experienced the weak-state effect.

How has it come about that pro-immigrant and restrictionist activists read the state in such divergent ways? Two ambiguities of immigration enforcement lend themselves to different understandings of the state. One ambiguity has to do with how border enforcement has expanded. Despite the unprecedented buildup of the U.S.-Mexico border since the 1990s (Miller 2014), undocumented immigration, via this border, has persisted (Cornelius 2005; Nevins 2007). Or put differently, *the border has simultaneously become more fortified and more porous*. There is also a second ambiguity in how immigration policing has developed. Although the federal government has maintained that only it has the power to enact immigration policy, day-to-day immigration enforcement has increasingly required the involvement of local actors, like the police (Coleman 2012). That is, *immigration enforcement has become simultaneously a federal prerogative and a local affair*. That there is a large undocumented population despite border buildup, and localized enforcement despite federal preemption, are paradoxes that can lead to opposite assessments of state power.

To pro-immigrant activists, these developments have indicated state strength. It was precisely the state's coerciveness that first instigated migration, then illegalized it, and eventually made cyclical migration so dangerous that a large undocumented population came to form in the United States. By contrast, restrictionist activists believe that the feebleness of the state as a policing body was what allowed the number of undocumented people in the United States to reach its present proportions. Similarly, activists perceive the devolution of immigration enforcement in opposing ways. According to pro-immigrant activists, this localization has revealed a dominant state that is spreading its punitive logic across all spheres of life. However, to restrictionists, this very same devolution suggests that the state needed local help because it was too weak to enforce immigration laws on its own. Thus, these ambiguities in the way that enforcement has developed have created a context in which groups can experience either the strong-state effect or the weak-state effect in relation to the border. It should be noted that conceptions of state strength may vary across issue domains. That is, this particular configuration of strong- and weak-state effects may be specific to struggles around immigration (but may not transfer to the politics of welfare, for instance). In any case, this study shows that despite being situated in similar regions near the border, the two sides had opposite assessments of state power.

This study also makes a third contribution. The emphasis on activists' perceptions about the state contributes to our understanding of social movements' tactical repertoires. Scholars have discussed how a movement's target—be it the state (Smith 2001) or other institutions (Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008)—shapes the tactics that movements deploy. However, social movement scholars have generally focused on what these target institutions *are*, rather than how they are *seen*. This study illustrates how a movement's beliefs about the state inform its strategies. I employ ideal types to

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

theorize the link between variations in the state effect and variations in each movement's strategy. Given the strong-state effect, pro-immigrant activists have tried to reduce the state's power over society. Toward this end, these activists work, first, to confine the reach of the state, and second, to expand society's capacity to struggle *against* the state. Meanwhile, immigration restrictionists, experiencing the weak-state effect, strive to make the state into a decisive, coordinated, and strong actor. Restrictionist tactics have thus been geared towards either expanding the state's reach or building society's capacity to *aid* the state. As ideal types, these distinctions in movement strategies do not capture every single endeavor in which a given group has engaged. Nonetheless, the typological distinction between efforts to reduce or expand the state's policing power describes a critical aspect of how this struggle has unfolded.

METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDIES

This article primarily draws on 16 months of participant observation, from February 2011 to June 2012, in Central and Southern Arizona. During this period, I participated in meetings, protests, conferences, and other events organized and attended by the members of restrictionist and pro-immigrant groups.[3] The data for this study is also supplemented by 70 semistructured interviews. Thirty of these interviews were with restrictionist activists and 40 with pro-immigrant activists. I also draw on content analysis of materials produced by the groups in this study, including websites, reports, short films, and organizational ephemera.

Using interviewee sampling and ethnographic observation as guideposts, I found a marked demographic difference between the two sides. The majority of restrictionist activists were white men and the median age was 63 years. Pro-immigrant activists were an equal mix of men and women, as well as a roughly equal mix of white and non-white members. Interviews with pro-immigrant respondents revealed a median age of 40 years.[4] Pro-immigrant organizations consisted of young adults in their 20s and 30s, on the one hand, and those nearing retirement age, on the other. All but two of the interview respondents were U.S. citizens at the time of research.

This article focuses on five organizations. Two of these organizations, the Humanitarians and the Advocates, were pro-immigrant: they sought to reduce the deportability of groups living in the United States, primarily by weakening the state. The Humanitarians, a nonprofit organization of approximately 40 core members, had been founded to put out aid supplies on migrant trails in Arizona's Sonoran Desert. Over time, the organization expanded its activities to document the Border Patrol's practices and to wage anti-deportation campaigns. The Advocates was also a nonprofit organization, albeit smaller in size, with 15 members. The Advocates conducted know-your-rights trainings and created community networks in neighborhoods with undocumented residents. This group also tried to prevent local institutions from participating in immigration control.

The three other organizations in this study—the Soldiers, the Engineers, and the Arpaiositos—were part of the restrictionist movement. They wanted to increase the deportability of noncitizens and certain nonwhite groups of U.S. citizens by strengthening the state. The Soldiers were a Minutemen-like, nonprofit organization whose members spent most of their time patrolling a 55,000-acre ranch in Southern Arizona. As a core group of 20 people, with an additional 20 occasional participants, the Soldiers conducted reconnaissance for the Border Patrol.

The Engineers also operated from a ranch in Southern Arizona. However, instead of helping the Border Patrol directly, the Engineers used the ranch as a laboratory for developing border surveillance methods that they hoped to contract out to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

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

4 The demographic differences between the two movements echo the findings of other studies (see Shapira 2013). While the raced and gendered aspects of this politics are beyond the scope of this article, excellent scholarship has been produced about how race (Hosang 2010) and gender (Romero 2011) are implicated in these struggles.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

The Engineers were a nonprofit organization composed of only six people, but they received financial support from 150 members nationwide. Core members of the Engineers also formed a company, which became the platform for interacting with potential business partners, competitors, and buyers at border security conferences. Given that the leading members of the nonprofit and the company were identical, and given their pursuit of the same goal, I count the Engineers as a single organization for analytical purposes.

The Arpaiositos were based in Phoenix. As a nonprofit organization of 20 people, the Arpaiositos spent most of their time publicly supporting a restrictionist local official, Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO).

As a young, dark-skinned woman of Turkish heritage and, at the time of fieldwork, a graduate student from UC Berkeley, I stood out among restrictionist respondents. Despite this outsider status, my access was facilitated by masculine protectionism.[5] As this article shows, restrictionists saw the state as failing to uphold its moral obligation to protect its citizenry and, in response to this weak-state effect, these activists strived to prop up the state. When I accompanied the Soldiers into the desert, I served as a stand-in for the vulnerable (feminine) nation that the state was failing to protect. That is, my physical presence made it easier for the Soldiers to imagine the object of their protection and thereby embody the role of a good male protector. Masculinist protectionism also informed how the other two restrictionist groups interacted with me. I was frequently likened to activists' daughters, granddaughters, nieces, and sons' girlfriends. In these situations, too, respondents wanted to 'protect' me by helping me with my research and teaching me about how immigration was mismanaged.

In contrast to my outsider status with restrictionists, I had to contend with an insider status among pro-immigrant respondents. By assuming shared meanings with me, respondents' explanations of their worldviews and strategies could be vague. In such cases, I changed my questions to try to clarify the respondent's decision-making process and evade general questions that would solicit prepackaged answers. For example, instead of asking Humanitarians why they were trying to stop deportations, I preferred to have them retrace how they decided who was a good candidate for an anti-deportation campaign. Following this process-focused line of inquiry, I asked about what characteristics made certain people less eligible for anti-deportation campaigns and the moral community of 'good immigrants' who were worthy of such endeavors. By documenting how my interviewees worked their way through their responses, I was able to gain deeper insights about the nature of pro-immigrant mobilization and overcome some of the problems associated with insider status.

By way of summarizing this study's findings, Figure 1 illustrates how the strong-state effect among the two pro-immigrant groups and weak-state effect among the three restrictionist organizations translated into oppositional movement strategies.

By relating the type of effect of the state to the strategies that each side deployed, this article deepens our understanding of the relationship between state and social movements. The next section explains how the strong-state effect translated into pro-immigrant movement practices in the groups studied.

THE PRO-IMMIGRANT MOVEMENT AND THE STRONG-STATE EFFECT

The Humanitarians: Restricting the State

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

5 According to Young (2003), masculinist protectionism is a gendered moral code in which men are defined as good based on their willingness to protect others, particularly women and children.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

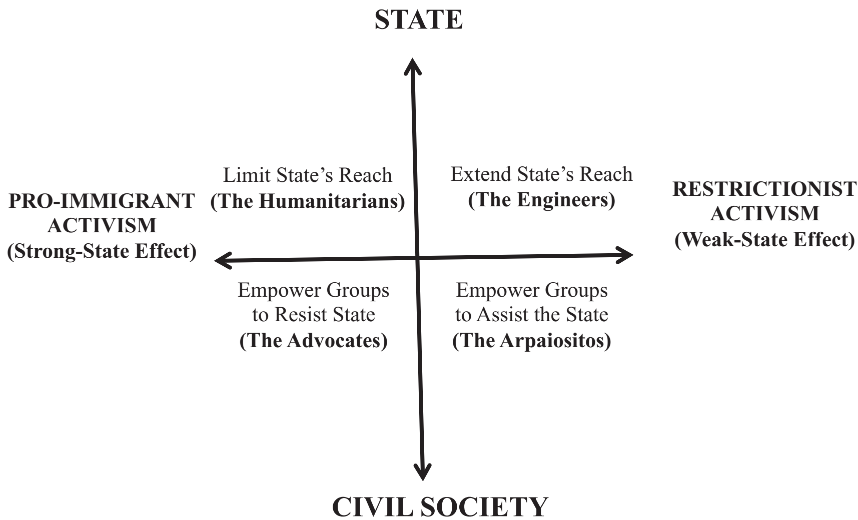

Figure 1. State Effects and Opposing Movement Strategies

The concept of humanitarianism saturated the organization's discourse and self-understanding, and it provided a powerful way to push back on state presence in the borderlands. The framework of humanitarianism allowed the group to challenge the idea that the border region was the exclusive domain of state agents. Instead, as 'humanitarian workers' bringing 'humanitarian aid' into a 'humanitarian crisis zone,' the group reframed the borderlands as a place of collective suffering that required the intervention of concerned civilians. As one member put it, the group's goal was to be an "unhindered humanitarian presence" in the borderlands.

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

In late fall, I accompanied two young Humanitarians, Lori and Alyssa, on one such water drop. Early in the morning, we drove for an hour in a well-used SUV to a town near the border. The trunk and part of the back seat of the vehicle were filled with crates of water, along with a dozen plastic baggies stuffed with food and socks. We parked the car on a road near the first of the five trails we would explore that day. I carried the medical pack and a gallon-sized plastic jug of water, while Lori and Alyssa each carried two gallon-sized jugs. We climbed up a small hill with the sun beating down on us. After about 15 minutes of hiking, we found the water drop site. Six jugs from a previous water drop, still filled with water, were sitting on the ground. Lori and Alyssa decided we should return to the car with our water and find the next water drop site. We repeated this process several times for the next two hours. At every site, the water from a previous drop had not been touched.

Lori and Alyssa seemed nervous throughout the day and their jumpiness became particularly apparent when we took a lunch break. We were still far from town in the middle of a desolate area. We settled down on some large rocks near the dirt road where the SUV was parked. Every time there was the sound of a vehicle in the distance, the two women fell silent, straining to hear if the vehicle's motor sounds were getting louder. Lori said that she would rather encounter people where we were sitting—on a path near the main road—rather than on a walking trail far from the car, but we never

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

encountered anyone. Alyssa later explained that she was nervous because there had been several instances of 'water vandalism' in the past. Plastic jugs had been slashed and the water inside the containers had been poured out. Alyssa believed that the Border Patrol was responsible. Lori claimed that a couple of Humanitarians had recorded a video of an agent following the organization's car to a water station and later committing water vandalism. After a moment's reflection, Alyssa said, 'look, putting out water is not just about putting out water [. . .] It's also a symbolic thing [. . .] it's telling the world that these are migrants. It's a message we're sending to Border Patrol, to hunters, to Minutemen, to everyone.'

Alyssa's explanation captured how the Humanitarians understood the desert: as a battle site where they tried to establish a domain in which non-state actors could interact with migrants. Establishing this domain of 'humanitarianism' required activists to constantly push up against the state. Lori and Alyssa's anxiety indicated their awareness of this fact. They went out to the desert with the anticipation that the Border Patrol would try to upend their efforts.

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

Alyssa's comment about the communicative aspect of the jugs of water is also important. 'Humanitarianism' offered a way to denaturalize state discourse and convey an alternative set of ideas about migrant suffering. That is, the jugs of water were intended not only to quench thirst but also to remind state agents and American civilians that the well-being of a group of people was being jeopardized at the border. Moreover, 'humanitarianism' reframed the desert as a region subject to international law and the Humanitarians as the self-designated members of the global human rights community charged with documenting the state's transgressions of this law. The Humanitarians referenced international institutions' codes, reports, and rulings in order to justify actions that could easily be construed as 'unlawful' behavior (like 'littering'). When the state *did* interfere with the Humanitarians' work in the desert, activists deemed such actions to be violations of international law.

Making this case was an ongoing struggle, however. For example, at one meeting of the Humanitarians, activists discussed ways to keep the Border Patrol from interfering with their efforts in the desert. Alleging that activists were 'aiding and abetting' law-breaking behavior, the Border Patrol had raided a medical camp that activists used for treating crossers, and the agency threatened to conduct more raids in the future. The Humanitarians brainstormed responses that could prevent a future raid. One suggestion was to get members of the city's medical community to acknowledge that the desert region where migrants crossed constituted a humanitarian crisis zone and to publicly ordain the Humanitarian tent an official medical unit outside the purview of the Border Patrol. By establishing the camp as something akin to a care unit run by Doctors Without Borders, the Humanitarians hoped to create a space that was safe from state intervention.

Framing the border region as a humanitarian crisis zone was only one way that the Humanitarians worked to circumscribe the state. The group also acted as a human rights watchdog on a state agency that seemed to have growing latitude—the Border Patrol. The Humanitarians interviewed crossers who were apprehended by the Border Patrol and deported to Mexican border towns. Based on their findings, the group wrote several reports. In one such report, the Humanitarians concluded that what the agency referred to as its 'processing centers' were not just waiting rooms where apprehended crossers stayed until they were deported. Instead, these spaces were detention facilities where agents abused their charges. The Humanitarians launched a campaign to disseminate the report's findings. In addition to presenting their report to international institutions like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the group also spoke with journalists and policymakers.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

The Humanitarians thus actively worked to reframe the state's practices as violations of human rights. In doing so, the group hoped to create enough public pressure so that one state organ—the Border Patrol—would be more restrained in what it could do.

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

Thus, the Humanitarians adopted a three-prong approach to rein in the state. The group strived to be an 'unhindered humanitarian presence' in the desert, thereby challenging the state's monopolistic hold over the border region. Over time, this kind of service provision in the border area led the group to more systematically document the experiences of the migrants and deportees that they encountered. This data then gave the Humanitarians the basis for fashioning themselves into a watchdog of the Border Patrol. Thirdly, the group expanded their 'humanitarian presence' from the border into the interior by conducting anti-deportation campaigns.

The Advocates: Building Groups' Resistance to the State

While the Humanitarians trained their focus on the state—particularly the Border Patrol—in an effort to limit its power, the Advocates were more concerned with building up *society's* capacity to resist the state. The Humanitarians' interaction with undocumented groups was largely in the form of providing a one-time service, such as medical treatment in the desert. By contrast, the Advocates tried to give noncitizens the tools to be less vulnerable to the state. Toward this end, the group taught noncitizens how to avoid deportation and they also created 'protection networks' linking undocumented individuals to other households and legal resources. The goal of these two tactics was to arm noncitizens with the means to either evade the state altogether or avoid interactions that could lead to deportations. The third tactic targeted what I call third-parties—institutions like the police and the medical examiner's office (MEO)—which had ambiguous relations with immigration enforcement. From the perspective of the Advocates, these institutions could align themselves with the state and reinforce its capacity. Or, they could just as easily side with pro-immigrant groups like the Advocates, and serve as an additional layer of resistance to restrictionist elements of the state.

The most frequent way that the Advocates reached out to people with irregular status was through 'prepárete' or 'prepare yourself' workshops. In these workshops, the Advocates explained the basics of immigration law and encouraged attendees to create emergency plans in case they or their family members were detained. These plans were intended to mitigate the confusion that could ensue if a household member suddenly disappeared. The Advocates urged household members to grant power of attorney to trusted others, so that their affairs could be handled in their absence. They advised households to find immigration lawyers and memorize their contact information. The Advocates also urged undocumented guardians to decide whether or not they wanted their children to stay in the United States or be reunited with them in case of deportation. By pre-designating someone to take charge of the children, guardians made it less likely that their offspring would be picked up by another organ of the state (Children's Protective Services), which would make family reunification even more difficult.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

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

In addition to describing the state's reach and how to avoid it, the Advocates hoped that these training sessions could reduce the individual's vulnerability to the state in the event that he or she attracted its attention. The group tried to teach people how to avoid deportation proceedings even after they came into contact with an officer. During these know-your-rights trainings, individuals were trained not to open their house door to an officer unless they made certain there was a warrant. If they were pulled over in traffic, they were instructed to refrain from divulging anything besides their names. The Advocates even had attendees role-play what they would say during a lawful contact. By teaching noncitizens about the state's reach and suggesting strategies for avoiding the state, as well as tactics to interfere with the ability of the state agents to carry out immigration enforcement, activists tried to make individuals more immune to the state.

To strengthen undocumented communities' buffer against the state, the Advocates also connected individuals to 'protection networks.' These networks of relatives, neighbors, immigration lawyers, and others could take care of a targeted individual's concerns. If someone in the network was detained during an immigration raid, the chain of communication cautioned others in the network to stay away from that area for the time being. The social capital that protection networks generated, the Advocates believed, could help shield individuals from the state.

In addition to helping noncitizens steer clear of the state, the Advocates also cultivated another approach, which targeted relatively powerful local institutions that had ambiguous relations to the immigration enforcement state. One such institution was the local MEO. A large portion of the work done by the MEO was identifying the remains of border crossers who had perished in Arizona's Sonoran Desert.[6] The Advocates often asked the chief medical examiner to present on the process of identifying human remains to different audiences and the doctor usually complied. However, this working relationship between the Advocates and the doctor had not been instantaneous or automatic. The Advocates had intentionally cultivated this particular collaboration over time. In fact, other MEOs in Southern Arizona were averse to basic forms of cooperation, refusing sometimes even to give out information about the numbers of remains that had been recovered in the border area in the past year.[7] When I asked the doctor who cooperated with the Advocates why he worked so closely with them, he explained that the group had been instrumental in helping his office identify remains. Family members of the deceased, especially if they themselves were undocumented people living in the United States, did not want to talk to a government office. However, they were willing to speak with the Advocates. As unidentified bodies from the desert piled up in their morgue, the MEO staff became grateful for the Advocates' help.

It was on the basis of this collaboration that the Advocates felt they might succeed in getting the doctor to present to the public. When members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus organized a community hearing in the city hall of an Arizonan border town, the Advocates used their ties with

6 According to Arizona state statute, a body cannot be cremated or buried until it has a death certificate. For victims of violence or some other reason that is classified as unknown or unnatural, the medical examiner's office is contacted to acquire a death certificate. For this reason, when Border Patrol agents find human remains in the desert, they are required to bring them to the medical examiner so that they may be identified.

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

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

one of the congressman to urge him to invite the doctor to speak. Other speakers included the town's mayor, the county sheriff, and the CEO of an American firm that conducted business in Mexico. The large conference room was packed with people. The room was flanked with standing reporters, with a dozen news cameras set up in the back. Most of the hearing was framed around how increased border security conflicted with the freedom to do business. Among the speakers, only the doctor spoke about migrant deaths in the desert. The doctor's presentation prompted one of the congressmen to ask whether the deaths constituted a 'humanitarian crisis.' The doctor responded with an analogy: 'it's like a mass disaster, like a plane crash that happens every year . . .' A clip featuring the doctor's response was aired on the local news. The Advocates had thus succeeded in using their ties to the MEO to convey their message to broader audiences.

The Advocates, however, did not want to stop there. They continued to target the medical examiner's office. For instance, the doctor agreed to make a video-recorded presentation about his work to a group of Advocates and their guests. At the end of the presentation, an Advocate asked the doctor to reflect on what impact his work had had on him 'at a human level.' The doctor skirted the question, saying that many bodies would never be identified, which was 'not easy.' Another Advocate, Gabriela, asked the doctor what he thought should be done about these deaths. The doctor shifted his weight uneasily and avoided answering the question. Afterwards, Gabriela articulated the group's hope: 'I wish he would be less clinical and more human in his presentations.'

Another ambiguously aligned third party that the Advocates targeted was local law enforcement. The Advocates were aware that the police were becoming key players in immigration enforcement around the country. In Arizona, sheriffs like Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County were vocal about their restrictionism and there were always rumors about how certain officers in Tucson overzealously cooperated with the Border Patrol. At the same time, however, the police exhibited reluctance about immigration control, particularly when SB1070 was signed into law in 2010. One police officer had brought a lawsuit challenging the measure. Meanwhile, the chief of police publicly criticized the bill for burdening officers with a task that would hinder their performance of other duties. Realizing that there was room to maneuver, the Advocates began pressuring police to more openly resist the Department of Homeland Security.

The summer of 2011 presented the Advocates with such an opportunity. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had just invited the city's police chief to participate in a national task force. The task force would hold community hearings about how a federal immigration enforcement program called Secure Communities could be implemented without impeding community policing. Soon after the police chief accepted ICE's invitation, the Advocates began putting pressure on him to resign from the task force. The group protested in front of the police department several times. They also told the media that it was hypocritical for a police chief who had criticized Senate Bill 1070 to then turn around and cooperate with ICE. One Advocate explained that by being part of the task force, the chief effectively 'legitimized' the Secure Communities program. Despite the pressure that the Advocates put on him and despite being visibly upset by the protests, the chief did not resign from the task force.

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

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

Advocates' contention—that local state actors should primarily be committed to the welfare of local residents, rather than to a federal immigration program.

The pro-immigrant organizations in this study adopted two responses to the strong-state effect: the Humanitarians tried to restrict the state while the Advocates strived to build groups' and individuals' capacities to resist the state. By framing the borderlands as a humanitarian crisis zone and the Border Patrol as the cause of this crisis, the Humanitarians called into question the legitimacy of the state's presence in the desert. Anti-deportation campaigns extended the battlefront from the border into the interior. Just as with the domain of humanitarianism in the desert, these campaigns tried to impose limits on the state's reach and actions. The Advocates did not have the same kind of adversarial relationship with the Border Patrol. This is because the group tried to weaken the state indirectly by equipping noncitizens with the tools to resist the state. The Advocates taught noncitizens how to avoid encounters with the state and plugged them into communities of mutual support. Additionally, the group tried to tether ambiguously aligned institutions to the pro-immigrant cause of weakening the state.

The Soldiers and the Engineers: Extending the State

Like their pro-immigrant counterparts, the restrictionist organizations in this study were critical of the state. However, unlike pro-immigrant groups, this criticism was aimed at the state's seeming weakness. Restrictionist organizations like the Soldiers and the Engineers strived to *expand the state*. Believing that the Border Patrol lacked adequate manpower and resources in the field, the Soldiers developed a system of gathering information about migrant crossers and sharing it with the agency. Meanwhile, the Engineers tried to develop a more comprehensive system of border surveillance than was currently in place and hoped to contract their system out to the DHS.[8]

The Soldiers conducted armed patrols of a large ranch a few dozen miles north of the Arizona-Mexico boundary. There, this organization endeavored to become the civilian counterpart of the Border Patrol. The Soldiers had grown out of a local chapter of the Minutemen. Over time, this local chapter evolved from an organization that primarily tried to create a media spectacle about an 'out-of-control' border into a far more media-shy group whose purpose was to help local Border Patrol agents. In order to accomplish this new goal, the Soldiers changed the old Minutemen 'standard operating procedures' to embrace a more proactive approach to intelligence-gathering than that of their predecessors. The Soldiers described the Minutemen as a group that sat on their lawn chairs, often unarmed, waiting for border crossers to come to them. By contrast, the Soldiers saw themselves as actively helping border enforcement efforts by conducting armed patrols to gather 'intel' for the Border Patrol. The restrictionist group believed that, given the amount of cross-border movement in the region, the government agency did not have the resources to deter crossers. Although they knew that the Border Patrol could not publicly ask civilians for their help, the Soldiers maintained that agents were appreciative of any assistance they could get. The group developed a relationship with a contact in the agency and took great pride in being able to pass along any information that they were able to gather.

The Soldiers had three ways of gathering information. First, on the rare occasion that group members actually encountered a crosser during a patrol, they called the Border Patrol to let them know of the person's location. Among the Soldiers that I spoke with, however, actual encounters were rare occurrences.[9] It was more common for the group to find objects and footprints left behind by migrants, than to come across migrants themselves.

The second way in which the group collected information was by keeping track of the locations of old items and aged footprints, and by alerting the agency whenever there were signs of fresh 'activity.' For instance, one Soldier, George, explained that the group had recently found a fresh 'lay-up,' or a relatively hidden place where crossers stopped to rest and discard unneeded items. However, this had

8 For a more extended ethnographic discussion of the Soldiers and the Engineers see Elcioglu (2015).

9 This finding was also echoed by Shapira (2013:160).

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

not been an ordinary lay-up. Instead of the usual survival items that migrants left behind—like water jugs, electrolyte powder packets, and food wrappers—this lay-up contained a set of binoculars, maps, a cellphone, and a global positioning system (GPS) device. George and his friends surmised that the lay-up had been created by a 'trail spotter' or someone who was hired to know the whereabouts of Border Patrol field agents and help navigate crossers away from potential capture. George explained that cartels were increasingly turning to spotters to ensure the safe passage of their drugs into the United States. That the 'trail spotter' had created this lay-up and left behind valuable equipment suggested that he planned to return and use the location again. George and his group 'destroyed' the lay-up, clearing it of all the items. By doing so, their intent was 'to send a clear message' to spotters that the area was under surveillance. Afterwards, George and his group relayed the GPS coordinates of the lay-up to the Border Patrol. They also informed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) so that they would come and clean up the area further.

In addition to informing agents about crossers' potential whereabouts by sighting them and their things, the Soldiers set up a reconnaissance system on the ranch in order to aid the Border Patrol. After determining the locations of well-traveled migrant paths, the Soldiers placed cameras to overlook them. Once or twice a week, the restrictionist group hiked out to the locations of these cameras and downloaded the footage. They then scanned the footage to see if the cameras had caught any migrants on tape. Any footage depicting 'activity' was given to the agency contact, along with the date and time of the footage as well as GPS coordinates of the camera's location. The Soldiers believed that this reconnaissance helped the Border Patrol decide where to best allocate their resources in the desert.[10]

While the Soldiers believed that the Border Patrol needed the help of activists in the desert, the Engineers thought that what the agency required was the assistance of border security experts like themselves. The Engineers came to this conclusion by examining border policing from a ranch that they acquired at the Arizona-Mexico border. The group spent the early 2000s studying the Border Patrol's methods: they listened to the agency's unsecure frequencies and when agents were dispatched to a specific location, the Engineers flew over the area in a small airplane and observed how agents responded to the detection of border crossers. The Engineers concluded that the Border Patrol's surveillance methods in the borderlands were far from comprehensive. The problem, they argued, was not the dearth of cameras and other monitoring technologies at the international boundary, but rather that these devices did not know where to look at any given moment.

Given these contrasting analyses of border enforcement, the Soldiers and the Engineers cultivated different relationships with the Border Patrol. The field agents with whom the Soldiers strived to build a collaborative relationship were merely objects of study for the Engineers. Rather than partnering with the Border Patrol, the Engineers wanted to partner and compete with security consultants and defense contractors that worked for the DHS. As a prospective government consultant, the Engineers hoped to redesign border policing, and with it the Border Patrol.

By the early 2010s, the Engineers had developed a sensor-based surveillance system that they hoped to contract out to the DHS. To begin positioning themselves as a viable consultant for the federal government on matters related to immigration enforcement, the Engineers began attending 'border security conferences.' These conferences served as a marketplace in which prospective buyers (representatives of government agencies) could interact with sellers (security consultants and companies). With time, the Engineers went from being mere observers at these conferences to full participants as 'border security experts.' When I interviewed him in late 2011, Phil, the founder of the Engineers, had just returned from a border security conference in Southern California. He had attended the conference just to observe what kind of advancements had been made in border surveillance technology. A month after I interviewed him, Phil presented at a security conference in

10 That these sorts of relationships have evolved between the Border Patrol and border watch groups has been documented by journalists. In particular, see Gaynor (2014) and Baker (2016).

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

Phoenix. There, he explained that although the DHS produced apprehension *statistics*, the government lacked a surveillance program that could calculate apprehension *rates*. For this reason, he explained, DHS could not ascertain whether the border was in fact getting more 'secure' over time. A year later, the Engineers began exhibiting their sensor system as a way to calculate apprehension rates. The group thus used conferences as sites in which to demonstrate their expertise to state actors.

In addition to networking with officials from the federal government via border security conferences, the Engineers also cultivated relationships with restrictionist Arizona State legislators. For instance, a state senator accepted the Engineers' invitation to visit the group's ranch. During the visit, members of the restrictionist group took the state senator up in their plane to show him how the border was not properly fortified, thereby giving him more ammunition to argue in favor of a bill that would start a fundraising drive to build a fence along the border. After a separate visit by two other state senators, the Engineers were invited to present their sensor system in front of a state senate committee. Legislators watched as the Engineers explained and livestreamed a demonstration of the sensors from the ranch. The Engineers urged the legislators to hire an independent expert to test how effective the sensor system actually was, and then to consider having it installed in various parts of Southern Arizona. One legislator strongly agreed, contending that the system could simultaneously be tested and utilized if its sensors were installed near a Border Patrol command center. In sum, the Engineers presented themselves as border security experts, whose specialized knowledge could be put to use in service of the state.

As pro-immigrant organizations like the Humanitarians tried to rein in the state by limiting the Border Patrol's reach and power, the Soldiers and the Engineers struggled to strengthen the state by expanding the agency's scope. On the surface, both the Humanitarians and the Soldiers hiked deep into the desert in search of migrant routes, often referring to their work as 'search and rescue.' However, the meanings ascribed to these practices contrasted sharply depending on whether the group experienced the strong-state or the weak-state effect. The Humanitarians saw the desert as a space in which the state exercised unchecked power through a punitive system of enforcement that victimized people. As a 'humanitarian' presence in the desert, therefore, the group tried to mitigate the consequences of the Border Patrol's practices and create a domain safe from agency intervention. By contrast, the Soldiers went into the desert out of a conviction that the Border Patrol needed the help of concerned civilians. Similarly, when the Humanitarians and the Engineers scrutinized the Border Patrol's methods, they did so for divergent reasons. The Humanitarians observed the agency to report on and challenge the state's power, while the Engineers' study was geared towards making the state's enforcement apparatus more ubiquitous, and therefore more potent.

The Arpaiositos: Building Group Capacity to Reinforce the State

Another restrictionist organization, the Arpaiositos, was the polar opposite of the Advocates. As described earlier, the pro-immigrant Advocates pressured local law enforcement not to participate in immigration control. By contrast, the Arpaiositos helped put local law enforcement *in service of* federal immigration enforcement efforts. Toward that end, the group started off by participating in a restrictionist sheriff's 'volunteer posse' and then, over the years, the Arpaiositos turned to protesting any effort to remove the sheriff from office.

The Arpaiositos' self-understanding was articulated in reference to places, such as Tucson, where the police were believed not to participate in immigration control and was motivated by the fear that Phoenix would follow suit. This fear—that Phoenix could become Tucson—was apparent during my first meeting with the group. When I mentioned that I was living in Tucson and not Phoenix, Valerie, a longtime Arpaiosito, flatly stated that there was 'no hope for Tucson.' She explained that city officials, under pressure from 'illegals and their supporters,' had made Tucson into a sanctuary city. As far as she was concerned, the cops in Tucson could no longer uphold the law—that is, perform

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

immigration enforcement. She was particularly appalled that the chief of the Tucson Police Department was 'pro-sanctuary.' When Senate Bill 1070 was introduced in the legislature, she explained, the police chief had opposed the measure and said that his department would not check immigration status. Valerie recounted how a Tucson-based tea party had organized rallies to protest the police chief's stance, but they had been in vain. As Valerie grew silent, another Arpaiosito piped up the concern that the group harbored: 'If we're not careful, it [the adoption of sanctuary policy] could happen here [in Phoenix]!'

Animated by this fear, the Arpaiositos dedicated themselves to supporting Sheriff Joe Arpaio and the MCSO. Key members of the Arpaiositos first met each other in 2006 and 2007 when they gathered to protest the presence of day laborers near a furniture store in Phoenix. For years day laborers had gathered in the parking lot of a local Home Depot to solicit work. In 2005, however, Home Depot stopped allowing this practice and the day laborers assembled down the street near a furniture store. The store's owner solicited the help of Phoenix Police Department to chase the day laborers away. Facing pressure from pro-immigrant groups, however, the police officers stopped their public policing; instead, off-duty Phoenix officers and MCSO deputies began moonlighting as private security guards at the store. Claiming that the guards were racially profiling anyone near the store, pro-immigrant activists gathered at the site to protest. Members of what would later become the Arpaiositos also gathered to counter-protest. They took photographs of pro-immigrant activists, day laborers, and the day laborers' potential employers, threatening to share this footage with ICE.

The timing of the protests was significant: they overlapped with a shift in Sheriff Arpaio's approach to undocumented immigrants. As recently as 2005, the MCSO was ambivalent about participating in immigration enforcement. Arpaio stated that he "[didn't] expect to concentrate on some guy in a truck with six illegals," preferring instead "to go after the professional smugglers who do this for money, the top people" (Gabrielson and Gibline 2008). This ambivalence changed a year later, after former Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano successfully requested that ICE grant 287(g) powers to her state, so that local law enforcement officers could make immigration-related street arrests. Concomitantly, Arpaio's policing priorities swung in the opposite direction. By 2007, MCSO deputies were arresting hundreds of undocumented immigrants (Gabrielson and Gibline 2008), and the day laborers' gathering place became a target of immigration raids.

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

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

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

Even before the furniture store protests wound down, the Arpaiositos began volunteering with the MCSO's posse out of a desire to be more involved in 'protecting' Phoenix. John noted that some highly determined activists among them participated in both efforts for a period: they "protested half the time [and] rode with Joe [Arpaio's deputies] the rest of the time." As volunteers with the posse, the Arpaiositos accompanied MCSO deputies, usually in traffic stops, and occasionally on designated immigration sweeps. In physical appearance, posse volunteers looked remarkably like deputies: they wore uniforms, they rode in vehicles with official-looking insignia, and some, after undertaking extra training, were armed. Although the volunteer posse was active during the time of my fieldwork—having grown into a complex organization with several branches since Sheriff Arpaio came to office in 1993[11]—only one Arpaiosito, Mark, participated in the volunteer posse at that time.

Wearing a uniform that had been issued by the 'jeep posse,' Mark rode with deputies on patrol. Other times, he drove his personal vehicle, which sported the insignia of the MCSO. Often, Mark accompanied deputies to conduct traffic control. Several times, he had ridden along with deputies who had stopped vehicles that turned out to contain undocumented drivers and/or passengers. Mark proudly described the support role he played on one such occasion. He and a deputy had pulled over an old Toyota with a broken taillight in a residential neighborhood of southern Phoenix. It was nighttime. The driver—who 'appeared Mexican,' according to Mark—could not produce a driver's license or registration. Nor did he answer any of the deputy's questions. The deputy suspected that the driver did not have papers. Meanwhile, a group of six or seven people gathered nearby; two of the bystanders started video recording the scene on their cell phones. Mark asked the group to put their cameras away because it was 'an ongoing investigation.' One of the cell phone users complied. Another asked 'confrontationally' why the driver had been pulled over. Mark 'politely' explained that he had a broken taillight and no license. The driver was eventually arrested and taken to jail. Afterwards, the deputy told Mark that he was glad to have had him there as backup. According to Mark, the episode typified the experience of MCSO deputies: a simple traffic stop of an 'illegal alien' could easily turn into a tense affair. Mark saw himself as a 'peacekeeper' who calmed down onlookers while deputies did their jobs.

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

This pro-Arpaio support primarily came in the form of counter-protesting any event that was critical of the MCSO. For example, when Citizens for a Better Arizona (CBA), a Phoenix-based group that had been responsible for successfully recalling a restrictionist state senator, started working on a campaign to expose how Arpaio abused the powers of his office, the Arpaiositos began monitoring CBA closely. One Arpaiosito member, John, managed to get on the CBA listserv. From an e-mail that John received, the group learned of an upcoming meeting. Alex and Alana attended the meeting. At the end of the meeting, Alana took copies of fliers for all upcoming events. Alex later showed me a few blurry photos that he had stealthily taken of other people attending the meeting. I asked him why he had taken the photos. He replied that he planned to post them on the Arpaiositos' website, so that others could recognize CBA people on sight. Alex and Alana also scanned the fliers to post onto their website. Additionally, they e-mailed the scanned fliers to local tea party groups and restrictionist organizations. The group then encouraged these like-minded organizations to join the Arpaiositos in their efforts to counter-protest and disrupt CBA-organized events. After these events

11 The MCSO was estimated to have 2,400 active posse members and in 2014 that number was thought to have dropped to 1,798 (Lemons 2015).

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

passed, the Arpaiositos continued their reconnaissance efforts. Other Arpaiositos besides John also managed to get on the CBA listserv. Members also closely monitored the CBA Facebook site to keep track of any future anti-Arpaio events and organize counter-protests.

The Arpaiositos thus represented one type of response to the weak-state effect: the group tried to expand the ways in which local actors could assist the immigration control state. Believing that the MCSO's 287(g) powers were responsible for ICE's effectiveness in Maricopa County, the Arpaiositos worked to keep immigration control localized. This political project was in direct opposition to the efforts of the pro-immigrant Advocates. The Arpaiositos started out as volunteers in the MCSO. Later, as the MCSO became the target of growing criticism, investigations, and a recall effort, the Arpaiositos transitioned into a more public role as Arpaio-supporters.

STRONG/WEAK-STATE EFFECTS AS TOOLS FOR UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL CONTENTION

This article has argued that it is not just an activist's intrinsic motivations but also their assessments of state power that shape their political behavior. Perceptions of state power, or strong and weak-state effects, in turn, are informed by the nature of state practices. In the current study, I described how the manner of immigration policing created a context in which there was a significant undocumented population despite border buildup, as well as localized enforcement despite federal preemption. These circumstances lent themselves to divergent assessments of state power. Varied perceptions of the state's coercive capacity shaped and were further reinforced by the tactics that each movement deployed. The strong-state effect motivated pro-immigrant organizations to confine the state's scope and increase groups' abilities to resist the state. Meanwhile, an opposing strategy grew out of the weak-state effect: restrictionist activists strived to expand the state's reach and enhance society's ability to help the state. As a result, grassroots immigration politics unfolded in a highly patterned way: as a struggle to change the scope and power of the state's repressive capacity.

The strong/weak-state effect framework is a useful way to theoretically link political behavior with political context. Without the lens of state effect, a specific group tactic may appear only vaguely connected to the strategic repertoire of allied and opposing organizations, let alone to the larger context of power and policing. One could empirically describe the similarities or differences between the tactics of two organizations. Such descriptions, however, do not fully illuminate the sociological environment that produce and reproduce these tactics. The state-effect framework, by contrast, sheds light on how an organization's tactics are oppositional and referential to those of other civic organizations. This framework also illuminates how a tactic may be an interpretation and response to state practices. In sum, the state-effect lens allows us to see the field of social relations in which an activist group is embedded.

Given its potential to illuminate how a field of struggle is organized around state practices, the strong/weak-state effect framework may deepen our analysis of grassroots immigration politics in other places. For example, this framework can be used to analyze the consequences of an increasingly prominent feature of immigration policing—the devolution of enforcement to local institutions (Varsanyi 2010). There is some evidence suggesting that a mutually reinforcing relationship exists between this kind of enforcement devolution and perceptions of state weakness. René Flores (2015) has shown how restrictive immigration ordinances in Pennsylvania stoked white residents' anxieties about crime and lawlessness, which led to increased handgun sales. Gun ownership can be a response to perceptions of state weakness (Carlson 2015). Arguably, then, the desire for devolved immigration enforcement can be both an expression of the weak-state effect and/or reinforce this effect over the long term. Thus, the state-effect framework is analytically useful in that it can shed light on the relationship between state practices and social mobilization in other places.

Examining social actors' intuitions about the state, therefore, can be illuminating for scholars of political contention. This approach allows analysts to attend to the nuances of day-to-day political behavior without losing sight of how these behaviors fit into larger terrains of struggle.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019

REFERENCES

Abrams, Philip. 1988. "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1(1):58-89.

Auyero, Javier. 2012. *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Baker, Shane. 2016. "I Went Undercover With a Border Militia." *Mother Jones*, November/December. Retrieved January 2, 2017 (http://m.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/undercover-border-militia-immigration-bauer).

Brissette, Emily. 2015. "From Complicit Citizens to Potential Prey: State Imaginaries and Subjectivities in U.S. War Resistance." *Critical Sociology*. Retrieved December 12, 2016 (DOI: 0896920515582091).

Brown, Wendy. 2010. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books.

Carlson, Jennifer. 2015. *Citizen-Protectors: The Everyday Politics of Guns in an Age of Decline.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Coleman, Mathew. 2012. "The 'Local' Migration State: The Site-Specific Devolution of Immigration Enforcement in the U.S. South." *Law & Policy* 34(2):159-90.

Cornelius, Wayne A. 2005. "Controlling 'Unwanted' Immigration: Lessons from the United States, 1993-2004." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31(4):775-94.

Elcioglu, Emine Fidan. 2015. "Popular Sovereignty on the Border: Nativist Activism Among Two Border Watch Groups in Southern Arizona." *Ethnography* 16(4):438-62.

Evans, Peter, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Flores, René. 2015. "Taking the Law into Their Own Hands: Do Local Anti-Immigrant Ordinances Increase Gun Sales?" *Social Problems* 62:363-90.

Gabrielson, Ryan and Paul Gibline. 2008. "Reasonable Doubt." *East Valley Tribune*, July 8. Retrieved August 25, 2016 (www.eastvalleytribune.com/special_reports/reasonable_doubt/).

Gaynor, Tim. 2014. "Desert Hawks: Paramilitary Veterans Group Stakes Out U.S.-Mexico Borderlands." *Al-Jazeera America*, October 26. Retrieved August 25, 2016 (http://projects.aljazeera.com/2014/arizona-border-militia/).

Gupta, Akhil. 1995. "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State." *American Ethnologist* 22(2):375-402.

Hosang, Daniel. 2010. *Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lemons, Stephen. 2015. "Joe Arpaio's Incredibly Shrinking Posse." *Phoenix New Times*, July 29. Retrieved August 25, 2016 (www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/joe-arpaios-incredibly-shrinking-posse-w-update-7523792v).

Miller, Todd. 2014. *Border Patrol Nation: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Homeland Security*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Publishers.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1988. *Colonising Egypt.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

——. 1991. "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics." *The American Political Science Review* 85(1):77-96.

——. 2006. "Society, Economy, and the State Effect." Pp. 169-86 in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, edited by Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Nevins, Joseph. 2007. "Dying for a Cup of Coffee? Migrant Deaths in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region in a Neoliberal Age." *Geopolitics* 12(2):228-47.

Romero, Mary. 2011. "Constructing Mexican Immigrant Women as a Threat to American Families." *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 37(1):49-68.

Shapira, Harel. 2013. *Waiting for José: The Minutemen's Pursuit of America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Smith, Jackie. 2001. "Globalizing Resistance: The Battle of Seattle and The Future of Social Movements." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 6:1-20.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2001. "The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization: Close Encounters of the Deceptive Kind." *Current Anthropology* 42(1):125-38.

Varsanyi, Monica. 2010. *Taking Local Control: Immigration Policy Activism in U.S. Cities and States*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Walker, Edward, Andrew Martin, and John McCarthy. 2008. "Confronting the State, the Corporation, and the Academy: The Influence of Institutional Targets on Social Movement Repertoires." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(1):35-76.

Yang, Shu-Yuan. 2005. "Imagining the State: An Ethnographic Study." *Ethnography* 6(4):487-516.

Young, Iris Marion. 2003. "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29(11):1-25.

Downloaded from https://academic.oup.com/socpro/article-abstract/64/2/239/3065805 by University of Toronto user on 23 August 2019