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*Expanding Carceral Frontiers: The 100-Mile Border Zone and Constituting Latinx
Political Subjectivity*

by

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April 3rd 2023

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Abstract:

The thesis has two interrelated concerns. The first explores the emergence of the 100-mile border zone in order to study how the U.S. has expanded its borders inward and redefined notions of national security and carcerality. The second will define the 100-mile border as a *carceral frontier* that has emerged from previous years of racial security operations such as “Operation Wetback” in 1953. Moreover, I will demonstrate how the 100-mile border zone, a carceral frontier, blends the logic of security and the carceral in order to create a space of total state control. This inward turn of the 100-mile border zone and the security and carcerality of this space reveals much about the constitution of the sovereign state’s right to define and secure its borders within the nation, the rights of the state over that of the citizen, a citizen's right to free movement and due process, and the racial dynamics of security actions. To explore this contradictory logic of security, I conduct an analysis of security language on border and immigration “operations” that constituted the emergence of the 100-mile border zone since 1953. Through this analysis, I will argue that the 100-mile border zone, as a carceral frontier, is a new theoretical development in Critical Carceral Studies. In this way, this thesis will engage in Securitization Studies, Border Theory, and Carceral theories. This type of analysis will reveal that the 100-mile border zone, and the making of this carceral frontier, is inextricably bound to the rights and status of Latinx.

Introduction: Introducing the 100-Mile Border Zone



Image: The 100-mile border zone¹

“Every town, every city, every state is a border town, a border city, a border state”

-Mark Morgan, Commissioner of Customs and Border
Protection for The Trump Administration

The constitutional ramifications of Mark Morgan’s expanding border declaration were illustrated during the Black Lives Matters protests that followed the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. What few people realize is that Minneapolis and dozens of other cities where

¹ Catherine E. Shoichet, “The US Border Is Bigger than You Think,” CNN (Cable News Network, May 24, 2018), <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/23/us/border-zone-immigration-checks/index.html>.

these protests occurred falls within a security zone the US constitutes as the “100-Mile Border Zone.” What is important to point out is that because modern US policy delineates the border as a space that extends 100 miles inward, these civil rights protests could be categorized as border security actions and a person’s rights within this space could thus be suspended. I call attention to the protests in order to examine the complicated security measures taken in the name of “national border security.” What I contend is that these security actions occurring within this expanded inward border challenges our modern understanding of rights. The 100-mile border zone, then, reveals a stark contradiction between the right of the nation to secure its borders inward and the First and Fourth Amendment rights of the citizens who reside within these spaces. In fact, these protests, the border security actions, and political rhetoric about the protests are rooted in a history of national security discourse. This discourse has enabled what I believe to be the inward expansion of US borders, which, in turn, has challenged the rights and status of the citizen since 1953, the year the 100-mile border zone emerged as a national security action.

Speaking months after he would declare the US/Mexico international border a space of emergency, Trump extended his rhetoric inward towards US cities over a hundred miles from the border. Trump declared that these widespread protests, “are not acts of peaceful protests. These are acts of domestic terror.”² Trump commented on the protests in Minneapolis, stating that “we can’t allow a situation like what happened in Minneapolis to descend further into lawlessness, anarchy and chaos.”³ Here, what is important to point out is that the physical boundaries of the 100-mile border zone can also be expanded by politicians in moments of “chaos” to maintain

² Transcript: Trump to Mobilize Federal Resources to Stop Violence, Restore Security,” ABC News (ABC News Network), accessed September 4, 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/transcript-trump-mobilize-federal-resources-stop-violence-restore/story?id=71008802>.

³ Krishnadev Calamur, Ayesha Rascoe, and Alana Wise, “Trump Says He Spoke with Floyd’s Family, Understands Hurt and Pain of Community,” NPR (NPR, May 29, 2020), <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/29/864722348/twitter-hides-trumps-tweet-on-minneapolis-saying-it-glorifies-violence>.

national security. In other words, the 100-mile border zone in this moment of insecurity was able to become the 120-mile border zone. Indeed, what Trump revealed in his language was the political creation of a security emergency in Minneapolis. This manufactured “emergency” was able to justify the use of military border drones and thus create a state of exception within Minneapolis to ensure that the entire US did not, as he states, “descend further into lawlessness.”⁴ In fact, what this reveals is that the 100-mile border zone is primarily a discursive, rather than a material geographic space, that is constituted through language of emergency, sovereign threat, or national security.

Trump’s declaration targeted citizens practicing their First Amendment rights and protesting racism in America. These civil rights actions in the 100-mile border zone, however, were met with political language and national security actions that led to what I locate as “carceral technologies” in the name of “national security.” In the months following the murder of George Floyd, Trump made good on his promise to mobilize and dispatch “thousands of heavily armed soldiers, military personnel and law enforcement officers.”⁵ While the deployment of military forces on civilians is a cause for concern, I find the most alarming of these security operations was the mass deployment of Customs and Border Protection.

Following the Minneapolis protests on June 1st, Customs and Border Protection dispatched more than 350 officers to Washington DC.⁶ When citizens and news media outlets questioned the jurisdiction and presence of CBP, Mark Morgan (then Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection and who I quoted above) tweeted, “these ‘protests’ have devolved into chaos & acts of

⁴ Krishnadev Calamur, Ayesha Rascoe, and Alana Wise, “Trump Says He Spoke with Floyd’s Family, Understands Hurt and Pain of Community,” NPR (NPR, May 29, 2020), <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/29/864722348/twitter-hides-trumps-tweet-on-minneapolis-saying-it-glorifies-violence>.

⁵ Karl Jacoby, “Opinion: Why the CBP’s Presence at the DC Protests Should Alarm All of Us,” POLITICO, accessed March 27, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/06/10/cbp-protests-border-zone-312151>.

⁶ Ibid.

domestic terrorism by groups of radicals and agitators @ CBP is answering the call and will work to keep DC safe.”⁷ Similarly, in Portland, CBP officers were deployed in order to “manage” similar national protests against racism and police brutality. In this case, members of Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) were deployed to Portland. Interestingly, BORTAC has also completed and run operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.⁸ Here we see the blurring of the lines between domestic security forces that are used internationally to fight “terrorism” in the name of national security. This reveals that security actions within and outside the US borders become ever expanding policing actions and indistinguishable carceral technologies of the state. It should also be noted, BORTAC officers were “camouflaged federal agents pulling people into unmarked vans, firing off tear gas and flash grenades, and beating protesters with batons.”⁹

⁷ CBP Mark Morgan, Pic.twitter.com/qluefkgapo,” Twitter (Twitter, June 1, 2020), <https://twitter.com/CBPMarkMorgan/status/1267571804056489984?lang=en>.

⁸ Karl Jacoby, “Op-Ed: The Border Patrol’s Brute Power in Portland Is the Norm at the Border,” Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, July 22, 2020), <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-07-22/border-patrol-portland-protests-trump>.

⁹ Ibid.

Image 1: Predator B Drones Route over Minneapolis¹⁰

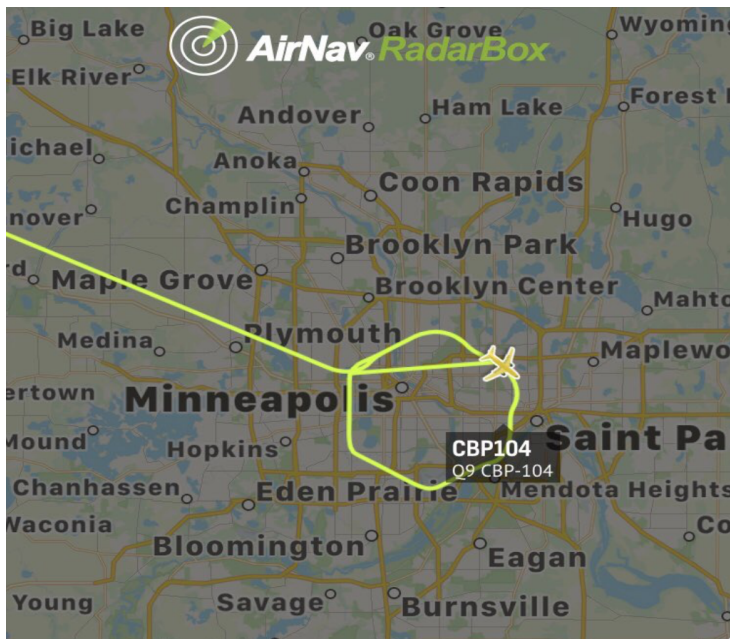
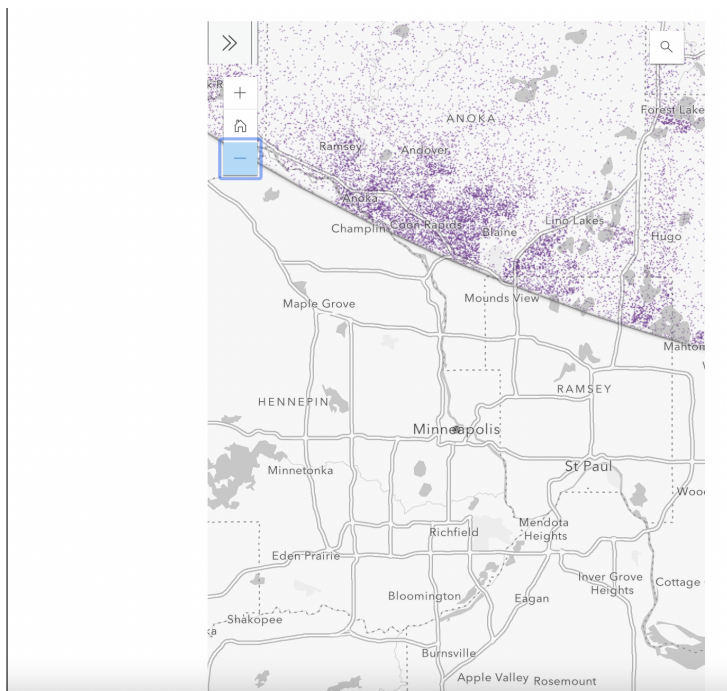


Image 2: Minnesota's 100 mile border zone¹¹



¹⁰ Tom McKay and Dhruv Mehrotra, "Customs and Border Protection Flew a Predator Surveillance Drone over Minneapolis Protests Today," Gizmodo (Gizmodo, June 2, 2020),

¹¹ Tanvi Misra, "Mapping Who Lives in Border Patrol's '100-Mile Zone'," Bloomberg.com (Bloomberg, May 14, 2018), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-05-14/mapping-who-lives-in-border-patrol-s-100-mile-zone>.

In a similar capacity, CBP also had an omnipresence at the protests in Minneapolis, though technologically rather than physically. During these protests many people noticed a Predator B Drone circling above BLM protestors. These predator B Drones, “provide real-time, high quality video feeds...can be outfitted with infrared cameras, weapons systems, or sophisticated airborne radar systems.”¹² In addition, “Predator B Drones have been recognized as one of the best combat drones in the world.”¹³ The use of military level drones, since September 11, 2001, has been normalized as *the* weapon of war against “terrorists and rogue nations.” However, what is striking in this domestic security action, is that these “weapons of war” were turned against assembled US citizens protesting racism within the borders of the United States.

According to ACLU senior legislative counsel Neema Singh Guliani, the “CBP has no role in what's happening in Minneapolis at all. This rogue agency’s use of military technology to surveil protestors inside US borders is deeply disturbing.”¹⁴ However, in reality, the CBP has jurisdiction expanding 100-miles from any external border (land or sea). Within this zone, the CBP can stop, frisk, and detain without warrants, creating a geographical frontier of constitutional exceptionalism that is maintained through legislative discourses of “national security” hidden in the language of a CBP “operation.” Moreover, the state can use carceral technologies to enforce this space. And with a series of Supreme Court rulings, the rights of the state security actors are sacrosanct to that of the Fourth Amendment rights of the citizen. Under this precedent people have lost the right to hold the state accountable for security actions that violate the Fourth Amendment rights of citizens within this space. The 100-mile border zone,

¹² “Via Foiaonline - Epic,” accessed April 3, 2023, 1.

¹³ Ibid, 2.

¹⁴ Tom McKay and Dhruv Mehrotra, “Customs and Border Protection Flew a Predator Surveillance Drone over Minneapolis Protests Today,” Gizmodo (Gizmodo, June 2, 2020),

then, over time, extends “national security interests” of the United States government over that of the rights of the citizen. This, then, is the emergence of the 100- mile border zone, a space that is a de-constitutionalized zone.

This zone marks the location in which we begin to see that the rights of the sovereign nation and the security actions created to maintain the state begin to challenge the fundamental rights of the citizens. It is no coincidence that within a year of the emergence of the 100-mile border zone, Operation Wetback was codified in 1953-54, which targeted Latinx citizens and nearly a million of documented and undocumented alike were detained and deported within this zone.¹⁵ In this moment, for Latinx, the carceral seeds that would lead to the modern manifestation of the carceral frontier were sown through the security actions of Operation Wetback. In the years that followed, “border operations” would, in effect, manage the rights and status of Latinx, and the 100-mile border zone set the foundations for how the state would continue to “manage” Latinx documented and undocumented peoples.

The 100-mile border zone continues to affect how the state maintains and defines security in order to control its citizens and interests. The deployment of CBP in geographies far from what we as a nation collectively understand to be “border zones” occurred because of the existence of the 100- mile border zone. Moreover, what these anecdotes suggest and what history shows is that the presence and power of CBP can be heightened at any time because of “security actions” within the 100-mile border zone and thus undermines the rights of citizens within this space. I contend that these security measures reveal a carceral logic and were legally taken to manage racial discord precisely because of the existence of the 100-mile border zone. In this way, this thesis will examine the emergence and maintenance of the 100-mile border zone and its

¹⁵ “Operation Wetback (1953-1954),” Immigration History, September 9, 2019, <https://immigrationhistory.org/item/operation-wetback/>.

implications on race and security. Ultimately, what we must ask then is: How does the 100 mile-border zone reveal the carceral and security logic of the state? And therefore how does the carceral frontier become a tool of state control to manage Latinx?

What I will show in the pages that follow are Trump's emergency declarations within the 100-mile border zone were not isolated incidents. In US border history, numerous administrations and state governors have used the language of security in order to maintain the 100-mile border zone and challenge fundamental rights in the US. And because of the zone's geopolitical nebulosity, it has allowed state and government administrations to be equally as vague in their control of a space that over two-thirds of its citizens reside. What this incident reveals, then, is that the 100-mile border zone has become a discursive rather than material space wherein political language of emergency, security and sovereign control can be manipulated by administrations, regardless of political affiliation.

The first concern of this thesis, then, and why I began with the above anecdote is to define the 100-mile border zone and to describe its implications. This anecdote reveals that this zone is a mechanism to challenge predominant discourses of political science regarding security, sovereign control, Fourth Amendment rights, race, and carcerality. But in order to understand how the 100-mile border zone challenges these discourses it is crucial to understand the zone's construction. Therefore, the first concern will attempt to answer the following questions: *How has the 100-mile border zone emerged?* To answer this question, I will examine the construction of the 100-mile border zone and Operation Wetback as the securitizing policy to the Mexican subject in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Following the establishment of the 100-mile border zone as a location defined by security and carceral logic, I will analyze its contemporary manifestation. Here I ask, *what is the purpose*

of the 100-mile border zone? It's simple: a location of state control to manage its populations. It continues to be carved through our nation as a security project and the internal geography of the zone is maintained through carceral technologies. In this way, I argue the 100-mile border zone is a *carceral frontier*. Arriving upon this definition of the 100-mile border zone, I lace together theories of Carceral Geographies and borders envisioned as thick discursive frontiers rather than linear geographic lines. Ultimately I contend a carceral frontier is a space where the logic of security and the carceral become so intertwined they can not be separated and become a pernicious form of state control. Furthermore, I contend the consequences of a carceral frontier are different from other individual carceral spaces because it is created through national security discourse that, in theory, presents itself as a sovereign right. Therefore, in the eyes of the state the carceral mechanisms and securitizing apparatuses within a carceral frontier supersede any law or right of the citizen, in the name of national security. In other words, the infusion of security prerogatives into carceral practices legitimizes and expands any carceral action taken by the state and removes it from the realm of normal politics.

The second concern is exploring how Latinx rights and status are affected by the emergence of the 100-mile border zone in 1953 as well as its contemporary manifestation. As stated above, the 100-mile border zone emerged the same period the US instituted "Operation Wetback" in 1953. This co-emergence is the location in which carceral seeds were planted within a securitizing operation. Indeed, the 100-mile border zone was created as a way to increase efficiency of deportation during Operation Wetback. In this way, the 100-mile border zone is a site of control to expel documented and undocumented peoples. Though all citizens alike face some side effects of the zone, it was created to be a space of control for the Latinx subject specifically. This site of control began with Operation Wetback, which to date is the one of the

most racially targeted deportation policy. Furthermore, let us not forget that today, two-thirds of the United States' population live in a 100-mile border zone, nearly 200 million Americans, and 75% of the US Latinx population lives in this zone.¹⁶ In fact, 8 out of the 11 cities with the highest Latinx population fall within the zone.¹⁷ Therefore, an analysis of the socio-political ramifications of the 100-mile border zone to Latinx cultural and political subjectivity is critical.

In order to address the two main concerns of this essay, Chapter 1 will examine the historical development of the 100-mile border zone in the context of the development of Operation Wetback. Indeed, this section will identify moments of a budding carceral logic within a security operation. This chapter will demonstrate how because of Operation Wetback's racial intent, the 100-mile border zone, from its inception, emerged as a reaction to controlling and managing Latinx populations within the borders of the US. Moreover, it became a location for the state to control the Latinx subject by expanding the jurisdictional scope of Operation Wetback practices. In addition, this chapter will examine the creation of Operation Wetback through Securitization theory framework. Securitization is concerned with *how* states construct threats and thus the security measures taken to neutralize them. Securitization Theory reveals that "national security policy is not a natural given, but carefully designated by politicians and decision makers."¹⁸ In this way, Securitization theory, "is thus not so much involved with answering 'why' an issue has been securitized," rather, "[Securitization theory] is concerned with the conditions that have made the securitization possible by asking 'how' questions: how

¹⁶"Know Your Rights: 100 Mile Border Zone," American Civil Liberties Union, April 6, 2020, <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/border-zone>.

¹⁷"11 Cities with the Most Hispanics - US News & World Report," accessed March 29, 2023, <https://www.usnews.com/news/cities/slideshows/11-cities-with-the-most-hispanics>.

¹⁸ Clara Eroukhmanoff and About The Author(s) Clara Eroukhmanoff is a Lecturer in International Relations at London South Bank University, "Securitisation Theory: An Introduction," E, May 7, 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/01/14/securitisation-theory-an-introduction/>.

has a specific language enabled the actor” to create a political security emergency?¹⁹ This analysis will help drive the point that Operation Wetback and by extension the 100-mile border zone was a measure created to secure the constructed threat of the Mexican/Latinx body.

Chapter 2 will define and locate the modern manifestation of the 100-mile border zone as a carceral frontier. I will provide a brief review of the Carceral Continuum, which describes the interconnecting networks that connect individual carceral regimes, the space and time in which a carceral logic is deployed by the state. This will allow me to situate the 100-mile border zone within a history and network of carceral sites. Following this, I will examine theories of Carceral Geographies and Matthew Longo’s theory of borders as frontiers. Finally, I will weave together these theories to describe and define the 100-mile border zone as a carceral frontier. Ultimately, this construction of a carceral frontier depicts a new logic behind spaces of carcerality, one that is guided and constructed by national security.

Lastly, Chapter 3 will continue to explore the implications of the 100-mile border zone and the racialized carceral-security logic upon Latinx rights and status. I explore how Latinx identity is tied to borders, utilizing Gloria Anzaldúa’s theory of border consciousness. However, I ask what happens when a Latinx subject, both documented and undocumented, some of whom do not consider themselves part of a “border culture” or even ever lived near the geographic border of the US/Mexico, are still seen by the state as a threat and who should be controlled in the name of 100-mile border security? In this way, I contend that every Latinx subject is seen as a “bordered subject” without the rights of an active citizen and thus falls within the panoptic gaze of national security. To explore this idea, the first theory I will employ will be Foucault’s biopower. This theory is a theoretical pillar to the field of Critical Carceral Studies and is tied to

¹⁹ Ibid.

theories of necropolitics. Indeed, biopower is the power to “let live and let die.” This necropolitical act leads me to utilize Lisa Marie Cacho’s theory of social death, developed in her book *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (2012). I employ this theoretical framework to explore how the 100-mile border zone creates subjects who are “socially dead” and unable to enact their rights of being free moving citizens within the zone.

In the end, this thesis will introduce and define the 100-mile border zone through a theoretical analysis that, I hope, will lay the future foundations for exploring how the 100-mile border zone should be seen as a major space of political science analysis. Indeed, what I hope one can infer from this thesis is that the 100-mile border zone is equally as powerful of a political space of analysis as traditional ones such as the “urban” v. “rural” continuum, red state v. blue state, the domestic and international, or regional state line policy differences. In this way, the 100-mile border zone should be a major geopolitical factor when thinking about political participation, security, rights, and the racialized democratic state.

Chapter 1: Finding the Carceral Seeds in Security Operations

To understand the emergence of the 100-mile border zone as a carceral frontier, it is critical to trace the origins of this spatial phenomenon. Outlined in the introduction, I argue that the creation of the 100-mile border zone and Operation Wetback within the same year is not a coincidence. Furthermore, these securitizing operations are inextricably bound to race and the Latinx political subject. In fact, the “national security” threat in both of these operations was the presence and identity of the Latinx subject, specifically Mexican nationals and citizens. I begin this chapter, then, with a historical overview of Operation Wetback and the 100-mile border zone. Operation Wetback and the zone were both born out of securitizing practices; therefore, I extend a critical security studies’ Securitization theory to trace how a racial logic of security emerged. I argue the language of emergency and exception that allowed for the creation of Operation Wetback and the 100-mile border zone is the same language that carves the boundaries of the zone’s contemporary manifestation.

In addition, this chapter will briefly explore the racial continuity of security. Specifically, by looking at similar operations such as “Operation Gatekeeper” and “Operation Push The Line Back” in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I show that the racial logic of emergency is still prevalent within this zone. Moreover, the technological advances that were introduced in these Operations ushered in the contemporary manifestation of the 100-mile border zone. Ultimately, I intend for this chapter to provide historical context as to how a carceral frontier – the logical end of racial security projects – emerged within the U.S.

History of Operation Wetback

Operation Wetback was the largest mass deportation action in U.S history. It began in 1954 when then Attorney General Herbert Brownell announced that in the coming months U.S Border Patrol would implement Operation Wetback.²⁰ Operation Wetback was imagined as an “intensive and innovative law enforcement campaign designed to confront the rapidly increasing number of illegal border crossings by Mexican nationals.”²¹ Most notably, during the summer of 1954, large swathes of newly hired border patrol agents swarmed the southwestern United States “performing raids, road blocks, and mass deportation.”²² These “securing” tactics ultimately contributed to the “apprehension and deportation of over one million persons.”²³ However, as Kelly Lytle Hernández uncovered in archival work, the policing of the Mexico border and Operation Wetback has been “narrowly understood since it was announced.” Indeed, Hernández has uncovered that this policing and practice of deportation was occurring years before the formal announcement of Operation Wetback. And while the deployment of Customs and Border Patrol was arranged out of a securing logic, the policing of the border regions and this population reveals the work of a carceral logic as well.

The deportation practices deemed unique to the 1954 Operation Wetback announcement actually emerged in the years following the implementation of the Bracero Program, 1942-1964. The Bracero program was a series of agreements between the US and Mexican government that “facilitated the migration of short-term Mexican contract laborers in and out of the United

²⁰ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley, California : University of California Press, 2010), 169.

²¹ *Ibid*, 184.

²² Kelly Lytle Hernández “The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943 to 1954.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (4) 2006: 421.

²³ *Ibid*, 421.

States.”²⁴ Ultimately, the Bracero program facilitated the presence of two million legal– but temporary– Mexican Workers from 1942-1964. However, much to the dismay of the U.S government, there was an “increasingly large number of Mexicans illegally during this time.”²⁵ In order to neutralize the presence of these illegal migrants, and to re-secure the “porous border,” border patrol displayed a carceral logic within their security mission of coordinating raids, road blocks, and transportation to deport Mexican nationals. Moreover, in February of 1950, U.S. Border Patrol inspector Albert Quillin initiated a new detainment and policing strategy that would be announced four years later to the public as “Operation Wetback.” Quillin’s model was internally known as Operation Wetback and by 1952 was a “well-oiled machine” utilized by the majority of border patrol.

Emerging at the same time as the internal implementation of Operation Wetback, the legal document of the 100-mile border zone was created in 1946, during the Bracero Program. Indeed, the policy originated in a statutory change to the Immigration and Nationality Act passed in 1946 by Congress. Interestingly, this change was federally codified and interpreted in 1953, one year before Operation Wetback would publicly initiate its securing operations. The specific statute of the 1953 codification was 8 U.S.C 1357, which gave federal agents the ability to conduct warrantless searches within a “reasonable distance” of the border.²⁶ This “reasonable distance” was described as 100 air miles from any external boundary, including coastal boundaries.²⁷ What is compelling about the politics regarding the 100-mile border zone is it was signed into policy without public deliberation or review because it was a matter of “national

²⁴ Kelly Lytle Hernández “The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943 to 1954.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (4) 2006: 423.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 426.

²⁶ “The Long Shadow - ACLU of Michigan,” accessed March 28, 2023, Page 13 https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 13.

security.” CBP had already constructed a political threat by initiating internal policing practices known as Operation Wetback in that same period. Therefore, the 100-mile border zone became a solution to enlarge the geographical boundaries in which these policing practices could legally occur and thus enable the management of the growing Mexican population that emerged because of the Bracero Program. Years prior to Operation Wetback border patrol had been attempting to secure the “porous border” from Mexican nationals and at times the Mexican-American citizen. Therefore, the 100-mile border zone was envisioned as a means to an end of securing the border and deporting mass amounts of Mexicans. Indeed, a critical piece of Securitization theory is the legitimization of extraordinary measures. In this way, Operation Wetback and the 100-mile border zone became an “extraordinary” securitizing apparatus to control citizens within the borders of the US.

Applying a Critical Security Analysis to Operation Wetback:

Securitization Theory

I contend that a Critical Security outlook on Operation Wetback is a compelling point of analysis. Specifically, by applying Securitization theory, the racial language of crisis is unveiled, and Operation Wetback and the 100-mile border zone become discursive policies of exception.

Ole Waever, a pioneer of Securitization theory, challenged traditional security studies in an effort to radically reframe how governments frame emergencies. In this way, Weaver proposed Securitization theory as a way to critically examine the “processes by which actors present threats as a justification for emergency measures and the transcendence of ordinary

politics, as well as the outcomes of these processes.”²⁸ In order to understand this process in which Securitization occurs, theorists have proposed four elements to investigate. The first focuses on the securitizing actor, “the agent who presents an issue as a threat through [a] securitizing move.”²⁹ The second is the referent subject which is the “entity that is threatening”; the third element, the referent object, which is the “entity that is threatened.”³⁰ Lastly, it is the audience, whose “agreement is necessary to confer intersubjective status to the threat.”³¹ Taken together, the investigation of all of these components and how they are reproduced and managed by the state are critical to Securitization theory. Confirming this, as well as further developing Waever’s preliminary arguments, Thierry Balzacq, a Security theorist, contends that the state invests “the referent subject with such an aura of unprecedented threatening complexion” and creates a legitimization of a “customized policy.”³² In this way, this “aura of unprecedented complexion” allows for the state to create a political emergency of varying severity. This way, whatever “customized policy” deemed necessary is the *only* solution for the threat and cannot be questioned.

Securitization theory is increasingly skeptical of how threats are constructed and under what circumstances. Securitization theory builds upon “Speech Act literature,” with the premise that “security has a performative character—that is, it does not only describe the world but can also transform social reality.”³³ This premise, based upon Speech Act theory, was further entrenched within Securitization theory starting with the Copenhagen school in the 1980’s. The

²⁸ Astor, Avi. 2009. “Unauthorized Immigration, Securitization and the Making of Operation Wetback.” *Latino Studies* 7 (1): 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2008.56>.

²⁹Balzacq, Thierry, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka. 2016. “‘Securitization’ Revisited: Theory and Cases.” *International Relations* 30 (4): 494–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815596590>.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

Copenhagen School of Security Studies used the word securitization to reference “the linguistic construction of security issues.”³⁴ In this way, it is evident that the theory of Securitization has similar theoretical presuppositions as social constructivism in which both theories “examine the role of language, the status of practice, and the power of argument in world politics.”³⁵

Securitization scholars have also been integrating Foucault’s theory of governmentality. Scholars of this practice argue that Foucault’s theory of governmentality “provides Securitization theory with an ‘analytics of government’ that is, ‘an analysis of the specific conditions under which particular entities emerge, exist and change.’”³⁶ The incorporation of governmentality into securitization analysis is a compelling point of reference. Indeed, the infusion between the two theories expands questions of “how and why is a threat constructed ?” to “what is the state's rationale in constructing a threat like this?” and “what is the state's rationale in creating policies of exception to contain the threat?”

Application of Securitization Theory

Applying a Securitization theory to Operation Wetback and the origins of the 100-mile border zone requires an identification and analysis of the four above defined elements and how the threat was discursively constructed. To begin, I identify the securitizing actor at the meta level as the United States government. Though more specifically, the securitizing actors are the INS and Border Patrol. Moreover, in 1954, President Eisenhower appointed retired Army General Swing as the commissioner of the INS to improve security efficiency.³⁷ In this way, there was an intentional incorporation of military capability with the INS, demonstrating the character

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Astor, Avi. 2009. “Unauthorized Immigration, Securitization and the Making of Operation Wetback.” *Latino Studies* 7 (1): 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2008.56>.

of the securitizing actor. It should be noted that this newly prescribed military presence within the INS was unprecedented prior to the years leading into Operation Wetback.

The referent subject, or in other words, the “threat,” was the Mexican immigrant, both documented and undocumented. In regards to the referent object, in this securitization process, there was not one referent object. Rather there were multiple referent objects being “threatened” by the referent subject, or in this case the Mexican subject. The referent objects in this securitization process were the physical safety of US citizens, the socio-economic stability of US citizens, and the “porous” border itself. Many politicians, specifically those in California, following the introduction of the Bracero program, began to construct the Mexican immigrant as a criminal, a criminal whose violent crimes and presence posed a threat to all US citizens.³⁸

Following the President’s commission in 1951, which documented how the Bracero program had increased unauthorized immigration, the Mexican immigrant was not only constructed as a threat to community safety, but also as an economic threat.³⁹ In fact, following the publication of this report, the “unauthorized immigration” of Mexicans was referenced in media outlets as, “the economic and sociological problem of the ‘wetbacks’ – and illegal Mexican immigrants”⁴⁰ In addition, some policy memos and INS rhetoric indicate the primary concern was not the presence of the undocumented immigrants but rather the “illegal border crossing.” In fact, many documents produced by the INS and Border Patrol referenced the threat

³⁸ Kelly Lytle Hernández “The Crimes and Consequences of Illegal Immigration: A Cross-Border Examination of Operation Wetback, 1943 to 1954.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (4) 2006: 439.

³⁹ Astor, Avi. 2009. “Unauthorized Immigration, Securitization and the Making of Operation Wetback.” *Latino Studies* 7 (1): 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2008.56>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

of a “porous border.”⁴¹ There was also mild concern that these porous borders would lead to communist spies crossing the border in “wetback” traffic.⁴²

In order to secure the referent objects under threat from the referent subject, the United States government, specifically the INS and Border Patrol, legislated Operation Wetback. However, the security apparatuses that were characteristic of Operation Wetback were in practice well before the public announcement. It was only after there was a public construction of the referent objects, the “problem of the wetback” in the media, policy memos, and commissions, did the United States create a policy of these practices publicly. As soon as the practices of an internal Operation Wetback became public as a legitimate securitizing mission, the US created a policy of exception through Operation Wetback. Indeed, Operation Wetback aimed to secure the Mexican immigrant while the 100-mile border zone was meant to secure the “porous border” and expand the jurisdiction for the policing and detention, as well as raids upon the growing Mexican subject. The state had constructed an unprecedented political emergency out of the “danger of the wetback.” Therefore, the decision to present border patrols policing habits to the public was intentional in order to legitimize and construct Operation Wetback as the only possible solution.

A key question Securitization theory addresses is “*what are the specific consequences of agreeing that something is a threat?*” The securitization process of the US/Mexico border that created 100-mile border zone and Operation Wetback had the consequence of a legacy of exception. Indeed, these policies of exception that were deemed necessary to deal with a “racial threat” have created a lasting precedent, a precedent that has perpetually elevated border policy out of the realm of ordinary politics and into the permanent realm of exception.

⁴¹ Astor, Avi. 2009. “Unauthorized Immigration, Securitization and the Making of Operation Wetback.” *Latino Studies* 7 (1): 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2008.56>.

⁴² Ibid.

The Continuity of a Racial Security Project

Securitization theory assumes that securitizing measures have an ability to alter reality. Indeed, Securitization theory implies that security has a “performative character– that it does not only describe the world but can also transform social reality.”⁴³ In this way, Operation Wetback altered the reality of future securitizing missions. To view racial policies of exception as limited to the pre-era of Operation Wetback would provide a narrow and incomplete narrative. Indeed, racial security projects centered around the border have continued decades after Operation Wetback. Moreover, these racial security projects endured regardless of party affiliation.

Operation Wetback would set the foundations for all future “operations” in the US. Although the Republican Eisenhower Administration would plant the seeds of the “Mexican threat” within the US in 1954, five decades later, Bill Clinton, a democrat, announced Operation Gatekeeper on October 1, 1994. This time, US officials portrayed the “overwhelming” amount of illegal crossings through San Diego as a crisis.⁴⁴ Following the announcement of Operation Gatekeeper, in July, Border Patrol announced they would be employing “increased surveillance technologies” in addition to an increase in border patrol presence and agents.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the strategic plan for Operation Gatekeeper was to “control the integrity of the border. A well-managed border will enhance national security and safeguard our immigration heritage.”⁴⁶ In this way, securitizing operations are constructed not only as an extension of sovereign control but also as a racial project that can endure over time.

⁴³ Balzacq, Thierry, Sarah Léonard, and Jan Ruzicka. 2016. “‘Securitization’ Revisited: Theory and Cases.” *International Relations* 30 (4): 494–531. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815596590>.

⁴⁴ Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and beyond: The War on "Illegals" and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*(London, New York : Routledge, 2010), 8.

⁴⁵Ibid,8.

⁴⁶Ibid, 10

The next democratic administration following Clinton was the Obama administration. Though the Obama administration did not have an expressive “Operation,” there were similar security apparatuses present and intended to be deployed on a racial group. Indeed, the Obama’s administration's first budget proposal for FY 2010 requested \$7.6 million for Customs and Border Patrol.⁴⁷ In addition, the administration requested another \$779.5 million for “border security fencing, infrastructure, and technology.”⁴⁸ The investment of administrations into technology and infrastructure to secure “porous” borders is the same logic that can be found at the emergence of the 100-mile border zone. This logic, regardless of party affiliation, has continued to be nurtured by administrations contributing to the modern manifestation of the 100-mile border zone.

⁴⁷ Joseph Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper and beyond: The War on "Illegals" and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*(London, New York : Routledge, 2010). 12

⁴⁸ Ibid, 14.

Chapter 2: Defining a Carceral Frontier

At the frontier our liberty is stripped away-we hope temporarily- and we enter the universe of control

-Step Across This Line; Salman Rushdie⁴⁹

Chapter 1 was an exploration of security operations deployed on the Mexican subject with attention to how a racial security project planted carceral seeds through policies of exception. Building on this, Chapter 2 and 3 will examine the logical end of these racial security projects and its manifestation in the contemporary era. Specifically, I argue that these security projects, because of their racial target, inherently adhere to a carceral logic. In this way, this chapter and the following chapters will examine how this carceral-security logic manifests in the contemporary and how it relates to the carceral continuum. Here, I argue that the 100-mile border zone is a carceral frontier that affects the rights and status of Latinx and citizens at large and should be a major factor of analysis when thinking about Latinx political subjectivity.

I begin with a review of the carceral continuum. In order to analyze the 100-mile border zone, it is critical to see the zone as a part of an ever-expansive carceral continuum. In this way, I adhere to the words of David Manuel Hernández when he examines the “connective tissue” between carceral logic and immigration policies.⁵⁰ Hernández states: “a noncomparative analysis of the immigrant prison system has the potential to reinscribe the very form of exceptionalism that typically frames episodes of immigrant detention, preventing us from viewing the extensive racial genealogy of this carceral institution.”⁵¹ I then discuss the theory of Carceral Geography, which develops from the burgeoning field of Critical Carceral Studies. This geospatial argument

⁴⁹ Salman Rushdie, *Step across This Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002* (London: Vintage, 2003).

⁵⁰ Robert T. Chase, *Caging Borders and Carceral States: Incarcerations, Immigration Detentions, and Resistance* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 57.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 63.

will enable me to explore Matthew Longo's theory of borders as frontiers. I will expand these theories in order to provide the theoretical framework for my analysis of the 100-mile border zone. In fact, through the layering of these theories, it is my intention to answer Dominique Moran's call when she states: "carceral geography should 'borrow' from critical border studies in order to take a more experiential approach to the prison boundary."⁵² In this way, this twofold theoretical approach will allow for me to develop a new theoretical concept within the carceral landscape: a carceral frontier. This chapter will conclude by positioning the 100-mile border zone as a carceral frontier.

Carceral Continuum

I begin by exploring the carceral continuum that exists in the United States to demonstrate where the zone fits into the field of Critical Carceral Studies. The establishment of the carceral continuum, or carceral archipelago in Foucauldian terms, enables the theorization of carceral geographies. Moreover, a discussion of the vast carceral network in the US allows for further interrogation of the "connective tissue" between carceral logic, security, and immigration policies that all materialize within border spaces. Finally, it is necessary to construct the emergence of the 100-mile border zone in location to other intertwining carceral spaces.

Of course, racial and carceral projects are not contemporary phenomena. In fact, "individual carceral regimes" are deeply embedded within and throughout American governance.⁵³ Therefore, a temporal analysis of the carceral continuum is just as important as a spatial analysis. Indeed, Robert T. Chase states that we must consider "carceral histories of the

⁵² Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2017), 102.

⁵³ Robert T. Chase, *Caging Borders and Carceral States: Incarcerations, Immigration Detentions, and Resistance* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 3.

U.S South and West as the nexus of an interconnected carceral network that stretched across region, space, and time.”⁵⁴ This is, in part, why it was critical to engage with the historical creation of the 100-mile border zone, as it demonstrates the seeds of a carceral logic that has now extended and formed into a carceral frontier.

I begin this review by defining the carceral continuum that has served as the canon of critical carceral studies. In fact, the theorization of the carceral continuum has enabled scholars to imagine spaces of penal punishment beyond the prison. Robert Chase contends that “distinct regimes of incarceration and removal—from jails and prisons to Indian reservations and immigrant detention centers and deportation trains—have constituted what Micheal Foucault has called a “carceral continuum.””⁵⁵ Chase elaborates on Foucault’s construction of this “carceral continuum, network and archipelago,” as, “a disciplinary network where the prison served as the core and root of carceral power but where different branches of other carceral regimes entwined.”⁵⁶ Indeed, Foucault states, “this network... comprises so many “regional” institutions.”⁵⁷ Foucault then moves beyond simply defining the carceral continuum by illuminating the function of this network. In *Discipline and Punishment* Foucault writes, “The great continuity of the carceral system throughout the law and its sentences gives a sort of legal sanction to the disciplinary mechanisms, to the decisions and the judgements they enforce.”⁵⁸ In this way, the carceral continuum becomes a self-legitimizing project. Each creation of an individual carceral regime perpetuates and reproduces a logic that is instilled within the prison itself. The carceral continuum, then, becomes the practice of exporting the logic of the

⁵⁴ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 3.

⁵⁶ Robert T. Chase, *Caging Borders and Carceral States: Incarcerations, Immigration Detentions, and Resistance* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 6.

⁵⁷ Michel Foucault and Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Classics, 2020), 302-303.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 302-303.

prison—including the panoptic gaze, surveillance, restriction of mobility, suspension of rights, and biopolitical acts to different populations and spaces when the state sees fit.

Though Foucault’s theorizations remain a canon of critical carceral studies, scholars have sought to expand the Foucauldian carceral continuum. In fact, scholars such as Angela Davis and Joy James have demonstrated a gap in scholarship regarding historical analysis of Foucault’s carceral continuum. Specifically, they note the omission of the earliest instances of racialized state violence. Davis and James argue that Foucault’s conception of the carceral continuum “rendered American systems of policing and prisons without a thorough analysis of the historical links between Southern slavery and lynching.”⁵⁹ Following this, Chicana scholar Ben Olguin also links the criminalization and containment of Latinx in a similar capacity, as he argues, “U.S. criminology and penology to U.S colonialism and imperialism” ultimately perpetuate the “construction of Chicana/o difference and subsequent criminalization and containment.”⁶⁰ In this way, Olguin, Davis, and James expand Foucault’s theorization of the carceral continuum and contend race and historical developments should form the epicenter of analysis of how specific carceral regimes emerge contributing to the carceral continuum. It is from this moment of scholarship that a contemporary definition and function of the carceral continuum emerges, “to fashion interlocking carceral states that cage the nation’s borders, imprison people deemed disposable, remove and relocate those considered to be less than full citizen, and expel those labeled as criminal “alien.””⁶¹ This contemporary definition and function of the carceral continuum is a critical point of departure for my analysis of the 100-mile border zone in the sections to follow.

⁵⁹ Robert T. Chase, *Caging Borders and Carceral States: Incarcerations, Immigration Detentions, and Resistance* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 6.

⁶⁰ Robert T. Chase, *Caging Borders and Carceral States: Incarcerations, Immigration Detentions, and Resistance* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 5.

A developing factor, though essential facet to the carceral continuum, is the carceral regime of immigration and detention. Rightfully so, as the detention regime is “considered the ‘fastest-growing form of incarceration,’ since roughly 40,000 immigrants are detained daily.”⁶² Furthermore, David Manuel Hernández argues, “As a carceral institution, detention reflects a variety of technological consolidations and accumulations of legal, administrative, and generally nationalist power over immigrants.”⁶³ Hernández continues to analyze this specific carceral regime as a unique moment and space of a carceral continuum, stating that “By engaging immigration enforcement with the carceral state, we learn that in the shadow of practically unchecked state power over prisoners is a flexible, biased, productive, and deeply advantageous state power over immigrants.”⁶⁴ Hernández argues that by positioning individual carceral spaces in conversation with one another, the states desire to control certain populations of state power is revealed. However, Hernández also warns one cannot think of these carceral systems as inherently the same, for “it is important to also note the critical and sometimes insidious nuances that separate these two forms of incarceration.”⁶⁵ Indeed, here I turn to theories of carceral geographies which I believe to uncover and care for nuances of each unique regime and space.

⁶² Ibid, 59.

⁶³ Ibid, 59.

⁶⁴ Robert T. Chase, *Caging Borders and Carceral States: Incarcerations, Immigration Detentions, and Resistance* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 61.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 79.

Carceral Geography and Critical Border Theory

The field of Critical Carceral Studies has produced multiple theories to conceptualize the historical and contemporary phenomenon of mass incarceration and its intertwined genealogy with race. Indeed, prominent theories include the carceral state, the carceral continuum, and the carceral archipelago. However, this chapter relies on the theoretical presuppositions of carceral geography.

Critical Carceral Studies' emergence can be marked by Foucault's theorization of the carceral archipelago, the panopticon, and disciplinary power. However, Foucault's canonical theories have elicited many scholars and activists from different subfields to contribute to the field of Critical Carceral Studies. Most contemporary contributions have been the development of carceral geographies. Of particular importance is Dominique Moran's argument that carceral geographies are "the notion of the 'carceral' as a social construction existing both within and separate from physical spaces of incarceration."⁶⁶ Moran continues to elaborate on the characteristics and facets of carceral geographies in her groundbreaking book, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration*. Moran's book is at the cutting edge of carceral geography, as she "traces the origins and emergence of carceral geography, locates it in relation to dialogues with cognate disciplines such as criminology and prison sociology, and considers the socio-political context."⁶⁷

Moran begins her archival process of carceral geography with Mike Davis, a critical geographer, and his 1990 book *City of Quartz*. Moran contends that Davis put forth the first

⁶⁶ Ibid, 87.

⁶⁷ Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2017), 7.

notion of the carceral in relation to spaces outside of the prison when he described Los Angeles as a “‘carceral city’ with a pervasive security agenda, which enmeshed the city in networks of surveillance.”⁶⁸ After Davis’s seminal work in placing space as a unique point of critical analysis of the carceral, Foucauldian scholars continued this exploration. In fact, in their own respective ways, Chris Philo and Ruth Wilson Gilmore expanded this work. Chris Philo in a review of Kantrowitz’s *Close Control: Managing a Maximum Security Prison; The Story of Ragens Statesville* “set an agenda” which has “informed the early development of carceral geographies.”⁶⁹ In a similar vein, Gilmore was a pioneer of carceral geographies as a “project of state building.”⁷⁰ However, it is important to note that Gilmore and Philo’s elaboration of Mike Davis’s preliminary work reflects a larger trend that demonstrates the dual emergence of theories of carceral geography and a “spatial turn to post Foucauldian prison studies.”⁷¹ Davis, Philo, Gilmore, and carceral geography theorists alike have worked to locate carceral geographies. This is a unique task, as each carceral geography is highly contextualized, though some facets tend to be widely accepted in this theoretical framework.

Theorists commonly cite the emergence of neoliberal governance as the inciting moment of carceral geographies. Any given neoliberal policy that contributed to the creation and maintenance of a specific carceral geography is unique to the specific temporal and spatial setting. In fact, this reflects a much larger assumed theoretical presupposition: the carceral state was a product of neoliberal governance. Moreover, Moran contends that by tracing the neoliberal logic that in turn creates a certain carceral geography can progress our understanding of the carceral states’ sites of control. Moran writes that “drawing direct connections between

⁶⁸ Ibid, 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 1.

⁷¹ Ibid, 10.

neoliberal governance and the organized practices and techniques through which subjects are governed via the carceral state” and theorizing and mapping carceral geographies “has the opportunity to contribute significantly to the understandings of governance and geographies of control.”⁷²

In addition, geographers have agreed upon the belief that the control of a population’s mobility is central to identifying a carceral geography. Indeed, for carceral geographers, “incarceration is clearly understood by geographers as the denial of mobility and the access to space.”⁷³ However, carceral geographers extend feminist theory to move beyond the “inside” “outside” binary of prisons and spatial regulation. In this way, Moran argues a carceral geography exhibits “spatial regulation is a key form of control” outside prison walls.⁷⁴ Moreover, it is important to note that this “spatial regulation” has a “dehumanizing and humiliating effect on mobility.”⁷⁵ Indeed, this “dehumanizing and humiliating effect” contributed to the theory of “disciplined mobility” and is inherent to a carceral geography. Here, carceral geographers rely on a “Foucauldian understanding of discipline and governmentality, in which mobility is an instrument of power and in which the subject of mobility has limited agency in the process of movement.”⁷⁶

I conclude this review of carceral geographies with the reminder that scholars continue to identify spaces that could be defined as carceral geographies. However, at the outset of her book, Moran sets an intention and necessity behind theorizing carceral geographies, arguing that “the aim here is to renew a focus on sites of incarceration; not as static physical entities but as nodes

⁷² Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2017), 7.

⁷³ Ibid, 46.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 74.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 79.

⁷⁶ Dominique Moran, *Carceral Geography: Spaces and Practices of Incarceration* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2017), 85.

in carceral networks which symbolize, represent, and are experienced as crystallizations of the penal philosophy of the prevailing state.”⁷⁷ I argue that Moran’s agenda is necessary for understanding all carceral geographies. Moreover, in order to better understand carceral geographies as “nodes in carceral networks,” Moran argues future scholarship should engage with critical border theory. For this reason, I transition to Matthew Longo’s theory of borders as frontiers, which will enable me to make these connections.

Matthew Longo’s *The Politics of Borders* disrupts traditional border theory and argues that borders no longer exist as thin linear lines, but rather are ever expanding inward. Indeed, Longo reviews the historical and theoretical origins of the traditional Westphalian conception as borders as “a line of jurisdiction - a legal topographic instantiation of authority.”⁷⁸ However, Longo contends that we have moved away from this idea of borders and that, “as borders move away from thin jurisdictional lines they also stop acting like borders, instead they start to resemble frontiers.”⁷⁹ Longo concludes that the sovereign state’s need for the border to delineate territory from the enemy has subsided. Instead, we have entered into a new era where borders are sites of control over populations. Longo argues that “this evolution from sovereignty over territory to government over people is part of what Foucault terms ‘governmentality.’”⁸⁰ Longo goes on to credit “this precise evolution... at the border ... which provides the baseline for this historical shift in border functionality.”⁸¹ In this way, the border has evolved from a delineation between us and them, and has become an apparatus of control for the state to secure the actions over certain populations. Longo further investigates this “shift in border functionality,” from thin

⁷⁷ Ibid, 110.

⁷⁸Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25.

⁷⁹Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 39.

⁸¹ Ibid, 39.

lines to thick frontiers, by asking “*what kind of space is the border region?*” It is first and foremost a space of *security*.⁸² Indeed, as Longo displays, the United States’ security policies at the border reveal “an increased awareness that for borders to be effective [security spaces], they cannot merely be “tall,” they must also be “wide” and “layered.”⁸³

After Longo examines this shift in border functionality, he argues the state is expanding the “horizontal footprint” of the border inland to create a frontier. Specifically, Longo looks at the technologies that allow for the expanding of borders inland, such as ground sensors. Longo argues that this covert technology is “far from the purchase of the fence, which seeks visibility and demarcation, this technology is interested instead in invisibility and attempts to expand the border rather than define it.”⁸⁴ In addition to sensors within these border regions, there has been a normalization of cameras and radars that can be fixed or “operate via ultralight aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV’s) and aerostats (radar balloons).”⁸⁵ Moreover, there has been an ever expansive jurisdiction for checkpoints. Though not a technology, these checkpoints operate as “an institutional site- which essentially create the border inland.”⁸⁶ The idea behind this expansion according to a local Police Chief on the US-Mexico border is to create “a net basically. You are creating a new visual net.”⁸⁷ Longo argues that this “net mentality” with its infinite security apparatuses has come to resemble “how Foucault described the panopticon, ‘the oldest dream of the oldest sovereign’ ... the landscape thus described, of surveillance, visibility, and control in many ways recreates the panopticon in the open air of the borderlands.”⁸⁸

⁸² Ibid, 65.

⁸³ Ibid, 56.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 57.

⁸⁵ Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 58.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Another symptom of the border transforming into a frontier is the blurred lines between federal and state actors. Due to the nebulous matter of jurisdiction that emerges from an expansive border, there is an “integration of different actors and agencies.” Longo argues that there is a “intra-federal cooperation (including with information-sharing and joint operation), and the merging and cooperation of federal, state and local forces in the border.”⁸⁹ Border patrol no longer operates and secures a thin line between two sovereigns but rather patrols inland, and an increasing amount of local law enforcement now find themselves patrolling borderlands.

Both Longo and theorists of Carceral Geography like Gilmore seek to understand what their respective fields reveal about statecraft— specifically governmentality in the Foucauldian sense. Indeed, Longo argues the securitizing logic of the frontier resembles control over populations sharing the same assumptions as Foucault’s theory of governmentality. Similarly, Ruth Wilson Gilmore asserts the carceral logic of the state in carceral geographies reveals much about state building. Furthermore, carceral geographers share the same theoretical presuppositions of Foucault's governmentality. In fact, both of these fields theorize how certain locations become spaces of control and how the state maintains control through certain mechanisms. Here, I believe the 100-mile border zone presents a unique case study as it operates as a space of control. However, there is a simultaneous preservation of carceral and securitizing logic in this space. Therefore it becomes necessary to layer these previously mentioned theories to define the 100-mile border zone as a carceral frontier.

⁸⁹ Ibid,

The 100-Mile Border Zone a Carceral Frontier

In this final section, I define and construct the 100-mile border zone as a carceral frontier. I contend that theorizing the 100-mile border zone as just a carceral geography does not capture the inherent complexities of this zone. In fact, to theorize the 100-mile border zone solely as a carceral geography would obfuscate a defining aspect of this space: the border itself. Therefore, because of the expansive nature and the breadth of the 100-mile border zone, I entwine Matthew Longo's theory of borders as frontiers with theories of carceral geographies.

I will demonstrate the inherent carceral logic throughout the 100-mile border zone. This carceral logic is evident through the panoptic gaze, the discipline and right of mobility within this space, and the racialization of "prisoning non-prison spaces. However, because the 100-mile border zone is in fact a discursively defined border, it becomes a zone of security as well. It is for this reason why I rely on Longo's theory of frontiers. Indeed, Longo envisions the frontier as a location of security, "*what kind of space is the border region?* It is first and foremost a space of security."⁹⁰ Here, it is important to remember that the 100-mile border zone since its inception was and still is a national security project. Specifically, I argued prior that the hyper-surveillance, military presence, the state of exception tendencies, and the suspension of rights within the zone are the byproducts of this security project. What I hope to show is the messy intertwining logic of the carceral and security that occurs within the 100-mile border zone. Indeed, I acknowledge each logic, carceral and security, respectively have unique mechanisms to establish control over populations. However, the carceral frontier is a unique space of state control over racial subjects

⁹⁰ Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 65.

where carceral apparatuses and technologies of security intertwine so deeply the logic of carcerality and security becomes one in the same. The consequences of a carceral frontier is so dire because in this space exists two logics that completely legitimizes all measures of state control and obfuscate the rights of every person within this space.

There is an omnipresence the state manifests in subtle and increasingly invisible ways in the 100-mile border zone. Indeed, there is a strong presence of technology in the 100-mile border zone that allows for hyper-surveillance of populations. However, it is important to note, the use of hyper-surveillance, like drones, is not just a symptom of securitizing logic. Hyper-surveillance of certain populations in set geographies is the cornerstone of carceral studies and prison analysis. In fact, Foucault's theory of the panoptic gaze continues to be a defining aspect of carceral spaces.

Here, I return to the protests following George Floyd's murder; I characterize this as an instance where carceral logic and the characteristics of a frontier bleed together within the 100-mile border zone. As Longo argues, a critical function of the frontier is to operate as a "zone of surveillance." The 100-mile border zone's operationalization as a location of surveillance for the state is best evident through the flight of military drones over protests. These drones were equipped with infrared radars and video surveillance equipment. In this way, the 100-mile border zone was viewed by the state as a security mission. However, these securitizing measures simultaneously legitimizes and demarcates the boundaries of the state's panoptic gaze from miles up in the sky. The hyper-surveillance technology that operates as a mechanism of securitizing logic simultaneously operates as the panoptic gaze of the state within the ever expanding borderlands. Indeed, as mentioned above this panoptic gaze of the state is indicative of a carceral

logic. Here, there is a melding between the carceral and security logic all with the intention of the state to sustain control from afar.

Again, I return to the anecdote I began this thesis with. Indeed, as I outlined before, in response to the murder of George Floyd protests across the nation ensued. However, unique to these protests was the role of the 100-mile border zone. Customs and Border Patrol were able to release tactical forces as well as military drones miles away from the southwest border. As I mentioned in the introduction, members of the Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) were deployed to Portland. And as I stated earlier, BORTAC, trained in, completed and ran operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Moreover, BORTAC officers were “camouflaged federal agents pulling people into unmarked vans, firing off tear gas and flash grenades, and beating protesters with batons.”⁹¹ In addition, CBP released military drones over protests in Minneapolis in order to identify protestors. These military actions by federal and local agencies pose a serious question of domestic jurisdiction.

The deployment of military equipped CBP forces in support of local police also demonstrates a critical function of the frontier: blurring of local and federal powers. Longo elaborates, “there is a blurring of security and law functions at the border, thereby enabling the two-headed hydra of the *military acting like police* and the *police acting like the military*.”⁹² However, in both the military and police transgressions against each other's jurisdiction, both rely on penal logic. Indeed, this blurring of local and federal powers within the frontier is evident throughout the 100-mile border zone, in instances of “national security emergency,” as seen during the George Floyd protests and in everyday police patrol. This blurring between these two

⁹¹ Karl Jacoby, “Op-Ed: The Border Patrol's Brute Power in Portland Is the Norm at the Border,” Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times, July 22, 2020), <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-07-22/border-patrol-portland-protests-trump>.

⁹²Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 63.

jurisdictions reveals that government operations and legal precedent does not operate at a normal capacity in frontiers or the 100-mile border zone. In this way, we see a suspension of laws in order to maintain “order” and to “secure the sovereign,” or in other words, the perpetual creation of “a state of exception” that creates and maintains the 100-mile border zone.

I want to highlight the operationalization of the 100-mile border zone to suspend normal government operations and the roles that exist outside of short term “national security emergencies” such as the George Floyd protests. Indeed, what is unique about the 100-mile border zone is its ability to exist as a space of perpetual national security emergency, and therefore a space where normal government operations are suspended. This is visible through the fluidity between jurisdiction of federal and local agencies within the 100-mile border zone as confirmed in a report published by the American Civil Liberties Union, Michigan chapter. Following a Freedom of Information Act request, the Michigan ACLU concluded that the report revealed a strong relationship between Michigan state, county, and local law enforcement, and border patrol.⁹³ In fact, “nearly half, 48.6%, of border patrol apprehensions began with a state or local law enforcement agency initiating a traffic stop.”⁹⁴ ACLU Michigan believes the high percentage of arrests starting with local police strongly suggests, “officers are detaining drivers solely to allow border patrol to arrive and investigate the immigration status of passengers and not for legitimate law enforcement purposes.”⁹⁵ In this way, the shared resources and jurisdiction of local law enforcement allows for an omnipresence of the state in physical manifestation, but also for the state to operate in an exceptional way indefinitely. The normalization of these

⁹³“The Long Shadow - ACLU of Michigan,” accessed March 28, 2023, https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁹⁵ “The Long Shadow - ACLU of Michigan,” accessed March 28, 2023, https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf.

checkpoints and stops, regardless of officer position, is a policing of a space outside the prison wall.

In this way, this perpetual national security emergency within frontiers contributes to the cycle of a perpetual state of exception. To make this argument, Longo extends Agamben's state of exception theory to frontiers, "the border is the site where the exception arrives constantly at the doorstep of local authorities... the normative challenge is rendered clearest by Agamben, for whom the state of exception is the state of war turned inward, entailing the subversion of constitutional protections."⁹⁶ The inevitability of the 100-mile border zone to exist as a solution to a national security emergency enables a state of exception to ensue. This is exemplified by the suspension of civil rights within the 100-mile border zone that the Michigan ACLU report finds.

Indeed, the 100-mile border zone is often referred to as a constitution-free zone by both scholars and advocacy groups such as the ACLU. Indeed, a defining characteristic of the 100-mile border zone is the ability for border patrol to search, seize, and detain without a warrant. In this way, civil liberties are second to maintaining border security. This suspension of rights has an abundant legal precedent. Specifically, in 1972 the opinion of the Fifth Circuit of the US Court of Appeals, which essentially declared the 100-mile border zone as a de-constitutionalized zone in *United States v. McDaniel*.⁹⁷ In addition to affirming that the border area extends 100 miles from any external boundary, the judges noted, "the standard of probable cause was relaxed or near the border."⁹⁸ In this way, the court had "expanded the notion of a reasonable search under the fourth amendment."⁹⁹ In the zone, because of its characteristic

⁹⁶ Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 63.

⁹⁷ Margaret E. Dorsey and Miguel Díaz-Barriga, "The Constitution Free Zone in the United States: Law and Life in a State of Carcelment," *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 38, no. 2 (2015): pp. 204-225, <https://doi.org/10.1111/plar.12107>, 63.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 63.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 64.

as a frontier and a space of security, civil liberties are not only negotiated with national security but rendered obsolete. However, the most hollowing act of the Fourth Amendment in the 100-mile border zone is documented in *United States v Montoya Hernandez* (1982). In this decision, the court dictated that under the “border exception” of the fourth amendment (precedent set in *United States v Mcdaniel*) and in addition to the searching of physical property, a person’s physical body is also seen as an object of state security within the zone. Specifically, the court declared a person's privacy, in this instance bodily privacy, is “balanced against the sovereign’s interest.”¹⁰⁰ The Supreme Court ruling resembles the carceral logic that enables the guard to control all aspects of bodily control in the prison, including body cavity searches. In prison, this violent demonstration of state power is conducted in an attempt to control the subject, a carceral mechanism to remind them they are an inmate of the state and have no control over their body. Yet, in *United States v Montoya Hernandez*, the Supreme Court legitimized this act of state control outside of prison walls on the basis of a national securitizing logic, or as an act to enable “the sovereign's interest.” In this instance, we see a carceral mechanism used to maintain control legitimized and codified based upon the logic of security within the 100-mile border zone.

The suspension of constitutional rights through carceral technologies, based upon a logic of “state security,” does not stop at Fourth Amendment rights. Indeed, the suspension of the freedom of movement is pervasive in the 100-mile border zone. Though the right to freedom of movement is not codified within the bill of rights, it is commonly referred to as an unenumerated right in many legal rulings. The regulation of mobility is best demonstrated in *Marsh v United States* (1965), when Customs and Border Patrol agents detained, questioned, and inspected

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 65.

property without a search warrant or probable cause.¹⁰¹ The location of this stop and search was 63 miles north of the US-Mexico borderline. Here, the court decided that federal officers should be empowered to detain, stop, and search, and question “within a reasonable distance from any external boundary of the United States.”¹⁰² Thus, here one’s mobility is contingent upon location within the 100-mile border zone.

The controlled mobility that occurs within the 100-mile border zone is characteristic of carceral geographies. Moran argues that “spatial regulation” is a dehumanizing property of carceral geographies and a carceral logic. Moreover, this spatial regulation is theoretically perceived as incarceration outside of prison walls, “incarceration is clearly understood by geographers as the denial of mobility and the access to space.” However, what is unique about the 100-mile border zone is that spatial regulation does not occur as a penal punishment following a legal transgression like we see in a prison. Rather spatial regulation occurs because of one’s existence in a certain geographic space. Indeed, this occurs, as the above court case demonstrates, because of “national security precautions.” This pattern is indicative of Matthew Longo’s belief that frontiers operate as a location of security and control. Longo states, “as much as security is aimed at their protection, it is also aimed at their control... they are both the subject and object of security...”¹⁰³ Here Longo refers to “they” and what in later instances he calls border dwellers, and people who live within these frontiers. However, I argue the targeted population of border security and control are predominantly Latinx people. The effects of racially targeted security and carceral control will be further interrogated in the following chapter.

¹⁰¹ Margaret E Dorsey and Miguel Diaz-Barriga, “The Constitution Free Zone in the United States: Law and Life in a State of Carcelment,” *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 38, no. 2 (2015)

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 12.

Ultimately, in the carceral frontier, security and carceral logic intertwine to control a subject, who is usually a racial object of the state. Indeed, all of the characteristics of the 100-mile border zone I have described above have an inherent racial dynamic. The blurred roles of federal and local agencies and the hyper surveillance of the George Floyd protests was an attempt to control racial bodies *and* discourses of civil rights. Furthermore, outside of this “national security crisis,” militarization and hyper surveillance is normalized within populations of color. In other words, the presence and detainment of border patrol has become “commonsenseness” of “carcelment” and residents within the zones “do not question the searches by CBP.”¹⁰⁴

Moreover, it is important to note that the majority of the U.S. cities with the highest Latinx populations reside within the 100-mile border zone. For example, Los Angeles, Houston, El Paso, San Jose, Miami, and New York all fall within the 100-mile border zone and have large populations of Latinx.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, suspension of rights within this geography will always have racial connotations and ramifications. Angela Davis, a critical writer within the carceral and abolitionist environment reminds us that “selective usage of the constitution begins with a realization of the racialized state.”¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the prevalence of racial profiling within this zone should come at no surprise. As stated above the existence of racial profiling within the 100-mile border zone was confirmed by the ACLU Michigan report in May 2020. With only 16.8% of Michigan’s foreign-born population being of Latin America Origin, 85% of noncitizens

¹⁰⁴ Margaret E. Dorsey and Miguel Díaz-Barriga, “The Constitution Free Zone in the United States: Law and Life in a State of Carcelment,” *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 38, no. 2 (2015): pp. 204-225, <https://doi.org/10.1111/plar.12107>, 70.

¹⁰⁵ Hispanic Communications Network, “Latinos in the United States: The 10 Cities with the Most Hispanics: HCN,” Hispanic Communications Network, September 22, 2022, <https://hcnmedia.com/news/latinos-in-the-united-states-the-10-cities-with-the-most-hispanics/>.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 68.

apprehended by border patrol were from Latin America. However, 33% of individuals who were arrested were US citizens and 12.8% detained had lawful status.¹⁰⁷ This data point is revealing.

It is my hope that this section has demonstrated the ways in which the 100-mile border zone is inherently tied to carcerality and is utilized by the state to manage populations of color, specifically Latinx. In this way, this chapter demonstrated how the 100-mile border zone targets and “imprisons” Latinx outside of traditional carceral institutions. The following chapter will examine the effects of this imprisonment.

¹⁰⁷“The Long Shadow - ACLU of Michigan,” accessed March 28, 2023, Page: 25
https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf.

Chapter 3: Consequences of a Carceral Frontier

“[y]ou know, the thing is that, no matter where we go, we carry the border on our backs”
-Geoffery Alan Boyce, Appearing ‘out of place’: Automobility and the everyday policing of threat and suspicion on the US/Canada frontier

In this chapter I will theorize the effects of the 100-mile border zone, which I located as a carceral frontier, on the rights and status of Latinx people. In order to do so, I begin this chapter with a review of border theory with a special focus on Gloria Anzaldúa and her theorization of border consciousness. Specifically, I will examine how Anzaldúa conceptualizes the effects of borders on the status of Latinx in the United States. By engaging with Anzaldúa, I will show how her seminal work theorizing the South/West geographic border is complicated by the existence of the 100-mile border zone. Moreover, the zone requires a more expansive geo-spatial understanding of border consciousness. Indeed, because of the expansiveness of the 100-mile border zone, spaces, towns and entire states now become border zones. In this way, this carceral frontier inherently shifts how Latinx personhood and border spaces interact. In addition, I will pose the question, how does the 100-mile border zone and its carceral and security logic complicate Anzaldúa’s theory of border consciousness? In order to attempt to answer this question, I will apply carceral theories such as biopower, necropolitics, and social death to the 100-mile border zone. Indeed, the application of carceral theories to the borderzone will allow me to demonstrate the 100-mile border zone’s ramifications on Latinx identity.

Border Theory & Latinx Identity

Latinx identity and the border have an inevitable relationship with one another. The inevitability of this relationship is best theorized by Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa defines a borderland as “a vague and undetermined boundary place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary.”¹⁰⁸ In this way, Anzaldúa contends that borders are not natural entities that occur but rather are products of humans. This product, a border, is the result of when “the third world grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a country- a border culture.”¹⁰⁹ Anzaldúa delineates a space unique to the border, a space where the border manages and reproduces its very own culture. Indeed, the inhabitants of this border culture and border land are the “prohibited and forbidden.. Los atravesados live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half-dead; in short those who crossover, or go through the confines of the normal.”¹¹⁰ Here, Anzaldúa positions inhabitants of border culture as outside the margins of “normal” identity. Border culture and therefore borderlands then becomes a socio-political space that exists outside the boundaries of the political status quo.

Anzaldúa’s seminal work answers the question “what is the border to the Latinx subject?” Her conception of border culture and consciousness is a canon of Latinx identity theories. However, I believe that the 100 mile border zone complicates the geographical limits of Anzaldúa’s theoretical presuppositions. Anzaldúa conceptualizes a Latinx border culture and consciousness to exist only at the South/West geographic border. Anzaldúa astutely theorized the

¹⁰⁸Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza La Frontera* (San Francisco, California: Aunt Lute Books, 2012),

¹⁰⁹ Ibid,

¹¹⁰ Ibid,

South/West border as a location where ”¹¹¹ However, I ask what are the ramifications of a border culture, where “death is no stranger,” that extends beyond the South/West border to encompass 2/3 of the United States Population? The existence of a border culture outside of traditional border spaces such as Brownsville, El Paso, and the Rio Grande valley has not been fully incorporated within Anzaldúa’s theory. The 100-mile border zone transcends traditional understandings of where borders begin and end. New border spaces and cultures exist in Boston, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Detroit, and many more cities. Therefore, the impact of borders on Latinx identity should extend beyond the traditional conception of the geopolitical southwestern borders between Mexico and the US. Moreover, the evolution of border technology that has infiltrated the security of borders has increased profoundly since Anzaldúa developed seminal theory. Indeed, today’s carceral and securitizing logic found in spaces outside of just the geographic southwestern border spaces gives a new meaning to her statement “death is no stranger” in borderlands. It is for this reason, I turn to critical carceral theories to understand how the 100-mile border zone gives new meaning and new space to “death” in borderlands.

Applying Carceral Theories to the 100-Mile Border Zone

The 100-Mile Border Zone as a Mechanism of Biopower

According to Foucault, in simplest terms, biopower is the state’s power to ““make live or let die.””¹¹² However, unlike disciplinary power, biopower operates as an intervention at the “level of generality.”¹¹³ This generality extends to populations, as Foucault elaborates, “biopower deals

¹¹¹Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza La Frontera* (San Francisco, California: Aunt Lute Books, 2012),

¹¹² Michel Foucault. *"Society Must Be Defended" : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. New York: Picador, 239.

¹¹³ Ibid, 246.

with the population, with the population as a political problem.”¹¹⁴ Indeed, this “problem population” becomes justification for the state’s intervention and control of the people. Foucault contends that in the control of subjects, “regulatory mechanisms must be established to establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis, and compensate for variations.”¹¹⁵ In this way, it is clear that biopower is a “calculated management of life” with the ultimate power to regulate populations to the point of life or death.¹¹⁶ What is important here are the ways in which the state embodies and enacts biopower and creates “technologies over the subject,” as he states, “I would in fact like to trace the transformation [to biopower] not at the level of political theory, but rather at the level of mechanism, techniques and technologies of power.”¹¹⁷ I will extend Foucault's emphasis on technologies of biopower to the 100-mile border zone and ultimately demonstrate how the zone is an apparatus of biopower.

As stated above, in 1953, the 100-mile border zone was adopted by Congress with the stroke of a pen and behind closed doors without deliberation. A year later, in 1954, the US Department of Justice publicly announced the commencement of Operation Wetback. Some historians have argued that as many as 1.3 million Latinx people were deported at this time; 60% of whom were citizens.¹¹⁸ “Operation Wetback” was an outcome of growing anti-Mexican sentiment by the US government and a reaction to the 1940s Bracero Program, which was an act to recruit immigrant men in the need to create a pipeline across the border with cheap labor from Mexico. During this pivotal period in US border policy, which historians have called “the

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 245.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 246

¹¹⁶ “Achille Mbembe: Necropolitics,” *Critical Legal Thinking*, July 8, 2021, <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2020/03/02/achille-mbembe-necropolitics/>.

¹¹⁷ Michel Foucault. *"Society Must Be Defended" : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. New York: Picador, 241.

¹¹⁸ Erin Blakemore, “The Largest Mass Deportation in American History,” *History.com* (A&E Television Networks, March 23, 2018), <https://www.history.com/news/operation-wetback-eisenhower-1954-deportation..>

wetback decade,” Latinx persons were deemed as a disposable population, or in Foucauldian terms, they had become the “problem population.” The policing practices and living conditions of Mexican immigrants during the Wetback Era reveal the attempted control of this population by the state. The deportation and policing practices of the border and spaces 100 miles from the border acted as a mechanism of biopower, as it deliberately managed the life of Latinx populations. The intention of deploying biopolitical practices was to maintain control of this disposable population. Indeed, the US made a calculated cost management of Latinx life and contributions against that of maintaining a white body politic.

Furthermore, the creation of the 100-mile border zone as a way to extend the jurisdiction of the carceral practices conducted by border patrol resembles the last domain of biopower. Indeed, as Foucault writes, the last domain of biopolitics is the “control over relations between the human race... and their environment, the milieu in which they live.”¹¹⁹ It is in the final domain of biopower in which the 100-mile border zone operates as a mechanism of regulation for the state, one that manages the “problematic population.” In this way, as a technology of biopower, the 100-mile border zone becomes a spatial geography in which populations are managed to the point of life and death. By death, I defer to Foucault’s definition, “when I say killing, I do not simply mean murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection...”¹²⁰ Indeed, it is “indirect death” that occurs most prevalently in the 100-mile border zone, and for this reason, I now turn to Mbembe’s theory of Necropolitics.

¹¹⁹ Michel Foucault. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. New York: Picador, 245.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 256.

An Extension of Biopower: Necropower in the 100-Mile Border Zone

Though Mbembe relies heavily on Foucault's idea of biopolitics, he ultimately argues that the idea of biopower is “insufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death.”¹²¹ It is at this point Mbembe introduces necropower, which accounts “for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of *death-worlds*.”¹²² With this important theory, I return to the anecdote in which I began this essay: when the CBP, empowered by the legal understanding of the 100-mile border zone, deployed an unmanned weapon of war and surveillance upon its civilians. However, this is not the only instance of US citizens being unknowingly subjected to weapons of war. In May 2020, CBP flew Predator B drones over San Antonio Texas half a dozen times, and the drone circled the city for an extended period of time.¹²³ San Antonio falls just barely outside the 100-mile border zone, indicating that the outer limits of the zone are not fixed but encroaching inward. Here, the state deployed a weapon of mass death to control its free citizens within and near the 100-mile border zone.

Though the act of securing borders is important and fundamental to the constitution of states, when technologies of war are used to spy on its citizens within the borders, a symptom of the carceral and securitizing logic of the 100-mile border zone, the state reveals its necropolitical technologies in creating “death worlds.” Mbembe continues to clarify his definition of *death-worlds* as, “new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon the status of living dead.”¹²⁴ Indeed, I argue that in

¹²¹ Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics. Theory in Forms* (Durham: Duke University Press 2019), 39.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 39.

¹²³ Joseph Cox, “The Government Is Regularly Flying Predator Drones over American Cities,” VICE, June 3, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/n7wnzm/government-flying-predator-drones-american-cities>.

¹²⁴ Mbembe, 39.

this May 29 protest, we see how the 100-mile border zone embodies the logic of a “*death-world*.” Within this death world, necropolitical technologies oversee predominately Latinx citizens, documented and undocumented, who are subjected to the status of the “living dead.” As such, Mbembe demonstrates that necropolitical landscapes like the 100-mile border zone enable the state to create vast “repressed topographies of cruelty under conditions of necropower” that extend well beyond the border that defines the state’s cartographic contours.¹²⁵

To demonstrate the ways in which the 100-mile border zone encapsulates necropolitics, I rely on Mbembe’s analysis of the plantation. But in doing so, I should state from the outset that the plantation and the horror of slavery are in no way the same thing as the 100-mile border zone, and to say so would be a dangerous analogy. Rather, I extend Mbembe’s analysis to metaphorically understand how spatial geographies and locations, which operate under the conditions of necropower, can become what I locate as a “necropolitical state of exception” within democratic nations. Within this necropolitical state of exception, then, its subjects become the “living dead” who cannot participate in or receive the full rights bestowed to a citizen. Mbembe writes, “First in the context of the plantation, the humanity of the slave appears as the perfect figure of a shadow.”¹²⁶ In a similar capacity, when anthropologists conducted an ethnographic study of residents within the 100-mile border zone, a participant stated, “We are the people with the asterisk on the side.”¹²⁷ In this way, a location that operates on conditions of necropower delineates a person’s physical body from their humanity. Mbembe continues, “Indeed, the slave condition results from a triple loss: loss of home, loss of rights over his or her body, and loss of political status. The triple loss is identical with absolute domination, natal

¹²⁵ Mbembe, 40.

¹²⁶ Mbembe, 21.

¹²⁷ Dorsey, Margaret E, and Miguel Diaz-Barriga. 2015. “The Constitution Free Zone in the United States: Law and Life in a State of Carcelment.” *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 38 (2): 204–2

alienation, and social death.”¹²⁸ I argue that this triple loss, though to a different degree, occurs to Latinx within the 100-mile border zone as well.

Indeed, when conducting a study in Michigan’s 100-mile border zone, critical geographer Geoffery Alan Boyce, observed that “the capturing” of “peoples autonomy and control over the conditions of their everyday circulation through space.”¹²⁹ Moreover, this surveillance and limitation of circulation demonstrates, “the various forms of marginalization and inequality that result from the uneven ways that this autonomy and self-determination become distributed across a population.”¹³⁰ In the 100-mile border zone, the point in which one loses the right to circulate through space (the right to move freely), or in having constant fear of being detained or deported, leads to a citizen-subject's loss of not only their rights, but autonomy over one's own body, or rather the right to “self determination.” Here I extend Boyce’s observation, under the conditions of necropolitics, according to the logic of the state, there would be no “self” to even self-determine within the 100-mile border zone because populations subjected to necropower exist under a status of “living dead.” Here, I turn to Lisa Marie Cacho’s theory of social death to further examine the “unique social existences” Latinx person's experience within the border zone.

Social Death in the 100-Mile Border Zone

Lisa Marie Cacho argues that certain laws and certain practices of the state are “dependent upon the permanence of certain groups’ criminalization.”¹³¹ Furthermore, Cacho

¹²⁸ Mbembe, 21.

¹²⁹Geoffrey Alan Boyce, “Appearing ‘out of Place’: Automobility and the Everyday Policing of Threat and Suspicion on the Us/Canada Frontier.” *Political Geography* 64: 2018, 9.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 9.

¹³¹ Lisa Marie Cacho. Cacho. *Social Death : Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected. Nation of Newcomers : Immigrant History As American History.* New York: New York University Press 2012, 6.

refers to these permanently criminalized persons as “ineligible for personhood—as populations subjected to laws but refused the legal means to contest those laws as well as denied both the political legitimacy and moral credibility necessary to question them.”¹³² It is here I rely on the findings of the ACLU Michigan FOIA request in order to demonstrate the ways in which Cacho’s theories can be extended to the 100-mile border zone. The Michigan ACLU filed a FOIA in 2015, and in 2020, it obtained thousands of documents, including more than 13,000 Border Patrol daily apprehension logs.¹³³ The ACLU determined that people of Latinx origin were the primary target, making up 85% of apprehensions, when only making up 16.8% of the state’s population.¹³⁴ In addition, the ACLU found that one third of those detained were citizens.¹³⁵ These findings demonstrate that for Latinx persons just existing in the 100-mile border zone is enough to warrant the duress of the law, thus demonstrating that they live in a constant state of criminality.

This overbearing status of criminality is best depicted through the detention of Arnulfo Gomez and his family. As recounted, Mr. Gomez, a lawful permanent resident for three decades, was pulled over for a “loud exhaust.”¹³⁶ After complying with the officer, Mr. Gomez and his family, all three Latinx, were detained and unable to leave until a CBP officer came. CBP was called by Michigan police officers because of the family’s “difficulty speaking english.” After hours and questioning by CBP, Mr. Gomez was free to go.¹³⁷ Mr. Gomez and his family’s story is unique in the fact that it ended without further detainment or arrest. Indeed, Mr. Gomez’s story

¹³² Ibid, 6.

¹³³ https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ The Long Shadow - ACLU of Michigan,” accessed March 28, 2023, Page: 25

https://www.aclumich.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/100_mile_zone_report-updated.pdf.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 1.

depicts the status of criminality, given to them because of their race, Latinx folk operate within the zone.

Moreover, even with Latinx peoples being documented as “citizens,” as the data shows, legal documents do not matter within this state of exception, for within this space, they are deemed as permanent criminals of the state and a “problem population” or as Mr. Gomez states, “We were being targeted just because we were brown.”¹³⁸ In this way, the 100-mile border zone is dependent on the permanent criminalization of Latinx persons and, in turn, making *all* Latinx “undocumented criminals.”

Cacho expands upon the idea of permanent criminalization, arguing that this creates an ineligibility for personhood. Moreover, she argues that “to be ineligible for personhood is a form of social death; it not only defines who does not matter, it also makes matter meaningful.”¹³⁹ It is here, I return to the quote from a resident in the 100-mile border zone, “we are the people with the asterisk on the side.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed, this asterisk serves as a reminder of how this vast border zone within the U.S. has perpetuated a technology wherein millions of people are ineligible for personhood and thus are relegated to an existence of social death, as undocumented specters of the state.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 1.

¹³⁹ Lisa Marie Cacho. Cacho. *Social Death : Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected.* Nation of Newcomers : Immigrant History As American History. New York: New York University Press 2012, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Dorsey, Margaret E, and Miguel Diaz-Barriga. 2015. “The Constitution Free Zone in the United States: Law and Life in a State of Carcelment.” *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 38 (2): 204–2

Conclusion

What I have hoped to demonstrate in this project is the complexity and disruption the 100-mile border zone poses to traditional understandings of borders, carceral spaces, and sovereign control. This border zone challenges traditional understandings of where borders exist and how they function. Though the most important intent of this thesis was to define the 100-mile border zone. Indeed, I put forth a new theoretical concept within the landscape of carceral spaces: a *carceral frontier*. The 100-mile border zone is a space where the state exerts total control over documented and undocumented alike, a space where the logic of national security and the carceral interlace to supersede individual rights. As such, this thesis also serves as the start of my future political science investigations into how the 100-mile border zone extends important geopolitical points of qualitative and quantitative analysis, one that will be taken into consideration when thinking about security, rights, democracy, voting habits, political participation and the ultimate creation of the racialized democratic state that is being constantly sectioned into carceral border zones.

In the end, the interweaving of carceral and security logic that carves this frontier was born out of the language and practice of Operation Wetback, and thus this carceral frontier is inherently linked to the Latinx political subjectivity. As I have shown, this racially targeted location of control has profound ramifications on the Latinx subject and citizens at large. In this way, not only does the 100-mile border zone operate as a site of control but also a site of absolute sovereign power. This thesis examined how this space emerged and how it was maintained in order to understand its contemporary manifestation. However, this thesis, although it locates the zone as a space of total state control, does not identify and address acts of resistance. That is not

to say there is no resistance in this space, that Latinx coalition building does not occur, or Latinx folk complacently live outside the realm of normal politics. Rather, this thesis attempted to understand the contours of control to hopefully, in the future abolish this harmful space. Indeed, the identification of power is necessary in order to organize, as Matthew Longo reminds us, “new sites of power are also new sites of resistance.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Matthew Longo, *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 12.

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