

## The Minuteman Project: Affective Entrepreneurship and the Securitization of the US/Mexico Border

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### Abstract

Since the late 1990s border studies have focused on the intersubjective nature of borders, specifically focusing on *bordering processes*; the ways in which borders are demarcated and forged by agents and actors. Border studies also focus on borders as loci of sovereignty as well as loci of securitization. This paper investigates the consequences of applying affect theory for the theoretical categories of sovereignty and securitization. It does so by offering a new theoretical category: the *affective entrepreneur*. It identifies the potential of vigilante citizen border patrol groups, especially their leaders, to be affective entrepreneurs and then enact a downward shift of sovereignty onto themselves in the face of a perceived failure of the 'sovereign' to respond to a perceived threat. It outlines future avenues of research for the affective turn in securitization theory.

There are two common ways to seize a country: by military invasion with bayonets fixed and guns blazing, or by incrementally transferring an aggressor nation's population into the target nation, thereby overwhelming the host country by sheer numbers. The United States is the victim of the later method (Gilchrist, 2008: 420).

### Introduction

Millions of people enter the United States as undocumented migrants each year. The perceived inability of the United States government to stop the flow of undocumented migrants has resulted in the rise of citizen border patrol activities, groups who have been identified as vigilantes (Doty, 2007; Yoxall, 2006; Chavez 2007), but who identify themselves as "immigration law enforcement advocacy" groups (minutemanproject.com, 2004-2011). This paper takes up the project of investigating the founder of one particular group, Jim Gilchrist (Minuteman Project) and by doing so it seeks to argue that taking account of such citizen-actor (vigilante) groups, through affect theory inspired contemplations, necessitates a reconsideration of the concept of sovereignty as it relates to securitization theory, and the role of securitizing actor in securitization theory.

In the post-9/11 context the study of borders has become highly critical in its approach; in particular many insist on paying attention to *bordering processes* (i.e. the variety of ways in which borders are demarcated) as opposed to simply focusing on borders as lines on a map (Newman, 2006: 148). Bordering processes are dependent upon a self-other friend/enemy distinction, which Schmitt has asserted is the essence of the political (Schmitt, 2007: 26), and which has been identified as being particularly important for theorizing about securitization (Williams, 2003: 516) – a process discussed in more detail below. For the purposes of this project the enemy that is of primary concern is the undocumented migrant who crosses the US/Mexico border 'illegally.'

In conjunction with the focus on bordering, ‘border studies’ have also taken up the conceptualization of the border as a locus of sovereignty, as where the exception is made visible. This distinction of the exception, of the other/enemy, is the prerogative of the sovereign. The border represents “the sovereign power to ban or exclude,” as such it is an “ongoing state of exception” (Salter, 2008: 366). This paper seeks to argue however, that although the state may decide the border, the citizen-actor (as vigilante) may decide the exception. This exception is decided in the face of a perceived failure of the sovereign – as the law of the land – as well as the perceived role of the American ‘people’ as comprising the sovereign (Doty, 2007: 132). Thus, a possible downward movement of sovereignty in the borderland is a phenomenon worthy of further exploration. This idea of a downward movement does not seek to suggest that the actuality of the sovereign power is devolved (as Judith Butler suggests through her theorization of the petty sovereign in *Precarious Life* – discussed below), but rather that the operating logic of the sovereign can be perceptually shifted onto people through their own actions in the face of perceived threats against them, as well as their perception of appropriate responses to particular threats, in the face of the perceived absence of an effective sovereign power.

The discourse surrounding the US/Mexico border is dominated by the idea of security (for example see: Doty, 2007; Chavez, 2007) however security in this instance, and indeed more broadly, fails to take into account important insights from cultural studies, and affect theory, which investigate the role of the body, “defined not by an outer skin-envelope or other surface boundary but by [its] potential to reciprocate or co-participate in the passages of affect” (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010: 2). Affect is defined in this instance as “the name we give to forces...visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion,” these forces “can serve to drive us towards thought and extension” (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010: 1).

This paper is an attempt to discern the role of *affect* in the securitization of the US/Mexico border by vigilante groups, such as the Minuteman Project; where securitization is read as a *bordering process*. It proposes that taking affect seriously in the study of the bordering of US/Mexico can help reveal the ways in which layered conceptions of human culture, and thinking, help to inform/construct identities, as well as reinforce friend/enemy distinctions which are integral to the downward movement of sovereignty represented by such groups. In its aim this paper forms part of a larger research program dedicated to investigating the consequences/potentialities of applying the affective turn to critical security studies/securitization theory.

This paper will proceed in two parts, each of which is comprised of several sections. Part one will deal with the theoretical assumptions underpinning the overall project: theorizations of borders and sovereignty (drawing mainly on the works of Agamben, Butler, Doty and Salter); affect theory (drawing principally on the works of Massumi and Connolly); securitization theory (drawing on the works of Wæver, Buzan and de Wilde; as well as Balzacq, and Williams); and finally, the last section attempts to link all of the theoretical underpinnings together through a discussion of sovereigns and securitizing actors – ‘the decision’ and securitizing moves. Part two is an empirical case study that links the theoretical section to a living example: the vigilante personality of the founder of the Minuteman Project, Jim Gilchrist. The personality of Gilchrist will be shown here as a microcosmic example of the new theoretical category of *affective entrepreneur* that this paper puts forth. Gilchrist in this instance plays the role of: declarer of the exception, securitizing actor and manager of affective interactions. The paper concludes by

arguing that an investigation into an actor such as Gilchrist, through the affective turn, reveals the need to take affect seriously in consideration of the category of *securitizing actor* in securitization theory, as well as the category of ‘the decision’ in theorizations of sovereignty.

## **Part I**

### *Borders and Sovereignty*

Borders construct our world and the spaces we live in; the spaces we live in and the world we construct, for ourselves and others, often define borders. In light of the intersubjective nature of borders, which are seen as “complicated social phenomenon related to the fundamental basis of the organization of society and human psychology” (Kolossoff, 2005: 606), this paper takes up the project of considering the US/Mexico border as an example of a series of reflections of the social world. As such, borders (the US/Mexico border being but one example) reflect several things. First, they reflect power relationships and the ability of one group to dominate others by constructing, and ensuring the continuation of, “lines of separation” (Newman, 2006: 147). Secondly, borders are a reflection of the binary distinctions between groups which permeate our existence as human beings: us/them – friend/enemy (Newman, 2006: 147). Lastly, borders can also be viewed as a reflection of a specific and concrete locus of sovereign power (Salter, 2008).

The relationship of sovereign power to borders, and bordering processes, necessitates that a particular view of sovereignty be recognized, that of Giorgio Agamben (in turn heavily influenced by the work of Carl Schmitt). Following Schmitt, Agamben proposes that the sovereign can be viewed as the one who decides the exception. The state of exception can be thought of as exclusion, allowing for the opening of “the space in which the determination of a certain juridical order and a particular territory...becomes possible” (Agamben, 1998: 19). Although exclusion allows the bordering of territory, the state of exception itself is inherently unlocalizable, even when it manifests itself in a particular spatiotemporal location (the supreme example of such spatiotemporality being the concentration camp). In this vein the US/Mexico borderlands can be conceived of as a camp, as a locus in which vigilantism resides outside, yet is sanctioned and made possible by, the “normal order” (Agamben, 1998: 20).

Integral to the discussion taking place here is the idea that “the sovereign decision on the state of exception opens the space in which it is possible to trace borders between inside and outside” (Agamben, 1998: 21). Within this bordered space “determinate rules can be assigned.” It is when the citizen-actor (vigilante/Minuteman) perceives these rules to be being broken, as failing to be enforced by the sovereign-as-state (United States’ governments) that they take it upon themselves to decide the exception (based on sanctioned laws) and enforce the ‘rules.’ They shift sovereignty downward, in the sense that it is they who *decide* the exception(s). This follows Doty’s assertion that “in the case of undocumented migration, border vigilantes have decided that a normal situation does not exist...the decision, then, can arise in the remotest of places and by...seemingly insignificant agents...Minutemen waving the American flag” (2007: 130). The role of affect is extremely important here, for a consideration of it can assist us in understanding the layered levels of culture and thinking which inform ‘the decision,’ and the perceptions, of the citizen-actor.

### *Affect: The Role of the Body/Brain/Culture Network<sup>1</sup>*

The concept – or idea, or theory – of *affect* is a relative new comer to the social sciences, particularly to critical security studies, its entry here is termed the *affective turn*. Taking the affective turn entails seriously considering the role of affect in the intersubjective processes that make up particular phenomenon: in this case the bordering of US/Mexico by vigilante groups such as the Minuteman Project against the perceived enemy – undocumented migrants, as well as the downward movement of sovereign power they can be argued to represent. In order to take the affective turn an explanation of affect is crucial.

The idea of affect is linked to a conceptualization of human thinking, and human culture, as being comprised of myriad interacting layers. This requires conceiving of the human brain/body as being active on multiple different levels, with these different levels feeding into one another, as well as into the objects and subjects which surround it – those subject/objects in turn feed back into the body/brain in the same manner. This exchange forms not so much a cycle or loop, but an aura, an idea which fits closely with Judith Butler's designation of the 'frame,' as a "field of intelligibility that helps to form...our responsiveness to the impinging world (2010: 34). This is the condition in which the human subject/object is forged, and which informs and impacts human action and decision making.

William Connolly engages with a layered and selective conceptualization of physical systems in his book *Neuropolitics*. He also engages with new developments in neuroscience that offer clues to the brain's lower levels of activity, those lurking beyond conscious and articulable thought. Of particular significance for the case in question is Connolly's conceptualization of 'difference' as being layered, a layering which is related to the layered nature of human thought. At its first two levels, difference reflects a deviating, or varying minority – either from a clear majority or from a multiplicity of others when a clear majority is lacking (Connolly, 2002: 43). Where things start to get interesting for the research here, and where affect is brought in, is in the third layer which sees difference as a subjective/intersubjective identity that is "obscured, suppressed, or remaindered by its own dominant tendencies" (Connolly, 2002: 43). This in turn feeds into the fourth and most consequential level of difference, the one that can best help in taking the affective turn due to the way in which it deals with agency – it is worth quoting at length. At this level:

surpluses, traces, noises and charges in and around the concepts and beliefs of embodied agents express proto-thoughts and judgments too crude to be conceptualized in a refined way but still intensive and effective enough to make a difference to the selective way judgments are formed, porous arguments are received, and alternatives are weighed. (Connolly, 2002: 43)

This fourth level of difference can aid in the project at hand, as applying it to empirical sources on the Minuteman Project will help in the consideration of how affect informs and impacts the actions/agency of the group's founder Jim Gilchrist.

The discussion of Jim Gilchrist, which is to follow in part two below, relies on theorization of his ability to manage affective interactions as an *affective entrepreneur*, thus a definition/description of this concept is warranted at this juncture. The concept *affective entrepreneur* used in the paper relies on a particular definition of both the terms affect, and entrepreneur. Here affect is understood as "the Spinozan 'power to affect and be affected'... affect [as]... 'transitive,' in constant variation, not so much a state as the ongoing 'passage from

one state to another” (Bertelsen and Murphie, 2010: 140). The concept of entrepreneur is understood as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary: “one who undertakes; a manager, controller, champion.” Thus, an *affective entrepreneur* is an agent who takes it upon themselves to become the manager, controller or champion of the power to affect, and be affected by, those they control or manage, or *attempt* to control or manage. In this sense affect is “the fulcrum of politics micro and macro” (Bertelsen and Murphie, 2010: 140). The discussion of Gilchrist below will establish how he acts as an affective entrepreneur, as will be seen this designation is made by ascertaining his motivation for, and justification of, the Minuteman Project.

### *Securitization Theory*

As mentioned above this paper forms part of a greater project of questioning the consequences, as well as exploring the potentialities, of taking the affective turn in critical security studies. Thus, a note on securitization theory is crucial here in order to show how this research enters into a wider debate going on in the academic community. The concept of securitization is the brain child of three theorists working out of the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute: Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, together they form what is known as the Copenhagen School (CS). The seminal piece of this trio is 1998’s *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. They were inspired in this project by increased questioning of “the primacy of the military element and the state in the conceptualization of security” (1998: 1). They began to offer a direct challenge to traditionalists, who viewed security as being primarily about the preservation and survival of the state in an international structure of anarchy. Contrarily, the CS argues that “security is a particular type of politics applicable to a wide range of issues” (Wæver, Buzan, and de Wilde, 1998: vii).

Securitization theory relies on the idea that something can be *securitized*, by being “presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedures” (Balzacq, 2005: 23). Notably *securitization* is painted as an inherently intersubjective process, where *securitizing actors* construct something as an existential threat to a *referent object*, a threat which is accepted by an *audience* – without this acceptance securitization does not take place. Significantly the process of securitization, defined thus: “what in language theory is called a speech act... the utterance [of the word security] itself... is the act” (Wæver, Buzan, and de Wilde, 1998: 29), actually suggests that security is entirely self-referential, a point that is in tension with the proposition that it is intersubjective. It is this tension point that forms the starting point for some of the criticisms of the CS (Balzacq, 2005: 29).

*Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve* is an edited volume released in 2011. It gives a thorough and comprehensive overview of much of the literature critiquing the CS theory of securitization. It begins by introducing the CS view of security, and highlights the self-referential/intersubjective tension noted above, suggesting that “audience can only be one element of a *larger theoretical pattern* in securitization studies, one which draws its importance in relation to others” [emphasis added] (Balzacq, 2011a: 8). This paper proposes that this larger theoretical pattern could be ascertained through a rereading of the new securitization theory (and by extension the CS securitization theory) through affect.

My research seeks to engage with the new problematization of the CS theory of securitization, and aims to push it further, suggesting that rereading the new ‘pragmatic’ approach being advanced in critical security studies through affect, brings the body/brain in to

securitization theory and reveals some of the workings behind the ontology of agents' interactions, as well as their capabilities. This paper seeks to enter this debate via a consideration of sovereignty (an affectively imbued process), a downward movement of which is represented by the Minuteman Project. This movement interrupts postulations on the role of elites as securitizing actors in securitization theory. It seeks to show how citizen-actors can shift the role of sovereign upon themselves in protest against both the other (undocumented migrants in this case) and the supreme decider of the rules (the founding law, in this case the United States constitution and the institutions which uphold it).

### *Sovereign/Securitizing Actor: The Decision/Securitizing Move*

In essence, this paper argues that sovereignty cannot be viewed as a reified stand-alone conceptual category, nor can the concept of the securitizing actor in securitization theory. The author accepts that the securitizing actor does not necessarily equate the sovereign, and accepts the suggestion of Judith Butler that particular actors can indeed be described as *petty sovereigns*, “reigning in the midst of bureaucratic army institutions mobilized by aims and tactics of power they do not inaugurate or fully control” (Butler, 2004: 56). However, because Butler links the petty sovereign to the field of governmentality and situates them in such a way as they must be representatives of the state – in *Precarious Life* they are those working in the bureaucracy of the American armed forces who play the role of the ultimate decider over the detention of ‘unlawful combatants’ – (Butler, 2004: 62-64) the vigilante cannot, by its very logic, *be* a petty sovereign. In this instance the role of the vigilante does not fit with the idea of the petty sovereign, as vigilantes are “‘organized extra-legal movements the members of which take the law into their own hands,’” they are “‘associations in which citizens have joined together for self-protection under conditions of disorder’” (Doty, 2007: 117-118). Thus, they do not exist within the field of governmentality *identified by Butler*, a field which sees a loss of sovereignty passed to state actors (Butler, 2004: 62), but not to ‘the people:’ the citizen-actor (vigilante).

That being said, vigilantes rely on the collusion of the petty sovereign in order to act in a securitizing manner, that is: in order to shift the sovereign power of the decision onto themselves. Vigilantism is “intimately connected with...popular sovereignty, and entails at least an implicit relationship to the law and to the state” (Doty, 2007: 117). This implicit relationship may take the form of the relationship between vigilantes and local law enforcement agencies (for example the U.S. Border Patrol), as well as their relationship with members of the sovereign power such as Congresspeople, Senators and Judges in the United States (minutemanproject.com, 2004-2011).

For Carl Schmitt, “the essence of sovereignty is located in the state’s *decision* on the existence of the enemy and the situation of imminent, existential danger to which this figure gives rise to” (Doty, 2007:121; emphasis added). This paper questions the utility of limiting the agent in the above sentence to ‘the state.’ Following Doty, it asks “what happens when it is perceived...that the sovereign does not in fact recognize the enemy,” and thus refuses to make the decision (2007: 116)? Groups like the Minuteman Project perceive this failure. These groups do not act ‘as sovereigns’ (Salter, 2008:327) rather, this paper argues, they are enacting a downward shift of sovereign power to themselves, in the face of a perceived failure. The logic of movement is important here, for it represents the temporariness of the shift in power (the shift is a two way movement, it can be given back if the perceived failure is adequately addressed). Conceptualizing this shift is dependent upon recognizing Doty’s contribution to the concept of

‘the decision.’ This paper accepts her claim that the decision made by Gilchrist – to form the Minuteman Project, and the Project’s collective decisions to patrol the border – “have not culminated in one unifying moment that could be called ‘the decision,’” rather she asserts “that there have been many dispersed decisions that have had real consequences...these ‘smaller’ decisions are just as much ‘the political’ as are the more attention-generating decisions” that International Relations deems worthy of study (Doty, 2007, 124).

The categories ‘sovereign’ and ‘decision’ can usefully be linked here to two key concepts of securitization theory: securitizing actors, and securitizing moves. Securitizing actors are those who “securitize issues by declaring something – a referent object – existentially threatened” (Balzacq, 2011b: 35). As mentioned above although securitizing actors are not necessarily the same as the sovereign, they are similar in that the logic behind both is the ability to declare something as an enemy, which is existentially threatening. Securitizing moves are defined as “the public framing of an issue as a national threat, accompanied by a strategy to act” (Sjöstedt, 2011: 151). Thus, securitizing moves are likened here to ‘the decision,’ as outlined above. Vigilante border groups frame the issue of undocumented migrants crossing into the United States from Mexico as an existential threat to a vision of America, and offer a strategy to act – i.e. to patrol the border. This strategy is framed as the public issue of the perceived failure of the government of the United States to decisively act to stop the flow of migrants.

## **Part II**

### *The Minuteman Project*

Describing itself as “a multi-ethnic immigration law enforcement advocacy group” (minutemanproject.com, 2004-2011), Jim Gilchrist’s Minuteman Project is an offshoot of the original Minuteman Project formed by Jim Gilchrist and Chris Simcox in 2004; they have since split into two organizations: the Minuteman Project and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps (Doty, 2007: 121). After hearing Simcox on a conservative talk radio show Gilchrist approached him with offers to assist in organizing “volunteer civilian border patrols” (Doty, 2007: 121). The first campaign launched by the Minuteman Project began on April 1, 2005. Volunteers from all over America converged on the town of Tombstone, Arizona with the express goal of surveying the Arizona-Mexico border, and with the hope of “locating clandestine border crossers...however this surveillance operation...had a larger objective,” that of drawing national attention to the issue of undocumented migration from Mexico to the United States (Chavez, 2007: 25). The following section will focus on the personality of Jim Gilchrist, in order to investigate his role as an *affective entrepreneur* in declaring the exception, enacting securitizing moves, and managing affective interactions.

In “An Essay by Jim Gilchrist” published in the *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal* he offers his personal explanation of, and justification for, the Minuteman Project. Thus, this source gives a unique window into the body/brain of Jim Gilchrist. It is an excellent example of *affective entrepreneurship* by Gilchrist, as his express goal is to disseminate his views to a national audience (Gilchrist, 2008: 415). The motivation for the project was Gilchrist’s self-reported frustration with the “refusal of...government to...enforce existing U.S. immigration law” (Gilchrist, 2008: 415). He takes it upon himself to enact a movement of sovereignty on to himself and ‘the project.’ In this, he declares the exception by asserting that the failure of the United States government to deal with undocumented migration from Mexico is a threat to that very institution. He takes it upon himself, and his followers, to assist in securing the border

(perceived as the preeminent manifestation of American sovereignty) because the “failure of elected officials to enforce immigration laws poses a *threat* to the *security, sovereignty, and prosperity*... [of] our nation” (Gilchrist, 2008: 415; emphasis added). This perceived failure on the part of the United States government(s) is an enabling factor for a downward shift of sovereignty.

Gilchrist’s motivation to take it upon himself to secure against this threat can be linked to the particular cultural narrative of America, Americanism and Americans to which he subscribes. Nowhere else is this narrative more apparent than when he links the founding of the Minuteman Project to the birth of the American state – basically equating the logic behind the Minuteman Project to that of the logic behind the creation of the U.S. Constitution (Gilchrist, 2008: 416). More research needs to be done to explore the particular affective ‘frame’ in which the decisions, actions, and reactions of Jim Gilchrist were forged. The real value in this source, for the purpose of this paper, is in its function as a piece of affective entrepreneurship. It is toward this dissemination of affectively imbued threat constructions, by Gilchrist, that this paper now turns – these constructions of threat are securitizing moves.

### *Constructions of Threat and the Securitization of the US/Mexico Border*

Key to securitization theory, both of the CS and of the new pragmatic approach, is the role of existential threat – for without a referent object that is existentially threatened in some way there can be no securitization. Existential threat is “the idea that the continued presence of the other” (in this case undocumented migrants) “constitutes a danger not just to the well-being of society but to its continued existence in a form familiar to its members” (Jabri, 2006: 52). The concept of an existential threat is uniquely suited to be read through affect as it often involves a visceral appeal to the body which works upon many layers of the body/brain/culture network.

Threat also has the unique characteristic as existing in a sort of temporal network which involves the past, present and future as they are imbricated with human perception and thinking. Massumi characterizes threat as being “from the future” (2010: 53) insisting that “[e]ven if a clear and present danger materializes in the present, it is still not over” (2010: 53). It is worth quoting Massumi at length on the link between this conceptualization of the supra-temporality of threat, with affect:

Whether the danger [is] existent or not, the menace [is] felt in the form of fear. What is not actually real can be felt into being. Threat does have an actual mode of existence: fear, as foreshadowing. Threat has an impending reality in the present. This actual reality is affective (Massumi, 2010: 54).

The establishment of the affective nature of threat allows threat constructions by actors to be conceptualized as actions of affective entrepreneurship, as well as securitizing moves. Securitizing moves are in essence affectively imbued actions. The power to affect, and be affected, is crucial to their very logic. This goes back to Connolly’s fourth level of difference, where affect lurks below conscious rational thought and influences the way porous arguments (in this instance arguments about the nature of a threatening being) are received by an audience – as well as the reciprocated reactions of that audience to the securitizing actor.

Gilchrist consistently constructs the US/Mexico border, and those who cross it, as a threat, stating that the “border region is a loosely guarded, lawless, wasteland” crossed by

“illegal aliens, fugitives, terrorists, and criminal[s]” (2008: 417). He repeatedly equates undocumented migrants with: dirt, crime, disease, and terrorism – all threats to a particular view of America and Americans. Of particular interest here is the way in which Gilchrist seeks to disseminate his message through the construction of undocumented migrants not just as a “clear and present danger” (2008: 424), but also as a source of the future destruction of the United States as an entity, going so far as to claim that “a break up into several ‘nation states,’ much like what occurred in Russia, is not beyond imagination for the not-so-distant future” (2008: 420). Consider the affective construction of the future threat in the following statements by Gilchrist:

At the current rate of invasion, by the year 2025, only 17 years hence, the Minuteman Project estimates that there will be more illegal aliens occupying U.S. territory than there will be citizen voters...Consequently...200 million unassimilated foreign nationals of voting age [would become] dual voting U.S. citizens... The consequences could be incredible...The year 2030 could be the first attempt to introduce into Congress legislation designed to trump English with Spanish...attempts to replace English with Spanish as the nation’s “new” common bond of language [would eventually succeed]. (2008: 422).

This visceral appeal is meant to play upon the fears of United States citizens, particularly those who live in the borderlands of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, but also those who live in the great American cities located farther north, such as Los Angeles, New York, Detroit and Chicago;<sup>ii</sup> implying that their very existence is under threat from undocumented migrants, specifically those from Spanish-speaking countries (Mexico).

#### *Management of Affective Interactions*

The management of affective interactions, of the power to affect, necessitates sustained and continual contact with the audience of the securitizing move and the followers of ‘the decision.’ Without this sustained contact the affective entrepreneur would, in most cases, simply fade away – the exception to which are the obvious historical examples of philosophers, theorists, musicians, and authors (however it can be argued that many posthumously retain the power *to affect* if not necessarily the power to *be affected* – a line of theorizing perhaps best saved for consideration at a future juncture). Gilchrist maintains this sustained and continual contact with his audience and followers by several means: by publishing; by maintaining an active and frequently updated website that is linked to social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter; through speaking tours, and interviews; and by running for public office in 2006 and disseminating his views via an election platform.

Perhaps the most fruitful point of contact to consider in this venue, aside from the publication that has already been considered, is the website [www.minutemanproject.com](http://www.minutemanproject.com), as it is frequently updated and contains a plethora of affectively imbued messages about both Gilchrist, and the Minuteman Project. On the homepage there are many links which offer visitors options to participate in passages of affective interaction, such as: links to join the Minuteman Project; links to offer financial support; options to “like” ‘the project’ on Facebook or to “follow” them on Twitter. There are also links to videos and a list of recommended reading; the option to post information about one’s own “border watch” or “freedom rally” event; options to purchase merchandise, including commemorative coins; portals to report illegal aliens; links to volunteer with auxiliary military outfits; as well as links to the now famous Tea Party movement. All of these links, offering opportunities for affective co-participation, line the sides of the homepage while in the center are links to anti-immigration and border security related news stories, all of

which come exclusively from right of center news sources such as Fox news (minutemanproject.com, 2004-2011).

This paper argues that these links are affectively imbued, that is they are imbued with forces that act simultaneously on conscious levels of knowing, as well as upon the lower levels of difference identified by Connolly, in that they contain “surpluses, traces, noises and charges in and around the concepts and beliefs” of particular agents who encounter them (2002: 43). For example, as someone who is not part of the dominant cultural narrative of ‘America’ the author reacts to these points of contact with a mixture of disgust, disbelief and, to an extent, amusement at the preposterousness of the entire ‘project.’ However, those who visit the site who are part of this cultural narrative, who may not necessarily share the views of ‘the project,’ or who do share their views, already have a preformed set of affectively conditioned assumptions about the issues presented. Thus, the surplus traces, noises and charges, which Connolly asserts are consequential for “the selective way judgments are formed, porous arguments are received, and alternatives are weighed” (2002:43), do come into play when those agents co-participate in the passages of affect by engaging in contact with the Minuteman Project.

## **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of undocumented, cross border migration is not unique to the United States. Elsewhere in the world, particularly in Europe, states have made immigration a national security issue – they have securitized immigration (Bigo, 2002). Also not unique to the United States is popular backlash against the presence of undocumented migrants and refugees – as evidenced in news stories about the rise of right wing parties with anti-immigration platforms in Europe. What is unique about the American example is the rise of organized vigilante forces whose primary aim is to patrol the US/Mexico border with the explicit goal of stopping undocumented migrants when they encounter them, as well as disseminating affectively imbued information about the potential threat of said migrants.

This paper has insisted that taking affect seriously in investigating the phenomenon of border patrol vigilante groups – like the Minuteman Project – has necessitated a reconsideration of the relationship of the theoretical category of sovereignty to securitization theory – specifically to the role of the securitizing actor. Investigating a vigilante group’s leader, whose *raison d’être* is to secure a border between two states, meant that it was crucial for this paper to focus on the theorizing of borders and bordering processes. In the above, the intersubjective nature of borders has been considered at length specifically the author has focused on the ways in which bordering processes are dependent upon the friend/enemy distinction that Schmitt identified as the essence of the political. The focus on borders also served as a way of getting to the heart of the issue of sovereignty, with which this paper was principally concerned, through a consideration of borders as a locus of sovereignty – and ‘the decision.’

The relationship of the border to sovereignty has been identified above as the place where the exception is made visible. Although this ‘decision’ on the exception – the designation of the enemy – has traditionally been the prerogative of the sovereign, the author has argued here, following Doty, that the citizen-actor as vigilante may indeed decide the exception when they are faced by a perceived failure of sovereign power. This paper has identified this action as being a downward movement of sovereignty – temporary by its very nature, and contingent upon affectively imbued perceptions of failure and frustration with the perceived inability of the

sovereign to restore the ‘normal order’ or indeed reverse the ‘normal order’ to a prior state of normalcy.

The above contemplations of sovereignty and securitization rely on affect theory inspired contemplations. Affect is essential to the above theorizing because it suggests that the layered nature of human thought and culture have unconsidered, or under-considered, implications for the ways in which humans receive arguments, draw conclusions, come to decisions and form judgments – thinking processes/activities which are crucial to securitization theory (as well as many other social scientific theories). By taking affect into consideration, the role of perception becomes much more prominent for theories about sovereignty (how it is embodied and by whom) and security (how is it uttered, and who utters it).

Considering affect has allowed this paper to put forth a new theoretical category – that of the affective entrepreneur. Considerations of the affective entrepreneur rely on a conceptualization of affect as something more concrete, something that can be managed, manipulated, controlled, or championed. However, theories of affect suggest that it is much more superfluous and less graspable than the category of the affective entrepreneur suggests. However, this need not be the case. The idea of affect as superfluous, visceral, forces can be maintained in the face of the theory of the affective entrepreneur, for it is not necessarily *affect* that is being controlled or managed, but the “power to affect and be affected” – the author sees this power as embodied in perceptions, however it may be identified as lying elsewhere as well.

The category of the affective entrepreneur presented in this paper opens up avenues for future research. The logic behind the vigilante personality of Jim Gilchrist and the Minuteman Project discussed above can be transposed onto other forms of non-state, extra-legal, entities/actors who co-participate in passages of affect in order to present an alternative arrangement to the ‘normal order’ which exists due to a perceived failure of the sovereign to act. The investigation into vigilantes/vigilantism could serve as a revelatory case in future research, revealing how in securitization theory a securitizing actor/agent can simultaneously be a referent subject – referred to here as the bipartite logic of the vigilante. The consequences for the field of securitization theory of revealing such a relationship is that it may help to broaden the field beyond its usual preoccupation with European/American/Western securitization cases. This broadening potential is based on the fact that many states/regions in, for example South American or Africa, have high instances of vigilante-type groups (rebels, guerrillas, narco-traffickers, ‘terrorists’) a fact that is also true of the Middle East, a region where securitization theory has generally limited itself to discussing Israel/Palestine.

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<sup>i</sup> A phrase coined by William Connolly.

<sup>ii</sup> Cities which have large populations of undocumented migrant workers, as do many municipalities and counties in the United States.

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