

**THE PRIVATIZATION OF BORDER SECURITY**

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## **Introduction**

The Eloy Detention Center is located on East Hanna Road, a few miles from the center of Eloy, a tiny town of about 8000 residents just off of Interstate 10 halfway between Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Enclosed with razor wire, the site has an ominous air about it. The Center, which opened in 1994, is one of six private prisons in Pinal County, Arizona which is owned and operated by CCA, Corrections Corporation of America, the largest non-government employer in the county.<sup>1</sup> CCA touts its presence in Eloy as one of the reasons for the county's jobs growth in recent years. In 2009 Money Magazine ranked Pinal County first among the top 25 counties nationally in terms of job growth.<sup>2</sup> From 2000 to 2008 Pinal Country experienced a 95.9% job growth.<sup>3</sup> This sprawling detention center in the middle of the Arizona desert is part of a larger national phenomenon, i.e. the privatization of border security of which private immigrant detention facilities figure prominently.

In March 2009 Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) announced that it had obtained a new five-year contract with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to manage detainee populations at the North Georgia Detention Center in Hall County, Georgia which will house up to 500 detainees. (CCA Press Release, 2009) Corrections Corporation of America is the largest owner and operator of privatized correctional and detention facilities in the United States. These announcements should come as no surprise as they are part of a trend indicating a dramatic increase in the

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<sup>1</sup> The other CCA facilities in Pinal County include La Palma Correctional Center, Red Rock Correctional Center, Saguaro Correctional Center which are also located in Eloy. The Central Arizona Detention Center and the Florence Correctional Center are located in Florence. Eloy and the Florence center house detained immigrants. CHECK ON OTHERS.

<sup>2</sup> Explore, "Money Ranks Pinal #1 for Job Growth – Prison Operator Largest Non-Government Employer," 9/23/2009. [www.exploernews.com/articles/2009/09/23/news/saddlebrook](http://www.exploernews.com/articles/2009/09/23/news/saddlebrook). Accessed 9/6/10.

<sup>3</sup> Though note recent foreclosures in this area.

detention of migrants with a significant portion being handled by private contractors. Immigrants are now the fastest growing population in federal custody.<sup>4</sup> A recent report issued by the Migration Policy Institute reports that since 1996 immigrant detention has increased geometrically, with the most recent spike occurring after 9/11.<sup>5</sup> In FY 1994 the average daily population in ICE custody was 6,785. By FY 1997 this figure had increased to 11,871 and by FY2007 it had increased to 30,295. Between FY 2003 and FY 2007 the total number of noncitizens detained by ICE per year increased from 231,500 to 311,213.<sup>6</sup> Currently, more than half of ICE's FY 2009 appropriated revenues, nearly \$2.5 billion, support its Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) and of this \$1.7 billion go for custody operations.<sup>7</sup> 17 percent of ICE's detainees are held in private facilities known as Contract Detention Facilities (CDFs).<sup>8</sup> The two largest private prison operators in the U.S. each receive over ten percent of their revenue directly from ICE.<sup>9</sup> At a conference call with investors in June of 2009 CCA's president, Damon Hininger said, "We believe this suggests that ICE will continue providing meaningful opportunity for the industry for the foreseeable future."<sup>10</sup> The CEO of Geo Group, CCA's competitor, echoed a similar sentiment to investors in February of 2009 saying "My personal view is that Homeland Security and the detention beds necessary to detain

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<sup>4</sup> Judith Greene and Sunita Patel, "The Immigrant Gold Rush: The Profit Motive Behind Immigrant Detention," a report submitted to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants. [http://209-85.173.132/search? DATE??](http://209-85.173.132/search?DATE??)

<sup>5</sup> Meissner, Doris and Donald Kerwin, "DHS and Immigration: Taking Stock and Correcting Course," *Migration Policy Institute*, February, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "The Math of Immigration Detention," National Immigration Forum Backgrounder, July 7, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Renee Feltz and Stokely Baksh "Detention Retention," *The American Prospect*, June 2, 2009 (web only) [http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=detention\\_retention](http://prospect.org/cs/articles?article=detention_retention). Accessed 9/9/10.

illegal aliens will increasingly be seen as a national imperative to protect U.S. workers and their jobs.”<sup>11</sup>

Currently ICE has contracted with seven dedicated Contract Detention Facilities (CDF) which are owned and operated by the private sector. These facilities are located in Texas, Washington State, California, Florida, Colorado, and New Jersey.<sup>12</sup> In addition to these facilities detainees are held in seven Service Processing Centers (SPC) which are owned by ICE and operated by the private sector. SPC facilities are located in Texas, Florida, New York, California, Arizona and Puerto Rico.<sup>13</sup> The other facilities which hold detainees are county jails dedicated solely to housing ICE detainees and shared-use county jails.<sup>14</sup> ICE’s budget proposal for FY2010 included a request for the complete privatization of the immigrant detention system.<sup>15</sup> The U.S. House of Representative rejected the privatization provision while the Senate approved it thus leaving its fate unresolved until the two are reconciled.<sup>16</sup>

Private immigrant detention facilities are only one aspect of the broader phenomenon of the privatization of border security. If you spend some time around the state highways in Arizona that lead to the U.S.-Mexico border, you are bound to see one of the large buses that frequent these roads. They zoom past you on state route 286 in southern Arizona leading to the small border town of Sasabe, Arizona or on highway 19 leading to Nogales or in the vicinity of Organ Pipe National Monument on the road to

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Dora Schriro, “Immigration Detention Overview and Recommendations,” Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 10/6/09 p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> “The Math of Immigration Detention,” National Immigration Forum Backgrounder, July 7, 2009. [www.immigrationforum.org](http://www.immigrationforum.org).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Until the House and Senate bills are reconciled the fate of the privatization portion of the budget is still up in the air.

Puerto Penasco popularly known as Rocky Point. At first glance one might assume these large busses belonged to a private tourist company. But, the rather odd word, “Wackenhut” painted in large letters on the sides indicates a private corporation on contract with the United States Customs and Border Protection Agency (CBP) to provide “guard and transportation” services along the entire southern U.S.-Mexican border including Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Wackenhut, now called G4S-Wackenhut is the U.S. subsidiary of the U.K. based security corporation, Group 4 Securicor. In 2006 Wackenhut was awarded a five-year contract to provide “guard and transportation” service to CBP with an initial deployment of 100 buses and over 270 armed security guards.<sup>17</sup>

Border surveillance and monitoring is a third area of border security in which private corporations have found a lucrative market. Project 28, more commonly known as the virtual fence, is perhaps the most well-known aspect of SBIInet. It spans 28-miles of the Sonoran desert along the Arizona-Mexico border and includes sensors and 90-foot mobile towers mounted with cameras and radar which communicate images to Border Patrol agents in vehicles and at command centers.<sup>18</sup> Boeing received a contract for SBIInet that was launched in 2006. The Boeing team, which includes nearly 100 sub-contractors including Centech Group, DRS Technologies, Kollsman, LGS, Perot Systems, Unisys Global Public Sector, USIS, was contracted to provide; 1) ground-based

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<sup>17</sup> Adam Borowitz, “Mexico: Wackenhut Worries: A Company With a Sketchy Records Has Quietly Taken Over Deportation Duties from Border Patrol,” *Tucson Weekly*, 5/3/07.

<sup>18</sup> On a visit to the Tucson Border Patrol Sector, January 8, 2010 one of the authors witnessed the P28 system in action. A “radar hit” was picked up on one of the screens in the command center. The screen showed a group in the Sasabe, Arizona border area. However, it could not tell if the group consisted of humans beings, cattle, or rabbits. The next phase of SBIInet, Block 1, was still in the testing phase. On March 16, 2010 Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, citing cost ineffectiveness, froze all SBIInet funding beyond Block 1’s initial deployment to the Tucson and Ajo regions until an assessment could be completed. See [http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr\\_1268769368466.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1268769368466.shtm). Accessed 9/3/10.

and tower-mounted sensors, cameras, and radars, 2) fixed and mobile telecommunications systems, 3) ground-penetrating detecting systems, 4) command and control center equipment, and 5) information database and intelligence analysis systems.

<sup>19</sup> In March of 2010 Homeland Security Secretary, Janet Napolitano froze all SBInet funding beyond the initial Tucson and Ajo regions pending an assessment of cost effectiveness. The funds allocated for SBInet were diverted into “other proven, commercially available technologies for use in border security efforts,” including mobile surveillance, and thermal imaging devices.<sup>20</sup>

These three realms; detention, transport, and surveillance/monitoring make up the basic infrastructure of U.S. border security and they are part of a growing trend of privatization of security-related functions previously carried out by the state which have been referred to as an “immigration industrial complex.”<sup>21</sup> Private security corporations such as Blackwater, now known as Xe, who have been involved in high profile, headline-grabbing activities associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have received a great deal of attention in the past few years. Their involvement in practices previously regarded as core functions of the state has come under scrutiny and raised questions ranging from accountability, protection of the rights of those with whom they come into contact, the changing role of the state, and the relationship between the public sector and

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<sup>19</sup> See CBP News Release, 10/04/07; Boeing website, <http://www.boeing.com/defense-space/sbinet/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Mickey McCarter, “Funds for SBInet Reallocated to Alternate Technologies,” *Homeland Security Today*, 3/17/10, [www.hstoday.us/index2.php?option=com\\_content&task=view](http://www.hstoday.us/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view). Also see “Statement by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, Office of Press Secretary, 3/16/10 Dept. of Homeland Security [www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr\\_1268769368466.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/ynews/releases/pr_1268769368466.shtm), and Suzanne Gamboa “Homeland Security Nears Decision on Virtual Fence,” *The Washington Post*, 10/11/20, [www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/22/AR2010102204895](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/10/22/AR2010102204895).

<sup>21</sup> See Tanya Golash-Boza, “A Confluence of Interests in Immigration Enforcement: How Politicians, the Media, and Corporations Profit from Immigration Policies Destined to Fail,” *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 3, 2009, pp. 1-12.

the private sector. However, the privatization of security functions is a much broader phenomenon which occurs over a wider and more diverse terrain than situations involving international military conflicts. The three aspects of border security privatization that this project will examine differ in important respects from the “privatized military firms” that “trade in professional services intricately linked to warfare.”<sup>22</sup> However, they are part of the general phenomenon of the privatization of security and raise some of the same issues which include; the contemporary reconfiguration of the public/private relationship, the changing role of the sovereign nation-state and the ways it seeks to secure its “internal” territory, as well as a whole series of ethical concerns elaborated below.

### **Project Description**

Given that various aspects of border security are increasingly being contracted out to private corporations, it is important to examine the extent of this phenomenon, its implications for immigration related policies, the emerging effects that privatization has had on local communities and the stake-holders involved including migrants, and issues involving accountability and the protection of the right of migrants who come into contact with these corporations. Over the past few years a number of researchers have studied and written about the issue of privatization as it pertains to security related functions more generally as well as its connections to immigration specifically. We are beginning to see an impressive array of writings. For example Naomi Klein notes that

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<sup>22</sup> For example, see P.W. Singer, “Corporate Warriors – The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 Winter 2001/02, pp. 186-220; Deborah Avant, “The Privatization of Security and Change in the Control of Force,” *International Studies Perspective*, 2004, Vol. 5, pp. 153-157; Deborah Avant, “From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War,” *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 1, Winter 2000, pp. 41-72.

"the dismantling of borders, the great symbol and promise of globalization, has been replaced with the exploding industry of border surveillance, from optical scanning and biometric IDs to the planned high-tech fence on the border between Mexico and the U.S., worth up to \$2.5 billion for Boeing and a consortium of other companies."<sup>23</sup> Klein thus places border security privatization within the diverse set of practices that exploit crises and disasters for the advancement of the market model. Klein's perspective suggests that the state is, in important respects, abdicating parts of its responsibility to the private sector with adverse consequences for some, but rewards for private firms. While the privatization of immigration related functions is certainly part of this phenomenon it occupies a very small space in Klein's study. We believe that this important topic is in need of greater attention. Journalist Fernandes (2007) explores in depth the issue of immigrant detention within the overall context of the war on terror, suggesting that the U.S. government has dramatically increased its reliance on the private sector. Dow (2004) also studies immigration prisons by giving the reader a glimpse into the lives of those affected, through interviews with inmates, guards, and officials. He focuses on the lack of accountability in these prisons and the hardships and denial of rights experienced by inmates. His study is not focused primarily on private prisons. Wood (2007) examines prison privatization in the United States assessing the strengths of several theoretical explanations. His study address prisons privatization broadly and is not focused specifically on border security issues.

Despite, these excellent works, very little exists in the way of an in-depth study of the overall extent of privatization of border security in the United States and its implications for comprehensive immigration reform. Although the study we are

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<sup>23</sup> Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine - The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, p. 303.

proposing is informed by and will build upon the previous work, it can be distinguished from the studies noted above in its specific focus on the three aspects of border security that have undergone significant privatization in recent years. Our argument is that undocumented immigration has provided an opportunity for private security-related businesses to embed themselves in and profit by the vast immigration-related security complex that has arisen in recent years in the United States and that this may have important implications for resolving the immigration crisis in the United States today.<sup>24</sup>

As Golash-Boza points out, a consideration of who benefits from undocumented immigration and especially the criminalization of migrants can contribute to an understanding of why immigration reform has not been enabled.<sup>25</sup> In order to investigate this we will assess the multiple impacts of the privatization of border security in the economic, political/social, and ethical realms that are impacted by this phenomenon. Clearly, these areas are not mutually exclusive and the impacts on one category may, and generally do, have implications for the other two categories. Our project also aims to make a contribution to the theoretical literature that addresses the complex workings of power in the context of the changing nature of the sovereign nation-state and a reconfiguration of the public-private relationship. We organize this project around five guiding research questions which are elaborated on below.

1. What is the impact of privatization on the possibilities for immigration reform?

Does the privatization of border security functions affect the possibilities and specifics of comprehensive immigration reform? We explore the extent of vested interests in keeping

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<sup>24</sup> Of course we recognize that undocumented immigration is not the sole factor at work here. The events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent “war on terror” have clearly contributed in an important way to the creation of opportunities for private security-related firms to capitalize on insecurity. Undocumented migration has also been a major factor.

<sup>25</sup> Golash-Boza, 2009 Op. Cit.

the current system basically intact or adding even more restrictive measures as opposed to reforming it in a fundamental way. Significantly, the provision of private immigrant detention centers has been an economic boom to some of the corporations involved. Several recent news items point to the impressive earnings of private prison companies. For example, CorpWatch reported in February 2009 that GEO Group Inc.'s most recent quarterly earnings were \$20 million. Their annual income for 2008 was \$61 million, up from \$38 million the year before.<sup>26</sup> These profits are due in part to their involvement in the business of immigrant and refugee detention. This is not to suggest that there is a direct, causal, or instrumental relationship between corporate interests and policy-making, though this should not be apriori ruled out. We believe that it is important to recognize that the so-called “border crisis” is a positive development for the corporations involved. It is possible that border “management” which benefits private companies becomes the modus operandi rather than finding genuine, comprehensive, and long-term solutions. A recent and pertinent example of this is the situation in Arizona where accusations have been made that the private prison industry helped shape the anti-immigrant bill, SB1070.<sup>27</sup> An investigative report from *National Public Radio* uncovered connections between state legislators and powerful private prison corporations and other associations through their mutual memberships in the American Legislative Exchange Council, ALEC.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Erin Rosa, “GEO Group, Inc.: Despite a Crashing Economy, Private Prison Firm Turns a Handsome Profit,” *CorpWatch*, March 1, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> See Beau Hodai, “Ties That Bind” Arizona Politicians and the Private Prison Industry,” *In These Times*, June 21, 2010. [www.inthesetimes.com/article6085/ties\\_that\\_bind\\_arizona](http://www.inthesetimes.com/article6085/ties_that_bind_arizona), accessed 8/17/10 and Beau Hodai, “Corporate Con Game,” *In These Times*, June 21, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Laura Sullivan, “Prison Economics Helps Drive Arizona Immigration Law,” 10/28/10 and “Shaping State Laws with Little Scrutiny,” October 29, 2010, *National Public Radio Transcript*.

Our goal is to explore the extent to which the private sector has become embedded in border security and whether or not investors and corporate leaders have played a role in the contemporary immigration debate and attempted to influence policy-makers. Some of the significant questions to be addressed here include: Who are the lobbyists? Who are the investors? What, if any, connections exist between lawmakers and vested corporate interests? Our study will explore and document these networks. In addition, we will investigate the nature of the contracts. For example, if it is difficult to withdraw from a contract which is relatively long term, the interests of both the private corporation and the contracting party, i.e. ICE are served by keeping the beds full during the duration of the contract, resulting in a disincentive to shift away from existing immigration enforcement policies.

2. This study also seeks to provide an understanding of the ways in which immigration detention centers have functioned within very local contexts by providing employment opportunities in areas that are relatively economically depressed. Many of the immigrant detention facilities are located in rural and economically depressed areas. How are these locations selected? For example, CCA's website quotes Eloy city manager, Joseph A. Blanton, as saying that CCA "brought nearly 1500 new jobs to Eloy through these facilities."<sup>29</sup> We explore the ways in which the privatized aspects of border security have impacted local communities, their economies, and the lives of those who live and work in these facilities and/or are employed in other aspects. The goal of addressing this question is to determine whether or not private detention facilities have a positive or a negative economic impact on the communities which are affected by them as well as how

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<sup>29</sup> "CCA Linked to Rapid Job Growth in Pinal County, Arizona," Corrections Corporation of Arizona, 2008., [www.correctionscorp.com/newsroom/news-release/189](http://www.correctionscorp.com/newsroom/news-release/189). Accessed 8/18/20.

dependent various localities are on private detention corporations for jobs and other sources of revenue. This is clearly related to the issues discuss in #1 above. Private prisons that bring jobs to relatively depressed areas presumably garner local support for their operations. What, if any, impact does this have on immigration related policy-making?

3. What does the privatization of border security functions tell us about the relationship between the state and private corporations? In contemporary times, especially in the United States, it is rather common to hear concerns voiced about the extent to which the state is becoming involved in private sectors of the economy, e.g. the bail-out of financial institutions and automakers, and, in the eyes of some, government intrusion into the healthcare system. Interestingly this is the reverse of what is occurring today in the realm of border security where we are witnessing the private sector taking on roles that were previously within the domain of the state. Private sector provision of security functions highlights the changing nature of the state and its role in securing its sovereign territory and providing protection for those within its borders. One scholar has noted that in the United States three times as many persons are employed by private security firms than by public law-enforcement agencies.<sup>30</sup> We can conceptualize this phenomenon as the *privatization of sovereignty* in which power is dispersed to numerous actors in numerous locals and has the force of the state behind it. As Nyers (2009: 2) argues, “the state is not so much ‘waning away’ as being radically recast under changing historical conditions.” The state itself is becoming increasingly mobile and fluid. In addition, the boundaries between the state and the private sector are becoming increasingly blurry. The state vs.

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<sup>30</sup> PW. Singer, “Corporate Warriors – The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry and Its Ramifications for International Security,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 3 2001, pp.186-200.

non-state or public vs. private realms are not mutually exclusive and it is a mistake to think of these in dichotomous terms. Studies have suggested that the privatization of security more generally is part of a reconfiguration of public-private and global-local relations.<sup>31</sup> The privatization of border security as it pertains to the various aspects of the southern border of the United States is an excellent site in which to examine this broader issue.

4. The privatization of border security functions raises many ethical questions. This is especially the case with immigrant detention. The broad question we address is “Should private corporations be involved in immigrant detention?” Clearly, this is a complex and sensitive question for which there is no definitive answer. We approach it by drawing on various reports that have documented abuses in immigrant detention facilities across the nation. We also draw upon scholarly literature that has explored the philosophical issues surrounding prison privatization more generally. A potential tension exists amongst a private corporation’s desire to maximize profit, the security objectives of contracting parties such as ICE, and the overall well-being of the migrants detained. In a very real sense immigrant bodies become commodities for detention contractors who receive payments averaging \$95 per day for each immigrant held under contract with ICE.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, the more bodies detained the higher the profit. Criminal Justice policy expert, Judith Greene, suggests “immigrants are fast becoming the modern day cash crop of the prison industry.”<sup>33</sup> In addition questions of oversight are raised. There have been numerous cases of prisoner abuse and lack of accountability by private security

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<sup>31</sup> Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, “Security Beyond the State: Global Security Assemblages in International Politics,” *International Political Sociology*, 2009, Vol., 3, pp. 1-17.

<sup>32</sup> Judy Greene and Sunita Patel, “The Immigrant Gold Rush: The Profit Motive Behind Immigrant Detention.” Report to the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants,” DATE? 2009?, page 2.

<sup>33</sup> Greene and Patel, *Ibid.* p. 3.

corporations. Kerri Sherlock of the Washington, D.C.-based Rights Working Group states that unlike federal agencies, “privately owned organizations may not be required to release information under the Freedom of Information Act.”<sup>34</sup> Even for government run immigration detention facilities there exists no legally enforceable rules.<sup>35</sup> The broader question of democratic accountability is also raised in situations of the transfer of core government functions to unelected, undemocratic, private sector firms that have a legal duty only to their shareholders rather than society as a whole. If corporations are embedded in the processes that lead directly or indirectly to decisions regarding immigration policies this raises broad ethical questions regarding conflicting interests. Privatization entails a vested interest in defining undocumented immigration as a security issue rather than a human rights issue or an issue intrinsic to globalization and the complicated reconfigurations of the world that it entails. Incarceration is thus seen as a logical solution.

5. Our final question addresses the global nature of this phenomenon. As noted above Wackenhut-G4S is a subsidiary of a U.K. based corporation. We believe that it is important to examine the global reach of the corporations involved as well as the overall global nature of security privatization as it pertains to borders. We argue that undocumented immigration is inextricably linked to processes of globalization and hypothesize that “solutions” are also becoming globalized resulting in an entrenchment of the ways in which this issue is framed and understood and in new forms of authority and

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<sup>34</sup> Borowitz, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> In July of 2009 the Obama administration rejected a federal court petition by former detainees for legally enforceable rules for immigration detention. DHS deputy secretary, Jane Holl Lute, said in the letter that “rule-making would be laborious, time-consuming and less flexible” that the review process currently in place. See Nina Bernstein, “U.S. Rejects Call for Immigration Detention Rules,” *New York Times*, 7/29/09, [www.nytimes.com/2009/07/29/nyregion/29detain.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/29/nyregion/29detain.html). WHAT IS THE REVIEW PROCESS IN PLACE?

governance in which the state may no longer be the sole significant or even the most central actor.

Our focus on these five questions gives this project significance in both a theoretical/conceptual as well as an empirical sense. The questions will enable us to make an important contribution to the knowledge base regarding the privatization of prominent aspects of border security. While numerous stories and special reports have been published by news organizations and advocacy/monitoring groups in the past several years, our project will bring together and add to the existing empirical data in the context of pertinent research questions framed by a broader theoretical context of the privatization of security functions in an era in which the nature of security and the sovereign state itself is undergoing significant transformations. Our focus on the areas noted above, including the economic impact on the local communities where private detention centers are located and the connections amongst the various stakeholders and government officials will enable us to tease out the implications these developments may have for comprehensive immigration reform. For example, Richard Stephens, Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Administration for the Boeing Corporation is also a member of the Secure Borders and Open Doors Advisory Committee (SBODAC) which is a subcommittee of the Homeland Security Advisory Council. The purpose of SCODAC is to “provide advice and recommendations to DHS and DOS on efforts to maintain security while increasing the welcoming nature of those who visit our country.”<sup>36</sup> According to FollowtheMoney.org, a nonprofit organization that maintains a database on campaign contributions in the state of Texas, private prison PACs have made

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<sup>36</sup> DHS Press Release, “DHS and State Announce Membes of the Secure Borders and Open Doors Advisory Committee,” 12/6/06, [www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr\\_1165414188787.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_1165414188787.shtm).

contributions to more than 20 state lawmakers, Democratic as well as Republicans.<sup>37</sup>

Exploring the extent of relations such as these is important in assessing the potential influence of private actors such as the Boeing Corporation on official government policies pertaining to border security.

In addition to the empirical nature of the above four research questions, this project also has significance in terms of the scholarly literature that falls loosely under the heading of “critical security studies.” Our findings will contribute to the growing body of literature that has broadened our understandings of the concept of security and how it functions in contemporary societies. This diverse and cutting edge literature has critically examined linkages between the “external” and the “internal,” the local and the global and has indeed sought to demonstrate the sometimes problematic nature of the very distinctions that scholarship as well as policy-making relies upon and takes for granted. As several scholars working in this area have noted, “The issue of privatisation is important both for critical security studies that insist on the fact that the field of the professionals of (in)security is not only transversal to the inside/outside distinction but also to the public/private distinctions, thus redefining contemporary governmentality.”<sup>38</sup>

## **Methods**

We will approach this study by using multiple methods. There exists a significant amount of literature in the form of reports by rights groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, and Detention Watch, investigative reporters, public interest organizations, as well as parts of the U.S. government such as the Government

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<sup>37</sup> Julissa Trevino. “Prison Contractors Making Profits, Giving Campaign Donations,” *The Texas Independent*, 8/20/10 accessed at <http://www.americanindependent.com/prison-contractors-making-pro...>

<sup>38</sup> C.A.S.E. Collective, “Critical Approaches to Security in Europe – a Networked Manifesto,” *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 4, December 2006, p. 23.

Accounting Office. We will draw from these reports extensively in assessing the questions posed above. In order to accurately determine economic impacts it will be necessary to access local records from local governments as well as monetary contributions to policy-makers at various levels of government. We also plan to interview three sets of actors; (1) local government leaders where private detention centers are located, (2) heads of private security corporations and lobbyists for these corporations, and (3) rights workers and legal advocates whose work focuses on the aspects of border security under investigation.

In recent years social scientists have drawn upon the concept of a network to understand the complex connections that exist amongst various elements of the social, political, and economic realms. Rather than beginning analysis with the presumption that the state is the central locus of power, network analysis facilitates the mapping of relationships that come to light through careful investigation and analysis of social and political interactions.<sup>39</sup> Recent work in international relations on security privatization has been informed by network analysis.<sup>40</sup> We will map the various connections amongst the corporations and government officials through the use of a type of network analysis. Our research will detail the various relevant sites (nodes) and how they are linked to one another to form an overall border security network of which private corporations figure prominently. Doing this will enable us to analyze the precise place of private corporations.

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<sup>39</sup> See Stephen P. Borgatti, et. al. "Network Analysis in the Social Sciences," *Science*, Feb. 13, 2009, Vol., 323, No. 5901, pp. 892-895.

<sup>40</sup> See Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, "Introduction: The Privatisation and Globalisation of Security in Africa," *International Relations*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 131-141.

From this project we envision several avenues of dissemination including presentations at national conferences including the annual International Studies Association conference, the American Political Science association conference, and the Association of Borderland Studies. We also plan to publish at a minimum one stand alone academic journal article, and one book length manuscript. The book will be written in a manner that will be of theoretical interest to scholars working on security privatization, but the material will also be presented in a way so as to be accessible to a broader readership including the general public.

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