

Introduction

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In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the United States and Canada were two major destinations for international migrants.¹ While U.S. and Canadian historians have written these people into national immigration histories, women, men, families, and groups migrated between towns, cities, and regions that were defined more by their economies than by political boundaries. In the late nineteenth century, the governments of the United States and Canada began to regulate borders, set immigration quotas, and define categories of citizenship. The nation-building projects north and south of the 49th parallel were informed by different ideologies of race, empire, and cultural belonging, yet they developed in a dialogue with one another and a wider world. Migrants' lives, often in regions not fully divided by political borders, and the nationalizing projects of these governments became deeply entangled.

The book explores how people and ideas transcended the political boundaries of the United States and Canada. It situates the history of migration to the two countries in broader transnational, borderland, and comparative contexts. The eight chapters in this volume focus on local, regional, national, and transnational scales, illustrating that the state and the nation were not contained social, cultural, and political systems in modern North American history. The chapters challenge the persistent historiographic interest in examining international migration from a single location in a country of origin to a single country of destination. As the chapters demonstrate, the United States and Canada constituted a fluid space that was as much connected as divided by borders and policies. As the border became more rigid in the twentieth century, the nature of policies and migration changed, but people's lives continued to be shaped by local, national, and transnational factors.

This book argues that migrants, government officials, and other actors in the United States and Canada entangled their ideas and lived realities and thus

the histories of these two countries. Following people rather than borders, the authors in this book investigate migrants' transnational connections and governments' international relationships. They study national politics and migration experiences in borderlands regions, and they compare migration patterns and policies between regions and countries.

Entanglement is a historical process, and, as this book demonstrates, it is a useful approach that binds together several literatures concerned with the study of migration. In light of a growing interest in global, imperial, transnational, transatlantic, transpacific, pan-American, and borderlands history, the concept of entangled history can give cohesion to a fractured field. It embraces all scales, from the local or transborder to the national and the global. Entangled history decenters the nation, and it charts the relations, linkages, and transfers at several geographical scales and across national borders and cultural boundaries. The approach stresses the webs and strands of ideas, policies, economies, kin networks, and migrants that are not neatly separated by countries' borders or the boundaries of national historiographies.

This volume seeks to connect the conversations migration historians have had about borderlands and transnationalism while anchoring themselves in either U.S. or Canadian history. Comparison stands, therefore, alongside borderlands and transnationalism as another approach in this volume. Transnational analyses that extend across the Atlantic, Pacific, and Caribbean; studies of borderland regions; and comparisons of parts of the United States and Canada complement one another and contribute to U.S. and Canadian historiographies in different ways. The flourishing of transnationalism in the past two decades has added new vigor to the push since the 1960s to connect studies of European emigration and American immigration.² A more recent interest in borderlands adds another critique to the long-standing myth of "immigration to America" as the dominant and even iconic view of migration.³

In North America, borderlands history grew out of historians' interest in the U.S. Southwest. This book suggests that this is a powerful approach that can be extended to other spaces. Furthermore, rather than creating separate borderland histories, this book suggests that diverse borderland regions may be nationally and internationally connected through migrants, policies, and ideas. U.S.-Canadian and U.S.-Mexican borderlands are often studied with a view to contributing to one national historiography.⁴ By contrast, *Entangling Migration History* places the United States and Canada on an equal footing, and it engages with two national historiographies. The volume's attention to borderlands and transnationalism seeks to create a dialogue between scholars

who research migration predominantly in the United States or in Canada. Such a dialogue among scholars can help to decenter national historiographies on both sides of the border.

Entangled history brings together comparative, transnational, and borderland approaches. It allows historians to compare different locations separated by national borders, to highlight transnational linkages such as migration flows, and to study how the dynamics of immigration, transculturalism, and citizenship play out in contested sites such as borderlands. The term entangled history comes from the French term *histoire croisée*, and in many ways *histoire croisée* and *histoire comparée* (comparative history) complement one another. Jürgen Kocka contends that “it is not necessary to choose between *histoire comparée* and *histoire croisée*. The aim is to combine them.”⁵ Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka note that “entanglement-oriented approaches stress the connections, the continuity, the belonging-together, the hybridity of observable spaces or analytical units and reject distinguishing them clearly.”⁶

On Transnationalism

Transnationalism as a methodological approach moves research questions beyond the confines of the nation-state.⁷ It helps scholars examine the international linkages and influences that comparison neglects. Transnational approaches do not naively ignore or stubbornly deny the importance of national borders or nationalist ideologies, and the state and the nation continue to matter. However, this approach emphasizes experiences and processes below and above the national scale, and it can illustrate how local and regional histories can cross national borders.⁸ Thomas Bender, in a study of the relationship between American and global history, proposes to view the history of the United States as something shaped by forces both bigger and smaller than the nation.⁹

Transnationalism has many uses, and in *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier note how slippery the definition of “transnational” can be.¹⁰ In this volume, we propose that it can be helpful to view the transnational as a scale that complements other local, regional, and national scales and entangled history as an approach that combines these scales. In addition, the transnational scale can transcend the boundaries of countries without necessarily encompassing the entirety of the country in question. In three chapters in this book, David Atkinson, Yukari Takai, and

Benjamin Bryce examine several ways that local and regional histories were shaped by ideas and policies originating outside national borders. A transnational approach can help describe a region such as the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada, as seen in Atkinson's and Takai's chapters, which are examples that highlight a transnational space that does not include all of the United States and Canada.

A transnational perspective helps examine the flow and circulation of people, ideas, and objects within a region that is not contained by national boundaries and national historiographies. In chapter 6, Takai traces the migration of Japanese agricultural workers across the Pacific to Hawai'i and then onward to coastal ports such as San Francisco and Vancouver. At the same time, she tracks the external influences the Japanese government attempted to exert in Hawai'i. A transnational approach can also demonstrate how ideas, institutions, or people outside the United States or Canada can influence people living within one country's political boundaries. Eiichiro Azuma shows how processes of state formation that emerged in Japan could shape the experience of Japanese immigrants and their children in California.¹¹ Similarly, Sebastian Conrad argues that nationalism and national boundaries in Germany were greatly transformed between 1880 and 1914 precisely because of greater global interaction through phenomena such as in-migration from eastern Europe and because of Germany's connections with German speakers living in other parts of the world.¹²

In addition, paying attention to the transnational scale can enable historians to observe common ideas, behaviors, or policies that developed in parallel in many countries. Transnationalism is often used as an umbrella term for histories of transfer; postcolonial and new imperial historical approaches; translocal, transregional, and transcultural perspectives; and global and world history.¹³ Chinese exclusion laws arose at a very similar time in the United States, Canada, and Australia in the late nineteenth century.¹⁴ Ideas and policies about assimilating the children of European immigrants through schooling led to the creation of universal public education in places such as Ontario, New York, and Buenos Aires at around the same time.¹⁵ Policies of multiculturalism began to emerge in Canada and the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, and by the 1990s they found counterparts in Brazil and Germany.¹⁶ These local instances of global processes reveal a transnational history. All of these state policies resulted from the international circulation of ideas, but this sort of transnational approach does not trace the lines of connection so much as it integrates local and national history into global history.

On Borderlands

Borderlands are quintessentially transnational, and scholars who study borderlands necessarily engage with a space that transcends the borders of nation-states. As several chapters in this volume demonstrate, it can be beneficial to include a broader transnational perspective in regional histories.¹⁷ Borderlands in North America are studied in reference to European colonialism and imperialism from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, in reference to the emergence and solidification of nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in reference to new questions of the U.S. empire and Canada's ongoing involvement in the British Empire.¹⁸ Writing about the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron contend that borderlands are "the contested boundaries between colonial domains."¹⁹ In the national period, borderlands history often engages with Frederick Jackson Turner's "frontier thesis" about the westward expansion of the United States.²⁰ Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett note that borderlands history has become "anchored in spatial mobility, situational identity, local contingency, and the ambiguities of power."²¹ They argue that "if frontiers were the places where we once told our master American narratives, then borderlands are the places where those narratives come unraveled."²² Finally, Hämäläinen and Truett note that "if imperial and national histories are about larger-scale conquests, borderlands histories are about smaller-scale accommodations or pockets of resistance. If imperial and national histories fill the continent, borderlands history seeps into the cracks in between those studies."²³

In the case of migration, the historiography of North American borderlands has taken different tacks. The histories of human movement, state control, and national imaginings differ significantly at the U.S.-Mexico or the U.S.-Canada borders. While concepts such as government cooperation, economic integration, or human mobility may best characterize the Canada-U.S. border, the U.S.-Mexican borderlands, in the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, are an "open wound" "where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds." As Grace Peña Delgado shows in chapter 4, the sexualization of migrant Mexican women at this border in the early twentieth century was one of the earliest expressions of immigration and border control in the United States. In the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, according to Anzaldúa, "the lifeblood of two worlds . . . forms a third country."²⁴ The kind of cultural hybridity that one can find in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is far less visible in the border areas where English-speaking Canadians and Americans interact. In questions of cultural

exchange and the formation of hybrid spaces, then, the northern and southern borderlands of the United States are very different.

In many of the studies that use a borderlands approach to study migration and the Canada-U.S. border, the imperial component of eighteenth-century borderlands history remains. Kornel Chang positions the study of the British Columbia-Washington borderlands in the context of U.S. and British empire building. He examines the tension between those who sought to control national boundaries and the racialized laborers, merchants, smugglers, and activists who undermined these projects.²⁵ Similarly, Seema Sohi examines inter-imperial U.S. and British cooperation in Washington and British Columbia that sought to control the movement of assumed Indian radicals.²⁶ In chapter 5 of this volume, David Atkinson engages with discussions of empire by studying a series of race riots in Washington and British Columbia. He contends that the tendency to view these riots within a local and national context causes scholars to overlook the importance of the transnational current of anti-Asian mobilization that existed across North America and the British Empire.

From the perspective of a historian of Canada, the borderlands approach for migration history has another value. On the one hand, as Randy Widdis shows in chapter 2, it is true that border cities in the United States attracted a large portion of Canadian migrants in the first half of the twentieth century. Similarly, in *Crossing the 49th Parallel*, Bruno Ramirez discusses the prevalence of short-distance migrations between Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan, or towns that have the same name on both sides of the border such as Sault Sainte Marie and Niagara Falls.²⁷ Ramirez has also shown the attraction of New England for people from the Canadian Maritimes, and this region could also be viewed as a borderland. On the other hand, a broader spatial perspective should complement a borderlands approach. Several scholars have demonstrated much more distant connections that also linked people in Canada to the United States. In chapter 8, Janis Thiessen charts out the entangled nature of the student movement in the late 1960s through her focus on a number of Mennonite colleges and war resisters in Indiana, Virginia, Ontario, and British Columbia. In chapter 3, Bruno Ramirez documents the continental nature of migration from Canada and Mexico to the United States from World War I until the 1960s. This movement relied on regional border towns, but it also drew on labor pools well beyond the immediate border zones. In chapter 7, Bryce shows the influence of cities such as Philadelphia and St. Louis—both well beyond any borderland space—on German-speaking Lutherans in Ontario.