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➲ Towards a Transborder Perspective: U.S.-Mexico Relations

Abstract: This article embeds a discussion of transborder communities –communities spread out in multiple locations in the U.S. and Mexico– in the history of U.S.-Mexico relations. These relations are read through the colonial and contemporary mapping of space, place, people, race, and ethnicity both literally and metaphorically as well as through U.S. immigration policy in the 19th and 20th centuries. The concept of "transborder," which can include borders of coloniality, ethnicity, race, nation, and region, can help us to illuminate U.S.-Mexico relationships through time, the racialization of Mexicans in the U.S., and contemporary dynamics of migration and immigration. The crossing of many borders and the carrying of these borders within one's experience allows us to see migration and immigration in terms of family relationships, social, economic, and cultural relationships, communities, and networks.
Keywords: Anthropology; Migration; Race; Ethnicity; Mapping; Mexico; U.S., 19th-20th centuries.

Resumen: Este artículo contextualiza una discusión sobre comunidades transfronterizas –comunidades con múltiples localizaciones en los Estados Unidos y México– dentro de la historia de las relaciones entre estos dos países. Se interpretan estas relaciones por medio de procesos que mapean el espacio, lugares específicos, personas, raza y etnicidad, tanto literal como metafóricamente, y también por medio de la política migratoria de Estados Unidos en los siglos XIX y XX. El concepto de "transfrontera", que incluye fronteras de colonialidad, etnicidad, raza, nación y región, nos ayuda a entender históricamente las relaciones entre México y Estados Unidos e ilumina los procesos de racialización de los mexicanos en Estados Unidos y las dinámicas contemporáneas de migración e inmigración. La experiencia de cruzar estas fronteras y portar estas experiencias dentro de uno permite ver la migración y la inmigración en términos de relaciones familiares, económicas, sociales, culturales y, también, en términos de redes múltiples.
Palabras clave: Antropología; Migración; Raza; Etnicidad; Mapas; México; Estados Unidos; Siglos XIX-XX.

In the United States, national discussions about "border security" with Mexico center on the concept of a "wall" dividing the two countries. Currently more than 630 miles of

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fencing separate the two countries in urban areas, along with 300 miles of vehicle barriers (Jiménez 2009: 8). The Berlin wall which fell in 1989 was to keep people in. Ironically, U.S. border policy since 1996 under the Clinton administration has functioned as much to keep people in as to keep them out. U.S. policy of tighter border enforcement has "lengthened U.S. sojourns of unauthorized migrants and increased their probability of settling permanently in the United States. In 1992, about 20 percent of Mexico to U.S. migrants returned home after six months […] and by 2000, only 7 percent did so" (Cornelius 2006: 5).

This "wall" has also literally killed people. Between 1994, when President Clinton initiated Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego (which was the first of many smaller walls constructed on the U.S.-Mexico border), until 2009, up to 5,600 people are estimated to have died crossing the border –and these numbers do not include the disappeared whose bodies are never found (Jiménez 2009: 8; Stephen 2008). "The wall" has also facilitated the growth of the multi-billion dollar human smuggling business which is now significantly controlled by and integrated with the drug business spanning the broader territories of Mexico and the U.S. (Meyer 2009). A 2010 U.S.-Mexican government study found that between $19 and $29 billion dollars a year in cash is shipped by drug cartels from the U.S. to Mexico and laundered through cash purchases of land, luxury hotels, expensive cars, and other items, eluding detection (Wilkinson 2010). How did the U.S. come to have a wall with Mexico which is keeping people here, killing people, and facilitating the drug business in the U.S? How does "the wall" concept keep us from understanding the shifting and multiple borders people cross through time? Can a transborder approach help us to develop a historical understanding of U.S.-Mexican relations that might inform our understanding of the racialization of Mexicans in the U.S. today?

This article embeds a discussion of contemporary transborder communities –communities spread out in multiple locations in the U.S. and Mexico– in the history of U.S.-Mexico relations and U.S. immigration policy in the 19th and 20th centuries. I argue that the concept of "transborder" which can include borders of coloniality, ethnicity, race, nation, and region can help us to illuminate U.S.-Mexico relationships through time, the complexities of the racialization of Mexicans in the U.S., and contemporary dynamics of migration and immigration. The crossing of many borders and the carrying of these borders within one's experience allows us to see migration and immigration in terms of family relationships, social, economic, and cultural relationships, communities, and networks beyond the legal relations that individuals have with nation states and the physical border between the U.S. and Mexico.

Moving borders in history: Mapping space, place, race, and ethnicity

Most people today envision the U.S.-Mexican border where it was settled in 1848. But in early maps of the Americas we see no borders we recognize. The first world map in which the name "America" appears was published in 1507 by Martin Waldseemüller (1474-1519), a German-born priest and cartographer (Waldseemüller 1507). It shows the outline of a continent, natural features, but no national borders. Native peoples conceived of their territories in entirely different ways than did Europeans. Their illustrations of the same territory of "America" look very different. Mixtec maps drawn in the

early colonial period, for example, link place names, stories of place founders, and genealogies to landscape and cosmology. There is no separation between human stories and place stories and the earth (Terraciano 2001: 42). The first map of "America" drawn by Waldesmüller is a colonial creation. It depicts "America" as imagined in Europe.

A map of the Viceroyalty of New Spain from 1786 through 1821 (Abingast et. al 1975: 26) provides more familiar outlines of the U.S. as a growing empire perched to absorb the territory of New Spain as its own territory expands westward. This map provides a picture of U.S. empire-building which in many ways resembles that of a colonial power vis-à-vis New Spain. Here, "America" is not claimed as a hemispheric label but as part of "The United States of America," forming the pivot point for U.S. nationalism and claims to further territory. In addition to the "United States of America," we see "The Louisiana Purchase," a series of "intendencies" inside of New Spain's boundaries which signal future states in independent Mexico and in the territories that the U.S. will usurp from Mexico in 1848. The Province of Texas, the Government of New Mexico, and the Government of New California all portend contested territories. Mexico became independent of Spain in 1821.

Spain and then Mexico used land grants to encourage Hispanic and Anglo settlement in Texas. By the 1830s, Texas contained 25,000 Anglos and 4,000 Spanish-speaking Mexicans. In the 1830s, Mexico abolished slavery and passed the Colonization Law to prevent slaves from being imported into Texas by Anglo landowners. Anglo settlers revolted and created the Republic of Texas in 1836. Mexico never recognized the independence of Texas and broke off diplomatic relations with the U.S. when it admitted Texas as a state in 1845. The U.S. government tried to purchase areas of New Mexico and California from Mexico which Mexico refused.

In the summer of 1845, John O'Sullivan, editor of the *Democratic Review*, published an essay titled "Annexation" which urged the U.S. to admit Texas as a state to the union. In that essay, O'Sullivan coined the famous saying "manifest destiny," urging not only the end of opposition to the annexation of Texas, but also forecasting Mexico's justifiable loss of California to the U.S. (O'Sullivan 1845).

The *Congressional Globe* of February 11, 1847, reported Mr. William Fells Giles, representative of Maryland, saying, "I take it for granted, that we shall gain territory, and must gain territory, before we shut the gates of the temple of Janus. [...] We must march from ocean to ocean. [...] We must march from Texas straight to the Pacific Ocean, and be bounded only by its roaring wave [...] It is the destiny of the white race; it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race" (quoted in Zinn 2003: 155). U.S. imperial desires to claim Mexican territory moved to action in 1848. The expansion of U.S. territory based on the justified claims of "the white race" proceeded forward. Race was codified in the law in the 19th century. An armed clash between Mexican and U.S. troops along the Rio Grande provided the spark for the U.S. to declare war against Mexico. In 1848, at the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexican War, the two countries signed the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. The treaty called for Mexico to give up almost half of its territory, which included modern-day California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and parts of Colorado, Nevada, and Utah. In return, the U.S. paid $15 million in compensation for war-related damage to Mexican land.

At the time of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, approximately 80,000 Mexicans lived in the ceded territory, which comprised only about 4 percent of Mexico's population. Only a few people chose to remain Mexican citizens compared to the many who

became United States citizens. Most of the 80,000 residents continued to live in the Southwest, believing in the guarantee that their property and civil rights would be protected as stated in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Sadly, this would not always be the case. By the end of the 19th century, most Mexicans had lost their land; either through force or fraud (Menchaca 2001). As the preceding discussion makes clear, not only is space and place claimed and codified in shifting frames, the mapping processes also produce racial and ethnic categories which are captured in the shifting borders within and between what became the U.S. and Mexico. A long view of more contemporary regional histories of the southwest, such as the one provided in the recent historical work of Rudy Acuña (2007) and Andrew Truett (2006), permits us to understand how legal, cultural, racial, and political borders as well as literal geographical borders were created in the late 19th and 20th century. The parallel and integrated development of the U.S. and Mexican mining and ranching industries in this region along with transportation corridors based on railroad lines also served as corridors of political, cultural, economic, and family transborder relationships that endure to this day and have stretched to include the broader territories of the U.S. and Mexico.

Beyond mapping: Racialization of Mexicans and U.S. immigration policy in the 20th century

Policies of the early 20th century foreshadow the contradictory nature of U.S. immigration and border policy towards Mexico of today. By 1917, people excluded from entering the United States included "all Asians, illiterates, prostitutes, criminals, contract laborers, unaccompanied children, idiots, epileptics, the insane, paupers, the diseased, and defective, alcoholics, beggars polygamists, anarchists, and more" (Hernández 2010: 27). When foreign laborers are needed, the real and metaphorical border is more open, but when national politics and economics require a scapegoat, "foreign workers" and immigrants get the blame for many of the country's problems. The "problem immigrant population" has shifted nationally and ethnically through time, but the moral assertion of who has the right to be in the U.S. and who does not remains. The historically subordinate status of Mexico as a nation to the U.S. since 1848 and the ongoing racialization since that time of people of Mexican descent as "foreign" has meant that the metaphoric U.S.-Mexico border and who belongs on which side of it has been an ongoing source of contention and public debate.

Beginning with the establishment of the U.S. border patrol in 1924 and the 1924 immigration act, people of Mexican descent have increasingly been constructed in popular and political discourse as "illegal aliens," a racialized category which is often generalized to all brown, Latino "looking" persons –whatever their citizenship, national original, legal status, education, class, or gender. After passing the National Origins Act of 1924, a few days later Congress set aside one million dollars to "establish a 'land-border patrol' of the Immigration Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor" (Hernández 2010: 32). Historian Kelly Lytle Hernández argues that the establishment of the U.S. border patrol in the Texas-Mexico borderlands enabled working class laborers (mostly white, but some Mexican-American) to move into stable law-enforcement positions with authority and that they also "found a unique way to participate in the agricultural econo-

my: they policed the region's workforce" (2010: 45). The U.S. racial narrative linking Mexican nationality with illegality and perceived "Mexican" physical appearance as "brown" began on the southern borderlands in the 1920s through law enforcement practices and linguistic categories. The hardening of the U.S.-Mexico border after 1924 and the creation of "legal" and "illegal" forms of migration and migrant status created two streams of Mexican migration to the U.S.

The racial narrative of the "Mexican illegal" was scripted on both sides of the southern border and spread from there to the rest of the country. After the depression became entrenched in the early 1930s, William N. Doak, Herbert Hoover's newly appointed secretary of labor, sent immigration officers throughout the country searching for "illegal aliens." Although Mexicans were not supposed to be the only targets, they appear to have been the majority of people either deported or intimidated into departing voluntarily. During the Great Depression, local authorities throughout the Southwest and Midwest repatriated up to one million Mexicans during the early 1930s (Balderrama/Rodríguez 2006; Valenciana 2006). Approximately 60 percent were children of American citizens by native birth (Ngai 2004: 72). By the Great Depression, the population of Mexicans in the U.S. was over 1.4 million. Once the U.S. entered World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December, 7, 1941, the position of Mexican laborers was once again reassessed in relation to U.S. interests.

In order to bridge the gap between the increasing demand for agricultural workers and their decreasing numbers among the U.S. population, in 1942 Public Law 45 was created to appropriate the necessary funds to implement an executive agreement with Mexico to import thousands –and eventually millions– of guest workers or braceros. Although the Bracero Program was created to alleviate wartime labor shortages, it lasted until 1965. Millions more workers were contracted in the period after the end of World War II (4,746,231) than during the war itself (167,925) (Carrasco 1997: 203, n. 50). The Bracero Program allowed the importation of Mexican workers for annual harvests with the stipulation that they were to return to Mexico after their work was finished. Braceros were contract workers who were supposed to have certain guarantees met in terms of housing, transportation, wages, recruitment, health care, food, and the number of hours they worked. The contracts –initially negotiated directly between the U.S. and Mexican governments– even stipulated that there should be no discrimination against the braceros. However, compliance officers, including Mexican consular officials, were few and far between. Later, contracts were switched to private contractors in the U.S. Most growers and the U.S. government ignored the terms of the contracts but the braceros had no recourse. After the initial agreement with Mexico for the Bracero Program expired in 1947, the program continued for agricultural workers under a variety of laws and administrative agreements. It was terminated in 1964.

Along with the legally contracted male, temporary agricultural and railroad workers of the Bracero Program came many other Mexican nationals who crossed illegally into the United States. Rapid industrialization of Mexican agriculture in the 1940s, an increase in population, and food shortages pushed people to the North (Hernández 2010: 113). The Mexican government became increasingly concerned with the greater flow of Mexican workers north, both as braceros and undocumented workers. Mexican agribusinessmen, particularly from the cotton industry, pressured the Mexican government to end unsanctioned migration to the U.S. (Hernández 2010: 114-117).

Racial scripts about "illegality" and "Mexicanness" were written regionally in the U.S. At the end of the Bracero program in the western state of Oregon in 1947, for example, the labor camps were closed, and all contracted laborers were supposed to return to Mexico. In Oregon, bracero workers went from being written about as heroes when they arrived in the state in 1943 and 1944 in headlines such as "Wheat Saved by Mexicans," "Mexican Harvesters Doing a Great Job in Fields and Orchards..."[1] to being called "wetbacks" and "illegals" in the same newspapers by the late 1940s and early 1950s. The racialized discourse of illegality, criminality, and Mexicanness became generalized throughout the U.S. during this period. The Border Patrol's project of policing unsanctioned Mexican immigration clearly intensified. The total number of Mexicans deported and departing voluntarily to Mexico was 16,154 in 1943. By 1953, that number was 905, 236 (Hernández 2010: 122).

The 1950s were also marked by "Operation Wetback," a program focused on preventing undocumented people from entering the U.S. and on rounding up and deporting undocumented people already here. While this was its tactical packaging, according to historian Hernández, "mass deportation , or at least the threat of mass deportation" was seen by Border Patrol Commissioner Swing and others as a means to confront the interrelated crises of control along the U.S. border and consent among influential growers who "refused to concede to a new era of migration control" (2010:169).

In Oregon and other states, the newspaper headlines from Operation Wetback helped to cement the racialization of people of Mexican origin as "illegals" in regional political narratives. A newspaper article in *The Oregonian* on May 15, 1953, ran with the headline "Agents Sweep Rising Tide of Mexican Illegals South to Border." The paper reported "Most of Portland's deportees are flown to Los Angeles. The immigration service flies them from there to Guadalajara, about 1500 miles south of this border, just to discourage them from returning so quickly. Now the flood of wetbacks is so great they are being swept back just to the border" (Richards 1953: 4M). The culture of immigration raids and the right of INS agents to detain "foreign-looking" workers in any location became entrenched and continues to this day.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the Special Agricultural Workers' Program (SAW) which resulted in the legalization of nearly 3 million people–were the next policies having had a large hand in setting up current patterns of immigration. In November of 1986, President Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), which allowed those who had been living undocumented in the US since January 1, 1982, to apply for amnesty and legal temporary residency, and then permanent residency. In addition, any person who worked in agriculture for ninety days between the period of May 1, 1985, through May 1, 1986, could receive temporary residence and later permanent resident status through the Special Agricultural Workers program (SAW). On this basis farmworkers also received temporary residency. IRCA conferred legal status on nearly 3 million undocumented immigrants whose family members then became eligible for permanent residency in the U.S. As discussed by Phil Martin,

[1] These headlines are "Wheat Saved by Mexicans", in: *The Oregonian*, October 11, 1944; "Mexicans Aid Flax Industry", in: *The Oregonian*, October 14, 1944; "Mexican Harvesters Doing a Great Job in Fields and Orchards, Say Growers and Farmers Who Have Seen Them Work", in: *The Oregonian*, October 3, 1943.

while policy makers had hoped that IRCA would decrease unauthorized immigration and increase real farm wages, instead it accelerated the spread of unauthorized Mexican workers throughout U.S. agriculture and reduced wages (Martin 2003: 183). Once they were legalized, SAW workers could live and work anywhere in the U.S. While most legal and undocumented farmworkers were found in western states, Texas, and Florida before 1986, after 1986 legalized SAW workers spread throughout the U.S. As Martin documents, "Pioneer SAWs served as anchors for the unauthorized workers who continued to arrive in the United States from their hometowns, giving rise to phrases that described Mexican immigration as the 'changing face' or 'Latinizing' of rural America" (2003:187).

The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which was legislated under the Bill Clinton administration, expanded the definition of deportation removals to include people who used to be excluded at the border as well as people deported from the interior of the United States. IIRIRA also made it more difficult for people to sponsor relatives to come to the United States by increasing income requirements from at or above 100 percent of the U.S. poverty level to at or above 125 percent of the U.S. poverty level. In 1998, this was close to $20,000 for a family of four. In 1999 this was about $24,000. IIRIRA also set deadlines for when people already in the U.S. could apply through their families for residency. If you missed a 1998 deadline you had to leave the country and apply from your home country–although there was a brief four-month period when divided families had a new chance to apply for residency without undocumented members having to leave the U.S. and apply from their home countries. Clinton's other branch of immigration policy –border security– also had a major impact on immigrant communities.

Beginning in 1994, U.S. border defense policy moved away from internal detentions to fortifying the border in highly trafficked crossing points through the construction of large walls and other barriers, use of high-tech equipment to track migrants, increased numbers of border patrol agents, and a new system of identification linked to fingerprinting all who are detained. Operation Gatekeeper was launched in the San Diego/Tijuana area. By early 1998, Operation Gatekeeper had been in place for more than three years and arrest rates fell significantly. The second phase of the border "defense plan" focused on classic crossing routes in central Arizona and south Texas. The enforcement offensive south of Tucson, dubbed Operation Safeguard, was launched just a few weeks after Gatekeeper in San Diego. By 1999 defense walls and agents were being planted along the full length of the border. Operation Rio Grande targeted the zone of South Texas focused on McAllen, Brownville, and Laredo. Arrests were dropping in these sectors. The outcomes of these efforts were that greater numbers of migrants attempted to cross in the rugged mountains to the west of San Diego in Imperial County. Here people began dying in the cold of winter. Others were pushed into the desert in western Arizona. Significantly increased migration during the 1990s coupled with a border defense policy that squeezed people into extremely rugged terrain in California and increasingly in Arizona produced a killing field. In 2009, there were 221 Arizona border deaths recorded by the Border Deaths Data Base of the Arizona Star (2009). By 2012, the largest immigration wave in history from a single country to the U.S. appeared to have come to a standstill and possibly have reversed (Passel/Cohn/González Barrera 2012:6). This did not stop anti-immigrant state policies, however.

In April of 2010, Arizona governor Jan Brewer signed into law SB1070 aimed at identifying, prosecuting, and deporting undocumented immigrants. The law gave police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally. While U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton issued a preliminary injunction suspending several key provisions of the law which were to come into force on July 29, 2010, this did not stop the political and cultural force of the Arizona law in the U.S. In 2010, lawmakers in other states introduced or planned to introduce similar legislation. In many ways, SB1070 codifies the long process of the racialization of Mexicans in the U.S. as "illegal" that began in the 18th century, and welds it to the militarization of the U.S.-Mexican border by official and unofficial forces (Chavez 2008). While such a conclusion is sobering from a structural perspective, we also need to remember that Mexican immigrants and migrants are active subjects who have agency in producing significant ideas and discourses themselves. A transborder perspective allows us to bring these subjects and their agency into focus.

A transborder perspective: Communities

Because of a long history of political, economic, and social integration with Mexico and as a result of U.S. and Mexican labor and immigration policies, today a majority of communities in Mexico are transborder communities. Such communities are full of people accustomed to living in multiple localities and discontinuous social, economic, and cultural spaces. People in these communities have worked out a social world that exists within a multi-cited existence. One Mixtec community in which I have carried out fieldwork since 2004, San Agustín Atenango in Oaxaca, does not exist in one geographic place, but is now present in multiple sites in the U.S. and Mexico. Spread out in at least thirteen different locations in the U.S. as well as others in Mexico, the home community of Atenango sports many empty houses, signaling both the presence of remittances to those who remain and coordinate family building projects and the strong presence of the people of Atenango in other locations. A review of different generations of migrants and immigrants from Atenango can be connected to the different sites.

José Luis García López was born in 1936. He worked as a bracero worker in California and Texas from 1953 until 1964. Prior to that, he went to work in Veracruz harvesting coffee and sugar cane. After being a bracero, he worked as a farm laborer in Sinaloa and Baja California with his wife and children. He has not returned to the U.S., but his son is living and working in Santa Maria, California, while his son's wife and two children remain in San Agustín. Many other men from his community were also braceros from the 1940s to the 1960s.

Many families in San Agustín also have one or more people who were regularized as a part of the 1986 IRCA or SAW program. They were present in California or other places in the 1980s and were able to legalize. Other family members who worked in the 1980s in the U.S. may not have qualified for legal residency, but came anyway because they had a legalized relative. From 1995 to 2005, migration from San Agustín and many other communities to the U.S. greatly increased and spread to many different places. Petrona Martínez Reyes, Luis Reyes Guzmán, Laura Martínez Reyes, and Esmeralda Martínez Reyes are representative of such families. In addition to the four currently living in San Agustín Atenango, this family includes two other people, Luis Junior living in Santa María, California, and another sister Aurora, living in Oxnard, California.

Petrona was born in 1943. Her husband Luis was born in 1942. Both of them went to the state of Veracruz as children to harvest sugar cane. Luis never went to the U.S. as a bracero, but when he and Petrona were married in the 1960s, they began to migrate north to Culiacán, Sinaloa, where they both worked harvesting tomatoes. They would periodically come home to build parts of their house, going back and forth every year with their young children. In the 1980s they went to work in Baja California and took their children with them. Laura (born in 1976), Esmeralda (born in 1978), Aurora (born in 1968), and Luis Junior (born in 1970) went with them to La Paz where they picked cotton.

While Luis, Laura, and Esmeralda stayed in San Agustín Atenango, Petrona, Aurora, and Luis Junior worked for ten years in Oxnard, Watsonville, and in San Diego. Luis Junior and Aurora became legal permanent residents in 1986 through the Special Agricultural Workers' Program related to IRCA. Petrona returned to Mexico during 1986 and lost the opportunity to become legalized. Laura went to San Diego in 1995 and through a contact of her older sister, Aurora, found work taking care of children for three years. She returned to San Agustín Atenango in 1998 to take care of her father Luis when he became very ill. She has not returned to the U.S. since that time.

As a "hometown," San Agustín Atenango is thus both a real and symbolic site that draws people back repeatedly in many senses, but which is also represented by multilayered forms of social and political organization that include a federated transborder public works committee in 13 U.S. cities as well as in several locations in Mexico, all linked to San Agustín in Oaxaca. We can think of each location of San Agustín as a "home" and as localities in their own right with a real sense of the "local." But these multiple homes of San Agustín are also discontinuous spaces linked through kinship, ritual, cycles of labor, and individual and collective resources of material and symbolic means (Besserer 2004).

Borders, border crossing, and borderlands

With this historical, policy, and ethnographic discussion in place, we can now explore the reasons why an analysis based on multiple and shifting borders can be helpful in understanding U.S.-Mexican relations and how people experience migration and immigration. People who migrate and immigrate have multiple dimensions to their identity including region, ethnicity, class, and race. Age, gender, and sexuality are also important dimensions of the identities of migrants and immigrants but are not discussed here. If we only refer to their nation of origin or "nationality" and/or to the specific nation(s) they come to reside in as a result of migration or immigration, then we miss understanding how people experience immigration on different levels and also how the identities of migrants and immigrants are reconstituted along multiple dimensions. The concepts of borders, border crossing, and borderlands may be more fruitful analytical terrain for understanding migrant and immigrant communities than a focus that centers only on the national and transnational. The crossing of many borders and the carrying of these borders within one's experience allows us to see migration and immigration in terms of family relationships, social, economic, and cultural relationships, communities, and networks beyond the legal relations that individuals have with nation states and the physical border between the U.S. and Mexico.

While one may be moving across borders, another way to conceptualize borders is in terms of the geographic and metaphorical spaces that they represent. Such spaces are often known as borderlands. Borderland scholarship –particularly of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands– has produced some of the most insightful cultural, political, and economic analyses of this integrated region of the U.S. and Mexico. Chicana lesbian feminist poet and intellectual Gloria Anzaldua (1999) has had widespread influence on the way the concept of borderlands is understand that is useful here. Her concept of borderlands includes the geographical space around the U.S.-Mexico border, but she also conceptualizes borderlands as a metaphorical space that accompanies subjects to any location.

While earlier borderlands scholarship often focused on the geographically circumscribed border region of the U.S.-Mexico border, more recent scholarship has merged with many of the concerns of scholars of transnationalism. For example, a volume edited by Denise Segura and Pat Zavella (2007), *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*, uses an expanded concept of borderlands to consider all of the U.S. and Mexico as potential parts of the borderlands. This is not unlike Nicolas De Genova's suggestion that cities with significant populations of immigrants from Latin America be considered a part of Latin America. He suggests the specific concept of "Mexican Chicago" in relation to the large number of Mexican immigrants there (De Genova 1998: 89-90; 2005). Offered as a corrective to perspectives that see Latin America as "outside the United States," and assimilation as the logical and desirable outcome of migration, De Genova suggests that "rather than an outpost or extension of Mexico, therefore, the 'Mexican'-ness of Mexican Chicago signifies a permanent disruption of the space of the U.S. nation-state and embodies the possibility of something truly new, a radically different social formation" (2005:190).

Conceptualizing the idea of borderlands as representing connected spaces (geographic, political, social, cultural, economic) that encompass multiple locations both on the literal border and in particular nation-states does not eliminate, but decenters the nation-state as the primary actor in immigration along with the individual.

Colonial borders: Racial and ethnic hierarchies written into nationalism

A border optic on migration and immigration which is multidimensional also permits us to deal with the issue of time compression in the ongoing construction, crossing, and codification of borders. An ongoing challenge for migration frameworks that focus primarily on movement between contemporary nation-states is in dealing with borders that have both current and historical dimensions to them. Specifically I want to raise the issue of the ways in which past colonial borders and categories linked to colonial states permeate the experiences of migrants today. Coloniality is understood as the ongoing vestiges of colonial processes of subjectification and identification that are the underside of modern states.

Coloniality persists after the formal end of colonial political regimes through the ongoing presence of colonial racial, ethnic, gender, and class hierarchies (Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2000). Such hierarchies are often submerged in the political culture of nation-states and are ever present as a part of nationalism. For example, after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the promotion of *mestizaje* (supposed mixing of "Spanish and Indi-

an") as a nationalist ideology was pushed in tandem with policies focused on incorporating the indigenous population. Writers such as Manuel Gamio, who called for the fusion of the races (1916), and José Vasconcelos, who wrote about "the cosmic race", reinforced the nationalist idea of Mexico as a one-race nation. This one race, the mestizo, required the erasure of "the Indian" and Afro-descendents.

Why do borders of coloniality matter in a discussion of contemporary migration? Afro-descendent and indigenous peoples are often glorified in histories of nationalism, but continue to struggle to obtain equal rights and recognition within the framework of many nation-states, even after they have won legal recognition in state constitutions. The fact that indigenous, Afro-descendent, and often women have to continue to demand "equal" rights is a manifestation of coloniality in many contexts. When Afro-descendent and indigenous peoples immigrate as part of a "national" group, they often face multiple forms of discrimination in the host context. They are discriminated against because of their national identity, but may also be further discriminated against by their fellow national immigrants for their racial and/or ethnic identity

Within Mexico, indigenous peoples are incorporated into a colonially-inherited system of merged racial/ethnic classification where they are ranked below "Mestizos" (a constructed category of "mixed race") and "White Spaniards" who supposedly have preserved their Spanish heritage over 500 years (Stephen 2002: 85-91). While such categories are certainly historically and culturally constructed and not biological, they continue to operate with political and social force in many parts of Mexico as well as among Mexican-origin populations in the U.S. For indigenous migrants who have come to the U.S., the racial/ethnic hierarchy of Mexico continues, but is also overlaid with U.S.-based racial categories.

Contemporary racial hierarchies in the United States are products of the process of U.S.-empire building linked to ideologies of Anglo superiority such as Manifest Destiny. The saying has consistently been used to justify U.S. expansion as "Anglo Saxons" bring democracy, progress, and enlightenment to "lesser" peoples, including American Indians, Mexicans, Phillipinos, Puerto Ricans, and others. As Ana Alonso points out, the discourse of Manifest Destiny conflated national origin and race (2008: 232). If Anglo-Americans were at the top of a racial/ethnic hierarchy, then Mexicans, American Indians, and Africans were at the bottom. The ethic/racial formations linked to U.S. nationalism have a strong impact on Mexican immigrants as do the ethnic/racial hierarchies produced by Mexican nationalism. And in both countries there are specific regional variations and histories of these larger ethnic/racial hierarchies.

Whereas "ethnic" distinctions are the primary markers of difference in Mexico, particularly in terms of how much people embrace an indigenous identity built on place, language, and ethnic autonomy, once Mexican migrants cross into the U.S., what was their national identity, i.e. "Mexicanness," becomes treated as a racial identity. Scholars of Latino Studies are increasingly taking on the racialization of cultural and ethnic categories in analyzing the varied experiences of Latinos in the U.S. (Fox 2006). The construction of all Mexicans historically as "illegal" or "potential illegals" also involves a process of racialization in the 19th and 20th centuries–with regional specificities.

We can use the borders of coloniality in both Mexico and the U.S. to understand the ways in which indigenous Mexican migrants become and continue to be a racialized category in the U.S. within the Mexican immigrant community and how Mexican systems

of ethnic and racial classification are influenced by and overlap with the historically and regionally-situated racial hierarchies in the U.S.

The role of states

While I have consistently made an argument here for using the term "transborder" community over "transnational" in order to partially decenter the position of the nation-state and national identity in how we conceptualize multi-sited migrant communities and the experiences of their members, it would be foolish to argue that we can write the state out of this discussion. Economic policy, trade policy, immigration policy, anti-drug policy, and national security policy are all arenas in which the nation-state is central and can profoundly affect transborder communities. In the U.S. the convergence of several different "wars" on the U.S.-Mexico border, the construction of additional border walls, and the Bush and Obama administrations' policy of raids on worksites and in residential areas with undocumented employees has made the state a common presence in transborder communities and families through their encounters with U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement (I.C.E.) officials.

Tony Payan (2006) makes a compelling case for how the 2002 reorganization of the Homeland Security Department conflated three different "wars" –the war on drugs, the war over the enforcement of immigration laws, and the war on terror– into one, and has placed them all on the U.S.-Mexico border. The "wall" is supposed to hold "illegal aliens," drugs and those who distribute them, and terrorists at bay. The unified "war", Payan demonstrates, has incorporated the strategy, tactics, personnel, resources, rhetoric, and hardware of militarization. The effects for those who live in the borderlands in places such as the forty-three border counties of Texas that are among the poorest in the U.S. are infrastructure and socio-economic deficiencies, enormous income inequality, and daily danger (2006: 138).

The politics and strategies of "homeland security," policing, and deportation as part of anti-gang, anti-terror, and anti-drug policy have become integrated with larger U.S. immigration policy to build a wall of exclusion and create blurred borderlands such as the ones found in U.S. and Salvadoran prisons for gang members and in particular neighborhoods of the cities of Los Angeles and El Salvador. Increased use of raids in places of employment in the U.S. have brought the policing of the U.S.-Mexico border into all Latino immigrant communities in the U.S., including those far from the border in locations such as Postville, Iowa, where in May of 2008, I.C.E. authorities arrested nearly 400 people and tore families apart (Hsu 2008: 1A). This is certainly a powerful demonstration of the capacity of the state to reconfigure transborder communities.

Conclusions

Transborder communities have complex current and historical trajectories that require a sophisticated array of analytical tools. Here I have emphasized the concepts of borders, border crossing and borderlands as a different optic for understanding how individuals and communities living in time and space compressions are able to build connections in multiple spaces at once and can construct, maintain and rework identities that

incorporate disparate forms of racial, ethnic, regional, national, gendered, and kin relations. In this discussion, I have specifically sought to take apart the homogeneity of nationalism as projected across borders and to emphasize the importance of regional histories of colonialism and the racial and ethnic hierarchies attached to this history. I have emphasized a disarticulated sense of border crossing, examining the multiple borders that migrants and immigrants cross, maintain, and re-articulate through their daily lives. I used the strategy of examining first the colonial mapping of place, space, people, race, and ethnicity in the American hemisphere and then argued that this colonial mapping is reworked and solidified in the racialization of Mexicans in the U.S. as "illegal" through U.S. immigration policy towards Mexico in the 19th and 20th centuries. I have suggested that we conceptualize transborder communities as linked together through networks that connect them not only to their home communities, but also to a wide range of other social actors, institutions, and communities in their host environment. If we have a multilayered, historically complex, and contemporarily rich picture of all of the borders that migrants cross and carry with them into multiple situations and places, then we get a sense of the counterweights that exist to the power of nation-states to impose legal and physical borders in peoples' lives, to police their own boundaries at any time or place, and to forcibly move and remove those who are excluded.

While it is clear that the construction of walls does not stop people from coming, analytically and historically deconstructing the notion of a fixed border/wall between the U.S. and Mexican nations also helps us to see how contemporary borders shift as well. Such an approach can help us to revamp formal immigration policy to match the reality of U.S.-Mexican life. We need a realistic and comprehensive approach which should minimally include: a path to earned citizenship, family unification, a safe, legal, and orderly avenue for migrant workers to enter and leave the U.S., labor protections for all workers, and border enforcement policies that protect the nation's security from those who truly endanger it while protecting the human rights of all individuals. Such a policy would suggest that we can move beyond the border and a border wall as ideological weapons. Instead, we can embrace the reality of extended borderlands and ensure that all the people within them are respected and included.

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