EMERGING TRENDS IN MIGRATION: CANADIAN AND AMERICAN MIGRATION AT THE BORDERLANDS

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ABSTRACT

This essay examines the increased securitization of the Canadian-U.S. border in the context of cross-border immigration. Of particular importance in this analysis are the historical and contemporary migration flows and spatial patterns of American migrants in Canada as compared to Canadians who reside in the United States. Data for this mixed methods study were gathered and analyzed from the Canadian and U.S. census for the years 1960-2006, bi-national polls conducted by Leger Marketing and commissioned by the Association for Canadian Studies, structured and unstructured interviews with Canadians in the U.S. and Americans in Canada, and survey questionnaires. Findings indicate that despite the shifting politics of the Canada-U.S. border in the post-9/11 era, more Canadians migrated to the United States and more Americans migrated to Canada in the first decade of the 21st Century than at any time since the 1960s.

提要

本文考察了跨国移民背景下美加边界日益增加的往来，并将重点放在加拿大的美国移民与美国的加拿大移民之间的比较：历史和当代的移民潮和分布模式。数据的收集和分析来自以下渠道：加美两国1960至2006年的全国人口普查数据；由加拿大研究会委托、Leger Marketing实施的两国民意调查；对美国的加拿大人和加拿大的美国人的各种结构性和非结构性访问；调查问卷。调查结果表明，尽管在9·11之后加美边界的政策有所调整，但21世纪的头十年相比20世纪60年代以来的任何时段，有更多的加拿大人移民到美国，更多的美国人移民到加拿大。

INTRODUCTION: IMMIGRATION FLOWS AT THE CANADA-U.S. BORDER

The Canada-U.S. border has long been known as the longest undefended border in the world (Beach et al, 2003). During the past nine years, however, securitization efforts following the events of September 11, 2001 continue to make crossing this border increasingly difficult for tourists and other temporary visitors, business travelers, and immigrants. Ever more restrictive policies promulgated by the Office of Homeland Security in the United States has launched an unprecedented era of change at the borderlands during the first decade of the 21st Century including a tripling of the total number of border agents, new passport requirements, and the use of a host of new inspection and identification technologies at border crossings (Konrad and Nicol, 2008a).

These new and more rigid border policies at the 49th parallel do more than simply regulate and control people

and territory (Alper and Loucky, 2007, 3). They also impede long-term transnational connections and networks on both sides of the border. Since borders are intangible abstractions as well as political markers, the Canadian-U.S. borderland in many ways resembles Benedict Anderson's notion of an "imagined community" – a zone created by multiple layers of relationships, meanings, and identities (1991). Understanding the significance of these borderland relationships and connections has long been of much greater importance in Canada than in the United States (since the majority of Americans seem to pay scant attention to issues related to their northern border despite post-9/11 media attention). In Canada, however, where more than two-thirds of the nation's population resides within one hundred miles of the border, it remains critically important to understand issues affecting the impacts of this internal North American political border. According to Downs and Sawchuck (2007, 1): "It is in Canada's borderland region where trade and economic linkages with the United States are at their strongest…and where cross-border relationships and networks of various kinds first developed to a significant extent."

This essay documents and analyzes the impact of more rigid border crossing policies on the migration patterns of two large groups of 'internal immigrants' at the borderlands to help unravel some of the complexities of migration, politics, and place in Canada and the United States. In the pages that follow, I address the following questions: What are the comparative spatial patterns of Canadian immigrants in the United States and Americans in Canada at the present time? Why do such large numbers of Canadians continue to migrate to the United States despite increased securitization of the border and economic challenges brought on by the global recession in the United States? Likewise, why have more Americans left their homeland for permanent residency in Canada during the past decade than at any time since the Vietnam War (despite the increased challenges of crossing the U.S.-Canada border brought on by the events of 9/11)? Answers to each of these related questions are provided in the sections that follow.

'INTERNAL' MIGRATION AT THE BORDERLANDS

The study of cross-border Canadian and American migrants is especially timely in this era of increasing anti-immigrant rhetoric in North America. In addition, Canada and the United States are both more commonly viewed as 'immigrant receiving nations' rather than as places shaped by out-migration. However, despite minimal attention to the flows of emigrants out of these two North America nations by the media and other scholars, American and Canadian migrants have continued to flow north and south across the border for more than three centuries.[1] In most cases, the number of Canadians moving to the United States has far outnumbered U.S. migrants to Canada. With the exception of three time periods – Loyalist emigration from the United States to Canada during and after the U.S. Revolutionary War era, the first two decades of the 20th Century, and the Vietnam War era – Canada sent two to three emigrants to the United States for every American who has headed north over the years (Simpson 2000). This trend has continued during the past decade, a period of time marked both by increased flows of Canadians to the United States as well as the largest migration of Americans emigrating to Canada in more than forty years (U.S. Census, 1960-2007; Statistics Canada, 1961-2006).

It is interesting to note that more Canadians have considered migrating to the United States than have actually done so. In an Association for Canadian Studies poll conducted by Leger Marketing in 2009, 29% of all respondents indicated that they "would like to live in the United States for at least part of the year." This bi-national poll also found that one in four Canadians also would like to completely eliminate the border with the United States despite the greater impact of the recession in the United States than in Canada and the challenges of more restrictive border crossings in recent years (see Jedwab and Hardwick, 2010c).

These broadly defined regions of Canadian and American immigrant settlement are summarized on the map in Figure 1 below:

- *The Atlantic Coast region* extending from a node of relatively dense American settlement in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick south to coastal Florida, a place rich in both Anglophone and Francophone Canadian settlement for more than five decades.

Figure 1: Cross-Border Physical Regions and Major Canadian-American Settlement Nodes



- *The Great Lakes region* extending from southern Ontario, where a network of cities and smaller towns have been home to a dense population of Americans for centuries, south to U.S. cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and Minneapolis-St. Paul where skilled workers and professionals from Canada have resided in large numbers for more than a century.
- *The Great Plains-Rocky Mountain region* that includes a relatively large population of Americans from Texas and other parts of the United States that reside in Calgary and Edmonton due to their employment in the oil industry, south to U.S. cities such as Denver, home to numerous workers, retirees, and alpine adventurers from Canada.
- *The Cascade Mountains-Pacific Coast* region stretching from the American-rich towns of southeastern British Columbia, Vancouver, and Victoria and more rural parts of Vancouver Island, south to a linear north-south Canadian settlement zone that includes the cities of Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles (the latter a city popularly known as the "largest city of Canadians outside Canada").

Along with the immigrants, temporary visitors, and business travelers who regularly cross the Canada-U.S. border are the accompanying lines of cross-border cars, trucks, and other vehicles. Figure 2 provides a summary of some of the busiest Canada-U.S. border crossings to help clarify the location patterns of border crossings within each of the settlement zones discussed above. As shown on this graphic, the three busiest ports include: (1) the border station at Windsor-Detroit that links the Canadian province of Ontario and the U.S. state of Michigan; (2) a series of border crossings located in upstate New York-southern Ontario; and (3) border stations located on the farthest western edge of the continent linking British Columbia with the state of Washington. These three busiest crossing points illustrate some of the many other crossing stations linking Canadian provinces and U.S. states shown on Figure 2.

A combination of economic cutbacks caused by the recession and more restrictive entry requirements at the border have both greatly reduced the magnitude of border flows overall at these crossing stations. According to a recent study of the impacts of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (that includes requiring passports at all border crossings for the first time in history), traffic levels have declined at the Canada-U.S. border during the past five years. Lower traffic volumes persisted throughout almost all of 2009 with a particularly large decline in crossings in the summer of 2009 immediately following the implementation of new WHTI requirements (Konrad and Nicols, 2008b). This finding begs the question: Have these

TABLE 1: Canada-US Border Crossings: States, Provinces, Number of Ports, and Share of Overall Traffic%

US STATE	# OF PORTS OF ENTRY	% OF CROSS-BORDER TRAFFIC	CANADIAN PROVINCE
ALASKA	2	0.1%	Yukon Territory
	3	0.3%	British Columbia
WASHINGTON	13	16.3%	
IDAHO	2	0.8%	
MONTANA	1	0.3%	
	6	1.3%	Alberta
	7	0.2%	Saskatchewan
NORTH DAKOTA	6	1.3%	
	12	1.9%	Manitoba
MINNESOTA	4	0.7%	
	3	3.1%	Ontario
MICHIGAN	4	27.7%	
NEW YORK	7	26.6%	
	10	3.8%	Québec
VERMONT	15	4.8%	
NEW HAMPSHIRE	1	0.1%	
MAINE	7	0.6%	
	17	10.8%	New Brunswick

Source: Border Policy Research Institute, Western Washington University. Border Policy Brief (Vol. 5:1:1.)

decreased flows of traffic at the borderlands been paralleled by a decrease in the number of internal immigrants during this same time period? To help answer this question, the next section provides a brief discussion of the fluctuating flow of American migrants to Canada over the years. It is followed by a comparative overview of the shifting numbers and patterns of Canadians in the United States to further address this timely question.

NORTHWARD FLOWS ACROSS THE BORDER: AMERICAN MIGRATION TO CANADA

As mentioned earlier, more Americans migrated to Canada during the past decade than at any time since the Vietnam War era (Statistics Canada, 1961-2006). This American diaspora expanded exponentially during the ultra-conservatism that framed the eight years of the George W. Bush presidency in the United States (Boswell, 2008). And, according to interviews conducted with Americans in Canada for the study reported on here, despite predictions to the contrary, the vast majority of these U.S. migrants in Canada do not plan to return home during the more liberal Obama era. Today, there are at least one million U.S.-born residents of Canada. The largest numbers reside in the Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Calgary metropolitan areas, and in smaller Canadian cities such as Halifax and Nelson, B.C. as well as in other more rural places (Statistics Canada, 2006; Hardwick and Smith, 2011 forthcoming). Despite the long history of American migration to Canada, with the exception of several important studies of draft dodgers and other war resistors who left the United States for Canada during the Vietnam War years, there are surprisingly few prior publications on the patterns, identities, and migration experiences of this little known immigrant group.[2]

The perception of Canada as a more liberal place than the United States and the shared languages, religions, and cultures of the United States and Canada have encouraged internal cross-border migration over the years. Perceptions of Canada as a 'place of refuge' for politically disenfranchised Americans began during the Revolutionary War when Loyalists left their homes in New England in resistance to anti-British attitudes in the United States then. Another example of Canada's role as a safe harbor for political refugees was the nation's strong support of the Underground Railroad in the mid-19th Century when runaway African American slaves from the Southern states were safely harbored in southern Ontario and Nova Scotia (Walker, 1980; Winks 1997).

The first two decades of the 20th Century encouraged much larger numbers of Americans to migrate to Canada. Encouraged by new Canadian immigrant settlement policies favoring agricultural settlers needed to populate Canada's Prairie Provinces, tens of thousands of rural Americans from the Great Plains and mid-western states left their farms seeking fertile farmland north of the Canadian border. A half century later, the largest wave of Americans ever to leave their homeland for political reasons, emigrated during and immediately after the Vietnam War as war resistors, draft dodgers, and other social and political activists (see Hagan, 2001, 2000; Dickerson, 1999; Kasinsky, 1976). By the end of the war in the mid-1970s, there were at least 100,000 of these anti-war activists from the United States living in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and elsewhere in Canada with about half of these remaining today. It has been estimated that Americans made up more than 20% of all immigrants in Canada during this time period (Jones, 2005).

A decade or so later, a whole new group of U.S.-born immigrants headed north to fill college and university faculty and administrative positions created by Canada's expanding system of higher education. They were joined by other Americans in the 1970s and 1980s who relocated to Canada's largest cities as 'economic elites' to open Canadian branches of U.S. insurance companies, banks, and other business operations after the passage of more welcoming transnational economic policies in Canada (Harvey, 1991; Hardwick, 2009). According to research conducted by Jack Jedwab, the majority of these and other American immigrants in Canada are highly educated and economically secure. He writes (as quoted in Baram, 2007, 2)

> *Those that are coming [now] have the highest level of education – these aren't people who can't get a job in the states. They're coming because many of them don't like the politics, the Iraq War, and the security situation in the U.S. By comparison, Canada is a tension-free place. People feel safer.*

Along with political refugees, economic elites, skilled workers, and other Americans in Canada have come ever-increasing numbers of retirees and 'midlife mavericks' from the United States who come seeking Canada's more open political climate as well as its environmental, economic, and social and economic amenities.

SOUTHWARD FLOWS ACROSS THE BORDER: CANADIAN MIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Similar increases in the number of Canadians emigrating to the United States have paralleled the northward flow of Americans to Canada during the past decade. As discussed below, approval of new 'open door' policies affecting worker visas as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), decreasing real estate costs in the United States brought on by the

recession, and the increasing parity of the Canadian and U.S. dollar continue to encourage more Canadians to settle in the United States since 2000 than at any time since the 1960s (Statistics Canada, 2001, 2006; Jedwab and Hardwick, 2010b).

This ongoing southward migration flow has an even longer history than the flow of Americans into Canada. It began when the British conquered Francophone Acadia in the 1600s thereafter forcing French-speaking Acadians to leave their homeland in today's Nova Scotia to start new lives in the United States. Many thousands of these displaced Acadians later moved on to the city of New Orleans after the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France. Here they planted a lasting imprint of Cajun culture in this part of the American South (Simpson, 2000).

Throughout the next three centuries, Canadians continued to seek economic opportunities in the United States. This ultimately led to fears in Canada of a 'brain drain' (Mansfield, 2007). Concerns that the United States was stealing some of the best minds and most highly skilled workers from Canada first surfaced in the 1920s. By the mid-20th century, the impacts of the brain drain on Canada's economy had become an issue of very serious concern. The majority of Canadian brain drain migrants were employed in the U.S. health care industry, and in engineering and education arenas. Most cited higher salaries, broader opportunities for career advancement, and a search for better and more stimulating jobs as their primary motivations for leaving Canada (see Hardwick and Smith, 2011, forthcoming).

The settlement of Canadians in the United States continued in earnest up to the mid-1960s when the passage of more restrictive U.S. legislation reduced the annual quotas of people allowed into the United States from any one country. This change in national immigration policy, along with the uncertain social and political climate of the 1960s and early 1970s, civil unrest, and severe economic challenges in the United States all resulted in a slowdown of Canadian migration south during this time period.

However, the decrease in the north-to-south migration flow changed dramatically after the passage of NAFTA in the mid-1990s. This new political and economic legislation strongly encouraged the trans-border flow of goods, services, and workers and also launched a new era of increased Canadian migration to the United States that continues to this day. Special 'Trade NAFTA' visas allowed college-educated Canadian professionals with certification of their employment in the United States to live and work there for an unlimited length of time. As a result, more than 28,000 Canadians migrated south in the 1990s with the majority arriving with TN visas in hand (Michalowski and Tran, 2008; Hamilton, 2006).

The ease of securing these new visas, along with the economic (and climatic!) amenities of life in the United States, resulted in a nearly 20% increase in the number of Canadians migrating south between 2001 and 2006 (Jedwab and Hardwick, 2010b). Concerns about the brain drain of Canadians to the United States continue today with much of this concern warranted. This group of immigrants is more highly educated, professionally skilled, and affluent than the overall American population. They are also three times less likely to be unemployed (Michalowski and Tran, 2008).

CONCLUSIONS: CANADIAN AND AMERICAN MIGRATION AND THE 'THICKENING' OF THE BORDER

As discussed above, the "longest undefended border in the world" is no longer undefended. Increased passport restrictions, a greatly increased number of new border guards, and new and more rigid border crossing regulations have resulted in a series of profound changes in the Canada-U.S. border since 9/11. In tandem with the economic challenges brought on by the recession, this thickening of the border has created a whole new border reality and resulted in dramatically reduced cross-border traffic (Konrad and Nicol, 2008b).

Despite these changes at the Canada-U.S. border in recent years, as this essay has shown, the number of Canadians in the United States and Americans in Canada has increased in recent years. Indeed, this cross-border flow of internal migrants is currently the largest number since the 1960s. One of the primary reasons that so many Americans are drawn to Canada is because of their perception of Canada as a place of refuge. Others have been attracted by the availability of universal health care, gun control laws, support for gays and lesbians, clean air and water and Canada's 'green' reputation overall, safety and security, and a shared belief in the value of living in a place shaped by multiculturalism.

In comparison, Canadians who emigrate to the United States are drawn there for economic reasons (as opposed to the decidedly political and/or idealistic magnets that attracted Americans to Canada). Other pull factors include the ease of securing a NAFTA visa, the attraction of affordable and available real estate (especially in the Sunbelt states such as Florida), and the climatic amenities in the United States.

Interestingly, this increase in Canadian-American migration at the borderland has not yet translated into a related increase in other border crossing patterns in the post-9/11 era. As discussed earlier, the number of cars, trucks, and other traffic at the U.S.-Canada border overall has decreased significantly in recent years. One of the unexpected reasons for this decline in cross-border traffic was revealed during interviews conducted for this study.

Most borderland immigrants reported that they had much less interest in visiting their homeland than in the past due to their frustration with long border wait times and delays, concerns about poor treatment by overly busy and stressed border guards, and fears of not being allowed to return to their new place of residence due to passport problems or fears of Homeland Security policies. The outcome of a 2010 poll conducted by the Border Policy Research Institute with Canadian and American stakeholders who regularly cross the Canada-U.S. border in the Pacific Northwest region corroborated this finding. This study found that the majority of respondents expressed a great deal of frustration at the frequency of long border delays as the primary reason for their decreased interest in cross-border travel (Konrad, 2010).

Many unanswered questions remain to be addressed in more detail based on the findings of this preliminary study of internal migration at the Canada-U.S. border. Will Canadians continue to be attracted to the United States at the end of the recession when U.S. housing prices are predicted to rise again and the overall cost of living increases south of the border? How will proposed changes in NAFTA and other economic and political policies affect the flow of goods, services, and people at the borderlands? Will American migrants to Canada, as compared to their Canadian counterparts in the United States, continue to be influenced more by the changing politics of their homeland than by economic considerations? If so, is it likely that the predicted return of ultra-conservative Tea Party-inspired policies in the United States will result in many more liberal Americans leaving for Canada in the near future? These and other related questions provide critically important avenues for further research as the shifting tides of change continue to affect North America's internal borderlands for many years to come.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] The terms "U.S. immigrant" and "American immigrant" are used interchangeably in this essay (even though the term "American" actually includes all residents of the Americas, including Latin America). However, because U.S.-born immigrants are referred to as Americans in Canada, in this article this term is used to refer only to people from the U.S. (due to its popular usage as such). Data presented in this analysis of Americans in Canada and Canadians in the U.S. are counts of all "U.S.-born" and "Canadian-born." This means that undocumented immigrants and others who are not included in data compiled by Statistics Canada and the U.S. Census Bureau in their "place of birth" tabulations are not included in these totals.

[2] A few notable exceptions to this dearth of published work on Americans in Canada and Canadians in the United States exist. One of the first published analyses of Americans in Canada was an online article written by Audrey Kobayashi and Brian Ray for the Migration Policy Institute. "Placing Emigration in Context" was released on January 1, 2005. It provides a look at the potential migration from the U.S. to Canada that was predicted after George Bush was re-elected as president in November, 2004 – a period of time when Conservative policies and attitudes in the U.S. made the more liberal policies and attitudes in Canada (especially as they related to social issues such as rights for gays and lesbians) more appealing for many Americans – thereby encouraging some to consider emigrating to Canada. My research for this essay also benefited from work accomplished by Randy Widdis on the historical flows of Americans at the Canada-U.S. borderland (see, for example, his "Borders, Borderlands, and Canadian Identity: A Canadian Perspective," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 15(1), 1997: 49-66 and "American Resident Migration to Western Canada at the Turn of the Century," *Prairie Forum* 22(2), 1997: 237-262) and extensive research on Canadians in the United States published by Simpson (2000). I am also indebted to the many contributions of Jack Jedwab to our co-authored research and publications and the ongoing collaborative spirit of our shared interest in immigration, identity, and place at the borderlands.