From Arrival to Incorporation

Migrants to the U.S. in a Global Era

EDITED BY

*Elliott R. Barkan, Hasia Diner,
and Alan M. Kraut*

Chapter 11

Immigrant "Transnationalism" and the Presence of the Past

Roger Waldinger

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the view that nation-state and society normally converge has waned. Instead, "globalization" is the order of the day, with international migration bringing the alien "other" from Third World to First, and worldwide trade and communications amplifying and accelerating the feedbacks traveling in the opposite direction. Consequently, social scientists are looking for new ways to think about the connections between "here" and "there," as evidenced by the interest in the many things called "transnational." The excitement is particularly great among those studying international migration: observing that migration produces a plethora of connections spanning "home" and "host" societies, scholars detect the emergence of "transnational communities," from which they conclude that the era of nation-state societies successfully keeping themselves distinct has now been eclipsed.

But does transnationalism—as idea or reality—represent anything new? For contributors to the foundational document—the proceedings of a 1990 New York Academy of Science meeting organized by the anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Blanc-Szanton—the answer was a resounding yes.[1] The development of social fields linking *particular* sending and destination countries, they argued, represented a decisive break with the past. Contrary to historical patterns and received social science notions, neither settlement nor the severing of ties to a home country was inevitable. In the contemporary age of migration, rather, "transmigrants . . . maintain, build, and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origins."[2] In so doing, the long-distance movers of the contemporary age expanded the range of "home" to encompass both "here" and "there," a change so fundamental that entirely new conceptualizations

were required. *Transnationalism* became the label used for identifying the social connections between receiving and sending countries, and *trans-migrants* denoted the people who forged those ties and kept them alive.

Even at the very moment of this debut, however, the historians were there to say that nothing, or at least, not much, was new under the sun. While the social scientists were simply accepting the dictionary's definition of *immigration* as movement for the purposes of settlement, the historians knew better, reminding their colleagues that the last era of mass migration was characterized by a continuous ebb and flow across and indeed around the trans-Atlantic. Nor was an immigrant or ethnic preoccupation with homeland politics anything new; *au contraire,* the literature told us, nothing was as American as agitating in favor of the homeland earlier abandoned.

Roughly fifteen years after debate began, we now all know better. Concerns generated by research on the international migrations of the contemporary era directed historians to patterns of which they had been aware but perhaps not fully attentive. The social scientists have agreed that connections between here and there were indeed seen before—though most still insist that there is something distinctive about the host-home linkages of today. More importantly, there is a steady stream of publications seeking to make systematic past-present comparisons—as opposed to the original practice of just pushing the issue off the table.

But from my vantage point, the record of the past decade and a half provides scant ground for satisfaction. On the one hand, the phenomenon that immigration scholars call transnationalism is fundamentally mislabeled and misunderstood. After all, connectivity between source and destination points is an inherent aspect of the migration phenomenon—no surprise, given the social networks that channel the process. However, those networks generate, not one, but a multiplicity of "imagined communities," organized along different, often conflicting principles, whether related to the scale of aggregation (local vs. national) or opposing visions of the "community" in question. Before the demise of the late, lamented workers' movements of the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, those "imagined communities" often conformed to the root meaning of *trans*national—extending *beyond* loyalties that connected to any specific place of origin or ethnic or national "group." But that was then, this is now: what contemporary immigration scholars describe as "transnationalism" is just long-distance particularism—a form of social action antithetical to transnationalism in any meaningful sense.[3]

Nor do the scholars of transnationalism do better when thinking about the possible relationships between present and past. To begin with, they dehistoricize the present, forgetting that it is but a moment in the flow of history, and therefore tomorrow's past. Likewise, they take temporal boundaries for granted, assuming, rather than explaining, just when and why the "past" stopped and the "present" began.

As to the existing debate, it has barely begun, having highlighted just one form of past-present connection—namely recurrence, by which I refer to the continued reappearance of trans-state immigrant and ethnic ties linking "here" and "there." The finding is surely important—but it simply reminds us that networks of goods, information, and people repeatedly and regularly extend beyond the limits of state institutions. To a large extent, long-distance migrant networks operate in much the same way whether extending within or across state boundaries—which is why much of the transnational literature concerns bilocal connections bearing no inherent relationship to international migration whatsoever.

However, the relationship between past and present takes more than one form, extending beyond recurrence to include secular change and contingency. Secular change entails direction, not just cyclicality. In this case, movement involves a historical shift toward a world increasingly divided by states, seeking to control movement across territorial boundaries, regulating the internal boundaries of membership, and nationalizing their peoples. Consequently, while social networks do connect nation-state societies—allowing *some* migrants to live both here and there—they don't always penetrate state boundaries.

If possessing direction, history is nonetheless indeterminate, reason for contingency to matter. Because international migration entails movement between states, it is a phenomenon of an inherently political sort. Therefore, the political uncertainties inherent in the relationships among states impinge on the ability of immigrants and their descendants to engage in activities that link "here" and "there." In particular, the security/solidarity nexus waxes and wanes with the degree of interstate tension, with the "dual loyalty" issue becoming particularly intense when belligerency develops between host and sending countries. While the shadow of war repeatedly falls over the trans-state social ties of immigrants and their descendants, it does so unpredictably—and thus contrasts with the regular, recurrent activation of migrant networks.

Having outlined these four different modalities by which past and present relate, I will now elaborate on each one.

Dehistoricization

Right from the start, historians scoffed at the notion that migratory expe-
riences organized by both "here" and "there" represented something not
seen before. Indeed, attention to the persistence and significance of mi-
grants' trans-state ties had long been on the historians' agenda. As noted
by the manifesto of modern immigration historiography—Frank Thistle-
thwaite's celebrated 1960 address—the migrations of the turn of the *last*
century entailed trans-oceanic, back-and-forth traffic of such amplitude
that only some portion of the phenomenon fell into the standard cate-
gories of settlement and acculturation.[4] Thus, by the time that sociolo-
gists and anthropologists "discovered" transnationalism, the historians
were documenting—in copious detail—that all was *not* new under the
sun. A trio of books, published in the early 1990s by Dino Cinel, Bruno
Ramirez, and Mark Wyman, and focusing on return migration, long-
distance nationalism, and immigrant associational life at the turn of the
twentieth century, underlined the many commonalities between "now"
and "then."[5]

That point has now been so frequently made that it has actually been
heard. Even so, the argument for discontinuity has proven remarkably
hard to abandon. As case in point, consider the writings of Alejandro
Portes, our foremost sociologist of immigration. Portes and his associates
first argued that the case for studying transnationalism rested on the very
novelty of the phenomenon itself.[6] Shortly, thereafter, these same authors
made due note of the historical precedents but sought to rescue the con-
cept by invoking the "fallacy of adumbration." Conceding that the phe-
nomenon was not new, the authors found that transnationalism illumi-
nated previously unnoticed parallels linking "contemporary events with
similar ones in the past" and therefore concluded that the concept yielded
significant added value.[7]

Today, the scholars of immigrant transnationalism repeat this very
mantra, telling us that the transnational phenomenon may be old hat, but
little matter, as the transnational concept does "new analytical work,"
to quote Robert Smith.[8] Yet a close look at the writings of such diverse
authors as Robert Smith, Luis Guarnizo, Peggy Levitt, and Nina Glick
Schiller shows that the emphasis on past-present divergence remains in
place.[9] According to these authors, a complex of factors makes "now" fun-
damentally different from "then":

- The effects of technological change—reducing the costs and time
  entailed in communication and travel
- The shift from the melting pot to multiculturalism—legitimating
  the expression of and organization around home-country loyalties
- The nationalization of home-country societies—increasing the sali-
  ence of the national identities with which immigrants arrived
- The advent of a new international human rights regime (labeled
  postnationalism)—diminishing the difference between "nationals"
  and "foreigners" by circumscribing the power of receiving states

But whether the concept or the phenomenon is thought to be new, the
same basic problems remain. In claiming discontinuity, the scholars of
immigrant transnationalism have fallen victim to the presentism charac-
teristic of their disciplines and times. After all, the distinction they draw
between today's world of migrant connectivity and yesterday's world of
migrant uprooting simply reproduces the familiar antinomies of social
science, most notably that of a "closed" past and an "open" present.[10] As
with the study of globalization or transnational relations, the original
framing of the question has therefore produced exactly the same so-called
discovery—that the phenomenon happened before and in surprisingly
similar ways.[11] On the other hand, if one hadn't started with these particu-
lar blinders, one might have asked more productive questions.

Moreover, the second line-defense, emphasizing the novelty of the
transnational concept and the new illumination it sheds, convinces only if
the concept correctly specifies the salient aspect of the situation at either
point in time. But that is precisely what contemporary scholarship fails to
do, emphasizing parallels while obscuring the fundamental contrast: that
contemporary migrations, because they occur in a world carved up by na-
tion-states, are both international and political in ways that were simply
not true before. No doubt, parallels exist between now and then; for that
reason, one has to note that they probably also extend to the factors that
brought the earlier era to an end. While scholarship is right to emphasize
the recurrence of migration, a point to which I will return to in a moment,
one need be attentive to other, less predictable events that can work in the
opposite direction. And so, if we take past-present parallels seriously, we
need to concede that the current state of affairs is not inevitable but rather
a contingent outcome, subject to unpredictable pressures that could burst
today's era of global interconnection asunder, as occurred in the past.

To begin with, the technological determinism asserted by the proponents of immigrant "transnationalism" surely deserves second thought: after all, the simple letter did a remarkably effective job of knitting together transoceanic migration networks, as the reader of *The Polish Peasant* will surely recall.[12] As the historians of globalization point out, moreover, the impact of the telegram was almost as fundamental as that of the Internet; yet neither the telegram nor any other, contemporaneous advances in communications and transportation technology prevented the slide into autarchy experienced for much of the twentieth century.[13] On the other hand, a political environment supportive of immigrant and ethnic long-distance nationalism should hardly be taken for granted. The evidence for the influence of international norms, or of an international human rights regime, is far from compelling.[14] If, instead, domestic political actors have been responsible for relaxing the distinction between nationals and foreigners, movement in the other direction is no less possible. Likewise, the greater legitimacy accorded expression of homeland loyalties is better understood as a product of the moment, not a permanent feature of advanced democracies. The liberal universalism of those social and political groups supportive of immigrant rights does not naturally converge with the highly particularistic attachments of immigrant long-distance nationalists, especially if the latter create new fissures among groups that first encounter one another in the American context, as for example, when African Americans and Cubans clashed over the visit of Nelson Mandela to Miami.[15] The key point is that immigrants' ability to act here in pursuit of objectives located there is chronically a subject of contestation, which is why what the scholars call transnationalism the public labels "dual loyalty." Regardless of what scholars think of such views, they matter and are ignored at our own peril.

Recurrence

Conventional social science views overlap with folk understandings: both assume that nation-states normally contain societies (as implied by the concept of "American society"), which is why the appearance of foreigners and their foreign attachments are viewed as anomalies expected to disappear.

The scholarship on migration tells us exactly the opposite: the advent of international migration is the *normal*, recurrent social outcome: net-

works of information, goods, and services *regularly* extend beyond the economy, which is why outsiders keep on showing up. In part, it is simply a story of capitalist economies relentlessly expanding beyond the ambit of any national society, even as they generate positions into which a newly activated labor force can move. In part, it is a story of the problem-solving strategies of the migrants, who use their most important resource—namely, each other—to consolidate networks linking "here" and "there" and in turn making it easier for the poor to try to exploit the rich for purposes of their own. Whatever its causes, international migration is a native, *not* alien phenomenon—even though nation-state societies would like to pretend otherwise.

Consequently, the proliferation of ties extending beyond the territory that states seek to enclose reappears in virtually every migrant context—whether "now" or "then," whether in the United States or in any of the world's other major receiving nations. Moreover, population flows across borders leave large numbers of persons moving back and forth in a state of transition, not yet certain where to settle, let alone how much importance to place on the connections "here" as opposed to "there." Over the long term, the networks that breach the nation-state society also pull the migrants away from home environments and encourage settlement. The short- to medium-term horizons, however, may look quite different. As long as migration increases, so too does the density of persons for whom home is not "here," a factor affecting the predispositions of veteran migrants as well as the opportunities they confront. More migration tends to cause more cross-border ties.

But if connections linking here and there are a recurrent feature of the migratory phenomenon, they are not a feature distinguishing international from other forms of population movement. Social networks lubricate long-distance migrations of all types, whether extending across borders or linking country and city within the same state. In some respects, long-distance migrants are all one of a kind: as Michael Piore argued years ago, what matters is not the color of the identity card or passport but rather that migrants are social outsiders, evaluating conditions here in light of the standards there.[16] Using a different terminology, the economic historians have confirmed this point of view: after the 1920s, when international migration was cut off, displaced rural Americans provided most, if not all, of the substitutes that employers needed.[17] And for further evidence, one can reference New York's own history of ethnic succession, where one group of migrant laborers has been more or less interchange-

able with any other, regardless of whether their origins were to be found within the United States or beyond its borders.[18]

Consequently, long-distance migrants, whether international or internal, undergo a similar experience: displaced from familiar ground, they get treated as strangers, which is why they suddenly discover a commonality in people originating from the same place. Whether we call them *landsmann* or *paisano,* immigrant hometowners and their organizations are at once ubiquitous but also *fundamentally bilocal*—that is to say, oriented toward attachments and activities linking *particular* places here and there. While these bilocal ties define the principal subject matter of the literature on immigrant transnationalism, the phenomenon bears no intrinsic relationship to international migration as such.[19]

Moreover, even migrations internal to modern, nation-state societies can be sufficiently displacing as to generate new connections around the place left behind. As an uprooted New Yorker, I both know whereof I speak and connect with a long-standing tradition of strangers trying to adapt to the strange land called California. In the 1920s, for example, midwestern migrants to Los Angeles created state-based associations that picnicked, through the 1960s, in the very same L.A. public parks where Salvadoran and Guatemalan associations now gather.[20] Indeed, the Iowa association of Long Beach survives to this very today. In the 1930s, the displaced southwestern farmers made into "Okies" and "Arkies" by fearful Californians not only held on to their local attachments but kept shuttling back and forth between the golden state and their old homes, in a fashion quite similar to that of the Mexican field hands who replaced them when times improved.[21] In the 1950s, as Deborah Dash Moore has told us, second-generation Jewish migrants to Los Angeles thought it necessary to form *landsmannschaften* to bring together, not ex-Bialystokers or ex-Pinskers, but rather the displaced New Yorkers from various parts of the Bronx or Brooklyn.[22]

Of course, we do need to take the international dimension of migration seriously: transborder bilocalism differs from intrastate bilocalism and more so now, when regional differences within the United States have declined, than before. But the key point, to invoke the stilted language of social science, is that discovering connections between "villages" or "communities" here and there simply confirms the null hypothesis: social networks both lubricate long-distance migrations *and* provide the basis around which new forms of community are constructed after the move has taken place. However, these relationships also arise in almost any mi-

gratory context, whether within or across state boundaries. Therefore, they do not identify the distinctive traits of international migration, regardless of whether our focus falls on the world of "now" or that of "then."

Secular Change

The "concept of transnationalism," contend Alejandro Portes and his associates in their widely cited and hailed reformulation, should be delimited "to occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contact over time across national borders for their implementation."[23] It is not for me to contest the claim. But I can note that this reformulation makes freedom of movement the point of departure, as if this were not a world divided by states, many of them expelling their undesirable residents, whose humanity proves insufficient reason for the so-called liberal democracies to open their doors. In this respect, the proponents of transnationalism turn out to share the same biases as the advocates of assimilation, who tell us that "assimilation" is the decline of an ethnic difference,[24] without noting that it is also the *making* of difference between national "peoples." As the sociology of assimilation obscures the coercion involved in excluding outsiders—via control of external borders—and in distinguishing between members and unacceptable residents of the territory—through regulation of the internal boundaries leading to citizenship and legal residence—it also reveals itself to be ideology of the nation-state society.[25] Consequently, the usual distinctions between assimilation and transnationalism mislead.

Neither transnationalism nor assimilation grapples with the inherently political nature of the phenomenon in question; for these reasons, the literature has yet to confront the alternative hypothesis, regarding past-present contrasts, advanced by Hannah Arendt more than a half century ago. Because of the global spread of the state system and the nation-state society, argued Arendt, the condition of having *no* home—*not two homes*—is what distinguishes "now" from "then."[26]

For Arendt, the old order exploded with World War I, though she conceded that the episodes of persecution and forced migration that followed the Great War represented nothing new. "In the long memory of history," as she wrote, developments of this sort "were everyday occurrences." What had changed, rather, was the emergence of a world completely organized into nation-states, conceived of and understood in familistic and commu-

nitarian terms. Entire classes of peoples found themselves expelled, "not because of what they had done or thought, but because of what they un- changeably were." And those deprived of a state found "themselves thrown out of the family of nations altogether," as "the loss of home and political status became identical with the expulsion from humanity altogether."[27]

While the Arendtian world and the world at the turn of the twenty-first century may not be fully identical, she fully captured the underlying trend. In the long run, the rise of massive state apparatuses *controlling* popula- tion movements between states, and rationalizing distinctions between foreigners and citizens, represents the most striking development. Unlike the situation at the turn of the century, persons migrating across interna- tional boundaries are not simply assessing the right mix of costs and ben- efits, as the economists insist. Today, they must also confront "a problem of political organization," just as underscored by Arendt.

To begin with, international migration is a pervasive, yet quantitatively minor exception to the system by which states bound mutually exclusive populations: after all, only 2.5 percent of the world's population is cur- rently living in a state different from the country of birth. What the liberal democracies dignify by the name of immigration policy is utterly misla- beled: rather, it is an exclusion policy, designed and maintained with the intent to keep out. Looking at the numbers of aliens who have entered the territory of this particular state, some large portion of whom have also been accepted into its nation, one might say that exclusion is pursued without effect. But if we consider the potential pool of migrants, not to speak of the lines patiently waiting for visas—whether permanent or tem- porary—in U.S. consulates and embassies all over the world, then the suc- cess of the fundamental policy is beyond doubt.

Moreover, the state-building efforts entailed in immigration restriction and the state-spanning processes that occur when migration networks ex- tend beyond the state container inevitably collide, yielding a set of cross- pressures that have increased, not diminished, the political impediments to international migration. Thus the United States earlier had a border but scant territoriality, which is why immigrants could come and go as they pleased. As the historical studies have shown us, restriction did not so much choke off movement as alter its pattern. Bottling up established ports of entry simply pushed new flows toward less regulated areas, in turn eliciting yet a further exercise of state power to gain control over space.[28] Though the process has been exceedingly protracted, the once near-open, informally regulated border, long managed in response to re-

gional or local preferences, has now been completely politicized and for- malized, with control extending to the entire perimeter of the United States. Of course, the border is leaky—which border isn't? But notice the intensity of the effort to keep people out, as evidenced by the steady mili- tarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and the extension of checkpoints to a zone well north of the border itself.[29] Note also the rising toll of mortality among unauthorized border crossers—an outcome produced only when one prefers to extinguish rather than recognize the humanity of people not like oneself, just as Arendt would have predicted.[30] And though unsuc- cessful in deterring movement to *el norte*, and therefore derided as "smoke and mirrors" by the leading sociological authorities, current border poli- cies have significantly discouraged unauthorized Mexican migrants from returning home—thus highlighting the newly created political obstacles to the sort of "regular and sustained social contact" across borders that supposedly distinguishes the immigrant transnationalism of today.[31]

Of course, the students of immigrant transnationalism will insist that the political trends work the other way: today's world is increasingly gov- erned by a trans- or postnational human rights regime, which is why im- migrants can pursue their various forms of long-distance particularism with a freedom unknown before. But in making this argument, they get the time order all wrong, as one can see by focusing on the refugee regime, an example of transnationalism in the very truest sense of the world. As implicitly argued by Arendt, and later reformulated with precision by Aristide Zolberg, the refugee is a product of the modern world.[32] The mi- grants of the turn of the twentieth century certainly included people flee- ing political hostility but few, if any, for whom a failure to find safe haven would have meant death. Nor was that search for safe haven a desperate venture, as the immigration countries of the times exercised so little bor- der control that they greeted revolutionaries and peasants with the same welcome. What case better exemplifies this unhappily long-lost world than that of Leon Trotsky, in February 1917 a Bronx man, in October 1917 a leader of the Russian Revolution?[33]

It was the subsequent actions of states—expelling their undesirables, while closing themselves off to the unwanted—that impelled the creation of the interwar refugee regime. And the career of our same revolutionary highlights the limits of this interwar transnationalism: once unarmed and outcast, the prophet Trotsky discovered that virtually no place on earth would harbor the likes of him.[34]

Like its interwar predecessor, the contemporary transnational refugee

regime is not just a creation of and adaptation to the actions of states; it remains the weaker party, giving way when it clashes with claims to state sovereignty, as illustrated most notably by the experience of the United States. The United States never acceded to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, even though the convention largely applied to refugees from the Soviet bloc, precisely the outcome desired by the United States. In 1967, the United States finally agreed to observe most of convention's obligations but retained its own narrow view of how refugees were to be defined, which in practice made refugee policy a matter not of humanitarianism but of U.S. foreign policy. While things changed significantly with the passage of the 1980 Refugee Act, the executive branch lost little of the latitude it had long possessed. Politics, not humanitarian considerations, determined where external boundaries would be enforced and with what degree of vigilance, as evidenced by the very different treatment accorded persons fleeing to the United States by boat from Haiti, as opposed to those coming from Cuba. Although land borders have been more difficult to enforce, the insistence on sovereign control of internal boundaries is clear. Asylum remains granted for those coming to the United States for reasons approved by the executive branch, as Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees have learned to their distress. These unhappy experiences notwithstanding, the relatively liberal asylum regime introduced by the 1980 Refugee Act is already a thing of the past, with the advent of expedited removal reducing rights of review and increasing the state's power to deport.[35]

Of course, none of this precludes international migrants from seeing "themselves as transnational, as persons with two homelands," to quote Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron.[36] Likewise, they can imagine themselves as "transnationals" and construct individual and social identities in transnational form, as Levitt and Mary Waters have recently suggested.[37] Those views, however, are hardly binding on anyone else. Not only do states not only exercise control over who enters the territory and enjoys rights of membership once there, but their capacity to do so has increased significantly between the last age of mass migration and today's.

Contingency

Whatever can be said for sociologists or anthropologists, the historians always knew that homeland attachments loomed large in the lives and communities of immigrants—with some significant degree of retention extended to second and third generations. But in those bad old days, before the correct terminology had been learned, scholars conceived of homeland attachments in terms of "dual loyalty"—as can be seen by opening the canonical 1980 *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, where an essay on just that topic is to be found.[38]

Chronological time does not measure the distance between 1980 and 1989, when the short twentieth century, as Hobsbawm called it, seemingly came to a close.[39] With the Berlin Wall dismantled and the Cold War concluded, the onset of a more pacific era appeared to signal the end of the mutually exclusive national loyalties that had earlier prevailed. In this more relaxed context, states no longer had the same reason to greedily control the allegiance of members and residents. This was all the more so for the world's hegemon, whose newcomers mainly came from poor, weak, and often small states—not of the sort to present a threat to anyone.

How quickly things change! While hindsight is always 20/20, the possibility that tolerance of dual loyalties would respond to the ebb and flow of international tensions should be no surprise. After all, national identity is relational: we define ourselves in contrast to alien peoples and external states. From this perspective, international migrants are the internal aliens, whose links to foreign people and places, so emphasized by the students of immigrant transnationalism, are precisely what renders them suspect.

It is the relationships among states that determine whether persons with foreign attachments are viewed benignly, as adding to the spice of social life, or malignly, as Trojan horses. In general, a peaceful world encourages states to relax the security/solidarity nexus; by contrast, international tension, let alone belligerence, provides the motivation to tighten up on those whose loyalties extend abroad.[40] Of course, predicting just when such tensions will rise or fall seems to exceed the capacity of social science: no one forecast the sudden demise of the Soviet Union, let alone the bombing of the Twin Towers. On the other hand, history does seem to teach us that the pendulum inevitably shifts, which means that international phenomena can be expected to intrude on the political bona fides of persons whose social identities are largely framed by their connections to two very distinct, sometimes opposing states.

War provides the supreme challenge. One can *try*, when war breaks out, to profess allegiance to two mutually belligerent states, but that often proves a difficult effort to pursue. No one is more threatening than the detested and feared Other who happens to be located within the boundaries

of one's own state. Moreover, the popular nature of modern wars threatens to transform immigrants from enemy countries into potential enemies, as happened in all the liberal democracies during each of the world wars.[41]

Hopefully, we won't face this test again, at least not in our lifetimes. Even so, the relative international tranquillity of the 1990s should not have blinded analysts to the threats on the horizon. Well before 9/11 one could have seen that immigrants originating from countries with unfriendly or tense relationships with the United States ran the risk of falling into the "enemy alien" trap. As shown by the Wen Ho Lee case, one only had to question a single person's loyalty for America's political rivalry with China to suddenly cast a shadow over the political legitimacy of an entire group. Though the shadow of suspicion receded after the case against Lee collapsed, the latent threat posed by potential conflict between an ever-more-powerful China and a United States prone to saber-rattling never fully disappeared. Before the Trade Tower bombings one could have also noted that long-distance nationalism in all its forms (including that of the time-honored ethnic lobby) did not come so easily to Arab Americans, reason to conclude that the exception proves the rule: when loyalty is in question, long-distance nationalism is a hazardous game.

Just how the sudden inflection of international tension in the early twenty-first century will affect the pursuit of immigrant and ethnic homeland loyalties is anyone's guess. But the lessons of history do indicate that the perception of external threat builds support for a more restrictive view of the national community. Past experience also shows that the American state has the *capacity* to monitor, control, and restrict the trans-state social action of international migrants and their descendants; whether and to what extent that capacity will be activated is a matter to which scholars of immigrant "transnationalism" will now surely want to attend.[42]

Conclusion

The "transnationalism" field emerged with the conviction that the case of contemporary migrants living "here" and "there" represented something new. Understandably, critics responded by saying, *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* Alas, this sort of discussion is nothing but a trap. History involves change, which is why any particular historical constellation is distinct from other like developments encountered before. But no phenome-

non lies beyond history or exists in and of itself. Consequently, historical knowledge develops through comparison: the task involves specifying both the similarities and the differences that distinguish one historical period from another. As I have argued in these pages, the periodization of the contemporary era needs to be taken seriously; but in the end, we do want to know how and why "now"—whenever that may be—differs from "then."

If the historical project is to progress, we cannot proceed by making ourselves prisoners of our age. One understands that self-congratulation is no more alien to social scientists than to the man or the woman in the street, which is why we continue to construct oppositions between a supposedly open present and closed past. But the reality is quite different. While long-distance, trans-state migration has been seen many times before, the efforts of nation-states to keep themselves apart from the world represents something relatively new. Therefore, our question is how the recurrent, state-spanning processes of migration collide with the reactive, often illiberal, often coercive, efforts to enclose nation-state societies and bound a national community. As I have contended in this essay, the advent of that collision is a historical event, entailing an ongoing process encompassing us all. While contemporary immigrants living "here" certainly act in ways that yield leverage "there," they do so in ways that reflect the continuing presence of the past. It is possible that the foreign attachments of America's immigrants will continue to experience the acceptance enjoyed in recent years. But the storm clouds stirred up since September 2001 should leave us all wondering whether the present may not also yield place to the past.

NOTES

1. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992).

2. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, "From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration," *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (1995): 52.

3. For further discussion of the scholarship on immigrant "transnationalism," as well as the distinction between "long-distance particularism" and a transnationalism consistent with the word's meaning, see Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald, "Transnationalism in Question," *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 5 (2004): 1177–95.

4. Frank Thistlethwaite, "Migration from Europe Overseas during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in *Population Movements in Modern European History*, ed. Herbert Moller (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 73–92.

5. Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860–1914* (Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1991); Dino Cinel, *The National Integration of Italian Return Migration, 1870–1929* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

6. Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt, "The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 217–37.

7. Alejandro Portes, William J. Haller, and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo, "Transnational Entrepreneurs: An Alternative Form of Immigrant Economic Adaptation," *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 2 (2002): 184.

8. Robert C. Smith, "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspective: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian, and Polish Cases," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 725.

9. Nina Glick Schiller, "Transmigrants and Nation-States: Something Old and Something New in the U.S. Immigrant Experience," in *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*, ed. Charles Hirschman, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh DeWind (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), 94–119; Luis E. Guarnizo, "On the Political Participation of Transnational Migrants: Old Practices and New Trends," in *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, ed. Gary Gerstle and John H. Mollenkopf (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001), 213–63; Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robert C. Smith, "Comparing Local-Level Swedish and Mexican Transnational Life: an Essay in Historical Retrieval," in *New Transnational Social Spaces*, ed. Ludger Pries (New York: Routledge, 2001).

10. Jean-Loup Amselle, "Globalization and the Future of Anthropology," *African Affairs* 101 (2002): 213–29.

11. Harold James, *The End of Globalization: Lessons from the Great Depression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Audie Klotz, "Transnational Activism and Global Transformations: The Anti-apartheid and Abolitionist Experiences," *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 1 (2002): 49–76.

12. William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1974).

13. On the ways in which earlier transformations affected both sending and receiving societies, see Jose C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

14. As argued by, among others, Christian Joppke, *Immigration and the Nation-State: The United States, Germany, and Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford Univer-

sity Press. 1998), and Virginie Guiraudon, "Citizenship Rights for Non-citizens: France, Germany and the Netherlands," in *Challenge to the Nation-State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Christian Joppke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

15. For background on the conflicts produced by divergent long-distance loyalties among ethnic Miamians, see the account in Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Of course, events in contemporary Miami are neither new nor particular to that place. As the historical record shows, disputes based on home-country polarities yield internecine conflicts that belie claims of a transnational "community"—as in "the war of the little Italies" earlier in the century (John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972]) or clashes between nationalists and communists in contemporary U.S. Chinatowns (Zai Liang, "Rules of the Game and Game of the Rules: The Politics of Recent Chinese Immigration to New York City," *Migration, Transnationalization, and Race in a Changing New York*, ed. Hector Cordero-Guzman et al. [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001]). Alternatively, opposing home-country loyalties can create adoptive-country cleavages, as illustrated by contemporary disputes among Arab Americans and Jewish Americans (Yossi Shain, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999]) and the earlier frictions between African Americans and Italian Americans spurred by Italy's invasion of Ethiopia during the 1930s, or the discord between Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans provoked by Japan's invasion of China (John F. Stack Jr., *Ethnic Conflict in an International City* [Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979]).

16. Michael Piore, *Birds of Passage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

17. Henry Gemery, "Immigrants and Emigrants: International Migration and the U.S. Labor Market in the Great Depression," in *Migration and the International Labor Market, 1850–1939*, ed. Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson (New York: Routledge, 1994), 175–203.

18. As I argued in Roger Waldinger, *Still the Promised City? African-Americans and New Immigrants in Postindustrial New York* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

19. For further evidence, see David Fitzgerald, "A Nation of Emigrants? Statecraft, Church-Building, and Nationalism in Mexican Migrant Source Communities" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2005).

20. Joseph Boskin, "Societies and Picnics as Stabilizing Forces in Southern California," *California Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1965): 17–26.

21. James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

22. Deborah Dash Moore, *To the Golden Cities: Pursuing the American Jewish Dream in Miami and L.A.* (New York: Macmillan, 1994).

23. Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, "Study of Transnationalism," 219.

24. Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

25. For a fuller development of this argument, see Roger Waldinger, "Foreigners Transformed: International Migration and the Making of a Divided People," *Diaspora* 12, no. 2 (2003): 247–72.

26. Hannah Arendt, *The Age of Totalitarianism* (1951; reprint, New York: Harcourt, 1996).

27. Ibid., 294 and passim.

28. On the extension of border controls following passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, see Ramirez, *On the Move,* and Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

29. Timothy J. Dunn, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978–1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home* (Austin, TX: CMAS Press, 1996).

30. Wayne Cornelius, "Death at the Border: Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of US Immigration Control Policy," *Population and Development Review* 27, no. 4 (2001): 661–85.

31. Douglas Massey, Jorge Durand, and Dumas Malone, *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).

32. Aristide Zolberg, "Matters of State: Theorizing Immigration Policy," in Hirschman, Kasinitz, and DeWind, *Handbook of International Migration.*

33. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

34. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963).

35. Gil Loescher and John Scanlon, *Calculated Kindness: Refugees and America's Half-Open Door, 1945 to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1986).

36. Nina Glick Schiller and Georges Fouron, "Everywhere We Go, We Are in Danger: Ti Manno and the Emergence of a Haitian Transnational Identity," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 2 (1990): 341.

37. Peggy Levitt and Mary Waters, eds., *The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational Lives of the Second Generation* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).

38. Mona Harrington, "Loyalties: Dual and Divided," in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups,* ed. Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 676–86.

39. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Pantheon, 1994).

40. John A. Armstrong, "Proletarian and Mobilized Diasporas," *American Political Science Review* 70, no. 2 (1976): 393–408.

41. As I argued in Waldinger and Fitzgerald, "Transnationalism in Question."

42. See David Cole, *Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism* (New York: New Press, 2003); Gary Gerstle, "The Immigrant as a Threat to American Security," in *The Maze of Fear: Security and Migration after 9/11,* ed. John Tirman (New York: New Press, 2004), 87–108.