BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION
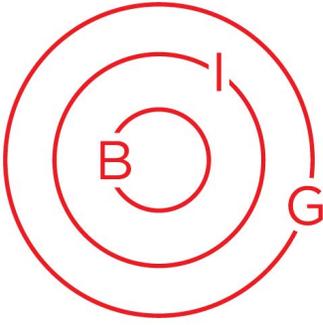
Borders in Globalization Research Project 72

Geographies of Border Research

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This study, comprised of a critical literature review and discussion, traces the dominant discourses and narratives present in fields of inquiry focussing on visa and citizenship, labour migration, border security, and border theorizing over the past twenty years of research on North American borders. The study identifies a number of key philosophical, empirical and theoretical issues within these areas, and uses that discussion as a foundation for introducing a number of new potential fields of inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

The study of borders in North America covers a vast and multifaceted territory of academic discourse, drawn from fields as disparate as history, philosophy, political science, sociology, and geography. Scholars who engage in work around and within the borderlands of North America are concerned with not just border policy, but with theorizing about the social, economic, and political meanings of borders as well. How are states bordered? How do states border themselves and others? Who, through the process of bordering, becomes bordered? Where do these borders end?

This study is the product of an investigation of the limits of contemporary border research in North America; it is an investigation of the geography of border research that focusses on a twenty-year period of North American history, from 1994 until 2014. Its purpose is to illuminate the directions that research and policy-making in the fields of citizenship, immigration, labour migration, and border theory/securitization have taken in North American scholarship over the past two decades and to highlight areas where research is dated, weak, or – in one or two cases – almost nonexistent. While the study aims to be comprehensive, it is not exhaustive.

This study will begin with a comprehensive literature review arranged along four major axes of investigation which, when taken together, will set the stage for the second major section featuring a discussion of some of the potential avenues of future research. The first section of the literature review focusses on the research surrounding visas, visa regulation, and the paths to citizenship in Canada and the United States, with an emphasis on Canadian visa policy. This section will examine the various narratives of citizenship, as well as the shifts in visa regulations

from family reunification in the 1990s to more economics-based priorities in the opening decade of the twenty-first century.

The second major component of the literature review will focus on scholarship that focusses on labour and labour migrations; it will also examine some of the research on semi-legal and illegal labour migrations across North American borders, including human trafficking, smuggling, and terrorism.

The final two sections of the literature will focus on the development of 'theories of borders' in North American research, and will examine what the author has identified as an epistemological rupture in research and policy regarding borders in the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington in 2001. This section will highlight the abrupt – though understandable – reconfiguration of border discourses from a focus on policy integration and trade liberalization, to one fixated on the threat of border penetration or subversion by hostile state and non-state actors. This final section will end with a discussion of contemporary perspectives on border navigation, with particular attention paid to the attempts at integrating pre-9/11 narratives of trade and liberalization with the post-9/11 realities of North American security concerns.

Part two of this study will grow from the literature and will examine a number of interesting avenues for potential research. The first of these will be an examination of what the author calls "border bubbles"; spaces deep within the territory of the state, where populations of new citizens, landed immigrants or undocumented persons have established linguistic and cultural enclaves that are distinct and separate from the surrounding culture.

There will also be a discussion of what the author refers to as the "ignored borders" of North America's Indigenous Peoples – particularly of Canada's First Nations Peoples, who have been engaged in treaty negotiations with the Canadian government over land and territory since the nation's inception. How do indigenous groups and post-colonial scholars contest the geopolitical borders of North America, especially in light of the existence of a pre-Contact network of borders and borderlands across the continent – one that reveals its continued influence through the complicated treaty negotiations between the various First Nations of Canada and the Canadian State? Is Canada in fact a patchwork of contested – yet ignored – borderlands?

Finally, this study will introduce the curious case of the Sovereign Citizens movement, a group of individuals who exercise personal freedom and agency through the explicit rejection of national and state/provincial citizenship. Does the act of rejecting citizenship signal a new strategy of manifesting personal agency?

PART ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Immigration, visas, and paths to citizenship

Canada, like the United States, is a nation founded on immigration, and like the United States, immigration patterns in Canada has taken many different forms. In the earliest years, immigration was a tool of nation-building; immigrants from primarily European nations were encouraged to come to Canada to settle the vast territories claimed by the British (Boyd and Vickers 2010: 2). Over the next several decades, the numbers of immigrants waxed and waned, and by the 1990s, the numbers of immigrants to Canada had climbed to an almost 100-year high, with the majority of immigrants choosing to settle in major metropolitan areas, rather than in

rural ones. (Boyd and Vickers 2010: 9; also Green and Green 2004: 111). For the first half of the twentieth century, Canada's immigration policy was discriminatory and explicitly favoured British, American, and Western European immigrants until the adoption of the "point system" in 1967 which had the effect of limiting the discretionary power of individual immigration officers by implementing a standardized system of assessment (Green and Green 2004: 117; also Green and Green 1995; Freeman, Leal, and Onyett 2013). The newly adopted point system allowed the Canadian government to establish a set of controls over immigration flows while at the same time allowing government agencies to manage immigrant applications by ensuring that only those potential immigrants whose applications met Canada's specific criteria could gain entrance.

A great deal of the literature that focusses on immigration in Canada focusses on the role of the point system in limiting the number – or tailoring the types – of immigrants seeking to enter the country (Goldring and Landolt 2011; Koslowski 2013; also Walsh 2010), or in identifying the differences between the Canadian point system and the American immigration system as a way of explaining the different trends in migration in these two states (Freeman, Leal and Onyett 2013; Beach, Green, and Worswick 2007; see also Martin and Lowell 2005). The central focus of the bulk of this literature is the extent to which either system attracts skilled labourers, which reveals that for the most part, the discourse of immigration remains – and has remained since at least the 1990s – firmly neoliberal in its outlook. This is hardly surprising, but what is interesting is how comparatively little has been written on the implicit inequalities in Canada and the United States' immigration systems – particularly with regards to the infrastructural impediments to even applying for residency that have emerged from an increasingly digitized and online application process. How, for example, does a lack of computer

access artificially reshape the pool of potential immigrants seeking residency and citizenship? As Dale, LeMay, and Mariam (1993) point out, the increasing difficulties in securing legal access to immigration for impoverished potential immigrants or asylum seekers can often lead to the emergence of new challenges to state sovereignty. If, for example, refugees or migrants from unstable or conflict nations wish to access Canadian immigration services, but a lack of physical offices or consulates prevents them from doing so, they may instead resort to various forms of 'gate-crashing' behaviour such as flying in using forged credentials, or resorting to human smuggling on container ships or other means.

Beyond discussions of the point system in Canadian immigration policy, a second major focus of research on citizenship reveals the centrality of labour and labour skill as the current, foundational requirement of potential citizens. Unlike previous epochs of immigration, contemporary immigration and citizenship discourse focuses almost entirely on the linkage between citizenship prospects and labour skills (Adamson 2006: 169). This focus is no accident: the literature clearly and repeatedly highlights the less-than-subtle shift in the attitudes of most major industrialized nations towards a policy of importing skilled labour (Adamson 2006: 168) at the cost of limiting other types of migration, such as humanitarian or family reunification (Aydemir, 2011; Borjas 1994; also Boyd and Thomas 2001).

In recent years, a number of scholars have begun to use the Australian immigration system for comparison when examining the economic and social outcomes of the Canadian visa system, largely due to Australia's adoption of the point-system (and because of the United States' failure to do so) (Hawthorne 2013; Walsh 2007; also Sweetman and Warman 2013). This shift is notable as an example of a slight decoupling of Canada and the United States in some areas of the literature on citizenship and immigration. This new Canada/Australia linkage seems

to be relatively isolated however, as the majority of the literature on Canada's immigration policy remains firmly welded to that of the United States.

Running throughout the body of this literature is the subtext of citizenship. Specifically, there is the meta-discussion of narratives of citizenship within Canadian and American immigration policy: what constitutes citizenship, who is a citizen, and what does a citizen 'look' like (Abowitz and Harnish 2006: 654)? The literature around the subject of citizenship is quite large, and much of it is theoretical in nature. In the case of the body of literature reviewed in this study, a number of different streams of theorizing emerge. The largest of these streams flows around the question of exclusion: who, precisely, is able to claim the title of 'citizen' (Stasiulis and Bakan 1997; Shachar 2009)? As Shachar (2009: 21) points out, the overwhelming majority of people acquire their citizenship through birth; the same 'birthright' traditions also allow for the transfer of wealth or property, and remain two of the last vestiges of laws of hereditary entitlement.

Shachar's point is subtler than that however, because through this information, she reveals that in this stream of citizenship discourse at least, the overwhelming majority of the people who hold citizenship rights are rendered effectively invisible by virtue of their status as 'natural' citizens. No one questions their right to citizenship, nor challenges any claims they may make to its privileges; the question of citizenship is one that is only posited to those who are seeking to redefine their political membership. Shachar concludes her examination of citizenship by introducing a new understanding of citizenship, one that emerges from an individual's participation in the social life of a state, rather than by virtue of being born within its borders (2009: 173). This call for re-theorization has been picked up by other contemporary citizenship scholars (Sassen 2010: 238).

Connected to this stream is another, parallel one which examines the question of who should *not* be considered as candidates for citizenship – particularly with regards to the extent to which socially marginalized groups like refugees, guest workers, and illegal residents ought to be considered as potential citizens. As an example, some researchers have pointed out that there is a tension present in citizenship discourses about the status of migrant workers within a state: should they be seen as citizens – or potential citizens – by virtue of their participation in local and national economies and culture, or should they be seen instead as merely passing through, present but with no real attachment to the state (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdkul 2008: 155)? Similar sentiments are echoed by North American researchers, particularly those interested in the debates around citizenship for illegal Latino migrants in the United States (Gitter, Gitter and Southgate 2008; Glenn 2011; also Heyman 2001)

There does however seem to be fewer examples of a more qualitative analysis of the narratives of new citizens within the Canadian and American states; what are their experiences as citizens? Do they feel a sense of membership with their new home state and, perhaps more importantly, do they feel as though all of the rights and privileges of their citizenship have been extended to them in the same way as it has been for 'natural' citizens? That is not to say that no such studies have been undertaken; certainly Ruth Lister's *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (1997[2003]) has been well received, and there have been a number of studies conducted with both indigenous Canadians and Latino Americans about citizenship, but more research is needed; establishing and enforcing the boundaries of citizenship is one of the primary functions of the state, and a manifestation of a polity's borders.

Labour Migration and Border Policy

The process of globalization has in recent years resulted in an emphasis on labour migration research among scholars whose work revolves around borders, border policy, and immigration. This is in many ways the natural outcome of the shifting priorities of Canadian and American immigration policies (to say nothing of the immigration policies of the rest of the Global North); when it comes to determining the suitability of individual visa applicants, no other category has more influence than those of skills training and education (Reitz 2013: 147). Literature in this area is plentiful and wide-ranging, covering topics from remittances and money transfers (Gitter, Gitter and Southgate 2008) to the impacts of migrant labour on domestic agriculture (Preibisch 2012). Throughout the early and mid-1990s, a large section of the literature around migration was occurring in the shadow of the collapse of the Soviet Union; in this climate, some scholars were suggesting that the narratives around migration were shifting such that migration could be viewed as the new security threat to the state (Mehan 1999: 257).

This view of migrant labour was often at odds with state policies that increasingly came to view migration as an economic necessity, but as Jorge Bustamante astutely points out, much of the disparity between these two visions of labour migration can be explained by understanding the narratives of migration at the border – particularly if that border lays along the Rio Grande (Bustamante 1999: 1113). Racist border and immigration policies are hardly a new phenomenon, but research on the subject has illustrated that the intersection of officially non-racist government policy, when coupled with the racist predispositions of some border and immigrations workers, results in "schizophrenic immigration policy" (Ogletree 2000: 762).

Discussions of the various narratives of security, criminalization, and illegality of labour migrants occupy a large segment of the literature discussing the status of guest workers in both Canada and the United States. This discussion incorporated research dealing with both 'native'

American citizens and recent immigrants and migrant workers. In research conducted in El Salvadorian communities in the United States, for example, Susan Coulin revealed that the exclusionary narratives faced by naturalized and newly immigrated El Salvadorians tended to encourage those women and men to accept an at best liminal form of US citizenship; though they may live in the United States for most of their lives, they felt that they would never be made to feel as though they were full participants in the American polity (Coulin 2003: 511). Other research conducted with American citizens indicated that while many Americans were in favour of guest worker programs of one sort or another, the majority of Americans polled were only in favour of such policies if they were coupled with increased border security programs (Sheyerah, Fennelly and Fedorico 2008: 746). These two studies are illustrative of the overarching narrative of exclusion and security that pervades much of the literature on guest workers and other migrant labour groups.

Themes of security and exclusion in discussions of guest workers and other migrant groups were exacerbated by the terrorist attacks of 9/11; immediately following this event, border security became one of the most prominent national debates. Guest workers became *de facto* security risks, and a number of researchers took up the challenge of separating legitimate migrant labourers from the security threats – in the form of drug cartels, smugglers, and terrorists posing as students or temporary workers (Neumayer 2006; Salter 2004; Sarrica 2005). The militarization of the US/Mexico border that occurred throughout the 1990s further cemented the image of migrants as national threats in the minds of many Americans and, as a result, elected officials began to pursue ever more 'hardline' approaches to border enforcement – even at the cost of increased deaths among undocumented migrant workers (Brownell 2001: 70; Eschbach, Hagan, Rodriguez, et al. 1999). More recent research has moved away from this trend however,

as debates around border policy and migrant labour have refocused on the economic impacts of temporary workers on national economies (Palivos 2009; Sager 2012).

Finally, a large component of the literature on migrant labour focusses on the semi-legal and illegal patterns of migration, focussing in particular on patterns of forced migrations and human trafficking (Salt and Stein 1997). One of the most intriguing questions to emerge from this literature centers around the subjects of migrant agency and the conferring of citizenship. When investigating if migrant workers are receiving rights or citizenship under current immigration and naturalization policy regimes, an often overlooked question is: before we talk about if migrant workers should benefit from rights or citizenship privileges in the polities where they work, we should first be asking the question, do they want them (Ontonelli and Toressi 2013: 786)? In other words, one area of migration and labour research that appears to be overlooked is the question of agency; should researchers assume that the lack of rights held by migrant workers is something the workers themselves are seeking a remedy for?

The question is a challenging one, because it may reveal a paternalistic tone in much of the discourse around migrant worker rights. If migrant workers are in a country against their will, as in the case of many instances of sex trafficking or other forms of human smuggling, then it seems obvious that the case must be made for extending the rights and protections of the state to them as well. If, on the other hand, migrant workers are present in a foreign nation of their own free will, and with the knowledge that they are doing so without the benefit of access to the host nation's legal systems, how can their position be investigated in a way that does not first assume that they are in need of aid or advocacy?

Another troubling pattern that emerges from the literature about labour migration and immigration grows out of how labour has been defined by researchers and policy-makers. In

particular is the binary categories of 'skilled' and 'non-skilled' or 'high-skilled' and 'low-skilled' labour. Over the past two decades, the emphasis for immigration officials has been on attracting workers from the 'high-skills' category, as evidenced in the Canadian context by a renewed emphasis on education and training for visa applicants. From a theoretical perspective, such a distinction – and the accompanying desire for high-skilled workers – makes sense, but a closer inspection reveals a troubling pattern. In most countries, those professions or fields of work that fall into the 'high-skills' category are dominated by men, while women – and "women's work" – is routinely categorizes as 'low-skilled' (Macklin 2003: 464), despite whatever demand may exist for such work (Jeffreys 2008: 71; also Bertone 1999). What this means in practical terms is that when applying for Canadian visas, men are far more likely to be categorized as 'high-skilled' (and therefore desirable), while women who apply for visas are more likely to be allocated to the 'low-skilled' (an undesirable category). This trend points to one of the perhaps unintended effects of the type of labour categorization most commonly used in states of the Global North, and while these effects have been studied in detail, there appears to be less research and theorizing taking place around understanding and addressing the cause.

Border Theorizing

What borders do for states is a function of what states think that borders are. In this sense, national borders are discursive social, political, and economic institutions of the state (Paasi, 1999: 670) and as such, how borders exist theoretically in some measure determines their possible functions. Do borders exist as a security membrane that encloses a polity? Are they the boundaries of economic activity and therefore the gateways between a state and its trading partners? Are borders the sites of conflict or of negotiations of sovereignty, or can they be seen

as tools of discipline and control? Each of these understandings of borders and borderlands are present in the theoretical literature, as are a number of important points of tension – and rupture.

Prior to 2001, the bulk of the theorizing around borders was concerned with questions of globalization, liberalization, and trade (Jenson 1995: 101). While international crime – particularly crimes involving the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and persons across national borders continued to be a topic of considerable discussion and research, the 1990s were largely seen as a decade of economic growth, following the apparent death of communism as a global force. Many of the discussions within the literature of that decade situated questions of citizenship, migrant labour, and border management within the broader debate around economic performance; would immigrants impact national economies and if so, would that impact come at the cost of native citizens (Borjas 1994: 1667)?

Borders in this sense were seen as something of a business arrangement between or among rival economic actors. The aim of border policy became a discussion about how best to navigate the competing aims of the state – how best to manage the need to facilitate the efficient movement of goods, capital, and labour, while maintaining the security and integrity of the nation. Which of those interests was emphasized the most however, was determined largely by which border a researcher was looking at. While the border between the United States and Canada remained unguarded for the most part and subject to increasingly harmonized border policies, the border between the United States and Mexico emphasized security and the militarization of border policy (Meyers 1999: 266).

By the late 1990s, the tone of border theory appeared to change. While trade liberalization and efficiency of border crossings remained hot topics of discussion, other, critical voices emerged to question whether the border could be viewed through a more Foucaultean

lens. Instead of viewing borders as the physical, empirical boundaries of a state, could borders be seen as tools of discipline – did borders function as a manifestation of the state's attempts to control the movements of people and ideas? This fascinating development in border theory emerged as a challenge to the assumption that controlling the movements of individuals was a natural privilege of the state (Torpey 1998: 241). Torpey argued that while states did not manage to *effectively* control the movement of individuals across borders, they had nevertheless monopolized the *authority* to do so (Torpey 1998: 240). This vein of border theory has retained the interest of a number of researchers, who continue to utilize Foucaultean (and Deleuzean) understandings of power, control, and discourse to illustrate that while the traditional role of the border – as a militarized frontier – has become less important in the nations of the Global North in recent decades, its importance as a site of governmental control over the mobility and movement of citizens and objects has grown (Walters 2006: 188; also Adey 2004: 502).

But the control of individuals and objects along borders and within borderlands is not a solo project for states, because in addition to being sites of control, borders and borderlands remain sites of negotiation between two or more states – negotiations that include which state's interests take precedent in cases of conflict. The question is not "do states control their own borders" but rather "how much control does a state exert in negotiations of borderland spaces?" (Abizadeh 2008: 43). This question requires further investigation, especially in the post-9/11 environment of competing national discourses and policies regarding border enforcement and cross-border migration.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, borders as sites of security and interdiction again rose to prominence, especially after the capture of the would-be "millennium bomber" at the Port Angeles border crossing in 1999. Not for the first time, policy-makers and researchers alike

called attention to the difference in border policies between the United States and Canada, noting – in the eyes of American and some Canadian officials – the relatively lax regulations governing the acquisition of documentation required for obtaining Canadian passports (so called 'breeder documents' such as baptismal certificates or student cards) (Salter 2004: 83). This scrutiny revealed another focus of research: the fundamental disagreements that existed between comparatively tiny Canada and the neighbouring colossus to the south. In a contest of wills between these two states over border security concerns, how would Canada operate, and which nation's priorities would win out (MacLeod, Roussel, and van Mens 2000: 346)? Two years after the capture of Ahmed Rassam in Port Angeles, this question, and the broader discussion of borders as militarized frontiers became the dominant theoretical discussion in border research.

Epistemological ruptures and the aftermath of 9/11

There is a perception that the immediate reaction to the devastating attacks of September 11th, 2001 was one of rage; fury at the perpetrators of the attacks. It was not; the immediate reaction was one of fear. Air travel in the United States was disrupted for months as travellers sought other, land-bound modes of transportation to the extent that some scholars have suggested that air travel by 2007 had still not returned to the levels that would have existed had the attacks never occurred (Blunk, Clark, and McGibany 2007: 370). While the United States and its NATO allies geared for a punitive war in Afghanistan, popular sentiment in North America drove policy-makers to radically redefine domestic security, not only along the borders, but in the case of the United States, across the entirety of the polity. In November of 2002, the United States, through an executive order of President George W. Bush, created the Department of Homeland Security in order to coordinate the domestic security and law enforcement services of the United States. This radical reorganization of government agencies, the largest since the beginning of the

Cold War, was designed to streamline communication and coordination among the many disparate departments and agencies of US law enforcement, including those responsible for border security, immigration, and customs.

The results of this reorganization were profound, not only in terms of its effect on the appearance and management of US borders, but also in terms of its effects on the state of border research and theory (Andreas 2003: 79). Prior to 9/11, border scholarship had been deep in discussions about the dissolution of borders and the emergence of 'post-border' states (such as the emerging European Union), or with the increasing pace of North American integration through NAFTA and other international agreements (Andreas 2003: 6), but after the terrorist attacks, discussions of integration were largely shelved in order to focus on more immediate concerns. Discussions of immigration and labour migration as potential security risks re-emerged with a vengeance. This was as true in Canada as it was in the United States, where the House of Commons debated rapid – and some argued draconian – changes to Canada's immigration policies (Adleman, 2002: 17). The security of the border – the need for security at the border – was no longer a question of *if* it was needed, but rather *how much* was needed, and border scholarship followed suit. The new security paradigm emerging across North America and Europe had profound effects on the discourse of border studies, which now had to take as given the fact of increasing militarization and control along borders and particularly at border control points and crossings.

New discourses about the effects of borders and bordering on bodies, long a part of border theory, came to the forefront with renewed focus, as states across the Global North radically strengthened their surveillance and interdiction capabilities at virtually every point of ingress and egress from the state, from border crossings to train stations and airports (Sparke

2006; Salter 2006). These new discourses, like those of Torpey from the mid-1990s, focussed on the policing and monitoring of bodies and objects as they passed from one jurisdiction to another, and drew heavily on concepts of surveillance, panopticism, and biopower. Throughout the latter half of the first decade of the twenty-first century, new perspectives on borders, security, and mobility began to emerge from feminist theorists (Calavita 2006), post-colonial theorists (EagleWoman and WasteWin 2008), and researchers investigating concepts such as whiteness and white supremacy (Triadafilopoulos 2013). These critical works join an already interdisciplinary discourse on the study of borders and borderlands, a field of research now spanning virtually every discipline of the social sciences and humanities.

While far from exhaustive, this literature review has touched on many of the dominant streams of research and theorizing across a number of different policy realms including citizenship and visa regulations, labour migration, and security in both pre and post-9/11 paradigms. The review's primary purpose was to illustrate the general trends in the research in these fields, and to provide some few critiques and reflections along the way. There are many more streams of work than are included here, but this review is comprehensive enough to serve as the foundation for a discussion of some potential new directions of study for researchers looking at borders in a globalized world.

PART TWO: AVENUES FOR NEW RESEARCH

The scholarship dealing with borders and borderlands is impressive, to say the least, and it spans a plurality of fields in a way that makes the resultant synthesis of theoretical and empirical data stronger than had the research sprung from a single discipline. In this study, the author would like to add to this discussion by highlighting a number of possible avenues for future research that may help to address a number of empirical and theoretical gaps in the current

literature. The first of these potential avenues focusses on what the author refers to as "border bubbles" – geographic or cultural spaces within a polity that retains the language, culture, social values of the residents' nation of origin. The second avenue of research looks at the question of border "ownership". Since borders are almost always shared between two or more states, and since the border concerns of participant nations are rarely perfectly harmonious, the question arises about which nation's concerns should predominate. In many border relationships, there is often one state that is more powerful – economically, militarily, etc. – than the other, and it seems trivial to assume that the more powerful neighbour's agenda will control discussions. But normative questions about which state *should* control or 'own' a border or rather, questions about what state officials feel about border ownership, may provide insight into state actions globally.

Another field of potential research grows out of the issue of "ignored" borders; in Canada in particular, the indigenous peoples of Canada's First Nations are the inheritors of borders and borderlands which predate Contact with Europeans. For the most part, border theorists and policy-makers alike seem to overlook these traditional boundaries in favour of theorizing about the contemporary geopolitical borders of North America. But this stance ignores the fact that these 'ignored' borders remain a part of the Canadian mosaic not only culturally and socially, as markers between the different nations of Canada's indigenous peoples, but also legally in the case of the multiple on-going treaty negotiations between the Canadian government and different First Nations. Given the growth rate of Canada's indigenous populations, and given the renaissance in indigenous culture, language, and traditions, it seems that perhaps these ignored borders won't be for much longer.

A final area of new research focusses on the curious case of anti-government patriot groups, such as the Sovereign Citizens. Such groups are nothing new; numerous such organizations and movements have existed in North American states for as long as those states have existed, but the Sovereign Citizens present researchers with an interesting philosophical question: can the rejection of national citizenship constitute an example of political agency, or of a new form of citizenship negotiation? If citizenship is seen as a birthright of being born within a particular polity, then does the rejection of that birthright, and the subsequent adoption of a more limited form of citizenship, constitute a theoretical or epistemological challenge to the concept of birthright citizenship?

Border Bubbles

When sociologists John Myles and Feng Hou investigated the phenomenon of ethnic enclaves in Toronto, they showed that non-white immigrants to the city followed similar patterns of settlement as non-white immigrants in other North American cities did – they tended to settle in immigrant-dominant neighbourhoods among people from similar geographic origins (2004: 52). This trend can be seen in most other major metropolitan centers with large numbers of immigrant residents, and where such enclaves are large enough, residents can often live the bulk of their lives insulated from the culture of their newly-adopted home country. They can buy or rent homes, shop for clothes, food, and essentials, and find entertainment in the language of their birth, and targeted to their native culture without having to travel far from where they live (Xie and Gough 2011: 1292). In fact, for ethnic enclaves to exist, they must be geographically contiguous (Xie and Gough 2011: 1291). If these enclaves are large enough, such as in the case of the Golden Village in Richmond, British Columbia, could it be possible to view them through the lens of border theory? Is there a borderland between immigrant enclaves and the surrounding

social, cultural, and economic regions? If such borderlands exist, how might they react to the expansion of the enclaves they border, or to external pressures from the surrounding regions? How would the lens of border theory – and of viewing the regions surrounding immigrant enclaves as borderlands – effect how municipal and provincial governments treated questions of development or zoning?

The existence of such enclaves present something of a challenge to traditional notions of citizenship which could also be investigated. While it is true that immigrant enclaves are geographically a part of their host nation, and therefore subject to the laws and political activities of the polity, they are also an example of what the author considers a "zone of resistance" in which the residents of the enclave live a type of citizenship that appears to resist assimilation or integration. Could an investigation of these enclaves as a form of encircled or contained borderland within a nation provide insights that a more traditional investigation might overlook?

Border Ownership

International borders are by definition sites of tension; they represent the geographic and discursive boundaries between competing international agents. Borders also serve as the manifestation of the limits of many forms of state control over its citizens, and as the literature from border studies has shown, these tensions radiate out from the physical demarcations between states to encompass the geographic and discursive spaces on either side. And while borders also serve as the limits of a state's claims to property, the border itself is often seen as a neutral ground; it occupies space that belongs to one state or another, but the border itself is often jointly controlled. But in the eyes of border protection agents – particularly those who work along the borders – who really *owns* the border? Since ownership implies a number of rights and permissions not associated with other relationships to land or infrastructure, then can there be a

fruitful discussion around narratives of ownership? Do Canada and the United States view control – or ownership – of borderland spaces in different ways? Who is encroaching/squatting/occupying whose land?

Ignored Borders

Post-colonial theorists often contest the traditional geopolitical borders of North America by arguing that prior to Contact, the continent already featured a complex system of borders, borderlands, and migratory routes established by indigenous peoples. In Canada, some of those pre-Contact borders remain, and are manifested in treaty negotiations. Do the borders between First Nations and the surrounding social/cultural/geographic spaces matter? Is Canada a patchwork of borderlands? This question opens up the possibility for critical research into the contested political geographies of North America; it enables researchers to approach the question of border and bordering through the rejection of Westphalian articulations of state and border, and through the (re)adoption of traditional articulations of space and identity. Indigenous borders have not disappeared; they are reified through Canada's system of treaty negotiations between the federal and provincial governments and the First Nations involved. Indigenous borders have historically been ignored, but there is evidence that they are making themselves felt once again.

The most prominent example of the (re)manifestation of indigenous borders within the Canadian state can be found in the Nisga'a Final Agreement which came into effect in 1999 and through which the Nisga'a peoples regained partial control over 2000 square kilometres of their traditional lands (Blackburn 2007: 622). This treaty settlement created a new administrative institution within the province, and served as a reminder that while the majority of Canadians accept the current borders of the Canadian state as natural, there exists another layer of borders beneath the surface.

Research into the ignored borders of indigenous peoples could also serve to open up a space for post-colonial and indigenous scholars to reveal the importance of understanding indigenous lives from their own unique perspectives, and to show that although the Westphalian model of nationhood is currently in vogue, there are other, subaltern understandings of nations, borders, and citizenship that must be recognized and understood.

The Rejection of Citizenship as Political Agency

When one thinks of activism around the concept of citizenship, the most common image is usually that of individuals struggling to receive recognition in the eyes of political authorities. The idea is that for marginalized groups, their ability to fully participate in the affairs of the state have been unfairly limited, and so activism is required in order to empower such groups to take their place in society as fully participatory citizens. These struggles often revolve around security voting or property rights, or around gaining access to state protections or the full privileges of citizenship, but over the past twenty years, another form of protest movement has emerged, one in which the *rejection* of citizenship is the focus of their activism. Members of this movement call themselves 'sovereign citizens', and they argue that they are not bound by the authority of the federal government – or even by the authority of state or provincial governments. Instead, sovereign citizens argue that the highest level of legitimate government is the municipal – or possibly county – government; anything higher is illegitimate.

Although estimates vary, it is reasonable to estimate that there are around 300,000 sovereign citizens in the United States (Theret 2011: 853), and perhaps as many as 30,000 in Canada (Bilinksy 2012). Unlike other activists groups who organize rallies or demonstrations, sovereign citizen activists largely resort to threatening behaviour, filing pseudo-legal documents or liens against properties owned by government officials or judges (called "paper terrorism" by

the FBI), or engaging in often farcical courtroom arguments with judges, bailiffs, court stenographers, or citizens they encounter in the hallways. But in addition to this form of activism, some sovereign citizens elect to adopt more extreme forms of resistance. Since 2008, individuals who identify as sovereign citizens have killed six law enforcement officers, including two in 2010, when two officers were killed by a sovereign citizen and his 16-year old son at a routine traffic stop (Bilinsky 2012).

Many sovereign citizens in the United States are deeply immersed in activism around what are often dubbed "second amendment concerns"[1], in addition to their anti-government activism, arguing that any federal law which attempts to regulate the ownership of firearms – any firearms – constitutes a form of tyrannical overreach by the federal government. As a result, sovereign citizens as a group tend to be heavily armed and deeply distrustful of any manifestation of federal authority.

Sovereign citizen activism tends to revolve around a central philosophical tenet: in order to be ruled by a government, or in order to become a member of a body politic, adults must give their explicit consent, otherwise any attempts to regulate their activity constitutes a violation of their personal sovereignty. Sovereign citizens often argue that governments have no right to tax them or require them to obtain licenses or registration for vehicles, property or firearms, and that by refusing to accept the authority of the state, sovereign citizens argue that no form of court of tribunal has any power over them (Finch and Flowers 2012).

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[1] The 2nd amendment in the United States pertains to the right of individuals to bear arms. While the exact intentions of this amendment remain contested, rulings by the United States Supreme Court have tended to favour the 'individualist' argument, which sees the amendment as containing two distinct sub-clauses, one which mandates the regulation of militias and another establishing an individual's right to legally obtain firearms.

Despite this troubling pattern of behaviour, and despite the large numbers of Americans and Canadians who adhere to this ethos, almost no academic research has been conducted on the movement. The majority of information available on sovereign citizen beliefs and practices comes from grey literature produced by various local, regional, and national law enforcement agencies or legal societies. Outside of any interest this movement may have for border studies, this dearth of serious research is not only startling, but almost unfathomable, given North American researchers' focus on terrorism and security threats to the state. Despite the movement's connection to a string of violent attacks, standoffs and courtroom battles, academic research has remained absent, a situation that stands in sharp contradiction to the attention given to such groups during the 1990s – particularly after the Oklahoma City bombing, perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh, a man with a number of ties to the sovereign citizens. This lacuna demands to be addressed.

In the more immediate context of studies of borders and borderlands however, the sovereign citizens present a subject of research that can be approached from multiple angles. Theoretically, the question of how to understand their activism presents a fascinating point of departure for studies looking at the re-negotiation of citizenship in the twenty-first century. Can a group which rejects citizenship be helpful in understanding how citizenship is performed in contemporary societies?

How do sovereign citizens understand their position vis-à-vis the society in which they live? What little research has been done on the movement has generally held the movement at arm's length; most of the first-hand recounting of the movement's beliefs have been culled from journalist interviews or transcripts of court cases or police interviews. In most of these situations, the sovereign citizen is placed in the position of defending their faith from hostile interviewers,

but how might sovereign citizens discuss their beliefs and the reasons for their activism if they were given the time, space, and venue to do so freely and without fear of attack or debate? In other words, how might the personal narratives of sovereign citizens help illuminate the beliefs and attitudes that drive the movement?

CONCLUSION

The field of border studies sits at the intersection of a great many different spheres of research and as such is able to posit questions and conduct inquiries based on existing bodies of knowledge spanning a wide array of disciplines. This study has attempted to identify and review some of the dominant themes and research interests of several of the key fields of study that influence border studies. This study first reviewed the literature around questions of citizenship, from research into the nature of North American visa regulations and their impact on immigrant populations in Canada and the United States, to theoretical questions about the nature of citizenship itself. The review illustrated that within the field of research, the dominant strands of investigation focussed on the changing nature of the Canadian point system and the resultant challenges to traditional concepts of citizenship based on birthright or economic input.

The second field of study reviewed here examined the discourse around labour migrations and the nature of immigrant labour in North American economies. The review illustrated how discourses about labour or the nature of foreign workers depended very much on the narratives about the workers' countries of origin; workers migrating from Mexico for example, were often viewed with suspicion by native citizens, while workers from Canada or other nations of the Global North were viewed more favourably.

The final area of study centered on how researchers from outside of border studies theorized the concept of borders; what narratives of borders predominated the research? In particular, how did the discourse on borders change following the events of 9/11? This study showed that in the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks, discourses about borders underwent a paradigmatic shift, from borders as sites of trade, liberalization and movement, to zones of security and control. The study illustrated the dramatic shift in policy concerns that has only recently begun to refocus on borders as more than frontiers in the global war on terror.

Finally, this study was able to use this literature review as a foundation to introduce a number of interesting new fields of research – inspired by areas in which the author felt that more academic investigation was required. These new avenues of research were as wide-ranging as the fields investigated by the literature review itself. The primary areas of new research focussed on illuminating new ways of theorizing about citizenship, borders and bordering, as well as examining how the rejection of citizenship can be seen as a form of social activism.

This study is by no means exhaustive; there are many more spheres of research to be examined, but this study was able to illustrate some of the major themes in a few of the larger fields of investigation, and was able to identify several new fields of potential study. More research is needed, but the author feels that this study can at least help to point the way.

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