

The “Yellow Peril” and Asian Exclusion in the Americas

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This article examines the history of Asian migration and exclusion in the Americas by focusing on the intersections of national histories, transnational migration, and the globality of race. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a transnational conversation about race, migration, and national security circulated throughout North and South America. The subject was the global migration of Asians and the alleged threat they posed. By examining the circularity of Asian migration within the Americas as well as the transnational nature of anti-Asian racism, this article seeks to revise our understandings of transnationalism and contribute to the larger global history of race.

Introduction

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, a transnational conversation about race, migration, and national security circulated throughout the Americas and across the Pacific. The subject was the global migration of Asians and the alleged threat they posed. The fact that Asians—especially Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians—were described as being inassimilable aliens who brought economic competition, disease, and immorality is not surprising. Much scholarship has focused on the subject of anti-Asian racism and the campaigns to exclude Asian people, particularly in the United States.¹ What is astounding, however, is the global scale on which these dis-

1. Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882–1943* (Philadelphia, 1994); Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley, 1962); Neil Gotanda, “Exclusion and Inclusion: Immigration and American Orientalism,” in Evelyn Hu-DeHart, ed., *Across the Pacific: Asian Americans and Globalization* (Philadelphia, 1999), 129–151; Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850–1990* (Stanford, Calif., 1993). Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998); Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley, 1971); Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven, Conn., 1988); Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion*

cussions and campaigns took place. This article explores key moments in the transnational history of Asian migration and exclusion in the Americas. A number of questions frame this project: How does Asian exclusion help us rethink “transnationalism” as both a category of analysis and as a methodology? How does race become a global construct? In other words, how are ideas about racial difference, inferiority, and identity related to the global migration of labor, capital, and culture? How is the “globality of race” (Howard Winant’s term) tied to both *global* flows as well as *national* processes of nation-building? Lastly, how is the history of Asian exclusion in the Americas significant to the larger global history of race?

First, a little background. Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians were among the largest groups of Asians to migrate to and throughout the Americas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.² Retaining ties to their homelands and forming networks across national borders, these Asians were like many migrants who practiced transnational migration and formed diasporic communities. But they were also very different, in that they were targets of some of the first national immigration laws that excluded migrants on the basis of race, as well as victims of state-sanctioned violence, expulsion, and incarceration.

I argue that these national policies were not separate phenomena but rather resulted from a transnational anti-Asian racism—what I have called “hemispheric Orientalism”—that flourished and moved across national boundaries.³ We see it first in the interconnected debates over Chinese immigration in the United States, Canada, Hawai‘i, Mexico, the Caribbean, and parts of Latin America beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. We see it next in the parallel national policies relating to Japanese and South Asian restriction in the early twentieth century and then in the coordinated, hemispheric policies of Japanese incarceration during World War II.

Era, 1882–1943 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003); Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995).

2. Korean and Filipino migrants were the other two primary Asian groups to come to the United States during this period, but their numbers outside of the United States were significantly smaller. Because of the transnational nature of this study, I have chosen to focus on Chinese, Japanese, and South Asians immigrants, who were the largest groups of Asians to migrate to and *throughout* the Americas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

3. Erika Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas: A Hemispheric Approach to Asian American History,” *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 8 (2005), 235–256.

Some parts of this story are familiar, but, too often, they have been told within ethnic-specific or nation-specific histories. We know little about the comparative and transnational origins and consequences of Asian exclusion. We have yet to ask the question of how or if Asian exclusion in one country relates to Asian exclusion in another country. By exploring the circularity and interconnectedness of these campaigns, we are able to relate the national histories of Asians in the Americas together as well as place them within a larger global history of race.⁴

Rethinking the “transnational turn” in Asian American studies

A central part of this project is to rethink the “transnational turn” in Asian American studies and to examine transnationalism critically, both as a category of analysis and as a methodology. Anthropologists first employed the concept of transnationalism in the 1990s to explain the ongoing social relations and networks that immigrants maintained across geographic, cultural, and political borders.⁵ In recent years, the transnational turn spread widely throughout the disciplines.⁶ Many scholars use a loose definition of transnationalism that focuses on decentering the nation-state altogether.⁷

4. Matthew Guterl and Christine Skwiot have argued that the worldwide efforts to “resolve the labor problem in [the] age of emancipation and migration, industrialization and imperialism” were linked together and contributed to the ascendancy of a “singular, unbroken global entity [of] white world supremacy.” Matthew Guterl and Christine Skwiot, “Atlantic and Pacific Crossings: Race, Empire, and the ‘Labor Problem’ in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Radical History Review*, 91 (2005), 42.

5. Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-states* (Langhorne, Pa., 1994).

6. It is important to remember that African American, Chicano, and Asian American studies have been international and diasporic in their perspectives and politics since their formation. Robin D. G. Kelley, for example, has described the global vision that informed African American historians since the early twentieth century. Inspired by antiracist and anti-imperialist politics, Kelley has written that African American historians insisted on “seeing African American and United States history in global terms [and refused] to allow national boundaries to define their field of vision.” Robin D. G. Kelley, “‘But a Local Phase of a World Problem’: Black History’s Global Vision, 1883–1950,” *Journal of American History*, 86 (1999), 1045, 1047.

7. David Thelen advocated for scholars to study how “people and ideas and institutions and cultures moved above, below, through, and around, as well as within, the nation state.” See David Thelen, “Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on

Both of these approaches can be too limiting. In my own work, I examine how racial formations and immigration politics—and not just migrants themselves—have transnational origins and consequences. I have always found that, both historically and today, the nation-state wields enormous power over who and what can cross borders, when, and under what conditions.⁸ The power of the nation is especially salient for racialized subjects. Studying diaspora, transnationalism, and the nation are not mutually exclusive projects, and, indeed, I follow in the footsteps of other scholars who call on us to “foreground the transnational and international dimensions of the United States and the Americas” without ignoring the nation-state altogether.⁹ A key question for me is how the transnational, national, and international interact with each other. To accomplish this goal, I have focused on racial discourses, cooperation, and policies that have taken place at both the transnational and international levels. This means that I examine the actions and rhetoric of individuals, organizations, and media, as well as state actors and institutions. I rely upon English- and Spanish-language government documents, writings, letters, organizational

U.S. History,” *Journal of American History*, 86 (1999), 968–969. Similarly, Shelley Fisher Fishkin has described scholarship in the field of transnational American Studies as work where “borders both within and outside the nation . . . were interrogated and studied, rather than reified and reinforced.” Shelley Fisher Fishkin, “Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies—Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004,” *American Quarterly*, 57 (2005), 20.

8. Sau-ling Wong has criticized diasporic studies that celebrate the crossing of borders while ignoring the continuing salience of race and racism produced by nation-states. Sau-ling Wong, “Denationalism Reconsidered: Asian American Cultural Criticism at a Theoretical Crossroads,” *Amerasia Journal*, 21 (Numbers 1 and 2, 1995), 17; Jigna Desai, *Beyond Bollywood: The Cultural Politics of South Asian Diasporic Film* (New York, 2004), 23. As Naoko Shibusawa and I also explain, “critics of globalization point out that globalization promotes only the unhindered flow of capital and products over national borders, *not* people—especially not the legal migration of predominately nonwhite workers seeking economic opportunities in wealthy capitalist nations.” Naoko Shibusawa and Erika Lee, “Guest Editors’ Introduction: What is Transnational Asian American History? Recent Trends and Challenges,” *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 8 (2005), fn 1, xv. See also Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New York, 1998).

9. Desai, *Beyond Bollywood*, 16, 25. Nina Glick Schiller has recently redefined “transnational” to refer to “political, economic, social, and cultural processes that extend beyond the borders of a particular state, include actors that are not states, but are shaped by the policies and institutional practices of states.” Nina Glick Schiller, “Transmigrants and Nation-States: Something Old and Something New in the U.S. Immigrant Experience,” in Charles Hirschman, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh DeWind, eds., *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience* (New York, 1999), 96.

records, immigrant autobiographies, and other sources that reveal both national and transnational discussions, linkages, and alliances.

Migration and re-migration in the Americas

A central task of this history is first to recognize the extent to which Asians migrated throughout North and South America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before World War II, 42 percent of Japanese migrants to the Americas (1868–1941) settled in Latin America.¹⁰ During the war, 33 percent of the Chinese population in the Americas lived in Latin America and the Caribbean, 46 percent in the United States, and 21 percent in Canada.¹¹

Equally important is the need to recognize the dynamic, circular patterns of migration. Asians not only moved across the Pacific and back again, but also north and south and east and west within the Americas.¹² For example, Chinese migration to Canada began when Chang Tsoo and Ah Hong left the California goldfields to try their luck in the Cariboo gold rush in British Columbia in 1858.¹³ The first Chinese migrants to Mexico arrived in 1864 from the

10. A total of 245,966 Japanese settled in Latin America; 338,459 settled in North America. Exact figures for countries with the largest Japanese populations are: Brazil, 188,985; Peru, 33,070; Mexico, 14,667; and Argentina, 5,398. "Japanese Immigration to the Americas, Southeast Asia and Oceania, and Asian Continent: Prewar, Wartime, and Postwar," in Akemi Kikumura-Yano, ed., *Encyclopedia of Japanese Descendants in the Americas: An Illustrated History of the Nikkei* (Walnut Creek, Calif., 2002), 67.

11. A total of 54,474 Chinese settled in Latin America, compared to 112,131 in the United States and Canada and 5,774 in the Caribbean. Exact figures and years are as follows: United States (1940), 77,504; Canada (1941), 34,627; Caribbean (1946), 5,774 (including British Guiana, British Honduras, Antigua, Trinidad, Jamaica); Cuba (1950), 23,000; Peru (1950), 12,000; Mexico (1950), 12,000; Panama (1950), 2,700. Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley, 1995), 293; Lynn Pan, *The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 235, 252, 262.

12. As Gary Okihiro has reminded us, a singular focus on the "east-west filaments" of migration blinds us to the "messier" reality that "migrants moved east and west but also north and south." Gary Okihiro, "Turning Japanese Americans," in Kikumura-Yano, ed., *Encyclopedia of Japanese Descendants in the Americas*, 25. Scholars working on the Atlantic world also warn against reifying the east-west axis as opposed to a north-south one. Jorge Canizares Esguerra, "Some Caveats about the 'Atlantic Paradigm,'" *History Compass*, 3 (2005).

13. Similarly, Chong Lee, a San Francisco merchant, established the first Chinese Canadian business in Victoria, B.C., soon thereafter. The business was a franchise of the Kwong Lee Company based in San Francisco. Anthony B. Chan, *Gold Mountain: The Chinese in the New World* (Vancouver, B.C., 1983), 32, 49.

United States to work on construction projects and in the mines in the northern state of Sonora.¹⁴ At least 2,000 Chinese workers arrived in Louisiana from Cuba in 1867.¹⁵ And, according to Cuban historian Juan Pérez de la Riva, a few thousand Chinese were smuggled into Cuba from California via Mexico and New Orleans between 1865 and 1875.¹⁶

Japanese began to arrive in Canada in 1885, and many entered that country in order to get into the United States. In 1890, for example, Kihachi Hirakawa bought a ticket from a Yokohama travel agency that brought him to Vancouver, British Columbia. He eventually boarded a small boat heading to Seattle and settled in the United States.¹⁷ South Asian migration to North America originated as a trans-Pacific migration, but it moved along imperial and inter-American axes as well. South Asian Sikhs employed as police in Hong Kong were among the first to emigrate via steamship.¹⁸ By the early 1900s a few thousand South Asian laborers had migrated to Canada, and by 1907 this migration spilled across the U.S.-Canadian border.¹⁹

Restrictive immigration laws targeting Asians—passed first in the United States—were key elements in redirecting Asian migration around the region as well as prompting illegal immigration.

14. Leo M. D. Jacques, "The Anti-Chinese Campaign in Sonora, Mexico, 1900–1931" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1974), 10.

15. By the summer of 1869, China and California provided the bulk of Chinese labor to the American South. Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore, 2006), 84, 92.

16. Pan, *The Encyclopedia of Chinese Overseas*, 249.

17. Typescript autobiography, Kihachi Hirakawa Papers, 1897–1940, Special Collections, University of Washington Archives, Seattle, cited in Roger Daniels, "Chinese and Japanese in North America: The Canadian and American Experiences Compared," *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 17 (1986), 174.

18. The first South Asians to Canada were ex-soldiers visiting London for the Queen's Jubilee in 1897 who returned home via Canada. William Lyon Mackenzie King, *Report of W. L. Mackenzie King: Commissioner Appointed to Enquire into the Methods by which Oriental Labourers Have Been Induced to Come to Canada* (Ottawa, 1907), 75.

19. Mackenzie King, *Report . . . to Enquire into the Methods*, 15, 22; Howard Sugimoto, *Japanese Immigration, the Vancouver Riots, and Canadian Diplomacy* (New York, 1978), 13–14; H. A. Millis, "East Indian Immigration to British Columbia and the Pacific Coast States," *American Economic Review*, 1 (1911), 72; U.S. Department of Labor Memorandum Regarding Hindu Migration to the United States, n.d. (c. Jan. 1914). "Hindu Immigration," File 52903/110C, Subject Correspondence, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, National Archives, Washington, D.C., [hereafter cited as INS Subject Correspondence, RG 85]; *New York Times*, Nov. 19, 1907, p. 8.

After the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barred all Chinese laborers from the United States, Chinese began to migrate first to Canada and Mexico and then crossed the borders illegally.²⁰ An estimated 17,300 Chinese immigrants entered the United States through the back doors of Canada and Mexico between 1882 and 1920.²¹ U.S. Bureau of Immigration reports and newspaper accounts indicate that they entered the country through Seattle, Buffalo, San Diego, San Antonio, El Paso, and numerous other points along the northern and southern borders.²² Ports along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean also became central hubs in the illegal immigration business. American diplomats based in Jamaica reported that commercial vessels brought Chinese on a three-legged journey from Mexico to Jamaica and then to Florida, Louisiana, or Mississippi where they disembarked for northern cities like Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.²³

A 1907 U.S. immigration regulation that barred Japanese and Koreans from entering the mainland United States from Hawai'i prompted such a dramatic increase of Japanese to Canada that officials there launched a major investigation.²⁴ A smaller group of Japanese came from Mexico, "trekking their way northward."²⁵ Canada's 1908 Continuous Journey Law—which forbade individuals who had not come by "continuous journey" from their homelands—effectively barred South Asians, since there was no direct steamship service between India and any Canadian port.²⁶ To the dismay

20. *Chinese Exclusion Act (Act of May 6, 1882)*, *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 22: 58, ch. 126.

21. Lee, *At America's Gates*, 151.

22. Index to the *San Francisco Call*, 1894–1903; available on microfilm.

23. M. R. Snyder to Commissioner of Immigration, New Orleans, Feb. 2, 1911, File 53161/2, INS Subject Correspondence, RG 85. See also Harry Davis to Commissioner-General of Immigration, Sept. 7, 1909, File 52090/4, and George Baldwin to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 6, 1909, File 52090/4, both in *ibid.*

24. Executive Order 589, March 14, 1907. Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice*, 130, n 42. During the ten months ending October 1907, steamships of the Pacific brought 8,125 Japanese, 2,047 "Hindus," and 1,266 Chinese; see Mackenzie King, *Report . . . to Enquire into the Methods*, 15, 22.

25. Sugimoto, *Japanese Immigration*, 14.

26. The Canadian Parliament passed this order-in-council on January 8, 1908. This law achieved the exclusion of South Asians without explicitly discriminating against British South Asian subjects. Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto, 1991), 81. Another order-in-council raised the amount of money that all immigrants were required to possess at the time of arrival from \$25 to \$200. This amount was strategically chosen to exclude any South Asian who might "slip through the other legal nets." Jensen, *Passage from India*, 82.

of U.S. immigration officials, South Asians started arriving in San Francisco and Seattle.²⁷

Japanese immigrants began to go to Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and other Latin American countries after the United States and Canada restricted their entry in 1908, 1924, and 1928.²⁸ And when Brazil and Peru followed with their own restrictions on Asian immigration, in 1934 and 1926 respectively, Japanese started to head from Brazil to Paraguay and Argentina, from Peru to Bolivia.²⁹ Viewed transnationally, these laws reveal an interconnected web of migration and remigration throughout the Americas as well as the domino effects of restriction policies targeting Asians first in North America and then in South America.

The “globality of race” and Asian exclusion

If illustrating the dynamic history of Asian migration and remigration to and throughout the Americas is one central part of my

27. Beginning in 1909–1910, the steamship companies began to bring South Asians directly from Hong Kong to U.S. Pacific ports of entry. In April 1910 the commissioner of immigration at San Francisco reported that “the Hindus are coming here at the rate of 80 to 100 a week.” U.S. Department of Labor Memorandum Regarding Hindu Migration to the United States, n.d.

28. This migration was made up of both trans-migrants and new migrants from Japan. Daniel M. Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Urbana, Ill., 2004), 52. The U.S. and Canadian “Gentlemen’s Agreements” with Japan in 1908 are explained in detail later in this essay. The 1924 U.S. Immigration Act reduced the annual admissions of immigrants through a numerical ceiling and national origins quotas established in the 1921 Quota Act. The act also prohibited any further Asian immigration by denying admission to all aliens who were “ineligible for citizenship (i.e., those to whom naturalization was denied). *Quota Act of 1921, U.S. Statutes at Large*, 42: 5, section 2; *Immigration Act of 1924, U.S. Statutes at Large*, 43: 153. In 1928 Canada and Japan further revised the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” of 1908 to restrict Japanese immigration to Canada to 150 persons annually.

29. Okihiro, “Turning Japanese Americans,” 25. In Brazil, Article 121 of the constitution declared that annual immigration of any foreign group would be limited to 2 percent of the total number of that foreign population already in Brazil. The amendment was clearly aimed at the Japanese. Nobuya Tsuchida, “The Japanese in Brazil, 1908–1941” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978), 291–295. In Peru, the 1936 immigration law prohibited the immigration of “racial groups” and targeted Japanese immigration. It also included a requirement that all businesses employ a work force that was at least 80 percent native-born. The law was passed in part out of fear that Japanese immigration to Peru would increase following the passage of Brazil’s restrictive law. See C. Harvey Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru, 1873–1973* (Albuquerque, 1975), 38–39, 51, and J. F. Normano and Antonello Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America: An Introductory Survey with Special Reference to Peru* (New York, 1943), 77, 114–116.

project, recovering the transnational history of anti-Asian racism and Asian exclusion is the other. Here I draw directly from scholars in African American and Chicano studies, scholars who have explored what Howard Winant has called the “globality of race.”³⁰ We now understand how a shared history of slavery and racial oppression connected the peoples of the African diaspora in a “Black Atlantic.”³¹ We also view border zones as sites of crossings, intercultural exchanges, circulations, resistances, and negotiations.³²

I build upon Winant’s claim that national ideas about racial difference and systems of racial ordering were, in fact, highly interactive and transnational processes. Nation-states developed their own understandings of ethnic and cultural differences through transnational connections and comparisons.³³ However, while Winant argues that the “contemporary world racial system is considerably more interactive and diasporic than it was in the past,” I use the case of Asian exclusion to locate an interconnected history and system of race, migration, and subjugation dating back to the mid-nineteenth century.³⁴

A global “Chinese problem”

Let us turn first to the related debates over Chinese immigration in the Americas and the ways in which racialized images of

30. Howard Winant has examined the history of a “world racial system” of white supremacy, demonstrating how race was a central driving force in the development of the modern world. Winant has also called this history a “racial *longue durée*” and a study of the “world-historical dimensions of race.” He has argued that “the foundation of modern nation-states, the construction of an international economy, and the articulation of a unified world culture were deeply racialized processes.” Howard Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto: Race and Democracy Since World War II* (New York, 2001), xiv, 2–3, 19, 21, 136–137.

31. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993).

32. See José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley, 1997).

33. Winant has written that “what took place in one country both had effects elsewhere and was in turn produced, at least, in part, by occurrences outside national boundaries.” Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto*, 143. Similarly, Henry Yu has argued that “notions of ethnic and cultural difference in the United States have always depended upon transnational connections and comparisons.” Henry Yu, “How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes: Post-Nationalist American Studies as a History of Race, Migration, and the Commodification of Culture,” in John Carlos Rowe, ed., *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (Berkeley, 2000), 224.

34. Winant, *The World Is a Ghetto*, 142–143.

the Chinese circulated throughout the region in the nineteenth century. As Moon-Ho Jung has illustrated, contradictory images and “racial imaginings” of Chinese coolie laborers first “moved around the Greater Caribbean in myriad ways, across geopolitical boundaries,” and eventually made their way to Louisiana by the mid-nineteenth century.³⁵ Along with negative reports on Chinese labor coming from the California goldfields, debates regarding slavery prior to the American Civil War provided a foundational context shaping Americans’ introduction to the figure of the Asian coolie. Both abolitionists and pro-slavery activists in the United States closely studied the “coolie problem” in the Caribbean and used the specter of Asian coolies to further their political agendas. Thus, coolies were portrayed either as an industrious labor force that would make slavery unnecessary or as an (other) inferior race that was vulnerable to cruel exploitation, just like African American slaves. Similarly, American missionaries and diplomats in Peru in the 1860s and 1870s reported back on Chinese coolie labor in that country, as well as on Peruvian attitudes toward Chinese and coolie uprisings. American missionary and diplomat S. Wells Williams published a report in American newspapers that later appeared in the Peruvian press, reprinted in Spanish.³⁶ The well-publicized 1876 Cuba Commission report documenting the extensive abuse of Chinese workers and slave-like conditions there also framed the debate over Asian labor in the Americas.³⁷ It has thus become clear that Americans’ racialized notions of Asian labor originated in the Caribbean, the American South, and South America, as well as in the goldfields of California.³⁸

By the late nineteenth century, the massive migration of laborers from China directly to the United States overlapped with domestic fears about American race, class, and gender relations and

35. Anti-slavery writers would routinely travel to the British West Indies to study the post-emancipation societies in the Caribbean. For example, William G. Sewall’s letters home were reprinted in the *New York Times* and then collected and published in a best-selling book. As Moon-Ho Jung explains, the United States, “a nation at war over slavery craved news from the Caribbean.” Jung, *Coolies and Cane*, 5, 46, 64.

36. Watt Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru: A History of the Chinese Coolie in Peru, 1848–1874* (Durham, N.C., 1951), 119–120, 123, 138–139.

37. *The Cuba Commission Report: A Hidden History of the Chinese in Cuba: The Original English-language Text of 1876* (Baltimore, 1993). See especially p. 26 of the introduction and section 30, pp. 88–90, in the body of the report.

38. Jung, *Coolies and Cane*, 5.

helped fan the fires of organized anti-Chinese sentiment, especially in the American West. Chinese workers were blamed for competing unfairly with white workers. Chinese as a race were charged with being inassimilable, inferior, and immoral.³⁹ Like the earlier transnational discourses surrounding Chinese coolie labor in the Caribbean and South America, the debates over large-scale Chinese immigration traversed geographic and political boundaries as well. As the country with the largest population of Chinese migrants and as the originating point of many of the racialized campaigns against the Chinese, the United States played an important role in these debates and in the circulation of Orientalism abroad. Newspapers outside of the United States routinely reprinted articles on Chinese immigration that had originally appeared in the United States. When the Canadian and Mexican governments launched their own investigations of Chinese immigration, they began by reviewing the evidence compiled by American authorities.⁴⁰ But anti-Chinese racism also intersected with unique regional or national contexts in various countries. This is a central point: Orientalism and Asian exclusion in the Americas were dynamic, heterogeneous processes. They did not migrate “intact” to other locales.

Let us take a closer look at Mexico. On the one hand, anti-Chinese sentiment in Mexico was clearly influenced by events in the United States. Anti-Chinese leaders in Mexico drew upon well-known Chinese stereotypes circulating throughout the Americas. Chinese immigration was described in familiar catastrophic terms, such as the “yellow wave,” the “yellow plague,” and the “Mongol invasion.”⁴¹ A federal commission studying Chinese immigration in 1911 concluded that it was “not advisable for the national interests to permit the unlimited immigration of Chinese.” As Robert Chao

39. See, generally, Gyory, *Closing the Gate*; Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*; Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia, 1999), 104; Karen J. Leong, “‘A Distant and Antagonistic Race’: Constructions of Chinese Manhood in the Exclusionist Debates, 1869–1878,” in Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau, eds., *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West* (New York, 2000), 133; Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley, 1994), 153–182.

40. Lee, “Orientalisms in the Americas,” 241–249.

41. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, “Immigrants to a Developing Society: The Chinese in Northern Mexico, 1875–1932,” *Journal of Arizona History* (1980), 294; Hu-DeHart, “Racism and Anti-Chinese Persecution in Sonora, Mexico, 1876–1932,” *Amerasia Journal*, 9 (No. 2, 1982), 7–8.

Romero has pointed out, “much of the basis for the position lay in the familiar North American argument that Chinese were unwilling to assimilate, were sojourners, and would hurt the economic advancement of the country’s indigenous population.”⁴² Anti-Chinese illustrations published in Mexico also had a striking resemblance to those from the United States.⁴³

But the anti-Chinese movement in Mexico, especially in the northern state of Sonora where it was strongest, was also inextricably shaped by the Mexican Revolution that led to the overthrow of dictator Porfirio Díaz in 1911. Díaz’s modernization campaign had encouraged foreign investment at the expense of the Mexican farmer/peasant classes. Sonorans who already felt besieged by the heavy infiltration of U.S. capital grew increasingly resentful of the large presence of Chinese in small businesses. In some towns, Chinese enjoyed a monopoly in local commerce.

Schoolteacher and businessman José María Arana led the anti-Chinese movement in Sonora in the 1910s. His fiery speeches and racist tracts railed against the “evils and vices of the Chinese,” pitting them against the progress and national regeneration of the Mexican nation, two themes born out of the revolution.⁴⁴ His anti-Chinese newspaper was called *Pro-Patria*, for the motherland. He found support among Mexican workers and landless peasants who complained in 1917 that “the Chinese succeed[ed] while we are forced to close our doors, [starve] our families” and send the youth to the United States for work.⁴⁵ Arana’s letters indicated as

42. José María Romero, “Comision de inmigracion; Dictamen del vocal ingeniero Jose Maria Romero: Encargado de estudiar la influencia social y economica de la inmigracion asiatica en México” (Mexico City, 1911), cited in Robert Chao Romero, “The Dragon in Big Lusong: Chinese Immigration and Settlement in Mexico, 1882–1940” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2003), 269–271.

43. Jacques, “The Anti-Chinese Campaign,” 196. See, for example, the common racial caricatures of Chinese in José Angel Espinoza, *El Ejemplo de Sonora* (Mexico City, 1932), 21–24, 36, 168; Philip A. Dennis, “The Anti-Chinese Campaigns in Sonora, Mexico,” *Ethnohistory*, 26 (1979), 73.

44. Gerardo Rénique, “Race, Region, and Nation: Sonora’s Anti-Chinese Racism and Mexico’s Postrevolutionary Nationalism,” in Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003), 220–221. Gordon V. Krutz, “Chinese Labor, Economic Development and Social Reaction,” *Ethnohistory*, 18 (1971), 328.

45. Krutz, “Chinese Labor, Economic Development and Social Reaction,” 327. See similar examples in Rénique, “Race, Region, and Nation,” 220.

well that Mexicans in the United States also supported the anti-Chinese campaign in Sonora.⁴⁶

Shaped by both the Mexican Revolution and a common North American racialization of the Chinese, the anti-Chinese movement in Mexico reveals one way in which hemispheric Orientalism worked and the fact that it was in no way unique. Similar strands of anti-Chinese sentiment translated into restrictions on Chinese immigration in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Australia, and New Zealand by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, the modes and practices of Chinese restriction differed in each country. International relations, treaties, state-building, and legal and political institutions in each country affected how Asian exclusion would be carried out in the early twentieth century. In the United States and Australia, Chinese were excluded explicitly on the basis of race. In Canada, they were restricted through head taxes. In Mexico, both local and federal laws attempted to discourage Chinese immigration and settlement. By the 1920s and 1930s Chinese immigrants were almost completely barred in Canada and Peru, and Chinese residents of northwestern Mexico were forcibly expelled in 1931.⁴⁷

46. Guillermo Dowling to José M. Arana, Magdalena, Sonora, Oct. 29, 1917, Papers of José María Arana, 1904–1921, University of Arizona Library Special Collections, “Arizona-Sonora Documents Online,” <http://content.library.arizona.edu/collections/asdo/arana/browse.php> (accessed April 10, 2007).

47. The Chinese Exclusion Act in the United States prohibited the further immigration of Chinese laborers, allowed only a few select classes of Chinese immigrants to apply for admission, and affirmed the prohibition of naturalized citizenship on all Chinese immigrants. *Chinese Exclusion Act*, 58, ch. 126. In Australia, the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, which established the “White Australia Policy,” followed the desire of the British Empire not to discriminate explicitly on the basis of race, but it still achieved its central goal of greatly restricting Chinese immigration. It did so by barring all immigrants who could not pass a dictation test in any European language. Myra Willard, “The History of the “White Australia” Policy,” *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 8, part 1 (1922), 3–5, 10–13. Canada restricted Chinese immigration by imposing a \$50 head tax on all Chinese laborers. The head tax was raised to \$100 in 1900 and then to \$500 in 1903. *An Act to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration into Canada, July 20, 1885, Statutes of Canada* (1885), ch. 71: 207–212; Patricia Roy, *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914* (Vancouver, B.C., 1989), 59–63. *An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, July 18, 1900, Statutes of Canada* (1900), ch. 32: 215–221; *An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration*, in *ibid.* (1903), ch. 8: 105–111. In Mexico, the Immigration Act of 1908 restricted and regulated Chinese immigration while several Mexican municipalities also passed public health regulations, segregation provi-

Chinese exclusion represented just the first stage in a global restriction movement targeting Asian immigrants. Largely in response to the labor shortages caused by the restriction of Chinese labor, migration from Japan, India, Korea, and the Philippines to the Americas increased dramatically. Lumped together as inassimilable Orientals, these immigrants often found that they faced the same racial stereotypes and discrimination as the Chinese before them. Transnational debates over the new “problem” of Japanese immigration, in particular, including the characterization of Japan and Japanese as the “Yellow Peril,” intensified by the early 1900s. In this context, the transnational character of Asian exclusion in the Americas underwent a significant shift. Whereas the debates over Chinese immigration had become interconnected by a transnational discourse about race, the movement to exclude Japanese immigrants moved beyond shared rhetoric. Instead, it encompassed actual cooperation and policy coordination, promoting what I call the “White Pacific,” a racial and geographic imaginary in which Orientalism and anti-Asian policies were shared and replicated among white settler societies in the region.⁴⁸

The Pacific Coast race riots of 1907

The best example of this new internationalization of the “Oriental Problem” is the Pacific Coast race riots of 1907. In the

sions, and bans on interracial marriages to discourage Chinese migration and settlement during the 1910s. Jacques, “The Anti-Chinese Campaign,” 37–38, 199–200; Chao Romero, “The Dragon in Big Lusong,” 276–277. In 1909 in Peru, Chinese immigration was limited to relatives of Peruvian residents only; it was completely halted in 1934. Ayumi Takenaka, “The Japanese in Peru: History of Immigration, Settlement, and Racialization,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 31 (Number 3, 2004), 87; Bernard Wong, “A Comparative Study of the Assimilation of the Chinese in New York City and Lima, Peru,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 20 (1978), 335–358.

48. The formation of what I call a “White Pacific” began as early as the 1880s, when, as Charles A. Price described, “the young white societies of the Pacific . . . had definitely decided that the Chinese were unassimilable, that they were a positive hindrance to the process of nation-building, and that with a few exceptions their immigration should be stopped completely.” Charles Archibald Price, *The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive Immigration to North American and Australasia 1836–1888* (Canberra, 1974), 275. Margaret Werry has used the term “American Pacific” to describe “the regional or geographical imaginary that brought the Pacific and Asia into coherent visibility for American capital and culture.” Margaret Werry, “‘The Greatest Show on Earth’: Political Spectacle, Spectacular Politics, and the American Pacific,” *Theatre Journal*, 57 (2005), 359, n 12.

spring, summer, and fall of 1907, anti-Asian sentiment along the Pacific coasts of the United States and Canada turned violent. In May Japanese restaurants and bathhouses were targeted and damaged in San Francisco. In early September a mob of 150 white men attacked the South Asian community in Bellingham, Washington. The call to “drive out the Hindus” was heard throughout the city, and by the next day 125 South Asians had been driven out of town and were on their way to British Columbia. Just three days later, an estimated crowd of 10,000 gathered in Vancouver to support an anti-Asian parade. The group soon turned into a rioting mob that attacked almost every building occupied by Chinese immigrants and several dozen in the Japanese quarter. Each riot had different and unique origins. In San Francisco, a school board order to segregate Japanese students emboldened anti-Japanese activists. In Bellingham, South Asian immigrants were allegedly hired to take the place of white workers at a local lumber plant. In Vancouver, exclusionists became alarmed over a sudden increase in Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigration that seemed to plague the city that summer. Yet, like the different national campaigns to restrict Chinese immigration, the 1907 riots along the Pacific Coast were not isolated events. Both the causes of the race riots and their long-term consequences were part of an intricate web of cross-border and transnational processes, linkages, and alliances.

Anti-Asian activists in both the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia drew inspiration from the San Francisco-based Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL). By the summer of 1907, there were AEL chapters in Seattle, Bellingham, and Vancouver.⁴⁹ Their organization around Asian restriction helped to spark both the expulsion campaign in Bellingham and the riots in Vancouver in ways that connected these two local events within a larger transnational frame. Vancouverites learned of the Bellingham riots just as they were completing plans for an anti-Asian parade in Vancouver that

49. On the Seattle Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL), see Jensen, *Passage from India*, 49. Robert Wynne has reported that Bellingham had 800 members in the local chapter of the AEL. Robert Wynne, “American Labor Leaders and the Vancouver Anti-Oriental Riot,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 57 (1966), 174. On the relationship between the U.S.-based AEL and the Vancouver organization, see Roy, *A White Man’s Province*, 190–192.

would “bring the white people to a state of enthusiasm.”⁵⁰ As one Vancouverite later told a newspaper reporter, Bellingham served as a “contagious example.”⁵¹ American leaders of the AEL also recognized the importance of linking U.S. and Canadian efforts to restrict Asian immigration, and they rushed to Vancouver to lend their support. Arthur E. Fowler, the founder of the Seattle AEL, traveled to Bellingham to assess the results of the riots on Friday, September 6. The next morning, he continued his journey to Vancouver to participate in the parade that evening. Joining him were other leaders of Washington’s exclusion and labor movements.⁵² While marchers carried signs proclaiming “A white Canada and no cheap Asiatic labor,” Fowler delivered a rousing speech from a telegraph pole in the middle of the business district. He explained how Americans in Bellingham had dealt with the problem of South Asian immigration, and he proposed a march through Chinatown.⁵³ By three o’clock the next morning, many immigrants and rioters had been wounded, and the mob had inflicted almost \$40,000 in property damages.⁵⁴

The Vancouver, Bellingham, and San Francisco riots of 1907 had two main consequences. First, the United States and Canada began negotiations with Japan for voluntary bans on the immigration of Japanese laborers. Although the two countries acted separately, the so-called “Gentlemen’s Agreements” with Japan were completed almost simultaneously. The U.S. agreement was finalized on January 25, 1908; Canada’s was finalized three days later. Born of cross-border Orientalism and anti-Asian activism, the Gentlemen’s Agreements reflect the parallel policies toward Japa-

50. Asiatic Exclusion League, *Proceedings of the First International Convention of the Asiatic Exclusion League of North America, Seattle, Washington, 1908* (San Francisco, 1908), 13; Jensen, *Passage from India*, 66.

51. *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 1907.

52. *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1907; Jensen, *Passage from India*, 67; *Literary Digest*, 35 (Sept. 21, 1907), 393.

53. *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 1907; Howard Sugimoto, “The Vancouver Riots of 1907,” in Hilary Conroy and T. Scott Miyakawa, eds., *East Across the Pacific: Historical & Sociological Studies of Japanese Immigration & Assimilation* (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1972), 94–95.

54. W. L. Mackenzie King, *Losses Sustained by the Japanese Population of Vancouver, BC on the Occasion of the Riots in That City in September, 1907* (Ottawa, 1908), 9; Mackenzie King, *Losses Sustained by the Chinese Population of Vancouver, B.C. on the Occasion of the Riots in That City in September, 1907* (Ottawa, 1908), 11; Sugimoto, “The Vancouver Riots of 1907,” 99.

nese immigration established by the United States and Canada by the early 1900s. In the Canadian agreement, Japan voluntarily agreed to restrict the number of passports issued to male laborers and domestic servants to an annual maximum of 400. Four classes of people were to be permitted to enter Canada: returning residents and their wives, children, and parents; emigrants specially engaged by Japanese residents in Canada for personal or domestic service; laborers under specifically worded contracts approved by the Canadian government; and agricultural laborers contracted by Japanese resident agricultural holders in Canada, limited to ten for each 100 acres of land owned. A definite limitation would not be set by the Japanese, because this would have required a revision of the Anglo-Japanese treaty of 1902. Secondary immigration from Hawai'i came under a separate category and was later covered under the "continuous journey" legislation passed by the Canadian Parliament on January 8, 1908.⁵⁵ In the American agreement, the Japanese government agreed not to issue passports for entry into the continental United States to any laborers, skilled or unskilled, but passports would be issued to "laborers who have already been in America and to the parents, wives, and children of laborers already resident there."⁵⁶

The riots' second consequence was that Canada, the United States, and the British Empire all focused attention more squarely on the international aspect of the "Asiatic issue," thereby uniting "white men's countries" together against the "Yellow Peril." In London, the editors of the *Spectator* discussed the mutual goal of the "Anglo-Saxon oversea [*sic*], both in America and in Australia and New Zealand," to remain "white men's countries" in the face of Japanese immigration.⁵⁷ The New York-based *Outlook* editorialized that the anti-Asian riots signaled a serious problem that "extends beyond the National boundaries."⁵⁸

By the spring of 1908 U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt

55. Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 81; Howard Sugimoto, "The Vancouver Riot of 1907 and Its International Significance," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 64 (Number 4, 1973), 166–168.

56. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1924* (Washington, D.C., 1939), 339–369, as cited in Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice*, 44.

57. "Japan, America, and the Anglo-Saxon World," *Spectator* (London), July 13, 1907, p. 40.

58. "Oriental Immigration," *Outlook*, Sept. 21, 1907, p. 99.

advocated “unity of action” among the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia that would promote a “White Pacific,” where white supremacy would be maintained in the face of an ascendant Japan.⁵⁹ “There should be no immigration in mass of Orientals to the countries where the English-speaking peoples now form and will form the population of the future,” he wrote to British politician Arthur Hamilton Lee.⁶⁰ No formal coordinated action resulted, but Roosevelt used the U.S. Navy’s famous sixteen-battleship Pacific tour (December 1907 to February 1909) to demonstrate Anglo-American unity against the “Yellow Peril” that Japanese immigration represented.⁶¹ As he told William Lyon Mackenzie King, the fleet “may help them understand that we want a definite arrangement” over immigration.⁶² Theodore Roosevelt also informed members of the Canadian Parliament that the U.S. fleet was making rounds throughout the Pacific “in the interests of British Columbia, Australia, as well as California.”⁶³

As Margaret Werry has demonstrated, the tour was part of a larger theatrical spectacle intended to mark the U.S. entry onto the world stage. The tour sent a forceful message of “national and racial solidarity on the one hand, and imperial advancement on the other.”⁶⁴ Painted white and gold and dubbed the “Great White Fleet,” the sixteen ships were surrounded by pageantry throughout

59. Theodore Roosevelt to Ambassador Whitelaw Reid, March 30, 1908, in Elting E. Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (8 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1952), 6: v. 985. On the ascendant role of the United States in the Pacific, see Werry, “The Greatest Show on Earth,” 359.

60. Theodore Roosevelt to Arthur Hamilton Lee, March 7, 1908, in Morison, ed., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 6: 965–966.

61. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders: An Autobiography* (New York, 1899), 802, quoted in Werry, “The Greatest Show on Earth,” 362; R. MacGregor Dawson, *William Lyon Mackenzie King: A Political Biography* (Toronto, 1958), 152; Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 82.

62. Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King, Jan. 25, 1908, MG26-J13, National Archives of Canada; <http://king.collectionscanada.ca/EN/default.asp> (accessed Aug. 11, 2006).

63. Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 83.

64. Werry has explained that it was the tour and the “spectacle it inaugurated” that resonated throughout what she calls the “American Pacific,” including the British dominions and white settler colonies of Australia and New Zealand. Werry, “The Greatest Show on Earth,” 364. On the tour in general, see Franklin Matthews, *With the Battle Fleet: Cruise of the Sixteen Battleships of the United States Atlantic Fleet from Hampton Roads to the Golden Gate, December, 1907–May, 1908* (New York, 1908); Robert A. Hart, *The Great White Fleet: Its Voyage Around the World, 1907–1909* (Boston, 1965); Kenneth Wimmel, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Great White Fleet: American Sea Power Comes of Age*

their tour. The fleet first circumnavigated South America, stopped in San Francisco and Puget Sound, and then crossed the Pacific to Hawai'i, Auckland, and Sydney.⁶⁵ In New Zealand and Australia, the arrival of the White Fleet and its celebrated reception illustrated the role that race, Asian immigration, and Japanese imperialism played in the tour.⁶⁶ In the face of an ascendant Japan, Australia and New Zealand looked to the United States. Theodore Roosevelt told a reporter for the *New York Times* that the fleet's visit to New Zealand and Australia would confirm that the colonies were "white man's countr[ies]."⁶⁷ A popular poem in Australia also reflected similar sentiments with its concluding lines: "For the sake of our race of the future, Hail! Men of America, Hail!"⁶⁸

Thus, huge, jubilant crowds in Sydney and Auckland greeted the tour and celebrated the "freedom" of the Anglo-Saxon Pacific, protected by the United States.⁶⁹ The message that the white settler societies of the Pacific shared a "mingled destiny" to preserve whiteness by excluding Asians was best illustrated in the "Fleet Week" issue of *Freelance*, an illustrated magazine in New Zealand. On the title page was a cartoon of a small boyish figure titled "New Zealand" shaking hands with a towering Uncle Sam whose protective stance spread from the United States across the entire Pacific and onto New Zealand. "Now, Uncle, let them all come," says the boy. "Brown or yellow, we'll keep a white flag over our lands!"⁷⁰

As this cartoon, the Navy's White Fleet, the two Gentlemen's Agreements, and the race riots of 1907 illustrate, the issue of Asian

(Washington, D.C., 1998); James R. Reckner, *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet* (Annapolis, Md., 1988).

65. There is no direct evidence that the fleet's white color was intentionally meant to be read as a symbol of white supremacy. But the imperialistic mission of the fleet's tour was expressed explicitly by Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry, who commanded the fleet. In a letter to his wife Edith, he explained that the tour was "establish[ing] a curious sort of protectorate—a new Monroe Doctrine." Charles S. Sperry to Edith Sperry, Sept. 9, 1908, box 5, Charles Stillman Sperry Papers, Library of Congress, as cited in Werry, "The Greatest Show on Earth," 363, especially n. 24.

66. Werry, "The Greatest Show on Earth," 364. Werry has explained that, for these countries, the tour "intersected with an impatient nationalism straining against the ties of colonial fealty" and growing anxieties over Asian immigration, the result of the "same globalizing momentum that had brought Asian migrants to California."

67. Reckner, *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet*, 78.

68. Samuel Carter III, *The Incredible Great White Fleet: America Comes of Age as a World Power* (New York, 1971), 97.

69. Werry, "The Greatest Show on Earth," 364.

70. *Ibid.*, 365.

exclusion had become internationalized by the early twentieth century, the product of both transnational Asian migration and anti-Asian racism. This new international perspective continued to shape Asian immigration and incarceration policies in North and South America through the early twentieth century. The total exclusion of Asians under the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 prompted similar policies in Canada, Brazil, and Peru in the 1920s and 1930s. By the 1940s global interactions of race and racialized policies relating to Asians contributed to parallel, interacting national policies of Japanese incarceration during World War II. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the alleged security threat that resident Japanese posed in the hemisphere seemingly required both national and coordinated hemispheric policies. Five days after President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, ordering the removal of the Japanese American West Coast population, the Canadian Order in Council P.C. 1486 similarly uprooted Japanese Canadians and exiled them to interior parts of British Columbia. Just one day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Peru's President Manuel Prado pledged his country's cooperation in the new U.S.-led program for the common defense of the hemisphere. What began with state control of Japanese Peruvian assets eventually led to the forced evacuation of 1,800 Japanese Peruvians to the United States on U.S. military ships and at the request of the United States.⁷¹ The large-scale incarceration of Japanese during World War II was thus coordinated and hemispheric in scope, the end result of nearly 100 years of transnational anti-Asian racism throughout the Americas.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by returning to the issues of transnationalism and global racial formation with which I began. Transnational frameworks have redefined the ways in which we understand many issues, but in Asian American studies, "transnational" is too often conflated with "trans-Pacific." Paying close attention to the interconnected migrations and remigrations of Asians throughout the

71. Okihiro, "Turning Japanese Americans," 22. Many more of the 20,000 Japanese remaining in Peru would likely have been deported as well, had there been more ships available to transport them. Masterson and Funada-Classen, eds., *The Japanese in Latin America*, 161.

Americas complicates the traditional east-west axis of Asian American studies scholarship and questions how we define both “America” and “Asian America.”⁷² A hemispheric, inter-American framework illustrates how the United States was not only a common destination for immigrants but also a migratory hub from which other journeys began.⁷³ Thus, the United States is best understood not in isolation from, but in connection with, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific Rim.

If part of the transnational project has been to decenter the state, I argue that ignoring the nation-state altogether is shortsighted and ahistorical. In the case of Asian exclusion, global racial formation was a product of both global flows of people and ideas across borders as well as national processes of nation-building. Racial formations and the exclusions of the nation-state were and continue to be inextricably related to transnational, imperial, and hemispheric processes.

The history of Asian exclusion in the Americas thus contributes to a larger global history of race by demonstrating how race, migration, and international relations intersect at multiple levels—locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. It challenges the black-white paradigm that still dominates global, comparative studies of race. It also confirms the central role that the United States played in the consolidation of white supremacy around the world.

72. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, “From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies: The Study of the Chinese Diaspora in Latin America,” in Shirley Hune, ed., *Asian Americans: Comparative and Global Perspectives* (Pullman, Wash., 1991), 9. See also Wally Look Lai’s promotion of “an Hemispheric consciousness . . . as an intellectual notion,” as cited in Roshni Rustomji-Kerns, Rajini Srikanth, and Leny Mendoza Strobel, eds., *Encounters: People of Asian Descent in the Americas* (Lanham, Md., 1999), xvi. Similarly, Lisa R. Mar advocates including Canada in a larger Asian Pacific North America. Lisa R. Mar, “Asian Canada: An ‘Alternate Asian America?’” from the Asian Pacific American Collective History Project, 2004, available from <http://www.apachp.org>; accessed April 10, 2007; Jung, *Coolies and Cane*, 9.

73. Henry Yu, “Los Angeles and American Studies in a Pacific World of Migrations,” *American Quarterly*, 56 (2004), 531–543.

Selected Chronology of Anti-Asian Policies and Violence in the Americas

- 1882 United States: Chinese Exclusion Act bars Chinese laborers and prohibits all Chinese from naturalized citizenship.¹
- 1885 Canada: Chinese Head Tax requires all Chinese to pay a tax in order to enter the country.²
- 1907 San Francisco, California (May): Anti-Japanese riots
Bellingham, Washington (September 4): Anti-Asian riots;
South Asians are expelled from the city.
Vancouver, British Columbia (September 7): Anti-Asian riots; Chinese and Japanese quarters are destroyed.
- 1908 Canada (January 8): Continuous Journey Law prohibits South Asian immigration.³
United States (January 25) and Canada (January 28):
Gentlemen's Agreements with Japan limit Japanese immigration.⁴

1. The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited the further immigration of Chinese laborers, allowed only a few select classes of Chinese immigrants to apply for admission, and affirmed the prohibition on the naturalized citizenship on all Chinese immigrants. *Chinese Exclusion Act (Act of May 6, 1882), U.S. Statutes at Large*, 22: 58, ch. 126.

2. Canada restricted Chinese immigration by imposing a \$50 head tax on all Chinese laborers. The head tax was raised to \$100 in 1900 and to \$500 in 1903. *An Act to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration into Canada, July 20, 1885, Statutes of Canada* (1885), ch. 71: 207–212; Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914* (Vancouver, B.C., 1989), 59–63; *An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, July 18, 1900, Statutes of Canada* (1900), ch. 32: 215–221; *An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration*, in *ibid.* (1903), ch. 8: 105–111.

3. This law forbade entry to individuals who had not come by a “continuous journey” from their homelands. Since there was no direct steamship service between India and any Canadian port, the law effectively barred South Asians. The Canadian Parliament passed this order-in-council on January 8, 1908. Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto, 1991), 81.

4. In the Canadian agreement, Japan voluntarily agreed to restrict the number of passports issued to male laborers and domestic servants to an annual maximum of 400. Four classes of people were to be permitted to enter Canada: returning residents and their wives, children, and parents; emigrants specially engaged by Japanese resi-

- Mexico (December): Immigration Act of 1908 restricts and regulates Chinese immigration.⁵
- 1911 Mexico (May 5): Massacre of Chinese and Japanese at Torreon.⁶
- 1910s Mexico: Several Mexican municipalities pass public health regulations, segregation provisions, and bans on interracial marriages to discourage Chinese migration and settlement.⁷
- 1917 United States: Immigration Act establishes “Asiatic Barred Zone,” prohibiting South Asian immigration.⁸

dents in Canada for personal or domestic service; laborers under specifically worded contracts approved by the Canadian government; and agricultural laborers contracted by Japanese resident agricultural holders in Canada, limited to ten for each hundred acres of land owned. In the American agreement, the Japanese government agreed not to issue passports good for the continental United States to any laborers, skilled or unskilled, but passports would be issued to “laborers who have already been in America and to the parents, wives, and children of laborers already resident there.” Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 81; *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1924* (Washington, D.C., 1939), 339–369, as cited in Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley, 1962), 44.

5. The law was a first attempt to regulate immigration; it identified a number of prohibited classes and established the Mexican immigration service. Chinese or Asian immigrants were not singled out, but with its list of prohibited contagious diseases and its requirement that ship captains provide a detailed report on each passenger, the law’s intention was to control and restrict Chinese immigration; Leo M. D. Jacques, “The Anti-Chinese Campaign in Sonora, Mexico, 1900–1931” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1974), 37–38. Robert Chao Romero explains that the law was a failure. Robert Chao Romero, “The Dragon in Big Lusong: Chinese Immigration and Settlement in Mexico, 1882–1940” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2003), 280–281.

6. Out of an estimated 600 to 700 total, 303 Chinese and 5 Japanese were killed. Property damage to Chinese businesses and homes was estimated at \$1,000,000. Wilfley and Bassett, *Memorandum on the Law and the Facts in the Matter of the Claims of China against Mexico for Losses of Life and Property Suffered by Chinese Subjects at Torreon on May 13, 14, and 15, 1911* (Mexico City, 1911), 4.

7. Jacques, “The Anti-Chinese Campaign in Sonora,” 199–200.

8. The Immigration Act of 1917 required a literacy test for all adult immigrants, tightened restrictions on suspected radicals, and, as a concession to politicians on the West Coast, denied entry to aliens living within a newly conceived geographical area called the “Asiatic Barred Zone.” With this zone in place, the United States effectively excluded all immigrants from India, Burma, Siam, the Malay States, Arabia, Afghanistan, part of Russia, and most of the Polynesian Islands. *Immigration Act of 1917, U.S. Statutes at Large*, 39: 874.

- 1921 Mexico: President Plutarco Elias Calles cancels further immigration from China.⁹
- 1922 Mexico: The state of Sonora requires all Chinese in the state to be registered.¹⁰
- 1923 Canada: Chinese Immigration Act bars all Chinese immigration.¹¹
- 1924 United States: Immigration Act excludes all Asians.¹²
- 1926 Mexico: Migration Law of the United Mexican States requires labor contracts, registration, and identification cards for all immigrants.¹³
- 1928 Canada: Revision to Gentlemen's Agreement all but excludes Japanese immigrants.¹⁴
- 1931 Mexico: The federal executive temporarily bars immigrant laborers; new labor law requires commercial employers

9. In 1927 Mexico also canceled its treaty with China, which had guaranteed "free and voluntary" movement of people between the two countries. On the 1899 treaty, see Romero, "The Dragon in Big Lusong," 51. On the 1927 cancellation, see Jacques, "The Anti-Chinese Campaign," 19–200; Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "The Chinese in Baja California Norte, 1910–1934," in *Proceedings of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies* (San Diego, 1985–1986), 21.

10. Apparently similar to the U.S. 1893 Geary Act, the Sonoran law's intent was to avoid confusion of identification since "one Chinese looked like another." Jacques, "The Anti-Chinese Campaign in Sonora," 174.

11. The 1923 Exclusion Act completely abolished the head tax system and instead prohibited all people of Chinese origin or descent from entering the country. Consular officials, children born in Canada, merchants, and students were exempted. *An Act Respecting Chinese Immigration, 1923. Acts of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada* (Ottawa, 1923), ch. 32, section 8. Library and Archives of Canada, <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/immigrants/021017-150-e.php?uid=021017-nlc011076&uidc=recKey>; accessed Jan. 11, 2007.

12. The 1924 Act reduced the annual admissions of immigrants through a numerical ceiling and national origins quotas, as established in the 1921 Quota Act. The act also prohibited any further Asian immigration by denying admission to all aliens who were "ineligible for citizenship" (i.e., those to whom naturalization was denied). *Quota Act of 1921, U.S. Statutes at Large*, 42: 5, section 2; *Immigration Act of 1924, U.S. Statutes at Large*, 43: 153.

13. The law was intended to regulate foreign immigration and to control Mexican emigration. The registration system, for example, was required for both nationals and foreigners seeking to leave or enter the country. The law also established immigration surveillance offices throughout Mexico and granted greater control to the Public Health Service to reject immigrants. Chao Romero, "The Dragon in Big Lusong," 281–282.

14. Canada and Japan further revised the "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1907 to restrict Japanese immigration to Canada to 150 persons annually.

- to hire at least 90 percent native Mexican employees; Chinese are expelled from the country.¹⁵
- 1934 Brazil: New constitutional amendment establishes immigration quotas and targets Japanese immigration.¹⁶
- 1936 Peru: Immigration Law prohibits the immigration of “racial groups” and targets Japanese immigration.¹⁷
- 1940 Peru (May 13): Anti-Japanese Riots in Lima.
- 1942 United States (February 19): President Franklin Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, calling for the evacuation of all individuals of Japanese descent from the West Coast (110,000).
Canada (February 24): Canada passes Order in Council P.C. 1486, requiring the evacuation of Japanese from British Columbia (23,000).

15. The ban on immigrant laborers was issued on July 14, 1931; the labor law was approved by the Mexican Camara de Diputados (House of Representatives) on July 21, 1931. Beginning in 1931, vigilante groups rounded up Chinese and took them to the U.S.-Mexican border. Following an order by Sonoran Governor Rodolfo Calles (son of President Plutarco Elias Calles) to dispose of their goods and evacuate their businesses, Chinese in Sonora began to close their businesses in August 1931. By September the expulsion of all Chinese residents from Sonora had been accomplished. Chao Romero, “The Dragon in Big Lusong,” 282–283; Charles Cumberland, “The Sonora Chinese and the Mexican Revolution,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 40 (1960), 191, 203.

16. Article 121 of the constitution declared that annual immigration of any foreign group would be limited to 2 percent of the total number of that foreign population already in Brazil. The amendment was clearly aimed at the Japanese. Nobuya Tsuchida, “The Japanese in Brazil, 1908–1941” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1978), 291–295.

17. The law was passed in part out of fear that Japanese immigration to Peru would increase following the passage of Brazil’s restrictive law on June 26, 1936. Historian C. Harvey Gardiner has explained that the law contained several components: a) the annual immigration to the country could not be greater than 16,000, which was approximately two-tenths of 1 percent of Peru’s total population; b) immigration by racial groups was prohibited [the law did not specifically mention Japanese, or even Asians, but it clearly targeted Japanese]; c) foreign residents who returned to their native lands and then desired reentry into Peru could do so only within the established quotas; the law extended a previous provision (Law No. 7505) that stipulated that only 20 percent of employees in all businesses and professions could be foreigners. The law and its provisions clearly targeted Japanese, who made up the majority of immigrants then entering Peru and whose success in business and in farming were a source of great resentment. C. Harvey Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru, 1873–1973* (Albuquerque, 1975), 38–39, 51; J. F. Normano and Antonello Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America: An Introductory Survey with Special Reference to Peru* (New York, 1943) 77, 114–116.

1945 2,118 Japanese from Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela are deported and interned in the United States; travel and activities of Japanese in Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, and Argentina are restricted.¹⁸ Some Japanese Brazilians are relocated to inland areas. The assets of Japanese Mexicans are frozen. Some are randomly detained in Mexican jails; residents in northern states are relocated to Mexico City.

18. Of these internees, 80 percent were from Peru alone, and they included Peruvian citizens by naturalization or birth. Chile sent 283, Bolivia 130, Paraguay 92, Uruguay 23, and Venezuela 24. Daniel M. Masterson and Sayaka Funada-Classen, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Urbana, Ill., 2004) 122; Edward N. Barnhart, "Japanese Internees from Peru," *Pacific Historical Review*, 31 (1962), 171–172; Seiichi Higashide, *Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps* (Seattle, 2000).