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REVIEW ESSAY / NOTE CRITIQUE

Transcending the National in Migration History in North America

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MIGRATION HISTORY AND ETHNIC HISTORY have come a long way from their earlier emphases on the celebration of ethnic heroes, on ethnic contribution to nation-building projects, and on victimization of racial minorities in Canada and the United States. This shift has stemmed largely from the engagement on the part of migration historians in the approaches of social history, history from the bottom up, and the activism and the consciousness that feminist, civil rights, and countercultural movements fostered in the 1960s and 1970s.¹ Beginning in the 1990s, transnational history began to shift the focus of historical writing beyond the confines of the nation-centred history which had dominated historical narratives since the 19th century. Migration historians have been at the forefront of a transnational turn even since before this phrase gained currency. Exploring a new set of sources and new perspectives, they have expanded and complicated the burgeoning fields of transnational history and borderlands history. They have also recovered the agency of men and

1. Lisa Chilton and Royden Loewen, "Introduction: Documenting Migration and Transnationalism: New Discourses on Old Themes," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 48, 96 (May 2015): 1–6, especially 1.

women on the move, their families and friends who waited for them or who joined them. They have further explored the complicated and wide-ranging roles of third parties of migration such as labour contractors, immigration companies, and other intermediaries who interacted with the migrants on the one hand and with government officials and immigration authorities on the other hand. Gender and feminist historians of migration, for their part, have disaggregated ethnic groups and families through their examination of gendered relations, social classes, and unequal power distribution within a family and an ethnic group. As a result, their research has revealed immigrant families and ethnic groups to be simultaneously a site of comfort and an arena of contestation.² Alexander Freund's *Beyond the Nation?*, Grace Peña Delgado's *Making the Chinese Mexican*, and Aya Fujiwara's *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity* each offers a compelling example of the results of such efforts.

Freund's and Delgado's studies challenge the limitations of the nation-state centred history while Fujiwara's sheds new light on the contribution of ethnic leaders in the transformation of Canadian identity. The limitations of nation-centred history are numerous ranging from delimiting metanarratives of nationalistic historiographies (such as American exceptionalism) to inherent biases in methodology (such as methodological nationalism).³ Migration historians are among those who were most keenly aware of such limitations in historical research based on nation-state centred history. True, one cannot deny the benefit, the insights, and the centrality that the nation-centred history continues to yield. Neither can one overlook the observation that the nature of the transformation that transnational history brought to the discipline of history is not revolutionary but rather modest as nation-centred history continues to be the mainstay of the historical writing.⁴ Nevertheless, the new perspectives, questions, approaches, and sources in the works of Freund,

2. M. Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Anna M. Garcia, "Power Surrendered, Power Restored: The Politics of Home and Work among Hispanic Women in Southern California and Southern Florida" in Louise A. Tilly and P. Guerin eds., *Women, Politics, and Change* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1990), 130–149; Donna Gabaccia, *Seeking Common Ground: Multidisciplinary Studies of Immigrant Women in the United States* (Westport: Praeger, 1992); Franca Iacovetta, *Such Hardworking People: Italian Immigrants in Postwar Toronto* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993); Donna Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), ix–xvi; Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta, and Frances Swyripa, eds., *Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic, and Racialized Women in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 3–19; Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, ed., *Gender and U.S. Immigration: Contemporary Trends* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Patricia R. Pessar, "Engendering Migration Studies: The Case of New Immigrants in the United States," in Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, ed., *Gender and U.S. Immigration*, 20–42.

3. Donna Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and The Immigrant Paradigm of United States History," *The Journal of American History* 86, 3 (December 1999): 1115–1134.

4. Aline Charles and Thomas Wien, "Le Québec entre histoire connectée et histoire transnationale," *Globe* 14, 2 (2011): 199–221.

Delgado and Fujiwara provide us with fine examples of recent changes in the research and writing on migration, ethnicity, identity, citizenship, borders, and borderlands.

At the vanguard of a criticism of the “tyranny of the national”⁵ is Alexander Freund’s collective volume *Beyond the Nation?: Immigrants’ Local Lives in Transnational Culture*. It is about German-speaking Canadian immigrants from the 18th century to the 20th century whose trajectories and lives crossed several national boundaries. In its opening chapter, Dirk Hoerder critiques the national in the transnational. As Freund notes in his introduction, Hoerder underlines that migrants did not move from one nation to another but from one locale or region to another within the networks, imaginaries, and traditions that rested on their family, friends, and community.⁶ This point is well-established among migration historians but often remains overlooked in popular understanding that still views immigration as an uprooting experience which represents a one-time, one-directional move, that is, a rupture. In this interpretation, immigration therefore entails immigrants’ teleological march towards adjustment and acculturation once they reached their destination in the country of arrival. In contrast, Hoerder introduces a new concept of the translocal, transcultural, and trans-societal perspectives by which migration is understood as a transcultural experience (in place of transnational experience) in the sense that migrants and non-migrants lived (and live) in many different “cultures simultaneously ... merging these cultures within oneself, one’s family, and one’s community”⁷ even while living and working in one, two or many countries. Living transcultural lives may at times imply difficult adjustments because it requires the competence to live in two or more differing cultures.⁸ Hoerder’s translocal, transcultural and trans-societal perspectives also exposes a nationalistic myth, of Germany in this case, that presupposes a single, national origin of Germans at home (in Germany) and German migrants abroad. Such a myth hinges on an essentialist view of single, unified German-ness, an erroneous assumption that simply ignores many regional variations and multiple origins of the people labelled as German or German migrants.

Migration historian Donna Gabaccia deplored the absence of immigrant women as historical agents in an essay published in 1991 entitled “Immigrant

5. Gérard Noiriel, *La tyrannie du national. Le droit d’asile en Europe, 1793–1993* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991).

6. Alexander Freund, introduction to Alexander Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?: Immigrants’ Local Lives in Transnational Cultures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 6.

7. Freund, introduction to *Beyond the Nation?*, 6.

8. Dirk Hoerder, “Local, Continental, Global Migration Contexts: Projecting Life-Courses in the Frame of Family Economies and Emotional Networks, in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 34.

Women: Nowhere at Home.”⁹ Following two decades in which gendered and ethnicized social and cultural history has filled this void, Christine Harzig echoes a similar call for the history of German immigrant women in Canadian history in her theoretical chapter, published posthumously in Freund’s volume. Harzig argues that we know little about German immigrant women not because they seem invisible or raise little scholarly interest, but because they have fallen through methodological and conceptual cracks of historical research. Her call for greater attention to gendered analyses in German-Canadian Studies and to the history of German women in Canada grounds gender in German Canadian Studies against four vast, seemingly separate academic subfields, ranging from Canadian women’s history to global migration history, to studies on German women in diaspora and to studies on the social and historical construction of whiteness.¹⁰

Angelika Sauer responds to Harzig’s conceptual intervention in a most unique way in her essay on an extraordinary Elise von Koerber.¹¹ The protagonist of Sauer’s chapter, Koerber wore many hats as a middle-class German-born widow and mother, breadwinner, activist, reformer, migrant and one of the first women to work as salaried civil servant for the Canadian state from 1872 to 1884. During her professional life she moved from Canada to Aix-la-Chapelle, to London, to Alsace, to Switzerland with a stop in Karlsruhe, Baden. In doing so, Koerber acted first as a Canadian immigrant recruitment officer on the field and then as a social reformer to promote the migration of women from the German empire to Canada. Her engagement in promoting female migration to Canada was rooted in the belief that the well-regulated emigration was “the only way to social reform and the only rational means of assisting”¹² or saving the masses by which she initially meant the whole proletariat in the German Empire and then later, women in economic and social difficulties more specifically. Koerber embraced a grand scheme: one that envisioned a creation of “an international system of women’s societies dedicated to the management and protection of women’s migration.” Her goal was to build “a new transnational gendered space, one in which women would help other women migrate from one place to another,” a project in which she was primarily concerned with the poverty of poor country women with little education and few means rather than middle-class women like herself.¹³ Sauer tells the

9. Donna Gabaccia, “Immigrant Women: Nowhere at Home,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, 4 (Summer 1991): 61–87.

10. Christine Harzig, “Gender in German-Canadian Studies: Challenge from across the Border,” in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 44.

11. Angelika Sauer, “A Weak Woman Standing Alone: Home, Nation, and Gender in the Work of German-Canadian Immigration Agent Elise von Koerber, 1872–84,” in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 137–162.

12. Sauer, “A Weak Woman Standing Alone,” in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 142.

13. Sauer, “A Weak Woman Standing Alone,” in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 143.

readers that Koerber did not question the premises for her belief that women had to emigrate and that they had to do so separate from their family. It is not clear why Koerber believed that emigration was necessary or desirable in order to relieve the poor women from indigence. Sauer suggests that Koerber's conviction stemmed from her own transnational identities and life trajectories that originated in Baden (before the formation of the German imperial state) where she was born in 1839 and that evolved as she moved on to the British colony of Canada and to Britain while passing through Alsace, Switzerland, Germany, the United States and other countries.

As Sauer skillfully narrates, Koerber's intense life of living and working transnationally and transculturally for her female immigration scheme was nonetheless hindered by the multiple nation-building projects of Germany and Canada in their exercise over entry and exit, over citizenship and, most importantly, its gendered construction.¹⁴ Being the first woman to work as a Canadian immigration officer in German-speaking countries, especially Switzerland and Germany, Koerber had to confront patriarchy in both Europe and Canada. She resented the absence of encouragement for her ideas and actions because of her gender. There was one such instance in 1875 when a Swiss delegation to Canada expressed its surprise that the government of Canada would have placed its interests in the hands of a woman. Subsequently, her Canadian supervisor recommended that Koerber be replaced and that her position be given to a francophone man. Koerber challenged her disparagers by arguing that women should be allowed to contribute their special talents to the nation-building projects. She was successful in laying the groundwork for the reception of female immigrants through her contacts with the YWCA in Toronto. She sought to launch Ladies Immigration Protective Societies in Montréal and Ottawa and to have them recognized by the Canadian government. In 1878 she successfully obtained a royal patronage from Crown Princess Alice of the United Kingdom and the Grand Duchess of Hesse for the ladies' committees in Canada.

However, Koerber's plans were derailed in several ways, for just at this time the newly elected Conservative government in Ottawa terminated her appointment along with those of several other special agents in Europe. She returned Canada in 1879 and her scheme continued to develop in accordance with her plans at least for a time. Perhaps, even more importantly in personal terms, Sauer writes, Koerber's several years of experience mingling with European diplomats, politicians and royalty earned her the confidence to criticize the Canadian government in strong language. In 1879 and 1880, she appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Immigration and Colonization to denounce the Canadian government for its failure to establish effective methods of recruiting Swiss and German immigrants to Canada. In 1882 Koerber declined an offer of reinstatement as a general immigration agent.

14. Sauer, "A Weak Woman Standing Alone," in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 154.

She returned to Europe with a greater ambition than the one she embraced in her earlier career in the civil service. Now she was looking to place her grand scheme "on an entirely philanthropic basis" and to "expand her international system of organization and protection into the United States."¹⁵ This time, the plan did not go any further, however, because she failed to obtain much-needed financial support or even a reasonable hearing for her ideas. She then pleaded unsuccessfully to be put back on the Canadian government payroll. Elise von Koerber died a lonely death in London in 1884 at the age of 45.

Why has Koerber's extraordinary life story disappeared from the national histories of Germany, Canada, and the United Kingdom? Sauer makes it clear and Freund reaffirms that what remains untold is as important as what is told. This is because the silencing and the forgetting are not arbitrary processes but selective ones in the making of national history. These processes legitimize the gendered, class, and ethnic norms, expectations, and assumptions of a local and national community.¹⁶ Clearly, one cannot reduce Koerber's life to part of the history of the building of one nation-state. It was transcultural and transnational.

Scholars' views diverge on the role that women played in maintaining ethnic identities and passing them on to next generations. Feminist scholars have underlined the centrality of women in creating and sustaining ethnic myths and collective memories, which Fujiwara claims to be primary tools that ethnic elites used to strengthen the allegiance of the group members as will be discussed later in this essay. Accordingly, immigrant and non-immigrant mothers were, and continued to be, at the forefront of transmitting to their children historical myths, collective memories, and ethnic symbols (such as the oak for Germans), both homeland made and Canadian made, for women were most often the ones who nurtured the next generation.¹⁷ Findings from Barbara Lorenzkowski's study in Freund's collective volume stand in contrast to such an understanding. Lorenzkowski has noted the limitations on, if not the absence of, women's agency among German-speaking immigrants in two communities in Canada and the United States. In Berlin and Waterloo, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York, German women migrants were denied a voice at the 1871 jubilee celebrations of German military victory over France in the Franco-Prussian War which were an important site for the public manifestation of ethnicity and nationalism on both sides of the border.¹⁸

Like Freund's collection on German Canadian immigrants, Delgado's book on Chinese in the Sonora-Arizona borderlands takes the readers beyond the

15. Sauer, "A Weak Woman Standing Alone," in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation?*, 151.

16. Freund, introduction to *Beyond the Nation?*, 11.

17. Danielle Juteau, *Ethnicité et ses frontières* (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1999), 18, 90–94.

18. Barbara Lorenzkowski, "Germania in Canada – Nation and Ethnicity at the German Peace Jubilees of 1871," in Freund, ed., *Beyond the Nation*, 118.

confines of the nation-state. Her analytical focuses on the Chinese *fronterizos* or borderlanders and the range of sources she explores set a distinct context unlike those known to German-speaking immigrants in North America and Europe. The rich and deeply personal stories in *Making the Chinese Mexican* stem from Delgado's extensive research in archives and libraries in the United States and Mexico as she mined a wealth of family papers; federal, state, municipal records including deeds and business transactions; newspapers; letters; photographs; and ephemeras.

Chinese became the target of the first racially exclusionary law of the United States in 1882. The Chinese Exclusion Acts, amended and extended several times until 1943, had the unintended consequences of propelling the construction of the North American borders between Canada, Mexico, and the United States as "physical, legal, and social realities."¹⁹ US policy makers and immigration authorities concocted state practices and promoted popular ideologies of gatekeeping within the United States in the enforcement of these Acts, and they did this in collaboration with Canadian authorities along the Canada-US border, and in disjuncture with Mexico along the Mexico-US border. The deep-rooted history of territorial contestation and the ensuing resentment along the Mexican-US border, on the one hand, and the open-door immigration policy of the Mexican government under the liberal-capitalist policies of President Porfirio Díaz at least until 1907, on the other hand, made it more difficult to collaborate to extend US surveillance and control against the undesirable immigrants over the southern border than over the Canadian border.

However, the tightening of the grip of the nation-states on the two international borders does not mean that border control and immigration restriction made either border airtight against Chinese and many other immigrants who were determined to evade state restrictions. The consequence was that both borders functioned as backdoors to the United States for immigrants who sought to circumvent more rigorous and systematic inspection at American seaports such as San Francisco or Seattle. And so, in 1889, seven years after the adoption of the US Chinese Exclusion Act, hundreds of Chinese arrived in Mexican ports on the Pacific Coast. They would then travel to Baja California Norte and Sonora in an attempt to enter into the United States. In the late 1920s, the US secretary of labour recognized and bitterly resented the impossibility of preventing Chinese from illegally entering the country. He deplored: "If we had the Army on the Canadian border and on the Mexican border ... we couldn't stop them; ... not even a Chinese wall ... would seem to permit

19. Angelika E. Sauer, "The Construction of Borders: Building North American Nations, Building a Continental Perimeter, 1890s–1920s," in Dirk Hoerder and Nora Faires, eds., *Migrants and Migration in Modern North America: Cross-Border Lives, Labor Markets, and Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 213.

a permanent solution.”²⁰ Clearly, illegal entries via Mexico and, I would add, Canada became a direct consequence of the new immigration regime and border control by the United States and its allies.

From the perspective of borderland history, Delgado highlights the ways in which Chinese *fronterizos* carved out vibrant and enduring borderland communities from the 1870s to 1930s. As merchants, smugglers, labourers, transients, and at times even brothel madams, Chinese men, women, and children created a universe that connected both sides of the Sonora-Arizona border with shores and islands across the Pacific. The extensive social networks of Chinese borderlanders expand and complicate one’s understanding of borders and borderlands that reach deep into locales and regions away from the immediate physical national land border such as at San Francisco, Guaymas, and even of China across the Pacific. To be certain, the interconnected world in which Chinese borderlanders lived, worked, and, at times, contested was shaped by the confluence of transpacific networks, various local arrangements, exclusionary nationalisms and immigration policies in the United States and Mexico. Yet, as Erika Lee, Mae Ngai, and Kornel Chang among others have shown elsewhere,²¹ Delgado’s writing also underlines the resilience of Chinese *fronterizos* and their changing relations with Mexican neighbours and state and national authorities in local, regional, national, and global spaces.

The making of ethnic identity for the US or Mexican-born or -raised generation was hardly fixed or remained purely Chinese. Rather Delgado’s Chinese *fronterizos* reveals the fluid nature of the ethnic boundaries and identities in these porous borderlands. For example, in the late 1870s and early 1880s when Chinese workers finished their contract with the Southern Pacific Railroad Company outside Tucson, they began cultivating kith ties, business connections, and bonds of friendship with Mexicans and some European Americans. Such local networks or *guanxi* grew out of contact and conflict in everyday life, rather than through an elite discourse alone that was intended to manipulate or mobilize community members. Those local ties in turn converged with far-reaching trans-pacific migration networks that connected China, the US

20. Yukari Takai, “Circumventing Controls: Transborder Migration of Asian-Origin Migrants during the Period of Exclusion,” in Hoerder and Faires eds., *Migrants and Migration in Modern North America*, 323; Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 175–181; Grace Peña Delgado, “At Exclusion’s Southern Gate: Changing Categories of Race and Class among Chinese *Fronterizos*, 1882–1904,” in Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, eds., *Continental Crossroads: Remapping US-Mexico Borderlands History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 185; Patrick Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines: Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration, 1882–1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 99–123.

21. Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates*; Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Kornel Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

West, Mexico, the Caribbean, and South America. Ultimately, transpacific and hemispheric networks weaved an expansive migration field which channelled, settled, and moved Chinese labourers, merchants, smugglers, women, and children across the Pacific, over the land borders and beyond.

During the 1920s, US-born Chinese in Tucson moved into the Hispanic barrio of the city where a good number of the immigrant generation had also lived. Subsequently, common bonds emerged and daily life shaped a blended ethnic identity of Chinese borderlanders, an identity that was simultaneously Mexican, American, and Chinese.²² One such example is Esther Wah, daughter of Chinese entrepreneur Don Wah, born in Tucson in 1917. Esther remembers fondly “El Barrio’s particular childhood convention” such as that she and her siblings savoured the treat of an ice chip from “Vaca” Urquides’s truck wagon, that they played with Mexican children, and that they were at times photographed in Mexican sombreros just outside the living quarters and the grocery store run by their father Wah.²³

While the ethnic boundaries and identities in the porous borderlands remained fluid for the immigrant generation and their children born in the United States or Mexico, North American land borders also functioned as a site of exclusion, admission, and selection depending on the race, nationality, gender, and class of immigrants who sought to cross it. In particular, female sexuality was a lynchpin for the enforcement of social control, nationalist projects, and immigration restriction. And so, immigrant women who bore children out of wedlock, had sexual relations outside of marriage, or were suspected of prostitution were highly marked targets of such state surveillance. As Deirdre M. Maloney argues, gender and race coded the manner in which state authorities enforced immigration restrictions, and exclusionary laws resulted from public concerns over the sexual morality of female immigrants, which in turn enhanced concerns about their economic roles in the new industrial economy of late 19th-century and early 20th-century United States.²⁴ Delgado’s final chapter “*Por la Patria y por la Raza*” (For the Fatherland and for the Race) echoes Maloney’s point by illustrating that in Mexico, too, authorities and popular leaders deployed female sexuality in shaping images of the Chinese, political and popular discourse of Sinophobia, and its explosive violence. The racial xenophobia in the post-revolutionary Sonora-Arizona borderlands condemned Chinese men and their Mexican wives as the worst symbol of moral corruption and this despite the fact that their unions had once been legally sanctioned. By the mid-1920s, *antichinistas* successfully convinced the majority of Mexicans that to avoid “the injection of sickly yellow

22. Grace Peña Delgado, *Making the Chinese Mexican: Global Migration, Localism, and Exclusion in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 140–141.

23. Delgado, *Making the Chinese Mexican*, 142.

24. Deirdre M. Moloney, “Women, Sexual Morality, and Economic Dependence in Early U.S. Deportation Policy,” *Journal of Women’s History* 18, 2 (Summer 2006): 95–122.

blood ... into [their] families” was indispensable for healthy development of Sonoran society. Delgado demonstrates that at the root of the anti-Chinese movement in Mexico ran an intense and entrenched campaign to achieve the revolution’s racial agenda, which attached itself to the national eugenics and social hygiene movements in Mexico.²⁵ Alternative notions of *mestizaje* or racial mixture certainly opened some room for debates about civic belonging and political rights of Sonoran Chinese in the early 1920s, but by early 1930s the opportunity was lost. Readers are left to wonder how and why such debates ended. However, Delgado’s writing makes it clear that the legal and popular attempts to demonize Chinese-Mexican interracial marriage along with barrioization and the concern for public health brought a number of features into sharp relief, most notably racism, nationalism, postrevolutionary politics, and the economic fear associated with a slow and uneven pace of development. All of these elements revealed deeper social concerns about gender and the sexuality of both immigrant and local men and women. Ultimately, the racial discourse on the part of *antichinistas* and the claim of civic inclusion on the part of Sonoran Chinese clashed with one another in postrevolutionary Mexico.

Fujiwara’s *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity* is a publication of her revised PhD dissertation at the University of Alberta. Fujiwara explores the roles of ethnic elites in the formation of multicultural Canada during the five decades from 1919 to 1971, a period during which Canada was transformed from a country modelled on unofficial Anglo-conformity to official multiculturalism. She contends that ethnic leaders of three communities, Japanese, Ukrainian, and Scot, made ethnicity a significant negotiating tool in Canadian politics and a component of Canadian political decision-making. For her, ethnicity is a dynamic political phenomenon defined not by common culture, language, and origin alone, but above all by ethnic elites’ interactions with Canadian society.²⁶ Fujiwara argues that Ukrainian and Japanese elites, far more forcefully than Scots, used collective memories, symbols, and myths, some of which originated in the home country, others created in Canada, in the making, the remaking, and the reinforcement of ethnic boundaries.

Fujiwara claims that her choice of the three ethnic groups is intended to represent common and different patterns in the strategies of ethnic community building and maintenance as well as the construction of a multicultural Canada. She locates the three ethnic groups at varying distances from Anglo-Protestant mainstream. What marked such cultural distances were race, religion, and either the presence or absence of a sense of superiority. And so, the Scots, part of mainstream Canada and belonging mostly to a Protestant culture, shared a sense of racial superiority with the “Anglo-Saxon” as the

25. Delgado, *Making the Chinese Mexican*, 158.

26. Aya Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity: Japanese, Ukrainians, and Scots, 1919–1971* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 184.

dominant race of the world. Ukrainians were neither part of Anglo-Protestant nor Western European civilization but their Christian background and belonging to a white race, Fujiwara writes, gave them an edge over Japanese in terms of access to mainstream society. The Japanese stood in contrast for being largely Buddhist or Shintoists, racially visible and from the non-Western world.²⁷ Such categorization may appear at times too simplistic. But the choice is effective for it allows the author to make a case that mainstream and ethnic boundaries strengthened or weakened at different historical moments in response to political circumstances in both the homeland and Canada on the one hand, and homeland myths and symbols on the other hand.

Ethnic boundary is an essential concept to Fujiwara's analysis, a concept that she uses in an encompassing way to connote an ethnic identity, allegiance and distance between the mainstream Canadian society and an ethnic group. She argues that as far as official policies and people's attitudes in general are concerned, the mainstream/ethnic boundaries fluctuated and eventually weakened over the five decades from the end of the World War I to the post World War II era. Yet the narrowing of the gap between the mainstream and ethnic elites in the definition of Canadian identity in the post World War I era was an uneven process. The boundaries persisted for Ukrainian and Japanese leaders whereas Scots having been mainstream Canadians, had always acted as "first-class" citizens.²⁸

The interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s was the time during which Fujiwara observes a crystallization of ethnic boundaries for Ukrainians, Scots, and Japanese. Fujiwara attributes the change to the intensive activities of ethnic elites and the initial rise of the prototype of ethnic pluralism among ethnic elites as the guiding principal of Canadian identity. The outbreak of World War II heightened tensions for both mainstream Canadian leaders and intellectuals and ethnic elites as the former struggled to balance democratic principles with racial and ethnic prejudices and the latter faced the acute dilemma of conflicting loyalties between Canada and their homelands. Thus, Fujiwara concludes the World War II era was a time of contradiction and political manoeuvring. The war buttressed the existing ethnic and racial hierarchy but not universally so. Scots were ethnically invisible, Ukrainians grow more and more to be part of Canada's war efforts, and Japanese were excluded.²⁹ It was during the years following the end of the war that Ukrainian nationalist elites and Japanese second-generation leaders, as against communist Ukrainians and the first-generation Japanese, seized the moment to rethink the roles of ethnic groups. "Ukrainian nationalists," Fujiwara writes, "demanded equal rights and the broad acceptance of ethnic pluralism in Canada, while *nisei* (or second-generation) Japanese denounced racism and

27. Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 5–6.

28. Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 186.

29. Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 77.

internment.”³⁰ The postwar era therefore was a crucial turning point for Canadian and ethnic identities, a time when the gap between mainstream and ethnic elites narrowed. Fujiwara notes that ethnic leaders generally cherished the British monarchy as representing pan-Canadian values such as freedom and democracy. Interestingly, the ethnic elites fused Canadian political ideals with their homeland myths and heroes. For Ukrainians, it was Bohdan Khmelnytsky, a 17th-century military leader, and Taras Shevchenko, a 19th century literary figure, both of whom were depicted as championing democracy and equal rights; for Japanese before World War II, it was the emperor of Japan; and for Scots in Nova Scotia it was their Highland myths and the poet Robert Burns. However, despite the tapering of the gap between mainstream and ethnic elites in the definition of Canadian identity, Fujiwara tells us that ethnic boundaries persisted for Ukrainian and Japanese leaders. Mainstream Canadians, exemplified by Scots, had always and continued to act as first-class citizens and defined democracy in terms of a British-born principle. Ukrainian and Japanese ethnic leaders rejected a narrowly defined Canadian democracy as conceived by the Anglo-Protestant mainstream.³¹

Fujiwara’s book is not a transnational history *per se*, but rather it seeks to conceptualize ethnic histories in larger Canadian and transnational contexts. Her analysis of ethnicity, its boundaries and transformation of Canadian identity chimes with an appreciation of transnationalism as a perspective that provides a new analytical framework for historical questions about immigrant integration as well as nation building. This said, the nation with or without states (the former in the case of Japanese and the latter for the most part in the case of Ukrainians and Scots) figures prominently in her comparative history. The centrality of the national that remains uncontested in Fujiwara’s study prompts one to identify her book as having a trans-“national” perspective, as Hoerder has defined it, as against his transcultural perspectives.

Fujiwara also highlights divisions within ethnic communities and the diverging distance between each community and mainstream society. Such distances reflected homeland politics, generational differences and regional contexts in which immigrants resided in Canada, whether it be British Columbia, the Prairies, or the Maritimes. Fujiwara argues convincingly that it is within the Canadian state that a combination of factors emerged to determine the extent to which ethnic leaders succeeded in achieving their goals to maintain strong ethnic consciousness and identity, to gain political power within their own community, and to influence Canada’s official identity.³²

Like the collaborative volume by Freund and the book by Delgado, Fujiwara’s monograph rests on its commendable research exploring diverse primary sources in multiple languages (English, Ukrainian, and Japanese, the first two

30. Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 78.

31. Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 186–187.

32. Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity*, 184.

she learned). It also uses sources that are housed in numbers of archives across Canada and the Pacific. However, her study also leaves one with unanswered questions. One such question concerns the place of French Canada, notably Québec. The book seems to leave the discussion of French Canada almost completely out of the study except for a brief mention of the rise of French Canadian nationalism in Québec during the first half of the 1960s. The author uses few French language sources or their English translation, a dearth that stands in stark contrast to the multilingual research that characterizes this valuable work. Was this a strategic decision of the author? Was it one spot that was left out for linguistic difficulties or for some other reasons? One might argue that none of the three ethnic groups studied in this book had a substantial presence in Québec except for the Scots in Montréal. Nevertheless, French Canada was at the centre of the discussion of federal multiculturalism and Québec's political will to reject Canada's multiculturalism propelled the province to pursue its own version of cultural pluralism labelled *interculturalisme* which continues to this day. Clearly, one cannot or should not expect to do everything in one book but one wonders whether it might have been more appropriate to qualify the study as ethnic elites and English Canadian identity.

Another question relates to the issues of ethnic boundaries among minorities. Fujiwara's discussion addresses exclusively the boundary between Anglo-Canadian mainstream society and minority ethnic groups. One might ask what then about those separating these groups, say between Japanese and Ukrainians? Did such boundaries remain firm, or were they at times porous? Did they ever shift? Did ethnic leaders of various groups ever pay attention to such boundaries? Or did their concern remain simply with the boundaries between their community and the mainstream Anglo society even when ethnic groups competed with, sought to influence, or perhaps attempted to build coalitions with one another? Were there any instances of "multi-faceted ethnic identity" as Delgado observes as common characteristics among a generation of Tuscon Chinese?

Yet another set of questions that one would raise relates to the role that women played in maintaining ethnic identities. Fujiwara claims that creating and sustaining ethnic myths and collective memories were primary tools that ethnic elites used to strengthen the allegiance of group members. What then about the role of women in the myth-making and sustaining those myths within the ethnic community? Did Japanese, Ukrainian, and Scottish women in the mid-20th century Canada find fulfillment in their role as caretakers as did German women in Berlin and Buffalo over a half century earlier as Lorenzkowski has argued? Or did they play a more active role in shaping the politics of ethnicity in the negotiation of new Canadian identity?

The questions raised above are intended to point to new paths for future study. All three books are well-written, grounded in solid research, and innovative in their approaches and perspectives. Students in migration history, in women's and gender history, and in history of borders and borderlands

would greatly benefit from reading each of these three volumes on its own. All together, they also suggest diverse ways of exploring the transnational ties of migrants, including both women and men, elite and ordinary people, on one side or the other of the Canada-US border, the Mexican-US border, the Atlantic or the Pacific. The nation-states continue to be central in history and historical writing and this despite the transnational turn that has transformed the field well over the past two decades. Yet the transnational migration history that these three studies have skilfully explored broadens our perspectives in thinking and rethinking about the nation-states and about the people whose lives transcended many boundaries.