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Jeffrey M. Schulze’s *Are We Not Foreigners Here? Indigenous Nationalism in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* rethinks the almost two-thousand-mile border between the United States and Mexico by foregrounding indigenous nationalisms rather than the US and Mexican nation-states. In particular, it focuses on three indigenous communities—the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham—that have their own unique experiences with border crossing after the Mexican-American War and the 1853 Gadsden Purchase. The Yaquis of Sonora crossed a relatively porous border during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) to resist the liberal policies that privatized their communal lands. While the Yaqui traveled northward into Arizona, the Kickapoos fragmented when they migrated southward from the Great Lakes region to Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, and finally Coahuila, Mexico, in the 1830s. Rather than crossing the border, the Tohono O’odham, originally of Sonora, Mexico, point to the complexities of indigenous community formation when, after 1853, the border bisected their lands, leaving some of them to navigate Mexican laws and others, US Indian policies.

*Are We Not Foreigners Here?* traces the survival strategies members of the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham nations employed to maintain community ties across the US-Mexico border in the twentieth century. Schulze effectively moves beyond the chronicles of indigenous resistance and the local-state negotiations that have been a pillar of Mexican historiography since the early 1990s. From a transnational perspective, he casts the histories of these three indigenous groups as “challenging, subverting, capitalizing upon, or just plain ignoring any geopolitical border that sought to contain, neutralize, and ultimately extinguish their own nationalistic aspirations” (p. 3). Ultimately, he argues that there was no single preordained outcome for their strategies to maintain community ties across the border. While the Yaqui and Kickapoo adapted to changing historical realities, the Tohono O’odham were less adept at maintaining a coherent national identity in this transnational milieu.

Divided into six chapters, plus an introduction and epilogue, *Are We Not Foreigners Here?* treats the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham as case studies, with each tribe having one chapter dedicated to it. The first two chapters provide background information on all three tribes, their experiences with Indian removal and reservations in the United States as well as nineteenth-century liberalism in Mexico, and a comparison of US and Mexican indigenous policies in the twentieth century. Similarly, the sixth chapter examines the legal processes by which the US and Mexican governments came to recognize the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Schulze claims that, for the Yaqui, border policies increasingly limited migration and thereby set the stage for two centers of Yaqui culture to emerge, one in Sonora and the other in Arizona. More mobile than the Yaqui, the Kickapoo maintained seasonal migration patterns that sustained their cultural unity and established Eagle Pass, Texas, as a center for tribal cohesiveness. At the other extreme, the Tohono O’odham, who had been given the right to cross the border at will after the Mexican-American War, slowly found more and more of its peoples choosing to remain in Arizona, a process that divided the Tohono
O’odham community in two. These histories of indigenous nationalism, Schulze concludes, left each tribe with a legal conundrum by the end of the twentieth century. Although the US and Mexican governments recognized them as indigenous, citizenship rights for peoples with such longstanding histories of border crossing left the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham with nebulous rights to federal recognition, a legal process that itself risked costing them the little transnational mobility they still possessed.

To reach these conclusions, Schulze weaves US and Mexican federal indigenous policies and borderlands history together through a creative mix of comparative and transnational methods. Even though the border looms over the lives of the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham communities, it is not the focus of his research. Instead, Are We Not Foreigners Here? evokes Rebecca J. Scott’s Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery (2005). Delving into the politics of race, labor, and freedom in post-emancipation societies, Scott explores how the local histories of sugar production “overlapped and intersected, making comparison a matter of daily experience.”[1] Schulze’s examples are similarly rooted in local conditions that beg for comparative as well as transnational analyses. As he argues, local, regional, and national politics and economics in the United States and Mexico “forced these Indians to ‘go transnational’ ” (p. 22).

Are We Not Foreigners Here? is not a standard transnational history of race in the Americas. Instead of highlighting the intellectual exchanges, institutional circuits, and cultural flows between two or more countries, Schulze gives primacy to the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham nations, much like how Pekka Hämäläinen centers the Comanche as a political, economic, and cultural empire on par with nearby colonial and national states in The Comanche Empire (2008). “Reorienting one’s perspective within these indigenous nations,” Schulze contends, “then, allows one to approach these three groups’ histories as might a historian of foreign policy or international diplomacy” (p. 7). Because his methodology has stronger antecedents in nineteenth-century Indian policy in the United States than in Mexico, where calls for mestizaje and indigenous integration have dominated the historical record, it challenges historians of indigeneity in Mexico to rethink the state-centric parameters that often have gone unquestioned in the historiography of Mexico since 1968.

However, the grassroots histories of the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham peoples occasionally get lost in Are We Not Foreigners Here? Newspaper articles from the United States as well as ethnographic accounts, especially by anthropologist Edward Spicer, obscure the stories Schulze wants to tell. The voices of Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham peoples tend to get second billing. Similarly, the Mexican side of these transnational histories—from the generational shifts in Mexican indigenismo to the regional political and cultural debates in Sonora and Coahuila—could have been developed more effectively. More thorough use of Mexican archives and the well-established historiography on postrevolutionary indigenous integration would have enlivened the political and intellectual narratives in Are We Not Foreigners Here?[2]

Nonetheless, Are We Not Foreigners Here? provides a history of indigenous nationalisms in the long twentieth century that encourages scholars of Mexico, the borderlands, and the southwest US to consider indigenous communities, not border debates between the US and Mexico, as the point of departure for borderlands history. Schulze’s jargon-free histories of the Yaqui, Kickapoo, and Tohono O’odham as well as his clear organizational structure also should make Are We Not Foreigners Here? accessible to undergraduates.

Notes

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