

Immigration vs. Emigration: The Internationality of U.S. Immigration Policy

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In March 1928, *The Montreal Gazette* reported from Washington D.C. that “the United States will not be a party to any international treaty governing general principles of immigration, if such a treaty should be proposed at the international convention on immigration which begins at Havana on Saturday.”¹ In the aftermath of the 1924 immigration quotas, emigrant exporting and immigrant receiving nations throughout the world gathered for an international conference to address the implementation of international immigration regulations. U.S. immigration restrictions, though aimed at tackling American domestic issues such as labour, unemployment and urban crime, created difficulties for immigrants and emigrant exporting nations. The new challenges brought about by U.S. restrictions prompted attention from national governments with extensive emigrant populations who desired reciprocal agreements on immigration and emigration policies. This international interplay has been overlooked in the history of U.S. immigration, particularly in the early twentieth century. Traditional scholarship has concentrated on the domestic factors that influenced restrictive immigration legislation. This article assumes a different approach, one that considers the international impact of U.S. immigration policies in the 1920s.

U.S. immigration quotas became an international problem when emigrant nations, particularly Italy, were unable to cease emigrant exportation in response to the closing of America’s doors. Like immigrant receiving nations, who utilised migrants as cheap labour for industrial and economic expansion, emigrant exporting nations employed emigration as an economic measure. Italy, for example, utilised remittances to pay off foreign trade debts.² European historian Pellegrino Nazzaro contends that the United States’s passage of quotas in 1921, which suddenly and drastically limited immigration from southern and eastern Europe, aggravated Italy’s post-war economic problems, namely inflation and unemployment.³ Not long

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after the United States passed the 1921 Quota Act, King Victor Emmanuel III appointed Benito Mussolini Prime Minister of Italy. The new Prime Minister promised to resolve Italy's post-war problems by restoring social order, affecting economic recovery and bringing an end to unemployment. Despite his emphasis on nationalism and domestic productivity, Mussolini recognised the importance of emigration for Italy's economic improvement and requested a relaxation of U.S. immigration policy.⁴

The United States government not only refused Mussolini's request, but Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924, which contained more severe quotas.⁵ Again Mussolini tried to convince U.S. leaders to relax immigration restrictions, this time by organizing an International Conference on Emigration, held 15 May 1924 in Rome. Delegates from fifty-seven nations participated in the Rome conference, including the United States. While the conference had no impact on altering U.S. immigration legislation, it did open a forum for international discussion among emigrant and immigrant nations. All delegates in attendance voted in favour of creating universal legislation in respect to emigration, immigration, and labour in order to hold all migrant workers to the same laws and regulations. To advance the creation of an internationally codified system of legislation, participant nations resolved to hold a Second International Emigration and Immigration Conference in Havana, Cuba between 31 March and 17 April 1928.⁶ These international immigration conferences are a significant example of internationalism existing within the post-WWI period, an era often described in American history as isolationist.

The forty-one nations in attendance at the Second International Emigration and Immigration Conference each had objectives for migratory regulation that they expressed in proposed topics for discussion. Immigrant receiving nations sought to protect their sovereign right to select immigrants, while emigrant nations aimed for assurances of safety and places of absorption for their surplus population. However, the conference's central purpose was to decide the most effective way to facilitate migration and protect migrants. There were two options. The first concerned establishing an international system of migratory law enforced by treaties and diplomatic conferences while the second involved preserving national sovereignty in matters of migration regulation with the stipulation that a central international office be created for researching, publishing and distributing information on migration worldwide.⁷

The 1928 conference opened with an address from Cuba's Secretary of State, Dr. Rafael Martinez Ortiz. Appealing to all interests, he asked that emigrant nations be attentive to their

citizens during migration and assist them in their new environment by requiring that the receiving nation provide equal rights to work, access to hygienic facilities and social benefits. In return, Dr. Ortiz explained, immigrant nations must implement resolutions for the “sanitary, moral, and ethical security” of immigrants. Such resolutions, he argued, helped not only the immigrant but guaranteed the present and future welfare of the receiving nation.⁸ Dr. Ortiz’s opening address reveals the prevailing tensions among immigrant receiving and emigrant exporting nations that had been exacerbated by the United States’s implementation of immigrant quotas. Receiving nations did not want to hinder nation building by accepting immigrants they considered to be racially and economically inferior while exporting nations wanted regulations to guarantee proper treatment of their citizens.

With the exception of Cuba, immigrant receiving nations exercised passive participation during the conference. One individual who summarised the events of the conference speculated that if additional international migration conferences came to fruition, the degree of participation among immigrant receiving nations would be less and less.⁹ In fact, the United States, the main recipient of the world’s immigrant population, nearly did not attend. In 1928, there were American Representatives seeking to extend the quota system to nations of the Western Hemisphere, and they feared that participation in the conference would impede their efforts. While Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg supported sending delegates to the conference, Congressmen John C. Box of Texas and Samuel D. McReynolds of Tennessee asserted that discussing immigration with foreign powers would only lead to difficulties for the United States. Congressmen Box and McReynolds planned to block the \$5,000 appropriation bill intended to cover travel expenses to Havana. Although their efforts ultimately failed they did influence the nature of the American delegation. The U.S. government sent an American delegation to the conference but under both strict instructions and the leadership of Assistant Secretary of Labour W. W. Husband.¹⁰

In spite of the fear that participation in the conference might impede the passage of quotas on Western Hemispheric nations, it was an appropriate time to send a delegation. Under President Calvin Coolidge and Secretary of State Kellogg, the Department of State conducted a Latin American policy based on cooperation and mutual interest. Only a few months before the international conference on emigration, nations within the Western Hemisphere gathered for the Sixth Annual Pan-American Congress also held in Havana. As reported by the *New York Times*,

the United States perceived the Pan-American Congress as a “diplomatic gesture to indicate the good feeling of the United States for her sister republics of the New World.”¹¹ The Congress was significant enough to warrant Coolidge’s first trip outside of the country as president. Whilst at the Pan-American Congress, Coolidge focused on topics of mutual interest to those in attendance, such as methods for improving relationships among nations in the Western Hemisphere.¹² Thus, the absence of a U.S. delegation at the Second International Conference on Emigration and Immigration would have reflected poorly on Latin American nations and potentially strain Pan-American relationships. However, there was another motivating factor. Other nations in the Western Hemisphere were adopting or considering restrictive immigration legislation. *The Montreal Gazette* reported that both Argentina and Cuba had informed the Canadian press that their countries favoured selective immigration. Chile also admitted considering a restrictive immigration policy.¹³ The American leaders who supported sending delegates likely believed the presence of the United States at the conference would convince these Latin American nations to enact restrictive legislation.

Only two central principles guided the actions of U.S. representatives at the conference, both of which were already in practice: the persistence of existing international law regarding human migration and naturalisation and the proposition that all nations treat immigration firstly as a matter of “human seed-stock” and only secondly as an economic issue.¹⁴ American representatives upheld international law regarding migration that maintained national sovereignty in matters of immigration policy. The American delegation asserted that “each migration-controlling country has the right to determine the conditions under which aliens may immigrate into or otherwise enter its territories.”¹⁵ Through these assertions and principles, the United States upheld its authority to pass restrictive and discriminatory immigration legislation.

Furthermore, the United States delegation not only asserted its own sovereign power to racially select immigrants, but also proposed to emigrant nations that “their best interests would be served by exporting only superior human seed-stock, which would reproduce and thus extend, in true colonial fashion, the best racial and cultural qualities of the mother country.”¹⁶ This proposal would also have appealed to Latin American nations who looked to immigration as a means to economic progress and what some felt to be racial improvement; therefore, they desired the best individuals that emigrant nations could offer. Argentina, Cuba, and Chile’s consideration of immigration policies based on racial selection in the late 1920s was a culmination of their

historical attempts to create a “whiter” population, one that could socially and economically compete with the United States.¹⁷

Historian Thomas E. Skidmore outlines the use of racial theories in Brazilian social policy between 1870 and 1940 asserting that efforts to “whiten” the Brazilian population was visibly represented in Brazil’s immigration policy. Policies implemented in the United States influenced proponents of immigration restriction in Brazil, such as Andrade Bezerra. While the Brazilian government did not discriminate against southern and eastern Europeans as harshly as the United States, it did restrict the immigration of blacks and Asians.¹⁸ The Anglo racial theories espoused by European intellectuals and used to develop U.S. immigration policy also influenced Argentina and Cuba. As Aline Helg points out, Hispanic American elites in Argentina and Cuba remained culturally dependent on France, England, the United States and Germany even after independence. Since Hispanic American elites held power, the majority of the population had virtually no influence on nation building. Comparing themselves to the United States, Hispanic American elites believed the economic success of the United States was the result of being an Anglo-Saxon nation.¹⁹

At first the Argentine government made few distinctions between different European groups and welcomed all Europeans to participate in the whitening process. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, debates concerning the integrity of some European immigrants began taking place in Argentina.²⁰ These debates occurred at a time when Latin American nations were becoming more nationally conscious and assertive. Argentina, in particular, was focused on establishing a new national identity defined by economic and social development. Argentine elites believed such progress was possible by encouraging immigration of the same northern and western European groups that had founded the United States. However, Argentina received more immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, groups that the United States stigmatised as poor, politically radical and racially suspect. In response, the Argentine government began crafting ways to attract only those Europeans deemed most socially, racially, and economically desirable, i.e. not those from southern or eastern Europe.²¹

Since immigration restriction was a mutual interest shared by several Western Hemispheric nations, the Second International Conference on Emigration and Immigration provided an opportune Pan-American atmosphere for discussing the use of racial selection, or eugenics, for immigration control. During the conference the Cuban Minister of Sanitation, Dr.

Francisco M. Fernandez, and Dr. Domingo F. Ramos from the Pan-American Office of Eugenics and Homiculture held an informal meeting. Fernandez and Ramos hoped that after the conference talks on immigration from “racial and eugenical points of view” would continue under the Pan-American Office of Eugenics and Homiculture located in Havana. Such discussions, they asserted, “Seem quite proper because, for the countries of the Western Hemisphere, there is no common interest which ties them more closely together than the fact that all are immigrant-receiving nations.”²²

The United States took a leading role in promoting the use of eugenics for immigration control with the expertise of Dr. Harry H. Laughlin. Between 1910 and 1921, Dr. Laughlin was the superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office in the Department of Genetics at the Carnegie Institute in Washington, D.C. After 1921, Dr. Laughlin became the director, a position he held until 1940. While director of the Eugenics Record Office Dr. Laughlin served in many capacities, including as the eugenics expert for the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, as an agent to Europe for the Department of Labour between 1923 and 1924, and as a U.S. Representative of the House between 1921 and 1931.²³ Believing that southern and eastern Europeans were of a less desirable character than northern Europeans, Dr. Laughlin advocated Pan-American efforts to use eugenic science for immigration restriction. According to a letter written by Albert F. Blakeslee of the Carnegie Institution of Washington in 1939, Dr. Laughlin wrote a volume on Pan American Immigration-Control Law and Policy.²⁴ Blakeslee thanked Laughlin for the copy and agreed with Laughlin that “the problem of Latin-American immigration is certainly one of the most important which we have in this whole field.”²⁵ Yet, while the United States was a powerful force in the Western Hemisphere, it did not impose immigration restrictions on Latin American nations. The meeting initiated by Drs. Fernandez and Ramos at the conference indicates that Latin American governments consciously constructed their own definitions of national identity through active and creative foreign relations, though they modeled their notions of achievement and racial theories after Europe and the United States.

There were several Latin American nations with voting delegations at the conference, including but not limited to, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico, but only the Cuban delegation suggested several discussion points for conference participants.²⁶ Most of the proposals concerned enacting medical and hygienic reforms, such as vaccinating dogs, conducting bacteriological examinations at immigration stations, assuring adequate drinking water on ships

and providing assistance to emigrating pregnant women. Cuba also recommended schooling, savings protections and beneficent institutions to aid immigrants. In relation to the protection of emigrants, the Cuban delegation suggested “agreements between the immigration countries and the shipping companies of emigration countries for the purpose of setting aside on board the ships a certain number of berths for the emigrants refused by the immigration countries and for the repatriation of emigrants.”²⁷

Cuba’s concern about the transport and protection of emigrants reflected its desire to become an immigrant receiving nation, because it hoped immigration would be the key to its economic growth.²⁸ Its recommendations to the agenda were influenced by eugenics and the belief that science could regulate population and generate a productive nation. There were hopes that immigration to Cuba would enable the island nation to become strong enough to break its quasi-colonial ties to the U.S. Unfortunately for Cuba, it never became a popular place for permanent European settlement like other Latin American nations. In truth, Cuba was more useful as a point of exchange than a site for long-term residence, especially after the passage of U.S. immigration restrictions. Cuba was a practical choice for immigrants seeking entrance to the U.S. via the Florida coast or by way of the U.S.-Mexico border. Word spread among migrants that entrance to the U.S. from Cuba was a viable alternative to waiting for a visa.²⁹ A report from the Inter-American Club’s files noted the presence of small colonies of Armenians, Asians and Europeans in Cuba, but it found little evidence of immigrant smuggling to the United States. Those who conducted the report did note that Cuba served as a meeting place for prospective brides, who had not yet migrated, and their fiancés who were already in the U.S. In addition, Cuba functioned as a temporary home for relatives waiting to join their families in the U.S. The report noted that “their proximity to their relatives in the United States makes visits between them more possible.”³⁰ Unlike Brazil, Argentina and the U.S. who all attracted permanent European settlement, Cuba struggled to retain immigrant settlers. This reality accounts for its active participation in the conference not only as host but as a main contributor to discussions on migration matters.

While Cuba offered recommendations for emigrant transport, the Italian delegation offered suggestions for measures of international cooperation between emigration and immigration services. Some of the proposed measures included the use of public agents as job recruiters, agreements among nations in favour of colonisation of uncultivated lands and laws to

secure social insurance benefits for workers successively residing in different countries.³¹ Mussolini conceded that the Italian economy needed emigration, but the export of Italians contrasted with his aspiration to increase Italy's domestic population and to strengthen the nation politically and economically. Philip Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli argue that Mussolini addressed this dilemma by striving to make Italian emigration a symbol of power.³² For the Italian fascist state, power equaled control; therefore, Mussolini aimed to maintain close ties with immigrant receiving nations as well as immigrant organisations and communities in order to organise pro-Fascist colonies abroad. Italy's recommendations to the conference concerning employment recruiting and colonisation reflected these desires. Even the term "colonisation" suggests power and control, more so than the term "emigration." To keep tabs on his "colonies" abroad Mussolini sustained close transnational contacts with Italian Ambassadors, consuls and certain Italian fraternal organisations in North and South America.

Some topics on the conference agenda directly reflected attempts to correct the imbalance between immigrant receiving and emigrant exporting nations in the wake of the 1924 restrictions. Besides calling for greater cooperation among emigration and immigration countries, the Polish delegation suggested a "limitation of immigration only for the purpose of protecting the home labor market, and not applied to members of the immigrant's family," and also a "stipulation of a reasonable delay, before the statutory measures adopted by an immigration country in order to prevent or limit immigration are to be enforced." The Polish delegation also brought up concerns of equality among foreign workers legally residing in a territory and fairness in the application of legislation regarding social insurance and labour protection.³³ The United States's quota restrictions harshly impacted Polish immigrants whom Americans considered socially and physically inferior. In fact, the Immigrants' Protective League, a Chicago based agency, reported that Italians and Poles in Chicago faced the most severe immigration problems, stating that "The abrupt check of their heavy immigration has left many in a tangled personal difficulty, and means for many an adjustment of hopes and plans."³⁴ Therefore, the troubles faced by Italian immigrants in the aftermath of restrictive legislation were not unique. Employing a sudden cut in admittance quotas for certain immigrant groups caused repercussions for the sending nation and the families separated transnationally. As a result, emigrant nations exerted efforts to collaborate with immigrant receiving nations, notably the

United States. However, in the absence of mutual interests there was little motivation for immigrant receiving nations to compromise their selective immigration policies.

So, what were the results of the 1928 conference held in Havana? The resolutions legitimised the attempts by immigrant receiving nations to either retain or establish policies of immigrant restriction with no obligations to international treaties governing migration. The conference established several principles to guide nations in matters related to human migration, each developed on a foundation of national interest and racial theory. For example, the conference resolved that each immigrant receiving and emigrant sending nation have the exclusive and indisputable right to control emigration and immigration in a way suitable to their own interests. Instead of an international system of collaboration, nations were to take responsibility for their domestic populations without burdening other countries. These responsibilities included sending only those individuals of “superior hereditary physical, mental and moral qualities” and not in quantities greater than a particular receiving nation was willing to accept. Emigrant nations were also burdened with resolving their population surplus and “hereditary degeneracy” within their own territories, with the use of eugenics.³⁵

The conflicting interests between immigrant receiving and emigrant exporting nations impeded the voting processes at the conference’s conclusion. Eighteen nations withheld their votes on changing the seat of the directing body from Rome to Havana. Poland proposed keeping members of the Rome committee in the new directing body but Cuba refused, contending that “the committee should consist of technical men capable of dealing with questions that may arise in a more direct manner than has been possible heretofore.”³⁶ There would also be no need to worry about the degree of participation among immigrant receiving nations in the next international conference because the delegations resolved that the Second International Conference on Immigration and Emigration would be the last. Believing that a central international office would have more success addressing migration issues, the conference recommended that the International Labour Office, established by the League of Nations at Geneva, “continue its very excellent and useful work of compiling, and publishing in all languages, current statistics, laws, treaties, regulations, and court decisions of all countries in respect to human migration.”³⁷ In terms of equalising the imbalance between immigrant receiving and emigrant exporting nations, little changed. While the delegates adopted some reforms for the safety of immigrants in travel, there were no solutions for emigrant nations other

than to deal with their population problems independently. The status quo of international migration remained intact.

The resolutions of the Second International Conference on Immigration and Emigration gave nations the sole authority to mold their populations “in accordance with their own desires,”³⁸ which appealed not only to the United States, but also to Latin American nations focused on achieving their own social and economic progress. Utilising the narrative of common interests symbolically placed Central and South American nations on an equal footing with the United States. The fact that these nations were constantly aware of the United States’s power and dominance in the Western Hemisphere provided motivation for national governments to adopt immigration policies similar to the United States but framed within narratives of national consciousness. The United States did not force Latin American nations to adopt restrictive immigration policies. Rather, Latin American nations viewed the implementation of such policies as being in their best interests if they wanted to compete economically with the United States.

A discussion of the Second International Conference on Emigration and Immigration situates 1920s U.S. immigration legislation within the deeper and broader history of international politics in the Western Hemisphere. It provides a conceptual bridge between the histories of U.S.-Latin American relations and U.S. immigration policy. Latin American historians have predominated in scholarship that explores links between these two histories. For example, Kelly Lytle Hernández’s recent work on the U.S. Border Patrol exemplifies how U.S.-Mexico politics shaped the nature of migration control along the U.S.-Mexico border.³⁹ Though focusing on only one aspect of U.S. immigration regulation, Border Patrol, Hernández’s strategy of analysing migration control within a bi-national context of U.S.-Mexico politics is applicable for research on other facets of U.S. immigration policy. For example, records from the Immigration and Naturalization Service indicate that the bi-nationality of U.S.-Mexico border regulation, as argued by Hernández, was present in other aspects of Mexican immigration policy well before the existence of Border Patrol or the arrangement of the Second International Emigration and Immigration Conference in 1928. Records from the Immigration and Naturalization Service reveal that the United States and Mexico had been partners in immigration policy at least since the beginning of the twentieth century. This recognition indicates that both the 1928 Emigration

and Immigration Conference and Hernández's work on the Border Patrol are part of a more expansive history of international politics and immigration regulation.

As early as 1904 communication existed between the United States Secretary of Commerce and Labour and the Mexican government regarding an immigration policy proposed by the Mexican government that contained a provision for restricting the admission of diseased individuals into Mexico. Mexico promised to negotiate an agreement with the United States if the law went into effect.⁴⁰ However, it did not implement the law at that time. In the summer of 1906 the United States government again asked the Mexican government to implement measures of restrictive immigration. An increase in the number of Syrians arriving at the port of Veracruz, with their ultimate destination to the United States, motivated the U.S. government to exert diplomatic pressure.⁴¹ V. H. Metcalf, secretary to the Secretary of State, confirmed that the American Ambassador to Mexico requested the cooperation of the Mexican government in developing preventative measures to minimise the immigration of undesirable aliens to the United States from Mexico.⁴²

Between 1907 and 1908 the United States and Mexico achieved progress toward cooperative immigration measures. Immigration Inspector Marcus Braun wrote to the Commissioner General of Immigration detailing his successful meeting with President Diaz "at which immigration was fully discussed; the President favors similar arrangements as exist with Canada."⁴³ The Mexican Congress then proposed an immigration restriction act. Essential to the United States's immigration interests was the stipulation that the masters of vessels bringing foreigners to Mexican ports supply complete manifests of the passengers destined to the United States to U.S. officials. The proposed act also prohibited Mexican transport companies from selling tickets to foreigners en route to the United States, with the exception of Mexican citizens or legal Mexican residents.⁴⁴ A list of excludable foreigners, such as prostitutes, beggars and several categories of diseased persons, also accompanied the proposed legislation. Mexican officials would determine the health of foreigners by subjecting them to a medical examination upon disembarkation.⁴⁵ Correspondence between D. E. Thompson and Ignacio Mariscal, Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, indicates that Mexican authorities were taking action toward excluding diseased persons and other undesirable foreigners. Thompson wrote,

Referring to your note of the 20th instant, in which you were so good as to inform me of the steps you are taking in the matter of the exclusion of diseased and otherwise undesirable immigrants landing at Mexican ports en route to the United States, there appeared in *The Mexican Herald* of the seventeenth instant an article, in which it is stated in some detail that Syrians with trachoma are no longer allowed to land in Mexico.⁴⁶

Negotiations between the United States and Mexico that began in the beginning of the twentieth century over immigration have continually resurfaced during periods of threatened national security. After the First World War, the rise of radical governments in Europe, the crisis of liberal democracies and the Great Depression compelled cooperation in immigration policy as part of Pan-American interest. An article in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* in 1929 revealed that experts in the Mexican Department of the Interior recommended passing measures to prevent the entry of Slovenes, Italians, Albanians, Hungarians and “groups that form undesirable competitors of the Mexican at home or those that use the country merely as a stepping stone to the United States.”⁴⁷ These measures were not only racially motivated but also intended to address the high levels of unemployment in Mexico. The legislation suggested by the Mexican Department of the Interior closely mirrored the restrictive efforts taken by the United States Bureau of Immigration in the same period.

Like other Latin American nations, Mexico’s challenges of national identity and economic progress were compounded by the complexities of Mexico’s relationship with the United States. During the 1910 Mexican Revolution, officials preached acceptance of cultural diversity but engaged in societal programs intended to mold a homogenous national culture.⁴⁸ As a result, Mexican officials targeted marginal groups, mostly indigenous tribes but also, as Hernández shows, Chinese immigrants living in Mexico. As early as 1919, Sonoran Governor Victoriano de la Huerta approved a law that required foreign-owned businesses to give 80 percent of their jobs to Mexican workers. By the 1930s, the combination of racial ideologies and the Great Depression resulted in anti-Chinese sentiment that pushed many Chinese migrants out of Mexico and into the United States. Mexicans blamed Chinese immigrants for lowering wages and stealing jobs. Since the United States shared the same anti-Chinese sentiment, Chinese immigrants deported from Mexico faced another deportation from the United States to China. Due to the transnationality of the U.S.-Mexico border, which not only facilitated the movement of people but also of ideas, racial theories propagandised in the United States influenced

Mexican policy and popular opinion which led to anti-Chinese policies and rhetoric in Mexico.⁴⁹ As with other Latin American nations, U.S. cultural and social influences not only spread to Mexico but also affected the implementation of Mexican public policies.

In addition to Hernández, other scholars have contributed to this rich history of foreign relations and immigration policy, notably Mae Ngai and Erika Lee. They offer several compelling examples of the United States altering its immigration policy in response to changes in its relations with other nations such as Mexico and China.⁵⁰ This study augments their work by contending that newspaper accounts and records from the 1928 conference in Havana reveal that discussions of migration control took place within an international context during a period in American history traditionally characterised as isolationist. Historians have often interpreted U.S. immigration policy, particularly in the 1920s, solely within the confines of the U.S. border, resulting in little understanding of the ways cultural, political and social relations impacted the regulations of immigrant receiving and emigrant exporting nations. Expanding on Hernández's portrayal of the U.S. Border Patrol as part of a bi-national system of immigration regulation, this research seeks to highlight the internationality of U.S. immigration policy, beyond the U.S.-Mexico border. Not always the result of diplomatic negotiations or international conferences, complementary immigration policies at times derived from the transnational flow of social and cultural influences among nations.

Understanding U.S. immigration within a framework of broader Pan-American cooperation brings together the history of U.S. immigration policy with the history of U.S.-Latin American relations and challenges the traditional interpretation that the United States's restrictive immigration measures of the 1920s signaled isolation. In his analysis of U.S.-Argentine relations, David M. K. Sheinin asserts that valuable commercial links, common future goals and cultural contacts formed the basis for generally cooperative foreign relations between Argentina and the United States.⁵¹ Though there was conflict in terms of which nation should receive the "best" immigrants, the resolutions at the Second International Conference on Immigration and Emigration display a general consensus between the United States and Latin American nations on immigration policy. Between the 1920s and 1930s, immigration was a mutual concern not only for Argentina and the U.S. but other Latin American countries as well. Concern over unrestricted immigration along with the diffusion of Anglo racial theories throughout the Western Hemisphere resulted in two-way discussions on immigration policy.

The migratory imbalance between emigrant and immigrant nations that resulted from the 1924 quotas prompted a complex interplay of international relations exemplified in the Second International Emigration and Immigration Conference. Emigrant nations, with Italy at the forefront, used diplomatic measures in an attempt to tone down immigration restrictions. Though they failed to meet with success, their efforts prove the existence of international pressure on U.S. immigration legislation in the 1920s, a reality hardly discussed in U.S. immigration historiography. Since independence in immigration restriction was its primary objective, there was no incentive for the United States, or any other immigrant receiving nation, to cooperate with emigrant exporting countries. Able to appeal to mutual interests, the United States reinforced Pan-American relations to coordinate restrictive immigration policies with other immigrant receiving countries in the Western Hemisphere. Just as Hernández asserts that Mexico was a partner with the United States in the development of border enforcement, Latin American nations implemented restrictive immigration policies because such legislation complemented their domestic goals of economic progress and national consciousness.⁵²

Endnotes

- ¹ “Holds Immigration is Domestic Affair,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 29 March 1928, p. 11.
- ² Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 14.
- ³ Pellegrino Nazzaro, *Fascist and Anti-Fascist Propaganda in America: The Dispatches of Italian Ambassador Gelasio Caetani* (Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press, 2008), 7, 10-11.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 20, 24.
- ⁵ Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, eds. William Chafe, Gary Gerstle, Linda Gordon, and Julian Zelizer, *Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 23.
- ⁶ Dr. Rafael Martinez Ortiz, “Second International Conference of Emigration and Immigration, Address of Dr. Rafael Martinez Ortiz, Delivered in the Opening Session the 31st of March 1928,” 1; Presidential Directing Committee, “Proposal by the Cuban Delegation with Regard to a Declaration of Principles of Migration and Future Organization of Conferences on the Same,” p. 1, C-2-5:11; “The Second Emigration Conference: Havana, 1928,” 1; C-2-5:11, “C” Boxes, Manuscript Collection L1, Harry H. Laughlin Papers, Special Collections, Pickler Memorial Library, Truman State University, Kirksville, MO (Hereafter Laughlin Papers).
- ⁷ “The Second Emigration Conference: Havana, 1928,” *Ibid.*, 2.
- ⁸ Dr. Rafael Martinez Ortiz, “Address of Dr. Rafael Martinez Ortiz,” *Ibid.*, 2.
- ⁹ “The Second Emigration Conference: Havana, 1928,” *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹⁰ “Quota Men will Fight Plan to Send Delegates to Havana Conference,” *The Oxnard Daily Courier* (Oxnard, California), 28 March 1928, front page.
- ¹¹ “Coolidge Sets Out for Havana Today,” *New York Times*, 13 January 1928, 1. Accessed through ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 10.
- ¹³ “Holds Immigration is a Domestic Affair,” *The Montreal Gazette*, 29 March 1928, 11.
- ¹⁴ “The American Representatives to the ‘Emigration Conference,’ which will meet in Cuba March 31, 1928, should stand for two primary principles,” 1, C-2-5:11, Laughlin Papers.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ¹⁷ Julia Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 4.
- ¹⁸ Thomas E. Skidmore, “Racial Ideas and Social Policy in Brazil, 1870-1940,” in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 23-24.
- ¹⁹ Aline Helg, “Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction,” in *Idem.*, 37-38, 43-45.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*

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- ²¹ Rodriguez, *Civilizing Argentina*, 3, 6, 23-25.
- ²² “The Second Emigration Conference: Havana, 1928,” C-2-5:11, Laughlin Papers, 4.
- ²³ “Harry H. Laughlin,” Biography, Manuscript Collections, Pickler Memorial Library, Truman State University, Kirksville, MO, accessed at <http://library.truman.edu/manuscripts/laughlinbio.asp> on 8 March 2011
- ²⁴ A copy of this volume is held at Miami University Libraries. Harry H. Laughlin, *The Codification and Analysis of the Immigration Control Law of the Several Countries of Pan America*, Analysis volume; a statement of the basic problem, and of the main findings in the analysis of Pan American immigration control law and policy (Washington, D.C., 1926).
- ²⁵ Albert Blakeslee to Harry Laughlin, 15 December 1939, transcript in the hand of Blakeslee, C-4-5:7, Laughlin Papers.
- ²⁶ “The Second Emigration Conference: Havana, 1928,” C-2-5:11, Ibid., 1.
- ²⁷ Committee for the International Emigration and Immigration Conference, “Agenda of the 2nd International Emigration and Immigration Conference (Havana, 1928),” Annex A, C-2-1:1, Ibid, 2-4
- ²⁸ Dr. Emilio del Junco, *La Inmigración Italiana y la Colonización en Cuba*, Informe elevado al Gobierno de la República (Turín: Societá Tipografico-Editrice, 1912), 29-30.
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- ³⁰ “Immigrants in Cuba Destined to United States,” Inter-American Club, December 1928-1930, folder 58, box 5, Ibid., 1.
- ³¹ Committee for the International Emigration and Immigration Conference, “Agenda of the 2nd International Emigration and Immigration Conference (Havana, 1928),” Annex A, C-2-1:1, Laughlin Papers, 4-7.
- ³² Philip Cannistraro and Gianfausto Rosoli, “Fascist Emigration Policy in the 1920s: An Interpretive Framework,” *International Migration Review* Vol. 13 (Winter 1979), 676-678.
- ³³ Committee for the International Emigration and Immigration Conference, “Agenda of the 2nd International Emigration and Immigration Conference (Havana, 1928),” Annex A, C-2-1:1, Laughlin Papers, 6-7.
- ³⁴ *The Immigrants’ Protective League in 1930*, annual report (Chicago Association of Commerce Subscriptions Investigating Committee, November 30, 1930), Immigration History Research Center, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 21.
- ³⁵ “Declaration of Common Principles for the Future Guidance of Human Migration,” C-4-4:12, Laughlin Papers, 1.
- ³⁶ “Migration Code Adopted: But 18 Nations Withhold Vote on the ‘Cuban Delegation’,” *New York Times*, 15 April 1928, p. 50. Accessed from ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- ³⁷ “Declaration of Common Principles for the Future Guidance of Human Migration,” C-4-4:12, Laughlin Papers, 2.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 1.
- ³⁹ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *MIGRA! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 6-7.

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- ⁴⁰ Hay to Secretary of Commerce and Labour, 25 June 1904, roll 1, frame 228, Part 2: Mexican Immigration, 1906-1930, Series A: Subject Correspondence Files, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- ⁴¹ Ignacio Mariscal to Department of Foreign Affairs, 15 June 1906, roll 1, frame 225, Mexican Immigration, 1906-1930, Series A: Subject Correspondence Files, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.
- ⁴² V. H. Metcalf to The Secretary of State, 5 July 1906, roll 1, frame 219, Ibid.
- ⁴³ Marcus Braun to Commissioner General of Immigration, 4 May 1907, telegram, roll 1, frame 433, Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ "Memorandum re Proposed Mexican Agreement," roll 1, frame 341 and 345, Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ "Projected Immigration Law of Mexico," roll 1, frames 496-500, Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ D. E. Thompson to Ignacio Mariscal, 22 August 1907, roll 1, frame 399, Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ "Mexico Moves to Hold Workers in Home Land," *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 16 March 1929, 3.
- ⁴⁸ Keith Brewster, "Redeeming the 'Indian': Sport and Ethnicity in Post-Revolutionary Mexico," *Patterns and Prejudice* Vol. 38 (2004), 213-214.
- ⁴⁹ Hernández, *MIGRA!*, 77-79.
- ⁵⁰ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Kelly Lytle Hernández, *MIGRA!*, 5-7; Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigrants during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
- ⁵¹ David M. K. Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained*, ed. Lester D. Langley, *The United States and the Americas* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2006), 4-5.
- ⁵² Hernández, *MIGRA!*, 7.

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