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*Theories of International Immigration Policy – A Comparative Analysis*¹

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Immigration policy shapes immigration patterns, which in turn have a tremendous impact on the demography, culture, economy and politics of a state. A rapidly expanding literature explores the immigration policies of individual receiving countries. But immigration policy theory is not well defined and lacks, for the most part, debates between various schools of thought on the subject. The aims of this study are to delineate the major approaches in the field of immigration control policy, to highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of each approach, and to analyze the influence of theories of comparative politics, international relations and sociology on those of immigration policy. The six approaches delineated are: Marxism, realism, liberalism, the “national identity” approach, domestic politics (partisan and interest group politics) and institutionalism. Finally, the article offers several research strategies that could serve to advance immigration policy theory.

Immigration has a great impact on the demography, culture, economy and politics of a state. Moreover, immigration is now responsible for population stability or growth in many Western societies. Immigration control policy is a crucial element in determining immigration patterns: given the large number of people who would like to emigrate to the industrialized countries for economic or political reasons, and the strictly limited opportunities to do so, it is immigration policy that mainly determines the scope of global migration (including, it could be argued, illegal migration). As Zolberg (1989:406)² observed: “All the countries to which people would like to go restrict entry. This means that, in the final analysis, it is the policies of potential receivers which determine whether movement can take place, and of what kind.”

A rapidly expanding literature explores immigration policies of individual receiving countries. But despite the burgeoning literature, and the impor-

¹The author thanks Gary Freeman, James Hollifield, Arie Kacowicz, Douglas Massey, Duncan Snidal, Adam Przeworski and four anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments.

²Illegal immigrants obviously immigrate despite restrictions. However, the industrialized countries have the capacity to substantially limit illegal immigration. Even the large illegal immigration to the United States has been facilitated by limited resources available for border control, partially a product of political pressure from pro-immigration interest groups. Thus, allowing illegal immigrants to enter a country by neglecting border control is essentially part of immigration policy (see Joppke, 1998b).

tance of immigration and immigration policy, immigration policy is not well defined and lacks, for the most part, attempts to debate the relative merits of various schools of thought on the subject. The aims of this study are to delineate the major approaches in the field of immigration policy and to highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Finally, it offers several research strategies that could serve to advance immigration policy theory.

Immigration policy consists of two parts: 1) immigration control policy or immigration regulation, namely, the rules and procedures governing the selection and admission of foreign citizens; and 2) immigrant policy, namely, the conditions provided to resident immigrants (*e.g.*, work and housing conditions, welfare provisions and educational opportunities) (Hammar, 1985:7–9). This review delineates the major approaches in the field of immigration control policy.

Immigration control policy concerns the admission and selection of permanent immigrants, temporary migrant workers and refugees, as well as attempts to restrict illegal immigration. While empirical studies describe both the policymaking process leading to immigration policy and the means and efficacy of implementing it, this review focuses on the former. It evaluates the ability of the various theories to explain state decisions with regards to how many immigrants to accept, when, of which type (*i.e.*, permanent immigrants, temporary migrant workers, or refugees), and of which ethnic origin. It also explores the clarity of the explanatory variables and the ability of the theories to explain concurrent immigration policies in various countries.³

Immigration policy is an interdisciplinary subject. Therefore, the approaches delineated in this article utilize theories of political science/comparative politics (Marxist, interest group, partisan politics and institutionalist approaches), international relations (realism, liberalism and world system approaches), and sociology and psychology (the “national identity” approach).

Each of these approaches contributes to our understanding of immigration policy or specific types of such policy. The Marxist approach correctly predicts the short-term correlation between the economic cycle and immigration policies. In particular, it sheds light upon policies regarding migrant

³It might be argued that each type of immigration policy is different, and thus, the failure of a theory to explain one type of immigration policy while adequately explaining another is not a drawback. But the theories should be evaluated with regards to various types of immigration policy because (a) the distinction between the types of immigration is frequently blurred. Many “temporary migrant workers” stay in the country of destination, while many “permanent immigrants” end up returning to their country of origin, and “political” refugees are often hard to distinguish from “economic” immigrants; and (b) most empirical studies simultaneously explore the various types of immigration.

workers and in some cases illegal immigrants. The “national identity” approach highlights historical experiences, cultural idioms and social conflicts that have shaped past and current immigration policies. The domestic politics approach points to important economic and social factors that shape immigration policies. It shows the influence of politics and is able to explain policies on immigration of dissimilar ethnic origin. The institutional approach sheds light on the intricacies of the process leading to immigration policy. It is especially revealing with regard to immigration policies on refugees and migrant workers. Realism contributes to our understanding of refugee policies, and neoliberal theories of supranational organizations and international regimes foster an understanding of immigration and refugee policies within the EU.

However, each of these approaches also suffers from certain weaknesses. For instance, the Marxist approach fails to explain policy on immigration of dissimilar ethnic origin, and its prediction of long-term growth in immigration as a structural part of capitalism is debatable. The “national identity” and institutional approaches are unable to explain concurrent immigration policies in various countries and suffer from vaguely defined explanatory variables. The domestic politics approach is mostly atheoretical and based on case studies rather than on broad comparative analyses. The liberal globalization claim – that the sovereignty of the state with regard to immigration policy has declined – is debatable. Finally, most studies conclude that supranational organizations and international regimes have had little impact on the immigration policies of individual countries, with the partial exception of the EU and the refugee regime.

As this review demonstrates, theories of comparative politics contribute more to our understanding of immigration policies than those of international relations. However, the advent of the EU and the broadening concept of security increase the relevance of international relations theories to the study of immigration policy.

MARXISM AND NEO-MARXISM

The Marxist approach – presented by Beard and Beard (1944), Gorz (1970), Marshall (1973), Marx (1973, 1976), Castells (1975), Nikolinakos (1975), Castles and Kosack (1985), Miles (1986, 1987, 1989) and Bovenkerk *et al.* (1990, 1991) – argues that economic factors and a class-based political process shape immigration policies. It asserts that capitalists import migrant workers in order to exert a downward pressure on wages and thereby increase their own profits. The migrants constitute an “industrial reserve army of

labor,” and migration is part of capitalist development and of the international division of labor.

The Marxist approach consists of several elements. First, it argues that labor immigration is a structural part of capitalism and serves the capitalist ruling class. Therefore, capitalists have encouraged migration between countries of uneven development throughout capitalist development, and labor migration is expected to grow in the long term. Second, fluctuations in the economic cycle and unemployment rates influence immigration in the short term. Governments halt or even reverse immigration during times of economic recessions in order to prevent these recessions from turning into crises of capitalism. Third, the interests of different segments of the capitalist class with regard to immigration diverge according to whether they belong to monopoly capital or to capital invested in industries with lower rates of profit. While the former prefer regularization of immigration, the latter hire illegal immigrants who can be exploited to a greater degree, or try to promote immigration even during times of prolonged unemployment. Finally, most Marxist writers focus on the capitalists’ role in promoting or limiting immigration, with no substantial role assigned to the unions. But some writers criticize the unions’ tendency to oppose migrant workers, arguing that such exclusionary policies divide and weaken the working class.⁴

According to Marxist theory, society is divided into two classes: the capitalists/bourgeoisie and the proletariat/working class. An individual’s class position is determined by his relationship to the means of production. Immigration is the result of the “submission of the worker to the organization of the means of production dictated by capital,” and of the “uneven development between sectors and regions and between countries” (Castells, 1975:34). Immigration is not simply produced by changing manpower needs of advanced capitalist countries; rather, it is a structural tendency characteristic of the current phase of monopoly capitalism. As a result, while the short-term employment situation is immediately reflected in changes in the level of immigration, the long-term trend is continued growth in immigration labor (Castells, 1975:36).

Immigration serves the ruling capitalist class in a variety of ways (Portes, 1981; Petras, 1981). First and foremost, capitalists use immigrant labor as an “industrial reserve army” to force down working-class wages. Second, immigration supplies capitalists with labor for the expanding process of capital accumulation. Third, immigration counteracts the tendency of profits to fall.

⁴Beard does assign an important role to unions in shaping American immigration policies; Marshall notes the role of labor organizations in causing a growth of wages and consequently a capitalist demand for migrant labor.

Fourth, immigration prevents sudden fluctuations in economic activity. Fifth, immigration counteracts structural inflation. Sixth, immigration divides the working class. The capitalists achieve this last aim by encouraging racism through their control of the education system and the media. Marx and Engels (1962:551–52), for example, describe the antagonism between the English and Irish proletarians, which helps the capitalist class to maintain its power. Seventh, racism contributes to class formation within the capitalist system. Bonvenkerk *et al.* (1991:387–88) and Miles (1989) argue that racialization facilitates class formation by categorizing individuals, sorting them into groups, and then allocating them to structural positions relative to the means of production.

Finally, according to some Marxists, immigrant labor enters the society at the lowest tier of the socioeconomic ladder, thereby raising the native workers to a higher tier and lessening the intensity of class conflict. Gorz (1970) explains that since foreigners make up a large share of certain manual occupations, they have pushed up a large number of native workers into nonmanual sectors, where they are less likely to belong to unions, vote for left-wing parties, or identify with the proletariat.

While most Marxist writers emphasize long-term growth in immigration as a structural part of capitalism, Castells notes that advanced capitalist economies regulate immigrant labor, temporarily limiting immigration or even expelling immigrants at times of economic decline. Such restrictions prevent recessions from becoming crises of capitalism. Unlike classical crises, caused directly by overproduction, today's crises, Castells (1975:55) argues, are produced primarily by inflation, which is itself the result of capital surpluses and financial movements. These crises are characterized by the combination of inflation and recession, or "stagflation," but the outcome is similar: overproduction which leads to recession. Migrant labor is the ideal remedy for the crises of capitalism for three reasons: 1) it is very productive in the expansionary phase; 2) it is excludable without difficulty in the recessionary phase, when there is a danger of overproduction; and 3) it consumes little, so it reduces inflationary tensions in expansionary periods and cushions the decline in demand in recessionary periods. The immigrant's disappearance as a wage-earner (and thus a consumer) has little effect on the overall level of effective demand so the productive capacity can be reduced with little change in effective demand, and fluctuations can be prevented from turning into crises of capitalism.

The neo-Marxist world system theory is derived from the Marxist approach. Based on the work of Wallerstein (1974), various theorists – including Petras (1981), Portes and Walton (1981), Cheng and Bonacich

(1984), and Morawska (1990) – have attributed international migration to the structure of the world market. The world system approach provides us with a comprehensive explanation of migration trends throughout the world. But it tells us little about immigration policy. Proponents of the world system theory who do analyze the receiving side (e.g., Portes and Walton, 1981), follow the standard Marxist approach, the problems with which are described below.

Critique of the Marxist Approach

The Marxist approach, especially Castells' version, correctly predicts the short-term correlation between the economic cycle and immigration policies. In particular, it helps to explain policies on migrant workers and in some cases illegal immigrants because such immigrants clearly benefit the employers. But there are various theoretical and empirical difficulties with the Marxist approach in this context.

First, the Marxist prediction of long-term growth in immigration as a structural part of capitalism is debatable. Immigration to the United States has been growing since 1965, but it is still smaller (in relation to the total population) than turn-of-the-century immigration. West European countries abolished large-scale labor recruitment in the 1970s and have not renewed it since. It could be argued that Europe is still going through a prolonged recession, characterized by high unemployment, or that illegal migration and asylum seekers have replaced the traditional labor migration to these countries. But it is not clear why the capitalists would resort to such replacement given their alleged control of the state.

Second, the Marxist approach fails to explain policy on immigration of dissimilar ethnic origin. According to the Marxist approach, the state (in the service of the capitalists) encourages the importation of immigrants of dissimilar race and ethnic composition in order to expand the labor force, facilitate class formation, and cause racial tensions between the immigrants and the local labor. In practice, however, immigration policies have discriminated against immigrants of dissimilar racial and ethnic composition. For instance, the United States, Australia and Canada prevented Chinese and Japanese immigration in the nineteenth century; Britain halted colored immigration during the 1960s; and the United States prefers Cuban refugees to Haitian ones.

Third, the exclusive focus of the Marxist approach on the economic motive lessens its ability to explain refugee policies and other permanent immigration policies that are influenced by foreign policy considerations. These include, for example, U.S. policy on Chinese, Japanese or Filipino

immigration; British policy towards Commonwealth immigration; Dutch policy towards immigration from Suriname; and the dramatic change in Australian immigration policy after World War II.

Fourth, the Marxist focus on the economic motive also prevents it from explaining policies related to wars and certain political pressures. For example, why did attempts to restrict European immigration to the United States fail during economic recessions between the early 1890s and World War I? And why were restrictions on immigration passed in various countries during World War I, despite a growing demand for labor?

Finally, Bohning (1978:6) contends that the Marxist approach does not explain the fact that the centrally planned economies of Eastern Europe also imported significant numbers of migrant workers, including from African developing countries. This critique is open to debate because it could be argued that the fault is not in the theory, but rather in the fact that the Eastern European states did not fulfill the dictates of Marxism.

THE "NATIONAL IDENTITY" APPROACH

An important explanation for immigration policies is what I term the "national identity" approach. It argues that the unique history of each country, its conceptions of citizenship and nationality, as well as debates over national identity and social conflicts within it, shape its immigration policies. In comparison to the other theories delineated here, the "national identity" approach downplays the importance of external and "situational" factors. Much of this literature can be categorized as historical sociology or political sociology, and it builds upon sociological and psychological theories and concepts such as national identity, nation building, prejudice, alienation and social closure (*see* Higham, 1955:332–34; Brubaker, 1992:23). It also utilizes the historical research method, usually focusing on the history of one or two countries. The "national identity" approach resembles some aspects of the constructivist approach in international relations, including its focus on ideas and identity, as well as its characterization of the interests and identities of the state as a product of specific historical processes (*see* Wendt, 1992; Koslowski and Kratochwil, 1994; Walt, 1998:40–41).

The "national identity" approach focuses on the unique history and traditions of each country and utilizes a historical approach, while downplaying the importance of external and "situational" factors. Higham offers a general history of the American anti-immigrant spirit and tries to show how it evolved its own distinctive patterns. Brubaker (1992:14) argues that today's

perceptions of foreigners and policies of citizenship are derived from historical experiences that crystallized in the decades before World War I. He shows (1992:16) “how particular cultural idioms ... framed and shaped judgments of what was politically imperative, of what was in the interest of the state.... State interests in an expansive or restrictive citizenry are not immediately given by economic, demographic, or military considerations. Rather, judgments of what is the interest of the state are mediated by self-understanding, by cultural idioms, by ways of thinking and talking about nationhood.”⁵ More recently, Brubaker (1995:905) also explored the “boundaries of legitimate discussion,” which change over time in response to broader cultural developments and influence immigration policy debates. Weil (1991) and Hollifield (1994) emphasize the contribution of French republicanism – a cornerstone of French political and legal culture – to its liberal immigration policy.⁶ Kurthen (1995:914) argues that Germany’s current problems with immigration and nationhood “date back to the origins of the nation-building. They reflect unresolved contradictions between exclusive ideas of the nation-state and inclusive ideas of republican and universal principles of individual human and civil rights.” And according to Herbert (1990:3–4):

Policy toward foreign labor ... is not only a question of the liberalism or economic strength of these governments but quite clearly also is bound up with the traditions – evolved over generations – within these societies in dealing with foreigners more generally and with foreign workers entering the host country in search of employment in particular.... To conceptualize the situation of foreigners in the Federal Republic solely in terms of a phenomenon of migration processes that are generally typical of capitalist societies and similar in their basic structure is a misconceived and inadequate approach.... The manner of dealing with resident foreign nationals in the present remains incomprehensible without a critical confrontation with the collective experience of a society in dealing with the massive employment of foreign workers in the past, and the traditions that have crystallized over decades as a result.

These broad historical studies do acknowledge the influence of short-term economic, demographic and military considerations. Higham (1955:336) tries to combine a materialist perspective with one based on ideas. He agrees that external situations played an important role in shaping U.S. immigration policy, but he tries “to demonstrate the power of certain new ideas to transcend the specific contexts that produced them.” Herbert combines structural-economic and ideological analyses. And Pak (1994:6) asserts that “the

⁵Brubaker analyzes the conception of citizenship rather than immigration control policy, but he notes (1992:34) the circular relationship between the two policies, and thus his findings indirectly relate to immigration control policy.

⁶Hollifield also incorporates elements of the domestic politics approach.

really interesting problem of immigration politics is the interaction between the economic and the cultural, between the material and the discursive.” But in comparison to the other approaches delineated here, distinctive national patterns are highlighted rather than external and “situational” factors. Jones (1960:260) goes even further to claim that “. . . no correlation exists between the character of immigration and the intensity of the reaction to it. Nativism rose and fell in response not to external influences but to changes in American internal conditions.”

The “national identity” approach explains the timing of immigration policies on the basis of social conflicts and debates over national identity. Pak asserts that Japanese immigration policy is shaped by the debate over national identity in that country. Brubaker (1992:11,134) argues that immigration into Germany was seen through the prism of the nationality struggle between Germans and Poles in Prussia. And several commentators claimed that German unification contributed to violence against foreigners and to pressures for restrictions on immigration. But Higham and Jones offer the most comprehensive analysis of this kind. They argue that social cleavages, social unrest and industrial unrest within American society foster fears of losing national identity and of a national breakdown. This, in turn, produces nationalism and nativism (xenophobia). Higham and Jones view nativism as a psychological phenomenon: a decline in American confidence in the country’s unity produces nativistic outbursts; an optimistic mood limits nativism. They identify four national crises up to the late 1920s that generated nativistic outbursts: 1) the 1790s national crisis; 2) the 1850s pre-Civil War regional cleavage; 3) the 1886–1896 class cleavage; and 4) the 1917–1920s national crisis. In the decades prior to the Civil War, for instance: “The American people maintained a cocksure faith in themselves, in their boundless opportunities for improvement and acquisition, and in the self-perpetuating strength of their principles of freedom” (Higham, 1955:11). But between 1886 and 1896, “Americans began to lose confidence in the process of assimilation. The result was a nationalist outburst that stressed the need for social unity and which expressed itself in a fear-ridden and sometimes hysterical hatred of foreigners” (Jones, 1960:252–53; *see also* Higham, 1955:77). Higham (1955:4, 335, 342) concludes that deep social crises provide the pivot of change, and that nationalism – defined as “a fervid demand for a new level of national unity” – produces nativism.

The “national identity” approach explains variations in immigration and citizenship policies between countries of destination on the basis of their dif-

ferent conceptions of national identity or different characteristics. Three such distinctions, which partially overlap, are 1) between settler societies, which accept large-scale immigration, and ethnic states, which tend to reject such immigration; 2) between homogeneous and heterogeneous countries; and 3) between countries whose citizenship laws tend towards *jus sanguinis* and those countries whose citizenship laws tend towards *jus soli* (see Money, 1999).

The first distinction is between settler societies, which have been built by immigrants and favor permanent immigration, and ethnic states, which tend to oppose such immigration, especially of dissimilar ethnic origin. Meissner (1992:70–71) argues: “For Europeans, membership in their societies is tied to shared ethnicity and nationality. . . . This is very different from Australia, Canada, and the United States, where nation building through immigration led to ideas of membership based on civic participation and a generally shared commitment to democratic values. In asserting that they are non-immigrant nations, European states reject ethnic diversity as a positive societal value. Immigration, therefore, is seen as a fundamental threat to national unity and the common good.” Freeman (1995b:881) notes that “divergent immigration histories mold popular attitudes toward migration and ethnic heterogeneity and affect the institutionalization of migration policy and politics.” He contrasts the English-speaking settler societies, which have histories of periodically open immigration, and the European states, which experienced mass migration only after World War II.

The second distinction assumes that ethnically homogeneous countries are less likely to accept ethnically dissimilar permanent immigration than heterogeneous ones. According to Zolberg (1981:16): “Given an equal challenge, the degree of tolerance of cultural diversity may vary as a function of the character of the receiving society. A highly homogeneous culture, such as may be found in an ethnically undiversified nation with a dominant religion, and which as a consequence of its insularity has experienced little immigration in the recent past, may have a lower threshold of tolerance than a more heterogeneous one, whose identity may have come to be founded on political rather than ethnic criteria.” Kurthen describes the contradiction between Germany’s official notion of national homogeneity and the increasing diversity created by immigration.

The third distinction refers to the rules governing citizenship at birth and accords in part with the previous two categorizations. The United States, which adopted the principle of *jus soli* (citizenship by place of birth), is a heterogeneous society that has accepted large-scale permanent immigration. In

contrast, Japan and many European states (*e.g.*, Germany and Switzerland) adopted the principle of *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by parentage), which until recently helped them to preserve their ethnic homogeneity and influenced their decision to favor temporary migrant workers over permanent immigrants of dissimilar ethnic origin (*see* Leitner, 1995:262–63; Kurthen, 1995:929).

Critique of the “National Identity” Approach

The “national identity” approach contributes to our understanding of immigration policies in several ways. First, it explores the traditions and cultural idioms that “frame and shape judgments of what is politically imperative.” State policies are not constructed in a vacuum, but rather are influenced, to some degree, by the history and traditional ways of thinking of a society. Second, it explains why some countries favor permanent immigration, while others prefer temporary labor migration. And third, major racial, ethnic and religious conflicts within a society influence the attitudes of the contending groups towards the composition of immigration, as it may alter the demographic and political balance between them. For example, Jews and Arabs in Israel, as well as francophones and anglophones in Canada, all assign great importance to the way in which immigration may affect the demographics within their countries.

The main weakness of the “national identity” approach is its inability to explain the fact that various countries have adopted similar immigration policies at the same time. Such resemblance undermines the argument that immigration policies are shaped by each country’s unique history, social cleavages and perception of national identity. For example, during the 1870s–80s, several countries restricted Chinese and other labor migration; between 1890 and World War I, receiving countries attempted to block Eastern European and impoverished immigration and restricted Japanese immigration; during the 1920s, various countries limited Eastern European immigration; between World War I and World War II, and since 1973, almost all of the receiving countries have restricted immigration; and during the Cold War, most receiving countries showed a preference for refugees from communism.

One explanation for the fact that the immigration policies of various receiving countries are similar, combining the “national identity” approach and the globalization theory, is described below. Another explanation for these similarities, which conforms to the “national identity” approach, is Zolberg’s analysis of racism and restrictions on immigration. Zolberg (1978) argues that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, nation-

building processes caused countries in the semi-periphery (Russia, Romania and later Italy and Germany) to expel those groups deemed unassimilable, while preventing the exit of other groups. The receiving countries, which were going through a similar process of nation-building, implemented restrictive immigration policies.

Zolberg's analysis explains the restrictions on emigration from Russia, Romania, Italy and Germany, and perhaps the simultaneous restrictions on immigration to France, Australia and Canada, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it is probably less applicable for Britain and the United States during that period, and it does not elaborate on restrictions on immigration during the post-war period, when most of the major receiving countries completed the process of nation-building.

Another deficiency of the "national identity" approach is its vagueness as regards identifying social conflicts and debates over national identity. For instance, there is no doubt that the Civil War constituted a major social conflict in U.S. history, and the same is probably true of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. But it is hard to reach a consensus on whether other historical events can be seen as social conflicts and signify a "loss of national confidence," including these presented by Higham and Jones. Vague definitions of this type risk being tautological, where the independent variable (social conflicts and debates over national identity) is chosen according to the dependent variable (restrictions on immigration). Zolberg (1978:269) criticizes this approach on similar grounds: "The basic problem with this mode of explanation is that there is no way of independently charting the 'level of frustration' of a society except by using 'aggressive behavior' – that which is to be explained – as the indicator. . . . The result is such perfect co-variance between 'cause' and 'effect' as to suggest the presence of a tautology."

A third difficulty with the "national identity" approach has to do with its tendency to see social conflicts and debates over national identity as the cause for restrictions on immigration, even though there are examples to the contrary. In contrast to Higham and Jones's arguments, U.S. immigration policy was liberalized during the volatile 1960s, which should count as a period of social conflict. Even the rise of the anti-immigration "Know Nothing"/American Party during the 1850s does not prove the "national identity" argument, because: 1) the American Party was unable to cause the passage of anti-immigration legislation; 2) the Civil War cleavage in fact contributed to the fall of the party; and 3) the success of the anti-immigration party can be explained by "situational" factors – a recession and large dissimilar immigration. The

focus on social conflicts as the cause for restrictions on immigration is also debatable with regard to Europe. Western European countries did not restrict immigration during the troubled autumn of 1968, a period of social conflict, although according to some scholars the 1972–75 restrictions on foreign workers were partially a product of the 1968 events (*see* Freeman, 1979:85–93).

DOMESTIC POLITICS: INTEREST GROUP AND PARTISAN POLITICS

Domestic politics models (or “society-centered approaches”) assume that the state serves as a neutral arena for societal interests: interest groups and parties. Policymaking is the result of bargaining as well as of compromises between these interests, or sometimes it reflects the fact that one or more of these actors has succeeded in capturing the state.

Many studies of immigration policies, including those of Divine (1957), Craig (1971), Zolberg (1981), Hoffmann-Nowotny (1985), Shughart *et al.* (1986), LeMay (1987), Layton-Henry (1990, 1992), Hollifield (1992a), Freeman and Betts (1992), Freeman (1995b), Joppke (1998b, 1999), Money (1997, 1999), and Meyers (2001a), apply the domestic politics approach. They attribute changes in immigration policy to “situational” socioeconomic factors (*e.g.*, recessions and large-scale immigration of dissimilar racial or ethnic composition contribute to restrictions on immigration), and identify societal actors as shaping immigration policy.⁷

In the partisan politics process, each political party offers a program; during elections, the public chooses among the parties according to their programs, and the party (or coalition of parties) which gains power implements its platform. Some studies focus on political parties as the source of immigration policy. Faist (1994) recounts statements by major politicians in the CDU, CSU and SPD with regard to immigration policy. Katznelson (1973), Freeman (1979) and Layton-Henry (1992) describe inter- and intra-partisan debates over immigration to Britain. Schain (1988) explores the role of party elites in the emergence of the politics of immigration and racism in France. And Thränhardt (1995) illustrates the use of xenophobia in electoral politics

⁷Some studies, including those by Zolberg (1978), Hollifield (1994), and to a lesser degree Freeman (1995b) also incorporate elements of the national identity approach. Hollifield’s (1992a, 1994) and Joppke’s (1998b, 1999) analyses of the formation of immigration policy combine the influence of domestic interests with rights-based politics / the role of courts, while Hollifield’s discussion of the effectiveness of immigration policy conforms with the institutional approach.

in Britain, France and Germany. Finally, numerous scholars – including Husbands (1988), Layton-Henry (1992), Mayer and Perrineau (1992), Voerman and Lucardie (1992), Braun and Scheinberg (1997); Fennema (1997) and Kitschelt and McGann (1997) – have analyzed the emergence of anti-immigration parties in various European countries.

In the interest group political process, organized interest or pressure groups try to force parties, legislators, and administrators to adopt specific policies. In contrast to the partisan politics process, where policies are supposed to represent the attitudes of the majority of the public (at least in the two-party system), the interest group political process frequently yields policies that favor the interests of only small sections of the population.

The interest and pressure groups most commonly associated with immigration policy are employers and ethnic groups, which tend to support immigration, and unions and nationalist groups, which tend to oppose it. For example, Collins (1988) describes how Australian employers in the tin-mining industry resisted restrictions on Chinese immigration, and how Australian unions opposed the immigration of Italians during the 1920s-30s, while employers supported it; Esser and Korte (1985) portray how German employers pressed for the recruitment of foreign labor for agriculture and industry during the 1960s; Freeman (1979) recounts how the cotton industry in Britain, disturbed by the lack of manpower in the textile factories, advanced the recruiting of foreign labor after World War II; Briggs (1984) describes the opposition of American unions to the 1917–1922 and the *Bracero* migrant-worker programs; Craig (1971) details how southwestern agricultural business interests pushed for the *Bracero* program in the United States; Haus (1995) explains the attitudes and role of unions in influencing U.S. immigration policy during the 1980s and early 1990s; Hoffmann-Nowotny (1985) portrays the objections of Swiss unions to labor migration; de Wenden (1994) describes how the initiatives of immigrant associations changed the terms of the political dialogue on immigration in France; and Reimers (1982) narrates how ethnic organizations denounced the 1952 Walter-McCarran Act, while “patriotic” groups defended it.

Another variant of the domestic politics/pluralist model focuses on local politics and on center-periphery relationships within national politics. While Freeman (1995a) defines such studies as separate “spatial theories,” they share, in my opinion, many arguments with other pluralist explanations. Money (1997, 1999) begins her model at the local level, with an analysis of employers’ support of, and labor and public opposition to, immigration. She

then explains how such local pressures reach the national political agenda as a function of the national electoral margin and the size and safety of “immigration” constituencies. In the same sphere, Body-Gendrot and Schain (1992) explain how the different center-periphery relationships in France and the United States have influenced the interaction of local politics and national politics over immigration policy. And several scholars describe the influence of pressures from provinces on Canadian immigration policy (Hawkins, 1991, 1998; Kelley and Trebilock, 1998:499–500).

Critique of the Domestic Politics Approach

Domestic politics is a widely employed approach to the study of immigration policy. Empirically, it seems evident that economic and social factors have a greater impact on immigration policies than do security and strategic considerations, which are highlighted by the realist approach. Changes in the state of the economy and in the volume of immigration are also easier to identify than debates over national identity. Domestic politics models avoid many of the difficulties of the Marxist approach, by offering, for instance, an explanation for policy on immigration of dissimilar ethnic origin. And such models do not neglect the influence of politics. Nevertheless, these models do have several weaknesses (which they share with some of the other approaches).

First and foremost, most studies that highlight domestic influences on immigration policies are empirically oriented and lack a general theory. Zolberg (1978:242) writes in this context: “The specialists who deal with . . . emigration policies, forced population exchanges, expulsions, immigration policies and their concomitants such as naturalization law – tend to be a-theoretic. Produced mostly by historians or political scientists interested in a segment of social reality within specified time limits and in particular countries, by specialists of international law, and by students of international organization, the literature on these matters constitutes an array of discrete bits.”

The second weakness of domestic politics studies of immigration policy is also indicated in Zolberg’s critique: they mostly examine the policy of a single country during a limited period. The concentration on case studies is apt to put undue emphasis on the peculiarities of each country, rather than identifying the main characteristics of immigration policy. The case study method also hinders the ability of the domestic politics approach to explain concurrent immigration policies in various countries, although Meyers (2001b) offers a model linking global socioeconomic trends and domestic politics in order to elucidate these similarities.

Comparative studies of the domestic politics of immigration policy are of three types. Earlier studies – including Krane (1979), Kubat (1979), Rogers (1985) and LeMay (1989) – are collections of articles that examine each country separately without indicating general tendencies or theoretical conclusions. Others – including Hammar (1985), Cornelius *et al.* (1994), and Brochmann and Hammar (1999) – are more integrative because the articles are based on a similar set of questions. They also offer some theoretical observations and discuss general tendencies that, however, do not amount to a full-fledged theory. Finally, Freeman (1979, 1995b), Zolberg (1981, 1983, 1991), Hollifield (1992a), Hardcastle *et al.* (1994), Joppke (1999), and Money (1997, 1999) are more theoretically oriented, but are usually based on the empirical analysis of only two or three countries.

Finally, a pure domestic politics approach cannot readily explain certain immigration and refugee policies adopted despite domestic opposition – such as U.S. admission of Chinese during the 1860s-1870s and of Eastern Europeans during the Cold War, Australian acceptance of Eastern Europeans after World War II, and British admission of immigrants from the New Commonwealth in the late 1950s. In each of these cases, immigration policy was mostly the product of foreign policy considerations, advanced by the executive branch. Studies of immigration policies that emphasize domestic politics deal with this problem by adding foreign policy considerations (*e.g.*, Mitchell, 1989; Tobin, 1989; Bach, 1990; Layton-Henry, 1992; Hardcastle *et al.*, 1994). Other studies describe the influence of ethnic groups on the immigration policy of their adopted country vis-à-vis their country of origin (*e.g.*, Cubans in the United States; *see* Teitelbaum, 1984; Weiner, 1990; Haney and Vanderbush, 1999). But ethnic groups were not sufficiently influential to explain the aforementioned immigration and refugee policies.

BRINGING THE STATE BACK IN: INSTITUTIONAL AND BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS APPROACHES

A perspective that brings the state back in as an actor, but still focuses on state-level interactions, is the institutional approach (which also includes the bureaucratic politics model).⁸ Many studies – including those by Dirks (1977), Birrell (1981), Schultz (1982), Abella and Troper (1983), Whitaker (1987), Abella (1988), Hawkins (1988, 1991), Suyama (1991), Simmons and Keohane (1992), Calavita (1992) and Fitzgerald (1996) – follow this per-

⁸The bureaucratic model is sometimes defined as a domestic politics model. However, it also brings the state back in, and thus it is analyzed here.

spective and focus on the role of the state (*i.e.*, the administration/bureaucracy) in shaping immigration policy. According to Birrell (1981:231), the Department of Immigration in Australia “has never been just a passive arm of Government, faithfully implementing Government policy,” rather it has “actively promoted the goal of population expansion and the cultivation of public support for it.” Schultz (1982), Abella and Troper (1983), Whitaker (1987) and Abella (1988) argue that bureaucrats have substantially influenced Canada’s immigration and refugee policies (*see* Hardcastle *et al.*, 1994).

The pure institutionalist approach argues that political institutions can be autonomous: they can form public policy according to the interests of the state and remain unaffected by societal or interest group pressures. Political choices made by earlier generations create institutions, which shape both policies and ideas for later generations (Fitzgerald, 1996:5; Skocpol, 1985; Goldstein, 1988, 1989). In practice, the institutionalist approach includes several variants, which differ according to the degree of autonomy and cohesion they attribute to the state. Some scholars describe the state as autonomous, acting according to its own interests. Others argue that various state agencies promote certain societal interests (*e.g.*, the Department of Agriculture is concerned with the interests of farmers). Researchers also differ with regard to whether the state is monolithic, united in its view of its interest, or whether various bureaucratic agencies pursue their own agendas, in what is known as the bureaucratic model (Allison, 1969).

Studies of immigration policy, which focus on the state, vary along the same lines. Whitaker, who analyzes Canadian immigration policy during the Cold War era, views the state as (nearly) autonomous. He describes how “the policies and practices of immigration security have been deliberately concealed from the Canadian public, the press, members of Parliament, and even bureaucrats with no ‘need to know’” (Whitaker, 1987:4). But most scholars picture a less autonomous state. Calavita (1992:179) borrows from the state-centered theorists who insist that the state, and the institutions that make it up, have their own interests and periodically enjoy substantial autonomy, but also from the literature on federal agencies that describes the interactions between state agencies and their “clienteles.” Simmons and Keohane (1992), in their study of Canadian immigration policy, argue that the state has a significantly independent agenda, which includes the pursuit of economic security, a rational-bureaucratic agenda, and continued legitimacy. But at the same time, they also find that various societal elements – labor, capital, ethnic groups, humanitarian organizations, and the provinces – influence immigration policy.

Structural studies of immigration policy also vary in their view of the cohesion of the state. For example, Bach (1978) depicts it as relatively monolithic, while Calavita, who analyzes the *Bracero* program in the United States, finds “a ‘state’ that is rift with internal divisions, as the policy agenda of the Immigration Service collides head-on with the policy goals of other state agencies, most notably the Department of Labor” (Calavita, 1992:4).

An important variant of the institutionalist approach (*e.g.*, Katzenstein, 1978) differentiates between “strong” states, where state institutions are relatively unaffected by societal pressures and shape public policies according to the “national interest,” and “weak” states, where societal pressures successfully penetrate state institutions and influence public policies. For example, in the case of trade and industrial policies, the United States and Britain are “weak” states, while Japan and France are “strong” states. Hollifield (1989) argues that “the statist and administrative approach to immigration in France has contributed to the politicization of the issue of immigration; whereas in the United States the federal nature of the political system, the stability of the party system, and the pluralist approach to legislation have helped to fragment the issue and keep it off the national agenda for most of the postwar period.” But he concludes that, despite these differences, both countries have maintained a relatively liberal attitude towards immigration. Fitzgerald (1996) offers a revision to that model, termed “improvisational institutionalism,” which describes the United States as a “sectoral state” rather than a “weak” one. Within the United States, state power and autonomy vary from one type of immigration policy to another: it is strongest with regard to refugee policy, weaker with regards to “front-gate” immigration policy, and weakest with regard to “back-door” policy (*i.e.*, illegal immigrants). Each type of policy has been institutionalized differently and has its own policy network that includes a distinct set of actors, and a particular rhetoric, with limited cross-influences between the three types of policies.

Critique of the Institutional Approach

Detailed analyses of bureaucratic policymaking, such as Whitaker (1987), Hawkins (1988, 1991), and Calavita (1992), shed light on the intricacies of the process leading to immigration policy. Studies based on the institutionalist approach are especially revealing with regard to immigration policies on refugees and migrant workers that were developed behind the scenes.

But there are several problems with the institutional approach. Some of them have to do with the approach in general. The “weak state versus strong

state” model in particular has been criticized for the vagueness of its definitions of “state,” “weak state” and “strong state,” which may make the explanatory power of this argument *post-hoc* and even tautological (Skocpol, 1992:37). The more ‘autonomous’ variant of the institutional approach to immigration policymaking suffers from other problems. First, it is not well suited for explaining policy on permanent immigrants, which takes place in the public arena, and where pressures from outside the ‘state’ – *i.e.*, from ethnic groups, nationalistic organizations, and extreme-right parties – significantly influence policymaking. Second, the institutional approach focuses on political institutions, which differ from country to country, sector to sector. As a result, it is unable to explain the fact that various countries have adopted similar immigration policies at the same time. And third, most institutional analyses of immigration policy examine specific countries rather than employing comparative methodology (Hawkin’s *Critical Years in Immigration* is an exception). Fitzgerald’s analysis solves some of the aforementioned problems, but it suffers from several theoretical, empirical and technical shortcomings, which are elaborated in Barkan (1997) and de la Garza (1997).

REALISM AND NEOREALISM

Realism (“classical” realism and neorealism) is perhaps the most prominent approach in the study of international relations. It “depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self-interested states” (Walt, 1998:31). According to Viotti and Kauppi (1987), realism is based on four key assumptions. First, states are the principal or most important actors and represent the key unit of analysis. Second, the state is viewed as a unitary actor, which faces the outside world as an integrated unit. Third, the state is essentially a rational actor. And fourth, national security issues are the most important ones on the international agenda. Realists focus on actual or potential conflicts among states. Issues of security and strategic issues are sometimes referred to as high politics, whereas economic and social issues are viewed as less important or low politics (*see* Hoffmann, 1960; Morgenthau, 1973; Waltz, 1979; Keohane, 1986). While some proponents of the realist approach, such as Gilpin, accept the importance of economic factors in international relations, they still view these factors as working “in the context of the political struggle among groups and nations” (Gilpin, 1986:308).

Actual or potential conflicts among states, including military ones, have influenced immigration policies. On the one hand, they contributed to restrictions on immigration, such as the 1917 literacy test act in the United

States, the introduction of passports and visa requirements during World War I, and the enactment of alien and sedition acts. On the other hand, wars and other conflicts have caused countries to accept or even encourage immigration. After World War II, France felt that wartime losses and a low birth rate made it susceptible to another German invasion, and thus it encouraged the immigration and settlement of Italians, Spaniards and Portuguese. Australia, which experienced Japanese intrusions during the war and feared that its sparse population could not repel an Asian invasion, implemented the “populate or perish” policy, attempting an annual intake of about one percent of the local population. Security concerns and demographic inferiority vis-à-vis its Arab neighbors have contributed to Israel’s encouragement of Jewish immigration (*see* Ben-Gurion, 1969:469). And during the Cold War, many Western democracies favored refugees from communist countries in order to demonstrate their anti-communist and anti-Soviet ideological commitment.

The emphasis on national security and military conflicts formerly caused most scholars of the realist school to neglect the issue of immigration. At the same time, realist thinking has influenced studies by Miller (1979), Miller and Papademetriou (1983), Teitelbaum (1984), Weiner (1985, 1990, 1993, 1995), Loescher and Scanlan (1986), Mitchell (1989,1992), Bach (1990), Tucker (1990), Teitelbaum and Weiner (1995) and others (*see* Hollifield 1992b) about the relationship between foreign policy and international migration, although none of them pursues a pure realist approach. Teitelbaum describes the influence of U.S. security, economic and ideological interests on its immigration policies. Weiner (1985) demonstrates how the actions or inactions of states vis-à-vis international migration influence the relations between states and how relations between states affect the rules regarding exit and entry. Zolberg (1981:11) notes that populations (including immigrants) “constitute, most obviously, assets and liabilities in relation to the mustering of military power.” And Loescher and Scanlan (1986:xvii) conclude that over the last four decades, foreign policy choices have played the key role in determining which refugees will be permitted to enter the United States.

Critique of the Realist Approach

The focus of the Realist approach on sovereign self-interested states seems a good starting point for a discussion of immigration policies. In contrast to neo-Marxist theories, for instance, realism does not neglect the influence of the state. States pursue their national interests when they restrict labor migration and permanent immigration during recessions, accept labor migration

during economic upturns, give preference to immigration of the highly-skilled and of investors, and encourage immigration in an attempt to overcome demographic inferiority vis-à-vis potential enemies.

Nevertheless, realism has contributed only marginally to the study of immigration policy, with the possible exception of refugee policy, for three reasons. First, the theory emphasized security, while viewing social issues as less important. Consequently, realist works tended to neglect the issue of immigration. Only of late (especially since the end of the Cold War) has neorealist theory paid more attention to migration policy by reframing it as a security concern. Weiner (1995:x) describes a variety of ways in which migrants and refugees are perceived as potential threats to the security of states and regimes. Similarly, Waever *et al.* (1993) argue, that “In Western Europe, societal insecurity has replaced state sovereignty as the key to success or failure of European integration, pushing concerns about identity and migration to the top of the political agenda.” But many mainstream realists oppose broadening the concept of security, lest it “destroy its intellectual coherence.” (Walt, 1991:213).

Second, realism defines the state as a unitary rational actor. But such a perspective cannot explain why some scholars (notably economists) criticize immigration policy for being inefficient or irrational (Fitzgerald, 1996:24–34). In contrast, a domestic politics approach, which describes immigration policy as the product of bargaining among various domestic actors, can clarify such state-level irrational behavior (*see* Freeman, 1995b). As a result, even the scholars who study the relationship between foreign policy and international migration tend to discuss the role of interest groups and other political players within the domestic arena (*e.g.*, Weiner, 1985:442).

And third, realism focuses on power as a key concept; but global power relations usually do not determine immigration policy. As Zolberg (1981:10–11) puts it: “On the one hand, formally independent states are distributed along a scale of strategic power. . . . On the other hand, however, these same states are fundamentally equal as sovereignties . . . it is out of the formal equality among states . . . that each derives the right to maintain its integrity by controlling entry.”

LIBERALISM AND NEOLIBERALISM

Liberals offer a more optimistic worldview than the realists. They maintain that international economic interdependence, transnational interactions, international institutions, and the spread of democracy can promote cooperation and even peace between nations. In contrast to the realists, liberalism

assumes that non-state actors, such as international organizations and multinational corporations, are important actors in international relations and that economic and social issues are no less important than military ones (Viotti and Kauppi, 1987). Some strands of the liberal paradigm – *e.g.*, economic liberalism, interdependence liberalism and republican liberalism – have had little direct influence on immigration policy literature (*see* Meyers, 2001a). But others, notably institutional neoliberalism and the globalization theory, shed light on immigration policymaking.

Neoliberal Institutionalism

The Neoliberal institutionalist model argues that international institutions and regimes help overcome dilemmas of common interests and common aversions and facilitate collaboration and coordination between countries (Krasner, 1983; Keohane, 1985; Haggard and Simmons, 1987; Baldwin, 1993). Major examples of international institutions or regimes are free or freer trade (*e.g.*, GATT, the EEC/EU) and international security (*e.g.*, NATO and the non-proliferation regime).⁹

Zolberg (1991, 1992), Hollifield (1992b), Miller (1992), Meyers (1994) and Cornelius *et al.* (1994) examine the applicability of the institutional model to immigration policies. They conclude that supranational organizations and international regimes usually have had little impact on immigration policies of individual countries, with the partial exception of the EU and the refugee regime (on the refugee regime, *see* Salomon, 1991; Hartigan, 1992; Loescher, 1993; Skran, 1995). The limited influence of international organizations and regimes is caused by the high political costs of immigration, the difficulty of distributing the benefits of immigration, and the almost unlimited supply of labor that has exempted the receiving countries from the need to cooperate with the countries of origin or with other receiving countries. However, the removal of obstacles to the free movement of people within the EU, and the increased cooperation among its member states with regard to immigration into it, have made this theory more applicable to the study of immigration policy (*see* Convey and Kupiszewski, 1995; Overbeek, 1995; Uçarer, 1997; Koslowski, 1998).

*The Globalization Theory*¹⁰

During the past decade, some scholars have argued that globalization is chal-

⁹The institutionalist model combines, in fact, realist and liberal arguments. Consequently, some scholars treat it as a liberal/neoliberal approach (*e.g.*, Walt, 1998), while others treat it as a separate approach (*e.g.*, Moravcisk, 1997).

¹⁰The globalization theory (*e.g.*, Sassen) combines elements of the liberal approach and the world system theory.

lenging the stability and territoriality of the state, as well as its capacity to control its economic and welfare policies (Cable, 1995; Schmidt, 1995; Strange, 1996; Holton, 1998). Such claims have influenced studies by Sassen (1996a, 1996b), Bauböck (1994), Soysal (1994) and Jacobson (1996), all of whom point to recent trends that have diminished the state's control of immigration and/or naturalization policies (*see* Hollifield, 1998). Sassen (1996a:9) argues that we must accept the possibility that sovereignty itself has been transformed, and that exclusive territoriality – a distinctive feature of the modern state – is being undermined by economic globalization. She concludes that a combination of pressures – including the emergence of *de facto* regimes on human rights and the circulation of capital, as well as ethnic lobbies, EC/EU institutions, unintended consequences of immigration policies and other kinds of policies and economic internationalization – have restricted the sovereignty of the state and reduced its autonomy where immigration policy is concerned. Similarly, Castles (1998:182) observes that international migration is an essential part of globalization and that if governments welcome the mobility of capital, commodities and ideas, they are unlikely to succeed in halting the mobility of people.

In practice, much of the aforementioned globalization literature focuses on immigrant and citizenship policy, which only indirectly influences immigration control policy. Soysal, Jacobson and Bauböck explain how human rights norms, transnational migration and/or transnational citizenship challenge state sovereignty with regard to citizenship. Sassen explores both citizenship and immigration control policy. With regard to the latter, she highlights the difficulty of maintaining two diverse regimes – a liberal one for trade and goods and a restrictive one for immigrants. States, she notes (1996b:87), “must reconcile the conflicting requirements of border-free economies and border controls to keep immigrants out.” Sassen offers the example of special systems governing the circulation of service workers within the GATT and NAFTA in order to further internationalize the trade and investment in services. Nevertheless, she acknowledges the limited influence of globalization on immigration control policy: the aforementioned labor circulation systems “have been uncoupled from any notion of migration, even though they involve a version of temporary labor migration”; only the EU has formalized a regime that combines the free mobility of trade, capital and labor; and, in general, there is a consensus in the community of states with regard to the sovereign right of the state to control its borders (Sassen, 1996b:59, 86–88).

Globalization has also been linked to domestic social changes, and this linkage may help the “national identity” approach to explain concurrent immigration policies, at least in the post-1960s period. Studies by Betz (1994), Kumar (1994), Richmond (1994) and Schnapper (1994) argue that globalization and post-industrial changes exert pressure on national cohesion and produce an emphasis on the politics of identity and citizenship (Freeman, 1995a). Consequently, such pressures may lead to restrictions on immigration. According to Schnapper (1994:138), European debates on immigrants are caused by the crisis of the nation state, which values and institutions are being challenged by both subnational pressures and by European construction and integration in the world economy. Richmond argues that the combined effects of postindustrialism, postmodernism, and globalization have generated a crisis of integration in contemporary societies. In reaction to the insecurity felt by many faced with a rapidly changing global society, there is a worldwide trend towards stricter immigration controls (Richmond, 1994:45, 211). Similarly, Betz (1994:27) starts with a globalization argument, stating that the final breakthrough of capitalism on a worldwide scale and the advent of a global economy have reduced the capacity of governments to control national economies. But his description also corresponds to the “national identity” approach. He argues that the transition from industrial capitalism to post-industrial capitalism has created profound social tensions and left society deeply split. This process of fragmentation and individualization has caused the decline of traditional cleavage politics and has opened up fresh opportunities for new parties – notably radical right-wing populist parties with anti-immigration platforms (Betz, 1994:33–35).

Critique of the Globalization Theory

The globalization literature contributes more to our understanding of the causes of migration and to immigrant and citizenship policy than to the study of immigration control policy. Its two main examples of the influence of global trends on immigration control policy – the EU regime that enables the free movement of labor and the impact of the human rights regime on refugee policy – overlap with the neoliberal institutionalist model.

Moreover, the globalization theory – that the sovereignty of the state has declined with regard to immigration policy – is a debatable one so far as the control of immigration is concerned. Both Freeman (1998) and Joppke (1998b) demonstrate that the capacity of the state to control immigration has not diminished but rather increased and that liberal states accept more immi-

grants because of domestic pressures rather than for external ones. Cable (1995:36) states that while globalization has reduced the room for maneuver of national governments in a growing number of fields, “controls over migration could be said to represent a powerful brake by the nation-state on globalizing forces [with some qualifications].”

Finally, Hollifield (1998:17) argues that the greatest shortcoming of the globalization theory is its excessive reliance on economic and social forces, while neglecting the influence of politics.

The combining of the globalization theory and the “national identity approach” helps, in my opinion, both theories by 1) adding a political component to the globalization theory (*e.g.*, Betz, 1994), and 2) explaining concurrent immigration policies in various countries.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the tremendous importance of immigration policies and the rapidly expanding literature on the topic, immigration policy theory is not well defined and lacks, for the most part, debates between various schools of thought. The aim of this study has been to delineate the major approaches in the field of immigration policy and to highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

The six approaches delineated were Marxism (and neo-Marxism), realism, liberalism, the “national identity” approach, domestic politics (partisan and interest group politics) and institutionalism. Each of these approaches contributes to our understanding of immigration policy. In particular, realism sheds light on refugee policy, Marxism on migrant workers and illegal immigration, neoliberalism on immigration policies in the EU and within the refugee regime, and institutionalism on policies in regard to refugees and migrant workers.

Theories of comparative/domestic politics contribute more to our understanding of immigration policies than those of international relations for two reasons. First, theories of international relations are mostly geared to explaining interactions between states, rather than state policies. But this does not necessarily make them irrelevant to the study of immigration policies as they do explain the trade, monetary and defense policies of individual states. The second reason for the greater relevance of theories of domestic politics is the tremendous impact of immigration on the sovereignty, culture and politics of a country, an impact much greater than in the case of goods or capital. Consequently, countries tend to pay less attention to foreign pressures with regard

to immigration than to domestic ones. In addition, the almost unlimited supply of labor, and the fact that most countries of destination are stronger than the countries of origin, make them almost immune to pressures from other countries in this context. But the advent of the EU, and the broadening concept of security, increase the relevance of international relations theories to the study of immigration policy.

Five research strategies or stages would serve to advance immigration policy theory. First, theories should be delineated and contrasted. Their main assumptions and conclusions should be highlighted and their contributions and weaknesses pointed out. Only the establishment of schools of thought can prevent the immigration policy literature from constituting “an array of discrete bits.” This article attempted to do exactly that. And while the specific categories suggested here may overlap to some extent, and may be debatable, they can serve as the basis for further categorization and differentiation between theories.

The second stage should be an analysis of empirical data according to the various theories. While case studies are essential, they should not stand by themselves, but rather serve to develop and refine generalizations and theories. Researchers of immigration policy should employ scientific research methods such as George’s “structured focused comparison.” As George (1979:43) pointed out, “the task is to convert ‘lessons of history’ into a comprehensive theory that encompasses the complexity of the phenomenon or activity in question.” Comparative studies of immigration policy should specify the conditions and variables – based on existing and new theories – that will enter into a controlled comparison of the empirical cases (*see* George, 1979:54).

Scholars of immigration policy may also organize comparisons by employing quantitative methods. While most fields of social science embraced quantitative methods years ago, there are only a few quantitative studies of immigration policies (Lowell *et al.*, 1986; Veugelers and Klassen, 1993; Goldin, 1994; Timmer *et al.*, 1998; Money, 1999). Quantitative studies of immigration policy encounter problems because of the numerous explanatory variables and the small number of cases. It is also difficult to quantify such variables as immigration policy, culture and ethnicity. Yet, quantitative studies help us single out those factors that have consistent effects. By analyzing policies over long periods of time, one may find numerous factors to be instrumental at one time or another. But a quantitative study covering an extended period makes it possible to identify the most consistent explanatory factors, and at the same time to reject or downplay those factors that have no effect or only a marginal one.

During the past decade, researchers have offered general models of immigration policy that were based on comparative studies (Freeman, Hollifield, Hammar, Money, Sassen, Zolberg). But while these analyses advance immigration policy theory, for the most part they still lack (with the exception of Money) the rigorous methodology of the “structured focused comparative method” and the quantitative one.

Third, most studies of immigration policy (including this paper) focus on Western liberal democracies. The study of immigration policies in other parts of the world – including Latin America, East Asia and the Middle East – would broaden the empirical basis for analysis and serve to explore the influence of cultural and political variables on immigration policy (*e.g.*, Russell, 1989).

Fourth, theories of immigration policy should be contrasted and debated, based on empirical data. One recent example is the debate between Freeman (1995b) and Brubaker (1995) on whether the delegitimization of racist terminology in immigration discourse and policy is a permanent characteristic of liberal democracies. Another example is the debate between the globalization approach (especially Jacobson, 1996; Sassen, 1996a, 1996b) and the domestic politics approach (Freeman, 1998; Hollifield, 1998; Joppke, 1998b) on whether globalization has diminished the state’s control of immigration.

Finally, the delineation of theories, the employment of comparative and quantitative methods and theoretical debates should permit the refinement of theories, and possibly a synthesis between some of them. Attempts to refine and synthesize various approaches – such as done by Hollifield (1992a, 1994), Freeman (1995b), Fitzgerald (1996) and Joppke (1998b) – play an important role in the advancement of immigration policy theory.

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