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Symposium on trends and advances in the comparative politics of immigration: Taking stock [post-print]

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Introduction MS 19-81

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Up until the 1980s immigration-related subjects were largely ignored by comparative political scientists. It was only when they were politicized during the 1990s that political science scholarship on these subjects proliferated. The essays in this symposium expand upon the progress comparativists have made in comprehending and explaining the phenomena of mass immigration and immigrant settlement. Specifically, they explore several recent currents within their respective research streams, including issue salience, radical right political parties, the domestic politics of immigration policy making, and national immigration regimes. All are intellectually indebted to the scholarship of Gary P. Freeman and Martin A. Schain to whom we dedicate this symposium.

Keywords: immigration; issue salience; radical right parties; immigration policy making; immigration regimes

Up until the 1980s the subject of immigration was, with some exceptions, neglected by comparative political scientists.[1] As Schain has observed, until that time "most social scientists with an interest in immigration were economists who specialized in labor economics and sociologists who focused on immigrant and ethnic communities."[2] Freeman concurs, noting that the primary audiences for political scientists who were then investigating immigration-related questions were anthropologists, historians, and sociologists laboring within multi-disciplinary settings.[3] Indeed, even after tens of thousands of post-WWII migrants had transformed the politics and societies of the host countries,[4] immigration-related scholarship remained theoretically underdeveloped.[5] It was only when immigration-related issues were widely politicized during the 1990s[6]—that is, when they became especially salient and polarizing among political elites and within the electorate[7]—that political science scholarship on immigration

1. Two prominent exceptions were Gary P. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies*: *The French and British Experience, 1945-1975* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities*: *Race, Politics, and Migration in the United States, 1900-30, and Britain, 1948-68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

2. Martin A. Schain, "Review Essay: The Comparative Politics of Immigration," *Comparative Politics* 44 (2012): 481-97, at 481.

3. Gary P. Freeman, "Political Science and Comparative Politics," (unpublished paper 2000), http://www.tulane.edu/~dnelson/PEMigConf/Freeman.pdf, accessed July 14, 2018.

4. See Tomas Hammar, ed. *European Immigration Policy*: *A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Anthony M. Messina, *Race and Party Competition in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Mark J. Miller, *Foreign Workers in Western Europe*: *An Emerging Political Force* (New York: Praeger, 1979); and Rosemarie Rogers, ed. *Guests Come to Stay*: *The Effects of European Labor Migration on Sending and Receiving Countries* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985).

5. Barbara Schmitter Heisler, "The Future of Immigrant Incorporation: Which Models? Which Concepts?" *International Migration Review* 26 (1992): 623-45.

6. See Schain, "Review Essay," 481; and Roger Karapin, "Explaining Far-Right Electoral Successes in Germany: The Politicization of Immigration-Related Issues," *German Politics and Society* 16 (1998), 24-61.

7. Wouter van de Brug, Gianni D'Amato, Joost Berkout, and Didier Ruedin, eds. *The Politisation of Migration* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

proliferated.[8] Since then, the study of immigration has become a "growth stock,"[9] increasingly

disciplined, theory driven, and methodologically rigorous.[10]

Against this backdrop, the essays in this symposium track and expand upon several major

advances comparativists have made in comprehending the complex phenomena of mass

immigration and immigrant settlement during the past fifteen years or so.[11] Its contributors

explore important new currents within their respective research streams including issue salience,

radical right political parties, the domestic politics of immigration policy making, and national

immigration regimes. Each profit from the intellectual spadework of a founding generation of

immigration scholars. However, they are especially indebted to and inspired by the work of Gary

P. Freeman and Martin A. Schain, both of whom retired from their respective universities in

recent years. In recognition of the numerous and incisive contributions these two scholars have

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8. See, for example, Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); James F. Hollifield, *Immigrants, Markets, and States*: *The Political Economy of Postwar Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Patrick Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity*: *Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Dietrich Thränhardt, ed. *Europe*: *A New Immigration Continent* (Munich: Lit, 1992); and Myron Weiner, *The Global Migration Crisis*: *Challenge to States and to Human Rights* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

9. Freeman, "Comparative Analysis of Immigration Politics," 1566.

10**.** See Christina Boswell, "The 'Epistemic Turn' in Immigration Policy Analysis," in *Handbook on Migration and Social Policy*, eds. Gary P. Freeman and Nikola Mirilovic (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2016), 11-27; Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, ed. *Migration Theory*: *Talking across Disciplines* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Anna K. Boucher and Justin Gest, *Crossroads*: *Comparative Immigration Regimes in a World of Demographic Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Gary P. Freeman, "Modes of Immigration Politics in Liberal Democratic States," *International Migration Review* 29 (1995): 881-902; Jens Hainmueller and Daniel J. Hopkins, "Public Attitudes toward Immigration," *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (2014): 225-49. Marc Helbling, "Framing Immigration in Western Europe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40 (2014): 21-41; Herbert Kitschelt and James McGann, *The Radical Right in Western Europe*: *A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Gallya Lahav, *Immigration and Politics in the New Europe*: *Reinventing Borders* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jeannette Money, *Fences and Neighbors*: *The Political Geography of Immigration Control* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Laura Morales, Jean-Benoit Pilet, and Didier Ruedin, "The Gap between Public Preferences and Policies on Immigration: A Comparative Examination of the Effect of Politicisation on Policy Congruence," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41 (2015): 1495-1516; Daniel Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*: *The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); and Aristide Zolberg, "The Next Waves: Migration Theory for a Changing World," *International Migration Review* 23 (1989): 403-30.

11. Freeman, "Comparative Analysis of Immigration Politics."

made to the study of the comparative politics of immigration, the editors and essay authors dedicate this symposium.

Symposium Themes

Issue salience, a prominent subject of study of a previous generation of immigration scholars,[12] and now a central concern of comparativists generally,[13] is the subject of Jennifer Fitzgerald and Hannah Paul's essay. It poses two questions: Are immigrants and so-called natives equally concerned about specific issues; and, if not, what do these differences look like over time? Fitzgerald and Paul argue that issue salience is important for studying political phenomena generally and it is especially critical for representative democracy. Specifically, whether issue salience bridges or divides different societal groups inexorably impacts social cohesion. In their view, *salience convergence* constitutes evidence of so-called natives and immigrants coming together.

Their essay investigates whether immigrant status influences the extent to which an individual is concerned about issues of economic development, immigration, and crime. In analyzing data drawn from 17 waves of German panel surveys executed between 1999 and 2015, they find that although foreign- and native-born persons in Germany diverge regarding their perception of the salience of immigration and economic development, this gap narrows over time. They also discover that immigrants and natives do not divide on the issue of crime. Based on these

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12. See Freeman, *Immigrant Labor*; Katznelson, *Black Men*, *White Cities*; and Messina, *Race and Party Competition*.

13. Terri Givens and Adam Luedtke, "European Immigration Policies in Comparative Perspective: Issue Salience, Partisanship and Immigrant Rights," *Comparative European Politics* 3 (2005): 1-22; Timothy J. Hatton, "Refugees and Asylum Seekers, the Crisis in Europe and the Future of Policy," *Economic Policy* (2017): 447-96; Gallya Lahav and Marie Courtemanche, "The Ideological Effects of Framing Threat on Immigration and Civil Liberties," *Political Psychology* 34 (2012): 477-505; and Andrew Wroe, *The Republican Party and Immigration Politics*: *From Proposition 187 to George W. Bush* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

findings, they conclude that in the German case there is "evidence of unification; not necessarily in terms of [inter-group] preferences or beliefs, but rather in the national community's prioritization of different issues in public life."

Michael Minkenberg's essay surveys the scholarship on radical right groups and political parties[14] following the post-1980 waves of migration to the contemporary liberal democracies and, in so doing, contributes to the ongoing, animated debate about their political impacts among comparativists. In contrast to early post-WWII scholars who primarily focused on the legacies of classical racism, fascism, and colonialism, contemporary radical right scholars, according to Minkenberg, divide between those who locate immigration at heart of their concepts and analysis and those who perceive it as but one of several major priorities on the agenda of the radical right. He argues that the political fortunes of the radical right significantly improved when the nature of immigration streams changed, and their volume surged during the 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, as the political salience of immigration increased, the trajectory of the politics of the radical right, and hence the focus of scholarship about these illiberal actors, shifted.[15] Minkenberg points out that there is scant evidence within the scholarly literature that the phenomenon of mass immigration *directly* caused radical right mobilization.[16] Rather, the radical right's recent electoral and political advances are mostly due to its opportunistic framing of mass immigration and skillful exploitation of the conflicts precipitated by its aftereffects.

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14. Martin A. Schain, "The Impact of the French National Front on the French Political System," in *Shadows over Europe*: *The Development and Impact of the Extreme Right in Western Europe*, eds. Martin A. Schain, Aristide Zolberg, and Patrick Hossay (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 223-43.

15. Martin A. Schain, "The National Front in France and the Construction of Political Legitimacy," *West European Politics* 10 (1987): 229-52.

16. Martin A. Schain, "Shifting Tides: Radical-Right Populism and Immigration Policy in Europe and the United States," (Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute report, 2018), https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/radical-right-immigration-europe-united-states, accessed December 2, 2019, 12.

The third essay by Daniel Tichenor begins with the political convulsions over immigration in the United States by revisiting the Wilsonian-inspired *client politics* model of immigration politics,[17] a model first adapted by Freeman[18] and subsequently scrutinized by numerous others.[19] Simply stated, Freeman's thesis is that since the societal costs of immigration are largely diffuse and its benefits concentrated, governments within liberal polities are relatively unfettered, even in the face of a skeptical or hostile public, to implement expansive and inclusive immigration and immigrant policies that primarily benefit well-organized economic and/or ethnic interest groups. The inequitable distribution of the costs and benefits of immigration routinely allows these privileged, non-governmental actors to capture national immigration and immigrant policy. Surveying the course of American immigration policymaking since the nineteenth century, Tichenor casts doubt upon the universal applicability of Freeman's thesis. According to Tichenor, today's Republican and Democratic Parties remain internally conflicted on immigration-related issues. The recent "rise of popular warfare over immigration between the liberal and conservative bases of each major party reflects an expanded scope of [political] conflict that makes it nearly impossible for elected political elites to quietly service organized client groups."

In contrast to the symposium's first three essays, the contribution by Justin Gest and Anna Boucher adopts a global approach to its subject: domestic immigration and immigrant policy regimes. Like Tichenor's contribution, their essay touches base with Freeman's client politics thesis as well as alternative, *liberal* perspectives on the politics of immigration. From this

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17. James Q. Wilson, ed. *The Politics of Regulation* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

18. Freeman, "Modes of Immigration Politics"; and Gary P. Freeman, "Winners and Losers: Politics and the Costs and Benefits of Migration," in *West European Immigration and Immigrant Policy in the New Century*, ed. Anthony M. Messina (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 17-32.

19. See Givens and Luedtke, "European Immigration Policies"; Morris Levy, Matthew Wright, and Jack Citrin, "Mass Opinion and Immigration Policy in the United States: Re-Assessing Clientelist and Elitist Perspectives," *Perspectives on Politics* 14 (2016): 660-80; and Morales et al., "Gap between Public Preferences."

starting point the authors analyze, based on empirical evidence gathered from their original data set of immigration outcomes in 30 major receiving countries, the veracity of six hypotheses that purport to explain the variation observed among national immigration regimes. Their data analysis yields two broad conclusions. First, immigration regimes cross-nationally are not determined by any one factor. Second, the ambition of scholars to construct a unified or grand theory of immigration regimes is neither desirable nor feasible.[20] Rather, contesting Freeman's oft-cited thesis that state immigration policy universally has exhibited an expansionary bias during the post-WWII period, Boucher and Gest instead promote a segmented theory of immigration regime development, or one that provides different explanations for different immigration regime clusters. In responding to a hierarchy of needs, they argue, the governance of immigration inevitably varies across countries.

Shared Foci

While springing from different comparative research streams, the four essays nevertheless intersect along several lines. First, following Freeman and Schain's lead,[21] each essay privileges politics, or "the authoritative allocation of values for a society,"[22] as the appropriate lens through which to comprehend the complex phenomenon of contemporary immigration. Whether immigration is particularly salient, radical right groups and political parties are politically ascendant, national immigration policies are relatively open or closed, and/or domestic immigrant regimes are inclusive or exclusive are, from the authors' collective vantage point,

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20. Stephen Castles, "Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36 (2010): 1565-86; and Anthony M. Messina, "The Limits of Grand Theory: Embedding Experiences of Immigration and Immigrant Incorporation within Their Appropriate National, Regional, and Local Settings," in *The Multicultural Dilemma*: *Migration, Ethnic Politics, and State Intermediation*, ed. Michelle Hale Williams (New York: Routledge, 2013), 15-29.

21. Freeman, "Winners and Losers"; Schain, "Review Essay"; Martin A. Schain, *The Politics of Immigration in France, Britain, and the United States*: *A Comparative Study*, 2nd edition. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

22. David Easton, *The Political System*: *An Inquiry into the State of Political Science* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

largely attributable to politics. In sum, politics is the arena within which the numerous conflicts over immigration and its economic, political, and social effects are either amplified or ameliorated.

Second, as the essays individually and collectively reveal, considerable analytical and methodological progress has been achieved regarding the investigation of the phenomenon of immigration since Freeman, Schain, and others[23] initially infused the subject into the mainstream of comparative political science research. Both Fitzgerald and Paul's and Gest and Boucher's essays, for example, directly and affirmatively respond to Freeman's exhortation to political scientists "to focus more assiduously on the development of testable propositions that can be pursued in disciplined case studies and in the analysis of cross-national data sets."[24]

Third, in consonance with Freeman's[25] and Schain's[26] early scholarship, the respective contributions by Tichenor and Fitzgerald and Paul attest to the enduring virtues of quality, small-*N* case studies in studying contemporary immigration. Although large-*N*, quantitative research unambiguously enriches our understanding of phenomenon,[27] it nevertheless can be persuasively argued that contextual knowledge is the origin, if not the foundation, of comparative scholarly expertise.[28] The fact that both Freeman (Britain and France) and Schain (France) developed

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23. See Hammar, ed. *European Immigration Policy*; Martin O. Heisler and Barbara Schmitter Heisler, eds. *From Foreign Workers to Settlers? Transnational Migration and the Emergence of New Minorities*, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 485 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1986); Anthony M. Messina, "Race and Party Competition in Britain: Policy Formation in the Post-Consensus Period," *Parliamentary Affairs* 38 (1985): 423-36; Miller, *Foreign Workers in Western Europe*; and Jonathan Power, *Migrant Workers in Western Europe and the United States* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1979).

24. Freeman, "Comparative Analysis of Immigration Politics," 1556.

25. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict*.

26. Schain, "National Front."

27. See Thomas Janoski, *The Ironies of Citizenship*: *Naturalization and Integration in Industrialized Countries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Pippa Norris, *Radical Right*: *Voters and Parties in the Electoral Market* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

28. Freeman, "Comparative Analysis of Immigration Politics;" Messina, "Limits of Grand Theory."

innumerable and enduring insights into the contemporary politics of immigration based on their deep country case knowledge and initial field research is no coincidence.

Finally, the essays are concerned about the largely unanticipated repercussions of the escalating number of migrants traversing national territorial borders. As they collectively underscore, few, if any, contemporary trends or phenomena have been more socially and politically disruptive than the cumulative experience of mass immigration.[29] Whether selecting upon the effects of issue salience for social cohesion (Fitzgerald and Paul), the growth and proliferation of radical right groups (Minkenberg), the intensity of inter- and intra-political party conflict (Tichenor), and/or the inclusivity of domestic immigration and immigrant policy regimes (Gest and Boucher), the cumulative experience of mass immigration has undeniably, profoundly, and permanently transformed the major immigration-receiving countries.

Indeed, as the essays by Minkenberg and Gest and Boucher accentuate, immigration is now—and undoubtedly will continue to be—a major driver of political, policy, and social change not only within the traditional immigration-receiving countries but also within newer immigration destinations.[30] Even in the currently inhospitable national and international political environments, migrant flows of all types continue to be robust. With an estimated 272 foreign-born persons residing today in countries other than where they were born or hold original citizenship,[31] the presence and permanent settlement of migrants have emerged everywhere as

29. Gary P. Freeman, "Immigration as a Source of Political Discontent and Frustration in Western Democracies," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 32 (1997): 42-64; and Anthony M. Messina, "The Not So Silent Revolution: Postwar Migration to Western Europe," *World Politics* 49 (1996):130-54.

30. Stefanie Chambers, Diana Evans, Anthony M. Messina, and Abigail Fisher Williamson, eds. *The Politics of New Immigrant Destinations*: *Transatlantic Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2017).

31. United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, "The Number of International Migrants Reaches 272 Million, Continuing an Upward Trend in All World Regions, Says UN," https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/international-migrant-stock-2019.html, accessed December 2, 2019.

among the most salient political and public policy challenges of our time.[32] As Castles and Miller

succinctly framed the current state of affairs, we are living in "the age of migration."[33] Based on

every reasonable projection, it is an era that is unlikely to end any time soon.[34]

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32. Freeman, "Comparative Analysis of Immigration Politics."

33. Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, 1st edition, *The Age of Migration*: *International Population Movements in the Modern World* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993).

34. Stephen Castles, Hein De Hass, and Mark J. Miller, 6th edition, *The Age of Migration*: *International Population Movements in the Modern World* (New York: Guilford Press, 2020), 1-20.