The Logics and Politics of Post-WWII Migration to Western Europe

Few phenomena have been more disruptive to West European politics and society than the accumulative experience of post-WWII immigration. Against this backdrop spring two questions: Why have the immigrant-receiving states historically permitted high levels of immigration? To what degree can the social and political fallout precipitated by immigration be politically managed?

Utilizing evidence from a variety of sources, this study explores the links between immigration and the surge of popular support for anti-immigrant groups; its implications for state sovereignty; its elevation to the policy agenda of the European Union; and its domestic legacies. It argues that post-WWII migration is primarily an interest-driven phenomenon that has historically served the macroeconomic and political interests of the receiving countries. Specifically, it is the role of politics in adjudicating the claims presented by domestic economic actors, foreign policy commitments, and humanitarian norms that creates a permissive environment for significant migration to Western Europe.

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The Logics and Politics of Post-WWII Migration to Western Europe

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University of Notre Dame
For Frances:
My great love and inspiration, and with whom all of the very best things in life became possible.
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Preface and Acknowledgments

In many ways, this book completes an agenda that I implicitly promised to pursue in my book review essay in the journal *World Politics* (October 1996). In that essay, I offered two sweeping and somewhat provocative criticisms of the state of the then scholarly literature on postwar migration to Western Europe. First, I argued that due to the emotionally charged nature of many immigration-related subjects, scholars of immigration too often fell into the trap of staking out inadequately substantiated claims. Specifically, the prospect of influencing public policy debates led some toward hyperbole and exaggeration in their analysis of immigration-related phenomena and to offer inappropriate or unworkable policy prescriptions. Second, I lamented that a growing trend toward specialization within the literature on postwar immigration and the concomitant insularity of scholarly inquiry threatened to fragment our understanding of the general phenomenon. In elaborating upon the second problem, I urged that new scholarly initiatives be pursued to synthesize and unify the disparate literatures on postwar migration in order “to stitch together the various strands of scholarship on post-WWII migration to Western Europe in a manner that better illuminates its whole.”

This study is a direct, albeit an obviously tardy, response to the previously cited exhortation. Perhaps more so than others within its genre, this book is the product of years of reflection, research, and writing and, more importantly, a rejoinder to many of the stimulating arguments and much of the impressive evidence presented in the intellectual marketplace by three generations of scholars of migration to Western Europe. Its main theme, the implications of mass immigration for state sovereignty, is, of course, not new. Among others, Gary Freeman, Andrew Geddes, Virginie Guiraudon, Randall Hansen, Martin Heisler, Jim Hollifield, Christian Joppke, Rey Koslowski, Gallya Lahav, Mark Miller, Saskia Sassen, Yasemin Soysal, Myron Weiner, and Ari Zolberg have previously addressed it in different ways and with varying degrees of thoroughness and success. Yet, despite the considerable volume
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of scholarship generated on the theme of immigration and state sovereignty during the past decade, it has long been and remains my considered opinion that more needs to be said. For example, whatever their individual strengths, none of the critiques of the declining sovereignty thesis have considered its failings on every important front. Perhaps as a result, a central assumption of the thesis – that is, contemporary Western European states are overburdened with unwanted immigration – continues to be uncritically diffused, including within the writing of some scholars who are suspicious of its veracity and/or universality. Moreover, for every incisive critique of the declining sovereignty thesis advanced, with most of which I largely agree, new problems of interpretation and subtle errors of logic and/or fact have stubbornly and unfortunately crept in. Against this backdrop, one purpose of this book is to scrutinize the declining sovereignty thesis more comprehensively than hitherto has been attempted.

Like most intellectual products, this study has benefited from the assistance, generosity, and inspirational example of numerous people. On this last score, Jim Hollifield, Gary Freeman, and Marty Schain stand out both for their enormous influence on the field of immigration studies and, more personally, for the profound impact each has had on my own thinking. As even the casual reader can see, their considerable body of work is liberally cited and, more often than not, celebrated throughout this book. Personal thanks goes to each for his incisive criticisms of my work, professional support, and general intellectual guidance over the years.

As the readers of this study will also quickly discern, this book also owes an enormous intellectual debt to the dozens of American and European scholars, several of whom are personal friends, whose scholarship has literally transformed the field of immigration studies since my 1996 World Politics essay was published. Although they are too numerous to cite within these few pages, I nevertheless wish to recognize Andrew Geddes, Randall Hansen, Christian Joppke, Virginie Guiraudon, Gallya Lahav, Shamit Saggar, and Eiko Thielemann for the invaluable efforts each has made in pushing the boundaries of what we know about the general phenomenon of immigration. I have had the pleasure of sitting alongside and/or observing most of them on numerous conference panels and, occasionally, in more intimate professional settings. They have taught me much, and undoubtedly much more than I am aware of. Indeed, the deep stream of contemporary immigration studies would not be as rich or diverse were it not for their individual and collective contributions. After a brief period when immigration studies hit a dry patch, they infused it with new intellectual energy and insight.

I wish to extend more targeted thanks to the agencies that facilitated the research that ultimately culminated in this book. A summer faculty research award from the Nanovic Institute of European Studies at the University of Notre Dame, a small project grant from Notre Dame’s Helen Kellogg Institute of International Studies, and the generous aid and sage advice of Bill
Newton Dunn (Member of the European Parliament) allowed me to plug the gaps in my knowledge of the role of the European Union in formulating immigration policy and, specifically, gave my good colleague, Gallya Lahav, and me the opportunity to execute the Member of Parliament survey that informs Chapter 5. A Faculty Residential Fellowship from the Kellogg Institute permitted me to write two chapters of the manuscript and make considerable progress in organizing it.

As is common of studies of its kind, some of the arguments and evidence presented in this book were first presented in other fora. The typology of anti-immigrant groups presented in Chapter 3 expands upon material originally presented in my chapter in an anthology edited by Matthew Gibney and Randall Hansen. An abbreviated and less ambitious version of Chapter 4 appeared in *Policy Studies Journal*. Chapter 5 updates an essay I coauthored with Colleen Thouez in my edited volume, *West European Immigration and Immigrant Policy in the New Century*. The data and central arguments in Chapter 7 draw heavily from an article in my recent coedited volume (with Gallya Lahav), *The Migration Reader*. I am very grateful to the aforementioned sources for their permission to use these materials.

I also wish to thank Lew Bateman of Cambridge University Press for his support and, especially, his patience, as well as two anonymous reviewers for their helpful advice and insightful criticisms of the original manuscript.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and extend my infinite gratitude to my colleague, best friend, and wife of twenty-seven years, Frances Hagopian, to whom this book is dedicated. In more ways than she knows, she has pushed me along the path of intellectual, professional, and personal growth and kept me going during the inevitable moments of doubt and discouragement. Indeed, to her I owe everything that is good in life, including our beloved son, Michael. As always, I only wish I could satisfy her high standards!
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