



European Immigration Policies in Comparative Perspective: Issue Salience, Partisanship and Immigrant Rights

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This paper examines the impact of issue salience and political partisanship on the restrictiveness of immigration laws in France, Germany, and the UK, from 1990 to 2002. Our first hypothesis is that immigration policymaking in liberal states is normally dominated by client politics, which minimizes restrictiveness towards immigrant rights, but under conditions of high issue salience and prominent media coverage, policy becomes more restrictive. Our second hypothesis is that Left and Right parties are equally restrictive *vis-à-vis* policies to control immigration, but Right parties are more restrictive *vis-à-vis* policies to integrate already-resident immigrants into society. We statistically test both of these hypotheses in Western Europe, while controlling for the impact of unemployment, GDP growth, and numbers of immigrants and refugees. Our analysis confirms that issue salience is a predictor of the restrictiveness of national immigration laws and that partisanship plays a role in policies towards the integration of already-resident immigrants, but not towards controlling the inflow of new immigrants.

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Introduction

During the last few decades, immigration has become one of the most salient political issues in Europe. In a survey in the late 1990s, 82% of European Parliament Members surveyed agreed that immigration is one of the top four problems facing Europe (Lahav, 1997). Not only has the immigration issue dominated headlines and public attention, but it has also had dramatic political effects, leading to new political cleavages and the rise of new political parties in the once ‘frozen’ European political landscape (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Despite this dramatic rise to prominence there are only a limited number of studies that point the way towards systematic, empirical hypothesis-testing in this area (e.g. Hollifield, 1992; Joppke, 1999; Money, 1999; Guiraudon, 2000;



Lahav and Guiraudon, 2000; Freeman, 2002; Hansen, 2002). Our paper aims to build on these studies, and thereby advance the comparative analysis of European immigration politics with rigorous theorizing and empirical testing.

Money (1999), in calling for such testing, argues that political scientists have yet to find reliable, agreed-upon empirical indicators for two key aspects of immigration politics: the ‘determinants’ of immigration policy (causes), and ‘the relationship between immigration control policies and policies governing immigrant integration’ (p 4). This paper will take up Money’s well-stated challenge by conceptualizing empirical indicators for both dimensions of immigration politics, and then theorizing about and testing the relationship between these dimensions of immigration politics in Western Europe, during the period 1990–2002, when immigration became one of the most highly salient, hot-button issues in European and world politics. We address two questions: (1) what causes immigration policies to take the shape that they do? (2) Are there significant political differences between policymakers over the policies that attempt to control new immigration, *vs* the policies that deal with integrating already-resident immigrants?

There are several puzzles related to immigration policy which are addressed by these questions. There has been some debate over the issue of convergence of immigration policy. Immigration has been a difficult area for European integration, and the proposed construction of a European Union (EU) immigration policy has not made significant progress (Guiraudon, 2000; Geddes, 2003; Givens and Luedtke, 2004). However, the common expectation is that national policy, particularly in the area of immigration control, is converging. Cornelius, Martin and Hollifield (1994, 3) hypothesize that ‘there is growing similarity among industrialized, labor-importing countries in terms of the policy instruments chosen for controlling immigration’. However, does this convergence move in a direction that is more or less restrictive towards immigrant rights? What factors are actually causing these changes in immigration policy at the national level? To what degree do domestic issues related to salience and public opinion influence national policy makers?

Our second puzzle is the degree to which various types of immigration policy follow similar dynamics. This puzzle draws on the analysis of Jeannette Money (1999) which shows that immigration control and immigrant integration may need to be considered as two separate policy areas, with two very different political logics. European governments of both Left and Right have often claimed that halting *new* immigration will aid in the societal integration of already-resident foreigners (Hammar, 1985, 1990). However, political parties have taken widely divergent stances on how to actually carry out this integration. Thus, we seek to explore the variable role of political partisanship across different areas of immigration policy.



For this analysis, our argument rests on the following premises. On the issue of the determinants of immigration policy, we operationalize and test a hypothesis of issue *saliency* and agenda-setting, whereby the restrictiveness of immigration policy results from the intensity of issue saliency as affected by the national media. And on the issue of policy types, we follow Money's hypothesis of the *control/integration* dichotomy, which holds that 'issues of immigrant integration ... elicit inter-party conflict. Issues of immigration control, on the other hand, are orthogonal to the left-right continuum' (p 37). Responding to Money's call for moving from case studies to quantitative cross-national analyses, we broaden her British sample by operationalizing and quantitatively testing the integration/control hypothesis in three countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) over a 12-year time period.

Conceptualizing Immigration Policy: Historical and Political Context

This section lays out our definition of immigration policy, using examples taken from France, Germany, and the UK. The fifth section will propose empirical indicators for our independent variables, but it is first necessary to be more specific about what is meant by our dependent variable, 'immigration policy', including a definition of the integration/control dichotomy. We begin by defining immigration policy and clarifying the differences between several areas of immigration policy. We then discuss this definition in the context of the three countries that are the subjects of our data analysis.

Money (1999) has noted that the growing political saliency of immigration has given rise to competing hypotheses about whether immigration policies are converging or diverging. One of the reasons behind this lack of scholarly consensus is the need to conceptualize immigration policy, and distinguish between immigration *control* and immigrant *integration* into society. Money argues that there are different causal variables for immigration control policies, as compared to immigrant integration policies. Her analysis shows, for example, that the main political parties in Britain had similar policy positions on immigration control, but diverged on immigrant integration. In order to understand preferences of the actors in immigration policy harmonization, we must first catalog some key types of immigration policy so that we can measure the restrictiveness of these policies towards immigrant rights.

We divide policy into two main types: immigration control and immigrant integration. These two policy types can be further broken down into the following policy areas:

Immigration Control: (1) illegal immigration; (2) political asylum/refugees; (3) family reunification and (4) legal labor immigration/visas.

Immigrant Integration: (1) citizenship and (2) anti-discrimination.



We will argue below that the factors which influence the *restrictiveness* of laws in these six policy areas do vary considerably. ‘Restrictiveness’ means that the law limits the rights and/or freedoms of immigrants in some way. The opposite of restrictiveness is defined as ‘expansiveness’, that is, a liberalizing approach to immigrant rights and freedoms.

How have these six policy areas varied in Western Europe over the past decade? We argue that despite some movement towards convergence, there has been considerable cross-temporal and cross-national variation in the degree to which France, Germany, and the UK have restricted immigrant rights and freedoms in these six policy areas. Our data analysis seeks to explain this variation, but first let us explore the historical and political context in each of the three countries.

After World War Two, France and the UK initially followed more ‘open’ immigration policies than Germany, due to the privileged status of their colonial subjects (Hansen, 2002). Despite public opposition, French and British policymakers were initially unable to prevent large numbers of ex-colonial subjects from entering the country and/or claiming citizenship. Ahead of France, the UK led the way in changing its policies to stop this flow of colonial immigrants, beginning in the early 1960s. With greater political opposition to immigration than in France, fewer institutional barriers, and a weaker economy, the UK passed three restrictive pieces of pre-1990s legislation. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the 1971 Immigration Act, and the 1981 British Nationality Act combined to make the UK’s policies on labor immigration, family reunification, and citizenship considerably more restrictive (Freeman, 1994; Layton-Henry, 1994; Hansen, 2000; Rudolph, 2003).

France began to follow the UK’s lead in earnest by the late 1960s. The Franco-Algerian Accords of 1968 restricted legal immigration, and new policies on employer sanctions restricted illegal immigration. Further tightening in the 1970s resulted in the halting of recruitment of foreign workers, and financial incentives were offered for immigrants to return to their countries of origin (Rudolph, 2003).

With a more pressing labor shortage than either France or the UK, but lacking a large pool of colonial labor with (initially) privileged status, Germany opted for its well-known ‘guestworker’ model. Under this system, immigrants were recruited for temporary residence from a variety of countries, with Turkey eventually becoming the largest contributor. However, practical problems of worker re-training and family life, combined with Germany’s strong institutional protections for human rights, allowed most of the guestworkers to remain in Germany, even after more restrictive policies were adopted in response to the economic downturn of the early 1970s.

By the 1980s, all three countries had converged on a ‘zero-immigration’ policy orientation, which continued into the 1990s (Cornelius *et al.*, 1994).



However, despite this stated policy goal, immigration continued in three areas: family reunification (protected under international law), illegal immigration (usually to take unskilled, low-wage work shunned by natives), and political asylum-seeking. It is this final category, along with citizenship policy, that provided the largest policy *divergences* in the 1990s, largely between Germany and the other two cases.

In the early 1990s, Germany had the one of developed world's most restrictive citizenship policies. Citizenship law was largely *jus sanguinis*, meaning that legally resident foreigners lacked few avenues to become citizens. By contrast, Germany had developed the world's most liberal political asylum policy. Due to its historical legacy, the drafters of the German Basic Law enshrined a clear and unambiguous right: 'Persons persecuted on political grounds shall enjoy the right to asylum' (cited in Gibney, 2004, 88). This right went well beyond the international law provisions that shaped the policies of most other developed countries (including the UK and France), which recognize only the *state's* right to grant asylum, and the principle of *non-refoulement* (not returning asylum-seekers to countries where they are likely to face persecution). This liberal policy, combined with Germany's proximity to Eastern Europe, led to a massive influx of asylum seekers after the Soviet collapse and its related phenomena, such as the war in Yugoslavia. This influx, coupled with Neo-Nazi violence against asylum-seekers, led to a momentous political development. The so-called 'asylum compromise' of 1993 paved the way for German convergence towards asylum and citizenship policies that more closely resembled those of France and the UK. In order to re-write Germany's constitution, the ruling Christian Democrats (CDU) needed the assent of the opposition Social Democrats (SPD). 'In return for supporting the amendment of the right to asylum, the government pledged to the SPD that it would liberalize elements of Germany's citizenship requirements and make a number of other concessions in the sphere of migration' (Gibney, 2004, 102). The right to asylum was immediately restricted in 1993, and though it took an additional decade of political initiatives, Germany eventually completed the compromise by liberalizing its citizenship laws.

Immigration continued to gain political salience throughout the 1990s, and by the late 1990s, all three countries had further tightened their laws on illegal immigration. The UK also tightened its laws on political asylum after a major influx in the late 1990s. In other areas of immigration, however, convergence was occurring towards more liberal norms. In legal labor immigration, by the turn of the century, all three countries had implemented programs to recruit highly skilled foreign labor in economic sectors (like high technology) that faced labor shortages and minimal unionization. And in the area of integration policy, convergence was occurring as well (Joppke and Morawska, 2003; Ireland, 2004). Not only did Germany liberalize its citizenship laws, but the



UK and France both instituted expansive anti-discrimination laws at the national level, and all three countries were bound by the EU's passage of a 2000 Racial Equality Directive that obligated member states to prevent racial discrimination across a variety of sectors.

From this brief contextual discussion, we see that considerable variation in the three countries continued into the 1990s, with trends towards convergence growing much stronger by 2002. Scholars have speculated about the degree to which media coverage, political partisanship, economic factors, and actual numbers of immigrants have affected these trends. The next two sections theorize each of these causes in turn, reviewing the literature and specifying the hypothesized logic at work in each factor.

Theorizing the Causes of Immigration Policies

Our first hypothesis addresses the puzzle of what causes the degree of restrictiveness of immigration policies. Freeman (2002) was one of the first scholars of immigration policy to apply a theoretical model drawn from the wider discipline of political science. Seeking to explain the puzzle of how expansive (liberal) immigration policies could arise in spite of restrictionist (anti-immigration) public moods, Freeman adapted the political economy framework of James Q. Wilson (1980) to offer this explanation. Based on the role of interests and incentives, Wilson's framework shows how the intensity of political conflict over a particular policy depends on whether the benefits and costs of that policy are societally concentrated or diffuse. When benefits are concentrated and costs are diffuse, a low-conflict mode of politics called 'client politics' is the result. Joppke (1999) has also found evidence for the role of client politics in several European cases. Client politics presents a collective action problem, whereby 'the organized beneficiaries of concentrated benefits will prevail over the unorganized bearers of diffused costs' (Joppke, 1999, 17).

Freeman argues that this situation applies to immigration policy in the United States and Canada, settler nations that have a consistent history of immigration. Although public opinion in these nations has at times been strongly anti-immigration, the flow of immigration has continued relatively unabated because of client politics. Client politics 'gives those who expect to gain from migration stronger incentives to organize than those who anticipate bearing its costs' (p 3). Freeman also adds an institutional element, arguing that an institutionally embedded 'antipopulist norm' prevents political elites in liberal democracies from capitalizing on restrictionist sentiment (and thereby overturning client politics). Populist sentiment in all three countries has been largely anti-immigrant, with Radical Right parties challenging the political 'establishment' on the issue of immigration (Cornelius *et al.*, 1994; Givens,



2005). While this has pushed elite opinion in a more restrictionist direction, elites still generally hold more liberal views than publics (Lahav, 2004).

We agree with Freeman, Joppke, and others that in liberal states, client politics has tended to keep immigration policy more expansive than public opinion would otherwise prefer. However, client politics cannot explain recent political developments in Europe: the rise of Radical Right parties and the conflictual explosion of immigration onto the political agenda. One way of explaining Europe's shift from client politics to a more conflictual mode of policy making is the theory of agenda setting put forth by Baumgartner and Jones (1993). Although these authors' analysis focuses on policy making in the United States, it is easily generalizable and can be applied to European cases. Understanding the nature of issue definition and venue access adds an important dimension to the nature of policy change. Baumgartner and Jones note that most change occurs 'during periods of heightened general attention to the policy. In the process of agenda-setting, the degree of public indifference to given problems changes dramatically' (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 20). Not only does the public become more involved in an issue, but political parties, the organizers of societal cleavages, also become involved. This can lead not only to temporary shifts in policy but to long-term shifts in policy outlook. This type of change is exemplified in the oil crisis and subsequent stop of labor importation in Europe in the early 1970s.

The oil shocks and accompanying recessions of the early 1970s radically changed the nature of immigration policy. This was the point when the European experience began to diverge from the client politics-driven expansiveness of North American immigration policy. European employers' demands for large-scale immigrant labor diminished, as they no longer gained concentrated benefits from immigration. Thus, the client politics connection became less important, and the strident demands of anti-immigrant electorates became dominant (Joppke, 1999). In such a high-conflict situation, the antipopulist norm identified by Freeman weakened, as political elites began to capitalize on anti-immigrant sentiment, spurred on by the high political salience of the issues. We draw on the work of Rosenblum (2002) in operationalizing the salience of immigration as a political variable. We propose here to test the impact of issue salience on resulting immigration policies.

H1: As the salience of an immigration issue increases, client politics decreases and immigration policy becomes more restrictive.

Out of this theory, however, a puzzle arises. If salience is the main cause of the restrictiveness of policy, then does it matter what party is in power? How does immigration manifest itself in partisan competition? We know that Radical Right parties push mainstream parties towards anti-immigrant



stances, but how do mainstream Left and Right parties differ when in government, or do they differ at all?

In investigating the impact of partisanship in our study, we expect to find that both Left and Right governments have a preference for restrictive policies of immigration control. Where policy preferences will tend to diverge is the area of immigrant integration, as shown by Money (1999). The logic of this theory rests with political capital. As Money has shown, parties of the Left are more likely to see immigrants as potential voters, and are thus more likely to perceive gains from an expanding immigrant population. This explanation runs into a potential snag, of course, when one considers that not all immigrants actually vote. Not only are political participation rates generally lower for immigrants, but in many countries immigrants are denied voting rights. In Germany, before the citizenship law was reformed (by a Left government), most legally resident foreigners could only vote in local elections, if at all. Thus, Money has argued that Left parties are more likely to prefer a pro-immigrant orientation *only* in integration policies (such as making it easier for immigrants to acquire citizenship), since these have an obvious and immediate political payoff. However, the Left cannot afford to be more generous in terms of immigration control policies (regulating the borders, and admissions of new immigrants), since short-term public backlashes offset any future gains from an expanded immigrant electorate.

In support of this argument, Patrick Ireland (2004) has shown that in Germany, even as immigration control policies were being tightened, jurisdictions run by the SPD were much more pro-active on promoting immigrant integration, including naturalization. In Essen, 'the city government would have liked to add immigrants to the working-class electorate that kept the SPD in power. Blocked by federal institutions from doing so, it actively encouraged them to apply for German citizenship' (Ireland, 2004, 68).

However, not all justifications for the impact of partisanship revolve around political capital. Ideology, in and of itself, is often hypothesized to be a 'pure' motivator. Lahav's work on elite opinion shows that 'partisans of the left are more likely to endeavor to amend social inequalities and to extend immigrant rights ... and to be open to increased immigration than their colleagues on the right' (2004, 133). Ireland (2004) also shows that the German Greens and a portion of the SPD were ideologically committed to cultural pluralism and immigrant integration.

Therefore, whether the causal logic is based on political capital or on 'pure' ideology, in the case of policies related to immigrant incorporation, we would expect to see partisan differences holding across time and across countries.

H2: Left governments are less likely than Right governments to formulate restrictive immigration policies that deal with *integration*, while both



governments are equally likely to formulate restrictive immigration *control* policies.

Alternative Explanations: Economics and Immigrant Inflows

Aside from issue salience or partisanship, what other factors might influence the restrictiveness of immigration policy? Political economy scholars tend to see a straightforward relationship between macroeconomic factors and immigration policy. The aforementioned client politics literature, for instance, tends to argue that the interests of business are the paramount factor in shaping immigration policy (Freeman, 2002). Neoclassical trade theory, when applied to immigration, implies that economic expansion stimulates demand for immigrant labor, all other things being equal (Simon, 1989). Thus, policy would be expected to become more expansive if GDP growth rises, or if unemployment goes down. In a liberal state, this relationship might be based on client politics, it might be based on straightforward self-interest, 'pocket-book' voting (Kinder *et al.*, 1989) or it might be based on the public's 'sociotropic' evaluations of the economy at large (Sears and Citrin, 1982).

This argument might also have a more specific political corollary, in that unemployment and/or economic shrinkage might increase support for anti-immigrant parties, which would put pressure on mainstream parties to tighten immigration policy. Unemployment can create a pool of disgruntled workers who may choose to vote for the Radical Right. Also, unemployment in general may create an environment that is conducive to the Radical Right by creating uncertainty for those whose jobs may be threatened, or by providing an alternative to those who blame the mainstream parties for economic downturns. If Radical Right support is a factor in pushing more restrictive immigration policies, then there should be a strong positive relationship between increases in unemployment and support for the Radical Right (Lewis-Beck and Mitchell, 1993; Swank and Betz, 1995; Anderson, 1996; Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Knigge, 1998; Givens, 2002). This could then be expected to lead to a more restrictive immigration policy, as happened during the economic downturns of the early 1970s and mid-1980s (Cornelius *et al.*, 1994).

H3: Lower levels of GDP growth and/or higher levels of unemployment will result in more restrictive immigration policies.

Hypotheses that point to issue salience, partisanship or macroeconomics might be ignoring one crucial factor, however: the actual numbers of immigrants entering a country. Research has shown that immigration *flows* are not always 'rational', in that they may not respond to political or economic incentives in straightforward ways (Hollifield, 1992). Thus, immigration *policy* processes might respond to the actual societal presence of immigrants, more



than responding to indirect pressures such as economics, partisanship or issue salience and media coverage. While media coverage might be expected to fluctuate along with actual immigrant inflows, we argue that the level of media coverage will spike in response to dramatic, politicized ‘focus events’, as opposed to neatly matching the quantitative inflows of immigrants (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993).

Some authors have also found evidence that the numerical presence of immigrants in society might directly increase support for anti-immigrant political movements, which could then be expected to force policy in a more restrictive direction (Lewis-Beck and Mitchell, 1993; Swank and Betz, 1995; Mayer, 2002). Lahav (2004) shows that ‘there is a pattern of negative attitudes towards immigrants, which rises according to the size of immigrant population ... extreme-right parties such as the French Front national tend to do best in areas of high immigrant concentration’ (p 97).¹

H4: Higher levels of immigrants entering the country will result in more restrictive immigration policies.

Operationalization: Data and Methodology

Our dependent variable, restrictiveness of various types of immigration policy, is represented by a data set of immigration laws in the three countries from 1990 to 2002, which were coded on two dimensions. The first dimension was the control/integration dichotomy (0=control, 1=both, 2=integration). The second dimension was the restrictiveness of the law regarding immigrant rights (1=highly restrictive, 2=somewhat restrictive, 3=mixed, 4=somewhat expansive, 5=highly expansive). The coding was done by three research assistants who were familiar with language and politics in each of the three cases, and who first coded each law on their own, and then consulted with each other to get a second and third opinion on their judgment. ‘Restrictive’ was defined as any limitation of immigrant rights, freedoms, benefits or privileges, and ‘expansive’ was defined as the opposite. For example, the German asylum compromise of 1993 was coded as 1 (highly restrictive), while the 1999 citizenship law was coded as 5 (highly expansive). The UK’s reforms to its asylum laws in 1999 and 2002 were both coded as 1, while its 2002 law on allowing skilled labor migrants was coded as 5. The 1996 French decree on illegal immigration policy, which created a central office for the repression of illegal immigration, was coded as 1, while the 2001 French anti-discrimination law (which put the burden of proof on employers) was coded as 5. If laws made only minor changes in a restrictive or expansive direction, then they were coded as 2 or 4, respectively, and if a law’s policy impact was mixed or unclear, it received a 3.



Our criteria for what constituted a ‘law’ were kept as broad as possible, so that we included not only acts of parliament, but also executive regulations, decrees, and administrative rulings. This led to some interesting cross-national variations in quantities of laws, given that France employs executive decrees to a much greater extent than the other two countries. Thus, the French sample was quite large, while the German sample was relatively small (although there was at least one immigration law for almost every year in Germany, thus allowing us a good range of time-series data across all three countries).

We chose our cases because they are Western Europe’s ‘heavy hitters’, and the most politically important countries by many measures. Three countries was a manageable case selection in terms of coding the laws for the 12-year period, and when taking each law in each country as an individual case, this gave us 125 immigration laws to work with. All three countries present widely divergent political and institutional settings, in terms of variables such as the power of courts or trade unions. This diversity offers an excellent climate for testing our independent variables, in that if political salience, partisanship, economic indicators, or numerical inflows of immigrants affect the restrictiveness of laws *across* these different institutional settings, then they are clearly robust causal variables.

Our primary independent variable, issue salience, was measured by taking a count of newspaper articles dealing with political asylum-seekers in each country for each year, 1990–2002. Our research assistants searched newspapers in the Lexis–Nexis database. The newspapers chosen were as follows: UK: *Times of London*; France: *Le Monde*; Germany: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. We chose articles about asylum-seekers because in France, Germany and the UK, political asylum has been the most highly politicized specific issue related to immigration.² For the dependent variable, restrictiveness of immigration laws, we took each year, in each country, as an individual case, giving us 39 cases. When there was more than one law passed in a given year, the restrictiveness scores were averaged to provide an aggregate measure.³ To measure the effect of political partisanship, we made an ordinal variable, such that: 0=Right government, 1=transition year, 2=Left government.

We also added control variables that tested the impact of socioeconomic factors and actual inflows of immigrants and asylum seekers. Specifically, from Eurostat data, we added variables for the unemployment rate and rate of GDP growth for each country, for each year, and from SOPEMI we obtained and added data showing the inflow of foreign workers, as well as number of asylum applications received. However, these data can be misleading, since they are in absolute numbers, and do not take into account the widely varying population sizes of European countries. The theories behind H4, since they are about the societal *impact* of immigrants, must take into account the numbers of



immigrants relative to the native population. Thus, we computed numbers of immigrants as a proportion of the national population.⁴

Since the test of H2 required splitting immigration laws into integration and control categories, this left us too few cases to use for OLS regression, given that we only had 39 country-year cases, and not all of these had both a control and an integration law. Thus, for our second set of data analyses below (for testing H2), we split all individual laws into their own cases, giving us 125 total cases to work with.

To analyze the effect of H1, regarding the impact of issue salience as measured by media coverage, we perform OLS regression on the restrictiveness of laws using counts of newspaper articles and the control variables as independent variables. Since our 39-case data set is time-series data, we are able to report panel-corrected standard errors. In order to better understand the impact of each variable, we test H1 individually and then construct additional OLS models with the other variables. To analyze the effect of political partisanship and determine if there are differences between control and integration policies (H2), we split laws into integration and control and perform standard OLS regressions on them using political partisanship, salience, and our control variables as independent variables.

On H1, we expect to see that the count of newspaper articles is the only significant predictor of restrictiveness. And on H2, we expect to see that partisanship is a significant predictor of the restrictiveness of integration laws, while it is not a significant predictor of control laws. We do not expect to find that unemployment, GDP growth, or inflows of immigrants are significant predictors of the restrictiveness of immigration laws.⁵

Results

We now turn to the statistical evidence for H1, regarding the *causes* of restrictiveness of immigration laws and our expectation that issue salience (as measured by media coverage) is the primary determinant of the degree of restrictiveness. Table 1 presents the results of our regression analysis on H1, when the dependent variable (restrictiveness of immigration laws) is lagged by one year to account for the time required to pass legislation.⁶

Regarding our salience hypothesis, we find support for H1, in that total articles, our measure of the extent of media coverage of immigration, was significant at the 0.1 level, and the regression coefficient (*B*) was negative (since lower numbers on the scale represent more restrictiveness). As issue salience goes up, and media coverage of asylum increases, immigration laws get more restrictive. However, the low regression coefficient of 0.001 means that the relationship is substantively fairly weak — it would take an increase of 1,000



Table 1 Regression analysis of impact of salience on restrictiveness (H1)^a

	<i>(B)</i>	<i>Std. error</i> ^b	<i>Sig.</i>
Newspaper articles ^c	-0.001	0.001	0.099

^a*N* = 33.

^bPanel-corrected standard errors are used.

^cDependent variable: average total restrictiveness of laws, lagged by 1 year.

Table 2 Regression analysis of impact of salience and partisanship on restrictiveness (H1)^a

	<i>(B)</i>	<i>Std. error</i> ^b	<i>Sig.</i>
Newspaper articles ^c	-0.001	0.001	0.076
Partisanship	0.148	0.181	0.414

^a*N* = 33.

^bPanel-corrected standard errors are used.

^cDependent variable: average total restrictiveness of laws, lagged by 1 year.

Table 3 Regression analysis of impact of salience, partisanship, unemployment and GDP growth on restrictiveness (H1)^a

	<i>(B)</i>	<i>Std. error</i> ^b	<i>Sig.</i>
Newspaper articles ^c	-0.001	0.001	0.326
Partisanship	-0.025	0.196	0.897
Unemployment	0.046	0.122	0.709
GDP growth	0.254	0.181	0.160

^a*N* = 33.

^bPanel-corrected standard errors are used.

^cDependent variable: average total restrictiveness of laws, lagged by 1 year.

newspaper articles in a given country and year to shift the restrictiveness of immigration laws by one point on our 5-point scale.

How will adding new variables to the model affect our results? Since we argued that political partisanship will only affect immigration control laws, and not all immigration laws in general, we expect to find that partisanship does not have a significant relationship with restrictiveness (Table 2).

Again, H1 is confirmed, and controlling for partisanship makes the *P*-value of salience drop to 0.076. Additionally, H2 is confirmed, in that partisanship is not a significant predictor of overall restrictiveness. We now consider the impact of socioeconomic variables on the model, by adding GDP growth and unemployment as independent variables (Table 3).



When accounting for socioeconomic factors, the impact of salience becomes statistically insignificant. Yet socioeconomic factors themselves are *also* not significant. Before discarding our hypothesis, we will add the final control variables to our model: the actual inflows of foreign workers and asylum-seekers. These could have an important effect, in that they might reveal trends that would be obscured by large differences in immigrant numbers across cases.

As suspected, adding immigrant numbers to the model reveals some important trends, though the immigrant inflows themselves are not a significant predictor of the restrictiveness of immigration laws. Thus, H4 is not confirmed. H3 is weakly confirmed, in that GDP growth is now shown to exert a probable effect on restrictiveness, though this relationship is not significant at the 0.05 level. H2 is again confirmed, in that partisanship is not a significant predictor of restrictiveness. Finally, H1 is also confirmed, and salience appears to be a much stronger predictor once immigrant inflows are taken into account, as the *P*-value for salience drops below the 0.05 threshold, and the unstandardized coefficient (*B*) of -0.004 shows that issue salience has a strong substantive effect on the restrictiveness of immigration laws. For every additional newspaper article on asylum, we see immigration laws get more restrictive by 0.004 on our 5-point scale. This seems like a small number, until we consider the sheer volume of asylum-related newspaper articles in a given country in a given year (around 1,000 stories per year in recent years in Germany and the UK). This means that a large increase in newspaper stories about immigration is related to more restrictive immigration laws, as our theory predicts. For instance, using the -0.004 coefficient that we find in Table 4, we can calculate that an increase of roughly 250 in the number of articles about asylum makes immigration laws shift by 1 point on our 5-point restrictiveness scale. Therefore, in theory, 250 additional immigration articles can lead to a shift from 'somewhat restrictive' to 'highly restrictive'. Since we

Table 4 Regression analysis of impact of salience, partisanship, unemployment, GDP growth, and inflows of foreign workers and asylum-seekers on restrictiveness (H1)^a

	(<i>B</i>)	<i>Std. error</i> ^b	<i>Sig.</i>
Newspaper articles ^c	-0.004	0.002	0.038
Partisanship	-0.052	0.208	0.803
Unemployment	0.120	0.123	0.332
GDP growth	0.375	0.200	0.061
Foreign workers	0.310	0.270	0.251
Asylum-seekers	0.436	0.408	0.285

^a*N* = 30.

^bPanel-corrected standard errors are used.

^cDependent variable: average total restrictiveness of laws, lagged by 1 year.



are controlling for immigrant inflow numbers, this data indicates that media attention is not simply an intervening variable between immigrant inflows and legislative output.

Overall, these are especially interesting findings, considering that GDP growth was the only other significant predictor of total restrictiveness. Immigrant inflows are highly variable and might correlate with economic factors and public opinion in varying ways (see the correlation matrix in Appendix A). When we factor in the impact of the actual numbers of foreign workers and asylum-seekers coming into a country, relative to the native population, media coverage has a significant effect on the restrictiveness of immigration laws. When one considers that political partisanship, foreign worker inflows, the unemployment rate, and the actual number of asylum applications have no statistical effect on restrictiveness; this is an important and possibly counter-intuitive finding.

In order to explain the restrictiveness across varying *types* of immigration policy, we will now test H2, using our second data set that assigns each of the 125 immigration laws to its own case. Our expectation for H2 is that political partisanship will be a significant predictor of the restrictiveness of laws dealing with immigrant integration, while it will not be a significant predictor of laws dealing with immigration control. Table 5 presents the results of an OLS regression using the same independent variables as Table 4, but with the dependent variable being limited to laws that deal with immigration *control* only.⁷

For the first test of H2, our expectation that partisanship is not a factor in immigration *control* laws, we find support for H2. Table 5 shows that partisanship is not a significant predictor of the restrictiveness of immigration control laws, and of the control variables, only foreign worker inflow is significant at the 0.1 level, as confirmed by the far-right column in Table 5. This is an interesting finding, showing that immigration *control* laws do appear to

Table 5 Regression analysis of impact of partisanship on control laws (H2)^a

	(B)	Std. error	Sig.
Partisanship ^b	0.241	0.167	0.156
Unemployment	-0.083	0.104	0.434
GDP growth	0.248	0.185	0.187
Foreign workers	0.323	0.156	0.044
Asylum-seekers	-0.584	0.360	0.112
Newspaper articles	0.001	0.001	0.599

^aN = 51.

^bDependent variable: restrictiveness of immigration control laws.



Table 6 Regression analysis of impact of partisanship on integration laws (H2)^a

	<i>(B)</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Partisanship ^b	1.087	0.348	0.010
Unemployment	-0.224	0.177	0.231
GDP growth	-0.095	0.257	0.719
Foreign workers	-0.381	0.207	0.093
Asylum-seekers	1.469	1.251	0.265
Newspaper articles	-0.003	0.002	0.074

^a*N* = 17.

^bDependent variable: restrictiveness of integration laws.

respond systematically to actual inflows of foreign workers (unlike immigration laws in general), but do not appear to depend on economic indicators, asylum applications, issue salience or partisanship (as predicted by H2).

Now, turning to our expectation that political partisanship is a predictor of the restrictiveness of integration laws, we present the OLS regression results in Table 6.

Again, H2 is confirmed, in that political partisanship is the only significant predictor of the restrictiveness of immigrant integration laws, when using the 0.05 cutoff (foreign worker inflow and newspaper articles are significant at the weaker 0.1 level).⁸ In fact, H2/partisanship even passes the more stringent 0.01 significance test here, and the high *B* of 1.087 means that partisanship has a powerful substantive impact on integration laws. This can be interpreted to mean that when a government shifts from left to right, the restrictiveness of integration laws goes up by more than 2 points on our 5-point scale, such as a shift from 'mixed' to 'highly restrictive', or from 'somewhat expansive' to 'somewhat restrictive'. This result, as well as the result in Table 5 above, confirms H2 and the finding of Money's (1999) British case study, namely that Left parties are relatively expansive on immigrant integration, but are no less restrictive than Right parties on immigration control.

Conclusion

Our analysis seeks to explain variation in the restrictiveness of immigration policies, both cross-temporally and cross-nationally. Despite a recent trend towards a trans-European convergence, considerable variation exists in the timing and extent of this convergence. What can explain this variation?

We took Freeman's (2002) theory of client politics as our starting point. Freeman argues that immigration policies will be more expansive than preferred by public opinion, due to the concentrated incentives facing



pro-immigration actors, *vs* the diffuse incentives facing the public at large. While this theory can perhaps explain why legal labor migration (especially for highly skilled workers), was liberalized in the period under investigation, while other policy areas were tightened, it cannot explain the specific conditions under which anti-immigrant sentiment can override client politics, including restrictive policies towards low-wage (and/or illegal) workers (who are also in demand from business interests). The rise of the Radical Right in Europe seems to have contributed to the break in the client politics connection, in that political actors are now highly responsive to public opinion *vis-à-vis* immigration.

We argued that media coverage and issue salience provide a key link between public opinion and policy outputs, and are likely to drive immigration legislation (H1). We also argued that political partisanship is not likely to play a role regarding policies to control new immigration (H2). The data analysis in this paper lends strong support for both hypotheses. Our regressions confirmed that issue salience, as measured by newspaper articles, was the most important significant predictor of the restrictiveness of national immigration laws in France, Germany and the UK, after controlling for numbers of immigrants entering a country. This result not only confirms our salience theory, but also casts doubt on theories that would see political partisanship, unemployment, and/or actual inflows of immigrants and asylum-seekers as having a direct causal effect on total restrictiveness. GDP was a significant predictor of total restrictiveness, lending possible support to socioeconomic theories (H3), but given that the newspaper articles variable was significant at the 0.05 level, and unemployment was not significant, we argue that issue salience can apparently have a more powerful impact than economic factors. Also, since newspaper articles about asylum were a significant predictor of restrictiveness, but actual asylum *applications* were not, this indicates that the European media may not foster the most 'objective' perceptions of the asylum issue.

Our regression results also confirmed that political party differences play a strong role in policies towards the integration of already-resident immigrants (citizenship, anti-discrimination), but do not play a significant role in policies dealing with immigration control (illegals, asylum-seekers, family reunification, legal labor/visas). These results provide confirmation of the work of Money (1999). We also hope that our findings, overall, take significant steps towards operationalizing and testing explanations for Money's two puzzles: the determinants of immigration policy, and the relationship between immigration control policies and policies governing immigrant integration.

In offering and testing causal theories for these puzzles, we have attempted to advance the comparative study of immigration politics into new and fruitful terrain. Further work along these lines might extend the analyses into new cases, both in new countries (European and perhaps non-European) and new



time periods. Other variables, such as public opinion polls, political institutions, or specific indicators of client politics, could also be added to the model. Further, as the European Union immigration regime continues to develop, scholars should be able to identify the EU as a source of national convergence, as well as studying the impact of issue salience, political partisanship, and other factors at the European level. EU-level political institutions provide a very different ‘venue’ for immigration politics than national-level institutions (Guiraudon, 2000; Givens and Luedtke, 2004). As Lahav (2004) argues, a trans-European, national-level policy and/or opinion convergence might ultimately make the development of a supranational EU immigration policy a real possibility. However, factors other than issue salience or political partisanship might play a more primary role in Brussels, or at least temper the impact of salience and/or partisanship.

Notes

- 1 There are several other compelling hypotheses found in the literature, such as the path-dependent account of Hansen (2002), the elitist account of Guiraudon (2000), or the rights-based account of Hollifield (1992). Due to space constraints as well as difficulties with operationalization in this context, we cannot address all of these hypotheses.
- 2 Although there are obvious differences in political viewpoint between these newspapers, our concept of salience is not dependent on pro- or anti-asylum coverage. We are simply trying to measure media *attention*, not editorial bias either way.
- 3 It was necessary to average the scores so that we could have only one case for each year. This allowed us to treat the data as panel data and to use panel-corrected standard errors (for analyzing time-series data).
- 4 We are indebted to Elisabeth Ivarsson for this suggestion.
- 5 To rule out collinearity, we include a correlation matrix in the Appendix A, which also contains our descriptive statistics. Our data are also available upon request. Among the independent variables, a few bivariate correlations deserve mention as possible collinearity problems. Foreign worker inflow and asylum-seeker inflow were correlated, which probably reflects the tendency of both types of foreigner inflows to wax and wane concurrently (a phenomenon which deserves further investigation in the literature, since asylum-seekers and workers often face different rules of entry). Other than this correlation, however, the only correlations above 0.6 were all with the newspaper articles variable, which was strongly correlated with unemployment and both types of immigrant inflows. Since media coverage of immigration would not logically be expected to *cause* unemployment and/or immigrant entry, we ran a separate OLS regression with newspaper articles as the dependent variable. Unemployment did not reach significance, though both types of immigrant inflows *were* significant predictors. However, given that they drop from significance when H1 is tested with all independent variables (Table 4), it appears that media coverage *does* exert an independent effect, and is not merely an intervening variable.
- 6 Although we had 39 cases in our time-series data set, the *N* was 33 due to missing data.
- 7 Although we had 125 cases in our panel data set, the *N* was 51 due to the fact that not all years had both an integration and a control law.
- 8 Although these results should be taken with caution, due to the low *N* of 17.



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Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

<i>Descriptive statistics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Control laws (restrictiveness)	75	1.00	5.00	2.4133	1.14010
Integration laws (restrictiveness)	27	1.00	5.00	3.8148	1.14479
Newspaper articles	118	188.00	1000.00	509.65	274.964
Partisanship	125	0.00	2.00	1.2480	0.89493
Unemployment	125	4.20	11.90	8.7144	2.09588
GDP growth	125	-2.20	5.10	1.8648	1.20270
Foreign workers (per 1,000 population)	97	0.25	4.93	1.3503	1.38780
Asylum applications (per 1,000 population)	111	0.28	5.28	1.0558	0.88321

Correlation matrix

		<i>Control laws</i>	<i>Integration laws</i>	<i>Newspaper articles</i>	<i>Partisan-ship</i>	<i>Un-employment</i>	<i>GDP growth</i>	<i>Foreign workers</i>	<i>Asylum applications</i>
Control laws	Pearson's Corr.	1	1.000	-0.043	0.179	-0.112	0.212	0.074	-0.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	—	—	0.730	0.125	0.337	0.068	0.576	0.277
Integration laws	Pearson's Corr.	1.000	1	-0.023	0.564	-0.181	0.222	-0.364	-0.381
	Sig. (2-tailed)	—	—	0.916	0.002	0.365	0.265	0.104	0.081
Newspaper articles	Pearson's Corr.	-0.043	-0.023	1	0.139	-0.626	-0.214	0.796	0.639
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.730	0.916	—	0.133	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000
Partisanship	Pearson's Corr.	0.179	0.564	0.139	1	-0.100	0.016	-0.272	-0.284
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.125	0.002	0.133	—	0.267	0.862	0.007	0.003
Unemployment	Pearson's Corr.	-0.112	-0.181	-0.626	-0.100	1	-0.135	-0.440	-0.599
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.337	0.365	0.000	0.267	—	0.133	0.000	0.000
GDP growth	Pearson's Corr.	0.212	0.222	-0.214	0.016	-0.135	1	-0.132	-0.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.068	0.265	0.020	0.862	0.133	—	0.197	0.878
Foreign workers	Pearson's Corr.	0.074	-0.364	0.796	-0.272	-0.440	-0.132	1	0.696
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.576	0.104	0.000	0.007	0.000	0.197	—	0.000
Asylum applications	Pearson's Corr.	-0.140	-0.381	0.639	-0.284	-0.599	-0.015	0.696	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.277	0.081	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.878	0.000	—