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Review of *Crossroads: Comparative Immigration Regimes in a World of Demographic Change*
By Anna K. Boucher and Justin Gest

Review by Margaret E. Peters

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In the political science, we use taxonomies all the time as a short hand to understand the world: democracies versus autocracies, developed versus developing states, varieties of capitalism, to name a few. From these taxonomies spring a wealth of information about how states are governed, their economies, and their people. Yet we are lacking this kind of short hand for immigration regimes beyond our outdated and probably not-very-useful categories of “settler states,” “states of new immigration,” and the like. In *Crossroads*, the authors take on the difficult but important task of creating a reproducible taxonomy of immigration regimes across the world.

To create their taxonomy, Boucher and Gest have assembled a wealth of new data on immigration and integration on both OECD and non-OECD states. The data, all which is from 2011, includes: total migrant flow; the flow broken down by type of visa, whether economic, family, humanitarian, or free movement and other; the percent of the flow that is temporary versus permanent; and the naturalization rate. To collect this data, the authors relied existing public data and obtain previously unavailable data. Having collected information on immigration laws (Peters 2017), I can only imagine the heroic efforts it took to get, say, Bahrain to release immigration data. The authors should be commended on the data collection effort alone.

The authors argue that the data shows a new era in immigration around the world. Far from Gary Freeman’s (1995) prediction that states are opening immigration more, they find that states are using what they call a “market model” of immigration. In the market model, states focus on immigrants primarily as bearers of human capital, rather than people. States seek to maximize their human capital needs, but do so in different ways, as explained by Boucher and Gest.

The data show that there are seven different types of these market based immigrant regimes: neoliberal regimes that have both high labor-focused selectivity and high naturalization rates; Kafala and Quasi-Kafala regimes that also focus on labor migrants but prioritize temporary flows and have low naturalization rates; humanitarian regimes that primarily admit immigrants as family migrants or refugees; intra- and extra-union regimes of Europe that primarily admit migrants through the free migration regime of the EU; and constrained regimes that fall somewhere between the neoliberal regimes and the quasi-kafala regimes with a bit more family and humanitarian migration and higher naturalization rates.

Throughout the discussion of their metrics, the authors provide qualitative descriptions and, where possible, quantitative data about how the measure change over time. These descriptions bring together the literature’s discussion of how immigration policy has changed over time in one place. These chapters prove to be extremely valuable for those of us teaching immigration; I

have already assigned chapter 3—the overview of immigration regimes—to my advanced undergraduate class on migration as it provides a nice summary of the history of these regimes. I also plan to assign the book in its entirety to my graduate migration class.

While the main purpose of the book—to provide a taxonomy of immigration regimes—is well-done, there are still points of contention. First, as anyone who is working with data on immigration policy must decide, is the choice to use de facto measures of immigration policy over de jure. While the authors argue that flow measure better capture both legislative and administrative changes in policy, they do not grapple much with the factors that lead to more or less demand for migration or naturalization. As such, a naïve reader might think that states can just open their doors to migrants and they will come.

Least satisfying is in the discussion of why states adopt these different regimes in Chapter 7. As the authors concede, they have about 30 data points and so can only provide some correlations between variables to measure existing theories in the field and their measures. Yet, the authors often use the language of causality when these results must be interpreted with a very large grain of salt. It might have been better to present this analysis as a set of conjectures and hypotheses that arise from the data rather than test of the factors that lead states to adopt these regimes.

Nonetheless, this book is what the authors set out to provide, the start of a conversation on immigration regimes. While scholars may argue whether a state belongs in this category or that, Boucher and Gest are extremely transparent in their methodology, allowing some future scholars to replicate and hopefully add additional data. This book will no doubt provide for an engaging and provocative conversation for years to come.

Works Cited

- Freeman, Gary P. 1995. “Modes of Immigration Politics in Liberal Democratic States.” *International Migration Review* 29 (4): 881–902.
- Peters, Margaret E. 2017. *Trading Barriers: Immigration and the Remaking of Globalization*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.