

CHAPTER 9

Structural Theories as Explanations

Like domestic explanations, international-structural explanations could provide a more accurate, and simpler, alternative to the argument forwarded earlier about sovereignty and the public interest. Structural theorists might argue that these legislative discussions in fact occurred, and they did in a microsense shape policies' details, but that the choices legislators thought that they were making from scratch were in a sense predetermined. Changes in the distribution of power, or in the country's terms of trade and public demands for better living standards, or another equally broad phenomenon could have placed so much pressure on a country that a legislator would have had to favor restriction. The arguments, in this view, reveal legislators' attempts to come to terms with the action they were compelled to take anyway, rather than the justifications that are necessary to sanctify democratic action and move the nation forward. This chapter assesses structural theories generally as explanations for the changes examined earlier.

Although systems-level structural theories of international relations, which deal directly with sovereignty and power, do not discuss immigration policy, each does imply hypotheses concerning quantitative restriction—concerning border control, the correlation between immigration and trade policies,¹ and directional trends in each of those policies—as well as suggest a basis for determining which characteristics a country will seek in its immigrant population. Neorealism, functionalism, and hegemonic stability theories each identify minimal commonalities among states that define their constraints and incentives. The following sections outline the predictions they would make concerning boundary control, then evaluate them in the light of American immigration policy in the twentieth century. Since the evidence each requires is macrolevel time-series data, most of the evidence used to evaluate the theories is quantitative. Since none distinguishes between transborder flows of goods and persons (labor), they are all tested on data about both trade and migration. The final section evaluates the degree to which relatively simple structural theories explain either the content of immigration policy or the timing and direction of changes in it.

Realism

Systems-level theories start by mapping the distribution of power and then deduce from this the dynamic pattern of interaction that should emerge. Neorealism starts by positing sovereign states with varying amounts of power, and then draws from this basic map principles governing alliance and conflict points. In anarchy, self-preservation through security becomes the highest value. States assure security via alliance or autarky—but preferably autarky since any alliance must be uncertain.² Sometimes rivalry becomes interbloc, as states ally to deter others, but such cooperation is fleeting, for it creates vulnerability. Power and interdependence are incompatible. As Hans Morgenthau put it, states pursue power;³ they seek relative gains. Changes in power's bases and distribution alter the threats and opportunities that states face, and therefore which strategy will be most effective in the short run in strengthening their autonomy and security. Sovereignty and power, authority and capabilities, are for realists ultimately a single idea, being able to do what one wants.

States use borders to preserve what they have, although preservation might imply expansion to undermine opponents and provide a buffer. People and wealth each enable a state to finance security, so policies toward people and markets reinforce each other. Each in the long run must tend toward assuring independence. The realist decision rule is quantitative and strategic. Calculating relative gains involves deciding on the net cost of some strategy, then comparing it to the alternatives. A realist sees both citizens and foreigners as resources carrying net costs or benefits depending on individuals' power vis-à-vis the state and their employers. A government first calculates whether an additional person's marginal product—understood in political and ideological as well as economic terms—exceeds his or her cost. Power politics demands a second calculation, whether pulling people in helps other states more than it helps oneself, and decides on this point. The same sort of calculus will be made for trade as for immigration, since what ultimately matters in all spheres are relative gains and losses. In the short run, this goal could dictate a variety of policies, depending on the prevailing distribution of productive factors and costs, alliances, and power. On average, though, across states and over time, immigration and trade policies should be similar because all policies must serve autonomy.⁴ Realism anticipates a strong policy bias toward restricting free transborder flows threatening independence.

Autonomy, for classical realists, also has a qualitative value. It matters because it makes possible survival, not just of people on a territory, but of a distinct culture valued for its own sake. The international environment, separate from and hostile to any one country, threatens life

directly, and one’s way of life indirectly. Since immigrants are foreigners of an enemy culture, realists would expect that the immigrants a country does accept would be culturally or ideologically similar to citizens; this dimension could change as the enemy changed. Structural realists, on the other hand, assume that a community’s values would remain stable through time. Table 15 summarizes the realist predictions about policy on several dimensions.

Hegemonic Stability Theory

Hegemonic stability theory shares many of realism’s premises. States seek power, they attempt to secure dominance over others and to avoid dependence, and their policies toward others depend on the prevailing distribution of power. Unlike realists, hegemonic stability theorists add the proposition that states will value order at the cost of some autonomy; benefits that order makes possible justify ceding some ability to act unilaterally.⁵ In this view, the strongest state will bear much of the responsibility for articulating and enforcing a specific order, in exchange for getting the type of order it wants. Smaller states will go along, sacrificing autonomy for the material benefits order allows. Hegemonic stability theorists concentrate on explaining what for realists are medium-term policy paradoxes, policies that do not “go together.” Because hegemons must balance their unique interests with others’ to keep the order going, their policies would look irrational from a narrow realist standpoint. For example, to secure European dependence after World War II, the United States helped to rebuild Europe as a competitor. The hegemon disaggregates policy areas and

TABLE 15. Realist Predictions: Summary

Goals	Security Self-preservation
Borders' function	Protect Preserve
Policies' long-run direction	Toward autarky
Immigration and trade policies	Positively correlated
Policy toward immigrant quantity	Depends on immigrants' contribution to state power
Policy toward immigrant characteristics	Unchanging (neorealism) Changes as the enemy changes (realism)

manipulates them, allowing autonomy in some areas but undermining it in others.

What remains a firm boundary depends on the hegemon's goals, which in turn depend on its domestic values and politics. Since these vary from hegemon to hegemon, knowing simply that some hegemon has secured an order will not tell one which types of goals it will pursue or which policies will come to dominate.⁶ One cannot on this basis predict what immigration policy will look like. Indeed, changes in the bases as well as the distribution of power drive policy change from era to era. British mercantilism undergirded the nineteenth-century notion of "the more people the better," encouraging inflows of people and goods while making expatriation almost impossible.⁷ American hegemony, however, arose with the welfare state and free trade. Americans preferred to allow capital, but not labor, to move freely, returning profits, but not people, to the United States. Other countries adapted to these hegemonies for the sake of order, but with declining British, then American, dominance, hegemonic stability theorists expect all policies eventually to snap back toward autarky.⁸

Like realism, hegemonic stability theory retains a strong bias toward autarky. Order among mutually vulnerable states is, after all, the anomaly the theory seeks to explain. On the other hand, hegemons secure rule by affecting other countries' ideologies and values, which implies a measure of integration. A hegemon will occasionally accept costs in one area in exchange for stability in another; it might accept immigrants it does not want in exchange for other policy concessions. But a country would accept immigrants of a sort it did not want only during periods of stable hegemony, as part of a policy bargain. During periods of international disarray, immigration, like other policies, would move back toward autarky and closure. Table 16 summarizes hegemonic stability theory's implications for analyzing a hegemon's immigration policy.

Functionalism

Interdependence or functional integration theory views movements back toward autonomy as retrogressive. In David Mitrany's formulation, increasing political participation and technological advances coincide with a more widespread view that government has a direct responsibility for people's well-being.⁹ Any government can only cultivate a home market so intensely until returns begin to decrease. To stay in power, to give its increasingly vocal population what it wants, legislators must turn to economies outside the home market. Other governments face similar pres-

tures to cooperate, while economies of scale promise rewards for doing so. While an international organization comprised of states, Mitrany argues, “would define their *territory* as a means of *differentiating* between members and outsiders, a [cooperative] league would select and define *functions* for the contrary purpose of *integrating* with regard to them the interests of all.”¹⁰ These rewards are for individuals, not governments, which become weaker in the process of such integration. As ever broader institutions provide for their needs, citizens become loyal to them; “the State is no more than a convenient association, neither greater nor smaller in usefulness and authority than the many other associations in which members of a community organize their various interests.”¹¹ Borders serve no purpose but to mark, arbitrarily, population in subsets capable of delegating authority to a representative.

People dictate state policy, and since most concern themselves with absolute, not relative, gains, they support immigration to the point where immigrants’ marginal increase in national wealth equals their drain on central services. Since regions of the world economy differ in factor endowments, some countries will initially prefer importing capital to importing labor, but trade and migration serve the same purpose. People therefore judge them by the same standard: their contribution to wealth. Functionalists expect governments to open borders to facilitate resource flows.

A desire for a better material standard of living motivates policy in the functional world. A functionalist would expect that in integration’s early stages, when people calculate social product within state boundaries, skill level and capital wealth would dominate the preference list; in later stages, when social product means world product, immigration would be entirely unrestricted. Table 17 summarizes functionalism’s expectations about immigration policy.

TABLE 16. Hegemonic Stability Theory's Predictions: Summary

Goals	Order Stability
Borders’ function	To define the area to be used when calculating relative gains
Policies’ long-run direction	Toward autarky
Immigration and trade policies	Positively correlated in the long run Potentially different in the short run
Policy toward immigrant quantity	Depends on the nature of the hegemony
Policy toward immigrant characteristics	Depends on the nature of the hegemony

Each of these perspectives implicitly hypothesizes some trajectory to autonomy and power, and to immigration and trade policies, based on what it pinpoints as the main engine powering large-scale change. Realism posits that states pursue security through autonomy, and hence would tend to guard against transnational processes. Both trade and immigration should tend toward restriction. Functional integration theory posits that states pursue wealth through cooperation and hence seek to promote transnational processes. Both trade and immigration should tend toward openness. Hegemonic stability theory, on the other hand, posits that in any era, states seek order through a system of rules consonant with the strongest state's overall interests and domestic values. Immigration and trade policies will not necessarily parallel each other since the modal policy will mimic that of the hegemon. During nonhegemonic eras, however, states should slide back toward autarky. The following section uses evidence from the past century of American trade and immigration policies, and from the country's experience with actual trade and immigration flows, to evaluate these structural theories' predictive power.

Evidence: Immigrant Volume

Hypotheses dealing with immigrants' volume and those dealing with immigrants' characteristics will be separated initially because the first are quantitative, the second qualitative.¹² Separated, each can be compared with parallel types of indicators to highlight change. The first analysis, of numerical control, is designed to test the structural theories' implicit propositions about increases or decreases in the volume of allowed immigration and about the relationship between policies toward material resources and those toward citizenship. One test concerns the volume of transborder flows, of increases or decreases in the volume of goods, services, and citi-

TABLE 17. Functionalism's Predictions: Summary

Goals	Increased individual wealth
Borders' function	To define the area to be used when selecting a representative
Policies' long-run direction	Toward integration
Immigration and trade policies	Positively correlated
Policy toward immigrant quantity	Favors immigration
Policy toward immigrant characteristics	Favors the skilled

zens imported. Because of strong secular trends, both of these variables will be discussed in their population and productivity contexts. Trade matters as a proportion of GNP; immigration matters as a proportion of the U.S. population. The second test involves the correlation between trade and migration; all theories anticipate the two to be positively correlated, but expect their common trend to be in different directions.

The second analysis concerns not quantity but quality: the nature of and stability in desired immigrants' characteristics. The picture here, as always, centers on policy, rather than actual numbers of immigrants.¹³ Policy, not the actual flow of immigrants, is the dependent variable. What is to be explained or outlined in context are the ceiling's level, the direction of its change, and the official distribution of quotas and preferences among immigrants. Following the statistical overview, the last section assesses structural theories' utility for explaining American immigration policy.

Structural theories' simplest expectations involve the magnitude of international migration. Because large or unregulated flows threaten states, by muddying their borders and allowing destruction from within, realists enjoin governments to restrict the volume of immigration and to secure control over it. Functionalists expect, and hope for, the opposite. Maximizing personal incomes can only be accomplished by taking advantage of transnational technologies and marketing abilities. Borders only interfere with this. Persons, as laborers, investors, and consumers, should be allowed to travel where the market will take them. Immigration should increase as states cede control over transborder flows to markets. Legally allowed immigration to the United States, in proportion to the American population, has decreased. This is consistent with realist expectations and counter to functionalist expectations, both broadly construed. Comparing it to actual immigration indicates the degree to which the policy defines what is really allowed; comparing it to actual inflows of nonimmigrants measures the degree to which policy reduces "natural" inflows.

Legal limits to immigration policy are usually exceeded, though actual levels are usually within a few percentage points of the policy targets. The gap between legally allowed immigration and actual nonimmigrant volume is enormous, indicating that immigration policy in the United States has remained restrictive. If the demand for immigration has risen, as the increases in nonimmigrant visitors might indicate, then immigration policy has become more numerically restrictive over time.

Realism, hegemonic stability theory, and functionalism each expect that immigration and trade policies will go together because each equates border control with sovereignty and sovereignty with autarky. Realists would claim that sovereign states' pursuit of relative power demands such control, hegemonic stability theorists would agree but note that for a short

time a hegemon can relieve the necessity of pouring resources into border protection, and functionalists would argue that integration involves erosion and eventual abandonment of borders. As borders go, so goes sovereignty. Conversely, since states remain, borders must remain strong enough.

All of the structural theories expect immigration and trade targets to covary positively; either both become more restrictive, or both become more open. Realists would expect them to tend, over the long run, in the direction of autarky; both slopes would be toward closed borders. Hegemonic stability theory anticipates autarkic policy only during periods without hegemonic stability. Policies should covary only from about 1920 to 1945 and from the 1970s to the present. Like realism, functionalism anticipates general covariance, though in the long run toward openness.

To check this for the United States, we can compare tariffs,¹⁴ as a proportion of merchandise imports, with the legal immigration ceiling, as a proportion of the U.S. population. Another comparison focuses on imports in relation to GNP and the immigration ceiling over time: trade barriers are to national product as immigration ceilings are to national population. Some of these indicators are interrelated in a way that biases them against showing a directional split. Population increases do not necessarily lead to a higher import reliance, but they do affect GNP. Over the last century, the American population has increased steadily, and the world population has risen even more sharply. Over the same century, world product has skyrocketed. In a comparison of proportions, legal ceiling to population and imports to GNP, rising population and rising GNP are denominators—and related denominators. Increases in population will almost always affect GNP, which is, after all, an aggregate. This means that between these two numbers there is some built-in relationship. If immigrants produce anything, GNP will rise; economic growth attracts immigrants. Population and imports are separate but population and GNP are not. In a straight time-series, then, we should be surprised if any variables that rested on population and GNP were not related positively.

In addition, systems theorists imply that the numerators ought to be related as well. The legal ceiling restricting immigration and protective trade policies, they would all argue, capture the same phenomenon: autarky. Immigration quotas are to population as tariff restrictions (which affect import levels) are to GNP. Whether they have been going up or down, they should be making their way together toward openness or closure. Since standard measures count these in opposite ways—a reduced immigration ceiling means a more restrictive policy, while a higher tariff indicates restriction—visually, or algebraically, positive covariance would be represented by two lines on a graph, each sloping in an *opposite* direc-

tion. A first glance at the graph shows this not to be the case. Figure 11 shows the relationship between the percentage of imports subject to tariffs—a measure of openness—and the numerical immigration ceiling as a percentage of the U.S. population—a measure of isolation.

Immigration policy has become more restrictive as trade policy has become less protectionist. To check to see whether this is simply due to inertia of time, we remove the secular trend from each. This leaves a set of numbers that indicate deviation from the norm. What is left are shifts, rather than raw values or amounts, in the ratios of ceiling to population and tariffs to the value of imports. Before World War II, when Congress drove tariffs upward and curtailed immigration, these residual variables correlate at $-.35$, that is, they served the same restrictive purpose. Following the war, however, Congress lowered tariff barriers substantially while immigration remained under control as tight as ever. Statistically, this is shown by a turnabout from the $-.35$ before the war to a positive $.55$ after it.

In fact, even this is deceptively low. In 1965, Congress raised the overall ceiling by adding 120,000 places for a previously unlimited group, Western Hemisphere migrants. Eastern Hemisphere migrants, who had before constituted the entire restricted group, were given only a slightly higher number of slots. This is not a leap but an accounting change. Consistent limits can be constructed in one of two ways: by adding actual Western Hemisphere immigration before the change, with the rationale that in not restricting it, Congress accepted its volume, or by subtracting the 120,000 from the ceiling after 1965, so the number consistently counts only Europeans, Asians, and Africans. Eliminating this artificial jump in the ceiling changes the postwar correlation, again of residuals, to $.85$ or $.73$ depending on which indicator is used. Clearly, lowered trade barriers have accompanied tighter, not looser, controls on immigration.

On the question of whether protectionist legislation extends across both trade and immigration, realism and functionalism both answered yes, they do in the long run. We see, however, that the proportion of imports subject to tariffs has, with two exceptions, decreased steadily and fairly dramatically, while the legislated tolerance level for immigrants has also declined. The reality as far as U.S. policy is concerned does not match what these theories predict.

If the exceptions were during times of chaos following a hegemonic order's collapse, hegemonic stability theory would appear to provide a plausible account of this. And in fact, from 1923 to 1945, the correlation between tariffs and the immigration ceiling drops; in the interwar period immigration restrictions and tariffs each got more protective ($-.50$ correlation),¹⁵ while in the post-World War II period tariffs eased while immigration restrictions did not ($.85$ correlation). From the mid-1970s to the

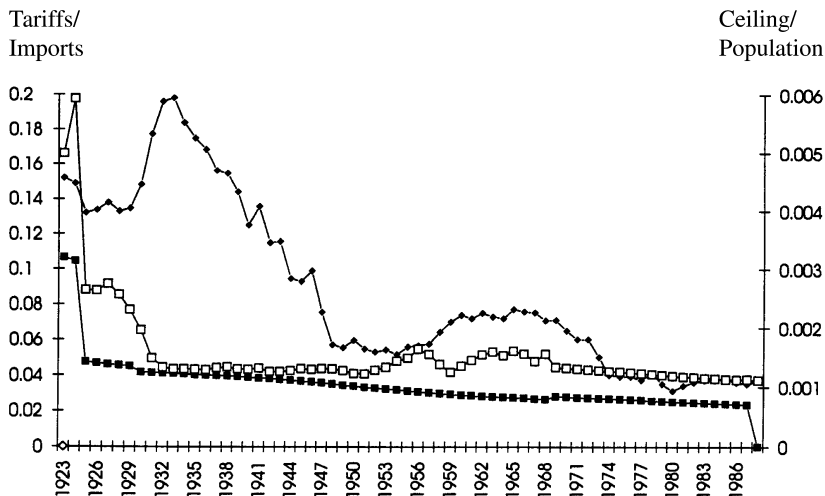


Fig. 11. Consistent ceiling levels to population and tariffs to imports. (Legend: *white boxes*, consistent ceiling including Western Hemisphere; *large black boxes*, consistent ceiling counting only the Eastern Hemisphere; *small black boxes*, tariff percentage.)

present, however, this postwar statistical relationship has not degenerated, but has strengthened—to .96. If hegemonic cycles explain turnarounds, they do so only for the shift in the 1940s unless it is argued that hegemony did not change after 1945. American policy toward foreign trade has sought to eliminate barriers, while American policy toward immigrants has sought to strengthen them.

Tariff levels measure protectionism, while import levels measure vulnerability to foreign markets.¹⁶ During the twentieth century, America's dependence on foreign markets has increased while its proportion of foreign-born has decreased. Since World War II, the immigration ceiling has gone down while the U.S. shares of world imports (−.44 correlation) and exports (−.79 correlation) have gone up. As others have become more dependent on U.S. markets, the United States has also become more dependent on foreign markets. Since 1945, U.S. imports rose from 5 to 13.5 percent of its GNP, while its exports rose from 8 to 12 percent.¹⁷ U.S. trade also rose relative to the rest of the world. Its share of world imports rose from 11.5 to 17.8 percent from 1947 to 1985, but its exports meanwhile dropped from 28.8 to 11.3 percent.

As the American market became more responsive and vulnerable to external economic fluctuation, a realist would expect the United States to have sought to insulate itself through tariffs and immigration restriction. As Americans consume a greater proportion of their GNP with imports, they lower the immigration ceiling.

Evidence: Regulatory Categories

One way to restrict the number of immigrants is to reduce the nominal ceiling on overall immigration. Another is to extend regulatory control over additional categories of immigrants. By 1990, all immigrants were subject to a numerical ceiling, but earlier in the century some groups' migration was left uncontrolled. At times, their number exceeded that of those entering within quotas. If this were allowed to continue, that would suggest that the limits were allowed simply to erode. This is not the case. When immigration exceeded a set level for a few years, new legislation forced it down below the ceiling and reclassified additional groups as restricted. It is as if the problem of too-heavy traffic on the freeway were resolved by five years of traffic-impeding construction followed by changes to force more onto the turnpike. Which groups this amending legislation targets have not necessarily been those responsible for the earlier increase. Rather, Congress has juggled categories to ensure that the groups to remain unrestricted will be those that supply immigrants in fairly predictable amounts, steadily over many years. As interdependence has become more extensive, more groups have been regulated. Figure 12 illustrates the way that nonquota immigrant categories have changed over time.

Three categories of immigrants—refugees, Western Hemisphere residents, and relatives—have at one time been allowed to immigrate without reference to how many others have also applied for admission. Increases in the number of nonquota immigrants have preceded legislation to peel categories away and reinsert them elsewhere with limits attached. For example, refugees were first charged against their country quotas, which were mortgaged against future country allocations if exceeded. The Baltic states, for example, had mortgages until about 2035. Congress forgave these mortgages and tried to deal with contemporary refugees on an ad hoc basis (mainly as parolees, who, when their status is adjusted, count as immigrants against their country of origin). When emergencies became chronic—or when America liberalized its definition of what constituted an emergency—refugees were given their own preference category of 6 percent, or 17,400 annually. Refugees still exceeded these categories, so after

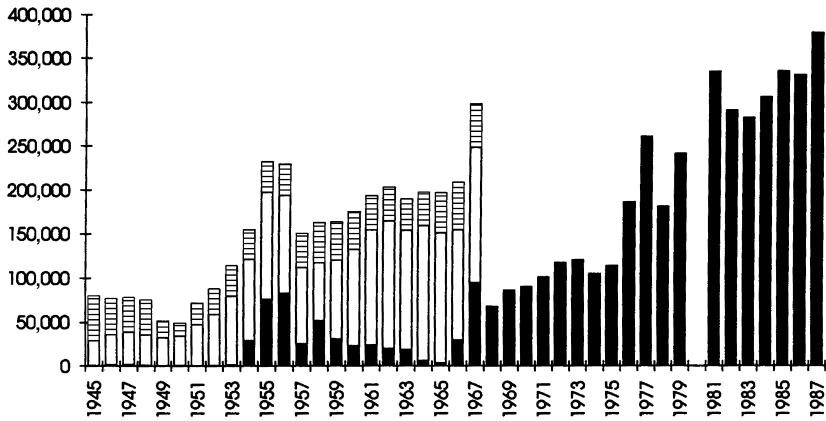


Fig. 12. Nonquota refugees, Western Hemisphere migrants, and relatives. (Legend: *striped*, Western Hemisphere migrants; *black*, nonquota refugees; *white*, relatives.)

a refugee admission averaging 85,645 from 1977 to 1979, the Refugee Act of 1980 integrated these miscellaneous mechanisms to fix the annual number at 20,000.

The 1965 limit on the Western Hemisphere, to 120,000, followed an annual average immigration of only 110,808 in the preceding decade, though the number had been on the rise. Western Hemisphere migrants first faced limits when the U.S. Congress equalized policy toward all countries. In the then-current view, the choice was to allow all countries free immigration or to restrict them all equally. Congress chose equal restriction. Of relatives,¹⁸ refugees, and Western Hemisphere migrants, the three groups that have dominated this category, relatives have been least likely to arrive unpredictably.¹⁹ They were also the last to be subject to numerical controls. Relatives' numbers had been rising as the two groups of immigrants, the Indochinese in the late 1970s and the resident illegal aliens in the mid-1980s, united their families.

The pattern in this category of unrestricted migrants has been to separate, systematize, and limit various subgroups; in other words, to formalize numerical limits when the unwritten ones have been reached or exceeded. Unrestricted immigration has not, then, really been free numerically. Increasing regulation is consistent with the predictions of realism, but is inconsistent with those of functionalism. Since policy continued through the 1970s and 1980s unchanged, hegemonic stability theory alone is insufficient as an explanation.

A comparison with policy toward, and flows of, nonimmigrants²⁰ provides a simple contrast to permanent immigrants. It indicates the magnitude of immigration restriction and highlights how important the citizen-noncitizen distinction is to numerical limitation. The difference between these two groups is not simply how long they are allowed to remain, but what they are allowed to claim; one might be more acceptable in high numbers because it is so difficult for it to cost anything or change much. One contrast, then, is in the limits of tolerance for certain types of claimants.

If accurate figures on global travel were available, one direct comparison might be made between the proportion of all travelers and all exports bringing money into the United States; another might be made between nonimmigrants and imports invading the United States. As outlined earlier in this chapter, visitors' volume has increased as the U.S. share of world imports has gone up and share of world exports has declined. The government has made no attempt to regulate visitors' volume except during wartime; in fact, presidents boost tourism in television commercials aired abroad. Since nonimmigrants are considered an economic bonus, with no costs—and are considered economic, not political—they are recruited, not restricted. American policy encourages, rather than ignores or restricts, nonimmigrant visitors.

No one knows how many people would immigrate if they could. The volume of nonimmigration cannot provide a direct indicator of potential immigration because the categories draw from partly different pools; for example, a constantly traveling foreign investor might be content in his or her citizenship while a poor compatriot who has never traveled might do so if it became legally possible. At the same time, nonimmigrant travel does indirectly measure two components affecting the decision to emigrate, information and travel cost, and it in turn affects the levels of each, as volume lowers prices and travelers bring news. If these barriers are coming down, it is reasonable to assume that immigration demand will also rise, other things being equal. Though they are imprecise, these comparisons highlight the degree to which immigration policy restricts.

While trade has risen exponentially, and the American economy, like many others, has become vastly more permeated every decade, U.S. immigration policy has consistently served protectionist and conservative ends. The number of immigrants admissible through normal routes has remained almost the same since the first ceiling in 1921 was shrunk three years later. When unrestricted immigrants have taken advantage too enthusiastically of that privilege, some open classifications have become limited. When the laws and immigrants have each become too numerous, systematic limits have replaced the ad hoc or time-limited legislation that

injected flexibility. The Immigration and Nationality Act has been amended in many important ways, all designed to increase control over the number of immigrants. Its purpose has been to contain, and occasionally to roll back. If world population is rising, and rising faster than the U.S. population, if costs are dropping and legally allowed in-movement is skyrocketing, holding fast not even to a proportion but a fixed number should be considered profoundly conservative. This process is consistent with that which realism would predict. Realism's accuracy, however, remains suspect since it predicts protective immigration policy because it anticipates autarkic policies generally. American trade policy did not follow that path in the post-World War II world. Realism can explain why the United States might have pursued conservatism regarding immigration ceilings but not why it would simultaneously attempt to make its borders irreversibly open to trade.

Evidence: Immigrant Characteristics

The first analysis described the most basic and enduring use of immigration policy, controlling the number of potential new citizens. A second set of questions addresses the changing requirements for immigrant characteristics. The ceiling's purpose is not simply to allow in a fixed number of persons, but persons of a certain sort. Which sort has changed over time. Neorealists and functionalists both expect American ideas about desirable immigrant characteristics to have been unchanging and to have focused on economic attributes. Neorealists predict that a country will decide to admit an immigrant who increases state power relative to others; functionalists predict absolute, not relative, gains to guide such judgments. Classical realists, on the other hand, would expect exclusion and selection criteria to change as the state's main threat shifted. Also expecting change are hegemonic stability theorists who anticipate that selection criteria will be consistent with the hegemon's ideology during periods of hegemonic dominance. A liberal hegemon would implement a policy that declared liberal principles the general norm.

Specifically, neorealism expects that criteria regarding immigrant characteristics are unchanging and wealth-based, while classical realism expects that they change with shifts in not only the distribution of power but in the nature of the threatening state. Hegemonic stability theory expects American immigration policy during its reign to move toward liberal criteria, but fall away from them and toward isolationist ones after its power began to wane. Functionalism anticipates an enduring predilection for laborers and investors. These hypotheses can be tested by tracing

whether and how immigration categories have changed over time. Policy provisions regarding immigrants' characteristics can be divided into three groups: individual degeneracy, national origin, and preferences for skills or relation to a U.S. citizen.²¹

Regardless of whether one seeks to enter the United States as a tourist or prospective citizen, certain characteristics will guarantee exclusion. Starting in 1875, Congress began to detail attributes sufficient to eliminate a person's chances of entering the country. (Since "the Asiatic races" were dealt with usually through general immigration policy, a ban on individual depravity and inferiority was intended to eliminate certain Europeans.) Table 18 lists the categories by the years in which they were introduced. Early exclusion categories focused on sexual morality, insanity, disability, disease, drug addiction, and poverty, all considered at the time evidence of degeneracy.

Over the next century, three types of categories would be added. One, directed against fraud, targeted persons who breached administrative requirements: lost their papers, had none to begin with, were incorrectly classified, and the like. The second addition raised the floor. Simply demonstrating nondegeneracy was no longer sufficient; one must demonstrate that one would help the country. Literacy and needed skills became necessary minima. The third added category aimed at ideological threats. Following McKinley's assassination by an anarchist immigrant, all anarchists were barred; with the rise of the cold war, all communists were barred.

Realists and functionalists believed that criteria would be stable (functionalists believed that they would be stable and economic); hegemonic stability theory predicted an underlying stability sometimes eclipsed by a hegemon's policies. Although this is but one part of the screen that filters immigrants, the development of exclusion categories through time indicates the sort of constancy expected by neorealists. Functionalist expectations about economic criteria, hegemonic stability theorists' expectations about liberalized categories, and classical realism's expectation that changing threats would underlie changing exclusion categories are not borne out. What is evident in this selective category is that the early focus on public health endured, to be supplemented by occasional efforts to keep out those who would infect American society in other ways. If this category is the focus of change, change was minimal.

Realists and hegemonic stability theorists expect that country of origin will matter a great deal when deciding whom to admit; it is central to the geopolitical advantages or disadvantages that accrue from admitting someone. Functionalists expect it to be a trivial component of immigration policy since it is irrelevant to a person's economic benefits. Both of these can capture American policy toward national origin from the mid-

TABLE 18. Exclusion Categories by Year of Introduction

1875	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Convicted criminals •Prostitutes and their pimps 	interest, or endanger the welfare, safety, or security of the United States.
1882	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lunatics and idiots •Those likely to become a public charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those who “are or at any time have been members of . . . the Communist Party of the United States, or any other totalitarian party of the United States or [anywhere]. . . those who advocate or teach the overthrow by force or violence of the government of the United States . . .” unless one’s membership was required for survival and one has actively opposed the party for the previous five years.
1885	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Contract laborers [eliminated 1952] 	
1891	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Idiots and insane persons •Those suffering from any dangerous contagious disease •Paupers •Criminals having been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude •Polygamists or those practicing or advocating the practice of polygamy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those whose intent in immigrating is sabotage or espionage
1903	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Epileptics •Those who have had two or more attacks of insanity •Professional beggars •Anyone accompanying an alien excluded due to incompetence •Anarchists or members of anarchistic classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those who have had one or more attacks of insanity
1907	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Anyone having a physical disease, defect or disability which may affect the ability to earn a living •Vagrants •Imbeciles and feebleminded •Unaccompanied children [eliminated 1952] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Narcotic drug addicts and convicted drug-traffickers •Those convicted of two or more major offenses [unless purely political] •Those coming to the United States to engage in any immoral sexual act •Skilled or unskilled labor, if the secretary of labor has certified sufficient domestic labor •Previous deportees •Smugglers of aliens
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those suffering from constitutional psychopathic inferiority •Chronic alcoholics •Those excluded and deported within the previous year •Stowaways •Those over 16, physically capable of reading, who cannot understand some language or dialect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mentally retarded persons •Sexual deviants [homosexuals]
1924	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those without correct papers •Anyone ineligible to citizenship [referred to Asians] •Anyone claiming exemption as a Western Hemisphere resident who has resided there less than two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Foreign medical graduates seeking to practice or train in the United States
1937	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those without the correct preference class listed on their papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those who engaged in persecution under the Nazis
1948-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Those engaged in activities that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Exclusion categories collapsed into nine: health threats, criminals, security risks, public charge risks, labor competitors, illegal entrants, those without visas, those ineligible for citizenship, and miscellaneous (includes polygamy). This gives officers wider discretion but at the same time removes communism and homosexuality as <i>automatic</i> reasons for exclusion.
1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> would be prejudicial to the public 	

1960s on, but neither comes close to describing the role that it played in the early years of immigration control.

Congress eventually justified national origin criteria as a handy way to ensure global equality in the opportunity to immigrate. This implied that sovereign boundaries had come to serve as convenient administrative categories and nothing more. Whether this were in fact true or not, in the early twentieth century, no one would have made such a claim. National origin indicated race, with all that went along with it: moral standards, propensity to superstition, intelligence, and the ability to govern oneself. The preoccupation with parentage led Congress first to ban immigration from China, then from almost all of Asia, and next to curtail it sharply from areas in Europe thought to spawn ignorant and racially inferior emigrants. Country tables translated this ethnoracial selection system into an enforceable law: zero for Asiatics, no limits for the Western Hemisphere, and varying limits for the thirty European countries recognized in 1921.

With time, and the cold war, national origin came to indicate ideology, rather than race. Following decolonization, Congress relativized its stand toward national origin, making all countries equal.²² It ensured a continued ability to screen subversives by relying on the exclusion criteria. Since World War II had raised Asian countries' status to "restricted," the last step in this globalization was the inclusion of previously unrestricted Western Hemisphere migrants under the ceiling. Eventually, even the division between the two hemispheres was abolished.

At the moment quotas were made universal, the countries facing quotas were made almost equal. Instead of adding precise allocations within the extended global limit, each country was allowed to supply immigrants until it hit 20,000 or combined immigration had exhausted the aggregate. Relativism accompanied globalism. This can be seen most clearly in the confluence of population and quota distributions over time.

Table 19 shows the changes in how immigration slots were distributed geographically. As a country expands its diplomatic contacts and adds trading partners, it is not surprising that it should amend its immigration policies to cover new areas in its social circle. Immigrants have always traveled in greatest numbers on beaten paths.²³ The United States could not help but clear such paths as its merchants and administrators involved themselves more heavily abroad. Anticipating or reacting to an increased number of immigration demand sites by extending restrictive limits to new areas is thus not unusual. What is notable, given the alternatives, is choosing to allocate slots by sovereign country, while gradually suspending judgment about the relative worth of immigrants' homelands, an outcome that neither realists nor functionalists would expect.

If American hegemony is defined as internationalism plus liberalism,

then the changes in American policy's use of national origins criteria mirrored and supported American hegemony. Before World War II, the liberalism that justified American domestic policies did not apply to American policy toward noncitizens. It was not until it set out to establish and maintain international institutions and regimes that foreign policy began self-consciously to reflect liberal principles. To be credible, American deeds had to support its rhetorical advocacy of liberal principles. Obvious in the congressional debates is a heightened consciousness that the eyes of the world were on the legislators, and the American reputation was at

TABLE 19. Regional Distribution of Immigration Slots

	1930	1950	1964	1970	1980	1995
Africa, the Middle East and the Philippines						
Percent of world's population	11	12	13	13	15	16
Percent of world's countries in the region	13	15	38	36	40	34
Percent of US ceiling allotted	0.7	1.1	1.7	26 ^a	40 ^b	34
Asia: Barred Zone Area						
Percent of world's population	55	55	55	57	58	61
Percent of world's countries in the region	16	15	11	20	20	23
Percent of US ceiling allotted	0.5	0.7 ^c	1.1	14	20	23
Europe, Australia and New Zealand						
Percent of world's population	28	25	23	21	18	14
Percent of world's countries in the region	43	43	31	26	21	25
Percent of US ceiling allotted	62	80	51	18	21	25
Western Hemisphere (not including the U.S.)^d						
Percent of world's population	6	8	9	9	9	9
Percent of world's countries in the region	28	27	20	18	19	18
Percent of U.S. ceiling allotted	36	18	46	41	19	18

Note: World population does not include that of the U.S. Percentages calculated from census data in the *UN Demographic Yearbook*, table 1 (various years), and the *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (various years).

^aStarting in 1969, each country in the Eastern Hemisphere was given a limit of 20,000 within a 170,000 maximum; the Western Hemisphere was given a 120,000 ceiling with no distribution by country. The allocation calculated in this column then is based on the number of countries among which a subquota is divided. It is the point at which countries equalize.

^bStarting in 1978, the hemisphere divisions were lifted but all countries were limited to the 20,000 ceiling. This means that the hypothetical distribution of immigration slots among regions just matches the proportion of the world's countries in them.

^cUntil special legislation enacted from 1943 to 1952, the Asian quota was usable only by non-Asiatics, i.e., by those of European or African descent who happened to be born in Asia. Until this time, the quota for Asiatics was zero.

^dThe Western Hemisphere did not have a ceiling until 1965/1969. It is included through the whole period for the sake of consistency. "Ceiling allotted" for earlier years is the proportion of all legal immigrants coming from the Western Hemisphere.

stake. Policy changed to assure that all countries and peoples were treated equally.

How this choice combines liberal principles with a consciousness of power can be seen by comparing this policy to possible alternatives. U.S. policy could have continued to differentiate among immigrants by drawing fine geographic lines. Since justifying discrimination on the basis of race had to be abandoned, change had to come, but the liberal tradition could provide arguments to favor allocating slots by country, using sovereign divisions as a way to administer equal distribution among individuals. Pegging countries' quotas to their populations, for example, would equalize global opportunity to emigrate to the United States, making immigrant representation more analogous to election to the House than the Senate. It thus could be argued to be more democratic. Instead, Congress gave every country the same potential ceiling. As countries achieved independence, giving them the same allotment served a symbolic purpose, like granting UN membership or embassy space, a procedure democratic among states if not among individuals. Theories incorporating American hegemony can account for this better than can the structural theories, which, after all, expect change to be linear when it occurs.

Persons whose personal characteristics and country of origin qualify them for admission into the United States are sorted once more before they are given a visa. Within any country's limit, some immigrants are preferred to others. The preference system can be seen as an effort at selection through positive means. Skills and capital have not guaranteed admission, though in some periods economic attributes were given more weight. Their weight has not varied with economic changes, as might be expected. The first quota laws provided that skilled agriculturists as well as parents, spouses, and children of U.S. residents could receive first preference, which at the time was 50 percent of the available slots. In 1952, during an economic boom, skilled workers and their families were given first preference and half the slots, but in 1965, another period of high employment, immigrant workers were reduced to two 10 percent slots. In 1976, during the oil recession, successful inclusion in one of these became more difficult, as it then depended not just on space but also on a previous job offer. The late 1980s, a time of growing fears of economic decline, saw a move to enlarge economic preferences while raising qualifications for them. Legislators revising immigration policy build in preferences for workers when the economy is up, and labor is scarce, but also when the economy is down, when investment and skilled labor are seen to be in short supply.

Relatives have always been preferred, though to what extent has varied. Male citizens' wives and children were allowed to immigrate without reference to the quota. Within it, the earliest preferences allowed that 50

percent would be reserved for the wives and unmarried children of permanent residents, while the other 50 percent would be shared by agriculturists and parents and husbands of citizens. The 1952 reforms changed this somewhat. It put foreign husbands and wives on the same footing and created new divisions, which resulted in a 50 percent preference for the skilled and their families, leaving 50 percent for relatives. Many refer to the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act amendments, however, as the “brothers and sisters act” because of their great push toward helping relatives enter. Seventy-four percent of places within the ceiling were reserved for brothers, sisters, and adult married and unmarried children; close relatives—parents, children, and spouses—remained eligible to immigrate outside these quotas. When all relatives were finally brought within the regulated sphere in 1990, relatives were guaranteed 480,000 of 675,000 places.

Congress gives relationship weight for a few different reasons. For one, getting relatives in is obviously in a person’s interest, whereas the benefits of getting skilled laborers to immigrate can seem remote. In this sense, it is a preference for American citizens, not for foreigners. Relatives have also been seen to stabilize the country socially and economically. Particularly in the early part of the century, social welfare workers worried about the health and moral welfare of the immigrant men who had left their families behind. Allowing them to send for their wives relieved the public of the burden of caring for them and for absorbing the cost of the violence, sickness, and gambling that seemed to live in immigrant dormitories. Bringing their wives to the United States also kept their wages in the country, where they would multiply and bring more rapid prosperity.

A final reason, though one for which no one argued explicitly, is that when immigrants are mostly relatives, immigrants are mostly of the same races as recently naturalized citizens. Eliminating selection by parentage was enormously important as a political and ethical statement, but the simultaneous enlargement of relatives’ preferences meant that immigrants were going to come from pretty much the same places. If one’s relatives were previously banned, one clearly could not join them in the United States. Relatives’ preference gave a momentum to the immigration stream, assuring continuity in country, race, language, wealth, and sometimes profession. Preferring relatives fulfills many separate and even contradictory demands at the same time. It appeases constituents, stops repatriation of wages, stabilizes families, and assures that the races, languages, and countries of origin of future immigrants will be almost identical to those of the recent past.

Structural theories all anticipate that countries will seek to include those who can benefit it economically. What is a puzzle for all of them is not that economic preferences have been included, but that they have not

been central, they have declined as well as risen, and they have changed without apparent reference to changes in the U.S. economy. One possibility is that the country focuses on economic criteria when it competes with others for dominance. When sailing is clear, it indulges its citizens by preferring their relatives; when competition increases, though, preferences for relatives get scaled back.

Realism and hegemonic stability theory were helpful in explaining change in the number of annual immigrants that federal policy would allow. Because structural theories are designed for such broad applications involving prediction of more or less of something, when they fared well and when they failed were fairly clear. These theories are less useful in helping to account for immigration policy regarding characteristics. Functionalism expects that policy will become more rational in economic terms. Abandoning race and national origin as criteria, instead favoring literacy and skills, is consistent with their expectations. That this liberalization escalated at the height of American hegemony is something that the hegemonic stability theorists might expect. But also true is that the standards for judging who should be excluded and who admitted followed the country's changing understanding of the central threat that it faced, something that classical realists predicted. Each explains something if parsed and attached to one aspect of change.

Conclusion

By showing how a few factors create one central dynamic, structural theories attempt to explain broad phenomena clearly. They justify their ignorance of detail by arguing that minutia, while important, do not add much to an explanation, while they consume attention and resources. As explanations of American immigration policy in the twentieth century, structural explanations offer some surprises and some disappointments. When a theory anticipates an aspect of policy change, it does so well and accurately—but its predictive failure in other areas means that the causal mechanism it assumes, by which it justifies its prediction, must be wrong. The theory gets the right answer (in one area) for the wrong reasons.

Realism and hegemonic stability can each plausibly explain the pattern of changes—or conservative nonchanges—in the immigration ceiling. Realism expects that states will pursue autarky unless they have no choice. Steadily reducing the proportion of immigrants cuts down the chaos and vulnerability that escalating immigration can signify. Hegemonic stability theory expects a country at the apex of hegemony to reveal a somewhat different set of policies than that which usually characterizes a self-protector.

tive country. Forgiving the mortgaged quotas and allowing immigrants to use the slots allotted them, which the United States did in the late 1950s to late 1960s, can be seen as the sort of gesture only a liberal hegemon would make. Power-based theories seem to help explain the direction of change.

Theories that rely on liberal motives to some extent help to explain the nature of change. The hegemonic liberalism that can account for relaxation in the quantitative ceiling can help to explain the move toward liberal criteria in the mid-1960s. Functionalists, because they expect criteria to be more economically rational over time, would not be surprised that irrelevant characteristics such as race and, eventually, ideology were eliminated in favor of economic selection criteria. Classical realism can also shed some light on these changes, as it expects states to adjust their defenses as their enemies change. As the United States' adversary shifted, the standards it used to judge immigrants acceptable changed in tandem.

These mutually contradictory theories each can shed some light on this change since in it are conflated two processes. The United States changed its assessment of what about its enemy was most threatening as it changed its understanding of who that enemy was. Not only did the country's understanding of "good" immigrant characteristics become more liberal, but so did its understanding of "bad" and "enemy" characteristics. When Japan became the enemy in the nineteenth century, Americans construed the struggle between the United States and Japan as racial, so Japanese were excluded for racial reasons. When Japan became a threat in the 1980s, Americans construed the struggle as economic, so immigrants generally were excluded for economic reasons. Such is also true of China; Chinese were evaluated first in racial, then in alliance, then in ideological, and then in economic terms. The assumed link between what a people does and who it is has vanished. For this reason, theories that anticipate liberalization and those that anticipate a continued focus on the enemy are equally vindicated.

Yet each of these theories anticipates these particular outcomes as a consequence of a specific dynamic. While no structural theory should predict details, all should get the broad patterns; that is their justification for ignoring the details, and none can consistently explain the pattern of change we see. Even when neorealism, classical realism, hegemonic stability theory, and functionalism do get an immigration policy outcome right, they are wrong about trade, an area that each postulates should parallel immigration. Functionalism, which does the worst as an explanation of immigration policy, is likely to do relatively well on the question of trade, suggesting that realism's strength as a prediction of, and explanation of, immigration policy conservatism is not generalizable. The causal processes that each theory postulates, if they were true, would result in a pattern of

outcomes: a certain type of trade policy, a certain level of numerical restriction, a certain standard to judge acceptable immigrants. If the pattern fails to materialize, that a theory got one right cannot be much more than coincidence. It cannot have been for the reason offered if that reason held in no other area. Therefore, even when a structural theory correctly predicts an immigration policy outcome, it must be wrong on the dynamic.

Knowing the causal mechanism through which policies change is particularly important, if especially difficult, in the case of macroprocesses. How and why a set of policies changes in particular ways—or refuses to budge, in spite of massive transformations in other areas—lie at the center of international relations scholarship. Elegant explanations are surely better than complex ones, especially when, as is the case with this exposition of immigration policy change, they are incomplete and leave unanswered questions. Yet if elegant theories do not explain the core dynamic of interest, their elegance does little good. Structural theories' failure to explain the nature of and trends in immigration policy—a policy central to the preservation of contemporary state sovereignty—raises questions about their abilities to explain across issue-areas, and therefore to account for variation in the ways that even individual states preserve and use their sovereignty.