Theoretical Perspectives on Immigration Policy and Politics

Agnieszka Zogata-Kusz

ABSTRACT:

Theoretical approaches dealing with immigration control policy explain what determines states' decisions regarding three main matters, i.e. the number, type, and country of origin of immigrants who are accepted. Trying to account for policy outcomes, they usually use different perspectives and they recognise various factors as the main determinants. The aim of the paper is to demonstrate and compare a few of these theoretical perspectives and to make some recommendations for students and academics interested in migration policies in Central and Eastern European countries.

KEY WORDS: immigration policy, immigration politics, theoretical approaches, factors, actors

This paper was originally published in Contemporary European Studies 1/2012, ISSN 1802-4289.

Introduction

The growing significance of immigration in today's world is leading academics to examine not only the phenomenon of immigration itself but also immigration policy more and more often. There is a wide range of theoretical approaches that can be used as a starting point for the examination of immigration control policy (further referred to as ICP). They explain what determines states' decisions regarding three main matters, i.e. the number, type, and country of origin of immigrants who are accepted. In trying to account for policy outcomes, they usually use different perspectives and they recognise various factors as the main determinants. A result of that is that there is a spectrum of explanations of ICP outcomes. Evidence of this is provided by e.g. the works of Money (not dated), Hollifield (2000), Meyers (2000), Tamas (2004), Giugni and Passy (2006), and Freeman and Kessler (2008), which present various theoretical approaches to the explanation of both immigration policies and immigration politics. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate and compare selected theoretical perspectives and to make some recommendations for academics and students examining immigration control, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

Approaches explaining immigration policy and immigration politics

Interest in explaining immigration control policy emerged in the middle of the 1970s. The pioneers in this area were, however, John Higham (1955) and Maldwyn Allen Jones (1960), who had conducted research into the anti-immigrant mood and its influence on immigration policy of the United States in earlier decades. Together with the rise in the number of immigrants – mainly in Western countries – as well as with the politicisation and securitisation of that matter, more and more researchers became involved in examining phenomena connected to immigration policy.

In general, theoretical approaches dealing with immigration control policies attempt to explain *what* shapes states' immigration policies, which take the form of laws and ministerial regulations (which must be distinguished from policy impacts, i.e. the actual migration situation). Additionally, there are some that focus on the question of *who* does that. Therefore, some of those theoretical perspectives could be called *factor-based approaches*. They recognise one or more determinants as the main factors in

policymaking. Additionally, *actor-based approaches*, which concentrate on immigration politics, could be pointed out. Whereas in the first group we could differentiate approaches focusing on factors such as economic interests, national identity, foreign policy considerations, security, globalisation, and rights, in the second group, there would be approaches explaining immigration politics with the activities of a state, state institutions and bureaucracies, interest groups, and international institutions. Such a division is, however, simplistic, since in fact in many cases it would be hard to separate the actor-based approaches from the factor-based ones. Many of them (although not all) overlap. They indicate the main actor and the main factor of the policy simultaneously, so the policy and the politics are very closely interconnected. For instance, for approaches rooted in realism, the main player is the state and the main determinant of the policy is the national interest connected to international relations (especially conflicts), together with questions of security. The following sections briefly discuss all the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives explaining immigration policy and/or immigration politics.

Economic interests and the state of the economy

Among the first theoretical approaches to immigration policy that emerged were those which account for it with economic interests and the state of the economy. In some way, they follow theories explaining the phenomenon of migration itself, because most of these theories are similarly based on economic factors (e.g. the neoclassical economy, the new economics of migration, and dual labour market theory). In these approaches to immigration control policy, immigrants are treated as economic actors who affect other economic actors, i.e. the policy is a result of the clash of various groups' economic interests (Money not dated: 5).

Within the group a special place used to be occupied Marxism and then Neo-Marxism. Especially works published before 1989 related to these (e.g. Castells 1975; Gorz 1970). For Marxism, a crucial element accounting for the shape of immigration policy is economic factors and the political process founded on class relations.

Eytan Meyers presents several characteristics of the Marxist explanation of immigration policy. First of all, Marxism focuses on labour migration. In this approach, short-term immigration policy is a response to fluctuations in the economic cycle and to changes in unemployment rates. Marxism explains immigration policy in terms of capitalists' desire to use immigrants to reduce wages. Therefore, the capitalists attempt

to influence immigration policy towards its liberalisation. An additional advantage for them is the expected destruction of the unity of the working class by the implantation of culturally different elements and promoting racism (which reinforces class differences) in schools and the media, which are controlled by the capitalists. One of the possible impacts of immigration is the collective social mobility of nationals, which took place e.g. in Germany. Thanks to the fact that immigrants take over the lowest positions, the nationals can take the better ones, besides which their children can receive a better education. Marxism recognises the phenomenon as a negative one (Meyers 2000: 1247-1251). As Gorz notes, it weakens the working class because less and less nationals work manually, and consequently less and less of them consider themselves members of the working class (Gorz 1970: 28).

There are also other perspectives which focus on the role of economic interests in the formation of immigration policy. They usually draw on neoclassical economics. They agree with Marxism that immigration policy is directly connected to the state of the economy, i.e. that economic prosperity may result in a higher number of immigrants being accepted, while economic stagnation may contribute to a restriction of the policy. They explain the regulation of immigration through the preferences of different economic actors in the receiving country and the anticipation that immigrants can jeopardise the economic well-being of the domestic population. Here the two main economic actors, with dissimilar economic interests, are the employers and labour unions. Employers are in general recognised as those who benefit from immigration, despite the fact that their actual gains can vary, depending on the changes in the market. As far as labour unions are concerned, they are representatives of the native workers. Therefore, it is mostly underlined that they oppose immigration because it can harm domestic workers' wages and working conditions. There are, however, academics who note that the labour unions' attitude towards migrants can also be neutral or positive because of the expectation that the newcomers will become members of the labour unions and they will reinforce them at times when their power is shrinking (e.g. Brochmann 1999: 315).

An example of a representative of the approach focusing on economic interests is Alan E. Kessler, who attributes changes in immigration control policy to 'the welfare effects of immigration on domestic factors of production in the receiving states, especially labor' (Freeman not dated: 4).

National identity

Completely different perspectives on the main determinant of immigration policy are given by approaches focusing on matters related to national identity. Their advocates explain that the shape of a particular state's ICP depends on its culture, history, traditions, and experience as a sending or receiving country, possibly as a country with a colonial past, because all these elements are a basis for the formation of national identity. Additionally, there are authors who draw attention to national mythology. For Stalker national mythology is even a fundamental factor influencing the level of tolerance towards newcomers (Stalker 1994: 138).

Attitudes towards immigrants, in particular those who are culturally dissimilar to the receiving society, depend on whether the society is culturally homogenous or heterogeneous; the formation of national identity looks unlikely in both cases. For this reason, immigration control policies in ethnic European states, where the majority of the population represent the same culture and have lived in the country for generations, differ from the policies of states such as the USA or Canada that have settler societies consisting of immigrants coming from various countries of origin (Zolberg 1981: 16; Meilaender 2001: 82). The number of immigrants that are interested in settling in the receiving country, and especially the level of their cultural dissimilarity, are therefore crucial for policymaking.

One of the most problematic elements of cultural dissimilarity is values. Bhagwati believes that the values which are key for a particular society can be *diluted* by arrivals for whom other values are crucial (Bhagwati 1984: 681). For this reason, an increase in the restrictions of an ICP can result from the fear of the dilution of those values (Meyers, 2004: 203). Similarly, Meilaender supposes that a receiving society would hardly accept newcomers who would be expected to undermine essential features of its identity and to radically change the character of that society (Meilaender 2001: 82). These arguments correspond to some of the broadly understood security considerations (see further).

Academics who analyse immigration control policy from the perspective presented here relate it to discussions about social conflicts, as well as to further basic concepts linked to the nation and citizenship, such as the principle of *ius solis* or *ius sanguinis*. For instance, Brubaker (1992), for whom traditions related to citizenship are important for shaping immigration policy, points out the issue while comparing France

and Germany. Correspondingly, Favell (2001) refers to it when contrasting France and Great Britain.

Human rights

An interesting approach is the one which pays attention to human rights. Human rights could be seen both as one of many elements of the pressure of globalisation, or as a separate and especially significant factor affecting the formation of immigration policy. Human rights include the rights of immigrants. They find their legitimisation mainly at the trans-national level. States that recognise themselves as liberal and democratic have to respect them; hence human rights affect migration policies directly. However, human rights also influence immigration policies indirectly since they provoke changes in the concepts of citizenship of particular states (Soysal 1994; Jacobson 1996).

The argument about the effect of human rights on migration policies is developed to the greatest extent by James Hollifield in relation to the concept of *embedded liberalism*. According to Hollifield, in a situation of embedded liberalism 'rights, expressed in the form of constitutional norms and principles, act to constrain the power and autonomy of states both in their treatment of individual migrants and in their relations to other states' (Hollifield 1992: 576-577). The author reminds us, for instance, that at the end of the 1970s Western European countries wanted to ban immigration because of the economic crisis. Nevertheless, since the states had recognised themselves as liberal democratic ones, they (had to) continue receiving newcomers. Even thought they could limit the inflow of economic immigrants, they (had to) continue to accept people coming on the basis of family reunification or refugee laws simply because of human rights (Hollifield 1992: 584).

Foreign policy reflections

Another factor considered by some academics to be the main determinant of the immigration policy is foreign policy reflections. These lie at the centre of approaches drawing on theories of international relations.

Before presenting them it is worth pointing out that the first academic to link international migration with international relations was Myron Weiner (1985). In the middle of the 1980s, he indicated that there are three main dependences between the two: first, the way in which states deal with migration issues often influences

international relations; second, the rules governing access to territory can be shaped by the relations between states; third, immigrants can affect the politics of both the receiving and the sending countries.

From the point of view of the current paper, the second dependence, international relations as a factor shaping immigration policy, is the most important one. This is a case of entry rules being negotiated between states; a case when one state, while creating its entry rules, follows another country's entry or exit rules. Additionally, the rules governing access to territory can be used to demonstrate the position of a state or to build or maintain its image, for example as a democratic country or a trustworthy member of an organisation (Weiner 1985: 448-50).

Theorists of international relations did not deal with immigration issues for a long time, since – as Hollifield points out – until the mid- and late 1990s migration was considered *low politics* and therefore it was not examined by academics, who were concerned with *high politics*, i.e. questions of national security and foreign policy. Only together with the wave of international migration of the beginning of the 1990s, but mainly with the emergence of a new generation of academics, did international migration gain some space within international relations. Originally, it started to be related to state security and sovereignty, and thus to questions that are at the centre of concern of realism and neorealism (Hollifield 2000: 152-3).

From the realist perspective, the state plays the role of a guardian of the 'national interest' and security in the international arena. Its main task is to make every effort to protect its sovereignty and increase its power, potential, and importance. The key political issues that remain at the centre of realists' interest are actual or potential conflicts among states. Therefore, from the point of view of the realist approach the main determinant of a state's immigration policy is these conflicts and questions of security. For instance, it could be pointed out that the Cold War contributed to greater willingness on the part of Western European countries to accept refugees from Central and Eastern European communist states. In such a way, asylum countries demonstrated their ideological positions trying to reinforce their international image as *truly* democratic countries.

Only after the end of the Cold War did some neorealists began to accept the broader concept of security, which allowed the neorealist theory to be applied better to migration policy analysis. One of the first to link immigration and security was again Myron Weiner. He pointed out how immigration can destabilise societies and regimes –

mainly in less developed countries, but also in more developed democracies. According to him, the reason for such destabilisation can be the fear of foreigners. The fear is not a question of pure xenophobia, however. Weiner notes that many people perceive links between migration and economic and cultural threats and that the linkage may negatively affect the feasibility of societies to absorb immigrants (Weiner 1993, 1995). Other scholars understand the issue similarly. Ole Wæver, one of the founders of the so-called Copenhagen School associated with questions of the *securitisation of migration*, points at societal security, which he defined as 'the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom' (Wæver 1993: 23). Didier Bigo (2005) stresses the argument of *inassimilability*, which means that immigrants threaten national homogeneity and national identity and in that way they have a negative effect on social and state security. George Borjas (1990) identifies migration as an economic threat that would change societies in such a way that at the top of their structures there would be many 'haves' and at the bottom many more 'have-nots'. Finally, Tsoukala (2005) refers to three types of threats perceived by opponents of immigration. On the basis of those she identifies three principles around which anti-immigrant arguments are articulated. The first one is *a socio-economic principle* – the rise in unemployment, the development of the parallel economy, the crisis of the welfare state, and deterioration of the urban environment. The second one is *a securitarian principle* – security problems in a narrow sense, from petty to organised crime, from urban insecurity to terrorism. The third one is *an identity principle* – the threat to demographic balance and to the identity of the receiving societies (Tsoukala 2005: 163-4).

These examples reveal that immigration has become subject to securitisation. The 'security' approaches highlight the fact that states and societies have started to look at newcomers as if they were the carriers of threats and these threats are widely understood. Therefore, while deciding about the number, type, and level of 'similarity' of immigrants to be accepted, a state mostly takes into consideration the widely understood threats that foreigners could bring. The perspective has its roots in realism and even more in neorealism; however, as Meyers (2000) points out, many mainstream theorists of realism do not agree with such a broadening of the concept of security.

Unlike realism, liberalism perceives questions of immigration policy as being shaped differently. This fact results *inter alia* from the assumption that international

relations are not only based on actual and potential conflicts but they may also be rooted in, or lead to, cooperation between countries.

However, the contribution of theories of international relations to our understanding of the formation of migration policy does not concern only the question of *factors* (foreign policy considerations, conflicts, cooperation, threats). Another important matter is that they draw attention to the *actors* making the policy. Whereas the realists consider a state to be the main and rational political actor in international relations and the arbiter in domestic political conflicts, the proponents of liberal theories recognise a state as only one of many actors on the international scene. For liberalism, and even more for neoliberal institutionalism, other important actors include international institutions and multinational corporations. States open their economies more easily to both trade and migration when there is some international regime above (or among) them that can assist them with organising cooperation and solving problems (Hollifield 2000b, 160-61).

The spirit of neoliberal institutionalism is followed by e.g. Jagdish Bhagwati, when he assumes that the capability of states to control migration has clearly been diminishing but, together with that, their wish to control their borders has been growing. Therefore, Bhagwati recommends that states should not only accept migration, but they should use it for the benefit of all interested countries. He suggests that if a World Migration Organisation was established that would foresee and monitor migration policies, it would help to use migration flows positively (Bhagwati 2003: 104). The idea is also supported by e.g. Stephen Castles (Castles 2007: 54).

The perspective of neoliberal institutionalism can be useful, for instance, for exploring the impact of the immigration policy of the European Union on the policies of its member and candidate states, since it contributes to understanding the common interests, collaboration, and coordination between countries. This question is furthermore related to phenomena such as Europeanisation or policy transfer in migration issues. This last is especially important for relations regarding the question of migration between the so-called old EU countries and its new members from Central and Eastern Europe, in particular before their access to the EU structures. For instance, Geddes (2003) and Vermeersch (2005) analyse the question of the real effect of Europeanisation on the shape of migration policies in Central and Eastern European countries.

Globalisation

Like the proponents of neoliberal institutionalism, the theorists of globalisation also claim that since states are not the only actors in international relations their power to create immigration policy autonomously is limited by the pressure of international organisations, institutions, companies, ethnic lobbies, transnational communities, and so forth. Because more and more processes are transnational, a particular state is less and less able to cope with those issues on its own. The state is then less and less autonomous, or rather different – as Saskia Sassen (1996) understands it. This situation results from the process of globalisation, in which, however, the state itself has participated. The state continues to play an important role in the formation and implementation of immigration policy, but the nature of the state has changed (Sassen 1999: 177-89). Transnationalism, including in terms of flows of people, has weakened the sovereignty of a nation-state, which is no longer (and – as representatives of the globalist approach believe – never has been) *absolute and indivisible* (Overbeek 2000: 61-63). Soysal explains that globalisation tests the role of a state, its stability, and its ability to control its welfare and economic policies. Moving power up, at the level of supranational organisations such as the European Union or the World Trade Organisation, and down, where markets and corporations have more and more influence on the transborder movement of the labour force ("privatisation" of the governmental sector) diminishes the autonomy of the state and affects its sovereignty (Soysal 1994).

State institutions and bureaucracy

Apart from approaches highlighting the role of the state and the role of international institutions, there are theoretical perspectives oriented towards domestic institutional politics. Their advocates concentrate on the role of the state; nevertheless, they understand the *state* as state institutions, administration, and bureaucracy, which do not remain only simple tools in the hands of the government. Here, in shaping its immigration policy a state acts independently of the pressure of interest groups. Nevertheless, it needs to be said that the level of autonomy of the state differs according to the perspectives of various theorists. Hence, some of them acknowledge that even though the state performs its role independently, sometimes its decisions can be modified e.g. by ethnic groups, non-governmental organisations, or capital (Meyers 2000: 1261).

Institutionalists indicate history as being an important element in the formation of immigration policy. Decisions made by previous generations influence their descendants' institutions that determine the policies (*path dependency*). In general, supporters of this approach perceive the determinants of immigration control policy as being complex and difficult to define precisely. They believe that the factors cannot be reduced to the interests of individuals or groups (Freeman and Kessler, 2008: 658). Examples of the institutional approach to immigration policy formation include the works of Calavita (1992), Tichenor (2002), and Hansen (2002).

Domestic politics

Finally, there are society-centred approaches, which highlight the extraordinary role of domestic politics in the creation of immigration policy. Their advocates see the state as a place where interest groups and partisan politics meet. Hence, immigration control policy results from negotiations and compromises made between all actors (it may happen, however, that a particular group takes control over that policy).

In contrast to theories concentrating on economic interests, which stress only the role of economic actors, approaches that focus on domestic politics identify various actors influencing ICP. These are, for instance, political parties, nationalist groups, and labour unions, which usually contest immigration, as well as employers and ethnic groups, which support it (Meyers 2000: 1257-58). Immigration policy is then shaped by their activities.

One of the main representatives of that theoretical approach is Gary P. Freeman (1995), who examined the concentration and diffusion of the costs and benefits connected to migration. He adopted James Q. Wilson's concept of *client politics* in immigration politics (Freeman 1995). According to Freeman, the benefits that ensue from accepting migrants, such as a cheaper and more flexible labour force or family reunification, are concentrated. Therefore, they mobilise interest groups, who are, for example, employers or settled migrants, to collective action. On the contrary, the costs connected to migration, such as a greater population density, are diffused. The costs contribute to the persistence of an anti-immigrant mood in a given society. This concerns mainly people who are negatively affected by migration, because they compete with immigrants, e.g. for jobs or cheap housing. Nevertheless, it is difficult for the society to organise itself in such a way as to become one of the 'clients' influencing ICP. Therefore, in practice, only small but well-organised groups work with the officials

or politicians responsible for creating the rules for the control of immigration. Additionally, their contacts mostly take place out of the public eye (Freeman 1995: 885-6).

In a later paper (Freeman 1998), Freeman points out additional elements which are not a part of Wilson's original framework. He calls them *populist* elements. They are related to the activities of politicians such as Joerg Haider in Austria or Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, who try to mobilise the resentment of that part of the electorate who may believe themselves to be harmfully affected by the presence of immigrants (Freeman not dated: 4).

Next representative of the domestic politics approach is Jeannette Money (1997), who brings another perspective on the issue. She argues that 'geographic concentration [of immigrant communities] creates an uneven distribution of costs and benefits, providing a spatial context for immigration politics' (Money 1997: 685). For this reason, politicians on the national level may ignore the demands related to immigration control policy as long as these parts of the electorate are not able to affect the result of the elections (Money 1997).

The theory of the socio-economic and foreign policy factors shaping immigration control policy

The last approach to be presented in the paper is Eytan Meyers' theory of the socio-economic and foreign policy factors shaping immigration control policy (Meyers 2004). Unlike other theories, which mostly focus on particular determinants and consider them as the main factor (or actor) influencing ICP, according to Meyers' approach there are several factors that produce it. His theory consists of five arguments and as many as fourteen hypotheses. His main argument is that *immigration control policy is determined by an interaction between: (a) socioeconomic and foreign policy factors* (…); *and b) the type of migration* (Meyers 2004: 200), i.e. temporary labour migration, permanent dissimilar immigration, permanent similar immigration, and refugees. Meyers takes into account five socio-economic and foreign policy factors: the state of the economy, the size of immigration of dissimilar composition, wars, foreign policy reflections, and ideological cycles, understood as general racist/liberal attitudes. ICP in general is influenced by a set of factors and control policy towards each type of immigration is determined by different factors. Furthermore, Meyers claims that the set of determinants is the same in various countries. Dissimilarities in countries' policies

can be explained by variations in the above-mentioned set of socio-economic and foreign policy factors and not e.g. by history or by an accepted concept of citizenship. Those factors are furthermore influenced by structural determinants such as population density, geopolitical location, and factors relating to economic structure etc. In contrast, the similarities in the policies of Western democracies can be accounted for the interdependence between the socio-economic and political factors shaping the policy. Then, according to Meyers, the type of immigration decides about the relative influence of the different socio-economic and political factors on immigration control policy. For example, labour migration policy is mainly shaped by the economic situation of the country and also by the '*war-migrant labour link'* and foreign policy reflections. To a lesser extent, it can be accounted for by the size and composition of immigration as well as liberal (or racist) ideology. Finally, whether the receiving society is a settler or ethnic one determines immigration policy in an indirect way, through the type of immigration (Meyers 2004: 200-201).

Critique

Each of the above-mentioned theories brings important findings into discussion of immigration control policy. Nevertheless, none of them is able to explain fully what influences states' ICPs as a whole. Why did Poland set conditions for low-skilled immigrants from neighbouring countries that let them gain access to its territory and get a job there easily? Why did it maintain the policy instrument despite numerous signals that the 'path' is widely misused and it supports the shadow economy to a great extent? Why did Australia apply a 'White Australia' policy for approximately seventy years (from 1901 onwards)? Why did it give it up in the end? Why in 2010 were as many as 91 per cent of Afghan asylum seekers successful in applying for asylum in Italy, whereas only 8 per cent of Afghan nationals were granted a positive decision on asylum in Greece in the same year (UNHCR 2011)? Why do some countries prefer to receive temporary immigrant workers, whereas others are open for family reunification? These are just examples of questions which reveal the complexity of the ICP issues.

None of the theoretical approaches presented above would be able to explain all of these examples. They are, however, applicable to particular types of policy and the types of immigrants connected to these. None of them is able to take into consideration the whole multidimensionality of the phenomenon of immigration and in that way to

help to anticipate the developments of these policies. Besides, all the above-mentioned theoretical approaches suffer from one more shortcoming: they build on the experience of Western European countries, and partly also on the experience of traditional settlement countries. Therefore, their universal usage is limited – or at least it should be tested.

The following paragraphs discuss some of the shortcomings of particular perspectives.

With regard to economic interest approaches, the main objection could be that they neglect other types of immigration than the labour one. For instance, they are not able to explain policy towards asylum seekers, policy regarding the question of family reunification, or policy aimed at repatriates. Besides, questions of links between migration and other issues (demography, immigrants' potential for integration, security, or foreign policy) are only important from the economic point of view, i.e. as long as they are related in some way with the market and the interests of particular economic actors.

Although approaches stressing national identity point out significant factors, they also suffer from serious shortcomings. Unlike 'economic' approaches, they could be applicable for policies aimed at permanent immigration. Nonetheless, their weakness remains the fact that they do not take external factors into account. Additionally, it may be difficult for them to explain the similarities between the policies of various receiving countries, where societies have different identities, national mythologies, and different experiences.

It seems that approaches focused on domestic politics and interest groups take many more factors shaping ICP into consideration, especially in comparison to the two above-mentioned perspectives. Evidently, this concerns both political and economic determinants. They can account for immigration policy towards newcomers of dissimilar ethnic origin, as well as for commonalities in immigration policies in different countries (Meyers 2000: 1259-60). Nevertheless, their shortcoming is that they again marginalise the international dimension, the question of foreign policy considerations or possibly international pressures, which definitely play an important role in the formation of immigration control policy. For instance, there have been many situations in which one state aiming to limit immigration pressure has introduced some additional restrictions which eventually increased the immigration pressure on its

neighbouring countries. In this way these neighbouring countries were forced to introduce similar or other restrictions to manage the inflow of foreigners.

Similarly, the approaches that focus on state institutions and the power of bureaucracy also ignore the international dimension of ICP. Apart from that, they leave out all interest groups and political parties. They could probably be well applicable to the immigration policies of countries where immigration issues have not been politicised yet. However, in countries where immigration is a question of politics, public opinion or the opinion of some interest groups and political parties regarding e.g. permanent immigration may be very influential in policymaking. An additional shortcoming of such a perspective is that when academics would like to make cross-country comparisons, they could face the problem of the incomparability of different states' institutions and the ways in which they work.

As far as approaches based on the theories of international relations are concerned, probably their main weakness is that – unlike the above-mentioned approaches – they underestimate or even omit the possible effects of internal factors on policy formation, which in many cases are evident. They leave aside the activities of domestic actors or state institutions, together with factors that are different from international or transnational pressures or processes. Besides, with regard to realism and neorealism, their key concepts, the national interest and the state as a rational actor, could be questionable in the case of immigration policy. What is the state's interest in the case of migration? Should the interest be set from the perspective of the economy, social cohesion, or anything else? And is a state actually a rational actor if there are many examples revealing the irrationality and inefficiency of state policy that leads to the policy gap, which Wayne Cornelius writes about (Cornelius et al. 2004)? Similarly, the concept of securitisation may raise doubts. It calls attention to security, which is widely understood, it explains ICP merely in terms of fighting or forestalling various kinds of threats.

Concerning the globalisation theory, which builds on the liberal approach and world system theory, one can point to at least three failures. First, it tends to be apolitical. Second, it questions the state's capability to control migration, whereas some academics (e.g. Freeman 1998) demonstrate the opposite. Thirdly, as Meyers notices, the theory is better applicable to accounting for the phenomenon of migration than immigration control policy (Meyers 2000: 1268).

Meyers' theory seems to be the most comprehensive. Its advantage is that it makes provision for various kinds of factors; nevertheless – like other theories – it only draws on the experience of Western countries. Additionally, it does not mention a factor that seems to be more and more important for immigration policy, human rights. A further shortcoming is that although it explains policy towards many different types of migration, it omits illegal immigration (although Meyers makes some suggestions regarding that).

Conclusion

There is a spectrum of theoretical approaches accounting for immigration control policies/politics. Nonetheless, in fact each of them explains only a part of the policy/politics related to the complex phenomenon that immigration is. Simultaneously, they neglect other parts. Hence, being aware of the complexity of the migration phenomenon, one could apply some theoretical approaches while examining some aspects of immigration control policies (e.g. the policy concerning access to the labour market) and others while analysing other ICP aspects (e.g. the policy towards permanent immigration).

As already stated, the theoretical approaches discussed above were developed on the basis of the experience over a few decades of Western European and other traditional immigration countries with immigration and immigration policy/politics. This is an important matter that one should bear in mind when examining the situation in other regions, e.g. in Central and Eastern Europe, where immigration is a relatively new phenomenon.

For about forty years, countries such as Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, or Hungary were not liberal democratic states. They received almost no immigration; they did not have any immigration policy. Today, these countries are destinations for immigrants (although to different extents). However, the experience with immigration is not long, the question has not been politicised yet, and the immigration policies are still relatively new.

Whereas the migration situation of these countries has been examined in its various forms, their policies, in particular their immigration control policies, have not often been an object of academic interest. If there are any studies that deal with policy issues, they are rather practically oriented. They present developments in the policy and/or politics and they provide policy recommendations. Their shortcoming, however,

is that they often do not build on any theory, nor intentionally contribute to the building of any theory. Exceptions include e.g. the works of Weinar (2006), who refers to *Europeanisation* when explaining Polish immigration policy, as well as of Baršová and Barša (2005), who refer to the concept of *convergency*, accounting for the development of the Czech immigration policy, or of Kušniráková and Čižinský (2011), who point to *path dependency* in the Czech case.

As stated in the introduction, the theoretical perspectives discussed in the paper represent a good starting point for studies of immigration policies/politics. It would be interesting to find out to what extent they are applicable to the situation in Central and Eastern Europe but especially to compare the immigration policies of various countries in the region. There is a wide range of topics to be analysed. They include the determinants of the border control policy and of policy towards economic immigrants, towards family reunification, or towards former emigrants and their descendants living abroad. Additionally, questions such as institutional structures connected to migration issues may be examined.

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Information about the author: Agnieszka Zogata-Kusz, Ph.D. is assistant professor at and the manager of the humanitarian and international social work study programme at the Department of Christian Social Work, Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Palacký University, Olomouc. Her academic interests focus on issues related to international migration, migration policies, ethnic minorities, and humanitarian aid.

Email: agnieszka.zogata@upol.cz