Assessing What’s at Stake in Approaches to Immigrant Settlement Policy:
A Framework for Comparative Analysis

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International migration has become a phenomenon that is virtually ubiquitous in the contemporary world, affecting nearly all countries in one way or another. According to the report of the Global Commission on International Migration, released in 2005, more than 200 million people – more than the population of Brazil – live in countries other than that in which they were born, and international migration not only moves from south to north, but also from east to west, west to east, and north to south (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005). The increasing magnitude and scope of international migration raises numerous challenges for political scientists all over the world. While a growing number of political scientists are studying various aspects of the international migration phenomenon, much remains to be done.

This paper seeks to contribute to critical understanding of a relatively under-studied aspect of the international migration phenomenon: public policies aimed at “settling” immigrants into the host society in the manner sought by policy-makers. The paper builds on previous research (Schmidt, 1996; 2000, Chapter 8; 2007; 2009), and aims to develop a framework for critical comparative analysis that will enable scholars, policy-makers, and members of the wider public to better understand what is at stake in such policy-making efforts. The framework also aims to facilitate the collaboration among scholars engaged in comparative cross-national critical analyses of policies aimed at “settling” immigrants.


Undergirding this analysis is the presumption that it will be useful to frame critical comparative inquiry in relation to three important dimensions of immigrant settlement policy: facets of immigrant adaptation, modes of immigrant adaptation, and modes of policy intervention. Understanding how different political communities approach immigrant settlement policy will benefit from using these foci as lenses through which to see important differences in policy approach. Moreover, the hypothesis from which this work proceeds assumes that the distinctions described herein demark important value conflicts that can usefully inform critical analyses of immigrant settlement policy approaches. Accordingly, the paper will begin by sketching out these foci for distinguishing between differing approaches to immigrant settlement policy.

A. Facets of Immigrant Adaptation.

Immigrant settlement policy’s most general aim is to facilitate the successful adaptation of international migrants in relation to their new society. This dimension for comparison asks about the basic facets of immigrant adaption to the host country’s communal life toward which an immigrant settlement policy is aimed. As conceptualized in this study, immigrant
settlement takes place along four inter-related facets of communal life: economic, cultural, social, and political.

Addressing the economic facet involves investigating the ways in which, and the degrees to which, states attempt to facilitate immigrants’ acquiring the means to earn their livelihoods and to contribute to the material development of the host society. This aspect of public policy may take a variety of forms: e.g., facilitating the acquisition of work permits, provision of job training and skills development programs to facilitate entry into the workforce, provision of opportunities and material support to facilitate the acquisition of educational credentials necessary for economic advancement, facilitating the host country recognition of professional credentials (e.g., medical, scientific, legal) acquired in the country of origin, connecting workers with employers and/or labor contractors in fields suffering from labor shortages, providing start-up grants for small business or farm acquisition, providing public spaces for day laborers to meet with prospective employers, etc.

The cultural facet of immigrant settlement policies involves state activities aimed at influencing or controlling the relationships between immigrants, their cultures of origins, and the cultural formations of the host society. In most host countries, the largest public policy intervention regarding the cultural facet involves the educational system, at the elementary, secondary, higher education, and adult education levels. But the cultural dimension may also include state policies aimed at addressing issues of language diversity, religious practices, employer practices related to cultural diversity, the existence and practices of culturally diverse mass communications media, etc.

The social facet of immigrant settlement policies involves state attempts to influence the social interactions between host society members and immigrants. Policy interventions aimed at this facet of communal life include, e.g., programs aimed at providing individual host country “guides” or mentors for adapting to life in the host country; state-sponsored workshops on using public transportation, medical care facilities, shopping customs, etc.; policies aimed at keeping temporary migrants segregated from the host country population; policies aiming to disperse immigrants throughout the host country, rather than encouraging/allowing immigrants to concentrate in cultural/economic enclaves; etc.

Finally, the political facet of immigrant settlement policy involves efforts to influence the degree to which, and the ways in which, international migrants connect to and/or participate in the political life of the community. This might involve policies aimed at educating international migrants about the political practices and core political values of the host country; facilitating and supporting the organization of immigrants into political interest groups; giving migrants a voice in the design and implementation of immigrant settlement policies; enabling immigrants to vote in host country elections; state-funded programs to facilitate the acquisition of citizenship in the host country; policies aimed at enabling or facilitating dual citizenship for migrants; etc.
Inquiring into these facets of immigrant settlement policy enables the researcher to quickly gauge and compare the relative comprehensiveness or narrowness, as well as the depth or shallowness of a country’s approach to immigrant settlement policy.

B. Modes of Immigrant Adaptation.

The second dimension of immigrant settlement policy asks about the aims of the countries’ settlement policies in relation to varying modes of immigrant integration. As conceptualized here, it is anticipated that most host countries make choices among four basic policy aims in relation to the modes of immigrant adaptation: segregation, assimilation, pluralist integration, and transnationalism.

An assimilative policy approach, for example, would encourage the immigrant to “melt” into the host society as quickly as possible, culturally, economically, socially, and politically. The aim of such a policy, then, would be that after some few years neither native-born citizens of the host country nor the immigrant herself would think that the immigrant’s national origins could be used to identify that person, or had any significant relationship to the individual’s or host society's well-being; it could be relegated to the past.

A policy promoting pluralist integration, on the other hand, encourages immigrants to integrate into the host society through their memberships in distinctive ethno-cultural communities – e.g., by retaining facility in and practicing the immigrants’ native languages while also learning the dominant language(s) of the host society, by encouraging the development of organizations and institutions to maintain immigrant cultural practices and social networks, by organizing economic activities in ethnic enclaves, by becoming politically connected through immigrant ethnic political organizations, etc.

A policy promoting a segregative approach, in contrast, encourages or requires immigrants to remain separate from the host society while yet performing certain economic or social functions within the host country – e.g., through a segregated “guest worker” program, through maintaining refugee camps insulated from the host society, through restricting immigrant access to citizenship in the host country, etc. The expectation here is that the immigrant community will not gain full membership in the host society over the long term, and, indeed, is often understood as a temporary and reversible, emergency presence in the host society.

A transnational settlement policy, finally, encourages immigrants to function as members of two societies, that is, as continuing members of the country of origin and as new members of the host country as well. Such a policy might involve the facilitation of communication and travel between the two countries, facilitating the development of “sending” country cultural institutions in the “receiving” country, facilitating economic enterprise between the two countries, formal recognition of dual citizenship in the two countries, etc. The aim here is to recognize and support the contemporary realities of international mobility, communication, commercial and economic activity and support, and political contributions and ties of individuals that aim to support the well-being of at least two countries.
C. Modes of Policy Intervention.

The third dimension of immigrant settlement policy for critical comparison in this analysis is that of the modes of policy intervention by the state. Prior research on this subject suggests four primary modes of policy intervention used by states in relation to immigrant settlement: prescriptive, proscriptive, proactive, and laissez-faire.

Prescriptive policies require that certain things must be done in prescribed ways – e.g., immigrants must demonstrate gainful employment within a certain time period or face expulsion; immigrants must demonstrate knowledge of the host country’s language within a specified time period, or to be naturalized as citizens of the host country. A proscriptive policy, in contrast, requires that certain things must not be done, on penalty of losing one’s immigrant visa, or being deported back to the sending country. Examples might include speaking the language of the sending country in public, participating in certain forbidden forms of political action, engaging in certain forbidden religious or cultural practices, or being convicted of specified crimes.

Proactive policies, on the other hand, seek to engage immigrants in a dialogic relationship, negotiating the most appropriate combination of facets and modes of immigrant adaptation, and the most appropriate allocation of responsibilities and obligations between immigrants and host society governments and people. In other words, both immigrants and host societies are expected to contribute to the relationships between them and to the design and implementation of immigrant settlement policies. Thus, a kind of contract is developed between the two sides to the relationship, with both the immigrants and the host society taking on responsibilities and obligations to ensure a successful adaptation of immigrants to the host society.

A laissez-faire policy approach, finally, is one in which the host government leaves the matter of immigrant settlement entirely in private hands, the hands of immigrants and/or host society private citizens and institutions (e.g., non-governmental or for-profit organizations). For example, the host government might do nothing to encourage or discourage an immigrant from developing a relationship with the host country’s political system. The expectation in this approach is that immigrants are to find their own way – individually or collectively through voluntary associations – to successful settlement in the host society. The state’s role in immigration, in short, is restricted to the “gate-keeping” function of immigration policy, and not to a planned and authoritative facilitation of immigrant efforts to become settled in the host society.

Immigrant receiving countries typically orient their immigrant settlement policies in ways that can be usefully categorized in terms of these dimensions. A previous study (Schmidt, 2007) comparing Canadian and U.S. approaches to immigrant settlement policy, for example, found that the U.S. approach to settling immigrants is relatively narrow in scope (focusing mainly on the cultural facet of immigrant adaptation), strongly assimilationist in respect to the mode of immigrant adaptation, and mostly laissez-faire in its mode of policy intervention (with the exception of unauthorized migrants, for whom the mode of policy intervention is quite prescriptive). In contrast, the Canadian approach to immigrant
settlement policy is relatively comprehensive in scope (focusing on economic, cultural, and social integration, with only the political facet being relatively neglected), pluralist integrationist with respect to the mode of immigrant adaptation, and mostly proactive in its mode of policy intervention.


Taken together, the three dimensions of immigrant settlement policy outlined above can enable the policy analyst to develop a comparative description of the central aims of policymakers and policy advocates in various political communities as they seek to shape the ways in which immigrants connect to the host society. Once a comparative description of the approaches to immigrant settlement taken by the countries under study has been developed, the next task is to analyze those policy approaches. But what sort of analysis should be undertaken?

The method proposed here is that of “value-critical” policy analysis, an approach first articulated by Martin Rein in *Social Science and Public Policy* (1976). Rein distinguished this approach to public policy analysis from two other methodological approaches, which he labeled as “value-neutral” and “value-committed.”

Guided by the canons of positivist social scientific research, the value-neutral approach takes the normative aims or goals of public policies as "given" and seeks to predict (through modeling and causal analysis) which of several alternative means of achieving a policy’s goal is most likely to succeed and at what costs. Or alternately, during and after a policy’s implementation value-neutral analysts attempt to describe and explain the degree to which the policy succeeded or failed to achieve its goals. Thus, in relation to immigrant settlement policy, the analyst might take as given such policy aims as, for example, helping the children of immigrants become successful in the host country’s educational system; ensuring that immigrants do not compete with host country nationals for lucrative jobs; helping immigrants to become fluent in the dominant language(s) of the host society, etc. Having specified the aims of the settlement policy, the policy analyst will then examine and assess the degree to which these aims might be realized under several competing immigrant settlement policy approaches, as well as the defined costs and benefits associated with these competing approaches.

The second, value-committed, approach to policy analysis has a long history. Here the analyst attempts to justify a given policy approach to which he or she is already committed through evaluative interpretations most likely to be found persuasive by the analyst’s audience, marshaling arguments and evidence that point in that direction. Typical examples of this form of policy analysis include the testimony of interest group representatives before legislative committees, as well as ideologically grounded policy arguments made by academics, think-tank scholars, and public commentators. For example, advocates for an immigrant settlement policy approach designed to ensure that immigrants do not compete with host country nationals for lucrative jobs might push a proposal for more restrictive work permits for immigrants by developing data and
arguments showing that current policies are not restrictive enough and that immigrants are, in fact, displacing host country nationals in such job markets.

In contrast, the value-critical approach was defined by Rein as one which "subjects goals and values to critical review, that is, values themselves become the object of analysis; they are not merely accepted as a voluntary choice of the will, unamenable to further debate" (Rein, 1976, 13). Nor, on the other hand, does the value-critical analyst begin with an unexamined faith in a set of ideologically-grounded policy commitments, as in the case of the value-committed approach. Rather, on the assumption that values discourse can be conducted coherently, the analyst approaches public policy aims with a skeptical spirit, seeking to subject them to rigorous, but not cynical, analysis. The aim of value-critical analysis, then, is to contribute to the public discussion of policy conflicts by taking the goals of policy seriously as subjects of analysis. In that vein, this paper initiates a project that will critically compare the value assumptions of competing immigrant settlement policy advocates in several immigrant-receiving countries. The paper’s central aim is to sketch out the parameters of this method of policy analysis in ways that might facilitate comparative analyses of immigrant settlement policies across multiple polities in the contemporary world.

Before moving to that sketch, it might be helpful to elaborate on the underlying epistemological premises from which value-critical policy analysis proceeds. Here the starkest contrast is that between value-neutral and value-critical approaches to policy analysis (value-committed analysis actually combines the perspectives of both the others in the service of a pre-established political agenda).

Making sense of the distinction between value-neutral and value-critical policy analysis will benefit, I think, from reflecting on an essay by political theorist Ruth Grant (2002) exploring the primary differences between political science and political theory. Contrary to the claims of some, Grant argues, the primary difference between most political scientists and most political theorists is not that the former is interested only in the study of “facts,” while the latter is interested only in “values.” Political theorists, she notes, have always been interested in empirical realities as much as in the diagnosis and cure of the ills that beset political communities, just as political scientists cannot avoid some attention to values in their work.

Grant suggests instead that the most fruitful way to understand the differences between these two overlapping disciplines is by understanding the differences between the fundamental questions that each is predisposed to address. Political scientists (operating in the framework of the natural sciences), she claims, are most interested in questions of cause and effect, and they use a wide range of scientific methods aimed at answering those questions. Political theorists, in contrast, operate within in the framework of the humanities, and they are primarily interested in questions of meaning and significance, and the methods they use to address these questions are those appropriate to the questions.

In similar fashion, I want to suggest, value-neutral policy analysts are trying to answer questions about cause and effect in relation to proposed or actual public policies, whereas
value-critical policy analysis is primarily concerned with questions of the meaning and significance of proposed or actual public policies. Accordingly, value-critical policy analysis is inescapably interpretive and historical in nature. As Grant says in relation to political theory’s humanities methods:

There is nothing arbitrary about the methodological approach. You cannot discover either what something means or why it matters without both interpretation and historical understanding. The characteristic uncertainty, disagreement, and lack of closure found in the discourse of the humanities are not arbitrary either. These characteristics reflect both historical and epistemological realities. Meaning and significance refer to relations that vary through time, and questions of meaning and significance are thus deeply historical. It should come as no surprise that they are questions that must be revisited in every age. The question of the meaning of a particular text or of any work of the imagination [including public policy proposals] is always accompanied by the questions, “What does it mean for us?” and “Why should we care?” (Grant, 2002: 581)

Similarly, the kinds of answers typically debated in response to public policy questions of meaning and significance are inevitably accompanied by “uncertainties and . . . disagreements that . . . are consequences of our epistemological situation. Different sorts of things are knowable in different ways and with correspondingly varying degrees of certainty. . . . There are some things that we may want to know that cannot be known with anything remotely like mathematical certainty, for example. Nonetheless, those things can be understood in some sense; reasonable judgments about them are possible” (Grant, 2002: 581-2).

And this proposal for a value-critical approach to the analysis of immigrant settlement policy is based on the belief that “reasonable judgments” can be made about the arguments of policy advocates. Indeed, judgments are inescapable in political life, despite the uncertainties necessarily connected to them. Again, Grant’s observations in relation to political theory are germane to this discussion of value-critical policy analysis:

If we knew, we would not need to judge. Judgment is required because the world always remains opaque to us in important respects. Both demonstrative reason and empirical evidence have their limits. Judgment is the faculty at work in any situation where reasonable people might disagree. And the premise of every truly political situation, particularly in democratic politics, is that reasonable people can disagree. (Grant, 2002: 582)

Despite this lack of closure, and inevitable disagreement, the claim here is that the effort to clarify what is at stake in debates over immigrant settlement policies can be very helpful to both students of public policy and to participants – stakeholders – in public policy controversies on this subject.

This is not the place for a full description of the method of value-critical policy analysis. However, I do want to briefly sketch out some of the core steps involved in such an analysis, in order to set the stage for further work on immigrant settlement policy. As envisioned here, there are three fundamental steps in value-critical policy analysis: (1) identifying and summarizing the central conflicts regarding the policy issue(s) in focus for the analysis. This involves identifying and describing the most important “camps” of policy advocates at odds with each other, their positions on the policy issue(s), and the arguments they make on behalf of their positions; (2) describing and critically assessing the policy advocates’ understandings of the historical and social contexts of public policy proposals; and (3) identifying, clarifying, and critically assessing policy advocates’ understandings of the central values at stake in the policy conflicts. In short, the aim of this intellectual work is to analyze the main policy advocates’ positions on the public policy issue(s) under study through a critical examination of their understandings of the social and historical contexts that give meaning and significance to issues perceived as needing to be addressed, as well as their understandings of the central values at stake in the political conflicts. The outcome, it is hoped, will be better understanding of just what is at stake in the political conflicts over selected countries’ approaches to immigrant settlement policy, and possibly a better foundation for the development and implementation of more appropriate and successful public policies.

**Step One: Identifying and Summarizing Policy Advocates’ Positions and Arguments.**

The initial step in a value-critical policy analysis is to gather, organize, and summarize information about the debates in relation to the policy issues being addressed in the analysis. Who are the participants in these debates, and what are their proposals, claims, and arguments?

In a broad sense, answering these questions will entail a systematic effort to discover the range of policy positions being taken by policy advocates in each country being studied in relation to each of the dimensions of immigrant settlement policy outlined above: i.e., *facets of immigrant adaptation* (social, economic, cultural, and political), *modes of immigrant adaptation* (assimilationist, segregative, pluralist integration, and transnational), and *modes of policy intervention* (laissez-faire, prescriptive, proscriptive, and proactive).

Having gathered this broad range of information in regard to each country, the next step will involve making sense of that information by looking for patterns that will render it meaningful in relation to varying approaches to immigrant settlement policy. For example, are there broad political “camps” that tend to be in opposition to each other in relation to several or many of the dimensions of settlement policy? If so, how can we summarize their policy positions and arguments in relation to immigrant settlement? Are their positions derivative of, or otherwise connected to, their positions on the country’s policy

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1 In part, this essay revises and extends the articulation of value-critical policy analysis developed in Schmidt, 2006.
toward immigration in general? If so, how? In the United States, for example, it does not take the researcher long to discover two broad camps on questions of immigrant settlement policy, and these are largely the same as the broad camps that exist in relation to immigration policy generally: those seeking to make the country more open to immigration, and to facilitate its processes and procedures (these might be termed “expansionists”) versus those seeking to restrict and obstruct international migration (“restrictionists”). And the specific policy positions taken by policy advocates tend to be undergirded by this basic orientation toward immigrants and immigration, spilling across the boundaries of a wide range of specific and narrow policy questions. Accordingly, since the aim of this kind of analysis is to critically analyze the value assumptions underlying these advocates’ policy positions, gaining this kind of broad understanding of political divisions is especially useful.

Since synthesizing such a broad range of policy advocates, and their positions and arguments requires a good deal of interpretive work, analysts will want to take care that the resulting summary is as accurate as possible. How is it possible to gauge the measure of accuracy in this kind of interpretive work? In my experience, discerning the degree to which the comparative summary of policy advocates, their positions, and their arguments has been successfully “captured” by the analyst depends crucially on direct communication with those who are actively engaged in policy advocacy. Most basically, that is, a successful articulation of the core political and policy divisions, and summary of advocates’ arguments in support of their policy positions, should be recognizable as essentially accurate by the advocates themselves. In this sense, the interpretive work of the policy analyst is reminiscent of the analogy by political theorist Joseph Tussman between political leaders and architects: a good democratic political leader, Tussman asserted, is one who is able to take the often inchoate and relatively unarticulated concerns, desires and aspirations of citizens and transform them into propositions that are understood as both desirable and “what we meant all along” by those same constituents (Tussman, 1960, pp. 96-98). Similarly, a good value-critical policy analyst will distill, summarize, and articulate the basic political divisions, policy positions, and arguments in a policy debate so that the debate’s partisans will recognize themselves and their struggles in those summary articulations.

At the same time, it should be kept in mind that if the purpose of this work is to contribute to public policy debate in the political world by clarifying just what is at stake in that debate, it is important that the policy analyst try to keep this phase of the work as clear and simple as possible. That is, aiming to be completely thorough regarding the nuances and details of the positions and arguments of all the policy advocates in the debate will inevitably result in a document that is so complex and so detailed that most non-specialist readers will be lost in the detail before they ever get to the analysis. If being accessible to a broad spectrum of those interested in the policy debate is important (including, i.e., non-academics), we will need to be willing to ruthlessly simplify the summary description of the core political camps in the debate, their policy positions, and their core arguments while still maintaining accuracy. The aim here is to help those involved and interested in these debates see and map the larger “forest” without becoming totally enmeshed in the details of the forests’ “trees.” This is an interpretive challenge that is highly important, if risky.
Having developed a coherent understanding of the most important camps of policy advocates, as well as their main policy positions and arguments for each country under study, the next step will involve looking for patterns of comparison across countries. That is, what appear to be the most significant points of similarity and difference between the political conflicts over immigrant settlement policy in the several countries under study? Do there appear to be significant patterns in these similarities and differences? Are similar policy positions of advocates in different countries replicated by similar arguments on behalf of those positions, or do advocates in different countries use different arguments in support of similar policy positions? How might we account for these patterns of similarity and difference?

There is not space here to fully explore the range of similarities and differences that might be found in this research effort, so one small example must suffice: one of the generalizations that has been made about the political facet of immigrant settlement policy is that those countries that formally recognize dual nationality tend to be immigrant sending countries, while immigrant receiving countries tend not to support or formally recognize dual citizenship (see, e.g., Jones-Correa, 2001). This is an important insight, and it points toward the need to come to terms with the differing interests of immigrant sending, as opposed to immigrant receiving, countries. At the same time, however, it could be very illuminating to compare across immigrant receiving countries the arguments deployed both in favor and against the formal recognition of dual citizenship (a transnational mode of immigrant adaptation), and to compare the conditions under which specific arguments are successful or not. That is, are there comparative patterns of political success and/or failure among advocates for dual citizenship rights across multiple immigrant receiving countries? If so, what might these findings tell us about the development of dual citizenship as a mode of immigrant adaptation in an increasingly globalized world?

In any case, the result of this first phase of the analytic process should be a coherent summary description of the competing approaches to immigrant settlement policy in the countries under study, the main camps of policy advocates engaged in political conflict over these competing approaches, the general approaches to immigrant settlement policy advocated by these camps, and the arguments they deploy in support of their preferred approaches. These summaries should be developed for each of the countries under study, as well as in comparison across the countries being studied. Once this information gathering, organizing, and summarizing work is completed, a second phase of the work begins.

**Step Two: The Social and Historical Context of Public Policy.**

As envisioned here, a second step in doing a value-critical policy analysis is to identify and critically evaluate the policy advocates’ understandings of the historical and social contexts of the public policy issues in which they are engaged. This is vitally important in a value-critical policy analysis because those engaged in public policy debate – on all sides – begin their arguments for a particular policy position from a frame of reference that rests on numerous unarticulated (and often unrecognized, even by the advocates) assumptions and preconceptions about the nature of the social and historical context for the policy issues.
that are being debated. Put differently, these (typically) unexamined assumptions about the social and historical context of policy debates often drive policy arguments in particular directions that appear to be “common sense,” but in fact may be highly questionable when re-examined through critical analysis. As Yanow has noted, public policies are developed and implemented within “communities of meaning” that share “policy frames” that are often developed through group processes unrecognized by the participants. These “frames direct attention toward some elements while simultaneously diverting attention from other elements. They highlight and contain at the same time that they exclude” (Yanow, 2000: 11).

Competing policy advocates often approach policy issues from competing communities of meaning that proffer competing policy frames. Thus, Yanow suggests, “rather than assuming . . . that policy problems are objectively ‘factual’ in character and searching for the single correct formulation of a policy statement, policy analysts might take the alternative view that problem statements are contending interpretations of policy issues made by different communities of meaning” (Yanow, 2000: 11). In precisely this sense, value-critical policy analysis attempts to problematize the contextual assumptions and preconceptions of policy advocates by questioning their appropriateness and searching for alternative frames that seem equally, or more, compelling for understanding the context within which policy issues are developing and gaining access to the political agenda.

In the case of immigrant settlement policies, there is a wide range of subjects in which taken-for-granted frames structure meanings that are often assumed to be “common sense” in policy debates. A value-critical policy analysis will want to examine skeptically policy advocates’ understandings (often unarticulated) of phenomena such as the following: the historical development and meaning and significance of the international migration phenomenon as a whole; the reasons people emigrate from and immigrate to specific countries; the benefits and the burdens that immigrants bring to destination countries; the impacts that immigrants have on host countries’ economies, cultural communities, public services, social networks, political institutions and conflicts; the historical evolution of migration patterns, and the reactions thereto, in the countries under study, etc. This list could be very extensive, but the point here is to give an indication of what is meant by the historical and social context of public policy. One example will have to suffice to provide some sense of the significance of this aspect of the analysis.

Case Study: National versus Global Contextual Perspectives on International Migration to the United States. The U.S. political climate in which immigrant settlement policies are being discussed today is dominated by concerns about the negative impacts of immigrants in regard to three phenomena: (1) the integrity of the country’s borders (the so-called “crisis” of “illegal immigration”); (2) the economic costs of immigrants on the country’s native workers, its economic development, and its governments’ budgets for public services; and (3) the cultural impacts of large numbers of non-English-speaking immigrants with “non-American” values and behaviors, especially Spanish-speakers from Latin America. Thus, immigration “restrictionists” publicize data and arguments developing the increasingly negative impacts of immigrants on the country in regard to each of these phenomena, and their positions on immigrant settlement policy issues are typically derived from these
concerns. Not surprisingly, then, immigration restrictionists typically resist using public resources to provide any form of support or assistance to immigrant integration in general (e.g., language education programs, expanded health care, occupational training for immigrants, etc.), and instead they want more public resources devoted to making the border between the U.S. and Mexico more impenetrable. Immigration “expansionists,” on the other hand, assert that most immigrants are not unauthorized, and that those who are unauthorized are often in desperate circumstances and exploited by unscrupulous employers and/or labor contractors. Further, they argue that immigrants have positive net economic and cultural impacts on the country as a whole, and that U.S. governments should significantly increase their investments in immigrant settlement policies such as education, English language training, health care, etc.

Both sides in this U.S. political tug-of-war, however, operate within a nationalist frame of reference that obstructs understanding of the larger historical and social context within which U.S. immigration takes place. That is, both restrictionists and expansionists understand the phenomenon of immigration to the United States as something that happens to the United States. Immigrants are people from the “outside,” who leave their own countries for any number of reasons, and who come “into” the country and have impacts on it. Thus, from this frame of reference, immigrants make up the independent variable, the engine of change, and the United States is the dependent variable, the passive recipient of international migrants. Completely ignored in this community of meaning is a larger, global frame of reference. And once one’s perspective shifts from nationalist to global, it quickly becomes obvious that the United States is not a largely passive victim of external forces but has been one of the most powerful engines of change in the world for nearly two centuries. And immigration figures prominently as one of the major consequences of the exercise of American power in the larger world around it.

First, consider the immigration consequences of U.S. foreign policy. When the United States engages in the hegemonic direction of other countries’ governments, it seeks allies in those countries to help control events in those countries that will harmonize with elite perceptions of American interests. As a result of the U.S. war with Spain in 1898, for example, the United States governed the Philippines as a colony until finally granting the islands independence following World War II (with an interlude in which the Japanese, having evicted the Americans, ruled the country during that war). As a result of actions thought necessary to govern the Philippines, there developed a special relationship between the United States and important segments of the Filipino population that facilitated social networks leading to increased immigration.

Following the same 1898 war with Spain, moreover, the United States Congress adopted the Platt Amendment, in which the U.S. government essentially declared itself the guardian of Cuba and of Cuba’s government. Accordingly, U.S. interests held sway in Cuba, with the help of thousands of Cubans who believed their personal interests were facilitated by cooperation with American government and business leaders – until the Cuban revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro overthrew the government and installed a Marxist government that proceeded to overturn many of the U.S.-backed policies of previous regimes. Given this special relationship between the U.S. and the many Cubans who worked
under its influence, it should not be surprising that many thousands of Cubans whose interests were negatively affected by the priorities of the Castro regime would seek safe haven in the United States, thereby becoming immigrants.

Similar immigration consequences – sometimes on a very large scale – have flowed from a large number of U.S. foreign policy ventures. That is, a significant increase in immigration has followed the overthrow of numerous regimes previously backed by the United States. One prominent example is that of the immigration following the collapse of South Vietnam’s government and Cambodia’s anti-communist government at the end of the Vietnam War in the 1970s. Similarly, the collapse of the Shah’s government in Iran, also in the 1970s, resulted in a significant increase in immigration from Iran (the Shah had been installed in power by the United States following the C.I.A.-backed overthrow of a democratically elected government in 1954). The long cold war with the Soviet Union also resulted in special considerations being given to refugees from communist rule in the USSR itself, from its eastern European satellites, and from other “puppet regimes” in various parts of the world. The point is that many immigrants arriving in the United States over the past half century migrated to that country because of special relationships established in their home countries by U.S. operatives seeking to advance U.S. interests in those countries. In that sense it is accurate to say that the U.S. government stimulated the flow of immigrants to the country.

The economic activities of Americans in other countries also result in stimulation of migrants to the United States. Some of this derives from overt efforts to recruit immigrants for American businesses that perceive themselves as suffering from a shortage of labor, a practice that has operated – with ebbs and flows – rather continuously since the early part of the nineteenth century. American business interests abroad (e.g., American owned factories, foreign contractors, service-providers, etc.), in addition, develop ties with individuals and groups in other countries who, in turn, make contact with potential sponsors for immigration in the United States. With the reach of the American businesses having spread to nearly span the globe, the potential for the U.S. stimulation of immigrants has grown accordingly.²

Both of these forms of immigration stimulation by the United States may be seen in full flower in the case of the special relationship between the United States and Mexico. In the mid-nineteenth century, for example, American foreign policy led to a war of conquest against Mexico, after which the U.S. compelled Mexico to “sell” nearly one-half of its territory to the United States (including all or part of the following present-day U.S. states: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Wyoming). After the U.S. incorporated this territory, Mexican citizens were given a choice of uprooting themselves and moving within the boundaries of the “new” (and smaller) Mexico, or remaining in their homes in what was now United States territory. Under the

provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo ending the war, most chose the latter, becoming U.S. citizens in the process. However, most of these new U.S. citizens soon found themselves unable to exercise the rights of citizenship, including voting rights, and they were quickly relegated to second-class citizenship, which often included racial stigmatization, segregation, and discrimination in a multitude of forms (see, e.g., Menchaca, 2001).

In the aftermath of this military conquest, moreover, U.S. economic interests soon found ways to “open up” Mexico’s economy for investment and “development.” As a consequence, it was not long before Mexico could be fairly characterized as an informal colony of the United States. That is, even though the United States did not formally take control of Mexico’s government through the typical European method of colonial empire, it did, in fact, exercise economic and political hegemony over its conquered neighbor to the south, exercising great control over myriad aspects of that country’s historical development (see, e.g., Gonzalez and Fernandez, 2003). While the Mexican Revolution of the early twentieth century managed to reverse some aspects of this economic colonization (e.g., the expropriation of Mexico’s oil reserves, and restrictions on the ownership of land by non-Mexicans), the domination of Mexico’s economic development by U.S. interests has remained very strong until the present (via, e.g., the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiated at the end of the twentieth century; see, e.g., Bacon, 2008 and Gonzalez, 2006, for a discussion of the consequences of both NAFTA and U.S. guest worker programs for Mexican migration to the United States).

The point of this discussion, again, is to indicate that the United States is not a passive recipient of immigrants coming from other countries. And the traditional scholarly discourse on the causes of immigration (i.e., “push” factors in the home country, and “pull” factors in the destination country) overlooks the degree to which “push” factors may be the result of direct and indirect contacts between the two countries that are not directly related to immigration per se. Thus, when U.S. discourses on immigration focus on the fact that Mexicans account for nearly one half of immigrants (legal and undocumented) to the United States, they nearly always point to the proximity of the two countries, as well as to the comparatively “under-developed” economy of Mexico, as key factors “explaining” the relatively high level of migration from that country. What these discourses miss entirely, however, is the deeply intertwined histories of social, economic, political, military, and cultural interactions that have shaped each country’s development, a history in which the United States has been a dominant force in shaping Mexico’s development as a country. The “Westphalian” model of autonomous, independent, and separate nation-states with sovereign governments that exercise effective control over their borders and authority over the citizens and denizens within – widely recognized by scholars as an increasingly inaccurate and even fictive depiction of reality in the contemporary world (see, e.g., Habermas, 2001; Benhabib, 2004) – has never been accurate in the case of Mexico and the United States. The reality is that one cannot accurately understand the historical development or present reality of either country without understanding the degree to which they are deeply intertwined (see also, Bonilla, et. al., 1998).
The point here is that the dominant discourses on immigration – and therefore on immigrant settlement policy – in the United States today are seriously distorted and inaccurate in developing a realistic and accurate account of the social and historical context within which international migration to the U.S. takes place in the contemporary world. That distortion and inaccuracy, in turn, feeds a sense of wounded victimization on the part of many Americans who believe they are being taken advantage of by illegal, pushy, and/or ungrateful immigrants seeking only their own interests at the expense of American interests. And this, in turn, provides moral justification for an approach to immigrant settlement policy that may be viewed quite differently from a more realistic and holistic contextual frame of reference. Again, this is just one small example of the kind of re-examination of contextual assumptions in policy debate, but it should give some indication of how important such a re-examination might be in gaining a better understanding what is at stake in a public policy debate.

In doing a comparative value-critical policy analysis of immigrant settlement policies, a global perspective on international migration would be particularly helpful, since it would enable the researcher/analyst to gauge and compare a variety of relationships between the countries being studied, including varying patterns between specific sets of sending and receiving countries with specific historical ties, as well as between receiving countries in one region versus those in another. And we might want to pay particular attention to the relative power positions of the countries involved in the study, and how those power differentials might affect patterns of migration as well as approaches to immigrant settlement. Such a perspective would enable the policy analyst to gain a better perspective on the historical and social contexts that structure the debates over immigrant settlement policies in the countries being discussed. The broader point, in any case, is that coming to a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of the historical and social contexts for international migration is crucial for understanding what is truly at stake, for whom, in political controversies over immigrant settlement policies.

**Step Three: Critical Analysis of Core Values.**

The final step in a value-critical analysis of immigrant settlement policy involves a focus on the value understandings of the main policy advocates engaged in policy conflicts and debates. Having identified the main competing political camps engaged in these debates, as well as their main policy proposals and their arguments on behalf of those proposals (step one, above), the task now is to uncover and articulate the advocates’ primary value understandings that serve as foundations for their policy arguments. Once these value understandings have been described, the aim is to subject them to critical analysis. And the perspective gained through critical analysis of the policy advocates’ understandings of the historical and social contexts (step two, above) of the policy issue under study will typically be highly useful in critically examining those value assumptions.

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The terrain for this form of analysis might be termed the terrain of political judgment. The questions one wants to ask here are questions that a critically aware and morally engaged person might be expected to ask about the appropriateness of the policy aims and goals of the policy advocates being interrogated in the analysis. That is, are the goals of the country’s immigrant settlement policy approach the “right” goals, serving the “best” understanding of core values that are appropriate for the situation being addressed by the policy? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the value understandings that seem to be guiding the policy arguments and/or assumptions of the main policy advocates? How best to answer these questions is by no means obvious, but whatever specific methods are used by the policy analyst, they will require engagement in the activity of making political judgments. And for this form of activity, there is no known intellectual formula or “scientific” method for eliminating the risk of error and ridicule. Still, the claim made here is that engaging in this form of analysis in a systematic way is not only appropriate for professional students of politics, but can yield important benefits in understanding that might be useful for those seeking to improve public policy.

At a high level of abstraction, previous work on this subject (see, e.g., Schmidt 2000, Schmidt 2006), has found that two of the most ubiquitous value frames deployed in public policy debates are those of the common good and justice. That is, policy advocates engaged in debate over the aims of public policy seem to couch virtually all their policy arguments in ways that can be characterized as aiming either at realizing a conception of the common good, or as being required by a conception of justice. These two concepts, in turn, typically entail two different perspectives on the impacts of public policy: arguments using a common good frame are focused on benefits and costs for the political community as a whole, while arguments deploying a justice frame typically use discourse focused on the allocation of a policy’s benefits and burdens between sub-divisions of the whole political community (e.g., categories of individuals, social groups). Thus, common good value arguments are typically articulated in language such as: “we need to adopt policy X because it will make our country better off by . . . .” Alternatively, justice value arguments are typically articulated in a form similar to this: “the proposed policy Y would be unjust because it would yield unjustifiable burdens [or benefits] for [insert a specific category or group, such as taxpayers, immigrants, native-born citizens, etc.].”

This dichotomy can be quite useful for organizing information gathered from various policy advocates in order to articulate basic divisions of opinion between competing political camps in relation to immigrant settlement policy. For example, summarizing the basic value positions of competing advocates contending over whether it is most advantageous to take a laissez-faire or a proactive approach to immigrant settlement policy, we might find it useful to group basic divisions on this question into those using a common good line of argument versus those using arguments framed in terms of justice. Or, to take another example, we might find it useful to sort arguments over whether the best mode of immigrant adaptation would be “assimilationist,” “segregative,” or “pluralist integration” into categories of argument using either “common good” or “justice” value formulations as

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4 See Steinberger, 1993, for an unusually comprehensive, insightful, and thoughtful analysis of what is entailed in making political judgments.
touchstones in policy debates. This move might be especially useful in seeking to draw comparisons between the approaches to immigrant settlement taken by multiple countries.

Though potentially useful, however, and certainly interpretive, this work remains essentially descriptive and does not entail the making of political judgments as such. Eventually, those judgments need to be made in order assess what is at stake in the contending views regarding immigrant settlement policy. And once again there are a wide variety of resources on which we might draw to find the ground on which to stand for making such critical assessments and political judgments. My own training has led me to tap the rich resources of political theory as a field that has a long history of reflection and critical discourse on questions of political judgment that have relevance to a wide range of public policy issues. Again, a brief case study will need to suffice to indicate what is involved in critically analyzing the core value understandings of immigrant settlement policy advocates.

*Case Study: Immigration, Identity and Language Policy in the United States.* As noted above, the United States – to the extent it has a coherent policy toward immigrant settlement – predominantly aims for an assimilationist mode of immigrant adaptation. Much of the political attention to this question is focused on the specific issue of *language policy.* That is, most public policy attention focused on the cultural facet of immigrant settlement policy in the United States is aimed at ensuring that immigrants and their children learn to use English as their primary public language. And there is strong pressure (via both public policy and public opinion) on immigrants and especially their children to *substitute* English for their native language (as opposed to *adding* English to their native language), especially in public spaces.

From a political organizational standpoint, it is probably not coincidental that one of the key founders (Dr. John Tanton) of the largest mass-based immigration restriction political group – the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) – was also a key founder of U.S. English, the largest mass-based English language assimilation organization. In any case, assimilationists have sought to make English the sole official language of the United States and of its state and local governments, and they have also sought to eliminate any public institutional support for literacy development or maintenance of languages other than English. In particular, assimilationists have fought against bilingual education programs of any kind in the U.S., as well as against policies that enable public agencies to communicate with immigrants through non-English languages or that provide “linguistic access” to civil and political rights (e.g., the right to vote) in languages other than English.

Pluralists, on the other hand, have not succeeded in founding any mass-based political organizations focusing on language issues, but advocates for pluralist integration approaches to immigrant settlement have sought bilingual policies that would provide access to English language learning for immigrants and their children, but would do so in a way that would build upon and advance their already existing language skills through bilingual education. Pluralists have also been supportive of policies that would provide “linguistic access” to voting rights, rights to non-discrimination in employment, and to two-way communication with public agencies. With respect to public opinion, European-origin
or “Anglo” Americans have been mostly supportive of an assimilationist approach to U.S. language policy, while Latinos have supported a pluralist integration approach. Blacks have been more supportive of pluralist integration approaches than have Anglos, and Asian Americans have been nearly as supportive of pluralist integration as have Latinos. While there was a period in the 1970s and 1980s when it looked as though the U.S. might shift its language policies toward a more pluralist integrationist approach, since the late 1980s the political momentum has strongly favored an assimilationist approach. And an education reform law passed by Congress in 2002 virtually eliminated Federal government support for a bilingual approach to English language learning for immigrant students.

Both sides in this political controversy have engaged in this conflict in terms of two core values thought to be highly important in U.S. politics. Assimilationists have been especially concerned about the implications of increasing public bilingualism for national unity (a “common good” frame) in the United States. Assimilationists are especially concerned about the national unity implications of the growing number of Spanish-speakers, many of them immigrants, who by 2007 made up nearly two-thirds of U.S. non-English speakers (U.S. Census, 2009), and whose perceived demands for Spanish language retention is politically divisive, threatening to split the country into “two Americas” (see, e.g., Huntington, 2004). At the same time, assimilationists have also argued that English language assimilation will be good for non-English speaking immigrants, in that it will enable them to take advantage of equal opportunity rights in the U.S., thereby affording them greater social mobility (here deploying a “justice” frame).

U.S. pluralists, in contrast, have been more focused on the public value of equality for immigrant non-English speakers, arguing that history has constituted the United States as a multilingual country, and that while equality of opportunity requires that all be given access to the mastery of English fluency, this should not entail the necessary loss of other American languages, especially Spanish. Indeed, pluralists argue, providing no public support for Spanish-speaking immigrants and their children to become fluently literate in the Spanish language is a denial of their equal rights as Americans. Moreover, pluralists believe, it is the strident demand that Americans hear only the English language spoken in public places that is a threat to national unity, not the presence of multiple languages in U.S. public spaces as such.

My critical analysis of both sides’ interpretations of the core “common good” and “justice” values in this debate led me to conclude (in Schmidt, 2000) that the pluralists are more correct than the assimilationists in regard to the best approach to immigrant settlement policy in the United States. This conclusion was reached on the basis of an analysis – drawing on the literatures of political philosophy, history, and public policy – of both the core values at stake regarding this question (i.e., equality as the core meaning in the justice frame, and national unity as the core meaning in the common good frame), but also in regard to the values at stake in an appropriate understanding of the social and historical context in which immigration to the United States takes place today. This is not the place to replicate this analysis, but I will briefly summarize my reasoning regarding the meanings embedded in the opposing camps’ understandings of the social and historical context of contemporary U.S. immigration.
In terms of social and historical context, U.S. assimilationists base their moral claim in favor of English language assimilation on the bases that (1) the United States is an English-speaking country, and (2) immigrants are voluntary new members of this English-speaking country, and as such they have a moral and political obligation to adapt their linguistic behavior to their new context. In contrast, pluralists argue that (1) while English has been the dominant language in the U.S. since its founding as an independent country, it has never been the sole language of the American people; and moreover, many non-English speakers – especially Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans – initially became Americans not through voluntary immigration but through conquest and annexation. Hence (2), when Spanish-speaking immigrants voluntarily move to the United States, they often become part of a long existing ethno-racial community (labeled “Latinos” or “Hispanics” in the U.S.) with numerous Spanish-speaking enclaves. While English language fluency will certainly enhance such immigrants’ opportunities for social mobility, there is no justification for the belief that they have a moral obligation to substitute English for their native language for English. Indeed, there is much more justification for an immigrant settlement policy aimed at bilingual fluency in both Spanish and English.

At stake here on both sides is a dispute regarding a question of justice: namely, what are the reciprocal obligations of both immigrants and the host society in relation to the cultural adaptation of immigrants – especially Spanish-speaking immigrants – to their new home in the United States? At bottom, then, this is a dispute over the appropriate understanding of the value of reciprocity that should be in play in the immigrant/host society relationship. My own critical analysis of the question leads me to believe that most policy makers and most members of the dominant Anglo public in the United States have a mistaken understanding of reciprocity on this issue.

The question is one of fairness. Immigrants surely do have an obligation to make various adjustments when they move to a new country, and it is doubtful that many of them would dispute this obligation. And one of these obligations is surely to learn how to communicate effectively with the members of one’s new country. But an accurate understanding of U.S. history should lead one to recognize that the pluralists are correct when they point out that the United States has never been a solely English-speaking country, and that several significant Spanish-speaking communities initially became part of the United States not through voluntary immigration, but through conquest and annexation. Moreover, these communities have remained extant in several parts of the country since they were annexed in the nineteenth century. When Spanish-speaking immigrants arrive in the U.S. southwest, for example, they often make their new homes in communities in which Spanish has been a language in constant use since these communities were annexed to the United States. In the case of Mexican immigrants, moreover, immigrants settling in the U.S. southwest are living

5 Indeed, public opinion data on Latino immigrants shows consistently that nearly all of them agree that they should learn to speak English, and that they want to do so. At the same time, they also want to retain Spanish and for their children to learn Spanish. See, e.g., the Latino National Survey (2007).
in communities that were once part of Mexico itself, so there are long-standing ties between these communities.

When these considerations are added to those outlined above in the case study (regarding the social and political context of U.S. immigration policy) illustrating Step Two in the process of value-critical policy analysis, it seems to me there is a very powerful moral case for supporting the evident desire of most members of the Latino or Hispanic cultural community of the United States to adapt culturally to their new country through a pluralistic integrationist approach. That is, the best approach in relation to the cultural facet of immigrant adaptation is one that is bilingual, aiming to enable Latino immigrants to become fluent in the country’s dominant language, English, while also maintaining and/or developing Spanish language fluency and literacy. In short, my value-critical analysis of the moral claims made by each side in the debate over this issue leads me to believe that the assimilationist claims are not supported by an accurate understanding of the historical and social context of immigration from Latin America, while the pluralist claims are much more supported by such an understanding.

*Toward Comparative Value-Critical Policy Analysis.* In extending this kind of critical analysis to a comparison between different countries’ immigrant settlement policies, the question emerges on what basis moral and political claims in one country can be critically compared with those of other countries, often by policy analysts not from one or more of the countries whose policies are being analyzed. What can be learned from such a comparison? And how can this be done in a systematic and fair way?

Regarding the first question – what can be learned? – one of the greatest benefits from systematic comparison between experiences of multiple political communities is that policy actors can learn – and benefit – from the experiences of those in other such communities. This is a truth that has been known by both scholars and political actors since at least the time of the ancient Greeks (see, e.g., Aristotle’s collection of constitutions), who learned to benefit from the written and oral testimonies of those who had traveled to other lands and observed closely what other polities were doing in regard to the difficult tasks of living together in political communities. Similarly, systematically examining the strengths and weaknesses of a number of polities’ immigrant settlement experiences and policies can be highly instructive to those seeking to improve their own policies on this matter (see, e.g., Bloemraad, 2006).

What, then, of the bases for value criticism between political communities? A very fruitful response to this question, I think, is that of political theorist Joseph Carens (2000). One of Carens’ central arguments is that some of the most important questions of justice require close attention to the specific social and historical contexts of particular political communities, and cannot be resolved at a high level of abstract, universalist reasoning. His second central argument is that sometimes justice requires an “evenhanded” calculation of the distribution of burdens and benefits as between political subjects, and not the “neutral” application of governmental authority as privileged by most theorists of liberal democracy. That is, sometimes justice requires that not all those subject to the authority of government be treated exactly the same.
Exploring these arguments in relation to a variety of concrete situations – many of them in reference to questions of immigrant settlement policy – Carens draws upon and substantially reformulates Michael Walzer’s *Spheres of Justice* (1983) to suggest that it is useful to think about the appropriate norms of justice in relation to three concentric circles that signify three different types of situations calling for critical political judgment. First, the *outer-most circle* “contains minimal standards of justice applicable to all contemporary states, regardless of their own particular histories, cultures, or political arrangements. The theory is universal in that it applies to all, at least in the present” (Carens, 2000: 34). An example that Carens asserts on several occasions is a prohibition of government authorized, permanent and irreversible physical harm to children.

The second, or *middle circle*, “contains standards of justice applicable not universally, but only to contemporary liberal democratic states” (Carens, 2000:34). Carens’ point here is that there are a number of liberal democratic principles that have evolved developed over time, but they are neither confined to the experiences and cultures of specific singular political communities, nor are they universally believed or adhered to. Rather, they are shared among a number of political communities that, collectively, have contributed to the historical development of liberal democratic thinking and norms. Examples of this kind of norm cited by Carens include certain rights belonging to guest workers and the growing consensus in liberal democratic states that if the society is sufficiently wealthy, every person subject to its government’s authority has a right to a minimal level of health care.

The third, *inner-most circle* in Carens’ scheme “contains standards of justice that are intimately linked to the history and culture of a particular political community” (Carens, 2000: 35). Working within this third circle of justice standards, Carens says, will obviously require a deep and detailed understanding of the specific cultural communities and historical experiences of that particular political community. Carens’ examples for this inner circle include the specific racial history (including slavery) of the United States.

The point here is not to defend Carens’ specific formulation, but to suggest that it is possible to have a disciplined and coherent discourse on questions regarding the rightness and appropriateness of various value understandings undergirding varying positions in respect to immigrant settlement policy. Moreover, it is possible to engage in this discourse in a comparative way, giving reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of advocates for specific approaches to immigrant settlement policy, even though these advocates operate in separate and distinct political communities. There are standards by which such discourses can be evaluated, even though – again – it cannot be expected that any specific conclusions reached by specific value-critical policy analysts will be beyond dispute or contention.

4. Summary and Conclusion

To summarize, this paper has sought to provide a framework that might be useful for scholars seeking a comparative understanding of what is at stake in various countries’ approaches to immigrant settlement policy. The paper outlined three dimensions to
immigrant settlement policy, and then advocated that understanding the stakes in political controversies over this form of policy requires an analytic approach that engages in making political judgments about the adequacy and viability of policy advocates’ understandings of those stakes. The paper sketched out and illustrated a “value-critical” approach to public policy analysis that offers one way of engaging in making political judgments about public policy, and illustrated this approach in relation to immigrant settlement policy through several brief case studies. It is hoped that the paper has provided food for thought, and perhaps some useful suggestions, for other policy analysts interested in systematic engagement with these increasingly important political questions.

5. Sources Cited:


