Book Reviews

Handcuffs and Chain Link: Criminalizing the Undocumented in America. By Benjamin Gonzalez O'Brien. Race, Ethnicity, and Politics Series. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2018. 192 pp., $30.00 (cloth or Ebook).

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Most federal immigration policy books and scholars look to legislation and policy passed in the late 20th century as the introduction of a criminality frame to the U.S. immigration system. Benjamin Gonzalez O'Brien's book asks us to look further back in history, to 1929's Senate Bill 5094, which he argues was the first to attach "criminal penalties to undocumented immigration" (p. 2). Gonzalez O'Brien identifies this as a primordial policy that evolved into what is known today as the "crimmigration" system: the convergence of immigration policy with the rhetoric of criminality. Further, this early legislation created a path dependence toward punitive policies against migrants for their movement, but not employers for hiring them. Gonzalez O'Brien uses illustrative case studies and a historical institutional approach to argue his main theoretical point, that immigration policy has not been path dependent based on critical junctures but rather, on the critical failures of federal immigration policy. Critical failures are those attempts at radical policy change that fall short of their goals and thus, ironically, further engrain the very policies they were meant to change. One example is the failure of the 1986 IRCA to provide a comprehensive solution to the contemporary immigration situation, which led directly to a "return to and reinforcement of the immigrant-as-criminal narrative" (p. 15).

The second half of the book is a review of how these policies were framed by policymakers, shaping media coverage and the subsequent public opinion of noncitizens as criminals. Using content and text

analysis of floor speeches and historical institutional narratives, Gonzalez O'Brien shows the long history of nativist and xenophobic rhetoric in Congress regarding Chinese, Japanese, and Mexican migration and highlights modern iterations of these sentiments. Using a set of positive and negative frames, Gonzalez O'Brien shows these same frames in use throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Gonzalez O'Brien shows the same frames of immigrants as hordes, waves, and threats have evolved with American immigration policy but not disappeared. He uses text analysis to show the mostly negative framing of immigrants by the media which introduces the books' final chapters about public opinion on immigration policy. The media amplify this rhetoric and frames which impact how media consumers perceive immigrants. It perpetuates the immigrant-as-criminal narrative among the public, eventually creating a feedback loop to government policy.

This book offers scholars many avenues for research. Gonzalez O'Brien acknowledges this manuscript as the start of future investigations, encouraging us to continue. One continuation of this book would be to generalize this idea of critical failures to other contexts. A big step forward would be to explain the movement of American immigration policy toward less restrictive or even permissive regimes, such as moving from the quota system to a family reunification system in the 1960s. Second, how can this approach explain the impact of subnational governments such as states, or other policy making bodies such as state and federal courts on federal immigration policy or their decisions toward less restrictive or permissive policy? Further, would this theory offer analytical leverage on policy toward other marginalized groups such as the criminalization of African Americans in the United States? To this third question, I would argue yes, this theory has the potential to illuminate many instances of political marginalization via legislation.

Second, the text analysis used by Gonzalez O'Brien shows an increase in negative debate rhetoric about immigrants in Congressional debates. Future research can build on this, identifying the causal mechanisms that link rhetoric to actual policy outcomes. Third, this book offers an opportunity to expand on media as the link between government frames and public opinion. For Gonzalez O'Brien, the media disseminate government rhetoric on immigrants to public opinion. Future research can verify this claim by showing how this actually happens and how this model is changed when the media act as agents, framing information. News networks are constantly reframing stories, as the simple result of language translations or for more political goals. If this institution is reframing

messages as well as amplifying them, this book offers a starting point for scholars can investigate this process as it pertains to immigration policy. Fourth, this book lends support for an elite model of public opinion, and it would be interesting to consider how grassroots models of public opinion might also affect immigration policymaking in this model. Previous scholarship has shown that a top-down model of public opinion, especially in the defused information context of the internet age, may form public policy concerns and opinions. Finally, this book offers future research a starting point concerning the determinants of immigration policy opinion that includes media influence but not as the most salient or central factor. Gonzalez O'Brien's logit regression of White opinion on immigration policy shows individual characteristics (personality, income, and gender) offer a more powerful correlation to immigrant criminality beliefs than media consumption. This correlation is important because if we assume media consumption is the most significant/salient indicator of anti-immigrant attitudes, then mitigating its adverse effects would be a simple act of consuming other media, which is not necessarily true.

The fundamental contribution of this manuscript, aside from its novel argument and thoughtful theory is starting a discussion about the relationship between rhetoric, opinion, and policy for debate between scholars of federal immigration politics and immigration federalism, as well as scholars of public opinion, policy making, and media. It would be an interesting book for classes with these foci as well.

Welcoming New Americans? Local Governments and Immigrant Incorporation. By Abigail Fisher Williamson. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018. 368 pp. $32.50 (paper).

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The terms "Arizona's SB 1070" and "sanctuary cities," often conjure images of state and local governments acting at the polarized extremes of either restriction or incorporation of immigrants. These extremes define much of the national media coverage and popular discourse