**The Causes of the Immigration Policies of North American Chief Executives: An Exploratory Analysis of Bill Clinton and William Lyon Mackenzie King**

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*Despite the crucial importance of chief executives for the immigration policy of North America, no extended scholarly study seems to exist comparing the migration-related decision-making of American presidents with that of Canadian prime ministers. To begin to fill this gap in the literature, this essay conducts an exploratory analysis of the roots of the immigration policies of two key North American chief executives, Bill Clinton and William Lyon Mackenzie King. Based on personal interviews, archival materials, and the secondary literature, the investigation finds that plausible causes of their migration-related actions include electoral self-interest/rational choice, ethnicity, class, wartime conditions, and racial ideology.*

Despite the crucial importance of chief executives for the immigration policy of North America, no book seems to exist comparing the migration-related decision-making of American presidents and Canadian prime ministers. To help fill this gap in the literature and generate hypotheses that may later be tested statistically, this essay conducts an exploratory analysis of two key cases, the respective immigration-related actions of American President Bill Clinton and Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King.

In the United States, a social-scientific literature already exists on the migration politics of the judiciary (Law 2010; Ocepek and Fetzer 2010), Congress (Gimpel and Edwards 1998), and the bureaucracy (e.g., Calavita 1992; Ellermann 2009), but very little research examines migration policy by the president (for virtually the sole exception, see Cox and Rodríguez 2020). In Canada, a specific focus on the prime minister tends to be missing; instead, Canadian scholars have mainly detailed the history of immigration policy without necessarily examining the mechanics of how key political actors arrived at their decisions in this arena (cf. Kelley and Trebilcock 1998). Previous investigators have compared politics, policies, or political institutions in the U.S. and Canada, but these studies hardly touch on immigration and rarely if ever look at how the chief executive, in particular, makes migration-related decisions (but see Monnot 2012).

No comparative, book-length study of immigration-related decision-making by American presidents and Canadian prime ministers thus appears to exist despite the crucial importance of the chief executive in formulating and implementing migration policy. Cox and Rodríguez (2020) do analyze the entire sweep of U.S. political history, but their study mainly focusses on whether presidents decide to enforce already-existing immigration laws. Beasley’s edited volume (2006) looks only at presidents’ public pronouncements on immigration, setting aside these politicians’ arguably more politically important vetoes, legislative proposals, and executive orders. Calavita’s (1992) work explains the bureaucracy’s actions on migration, not those of the president himself. Kelley and Trebilcock (1998) represents the state of the art for the U.S.’s northern neighbor, yet the book contains few specific details about why Canadian prime ministers made the immigration-related decisions they did. Such general political comparisons as Samuels and Shugart (2010) have already appeared, though immigration policy—and Canada—receive little sustained attention. Similarly, Savoie (2013) explicates the behavior of Canadian PMs but has little to say about migration. Perhaps the previous study closest to what I am proposing is Campbell (1983). Campbell’s volume does closely compare the U.S. and Canada, but it focusses primarily on contemporary leaders and barely mentions immigration.

Comparing Canada and the United States serves several purposes. Both are affluent, liberal democracies and major destination countries for relatively similar streams of immigration. One major difference particularly relevant to my study, however, is the type of executive. While the American president is directly elected, the Canadian prime minister derives his or her position as chief executive from the collective strength of his or her party in the House of Commons. At least superficially, one would expect that the Canadian executive—whose legislative initiatives invariably command majority support in the lower house of parliament—would be more likely to engage in immigration policy-making and to be more libertarian in her or his immigration-related behavior. A U.S. president, in contrast, should be less apt to try to change migration policies since she or he fears defeat in the not-necessarily-friendly Congress. Because the president is directly elected by an almost universally anti-immigration mass public, moreover, the American chief executive’s policy preferences should be more restrictive that those of his or her Canadian counterpart.

The main dependent variables of interest are: 1. the total number of relevant decisions of the presidents or prime ministers; and 2. the extent to which their Executive Orders or Orders-in-Council, proposed or signed legislation, and vetoes support or oppose an overall policy of free migration. My preliminary research suggests that political party is the main determinant of the position of the prime minister or president about immigration, but several important exceptions deserve further intensive study. To prepare for the later quantitative analysis, then, the book will include four chapters on critical cases to help generate other hypotheses.

Theoretically, my working assumption is that the most important variable predicting chief executives’ policies on immigration will be partisanship, broadly operationalized as left-of-center (i.e., U.S. Democratic and Canadian Liberals) versus right-of-center (i.e., U.S. Republican and Canadian Conservatives/Progressive Conservatives). A large historical and empirical literature shows that parties of the left tend both to be composed disproportionately of immigrant-origin voters and to support pro-immigration legislation (Nicholson and Segura 2006; Alonso and Claro da Fonseca 2011; Paperny 2015). Ideologically conservative political groupings, in contrast, are more likely both to be made up of old-stock “natives” (i.e., ethnic English in the United States or ethnic French, English, or Scottish in Canada) and to favor more restrictive policies (Higham 2002).

**Bill Clinton as Restrictionist Liberal**

The pair of chief executives studied in this paper represents an arguably exceptional case of the relationship between party and policy. As partisans of the left, American Democrat Bill Clinton and Canadian Liberal William Lyon Mackenzie King approved strongly restrictionist laws especially targeting Mexicans, East Asians, or Jews. Yet both leaders’ positions on immigration did not necessarily receive the support of the base of their left-of-center political parties.

The most important piece of relevant legislation during the Clinton presidency was the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). When Clinton signed it, he asserted that it would enhance “the rule of law by cracking down on illegal immigration at the border, in the workplace, and in the criminal justice system—without punishing those living in the United States legally” (Kerwin 2018), yet prominent immigration attorney Dan Danilov blasted IIRIRA as “the most diverse, divisive and draconian immigration law enacted since the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882” (Grable 1998). Indeed, this act contained a multitude of provisions, virtually all of which further restricted immigration, increased penalties for migration-related violations, or made life even more difficult for immigrants already in the United States. Focusing almost exclusively on “illegal immigration” (Macías-Rojas 2018), the legislation increased the number of Border Patrol agents by five thousand, added two more layers to the fourteen-mile-long wall between San Diego, California, and Tijuana, Mexico, and banned for years or life the re-entry of migrants previously caught in the country without authorization (United States Congress 1996b; Daniels 2004:244-247; Kerwin 2018). A new “expedited removal” section allowed rapid deportation orders for migrants without valid documents even if these individuals had not had a chance to present their case before an immigration judge or a regular court (Grable 1998; Cox and Rodríguez 2020:99). The legislation expanded the number and kinds of crimes that would make an immigrant subject to deportation or cancellation of permanent-residency status (Macías-Rojas 2018). And under IIIRIA’s 287(g) program, local and state police are called upon to enforce federal immigration law (United States Congress 1996b), which, critics argue, may increase immigrants’ mistrust of the police and impede generic law enforcement (Kerwin 2018).

Just a few months before signing IIRIRA, Clinton had also approved the welfare-related “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996,” a parallel bill that profoundly affected immigrant communities. In particular, the legislation stripped eligibility for Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid, and food stamps from even immigrants legally residing in the country. Most legal, recent entrants were also barred from accessing most forms of federal assistance for five years according to Title IV, “Restricting Welfare and Public Benefits for Aliens.” And an American citizen who sponsored an immigrant became legally obliged to reimburse the government for any “means-tested public benefits” that this migrant nonetheless received (United States Congress 1996a; Singer 2004). According to some sources, Clinton himself opposed barring non-citizens from welfare even if he approved of the general idea of welfare reform; when he learned that negotiators were unable to remove the ban from the bill, he shouted to an assistant that the legislation was “not about welfare. . . . This is about screwing immigrants and screwing me” politically just before the 1996 election. Despite bitter opposition from leading liberal Democrats, including some on his own staff, Clinton signed the measure into law but promised to try to remove the problematic sections later (Gillon 2008:178-179; Branch 2009:368-371, 414 & 446).

These harsh provisions in the immigration and welfare legislation of 1996 led to many documented cases of personal tragedies. Upset at the potential loss of her Supplemental Security Income payments, the 59-year-old, illiterate and disabled Hmong refugee Ye Vang hung herself a few months after the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 was to go into effect. Hers was hardly the only such self-killing among the Hmong community in Fresno, California (Xiong 1997) or among permanent residents in the United States in general (Pear 1997). The results of IIRIRA have been equally cruel to immigrants and their families (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. 2000). In one of the most notorious examples, American authorities deported 38-year-old Gerardo Antonio Mosquera Sr. “back” to Colombia in December of 1997 despite his lack of adequate Spanish skills and his having entered the US legally 29 years earlier. Under Clinton’s 1996 immigration act, Mosquera’s 1989 “aggravated felony” conviction for having sold $10 worth of marijuana to a police informant in Los Angeles made him deportable and potentially banned from entering the United States for the rest of his life. Despondent over his father’s sudden expulsion from the country, 17-year-old U.S.-native Gerardo Anthony Mosquera Jr. fatally shot himself in the head a few months later. American diplomats in Colombia even denied the senior Mosquera a temporary visa to attend his son’s funeral (McDonnell 1998).

Bill Clinton had his flaws, especially in his personal affairs, but he was not known for being especially racist or xenophobic (but see Heilemann and Halperin 2010:218-219; Sainato 2016). According to the President (Clinton 2004:v & 10-13), his maternal grandfather James Eldridge Cassidy greatly influenced his views on race. Bill “adored [his] grandfather” and even dedicated his autobiography to him for teaching him “to look up to people others looked down on.” A white grocer in small-town, Jim Crow-era Arkansas, Cassidy was “an uneducated rural southerner without a racist bone in his body” who would treat white and African-American customers equally. Decades later, the granddaughter of one of Cassidy’s African-American clients remembered that Bill Clinton, presumably with his grandpa’s encouragement, “was the only white boy in that neighborhood who played with black kids.” Bill’s mother Virginia Kelley (1994:28) likewise attributes his “enlightened views on race” to a beating she herself received from her own mother for having called an elderly African-American woman the N- word.

As Bill turned seven, however, his mom and her second husband moved with him from Hope, his grandparents’ home, to the more free-wheeling resort and gambling town of Hot Springs. This environment seems to have been the most multicultural of Clinton’s childhood even if few or any immigrants from Latin American or the Caribbean seem to have lived there. The President recalled the place fondly decades later (Clinton 2004:27):

For Arkansas, a state composed mostly of white Southern Baptists and blacks, Hot Springs was amazingly diverse, especially for a town of only 35,000. There was a good-sized black population and a hotel, the Knights of the Pythias, for black visitors. There were two Catholic churches and two synagogues. . . . I also met my first Arab-Americans in Hot Springs, the Zorubs and the Hassins. . . . David Zorub . . . came to this country at nine unable to speak any English and eventually became valedictorian of his class and governor of Boy’s State. . . . I also had a Japanese-American friend, Albert Hahm [more likely a Korean-American given his surname], and a Czech classmate, René Duchac, whose émigré parents owned a restaurant, The Little Bohemia. There was [also] a large Greek community. . . .

Among this last group came a more explicitly pro-Civil Rights influence, the family of Clinton’s Greek-American best friend in Hot Springs, David Leopoulos. The senior Leopoulos’ ethnic roots lay in Hellas, and he employed a largely African-American staff at his Greek restaurant in Hot Springs. Mrs. Leopoulos, who hailed from New York and was a devout Episcopalian, lectured the eleven-year-old Bill Clinton on the Christian duty to support the Civil Rights Movement, a lesson he seems to have taken to heart in the 1950s Arkansas of Governor Orval Faubus and the Little Rock Nine (Hamilton 2003:90-91). While a child in Hot Springs, the future president similarly discovered the intellectual treasures of the local library, where he developed his “interest in Native Americans” and his belief “that they had been terribly mistreated” (Clinton 2004:30).

Just before becoming president, Clinton had advocated for a broadly generous, arguably non-racist, platform on immigration (Clinton and Gore 1992:116-120). And even after he moved into the White House, he also spearheaded an explicitly anti-racism initiative. Formally entitled “One America in the 21st Century: The President’s Initiative on Race,” the program aimed to prepare Americans for the increasingly diverse society in which they would live in the next century. In announcing the initiative at the commencement ceremony of the University of California San Diego, Clinton urged his listeners to help “fulfill the promise of America by embracing all our citizens of all races” and called for a “year of honest dialogue” among people of different backgrounds (Peterson 1997). To that end, the anti-racism campaign’s leaders such as African-American historian John Hope Franklin and his colleagues (1998) organized town hall meetings around the country to promote dialogue among the different races and to foster racial reconciliation.

Yet even if Clinton himself does not seem to have harbored many racist tendencies, he was apparently willing to take into account the racially tinged, anti-immigrant views of many American voters. During his electoral campaign against the first President Bush, for example, Clinton criticized the administration’s “forced repatriation of [the overwhelmingly Black] Haitian refugees” back to that Caribbean island without a formal asylum hearing and instead called for “provid[ing] them safe haven” in the United States (Clinton and Gore 1992:119-120). Yet “the minute Clinton was elected, the intelligence started to come forward that boats were collecting on the northern coast of Haiti and were going to be launching as soon as he was inaugurated. . . . [Clinton and his staff] were consummate politicians and recognized very quickly how you would sink a presidency from the get-go if something like that were to set in” (Meissner 2017; see also Kephart-Roberts 2003:6). His administration therefore had the Coast Guard send Haitian refugees to camps in Guantánamo, Cuba, instead of allowing the migrants to land on the Florida coast. Yet privately, Clinton acknowledged that anti-Black racism was driving much of the public opposition to the Haitians (Branch 2009:191).

Instead of classic racism or xenophobia, the most likely motivation for his signing IIRIRA and even praising it as “landmark reform legislation” is electoral calculation (Rae 2000). The notoriously anti-immigrant Proposition 187 had recently passed in California and swept Republican Governor Pete Wilson back into office (Martin 1995; Ono and Sloop 2002). By the fall of 1996, most GOP and Democratic politicians seemed to believe that they needed to take a “tough stand” on “illegal immigration” to ensure their political survival. Clinton thus inked the bill few weeks before American voters decided whether to return him to the White House (Daniels 2004:242-247). His short-term calculus appears to have paid off, though one might imagine that he is not necessarily too proud of his actions today. As his INS Commissioner Doris Meissner (2017) put it:

Perhaps . . . the two most important” immigration-related issues leading up to the election in 1996 “were Proposition 187 in California in ‘94 and Pete Wilson risking his gubernatorial reelection on the issue of illegal immigration, and even though he lost, and many people believe that that ultimately was what handed California over to the Democratic Party ever since, it nonetheless was intertwined with Proposition 187, and though Proposition 187 didn’t ultimately get implemented, it was a really strong political signal around the country, in the way that California so often leads, to politicians and the Congress, and that vote was the same year that Congress turned to Republican leadership [in] the House, and Newt Gingrich’s Contract With America very much took a hardline stance [on immigration]. [Texas Republican] Lamar Smith[, who ended up co-authoring IIRIRA,] became chair of the judiciary committee in the House and right away they started working off of Proposition-187 kinds of ideas about strengthening enforcement.

Indeed, in Clinton’s mind, immigration had represented electoral peril even before 1996. Again, Meissner (2017) explains:

I think that’s the other really pivotal thing about Clinton. I think that he came into the presidency where immigration is concerned, totally apart from the law-and-order/crime issue, he came into the presidency with this very . . . almost searing experience when he was governor because his reelection race for governor is, I believe, the only bid for office that he ever lost. . . .[[2]](#footnote-2) The lesson that he took from [this loss] was that the decision that he had made to allow the Federal government to use Fort Chaffee for the Marielitos [some of whom were perceived as being criminals or mentally ill] was highly controversial and disliked in his state. . . . and he was viewed as putting his state at risk. So that [defeat] definitely stuck with him, and . . . politicians, if they remember anything, they remember the races they lost.

Even before his time in the White House, then, the immigration issue had bitten him electorally.

In his autobiography, Clinton (2004:274-287) is open about how he viewed the electoral debacle in 1980. President Carter had ordered Mariel Cubans to be housed in a military base in Arkansas with at least the partial, initial support of the state’s governor. But when the internees rioted, local residents perceived them as a physical threat and armed themselves in supposed self-defense (2004:274-278). “After the announcement that all the refugees would be housed at Fort Chaffee, [Republican gubernatorial candidate Frank D.] White had his mantra for the election: Cubans and Car Tags. That’s all he talked about for the rest of the campaign” (2004:280). “But White’s most effective campaign ad showed rioting [Mariel] Cubans, with a strong voice-over telling viewers that the governors of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin cared about their people and they got rid of the Cubans, but I cared more about Jimmy Carter than the people of Arkansas, ‘and now we’ve got them all.’ . . . the ads . . . were working. . . . I was sinking in the quicksand of Cubans and car tags [another prominent issue during the campaign]. . . . I carried only twenty-four counties. . . . The main effect of the Cuban ad was to take away voters who had been supporting me despite their reservations” (282-283). “The post-election polls showed that . . . [s]ix percent of my former supporters [from 1978] said [they switched their vote in 1980] because of the Cubans. With all my other problems an mistakes, if I had been free of either of these two issues, I would have won. . . . It was a near-death experience, but an invaluable one, forcing me to be more sensitive to the political problems inherent in progressive politics: the system can absorb only so much change at once. . . .” (2004:286-287)]. According to Clinton’s friend and chronicler Taylor Branch (2009:177), “the president was sensitive about the Cuban refugees [in 1994]. [During our interview, w]e discussed his vivid memories from the Mariel boatlift of 1980, when Clinton was governor. He ascribed his failed bid for reelection more to other factors, but it did not help that Cuban convicts and mental patients had rioted in Arkansas prisons.”

Even if one ignores the federal electoral environment in 1996 or Clinton’s immigration-related loss in Arkansas in 1980, however, certain elements of his political outlook did mesh well with substantial restrictions on international migration. In particular, his “New Democrat” emphasis on “law and order” facilitated immigration laws that focused on enforcement of strict rules rather than governmental support for the integration of newcomers. And, of course, it did not hurt that this theme played well with centrist and conservative Americans. As Meissner (2017) details, “Part of what made [Clinton] a centrist was a strong commitment to law and order issues.” These policies he “explicitly intended to steal from the Republicans.” During the 1988 election between Michael Dukakis and George H.W. Bush, “Dukakis, one could argue, lost as much as anything” over the “Willie Horton issue and ad[[3]](#footnote-3) and Democrats’ being looked upon as soft on crime.” Clinton therefore “made law and order issues, public safety, an explicit and important part of his outlook, and immigration fit into that.”

**William Lyon Mackenzie King as Restrictionist Liberal**

Perhaps the most xenophobic political leader in his country’s history, Canadian Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King was in charge during both the prosperous 1920s and the perilous Second World War. As chief executive, he made many restrictionist decisions, but the three most notorious were probably the banning in 1923 of almost all migration from China (Kelley and Trebilcock 1998:203-204), a moral blot for which even Stephen Harper (2006) later apologized, the refusal to allow the Holocaust-era Jewish refugees on the *St. Louis* to land in 1939 (Abella and Troper 2000:63-66), and the internment and expulsion of Japanese-Canadians and other ethnic Japanese during WWII (Whitaker 1991:13-14).

One possible root of such restrictionist sentiment was Mackenzie King’s apparently fervent belief in “scientific racism” or some variant thereof. King clearly did not view all “races” equally. During a 1947 speech in the House of Commons, for example, King (1947) explicitly opposed fostering large Asian populations in Canada:

There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale immigration from the orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population. Any considerable oriental immigration would, moreover, be certain to give rise to social and economic problems of a character that might lead to serious difficulties in the field of international relations. The government, therefore, has no thought of making any change in immigration regulations which would have consequences of the kind.

The Prime Minister likewise harbored racist views of ethnic Africans, referring to them as “darkies,” and as a younger man complained in his diary about “a Jew’s nature,” the “sucking of blood” (Levine 2011:286-287).

Another possible root of his scorn of immigrants and ethnic minorities is his privileged, upper-class background,[[4]](#footnote-4) which might have made him less understanding of refugees or destitute migrants. Grandson of Canadian politician and revolutionary William Lyon Mackenzie, the future prime minister grew up in comfortable circumstance even though his attorney father never seemed to earn enough actual income to keep up with the bills (Levine 2011:25-33).

One of Mackenzie King’s primary intellectual influences, especially on matters of ethnicity, appears to have been British journalist and historian Goldwin Smith, who helped lead the faculty at the newly established Cornell University in upstate New York until 1871 and then spent the remainder of his life in Toronto. In this largest of Canadian cities, Smith and Mackenzie King’s father soon ended up as next-door-neighbors. Here in the early 1890s, the elderly exile from Cornell would explain his views to his young acolyte over tea (Hutchinson 1952:19-21), and even in his own senior years, Mackenzie King would recall Smith’s adages such as that Jews “were poison in the veins of a community” (Levine 2011:375-376). In a 1909 letter to Smith, Mackenzie King gushed that “In nothing do I regard myself more fortunate . . . than in holding any place in your regard. . . . I shall continue to look in the future as I have in the past to your writings for guidance and assistance” (Mackenzie King 1909; Wallace 1957:234). During my research in Goldwin Smith’s papers at Cornell University, I counted at least 16 pieces of correspondence to or from these two men, which suggests that Smith and Mackenzie King enjoyed a robust, long-standing relationship.

And Smith’s works did contain much “guidance” on “racial” and related questions. In fact, his relevant views seem to be an extension of Arthur de Gobineau’s ideology of “Aryan” supremacy. During a discussion with his colleague Haultain in 1898 (1914:28-29), for example, Smith opined that the Chinese in Asia were not likely to achieve “great things” because they had been colonized. When Haultain responded that “all [of] Europe” was an “Aryan colonization,” the former professor simply repeated his claim that early Europeans reached greatness because they were “wild stocks” instead of colonized subjects (such as the Chinese). Besides his racist views of the Chinese and other Asian victims of imperialism, Smith commonly expressed extreme anti-Semitism (Altschuler and Kramnick 2009); in a journal article from the 1890s, for instance, he referred to Jews as “a parasitic race” who “absorb . . . the national wealth” and “eat . . . out the core of nationality” (Bendavid 1891). This essay was hardly the only time Smith voiced such prejudice (Holmes 1972; Rome 1983:129-194; Tulchinsky 1992; Phillips 2002:127-144; Mendelson 2008:11-54). Smith likewise ridiculed women, resigning his post at Cornell in protest over coeducation (Phillips 2002:97-98). And even the memorial plaque at the university’s Goldwin Smith Hall betrays his racialized thinking; the inscription quotes the donor as saying that his gift is “to show my attachment as an Englishman to the union of the two branches [i.e., Anglo Americans and Anglo Canadians] of our race [sic] on this continent [i.e., North America] with each other, and with their common mother [i.e., England]” (personal observation).

**Conclusion**

This intensive study of the policies and lives of these two chief executives thus suggests that the quantitative, second section of the book should examine the effects of several important independent variables. In particular, it will look at the influence of partisanship (that presidents and prime ministers affiliated with parties of the left will be more libertarian on immigration), electoral self-interest/rational choice (that executives will tend to adopt the immigration policy most likely to help them win elections or maintain political influence in the legislature, suggested by Anthony Downs and David Mayhew), ethnicity (that ethnic-minority executives will be more pro-immigration), class (that upper-class political leaders will be less sympathetic to immigrants), and racial ideology (that adherents of scientific racism or white supremacy will oppose immigration more). The model for the amount of relevant policy making will also rely on political time/structuralism (that chief executives will be more active in implementing their preferred policy when they are affiliated with a party at the height of its political power, formulated by Skowronek 1997; 2011; see also Tichenor 2002). My statistical models will likewise control for contemporaneous economic conditions and the proportion of foreign-born in the population. Overall, the quantitative chapters will try to predict the extent to which all U.S. presidents and Canadian prime ministers have supported immigration when issuing or approving immigration-related Executive Orders or Orders-in-Council and proposing, signing, or vetoing immigration legislation. These data would then be analyzed in STATA with some form of multivariate regression.

The three main sources of “data” for testing these hypotheses will be official Canadian and American statistics and publications (many of them reprinted in the online “Parlinfo” and “Orders in Council” databases for Canada and “The American Presidency Project” for the U.S.), autobiographies by and biographies about the chief executives and their immigration secretaries or ministers, and the personal papers of these same individuals. For the Canadian leaders, I have conducted research at Library and Archives Canada in the Trudeau, Macdonald, and Mackenzie King Fonds and have likewise examined the LAC’s microfilmed copies of most of Diefenbaker’s relevant personal papers. The remaining relevant materials exist only as originals at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre of the University of Saskatchewan, which I visited in 2015. For U.S. presidents, I have viewed Reagan’s, Clinton’s, and Johnson’s papers at their respective presidential libraries; the Library of Congress, meanwhile, has microfilmed Arthur’s few surviving writings. I have already interviewed Bill Clinton’s commissioner of immigration, Doris Meissner, as well as two American legislators who worked closely with Ronald Reagan on immigration policy: Alan Simpson and Ron Mazzoli. Unfortunately, Bill Clinton himself did not respond to my requests to speak with him about his immigration policies, and the other seven political leaders and their main migration assistants are now dead. Finally, in 2018 I followed up on relevant details of various chief executives’ immigration policies by visiting the Canadian Immigration Museum at Pier 21 in Halifax, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston, and the Mudd manuscript collection at Princeton University.

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   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Actually, Clinton had also lost to John Paul Hammerschmidt during their race for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974 (Gold and Hamburger 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Willie Horton was a convicted murderer who was temporarily released from prison under a Massachusetts furlough program when Dukakis was governor. While at liberty, Horton then raped a woman and stabbed her partner before being captured and re-incarcerated in Maryland. Because Horton was African American, many scholars view this Republican advertisement as a classic example of racist, “dog-whistle” politics (Roller 2016; Mendelberg 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I take a third hypothesis as insufficiently plausible for future investigation: that his racial views and immigration policies were imposed upon him by the spirit of his departed Irish terrier, “Pat I,” with whom Mackenzie King supposedly communed during countless occult séances (Levine 2011:4). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)