Abstract:
Do inclusive societies need closed borders? This problem has bothered political theorists for decades. The conventional view holds that in liberal democracies immigration restrictions are necessary for inclusive citizenship. By contrast, theorists arguing for a combination of inclusive citizenship policies with open borders assume that the two are compatible. This leads to an empirical puzzle: Is there a trade-off between the openness of borders and the inclusiveness of citizenship? Or, more generally, how are entry regimes and membership regimes related? There are three intuitive answers to this question. The first is that there is indeed a trade-off between the two, because it would be impossible for a state to admit unlimited amounts of immigrants and simultaneously grant them expansive rights and indiscriminately hand out passports. The second answer is that entry regimes and membership regimes are driven by the same political factors. Especially the power of right-wing parties should determine variation in entry and membership policies. The third answer is that entry regimes mainly respond to fast-paced market forces, while membership regimes are determined by path-dependent and slow-paced trajectories of national identities. Therefore, it can be assumed that they follow divergent logics and should not be correlated. Employing panel regressions to analyze 23 liberal democracies from 1980 to 2014, the empirical analysis lends support to the third answer. Contrary to the widespread trade-off assumption, entry regimes and membership regimes do not appear to be systematically correlated. However, the investigation also brings to light a limited and conditional positive relationship between the two: If strong far-right parties and center-right governments team up and succeed in restricting immigration policies, citizenship policies are likely to follow the same restrictive trajectory.