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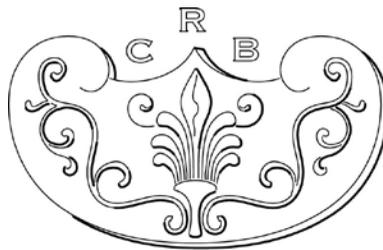
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Essay by William Voegeli

DIVERSITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

IN JUNE 2015 WASHINGTON POST blogger and UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh reported that his university had listed the statement “America is a melting pot” among examples of “microaggressions.” The administration defined these offenses as “slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.” The university admonished its faculty and staff that uttering such words indicates that “a White person does not want to or need to acknowledge race.” Similar terms of abuse, it advised, were “America is the land of opportunity” and “Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.” The examples were meant to help University of California employees recognize a microaggression when they were at risk of committing or suffering one.

By coincidence, news of the U.C.’s expansive understanding of “microaggression” broke the same week Hillary Clinton launched her disastrous presidential campaign. The *Atlantic’s* Peter Beinart recently speculated that Clinton might have defeated Donald Trump if only she had: denounced the “absurd” idea that “melting pot” conveys a hostile, derogatory, or negative message; urged universities to

“celebrate...Americanness” as well as multiculturalism; and acknowledged that mass immigration entails significant challenges. Even if some leftists “would have howled” at this big-tent treatment of the immigration issue, Beinart believes it would have been a shrewd, possibly decisive maneuver.

Autopsies

SENDING THE OPPOSITE MESSAGE—that no intelligent, decent American could possibly favor restricting immigration—was not, however, just another Clinton campaign blunder, like avoiding the state of Wisconsin for the six months before Election Day. It is, rather, one more item for the Democrats’ “It Wasn’t Supposed to Be Like This” file. Prior to November 2016, Democrats were confident that immigration was a political issue that worked in their candidates’ favor. The multicultural “coalition of the ascendant” would embrace, even demand, immigration policies that were welcoming rather than restrictive. The GOP’s pale, male, aging, raging coalition of the descendant would fulminate in front of its Fox News programs, lose election after election, and eventually die off, leaving behind a “majority-minority” America governed by a hegemonic Democratic Party.

Worried Republicans envisioned the same future. A post-2012 “autopsy” by the Republican National Committee warned that unless the GOP compromised on immigration in order to reach out to Hispanic voters, “our Party’s appeal will continue to shrink to its core constituencies only.” Former Florida governor Jeb Bush expressed this stance lyrically, telling one audience in 2014 that illegal immigrants were people who:

crossed the border because they had no other means to work to be able to provide for their family. Yes, they broke the law, but it’s not a felony. It’s an act of love. It’s an act of commitment to your family. I honestly think that that is a different kind of crime, that there should be a price paid, but it shouldn’t rile people up that people are actually coming to this country to provide for their families.

He added that when foreigners overstay their visas in America, “[a] great country ought to know where these folks are and politely ask them to leave.” It wasn’t clear how Bush planned to respond if those folks, politely or otherwise, declined the request.

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best,” said the opponent

who defeated Bush for the Republican nomination.

They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.

Many Americans, it turned out, *were* riled up about people coming here: enough for Donald Trump to win the GOP primaries after repudiating the autopsy report's plea for more tempered rhetoric on immigration, and then enough for him to win the general election.

As a result, it's the other party conducting autopsies. Pollster Stan Greenberg has admonished Democrats that every center-left political party in the developed world is now burdened by voters' suspicions that it isn't serious about enforcing immigration laws. In the worst cases, that suspicion proves electorally "fatal."

Moving Way Left

IT IS NO MYSTERY THAT IMMIGRATION has become an increasingly consequential issue, with ever higher political costs for getting on the wrong side of public sentiment. The 2010 census found that 40 million people living in America had been born elsewhere, 12.9% of the entire population. This was the highest percentage since 1920, and 2¾ higher than the proportion in 1970.

Two political scientists, Jeff Colgan and Robert Keohane, argued in *Foreign Affairs* this year that immigration's benefits to the U.S. exceed its costs, and that prejudice accounts for much of the opposition to it. Even so, they insisted that there is "some limit to how rapidly a country can absorb immigrants," a reality necessitating "tough decisions about how fast people can come in and how many resources should be devoted to their integration." Moreover, a legitimate concern for "national solidarity" requires acknowledging, "[i]t is not bigotry to calibrate immigration levels to the ability of immigrants to assimilate and to society's ability to adjust."

That such elementary points need to be spelled out reflects the fact that the Democratic Party, which has moved left on such issues as crime and gender politics since Bill Clinton's presidency, has moved *way* left on immigration. Barack Obama ran for president in 2008 on a platform that declared, "We cannot continue to allow people to enter

the United States undetected, undocumented, and unchecked." Eight years later, the Democratic platform's extensive discussion of immigration concentrated entirely on reforms that would make it easier to come to the U.S. or, once in it, stay. Unlike in 2008, the 2016 platform never even alluded to violations of our immigration laws, saying only that 11 million people are here "without proper documentation," which makes it sound like they're victims of a bureaucratic snafu or regrettable happenstance.

Even admitting that there are costs as well as benefits to immigration has become difficult and, as a result, rare. Liberal politicians, scholars, and writers all "face pressures to support immigration," in Beinart's words. Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, for example, spoke against "bringing in significant numbers of unskilled workers to compete with [unemployed] kids." The ThinkProgress website immediately rebuked him, asserting that "the idea that immigrants coming to the U.S. are taking jobs and hurting the economy...has been proven incorrect."

The reality is less tidy. Empirical and anecdotal data support the idea that the presence here of large numbers of immigrants with few skills has benefits but also costs, which fall most heavily on Americans with no more than a high school education, the group already hit hardest by automation and globalization. One claim adduced to argue that immigration has few bad effects and many good ones is that immigrants with limited education and skills—the ones described by Jeb Bush—flock to the arduous, dirty, dangerous jobs "Americans won't do." One test of this contention came in 2006, after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents raided six Swift & Co. meatpacking plants, arresting some 1,300 illegal immigrants. Swift responded by raising wages, offering bonuses, and recruiting more aggressively in the U.S. to staff its plants. The (now defunct) *Rocky Mountain News* reported the week after the raids that there was a line of applicants "out the door" at Swift's Greeley, Colorado, plant, all hoping for a chance to do one of the jobs Americans supposedly won't do. In any case, supply-and-demand remains operative *beyond* our borders. The *Washington Post* reported earlier this year that the prospect of millions of Mexicans being repatriated, voluntarily or involuntarily, because of President Trump's policies "means lower wages for everybody in [Mexico's] blue-collar industries such as construction and automobile manufacturing, where competition for jobs is likely to increase."

Apart from political and economic miscalculations, the Democrats' equivocal position on immigration became fanatical due to something more fundamental: the unfolding of progressive liberalism's inner logic. Taking Beinart to task for even suggesting that Democrats had suffered from mishandling the immigration issue, Dylan Matthews of Vox.com wrote that "any center-left party worth its salt has to be deeply committed to egalitarianism, not just for people born in the U.S. but for everyone." The egalitarianism that has come to insist on transgender rights, single-payer health insurance, and ending mass incarceration also requires "treating people born outside the U.S. as equals," which necessitates "a strong presumption in favor of open immigration." Honoring this "basic obligation of justice" means that immigrants from such countries as Cambodia, India, Mexico, and Nigeria often earn several times as much in the U.S. as they would have in their native countries, a development Matthews wants every liberal to support unreservedly. And if it turns out that the open immigration inherent in international egalitarianism does adversely affect some native-born American workers, international egalitarianism will solve the problem through "more domestic redistribution to address poverty and hardship."

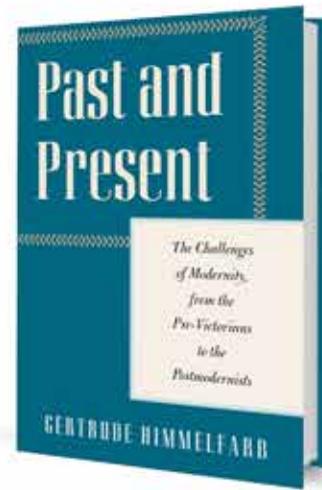
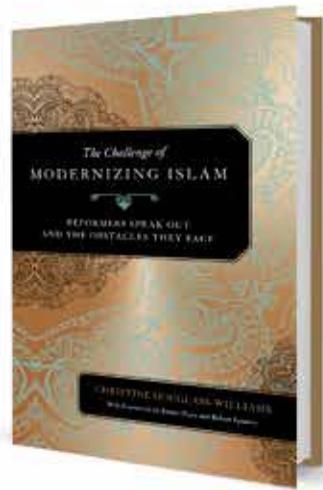
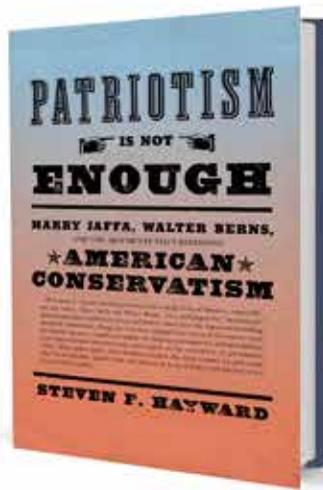
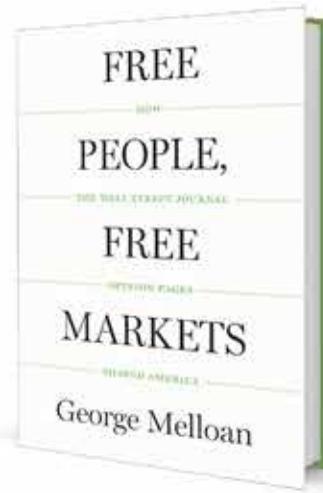
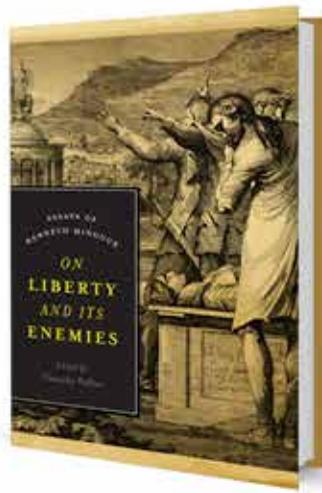
Is Nationhood Obsolete?

FIFTY YEARS AGO, WHEN LIBERAL WRITERS were either more circumspect or less self-aware, political scientist Joseph Cropsey had already discerned that liberalism culminates in globalism. Liberals, he wrote, regard "the dividedness of men grouped according to their nations" as "an arbitrary division." As a result, they reject patriotism as "unavoidably discriminatory," a form of "preferring one's own as such and, in the vulgar extreme, degenerating into the simple dislike or hatred of foreigners."

This implication of the liberal project was subsequently made explicit by prominent intellectuals and academics. The "holiday from history" between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the 9/11 terror attacks was especially conducive to hailing a new anti-, post-, transnationalist epoch. In 1992, before he served in the Clinton State Department and later became president of the Brookings Institution, journalist Strobe Talbott predicted that the 21st century would see "nationhood as we know it [become] obsolete." The emergence of a "single global authority" would mean that mankind had finally transcended all nations' anthropological basis: "a prehistoric band

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clustered around a fire,” united by virtue of sharing “a language, a set of supernatural beliefs and a repertoire of legends about their ancestors.”

Similarly, the “challenge and the promise of American society,” social scientist Richard Sennett wrote in 1994, is to act together “without invoking the evil of a shared national identity.” Two years later, philosopher Martha Nussbaum held that “patriotic pride” was “morally dangerous.” We should aspire, instead, to be citizens of the world, allegiant to the “worldwide community of human beings.” Political scientist Amy Gutmann, later president of the University of Pennsylvania, agreed: Americans should be loyal to “democratic humanism,” rather than to “the United States or some other politically sovereign community.”

Working from such premises, a strong presumption in favor of open immigration is inevitable. If slights and snubs to members of marginalized groups are unacceptable microaggressions, then forcibly excluding or evicting such people from a particular country is an unconscionable macro-aggression. Few margins, after all, are more consequential than a national border, which means few groups are more marginalized than those outside the border denied entry and inclusion by the group inside it.

Calling the Shots

THE “NATION OF IMMIGRANTS” RHETORIC about huddled masses yearning to breathe free has, accordingly, gone from sentiment to theory. Political philosopher Joseph H. Carens, in *The Ethics of Immigration* (2013) argues that “citizenship in Western democracies is the modern equivalent of feudal class privilege—an inherited status that greatly enhances one’s life chances.” To confer “great advantages on the basis of birth but also entrench these advantages by legally restricting mobility” is, he contends, “hard to justify.”

Another scholar, Arash Abizadeh of Montreal’s McGill University, arrives at the same conclusion by a different path: no exclusion without representation. He rejects the “unilateral domestic right to control and close the state’s boundaries.” Such restrictions are justifiable only if they emerge from “democratic processes giving participatory standing to foreigners” affected by border controls. Abizadeh calls for “differentiated participatory rights,” so that foreigners have a voice in determining a particular nation’s immigration policies while its citizens have more of a say on the question. The extent of

this differentiation, how much *more* powerful citizens will be, is as hazy as the means by which the question will be sorted out. Because equality is the fundamental democratic principle, there is no obvious way the logic of giving foreigners *some* say about policies that affect them stops short of giving them equal say, globalizing the “one man, one vote” standard.

The world’s most populous nation, China, contains fewer than 19% of the world’s people, which means any nation’s desire to keep foreigners out could be overruled in a worldwide quasi-polity if enough foreigners want to get in. Unchallenged sovereignty regarding secure borders would be one of the few distinctive advantages enjoyed by nations no one wants to migrate to, like Somalia. Nor is there any obvious reason to confine Abizadeh’s argument about participatory standing to questions of immigration. Exporters, for example, could use it to claim that an importing nation’s tariffs or health and safety standards are illegitimate if a business subject to them had no capacity to shape or thwart such

For those who like the old “us,” constructing a new one is a solution in search of a problem.

policies. Similar arguments could be made regarding copyrights and patents. Government by consent of the governed is, in this scheme, rewired to produce something quite different and much harder to realize: government by consent of the affected.

Not surprisingly, those who believe there is very little we can justly do to exclude immigrants think there is also very little we may demand of them once they’re here. To call America a melting pot is hostile to marginalized groups because, according to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, multiculturalists “reject the ideal of the ‘melting pot’ in which members of minority groups are expected to assimilate into the dominant culture in favor of an ideal in which members of minority groups can maintain their distinctive collective identities and practices.” Multiculturalism pervades liberal thinking in our time. As a result, assimilation is “a concept many on the left currently hate,” Beinart writes.

To assimilate is to make oneself, or be made by others, similar to those others, a

process that necessarily means becoming dissimilar from the people the immigrant left behind in his native land. The melting-pot metaphor implies that the assimilated will modify the culture they are assimilated to, rendering it as American as pizza pie. But that isn’t good enough. For the zealous multiculturalist, assimilation demands “that the marginalized conform to the identities of their oppressors,” to quote the *Stanford Encyclopedia* again, which “looks suspiciously like the erasure of socially subordinate identities rather than their genuine incorporation into the polity.”

Note that applying the logic of multiculturalism to the case of immigration requires positing that immigrants *are* dominated, oppressed, and subordinated. This assumption is consistent with the arguments put forward by Carens and Abizadeh: immigrants have the right to determine not only whether they are physically admitted to a new country, but the terms of their inclusion in a new society. One might suppose that the host nation, rather than conduct lacerating self-examinations about the meaning of immigrants’ “genuine incorporation,” would simply urge them to return to their country of origin if they consider themselves so grievously subjugated in the new one they chose.

Near and Far

BUT TELLING IMMIGRANTS WHO FEEL oppressed to go back home would be, for the multiculturalist, yet another abusive message to a marginalized group. Supporting cultures’ multiplicity doesn’t mean endorsing their equal rights or status. Multicultural egalitarianism is redistributive, aiming to strengthen subordinated cultures and weaken the dominant one. Accordingly, a crucial feature of leftist thinking in North America and Europe is “oikophobia,” philosopher Roger Scruton’s term for a consuming aversion to the near and familiar in favor of the exotic. It is, in other words, the exact opposite of xenophobia. Oikophobia helps explain why European feminist politicians, otherwise insistent on women’s equal rights and status, dutifully put on hijabs to meet with Middle Eastern leaders, lest they be accused of Islamophobia. And it explains why many Americans spoke matter-of-factly about traveling to Cuba before an onslaught of American tourists ruined the decrepit charm bequeathed by poverty and oppression, replacing it with a vibe as ghastly as Disney World’s.

Thus, the committed oikophobe believes there is no such thing as too much immigra-



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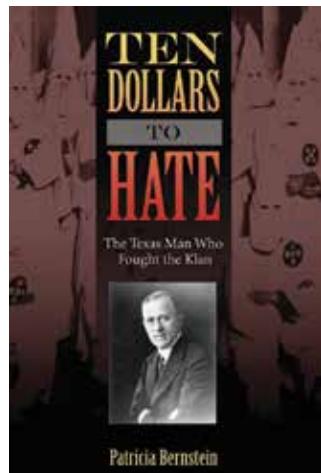
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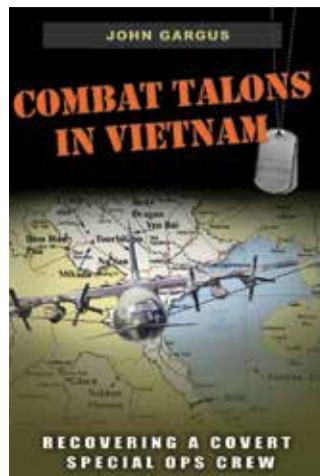
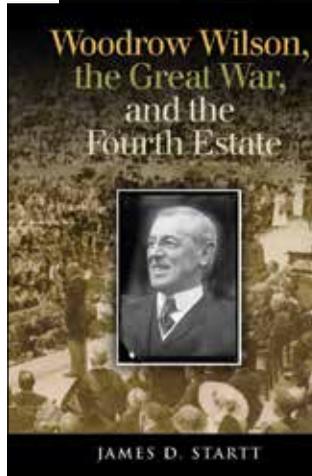


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tion, or too little assimilation. New arrivals make the dominant culture less dominant, providing alternatives that oikophobes celebrate in order to highlight the dominant culture's moral and aesthetic deficiencies. Illegal and unnaturalized immigrants may not be able to vote—though liberal activists are working diligently to circumvent that nativist impediment—but do alter the balance of political power in other ways. Immigrants can demonstrate, speak out, and be profiled in news stories about the mistreatment and sufferings of migrants who, as an act of love for their families, left their homeland to come to a new nation, only to find it utterly callous and bigoted. Immigrants advance the liberal cause by swelling the ranks of the victimized and aggrieved, adding new contestants for the Oppression Olympics who will elevate the level of competition, thereby increasing pressure on the dominant culture's smug overlords to repent and redistribute.

A New Us

POLITICS IS HARD, SO IT IS NOT ENOUGH to settle any question by ascertaining how Vox.com thinks about it in order to endorse the opposite approach. In the majority of cases, however, this method will yield a very good beginning. Repudiating the relevant leftist axioms does indeed lay the foundation for a sound conservative immigration policy.

In the first place, the nation-state is neither anachronistic nor contemptible but, rather, the basis for pursuing justice and progress in the modern world. Government, Roger Scruton argues, “requires a ‘we,’ a pre-political loyalty that causes neighbors...to treat each other as fellow citizens.” Without the “legacy of social trust” derived from this sense of belonging to a highly specific subset of mankind, political stability is impossible. In *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), John Stuart Mill defined a nationality as existing when “[a] portion of mankind...are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and any others—which make them cooperate with each other more willingly than with other people, desire to be under the same government, and desire that it should be government by themselves or a portion of themselves exclusively.” Nationality's sources may include various combinations of language, religion, geography, and ancestry, Mill argued, but the strongest one is “identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history, and consequent community of recollections; collective pride

and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past." The "mystic chords of memory," in other words, which Abraham Lincoln invoked that same year in his First Inaugural.

This tribal, pre-political "we" is not immutable: individuals or groups once considered "them" can, in every sense that matters, come to be part of, and ultimately indistinguishable from, "us." It does not follow, however, that the process of expanding the group united by common sympathies, or redefining what it means to belong to it, will necessarily occur in every instance just because there are those who want it to occur. Nor is it inevitable that the process will be fast and easy, or can be hastened and smoothed in response to hectoring and sermonizing. To the social scientist Richard Florida the "sobering" evidence argues that humans "sort ourselves into communities of similar, like-minded others," in a way that "appears to be built into the very structure of our social lives." Political scientist Robert Putnam was similarly chagrined to find that ethnic diversity and social trust are negatively correlated. Diversity causes us to "hunker down [and] act like turtles," he said. "And it's not just that we don't trust people who are not like us. In diverse communities, we don't trust people who do look like us."

Hundreds of American colleges now have an Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which monitors, celebrates, and agitates for both ideals. If Florida and Putnam are correct, however, the humble conjunction is wholly inadequate to resolve the inherent tension between diversity *and* inclusion. Nonetheless, Putnam believes that the opposition between the two can be overcome in a way conducive to large-scale immigration. He, too, rejects assimilation. Instead of telling immigrants they "should be more like us," Putnam says, we should "construct a new us." This implicitly oikophobic advice will make perfect sense to all who consider the existing "us" deficient or even reprehensible. Those who do not share this assumption, however, will view Putnam's new "us" construction project as a solution in search of a problem. For those who like the old "us" as it is, who fear that transforming it is at least as likely to be damaging as beneficial, and who cannot fathom a moral order where it is impermissible to expect immigrants to be more like us, the obvious solution to the problem of maintaining social cohesion despite the presence of unassimilable immigrants is to exclude such immigrants in the first place, and send those who can't or won't assimilate back home.

Caution Ahead

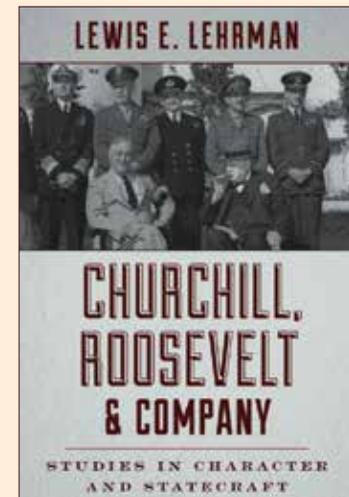
PEOPLE BOUND TOGETHER BY COMMON sympathy are not, however, required to regard the rest of mankind with antipathy. The plurality of nations—there are just under 200 in the world today—greatly reduces the need to pursue or impose one final, metaphysically correct answer to questions about how we should live. Different peoples, different nations, can live in different ways. Latitudinarian tolerance *between* nations gives rise to fewer frictions necessitating tolerance *within* nations. Nations that demand women wear head scarves in public can do so, and nations that consider such rules an affront to the equality of the sexes can follow *their* preferences. The absence of a large Muslim population from France, for example, would obviate debates over whether tolerating the hijab is a requirement of diversity or a violation of that country's *laïcité*, its constitutionally mandated secularism.

Indeed, tolerance itself is regarded differently around the world, to the point of being prized by some peoples and reviled by others. Keeping nations and peoples distinct creates fewer situations that pose the conundrum of whether, and how extensively, to tolerate intolerance. Caution and humility on this point push back against the neoconservative aspiration to make the rest of the world more like America, as in Iraq, and the multicultural one to make America more like the rest of the world, as in Berkeley.

Furthermore, if nations as such are necessary and good, and mankind's post-national future is neither plausible nor desirable, it follows that nations have a right to exist. This means each one's government has the right to wield its sovereign powers to protect the nation's territory and people. This exercise of sovereignty argues against recognizing any countervailing right of people to be received as immigrants by countries that, for whatever reason, do not want them. The admission of prospective immigrants is, rather, a matter for the people of the host nation to determine through deliberations that may incorporate a decent respect to the opinions of mankind.

But whether to accord that respect, and how to interpret those opinions, are questions for each nation to determine. None are obliged to justify, to foreign critics or rejected migrants, immigration policies that express the intentions and serve the interests of their own people. Fair and reasonable citizens will arrive at different answers to the prudential questions immigration policy entails: whether or how much weight to give

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to humanitarian considerations; and which admissions and exclusions are most conducive to the existing citizenry's security, prosperity, domestic tranquility, and social cohesion. But sovereignty means little if it does not mean that a nation is a kind of gated community, to use political scientist Diana Schaub's term. Even those who regret the metaphor find it hard to dispute: Brandeis University's John Burt acknowledged, in an exchange with Schaub on *CRB Digital*, that for anyone other than the existing members of a community to decide how prospective new members are vetted, and then admitted or rejected, "would make a mockery of the notions of liberty and consent."

People who agree on all these premises can, by virtue of assessing immigration's costs and benefits differently, arrive at various answers to the question of how restrictive America's immigration policy should be. Every policy course will affect, to some extent, a nation's destiny. But choices about immigration and assimilation are especially momentous for a democracy, since they shape the composition and disposition of the "we" who will go on to settle every other question.

Given the stakes, the conservative instinct toward caution applies with extra force to immigration. Cautious governance entails constant awareness that an immigration policy

that turns out to be excessively restrictive can easily be reversed, but revising an insufficiently restrictive one will be difficult and undoing its consequences even more so. Caution also means treating the successful assimilation of previous large waves of immigrants to America as a fact of history, not a law of nature. Past performance is no guarantee of future results, as the brokerage firms' ads say, particularly given that the biggest single source of immigration today is an adjacent nation, not ones separated from North America by thousands of miles and a difficult ocean passage. Nor did the Ellis Island immigrants come to a nation where the Americanization of newcomers was stymied by the fierce opposition of multiculturalists.

Conservatives are cautious not just about how to proceed but about how the world works. No matter how secure and admired a set of arrangements appears, it is always vulnerable to external antagonists and internal decay. America's experiment in self-government needs to be conserved because it is reckless to assume it will simply sustain itself.

This vulnerability bears on immigration policy because the concept of self-government includes...government. It's not enough for the governed to have a say if the government makes promises in bad faith. Donald Trump was able to use the immigration issue against both political parties in 2016 because both

were complicit in passing and implementing the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Democrats and Republicans not only failed to follow through on its promise of tough immigration enforcement, but treated the law as the template when they sought the *next* grand bargain on immigration, which would somehow address the enforcement failures of the previous clueless or cynical grand bargain.

A high rate of immigration jeopardizes social cohesion, on which republics are more dependent than any other regime. This threat is compounded when a large, influential portion of the intelligentsia dismisses or even applauds the prospect that immigration will unravel the social fabric. It is fitting, though perverse, that this erosion of trust among citizens should be accompanied by the feckless enforcement of immigration laws, which renders the government unworthy of the citizens' trust. Because of the way immigration policy has been debated and implemented, many of the people most appalled by Donald Trump's election victory are among the people most responsible for it.

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