

## ESSAY

# Borders of Class: Migration and Citizenship in the Capitalist State

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“It’s all about immigration. It’s not about trade or Europe or anything like that. . . . The movement of people in Europe—fair enough. But not from Africa, Syria, Iraq, everywhere else, it’s all wrong.”<sup>1</sup> This is how one person explained why he voted in June 2016 for Britain to leave the European Union. He, like many of his fellow nationals, believed that immigration pressure had brought the country to a breaking point. “Breaking point” was also the slogan written on one of the most controversial posters of the referendum campaign that Nigel Farage led on behalf of the U.K. Independence Party. The poster showed a crowd of refugees waiting to cross the Slovenia-Croatia border, with the caption, “The EU has failed us all. We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders.”<sup>2</sup>

The issue of how to come to a fair settlement that recognizes the claims of immigrants, both those of citizens in sending societies and in receiving societies, has been at the center of many recent debates on justice in migration. And while the academic debate is generally much more critical of the exaggerations and simplifications voiced by right-wing politicians and some mainstream media, some scholars reach the same general conclusion that Western states can and should curb immigration. “The immigration regimes of most liberal democracies,” argues David Miller, “are under extreme stress.”<sup>3</sup> Such stress, so the argument goes, is driven by a number of factors: first, the sheer number of migrants struggling to be admitted; second, the premium (because of a range of liberal democratic commitments to equality for all) that is placed on “getting one foot inside the territory”; and third, by “the anxieties, resentments, and prejudices of many native citizens toward many immigrants.”<sup>4</sup>

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Advocates of freedom of movement tend to respond to these arguments by questioning the very normative premises on which they are grounded. But they do so from a perspective that many have found lacks political bite. They suggest that, whatever we think about political reality, freedom of movement is a human right, border controls are arbitrary and coercive, and the distribution of privileges between rich and poor areas of the world is unfair given the basic moral equality of all human beings.<sup>5</sup> Rather than siding with either critics or advocates of freedom of movement, here I want to focus on one dimension of migration debates that both parties seem to neglect—social class. Even if we grant that immigration is a real concern for citizens of liberal states, we still need to know which citizens are being affected, by what measures, and how they can be empowered again. We might agree that open borders are questionable, but we need to see whether decisions on who to admit and who to exclude affect all migrants in the same way. My argument in what follows is that both defenders and critics of freedom of movement are wrong to assume that migration poses a problem of justice per se. My suggestion is that, whether or not it does, and to what extent, depends on who you are.

Borders have always been (and will continue to be) open for some and closed for others. They are open if you are white, educated, and middle and upper class; they are closed (or much less open) if you are not. The same applies to barriers to integration and civic participation. If we focus on the abstract value of freedom of movement, and its implications for border control, we are focusing on a secondary question that is unlikely to matter from the point of view of the politics of migration. It is time to return our focus to the connection between migration and social class, and it is time to start carving out political solutions that begin with the recognition of class injustice as a fundamental democratic concern. In defending the centrality of social class to debates about migration, I will focus on two worries that anti-immigration advocates often emphasize: one distributive, the other cultural.<sup>6</sup> In the following sections I will take each in turn.

## DISTRIBUTIVE CONFLICTS

As far as the distributive worry is concerned, those who adopt a restrictive stance argue that immigrants compete with natives for jobs, housing, access to health-care, schooling, and the like. Given the commitment of liberal states to guaranteeing access to a certain level of welfare to whoever resides in their territory, it is

natural that the state should exercise discretion on whom to admit and whom to exclude if it is to maintain those welfare standards.<sup>7</sup> This distributive worry seems particularly pressing when we turn to what average people think about the impact of migration on host societies. David Miller's influential contribution on the topic begins by citing opinion polls showing that 85 percent of the British public believes that immigration is putting pressure on public services such as schools, hospitals, and housing, and 64 percent believes that immigration has been bad for British society as a whole.<sup>8</sup> To be sure, Miller does not endorse these data himself, at least not at this point. Rather, he uses them as a platform to launch a moral inquiry on the fair terms of interaction between immigrants and natives, given a range of plausible commitments of the liberal national state—including guarantees of self-determination, human rights fulfillment, and a decent standard of living. If Miller is to be believed, these commitments would seem to pose a real trade-off between maintaining the welfare state and more open borders. Even Joseph Carens, an advocate of open borders who argues that the choice between the welfare state and open borders is similar to the perverse offer of “your money or your life,” admits that “in our highly inegalitarian world there is some evidence that welfare state differences play some role in motivating patterns of immigration.”<sup>9</sup>

What both critics and defenders of freedom of movement fail to emphasize, however, is the class-specific dimension of these concerns. The burdens of admission and integration are not shouldered equally by all immigrants or by all natives. To cite just one example, under the U.K.'s Tier 1 (Investor) visa program, those with the ability to invest two million pounds in the United Kingdom can come and stay in the country for more than three years, and those who invest ten million pounds may apply for indefinite leave to remain after only two years of residence (compared to five years for those who have reason to naturalize because of family ties).<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the inconveniences of assembling paperwork, waiting for a response, living with enormous uncertainty, and all of the other familiar troubles associated with immigration bureaucracy are unevenly distributed across the immigrant population. Here again, to take one example, if you are wealthy, you may use the “super premium service” for visa processing. For a fee of around ten thousand pounds (as opposed to the regular fee of roughly one thousand five hundred pounds, depending on the type of visa), a courier will visit you at your home to collect application forms and biometric information. There is no need to book an appointment or wait in line, and the whole file is processed within twenty-four hours (as opposed to three weeks for the normal service).

These practices are generalizable across the European Union and beyond. In the aftermath of the eurozone debt crisis, Cyprus offered citizenship to those foreign investors who had lost at least three million euros from deposits in Cypriot banks.<sup>11</sup> In 2012, Portugal offered a “golden residence permit” with fast-tracked access to citizenship and accelerated family reunification procedures to real estate and financial investors promising to create jobs in the country. In 2013, Malta approved a law that allowed wealthy applicants to obtain a European Union passport in return for investments totaling €1.15 million.<sup>12</sup> Even on issues of selection, immigrants are unequally burdened. Under the points-based admission policy pioneered in Canada and successfully spread around the world, including to Australia, Denmark, and the United Kingdom, prospective immigrants with higher skills, more money, and a demonstrably greater capacity to adapt to the host environment face significantly lower obstacles to admission and integration compared to their less wealthy, talented, or well-trained counterparts. Indeed, in the case of highly skilled immigrants, states find themselves competing for talent in a global race characterized by its own distinctive hierarchies whereby “the more desired the immigrant is, the faster she will be given an opportunity to lawfully enter the country and embark on a fast-tracked path to its membership rewards.”<sup>13</sup>

Given the selective admission practices of most liberal democracies, it is clear that the distributive concerns voiced by critics of freedom of movement only affect those migrants who are members of particular social classes. Similarly, social class is crucial when we assess migration from the point of view of natives and examine their grievances about immigrant competition with regard to public healthcare, housing, or schools. Here again, not all immigrants will attract mistrust and resentment in equal measure. Instead the animosity will fall predominantly on those with lower skills and lower incomes who are more likely to make use of a range of such state-subsidized services. After all, Arab or Russian millionaires living in London typically visit private clinics, send their children to expensive private schools, and make no claims to, say, public housing.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the kind of competition that leads to resentment is typically between poor working class natives and poor immigrants.

This is where both the diagnosis of why immigration is perceived to be a threat as well as the variety of suggested remedies go astray. Reducing the conflict between immigrants and natives to an identity conflict between *all* migrants and *all* natives obscures the class-related dimension of such conflicts and how

responsibility for those conflicts may lie with domestic employers and financial elites. Indeed, the focus on distributive conflicts between migrants and natives obfuscates the distributive conflicts and concerns of the host citizenry, which is itself far from homogenous. It also runs the risk of condoning the dominant xenophobic narrative fueled by right-wing media and political forces at the expense of a more progressive interpretation of what is actually going on in contemporary liberal democracies.

A rival, class-based interpretation of the empirical circumstances in which immigration injustices arise should not begin with such an isolated analysis, understood primarily as a conflict between agents who have different identities. Rather, it should examine the issue of migration in the context of wider social injustices appearing as a result of financial constraints on the funding of welfare states, the increase of sovereign debt, and the impunity of domestic employers and property owners who take advantage of the vulnerability of poor people (whether native or immigrant). Such an approach would note that working-class immigrants frequently become scapegoats for the inability of liberal states to deliver the promise of equality in the distribution of social goods to all of their members, in particular the most vulnerable. In short, it would be a discussion of how the crisis of the ideal of democratic solidarity to which many liberal societies profess commitment is linked not to the consolidation of identity conflicts, but to the pursuit of social and economic policies that leave poor working people with inadequate access to basic social goods.

The real problem, therefore, is not a trade-off between the welfare state and a more liberal immigration policy. And the most appropriate way forward is not to come up with admission and integration policies that will contain these effects by selecting migrants on the basis of particular skill sets or for their potential economic contribution.<sup>15</sup> Rather, we ought to begin with a different diagnosis focusing on the obstacles encountered by less affluent migrants and natives alike. Such threats are particularly pressing in the face of declining unions, the rise of populist political parties fueling anti-immigration narratives, and the lack of effective political representation for all those who lack adequate resources—both immigrants and natives.

On this rival analysis, then, migration-related distributive conflicts should be analyzed not as injustices in their own right, but as part of a larger account of social injustice that focuses on a common source of oppression for both vulnerable native citizens and immigrants.<sup>16</sup> And the solution will not come from responses that consolidate the divide between them. A solution is more likely to emerge from efforts to build political alliances across these two constituencies and from a firm

commitment to strengthening networks of solidarity and institutions fostering joint bargaining at both the national and transnational levels.<sup>17</sup> Taking up these challenges is the task of progressive political agents (movements, unions, and political parties) whose commitment to democratic representation and electoral success should not come at the expense of an appropriate interpretation of political reality.

So far I have discussed distributive problems by taking for granted two claims that critics of freedom of movement typically make in analyzing the conflict between migrants and native citizens. The first is that there is a genuine trade-off between immigration and the preservation of the welfare state. This premise can be, and has often been, contested. Empirically, immigrants are more often a resource than a burden for liberal democracies: They make a positive fiscal contribution even in periods of budget deficit, they fill shortages in labor supply, they compensate for a decline in fertility rates, and they contribute to the development of human capital in host societies.<sup>18</sup> The second assumption is that the unit of analysis for the distribution of shared benefits and burdens is (and should be) the state. It might be objected that the discussion on shared burdens would be different if we were to take as the relevant unit of analysis not the state but a more expansive community of transnational interest or even a cosmopolitan society. Both of these objections are plausible. I do not pursue them here because I am more interested in assessing the mainstream *political* interpretation of migration-related conflicts, the kind of claims that the likes of Nigel Farage or Donald Trump are inclined to make, as indicated in the opening paragraphs of this essay. Open-border cosmopolitanism is unlikely to move those politicians' supporters, the largest proportion of whom are working-class citizens who are convinced that immigrants pose a threat to their security and their jobs. Even if we deploy these objections, they are unlikely to gain much political traction on their own. The alternative interpretation based on social class that I have highlighted is therefore still crucial to challenge the political terms under which migration-related conflicts are explored in liberal democracies, and to reshape citizens' attributions of responsibility and political expectations.

## CULTURAL CONCERNS

The second issue that is often raised in connection with the impact of immigration on host societies relates to conflicts of a cultural nature. The emphasis here is on the costs of integration and the fear that cultural diversity might undermine the

bonds of trust and solidarity required for a functioning welfare state.<sup>19</sup> Many authors have spoken about the fair settlement of these conflicts in terms of a quasi-contract between natives and new members, a contract that requires both parties to take steps facilitating their mutual acceptance in the interest of the stable development of a shared political culture.<sup>20</sup> In the case of immigrants, one such step has taken the form of making naturalization conditional on the successful passing of linguistic, civic, or other competency-based tests designed to prove an immigrant's understanding and acceptance of important linguistic and social norms of the host society. David Miller, one of the most prominent advocates of these policies, argues that "in order to function as a citizen a person must also align herself with the political system of which she now forms a part."<sup>21</sup> His account on the matter is quite demanding: not only is a sense of compliance with the basic authority and norms of the host state required but immigrants ought to familiarize themselves with its "cultural landmarks such as feasts and holidays, artistic and literary icons, places of natural beauty, historical artifacts, sporting achievements, popular entertainers, and so forth."<sup>22</sup> They ought to do this, he argues, even if their aim is ultimately to change the societal culture or to mix it with elements of their own heritage and background. Thus, "a Muslim immigrant to Italy should expect that her female children will be allowed to dress modestly and to wear the headscarf to school but she should not object to the presence of a crucifix as a representation of Italy's Catholic heritage."<sup>23</sup>

This argument raises two wider questions, both of which highlight the neglect of the issue of class in recent debates about immigration. First, such expectations of cultural adaptation rest on a one-sided image of the national political community, and a rather idealized one at that. This narrative conceals how much the construction of a political identity is a matter of ongoing political dispute, if it is to be more than a celebration of past achievements. The reification and sanitization of political identity upon which the identity-based narrative relies runs the risk of endorsing an exclusionary outlook that stifles rather than encourages political activism. To keep with the crucifix example, its presence in Italian classrooms has been the object of vivid political contestation, but the main criticisms are coming not from members of other religions who object to it on cultural identity grounds. Rather, the staunchest critics are secular Italian citizens who interpret it as a symbol of continuity with the country's fascist past, as an attempt to undermine the separation of the Catholic church from the Italian state, and as an effort to suppress voices from the Left.

Thus, the construction of common allegiances is often a matter of conflict not just between immigrants and natives but also among natives themselves. And the conflict is not merely cultural but of an ideological and class-based nature. To require that immigrants identify with and accept the cross as the correct interpretation of national culture in this case reifies consent around the conservative side of the political debate. It also discourages an alternative interpretation of the state as the stage on which conflicts of ideology and social class play out, shaping the development of political norms by which citizens are bound.

Second, and even more pernicious, by recognizing the right of immigrants to maintain certain aspects of their way of life in the public sphere (such as wearing a headscarf) but simultaneously demanding that they refrain from questioning certain national traditions, we effectively end up relegating the potential objections of the immigrant to merely cultural objections. This in turn both weakens the interpretation of her criticism as political in nature and reduces the effectiveness of her civic participation. The result is that cultural measures that are supposed to facilitate integration and encourage political activism achieve precisely the opposite: they entrench cultural identification and remove major issues of political contestation from the domain of political disagreement. When political conflict is reduced to identity conflict, other major sources of political disagreement are either silenced or go unnoticed. This makes it much more difficult to offer an appropriate diagnosis of such conflicts and to identify the remedies required to respond to them. It also makes it harder to question the role of political elites in shaping public norms and maneuvering a process from which those with less education, skill, and income are increasingly *de facto* excluded.

One might argue here that the crucifix example is ill chosen, but that the cultural argument would be valid if it were more charitably formulated. One might say that even if we agree that the construction of a particular political culture is a matter of ongoing dispute, and that we should not take any particular interpretation of it as the settled one, natives should remain in control of the process and should set the terms of political debate. This is where civic competence tests for immigrants become important. But here again we ought to ask which natives are in control and where exactly the bar for showing good citizenship is set. If the degree of commitment required for participating in such civic debates is a minimal one, it is hard to see what exactly civic integration tests could measure and how they would show that they can measure what they purport to measure. If the standards of integration are demanding, it is hard to resist the objection that



the entire project is an elitist one designed to conceal the class character of the state and to silence dissenting voices. Therefore, while demanding standards of adaptation neutralize political objections, minimalist ones end up shaking rather than consolidating the belief that the civic project to which migrants must commit is a worthy one. Moreover, no matter how difficult (or not) the standards may be, it is not clear why we take it as a default position that the kind of knowledge required to exercise political judgment of this kind is one *all* natives have and *all* immigrants lack.<sup>24</sup> Surely here, too, the problem is that in the preparation for competent exercise of political judgment, levels of education, degrees of culture, and different social skills matter a great deal, regardless of whether one is a native or an immigrant. If we ask a highly educated immigrant to take the test, she is very likely to perform much better than a poorly educated native. If that is the case, either we should ensure that all citizens and all natives are tested to guarantee they can be competent participants in public debates or we should acknowledge, more plausibly, that different people will display different levels of interest in these matters regardless of how the relation to a particular political community is established in the first place.

## CONCLUSION

One final but important point is in order. Civic competence tests for long-term resident immigrants are reminiscent of an age in which the same criteria were deployed to restrict the franchise with regard to certain categories of people within a territory. Historically, working-class people, people with lower education, and people who only spoke dialects or were barely literate in the standardized national language were excluded from the exercise of political rights, including the right to vote. In the United Kingdom, for example, property qualifications mattered even after the recently commemorated Representation of the People Act of 1918, which continued to exclude women under thirty years of age and with less than five pounds in property. Then, as now, access to citizenship was a matter of class belonging. But while democrats around the world have successfully fought for the expansion of the franchise and against elitist citizenship, the danger to democratic inclusion now comes from the reification of national culture and the application of these antiquated restrictions to resident immigrants. The interpretation of problems of integration solely along identity lines and at the expense of social

class poses a serious threat to the ideal of democratic citizenship, turning the latter from a vehicle of social emancipation to one of elite domination.

If this sounds plausible, it is imperative that the overall conversation surrounding migration and immigration be resituated to acknowledge class as a driving factor in this process. One logical outcome of this would be that we should seek to abolish the cultural requirements laid out above for long-term residents, ending mandatory tests and other obstacles to full citizenship. Without a renewed emphasis on unconditional citizenship for long-term residents as both a matter of principle and of policy, inclusive democratic ideals of integration will be sacrificed and eventually forgotten.<sup>25</sup> The enforcement of national cultural identity and the perpetuation of a narrative of competition between poorer immigrants and poorer natives remains a project of the wealthy elite. It is a project that obscures the underlying class-based issues of justice at hand, and one that must be confronted in order to find lasting solutions to the crisis of liberal democracy around the world. If we fail to address the borders of class, there will be more Farages and more Trumps. And there might be even worse.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Paul Mokuolu, "I Voted to Leave the EU. That Doesn't Make Me an Idiot or a Xenophobe," *Guardian* ("Opinion" section), June 30, 2016, [www.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2016/jun/30/voted-leave-eu-racist-idiot-intolerance-brexiteers](http://www.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2016/jun/30/voted-leave-eu-racist-idiot-intolerance-brexiteers).
- <sup>2</sup> See Heather Stewart and Rowena Mason, "Nigel Farage's Anti-Migrant Poster Reported to Police," *Guardian*, June 16, 2016, [www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/16/nigel-farage-defends-ukip-breaking-point-poster-queue-of-migrants](http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/16/nigel-farage-defends-ukip-breaking-point-poster-queue-of-migrants).
- <sup>3</sup> David Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 159.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>5</sup> See, for example, Arash Abizadeh, "Democratic Theory and Border Coercion: No Right to Unilaterally Control Your Own Borders," *Political Theory* 36, no. 1 (2008), pp. 37–65; Joseph Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), especially ch. 11; Chandran Kukathas, "The Case for Open Immigration," in Andrew Cohen and Christopher Heath Wellman, eds., *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics* (Malden, Mass.: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), pp. 376–88; and Kieran Oberman, "Immigration as a Human Right," in Sarah Fine and Lea Ypi, eds., *Migration in Political Theory: The Ethics of Movement and Membership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 32–56.
- <sup>6</sup> There is a large literature on both these aspects of the discussion. For good summary and analysis of the standard critiques, see David Miller, "Immigrants, Nations, and Citizenship," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 16, no. 4 (2008), pp. 371–90; Will Kymlicka and Keith Banting, "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State," *Ethics & International Affairs* 20, no. 3 (2006), pp. 281–304; and Ryan Pevnick, "Social Trust and the Ethics of Immigration Policy," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17, no. 2 (2009), pp. 146–67.
- <sup>7</sup> The idea that immigration creates new obligations for citizens of host societies is central to a number of arguments defending the right to exclude. See, for example, Michael Blake, "Immigration, Jurisdiction, and Exclusion," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 41, no. 2 (2013), pp. 103–30; and Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst*, especially chs. 6 and 7.
- <sup>8</sup> See Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst*, pp. 1–2. Another recent book argues that 59 percent of the British population thinks that there are "too many" immigrants. See Paul Collier, *Exodus: How Migration is Changing Our World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 60. Focusing on the United

- States, Stephen Macedo has also argued that “there are reasons to believe that recent American immigration policy has had a deleterious impact on the distribution of income amongst American citizens.” See Stephen Macedo, “The Moral Dilemma of U.S. Immigration Policy: Open Borders versus Social Justice,” in Carol M. Swain, ed., *Debating Immigration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 63.
- <sup>9</sup> Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, p. 283.
- <sup>10</sup> For details on the Tier 1 (Investor) visa, see [www.gov.uk/tier-1-investor](http://www.gov.uk/tier-1-investor); for details on applying for indefinite leave to remain, see [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/663911/SET\\_O\\_guidance\\_notes\\_11-17.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663911/SET_O_guidance_notes_11-17.pdf).
- <sup>11</sup> See “Cyprus to Ease Citizenship Requirements, Attacks EU ‘Hypocrisy,’” *Reuters*, April 14, 2013, [www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-president-russia/cyprus-to-ease-citizenship-requirements-attacks-eu-hypocrisy-idUSBRE93D09720130414](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-cyprus-president-russia/cyprus-to-ease-citizenship-requirements-attacks-eu-hypocrisy-idUSBRE93D09720130414).
- <sup>12</sup> See Ayelet Shachar, “Dangerous Liaisons: Money and Citizenship,” in Ayelet Shachar and Rainer Bauböck, eds., *Should Citizenship Be for Sale?* (European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Working Paper no. 2014/01), p. 3. See also Owen Parker, “Commercializing Citizenship in Crisis EU: The Case of Immigrant Investor Programmes,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 2 (2017); and Ayelet Shachar and Ran Hirschl, “On Citizenship, States, and Markets,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 22, no. 2 (2014).
- <sup>13</sup> See, on this issue, Ayelet Shachar, “Selecting by Merit: The Brave New World of Stratified Mobility,” p. 183, in Fine and Ypi, *Migration in Political Theory*.
- <sup>14</sup> For empirical evidence that anti-immigrant hostility is much more pronounced when low-skilled immigrants are concerned, and that anti-immigrant sentiment declines when high-skilled migration is at stake, see Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox, “Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment,” *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 1 (2010), pp. 61–84.
- <sup>15</sup> Migration scholars often overlook the fact that the selection of skills might be an inappropriate way to respond to the perceived conflicts that arise out of migration pressures. While discussing the focus on immigrants’ potential economic contribution in setting up criteria of admission, Joseph Carens, for example, stresses that within conventional assumptions about the right of states to control their borders, such criteria “may be ungenerous but are not unjust” (Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, p. 185). David Miller also discusses the issue of skill selection vis-à-vis selection based on gender or race in *Strangers in Our Midst*, pp. 105–106.
- <sup>16</sup> For a discussion of this problem with regard to temporary worker programs, see Lea Ypi, “Taking Workers as a Class: The Moral Dilemmas of Guestworker Programmes,” in Fine and Ypi, *Migration in Political Theory*, pp. 151–74.
- <sup>17</sup> For a discussion of some of the challenges this poses, see Nathan Lillie and Ian Greer, “Industrial Relations, Migration, and Neoliberal Politics: The Case of the European Construction Sector,” *Politics & Society* 35, no. 4 (2007), pp. 551–81; and Ian Greer, Zinovijus Ciupijus, and Nathan Lillie, “The European Migrant Workers Union and the Barriers to Transnational Industrial Citizenship,” *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 19, no. 1 (2013), pp. 5–20.
- <sup>18</sup> For a discussion of many of these points, see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Is Migration Good for the Economy?” OECD Migration Policy Debates, May 2014, [www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf).
- <sup>19</sup> For a recent discussion of this literature, see Rainer Bauböck and Peter Scholten, “Introduction to the Special Issue: ‘Solidarity in Diverse Societies: Beyond Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Welfare Chauvinism,’” *Comparative Migration Studies* 4, no. 4 (2016).
- <sup>20</sup> See, for example, David Miller, “Immigrants, Nations, and Citizenship”; Claus Offe, “From Migration in Geographic Space to Migration in Biographic Time: Views from Europe,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 19, no. 3 (2011); and Liav Orgad, *The Cultural Defense of Nations: A Liberal Theory of Majority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- <sup>21</sup> Miller, *Strangers in Our Midst*, p. 7.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- <sup>24</sup> Joseph Carens objects to citizenship tests on the grounds that the knowledge they require is complex and multifaceted and cannot be captured by them. See Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, p. 59.
- <sup>25</sup> For a longer discussion of the normative importance of granting citizenship unconditionally to long-term residents, see also Helder de Schutter and Lea Ypi, “Mandatory Citizenship for Immigrants,” *British Journal of Political Science* 45, no. 2 (2015), pp. 235–51.

Abstract: In many recent debates on the political theory of immigration, conflicts between immigrants and citizens of host societies are explored along identity lines. In this essay, I defend the relevance of social class. I focus on two types of conflict—distributive and cultural—and show how class boundaries play a crucial role in each. In contrast to both defenders and critics of freedom of movement, I argue that borders have always been (and will continue to be) open for some and closed for others. The same applies to barriers on integration and civic participation. It is time to revive the connection between immigration and social class and to start carving political solutions that begin with the recognition of class injustice as a fundamental democratic concern.

Keywords: migration, justice, capitalism, citizenship, social class