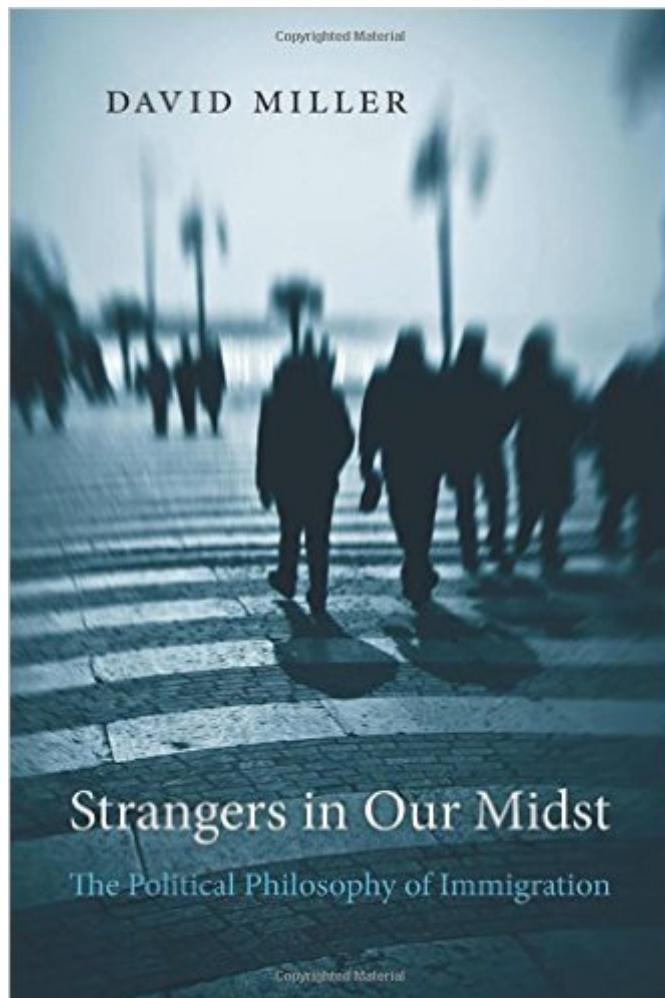


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Strangers In Our Midst: The Political Philosophy Of Immigration



Synopsis

It is not unusual for people in countries with limited job opportunities and economic resources to want to seek a better life in different lands. This is especially so for those who come from countries where they are treated poorly, discriminated against, or worse. But moving from one country to another in large numbers creates serious problems for receiving countries as well as those sending them. How should Western democracies respond to the many millions of people who want to settle in their societies? Economists and human rights advocates tend to downplay the considerable cultural and demographic impact of immigration on host societies. Seeking to balance the rights of immigrants with the legitimate concerns of citizens, *Strangers in Our Midst* brings a bracing dose of realism to this debate. David Miller defends the right of democratic states to control their borders and decide upon the future size, shape, and cultural make-up of their populations. Reframing immigration as a question of political philosophy, he asks how democracy within a state can be reconciled with the rights of those outside its borders. A just immigration policy must distinguish refugees from economic migrants and determine the rights that immigrants in both categories acquire, once admitted. But being welcomed into a country as a prospective citizen does more than confer benefits: it imposes responsibilities. In Miller's view, immigrants share with the state an obligation to integrate into their adopted societies, even if it means shedding some cultural baggage from their former home.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Miller finished writing the main part of this book before the estimated 350,000 immigrants and refugees crossed into Western Europe between January and August 2015. Immigration has become a hot political topic and a matter of intense and emotional debates not just in Europe, but across the world. Yet, how many people who hold strong views about immigration have really thought through the subject rationally and deeply? How many such arguments are packaged in anger? "Strangers in our Midst" is an important book not only for its deep and powerful arguments, its timeliness and rational voice will help us all understand immigrants, immigration, and our very own humanity. Miller begins his discourse on immigration by considering the concept of cosmopolitanism, the idea that free people should be entitled to travel wherever and whenever they wish if they think that they can find a better job or a more suitable climate. Should the receiving country give weight to such interests? He examines the limits of democracy, the extent to which a democratic country should extend the freedom its citizens enjoy, to the benefit of immigrants? He considers the distinctions between "economic immigrants" and refugees. Miller explores in great detail the application of political and moral philosophy not only to refugees but also to immigrants. Miller appreciates the dilemma that immigration creates in the minds of anyone thinking about it. He says, "Move in one direction and you can be accused of heartlessness toward vulnerable and desperate people; move in the other and you will be called an elitist with no understanding of the impact that immigration can have on the working-class communities".

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