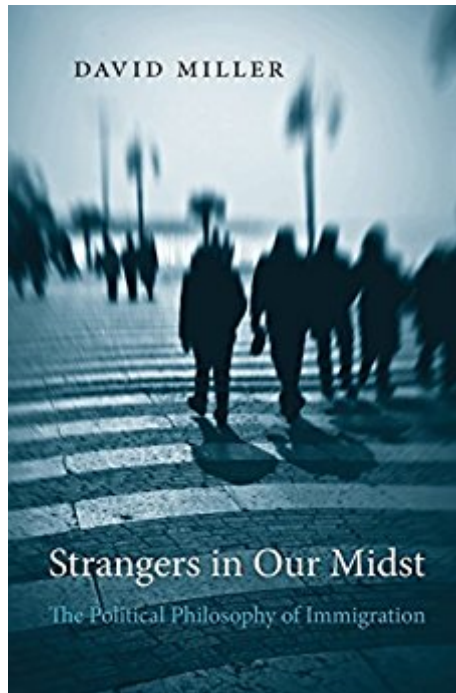




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Strangers In Our Midst



Synopsis

How should democracies respond to the millions who want to settle in their societies? David Miller's analysis reframes immigration as a question of political philosophy. Acknowledging the impact on host countries, he defends the right of states to control their borders and decide the future size, shape, and cultural make-up of their populations.

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Customer Reviews

Lays out strong case for compassionate self interest. Must read vs Carens

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." In order to be helpful in debates on this issue, Miller considers the positions and interests of not just the immigrants, the host societies, but also the people the immigrants leave behind. He considers a number of values, including what he calls, the "weak moral cosmopolitan" value which takes immigrants as humans whose rights cannot be ignored; he considers the value of the rights of citizens in a democracy to decide the future direction of their society; he considers the value of fairness in the distribution of benefits, burdens, and responsibilities in a society, and how an immigrant is expected to take his share in each of these; and finally, he considers the value of "an integrated society" where "people from all walks of life and from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds live in close proximity to one another, associate with each other for common goals, and interact freely and openly on terms of equality."

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