

THESIS

IMMIGRATION ETHICS: CREATING FLOURISHING, JUST, AND SUSTAINABLE
SOCIETIES IN A WORLD OF LIMITS

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ABSTRACT

IMMIGRATION ETHICS: CREATING FLOURISHING, JUST, AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES IN A WORLD OF LIMITS

Most political liberals and academics hold that the proper ethical stance on immigration is one of expansive policies or even open borders. It is assumed that it is unjust to limit the movement of humans who are merely attempting to improve their lot in life by seeking to make an honest living in a new country. This thesis argues that a considered ethical view on immigration in our overpopulated and environmentally overexploited world must take the ethical import of limits seriously. In the first chapter, I argue that the right of a nation's citizens to exercise self-determination and pursue the creation of a flourishing society justifies limiting immigration to the degree that is required to secure various societal goods necessary to a flourishing society, such as the maintenance of mutual regard and a robust welfare state. In the second chapter, I argue that present ecological, economic, and social circumstances demand that developed nations exercise that right and limit immigration from the developing world, due to significant and pressing threats to their near and long-term prospects for flourishing. Mass immigration will never solve the issues the developing world currently faces, but it sends the false signal that it will solve these issues and fails to signal to developing nations the cost of their often extremely high fertility rates. Meanwhile, mass immigration burns financial and political capital in the developed world that should be spent on sustainable development aid and family planning services. Finally, I provide a detailed rebuttal of a potential counterargument that the rights of

immigrants overrule considerations about limits and flourishing, arguing that the present regime of national parks and protected natural areas provides a precedent for the type of limits I propose.

“People must recognize that they cannot make up for failing to regulate their numbers or to care for their land . . . by migrating into another people’s territory without their consent.” - John Rawls, The Law of Peoples, pg. 8

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Introduction

The motivation for this thesis is the desire to contribute to the discussion of which ethical principles are necessary to build an enduring, flourishing society. Of central concern will be what role limits should play among these principles. Talk of limits is generally unpopular but, on a finite planet, it is simply irresponsible to not think about limits and their implications for how we should act as individuals, and the kinds of policies and projects we should pursue as a society. As David Attenborough recently said, in response to economic theories which predicate prosperity on the limitless growth imperative of each subsequent generation being larger than the last, “It’s an obvious ecological Ponzi scheme.”¹

Whatever one’s techno-optimistic belief in humanity’s ability to find ever more efficient ways to utilize, reuse, or reengineer natural resources, the world is limited in size and mass so, sooner or later, limits will be imposed on human activities. It is, however, obvious folly to let our economies and societies run on unregulated until they hit absolute physical limits. No one would question the wisdom of hitting the brakes before smashing into a brick wall. The fact that the brick wall will stop us *anyway* is clearly an insane reason to not think about when we should begin to hit the brakes. Of course, this metaphor is limited in that it only illustrates the prudence of considering limits for the purpose of *survival*. The target worth aiming for, however, is not mere survival, but flourishing.

Limits have played a role in ethical thinking and in conceptions of a flourishing human life since at least the ancient Greeks. Temperance was a virtue for Aristotle. Cities stopped being true cities beyond a certain size. However, due to the scale of the human impact on the world up until roughly the 20th century, thinking ethically about limits to the overall size of

¹Jeroen Spijker and John MacInnes, "Population Ageing in Scotland: Time for a Re-think?," *Scottish Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2013): 54.

human activity on the Earth did not present itself as an issue. Consequently, our moral intuitions and ethical systems have not been primed to handle the kinds of issues we now face in the 21st century, in this world of runaway growth.

Our populations and economies have outrun our ethical theorizing. We find ourselves in a position where our economic activities are putting unprecedented and unsustainable stress on virtually all of the Earth's essential biotic systems. We are in the midst of a crisis, yet we find ourselves generally unable to say anything consistently firm or even well-formed with regard to limiting the magnitude of our impacts before we push the Earth outside of the only climatic and ecosystemic parameters human civilization has ever flourished in. We've managed to get this (admittedly very impressive) industrial economic machine up and running, but the only reaction we can seem to muster in the face of this machine's unpredicted and unprecedented destructive side-effects is to ogle at the positive outcomes it produces, acquiesce to the inevitability of growth, and tinker a bit with the machine to increase its efficiency as it runs us off a cliff. It is well-past time we made a serious effort to think ethically about limits to human activity.

The present predicament which forces us to grapple with the ethics of limits has a double cause: population and consumption. While the idea of limiting consumption is extraordinarily unpopular, it does have some purchase in certain areas of popular culture (even if it often amounts to empty rhetoric - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!). Increasing standards of energy and resource use efficiency, while insufficient to address current environmental problems caused by economic growth, are certainly a component of a solution and have the advantage of being quite broadly popular (or, at least, not roundly disliked). Decreasing consumption and reducing the impact of consumption through efficiency gains, therefore, have been the subject of some ethical consideration in recent years. For this reason, my discussion will set aside the consumption

component of our growth problem and focus on the component that has been virtually totally neglected and is unpopular to the extent that it is almost taboo: population.

By this point, skeptics will have uttered *Malthusian* under their breath half a dozen times. However, as I stated at the beginning, I am concerned with what ethical principles will lead to an enduring and *flourishing* society. I personally tend to favor extreme versions of techno-optimism, but my concern is not how ingeniously we can cram as many people onto the face of the Earth as possible. It may well be possible to support hundreds of billions of humans on Earth by transforming it into something akin to the fields of human-pods depicted in the dystopian nightmare-scape of *The Matrix*, but I do not take such an outcome to be conducive to widespread human flourishing. I take it to be quite obvious that there is an optimum human population range conducive to widespread access to the goods necessary for human flourishing, grounded in the undeniable fact of the Earth's finiteness and the widespread understanding that humans do not generally flourish when they are forced to live within machine-like parameters of efficiency. Given the reasonable assumption that there is a range of human population size which is ideal for human flourishing, the farther outside of this range we push, the greater the detriment to human flourishing.

I can still hear the pro-growth anti-Malthusians protesting that gains in energy and resource use efficiency will compensate for any increases in population we're likely to experience. First, it is important to realize that just because Malthus' and Ehrlich's specific predictions were wrong, does not mean the Earth has no limits. Second, there is a sense in which both of them, Ehrlich in particular, were right. That is, both were keenly aware of the enormous impact of a rapidly increasing, unbounded population and Ehrlich, while wrong about the specific prediction of mass human starvation, seems to have been correct about our population

approaching the limits of what Earth's systems could support. Yes, the technologies of the Green Revolution averted a food-shortage crisis and consequent mass starvation, but at what cost? In recent decades we have become more and more aware of the enormously detrimental impact we have been having on the Earth. Extreme weather events are increasing in frequency, sea levels are rising, fish stocks are plummeting, dead zones in the oceans are expanding, and the sum of our economic activities have accelerated the rate of species extinction to 100 to 1000 times its historical background rate.² In less than half a century, we have wiped out over half of the global vertebrate population.³ Was Ehrlich actually wrong? What seems closer to the truth is that we've subjected ourselves to a fatal blow, but have engineered a high-tech exoskeleton that allows us to keep moving forward as we slowly bleed out. The current situation is not sustainable unless we are comfortable with wiping out virtually all life other than ourselves and our domestics and transforming the Earth's surface into a single massive engineering project, all while moving into an environmental and climatic scenario which we have no confidence will be conducive to the survival of human civilization, let alone widespread flourishing.

As mentioned above, the idea of population control is wildly unpopular. There is one dimension of population control, however, which, while nearly universally neglected or rejected by most political liberals and academics, is actually relatively popular among the general public. This method of population control is strict limitations on immigration into a country. The Japanese population has basically stabilized due to a fertility rate below the replacement rate and strict immigration policies. A different story is unfolding in the United States. While the

²Gerardo Ceballos, Paul R. Ehrlich, Anthony D. Barnosky, Andrés García, Robert M. Pringle, and Todd M. Palmer, "Accelerated modern human-induced species losses: Entering the sixth mass extinction," *Science Advances* 1, no. 5 (2015): 1.

³WWF, ZSL, and WFN GFN, *Living Planet Report 2014: Species and Spaces, People and Places*, Gland, Switzerland: WWF (2014), 4.

fertility rate among native-born American women has been below replacement rate for about fifty years, the population of the United States has continued to climb, due to unprecedented levels of immigration into the U.S. and high levels of fertility among immigrant women.⁴ A similar story may be told about Australia, Canada, and many countries in western Europe.

While the initial reaction of most is to see no relevance of national population to global population (“It’s just moving people around!”), there are several reasons to think this reaction is misguided. First, the sustainability agenda has objectives at many different spatial and temporal scales. Just as surely as the world has physical limitations, so do countries and regions. And the limitations of regions are variable for several reasons. Natural resources are not spread evenly throughout the globe. Different cultures place different values on their natural environments. Different indigenous flora and fauna and the ecosystems in which they are embedded have varying levels of resilience to human activity. And the list goes on.

Second, native populations of receiving nations with wide-open doors have less incentive to think seriously about population matters, or consider their own obligations and duties with respect to the issue. They are likely to feel that their decision to have no or fewer children, certainly an effort to be responsible with *both* the local and global environment, is at best a practically pointless moral exercise and at worst a wasted sacrifice. An expansive immigration policy that permits massive amounts of inward immigration shows citizens of receiving countries that their decisions to have fewer children for the sake of local loved landscapes and so that future generations might enjoy the wonders of nature are futile and that they will make no difference on the global scale. If so many other countries are having children as they please, free of any moral scruples or concern for limits, and are free to move where they please, depleting

⁴Jefferey Passel S., and D. V. U. S. Cohn, "US population projections: 2005-2050," Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center (Feb 11 2008).

natural resources at unsustainable levels wherever they can be found, a single individual is unlikely to feel their decision to have fewer children has any meaningful impact.⁵

The importance of immigration policy to an enduring, flourishing society informs the two chapters of this thesis. The first chapter asks the following question: Do nations have a right to control their borders and limit the number of people that they permit to enter and remain within their borders? This question is often answered by philosophers in the negative due to “demands of justice.” I will argue justice indeed has a role to play in our immigration policy, but that the rights of immigrants are not the only relevant factor in determining the just course of action. The rights of immigrants must be balanced against concerns about societal flourishing and the right to national self-determination, which I will argue is a fundamental human right.

The second chapter explores the importance of immigration to creating enduring, flourishing societies, in what I will call the humanitarian argument for reducing immigration. Many philosophers and the majority of liberals assume that humanitarian arguments favor the policy of expansive immigration policies. I will argue that there is another humanitarian case to be made for strict limits on inward immigration which emerges once we have appreciated the central role that the concept of flourishing must play in our thinking about the ethics of immigration.

My goal in this thesis is to help contribute to a more balanced and critical dialogue about the importance of limits in our ethical thinking and, more specifically, about the ethics of immigration. I aim to shift the focus in immigration ethics from a more or less “lifeboat” paradigm which focuses merely on basic survival, to a paradigm which takes the creation of enduring, flourishing societies as paramount.

⁵Paul A. Murtaugh, Michael G. Schlax, “Reproduction and the Carbon Legacy of Individuals,” *Global Environmental Change* 19 (2009): 14–20.

Chapter 1

The Right to Self-Determination:

Do nations have a right to limit the number of people they permit to enter and remain within their borders?

Most discussions about the ethics of immigration in academic and liberal political circles focus on the rights of immigrants to move and the responsibilities of receiving nations to take them in. In these circles, it is usually assumed that it is the duty of wealthy nations to take in as many immigrants as possible (especially from developing nations) and that the only possible reasons for wanting to restrict the number of immigrants into a nation are racism and xenophobia. In this chapter, I will argue that a variety of legitimate interests that are protected by the right to self-determination offer strong and ethically sound reasons for limiting immigration into a nation.

As an introductory aside and a way of clearing the air of the most discussion-plaguing controversies, it is useful to ask why racism and xenophobia receive so much attention in the popular liberal imagination as the only possible motivations for limiting immigration. I believe there are three primary reasons. A history of racist practices and institutions in Europe and the United States have made political liberals hypersensitive to anything that might be construed as being motivated by racist ideas. Consequently, liberals tend to attack and distance themselves from anything that could be so construed. The second reason is that the general public in the United States and Europe favor reducing immigration and the lack of action on the part of liberal politicians to address this public preference has led in some places to the election of politicians who are actually racists, because they at least have immigration policy proposals that align with the overwhelming public opinion (even if for the wrong reasons). Third, racists who want to

restrict immigration for racist reasons tend to be loud and offensive and this type of behavior is the favorite fodder of the 24/7 news industrial complex. Consequently, the racist views of the few are magnified and repeated 100-fold. It is clearly unacceptable to allow the factors just outlined to dictate the scope of the dialogue about the ethics of immigration. If we want an ethical immigration policy, it is important to examine all sides of the issue.

This dynamic has resulted in a dialogue about immigration ethics that generally neglects legitimate reasons for placing limits on immigration. These reasons can all be classified as interests that fall under the protection of the right to self-determination. Some attention has been paid to this right and to a few of the interests it protects by thinkers in the field of immigration ethics, but almost no one gives this right the attention it deserves and few seem to see the complex set of interests that are protected by this right. For example, Michael Walzer's work in *Spheres of Justice* concerns itself with the right of communities to exercise discretionary control over immigration for the sake of maintaining their character.⁶ Christopher Wellman, in *Debating the Ethics of Immigration: Is there a Right to Exclude?* argues for a right to restrict immigration based on the interest in freedom of association and the role this plays in self-determination.⁷ Ryan Pevnick argues that citizens have ownership rights over their 'collective accomplishments' including, among other things, their political institutions, and that their interest in protecting these accomplishments is protected by their right to self-determination.⁸ David Miller hangs the right to self-determination on a more complex set of interests including the pursuit of equality within a nation and the protection of national culture.⁹ What each of these thinkers have in

⁶Michael Walzer, *Spheres Of Justice: A Defense Of Pluralism And Equality* (London: Hachette UK, 2008), 62.

⁷Christopher Heath Wellman and Phillip Cole, *Debating the Ethics of Immigration: Is there a Right to Exclude?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

⁸Ryan Pevnick, *Immigration and the Constraints of Justice: Between Open Borders and Absolute Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33.

⁹David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) 86-87.

common is that they try to hang the right to self-determination on too narrow a set of interests – in most cases, a single interest. They each try to show how a single interest or narrow set of interests, e.g., the interest in freedom of association, justifies the right to self-determination and the decision to restrict immigration. This approach, I argue, fails to appreciate the full extent of what the right to self-determination is meant to protect. Further, the attempt to base the right to self-determination on a single interest or narrow set of interests leaves the right open to a host of objections which are precluded when one appreciates the full scope of what the right to self-determination protects.¹⁰ I argue the right to self-determination protects the interest in *building flourishing societies* and all that project entails. The characteristics of and conditions necessary to produce flourishing societies will be unpacked throughout the chapter.

The failure to recognize the connection between the right to self-determination and the creation of flourishing societies has led even the most prominent of thinkers in the field of immigration ethics to dismiss the importance of this right much too quickly. Joseph Carens, for example, fails to see this connection and dismisses the right to self-determination relatively hastily.¹¹ This chapter will detail the critical importance of the right to self-determination to protecting the basic interest in building a flourishing society.

A further introductory remark that should be made is a note on the kinds of reasons that motivate each side of the immigration debate. The kinds of reasons appealed to on the side of open-borders often include strong imagery, urgent needs, passionate humanitarian pleas, and short-term consequences. The kinds of reasons that I will appeal to in this thesis to support the

¹⁰See e.g., Javier Hidalgo, "Self-determination, immigration restrictions, and the problem of compatriot deportation." *Journal of International Political Theory* 10, no. 3 (2014): 261-282. and Bas Van der Vossen, "Immigration and self-determination." *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 14, no. 3 (2015): 270-290.

¹¹Joseph Carens devotes 3-4 pages to this issue in his magnum opus of immigration ethics, *The Ethics of Immigration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

restricted borders position are focused on more large-scale and far-sighted considerations such as the nature of strong, flourishing communities, the role that trust and regard play in shaping communities, collective action problems and the tragedy of the commons, and long-term demographic, economic, and environmental trends. However, the reasons that support the restricted borders side of the debate are no less concerned with well-being, humanitarian outcomes, and meeting urgent needs. Indeed, I argue they better address such concerns than the open-borders position due to being better grounded in empirical fact, long-term trends, and ecological reality. The ideas and policies necessary to build a flourishing society may lack the knee-jerk emotional appeal that a photograph of suffering migrants on the front page of the newspaper can have. However, restricting immigration will ultimately further the goal that every society should be aiming for: widespread human flourishing.

I. The Right to Self-Determination

Why think the right to self-determination is an essential human right? It is first important to define what I mean by “self-determination.” Some thinkers, such as Michael Walzer, prefer to think about this right at the level of the state, that is, as a right exercised by a state as whole.¹² I argue it is more useful to think of this right as one held and exercised by citizens of states and as an extension of their general right to freedom and individual autonomy. Political self-determination is a dimension of the general right to shape one’s own life. Focusing on the individual also avoids such issues as e.g., how a state that contains many cultures can decide which culture(s), value(s), or project(s) to favor, or how to weight the preferences of multiple cultures within a single state. The character of a state, should, on my account, be determined by

¹²Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 60.

the aggregate decisions and outcomes of negotiations among the members of a society via some form of representational government. Self-determination, then, is the process by which citizens, through the aggregate of their formal, informal, social, legal, and cultural actions exercise some degree of control over aspects of their nation's character and functioning.

That self-determination is an important interest for a community can be seen in a variety of prominent events throughout history as well as many human rights documents. For example, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights asserts “[a]ll peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” The African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights claims, “All peoples...shall have the unquestionable and inalienable right to self-determination. They shall freely determine their political status and shall pursue their economic and social development according to the policy they have freely chosen.”¹³

Further, the 20th century process of decolonization was largely catalyzed by the desire of the residents of European colonies around the world to self-determine and not have their future determined by a distant and detached imperial power, the interests and values of which did not necessarily align with the local people. Further examples of the importance of self-determination can be seen in any appeal to patriotism and self-sacrifice for the common good – Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country! These appeals presuppose and depend for their psychologically motivating force on a sense of self-determination, a sense of ownership, a sense that one's actions and decisions matter to the bigger picture. Who would care about doing anything for their country if they felt its future was totally outside of their control and determined by values and goals which they have no share in determining? Why e.g.,

¹³Javier Hidalgo, "Self-determination, immigration restrictions, and the problem of compatriot deportation," *Journal of International Political Theory* 10, no. 3 (2014): 262.

go without certain goods to help with a war effort if one has no share in determining the character and future of the country the war is fighting to protect? As a soldier or an astronaut or police officer, why risk your life, or even perform your function with integrity, if your efforts go to benefit a social and political system you have no vested interest or personal share in?

However, some may object to the right to self-determination being a human right on the basis that almost no one can actually exercise this right; i.e., self-determination is impossible or illusory. One might argue that only very few elite humans can exercise this right due to the fact that very few individuals' actions are significant enough to play any measurable role in shaping their larger cultural and political context. If it is practically impossible for almost anyone to exercise the right to self-determination it cannot possibly be a human right. To speak of a right requires, at minimum, the possibility of this right being widely realized. We can talk of individuals in developing countries having rights to things like adequate medical care and education even when these services are not yet available to them – here we mean that these things are in fact their right and it is ethically wrong that they don't have access to them. By comparison, one might argue that the right to self-determination is in principle impossible for anyone to exercise except perhaps the most powerful due to the very nature of collective action and the political systems of most modern nations.

There are at least two ways of responding to this objection. First, various programs and policies (e.g., voter registration drives, automatic voter registration policies, and shuttles to polling places) in democratic societies are designed specifically to combat political apathy and impotence among citizens. These programs and policies presuppose that it is a basic right of all citizens to have a say in determining the actions and policies of their country. That is, these policies and programs presuppose the idea that citizens can exercise some degree of self-

determination in a national political context is a coherent one. If it is impossible for almost anyone to exercise the right to self-determination then nearly everyone is irremediably always already politically impotent and policies designed to address this are the result of a confusion and are a waste of time and resources. If the right to self-determination is incoherent then it is only consistent to give up on all of these programs. Indeed, if self-determination is practically impossible, the idea that an individual's vote in a democracy has any power to determine the course of a nation is illusory and, it may be argued, the entire project of democracy is ill-conceived. The practical reality is that the plausibility and fundamental importance of the right to self-determination is called into question only when it is useful to advance one's agenda, e.g., within certain camps in dialogue about the ethics of immigration. In many other fundamental areas of ethical and political debate in modern democracies, the right to self-determination is taken as a basic presupposition.

The second response to the objection that the right to self-determination is not a right due to its unrealizability points out that for the individual, self-determination, like free-will (and as an extension of it), is a necessary practical postulate for normal, fully-functioning human beings in democratic societies. A host of some of the most basic human phenomena presuppose at least some degree of free will. Responsibility, decision-making, and goal-setting, just to name a few, all presuppose some degree of free-will. It is simply not possible for any human to genuinely (meaningfully, honestly, consistently) reject these and many other basic human concepts that presuppose some degree of free-will. Therefore, insisting that free-will is an illusion is, for the most part, meaningless for the individual actor's self-conception and self-governance. Further, even the attempt by an individual to take the denial of free-will seriously in her personal life will have unintended, unpredictable, and likely perverse consequences. For example, an individual

who attempts to take this thesis seriously in her individual life may decide to give up on setting any goals for herself because everything is already determined, *che sarà, sarà*. This is problematic ethically, because it leads an individual to lead a less virtuous and likely less fulfilling life.

Similar to the way it is not possible to function as a normal human being without the practical postulate of free-will, it is also not possible to function as a citizen of a modern democratic state while rejecting the idea of self-determination. The most basic concepts of citizenship presuppose it, one of the most important of which being the right and duty to vote. Further, and also like the free-will case, rejecting the idea of self-determination will have perverse and unintended consequences. If an individual decides that nothing she does makes any difference to the shape and direction of her social and political community, she is likely to do nothing to improve it and to instead act in the most selfish and opportunistic way she can.

Obviously far more can be said on this topic, but enough has been said in order to establish the basic analogy between the problem of free-will and the problem of self-determination on this point. That is, they are both necessary practical postulates. One final observation to make about the denial of the existence of both free-will and self-determination is that, in some instances, we can take this denial seriously and we can learn lessons from it. There are important lessons to be learned from the objective truth that the universe is a tight network of physical causes and there is no room for any other kind of influence. We learn from this, for example, that bad behavior should be treated more like a disease (needing treatment) than as the result of a sinful soul willing bad actions into existence *ex nihilo* (deserving punishment). Similarly, the influence that the vast majority of individuals can actually exert on the shape and direction of their nation is vanishingly small. Comprehending this reality is important because it

can prevent a feeling of crushing responsibility. It is true that each citizen's influence matters, but it is also true that the responsibility to exert this influence is shared by many others. In the case of both free-will and self-determination, we must find a balance between recognizing that they are both necessary practical postulates and that the nature of the causal background of each has important lessons to teach us.

Ultimately, I argue that the strongest response to the objection that the right to self-determination is a human right is found in practical realities such as those illustrated in the historical examples mentioned earlier. While the metaphysics of this right may be difficult to pin down, its social and political importance is impossible to deny. In addition to the historical examples cited above, some sense of self-determination is presupposed by all political organizations and all social action groups. Self-determination is a precondition for any act of civic responsibility. Further, we easily differentiate between societies where common people have some say in their governance, or some sense of self-determination, like Switzerland or Norway, and countries where they do not, like China or Afghanistan. And we differentiate not only by the material quality of life of citizens of these respective countries, that is, by the practical consequences of self-determination, but also by the value of self-determination in itself. Our sense is that citizens of e.g., Switzerland, are better off than those of e.g., China, (partly) in virtue of the fact that they enjoy a greater degree of self-determination. That is, we tend to regard self-determination as intrinsically valuable or as an end in itself in addition to its being instrumentally valuable. Perhaps one more point might be made: millions of people have fought and died for the right to govern themselves; millions more have chafed under a failure of their societies to allow them this. People do, as a matter of fact, value political self-determination.

Whatever the metaphysical status of an individual's actions within the context of massive collective action, individuals tend to place a high value on self-determination and require a sense of self-determination in order to be motivated to improve their society. I argue, then, that self-determination is an essential precondition (instrumentally and intrinsically) to the creation of a flourishing society. There are few things which can be deemed unequivocally good, but flourishing societies are one of them. Hence, self-determination is a fundamental human right due to the constitutive and causal role it plays in protecting the interest of creating the unalloyed good of flourishing societies.

In the case that one has some hesitation grounding the right to self-determination in the broader social concerns just discussed, it is also possible to ground the right in "thinner," more generic conceptions of freedom. The desire to self-govern, set one's own goals, organize one's own projects, self-determine, is an essential part of basic liberty. Indeed, the common personal liberties we enjoy in our individual everyday lives are greatly diminished, if not all but erased, within a larger context which is utterly out of our control and alien to our values and interests. Individual freedoms feel trivial within such a context. Who cares if one can choose to live in New York or Los Angeles, drink a latte or a cappuccino, or drive a Ford or a Chevy, when one doesn't feel oneself part of any larger project, or feels that no decision or action one takes will have any impact on their greater social and political context? Self-determination is part and parcel of the basic human right to freedom. One's freedom is considerably impinged upon when the character of one's social and political community is entirely out of one's control. The control might be taken from one by colonial rule, or invasion. More controversially, it might be taken from one by an enormous influx of immigrants from a culture socially and politically different

enough from one's own that it threatens to change the very fabric of one's social and political context in dramatic and unpredictable ways. Just ask the Tibetans!

Just as I argue the right to self-determination is founded on the basic human right to freedom, Joseph Carens argues that the right to immigrate is founded on the basic human right to freedom.¹⁴ We then have here a clash of basic human rights, not a human right on one side and a capricious unjust desire on the other, as Carens and many other liberal commentators on immigration seem to construe it. When rights clash, difficult and complex ethical dialogue is required and resolutions to these clashes never come easily or comfortably. Further, and crucially, shouting an *ad hominem* at one's interlocutor is not the way to arrive at the most ethically sound conclusion. Rather, it is an abdication of the responsibility to engage in serious ethical inquiry.

Like all rights, the right to self-determination must be qualified and limited against many other rights and concerns. For example, citizens of a state are not protected by their right to national self-determination no matter how deeply their identity is based on being a warring and conquering state. One state's citizens' exercise of their self-determination may not infringe on the self-determination of citizens of another. Further, as Carens rightly argues, actions of citizens are also not protected under the right to self-determination if they are motivated by racist, sexist, or other prejudicial ideas.¹⁵ A state's citizens are justified, however, in excluding or limiting immigrants if they feel their prospects for, e.g., creating a sustainable society will be diminished by failing to do so. They are not justified in excluding immigrants for being from a certain region of the world or for having a certain skin color.

¹⁴Joseph Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 236.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 179.

An issue in immigration ethics unique to contemporary democratic states is that they tend to pride themselves on being open, charitable, and generally friendly toward outsiders.¹⁶ Having developed such a national identity, it becomes more difficult, it is claimed, to limit immigration on grounds of self-determination, at least when appealing to such protected interests as Walzer's maintenance of the character or culture of a community. If one's society is characterized by qualities such as openness and tolerance, one might have more difficulty finding grounds for closing one's borders in the interest of maintaining one's identity of openness and tolerance. However, no quality, characteristic, or virtue can be embraced absolutely or in a vacuum, they must always be balanced against other values and considerations. This has been a standard in philosophy at least since Aristotle. Too much bravery isn't super-bravery, it is foolhardiness. So too, too much openness and charitableness isn't super-openness and super-charitableness, but different kinds of foolishness and carelessness. Therefore, even a society which prides itself on its openness is able to define a limit to this openness without jeopardizing the legitimacy of its identity as an open society. In fact, it may need to do so to preserve its open character.

Further, maintenance of character is not the only interest protected by the right to self-determination and contemporary democratic states certainly have an interest in, e.g., maintaining their social capital and creating environmentally sustainable societies. They also have a moral and pragmatic interest in not having a national history characterized by ecocide: the thoughtless and wanton destruction of local species and ecosystems under a regime of runaway population growth. The next step in this chapter is to provide a detailed sketch of the full extent of the interests protected by the right to self-determination.

¹⁶Phillip Cole, "Philosophies of Exclusion: Liberal Political Theory and Immigration," Edinburgh University Press (2000): 2.

II. What does the Right to Self-Determination Protect?

As mentioned above, the right to self-determination protects a variety of interests. These interests range from the maintenance of a particular culture to the interest in freedom of association. Different thinkers have focused on different interests which the right to self-determination protects. As I have also mentioned, I believe the best approach is one which attempts to do justice to the full range of interests protected by the right to self-determination. In this section, I will outline some of the interests protected by the right to self-determination as detailed by others who have worked to elucidate the foundation and scope of this right. While each of the thinkers I will mention give an incomplete picture of the interests protected by the right to self-determination, they do each provide an important piece that will be incorporated into the more comprehensive picture I will provide. The subsequent section will begin my focused account of the full scope of the interests protected by the right to self-determination.

Walzer argues that a political community may have an interest in preserving important aspects of its character or culture and that this interest grounds its right to self-determination.¹⁷ A political community may be justified in limiting immigration if it faces the prospect of levels of immigration high enough to destroy or disrupt distinctive or valuable aspects of its character. A political community is under no obligation to set an immigration policy which would rapidly and radically alter its public character. I believe that this is indeed an important interest protected by the right to self-determination, but that by itself this interest does not provide a sufficiently strong or comprehensive grounding to the right to self-determination. Community members engage in multitudes of value-laden projects at a variety of different spatial and temporal scales. Hence, their interest in self-determination is grounded in a variety of concerns

¹⁷Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 62.

and values that crisscross and undergird these various projects. The interests which ground self-determination are better captured by talking about such interconnected interests as, e.g., a sense of belonging, social capital, and environmental sustainability, as will be elaborated on shortly.

Alternatively, Collier highlights the value and importance of social capital.¹⁸ A community characterized by mutual trust, respect, or regard, and by deep social interconnection, is essential for institutional efficiency, economic prosperity, and general well-being and happiness.¹⁹ Some social models are better than others at producing mutual trust and regard and are consequently better at producing the listed goods. To the extent that excessive immigration can threaten this social capital, communities have an interest in limiting immigration. Hence, the preservation of social capital is another interest which grounds the right to self-determination.

If the assertion that some social models are better than others at producing certain societal goods troubles you, it is worth examining a longer passage from Collier in order to unpack this claim.

Migrants are essentially escaping from countries with dysfunctional social models. It may be well to reread that last sentence and ponder its implications. For example, it might make you a little more wary of the well-intentioned mantra of the need to have “respect for other cultures.” The cultures—or norms and narratives—of poor societies, along with their institutions and organizations, stand suspected of being the primary cause of their poverty. Of course, on criteria other than whether they are conducive to prosperity these cultures may be the equal of, or superior to, the social models of high-income societies. They may be preferable in terms of dignity, humanity, artistic creativity, humor, honor, and virtue. But migrants themselves are voting with their feet in favor of the high-income social model. Recognizing that poor societies are economically dysfunctional is not a license for condescension toward their people: people can as readily earn the right to respect while struggling against a hostile environment as while succeeding in a benign one. But it should put us on our guard against the lazier assertions of multiculturalism: if a decent living standard is something to be valued, then on this criterion not all cultures are equal.²⁰

¹⁸Paul Collier, *Exodus: How Migration is Changing our World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75.

¹⁹See also Robert Putnam, "Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences," *Canadian Journal of Policy Research* 2, no. 1 (2001): 13.

²⁰Collier, *Exodus*, 34-35.

Collier's careful and thoughtful analysis is an example of exactly what is needed in discussions of immigration ethics. It is perfectly coherent and intellectually respectable to talk of legitimate differences across cultures which lead to some cultures being better and some worse in certain respects by objective measures. However, as Collier notes, this is no grounds for cultural superiority. Just as with individual people, no culture is the best at everything. It does not follow from this, in the case of either people or cultures, that no one or no culture is better at *anything*. John von Neumann was better than me at math. Belgium is better at efficiently organizing social programs than Italy.

How can immigration effect all this? Presumably that may vary, depending on the receiver society, the nature of the immigrants coming in, and probably most importantly, the numbers involved. To the extent that large inflows of immigrants from countries with social models which do not produce the same high level of mutual trust or regard can jeopardize a nation's social capital, the citizens of that nation have an interest in limiting immigration. Similarly, to the extent that excessive diversity itself undermines mutual trust or regard, there may be an interest in limiting immigration (even if new immigrants do not score low on trust or regard).

In such cases, the argument for restrictions might go something like this. It is not right for a nation that has collectively built up a society characterized by mutual regard and whose economic and social well-being depends on this mutual regard to be forced to jeopardize this social capital with unrestricted levels of immigration. In fact, arguably, in such cases, current citizens have an obligation to limit immigration in a way that will preserve social capital so future citizens (including immigrants and their descendants) can enjoy the benefits of citizenship in their turn.

The last narrow account of the interests that ground the right to self-determination I will outline is that provided by Ryan Pevnick. Pevnick hangs the right to self-determination on the interest in protecting collective accomplishments such as public institutions and infrastructure. These can be thought of as the fruits of mutual regard or trust and efficient cooperation over time. Well-functioning public institutions and infrastructure are enormously valuable achievements and they only exist where individuals have managed to cooperate, invest, and put in hard work over long periods of time in complex positive sum games. Such public goods are the exception rather than the rule in human history and those nations that have managed to achieve them have every right to act, within reason, to ensure their continued functioning. Pevnick summarizes this historical process and its value as follows,

[T]he construction of state institutions is a historical project that extends across generations and into which individuals are born... [T]he value of membership in a state is very largely a result of the labor and investment of the community. The citizenry raises resources through taxation and invests those resources in valuable public goods: basic infrastructure, defense, the establishment and maintenance of an effective market, a system of education, and the like... [T]hese are goods that only exist as a result of the labor and investment of community members...²¹

Just as individuals have the right to protect the fruits of their own individual efforts, so too community members have the right to protect collective accomplishments. As with the maintenance of social capital, immigration may impact this in a variety of ways. High levels of immigration may jeopardize mutual trust and other forms of social capital that public institutions depend on for their functioning. Excessive inward migration can also stress public infrastructure from schools to trains and buses as immigrants tend, at least at the beginning of their stay in a new country, to utilize these public services without contributing to the tax base which supports them.

²¹Pevnick, *Immigration and the Constraints of Justice*, 38.

The purpose of this section was to briefly survey past attempts to provide a foundation for the right to self-determination in fundamental human interests. Each of the above accounts is valuable, but incomplete. In what follows, I will utilize and build upon these accounts as components of a broader and more complex fundamental human interest which provides a more secure foundation for the right to self-determination: flourishing.

III. Flourishing vs. Survival

The concept of flourishing has been touched on several times thus far. It has been argued that the right to self-determination is a precondition of flourishing societies. It has also been argued that the creation of flourishing societies is one of the only goals in life unequivocally worth aiming for. In the next sections, I will argue that the interest in working to build a flourishing society is an interest protected by the right to self-determination. Further, I will argue that the parameters necessary for widespread flourishing, from a certain level of economic prosperity, to a sense of purpose and belonging, to environmental sustainability, give a state considerable latitude in determining what its immigration policy should be. In so doing, I will fill out a more extensive definition of what flourishing consists in.

Before looking more closely at the specifics of what is entailed by the concept and pursuit of flourishing, it is useful to highlight the stark differences between a society which aims at survival and one that aims at flourishing. This difference can be highlighted by considering one of the most vivid thought experiments about immigration and a nation's attempt to survive, from Garrett Hardin's article "Living on a Lifeboat."²² It will be seen that the moment we begin to think seriously about societal flourishing, Hardin's famous lifeboat ethic begins to appear

²²Garrett Hardin, "Commentary: Living on a Lifeboat," *BioScience* 24, no. 10 (1974): 561-568.

woefully inadequate for thinking about issues of immigration. A shift from thinking about survival to thinking about flourishing also helps to address some of the most powerful challenges to Hardin's lifeboat ethics.

Hardin challenges us to think about nations as lifeboats with limited capacity. A lifeboat can support some limited number of people and if more people decide to get on board than what the maximum capacity of the lifeboat is, everyone perishes. Further, it is never prudent to fill a lifeboat to its absolute maximum capacity; a safety margin should always be maintained. On a lifeboat designed to hold a maximum of 50 people, it is not wise to fill the boat with more than 40 or 45 individuals. While this thought experiment might be a useful tool for thinking about immigration in certain hypothetical contexts, some of its basic presuppositions are inadequate for thinking about immigration in the real world where individuals are aiming to create societies characterized by flourishing.

The first thing to note about Hardin's thought experiment is that it assumes a permanent crisis context in which the highest value (perhaps the sole value) is survival. If all nations are like lifeboats, then all nations are the result of a recent calamity and are all merely trying to keep their heads above water. This is neither descriptively true of all nations nor normatively desirable (we *shouldn't* think of nations in this way by default). Many nations are no longer at a stage where they aim merely to survive and all nations (rightfully) have ambitions for the future that go far beyond meeting basic needs. Some European nations, for example, are well on the way toward creating egalitarian societies characterized by widespread well-being, the advancement of the arts and sciences, and a variety of other praiseworthy social goals. This is shown, e.g., by their rankings atop the UN's Human Development Index.²³ A combination of

²³Selima Jāhāna, *Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone*, United Nations Publications (2016) <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

efficient government, scientific and technological progress, and social milieus characterized by mutual regard have enabled the populations within countries like Norway and Switzerland to cooperate and engage in positive sum games that have resulted in some of the happiest, most peaceful, and most egalitarian societies in history. These nations have achieved unprecedented levels of flourishing and have demonstrated the kinds of goals societies *should* pursue.

Once one appreciates that many nations are not accurately described as being like lifeboats and that no nation is *obliged* to think of itself as a lifeboat, Hardin's thought experiment is forced to change considerably. A nation is not a life-support device designed to keep as many humans (and only humans) breathing as possible. A nation is a unique combination of naturally occurring and culturally constructed elements. A nation is the locus of complex and meaningful human social life and of the lives of countless other non-human species. A nation isn't a rickety boat, adrift at sea, aiming for nothing more than to buoy its human (and only human) passengers above the waves. A nation is a *home* to people, animals, and cultures.

How far, then, can Hardin's lifeboat ethics get us? Not far at all. Once we begin to appreciate that the appropriate societal goal is flourishing and not survival and that the metric for flourishing is quality of lives (human and non-human), not mere quantity of lives, the lifeboat picture loses nearly all of its power as a tool for sensibly aiding our thinking about immigration. To think about a nation as a lifeboat whose maximum capacity we are obliged to get as close to as possible is to totally disregard the health of ecosystems, the lives of non-human species, the common human need for open spaces and natural areas for recreation, the social and economic benefits that accrue from having a relatively stable population, and the societal and human importance of using resources on things other than meeting basic needs.

Further, conceiving of the world as a continuous crisis scenario creates an unsustainable and counterproductive benefactor-beneficiary or savior-victim global dynamic where developed nations bear the sole responsibility of saving developing nations from their circumstances and the developing nations have no responsibility to work toward building flourishing societies for themselves (Hardin is aware of this last problem). This is not just condescending toward the citizens of developing countries. It also fails to demand of them what we should demand of all people—a commitment to justice and sustainability.

Once the lifeboat scenario has been abandoned for something more realistic by taking the legitimate goal of building flourishing societies seriously, a crucial objection to limiting immigration can be addressed. Hardin succinctly summarizes this objection thus,

We may be tempted to try to live by the Christian ideal of being "our brother's keeper," or by the Marxian ideal (Marx 1875) of "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." Since the needs of all are the same, we take all the needy into our boat, making a total of 150 in a boat with a capacity of 60. The boat is swamped, and everyone drowns. Complete justice, complete catastrophe.²⁴

Is it correct to categorize the scenario outlined by Hardin as complete justice? Have we taken the just course by bringing as many into our lifeboat as possible, up to and past its absolute limit? The needs of all are equal; how can developed nations turn away countless needy from the developing world when developed nations have the means to meet their needs? Based on what has been argued so far about the human right to self-determination, I argue that taking in as many people as possible as dictated by the Christian/Marxist maxim is not just at all. It is a scenario which arbitrarily favors the human rights of some (would be immigrants), while totally ignoring the human rights of others (citizens, both current and future). One might respond that the human rights of the needy from the developing world are more pressing, and this may, in some cases, be

²⁴Hardin, "Commentary: Living on a Lifeboat," 562.

true, but this is an oversimplification of the situation. Each nation is obliged to work toward the construction of a flourishing society. When we insist on thinking only in terms of mere survival, we miss important aspects of the ethical conundrum that immigration poses to us.

When we limit ourselves to thinking about immigration only in terms of survival, we ignore the rights of citizens of receiving countries to build flourishing societies and we excuse immigrants from the responsibility of creating flourishing societies in their countries of origin. In so doing, we eliminate from our ethical picture what is likely the most important ethical project in the history of the human species: *building flourishing societies which produce well-being for the largest possible number of people in perpetuity while avoiding the ethical stain of indiscriminately destroying non-human nature.*

IV. Building Flourishing Societies

Now that we have sharpened the concept of flourishing by contrasting it with survival, we must fill in its content. What conditions are most likely to produce a flourishing society and what elements are central to the characterization of a society as flourishing? Further, what case can be made that the interest in building a flourishing society should be protected by the right to self-determination? I will argue that there are four societal characteristics that are most important for building a flourishing society and that due to the role each plays in creating flourishing societies, they are all characteristics that qualify as essential interests protected by the right to self-determination. Along the way, I will enumerate an incomplete list of characteristics of a society which go a long way toward allowing it to be characterized as flourishing. Finally, I will consider what impact high levels of immigration can have on these elements which are necessary to building flourishing societies.

There will be some overlap in qualities important for building a flourishing society and characteristics of a society that allow it to be characterized as flourishing. This is due to the fact that many of the conditions necessary for building a flourishing society, such as a sense of belonging and environmental sustainability, are ends in themselves in addition to being the condition for producing other kinds of goods. Further, the right to self-determination, the right which protects interests related to societal flourishing, is itself part of the necessary conditions for societal flourishing. Individuals who have no sense that their actions will have any impact on the shape and direction of their society are likely to suffer from their failure to actualize their essential human capability for self-governance. They are also unlikely to exert any effort to improve their society. The four societal characteristics I will argue are necessary for producing a society characterized as flourishing are: mutual regard, a sense of belonging, environmental sustainability, and robust social welfare programs that prevent economic inequality from rising too high and that allow equal access to opportunities necessary to self-actualization and the ability to participate in the modern workforce.²⁵

Mutual Regard

The first element necessary for societal flourishing is what Paul Collier calls “mutual regard.” He defines mutual regard in the following way:

By mutual regard I mean something stronger than mutual respect. I mean something akin to sympathy or benign fellow-feeling. Mutual respect may be fulfilled by everyone keeping a respectful distance from others—the noninterference of the “Don’t dis me” society. In contrast, mutual regard supports two types of behavior that are fundamental to successful societies. [...] One is the willingness of the successful to finance transfers to the less successful. [...] The other key way in which mutual regard affects economic outcomes is through cooperation.²⁶

²⁵Collier, *Exodus*, 61.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 61-62.

Mutual regard is best thought of as a form of social capital. It is essential for the maintenance of positive public will toward various social welfare programs and toward general efforts to keep wealth inequality in a society from getting too far out of control. It is also necessary for efficient cooperation in general. Both of these are critical to the creation of flourishing societies.

Societies which allow wealth inequality to get out of hand experience reductions in levels of well-being across the society due both to individuals feeling they are not getting a fair share and due to the inability of many to meet basic needs or pay for essential services such as education and medical care. Additionally, societies which lack mutual regard must devise other, costlier, means for facilitating cooperation among their members such as monitoring and sanctions. The need for constant verification and enforcement introduces pervasive inefficiencies that are avoided in societies where individuals tend to behave fairly and justly by default due to feelings of mutual regard. And due to the costs and inefficiencies associated with elaborate monitoring and sanctioning programs, they really are no substitute for mutual regard. The loss of mutual regard is an absolute loss.

Elinor Ostrom, in her analysis of how various common-property systems work, provides further elucidation on this last point.

In some settings [...] rampant opportunistic behavior severely limits what can be done jointly without major investments in monitoring and sanctioning arrangements. [...] In other settings, long-term joint commitments can be undertaken with only a modest investment in monitoring and sanctioning arrangements. Shared norms that reduce the cost of monitoring and sanctioning activities can be viewed as social capital.²⁷

Ostrom discusses rules developed by a fishery co-op in Turkey. The co-op has managed, through negotiations among stakeholders and a long process of trial and error, to establish a set of policies for governing fishing activities which ensure fair outcomes for all parties involved

²⁷Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 36.

and the continued health and functioning of the fishery. She discusses how such an arrangement would likely be impossible without a set of shared norms and values among fisherman involved. That is, excessive diversity of norms and values among fisherman would make the communal good of a healthy fishery full of successful fisherman difficult or impossible to achieve. Mutual regard, therefore, is critical to both fair wealth distribution in a society and general economic prosperity.

Excessive migration can undermine mutual regard in two distinct ways. First, high levels of migration can lead to levels of diversity that are not conducive to efficient cooperation. It is simply easier to trust and cooperate with people who share a linguistic and cultural background, norms, and values. The second way high levels of migration can undermine mutual regard is if large numbers of immigrants come from countries with dysfunctional social models. And, as Collier notes, it is often the case that “poor countries are poor because their social models are dysfunctional.”²⁸ So the more immigrants that arrive from poor countries, the more individuals a receiving country has who may have internalized a dysfunctional social model. They thus may have lower levels of trust for others, and higher tendencies for opportunistic behavior than people coming from economically healthier countries. Undermining the level of mutual regard in a society can have serious economic consequences and therefore serious consequences on a society’s prospects for flourishing. As Collier points out, loss of mutual regard can lead to the degradation of the social welfare system within a society (a point which will be taken up in more detail later) and can have pervasive economic effects that derive from the loss of key preconditions for efficient cooperation.

²⁸Collier, *Exodus*, 96.

Of course, diversity does bring some value into societies. It brings new ideas, stimuli, and new choices. But more of a good thing isn't always better (it often isn't). Beyond a certain point, diversity's adverse effects tend to outweigh its benefits. Immigrants from foreign countries bring new foods, ideas, customs, and ways of life, and all of these things can enrich a society. But if diversity rises to a level which jeopardizes mutual regard then it is unlikely to be beneficial. Due to the link between the maintenance of mutual regard and the ability to build a flourishing society, citizens' right to self-determination entitles them to limit immigration in a way that will protect mutual regard.

The Sense of Belonging

The next element which is necessary for societal flourishing is for the members of a society to feel a sense of belonging.²⁹ The sense of belonging is valuable both intrinsically and instrumentally. Individuals in a society tend to experience higher levels of well-being simply in virtue of feeling that they belong or are at home in the society in which they live.³⁰ Living long-term in a society in which one feels an alien has pervasive consequences on levels of happiness, motivation, and attitude toward one's fellow members of society. Further, as mentioned previously, one is much more likely to work toward improving one's society if one feels they have a deep and personal interest in their larger surroundings. Much in the same way, people tend to put great effort into maintaining their homes and personal property, but tend to have much less of an interest in maintaining the homes and personal property of others. The instrumental and intrinsic value components of the sense of belonging make it both a characteristic of flourishing societies and a precondition for creating them.

²⁹Miller, *On Nationality*, 85.

³⁰Collier, *Exodus*, 171.

Excessive immigration can undermine a sense of belonging in several ways. First, much like the way excessive diversity can undermine mutual regard, it can do the same to a sense of belonging. Again, some degree of diversity is valuable. But if immigration reaches levels that begin to dramatically transform the demographics of one's community in a relatively short time period, one can begin to feel alienated in the only place one has to call home. Accusations of xenophobia are a common response to this kind of concern. And xenophobia is a motivation which can superficially resemble the concern for a sense of belonging. However, this does not change the fact that one can make perfect sense of a legitimate interest in a sense of belonging which is totally divorced from xenophobia. One can easily imagine individuals who are passionate about traveling and who spend great amounts of time and money in order to experience the cultural, culinary, linguistic, and other diversity that there is in the world, but who also value having a place to call home, having a place where they experience a sense of belonging. It is clearly unreasonable to call such a person a xenophobe. One can imagine a spectrum of other types of individuals. There are those who don't like to travel but who love trying new ethnic restaurants in their hometown; those who don't travel or seek out foreign or diverse experiences but enjoy the company of foreign individuals when they come into contact with them; and those who don't travel or like foreign food, and who just prefer to speak with people who share their cultural and linguistic background. One has no trouble imagining that all these kinds of people have a legitimate desire to live in a society where they feel a sense of belonging.

Indeed, liberals who envision a totally globalized society where all cultures mix as fully as possible everywhere are being insensitive to real and legitimate interests of individuals in every society. Cosmopolitans may be tempted to call such plebeians backward and close-minded

and demand that they become fully cultured, global citizens, but such a demand is not only condescending, imperialistic, and unjustified, it is straightforwardly intolerance of diversity and likely the call for the destruction of it. Part of tolerating diversity is tolerating individuals with a diversity of attitudes toward the place they call home. People differ with respect to the need to call a specific, local, limited social and cultural context their home. That is, some feel more at home in a multicultural environment, others in a more traditional and monocultural one. Neither of these preferences is superior. Not everyone is suited to the cosmopolitan life, and a world of only cosmopolitans would be a much less diverse world.

Another common liberal response to the concern about a sense of belonging is that people have always migrated and that no society is stable, so maintaining a certain cultural or demographic paradigm is arbitrary and unjustifiable. However, this view ignores immigration rates and time scales. It is true that the cultures and demographics of areas have shifted consistently throughout human history. However, transportation technology and general resource poverty made it very uncommon for these shifts to happen in a single lifetime. (Many of the sudden and dramatic shifts were due to wars and invasions and this hardly seems like a legitimate ethical paradigm.) It is not problematic for the sense of belonging if cultural and demographic composition shifts across multiple generations - each new generation only has to adjust to a small amount of change that is unlikely to make them feel alienated from their home society. However, if an individual grows up in a society of a certain cultural and demographic composition, it is reasonable for him to want the nature and composition of his home not to radically change in his old age. Change is difficult for many people, and for those who have difficulty with change, few changes could be more difficult than watching their home “disappear” before their eyes.

Environmental Sustainability

The third element necessary for societal flourishing is environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability is a notoriously vague concept, but I will argue that the appropriate primary metric for assessing environmental sustainability in the context of a discussion about flourishing is rate of species extinction. Using rate of species extinction is useful for three primary reasons. First, we are able to measure this rate with a reasonable degree of reliability and its meaning is less controversial than other ecological metrics. The complexity of ecological systems and the reality of succession and historical environmental change often make it difficult to establish a baseline from which to measure many systemic elements of ecosystems, thereby rendering conclusions from empirical studies too tentative to be used as a reliable metric on which to base policy. By contrast, we have a clear picture of what the historical background rate of species extinction is (a baseline) and we know that we have pushed this rate considerably beyond this historical background rate all over the globe and to such a degree that we could be embarking on a rare mass extinction event.

The second reason is that it can serve as a useful proxy for assessing other ecological parameters. For example, ecosystem change is normal, but it is unusual for ecosystems to undergo change extremely rapidly. When this does happen, mass extinctions can result. Hence, a high rate of species extinction can be an indication that ecosystems are being pushed into new states too rapidly.³¹ Further, species extinction rate can serve as a proxy for other, more anthropocentric concerns like ecosystem services. We depend on such ecosystem services as water and air purification and a high rate of species extinction is a clear sign that the health and

³¹Barry W. Brook, Navjot S. Sodhi, and Corey J.A. Bradshaw, "Synergies Among Extinction Drivers Under Global Change," *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 23, no. 8 (2008): 453-460.

viability of these systems, from trees to nematodes, is being jeopardized. Rapid species extinction is the ecosystemic equivalent of a coal miner's canary dying in its cage.

Finally, species extinction rate is the appropriate primary metric for measuring environmental sustainability because it captures a wide range of ecological values. Species extinction rate gives us a picture of overall ecosystem health, but can also serve as a metric for preserving a wide range of values such as wildness and otherness, values much more difficult to measure in empirical terms, but no less important to a flourishing society. Species extinction rate gives us a reliable metric by which we can measure environmental sustainability from the standpoint of building flourishing societies, as opposed to societies that are merely viable. The maintenance of ecosystem services are all that is (probably) necessary for a society to survive. A flourishing society needs its wildness, its breathtaking vistas, and its non-human brothers and sisters, the bears and the wolves.

Once we have established rate of species extinction as the metric for assessing environmental sustainability in the context of discussing the creation of flourishing societies, the meaning and content of this necessary element for building flourishing societies can be filled out. The kind of environmental sustainability necessary for the creation of flourishing societies is that which preserves a wide range of natural possibilities, including both natural resources and natural experiences, in perpetuity. That natural resources must be utilized in a way which does not exhaust or destroy them now or for future generations is, at least in principle, relatively uncontroversial. But just as crucial is the fact that a society whose economic and population growth has precluded its members from experiencing wilderness, solitude, empty, quiet places, sublime, untouched natural beauty, or the range of experiences one can have with wild animals (from the pleasantness of a rare songbird to the majesty of a wild bison) cannot be characterized

as flourishing. Not all people value such experiences, but any society which permits itself to develop in such a way that it destroys the possibility of such experiences for many of its members cannot be categorized as having achieved flourishing. Such a society will have significantly truncated the range of possible meaningful human experiences readily available to its members as well as eliminated a range of experiences that many find necessary to a basic level of well-being and psychological balance. Further, these possibilities must be preserved for future generations. A society without a future is not a viable society, it is a society doomed. Similarly, a society with a severely naturally impoverished, biologically depauperate future is not a flourishing society, it is a society characterized by irresponsibility, foreboding, and a profound sense of loss.

A flourishing society requires natural possibilities, including natural resources and natural experiences, be preserved in perpetuity. A society which is rapidly exterminating its native species is systematically destroying these natural possibilities. The primary driver of species extinction is the impact of economic activities, the magnitude of which is determined primarily by two factors: population and per capita consumption. Hence, a society must be able to exercise control over both its level of per capita consumption and its population size if it is going to have any prospect of creating an environmentally sustainable and flourishing society. The importance of environmental sustainability to creating a flourishing society gives societies the right to control immigration for the sake of meeting their overall population goals. Further, for almost every society on Earth, this is going to mean significant decreases in immigration or fertility, or both. This is because most societies continue to grow in population, even as evidence accumulates that current populations are already too high.³² Current levels of extinction are 100-

³²Jeffrey McKee, Erica Chambers, and Julie Guseman, "Human Population Density and Growth Validated as Extinction Threats to Mammal and Bird Species," *Human Ecology* 41, no. 5 (2013): 773-778.

1000x their historical background rates, so any society aiming for environmental sustainability and flourishing will have to address both per capita consumption and population.³³ In the US, the EU, Canada, Australia and other parts of the developed world, this will have to involve decreasing the rate of immigration.

Why think immigration policy is relevant to population goals? First, and most importantly, the numbers bear out this concern. The United States, the UK, France and many other developed countries would currently be on a path to population stabilization (or decline) if immigration were dramatically reduced.³⁴ European and American couples have decided, in large enough numbers, to have fewer children, and this has resulted in a fertility rate at or below replacement level. That is, the United States and Europe have reached an absolutely critical point environmentally, a point where the population, given the fertility rate of native women, will stabilize or decline. However, the aggregate of decisions of native-born Americans and Europeans is being thwarted by the immigration policy set by their governments. In other words, if the size of the population were left to be determined by the aggregate of decisions of native-born citizens, this would mean a more sustainable population size, which is more likely to leave intact natural resources for future generations and enough land for other species to continue to exist within the borders of these nations. The question then becomes: Is it right for a nation which has, via its own internal economic and social development and the aggregate of the free choices of its citizens, reached a point critical to its future viability and critical to the survival of its non-human species, to be inundated with so many immigrants that it sends its demographics

³³Ceballos et al.

³⁴Philip Cafaro, *How Many is Too Many? The Progressive Argument for Limiting Immigration into the United States*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 13.

soaring to unsustainable levels? I argue that this is a violation of citizens' right to self-determination as well as being simply prudentially disastrous.

It may be the case that, e.g., the United States is currently overpopulated and that the current fertility rate is still higher than what is sustainable. In fact, several studies over the years have asserted just this, arguing that a US population of 100 to 150 million might stand a good chance of being sustainable, given the right environmental policies.³⁵ If this is the case—and it seems likely that it is, given that the rate of species extinction in the United States is no different from that of the globe in general—this only strengthens the argument above.³⁶ If the current population of the United States is already environmentally unsustainable, then the United States should pursue policies that will reduce, rather than merely stabilize the population. Strictly limiting immigration would be a necessary element of this policy goal. It would not only be unjust to ask Americans to have fewer children while bringing in large amounts of immigrants, it would also make Americans less likely to comply with policies designed to decrease the fertility rate, and, most importantly, reduce the speed with which the overall population could actually be reduced. That is, stringent efforts to reduce American women's fertility combined with continued mass immigration, would be a self-contradictory and internally-conflicted policy set. Efforts would have to be made to ratchet down fertility and immigration in tandem, or not at all.

Social Welfare Programs

The final element necessary for societal flourishing is robust social welfare programs that prevent economic inequality from getting too out-of-control and that allow equal access to opportunities necessary to self-actualization and the ability to participate in the modern

³⁵David Pimentel, Rebecca Harman, Matthew Pacenza, Jason Pecarsky, and Marcia Pimentel, "Natural Resources and an Optimum Human Population," *Population and Environment* 15, no. 5 (1994): 347-369.

³⁶D. W. Schindler, "Biotic Impoverishment at Home and Abroad." *BioScience* 39, no. 7 (1989): 426.

workforce. A clarification of the relation between well-being and flourishing will help to see why such programs are necessary for building a flourishing society.

I argue that “flourishing” is the term that should be used to characterize a society which is composed of members who by and large have lives with high levels of well-being. What well-being fully consists in will vary from person to person, but there are necessary conditions for well-being which are shared by all humans. All humans, for example, require adequate food, clothing, and shelter in order to experience well-being (perhaps with the rare exceptions of religious ascetics or other zealots). By contrast, only some humans require some creative or intellectual outlet in order to experience well-being. A painter may need to paint to experience well-being. A philosopher may need to write to experience well-being, and so on. Robust social welfare programs are the best way to generate well-being for the largest number of people in a society. Robust social programs (including welfare, education, and healthcare) ensure that no one in a society goes without the basic universally necessary conditions for well-being (food, clothing, shelter) and help ensure that no matter the situation one is born into, one has the possibility of pursuing the more complex life goals some feel are necessary for their well-being; e.g., publishing research in theoretical physics, learning a craft or trade, developing one’s artistic capacities, etc.

A society so structured ensures that no one is treated inhumanely and that anyone who is so motivated can compete in the literal marketplace or the marketplace of ideas in order to self-actualize, better their place in society, gain prestige, or work to solve societal problems. Such a scenario is necessary for a society to be characterized as flourishing because it provides for the many types of people that occur in any population. The least skilled and least motivated are guaranteed to have all they need to experience well-being. The most skilled and most motivated

are free to compete with one another in an open marketplace. And those that fall in the middle are free to work their way above the baseline provided by the set of social programs to whatever extent is necessary for them to achieve well-being. In other words, such a scenario is necessary for a society to be characterized as flourishing because it both minimizes suffering (minimizes bad outcomes) and enables creativity and innovation (maximizes good outcomes) by leaving ample open space for competition and by permitting a reasonable degree of wealth inequality as incentives for those who are driven to reach beyond the baseline. A society with such a structure, I argue, will generate the most well-being for the largest number of people. Social programs prevent any individual from experiencing want and the open marketplace enables individuals to develop knowledge, innovations, and creations which confer benefits on society as a whole.

The strongest real-world exemplars of the theoretical sketch provided above are probably the Scandinavian nations. Sweden and Norway, for example, provide robust social programs for their citizens which prevent individuals from falling to a level of want that would be seriously detrimental to their well-being. Meanwhile, much of the economies of Sweden and Norway operate as relatively open-market capitalist systems which allow ambitious and intelligent people to pit ideas and proposals against one another in an effort to gain monetary rewards and prestige - and, whoever wins, the society tends to benefit. This is, of course, an oversimplification. The point however, is that these nations demonstrate the ability to balance robust social programs with competition and innovation and their residents report some of the highest levels of happiness and well-being in the world. Many other European nations have comparable social and economic arrangements and demonstrate comparable levels of well-being among their

citizens. In terms of real world examples of flourishing, I propose countries like Sweden and Norway, the Netherlands and Germany, be the points of reference.

If one accepts the premise that a robust system of social welfare programs is necessary to societal flourishing, then countries have the right to take measures in order to ensure the efficient functioning and long-term viability of such programs. And high levels of immigration can threaten these programs. This provides another strong justification for any developed country's decision to limit immigration.

Immigration vs. Social Welfare Programs

It has been pointed out by many thinkers, Carens and Kukathas, for example, that there is a tension between robust social welfare programs and high levels of immigration. Indeed, Kukathas believes them to be incompatible with each other and that these social programs should be jettisoned in favor of open borders.³⁷ Carens, by contrast, takes a more utopian view and asserts, contrary to evidence that he himself acknowledges, that we should be able to have our cake and eat it too.³⁸

First, why do thinkers like Carens and Kukathas think that there is a tension between high levels of immigration and a robust system of social programs? There are two reasons for this tension, one a matter of simple logistics, the other a matter of public will. The logistical reason is that too many immigrants arriving in too short of a time tend to stress the funding schemes that social programs depend on for their viability. The viability of social programs depends on most members who take advantage of the programs' services paying into these programs. Of course, some individuals depend more on such services, and some members less, but the result is a

³⁷Chandran Kukathas, "The Case for Open Immigration," in *Contemporary Debates in Applied Ethics*, ed. Andrew I. Cohen and Christopher Heath Wellman, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 213.

³⁸Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, 283.

relative balance that allows the system to continue to function. The problem that immigrants pose to such schemes is not the result of them being immigrants *per se*. A brand-new immigrant's relation to social programs is much like a poorer or sicker than average individual who takes more from the system than they put it. The system is designed to handle these cases. Immigrants, especially from poor nations, tend to take from these systems disproportionately and are not able to contribute much to them until quite some time after their arrival (they must often learn a language, a trade, and acclimate to a new culture) and for immigrants beyond a certain age, it will often be impossible for them to pay back into the system during their remaining lifetime the equivalent of what they have taken.³⁹ Again, this is unproblematic in itself because the social programs in any country involve millions of people and so a small number of immigrants won't cause any serious imbalance or funding crisis in the system. The problem is numbers or, more specifically, large numbers in a short time.

The viability of social programs begins to be threatened when immigration rates are too high. What was not a problem when dealing with small numbers, becomes a huge problem when dealing with large numbers. Huge influxes of immigrants drain the funds allocated to various programs, strain infrastructure, and push public service employees, such as medical staff, to their limits. The result is the need for more funding, more infrastructure, and more public service staff. However, as high levels of immigration strain these public programs, they tend to simultaneously drain public will to fund these schemes, making the prospect of increasing funding for them all the more difficult. This unwillingness to increase funding is just one specific symptom of the second reason why there is a tension between high levels of immigration and robust social programs: public will.

³⁹Kukathas, "The Case for Open Immigration," 209.

Willingness to fund public programs such as welfare, healthcare, and education ultimately stems from the first element necessary to build flourishing societies: mutual regard. As immigration increases (especially from developing nations), diversity increases and individuals who have internalized social models not conducive to mutual regard may increase. Both of these factors can work together to weaken mutual regard in a society. Weakened mutual regard tends to move a society more in the direction of atomic individualism, or tribalism, and away from a sense of shared responsibility. When large numbers of immigrants arrive in a short time who are taking from but not (yet) contributing to social programs this tends to create a general public worry about cheaters and free-riders. Sheer diversity has the same effect. When individuals are thrown into a situation where they are surrounded by unfamiliar types of people whom they do not understand, it is more difficult to form bonds of trust. As mutual regard and trust are eroded and the concern about cheaters and free-riders increases, the fundamental backbone of a system of social programs is jeopardized. Willingness to pay into a system is predicated on the trust that others will also pay their fair share into the system and not abuse the system by intentionally taking more than their fair share. High levels of immigration tend to erode these fundamental preconditions of a viable system of social welfare programs.

Confronted with this reality, states likely must choose either robust social programs or high levels of immigration. They may be able to sustain both for limited periods of time, but not indefinitely. As was mentioned before, Kukathas argues we should choose high levels of immigration (open borders) and Carens argues we should somehow have both (without specifying how this is possible). I hold that both of them are mistaken and that the right to self-determination and the legitimate goal of creating a flourishing society justify a state's decision to limit immigration in order to preserve viable robust social welfare programs.

Kukathas thinks if we have to choose between open borders and social programs, we should choose open borders. He writes,

Is it right that the preservation of local institutions of social justice take precedence over the humanitarian concerns that make open immigration desirable? As was noted earlier, immigration barriers operate largely to limit the movement of the world's poor. It seems odd to suggest that this can be defended by appeal to the importance of social justice. If the price of social justice is exclusion of the worst-off from the lands that offer the greatest opportunity, this may be a mark against the ideal of social justice.⁴⁰

In the end, it may be that the existence of the welfare state makes open borders, or even extensive immigration, very difficult – if not impossible. From the perspective of a principle of freedom, or a principle of humanity, I suggest, the standard of open borders should prevail.⁴¹

In these passages, Kukathas insists he is on the humanitarian side of the debate and is opposed to those who selfishly ignore pressing humanitarian concerns. I find this patently absurd. The robust social welfare systems of modern industrialized nations are among the greatest humanitarian achievements in human history. Never before have societies collectively decided that they are unwilling to let their neighbors and fellow citizens go without basic necessities, or without an education or medical care, and had the wherewithal to make those decisions stick. The citizens of many industrialized nations experience unprecedented levels of well-being in no small part due to the social welfare systems Kukathas is so ready to jettison. Indeed, it is likely that one of the biggest pulls for immigrants who want to migrate to the developed nations of the world are the robust social welfare systems of these nations. Further, the abolition of social welfare systems in the world's developed nations would not only deeply impact the native poor of those nations, it would disproportionately affect immigrants recently arrived in those countries. Immigrants often arrive with few resources so, as mentioned before, they typically

⁴⁰Ibid., 217.

⁴¹Ibid., 214.

depend disproportionately on these social welfare systems to meet their basic needs. A humanitarian position indeed!

Of course, would-be immigrants who are unable to cross national borders to immigrate to developed nations have humanitarian needs of their own. This cannot be denied. However, what our reaction to this reality should be is complex and requires a more thoughtful and detailed approach than Kukathas seems willing to give. What is certain is that humanitarian obligations do not entail that citizens must take actions which jeopardize or destroy the social welfare systems in their home societies. This issue will be taken up in more detail in Chapter 2.

Kukathas does mention a middle position of temporary limited societal membership for immigrants, thereby preventing them from benefiting from social programs until they have paid into these systems for a sufficient amount of time. However, he promptly dismisses this idea, believing that most states would balk at having different levels of membership in their society.⁴² (This is probably correct.) However, his concern with what is actually feasible within our current nation-state system evaporates when he turns to his reason for choosing open-borders over social programs. In brief, he chooses open-borders over social welfare programs because he rejects the idea that the nation-state is the appropriate site for resolving questions of distributive justice.⁴³ – A strange and unannounced turn from concern with the practical and realizable to concern with the ideal. Kukathas argues that the size and diversity of many nation states (e.g., China and the United States) make them problematic for talking about unified conceptions of justice, and that it is therefore wrong-headed to deny entry to immigrants on the basis of

⁴²Ibid., 214.

⁴³Ibid., 216.

maintaining social welfare programs the existences of which are predicated on a non-existent shared conception of justice.

While the existing diversity in large nations such as the United States and China certainly makes appeals to a common conception of justice and solidarity more difficult, this does not change the fact that the nation state is the place within our global system where the most effective mechanisms exist for approximating distributive justice. Kukathas rejects social welfare programs, among the great moral and social achievements of the 20th century, because they fail to exist at the level which he believes is ideal for assessing what is just - a classic case of making the perfect the enemy of the good.

In fact, one can just as easily draw the opposite lesson that Kukathas draws from large countries such as the United States and China. He argues that their current levels of diversity are such that it is difficult to talk of a single conception of justice and that this level of diversity is not conducive to solidarity. From this he concludes the nation-state is not the appropriate place for settling questions of justice and that we should instead consider the globe as a whole. An equally justified conclusion from his observations about countries like the United States and China is that these nations have failed to institute social programs as robust and humane as those instituted by smaller, more homogeneous European countries, and so large countries like the United States and China should be broken up into small, more homogeneous countries that more closely resemble the member states of the EU; also, that they should further restrict immigration.

Joseph Carens' response to the tension between high levels of immigration and the viability of social programs feels even more wedded to implausible idealizations than Kukathas'. Carens recognizes the same kinds of tensions that Kukathas does, but rather than struggle with

difficult trade-offs and choose one option over another, he simply expresses the wishful desire that we can still have both anyway:

The welfare state argument is implicitly asking us to choose between providing material support for needy members of rich states and providing material support for even needier people in poor states or giving those people the opportunity to move to rich states to acquire some means of subsistence. Why should we accept that trade-off? As a practical matter, that may sometimes be the choice that we face in the world today, but I want to argue that it's an illegitimate choice like the demand to choose between your money and your life. In a just world, there would be no such trade-off.⁴⁴

Carens hedges his wishful thinking by referring to a "just world" and he hedges many of his strongest positions in this way. But in a "just world" so many things would be different than they are in the real world that it isn't particularly productive to pontificate in this way about the tension between high levels of immigration and social programs when thinking about what an ethical immigration policy is today. In the real world we must actually take a position about how to weigh the rights and interests of the citizens against the rights and interests of potential immigrants. This isn't to say, of course, that there is no place for ethical ideals toward which we should strive, but this kind of ideal ethical reflection must be balanced against struggling with the actual situation we find ourselves in. Rather than engage both with the ideal and the concrete, Carens seems to hide behind his ideals and avoid dealing with our present context.

I hold that Carens' position is disingenuous in at least two ways. First, his constant refrain when discussing the "just" position of open borders is reference to a so-called "just world" characterized primarily by relative distributive justice. This is a fine ideal, but his seeming unwillingness to grapple with concrete particulars (such as the importance of limits and the nature of cooperation and collective action) and apply his ideal to the real world results in nothing more than armchair philosophizing. Most problematically, his way of reflecting on

⁴⁴Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, 283.

distributive justice utterly ignores the institutions and historical developments which have actually led to real flourishing egalitarian societies.

The Scandinavian nations are again a good point of reference. These nations represent a very small percentage of the world's population, but they are golden examples of the kinds of social goals, policies, and institutions that nations all over the world should pursue. And many of their impressive social achievements would have likely been impossible if they were constantly inundated by large influxes of immigrants. Further, as has been argued, their present level of flourishing would also be jeopardized by excessive levels of immigration. One crucial lesson to learn from these flourishing nations is that the creation of flourishing societies is a massive, complex, and long-term organizational challenge and the view-from-nowhere daydreams and high-brow pronouncements of philosophers about a "just world" are unproductive and even dangerous when divorced from a willingness to grapple with realities. It is nice to hear about the kind of world Carens would create, were he God, but it is much more important to engage in difficult and well-grounded ethical reflection on the implications and impacts of immigration in the real world.

Second, I am suspicious that Carens' constant reference to a "just world" and the way he uses it to hedge his open borders position is a way to score points with a liberal audience while avoiding making an actual commitment to a real-world immigration policy. Indeed, I argue that Carens' considered view is not one of "open borders" at all when you appreciate the implications of all of his hedging and qualifying. Carens is typically taken to be an unwavering champion of the "open borders" position, but his allowance for limiting immigration due to "contingent and

self-limiting”⁴⁵ considerations in conjunction with the fact that we don’t live in his “just world” causes his “open borders” position to collapse into a position of limited immigration.

In contrast to Carens, I argue that the importance of robust social programs to building a flourishing society, combined with the incompatibility of robust social programs and high levels of immigration, give nations considerable latitude in determining what level of immigration they decide to set. Robust social programs which prevent individuals from falling into desperate poverty and which give everyone in a society access to healthcare and the opportunity to get a proper education are social achievements the value and importance of which cannot be overstated. These programs play a key role in creating flourishing societies and citizens are perfectly within their rights to limit immigration in such a way that preserves these programs and institutions. Indeed, citizens who fail to preserve these key social goods arguably are failing in their moral responsibilities to present and future citizens. And writers like Carens who mislead their fellow citizens about the necessary preconditions for preserving these social goods, even if they have good intentions, are not doing them any favors.

By this point it should be clear that flourishing is a meaningful and worthy goal for any society to pursue, but a final clarification may help to make my case even stronger. When one argues for limited immigration for the sake of societal flourishing, I am certain that the idea that comes to mind for some readers is one of countries whose members consume to enormous excess while excluding those who are not able to consume at a level sufficient to meet basic needs. One may envision a caricature of the United States: hordes of obese individuals driving their oversized, gas-guzzling SUVs to the McDonald’s drive-thru window, while masses of huddled, starving immigrants are walled-out from a country which could easily meet their basic

⁴⁵Ibid., 286.

needs. It should be obvious that such a scenario is nothing like what I am arguing for and that such a scenario certainly does not generate flourishing for anyone. Such a dystopian caricature is just as far from flourishing as the poorest developing nations on Earth. Indeed, I argue that excess consumption is antithetical to societal flourishing both intrinsically (consumption beyond a certain level does not add to quality of life and distracts individuals from other pursuits which *do* improve quality of life) and due to its consequences (it is not ecologically sustainable and results in unjust economic inequality). So not only is excess consumption not a part of societal flourishing, moderate consumption is a necessary component of it. A flourishing society, then, is not one which hordes resources and consumes to an excess, but one which builds and perpetuates a sane, balanced value-framework, including reasonable consumption. It is also one which arguably should use its excess resources (that is, resources not necessary to create a sustainable, flourishing society) to help people in other, poorer societies to flourish.

Individually, the interest in protecting each of these four elements necessary to creating a flourishing society, provides strong justifications to limit immigration. Collectively they carry considerable power. Of course, the rights of potential immigrants also may carry considerable weight. The point of this chapter is to demonstrate that there are fundamental interests and basic rights at stake for individuals in countries which are typically expected to receive immigrants. The issue of rights is not one-sided, as it is often portrayed in discussions about immigration. The fact that fundamental interests and basic rights are at stake for citizens of receiver countries means that justice does not demand that countries receive as many immigrants as possible. Justice does not demand that societies undermine their levels of mutual regard and their members' sense of belonging in order to accept more immigrants. Justice does not demand that a country destroy its ecosystems and drive its native species to extinction in order to accept

higher levels of immigration. Justice does not demand a country erode its ability to maintain crucial social services for its members in order to accept more immigrants. Similarly, justice does not demand I take away my mother's healthcare and bulldoze a beloved forest in my community in order to send money to a charity on the other side of the world. Of course, justice does demand that individuals all over the world act in such a way as to help correct many of the inequalities and unjust systems that currently exist around the globe—but there are ways of doing this which do not infringe on a society's fundamental right to self-determination. Justice likely demands, for example, that a wealthy nation spend a certain percentage of its GDP on humanitarian efforts such as development, improvement in education in the developing world, and ensuring that women everywhere have access to family planning and contraception. But note that these efforts are compatible with national self-determination; they do not undermine it.

A crucial point to note about my conclusion is that the justifications I provide for a country's right to limit immigration are, in the words of Carens, contingent and self-limiting.⁴⁶ That is, these reasons only justify restrictions on immigration if immigration threatens the right to self-determination via the above-named fundamental interests, and only to the extent necessary to protect these interests. I agree with Carens that arbitrary control is never justifiable.⁴⁷ All other things being equal, individuals have the right to move where they please as a dimension of their basic right to liberty.⁴⁸ However, contingent facts about the way the global economic, social, and ecological sphere are currently constituted, make it such that this right cannot be fully actualized. In a world with a smaller population and less economic inequality between nations, for example, it might be possible to have open borders.

⁴⁶Ibid., 286.

⁴⁷Ibid., 287.

⁴⁸Ibid., 227.

V. Concluding Remarks

One of the main purposes of this chapter has been to demonstrate that standard conversations on the ethics of immigration are unacceptably one-sided. There is much to be said about the rights of a nation's citizens to limit immigration across national borders, and about the human responsibility to limit population growth and the necessary role that immigration must play in such efforts. I have shown that there are strong arguments in support of both of these dimensions of the debate and I have made a preliminary attempt at detailing the complexity on this largely ignored side of the debate. Much more can be said on both sides, but the arguments I have made here go a considerable way to add balance. Further, even if my arguments in this chapter prove definitive, that will not necessarily make decisions about immigration policy any easier to make from a humanitarian perspective. Decisions about immigration policy will *always* be difficult and emotional decisions, even when the decisions are the result of careful and weighty ethical deliberation which makes its best effort to take all parties, consequences, and ethical implications into account. Any immigration policy will always result in there being winners and losers. But the fact that a decision is difficult and unpleasant to make does not cancel our responsibility to make that decision and to put all thought and care into making it.

The present chapter has answered the question, "Do citizens have a right to limit immigration?" in the affirmative. The question taken up by chapter 2 is, "Is it time for developed nations to exercise their right to self-determination and reduce the rate of immigration across their borders?" That is, are developed nations currently confronted with a situation where the four basic interests which are necessary to flourishing societies are threatened by a high rate of immigration? Chapter 2 will argue that this question must also be answered in the affirmative.

Chapter 2

The Humanitarian Argument for Reducing Immigration:

On the need to limit immigration to create flourishing societies today

Chapter 1 established that the right to self-determination gives citizens considerable latitude in shaping their immigration policy so as to ensure the long-term flourishing of their society. The focus of Chapter 2 is whether citizens in the developed world should, at present, exercise their right to self-determination and decrease the rate of immigration across their borders. Chapter 2 asks whether social, economic, and ecological realities provide the contingent and self-limiting justifications discussed in Chapter 1 for limiting immigration into the developed world. The central argument of Chapter 2 will stress the humanitarian importance of limiting immigration into the developed world today. I will argue that the present global context is such that high rates of immigration into the developed world will seriously damage the prospects of these countries for developing and/or maintaining sustainable, flourishing societies. I will also show that there are important ways in which high rates of immigration from the developing to the developed world can inhibit critical development in the developing world. Further, it will be important to remind ourselves throughout the chapter that the fact that developed countries should limit immigration across their borders for the sake of their own flourishing does not mean that they have no humanitarian obligations toward the developing world. However, there are ways to discharge this duty which do not impinge on the developed world's ability to build flourishing societies themselves.

The arguments of this chapter will go directly contrary to what most political liberals and academics take to be of greatest humanitarian significance in the debate about the ethics of immigration. In this chapter I will argue that the truly humane position is actually one of limited

immigration from the developing to the developed world. The theme that runs through all of my arguments for limited immigration being the most humane policy is that historical, social, economic, and ecological realities complicate the picture to such an extent that the popular liberal position can only be regarded as a vague romanticization of the facts we are confronted enabled by a blindness to the complex, precarious, and incredibly valuable preconditions to creating flourishing societies. The standard liberal position, I argue, is obsessed with ideal and abstract conceptions of justice and entirely blind to the historical processes that have led to flourishing societies in the real world.

The abstract reflections and thought experiments on the nature of justice and the contingency of one's place of birth, as well as the focus on atomic individuals apart from wider society on which the traditional liberal position depends, are misguided abstractions and simplifications. Of particular relevance is the fact that the focus on atomic individuals and the neglect of wider society totally miss the nature of the conditions necessary for creating flourishing societies. The most humane position is the one which appreciates the necessary prerequisites to building flourishing societies all over the world and which prescribes policies and actions to bring about these prerequisites. The most humane position is not represented by the image of a UN aid worker giving blankets to huddled masses. The humanitarian images to keep in mind are efficient and well-functioning societies all over the globe which preclude the need to provide blankets to huddled masses, which avoid the devastating realities which lead to the displacement and mass movement of humans in the first place. I will argue that a proper appreciation of social, economic, and ecological realities and an appreciation of the fact that widespread and long-term global flourishing is the goal worth aiming for when thinking about immigration policy leads to the conclusion that limited immigration is the most humane position.

One important qualification to my position is that it is time and context-sensitive. I am concerned with what policies we should adopt with respect to immigration in the present and near future. This may strike some as strange. One might assume that if a policy is humane, it is humane irrespective of the time in which it is enacted. However, this would only be the case if we were exclusively concerned with abstract conceptions of justice and insensitive to concrete realities, changing social and economic dynamics, and actual outcomes. I argue that when it comes to the most humane policies, abstractions cannot be definitive and, consequently, circumstances can alter what is or is not humane. There is no profound mystery here. If a country is suffering from an outbreak of plague, it is humane to send huge amounts of antibiotics as aid. When the plague has abated, it may no longer be humane to do so: it may be a foolish waste of resources, or even cause harm by increasing antibiotic resistance. The ethical status of an act is dependent on the state of the system in which it is enacted at the time it is enacted.

I. A Note on Psychology

Before proceeding, I think it is important to make a general point about human psychology. It is both intuitive and well-documented that our moral and emotional concern with events and arrangements is stronger the more proximate they are to our lives and that this concern generally diminishes dramatically with distance.⁴⁹ A powerful description of this psychological fact comes from Adam Smith. He writes of a hypothetical “man of humanity” who learns of a devastating earthquake in China which has wreaked havoc on the entire country and caused the loss of countless lives. This man expresses his sorrow and makes many reflections on the precariousness of life and the lot of humankind, and then more or less goes

⁴⁹For example, Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* (1972): 229-243.

about his ordinary business. By comparison, the same man, if he learned that the next day he would lose his little finger, would be deeply troubled, unable to sleep, and unable to get the impending event out of his mind.⁵⁰

We can all empathize with this hypothetical example. Our moral and emotional concern usually tends to scale with proximity rather than moral or practical gravity. We drop everything and run to the aid of our child when she scrapes her knee, while we mostly ignore a tsunami in Indonesia that kills thousands of people. We are shocked and deeply saddened by the death of our neighbor, but show virtually no concern for countless Syrian children killed by bombs paid for by our tax dollars.

Clearly this fact about our psychology does not track many of our considered moral judgements. On reflection, few would agree that the moral significance of an event or arrangement is usually properly determined by its pure physical distance from a moral agent. Only the worst kind of narcissist would say this discrepancy in moral and emotional concern is typically appropriate. Due to this discrepancy between our innate psychological tendencies and our considered moral judgments, it is often necessary to resist and augment these innate psychological tendencies with conclusions derived from rational moral reflection. This need to augment innate psychological tendencies does not only apply to personal moral judgements, it is a prudent general operational principle for any person or institution. It has been documented, for example, that judges tend to mete out more severe sentences near lunchtime as they tend to be hungry, more irritable, and therefore more likely to make severe or rash decisions.⁵¹ The wise

⁵⁰Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 157.

⁵¹Shai Danziger Jonathan Levav, and Liora Avnaim-Pesso, "Extraneous Factors in Judicial Decisions," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108, no. 17 (2011): 6889-6892.

who are aware of their physio-psychological weaknesses employ various compensating mechanisms derived from rational and measured consideration to correct for these weaknesses.

An awareness of psychological tendencies and predispositions, then, is a useful (and sometimes essential) guide for applying moral and philosophical insights for the purpose of making our behavior more just and rational. It is for this reason that I bring up the example from Adam Smith. When one thinks of limiting immigration, I believe it is common to imagine turning away the poor and hungry knocking at our door. The proximity (or potential proximity) of immigrants elicits a strong emotional response from those with humanitarian concerns. By contrast, the arguments I will make in favor of limiting immigration will generally appeal to more spatially and temporally distant concerns. That is, the appreciation of the social, economic, and ecological realities which make closed borders or limited immigration the humane position will require us to close our proverbial doors and turn away the poor and hungry for the sake of more large-scale, long-term goals that are just as closely tied to achieving humanitarian ends. This will go directly contrary both to our innate psychological tendencies and to the general empathic dispositions of those concerned with humanitarian issues. However, what we are concerned with in this chapter is the most just and humane immigration policy, all things considered. We cannot allow our innate and deeply flawed psychological tendencies, the same tendencies which allow us to sleep soundly after a devastating earthquake on the other side of the world but which keep us up all night at the prospect of losing our little finger, dictate immigration policy. We must instead employ reason and evidence to guide us to the policies that are best aligned with our most considered conception of justice.

II. What do open borders advocates hope to achieve?

The first important question to ask when critically examining ideas about the most humane immigration policy is, “What are humanitarians trying to achieve with an open borders policy or very expansive immigration policy?” The answer is something like alleviation of suffering and, ultimately and most importantly, global economic justice. But do open borders or expansive immigration policies actually further these goals? The story is complicated, but there are reasons to believe that open borders or expansive immigration policies would result in social and economic dynamics that are not most conducive to the creation of sustainable, flourishing societies around the world. Again, I am concerned with what is the most humane policy in the present and near future and with what immigration policy will be most conducive to the creation of *flourishing* societies rather than societies that are merely lifeboats.

There is evidence that migration often has been a benefit for individuals from developing nations in the past.⁵² Millions who have migrated have greatly improved their quality of life and sent back remittances that have improved the lives of millions more. However, while developing nations can derive benefits from this scenario initially (with relatively low levels of immigration to the developed world) without exacting substantial costs on the societies to which they immigrate, this dynamic changes when immigrant flows become too large. Sustained high levels of immigration into a developed nation can have serious consequences for its prospects for long-term flourishing which are a non-issue with lower levels of immigration. A developed nation can begin, with sustained high levels of immigration, to feel that its prospects for creating a sustainable society, and for maintaining mutual regard, a sense of belonging, and a robust system of social welfare programs are being threatened. In other words, sustained high levels of

⁵²Collier, *Exodus*, 252.

immigration can impinge on citizens' right to self-determination by threatening some or all of the fundamental interests just mentioned. Indeed, later in this chapter, I will argue that this is precisely the situation that many developed nations currently find themselves in.

One may, however, think that it is of only secondary importance what happens to the developed countries of the world when we're discussing open borders. The purpose of open borders may be to ensure that anyone who desires to change their country of residence for perfectly legitimate reasons is free to do so. Or the purpose may be to alleviate suffering among poor people in the developing world, who often grapple with much more difficult circumstances than citizens in the developed world. Either way, the impacts on developed countries may seem beside the point. But if we are thinking in terms of the most humane policy, we have to think in terms of what will actually lead to flourishing societies all over the world. Respecting the right of certain individuals to migrate is not humane if it is less likely to lead to a future world full of societies characterized as flourishing. Or, if one prefers to speak in terms of rights, the right of individuals to move must be balanced against the rights of others to build flourishing societies.

Further, when one considers the raw numbers, it is difficult to understand how anyone can view mass migration as central to solving problems of global economic justice. Today, more than 1 billion people live in conditions classified as extreme poverty. This is roughly equivalent to the entire populations of North America and Europe combined. This is only those classified as living in extreme poverty. The number of people living on less than \$2.50/day is more than 3 billion. Surely no one who wants open borders for humanitarian reasons can believe that immigration can even begin to address any meaningful fraction of these numbers. It is simply not possible for North America and Europe to host more than 3 billion immigrants from developing countries. Such a situation would be unjust and unjustifiably punitive to developed

countries as it would certainly threaten all of the fundamental conditions necessary to the creation of flourishing societies (and likely even to the mere viability of the countries forced to receive immigrants in such large numbers).

Of course, one might argue that it is better to help some than to help none. Why not help those we can even if we cannot help them all, or even a sizeable fraction of them? Isn't it better to alleviate as much suffering as possible? First, I agree we should help as many as we can by having as expansive an immigration policy as is possible while maintaining the conditions necessary to the creation of flourishing societies. That is, yes we should let in as many migrants as possible, but an appreciation of the conditions for the creation of flourishing societies in the real world will dictate that this number be substantially lower than what most liberally-minded humanitarians hope for. Second, it is critical to remember that efforts to help alleviate as much suffering as possible include a far greater variety of possible actions and policy choices than immigration policy. Generous and creative means to alleviating poverty and suffering around the world must be pursued which do not impinge on the citizens' right to self-determination in developed countries.

Third, alleviating suffering is not the only goal we need to consider when thinking about immigration policy. Genuine self-government and the preservation of global diversity are also important political goals to keep in mind when thinking about immigration, and there may be others. Even if expanding immigration would lead to less overall human suffering, there might be reasons not to expand immigration: reasons grounded in a comprehensive view of the nature and preconditions of human and nonhuman flourishing.

III. On the Need for Limits to Immigration

Up to this point I have only asserted that present-day social, economic, and ecological realities dictate that developed nations should limit immigration across their borders for the sake of their own long-term flourishing. The purpose of this section is to examine some current and emerging trends in both developing and developed nations which show why this is so. This section will focus on the four fundamental preconditions to creating flourishing societies outlined in chapter 1 and show how some or all of them are currently being threatened in many developed nations by excessively high levels of immigration from the developing world. Due to this threat to their flourishing, developed nations arguably *should* limit immigration. Further, I will show how high immigration rates from the developing to the developed world are likely to significantly threaten the prospects of the developing world to create flourishing societies by reducing both political will and public funds in developed nations for providing crucial development aid to developing nations. This last point is of critical importance due to the fact that the majority of individuals currently residing in developing nations will never make it to developed nations and so the most effective way to alleviate the greatest amount of suffering is to catalyze development in developing nations. When high levels of immigration decrease development aid funding to developing nations, this may cause net harm.

Mutual Regard

As discussed in chapter 1, mutual regard is critical to both efficient cooperation and the transfer of wealth from those more fortunate to those less fortunate. It was established in chapter 1 that sustained high levels of immigration can jeopardize this valuable aspect of social capital. Mutual regard can be undermined either by excessively varied values and social norms, or by the presence of social norms intrinsically antithetical to cooperation, such as those that encourage

opportunistic behavior. Of course, immigration is not the only social phenomenon that can threaten mutual regard and trust. Differences in educational opportunities and general life opportunities, as well as income and wealth inequality, can also seriously damage mutual regard within a nation.⁵³ Due to the fact that the erosion of mutual regard can have multiple causes, no specific example of the erosion of mutual regard we consider can be attributed to high immigration with total certainty. However, I have already established that high rates of immigration can have a significant negative impact on mutual regard and there is data available in which individuals attribute behavior indicative of reduced mutual regard to high levels of immigration. Consider an example.

The European Union is among the most impressive feats of large-scale human cooperation in history. Its existence is predicated on the coordination of 28 diverse, sovereign nations representing a large spectrum of economic, social, linguistic, cultural, and historical differences. A continent until relatively recently characterized by frequent wars, large and small, shifting alliances, and a variety of other zero-sum games now experiences unprecedented cooperation and, consequently, unprecedented prosperity. The most significant threat to date to this highly valuable state of cooperative behavior is the impending departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union: Brexit. Spearheaded by far-right nationalist political figures in Britain and cheered on by nascent far-right nationalist political parties across the European continent, many feared the departure of Britain would initiate a domino effect that would lead to the unraveling of the European Union as a whole.

While the European Union has survived the impact of a majority ‘leave’ vote on the Brexit referendum, the threat it represented to the carefully constructed cooperation of European

⁵³Lauren McLaren, "Immigration and Trust in Politics in Britain," *British Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 1 (2012): 163-185.

Union member states can be ignored only at great peril. Indeed, in order to prevent farther unraveling of this valuable cooperative arrangement European officials would be wise to understand its root causes and take action to resolve these issues. A study by London's Demos think tank in 2011, long before Brexit, traced the rise of the right-wing populist parties, the architects of Brexit, to opposition to liberal immigration policies.⁵⁴ Many other studies have found the same result – that the desire to reduce immigration (distinct from xenophobia or racism) is one of the principal factors for predicting who will vote for a far-right nationalist political party.⁵⁵ In other words, an abundance of data points to the fact that high rates of immigration are among the chief dangers to the viability of the European Union.

How does the connection between high rates of immigration and the destabilizing of the European Union by the actions of far-right nationalist parties relate to the social good of mutual regard? The desire to leave the European Union and to become more insular/isolationist and less cooperative can be productively understood as the result of the erosion of mutual regard and trust. The European Union already represented an impressive feat of cooperation through the extension of feelings of mutual regard and trust to those across the European continent with different languages and different social values. Of course, while European countries differ from one another, they do share much of the same general history and culture – and this helps facilitate the cooperation that takes place within the European Union. Further, any two European countries have more in common than any European country and any African or Asian country. The massive influx of immigrants from countries that differ in a much more dramatic way from any European country has likely begun to tear the fabric of relative familiarity that held together

⁵⁴Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell, and Mark Littler, *The New Face of Digital Populism* (Demos, 2011).

⁵⁵Jens Rydgren, "Immigration Sceptics, Xenophobes or Racists? Radical Right-Wing Voting in Six West European Countries," *European Journal of Political Research* 47, no. 6 (2008): 737-765.

the trust and cooperation of the European Union. As was discussed in chapter 1, without a shared set of norms and values, cooperation can become cost-prohibitive or even logistically impossible. Brexit can be understood as a reaction to a level of diversity not conducive to trust caused by excessively high levels of immigration.

When British citizens decided to join the European Union, they did so under certain preconditions which undergirded the possibility of efficient cooperation. Other European nations were similar enough that they could be trusted and cooperated with. Excessively high levels of immigration have begun to change that scaffolding of familiarity and trust and the understandable reaction of the British people was to withdraw their agreement to tight cooperation. The British people faced a large, increasingly alien, and rapidly changing context that was not conducive to cooperation and so decided to shrink one of the cooperative spheres they were engaged in. The European Union began to look too big and too strange, so the Brits made their social and political sphere smaller and more familiar. Again, this kind of motivation is distinct from racism or xenophobia, this is a consequence of the nature of cooperation among human beings.

Brexit was a warning shot for the possible farther collapse of the highly valuable European Union. I argue that in order to protect the social capital of mutual regard, trust, and general cooperation, it is time for the European Union to dramatically reduce the rate of immigration across its borders from the developing world. EU citizens have the right to create flourishing societies and mutual regard is necessary in order to do this. EU citizens, therefore,

should demand that immigration rates be reduced. Indeed, EU citizens are, by and large, already demanding this. EU officials must listen.⁵⁶

So excessive immigration is eroding mutual regard in EU countries and therefore EU citizens' prospects for creating flourishing societies. High levels of immigration from the developing to the developed world are also having an indirect but seriously negative impact on countries in the developing world. This is being caused by developed countries diverting financial and political capital from sustainable development aid to accommodating high rates of immigration. I argue that at least some of this diversion in financial aid and political capital can be attributed to the erosion of mutual regard resulting from the high rates of immigration. This will be the topic of the next section.

Diverting Financial and Political Capital

All nations have limited financial and political capital to spend on foreign aid. Limited financial capital is easy to understand. No nation has unlimited financial resources, so anything which competes with the financial resources allocated to foreign development has the potential to reduce spending for foreign development aid. Political capital is less straightforward. In order for a democratic nation to allocate financial and other resources to aid development in the developing world, the public must be in favor of this or, at the very least, not strongly opposed. The extent to which public will turn against efforts to aid development in the developing world is the extent to which it will become more difficult or impossible for developed nations to provide this aid. In what follows, I will show that high rates of immigration tend to spend down

⁵⁶Other examples of excessive immigration leading to the unraveling of European cooperation have been the several cases of European nations violating the policy of free movement stipulated by the Schengen agreement in order to stem the flow of migrants.

critical financial and political capital that could otherwise be used for sustainable development aid and that the consequence of this is likely net harm to those in the developing world.

The spending down of financial capital is, again, relatively straightforward. Developed nations commonly allot a certain amount of financial resources to sustainable development aid. They also allot a certain quantity of financial resources to resettling migrants. The massive uptick in immigration into the EU from the developing world in recent years and consequent uptick in spending on resettlement has broken some nations' budgets allotted for this area. Partly due to each nation's primary responsibility to its own citizens, this budget shortfall has begun, in some countries, to be made up for by reallocating money previously allocated for sustainable development aid. Even the famous generosity of Sweden is beginning to wane under the weight of huge numbers of asylum seekers. Sweden's 2015 foreign aid budget was slashed by 30% in order to make up for the cost of resettling the growing number of migrants.⁵⁷ Other European nations, including Norway, have done the same.

This reallocation of funds from foreign aid to migrant resettlement is problematic for those in the developing world due to the fact that no matter how high migration rates become, the vast majority of individuals won't be able to migrate from the developing to the developed world. In other words, one dollar spent on foreign aid helps more people than one dollar spent on immigrant resettlement due to the fact that foreign development aid is destined for purposes which will help to lift entire regions and countries out of poverty by stimulating their economies and helping build critical infrastructure. One dollar spent to resettle one migrant helps one migrant. One dollar spent on foreign aid goes toward helping an entire developing nation's economy. (It is estimated, for example, that it requires £165,000 be spent on housing,

⁵⁷James Traub, "The Death of the Most Generous Nation on Earth," *Foreign Policy* 10 (2016).

infrastructure, equipment and training to settle one immigrant in the UK. The same amount could help far more than one individual in a developing country.)⁵⁸

The spending down of political capital on huge migrant flows is likely even more harmful than the spending down of financial capital. Even a superficial understanding of the nationalist far-right that is occurring in response to large migrant flows reveals why. Many individuals in developed countries feel their way of life to be threatened by large migrant flows. This makes a more nationalist political perspective more appealing. A high rate of migration into a country can feel a lot like an invasion to many people and this can elicit (and, in many places, is eliciting) a strong negative reaction to migrants and the countries from which they originate. A strong negative public attitude in developed nations toward migrants and their countries of origin due to the perceived threat they represent (real or not) will likely lead to substantial and pervasive blowback against these countries, likely in the form of decreased spending on foreign aid. Put simply, a government run by far-right nationalists is much less likely to invest in foreign aid than a more politically liberal government is.

It is also possible to understand this reduction in social and political capital in terms of reduced mutual regard. As diversity increases with higher rates of immigration, and trust and mutual regard are eroded, the most general effect is that individuals begin to perceive society less as a cooperative enterprise and more as a competition among atomized individuals. I see no reason why this general change of coloring wouldn't apply to everyone, fellow citizens and foreigners. Why spend one's own financial capital to help someone one is in competition with? This dynamic would likely lead to a decrease in public will to fund foreign aid spending.

⁵⁸Jane N. O'Sullivan, "The cost of Population Growth in the UK," report commissioned by Population Matters, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Australia (2013).

Finally, if large influxes of immigrants undermine one's sense of political autonomy (self-determination) one is likely to feel that money spent on foreign aid is extortion as opposed to a collective decision to be charitable and humane.

While many open borders advocates want developed countries to accept huge numbers of migrants AND spend huge sums on sustainable development, this simply ignores the nature of collective action and the necessary prerequisites of efficient cooperation and effective democratic government. It might (in some abstract sense) be preferable if it were possible to do both, but this is unrealistic given an empirically-grounded understanding of the nature of human cooperation and a hard look at current social and political facts.

The Sense of Belonging

As discussed in chapter 1, high levels of immigration can undermine citizens' sense of belonging in their home country and this can have profound direct and indirect negative effects on a country's prospects for flourishing. High levels of immigration can directly impact the well-being of citizens by rapidly changing the cultural composition of their homes in a way that makes them feel they are "disappearing." It can impact the prospects of a country's flourishing by creating feelings of alienation among citizens, reducing the natural motivation many have to take action to improve the place they call home. Citizens are thus justified in limiting immigration to the extent that is necessary to preserve a sense of belonging for the sake of working toward creating flourishing societies. In this section, I will discuss a specific instance of the way excessive migration undermines citizens' sense of belonging and argue citizens of developed nations currently receiving large numbers of immigrants *should* act to reduce the rate of immigration across their borders.

One specific way excessive immigration can undermine a sense of belonging is the creation of diasporas. Diasporas are concentrated communities of immigrants from one country (or sometimes groups of similar cultures or language groupings) within a receiving society. Diasporas are common features of countries with high levels of immigration and they arise due to the fact that they make the transition from a country of origin to a new country much easier. Immigrants are often unfamiliar with the language and culture of the country into which they move, so they tend to gravitate to individuals from their country of origin who have already been in the receiving country for some time and who therefore already have a higher level of familiarity with the receiving country's language and culture. Diaspora communities help new immigrants learn the new language and navigate the new culture. They also provide a social environment they are able to immediately get involved with. Diasporas may not immediately seem problematic, but under high rates of immigration they can create problems both for the sense of belonging as well as for mutual regard.

Paul Collier provides an insightful analysis of the relation between diaspora size, diaspora absorption rates, and immigration rates. Two of his observations are most relevant to us here. First, "immigration adds to the diaspora, whereas absorption into mainstream society reduces it."⁵⁹ Second, "the rate of absorption of the diaspora depends upon the size of the diaspora: the larger the diaspora is, the slower its absorption."⁶⁰ So, high levels of immigration cause diasporas to grow by both adding to their numbers more rapidly and by slowing the rate at which individuals are absorbed into mainstream society from the diaspora.

⁵⁹Collier, *Exodus*, 43.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

The way higher immigration rates add to diasporas is relatively straightforward. Higher immigration rates mean more immigrants and immigrants tend to gravitate toward diasporas, so more immigrants equals larger diasporas. The way higher immigration rates slow absorption of individuals from the diaspora into the mainstream is less obvious. More rapid immigration rates add individuals to the diaspora more rapidly and this increase in number results in each individual within the diaspora being more likely to encounter other individuals in the diaspora and less likely to encounter individuals who are not members of the diaspora. The number of possible social interactions any individual can have is limited by time, psychology, and other logistical factors, so encountering more individuals from the diaspora makes it less likely one will encounter individuals from the receiving society. These two observations may make it seem like the central worry is diasporas that grow indefinitely. However, Collier notes that immigration rate and diaspora size tend to reach an equilibrium, what he calls the *diaspora schedule*. The central worry then is not diasporas growing to indefinite sizes but the persistence of diasporas of any significant size for extended periods of time.

Why are persistent diasporas problematic? First, diasporas are problematic for members of the diaspora because insofar as an individual has failed to integrate into mainstream society, he or she remains culturally marginalized and cut off from opportunities available to those within the mainstream. One might argue that the mainstream society has an obligation to make the same opportunities available to members of diasporas as they do to mainstream society, but this simply ignores the dynamics of how diasporas and real-life opportunity actually work. Opportunity often comes down to social connection and insofar as being a member of the diaspora cuts one off from a significant amount of social interaction with the mainstream culture, this will have an opportunity cost. Further, one can push back that immigrants have a

responsibility to integrate into the mainstream culture and so the obligation of the mainstream society to make opportunities available to members of the diaspora must be balanced against this responsibility.

Second, persistent diasporas are problematic for society as a whole. Diasporas create insulated communities which do not maintain the same kind of dialogue with the wider culture that other, more integrated communities do. Diasporas are also prone to generate inequality as members of the receiver population with more political influence tend to move out of areas where diasporas form due to feelings of alienation and other considerations. Further, persistent diasporas make a society as a whole less unified and provide easy scapegoats for societal problems as well as targets for racist groups. Diasporas are a kind of *de facto* segregation and persistent diasporas are not good for any nation working toward a unified, cohesive, egalitarian society.

Third, diasporas are bad for native-born citizens of a society due to the way they directly inhibit their sense of belonging. Persistent diasporas have frequently led to native-born citizens leaving their home areas or neighborhoods due to radical changes in demographic and cultural composition. Of course, one *could* have xenophobic or racist motivations for leaving such an area, but one can also have totally legitimate motivations for doing so. The desire to want to continue to live in an area that one identifies with and feels at home in is a legitimate one (that's one reason why immigrants form diasporas!). Diasporas can also lead to the sense that one's home is being occupied by a foreign presence. No Western liberal is a fan of colonial practices, but policies which enable the development and persistence of large diasporas enable a kind of *de facto* colonization of their home country. Feeling as if one's home has in some way been invaded is antithetical to feeling a sense of belonging and control over one's society. The

persistence of a large diaspora represents the presence of a substantial alien power and influence which can severely impinge on one's ability to feel at home in one's home society.

Developed nations, then, should limit immigration in such a way as to limit or eliminate the growth and persistence of diasporas. Diasporas directly and indirectly negatively impact a society's prospects for flourishing. The right to self-determination protects a society's attempts to build a flourishing society, and creating a society whose members retain a sense of belonging and unity is necessary to this project.

Environmental Sustainability

Chapter 1 argued that nations have the right to limit immigration to the extent that is necessary to protect their interest in creating environmentally sustainable societies.

Environmental sustainability is critical to both basic survival and to higher levels of flourishing, so citizens have the right to choose an immigration policy that will enable them to create an environmentally sustainable society. In this section I will argue that citizens do not merely have the right to limit immigration for this purpose, they have the responsibility to do so, due to current environmental realities. Environmental sustainability is impossible to achieve with an ever-growing population, so citizens are justified in limiting immigration in an effort to stabilize or reduce the size of their populations in order to achieve environmental sustainability.

One might agree with the general proposition that societies have the right to limit their population via immigration limits (and other non-coercive methods) if their population is at a level which is threatening their prospects for sustainability, but disagree that the United States or any other developed nation is anywhere near a population level which threatens its ability to create a sustainable society. After all, technological progress provides us with efficiency gains every year and the share of sustainably generated electricity is continuously increasing in grids

across the developed world. These trends do provide some hope. But not a great deal of it.⁶¹ Further, there is no reason to think that they will be enough to create a sustainable society as the population of, e.g., The United States, blooms to close to half a billion people by 2100 if current immigration levels are maintained.⁶² First, the popular focus on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change has led to a neglect of a host of other environmental problems that result from water use, land use, resource extraction, the various aspects of agriculture, waste generation, consumer commodities, and more. It is not reasonable to think that technological advances will take care of all major environmental problems as the severity of each problem is continually ratcheted up by an ever-growing population.

Second, as already stated, the rate of species extinction across the globe is 100-1000x its historical background rate. Our ever-growing economic activities are causing a genocide against hundreds of thousands of other species. Each nation is responsible for stewarding the land, resources, and biome over which it has jurisdiction. When we are aware that the current extinction crisis is being caused by both excessive population and excessive per capita consumption, it is immoral to address only one of these causes (not to mention that we are hardly addressing this cause with much urgency!). Refusing to address the population element of our environmental crisis is analogous to a factory that is poisoning its local community with two different kinds of toxic chemicals, which are poisonous alone but even more poisonous in tandem, deciding to eliminate only one of the toxic pollutants!

We have no right to indiscriminately exterminate so many non-human species. Each nation has the duty to do everything within its power to reduce its impact on the environment in

⁶¹Clive L. Spash, "This Changes Nothing: The Paris Agreement to Ignore Reality," *Globalizations* 13, no. 6 (2016): 928-933.

⁶²Cafaro, *How Many Is Too Many?*, 124.

such a way that it brings the extinction rate within its borders as close to the historical background rate as quickly as possible.⁶³ This duty is reinforced by a proper understanding of the right to self-determination, which also involves obligations. Taking or maintaining control of one's destiny is both a privilege and a responsibility. Citizens have the right to self-determine, but in exercising this right, citizens also become culpable for the wrong-doing they produce. The citizens of every nation are responsible for governing themselves in such a way that their history will not be characterized by inhumane behavior against the natural world. Further, and as previously discussed, the right to self-determination must be qualified within a larger context of justice. The right to self-determine does not entitle anyone to actively harm one's fellow citizens or noncitizens, human or non-human. Therefore, the right to self-determination cannot include ecocide.

The last reason to reject the idea that we are nowhere near a population level that would justify limiting immigration for environmental reasons is that the citizens of a nation, as part of their right to self-determination, have a right to work toward not just long-term survival, but flourishing. If the United States could take in one billion immigrants from the developing world by converting the majority of its landmass into hyper-efficient agriculture and high-density housing without jeopardizing its long term "sustainability," that is, the ability of its land base to support human life at a basic level, it would still not be obliged to do so—because there is more to life than mere survival. It is a perfectly just and reasonable goal to aim for a society characterized by the full flourishing of its members. Indeed, it is one of the only goals in life unequivocally worth aiming for.

⁶³W. Staples and Philip Cafaro, "For a Species Right to Exist," in *Life on the Brink: Environmentalists Confront Overpopulation* eds. Philip Cafaro and Eileen Crist (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 283-300.

Accounts of what is necessary for human flourishing vary, but in any population, many individuals require some contact with nature or the wild in order to feel that they are living meaningful, flourishing lives. In every society, many people derive spiritual, aesthetic, recreational, and other goods essential to a flourishing life from the natural world. Perhaps less controversially, flourishing also requires avoiding overcrowding. There are many who find little value in wild nature and so would not include it on a list of goods necessary for them to live a flourishing life. However, few would exclude the ability to seek solitude and escape from crowds, society, and people in general, at least on occasion, among the things necessary to live a flourishing life.⁶⁴ Any nation aiming to build a society that is conducive in the long-term to wide-spread flourishing for its people must pursue policies that will allow its wild, natural, open landscapes and its wild inhabitants to continue to exist in perpetuity. The right to self-determination protects a wide range of human interests, many of which themselves imply limits to the number of people a society might wish to accommodate.

In case some readers find the above list of goods derived from contact with wild, open nature to be too bourgeois, white, middle-class American, privileged, or generally Western, it is worth considering at least one example from a marginalized group which illustrates the importance of avoiding overpopulation to oppressed, marginalized, and indigenous groups all over the world. Consider the following description of environmental challenges being faced by the Quileute tribe of the American Pacific Northwest:

Changes in landscapes may engender less opportunities for elders to teach youth in practical situations. Glacier retreat may affect the survival of salmon or start to affect the range, quality and quantity of berry resources, making it more difficult or even impossible for tribal members to

⁶⁴"A population may be too crowded, though all be amply provided with food and raiment. It is not good for man to be kept perforce at all times in the presence of his species. A world from which solitude is extirpated, is a very poor ideal. Solitude, in the sense of being often alone, is essential to any depth of meditation or of character; and solitude in the presence of natural beauty and grandeur, is the cradle of thoughts and aspirations which are not only good for the individual, but which society could do ill without." - J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, Book IV, Chapter VI, Section II, as it first appeared in 1848.

exercise their responsibilities toward those species (Campbell and De Melker 2012; Lynn et al. 2013).⁶⁵

Indigenous peoples around the globe have lifeways which are intimately bound up with the natural environment their societies exist in and have existed in for much longer than any modern nation has existed. The passage mentions glacial retreat, a frequently discussed point in discussions on climate change. But the most relevant feature to notice about this description of the environmental problems faced by the Quileute is the need for land. The passage mentions “landscape changes,” “survival of salmon,” and “quantity of berry resources.” The preservation of these features of the landscape which the Quileute regard as priceless is impossible given an ever-growing population. And, of course, *the problem is not the growth of the population of the Quileute*. A larger population creates more demand for housing, water, and agriculture, each of which puts more pressure on landscapes, salmon, and berries. And as the landscapes, salmon, and berries are transformed or disappear, so do the Quileute and their lifeways. A growing population is a direct assault on the Quileute and countless other marginalized, indigenous groups around the globe. Citizens and nations have the responsibility to protect marginalized indigenous groups within their borders and part of this responsibility is preventing out-of-control population growth.

Wild nature and open spaces are not white, privileged values, but are near universal values which contribute to flourishing societies and the well-being of humans across the globe and in every generation. Citizens have both a right and a duty to take steps to protect this dimension of flourishing for both themselves and future generations by limiting the size of their population. This right and duty includes limiting immigration levels. Further, the rate of species

⁶⁵Kyle Powys Whyte, "Justice Forward: Tribes, Climate Adaptation and Responsibility.," *Climatic Change* 120, no. 3 (2013): 517-530.

extinction in every nation on Earth indicates unequivocally that no nation is currently living within sustainable parameters. Therefore, nations not only have the right to limit immigration as a dimension of a larger policy set designed to reduce both population and per capita consumption, they have an obligation to do so. Species are going extinct within the borders of, e.g., the United States, every year due to an unsustainable human impact. The United States has a responsibility to end this state of affairs and create a sustainable society. The U.S. has the responsibility to end population growth and reduce per capita impact and part of this responsibility is to reduce immigration rates.

Social Welfare Programs

As discussed in chapter 1, a robust social welfare system is essential to the creation of a flourishing society and societies are thus justified in taking reasonable action, including limiting immigration, in order to protect these systems. Every society has the right to work toward the flourishing of its members and the right to self-determination gives states latitude to decide what kind of immigration policy they will adopt for the purpose of preserving the social welfare systems that are essential to societal flourishing. While chapter 1 argued that nations are justified in limiting immigration across their borders IF immigration threatens the viability of their social welfare systems, I will here argue that many developed nations should limit immigration due to the way their social welfare systems are already being impacted by high rates of immigration.

Many developed nations have been receiving very high numbers of immigrants in recent years, but there is no space here to discuss each of these individually. Instead, I will examine two representative cases, one in Europe and the other in North America, which both have significant populations of immigrants living within their borders, many of which are recent

arrivals. I will focus on Sweden, the population of which is now roughly 17% immigrants, and the United States, the population of which is now roughly 15% immigrants.⁶⁶ Many other Western nations have been receiving similar levels of immigrants in recent years, so the analysis of Sweden and the United States will also roughly apply to all of these. As discussed in chapter 1, I will examine the way high levels of immigration are currently impacting the viability of the social welfare programs in these countries via both straining financial resources, reducing public will to fund these programs, and synergies between these two.

First, consider the financial strains that high levels of immigration are causing on the Swedish social welfare system. In 2015, budget limitations forced the Swedish government to curtail welfare benefits, housing benefits, and parental leave benefits to some categories of immigrants.⁶⁷ As discussed in chapter 1, the issue here is not with providing these benefits to immigrants *per se*. Indeed, Sweden provided these benefits to many immigrants in the past without encountering any problems. Social welfare systems of this kind are designed with some degree of resiliency. The problem arises when the rate of immigration becomes too high. With too many immigrant arrivals in too short of a time, the balance of paying into and taking from social welfare systems is thrown off and these systems may become financially unviable. Sweden is justified in limiting immigration now to prevent farther imbalances of this kind. Indeed, Sweden would have been justified much earlier in limiting immigration in an effort to prevent these kinds of imbalances from happening in the first place.

⁶⁶Migration Policy Institute tabulation of data from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin: 2017 revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017):

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates17.shtml>.

⁶⁷E.H., "How immigration is changing the Swedish welfare state," *The Economist*, June 23, 2017.

A further negative outcome of the above scenario is the way it can divide a society. When the Swedish government saw the finances of its social welfare system being strained, the reaction was to cut immigrants off from some of the benefits this system confers. This is not a scenario that will lead to an egalitarian, flourishing society. The Swedish government's first responsibility is to ensure social welfare services are functioning for their own citizens, individuals who have also been paying into these social welfare systems for their entire working lives. It is therefore reasonable to first cut off services for the most recent arrivals. However, this decision results in the poorest and least well-off in society losing access to services that help them meet basic needs. The result is a society of happy, well-off citizens and a struggling, suffering underclass. Societies that contain great gaps in personal and financial well-being cannot be considered to be flourishing.

The second way that high levels of immigration can threaten the viability of a nation's social welfare systems is through a reduction in public will to fund these schemes. Again, this creates negative synergies with the financial strains discussed above as public will is reduced to fund these schemes at precisely the moment when these schemes are in need of greater funding. This reduction in public will stems from a sentiment that tends to arise in the public in the face of high levels of immigration: that too many recent arrivals are coming merely to benefit from a nation's generous social welfare schemes and are not paying their fair share back into the systems. In other words, high levels of immigration can lead to a widespread fear of and anger with "free riders." This sentiment is well-captured by the words of a cashier in the southern Swedish city of Malmö, the city that has received more immigrants than any other in Sweden. While discussing the influx of immigrants with a reporter, the cashier angrily exclaimed, "They

are just here for welfare and benefits.”⁶⁸ When individuals believe their social welfare system is being taken advantage of by multitudes who are not paying into the scheme, they feel cheated and stolen from and can become less willing to participate in such schemes at all. In other words, the reduction of public will to fund these schemes that often results from high levels of immigration can erode the basic social trust that is essential to the functioning of these systems.

Less anecdotal evidence of citizens’ dislike of the possibility of large numbers of free-riders benefiting from a nation’s social welfare system is California Proposition 187, which was voted on in November 1994. This proposition was supported by 59 percent of California’s voters and denied almost all benefits (including access to public schooling) to illegal aliens.⁶⁹ Today, the United States is experiencing even higher levels of immigration (legal and illegal) than it was in 1994. It is far past time for politicians in the United States and other Western nations which have been experiencing high levels of immigration to take seriously the threat that these levels of immigration pose to the viability of a nation’s social welfare system and hence to their prospects for flourishing.

The reality of the tension between high levels of immigration and robust, healthy social welfare systems should also worry progressives in the United States who hope to bring the level of social welfare benefits in the United States up to levels similar to most of Europe. The reality of this tension suggests that American progressives are working at cross purposes. Indeed, studies have concluded that almost half of the difference in social welfare spending between the United States and Europe can be attributed to the already greater ethnic and cultural diversity of

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹George Borjas, "Comments on Immigration and the US Economy," in *Immigration Policy and the Welfare State* eds. T. Boeri, G. Hanson, and B. McCormick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

the United States versus European nations.⁷⁰ American progressives most likely have to make a choice between advocating for high levels of immigration and advocating for a more robust social welfare system. And the fundamental right of citizens to pursue the flourishing of their own society dictates that progressives who are truly concerned with justice must give up on their quest for continued mass immigration.

High levels of immigration in the recent past have threatened the viability of developed nations' social welfare systems, and recent increases in immigration rates have only made the problem worse. For the sake of maintaining their social welfare schemes for the purpose of pursuing a flourishing society, the United States, Sweden, and many other developed nations should significantly reduce the rate of immigration across their borders.

IV. Population, Biodiversity, and Sustainability

While I hold the above four-part framework provides the most solid and robust justification for and obligation to limit immigration for the sake of creating flourishing societies, it is worth dwelling longer on the environmental sustainability component of this framework and the impact that population has on it. The environmental impact of immigration is too often neglected and environmental sustainability is, I argue, the most important dimension of the four-part framework. Environmental sustainability is critical not just for societal flourishing, but for basic human survival. A healthy and stable natural environment is the precondition of human life and culture as we know it. The gravity of the environmental predicament we now face and the impact immigration can have on this situation is therefore worth spelling out in greater detail.

⁷⁰Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Edward L. Glaeser, *Fighting poverty in the US and Europe: A world of difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10.

The consensus among ecologists, climate scientists, and environmental scientists of all stripes is that we are in the midst of an unprecedented environmental crisis. Climate change caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions is leading to rising sea levels, rapidly changing weather patterns, and more extreme, unpredictable weather events. Global fish stocks are plummeting. Dead zones in the seas are expanding. And, perhaps most troubling of all, the rate of species extinction has increased to 100 to 1000 times its historical background rate.⁷¹ The earth is hemorrhaging its life at a pace never seen in the entire history of *Homo sapiens*. Of course, this problem is not merely a problem for nature-lovers and conservationists. The very systems that purify our air and water and allow us to grow and catch enough food are being destabilized. The only climatic conditions in which humanity has ever flourished are being altered. And, more subtly, but no less important, the wild nature out of which all human cultures have grown and from which humans have always derived psychological rejuvenation and spiritual and artistic inspiration is being destroyed. Environmental preservation is clearly a humanitarian issue.

To further emphasize the environmental predicament we find ourselves in, it is worth briefly examining one of the more quantified metrics developed for assessing the current human impact on the global systems that make life as we know it possible. This is the popular Planetary Boundaries approach developed by Johan Rockström et al.⁷² Their method is to define global sustainability in terms of planetary boundaries within which they expect that humanity can operate safely. They choose nine metrics (seven of which they have been able to assign a quantified boundary to) which, they argue, give us a robust framework for assessing our overall

⁷¹Anthony D. Barnosky, Nicholas Matzke, Susumu Tomiya, Guinevere O. Wogan, Brian Swartz, Tiago B. Quental, Charles Marshall et al, "Has the Earth's sixth mass extinction already arrived?," *Nature* 471, no. 7336 (2011): 51.

⁷²Johan Rockström, Will Steffen, Kevin Noone, Åsa Persson, F. Stuart Chapin III, Eric Lambin, Timothy M. Lenton et al, "Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity," *Ecology and Society* 14, no. 2 (2009).

impact on earth's systems. The seven they have assigned quantified boundaries to are climate change, ocean acidification, stratospheric ozone, biogeochemical nitrogen (N) cycle and phosphorus (P) cycle, global freshwater use, land system change (<15% of the ice-free land surface under cropland), and the rate at which biological diversity is lost (annual rate of <10 extinctions per million species). The two additional planetary boundaries for which they have not yet been able to determine a boundary level are chemical pollution and atmospheric aerosol loading. They argue that the safest course for humanity to steer is one which does not transgress any of these boundaries. The more boundaries we cross, the higher the risk of catastrophic, potentially rapid, non-linear change on the continental or global scale. Further, the boundaries interact with one another, so if one boundary is crossed, this may alter some or all of the other boundaries. In their words, "Humanity thus needs to become an active steward of all planetary boundaries—the nine identified in this paper and others that may be identified in the future—in order to avoid risk of disastrous long-term social and environmental disruption."⁷³

Very worryingly, we have already transgressed four of the boundaries to which Rockstrom et al. have assigned specific numbers. We have already transgressed the boundaries in which humanity has a high likelihood of continuing to operate safely for climate change, rate of biodiversity loss, changes to the global nitrogen cycle, and land system change.⁷⁴ O'Neill et al. estimate that the basic needs of all 7.6 billion people currently living on Earth could be met within planetary boundaries (this means that excessive of – or above a subsistence level of - consumption of a fraction of these 7.6 billion is currently driving us beyond these four boundaries). However, meeting the basic needs and nothing more of 7.6 billion people is hardly

⁷³ Rockström et al., "Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity," 21.

⁷⁴ Daniel W. O'Neill, Andrew L. Fanning, William F. Lamb, and Julia K. Steinberger, "A good life for all within planetary boundaries," *Nature Sustainability* 1, no. 2 (2018): 88.

a goal worth aiming for. As previously discussed, the goal worth aiming for is human flourishing. O'Neill et al. go on to estimate that if we want to pursue some approximation of flourishing for all 7.6 billion humans currently on Earth (their equivalent of flourishing is defined as follows: life satisfaction, healthy life expectancy, secondary education, democratic quality, social support and equality) our global use of natural resources must become 2-6 times more efficient. It is important to emphasize that this demand for a 2x-6x increase in resource use efficiency is given the current global population. The UN 'medium variant' prediction is for the global population to rise to 9.7 billion by 2050, and 11.2 billion by 2100.⁷⁵ The present situation is dire for anyone who cares about either environmental sustainability or human flourishing.

At its root, this crisis is being caused by two main drivers: excessive per capita consumption and excessive human numbers.⁷⁶ The prudent course of action is to do everything within our power to combat both of these drivers of environmental destruction. There are strong reasons to believe that reducing immigration into the United States and the rest of the developed world is an important component to stabilizing and reducing the global population. Because the current environmental crisis is also a humanitarian crisis, the fact that a limited immigration policy can help to address one of the main causes of our current environmental crisis is another reason why a limited immigration policy is also the most humane immigration policy. The reasons why a limited immigration policy will make an important contribution to limiting global population will be discussed below.

⁷⁵Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, *United Nations World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, DVD Edition* (2015).

⁷⁶William J. Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M. Newsome, Mauro Galetti, Mohammed Alamgir, Eileen Crist, Mahmoud I. Mahmoud, William F. Laurance, and 15,364 scientist signatories from 184 countries, "World scientists' warning to humanity: A second notice," *BioScience* 67, no. 12 (2017): 1026-1028.

How can limiting immigration from the developing to the developed world help solve the global overpopulation problem? Immigration policy can be used as a kind of economic signaling tool about global population carrying capacity and the impact of this signaling, in turn, can help developing nations benefit from the “demographic dividend.” Further, as discussed previously, the right immigration policy can help ensure political and financial capital in developed nations is used in the most efficient way to aid development in developing nations. Let us consider these three aspects in turn.

Population Signaling

Perhaps the most important role that limiting immigration into developed countries can play is as a signal to developing nations. Developed nations must unequivocally signal to developing nations the hard fact that the only path that doesn’t lead to massive humanitarian and ecological catastrophe is one where they organize themselves in a way which prevents their populations from growing out-of-control. Of course, this signaling does not completely fulfill developed nations’ humanitarian duties toward developing nations, but it is a necessary part of it.

As I’ve argued, it is critical to the future well-being of the human and non-human world that developing nations develop economically and politically and make every effort to reduce their fertility rates. Developed nations have the obligation to pursue a strategy which will maximize the odds of this transition taking place as quickly as possible. Limiting immigration from the developing world to the developed world is an important complement to any policy aiming to hasten this transition. Sustainable development aid paired with limited immigration sends a clear message: People in developing nations have the responsibility to build flourishing societies where they are and this is the only path that avoids tremendous human suffering and ecological disaster. Sustainable development aid paired with open borders sends a mixed

message: People in developing nations should build flourishing societies where they are BUT if you have the resources necessary to move and you want to flee the responsibility to improve your home society, you may do so.

Another way of framing the problem is to follow Garrett Hardin and think of the Earth's carrying capacity as a commons.⁷⁷ Individual nations that have excessively high fertility rates are consuming an unfair share of the commons of global human carrying capacity and the only way to avoid ecological and humanitarian catastrophe is to devise a policy that will function as a mechanism that provides real economic and resource pressures on the nations with excessively high fertility. If developed nations have expansive immigration policies or open borders, this permits the developing nations with high fertility rates to externalize the impact their national fertility rate has on global population carrying capacity. Excessively high fertility rates have severe consequences and expansive immigration policies that permit huge flows of immigrants from the developing to the developed world obscure this fact. Closed borders or limited immigration from the developing to the developed world send a signal that says, "Your high fertility rate has a cost. You must take action to reduce it or pay the natural and inevitable consequences."

Some will worry about the way in which this kind of signaling curtails individual liberties. How can something as abstract as a general social and economic signal be used to justify limiting basic human freedom? But this kind of signaling and its consequent impact on personal freedom is a common occurrence in countless broadly popular and intellectually uncontroversial regulatory policies. Regulations are often put in place to send signals where the free market fails to do so. For example, most European nations employ a high cigarette tax to

⁷⁷Hardin, "Commentary: Living on a Lifeboat."

send a price signal that smoking cigarettes is detrimental to public health, the viability of socialized medical systems, and to society in general. The free market and the general belief in individual liberty permits humans to choose to smoke cigarettes. High cigarette taxes curtail freedoms by making habitual cigarette smoking more cost-prohibitive. However, even many strong advocates of personal freedom see the wider social benefit that is gained through high rates of taxation on cigarettes. There are countless other examples where through either monetary incentives/disincentives or stronger and more direct means, individual freedoms are curtailed for the sake of larger societal goods.

It is often important to employ policies which send market signals that the free market fails to send on its own. The same principle applies in the case of immigration. Mass immigration will not solve the problems of the developing world. It will also do nothing to reduce fertility rates in those same countries. A limited immigration policy is one crucial way of signaling that mass immigration is not the solution to these problems.

Consider two 20th century development success stories, Germany and Japan. After WW2, the US instituted the Marshall Plan in an effort to help Western Germany rebuild its government, economy, and infrastructure. Western Germany received development loans equivalent to more than \$14.5 billion today. Under the guidance of General Douglas MacArthur, the US imposed various economic and political reforms on Japan in an effort to promote democratic government and free market capitalism. For example, fantastically wealthy Japanese landowners who demanded up to 50% of the crops from poor Japanese farmers had their land seized and redistributed to local farmers around the country. The result of these efforts was the creation of two of the strongest and most prosperous democratic societies in the world today. Consider the counterfactual of having not invested great amounts of development aid or political

capital in Germany and Japan after WW2, and instead just opening borders to allow whomever wanted to escape from these devastated countries to do so (a policy that would have no doubt appealed to many with strong emotional ties to humanitarian causes). Small fractions of the Japanese and German populations would have immigrated to the United States or other parts of western Europe, but the majority of the populations of these countries would have remained in underdeveloped nations.

This is not to say that these two policies are mutually exclusive. But there is good reason to think that a closed borders policy can help reinforce efforts to catalyze development within a country by sending the signal that ultimately, the responsibility to build flourishing societies is in their hands. Further, there is also good reason to think that the popular focus on the humanitarian importance of mass immigration is overblown. As discussed previously, financial and political capital should be invested in aid programs that facilitate development in developing countries, not wasted on lobbying for open borders or higher immigration quotas.

The Demographic Dividend and the Positive Feedback Loop with Fertility Declines

Research shows that a decrease in fertility tends to promote the growth of per capita real income by increasing the percentage of the population that take part in the workforce and (in high fertility societies) increasing investment.⁷⁸ Economists refer to this as the “demographic dividend.” More recent evidence suggests that a lower birth rate also tends to promote overall economic growth.⁷⁹ Further, data suggests that in many countries around the globe throughout the 20th century, lowered fertility rates preceded economic advances (rather than the opposite, as

⁷⁸James A. Brander, and Steve Dowrick, "The role of fertility and population in economic growth," *Journal of Population Economics* 7, no. 1 (1994): 3.

⁷⁹Hongbin Li, and Junsen Zhang, "Do high birth rates hamper economic growth?," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89, no. 1 (2007): 110-117.

is often asserted).⁸⁰ Taken together, this data suggests that limiting immigration from the developing to the developed world in an effort to get developing nations to take responsibility for and reduce their fertility rates, can have a ratcheting effect on their economic development which, in turn, can have a further ratcheting-down effect on fertility. That is, limiting immigration sends an unequivocal signal that developing nations must take responsibility for reducing their fertility rates. When developing nations respond to this signaling and reduce their fertility rates, this should accelerate economic development via the demographic dividend and other effects. Further, as nations reach higher levels of development, their fertility rates tend to drop. This last effect will be discussed in more detail below.

The data tells us that once a nation reaches a certain level of socio-economic development, birth rates tend to decline.⁸¹ More wealth and opportunity leads couples to pursue life goals other than child-bearing, and to desire a lower number of children in order to be able to invest more time, money, and energy into each child, thereby increasing their chances of success in a competitive modern economy. In other words, parents favor providing a high quality upbringing over sheer numbers of children. Further, achieving a certain level of socio-economic development is one of the most reliable, non-coercive ways to bring down a nation's fertility rate. In our present environmental crisis, we cannot afford to do anything other than pursue those courses of action which we have the best reason to believe will yield the largest, fastest, and most reliable results while minimizing coercion and human suffering.

⁸⁰Jane N. O'Sullivan, "Synergy between Population Policy, Climate Adaptation and Mitigation," in *Pathways to a Sustainable Economy*, eds. Moazzem Hossain, Robert Hales, Tapan Sarker (New York: Springer, 2018), 103-125.

⁸¹Brander et al., "The role of fertility and population in economic growth," 2.

To appreciate the difference in fertility rate between developed and developing countries, consider the difference in population growth between Italy and Nigeria. The journalist Stephen King contrasts these two starkly different situations:

In 1950, Nigeria's population was about 38 million; Italy's 47 million. In 2015, Nigeria's had shot up to 182 million, while Italy's stood at 60 million. By 2100, the UN predicts that declining infant mortality and other trends will swell Nigeria's population to more than 700 million, while Italy's will have dropped back to 50 million 'thanks to a persistently low birth rate'. Similar trends across Africa suggest the continent's share of the world population, now at 16%, is likely to rise to 40% by the end of the century. And the chances are that many of these people will want to seek a new life in Europe.⁸²

While Italy and Nigeria are at the two extreme ends of the fertility spectrum, the general difference in fertility holds for the comparison of nearly any developed versus developing country. For example, the fertility rate of Mexico was at 2.21 births per woman in 2015 while the fertility rate of the United States was at 1.84 births per woman at the same time.⁸³

There are many takeaway lessons from these numbers. First, it is clear that urgent action must be taken to curb population growth in Nigeria and many other nations of the developing world (Niger currently has a fertility rate of 7.57, Chad, 6.05, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, 5.91).⁸⁴ A common response to this is to emphasize that the vast majority of environmental degradation is caused by economic activity in developed nations. "It isn't the population sizes of the poorest countries we should be worried about, it is our own level of consumption!" While no responsible person can deny that Western nations as well as Eastern economic powerhouses like China must dramatically reduce their consumption and find as many

⁸²Stephen King, "Why migration from Africa this century will make the refugee crisis look like a dress rehearsal," *The Telegraph*, May 20, 2017: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/20/coming-century-migration-africa-will-make-refugee-crisis-look/>.

⁸³(1) United Nations Population Division, *World Population Prospects: 2017 Revision*. (2) Census reports and other statistical publications from national statistical offices. (3) Eurostat: Demographic Statistics. (4) United Nations Statistical Division, *Population and Vital Statistics Report*. (5) U.S. Census Bureau: International Database. (6) Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Statistics and Demography Program. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

ways as possible to massively reduce their general environmental impact, that should not blind us to the fact that surging populations in the developing world are an enormous problem in their own right. People are already suffering and dying in the developing world due to excessively high fertility rates and overpopulation. For example, a recent study showed a strong linkage between large family size and malnourished children in Nigeria.⁸⁵ Another recent study has also linked long-term population growth to deadly conflict and displacement in East Africa.⁸⁶ The importance of reducing fertility rates to the well-being of developing countries can be further highlighted by comparing the recent histories of India and China. 40 years ago, India and China both had large numbers of hungry people. India's population has continued to balloon, while China has cut back population growth substantially. Today, hunger remains a much greater problem in India than in China. India has a large proportion of the world's underweight children, while China, with an approximately equal population size, has a far smaller proportion.⁸⁷ The prognosis is for much more suffering if populations continue to explode.

Humanitarians' goal is to bring countries like Nigeria out of poverty. That is, the goal is to bring countries like Nigeria to a level of material welfare and consumption which will give their people a decent quality of life, comparable, I assume, at least to some of the poorer Eastern European countries, such as Serbia. Achieving this goal would likely help reduce the fertility rate in Nigeria, as has happened in every other country to reach that level of development. However, the longer it takes to reach that development goal the larger the population is going to

⁸⁵K.O. Ajao, E. O. Ojofeitimi, A. A. Adebayo, A. O. Fatusi, and O. T. Afolabi, "Influence of family size, household food security status, and child care practices on the nutritional status of under-five children in Ile-Ife, Nigeria," *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 14, no. 4 (2010).

⁸⁶Erin Owain, and Mark Maslin, "Assessing the relative contribution of economic, political and environmental factors on past conflict and the displacement of people in East Africa," *Palgrave Communications*, 4:47 (2018).

⁸⁷Barry M. Popkin, Susan Horton, Soowon Kim, Ajay Mahal, and Jin Shuigao, "Trends in diet, nutritional status, and diet-related noncommunicable diseases in China and India: the economic costs of the nutrition transition," *Nutrition Reviews* 59, no. 12 (2001): 379-390.

be and, consequently, the larger the ecological impact. There is an enormous difference in ecological impact between a Nigeria whose population sustains a decent quality of life with 200 million people vs. 700 million people.

Earth's biotic systems are already under a level of stress that is not sustainable. Adding another country with Eastern European-like levels of consumption with 200 million people is going to make a desperate situation much worse. Now imagine adding a country with this level of consumption with 700 million people. Now imagine adding dozens more countries with populations that have tens of millions of additional people due to prolonged periods with excessively high fertility rates. This is the future we face if we do not get a handle on global population growth, especially population growth in many parts of the developing world. The most humane course of action we can take toward people currently in the developing world, as well as toward most living and all future human beings, is one which takes every humane measure possible to curb population growth in the parts of the developing world that currently have excessively high fertility rates.

The second takeaway lesson from King's quotation is a deeper appreciation for how preposterous it is to think that open borders is doing much to address humanitarian issues. The West cannot absorb any substantial fraction of Africa's impending population explosion during the coming century. Europe is already overloaded with immigrants, and with people in general. Many European countries' social services are already overburdened. Their environments are already under unsustainable stress, and Europe already has some of the most densely populated countries in the world. These factors as well as security concerns and troubling cultural clashes have made Europeans justifiably less willing than ever to accept more immigrants. One might say that this is the result of mere selfishness. I disagree but, in any case, an immigration policy

can only work in a democratic nation if the people support it, so the reality of mass immigration's enormous and continuously growing unpopularity is enough by itself to kill the proposal. If Europe's capacity and willingness to accept immigrants is already maxing out, what will the situation be when the sending countries have double their current populations?

Further, these growing numbers betray another reality which cannot be dismissed out of hand with high-minded moralism. This is the reality that the rate of population growth in much of Africa and the Middle East is so high that even if Western countries began to take in twice or three times as many immigrants as they currently do, the net number of people living in poverty in these sender countries would still increase by hundreds of millions. Any "humanitarian" policy which results in a large net increase in the number of people living in poverty clearly does not deserve the name.

The final takeaway lesson from the numbers provided by the latest UN population projections is that the longer we delay in helping these countries to develop and get a handle on their population growth, the more difficult it will be to alleviate poverty in these nations. Raising nearly 200 million people up out of poverty is a daunting task to say the least. Raising 700 million people up out of poverty will be much harder.

The fact that we should limit immigration in an effort to promote development in developing nations does not mean we should not do anything to help developing nations. Indeed we have a responsibility to do everything in our power to institute the most prudent and helpful policies that we can. Likewise, limiting immigration in order to encourage fertility reduction does not mean we should take an entirely *laissez-faire* approach to overpopulation in developing nations. Western governments and NGOs should take an active role in educating the populations of developing nations on the dangers of overpopulation, providing access to free family planning

services and contraception, and encouraging populations of developing nations to get involved with their governments in an effort to institute reforms that will provide for their long term well-being. I recognize that this is, in many ways, a far cry from the kind of global influence the United States and other Western powers currently exert in the developing world, but, again, this is the only viable solution. Political reformers in Western countries seeking for more humane policies should not focus on lobbying for open borders or expansive immigration policies, but for foreign policies that help to develop, rather than exploit, developing nations.

So, in order to avoid further catastrophic impact on the environment, we must pursue every possible strategy to decrease fertility and accelerate development in developing nations. Mass immigration will not further these goals and will likely hinder them, while limiting immigration from the developing to the developed world can play an important role in achieving these goals.

V. The Humanitarian and Environmental Importance of National Populations

The humanitarian dimension of the environmental impact of immigration is relevant not just at the global level, but also at the national. Developed nations will be unable to reach any of their environmental and conservation goals if they allow their populations to continue growing. (The same is true of developing nations.) Currently most population growth in developed nations is the result of mass immigration. This is a humanitarian issue because, at the extreme, oversized populations can threaten basic ecosystem services and undermine the health and safety of citizens.⁸⁸ Less extreme outcomes can also be harmful. For example, many find access to natural areas critical to their mental and physical health. And solitude in healthy natural areas is

⁸⁸David Pimentel, S. Cooperstein, H. Randell, D. Filiberto, S. Sorrentino, B. Kaye, C. Nicklin et al, "Ecology of increasing diseases: population growth and environmental degradation," *Human Ecology* 35, no. 6 (2007): 653-668.

likely to be threatened before an oversized population threatens basic ecosystem services. Further, overcrowding in cities can take a significant toll on residents' psychological and physical health and overall well-being. For example, one study has shown that general social and psychological stressors are made worse by overcrowding.⁸⁹ Overpopulation and overcrowding can have pervasive and direct negative effects on many elements of human well-being.⁹⁰

Growing national populations is also an issue of inter-species justice. The species which occur naturally within every nation have the right to continue existing. To think otherwise is simply speciesist. A growing human population will seriously threaten other species' prospects for existence. Indeed, many species' prospects for existence are seriously threatened given the current population size of developed nations. More growth will almost certainly spell their demise.

There are many ways an oversized population can threaten ecosystem services, natural areas, and the existence of non-human species. Perhaps the easiest to understand is demand for space. Both humans and non-human species require space to survive. Humans require homes be constructed and animals require natural habits. Indeed, habitat loss is considered the number one driver of species extinction by far.⁹¹ Further, space must be left for forests to play their role in purifying air and water, among other ecosystem services. If developed nations do not stabilize and decrease their population sizes, they will be powerless to stop the destruction of habitats in the future due to demand for housing, food and energy production, and many other human

⁸⁹Stephen J. Lepore, Gary W. Evans, and M. N. Palsane, "Social hassles and psychological health in the context of chronic crowding," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (1991): 357-367.

⁹⁰Mona Marshy, "Social and Psychological Effects of Overcrowding in Palestinian Refugee Camps in the West Bank and Gaza- Literature Review and Preliminary Assessment of the Problem," *International Development Research Centre* 8 (1999).

⁹¹Lenore Fahrig, "Relative effects of habitat loss and fragmentation on population extinction," *The Journal of Wildlife Management* (1997): 603-610.

uses. The immediate needs of the population likely will overwhelm the cries of conservationists to preserve these areas.

This is already a pressing issue in the United Kingdom. Conservationists and nature-lovers are fighting for the preservation of the “Green Belt,” the spaces around London and several other major English cities designed to prevent urban sprawl by keeping areas open and free from 'inappropriate' development. But population pressures are leading government officials to allow new home construction in these protected areas. Promises that the Green Belt will be preserved are proving to be empty and powerless slogans against the demand for more housing. Colin Hines and Jonathon Porritt write,

Despite the Prime Minister’s repeated assertions that “My Government is very clear that the Green Belt must be protected”, 425,000 new homes are currently planned for Green Belt land, as of March 2017, according to figures from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England. That figure is up from 273,000 in March 2016. Little of this new housing on Green Belt land will address the crisis in affordable housing. (Astonishingly, the CPRE remains completely silent on the principal reason why the Green Belt is now under growing threat. Population growth is as taboo an area of discussion for CPRE as it is for every other mainstream environmental / conservation organization in the UK.)⁹²

Despite this obvious connection between conservation goals and population growth, population growth is being all but ignored by mainstream environmental groups in the United Kingdom. And the Brits are no outliers: similar head-in-the-sand behavior can be found elsewhere in Europe, the US, and around the world. This denial of reality is dishonest and could lead to disastrous consequences.

Crucial to note is just how much of this growth in the British population is being driven by migration. It is estimated that immigration plus births to non-native parents has accounted for 85% of UK population growth since 2000.⁹³ Similarly, in 2011 around 68% of Europe’s

⁹²Colin Hines, Jonathon Porritt, *The Progressive Case for Taking Control of EU Immigration – and Avoiding Brexit in the Process*, 16.

⁹³Colin Hines, “Immigration and Population: The interlinked ecological crisis that dares not speak its name” *The Ecological Citizen 2* (2018): 52.

population growth came from immigration and immigration continues to be the main cause of European population growth, as it has been since the early 1990s.⁹⁴ With cuts in immigration, EU countries could stabilize their populations, or even decrease them gradually over time.

VI. What about techno-fixes?

But wait: do we really have to be worried at all about environmental limits to population size? Isn't this just the sequel to Paul Ehrlich's fantastical false alarms about mass starvation, itself a sequel to Parson Malthus' mistakes?⁹⁵ Ehrlich argued in the 1960s that we were on the cusp of environmental catastrophe and mass starvation, but innovation in the form of the Green Revolution came to our rescue. We now produce plenty of food for a global population almost twice the size of what it was when Ehrlich published his infamous book. Granted, there are plenty of hungry people out there, but this is an issue of equity and logistics, not agricultural output.⁹⁶ Why assume we need concern ourselves with environmental limits to population now? Science and technology have saved us in the past, aren't we safe to assume they will do so in the future? In short, no.

It is true that humanity has managed to produce enough food to avert the mass starvation catastrophe that Ehrlich worried about, but this increase in agricultural output has come at a colossal environmental cost.⁹⁷ As I've already mentioned, our environmental problems are legion. Perhaps most worrying among them is the greatly accelerated species extinction rate. We are so altering the Earth's various cycles (mineral, climatic, nutrient, hydrological) that the

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Paul Ehrlich, "The Population Bomb," *New York Times*, 1970, 47.

⁹⁶Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 7.

⁹⁷Eileen Crist, Camilo Mora, and Robert Engelman, "The interaction of human population, food production, and biodiversity protection," *Science* 356, no. 6335 (2017): 263.

planet is becoming increasingly toxic to the thing which makes the Earth a unique and special place and the only place we have ever called home - the biosphere. Our economic activities, which are bringing about indiscriminate extermination of lifeform after lifeform across every type of environment on Earth, continue to degrade those aspects of the Earth which make it hospitable to life, including ourselves.

I am confident that we can come up with multitudes of groundbreaking agricultural innovations that will dramatically increase our agricultural outputs and decrease the per tonnage environmental impact of food production. Some of the currently most promising agricultural techno-fixes include lab-grown meats that require dramatically less water and energy input, and which emit far less greenhouse gases like CO₂ and methane.⁹⁸ There are GMO crops in the works which will be engineered to fix their own nitrogen, thereby eliminating the need for nitrogen fertilizers which pollute waterways and cause algal blooms and dead zones in the oceans. Further possible GMO innovations include faster-growing crops, crops that require less water, drought-resistant crops, and a variety of other potentially environmentally beneficial modifications. There is also the possibility of intensive vertical farming on both land and sea which will allow us to increase the amount of space we have to produce food without consuming more land. I am hopeful about the viability of these innovations. Their large-scale deployment now might help many of our current environmental issues. However, it is imprudent in the extreme to put all of our eggs in this techno-fix basket and leave the issue of population growth unaddressed, given current environmental circumstances.

In a world much different from the one we currently face it might be acceptable to play the wait-on-techno-fixes-and-see game. If, for example, we weren't already hemorrhaging

⁹⁸Jamie Condliffe, "Say Hello to Finger-Lickin' Lab-Grown Chicken," *MIT Technology Review*, March 15, 2017: <https://www.technologyreview.com/s/603862/say-hello-to-finger-lickin-lab-grown-chicken/>.

species left and right and facing the likely prospect of catastrophic climate change, it might be reasonable to rely solely on techno-fixes to solve environmental problems. However, this is clearly not the world we live in. We are already in the midst of environmental disaster. Further, while we have a proven track record of solving problems with science and technology, we also have a proven track-record of destroying the natural world with science and technology. The Green Revolution has played a key role in getting us into our current environmental crisis and accompanying extinction crisis by enabling the continued growth of the human population and allowing humanity to push past planetary ecological boundaries, including excessive nitrogen and phosphorous pollution, excessive carbon emissions and accompanying climate change, and dangerous ocean acidification. Ignoring the population problem due to total faith in the Green Revolution 2.0 would be not just imprudent: given the stakes for current and future generations, it would be immoral as well.

Modern science and technology have given us an unprecedented ability to solve problems at a scale never before dreamed of in the history of human civilization. But no scientific or technological solution is perfect and new technologies, in solving old problems, create new dynamics and new problem contexts which require further innovation and further scientific and technological problem solving. I do not mean that science and technology never perfectly solve problems. I believe they often do this. I also do not mean that scientific and technological solutions always have unintended and undesirable side-effects. (Penicillin, for example, when used appropriately, seems to have great benefits with no real measurable downsides.) Rather, I am saying that new technologies have the power to so transform the space in which they operate that new and unpredictable problems often arise. Social media technology and the current problem of fake news are a good example of this. I am, however, in no way opposed to this

process of creating ever-new technologies to solve ever-new problems created by previous technological iterations. It seems that the overall direction that this process is leading us in is a positive one. What I am arguing is that the present environmental crisis is of such scale and severity that we *do not* have the luxury of waiting to see if a Green Revolution 2.0 will allow us to support 11.2 billion humans on Earth by the year 2100.⁹⁹ Nor do we have the luxury (or the right) to wait and see if it will allow us to support only Homo sapiens, our pets and livestock, and perhaps some of our city-dwelling friends like the rat and the pigeon, while extinguishing all other life on Earth.

Indeed, we have good reason to believe we will not be able to have both a viable natural world alongside a population of anything close to 11.2 billion humans. The road to 11.2 billion people globally in the year 2100 is also a road of substantial economic development. It is a road on which the poorer segments of our ever-growing population aspire to Western levels of consumption, while the richer segments aspire to ever higher levels. Current estimates state that if everyone currently alive consumed at the level of the average American today, we would need almost four Earths.¹⁰⁰ This is with a population of under 7.5 billion. With 11.2 billion people consuming at the level of the current average American, we would need nearly six planet earths. I believe in the power of technological innovation, but I don't know what kind of faith one would need in order to believe that technology can increase in efficiency enough to make up for more than five entire planets worth of resources.

A more general point comes from reflecting on the purpose of technology and the kind of societies we want to build. The promise of technology is that it will make our lives easier and

⁹⁹United Nations, "World population prospects: The 2015 revision," *United Nations Econ Soc Aff* 33, no. 2 (2015): 1-66.

¹⁰⁰Charlotte McDonald, "How many Earths do we need?," *BBC News*, June 16, 2015: <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33133712>.

more convenient and increase leisure time. However, we have so structured our society that the efficiency gains that are made and the time that is freed up by new technologies is virtually all repurposed in order to bring about more economic growth. And population growth goes hand-in-hand with economic growth. Each new child is a new consumer. If technology is ever to fulfill its promises, we must set limits to growth. If the growth imperative is ended then the gains made by technology can be utilized to improve quality of life and work toward a world where every society is characterized as flourishing. Crucial to this is limiting population growth. Fewer people means fewer mouths to feed, fewer consumer desires to fulfill, and more space and resources to go around. Technology can serve as the means to create a world where both humans and non-human species flourish, but this is only possible if we are willing to place limits on the size of the human population.

In order to address our current environmental crisis and in order to ensure the flourishing of present and future humans, we must reduce consumption, pursue technological innovations that increase efficiency and decrease environmental impacts, and use every morally-sound tactic at our disposal to reduce the global population.

VII. The Demographic Transition Excuse

The most popular excuse for ignoring the problem of overpopulation is the so-called demographic transition thesis. Proponents of this thesis note that the fertility rate has dropped precipitously in all nations which have reached a certain level of economic development. Due to the fact that economic development so reliably decreases fertility, and in a non-coercive way to

boot, the best course of action is to ignore fertility rates and instead focus solely on economic development.¹⁰¹ So it is argued.

Hans Rosling is one of the most influential intellectuals who has relied on this thesis.¹⁰² He suggests that the only two possible ways to end population growth are a nuclear war or economic development. He states, “The only way of really getting world population [growth] to stop is to continue to improve child survival to 90 percent.”¹⁰³ And he believes economic development is the surest path to this reality. In other words, Rosling believes it is impossible to effect any change in fertility rates in any way other than through economic development. This is patently false. Many cases in the 20th century demonstrate the efficacy of population policies in reducing fertility even in the absence of strong economic development.¹⁰⁴ Further, the UN’s 2017 World Population Prospects report states: “To achieve the substantial reductions in fertility projected in the medium variant, it will be essential to support continued improvements in access to reproductive health care services, including family planning, especially in the least developed countries, with a focus on enabling women and couples to achieve their desired family size.” Economic development does indeed tend to decrease fertility rate, but it is by no means the only way to do so. Fertility rates can be decreased, as the UN reports indicates, through access to contraception and family planning, as well as increased educational opportunities for women and girls, tax incentives for smaller family size, and marketing campaigns that extol the virtues of having fewer children.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹E.H., “Falling Fertility,” *The Economist*, October 29, 2009: www.economist.com/node/14744915.

¹⁰²Hans Rosling, Anna Rosling Rönnlund, and Ola Rosling, *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong about the World--and why Things are Better Than You Think*, (New York: Flatiron Books, 2018).

¹⁰³Hans Rosling, "Global population growth, box by box," filmed June 2019 at TED@Cannes, Cannes, France, video, 9:57, https://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_on_global_population_growth?language=en.

¹⁰⁴Ndola Prata, "Making family planning accessible in resource-poor settings," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 364, no. 1532 (2009): 3093-3099.

¹⁰⁵John Bongaarts, "Development: Slow down population growth," *Nature News* 530, no. 7591 (2016): 409.

Rosling's approach is massively insufficient for both practical and logical reasons. First, despite unprecedented economic development throughout the 20th century and declining fertility rates around the globe in the latter half of the century, the global population has continued to rapidly climb and has more than doubled since 1960. So, as our per-capita environmental impact has increased greatly, so has the population size. This has resulted in multipliers of environmental impact converging on multipliers of environmental impact and resulted in catastrophic environmental destruction. If the phenomenon of "demographic transition" resulted in population size falling in proportion with per capita consumption, this might be a strong reason to focus solely on economic development and ignore fertility rate and population size. But this is not the situation we are presented with. Yes, economic development leads to decreases in fertility rates, but the evidence tells us that this "natural" decrease is insufficient to avert environmental catastrophe.

It is fortunate that economic development generally tends to result in reduced fertility and for this reason economic development must be one of the tools we employ for reducing the size of the human population. But it can't be our *only* tool. The situation we are presented with, the prospect of a population of over 11 billion by the year 2100, necessitates that we use every tool at our disposal to lower fertility rates – economic development, universal access to family planning and contraception, marketing campaigns which extol the virtues of having fewer children, tax incentives for smaller family sizes, free or incentivized vasectomies, and increased access to education for women and girls. Lessons from successful population strategies in countries as diverse as South Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Iran, and Colombia, reveal that comprehensive approaches that include many of the above strategies produce the greatest

success.¹⁰⁶ The failure to use all resources at our disposal to reduce fertility rate and population size amounts to enormous moral negligence and the turning of a blind eye toward very clear data.

The situation we are presented with regarding advocates of relying solely on “demographic transition” to get global population size under control is analogous to the following scenario: A bus full of passengers is rolling toward the edge of a cliff several hundred feet high. The engine has broken down, so the bus is moving only with its remaining momentum. However, the brakes on the bus have also gone out. Half a dozen engineers are onboard the bus and they can see that friction is slowing the bus down but, in their best estimation, the bus will require 15-20 feet beyond the edge of the cliff to come to a complete stop. Each of these engineers has an idea they are reasonably certain will make it more likely that the bus will come to a complete stop before the edge of the cliff. Further, the more of them which implement their idea for slowing down the bus, the more likely the bus will come to a stop before the cliff edge (the different techniques can work together). The engineers collectively decide to do nothing, because they don’t want to disturb the other passengers by running around the bus implementing their various solutions to slow the bus down.

Who would praise the engineers for their courtesy and practical wisdom? No one. Yet this is analogous to the course of action which countless individuals working in the fields of conservation and sustainability policy are advocating. The fact that the bus is slowing down *by itself* (this is hypothetical; in many ways, the bus is speeding up!) is no reason not to try to slow the bus down more rapidly, if its rate of deceleration is too slow to avoid the disaster of the bus plummeting off the cliff. Indeed, if the rate of deceleration is too slow to avert total disaster and

¹⁰⁶Malcolm Potts, "Where next?," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 364, no. 1532 (2009): 3120.

no one is willing to try to slow it down to a degree sufficient to avert disaster, one might as well attempt to speed up the bus for a more spectacular Evel Knievel-style ending. This bus scenario presents no insoluble problems like the classic trolley problem dilemma in ethical philosophy. The moral and sane course of action is clear. Employ all reasonable means to slow the bus down.

VIII. How can you be so cold?

I am certain my insistence potential migrants from the developing world remain in their likely difficult situations is not satisfying to many with humanitarian commitments. Indeed, I find the current proposal difficult to stomach in certain ways. How would I feel if I were denied the right to improve my lot by moving to a more prosperous country? While the current proposal may seem cold, an open borders policy is a misguided way to help improve the lives of the vast majority of individuals in developing nations. Political and financial capital is better spent on other ways of providing aid to these people. The fact that a policy is well-meaning and makes you feel better is no reason to implement it if it is in competition for both public support and funding with policies that have a better chance of helping more people.

There are many examples of well-meaning policies that make those with humanitarian concerns feel better about themselves, but which have severe unintended negative consequences. For example, news that African migrants were drowning in the Mediterranean on boats that were not seaworthy, as they attempted the crossing to Lampedusa and other points of arrival on the European continent, led to public outcry. A new policy was put in place which resulted in the Italian Navy running patrols to try to ensure no Africans drowned on these poorly constructed boats. The consequence of this policy was that the smugglers who operated these boats realized they could put their passengers on even lower quality boats. They knew that they did not have to

use a boat that could reach Lampedusa or the European mainland, but only one that could make it within reach of the Italian Naval vessels.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, this policy encouraged more Africans to attempt the crossing (as they got word that the Italian Navy would essentially assist them in completing the crossing) in even more dangerous vessels, thereby putting even more lives in danger. The policy certainly saved many lives, but it probably cost lives as well. In any event, it did nothing to address the underlying dynamics driving the migration, which are of far greater humanitarian import. It also reinforced the paradigm of benevolent Europeans solving Africa's problems, a paradigm that has never worked and that should have been jettisoned along with colonialism itself back in the 1960s.

Given the consequences of the abovementioned policy, another, better policy suggests itself: use the Italian Navy to intercept African immigrants and return them to the African continent. This may seem, on its face, to be cold and inhumane, but it is a policy that likely would have saved more lives from drowning and kept more individuals out of harm's way. First, the knowledge that the Italian Navy would intercept and return smugglers' boats to the African continent would have motivated the smugglers to use more, not less, seaworthy vessels in an effort to evade Italian Naval vessels. Second, the need to use higher-quality boats would have forced the smugglers to charge immigrants a higher price for the crossing, consequently reducing the number of immigrants attempting the crossing. Third, as smugglers aren't known for giving refunds, the prospect of being intercepted and returned to the African continent by the Italian Navy halfway through the crossing, thereby wasting the money on the attempted crossing would further reduce the number of people attempting the crossing. This policy of towing smugglers' boats full of immigrants back to the African continent would have certainly dramatically reduced

¹⁰⁷Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 68.

the numbers attempting this sea crossing and therefore would have been the most effective policy at preventing more drowning deaths on smugglers' poor-quality boats. Of course, many European liberals, like their American counterparts, wrongly assume that the immigrants have a right to migrate wherever they please, and this assumption clouds thinking about how best to resolve these kinds of problems.

The most infamous and tragic image associated with these attempts to cross the Mediterranean was one of a drowned Syrian boy washed up face-down on a beach. This image likely comes to the mind of any European with humanitarian commitments when they think of the immigration problems around the Mediterranean. This image and others like it are also likely to fuel a holier-than-thou humanitarian outrage at many of my arguments. However, policy development requires the weighing of evidence and argumentation, not the brandishing of emotionally-charged photographs. But, if we are forced to deal in photographs rather than words, it is likely that the policies oriented by an open-borders mindset will result in many more such photographs than a policy of limited immigration.

IX. What about the Right of Immigrants to Migrate?

I have argued that the right to self-determination protects the collective decisions of citizens to limit immigration as part of the effort to build flourishing societies. In the last section of this chapter, I will consider the other key party involved in debates about the ethics of immigration: immigrants themselves.

Ethically, one of the strongest arguments offered in favor of open borders is the idea that free movement is an essential component of the fundamental human right to freedom, and that free movement is a basic human interest due to the role it plays in allowing people to pursue other basic interests such as pursuing work opportunities, or seeking food and shelter. Joseph

Carens offers one of the most straight-forward and powerful arguments in favor of this position.¹⁰⁸ I will show why his argument ultimately fails and why the right to freedom of movement, like all other rights, has important and legitimate qualifications.

Carens makes what he calls, following David Miller, a “cantilever argument” for why the right to move across national borders is a basic human right. The basic structure of a cantilever argument is to take as a starting point an existing human right or ethical principle which everyone who subscribes to democratic ideals accepts, and then show how this has implications for another, more contentious area of ethics. The core of Carens’ cantilever argument goes as follows: the ability to move freely within the borders of one’s country of residence is recognized by most governments, many prominent international organizations, and many prominent international human rights documents (e.g., Article 13 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights) as a fundamental human right. The rationale for regarding the right to move freely within one’s country as a fundamental human right must be the same (or at least relevantly similar) to the rationale for regarding the right to move freely across national borders as a fundamental right. In both cases, the concern is with the freedom of individuals to move in order to pursue basic interests; e.g., pursuing a job or following a love interest. Therefore, consistency demands that we recognize the right to move across national borders as a basic human right.¹⁰⁹

To strengthen the psychological force of his argument, Carens asks his readers to consider several hypothetical scenarios in which one attempts to move from New York to California and encounters many of the kinds of frustrating and often seemingly arbitrary bureaucratic barriers that immigrants encounter when attempting to immigrate from one country to another. Carens’ argument has a lot going for it. He appeals to something widely regarded as

¹⁰⁸Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, 237

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 238.

a basic human right, to our sense of freedom and possibility as American citizens able to freely move anywhere within a vast country, and to the fundamental principle of consistency.

However, Carens ignores some important exceptions to the right to free movement within one's own country. He acknowledges that the right does have some exceptions, such as limiting access to private property, imprisonment and parole for criminal offenses, medical quarantines, prohibitions on settling on indigenous lands, and traffic regulations.¹¹⁰ But he either forgets or ignores the cases of national parks and nature reserves. From such cases we can make a cantilever argument of our own for restricting movement across national borders.

The argument goes as follows: it is part of our understanding of the limits of the human right to freedom of movement within one's own country that certain areas are set apart in order to protect nonhuman species, provide recreational areas, protect ecosystem services, or for other good environmental purposes. The rationale for doing this is that limiting human use or access is important to achieving environmental goals, not just at the global level, but also at the regional and local levels, and that it may be necessary to entirely exclude humans from settling in some areas for the sake of environmental goals. But the same environmental rationales are relevant in deciding how many immigrants to allow into a country. That is, the population of a country has a large impact on environmental goals, and a large and growing population makes some environmental goals unachievable. Therefore, we are justified in limiting immigration across national borders in order to limit population size for the sake of environmental goals.

We exclude humans from national parks and nature reserves because it is understood that human settlement is inimical to achieving the environmental goals for which those areas were set aside. Numbers matter. The presence of humans on areas of land means less space, water, and

¹¹⁰Ibid., 247.

biomass for other species. In the case of national parks and nature reserves, it is important for the number of humans to be as close to zero as possible. This same model applies to countries as well. The number of species we are able to preserve outside of national parks and nature reserves will vary tremendously if the United States has 200 million, 400 million, or 800 million people. Ditto for the EU, or Australia, or Japan, or Canada. Further, the integrity of national parks and nature reserves depends partly on the size of the population in the area surrounding the reserve and in nearby regions.¹¹¹ Larger local and regional populations mean more of a human footprint within national parks and reserve areas due to both pollution and resource extraction occurring around the protected area. For example, the ecological integrity of a national park or nature reserve which depends on a flow of water will vary considerably depending on how many people upstream depend on the same flow and how many people are contributing pollution to that flow. Similarly, a national park downwind of a city will be impacted more heavily by air pollution generated by a city of 1 million people versus 2 million people. The health of protected bodies of water will vary depending on the demand for food and the consequent development of intensive industrial agriculture utilizing nitrogen-based fertilizers.¹¹² Further, a rapidly growing population will place public pressure on politicians to allow development on currently protected lands.

Like Carens, I do not argue for the structural support on which my cantilever argument rests; i.e., the legitimacy of national parks or nature reserves as limitations on human freedom of

¹¹¹Meghna Krishnadas, Meghna Agarwala, Sachin Sridhara, and Erin Eastwood, "Parks protect forest cover in a tropical biodiversity hotspot, but high human population densities can limit success," *Biological Conservation* 223 (2018): 147-155.

¹¹²Kendall R. Jones, Oscar Venter, Richard A. Fuller, James R. Allan, Sean L. Maxwell, Pablo Jose Negret, and James EM Watson, "One-third of global protected land is under intense human pressure," *Science* 360, no. 6390 (2018): 788-791.

movement.¹¹³ Instead, I take this as a given due to its widespread acceptance and the scientific and conservation tradition on which it is based, and argue the rationale for restricting human freedom of movement in the case of national parks and nature reserves is also relevant when trying to specify an ethical immigration policy, all things considered.

Where does this leave us? With two powerful cantilever arguments that need to be resolved with reference to the underlying goals of ethics: preserving the flourishing of human societies and nonhuman nature. Freedom of movement is indeed a fundamental human good. But, like all freedoms, it has its limits. Absolute and unchecked freedom can be the cause of great injustice. We must balance the need to preserve large areas of wild nature for the preservation of biodiversity and the recreation of the human spirit, against human freedom of movement. An important reality to keep before us is that the argued-for limits to freedom of movement are a consequence of failing to limit ourselves in other ways. If, for example, we can significantly decrease human numbers over time, we can envision a world where opportunities for free human movement are enhanced while still preserving the wild nature that we need to preserve. As Garrett Hardin argues, “*the morality of an act is a function of the state of the system at the time it is performed.*”¹¹⁴ Failing to limit human numbers changes the state of the global system and hence the morality of a variety of different acts, including immigration.

Before concluding, a possible objection to my cantilever argument for limiting immigration should be addressed. One might object that nations as units of land do not track all (or any) relevant environmental boundaries. One might argue that if we are going to restrict immigration into the United States for the sake of the importance of regional population to

¹¹³Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, 239.

¹¹⁴Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research* 1, no. 3 (2009): 247.

environmental goals, then it does not make sense to stop here. If we are going to justify restricted immigration into the United States for the sake of the importance of regional population to environmental goals, then we must identify, to the most detailed extent possible, all environmentally relevant regions and sub-regions and also restrict movement into those areas. This is, in principle, an important point.

What would Yellowstone be if it were choked by the smog of a nearby city with 1 million automobiles? What would the Grand Canyon be if so many people needed water upstream from it that the Colorado River ran totally dry? However, any proposal to limit immigration within existing nation-states is a losing proposition. First, there are no existing political mechanisms for carrying out such a policy proposal. Such an endeavor would require the fundamental restructuring of the current nation-state system. Second, we would not want to create such mechanisms, and not just because the attempt to institute such a proposal would likely turn many people against environmental goals in general. If conservationism is to be successful, it cannot devolve into environmental fascism. However, there are other kinds of policies that might be pursued at the state and local levels which would address limits appropriately without excessively restricting freedom of movement (such as strict zoning laws that prevent urban sprawl and increase housing costs). These are complex policy issues which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that they can and must be addressed, without tossing either of two very valuable babies—personal freedom and environmental goods—out with the bathwater.

Despite the universal dislike of environmental fascism we are rapidly moving in a direction that may give us no other option, unless we content ourselves with destabilizing the environment we depend upon and wiping out all species other than ourselves and our

domestics. As David Attenborough says, if we do not impose limits on ourselves, nature will. It is simply not possible to go on indefinitely growing the population without any thought to controls or limits. Either ecological catastrophe, a depauperate and homogeneous human-dominated Earth, or environmental fascism is our destiny, if we do not learn to control the environmental impact of our civilization by limiting population. Humanity can only find freedom in self-imposed limitation. It was ever so. If we greatly decrease the global population, we can imagine that regional population issues will be greatly mitigated, and individuals will be much more free to move where they please without causing negative environmental consequences.

Conclusion

Both chapters of this thesis have shown that the standard liberal position on immigration neglects to grapple with the full ethical context implicated in debates about a just immigration policy. In the first chapter, I showed that the liberal concern with human rights must generate concern not just for immigrants, but also for individuals living in developed nations (and not just for current people, but for future citizens of both developed and developing nations). A proper respect for human rights cannot ignore the right of individuals in developed nations to pursue the goal of creating flourishing societies. The invocation of immigrants' right to freedom of movement is by no means a debate-ending move. An ethical immigration policy requires trade-offs and compromises between the rights of immigrants and the rights of citizens of developed nations. If one's paramount concern is respect for human rights, one does one's own cause a great injustice by ignoring the rights of citizens of Western nations in the context of the immigration debate.

In the second chapter, I have shown that present global economic, social, and environmental circumstances generate a context in which the citizens of developed countries should exercise their right to self-determination and reduce immigration across their borders for the sake of their and their posterity's flourishing. Present circumstances make it such that it is impossible for developed countries to achieve their long-term environmental, social and economic goals if present high rates of immigration are maintained. Further, I have shown that immigrants' right to freedom of movement does not overrule the right of citizens to control movement across their borders.

Liberal academic and political circles tend to believe, as a matter of course, that an open borders policy is both the most ethical and the most humane immigration policy. This thesis has

shown that neither of these claims is obviously true. Further, a strong case has been made that a broader and more detailed understanding of the social and economic landscape reveals that limiting immigration is, in fact, the just position in the immigration debate. The belief that open borders is the just position is fueled by both knee-jerk emotional reactions and a refusal to consider any ethical dimension beyond the liberties of individual immigrants. However, a proper understanding of both rights and responsibilities requires thoughtful and serious consideration of the wider social, environmental, and economic context in which those rights and responsibilities operate. Further, the future of life on Earth compels us to think more holistically than ever before. Thinking in terms of individual human freedom is inadequate in a world where virtually every aspect of the biosphere is being assaulted and degraded faster than it can regenerate. Free markets and individual liberties are of great value and are critical to societal flourishing. However, like all values, these must be evaluated within a larger axiological context. Freedoms must be balanced against one another; freedom, as one important value, must be balanced against others.

In this thesis I have focused primarily on the rights of citizens of developed nations to limit immigration into their territories from the developing world. I want to conclude by making it clear that I fully agree with ethical and humanitarian pleas made elsewhere concerning our obligations to the developing world. We have a strong ethical responsibility to aid these nations in their development and we should do much more than we currently do to alleviate suffering everywhere in the world. However, this ethical obligation says nothing about what the immigration policy of developed nations should be. Our ethical obligation to alleviate suffering in the developing world dictates that we must take action. However, citizens' right to self-determination justifies a nation's decision to help in ways other than opening their borders.

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