

Migration, Cultural Diversity, and the Rights of Foreigners in Political Thought

Anthem Philosophy and Politics of Human Rights Series

In recent years, scholars such as Haig Patapan have confronted the unsettling reality of democratic backsliding in many parts of the world as constitutional, liberal democracies fall into increasing political polarization and face the rise of modern, sophisticated, “post-liberal” authoritarians who deploy democratic forms and modern technology to legitimize and expand their power. As political philosopher John Rawls predicted more than 30 years ago, central to polarization in contemporary liberal democracies is the politics of migration and disagreement over questions of indigeneity.

Post-liberal regimes today pursue policies that directly challenge contemporary arguments for the justice of open borders. For instance, in *The Ethics of Immigration* (Oxford University Press, 2013), Joseph Carens argues that according to their own liberal democratic values many North American and European practices that restrict access to citizenship are indefensible and need reform. Carens critiques western democracies, arguing that living up to our most basic democratic principles of freedom and equality entails a full commitment to open borders. Similarly, in his contribution to *Driven From Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants* (Georgetown University Press, 2010), Arash Abizadeh argues that open borders and the denial of state sovereignty are necessary to secure human rights; freedom of movement across borders is a basic human right and necessary to reduce global poverty and inequality. Abizadeh goes further, arguing that human rights doctrine can ground its denial of the state’s right to close its borders to foreigners in the democratic theory of popular sovereignty. Democratic theory argues that people subject to the state’s coercive power, and not the state itself, are ultimately the sovereign arbiter of political questions, and since migrants subject to the state’s border laws are also subject to the state’s coercive power, it is necessary to give them a say in setting those laws.

Looking to classical political philosophy, some scholars argue that openness to strangers is necessary for the flourishing of citizens. For example, in *Plato’s Caves: The Liberating Sting of Cultural Diversity* (Oxford University Press, 2020), Rebecca LeMoine argues that far from exhibiting hostility toward foreigners, Plato’s dialogues reveal that foreigners play a role similar to that of Socrates: the role of gadfly. Like encounters with Socrates, interactions with foreigners can expose contradictions in the authoritative opinions that undergird one’s political community and thus encourage a more self-reflective citizenship. They can do this, according to LeMoine, because every citizen lives in a polity that shares the basic features of the cave, Plato’s famous allegory in the *Republic*. This means that when we interact with someone raised in a different “cave,” we are faced with the possibility of another way of life and hence with the occasion to reflect on our own conception of truth, beauty, and goodness. LeMoine concludes that for Plato the “liberating sting” of cross-cultural engagement, although initially painful, can help citizens cultivate a Socratic knowledge of ignorance and hence the intellectual humility that is essential to the preservation of democracy.

This volume will examine fundamental questions of migration, cultural diversity, and the rights of foreigners in the history of political thought, providing a multiplicity of perspectives on these important issues. Chapters that address any aspect of the themes discussed above or any other fundamental questions of migration, cultural diversity, and the rights of foreigners in political philosophy, history, or literature are welcome

Please send a chapter title, brief 250-300 word abstract, email address, and brief five-line cv to Ann Ward (ann_ward@baylor.edu) by October 15, 2025. Accepted chapters will be due February 15, 2026. Chapters will be peer-reviewed, and it is intended that the collection will be published by Anthem Press in the Anthem Philosophy and Politics of Human Rights Series.

Thank you.

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