

THE NEW AMERICANS

A GUIDE TO IMMIGRATION SINCE 1965

EDITED BY

Mary C. Waters & Reed Ueda

with Helen B. Marrow

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

London, England 2007

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Transforming Foreigners into Americans

Roger Waldinger

In popular belief as well as social science wisdom, the bounds of “society” and the “nation-state” normally converge. While society and state generally overlapped during the mid-20th century, conditions at the turns of the 20th and the 21st century took a different form, making it hard for nation-state societies to wall themselves off from the world. Consequently, the long-term view indicates that social relations regularly span state boundaries. For that reason, international migrants, those people from beyond the nation-state’s boundaries, persistently reappear.

In the rich, liberal democracies of the old and new worlds, the advent of international migration produces a social dilemma, as it runs into efforts to force society back inside state boundaries. States seek to bound the societies they enclose: they strive to regulate membership in the national collectivity as well as movement across territorial borders, often using illiberal means to fulfill liberal ends. Nationals, believing in the idea of the national community, endeavor to implement it, making sure that membership is available only to some, and signaling to newcomers that acceptance is contingent on conformity.

In large measure the effort is successful, as foreigners get transformed into nationals. Engaging in the necessary adjustments is often acceptable to those who were earlier willing to abandon home in search of the good life; the everyday demands of fitting in, as well as the attenuation of home-country loyalties and ties, make the foreigners and their descendants increasingly similar to the nationals whose community they have joined. But the ex-foreigners also respond to the message conveyed by nationals and state institutions. In this respect, the assimilation literature, emphasizing the decline of an ethnic difference, largely misleads us: the ex-foreigners do not abandon particularism; rather, they replace an old particularism for one that is new. Finding appeal in the idea of a national community, they also think that their new national community should be bounded, agreeing that the gates through which future foreigners enter ought to be controlled.

However, the advent of large-scale migration produces a gap between the people *in* the state and the people *of* the state, to which the nationals respond in ways that galvanize an ethnic reaction. Believing that the people of the state and the people in the state should be one and the same, nationals find divergence disturbing. Questions of belonging become a source of political and social contention, with some nationals inevitably insisting that boundaries *around* the state be tightened and others demanding that the boundaries of the political community *within* the state be narrowed. Thus, as an inherently political phenomenon, migration across state boundaries generates political conflicts that none of the rich, immigrant-receiving democracies can avoid. In the end, those conflicts transform the ex-foreigners into nationals who know that they have yet to be fully accepted, which is why they remain attached to ethnic others of their own kind.

These are the arguments to be elaborated in the pages that follow. The essay seeks to go beyond the usual polarity of assimilation versus ethnic retention. I share the view of the sociologists of assimilation: the demographic dynamism of the rich democracies inexorably pulls the ex-foreigners out of their ethnic enclaves and niches into more diverse settings. But I expand the perspective to include the national boundaries and extend beyond them: the very same factors that produce border blending and shifting within the boundaries of the immigrant-receiving societies also bring foreigners across national lines. Consequently, the cross-state networks of international migrants and the community-building and -maintaining activities of states and national peoples collide, transforming foreigners into nationals but often into nationals of a different, ethnic kind.

The perspective developed here stands at considerable remove from most of the sociological literature on the United States. As that body of work focuses on the re-making of the American mainstream, it highlights the peculiarities of Americans, as opposed to the commonalities shared by the U.S. with the other rich democracies on which international migrants have converged. Americans are surely strange, though not for the reasons emphasized by the usual theories of American exceptionalism. Americans have constructed nationhood in terms that have been both externally and internally contrastive, excluding not just aliens but also the outsiders—most notably, African Americans—found within the territory of the state. While the combination of internal and external contrasts has parallels elsewhere, the American dilemma, as Gunnar Myrdal argued, is of a particular sort. Only in the U.S. does one find so deep a conflict between the fundamentally liberal principles to which the American people have been committed right from the beginning and a contradictory, no less deeply held view that restricts legal or functional membership in the people on the basis of origin and kind. The civil rights revolution notwithstanding, practice still diverges from theory: while Americans publicly proclaim their indifference to ascriptive differences among the peoples of the U.S., they still organize much of national life around distinctions of precisely this kind.

However, the very creed that the ethnic majority has violated—namely, that the U.S. is a nation where membership is available to all who wish to commit—is exactly what the internal outsiders have found attractive. Since the ethnic outsiders have mainly understood themselves as Americans, not as separate nations, the relationship between “majority” and “minority” Americans has been one of contention over the terms of inclusion in the people, not national autonomy or the rights of secession. Consequently, ethnic minorities have had a dual consciousness, attached to a group identity fashioned in contrast to an ethnic majority that has consistently disregarded the liberal, democratic principles it has claimed to profess, and yet as fully American, patriotic, and nationalistic as anyone else. For the same reason, established minorities play a dual role as regards immigrants, serving as instruments of Americanization while providing a counter-community, which proves attractive when the majority is unwilling or reluctant to let individual immigrants make their way upward.

Of course, immigrant assimilation in the U.S. is inevitably affected by the specific conditions on the ground. However, the literature’s preoccupation with the divisions particular to this country is a bit like mistaking the forest for the trees. As international migration is an exception to the system by which states bound mutually exclusive populations, the fundamental dilemmas it produces are experienced by the residents of all the rich democracies, not just by Americans. Consequently, the process of taking foreigners and turning them into Americans is a local variation on a common theme, shaped by political factors extending well beyond the frontiers of the United States.

Transforming Foreigners into Nationals

Nationalizing foreigners is a mixture of coercion and consent. People who are prepared to abandon home in search of the good life are often willing to try other novelties as well. The new context also matters: there are few immigrant communities in which the keepers of tradition can fully guard against change; since most migrants are numerical minorities, many have at least some, if not much, exposure to hosts and their ways. While not all are ready or quick to exchange the embrace of one state for another, those who left in order to escape, or for whom “home” offers little promise, have a different view: for them, the price of formal identification with another people and place is not difficult to bear. As for the rest, time does its work, especially where the conditions of membership are relatively open and demands for cultural or ideological conformity are modest, as is true in the U.S. Gradually, ties to the old home attenuate and are replaced with substantive as well as symbolic attachments to a new people and their state.

But a story of foreigners willingly becoming nationals is just too simple. During the last era of mass migration as well as its aftermath, the coercive role of states,

not to speak of nationals' racist views, did much to speed the process. While institutionalized, ethnocentric assimilation efforts—such as the Americanization programs offered in U.S. schools and companies earlier in the 20th century—have now largely disappeared, pluralism goes only so far. Understanding the national culture makes for greater competency, which is why immigrants and particularly their children hasten to acquire the appropriate tool kit. Although overtly racist views have disappeared from the political and cultural mainstreams of the rich democracies, newcomers are still expected to shift attachments from the old to the new home. Notwithstanding public institutions and rituals that have been redesigned to accommodate a mixture of national and other identities, expressions of pluralism follow a common template, yielding a homogenizing effect. Consequently, what the sociological dictionary defines as “assimilation”—the voluntaristic shedding of an ethnic difference—turns out to be something else: adhesion to a new national people, in part because strangeness and foreign attachments leave one open to doubt.

In the U.S., however, the continued nationalization of foreigners is largely unseen; the democratization of the American people has transformed the meaning of Americanization. The key lies in the distinction between the internal and external aspects of national identity, the former distinguishing among the various peoples of the U.S., the latter between the Americans at home and the foreigners abroad. Descendants of the founding immigrant groups dominated during the last era of mass migration and its aftermath, when origins, not belief, determined whether or not one belonged. Since, as these dominants saw it, *they* were the Americans, the demands for cultural change were intense; for them, acceptance was to be granted only if the immigrants and their descendants shed all foreign habits, tastes, and attachments. While practical considerations made for greater flexibility, the message was both conveyed and received.

During the current era of mass migration, by contrast, sharply ethnicized conceptions of American identity have been abandoned, and the cultural boundaries of the American “we” have been enlarged to include all the citizens of the state. In postethnic America, as the historian David Hollinger has termed it, ethnicity is respected but not frozen in place. New ethnic groups get formed as part of the normal functioning of a democratic society, and are so accepted. As the sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee correctly note, the newest Americans are freer than those in the past to choose strategies of the “mainstream” as well as the “ethnic” type.

But as Hollinger points out, postethnic Americans are not citizens of the world. National identity remains a source of primary affiliation; the political, external component of American identity—the national “us” versus the alien “them” beyond the borders of the U.S.—remains strong, and more so than the sociologists of assimilation are wont to admit. According to the pundits, Americans come from Mars (loving war) and Europeans from Venus (loving love). While that view might be too strong, poll data do indicate that Americans are more nationalistic than members of

the other rich democracies are. Moreover, as liberal nationalism embraces the American creed, it is perfectly suited to the normal, multicultural American of the turn of the 21st century. As doctrine, it includes all who want to be full Americans, without ever harassing them for driving while not white or pressing them to sever all attachments to other peoples or places, and yet it does not believe in opening up the club to all newcomers, if only on the grounds that Americans first need to take care of each other. At a macro-sociological level, therefore, what the literature describes as “acculturation” entails the political process of resocializing foreigners, turning them into Americans of a new kind, equipped with new-country instead of old-country solidarities.

Thus, at the turn of the 20th century, founding groups had the view that the state belonged to them; thanks to the Progressive-era transformation of the state, they seized hold of it. As they did elsewhere, schools provided the means by which the state turned the children of peasants into nationals. Of course, that effort entailed other objectives consistent with Americanization—most notably, ensuring that the peasants' children would absorb the dispositions required by good, that is to say, disciplined, factory workers. But as the contemporary records tell us, it also convinced the immigrant children that their ethnic origins made them Americans of a decidedly second class.

From midcentury onward, however, both the American people and the American state were decoupled from the identities of the founding immigrant groups. Involvement in a world war and then a cold war helped turn the despised ethnics from southern and eastern Europe into full-fledged Americans: the salience of an external enemy, as well as the need to mobilize the whole population, helped efface internal differences among Americans of different kinds. The same factors facilitated the advent of the civil rights revolution, which expanded the people of the state so that all of its citizens were included, not just those with origins in Europe. In the post-civil rights era, the cultural differences between Americans of different national or ethnic types also became values to be preserved rather than discarded. Consequently, the public institutions and rituals met by the immigrants and immigrant descendants at the turn of the 21st century have found ways respectfully to incorporate new traditions and practices along with the old.

But the basic rules of the game have not changed: holding on to earlier identities and cultures is perfectly acceptable as long as these are additions to a fundamentally American core. As Alba and Nee note, multiculturalism is profoundly asymmetric. While the new Americans can retain what they wish of the old country, they need to master the native code; moreover, there is no expectation that established Americans will take on foreign ways. Language remains a potent symbol of national unity, which is why established Americans not only expect the newcomers to learn English but want it to remain dominant. Ethnic political organizations are tolerated but are also viewed as possibly undermining national cohesion; the political loyalties of hy-

phenated Americans are open to suspicion; and there is widespread support for the views that there are too many immigrants and that national borders should be better controlled—evidence that Americans can be more accepting of foreigners who wish to become nationals without ever becoming one-worlders.

In general, the foreigners hear the message. Those who settle down for the long term—a population that excludes likely and perhaps even would-be return migrants—also respond appropriately. Scholars have shown that some groups effectively retain certain ethnic attachments and old-country ways while adding an American tool kit, but there does not seem to be any case in which the foreigners and their children wish to appear as if they are fresh off the boat. Indeed, all the evidence points to the opposite. While Angelenos or New Yorkers may think that their cities have been turned into Towers of Babel, foreign languages quickly lose ground to English. Some groups, especially Spanish-speakers, add English to continued facility in their mother tongue. But the views of such alarmists as Samuel Huntington notwithstanding, the old pattern remains in place: immigrants' children reserve the mother tongue for private places; in public, it is an English-only (or at least English-mainly) world.

Much the same holds for national loyalties. Some foreigners naturalize for purely pragmatic reasons, and the old-country flag or anthem stirs many an immigrant heart; nonetheless, the imprint of adoptive-country nationalization is hard to miss. Though some social scientists contend that immigrants tend toward transnationalism, a possibility that leads others to worry about the specter of “dual loyalty,” the political concerns of immigrants are principally focused on the U.S. Those who retain affection for or connections to the old country often find that there is nothing more American than coming together around homeland ties. Accommodations to earlier homeland loyalties ensure that the political system can easily incorporate the old-country attachments of the latest Americans. Having long attended to the importance of the “three I’s”—Italy, Israel, and Ireland—New York political figures, for example, have not waited for prompts from social scientists to extend their political antennae to Santo Domingo or Port-au-Prince. Consequently, mobilizing to support the home country usually furthers integration, yielding instruction in that most American of public activities, interest-group politics.

In general, the new Americans consider themselves to be Americans and also think that newcomers should learn (and should be helped to learn) the native tongue. Like the good Americans that they have become, the immigrants also believe that the community of Americans should be bounded, which is why majorities among immigrants of most national origins support immigration restriction, though not with the severity endorsed by Americans of a more established sort. They also rally around the Stars and Stripes. According to a recent survey of the foreign-born population, 49 percent said that it would be “extremely important” for immigrants to serve in the military if drafted; 26 percent either served or had a fam-

ily member who had served in the U.S. armed forces. And just as in the past, war continues to build an American nation. Recent U.S. chiefs of staff have included a son of Jamaican immigrants (Colin Powell), a Japanese American from Hawai'i (Eric Shinseki), and an immigrant from the former Soviet Union, speaking English with a noticeable accent (John Shalikashvili). A look at the top brass commanding U.S. troops in Iraq makes it clear that fully nationalized Americans can come in just about any ethnic type: the Arabic-speaking descendant of Lebanese immigrants (John Abizaid), heading up Central Command; the Spanish-speaking grandson of Mexican immigrants (Ricardo Sanchez), at one time commanding the U.S. forces on the ground in Iraq; and the Philippines-born son of a Filipino GI (General Antonio Taguba), documenting the supposedly un-American behavior of the American military police. On the battlefields, no small number of soldiers wearing U.S. uniforms are dying for a country that is not yet theirs. The ultimate sacrifice has its rewards, bestowing citizenship on the dead, though not every American is impressed: some insist that military service is for the people *of* the state only, as opposed to the people *in* the state but outside the national community.

Reactions—National and Ethnic

While foreigners get turned into nationals, they are often produced as nationals of a particular kind. The conventional approach assumes that ethnic differences are imported from abroad; the better view understands that differences are produced by the process of migration and the subsequent encounter with hosts whose reactions are rarely welcoming.

To begin with, few international migrants come as lonely adventurers. Rather, they move by making use of the one resource on which they can almost always count—namely, support from one another—which is why social connections between veterans and newcomers lubricate the migration process. Because those ties also provide the means for solving the practical problems of starting a new life—whether securing shelter, getting a job, or just finding one's way around—the networks furnish the foundation out of which a new collectivity gets made. Moreover, new identities arise as the migrants undergo a similar experience: displaced from familiar ground, they get treated as strangers. Consequently, they discover a commonality with people who were seen as different back home but who now, once the context has been transformed, appear as people of the same kind.

By contrast, the hosts see the foreigners as strange, not simply because they are aliens but often just because of the jobs to which they are put by the hosts themselves. The experience of labor migrations furnishes a central case in point. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, labor migrants are wanted precisely because they are different: assessing conditions “here” in light of lower “standards” there, while enjoying fewer entitlements than nationals, they are the ideal candidates for bot-

tom-level jobs that others don't want. In deploying immigrant labor to perform the tasks that natives find dishonoring, nationals generate ethnic inequality in just the way described by Charles Tilly: they durably connect a category exterior to the society—foreigner—with a category interior to the society—low-level, low-prestige work. Consequently, the stigma associated with the jobs ends up sticking to the people who hold them, which is why the same set of stereotypes—“dumb but hardworking,” “dependable but unambitious,” “hardworking but excessively ambitious”—floats from one group to the next and is found in more or less the same form wherever one goes.

Over time, the impact of initial conditions weakens. Ties to fellow foreigners loosen as the newcomers seek to improve their lot. That search, however, yields greater exposure to the dominants, whose resistance to accepting the newcomers as full members of the club reactivates the very ethnic allegiances that the ex-foreigners would otherwise lose on their own. An ethnic reaction is further galvanized if and when the second generation finds that the linkage between the exterior category of foreigner and the interior category of disreputable work generates a long-lasting effect. Whereas immigrants are preferred as the right workers for the wrong jobs, their offspring are often perceived as too much like everyone else and therefore no longer appropriate for the undesirable tasks on which the foreign-born converge. At the same time, the quest to move ahead frequently occurs under a shadow, as the second generation's effort to trade on ambition and creativity has to overcome the opposing stereotypes associated with the first generation and its jobs.

Beyond these social processes yielding ethnic attachments are reactions bound up with the inherently political nature of migrations that cross state boundaries. Decades of restriction have left an indelible cultural mark, making low immigration the norm, from which departure is seen as a deviant, unsettling event. Thus, while residents of the rich democracies may find individual immigrants acceptable, they nonetheless strongly prefer lower levels of international migration than currently prevail. Though immigration restrictions would seem successful if evaluated in light of the numbers of poor people they deter, boundaries nonetheless prove leaky. Consequently, the rich democracies have all created the “illegal” immigrant, a kind of person whom nationals widely view as undesirable and whose arrival produces ever more stringent exertions aimed at making restrictions stick. People with foreign ways and allegiances to foreign countries also remain open to question, even though popular cultures have become more cosmopolitan and intellectuals often tend toward xenophilia. Suspicions are further heightened when the relevant nation-states coexist on less than friendly terms, as demonstrated during the two world wars and, more recently, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Moreover, nationals notice that the advent of foreign people goes hand in hand with the flow of foreign goods. Those disturbed by globalization's steady intrusion—of which the arrival of foreign people is a good deal more visible than the movement of foreign-made things, not

to speak of foreign currencies—often want “their” states to fix the problem by keeping boundaries under control. Consequently, adverse political reactions to the influx of foreigners are an endemic condition of the rich democracies. Since the political resocialization of the foreigners is often successful, generating an aspiration to membership as well as a political outlook sharing core values of the nationals, efforts to restrict the national community provide a further catalyst to an ethnic response.

Just how this process works out varies from one context to another. The basic axis of variation distinguishes the liberal democracies of Europe and North America from labor-importing countries elsewhere, whether the autocracies of the Persian Gulf or the ethnocracies of East Asia. Internally, the liberal democracies claim to be universalistic, making increasing efforts to ensure that theory—which prohibits ascriptive distinctions among nationals—conforms with practice. While internal ethnic affiliations in a postethnic society may be of a voluntary sort, membership is a birthright. As for those from beyond the state's boundary, entry into the territory and its people is for the chosen only, not for anyone who just happens to want in. Externally, therefore, the liberal democracies are inherently exclusive, allowing the lucky few to pass on their good fortune to their children and recognizing the common humanity of all people no further than the water's edge.

The advent of international migration turns the tension between these two principles into a social dilemma. On the one hand, the foreign outsiders inside the state seek recognition, contending that liberalism's universalism requires expanding the circle of the “we.” On the other hand, since “we” implies “they”—there being no political community without boundaries—some nationals always take a more restrictive view. If the rich democracies were more like their despotic labor-importing counterparts, the foreigners could be easily expelled. If the rich democracies were more ethnocratic, the foreigners' claims could be more easily ignored. As the rich democracies are instead liberal societies, international migration produces conflict over the bounds of community.

Thus, internally liberal societies can't enforce border controls with the ruthlessness that illiberal societies regularly deploy. Liberal humanitarians among the nationals look askance at efforts to turn guns against people whose only offense is crossing a border in search of a better life, and sometimes go so far as to help the border-crossers evade the state's reach. Liberal societies have even greater difficulty with those illegals who successfully traverse the border: if not legal citizens, they do possess some rights, which is why they cannot be deported at will, in contrast to the situation in the first half of the 20th century or in the Persian Gulf today. Illegals also enjoy the support of ethnic and human rights advocates, who provide the practical assistance needed to circumvent or overturn restrictive immigration policies and practices.

While illegal immigration cannot be made to go away, this is not a message that

nationals are willing to accept. In the U.S., a public consistently opposed to rising levels of immigration has been particularly insistent on tightened border controls. Social scientists deride the response as symbolic politics. According to the experts, intensified restriction is a matter of “smoke and mirrors” or “border games,” to cite two recent widely read books. The social scientists note that stepped-up controls have had largely perverse effects, allowing illegals to cross the border (albeit with much greater loss of life and health than before) while deterring them from going home. Consequently, the number of illegal immigrants in the U.S. doubled during the course of the 1990s.

But making fun of the populace and their politicians misses the point. Designing immigration policies to promote rational ends proves difficult because the policy’s fundamental goal rests on a set of inherently illiberal beliefs: namely, that Americans make up an exclusive club, to which membership should be restricted. Those beliefs, however, are implemented only with trouble. As the illegals are often the friends or relatives of legal immigrants and citizens, measures aimed at curbing illegal migration or restricting illegals’ options within the national territory inevitably prove contentious, mobilizing a social base beyond the illegals themselves.

The conditions of membership are similarly a source of conflict. A large population of aliens often proves disturbing to nationals believing in the unity of the people *in* the state and *of* the state. However, proposals to bring foreigners into the national fold by reducing the barriers to naturalization, or just disseminating information about naturalization and its procedures, are often opposed. Efforts at restricting membership have the potential for yielding perverse effects: if access to residence or benefits becomes more uncertain, foreigners are likely to respond with increased efforts to gain membership, in turn sparking further initiatives aimed at raising membership bars.

The controversies unleashed by California’s Proposition 187 (an amendment to the state constitution passed in 1994) demonstrate the dynamics at play. Proposition 187 banned people not legally resident in the U.S. from receiving public social services, health care, and education; it also required service providers to verify the immigration status of all people seeking public services and to notify state officials about applicants of dubious legal status. The signal sent by the state’s voters quickly ramified nationally. In 1996 the U.S. Congress passed a series of bills widening the divide between citizens and legally resident noncitizens: access to a large number of public benefits previously available to the latter was either cut off or cut back. The same legislation also prohibited illegal immigrants from access to federal, state, and local benefits and mandated that state and local agencies verify that immigrants were fully eligible for the benefits for which they applied.

Not surprisingly, threatening benefits previously taken for granted led the targeted people to change their behavior: naturalizations spiked in the late 1990s, as did voter registrations (although neither option was available to illegals). As

naturalizations rose, the conditions of citizenship became the next flashpoint. Proponents of a more restrictive view of the national community charged that efforts to naturalize were marked by fraud; Congress began considering legislation that would deny automatic citizenship to the U.S.-born children of foreign parents and also began examining proposals to scrutinize prospective citizens with greater care. By contrast, in the states and localities where immigrants were likely to live, membership expansion moved to the political agenda via new proposals to revive alien voting—once commonplace, but later a casualty of turn-of-the-20th-century restriction. Needless to say, those who held a narrower view of the bounds of the national community mobilized in opposition. As of this writing, the reactive cycle remains in play.

Where mass migrations occur, the question of how the outsiders from abroad will belong inevitably arises. Whether the issue is to be framed in terms of “assimilation” or “integration” varies from one national context to another. However, the underlying approach is essentially the same, as conventional social science and national (that is to say, folk, native, local—call it what you will) understandings of international migration largely overlap. In scholarly and popular views, nation-states normally contain societies (as implied by the concept of “American society”), which is why both the appearance of foreigners and their foreign attachments are seen as anomalies expected to disappear.

However, explaining the decline or disappearance of the immigrants’ ethnic difference is a peculiar exercise. The descendants of the people from abroad do gradually lose attachments to the culture and people with roots in the old country. That change, however, transforms them not into rootless cosmopolitans but into nationals, committed to the new place and its people. What the literature calls assimilation or integration is really the political process of nation-building, replacing one particularism for another.

Though usually successful in the long run, the business of turning foreigners into nationals is complicated by the very features that distinguish any one national collectivity from all others. As emphasized by the sociological literature, assimilation entails the search for the good life, pursued at the cost of connections and proximity to kin and friends, and inevitably producing contacts of an ever more diverse kind. But if international migrants are to achieve the good life they seek, they first need to get into some other people’s club. The nature of the national people’s club—an inherently exclusive, bounded community—makes entry, let alone full acceptance, very hard to secure.

Moreover, the national peoples of the rich, immigrant-receiving democracies want their communities maintained. Keeping membership restricted is of strategic value, especially when the place in question is a rich society that attracts the poor. But the national community is also an ideal, with the exception of the occasional

libertarian, nationals believe that maintaining the boundaries delimiting the people is a good thing in and of itself. While restriction, therefore, reflects the people's will, it also sends an unwelcoming message to those foreigners who manage to get through the gates. As nationals further believe that the people of the state and the people in the state should be one and the same, the presence of foreigners on national soil and the questions of whether they should belong and if so, how, inevitably provide grounds for contention.

Consequently, the influx of foreigners produces a *dis*-integrating response among nationals, whose political efforts at *dis*-assimilation impel the ex-foreigners to respond in ways that emphasize their attachments to people of their own kind. Ironically, the decline of an internal ethnic difference between the nationals and the ex-foreigners spurs the reactive cycle: among the latter, those who have most fully learned the national code and internalized its creed are the most likely to experience rejection with the greatest sting. Therefore, the usual dichotomy between assimilation and ethnic retention misleads. The better view, rather, emphasizes the regularity of international migration and its collision with efforts to reproduce the political community that migration disrupts. In the end, foreigners get transformed into nationals, albeit nationals of a different kind.

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