David Miller’s Theory of Immigration
A Realist Critique

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Abstract

This study examines the coherency of David Miller’s immigration argument in favour of a state regulated immigration policy. It is an internal critique where Miller’s empirical understanding of immigration is questioned by an empirical analysis using external concepts taken from the substantive realist thinker’s Bonnie Honig and Marc Stears as well as Raymond Geuss. From Honig and Stears the theoretical tool of framing “the real” is used to claim that there are many national identity narratives. According to Clara Sandelind’s empirical research institutional narratives are more compatible with immigration than cultural ones. Miller on the other hand asserts that a liberal national identity that is culturally based is compatible with regulated immigration. Then according to the analysis with the second theoretical tool self-interest, which assumes a strife for power and security, the alleged problem of Miller’s theory is that it underestimates the conflict between national identity and immigration. The vertical relationship of power between insiders and immigrants gives insiders a national self-interest to exclude outsiders in order to preserve their national privilege. Miller’s conception of a quite allowing immigration policy therefore does not cohere with a more realistic interpretation of the political reality.
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1 - Introduction

1.1 The Politics of Immigration

Few political questions seem to be more important in today’s world than the immigration issue. Great amounts of people are fleeing from regions plagued by natural disasters or war. In a European context, the issue was put at its head during the migration crisis of 2015 when many refugees fled to Europe. This has been a major talking point, and since the refugee crisis the European Union (EU) has failed to create a quota system despite that such a solution was to the liking of for instance France and Germany. The UK: s decision to leave the EU has also partly been seen as discontent with a lack of control of the entry of immigrants.

Political theory of the 20th century did not put that much emphasis on immigration compared to the current debate within and outside of academia. Political philosophy has mostly discussed how to achieve a desirable society without thinking about this society’s communication with the rest of the world. Björn Ösbring, a Swedish political theorist specialised on immigration, uses John Rawls famous book *A Theory of Justice* (1971) as an example of a work which discusses justice while presupposing a political system closed off from other societies. Rawls is then compared to the communitarian Michael Walzer who writes about immigration in his classic work *Spheres of Justice* (1983) where questions of community and entry both are central.1

Walzer’s contribution was important to make immigration into a well discussed topic of political philosophy. Since then, different positions have been developed and ‘Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders’ (1987) is one of the more famous essays where Joseph Carens claimed that utilitarianism, John Rawls’ egalitarian liberalism and Robert Nozick’s libertarianism support open borders.2 By now, the amount of contributions to the debate is extensive. This essay will focus on one important theorist, namely the liberal nationalist David Miller, who supports self-determining nation-states with the right to decide upon entry to their territory. Miller also believes that the self-determinant nation-states ought to accept a fair share of refugees.3

1.2 The liberal discourse of immigration

Most of the contemporary normative discussion about immigration is, as Björn Östbring has argued, held between what in simplified terms could be described as liberal universalists (see Benhabib, Carens, Oberman) and liberal nationalists (see Canovan, Kymlicka, Miller). He analyses how the approach to fact-sensitivity between the strong/weak idealism of liberal universalism and the methodological realism of liberal nationalism leads to different normative conclusions about immigration. Joseph Carens, often labelled liberal universalist, argues in favour of open borders from a strong idealist position. One of the ideal assumptions of his argument is for instance a fair egalitarian world radically different to the world of today.

Östbring supports a typology which focuses on the question of fact-sensitivity. Methodological realism is Miller’s position in the typology and this approach is “bottom-up”, since it discusses what is empirically feasible before deciding upon normative principles. Some of Miller’s opponents are according to Östbring often “top-down” and thinks that ideals should be discussed before we decide upon what is feasible.

Miller’s immigration stance is conditioned by his methodological realism; he is for instance sceptical of immigration theories which rely on a conception of humans who can show equal concern towards everyone. Borrowing the phrase from Alasdair MacIntyre, Miller claims that this would make individuals into an unfeasible “citizens of nowhere”. To add to his argument against idealisations Millers says that Carens relies on assumptions about an ideally just and egalitarian world which is both utopian, and makes the issue of immigration less important, since in an egalitarian world immigration would be less of a problem.

Instead Miller argues in favour of a weak cosmopolitanism which combines special obligations towards compatriots as well as a duty to defend human rights universally. Citizenship rights can be more demanding since the national community is an entity where justice can be achieved. According to Miller, the national identity can provide the trust and solidarity necessary to achieve social justice in the form of for example an education system. This is

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4 David Miller. Strangers in Our Midst, 4-11.
6 Björn Östbring. Migrationspolitiska dilemma, 75.
9 David Miller. Strangers in Our Midst, 104.
Miller’s *national identity argument*, according to which the national community is a precondition for any functioning account of social justice.\textsuperscript{11}

The divide between liberal universalists and liberal nationalists has already been covered extensively in the literature. This essay will try to bring in another perspective in the form of an external theory, namely substantive realism, which is part of Östbring’s metatheoretical typology. Substantive realism is strictly “bottom”, and thinks political philosophy only should analyse the empirical reality.\textsuperscript{12} Two concepts from the substantive realist school of thought, namely A) “the real” and B) self-interest assuming a strife for power and security, will be used as theoretical tools to question the feasibility of the normative principles of David Miller’s immigration theory.

\subsection*{1.3 Purpose}
Initially, the thematic goal of this essay was to examine the role of substantive realism in the immigration discourse of political philosophy. Since that was a too broad aspiration, the scope had to be narrowed down. The aim of this paper is therefore to critically evaluate David Miller’s immigration position. The theoretical tools to examine his theory are taken from substantive realism. It is argued that what substantive realism can provide is concepts to analyse an issue such as immigration. In this essay concepts from substantive realism will be used to make an internal critique of the coherency of Miller’s immigration theory. To explain the internal critique quickly, Miller’s methodological realism believes that political theory *first* should get empirical evidence from the social sciences to know what is feasible, and in a *second step* decide upon normative principles. The interesting thing to see is if the external concepts A) “the real” and B) self-interest can be crucial elements in an internal critique of the feasibility of the normative ambitions of Miller’s immigration theory.

\subsection*{1.4 Research question}
*How does David Miller defend his conception of state-regulated immigration, and is his conception coherent given two different substantive realist interpretations of the empirical reality?*

\textsuperscript{11} David Miller. *On Naionality*, 93.
\textsuperscript{12} Björn Östbring. *Migrationspolitiska dilemma*, 75.
1.5 Research limitations
To make this paper manageable there are many limitations, and I will name a few of them. An obvious one is that the paper analyses Miller who is within the liberal discourse of immigration theory. This is of course a great confinement since there is a wide-ranging literature where different theories such as utilitarianism, libertarianism or critical theory could be discussed for alternative comprehensions of the question of immigration.

An additional constraint is that this essay focuses on how substantive realist concepts affects our conception of immigration politics. The consequence of this choice is that much of the depth of the discussion about the meaning of concepts such as trust and national identity will be left out of the essay. These limitations make the study less nuanced but it is necessary to instead have the space to outline the substantive realist interpretation of immigration politics.

The essay will also only talk about one part of the question of migration, namely immigration. Besides the immigration issue there are many important and interesting points to be made about integration, emigration and about how to orchestrate the movement of people from one state to another. This essay unfortunately cannot cover these important issues. The focus is instead immigration and the special relationship between the applying immigrant and the receiving state.

Finally, Miller’s complete work cannot be covered. A more thorough study would of course consider more material and in a more nuanced way discuss how Miller’ political theory has developed over time. Never the less, this essay has tried to focus on some of Miller’s central works on immigration and national identity. Key books for the analysis were On Nationality (1995) and Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration (2016) which were supplemented with chapters from other books as well as some of Miller’s papers.

1.6 Structure of the essay
This initial chapter 1 has presented research limitations, but maybe more importantly some basic background to the debate about fact sensitivity in liberal political theory, and how it affects the immigration issue. The distinction between substantive realism and methodological realism was also introduced to outline the essay’s purpose and the research question. Moving forward to chapter 2, the method will be explained as an argumentative analysis and internal critique. Furthermore, in chapter 3, the differences between Miller’s methodological realism and substantive realism will be clarified. The second purpose of chapter 3 is to outline the concepts of substantive realism which later will be used in the analysis. Two concepts taken
from substantive realists are the theoretical tools utilised in an attempt to critique David Miller’s theory of immigration. Chapter 4 is the major part of the essay, where differences and similarities between David Miller’s immigration theory and the analysis with the theoretical tools from substantive realism will be examined. The concepts taken from substantive realists will be used as tools to internally critique the coherency Miller’s argument. Finally, chapter 5 concludes the findings of the paper and gives some suggestions for future research.

2 - Method

The following chapter presents the method of the essay as an argumentative analysis which is meant to break down Miller’s immigration argument into sub-components. Then, given a correct argumentative analysis, it is hopefully possible to develop a idea critique of Miller’s immigration theory.

2.1 Argumentative analysis

Argumentative analysis is a method to explicate how an argumentation is structured. It is through this method possible to analyse the arguments step by step, and properly comprehend how empirical and normative claims add up to the more comprehensive theory.\textsuperscript{13} This kind of analysis can usually be done either as an idea or actor focused study. I will analyse David Miller’s immigration theory specifically, but it is only the ideas that are evaluated, not Miller himself, and therefore it is an idea centred study.\textsuperscript{14} Usually a formalized analysis scheme is made to present the argumentation, but since this essay will compare Miller’s immigration theory with a substantive realist interpretation of empirical reality, no such scheme will be provided. Still, the aspiration is of course to present Miller’s argument as coherently as possible in order to do it justice.

The essay will analyse the “bottom”, or David Miller’s empirical understanding of immigration, which is fundamental to his defence of state regulated immigration policy. The goal is to explicate how Miller’s immigration theory is conditioned by his empirical assumptions, and also to give an alternative empirical analysis with concepts taken from substantive realism. Hopefully, the analysis will illuminate differences in interpretation of the political reality between Miller’s position, and an analysis which uses concepts from substantive realism. It is

\textsuperscript{14} Ludvig Beckman, \textit{Grundbok i idéanalys}, 17.
also crucial to point out any potential *similarities* in the interpretation of the political reality between Miller’s theory, and the analysis with substantive realist concepts.

### 2.2 External critique

Idea critical analysis often evaluates the attractiveness of a theory with values taken from elsewhere.\(^{15}\) To achieve a trustworthy external critique in this particular essay it is crucial to explain the concepts brought in from the substantive realism which then will be used to criticise Miller and his immigration position in chapter 4.

However, this essay’s usage of substantive realism as the external theory means that it will not be a usual external critique. Substantive realism is a school of thought which is sceptical of normative claims in political theory. Instead of using external values this essay will argue that immigration politics ought to be analysed with concepts taken from substantive realism. It is therefore not a critique of the normative values of Miller’s immigration theory but instead a questioning of how he interoperates the empirical reality of immigration politics. This will yield an internal critique which questions whether Miller’s normative ambitions for immigration politics actually follow if we believe in the chosen substantive realist interpretation of the political reality.

### 2.3 Internal critique

As was mentioned this will not be a typical idea critique where the analysis evaluates the attractiveness of normative principles.\(^{16}\) Instead the essay will be a kind of internal critique, which means that it tries to find argumentative deficiencies in premises and assumptions of a given theory. This might be the case if an argument appears to be incoherent, which means that recommendations given do not have support by the principles or values which the theorist seemingly agrees to. Another way to execute an internal critique is to say that a promoted value would be undermined if the theory was to be implemented. We can also show that parts of the analysis are inconsistent with one another as well as to say that parts of it lacks in clarity.\(^{17}\)

Miller subscribes to methodological realism which means that political theorist should get empirical evidence *before* deciding upon normative principles. This essay will try to find argumentative incoherencies in the link between David Miller’s empirical understanding of immigration politics and normative principles in his immigration theory. The external concepts

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\(^{15}\) Ludvig Beckmann. *Grundbok i idéanalys*, 77-78.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 57.

\(^{17}\) Ibid, 72-73.
taken from substantive realism will be used to analyse whether the kind of state regulated immigration policy which Miller proposes follow if substantive realist concepts about the empirical reality are considered viable.

On the one hand the coherency will be questioned using the concept of A) “the real”. This concept can arguably explain that the dominant conception of national identity matters, and some national identities are more compatible with immigration than others. It is also questionable whether it is true that national identity conflicts with immigration in the way that Miller thinks it does. Given that this empirical analysis is fruitful it does not seem internally coherent of Miller’s immigration theory to assert that immigration must be regulated to preserve national identity in all empirical contexts.

The second substantive realist interpretation of reality is the concept B) self-interest, which assumes a strife for power and security. Using this interpretation, it is questionable whether a state has the willingness to admit refugees. First of all, tax-evasion, in our current globalized economy, will be discussed as an important external factor. In a globalized world were issues such as tax-evasion makes it difficult for a nation-state to remain sovereign it can illustrate why immigration is an important national issue. It is argued that a national citizenry wants to keep control of, and potentially minimize, immigration to serve their self-interest and protect already threatened national economies.

The national self-interest will then be used to describe a vertical power relation between national insiders and immigrants. National identity is argued as something which has to be kept exclusive since it grants access to for instance a regulated job market or welfare benefits. Hence, it is in the self-interest of national insiders to preserve their national privilege which allegedly means that they will not support an intake of migrants which harms their self-interest. It will then be argued that a pluralistic and heterogenous national identity potentially can harm the self-interest of co-nationals, which means that they will aspire for a homogenous national identity which is not compatible with immigration. As an internal critique, this substantive realist interpretation of the political reality can question whether it is coherent of Miller to argue that the nation-state decides upon entry to its territory, and still think that they realistically will adopt an allowing immigration policy.

2.4 The limits of the method
This is an idea centred analysis but it will not cover all the ideas which different liberal nationalists have put forward. Hence this means that there are other reasons to value the right
of self-determining nation-states to decide upon entry to their territory. Other theorists can come up with different arguments and this critique is therefore directed towards Miller’s theory. Nevertheless, Miller’s argument should be regarded as one of the central defences of the liberal nationalist viewpoint on immigration.

Secondly, the depiction of Miller’s theory will lack some crucial elements which one may find important in order to comprehend it fully. One such central deficiency is that the essay does not touch that much upon Miller’s distinction between special obligations of justice towards compatriots and humanitarian duties owed to every human being. This might appear strange since this is something which much of the discussion between Miller and his critics focuses on. Neither will Miller’s social democratic ideals be discussed in any detail, and the same goes for his connection to Walzer’s communitarianism. The more narrow focus is the role of methodological realism in Miller’s argument, and to critique the coherency of his immigration position with concepts taken from substantive realism. This meant that many elements of his theory were left out. Allegedly, these exclusions will not undermine the analysis, and the aim is to portray Miller’s argument as fairly as possible.

3 – Substantive and methodological realism

Before the analysis, the two kinds of realism which will be analysed have to be explained. First of all, Östbring’s typology will be presented and then how Miller’s methodological realism fits into the typology, followed by how he thinks his position differs from the one of substantive realism. The chapter also presents some substantive realists, and how their concepts will be used as theoretical tools of the essay in order to provide two different interpretations of the political reality. Put shortly, agonistic realism’s questioning of “the real” is one theoretical tool just as Raymond Geuss’ intertwined concepts self-interest, security and power.

3.1 Different approaches to the relation between morality and empirical feasibility
Björn Östbring’s dissertation *Migrationpolitiska dilemma: Om idealism och realism i liberalpolitisk teori* (2019) has influenced this essay. Östbring uses a metatheoretical typology divided into four categories: “strong idealism” (stark idealism), “weak idealism” (svag idealism), methodological realism (svag realism) and “substantive realism” (stark realism). Östbring says that it is a useful tool to comprehend important divisions within the immigration

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debate. Even though it does not cover all metatheoretical disweputees it focuses on the question of how fact-sensitive political theory ought to be.

If this framework is found useful and applied to an issue such as immigration politics it can help us comprehend distinctive reasons for different normative conclusions. What we also can see is that a too abstract immigration theory risks becoming irrelevant for politics whereas a very fact-determined one might become too uncritical of the present political order. To make the reader aware of how fact-sensitivity affects the purpose and method of political theory Östbring’s typology will be presented briefly:

**Strong idealism:** Strong idealism’s purpose is mainly evaluative and the method is “top-down” since what is normatively ideal is discussed without any concern about feasibility. For a strong idealist the empirical reality is relevant in a second step of implementation totally separated from the discussion about normative ideals which can be theorized under conditions of total abstraction.

**Weak idealism:** Weak idealism’s purpose is instead to set targets for politics but the method is still “top-down” just like strong idealism. Political theory should start with abstract ideal theory but also adjust the ideals in order to make them feasible in the society where they ought to be implemented. This approach is therefore more fact-sensitive since the normative ideals in the non-ideal phase must be adjusted to some feasibility constraints.

**Methodological realism:** The methodological realism adopts an action-guiding purpose and “bottom-up” method. Here, the starting point is the empirical reality and after an allegedly correct understanding of the political reality normative principles are proposed.

**Substantive realism:** To substantial realism political theory should have the purpose to decipher or interpret what happens within the realm of politics. This approach is just “bottom” without any normative principles for the political sphere, according to Östbring. Another thing that substantive realists have in common is that they make substantive claims about human nature and the political sphere.

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20 Ibid. 75.
21 Ibid. 74.
22 Ibid. 75.
23 Ibid.
3.2 Two types of realism

Miller clearly sees himself as a methodological realist. He writes that his political theory aspires to be action-guiding, and therefore he adopts a methodological realist approach. In one paper Miller distinguishes his methodological realism as \( r_1 \) from the substantive realism which he calls \( r_2 \).\(^{24}\) I will use Miller’s distinction, but I will not use his labelling, and instead continue to call the two types methodological and substantive realism.

Miller develops an immigration theory which is “bottom-up”, and considers facts about the human condition in general coupled with more contextual knowledge about particular societies before establishing normative principles.\(^{25}\) The facts are considered before normative principles to make sure the that the defended values are feasible. Understanding methodological realism is important to comprehend Miller’s view on immigration, and why he differs from other liberal universalists within the immigration discourse.

However, for this essay the primary focus is the differences and similarities between Miller’s methodological realism and the substantive realists he criticises. Thus, it is important to understand why Miller thinks his realist position is different from the one of substantive realism. Central to Miller’s realism is that it is a method to evaluate under which conditions some favourable ideal actually can be realised. His methodological realism is comparative in nature and not a fixed position. Miller describes it in the following way,

“realism in this sense proposes a close marriage between political philosophy and the social sciences, since the latter are going to be the most reliable sources of evidence about ‘how things actually are’, not just in the sense of ‘how things stand now’ but in the sense of ‘what it is feasible to aim for and what isn’t’, looking across space and time more broadly”\(^{26}\)

Methodological realism tries to bridge empirical science with political theory so that the prescribed ideals actually are feasible. According to Miller this position differs from the one of substantive realism, which allegedly subscribes to set assumptions about reality which do not have empirical support, and thus it is not realist enough.\(^{27}\)

\(^{27}\) Ibid, 221.
Miller says that substantive realism has a negative claim about moral goals in politics,

“The negative claim, then, is that there is something in the very essence of politics that makes it inapt for pursuing moral goals, such as justice understood in its usual sense.”

Miller adds that substantive realists diverge when it comes to positive content. He still sees two main branches where one claims that it is impossible to reach consensus in politics and the other one makes claims about exercising power. Miller also adds that realists often think that there are higher legitimacy demands in politics than a modus vivendi arrangement, which is a solution that makes it possible for conflicting parties to coexist peacefully.

3.3 Concepts from substantive realism
In chapter 4, concepts taken from substantive realism will be used in an internal critique of Miller’s analysis of immigration politics. To make the analysis possible the concepts which constitute this essay’s conception of substantive realism have to be outlined.

The entirety of the school of thought labelled as substantive realism will not be covered in this essay, and several of its concepts will not be used. I shall note that one common trait is that substantive realism asserts a negative claim about morality in politics and holds that the nature of the political realm makes it inapt for normative principles. This study will not discuss this claim about morality in politics, but instead focus on some of substantive realism’s positive assertions about what the political realm is.

The positive claims are about how to analyse the empirical “bottom”. In general, substantive realists make ontological claims about human nature as well as what the political realm is. The focus in this essay is to use some of their central claims about the political sphere in the analysis. The analysis will only use concepts of three substantive realists, namely Raymond Geuss as well as Bonnie Honig and Marc Stears’ cooperative effort. The concepts of self-interest, security and power which are important in Geuss’ theorising are concepts which most substantive realists agree to. The essay will also use “the real” as a theoretical tool that is

30 Ibid, 221.
31 Matt Sleat. ‘Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory Or, are there Two Ways to do Realistic Political Theory?’, Political Studies 64, no. 1 (2016), 31.
32 Matt Sleat. ‘Realism, Liberalism and Non-Ideal Theory Or, are there Two Ways to do Realistic Political Theory?’, 31.
distinctive for the agonistic realism which Honig and Stears calls “an alternative realism”. The concept of “the real” is thus not something which all substantive realists subscribe to.

**Raymond Geuss**

Geuss says that political theory too often becomes applied moral philosophy, and that we should avoid this tendency to moralize about politics since such abstract moral theorising will not help us understand the complex political reality. Instead political theory should focus on how humans actually behave and how politics works.

Geuss thinks that politics ought to be seen as a balance of power which at best can provide security. This construes politics as a sphere where people act in accordance to their material self-interest, and a realm where power is exercised. Geuss writes “Who <does> what to whom for whose benefit? […] To think politically is to think about agency, power, and interests, and the relations among these.” Geuss therefore thinks that an important function of political theory is a form of ideology critique. The ideology critique is a Marxist term to comprehend what material self-interest we can dissect behind a moralist claim about what society ought to be. To Geuss, this means that every justification of a particular political order is motivated by either an explicit or hidden self-interest.

**Bonnie Honig and Marc Stears**

Honig and Stears question the entire concept of what the empirical reality is. They argue that it is an illusion to think that we can properly grasp what they call “the real” and hence any such attempt to comprehend it are destined to fail. What our accounts of “the real” instead do is to protect us from doubt since we can create a conception of a world we seem to know. The consequence of this is that no attempt to comprehend the world is neutral. They are all a kind of discursive framing of reality. To explain this point Honig and Stears contrasts James Tully’s view of history with the one of Raymond Geuss. Honig and Stears claims that Tully is too optimistic and selective with his accounts of historical data, whereas Geuss on the other hand argues that political theory should focus on how humans actually behave and how politics works.

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hand is too one sided and negative. Honig and Stears claim that Tully and Geuss propose two alternative ways to frame the political reality. 39

4.4 Analytical tools
To end this chapter, I will explicate the concepts taken from substantive realism which will be used in the upcoming analysis. In addition to that, it is also important to clarify what is found useful about the theory. What this essay does believe is that the substantive realist perspective should be included in an analysis of David Miller’s methodological realist approach to immigration politics. Substantive realism makes concepts such as self-interest, power and security central, and these concepts arguably “dictate” what politics is and how it should be analysed. In the upcoming chapter 4, concepts from the presented realists will be utilised in an argumentative comparison between Miller’s immigration theory and a substantive realist analysis. The argumentative comparison will then be used to make an internal critique of Miller’s immigration theory to see if it makes his ambitions for immigration policy hard to achieve.

The first analytical tool comes from Honig and Stears. It is their questioning of “the real” which will be utilized. Their claim is that no attempt to draw empirical conclusions about what “the real” is can be satisfactory, and hence what Miller says about the empirical reality to back-up his immigration argument might be questionable. The definition of substantive realism will also contain Raymond Geuss’ focus on self-interest, power and view of politics as modus vivendi arrangements which at best can provide security.

A) “the real” will get its own section but the three concepts from Geuss’ theory are intertwined and cannot be separated from one another. Unfortunately, this makes it less pedagogical, but the analytical tool B) self-interest implies the two other theoretical concepts. Regarding the self-interest of political agents as central also makes the strife for both security and power important. On a final note Honig and Stears also says that to some substantive realists, such as Bernard Williams, self-interest is not all there is to politics, and this does seem like a more modest and reasonable proposal. 40 Even if this point is accepted it is still possible to use self-interest as an analytical tool to provide important insights in the upcoming analysis.

40 Ibid, 179.
4 - Analysis

4.1 Introduction
The following analysis will be an examination of David Miller’s immigration policy. In the initial two sections David Miller’s view on liberal nationality and his national identity argument will be outlined. In 4.3 the analytical tool A) “the real” will be used to criticise the uncertainty in Miller’s national identity argument. Using Clara Sandelind’s empirical research, it will be argued that institutional narratives of national identity are more compatible with immigration than cultural ones. Miller supports a cultural kind of national identity which according to Sandelind’s research is less compatible with immigration. However, this does not seem to be an accurate critique against Miller’s immigration theory. Miller does actually believe that nation-states with a cultural national identity should admit a fair share of immigrants.41 The issue for Miller is instead that the self-determining nation-states do not accept as many immigrants as he would like them to do.

Furthermore, the remaining part of the analysis will use the substantive realist analytical tool of B) self-interest, which assumes a strife for security and power. Initially tax-evasion and the nation-states vulnerability in the global economy is allegedly said to implicate that the nation-state needs to find issues where it is in a position of power, and border control is one such issue. The second simple, but important, point is that national self-interest is a central aspect of immigration politics, and if we agree to that point other claims can be made. One such claim is that national identity is affected by national self-interest. The identity can become a crucial way to provide security against immigrants, and as a consequence, the nation-state will not allow as many immigrants entry as Miller wants them to. Another point is that Miller’s ideal of an integrated and pluralistic society might be hard to achieve due to national self-interest.

4.2.1 David Miller’s view on national identity
First of all, this section will first try to describe Miller’s idea of national identity which he sees as a collective source of personal identity with five characteristics which makes it different from other identity sources:

“Three five elements together - a community (1) constituted of shared belief and mutual commitment (2) extended in history, (3) active in character, (4) connected to a

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particular territory, and (5) marked off from other communities by its distinct public culture [...] 42
The fifth criteria of public culture can involve pluralism, and then immigration need not be a problem for a nationality. Miller has a vision of an integrated society which he in his latest book *Strangers in Our Midst* (2016) describes as, “when a society is integrated it becomes easier for all of its members to sense they are engaged in a common national project” 43. In another passage Miller explains his pluralistic ideal of integration as,

“an integrated society – a society in which people from all walks of life and from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds live in close proximity to one another, associate with each other for common goals, and interact freely and openly on terms of equality. No society never lives up to that ideal fully, but it can serve as an aspiration and a guiding beacon” 44

Miller is in favour of a liberal and pluralistic society where integration is a means to achieve shared characteristics within the populous. Immigration is therefore compatible with national identity since the inclusion of new sub-groups can be achieved, given that the amount of received immigrants is not too big and not permitted during a short period of time. 45

4.2.2 David Miller’s immigration policy
Now moving on to how national identity matter’s for Miller’s immigration theory we must return to his methodological realism. Clara Sandelind says that Miller supports an instrumental kind of liberal nationalism. This means that the national identity is an instrument to achieve other valuable liberal principles. 46 Miller says that his realism “tells us to enquire into the conditions under which some favoured ideal can be realized and those under which it cannot” 47. This section will explain the *national identity argument* according to which a national identity is a condition for both liberal democracy and social justice. The protection of the national identity also means that states must have the right to control their intake of immigrants.

43 David Miller. *Strangers in Our Midst*, 156.
44 Ibid., 156.
Miller’s argument conveys nationality as something instrumental for the preservation of high levels of trust and solidarity within a society. This is an empirical starting point which says that states function better with a demos sharing a single nationality because states have endeavours of social justice which require voluntary cooperation of citizens. Miller says, “For this [state] activity to be successful, the citizens must trust the state, and they must trust one another to comply with what the state demands of them”48.

Miller wants a national community with trust and solidarity that can endure over time. Otherwise the community will not succeed to create relationships of mutual trust, which would make policies promoting social justice difficult. A state that does not want to rely on mutual trust could allegedly only aim to create a night watchman state. The national identity can become a source of loyalty and solidarity necessary for schemes of social justice.49 Miller mentions that John Rawls famous principle of redistribution to the benefit of the worst-off tacitly presupposes a community with ties of solidarity.50

To protect this national identity a nation-state needs self-determination to decide upon its immigration policy. Miller explains it in the following way,

“the argument here, to avoid misunderstanding is not that a self-determining political community must close its borders, but that it must have the right to control its borders in order to preserve a meaningful range of policy choices without detriment to the human rights to those it chooses to admit”51

The citizen body is “the self” in self-determination and they are the ones who should participate in the deliberation about policy and the future of their nation-state. Hence, restricting immigration must be a right of compatriots in order to preserve the right of the national community to decide upon its future policy. Towards immigrants on the other hand there is only a humanitarian duty with the requirement to respect their human rights described as the protection of basic human needs.52

It must be said that David Miller argues that states ought to receive a fair share of refugees and this would mean increases in admittance for all modern democracies.53 In that sense Miller’s argumentation appears not to be that restrictive, even though he is often regarded as one of the

48 David Miller. On Nationality, 91
49 Ibid, 91.
50 Ibid.
51 David Miller. Strangers in Our Midst, 62
52 Ibid, 32.
53 Ibid, 85-86.
less progressive voices within the immigration discourse of political theory. On top of this, Miller’s ideal of an integrated society should be mentioned since he believes that a diverse composition of people can develop a unifying national identity. Such a pluralistic state has the capacity to receive immigrants without much damage to national public culture or political institutions.54

4.3 Agonistic realism and “the real”
Agonistic realism’s concept “the real” is the first theoretical tool to be utilised in the analysis. The suggestion is that how Miller’s immigration theory conceptualizes “the real” can be challenged. If the agonistic realists are right his empirical understanding of immigration is just one discursive attempt to frame reality as good as any other one. The point about framing reality will be used to suggest that the national identity narrative that dominates a national discourse matters since some national identities conflict more with immigration than others do.

Previously Miller has admitted that methodological realism has the difficult task to use facts that are empirically sound and proven trustworthy according to the social sciences. Therefore, Miller believes that political theorists in the empiricist tradition should try to use empirical evidence on which there is quite strong scientific consensus.55 However, according to agonistic realism, all accounts about the empirical reality stand in combat against one another since they are all presented within a discourse. The empirical claim that becomes the dominant one will then dictate what is believed to be “the real”.56

Many would say that agonistic realisms ontological and epistemological claims about “the real” are questionable. Their point about framing reality might still be useful to comprehend the discussion about national identity, which is central to Miller’s immigration theory. Recapitulating the national identity argument according to which national identity is “the ‘cement’ or ‘glue’ that holds modern, culturally diverse, societies together and allows them to function effectively”57. Miller supports redistributive policies, and a national identity is according to him necessary to achieve this. To make sure that this national identity is preserved, immigration to the nation-state has to be controlled. But just as Miller admits, the causal link

54 David Miller. On Nationality, 128-130.
56 Bonnie Honig and Marc Stears. ‘The New Realism: from Modus Vivendi to Justice’ In Political Philosophy versus History? Contextualism and Real Politics in Contemporary Political Thought, 204.
between national identity and redistributive justice has not been proven right or wrong. In such a situation of empirical uncertainty, Miller’s national identity argument actually looks like a framing of “the real”.

Similar to the discussion about framing “the real”, Clara Sandelind has problematized the alleged conflict between preserving national identity and admitting immigrants. She claims that what kind of national identity narrative individuals believe in will have an impact on how much a national identity stands in conflict with immigration. Sandelind has made a qualitative interview study, with Swedish and British respondents, to analyse their comprehensions of national identity. In Sweden respondents gave voice to a national identity related to the institutionalized well-fare state, whereas the British respondents more often thought of a more contribution-based identity. According to Sandelind, these are two narratives which both seem to make national identity more compatible with immigration. These narratives are institutional and less cultural, and therefore they cushion the immigration’s effect on national identity. However, many respondents thought of a more cultural and exclusionary nationalist narrative which was anti-immigrant.

Sandelind’s point about different kinds of national identity narratives is important for the amounts of immigrants a nation-state is capable of receiving. This means that how national identity is framed by individuals matters, and depending on what kind of identity citizens envision the conflict between national identity and immigration can be cushioned to a smaller or larger extent. Returning to the concept of “the real” there seems to be uncertainty about what it means to have a national identity, and the framing of national identity which becomes the dominant conception matters since this affects how compatible the national identity is with immigration.

Sandelind’s research can be used to critique Miller since an institutional narrative of national identity allegedly is more compatible with immigration compared to a cultural one which is what Miller proposes. However, this critique seems misguided since Miller’s liberal nationalism envisions a changeable and pluralistic national identity which makes immigration possible as long as there is time to adjust the national identity so that it includes new immigrant groups.

60 Ibid, 212.
61 Ibid.
4.4 Tax-evasion as an external factor

Moving forward I would like to turn to the second analytical tool, namely B) self-interest which assumes a strife for security and power. Initially it is valuable to see immigration in a context of a world full of many external factors. One external factor is tax-evasion which will exemplify the hard task of national citizens to preserve their position of power in the globalized economy. In contemporary society, we experience large-scale tax-evasion by individuals and large corporations, and that can be interpreted as undermining the national redistribution policies Miller supports. The importance of national identity may be questioned if people claim that they belong to a national identity while at the same some people do what they please with their wealth to serve their self-interest.

Against substantive realists it could be said that if self-interest actually would guide our actions then everyone would try to evade tax. A response from a substantive realist could then be that tax-evasion is very complex, and if it was not so intricate it would be more widely spread. Still, this response seems weak, and all of the tax that actually is being paid cannot be explained by the fact that tax-evasion is too complicated. Then we have to remember that the description of substantive realism in chapter 3 made the remark that even if we should not underestimate the importance of self-interest it is not all there is to politics.

The question of tax evasion could still be said to hurt society and self-interest should perhaps not be underestimated. David Kerzner and David Chodikoff begins their book about tax-evasion with some estimates about the amounts of lost government tax money:

“It is estimated that the off shore banking industry shelters over $7.5 trillion, which costs governments lost revenues of at least $200 billion a year. Another estimate puts the amount of money in off shore tax haven accounts in 2010 at $21 trillion (such a figure is comparable to the size of the economies of the United States and Japan combined).”

To properly estimate the amount of global tax-evasion is very difficult, but given Kerzner and Chodikoff’s sources it seems reasonable to say that for the national community this means a steady drainage of funds which is difficult to tackle. What tax-evasion illustrates is that the nation-state is weak when it comes to protecting itself from economic interests. Empirical research from Michael Wenzel has shown though that national identity increases the tax-

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compliance of individuals, and hence the strength of this identity is important. It is still questionable whether the national identity helps enough given the large amounts of money lost due to tax-evasion. Another point is that we have to consider multinational corporations, and they operate in several states and will most probably not create strong national identities. The problem of tax-evasion hence exemplifies that the states have lost some of their economic power, and this makes it more difficult to regulate public spending.

From a substantive realist point of view Miller’s argument for restricted immigration seems like a reasonable solution for those who are still relying on getting security from their national community in a world with globally floating capital. These are not the stratum of individuals or multinational corporations in the global economy, who place their money wherever they please. Instead it is people who have a self-interest to protect their national community. How then can this actually be achieved by national citizens? To challenge the economic inequalities between and within societies seems to be a very difficult task. Tackling economic issues such as tax-evasion successfully for instance appears to be beyond the scope of the nation-state. A national citizenry does not have that power, and they would have to go up against people with way more resources in vertically more powerful positions.

What those who need the national community can do is to find an issue where they actually are in a position of power. A focus on national self-determination fits this picture very well. On economic issues the nation-state is not that self-determinant, whereas it still can control the immigration to the state. Miller’s position defends the state’s right to control its borders, even if a nation-state has a humanitarian duty to allow entry to a fair share of refugees. However, given how globalized capital threatens national social justice it is possible that those who rely on the nation-state as a security scheme might become more and more scared of losing that safety. It is not unlikely that the self-interest will make national immigration policy more restrictive than Miller wants it to be. As a consequence, the humanitarian duty might fall short.

4.5 The role of self-interest in immigration politics

The analysis will now continue to use the theoretical tool of self-interest which assumes that self-interested political agents strive for security and power. The substantive realism which focuses on self-interested actors is usually applied to domestic politics or in a quite similar way to International Relations theory. Never the less, within the immigration debate there seems to

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64 David Miller. *Strangers in Our Midst*, 162.
be few who want to take a substantive realist stance, even though Joseph Carens to some extent includes the self-interest of rich democracies in his analysis.65

According to Miller there are clear deficiencies with this kind of substantive realism which makes it unrealistic. Miller says,

“To begin with, realism exaggerates the extent of political disagreement in the societies it pretends to describe. It fails to notice that on many important issues, both procedural and substantive, the overwhelming majority of citizens hold convergent views. [...] there is another respect in which realism fails to be realistic. It pays too little attention to questions of political identity, and especially of national identity. Realism sees individual citizens, and maybe political elites trying to command them, but it does not see horizontal ties between the citizens themselves in the form of allegiances that are not directed at leaders specifically but at the ‘imagined community’ itself”66

Important here is that the “realism” allegedly focuses too much on divisions of interests domestically within a political community, and that convergent views actually are achievable. The national identity can purportedly prove to be a crucial factor that unites people, and Miller says, “the motivation to do so [promote social justice] comes from an emotional identification with compatriots that can overcome the competing pull of self-interest”67. Substantive realism gives a too crude explanation of human motivation as driven by self-interest, and the approach fails to be sufficiently realist according to Miller’s standards.68

Nevertheless, if we look away from domestic politics and instead consider immigration, then Miller’s critique against substantive realism does not seem as accurate. It could be said that the national horizontal ties of insiders which Miller mentions mean that co-nationals share a similar position of power which they can exercise towards aliens who want to get entry to the state’s territory. A national interest which looks horizontal on a domestic level therefore becomes vertical when we discuss immigration. The substantive realist analysis in this essay will highlight the presumed imbalance of power between citizens and aliens, and that there exists a

65 Joseph Carens. The Ethics of Immigration, 222-224.
self-interest of insiders to exclude people in order to preserve national privileges. Immigration is therefore possible, only if it serves the self-interest of insiders.

Interestingly enough, Joseph Carens, who is in favour of open borders, acknowledges self-interest in immigration politics and thinks that the self-interest of rich democratic states is not aligned with the moral requirement to admit refugees.

“I am afraid that refugee policy is today one of those areas where the gap between what morality requires and what serves even long run self-interest is so great that interest can do very little work in supporting morality. [...] Where we can, we should seek a better alignment of interest and morality. The real problem, in my view, is that the admission of refugees does not really serve the interests of rich democratic states”69

Carens’ point does not seem to be too different from the substantive realist argument, and even David Miller acknowledges potential problems with a national identity,

“National identities might help to solve the problem of political order internally, but they are often thought, with some justification, to make the problem of international order even harder to solve than it would otherwise be”70

Miller writes about the international order but it seems just as relevant for the question of immigration. National identity makes domestic politics function better whereas the immigration issue becomes more difficult to solve. Miller also admits that keeping welfare programs and public spending in control might require restrictions on immigration and a self-determining nationality ought to be able to decide upon such matters.71

Even though Miller acknowledges the evident point that the state will prioritize its own endeavours his analysis of immigration politics is different from the substantive realist interpretation. With this substantive realist interpretation Miller underestimates the importance of national self-interest and overstates the value of horizontal citizen ties. Just because Miller says that self-interest can be tackled in a national context does not necessarily mean that it is gone. People can come to share a similar national self-interest to protect their national privileges through restricting immigration.

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71 David Miller. 'Migration and Justice: A Reply to my Critics’. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 20, no. 6 (2017), 772.
4.6.1 Substantive realism and national identity

National identity is as we have seen important for David Miller’s immigration argument, and it can also be included in this essay’s substantive realist analysis. Miller’s view on national identity will be questioned with the substantive realist focus on B) self-interest. Miller argues that a unifying national identity is needed to enable both social justice and liberal democracy. His methodological realism therefore differs a lot from substantive realism since Miller comprehends national identity as an instrument of stability to achieve his preferred values.

In contrast, national identity is an instrument of power in the substantive realist analysis since the national identity gives exclusive access to security and benefits. These are national privileges and an insider has an incentive to preserve them which might mean that closed borders are necessary. Both Miller and substantive realism thinks national identity is important but they reach that conclusion for different reasons.

In 1995, Miller recognised that more affluent and educated members of a state have access to culture from the entire world whereas poorer people cling on to a more limited national culture. The interesting thing is that all across the board of society, left or right, higher education or not, all societal groups seem to think that national identity is important. Together with Gina Gustavsson, Miller has compiled some statistics about this trend, and in the face of globalization people apparently want to preserve their nationality.

The fact that national identity still is important in today’s world even though many thought it would vanish due to globalization, appears as positive for Miller since allegedly his liberal ideals can be achieved then. However, the fact that the strength of national identity does not drop in the face of globalization is natural with this essay’s usage of substantive realism. Simply put, for man globalization is the threat that one may lose the security which the nation-state provides. In such a situation it is important to cling on to the safety you get from belonging to an exclusive national identity.

Something that is troubling for the analysis’ focus on self-interest, security and power is that national identity is spread across society. It is problematic since the substantive realist analysis would be that extremely rich people do not need a national identity. They can exist as cosmopolitan citizens without any large concern about their national belonging since apparently, they do not need it for their security. If this was true it would challenge Miller’s

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72 David Miller. On Nationality, 187.
entire project of national solidarity since rich people, living wherever they please, will not show the necessary solidarity towards there co-nationals. This does not seem to be the case and it goes against the substantive realist analysis that national identity seems to be so strongly shared no matter educational background or political outlook.

4.6.2 What kind of national identity

It could still be asked whether an entire nation actually shares the same kind of national identity. National identity can take different forms and be important for different reasons, and this once again shows why Clara Sandelind’s point about national identity narratives is important. There are of course different kinds of national identities, and just because people say that they subscribe to a common national identity does not mean that they share a similar understanding of it.

To properly grasp some important differences between certain types of national identity, Gina Gustavsson distinguishes three ideal types of national identity in the form of conservative national identity, liberal national identity and a constitutionally patriotic identity. These identities are then disentangled from one another over five dimensions. A central aspect of the liberal national identity is that it is dynamic, which means that it changes over time and can develop so that immigrant groups feel included in a pluralistic public culture. One of the dimensions is what the basis of the national identity is, and in the case of the liberal national identity it is based on horizontal ties between co-nationals.74

According to Miller immigration is compatible with national identity as long as there is time for mutual cultural adjustment.75 About the task of developing such a liberal nationalism compatible with immigration Gustavsson and Miller writes,

“In other words, the question for liberal nationalists is whether it is possible to develop an ‘open’ culturally-based nationalism that creates a strong enough sense of common identity to support democracy and social justice, while not excluding minorities, especially immigrants, whose cultural roots may be different from those of the national majority”76

75 David Miller, On Nationality, 128.
I believe that the realist critique of a liberal nationality open to immigrants would in two words be: “security first”. The suggestion is that nationality takes different forms depending on people’s self-interest, and that immigration is a central issue on which people differ in opinion due to what position they have in society. Some people want to protect their security through limiting immigration whereas others already have that security, and support a concept of national identity which is more in favour of immigration.

People who want to protect their national security might assume that making this identity exclusionary is helpful for their safety. Once again just like in 5.5, we have to remember that the horizontal ties of liberal nationalism allegedly become vertical in relation to immigrants, and the nation-state can provide an exclusive privilege if enough immigrants are excluded. This is the substantive realist account of national identity which claims that people become loyal to it since the national identity makes it possible for nationals to preserve their powerful position as insiders.

It allegedly is troubling for Miller’s immigration theory that contemporary Europe and the political reality gives some support to the substantive realist analysis. Europeans claim that they support national identities but they are still split up by political polarization, concerning immigration specifically, and the solution has been to exclude migrants. In European societies the liberal nationalism is not winning the immigration issue since the anti-immigrant tendency seems to be strong. According to Pew Research Centre study from 2014 the amount of people in Europe who wanted their state to receive more migrants differed between 14% in Germany to only 1% in Greece.77

Miller acknowledges this tendency of European populations to be sceptical of immigration, and in Strangers in Our Midst he writes,

“the resistance to the large-scale immigration that we have seen in public opinion polls is not just an expression of prejudice, but stems from a genuine fear of dislocations as well as from more material worries about jobs and social services”78

This is Miller admitting that a liberal national identity open to immigrants is hard to achieve. National citizens do not want to lose jobs and benefits crucial to their everyday life, and liberal nationalism has a difficult task to defend a liberal immigration policy in practice. Clara

78 David Miller. Strangers in Our Midst, 163-164.
Sandelind has made this argument against liberal nationalism, and said that in practice liberal nationalism tends to go from cultural to ethnic, and become an anti-immigrant identity which is similar to what Gustavsson would call a conservative national identity. Sandelind gives examples of political events in states like France or Denmark which exemplify this tendency to make the nationality exclusionary. Sandelind’s qualitative study which was presented in section 4.3 also suggests that nationalism in reality becomes exclusionary and anti-immigrant. The point Sandelind makes shows why the liberal nationalist ambition to have nation-states open to immigrants fails to be realistic.

To summarize the argument, a substantive realist would focus on how nationality is linked to the fear of losing once security and exclusive national privilege. Miller also acknowledges that immigration might spark the fear of losing national benefits. Symbolically, with a substantive realist interpretation, this could be seen as a battle about what the national identity entails. Many say that they want the more exclusionary version which is in line with the national self-interest to protect the security which the shared national identity provides. People subscribing to this position will probably tend to be those in more vulnerable positions who rely on the state to give them secure and decent living conditions. It is in those people’s self-interest to regard nationality as something exclusive which can protect a limited amount of people. The support of immigration is not shared in European societies, and to the extent it is shared, it is more likely to be in the interest of a less vulnerable stratum of society for whom immigration may not pose the same threat to security.

4.7 Miller’s ideal of an integrated and pluralistic society
Moving on from the question of national identity, the following section will once again use the theoretical tool of self-interest, which assumes a strife for security and power, to question Miller’s ideal of an integrated society. National identity in Miller’s argument is important due to its claimed empirical function to provide trust and solidarity. Still, his theory is also idealistic in important aspects, and this mixture of empiricism and idealism is important to comprehend his stance on immigration. The following section will now take a look at one of these ideals, namely the liberal and pluralistic ideal of integration.

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The ideal of integration has already been described in section 5.2.1. Miller believes in a pluralistic society where co-nationals share a sense of community even though they might be religiously, ideologically and ethnically quite different from one another. Miller admits that this is an ideal which has not been fulfilled in reality but it is an ideal of significance to make sure that immigrants are included into the society.

Here I will address an internal deficiency in Miller’s argument since he does not articulate precisely how strong this ideal of a pluralistic society actually is. In his later work Miller contrasts Canada as a heterogenous state with Japan as a homogenous one. Miller’s point is not to choose which kind of national identity that is the superior one. Instead he says that states with different national cultures have different capacities to receive immigrants. It is therefore allegedly important that self-determining national communities can decide upon the intake of immigrants to preserve their national identity. Given this argument, self-determination seems to be the top priority, and it should be respected no matter if the nation-state in question has a pluralistic national identity or not.

According to the substantive realist interpretation, people in receiving societies have a strong self-interest to preserve some kind of national privilege which the national identity makes possible. A state like Japan would accordingly keep their borders closed and protect their national identity from becoming more pluralistic. More so, a dominant and powerful group in society might try to keep a strong position, and try to avoid any mutual adjustment which makes room for newcomers. In a homogenous state it might therefore be hard to achieve the ideal of integration Miller aims for, and the identity consequently becomes more anti-pluralistic than he wants it to be. The outcome might be that it is very hard to integrate immigrants.

In summary, the nationalism in liberal nationalism is the instrumental and inescapable part of Miller’s immigration theory, whereas Miller’s point about the ideal of integration is more idealistic. This ideal is crucial to make Miller’s account of nationalism into not just any nationalism, but a liberal nationalism. What this section has tried to point out is that Miller stands the risk of defending national self-determination which merely serves the national self-interest to preserve the security of the insiders. If this is correct, then Miller defends national self-determination even though it might be quite difficult to achieve the ideals of a pluralistic and integrated society which are important for the state’s capacity to permit immigrants.

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4.8 Summary
This analysis has made an internal critique of Miller’s immigration argument using concepts from substantive realism. The first theoretical tool was “the real” and the claim was that the national identity narrative that dominates a national discourse matters since some national identities conflict more with immigration than others do. According to Clara Sandelind’s research, there are several national identity narratives. The potential conflict between national identity and immigration is allegedly cushioned by institutional narratives of national identity, and not by cultural national identities which is what Miller supports. This is an interesting point, which however seems misguided against Miller’s immigration theory. Miller believes in a changeable and pluralistic national identity which is supposed to make it possible for most societies to accept more immigrants than they do right now.

The second analytical tool, self-interest, has been utilised to analyse why Miller’s theory cannot achieve the regulated, but still quite open, immigration policy which he aspires for. Initially, it was argued that national identity might very well be a promotion of self-interest and security in the hands of national insiders. The national insiders want to preserve their power in a globalized economy where external factors such as tax-evasion has meant that states have lost parts of their sovereignty to decide on economic issues. Then, the claim was that Miller’s usual critique against substantive realism and their assumptions about the political realm might fit domestic politics better but does not seem accurate if we consider immigration politics. Similar to what Joseph Carens says, this essay holds that there is a national self-interest which hinders states from accepting refugees to the extent Miller would like them to do.

The analysis with self-interest as the analytical tool suggests that since an anti-immigrant national identity might be developed it seems justified to be sceptical about if it is realistic for Miller’s liberal nationalism to aim for a society that is quite open to immigrants. Another troubling thing for Miller’s theory is that the pluralistic and integrated society which would make immigration easier to handle for a state might not be desired by a nationality with a self-interest to keep their population homogenous.

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This analysis has questioned the coherency of Miller’s immigration argument. If we do as Miller says, and accept the self-determination of nation-states in order to preserve their national identity. Then it is according to the analysis incoherent to also think that the state will accept a fair share of refugees. The national identity might not become what Miller wants it to be, since
the national interest makes it exclusionary. Instead of a liberal national identity it might just as well be anti-immigrant, and concerned with protecting the power and security of insiders. It does not seem likely that many European states have the will to promote a liberal national identity where Miller’s liberal ideal such as a pluralistic but still integrated society serves as a guiding beacon. The solution of European states has been to exclude migrants more than Miller would like them to do, and if European citizens actually shared a liberal kind of national identity this kind of a restrictive immigration would seem unlikely.

5 - Conclusion

Now it is time to summarize the essay which has attempted to answer the research question: *How does David Miller defend his conception of state-regulated immigration, and is his conception coherent given two different substantive realist interpretations of the empirical reality?*

Miller’s position rests on his methodological realist theorising, which is shown by the *national identity argument*, that says that a national identity is instrumental to create trust and solidarity. Trust and solidarity are required to succeed with for instance redistributive policies which Miller promotes. National identity hence becomes the glue of society, and the nation-states must have the right to control immigration in order to preserve the national identity.

One of the analytical tools in the essay was the agonistic realist concept of “the real” which questions our understanding of the political reality. Clara Sandelind’s empirical research has made the point that national identity narratives, which are more institutional and less cultural, can cushion immigration’s negative impact on national identity. This would mean that some states are more capable of receiving immigrants than others, depending on what national identity narrative that is dominant. Even if this point is important, it seems misguided if it is meant to critique Miller’s immigration position. The problem for Miller’s theory is that nation-states do not admit as many immigrants as he wants them to. If we use Sandelind’s terminology, Miller is searching for a liberal narrative of national identity which is compatible with regulated immigration.

The second analytical tool in the analysis was B) *self-interest* which assumes that political agents are driven by a strife for *power* and *security*. The two simple but central points were that there is vertical power-relation between national insiders and immigrants together with a national self-interest. If the point about the existence of a national self-interest is accepted, the
national identity becomes a means for people to get security and national benefits. It is in the self-interest of nationals to preserve their privileges and they can exercise power through closing national borders. The suggestion is that the stronger the experience of a threat to security is, the more likely it is that the national self-interest will serve to protect the nation-state from immigrants. The consequence will be anti-immigrant tendencies and contemporary Europe is an example of such a development.

The internal critique concludes that Miller’s theory has a problem with incoherency. The analysis has argued that it is unrealistic to let the nation-state regulate its own immigration policy, and still believe that the nation-states will accept a fair share of refugees. Because admitting immigrants too often does not serve the national self-interest. If Miller is to remain loyal to his methodological realist approach, and include national self-interest in his empirical analysis, it is incoherent to think that the nation-states will accept a fair share of refugees.

If the reader thinks that the realist critique provided insights to the immigration issue it is possible to apply a normative perspective to complement the essay’s analysis of immigration politics. This kind of normative approach exists, and for instance Clara Sandelind believes that we should acknowledge the welfare-state’s importance for the moral life of individuals while also considering the power-relations and ethnic biases which the welfare-state reproduces.83 Alex Sager is very sceptical of power relations between refugees and national insiders, and he proposes a critical cosmopolitanism which is “opposed to hierarchy and domination [of migrants] and to the silencing of significant parts of the human population”84. The analysis in this essay can help us understand the role of national self-interest in this vertical power relation between citizens and immigrants, and a normative theory could use such an analysis to question that power structure.

Future research could also use concepts from substantive realism to critique other liberal nationalists, but also to question liberal universalists such as Joseph Carens or Seyla Benhabib for instance. This is of course only given that the reader agrees with the analysis’ claim that these concepts help us understand immigration politics. If future research would like to use the substantive realist perspective one other suggestion is that they dig deeper into the concepts of this school of thought because that would do it more justice, and give a more nuanced and

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thoughtful analysis. Another proposal is that a future paper should do a thorough evaluation of empirical data on views about for example immigration and national identity.

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