

More Thoughts About That Huntington Book

by Samuel Francis

Harvard scholar Samuel P. Huntington's *Who Are We?*, undoubtedly the most important criticism of mass immigration by a major academic figure in the last 50 years, has now been published, and if the onslaught against it has not been quite the gang rape some predicted, the establishment embrace of the book has not exactly been a love match.

Reactions to Mr. Huntington's book range from the pedantically skeptical to the predictably ranting, but most of the responses merely reflect the ideological fixations of the reviewers rather than any substantive criticism.

What they reveal is that the ruling class or at least its cultural commissars simply can't handle serious discussion of mass immigration and the multicultural and multiracial messes it is creating.

Who Are We? is notable for three claims.

First, it argues that the real and enduring American national identity comes from and remains dependent on what Mr. Huntington calls the

"Anglo-Protestant core" culture created by the early settlers who established the first European societies in North America. Alternative views are that our identity, if we have one at all, is universal, the product of a "creed" or "proposition" that includes all peoples and all cultures, or that if we used to be an Anglo-Protestant society, we are no longer and good riddance.

The book then argues that the mass immigration of non-Western, Third World – specifically, Hispanic – peoples into the United States over the last 40 years or so is undermining our Anglo-Protestant identity. This part of the book is probably the best and most sustained critique of mass immigration on cultural grounds ever written. It has not been well received at the hands of the culture cops.

Finally, Mr. Huntington argues that immigration represents a cultural threat not just because of the pressures from immigration itself but also because of the absolute refusal of our elites – not only in culture but big business and politics also – to resist cultural deracination, slow or halt immigration itself, or even enforce assimilation of newcomers into traditional American civilization. These claims are not mere assertions. Mr. Huntington, like the major scholar he is, documents all

of them with a vast amount of information and no small amount of ingenuity. Even if you love immigration, his book is the one you have to read if you want to know what its critics think and say.

But the book is far from perfect, and in fact it contains a major conceptual flaw. The flaw is that even though Mr. Huntington argues that America is not "based on a creed," he believes there is a creed that in effect defines the nation. It's just that the creed grows out of and remains dependent on the Anglo-Protestant culture.

The "creed" he describes is one that endorses the "political principles of liberty, equality, democracy, individualism, human rights, the rule of law, and private property" – in short, liberalism. Mr. Huntington is right that many Americans do believe in one version or another of such a creed, but there's no reason to think it's the defining trait of American beliefs.

It never seems to occur to Mr. Huntington that the creed he describes is self-evidently false in at least one important respect: It claims to be universal. But if, as he argues, it's really the product of a specific culture and history (the "Anglo-Protestant core"), then it's not really universal. It's just what we or some of us happen to believe.

And if the creed is really only a

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culturally unique set of beliefs, there's no reason to worship it or elevate it to the level of divinely revealed dogma, which is what the very term "creed" suggests.

In fact, America has no creed. There are many different documents in our history, but nowhere is there one that is known as the "American Creed." It's interesting that most of the writers Mr. Huntington cites on the creed are in fact foreigners themselves.

What defines America is indeed

the very kind of cultural identity Mr. Huntington started out talking about, an identity that produces many different beliefs and belief systems. Americans decide which "creed" to swallow based on their merits – whether they're true or false, logical or illogical – and not because they're supposed to believe one or another.

But Mr. Huntington is entirely right that mass immigration by peoples who don't share the same

cultural roots and often hate or reject them won't be assimilating to it any time soon.

He's also right that if no one in charge demands that they assimilate, the culture won't last long.

You can quibble or rant about a good many of the claims Mr. Huntington makes in his important book, but if you learn only that much, you will have gotten your money's worth. •

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