

Word Bullies Aren't Our Betters

JOHN VINSON

When I was in high school there was a bully named Tom, and many of the boys were afraid of him. One day our P.E. coach told our class, “You fellows are letting him buffalo you. Don’t do that.” A boy named Larry had this idea too when Tom picked a fight with him. After Tom sucker punched him, Larry replied, “Ok, you’ve had your turn, now I’m going to take mine.” With a flurry of blows he beat Tom into submission. As I recall, Tom did a lot less bullying after that.

Some bullies use fists, but other bullies use words. The blows of the former are physical, while the blows of the latter are mental and emotional. Contrary to the old claim that “sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me,” broken bones often heal better than broken psyches, especially if this leads to the financial hardship of sudden unemployment.

Immigration restrictionists are quite familiar with verbal bullies. Disagree with a mass immigration supporter, and you often will face a torrent of abuse—racist, hater, bigot, xenophobe, white supremacist, nativist, etc. In the face of this ideological trash talk, commonly boosted and magnified by the “mainstream media,” it’s easy to feel intimidation. The message from the bully is clear: I am your moral superior. You must shut up, and think what I tell you to think.

How might this fear be countered? One possibility is considering the source. Let’s look at some human qualities that most religious and ethical traditions consider to be moral virtues. Some primary examples are humility, prudence, truthfulness, and loyalty. How do the most ardent mass immigrationists rank in in these categories?

Humility is the virtue that prompts us not to think more of ourselves than we really should. It teaches us, as fallible humans, that we all have limits to our awareness and understanding. Immigration advocates in general

are anything but humble. The moral arrogance of so many of them is astounding. The fanatics at the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) are one example, but there are plenty of others.

In their bubble of moral bravado, these bullies of the word cannot entertain the least shade of gray, the least impulse to consider a view on the other side, and certainly no inclination to self-correct. They pose as righteous people, but self-righteous is a far better description. They inflate their exalted selves by demonizing their opponents. This toxic narcissism cannot have a good outcome. As the Bible so well states, pride and a haughty spirit come before the fall.

Prudence is a virtue which stems from humility. It consists of foreseeing the outcome of one’s behavior and changing that behavior if the perceived outcome isn’t good. But people blinded by arrogance have little foresight, indeed little sight at all. Mass immigrationists are enraptured with their inner vision of a future multicultural utopia where peace, harmony, and love will prevail. And if reality suggests otherwise, reality doesn’t matter.

Take California, for example. Surely utopia must be in the making there, the state with the highest number and percentage of immigrants. But that’s not what’s happened. Before mass immigration, the state was relatively uncrowded, solidly middle-class, and well-governed. It was a place where Americans wanted to go for a better life.

Today, California is increasingly an overcrowded bedlam of diversity. Its economy more and more resembles the economic divide so characteristic of the Third World homelands of most of the immigrants: a relatively few wealthy people at the top and lots of poor folks at the bottom. In the past several decades, native-born Californians have fled the state in droves.

These unpleasant consequences prompt little concern from the ideological true believers of immigration, whether they be nation-hating Marxists on the left or the open borders libertarians on the right. Even if immigration turned California into Haiti, these imprudent people would still keep pushing immigration and the wonders of diversity.

One example is Harvard University’s Robert Putnam. He discovered — to his horror — from his in-depth research that American cities with the highest levels of

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diversity had the lowest levels of social trust and community. Did that give him cause to pause and question his faith in diversity? No, he's still a true believer.

Truthfulness is the key to moral understanding and dialogue. How honest are the mass immigrationists? One good indicator is what the lawmakers among them have said and done. In 1965 when Congress was debating the legislation that set our current disaster of immigration in motion, supporters of the bill promised that it would not greatly alter our country. Most famously, Sen. Edward Kennedy promised that it would not open our gates to a million immigrants a year; that it would not change the ethnic makeup of the country. And that's precisely what it did do.

Similarly the supporters of the 1986 amnesty proposal vowed that this legalization of illegal aliens would only happen once and would never be repeated. Yet the ink on the bill had scarcely dried before these same people were calling for more amnesties. Subsequent immigration measures passed by Congress left a similar stream of broken promises in their wake.

Dishonesty also shows itself among many mass immigration advocates with their tendency to ascribe the worst possible motives to their opponents. To illustrate, the Southern Poverty Law Center labeled the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) a "hate group," thereby equating it to the likes of the Ku Klux Klan. In reality, CIS is a rather bland number-crunching organization which often provides testimony to Congress. The SPLC surely knows this as well as anyone, but it repeats its falsehood just the same.

Loyalty is a virtue, though not always. Gangsters can be loyal to other gangsters as they commit crimes.

But common human experience testifies that many types of loyalty—within bounds—are virtues indeed. Examples are the ties of family, community, and nation. Mass immigrationists often claim they are loyal Americans. At the same time they seem to have a real difficulty distinguishing between illegal aliens and citizens. They often appear outraged that non-citizens don't have as much right to live in America as Americans. Furthermore, they typically rage against any suggestion that we take effective steps to secure our border.

Questions: How can one be a loyal American while being indifferent to the worth and significance of our citizenship? And how can our nation, or any nation, exist as a sovereign entity without borders? Is it possible that at least some immigrationists are not loyal Americans? If they find this suggestion offensive, let them explain why it isn't true.

In his book *Who Are We?* Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington maintains that a high percentage of America's elites are "transnationals," people with a globalist perspective with little attachment to their country or countrymen. Transnational is one word for such people. Some Americans might use another one — traitor.

Immigration restrictionists, by and large, are reasonable and decent people. Few want to stop all immigration, but they have perfectly legitimate concerns about the level of immigration we have today and its impact on our society. They would welcome reasonable dialogue with their opponents. But when those opponents opt instead for verbal bullying, restrictionists should resist intimidation by simply reflecting on the arrogance, imprudence, dishonesty, and treachery of their accusers. They can't "buffalo" people who refuse to back down. ■



Two distinguished Harvard University scholars — Political Scientists Robert D. Putnam, left, and Samuel P. Huntington (1927-2008), above, past president of the American Political Science Association (1986-1987). Both are authors of widely discussed (and critiqued) studies of broader national trends that result from demographic change.