

## Western Europe

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

*In Our Interest: How Democracies  
Can Make Immigration Popular*

BY ALEXANDER KUSTOV.  
Columbia University Press, 2025,  
344 pp.

Fear of immigration has polarized politics and fueled the rise of the far right across the globe. A majority of voters in wealthy democracies strongly oppose uncontrolled inflows, leaving leaders no alternative but to close borders, even at high economic cost. A minority defend mass migration, often appealing to humanitarian ideals and accusing opponents of racism and xenophobia. Kustov's carefully argued and data-rich book promises a way out of this deadlock. Using cross-national surveys and case studies, he argues that most opponents of migration are in fact altruists who privilege the fate of their co-nationals over foreigners. To rebuild a consensus, politicians must thus appeal to these swing voters by eschewing moralistic and globalist rhetoric. Instead, they must adopt a tightly controlled and highly selective immigration policy clearly tailored to serve the national economic interest—a tough-minded approach that, the author claims, has helped maintain relatively high public support for immigration in countries such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. This cautiously optimistic book offers a welcome respite from futile, endless debates over migration.

*Good Change: The Rise and Fall of  
Poland's Illiberal Revolution*

BY STANLEY BILL AND BEN  
STANLEY. Stanford University  
Press, 2025, 360 pp.

Right-wing parties are growing in number and strength across Europe and North America. Often, they represent an alliance of populists and plutocrats; in the United States, for example, President Donald Trump has been backed by a coalition of cultural conservatives, who favor traditional religious and nationalist values, and economic libertarians, who favor lower taxes and business regulation. Yet in Poland, where the right-wing Law and Justice party governed for most of the past decade, the party and its allies gained much of their electoral support by adopting policies of economic redistribution that helped poorer Poles, particularly those in rural areas. In 2023, however, a liberal coalition unseated Law and Justice in national elections. This nuanced and data-driven analysis shows how support for the right was undermined by widespread opposition to conservative policies on abortion and other issues, along with Law and Justice's failure to deliver low-inflation growth, benefits for farmers, and smooth relations with the EU. The authors acknowledge that Poland is increasingly polarized and concede that the far right has at times exploited institutional opportunities to tilt the political system toward its goals. Yet their overall view is that Poland remains a country with robust issue-based political competition. This is a must-read for all who follow central European politics.

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*Fateful Hours: The Collapse of the Weimar Republic*

BY VOLKER ULLRICH. TRANSLATED BY JEFFERSON CHASE. Norton, 2025, 384 pp.

As liberal political systems face challenges in much of the industrial world, many observers have invoked an alarming historical parallel: the end of the Weimar Republic in Germany, in 1933, which ushered in the rule of the Nazi Third Reich. Ullrich, a best-selling historian of Germany and biographer of Hitler, offers a readable and reliable account of this period, when politics had become polarized in a time of significant economic stress. He reminds readers that Hitler did not seize power but was given it by conservatives. To defeat the threat of a surging left, businessmen and nationalists colluded to countenance domestic culture wars, xenophobic nationalism, the erosion of constitutional norms, and outright violence, ultimately naming Hitler, a vulgar racist, as national executive. Ullrich stresses the role of tactical mistakes and misjudgments, not least by the far left, which shortsightedly refused to compromise its beliefs and join with more moderate groups to oppose democratic backsliding. Concerned citizens in many democracies must wonder whether similar processes are underway today.

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*Rebooting a Nation: The Incredible Rise of Estonia, E-Government, and the Startup Revolution*

BY JOEL BURKE. Hurst, 2025, 304 pp.

Burke, a Washington think-tanker who spent time working in the Estonian government, details why this small country of barely a million has emerged as a model of sound policymaking. After freeing itself peacefully from the Soviet Union in 1991, Estonia has taken tough steps to liberalize its economy, integrate with Europe, and oppose Russian aggression in Ukraine and elsewhere. Its high-tech firms, such as Wise and Bolt, are known across the globe. Most striking of all is Estonia's embrace of digital freedoms and its pioneering approach to digital regulation. A centralized yet secure system allows all Estonians to control their government data, including medical, driving, school, business, and tax records. Citizens can oversee who accesses their data and for what purpose, and abusers are hit with stiff penalties. Efficient and transparent regulation also makes Estonia attractive to global business. Because the system is integrated, moreover, citizens must provide vital information only once. The author overlooks, however, that while Estonia has reformed public-sector digital services, it remains quite permissive in regulating the behavior of influential private actors in the digital space.

*Ungovernable: The Political  
Diaries of a Chief Whip*

BY SIMON HART. Macmillan, 2025,  
368 pp.

Hart is a moderate and decent British politician who was unexpectedly elevated to cabinet minister and chief whip in Parliament under recent Conservative governments. This book contains his diary entries over this period, which are uniquely frank, delivered with deadpan irony, and full of the hidden texture of everyday parliamentary life: insider betrayals, backroom deals, strategic leaks, rhetorical grandstanding, partisan squabbles, and scatological insults. As they angle for peerages, hanker for safe seats, and roll their eyes in the corner of cabinet meetings, most members of Parliament come across as petty, childish, and more ambitious than competent. Among many others, Hart dismisses two recent prime ministers as exceptional only in the degree of their talent for spin: Boris Johnson because of his propensity for bluster and Liz Truss because of her wooden “deputy head girl” personality. A more damning indictment of how politicians are chosen and what they do once they reach office is hard to imagine. This is at once the most entertaining and the most troubling political memoir I have read in many years.

## Western Hemisphere

RICHARD FEINBERG

*On the Move: Migration Policies in  
Latin America and the Caribbean*

BY ANDREW SELEE, VALERIE  
LACARTE, ARIEL G. RUIZ SOTO,  
AND DIEGO CHAVES-GONZÁLEZ.  
Stanford University Press, 2025,  
208 pp.

In this excellent, timely, and accessible brief, experts from the Migration Policy Institute survey recent trends in mass migration across the Western Hemisphere and the various policy responses of national governments. Since 2010, the explosion in regional migration has been driven largely by devastating crises in three countries: Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. In just over a decade, nearly eight million Venezuelans have departed the hellscape created by President Hugo Chávez and his successor, Nicolás Maduro. Latin American countries that have received large numbers of migrants, such as Chile, Colombia, and Peru, have generally shown empathy toward the new arrivals, allowing them to obtain legal status and secure access to social services. At the same time, in reaction to the sharp increases and public visibility of migrant flows, governments have begun to tighten border controls and strengthen their institutional capacities to regulate migration.