I. Introduction

Defenders of border controls propose various criteria to restrict immigration. For example, Michael Walzer argues that a political community should decide its own admission policy so as to preserve its distinctive character and ‘the shape of the community’ (Walzer 1983: 61-62). Other standards include the concern for national security (Carens 2013: 276), the preservation of public culture (Miller 2005: 200) and collective solidarity (Gibney 2004: 73), and immigrants’ acceptance of host countries’ political structure (Miller 1995: 130).¹

These proposals, however, are challenged by the fact of heterogeneity within host countries (Higgins 2013: 28, 35; see also Benhabib 2004: 81; Sager 2016: 43). Some citizens may jeopardize their own country’s distinctive character, threaten national security, disagree with public culture, compromise collective solidarity, and do not accept the existing political structure. While some immigrants do not satisfy these admission criteria, some citizens fail the same test as well. These proposals seem to rely on the mistaken assumption about a state’s internal homogeneity.

The challenge of heterogeneity leads to a more fundamental issue regarding the justification of immigration controls: the asymmetry between compatriot deportation and immigration controls (Brezger and Cassee 2016; Hidalgo 2014a; Cole 2000: 144). States adopt various admission criteria to exclude unqualified immigrants but do not at the same time expel their own citizens who fail the same criteria. If a state really

¹ For other economic, social, and cultural considerations, see Huemer’s discussion (2010).
worries about the admission of such unqualified immigrants, why does it not expel the citizens who share the same features with these immigrants? Why does it treat immigrants and citizens differently?

The asymmetry between citizens and immigrants (‘the asymmetry’ henceforth) does not necessarily entail closed borders. The strong version of the asymmetry holds that unqualified immigrants should be denied entry, while citizens who fail the same criteria will not be expelled. On this strong reading, the asymmetry amounts to closed borders. In contrast, the weak version of the asymmetry maintains that unqualified immigrants’ entry depends on destined countries’ absorptive capacity. Within the limit of absorptive capacity, destined countries should prioritize citizens’ opportunity to stay over immigrants’ opportunity to enter and stay. For example, suppose that a country can only accommodate five hundred religious fundamentalists, and currently it has three hundred citizens of religious fundamentalism. It can grant admission to two hundred immigrants of religious fundamentalism. Its admission policy manifests the asymmetry because, instead of expelling these three hundred citizens and admitting five hundred immigrants of religious fundamentalism, this country first allows these three hundred citizens to stay and then accepts two hundred immigrants of religious fundamentalism up to the threshold of its absorptive capacity. On this weak interpretation of the asymmetry, unqualified immigrants still have the opportunity to enter and stay. Despite this difference between denial and priority, both versions share the idea that the admission criteria to exclude immigrants do not apply to exclude citizens.

The defense of the asymmetry is important because proponents of immigration controls cannot simply justify these specific admission criteria but need to go a step further to explain why the asymmetry between immigrants and citizens is morally
justifiable (Brezger and Cassee 2016: 378). In other words, the justification of these admission criteria constitutes a necessary but insufficient condition of defending immigration controls. A successful defense of immigration controls needs to address this asymmetry as well.

One might doubt the significance of this task. If we ask why states treat immigrants and citizens differently, we seem to assume that immigrants should enjoy the same moral standing as citizens. This assumption unfortunately begs the question, because the equal standing of citizens and immigrants is the crucial issue theorists of immigration justice should explore (Blake 2008: 965). This doubt, however, is not devastating. By juxtaposing citizens with immigrants, we can explore the gap in the current justifications of immigration controls. The juxtaposition does not intend to assume the equal standing of citizens and immigrants but to help us delve into a more fundamental issue regarding people’s opportunity to stay in a particular country.

This paper aims to defend the asymmetry between compatriot deportation and immigration controls. In the next two sections, I examine the defense of the asymmetry by Yael Tamir, Joseph Carens, and Margaret Moore and argue that their defense fails to satisfy the requirement of comprehensiveness and particularity. Section four develops an alternative approach to defending the asymmetry, focusing on the assumption built in immigrants’ action and the equality among immigrants. I shall explain how this alternative defense, the practical approach, can meet the requirement of comprehensiveness and particularity. Unlike other defenses of the asymmetry in the current literature, the practical approach attempts to defend the asymmetry from the perspective of immigrants, rather than from the perspective of destined countries.
II. Birthright

From the perspective of liberal nationalism, Tamir argues that a liberal state can set up two standards of membership to preserve its distinctive character (Tamir 1993: 129). First, prospective members should acquire the civic competence to discuss public issues with fellow citizens. Second, prospective members should share the culture and identity with the state in question. On this view, a liberal state can exclude immigrants without the required civic competence and the willingness and ability to share its culture and identity.

Nonetheless, some citizens, such as militant anarchists or religious fundamentalists, who acquire birthright citizenship lack the required civic competence as well. According to these two standards, should a liberal state expel them as well? Tamir answers in the negative. Under this circumstance, the liberal state resembles a community that emphasizes ‘feelings of kinship and belonging’ (Tamir 1993: 129) rather than an association formed by social contract. Although these citizens fail the standards of membership, unlike the unqualified immigrants who are excluded, they still retain their membership. This asymmetry between citizens and immigrants demonstrates ‘the priority of birthrights’ (Tamir 1993: 124).

Note first that the birthright principle does not fully capture the scope of the asymmetry. In most countries, after naturalization, immigrants enjoy the same privilege of staying as citizens by birthrights do. Even though the naturalized citizens may later exhibit the same unqualified features of the excluded immigrants, the former can still stay, while the latter’s entry is still restricted. Consequently, the asymmetry between citizens and immigrants is not the one between citizens by birthrights and immigrants but the one between current citizens and immigrants.

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2 Although this paper focuses on the admission of immigrants rather than naturalization and citizenship, Tamir’s argument is still illuminating for the analysis of the asymmetry.
Setting aside the scope of the asymmetry, the birthright principle faces one challenge. Birth is a factor that people cannot choose by themselves. If the defense of the asymmetry hinges on people’s circumstances of birth, this defense seems to promote a modern version of feudal society in which people’s circumstances of birth determine their rights, obligations, and life prospects. Immigrants do not have a fair opportunity to enter and stay in their destined country because the differential treatment of immigrants and citizens depends on an ascriptive factor, birth, beyond their choice.

This challenge is not insurmountable. When explaining the importance of the birthright principle, Tamir argues that it contributes to the ‘self-perpetuation’ of the state (1993: 130). Similarly, as Rainer Baubock observes, the birthright principle ensures that ‘there will always be a next generation of citizens as long as there are citizen parents or children born in the territory’ (2015: 829). The birthright principle enables the state to obtain its future generation. Self-perpetuation in this sense is important for at least three reasons. First, a state cannot exercise its right of self-determination unless it has members to participate in its political, social, and economic affairs. Moreover, its culture withers when none of its members exists. Finally, it needs to provide public goods for its members. These public goods do not exist out of nothing. The creation and maintenance of these public goods needs resources which ultimately result from its members contributions.

In the context of immigration controls, these three reasons seem to concern destined countries only and do not deal with the above challenge about the ascriptive nature of the birthright principle. Tamir’s argument of self-perpetuation, however, can

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3 For this criticism of birthright, see Shachar (2009: 123-128), Schuck and Smith (1985), and Stevens (2009: 27-103).
4 On the similarity between feudal privilege and the contemporary practice of citizenship, see Carens (1987: 252). Recently, Carens has proposed a limited defense of birthright citizenship (2013: 25).
5 This challenge echoes Samuel Scheffler’s distributive objection (2001: 74, 85).
respond to this challenge in two ways. The first response, the practical approach, aims to scrutinize the practical reasoning of immigrants and see whether the birthright principle constitutes an assumption built in their action. When we adopt the practical approach to examine our action, as Onora O’Neil puts it, ‘we ask what assumptions we are already building into our action, habits, practices and institutions’ (O’Neil 2001: 192). When we decide to take a specific action, we cannot alienate ourselves from the assumptions inherent in the action. Otherwise, we would contradict ourselves. By taking this action, we adhere to the assumptions built in the action. On this approach, if immigrants assume the birthright principle in their action, this principle can be considered as one accepted by them. Consequently, the practical approach has the advantage of showing that, even though immigrants cannot determine the circumstances of birth, the asymmetry based on the birthright principle may still be justifiable to immigrants.

Does immigrants’ action assume the perpetuation of their destined countries? Immigrants choose to immigrate for various reasons, such as better job opportunities, family reunion, and the attractiveness of destined countries. Despite the variety of these reasons, when they immigrate, they all assume that they (and perhaps their children as well) will live in destined countries for a long period of time. Moving to other countries is a costly decision, and immigrants would not make this costly decision unless they are prepared to live in their destined countries for a long period of time. This assumption, however, implies that their destined countries will last for a long period of time as well. And, the destined countries cannot achieve this goal without obtaining future members to maintain the functioning of the state. The birthright principle, as noted above, helps the destined countries to obtain their future members. As a result, immigrants’ decision to immigrate assumes the perpetuation of
their destined countries enabled by the birthright principle.

Although the combination of the practical approach and Tamir’s argument of self-perpetuation can reveal why immigrants can accept the birthright principle, this combination, especially the part about self-perpetuation, cannot satisfy the comprehensiveness requirement for the justification of the asymmetry. A successful defense of the asymmetry needs to explain why all citizens who share the same features with unqualified immigrants will not be deported. The deportation of only a few citizens, nonetheless, will not endanger the perpetuation of the state. Moreover, some extremist citizens may intend to destroy their own state. Granting them the opportunity to stay conflicts with the logic of the state’s self-perpetuation. For these two reasons, the self-perpetuation argument cannot buttress the asymmetry premised on the birthright principle, because it cannot cover all citizens.

The second response uses the idea of ‘the Iteration Proviso’, a term I borrow from Richard Vernon (2010: 104), to show why immigrants can reasonably accept the birthright principle that contributes to the self-perpetuation of their destined countries. Birth indeed is a factor not subject to immigrants’ own choice. Nonetheless, instead of seeing the asymmetry as affected by the particular factor of birth, we can consider whether this factor can become an institution justifiable to immigrants. Can immigrants reasonably accept the birthright principle as an institution to govern states’ immigration policy? If yes, the birthright principle can defend the asymmetry without the above-mentioned bias against immigrants, even though immigrants cannot choose the circumstances of birth.

The Iteration Proviso holds that, if immigrants’ home countries can adopt the same principle of birthright to restrict immigration, then this principle does not bias against immigrants, because all countries, including immigrants’ home countries, can
do the same thing. The birthright principle then becomes an institution to govern all
countries’ immigration policy. In short, when destined countries appeal to the
birthright principle to maintain the asymmetry, this principle is justifiable to
immigrants if their home countries can adopt the same principle as well.

The reasoning of Iteration Proviso appears in Tamir’s writing. She argues that,
while a national community can restrict immigration to preserve its own distinctive
characters, the immigration restriction is ‘only justified if all nations have an equal
chance of establishing a national entity, in which its members will be given a fair
chance of pursuing their personal and collective goals’ (Tamir 1993: 161). As
explained above, the national entity in question needs the birthright principle to
enable its self-perpetuation. On this view, a nation cannot restrict immigration unless
other nations have an equal opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination.
For present purposes, this condition entails that immigrants can reasonably accept the
birthright principle implied in their destined countries’ immigration restrictions, if
their home countries can embrace the birthright principle for self-perpetuation as well.

The reasoning of Iteration Proviso, however, faces two difficulties. First,
immigrants want to leave their home countries and might not pay much attention to
whether their home countries can resort to the birthright principle for
self-perpetuation. Consequently, the Iteration Proviso cannot demonstrate why
immigrants would reasonably agree with the birthright principle by the idea that their
home countries can adopt the same principle. Second and more importantly, the
Iteration Proviso cannot explain the particularity aspect of the asymmetry. Most
immigrants intend to move to a particular country, not any country. They do not
worry about other countries’ immigration restrictions. Instead, they are concerned
with a particular destined country’s immigration restrictions. Accordingly, if
defenders of the birthright principle seek to show that immigrants can reasonably accept this principle, they need to explicate why a particular destined country can use the birthright principle to maintain the asymmetry. Unfortunately, the Iteration Proviso only indicates that, at a general level, all countries can maintain the asymmetry with the birthright principle, but not that a particular destined country’s birthright principle can be justifiable to the immigrants who wish to enter and stay.

In sum, through examining Tamir’s birthright theory, this section has suggested three requirements for a successful defense of the asymmetry. First, the defense should concern the contrast between citizens and immigrants, rather than the contrast between citizens with birthrights and immigrants. Second, and related to the previous point, the defense should satisfy the comprehensiveness requirement, explaining why the admission criteria are not applicable to all citizens in destined countries. Third, the defense should be justifiable to immigrants. More specifically, the defense should satisfy the particularity requirement, explaining why a particular destined country can justify the asymmetry to its immigrants.

**III. Historicism**

In addition to the birthright principle and the idea of self-perpetuation, Tamir briefly notes that ‘[r]estrictions placed on the entry of future members differ significantly from injustices inflicted on present members, which can never be justified’ (Tamir 1993: 160). This remark means that the asymmetry results from the difference between existing members and prospective members. The crucial issue here concerns what the difference is and how this difference grants existing members greater opportunities to stay than prospective members. Tamir does not elaborate on these questions. Joseph Carens offers a useful explanation.
Why does the expulsion of existing members differ from the exclusion of prospective members? When living in a country, one person cultivates various kinds of social ties with other people. These social ties render this person a member of society. This social membership ‘provides the foundation upon which moral claims to citizenship normally rest’ (Carens 2013: 160). Conceiving citizenship in this way, the expulsion of citizens would sever their existing social ties and social membership. In comparison, immigrants seek to establish new ties with citizens of destined countries, and the exclusion of immigrants prevents these prospective social ties from occurring.

This difference matters for the defense of the asymmetry. Severing existing social ties is more important than preventing prospective social ties. As Carens notes, citizens’ right to stay is more important than immigrants’ right to enter, because ‘[a]ll of the ties that one creates in the course of living in a place mean that one normally (though not always) has a much more vital interest in being able to stay where one is than in being able to get in somewhere new’ (1992: 29). Accordingly, while destined countries use admission criteria to exclude unqualified immigrants, the same criteria do not apply to the expulsion of citizens.

The establishment of social membership requires ‘residence and the passage of time’ (Carens 2013: 164). These two conditions, however, result in a dilemma for the social membership theory to defend the asymmetry. On the one hand, this theory fails the comprehensiveness requirement, because newborn citizens have not yet acquired their social membership through the passage of time. Moreover, this theory cannot justify the asymmetry to immigrants, because immigration constitutes an avenue for them to establish social ties with people in destined countries. Immigration

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6 Carens notes that the social membership theory copes with the issue of citizenship, not that of admission (2013: 162). However, the quote in the preceding paragraph shows that he relies on this theory to defend the asymmetry.
belongs to a stage prior to residence and the passage of time in the process of cultivating social ties. On the other hand, if this theory abandons the requirement of residence and the passage of time, it cannot distinguish between existing members and prospective members and fails to sustain the asymmetry. In the following, I shall explain this dilemma in detail.

Compared to Tamir’s birthright principle, the social membership theory has the strength of covering naturalized citizens, given that naturalized citizens have established social ties with other citizens. At the same time, the social membership theory encounters its own difficulty regarding the comprehensiveness requirement. Do newborn citizens have social ties with other people? The requirement of the passage of time is particularly challenging for newborn citizens because they have not lived in their own society for a long time. If this is the case, newborn citizens have not yet acquired their social membership. The expulsion of newborn citizens does not differ from the exclusion of immigrants. In other words, the social membership theory fails the comprehensiveness requirement, because the admission criteria that exclude unqualified immigrants can be applied to newborn citizens.

When addressing the citizenship of newborn babies, Carens relaxes the requirement of the passage of time in two ways. First, he argues that ‘[a] baby emerges physically from her mother, of course, but she enters a social world’ (Carens 2013: 23). Once born, babies are connected to their parents, relatives, and the political community. The establishment of these connections does not take time. This argument, nonetheless, pushes the social membership theory toward Tamir’s birthright principle, because the circumstances of birth determine individuals’ social membership. Second, Carens maintains that ‘almost every moral claim to citizenship rests upon facts and expectations about social membership (Carens 2013: 160,
emphasis added). Accordingly, expectations about social membership can also buttress people’s claim to citizenship. Moreover, although a child of emigrant citizens does not live in her parents’ home country, she has connections to her parents’ home country ‘because of her social situation and her existing and potential relationships’ (Carens 2013: 28, emphasis added). These two remarks indicate that potential or expected relationships constitute a relevant consideration for the obtainment of social membership. This conclusion, nevertheless, obliterates the difference between newborn citizens and immigrants, because immigrants intend to establish such potential or expected relationships in destined countries. Without this difference, the social membership theory cannot uphold the asymmetry. In short, these two responses cannot save the social membership theory without inviting the doubts about Tamir’s birthright principle or demolishing the asymmetry.

The social membership theory encounters another difficulty of justifying the asymmetry to immigrants. Citizens cultivate their social ties through living in their own country for a certain period of time. But immigrants cannot establish such social ties in the same way without first entering their destined countries and living there. Immigration is the door for immigrants to acquire their social membership in destined countries. Now, if the social membership theory uses the fact of social ties to justify the asymmetry and the resulting immigration restrictions, this justification cannot persuade immigrants. The immigration restrictions prevent immigrants from cultivating social ties with people in destined countries, and the lack of social ties in turn becomes the reason to justify the asymmetry and the immigration restrictions. If this is the case, the fact of social ties by itself cannot defend the asymmetry. The social membership theory needs an additional explanation of why immigrants can reasonably accept the asymmetry.
Put differently, history plays an important role in the social membership theory. The cultivation of social ties takes time. For immigrants, immigration is an early step in this long process of establishing their social ties with destined countries. Following the same logic of social membership, immigrants can argue that destined countries should not disrupt this process of cultivating social ties. In defense of the asymmetry, the social membership theory has to explain how the citizens’ history of obtaining social membership differs from immigrants’ history of acquiring social membership.

These two problems, the comprehensiveness problem and the insufficiency problem, result from the historical dimension of the social membership theory. On the one hand, newborn citizens do not have the history of living in their own society and establishing their social membership. The factor of social ties cannot distinguish between newborn citizens and immigrants. On the other hand, immigration constitutes an early stage in the long process of establishing the social ties between immigrants and their destined countries. If the social membership theory emphasizes the passage of time for the obtainment of social membership, it should recognize immigration as an early stage in this process as well. To be sure, the social membership theory can avoid these two problems by abandoning the historical element. This strategy, nonetheless, frustrates the goal of differentiating citizens from immigrants and justifying the asymmetry.

The same dilemma appears in Margaret Moore’s historical approach to defending the asymmetry. Moore argues that political self-determination requires immigration controls for two reasons (Moore 2015:196-198). First, immigration generates impacts on many aspects of the collective life of political communities, such as health care, budget balance, and job markets. Without controlling immigration, political communities cannot shape their collective life according to their own choice.
Second, immigration affects the composition of ‘the self’ in political self-determination. Given that the right of political self-termination entails ‘a right to determine what “the self” is’ (Moore 2015: 197, see also Wellman 2008: 115; Wellman and Cole 2011: 41), political communities have the right to control immigrations. Later, Moore expands on this second reason and argues that individuals do not have the right to establish relationships with any person they want (More 2015: 201). Although immigrants seek to enter into relations with destined countries, destined countries retain the right to determine the persons to associate with.

Moore then addresses a puzzle regarding the asymmetry (Moore 2015: 202). When babies are born to citizens, citizens treat the babies as members of the community and shoulder obligations toward them, even though these obligations are unchosen. Why do not citizens treat immigrants in the same way? Why do citizens accept the unchosen burdens imposed by their babies but insist on their freedom of choice with regard to immigrants’ desire for association?

Like Tamir and Carens, Moor points out the difference between existing relationships and prospective relationships. Children of occupants ‘are in an appropriate kind of relationship to legitimate occupants’. In comparison, immigrants’ claim to enter and stay ‘is not rooted in any kind of existing relationship but on the desire and/or aspiration to be in a relationship’ (Moore 2015: 202, 122). This difference matters because existing relationships generate two kinds of relationship interests (Moore 2015: 63-64). Take the example of parents/children relationship. This relationship produces relationship-independent interests such as care. These interests are served by the relationship itself. The production of these interests does not require particular participants in this relationship. At the same time, this

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7 For a critical discussion about this issue, see Fine (2013: 264-265).
relationship produces relationship-dependent interests, which can only be served by particular participants in the relationship. A child has an interest in being cared by his or her parents, not any parents. The existing relationship between citizens and their children produces these two kinds of relationship interests. Given the importance of protecting these two kinds of relationship interests, citizens treat their babies as members of the community, without considering expelling them. In comparison, such relationships do not exist between immigrants and citizens of destined countries, and the exclusion of immigrants does not endanger these two kinds of relationship interests.

Notice that the notion of relationships has a historical dimension. Relationships ‘imply enduring interactions’ (Moore 2015: 63; see also Seglow 2013: 28). Moreover, Moore argues that ‘people acquire moral residency rights through living in a place and having relationships, commitments, and attachments which are connected to residing there’ (Moore 2015: 37). These two notes indicate that the establishment of relationships and the right of residency take time. Unfortunately, this historical dimension puts Moore’s theory in the same dilemma that challenges the social membership theory. Newborn babies do not have such enduring interactions with other citizens. Furthermore, immigrants can hardly maintain enduring interactions with other people in their destined countries, if they cannot enter their destined countries. In response, perhaps Moore can avoid these two problems by removing the historical dimension from the notion of relationships. On this new definition, as long as two persons are connected to each other in a certain way ‘by virtue of their social roles’ or ‘common attribute’ (Seglow 2013: 26, 27), their relationship exists. The existence of relationships does not require enduring interactions. This response, however, blurs the distinction between immigrants and citizens, because relationships
can possibly exist between immigrants and people in destined countries as well. Without this distinction, Moore’s defense of the asymmetry cannot succeed.

IV. The Practical Approach

In this section, I sketch an alternative defense of the asymmetry that can meet the comprehensiveness requirement and the particularity requirement. It explains why the admission criteria that exclude immigrants do not apply to all citizens. Moreover, the asymmetry inherent in a particular destined country’s immigration policy can be justifiable to its immigrants.

This defense adopts the practical approach mentioned above, which pays attention to the assumption inherent in immigrants’ action. It begins with the observation that most immigrants decide to immigrate with the intention to form associations with people in destined countries. This observation resonates with several writers’ emphasis on immigrants’ freedom of association (Lomasky and Teson 2015: 92-100; Hidalgo 2013: 710; 2014b: 214). Immigrants seek to enter and stay in their destined countries for the purposes of marriage, education, job opportunities, or family reunion. These goals entail the establishment of connections with people in the destined countries. An immigrant who migrates for the purpose of marriage wants to form an association with her spouse. A Japanese software development engineer who wants to enter the United States to work for Google intends to create ties to her company and employers. Moreover, immigrants do not simply want to form associations with anyone in the destined countries. Instead, they intend to associate with specific persons in a specific destined country. They want to marry a specific person, work for a specific company, pursue an academic degree in a specific college, or reunite with their families. Compared to the historical approach, the practical
approach stresses prospective relationships between immigrants and their destined countries, rather than existing relationships between citizens in destined countries.

One assumption lies behind the motivation of forming associations. Immigrants assume that the specific persons they want to associate with will stay in their destined countries. If their ‘targets’ no longer live in their destined countries, they do not need to immigrate to the destined countries. Hence, when deciding to immigrate to a particular country, immigrants should oppose the expulsion of their targeted associates from this destined country. Otherwise, the expulsion will frustrate immigrants’ decision. This assumption explains why immigrants could reasonably agree that the admission criteria in the context of immigration do not apply to the case of compatriot deportation. More importantly, the practical approach developed here can meet the particularity requirement. Since immigrants want to establish relationships with specific persons in specific countries, they would oppose the expulsion of these specific citizens from these specific countries.

Can the practical approach meet the comprehensiveness requirement? At first glance, it fails for two reasons. First, immigrants do not want to associate with every citizen in destined countries. Some citizens in destined countries are not immigrants’ targeted associates. The expulsion of these citizens would not matter for immigrants. The practical approach then cannot explain why the asymmetry should cover all citizens. Second, some immigrants may not want to associate with some citizens in destined countries. Under this circumstance, the practical approach cannot condemn the expulsion of these citizens from the perspective of immigrants, because these immigrants would not worry about whether the citizens they do not like will live in the destined countries.

In response to the first doubt, the practical approach can meet the
comprehensiveness requirement by the idea of the infinity of immigrants. The first doubt ignores that all citizens are possible associates for immigrants. At a particular moment, some citizens of a destined country indeed play no role in its current immigrants’ plan of association. However, in the future, these citizens may become the targeted associates for other immigrants, and these immigrants would oppose the expulsion of these citizens. As a result, all citizens of this country are possible associates for immigrants, as long as these are immigrants who want to immigrate to this country.

The idea of the infinity of immigrants deserves consideration, because it concerns the equality among immigrants. All immigrants should have the equal entitlement to form associations with people in destined countries. While some citizens may not be the targeted associates for current immigrants, the expulsion of these citizens would disrupt future immigrants’ opportunity to establish relationships with them. The equality among current and future immigrants suggests that the latter’s opportunity should not be ignored, and hence the asymmetry should cover all citizens.

The equality among immigrants helps the practical approach respond to the second doubt about comprehensiveness. While some immigrants may resist the association with some citizens in destined countries, the expulsion of these disfavored citizens is still unacceptable, because it jeopardizes other immigrants’ opportunity to associate with these citizens. With the equal status among immigrants, they cannot restrict each other’s opportunity to establish relationships with destined countries.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, I developed the practical approach to defending the asymmetry between
citizens and immigrants with regard to their opportunity to stay in a particular country. On this approach, immigrants can reasonably accept that, while destined countries use various admission criteria to restrict the entry of unqualified immigrants, the same criteria do not apply to expel citizens who share the same features with the unqualified immigrants. The main reason is that the expulsion of citizens would endanger immigrants’ opportunity to form associations with citizens in destined countries. Accordingly, from immigrants’ own perspective, they would oppose the application of the admission criteria to the expulsion of citizens. Compared to Tamir’s birthright theory, Carens’ social membership theory, and Moore’s relationship goods theory, the practical approach developed here has the advantage of satisfying the requirement of comprehensiveness and particularity.

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