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## Identity, Immigration, and Liberal Democracy

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Journal of Democracy

Johns Hopkins University Press

Volume 17, Number 2, April 2006

pp. 5-20

10.1353/jod.2006.0028

ARTICLE

[View Citation](#)

### Abstract

The dilemma of immigration and identity ultimately converges with the larger problem of the valuelessness of postmodernity. That is, the rise of relativism has made it impossible for postmodern people to assert positive values for which they stand, and therefore the kinds of shared beliefs they demand as a condition for citizenship. If postmodern societies are to move toward a more serious discussion of identity, they will need to uncover those positive virtues that define what it means to be a member of the larger community. If they do not, they will indeed be overwhelmed by people who are more sure about who they are.

# IDENTITY, IMMIGRATION, AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

*Francis Fukuyama*

*Francis Fukuyama, Bernard L. Schwartz Professor of International Political Economy at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, delivered the 2005 Seymour Martin Lipset Lecture on Democracy in the World (see box on p. 8). His most recent book is America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy.*

Seymour Martin Lipset was a colleague of mine at George Mason University, and for the years I was there we taught a course together on comparative politics that was originally based on his book *American Exceptionalism*. I learned an extraordinary amount from talking to Lipset, reading his books, and listening to his lectures, and I appreciate the opportunity to apply some of his thinking to our current situation.

Marty Lipset is, of course, a great student of liberal democracy. As the twenty-first century unfolds, it seems unfortunately clear that liberal democracy continues to face multiple challenges. One challenge particularly apparent to Americans since the attacks of September 11 is that of jihadist terrorism. The radical Islamist ideology motivating such terrorism is profoundly antiliberal and, when combined with the destructive possibilities of modern technology, poses a tremendous security challenge.

Most Americans have tended to regard the jihadist problem as something that has been bred and nurtured in profoundly dysfunctional areas of the world like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other parts of the Middle East. Since jihadism is something that is happening "over there," the solution lies either in walling off the United States and other target countries, or else, as the Bush administration would have it, going over there to fix the problem at its root by deposing dictators and promoting democracy.

There is no doubt, of course, that the Muslim world is dysfunctional in many ways, and that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have been the sources of an extremist and hateful ideology. I would contend, however, that the more serious longer-term challenge facing liberal democracies to-



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