Open Borders: Hopes and Fears on Release Day

My first graphic novel, *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration*, co-authored with the great Zach Weinersmith, released October 28th. Since I've already shared the backstory, today I'll share my hopes and fears.

All of my books have been controversial. Yet so far, almost no prominent critic has accused any of my books of being "ideological" or "dogmatic." Instead, they open the books and engage the arguments. As a result, even staunch critics almost always find some common ground. Few deny me a minimal, "While he goes too far, some of what Caplan is saying sure *seems* true…"

I *hope* this pattern of reactions to my books continues. I *fear*, however, that I've reached the end of the line.   Immigration has become *so* ideological during the last five years. Pessimism about immigration is almost a litmus test for conservatism. Yet there is no fundamental reason for this change of heart. Yes, today's immigrants are heavily Democratic. As I explain in the book, however, this is a *recent* pattern. During the Reagan era, immigrants were almost equally divided between the two major parties.

While it's tempting to blame the changing national origin of the immigrants, this doesn't hold water. Indian-Americans are the richest and most socially conservative ethnicity in modern American, yet they're probably even more Democratic than Hispanics. What's going on? I say we're seeing the Respect Motive at work. Immigrants have turned away from Republicans because they no longer feel the heartfelt welcome that leaders like Reagan once eloquently voiced.

When I say this, I *fear* that conservative readers will feel attacked. I also *fear* that liberal readers will amplify those fears by attacking them. My *hope*, however, is conservatives rediscover Reagan's perspective – and liberals will show appreciation for those who do. Support for immigration used to be bipartisan. It can be bipartisan again.

Wishful thinking? Perhaps. With Zach Weinersmith's help, however, it's not hard to visualize…