

An Educational Charity Promoting Life, Liberty and Property

ON IMMIGRATION

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ON IMMIGRATION

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IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE FOR libertarians to defend the idea of open borders or “free” immigration. One might even say that this position now constitutes the orthodoxy within the libertarian movement. However, since the 1990s, with the great work of Hans-Hermann Hoppe and a few othersⁱ, the idea that the best libertarian position on immigration is to favour open borders started to be seriously reconsidered. Thus, there now exists a small group of realistic libertarians believing that, in the context of a contemporary statist society, restricted immigration is more consistent with libertarianism than “free” (*i.e.*, unrestricted) immigration. I am one of those who believe that the best libertarian answers to the immigration problem have been provided by Hoppe. They can be divided in three categories: 1) promoting *total privatisation* as the ultimate solution to any kind of immigration problem, 2) advocating *secession* as a means to reduce drastically the incentive for the state’s ruling class to favour forced integration or forced exclusion measures, and 3) in the meantime (*i.e.*, in the present context of large statist societies), supporting any *restrictive immigration policy* that is as close as possible to an “invite-only” system. I will briefly describe each one of these solutions before refuting the most common arguments favouring open borders—including some of which, to my knowledge, have remained unaddressed until now. But before attempting to describe any solution to the immigration problem, it is important to explain what the problem with immigration actually *is*.

I. The Problem

We are currently living in a world where, over the past few centuries, Western societies have been increasingly accumulating wealth and have been promoting high culture, morality, and civilisation. It thus comes as no surprise that the number of foreigners from Third World countries desiring to increase their standards of living by immigrating in the West has increased exponentially. This would cause no particular problem for Westerners if it wasn’t for the fact that public property is everyday extended or if it wasn’t for the fact that the welfare-state is being increasingly “generous” over time. Indeed, without public property or welfare benefits, only productive and culturally compatible foreigners would tend to immigrate, whereas economic or cultural parasites would tend not to come (or would be expelled). The less public property and welfare benefits there are, the easier it becomes to *select* only the best foreigners to immigrate. Private property owners would ultimately be deciding who can or cannot come, and no immigrant could benefit at the expense of taxpayers merely by moving to a Western country. But with more public properties and welfare benefits, quite the opposite situation is then possible. Both productive, culturally compatible foreigners *and* economic or cultural parasites can then immigrate. Indeed, with the state deciding who can or cannot use public property or have access to welfare benefits, it becomes possible for immigrants to benefit at the expense of taxpayers. In fact, they can remain completely unproductive or hostile and still

receive healthcare, schooling, housing, free access to roads, and so forth—all of which is paid, of course, by the net-taxpayers of their host country. This situation *is* what actually prevails in most Western countries and should certainly be regarded as unacceptable by anyone who values the respect for property rights.

II. The Solutions

1.1. Total privatisation as the ultimate solution to the immigration problem

The best “immigration policy” is, of course, to privatise every scarce resource of society (including roads, bridges, rivers, hospitals, schools, police services, justice services, and so forth) in order to establish a genuine and sustainable private law society.ⁱⁱ Indeed, a private law society is not confronted to any kind of migration problem. Every property owner and group of property owners are free to decide which particular individuals or group of individuals can or cannot come inside the physical boundaries of a particular property. Legitimate immigrants (*i.e.*, those who are invited by a legitimate property owner) are accepted as described by their specific immigration contracts, and undesirables (*i.e.*, those who are not invited) are simply rejected or expelled from the community.

This is the purest libertarian answer to the immigration problem. However, it is only proper to realise that such a society won’t magically appear tomorrow morning. To be sure, the idea of a pure libertarian order deserves our unconditional support. Libertarians should do everything they can in order to promote and create a sustainable free society. But in the meantime, the state still exists and a true migration problem persists: intercultural and interracial conflicts are accentuatedⁱⁱⁱ, institutionalised parasitism

increases at the expense of net taxpayers (who are the legitimate owners of public property), and the powers of the democratic states are consequently larger than ever. These are all effects that should cause the particular indignation of libertarians since they all imply a larger violation of property rights.

1.2. Secession as a first step in the right direction

A more realistic—albeit imperfect—solution to immigration-related problems can be found in the idea of secession. Indeed, the larger the number of states, the more competition there is in order to attract the most productive citizens or subjects of the world. As Hoppe argues:

A small government has many close competitors, and if it taxes and regulates its own subjects visibly more than his competitors, it is bound to suffer from the emigration of labor and capital and a corresponding loss of future tax revenue.^{iv}

Therefore, the ruling class of a small state is less incentivised to establish policies that would be too damaging for the private property of its citizens or subjects than if that same ruling class was in control of a larger state. In other words, it would become easier for *productive* people to move; they would be attracted by states where private property is better defended. Since the tax-consumption of a ruling class can only be maintained and increased if local productive individuals decide not to move out, it will have a greater incentive to restrict immigration to only those foreigners who are productive (and, consequently, *not* parasitical or undesired foreigners). This is merely an application of economic theory according to which an increase in competition (such as more states) for the provision of a particular good or service (such as property protection) will tend

to reduce its price (taxes in this case), or increase its quality (better property protection against, for instance, parasitical immigration), or a combination of both. With larger states, however, it is comparatively more difficult for productive people to move out of the country, and parasitical immigration can thus become a tool for the ruling class in order to justify its own expansion. For in this scenario, an increase in taxes or power will affect emigration much less than if many other competing states exist, and the excuse of “helping” poor immigrants or “solving” intercultural or interracial conflicts can be used as a justification for increasing the powers of the ruling class (*via* higher taxes and greater restrictions on freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom to discriminate).

There is another effect that secession would bring. It will tend to re-homogenise (or decentralise) the centers of decision of each particular state. Indeed, it is to be expected that secession would take place in order to physically separate the centers of decision of culturally incompatible groups. For instance, the decision-makers of a multicultural community or of a cosmopolitan city-state would be able to invite as many immigrants as they wish without affecting directly the wellbeing of individuals living in *another*—more ethno-culturally conservative—city-state. In this scenario, *both* forced integration *and* forced exclusion are drastically reduced as compared to a situation in which both city-states would be integrated in a larger state.

However, it is once again unrealistic to assume that this step in the right direction can be magically implemented tomorrow morning. It takes a lot of time and effort for the people of a given geographical area to successfully secede. For instance, two failures to win an independence referendum (first in 1980, and then in 1995) led French-Canadians from

Québec to resentfully accept that the project of seceding from Canada will not be realised anytime soon.^v It is thus of utmost importance to consider a more specific type of immigration policy that we should be in favour of in the meantime. This policy must be able to limit the problems of forced integration and forced exclusion as much as possible in the more realistic context of a large state ruling the whole country.

1.3. Restricted immigration as a short-run solution to the immigration problem

Only a policy of *restricted* immigration can bring us closer to the libertarian ideal in the context of a statist society. Indeed, public property legitimately belongs to net taxpayers, and *they* are thus the ones who should decide who can come and who cannot come.

This kind of restricted immigration policy is rather simple to conceive of and has been presented many times by Hoppe and a few other libertarians.^{vi} In principle, it must make sure that: 1) every immigrant is *either* invited by a net taxpayer that is ready to bear any external cost relative to his visit *or* is able to demonstrate that he has a residential contract and that he is able to pay for any eventual damage on public or private property (*e.g.*, by having an employment contract or by proving that he has a sufficient amount of savings); 2) once admitted, an irreproachable behaviour is required regarding the respect of life and property; and 3) every immigrant is excluded from any type of subsidy or social benefit (public medical insurance, welfare, subsidised education, and so forth).

Moreover, to become a citizen, the immigrant must be able to demonstrate his local cultural assimilation (*i.e.*, his aptitude to communicate, interact peacefully, and understand *and* support local traditions and customs), for instance, by becoming himself a residential

property owner or by being permanently sponsored (through a gift of property or, in the case of babies or small children, through adoption) by important productive members of that specific locality. Similarly, Hoppe writes that such a policy would imply that

the fundamental requirement for citizenship is the acquisition of property ownership, or more precisely the ownership of real estate and residential property. [...] Becoming a citizen means acquiring the right to stay in a country permanently, and a permanent invitation cannot be secured by any means other than purchasing residential property from a citizen resident. Only by selling real estate to a foreigner does a citizen indicate that he agrees to a guest's permanent stay, and only if the immigrant has purchased and paid for real estate and residential housing in the host country will he assume a permanent interest in his new country's well-being and prosperity.^{viii}

Obviously, the more decentralised the immigration processes are, the more efficient they will be in order to minimise forced integration and forced exclusion.

As a proxy to that rather specific policy, any attempt by politicians to implement a policy as close as possible to this is to be supported by genuine libertarians. Most types of immigration controls are *better* than no control at all. It is indeed very unlikely that net taxpayers (who, again, are the legitimate owners of public property) would be in favour of allowing people that are culturally, religiously, and linguistically incompatible to massively immigrate and use at little or no cost their roads, hospitals, schools, and kindergartens. In that sense, most immigration restrictions deserve the active support of those who value the respect for property rights.

III. Contra Open Borders

In the context of a statist society, the last solution presented in section II is without any doubt the most realistic of the three presented—*i.e.*, out of the three solutions presented, it is this third solution that is the most likely to be adopted in the short run. However, far from being the typical libertarian position, restricted immigration is usually denounced by mainstream libertarians as being anti-libertarian. Most libertarians consider it as a matter of course that the best immigration policy in the context of a statist society is to open the borders to anyone without any type of discrimination whatsoever. The arguments in favour of this thesis can be divided in three distinct classes: 1) the economic benefits of open borders, 2) the ethics of open borders, and 3) the “compassion” of open borders.

2.1. A critical examination of the economic arguments in favour of open borders

a) Improved standards of living

The main economic argument advanced by libertarians to defend open borders is the following: immigration would bring an increase in the standards of living of the people living in a definite geographical area.

First, it is important to note that this argument is valid only if we live in a relatively free society (*i.e.*, without access to large parasitic institutions). Indeed, in a statist society, it is easier not to participate in the process of division of labour. One can simply live off the production of the others (just think of politicians, criminals, or beggars who typically do not merely live off the production of their fellow men, but also actively participate in the very *destruction* of the process of division of labour).

Second, this argument is only addressing *objective* (physical) measures of standards of living (production per capita or real income). But, as Hoppe pointed out^{viii}, it is realistic to assume that, from a *subjective* point of view, a large number of individuals (in particular in rural or residential areas) would prefer to live at lower objective standards of living while keeping a relative cultural homogeneity in their community. Thus, if the subjective preferences of the citizens in a given geographical area are such that homogeneity is preferred to the increment in real revenues caused by immigration, then economics informs us that the *subjective* standards of living (or the “psychic” welfare) of these actors *diminishes* when immigration of ethnoculturally different people increases.

Last, immigrants are *heterogeneous*. Even if it is true that, on average, empirically^{ix}, immigration tends to increase physical standards of living of local citizens, this does *not* imply that *every* immigrant or type of immigrants contributes to this improvement. A restrictive policy targeting those immigrants that are more likely to be productive (such as the policy presented in section II) would certainly increase *even more* physical and subjective standards of living in a given Western society. If every net parasite that tries to immigrate is systematically rejected, then only productive immigrants are left. As a result, the total effect (benefits minus costs of immigration) will necessarily be even more positive.

The main economic argument in favour of open borders is therefore not as strong as its proponents think it is. On the contrary, the restrictive policy suggested in the last section seems to allow a greater resistance to economic complications resulting from the presence of a state.

b) Expelling illegal immigrants is costly

A less common economic argument in favour of open borders is that deportation is costly. This is true, but a failure to deport unproductive, undesired, or dangerous immigrants is far more costly. Moreover, the more it becomes known that the undesired are deported without compromise, the less likely they are to try to come, and the less costly it will become in the long-run.

2.2. *The ethics of open borders: a refutation*

a) The necessary intervention of the state to restrict immigration

The first philosophical argument in support of the idea of open borders takes the following form: a libertarian must be against state intervention; state intervention is necessary in order to restrict immigration in the context of the existence of public property; therefore, a libertarian must be against any type of immigration restriction whatsoever.

It is important, however, to understand that the ultimate goal of libertarians is the protection of legitimate property rights. Given that the state is expropriating its citizens, there are some policies that can protect property *better* than the absence of these policies. For instance, since the state doesn’t allow us to defend our property by ourselves and doesn’t allow any competition in the provision of defence or retaliation services, it is only appropriate for public policemen to stop a private murderer, rapist, or thief from committing a murder, rape, or theft. But if we were to follow the perverse logic of the “non-interventionists-at-any-cost” in this specific context, a libertarian would need to advocate for the police to stop intervening. What mainstream libertarians neglect is that there exists a fundamental difference between accepting a particular intervention in a given context in order to maximise property protection, and accepting that the state has

indeed *the right* to intervene. It is true that state intervention is never *legitimate* and that every public property should be returned to its legitimate owners so that *they* can decide which particular rules are to be followed on it. But in the meantime, non-intervention implies a greater violation of the taxpayers' legitimate property than the specific intervention suggested in section II. This is true in exactly the same way that non-intervention against a particular murder or rape would imply a greater violation of property rights than a police intervention to stop it (given of course that we live in a statist society). In other words, if we are *constrained by the fact that the state is the ultimate decision-maker on immigration policies*, it is better to advocate for *some* immigration restrictions than for *no* immigration restriction at all. This obviously *does not* imply that it is legitimate for the state to *be* the ultimate decision-maker on immigration policies.

b) Public property as common property

Another typical argument put forward by the adepts of open borders is that public property is in fact common property or unowned property, and that it can thus be used or homesteaded by anyone.

But this is not completely correct. Of course, it is true that one cannot become the owner of something or someplace by mere verbal assertion.^x Insofar as there exist places that states claim to be public property, but are in fact *unused*—such as parts of the Nevada desert or of the Canadian Tundra—it is true that these *specific* places are not to be considered as stolen property. But public properties that *result* from expropriation necessarily are something over which property rights already exist. Indeed, the very fact that it was expropriated or built with expropriated means in the first place, thus implying an involuntary *transfer* of property rights from the

taxpayers to the state, demonstrates that this type of property is not unowned. It is simply *illegitimately* owned, meaning that there exists a legitimate owner (the taxpayer).

We could very well add to our criteria for immigration that every foreigner wishing to build himself a house (without any help from the taxpayers' money) in the Canadian Tundra might go there and do it. However, it is important to realise that virtually no foreigner wishes to immigrate in these types of uninhabited and hostile environments. Immigrants want to improve their standards of living through the external benefits of the Western civilisation *or* through the institutionalised parasitism which is facilitated by the modern welfare states. And it is much more complicated to do one or the other by immigrating in the Canadian Tundra.

c) The analogy between free trade and “free” immigration

The next ethical argument I want to address consists in declaring that restricting immigration is tantamount to restricting trade. Since every voluntary exchange is justified and that any interference with such an exchange is unjustified, then every restriction on immigration must also be unjustified (if the analogy holds).^{xi}

However, as has already been noted by a few other libertarians^{xii}, this analogy between “free” immigration and free trade is completely misguided. In order for two goods to be *voluntarily* exchanged, it is necessary that *both participants* consent at keeping on their respective property the good that they receive. In other words, the goods exchanged are *desired* by both actors, and neither of them has the right to affect the property of a third party during or after the exchange. If an exchange of objects causes any damage on the property of a third party, then the exchangers must

bear the external costs. In a free society, there is no such thing as open borders for objects *or* for people (*i.e.*, no object or individual can legitimately cross the border without being desired by a legitimate local property owner that is ready to bear potential external costs related to its importation or immigration). Clearly, an analogy between free trade and the Hoppean policy of restricted immigration is much more appropriate than between free trade and open borders.

d) Local parasites are also using public property

Another “ethical” argument that is sometimes presented by open borders enthusiasts is that it would be “unfair” to deny access to public property for some undesired foreigners when local tax-consumers have access to it.

From a libertarian perspective, however, this argument is nothing else than ideological rubbish. The greatest injustice for a libertarian is the violation of a legitimately acquired property right. It is not because a particular parasite has an easier access to his prey that we need to facilitate the parasitism of others in order to be “fair.” There exist local murderers and rapists: should we, “therefore,” facilitate the access to the bodies of local men and women for foreign murderers and rapists in order to be “fair”? If the answer to this question is a clear “no” (as any libertarian—at least, I hope—would answer), then any *other* form of parasitism that exists locally *do not justify* even more parasitism. There is no such thing as a “right” to accessible parasitism for all. A policy of open borders (*i.e.*, open for *both* productive foreigners *and* parasitical foreigners) is most certainly *not* a solution to local tax-consumption.

e) The “right” to immigrate

It is also argued that immigration restrictions do not take into consideration the “rights” of the immigrants.^{xiii}

But it is more than obvious that there is no such thing as an absolute “right to immigrate.” The only right that exists is the right for a legitimate property owner to invite a foreigner on his property. If no one invites a particular foreigner to immigrate, then this particular foreigner has no right to immigrate. As Murray N. Rothbard explained, every meaningful human right is reducible to a property right.^{xiv} In the same way that individual X has no right to use your living room without an invitation from you, a foreigner Y has no right to cross a property border without the permission of its legitimate owners. The fact is that public property is simply stolen property from the net taxpayers. Therefore, if no taxpayer wants individual Y to come, then Y has no right to come and use public property.

f) The original theft: slavery and colonial expropriation

Another ethical argument often presented by the adepts of open borders is that the private properties of many white North Americans and the public property of the states were *initially* stolen from indigenous people (or from black slaves) and that, therefore, it becomes illegitimate to refuse to admit an immigrant on such properties. Indeed, what gives one the right to exclude someone else from a stolen property?^{xv}

However, allegations of stolen property must be demonstrated for restitution to occur (*i.e.*, there must be presumption of innocence until proof is presented). Surely, not every single property is the result of colonialism or slavery. The burden of proof is on the alleged victim.

Of course, if an individual can demonstrate without any reasonable doubt that he is the legitimate property owner of a given place (for instance, because he has documents that prove that he is the legitimate heir of an expropriated indigenous or of a slave that worked at this particular place), then he (and *only he*) has indeed the right to take back this stolen property. But until proof is presented, the individual that actually occupies the property is assumed to be its legitimate owner—with every right of inclusion and exclusion that this implies.

In most cases, it is impossible to know which particular properties have been stolen from natives or slaves and, even when it is possible to know, it is often impossible to know *who exactly* was expropriated (and, therefore, which particular native or black has a legitimate claim to the property). Forcing *every* property owner to renounce to a part of his property because his property title is *perhaps* illegitimate is tantamount to presume all of them, their ancestors, or those with whom they contracted in the past to be guilty, which conducts *ipso facto* to a violation of the legitimate property rights of those who are *not* guilty. As long as no proof is shown to the contrary, it must be assumed that the individual that occupies and uses a given property is its legitimate owner.

In the case of public property, however, it is *clear* and *easy* to demonstrate without any reasonable doubt that present net taxpayers were expropriated in order to build or maintain it.^{xvi} Therefore, it is to *them* that restitution must be made. But in the meantime, libertarians should support any policy that makes *them* those who can decide which particular rules concerning integration or exclusion must apply on public property.

In any case, the fact that a native or a slave was expropriated in the past *does not confer* any

right whatsoever to a third party. Why should a Sudanese and a Malagasy (for instance) have any right to access Canadian public property without invitation? They were most certainly not expropriated by any kind of Canadian colonialism or slavery.

g) Immigrants can be easily integrated to our culture

A very bizarre argument in favour of open borders is the following: immigrants, by fleeing their original countries, demonstrate that they do not favour the set of cultural norms prevailing there, and are thus more than happy to fully integrate to the culture of the country in which they immigrate.

The fallacy of composition is so obvious in this argument that I wouldn't even talk about it if it were not repeatedly used as a rebuttal to the correct idea that some cultures are incompatible and that, therefore, open immigration would create a tendency to multicultural conflicts. Suffice it to say here that if it is absolutely true that immigrants immigrate for a reason, and that there are *parts* of their original culture, or political system, or environment which they didn't like, it is also true that most people remain attached to the essence of their original culture. For instance, a Syrian thief might lose his hands if he is caught stealing. This and the fact that he has much less to steal in Syria than in Canada might be a sufficient reason for him to attempt to move from Syria to Canada. However, the fact that he disagreed with a particular law of his original country that affects him particularly *does not imply* that the fundamental set of values which he holds dear is essentially different from that of his fellow Syrians that decided not to move. And it certainly wouldn't make him less of a thief.

b) The immigrant as a “liberating hero”

Finally, the last ethical argument I want to address is the one stipulating that an immigrant is “liberating” public property from the state’s authority in the same way that an individual taking money away from the state “liberates” this money, or that he would be a “hero” in the same way that an individual that would make a soviet tank explode would be a hero.^{xvii}

The problem is that the immigrant liberates nothing. He is neither giving back public property to its rightful owners, nor is he even taking away the stolen property from the hands of the state. If he is not invited by any net taxpayer, he only lives at the expense of others. Net taxpayers continue to use public property (roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, *etc.*), but each additional uninvited immigrant reduces the few remaining residual rights concerning the use and control of their legitimate property.

In support for the thesis of the immigrant as a “liberator” of public property, the (otherwise) very sound libertarian economist Walter Block explains that if taking away a stolen property (step 1), and giving it back to its legitimate owner (step 2) is justified, then each step of this process is justified.^{xviii} Block thus arrives to a very odd set of propositions: According to Block, if B steals the property of A, and if A is opposed to another individual C taking back the stolen property, then A would become “complicit in his own robbery”!^{xix} Therefore, if it is impossible for individual C to give back the property of A, it would be a lesser evil, from a libertarian perspective, to let C keep this property (after all, according to this scenario, only B is clearly a thief), and A should be happy with it.

There is, however, a major problem with Block’s reasoning and analogy. Indeed, net

taxpayers keep *parts* of their rights over public property (*i.e.*, the right to use roads and sidewalks that they paid for, the possibility to pay less for medical care or for schooling, *etc.*) The state does not confiscate the taxpayers’ property to hide it in a place where only bureaucrats or other parasites can use it. Thus, each additional individual using public property without paying for it or without being invited by a legitimate owner of it *reduces* the extent to which the legitimate owners of public property can enjoy the residual rights they have over it. It is now very clear that there is no such thing as “liberation” of public property linked to undesired immigration, but that it rather creates a situation in which there is an undesired extended use of public property (the costs being assumed by its legitimate owners).^{xx} It is also important to note that immigration *does not* imply a reduction of the powers of the state over public property. The state *still* controls this property to the same extent as before the coming of new immigrants (if not to an even greater extent^{xxi}). To immigrate is therefore not the logical equivalent of taking (or liberating) a stolen good from the state.

The following analogy is, I think, much more appropriate than the one presented by Block and other proponents of open borders:

Suppose that the state steals your money and uses it to build a house (which becomes officially “public property”). Which of the following policies would be more consistent with libertarianism:

- A policy of “open borders” that allows, without discrimination, any individual to use that house built by the taxes collected from *your* own money;
- Or a more restrictive policy that allows only you (and those whom you

choose to invite) to use this “public house”?

It is obvious that the second policy is the most compatible with libertarianism. Likewise, it is also clear that restricted immigration is more compatible with libertarianism than “free” or open immigration. Accusing those who would prefer to refuse to let one or many foreigners sleep or eat in the house that the state built with their own money of being “complicit in [their] own robbery” is absurd. And it would be even more absurd to stipulate that any undesirable that comes to sleep or eat in this “public house” without any invitation from the legitimate owner would “liberate” the house from the oppressive control of the state.

2.3. Refutation of the “arguments” from compassion

These “arguments” are not really arguments. I include them here merely because it is very frequent to hear lamentations of the following type: immigrants have suffered in their original country and it would be “inhumane” or “insensitive” not to offer them the opportunity to increase their standards of living, and to let children die because of a restrictive immigration policy.

First, it is worth mentioning that those expressing these lamentations are typically not willing to welcome even one single immigrant in their own houses. As Rothbard correctly pointed out, it is very easy to be generous with other people’s money and property.^{xxii}

Second, it is of utmost importance that human beings in general—and libertarians in particular—start to realise that as long as we live in a world of scarcity, there will be dead children, miserable people, and unfortunate situations. If these problems seem to be solvable, it is only because the quantity of resources required to save *one single* “unlucky”

individual presented by the mass Medias seems negligible. However, if we want to save the life or improve the standards of living of *every* “unlucky” individual on Earth—presented *and* occulted by the Medias—the quantity of resources required would be so great that it would reduce considerably the standards of living of everyone “lucky.” Thus, we would live—at best—in a world where everyone is equally “unlucky.” And from that point on, no one will be able to help anyone anymore.

To be sure, nobody is happy to see innocent unlucky people die or suffer. But again, nobody is happy to live in a world of scarcity. The best we can do is to keep a realistic perspective, and minimise the impacts of scarcity by developing new technologies which could be imitated or by favouring peace and trade. Intelligence and good institutions are the key elements to allow economic development to occur. This is how the Western civilisation was able to develop itself, and succeeded to almost completely eliminate extreme poverty. The hope of the Third World countries is that they will become intelligent enough to be able to imitate to some extent Western institutions in such a way that their standards of living might increase.

But one thing is for sure: it is not by pauperising the West that the “unlucky” of the world will become “lucky” in the long run. Again, if a charitable individual is ready to invite someone to immigrate in his home and to assume all potential costs related to his visit, then so be it. However, no one has any moral obligation to assume the costs associated with the “unluckiness” of another. Libertarianism implies *negative* norms of non-aggression, not positive norms of altruism.

IV. Conclusion

It has been shown that the orthodox libertarian solution to the immigration problem (*i.e.*, open borders) is far from being in conformity with the fundamental libertarian principles resting on the respect for property rights *and*, by implication, on the supremacy of its legitimate owners over it. Indeed, open borders favour intercultural conflicts, the weakening of the natural counter-powers to the state, short-run economic policies, and the destruction of culture and morality. It is more than time that libertarians realise that the delusions of forced multiculturalism lead not merely to the decline of the Western civilisation, but also to the denial of fundamental libertarian principles resting on the absolute respect for private property rights and its logical implications.

Let me now emphasise, in light of the complexities that the immigration debate reveals, the importance for the typical open borders proponent to stop being so arrogant about the alleged morality of his position. It is in fact quite ridiculous to arrogate oneself a monopoly on human decency by arguing that one is being more generous with other people's money and property.

ⁱ See for instance Hans-Hermann Hoppe, *Democracy: The God That Failed – The Economics and Politics of Monarchy, Democracy, and Natural Order* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2001), chaps. 7-8.

ⁱⁱ On *how to proceed* in order to substitute private property for public property, see Murray N. Rothbard, "How and How Not to Desocialize" in *The Review of Austrian Economics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1992); Jeffery Herbener, "The Role of Entrepreneurship in Desocialization" in *The Review of Austrian Economics*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1992); Hans-Hermann Hoppe, *Democracy: The God That Failed*, chap. 6; idem, *The Great Fiction – Property, Economy, Society, and the Politics of Decline* (Laissez Faire Books, 2012), chap. 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ On the accentuation of interracial conflicts in the United States, see Thomas Sowell, "Early Skirmishes in a Race War" on NationalReview.com (2013).

^{iv} Hoppe, *Democracy: The God That Failed*, p. 110. See also p. 148 on the benefits of decentralising immigration policies.

^v It is interesting to note, speaking of the effects of immigration, that the Canadian government naturalised 87% more immigrants in Québec from 1993 to 1995. A lot of them were naturalised within a month before the referendum. The number of naturalisation then fell by 39% in 1996 (See Pierre O'Neill, "Le camp du NON a-t-il volé le référendum de 1995?" in *Le Devoir*, november 1999, available on Vigile.net). This suggests that the Canadian government wanted to prevent the secession of Québec by buying the votes of immigrants. It certainly constitutes a good illustration of how democratic states can use immigration to maintain or expand their powers. Oddly, this thesis is generally considered to be politically incorrect. Former Prime Minister of the province of Québec Jacques Parizeau was accused of racism when he pointed out that ethnic votes partly explained why the 1995 referendum was lost.

^{vi} Hoppe writes that the best (or least worst) national immigration policy is to

check all newly arriving persons for an entrance ticket; that is, a valid invitation by a domestic property owner; and anyone not in possession of such a ticket must be expelled at his own expense.... Valid invitations are contracts between one or more private domestic recipients, residential or commercial, and the arriving person. *Qua* contractual admission, the inviting party can only dispose of his own private property. Hence, similar to the scenario of conditional free immigration the admission implies that the immigrant will be excluded from all publicly funded welfare. On the other hand, it implies that the receiving party must assume legal responsibility for the actions of his invitee for the duration of his stay. (*Ibid.*, p. 167)

^{vii} Hoppe, *Ibid.* p. 168.

^{viii} Hoppe, *Democracy: The God That Failed*, p. 138; 156.

^{ix} For an empirical study on the world's productivity gains related to less restricted immigration, see Michael A. Clemens, "Economics and Emigration: Trillion-Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk?" in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2011).

^x See Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), p. 47.

^{xi} See for instance Jacob G. Hornberger, “The Case for Unilateral Free Trade and Open Immigration” in Richard M. Ebeling et Jacob G. Hornberger eds., *The Case for Free Trade and Open Immigration* (Fairfax: The Future of Freedom Foundation, 1995), chap. 1; see also Bryan Caplan, “The Rights of the World’s Poor” on Cato-Unbound.org (2013); Pascal Salin also makes this comparison between free trade and free migration, but defines free migration as being constrained by the property of local residents. This comparison thus becomes, of course, completely appropriate, and Salin does not come to accept the absurd conclusion that *any* foreigner (even undesired) has the “right” to immigrate. See Salin’s interesting analysis “L’immigration dans une société libre” in idem, *Libéralisme* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2000), chap. 11, also available on QuebecoisLibre.org (2005).

^{xii} See for instance Hoppe, *Democracy: The God That Failed*, chap. 8; Keir Martland, *Liberty from a Beginner – Selected Essays* (2016 [2015], second edition), pp. 88-89.

^{xiii} For a version of this argument based on “widely-shared ethical intuitions,” see Michael Huemer, “Is There a Right to Immigrate?” in *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2010). Huemer argues that if a restriction causes a “harmful coercion” that is “unjustified,” then this restriction is unjustified. However, Huemer has no theory of what can or cannot be considered as justified. According to him, even rights violations can be justified. Indeed, he writes that “even when an action violates rights, it might be justified nevertheless, because the victim’s rights may be *outweighed* by competing moral considerations.” According to what criterion is something justified, then? Only God knows, and only Huemer got the “revelation.” Indeed, Huemer has no substance to offer here other than a sophisticated version of your uncle’s opinion (or “intuition”) on how the world should *really* work.

^{xiv} Murray N. Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), chap. 15 (see in particular pp. 119-20).

^{xv} For a version of this argument, see Diana Virginia Todea, “Libertarianism and Immigration” in *Libertarian Papers*, Vol. 2, 30 (2010), pp. 9-11.

^{xvi} To some extent, it is also possible to go a few generations in the past, and to find a few legitimate heirs that are able to demonstrate that their parents or grandparents were expropriated in order to build or maintain public property.

^{xvii} This strange position is expressed by Walter Block and Gene Callahan, “Is There a Right to Immigration? A Libertarian Perspective” in *Human Rights Review* (2003), pp. 51-53. It is interesting to note that Callahan has changed his mind concerning immigration (from open borders to restricted immigration): see Gene Callahan, “Immigration, Yes – and No” on *TheAmericanConservative.com* (2014).

^{xviii} Walter Block, “Hoppe, Kinsella and Rothbard II on Immigration: A Critique” in *The Journal of Libertarian Studies* Vol. 22, No. 1 (2011), pp. 603-05.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, p. 604

^{xx} I think that Block’s analogy of using the theft of a bicycle by the mafia obfuscates this fact, since in its own construction the theft must be considered as *complete* (i.e., there are no residual rights left to the victim of the theft).

^{xxi} Indeed, it might be argued that the more individuals immigrate and social cohesion is reduced, the more the state will expand its control easily. A population that is afraid is easier to convince about the “greatness” of state expansion than a secure population.

^{xxii} Murray N. Rothbard, “Egalitarianism and the Elites” in *The Review of Austrian Economics* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1995), p.53.