

Libertarian Philosophy and Open Borders Fallacy

FILIPPE FARIA • November 05, 2017



Contemporary libertarians agree on basic premises such as free market, private property, and the principle of voluntarism; but on a few subjects they disagree as vehemently as they do on the issue of immigration. Should libertarians advocate open borders?

Among the libertarians who argue against this idea of open frontiers (at least as long as the Social State exists) are Murray Rothbard, Ron Paul Milton Friedman, Hans-Hermann Hoppe , Stephan Kinsella , Lew Rockwell, Scott M. Rosen , Among the libertarians who argue against this idea of open frontiers (at least as long as the Social State exists) are Murray Rothbard, John Hospers, Among the libertarians who argue against this idea of open frontiers (at least as long as the Social State exists) are Murray Rothbard, Walter Block and virtually all (if not all) libertarians linked to instituto CATO .

In fact, this debate seems a false question, but it is not. It seems a false question because both parties agree that the state should not have the power to exclude people from the territory and both would like to reach a point where the whole territory would be privatized, allowing individuals to use their property rights to choose who they want integrate into your community. Where they do in fact disagree is what to do in the current circumstances where there is a vast public property and a Social State. The former say that in these conditions, open frontiers are immoral because they force the native residents to pay for the integration of others that are generally not wanted; the latter say that border controls should be completely eliminated because the State has no right to exclude whoever is from the territory.

In order to infer ideas for the current real context, it is important to generate a thinking experience in order to reflect on how the migratory phenomenon would take place in a totally privatized society where there are no state borders. Contrary to the indiscriminate (almost) perfect world that libertarian "open frontiers" advocate, a scenario in which individuals have full property rights will be a scenario where people will use them as a mechanism to integrate or exclude others; in other words, they will

discriminate in order to live surrounded by the kind of people they prefer, using the natural right of association for that purpose. This is the real notion of property rights: the ability to discriminate, associate, welcome or exclude others in our properties. Immigration would not become "free" in the sense that the only criterion of integration would be a market price, but rather to meet requirements that the owners would create to define the quality of their neighborhood through their preferences.

The mistake that proponents of open borders normally make is to bring together the desirable absence of frontiers in this "nirvanesque" society that has been completely privatized with the open frontiers of states that have a system of providence and vast state ownership. In our current context, open borders would be no more than forced integration, in the sense that it obliges the native taxpayers of each country to pay (via the welfare state) for the integration of people whom the former did not choose, did not select or have effective ways of filtering. Because in this context, when they are unprotected, the natives do not have the mechanism of selection and discrimination of full property rights, essentially due to anti-discrimination laws and the welfare state that, for example, forces a taxpayer to finance social housing for immigrants in your neighborhood against your will.

In addition, because the population is overwhelmingly against mass immigration (it is enough to verify that no party, however progressive it may be, competes with a program of open borders if it wants to win national elections), the present unimaginable immigration that is verified in Europe and the USA is largely a result of rent-seeking; that is, the major companies capture the political process through constant lobbies to acquire cheap labor. If these same companies had to pay all the living costs of this cheap labor in a developed country, the latter would cease to be cheap and would lose interest. What these companies essentially do is to acquire cheap employees just because all other costs (education, housing, health, etc ...) fall on the native taxpayer.

Any economist knows that, at least until the end of the financing, when subsidizing something we will have more of this same thing. At the same time, when immigration is subsidized, it grows exponentially; and grows at the expense of an impotent contributor to this forced integration.

Many of the defenders of the open borders are aware of this immorality that goes through their moral claims. But since they do not want to wait for the return of

Many openly argue that opening borders completely is the best way to make the welfare state implode, as the invasion of Third World immigrants would put pressure on the system that would lead to this outcome. However, after that collapse, what would follow would not be the wonderful world of liberation, but civil wars among the most varied ethnic groups who would fight for political spoils; in other words,

Balkanization (which is actually happening in Europe, but this will be a theme for another text). This is a price too high to pay for the end of the social state, especially when it is slowly collapsing even without the (fully) open frontiers. The criticism by the defenders of open borders, which in my opinion is stronger, is that the state can not emulate property rights when it selects immigrants. The argument "while there is a State, it better behaves like a private owner" is in fact complex and difficult to justify. But I think this is a question of perspective: I do not think that is the best way to put the question; it makes a lot more sense to say that resources that are subject to authority and are used by users, such as "public" property, do not cease to need rules that enable its use and prevent a "common tragedy", as they would need to property was private and open to the public. Efficient market emulation, of course, does not exist, which is why privatization is advocated, but this does not eliminate the previous premise (ie need for rules). In this way, the solution is to improve this system, improving it in the sense of if you earn quality in degree and not by sending the water away with the baby. Not being a perfect system of property rights, the Swiss immigration system, for example, is frankly superior in degree to almost every other where bureaucrats rule: Swiss immigration laws are made decentrally at cantonal level and through democracy citizens can select the type of immigration they want as well as exclude what they do not want. There is in this way a selection mechanism that in practice does not exist in other societies. For liberalism, in the current circumstances, what makes sense is to advocate decentralization of power / secession and not open frontiers. In short, the right to voluntary association between adults is fundamental part of the property rights system; that is, the right to choose the type of people with whom we wish to live, and this implies discrimination, since any choice is an act of discrimination (I prefer A to B, then discriminate). In an age where the spirit of the times is fundamentally egalitarian, this is a logic that is forgotten, even in philosophical fields where one would not expect this to happen.