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Curbs on migration are curbs on our freedom [1]

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Recently, Kier Martland produced an article in The Libertarian [3] attackingSam Bowman's take on immigration [4], suggesting an alternative libertarian view on the issue ? using Hoppe to back up the position. I think this view is entirely mistaken. Indeed, Anthony Gregory and Walter Block take apart Hoppe's position here [5] andBlock again here [6].

The position taken by Hoppe is that nobody should be able to make a claim on the state without 100% consent from those paying for it, including for goods such as roads. The issue is that the state does exist, so long as there is government we should seek to ensure a policy of least damage done. By having high costs or even bans to hire migrants, the state would be taking away people's right to freely associate and make contracts. Further, by increasing the cost of labour, and doing other such damage to the economy as described in Bowman's article, restrictions on immigration do damage to the taxpayer. Hoppe's ?second best? position simply doesn't hold true.

If one group in society objects to immigration, that does not mean migration is wrong because they pay a small percentage of the cost (even though, again, immigrants are a net positive for the tax collector). Indeed, the same argument would hold true for economic nationalists or greens who wished for only local goods to be sold in the economy. By importing foreign products, one would be initiating trespass on the roads by transporting goods unwanted by third parties. The same could be said of any good transported that an individual disapproved of, whether alcohol, meat products or any other ?vice?. Similarly, Christian Scientists or others who disapprove of modern medicine might insist that taxpayer roads not be used for transporting any related materials. The position is ridiculous, you cannot support absolute rights to reject immigration whilst not supporting the same absolute right to reject other goods and services people might disapprove of.

By suggesting an increase in government control of migration, both Martland and Hoppe are going the wrong way on this issue ? it is not about defending the taxpayer. Increasing the scope of the state, and the cost to taxation in policing it, as the Hoppeans propose, is damaging. What about those who pay taxes that DO want immigrants to use government services such as roads? Are their rights lesser than those who are for government restriction? Even if the costs and size of government are larger to be more restrictive? Should they be forced to fund border forces in this way? The Hoppean position on immigration is illogical; you do not reduce the scope of the state by increasing it and the number of tasks it undertakes. We should be looking at ways to limit the damage and cost of government now, and not sit in ivory towers trying to fudge a philosophical position that takes away the right of free association.

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