

Countering Common Claims of Immigration Advocates

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Over the years I've found some useful arguments against the claims and clichés of mass immigration. I've field-tested these refutations on a number of occasions, and I can testify that they work. Here are some examples.

Claim: *We're a nation of immigrants.*

Reply: Our heritage of immigration is just one facet of our national identity. First and foremost, we're a nation of Americans. As a free people we have the right to regulate immigration for the benefit of our national interest.

Claim: *The descendants of immigrants cannot in good conscience keep out new immigrants.*

Reply: This is like saying that a private business, staffed by people who were once job applicants, is morally obligated to hire all new applicants. This is ridiculous because the purpose of a business is to sell products and make money, and it must gear its hiring program to meet those ends. Similarly, a nation exists to serve its national interests—and it should regulate immigration by that standard.

Claim: *Immigration has been good for America; we need it to keep benefitting us. Immigrants after all built America.*

Reply: Certainly immigration can help America, but to say that it is always good, regardless of quantity or quality, is absurd. It's like saying that alcohol is always beneficial because a daily glass of red wine will improve a person's health—and from that observation going on to claim that two bottles of whiskey a day will improve one's health even more.

The specific question to ask is whether our massive level of immigration today is helpful or harmful. In the

past a high level of immigration helped to populate and develop a vast and undeveloped country. But today our nation is populated and built. So why do we need to keep on admitting so many builders?

Claim: *We have the moral duty to be a haven for the world's poor and downtrodden.*

Reply: Morality does not require us to do what is impossible and self-destructive. World population now increases at the rate of about 80 million a year, with most of this increase in poor and relatively poor countries.¹ Now suppose we decided to admit one-tenth of that number a year, eight million, a total about six times higher than our current annual intake of legal and illegal immigrants. With immigration causing problems now, imagine what stress that increase would cause, one which would add 100 million people in little more than a decade.

For most people in the world, prosperity is something they will have to create at home. If America remains strong, we can provide them with assistance. But if we are overwhelmed, we will lack the capacity to help anyone.

Claim: *We live in a global society, so immigration restrictions are outdated and unnecessary.*

Reply: To find out if the person making this statement is really willing to stand behind it, pose to him some facts, and then ask a question.

The facts: A Gallup International poll a few years back found that 150 million people would like to move to America.² Under our immigration law, if they came here, they could petition to bring their spouses, minor children, and other relatives. Immigrants bring in an average of 3.5 relatives.³ Thus if we completely opened our gates, we could expect more than 500 million new arrivals, a number which would swamp our current population of 325 million.

The question: Do you support admission of all these people with no restriction or delay? If the advocate says yes, his lack of practicality and ideological obsession become clear to any sensible person. If he says no,

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congratulate him for joining the restrictionist side. The argument now is simply over where to set the limits, not whether restriction is necessary.

Claim: *Diversity is our strength. All cultures are equal and equally enriching.*

Reply: To say diversity is strength is just another version of the fallacy, already noted, that because limited intake of alcohol (wine) can be good that binge drinking whiskey must be even better. With both alcohol and diversity, good cannot be discerned without reference to *quantity* and *quality*. Certainly we can enjoy the diversity of having a number of ethnic restaurants in a city. But that hardly means we should welcome profound cultural differences which threaten our national unity. Some diversity is good, but taken too far it is divisive and destructive.

The statement that “all cultures are equal and equally enriching” is one that flatly contradicts reality. In terms of things that nearly all people want, such as freedom and prosperity, it is manifestly clear that some cultures provide them far better than others. Western countries, including the United States, are a case in point. That’s why so many people around the world want to move to them. If all cultures were truly equal, those people could find the satisfactions they want within their own cultures without leaving home.

Claim: *This land belongs to the American Indians. Only they have the right to set immigration policy.*

Reply: Whoever truly believes this claim, should be the first to call for an end to immigration. Why allow more foreign thieves to come and take Indian land?

Of course no one really believes this claim. It’s just a rhetorical cheap shot to denigrate immigration control by manipulating guilt about historic injustices done to Indians. Those were unfortunate, but dwelling on past moral failings should not keep us from living in the present and dealing with present realities.

Today American land belongs to Americans of all backgrounds, including American Indians. And as a democratic society, we have the right to decide what our future will be. Allowing guilt to paralyze our will to make necessary decisions about immigration is gross irresponsibility, a patent evil which will jeopardize our country’s future. We can make up what we owe to Indians by treating them justly as citizens today. ■

Endnotes

1. <http://www.history.com/news/ask-history/how-fast-is-the-worlds-population-grow>
2. <http://news.gallup.com/poll/153992/150-million-adults-worldwide-migrate.aspx>
3. <https://cis.org/Report/Immigration-Multipliers>

