Does Everyone Want to Live in a Free Society?

Of all the mistaken ideas libertarians hold about their fellow man, the most fundamental is the idea that nearly everyone wants to live in a free society. If that idea had much substance, the political developments of the past 120 years or so in the USA and the other economically advanced countries would have been impossible. People who give the highest priority to living in a free society do not make the same mistake year after year after year for more than a century. Except for a tiny minority, avowals of the love of liberty are little more than hot air. Given a choice, people choose something else.

Claiming that people's love of liberty is demonstrated by the net immigration flows into the freer countries proves nothing about liberty *per se* because the freer countries were and still are more prosperous, and their prosperity served and still serves as the principal attraction to migrants from less prosperous countries. The national myth is that people came to the USA (or the colonies from which it emerged) to be free, but relatively few people fit that description. Even some who are said to fit, such as the Puritans who settled New England, did not seek liberty in general, but only freedom to practice their own brand of theocracy, rather than being persecuted by the English Crown on religious grounds. Besides, most of the individuals who came to the colonies came as either slaves or indentured servants, not as free men and women.