

Dear members of the jury and the audiences of Guanajuato International Film Festival,

It is an honor to receive this award and I am very grateful. The jury's comments reflect what my main ambition has been whilst making this film: to break through the realm of abstract news stories. Stories that often don't go any further than numbers. The factual information fails to create a true understanding for the hardships the immigrants have to go through. The immigrants are no longer seen as people like you and me, but as aliens trying to confiscate something that does not belong to them. This problem doesn't only occur in Europe, but all around the world. The way the U.S. is building up walls between themselves and Mexico is similar to the European immigration problem. It saddens me to see a man like Donald Trump run for president and say ludicrous things about building a huge wall and making Mexico pay for that wall themselves.

Whilst my film is not describing my frustrations in words at all and where it is meant to make you feel emotionally involved through a cinematic experience and to give you space to create your own opinion, I would now like to use this moment to express my frustration with words.

The European Union, with its navy and war fleet can rescue the migrants in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea if they want to, but they sit and wait till the migrants die. It's as if letting them drown is used as a deterrent to prevent migrants from coming to Europe. But that doesn't deter anyone. The individual who is migrating as a survival instinct, who believes that the life they are living isn't worth much, is not afraid of death.

Criminalizing the immigration will only stimulate a large network of illegal human trafficking. And trying to catch the human traffickers is not a solution, it's fighting a symptom of a much bigger problem.

Europe and the U.S. can no longer live in opulence where there are so much unmet needs around the world. We live in a global society where an Indian makes a living in Dakar, someone from Dakar makes a living in New York, and a Gabonese makes a living in Paris. Whether you like it or not, this process is irreversible.

When you are a white Canadian or an Argentinian and you come to live in France, you are an expat... But if you are African, or Indian, or Afghan, and you come to France or Germany, you are an immigrant, no matter the circumstances. This way of dealing with certain groups of people is xenophobic.

The headlines always describe the flow of African migrants arriving in Europe but they never speak of the Europeans going to Africa. That's the free flow of the powerful, the ones who have the money, and the right kind of passports. The westerners go to Senegal, to Mexico, to India, to any country around the world... Anywhere you go, you might meet

French people, Germans, and Dutch. I see them everywhere around the world, because they have the right passport.

Borders and the limitation that comes with passports are no doubt a form of discrimination. A global form of discrimination. Based on where you are born, you are either lucky or not. The wealthy people don't even seem to realize that they are part of a modern elite. They take their wealth for granted and see potential invaders from the third world as a threat. With a modal Dutch income you belong to the richest 2 per cent of the world population. Inequality within countries is by far not as big as the inequality between countries

From all the controversy surrounding the issue, you might think that immigration was an economic evil that the U.S. and Europe are forced by circumstance to put up with. In fact, the consensus among economists is that immigration -- both legal and illegal -- is good for the overall economy. While competition from undocumented workers and new arrivals pushes wages down in some sectors, the net effect is positive.

It might sound crazy at first, but maybe it's not so crazy at all: open the borders.

Open borders advocates argue that free migration is the most effective way to reduce world poverty. Migrants from developing countries can earn higher wages after moving to a more developed country, usually lifting them from 'developing world poverty' to 'developed world poverty'. They also send remittances to relatives in their home country, the glow flow of remittances being estimated to be around three times the global foreign aid spending reported by the OECD, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation.

A literature summary by economist Michael Clemens leads to an estimate that open borders would result in an increase in GWP (gross world product) of 67-147%, with a median estimate of a doubling of world GDP.

From a human rights perspective, free migration may be seen to complement Article 13 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights: Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Economist and writer Philippe Legrain argues that the countries of the world need migration to help global trade and reduce the occurrence of regional wars.

To me these thoughts about opening borders sound truly progressive. I don't hold the answer to solving this problem, but I sure think that building more walls to separate people from each other will not help. We need to function as a unity if we want the human race to make progress.