



The Privatisation of Roads & Highways: Human and Economic Factors

Walter Block

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Walter Block's remarkable new treatise on private roads, will cause you to rethink the whole of the way modern transportation networks operate. It is bold, innovative, radical, compelling, and shows how free-market economic theory is the clarifying lens through which to see the failures of the state & see the alternative that is consistent with human liberty.

He shows that even the worst, off-the-cuff scenario of life under private ownership of roads would be fantastic by comparison to the existing reality of government-ownership.

That is only the beginning of what Block has done. He has made a lengthy, detailed, and positive case that the privatization of roads would be socially optimal in every way. It would save lives, curtail pollution, save us (as individuals!) money, save us massive time, introduce accountability, & make transportation a pleasure instead of a pain in the neck.

Because this is the first-ever complete book on this topic, the length & detail are necessary. He shows that this is not some libertarian pipe-dream but the most practical application of free-market logic. Block is dealing with something that confronts us everyday. And in so doing, he illustrates the power of economic theory to take an existing set of facts and help you see them in a completely different way.

What's also nice is that the prose has great passion about it, despite the great scholarly detail. He loves answering the objections (aren't roads public goods? Aren't roads too expensive to build privately?) and making the case, fully aware that he has to overcome a deep and persistent bias in favor of public ownership. The writer burns with a moral passion on the subjects of highway deaths and pollution issues. His "Open Letter to Mothers Against Drunk Driving" is a thrill to read!

The book comes together as a battle plan against government roads and a complete roadmap for a future of private transportation.

The Privatisation of Roads & Highways: Human and Economic Factors Details

Date : Published 2009 by The Ludwig Von Mises Institute

ISBN :

Author : Walter Block

Format : Paperback 494 pages

Genre : Economics, Politics, Nonfiction



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From Reader Review The Privatisation of Roads & Highways: Human and Economic Factors for online ebook

Thomas McCall says

Great book, and hope more people see the same logical discussion as to why Government monopoly on roads is not a good idea.

John says

From now on, if you're economically to the left of Mises, Rothbard, Menger, Hayek, etc, this is required reading (along with "Economics in One Lesson" by Hazlitt) before you get to talk to me about econ. If you mention Keynes unironically I will punch you in the throat, then you're also going to have to read "The Failure of 'New Economics,'" also by Hazlitt.

If you don't know who any of these people are, that's ok, no big deal, but you probably shouldn't discuss econ seriously with anyone because you don't know what the fuck you're talking about.

MUH ROADS!

4/5

Henrik says

As stated in the beginning, this is a collection of essays/articles that have been organized into a book. It would have been wonderful to have had Block write it *as a book* instead, since there are necessarily some repeats, and the overall structure and progression of ideas could have been clearer. However, it is still works surprisingly well. As far as I understand, the "who's going to build the roads?" is a common enough question libertarians get, as to be almost a joke. It's interesting to read Block's motivation for privatization in this area, ideas on how to make the transition (which seems to me to be the hardest part), and speculations on how it will work.

Christian Andersson says

A lot of great content with many solid arguments for a free market in general and, of course, for private roads.

Unfortunately, the book is a bit unstructured and repetitive but if you can stand that it's definitely worth a read.

Austin Archibald says

Quite good. Knocks this common question out of the park, though it could have been better if it weren't a collection of older articles he'd already written. Thus, there was some repetition and less flow. Still, Block's style and powerful logic makes this a great read.

Zachary Moore says

The best available libertarian treatment of roads calling for genuine as opposed to pseudo-privatization in which the state retains a controlling interest. The individual essays are strong but the book as a whole contains a significant amount of redundant material as the same arguments and objections are repeated in many of the separate essays.

Josh says

I have to say, I am really disappointed by this book.

The forward by Brad Edmund was fantastic, and even the first 10 or so pages were full of great information, and then it just started devolving in to a very mechanical presentation and the author started to sound like an economist writing a peer reviewed paper than a book for the lay person.

The information is great; there's no doubt about it. Walter Block thoroughly quotes from various books and does a great job of providing citations (which I am hawkish about). But.... the writing just becomes mechanical and I find myself reading and thinking something between "I have no idea what is being discussed here" and "Get to the point, I don't care!".

If you can get past the atrocious writing style (I think that Brad Edmund would have done a much better job based on the forward), then you'll find that the book has a lot of great information and goes in to good detail.

I don't want to dissuade others from reading this, as it's possible that the writing style that I prefer differs from another individual, so while for me this is no more than a 3-star book, for another it may be 4 stars (or even 5 if you can grasp everything that's said).

Brendan says

Blocks arguments are sound and his style fluid and easygoing, but the presentation as a book is somewhat misleading. This is a collection of separate essays, and his argument suffers a little from eventually tedious repetition as a result. This could have been half the length and still presented the same argument in a much clearer way.
