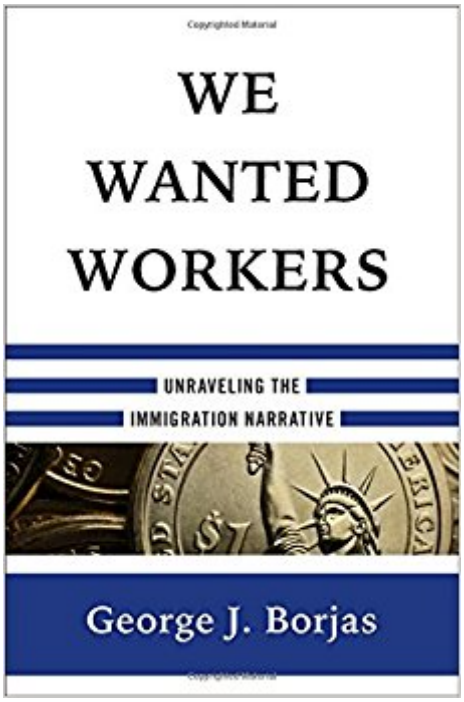
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We Wanted Workers: Unraveling The Immigration Narrative



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Synopsis

From Ã¢â ¬Å“AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s leading immigration economistÃ¢â ¬Â• (The Wall Street Journal), a refreshingly level-headed exploration of the effects of immigration.We are a nation of immigrants, and we have always been concerned about immigration. As early as 1645, the Massachusetts Bay Colony began to prohibit the entry of Ã¢â ¬Å“paupers.Ã¢â ¬Â• Today, however, the notion that immigration is universally beneficial has become pervasive. To many modern economists, immigrants are a trove of much-needed workers who can fill predetermined slots along the proverbial assembly line.But this view of immigrationÃ¢â ¬â„¢s impact is overly simplified, explains George J. Borjas, a Cuban-American, Harvard labor economist. Immigrants are more than just workersÃ¢â ¬â ¢theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re people who have lives outside of the factory gates and who may or may not fit the ideal of the country to which theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve come to live and work. Like the rest of us, theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re protected by social insurance programs, and the choices they make are affected by their social environments.In We Wanted Workers, Borjas pulls back the curtain of political bluster to show that, in the grand scheme, immigration has not affected the average American all that much. But it has created winners and losers. The losers tend to be nonmigrant workers who compete for the same jobs as immigrants. And somebodyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s lower wage is somebody elseÃ¢â ¬â„¢s higher profit, so those who employ immigrants benefit handsomely. In the end, immigration is mainly just another government redistribution program.Ã¢â ¬Å“I am an immigrant,Ã¢â ¬Â• writes Borjas, Ã¢â ¬Å“and yet I do not buy into the notion that immigration is universally beneficial. . . . But I still feel that it is a good thing to give some of the poor and huddled masses, people who face so many hardships, a chance to experience the incredible opportunities that our exceptional country has to offer.Ã¢â ¬Â• Whether youÃ¢â ¬â„¢re a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent, We Wanted Workers is essential reading for anyone interested in the issue of immigration in America today.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages
Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (October 11, 2016)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0393249018
ISBN-13: 978-0393249019
Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 0.9 x 9.6 inches
Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #273,445 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #48 inÃ Â Books > Law > Administrative Law > Emigration & Immigration #484 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Emigration & Immigration #877 inÃ Â Books > Business & Money > Economics > Economic Conditions

Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“"However much you think you know about immigration, you'll learn something from this book. And buy a second copy for your congressmanÃ¢â ¬â ¢he needs it even more than you do."Ã¢â ¬Â• - Mark Krikorian, The National ReviewÃ¢â ¬Å“"A readable and detailed historical tour of AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s immigration debates and policies....[Borjas] generously provides readers with arguments on all sides."Ã¢â ¬Â• - The Wall Street JournalÃ¢â ¬Å“An intriguing, clearly written polemic.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Kirkus ReviewsÃ¢â ¬Å“One of AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s leading immigration economists presents a level-headed exploration of the effects of immigration on migrant and nonmigrant workers.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Publishers WeeklyÃ¢â ¬Å“We Wanted Workers is essential to understanding AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s future. Drawing on decades of research, Borjas cuts through the myths and obfuscations plaguing our immigration debate. This is the most lucid, powerful work of social science IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve ever read.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Reihan Salam, executive editor, National ReviewÃ¢â ¬Å“An invaluable addition to the literature on U.S. immigration policy. A model of lucid exposition, it delves deeply into the subtle complexities of a subject that has been rife with sloppy and wishful thinking. Borjas reviews a mountain of evidence in support of a forceful argument for the position that, while there are benefits, one needs also to be mindful of the considerable costs associated with the liberalization of immigration policies.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Glenn C. Loury, Merton P. Stolz Professor of the Social Sciences, Brown UniversityÃ¢â ¬Å“Borjas, the worldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s leading economic expert on immigration, has penned a nontechnical, nearly conversational book pointing out all the issues in immigrationÃ¢â ¬â„¢s effects on an economyÃ¢â ¬â ¢particularly the American economy. The central message is Ã¢â ¬Ëœit dependsÃ¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬â ¢impacts are positive or negative for different natives, different kinds of immigrants, and at different times. With immigration again a central political issue, this book is must-reading for every voter.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Daniel Hamermesh, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) and Royal Holloway University of LondonÃ¢â ¬Å“Ã¢â ¬ËœWir riefen ArbeitskrÃƒÂ¤fte, es kamen MenschenÃ¢â ¬â ¢We wanted workers, people came.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ Max FrischÃ¢â ¬â„¢s comment on the economically motivated after-war migrations from Southern Europe and Turkey into Northern Europe lends this fascinating

book its title, and points at the core of what distinguishes movement of people from movement of goods. It is this aspect of migration that Borjas emphasizes alongside the economic dimensions, when he ventures in a thoughtful and well-structured way through the various facets of migration. This excellent book is also very personal, telling the story of the migrant George Borjas who arrives as a child refugee from CastroÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Cuba and the lifeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s work of the economist George Borjas, pointing at how personal experience has influenced highly acclaimed academic work. A captivating, insightful and easily accessible book that makes great reading for everyone interested in the subject.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Christian Dustmann, University College LondonÃ¢â ¬Å“Lucid and illuminating.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Binyamin Appelbaum, correspondent for The New York Times

George J. Borjas is the Robert W. Scrivner Professor of Economics and Social Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. He is the recipient of the 2011 IZA Prize in Labor Economics.

This was a book which repaid many-fold my investment of time in its reading.I won’t repeat, but will certainly endorse, the other enthusiastic comments about this exceptional book, which is by far the best statement of the immigration problem that I have seen. To add to the prior encomiums, I found his descriptions of the ways in which statistical analysis has been corrupted in the search for support of a point view, rather than as aid to finding the truth, highly informative..The only criticism I can offer is that Borjas skills as a writer seemed to me pedestrian. Certainly not up the level of his knowledge about immigration. But that’s a small price to have paid for a book which so informed me, and made me think, about immigration issues..

Since immigration is a highly politicized issue, it becomes difficult to cut through the noise and get the facts. I don’t think a person should rely on any one book to be the foundation that shapes their view on immigration, the topic is too complex. This book does a great job of exposing various economic tricks that can misrepresent the implications of immigration.

Borjas tries to simplify the reasons why trade offs tied to immigration create the positions that various groups take. As an immigrant himself and an economist he is more evenhanded than many who offer their opinion on the type of immigration that should be supported. For this reason it is worth reading.

We Wanted Workers gives an account of how immigration can impact the host country. It is a

readable and full of good explanations of how immigration impacts a host nation as well as how the framing of results on immigration can be misleading if one is not careful. It is hard not to think of immigration and its benefits or burdens without the "ethics" of it but the author is quite precise in highlighting the costs and benefits of different forms of immigration and how those costs and benefits themselves fall into ideological categories. If one wants to understand the facts about how immigration might impact local economies as well as how those dynamics can change over time and in addition who is most affected, this book offers the reader a set of ideas that will help guide how to think for the future.We wanted workers starts by highlighting some back of the envelope calculations economists often highlight about the benefits of immigration if immigration allows for a immediate productivity shift from poor to rich countries as workers. But then asks the question if immigrants come as cultural people rather than as factory workers perhaps they don't just bring worker productivity they bring part of the cultural institutions they came from which the calculations could even reverse about the benefits. The author uses parking tickets for diplomats in NY as a result highlighting which countries diplomats incurred lots of parking violations vs those with perfect records as evidence of behavior being origin country based. This exercise is used to highlight that considering people as widget makers vs cultural people means simple economic modeling is garbage in garbage out. The author then discusses various ways in which studies which give certain results can be reinterpreted if the data is more carefully looked at. In particular most immigration studies have an original ideological reason as to why they are embarked on which leads to results being churned out of the data rather than the data being objectively analyzed from a statistical perspective. The author discusses studies wages in Miami after large batches of Cuban immigrants landed there and how mean wages were relatively unchanged vs other regions. The author is re-examining the data saw that the sub-population which was competing with the immigrants, ie the lower skill buckets did have substantial suppression of wages and furthermore the comparison populations, the placebo populations were biased. In doing a more careful statistical test the same experiment led to what is more expected. Those industries hit by a supply shock of a certain class were disproportionately affected and the results can be averaged over if you look outside that cohort. The author examines several other famous case studies of the impacts of immigration and discusses how with essentially 0 exception supply of immigrants affects that cohort of labor competing with those immigrants. As a consequence any studies which consider labor as labor with no granularity on the variety of skills will miss the crucial impacts of immigration on those competing with the supply shock. The author discusses some of the results of how immigration does lead to immersion over generations but the effect is much slower than quoted and that recent immigration is

slowing down immersion speed. The author does this as best as possible without giving value judgements but instead trying to frame the economic results in terms of redistribution, overall growth in the short term and the way to think about the long term which is anyone's guess.Immigration is definitely a political issue and brings about strong opinions in which each side has no association with the other sides opinion. There are deep principals embedded in thoughts on immigration policy but unfortunately they are usually thought of by competing sides in one dimensional perspectives of good and bad. The author discusses how immigration can affect populations at the local level and how, if one is testing for immigration, to be more precise about the results. This book tries to be apolitical and describe how we should perhaps consider immigration and the context in which it occurs. It brings honesty but not answers to how to think about immigration.

Great book with details and facts about our country.

References academic economists bending every which way to "measure" immigration aiding US economic growth, while Borjas develops tools to make accurate measures.

I opened this book with some preconceived ideas about what immigration was about, and the author opened my eyes to what it's really about, the positives and negatives, and gave me a much more thorough understanding of the economic impacts of immigration in the USA. It is a relatively quick read as serious economic texts go, and very well written.

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