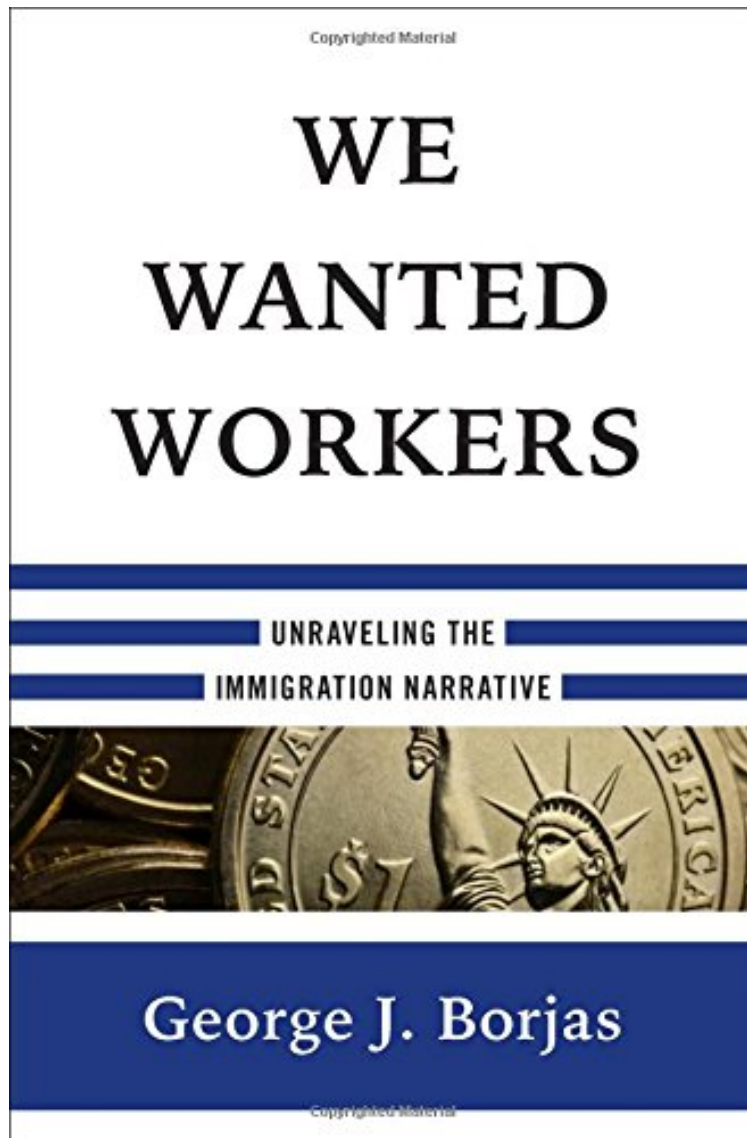


[Free pdf] We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative

# We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative

*George J. Borjas*

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#163349 in Books Ingramcontent 2016-10-11 2016-10-11Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.60 x .90 x 6.50l, .0 #File Name: 0393249018240 pagesWe Wanted Workers Unraveling the Immigration Narrative | File size: 57.Mb

**George J. Borjas : We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative:

20 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Immigration Wars: Which side are YOU rooting for?By Alan F. SewellMuch of my life has been wrapped around immigration. My wife, adopted son, and in-laws are naturalized U.S.

citizens. My first employer, who taught me lessons of entrepreneurial success, was a refugee from Communist Eastern Europe. My business partners have been from Britain and Canada. I had college roommates from Ecuador, Germany, and Syria. I've seen the prosperity and positive energy that immigrants bring to cities like Orlando, Las Vegas, and Chicago. Yet, I also favor immigrant-restrictive policies of controlling the borders; admitting only specific quotas of skilled immigrants; not admitting refugees from impoverished and terror-prone countries; and removing illegal aliens. I've seen immigration policies abused by employers who bring in foreign workers, contrary to our immigration laws, to displace American workers. I thus approached the book with conflicting opinions. It turns out that that is how author George Borjas, a Cuban-American immigrant, wants us to approach his book. He understands that immigration, by its complex nature, must have conflicting points of view. His objective is to analyze those conflicting views in order to present an objective discussion of how various immigration policies may affect us for the better, or in some circumstances, for the worse. Borjas explains:=====Although I am myself an immigrant, this is not an ideological sermon on immigration; there is no attempt to moralize or to either canonize or demonize immigrants. Instead, a recurring refrain is that the economic consequences of immigration are not evenly distributed among the many people that immigration affects. Put simply, some people win and some people lose. Devoid of all the ideological trappings and all the deliberate obfuscations, immigration can be viewed for what it plainly is: another redistributive social policy. I have long suspected that a lot of the research (particularly, but not exclusively, outside economics) was ideologically motivated, and was being censored or filtered to spin the evidence in a way that would exaggerate the benefits from immigration and downplay the costs. It is crucial to carefully examine the nuts and bolts of the underlying research before one can trust the claims made about the impact of immigration=====Before getting to the economic and social analysis, Dr. Borjas tells his own fascinating story of coming to the USA when Fidel Castro's regime confiscated his family's property on Cuba. His family settled in New Jersey, penniless but with prior-immigrant family there to accommodate them and help them begin their journey to success in the USA. This experience as an immigrant fired his interest in the long-standing debate over which immigration policies add value to the USA. He doesn't so much debunk the dogmas of the pro-immigration and anti-immigration camps as he debunks the CERTAINTY of their conclusions. He points out that both groups estimate the effects of immigration on America by gaming their models to produce the results they desire, a technique he calls torturing the data.=====A lot of it depends on the spin, and the reception in the highly politicized Immigration community would very much depend on how well the results fit a preconceived narrative.=====Because pro-immigration groups -- including calls for unlimited immigration across open borders by august entities like the Wall Street Journal --- are so prominent, he spends much of the book questioning their models purporting to prove that immigration only ever improves living standards for current American citizens:=====So what is the lesson that eludes the Cato Institute and the Center for American Progress?. It is not that immigrants do jobs that natives don't want to do. It is instead that immigrants do jobs that natives don't want to do at the going wage. THE FACT THAT wages fall for the skill groups that received the most immigrants even after apparently accounting for all complementarities makes it difficult to claim that immigration does not harm anyone.=====He discusses the effect that high-skilled, innovation-driven immigrants have on inventing new technologies and founding new companies that increase everybody's standard of living. But he also explains that employers use high-skilled immigrants to displace high-skilled Americans who are already working:=====Although there are widespread reports of shortages of such scientists in the United States, economist Paula Stephan, who has conducted many studies of high-skill labor markets, dismisses those claims: Shortages are often predicted by groups who have a vested interest in attracting more students to graduate school and into careers in science and engineering. . . . Most of the assertions come from four groups: universities and professional associations, government agencies, firms that hire scientists and engineers, and immigration lawyers. All have a considerable amount to gain by an increase in supply: universities, for example, in terms of students (and lab workers); companies in terms of the lower wages associated with an increase in supply. THE MOST CREDIBLE estimate of the immigration surplus the increase in native wealth resulting from immigrant participation in the productive life of our country is about \$ 50 billion annually.===== \$50 billion / 300 million American citizens = \$167 per citizen per year. And even most of that is merely a REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH from employees, whose wages are depressed by immigration, to employers, whose profits are increased by hiring cheaper immigrant labor. He points out that, contrary to popular myth, most immigrants are OLDER than the average American citizen. Thus, immigrants aren't the youthful fuel to replenish Social Security and Medicare for aging American Citizens that they are made out to be. He points out that the proportion of low-skilled immigrants is increasing and that they are concentrated in a small number of nationalities (Mexican, Guatemalan) thereby making it more difficult for them to assimilate. This is particularly true of illegal immigration. Borjas presents these many sides to this most complex issue and makes it clear that most debates about immigration are driven by self-serving ideologies (we need more racial diversity) or economic self-interests (we need cheap labor). He admonishes us to be humble in our assumptions about immigration, going neither to the blue sky extreme of assuming that all immigration is beneficial, or detrimental. He provides many examples of how to torture the same data points in order to support contradictory viewpoints, such as whether immigrants are more likely to rely on welfare than American citizens, or whether they aren't. There is enough information in this book, and the

information is fairly presented enough, for each reader to decide how much immigration, and what kind, we should admit. Borjas states it this way:=====In the long term, the estimates of the fiscal impact [of immigration] are far too dependent on arbitrary assumptions to make them a reliable basis for any kind of cost-benefit calculation. The most credible evidence, therefore, suggests that it is not far-fetched to conclude that immigration is a net economic wash. After all is said and done, immigration turns out to be just another government redistribution program. And this lesson sheds a lot of light on which groups are on which side of the immigration wars.. Immigrant participation in the workforce redistributes wealth from those who compete with immigrants to those who use immigrants. Which side are YOU rooting for? 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An exceptional book which must be read by anyone with any interest in immigration policy. By Interested customer 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.. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book does a great job of exposing various economic tricks that can misrepresent ... By Christopher John McGevna 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.

From Americas leading immigration economist (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 paupers. 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 immigrations impact is overly simplified, explains George J. Borjas, a Cuban-American, Harvard labor economist. Immigrants are more than just workers they're people who have lives outside of the factory gates and who may or may not fit the ideal of the country to which they've come to live and work. Like the rest of us, they'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 somebody's lower wage is somebody else's higher profit, so those who employ immigrants benefit handsomely. In the end, immigration is mainly just another government redistribution program. I am an immigrant, writes Borjas, 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. Whether you'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.

"However much you think you know about immigration, you'll learn something from this book. And buy a second copy for your congressman he needs it even more than you do." - Mark Krikorian, *The National* "A readable and detailed historical tour of Americas immigration debates and policies.... [Borjas] generously provides readers with arguments on all sides." - *The Wall Street Journal* An intriguing, clearly written polemic. - Kirkus s One of Americas leading immigration economists presents a level-headed exploration of the effects of immigration on migrant and nonmigrant workers. - *Publishers Weekly* *We Wanted Workers* is essential to understanding Americas 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 I've ever read. - Reihan Salam, executive editor, *National* 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. - Glenn C. Loury, Merton P. Stolz Professor of the Social Sciences, Brown University Borjas, the worlds leading economic expert on immigration, has penned a nontechnical, nearly conversational book pointing out all the issues in immigrations effects on an economy particularly the American economy. The central message is it depends 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. - Daniel Hamermesh, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) and Royal Holloway University of London Wir riefen Arbeitskrfte, es kamen Menschen We wanted workers, people came. Max

Frisch'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 Castro's Cuba and the life'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. - Christian Dustmann, University College London  
Lucid and illuminating. - Binyamin Appelbaum, correspondent for The New York Times  
About the Author  
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.