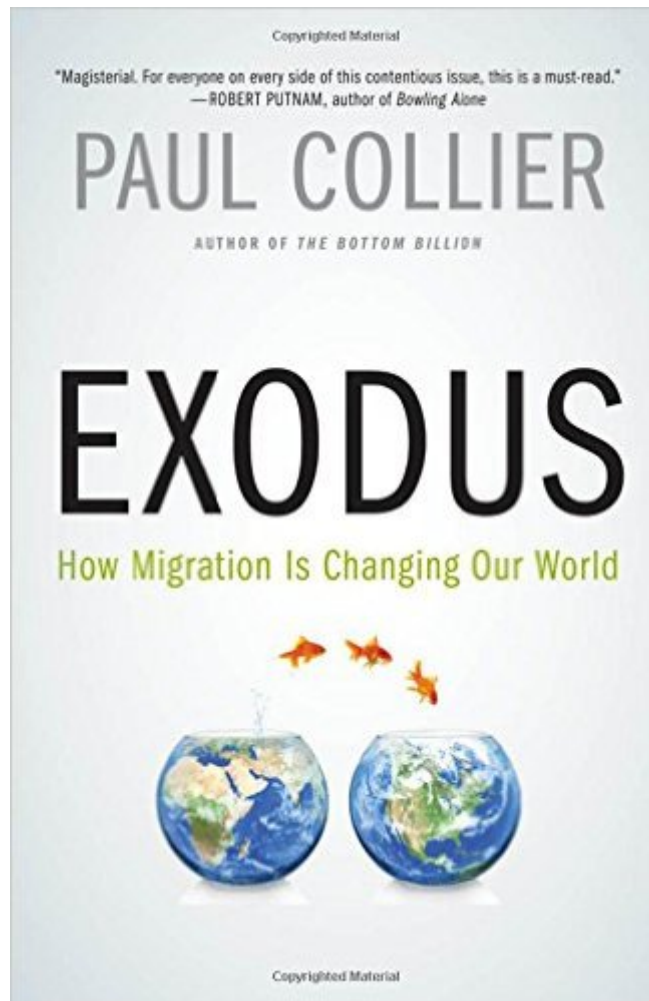


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Exodus: How Migration Is Changing Our World



Synopsis

It is one of the most pressing and controversial questions of our time -- vehemently debated, steeped in ideology, profoundly divisive. Who should be allowed to immigrate and who not? What are the arguments for and against limiting the numbers? We are supposedly a nation of immigrants, and yet our policies reflect deep anxieties and the quirks of short-term self-interest, with effective legislation snagging on thousand-mile-long security fences and the question of how long and arduous the path to citizenship should be. In *Exodus*, Paul Collier, the world-renowned economist and bestselling author of *The Bottom Billion*, clearly and concisely lays out the effects of encouraging or restricting migration. Drawing on original research and case studies, he explores this volatile issue from three perspectives: that of the migrants themselves, that of the people they leave behind, and that of the host societies where they relocate. Immigration is a simple economic equation, but its effects are complex. *Exodus* confirms how crucial it will be that public policy face and address all of its ramifications. Sharply written and brilliantly clarifying, *Exodus* offers a provocative analysis of an issue that affects us all.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; Reprint edition (May 1, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0190231483

ISBN-13: 978-0190231484

Product Dimensions: 7.9 x 0.9 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (67 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #54,009 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Textbooks >](#)

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Customer Reviews

This is an extremely insightful book on the subject. Paul Collier conveys this is a complex subject ill fitted to the simple binomial outcomes (yes it is good; no it is bad) adopted by the media, politicians, business lobbyists, and even economists. The issue is not whether migration is good or bad but what is the optimal rate of migration for a specific country. He makes a case that there is an optimal

migration level or rate. And, if we leave migration to itself, it will exceed the optimal level and eventually hurt. The social effects of migration follow an inverse-U shape, with gains from moderate migration and losses from high migration. Moderate migration is liable to confer overall social benefits, whereas sustained rapid migration would risk substantial costs. Also, a low-density country such as Canada and Australia can accommodate a far greater rate of migration than high-density countries such as Western European ones. Moderate migration has modestly positive economic effects on the indigenous population in the medium term. Any long-term effects are negligible. In contrast, sustained rapid migration lowers the living standard of the indigenous population, both through wage effect and due to the need to share scarce public capital. Collier builds an elegant model that explains the rate of migration from one country to another. The rate of migration is determined by: 1) the width of the income gap (the wider it is the faster the migration rate from the low-income to high-income country); 2) the level of income in country of origin (the lower the income the higher the emigration rate); and 3) the size of the diaspora in the host country (the larger the diaspora the higher the immigration rate into the host country).

Despite a mostly UK-centric narrative, this dense (but succinct) treatment of migration - mostly framed in the context of migration's impact on the host, migrant and the society of origin - provides an excellent review and critique of socio-economic theories/philosophies that have shaped views on immigration. Collier methodically explains the key factors that are likely to influence the migration rate and then starts delineating the impact on all parties concerned. The discussion around the impact of the size of diaspora, assimilative tendencies and income gap differentials are interesting and provide a reasonable framework to think about motives than rely on politician/media-created generalisms that tend to appeal to emotions than reason. Throughout the book, Collier manages to provide a mostly impartial and consistent view of migration and its effect before making a strong ethical case for why a society can (and should) control migration. Collier's examples typically refer to the low-skill migration and his views on high-skill migration is nuanced and guided more by ethical arguments than utilitarian arguments (the very same ones he seemed to use to rationalize low-skill migration). Readers of a particular political persuasion can of course find cherry-pick some observations to justify their view, but the relatively reduced focus on high-skill migration is an opportunity lost to add more clarity to the discussion. While much has been written on IT sector in the US, the medical skill migration to UK (and US) poses ethical and economic arguments far more pronounced than any other high-skill sector. Collier could have devoted more space to address high-skill migration.

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