

Contemporary China Research
Global China and the Future of Capitalism Seminar Series
Blaming Immigrants: Nationalism and the Economics of Global Movements

Abstract

Immigration is shaking up electoral politics around the world. Anti-immigration and ultra-nationalistic politics is rising in Europe, the United States, and many countries across Asia and Africa. What is causing this nativist fervor? Are immigrants the cause or merely a common scapegoat?

In *Blaming Immigrants*, economist Neeraj Kaushal investigates the core causes of rising anxiety in host countries and tests common complaints against immigration. Do immigrants replace host country workers or create new jobs? Are they a net gain or a net drag on host countries? She finds that immigration, on balance, is beneficial to host countries. It is neither the volume nor pace of immigration but the willingness of nations to accept, absorb, and manage new immigration that is fueling disaffection. Kaushal delves into the demographics of immigrants worldwide, the economic tides that carry them, and the policies that shape where they make their new homes. She demystifies common misconceptions about immigration, showing that the level of global mobility is historically typical; that most immigration occurs through legal frameworks; that the U.S. system, far from being broken, works quite well most of the time and its unique features are replicated by many countries; and that proposed anti-immigrant measures are likely to cause suffering without deterring potential migrants. Featuring accessible and in-depth analysis of the economics of immigration in worldwide perspective, *Blaming Immigrants* is an informative and timely introduction to a critical global issue.