

Do Open Borders Produce Greater Happiness? An Underanalyzed Question

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Global labor markets have had both positive and negative consequences for the United States. Among the positive consequences are an open and flexible labor market and large inflows of capital and labor—indications of a strong economy. However, large inflows of capital and labor have given rise to divisive arguments about immigration and made the United States more dependent on foreign countries to finance its spending. The result is a more fragile prosperity, more inequality, and more poverty than otherwise might exist. Moreover, if people care more about their relative economic position than they do about their absolute standard of living, these developments may be contributing to higher levels of subjective distress and a decline in “happiness” within the United States.