

Figure 17. Most immigrants are not Latino, and most Latinos are not immigrants. FPI analysis of 2013 ACS.

Figure 18. The outlier period for immigration on Long Island is the mid 20th century. For 1900 to 1980, the NYC Department of Planning; for 1990 to 2013, FPI analysis of Census and ACS.

Figure 19. Unauthorized immigrants come from around the world. FPI analysis of data from the Migration Policy Institute’s Data Hub: Profile of the Unauthorized Population by County, which is based on ACS 2012 data and data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation.

Figure 20. Unauthorized immigration is down in recent years. Source: FPI chart based on Robert Warren and John Robert Warren, “Unauthorized Immigration to the United States: Annual Estimates and Components of Change, by State, 1990 to 2010,” *International Migration Review* (2/15/2013).

Figure 21: Within ten years, most immigrants speak English very well or speak only English. FPI analysis of 2013 ACS. Universe is immigrants five years of age and older.

Figure 22. Half or more of foreign-born adults have become naturalized U.S. citizens. FPI analysis of 2013 ACS.

Figure 23. The vast majority of children living in immigrant families were born in the United States, and a significant share of all kids live in immigrant families. FPI analysis of 2013 ACS. Families are defined as primary families with at least two related members in a household. Foreign-born families are families with at least one foreign-born member who is 18 years of age or older.

Figure 24. Immigration levels vary significantly among Long Island’s towns and cities. FPI analysis of 2013 ACS 3-year data.

David Dyssegaard Kallick is director of the Immigration Research Initiative at the Fiscal Policy Institute in Manhattan and Visiting Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute.

REGIONAL LABOR REVIEW, vol. 17, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2015).
© 2015 Center for the Study of Labor and Democracy, Hofstra University



New Technology, Deskilling and Economic Power

The Glass Cage: Automation and Us, by Nicholas Carr. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2014.

Reviewed by Russell Harrison

This book looks at automation in a number of industries (airline, automobile, health care, financial services, law, architecture etc. Carr’s thesis, in a nutshell, suggests that automation poses a number of threats that have not been adequately examined in the rush to attain increased “efficiency.” He further argues that the issue of de-skilling has been almost completely overlooked. Indeed, he makes an interesting point when he asserts that de-skilling is built into many workplace practices.

One thing that all of his examples reveal is the tremendous hype that accompanies the introduction of any new technology in the field of automation. To take but one example: In the field of health care, the introduction of electronic medical records (EMR) was touted, by the RAND corporation, as having the potential of saving “more than \$81 billion annually [my emphasis] and improve [ing] the quality of care” (92). This was in 2005. In 2013, a second RAND report acknowledged that “quality and efficiency of patient care are only marginally better” (94). Further, and arguably just as significant, are the unintended consequences. One striking example follows: “Before doctors had software to prompt them, they were less likely to add an extra charge for certain minor procedures. The procedures were subsumed into more general charges—for an office visit, say, or a yearly physical. With the prompts, the individual charges get added to the invoice automatically” (94).

One excellent point that Carr makes, while obvious, is too little appreciated. Quoting the historian David Noble who described a Pollyannaish view founded on “a simple faith in objective science,

economic rationality, and the market” (113). This view “portrays technological development as an autonomous and neutral technical process on the one hand, and a coldly rational and self-regulating process, on the other, neither of which accounts for people, power, institutions, competing values, or different dreams” (193-4). Carr acknowledges this in his brief discussion of Harry Braverman’s *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. But Braverman based his thesis on the Boss/Worker essential antagonism, the capitalist’s need to get as much work as possible out of the worker.

Carr’s book lacks a similarly sharp focus on power imbalances that might have constructed a more sustained and coherent structure out of the building blocks of his various examples. Overall, though, his book is useful for showing the downside of automation in a number of fields and the similar challenges it poses to working people across many industries.

Russell Harrison is Assistant Professor of Writing Studies and Composition, Hofstra University.

REGIONAL LABOR REVIEW, vol. 17, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2015).
© 2015 Center for the Study of Labor and Democracy, Hofstra University

