

# Immigration: A Moral Issue

## *How do we balance the rights of the individual against the claims of corporate society?*

Book Review by Gregory Pavlik

In his new book, *The Immigration Mystique*, Chilton Williamson takes up the subject of mass immigrations to the United States on several levels. One of the most impressive features of the book is the author's refusal to treat the issues raised by the United States's immigration policy lightly. Mr. Williamson treats immigration as a moral issue, subject to competing moral claims. He avoids the trap of spitting economic statistics coupled with epithets at his opponents, a modus operandi all too common among advocates of immigration.

Significantly, Mr. Williamson's book is one of the first in recent years to draw prominently on the restrictionist literature of the early twentieth century. His work is heavily influenced by the earlier writings of Henry Pratt Fairchild and other critics of the "old immigration" of Eastern and Southern Europeans of non-Anglo-Saxon stock. (Williamson does avoid reference to restrictionists who based their objections to immigration on racial grounds. This seems to give short change to history — President Harding testified to the influence of Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race* in his views against immigration.)

Insofar as Williamson deals with immigration as a subject in and of itself, he goes a step beyond being a critic of current policy. The result is a bold and comprehensive essay, dealing with the topic of immigration as an agent of social and political transformation.

The first portion of Williamson's book deals with the

history of American immigration. It is, as he shows, largely dominated by the myth, propagated in this century, that America was built on the foundation of open borders and immigrant cultures. It is the author's contention — which he amply supports — that America, far from being the result of widespread immigration from disparate nations, was the result of the colonial experience of Great Britain. The early British colonies assumed the right of restriction, through which they were essentially able to maintain their unique characters. Challenges to the colonies' restrictionist tendencies originated almost entirely with the mother country, which wished to use the colonial territories for purposes alien to the interests of the colonists.

In a related vein, the formative political and cultural institutions of the young United States were British; major regional variations still discernable today were, as David Hackett Fisher points out, the result of a heritage directly traceable to separate migrations from the British Isles. And Mr. Williamson shows that many of the prominent figures among the founding generation, from Jefferson to Washington, were either ambivalent or hostile toward immigration, the result of which they imagined would be the destabilization of the common ethnic and cultural make-up with which John Adams believed Providence had blessed the new nation. Yet the early national period was relatively free from acrimony with regard to immigrants if only because they were so few. As Williamson points out, from 1783 to 1820, "an average of ten thousand aliens arrived annually in the United States." By the 1830s, the stirring of the nativist movement could be heard, objections mainly based on the culture shock produced by large numbers of immigrants arriving in America's cities. Americans, in short, never experienced a period in the republic prior to the Civil War in which the noticeable effects of immigration were unaccompanied by its opposition.

---

### **The Immigration Mystique: America's False Conscience**

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.  
New York: BasicBooks, 1996  
202 pages, \$23.00

---




---

**Gregory Pavlik** is editor of *Forgotten Lessons: Selected Essays of John T. Flynn* (Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education, 1995) and former associate editor of *The Freeman*. He now writes from Denver.

One of the after-effects of the Civil War noted by Williamson was the establishment of the “propositional” definition of American citizenship. President Lincoln justified the pursuit of his war against the Confederacy not only by a previously unrecognized appeal to “Union” but also by the notion that America is dedicated to the proposition that “all men are created equal” and are the recipients of certain metaphysically-defined “unalienable rights.” This undermined the special nature of American political rights, previously understood as an inheritance of British civilization. This transformation within American politics — which matched closely the definition of what the twentieth century classical liberal Garet Garret called a “revolution within the form” when analyzing the New Deal — would have a significant impact on later discussions of the morality of immigration. In a circular irony of history, immigration would also serve to buttress this new national myth. After all, the increasingly heterogeneous population of the United States could hardly be expected to identify with an exclusively British political inheritance. This new abstract and universalized conception of political citizenship and rights — essentially a throwback to the Jacobinism of the French Revolution — became the basis of the immigrationist belief in the oxymoronic “universal nation.”

---

***“The fact that immigration significantly contributed to the transformation of the public understanding of what it means to be an ‘American’ was not lost on the critics of mass immigration earlier in this century.”***

---

The fact that immigration significantly contributed to the transformation of the public understanding of what it meant to be an “American” was not lost on the critics of mass immigration earlier in this century. As mass immigration helped to buttress the political foundations of an increasingly imperialistic and industrialized United States, it also affected the culture, which increasingly reflected the proletarianization and commercialization produced

largely by lower class immigrants. Williamson echoes this in his work:

*immigration produced levels of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity that gradually, almost imperceptibly, have partially reconstructed the American nation. For most of this the Old — not the New — immigration is responsible.*

By pointing out the transforming power of mass immigration involving those with relatively closely related civilizational backgrounds, the author provides the historical background against which we can expect to judge the effects of current immigration from the Third World.

Williamson’s historical discussion is a convincing revisionist indictment of current orthodoxy. One particular element stands out as a universal among those historically opposed to large-scale immigration. He makes clear that the advocates of restriction were careful to delineate between hatred of foreigners and the fundamental right of self-preservation. This is a powerful appeal, which illustrates the author’s contention that immigration is ultimately a moral problem, balancing the rights of the individual against the claims of corporate society. That those most closely opposed to the historically definable corporate society within the United States are also among the most vigorous proponents of the open borders doctrine is significant. Williamson quotes Lawrence Auster to the effect that in many respects contemporary multiculturalism is the child of mass immigration.

Of course, this essay is more than a historical sketch. The bulk of the presentation within *The Immigration Mystique* deals with today’s “immigration crisis” (Williamson’s words). If in some ways the Civil War was a watershed event with ramifications for policies relating to the Old Immigration, the hegemonic dominance of Cold War liberalism was certainly the foundation on which policy relating to the New Immigration of the late twentieth century was built. The defining event of the New Immigration was the 1965 immigration act, which was the culmination of social trends promoted under the aegis of modern liberalism. Williamson points out, for example, that the 1965 act was rooted in the civil rights movement, which commanded a good deal of moral prestige in opposition to discriminatory policies. He also argues that whatever moral debt may have been owed to American blacks, that debt could not have been owed to foreign immigrants, who were, after all, external to the

American historical experience.

Indeed, there were other considerations that impacted the immigration debate prior to passage of the 1965 act. Cold War liberals demanded reform of immigration policies to avoid offense of Third World countries that might be tempted to ally with the Soviet Union if the U.S. government appeared to be hostile toward non European peoples. While secretary of state, Dean Rusk argued that the discriminatory policies of the United States with regard to immigration were one of its most damaging weaknesses in the eyes of the Third World.

Whatever combination of factors led to the passage of the 1965 act, the result has been, as Auster and Peter Brimelow have recently emphasized, demographic madness. Immigration has increased in numbers and many of the immigrants are radically estranged from the main-stream of American culture, which itself has been redefined through immigration. The book deals with both aspects of these trends.

One of the most intriguing arguments that Williamson puts forth against mass immigration, and one that he holds to be "the most persuasive," is environmentally based. Here, I think also, is the most underdeveloped argument in the book. In two sections, the author deals with both the subject of population pressures and the environmental impact of immigration. With regard to population movements, he raises some important observations. For example, he quotes Virginia Abernethy to the effect that the "prospect *alone* of immigration has pronatalist effects on sending countries," hence increasing population pressure in already overpopulated countries.

But while rightly noting the hesitancy of environmentalists to criticize immigration, Mr. Williamson doesn't make much of a case with regard to the relationship between immigration and the destruction of natural resources. Much of the section on the environment contains Malthusian predictions with little in the way of supporting evidence. That is not to say that the environmentalist objection to immigration is necessarily wrong; the reader simply has no way to judge.

The converse position that resources are essentially unlimited is rightly held up for ridicule. The whole reason for the existence of the division of labor and a complex structure of production is the fact of the scarcity of resources. It is also the reason for the existence of economics as a discipline. Until recently, the denial of the fact of scarcity was limited to Utopian

socialists and the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden. To claim, as some immigrationists have, that human ingenuity effectively eliminates the scarcity of natural resources, broadly defined, is almost flabbergasting. In actuality, an effective economic system rationally coordinates the allocation of resources based on the most efficient satisfaction of consumer wants. Human ingenuity may be able to cope with scarcity; it does not eliminate it.

---

***"Immigration has increased  
in numbers and many of the  
immigrants are radically  
estranged from the mainstream  
of American culture, which itself  
has been redefined through  
immigration."***

---

Overall, the scope of Mr. Williamson's treatment is impressive. He tackles the ethical and religious claims made by immigrationists, the relationship between America's perception of itself and its immigration policies, New Class interest in immigrationism, and the development of multi-culturalism in America, among other topics. And although most of the discussion in *The Immigration Mystique* treats economics as superfluous to larger questions raised by immigration, the last section of the book engages the pro-immigration economists squarely. While Mr. Williamson concedes, following Fairchild, that economics provides the most appealing arguments in favor of immigration, he deals with the issue quite effectively. He cites studies that show that immigration can significantly retard the development of the sending countries, contributing to stagnant and impoverished conditions. Similarly, immigration can act as a "brain drain" within countries that desperately require their brightest citizens. While immigrationists argue that immigration is needed to provide workers (and consumers) in the economy, Mr. Williamson points out that there is an abundance of low-skilled workers available, though many are currently on the dole. In an important observation, the author comments, "economists have

noted that the United States really needs greater capital and more and better technology, which immigration does not supply." Technological development and capital investment are, after all, the means by which marginal productivity is increased.

The book as a whole is a carefully constructed work in which topics related to immigration and its effects are treated with great care. When dealing with the

arguments in favor of immigration put forward by individuals and institutions (for example, mainline church denominations), Mr. Williamson provides some particularly erudite responses. Anyone who wants to grapple with the larger issues raised by current immigration policies will benefit tremendously from this presentation. His book has raised the terms of the debate. □

# Mexico's Continuing Crises

## *The implications of this analysis are ominous*

Book Review by David Simcox

**C**haos may not be too strong a word for the social and political disarray that marks the crumbling of Mexico's 67-year-old authoritarian political system: unresolved political assassinations; massive currency crises and capital flight; paralyzing economic downturn; guerrilla uprisings in the south; graft of pharaonic scale in a once trusted former president's immediate family; and emergence of a Colombia-style narco-culture that pervades all institutions and co-opts all law enforcement.

Most of these afflictions are not new in Mexico's troubled 174-year history as an independent republic.

But nowadays they seem far more menacing from this side of our common border. Mexico is no longer a sleepy banana republic isolated by harsh terrain and bad roads from the U.S. There will soon be 100 million Mexicans, most of them unfulfilled, impatient — and mobile — as never before. Nearly 20 million of them live within a half day's drive of the U.S. border.

The mushrooming of Mexican colonies in the U.S. southwest has increasingly mingled Mexico's politics with our own. The Mexican establishment has advanced this process by allowing Mexican-born

Americans dual citizenship and extending partisan political mobilization to U.S. territory. The U.S. encourages it by sweeping immigration amnesties followed by massive rubber-stamp naturalizations. Overlapping loyalties and an evanescent border are ingredients for the spread of violent conflict to U.S. soil if the Republic's political rot degenerates into general insurgency.

Journalist Andres Oppenheimer ratchets up our fears of apocalypse in Mexico with this chronicle of corruption, greed, murder and ineptitude in the ruling circles of the republic since the early 1990s. His

book is a series of journalistic sketches or case studies of recent debacles in Mexico that symptomize a political system above accountability, immobilized by deceit and denial, and now collapsing from within because of infighting among the once united dominant political tribes.

Corruption, he notes, is no longer working as the "oil" and "glue" of Mexico's political system — the oil that made government wheels turn and the glue which bound quarrelsome factions of elites together and to the president since the 1920s.

The uprising of Zapatista militants in Chiapas state on New Years day 1994, an expression of despair, also helped catalyze the loss of investor confidence that would within a few months blossom into massive capital flight. Oppenheimer disputes the romantic view of some media and international human rights interests of the Chiapas insurgency as an indigenous, non-ideological movement for Indians' rights. Oppenheimer traces the movement's origins and leadership, not to Chiapas, but

---

### **Bordering on Chaos**

*By Andres*

*Oppenheimer*

Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1996  
352 pages, price \$24.95

---




---

*David Simcox is a senior fellow of the Washington-based Center for Immigration Studies, which he served as its first executive director. He currently resides in Louisville, KY where he leads a think tank, Migration Demographics.*

to a 17-year effort among non-Indian urban, Marxist-Leninist militants.

Initial reports of the latest anti-regime uprisings in Guerrero and Oaxaca states in August, 1996, suggest Oppenheimer's analysis is valid there as well. The implications are ominous. Mexico's professional revolutionaries have succeeded where Che Guevara and Fidel Castro failed — winning the active allegiance of the downtrodden indian masses.

---

***“Among the worst losers  
[in the 1994 currency crisis]  
are those in Mexico's working  
class, which once again is  
sacrificing most to pay for the  
elite's bouts of overspending and  
corruption, and American  
communities and their workers,  
who must bear the costs of new  
waves of Mexican settlers...”***

---

Neither Mexico nor the United States looks noble in the book's recounting of events leading to the currency crisis of late 1994. Mexico City set the stage for insolvency with an overvalued peso that stimulated massive imports from the United States in 1993 and 1994 and heavy patronage spending in anticipation of the 1994 elections. The Clinton administration reaped the gains as Mexico's extravagant purchases and hefty trade deficit with the United States improved the climate for Congressional approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

But with the ink hardly dry on NAFTA, Mexico's reserves had dwindled to the danger level by early 1994. Even as U.S. Treasury officials confidentially warned of impending financial crisis, the Clinton administration was publicly praising Mexico's economic record. Two weeks before the devaluation Clinton held up Mexico as a “model of good economic management” for other world economies. None of Treasury's internal warnings were shared with millions of U.S. investors, who failed to get out before devaluation cut the value of their investments by half.

Among the worst losers are those in Mexico's working class, which once again is sacrificing most to pay for the elite's bouts of overspending and corruption, and American communities and their workers, who must bear the costs of new waves of Mexican settlers abandoning a country that offers only poverty and neglect.

The well-connected giants of Mexico's coddled private sector, Oppenheimer notes, had no trouble switching out of pesos in time. While Mexico's smaller businesses and farmers have suffered severely under NAFTA, private sector elites were able to buy privatized state enterprises on sweetheart terms and were guaranteed protection of their monopolies for the first twelve years of NAFTA. In return, Mexico's magnates donated sums to the official party's 1994 re-election effort that make U.S. political contributions seem paltry.

Oppenheimer concludes that Ernest Zedillo, candidate of the official party, won the Presidency in August, 1994 fair and square, although with less than half the vote for the first time in PRI history. The author gives us an insider's view of how then-President Carlos Salinas Gortari hand-picked to succeed him, first, the ill-fated Luis Donaldo Colosio and then Zedillo, without even the pretence of a primary vote, convention, or even a smoke-filled room to restrain him. This was an exercise of what the author calls Mexico's “revolving dictatorship.”

At work throughout these events, Oppenheimer finds, is “Mexican exceptionalism” among U.S. policy makers. No matter how destructive Mexico's behavior, whether drug smuggling, human rights abuses, illegal immigration, or financial recklessness, the United States will not endanger the relationship by confronting it as a mature, accountable partner. One political scientist has called this condition “the tyranny of the weak.”

For the author, among the sickest of Mexico's institutions are the national, state and local police forces — some 2400 of them, poorly coordinated, trained and paid. The major police forces have carved out special niches of corruption. The Federal Police are now the allies and protectors of the major Mexican drug cartels, or distributors themselves of seized heroin and cocaine. The Mexico City police specialize in extortion of motorists and taxi operators and occasional kidnappings for ransom. Tijuana city police have prospered in car theft in neighboring San Diego. State police forces are little more than uniformed crime syndicates.

The Ministry of Interior estimated conservatively in 1995 that 60 percent of all police had accepted bribes or had criminal records themselves. The Ministry reported that about 50 percent of members of the nation's estimated 900 criminal bands were active or retired members of police forces.

An inescapable point of Oppenheimer's volume is that Mexico as a modern nation is just not working. Mexico's divisions and injustices are antithetical to nation building. Not surprisingly Mexicans are spiritually or physically opting out. Oppenheimer finds Mexican nationalism is a myth created by the ruling elites to

strengthen their bargaining position with the United States. The author cites polls showing Mexicans are less nationalistic than Americans: 59 percent of them favor a political merger with the United States.

For millions, the Mexican state now fails to offer the most basic amenities of nationhood: equality before the law, a functioning judicial system, personal safety and dignity, and a modicum of civic participation. A portentous response has been the unilateral self-annexation of millions of Mexicans to the nation next door. □

# A Nation Like No Other?

## *Another look at America's leading characteristics*

Book Review by Kevin Lamb

The unique national characteristics of America's political and social culture, which distinguish the United States from other nations of the world, continue to evoke much speculation and analysis among scholars. Some of the political and social factors that contribute to America's stability as a democratic republic are incisively reviewed by a leading American scholar. In the tradition of Tocqueville's perceptive study of American society, Seymour Martin Lipset, a re-spected and influential social scientist, attempts to explain modern social trends vis-a-vis the traditions that are embedded in America's political culture.

According to Lipset, five core pillars of the American creed account for its exceptional status: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire. Lipset points out that the key to understanding social, economic and political trends throughout American history is to consider them in the context of this five-dimensional prism. In this sense, the *ideal* of the American creed is *the* distinguishing feature that

makes the United States unique. The degree to which the national character is influenced by the beliefs and values ingrained by this creed is what Lipset identifies as "American exceptionalism."

Other Western countries that have their own distinct cultural identities, like Canada or France, differ from the United States in that they lack robust populist and individualistic convictions. Unlike these other democracies, the concepts of limited government and individual liberty are core features of the American political landscape. The appealing features of the American creed may also explain why residents from unstable countries, who endure patterns of turmoil and torture, so often seek the "American dream" of prosperity and the security a more comfortable existence offers.

Two of the more interesting chapters review the experience of two significant ethnic groups that have had a major impact on American society: Jews and African Americans. Lipset points out that while both groups have experienced discrimination and hostility, major societal and legal changes have been implemented to rectify such practices. And as Lipset points out, a genuine sense of fairness and a commitment to equal opportunity is a leading American characteristic.

Whether it's the abolition of slavery, the end of legal segregation, the resistance to racial or gender

---

### **American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword**

*by Seymour Martin Lipset*  
New York: W.W. Norton, 1996  
352 pages, \$27.50

---




---

**Kevin Lamb** is assistant librarian at the Washington bureau of Newsweek.

preferences, the rise of entrepreneurship or the religious nature of our moral compass, major trends or significant events in American history often stem from one or more of these five major tenets. The end of slavery and de facto segregation reflects a commitment to egalitarian principles just as the widespread opposition to affirmative action reveals a meritocratic recognition of individual achievement. In this regard, Lipset presents a balanced portrait of American culture.

One of the stronger features of Lipset's work is the extensive polling data that disclose revealing information about American attitudes and beliefs on a range of social, economic and political issues. Again, on many issues the concept of individualism runs much deeper in American society than many other European or Asian nations. This explains in part why trade unions remain relatively weak and insignificant unlike their European counterparts. It also accounts for the lack of any substantial socialist movements in American politics. In addition to survey data, the author presents a vast amount of detailed information from reliable secondary sources. Lipset's study, however, comes up short in a few key areas, and to some extent this simply reflects a blind side in the contemporary neoconservative view of social issues.

First, while its scope is broad, its depth is shallow. In this regard, one strength of Tocqueville's analysis is notably missing from the present work. As Tocqueville pointed out, the national character of America's political and social culture was shaped early on by Europeans, which Tocqueville identifies as "Anglo-Americans." This is reflected in the customs, traditions and folkways of our colonial ancestors. The experiences shaped by this common heritage contributed to the formation of our own political institutions. That the foundation and endurance of the American political and social order stem from traditional European culture is not coincidental.

Second, little if any mention is made in the present work about the impact of sizable demographic shifts in the American population, largely a result of contemporary immigration policies, and how this will affect the social and political culture. Tocqueville recognized the significant relationship between civil associations and a firmly established common culture.

As Tocqueville put it, "all these general characteristics of the nation were more or less the same among those of its sons who sought a new future on the far side of the ocean."

---

***"One of the strongest features of Lipset's work is the extensive polling data that discloses revealing information about American attitudes and beliefs on a range of social, economic and political issues."***

---

Most of the measures Lipset relies upon in evaluating American culture and in making cross-national and cultural comparisons are inherently subjective. By applying the national syntality theory of eminent social psychologist Raymond Cattell, Lipset could have enhanced his own empirical findings with this added depth of analysis. Cattell's theoretical framework, an objective method of comparing on a qualitative scale various features of national cultures, would have complemented Lipset's findings. How great, for instance, is the magnitude of *cultural pressure*, what effect does it have on national character and how has it changed American culture?

It's often difficult to recognize the immediate consequences of extensive changes that occur incrementally over time. And to this extent, migrations of diverse people affect the cultural direction within any given nation.

Although the scant attention that Lipset devotes to examining immigration-related issues is arguably the weakest aspect of his work, Lipset's study is an insightful account — one that, unlike other contemporary volumes in the social sciences, remains free of ideological jargon. □

# Recent Immigrants — An Increasing Welfare Burden

Article Review by Wayne Lutton

“Immigration and the Welfare State:  
Immigrant Participation in Means-Tested  
Entitlement Programs”

by George J. Borjas and Lynette Hilton  
*The Quarterly Journal of Economics*  
Volume CXI, Issue 2, May 1996, pp. 575-604

Are recent immigrants contributing to our welfare burden? For years, anti-limitationists, such as Julian Simon and Jack Kemp, have argued that immigrants are a boon to the economy and are less likely than native-born Americans to use welfare programs. A new report by Harvard economist George Borjas and co-authored by Lynette Hilton indicates that the United States has indeed become a “welfare magnet” for immigrants from around the world. When both cash and non-cash welfare programs are taken together, by the early 1990s, in typical month 20.7% of immigrant households were using welfare, compared to 14.1% of native households, and 10.5% of white, non-Hispanic native households. In less than a decade, the immigrant-native “welfare gap” more than doubled.

Borjas and Hilton note that focusing only on cash benefit programs badly understates over-all welfare use. Cash benefit programs, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) account for less than a quarter of the cost of all means-tested programs. Non-cash programs include Food Stamps, Medicaid, and housing subsidies.

Using data taken from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), rather than relying only on the Census Bureau, which does not provide any information about non-cash welfare enrollment, the authors found that immigrant households “experience both more and longer welfare spells. Immigrant households spend a relatively large fraction of their time participating in some means-tested program...[I]mmigrant households are more likely to participate in practically every one of the major means-tested programs.”

Immigrants were also found to account for a disproportionately large fraction of the costs of major benefit programs, such as 16.6 percent of the costs of AFDC, 18.4 percent of the cost of SSI, 11.5 percent of the costs of Food Stamps, 14.1 percent of the costs of Medicaid, and 19 percent of the cost of school breakfasts and lunches. All told, the 8.8 percent of persons living in immigrant households accounted for 13.8 percent of our national welfare costs — almost 60 percent more than their percent of the population.

The available data show that “immigrants are more likely to be exposed to the welfare system and are also more likely to become ‘permanent’ recipients.” Moreover, “more recent immigrant cohorts are more likely to participate in welfare programs than earlier cohorts and...immigrants in a particular cohort of arrival are more likely to receive benefits the longer they have lived in the United States.” What seems clear is that immigrants are having little trouble assimilating into the welfare state.

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS		
FOUNDED 1886		
Volume CXI	May 1996	Issue 2
ARTICLES		
GEORGE J. BORJAS, JANET L. YELLEN, AND MICHAEL L. KATZ An Analysis of Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing in the United States	STEVIN D. LEVITT The Effect of Prison Population Size on Crime Rates: Evidence from Prison Overcrowding Litigation	277 319
DANIEL KESNER AND MARK MCCLELLAN Do Doctors Practice Defensive Medicine?	DAVID M. CUTLER AND JONATHAN GRUBER Does Public Insurance Crowd out Private Insurance?	353 391
JANET CURRIE AND JONATHAN GRUBER Health Insurance Eligibility, Utilization of Medical Care, and Child Health	THOMAS J. KANE AND DOUGLAS STAIGER Teen Motherhood and Abortion Access	431 467
EDWARD L. GLASSER, BRUCE SACARDOTE, AND JOSE A. SCHRIMMANN Crime and Social Interactions	MICHAEL KREMER Integrating Behavioral Choice into Epidemiological Models of AIDS	507 549
GEORGE J. BORJAS AND LYNETTE HILTON Immigration and the Welfare State: Immigrant Participation in Means-Tested Entitlement Programs	NADA ERSSA AND JEFFREY B. LEBMAN Labor Supply Response to the Earned Income Tax Credit	575 605
PUBLISHED FOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY BY THE MIT PRESS, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS		
412 (11/2) 575-607 (1996) ISSN 0033-5323		
		No. 445

**Wayne Lutton** is associate editor of *The Social Contract*.



Being an immigrant as such does not explain why they are on welfare at higher rates than native-born Americans. Rather, current U.S. policy allows people into the country who possess socio-economic characteristics that are highly correlated with welfare use. As Borjas and Hilton point out, "a small number of observable socio-economic characteristics can be used to screen the pool of potential immigrants and to assess the probability that a visa applicant will become a welfare recipient upon entry in the United States."

As Table IV from their report reveals (reprinted below), various national origin groups tend to receive particular types of welfare benefits. Borjas

Norman Matloff, agree that networking is taking place, with particular ethnic communities encouraging their fellows to participate in select programs.

"Immigration and the Welfare State" is an important article that should go far in closing the debate on this particular aspect of immigration policy.

It simply cannot be honestly argued that immigration is a cost-free benefit to United States taxpayers. □

[This journal is taken by many college and public libraries; back issues are \$14.00 each and can be purchased from The MIT Press Journals, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA

Table IV  
Average Monthly Probability of Receiving Benefits in 1990/1991  
Selected National Origin Groups

<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>AFDC</u>	<u>SSI</u>	<u>Food Stamps</u>	<u>Energy Assist.</u>	<u>Medicaid</u>	<u>Housing Subsidy</u>	<u>School Lunches</u>	<u>Any Cash Benefits</u>	<u>Cash Medicaid Vouchers</u>	<u>Cash Medicaid Vouchers Housing</u>	<u>Any Benefits</u>
<b>Europe:</b>											
Germany	0.8	1.6	4.1	1.2	4.3	1.5	2.1	3.6	6.6	7.3	8.0
Greece	0.0	2.9	1.4	0.7	4.6	2.6	2.6	2.9	5.2	7.7	9.8
Ireland	0.0	3.6	5.1	3.4	4.9	0.0	0.0	5.0	7.8	7.8	7.8
Italy	1.7	6.0	2.4	4.5	8.7	6.4	1.6	8.5	13.0	17.2	18.3
Poland	2.1	3.3	4.9	3.0	7.7	3.7	2.3	5.4	9.2	10.7	10.9
Portugal	0.3	3.9	0.3	0.2	5.5	2.7	6.3	4.2	7.8	10.5	16.2
U.K.	0.2	2.4	2.5	0.9	5.2	2.9	2.4	2.8	6.8	9.6	11.3
U.S.S.R.	7.5	17.8	30.9	5.9	40.6	11.0	7.3	31.3	40.9	41.8	42.8
Other Europe	0.6	1.5	1.9	1.3	3.0	1.4	1.0	2.3	4.2	5.7	6.2
<b>Asia:</b>											
China	0.3	8.0	1.3	0.4	11.8	6.3	6.3	8.4	11.9	14.3	18.9
India	1.5	1.3	1.9	0.0	7.2	4.5	3.2	2.8	7.3	11.7	14.5
Japan	0.0	7.8	1.0	0.9	7.8	0.0	3.1	7.8	9.3	9.3	11.7
Korea	0.1	2.7	0.2	0.3	4.2	2.4	6.7	3.3	4.8	7.3	13.7
Middle East	5.1	12.8	12.4	1.6	22.8	1.2	9.4	18.5	23.5	23.5	25.4
Philippines	1.1	7.3	3.1	0.0	10.8	3.6	2.5	8.4	11.6	15.2	16.5
Vietnam	20.3	24.1	29.7	3.8	44.9	18.6	28.6	41.1	46.0	48.6	53.3
Other Asia	25.8	17.6	30.2	5.4	33.2	8.2	29.5	32.4	33.8	34.3	40.5
<b>North &amp; South America</b>											
Canada	1.6	1.7	0.7	1.5	4.4	4.4	1.2	4.5	6.9	9.6	9.9
Central Am.	4.3	5.8	11.3	1.9	22.8	7.4	25.7	9.6	27.7	31.5	43.5
Cuba	0.6	17.5	15.6	2.3	22.7	8.9	5.6	17.8	24.7	27.5	29.9
Dom. Rep.	23.9	19.8	38.3	9.3	47.1	15.3	29.7	45.4	49.5	50.9	58.6
Jamaica	1.3	6.8	3.3	1.6	11.0	2.5	9.3	8.1	12.1	12.8	19.1
Mexico	6.9	6.2	17.0	3.0	26.8	7.9	35.6	13.7	33.7	36.0	51.3
South Am.	4.0	4.3	7.7	1.8	11.4	5.7	14.1	8.4	15.0	18.5	26.1
<b>Other Groups</b>											
Refugees	7.4	13.6	16.9	3.4	24.1	9.5	8.8	19.5	25.6	27.9	29.9
Non-refugees	3.8	5.5	8.0	2.0	14.1	4.9	12.6	9.6	17.1	19.7	25.5
All natives	2.9	3.7	6.5	2.3	9.4	4.4	6.2	7.3	12.3	14.1	16.3
White Natives	1.5	2.5	4.0	1.8	6.5	3.1	3.9	4.8	8.9	10.5	12.2
Black Natives	12.1	12.2	23.3	5.4	28.8	14.6	22.0	24.5	35.1	38.8	44.0
Hisp. Natives	10.0	9.9	19.4	5.2	26.0	10.3	18.5	20.7	30.9	33.4	38.1

and Hilton, citing the work of Don Barnett and 02142.]