

# Family Values: a Valid Criterion for Immigrants?

by Joseph Daleiden

In the debate on immigration we often hear the curious justification that we should be happy to take in so many immigrants because they have the right sort of family values. I'm not certain what sort of "family values" the proponents have in mind, but international crime statistics do make me question what sort of "family values" we are importing.

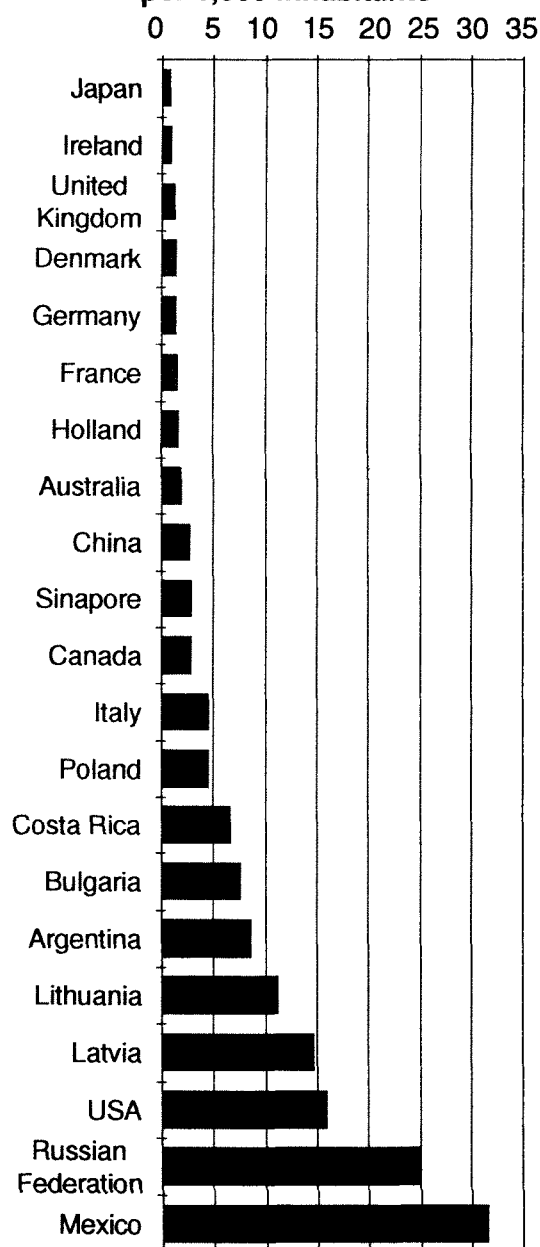
The largest number of legal and illegal immigrants come from Mexico. While it is true that America is a violent country compared to other Western industrialized nations, our homicide rate pales in comparison with that of Mexico [See accompanying chart]. According to World Health Organization data, *the homicide rate of Mexican males was 31.5 per 1,000 inhabitants — over twice the 15.9 rate of the U.S.* In fact one reason for the increase in the U.S. crime rate in all categories in recent years has been the huge influx of Mexican immigrants.

Since the majority of immigrants from Mexico come from the lowest socio-economic group, which has the highest crime rate, it is not surprising that they have higher crime rates than even the average for Mexico. The result is higher crime in the U.S. For example, 25 percent of the inmates of federal prisons are foreign-born — the vast majority of these Hispanic.

Of course, to draw attention to the correlation between crime and America's immigration policy is politically incorrect and is thus scrupulously omitted by the media. A Public Radio broadcast dealt with the topic of the sudden rise in crime and gang violence in small towns throughout America. In the course of their interviews of officials in several small towns, every gang mentioned had a Hispanic name.

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Male Homicide Rates, Selected Countries  
per 1,000 inhabitants



Source: World Health Organization, 1994

But it would have been politically incorrect for PBS to note the obvious correlation between immigration and increased crime, so the interviewers concluded that the increase in crime was due to as yet undetermined social factors.

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The link between massive immigration and higher crime rates is not limited to Mexicans or Hispanics in general. The last wave of immigration at the turn of the century was also accompanied by a rapid increase in crime rates. The murder rate in the United States in 1900 was only 1.2 per 100,000. By 1917, when prohibition was enacted, the murder rate had increased almost six-fold to 6.9 per 100,000. (During Prohibition the homicide rate rose further to 9.7, about the same rate as today.)

Obviously immigration is not the only factor that causes increases in crime. However, it should not be surprising that when we allow the immigration of large numbers of poor, uneducated and unskilled persons the crime rates increase. Nor should it be surprising that the rates of crime by immigrants closely approximate those of the country of their national origin.

If we used family values as the sole criterion, we would only permit immigration from European and Asian countries where homicide rates (and crime rates in general) are extremely low. But this too would be simplistic. The issue of who we allow in and how many depends on a host of factors including:

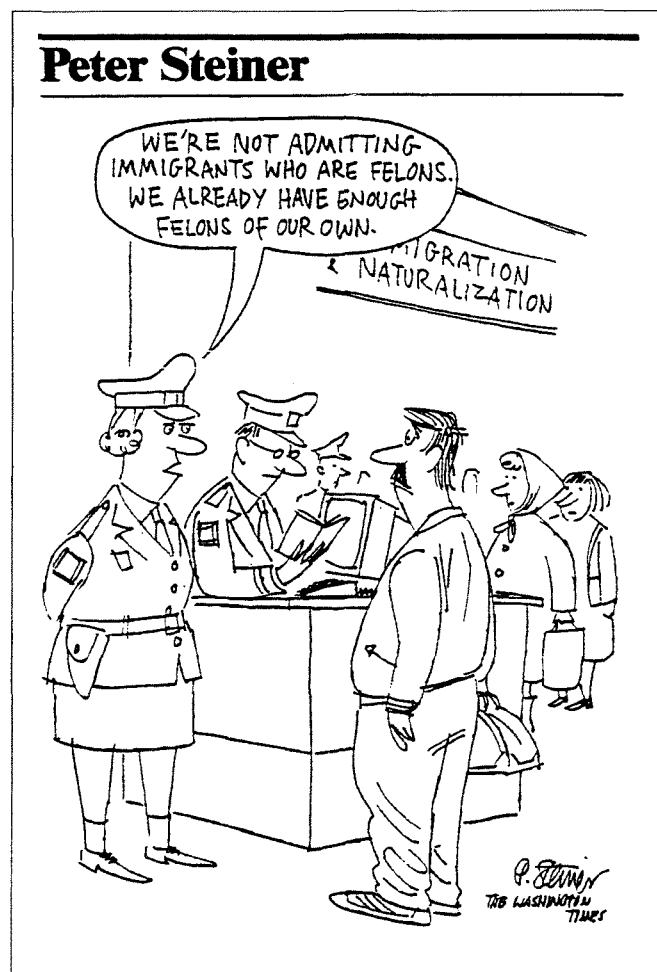
- immigration's impact on wage rates,
- job displacement,
- taxes,
- schooling,
- the environment,

- interethnic conflict,
- cultural values, and
- the consequences for future generations.

While beyond the scope of this present article, when these factors are examined, the answer becomes obvious to anyone who examines the issue in depth. First, immigration must be significantly reduced to long-term, sustainable levels — somewhere between 100,000 and 300,000 annually from all sources. And second, the mix of immigrants should be based primarily on the skills America needs rather than being heavily skewed toward the poor and unskilled. With 36 million Americans under the poverty line there is no reason to import more.

There are far more effective ways to alleviate poverty in the rest of the world than by inviting the poor to the United States.

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# Colonists and Immigrants

## *Who were the first Americans?*

by Henry Pratt Fairchild

[Editor's note: Henry Pratt Fairchild (1880-1956) was professor emeritus of sociology at New York University and one of the early leaders of the immigration restriction and conservation movements. Dr. Fairchild served as the first president of the Population Association of America. This essay is taken from his book *Race and Nationality As Factors in American Life* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1947, pages 118-122). His book, *The Melting Pot Mistake*, was reviewed by Brent Nelson in the Spring 1996 issue of *The Social Contract* (Vol.VI, No.3, pp.184-191).]

The American nation, as we know it today, is the direct consequence of the establishment of settlements of white Europeans upon the shores of an unexploited continent. The natives, although of fine physical stock and high mentality, had not got up the ladder of cultural progress nearly so far as the newcomers. They lived essentially on a hunting economy, although they had begun to develop the rudiments of agriculture. From the point of view of the newcomers, granted the prevailing attitudes of the world conquerors of the day, the natives represented little more than natural obstacles, lower animals

that had to be brushed out of the way to make room for a superior type of being. They never represented military opposition in the full sense of the word.

The settlers at Plymouth Rock, Jamestown and New Amsterdam came under the banner of

The oft-repeated cliché, 'We are all immigrants, or the descendants of immigrants,' is typical of the sort of nonsense that is all too frequently uttered in the name of liberalism. Nearly half of us are the descendants, not of immigrants, but of colonists."

— Henry Pratt Fairchild, 1947

colonization, not of conquest. The natives were pushed steadily backward into the interior as the aggressors needed the territory. They were never exterminated; as a matter of fact they were not so nearly eliminated as is commonly supposed. Estimates of the total number of Indians on the continent of North America north of the Rio Grande at the time of the arrival of the white man vary from half a million to perhaps twice that number. According to the Census of 1940 there were in the United States 330,969 Indians, which represented an increase of about 90,000 over 1920. This aboriginal population constitutes

a special problem by itself, but does not figure largely in the major issues at stake.

The original white population came almost entirely from two or three Western European countries, with Great Britain standing far in the lead.

Physiologically, they were so clearly akin that it is safe to say that no genuine racial problems were involved whatsoever. During the colonial period there were considerable additions from Germany, and the predominantly English element from Great Britain was supplemented by large contingents of the Scotch-Irish. But these, in turn, added no serious racial complications.

The Germans were of the same basic Nordic stock represented so largely in the English population, and the other element, in spite of its name, was "very little Scotch and much less Irish," but really represented a very typical cross section of the British people. Consequently, when the North American settlements passed from the stage of colonies into an independent nation, the population was highly homogeneous, comprising racial elements closely similar to those of the British Isles, and with a culture representing simply a local variant of the English nationality.

Just what were the proportions of the population traceable to