

NPG Booknote

A Tale of Ten Cities

Immigration's Effect on the Family Environment in American Cities

Leon Bouvier and Scipio Garling

A Tale of Ten Cities: Immigration's Effect on the Family Environment in American Cities

Federation for American Immigration Reform, 1995. 70 pages. \$12.50 including S&H. Available directly from FAIR Publications, 1666 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 400, Washington DC 20009. Phone 1-800-395-0890.

Reviewed by Donald Mann, President of Negative Population Growth, Inc.

It often seems as though

the dispute about immigration's impact on America involves endless debate over statistics – whose are right and whose are wrong. We read charges and counter-charges of misleading and manipulated data and conclusions, often leading to a contentious but inconclusive flurry.

Immigration is the driving force that will cause the population of America to explode to nearly 400 million in just 50 years.

But every so often there appears a study so unique in conception and innovative in style that it has the potential to alter the overarching frame of a debate. A new report from the Federation for American Immigration Reform, authored by noted Tulane demographer Leon Bouvier and researcher Scip Garling, and entitled *A Tale of Ten Cities: Immigration's Effect on the Family Environment in American Cities*, is just such a study.

Over-aggregating

In the past, social science researchers and economists have tried to isolate individual variables to measure immigration's impact on the nation. Those variables, when aggregated to the nation as a whole, are often too imprecise to demonstrate any meaningful impact from immigration's regionalized concentrations. In essence, those studies are too over-aggregated to be relevant. (Most notorious for this practice is Julian Simon, who has made a career

out of over-aggregating. In every one of his studies on immigration he concludes that "on average" or "on balance" some aspect of immigration has no measurable effect. This defies common sense!)

It is well-known that immigration is the driving force that will cause the population of America to explode from 264 million today to nearly 400 million in just 50 years. The question is how to measure the over-all impacts when immigration tends to be such a regional and local phenomenon.

Pairing up Cities

Bouvier and Garling have gotten around this obstacle by matching five pairs of cities of similar size – one the product of high recent immigration and the other made up mostly of native born:

Long Beach	Oklahoma City
Oakland	Tulsa
Miami	Omaha
Santa Ana	St. Paul
Stockton	Lexington

Relying on Census data from 1990, they identify forty-four indicators around nine major categories measuring "quality of life" (an admittedly subjective field, but here broad enough to consider something that appeals to everyone), and compare the results. The major categories are:

Education	Homelife	Crime
Income	Housing	Health
Occupation	Community	Cultural Adaptation

The results are amazing! Anyone who knows Dr. Bouvier knows he is a man who lives with and by the numbers. He is not a man to be easily impressed by marginal differences, and he is certainly not given to

making predictions based on short-term trends or isolated variables.

Bouvier is ebullient in the preface: "I am flabbergasted by our findings. I have been a professional demographer for more years than I care to admit. . . . I began with some fairly strong suspicions about whether the eventual results would be significant. Honestly, I didn't expect any startling revelations – but I was wrong."

It's not even close

In short, low immigration cities have a much higher quality of life. It's not even close. By almost any standard, high immigration is overwhelming the housing, infrastructure and quality of life in the major impact areas. High immigration cities have twice as much unemployment, forty percent more people in poverty, twice as much welfare dependency, fifty percent less affordable housing, much longer average commuting times, ten times the number of people who can't speak English (Miami has 26 times as many people who cannot speak English as Omaha), sixty percent more dropouts, twice as much violent crime (related to overpopulation and overcrowded housing), much more rapid population growth, three times the population density, and seven times more crowded housing.

Bouvier and Garling also find that these trends will soon be replicated in low impact cities unless Congress clamps down on immigration.

It's fair to ask, didn't Bouvier and Garling find anything better in the high impact cities? Yes, they did. They found that health care indicators for Miami were better than for Omaha. They also found that for Americans at the high end of the income ladder, high impact cities may still have attractions, mostly cultural and culinary. But these individuals must have the kind of incomes that enable them to buy their way around immigration's undesirable effects, i.e., private schools, secure communities, etc.

Familiar Root Causes

In short, Bouvier and Garling have done a real public service here, killing two birds with one stone. They show us both that high, unrestrained immigration is not good for us as a nation, and they demonstrate why this issue is so class and income based.

For those in the top one percent of the income brackets, many of the negative consequences of the current immigration policies are outside their immediate range of experience. As for the rest of us, *A Tale of Ten Cities* is the tale of something greater, something we've suspected but until now were unable to illustrate: high immigration and the resultant

population growth are destroying the American dream and quality of life for all Americans.

Bouvier attributes this decline in the quality of life to a diseconomy of scale engendered by immigration-related population growth into an infrastructure and urban system ill-equipped for that kind of growth. At NPG, we view this phenomenon as part and parcel of our view that population growth must be halted as soon as possible, and then reversed.

Low immigration cities have a much higher quality of life.

While they may have fulfilled national objectives at one point in our national history, population growth policies are disastrous today. Bouvier and Garling evoke, in graphic and unparalleled relief, the oft-quoted observation that "ideas appropriate to one age can lead to disaster in the next."

Today's massive immigration is the driving force that is propelling our country down the path to disaster. Our broad national interest requires that it be drastically reduced.



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