

Urban Immigration

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Body

The Post's two-part series on the revival of New York City [front page, May 25 and 26] demonstrates the risk in using a policy of mass immigration to camouflage the ills of urban America.

Immigrants may renew neighborhoods abandoned by "white flight."

The unanswered question remains, "What impelled so many to flee the city in the first place?" Depending on an endless stream of immigrants, many of them illegal, to replace those who have left is hardly enlightened urban policy. As the series documents, many immigrants have no decent place to live, and they are willing to work in conditions that are little improvement over the sweatshops of the early 20th century. Is this what we mean by urban revitalization?

The most disturbing evidence, however, concerns the future. Overcrowding and the language and cultural problems caused by a rapid influx of immigrants have worsened the already-marginal academic performance of New York's schools. How, without adequate education, can the children of this generation of immigrants become the heads of solid middle-class households in the future?

No one questions that immigration brings many benefits to our society. But does our current policy of mass immigration (1.2 million immigrants per year, legal and illegal) augur well for the future of New York or other urban centers?

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