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### IMMIGRANT WOMEN HAVE MORE BABIES

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Birth rates for immigrant women - particularly Hispanics - are higher than for native-born women, according to a U.S. Census Bureau report released last week.

The survey found that in 1988, there were 96 births per 1,000 foreign- born women, compared with 67 births per 1,000 native-born women.

The report found that babies born to women from Latin America accounted for more than half - 201,000 - of the 390,000 babies born to all immigrant women in the United States in 1988. Overall, the birth rate for Latin Americans was 101 per 1,000.

Amara Bachu, a Census Bureau demographer who conducted the study, said the high fertility rates of immigrants have boosted American birth rates in general. She said foreign-born women made up about 7 percent of the population in 1988, while they accounted for 11 percent of all births.

Bachu said high fertility rates are linked to low levels of education. Her survey found that 76 percent of women born in Latin America hadn't completed high school and that only 2 percent had four or more years of college.

Another demographer, Alex DeSherbinin of the Population Reference Bureau, a non-profit study group in Washington, D.C., said the high Hispanic birth rates could be attributed in part to anti-birth- control teachings of the Catholic Church. He noted that women from Central America, in particular, come from a tradition of large families.

During the 1980s, the country experienced a dramatic influx of immigrants, mostly from Latin America and Asia.

The Census study focused on those groups, including Mexicans, Cubans, Chinese, Filipinos, Indians, Koreans and Vietnamese.

It shows that while the number of immigrants rose dramatically in America during the 1980s, the birth rates for foreign-born women also increased - from 83 births per 1,000 in 1983 to 96 per 1,000 in 1988.

At the same time, birth rates of native-born Americans declined from 73 to 67 per 1,000.

The Census report is expected to be cited in the debate over immigration in America. Groups that propose limiting it argue that foreigners' higher birth rates put a disproportionate burden on American public services, while pro-immigration activists say such talk is narrow- minded.

"Not only is (immigration) adding more people, but it's adding more people with higher fertility rates," said Rose Hanes, director of Population- Environment Balance, a Washington, D.C., group that advocates capping immigration. Hanes says families should include only two children, one child to replace each parent.

A similar position is taken by FAIR, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, another limit-immigration group in Washington, D.C., whose board of advisers includes financier Warren Buffett and former Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm.

FAIR Director Daniel Stein argues that higher birth rates will give immigrants a disproportionate share of political power as their numbers increase in America.

"It's almost like they're getting into competitive breeding," he said. "You have to take into account the various fertility rates in designing limits on immigration."

Cecilia Munoz of the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic civil rights group, said most immigrants have higher birth rates because "immigrants tend to be younger." She compared Stein's position to that of David Duke, the former Klan leader turned presidential candidate who has called for a halt to further immigration.

In the United States, according to another Census study, native-born Hispanics had 94 births per 1,000 women in 1988. The number for native-born non-Hispanic whites was 66 per 1,000 and for blacks it was 87 per 1,000.

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