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The views expressed here are solely those of the author.

Babies, Welfare and Crime

By Linda Thom

Synopsis

What connection exists between guns and babies? Immigration. Because of immigration, California's birth rate has climbed continuously since 1970. Between 1970 and 1993, births to foreign-born women accounted on average for 221,831 additional births in the state each year. Recent changes in the number of felony and misdemeanor arrests reflect the same patterns. Although birth location of criminals is not recorded, ethnic and racial data are maintained. The ethnic patterns of births and arrests are consistent with immigration patterns in California.

Babies

On March 22, 1995, a headline in the *Los Angeles Times* reported, "State Leads Nation in Rate of Teen-Age Births, Study Says." The study, released by the California Senate Office of Research indicated that in 1982, the state's teen birth rate was 52.8 births per thousand girls as compared to the national rate of 52.9 births per thousand girls (California Senate Office of Research). Other findings in the report included:

- In 1993, two-thirds of the fathers of children born to teenagers were adults.
- Despite recent, small declines in teen births overall, teen birth rates for Hispanics continue to grow. There has been a 44.8% increase in the decade between 1983 and 1993.
- In 1992, Medicaid funded over half of teen deliveries. The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) costs for one pregnancy, birth, and first year of support is \$10,000.
- Recent research indicates that two-thirds or more of pregnant and parenting teenagers have been victims of sexual abuse prior to becoming pregnant.
- Los Angeles County, alone, accounted for one-third of the teen births in 1993.

In 1993, the birth rates for females (under 20 years of age) by ethnicity and race are as follows:

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Birth rate</u>
Hispanic	123.2
African-American	97.9
White	36.2
Asian/Other	30.6

Why is the Hispanic birth rate so high? Why, when teen birth rates are declining, are Hispanic birth rates increasing? The press secretary for California Senate President Pro Tem Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward) stated, "We don't have any sense why it is so high among Hispanics." She said that researchers suspect that part of the reason may be because of the Hispanic population's increase in California. They may use abortions less frequently than other groups and they are closer to the poverty line than whites and Asian Americans (Ingram, *Los Angeles Times*).

***"Immigration caused all
of the increase in teen births
and then some."***

The question which jumps right out and bites is: Why is the Hispanic population increasing? Either it did not occur to anyone in the California Senate Office of Research or no one was willing to discuss the reason why there are so many Hispanic teens. This author guesses that no one wishes to discuss the issue, since the statistician who supplied the birth place data for this piece was the same person who supplied the teen birth data to the Senate Office of Research.

What did the statistician's numbers show? Immigration caused all of the increase in teen births and then some. Table 1 shows the change in annual teen births between 1970 and 1993 by place of birth of the mother.

**Table 1. California Births for Females under 20 years
by country of mother's origin**

Source: California Department of Health Services, birth records

Year	Total	U.S.	U.S. % total	Foreign	Foreign % total
1970	61,757	58,358	94.5%	3,399	5.5%
1975	53,601	44,701	83.4%	8,900	16.6%
1980	55,521	42,751	77%	12,770	23%
1985	51,255	37,505	73.2%	13,750	26.8%
1990	70,950	44,455	62.7%	26,495	37.3%
1993	70,091	43,848	62.6%	26,243	37.4%
Change	8,334	(14,510)		22,844	

Total annual teen births increased by 8,334. The number of annual births to United States-born girls declined by 14,510. The number of annual births to foreign-born girls increased by 22,844.

The foreign-born mothers are overwhelmingly Mexican but Table 2 shows that the births are also statistically significant among girls born in other countries.

Table 2. Ethnicity/Race and Birthplace of Teen Mothers, California-1993

Race/Ethnicity	Total Numbers	Mexico born	U.S. born	Other born
Total	70,091	20,014	43,848	6,229
Hispanic	42,199	19,902	19,246	3,051
White/NH	16,113	83	15,490	540
Black	7,913	3	7,767	143
Native Am	515	1	508	6
Filipino	807		342	465
Laotian	429		4	425
Vietnamese	352		15	337
Cambodian	238		3	235
Othr Asian	679		52	627
Samoan	118		69	49
Thai	87		9	78
Chinese	85		19	66
Guamian	73		37	36
Other	483	25	287	171

Immigration supporters would suggest that the births among native-born girls is declining because the number of native-born teens is declining and the number of immigrant-teen births are increasing because the number of immigrant teens is increasing. That, of course, is true; however, the birth *rate* of immigrant

teens is disproportionately high. Recall that the Senate Office of Research study showed that Hispanic teen birth rates continued to climb while birth rates for all other racial groups fell two years in a row. The girls are not only young, but also they are poor. Medicaid funded half of the teen deliveries in 1993. Statistics for all

women reflect these same patterns. Table 3 shows the change in the distribution of births to United States-born and foreign born women between 1970 and 1993 (Burke).

From 1970 to 1993, the annual births for US-born women decreased by 1,565 and the annual births for foreign-born women increased by 223,396. Foreign-born women accounted for 45% of the total births in 1993 and Mexican-born women accounted for 27% of the total births. The countries of the mothers' birth are distributed much the same as the countries of origin of the teens. Moreover, the total fertility rate (TFR) of all California Hispanic women was 3.5 in 1992 which is one full child higher than the next highest TFR, that for

(100,989) were funded by OBRA/IRCA Medicaid, a special program for illegal and amnestied aliens. Medicaid data for refugee and naturalized citizen births are not available, as those cases are carried in the regular caseload statistics.

For example, Imperial County which is immediately east of San Diego County and north of the Mexican border showed 56 percent of births (1,583) to foreign-born women (all but 54 were born in Mexico) in 1993 but only 11.2 percent (318) of the total deliveries were funded by OBRA/IRCA Medicaid. However, 60 percent (1,697) of the total births (2,849) in 1993 were Medicaid funded and 81 percent (1,376) of the Medicaid funded deliveries were to Hispanic women. Clearly,

Table 3. Annual Births in California by Birthplace of Mother, 1970-93

	Total	US-born	Percent	Foreign	Percent
1970	362,652	324,375	89.4%	38,277	10.6%
1975	324,949	242,460	74.6%	82,489	25.4%
1980	402,720	286,873	71.2%	115,847	28.8%
1985	470,816	319,204	67.8%	151,612	32.2%
1990	611,666	361,388	59.1%	250,278	40.9%
1993	584,483	322,810	55.2%	261,673	44.8%
Increase	221,831	(1,565)		223,396	

blacks (Burke).

The overall effect of this is a skyrocketing population in California. "Natural increase (the number of births less the number of deaths) will assume the leading role in the State's population growth in the 1990's, increasing from 45 percent of total population growth in the 1980's to 60 percent in the 1990's" (Governor's Summary Budget, 1994-1995, p. 17). In addition to the births, California continues to receive large numbers of immigrants and their children.

Absolutely no question exists, therefore, as to why California classrooms are overcrowded. California has the unenviable fiftieth position in a ranking among the states of average students per class. The Urban Institute, chief proponent of the "immigrants pay their way" theory, does not include the costs associated with U.S. citizen children when computing the costs of immigration (Passel). But who is responsible for the tax dollars needed to pay for these children's schooling? Their next door neighbors?

Poverty Among Immigrant Women

California's foreign-born women are disproportionately poor. Of the 261,673 births to foreign-born women in 1993, 39 percent of the deliveries

many immigrant women in Imperial County have become naturalized citizens. This contrasts with Los Angeles County which had 189,706 deliveries of which 111,892 were to foreign-born women; and 50,579 of the foreign-born deliveries were funded by OBRA/IRCA Medicaid (*California Department of Health Services, Medical Care Statistics, birth records*).

In addition to Medicaid, the U.S. Department of Agriculture funds the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). WIC is a supplemental food and nutrition program for low-income pregnant, breast feeding and postpartum women, and for infants and children up to the age of five who are at nutritional risk. The WIC caseload in California has grown from 580,000 participants in December 1991 to 612,000 in January 1993 and was anticipated to reach 950,000 clients by the end of September 1994 (*WIC: 2000*, p. 11).

The report goes on to say, "Many of these young women and children are WIC-eligible (185% of the federal poverty level, or \$22,792 per year for a family of three) because the economic conditions for young California families have worsened in the last two decades.... Today, one in four children — 2.2 million — live in families whose income is below the poverty

level" (*WIC: 2000*, p.15). Did the conditions worsen or did the poor people come from some place else?

The report continues, "The population dynamics in California are markedly different ... from those in other states. The number of births and the number of children in California have been increasing since the late 1970's... The state experienced an 18 percent increase in its birthrate between 1980 and 1990. This trend is impacted by three factors: 1) a small overall increase in fertility rates, 2) a higher proportion of women of childbearing age, particularly those from ethnic groups with high fertility rates, and 3) immigration..." (*WIC 2000*, p. 14).

WIC services are provided regardless of immigration status and, therefore, no statistics are available on the birthplace of mothers. Ethnic and racial data are maintained, however, and the distribution by race and ethnicity is remarkably similar to that of California's clients whose deliveries were funded by Medicaid. Table 4 shows the ethnic distribution of Medicaid and WIC clients in 1993.

The WIC caseload is climbing rapidly. The client ethnicity and racial distribution is obviously the same as the Medicaid caseload. If immigrants account for all of the increase in the annual birthrate, we can presume that they comprise the added caseload for Medicaid-funded deliveries and for the WIC program.

Children of immigrants who are born in the United States are citizens. They are eligible for the full scope of welfare services if their parents are poor. Many poor refugee families live in California also and receive welfare benefits. Between 1980 and 1990, California accounted for 525,000 of the 1,035,000 added clients in the nation's Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Texas and Florida accounted for an additional 494,000. Together, these three states accounted for 98 percent of the added clients on AFDC for the entire nation in the decade of the 80's (US Census, Table 607).

And the trend continues in the 90's: "From 1990-91 through 1995-96, the [California] AFDC caseload will have grown ... 40 percent while the population of the state will have grown 9.4 percent. In federal fiscal year 1992, California had only 12 percent of the nation's population, but accounted for ... 26 percent of the national total of AFDC expenditures" (*Governor's Budget Summary, 1995-96*, p. 64).

Without a doubt, immigration is causing an increase in population and poverty in California.

Guns

Birth place data are not available for those who are arrested for crimes. Ethnic and racial data are available, however. Biologically, young women have babies and young men commit crimes. It does not matter if they live in Lithuania or Louisiana. In California in 1993, 75 percent of all felony arrests were of men under 40 years of age and 98 percent of births were to women under 40. How are guns and babies connected? Immigrants are disproportionately young. If immigrants account for the increase in babies, do immigrants account for the increase in crime? Yes, they do.

Felony arrests among teen males are increasing while misdemeanor arrests are decreasing. As with teen births, the numeric overview does not tell the story; the ethnic composition does. Table 5 shows the change in arrests by race and ethnicity for males under the age of 20 in California for the period 1986 to 1993. (The category "Other" is primarily Asian/Pacific Islander but it also includes Native Americans and others.)

Felony arrests for young white and black males declined by 11,415 while felony arrests for Hispanics and "Others", most of whom are Asians, increased by 22,965. Felony arrests among teens would be dropping precipitously but for arrests among Hispanics and "others." The misdemeanor arrests are consistent with the felony trends. White and black, young male misdemeanor arrests are down by 46,724. Hispanic and "other" misdemeanor arrests are up by 16,253 (California Department of Justice).

The ethnic composition of the arrests for violent crimes is especially troubling. Violent crimes are offenses against people and include: homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault and kidnapping. Aggravated assault is defined as "an unlawful attack or attempted attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe and aggravated bodily injury. This type of assault usually is accompanied by the use of weapons or by means likely to produce death or great bodily harm." Table 6 shows statistics for all felony arrests and for selected violent crimes.

Some of the information that can be garnered from this data: white teen males are committing more crimes of property than violent crimes as their percentage of crimes against people is relatively low (19 percent) as compared to their total felony arrest percentage (26

Table 4. Ethnic/Racial Distribution of WIC and Medicaid Clients, 1993

Ethnicity/Race	Medicaid	WIC
White	19%	13%
Hispanic	62%	64%
Black	9%	9%
Asian/Pac Isl	6%	7%
Native Amer.	.4%	.6%
Not Reported	4%	7%

percent). Hispanic, black and "other" teens are committing more violent crimes but note that black data is skewed by blacks' very high level of robbery arrests (40 percent). Assault and homicide arrests are disproportionately accounted for by Hispanics. Other (mostly Asians) homicide arrests are 138 as compared to whites' arrests which are 122. As there are significantly fewer Asian teens than white teens, this trend is very disturbing.

Does immigration have anything to do with this? Considering what we know about the birth place of teen mothers in California, what other explanation could there be?

Are teens the only tarnish on the Golden State? No, unfortunately, adult crime statistics are also dismal but the absolute numbers are much greater. Table 7 includes all felony arrests, for men and women, adults and

158 and by 1993, they were 281; that is a 78 percent increase! In 1993, 138 of the total 281 homicide arrests were Asian males under 20 years of age.

Table 8 shows the change in all misdemeanor arrests as compared to the change in misdemeanor arrests for males under 20 years of age.

Overall, misdemeanor arrests declined significantly but arrests for teen males did not decline nearly so sharply. The majority of the decline is caused by the large decrease in white arrests. Black arrests are also down by 9 percent overall which is very encouraging. Hispanic male youths, in contrast, accounted for almost half of the increase in misdemeanor arrests and the "Other" male youths misdemeanor arrests increased by 2,005 while arrests, overall, decreased by 369. The trends in arrests for Asian and Hispanic male teens are not good.

Table 5. Felonies and Misdemeanors by Ethnicity

Felonies	1986	1993	Change
Total	111,040	122,690	11,650
White	40,577	31,960	(8,617)
Hispanic	34,770	54,022	19,252
Black	29,855	27,057	(2,798)
Other	5,938	9,651	3,713
Misdemeanors	1986	1993	Change
Total	194,015	163,544	(30,471)
White	105,104	58,864	(46,240)
Hispanic	56,478	70,726	14,248
Black	23,073	22,589	(484)
Other	9,360	11,365	2,005

juveniles.

Together, Hispanic and Other (primarily Asian) arrests increased by 74,372 or 78.8 percent of the increase in felony arrests between 1986 and 1993. On a base of 17,279, the "Other" category increased by 9,020 arrests as compared to a black arrest increase of 2,426 on a base of 136,769. Clearly, the rise in arrests among Asians is very rapid and the black arrests are still very high but not rising so rapidly.

The violent crime data for adults are similar to those for juveniles. The felony statistics are disturbing but the homicide statistics are more so. Between 1986 and 1993, the number of homicides increased by 244. White and black arrests declined by 221. Homicide arrests for Hispanics increased by 342. In 1986, homicide arrests among "Others," mostly Asians, were

Does the change in the ethnic and racial composition of arrests have anything to do with immigration? What other explanation could there be? This is not to say that all Hispanics and Asians are immigrants but rather most immigrants are Hispanic and Asian. There must be a connection between the changing ethnic and racial composition of the arrests and immigration.

Conclusion

Repeatedly, "think tank" reports indicate that data are not available. Statistics *are* available. They are everywhere and they are public record. As more statistics appear and suggest that everything is not working out, immigration supporters cry "racism."

In a review of the book, *Alien Nation* by Peter Brimelow, *Newsweek* writer Tom Morganthau states,

Table 8. Change in Misdemeanor Arrests, California 1986-93

	Total	White	Hispanic	Black	Other
1986	1,299,222	678,145	377,814	185,403	57,860
1993	1,079,136	455,228	407,086	169,331	57,491
All Change	(220,086)	(222,857)	29,272	(16,072)	(369)
Teen Change	(30,471)	(46,240)	14,248	(484)	2,005

"Brimelow thinks race counts, though he never actual-ly says other racial groups are inferior to whites. But he implies it, by rehashing tendentious research on immigrant welfare dependency ... and by making much of the irrelevant fact that immigrants now compose 25 percent of the federal prison population" (Morganthau).

Morganthau does not say the *facts* are wrong, only that Brimelow must be racist because Morganthau believes the *facts* are tendentious and irrelevant. Perhaps Morganthau believes the facts are tendentious and irrelevant because they do not support his point of view.

More important, why is it racist to discuss the facts? Perhaps Morganthau wants discussion of the facts to stop.

"...in California, the U.S. citizen children of illegal immigrants are almost half of the AFDC caseload increase since 1985."

Table 6. Ethnic/Racial Composition of Selected Felony Arrests for Males under 20 years, California 1993

Source: California Department of Justice

	Total	White	Hispanic	Black	Other
All Felonies	122,690	31,960	54,022	27,057	9,651
Percent of all	100%	26%	44%	22%	8%
Violent Crimes	30,137	5,647	13,666	8,613	2,211
Percent of all	100%	19%	45%	29%	7%
*Homicide	1,091	122	514	317	138
Percent	100%	11%	47%	29%	13%
*Robbery	11,297	1,257	4,835	4,479	726
Percent	100%	11%	43%	40%	6%
*Assault	16,578	4,028	7,794	3,488	1,268
Percent	100%	24%	47%	21%	8%

Table 7. Racial/Ethnic Composition of Felony Arrest Changes California, 1986 to 1993

	Total	White	Hispanic	Black	Other
1986	469,982	183,022	132,912	136,769	17,279
1993	564,307	200,549	198,264	139,195	26,299
Increase	94,325	17,527	65,352	2,426	9,020
Percent of total increase	100%	18.6%	69.3%	2.6%	9.6%

Further, so-called-experts keep repeating nonsense such as, "The most striking feature is that for all programs, welfare participation rates of undocumented immigrants were well below those of the total U.S. population." (Tienda and Liang) It would only be "striking" if the welfare participation rates of illegal aliens were *high* because illegal aliens are legally barred from receiving most welfare benefits. The benefits for which they are eligible, such as OBRA/IRCA Medicaid for delivery of babies and WIC, are used in abundance. In addition, in California, the U.S. citizen children of illegal immigrants are almost half of the AFDC caseload increase since 1985. (Department of Social Services)

Are the experts trying to convince us that illegal immigrants do not use welfare because the illegals do not want to? Are we to conclude that illegal immigrants who do not use AFDC are morally superior to their children who do? Are these immigration experts trying to mislead us into thinking illegal immigrants are not big users of welfare, or that they will not use it if we naturalize them?

More probably, the experts are not experts. They do not understand the programs they are studying and, therefore, leap to unwarranted conclusions which support their preconceived notions and do not explore other plausible explanations for low welfare usage by illegal aliens such as: they are not eligible.

Many Californians are tired of being called racists. They do not need dueling studies of the economic consequences of immigration. The changes in California are obvious to all who wish to see. The majority of Californians are tired of waiting for something to be done, as the 59-percent-yes-vote on Proposition 187 demonstrates. As much as anything, the passage of Proposition 187 was a measure of voters' frustrations with government. Most Californians just do not want any more poor immigrants, legal or illegal.

***"Many Californians are tired
of being called racists."***

Maybe in the long run it will all work out, as immigrant supporters claim, but in the words of the late British economist, John Maynard Keynes, "in the long run, we will all be dead." In the meantime, California must suffer ever more crowded schools, highways, prisons, parks and welfare rolls. To pay for all the added poor people, huge cuts are being made to local programs such as libraries, parks and recreation programs. Tuition at junior colleges and public universities continue to rise as the State diverts more and more financial support away from higher education to pay for burgeoning health, welfare and school services. The native-born

poor have endured repeated cuts in public assistance. Californians suffer increased crimes, teen gangs and graffiti in their communities.

Californians want to know what conceivable national interest is served by this? ■

[Previous articles by Linda Thom in THE SOCIAL CONTRACT: "Where Are All These Poor People Coming From?" in Volume V, No. 2 (Winter 1994-95) p. 108; "The Urban Institute's Estimates of Taxes Paid by Illegal Aliens," Volume V, No. 3 (Spring 1995) p. 209.]

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