

February 15, 1998

February 8-14; Hispanic Baby Boom

The number of babies born to Hispanic women in the United States has reached a record high.

The National Center for Health Statistics revealed that 18 percent of the total number of births were to Hispanic mothers. In 1995, the latest year for which complete data are available, 679,768 Hispanic babies were born, which is up from 532,249 Hispanic-origin births in 1989, when 14 percent of all babies born in this country had Hispanic mothers. Hispanic residents make up 10.3 percent of the country's population.

Much of the increase is the result of high fertility rates among Mexican-Americans, particularly recent immigrants. The study also estimated that this group of women would average 3.32 births over their lifetimes, compared with 1.7 births for Cuban-American women and 2.2 births for Puerto Rican women, rates that are comparable to those of black and non-Hispanic white women.

The findings suggest that, as a result of immigration and a high birth rate, people of Mexican heritage are in a position to become a major force in the coming decades in economics, politics and culture.