

Immigrants: 60 Percent of U.S. Population Growth

by Virginia Abernethy

The immigration share of the U.S. population growth rises continuously as births to recent immigrants are added to the annual flow of new arrivals. The usually reported numbers reflect *annual flow*. But this flow does not fully represent immigration's impact on population size because the downstream effects, i.e., family formation and births, are ignored.

Total immigration impact is *annual immigration plus births to the foreign born minus deaths and*

results. The foreign born are about ten percent of the population but had over 18 percent of births. Immigration and children born to the foreign-born sector, in 1994, accounted for a *net* increase of 1.6 million persons, or sixty percent, of the United States' annual population growth. **TSC**

NOTES

1. "Immigration-Related Statistics — 1995." 1995. *Backgrounder*, No. 2-95, July. Center for Immigration Studies, Washington, DC.

| 1994 | Native Born | Foreign Born | Total |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Immigration ¹ | 0 | 1,206,000 | 1,206,000 |
| Births ² | 3,264,505 | 731,262 | 3,995,767 |
| Deaths ³ | -2,074,136 | -204,858 | -2,278,994 |
| Emigration ^{4,5} | -125,000 | -125,000 | -250,000 (estimate) |
| Population Growth | 1,065,369 | 1,607,404 | 2,672,773 |
| Percentage Share | 40% | 60% | 100% |

emigration of immigrants. The native-born account is *births minus deaths and emigration* of this sector. Annual population growth is the sum of the immigration and native born accounts.

These calculations for the year 1994, using National Center for Health Statistics (1996) figures on births and deaths and Center for Immigration Studies (1995) figures on immigration, yield startling

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2. S.J. Ventura, J.A. Martin, T.J. Mathews, S.C. Clarke, 1996. "Advance Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1994," Vol. 44, No. 11, Supplement, June 24, Tables 10 and 11, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD.
3. Unpublished figures, Table 308, National Center for Health Statistics, Division of Vital Statistics, Mortality Statistics Branch.
4. Robert Warren and Ellen Percy Kraly, 1989. "The Elusive Exodus: Emigration from the United States," Immigration and Naturalization Service, Washington, DC.
5. Gary Belsky, 1994, "Escape from America," *Money*, July, pp. 60-70.

Tunnel Vision Dooms America's Future

Population study ignores everything that counts

by **B. Meredith Burke**

Whom you seek advice from reveals what you want to hear. This observation by Jean-Paul Sartre best explains the diametrically opposite conclusions reached in 1972 by the President's Commission on Population Growth and the American Future and the report that has just been issued by the National Academy of Science panel at the behest of the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform.

The bipartisan 1972 panel, headed by John D. Rockefeller III, founder of The Population Council, had a diverse membership. It included lay people, politicians and scientists. Its five-volume report examined the role of population in every facet of American life. The effects of population level and growth on both the individual and community levels were thoroughly examined.

The Commission observed the high value Americans place upon low-density, compact communities, and easy access to uncrowded open space as well as to political representatives. It concluded there was no value in American life that could be furthered by additional population growth. It condemned our pro-growth ideology, recommending population stabilization (then at 200 million) as fast as possible. Immigration policy would necessarily have to respect this reality.

This year's report was produced by a panel of social scientists led by a Rand Corporation economist. They favor econometric computer models that utilize readily quantifiable monetary and demographic data. The methodology rules the kinds of questions that are asked, rather than vice versa. Societal values and quality-of-life considerations

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which produce preference rankings do not fit this model.

Moreover, the Commission expressly enjoined the NAS panel from addressing the issue of optimum population. Therefore, the NAS report evaded the implications of doubling by mid-21st century (and more likely sooner) a population the earlier panel found already excessive. It ignored two decades of national surveys showing an American consensus on the need to stop population growth — e.g. a 1992 Roper poll found that only 27 percent nationally and 11 percent in California, home to half the new immigrants, believed their state could handle an increase in population. It was oblivious to the assessment by some leading ecologists that the United States' long-term sustainable population is 150 million, a total we have exceeded ever since 1950.

“[The Commission on Immigration Reform] recommended continuing the pace of immigration that has already nullified the benefits of the low fertility of the boomers.”

Instead, the panel endorsed the perpetual motion model of population. Rather than hailing the “Baby Bust” as a welcome corrective to the previous baby boom, it condemned the resultant temporary shift upwards in the age distribution of our population. Thus it recommended continuing the pace of immigration that has already nullified the benefits of the low fertility of the boomers themselves.

Most culpably, the panel's restrictive definition of immigration's “costs” excludes dozens of categories. It excludes all environmental costs considered by the