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U.S. Birth Rate Falls to a Record Low; Decline Is Greatest Among Immigrants

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OVERVIEW

The U.S. birth rate dipped in 2011 to the lowest ever recorded, led by a plunge in births to immigrant women since the onset of the Great Recession.

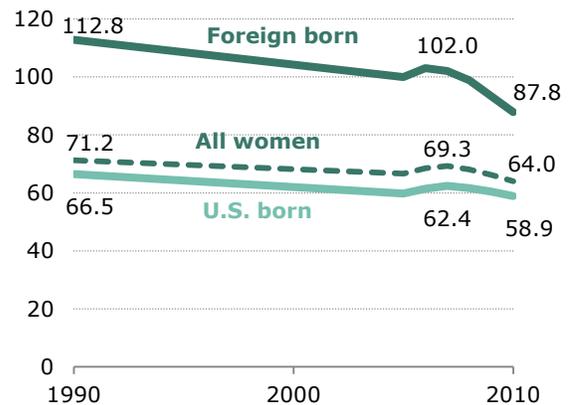
The overall U.S. birth rate, which is the annual number of births per 1,000 women in the prime childbearing ages of 15 to 44, declined 8% from 2007 to 2010. The birth rate for U.S.-born women decreased 6% during these years, but the birth rate for foreign-born women plunged 14%—more than it had declined over the entire 1990-2007 period.¹ The birth rate for Mexican immigrant women fell even more, by 23%.

Final 2011 data are not available, but according to preliminary data from the National Center for Health Statistics, the overall birth rate in 2011 was 63.2 per 1,000 women of childbearing age. That rate is the lowest since at least 1920, the earliest year for which there are reliable numbers.² The overall U.S. birth rate peaked most recently in the Baby Boom years, reaching 122.7 in 1957, nearly double today's rate. The birth rate sagged through the mid-1970s but stabilized at 65-70 births per 1,000 women for most years after that before falling again after 2007, the beginning of the Great Recession.

In addition to the birth rate decline, the number of U.S. births, which had been rising

Foreign-born Women Led Recent Decline in Birth Rates ...

Births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44



Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census and American Community Survey data (see Methodology)

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... But Still Account for a Disproportionate Share of 2010 Births

% of total population that is foreign born



% of women ages 15-44 who are foreign born



% of all births to foreign-born mothers



Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census and American Community Survey data (see Methodology)

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¹ The 2011 data do not include birthplace of mothers, so do not permit analysis of births to U.S.-born and immigrant mothers.

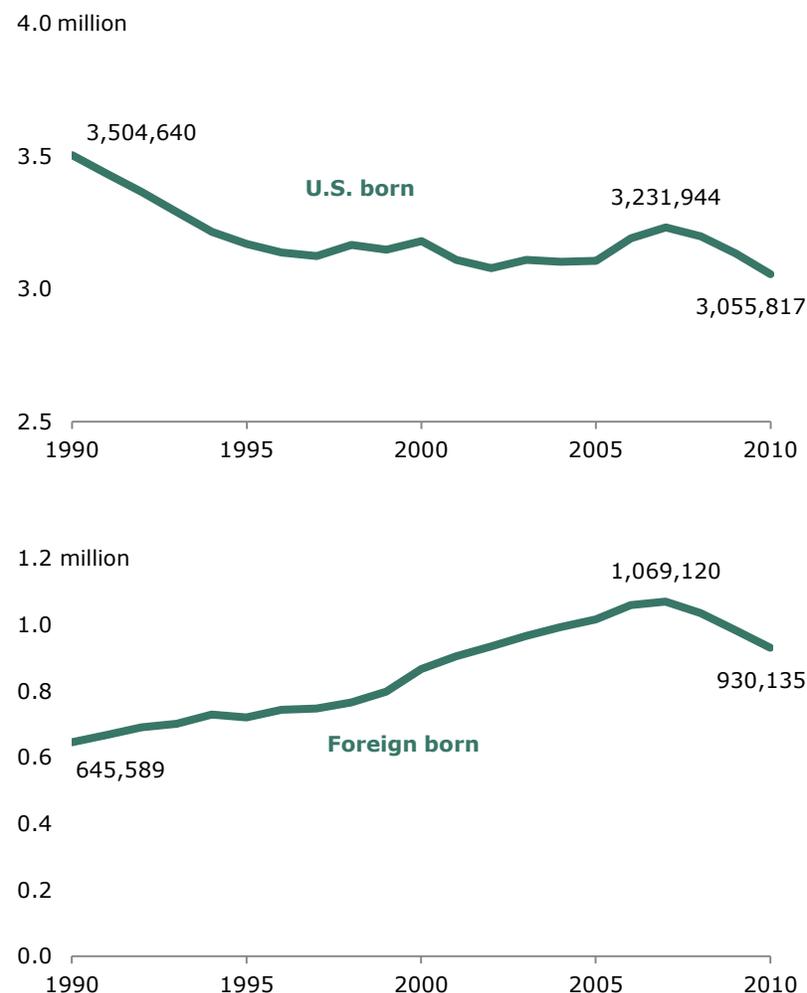
² Brady E. Hamilton, Joyce A. Martin and Stephanie J. Ventura, "Births: Preliminary Data for 2011," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 61, No. 5, Oct. 3, 2012.

since 2002, fell abruptly after 2007—a decrease also led by immigrant women. From 2007 to 2010, the overall number of births declined 7%, pulled down by a 13% drop in births to immigrants and a relatively modest 5% decline in births to U.S.-born women.

Despite the recent decline, foreign-born mothers continue to give birth to a disproportionate share of the nation's newborns, as they have for at least the past two decades. The 23% share of all births to foreign-born mothers in 2010 was higher than the 13% immigrant share of the U.S. population, and higher than the 17% share of women ages 15-44 who are immigrants. The 2010 birth rate for foreign-born women (87.8) was nearly 50% higher than the rate for U.S.-born women (58.9).

Number of Recent Births Peak in 2007

Annual births (1990-2010) to mothers who are ...



Source: National Center for Health Statistics (see Methodology)

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Total U.S. births in 2010 were 4.0 million—roughly 3.1 million to U.S.-born women and 930,000 to immigrant women. In 2011, according to preliminary data, there were 3.95 million total births.

The recent downturn in births to immigrant women reversed a trend in which foreign-born mothers accounted for a rising share of U.S. births. In 2007, births to foreign-born mothers

accounted for 25% of U.S. births, compared with 16% in 1990. That share decreased to 23% in 2010.

The fall in the number of births to immigrant women is explained by behavior (falling birth rates), rather than population composition (change in the number of women of childbearing age), according to a Pew Research analysis. Despite a recent drop in unauthorized immigration from Mexico, the largest source country for U.S. immigrants, the Pew

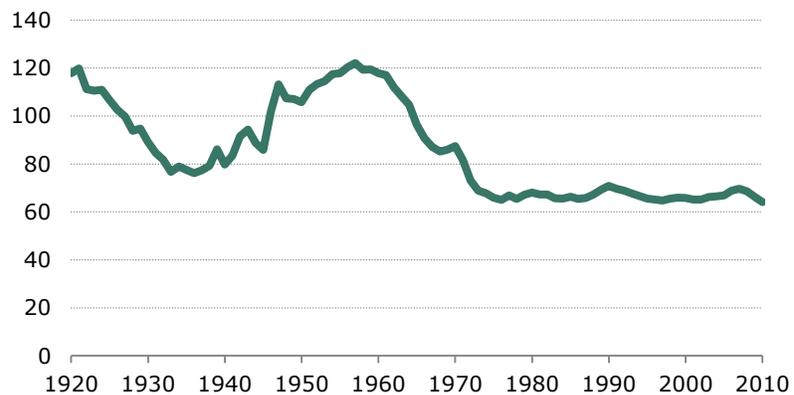
Research analysis found no decline in the number of foreign-born women of childbearing age.³

This report does not address the reasons that women had fewer births after 2007, but a previous Pew Research analysis⁴ concluded that the recent fertility decline is closely linked to economic distress. States with the largest economic declines from 2007 to 2008, as shown by six major indicators, were most likely to experience relatively large fertility declines from 2008 to 2009, the analysis found.

Both foreign- and U.S.-born Hispanic women had larger birth rate declines from 2007 to 2010 than did other groups. Hispanics also had larger percentage declines in household wealth than white, black or Asian households from 2005 to 2009.⁵ Poverty and unemployment also grew more sharply for Latinos than for non-Latinos after the Great Recession began, and most Hispanics say that the economic downturn was harder on them than on other groups.⁶

Birth Rates, 1920-2010

Births per 1,000 women ages 15-44



Source: Statistics calculated using data obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics and Heuser (1976), available [here](#)

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³ See Jeffrey Passel et al., "[Net Migration From Mexico Falls to Zero—and Perhaps Less](#)," Pew Hispanic Center, May 3, 2012.

⁴ See Gretchen Livingston, "[In a Down Economy, Fewer Births](#)," Pew Social & Demographic Trends, Oct. 12, 2011.

⁵ See Rakesh Kochhar et al., "[Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics](#)," Pew Social & Demographic Trends, July 26, 2011.

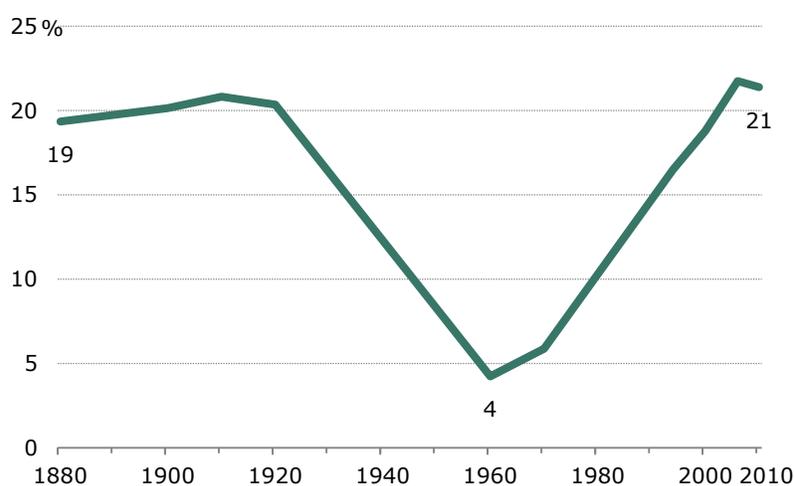
⁶ See Paul Taylor et al., "[Hispanics Say They Have the Worst of a Bad Economy](#)," Pew Hispanic Center, Jan. 26, 2012.

Looking back a century, data about very young children provide evidence about earlier trends.⁷ The share of U.S.-born children younger than age 2 with foreign-born mothers was about as high during the wave of immigration in the early 1900s (21%) as it is now. By 1960, after four decades of restrictions on immigration, that share had plummeted to a low of only 4%. It inched up to 6% by 1970 before rising rapidly as immigration levels increased due mainly to federal legislation passed in 1965.

Population projections from the Pew Research Center indicate that immigrants will continue to play a large role in U.S. population growth. The projections indicate that immigrants arriving since 2005 and their descendants will account for fully 82% of U.S. population growth by 2050.⁸ Even if the lower immigration influx of recent years continues, new immigrants and their descendants are still projected to account for most of the nation's population increase by mid-century.

Share of U.S.-born Young Children with Foreign-born Mothers, 1880-2010

Among children younger than age 2



Source: Statistics calculated using U.S. Census and American Community Survey data (see Methodology)

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Among this report's other major findings:

- A majority of births to U.S.-born women (66%) in 2010 were to white mothers (although that share was smaller than in 1990, when it was 72%), while the majority of births to foreign-born women (56%) were to Hispanic mothers.
- Teen mothers account for a higher share of births to U.S.-born women (11% in 2010) than to foreign-born women (5%), in part because of the age profile of immigrants.
- Mothers ages 35 and older account for a higher share of births to immigrants (21% in 2010) than to the U.S. born (13%). In fact, immigrants accounted for fully 33% of births to women ages 35 and older in 2010.

⁷ Complete national-level historical birth data including mother's nativity status are not available.

⁸ See Jeffrey Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050," Pew Social & Demographic Trends, Feb. 11, 2008.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report uses data for 1990 to 2010 from the National Center for Health Statistics and the Census Bureau to analyze and compare fertility patterns of foreign-born and U.S.-born women. The report consists of an overview and section on overall trends; births by the race, ethnicity and national origin of mothers; births by age of mothers; and births by marital status of mothers. Appendix A provides details on methodology and data analysis. Appendix B includes additional tables.

This report was written by Gretchen Livingston, senior demographer, and D’Vera Cohn, senior writer, of the Pew Research Center’s Social & Demographic Trends project. Editorial guidance was provided by Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the Pew Research Center and director of its Social & Demographic Trends project. Guidance also was provided by Jeffrey Passel, senior demographer, and Kim Parker, senior researcher, both of the Pew Research Center. Charts were prepared by Eileen Patten and Seth Motel, research assistants. Number-checking was done by Motel and Patten. The report was copy-edited by Marcia Kramer.

TERMINOLOGY

All references to whites, blacks and Asians are to the non-Hispanic components of those populations. Asians also include Pacific Islanders.

“U.S. born” and “native born” refer to people born in the 50 states or District of Columbia. “Foreign born” and “immigrant” are used interchangeably. In keeping with the practice of the National Center for Health Statistics, women born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories are included with the foreign born. See Methodology for more details.

Unless otherwise specified, “teens” refers to those ages 10 to 19.

In references to marital status, “married” includes those who are separated.

OVERALL TRENDS

Immigrant mothers accounted for 23% of U.S. births in 2010, an increase from their 16% share in 1990, but a slight decrease from their 25% peak share in 2005-2007. The share of births to foreign-born mothers is higher than the proportion of immigrants in the overall population, which also has risen during this period. In 1990, immigrants were 8% of the U.S. population, and in 2010 they were 13%.

Overall U.S. births declined

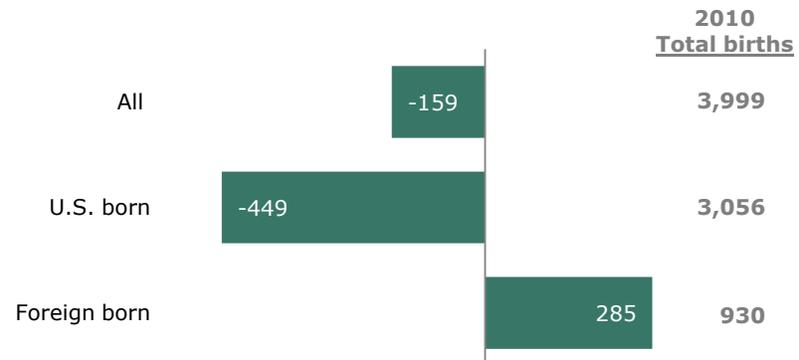
slightly from 1990 to 2010, to 4.0 million from 4.2 million. Birth trends diverged for foreign-born and U.S.-born mothers over this period. Births to U.S.-born women, which numbered 3.5 million in 1990, decreased or did not change in most years since then. Births rose in 2006 and 2007 before declining over the next three years, by 5%, to 3.1 million in 2010. Over the entire 1990-2010 period, births to U.S.-born women declined by nearly 450,000, or 13%, to 3.1 million.

By contrast, births to immigrant women, which numbered 646,000 in 1990, rose each year but one until peaking in 2007, at 1.1 million. From 2007 to 2010, they fell by a marked 13%, to 930,000. Over the entire 1990-2010 period, births to immigrant women grew by more than 280,000, or 44%.

The largely contrasting fertility patterns of U.S.-born and foreign-born women had the net effect of producing a small rise in the total number of births over the 1990-2007 period. But from 2007 to 2010, total births decreased 7%, with births to U.S.-born women declining by a modest 5% and births to immigrant women dropping by 13%.

Change in Number of Births, by Nativity of Mother, 1990-2010

In thousands



Note: Numbers do not add to total because of missing nativity data.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

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From 2007 to 2010, the number of U.S. births shrank by more than 300,000. A sharp decrease in births to immigrant women accounted for more than 40% of the overall decline.

One reason that immigrant mothers account for a disproportionate share of births is that immigrants are more likely than others to be in their childbearing years. Among immigrants in 2010, 25% were women ages 15-44, compared with 19% of the U.S.-born population. Over the 1990-2010 period, the number of immigrant women of childbearing age grew by 85%, while the number of native-born women of childbearing age dwindled by 1%.

Looked at another way, among all women of childbearing age, 17% were immigrants in 2010, an increase from 10% in 1990.

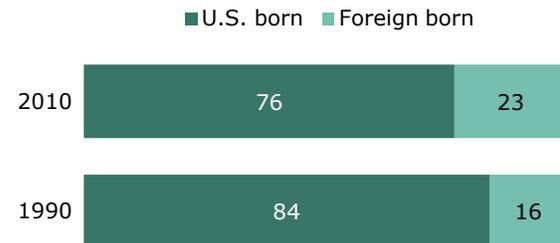
Another measure of childbearing—the birth rate, or children born per 1,000 women ages 15-44—was 87.8 for immigrants in 2010 and 58.9 for U.S.-born women. Birth rates for both groups have declined markedly since 1990—by 11% for U.S.-born women and by 22% for foreign-born women. From 2007 to 2010, there was an especially sharp decline in birth rates for immigrant women—14%, compared with a 6% decline for U.S.-born women.

The sharper decline in birth rates to immigrant women compared with native-born women has closed the gap in birth rates somewhat over the 20-year period. In 1990, the birth rate for immigrant women was 70% higher than for native-born women. In 2010, it was 49% higher.

Another measure of fertility—children ever born—indicates the number of children that women nearing the end of their childbearing years have had in their lifetimes (including those who have had no children). According to the Current Population Survey, this number is an average 2.1 for immigrant women, and 1.8 for U.S.-born women.⁹

Share of Births by Nativity of Mother, 1990 and 2010

% of births to mothers who are ...



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to missing nativity data or rounding.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

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⁹ This analysis uses data from the Current Population Survey for 2006-2010. This measure of completed fertility does not account for changes in birth patterns among younger women.

RACE, ETHNICITY AND NATIONAL ORIGIN

Among mothers of newborns overall in 2010, slightly more than half (54%) were white, 15% were black, 24% were Hispanic and 6% were Asian. But there are marked differences in the racial and ethnic characteristics of births to U.S.-born and immigrant mothers, which are a byproduct of both population makeup and birth rates.

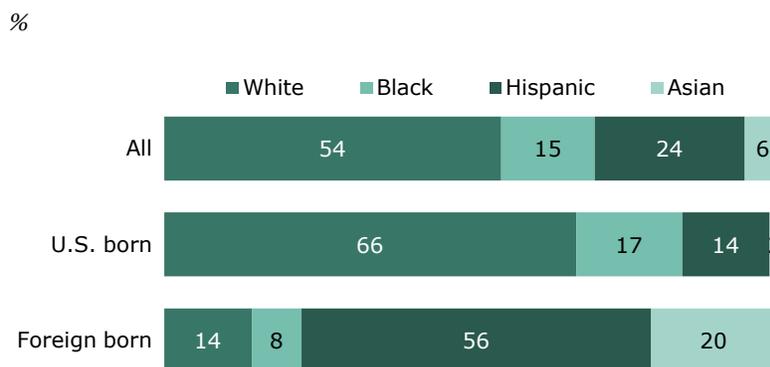
In 2010, 66% of U.S.-born mothers of newborns were white, compared with 14% of

new immigrant mothers. Among foreign-born mothers, 56% were Hispanic, compared with 14% of U.S.-born mothers. The share of new mothers who were black was higher among the U.S. born than the foreign born (17% vs. 8%). The share of new mothers who were Asian was higher among immigrants than among the U.S. born (20% vs. 2%).

Since 1990, the share of births to U.S.-born mothers who are white has decreased from 72%, while the share to U.S.-born mothers who are Hispanic has grown from 7%. The racial and ethnic composition of births to foreign-born mothers has changed little. But because births to immigrant mothers have grown, they play a bigger role today in determining the race and ethnic makeup of total births.

Within each race and ethnic group, there also are marked differences in the shares of births to mothers by nativity. Among births to whites, 6% in 2010 were to immigrant mothers, little changed from 4% in 1990. Among births to black mothers, 13% were to immigrants in 2010, up from 7% in 1990. By contrast, the foreign-born share has decreased among Asian and Hispanic mothers. Among births to Asian mothers, 80% were to immigrants in 2010, compared with 86% in 1990. Among births to Hispanics, 56% were to foreign-born mothers in 2010, compared with 61% in 1990.

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Births, By Nativity of Mother, 2010



Notes: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race. Other racial and ethnic groups not shown.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

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Generally, the foreign-born population has grown more rapidly, includes more women in their childbearing years and has higher birth rates than the U.S.-born population. But these metrics vary by race and ethnic group.

Both the foreign-born and U.S.-born population of whites have lower shares of women in their childbearing years than do the black, Hispanic and Asian populations.

Among all racial and ethnic groups, Hispanics have the highest birth rates—80 births per 1,000 women of childbearing age, compared with 64 for blacks, 59 for whites and 56 for Asians. The high Hispanic rate is explained in part by the high share of Hispanic women who are foreign born.

In 2010, for each major racial group and for Hispanics, birth rates for foreign-born women were markedly higher than for U.S.-born women. In addition, among immigrant women, whites, blacks and Hispanics had fairly similar birth rates in 2010. Asians had lower birth rates than other racial and ethnic groups, among both foreign-born and U.S.-born women of childbearing age.

Since 1990, the gap in birth rates among whites, blacks and Hispanics has lessened, both for immigrant and U.S.-born women. Among foreign-born women, for example, 1990 birth rates for Hispanics were 44% higher than rates for whites. But the rate for Hispanic foreign-born women declined dramatically after 1990, and the white rate decreased only slightly. In 2010, the Hispanic rate was only 10% higher than the white rate among foreign-born women. The birth rate of foreign-born black women also had been higher than that for white women in 1990, but since then declined more sharply to the point that they are almost equal.

The same general pattern is true for U.S.-born women. Birth rates were markedly higher in 1990 for black and Hispanic women than for white women but now have converged because

Birth Rates, by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity of Mother, 1990 and 2010

Births per 1,000 women ages 15-44

	Birth rate		Percent change 1990-2010
	2010	1990	
All women	64.0	71.2	-10%
U.S. born	58.9	66.5	-11%
Foreign born	87.8	112.8	-22%
Among the U.S. born ...			
White	57.3	60.1	-5%
Black	61.3	86.2	-29%
Hispanic	65.4	82.4	-21%
Asian	32.0	42.7	-25%
Among the foreign born ...			
White	87.2	95.1	-8%
Black	89.9	112.1	-20%
Hispanic	96.3	136.9	-30%
Asian	68.3	78.5	-13%

Note: Percent change calculated before rounding. Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census and American Community Survey data (see Methodology)

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while the white rate decreased slightly since 1990, rates for the other two groups declined sharply.

Birth rates for foreign-born Asian women of childbearing age declined 13% but remained well below those of the other racial and ethnic groups. Birth rates for U.S.-born Asian women dropped by 25%, and are lower than those of the other major racial and ethnic groups.

As noted previously, births plunged 13% for foreign-born women from 2007 to 2010, after years of rapid growth. This change is especially dramatic for immigrant Hispanics, whose birth numbers dropped 19% from 2007 to 2010. The number of births also was lower in 2010, compared with 2007, for immigrant whites and Asians (although not for immigrant black women).

The decline in births to foreign-born Latino mothers was so sharp that births to Hispanic mothers shrank as a share of all foreign-born births, to 56% in 2010 from 61% in 2007.

For U.S.-born women, births declined 7% from 2007 to 2010 for whites and blacks but rose for Asians (8%) while remaining relatively unchanged for Hispanics (up 1%).

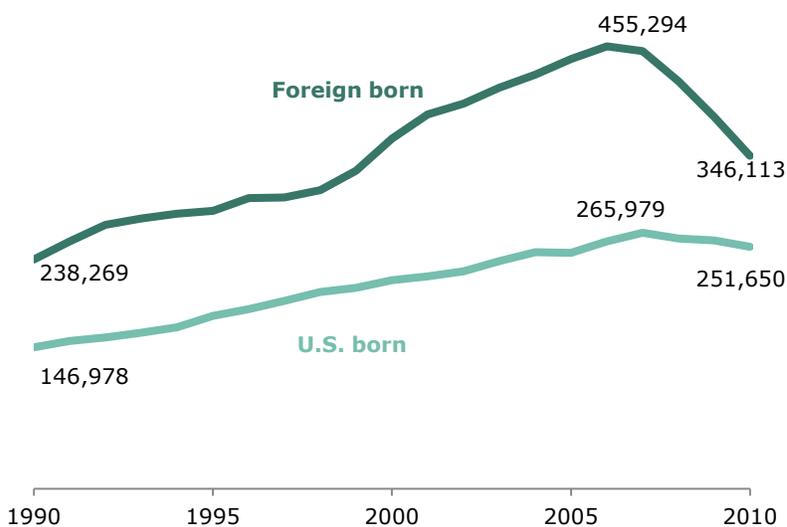
Mexican Mothers

Among Hispanic immigrants, the decline in births to Mexican women was especially large—from more than 455,000 births in 2007 to 346,000 in 2010, a 24% drop. Mexican-born women, who had 43% of births to immigrants in 2007, accounted for 37% of those births in 2010.

Why did births to foreign-born Hispanics, especially Mexicans, decline so

Births to Mexican Women, by Nativity, 1990-2010

Number of births to mothers who are ...



Source: National Center for Health Statistics (see Methodology)

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abruptly after years of increase? The major reason appears to be a dramatic decline in birth rates. Among all foreign-born women, birth rates declined more from 2007 to 2010 (14%) than they had for the entire 1990-2007 period (10%). For foreign-born Mexican women, birth rates declined nearly as much from 2007 to 2010 (23%) as they had from 1990 to 2007 (26%).

By contrast, the decline in birth rates for U.S.-born women was about the same for the 1990-2007 and 2007-2010 periods—each 6%. (However, a sharper decline was recorded in birth rates for all U.S.-born Hispanic women, down 13% over the 2007-2010 period, and for U.S.-born Mexican women, down 23% (the same as for foreign-born Mexican women), over the 2007-2010 period.)

The number of foreign-born Mexican women of childbearing age did dip slightly after 2007, although this decline was less important a factor than the drop in birth rates. The small decrease in this population occurred during a period of reversal in historic immigration patterns from Mexico. According to a recent Pew Hispanic Center report, [net immigration from Mexico—the sum of arrivals and departures—is now zero](#), and perhaps negative, after years of rapid increases.

AGE

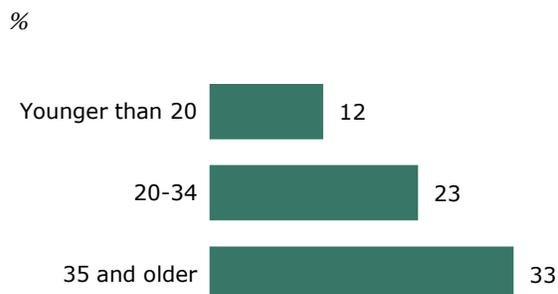
Three-quarters (76%) of all births in the U.S. in 2010 were to women ages 20 to 34. The share was similar for both U.S.-born women and foreign-born women, and for the major racial and ethnic groups. However, there are some other notable differences by nativity among younger and older age groups.

This pattern plays out in the share of births by age to women born in the U.S. and born abroad. Among U.S.-born women, roughly equal shares of births are to mothers in their teens (11% in 2010) and those ages 35 and older (13%). Among immigrants, four times as many births are to older mothers (21% of all 2010 births) as to mothers in their teens (5%).

Looking at overall births by nativity, in 2010, immigrant mothers accounted for 23% of all births but only 12% of births to mothers younger than 20 and fully 33% of births to women ages 35 and older.

The same general pattern—higher shares of teen births for U.S.-born mothers, and higher shares of births to older mothers for foreign-born women—also prevails within each major racial and ethnic group. The most striking disparity is among black women: 17% of births to U.S.-born women and 3% of births to immigrants are to mothers in their teens, while 9% of births to natives and 25% of births to immigrants are to mothers ages 35 and older.

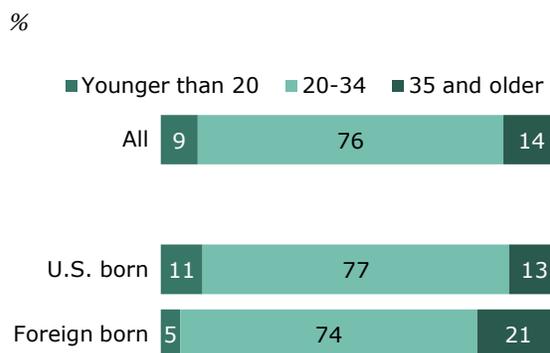
Foreign-born Share of Births, by Age of Mothers, 2010



Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

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Share of Births, by Age and Nativity of Mother, 2010



Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

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Among the U.S. born and foreign born in the major racial and ethnic groups, the highest share of births to mothers in their teens is among U.S.-born Hispanics (20%). The highest share of births to women ages 35 and older is among foreign-born Asians (26%).

Differences between immigrants and U.S.-born women in the age makeup of mothers are in part a result of population composition. In fact, the lower share of teen births among immigrants is due to the lower share of teens among immigrant women of childbearing age. Among women ages 15-44, only 7% of immigrants are younger than 20, compared with 19% of U.S.-born women. But among women in that same age span, fully 43% of immigrants are ages 35 and older, compared with 31% of U.S.-born women.

Birth rates also play a role in explaining nativity differences in births to older mothers. Overall, as well as among white, black and Hispanic mothers, birth rates at ages 35 and older are higher for immigrants than for U.S.-born women. Rates are fairly similar regardless of nativity for Asian women ages 35 and older.

The share of births to teen mothers has dropped over the past two decades for all women, declining to 9% in 2010 from 13% in 1990, mainly because of a dramatic decline in birth rates for this group. The share also declined for both native-born and immigrant women and for all major racial and ethnic groups, both foreign born and U.S. born.

All groups also experienced a decline in birth rates to women ages 15-19 over the 20-year period.

During the same period, the share of births to women ages 35 and older has grown overall, from 9% in 1990 to 14% in 2010, because of an increase in birth rates and an increase in the population of women in this age group.

Birth Rates, by Nativity and Age of Mother, 1990-2010

Births per 1,000 women

	Birth rates		Percent change 1990-2010
	2010	1990	
All women ages 15-44	64.0	71.2	-10%
U.S. born	58.9	66.5	-11%
Foreign born	87.8	112.8	-22%
Among the U.S. born ...			
15-19	32.4	57.6	-44%
20-34	91.2	98.7	-8%
35 and older	15.0	12.7	+18%
Among the foreign born ...			
15-19	57.5	101.4	-43%
20-34	131.2	165.2	-21%
35 and older	29.4	25.8	+14%

Notes: Percent change calculated before rounding.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census and American Community Survey data (see Methodology)

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The share of births to older women grew for both native-born and immigrant women, and for all major racial and ethnic groups, both foreign born and U.S. born. The increase in share has been particularly sharp for foreign-born women—10 percentage points or more for each of the major racial groups.

Birth rates for women ages 35 and older rose over the 20-year period among all groups except foreign-born Hispanic women and U.S.-born black women.

MARITAL STATUS

Overall, 41% of births in the U.S. were to unmarried mothers in 2010. The share is higher for births to U.S.-born mothers (42%) than to foreign-born mothers (36%).

These differences are explained in part by the greater likelihood of immigrants to be married, which also is the case within each major racial and ethnic group. Among all women ages 15-44, 56% of immigrants are married, compared with 36% of U.S.-born women.

Of all births in 2010 to unmarried women, 20% were to immigrant mothers. Among married mothers, 25% of births in 2010 were to immigrant women.

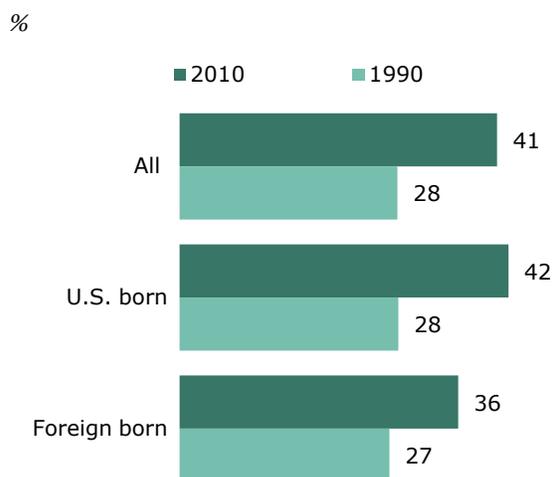
The share of births to unmarried mothers differs markedly by racial and ethnic group.

Overall, the share is highest among black women, followed by Hispanics, whites and Asians. But those rankings differ between foreign-born and native-born mothers.

Looking at births to foreign-born mothers by race and ethnicity, the highest share to unmarried mothers is among Hispanics (50%), followed by blacks (38%), whites (13%) and Asians (12%). Among births to U.S.-born women, the highest share to unmarried mothers is among blacks (78%), followed by Hispanics (58%), Asians (31%) and whites (30%).

The share of births to unmarried women has risen since 1990, when it was 28% overall. At that time, the non-marital share of births was similar for immigrant (27%) and U.S.-born women (28%). Since then, however, the share of immigrant women of childbearing age who are unmarried has changed little (rising to 44% from 41%). The share of U.S.-born women of childbearing age who are unmarried has risen markedly—by 14 percentage points—since 1990, when it was 50%.

Share of Births to Unmarried Women, by Nativity, 1990 and 2010



Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

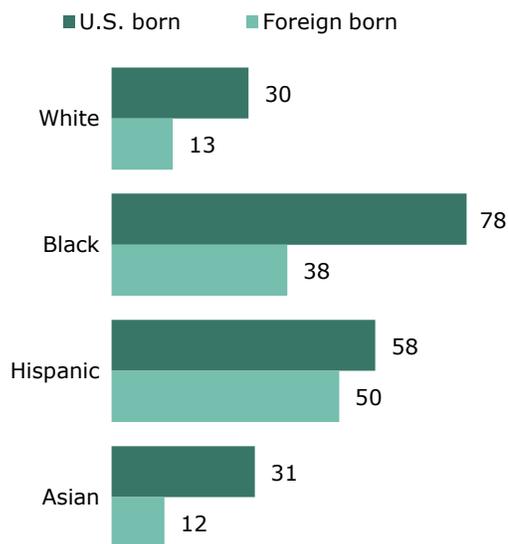
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However, because the number of births to immigrant women has grown more rapidly since 1990 than the number of births to U.S.-born women, immigrant mothers now account for a larger share of births to unmarried mothers than in the past. Of all births to unmarried women, 20% in 2010 were to foreign-born mothers, up from 15% in 1990.

The share of births to unmarried mothers has risen since 1990 for virtually all racial and ethnic groups, both foreign born and native born. The only exception among the major groups was births to foreign-born black women, of which 44% were to unmarried mothers in 1990, compared with 38% in 2010.

Share of Births to Unmarried Women, by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity, 2010

%



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Statistics calculated using National Center for Health Statistics data (see Methodology)

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APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Data Sets

Except where noted, data regarding births are obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) using the VitalStats tabulation tool available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/vitalstats.htm>.

These vital statistics data reflect information extracted from completed birth certificates for live births, which include the mother's characteristics at the time of the birth. These tabulations are based upon births occurring in the 50 states and the District of Columbia to people living in the United States in a given calendar year.

Information regarding the composition of the female population of childbearing age (15-44) is derived from the decennial census for 1990, and 2000, and from the American Community Survey for all subsequent years. The American Community Survey data were weighted to reflect intercensal population estimates.

Birth Rates

The primary measure of birth rate used is the general fertility rate (GFR), which is the number of births divided by the number of women of childbearing age in a given year. For the total GFR, the denominator includes a count of all women ages 15 to 44.¹⁰

Following the NCHS convention, birth rates for women ages 35 and older include all births to women 35 and older in the numerator, and a count of women ages 35 to 49 in the denominator.

Birth rates calculated by Pew Research for this report may differ from those published by NCHS because NCHS calculates birth rates using Census Bureau population estimates to measure the number of women of childbearing age.

Variables

All variables, including race and ethnicity, are based upon the characteristics of the mother, not of the father or the baby.

¹⁰ In 2010, 99.7% of births were to females ages 15 to 44.

Statistics for whites, blacks and Asians are for non-Hispanics only. The Asian population is defined as including both Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Any mother born in one of the 50 states or the District of Columbia is defined as native born in this analysis. All others are defined as foreign born. Reflecting the NCHS VitalStats convention, in this report mothers born in Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories are classified as foreign born.¹¹ These nativity characteristics do not reflect a mother's citizenship status at her birth, since standard U.S. birth certificates do not collect this information.

A mother is described as married if she is either married or separated. Otherwise she is considered unmarried.

Unless otherwise specified, all references to "teens" consist of ages 10-19. One notable exception occurs in relationship to teen birth rates, which are defined for females 15-19.

¹¹ Had the Puerto Rican-born women been classified as "native born," the overall share of births to native-born women would have increased by 0.61% in 1990 and by 0.42% in 2010.

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL TABLES

Number of Births, by Mothers' Characteristics, 1990 and 2010

	-----1990-----			-----2010-----		
	All	U.S. born	Foreign born	All	U.S. born	Foreign born
All births	4,158,212	3,504,640	645,589	3,999,386	3,055,817	930,135
White	2,626,500	2,512,837	110,581	2,162,406	2,024,558	132,745
Black	661,701	614,123	44,927	589,808	507,138	78,326
Hispanic	595,073	230,587	363,684	945,180	418,237	525,319
Asian	134,837	18,965	115,696	234,472	46,291	186,945
Mexican	385,640	146,978	238,269	598,317	251,650	346,113
Non-Mexican	3,772,572	3,357,662	407,320	3,401,069	2,804,167	584,022
Younger than 20	533,483	472,705	59,163	372,175	324,452	46,077
20-34	3,256,901	2,737,429	513,690	3,047,571	2,345,790	692,117
35 and older	367,828	294,506	72,736	579,640	385,575	191,941
Married	2,992,828	2,518,497	471,290	2,365,915	1,763,221	596,933
Unmarried	1,165,384	986,143	174,299	1,633,471	1,292,596	333,202
Among women who are white ...						
Younger than 20	252,556	247,108	4,883	145,070	142,017	2,628
20-34	2,121,780	2,029,680	89,842	1,688,086	1,588,030	96,294
35 and older	252,164	236,049	15,856	329,250	294,511	33,823
Married	2,183,488	2,082,918	98,886	1,534,865	1,416,978	114,962
Unmarried	443,012	429,919	11,695	627,541	607,580	17,783
Among women who are black ...						
Younger than 20	153,725	149,706	3,352	89,902	86,990	2,149
20-34	468,235	430,844	35,549	436,430	376,956	56,433
35 and older	39,741	33,573	6,026	63,476	43,192	19,744
Married	220,067	194,330	25,309	162,121	112,937	48,194
Unmarried	441,634	419,793	19,618	427,687	394,201	30,132
Among women who are Hispanic ...						
Younger than 20	100,031	54,694	45,176	123,609	84,007	39,333
20-34	451,377	163,861	286,920	701,039	301,615	398,268
35 and older	43,665	12,032	31,588	120,532	32,615	87,718
Married	376,558	141,622	234,554	440,769	176,644	263,549
Unmarried	218,515	88,965	129,130	504,411	241,593	261,770
Among women who are Asian ...						
Younger than 20	7,351	2,191	5,146	5,084	3,302	1,739
20-34	106,980	14,129	92,707	172,253	34,906	136,496
35 and older	20,506	2,645	17,843	57,135	8,083	48,710
Married	118,109	14,093	103,892	198,054	31,756	165,312
Unmarried	16,728	4,872	11,804	36,418	14,535	21,633

Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics (see Methodology)

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Number of Births, by Mothers' Characteristics, 2007-2010

	-----2007-----			-----2008-----		
	<i>All</i>	<i>U.S. born</i>	<i>Foreign born</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>U.S. born</i>	<i>Foreign born</i>
All births	4,316,233	3,231,944	1,069,120	4,247,694	3,198,420	1,034,411
White	2,310,333	2,166,564	138,186	2,267,817	2,125,759	136,848
Black	627,191	544,864	77,906	623,029	540,393	78,183
Hispanic	1,062,779	412,876	647,737	1,041,239	422,306	616,747
Asian	242,046	42,957	197,744	240,317	44,553	194,402
Mexican	722,055	265,979	455,294	684,883	260,273	423,788
Non-Mexican	3,594,178	2,965,965	613,826	3,562,811	2,938,147	610,623
	-----2009-----			-----2010-----		
	<i>All</i>	<i>U.S. born</i>	<i>Foreign born</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>U.S. born</i>	<i>Foreign born</i>
All births	4,130,665	3,134,234	982,942	3,999,386	3,055,817	930,135
White	2,212,552	2,073,785	133,648	2,162,406	2,024,558	132,745
Black	609,584	527,891	77,549	589,808	507,138	78,326
Hispanic	999,548	423,968	573,921	945,180	418,237	525,319
Asian	237,663	45,904	190,438	234,472	46,291	186,945
Mexican	645,297	258,198	386,545	598,317	251,650	346,113
Non-Mexican	3,485,368	2,876,036	596,397	3,401,069	2,804,167	584,022

Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics (see Methodology)

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