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April 12, 2010

NEW AMERICANS IN THE EMPIRE STATE: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in New York

Immigrants, Latinos and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and the electorate in New York. Immigrants account for more than one in five residents of New York—and more than half of them are U.S. citizens eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 17.9% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos and Asians account for nearly 25% of New Yorkers and wield \$126.6 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, the sales and receipts of businesses owned by Latinos and Asians totaled more than \$42.7 billion and employed more than 230,000 people. New York’s immigrants are responsible for \$229 billion in economic output. Not only is New York one of the most ethnically diverse states in the nation, but it is also a historic gateway for immigrants from virtually every part of the world. Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians are a political and economic powerhouse in New York.

Immigrants account for more than one in five residents of New York—and more than half of them are U.S. citizens eligible to vote.

- **The foreign-born share** of New York’s population rose from 15.9% in [1990](#),¹ to 20.4% in [2000](#),² to 21.8% in [2007](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. New York was home to 4,205,813 immigrants in [2007](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Los Angeles, CA](#).⁵
- **52.3% of immigrants (or 2,198,838 people) in New York were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2007](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **17.9% (or 1,457,574) of all registered voters** in New York are “New Americans”—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2006 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁷

Latinos, Asians, immigrants, and the children of immigrants comprise a powerful share of the New York electorate.

- The **Latino share of New York’s population** grew from 12.3% in [1990](#),⁸ to 15.1% in [2000](#),⁹ to 16.4% (or 3,403,870 people) in [2007](#).¹⁰ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 3.8% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 5.5% in [2000](#),¹² to 6.9% (or 1,331,543 people) in [2007](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos comprised 9.8% (or 743,000) of New York voters in the 2008 elections, and Asians 3.3% (or 248,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁴

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- In New York, **nearly nine-in-ten (or 89% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#),¹⁵ according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

Immigrants are essential to New York's economy.

- “New York’s immigrants are responsible for \$229 billion in economic output in New York State,” or 22.4% of the total New York State GDP, according to a 2007 study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).¹⁶
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from New York in 2008, **the state would lose \$28.7 billion in economic activity, \$12.7 billion in gross state product, and approximately 137,013 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).¹⁷

Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and tens-of-thousands of jobs to New York's economy.

- The 2009 **purchasing power of New York’s Latinos totaled \$76.0 billion**—an increase of 223% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$50.6 billion**—an increase of 317.2% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- New York’s 145,108 **Asian-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$30.4 billion and employed 164,316 people in 2002,¹⁹ the last year for which data is available. The state’s 163,588 **Latino-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$12.3 billion and employed 70,183 people in 2002,²⁰ according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Survey of Business Owners.

Immigrants are integral to New York's economy as students.

- New York’s 74,934 **foreign students contributed \$2.2 billion** to the state’s economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2008-2009 academic year, according to the [National Association of Foreign Student Advisers](#) (NAFSA).²¹

Naturalized Citizens Excel Educationally.

- In New York, **31.1% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2007](#) had a bachelor’s or higher degree, compared to 25.3% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 22.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 32.2% of noncitizens.²²
- The number of immigrants in New York with a college degree **increased** by 34.1% between 2000 and 2007, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²³
- In New York, **77.4% of all children** between the ages of 5 and 17 in families that spoke a language other than English at home also spoke English “very well” as of [2007](#).²⁴

Endnotes

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- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*](#), December 2003.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Rob Paral and Associates, [*The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children*](#) (Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Law Foundation, October 2008).
- ⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Hispanic Population: 2000*](#), May 2001.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁴ 2008 Current Population Survey, [*Table 4b: Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008*](#).
- ¹⁵ Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, [*Children in Immigrant Families in New York*](#) (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).
- ¹⁶ Fiscal Policy Institute, *Working for a Better Life: A Profile of Immigrants in the New York State Economy* (New York, NY: November 2007).
- ¹⁷ The Perryman Group, [*An Essential Resource: An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Undocumented Workers on Business Activity in the US with Estimated Effects by State and by Industry*](#) (Waco, TX: April 2008).
- ¹⁸ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2008*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2008).
- ¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Asian-Owned Firms: 2002*](#), August 2006.
- ²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002*](#), August 2006.
- ²¹ Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2008-2009 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis*](#) (Washington, DC: National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, 2009).
- ²² Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [*New York: Language & Education 2007*](#).
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.