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NEW AMERICANS IN NEW YORK: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Empire State

Immigrants, Latinos and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and the electorate in New York. Immigrants (the foreign-born) account for more than 1 in 5 New Yorkers—and more than half of them are U.S. citizens eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 23.9% of all registered voters in the state. New York’s immigrants are responsible for \$229 billion in economic output, while Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) account for one quarter of New Yorkers and wield \$165 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, the sales and receipts of businesses owned by Latinos and Asians totaled more than \$68.7 billion and employed more than 310,000 people. 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 1 in 5 New Yorkers.

- **The foreign-born share** of New York’s population rose from 15.9% in 1990,¹ to 20.4% in 2000,² to 22.3% in 2013,³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. New York was home to 4,383,311 immigrants in 2013,⁴ which is more than the total population of Los Angeles, California.⁵
- **53.8% of immigrants (or 2,359,247 people) in New York were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2013**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **3.8% of the state’s population** (or 750,000 people) in 2012, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **23.9% (or 2,121,443) 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 2012 Census Bureau data by the American Immigration Council.⁸

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

- The **Latino share of New York’s population** grew from 12.3% in 1990,⁹ to 15.1% in 2000,¹⁰ to 18.4% (or 3,606,708 people) in 2013.¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 3.8% in 1990,¹² to 5.5% in 2000,¹³ to 7.9% (or 1,554,980 people) in 2013,¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- **Latinos comprised 10.9%** (or 835,000) **of New York voters** in the 2012 elections, and **Asians 4.3%** (or 333,000), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁵
- In New York, **89.7% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in 2009, according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In 2009, **87.3% of children in Asian families** in New York were U.S. citizens, as were **93.6% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

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

- **The 2014 purchasing power of New York's Latinos totaled over \$95 billion**—an increase of 300% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$70 billion**—an increase of 472% since 1990, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Immigration boosts housing values in communities. From 2000 to 2010, according to the Americas Society/Council of the Americas, the value added by immigration to the price of the average home was \$3,359 in Queens County; \$5,690 in Suffolk County; \$6,744 in Bronx County; \$4,244 in Nassau County; and \$2,661 in Westchester County.¹⁹
- New York's 196,825 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$50.5 billion and employed 224,576 people** in 2007,²⁰ the last year for which data is available. The state's 193,183 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$18.2 billion and employed 86,329 people** in 2007,²¹ according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.
- From 2006 to 2010, there were 261,140 new immigrant business owners in New York, and they had total net business income of \$12.6 billion, which makes up 10.4% of all net business income in the state, according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.²²
- In 2010, **29.4% of all business owners** in New York were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.²³ In 2013, **35.3 % of business owners** in the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island metropolitan area and 9.4% in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute and Americas Society/Council of the Americas.²⁴ Furthermore, nearly half (49%) of "Main Street" business owners—owners of businesses in the retail, accommodation and food services, and neighborhood services sectors—in the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island metro area and 16.3% of "Main Street" business owners in the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metro area were foreign-born in 2013.²⁵

Immigrants are essential to New York's economy as workers, consumers, and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **27.2% of the state's workforce** in 2013 (or 2,746,331 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁶
- "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, as of 2006, according to a study by the Fiscal Policy Institute.²⁷
- Immigrants accounted for **28% of total economic output in the New York metropolitan area** as of 2007, according to another study by the Fiscal Policy Institute.²⁸

- Latinos in New York paid **\$10 billion in federal taxes and \$6.6 billion in state/local taxes in 2013**, according to the Partnership for a New American Economy. In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$4.9 billion in federal taxes and \$3.3 billion in state/local taxes.²⁹
 - The federal tax contribution of New York's Latino population included **\$7.4 billion to Social Security and \$1.7 billion to Medicare in 2013**. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$3.7 billion to Social Security and \$873 million to Medicare that year.³⁰
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **5.7% of the state's workforce** (or 575,000 workers) in 2012, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.³¹
- 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.³²

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in New York paid **\$1.1 billion** in state and local taxes in 2012, which includes \$566.1 million in sales taxes, \$185.7 million in personal income taxes, and \$341.7 million in property taxes, according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.³³
- Were unauthorized immigrants in New York to have lawful permanent residence, they would pay over **\$1.3 billion** in state and local taxes, including \$622.8 million in sales taxes, \$345.8 million in personal income taxes, and \$375.8 million in property taxes.³⁴

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

- New York's 98,839 **foreign students contributed \$3.3 billion** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2013-2014 academic year, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators.³⁵
- Foreign students contribute to New York's metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the Brookings Institution, 101,586 foreign students paid \$2.6 billion in tuition and \$1.7 billion in living costs in the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island metropolitan area. In the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metro area, 4,313 foreign students paid \$108 million in tuition and \$45 million in living costs. In the Binghamton metro area, 3,642 foreign students paid \$52 million in tuition and \$42 million in living costs. In the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metro area, 13,660 foreign students paid \$225 million in tuition and \$92 million in living costs. In the Ithaca metro area, 7,361 foreign students paid \$282 million in tuition and \$146 million in living costs. In the Rochester metro area, 6,782 foreign students paid \$242 million in tuition and \$82 million in living costs. In the Syracuse metro area, 5,769 foreign students paid \$168 million in tuition and \$73 million in living costs.³⁶
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in New York. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 49% of master's degrees and 49.5% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the Partnership for a New American Economy.³⁷

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In New York, **32.7% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2011 had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 24.4% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in New York with a college degree **increased by 41.9% between 2000 and 2011**, according to data from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁸
- In New York, **85.7% of children with immigrant parents** were considered “English proficient” as of 2009, according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁹
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in New York was 80.9%**, while for **Latino children it was 85.4%**, as of 2009.⁴⁰

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*, December 2003.

² Ibid.

³ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, November 18, 2014), p. 30.

⁸ Walter A. Ewing and Guillermo Cantor, *New Americans in the Voting Booth: The Growing Electoral Power of Immigrant Communities* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, October 2014), p. 25.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, May 2001.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000*, February 2002.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁵ 2012 Current Population Survey, *Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2012*.

¹⁶ *The Urban Institute*, data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, *The Multicultural Economy 2014* (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2014), pp. 22, 24.

¹⁹ Jacob Vigdor, *Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market* (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas, 2013).

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, *Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*, June 2011.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Robert W. Fairlie, *Open for Business: How Immigrants are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2012), p. 32.

²³ David Dyssegaard Kallick, *Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy* (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.

²⁴ David Dyssegaard Kallick, *Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow* (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas and Fiscal Policy Institute, 2015).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²⁷ Fiscal Policy Institute, *Working for a Better Life: A Profile of Immigrants in the New York State Economy* (New York, NY: November 2007)

²⁸ David Dyssegaard Kallick, *Immigrants in the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas* (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, December 2009), p. 11.

²⁹ Partnership for a New American Economy, *The Power of the Purse: The Contributions of Hispanics to America's Spending Power and Tax Revenues in 2013* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2014).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, November 18, 2014), p. 29.

³² 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).

³³ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: April 2015).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, *The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2013-2014* (Washington, DC: 2014).

³⁶ Neil Ruiz, *The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2014).

³⁷ Partnership for a New American Economy, *Help Wanted: The Role of Foreign Workers in the Innovation Economy* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2013), p. 21.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *The Urban Institute*, data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

⁴⁰ Ibid.