

A City of Immigrants Is Pictured in Report

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Body

More than a quarter of the population of New York City is now foreign born as the number of immigrants settling here has climbed to its highest level since 1940, according to a city report released yesterday.

In the report, a study of immigrants who arrived in the 1980's, a clear picture emerges of just how dramatically the city's ethnic landscape is changing.

Just as schools in Queens and apartment buildings in northern Manhattan are suffering overcrowding unseen for decades, declining neighborhoods are being revitalized by the new immigrants.

Some of the changes are subtly profound: One in every four New York City blacks is now foreign born. Puerto Ricans, long synonymous with Latin New York, now make up only half the Hispanic population as the Dominican and Colombian communities, in particular, grow. Little Italy is now primarily Chinese.

The most sweeping change, however, is this: While the immigrants arriving in the 1940's were primarily white Europeans, the newest New Yorkers are and will continue to be mostly Hispanic, black and, to a lesser extent, Asian, said the report, by the city's Planning Department.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in Queens, a social laboratory of ethnic diversity, and, in particular, on the Flushing IRT No. 7 train, variously dubbed the Immigrants' IRT and the International Shuttle.

Rattling along on the No. 7 on Monday morning, a young couple ate a breakfast of octopus from a plastic container, their Chinese newspaper brushing against the Spanish-language tabloid of the next passenger. Two elderly Korean women embraced bags filled with lemon grass, and the burly man beside them, forearm tattooed with a Confederate flag, wore an American flag belt buckle.

"It could be seen, and is by some, in a negative light, that New York is turning into a third world country," said Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Forum. "It could also be seen as a wonderful experiment in the racial dynamics of pluralism."

Similar dynamics are transforming the country as a whole, as about 600,000 new immigrants a year -- triple the number in the 1960's -- establish permanent residency in the United States.

"In Russia, they told us we lived in the most international nation, but that was a lie," said Olga Kheyfets, 68 years old, who recently left St. Petersburg for Elmhurst, Queens. They city report called Elmhurst "perhaps the most

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ethnically mixed community in the world," with 17,200 new immigrants from 118 countries who arrived between 1983 and 1989 alone.

While Mexicans and Asians dominate the national picture, they are far outnumbered in New York City by new Caribbean, Central American and South American arrivals.

The top five countries sending immigrants to the United States are Mexico, with the greatest number, then the Philippines, China, Vietnam and Korea. However, less than 1 percent of Mexican immigrants settle in New York City, and only 4 percent of Filipinos.

For New York City, the top five source countries are the Dominican Republic, substantially outpacing the others, and then Jamaica, China, Guyana and Haiti. Sixty-one percent of all Dominican immigrants move to New York; 70 percent of all Guyanese do so. In fact, about 8 percent of the total population of Guyana moved to New York City in the 1980's, according to the city report.

The predominance of Caribbean and Latin American immigrants in New York shapes a different kind of immigrant culture. For instance, far fewer Latin and Caribbean immigrants end up seeking U.S. citizenship than do Asians, which means that New York City's predominant immigrant groups move more slowly into American society. In 1989, for example, the naturalization rate for Dominicans was only 18 percent of eligible immigrants. For Filipinos, who settled in great numbers in Los Angeles and San Francisco, the rate was 53 percent.

Many Caribbean and Latin immigrants see their national identity as more fluid, experts say, to move back and forth between countries.

Nonetheless, the Dominicans have already elected a City Councilman, Guillermo Linares, which suggests they will eventually move as aggressively into politics as prior immigrant groups.

In total numbers, New York City receives more immigrants than any other city in the country -- 685,000 between 1982 and 1989. These numbers do not include the city's illegal immigrant population, which some immigration experts estimate at about 200,000. They also do not give the best idea of the extent of the immigrant population, because they do not take into account the children of the many immigrant women of child-bearing age. The 1990 Census counted 953,000 New Yorkers who entered the United States in the 1980's.

Graphic

Table: "Immigration: After They Reach New York"

the groups with the largest number of immigrants to New York City from 1983 to 1989 and where those groups have relocated.

	Number	%
1. Dominican Republic		
All <u>immigrants</u>	105,357	100.0
1. Washington Heights	27,805	25.7
2. Hamilton Heights	7,363	7.0
3. Corona	6,506	6.2

A City of Immigrants Is Pictured in Report

4. Inwood	6,036	5.7
5. Chinatown	3,577	3.4
Williamsburg	3,557	3.4
2. Jamaica		
All <u>immigrants</u>	63,226	100.0
1. East Flatbush	5,656	8.9
2. Crown Heights	5,469	8.6
3. Flatbush	4,983	7.9
4. Wakefield	4,357	6.9
5. Williamsbridge-Baychester	3,384	5.4
3. China		
All <u>immigrants</u>	64,184	100.0
1. Chinatown	19,550	30.5
2. Elmhurst	3,680	5.7
3. Flushing	3,227	5.0
4. Sunset Park-Industry <u>City</u>	2,442	3.8
5. Bay Ridge	1,805	2.8
4. Guyana		
All <u>immigrants</u>	46,706	100.0
1. East Flatbush	3,425	7.3
2. Flatbush	2,992	6.4
3. Richmond Hill	2,979	6.4
4. Crown Heights	2,495	5.3
5. Cypress Hills	1,643	3.5
5. Haiti		
All <u>immigrants</u>	34,046	100.0
1. Flatbush	8,303	23.0
2. Crown Heights	5,336	14.8
3. East Flatbush	4,056	11.3
4. Vanderveer	1,837	5.1
5. Brownsville	1,415	3.9

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Graph: "Compare and Contrast: Two Different Immigration Pictures"

New York City's immigrant pool from 1982 to 1989 was drawn mostly from the Caribbean while the U.S. as a whole drew in more Mexican and Asian immigrants.

NEW YORK CITY

1. Dominican Republic: 16.9%
2. Jamaica: 10.6%
3. China: 10.5
4. Guyana: 7.8
5. Haiti: 6.0

Others: 48.2

Total immigrants from 1982 to 1989: 684,819

U.S.

1. Mexico: 11.3%
2. Philippines: 8.1
3. China: 7.6
4. Vietnam: 6.3
5. Korea: 5.8

Others: 61.0

Total immigrants from 1982 to 1989: 4,726,165

(Sources: New York City Planning Department analysis of census and Immigration and Naturalization Services data) (pgs. B1 and B2)

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