

IMMIGRANTS BOOST CITY POPULATION

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Body

Immigrants have poured into New York **City** in such large numbers during the 1990s that the **population** has increased slightly, even though more than 1 million people moved out during that time, new census figures show.

The **city's population** grew by more than 20,000 between 1990 and 1997, while the state **population**, also powered by immigration, rose 146,000.

"If you didn't have international immigration, New York would be like Pennsylvania," said Census Bureau analyst Marc Perry. "They're experiencing a **population** decrease now."

Absent an influx of foreign-born workers, **city** planners said, entire neighborhoods might have suffered widespread abandonment of their aging buildings.

New York also would suffer a greater loss of political clout. The state already stands to lose two of its 31 House seats after the 2000 census as the **population** balance of power shifts to the South and the West. The cut would be even deeper without the **immigrant** tide.

"What's different now is we are more dependent than ever on **immigrants**. We don't have people coming in large numbers from the South or from Puerto Rico," said Joseph Salvo, a senior **city** planner.

Tong Leung is the face of the changing New York.

He is Chinese, the **city's** third-largest **immigrant** group during the 1990s after newcomers from the Dominican Republic and the former Soviet Union. Leung, 51, immigrated to the **city** in 1990 from Hong Kong with a friend.

"I came here because I wanted to improve my economic situation. I felt I could make more money here," Leung said yesterday.

He has held a variety of jobs, including waiter, garment factory worker and moving company laborer.

As Leung and his hundreds of thousands of fellow **immigrants** settled in the five boroughs, more than 1 million people moved out of the **city** during 1990-97, and more than 500,000 died.

The unprecedented influx of **immigrants**, combined with more than 900,000 births, resulted in a 20,072 **population** jump, to 7.3 million people.

Immigration also influenced the **city's** birth rate, because the newcomers, particularly Hispanic **immigrants**, generally have higher birth rates than other New Yorkers, Salvo said.

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The rest of New York State's population also increased through immigration, rising from 17,990,778 in 1990 to 18,137,226 last July.

The U.S. population increased from 248.8 million in 1990 to 267.6 million in 1997.

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