Few places in the world are as closely identified with immigrants as New York City. The ebb and flow of immigrants has continuously renewed the city’s population; nearly every sphere of New York has been invented or re-invented by the energy and talents of immigrants. This chapter explores the major role that immigration plays in population change and its effect on the city’s economy and neighborhoods. Going forward, such an understanding can help promote more appropriate planning decisions.

The Impact of Immigration: Past, Present, and Future

CHAPTER

The Role of Immigration in Population Change: 1970 to 2010

New York has a very dynamic population, reflected in the continuous flow of people into and out of the city. Each year hundreds of thousands of people arrive from across the U.S. and other countries, while others leave for domestic or international destinations. The city is as much a process as a place, with continuous population turnover, where population change is the only constant on the city’s demographic landscape. In recent decades, the city has been a net exporter of people through migration—people leaving the city for other parts of the country or the world exceed those entering to make the city their home. New York’s population gains have come through natural increase—the excess of births over deaths. While the contribution of natural increase has varied over the past few decades, the most important factor regarding change in the city’s overall population is migration.

The fact that New York City continues to be a net exporter of population to the 50 states is a defining part of its population dynamic. Many people come to the city, avail themselves of its opportunities, and then leave for a variety of reasons including child-rearing, desire for the space afforded by a suburban or exurban home, job change, and retirement. Figure 7-1 shows the components of population change in the city for each decade, from 1970 to 2010. As noted above, population change is a function of two basic demographic components: natural increase (the balance of births and deaths) and net migration (the balance of persons entering and leaving the city). While the separate components of net migration are not shown in Figure 7-1, it needs to be noted that net migration is the sum of net domestic migration (the balance of flows within the U.S.) and net international migration (net exchanges with the rest of the world). International migrants include a large flow from Latin America, Asia, and the nonhispanic Caribbean who have benefited from the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Amendments of 1965, detailed in the previous chapter.

In the 1970s, the first full decade after passage of the new immigration law, New York City was near fiscal insolvency, with the housing stock in many neighborhoods approaching collapse. In that decade the city lost more than 800,000 people—natural increase of 366,000 persons was offset by a huge net outflow of nearly 1.15 million. The net outflow—and overall population losses—would have been far greater were it not for the entry of 783,000 immigrants in that decade. As bad as things were in New York City in the 1970s, the opportunities envisioned by immigrants to the city were preferable to those in their countries of origin. The 1980s saw growth of 336,000 for two reasons. First, the slowing of domestic outflows, coupled with the arrival of 856,000 immigrants, sharply attenuated overall migration losses to an estimated 72,000 persons. Second, natural increase rose to 408,000, a result of births to baby boomers (many of whom had
delayed childbearing) and fertility among a youthful immigrant population. Thus the overall increase was a product of the direct effect of people immigrating, but also of the relative youth and fertility of these newcomers. Indeed, by the late 1980s, more than one-half of all births in New York City were to foreign-born women. The 1990s saw immigration cross the 1 million mark; nevertheless, net migration losses totaled 107,000. These migration losses were offset by a natural increase of 584,000, resulting in growth of 477,000 that propelled the official population of New York City over the 8 million mark for the first time.

In the first decade of this century, losses through net migration increased to 440,000—notwithstanding legal immigration of 968,000 persons. With natural increase of 639,000 offsetting migration losses, the city’s population grew by 199,000 during the decade. Thus in each decade since 1970, net migration to the city has been negative, despite the huge flow of immigrants. Given continued net domestic outflows, the city would have sustained huge population losses were it not for the entry of immigrants.

**A New Population Dynamic?**

Starting around the middle of the first decade of this century, a change in the historical pattern of population growth depicted above has emerged, with several data sources pointing to a shift in the relative roles played by domestic and international migration. Changes of address on tax returns, a widely used source of information on domestic migration, show a consistent increase in the number of in-migrants from other parts of the nation and a reduction in domestic outflows from the city (Figure 7-2). The convergence of these two flows, starting in 2007, represents a relatively new pattern of fewer people leaving for domestic destinations and more coming to the city from other parts of the U.S.
In addition, the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) shows a decline in the entry of recent international migrants. Data on year of arrival in the U.S. for the foreign-born show that the number of foreign-born persons who arrived “in the previous year” declined by 25 percent between 2000 and 2011. Consequently, domestic migrants now constitute a much larger share of all in-migrants to New York City. In 2000 domestic in-migrants were about one-half of all in-migrants, but they now constitute two-thirds of the total inflow (Figure 7-3).

All of this points to a newly evolving pattern of migration over the latter part of the past decade, which is reinforced in the latest data on components of change in population post-2010. Figure 7-4 compares components of change for 2000-2010 and 2010-2012. Since a 10 year period is being examined alongside Census Bureau estimates for an approximately 2 year period, these components have been annualized to make them comparable. Annual net international migration in the post-2010 period dropped to 67,000, from 77,000 in the prior decade, and annual net domestic losses attenuated to 62,000, nearly one-half the level of the prior decade. The result was positive net migration — a net annual inflow of 5,000 in the post-2010 period. While modest, this net inflow represents a reversal of historical migration trends.

The increased role of domestic migration relative to international migration is important because it affects the attributes of migrants to the city, which serve as a backdrop for needs assessments, program planning, policy formulation and, ultimately, the provision of services. Since 75 percent of domestic arrivals are native-born (data not shown) and most are English-speaking, a shift in the balance of...
POPULATION GROWTH AND MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF A CENSUS UNDERCOUNT

In recent decades, the decennial census has consistently underenumerated New York’s population. This is largely because the city contains large numbers of “hard-to-enumerate” groups, including undocumented immigrants, workers in the underground economy, and other marginalized groups who fear government and have a high propensity to elude census operations. In this section, we use Census Bureau estimates of the undercount along with selected local adjustments to the city’s enumerated population for 2010, which allow us to more accurately quantify population growth and the role of immigration in sustaining the city’s population in the 1970–2010 period.

Data, primarily from Census Bureau post-enumeration surveys, show that the estimated undercount stood at 143,000 in 1970 and 160,000 in 1980, and increased to 245,000 in 1990 (Table 7-1). When the city’s population is adjusted to reflect the undercount, the population decline of the 1970s drops from 10.4 percent to 10 percent, and the population growth in the 1980s increases from 3.5 percent to 4.6 percent. In 2000, thanks to an improved address list of city residents created by the Department of City Planning and used by the Census Bureau to mail out census questionnaires, the undercount dropped dramatically to 36,000. As a result, the real increase in the city’s population in the 1990s is estimated to be 6.3 percent, instead of the 9.4 percent obtained through the enumerated census figures.

When the adjusted population numbers for New York City are incorporated into the components of change analysis (along with natural increase, which is unchanged), the effect of net migration is altered. The 1970s, which saw huge domestic outflows, was a decade with a large net migration loss, -1.14 million using adjusted population, instead of -1.16 million using unadjusted population data. In the 1980s, with domestic outflows moderating from levels seen in the earlier decade, net migration losses were relatively low using the unadjusted data (-157,000) and were even lower when the adjusted figures are used (-73,000). Thus, the use of adjusted data attenuates population losses through net migration in the 1970s and 1980s, though immigration remained a crucial element in stabilizing the city’s population.

The biggest change occurs in the 1990s, where the enumerated population increase of 685,700 persons was actually 477,000, after adjusting for the much lower undercount in 2000. With a lower level of population change, net migration using the adjusted data is negative (-107,000), compared to positive net migration of 101,000 using the unadjusted data. Thus, the adjusted data show that the underlying dynamic of population change in the 1990s was similar to that of earlier decades: a loss through net migration, the entry of 1.14 million immigrants being insufficient to offset domestic outflows.

New York City’s population as of April 1, 2010, reported as 8,175,000, was well under estimates prepared by New York City Department of City Planning in cooperation with the Census Bureau, which were in excess of 8.3 million. Despite this disparity, the Census Bureau’s 2010 Census Coverage Measurement (CCM) program, which utilized a post enumeration survey, determined that New York City did not experience a net undercount in 2010. Still, anomalies in the 2010 Census results became apparent when the housing data revealed a reported increase of 82,000 vacant units in New York City, or a 46 percent rise since 2000. A disproportionate share of this increase was found in two local census offices covering southern Brooklyn and northwest Queens, both vibrant sections of the city. The huge increase in vacant units in these areas cannot be explained by new construction or foreclosures; nor is it consistent with other survey and administrative data. As a result, an adjustment to the population in Brooklyn and Queens was employed to compensate for this undercount. The Department of City Planning estimates of the population missed due to erroneous vacancies in Brooklyn, and vacancies and deleted units in Queens, added 48,211 people to the total population in Brooklyn and 19,280 people to Queens. This increased the population of Brooklyn from 2,504,700 to 2,552,911. In Queens, the population rose from 2,230,722 to 2,250,002. The additional population increased New York City’s total population in 2010 from the official count of 8,175,133 to 8,242,624. Using the 2010 adjusted population of the city, net migration losses stand at 440,400, compared to losses of 507,900 using the unadjusted 2010 population.
### Table 7-1
Enumerated and Adjusted Populations
New York City, 1970–2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Enumerated Population</th>
<th>Undercount</th>
<th>Population Adjusted For Undercount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>CHANGE OVER DECADE</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>7,894,798</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>143,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>7,071,639</td>
<td>-823,159</td>
<td>-10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>7,322,564</td>
<td>250,925</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,008,278</td>
<td>685,714</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8,175,133</td>
<td>166,855</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FOOTNOTES

1. Since 1940, the Census Bureau has done a “coverage evaluation” of the decennial census, usually through the creation of an independent estimate of population, using administrative records (e.g., births and deaths) and/or through a post-enumeration survey, which provides information on who was captured in the census enumeration. While the use of administrative records for demographic analysis has been considered by many to be the gold standard for independently estimating the population, this approach has two big limitations. First, estimation cannot be done for most sub-national areas and second, in recent times, these estimates have come under fire because of problems in estimating the size of the immigrant population. The post-enumeration survey, which has been used since 1950, has the advantage of being able to provide coverage estimates for small areas. Post-enumeration surveys work on the premise that it is possible to revisit addresses in a sample of blocks to estimate who was captured and who was missed in the census. The main limitation of this method is that persons who resist the enumeration may also resist the post-census survey. Moreover, like any survey, estimates for small areas are subject to error associated with use of a sample instead of the entire population (sampling error) and error associated with the collection, processing and compilation of data (nonsampling error).


5. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, A.C.E. Revision II, Memorandum Series #PP-60. (Washington, DC, 9 April 2003) [http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/pdf/pp-60r.pdf](http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/pdf/pp-60r.pdf). There is a high standard error associated with the undercount for the city. The main goal of this section, however, is to examine components of population change. If one were to assume there was no undercount in 2000, net out-migration in the 1990s would be even higher.

6. The Census Bureau’s 2010 CCM results actually showed a net overcount for New York City but the results were not statistically significant. See U.S. Census Bureau. Census Coverage Measurement Summary Results for New York: [http://www.census.gov/coverage_measurement/post-enumeration_surveys/stateinfo38.html](http://www.census.gov/coverage_measurement/post-enumeration_surveys/stateinfo38.html)


8. Erroneous vacant units in Brooklyn were estimated at 18,090, which accounted for an estimated population of 48,211. In Queens, erroneous vacancies were estimated at 3,278, resulting in 8,160 persons added. In addition, Queens had an estimated 3,940 erroneously deleted units, resulting in an added population of 11,120, for a total population added in Queens of 19,280. More information is available at: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/census_challenge_2010.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/census_challenge_2010.shtml)
The Newest New Yorkers, 2013 edition

The effects of this shift can be gleaned from Table 7-2. In earlier periods, in-migrants had lower earnings and household income than their out-migrant counterparts, leaving some to lament the loss of persons of higher socioeconomic status to out-migration. Data for 2007–2011 show a reversal of that pattern, with in-migrants reporting higher household incomes compared with out-migrants. Moreover, differences in earnings and the poverty rate are no longer statistically significant. This turnaround is primarily a result of the increased share of domestic migrants in the migration stream coming to New York.

It remains to be seen whether reduced international migration and the increased role of domestic migration represent a new long-term pattern of migration for New York City or whether it is a temporary phenomenon tied to the current economic climate.
Unauthorized Immigration

Unauthorized immigration to the U.S. can trace its roots to the Bracero Program, a temporary migrant labor program that began in 1942. It was created to address a shortage of agricultural workers in the southwest. For over two decades this program established networks between farm workers in Mexico and agricultural interests in the U.S. While the Bracero Program ended in 1964, the networks established earlier resulted in continued—but now frequently unauthorized/undocumented—flows from Mexico to the U.S.5 Though New York City saw its unauthorized numbers rise, the increases were more dramatic in the southwest and western U.S., where Mexicans were much more likely to settle.

Estimating the number of unauthorized immigrants is a challenging endeavor. The ACS does not include a question on the legal status of the foreign-born and hence an estimate of the unauthorized population can only be obtained indirectly. The most recent estimates come from a methodology that relies on data on the foreign-born population from the ACS and a series of assumptions about what these data represent.6 Since the foreign-born population tends to be heavily undercounted, the methodology first adjusts for this undercount. This adjusted count of the foreign-born population is then reduced by the number of legal immigrants derived from administrative records to obtain the number of unauthorized immigrants as a residual figure. The precision of the estimates are heavily dependent on the quality of the data sources and the accompanying assumptions. These limitations notwithstanding, the numbers derived provide the best estimates of the unauthorized foreign-born population.
Figure 7-5 provides insight into trends in unauthorized flows to New York State. The line graph shows the annual change in the unauthorized population, while the total unauthorized population (in thousands) is noted above the graph. In 1990 the unauthorized population in the state stood at 358,000 and nearly doubled in the following two decades to 705,000 in 2010. For most of this period, the unauthorized population grew, with the largest increase of 72,000 in 2000, which took the unauthorized population to 746,000 in 2001. With smaller gains in the following years, the unauthorized population peaked at 799,000 in 2004 and has been declining ever since, reaching 705,000 in 2010.

New research sheds light as to why unauthorized immigrants leave (Figure 7-6). Unauthorized residents leave the population in three ways: 1) emigration—that is, voluntarily leave the country; 2) adjustment to lawful resident status; or 3) removal by the Department of Homeland Security. For 2009, about one-third of the 43,000 persons who exited the unauthorized population in New York State emigrated out of the U.S. The largest group—37 percent—adjusted their status to legal permanent resident and 23 percent were removed from the country by the Department of Homeland Security. Additionally, there is some depletion of the unauthorized population because of death, which was estimated to be about 7 percent.

Given that the overwhelming majority of the foreign-born in New York State live in New York City, these data are likely to be representative of what is going on in the city. Using the city’s share of the state’s foreign-born population (71 percent) as a proxy for its share of the unauthorized population, the city was home to 499,000 unauthorized immigrants in 2010. As in the rest of the state, the city’s undocumented population is also likely to be in decline. This decline is a result of fewer unauthorized entrants coupled with large outflows of this popu-
The decline in newly-arrived unauthorized immigrants corroborates other data that show an overall decline in recent arrivals—both authorized and unauthorized—from abroad.

**Naturalization: Acquiring U.S. Citizenship**

Naturalization is the process through which the foreign-born acquire U.S. citizenship. To naturalize, an immigrant must be at least 18 years of age, have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S., and must have continuously resided in the U.S. for at least five years. Those naturalizing as a spouse of a U.S. citizen may do so in three years.

The number of New York City residents who were naturalized citizens stood at 1,595,000 in 2011 (Table 7-3), or 52 percent of the foreign-born population. In general, the longer an immigrant group has been in the U.S., the larger the percentage that naturalizes. As measured in 2011, 80 percent of New York City’s foreign-born who entered before 1990 were naturalized citizens, but this was true for only 55 percent of those who entered in the 1990s, and just 18 percent of those who entered in the 2000s. The low percentage naturalized among those entering in the 2000s reflects the fact that many of these recent entrants, particularly those who entered in the late 2000s, have not lived in the U.S. for a sufficient period to qualify for citizenship. Moreover, recent entrants include a large number of non-immigrants, such as students, diplomats, and those on temporary work visas, who are not eligible for citizenship. Thus a decline in the share of recent entrants—as in New York, where the share of recent entrants fell from 43 percent of the foreign-born in 2000 to 34 percent in 2011—can positively influence the percentage of the overall foreign-born population that is naturalized.7 Indeed, this partly accounts for the increase in the share of the overall foreign-born population that was naturalized, from 45 percent in 2000 to 52 percent in 2011 (Tables 7-3 and 7-4).

Given that a change in the percentage naturalized is related to the duration of residence in the U.S., it is important to disaggregate data from the 2000 census and the 2011 ACS by year of entry. Theoretically by doing so, changes in the percentage naturalized can be attributed to shifts in the proclivity of a group to become U.S. citizens. For the most recent entrants (those who entered within 10 years of the survey), about the same share were naturalized in 2000 and 2011—18 percent. Among those with residence of 20 years or more, close to 8-in-10 were naturalized at both points in time. The only significant difference was among immigrants who were in the country between 10 and 20 years. In this group, 55 percent were naturalized in 2011, compared with 51 percent in 2000, indicative of a slight increase in their proclivity to become American citizens, particularly among Europeans and Asians.8

In 2011 over 6-in-10 immigrants from Europe and the nonhispanic Caribbean were naturalized, as were over one-half from Asia. Latin Americans and Africans had the lowest levels of naturalization, 39 and 44 percent, respectively. The low percentage naturalized among Latin Americans was largely a result of their lower proclivity to naturalize, irrespective of decade of entry; for Africans, the lower percentage naturalized was heavily influenced by the recency...
### Table 7-3
Share of Foreign-born who are Naturalized by Area of Origin & Decade of Entry
New York City, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Naturalized</td>
<td>Percent Naturalized</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, NYC</td>
<td>3,059,912</td>
<td>1,595,227</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>1,035,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>975,941</td>
<td>384,082</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>339,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>841,844</td>
<td>449,588</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>330,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean, nonhispanic</td>
<td>606,390</td>
<td>381,675</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>159,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>479,696</td>
<td>315,006</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>128,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>128,952</td>
<td>57,072</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>64,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>27,089</td>
<td>7,804</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>13,271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey-Public Use Microdata Sample
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning

### Table 7-4
Share of Foreign-born who are Naturalized by Area of Origin & Decade of Entry
New York City, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Naturalized</td>
<td>Percent Naturalized</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, NYC</td>
<td>2,871,032</td>
<td>1,278,687</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>1,224,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>907,451</td>
<td>310,497</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>398,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>686,599</td>
<td>294,643</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>333,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean, nonhispanic</td>
<td>595,642</td>
<td>325,792</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>190,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>557,492</td>
<td>308,116</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>232,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>92,435</td>
<td>31,398</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>52,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>31,413</td>
<td>8,241</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>17,224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census-Summary File 3 and 5% Public Use Microdata Sample
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning
Chapter 7: The Impact of Immigration: Past, Present, and Future

of their immigration, with almost one-half of all immigrants in 2011 entering in the previous decade. For all groups, however, the level of naturalization rose between 2000 and 2011 (Figure 7-7).

As discussed in Chapter 6, there has been a substantial change in the classes of admission utilized by immigrants over the past three decades. The entry of immigrants with family ties to legal permanent residents has fallen, while visas to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens have increased dramatically. Visas to those with ties to permanent residents are numerically limited and entail long waiting periods, as opposed to visas for immediate relatives, which are exempt from any limit. One reason for the earlier reliance on reunification with legal permanent residents was the low levels of naturalization among some immigrant groups. The increase in naturalization has allowed for greater use of immediate relative visas, which paves the way for quicker immigrant entry.

Immigrants in an Aging Population

Most immigrants ages 65 and over (hereafter referred to as 65+) arrived in the U.S. primarily in the young working ages. Thus peaks and valleys in immigration to the city are reflected—after a lag—in the foreign-born composition of the city’s 65+ population. In recent decades, the foreign-born share of the city’s 65+ population peaked in 1970, when 58 percent of the 948,000 residents in that age group were foreign-born (Figure 7-8). Most immigrants 65+ were part of the large flow from Europe in the initial decades of the 20th century, and their numerical strength was reflected in the large share they comprised of the 65+ population in 1970. The cessation of large-scale immigration in the 1930s and 1940s was reflected in a diminishing share of the foreign-born among those 65+ in 1980 (41 percent) and 1990 (32 percent). While the overall population age 65+ was essentially unchanged between 1970 and 1990, the number of foreign-born in this age group dropped 45 percent during this period.
After 1965, flows from Europe began to ebb and there was a dramatic increase in immigration from Latin America, Asia, and the nonhispanic Caribbean. The resurgence of large-scale immigration to the nation provided a large supply of young, working age people who are now beginning to enter the older age groups. Between 1990 and 2011, the number of foreign-born persons 65+ increased by 55 percent, from 302,000 to 469,000; immigrants comprised over 46 percent of the population age 65+ in 2011. It should be noted that growth in the older foreign-born population was not only due to the aging of earlier foreign-born cohorts who entered in the young working ages, but also due to recent direct immigration of older persons. More than 45,000 persons or 10 percent of the foreign-born age 65+ in 2011 immigrated to the U.S. since 2000, with China and the Dominican Republic accounting for about one-in-three of these older—but recent—immigrants (data not shown).

Like the nation, more New Yorkers are projected to be in the older age groups over the next few decades. The question is not whether an increase in the population 65+ will occur, but rather the scale of the increase. Preliminary projections have the city’s population 65+ increasing by approximately 400,000 in the next three decades. As those in the present, heavily immigrant younger age cohorts eventually enter the older age groups, the number of foreign-born in the oldest age groups will con-

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**Figure 7-8**

**Population 65 and Over by Nativity**

New York City, 1970–2011

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Native 65+</th>
<th>Foreign-born 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2000 censuses; 2011 American Community Survey-Public Use Microdata Sample Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning
continue to increase. As of 2011, more than one-half of all persons 35 to 64 years of age were foreign-born, well above the city average of 37 percent. These age cohorts will increase both the size of the older population and its immigrant component. More importantly, unlike previous periods, the mix of countries represented in these groups will reflect the diverse post-1965 immigrant streams, resulting in unprecedented diversity among older New Yorkers.

**Immigrant Fertility**

In addition to the direct effect of immigration on population growth, immigration has an indirect effect by way of fertility. Immigrants are heavily concentrated in the childbearing ages and tend to have higher fertility than native-born residents. In 2011 foreign-born women constituted 41 percent of women in the childbearing ages, 15 to 50 years. Yet foreign-born mothers accounted for a slight majority of all births in New York City: 60,800 out of 118,700 births (Table 7-5). Among foreign-born women, mothers born in China (8,000), the Dominican Republic (7,701), and Mexico (6,645) had the largest numbers of births, together accounting for 1-in-3 births to foreign-born women. Overall, immigrants and their U.S.-born offspring account for approximately 60 percent of the city’s population.

**Immigration and the Resident Work Force**

The ebb and flow of people that is a defining feature of New York City’s population dynamic means that workers who leave need to be replaced to ensure the continued success of New York’s economy. Moreover, as workers in the large baby boom cohorts retire, they also need to be replaced. These replacement workers are often immigrants. In 2011, 46 percent of the city’s resident labor force was foreign-born (Figure 7-9), but immigrants constituted a majority of all workers 35 to 64 years of age, with their peak share among 45 to 54 year olds (56 percent).

In 2011, recent immigrants—those who arrived in 2000 or later—comprised 15 percent of city residents in the labor force. Since most immigrants arrive in the young working ages, this is where recent immigrants are disproportionately represented (as are the native-born). The peak share for recent immigrants is among those 25 to 34 years of age, where they comprised 21 percent of the labor force. Longer resident immigrants—those who arrived prior to 2000—comprised 31 percent of residents in the labor force, but 40 percent of workers ages 35 to 54, and 46 percent among 55 to 64 year olds.

In order to better understand the contribution immigrants make to the city’s workforce, it is import-
ant to identify the niches they occupy by industry. Industry refers to the kinds of business conducted by a person’s employing organization. This includes the businesses of those who are self-employed, where immigrants have a higher-than-average representation (see Chapter 4).

Immigrants were conspicuous across the industry spectrum, but had the highest numerical presence in two of the city’s largest industries (Figure 7-10). *Educational, Health, and Social Services*, the largest industry in New York’s economy, employed 990,500 residents; immigrants accounted for 461,000 (47 percent) of this service sector, in fields such as hospitals (80,400), home health care (51,700), elementary and secondary schools (44,800), individual and family services (32,900), child day care services (27,400), colleges and universities (26,500), and nursing care facilities (25,600). The next largest industry, *Accommodation, Food, and Other Services*, employed 614,500 residents, of whom 360,300 or 59 percent were foreign-born. The largest concentrations in this industry were found in restaurants and other food services (125,600), private households (28,300), and traveler accommodations (21,500), with smaller, though notable, numbers in auto repair, beauty salons, and dry cleaning. *Wholesale and Retail Trade* had the third largest immigrant presence, with 219,900 immigrants employed. They constituted nearly one-half of total employments in this sector, with substantial numbers in grocery (32,200), clothing (15,200), and department and discount stores (10,900).

With respect to industries with a disproportionate immigrant presence, 67 percent of workers in *Construction* were foreign-born (120,700), followed by *Accommodation, Food, and Other Services* (59 percent). Immigrants also had a large share in *Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities* (57 percent or 125,300 immigrant workers), which included 33,800 in taxi and limousine businesses, 19,500 in bus service and urban transit, and 10,000 in services...
Incidental to transportation. Also included here are workers in the postal service, as well as those in air transport, courier, truck, and rail transportation. Finally, immigrants comprised a majority in Manufacturing (55 percent or 86,100 immigrant workers), with the largest cluster in apparel (13,100), along with medical equipment, baking, furniture, pharmaceuticals, and printing.

Industry sectors where immigrants had the lowest percentages of all workers were Information (19 percent); Public Administration (28 percent); Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management (37 percent); and Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (F.I.R.E.) (36 percent). Despite the relatively low representation, large clusters of immigrants were present in industries within these sectors. Among jobs in F.I.R.E., for example, large numbers of immigrants were in real estate (37,600), banking (29,700), securities/commodities (22,800), and insurance (14,400). Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management included immigrant workers in building maintenance (25,300), legal services (14,100), investigation and security services (12,900), computer systems design (11,200), and accounting and payroll (10,900).

Figure 7-10
Nativity of New York City’s Resident Employed* by Selected Industry
New York City, 2011

46.8% of all employed* residents were foreign-born

* Persons 16 and Over Employed in the Civilian Labor Force
** Includes Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative and Waste Management
*** Includes Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Other Services (Except Public Administration)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey-Public Use Microdata Sample
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning
**Immigrants and Housing**

This section addresses the role immigrants play in the city’s housing market by using the 2011 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS).\(^1\) Table 7-6 shows there were 3.1 million households in the city, of which 1.39 million had foreign-born heads (of household). Among these foreign-born heads, 1,080,000 had arrived in the U.S. before 2000 (longer-resident heads) and 313,000 arrived in 2000 or later (recent entrants). For both recently arrived and longer-resident foreign-born heads, Table 7-6 lists the number living in six types of housing.

The housing types depicted refer to tenure and regulatory status. Owner-occupied housing units are either conventional or co-op/condo. Conventional refers to privately owned houses or buildings that are not part of a cooperative or condominium development. This includes owner-occupied single family houses and living quarters that are part of commercial or industrial buildings. The category co-op/condo is comprised of cooperative and condominium units, including those constructed under the New York State and New York City Mitchell-Lama programs that provide cooperative housing for moderate income families through limited equity ownership.

Renter-occupied housing units cover four categories: market rate, controlled/stabilized, government assisted, and public housing. Market rate refers to units with no current governmental restrictions or regulation on rents, rental conditions, or type of tenancy. These units may never have been subject to government rent regulation, or may have been regulated in the past but are no longer subject to these controls. Controlled/stabilized units include those that are subject to the Rent Control Law and Regulations, as well as units where other government regulations determine the level of rent increases. Controlled/stabilized units numbered nearly 1 million, making this the largest category in the city’s housing inventory.

### Table 7-6

**Housing Type by Nativity of Household Head**  
New York City, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Heads</th>
<th>Percent Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOREIGN-BORN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL, New York City*</td>
<td>3,087,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-Occupied</td>
<td>984,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>567,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op/condo</td>
<td>416,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-Occupied</td>
<td>2,103,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market rate</td>
<td>812,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled/stabilized</td>
<td>999,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government assisted</td>
<td>104,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public housing**</td>
<td>187,443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were 426,000 householder records with missing information on birthplace and 193,907 foreign born householder records with missing information on year of immigration. These households were assigned a year of immigration based on the percent distribution of households with complete information for these variables.

**Includes about 2,500 units that were acquired by the city due to nonpayment of property taxes.

Source: New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, 2011  
Population Division-New York City Department of City Planning
The large majority of these units were rent stabilized, covered under the auspices of the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974.12

Government assisted rentals include several categories that receive some form of government subsidy for the purposes of providing affordable housing to those with moderate incomes. Finally, public housing refers to rental units owned and managed by the New York City Housing Authority. Units in Housing Authority projects aim to provide housing for low to moderate income tenants, with the terms and conditions of occupancy regulated by the Authority.

Immigrants comprised 45 percent of all households, with a slightly lower percentage in owner-occupied (44 percent) compared with renter-occupied units (46 percent). Immigrants were particularly underrepresented among co-op/condo owners, where they accounted for just 35 percent of all units; they had a higher share (50 percent) of conventional owner-occupied units. Among rental units, immigrants were disproportionately represented in controlled/stabilized units, while they were underrepresented in government assisted units and especially in public housing.

A different picture emerges when longer-resident immigrants are compared with recent entrants. Home ownership requires not only capital but also knowledge of the housing market. Not surprisingly, units that were home to recent entrants were far less likely to be owner-occupied. While recent entrants accounted for 10 percent of all households in New York City, they constituted just 3 percent of owner-occupied units—and 14 percent of rentals. Among market rate rentals, 17 percent were occupied by recent entrants. On the other hand, recent entrants were underrepresented in rentals that were government assisted (5 percent) and in public housing (3 percent).

With increased time spent in the U.S., the housing picture improved dramatically for immigrant households. While longer-resident immigrant households were 35 percent of all households, they accounted for 41 percent of owner-occupied units. Among conventional units, longer resident households accounted for 47 percent, though they were underrepresented (32 percent) in co-ops/condos. Among rentals, the presence of longer resident immigrants in controlled/stabilized units (36 percent) and in government assisted units (38 percent) was broadly in line with their overall share of households. But they were underrepresented in public housing, with 27 percent of units in this category. Thus even with increased time in the U.S., immigrants are still much less likely to be living in public housing.

Since the mid-1990s, demand for housing resulted in a surge in new construction, especially in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens, boroughs that also had significant numbers of housing conversions in the 1990s.13 This boom lasted until 2008, when the effects of the deep recession took hold in the New York housing market.14 Much of the demand for new housing that came on the market in the last decade was driven by immigrants. NYCHVS reported that between 2000 and 2011, 133,000 housing units were “occupied for the first time,”15 and over 64,000 or 49 percent of these units were occupied by a foreign-born head (data not shown). When second generation household heads—those who were native-born with one/both parents foreign-born—were added, units occupied by first and second generation heads stood at more than 83,000 or 63 percent of all housing units that were first occupied between 2000 and 2011.

Race and Hispanic Change

Over the past four decades, the large flow of immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean has reshaped the race/Hispanic composition of New York from largely white nonhispanic to a diverse mix where no one group is in the majority. White nonhispanics, who have experienced population losses each decade since 1970, saw these losses attenuate in the last decade due to a large influx of young whites from the rest of the nation. With a population of 2.73 million in 2011, whites remained the largest group in the city, but they comprised just 33 percent of the
population, down from 63 percent in 1970 (Figure 7-11). The black population reached a high 1.96 million in 2000, but declined by 79,000 in the last decade, the result of increased out-migration of blacks with origins in the southern states and the Caribbean. Black nonhispansics, who comprised 19 percent in 1970, accounted for 23 percent of the population in 2011. While the population of whites and blacks declined in the past decade, Asians and Hispanics saw population increases that were mirrored in their growing shares of the city’s population. Asians and other nonhispansics increased by nearly one-third in the last decade and crossed the one million mark for the first time. They accounted for 14 percent of the population in 2011, up from 2 percent in 1970. Hispanics grew 10 percent in the last decade to reach 2.37 million. Hispanics are now the largest minority group in the city, with a 29 percent share, up from 16 percent in 1970.

These dramatic changes have been accompanied by increasing ethnic diversity within each race/Hispanic group. The Afro-Caribbean population, for example, numbered in excess of 601,000 in 2011, or nearly one-third (32 percent) of the black nonhispanic population, up from less than 10 percent in 1970. The Hispanic population, long synonymous with Puerto Ricans, had no single group that comprised a majority. While Puerto Ricans remained the largest group, they accounted for just 31 percent of Hispanics in 2011, and were followed by a panoply of other ethnic groups, including Dominicans (25 percent), Mexicans (13 percent), Ecuadorians (7 percent), and Colombians (4 percent). Among Asians, the Chinese were a near majority (47 percent) in 2011, but down from their 59 percent share in 1970. They were followed by Asian Indians (19 percent), Koreans (9 percent), and Filipinos (7 percent). Bangladeshis emerged as the 5th largest Asian group in 2011, with a
5 percent share of the Asian nonhispanic population, followed by Pakistanis at 4 percent.

Figure 7-12 examines the race/Hispanic profile of the city by age. White nonhispanics accounted for a disproportionate 46 percent of those 65 years and over—an age cohort that represents the city’s demographic past. The city’s demographic future is best represented by children under 18: Hispanics were the largest group (35 percent), followed by white and black nonhispanics (25 percent each), Asian and other nonhispanics (12 percent), and those of multiracial nonhispanic backgrounds (2 percent). In the coming decades, the overall race/Hispanic composition of the city will reflect the make-up of the younger age cohorts as they move into the older age groups. However, the changing nature of domestic and international migration could alter the race and Hispanic makeup of the city in new ways.

**SUMMARY**

There is a dynamism that defines the population of New York City, an energy that comes from a continuous ebb and flow of people—literally hundreds of thousands of people entering and leaving the city each year. Immigration is a key part of this process, selective of people with talent and motivation who are drawn to the possibilities afforded by the wide array of economic opportunities the city offers. In recent decades immigrant flows have mitigated what could have been catastrophic population losses in the 1970s, have stabilized the city’s population in the 1980s, were a major impetus for growth that helped New York officially cross the 8 million mark in 2000, and have propelled the city to a new population peak of 8.34 million in 2012.

The city’s foreign-born number more than three million—a population that would comprise the third largest city in the U.S., bested by just New York City
Immigrants are 37 percent of the city’s population, and with foreign-born mothers accounting for 51 percent of all births, approximately 6-in-10 New Yorkers are either immigrants or the children of immigrants. On the economic front, immigrants comprised 47 percent of all employed residents, but accounted for over a majority of residents employed in Construction; Accommodation, Food, and Other Services; Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities; and Manufacturing. Immigrants are disproportionately represented among those who start new businesses, providing a continuous injection of economic vitality that serves the neighborhoods of New York. Further, the presence of immigrants helps New York City maintain its aging housing stock and drives demand for new housing, with almost one-half of all units coming on the market between 2000 and 2011 occupied by an immigrant; when the second generation is included, this share increases to 63 percent.

There is another and perhaps less well understood side to the economic story of immigration, one that goes to the heart of the city’s demographic makeup. It involves the inevitable aging of the city’s population over the next three decades, a result of the baby boomer cohorts entering retirement. Continued immigration could help ameliorate the costs associated with increased services that would be needed by this burgeoning older population, which is projected to increase by approximately 400,000 persons by 2040. If history is any indication, the economic opportunities in New York will continue to sustain its immigrant flow. And in light of the increase in the number of naturalized citizens, the number of family members reunifying with these citizens should continue to grow.

Finally, the most recent data suggest that we are potentially in the midst of yet another phase in the city’s demographic history. It is one where domestic migration will play a heightened role in the flow of people to the city, as evidenced by smaller losses to the rest of the nation and more modest gains through international migration. This rela-
tive balance of domestic losses and international gains, while evident in just the last few years, may represent a reversal of a longstanding pattern of net losses through migration.

ENDNOTES

1 Changes of address from year-to-year for tax returns represent flows into and out of the city. Those who have addresses in the city in one year and outside the city in the next are designated as “out-migrants”; those who live outside the city one year and in the city the next are designated as “in-migrants.”

2 According to the 2011 ACS, the number of persons who “came to the U.S. to live” in 2010 was 94,800, down 25 percent from the 126,400 persons in the 2000 census who said they had entered in 1999. Similarly, the 451,800 persons in the 2011 ACS who had arrived in the previous five years (2006–2010) was down 22 percent from the 579,800 in the 2000 census who had entered between 1995–1999.

3 Net international flows were derived by assuming that those emigrating equaled 20 percent of the legal flow. Non-immigrant in- and out-flows were ignored.

4 Strictly comparable data on in-migrants and out-migrants are not available; data on out-migrants are incomplete, since the ACS does not provide information on those who have left the U.S. for other countries. This analysis assumes that this effect remains the same over time, thus making comparisons useful.


7 These percentages, shown in Chapter 4, can also be derived from the first row in Tables 7-2 and 7-3.

8 Theoretically, it is possible that differences in the year-to-year flow of immigrants in the 1980s and the 1990s could have affected the time available for immigrants to naturalize. However it is impossible to disentangle this effect from those related to the other factors mentioned, such as differences in the number of non-immigrants and other groups that are ineligible to naturalize.

9 Between 1990 and 2010, there was steady growth in the percentage of all deaths to foreign-born persons: 29 percent in 1990, 31 percent in 2000 and 35 percent in 2010.

10 The broad industry groups shown in Figure 7-10 are based on the one-year 2011 ACS. Because of the much larger number of detailed industries, the 2011 sample was insufficient for the creation of reliable estimates. Thus estimates of detailed industries are from the five-year ACS for 2007-2011.

11 The 2011 NYCHVS sample consisted of about 19,000 housing units that were drawn from the 2010 census address list. Information on “control status” of the housing unit, that is the kinds of subsidies and/or governmental regulation that govern housing occupancy, can be identified in the NYCHVS but not the decennial census or ACS.

12 The Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) is a state law that provides limitations on the amount of rent in various municipalities (local opt in) based on a continuing housing emergency, defined as vacancy rates of less than five percent.

13 Unlike new construction, conversions are housing units created by adding to or subdividing units in existing buildings. It includes dwelling units created in non-residential buildings, additional units created within existing occupied residential buildings, and units restored to the housing stock in vacant residential buildings by private investors without city assistance. The city’s building records provide more accurate data on new construction than on conversions, requiring that the number of these added units be estimated by indirect means. For the 1990s, the estimated number of conversions in the city was 127,000.


15 This excludes 9,400 households where information on the birthplace of the respondent or respondent’s parents was not reported.

16 Based on persons of nonhispanic Caribbean ancestry in the ACS.

17 Self-reporting more than one race on the census, which began in 2000, is affected by a variety of factors that make any judgment of “accuracy” impossible to determine. Suffice it to say that the “two or more races” population is a volatile number that demonstrates much inconsistency when measured over multiple samples in census evaluations. See National Research Council (2004). The 2000 Census: Counting Under Adversity. Panel to Review the 2000 Census. Washington DC: the National Academies Press.