

# rural new york minute

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## Latino In-Migration among Counties in Decline<sup>1</sup>

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### What is the Issue?

Latinos increased their share of the U.S. population from 12.5 percent to 14.7 percent between 2000 and 2006 (U.S. Bureau of the Census), making them the nation's largest ethnic minority. Latino migration to the United States is often to rural areas with declining population. Many counties across the country, including some in upstate New York, would be experiencing much more significant population losses without this in-migration.

In 2006, Latinos comprised 16.2 percent of New York's population, an increase from 15.1 percent just six years prior (U.S. Census Bureau). Recent analysis of NYS counties by Eberts and Merschrod<sup>2</sup> demonstrate a marked growth in the Latino population in rural counties associated with the employment of migrant farmworkers. The Hudson and Champlain Valleys as well as the Central and Western rural regions of the state are the main receiving areas of Latino immigrants. While NYS counties have not seen the exponential growth rates experienced in areas such as the rural South and Midwestern U.S., the impacts from in-migration have nonetheless been significant. As communities undergo these marked demographic changes, the integration of new immigrants and the adequate delivery of services present serious challenges.

### In-Migration and Population Loss

Increased Latino in-migration into upstate New York counties occurs at a time of overall population declines in many communities. Between 1990 and 2000, while total population decreased in about half of NYS counties (all upstate), the Latino population decreased in only seven. And, for twenty counties in NYS, the Latino population increased while the total population decreased (see Figure 1).

The twenty counties that exhibit this pattern (increasing Latino population concurrent with total population decreases) are spread along the Southern Tier, Western, East Central (Mohawk Valley) and Central NY (Syracuse MSA) regions of the state (see Map 1). About half the counties are considered non-metropolitan, the other half are metropolitan. Latino population increases between 1990 and 2000 range from just nine percent in Schoharie County to eighty-six percent in Schenectady County. Among this group of counties, Broome County experienced the most significant relative population loss over the time period (five percent), yet increased its Latino population by sixty-one percent.

While some of the Latino population increases are significant *percentage-wise*, in many cases they represent relatively small *numerical* increases. For example, Seneca County had 363 persons of Hispanic origin in 1990. Ten years later, this number had increased to 659 (U.S. Census Bureau). While this represents an eighty-two percent increase over the decade, Latinos comprise only two percent of the total county population. This increase of Latinos in Seneca County occurred as the county as a whole *lost* 341 people (total county population declined from 33,683 in 1990 to 33,342 in 2000). These increases in the Latino population serve to offset larger overall population losses fueled primarily by White, non-Hispanic population decreases in many counties.

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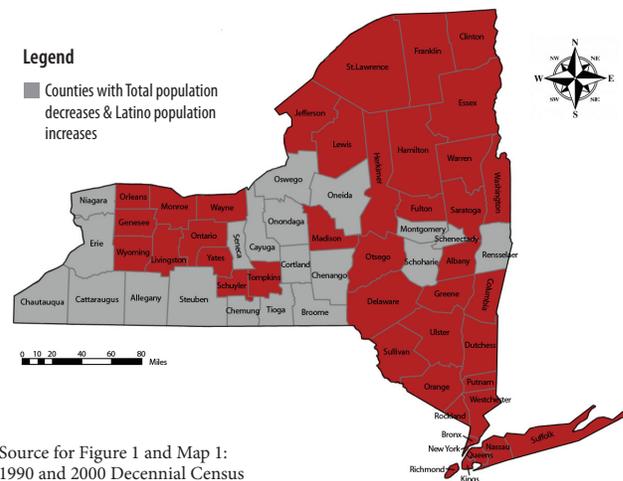
<sup>2</sup>Eberts, Paul and Chris Merschrod. (2004). *Socioeconomic Trends and Well-Being Indicators in New York State, 1950-2000*. Albany: New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources.

**Table 1:** Change in Total Population and Latino Population, NYS (1990-2000)

County	% Change in Population		County	% Change in Population	
	Total	Latino		Total	Latino
Allegany*	-1%	45%	Niagara	0%	39%
Broome	-5%	61%	Oneida	-6%	30%
Cattaraugus*	0%	48%	Onondaga	-2%	55%
Cayuga*	0%	34%	Oswego	0%	37%
Chataouqua*	-2%	46%	Rensselaer	-1%	73%
Chemung	-4%	12%	Schenectady	-2%	86%
Chenango*	-1%	15%	Schoharie	-1%	9%
Cortland*	-1%	26%	Seneca*	-1%	82%
Erie	-1%	40%	Steuben*	0%	54%
Montgomery*	-4%	27%	Tioga	-1%	39%

\*non-metropolitan counties

**Map 1:** Change in Total Population and Latino Population, NYS (1990-2000)



### Conclusion

New York State communities will inevitably change as a result of new migration patterns. Indeed, as many communities experience declines in the White, non-Hispanic population, continued Latino in-migration will result in a dramatically altered demographic profile. These changing demographic conditions translate into new opportunities and challenges for local communities. For more information on this topic, please see CaRDI's publication "Community Response to Immigrants in New Destinations," by Pfeffer and Parra, at: <http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/upload/11-2008-RPB.pdf>.

