



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/RYAN LAVIS

Dr. Joseph Salvo, director of the Population Division of the Department of City Planning, discussed the immigration trends that are shaping Staten Island's population in a lecture at Wagner College.

Increasingly, a borough of immigrants

Nearly 21 percent here foreign-born, lecturer tells Wagner College audience

By RYAN LAVIS
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

The extent of Staten Island's diversity is sometimes overlooked, but an expert in the field shined a spotlight on the borough's growing immigrant populations during a lecture Tuesday night at Wagner College.

On the Island, which some 470,000 people call home, nearly 21 percent, or 100,500, are foreign-born, said Dr. Joseph Salvo, who directs the Population Division at the city Department of Planning.

That's a huge increase from 1970, when only 26,700 Islanders were from outside the country. And it's considerably larger than it was in 2000, when the number was at 72,700.

"When you take a look, you see there's been a huge

increase of foreign-born on Staten Island," Dr. Salvo said, adding that the most significant gains come from various subgroups of Hispanics, black non-Hispanics and Asians. Staten Island is also the only borough to see a rise in these populations over the past decade, he said.

From 2000-2010, there has been a 52 percent increase in the Hispanic population, a 12 percent increase in the black non-Hispanic population and a 40 percent rise in the Asian non-Hispanic population on the Island, according to figures from the U.S. Census. Perhaps even more interesting, Dr. Salvo said, are the breakdowns of these denominations' subgroups.

For Hispanics living on the Island, Mexicans have seen the largest jump in population, with a 154 percent increase from 2000-2010. The Puerto Rican population on the Island rose by 22 percent. Dominicans saw a 105 percent increase and Central Americans a 50 percent boost.

Chinese populations account for a whopping 78 percent of Asians living on the Island, while Filipinos have 14 percent and Asian Indians are at 5 percent. The only decrease on the Island came among Koreans, who dropped 7 percent from 2000-2010. "If there's any one phenomenon that's shown itself in the last 15 years, it's the increase of the Chinese population in New York City," Dr. Salvo said. "Every single borough is feeling this."

Unlike the other groups, which have settled mostly on the North Shore, Hispanics have spread somewhat evenly throughout the borough. It comes as no surprise that the most significant gains for Hispanics are in North Shore neighborhoods such as Port Richmond and Westerleigh, with a rise of 80 percent or more from 2000-2010. But even South Shore areas from Tottenville to Annadale have seen a 50-80 percent increase.

"The Hispanic influx has been huge," Dr. Salvo said. "Often what you don't hear about are the large working-class and middle-class Hispanics moving to the Island, some of whom want to experience homeownership or want less density."

In addition to the ongoing trend of Hispanics, blacks and Asians in the borough, the white non-Hispanic population has declined substantially over the past decade. From 2000-2010, it saw a 5 percent decrease in population, according to the U.S. Census.

NORTH SHORE EXODUS

The Island's North Shore has seen an exodus of its white non-Hispanic population in the past decade, with most either leaving the borough entirely or moving to South and West Shore neighborhoods like Tottenville, Charleston and Richmond Valley.

In Port Richmond and Mariners Harbor, for example, there was a loss of 20 percent or more in the white non-Hispanic population from 2000-2010. At the same time, there was a gain of 20 percent or more in those South Shore neighborhoods. Mid-Island and West Shore neighborhoods have also seen a decrease of 6 to ten percent.

"We're getting to a point where half of the young people on Staten Island are not European whites. It's a mix of Hispanic, black and Asian," Dr. Salvo said. "There's a whole swath of people from all over the world here. It's only going to increase."