One or Two States? Immigration and Political Differences in New York State

The Source Project: People, Politics, & The Environment

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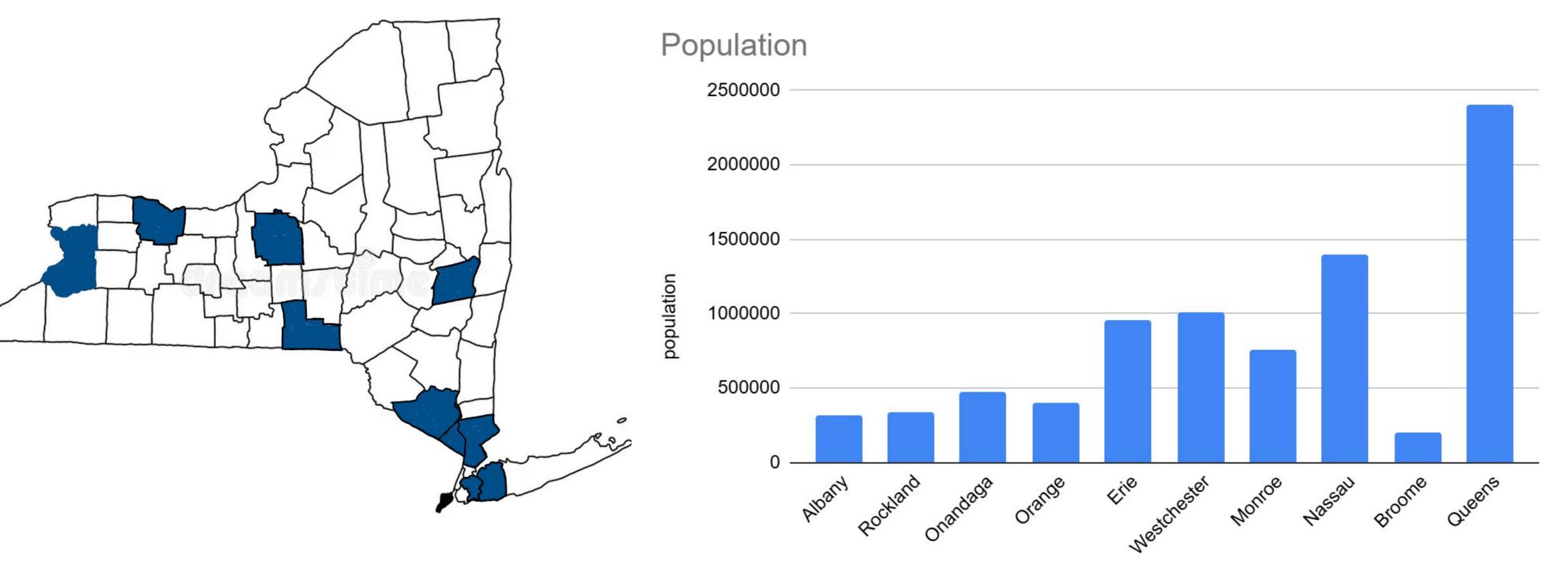
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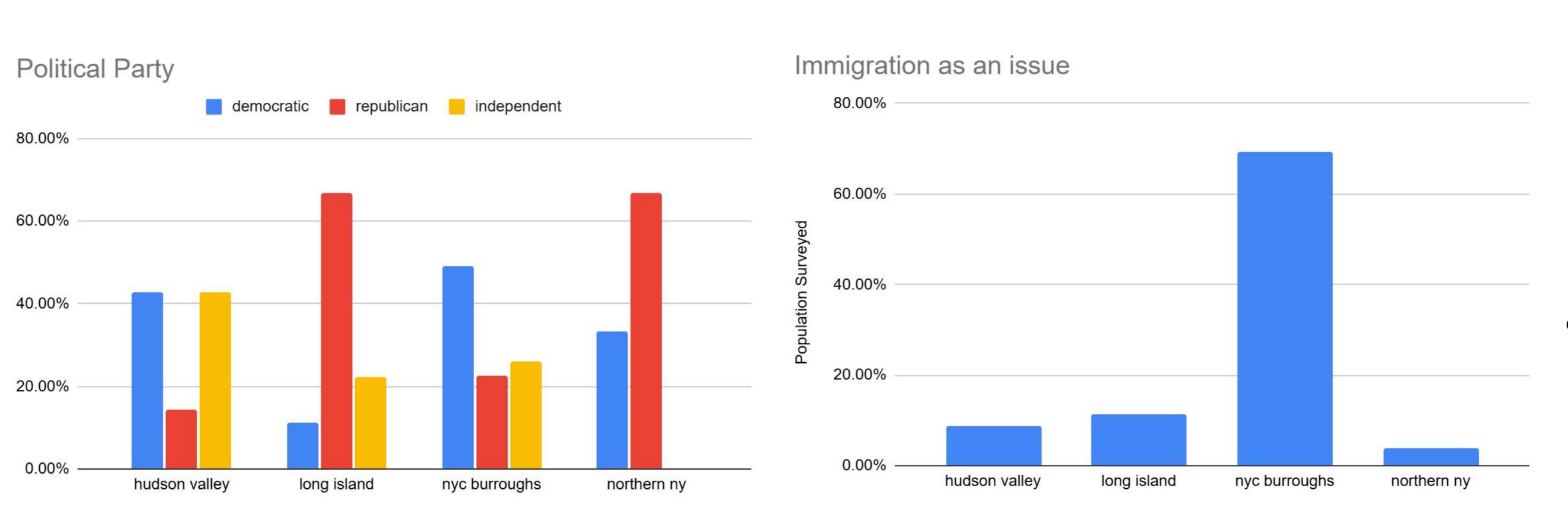STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Background

- New York State is looked at as a blue state during presidential elections, however there is a large political divide happening inside the state
- In the past decade, the politics across the United States have changed drastically with changes in presidential candidates and the propaganda produced
- Anti-immigration rhetoric has increased in recent years, changing immigration patterns and how citizens across the country, and in NY, react to these changes is reflected through voting patterns
- The amount of resources and opportunities differ in counties holding major cities versus those who don't, resulting in a large difference of demographics and the needs they need to thrive
- My research aims to highlight the disagreements between the counties in NYS as it has grown into a finger pointing argument; further delaying any progress in the state to be made
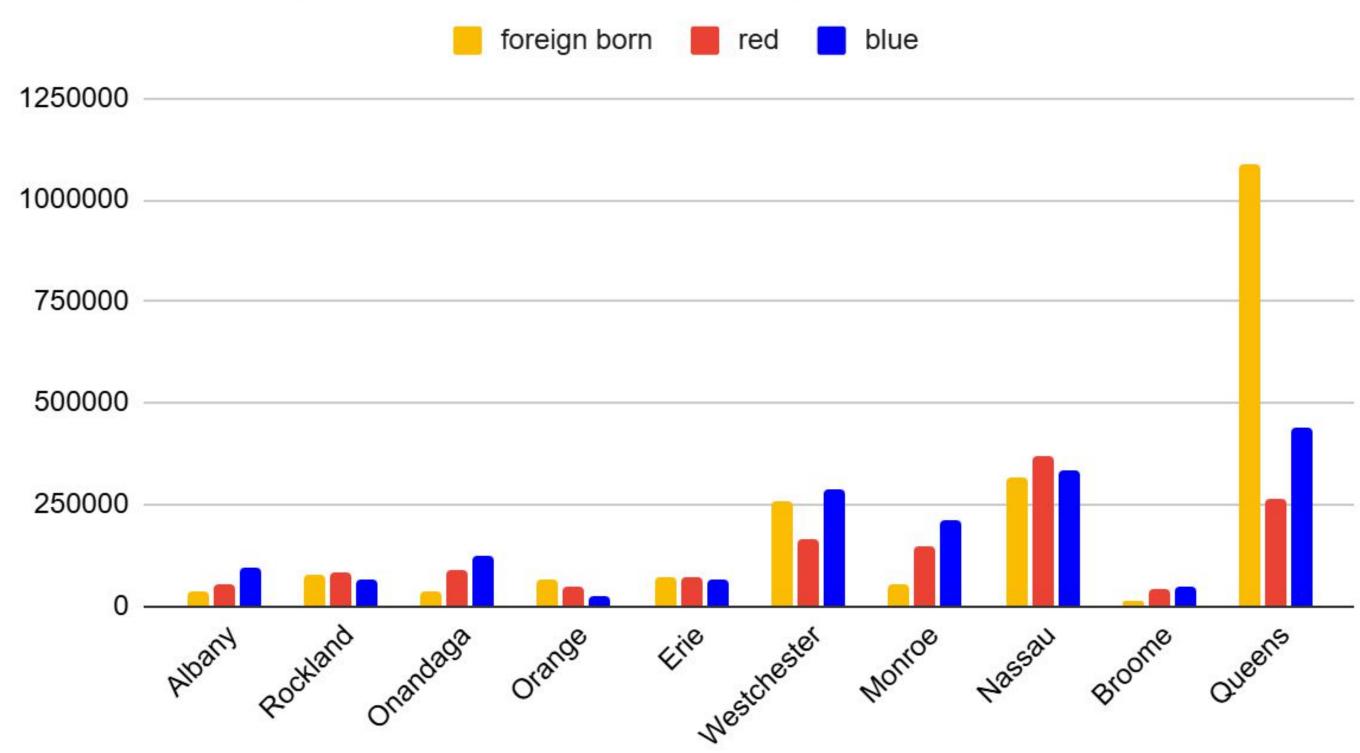
Methodology

- Began research by comparing the population sizes of counties across NYS in 2024
- Read literature reviews to understand history behind the rise of underlying issues between the northern and southern tiers of NYS
- Chose 10 states with both similar and different population sizes
- Collected data on the the immigrant population and looked at local policies to see what is important to residents in those counties
- Compared immigration patterns, local policies, and what is being voted for to understand if there was a relationship between these variables

Results

Population

Political Party
(democratic, republican, independent)

Immigration as an issue

Immigrant Population & Political Party
(foreign born, red, blue)

Conclusion

By comparing immigrant population, voting records, and a survey of about 400 people across NY, I received the following results:
- Counties that hold major cities have a higher percentage of immigrant population, while also simultaneously favoring democratic views
- High population density in the burroughs resulted in skewing of the data; half of population is immigrants and majority of results as immigration being a top issue came from people surveyed in the burroughs
- Percentage of immigration as a top issue from Hudson Valley, Long Island, NYC, and Northern NY align differently in relation to the immigrant population; resulting in inconclusive relationship
  - In addition to the selected studied counties that have lower immigrant populations have higher democratic parties (Albany, Monroe, Broome)
- High populated counties differ in political affiliation:
  - Westchester and Queens higher ratings of Democratic party
  - Nassau and Erie have higher republican views

Further Research

When exploring this topic, further research for other influential factors would be necessary to fully determine the reason for the wide variety of political affiliation across New York State. Possible factors influencing include Economics and Geography; in addition to where popular universities across the state are located as well, educated college students influence voting during major and local elections. Ultimately, the reasons behind the diverse political spectrum across NY cannot be answered through immigration trends on it's own.