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Socio-Economic Mobility Among Foreign-Born Latin American and Caribbean Nationalities in New York City, 2000-2006

Howard Caro-López

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Howard Caro-López
Fellow, Center for Latin American, Caribbean &
Latino Studies

Center for Latin American,
Caribbean & Latino Studies

Graduate Center
City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
Room 5419
New York, New York 10016

212-817-8438

clacsl@gc.cuny.edu

<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/lastudies>



Latino Data Project - Report 21 - December 2008

The Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies is a research institute that works for the advancement of the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States in the doctoral programs at the CUNY Graduate Center. One of its major priorities is to provide funding and research opportunities to Latino students at the Ph.D. level.

The Center established and helps administer an interdisciplinary specialization in Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies in the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program.

The Latino Data Project was developed with the goal of making information available on the dynamically growing Latino population of the United States and especially New York City through the analysis of extant data available from a variety of sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Institute for Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and state and local-level data sources.

All Latino Data Project reports are available at <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/lastudies/>

For additional information you may contact the Center at 212-817-8438 or by e-mail at clacls@gc.cuny.edu.

Staff:

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Carolina Barrera-Tobón, Administrative Director

Michelle Morazán, Development and Outreach Coordinator

Victoria Stone-Cadena, Director of Special Projects and Mapping Coordinator

Debora Upegui-Hernández, Special Events Coordinator

Melissa Swinea, Editorial Assistant

Laura Limonic, Research Assistant

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Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies
Room 5419
Graduate Center
City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10016

212-817-8438
clacls@gc.cuny.edu
<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/lastudies>

The 2000 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) of 2006, published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, provide data that permits the measurement of key socio-economic indicators, for foreign-born national Latin American and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean groups. This report will concentrate on a number of basic socio-economic indicators, including annual family income, educational attainment, family size, labor force participation and occupational status. It also measures home ownership rates, poverty rates and English language proficiency, to provide additional indicators of socio-economic mobility for foreign-born groups since 2000. In order to provide a clearer picture on socio-economic mobility, this report will compare measurements between major foreign-born Latino nationalities and foreign-born non-Hispanic Caribbean residents in New York City. Unless otherwise indicated, all data are based on the 2000 and 2006 population and household surveys from the 2000 Census and 2006 ACS.

Comparing socio-economic indicators, related to mobility, between different foreign-born groups, in the Latin American and Caribbean regions, is relevant not only because of the growth of New York City's Latino and non-Hispanic Caribbean population since 1980, but also because of a number of similarities that both Latino and Non-Hispanic Caribbean groups have with respect to the migration experience. Many Latino and non-Hispanic Caribbean immigrants come from countries with small, and/or developing economies of various levels of political stability. As a result, these immigrant groups play a pivotal role in the economic and political development of their respective countries, whether through financial remittances or through transnational political activity. Both of these activities are largely shaped by the socio-economic conditions immigrant groups confront in the United States.

There are, however, significant differences between these groups that warrant a comparative analysis between Latino and non-Hispanic Caribbean immigrants. For example, while both populations exhibit linguistic diversity, the fact that many non-Hispanic Caribbean migrants come from English speaking nations may effect their ability to integrate into an English-dominant society like the United States. Furthermore, while both Latinos and non-Hispanic Caribbean populations are racially diverse, a substantial majority of non-Hispanic Caribbean immigrants are of African descent, which differentiates them from many Latino nationalities that are more racially heterogeneous. Given the historical correlation between race and socio-economic outcomes in the United States, these racial distinctions between immigrant groups should be taken into account.

Comparing Latinos and Other Racial Groups in New York City Since 2000

While this report focuses on comparative socio-economic conditions between the major foreign-born Latino groups and all foreign-born non-Hispanic Caribbean residents in New York City, we will briefly examine the relevant socio-economic indicators between Latinos and other groups in New York City for 2000 and 2006.

As Table 1 and Figure 1 indicate, while the median annual family income for Latino residents increased by approximately 8% between 2000 and 2006, Latinos still lag behind all other major racial groups in New York City. The median income differential between non-Hispanic Whites and all other groups has grown substantially since 2000, but the gap between Latinos and other minority groups has also grown during this period. Furthermore Latinos, more so than any other group tend to fall into the lowest income brackets (See Figures 2 and 3 and Table 2.) While the number of Latino families earning over \$50,000 annually has increased from 33% to 42% between 2000 and 2006, nearly 60% of Latino families earn less than \$50,000 per year.

The proportion of Latinos in the lower income brackets remains considerably higher than those of Asians (28%), non-Hispanic Whites (31%) and non-Hispanic Blacks (42%) as of 2006, all of whom have experienced greater declines, in the number of families, in the lower income brackets for the six-year period.

The persistence of lower income figures for Latinos over this period appears to be, at least, partially linked to equally persistent low educational attainment levels relative to other major racial groups. While the percentage of New York City Latino adults with a high school degree or higher increased since 2000 from 53.5% to 62.2%, Latinos on the whole still have the highest percentage of individuals with less than a high school degree (Table 3). Furthermore, as Figure 4 illustrates, a college level degree remains an elusive goal for many Latinos. Though the number of Latino college graduates has increased, only 15% of all Latino adults in New York City report having a bachelor's degree or higher. This figure is considerably lower than non-Hispanic Black and Asian residents, who have also experienced educational attainment increases. Latinos also fall far behind non-Hispanic Whites in educational attainment. When one takes into account that Latinos labor force participation does not significantly differ from other groups, this suggests that Latinos are more adversely affected by educational differentials relative to other groups.

Table 1
Median Family Income by Race/Ethnic Group in New York City, 2000 - 2006

Race/Ethnicity	2000	2006
Non-Hispanic White	\$47,880	\$70,869
Non-Hispanic Black	\$37,734	\$55,693
Asian	\$47,321	\$64,396
Latinos	\$33,459	\$36,424

Figure 1
Median Family Income by Major Race/Ethnic Groups
in New York City, 2000 - 2006

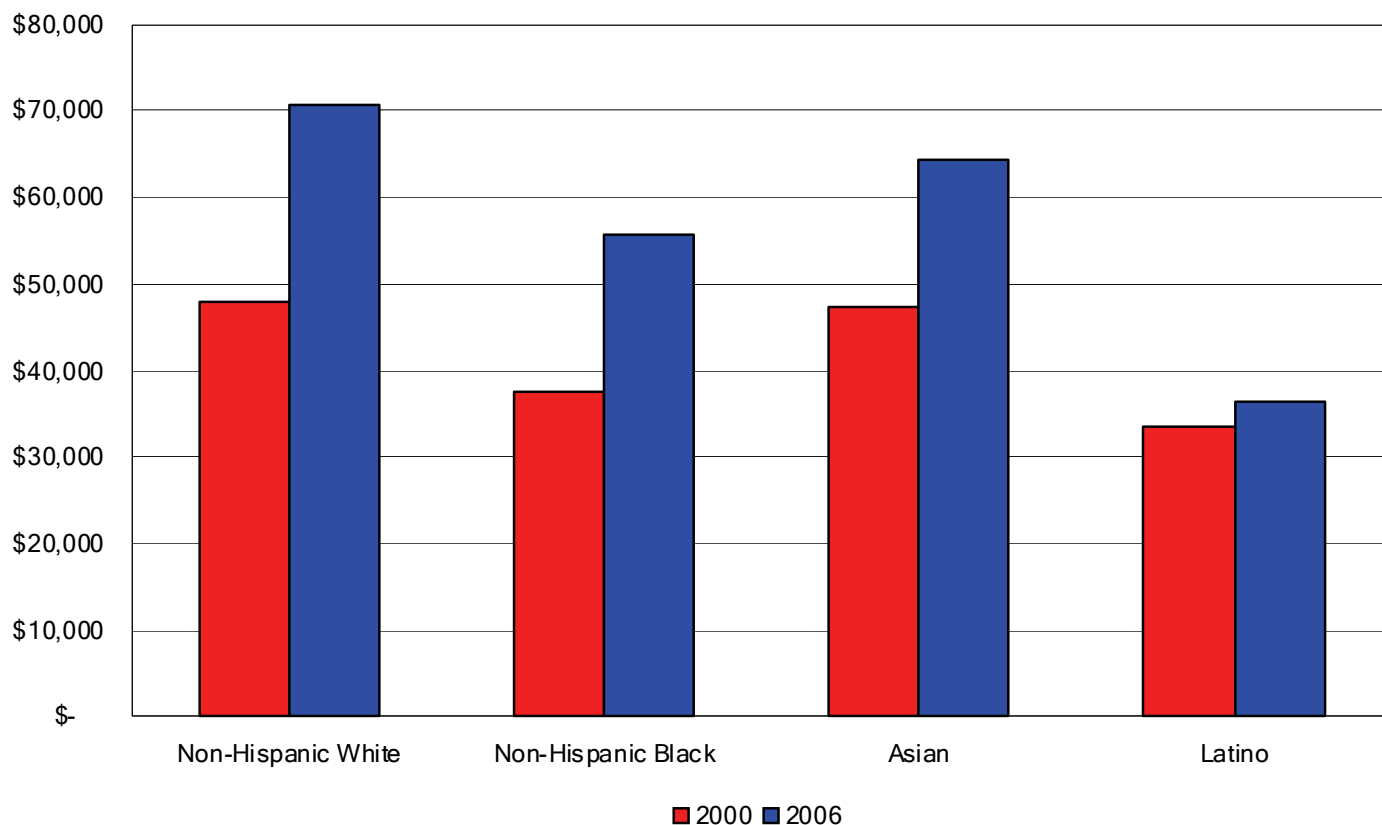


Table 2
Annual Family Income Distribution by Race/Ethnic Group in New York City, 2000 - 2006

	Non-Hispanic White		Non-Hispanic Black		Asian		Latino	
	2000	2006	2000	2006	2000	2006	2000	2006
Less than \$10,000	11%	8%	16%	13%	8%	0%	15%	11%
\$10,000-\$19,999	9%	5%	12%	10%	13%	6%	15%	14%
\$20,000-\$29,999	8%	6%	12%	4%	10%	9%	13%	12%
\$30,000-\$39,999	11%	7%	12%	5%	12%	3%	12%	10%
\$40,000-\$49,999	11%	5%	13%	8%	10%	10%	10%	10%
\$50,000-\$74,999	18%	15%	19%	15%	10%	29%	16%	17%
\$75,000-\$99,999	11%	16%	8%	17%	19%	7%	8%	10%
\$100,000-\$199,999	17%	30%	7%	23%	11%	20%	7%	12%
\$200,000 or Greater	4%	8%	1%	6%	4%	16%	2%	3%

Figure 2
Annual Family Income Distribution by Major Race/ Ethnic Groups in New York City, 2000

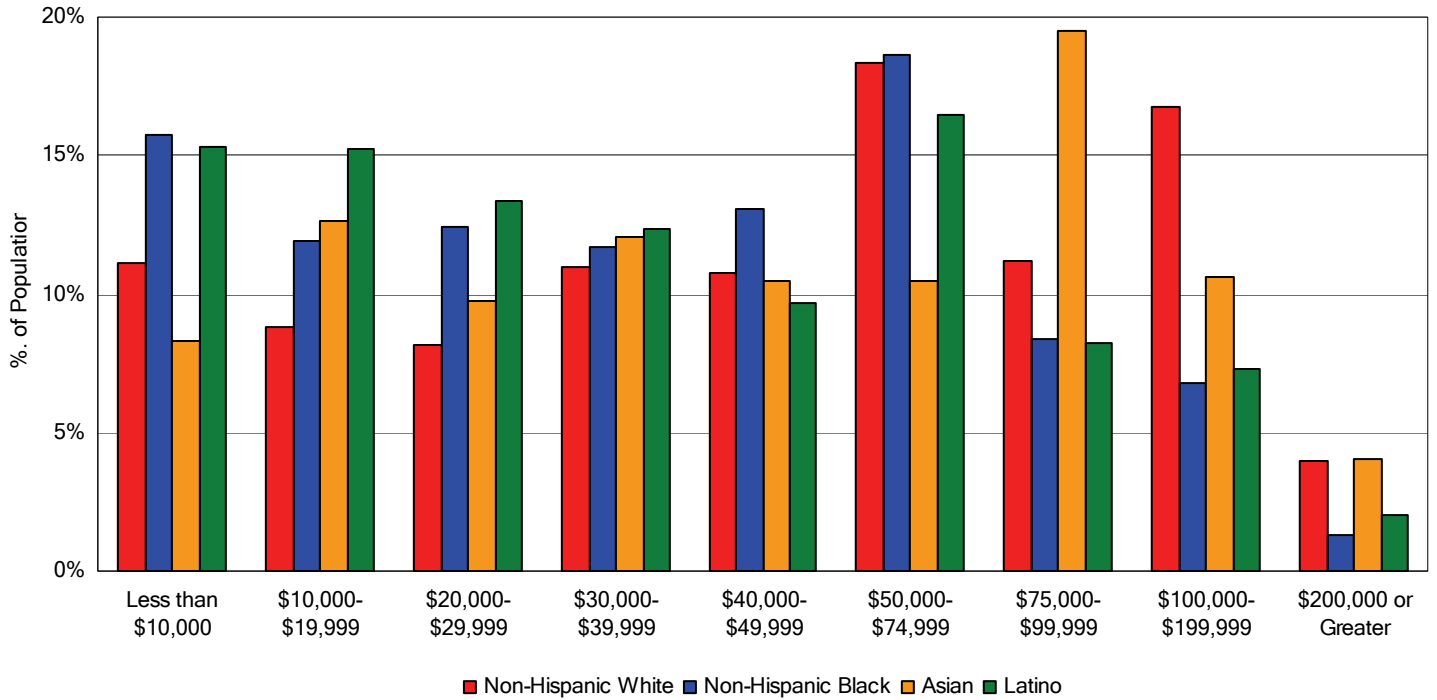


Figure 3
Annual Family Income Distribution by Major Race/ Ethnic Groups in New York City, 2006

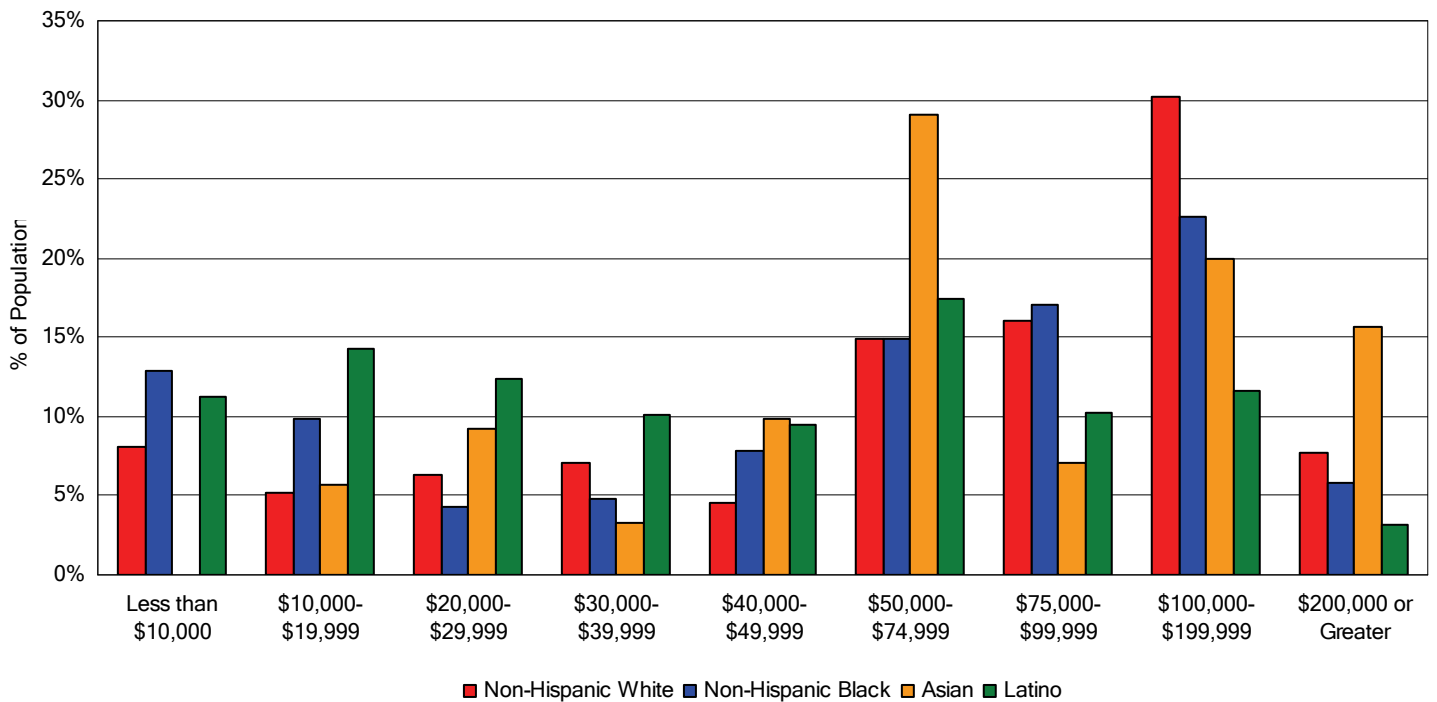


Table 3
Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnic Group for Individuals Aged 25 and Older in New York City

	Non-Hispanic White		Non-Hispanic Black		Asian		Latino	
	2000	2006	2000	2006	2000	2006	2000	2006
Less than High School	19.7%	10.0%	29.3%	15.4%	26.6%	17.7%	46.5%	37.6%
High School Diploma or GED	39.1%	51.9%	46.4%	57.0%	42.1%	37.8%	38.2%	42.4%
Occupational or Associates	5.9%	5.2%	6.1%	7.3%	4.6%	6.2%	4.7%	6.4%
BA	18.8%	16.5%	11.1%	9.8%	15.4%	26.4%	6.4%	9.5%
MA or Professional Degree	14.8%	14.8%	6.8%	10.5%	10.7%	9.9%	3.8%	4.2%
Doctorate Degree	1.6%	1.6%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	1.8%	0.4%	0.5%

Figure 4
Percentage of New York City Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Major Race/Ethnic Groups, 2000 - 2006

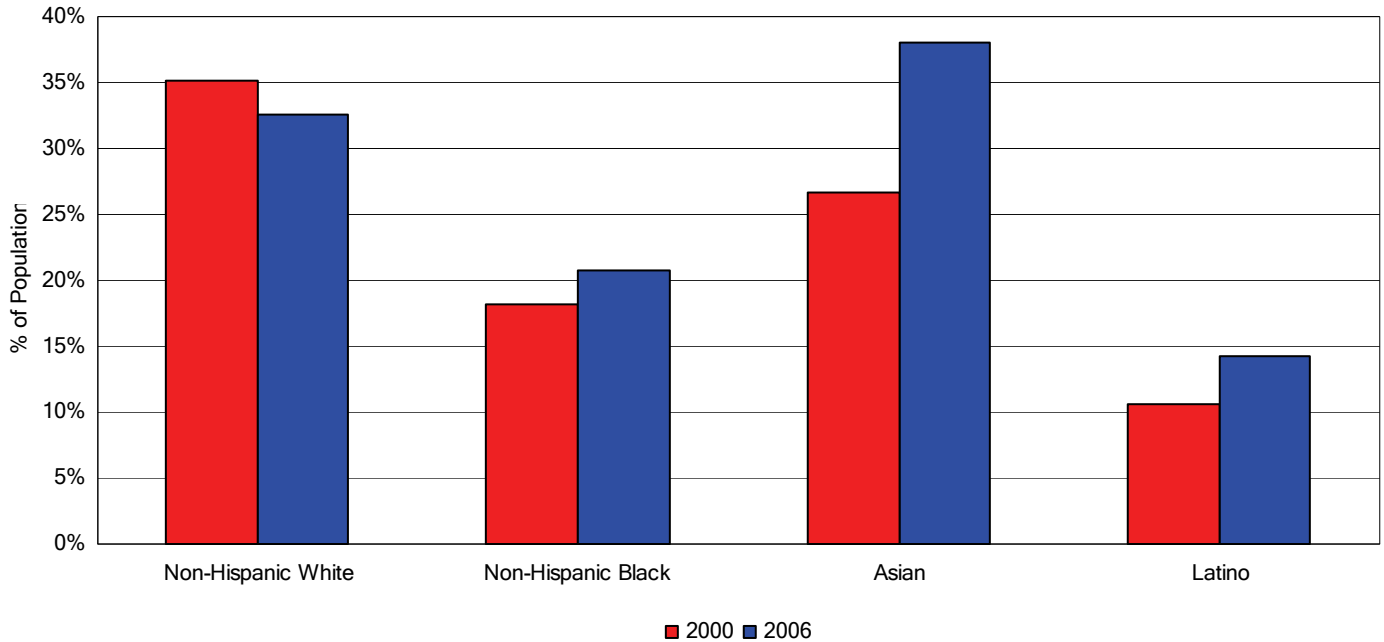


Table 4
Employment Status by Race/Ethnic Group for New York City Residents, 2000

	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Non-Hispanic White	64.3%	6.7%	29.0%
Non-Hispanic Black	58.6%	8.6%	32.8%
Asian	57.4%	4.9%	37.7%
Latino	50.8%	8.3%	40.9%

Figure 5
Employment Status by Major Race/Ethnic Groups for
Working-Age New York City Residents, 2000

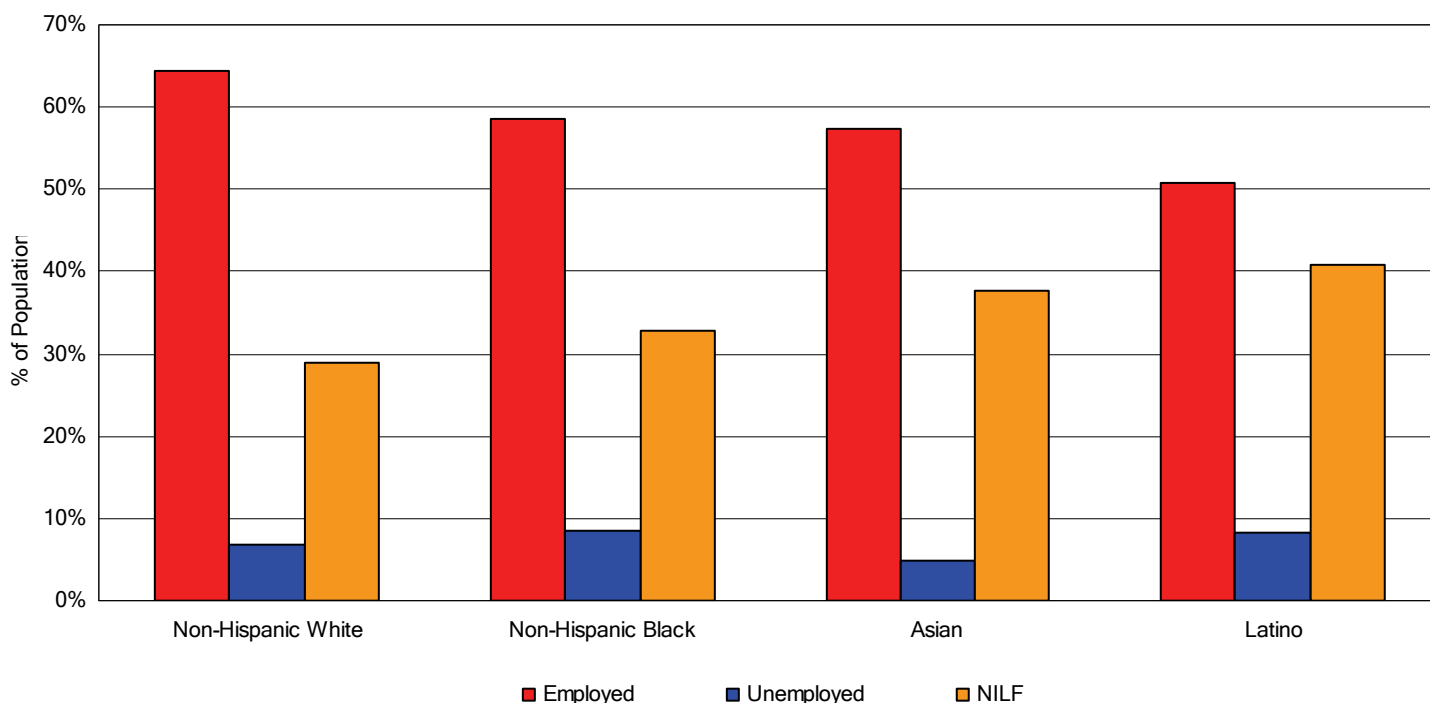
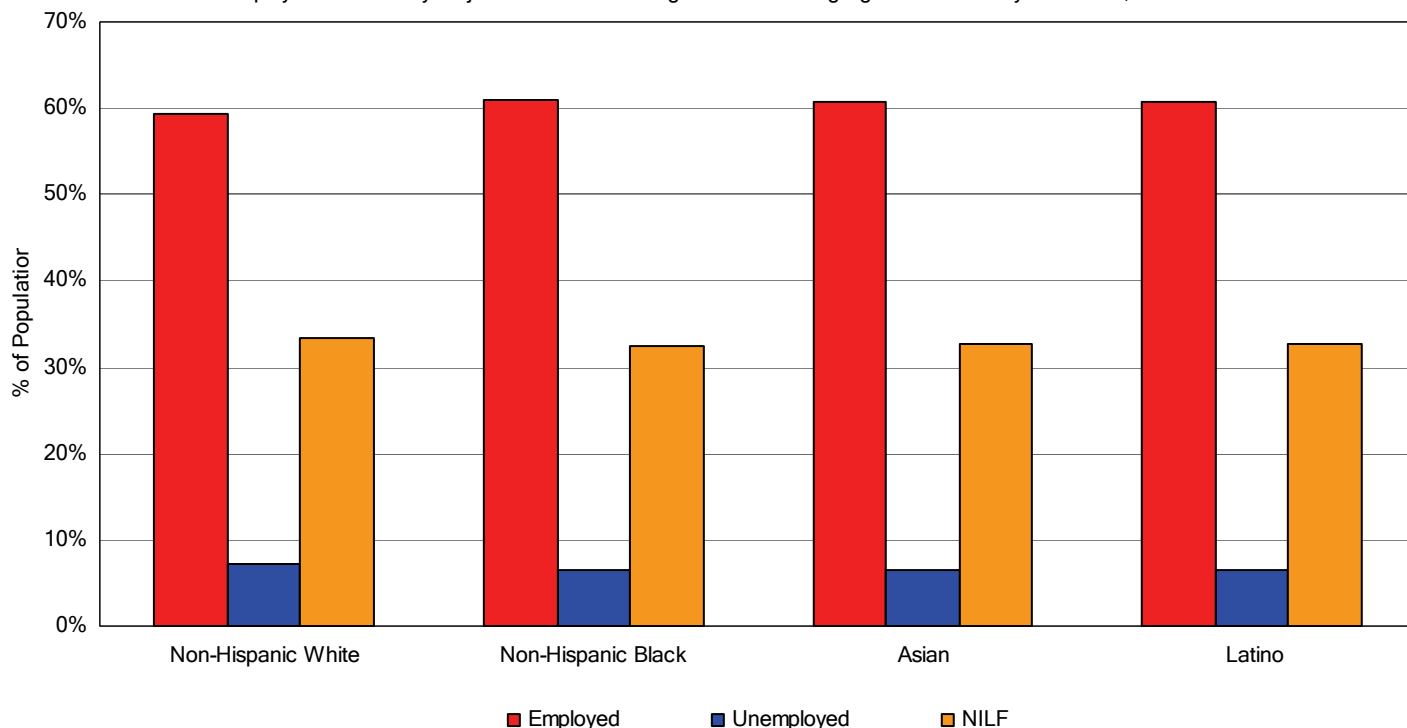


Table 5
Employment Status by Race/Ethnic Group for New York City
Residents, 2006

	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Non-Hispanic White	59.4%	7.3%	33.3%
Non-Hispanic Black	61.0%	6.5%	32.5%
Asian	60.8%	6.5%	32.7%
Latino	60.8%	6.5%	32.6%

Figure 6
Employment Status by Major Race/ Ethnic Categories for Working-Age New York City Residents, 2006



Basic Population Data for Foreign-Born Latino and Non-Hispanic Caribbean Groups

Puerto Ricans historically have been the largest Latino population in the New York City area, and continue to make up the largest percentage of the Latino population in New York City. Yet Puerto Ricans also have the distinction of being the only national group where the majority of the population was born in the United States. Most Latinos, therefore, generally fall into the immigrant category, as indicated in Table 6 and Figure 7.

The period between 2000 and 2006 brought about significant changes in the city’s Latino population. While Puerto Ricans remain the city’s single largest Latino group, Latinos in New York City have become considerably more heterogeneous, as other groups have grown during this period. The city’s total Dominican population has increased by 14.5%. However the most notable population growth has been among the Mexican and Ecuadorian populations, which increased by 43% and 28% respectively between 2000 and 2006.

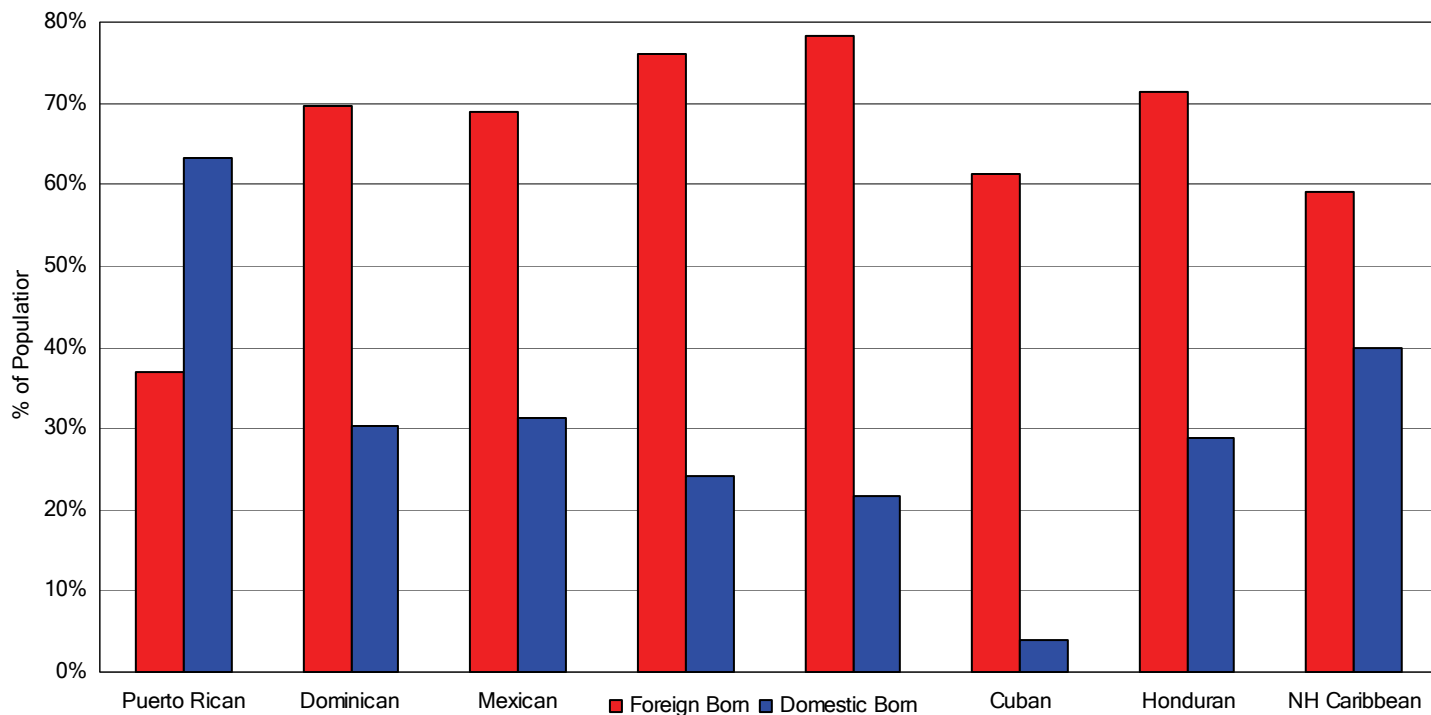
Among most nationalities, Latino population growth between 2000 and 2006 was made up of mostly of domestic-born residents, particularly in the case of Dominicans, Cubans and Colombians. However, the majority of Latinos in New York are foreign born with the exception of Puerto Ricans, although the Mexican and Ecuadorian population growth was driven in large part by immigration. In the case of Mexicans, 55% of population growth between 2000 and 2006 was made up of foreign-born residents. Similarly, 43% of the Ecuadorian population growth during this period was due to an influx of new foreign-born residents.

The Mexican and Ecuadorian growth patterns are similar to those of the non-Hispanic Caribbean population in that much of the growth was driven by immigration as indicated in Table 6.

Table 6
Major Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born and Domestic-Born Nationalities, 2000 - 2006

	2000				2006			
	Foreign-Born		Domestic-Born		Foreign-Born		Domestic-Born	
Puerto Rican	295,910	37%	505,193	63%	248,197	32%	523,787	68%
Dominican	371,420	70%	161,227	30%	373,547	61%	236,428	39%
Mexican	126,542	69%	57,250	31%	170,956	65%	92,885	35%
Ecuadorian	111,049	76%	35,151	24%	129,234	69%	57,235	31%
Colombian	82,563	78%	22,908	22%	73,765	68%	33,947	32%
Cuban	26,563	61%	1,681	4%	16,051	44%	20,435	56%
Honduran	30,046	71%	12,101	29%	29,742	65%	16,235	35%
NH Caribbean	13,058	59%	9,004	41%	17,855	60%	11,875	40%

Figure 7
Major Latin American and Caribbean Foreign and Domestic-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000



Our analysis of foreign-born population distribution by sex indicates that while women continue to make up a majority of the foreign-born residents among a number of Latino groups in New York City, there were differences among nationalities. In the case of more established populations such as Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Colombians and Cubans, most foreign-born residents have been women. However among more recently arrived nationalities, particularly Ecuadorians and Mexicans, foreign-born city residents are heavily male. Over the six-year period examined, the male foreign-born population of these two groups has actually increased, which suggests that immigration from Mexico and Ecuador has been male-dominated since 2000. For all other foreign-born Latino groups, sex distribution has remained constant, with women comprising a clear majority. This trend mirrors sex distribution patterns found among the non-Hispanic Caribbean population, which not only remains female-dominated, but has actually experienced a growth in its female foreign-born population between 2000 and 2006.

Table 7
Population Distribution by Sex for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000 - 2006

	Male		Female	
	2000	2006	2000	2006
Puerto Rican	42%	42%	58%	58%
Dominican	45%	41%	56%	59%
Mexican	61%	63%	39%	37%
Ecuadorian	54%	56%	46%	44%
Colombian	43%	45%	57%	55%
Cuban	49%	43%	51%	57%
Honduran	46%	49%	54%	51%
NH Caribbean	41%	39%	59%	61%

Figure 8
Major Latin American and Caribbean Foreign and Domestic-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

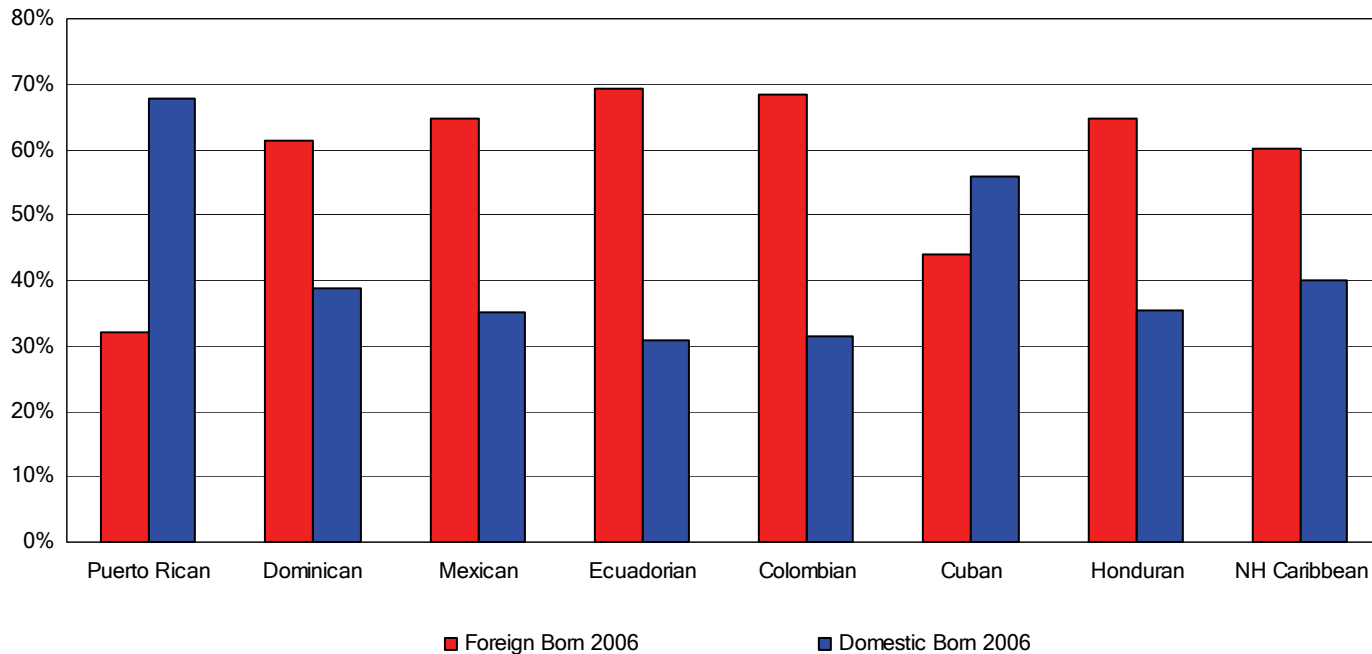


Figure 9
Population Distribution by Sex for
Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

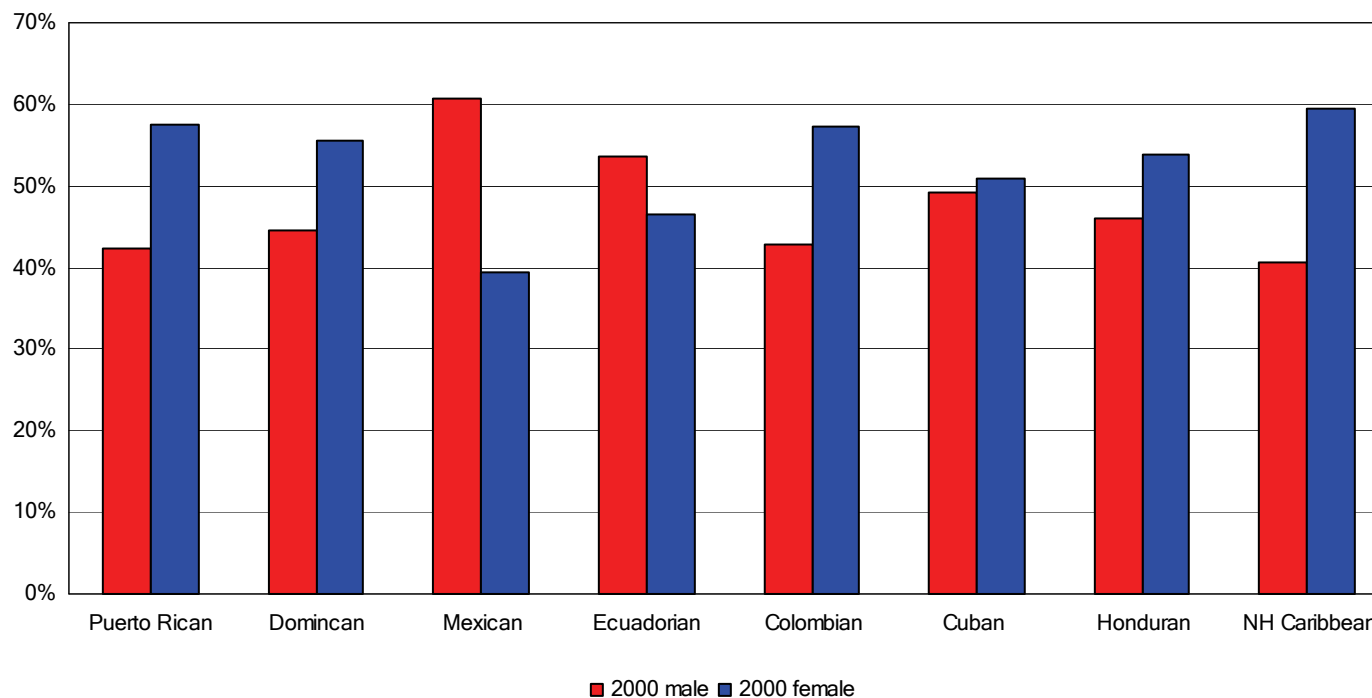
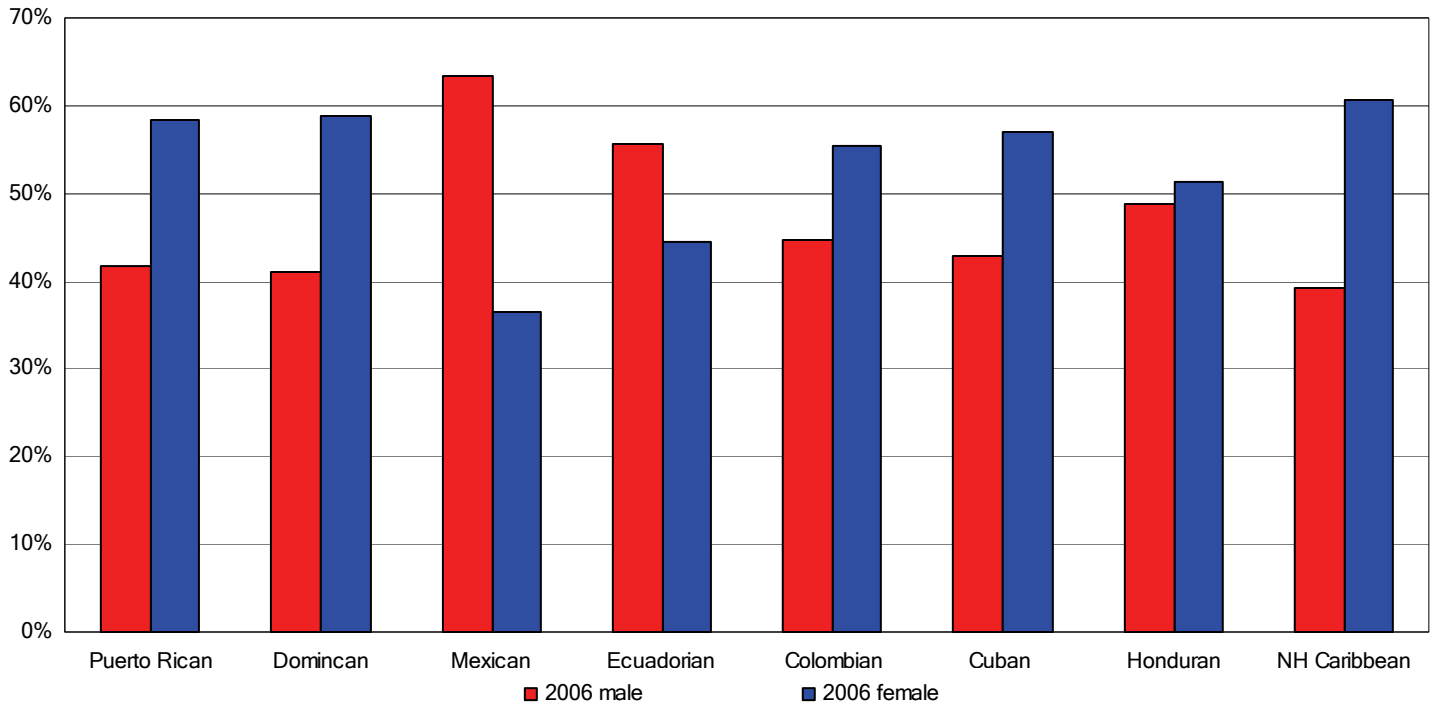


Figure 10
Population Distribution by Sex for
Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006



Age distribution trends between 2000 and 2006 indicate that while there has been an expected aging of the foreign-born population, most Latino groups have a young adult population. Population aging has been much more pronounced among the Puerto Rican and Cuban foreign-born population, where in both cases the largest age cohort are individuals over the age of 60 (See Tables 8 & 9.) Among other major Latino groups, the majority of the foreign-born population still falls into the working age category (16 to 60), with most people aged between 15 and 44. Foreign-born Mexicans and Ecuadorians, in particular, stand out as a young group, with the former actually experiencing an increase in its 15-44 year old cohort in both 2000 and 2006. Comparing the foreign-born age distribution, trends between these two groups appear to mirror that of the city's foreign-born non-Hispanic Caribbean population, which has become considerably younger between 2000 and 2006. Given that migration is generally a venture undertaken by younger generations, our data provides additional evidence that Mexicans, Ecuadorians and non-Hispanic Caribbean peoples continue to fuel a substantial part of contemporary immigration to New York City.

Table 8
Age Distribution for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

	0-14	15-44	45-59	60+
Puerto Rican	5%	32%	33%	30%
Dominican	8%	59%	21%	11%
Mexican	9%	83%	6%	2%
Ecuadorian	6%	64%	19%	10%
Colombian	6%	57%	23%	14%
Cuban	2%	27%	26%	45%
Honduran	6%	67%	18%	9%
NH Caribbean	4%	36%	33%	27%

Figure 11
Age Distribution of Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

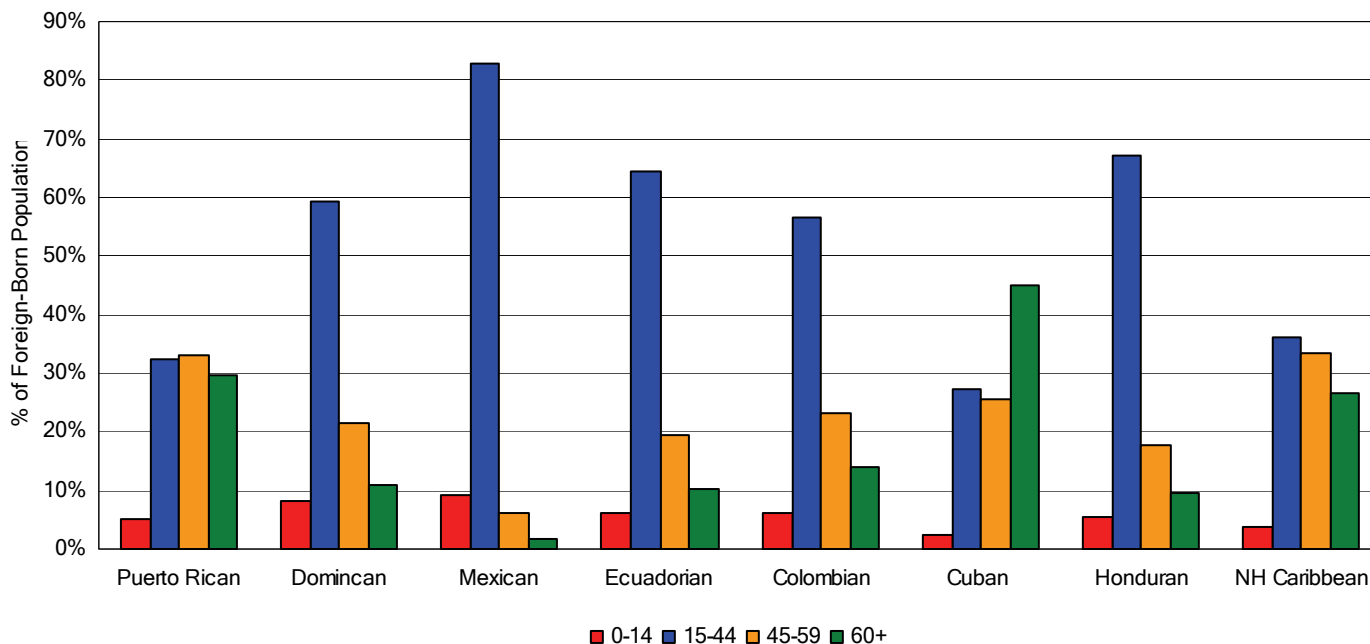
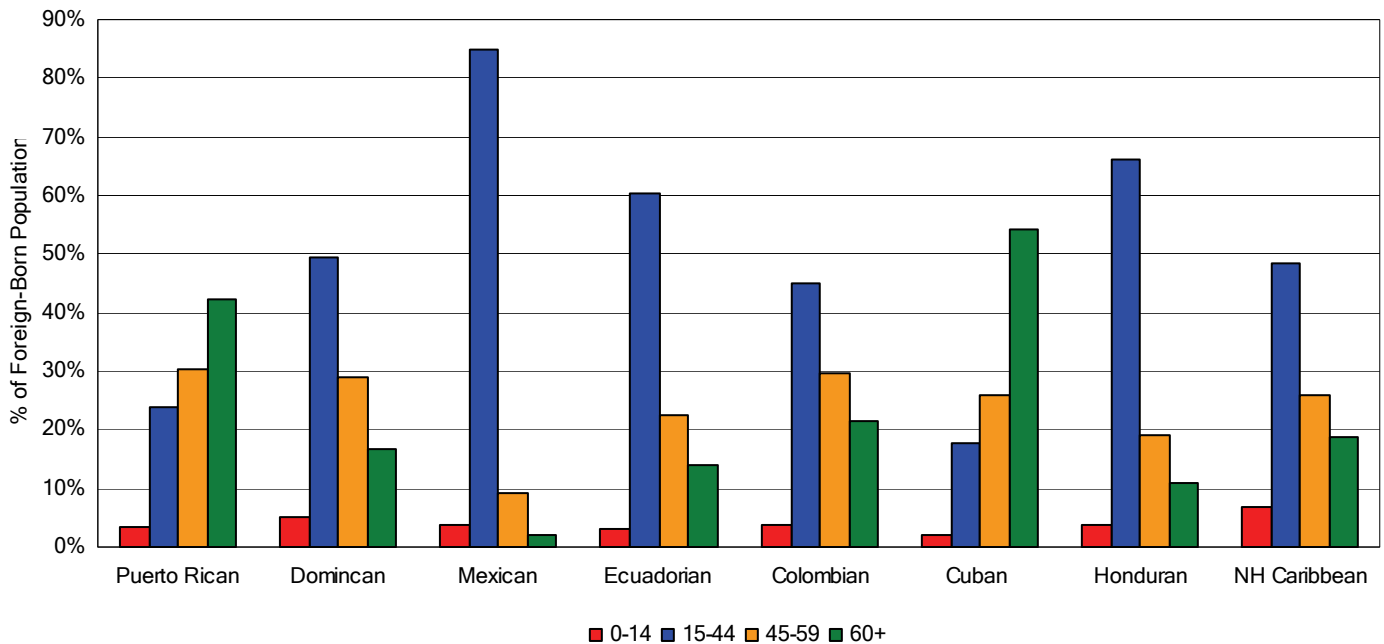


Table 9
Age Distribution for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

	0-14	15-44	45-59	60+
Puerto Rican	3%	24%	30%	42%
Dominican	5%	50%	29%	17%
Mexican	4%	85%	9%	2%
Ecuadorian	3%	60%	23%	14%
Colombian	4%	45%	30%	22%
Cuban	2%	18%	26%	54%
Honduran	4%	66%	19%	11%
NH Caribbean	7%	48%	26%	19%

Figure 12
Age Distribution of Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006



Socio-Economic Indicators for Foreign-Born Latino and Non-Hispanic Caribbean Populations

The central focus of our inquiry is to determine whether there is any measurable evidence to suggest that Latinos have experienced positive intra-generational social mobility in recent years and how their performance compares to non-Hispanic Caribbean populations in the City. Therefore, we sought to compare a number of fundamental indicators associated with social mobility: education, annual family income, family size, labor force status and poverty rates.

Overall, foreign-born Latinos have experienced positive gains with respect to educational attainment, though such progress varies by nationality. Foreign-born Colombians, Cubans and Hondurans appear to have made the largest strides between 2000 and 2006, as a considerable percentage of respondents, from each group report to have college-level degrees. Some 28% of Cuban, 20% of Colombian and nearly 14% of Honduran adults have achieved a Bachelors Degree or higher as of 2006, compared to the 18%, 15% and 6% respectively in 2000. However, other foreign-born Latino groups have lagged behind in college-level educational attainment. Approximately 10% of the foreign-born Dominican adult population reports to hold a Bachelor’s Degree. Particularly revealing is the status of foreign-born Puerto Ricans, who have seen virtually no change in educational attainment in the time frame we examined.

Furthermore, the overall percentage of individuals who have not completed high school remains high for most foreign-born Latino groups. A majority of foreign-born Puerto Ricans, Hondurans and Mexicans have yet to complete a high school-level education in the time period we examined, and over 40% of Dominicans and Ecuadorians fall into this same category.

While all of the aforementioned groups have seen the number of high school graduates increase between 2000 and 2006, we still find that educational attainment remains elusive for most foreign-born Latinos. This pattern bears some similarities to that of the city’s foreign-born non-Hispanic Caribbean population, in that high school graduation rates seem to have improved, but college graduation rates have not.

Table 10
Educational Attainment for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities Aged 25 and Older in New York City, 2000

	Less than High School Degree	High School or GED	Occupational or Associates Degree	BA	MA or Professional Degree	Doctorate
Puerto Rican	58.2%	32.7%	3.4%	3.0%	1.9%	0.8%
Dominican	56.1%	32.0%	4.2%	4.6%	2.8%	0.3%
Mexican	64.7%	28.9%	0.9%	3.3%	2.0%	0.1%
Ecuadorian	47.3%	39.9%	4.2%	5.3%	3.2%	0.2%
Colombian	35.8%	44.1%	5.0%	8.1%	6.4%	0.5%
Cuban	40.0%	38.3%	3.7%	7.6%	9.5%	1.0%
Honduran	58.1%	32.9%	2.5%	4.1%	2.2%	0.3%
NH Caribbean	36.3%	42.5%	6.0%	9.5%	5.5%	0.2%

Figure 13
Educational Attainment for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities Aged 25 and Older in New York City, 2000

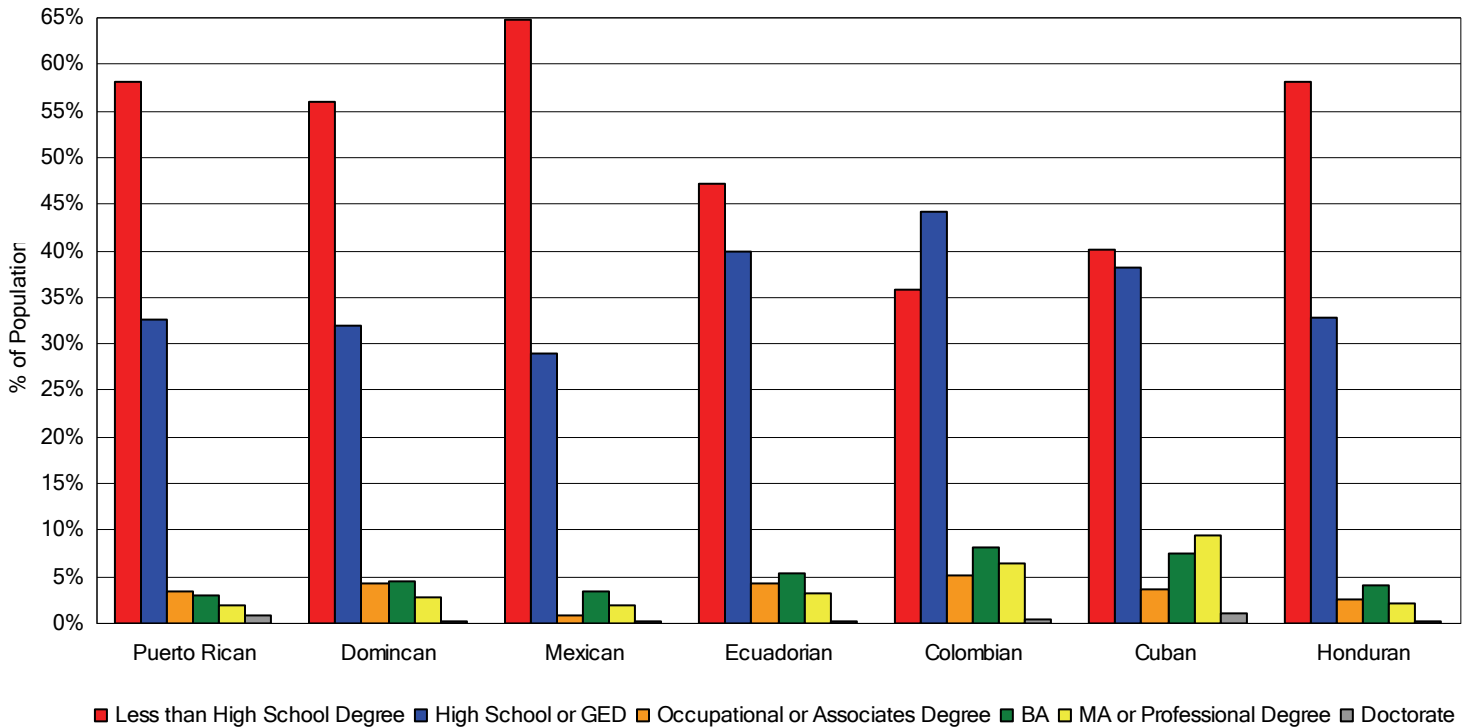
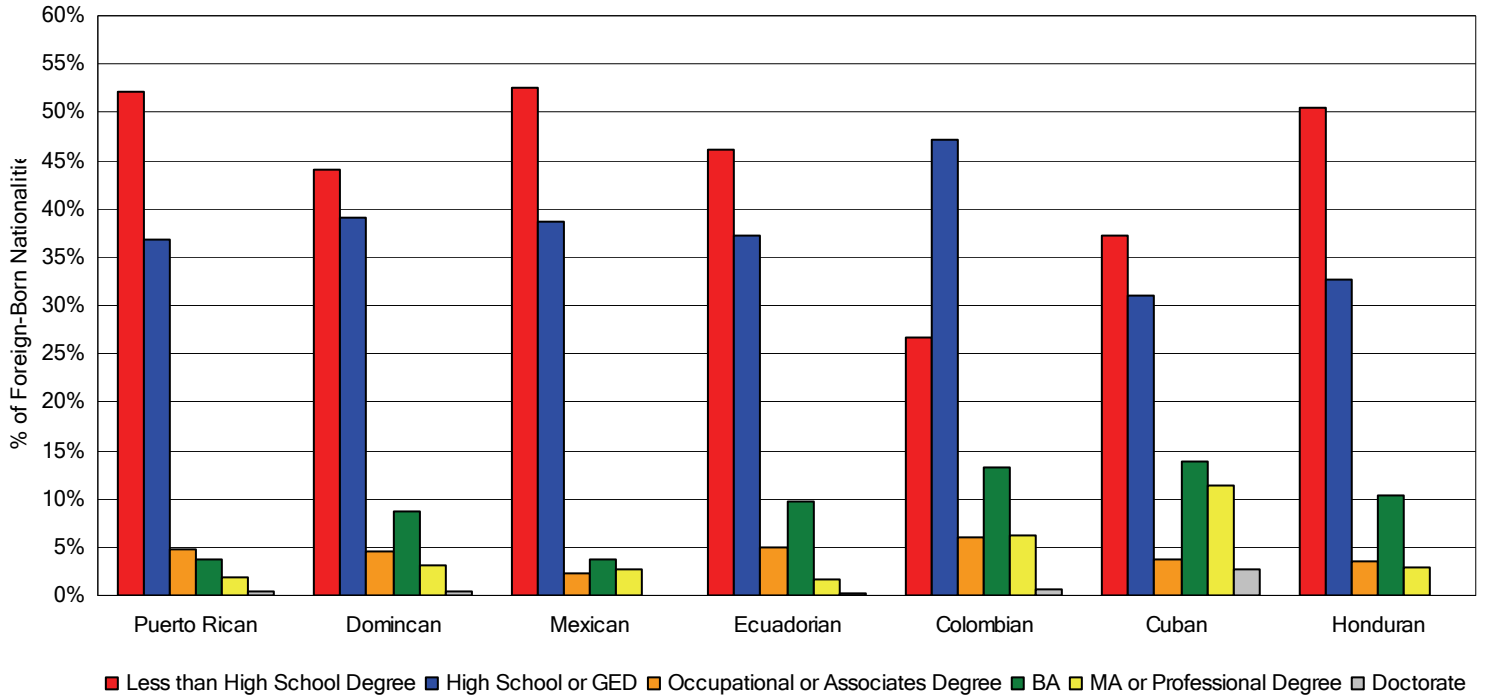


Table 11
Educational Attainment for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities Aged 25 and Older in New York City, 2006

	Less than High School Degree	High School or GED	Occupational or Associates Degree	BA	MA or Professional Degree	Doctorate
Puerto Rican	52.2%	36.8%	4.8%	3.7%	2.0%	0.5%
Dominican	44.1%	39.2%	4.5%	8.6%	3.2%	0.4%
Mexican	52.6%	38.7%	2.2%	3.6%	2.8%	0.1%
Ecuadorian	46.1%	37.3%	5.0%	9.8%	1.7%	0.3%
Colombian	26.7%	47.2%	6.0%	13.2%	6.2%	0.7%
Cuban	37.2%	31.0%	3.8%	14.0%	11.4%	2.6%
Honduran	50.5%	32.7%	3.5%	10.4%	3.0%	0.0%
NH Caribbean	34.2%	47.9%	5.1%	6.8%	6.0%	0.1%

Figure 14
Educational Attainment for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities Aged 25 and Older in New York City, 2006

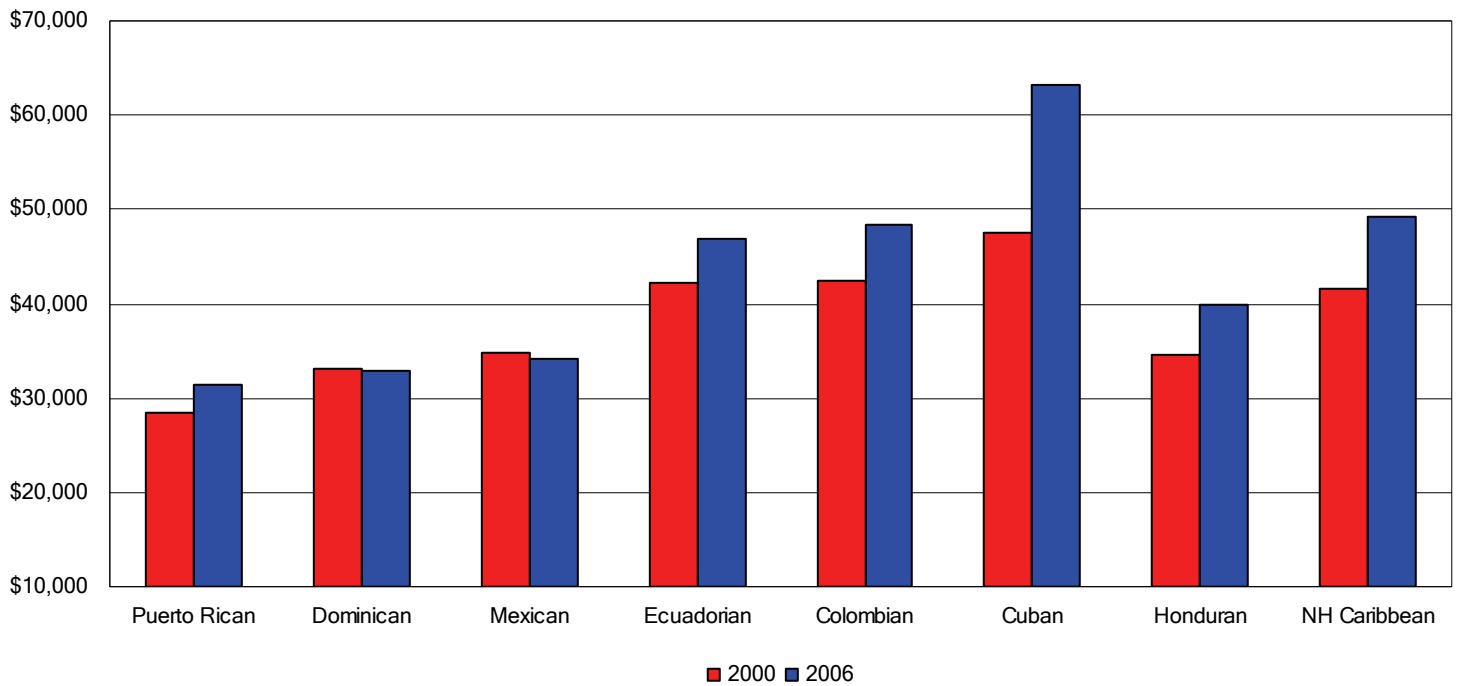


When we examined the corresponding annual family income data for Latino and Non-Hispanic Caribbean groups, we found evidence to suggest a relationship between increased educational attainment and income growth between 2000 and 2006. While median annual family income rose for all groups since 2000, the largest gains were among those Latino groups who experienced significant increases in college-level degrees: Cubans, Colombians, Ecuadorians and Hondurans, respectively (See Table 12). Annual family income among these groups has increased by 33% for foreign-born Cubans, 15% for foreign-born Hondurans, 14% for foreign-born Colombians, and 11% for foreign-born Ecuadorians between 2000 and 2006. Foreign-born Puerto Ricans, in particular, have also trailed in educational attainment. Foreign-born Dominicans present an idiosyncratic case in that while educational attainment has increased (approximately 9% of foreign-born Dominicans have completed a Bachelors Degree in 2006, versus just 4.6% in 2000), median annual family income has actually declined between 2000 and 2006. Latino groups who have gained appear to follow the same trend as the non-Hispanic Caribbean population, whose median income has increased by approximately 19%.

Table 12
 Median Total Family Income for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City
 2000 - 2006

	2000	2006
Puerto Rican	\$28,500	\$31,393
Dominican	\$33,060	\$32,902
Mexican	\$34,770	\$34,211
Ecuadorian	\$42,180	\$46,931
Colombian	\$42,431	\$48,297
Cuban	\$47,629	\$63,189
Honduran	\$34,656	\$39,946
NH Caribbean	\$41,553	\$49,303

Figure 15
 Median Annual Family Income for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000 - 2006



Our income distribution analysis reveals that the foreign-born groups, which have made significant gains in median annual income, have also seen considerable growth in the number of families in upper income brackets (annual incomes over \$50,000). Foreign-born Colombians have seen the largest gains, with 59% of families earning over \$50,000 annually in 2006, compared with 42% in 2000. Ecuadorians (57% of families earning over \$50,000 in 2006, versus 43% in 2000), Hondurans (42% in 2006 versus 34 % in 2000), and Cubans (57% in 2006 versus 51% in 2000) have also made noticeable gains in the upper income brackets over the time period we examined. Other foreign-born groups such as Puerto Ricans and Dominicans have seen little improvements in income distribution, as nearly two-thirds of foreign-born Dominican and Puerto Rican families continue to earn less than \$50,000 annually in both 2000 and 2006.

Foreign born Mexicans present an interesting case because the percentage of families earning over \$50,000 has increased from 35% to 45% since 2000, while there have been no improvements in median income. This appears to be due to a growth in foreign-born residents earning over \$100,000 annually, but there are few other changes in family income distribution. It is likely that the new foreign-born arrivals with lower incomes have offset gains made by other segments of the foreign-born Mexican-origin population. However income distribution trends among Colombians, Ecuadorians, Cubans and Hondurans were similar to that of the city’s non-Hispanic Caribbean population, where half of the foreign-born population reported family income over \$50,000 in 2006, compared to 40% in 2000.

Table 13
Annual Family Income Distribution for Select Working-Age Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City , 2000 (in percentages)

	Puerto Rican	Dominican	Mexican	Ecuadorian	Colombian	Cuban	Honduran	NH Caribbean
Less than 10,000	21%	13%	8%	8%	7%	11%	10%	10%
10,000-19,999	17%	16%	16%	10%	12%	12%	15%	10%
20,000-29,999	13%	15%	15%	14%	14%	8%	14%	13%
30,000-39,999	11%	14%	15%	13%	13%	11%	14%	14%
40,000-49,999	8%	11%	11%	12%	13%	7%	12%	13%
50,000-74,999	15%	16%	21%	22%	18%	17%	17%	16%
75,000-99,999	8%	8%	8%	11%	10%	10%	8%	11%
100,000 - 199,999	6%	6%	5%	9%	10%	19%	7%	10%
200,000 +	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	5%	2%	3%

Figure 16
Annual Family Income Distribution for Working-Age
Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

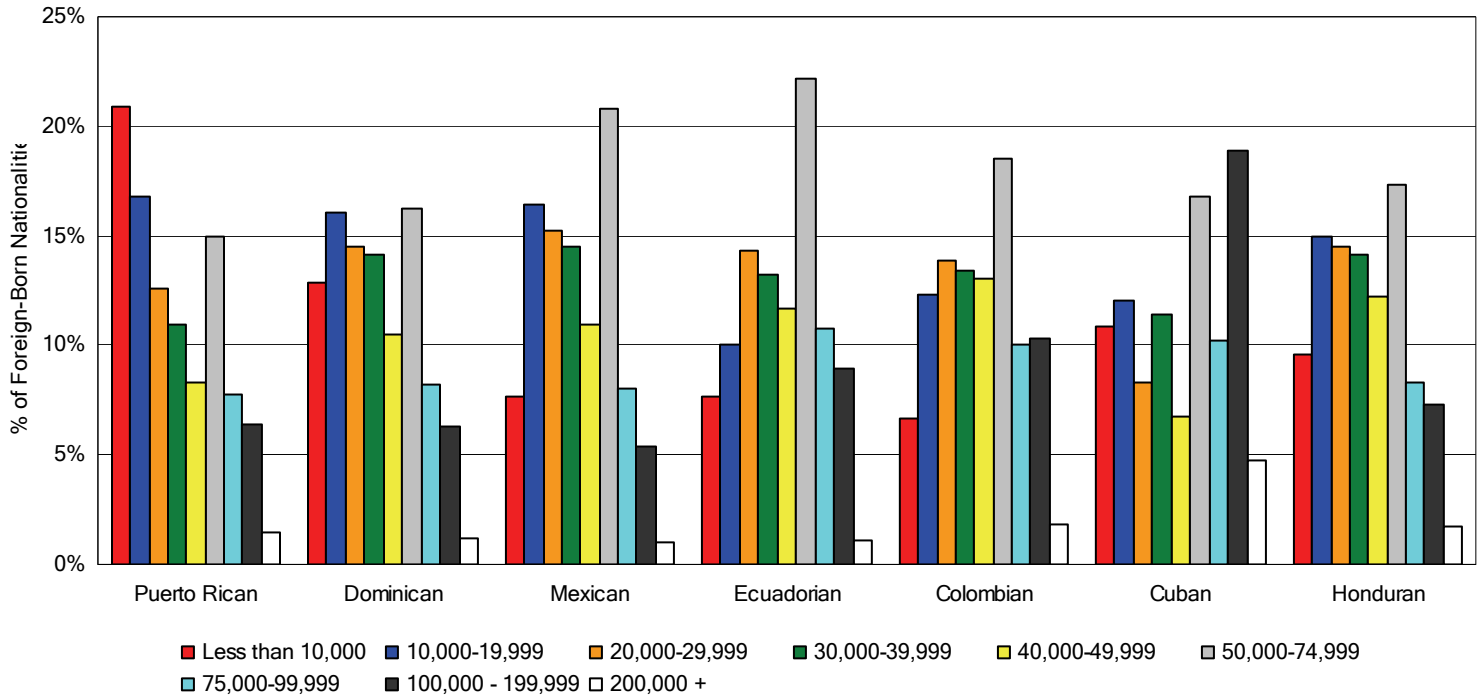
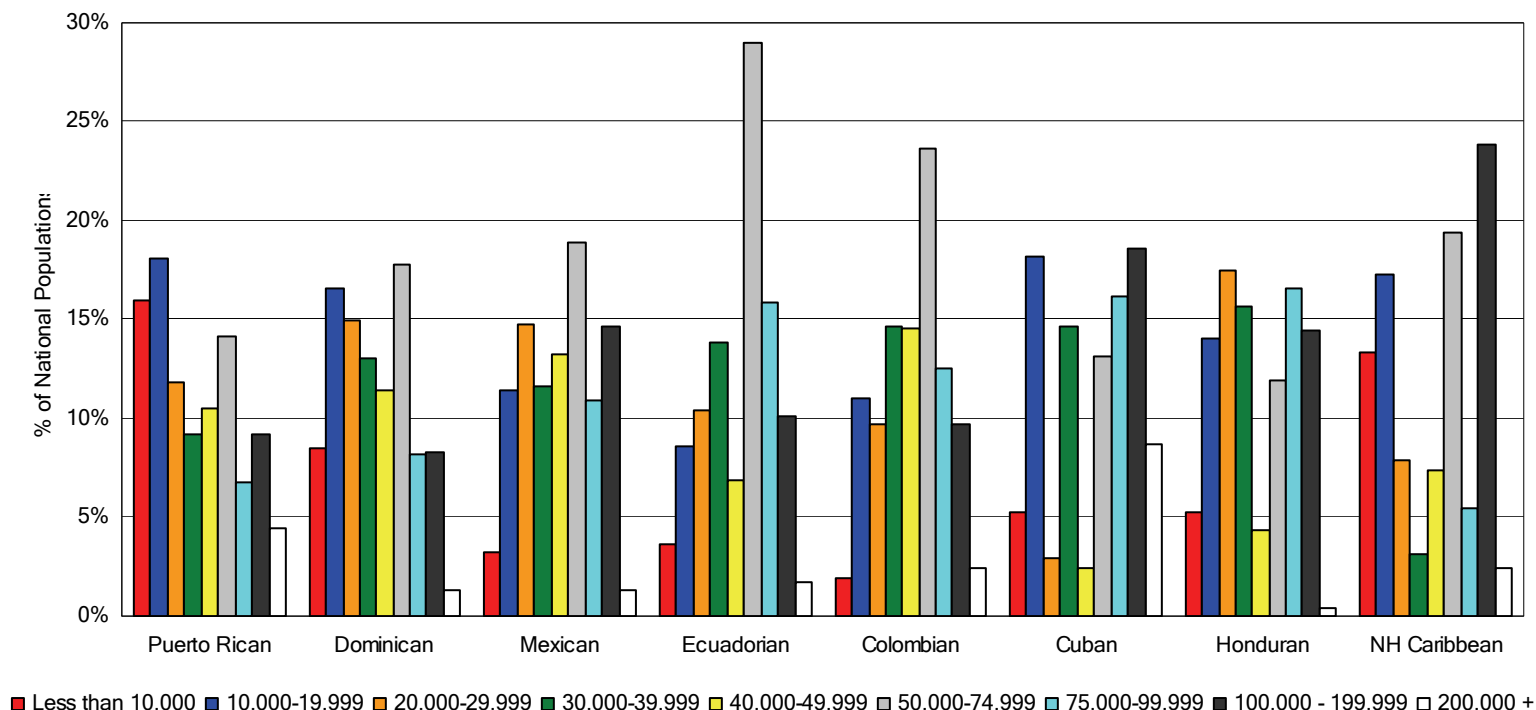


Table 14
Annual Family Income Distribution for Select Working-Age Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006 (in percentages)

	Puerto Rican	Dominican	Mexican	Ecuadorian	Colombian	Cuban	Honduran	NH Caribbean
Less than 10,000	16%	8%	3%	4%	2%	5%	5%	13%
10,000-19,999	18%	17%	11%	9%	11%	18%	14%	17%
20,000-29,999	12%	15%	15%	10%	10%	3%	17%	8%
30,000-39,999	9%	13%	12%	14%	15%	15%	16%	3%
40,000-49,999	11%	11%	13%	7%	15%	2%	4%	7%
50,000-74,999	14%	18%	19%	29%	24%	13%	12%	19%
75,000-99,999	7%	8%	11%	16%	13%	16%	17%	5%
100,000 - 199,999	9%	8%	15%	10%	10%	19%	14%	24%
200,000 +	4%	1%	1%	2%	2%	9%	0%	2%

Figure 17
Annual Family Income Distribution for Working-Age Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006



We also examined family sizes as a way to determine if family income potentially allowed foreign-born families to generate savings and equity, or whether their income was directly used to support dependents. While the majority of foreign-born Latinos had no dependents, there is no clear connection between family size and income gains among foreign-born Latinos. For example, a greater number of foreign-born Cubans report having no dependent children in 2006 (74%) compared with 2000 (68%), yet foreign-born Puerto Ricans which have the second highest rate of childless households, in 2006, rank lowest in income gains between 2000 and 2006. Nevertheless, we find that foreign-born Colombians and Cubans were less likely to have small families than other Latinos. This suggests that foreign-born Cuban and Colombian households are likely to be in a stronger position to accumulate wealth than other Latinos, since they do not have to devote earnings to cover childcare related expenses. Yet because the foreign-born Cuban population is considerably older than all other foreign-born Latino groups, the economic advantage of small family sizes is most relevant to Colombians, most of whom are still active in the labor force and therefore in a position to devote more income toward savings than Cubans.

Table 15
 Number of Dependent Children for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

	None	1	2	3 or more
Puerto Rican	58%	21%	13%	9%
Dominican	52%	17%	17%	14%
Mexican	65%	11%	11%	13%
Ecuadorian	55%	19%	14%	11%
Colombian	56%	20%	17%	8%
Cuban	68%	19%	9%	4%
Honduran	54%	17%	14%	14%
NH Caribbean	54%	19%	18%	9%

Figure 18
 Number of Dependent Children per Household for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

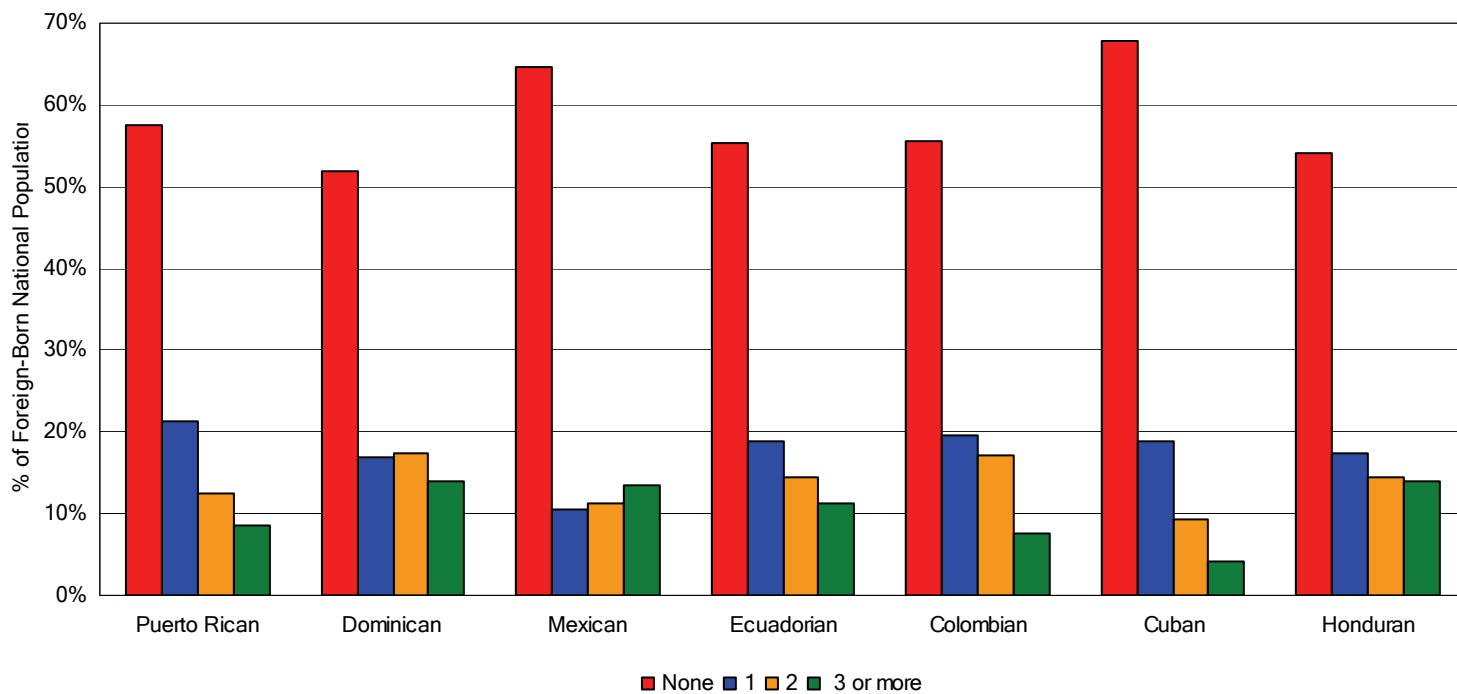
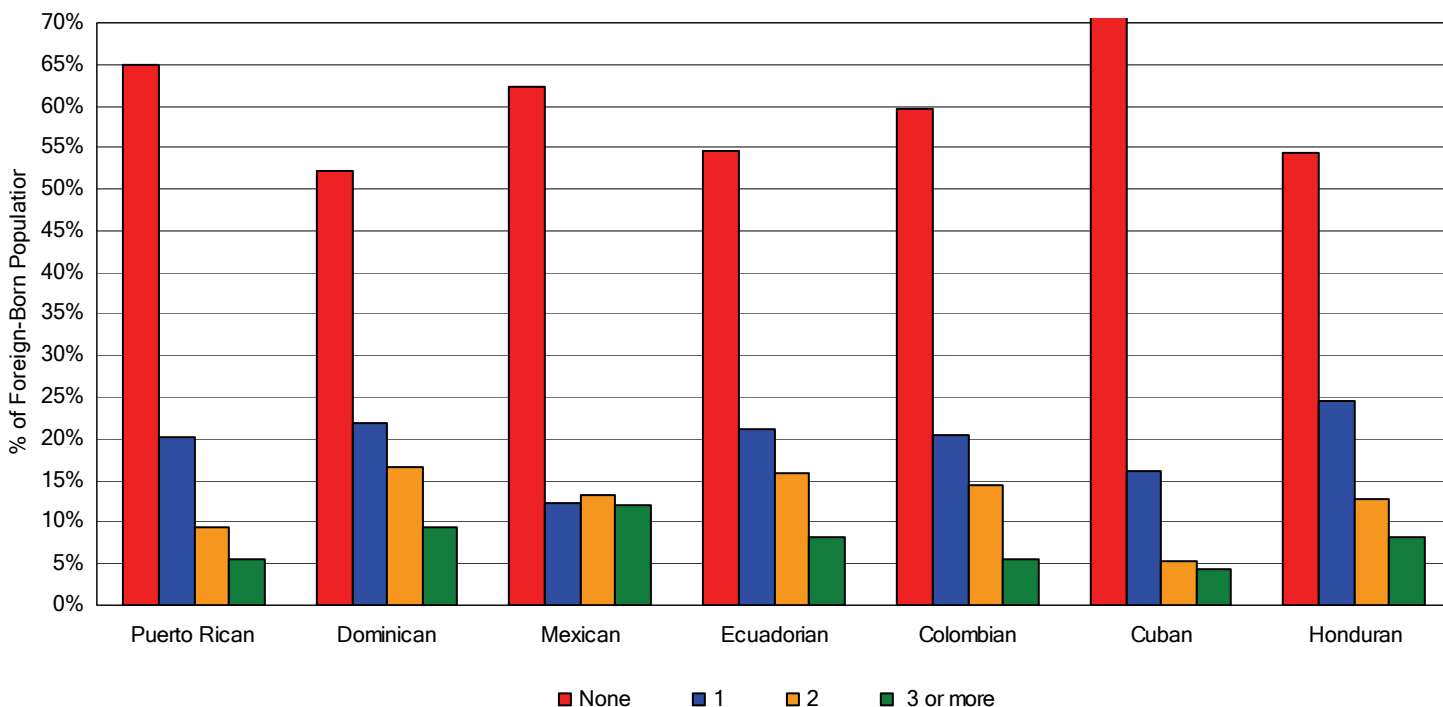


Table 16
 Number of Dependent Children for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

	None	1	2	3 or more
Puerto Rican	65%	20%	9%	6%
Dominican	52%	22%	17%	9%
Mexican	62%	12%	13%	12%
Ecuadorian	55%	21%	16%	8%
Colombian	60%	20%	14%	5%
Cuban	74%	16%	5%	4%
Honduran	54%	25%	13%	8%
NH Caribbean	58%	22%	16%	3%

Figure 19
 Number of Dependent Children per Household for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006



Our examination of labor force participation rates reveals that a greater percentage of foreign-born Latinos were active in the labor force in 2006 compared with 2000, with a number of noteworthy findings. First, there were noticeable differences between older foreign-born Latino groups, such as Dominicans, Puerto Ricans and newer groups, in that unemployment and labor participation rates remain higher for the aforementioned groups than among more recent arrivals (see Tables 17 & 18). Furthermore, the most significant labor force increases were found among the groups which have also had the most significant income increases over the six-year period analyzed- Colombians, Cubans, Ecuadorians and Hondurans. Furthermore, foreign-born Colombians, Cubans, and Ecuadorians had the lowest unemployment rates among the major foreign-born Latino groups in 2006. Finally, we find that the more recent foreign-born Latino arrivals (Mexicans, Ecuadorians and Hondurans) have experienced the most dramatic drops in unemployment, going from the highest unemployment rates in 2000 to the lowest rates in 2006. One possible explanation for this is that many of these recent foreign-born arrivals managed to secure work in growth sectors, such as construction, during this period. Evidence of this is present in the occupational distribution data in Tables 22 and 23. Our occupational data also notes that a significant percentage of these new foreign-born arrivals are employed in the food service and service & retail sectors. This may suggest that as these foreign-born groups have grown, many recent arrivals have developed new employment sectors that specifically cater to these new foreign-born groups.

The fact that older Latino groups continue to lag behind in terms of unemployment and overall lower labor force participation explains, at least to some degree, why they have not performed as well economically as newer Latino foreign-born arrivals. However, labor force participation rates alone cannot fully explain why particular groups experienced upward economic mobility, since these data do not specify what kinds of jobs people had or their potential for increased earnings. Therefore, in spite of greater employment rates, Dominicans and Mexicans have stagnated in this period. This highlights the need to consider other factors such as educational attainment increases, population growth, and occupational distribution, which will be analyzed in a following section.

Table 17
 Employment Status Among Working-Age Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Puerto Rican	42.7%	6.8%	50.5%
Dominican	48.1%	8.9%	43.0%
Mexican	54.3%	12.5%	15.1%
Colombian	57.8%	6.5%	35.7%
Ecuadorian	56.4%	11.5%	11.9%
Cuban	58.5%	8.1%	33.4%
Honduran	51.5%	7.9%	40.6%
NH Caribbean	64.6%	6.9%	28.5%

Figure 20
Employment Status Among Working-Age
Foreign-Born Latin American and Caribbean Nationalities in New York City, 2000

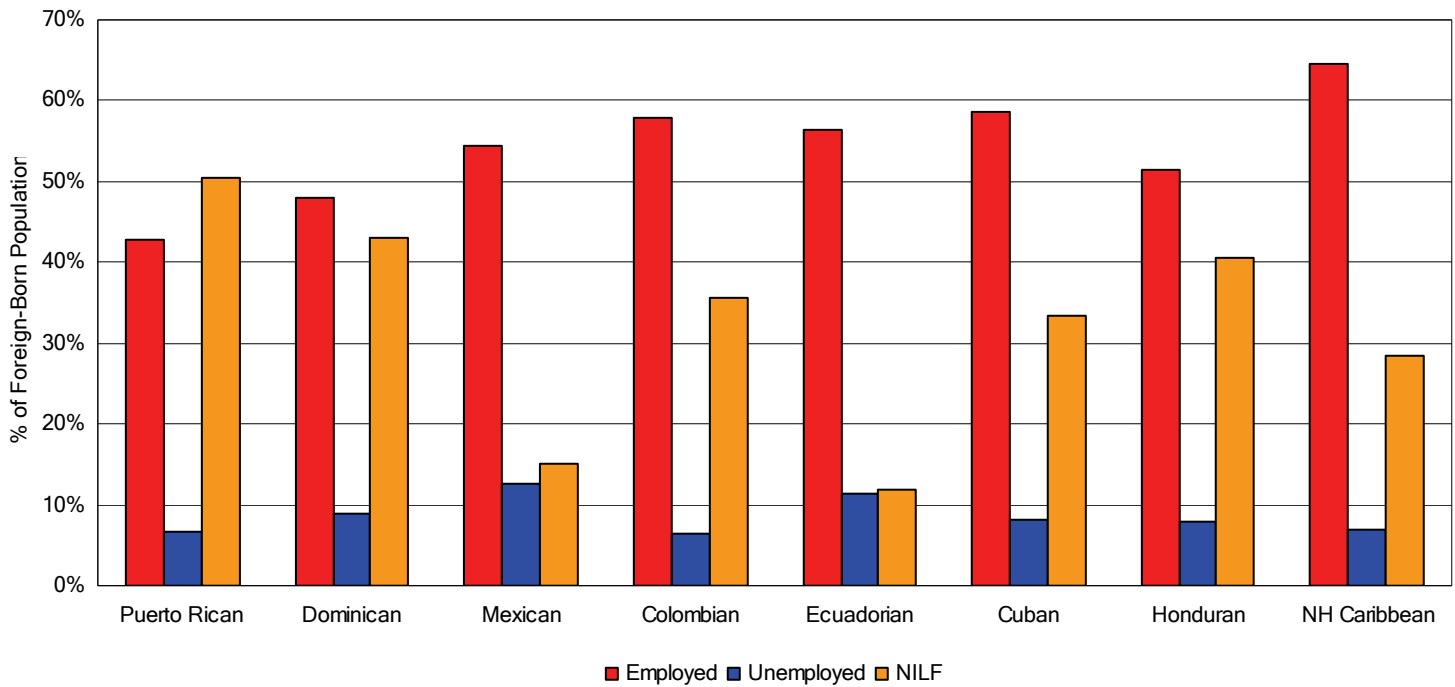


Figure 21
Employment Status Among Working-Age Foreign-Born
Latin American and Caribbean Nationalities in New York City, 2006

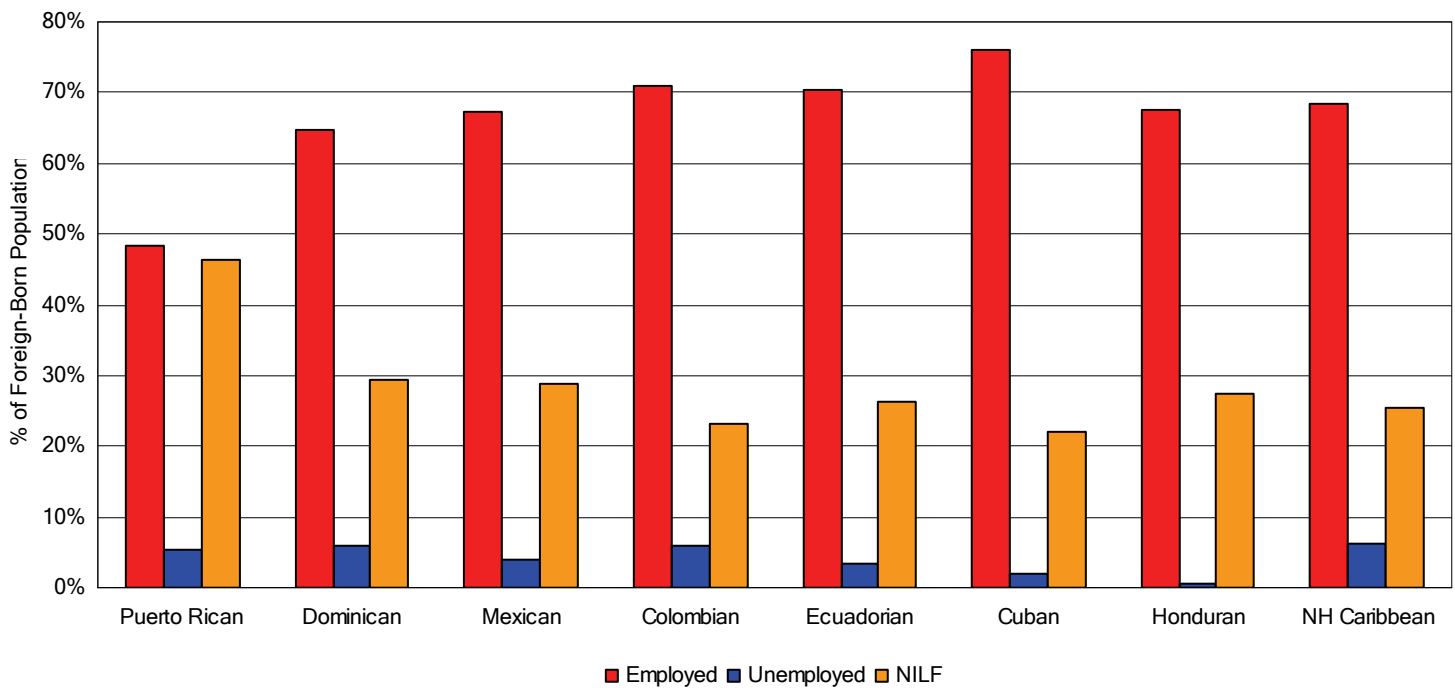


Table 18
 Employment Status Among Working-Age Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

	Employed	Unemployed	NILF
Puerto Rican	48.2%	5.5%	46.3%
Dominican	64.7%	5.9%	29.4%
Mexican	67.2%	4.0%	28.7%
Colombian	71.0%	5.9%	23.2%
Ecuadorian	70.4%	3.3%	26.2%
Cuban	76.0%	2.0%	22.0%
Honduran	67.7%	0.5%	27.3%
NH Caribbean	68.4%	6.1%	25.5%

Beyond annual income figures, we also examined poverty indices for each of the major foreign-born Latino groups in New York City, as well as the city’s non-Hispanic Caribbean population. The poverty line calculation used for this study is based on the poverty index used by the ACS and developed by the Social Security Administration. The index, which assigns a score to each household corresponding to the percentage at which their incomes exceed a poverty income cut-off value, is based on a matrix that includes family size cross-referenced by the number of dependent children in each household, from which an income value is assigned as the designated poverty threshold.

The poverty scale values used in this study reveals that just two of the city’s major Latino foreign-born groups, Ecuadorians and Hondurans, experienced a substantial reduction, in the percentage of households below the poverty line between 2000 and 2006. Poverty rates among Ecuadorian households have declined by 50% during this time period, while poverty rates among foreign-born Hondurans have dropped by approximately 22% since 2000. For the remaining foreign-born Latino groups however, there seems to be small or no reductions, or in some cases increases in the percentage of households living in poverty. Colombians, Dominicans and Mexicans have had smaller reductions in poverty rates than Ecuadorians and Hondurans, while poverty rates among foreign-born Puerto Ricans have essentially remained the same from 2000 to 2006. Surprisingly, poverty rates among foreign-born Cubans have increased in spite of the trend of income growth, during the period in which we previously studied. This may be explained by the apparent downward trend in income among foreign-born Cuban families earning less than \$50,000 annually (see Tables 13 and 14), possibly due to a greater number of Cubans entering retirement age. The decline in foreign-born Cuban family incomes in New York also seems to be a product of outward migration of Cubans to suburban areas of New York City, since middle class Cubans, more than any other Latino group, have moved out of New York City to outlying suburban areas (see Tables 19 and 20.)

Table 19
Geographical Distribution of Foreign-Born Households by Latino Nationality Earning \$50,000-\$199,000 Annually in the New York City Metro Area by County, 2000

	New York City	Westchester County	Nassau County	Suffolk County
Puerto Rican	81.0%	3.6%	4.6%	10.8%
Dominican	88.9%	2.7%	4.3%	4.1%
Mexican	80.2%	13.3%	3.1%	3.3%
Colombian	70.9%	7.4%	10.4%	11.3%
Ecuadorian	82.4%	3.1%	6.1%	8.5%
Cuban	73.9%	7.5%	10.7%	7.9%
Honduran	65.3%	7.5%	18.3%	8.8%

Table 20
Geographical Distribution of Foreign-Born Households by Latino Nationality Earning \$50,000-\$199,000 Annually in the New York City Metro Area by County, 2006

	New York City	Westchester County	Nassau County	Suffolk County
Puerto Rican	80.6%	4.0%	4.7%	10.7%
Dominican	88.6%	1.8%	5.4%	4.2%
Mexican	82.9%	11.1%	3.2%	2.8%
Colombian	72.2%	4.8%	11.2%	11.8%
Ecuadorian	84.2%	1.6%	7.1%	7.1%
Cuban	63.4%	18.3%	18.3%	7.0%
Honduran	71.1%	2.6%	14.9%	11.4%

With the exception of Cubans, foreign-born Latino poverty rates were better than those of the foreign-born non-Hispanic Caribbean population, which had a greater percentage of families in poverty in 2006 than in 2000. The rise in poverty within the non-Hispanic Caribbean population may have been related to the increased presence of younger foreign-born residents, in the city during the period we examined. Our age distribution data (see Tables 8 & 9) indicate that the fastest growing foreign-born groups, Ecuadorians and Mexicans, are overwhelmingly made up of individuals under the age of 45. This suggests that a significant number of the new Latino foreign-born arrivals are younger. Given that the foreign-born Latino population in New York City appears to be getting older, it is possible that poverty rates will continue to decrease among non-Hispanic Caribbean population as time elapses. However, the rise of poverty among foreign-born Cubans, a population that has aged considerably, indicates that it is equally possible that foreign-born Latino groups will see a spike in poverty over the long term, particularly those with lower education levels, lower income and assets.

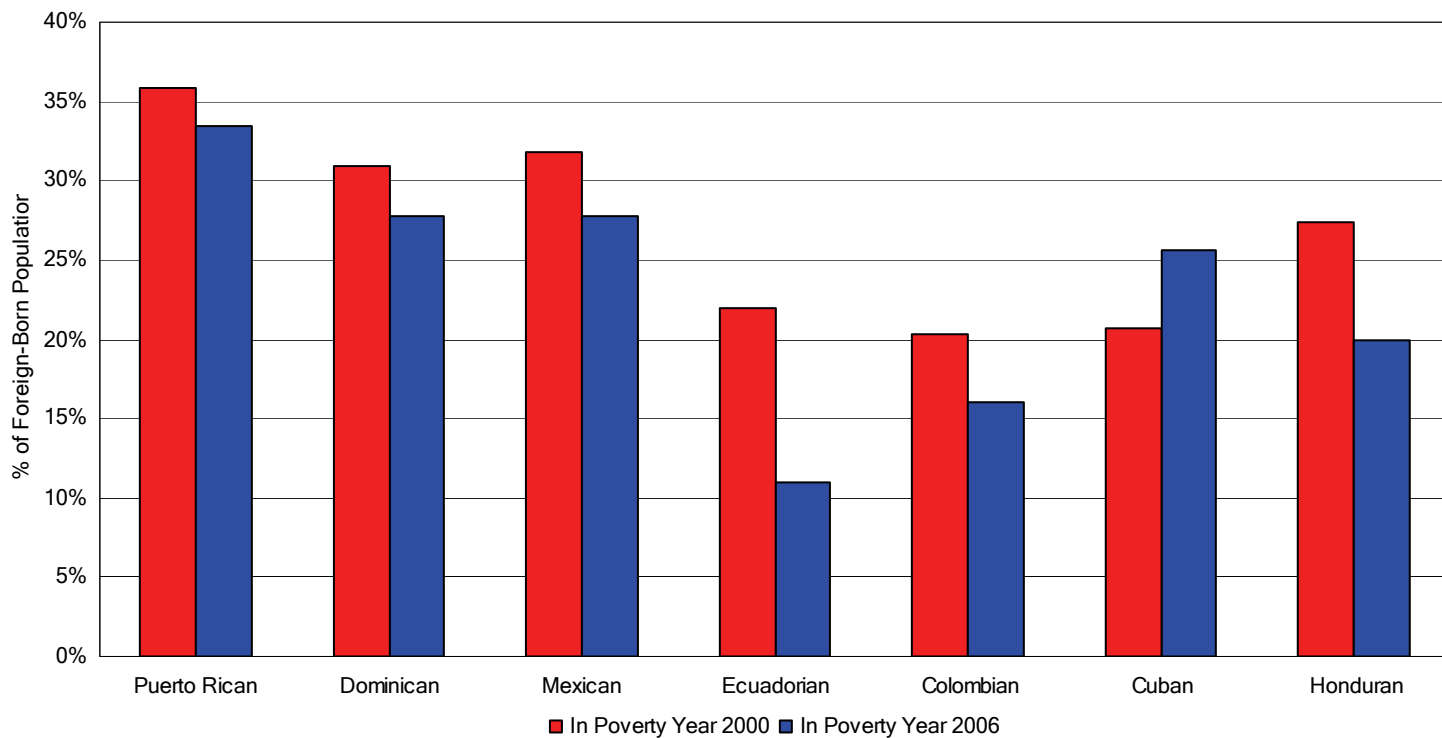
Table 21
 Poverty Status Among Latin American
 and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities
 in New York City, 2000

	In Poverty	Above Poverty
Puerto Rican	36%	64%
Dominican	31%	69%
Mexican	32%	68%
Ecuadorian	22%	78%
Colombian	20%	80%
Cuban	21%	79%
Honduran	27%	73%
NH Caribbean	21%	79%

Table 22
Poverty Status Among Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

	In Poverty	Above Poverty
Puerto Rican	34%	67%
Dominican	28%	72%
Mexican	28%	72%
Ecuadorian	11%	89%
Colombian	16%	84%
Cuban	26%	74%
Honduran	20%	80%
NH Caribbean	26%	74%

Figure 22
Poverty Rates Among Foreign-Born Latin American and Caribbean Nationalities in New York City, 2000 - 2006



We also examined occupational distribution among foreign-born Latinos, as well as the non-Hispanic Caribbean population, in order to identify the extent to which occupational placement and mobility contributed to economic outcomes between 2000 and 2006. While occupational categories do not fully account for the position individuals hold in their given occupations or their employment earnings, this nevertheless can provide some insight on earning potential. The occupational data presented for 2000 and 2006 focuses on the top five occupational sectors, in which foreign-born members of each Latino group and the non-Hispanic Caribbean population were employed.

Among foreign-born Latino groups who had the best socio-economic performance, such as Colombians, Ecuadorians and Hondurans, the industrial and manufacturing sector continues to serve as a key source of employment, even though the percentage of foreign-born city residents employed in the sector has fallen between 2000 and 2006 (See tables 23 and 24.) Many foreign-born Ecuadorians and Hondurans have shifted from industrial and manufacturing work to construction, as a primary source of employment, which was a steady source of employment during the period examined in New York. Foreign-born Mexicans seem to have settled in large numbers into the food service sector, though construction and industrial/manufacturing have also become important employment sectors for Mexican immigrants. At the same time, however, an increasing number of foreign-born Latinos are working in the service and retail sectors, which often entail low skill and lower wage employment. The city's foreign-born non-Hispanic Caribbean population shows similar trends compared with the more economically successful foreign-born Latino groups. Industrial and manufacturing has, and continues to be, one of the top employment sectors for the non-Hispanic Caribbean population in New York City. At the same time, however, participation in the service and retail sector has increased since 2000, which raises the question as to whether foreign-born Latinos will be able to achieve upward economic mobility in the future.

Table 23
Occupational Distribution by Top Five Leading Sectors for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

Puerto Rican	Dominican	Mexican	Ecuadorian	Colombian	Cuban	Honduran	NH Caribbean
Administrative & Clerical (8.3%)	Service & Retail (12.6%)	Food Service (14.7%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (19.2%)	Service & Retail (11.1%)	Upper Management (9.3%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (11.7%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (12.2%)
Industrial & Manufacturing (6.7%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (11.5%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (13.6%)	Service & Retail (8.5%)	Custodial & Maintenance (10.6%)	Administrative & Clerical (8.8%)	Service & Retail (10.1%)	Service & Retail (10.7%)
Service & Retail (6.6%)	Administrative & Clerical (7.3%)	Service & Retail (8.4%)	Administrative & Clerical (8.0%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (10.1%)	Legal Professional (7.2%)	Custodial & Maintenance (8.3%)	Administrative & Clerical (7.7%)
Custodial & Maintenance (5.1%)	Transportation & Moving (7.0%)	Custodial & Maintenance (8.4%)	Transportation & Moving (6.8%)	Administrative & Clerical (8.3%)	Medical Professional (7.2%)	Medical Support (7.2%)	Transportation & Moving (6.5%)
Transportation & Moving (4.2%)	Custodial & Maintenance (5.7%)	Transportation & Moving (7.2%)	Food Service (6.6%)	Transportation & Moving (7.0%)	Top Executive (6.5%)	Administrative & Clerical (7.1%)	Custodial & Maintenance (6.6%)

Table 24
Occupational Distribution by Top Five Leading Sectors for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

Puerto Rican	Dominican	Mexican	Ecuadorian	Colombian	Cuban	Honduran	NH Caribbean
Administrative & Clerical (7.8%)	Service & Retail (16.5%)	Food Service (21.4%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (13.6%)	Custodial & Maintenance (13.5%)	Administrative & Clerical (8.4%)	Construction, Farming & Forestry (13.8%)	Service & Retail (12.7%)
Service & Retail (6.6%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (7.3%)	Construction, Farming & Forestry (10.1%)	Construction, Farming & Forestry (11.0%)	Service & Retail (13.1%)	Service & Retail (9.1%)	Custodial & Maintenance (12.2%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (8.1%)
Custodial & Maintenance (4.2%)	Administrative & Clerical (7.2%)	Custodial & Maintenance (8.6%)	Service & Retail (9.2%)	Administrative & Clerical (8.3%)	Custodial & Maintenance (5.8%)	Service & Retail (10.7%)	Custodial & Maintenance (8.1%)
Industrial & Manufacturing (3.8%)	Transportation & Moving (7.2%)	Service & Retail (8.5%)	Food Service (8.6%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (7.1%)	Middle Management (2.5%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (8.7%)	Food Service (7.9%)
Transportation & Moving (3.8%)	Custodial & Maintenance (6.7%)	Industrial & Manufacturing (7.4%)	Custodial & Maintenance (7.2%)	Transportation & Moving (4.8%)	Business and Financial (2.5%)	Medical Support (5.6%)	Administrative & Clerical (7.4%)

The final section of our analysis focuses on a key factor most foreign-born groups including Latinos confront when they arrive to the United States, language proficiency. Many foreign-born Latinos arrive with limited or no proficiency in English, which is often seen by scholars, as an obstacle toward integration into American society and upward social mobility. Data for 2000 and 2006 indicate that most foreign-born Latino groups have not made significant gains in English proficiency, with the exception of foreign-born Puerto Ricans (Tables 25 and 26.) In fact, the percentage of individuals with limited or no English proficiency has increased slightly, among foreign-born Dominicans and Ecuadorians and much more substantially among foreign-born Mexicans. This is also the case for the non-Hispanic Caribbean population, although it is only in the case of foreign-born Mexicans that more than half of the city’s population has limited or no English proficiency. The rise in the percentage of limited English speakers among the aforementioned groups is likely attributed to the influx of new immigrants, since the Ecuadorian, Mexican and non-Hispanic Caribbean foreign-born populations have grown within the period studied. We also find that the groups who have the highest levels of English proficiency, with the exception of Puerto Ricans, are those who have also experienced significant income growth between 2000 and 2006: Colombians, Cubans and Hondurans.

However, it is necessary to go beyond examining language proficiency and consider the relationship between language skills and economic success for non-English speaking groups. Tables 27 and 28 examine annual family income trends among the foreign-born population, based on their level of English proficiency, indicating that of all foreign-born groups, the median annual income declined among those who had limited or lacked English proficiency. Furthermore, the income gap between the limited or non-English speakers and those who reported speaking English “well” grew during the period between 2000 and 2006. The widest gaps were among foreign-born Cubans (\$26,000), Puerto Ricans (\$13,000), Colombians and Ecuadorians (\$9,000 each), and Hondurans (\$7,000.) This data suggests a positive association between language proficiency and economic performance, though the Puerto Rican case remains significantly outlier.

Table 25
English Language Proficiency Among Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

	Fully Fluent/Native Speaker	Speaks Well	Limited or Non-speaker
Puerto Rican	6%	51%	43%
Dominican	6%	47%	47%
Mexican	13%	11%	54%
Ecuadorian	5%	49%	47%
Colombian	5%	56%	39%
Cuban	10%	59%	32%
Honduran	6%	53%	41%
NH Caribbean	7%	47%	46%

Figure 23
English Language Proficiency Among Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

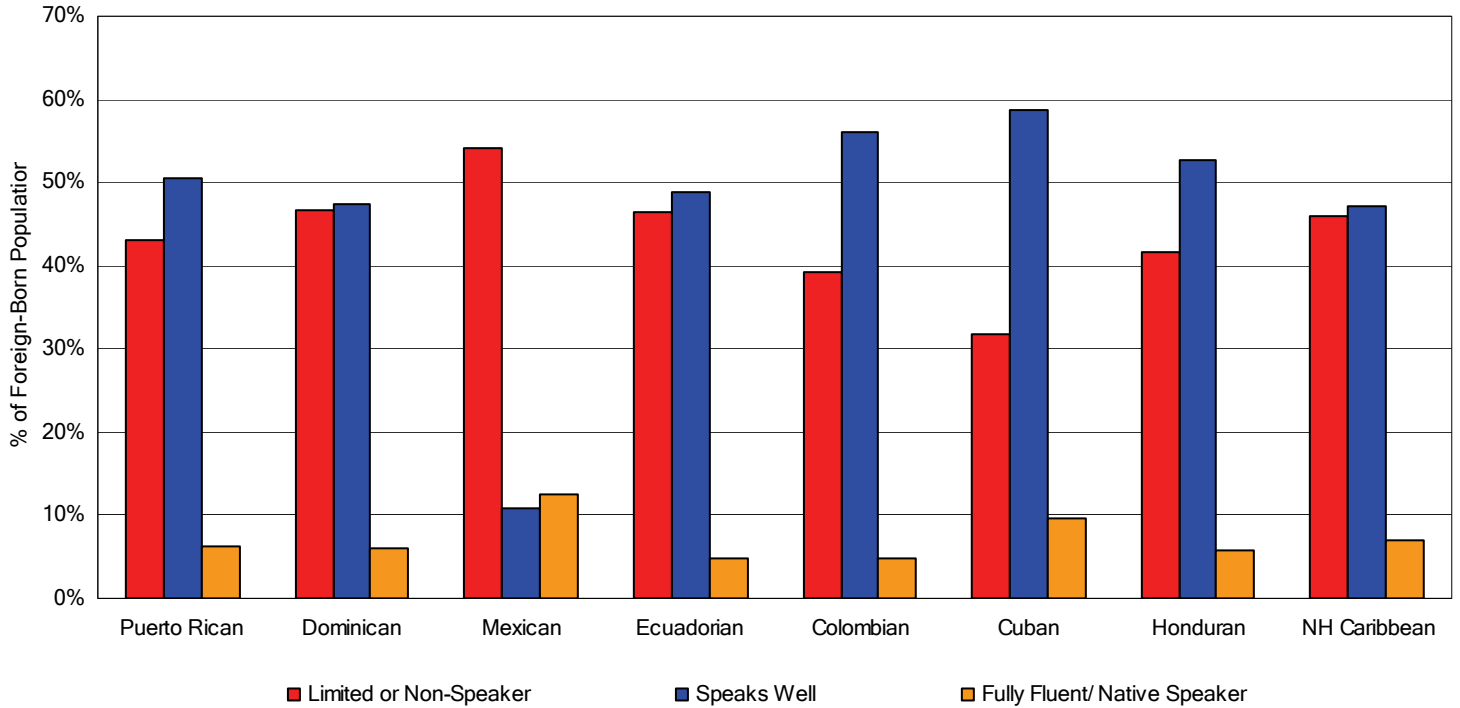


Table 26
English Language Proficiency Among Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

	Fully Fluent/Native Speaker	Speaks Well	Limited or Non-speaker
Puerto Rican	6%	65%	29%
Dominican	2%	49%	48%
Mexican	3%	34%	62%
Ecuadorian	2%	48%	50%
Colombian	6%	58%	36%
Cuban	10%	58%	32%
Honduran	6%	53%	41%
NH Caribbean	4%	49%	48%

Figure 24
English Language Proficiency Among Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

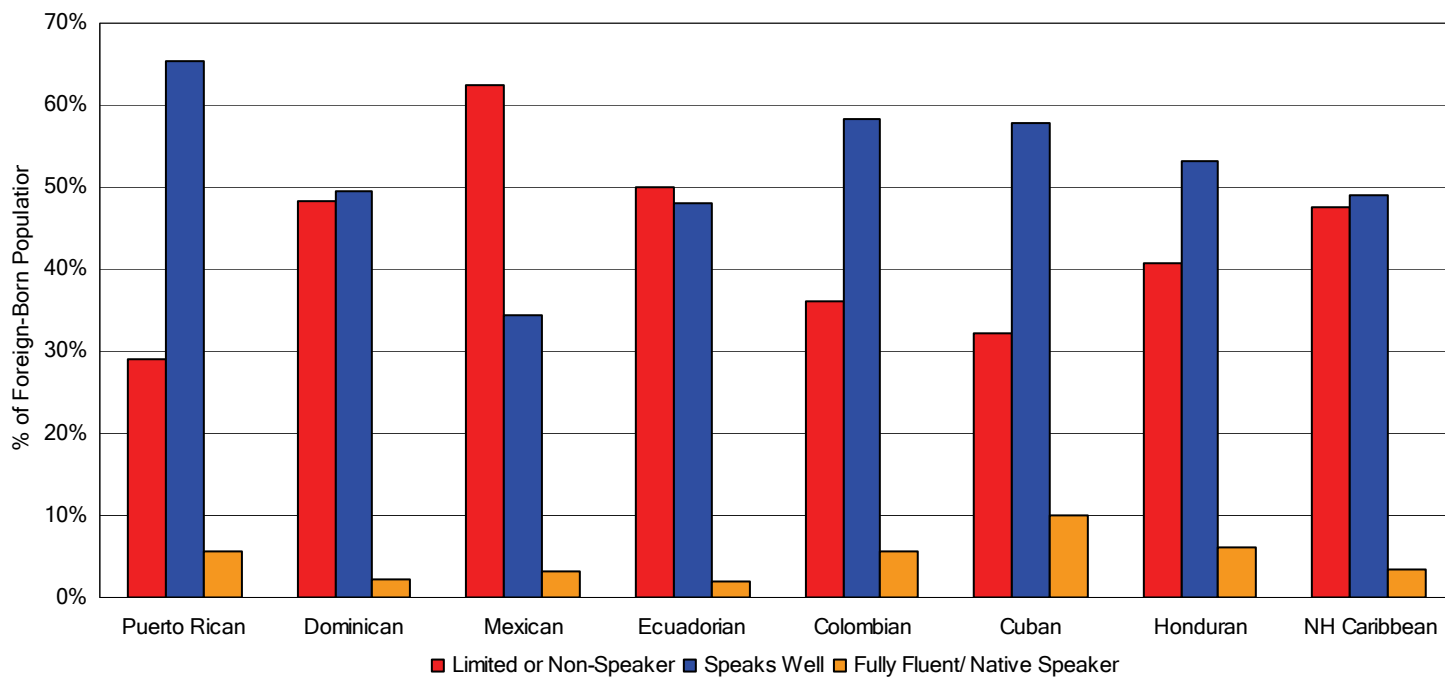


Table 27
Annual Median Family Income by English Proficiency for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

	Fully Fluent/Native Speaker	Speaks Well	Limited or Non-speaker
Puerto Rican	\$17,670	\$29,640	\$16,188
Dominican	\$26,790	\$35,340	\$29,269
Mexican	\$24,624	\$36,480	\$34,200
Ecuadorian	\$31,122	\$45,828	\$36,708
Colombian	\$39,990	\$45,315	\$36,480
Cuban	\$43,872	\$49,020	\$23,940
Honduran	\$43,263	\$37,506	\$31,920
NH Caribbean	\$28,500	\$35,568	\$29,463

Figure 25
Annual Median Family Income by English Proficiency for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2000

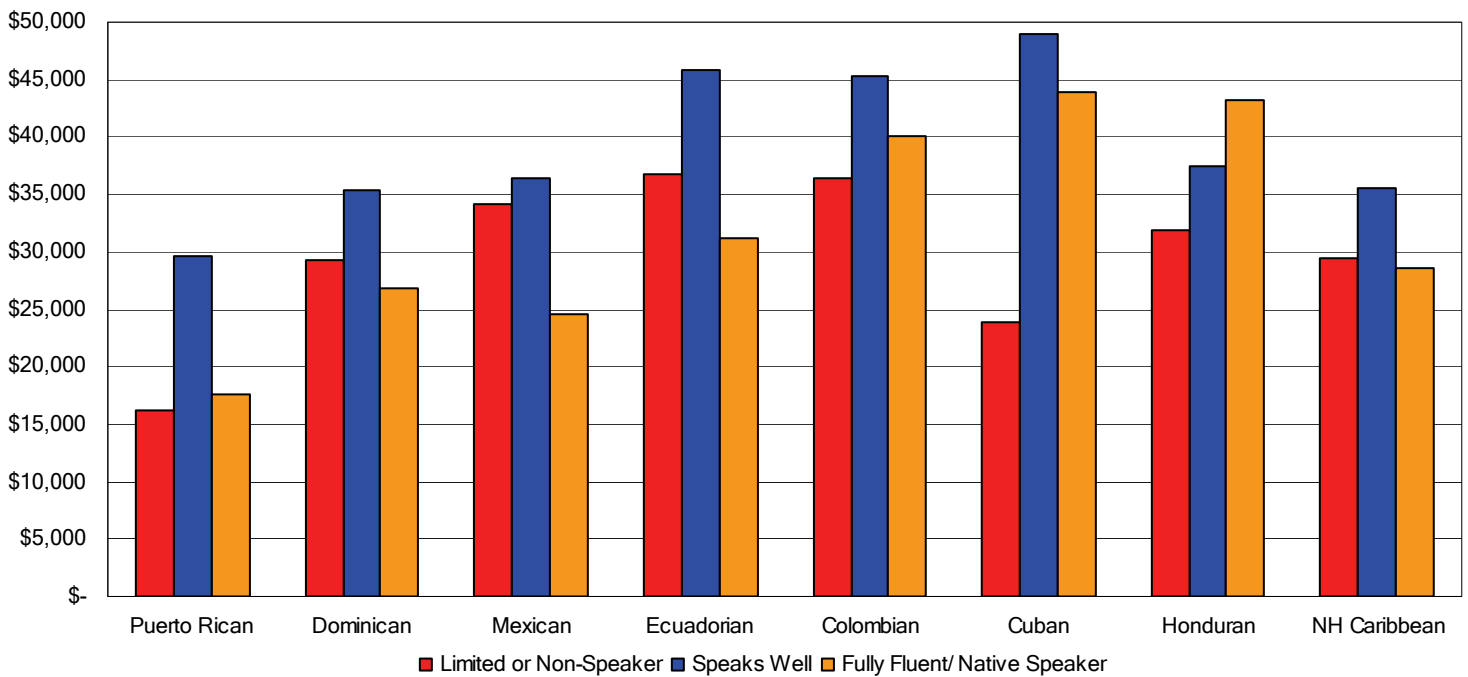
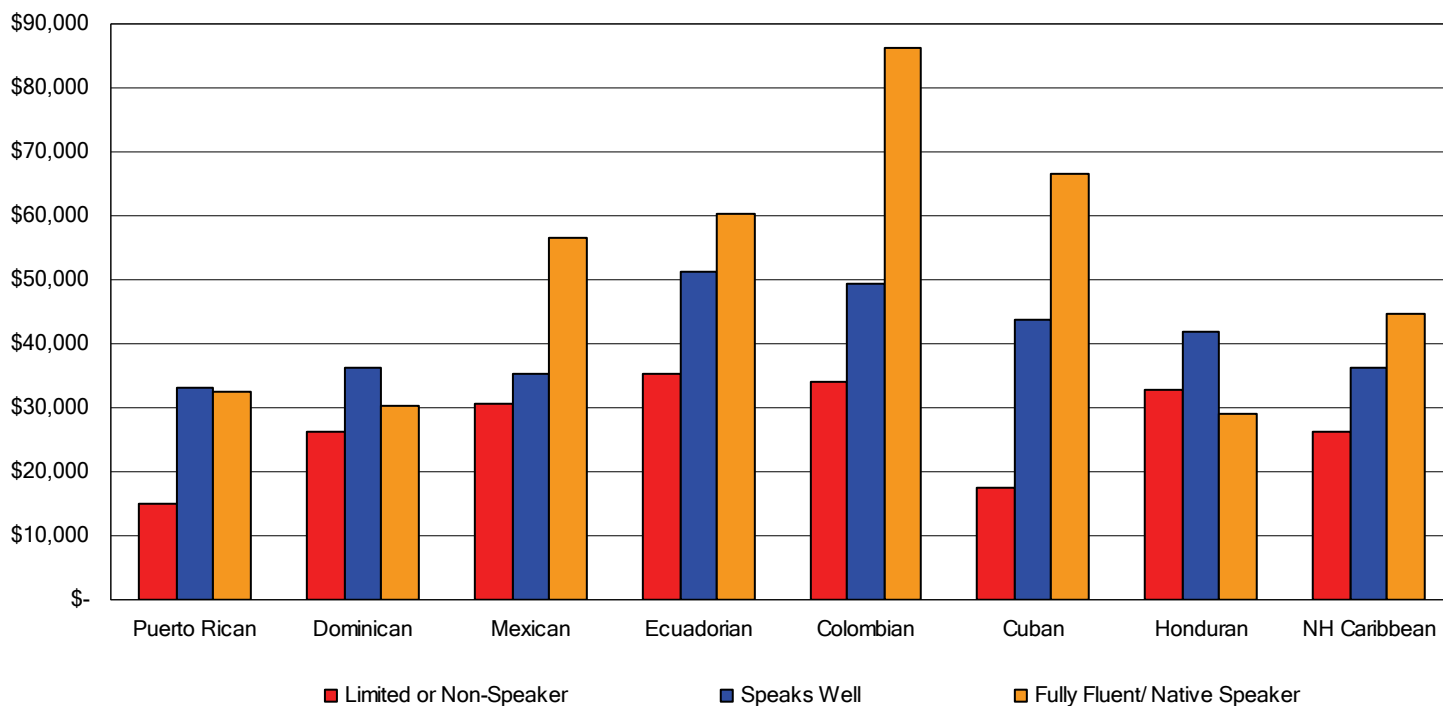


Table 28
Annual Median Family Income by English Proficiency for Latin American and Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006

	Fully Fluent/Native Speaker	Speaks Well	Limited or Non-speaker
Puerto Rican	\$32,549	\$33,104	\$14,891
Dominican	\$30,186	\$36,223	\$26,323
Mexican	\$56,696	\$35,418	\$30,689
Ecuadorian	\$60,170	\$51,115	\$35,217
Colombian	\$86,160	\$49,303	\$34,215
Cuban	\$66,660	\$43,769	\$17,508
Honduran	\$28,928	\$41,757	\$32,701
NH Caribbean	\$44,826	\$36,233	\$26,322

Figure 26
Annual Median Family Income by English Proficiency for Latin American & Caribbean Foreign-Born Nationalities in New York City, 2006



On the whole there was considerable variation between immigrants from different Latino national groups in New York City, with respect to economic performance between 2000 and 2006. Some of these differences were associated with group size. Smaller national groups in New York City such as Colombians, Cubans, Ecuadorians and Hondurans have experienced the greatest increases in annual family income and educational attainment than larger more established foreign-born groups such as Dominicans, Mexicans and Puerto Rican population. Foreign-born Latinos from the latter groups continue to have higher numbers of dependent children and higher poverty rates than the smaller more recent Latino arrivals. Cubans stand out for having both positive income growth and growing poverty rates in New York City which may be associated with demographic shifts in this population including a greater number of retirees, as well as migration of middle class Cubans to areas outside of New York City. Furthermore language seems to play a crucial role in economic mobility, for the city's foreign-born Latino groups, as those who have greater English proficiency have substantially out-earned foreign-born Latinos, who have limited or lack English proficiency during the time interval examined.

These conclusions reinforce previous findings, which illustrate that the Latino immigrant experience is not uniform and that economic mobility is experienced unequally by different Latino nationalities. These findings also point to economic stagnation and persistently high poverty among the more established Latino groups such as Dominicans and Puerto Ricans. Occupational and language proficiency data presented in this study suggest that recent Latino immigrant arrivals have been more successful in adapting to the economic landscape of the city by becoming more proficient in English and moving into labor markets with higher wages and/or greater opportunities for employment, such as construction industrial and manufacturing and administrative/clerical work.

In addition the rapid growth of newer groups, such as Mexicans and Ecuadorians leaves open a question pertaining to the long-term economic success of foreign-born residents within these groups, should they find it more difficult to find access to stable, higher paying employment. Furthermore the larger shift in the New York City economy toward a service-based economy also raises questions, as to whether Latinos will be able to effectively integrate into the local labor market and whether such jobs will facilitate upward economic mobility.

The smaller Latino immigrant groups seem to have performed in a similar fashion to the city's non-Hispanic Caribbean immigrant population, at least in the short-term. However, it is worth noting that non-Hispanic Caribbean groups have a longer migration history in New York City than more recent Latino arrivals. This is relevant since the city's non-Hispanic Caribbean population has experienced changes in migrant characteristics over time, as most of the recent migrants are younger, less educated and poorer than earlier generations. It is therefore important to consider whether new Latino immigrant groups, such as Ecuadorians and Hondurans, will follow similar trends over time.

Future scholarship may also need to take into account what impact, if any, race may have in socio-economic outcomes between foreign-born Latinos and non-Hispanic Caribbean immigrants. While not directly addressed in this study, it is important to recognize that historically, scholars have noted a relationship between race and lower levels of economic mobility for groups such as African Americans. To the extent that either Latino or non-Hispanic Caribbean migrants are categorized as racially distinct from non-Hispanic whites, this may raise questions as to whether these two groups face barriers related to discrimination that will adversely effect their economic performance over the longer term.

Finally, while there are encouraging signs with respect to positive economic mobility among a number of Latino immigrant groups, it would be premature to suggest that Latino immigrants have overcome economic hardship. Most Latino immigrants continue to fall well behind non-Hispanic Whites, non-Hispanic Blacks and Asian populations in New York City in terms of income, educational attainment and labor force participation. While these discrepancies are due to the growth of a younger second-generation Latino population that has yet to fully integrate into the city's economy, the income and education gaps between Latino immigrants and other groups should serve as a reminder that issues of poverty and social mobility are issues that must continue to be examined and addressed.

Endnotes

1. Note that all income values listed for the year 2000 have been adjusted for inflation to represent their totals based on 2006 dollar amounts. See www.bls.gov for additional information on inflation adjustment calculations.
2. NILF: Not in Labor Force.
3. Foreign-Born Puerto Ricans refers to persons born and raised in Puerto Rico.
4. Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, Demographic Surveys Division, Continuous Measurement, Office.* See also Fisher, Gordon M., "The Development and History of Poverty Thresholds", *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 55, #4 (Fall 1992)