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Birds of Passage No Longer? The Mexican Population of New York City, 2000 - 2015

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Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies

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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.

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

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Executive Summary

This report examines the Mexican origin population in New York City in 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015, using data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.\(^1\) The focus is on how this particular demographic group has grown during the 21st century, with particular emphasis on differences by nativity across the five boroughs of America’s quintessential immigrant city. At least five key findings are highlighted.

The Big Apple’s Mexican origin population increased consistently from approximately 195,000 in 2000 to 376,000 in 2015. Mexicans retained their position as the third largest Latino/a national subgroup in the City during these fifteen years. In 2015, Mexicans represented 4.4% of the total population in New York City, considerably lower than the Dominican (8.5%) and Puerto Rican (8.2%) populations. Since 2000, in contrast to the other four largest Latino subgroups in the City, the Mexican population has been spread across three main boroughs: Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. In 2015, Queens had the highest number of foreign-born Mexicans (67,837) and Brooklyn the highest number of domestic-born Mexicans (47,567).

The Mexican population of New York City has experienced marked change in terms of nativity, sex, and age distributions. In addition, these data indicate significant age differences between the domestic-born and foreign born populations. Domestic-born Mexicans are generally younger and more equally distributed by sex, whereas foreign-born Mexicans tend to be older with more men than women.

Another key finding in this study concerns the number of Mexicans in New York City who changed their immigrant legal status over the fifteen year period. The volume and share of Mexicans in the City who were US Naturalized Citizens more than doubled from 13,000 in 2000 to 30,000 in 2015. Meanwhile, the percentage of Mexicans who were not U.S. Citizens (i.e. those who could be Legal Permanent Residents, visa holders, and people with other immigrant status, including those unauthorized or undocumented) decreased significantly, from 60% to approximately 40%.

This report uncovers mixed findings in the examination of household income. On one hand, the percentage of Mexicans living in the City with a median household income of $100,000 or more was estimated around 19.1% and 20.0% in 2000, 2010 and 2015. This same percentage was steadily higher for the foreign-born in the four years of study. However, the Mexican population in the City still had the third lowest median household income in 2015 ($46,000 USD) compared with the five largest Latino national subgroups in New York. Mexicans reported a higher median household income than to Dominicans ($40,000) and Puerto Ricans ($44,000), and a considerably lower income compared to Colombians ($84,000) and Ecuadorians ($67,000). The Mexican median household income in 2015 was also low when compared to major ethno-racial groups in the City, such as non-Hispanic whites ($95,500), Asians ($68,000) or non-Hispanic blacks ($58,400).

\(^{1}\) This report is based on US Census Bureau’s Public Use Microdata Series (PUMS) data for 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015 organized and released by IPUMS USA at the Minnesota Population Center of the University of Minnesota. See Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015. The author is very thankful to Averi Giudicesi for providing research support and editorial assistance to complete this report.
A fourth key finding is that Mexicans are also increasing their presence in the electoral and political landscapes of New York City. According to the data, the number of Mexicans in the electorate of the five boroughs more than tripled between 2000 and 2015, from 30,000 to 95,000 people.

Finally, there were also positive gains in educational attainment among the city’s Mexican adult population (25 years of age and older), particularly for the domestic-born. Between 2000 and 2015 the percentage of Mexicans in the City with “a bachelor's degree or more” increased four percentage points: from 9.0% to 13.0%. Meanwhile, the percentage of those who “did not graduate from high school” decreased by fifteen points: from 59.0% to 44.0%.

It is important to keep in mind that while the data here are valuable indicators when approaching trends concerning Mexican immigrants in New York City, they do not answer fundamental questions. Readers interested in the causative factors behind these trends may benefit from the concluding section of this report, which offers possible avenues of future inquiry.

Keeping in mind the groundbreaking work by Michael Piore from almost four decades ago, in which he highlighted the relevance of the US-based employers requiring immigrant workers, and therefore questioning the simple model of “push” and “pull” factors (i.e. supply and demand) in the study of labor migration, the estimates of this report show the gradual settlement of the Mexican immigrant population in New York City. In a time of less circular migration and increasing border enforcement in North America, particularly since the last decade of the 20th century, further data and research are required to understand how different immigrant groups and generations could be transforming from unexpected sojourners, or Birds of Passage engaged on transnational migration, into de facto residents, workers and parents raising American citizens.

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1. Demography

Since 2000, the Mexican population in New York City has been steadily increasing. First generation immigrants from Mexico represent the largest foreign-born group residing in the United States in the early 21st century. However, Mexican immigrants born abroad and their offspring residing in the Big Apple occupy a lower position in the population rankings among the foreign-born and compared to the five largest Latino national subgroups in the City.

In 2000, Mexicans represented about 2.4% of the total population in the five boroughs. This estimate was considerably lower compared to other two Latino subgroups, Puerto Ricans (10.3%) and Dominicans (6.6%), but above the estimates for Ecuadorians (1.9%) and Colombians (1.3%). In 2015 the percent of Mexicans in New York City rose to 4.4%, and for the first time compared to the previous years of study the domestic-born and foreign-born Mexicans reached parity (see table 1). Interestingly the number of foreign-born Mexicans in New York City decline from 197,000 in 2010 to 189,000 in 2015. In the four periods revised for this report (2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015), Mexicans were the third largest Latino national subgroup in the City behind Dominicans and Puerto Ricans.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>195,356</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>245,344</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>342,699</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>376,548</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican domestic born</td>
<td>63,094</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>95,236</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>145,331</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>187,511</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican foreign born</td>
<td>132,262</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>150,108</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>197,368</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>189,037</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>827,490</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>826,557</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>738,978</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>700,546</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican</td>
<td>530,720</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>560,788</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>605,840</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>723,077</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuadorian</td>
<td>151,792</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>181,526</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>210,532</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>222,793</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombian</td>
<td>106,709</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>110,499</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>101,784</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>101,848</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total NYC Population</td>
<td>8,004,759</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>7,962,148</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>8,185,314</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>8,551,938</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Geographic Location

The Mexican population in New York City almost doubled over the fifteen year period. In the first three years of analysis for this study (2000, 2005, and 2010) Brooklyn was the borough with the largest

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For a very good and succinct demographic overview of key changes at the national level see Sáenz (Spring 2015) “A Transformation in Mexican Migration to the United States” available at: https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/transformation-mexican-migration-united-states

number of Mexicans (regardless of nativity). In 2015 the estimates of Mexicans in Queens surpassed Brooklyn by a very small margin. These two boroughs concentrated approximately 60.0% of the Mexican population in 2015, followed by the Bronx (22.0%), Manhattan (12.0%) and Staten Island (5.0%). (See table 2).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>37,289</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>59,954</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>62,651</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>73,151</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>32,530</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>36,266</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>55,162</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>66,450</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>7,724</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>9,523</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>195,356</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>245,344</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Ecuadorians and Colombians, since 2000 Mexicans have not been concentrated in one or two boroughs only, but dispersed in three: Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Puerto Rican were concentrated mainly in the Bronx and Brooklyn; Dominicans in the Bronx and Manhattan; and Ecuadorians and Colombians overwhelmingly in Queens. (See table 3, maps 1 and 2).

Table 3
Percentage of Four Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City’s Boroughs, 2000 - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Dominican</th>
<th>Ecuadorian</th>
<th>Colombian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>40.5% 40.5% 40.0%</td>
<td>40.0% 38.4%</td>
<td>4.1% 14.3%</td>
<td>4.1% 14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>26.4% 26.5% 24.6%</td>
<td>24.6% 23.1%</td>
<td>18.4% 18.4%</td>
<td>18.4% 18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>16.0% 14.7% 14.6%</td>
<td>14.6% 15.8%</td>
<td>11.5% 11.5%</td>
<td>11.5% 11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>13.4% 14.6% 15.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>54.7% 57.1%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>3.7% 3.5% 5.1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>1.1% 2.6%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0% 100.0% 100.0%</td>
<td>100.0% 100.0%</td>
<td>100.0% 100.0%</td>
<td>100.0% 100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. Nativity, Age and Sex

Since 2000, there was a more balanced distribution of the Mexican-origin population by nativity. In the two early years of study in this report (2000 and 2005) there were larger percentages of foreign-born Mexicans across the five boroughs. For example, in 2000 71.3% of the Mexicans in Queens were born in Mexico and only 28.7% were born in the United States, while in 2015 these percentages changed to 58.8% and 41.7% respectively. In 2015, Queens had the highest number of foreign-born Mexicans (67,837) while Brooklyn had the highest number of domestic-born Mexicans (47,567). (See table 4).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Domestic-born</th>
<th>Foreign-born</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>12,718</td>
<td>24,571</td>
<td>37,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>19,842</td>
<td>42,809</td>
<td>62,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>11,984</td>
<td>20,546</td>
<td>32,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>15,854</td>
<td>39,308</td>
<td>55,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>5,028</td>
<td>7,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63,094</td>
<td>132,262</td>
<td>195,356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transformations toward an older and less masculine profile of Mexicans in New York City were also distinguishable in the analysis of nativity, age and sex. The median ages for both the domestic and foreign-born Mexicans increased. The median ages for the Mexican-origin population changed from 24 years in 2000 and 25 years in 2005 to 26 years of age in 2010 and 2015.

However, crucial differences are evident when we analyze age by nativity. For those born in the United States, the median age in 2000 was 8 years –6 years in Brooklyn– while in 2015 was 12 years old –19 years in Manhattan–. For those born in Mexico, the median age in 2000 was 27 years while in 2015 was 36 years old –38 years in Queen–. (See table 5). These stark contrasts and changes in socio-demographic profiles are shown in the age pyramids of the domestic born –younger, equally distributed by sex– and foreign born –older, more men but increasingly more women– across the four periods of analysis. (See figures 1, 2 and 3). Table 6 echoes these differences showing age structure by nativity. For instance, 58.9% of the domestic born were in the 0-14 age group in 2015.
Table 5
Median Ages for the Mexican Population in New York City's Boroughs by Nativity (Domestic-Born [D-B] and Foreign Born [F-B]), 2000 - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>D-B</td>
<td>F-B</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1
Age Pyramids Mexican Origin Population of New York City, 2000 - 2015
These data indicate that there were more men than women among the foreign-born Mexicans in New York City between 2000 and 2015 (See figure 4). In 2000, the sex ratio was 151 males per one-hundred females and in 2015 that ratio decreased to 139 males per one-hundred females. In 2005 the sex ratio increased compared to the previous year (164) but in 2010 decreased again (142) and was actually lower compared to any of the three years of study. In the case of domestic-born individuals, there were slightly more women than men in 2005 and 2015, but overall the distribution of Mexican males and females born in the United States is more evenly distributed when compared to the foreign-born (i.e. the first immigrant generation, those born in Mexico). The decline of foreign-born men as a share of the entire Mexican-origin population also warrants attention. In 2000 about 41.0% of the Mexican population in the City was constituted by males born in Mexico, followed by females also born outside of the US (27.0%), while in 2015 approximately 29.0% were foreign born-men followed by U.S.-born women and men (25.0% each group) and finally foreign-born women (21.0%).
Figure 3
Age Pyramids Mexican Foreign-Born Population of New York City, 2000 - 2015

Figure 4
Mexican Origin Population in New York City by Sex and Nativity, 2000 - 2015
c. Marital Status and Household Type

The marital status and household types of New York’s Mexican population has received scant attention from researchers in recent years. These data indicate that the percentage of married Mexicans (either with the spouse present or absent) experienced a slight decline between 2000 and 2015, from 32.7% to 26.7%. Another trend that perhaps reflects the increasing presence of younger domestic-born Mexicans is that the percentage of people who declared single or never married increased in approximately 8.0% in fifteen years, growing from 61.5% in 2000 to 68.6% in 2015. (See table 7).
Half of the Mexican population in New York City reported living in a married household in 2015. Furthermore, the percentage of Mexican female householders with no husband present increased consistently between 2000 and 2015, a growth from 15.6% to 24.4%. Additional data on household characteristics for Mexicans in the City show that the average number of “own family members in household” (4.7 to 4.2 people) and the number of “families in the household” (1.7 to 1.5 people) declined slightly between the 2000 and 2015, with minimal differences in 2005 and 2010. (See table 8).

### Table 8
Household Type of Mexicans in New York City, 2000 - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Type</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married-couple family household</td>
<td>114,680</td>
<td>143,570</td>
<td>156,369</td>
<td>192,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male householder, no wife present</td>
<td>34,545</td>
<td>36,777</td>
<td>74,135</td>
<td>50,894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female householder, no husband present</td>
<td>30,448</td>
<td>43,578</td>
<td>83,535</td>
<td>90,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male householder, living alone</td>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>4,745</td>
<td>6,310</td>
<td>6,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male householder, not living alone</td>
<td>7,335</td>
<td>11,645</td>
<td>11,906</td>
<td>21,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female householder, living alone</td>
<td>1,598</td>
<td>2,753</td>
<td>3,386</td>
<td>4,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female householder, not living alone</td>
<td>2,468</td>
<td>2,276</td>
<td>4,610</td>
<td>7,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>1,362</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2,448</td>
<td>3,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>195,356</td>
<td>245,344</td>
<td>342,699</td>
<td>376,548</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Citizenship Status and Electorate

Immigrant legal status and its association with nativity and citizenship are essential variables in the examination of socio-economic outcomes for Mexicans and their descendants in the United States. The data for the Mexican origin population in New York City indicate a key trend in this regard: the number of Mexicans who were Naturalized US Citizens more than doubled in the fifteen year period, increasing from approximately 13,000 in 2000 to 30,000 in 2015. (See figure 5). The two boroughs with the largest numbers of Naturalized Citizens were in Queens (13,233) and Brooklyn (8,872). A reasonable argument can be made that many of these Naturalized Citizens were Legal Permanent Residents who for various reasons could not or did not want to become Citizens.

A subsequent pattern corresponds to the decline of Mexicans in New York City who are “Not U.S. Citizens.” According to these data the percentage of Mexicans who were not citizens decreased from 60.0% in 2000 to 55.0% in 2005, and then from 51.0% in 2010 to 41.0% in 2015. (See figure 6). It is important to note that this category corresponded not only to those who could be unauthorized or undocumented immigrants, but also to those with Legal Permanent Residence or other lawful status.7

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7 There is not a more detailed, direct or reliable question on immigrant legal status in the U.S. Census. The main demographic methods employed to produce estimates of the unauthorized or undocumented population in the United States are calculated using variants of the residual method, or more recently using “logical edits.” See for example Robert Warren, “Democratizing Data about Unauthorized Residents in the United States: Estimates and Public-Use Data, 2010 to 2013,” Journal on Migration and Human Security 2, no. 4 (2014):305-28. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.14240/jmhs.v2i4.38](https://doi.org/10.14240/jmhs.v2i4.38)
The astonishing growth of the electorate from Mexico in New York City is perhaps best explained by the rising number of Mexicans born in the United States who have recently reached voting age. In 2000, only about 30,000 Mexicans could vote on American elections. Five years later, there were
approximately 5,000 more voters; in 2010 there were approximately 27,000 more, reaching a total of approximately 62,000 people of Mexican origin in the electorate. Yet by 2015, the estimate of Mexicans who could vote in the Big Apple was around 95,000 people. In other words, the electorate of Mexican origin in New York City tripled between 2000 and 2015. (See figure 7).

![Figure 7](image)

Electorate of Mexican Origin in New York City, 2000 - 2015

3. Household Income and Poverty

National origins and nativity remained essential characteristics in measuring household income for the five largest Latino subgroups in New York City, including Mexicans. The estimates in this section analysis have been adjusted to 2015 dollars. All groups experienced an increase in median household income between 2005 and 2010. Ecuadorians had the highest median household income among the top five largest Latino subgroups in the City in 2000, 2005, and 2010. Ecuadorian’s reported the greatest median household income in 2010 compared to the other subgroups ($65,217). Puerto Ricans had the lowest median household income among the top five Latino subgroups in the City in 2000 and 2010, while that was the case of Dominicans in 2005 and 2015. In the four years of analysis Mexicans did not have the highest or lowest median household income in the group, but in 2005 they reported the second lowest income ($41,869). Additionally, Mexicans experienced a decline in median income between 2000 and 2005 and 2010 and 2015. Dominicans also experienced a decline between 2000 and 2005 and Ecuadorians between 2010 and 2015 (See figure 8). The Mexican median household income in 2015 ($46,000) was still low when compared to other ethno-racial groups like non-Hispanic whites ($95,000), non-Hispanic blacks ($58,000) or Asians ($68,000).

Again, place of birth was key for the analysis of Mexican’s income in the City. Domestic and foreign-born Mexicans experienced loss in median household income between 2000 and 2005 with an increase in 2010 and a decrease in 2015. Yet, the foreign-born report higher median earnings compared to the domestic-born between 2000 and 2015. (See figure 9).
Figure 8
Median Household Income by Latino Nationality in New York City, 2000 - 2015
(in inflation adjusted 2015 dollars)

Figure 9
Median Household Income of the Mexican Population in New York City by Nativity, 2000 - 2015
(in inflation adjusted 2015 dollars)
Within the Mexican population across the five boroughs between 2000 and 2015, the foreign-born living in Queens reported the highest median household income ($65,434) in 2010 while that was the case of the domestic-born living in Manhattan ($70,652) in 2010. (See figures 10 and 11). Additionally, breaking down by lowest earnings among nativity and borough in each year, the domestic-born Mexicans in the Bronx reported the lowest median income ($28,400) in 2015 while the foreign-born Mexicans in the Bronx had the lowest amount ($36,000) in 2015.

Figure 10
Median Household Income for Domestic-Born Mexicans in New York City by Borough, 2000 - 2015
(in inflation adjusted 2015 dollars)

Figure 11
Median Household Income for Foreign-Born Mexicans in New York City by Borough, 2000 - 2015
(in inflation adjusted 2015 dollars)
With the notable exception of 2005, the percentage of Mexicans living in New York City with a median household income of $100,000 or more was estimated around 19% in 2000, 2010 and 2015. The share of Mexicans with a median household income above the $100,000 threshold was higher for the foreign born in in the four years of analysis. (See figure 12).

**Figure 12**
Percentage of Household Earnings More than $100,000 Annually by Nativity in New York City, 2000 - 2015 (in inflation adjusted 2015 dollars)

There were marginal changes in the percentage of Mexicans living in poverty over the fifteen year period. Approximately 33.0% of Mexicans in the City lived in poverty between 2000 and 2015. The Mexican origin population was more likely to live in poverty compared to other Latinos, such as Colombians and Ecuadorians. (See figure 13).

**Figure 13**
Percentage of People Living in Poverty by Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City, 2000 - 2015
Poverty rates were consistently higher among Mexican female. In 2000 about 36.0% of all Mexican females lived in poverty, while their male counterparts hovered around 31.0%. The poverty for domestic-born Mexicans increased from 35.0% in 2000 to 41.0% in 2015, and decreased for foreign-born from 29.0% to 25.0%. By 2015 poverty among domestic born Mexicans had risen to its highest at 41.0.0% while poverty rates for foreign born Mexicans was at its lowest at 25.0%. (See figure 14).

Figure 14
Percentage of Mexicans Living in Poverty New York City by Sex and Nativity, 2000 - 2015

Poverty among young Mexicans, aged 0-14, increased substantially by 2015. (See figure 15). 48.0% of this age category lived in poverty, an increase from 40.0% in 2000. Domestic-born Mexicans in this age group were also much more likely to live in poverty (49.0%) than foreign-born (25.0%) by 2015. Females reported levels of poverty of 50.0%, 4 percentage points higher than males in 2015. (See figure 16).
Figure 15
Percentage of Mexicans Living in Poverty in New York City by Age Group, 2000 - 2015

Figure 16
Percentage of Mexicans Living in Poverty in New York City by Age, Sex and Nativity, 2015
4. Employment and Unemployment

Mexican immigration to the United States has been historically characterized as a labor phenomenon. The employment rates for Mexicans (ages 16-60) in New York City rose consistently over the fifteen year period, from 54.4% in 2000 to 69.2% in 2015. Colombians (72.9%) and Ecuadorians (73.9%) boasted the highest rates of employment among the five largest Latino nationalities in 2015, while Puerto Ricans had the lowest employment rates among Latinos. (See figure 17). The number of Mexicans reporting to be “out of work” declined drastically from 39.0% in 2000 to 27.0% in 2015. These estimates were lower when compared to Puerto Ricans and similar to Dominicans and Ecuadorians, but consistently higher than the ones for Colombians. (See figure 18).

Mexicans, Ecuadorian and Colombians had the lowest unemployment rates meanwhile Dominicans and Puerto Ricans had the highest unemployment rates among the five largest Latino/a nationalities in 2015. (See figure 19).

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Figure 18
Out of Work Rates by Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City, 2000 - 2015 (population ages 16-60)

Figure 19
Unemployment Rates by Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City, 2000 - 2015 (population ages 16-60)
Employment rates among Mexicans had grew steadily from 54.4% in 2000 to 69.2% in 2015. Nevertheless, when the data is disaggregated further by gender, 53.0% of females and 82.0% of males were employed in 2015—a major increase from the respective 37.0% and 66.0% rates of 2000. Foreign born employment rates also increased from 54.0% in 2000 to 73.0% in 2015. (See figure 20).

Figure 20
Employment Rate for Mexicans by Sex and Nativity in New York City, 2000 - 2015
(population ages 16-60)

For native born Mexicans living in New York City rates of individuals out of the workforce had slightly increased from 2000 (33.1%) to 2015 (34.8%) (See figure 21). The percentage of foreign born Mexicans out of the work force decreased considerably from 39.6% in 2000 to 23.3% in 2015. (See figure 22). Furthermore the out of work force rate for Mexican males decreased again notably from 28.0% in 2000 to 14.0% in 2015, for females there was also a significant decrease from 56.0% in 2000 to 42.0% in 2015. (See figure 23).
Figure 21
(population ages 16-60)

Figure 22
(population ages 16-60)
5. Educational Attainment

Education among immigrants and their children in America remains a topic of public interest for multiple actors at the national and local levels. In 2015 the Mexican adult population in New York City (25 years of age and older) had a lower percentage of individuals with “BA or a higher” (13%) than compared with the two Latino subgroups more alike in terms of population size and basic socio-demographics in the City: Dominicans (15%) and Ecuadorians (14%). Additionally, Mexicans had higher rates of “non-high school” graduating individuals (44%) compared to the same two subgroups (Dominicans 40%, Ecuadorians 37%). (See figure 24).

Educational attainment for Mexicans in New York City steadily increased between 2000 and 2015. The percentage of the Mexican adult population (25 years and older) that finished college (got “BA or higher”) has grown 4.1% between 2000 and 2015. Even more important, the percentage of individuals who did not graduate high school decreased 15.0% between 2000 and 2015. The number of Mexicans who have graduated college has steadily increased from 22.5% in 2000 to 31.2% in 2015. (See figure 25).
Figure 24
Non-High School and College Graduation Rates among Three Latino Nationalities in New York City, 2015 (in percent of population 25 years of age and older)

Figure 25
Educational Attainment Levels among Mexicans in New York City 2000 - 2015 (in percent of population 25 years of age and older)
The biggest difference in high school non-completion rates within the Mexican community is the extraordinary gap between domestic-born and foreign-born Mexicans. While approximately 51.0% of foreign-born Mexicans in the City did not graduate high school, only 10.0% of domestic-born Mexicans 25 years of age and older failed to finish in 2015. The college graduation rate among domestic-born Mexicans was an astounding 43.1% in 2015, while for the foreign born it was 7.3%. (See figure 26).

Figure 26
Non-High School and College Graduation Rates among Mexicans in New York City, 2015 (in percent of population 25 years of age and older)

The 2015 data revealed that most Mexicans (25 years of age and older) who’ve graduated college in New York City are in fact domestic born. Additionally, most Mexicans who’ve graduated college live in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. (See figure 27). If these trends hold steady, this proportion is likely to increase in the future.

Percentages of Mexican educational achievement are substantially different when paying a closer look at nativity: 43.0% of the domestic-born Mexicans got “BA or +” in 2015 while only 7.0% of the foreign-born had that level of education in that same year (See figure 5.4). In the most recent year of study, Manhattan was the borough with the largest number of Mexicans with “BA or more: 9,200 in total (around 5,900 of them were domestic-born). These are noteworthy changes when looking at previous periods, for example, considering that in 2000 the number of Mexicans (native and foreign-born) in the City with “BA or more” was around 8,000 people (See figure 28). The stark differences in educational attainment by nativity among the Mexican population in New York City indicate essential differences between the first (foreign-born) and second (native-born) immigrant generations. This is validated by estimates of older foreign-born migrants participating more in the labor market while their younger children still attend educational institutions in the United States.
In 2015, the largest number of Mexicans with a BA or higher resided in Manhattan (9,217) followed by Brooklyn (8,376) and Queens (6,280). The largest number who did not graduate high school resided in Brooklyn (32,294) followed by Queens (26,592) and the Bronx (20,769). Furthermore, the most Mexicans with a high school diploma in 2015 were residing in Queens (24,401) followed by Brooklyn (14,444), and the Bronx (4,023). (See figures 28).

The number of Mexicans with a graduate degree (masters and PhD) in the five boroughs increased from approximately 2,402 people in 2000 to nearly 8,937 people in 2015. Graduate degree numbers in the Mexican origin population in the City have grown steadily between 2000 and 2015. Domestic-born Mexicans have seen the largest number of growth in individuals with a graduate degree: from approximately 1,264 people in 2000 to nearly 5,974 people in 2015 – nearly a fivefold increase–.
Figure 28
Educational Attainment of Mexicans by Borough in New York City, 2015
(population 25 years of age and older)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Did Not Graduate</th>
<th>High School Graduate</th>
<th>Some College No Degree</th>
<th>Associates Degree</th>
<th>BA or Higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>2,522</td>
<td>13,830</td>
<td>4,023</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>20,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>8,578</td>
<td>14,444</td>
<td>4,314</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>32,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>9,217</td>
<td>7,182</td>
<td>3,151</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>6,280</td>
<td>7,030</td>
<td>2,064</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>24,401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>3,329</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1,998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Health Insurance
Between 2010 and 2015, the percentage of Mexicans in New York City with no health insurance decreased from 46.7% to 32.2%. (See figures 29 and 30). The declines in this period were less pronounced among domestic born (9.6% to 7.2%) than foreign born (from 73.9% to 57.1%). (See figures 31, 32, 33 and 34). Within each borough and by nativity, the Bronx had the highest percentage of foreign-born Mexicans with no health insurance in 2010 (81.0%), and Brooklyn took that position in 2015 (61.9%) although with a considerably lower rate. In 2010 Brooklyn and Staten Island reported the highest percentages of foreign born Mexicans with health insurance (around 33.0%) while in 2015 that distinction went to Staten Island (61.2%) and Manhattan (50.2%).
Figure 29
Health Insurance Coverage of Mexican Origin by Borough in New York City, 2010

Figure 30
Health Insurance Coverage of Mexican Origin by Borough in New York City, 2015
Figure 31
Health Insurance Coverage of Domestic Born Mexicans by Borough in New York City, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>No health insurance</th>
<th>Health insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 32
Health Insurance Coverage of Domestic Born Mexicans by Borough in New York City, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>No health insurance</th>
<th>Health insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYC</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 33
Health Insurance Coverage of Foreign Born Mexicans by Borough in New York City, 2010

Figure 34
Health Insurance Coverage of Foreign Born Mexicans by Borough in New York City, 2015
7. Language

The percentage of Mexicans in New York City (5 years of age and older) who did not speak English decreased from 16.0% in 2000 to 8.0% in 2015. In 2000 about 16.0% of all Mexicans in the region reported not speaking English, then slowly declined in 2005 and 2010 to approximately 15.0%, and then sharply to 8.1% in 2015. (See figure 35)

![Figure 35: Language Ability among Mexicans in New York City, 2000 - 2015](image)

In 2000 and 2015 the percentage of Mexicans who reported speaking Spanish at home remained steady at 89.0%. Percentages of speaking Spanish at home have remained the same across the four periods, with a very minor decline in 2015. In addition, rates of English spoken at home by Mexicans have remained stable between 2000 and 2015 (at 10.0% and 11.0% respectively). (See figure 36)

Patterns of language spoken at home by nativity for both foreign and domestic-born Mexicans show small changes between 2000 and 2015. Domestic-born Mexicans reported levels of English spoken at home around 22.5% between 2000 and 2015. More specifically, rates of English spoken at home for domestic-born Mexicans decreased from 24.0% in 2000 to 20.0% in 2015. Levels of Spanish spoken at home steadily increased from 75.0% in 2000 to 79.0% in 2015 for domestic-born Mexicans. Foreign-born Mexicans reported that Spanish spoken at home remained the same in 2005, 2010, and 2015 at a rate of 95.0%; this was a slight increase compared to 2000 when 93.0% reported speaking Spanish at home. Percentages of English spoken at home for foreign-born Mexicans have fluctuated between 6.0% and 3.0% between 2000 and 2015. In 2000, 6.0% of foreign-born Mexicans reported speaking English at home, the highest percentage among the four time frames studied, with the lowest rates of reported speaking English at home was in 2010 at 3.0%. (See figure 37).
Figure 36
Language Spoken at Home of Mexicans in New York City, 2000 - 2015
(population 5 years of age and older)

Figure 37
Language Spoken at Home for Mexicans by Nativity in New York City, 2000 - 2015,
(population 5 years of age and older)
Concluding Remarks

While the indicators highlighted in this report are no doubt useful, many fundamental questions remain about the causative factors behind these trends. Without any further qualitative study, we have some suggestions for further inquiry:

There is not one single “Little Mexico” in New York City. However, noticeable concentrations of domestic (native/U.S.-born) and foreign-born Mexicans are located in three boroughs: Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx. Further investigation is required to understand how neighborhoods within these areas, such as Corona and Jackson Heights in Queens; Sunset Park and Bushwick in Brooklyn; or Mott Haven and Melrose in the Bronx, could explain the urban geographic dispersion and certain disparate socioeconomic outcomes of Mexicans by age, sex and place of birth.

The increasing participation of Mexican women in the labor market requires further investigation in order to identify potential barriers, obstacles, incentives or opportunities available to them. Findings demonstrate that domestic-born Mexicans are generally younger and more equally distributed by sex, whereas foreign-born Mexicans tend to be older with more men than women. These changes could be explained by the diminishing presence of the traditional male migrant worker without family and the rising numbers of female migrants born in Mexico, both of them residing with more relatives and U.S.-born children.

The relevance of nativity in the study of the Mexican population in New York City cannot be overstated. The striking differences between the first immigrant generation (i.e. the foreign-born) and the second (i.e. the domestic-born) in variables such as educational attainment or household income could be partially explained by how dissimilar these two groups are in terms of age, sex, education, labor market participation, language ability and basically the fact that these two subgroups were (or are being) raised in two very different societies. These are two groups perhaps interacting among them on a daily-basis but in fact also interacting very differently with multiple institutions and therefore affecting in several ways their settlement patterns.

Mexicans in New York City consolidated their position as the third largest Latino population in the five boroughs between 2000 and 2015, behind Dominicans and Puerto Ricans and above Ecuadorians and Colombians. Mexicans are also wedged between other Latino subgroups across different socioeconomic measures, including household income or labor market participation (i.e. employment and unemployment rates). Additional qualitative studies are needed to uncover how and to what extent there might be conflict and solidarity among Mexicans, other Latinos, non-Hispanic immigrant groups or other ethno-racial minorities across a gamut of scenarios and in search of desirable resources, such as affordable/comfortable housing, ‘good’ schools or developing political alliances.

Stakeholders and advocacy groups may want to start targeting Mexicans specifically or crafting their messages and outreach to Mexican populations. The fact that there are more Mexicans in the electorate might signal a new era in how they are perceived by well-established political actors or in how they
decide to participate in future political processes. These changes could mark a new era in the local political campaigns or in how Mexicans will continue participating in future elections and political campaigns.

The socio-economic mobility of Mexicans in New York City in terms of household income, occupations and educational opportunities, could be another area of research interest in which is fundamental to consider the role of the family, marital status, the type of household and the availability of various forms of social networks and institutions/organizations (i.e. locally, sub-nationally and transnationally). It is paramount to continue documenting how potential penalties or advantages for Mexicans and their families in the United States (for example as workers, entrepreneurs, students, parents, or heads of households) might be associated with their demographic profile, immigrant legal status, neighborhood characteristics, educational attainment, labor trajectories, health access, language ability and even phenotype.

These and other variables might be affecting the settlement patterns and social mobility of Mexican and their families in the United States, principally in ethnically-diverse and immigrant-friendly urban destinations such as New York and its surrounding areas. These variables might explain the potential transition of the archetypical Mexican labor immigrant from a “bird of passage” to a “tree growing roots” across various borders, and in the face of what many pundits and experts are identifying as a reemergence of discrimination and xenophobia in the American political discourse.
Map Appendix

Map 1
Mexican Foreign Born Population Concentrations in New York City, 2006 - 2010

Population born in Mexico
% by census tract

- 0% - 7%
- 8% - 12%
- 13% - 38%

Map 2
Dominican Foreign Born Population Concentrations in New York City, 2006 - 2010

Population born in DR
% by census tract
- 0% - 9%
- 9.1% - 14.9%
- 15% - 49%

Map of New York City showing concentrations of population born in DR in various census tracts.