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2020

Demographic and Socioeconomic Transformations Among the Mexican-Origin Population of New York City, 1990-2017

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Demographic and Socioeconomic Transformations

Among the Mexican-Origin Population of New York City, 1990 – 2017

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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 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://clacls.gc.cuny.edu

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

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Founded in 2012, the **Mexican Studies Institute of the City University of New York (CUNY MSI)** is the first academic institute east of the Mississippi River specifically devoted to Mexican and Mexican-American studies. It is the culmination of nearly a decade of work by faculty, administrators, staff, and students to boost enrollment of Mexican and Mexican-American students in CUNY; support equity by promoting academic achievement, improving outcomes and career success; foster research with and about Mexico and Mexicans in the US, especially in New York; and collaborate with community based and public institutions to support and empower the Mexican community, especially through education. CUNY MSI is a CUNY-wide institute housed at Lehman College in the Bronx.

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Introduction

The Mexican Studies Institute of the City University of New York (CUNY MSI) is guided by the principles of boosting enrollment of Mexican and Mexican-American students in CUNY, promoting equity and upward mobility through academic achievement, fostering research with a focus on Mexico and Mexicans in New York, and collaborating with community-based organizations and public institutions to support and empower New Yorkers.

The Mexican Studies Digital Archive and Resource Unit (DARU) is part of three interconnected units: Research, Archives, and Library. CUNY MSI is focusing on identifying lines of research critical to the Mexican diaspora that may gather significant data on local and national issues.

One specific objective of the DARU is to help inform students, public agencies, local and international researchers, scholars, and the general public on issues related to this ethnic group in New York City. By partnering with local and international academic institutions and visiting scholars, CUNY MSI looks to produce research and publications, and to disseminate more knowledge of the issues affecting the Mexican diaspora in New York City.

CUNY has always been a vehicle for upward mobility for working and immigrant families in New York City. Still the best value in education, CUNY continues to provide a pathway to success for students. It is well known, that the Mexican community has high aspirations to access college, but encounters barriers, especially now, amid a rising anti-immigrant tide. This requires intentional actions across our university community to improve campus climate, contribute to better outcomes, and close attainment gaps. For the past seven years, CUNY MSI has been working to equalize the educational achievement disparities among Mexican and Mexican-American students, striving to ensure they have equal access and support for thriving in our institution and beyond.

José Higuera López, Deputy Director, CUNY MSI

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Executive Summary

The Mexican-origin population was the fastest growing Latino national subgroup in New York City between 1990 and 2015, increasing from about 58,000 to 377,000 people. The growth rate was so above and beyond the rates of expansion among other Latino nationalities, that it seemed as if by 2030 Mexicans would surpass Dominicans and Puerto Ricans to become the largest Latino nationality in the City. However, very quickly after 2015, Mexicans began to leave the City and population contracted to about 323,000 in 2017.

One reason is that foreign-born Mexicans stopped migrating to the City from Mexico or from other areas of the United States. The peak decade of arrivals was between 2000 and 2009 when about 6,400 Mexicans arrived each year. This fell off to 2,600 yearly after 2010.

Another reason was because of the apparent out migration of Mexican families including children born in the U.S. This is known because in the two years between 2015 and 2017, the foreign-born and domestic-born Mexican population each contracted at the same 14% overall decrease.

About a third of all Mexicans lived in Brooklyn in 1990 and this was stable to 2017. The Bronx was home to nearly a quarter of all Mexican origin persons in 2017 and in the same year nearly 80% lived in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens.

Educational attainment levels among the Mexican community suggest hope for upward social mobility in the future. Only 9% of all adults 25 years of older had achieved a B.A. or higher in 2000. This almost doubled to 17% in 2017. Among U.S. born Mexicans, an astounding 42% of men had at least graduated college in 2017 and 47% of all women had acquired a B.A. or higher degree.

Mexican households earned median incomes by 2017 of $54,000 which was slightly higher than Puerto Ricans and Dominicans but much lower than Ecuadorans and Colombians, the five largest Latino nationalities in the City. It should be noted that income was highly stratified and that there were very wealthy Mexican households. Nearly a quarter of all Mexican-headed households earned more than $100,000 annually in 2017 and they controlled about 60% of all income accruing to Mexican households. Yet, 11% of all households earned less than $20,000 and only about 2% of all income. Thus, there were both wealth and poverty within the Mexican community, much like the situation among all Latino nationalities in the City.

Mexicans had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the City among all Latino nationalities at 4% in 2017. However, a very large section of the Mexican work force, especially women, were out of the formal workforce. Some 48% of all Mexican adult women were not seeking work according to census bureau data, although many may have labored at home in addition to housework and child-rearing responsibilities.

It is unfortunate to note that Mexicans had the highest overall poverty rate among Latino New Yorkers at 29% and the highest childhood poverty rate as well at 42% in 2017. This tempers the optimistic view of the future suggested by increasing educational attainment levels.

Bilingualism was an important dynamic in the Mexican community of the City. Close to 90% of all Mexicans reported speaking Spanish at home in 2017. However, about 70% reported an ability to speak English exclusively (17%), speak English well (16%) or speak English very well (41%).

Nearly three-quarters of all Mexicans in the City had health insurance in 2017, and over two-thirds of those insured were receiving Medicaid benefits (64%) or Medicare (4%).

Basic Demography

The Mexican-origin population of New York City increased meteorically between 1990 and 2017, although there are very clear indications of a major demographic change after 2015, as there was population decline for the first time since 1990. In 1990, there were only 58,410 Mexicans in the City and they comprised 3.3% of the total Latino population.[1] By 2015, the Mexican population peaked at 376,548 and made up nearly 15% of the City's Latino communities.

The annual population growth rate between 1990 and 2015 was an extraordinary 7.7% and from the perspective of 2015 it appeared that the Mexican population was growing so rapidly there was a real possibility that by 2030 Mexicans would eclipse Dominicans and Puerto Ricans to become the City's largest Latino national subgroup.[2] However, there has clearly been an exodus from the City as by 2017, the Mexican-origin population fell by 14% from 2015 to 323,754 persons. (See table 1 for comparative population data for New York City's largest Latino nationalities).

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[1] All of the data in this report were derived from the raw data files released by the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys for 1990, 2000, 2010, 2015, and 2017 organized and released by IPUMS USA at the University of Minnesota. See Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 9.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2019. https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V9.0.
   The term 'Mexican' is used at times to refer to all people of Mexican-origin whether born in Mexico or in the United States.

[2] See Laird W. Bergad, *Demographic, Economic, and Social Transformations in the Mexican-origin Population of the New York City Metropolitan Area, 1990 – 2010*, Latino Data Project Report 49, September 2013, at http://clacls.gc.cuny.edu/files/2013/10/Mexicans-in-New-York-Metro-Area-and-Surrounding-Counties-1990-2010.pdf

In large part Mexican population expansion in the City was because of the arrival of foreign-born Mexicans either directly from Mexico or from other parts of the United States. The peak was in 2000 when nearly 12,000 foreign-born Mexicans arrived in New York City, after which there was a steady decline as indicated in Figure 1. Figure 2 indicates very clearly how foreign-born Mexican arrivals grew significantly higher during the 1990s, peaking between 2000 and 2009, and eventually falling off significantly thereafter.

Table 1
Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City, 1990 - 2017

Nationality	1990 Population	1990 % of Total Latinos	2000 Population	2000 % of Total Latinos	2010 Population	2010 % of Total Latinos	2015 Population	2015 % of Total Latinos	2017 Population	2017 % of Total Latinos	Annual Population Growth Rates 1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2017	1990-2017
Puerto Rican	860,889	49.1%	816,827	36.7%	738,978	30.8%	700,546	27.8%	715,473	28.5%	-0.5%	-1.1%	-1.1%	-0.8%
Dominican	348,951	19.9%	547,379	24.6%	605,840	25.3%	723,077	28.7%	748,264	29.8%	4.6%	1.1%	3.6%	3.0%
Mexican	58,410	3.3%	187,259	8.4%	342,699	14.3%	376,548	14.9%	323,754	12.9%	12.4%	6.9%	-0.8%	6.5%
Ecuadorian	85,155	4.9%	149,897	6.7%	210,532	8.8%	222,793	8.8%	206,227	8.2%	5.8%	3.8%	1.1%	3.9%
Colombian	91,769	5.2%	109,710	4.9%	101,784	4.2%	101,848	4.0%	117,856	4.7%	1.8%	-0.8%	0.0%	0.4%
Others	308,282	17.6%	415,835	18.7%	396,541	16.5%	398,304	15.8%	401,213	16.0%	3.0%	-0.5%	0.1%	1.0%
Total	1,753,456	100.0%	2,226,907	100.0%	2,396,374	100.0%	2,523,116	100.0%	2,512,787	100.0%	2.4%	0.8%	1.0%	1.5%

Figure 1
Yearly Arrival of Foreign-Born Mexican Population to New York City, 1971 - 2017
(Extant Foreign-Born Mexican Population in 2017)
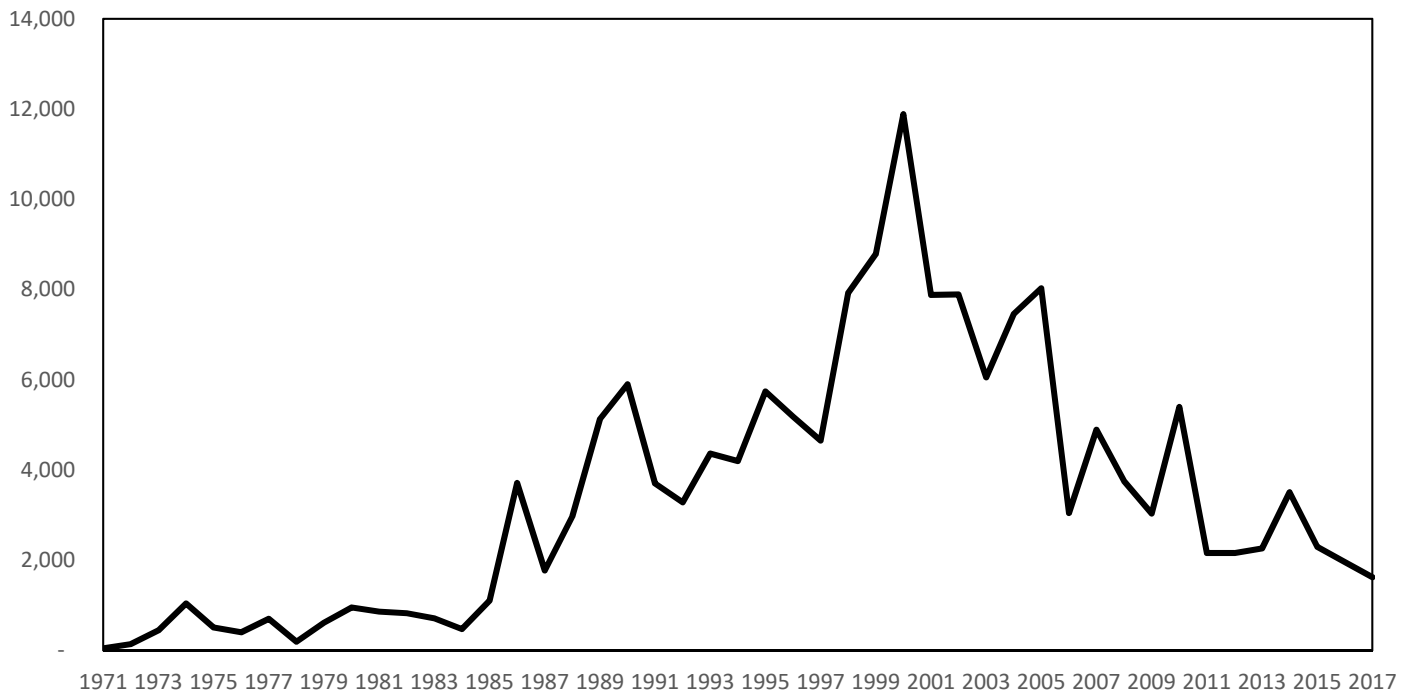
Figure 2
Average Yearly Arrivals of Foreign-Born Mexicans Living in New York City
in 2017 by Decade, 1951 - 2017
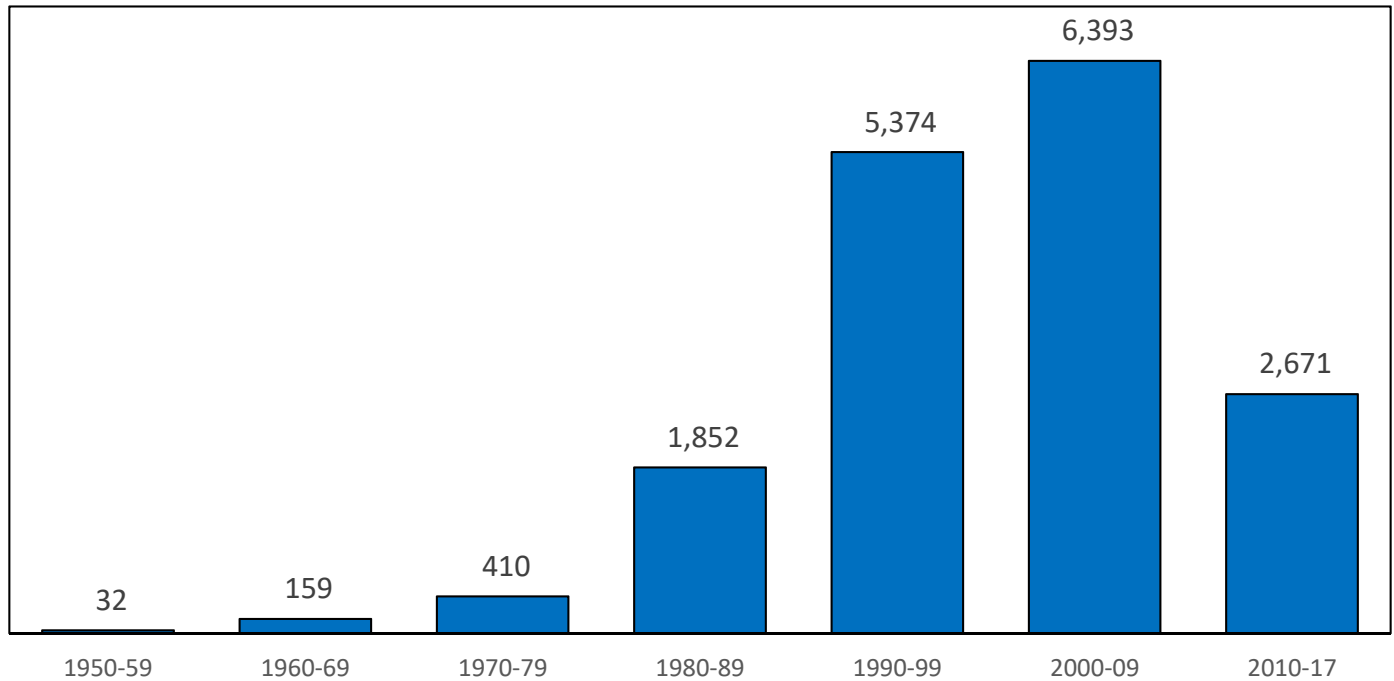
The growth of the New York City Mexican-origin population was not only linked to migration but also to reproductive patterns within the Mexican community and the rapid growth of a population of young children born in the U.S. to foreign-born Mexican mothers.

In 1990, about 36% of all Mexicans living in the City were born in the U.S. However, by 2015 and 2017 nearly half of all Mexican-origin persons living in New York City were born in the United States. (See table 2 and figure 3). The age structure of the domestic-born Mexican population of the City clearly indicates the likelihood that most of these children were born to adults who were born in Mexico. In 2017, nearly three-quarters of all Mexicans born in the U.S. were under 25 years of age. When we examine foreign-born Mexicans, nearly three-quarters were between 20 and 49 years of age. (See table 3).

It is also very clear that when the Mexican foreign-born population began to leave New York City after 2010, there is every indication that they were taking their U.S. born children with them. Between 2015 and 2017, U.S. born Mexicans in the City declined by 14.2%, only slightly greater than the 13.8% decline of foreign-born Mexicans.

Table 2
Mexican-Origin Population of New York City
by Nativity, 1990 - 2017

	Domestic Born	Foreign Born	Total
1990	19,964	35,980	55,944
2000	59,246	128,013	187,259
2010	145,331	197,368	342,699
2015	187,511	189,037	376,548
2017	160,803	162,951	323,754

	Percent Domestic Born	Percent Foreign Born	Total
1990	35.7%	64.3%	100.0%
2000	31.6%	68.4%	100.0%
2010	42.4%	57.6%	100.0%
2015	49.8%	50.2%	100.0%
2017	49.7%	50.3%	100.0%

Adult Mexicans who arrived in New York City after 1990 were predominantly male and this is indicated by examining the sex ratio of the total Mexican population, which is measured as the number of males per 100 females. In 1990 the sex ratio of all Mexicans was 177, or 177 Mexican males for every 100 females. This is indicative of the overwhelming male nature of migration to the City. However, as the process of natural reproduction unfolded, with a near parity in male and female births and the clear decline of migration to the

City after 2000, the sex ratio began to even out. By 2017, there were still more male Mexicans than females, but the sex ratio had dropped precipitously to 116. (See figure 4).

Figure 3
Mexican-Origin Population of New York City 1990 - 2017 by Nativity
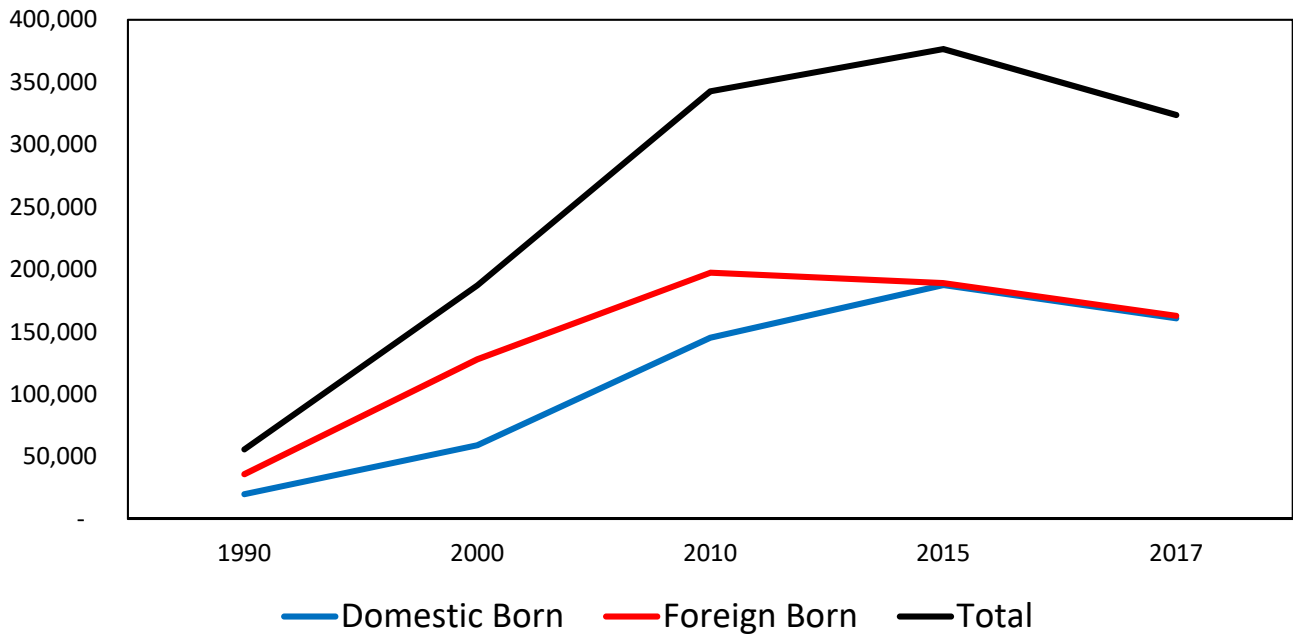
Figure 4
Sex Ratio of New York City Mexican-Origin Population, 1990 - 2017
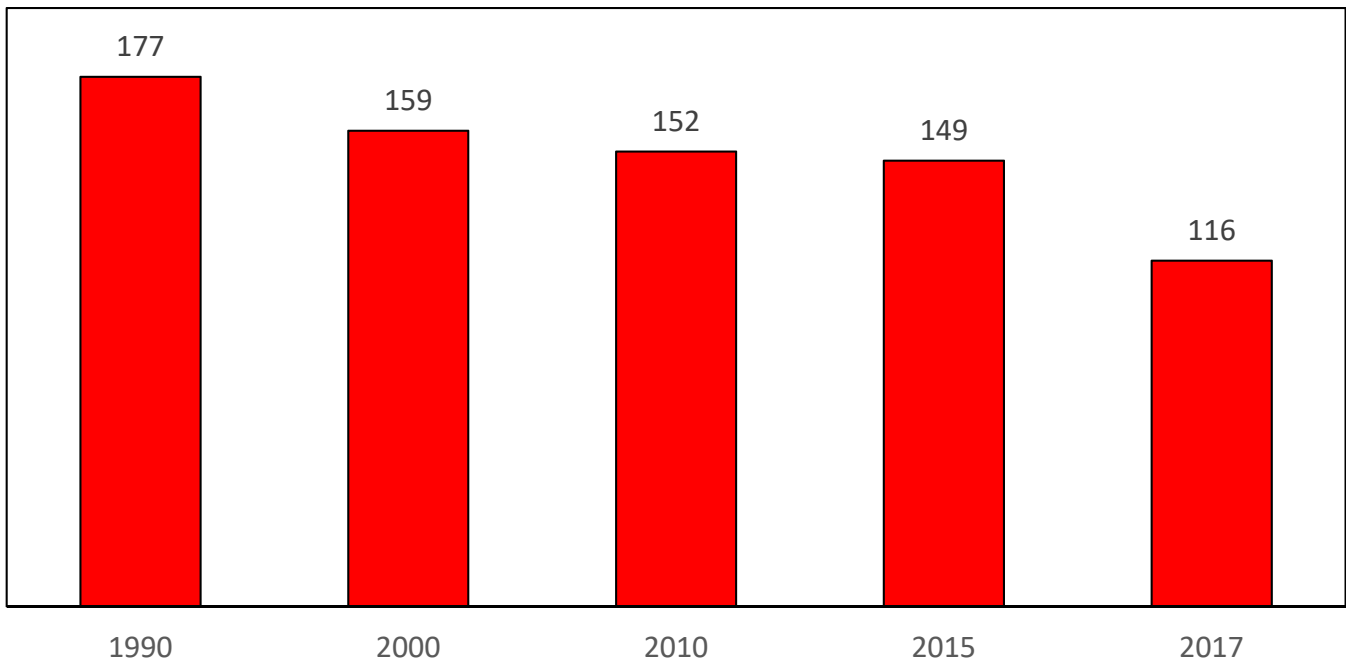
Table 3
Percentage of New York City
Mexican-Origin Population
by Age Category and Nativity
2017

Age Category	Domestic Born	Foreign Born	Total Population
0-4	16.2%	0.5%	8.3%
5-9	17.8%	0.9%	9.3%
10-14	18.2%	1.5%	9.8%
15-19	11.1%	1.9%	6.4%
20-24	10.9%	4.5%	7.7%
25-29	9.3%	8.8%	9.0%
30-34	5.5%	16.4%	11.0%
35-39	2.7%	22.1%	12.5%
40-44	2.3%	14.3%	8.4%
45-49	2.2%	12.0%	7.2%
50-54	0.8%	6.5%	3.7%
55-59	0.5%	4.4%	2.5%
60-64	1.0%	2.7%	1.9%
65-69	0.4%	1.2%	0.8%
70-74	0.4%	1.5%	0.9%
75-79	0.1%	0.4%	0.2%
80-84	0.6%	0.2%	0.4%
85-89	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Yet from comparative perspectives, even in 2017 after the steady decline in the sex ratio disparity, the Mexican community of New York City had the highest component of males among Latinos. Ecuadorans were close with a sex ratio of 109 men for every 100 women. However, among Dominicans — the largest Latino national sub-group in the City—there were significantly more women than men with a sex ratio of 85 (or 100 Dominican women for every 85 men); and the same was true among Puerto Ricans (93) and Colombians (77). This reflected a fundamental difference in the sex distribution of Mexican, and to a lesser extent Ecuadoran, migrants who were predominantly male compared with the predominant female migration of Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Colombians. (See figure 5).

Figure 5
Sex Ratio of New York City's Largest Latino Nationalities, 2017
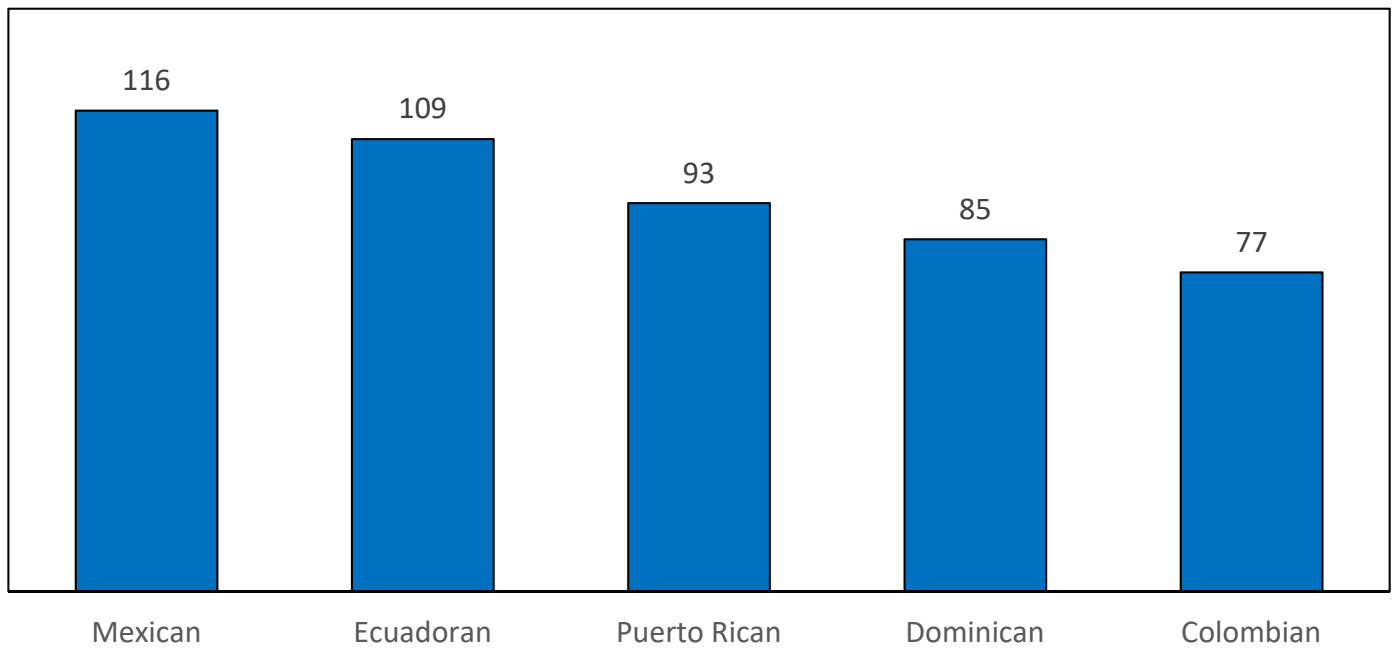
Settlement Patterns

Mexicans in New York settled and lived in the same boroughs between 1990 and 2017 with very little long-term change. Brooklyn was home to 34.4% of the Mexican community in 1990 and 34% in 2017. There was some increase in the relative overall Mexican population which lived in the Bronx, from 21% to 24% between 1990 and 2017, and it is conspicuous that Queens remained completely stable with 23% of all Mexicans living there in 1990 and 2017. About 79% of all Mexican-origin people lived in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens in 1990 and this increased slightly to 82% in 2017. (See table 4).

In Brooklyn, Mexicans comprised nearly 22% of the total Latino population in 2017, second in size to Puerto Ricans who were 32% of all Latinos in the borough. Dominicans made up 17% of all Brooklyn Latinos in 2017. Although Staten Island had a relatively small Mexican-origin population compared with the other New York City boroughs in 2017, it housed 21% of the total Latino population. (See figure 6).

Table 4
Percentage of Total Mexican-Origin Population by New York City
Borough, 1990 - 2017

|	1990	2000	2010	2015	2017
Brooklyn	34.4%	32.5%	29.6%	30.3%	34.0%
Bronx	20.9%	19.0%	25.8%	22.3%	24.3%
Queens	23.2%	27.9%	27.2%	30.6%	23.4%
Manhattan	18.4%	16.6%	12.8%	12.2%	12.5%
Staten Island	3.1%	4.1%	4.7%	4.6%	5.8%

Figure 6
Percentage of Total Latino Population of Mexican Origin by
New York City Borough, 2017
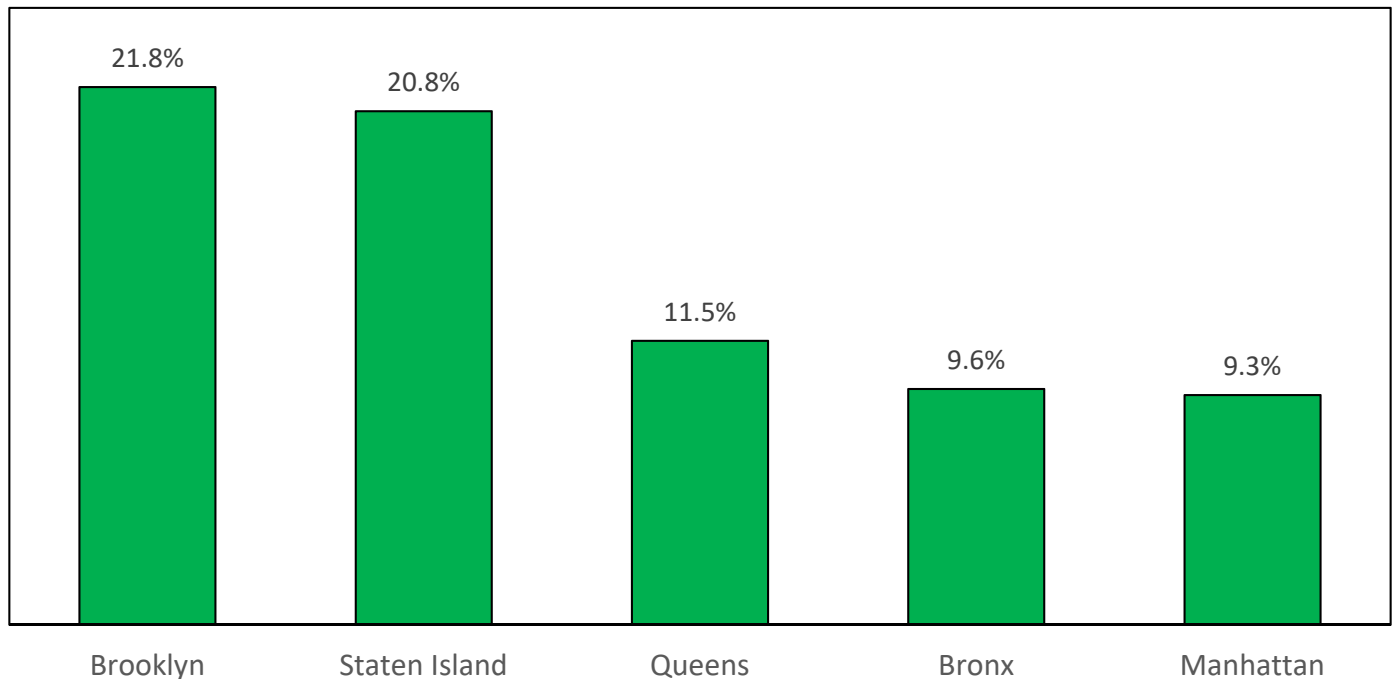
Educational Attainment

The socioeconomic well-being of nearly all race/ethnic groups in the City is directly correlated to educational attainment levels and how those levels change over time. The most important indicator is the percentage of the adult population which has graduated college with a B.A. degree or who has attained a higher degree. In general Latinos have had the lowest college graduation rate among the major New York City race/ethnic groups, although there was a significant increase from 1990 when only 9% had achieved a B.A. or higher to 18% in 2017. (See figure 7).

Figure 7
Percentage of Population 25 Years or Older who had Achieved a B.A. Degree or
Higher by Race/Ethnicity, New York City 1990 - 2017
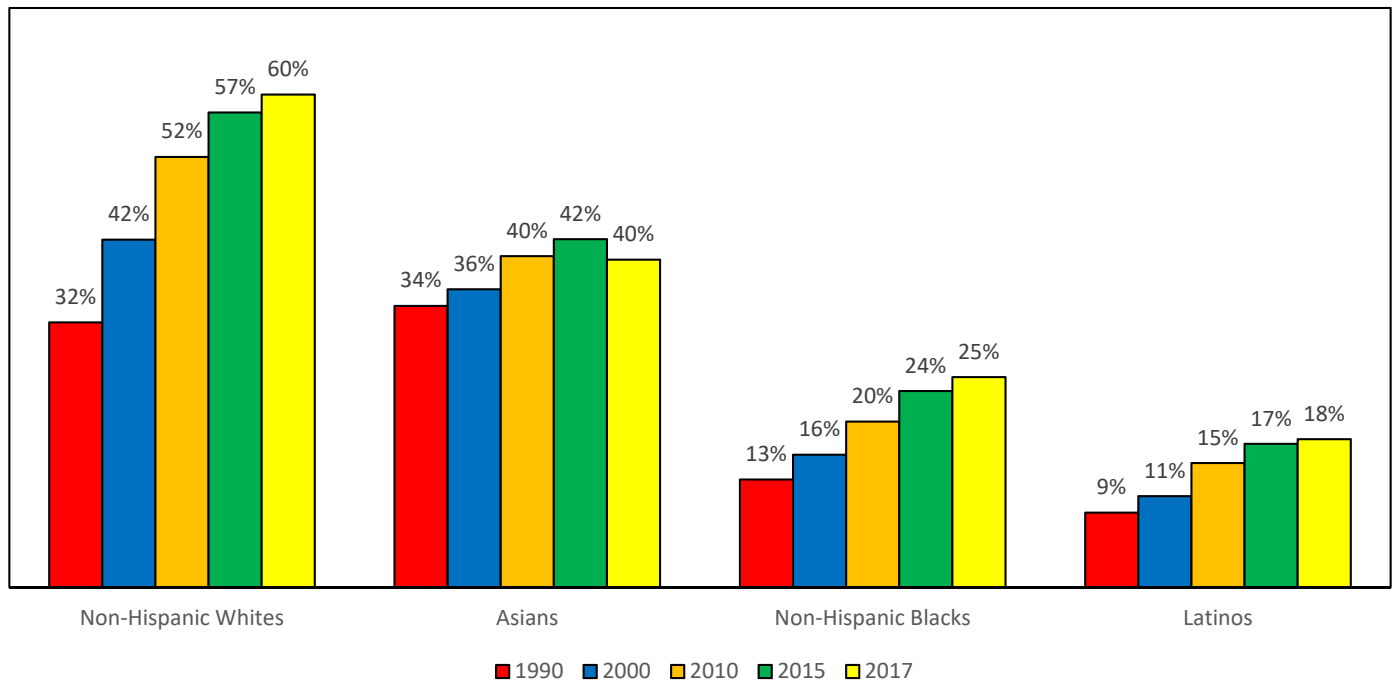
College graduates among New York City's Mexican-origin population decreased between 1990 and 2000 from 14% to 9% because of the increase in the arrival of foreign-born Mexicans to the City who had relatively low levels of educational attainment. However, after 2000, there was a steady increase in Mexican adults who had achieved a B.A. or higher, to 17% in 2017. (See figure 8).

Figure 8
Percentage of Mexican-Origin Population 25 Years or Older who had Achieved
a B.A. Degree or Higher, New York City 1990 - 2017
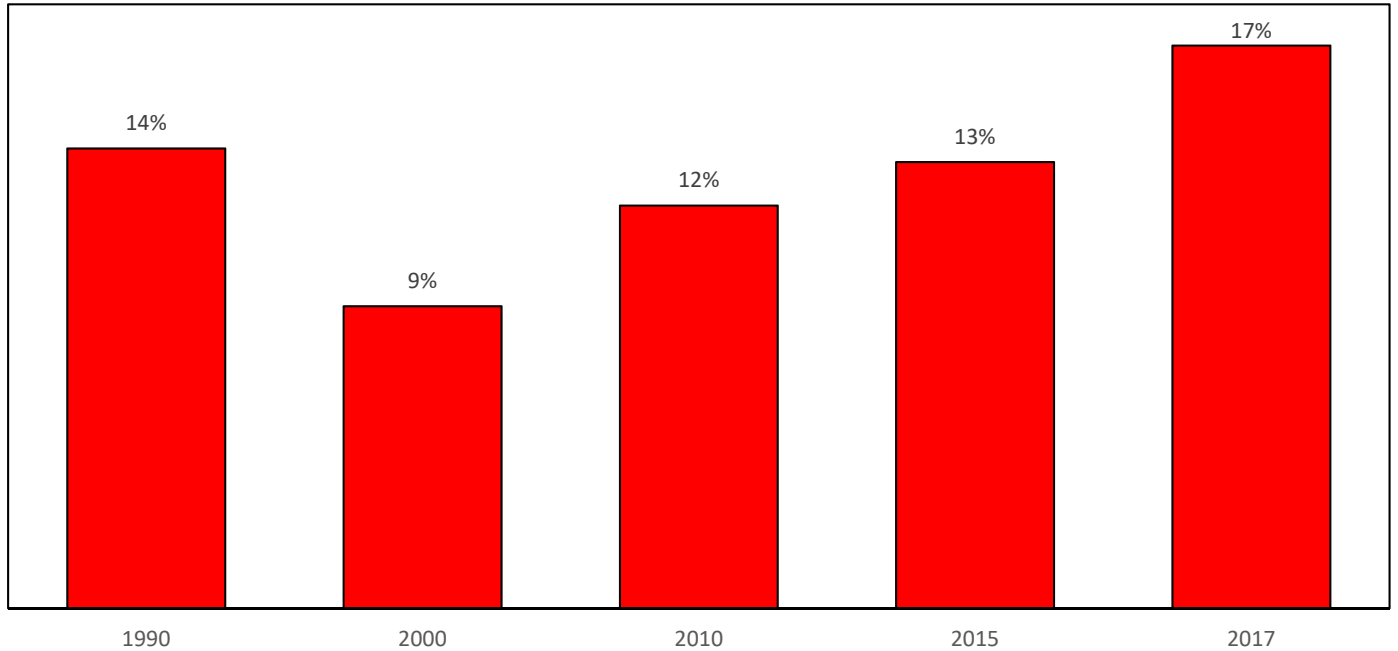
Despite a fairly high percentage of Mexican adults who were foreign-born, a greater share of the Mexican population graduated college in 2017 than among Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Ecuadorians, although Colombians had the highest rates of college graduation among the largest Latino nationalities in the City. (See figure 9).

However, these general data mask a major division in educational attainment levels when sex and nativity are considered. Among domestic-born Mexican-origin males, an astounding 42% had graduated college compared with 17% of foreign-born Mexican males. And among domestic-born females, 47% had attained a B.A. or higher compared with 9% of foreign-born females. These data are of extraordinary importance for future generations of Mexicans in the City. It is clear that education is a major priority among the Mexican population of the City. The high rates of college graduation and attendance (shown in table 5 below) suggests the possibilities of processes of upward social mobility, indicated generally with college graduation.

Still, the high levels of non-high school graduation among foreign-born Mexican males in 2017 (47%) and females (56%) is to be noted in comparison with the low levels of non-high school completion among the domestic born of both sexes.

Figure 9
Percentage of Latino Population 25 Years or Older who had Achieved a B.A.
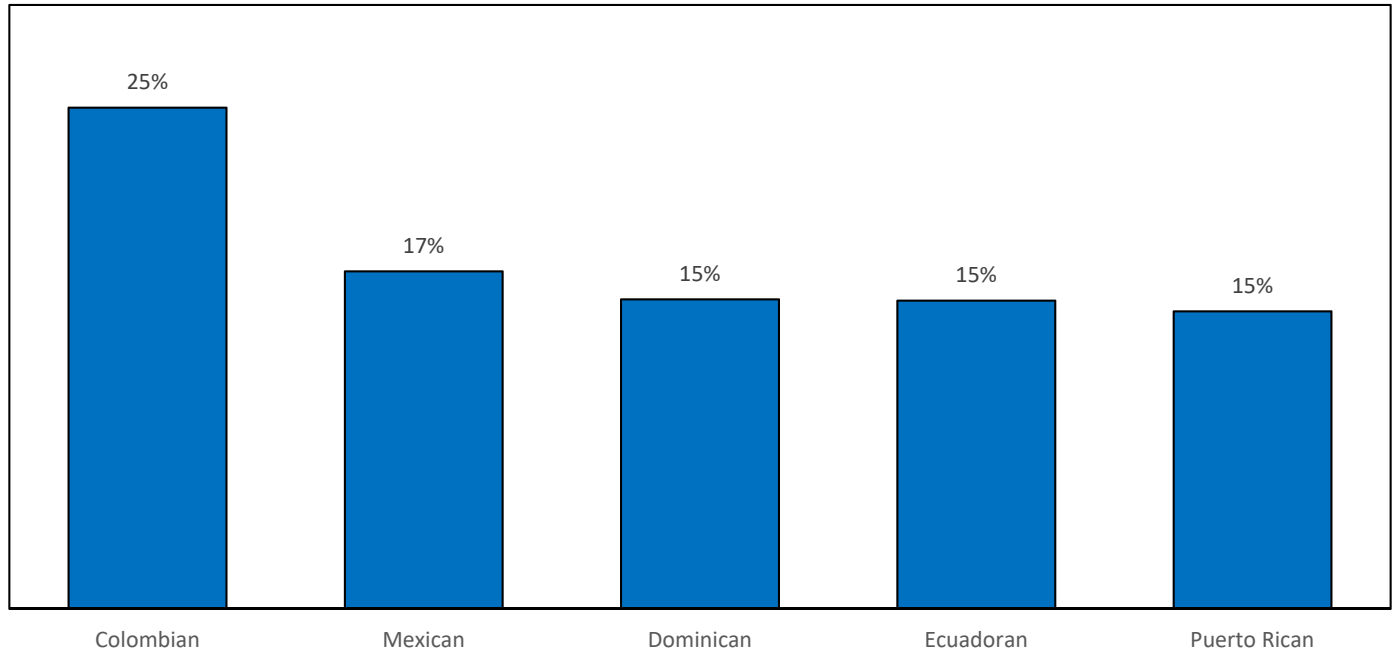Degree or Higher for Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City, 2017

Table 5
Educational Attainment Levels for Mexican-origin Population in New York City, 2017
by Sex and Nativity

Education Attainment Level	Domestic-Born Males	Foreign-Born Males	Domestic-Born Females	Foreign-Born Females
Did Not Graduate High School	11.1%	46.7%	13.2%	55.7%
High School Graduate	22.9%	36.7%	12.4%	28.1%
Some College No Degree	15.3%	5.0%	13.4%	4.8%
Associates Degree	8.8%	2.1%	14.4%	2.9%
BA or Higher	41.8%	9.6%	46.6%	8.5%
Some College, AA, or B.A. degree or higher	**65.9%**	**16.6%**	**74.4%**	**16.2%**
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Household Income

In 2017, Latinos had the lowest median household incomes at $57,000 among all of the major race/ethnic groups in New York City as indicated in figure 10.

Figure 10
Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity
New York City, 2017 (in 2017 dollars)
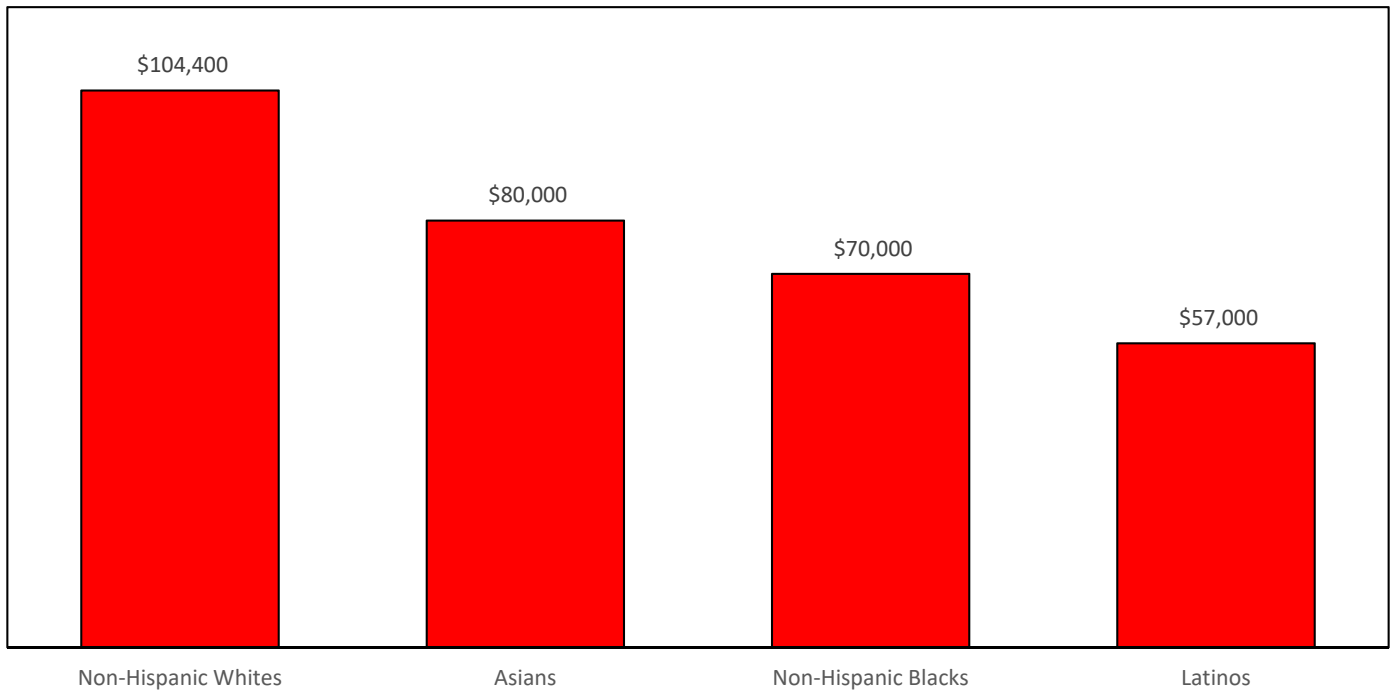
Although Ecuadorans and Colombians had higher median household incomes in 2017, Mexican-origin households earned slightly more than Puerto Rican and Dominican households, as indicated in figure 11.

Figure 11
Median Household Income among Largest Latino Nationalities
New York City, 2017 (in 2017 dollars)
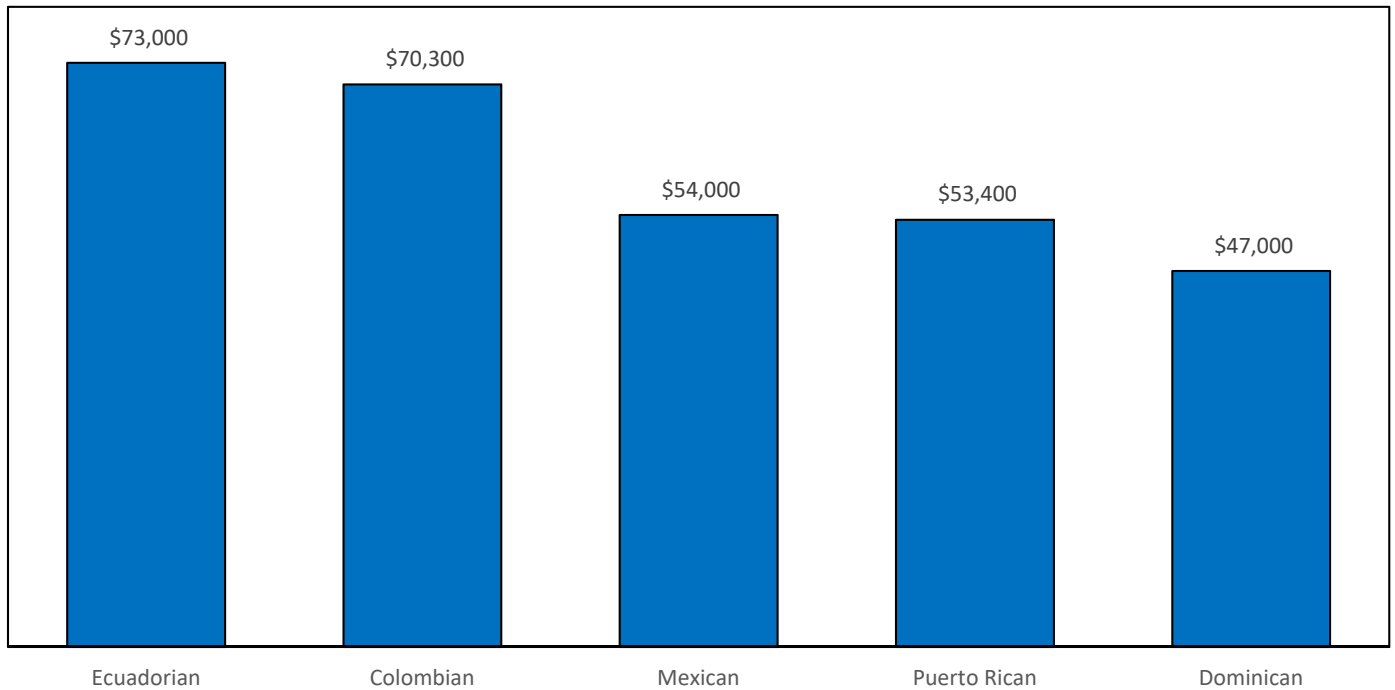
After declining steadily between 1990 and 2015, there was a sharp rise in median household income among Mexican households after 2015 as indicated in figure 12. The precise reasons for this are not entirely clear. However, it may be because of the exodus from New York of lower-earning Mexican families as indicated above in the section on demography.

Figure 12
Median Household Income among Mexican-Origin Population, New York City
1990 - 2017 (in inflation adjusted 2017 dollars)
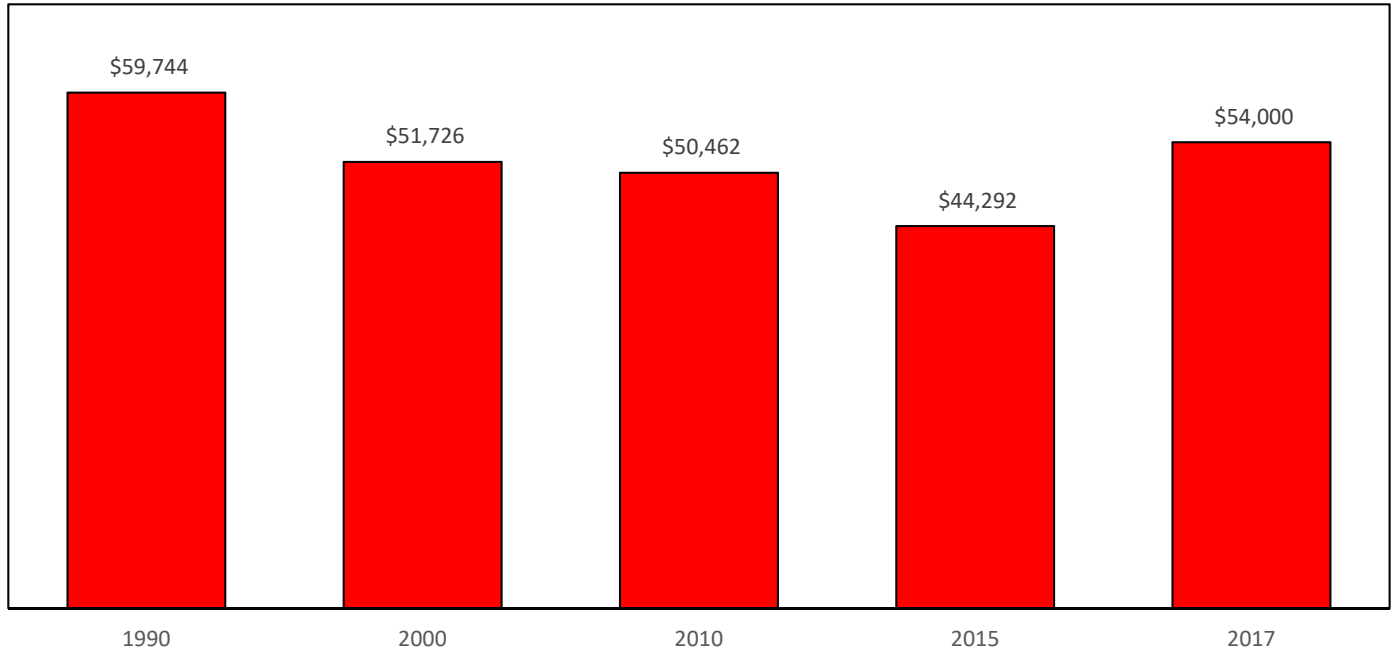
Households headed by foreign-born Mexican males had the highest median incomes and this is likely because most worked full-time jobs, and probably even added income by working part-time jobs in addition to their principal sources of income. Female headed households earned significantly less, although there was little difference between Domestic and foreign-born headed households for women. (See figure 13).

Figure 13
Median Household Income among Mexican Households by Head of Household, Sex,
and Nativity, New York City, 2017 (in 2017 dollars)
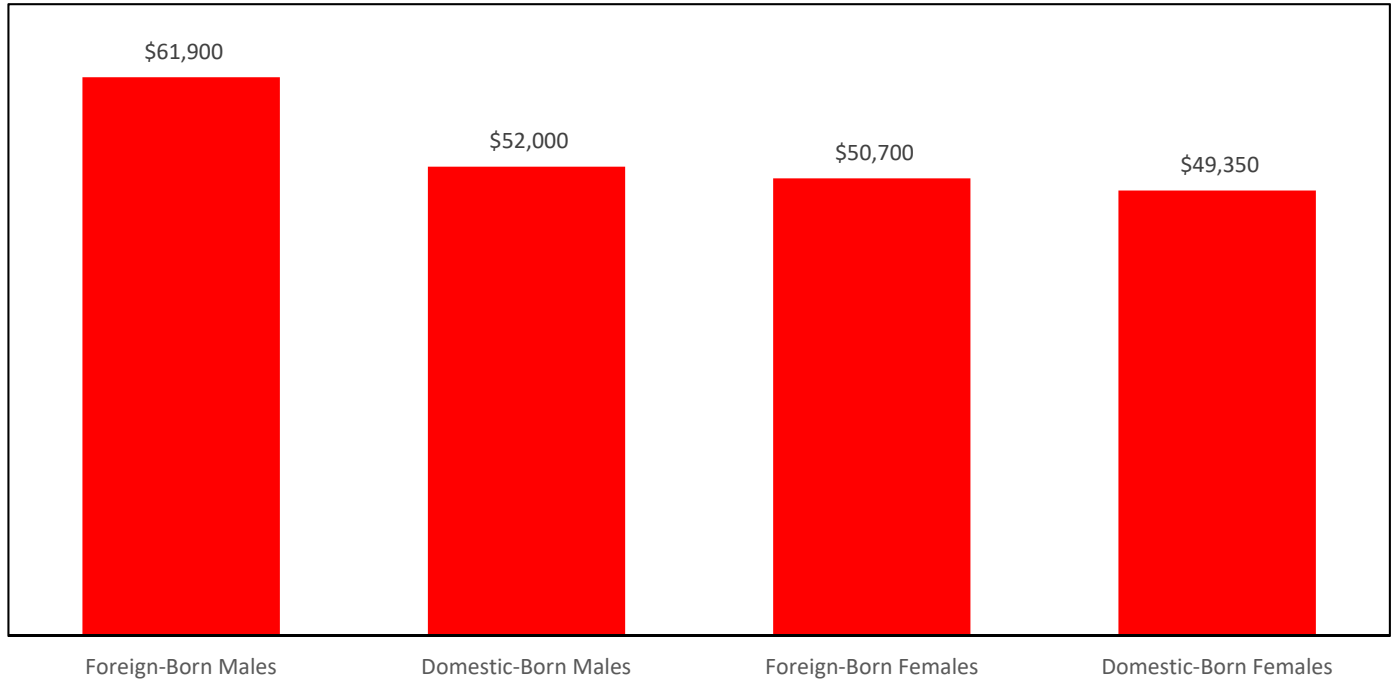
When the structure of household income is examined among the New York City Mexican community, it is clear that there was the same kind of extreme concentration of wealth found among the population at large within all race/ethnic groups.[3] Despite stereotypical, and erroneous, images of enduring poverty among Mexicans in New York City, in 2017 nearly 25% of all Mexican-origin households earned $100,000 or more per year and they controlled 60% of all household income among Mexican households.[4] At the other, lower, end of the income-earning hierarchy, 37% of Mexican households earned under $40,000 per year, but they only controlled 11% of total household income among all Mexican households. (See table 6 for complete data).

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[3] See Laird W. Bergad, "The Latino Population of New York City, 1990 – 2015" https://clacls.gc.cuny.edu/files/2017/03/Latino-Data-Project-Report-65.-The-Latino-Population-of-New-York-City-1990-2015.-December-2016.pdf

[4] See Lazar Treschan and Apurva Mehrotra "Young Mexician-Americans in New York City: Working More, Learning and Earning Less" March 2013 https://www.cssny.org/publications/entry/young-mexican-americans-in-new-york-city This sensationalist article claims erroneously that Mexicans are not enrolled in schools at rates of other groups in the City. The data is completely faulty and is typical of poor social science research methodologies which arrive at distorted and irresponsible conclusions.

Table 6
Structure of Household Income Among Mexican
Households in New York City, 2017

Income in 2017 dollars	% of all Households	% of Total Income
Less than 10,000	3.6%	0.3%
10,000-19,999	7.9%	1.4%
20,000-29,999	12.0%	3.5%
30,000-39,999	13.8%	5.7%
40,000-49,999	9.2%	4.8%
50,000-74,999	16.8%	12.0%
75,000-99,999	12.0%	12.2%
100,000 - 199,999	16.3%	26.6%
200,000 +	8.4%	33.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Employment and Unemployment

Mexican-origin adults in New York City have had falling unemployment rates since 1990 and had an extraordinarily low unemployment rate at 4% in 2017, as indicated in figure 14. However, in order to better understand how the Mexican community fares in the City's labor market, the out-of-the-workforce rate by sex must be examined alongside unemployment data. This is because unemployment data only measure people who are actively seeking work and can be misleading if a large portion of any demographic simply is not in the labor market.

Within the Mexican-origin population there was an extraordinary differentiation in this rate by sex. A very large portion of women were not seeking work and this was related to two possible factors. The first is that women assumed the traditional house-keeping and child-raising roles (unpaid labor) that has historically been the experience of women in Latin American societies even in the epoch of rapid urbanization throughout the region from the 1980s on. The second is that Mexican-origin women were working from home or even outside of the household in the 'informal' labor market. Unfortunately, there are no data which may document either of these possibilities. (See figure 15).

Figure 14
Unemployment Rates Among Mexicans in New York City, 1990 - 2017
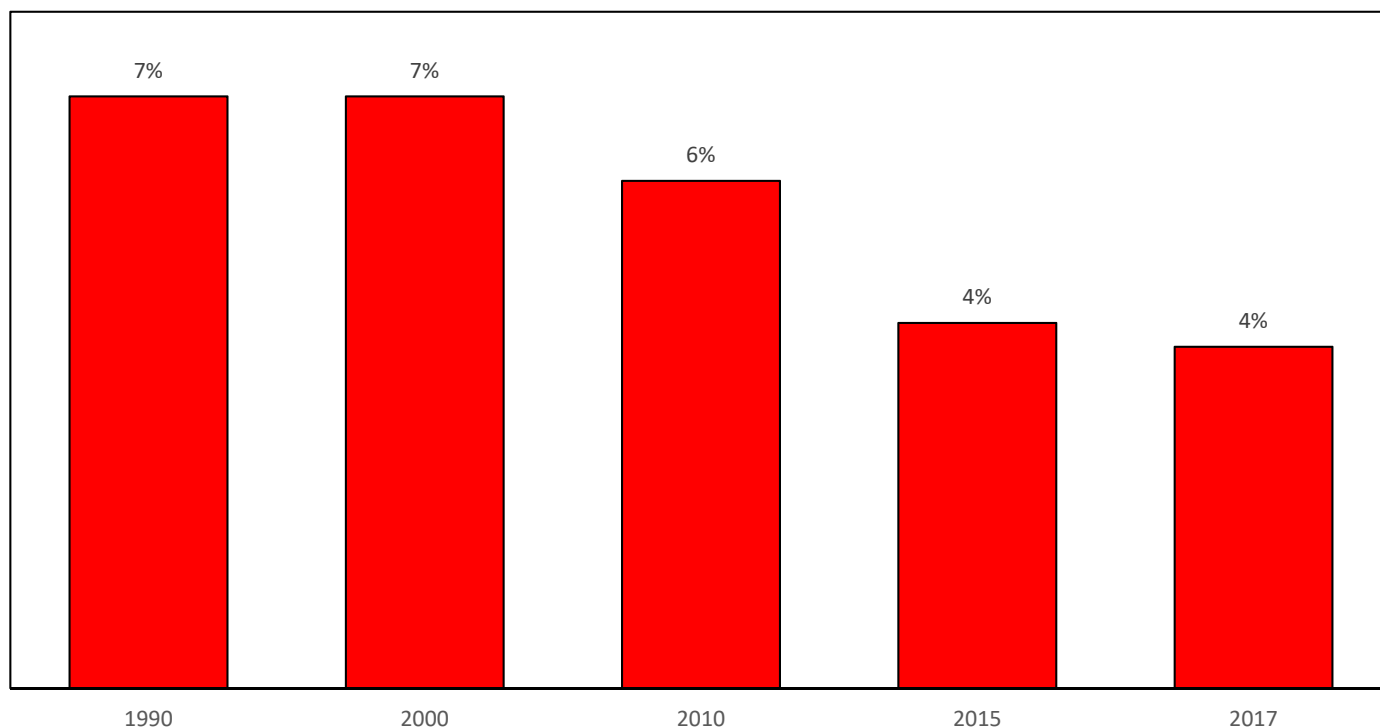
In 2017, Mexican male adults had the lowest out-of-the-workforce rates among the five largest Latino national subgroups in the City. Although Puerto Rican women had marginally higher out-of-the workforce rates at 48% than Mexican women (47%), the rate among Puerto Rican women was significantly higher than among Ecuadoran, Dominican, and Colombian women. (See figure 16).

Figure 15
Out of the Workforce Rates Among Mexicans in New York City by Sex, 1990 - 2017
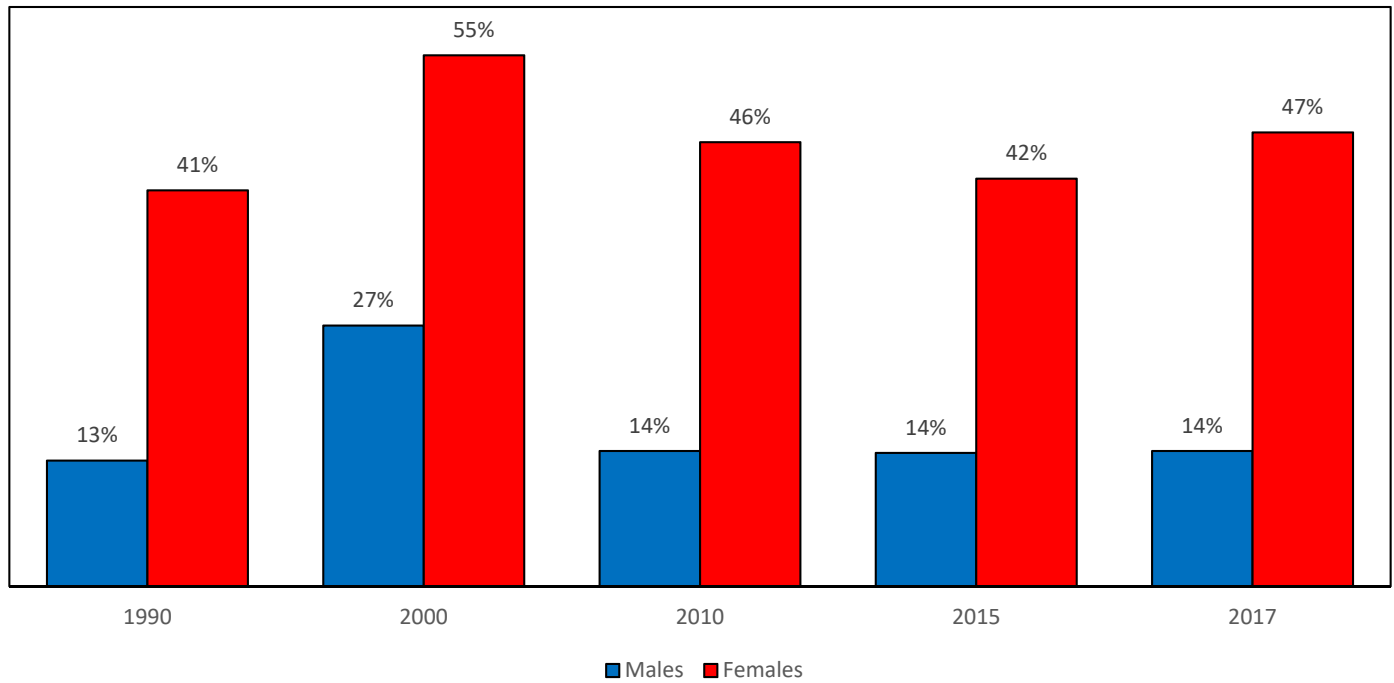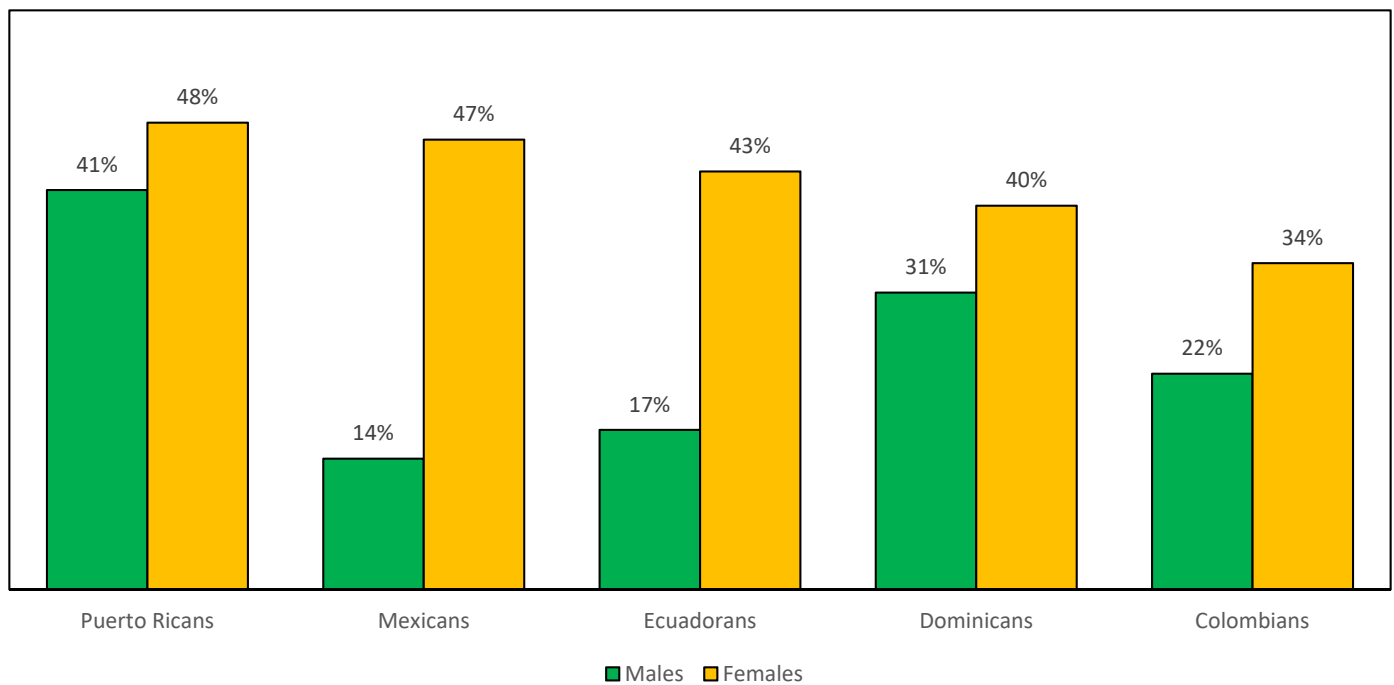

Males   Females

Figure 16
Out of the Workforce Rates Among Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City by Sex, 2017

Males   Females

Poverty

Despite the fact the Mexicans in general, and males specifically, had very low unemployment rates, it is clear that they labored in lower paying jobs and occupations. This observation must be made with caution because of the social stratification indicated by the data on household income among Mexican New Yorkers. There were, as emphasized previously, very wealthy sectors of the New York City Mexican-origin community. However, Mexicans had the distinction of having the highest rates of general poverty and childhood poverty among the five largest Latino nationalities in the City as indicated in figure 17.[5]

Figure 17
Poverty Rates Among the Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York City by
Sex, 2017

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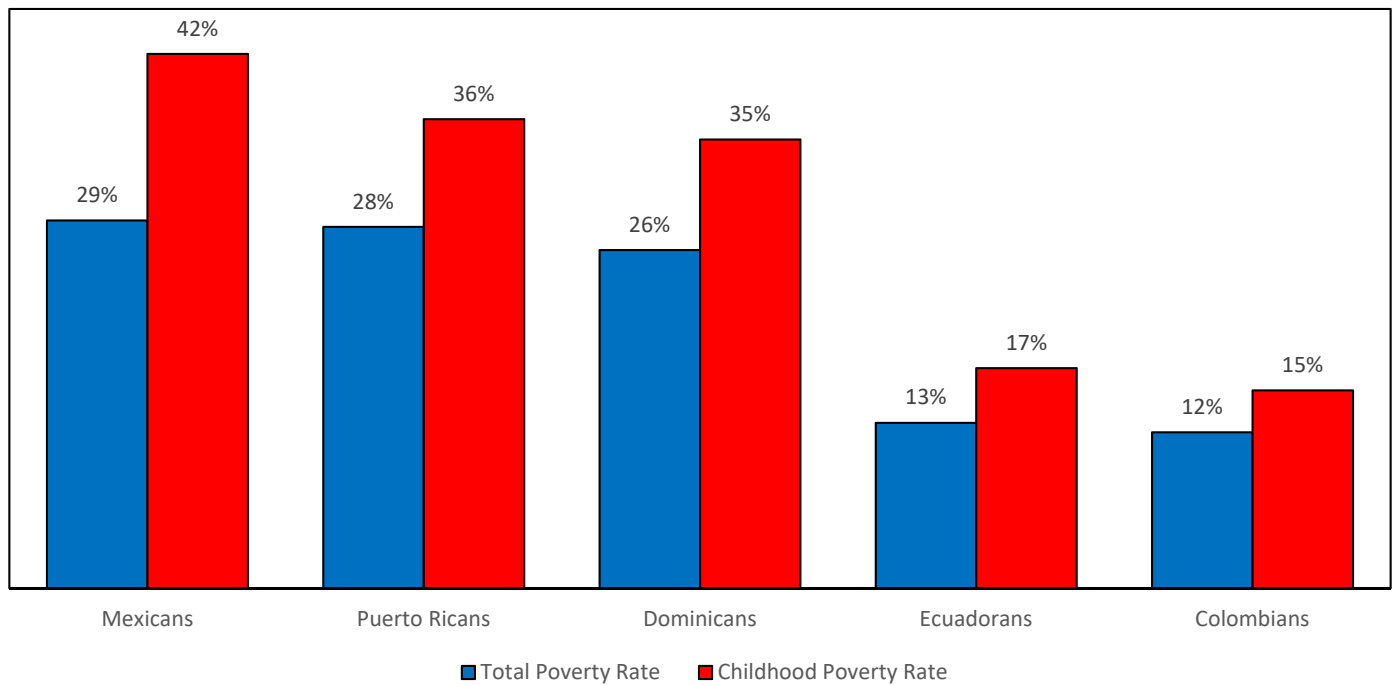
[5] Childhood poverty is for children between 1 and 14 years of age.

Language

Given the fact that about half of all New York Mexicans were foreign-born, the English language abilities among the entire Mexican community are quite impressive. Nearly 70% of the Mexican-origin population reported an ability to speak English well, speak English very well, or only speak English in 2017, as indicated in figure 18. Only 9% reported no ability to speak English, although another 21% considered that they did not speak English very well.

Figure 18
English Language Abilities Among the Mexican-Origin Population of New York City, 2017
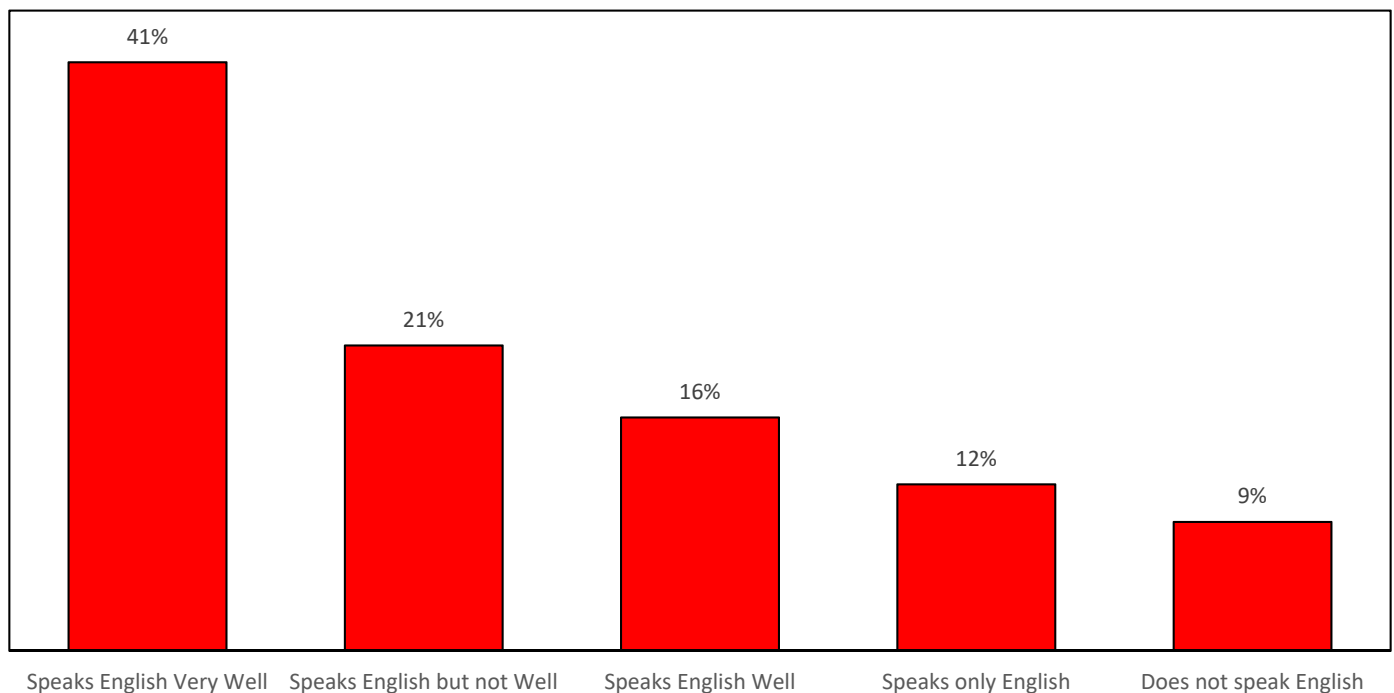

It is also evident that bilingualism is an integral part of the Mexican community. This is because 87% of all Mexicans reported that they spoke Spanish at home in 2017.

Health Insurance

In 2017, 73% of all Mexicans in New York City reported having some form of health insurance. About 64% of those insured were through Medicaid and another 4% through Medicare. The remaining 32% were insured through their employers or purchased some kind of private insurance. There are no data on the number of Mexicans in the City who purchased health insurance through "Obamacare." (See figure 19).

Figure 19
Health Insurance Data among the Mexican-Origin Population of New York City,
2017
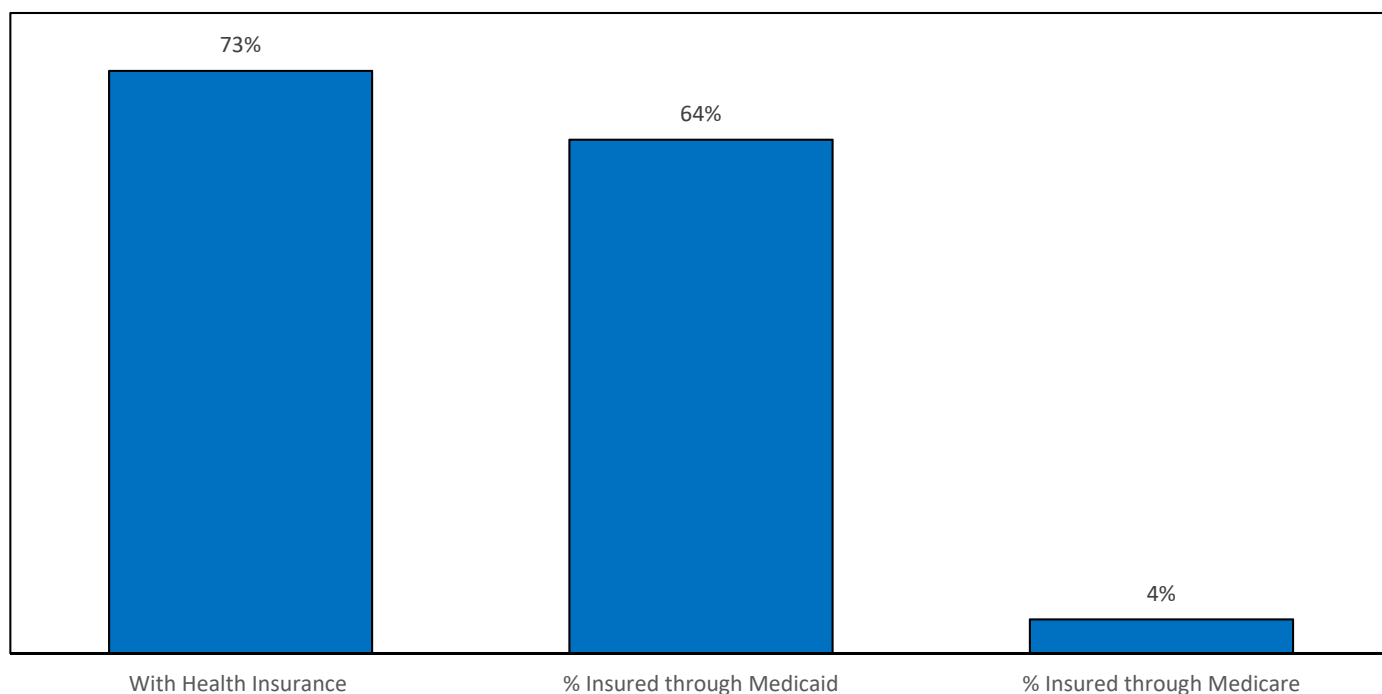
Citizenship

With the gradual decline in the migration of foreign-born Mexicans in the City, and the increase in the domestic-born Mexican population, citizenship rates rose from 47% in 1990 to 57% of all Mexicans who were citizens in 2017. In that year 51% were citizens by birth and 6% were naturalized. (See figure 20).

Figure 20
Citizenship Rates for Mexican-Origin Population of New York City, 1990 - 2017
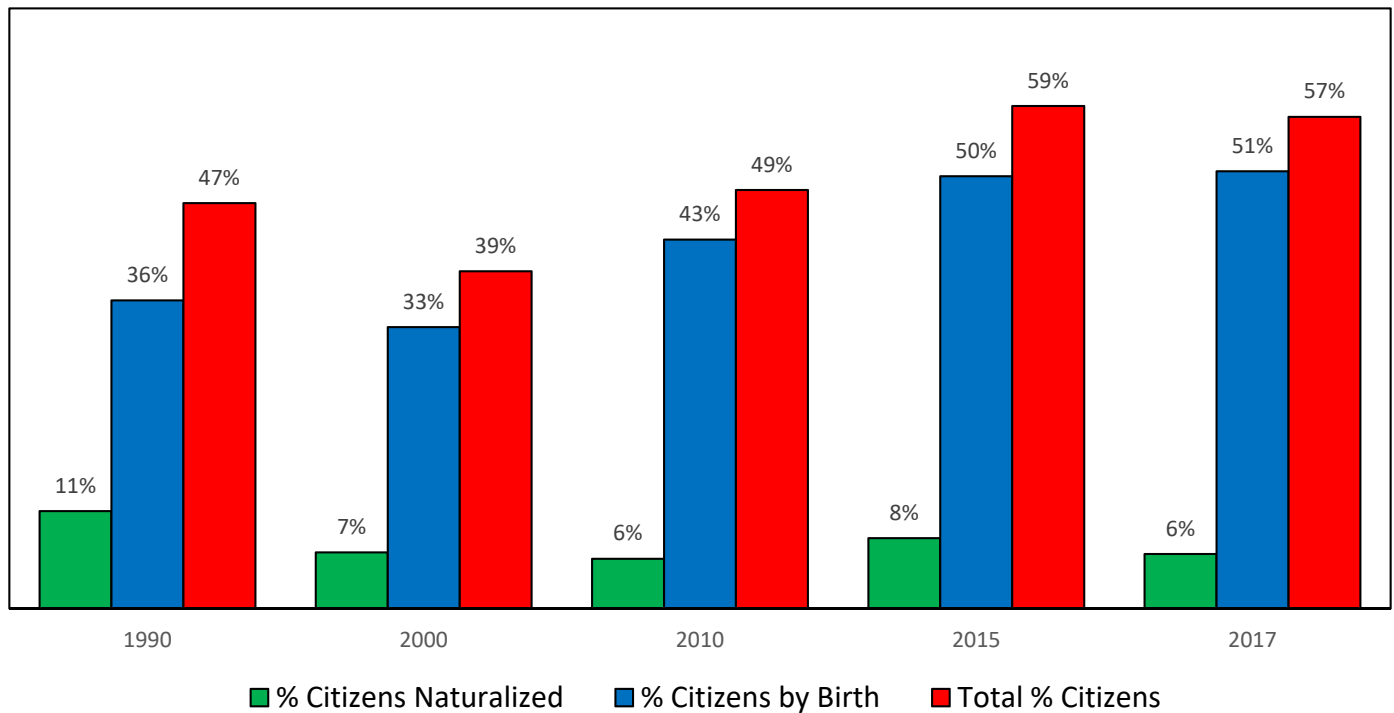
Conclusion

The statistical data presented in this report suggest that after a period of rapid population growth between 1990 and 2015, it is likely that the Mexican population of the City will continue to fall numerically in the near future. Migration to the City has virtually stopped and although there is a fairly high rate of population growth among Mexican New Yorkers, families seem to be leaving the City with foreign-born adults taking their U.S. born children with them. Still, because of the virtual end of migration to the City, in the future a large share of the Mexican-origin population will be U.S. citizens since they will be born in the U.S. About half of all Mexican New Yorkers were domestic born in 2017 and this percentage will grow in the future.

Mexican New Yorkers have increased their college graduation rates to 17% in 2017 and this is an indicator that at least a sector of their community has a bright future. Nearly half of adult Mexican New Yorkers have graduated college.

These data are tempered by the fact that Mexicans had the highest poverty rate at 29% among the five largest Latino nationalities in the City and a horrific 42% childhood poverty rate.

The Mexican community in New York was by no means homogenous and this is highlighted by the highly stratified household income structure. About one-quarter of all Mexican households earned over $100,000 yearly in 2017. However, a large number of households earned under $40,000 annually. This is a community with a very clear social and class structure highlighted by the income distribution profile.

The bilingualism of Mexicans is highlighted by the fact that nearly 70% of the population reported fairly good English language skills. At the same time nearly 90% spoke Spanish at home.

The future of the Mexican community in the City is difficult to project. It is unknown whether migration to the City will resume but this is unlikely given the decline of overall Mexican migration to the U.S. in general. Additionally, the very high cost of living and uncertain labor market make it doubtful that migrants will begin to arrive at the levels which were extant prior to 2010. This means that in the future, the majority of New York City's Mexican community will be born in the U.S. as is the case of older Latino migrant groups such as Puerto Ricans.

Appendix: The Mexican Population of the United States, 1990 – 2017

The Mexican-origin population of the U.S. increased from about 13,500,000 people in 1990 to nearly 37,000,000 in 2017. Although the arrival of Mexicans from Mexico was a major factor in this population increase between 1990 and 2010, net migration virtually ceased thereafter, in all likelihood, because of the 2008-2009 economic crisis in the U.S. The number of foreign-born Mexicans fell from a little over 12.2 million in 2010 to 11.7 million in 2017.

Over the same period the U.S. born population increased from 9.1 million in 1990 to 25.2 million in 2017. By 2017, 68% of all Mexicans living in the U.S. were domestic born. (See figure 21).

Figure 21
Mexican-Origin Population of the United States, 1990 - 2017
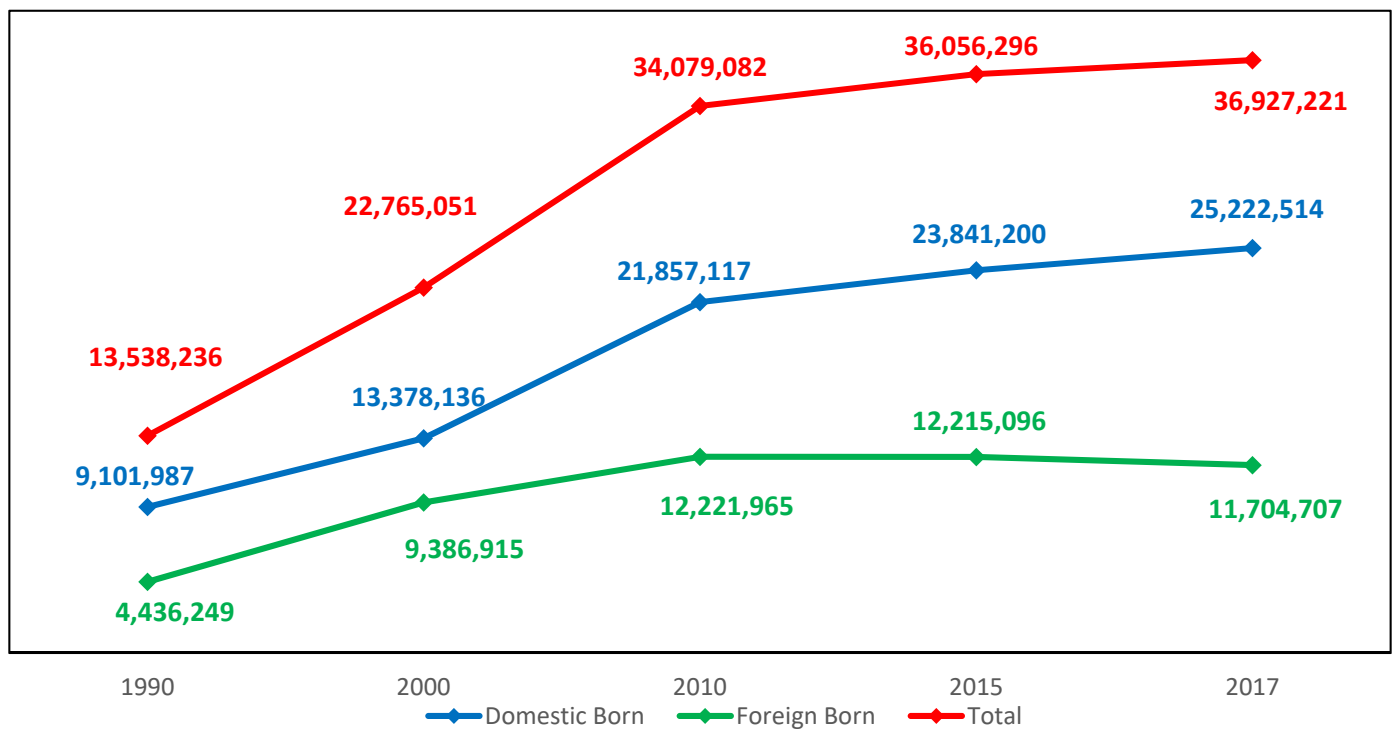
Mexicans constituted over 60% of all Latinos living in the U.S. in all years between 1990 and 2017, when they were 63% of the total Hispanic population. (See figure 22).

Figure 22
Mexican-Origin Population of the United States as Percentage of Total Latino
Population, 1990 - 2017
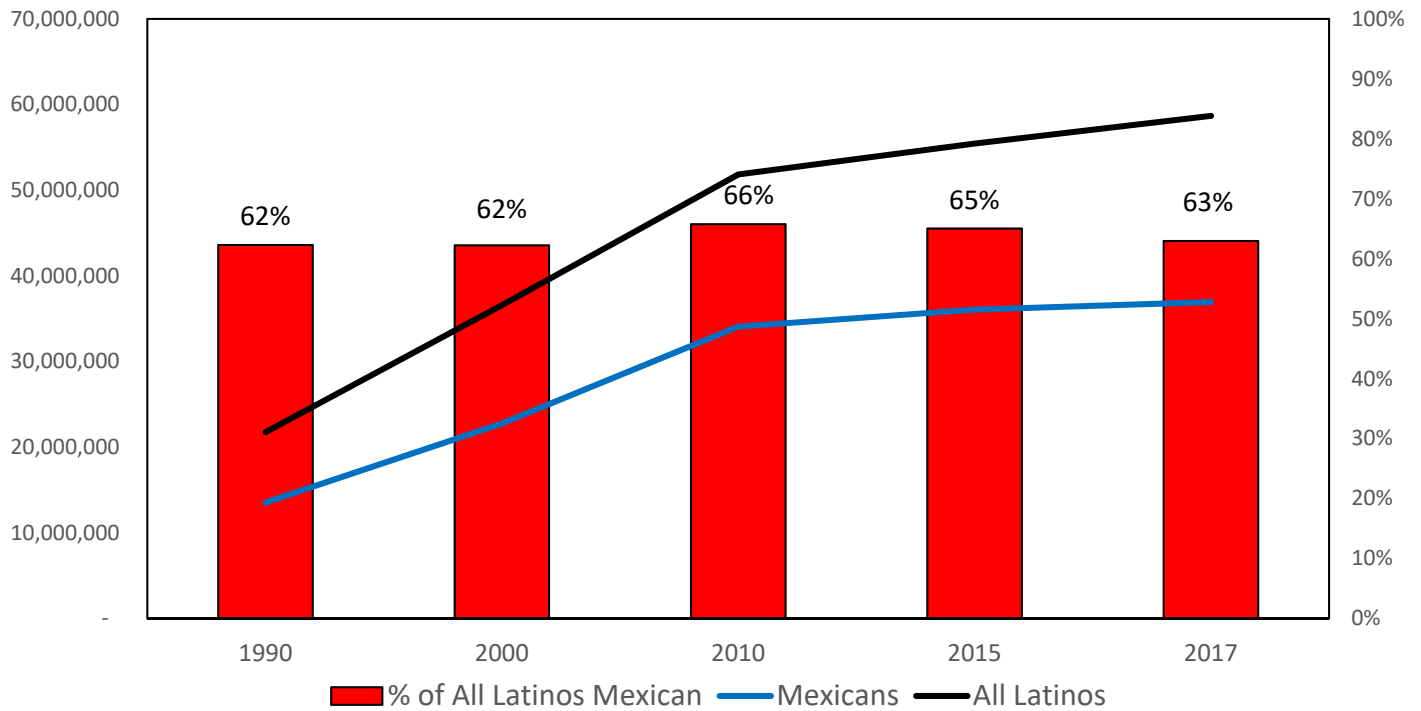
Over three-quarters of all Mexicans living in the U.S. between 1990 and 2017 were citizens, and by 2017 nearly 70% were citizens because of birth in the U.S. (See figure 23).

Over a third of all Mexicans lived in California in 2017 and another 26% in Texas. All other states had relatively smaller percentages of the total Mexican population with Arizona at 5%, Illinois also at 5%, and Colorado at 2% in 2017. About 74% of all Mexicans living in the U.S. resided in these five states. (See figure 24).

In Texas and California, Mexicans comprised over 30% of total state populations in 2017 and 87% and 83% of all Latinos respectively. (See figures 25 and 26 for complete data for the five largest states with Mexican populations.)

Figure 23
Citizenship Rates of Mexican-Origin Population of the United States, 1990 - 2017
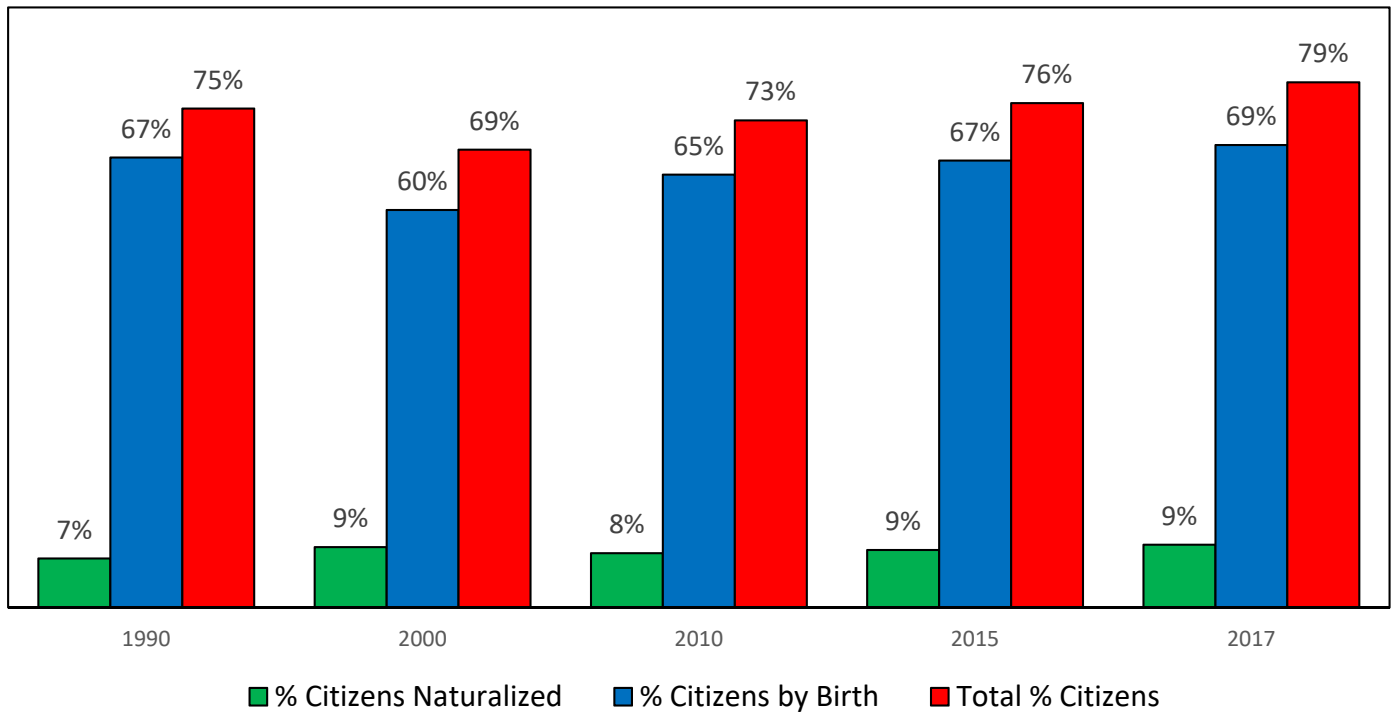

- % Citizens Naturalized
- % Citizens by Birth
- Total % Citizens

Figure 24
States with the Largest Mexican Populations in the United States, 1990 - 2017

- California
- Texas
- Arizona
- Illinois
- Colorado
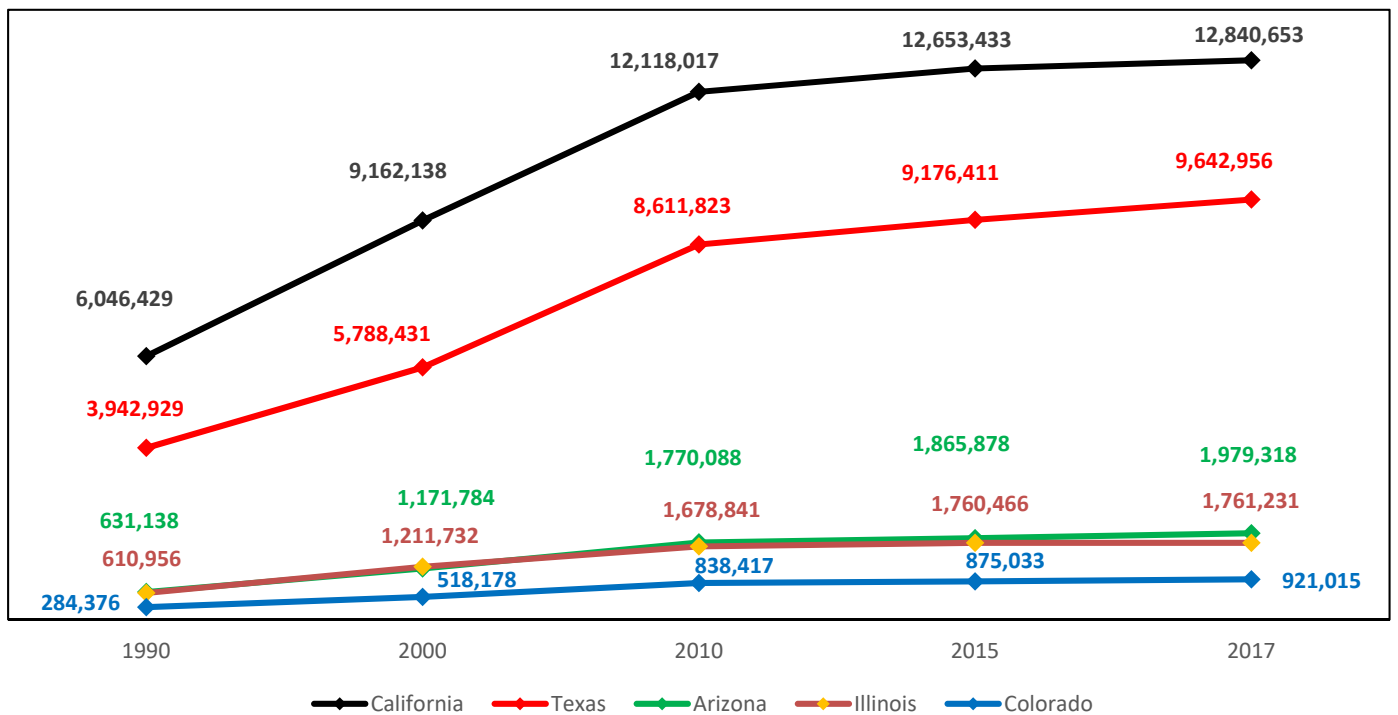
Figure 25
Percentage of Total Population which is Mexican by Largest States, 1990 - 2017
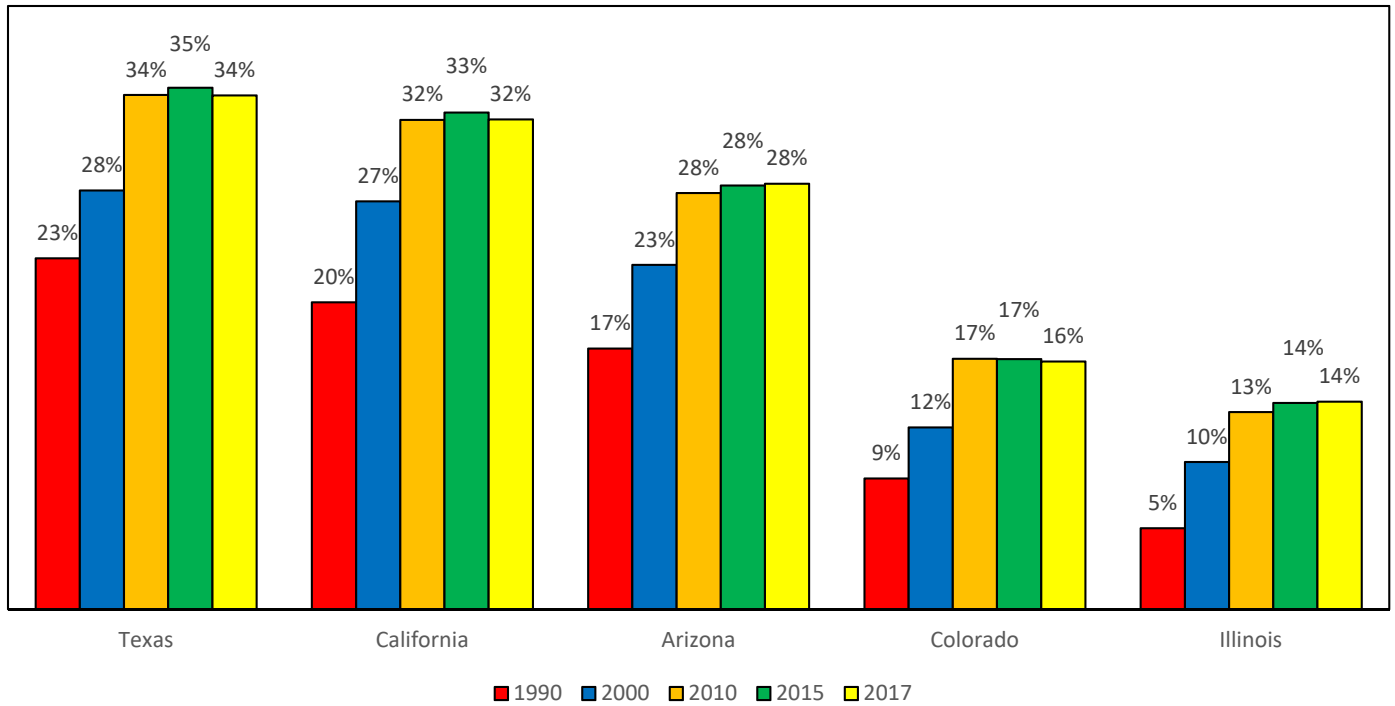

■ 1990 ■ 2000 ■ 2010 ■ 2015 ■ 2017

Figure 26
Percentage of Total Latino Population which is Mexican by Largest States, 1990 - 2017

■ 1990 ■ 2000 ■ 2010 ■ 2015 ■ 2017