

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

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A New Collaborative Report from the Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies at The Graduate Center, CUNY and the Mexican Studies Institute at Lehman College, CUNY Examines the Changes in the Mexican-Origin Population of NYC.

NEW YORK, December 9, 2020—The [Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies](#) (CLACLS) of [The Graduate Center, CUNY](#) and the [CUNY Mexican Studies Institute](#) (MSI) at Lehman College have released an collaborative [report](#) on the changes among the Mexican-origin population in New York City since the 1990s.

The report, titled “Demographic and Socioeconomic Transformations Among the Mexican-Origin Population of New York City, 1990-2017” examines the sociodemographic changes trends of this group—the fastest growing Latino national subgroup in the city until 2015.

The data published by the American Community Survey and the Census between 1990 and 2017 clearly show that the NYC Mexican population, although having one of the lowest unemployment rates in the city, has also the highest poverty rates among Latino New Yorkers: the overall rate was 29% and the childhood poverty rate was 42%.

Other key findings:

- Starting from 2015, the Mexican-Origin population started declining in the city. One reason was that foreign-born Mexicans stopped migrating to NYC. Another reason was an apparent out migration of Mexican families. Between 2015 and 2017, the foreign-born and domestic-born Mexican population had each a 14% decrease.
- Educational attainment levels among the Mexican community suggest hope for upward social mobility. Although only 9% of adults 25 years or older had achieved a B.A. or higher in 2000, this almost doubled to 17% in 2017.
- Mexican households earned median incomes of \$54,000 in 2017, which was slightly higher than Puerto Ricans and Dominicans but much lower than Ecuadorians and Colombians, the five largest Latino nationalities in the City. That said, there were very wealthy Mexican households: nearly a quarter of these earned more than \$100,000 in 2017 and they controlled nearly 60% of all income accruing to Mexican households.

- The unemployment rate of Mexicans was 4% in 2017—one of the lowest in the City. Still, 48% of all Mexican adult women were not seeking work, although many may have labored at home in addition to housework and child-rearing responsibilities.
- Close to 90% of all Mexicans spoke Spanish at home in 2017. However, about 70% reported an ability to speak English exclusively (17%), well (16%) or very well (41%).
- Nearly three-quarters of all Mexicans in the City had health insurance coverage in 2017, and over two-thirds of those insured received Medicaid benefits (64%).

Contact Sebastián Villamizar-Santamaría, Director of Quantitative Research, for a PDF of the report at svillamizarsantamaria@gradcenter.cuny.edu.

About The Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies

The core mission of CLACLS is to actively support and advance the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the U.S. in the doctoral programs of The Graduate Center, and to provide opportunities for Latino students at the Ph.D. level. CLACLS's flagship program is the [Latino Data Project](#), established in 2003 by Laird W. Bergad founding and current CLACLS director. Bergad is a distinguished professor in the Department of Latin American, Puerto Rican, and Latino Studies at [Lehman College](#) and with the Ph.D. Program in History at The Graduate Center. The Latino Data Project conducts detailed quantitative research on the Latino population of the United States and New York City metropolitan region, analyzing raw data files produced by the U.S. Census Bureau and other government agencies.

About The Mexican Studies Institute

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.

About The Graduate Center, CUNY

The Graduate Center of The City University of New York (CUNY) is a leader in public graduate education devoted to enhancing the public good through pioneering research, serious learning, and reasoned debate. The Graduate Center offers ambitious students more than 40 doctoral and master's programs of the highest caliber, taught by top faculty from throughout CUNY — the nation's largest public urban university. Through its nearly 40 centers, institutes, and initiatives, including its Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC), The Graduate Center influences public policy and discourse and shapes innovation. The Graduate Center's extensive public programs make it a home for culture and conversation.

