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How do Latino Groups Fare in a Changing Economy?

Occupation in Latino Groups in the greater New York City area, 1980-2009

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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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Over the past forty years, the types of jobs offered by New York’s economy have shifted from a more manufacturing-based economy to one with more professional, management, and service jobs. This report looks at how Latino immigrants and later generations have integrated into this changing economy, and how their job categories have shifted as well. Occupation strongly indicates lifestyle and its accompanying socioeconomic measures (Alba and Nee 2003).

Changes in the distribution of occupation in groups as they enter New York and as their children gain jobs in the economy lend insight into how economic assimilation is occurring. More specifically, how gender, citizenship, age, and country of birth impact the job categories occupied by Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Mexicans, and Ecuadorians shows whether they are becoming more, or less, like the average New Yorkers over time.

Building on an earlier Latino Data Project report (Limonic 2008) on the changes in occupations of New York’s Latino population, this report focuses on variation amongst and within the four most populous Latino sub-national groups.

The four groups examined in this report are the largest Latino groups in the New York City area today, though they have differing population trajectories. The first numbers of Puerto Ricans arrived in the 1940s and 1950s and entered the manufacturing sector despite relatively high levels of education (Kasinitz et al 2008). Puerto Ricans, the first large Latino group to arrive to New York, remain the largest Latino group in the New York area, with a slightly decreasing population of under 800,000 (Bergad 2009). With increasing migration from other countries of Latin America, their proportion of Latinos has diminished to about a third in 2008 (Bergad 2009). Small numbers of Dominicans began to arrive in New York in the 1960s, and streams grew over time (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). Dominicans increase in number and share of Latinos until their numbers plateau in 2008 at about 600,000, constituting a quarter of all New York Latinos (Bergad 2009). Ecuadorians have added to their population and share of the Latino population over the three decades, increasing to over 200,000 in 2008 (Bergad 2009). While a small percentage of better-off Mexicans had lived in New York prior to 1980 (Smith 2006), a growing population and a poor economy pushed Mexicans to migrate to New York between 1990 and 2000 (Latino Data Project) and now occupy a larger share of New York Latinos than Ecuadorians, with about 300,000 residents.

One advantage of showing changes in national-origin groups over time lies in showing how the economy incorporates groups as they arrive and over time. As we can see in Table 1, the New York City economy is also a dynamic sphere. From 1980 to 2009, the percentage of jobs in the management and professional sector grow from 27% to 40% of the economy. Sales and office positions drop from 34% to 26% of all jobs, and jobs in production decrease by more than half, from 19% to just 8% of all positions. Service jobs increase by 38% over the time period, and construction jobs by 22%.

Table 1

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Greater New York City, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	27%	15%	34%	5%	19%	100%
1990	32%	16%	32%	5%	15%	100%
2000	34%	19%	28%	7%	11%	100%
2009	40%	20%	26%	6%	8%	100%

1980

In comparison to the larger New York economy, all four groups exhibited a higher concentration of workers in production jobs in the economy, as seen in Table 2. Nearly a third of Mexican-origin and Puerto-Rican origin workers and about half of Ecuadorian and Dominican workers worked in production in 1980. With a more selective migration stream, Mexicans exhibit a greater percentage of workers in management and professional jobs than the other groups. Over half of Puerto Ricans were in sales and office or service occupations, and less than 5% of workers in each group were in construction.

1990

In the context of a changing economy, Puerto Ricans moved out of production jobs and into jobs in service and, increasingly, in sales and management. Dominicans and Ecuadorians moved out of production jobs in large numbers, shifting from half to a third of those groups. More than a quarter of Dominicans and Ecuadorians worked in sales occupations. Mexicans moved away from sales jobs and into jobs in the service sector.

2000

Trends from 1990 continued in 2000, with numbers of Puerto Ricans in production dropping to only 14% of that group. More than a fifth of Puerto Ricans worked in management and professional positions, a quarter in service jobs, and a third in service positions. Production jobs also dropped in Dominicans, and to a lesser extent, Ecuadorians. With rising populations, Dominicans shifted into service jobs, and Ecuadorians and Mexicans nearly doubled the percentage of their group in construction jobs.

2009

By 2009, Puerto Ricans had largely moved out of production jobs, and over a quarter worked in management or professional jobs, by far the most of these four Latino groups. A majority continued to work in sales or service. Fewer than one in six Dominicans worked in production, with over one in three in service positions. Mexicans are also predominantly in the service sector, with more than two in five working there. The decrease in Ecuadorians in the production sector is met by an equivalent increase in construction jobs, with about a fifth working in each sector. (see Table 2)

Note: All data in this report were derived from Steven Ruggles, Matthew Sobek, Trent Alexander, Catherine A. Fitch, Ronald Goeken, Patricia Kelly Hall, Miriam King, and Chad Ronnander. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 4.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center [producer and distributor], located on the internet at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

Table 2

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Puerto Rican-Origin in Greater New York City, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	12%	20%	31%	5%	33%	100%
1990	17%	21%	35%	5%	22%	100%
2000	22%	25%	33%	7%	14%	100%
2009	26%	27%	31%	6%	9%	100%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Dominican-Origin in Greater New York City, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	6%	19%	19%	4%	51%	100%
1990	11%	22%	26%	5%	35%	100%
2000	14%	29%	28%	7%	23%	100%
2009	16%	37%	26%	6%	15%	100%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Ecuadorian-Origin in Greater New York City, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	9%	19%	19%	5%	49%	100%
1990	10%	23%	26%	7%	34%	100%
2000	12%	24%	22%	13%	29%	100%
2009	13%	26%	19%	21%	20%	100%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Mexican-Origin in Greater New York City, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	17%	24%	25%	5%	29%	100%
1990	13%	34%	20%	6%	28%	100%
2000	11%	36%	18%	11%	24%	100%
2009	14%	41%	16%	12%	17%	100%

Dynamics over Time

Examining the dynamics of changes in each group's occupational sectors over a thirty-year period, we see shifts that correspond with those in the larger New York economy, only more extreme. The percentage of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in management and professional jobs more than doubles. The percentage of Mexicans and Dominicans in the service sector nearly doubles as well. The percentage of Ecuadorians in construction jumps by a factor of four, and amongst Mexicans, more than doubles. There are a few constants as well. Over a quarter of Dominicans and Puerto Ricans work in sales, and low percentages still work in construction.

Gender and Occupational Changes

Some of these changes in occupations over time can be described more fully with changes by gender, as seen in Table 3. In 1980, well over half of all Ecuadorian and Dominican women worked in production jobs, while about two in five men did. Nearly a tenth of men in each group worked construction jobs, with virtually no women in this sector. Across all groups, about a quarter of men worked in service while about half that percentage in women did so. The rate of Puerto Rican, Mexican, Ecuadorian, and to a lesser extent, Dominican, women working in sales was nearly two to one. Differences by gender were not large for management and professional positions.

Each group experiences a rapid shift in the percentage of women working in service. For example, in 1980, only 4% of Mexican-origin women worked in food preparation, and only 2% in building and grounds maintenance. By 2009, 14% and 16% of Mexican-origin women did, respectively. Likewise, building and grounds maintenance, and personal care and service represented 5% each of Ecuadorian women's jobs in 1980 but 13% and 10% of their jobs, respectively, in 2009. The percentage of men working in service work does not change much, however the percentage of women nearly doubles in each group. In 1980, 13% of Dominican women worked in service jobs; by 2009, 44% of them do. While in 1980, nearly equal or greater numbers of women worked in production, by 2009 production jobs are overwhelmingly occupied by men. While 60% of Dominican women worked in production in 1980, less than ten percent do so in 2009; Dominican men shift from 41% to 24% in the same period. Some of this shift might be attributable to a change in the proportion of legal entrants to illegal entrants, with a smaller proportion of undocumented being funneled into little-enforced production or service jobs (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

Women continue to dominate the sales sector. With the exception of Dominicans, women consistently represent the sales occupations by a rate of two to one. While the percentage of men in construction grows for each group, it jumps for Ecuadorians, with over a third of men employed in this sector in 2009.

In management and professional jobs, we see shifts by gender as well. While a greater percentage of men than women held these jobs in 1980 in each group, by 2009 the opposite was true. Women made steady gains across each decade in this sector. Nonetheless, the percentage of Dominican and Puerto Rican men working in management and professional jobs nearly doubled from 1980 to 2009. A smaller percentage of Mexican and Ecuadorian men held these positions in 2009 compared to 1980.

Table 3

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Puerto Rican-Origin in Greater New York City, by Gender, 1980-2009

		Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	Men	12%	23%	21%	8%	35%	100%
	Women	11%	15%	43%	0%	30%	100%
1990	Men	14%	24%	23%	10%	30%	100%
	Women	21%	18%	47%	1%	14%	100%
2000	Men	18%	26%	22%	13%	21%	100%
	Women	26%	23%	43%	1%	7%	100%
2009	Men	21%	28%	21%	13%	16%	100%
	Women	30%	27%	40%	0%	3%	100%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Dominican-Origin in Greater New York City, by Gender, 1980-2009

		Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	Men	7%	26%	16%	9%	41%	100%
	Women	5%	13%	22%	0%	60%	100%
1990	Men	11%	22%	23%	9%	35%	100%
	Women	11%	23%	30%	1%	35%	100%
2000	Men	12%	25%	22%	13%	28%	100%
	Women	15%	33%	33%	1%	18%	100%
2009	Men	13%	27%	21%	14%	24%	100%
	Women	18%	44%	29%	0%	9%	100%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Ecuadorian-Origin in Greater New York City, by Gender, 1980-2009

		Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	Men	11%	24%	14%	9%	43%	100%
	Women	6%	15%	24%	0%	55%	100%
1990	Men	10%	26%	20%	11%	34%	100%
	Women	11%	20%	34%	1%	35%	100%
2000	Men	35%	20%	17%	18%	10%	100%
	Women	14%	25%	30%	1%	29%	100%
2009	Men	10%	19%	12%	37%	22%	100%
	Women	18%	36%	28%	1%	17%	100%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Mexican-Origin in Greater New York City, by Gender, 1980-2009

		Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	Men	19%	29%	15%	8%	30%	100%
	Women	16%	17%	39%	0%	27%	100%
1990	Men	11%	39%	14%	9%	26%	100%
	Women	17%	22%	31%	1%	30%	100%
2000	Men	10%	36%	15%	16%	23%	100%
	Women	14%	35%	25%	1%	25%	100%
2009	Men	11%	39%	12%	18%	21%	100%
	Women	19%	46%	24%	0%	11%	100%

Birthplace and Occupational Changes

In Table 4, we see similar patterns of differences in occupations of the foreign-born and domestic-born across groups across the time period from 1980 to 2009. The percentage of domestic-born working in management and professional jobs is double or triple that of the foreign-born. For example, more than 30% of the jobs of American-born, Mexican-origin adults are management or professional; the same is true for less than 10% of foreign-born Mexican Americans in New York. Domestic-born are also much better represented in sales positions; the foreign-born are better represented in service positions though their proportion has grown over time. In 1980, a slightly higher percentage of US-born Dominicans vs foreign-born held service jobs; by 2009, 40% of foreign-born Dominicans held service jobs while 24% of US-born ones did. Sales positions across all years reflect the reverse. From 1980 to 2009, about 40% of US-born Dominicans held sales jobs while just over 20% of foreign-born did. The foreign-born work in production at rates double the domestic-born. The gaps were attenuated between island-born and mainland-born Puerto Ricans, though disparities emerge. In 1980, Mexicans were exceptions to this pattern, with smaller differences by country of birth.

Compared with the larger New York economy, these groups exhibit lower numbers in the management and professional sector. Taken globally, New York's foreign-born average greater proportions in this sector than US-born Latinos. Proportions of service, construction, and production positions are lower among New York's foreign-born than amongst these Latino groups alone (see Table 5); percentages of sales jobs are not very different.

Table 4

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Puerto Rican-Origin in Greater New York City, by Birthplace, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional (M-B)	Management and Professional (I-B)	Service (M-B)	Service (I-B)	Sales and Office (M-B)	Sales and Office (I-B)	Construction (M-B)	Construction (I-B)	Production (M-B)	Production (I-B)
1980	13%	11%	17%	21%	43%	24%	4%	5%	22%	38%
1990	19%	15%	18%	24%	43%	27%	5%	6%	16%	28%
2000	24%	19%	21%	29%	38%	25%	6%	8%	10%	19%
2009	27%	23%	24%	33%	34%	25%	6%	7%	8%	13%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Dominican-Origin in Greater New York City, by Birthplace, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional (DB)	Management and Professional (FB)	Service (DB)	Service (FB)	Sales and Office (DB)	Sales and Office (FB)	Construction (DB)	Construction (FB)	Production (DB)	Production (FB)
1980	13%	6%	23%	19%	40%	19%	3%	4%	22%	52%
1990	17%	10%	14%	23%	48%	24%	4%	5%	17%	37%
2000	21%	12%	22%	30%	45%	25%	5%	7%	8%	25%
2009	23%	14%	24%	40%	41%	22%	6%	6%	7%	18%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Ecuadorian-Origin in Greater New York City, by Birthplace, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional (DB)	Management and Professional (FB)	Service (DB)	Service (FB)	Sales and Office (DB)	Sales and Office (FB)	Construction (DB)	Construction (FB)	Production (DB)	Production (FB)
1980	27%	8%	7%	20%	40%	18%	0%	5%	27%	49%
1990	14%	10%	14%	24%	53%	24%	3%	7%	15%	36%
2000	25%	10%	14%	26%	45%	19%	5%	14%	11%	31%
2009	30%	10%	15%	28%	35%	16%	10%	23%	10%	22%

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Mexican-Origin in Greater New York City, by Birthplace, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional (DB)	Management and Professional (FB)	Service (DB)	Service (FB)	Sales and Office (DB)	Sales and Office (FB)	Construction (DB)	Construction (FB)	Production (DB)	Production (FB)
1980	19%	17%	21%	27%	32%	18%	6%	4%	23%	33%
1990	31%	8%	14%	40%	38%	14%	7%	6%	11%	32%
2000	35%	7%	19%	38%	32%	16%	5%	12%	9%	26%
2009	39%	7%	21%	46%	29%	13%	4%	14%	6%	20%

Table 5

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Foreign-Born in Greater New York City, 1980-2009

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	22%	19%	26%	6%	27%	100%
1990	24%	21%	26%	6%	22%	100%
2000	26%	25%	24%	8%	17%	100%
2009	31%	27%	21%	8%	12%	100%

Citizenship and Occupational Changes

This lens relates to the previous distinction between foreign-born and domestic-born, with all domestic-born being citizens. Some foreign-born naturalize, while some do not or cannot change their citizenship. Are the occupational benefits of citizenship more due to place of birth or to citizenship status?

Table 6 shows differences in Mexican occupations by citizenship status. With the exception of 1980, US-born Mexican-origin workers have a much higher proportion of management and professional jobs than Mexican non-citizens, at over 30% versus 6%. In sales, construction, and production, naturalized Americans of Mexican-origin have only slightly lower percentages compared to non-citizen Mexicans. From 1990 to 2009, compared to non-citizens, naturalized Mexicans have double the proportion of workers in management and professional jobs. The growth of undocumented immigrants from Mexico corresponds to growth in the proportion of service and construction sector jobs from 1980 to 2009. ADD production sector and service sector

As Table 7 shows, Ecuadorians exhibit similar patterns. With the exception of 1990, US-born Ecuadorian-origin workers have a much higher proportion of management and professional jobs compared to Ecuadorian non-citizens, with over 25% of jobs in this sector, against only 6% of non-citizens. US-born Ecuadorians are more than twice as likely to work in sales compared to non-citizens. With rates similar to citizens by birth, nationalized Ecuadorians work much less in construction jobs than non-citizen Ecuadorians. In all other sectors, naturalized citizens figures lie between those of the US-born and non-citizens.

Dominicans also follow this pattern (see Table 8). US-born Dominicans exhibit much higher rates of being employed in management and professional jobs and in sales jobs, compared to non-citizens. Non-citizens have much higher rates in the service and production sectors, and the proportions of naturalized citizens of Dominican origin are in between.

Nearly all Puerto Ricans have citizenship by birth, and so their figures comprise a more generalized group compared to the other national-origin groups, and data are not shown.

Table 6

Proportion of Occupations by Category, Mexican-Origin in Greater New York City
by Citizenship Status, 1980-2009

Citizens by Birth

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	19%	21%	32%	6%	23%	100%
1990	31%	14%	38%	7%	11%	100%
2000	35%	19%	32%	5%	9%	100%
2009	39%	21%	29%	4%	6%	100%

Citizens by Naturalization

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	16%	25%	23%	3%	32%	100%
1990	15%	34%	21%	4%	26%	100%
2000	13%	34%	20%	11%	23%	100%
2009	15%	42%	15%	11%	16%	100%

Non-citizens

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	15%	29%	16%	4%	37%	100%
1990	6%	40%	13%	6%	34%	100%
2000	6%	39%	16%	12%	27%	100%
2009	6%	47%	13%	14%	20%	100%

Table 7
Proportion of Occupations by Category, Ecuadorian-Origin in Greater New York City
by Citizenship Status, 1980-2009

Citizens by Birth

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	27%	7%	40%	0%	27%	100%
1990	14%	14%	53%	3%	15%	100%
2000	25%	14%	45%	5%	11%	100%
2009	30%	15%	35%	10%	10%	100%

Citizens by Naturalization

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	14%	18%	18%	6%	44%	100%
1990	18%	23%	26%	6%	28%	100%
2000	15%	26%	23%	8%	27%	100%
2009	19%	28%	20%	9%	24%	100%

Non-citizens

	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	6%	20%	18%	5%	50%	100%
1990	7%	25%	22%	7%	38%	100%
2000	8%	25%	17%	16%	33%	100%
2009	6%	29%	14%	31%	21%	100%

Table 8
Proportion of Occupations by Category, Dominican-Origin in Greater New York City
by Citizenship Status, 1980-2009

Citizens by Birth						
	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	13%	23%	40%	3%	22%	100%
1990	17%	14%	48%	4%	17%	100%
2000	21%	22%	45%	5%	8%	100%
2009	23%	24%	41%	6%	7%	100%

Citizens by Naturalization						
	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	9%	20%	23%	5%	43%	100%
1990	16%	23%	27%	4%	29%	100%
2000	18%	31%	26%	5%	20%	100%
2009	19%	38%	23%	5%	16%	100%

Non-citizens						
	Management and Professional	Service	Sales and Office	Construction	Production	Total
1980	5%	19%	17%	4%	55%	100%
1990	8%	24%	22%	6%	41%	100%
2000	9%	30%	24%	8%	28%	100%
2009	8%	43%	20%	8%	20%	100%

Age Cohorts and Occupational Changes

While educational attainment is a key indicator of wellbeing, occupation is how education gives rise to earnings, and so how it develops over time lends insight into the dynamics of the lifestyles of national sub-groups and class in greater New York. The national sub-groups analyzed here include both US-born and foreign-born workers, and thus comprise differences between groups' composition. That is, if Puerto Rican workers in 2009 were mostly US-born while most Ecuadorian-origin workers were foreign-born, one can note only the differences in nationality and not in place of birth and nationality.

The youngest cohort, those 16–19 years old, shows important differences in how different groups are inserted into the economy (see Table 9). Few youth, by sub-group or in the overall population, work in management or professional positions. Mexican-origin youth, in contrast to the other groups that are far under the proportion in the overall population, predominantly work in service jobs, from 1980 to 2009. Despite increasing proportions, the number of Mexicans in sales jobs lies under that of the other groups (and the proportion in the overall economy), making this sector by far the most represented amongst youth. In construction and production, groups follow city-wide trends with two exceptions. By 2009, one in four Ecuadorian-origin youth workers has a job in construction, eight times the city proportion, and one in six Mexican-origin youth has a job in production, three times that of the city at large.

Table 9
Proportion of Occupations by Category, National Sub-group in Greater New York City
16-19 years old, 1980-2009

Management and Professional Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	8%	6%	5%	3%	7%
1990	3%	5%	3%	5%	8%
2000	4%	11%	8%	11%	11%
2009	4%	10%	0%	7%	13%

Service Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	30%	6%	5%	3%	24%
1990	40%	5%	3%	5%	22%
2000	38%	11%	8%	11%	28%
2009	34%	10%	0%	7%	34%

Sales and Office Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	30%	44%	37%	43%	48%
1990	27%	58%	53%	55%	53%
2000	31%	53%	44%	54%	51%
2009	43%	51%	48%	57%	45%

Construction Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%
1990	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%
2000	6%	3%	9%	3%	3%
2009	4%	4%	24%	3%	3%

Production Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	30%	24%	31%	34%	19%
1990	25%	15%	17%	22%	15%
2000	20%	7%	15%	7%	7%
2009	15%	1%	7%	6%	5%

As indicated in Table 10, differences between Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican, and Ecuadorian workers and workers at large emerge in the cohort aged 20–29. City-wide workers in their 20s have nearly twice the proportion of management and professional jobs compared to these groups. Mexicans hold twice the percentage of service jobs compared to the city at large from 1990 to 2009. Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Ecuadorians hug the city-wide representation in the service sector. Puerto Ricans and Dominicans report more positions in sales while Mexicans are represented more in the construction and production sectors.

Table 10
Proportion of Occupations by Category, National Sub-group in Greater New York City
20-29 years old, 1980-2009

Management and Professional Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	16%	12%	10%	5%	26%
1990	9%	16%	12%	12%	27%
2000	10%	20%	13%	14%	32%
2009	12%	21%	21%	17%	36%

Service Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	23%	15%	18%	15%	13%
1990	37%	17%	23%	17%	15%
2000	35%	21%	22%	23%	18%
2009	45%	26%	32%	28%	21%

Sales and Office Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	25%	42%	27%	27%	40%
1990	18%	44%	32%	36%	38%
2000	18%	43%	27%	42%	35%
2009	16%	40%	38%	39%	32%

Construction Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	8%	5%	6%	4%	5%
1990	7%	5%	7%	4%	6%
2000	12%	6%	13%	6%	6%
2009	13%	6%	5%	6%	6%

Production Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	28%	26%	39%	49%	16%
1990	29%	18%	27%	31%	14%
2000	24%	10%	24%	15%	9%
2009	15%	7%	4%	10%	5%

Compared to the greater city, the 30–39 cohort of each group has a smaller proportion of management or professional jobs but there is significant variation by group. Nearly one in three Puerto Ricans has a job in this sector while only one in eight Mexicans does. The proportion of Dominicans in this sector triples from 1980 to 2009. Though near city-wide proportions in 1980, by 2009 Mexicans and Dominicans are twice as likely as New Yorkers in general to work in the service sector in their 30s. Increases in those sectors come from a sharp drop in the proportion of production jobs by all groups. While over half of all Dominicans work in production in 1980, less than one in eight do so by 2009.

With differences between age cohorts of the national sub-groups, we can also see indications of shifts across the life course. For example, groups well-represented in certain industries for the 20–29 cohort may be poorly represented for the 30–39 cohort. In a major shift from the 20–29 cohort of Ecuadorians, nearly half of Ecuadorians in their thirties work in either the construction or production sectors. The converse is true in the management and professional sector as well, with workers in their twenties better represented than workers in their thirties. If about 40% of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans work in sales sectors in their twenties from 1980 to 2009, the proportion working in sales in their thirties drops to about a quarter, particularly in 2009.

Table 11
Proportion of Occupations by Category, National Sub-group in Greater New York City
30-39 years old, 1980-2009

Management and Professional Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	19%	14%	10%	7%	35%
1990	19%	22%	13%	12%	37%
2000	12%	24%	13%	15%	36%
2009	13%	30%	14%	22%	47%

Service Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	20%	18%	16%	19%	13%
1990	29%	19%	19%	21%	14%
2000	35%	22%	23%	28%	18%
2009	42%	26%	26%	35%	18%

Sales and Office Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	28%	29%	16%	16%	30%
1990	19%	34%	26%	24%	29%
2000	17%	33%	20%	25%	26%
2009	16%	29%	14%	24%	23%

Construction Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%
1990	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%
2000	12%	7%	15%	8%	7%
2009	12%	5%	25%	7%	6%

Production Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	28%	32%	54%	53%	17%
1990	27%	19%	35%	37%	14%
2000	25%	12%	28%	24%	11%
2009	17%	10%	20%	12%	7%

The sharp drop in production jobs holds true for workers older than 40 as well, though the decrease is attenuated compared to the decrease in younger workers. For example, one in four Ecuadorians over 50 years old worked in production in 1980, about a quarter remain in production in 2009. The shift amongst workers under 30 years old is more radical, moving from over a third in 1980 to about 5% by 2009.

Older Mexicans look more like the New York population at large than younger Mexicans. In 2009, the percentage of Mexicans in management and professional jobs increases with each successive age cohort, with only 12–13% of Mexicans in their 20s and 30s compared to 24–28% of those in their 50s or early 60s.

Table 12
Proportion of Occupations by Category, National Sub-group in Greater New York City
40-49 years old, 1980-2009

Management and Professional Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	20%	11%	27%	6%	30%
1990	24%	20%	9%	12%	37%
2000	14%	26%	12%	14%	36%
2009	16%	29%	15%	15%	39%

Service Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	23%	22%	11%	21%	15%
1990	24%	23%	27%	28%	15%
2000	37%	25%	24%	33%	19%
2009	38%	27%	25%	40%	21%

Sales and Office Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	25%	21%	35%	10%	29%
1990	18%	26%	18%	15%	28%
2000	16%	27%	17%	18%	24%
2009	13%	29%	16%	19%	23%

Construction Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	2%	5%	19%	6%	6%
1990	5%	6%	1%	6%	6%
2000	11%	8%	11%	7%	8%
2009	12%	9%	20%	6%	7%

Production Occupations					
	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Ecuadorian	Dominican	Greater New York
1980	30%	41%	8%	56%	20%
1990	29%	25%	46%	38%	15%
2000	22%	14%	35%	27%	13%
2009	20%	5%	24%	20%	10%

Conclusion

These data show how a complex mix of demographic changes within groups as well as between them results in significant occupational shifts by groups. Older Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, who constituted the majority of New York's Latino population in 1980, tended to work in production. At the same time, younger Puerto Ricans and Dominicans tended to work in sales positions, and over time over 40% of Puerto Rican women—and just under a third of Dominican women—have continued to work in sales. Over the past thirty years, Puerto Ricans have come to reflect (relatively low) city proportions in lower-status jobs in construction and production. Over time, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans that work in production have become men, and foreign-born. With the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans citizens at birth, we don't see the same difference between those born on the island and those born on the mainland that we see with other groups. The percentage of Puerto Ricans in higher-status management and professional jobs, particularly among women, has climbed relative to the city average from 1980 to 2009.

Similarly, the percentage of Dominican women in management and professional jobs has increased threefold since 1980 while the percentage of men has held constant since 1990 (see Table 3). Unlike Puerto Ricans, the percentage of Dominicans working in service has increased rapidly between 1980 and 2009 (see Table 2). While the percentage of Dominican US-born service workers has held constant, the percentage of foreign-born in this sector has doubled to 40% in 2009 (see Table 4). These jobs mostly lie in healthcare support and in personal care and service. If young Dominicans who entered the job market 20 years ago were less represented compared to Puerto Ricans in management and professional jobs (see Tables 11–13), that gap has diminished considerably (see Tables 9–10).

The dynamics of Ecuadorians and Mexicans are impacted more directly by large influxes in the past twenty years. Domestic-born Mexicans look much like New Yorkers at large. The small numbers who emigrated to New York earlier do not face the obstacles of protracted undocumented status that more recent immigrants have faced (Smith 2006). Their children are better represented in management and professional occupations than the other three Latino groups (see Table 4).

The majority of Mexicans in New York are not citizens by birth, however. Nearly half of non-citizens work in service by 2009, with both sexes well-represented in service jobs (see Table 6). Other non-citizens fill production jobs. Ecuadorian non-citizens seem to fill a slightly different niche, with nearly a third working in construction jobs (see Table 7). Since 1990, very few non-citizens of Mexican and Ecuadorian background have jobs in the management and professional sector. In 2009, 6% of each group did so, in comparison to 40% of greater New York jobs and 31% of the jobs of the foreign-born.

In the data on citizenship status and occupational categories, we see important differences not only by citizenship but also by the means through which it was acquired. Being born in the US is associated with much higher percentages of management and professional jobs for the four Latino groups examined here. Moreover, those percentages have grown over time for each group, tending toward proportions for the city as a whole if not matching them. In addition, the domestic-born are much less likely to work in construction or production and much more likely to work in sales and office positions.

Those who naturalize work more in management and professional jobs and less in production and construction jobs, than non-citizens. On the individual level, of course, these data cannot support a relationship between individual social mobility and naturalization. In the aggregate, however, groups' transitions towards greater citizenship appears to correspond to a greater representation in management and professional job sectors.

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