



# CLACLS

Center for Latin American, Caribbean & Latino Studies

## Demographic, Economic and Social Transformations in the Colombian-Origin Population of the New York City Metropolitan Area, 1990 - 2010

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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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## Demography

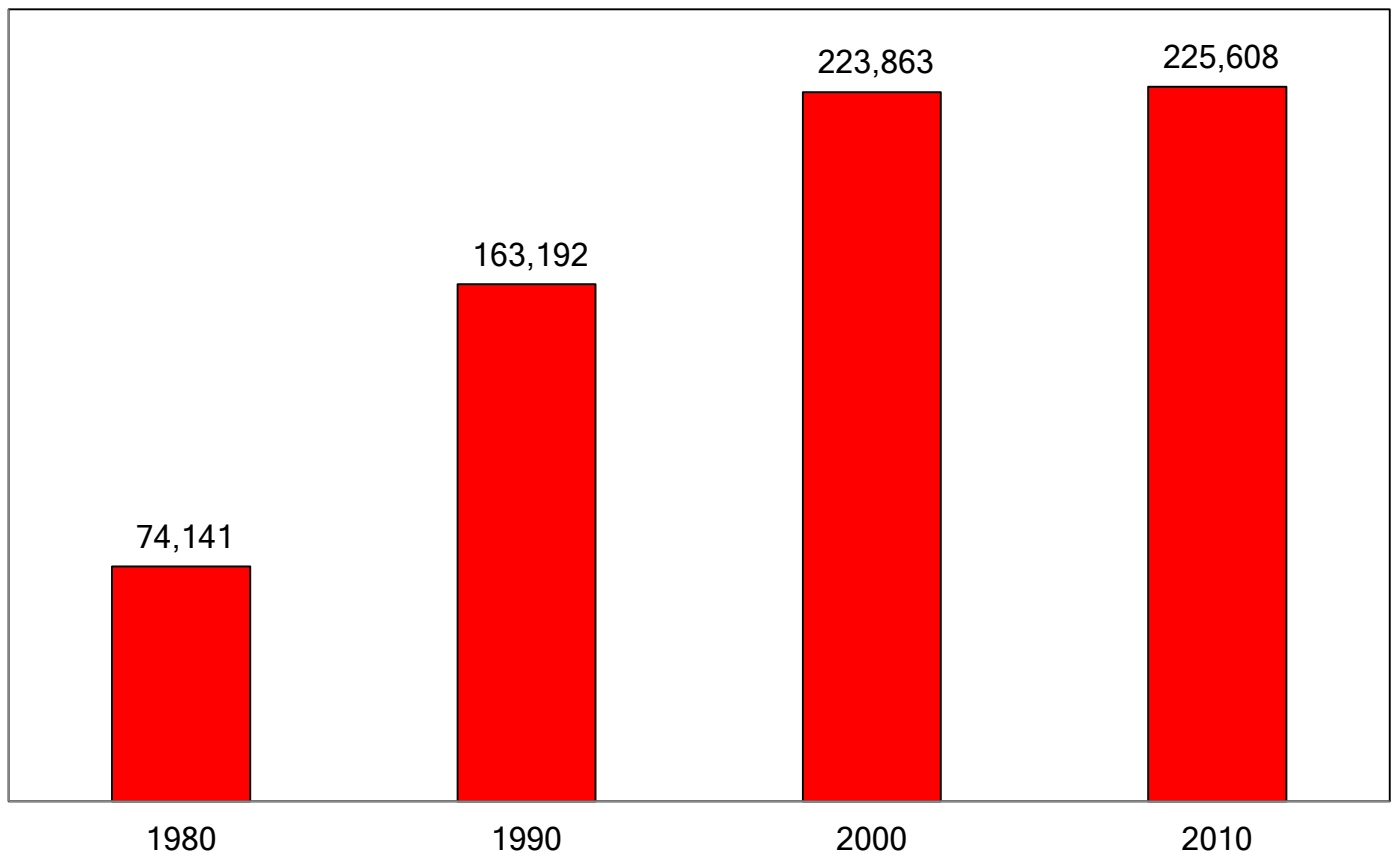
Between 1980 and 2010 the Colombian-origin population of the New York metropolitan area and its surrounding counties (see Map 1) increased from 74,141 to 225,603.<sup>1</sup> (See figure 1). Over these thirty years Colombians increased marginally as a percentage of all Latinos in the region from 3.8% in 1980 to 5.0% in 2010.

Map 1  
Counties Analyzed in this Study



<sup>1</sup> This report will examine the following New York counties: Bronx, Kings (Brooklyn), Dutchess, New York (Manhattan), Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Rockland, Richmond (Staten Island), Suffolk, and Westchester. Fairfield County in Connecticut will be considered. The following New Jersey counties are included in this study: Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic, and Union. All data, unless otherwise noted, were derived from the 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 PUMS data files provided by the IPUMS USA web site at <https://usa.ipums.org/usa/index.shtml>. See Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Figure 1  
Colombian Population of the New York City Metropolitan Area, 1980 - 2010



Note: There are no country data for 1980. The data presented here for that year are an estimate and represent 80% of all Colombians living in the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Between 1990 and 2010 about 80% of all Colombians in these three states lived in the counties considered in this study.

The greatest concentration of Colombian-origin persons was in New York City although there was a steady decline in the percentage of all Colombians in the region living in the City from 56.2% in 1990 to 45.1% in 2010. Nearly one-third of the total Colombian population lived in New Jersey counties and 18% was found in surrounding New York counties in 2010.<sup>2</sup> (See figure 2).

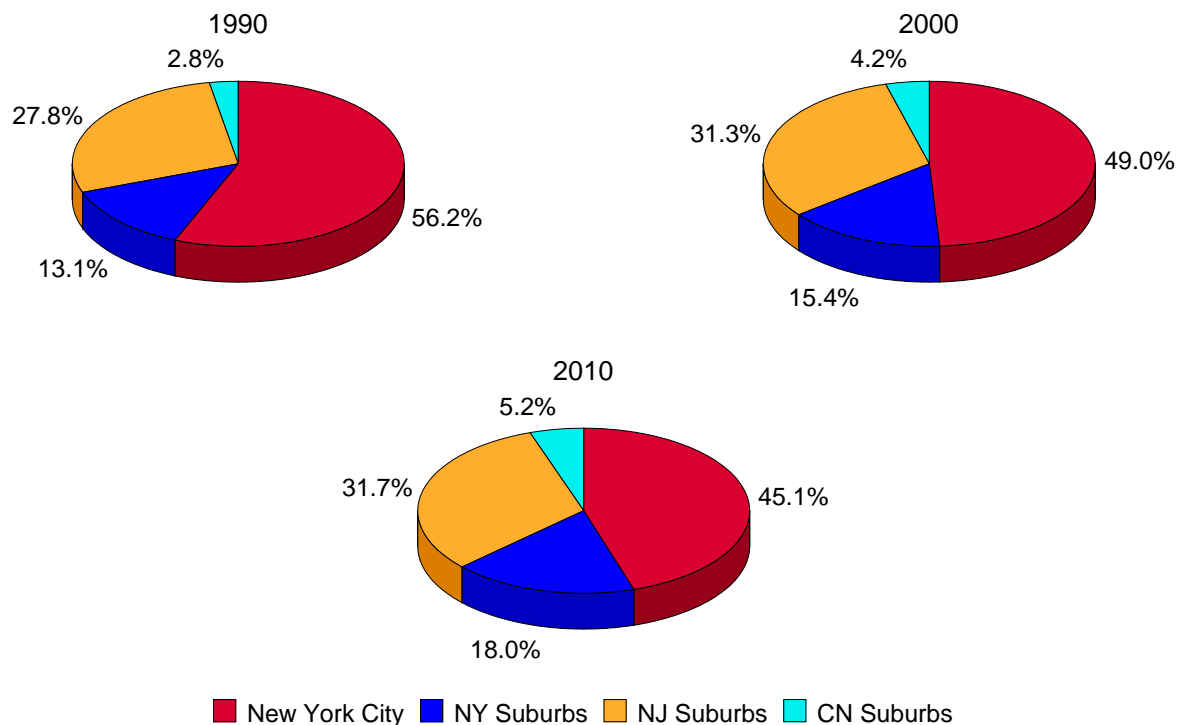
There were two important and related trends which should be emphasized. First, the growth of the Colombian population in the City and tri-state region nearly stopped after 2000. Second, Queens, the center of Colombian settlement after 1980, experienced a decline in the number of Colombians living there between 2000 and 2010 from about 84,000 persons to about 71,400. (See complete county data in table 1).

In New Jersey Union, Hudson, and Bergen counties had a combined Colombian population of just over 52,000 in 2010. Nassau and Suffolk counties in New York, and Fairfield County in

<sup>2</sup> The term Colombian will be used throughout this report to refer to persons of Colombian origin irrespective of whether born in Colombia or in the United States.

Connecticut, had more Colombians residing in each of them than the next largest City borough, Brooklyn. This all is indicative of a process of suburbanization among Colombians in the New York City metropolitan area.

Figure 2  
Colombian-Origin Population in the New York City Metropolitan Area, 1990 - 2010  
(by region in percentage of total population)



The Colombian population of the New York City metropolitan region increased steadily until 2000 and then stagnated thereafter. In New York City there was a decline in the total number of Colombians from about 110,000 in 2000 to nearly 102,000 in 2010. The principal reasons for this were twofold. First there was a significant fall in migration from Colombia as indicated in figure 4 below. In 2010 two-thirds of all Colombians living in the region were born in Colombia. There was a dramatic fall in those arriving after 2000. Between 2001 and 2010 29,326 arrived compared with 46,478 Colombians who had arrived between 1991 and 2000.

The second reason was the very low reproductive rates of Colombians in the region in comparative perspective. Colombians in the region had the lowest crude birth and fertility rates compared with the four other Latino national sub-groups in the region as indicated very clearly in table 2 below.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The crude birth rate is the number of live births in a given year per 1,000 people. The general fertility rate is the number of live births in a year divided by the number of women aged 15-44, times 1,000. For the data on New York City births see New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Summary of Vital Statistics 2010 The City of New York Pregnancy Outcomes* (December 2011), p. 5 and available for consultation on the internet at <http://www.nyc.gov/vitalstats>. Population data used to calculate the general fertility and crude birth rates for New York City were derived from the 2010 PUMS files.

Table 1  
Colombian and Total Latino Populations of Selected Counties in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1990 - 2010

	Total Latino Population			Colombian Population			Colombians as % of all Latinos		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Rockland	17,155	31,271	50,076	520	576	691	3.0%	1.8%	1.4%
Orange	22,037	43,762	69,720	821	941	311	3.7%	2.2%	0.4%
Westchester	86,702	150,041	220,941	7,453	10,836	13,170	8.6%	7.2%	6.0%
Putnam	11,641	6,954	11,525	443	134	256	3.8%	1.9%	2.2%
Dutchess		17,188	31,755		660	1,412		3.8%	4.4%
Nassau	76,717	139,398	201,666	7,039	10,105	12,482	9.2%	7.2%	6.2%
Suffolk	82,159	162,823	255,035	5,154	11,282	12,219	6.3%	6.9%	4.8%
Bronx	511,092	659,832	753,886	3,228	4,573	5,801	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%
Brooklyn	450,940	498,135	519,916	11,899	11,545	11,400	2.6%	2.3%	2.2%
Manhattan	384,032	443,772	411,584	8,307	7,806	10,669	2.2%	1.8%	2.6%
Queens	377,204	569,935	630,664	66,917	83,854	71,358	17.7%	14.7%	11.3%
Staten Island	30,188	55,233	80,324	1,418	1,932	2,556	4.7%	3.5%	3.2%
Total New York City	1,753,456	2,226,907	2,396,374	91,769	109,710	101,784	5.2%	4.9%	4.2%
Total New York Suburban	296,411	551,437	840,718	21,430	34,534	40,541	7.2%	6.3%	4.8%
Total New York State Counties	2,049,867	2,778,344	3,237,092	113,199	144,244	142,325	5.5%	5.2%	4.4%
Passaic	94,564	150,974	188,939	7,511	12,905	11,150	7.9%	8.5%	5.9%
Bergen	49,866	97,280	152,178	8,173	14,699	15,634	16.4%	15.1%	10.3%
Hudson	184,260	252,153	288,881	12,673	17,037	16,344	6.9%	6.8%	5.7%
Essex	90,953	136,182	175,658	3,339	4,155	3,518	3.7%	3.1%	2.0%
Union	67,495	110,216	155,705	10,256	15,556	20,071	15.2%	14.1%	12.9%
Middlesex	58,417	106,988	154,083	3,464	5,760	4,761	5.9%	5.4%	3.1%
Total New Jersey State Counties	545,555	853,793	1,115,444	45,416	70,112	71,478	8.3%	8.2%	6.4%
Fairfield, Connecticut	69,458	120,475	172,566	4,577	9,507	11,805	6.6%	7.9%	6.8%
Total Population All Counties	2,664,880	3,752,612	4,525,102	163,192	223,863	225,608	6.1%	6.0%	5.0%

Note: Data on the Colombian population was derived from PUMS files for each census year. Birthplace and ancestry data were used to calculate these data which differ somewhat from the data indicated using the "hispan" variable in each data set.

Figure 3  
Colombian-Origin Population in the New York City Metropolitan Area by County, 2010

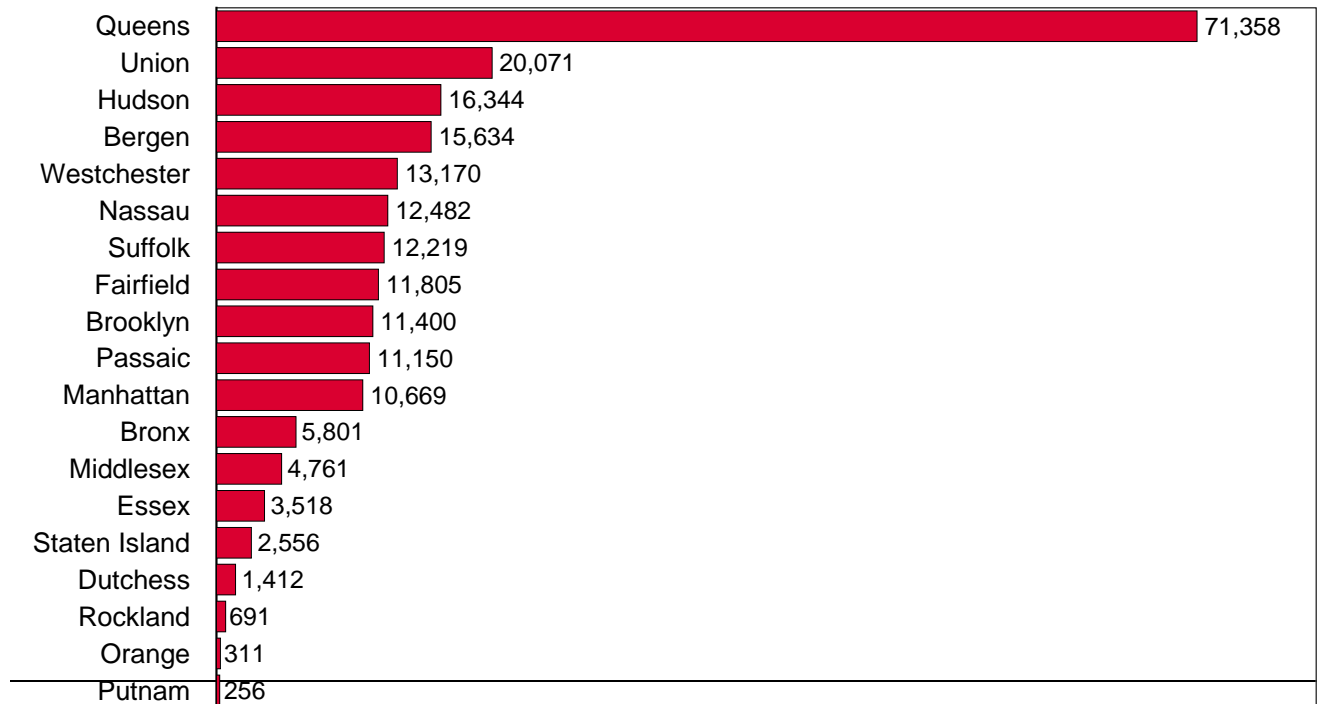


Figure 4  
Foreign-Born Colombians Living in New York Metropolitan Area Counties  
in 2010 by Decade of Arrival

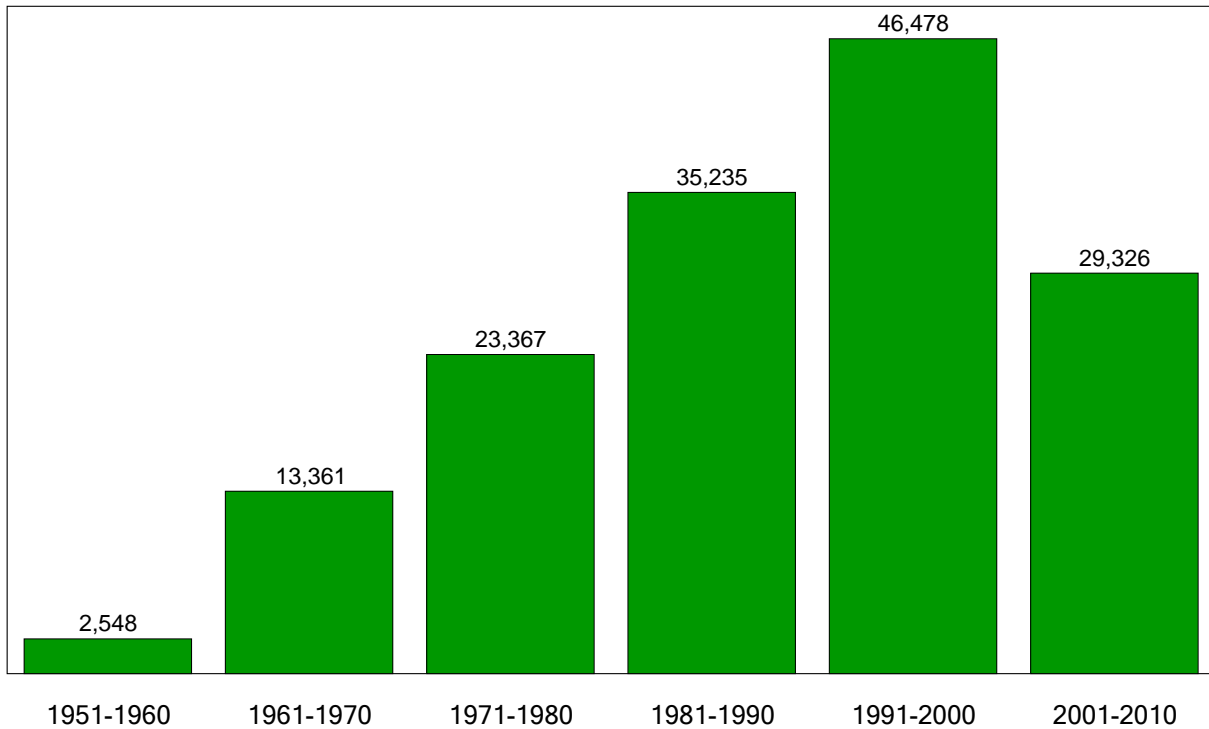
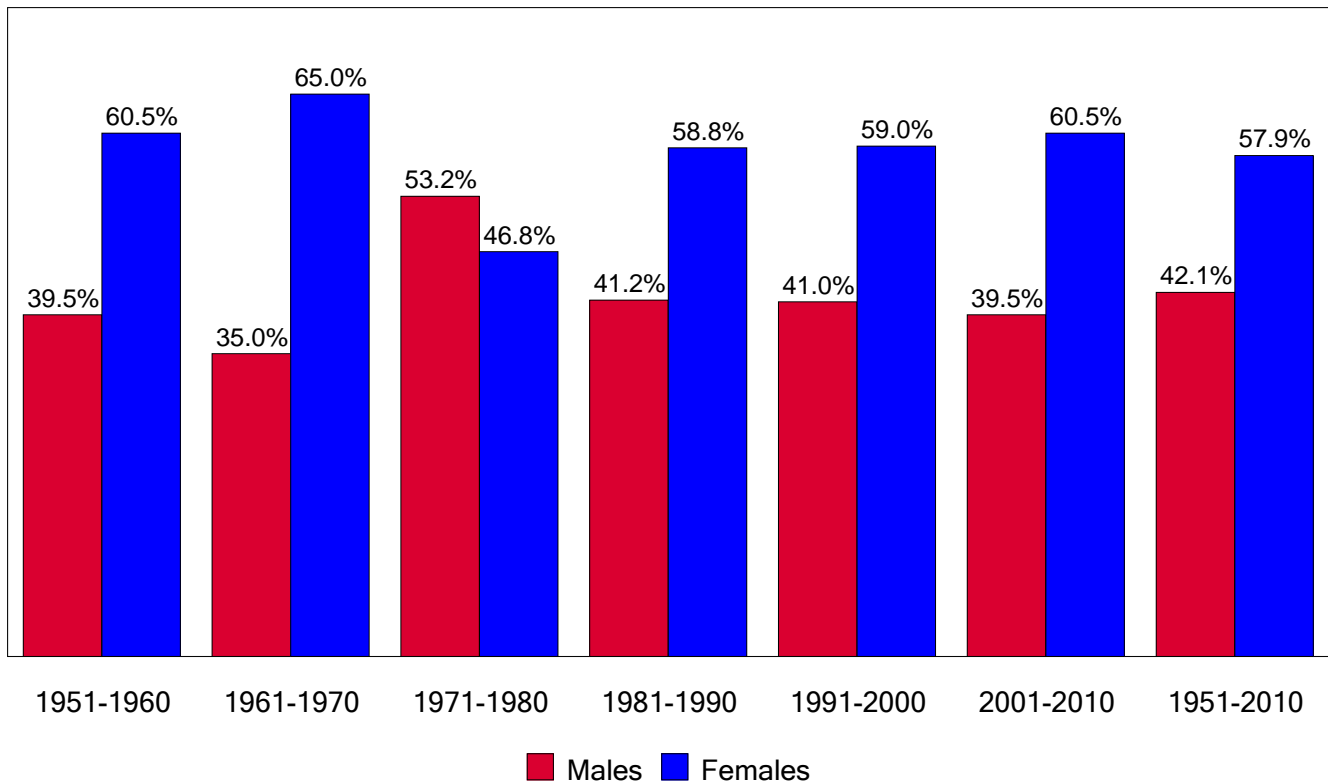


Table 2  
Comparative Indicators of Natural Increase  
among Five Latino National Sub-groups in  
the New York Metropolitan Region, 2010

	General Fertility Rate	Crude Birth Rate
Mexicans	98	24
Dominicans	75	19
Puerto Ricans	70	16
Ecuadorians	65	15
Colombians	50	12

One of the most important and distinguishing features of Colombian migration to the tri-state region was the predominance of women over men. Between 1951 and 2010 nearly 58% of all Colombians arriving in the region were female. In all decades, with the exception of 1971 to 1980, nearly 60% or more of Colombian migrants to the New York metropolitan region were women. (See figure 5).

Figure 5  
Foreign-Born Colombians Living in New York Metropolitan Area Counties  
in 2010 by Sex and Decade of Arrival (in percentages of total)



Because of ongoing high migration levels before 2000, and relatively low rates of natural reproduction among Colombians in the New York City Metropolitan area counties, the Colombian community was comprised mainly of people born in Colombia. In 1990 and 2000 over three-quarters of all Colombians in the region were born outside of the U.S. However, with the decline of migration after 2000 the percentage of Colombians born in the U.S. in relation to all Colombians increased to about one-third. (See table 3). If these trends continue, and it is likely that they will the ratio of U.S. born to the Colombian-born will likely increase. It may be noted that the absolute number of Colombians in the region increased steadily between 1990 and 2010, even with the relatively low fertility and birth rates. Yet, the decline in the number of foreign born Colombians between 2000 and 2010 is very clear.

This latter trend may be indicative of three parallel processes. First, there was the slowing of migration from Colombia as indicated above. Second, it may be that Colombians in the region were

leaving the area for other parts of the U.S. Third, many Colombian adults may have begun to return to Colombia.<sup>4</sup>

Table 3  
Colombian-Origin Population by Nativity in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 1990 - 2010

	Domestic Born	% of Total	Foreign Born	% of Total	Total
1990	35,155	22.3%	122,644	77.7%	157,799
2000	52,138	23.3%	171,725	76.7%	223,863
2010	75,058	33.3%	150,550	66.7%	225,608

Because of the ongoing migration of adults from Colombia, and the relatively low birth and fertility rates among those who settled in the New York metro area, Colombians had the highest median ages among the largest Latino nationalities in the region in each census year from 1990 to 2010 as indicated in table 4.

Table 4  
Median Ages among Five Largest Latino National Subgroups in the New York Metropolitan Area 1990 - 2010

	1990	2000	2010
Colombians	29	34	36
Ecuadorans	27	30	30
Puerto Ricans	25	29	31
Dominicans	25	28	31
Mexicans	23	23	25

<sup>4</sup> The latter two processes are speculative because the data examined for this study do not reveal out migration processes.

They also had the lowest percentage of people 14 years of age or younger compared with the other four largest Latino national subgroups in the region at 17.6% and the largest percentage of people 45 years of age or older at 36.7%. (See table 5). Clearly Colombians in the New York metropolitan area by 2010 were an aging population and with the end of migration to the area it is likely that the future will be one of ongoing population stagnation or decline.

Table 5  
Age Structure of Latino National Subgroups in the New York City Metropolitan  
Counties, 2010 (in four age groups)

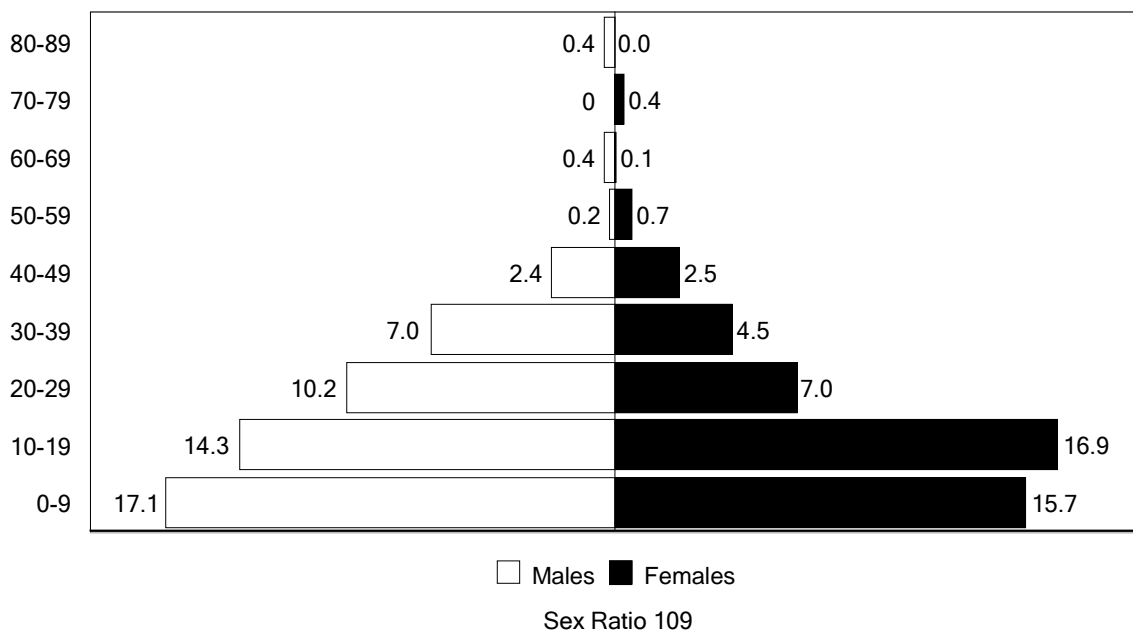
	Total Population		Domestic Born		Foreign Born	
	Age Groups	Percent of Total	Age Groups	Percent of Total	Age Groups	Percent of Total
<b>Colombians</b>	<b>0-14</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>0-14</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>0-14</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
	<b>15-44</b>	<b>45.7%</b>	<b>15-44</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>15-44</b>	<b>44.6%</b>
	<b>45-59</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>32.6%</b>
	<b>60+</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>60+</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>60+</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
Mexicans	0-14	30.7%	0-14	64.7%	0-14	4.5%
	15-44	57.5%	15-44	29.6%	15-44	79.0%
	45-59	9.0%	45-59	3.9%	45-59	12.9%
	60+	2.8%	60+	1.8%	60+	3.6%
Puerto Ricans	0-14	25.1%	0-14	32.6%	0-14	5.4%
	15-44	44.2%	15-44	51.3%	15-44	25.5%
	45-59	17.4%	45-59	13.2%	45-59	28.5%
	60+	13.3%	60+	2.9%	60+	40.7%
Ecuadorians	0-14	22.1%	0-14	58.3%	0-14	3.8%
	15-44	51.5%	15-44	40.5%	15-44	57.1%
	45-59	16.4%	45-59	0.7%	45-59	24.4%
	60+	9.9%	60+	0.6%	60+	14.6%
Dominicans	0-14	20.9%	0-14	49.4%	0-14	4.9%
	15-44	48.5%	15-44	48.3%	15-44	48.6%
	45-59	19.6%	45-59	1.7%	45-59	29.7%
	60+	11.0%	60+	0.6%	60+	16.8%

Note: For Puerto Ricans, foreign-born means born on the island.



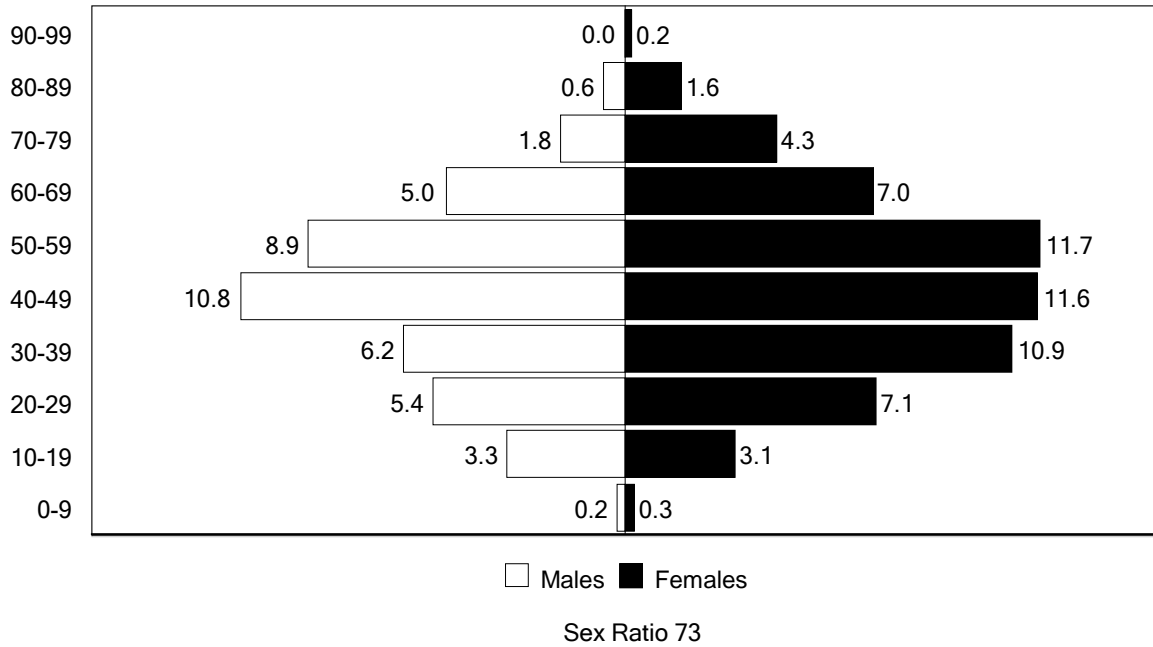
Figures 6 through 8 graphically depict the age pyramids of the foreign-born, domestic-born, and total Colombian-origin populations in the region in 2010. The domestic-born Colombian population pyramid demonstrates the 'classic' image of a population which resulted from natural reproduction, despite the fact that fertility and birth rates among Colombians were lower than among other Latino nationalities. There were concentrations of younger people at the base. The foreign-born pyramid is a 'classic' image of an immigrant population comprised principally of working-age people.

Figure 6  
Age Pyramid Colombian Domestic-Born Population of New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010  
(in percentages of total population)



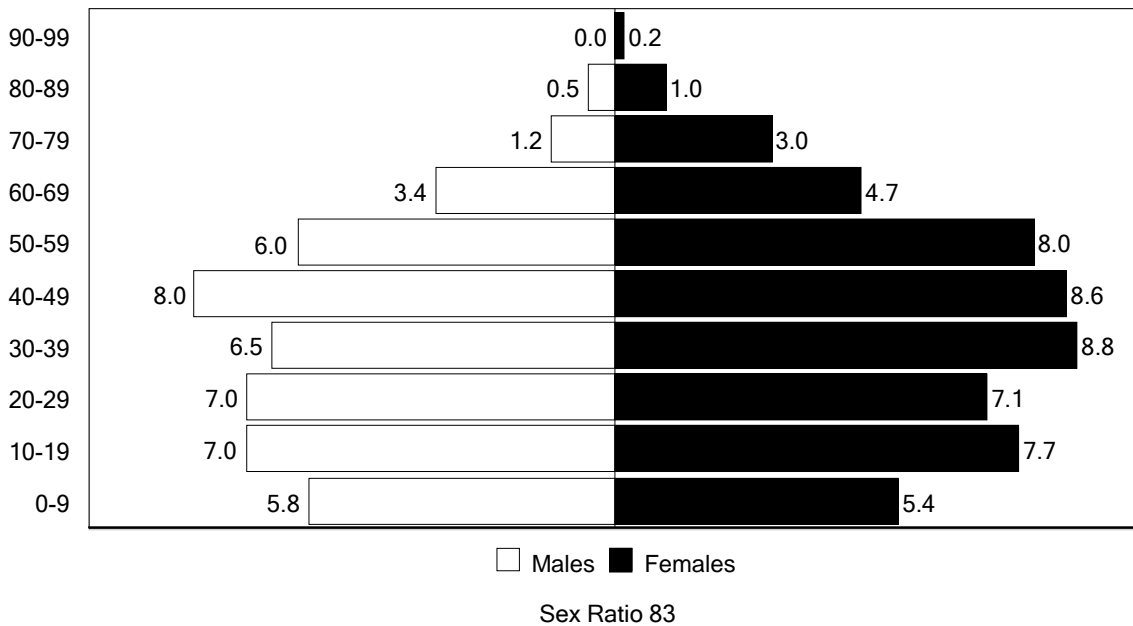
Note: The sex ratio is the number of women per 100 men.

Figure 7  
Age Pyramid Colombian Foreign-Born Population of New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010  
(in percentages of total population)



Note: The sex ratio is the number of women per 100 men.

Figure 8  
Age Pyramid Total Colombian Population of New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010  
(in percentages of total population)



Note: The sex ratio is the number of women per 100 men.

Within New York City the Colombian-origin population was concentrated in Queens where over 70% of all Colombians lived in 1990, 2000, and 2010. However, the absolute number of Colombians living in Queens declined between 2000 and 2010 from about 84,000 to 71,000. (See table 6). Additionally the percentage of all Latinos living in Queens who were Colombians declined from 18% in 1990 to 12% in 2010. Jackson Heights was the center of the Colombian community in Queens in each census year.

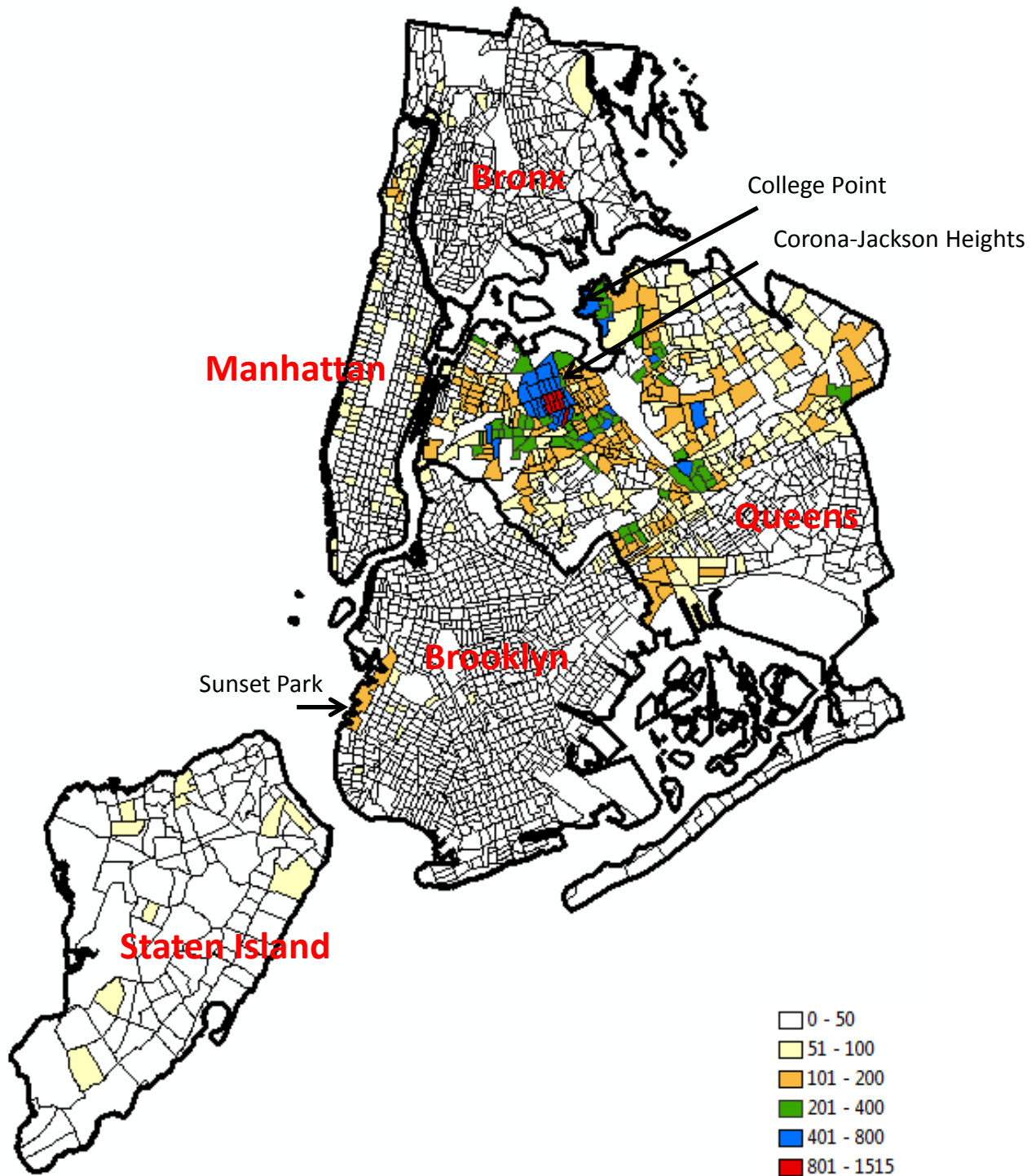
Table 6  
Colombian-Origin Population by New York City Borough, 1990 - 2010

	1990		2000		2010	
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total
Bronx	3,228	3.5%	4,573	4.2%	5,801	5.7%
Manhattan	8,307	9.1%	7,806	7.1%	10,669	10.5%
Staten Island	1,418	1.5%	1,932	1.8%	2,556	2.5%
Brooklyn	11,899	13.0%	11,545	10.5%	11,400	11.2%
Queens	66,917	72.9%	83,854	76.4%	71,358	70.1%
Total	91,769	100.0%	109,710	100.0%	101,784	100.0%

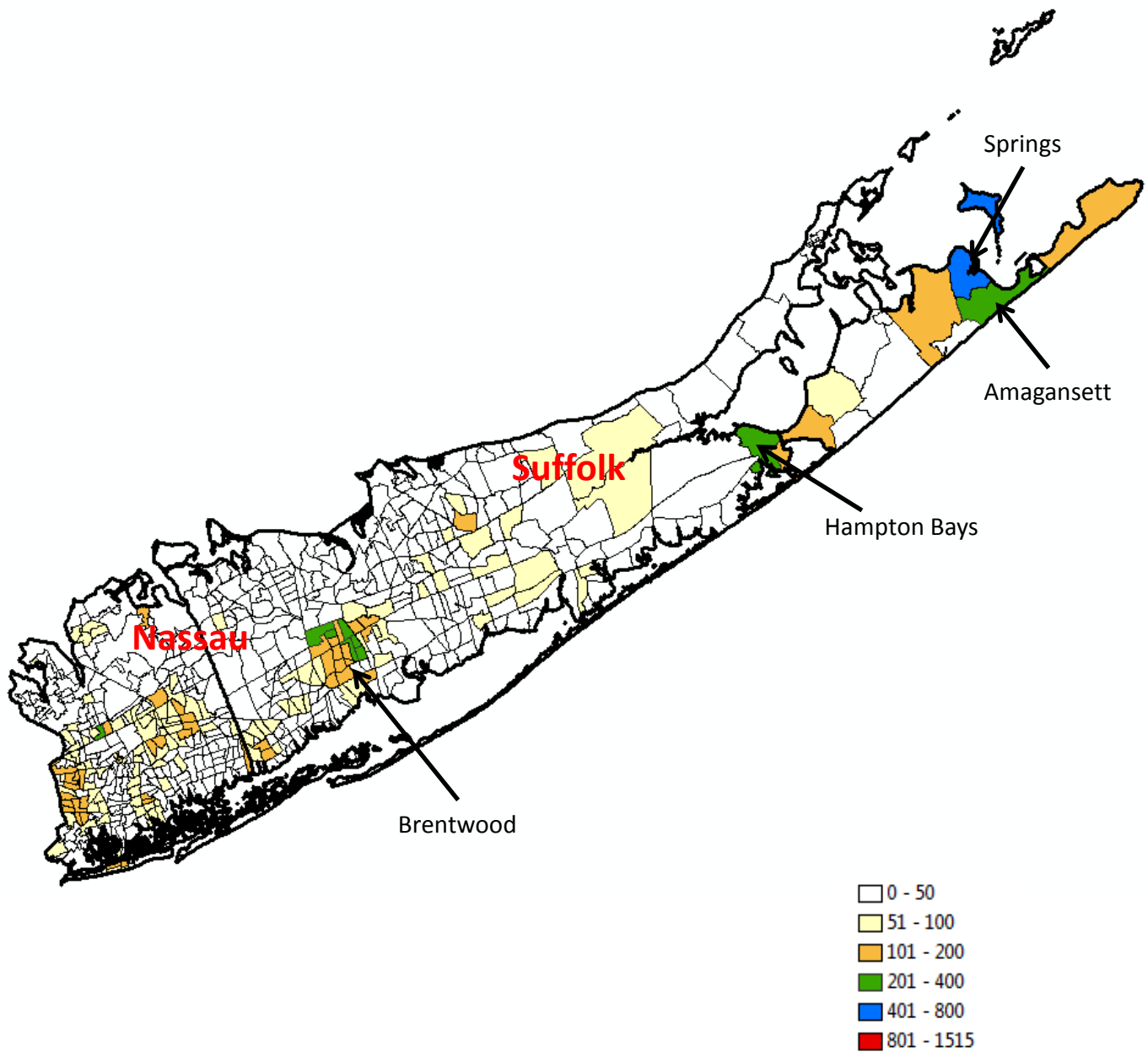
Colombians tended to concentrate in New York City neighborhoods which were centers of Hispanic settlement well before the Colombian population began to increase in the 1990s. In Queens the Colombia-origin community in 2010 was concentrated in Corona, Jackson Heights, and surrounding neighborhoods, a destination for Latin American immigrants from the 1980s. In Brooklyn Colombians were centered in Sunset Park. There were no major concentrations of Colombians in the City's other boroughs. (See map 2).

In Nassau and Suffolk counties comprising Long Island there were nuclei of Colombians living in Brentwood, Hampton Bays, Amagansett, and Springs. (See map 3). In the northern suburban counties of New York and Fairfield County Connecticut Colombians were concentrated in White Plains, Greenwich, Stamford, and Norwalk. (See map 4). Finally, in the New Jersey counties considered here there were concentrations of Colombians in Englewood, Patterson, West New York, Elizabeth, and Middlesex, all places where other Latinos were concentrated as well. (See map 5).

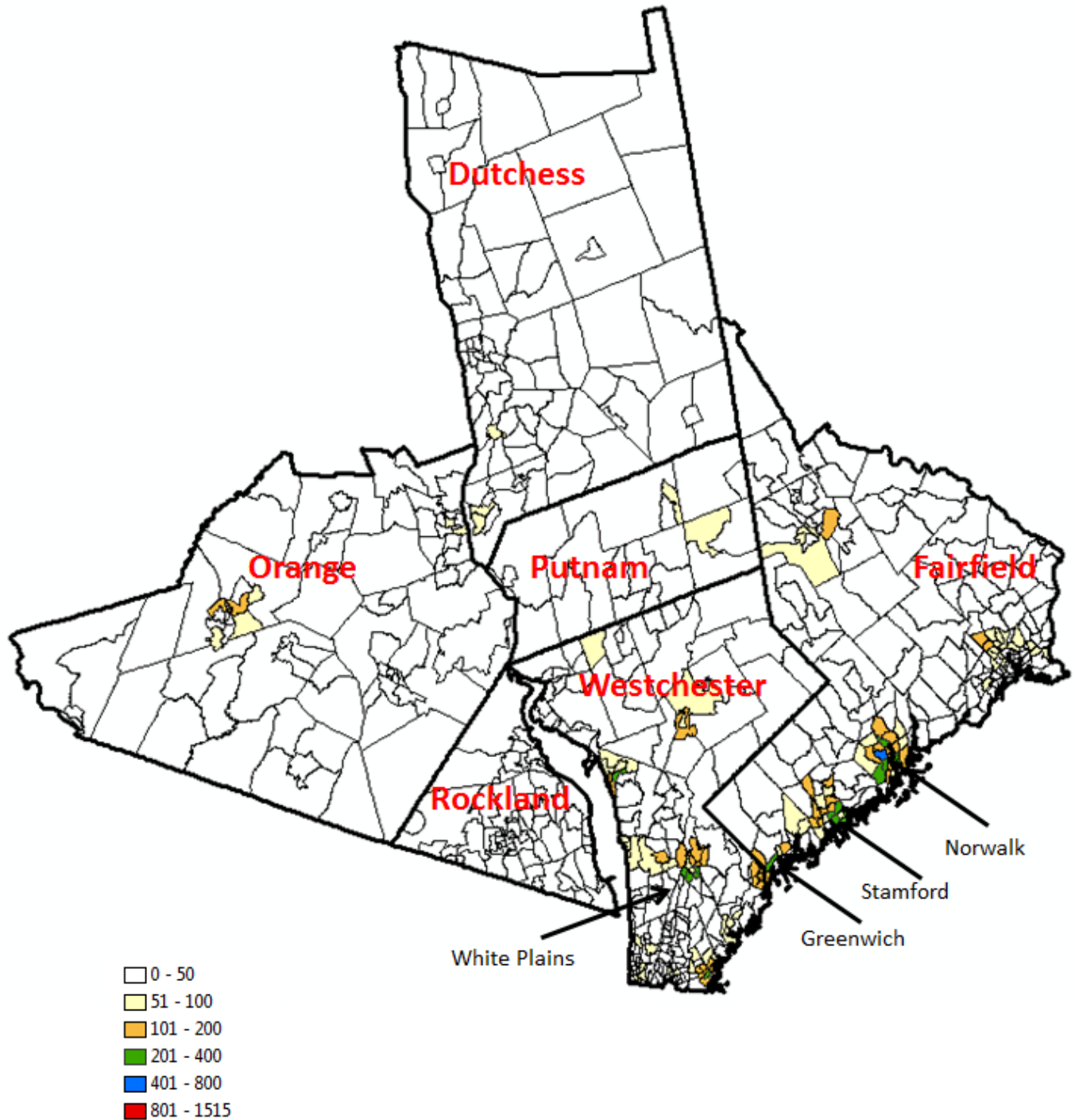
Map 2  
Colombian Population Concentrations in New York City, 2010



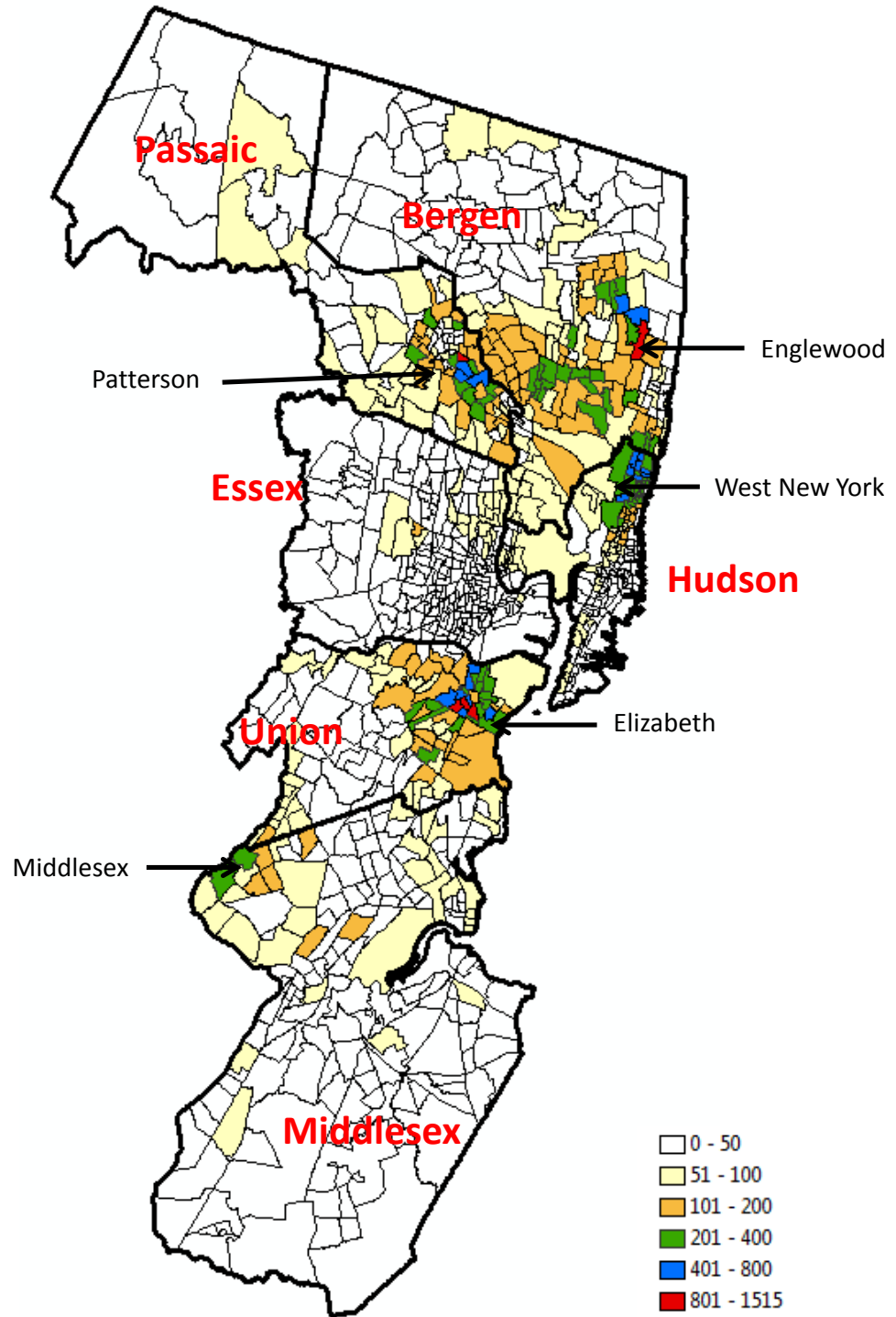
Map 3  
Colombian Population Concentrations in Suffolk  
and Nassau Counties, 2010



Map 4  
Colombian Population Concentrations in New York and Connecticut  
Counties in the Metropolitan Area, 2010



Map 5  
 Colombian Population Concentrations in New Jersey Counties  
 In the Metropolitan Area, 2010



## Household Income

There are three measures utilized by the Census to determine income: personal, family, and household income. Each is indicated for persons 15 years of age and older and consists of eight possible income sources which are added together if there are multiple sources.<sup>5</sup> Household income is utilized here as an indicator of comparative living standards as it is recognized that people living together in households share expenses and this may leave more disposable income for non-essential consumption items.<sup>6</sup> Household income is the sum total of income derived by every person 15 years of age and older living in a household, irrespective if they are related or not.

There are certain characteristics about Colombian households that should be noted prior to considering household income. First and foremost, Colombian households had a fairly low average (or mean) number of people living compared with other Latino national sub-groups by 2010. (See table 7).<sup>7</sup>

Table 7  
Average Number of People Living in Each  
Household by Largest Latino Nationalities  
in New York Metropolitan Counties  
1990 - 2010

	1990	2000	2010
Mexicans	4.4	4.9	4.3
Ecuadorans	3.9	3.7	3.7
Dominicans	3.9	3.6	3.2
<b>Colombians</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Puerto Ricans	3.4	3.1	2.9

<sup>5</sup> These include: 1) wages, ages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips from all jobs; 2) self-employment income from own non-farm businesses or farm businesses; 3) interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; 4) social security or railroad retirement 5) supplemental security income (SSI); 6) any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; 7) retirement, survivor, or disability pensions (not social security); 8) any other sources of income received regularly such as Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. See "All About Measures of Income in the Census" at following web site: [http://mcdc.missouri.edu/allabout/measures\\_of\\_income/](http://mcdc.missouri.edu/allabout/measures_of_income/)

<sup>6</sup> Three people living in a household earning \$30,000 total are generally recognized as having a higher living standard than each of them earning \$10,000 and living alone. By the same token two families living in one household earning \$20,000 each are likely to have higher living standards than if they lived in separate households.

<sup>7</sup> These data were calculated by dividing the total number of people living in households by the total number of households as indicated by the total number of household heads. By way of further comparison the average number of people per household among non-Hispanic whites was 2.4; for non-Hispanic blacks 2.7; and for Asians, 3.1.



Additionally, Colombian households had a relatively low average number of families living in them compared with the other Latino nationalities between 1990 and 2010.<sup>8</sup> (See table 8).

Table 8  
Average Number of Families in Each  
Household by Largest Latino Nationalities  
in New York Metropolitan Counties  
1990 - 2010

	1990	2000	2010
Mexicans	1.6	1.7	1.5
Ecuadorans	1.3	1.4	1.5
Dominicans	1.3	1.2	1.2
<b>Colombians</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Puerto Ricans	1.2	1.1	1.2

Colombian households had the highest median household incomes when compared with the other largest Latino national subgroups living in the New York Metropolitan region.<sup>9</sup> In 1990 it was \$62,311. By 2000 Colombian median household income had declined slightly to \$60,750 although there was a rebound by 2010 to \$67,000, for an overall increase of 8% from 1990. (See the data in table 9).

Part of the explanation for higher median incomes may be found in the comparative occupational structure of the five largest Latino nationalities living in the New York metropolitan area. Colombians had the lowest percentage of workers employed in unskilled occupations such as cooks, laborers, gardeners, waiters and waitresses, and several more as indicated in table 10. These occupational categories accounted for 24% of Colombians compared with 28% of employed Puerto Ricans, 32% of Ecuadorians, 27% of Dominicans, and 43% of Mexicans in 2010.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> By way of comparison in 2010 non-Hispanic whites had 1.1 average families/household and non-Hispanic blacks and Asians each had averages of 1.2 families/household.

<sup>9</sup> All values have been adjusted for inflation into 2010 dollars using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation Calculator at [http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

<sup>10</sup> These data were derived from the variable OCC1950 which is consistent in the 1990, 2000, and 2010 census data sets used here..

Table 9  
 Median Household Income in 2010 inflation-  
 adjusted Dollars by Largest Latino Nationalities  
 in New York Metropolitan Counties  
 1990 - 2010

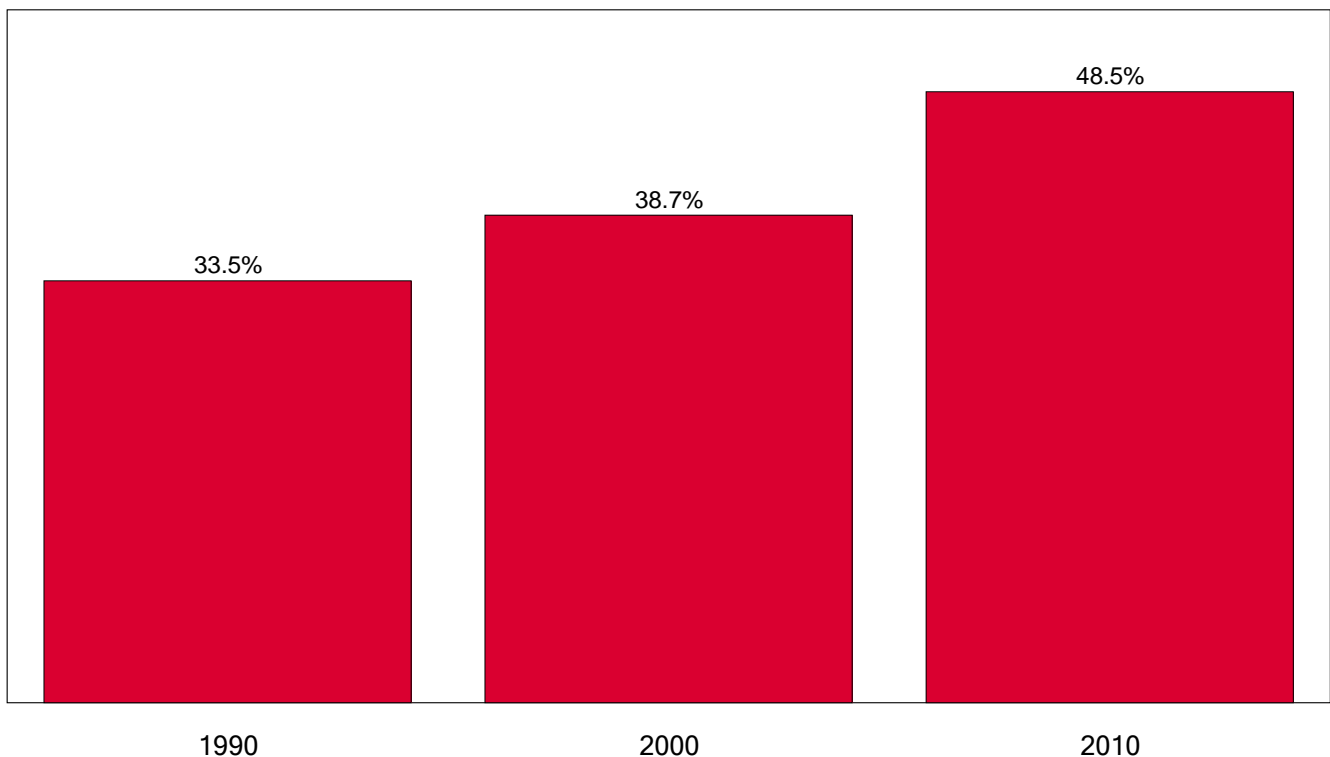
	1990	2000	2010
<b>Colombians</b>	<b>\$ 62,311</b>	<b>\$ 60,750</b>	<b>\$ 67,000</b>
Ecuadorians	\$ 57,618	\$ 58,250	\$ 64,100
Mexicans	\$ 62,700	\$ 54,375	\$ 51,250
Puerto Ricans	\$ 44,253	\$ 46,250	\$ 50,200
Dominicans	\$ 42,075	\$ 42,500	\$ 45,000

Table 10  
 Largest Known Occupational Categories Among Five Largest Latino Nationalities in  
 New York Metropolitan Counties, 2010  
 (in percentage of all workers whose occupations were known)

	Colombians	Mexicans	Puerto Ricans	Ecuadorians	Dominicans
Cooks	1.7%	12.7%	2.2%	4.9%	3.0%
Laborers	4.3%	10.7%	4.0%	9.5%	4.3%
Clerical workers	7.2%	4.8%	11.5%	6.1%	8.1%
Janitors	5.3%	4.6%	5.0%	5.2%	4.9%
Waiters and waitresses	2.3%	3.6%	1.1%	1.1%	1.7%
Cashiers	2.6%	3.5%	3.6%	2.8%	4.2%
Gardeners	0.5%	2.8%	0.8%	2.1%	0.6%
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>42.7%</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>
Operatives	5.9%	6.5%	3.3%	6.8%	6.7%
Managers, officials, and proprietors	8.7%	6.1%	9.3%	7.3%	7.6%
Service workers	0.4%	3.0%	0.6%	1.0%	1.1%
Salesmen and sales clerks	3.8%	2.4%	4.2%	3.0%	5.1%
Total	42.7%	60.7%	45.6%	49.7%	47.3%

Another factor is what while the percentage of households headed by women among Colombians in the New York City metro area increased from about a third of all households in 1990 to nearly half of all households in 2010, the wage differential between male and female-headed households declined. In 1990 Colombian female-headed households earned 70% of the median household incomes of male headed households. This increased to 76% in 2010. (See figures 9 through 11 for these data).

Figure 9  
Colombian Households Headed by Women in New York Metropolitan Area Counties  
1990 - 2010 (in percentage of total households)



Colombian households in New York and New Jersey suburban counties had higher median incomes than among Colombian households in New York City. (See figure 12 and table 11 for complete data). Households in Suffolk, Essex, Nassau, and Westchester Counties earned median incomes which were significantly higher than in Queens, the center of Colombian population concentration in the City.

Figure 10  
 Median Household Income among Colombians by Nativity and Sex in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010  
 (in 2010 inflation adjusted dollars)

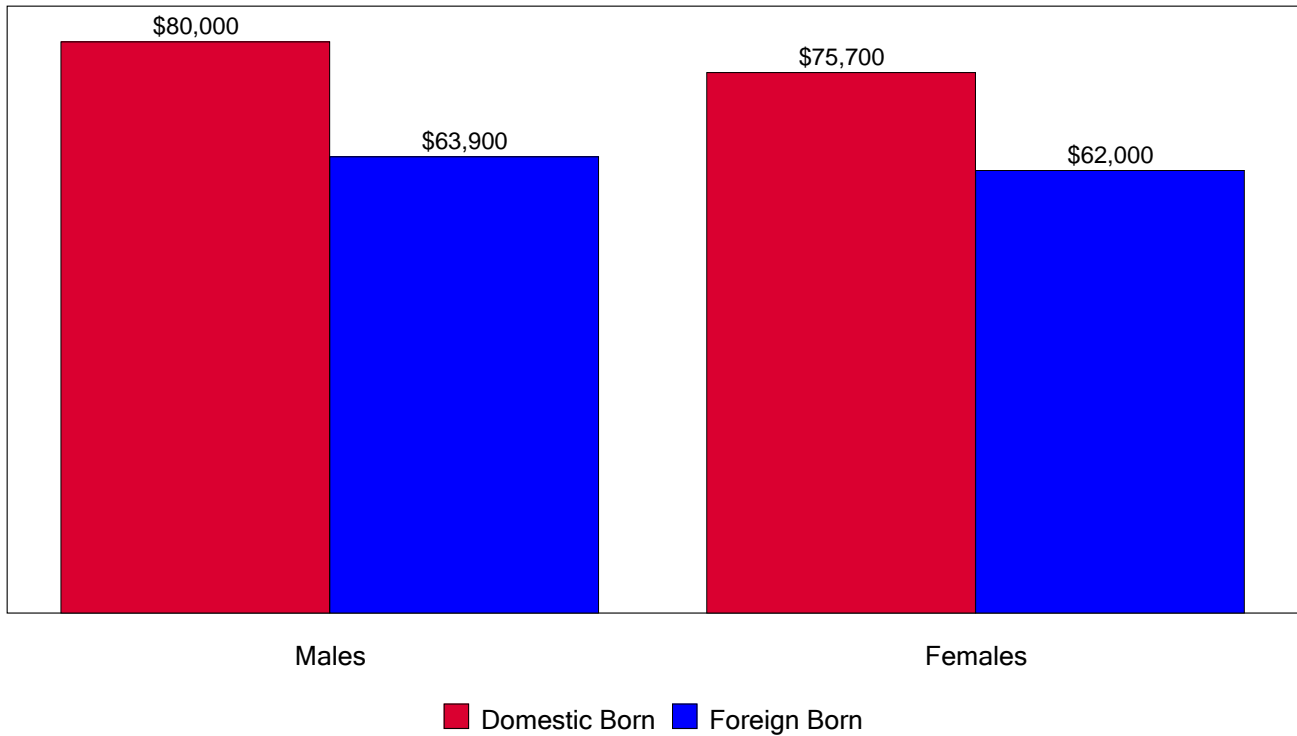


Figure 11  
 Median Household Income among Colombians by Sex for Household Heads Only in the New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010 (in 2010 inflation adjusted dollars)

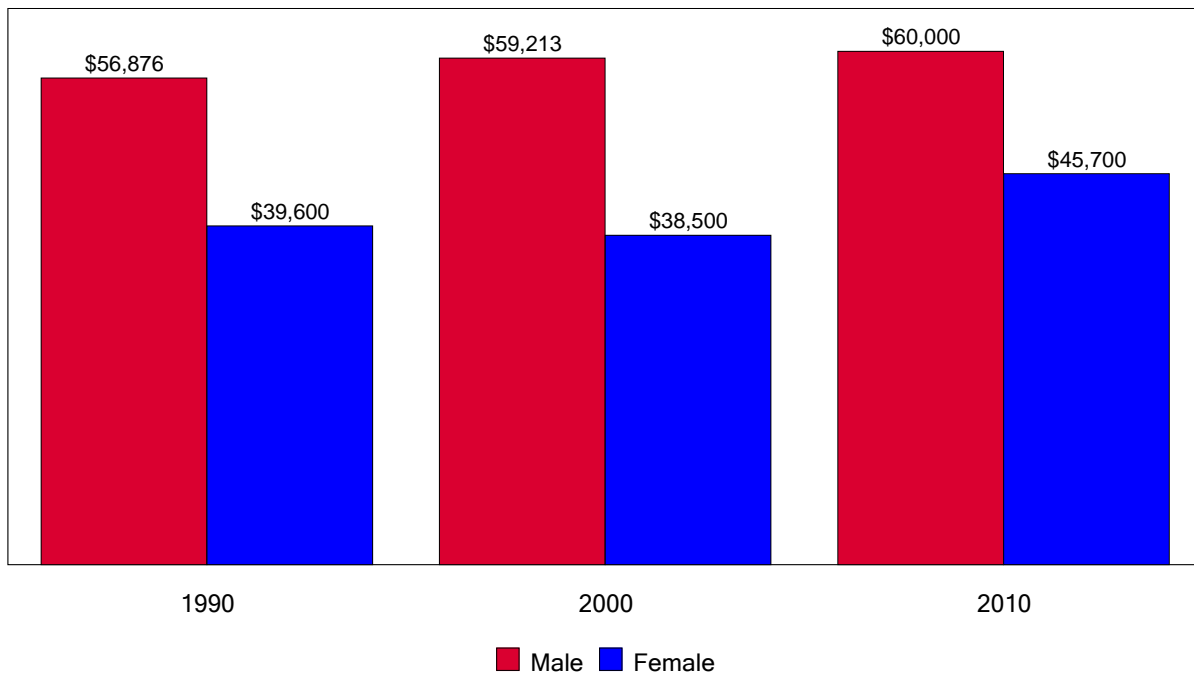
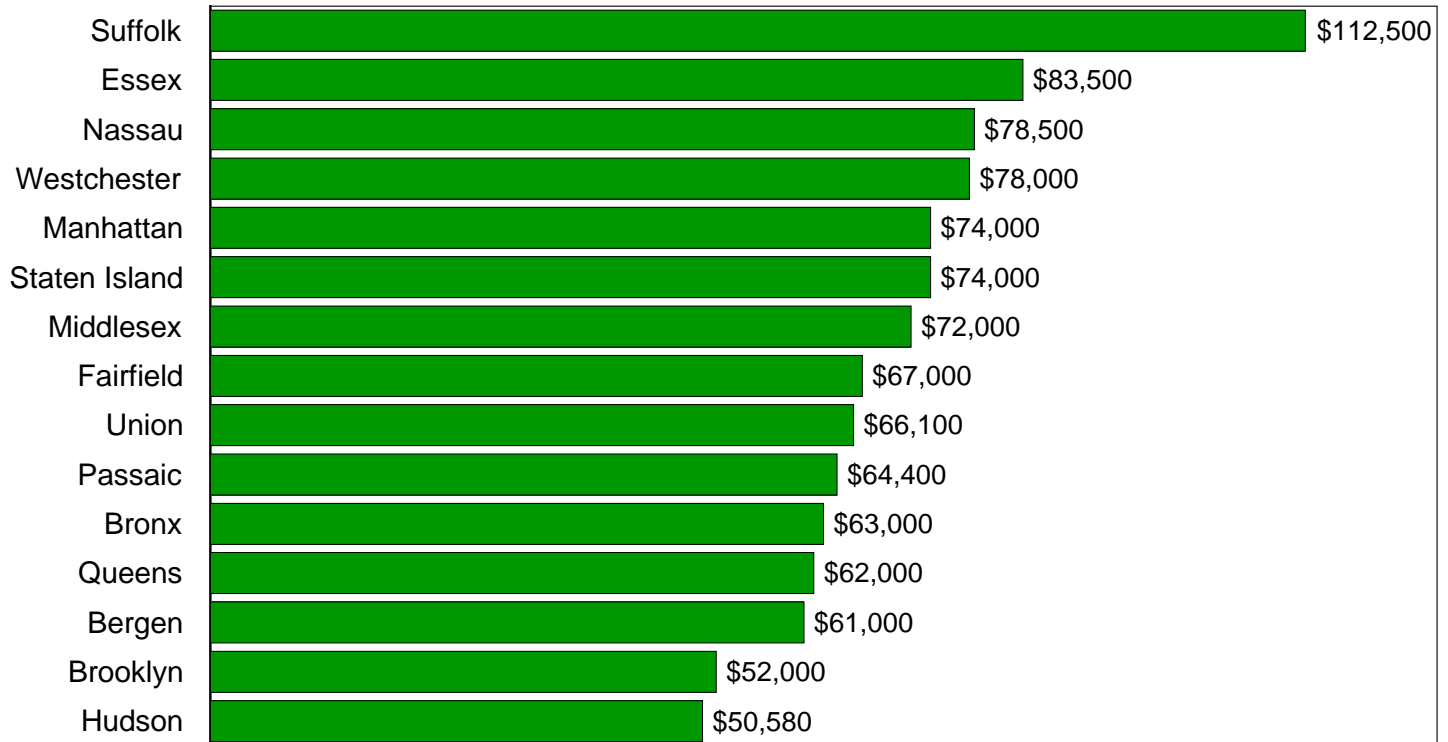


Figure 12  
Median Household Incomes among Colombians by County in the New York Metropolitan Region, 2010  
(in 2010 inflation adjusted dollars)



Colombians in the New York metropolitan area may have come from similar cultural backgrounds, to be sure, but there were sharp differentiations within the Colombian community and a very clear socioeconomic structure. This is brought into sharp focus when the structure of household income is examined. Median incomes are indicators of relative well-being but it must be remembered that the median is a statistical measure which is the mid-point of income distribution. This means that half of all observed incomes are above the median, and half are below. For a better understanding of the internal dynamics of the Colombian community in the tri-state region, the distribution of income must be considered. When these data are examined it is evident that there are very wealthy Mexican households in the region as well as very poor and middle income-level households. This was the case with both domestic and foreign-born Colombians.

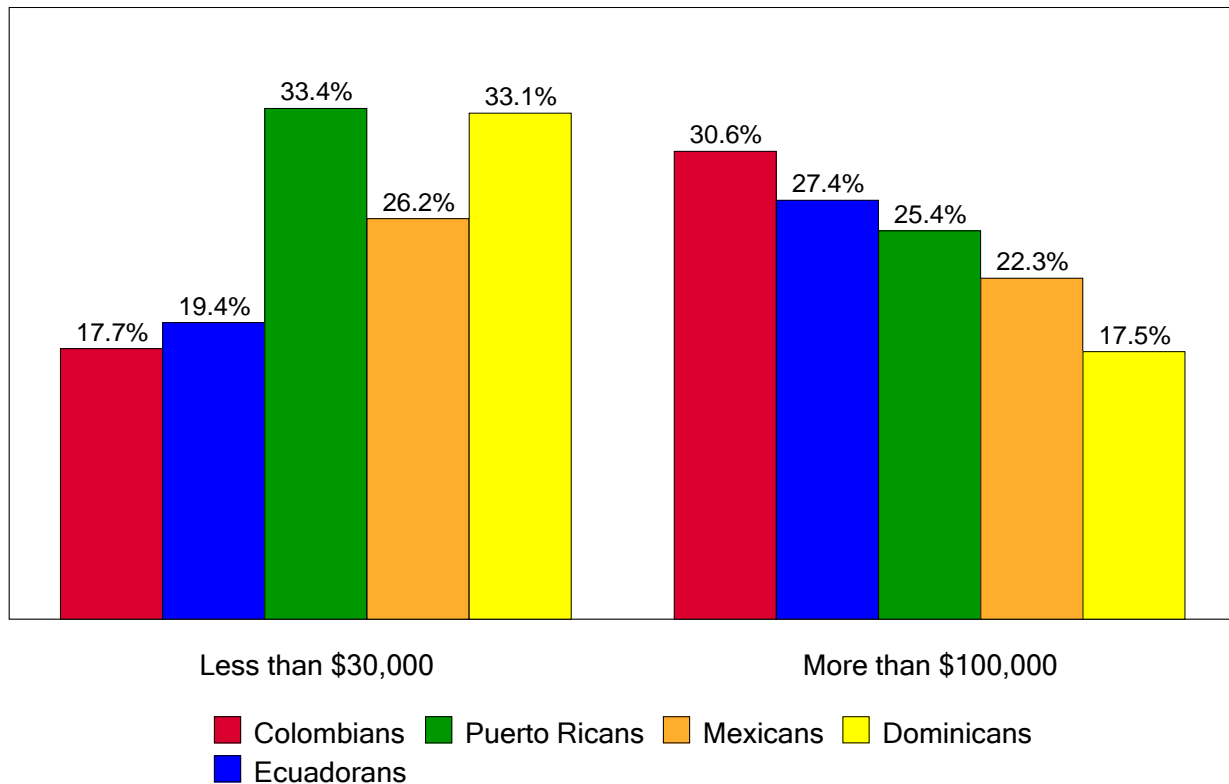
Table 11  
 Median Household Incomes among Colombians in New York  
 Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010  
 (in 2010 inflation adjusted dollars)

	1990	2000	2010	% of Total Colombian Population 2010
Suffolk	\$ 82,399	\$ 77,875	\$ 112,500	5.4%
Essex	\$ 67,320	\$ 65,000	\$ 83,500	1.6%
Nassau	\$ 86,881	\$ 93,750	\$ 78,500	5.5%
Westchester	\$ 60,720	\$ 63,125	\$ 78,000	5.8%
Manhattan	\$ 52,800	\$ 56,375	\$ 74,000	4.7%
Staten Island	\$ 67,426	\$ 65,188	\$ 74,000	1.1%
Middlesex	\$ 89,100	\$ 86,875	\$ 72,000	2.1%
Fairfield	\$ 77,593	\$ 70,000	\$ 67,000	5.2%
Union	\$ 58,575	\$ 58,750	\$ 66,100	8.9%
Passaic	\$ 60,849	\$ 66,000	\$ 64,400	4.9%
Bronx	\$ 46,035	\$ 41,250	\$ 63,000	2.6%
Queens	\$ 56,100	\$ 52,500	\$ 62,000	31.6%
Bergen	\$ 71,775	\$ 81,503	\$ 61,000	6.9%
Brooklyn	\$ 43,890	\$ 52,500	\$ 52,000	5.1%
Hudson	\$ 56,265	\$ 50,625	\$ 50,580	7.2%

Note: Because of small sample sizes data for Rockland, Orange Putnam, and Dutchess Counties are excluded from this Table  
 Only 1.2% of the total Colombian population of the region lived in these four counties combined.

In 2010, for example, 30.6% of all Colombian households in the New York metropolitan region earned more than \$100,000 annually. This was the highest percentage of households in this income category when compared with the other Latino nationalities in the region. At the same time, 17.7% of all Colombian households earned less than \$30,000 annually and this was the lowest percentage of households in this lower income category compared with the other Latino nationalities. (See figure 13).

Figure 13  
Percentage of Households Earning Less than \$30,000 and More than \$100,000 by Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010



What also must be emphasized is that there was an extreme level of income concentration in wealthier Colombian households in 2010 and before. In 2010 78% of total household income was controlled by those Mexican households earning more than \$100,000. To state this in another way, 30.6% of all households earned 78% of all income. In fact, income concentration among Colombians was even more extreme in 2010. Some 6% of all Colombian households earned \$200,000 or more, and these controlled 57% of total income to all Colombians in the region.

The 17.7% of all households earning less than \$30,000 accounted for only 2.0% of total income accruing to Colombian households. For complete data on household income structure among Colombians see table 12.

Table 12

Household Income Structure among Colombian Households in Inflation Adjusted 2010 Dollars  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010

	1990		2000		2010	
	% of Households	% of Income	% of Households	% of Income	% of Households	% of Income
Less than 10,000	3.0%	0.2%	3.7%	0.2%	3.6%	0.1%
10,000-19,999	5.9%	1.1%	6.8%	1.2%	6.7%	0.7%
20,000-29,999	9.1%	2.7%	7.9%	2.2%	7.5%	1.2%
30,000-39,999	10.1%	4.2%	10.4%	4.2%	9.0%	2.0%
40,000-49,999	11.5%	6.1%	10.3%	5.3%	8.2%	2.4%
50,000-74,999	23.2%	16.8%	21.3%	15.0%	21.7%	8.6%
75,000-99,999	15.2%	15.4%	14.5%	14.3%	12.7%	6.9%
100,000 - 199,999	18.6%	28.0%	20.4%	31.1%	24.6%	21.1%
200,000 +	3.4%	25.7%	4.9%	26.5%	6.0%	57.0%

### Educational Attainment

There is little question that the acquisition of higher levels of educational leads to greater income, irrespective of profession or job category. This is graphically depicted in figure 14 which clearly indicates the income advantages for high school graduates as well as for those able to attain a higher educational degree. This section will examine how educational attainment levels changed for the Colombian community in the New York metropolitan counties between 1990 and 2010.

The overall data indicate enormous strides in educational attainment between 1990 and 2010 among New York area Colombians. In 1990 only 10.6% of all Colombians 25 years of age or older had completed a college education. By 2010 this had increased to an impressive 23.3%. Over the same period the non-high school graduation rate fell from nearly 40% to 18.2%. By 2010 about 48% of all Colombians living in the New York metropolitan area had either attended some college, acquired an Associate's degree, or had achieved a B.A. degree or higher. (See figure 15).

In comparative perspective Colombians in the New York City metropolitan area were the most educated of the largest five Latino nationalities. They had the highest college graduation rate in 2010 and the lowest non-high school graduation rate. (See figure 16).



Figure 14  
Educational Attainment and Median Household Income Among Colombians 25 Years of Age and Older New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010

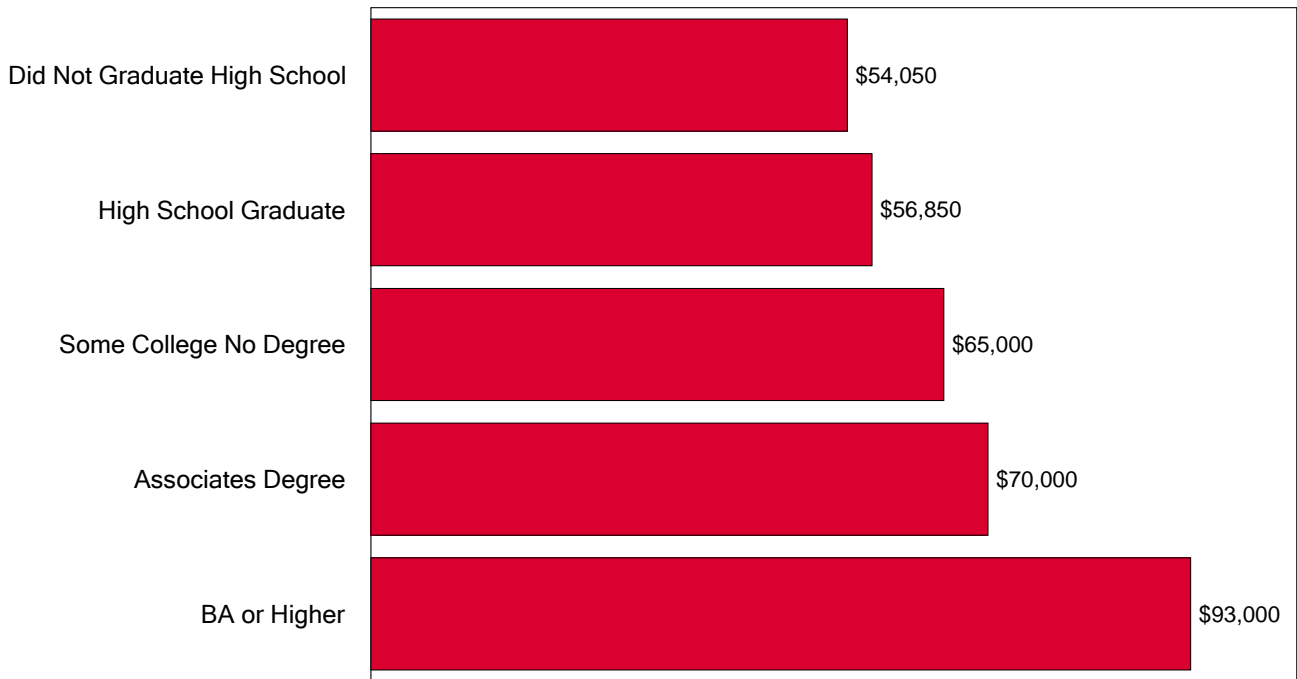


Figure 15  
Educational Attainment Levels Among Colombians in New York Metropolitan Area Counties 1990 - 2010 (in percent of population 25 Years of age and older)

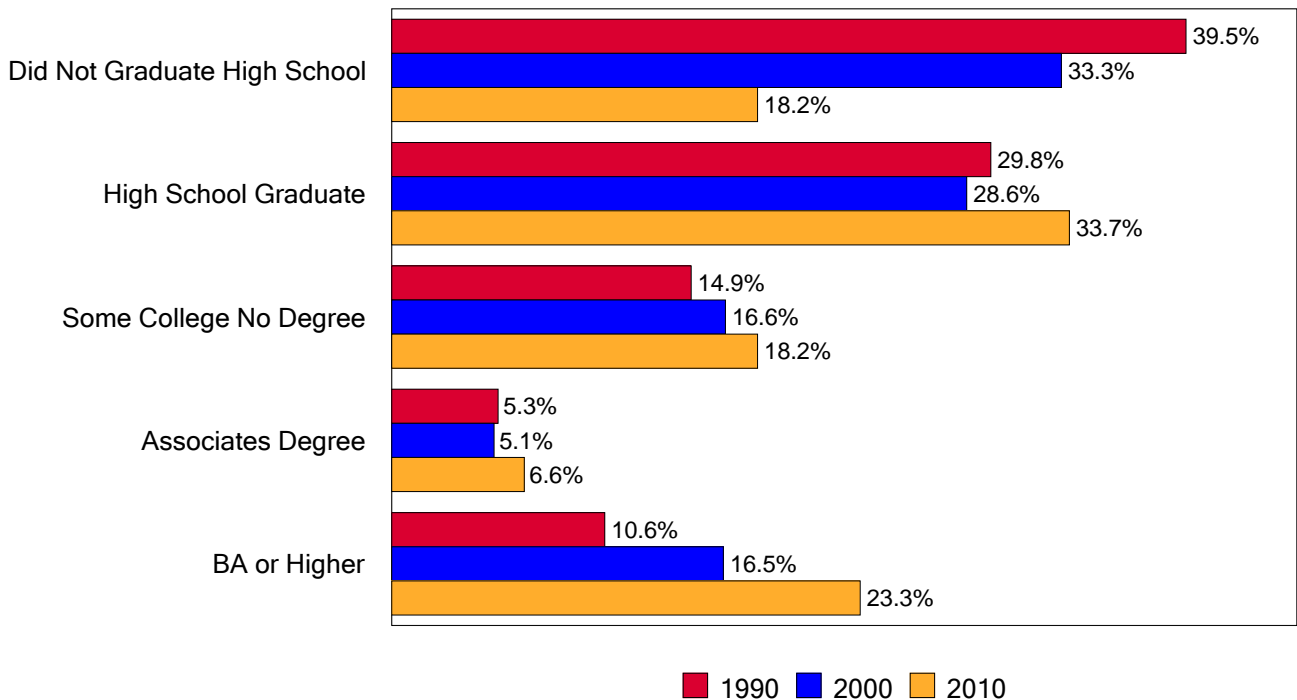
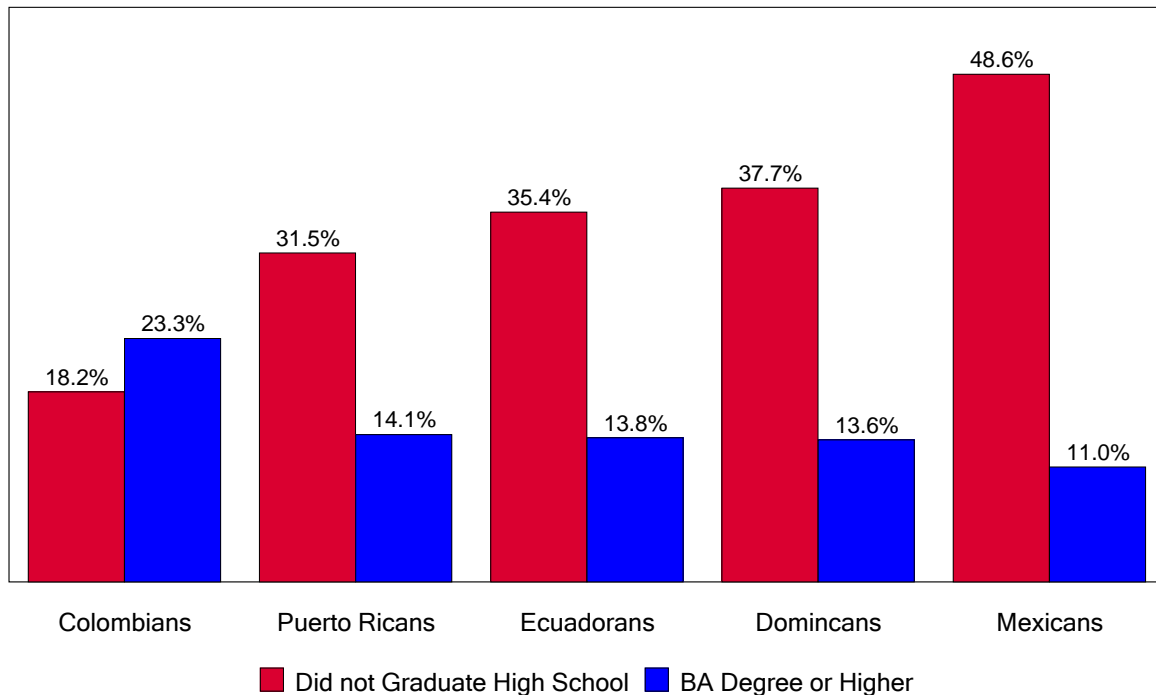


Figure 16  
Non-High School and College Graduation Rates Among Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010 (in percent of population 25 Years of age and older)



The most glaring difference in educational performance within the Colombian community was the extraordinary differential between domestic-born and foreign-born Colombians. While nearly 20% of foreign-born Colombians 25 years of age or older in the region did not graduate high school in 2010 only about 10% of domestic-born Colombians failed to finish high school by 2010. The college graduation rate among domestic-born Colombians was an astounding about 39% while for the foreign born it was 21%. (See figure 17).

When the data are disaggregated even further, nearly 38% of domestic-born males and 41% of domestic-born female Colombian adults had graduated college or achieved a higher degree in 2010. Only 10% of U.S.-born Colombian males and 11% of domestic-born females had not graduated high school by 2010. By way of comparison 17% of foreign-born men and 21% of foreign-born Colombian women had not graduated high school by 2010. About 20% of foreign-born males and 22% of foreign-born females had achieved a B.A. degree or higher by the same year. (See figures 18 and table 13 for complete data).

The data for 2010 reveal that about only 13% of all Colombians in the New York metropolitan area counties 25 years of age and older were domestic born. This proportion is certain to increase in the future as the demographic data presented previously indicate that migration has ended and in the future the Colombian population will be determined by natural reproduction. As it does educational

attainment for all Colombians will improve because of opportunities in the higher public education systems in the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut,

Figure 17  
 Non-High School and College Graduation Rates Among Colombians in New York Metropolitan Area Counties by Nativity, 2010 (in percent of population 25 Years of age and older)

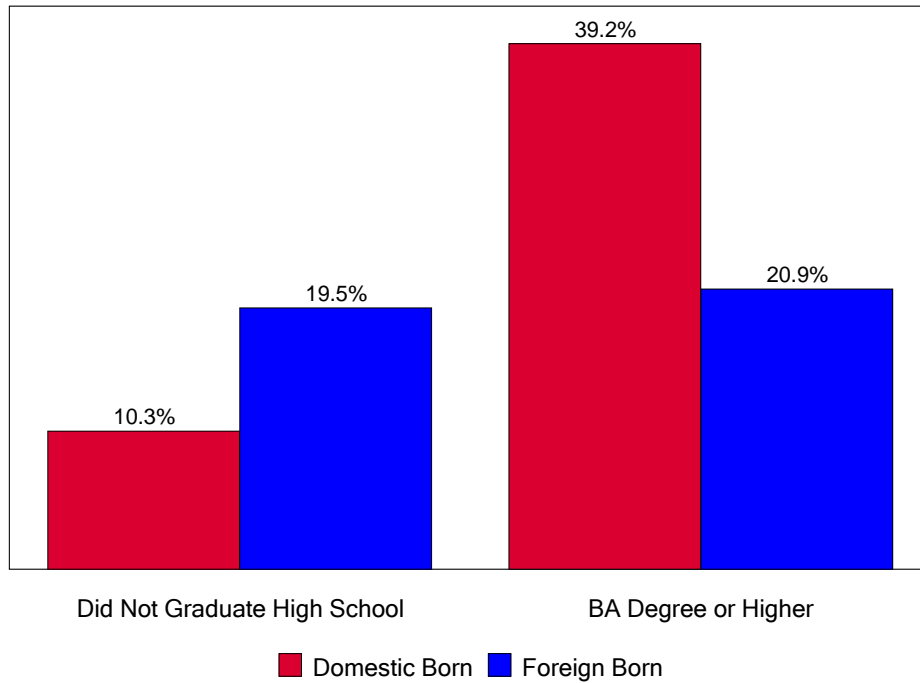


Figure 18  
 Non-High School and College Graduation Rates Among Colombians in New York Metropolitan Area Counties by Sex and Nativity, 2010 (in percent of population 25 Years of age and older)

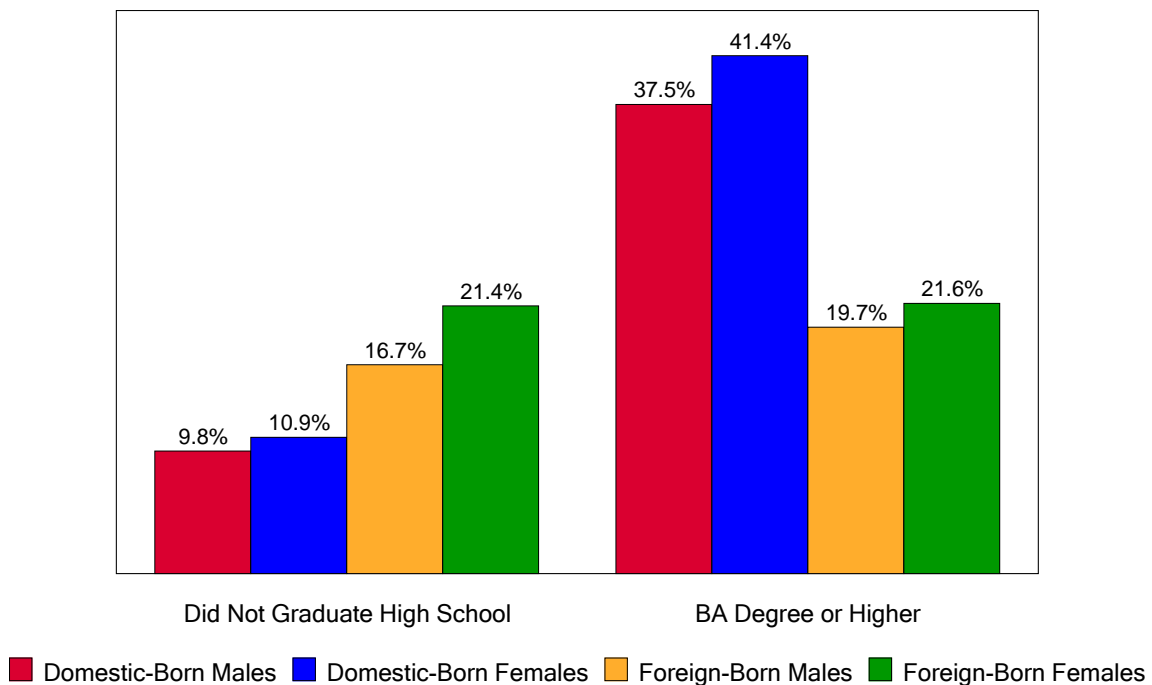


Table 13  
Educational Attainment Among Colombians in New York Metropolitan Counties  
by Demographic Category, 1990 - 2010  
(in percentages of Colombian population 25 years of age and older)

	1990				
	Did Not Graduate High School	High School Graduate	Some College No Degree	Associates Degree	BA Degree or Higher
Total Population	39.5%	29.8%	14.9%	5.3%	10.6%
All Males	35.7%	30.5%	16.7%	4.8%	12.3%
All Females	42.7%	29.2%	13.3%	5.7%	9.1%
Domestic Born	22.0%	26.2%	20.9%	10.4%	20.4%
Foreign Born	39.8%	29.9%	14.8%	5.1%	10.3%
Domestic-Born Males	20.1%	27.3%	28.6%	7.5%	16.6%
Foreign-Born Males	36.1%	30.7%	16.5%	4.8%	11.9%
Domestic-Born Females	24.0%	25.2%	13.0%	13.4%	24.4%
Foreign-Born Females	42.9%	29.3%	13.5%	5.4%	8.9%

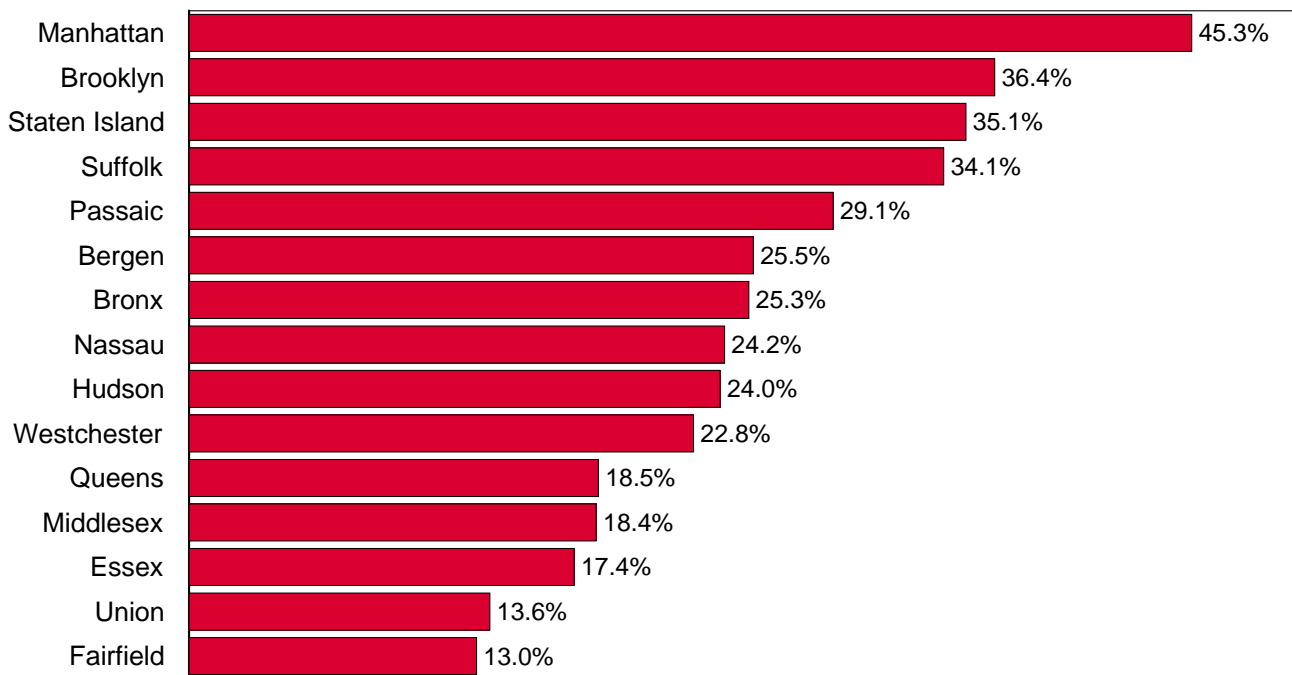
	2000				
	Did Not Graduate High School	High School Graduate	Some College No Degree	Associates Degree	BA Degree or Higher
Total Population	33.3%	28.6%	16.6%	5.1%	16.5%
All Males	31.8%	28.7%	18.3%	4.4%	16.8%
All Females	34.4%	28.5%	15.3%	5.6%	16.2%
Domestic Born	14.1%	14.5%	23.8%	9.5%	38.0%
Foreign Born	34.7%	29.6%	16.1%	4.7%	14.9%
Domestic-Born Males	16.4%	13.7%	29.0%	7.9%	33.0%
Foreign-Born Males	33.0%	29.9%	17.4%	4.1%	15.6%
Domestic-Born Females	12.1%	15.2%	19.3%	11.0%	42.4%
Foreign-Born Females	36.0%	29.4%	15.0%	5.2%	14.4%

	2010				
	Did Not Graduate High School	High School Graduate	Some College No Degree	Associates Degree	BA Degree or Higher
Total Population	18.2%	33.7%	18.2%	6.6%	23.3%
All Males	15.5%	36.5%	20.7%	4.5%	22.8%
All Females	20.3%	31.6%	16.3%	8.1%	23.7%
Domestic Born	10.3%	20.5%	21.2%	8.8%	39.2%
Foreign Born	19.5%	35.7%	17.7%	6.2%	20.9%
Domestic-Born Males	9.8%	23.9%	18.8%	10.1%	37.5%
Foreign-Born Males	16.7%	39.1%	21.0%	3.4%	19.7%
Domestic-Born Females	10.9%	16.2%	24.2%	7.2%	41.4%
Foreign-Born Females	21.4%	33.4%	15.4%	8.3%	21.6%

Finally, when college graduation rates are examined by county there was clearly a hierarchy. At the top, about 45% of all adult Colombians living in Manhattan had achieved a B.A. degree or higher in 2010. Over one-third living in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Suffolk county had graduated from college. Complete data on each county are found in figure 19 and table 14.

Figure 19  
Colombians College Graduates as Percentage of Colombian Population 25 Years of Age and older New York Metropolitan Counties, 2010



Note: The sample sizes for Rockland, Orange, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties were too small for their data to be included here.

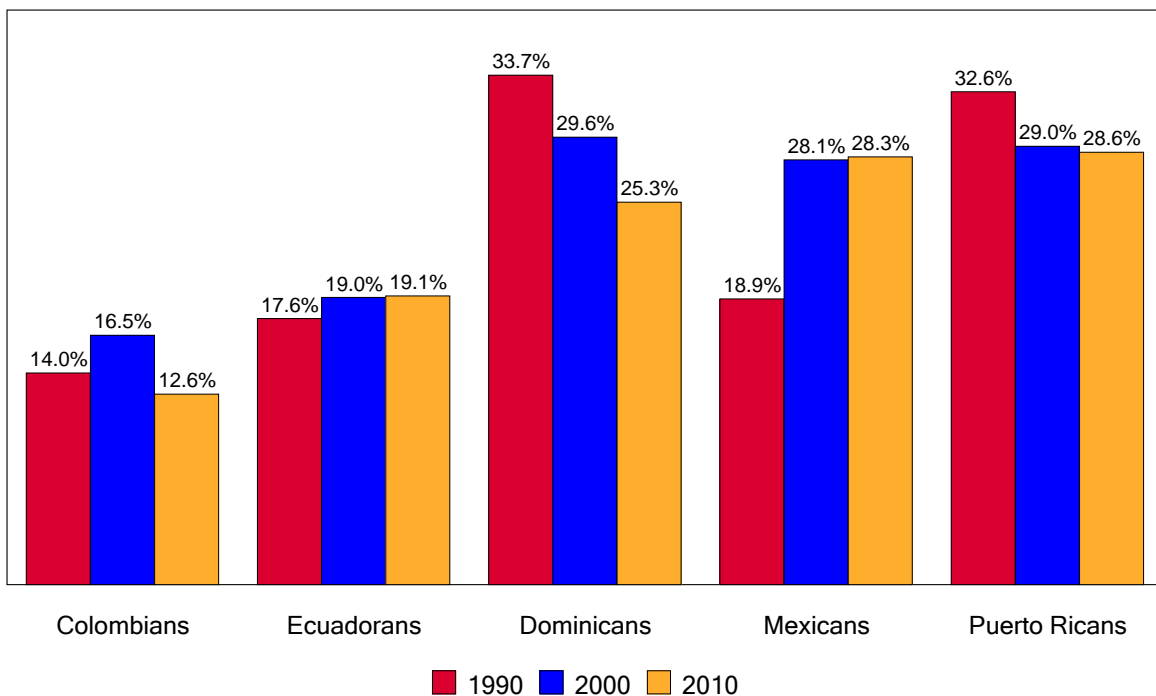
Table 14  
 Percent of Colombian Population  
 with B.A. Degree or Higher  
 by New York Metropolitan Area County  
 2010 (population 25 years of age and older)

	% with B.A. Degree or Higher	% of all Colombians with B.A. Degrees or Higher
Manhattan	45.3%	5.1%
Brooklyn	36.4%	5.1%
Staten Island	35.1%	1.3%
Suffolk	34.1%	4.6%
Passaic	29.1%	4.9%
Bergen	25.5%	7.4%
Bronx	25.3%	2.6%
Nassau	24.2%	6.3%
Hudson	24.0%	6.5%
Westchester	22.8%	5.1%
Queens	18.5%	31.5%
Middlesex	18.4%	3.1%
Essex	17.4%	1.7%
Union	13.6%	8.8%
Fairfield	13.0%	5.1%

## Poverty

Colombians in the New York City metropolitan area had the lowest poverty rates found among the five largest Latino national subgroups in the region at 12.6% in 2010 which was a decrease from 14% in 1990 and 16.5% in 2000. In large part this was related to the higher educational attainment levels indicated previously, which meant integration into the labor force in better-paying jobs. (See figure 20).

Figure 20  
Percentage of People Living in Poverty by Five Largest Latino Nationalities in New York Metropolitan Counties  
1990 - 2010



Poverty rates were comparatively low among all demographic categories; males, females, foreign born; domestic born; and in all age groups as indicated in figures 21 and 22.

Figure 21  
 Percentage of Colombians Living in Poverty by Sex and Nativity in New York Metropolitan Counties  
 1990 - 2010

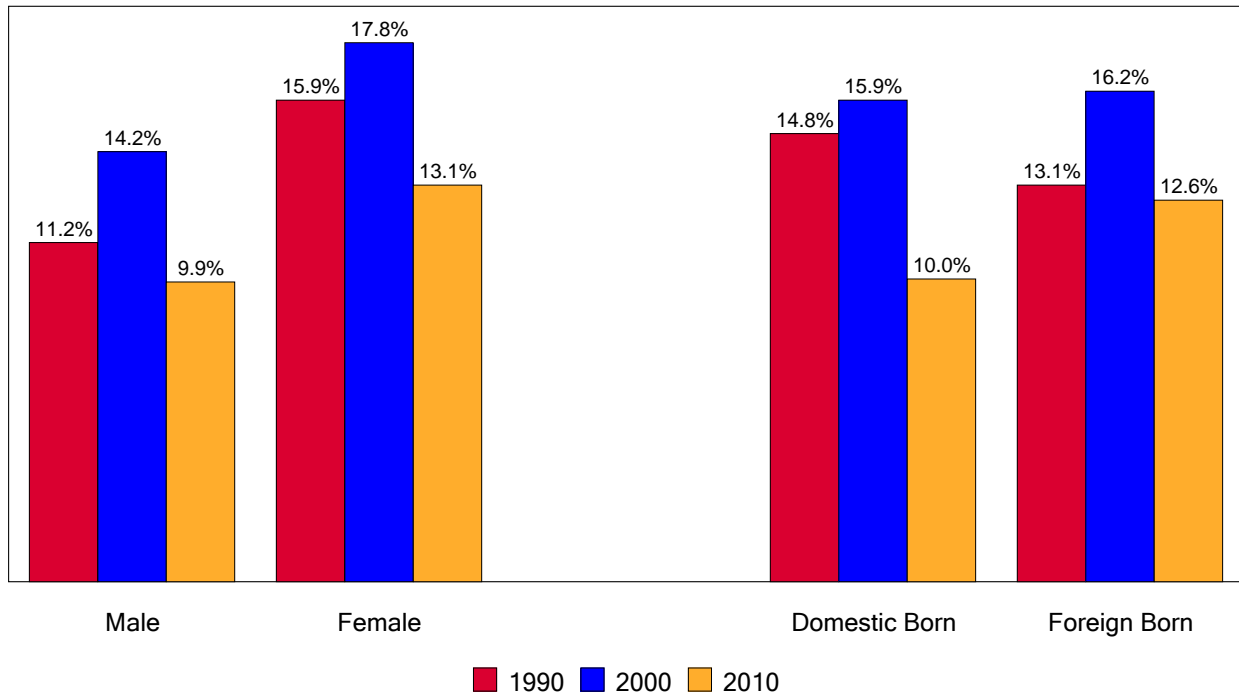
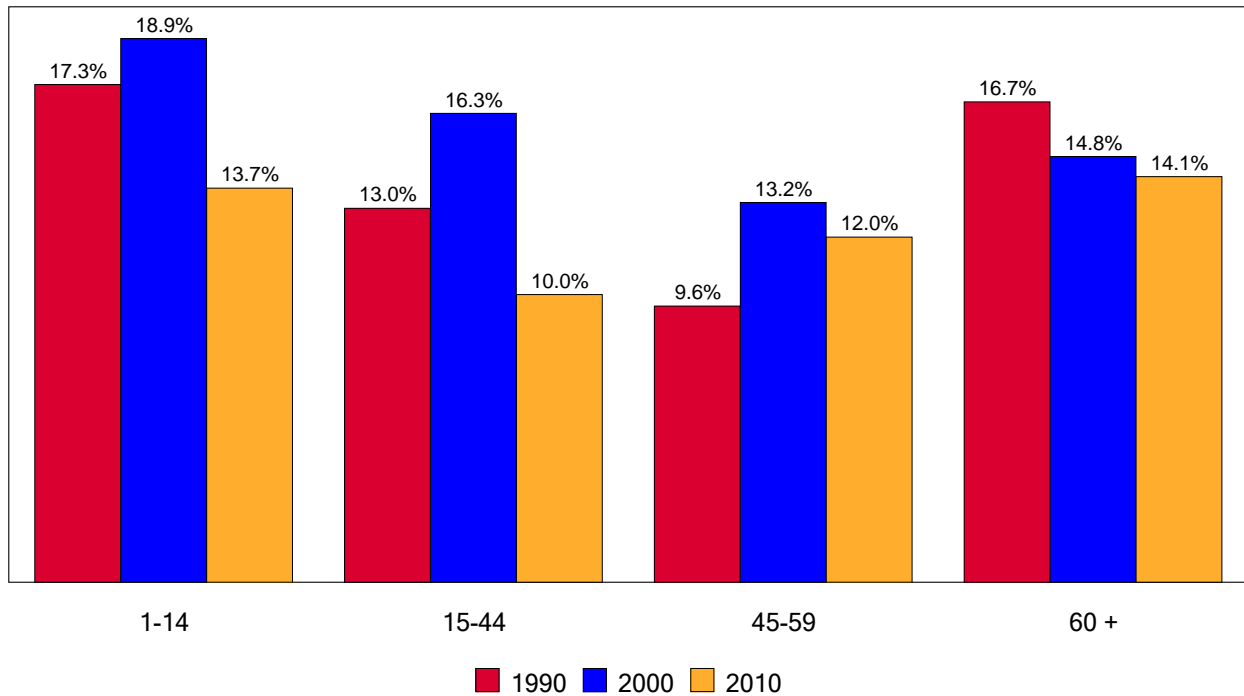


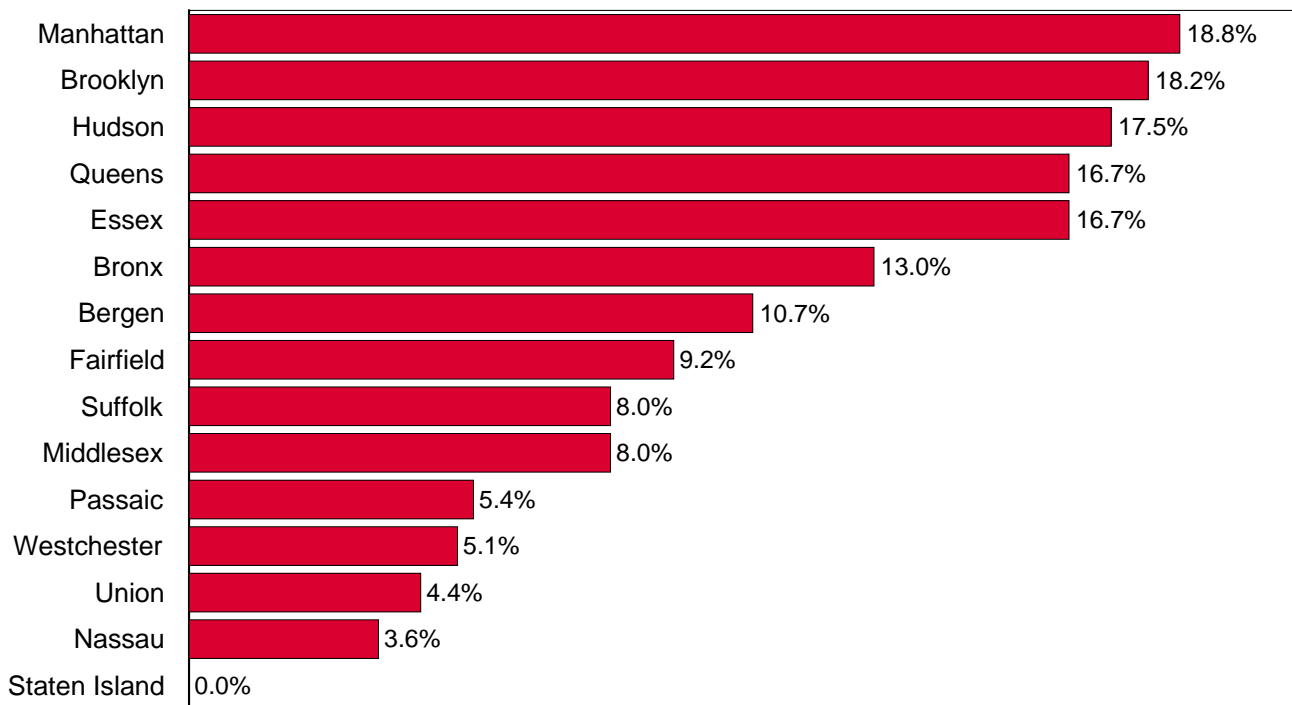
Figure 22  
 Percentage of Colombians Living in Poverty by Age Group in New York Metropolitan Counties  
 1990 - 2010





Finally, poverty among Colombians in the region was not uniform. The City boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx and Hudson and Essex counties in New Jersey all had poverty rates which were significantly higher than in the other suburban counties. (See figure 23).<sup>11</sup>

Figure 23  
Colombian Poverty Rates New York Metropolitan Counties, 2010



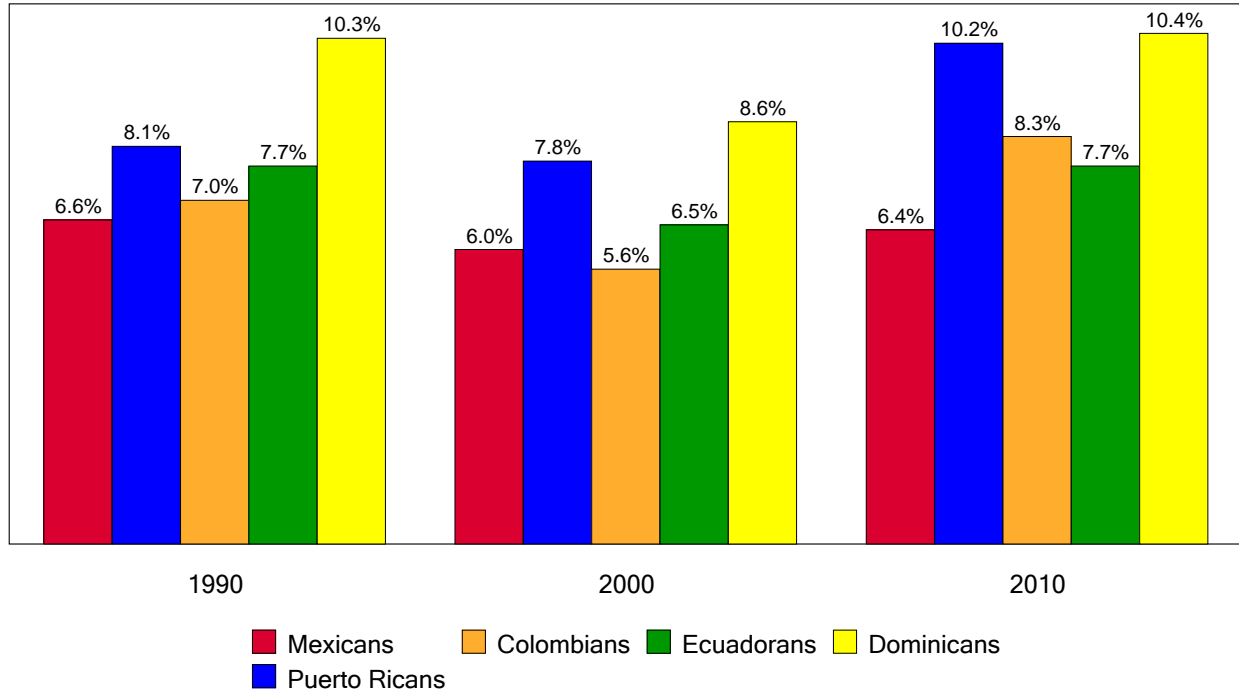
## Employment and Unemployment

The Census Bureau utilizes three measures which help understand the employment characteristics of the work force: unemployment, employment, and those out of the work force. Each tells us something very different about the changing dynamics of the Colombian labor force in the tri-state region.<sup>12</sup> Unemployment measures only those actively seeking work. In comparative perspective Colombians had low unemployment rates in 1990 (7%), 2000 (5.6%), although there was a rise to 8.3% in 2010. This increase in unemployment may have been related to the economic crisis which began in late 2008. (See figure 24).

<sup>11</sup> The sample sizes in Rockland, Orange, Putnam, and Dutchess Counties were too small to be reliable.

<sup>12</sup> The potential work force is considered people between the ages of 16 and 60 and all data analyzed in this section focus on this age category.

Figure 24  
Percentage of People Unemployed by Largest Latino Nationalities for Population Ages 16 - 60  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010



However, the employment and out of the work force rates, which move in opposite directions relative to each other, are important indicators of changes occurring within the Colombian labor force. The percentage of the Colombian work force which was employed was the highest among all of the major regional Latino nationalities in each year between 1990 and 2010 as indicated in figure 25. The out of the labor force rate between 1990 and 2010 was the lowest among all of the Latino national subgroups in the region. (See figure 26). Colombians of working ages actively sought jobs and this may have been related to two factors. First were the qualifications for work force employment that related to relatively high educational attainment levels. Second, because of lower birth and fertility rates, Colombian women more actively sought employment out of the household because they were not burdened by child-care responsibilities to the same extent as other Latino nationalities.

There were however, significant differences in workforce participation rates by sex and nativity. Women in the working age category, between 16 and 60 years old had significantly higher 'out of the work force' rates than men. By 2010 about 27% of all working-age Colombian women were out of the work force compared with 14% of Colombian men. It is likely that this was closely related to child-rearing responsibilities. (See figure 27).

Figure 25  
 Percentage of People Employed by Largest Latino Nationalities for Population Ages 16 - 60  
 in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010

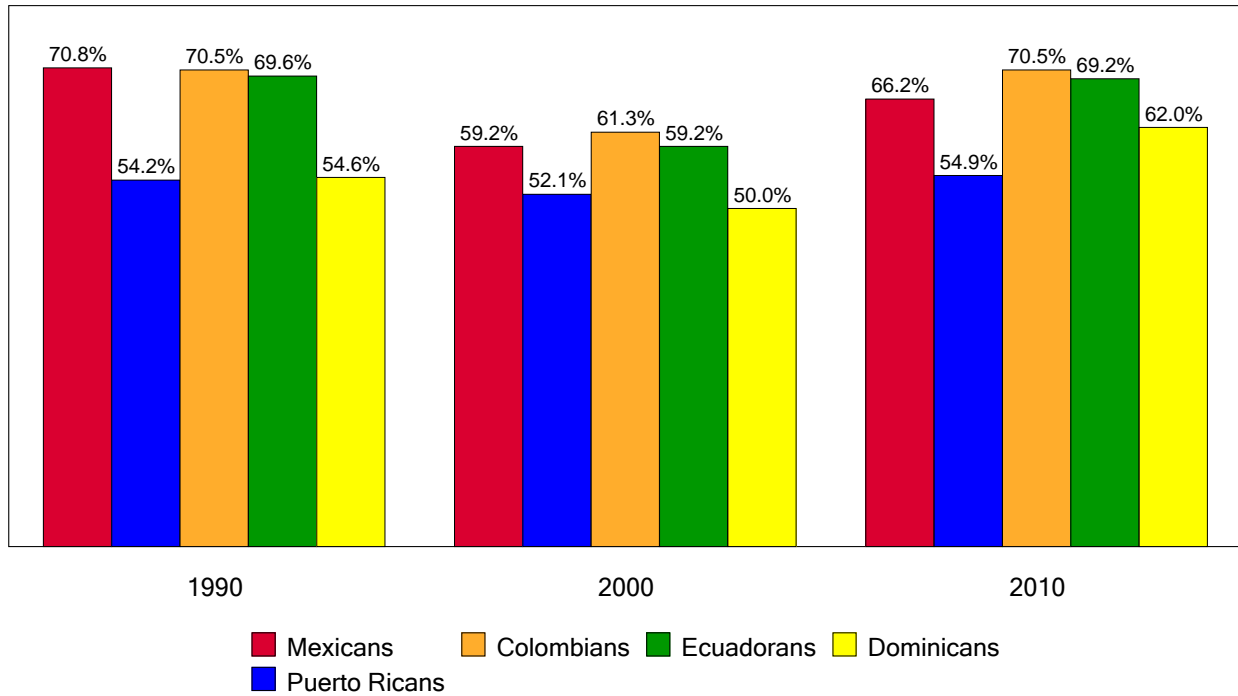


Figure 26  
 Percentage of People Out of the Work Force by Largest Latino Nationalities for Population Ages 16 - 60  
 in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010

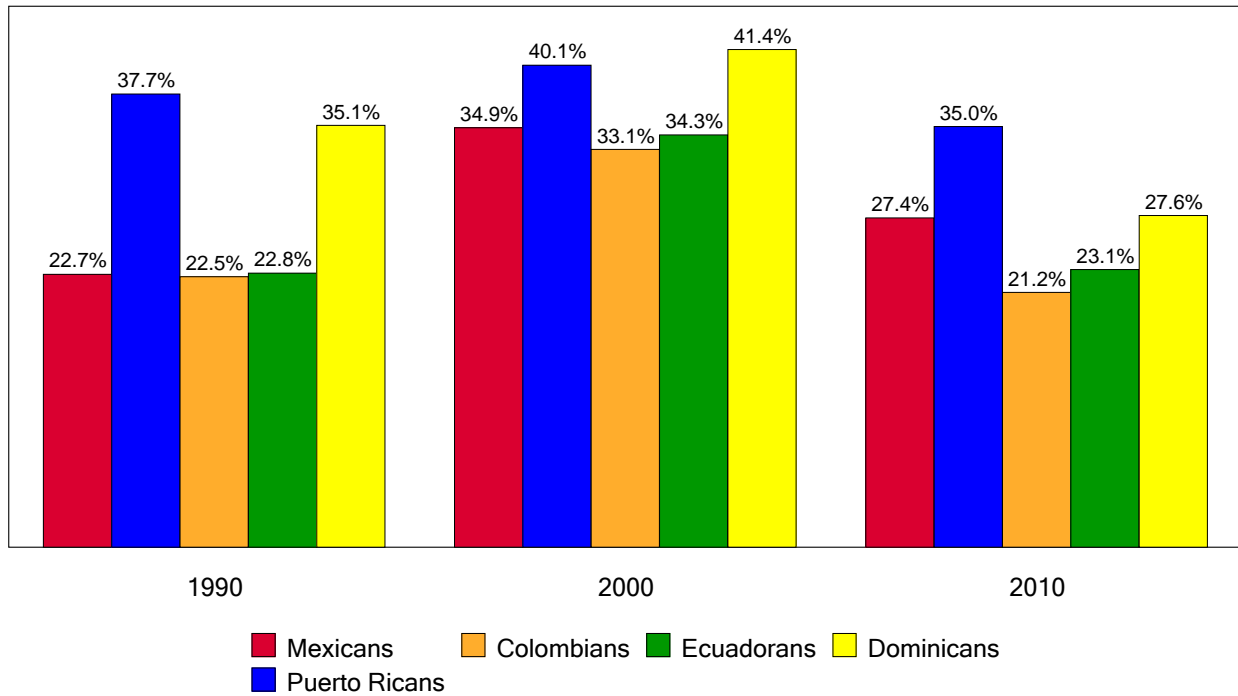
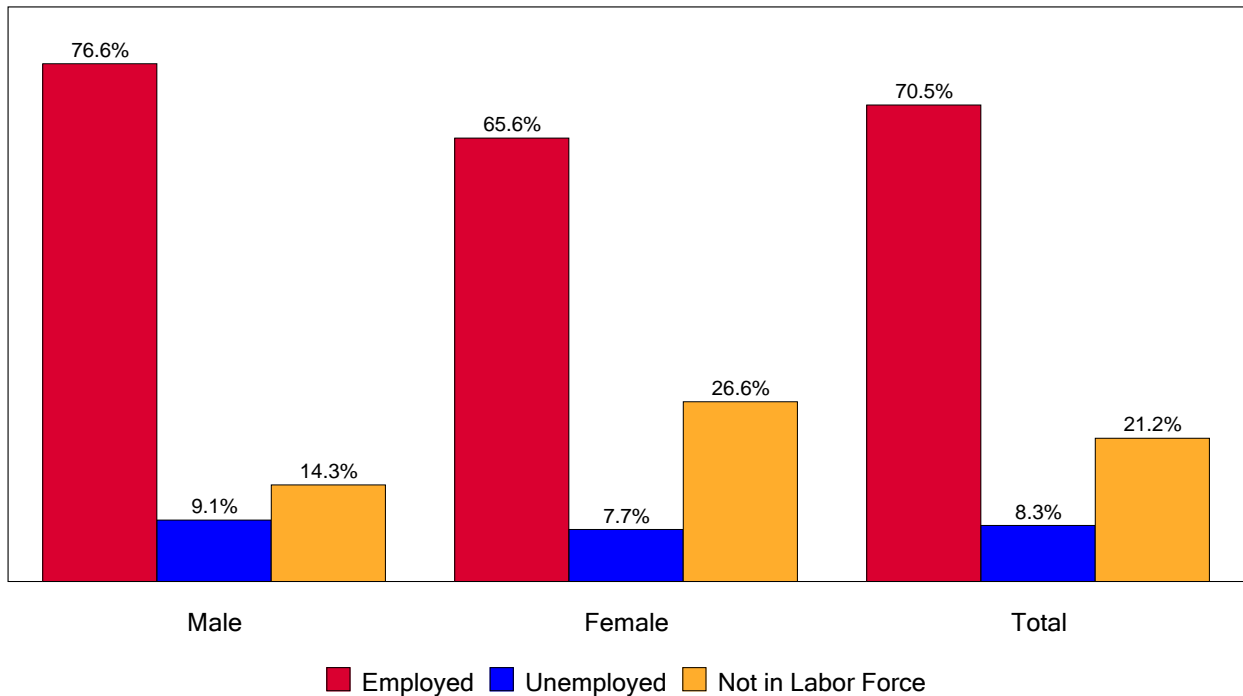


Figure 27  
Employment Status of Colombians by Sex for Population Ages 16 - 60 in Percentages  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 2010



It is also conspicuous that the out-of-the work force rate for domestic-born Colombian females was significantly higher between 1990 and 2010 than for foreign-born Colombians women between 16 and 60 years of age.. By 2010 the rate was 32% for Colombian women born in the U.S. and 25% for those who were born in Colombia. (See figure 28).

The differentials for males were also striking. Among U.S.-born Colombian males 27% were out of the work force compared with 10% of foreign-born Colombian males in 2010. (See figures 29 and 30). For complete data see table 15.

One of the main reasons for these different work force rates by nativity was because of the fact the foreign-born Colombians were generally older than the U.S. born, and thus more likely to have a lesser degree of child-rearing responsibilities and longer time periods in the work force. The median age for U.S. born Colombians between 16 and 60 years old was 25 for both sexes, while the median age for foreign-born Colombians in the region within this working age category was 43.

Figure 28  
Out of the Workforce Rates for Colombian Females by Nativity for Population Ages 16 - 60  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010

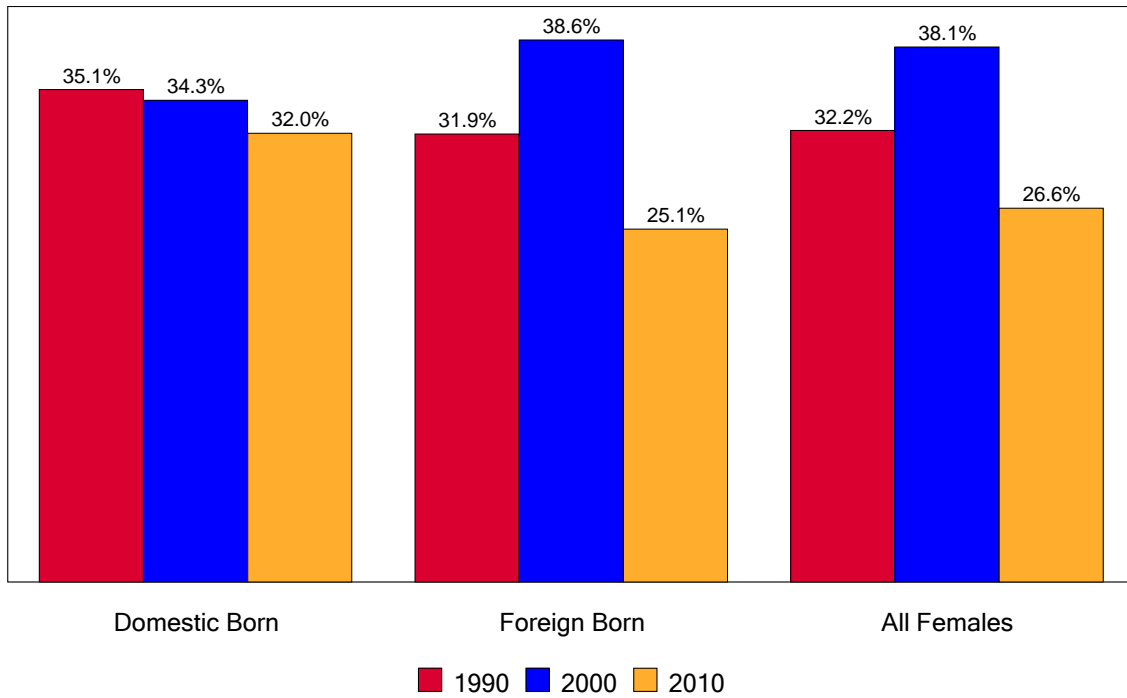


Figure 29  
Out of the Workforce Rates for Colombian Males by Nativity for Population Ages 16 - 60  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010

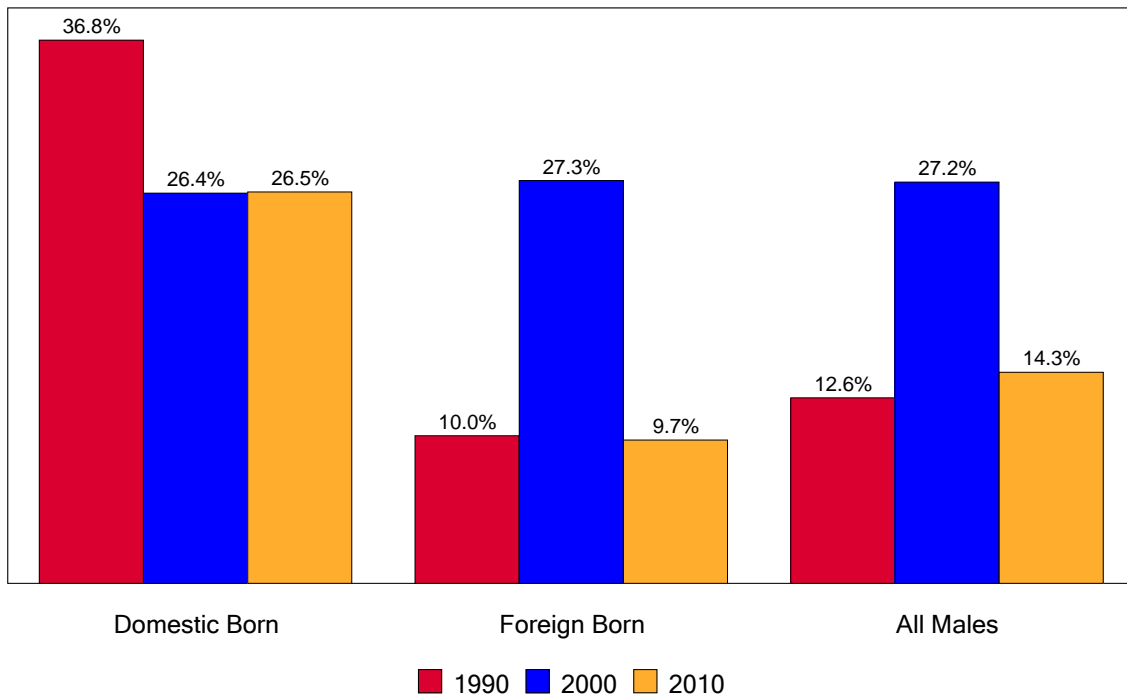
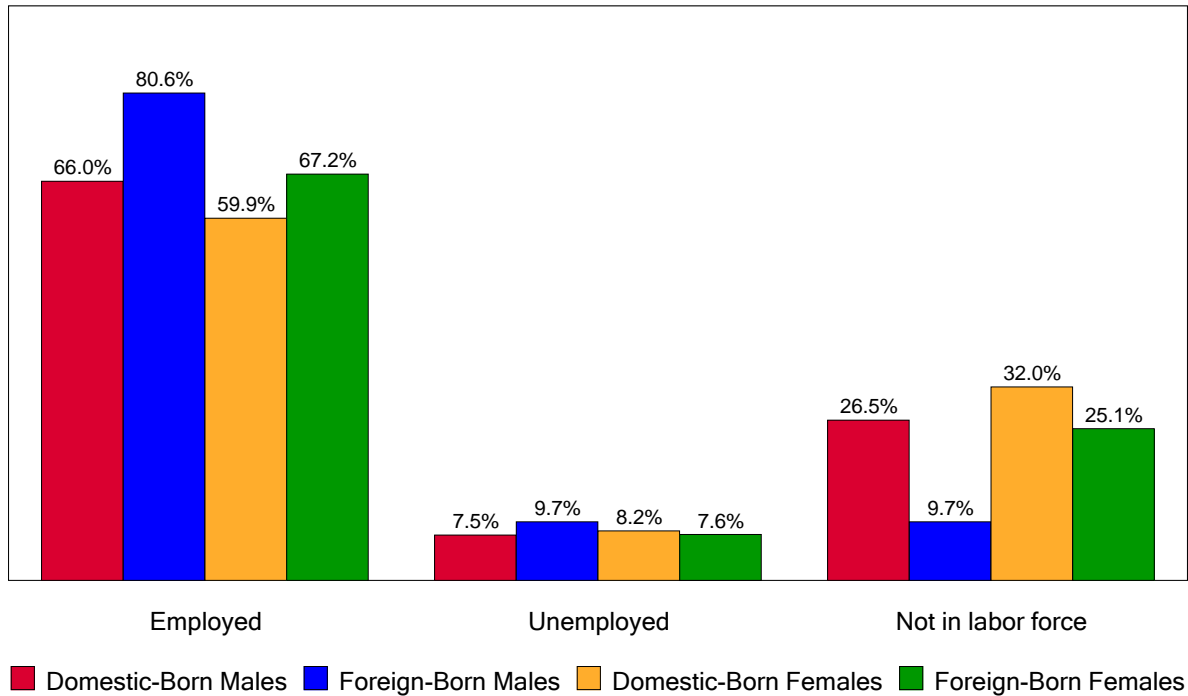


Figure 30  
Employment Status of Colombians by Nativity and Sex for Population Ages 16 - 60 in Percentages  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 2010



## Language

The overall ability to speak English among the Colombian community in the New York metropolitan counties was conditioned by the end of migration to the region after 2000.<sup>13</sup> This was because very few Colombians arrived with poor English language skills as was the case with Latinos who continued to arrive in the region such as Dominicans, Mexicans, and Ecuadorans.

While the reliability of the data collected by the Census Bureau may be somewhat suspect, since this relies on self-assessments of language ability, the trends are clear. In 1990 about 33% of all Colombians in the region reported not speaking English or not speaking well. This declined marginally to 31.3% in 2000 as Colombians continued to arrive between 1990 and 2000. But with the downturn in migration after 2000 this declined 22.8% to 35% in 2010. (See figure 31).

However, as to be expected there was a divergence by nativity and age. About 97% of domestic-born Colombians in the region spoke only English or spoke English well or very well in 2010. Among foreign-born Colombians, however, about 69% reported having adequate English speaking skills in the same year.

<sup>13</sup> Language abilities are only measured for the population 5 years of age and older.

For foreign-born Colombians there was some variation in English speaking skills by age category. Foreign-born Colombian children, between 5 and 14 years of age and most likely enrolled in school, had a 90% rate of good English speaking skills. However, in the core working age group, those between 15 and 44 years old and foreign-born, the rate dropped to 82%. For those between 45 and 59 years of age, the rate was 67% and it was 45% for those 60 years old or greater. (See figure 32).

Irrespective of English language skills the language spoken at home was usually Spanish. In 1990 about 94% of all Colombians spoke Spanish at home. This fell only slightly to 92% by 2000 and to 88% in 2010. Thus, bilingualism among those who spoke English well was widespread. The domestic-born children of foreign-born parents, even though fluent in English, spoke Spanish at home. (See figure 33).

Figure 31  
Language Ability Among Colombians, Population Ages 5 and Older in Percentages  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010

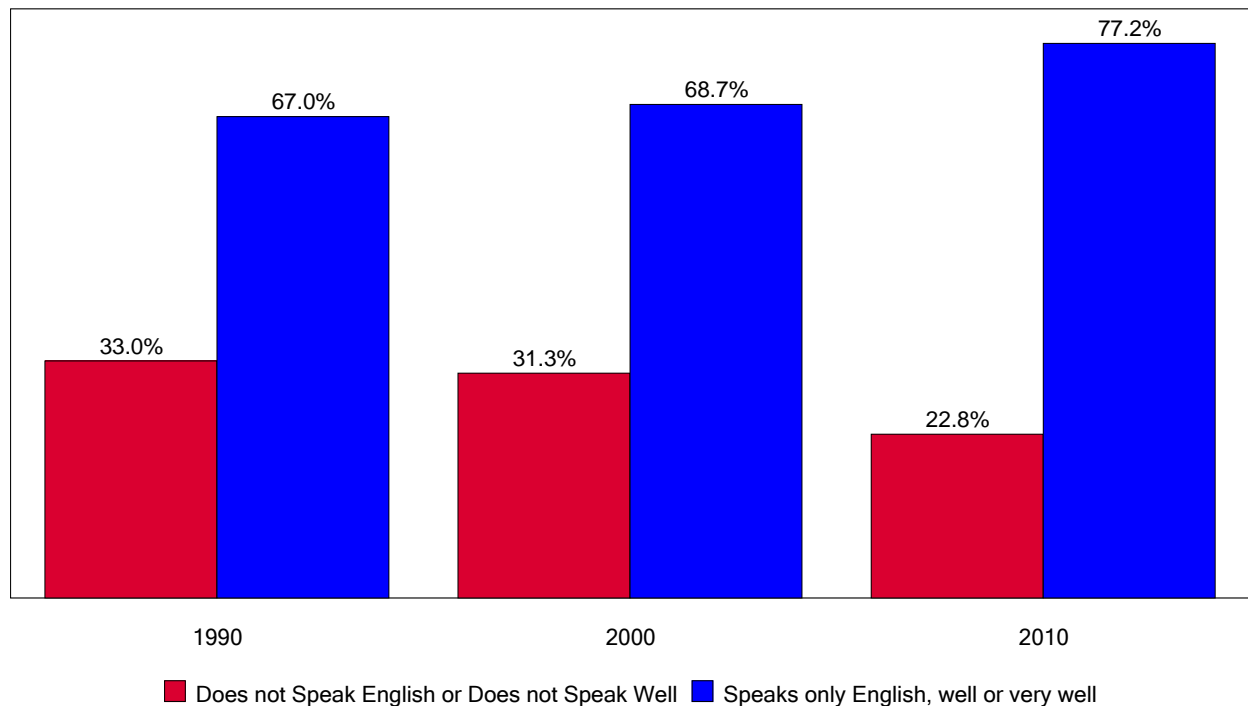
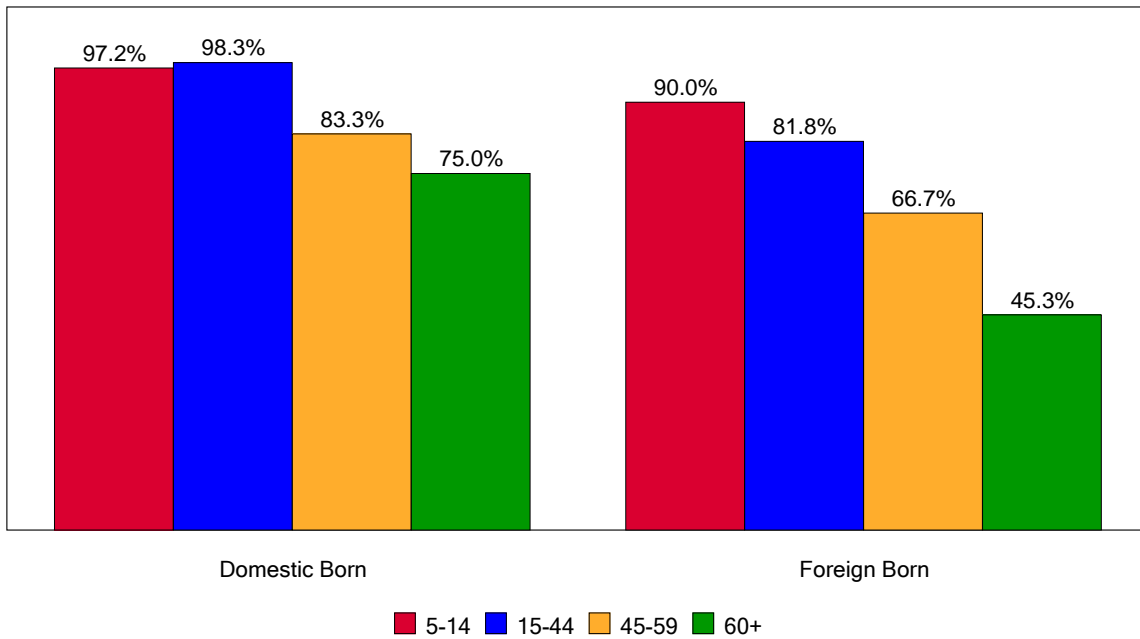
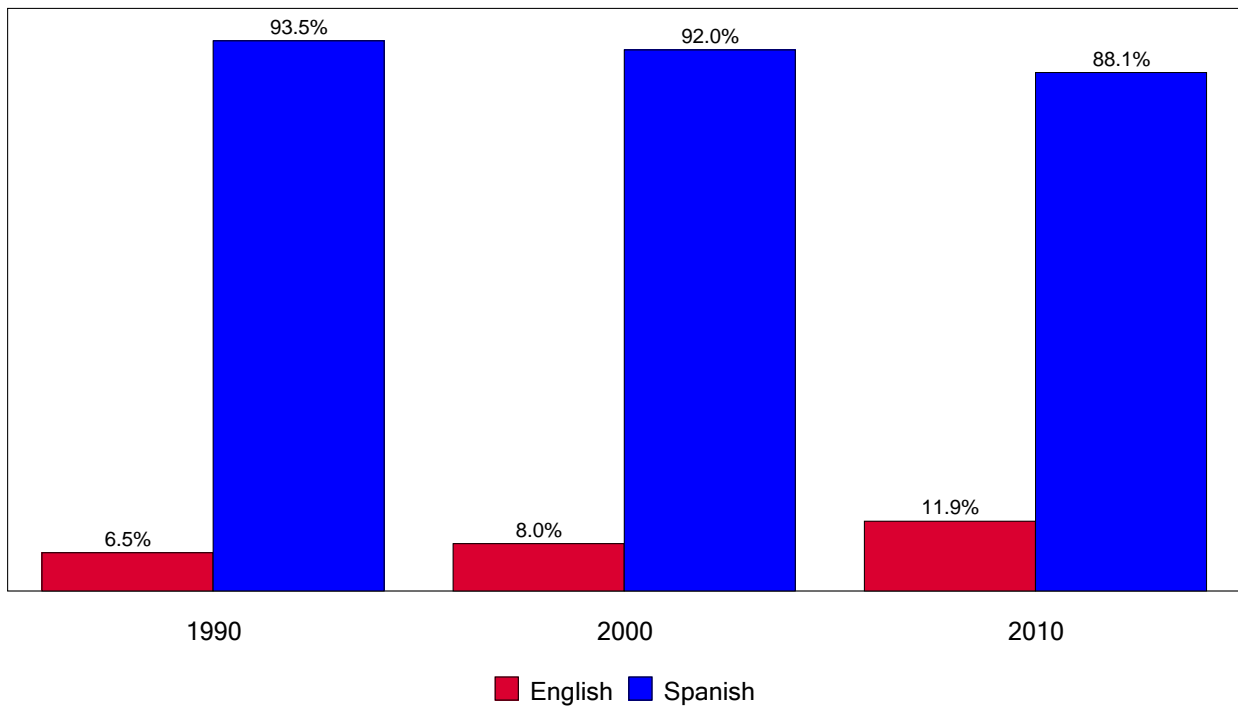


Figure 32  
English-Speaking Proficiency Among Colombian Population by Age Category and Nativity  
in Percentages in New York Metropolitan Counties, 2010



Note: These are individuals who reported speaking English exclusively, well, or very well.

Figure 33  
Language Spoken at Home Among Colombians Population Ages 5 and Older in Percentages  
in New York Metropolitan Counties, 1990 - 2010





## Citizenship and the Electorate

The percentage of Colombians who were citizens increased steadily from 43% in 1990; 55% in 2000; and nearly 70% in 2010. Citizenship rates among Colombians in the region, both naturalized and because of births in the U.S., will continue into the future with the fall in the migration from Colombia. (See figure 34).

The absolute number of Colombians in the region who were eligible to vote increased substantially between 1990 and 2010. These were citizens who were 18 years of age and older. These more than tripled from 33,8a8 eligible voters in 1990 to 111,024 in 2010. There is no way to determine how many actually exercised their right to vote. However, the political influence of Colombians was miniscule. In 2010 the Mexican potential electorate comprised less than 1% of all eligible voters in the region. (See figure 35).

Figure 34  
Citizenship Status Among Colombians in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 1990 - 2010  
(in percentage of all Colombians)

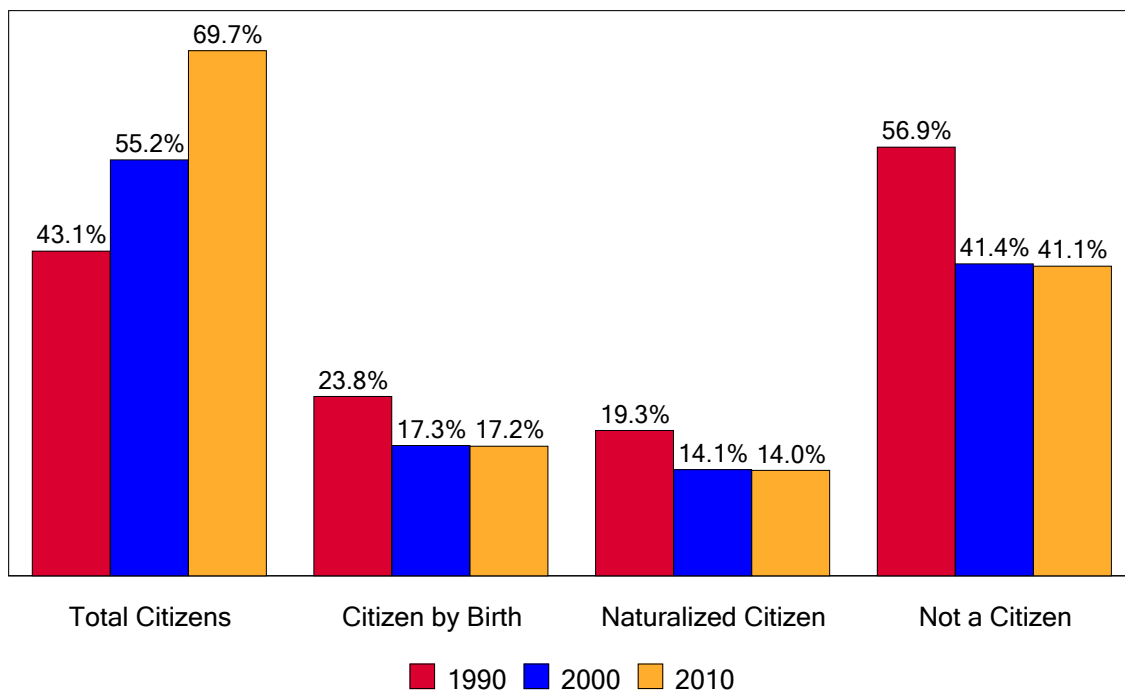
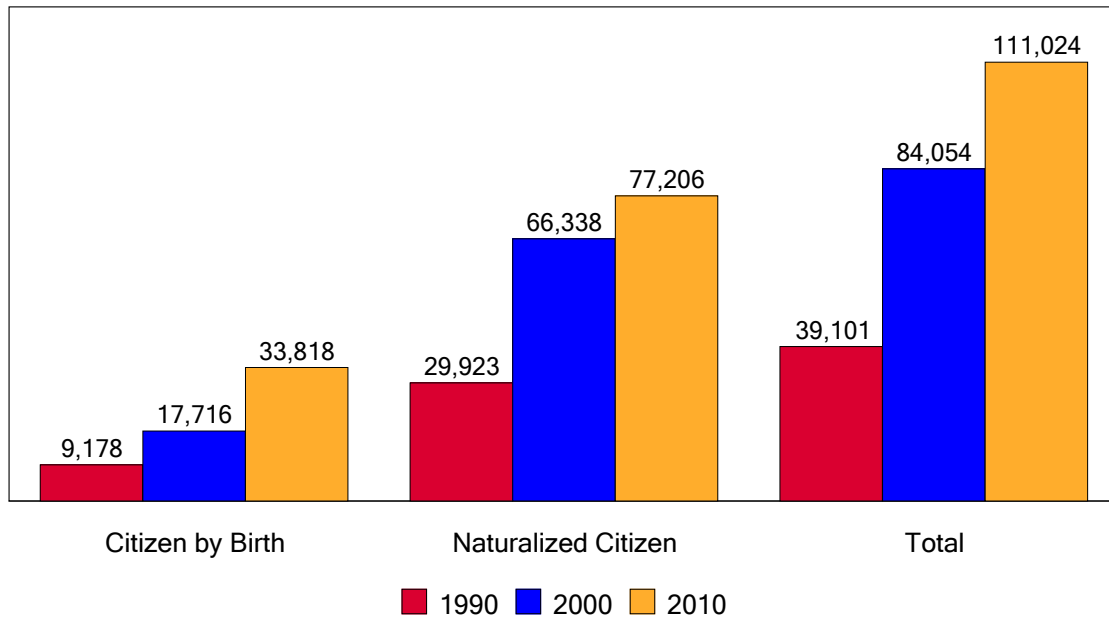


Figure 35  
Size of Colombian Electorate by Citizenship Category in New York  
Metropolitan Area Counties, 1990 - 2010 (Persons 18 Years of Age and Older)



Note: There were over 11 million eligible voters in the region in 2010.

## Health Insurance

About 22% of all Colombians living in the New York City metropolitan area did not have health insurance. This was greater than Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, but considerably less than Ecuadorans and Mexicans. (See figure 36). About 88% of all Colombians born in the U.S. had some type of health insurance compared with nearly 74% of foreign-born Colombians with health insurance.

Over 80% of Colombian females were covered by health insurance compared with 76% of Colombian males. Higher percentages of Colombian females were covered in both the U.S. born and Colombian born categories. (See figure 37).

When compared to other Latino nationalities in the region Colombians had the highest percentage of people who were covered by insurance provided by private insurance companies, usually employers. This may have been linked to the occupational structure and higher educational attainment rates achieved by Colombians. Generally, they were able to acquire jobs in the private sector in higher paying professional occupations which provided health care, at least at rates which were much higher than Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Ecuadorans, and Mexicans. (See figures 38 and 39). This was the case among all age categories as indicated in figure 40.

Figure 36  
 Percentage of Population with No Health Insurance Coverage among Largest Latino Nationalities in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010

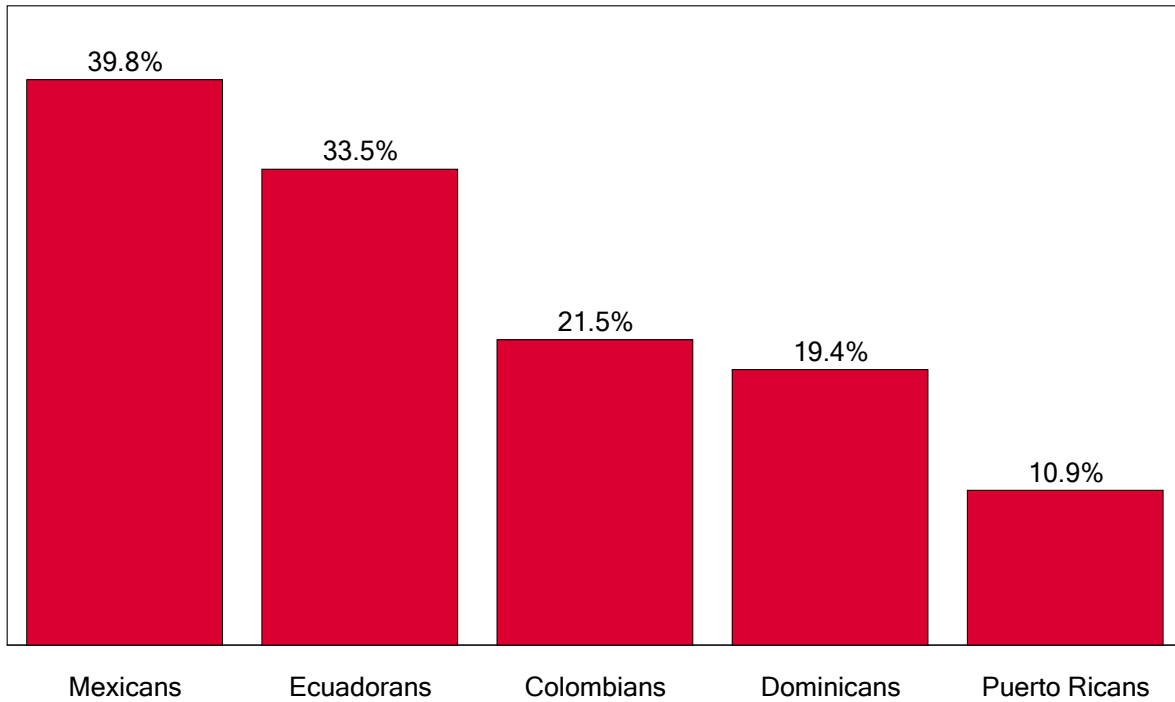


Figure 37  
 Percentage of Colombian Population which had Health Insurance by Nativity and Sex in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010

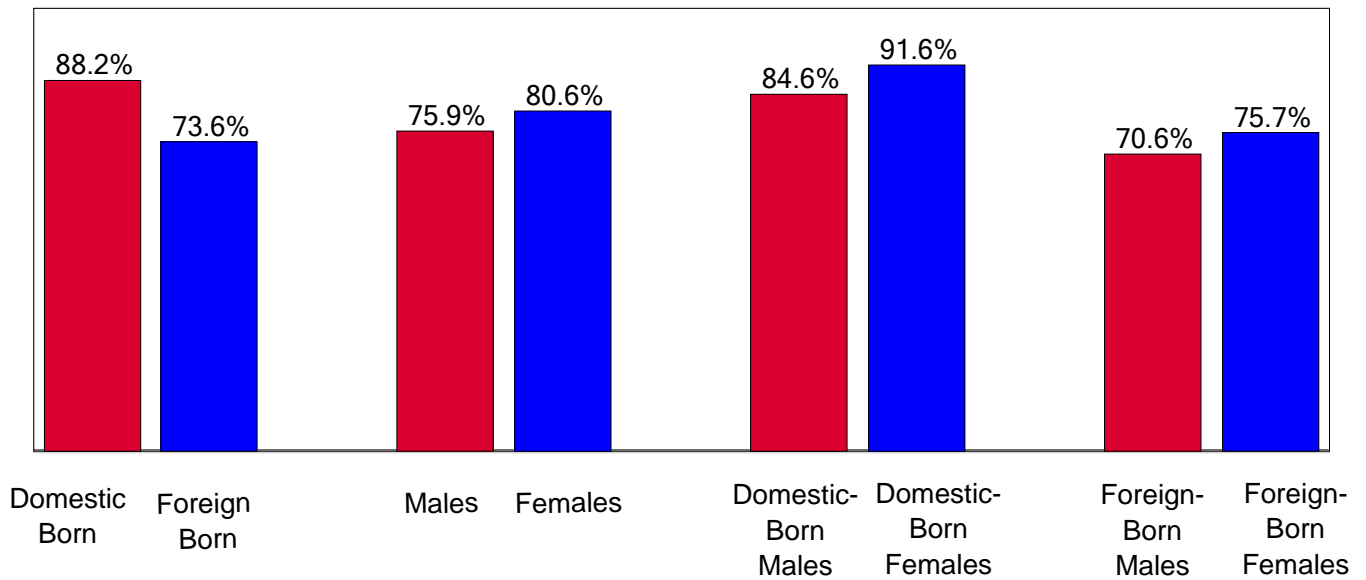


Figure 38  
 Percentage of Population by Type of Insurance Coverage Among Five Largest Latino Nationalities which had Health Insurance in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010

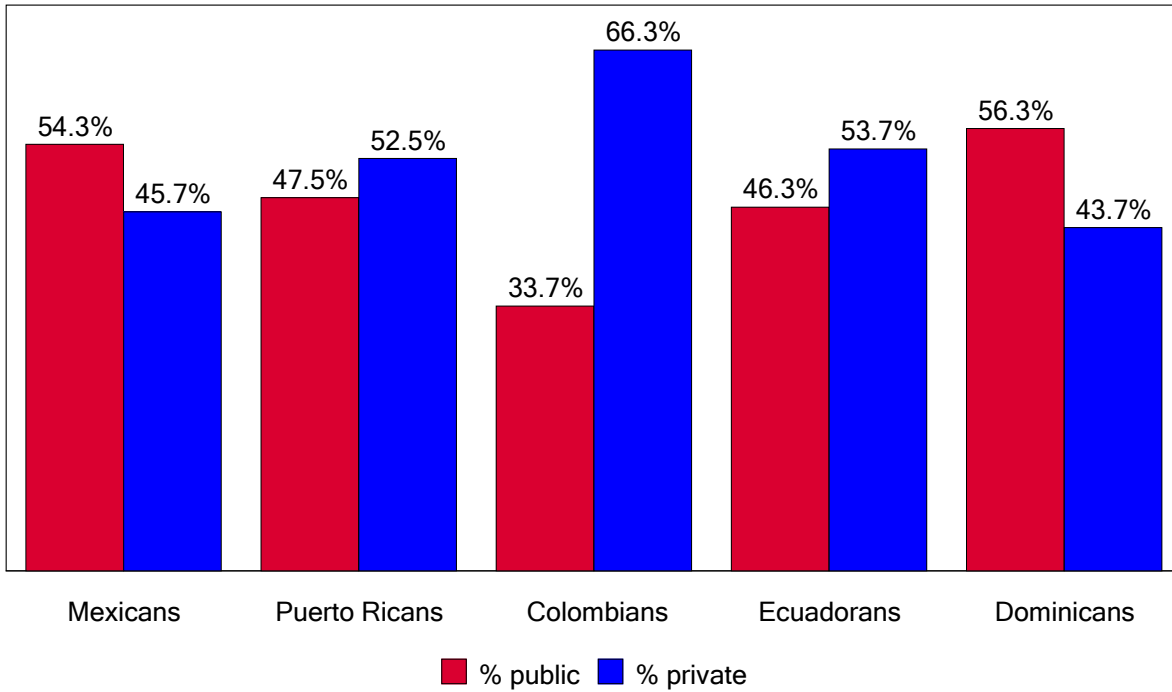
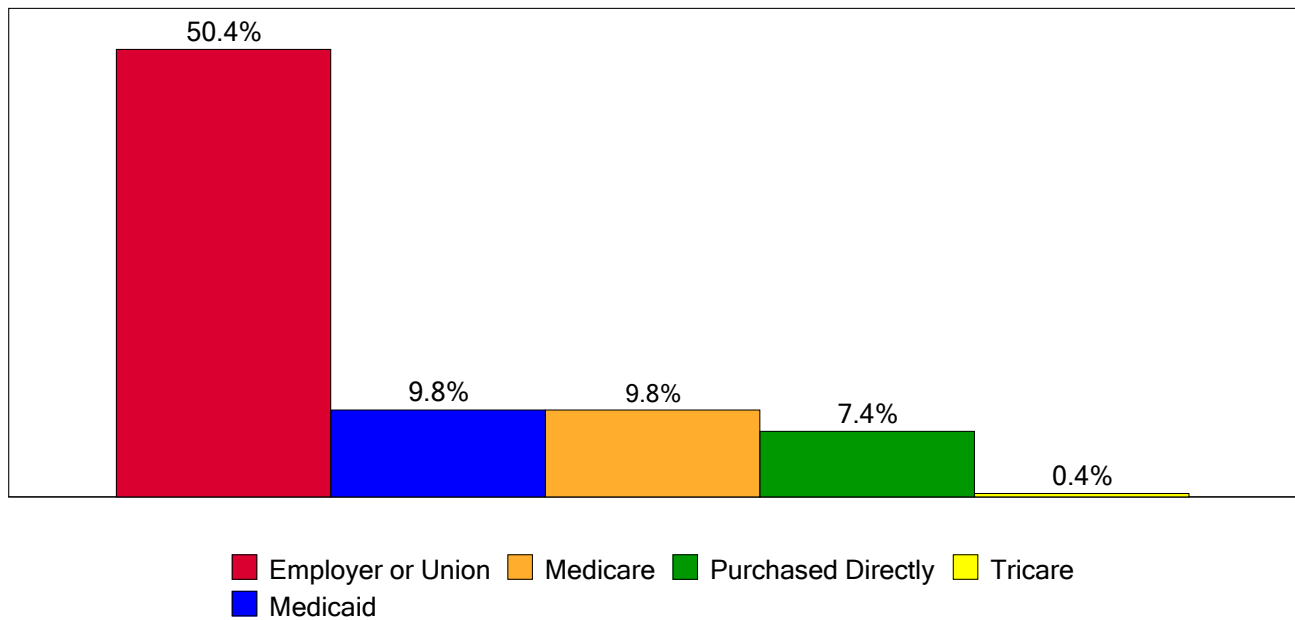
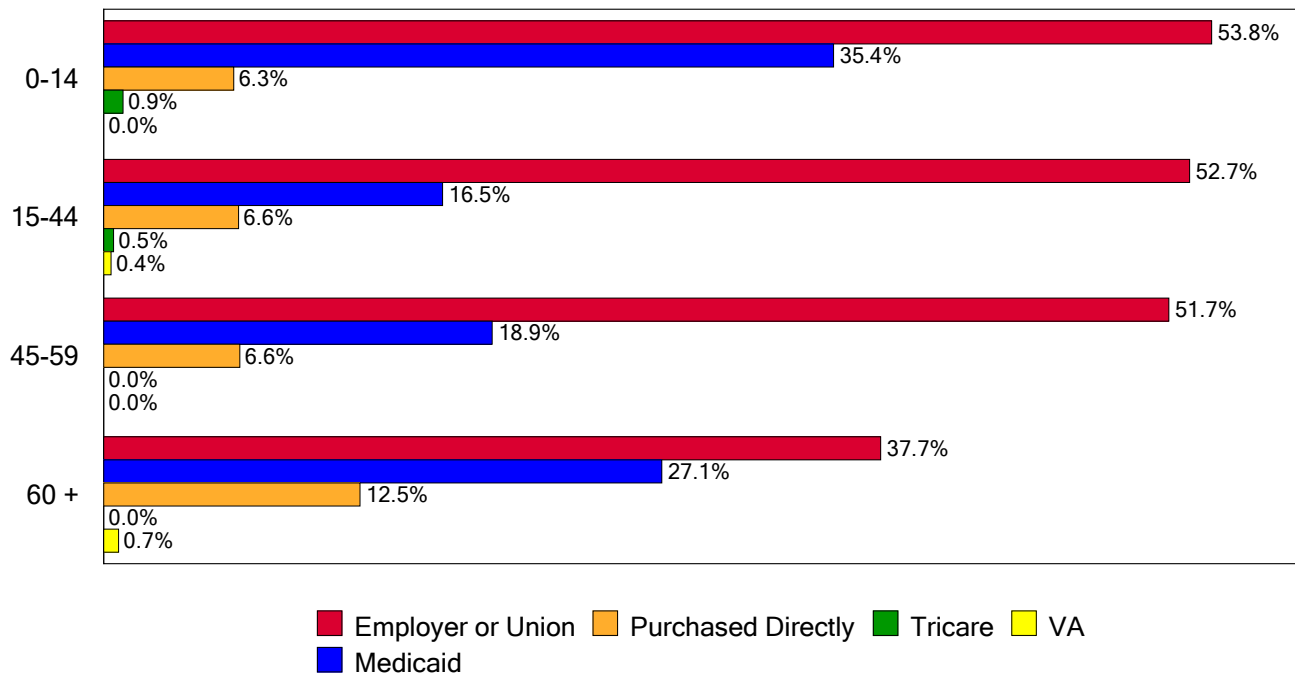


Figure 39  
 Type of Insurance Coverage Among Colombians with Health Insurance in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010



Note: Tricare is insurance provided by the military.

Figure 40  
Type of Insurance Coverage Among Colombians with Health Insurance by Age Category  
in New York Metropolitan Area Counties, 2010



### Limited Conclusions

The demographic, social, and economic indicators considered in this report were influenced by decline of immigration from Colombia to the region after 2000. Like most immigrant groups before them Colombians are ambitious, hard workers, serious about improving their standards of living, and most of all they are dedicated to securing a better life for their children and future generations.

Educational attainment levels were generally greater than other Latinos in the region and this may have been linked to the fact that they arrived with higher educational attainment than migrants from other Latin American and Caribbean nations. However, the data on arrivals do not have information on this and thus this is a speculative conclusion.

Yet, higher educational attainment levels meant lower unemployment rates in comparative perspective and the ability to enter regional labor markets in generally higher paying jobs because of greater skill levels. This, of course, is why Colombians had such high median household incomes in comparative perspective.

While Queens continues to be the epicenter of Colombian population concentration in the region there has been a clear process of suburbanization among the region's Colombian community as by 2000 and 2010 more Colombians lived outside of the City than in the five City boroughs. It is likely that this process will continue and the absolute number of Colombians living in Queens will continue to decline.

There are no indications that migration from Colombia will continue into the future and the decline after 2000 will likely be accentuated. This means that over time a greater percentage of people of Colombian origin will be born in the United States. This implies that educational attainment levels will continue to increase since U.S. born Colombians not only had higher college graduation rates than the foreign born, but they were extraordinarily high in comparative perspective.

This educational perspective suggests that Colombians in the region will obtain higher paying jobs in the future and continue to be the most economically successful of all major Latin American immigrant-origin groups in the region.