

R A L A R W

Spring/Summer 2011

How do you overcome any New York
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Latest trends in Key Labor and Instructors

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A Conversation with NYSUT's Regional Director
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Students' participation in New York's...
New York's Labor...
by Tarry Hum

Do workers, farmers & teachers...
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in 40 American households. The ACS provides 1, 3, and 5 year period estimates which represent the average population and housing characteristics over the data collection period. The analysis presented in this paper is based on the 2006-2008 ACS and represents data averages for the period January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2008.

Race and nativity are important qualities that distinguish New York City's urban labor force. New York City's urban labor force is racially diverse with a majority 60% who are non-White and heavily immigrant as nearly one in two (47%) workers is foreign-born. Reflecting immigration trends, 59% of Latino New Yorkers and an astounding 87% of Asian New Yorkers in the labor force is foreign-born. Moreover, virtually one in every two Black New Yorkers (47%) in the labor force is also an immigrant. While it is not surprising that immigration drives labor force participation patterns among Asians, Latinos, and Blacks, it is notable that a full 25% of Non-Hispanic White New

Yorkers in the labor force is also for TJJ 20.64 TL1((o)-20(r)50(TL1)-10(31,-)1/R14 0 0 rg(i)3L-10.b0(e)or()-435A

concentrated in the private sector. While 15% of New Yorkers are employed in the public or governmental sector, the share of Blacks especially native-born Blacks is nearly double at 29%. Interestingly, the public sector is also an important source of employment for Black immigrants but this is less so for Asian and Latino immigrant groups. A compelling aspect of New York City's economy is immigrant entrepreneurship and this profile does indicate high rates of self-employment for immigrant Asians (12%) and Latinos (10%) compared to their native-born compatriots.⁴ The group with the highest self-employment rate is non-Hispanic Whites, in particular, immigrant non-Hispanic Whites with a self-employment rate of 16%.

Industry and Occupational Segments

New Yorkers employed in the private sector are concentrated in one of five industries – professional or financial services, retail, medical services, and entertainment (which includes some food services as well as arts institutions and recreational activities). These five industry sectors collectively employ 64% of New York City's private sector workforce. On average, private sector workers earn \$50,000 but there are significant earnings differentials by industry lending evidence to a bifurcated service economy. While those employed in professional and financial services have average earnings that exceed the city-wide average, workers

employed in retail, medical services, and food, accommodations and recreation have earnings that range from \$28,000 to \$39,000 – well below the city-wide average. Moreover, these industries are differentiated by race and nativity.

Among New Yorkers employed in the private sector, race is a key differentiating factor in their industry location. This is evident upon an examination of the racial composition of the top five industries where New York City private sectors are concentrated. Approximately one in two New Yorkers employed in professional (48%) and financial (51%) services is Non-Hispanic White, while New Yorkers heavily concentrated in low-income industry sectors such as retail, food, accommodations, and recreation, and medical services are majority workers of color.

Race and nativity are also important qualities that define the occupational niches of New York City workers. For non-Hispanic White New Yorkers employed in the private sector, immigrant status does not factor into the type of job one is likely to have. Office, sales, and management-related employment are key occupations regardless of nativity status for non-Hispanic Whites. In contrast, nativity status is quite significant in differentiating the occupational categories of Black, Asian, and Latino private sector workers. For Black New Yorkers, nearly one in five (16%) immigrant workers is employed in a healthcare related occupation where nearly all are home health aides

while native-born Blacks are more likely to hold office or sales related jobs. Asians regardless of nativity status are concentrated in sales and office related occupations however immigrant Asians are also concentrated in food services and industrial production jobs while their native-born compatriots are more likely to hold a finance or management related job. The occupational patterns of Latino New Yorkers, however, suggest the starkest level of occupational segregation. Aside from transportation jobs (e.g., bus drivers, truck drivers, taxi drivers and chauffeurs), immigrant Latinos are located in different occupational niches than their native-born compatriots. Like many New Yorkers in the private sector, office and retail sales jobs are common sources of employment for native-born Latinos. Immigrant Latinos, on the other hand, stand out as their occupational niches are in food, building services, construction, and industrial production jobs. In fact, these occupations account for nearly half (48%) of the jobs held by immigrant Latinos.

The relative importance of manufacturing as a source of employment, particularly for Asian and Latino immigrant New Yorkers, is quite notable in light of its diminishing presence in the local economic landscape. As of 2008 among immigrant Asians and Latinos, approximately 1 in 10 workers were employed in production-related manufacturing jobs. This finding underscores the urgency of strengthening industrial retention policies and programs in New York City (Crean 2011).

Gender matters in labor market outcomes. Women are concentrated in non-managerial office occupations where the most common jobs are as secretaries and administrative assistants, customer service representatives, receptionists, and bookkeepers. While sales jobs are an important occupational niche for both men and women, 56% of women in sales occupations work as a cashier or retail salespersons. Men employed in sales, on the other hand, are concentrated as supervisors or in securities, commodities and financial services sales. These differential niches may be a factor in the significant difference in the average earnings for men and women in sales occupations. While transportation and construction occupations figure prominently for men, healthcare support and personal services are important sources of employment for women, and are consistent with a gendered division of labor.

Table 5 lists the top ten occupational categories by race and gender groups. Across racial groups, approximately one in five women employed in the private sector holds a non-managerial office-related occupation. While sales is the next largest female occupational category, this is not the case for Black women who are more likely to be employed as a home health aide. Notably, industrial production employment follows office and sales as a key occupational category for Asian women. Among men, race is a significant factor in differentiating occupational niches. Non-Hispanic White men are the only race-gender group concentrated in

managerial jobs. Food related and transportation occupations are particularly significant for Asian and Latino men who are also heavily concentrated in construction and building services. Similar to female New Yorkers in the private sector, key niches for Black men are non-managerial office and sales occupations in addition to transportation and construction.

By further disaggregating occupational niches by nativity, we find the occupational profile of native-born Asian women is similar to that of their non-Hispanic White peers. In contrast, immigrant Asian women share sizable occupational niches with immigrant Latinas and Black women in personal services and manufacturing jobs. Gendered service employment as caregivers to children, the elderly and sick are especially pronounced for Black immigrant women while many immigrant Latinas labor with their male compatriots in building services as janitors and building cleaners or as maids and housekeeping cleaners.

In addition to race, gender, and nativity, occupational patterns are further differentiated by ethnicity. By disaggregating the occupational categories for NYC's three largest Latino groups – Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans – distinct patterns are evident. Mexicans are heavily concentrated in a handful of occupations related to building services, transportation, food, and construction. These occupational categories account for 61% of Mexican workers in NYC's private

sector labor force. Dominicans are similarly concentrated in building services and transportation related employment but office, sales, and personal services are also important occupational niches. In contrast, office employment is the only concentrated niche for Puerto Ricans with 23% of those employed in the private sector. Otherwise, Puerto Ricans are employed in a fairly wide range of occupations.

The occupational profile of Asian New Yorkers is also differentiated by distinct niches based on ethnicity. Moreover, these niches suggest a bifurcated occupational profile. Chinese are the largest Asian ethnic group and about one-half of Chinese workers are employed in NYC's private sector economy either in office and sales or food and production related jobs. Asian Indians, NYC's next largest Asian ethnic group is similarly concentrated in management, office, and sales employment or in transportation. Three occupational categories account for nearly one in two Korean employees in the private sector – sales, management and personal services.

Figure 1: Language Ability and Education

In light of New York City's heavily non-White and immigrant labor force, it is not surprising that a mere 49% of New Yorkers employed in the private sector are English speakers only. The lack of English proficiency is highest among Asian and Latino immigrant workers. In fact, over half (51%)

of immigrant Latino private sector employees do not speak English well or at all. Nearly one in five (37%) Asian immigrant employees are similarly limited in English language ability compared to only 15% of Black and non-Hispanic White immigrant private sector employees. Clearly, linguistic isolation is a reality for a significant segment of New York City's labor force, and may reference the preponderance of economic enclave employment for Asian and Latino immigrants.

In addition to English language ability, educational attainment is another human capital asset that differentiates New York City's private sector employees by race and nativity. A significant majority of non-Hispanic Whites regardless of nativity status and native-born Asians are highly educated having completed college and/or professional or graduate schools. Even when compared to non-Hispanic Whites, native-born Asians stand out as a full two-thirds (66%) of those employed in the private sector have earned a college or higher degree. In contrast to other racial groups, nativity status is a key differentiating characteristic in educational attainment for Asians. While a majority native-born is highly educated, educational attainment is bifurcated among immigrant Asians with 47% on the lower end having completed high school at most, and 39% on the other end of the educational attainment spectrum with a college degree or more.

As noted, nativity is not significant in differentiating the educational attainment levels of non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks, or Latinos employed in the private sector. Whereas non-Hispanic Whites are likely to have earned a Bachelor's degree or more, the opposite is true for Blacks and Latinos who are concentrated among those having completed some high school or have earned a high school diploma as the highest level of educational attainment. The low level of human capital is particularly alarming for immigrant Latinos as nearly one in five (39%) have not completed a high school education.

Household Income and Human Capital Formation

The ACS data provides compelling evidence of income disparity among New York City households by race and nativity groups. In addition to significant differences in average annual household incomes, the breakdown of households by income categories underscores concern about the economic sustainability of Latino and native-born Black households since one in two households earn less than \$35,000. Correspondingly, these same households experience high poverty rates. The per capita income reinforces a narrative of economic hardship particularly for Latinos, Blacks, and immigrant Asians. The per capita income for Latinos, regardless of nativity status, hovers around a mere \$18,600. While this per capita income is comparable for native-born Blacks, the per capita

income for immigrant Blacks and Asians is in the mid \$20,000.

Tavernise, Sabrina and Robert Gebeloff. 2010. "Immigrants Make Paths to Suburbia, Not Cities." *New York Times*, December 14.

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Figure 1

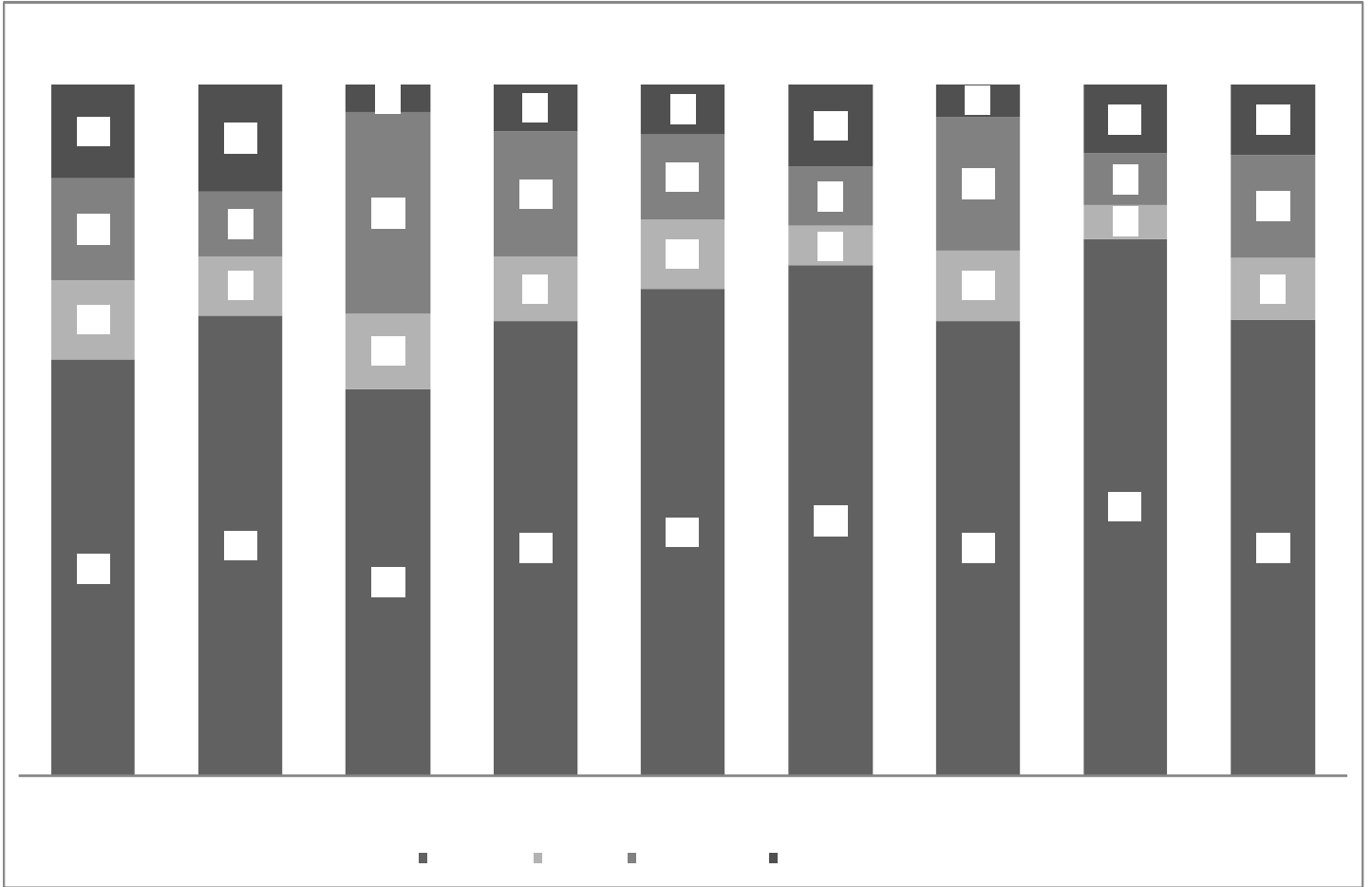
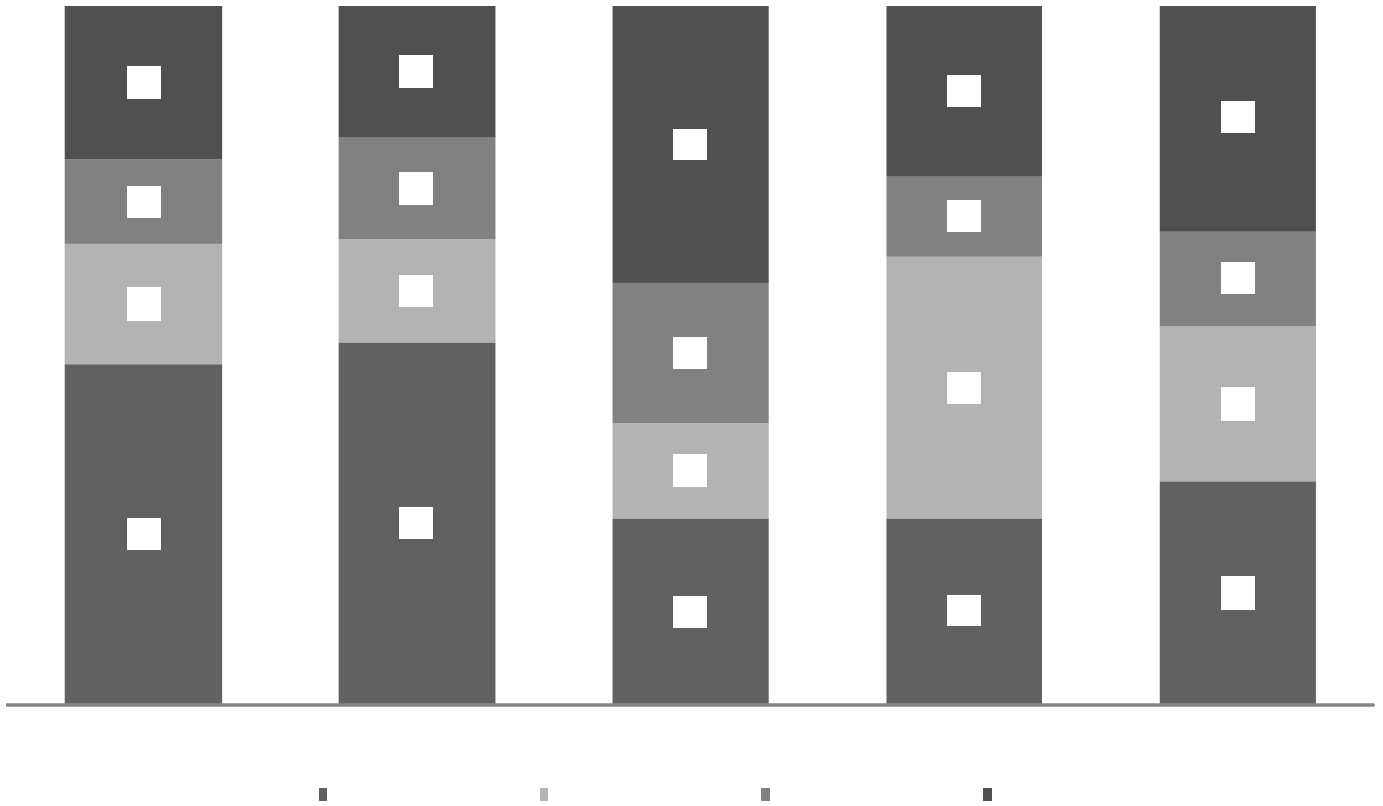


Figure 2



NOTES

¹ Text of Mayor Michael Bloomberg State of the City Speech on January 19, 2011 available online at:
<http://s3.amazonaws.com/nytdocs/docs/561/561.pdf>.

² A December 2010 New York Times article based on ACS 2005-2009 findings document the growing numbers of immigrants who bypass cities and settle in surrounding suburbs for employment opportunities in construction and food industries.

³ Refer to September 7, 2010 Los Angeles Times article, "Unemployment lasts longer for Asian Americans," by Alana Semuels and NPR coverage, "Asians Out Of Work Longest Among U.S. Minorities" by Yuki Noguchi, accessed online at:
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130408243>.

⁴ Includes a small number of unpaid family workers.

⁵ Quoted from Mayor Bloomberg's 2011 State of the City Speech.