

# TOWARD A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CITY FOR ALL

PROGRESSIVE POLICIES FOR  
NEW YORK CITY IN 2013  
AND BEYOND

## Shifting Shares: Demographic Change, Differential Mobility, and Electoral Trends in New York City, 2000 to 2011

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The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was economically and politically tumultuous for the city, the country, and the world. It began with the hotly contested, and possibly stolen, 2000 presidential election, proceeded through the devastating September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, which postponed and altered 2001 mayoral election, and then two sharp economic recessions, one in 2001 and the other from the end of 2007 through mid-2009. The decade also witnessed difficult wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the economic recovery between the two recessions was troubled – and some said jobless. The financial crisis at the end of the decade was fed by rising housing foreclosure rates, the bursting of the housing bubble, the collapse of Lehman Brothers and other large financial institutions, and the tanking of the stock markets and employment. At the end of 2008, the Federal Government responded with a massive bank bailout; after the election of an African American Democrat to the presidency in November 2008, the U.S. Congress passed a three-quarters of a trillion-dollar stimulus package. Despite all these measures, the national and local economies have both struggled in the post-2009 recovery period to regain the prior peak levels of employment and earnings, although the stock market has regained its severe losses.

### 1. Recent Trends: How the New York City Labor Force Has Experienced a Halting Recovery

These trends in the economy, national mood, and federal spending levels had large impacts on New York City and its residents. Considering that it was “ground zero” for many of the nation’s economic problems – poorly underwritten collateralized debt obligations, over-leveraged financial institutions, and risky trading strategies – the difficult economic environment did not have as negative an impact on the New York City economy as might have been anticipated. In previous decades, New York usually preceded the nation into recession and pulled out of it later. In 2001, New York entered the recession a bit later, lost fewer jobs than originally predicted, and recovered employment somewhat more quickly than the nation. Similarly, New York City employment did not decline quite as quickly in the post-2007 crisis as did the nation’s, did not fall as far, and by early 2013 had exceeded the pre-recession

employment peak, though unemployment remained at historically high levels. This relatively good performance may reflect the substantial Federal aid the city received after 9/11, the bailout funds provided to its banks and financial institutions after 2008, and the city's share of the stimulus package.

Even though the New York City economy performed somewhat better than expected – or at least not as badly as initially feared – the post-2008 financial and economic crisis hit workers living in New York City hard. (Suburbanites working in the city, who tend to be better educated and have higher incomes than those living and working in the city, also suffered, but were hit less hard.) The city's unemployment rate fell to a low of 5.8 percent in 2000, rose to 8.3 percent in 2003, declined again to 4.9 percent in 2007, but then shot up again to more than 10 percent in early 2010 and did not fall far from that peak through 2012. Many of the unemployed have experienced particularly long spells out of work and may ultimately be pushed out of the labor force. Unemployment has disproportionately affected African Americans, Latinos, young people, and the less educated.<sup>1</sup>

Since the national recovery officially began in June 2009, employment in the city's professional services and finance sectors has rebounded, but other sectors have not. Job losses were deepest and most enduring in government, manufacturing, and construction; job gains took place in finance and professional services as well as the traditionally countercyclical health care and education services. Strikingly, real median annual wages for all full time workers living in New York City have declined by 4 percent since the beginning of the recovery.

Different parts of the city's geography and labor market experienced these trends in quite different ways. In the summer of 2012, unemployment was 13.9 percent in the Bronx and 11 percent in Brooklyn, while the rates remained lower than the citywide average in the other boroughs. Similarly, at the beginning of the recovery, median annual wages for full-time workers varied from a low of \$31,827 in the Bronx to a high of \$56,105 in Manhattan (in 2011 dollars), a disparity that remained intact since then.

The well-known returns to higher levels of education are stark in present-day New York City. In 2011, only 45 percent of individuals age 25 and older with a high school diploma or GED or less had jobs, compared to 74 percent of those with a four-year degree or more. Although both groups suffered wage erosion since the recovery began in 2009, the disparity between real median wages remains wide. In 2011, full-time, full-year workers with a high school education or less had median annual earnings of \$27,040 compared to \$59,999 for individuals with a four-year degree or more. Nativity also plays a role: foreign-born individuals aged 16 and over are *more* likely to be employed (57 percent compared to 52 percent) than the native born. Although full-time foreign-born workers earned \$14,000 less than native-born full-time workers (\$31,999 compared to \$45,468), their real median wages increased during the recovery, while those of the native born decreased.

Race also plays a role. A larger proportion of white New Yorkers were employed both at the outset of the recovery and in 2011 than was true of any other racial and ethnic group. In a turnabout, however, median annual real wages rose by 2 percent among Hispanic full-time earners, while those of blacks, whites, and Asians fell. But Hispanics still earned the least of any group, with a median of \$29,120 in 2011 compared to \$33,800 for blacks, \$37,900 for Asians, and \$52,000 for whites.

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<sup>1</sup> Resident employment and unemployment figures in this section are drawn from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, jobs figures are from the Current Economic Statistics, and demographically disaggregated employment and wage trends are from the Current Population Survey as analyzed by the New York City Labor Market Information Service.

Younger workers have also been having a hard time. Full-time workers aged 16 to 24 earned 13 percent less in 2011 compared to the beginning of the recovery, while labor force participation held steady at 42 percent. The number of “disconnected” young adults (those without high school degrees who are neither working nor in school) rose from about 136,000 in 2007 to 146,000 in 2011. If we add all the other unemployed young people who are neither in school nor at work, the total rises from 191,000 in 2007 to 210,000 in 2011. Finally, among full-time workers in New York City, women earned less than men both before and after the recession, but the gender wage gap fell from \$2,547 to \$2,039 because men’s wages eroded more than women’s wages.

Behind these labor market trends, the demographic composition of the city has continued to change, driven by such long-standing forces as the aging of the population, the decline of fertility rates, international migration, and out-movement due to suburbanization and inter-regional shifts. These gradual but steady shifts have interacted with larger sectoral trends and swings in the business cycle to shape how the major demographic groups have fared in terms of labor market status, family and household incomes, and position in the income distribution, as well as their relative influence in the potential electorate. The composition of the active electorate and their voting behavior has also shifted over the period.

The following sections of this chapters use a different, larger data source to address each of these three topics.<sup>2</sup> The first section analyzes changes in the overall composition of New York City residents in terms of the race, ethnicity, and nativity of the heads of the households in which they live. As is customary, we group together all members of households headed by Hispanics (or Latinos) regardless of the race of those householders and distinguish them from members of households headed by non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Asians, and others. In a departure from common practice, however, we use the race, ethnicity, and nativity of the head of the household to classify all the other individuals living in it. This way, we include native-born people who live in households headed by foreign-born parents (or other household head) among those designated as immigrant-origin. The following sections break out eight distinct groups: non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Asians and Hispanics, further each group further broken down by whether the household head is US-born or foreign-born. (We exclude persons who do not live in households, such as those in jails, nursing homes, or college dorms, because they do not have household incomes or other household characteristics, and we also exclude a small group of people with other races.)

We begin this analysis by describing changes in the overall composition of the city’s population and briefly profiling each race-nativity group. We then broaden the discussion to examine how the 2008 recession affected individual workers in terms of their per capita household income, their position in the household income distribution, and their labor market experiences across the decade. New York has always promised newcomers that they would find opportunities for upward mobility that were not available where they came from. Now, as has been true historically, this upward mobility takes place within a context of great inequality, both in the aggregate and across neighborhoods. We find that different groups have followed different trajectories, with members of native-born white married-couple

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<sup>2</sup> The remainder of this analysis uses data from the 2000 Census Public Use Microdata Sample (5 percent) and microdata (roughly 1percent each) from the combined American Community Surveys (ACS) for 2006 through 2010. We created one file including all New York City residents another of all people with jobs who lived or worked in New York City. For the demographic analysis, we combined years 2006 through 2008 to provide sufficient sample size for a pre-recession data point and the 2009 through 2010 data for a post-recession data point, respectively labeled 2008 and 2010 in the tables.

families doing best and members of native-born black and Latino single-parent families doing worst. We conclude by reflecting on the factors that are driving these outcomes. Major reasons include household type, the number of household members working, the kinds of jobs they have, and their levels of education. To state the obvious, people who live in multi-earner households where people hold professional and managerial jobs, especially in the financial services, have many more resources than those living in single minority households where non-working mothers struggle to support children. Over the decade, the New York City economy has more amply rewarded some groups than others, though all groups took an income hit in the years after the financial and economic crises of 2008.

The final section of the paper shifts focus from the economic correlates of demographic change to the political consequences, focusing on how the population as a whole differs from those who are voting age citizens and thus belong to its potential electorate. It further details how registered voters differ from voting-age citizens and the actual voting population. In a city of 8.2 million residents and 5.1 million voting-age citizens, only 4.7 million are registered voters. Of them, 2.45 million voted in the 2012 presidential election and 1.4 million in the 2010 gubernatorial election, but only 1.2 million voted in the 2009 mayoral election. Remarkably, just 371,000 of the city's 3.2 million registered Democrats voted in the 2009 Democratic primary, despite spirited races for a number of citywide offices. (Only 241,000 voted in the runoff election for the Democratic nominee for Controller.) Given the absence of an incumbent in the 2013 mayoral race and the city's highly Democratic registration and voting behavior, the outcome of the Democratic primary may well determine the outcome of the general election. The small fraction of the city's potentially eligible voting-age citizen who will vote in the 2013 Democratic primary (even if turnout returns to the recent high point of the 2001 primary elections) is a key facet of the city's politics.

## 2. The Changing Demography of New York City

Overall, the decennial censuses reported that city's population grew slightly from 8.008 million in 2000 to 8.175 million in 2010. A closer look at the intervening years from the American Community Survey (ACS) suggests that the city's population rose from 8 million to 8.3 million between 2000 and 2008, but then dropped back to 8.18 million by 2010. Table 1 uses the microdata files of the 2000 Census and the 2010 ACS to break down the components of this overall change. It shows that people living in native-born white, black, and Hispanic households have all declined as shares of the total, as did those living in households headed by foreign-born whites. (The decline of the native-born black share was particularly sharp.) The share of people living in households headed by foreign-born persons all increased, with those Asian and Hispanic foreign-born households each gaining more than two percentage points of the total population. Notably, *less than a quarter of the city's population now lives in households headed by native-born, non-Hispanic whites* and everybody else lives in a household headed by an immigrant and/or minority person.

Table 1

**Household Type by Household Head Race and Nativity**

(NYC Residents, Row Percents Except for Total Column)

Year	Race and Nativity of Household Head	Household Type							Total
		Married Couple Family w Children <18	Married Couple Family w/o Children <18	Female-Headed Household	Male-Headed Household	Single	Non-Family Household	Group Quarters	
2000	White NB	18.7%	34.5%	9.3%	3.5%	21.2%	9.4%	3.3%	25.5%
	White FB	26.6%	41.4%	9.3%	3.6%	13.5%	4.9%	.7%	10.0%
	Black NB	11.0%	16.6%	43.7%	6.2%	13.5%	3.8%	5.2%	14.7%
	Black FB	21.4%	27.5%	33.4%	7.4%	7.0%	3.0%	.3%	9.5%
	Hispanic NB	16.5%	22.2%	37.7%	6.7%	9.6%	3.9%	3.2%	11.6%
	Hispanic FB	23.2%	29.8%	28.7%	10.9%	3.8%	3.3%	.2%	15.1%
	Asian NB	15.0%	23.3%	8.1%	7.1%	18.3%	16.1%	12.1%	0.6%
	Asian FB	35.3%	39.8%	8.4%	6.3%	5.3%	4.4%	.4%	9.1%
	<b>2000 Total</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
2010	White NB	17.9%	35.4%	8.7%	3.4%	17.9%	14.1%	2.4%	24.8%
	White FB	24.0%	42.2%	8.1%	4.3%	15.4%	5.1%	.8%	9.1%
	Black NB	8.5%	13.5%	45.3%	8.2%	15.5%	4.0%	5.0%	12.6%
	Black FB	19.8%	26.0%	33.7%	9.8%	6.8%	2.8%	1.0%	10.4%
	Hispanic NB	13.1%	19.1%	39.1%	8.7%	11.6%	5.3%	3.0%	11.3%
	Hispanic FB	19.3%	23.9%	33.5%	14.4%	5.1%	3.4%	.5%	17.0%
	Asian NB	15.5%	29.6%	10.9%	5.0%	16.9%	17.9%	4.2%	1.3%
	Asian FB	33.9%	37.5%	10.2%	6.8%	6.0%	5.1%	.5%	11.3%
	<b>2010 Total</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey. Other Races not shown.

NB = native born, FB = foreign born

The type of household in which one lives is a defining aspect of how one experiences urban life. Table 1 shows that only one in five of New York City’s residents lives in a married-couple family with children under 18 and less than half in married-couple families of any kind. By contrast, almost one in five either lives alone or in a household of unrelated individuals. Whites in both native-born and foreign-born households are particularly likely to live either in married-couple families without children (more than a third in both 2000 and 2010) and native whites (along with the relatively few native born Asians) often live alone (about one in five in both years), while members of native-born black and Hispanic households are far more likely to live in female-headed households (nearly half for blacks and two in five for Hispanics). The 2010 figures represent the endpoint in a long decline of the share of people living in married-couple families with children and a long rise of other family or household forms. As we will detail later, living in single-parent households is closely linked with poverty.

How do these racial-ethnic-nativity groups vary across other key characteristics? As expected, Table 2 shows those living in native white households are most likely to own their home and have a car. They are older, less likely to live with children, living in smaller households, and are highly likely to be voting-age citizens. With the exception of the relatively small group living in native-born Asian households, they are most likely to have college educations and the least likely to be high school dropouts. As expected, members of native-born Hispanic and black households are also least well positioned on these

indicators. They are far less likely to own their homes or have a car and most likely to lack a telephone. While a bit older on average than their foreign-born household counterparts, native-born Hispanic and black households are significantly younger than whites, live in larger households with children, and are women. Compared to those in households with foreign-born heads, of course, they are much more likely to be voting-age citizens. Their education levels, while rising across the decade, remain far below those living in native white households. Those living in foreign-born black households have marginally better outcomes on most measures, being much more likely to own homes and have a car and telephone. They live in larger households, with more children, and have somewhat better educational outcomes. Those living in foreign-born Hispanic households are least likely to own homes or cars, live in the largest households and with more children, and are the youngest and least likely to be voting-age citizens. They also have the lowest level of educational attainment. Outcomes for those in Asian households, the vast majority of whom have foreign-born heads, are between the other minority groups and whites, although they share characteristics with other immigrant groups such as being younger, living in large households with children, and having high levels of those with poor educational credentials. (The small group of those living in native Asian households outscored those in native white households on college attainment.)

Table 2

Average Characteristics by Race and Nativity of Head of Household

(New York City Residents)

Year	Race and Nativity of Head of Household	Home Owner	No Vehicle	No telephone	Persons in Household	Own Children	Average Age	Female	Voting Age Citizens	No High School Diploma or GED (18+)	BA or More (18+)
2000	White NB	50.9%	39.5%	4.1%	2.78	22.9%	41.6	52.8%	82.9%	11.7%	43.5%
	White FB	40.7%	41.4%	1.5%	3.26	30.7%	41.5	51.9%	50.7%	23.8%	32.6%
	Black NB	26.4%	62.3%	9.3%	3.37	26.0%	34.2	56.5%	70.4%	29.9%	13.9%
	Black FB	40.9%	44.1%	1.8%	4.06	33.4%	32.6	54.7%	43.1%	27.9%	16.5%
	Hispanic NB	17.1%	62.8%	8.8%	3.63	29.7%	31.5	53.2%	67.0%	42.9%	10.0%
	Hispanic FB	15.3%	62.2%	3.3%	4.69	32.7%	29.9	50.6%	29.2%	48.5%	9.3%
	Asian NB	40.0%	57.1%	12.8%	2.67	18.7%	32.3	52.7%	82.0%	11.3%	55.0%
	Asian FB	42.2%	39.7%	1.3%	4.22	38.0%	34.2	49.6%	36.7%	30.6%	32.2%
	<b>Total 2000</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>49.9%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>52.7%</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>
	2006-8	White NB	53.2%	40.0%	6.3%	2.95	22.6%	40.9	51.8%	80.4%	7.2%
White FB		44.1%	40.1%	4.1%	3.26	28.2%	41.2	51.7%	56.0%	17.1%	39.1%
Black NB		27.4%	58.9%	10.5%	3.21	24.2%	35.5	56.1%	72.2%	22.3%	17.2%
Black FB		41.9%	41.4%	3.3%	3.80	30.2%	34.6	54.2%	47.9%	20.2%	18.8%
Hispanic NB		21.7%	57.7%	10.8%	3.32	27.8%	34.1	53.7%	70.2%	32.4%	14.4%
Hispanic FB		16.0%	61.2%	6.7%	4.09	30.7%	32.0	49.9%	33.7%	40.4%	12.1%
Asian NB		42.6%	50.7%	11.8%	2.88	22.3%	33.6	49.3%	77.9%	9.7%	58.7%
Asian FB		45.6%	40.3%	6.3%	3.95	36.5%	36.3	49.6%	43.8%	25.5%	35.1%
<b>Total 2006-08</b>		<b>37.3%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>27.7%</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>52.3%</b>	<b>60.5%</b>	<b>21.3%</b>	<b>30.2%</b>
2009-10		White NB	50.7%	41.4%	4.7%	2.94	22.7%	40.3	52.0%	81.4%	6.1%
	White FB	43.2%	40.9%	2.8%	3.18	28.5%	41.9	51.8%	57.4%	15.2%	41.0%
	Black NB	26.5%	58.8%	8.7%	3.12	24.9%	36.4	56.1%	74.2%	20.3%	18.5%
	Black FB	40.9%	42.0%	3.3%	3.93	31.2%	35.6	54.6%	50.1%	17.9%	19.4%
	Hispanic NB	19.5%	58.1%	7.5%	3.35	27.7%	34.0	53.1%	70.6%	31.5%	17.0%
	Hispanic FB	14.9%	60.8%	5.0%	4.32	31.2%	32.6	49.9%	34.6%	40.8%	11.5%
	Asian NB	43.8%	52.4%	6.5%	2.75	20.3%	32.1	50.6%	80.8%	6.1%	66.0%
	Asian FB	46.0%	40.5%	3.6%	4.04	36.0%	36.9	50.5%	45.0%	26.5%	34.1%
	<b>Total 2009-10</b>	<b>35.8%</b>	<b>48.7%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>28.0%</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>20.5%</b>	<b>31.5%</b>

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey. Other Races not shown.  
NB = native born, FB = foreign born

Table 3

**Labor Market Status and Median HH Income by HH Head Race and Nativity***(NYC Residents Aged 18-64)*

Year	Race and Nativity of Head of Household	Labor Market Status			Median HHI per capita
		Employed	Unemployed	Not in labor force	
2000	White NB	73.2%	3.8%	23.0%	\$34,388
	White FB	62.9%	4.0%	33.1%	\$20,305
	Black NB	52.2%	10.1%	37.6%	\$13,755
	Black FB	64.6%	7.6%	27.8%	\$16,157
	Hispanic NB	49.8%	8.6%	41.6%	\$11,135
	Hispanic FB	53.7%	7.7%	38.5%	\$10,349
	Asian NB	68.4%	7.5%	24.0%	\$31,899
	Asian FB	63.5%	4.1%	32.4%	\$14,410
	<b>Total 2000</b>	<b>61.4%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>\$16,899</b>
2006-8	White NB	74.7%	3.6%	21.8%	\$34,703
	White FB	68.9%	4.2%	26.9%	\$20,873
	Black NB	58.9%	8.5%	32.6%	\$14,963
	Black FB	72.0%	6.5%	21.6%	\$16,956
	Hispanic NB	59.5%	6.4%	34.1%	\$13,467
	Hispanic FB	69.1%	5.8%	25.1%	\$10,815
	Asian NB	75.6%	3.9%	20.5%	\$30,637
	Asian FB	68.4%	4.2%	27.3%	\$15,120
	<b>Total 2006-8</b>	<b>68.5%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>\$17,934</b>
2009-10	White NB	73.0%	6.1%	20.9%	\$35,435
	White FB	67.6%	6.3%	26.1%	\$21,800
	Black NB	57.1%	10.7%	32.2%	\$15,300
	Black FB	68.8%	9.4%	21.8%	\$16,779
	Hispanic NB	57.0%	9.4%	33.6%	\$13,209
	Hispanic FB	65.8%	8.5%	25.7%	\$10,812
	Asian NB	75.7%	5.3%	19.1%	\$37,468
	Asian FB	65.0%	7.2%	27.7%	\$14,103
	<b>Total 2009-10</b>	<b>66.2%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey. Other Races not shown.

NB = native born, FB = foreign born

Although the various groups clearly lived in different circumstances both at the beginning and end of the decade, it is worth noting that many key indicators improved marginally over the decade. That is to say, the overall home ownership rate, car ownership rate, and college graduation rate were all higher at the end of the decade than at the beginning. They were not as high as they were at the peak of the economic cycle in 2007, but the recession did not knock them back to lower levels than in 2000.

Particularly important was the decline of the less-than-high-school education rate and the rise of the college graduation rate, which were steady and substantial across the decade, not only across groups, for each individual group (except for a slight fall-back in the college graduation rate for those in foreign-born Hispanic households between 2006-8 and 2009-10).

The city's economy began the decade in recession, gradually recovered through 2007, then fell into an even sharper recession in 2008 and 2009, and is now gradually recovering once more. Despite this difficult economic environment, Table 3, which breaks out employment among working-age people and real household income per capita (in 2010 dollars) for all the groups during the 2000 to 2008 upswing and the 2009 recession and its immediate aftermath, quite remarkably shows slight gains in real per capita income (right hand column) both in the aggregate and for many groups, although those in native-born Hispanic and foreign-born Asian households remained flat at low levels. In terms of labor market status, unemployment fell substantially between 2000 and 2006-8 and then rose sharply afterwards, but 66.2 percent of all adults aged 18 through 64 had jobs even at the end of the decade, significantly higher than 61.4 percent at the beginning (even though it peaked at 68.5 percent in 2006-8).

All these indicators varied greatly across the groups. At the beginning of the decade, those in native white households were most likely to be working, (73.2 percent), almost half again as much as the least employed groups, those in native black (52.2 percent) and Hispanic (49.8 percent) households. Over the decade, however, the employed shares rose in black- and Hispanic-headed households (native as well as foreign born), while that of whites held steady, slightly closing the gap. (The Asian shares compared with or exceeded the shares of the white groups.) Similarly, the median real household income for those in native white households (\$34,388) was more than three times that of those in foreign-born Hispanic households (\$10,349) in 2000, and the situation remained unchanged.

### 3. Income Distribution: Group Improvement within High Levels of Inequality

Income and its distribution can be measured in many different ways and data can come from at least two major sources. Income has many sources: wages and salaries, earnings from self-employment, and income from investments, retirement, social security, or public assistance. It can be aggregated by individual, family, or household. Its distribution may be analyzed in terms of the Gini index of inequality (as provided by the American Community Survey for various levels of geography) or such ratios as the aggregate income of the top 20 percent in relation to the bottom 20 percent. Finally, while we can disaggregate data provided by the Census on individual and household income in terms of individual and household demographic characteristics, data from income tax returns may be more reliable and precise, though it does not cover households whose incomes are too low to file tax returns.

Here, we continue to analyze the 2000 Census and 2006-10 ACS microdata samples to depict the distribution of income across groups and time in New York City. We use real household income per capita and poverty level as our key indicators. Given the great diversity of household forms and their sources of income, per capita household income provides the best overall way to understand the resources available to a given individual. (We have also examined the distribution of individuals across total household income categories.) Because it makes a real difference whether a given household



income – say \$25,000 per year – gets divided across a single-person or to a four-person household (such as a family with two parents and two children), we look at per capita household income rather than total household income. We have also adjusted household incomes to account for inflation, reporting numbers in 2010 dollars.

As the previous discussion of real median household incomes per capita noted, New York City residents experienced a 6.5 percent increase in real income despite the decade’s economic difficulties, albeit within the context of high and persistent overall inequality. Table 4 shows that the share of people in the three lowest income categories fell from 19.2 percent at the beginning to a low of 16 percent in 2006-8, but then rebounded slightly to 17.3 percent in 2009-10, still below the beginning. Similarly, the share in the top three categories rose from 34.6 percent at the beginning to 35.8 percent at the peak back to 36.3 percent at the end, suggesting a gradual widening of income inequality. In addition, the income distribution shifted slightly upward over the period, though most of this gain occurred during the upswing. This is also borne out in the poverty level, which increased by more than a percentage point after the 2008 recession, but was still a point and a half lower than in 2000.

<i>Real HHI Per Capita</i>	2000	2006-8	2009-10
< \$2.5K	6.8%	4.1%	4.6%
< \$5.0K	5.8%	5.4%	6.0%
< \$7.5K	6.6%	6.5%	6.7%
< \$10K	7.2%	7.2%	7.4%
< \$15K	12.7%	13.0%	12.6%
< \$20K	10.8%	11.3%	10.5%
< \$30K	15.4%	16.8%	15.9%
< \$40K	10.3%	10.5%	10.7%
< \$50K	6.7%	6.9%	7.2%
> \$50K	17.6%	18.4%	18.4%
Poverty	21.3%	18.7%	19.8%
Median	\$16,899	\$17,934	\$18,000

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey.

Looking at how the each group fared inside this overall picture tells a somewhat different story, detailed in Table 5. The groups hold quite different positions in the income distribution. The good news is that every group experienced a growth in median real per capita household income over the decade, especially those in native black and Hispanic households. The bad news is that these gains did not close much of the gap with native-born white households, because they also gained. Real incomes stagnated for the immigrant minority-headed households, notably for those headed by Hispanic immigrants, the lowest income group. As previously noted, the gap between the top group (those in native white households) and the bottom (those in foreign Hispanic households) was more than three to one both at the beginning and the end of the decade.

In short, at the end of the decade, working-age adults were more likely to have a job and have real per capita income growth over the decade, though these gains were not as high as they would have been if the 2008 recession had not knocked them back. Greater work effort seemed to offset rising unemployment and threats to household income. Still, class had a clear color (and nativity) at the end as well as the beginning of the decade. One-third of all members of native-born white households were in the top income category and they comprised three-fifths of that category. Meanwhile, only one out of 13 members of native-born black households and one out of 20 in native Hispanic households were in the top category and they made up less than one-tenth of it. (The bottom end of the distribution was a mirror

image of this situation.) The same held true at the end of the decade, although the native white share of the top declined slightly as their presence diminished in the city's population and the shares of other groups, particularly Asians, grew slightly.

**Table 5****Real HHI Per Capita and Poverty Rate by Head of Household's Race and Nativity pt. 1***(New York City Residents)*

Head of Household's Race and Nativity	Real Household Income Per Capita	Native Born			Foreign Born		
		2000	2006-08	2009-10	2000	2006-08	2009-10
Black	< \$2.5K	14.4%	10.0%	10.5%	7.8%	4.7%	4.2%
	< \$5K	8.5%	8.5%	8.6%	5.5%	5.4%	6.2%
	< \$7.5K	8.0%	7.5%	8.1%	7.4%	7.3%	7.4%
	< \$10K	8.5%	9.4%	8.3%	8.6%	7.8%	10.0%
	< \$15K	13.8%	14.7%	13.9%	16.8%	18.7%	17.3%
	< \$20K	10.9%	11.9%	11.0%	14.6%	14.7%	14.0%
	< \$30K	14.6%	15.9%	16.5%	19.4%	20.9%	19.7%
	< \$40K	8.9%	9.7%	9.4%	9.5%	10.2%	10.2%
	< \$50K	4.7%	5.0%	5.8%	4.6%	4.9%	5.0%
	> \$50K	7.6%	7.4%	8.0%	5.7%	5.4%	5.9%
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	<b>17.3%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$13,755</b>	<b>\$14,963</b>	<b>\$15,300</b>	<b>\$16,157</b>	<b>\$16,956</b>	<b>\$16,779</b>	
Hispanic	< \$2.5K	10.2%	6.0%	6.4%	14.5%	9.9%	11.0%
	< \$5K	11.7%	12.1%	12.4%	11.4%	9.7%	10.7%
	< \$7.5K	13.3%	13.7%	13.6%	9.9%	9.4%	9.0%
	< \$10K	13.2%	14.0%	13.7%	10.1%	10.6%	10.7%
	< \$15K	19.6%	19.8%	20.2%	14.9%	15.0%	12.6%
	< \$20K	11.6%	12.3%	12.2%	11.1%	11.8%	10.7%
	< \$30K	11.2%	13.0%	12.0%	13.0%	15.3%	14.7%
	< \$40K	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%	6.4%	7.3%	8.3%
	< \$50K	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%	3.6%	4.1%	4.8%
	> \$50K	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%	5.1%	7.0%	7.7%
	<b>Poverty Rate</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>34.7%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>31.0%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$10,349</b>	<b>\$10,815</b>	<b>\$10,812</b>	<b>\$11,135</b>	<b>\$13,467</b>	<b>\$13,209</b>	

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey. Other Races not shown.

## 4. Regional Patterns of Employment

A labor market as large and extensive as that of New York is bound to be complex. The previous tables all reported results only for residents of New York City. Here we turn our

attention to all workers living in Table 6

**Places of Work and Residence by Head of Household's Race and Nativity**

*(Employed People who Live or Work in NYC, Column Percent)*

Year	Head of Household's Race and Ethnicity	Live and Work in NYC	Work in NYC But Live Outside	Live in NYC But Work Outside	Total
2000	White NB	31.7%	62.4%	28.6%	37.6%
	White FB	10.1%	8.4%	9.9%	9.8%
	Black NB	11.7%	6.0%	11.1%	10.5%
	Black FB	9.8%	3.7%	12.0%	8.7%
	Hispanic NB	9.0%	4.6%	8.2%	8.1%
	Hispanic FB	12.9%	4.4%	14.6%	11.4%
	Asian NB	.8%	.6%	.7%	.8%
	Asian FB	9.9%	8.0%	11.1%	9.7%
2006-8	White NB	28.7%	55.5%	27.8%	33.8%
	White FB	10.0%	8.4%	9.2%	9.6%
	Black NB	10.6%	6.3%	9.4%	9.7%
	Black FB	10.8%	5.0%	13.7%	10.0%
	Hispanic NB	9.4%	5.5%	8.3%	8.6%
	Hispanic FB	16.2%	6.2%	15.0%	14.2%
	Asian NB	1.3%	1.0%	.8%	1.2%
	Asian FB	10.8%	10.7%	13.4%	11.0%
2009-10	White NB	29.3%	52.9%	28.3%	33.9%
	White FB	9.4%	8.2%	9.0%	9.1%
	Black NB	10.5%	6.7%	8.9%	9.6%
	Black FB	10.7%	5.0%	12.4%	9.7%
	Hispanic NB	9.3%	6.2%	7.7%	8.5%
	Hispanic FB	16.2%	7.3%	15.8%	14.4%
	Asian NB	1.6%	1.2%	1.4%	1.5%
	Asian FB	10.8%	10.8%	14.6%	11.1%

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey. Other Races not shown. NB = native born, FB = foreign born

the city (regardless of where they work) combined with those who live outside the city, but work within it. Table 6 shows the racial and nativity makeup of these different work-life situations over time. The overall distribution of resident workers, in-commuters, and out-commuters has basically been stable, with about

71 percent living and working in the city, 20 percent commuting into the city, and 9 percent commuting out. As we would expect, Table 6 shows that workers in native white households make up a great share of those who commute in, while those who live in minority-headed households, especially immigrant households, are over-represented among those who commute out. The native white and native black shares of all these groups has declined since 2000, the native Hispanic share of the resident labor force has held steady but risen among commuters, and the Hispanic and Asian foreign-born shares of all three components have been rising. This parallels the trends noted in the first section about changes in the composition of the population.

**Table 7**

### Median Real Annual Personal Income by HH Race and Nativity by Place of Residence & Work

(Employed People who Live or Work in NYC, \$2010)

	<i>Native Born</i>			<i>Foreign-Born</i>		
	<i>2000</i>	<i>2006-8</i>	<i>2009-10</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2006-8</i>	<i>2009-10</i>
<b>White</b>						
<i>Live and Work in NYC</i>	\$57,640	\$59,400	\$57,120	\$40,610	\$42,000	\$43,860
<i>Work But Do Not Live in NYC</i>	\$82,530	\$85,850	\$86,700	\$66,548	\$64,800	\$71,400
<i>Live But Do Not Work in NYC</i>	\$52,963	\$57,750	\$58,650	\$44,540	\$45,150	\$46,000
<i>All White</i>	\$65,500	\$66,960	\$65,280	\$45,850	\$45,360	\$48,960
<b>Black</b>						
<i>Live and Work in NYC</i>	\$36,680	\$35,700	\$36,720	\$34,060	\$31,500	\$32,640
<i>Work But Do Not Live in NYC</i>	\$56,330	\$57,974	\$58,140	\$53,186	\$51,084	\$52,000
<i>Live But Do Not Work in NYC</i>	\$32,750	\$35,380	\$35,800	\$30,916	\$31,500	\$30,600
<i>All Black</i>	\$38,514	\$37,800	\$39,400	\$35,370	\$32,616	\$34,680
<b>Hispanic</b>						
<i>Live and Work in NYC</i>	\$32,750	\$34,125	\$35,700	\$22,270	\$21,600	\$21,420
<i>Work But Do Not Live in NYC</i>	\$55,020	\$60,600	\$59,364	\$39,300	\$36,750	\$40,000
<i>Lives But Do Not Work in NYC</i>	\$30,130	\$35,350	\$35,000	\$20,436	\$21,600	\$21,420
<i>All Hispanic</i>	\$35,239	\$36,750	\$38,760	\$23,580	\$22,050	\$22,900
<b>Asian</b>						
<i>Live and Work in NYC</i>	\$52,400	\$52,500	\$55,000	\$28,820	\$30,452	\$30,600
<i>Work But Do Not Live in NYC</i>	\$72,050	\$86,400	\$75,000	\$63,535	\$71,710	\$75,000
<i>Live But Do Not Work in NYC</i>	\$52,400	\$58,439	\$61,200	\$27,510	\$27,300	\$26,900
<i>All Asian</i>	\$54,496	\$57,240	\$60,000	\$32,750	\$35,350	\$36,000

Source: microdata samples from 2000 Census and Combined 2006-2010 American Community Surveys. Other Races not shown.

How much do these various groups make? After wading through a large number of cells, Table 7 provides us with some insights. After breaking down their work-residence situations, the relative earnings of the various groups closely mirror the previously discussed patterns in household income per capita for city residents. (This would be expected given that most household income comes from wages and salaries.) The inclusion of the predominantly higher income commuters to the previous picture shows that they boost incomes of native whites. The familiar racial-nativity earnings differentials can be found among the higher-paid commuters as well as the resident labor force. In general, those who commute to jobs outside New York City earn less than those who live and work in the city, but the margins are close for the minority immigrant groups, suggesting that this group plays an important role in staffing low-wage positions in the suburbs; and suburban work opportunities may partly offset any crowding of the low-wage labor market in the city or any wage polarization going on in jobs within the

city.

In terms of earnings trends, the 2008 recession seems to have had a more negative effect on income gains among native white workers living in the city, while their commuting counterparts did better. (This was also true of the overall resident and commuting labor force.) The pattern for workers in black native-born households was an anomaly, sinking during the boom and then recovering after the recession. Workers in Hispanic native-born households living in the city were also anomalous, experiencing upwardly trending real median incomes both before and after the recession. By contrast, median real earnings declined among workers in Hispanic foreign-born households living in the city, though they rose among the Hispanic foreign-born commuters. All in all, these patterns suggest that rising real median earnings for those with jobs offset the patterns of employment and unemployment noted earlier and helped bolster household incomes.

We conclude this section by observing once more that while the 2001 and 2008 recessions were hard on those living in New York City, especially the lowest income minority groups from immigrant backgrounds, overall levels of employment, real earnings, and household income proved surprisingly resilient. While more people ended the decade in poverty and unemployment than at the peak years of the economy in 2007, conditions were marginally better in 2010. At the same time, the hierarchy of household income organized around race, ethnicity, nativity, and places of residence and work exhibits a high level of inequality which the trends of the decade did very little to abate. The evidence provided here suggests that the greater tendency of people in households headed by native-born black and Hispanics to work in local government and nonprofit social services may have insulated them somewhat from the economic downturns of the decade, although government employment turned down at the end of the period. A possible explanation is that this population is more likely to hold jobs in education, health care, and social services than people in their counterpart immigrant-headed households. (We have not discussed differences by gender, household form, and educational attainment, but preliminary analyses suggest that these factors also play a large role in shaping the contours of the distribution of median real household income and earnings.)

Returning to Table 3 to summarize overall trends in the relative standing of different groups of New York City residents across the decade, average real household income per capita rose over the first part of the decade and fell during the recession, but remained higher at the end of the decade, while average real hourly wages fell overall. (These trends can differ because households can increase their number of workers and hence household income per capita to offset downward pressure on wages.) The gap in real per capita household income between the highest group (those in native white households) and lowest (those in foreign Hispanic households) approached four to one in 2000, while the hourly earnings gap was two to one. These patterns basically remained stable across the decade, but those in native-born Hispanic and Asian households showed significant improvement while their foreign-born counterparts did not.

In short, overall work effort and average real household income per capita were higher in 2010 than 2000, despite the 2008 recession. At the same time, average real hourly earnings declined. The city's workforce thus made a greater work effort to offset declining wages; the changing mix of workers also contributed to the decline in the overall average wage, with members of high-earning native white households declining and members of lower-earning groups increasing. The basic picture is thus one of

broadening prosperity between 2000 and 2008, followed by households working longer to offset downward pressures on incomes and hourly wages during the last years of the decade, with particularly high unemployment among the black and Hispanic households, headed by both natives and immigrants.

Certain characteristics are strongly statistically associated with poverty and lower per capita household incomes among New York City residents: not having a job, being young, having a child, living in a single parent household, living in larger households with fewer workers, being foreign born, being a non-citizen, not speaking English well, being a high school dropout, not having a college education, and not working in a professional and managerial occupation and not working in a highly-compensated industry. (This condition is also strongly associated with other traits that are not measured by the Census, including having a jail or prison record, having been arrested, and not being in a union.) These characteristics are intertwined with race and nativity and have a particularly high incidence among those living in households headed by native-born blacks and Hispanics – in other words, the city’s African American and Puerto Rican communities. (Multivariate analysis shows that being black or Hispanic still carries a penalty, even after taking all the other characteristics into account.) Some of these characteristics are also common among households headed by foreign-born people, but others are not, and it appears that members of black and Hispanic immigrant families are doing somewhat better than their native born counterparts, despite their relatively low starting points. Members of Asian households are doing particularly well.

The best news from this demographic analysis is that many, but not all, of the traits associated with poverty and low incomes gradually diminished over time. This had several components, as the most troubled native-born black and Hispanic households both declined as a share of the population and improved their position, particularly in terms of attaining a college education. Yet even at the end of the decade, distressingly high shares of the adults in native black and Hispanic households do not have a job and live in single parent households where supporting their children is an on-going struggle.

## 5. The Changing Composition of the New York City Electorate

It is often said that “demography is destiny” in politics, but this is not quite true: the changing demographic composition of a given population and potential electorate provides the raw materials which myriad political institutions and actors then landscape and contour. These shaping forces include election laws, party organization and practices, campaigns, and civic, religious, political, labor, and other organizations and movements, as well as patterns of informal social networks and collective identities. When demographic change goes far enough, it can force all these institutions and actors to adapt, but they still do their best to shape the political import of how that change unfolds. For example, a county party organization might nominate a loyal party activist from of an ethnic group in a legislative district where that group’s population has grown or an immigrant advocacy group might seek to increase the voter registration of newly naturalized areas in a particular area.

One overall way to understand the large differences between those who are potentially eligible to vote in New York City elections and those who actually do is to consider what might be called “the electoral funnel.” That is to say, in a city of 8.2 million residents, about 6.4 million are old enough to vote and 5.1 million of them are citizens. But even the whittling down of population to theoretically eligible voters

**Table 8**

**Composition of the Citizen Voting Age Population and the Total Population by Head of Household's Race and Ethnicity and Nativity**

*(NYC Residents, Column Percent)*

Year	HH Head Race and Nativity	Citizen Voting Age Population	Total Population
2000	White NB	36.1%	25.5%
	White FB	8.7%	10.0%
	Black NB	17.7%	14.7%
	Black FB	7.0%	9.5%
	Hispanic NB	13.3%	11.6%
	Hispanic FB	7.6%	15.1%
	Asian NB	0.9%	0.6%
	Asian FB	5.7%	9.1%
	<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>4,687,337</b>	<b>8,004,759</b>
2006-8	White NB	34.0%	25.5%
	White FB	9.5%	10.2%
	Black NB	15.5%	13.0%
	Black FB	8.3%	10.5%
	Hispanic NB	12.9%	11.2%
	Hispanic FB	8.8%	15.9%
	Asian NB	1.3%	1.0%
	Asian FB	7.7%	10.6%
	<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>5,014,185</b>	<b>8,284,400</b>
2009-10	White NB	33.7%	25.5%
	White FB	8.8%	9.4%
	Black NB	15.2%	12.6%
	Black FB	8.5%	10.4%
	Hispanic NB	12.9%	11.2%
	Hispanic FB	9.3%	16.5%
	Asian NB	1.5%	1.2%
	Asian FB	8.1%	11.0%
<b>Total (100%)</b>	<b>5,106,486</b>	<b>8,288,196</b>	

Source: Microdata samples from 2000 Census and 2010 American Community Survey. Other Races not shown.

NB = native born, FB = foreign born

(citizens of voting age, or CVAP) does not take place evenly across all groups. As Table 8 shows, the ratio of CVAP to population varies considerably across the different racial, ethnic, and nativity groups.

People living in households headed by native-born whites make up only a quarter of the overall population, but they are a third of the potential electorate of voting-age citizens (because they are more likely both to be voting age and to be citizens than other groups). Their “nearest neighbors,” those in households headed by foreign-born whites, add about 9 percentage points to their total in the potential electorate, but all those living in households headed by whites are still clearly less than a majority. Note that those living in native-born black households also make up significantly more of the potential electorate than the population because they, too, are older and more likely to be citizens. Those living in native-born Hispanic headed households have only a small gain due to their differential citizenship and age. All the immigrant-headed households make up smaller shares of the potential electorate than the population. Taken together, however, all the minority native-born and

immigrant groups constitute a majority of the potential electorate.

The electoral funnel continues to narrow, however, because a number of other filters stand between theoretical eligibility and actual electoral participation. To participate, one must register to vote and choose to affiliate with a political party (or not). Given that the New York City voter registration file currently lists approximately 4.1 million names, at most about 80 percent of the potentially eligible voters are registered. However, only 3.2 million of those 4.1 million names on the list actually voted even once in a city election between 2001 and 2009. The number of actually available voters on the list is clearly significantly lower than the total. (The list contains people who have moved away, died, or who never intended to vote when they were asked to register.) The largest turnout over the decade in any city election was in the 2008 Presidential election, when 2,615,479 people voted. (Roughly half that many people voted in the 2010 gubernatorial election.) In general, even fewer votes are cast in elections for citywide municipal office, including the mayoralty, and there is a significant fall-off from the votes cast for citywide candidate to those cast for less-than-citywide offices like Council or Assembly.

Party affiliation also plays an important role in narrowing the electoral funnel. About 69 percent of all registered voters (and 72 percent of all those who voted at least once between 2001 and 2009) are Democrats. The predominance of Democratic registration has a number of consequences. Being a party member (especially one who votes regularly) means that organizations and candidates affiliated with the Democrats will make efforts to get the person out to vote. Equally important, only registered Democrats can vote in the party primary that, apart from recent mayoral contests, usually determines who will win the general election. A final consequence is that black and Hispanic registered voters are more likely to affiliate with the Democratic party than white Catholics, which somewhat enhances their influence within the political process, while Asian voters disproportionately choose not to affiliate with any party, reducing their potential impact. This next narrowing of the electoral funnel reduces it from the 3.2 million active voters between 2001 and 2009 to 2.3 million Democrats in that group.

The final steps in narrowing the electoral funnel take place in terms of who votes in which elections (presidential versus municipal and general versus party primary) and particularly the relatively small electorate attracted by Democratic primary elections, as shown in Table 9. Not only did the mayoral general elections of 2001, 2005, and 2009 draw relatively small and declining numbers of voters to the polls, but the Democratic mayoral primary elections drew far fewer, especially in 2009. The mayoral general elections declined from 1.5 million to 1.2 million voters, while the mayoral Democratic primaries declined from 800,000 to 330,000, even as the overall and Democratic voter rolls grew significantly. While mayoral elections have been quite competitive from 1977 to the present and the Democratic nominee has lost every election since 1993, Democratic nominees won all other citywide offices and most other municipal contests as well. Reaching the narrowest point in the funnel, it is striking that only about 165,000 people, or half of those voting in the Democratic primary – a mere 3.2 percent of the 5.1 million potentially eligible voters – decided who would hold most citywide offices. At this point, the funnel is narrow indeed.

From where does the comparatively small vote in mayoral general and Democratic primary elections come? We can only infer why various constituencies turn out and for whom from the predominant racial and ethnic make-up of election districts in which they live. Looking just at the 2009 Democratic mayoral primary, the row near the bottom of Table 9, it appears that 45 percent of the vote came from majority or plurality white election districts (EDs), while 30.6 percent came from majority or plurality black EDs, 20.6 percent from majority or plurality Hispanic EDs, and 2.8 percent from majority or plurality Asian EDs. (Obviously, these are approximations because many people from any given background may live in EDs where they are not a majority or plurality, and indeed such people may vote differently from those who live in areas of concentration. Nevertheless, groups are sufficiently segregated and clustered, particularly whites and blacks, to give a rough indication of who is voting and how they are voting.) Regarding the overall increase in Democratic registration between 2001 and 2009, registration gains systematically lagged vote share for declining groups like whites (especially more religious Jewish areas) and African Americans, but was systematically larger in Latino and Asian areas influenced by immigration.



Table 9

## Registration and Voting by Election District Composition, New York City, 2001-2009

	2001 General Election	2001 Democratic Mayoral Primary	2005 General Election	2005 Democratic Mayoral Primary	2009 General Election	2009 Share	2009 Democratic Mayoral Primary	2009 Share
Catholic	336,338	105,703	264,268	56,636	245,228	20.8%	43,174	13.1%
White Secular	144,283	66,042	108,291	48,405	96,303	8.2%	31,719	9.6%
Jewish	306,419	138,921	243,243	88,740	229,783	19.5%	57,556	17.4%
White Plurality	78,519	35,435	63,322	20,434	60,830	5.2%	16,574	5.0%
African American	199,051	140,621	177,241	84,473	170,738	14.5%	65,901	19.9%
Afro-Caribbean	88,142	55,579	72,401	29,877	71,865	6.1%	24,069	7.3%
Black Plurality	42,789	26,616	37,955	16,062	35,030	3.0%	11,397	3.4%
Puerto Rican	111,235	86,066	119,498	55,476	90,281	7.7%	27,721	8.4%
Dominican	68,295	51,623	71,683	33,896	55,459	4.7%	18,912	5.7%
Latin American	22,276	12,040	20,566	7,782	18,061	1.5%	4,939	1.5%
Latino Plurality	71,564	39,641	66,192	25,989	58,542	5.0%	16,436	5.0%
Chinese	35,545	14,682	29,399	8,082	30,007	2.5%	7,685	2.3%
Other Asian	10,191	4,305	8,585	2,404	8,385	0.7%	1,780	0.5%
Total	1,519,517	780,396	1,289,919	493,374	1,178,057	100%	330,659	100%

Source: John Mollenkopf analysis of election district demographics and NYC Board of Election results.

How could a formerly Republican and then independent native white mayor win general election majorities in such a heavily Democratic, majority-minority city (and electorate)? Table 10 outlines how Mayor Bloomberg's three campaigns assembled their majorities. Note that all three general elections showed some degree of racial and ethnic polarization. In other words, two-thirds to three-quarters of the voters in white constituencies voted for Mayor Bloomberg while African American areas gave him only one-fifth of their votes in the 2001 and 2009 elections and Puerto Rican areas also gave him only about a third. Predominantly white areas of the city thus provided the mayor with more than two-thirds of his votes.

As we observed previously, however, white votes are not enough to win even under conditions of greater racial polarization than evidenced in these elections. Mayor Bloomberg thus had to get slightly less than one-third of his support from minority areas in each of his victories. The pattern of *where* he got these minority votes shifted over the course of the decade, however. In 2001, the eventual Democratic nominee, Mark Green, defeated Fernando Ferrer, the Puerto Rican former borough president of the Bronx, in a bitter primary election. A fallout from this was a higher degree of general election support for Bloomberg from Puerto Rican (and Latin American, but not Dominican) areas in the general election. He also did well among the small, but growing Asian electorate.

This pattern shifted both in 2005 and 2009, reflecting the fact that the Democrats nominated a Latino, Fernando Ferrer, in 2005 and an African American, former comptroller William Thompson, in 2009. Table 10 shows a visible degree of black-Latino competition in the relatively high share of votes Bloomberg got in black neighborhoods in 2005, when a Latino challenged him, and the low share Bloomberg got in Latino neighborhoods in 2005, which then increased in 2009 when he was challenged by a black Democratic nominee. This was a far closer election than in 2005, in part because of the controversial suspension of term limits heightened animosity toward the mayor. The normally most-supportive white constituencies all gave him a smaller share of their votes in 2009 than 2005. Facing a black candidate, Bloomberg could also foresee that his black support would decline from 2009. Therefore, he needed to increase his Latino vote shares to win the final victory. Whereas black and Latino Democrats had forged a good, but not quite sufficient working alliance around Ferrer's candidacy in the 2001 Democratic mayoral primary and runoff, this was not maintained sufficiently in the 2005 or 2009 general elections to yield a Democratic win. (A third component of a multi-racial challenging coalition, white liberals and a substantial part of the Jewish vote, shifted providing substantial support for the white liberal Jewish Democratic candidate in the 2001 primary and general election to firm support for Bloomberg in the two succeeding elections.)

Table 10

### Bloomberg Mayoral General Vote Shares, 2001-2009

(New York City Votes Cast)

Neighborhood Ethnicity	2001		2005		2009	
	General Vote	% for Bloomberg	General Vote	% for Bloomberg	General Vote	% for Bloomberg
Catholic	239,822	71.3%	195,354	73.9%	160,031	65.3%
White Secular	67,109	46.5%	73,602	68.0%	61,448	63.8%
Jewish	179,838	58.7%	189,751	78.0%	163,857	71.3%
White Plurality	41,235	52.5%	38,341	60.7%	32,707	53.8%
<b>White ED pct of MB Total</b>	<b>70.9%</b>		<b>66.0%</b>		<b>71.4%</b>	
African American	43,668	21.9%	81,309	45.9%	34,030	19.9%
Afro-Caribbean	20,188	22.9%	36,267	50.1%	15,074	21.0%
Black Plurality	14,748	34.5%	18,353	48.4%	11,920	34.0%
<b>Black ED pct of MB Total</b>	<b>10.6%</b>		<b>18.1%</b>		<b>10.4%</b>	
Puerto Rican	43,985	39.5%	33,741	28.2%	29,755	33.0%
Dominican	25,321	15.1%	20,035	27.9%	17,367	31.3%
Latin American	11,045	15.4%	8,902	43.3%	9,140	50.6%
Latino Plurality	32,944	46.0%	29,985	45.3%	24,814	42.4%
<b>Latino ED pct of MB Total</b>	<b>15.2%</b>		<b>12.3%</b>		<b>13.9%</b>	
Chinese	17,635	49.6%	18,442	62.7%	17,555	58.5%
Other Asian	5,371	52.7%	5,011	58.4%	4,384	52.3%
<b>Asian ED pct of MB Total</b>	<b>3.1%</b>		<b>3.1%</b>		<b>3.7%</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>744,757</b>	<b>49.0%</b>	<b>753,089</b>	<b>58.4%</b>	<b>585,466</b>	<b>49.7%</b>

Source: Mollenkopf analysis of registered voters and election results from New York City Board of Elections; 2000 Census SF3

The complete contours of the 2013 mayoral primary and general election are only now coming into focus. At this writing, no Republican candidate with Mayor Bloomberg's resources and name recognition has appeared on the electoral stage. Yet the divisions among the Democratic primary electorate – between white liberals, African American and Afro-Caribbeans, Puerto Ricans, Dominican Americans,

Chinese Americans, and other Asian Americans – will persist. The challenge for the emerging field of Democratic mayoral aspirants is to find a way to bridge these divisions in order to win a majority both of the Democratic primary voters and the general electorate.

Stepping back from the demographic and electoral details, we can draw several larger conclusions. First, New York City has proven surprisingly resilient in the face of the dramatic economic shocks and political challenges it experienced during the last decade. Not only the whole city, but each of its ethno-racial groups were better off at the end of the decade than at the beginning, though this improvement was less than what might have occurred in the absence of the 2008 financial and economic crisis. Moreover, many basic social indicators, such as college degree attainment among adults or high school dropout rates or single parent family rates, improved markedly across the decade. Second, this improvement took place within a highly durable framework of inequality. Though New York City has always been characterized by high levels of inequality, reflecting its ability not only to attract low-income immigrants looking for opportunity, but also to retain high-income and high-net-worth households, the widening of income inequality over recent decades is troubling. This is especially so when it sequesters large numbers of residents at the bottom and bars them from moving up. It is also troubling that income classes have such distinct colors, with whites predominating at the top and African Americans and Puerto Ricans predominating at the bottom, with immigrants and other native minority groups in between them.

While well-informed observers may disagree over how much city government can do or should do in this situation, it is clear from the electoral trends that while relatively better-off whites continue to exercise disproportionate political influence, particularly in forming the core of a citywide electoral majority for their favored candidate, they cannot do it without allies. To a degree, their influence depends on the persistence of divisions among the elements of an alternative coalition drawing support from black, Latino, Asian, and liberal white constituencies. These divisions reflect real differences in the socio-economic positions and goals of these groups, as well as political competition among them. The situation is different in 2013, however, because no candidate with strong support among relatively conservative white constituencies will find it as easy to appeal to any of these groups. As a result, the prospects are better than they have been in a decade for Democrats to overcome their differences and form a majority.

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