

# Study: LI's Latino population changing, growing

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The wave of "new Latinos" who have spurred the rapid growth of Hispanics on [Long Island](#) rank lower on income and are concentrated in more segregated and poorer neighborhoods than older community segments, according to a new analysis of census data.

But those new groups are slowly making progress at the national level and, because of their growth, are helping redefine what Hispanic means, the study found.

While Mexicans are the majority of U.S. Hispanics, and Puerto Ricans and Cubans remain significant groups, Dominicans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans

and others are surging.

The diversity of educational, economic and assimilation experiences makes it increasingly hard to categorize all Latinos as a homogeneous group beyond having a shared culture, said study co-author John R. Logan, a sociology professor at Brown University.

"Groups like Salvadorans and Dominicans are numbering in the millions and it seems like it's time to take them into account because they are not just like Mexicans," Logan said in an interview.

[Long Island](#)'s Hispanics are more diverse than those in other parts of the country, the analysis showed.

Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans make up the largest Latino groups in [Nassau](#) and [Suffolk](#), while Hondurans and Guatemalans grew the fastest over the past 20 years. [Nassau](#) and [Suffolk](#) combined contain the fourth-largest concentration of Dominicans in the U.S.

Many Puerto Ricans and Cubans on [Long Island](#) have moved out of segregated communities and report higher median incomes, while Central American and Dominican immigrants move into those segregated neighborhoods and lag behind in household income, Logan said.



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Luis Valenzuela, a Puerto Rican activist who heads the [Long Island Immigrant Alliance](#), said the study results just reflect the history of migration: Established groups move up the economic ladder and make room for newcomers.

"Part of it has to do with longevity in the United States and on [Long Island](#)," Valenzuela said. "Immigrants tend to go into neighborhoods that are often in decline . . . and they revitalize these communities with their work."

The report seemed partially complete, said Ricardo Reyes, a Dominican entrepreneur in [Freeport](#) who owns Alerta TV, a Spanish-language cable station for Protestant Latinos, and presides over a network of evangelical churches.

While the study cites local Dominicans as having the lowest household median income at \$76,787, it doesn't account for the wealth they are building, he said.

"You see Dominicans living in poor areas because they're temporarily looking for low rent to send money home or save up for a business," said Reyes, 61. "I've done it."

Assistant Deputy [Suffolk County Executive Luis Montes](#), a Salvadoran-American, said [Long Island](#) would [benefit](#) if the challenges faced by the different Latino communities are addressed.

There should be more initiatives to teach immigrants English, establish scholarship funds and improve their children's education, he said.

"Until our immigrant communities overcome educational barriers," Montes said, "there won't be progress."

## LI'S HISPANIC POPULATION

Salvadorans: 99,495

Puerto Ricans: 88,514

Dominicans: 41,967

Colombians: 27,103

Ecuadoreans: 26,877

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR LI HISPANICS

All Hispanics: \$78,126

Mexicans: \$78,766

Puerto Ricans: \$83,218

Cubans: \$92,104

Dominicans: \$76,787

Central Americans: \$71,416

South Americans: \$82,749

Non-Hispanic whites: \$97,403

*Source: 2010 census*

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