

## 1995 – 2005: Foreign-Born Latinos Make Progress on Wages

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Foreign-born Latino workers made notable progress between 1995 and 2005 when ranked by hourly wage. The proportion of foreign-born Latino workers in the lowest quintile of the wage distribution decreased to 36% from 42% while many workers moved into the middle quintiles, according to a new analysis of Census Bureau data by the Pew Hispanic Center.

Newly arrived Hispanic workers also were much less likely to be low-wage earners in 2005 than in 1995, in part because they were older, better educated and more likely to be employed in construction than in agriculture. Yet despite the clear movement into the middle range of the wage distribution, many foreign-born Latinos remain low-wage earners. Even though the share of Latino workers at the low end decreased, in absolute numbers this population grew by 1.2 million between 1995 and 2005.

Foreign-born workers in general did well during that time period, though there were significant differences among them. While Latino workers moved out of the low end of the wage distribution and into the middle, Asians significantly boosted their presence in the high-wage workforce.

**About this report:** The estimates in this report are derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households. Data on earnings are available for one-quarter of the monthly sample. Twelve monthly samples with earnings data are combined to conduct the analysis on an annual basis. The analysis focuses on changes between 1995 and 2005.

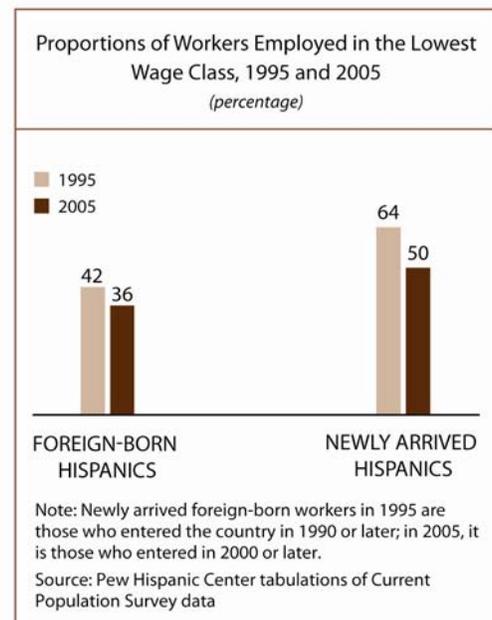
**About the Pew Hispanic Center:** Founded in 2001, the Pew Hispanic Center is a nonpartisan research organization supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The Pew Hispanic Center's mission is to improve understanding of the diverse Hispanic population and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation. The Pew Hispanic Center is a project of the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" in Washington, D.C., that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world; it does not advocate for or take positions on policy issues.

## Executive Summary

Foreign-born Latino workers made notable progress between 1995 and 2005 when ranked by hourly wage. The proportion of foreign-born Latino workers in the lowest quintile of the wage distribution decreased to 36% from 42% while many workers moved into the middle quintiles, according to a new analysis of Census Bureau data by the Pew Hispanic Center.

Newly arrived Hispanic workers also were much less likely to be low-wage earners in 2005 than in 1995, in part because they were older, better educated and more likely to be employed in construction than in agriculture. Yet despite the clear movement into the middle range of the wage distribution, many foreign-born Latinos remain low-wage earners. Even though the share of Latino workers at the low end decreased, in absolute numbers this population grew by 1.2 million between 1995 and 2005.

Foreign-born workers in general did well during that time period, though there were significant differences among them. While Latino workers moved out of the low end of the wage distribution and into the middle, Asians significantly boosted their presence in the high-wage workforce.



This report uses the prism of the wage distribution to study the integration of foreign-born workers, especially Latinos and Asians, into the U.S. labor market. Immigrant workers represent a critical and growing part of the U.S. labor force. The share of foreign-born workers in the labor force grew from 7% in 1980 to 15% in 2005. Latinos, who also represent the largest share of foreign-born workers, accounted for 13% of the overall labor force in 2005, up from 6% in 1980. Since foreign-born workers account for the majority of new workers in the economy, their share of the overall workforce will continue to increase in the near future.

The report addresses several key questions about this fast-growing workforce: Are these foreign-born workers crowding into the low-wage segments of the workforce? What are the growth rates for immigrant workers in the middle- and high-income segments of the workforce? How are the newly arrived immigrant workers faring? The analysis is based on the hourly wage. A worker is assigned to one of five wage groups based on his or her wage relative to the wages of other workers. In ascending order, the five wage groups are referred to as low wage, low-middle, middle, high-middle and high. That classification is done once for 1995 and again for 2005.

Estimates are derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households. Data on earnings are available for one-quarter of the monthly sample. Twelve monthly samples with earnings data are combined to conduct the analysis on an annual basis. The CPS started reporting birthplaces on a monthly basis in 1994, so it is not feasible to construct annual files with earnings data for foreign-born workers prior to that date. The analysis focuses on changes between 1995 and 2005.

Both authorized and unauthorized workers are part of the analysis but this report does not distinguish foreign-born workers by immigration status. For more information on unauthorized workers in the U.S. labor market, see [Passel \(2006\)](#). This report also does not examine the relationship between immigration and wages of native-born workers. That issue has been extensively researched and no definitive answer has emerged. Some economists ([Borjas, 2003](#)) have concluded that immigration harms the wages of native-born workers but others (Card, 2001; and [Ottaviano and Peri, 2006](#)) find either no effect or a possible beneficial effect on wages. A 2007 report by the [Council of Economic Advisers](#) concludes that, on average, native-born workers benefit from immigration.

This study first examines the demographic characteristics of the wage distribution in 2005. The principal characteristics of interest are workers' nativity, race and ethnicity. That is followed by an analysis of the progress of foreign-born workers in the wage distribution between 1995 and 2005. The last section examines the

experience of native-born workers and individual racial and ethnic groups in the same time period.

Among the findings:

- The proportion of foreign-born Hispanics who were at the bottom when ranked by hourly wage decreased from 42% in 1995 to 36% in 2005.
- Employment growth for foreign-born Hispanics was fastest in the high-middle range of the wage distribution, where it increased by 112% between 1995 and 2005. By comparison, the increase in the lowest wage group was 57%.
- The number of immigrant Latinos at the lowest end of the wage distribution still increased by 1.2 million between 1995 and 2005, more than double the increase of Latinos in the high-middle range of the wage distribution. However, the increase in low-wage Latino immigrants was lower than expected, based on the growth of the population of foreign-born Hispanics, while it was higher than expected among Latino immigrants in the middle-wage range.
- The proportion of Mexican-born workers in the lowest wage class decreased from 48% in 1995 to 40% in 2005.
- The proportion of newly arrived Hispanic immigrants who were low-wage workers decreased from 64% in 1995 to 50% in 2005. New arrivals in 2005 were also older, better educated and more likely to be employed in construction than in agriculture.
- Foreign-born Asians increased their presence in the high wage workforce. Nearly one-third of foreign-born Asians were among the top fifth of workers ranked by their hourly wage in 2005, up from 25% in 1995.
- Employment growth for foreign-born Asians was fastest in the high-wage groups. Total employment for immigrant Asians increased 126% between 1995 and 2005, but employment in the highest earning group increased 174%.
- There was little change in the earnings profile of native-born workers between 1995 and 2005. Most notably, the number of non-Hispanic whites decreased by 747,000 in the low-wage range and by 663,000 in the middle-wage range. Meanwhile, 513,000 were added to the high-wage range.

## About the Author

Rakesh Kochhar has more than 15 years of research experience in the areas of labor economics and price and wage measurement and analysis. Prior to joining the Pew Hispanic Center, he was senior economist at Joel Popkin and Co., where he served as a consultant to government agencies, private firms, international agencies and labor unions. He is a past president of the Society of Government Economists. His doctoral thesis at Brown University focused on the theory of labor migration.

## A Note on Terminology

The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably in this report.

The terms “whites” “blacks” and “Asians” are used to refer to the non-Hispanic components of each population.

Foreign-born refers to an individual who is born outside the U.S., Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories and whose parents are not U.S. citizens. The terms “foreign-born” and “immigrant” are used interchangeably.

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## Introduction

Foreign-born workers, who now comprise 15% of the U.S. labor force, made notable progress into middle- and high-wage jobs between 1995 and 2005. During this period, many foreign-born Latinos stepped out of the low-wage workforce and headed toward the middle of the wage distribution.

In particular, newly arrived Hispanics proved much less likely to be low-wage workers in 2005 than in 1995. Higher levels of education and a move from jobs in agriculture to construction aided the progress of Latinos in the wage distribution scale. At the same time, there was a large drop in the proportions of workers born in Mexico and Central America who were in the lowest wage class. Among all foreign-born workers, the strongest gains were made by Asians, who significantly boosted their presence in the high-wage workforce.

Despite the gains in wage, foreign-born workers remained more likely than native-born workers to be in low-wage jobs in 2005. And while the pace of growth for foreign-born Latinos in the low-wage workforce was relatively slow, they also accounted for a significant number of new low-wage workers between 1995 and 2005. In part that is because the large initial size of the Latino low-wage workforce translated into high numbers of new low-wage workers even at slower growth rates. At the same time, economic progress for other workers, especially whites and foreign-born Asians, was more rapid than for foreign-born Hispanics.

In contrast to the experiences of foreign-born workers, there was little to no change in the position of native-born groups in the wage distribution between 1995 and 2005. The main exception was the experience of native-born white workers. Their employment growth was largely confined to the high-wage group. Even as their share in the workforce dropped, they added more workers to the high-wage workforce than might have been expected based on demographic trends alone.

These developments came about as two intertwined trends—the growth of the Hispanic population and immigration—have transformed the demography of the U.S. labor market in recent years. The share of Hispanics in the labor force (those with a job or actively looking for a job) stood at 6% in 1980. Their share increased to 9% by 1995 and then to 13% by 2005. At the same time, the share of foreign-born workers in the labor force grew from 7% in 1980 to 11% in 1995 and then to 15% by 2005. These shares will continue to increase in the near future because Latino and foreign-born workers account for the majority of new workers in the economy.

This report uses the prism of the wage distribution to study the integration of foreign-born workers, especially Latinos and Asians, into the U.S. labor market. The analysis addresses key questions about this fast-growing workforce: Are these foreign-born workers crowding into the low-wage segments of the workforce? What are the growth rates for immigrant workers in the middle- and high-income segments of the workforce? How are the newly arrived immigrant workers faring?

Estimates are derived from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households. Data on earnings are available for one-quarter of the monthly sample. Twelve monthly samples with earnings data are combined to conduct the analysis on an annual basis. The analysis in this report focuses on changes between 1995 and 2005.<sup>1</sup>

Both authorized and unauthorized workers are part of the analysis, but this report does not distinguish foreign-born workers by immigration status. For more information on unauthorized workers in the U.S. labor market, see [Passel \(2006\)](#). This report also does not examine the relationship between immigration and wages of native-born workers. That issue has been extensively researched and no definitive answer has emerged. Some economists ([Borjas, 2003](#)) have concluded that immigration harms the wages of native-born workers but others (Card, 2001; and [Ottaviano and Peri, 2006](#)) find either no effect or a possible beneficial effect on wages. A 2007 report by the [Council of Economic Advisers](#) concludes that, on average, native-born workers benefit from immigration.

The study first examines the demographic characteristics of the wage distribution in 2005. The principal characteristics of interest are workers' nativity, race and ethnicity. That is followed by an analysis of the progress of foreign-born workers in the wage distribution between 1995 and 2005. The last section in the report briefly examines the experience of native-born workers and individual racial and ethnic groups in the same time period.

### Assigning Workers to a Wage Group

Workers are assigned to one of five wage groups depending on their rank in the wage distribution. In ascending order, the five wage groups are referred to as low wage, low-middle, middle, high-middle and high. That classification is done once for 1995 and again for 2005.

On average, one-fifth of workers are expected to fall into each of the five wage groups. In other words, about 20% would fall into the low-wage group, 20% into

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<sup>1</sup> The Current Population Survey began reporting birthplaces on a monthly basis in 1994, so it is not feasible to construct annual files with earnings data for foreign-born workers prior to that date.

the low-middle group and so on. The lowest earning 20% of the workforce is the low-wage workforce. The highest earning 20% of the workforce is the high-wage group. Workers who fall in the middle 20%, or the third of the five wage classes, are middle-wage workers.

The distribution of individual categories of workers, such as foreign-born or Latinos, may differ from this average. Relatively more or less of a particular group of workers may lie above or below the middle of the wage distribution.

The assignment of a worker to a wage class is based strictly on that worker's wage relative to the wages of other workers. Thus, the income range that defines the middle of the distribution varies from one period to the next. It should be noted that the terms "low wage," "middle wage" and "high wage" refer merely to different points of the wage distribution. This report does not attempt to use absolute notions or test alternative definitions of what it means to be a low-, middle- or high-income worker.

In that sense, this report differs from other analyses that focus on the experiences of the middle class (see, for example, [Rodriguez, 1996](#); [Bean, Trejo, Capps and Tyler, 2001](#); and [Clark, 2001](#)). Many of those analyses impose an income range that defines the middle class or use an absolute notion of income in conjunction with homeownership to define the middle class. Wolfson (1994) presents a variety of indicators that might be used to measure the spread of the wage distribution or to define the middle of the wage distribution.

The analysis in this report is based on the hourly wage. For workers in the sample who reported only a weekly wage, the hourly wage is estimated as the weekly wage divided by the usual hours worked in a week. Using the hourly wage factors out differences in earnings across workers that arise from differences in hours worked, such as the weekly earnings of full-time versus part-time workers.

The range of earnings for workers in each of the five wage groups is shown in Table 1. The sample for 2005 consists of 122 million workers divided into five groups of approximately 24 million workers each. Low-wage workers in 2005 were earning less than \$8.50 per hour and those in the middle were paid \$12 to \$16.20 per hour. High-wage workers in 2005 earned more than \$24.03 per hour.

In 1995 hourly earnings could be estimated for 106 million workers. Thus, there are five wage groups of about 21 million workers each in 1995. Expressed in 2005 dollars, low-wage workers earned less than \$7.69 per hour in 1995. Middle-wage workers earned \$10.97 to \$15.38 per hour, whereas high-wage workers earned more than \$22.03 per hour.

**Table 1**  
Hourly Earnings at the Boundaries of Wage Classes in 1995 and 2005  
*(Wages expressed in 2005 dollars)*

	HOURLY WAGE IN 1995		HOURLY WAGE IN 2005	
	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest
Low-wage workers	2.00	7.69	2.00	8.50
Low-middle workers	7.69	10.97	8.50	12.00
Middle-wage workers	10.97	15.38	12.00	16.20
High-middle workers	15.38	22.03	16.20	24.03
High-wage workers	22.03	100.00	24.03	100.00

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

The median wage for all workers was \$14 per hour in 2005. That was 9.2% higher than the median wage of \$12.82 per hour in 1995 (Table 2; all wages are expressed in 2005 dollars). The economy-wide median wage is, by definition, also the median wage of middle-wage workers. Both reflect the midpoint of the wage distribution—half of all workers earn less than the median and half earn more. Therefore, the earnings of middle-wage workers are also seen to have increased 9.2% between 1995 and 2005.

Low-income workers’ median hourly earnings increased from \$6.41 in 1995 to \$7 per hour in 2005, also a 9.2% increase. Interestingly, the median earning of low-wage workers was exactly half the median earning of middle-wage workers in both years.

High-income workers fared better than average between 1995 and 2005 and pulled away slightly from the rest of the workforce. The median wage of these workers increased from \$28.48 in 1995 to \$31.73 per hour in 2005, or by 11.4%.

**Table 2**  
Median Hourly Earnings by Wage Class, 1995 and 2005  
*(Wages expressed in 2005 dollars)*

	1995	2005	Change (%)
All Workers	12.82	14.00	9.2
Low-wage workers	6.41	7.00	9.2
Low-middle workers	9.35	10.00	6.9
Middle-wage workers	12.82	14.00	9.2
High-middle workers	18.48	19.23	4.0
High wage workers	28.48	31.73	11.4

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

### **Employment Levels in the Report Understate Actual Employment**

The number of workers counted in this report is less than the actual number employed in the labor market. The unincorporated self-employed, workers without pay and those whose earnings are very low (less than \$2 per hour) or high (more than \$100 per hour) are excluded from the analysis.

In addition, there is some sample loss due to missing data on earnings or usual hours worked. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that employment in the U.S. in 2005 was 142 million. However, Table 8 in the report shows 122 million as the total number employed in 2005, or about 85% of the actual level of employment. Thus, employment levels in this report should not be interpreted to represent actual employment in the economy at the point in time in question. The missing observations, representing 15% of employment, would have an effect on the findings in this report only if their characteristics were extremely different from the remainder of employed workers.

## Foreign-Born Workers in the Wage Distribution

Immigrants are more likely to be low-wage workers than high-wage workers. However, there are notable differences among foreign-born workers depending on their origins and year of entry. In the aggregate, half of foreign-born workers were in either low-wage groups or low-middle groups in 2005. Most foreign-born Latinos are also in the lower wage brackets—in 2005, two-thirds were either low-wage earners or low-middle earners. On the other hand, about half of Asian immigrant workers were high-wage earners or high-middle earners. And the longer a worker has been in the U.S., the more likely that person is to be a high-wage earner.

Even though foreign-born workers are more likely than average to be in the low-wage group, many of them made notable progress in the wage distribution between 1995 and 2005. Foreign-born Latinos, especially those from Mexico and Central America, moved out of the low end of the wage distribution and toward the middle. Foreign-born Asians moved into the high end of the wage distribution in relatively large numbers.

Moreover, newly arrived foreign-born workers, especially Hispanics, were less likely to be in the lowest wage class in 2005 than in 1995. That reflected a higher level of education for new arrivals and a boost from the construction industry.

This section first examines the employment of foreign-born workers at various points of the wage distribution in 2005. It then focuses on changes in employment by wage class for foreign-born workers between 1995 and 2005, highlighting the experiences of Mexican-born and newly arrived workers.

### Foreign-Born Workers Leaned to Lower-Wage Employment in 2005

About half of foreign-born workers were in either the low-wage group or the low-middle group in 2005. If foreign-born workers were spread evenly across the wage distribution, about 40% of them would be expected to fall into those two wage groups. As a result, their representation in the low-wage groups exceeded the norm by about 10 percentage points.

More specifically, there were 18.3 million foreign-born workers for whom wage data were available in 2005 (Table 3). Of that total, 4.9 million (27%) were low-wage workers and 4.3 million (23%) were in the low-middle range.

Among foreign-born workers, Latinos were the most likely to be in the lower wage groups—about two-thirds were in the low-wage group or the low-middle group. Of 9.3 million foreign-born Latinos in the workforce in 2005, 3.3 million

**Table 3**  
Employment by Race, Ethnicity and Wage Class for Foreign-Born Workers, 2005

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>Employment (in thousands)</b>						
All Foreign Born	18,294	4,862	4,260	3,557	2,615	2,999
Hispanic	9,252	3,334	2,647	1,792	920	559
White	3,392	520	576	652	668	975
Black	1,487	346	374	339	219	210
Asian	4,074	646	648	753	791	1,236
<b>Distribution (%)</b>						
All Foreign Born	100	27	23	19	14	16
Hispanic	100	36	29	19	10	6
White	100	15	17	19	20	29
Black	100	23	25	23	15	14
Asian	100	16	16	18	19	30

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders.  
The total includes "other" workers not shown separately. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

(36%) were low-wage workers and 2.6 million (29%) were low-middle workers. Only 6% of foreign-born Hispanics were high-wage workers in 2005.

The wage distribution of foreign-born Asians stands in stark contrast to the distribution of Hispanics. About half of those workers were in either the high-wage group or the high-middle group in 2005. In particular, of the total employment of 4.1 million Asian workers, 1.2 million, or 30%, were in the high-wage group and 791,000, or 19%, were in the high-middle group.

The likelihood of being a low-wage worker was highest for workers from Mexico and those who had been in the U.S. for five years or less (year of entry 2000 or later). Among either group, 40% were low-wage workers in 2005 and an additional quarter or more were in the low-middle group (Table 4). Only 4% of Mexican-born workers and 11% of recent arrivals were high-wage workers in 2005.

**Table 4**  
Distribution of Employment Across Wage Classes for Foreign-Born Workers  
by Place of Birth and Year of Entry, 2005  
(percentage)

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>Place of Birth</b>						
Mexico	100	40	29	19	8	4
Caribbean	100	26	26	22	13	12
Central America	100	33	29	21	11	6
South America	100	23	23	23	16	15
<b>Year of Entry</b>						
Before 1970	100	13	19	20	18	31
1970 to 1979	100	18	19	21	19	23
1980 to 1989	100	22	22	22	17	17
1990 to 1999	100	29	26	19	12	14
2000 or later	100	40	24	16	9	11

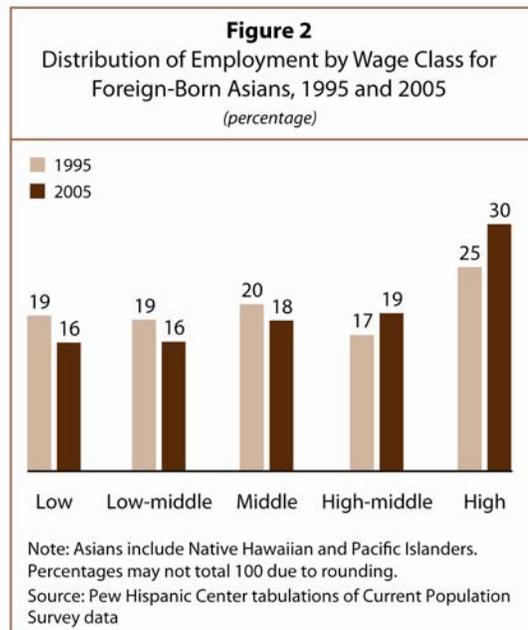
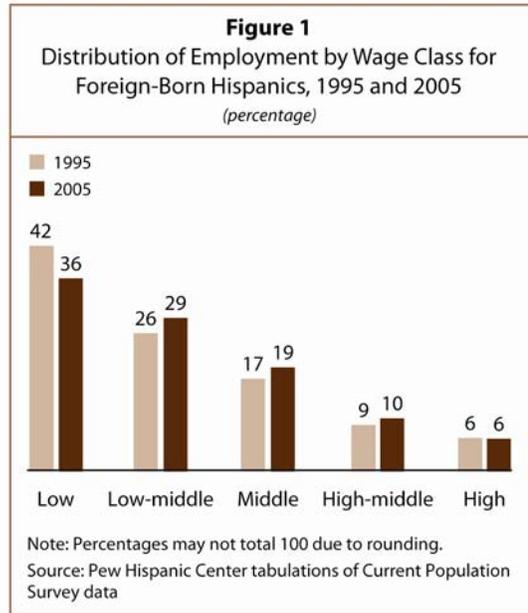
Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

### Progress for Foreign-Born Hispanics and Asians

The low-wage status of many foreign-born workers in 2005 belies their significant progress in the preceding 10-year period. In particular, Latinos moved out of the low end of the wage distribution and toward the middle. Foreign-born Asians increased their presence in the higher ends of the wage distribution.

Foreign-born Latinos were much less likely to be low-wage workers in 2005 than in 1995. As shown in Figure 1, 36% of foreign-born Latinos were low-wage workers in 2005, well above the average of 20% for the labor force as a whole. But that still represented considerable progress over 1995, when 42% of foreign-born Latinos were in the low-wage group. Over the same period, the proportion of Latinos in the low-middle group increased slightly from 26% to 29%, and the proportion in the middle-wage group inched up from 17% to 19%.

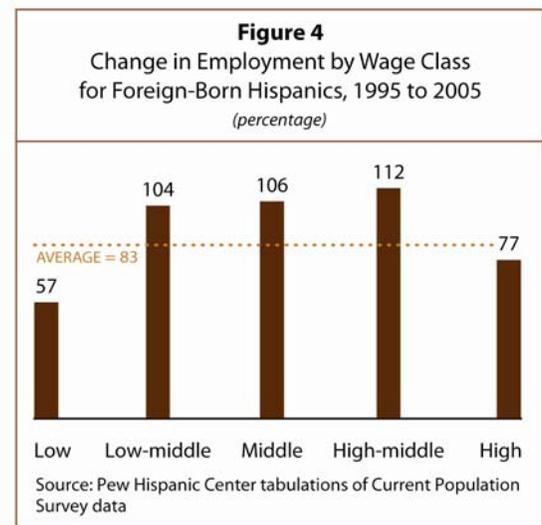
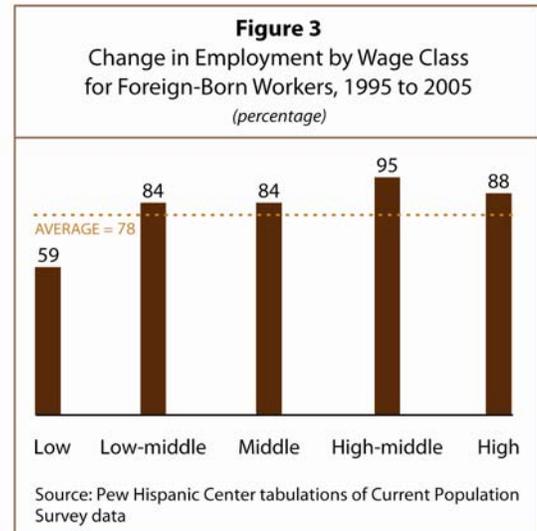
Asian workers made strong strides into the high-wage group between 1995 and 2005 (Figure 2). The proportion of foreign-born Asian workers in the high-wage group in 2005 (30%) was notably higher than the proportion in 1995 (25%). At the same time, the percentage of Asian workers who were in either the low-wage group or the low-middle group dropped from 38% in 1995 to 32% by 2005.



### Growth Fastest in Middle- and High-Wage Classes

Implicit in the improving wage profile of foreign-born workers is the fact that they experienced faster growth in employment in the middle to upper points of the wage distribution between 1995 and 2005. That was true for both Hispanic and Asian workers. In absolute numbers, however, foreign-born Hispanics added more low-wage than high-wage workers.

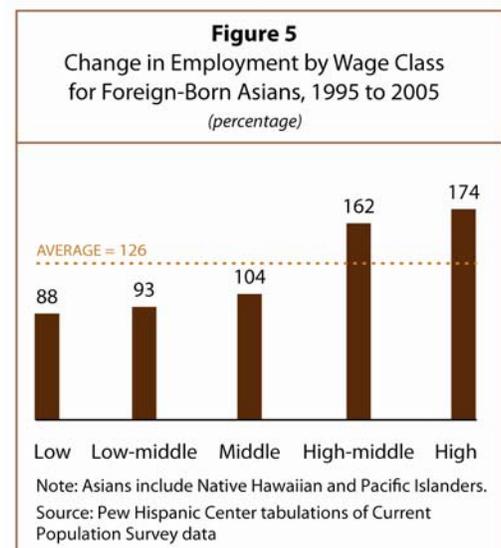
Total employment of foreign-born workers increased 78% from 1995 to 2005 (Figure 3). But employment growth in the lowest wage class (59%) was well below that average. At the same time, employment of foreign-born workers in the high-middle and high-wage classes increased at much higher rates than the average—95% and 88%, respectively.



A similar pattern emerged for Latino workers (Figure 4). Employment of foreign-born Hispanics increased 83% between 1995 and 2005. But employment growth was much faster in the middle of the wage distribution, ranging from an increase of 104% for Latinos in the low-middle group to an increase of 112% for those in the high-middle group. Growth in Latino employment in the lowest wage class (57%) was well below average.

While employment growth for foreign-born Hispanics in the low-wage class was slower than average, in absolute numbers they added more low-wage than high-wage workers to the labor force between 1995 and 2005. Given the large initial number of foreign-born Latinos in the low-wage class (2.1 million), the 57% growth translated into the addition of 1.2 million low-wage workers between 1995 and 2005. On the other hand, the 112% growth in the high-middle group for foreign-born Latinos amounted to the addition of 486,000 workers. Thus, even though foreign-born Latinos are progressing up the wage ladder, their increasing numbers at the bottom of the wage distribution divert attention from that trend.

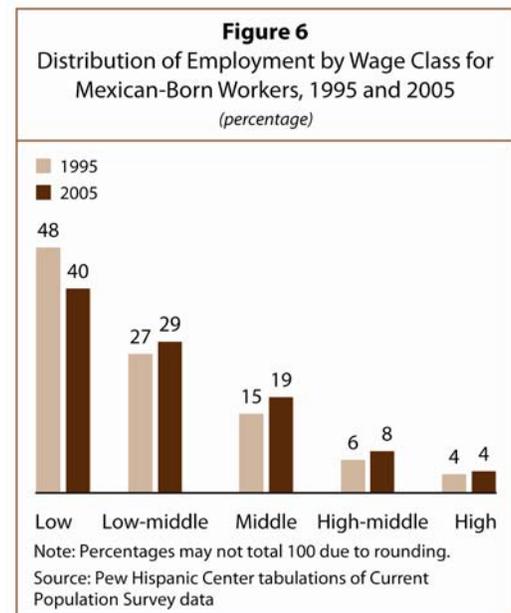
The number of foreign-born Asians at the top of the wage distribution nearly tripled between 1995 and 2005. As shown in Figure 5, the employment of foreign-born Asians in the highest wage group increased 174% from 1995 to 2005. In absolute terms, that was a gain in high-wage employment from 451,000 to 1.2 million. Over the same period, the number of foreign-born Asians employed in the high-middle group increased 162%.



## Workers Born in Mexico and Central America Move Out of Low-Wage Work

Workers born in Mexico were a key source of the improvement in the wage distribution of the foreign born. They account for about one-third of all foreign-born workers and exert a significant influence on the overall wage profile. As Mexican-born workers progressed in the wage distribution, so did the earnings status of foreign-born workers in general.

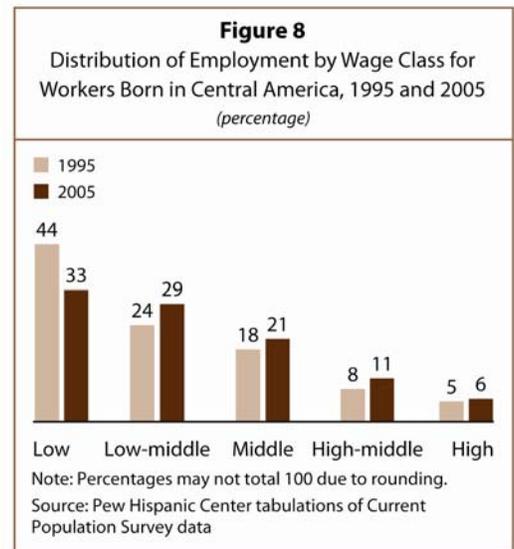
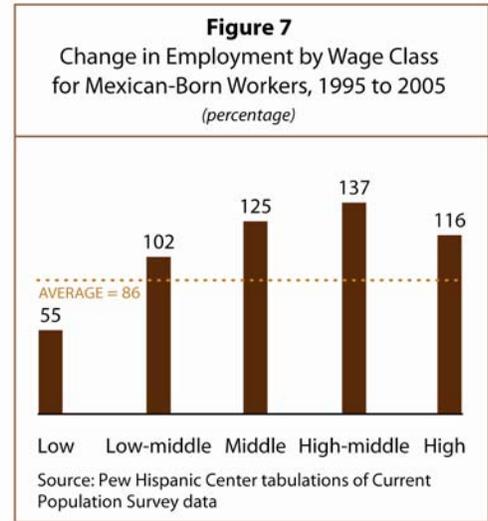
There was a large drop in the proportion of Mexican-born workers in the lowest wage class between 1995 and 2005. In 1995, 48% of workers from Mexico (1.5 million out of 3.1 million) placed in the low-wage group (Figure 6). By 2005, that proportion had decreased to 40%, or 2.3 million out of 5.8 million Mexican-born workers. At the same time, the proportion of Mexican-born workers in the middle-wage class increased from 15% to 19%.



The employment of Mexican-born workers increased at higher than average rates in the middle- and upper-wage classes between 1995 and 2005. Total employment of these workers increased 86%, but employment growth in the lowest wage class was only 55% (Figure 7). Meanwhile, employment of Mexican-born workers in the other wage classes increased 100% or more. Therefore, relatively more workers born in Mexico could be found in higher wage classes in 2005.

The experience of workers born in Central America mirrors the progress of Mexican-born workers in the wage distribution. The proportion of workers born in Central America in the lowest wage class decreased from 44% in 1995 to 33% in 2005 (Figure 8). At the end of the 10-year period, greater proportions of workers born in Central America could be found in the low-middle group (29%

versus 24%) and middle-wage group (21% versus 18%). The wage distribution of workers born in the Caribbean or in South America was fairly stable between 1995 and 2005.



## Newly Arrived Hispanics Enter Into Higher Wage Work

Time spent in the U.S. labor market facilitates a foreign-born worker's transition from the lower to the higher reaches of the wage distribution. The longer a foreign-born worker is in the U.S., the more likely that worker is to be found in the higher wage classes. Another key factor in the improving wage profile of foreign-born workers between 1995 and 2005 is that the newly arrived are now entering at higher points in the wage distribution. That is especially true of newly arrived Hispanic workers.

Foreign-born workers who entered the U.S. before 1970 were the most likely to be in the highest wage class. In 1995, 28% of those workers were in the high-wage class, compared with 19% of those who arrived between 1970 and 1979 and 10% of those who arrived between 1980 and 1989 (Table 5). Conversely, newer arrivals were more likely to be in the lower wage classes. For example, 34% of entrants from 1980 to 1989 were in the lowest wage class, compared with 15% of those who entered before 1970.

**Table 5**  
Distribution of Employment Across Wage Classes for Foreign-Born Workers  
by Year of Entry, 1995 and 2005  
(percentage)

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
Before 1970	100	15	17	21	20	28
1970 to 1979	100	23	22	21	16	19
1980 to 1989	100	34	26	18	11	10
1990 or later	100	45	22	14	8	11
<b>2005</b>						
Before 1970	100	13	19	20	18	31
1970 to 1979	100	18	19	21	19	23
1980 to 1989	100	22	22	22	17	17
1990 to 1999	100	29	26	19	12	14
2000 or later	100	40	24	16	9	11

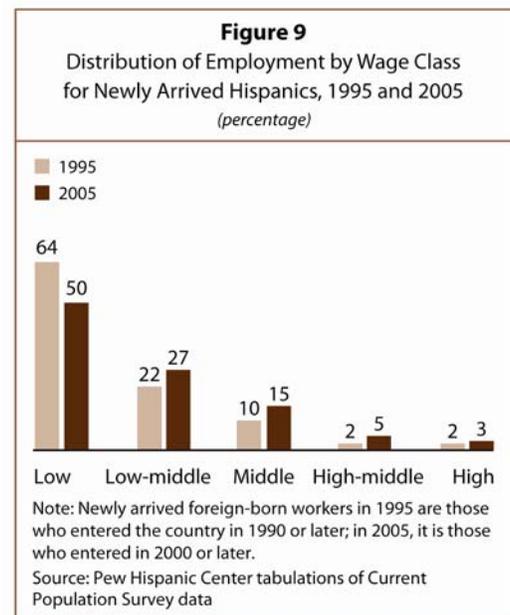
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

Part of the reason earlier arriving cohorts place better in the wage distribution is that they have higher levels of education and other attributes correlated with higher wages ([Borjas, 1985](#)). Therefore, it is of interest to examine the progress of individual cohorts, such as those who entered between 1980 and 1989, over time. Subject to one caveat—the disproportionate out migration of low-wage or high-wage workers—the change in the wage profile of a specific cohort of foreign-born workers is a clearer indication of progress over time.

Wage profiles of all cohorts of foreign-born workers show improvement between 1995 and 2005. Consider those who entered between 1980 and 1989. About one-third (34%) were in the lowest wage class in 1995 (Table 5). That proportion decreased to 22% by 2005. Over the same period, the proportion of these workers in the highest wage group increased from 10% to 17% and the proportion in the high-middle group increased from 11% to 17%. Similar signs of progression in the wage distribution are evident for those who arrived between 1970 and 1979.

Newly arrived workers, defined as those who entered within the past five years, reveal an improved wage profile in 2005 in comparison with 1995. In 1995, 45% of new arrivals (year of entry 1990 or later) were in the lowest wage class (Table 5). By 2005, the proportion of new arrivals (year of entry 2000 or later) in the low-wage group had decreased to 40%.

The progress in the wage profile of new arrivals is driven by Hispanic workers. Whereas 64% of newly arrived Latinos were in the lowest wage class in 1995, the proportion for newly arrived Latinos in 2005 was 50% (Figure 9). More newly arrived Latinos could also be found in the middle of the wage distribution—15% in 2005, compared with 10% in 1995. The wage profile of newly arrived non-Hispanic workers was unchanged between 1995 and 2005.



The earnings of new arrivals in 2005 are improved in comparison with the earnings of new arrivals in 1995 partly because they have higher levels of education and are older. Newly arrived Hispanic workers in 2005 were more likely to have a high school degree or to have attended college (Table 6). Similarly, new arrivals in 2005 were less likely to be young (age 16 to 24) and more likely to be middle-aged (Table 7). Age and education both correlate positively with wages.

Another factor is a shift away from jobs in agriculture to those in the construction sector. In 1995, 10% of newly arrived Hispanic workers were employed in agriculture and 11% were in construction. By 2005, only 5% entered into agriculture and 25% were hired into construction. Earnings in agriculture are known to be below average, and earnings in construction are above average. Thus, newly arrived immigrants in 2005 reported higher earnings than those who arrived in 1995.

A full accounting of the industry distribution of workers in 1995 and 2005 is not possible because of significant revisions in the definitions of industries in the source data.

Education	HISPANIC		NON-HISPANIC	
	1995	2005	1995	2005
Less than high school	63.1	56.4	13.6	11.7
High school	21.8	25.6	20.0	22.0
Some college	8.7	9.5	20.3	16.0
College degree	6.4	8.4	46.1	50.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Newly arrived foreign-born workers in 1995 are those who entered the country in 1990 or later; in 2005, it is those who entered in 2000 or later.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table 7**  
Distribution of Newly Arrived Foreign-Born Workers  
by Age, 1995 and 2005  
(percentage)

Age	HISPANIC		NON-HISPANIC	
	1995	2005	1995	2005
16 to 24	42.3	32.4	20.3	16.1
25 to 34	38.7	39.9	41.5	42.7
35 to 44	12.6	17.8	22.6	24.7
45 to 54	4.0	7.3	11.0	12.2
55 and older	2.3	2.6	4.5	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Newly arrived foreign-born workers in 1995 are those who entered the country in 1990 or later; in 2005, it is those who entered in 2000 or later.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

## The Growth in Foreign-Born Employment

The demographic composition of employment in the U.S. underwent significant change between 1995 and 2005. The 105.7 million workers for whom hourly wage data were available in 1995 included 10.3 million foreign-born workers (Table 8). By 2005, the number of foreign-born workers had increased to 18.3 million and their share in employment had increased from 10% to 15%.

Foreign-born workers alone accounted for 49% of the total change in employment between 1995 and 2005. The most significant contributors to the change in the foreign-born workforce were Latino and Asian workers, who were responsible for 6.5 million of the 8 million new foreign-born workers, or 81%.

The rapid growth in the foreign-born population ensured that its share increased within all segments of the wage distribution in between 1995 and 2005. As discussed earlier, even a relatively slow growth rate translated into significant numbers of new low-wage Latino workers. This section presents an alternative portrait of the growth in employment of foreign-born workers at different points of the wage distribution.

**Table 8**  
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Employment  
of Foreign-Born Workers and Its Change From 1995 to 2005

	Employment (in thousands)		Change in Employment (in thousands)
	1995	2005	
<b>Total: All Workers</b>	105,739	122,017	16,279
<b>All foreign born</b>	10,250	18,294	8,044
Hispanic	5,046	9,252	4,206
White	2,454	3,392	937
Black	797	1,487	690
Asian	1,802	4,074	2,272
	Share of total employment (%)		Share of Total Change (%)
	1995	2005	
<b>All foreign born</b>	10	15	49
Hispanic	5	8	26
White	2	3	6
Black	1	1	4
Asian	2	3	14

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. Numbers and percentages do not sum to totals due to rounding and because the "other" group is not shown separately.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

### Expected and Actual Change in Employment by Wage Class

Two trends combine to determine the characteristics of the workforce at an interval in the wage distribution. One trend is demographic, i.e., the growth in a population. Unless accompanied by changes in the characteristics of the population, the demographic effect is neutral and would be expected to increase the share of a group uniformly in all wage classes. For example, a 10% increase in the foreign-born population might be expected to lead to the same proportional increase in the numbers of low-, middle- and high-wage foreign-born workers.

But the actual increase in the share of a group within a wage class depends on other factors as well. In particular, it also depends on changes in the socioeconomic profile of the group as well as the changes in the characteristics of other workers.

For example, if the growth in the foreign-born population is accompanied by higher levels of education, the share of foreign-born workers will tend to increase more in the middle to higher points in the wage distribution. But this progress can be “disguised” by changes in the characteristics of other groups of workers.

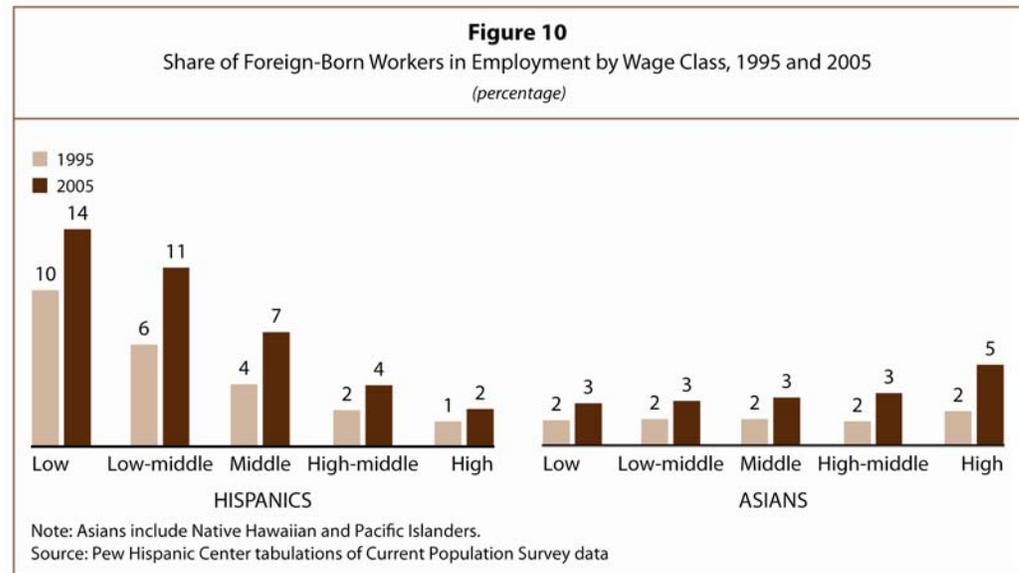
Suppose that native-born workers raise their education level and progress up the wage ladder even faster than foreign-born workers. That will tend to dampen the rising share of foreign-born workers in the higher ends of the wage distribution. By the same token, as native-born workers transition out of the low ends of the wage distribution, that will boost the share of foreign-born workers in the low-wage workforce even as they are making progress of their own.

The following section explores the net effects of these forces in 1995 to 2005 and sheds light on whether the share of foreign-born workers within the low-, middle- and high-wage workforces has exceeded or fallen short of expectations.

### Better Than Expected Results for Foreign-Born Workers

As the number of foreign-born workers increased, they also made progress within the wage distribution. In particular, foreign-born Latinos increased their representation in the middle-wage workforce more than expected and their share in the low-wage workforce grew less than expected based on demographic trends alone. Foreign-born Asian workers moved into the high-wage workforce in greater numbers than expected between 1995 and 2005.

The rapid growth in their numbers translated into higher shares for foreign-born Latinos and Asians at all points of the wage distribution (Figure 10). Foreign-born Hispanics were 10% of the low-wage workforce in 1995 and 14% in 2005. Further, they almost doubled their share in the middle-wage workforce in that period, from 4% to 7%. Foreign-born Asians more than doubled their share in the high-wage workforce, from 2% in 1995 to 5% in 2005.



The increasing share of foreign-born Hispanics in the low-wage group conceals their underlying progress in earnings. In 1995, 42% of foreign-born Hispanic workers placed in the lowest wage group. If there had been no change in the wage profile of foreign-born Latinos between 1995 and 2005, the same proportion—42%—would be expected in the lowest wage group in 2005. Thus, the total number of foreign-born Hispanics in the low-wage workforce in 2005 would have been expected to be 3.9 million, or 42% of the 9.3 million foreign-born Latinos in the workforce (Table 8).

In reality, the actual number of foreign-born Latinos in the lowest wage class was 3.3 million (Table 9). In other words, the increase in low-wage, foreign-born Hispanic workers was 564,000, or 17%, less than expected in the 10-year period. That difference represents an estimate of the (net) number of foreign-born Latinos who transitioned out of the low-wage workforce between 1995 and 2005.

At the same time, the increase in the number of middle-wage, foreign-born Hispanic workers was 194,000, or 11%, more than expected (Table 9). Based on demographic trends alone, 1.6 million foreign-born Latino workers were expected to be in the middle-wage group in 2005. However, the actual number of middle-wage, foreign-born Hispanics workers in 2005 was 1.8 million.

Foreign-born Asians moved into the high-wage class in larger numbers than expected. They added 216,000 workers, or 17%, more than anticipated into the high-wage workforce. At the same time, their numbers grew much less than anticipated in the low-wage group (21%) and the middle-wage group (11%).

**Table 9**  
Actual and Expected Employment of Foreign-Born Workers  
by Wage Class, 2005

	Actual (in thousands)	Expected (in thousands)	ACTUAL LESS EXPECTED	
			Number (in thousands)	Percent
<b>Hispanic</b>				
Low-wage class	3,334	3,898	-564	-17
Middle-wage class	1,792	1,598	194	11
High-wage class	559	578	-20	-4
<b>Asian</b>				
Low-wage class	646	779	-133	-21
Middle-wage class	753	835	-81	-11
High-wage class	1,236	1,021	216	17

Note: Expected employment is based on the percent of workers of a foreign-born group who were in a given wage class in 1995.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

## Native-Born Workers in the Wage Distribution

This section examines the employment of native-born workers grouped by race, ethnicity and wage class in 1995 and 2005. Like their foreign-born counterparts, native-born Latinos are more likely than average to be in the lower wage groups. Similarly, native-born Asians are more likely than average to be high-income workers. The wage profile of non-Hispanic blacks resembles that of Hispanics, and the earnings profile of non-Hispanic whites is similar to that of Asians. However, in the 1995 to 2005 period, there was little to no change in the position of native-born groups in the wage distribution.

### Native-Born Hispanics More Likely to Be Low-Wage Workers

Of the 7.6 million native-born Hispanic workers for whom earnings data were available in 2005, 1.9 million, or 26%, were low-wage earners and 1.7 million (23%) were low-middle earners (Tables 10 and 11). When the two groups are combined, about 50% of native-born Latino workers placed below the middle of the wage distribution in 2005.

In 1995, earnings data were available for 5 million native-born Hispanics. Of that number, 1.4 million Latinos, or 27%, were low-wage earners and 1.1 million, or 23%, were low-middle earners. Thus, 50% of Latino workers were below the middle of the wage distribution in 1995. That proportion did not change by 2005.

Slightly more than one in 10 native-born Hispanic workers is a high-wage earner. There were 940,000 high-wage Latinos in 2005 and 579,000 in 1995. In both years, they represented 12% of the native-born Latino workforce. Hispanic representation in the middle-wage class is about as expected, with 22% of Latinos earning that wage in both 1995 and 2005.

### Native-Born Asians More Likely to Be High-Wage Workers

Asians are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to be high-wage workers. In 2005, 381,000 of 1.4 million native-born Asian workers, or 27%, were high-wage earners (Tables 10 and 11). This was about the same as the proportion of Asians (26%) who were high-wage workers in 1995. Combined with workers in the high-middle group (19%), almost half of Asians earned more than the middle-wage class in both 1995 and 2005.

### Native-Born Whites Lean to High-Wage Employment

Native-born whites, the largest single group of workers, are more likely to be high-wage than low-wage workers. In 2005, 13.8 million native-born white workers, or 17% of the white workforce, were in the low-wage group and 18.5

**Table 10**  
Employment by Race, Ethnicity and Wage Class for Native-Born Workers, 1995 and 2005  
(in thousands)

	HOURLY WAGE CLASS					
	Total	Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
All Workers	95,489	18,624	18,296	20,593	18,425	19,550
Hispanic	5,004	1,363	1,129	1,110	823	579
White	77,959	14,012	14,190	16,790	15,616	17,352
Black	11,259	3,005	2,726	2,426	1,747	1,354
Asian	654	98	119	139	128	169
<b>2005</b>						
All Workers	103,723	19,600	19,326	21,595	21,727	21,476
Hispanic	7,599	1,949	1,738	1,650	1,322	940
White	80,687	13,755	14,019	16,714	17,727	18,472
Black	12,133	3,152	2,955	2,558	2,065	1,404
Asian	1,400	265	215	266	272	381

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. The total includes "other" workers not shown separately.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table 11**  
Distribution of Employment Across Wage Classes for Native-Born Workers, 1995 and 2005  
(percentage)

	HOURLY WAGE CLASS					
	Total	Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
All Workers	100	20	19	22	19	20
Hispanic	100	27	23	22	16	12
White	100	18	18	22	20	22
Black	100	27	24	22	16	12
Asian	100	15	18	21	20	26
<b>2005</b>						
All Workers	100	19	19	21	21	21
Hispanic	100	26	23	22	17	12
White	100	17	17	21	22	23
Black	100	26	24	21	17	12
Asian	100	19	15	19	19	27

Note: Asians includes Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

million (23%) were in the high-wage group (Tables 10 and 11). These proportions were essentially the same in 1995, when 18% of native-born white workers were in the low-wage group and 22% were in the high-wage group.

### **Native-Born Blacks Lean to Lower-Wage Employment**

Half of the native-born black workers were in the lower groups of the wage distribution in 2005, the same as in 1995. In particular, of 12.1 million native-born black workers, 3.2 million, or 26%, were low-wage earners in 2005 and another 3 million, or 24%, were low-middle earners (Tables 10 and 11). Those proportions were virtually unchanged in comparison with 1995. Almost 30% of black workers were in the two highest rungs of the wage distribution and that, too, was unchanged between 1995 and 2005.

### **Native-Born Whites Exceed Expectation in Gaining High-Wage Employment**

Because the white population increased at a slow rate, the shares of white workers in the workforce, and the high-wage group in particular, were smaller in 2005 than in 1995. In 2005, native-born whites accounted for 66% of total employment and 75% of the high-wage workforce (Table 12). Both shares were less than in 1995, when native-born whites comprised 74% of the workforce and 82% of the high-wage group.

Even though the share of white workers in the high-wage group decreased, their actual number in that group in 2005 exceeded expectation. Based on demographic trends, 18 million native-born white workers were expected to be in the top wage class in 2005 (Table 13). But as white workers progressed up the wage ladder during the 10-year period, 18.5 million were in the high-wage group by 2005. Thus, 513,000 more workers than expected were in the highest wage class.

As native-born whites entered high-wage employment, they shed 747,000 low-wage workers and 663,000 middle-wage workers between 1995 and 2005. Much of that reduction accounted for the addition of 1.6 million native-born white workers in the high-middle group (estimate not shown in the table).

**Table 12**  
 The Shares of Native-Born Workers in Total Employment by Wage Class, 1995 and 2005  
 (percentage)

	HOURLY WAGE CLASS					
	Total	Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>Whites</b>						
1995	74	65	69	75	79	82
2005	66	56	59	66	73	75
<b>Blacks</b>						
1995	11	14	13	11	9	6
2005	10	13	13	10	8	6
<b>Hispanics</b>						
1995	5	6	5	5	4	3
2005	6	8	7	7	5	4
<b>Asians</b>						
1995	1	0	1	1	1	1
2005	1	1	1	1	1	2

Note: Shares within a column do not total 100 because foreign-born and other workers are omitted.  
 Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table 13**  
Actual and Expected Employment of Native-Born Workers  
by Wage Class, 2005

	Actual (in thousands)	Expected (in thousands)	ACTUAL LESS EXPECTED	
			Number (in thousands)	Percent
<b>White</b>				
Low-wage class	13,755	14,502	-747	-5
Middle-wage class	16,714	17,378	-663	-4
High-wage class	18,472	17,959	513	3
<b>Black</b>				
Low-wage class	3,152	3,239	-87	-3
Middle-wage class	2,558	2,615	-57	-2
High-wage class	1,404	1,459	-56	-4
<b>Hispanic</b>				
Low-wage class	1,949	2,070	-121	-6
Middle-wage class	1,650	1,686	-36	-2
High-wage class	940	879	61	7
<b>Asian</b>				
Low-wage class	265	211	54	20
Middle-wage class	266	298	-32	-12
High-wage class	381	361	20	5

Note: Expected employment is based on the percentages of workers of a native-born group who were in a given wage class in 1995.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

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## Methodology

### Hourly Wage

The analysis in this report is based on the hourly wage. For workers in the sample who reported only a weekly wage, the hourly wage is estimated as the weekly wage divided by the usual hours worked in a week. Using the hourly wage factors out differences in earnings across workers that arise from differences in hours worked, such as weekly earnings of full-time versus part-time workers.

Workers earning less than \$2 per hour or more than \$100 per hour are dropped from the sample. That amounts to a loss of less than 1% of the sample.

### Why the Numbers of Workers in the Five Wage Groups Are Not Equal

The wage distribution used in this report is based on the principle of separating workers into wage quintiles. Each quintile would, in theory, consist of one-fifth of the workforce. However, as shown in Table A1, this ideal is not achieved in either 1995 or 2005. The reason is that workers at the boundaries of wage classes often have the same hourly wage. For example, in 2005, workers who in principle would be at the top of the low-middle group (the 40th percentile) had the same wage, \$12 per hour, as workers who would be at the bottom of the middle-wage group (the 41st and 42nd percentiles). Since it would be arbitrary to separate workers with the same hourly wage, it was decided to classify them all into the middle-wage group. As a result, the low-middle group lost a percentile of workers and the middle-wage group gained a percentile. The consequence is that the low-middle group in 2005 had 23.6 million workers and the middle-wage group had 25.2 million.

### Labor Market Conditions in 1995 and 2005

A concern that arises when comparing economic outcomes across time is whether the periods in question represent similar phases of the business cycle. For example, if wage outcomes in an economic expansion are compared with outcomes in a past recession, that would exaggerate the improvement in earnings relative to the underlying trend. The periods in question for this report are 1995 and 2005. A key similarity between the periods is that they are about four years removed from the ends of the last two recessions, the first lasting from July 1990 to March 1991 and the second from March 2001 to November 2001. In that sense, 1995 and 2005 can be said to represent similar points in the business cycle.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that labor market conditions in the two periods were about the same. One indicator suggests the labor market in 2005 may have been tighter than in 1995, but other indicators suggest the opposite. In particular, the 5.1% unemployment rate in 2005 was less than the 1995

unemployment rate of 5.6%. However, the percentage of the working-age population that was employed, or the employment-population ratio, was slightly higher in 1995—62.9%, versus 62.7% in 2005. Also, the percentage of the working-age population that is employed or actively seeking work, or the labor force participation rate, was higher in 1995—66.6%, compared with 66% in 2005. On balance, labor markets conditions in 1995 and 2005 appear roughly the same.

### Related Findings in the Literature

The findings in this report regarding the progress of Mexican-born workers and newly arrived foreign-born workers are echoed in some recent research papers. In a report issued in December 2006, the [Congressional Budget Office \(CBO\)](#) examined the changing characteristics of the low-wage labor market in the U.S. between 1979 and 2005. One of its findings is the recent decline in the percentage of workers born in Mexico or Central American who are paid low wages (less than the 20th percentile hourly wage). The CBO analysis shows that percentage falling from 49% in 1994 to 44% in 2005.

[Borjas and Katz \(2007\)](#) document an improvement in the education profile of Mexican-born workers, albeit not as rapid an improvement as achieved by native-born workers. They also report that declines in the wages of Mexican-born workers relative to native-born workers in the 1980s came to a halt in the 1990s and that the relative wage of newly arrived Mexican-born workers increased in the 1990s. A more detailed examination of the earnings of new arrivals is found in Borjas and Friedberg (2006). They point to a shift away from agricultural labor as a factor in raising the entry wage for newly arrived workers from Mexico.

## Appendix A: Tables A1 – A7

**Table A1**  
Employment by Race, Ethnicity and Wage Class, 1995 and 2005  
(in thousands)

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
All Workers	105,739	21,691	20,608	22,525	19,769	21,146
Hispanic	10,050	3,489	2,429	1,982	1,257	894
White	80,413	14,387	14,619	17,290	16,080	18,037
Black	12,056	3,184	2,945	2,590	1,870	1,468
Asian	2,456	443	454	509	430	620
<b>2005</b>						
All Workers	122,017	24,462	23,586	25,153	24,342	24,475
Hispanic	16,851	5,283	4,385	3,442	2,242	1,499
White	84,078	14,275	14,595	17,367	18,395	19,447
Black	13,621	3,498	3,329	2,896	2,284	1,614
Asian	5,474	911	863	1,019	1,063	1,617

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. The total includes "other" workers not shown separately.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table A2**  
Distribution of Employment Across Wage Classes, 1995 and 2005  
(percentage)

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
All Workers	100	21	19	21	19	20
Hispanic	100	35	24	20	13	9
White	100	18	18	22	20	22
Black	100	26	24	21	16	12
Asian	100	18	18	21	18	25
<b>2005</b>						
All Workers	100	20	19	21	20	20
Hispanic	100	31	26	20	13	9
White	100	17	17	21	22	23
Black	100	26	24	21	17	12
Asian	100	17	16	19	19	30

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table A3**  
Change in Employment by Race, Ethnicity and Wage Class, 1995 to 2005

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>Numeric Change (in thousands)</b>						
All Workers	16,279	2,771	2,978	2,628	4,573	3,329
Hispanic	6,801	1,794	1,957	1,460	985	605
White	3,665	-112	-24	76	2,315	1,410
Black	1,565	314	385	307	414	145
Asian	3,018	468	409	511	633	997
<b>Percentage Change</b>						
All Workers	15	13	14	12	23	16
Hispanic	68	51	81	74	78	68
White	5	-1	0	0	14	8
Black	13	10	13	12	22	10
Asian	123	106	90	100	147	161

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. The total includes "other" workers not shown separately.  
Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table A4**  
Employment of Foreign-Born Workers by Selected Place of Birth and Wage Class, 1995 and 2005  
*(in thousands)*

	Total	HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
		Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
Mexico	3,145	1,496	852	483	201	113
Caribbean	1,092	271	291	223	146	161
Central America	786	348	191	142	64	40
South America	622	152	146	141	107	76
<b>2005</b>						
Mexico	5,842	2,315	1,720	1,086	478	243
Caribbean	1,737	454	448	387	232	215
Central America	1,592	525	469	330	174	93
South America	1,258	284	286	291	202	194

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table A5**  
Employment of Foreign-Born Workers by Year of Entry and Wage Class, 1995 and 2005  
(in thousands)

		HOURLY WAGE CLASS				
Year	Total	Low	Low-middle	Middle	High-middle	High
<b>1995</b>						
Before 1970	1,775	260	295	378	350	491
1970 to 1979	2,572	579	556	551	403	482
1980 to 1989	3,873	1,310	1,022	712	434	395
1990 or later	2,031	917	439	290	157	228
<b>2005</b>						
Before 1970	1,176	149	218	239	211	359
1970 to 1979	2,471	442	478	517	470	565
1980 to 1989	4,676	1,014	1,029	1,006	816	811
1990 to 1999	6,281	1,793	1,645	1,189	780	874
2000 or later	3,689	1,464	891	607	338	389

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table A6**  
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Employment and Its Change From 1995 to 2005

	Employment (in thousands)		Change in Employment (in thousands)
	1995	2005	
<b>Total</b>	105,739	122,017	16,279
Hispanic	10,050	16,851	6,801
White	80,413	84,078	3,665
Black	12,056	13,621	1,565
Asian	2,456	5,474	3,018
		Share of Total Employment (%)	Share of Total Change (%)
		1995	2005
Hispanic	10	14	42
White	76	69	23
Black	11	11	10
Asian	2	4	19

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. The percentages do not total 100% because the "other" group is not shown separately.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data

**Table A7**  
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Employment  
of Native-Born Workers and Its Change From 1995 to 2005

	Employment (in thousands)		Change in Employment (in thousands)
	1995	2005	
<b>Total</b>	105,739	122,017	16,279
<b>All native born</b>	95,489	103,723	8,235
Hispanic	5,004	7,599	2,595
White	77,959	80,687	2,728
Black	11,259	12,133	874
Asian	654	1,400	746
	Share of Total Employment (%)		Share of Total Change (%)
	1995	2005	
<b>All native born</b>	90	85	51
Hispanic	5	6	16
White	74	66	17
Black	11	10	5
Asian	1	1	5

Note: Asians include Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders. Numbers and percentages do not sum to totals due to rounding and because the "other" group is not shown separately.

Source: Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of Current Population Survey data