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PUERTO RICO: RECEIVER OF THE CARIBBEAN AND THE WORLD  
Characteristics of the Population with Foreign  
Ancestry and its Impact upon the Native Population

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## PUERTO RICO: RECEIVER OF THE CARIBBEAN AND THE WORLD

### Characteristics of a Population with Foreign Ancestry and its Impact upon the Native Population

The main objective of this study is to determine the origin and ancestry of the non-Puerto Rican population residing on the Island and its socio-demographic characteristics. On the basis of this information we will try to reach some conclusions on the probable effect that the immigration of Cubans, Dominicans and other foreigners have had on Puerto Rican society.

The data derived from census publications indicates that the amount of persons born outside Puerto Rico has increased in a consistent and accelerated manner since 1940. On this date there resided on the Island around 13,117 persons born in foreign countries which represented less than one percent of the total population of Puerto Rico. In 1980 the amount of persons born outside Puerto Rico was 314,879 which represented approximately ten percent of the total population of the Island.

From 1940 to 1970 there was a considerable increase in the amount of persons which entered from the United States, from 8,078 to 199,524. We also noted a similar tendency in the remaining groups of foreigners residing on the Island, with the Cubans and Dominicans showing the greatest expansion. Cubans increased from 307 persons to 22,811 persons, while

Dominicans increased from practically 0 to 20,558. The population from other countries (Other Foreigners) when globally considered also increased in number. By 1940 the amount of persons in this group was 4,732 and in 1980 it was 71,990. In 1980 the main countries, sources for this group of migrants, were Spain, South America and Asia.

The Spanish population practically doubled itself, from 2,532 in 1970 to 5,200 in 1980, while South Americans increased from 259 to 5,424.

Although the previously mentioned data offers a general view of the population of foreigners residing in Puerto Rico, it is not totally acceptable since it contains serious limitations:

1. The definition of native population, used in the Census publication produces great confusion, since it includes as native population all persons who have been born in the United States or in any possession or territory of same. It also includes as natives those who, although born in a foreign country, have at least one Puerto Rican parent.

2. A large proportion of the persons that did not report their country of birth were not born in Puerto Rico.

The previous findings lead the authors to try to determine with greater precision the origin and ancestry of the non-Puerto Rican population residing on the Island.

Thus, the Demographic Section of the School of Public Health of the Medical Sciences Campus School of the University of Puerto Rico carried out special tabulations using a sample

of five percent of the population residing in Puerto Rico for 1980. The tape entitled "Public Use Microdata Sample (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980" was used.

In this exposition we have defined as native persons of Puerto Rico those who were born on the Island and the ancestry of the persons was determined on the basis of the country where their parents were born. This criteria served to classify the resident population in 1980 into five groups of persons:

1. Natives of Puerto Rican ancestry: persons born in Puerto Rico whose parents (one or both) were born in Puerto Rico.

2. Non-natives of Puerto Rican ancestry: persons born outside the Island whose parents (one or both) were born in Puerto Rico. These are the children of Puerto Rican immigrants born in foreign countries.

3. Cubans: persons born anywhere, whose father was born in Cuba and whose mother was born anywhere except Puerto Rico. If the father was born in Cuba and the mother in Puerto Rico, the person was considered to have Puerto Rican ancestry.

4. Dominicans: persons born anywhere whose father was born in the Dominican Republic and whose mother anywhere except in Puerto Rico.

5. Other foreigners: persons born anywhere, whose father was born in another country, including the United States and whose mother was born anywhere except Puerto Rico, including the United States.

Pursuant to this system of classification a person of mixed ancestry is included in one of the five categories defined above, giving preference in the first place to their possible Puerto Rican origin. When the parents of the persons of mixed ancestry were not natives of Puerto Rico, the place of birth of the father determined their ancestry.

For purposes of this analysis, the group of foreigners was divided into three sub-groups: Cubans, Dominicans and Others. When we refer in this exposition to "Other Foreigners" we will be referring to the subgroup that excludes Cubans and Dominicans.

The amount of foreigners residing in Puerto Rico by 1980 was 170,857 persons, which represents about five percent of the total population of the Island.

The group of Cuban ancestry represented 0.6 percent (30,670). Of these 16,001 were born in Cuba, 3,392 were born in Puerto Rico and 1,277 were born in other countries. The group of persons of Dominican ancestry also represents 0.6 percent (19,951); 16,619 of these persons of Dominican ancestry were born in Santo Domingo, 2,494 in Puerto Rico and 838 in another country.

The male populational rate\* is higher for the Puerto Rican population (105.5) than for the group of foreigners (94.5), which represents an excess of women in the foreign population. Within the foreign population, the group of Dominicans is the one with the lowest proportion of males (76.0). This rate is 97.7 and 91.4 for the group of Cubans

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\* Amount of males per each 100 females

and the Other Foreigners, respectively. It is evident that there is a similarity between the groups of migrants as to their composition by sex.

Regarding the age structure of the Cubans, they are the ones which most differ from the native Puerto Rican population, being this the most elderly group of those we compared. The median age for Cubans was 34, compared to 25 years for the Puerto Ricans. Dominicans have a median age of 30 and Foreigners 32.

The marital structure of the Puerto Rican population is similar to that of the total foreign population. However, if we examine the different groups we will notice some differences in this characteristic. A marked difference was observed among the population for these groups. Fifty two percent of the Puerto Rican population is single, compared to 42 percent for the Cubans and approximately 39 percent for the Dominicans and Other Foreigners. When comparing we find that approximately fifty one percent of the population of the different groups is married, while only 40 percent of the Puerto Rican population is married. In terms of the divorced population Dominicans have the greatest incidence (7.0%). No marked difference was observed among the different groups for widows.

Following the Cubans, we find that the population of Other Foreigners is the group which registers the lowest proportion of consensual marriages, totalling 3.2% of the total amount of marriages registered.

As to the educational aspects analyzed in this study, the foreign population shows educational levels which are higher than that of the Puerto Rican population. Among them there is a high proportion of persons enrolled in schools, especially private schools, with a higher average number of years of schooling completed.

In terms of the years of school completed, the group of Puerto Ricans has a median of 8. Cubans have a highest median of years of school completed within the group of foreigners (13); Dominicans on the other hand have a median of 9 and Other Foreigners of 12.

Regarding the population enrolled in private school, Cubans have the highest proportion (62.0%), followed by the group of Other Foreigners (40.0%) and Dominicans (28.0%).

Puerto Rico has the lowest proportion of persons enrolled in private schools (11.0%).

The foreign population also has a greater participation, masculine as well as feminine in the economic activity. The rate of economic activity for Puerto Ricans males was 54.0%, while that of the foreign population was 68%. On the other hand, the corresponding figures for females was 29% and 36%, respectively.

The unemployment rate for the foreign population residing in Puerto Rico is lower than that of the Puerto Ricans (8% compared to 15%). Cubans and the group of Other Foreigners have the lowest unemployment rate.

In terms of occupational distribution there are very few foreign persons who are engaged in agricultural occupations. Most of these persons (50%) are employed in white collar activities, compared to only 26% for the Puerto Rican population. The most common occupations for the foreign population are salesmen, professionals, executives, administrators and office workers, while Puerto Ricans tend to be operators, office workers, craftsmen and involved in service occupations.

The analysis of this foreign population, in terms of the different groups that constitute it, indicate that all are different to the native Puerto Rican population from a demographic point of view and have a greater advantage over the Puerto Rican population in terms of their socio-economic characteristics. What this reflects is that the foreign population residing in Puerto Rico is quantitatively and qualitatively different from the Puerto Rican population. Although in numerical terms this group only represents 5% of the Puerto Rican population, the nature of their characteristics evidence that this foreign population has had a significant impact, demographic as well as socio-economic on Puerto Rican society.