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IN HIS BOOK *PUERTO RICAN POVERTY AND MIGRATION: WE JUST HAD TO TRY ELSEWHERE*,

Julio Morales (1986) examined causes for the lack of economic progress among Puerto Ricans residing in New York City and other areas in the Northeast, primarily mid-sized and small cities in Massachusetts. Morales attributed low levels of formal education, lack of English proficiency, racism, and changes in the U.S. economy, which depended less on unskilled labor, as primary factors for explaining poverty among this group.¹ Roughly twenty years have passed since the publication of his book, and Puerto Ricans continue to settle and migrate to small and mid-sized cities in the Northeast, where their socioeconomic status is tenuous.

During the 1990s, the Puerto Rican population in the United States underwent significant demographic changes. According to the U.S. Census, the mainland Puerto Rican population grew close to 3.9 million by 2003, an increase of 25 percent from 1990 (Falcón 2004). The significant population growth among mainland Puerto Ricans has been accompanied by a dispersal of this group throughout the country. In the past, New York State had, by far, the highest concentration of Puerto Ricans. In 1960, 72 percent of the mainland Puerto Rican population was living in New York State. By 2000, New York's share of the mainland Puerto Rican population had decreased to 35 percent (National Puerto Rican Coalition 1992; Falcón 2004).

There was also a decline in the Puerto Rican population in large urban centers. For the first time in decades, the New York City Puerto Rican community experienced a decrease in population, roughly 12 percent (over 100,000 persons) from 1990 to 2000 (Falcón 2004).² Rivera-Batiz (2004) attributes the decline to a reduction of migration from Puerto Rico, a high volume of out migration to other cities and regions, and overall aging of this group. While the presence of Puerto Ricans in New York City has declined, the Puerto Rican population in Florida has grown substantially. The Puerto Rican population in Florida grew so significantly, in fact, that it eventually replaced New Jersey as the second largest area of concentration on the U.S. mainland (National Puerto Rican Coalition 2001). While considerable population growth among Puerto Ricans has occurred in states like Florida, Texas, and California, the majority of Puerto Ricans still reside in the Northeast. In states like New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, the Puerto Rican population has more than doubled since 1960 (National Puerto Rican Coalition 1992; Falcón 2004).

The significant dispersal of the Puerto Rican mainland population during the 1990s also corresponds to regional variation in socioeconomic status. Puerto Ricans residing in the Northeast, primarily in New York City, have been plagued with problems of unemployment, poverty, low wages, and have lower levels of socioeconomic status than their counterparts outside this region. Enchautegui (1992) found that Puerto Ricans residing in the Northeast and Midwest were less likely to be employed and that households headed by females were more prevalent in these regions. Rivera-Batiz and Santiago (1994) found that Puerto Ricans who resided in cities of the South and West were less likely to be unemployed and impoverished, and more likely to be in the labor force. According to Bose and Marzan (2002/2003), Puerto Rican males had higher incomes and labor force participation in the South and West, compared to those who resided in the North and Midwest. There have also been noticeable improvements in socioeconomic status among those residing outside the Northeast, particularly those living in the South and West. According to Rodríguez (1998), Puerto Ricans who lived in California had higher levels of socioeconomic status compared to their counterparts in the Northeast, as well as other Latino groups in this state. Similar to those in California, Puerto Ricans in south central Florida, specifically those who live in Orlando, enjoy higher levels of employment, wages, and business ownership compared to compatriots in other regions (Duany and Matos-Rodríguez 2006).

The improvement in economic status among Puerto Ricans outside the Northeast can be attributed to their high levels of human capital, primarily education, and English proficiency. Marzan (2001) found this to be the case for Puerto Rican males in the West and South, who were more proficient in English and more likely to attain college degrees than their counterparts in the Northeast. Bose and Marzan (2002/2003) also found that the average education level and the ability to speak English well improved for both Puerto Rican men and women for those who resided outside the Northeast. Among Puerto Ricans in Florida, their educational levels are higher compared to others on the mainland, as well as to Puerto Rico (Duany and Matos-Rodríguez 2006: 3).

Despite the decline in socioeconomic status, the Puerto Rican presence in cities of the Northeast region has increased. This pattern of migration is perplexing given the relative success of Puerto Ricans living in the South and West. During the 1980s, for example, Puerto Rican communities in midsized cities in the Northeast actually grew in size (Rivera-Batiz and Santiago 1996). However, Puerto Ricans in these urban areas were also beset with unemployment, low incomes, and poverty. This trend continued in the 1990s, when roughly 60 percent of Puerto Rican mainland population still resided mostly in midsized cities (Falcón 2004). In cities like Newark, New Jersey, and Springfield, Massachusetts, Hartford and Bridgeport, Connecticut, Allentown and Reading, Pennsylvania, the Puerto Rican population has increased substantially during the last decade. In some of these cities, Puerto Ricans now constitute a sizable portion of the city's overall population. For example, in Hartford, Connecticut, Puerto Ricans make up 35 percent of the total population (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006). Corresponding with this growth has been a high concentration of poverty in these urban communities. Acosta-Belén and Santiago (2006) have documented the Puerto Rican propensity to migrate into midsized cities in the Northeast. This has led Acosta-Belén and Santiago to state:

The concentration of Puerto Ricans in midsize cities of the Northeast—cities with a declining employment and tax base—is leading to pockets of extreme poverty surrounded by an infrastructure in decline. It is ironic that despite difficult economic times in these cities, Puerto Ricans continue to gravitate to these places. (2006: 143)

What can explain the substantial growth of the Puerto Rican population in these midsized cities of the Northeast? The deterioration of economic and social conditions in large metropolitan areas may be contributing to this migratory trend. The economy of New York City has shifted away from traditional industrial production towards service and information processing activities. Manufacturing and other low-skilled industries have been in steady decline in New York City. A large number of Puerto Ricans were employed in these industries; thus, the decline of these jobs may have forced many to seek similar employment in these firms outside of this urban area, perhaps relocating to smaller cities. Another factor influencing this trend of migration is the lack of affordable housing in these large metropolitan areas. Puerto Ricans, compared to other ethnic groups, have low rates of homeownership and are more likely to rent. Real estate prices in New York City, in terms of home ownership and rents, have sky rocketed in the last decade. Puerto Ricans may be leaving New York City to find more reasonably priced homes in other cities. Acosta-Belén and Santiago (2006) suggest that the comparatively low rent prices in midsize cities are added incentives for Puerto Ricans to migrate away from expensive urban areas such as New York City.

Historical Background and Context for Puerto Ricans in Three Cities

This article examines what factors contribute to this movement of Puerto Ricans into Northeastern cities despite the economic hardships they will endure. Three midsized cities are selected for this study: Allentown, Pennsylvania; New Haven, Connecticut; and Springfield, Massachusetts.³ The major motivation for Puerto Rican migration to these cities is economic in nature. Employment opportunities have contributed to the emergence of Puerto Rican settlements outside of New York City. The establishment of these early Puerto Rican settlements would later form the nucleus of Puerto Rican communities developing in the midsized cities of the Northeast and Midwest. The origin of many of the Puerto Rican communities in the midsized cities of New England can be traced to the agricultural industries of the region. Puerto Ricans workers were recruited for seasonal employment on farms, orchards, and nurseries throughout New England. According to Morales, Springfield and other cities in Massachusetts were in close proximity to migrant camps in the area:

The first migrations of Puerto Ricans to Massachusetts were into the Connecticut River Valley for work on tobacco farms. First, brought into the Hartford, Connecticut area, the use of these workers spread up the Connecticut River Valley into Massachusetts. (1986: 78)

While some Puerto Ricans returned to the island due to the termination of their employment in these agricultural industries, many migrated to nearby cities to be employed in more stable and better paying factory jobs (Morales 1986). Upon obtaining employment on the mainland, migrants began sending for family back on the island. These family connections expanded into social networks that also facilitated migration. Besides declining employment opportunities, poor housing and crime problems may have also contributed to the dispersion of Puerto Ricans away from New York City and other major metropolitan areas of the Northeast and Midwest (Boswell 1984).

The Puerto Rican community in Springfield, for example, has experienced significant hardships in terms of socioeconomic status. Since the 1970s,

this community has been plagued by poverty due to low employment rates and income levels (Baker 2002: 79). It continues to have one of the highest poverty rates and percentage of its population receiving public assistance compared to other Puerto Ricans residing in similar sized cities in the Northeast (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006: 137).

Puerto Ricans have also migrated to other midsized cities in New England. It has been documented that Puerto Ricans lived in the city of New Haven, Connecticut, as early as 1860. However, the formation of a considerable Puerto Rican community in New Haven began during the 1930s (Glasser 2005). The earliest migrants came to the city to work in Winchester Repeating Arms factory and later established a small community on Dixwell Avenue (Glasser 2005: 177). During the 1940s, migration to New Haven was facilitated by the economic opportunities in the war-related industries. Puerto Ricans continued to arrive during the 1950s and 1960s. The migration streams to New Haven were due in part to direct migration from the island as well as geographic dispersion from the surrounding large cities of Boston and Hartford (Torres 2006: 4). Similar to their counterparts in Springfield, Massachusetts, Puerto Ricans in New Haven experienced significant socioeconomic problems. In 1970, according to a study sponsored by the Connecticut State Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Puerto Ricans in New Haven were “grossly unemployed underemployed and usually limited to low level, unskilled jobs with little hope for advancement” (Baker 2002). According to Glasser (2005), urban renewal of the city’s downtown district was part of the cause for this decline. This led to the fracturing and displacement of the Puerto Rican community in this city.

Besides recruitment for farm labor, Puerto Ricans were also contracted to work in other industries, such as factory and foundry work in the Northeast and Midwest (Maldonado 1979). While early Puerto Rican migration to Allentown, Pennsylvania, was due to contract agricultural labor, later migration to this city was facilitated by employment in the steel industries (Adams 2000). Unlike the community in Springfield, large-scale Puerto Rican migration started in the late 1970s and has steadily increased into the 1990s (Reisinger 2003). As employment in the steel firms declined, Puerto Ricans found work in other industries, such as the service and light manufacturing industries.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the search for employment led to migration into Springfield, New Haven, and Allentown. When immigrants found employment, these settlements began the process referred to as “barrio formation.” According to Borges-Méndez (1993), barrio formation is a process where Puerto Ricans use ethnic bonds to create communities beyond traditional areas of settlement like New York City. A contributing factor to this process is social networks, which channel both external migrants (from the island) and internal migrants (within and from other states) into new enclaves. Soon after these settlements were established, however, the Puerto Rican communities in these cities began to experience economic hardships. Yet migration to these continues. Why is this so? The next section of this article describes the data and methods used to analyze this migration phenomenon.

Data and Methods

National data are used to examine the socioeconomic status of Puerto Ricans who reside in midsized cities of the Northeast. The data for this article were drawn from the 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) of the 2000 U.S. Census.

The sample is restricted to the non-institutionalized, civilian population of persons who identified themselves as Puerto Rican on the census form. There are three primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSA) selected from census data: Allentown, Pennsylvania; New Haven, Connecticut; and Springfield, Massachusetts. These three cities experienced significant increases in Puerto Rican population between 1990 and 2000 (see Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2005: 94).⁴ The variables for this study are categorized into the following groups: Economic Well Being, Human Capital, Migration Status, Occupation, Home Ownership, and Rent.

A MAJOR FACTOR CONTRIBUTING TO THIS MOVEMENT IS THAT PUERTO RICANS WITH LITTLE EDUCATION AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ARE FINDING EMPLOYMENT IN INDUSTRIES THAT REQUIRE LOW LEVELS OF HUMAN CAPITAL.

The first stage of this analysis is to examine the economic standing of Puerto Ricans residing in the aforementioned cities. The first step in explaining this migratory trend is to examine the socioeconomic status of Puerto Ricans in these urban centers. It is well documented that Puerto Ricans residing in cities of this region have experienced significant declines in economic status, yet they continue to move and settle to these areas. Careful examination of the demographic profile of this group can determine if Puerto Ricans continue to experience economic decline. The economic well-being variables are composed of employment status (employed versus unemployed), wage level, and poverty status. The employment status variable examines those individuals who were employed or actively seeking work from those who were not. The analysis of wage level is based on total earnings or salaries of Puerto Rican individuals in 1999. Poverty status is a variable identifying individuals who are above and below the poverty level.

A major factor contributing to this movement is that Puerto Ricans with little education and English proficiency are finding employment in industries that require low levels of human capital. Human capital variables include education and English speaking ability. Education is categorized into the following groups: Less Than High School, High School, and Beyond High School. English Proficiency categories are as follows: Very Well, Well, Not Well, and Not at All. Human capital variables are important in determining economic well-being, that is, employment versus unemployment, high wages versus low wages, and being in or out of poverty. Proficiency in English should improve Puerto Rican labor force participation and earnings since language is an economic skill that enhances productivity in jobs requiring communication skills (Bean and Tienda 1988). Education should

have similar effects with higher education levels improving employment and wage opportunities for Puerto Ricans (Bean and Tienda 1988).

Migration status, whether from island or internal within the U.S, has an impact on economic well-being. Rivera-Batiz and Santiago (1994: 102–16) found that Puerto Rican non-movers, and movers from the Puerto Rico and other regions, had different socioeconomic outcomes in terms of earnings, labor market status, and poverty rates. In order to determine if economic well-being across cities may have resulted from a process of selective migration, the “residence five years ago” question from the census will be used. Migration status is categorized into three groups: Non-Migrant, Migrants from Puerto Rico, and Internal Mainland Migrants. A non-migrant is a Puerto Rican-origin person who was living in the same city and state in 1995 and 2000. A migrant from Puerto Rico is a Puerto Rican-origin person who was living in Puerto Rico in 1995 and in the United States in 2000. An internal mainland migrant is defined as a Puerto Rican-origin person whose U.S. state of residence in 2000 was different from the U.S. state of residence in 1995.

Historically, Puerto Ricans have been heavily concentrated in blue-collar jobs. The decline of these occupations in the Northeast has had a detrimental effect on the economic well-being of Puerto Ricans in this region. According to the New York City Department of Planning (1994) a high proportion of Puerto Ricans leaving the city did not have high levels of education and many had blue-collar jobs and service occupation backgrounds. In order to determine which occupations Puerto Ricans are employed in these cities the census occupation categories are used: (1) Management, Professional Related, (2) Sales and Office, (3) Service, (4) Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, (5) Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance, (6) Production, Transportation, and Material Moving.

The final step in determining the factors influencing Puerto Rican migration is to examine the housing structure in these cities, specifically the availability of affordability housing. According to Reisinger (2003), Puerto Ricans migrated to Allentown, Pennsylvania, to find affordable housing (low mortgages and rentals). Acosta-Belén and Santiago (2006) also state that low rents in cities outside of New York City can be an incentive to migrate. Examining homeownership and rent shows that these two factors influenced migration. The next section of this article presents descriptive data on Puerto Ricans who reside in Allentown, Pennsylvania, New Haven, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts.

Findings

This section examines the economic well-being of Puerto Ricans in these three cities. Economic well-being encompasses the variables of employment/unemployment, wage level, and poverty status. Table 1 presents metropolitan variations in the percentage of Puerto Ricans who are employed and unemployed, their average total earnings in 1999, and their poverty status. The table shows that Puerto Ricans in New Haven exhibit slightly lower rates of employment and higher rates of unemployment compared to their counterparts. In terms of unemployment, the overall percentages of the three cities are similar to Puerto Ricans at the national level, holding at roughly 11 percent (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006). However, significant differences in wage levels exist for Puerto Ricans in these cities compared to those at the national level. Puerto Ricans at the national level make an average of \$33,427 per year (Falcón 2004). When compared to the mean wage of \$12,118 for Puerto Ricans in Springfield, the mean wage of

TABLE 1: EMPLOYMENT, MEAN WAGE LEVEL, AND POVERTY STATUS OF PUERTO RICANS AGES 25 AND OLDER BY CITY

| City | Employment/ Unemployment Status | Wage Level | % in Poverty |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Allentown, PA | 89/11 | \$13,601 | 31% |
| New Haven, CT | 86/14 | \$15,834 | 28% |
| Springfield, MA | 90/10 | \$12,118 | 39% |

Source: U.S. Census “5-Percent Public Use Microdata 2000.”

\$13,601 for Puerto Ricans in Allentown, and the slightly higher mean wage of \$15,843 for Puerto Ricans in New Haven, it becomes evident that an alarming disparity exists. Although their employment levels are on par with the national average, their wage levels are strikingly lower.

The same pattern persists when examining poverty status. The poverty rate of Puerto Ricans at the national level is 23 percent. In the cities of New Haven and Allentown, poverty levels are high, 28 percent and 31 percent, respectively. While poverty remains a problem for Puerto Ricans in all cities, it is most severe in the city of Springfield. The poverty for the Puerto Ricans in Springfield is strikingly high, at 39 percent. Overall, the socioeconomic status among Puerto Ricans in these cities is quite low, especially compared to Puerto Ricans at the national level. This economic predicament of Puerto Rican residents and migrants in these cities can be largely explained by their lack of advanced education and proficiency in English.

Data on the educational levels and migration status of Puerto Ricans in these cities are presented in Table 2. At the national level, 63 percent of Puerto Ricans have a high school diploma (Falcón 2004). Among Non-Migrants in these three cities, less than 41 percent (Allentown), 44 percent (New Haven), and 46 percent (Springfield) of Puerto Ricans have completed high school. In the post-industrial

TABLE 2: YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PUERTO RICANS AGES OF 25 AND OLDER, BY CITY AND MIGRATION STATUS

| City | MIGRATION STATUS | | |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Non-Migrant | Migrants from Puerto Rico | Internal Mainland Migrants |
| ALLENTOWN, PA | | | |
| <i>Education Level</i> | | | |
| Less than H.S. | 41% | 53% | 27% |
| High School | 36% | 20% | 24% |
| Beyond H.S. | 23% | 27% | 49% |
| NEW HAVEN, CT | | | |
| <i>Education Level</i> | | | |
| Less than H.S. | 44% | 48% | 36% |
| High School | 31% | 31% | 51% |
| Beyond H.S. | 24% | 21% | 13% |
| SPRINGFIELD, MA | | | |
| <i>Education Level</i> | | | |
| Less than H.S. | 46% | 48% | 39% |
| High School | 27% | 26% | 28% |
| Beyond H.S. | 26% | 25% | 33% |

Sources “5-Percent Public Use Microdata 2000.”

American economy, there is a strong relationship between high levels of education and decent-paying employment opportunities. The low level of educational attainment of Puerto Ricans corresponds with the low wages and high poverty levels experience by this group.

Though a similar pattern exists within the Migrants from Puerto Rico categories, Internal Mainland Migrants demonstrate slight improvement. For Puerto Ricans in Allentown, for example, 49 percent have experienced education beyond the high school level, whereas only 23 percent of Non-Migrants have experienced beyond the high school level. In Springfield, 33 percent of Internal Mainland Migrants have post high school education. New Haven, displays the lowest percentage of post-secondary education with only 13 percent. Overall, the education levels for Puerto Ricans in these cities are low, especially in terms of college experience.

The level of English Speaking Ability by city and migration status is presented in Table 3. Among Non-Migrants in these three cities a significant proportion does not speak English well or not at all. Not surprisingly, English ability is lowest among Puerto Rico migrants.⁵ For this group, close to 50 percent in all three cities speak English not well or not at all. This deficiency in speaking English hinders employment prospects and access to higher earning positions. This issue is not only limited to Puerto Rico migrants but is also found among Internal Mainland Migrants. For these migrants, particularly those residing in New Haven and Springfield, a significant percentage speak English not well or not at all, 23 percent and 32 percent, respectively.

Occupational distribution of all employed persons and Puerto Ricans and their migration status in all three cities is represented in Table 4. Overall, among Non-Migrants, a small percentage of Puerto Ricans are in the management and professional occupations. These occupations require higher educational credentials and proficiency in English, which many Puerto Ricans in these cities lack. In the

TABLE 3: ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY FOR PUERTO RICANS AGES OF 25 AND OLDER, BY CITY AND MIGRATION STATUS

| English Ability | MIGRATION STATUS | | |
|------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Non-Migrant | Migrants from Puerto Rico | Internal Mainland Migrants |
| ALLENTOWN, PA | | | |
| Very Well | 53% | 36% | 72% |
| Well | 24% | 14% | 14% |
| Not Well | 16% | 33% | 14% |
| Not at all | 6% | 16% | 0% |
| NEW HAVEN, CT | | | |
| Very Well | 51% | 24% | 47% |
| Well | 23% | 21% | 30% |
| Not Well | 20% | 37% | 13% |
| Not at all | 6% | 18% | 10% |
| SPRINGFIELD, MA | | | |
| Very Well | 49% | 31% | 54% |
| Well | 23% | 27% | 15% |
| Not Well | 18% | 23% | 30% |
| Not at all | 9% | 19% | 2% |

Source: U.S. Census “5-Percent Public Use Microdata 2000.”

TABLE 4: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ALL EMPLOYED PERSONS AND MIGRATION STATUS FOR PUERTO RICANS IN ALLENTOWN PA, NEW HAVEN CT, SPRINGFIELD MA

| Occupations Categories | All Employed Persons | Non-Migrants | Migrants from Puerto Rico | Internal Mainland Migrants |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ALLENTOWN, PA | | | | |
| Management, and professional | 32% | 13% | 0% | 14% |
| Sales and Office | 14% | 24% | 15% | 36% |
| Service | 27% | 21% | 23% | 17% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | .2% | .8% | 0% | 2% |
| Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance | 12% | 7% | 0% | 1.5% |
| Production, transportation, Material Moving | 18% | 34% | 61% | 30% |
| NEW HAVEN, CT | | | | |
| Management, and Professional | 39% | 15% | 5% | 16% |
| Sales and Office | 14% | 22% | 26% | 43% |
| Service | 27% | 22% | 17% | 10% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | .2% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance | 9% | 7% | 6% | 3% |
| Production, Transportation, Material Moving | 12% | 34% | 44% | 25% |
| SPRINGFIELD, MA | | | | |
| Management, and Professional | 34% | 17% | 23% | 18% |
| Sales and Office | 16% | 23% | 11% | 29% |
| Service | 36% | 23% | 29% | 14% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | .2% | 2% | .9% | 0% |
| Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance | 7% | 5% | 5% | 8% |
| Production, Transportation, Material Moving | 15% | 29% | 31% | 31% |

Source: U.S. Census “5-Percent Public Use Microdata 2000”; Mumford Center; Metropolitan Region Occupation Counts STF3 2000.”

other occupational categories, Puerto Ricans in these cities are more likely to be in sales and office, service, and production, transportation, and material moving. These jobs typically require less education. The pattern of the majority of Puerto Ricans being in blue-collar jobs persists throughout the other migrant categories. The proportion of migrants from Puerto Rico in production, transportation, and material moving occupations illustrates this point. In Allentown, for example, 61 percent of migrants from Puerto Rico have jobs within this industry. Turning to the occupational distribution for all persons employed in Allentown, New Haven, and Springfield, a high percentage of employed persons are in management and professional occupations. This is followed by occupations in the service industry. The percentage of those employed in production and transportation range from 12 to 18 percent. Hence, Puerto Ricans, with the exception of those in some service jobs, are not heavily presented in white-collar professions. To compound the problem, the industries that Puerto Ricans in these cities are more likely to be in are in decline.

Due to economic restructuring in the Northeast, many cities in the region experienced a decrease in manufacturing industries and subsequent increase in

TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND PERCENT CHANGE 1990 TO 2000 FOR ALL PERSONS IN ALLENTOWN, PA, NEW HAVEN, CT, AND SPRINGFIELD, MA

| Occupations Categories | Number Employed in 1990 | Number Employed in 2000 | 1990-2000 Percent Change |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ALLENTOWN, PA | | | |
| Management, Professional Related | 78591 | 96641 | 23% |
| Sales and Office | 81627 | 42922 | -47% |
| Service | 36774 | 82157 | 123% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | 1116 | 646 | -42% |
| Construction, Extractions, and Maintenance | 29553 | 27361 | -7% |
| Production, Transportation, Material Moving | 58841 | 54965 | -6% |
| NEW HAVEN, CT | | | |
| Management, Professional Related | 93468 | 103402 | 11% |
| Sales and Office | 82311 | 36340 | -56% |
| Service | 33600 | 70820 | 111% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | 804 | 450 | -44% |
| Construction, Extractions, and Maintenance | 23518 | 19577 | -17% |
| Production, Transportation, Material Moving | 36992 | 30927 | -16% |
| SPRINGFIELD, MA | | | |
| Management, Professional Related | 85374 | 96309 | 13% |
| Sales and Office | 82613 | 46105 | -44% |
| Service | 44835 | 72988 | 63% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | 1150 | 766 | -33% |
| Construction, Extractions, and Maintenance | 25117 | 20886 | -17% |
| Production, Transportation, Material Moving | 45799 | 43100 | -6% |

Source: Mumford Center; Metropolitan Region Occupation Counts STF3 1990-2000.

both high-skilled and educated white collar and low-skilled and less-educated service professions (Reisinger 2003; Santiago-Valles and Jiménez-Muñoz 2004). This trend has continued since the late 1950s to the present day. The effects of this restructuring on the industries in Allentown, New Haven, and Springfield are shown in Table 5. In all three cities, the percentage of jobs in sales and office, and production, transportation, and material moving have decreased. Corresponding with this trend is an increase of jobs in the service industry. Given the decrease of jobs in the aforementioned industries, Puerto Ricans are forced to obtain jobs in the service industries. Also, their low level of education and English proficiency restricts their employment opportunities to service jobs. Hence, Puerto Ricans are inclined to move to these cities to get these positions. Although the probability of finding service employment is greater in these cities, the likelihood of being paid low wages is also greater. Coupled with these trends is the expansion of jobs in management and professions occupations where Puerto Ricans are less qualified to obtain. The data on occupational distribution indicate that Puerto Ricans living and moving into cities are heavily concentrated in industries that are typically low wage and in

decline. Their overrepresentation in the production, transportation, and material moving occupations is similar to the occupations Puerto Ricans historically have gravitated to in the past, mainly manufacturing. These factors have a negative effect on the economic well-being of Puerto Ricans in these cities.

One factor influencing the migration of Puerto Ricans to these cities is the need for housing. As a group Puerto Ricans exhibit low rates of homeownership and are more likely to rent (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006). The housing market of large cities like New York is becoming increasingly expensive. For Puerto Ricans in search of cheap rents, migrating to other cities provides them affordable housing. According to Morales (1986), a determining factor for Puerto Rican migrations to cities in Massachusetts was the availability of low-income housing and rental units. Morales states:

It is obvious that Puerto Ricans will tend to settle areas where low-income housing is more available, and those cities would be the ones with declining urban populations.... One of the prime predictors of Puerto Rican settlements is the number of rental units as opposed to owner units. (1986: 184-5)

Home ownership and rent status is presented in table 6. Puerto Ricans are more likely to rent than own in all three cities. Among non-migrants, those living in Allentown have a higher percentage who own homes compared to other cities. New Haven had the highest percentage of Non-Migrants renting at 78 percent. This pattern persists in the other migration categories. Puerto Ricans from the island are more likely to rent compared to the other migrations groups. Affordable housing, in particular lower rents, are incentives for Puerto Ricans to migrate into specific cities of the Northeast (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006). For Puerto Ricans with low incomes, finding cheap rents is essential for economic stability.

Due to their low wages, Puerto Ricans in these cities need affordable housing, in certain price ranges. The distribution of rents within specific price ranges in the cities of Allentown, New Haven, and Springfield is presented in table 7. In the cities of Allentown and Springfield, over 40 percent of rental units fall below \$500. Roughly 80 percent of rentals fall below \$750 in these two cities. In the city of New Haven, a smaller proportion of rental units are below \$500: 26 percent. However,

TABLE 6: HOME OWNERSHIP AND RENT DISTRIBUTION FOR PUERTO RICANS AGES 25 AND OLDER BY CITY AND MIGRATION STATUS

| City | Non-Migrants | Migrants from Puerto Rico | Internal Mainland Migrants |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| ALLENTOWN, PA | | | |
| Home Owner | 36% | 5% | 29% |
| Renter | 56% | 93% | 69% |
| Other | .4% | 0% | 2% |
| NEW HAVEN, CT | | | |
| Home Owner | 32% | 5% | 13% |
| Renter | 78% | 95% | 86% |
| Other | 1% | 0% | 2% |
| SPRINGFIELD, MA | | | |
| Home Owner | 28% | 6% | 22% |
| Renter | 71% | 96% | 75% |
| Other | 1% | 0% | 3% |

Source: U.S. Census “5-Percent Public Use Microdata 2000.”

a larger proportion falls below \$750: 66 percent. The possibility of finding rents within affordable rent range in these cities is greater.

The lack of affordable rents and housing is an explanation for the out migration of Puerto Ricans from New York City to other regions (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006). When New York City’s rental distribution is examined, a smaller proportion of rentals are below \$500: 23 percent. About 45 percent of rentals are above the \$750 range, a rent not within the range of many Puerto Rican migrants. One issue that the data do not capture is the nature of housing competition in New York City. Real estate in this city, in terms of home ownership and rentals, involves competition between racial/ethnic groups, social classes, businesses, and political interest. More established Puerto Rican communities in this city are vulnerable to this competition and to gentrification (see Dávila 2000). Overall, the distribution of rentals in all three cities, compared to New York City, is cheaper. In the three cities the availability of rentals in affordable price ranges is high.

Median rents for Puerto Ricans in these three cities are also presented in table 7. Overall, the housing stock, particularly in terms of rentals, is extremely affordable compared to New York City. The median rent in New York City is \$705. Rents are particularly low for those residing in Allentown, where the median rent is \$321. Puerto Ricans residing in New Haven pay high rents compared to their counterparts in other cities (\$558). However, this is low compared to other residents in this city

TABLE 7: PERCENTAGE IF RENTER OCCUPIED UNIT FOR ALLENTOWN PA, NEW HAVEN CT, SPRINGFIELD MA AND NEW YORK CITY

| ALLENTOWN, PA | | NEW HAVEN, CT | |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Gross Rents</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Gross Rents</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
| Less than \$200 | 7% | Less than \$200 | 8% |
| \$200 to \$299 | 7% | \$200 to \$299 | 5% |
| \$300 to \$499 | 27% | \$300 to \$499 | 13% |
| \$500 to \$749 | 41% | \$500 to \$749 | 40% |
| \$750 to \$999 | 12% | \$750 to \$999 | 24% |
| \$1,000 to \$1,499 | 3% | \$1,000 to \$1,499 | 7% |
| \$1,500 or more | 1% | \$1,500 or more | 1% |
| No cash rent | 2% | No cash rent | 2% |
| Median (dollars) | \$541 | Median (dollars) | \$651 |
| Median Rent of Puerto Ricans | \$321 | Median Rent of Puerto Ricans | \$558 |
| SPRINGFIELD, MA | | NEW YORK CITY | |
| <i>Gross Rents</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Gross Rents</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
| Less than \$200 | 15% | Less than \$200 | 6% |
| \$200 to \$299 | 9% | \$200 to \$299 | 5% |
| \$300 to \$499 | 22% | \$300 to \$499 | 12% |
| \$500 to \$749 | 37% | \$500 to \$749 | 32% |
| \$750 to \$999 | 11% | \$750 to \$999 | 23% |
| \$1,000 to \$1,499 | 2% | \$1,000 to \$1,499 | 13% |
| \$1,500 or more | 1% | \$1,500 or more | 7% |
| No cash rent | 3% | No cash rent | 2% |
| Median (dollars) | \$517 | Median (dollars) | \$705 |
| Median Rent of Puerto Ricans | \$390 | Median Rent of Puerto Ricans | \$479 |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 Source: U.S. Census “5-Percent Public Use Microdata 2000.”

(\$651). Interestingly, Puerto Ricans residing in New Haven pay a higher median rent than their equivalents in New York City (\$478). However, the Puerto Ricans in New York City may represent residents who are older and living in the city longer and who are more established. This group may have found a niche in the city's affordably priced housing (public and section 8 housing, and rent-stabilized apartments). This does not mean the Puerto Ricans are finding affordable apartments. The availability of affordable rents in these three cities provides an incentive for Puerto Ricans to move to these cities. This is particularly the case in comparison to large cities, like New York, where rents continue to increase.

Conclusion

Puerto Rican migration to midsized cities in the Northeast has a long history. At first, Puerto Ricans migrated to these cities to find work. Upon securing employment, these migrants soon sent for family and friends. These networks helped to develop migration streams, which later became the nucleus for Puerto Rican communities in these cities. These migrants settled in areas where rents were cheapest and where the housing stock was in decline. However, as time progressed, the Puerto Rican populations in these cities experienced significant economic problems.

These cities were beset with problems of unemployment, low incomes, and poverty. It appears that Puerto Ricans are recreating communities similar to those they had in larger cities. However, migration to these declining urban areas continues. In these cities migration and poverty went hand in hand. As Morales has stated Puerto Ricans were searching for an "elsewhere" where they could find employment, better wages, affordable housing, and less poverty.

The main goal of this research was to explain Puerto Rican migration to cities where they experienced low levels of employment and wages and high levels of poverty. The focus was on Puerto Ricans residing in the cities of Allentown, Pennsylvania, Springfield, Massachusetts, and New Haven, Connecticut. In these midsized cities, Puerto Ricans had (1) lower levels of labor force participation, (2) lower wages, and (3) were more likely to live poverty. Yet Puerto Ricans continue to move to the urban locations. Findings presented in this study suggest economic factors play a role in shaping the migration of Puerto Ricans to these cities. These two factors are employment in blue collar and service industries and affordable housing, particularly cheap rents.

A major impediment to socioeconomic success among mainland Puerto Ricans has been their traditional over-representation in the low-paying, blue-collar industries of the Northeast. During the 1960s and 1970s, their condition deteriorated due to the effects of economic restructuring when many of these industries relocated outside the central cities. Presently Puerto Ricans who reside in these midsized cities are still overrepresented in these types of industries. However, employment in these firms also explains why Puerto Ricans are relocating to Allentown, Springfield, and New Haven. Blue-collar and service occupations require less education and English proficiency. Due to their lower levels of education and lack of English proficiency, the possibility of finding employment in these industries is more likely for those Puerto Ricans moving to these areas.

Puerto Ricans may be finding better living conditions in these midsized cities. For example, Puerto Ricans may be paying less rent for a better quality apartment. This study found that Puerto Ricans living in Allentown, Springfield, and New Haven were paying lower rents on average than in New York City. A higher proportion was

also able to find affordable rental units. Another factor that might explain Puerto Rican migration to these cities is the declining quality of life in large urban cities. Puerto Ricans in midsized cities may be finding safer streets, better schools, and more affordable housing than in large metropolitan cities. While economic factors such as job opportunities and higher wages may not be the main incentive, the social factors mentioned may be a more accurate and powerful inducement to relocate.

DUE TO THEIR LOWER LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND LACK OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, THE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING EMPLOYMENT IN THESE INDUSTRIES IS MORE LIKELY FOR THOSE PUERTO RICANS MOVING TO THESE AREAS.

The de-concentration of Puerto Ricans away from large metropolitan areas and the corresponding growth of Puerto Rican communities in midsized cities of the Northeast create an opportunity for further study. If, as this study suggests, economic factors play a role in migration, then further study into the noneconomic factors should be conducted. One type of study may be collecting data through formal and informal interviews, which could bring to light the social forces that help create and sustain these communities. In this approach interviews can be conducted with Puerto Rican migrants to find out their primary motives for moving. Besides qualitative approaches, more quantitative approaches might also be utilized. One such approach might examine housing surveys, like those published by the census, which could help determine the significance of low rent as an incentive for migrations.

Of course, further research on Puerto Rican migration into these cities should involve social policies to help the deteriorating conditions of these communities (as this study found, education levels and English proficiency restrict Puerto Rican access to higher paying jobs). Educational programs in these cities should be created to help those migrating and living in the cities. Such programs as GED preparation, vocational training programs, and classes in English would benefit this group. The continuing bifurcation of the mainland Puerto Rican community, with one group progressing economically and the other not, needs to be further examined and policies need to be created to eliminate this problem. Maybe then, Puerto Ricans will find the “elsewhere” they’ve been searching for.



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NOTES

1 According to Morales, another contributing factor causing migration and poverty for Puerto Ricans on the mainland is the colonial and neocolonial relationship between the island and U.S. government. See Morales (1986: 214–9).

2 The city of Chicago also experienced a decline in its Puerto Rican population. The number of Puerto Ricans dropped from 119,866 in 1990 to 113,055 in 2000 (see Acosta Belén and Santiago 2006: 94).

3 These cities were selected due to: (1) the location in states of the Northeast; (2) the significant growth in terms of Puerto Rican population; and (3) the high rates of poverty (see Acosta Belén and Santiago 2006: 137–41; Baker 2002: 186–92; Tettey-Fio 2003: 202–5).

4 The percent increases are as follows: Allentown, Pennsylvania, 82 percent; New Haven, Connecticut, 28 percent; Springfield, Massachusetts, 48 percent.

5 It is important to note that although Puerto Rico has been associated with the United States for over a hundred years, Puerto Ricans still retain the Spanish language (see Acosta Belén and Santiago 2006: 129).

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