

ABSTRACT

The geographical movements of persons is a common event in all countries, however, its intensity varies from place to place. Over the last three and a half decades the proportion of persons that was born outside the island and living in Puerto Rico has increased considerably. In Puerto Rico, similar to other countries, migration has been and continues to be a relevant demographic aspect. Of particular interest is the study of the insertion of this population in the labor force of the island. Among the elements that carry the immigrant to be successful in host society is its participation in the labor market.

The present investigation had as its primary purpose to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the immigrant population participating in the labor force in Puerto Rico for the year 2000. The following are the specific objectives of the study: describe the participation of the immigrant population in the labor force by ethnic group, describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the immigrants participating in the labor force by ethnic group and describe the occupational structure of these ethnic groups using the dual segmentation approach. The immigrant population was operationally defined using the person's place of birth. In order to be classified as immigrant the person needed the following characteristics: born outside Puerto Rico and living in the island during the last census. For analytical purposes the population under study was divided into the following ethnic groups: Cubans, Dominicans, Americans born in Puerto Rico, Americans born in the U.S. and Puerto Ricans.

In general terms the findings of the present investigation showed differences in volume, socio-demographic characteristics and the factors that promote the segmentation for the economy by ethnic origin. In terms of size, absolute numbers indicated that the smallest group corresponded to Cubans. This was an expected finding since the number of Cubans living in Puerto Rico has been decreasing since the 70's. Those born in the United States constituted the largest groups of immigrants in the island; specifically those born in the U.S. with Puerto Rican parents.

In term of labor force participation, 80% of immigrant was in the labor market. Among these the groups of those born in the U.S. of Puerto Rican origin showed the largest proportion of labor force participants. A great proportion of those participating in the labor, were employed (82%). Among the employed, Cubans were a t the top of the list, with 96% of them in this category.

As expected the highest proportion of labor force participants corresponded to men for all ethnic groups. Over half of the employed population was adults and young adults, except for Cubans. This group has an old age structure. In addition they came into the island during the 70's.

In terms of educational level, some differences were observed among the ethnic groups. The highest level of education was showed among Cubans. On the other hand, Dominicans participating in the labor force had the lowest level of education. The observed characteristics suggest that the ethnic groups studied differ in their socio-economic status, which in turn explain the type of occupation they have. This probably is related to type of migration these groups experienced and the characteristics they had when they moved to the island. For instance, migrant from Cuba have characterized by being a groups with some kind of economic position which put them at the top of the hierarchical economic strata.

Cubans showed the highest income levels and were participating in prestigious occupations. This group was followed by Americans. In addition to the salary, the number of hours worked was taken into account. More than half of immigrant to the island work around 30 hours per week. A considerable proportion of these groups worked 40 or more hours/week. This suggests that immigrant could be working extra hours to support their families or have more than one work. Immigrants work

. The analysis of the sex structure by occupation showed that the highest proportion of employed persons for all ethnic groups corresponded to men. In addition a higher proportion of men compared to women had prestigious occupations. However,

similar to men or higher levels of education were observed for the groups of women. They also had a younger age structure. In general terms immigrant women were concentrated on administrative and service occupations.

The present investigation found differences in socio-demographic characteristics (income, occupation, age structure, etc.) The dual segmentation approach appears to be supported by these findings. A hierarchical distribution in terms of these groups participation in the labor force was observed. Cubans are located at the top of the ladder, and Dominicans in opposite position. The diverse socio-economic characteristics that distinguished one group from the other play an important role in the explanation of this situation. The variable analyzed in this investigation could influence the incorporation of these groups into the labor market of the host society..