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Social Mobility of Puerto Ricans:

Education, Occupation, and Income Changes Among

*Children of Migrants, New York, 1950-1960**

by Nathan Kantrowitz*

Upward mobility is possible to an immigrant group if the institutions of the host society are open to social change and the immigrants' culture encourages social mobility. The Author tests his assumption by analyzing the Census statistics of 1950 and 1960 for the New York metropolis concerning Puerto Ricans. The conclusion is that in New York between 1950 and 1960 the children of Puerto Rican migrants, at least, were upwardly mobile: they attained some high school education, certain white collar jobs, and, to a lesser extent, higher income. Puerto Rican parents, however, are still poor, and so are their children. But if the experience of the decade studied can be a basis for prediction, the possibility of achieving a social class distribution similar to that of other groups in the city is very real for the Puerto Rican migrants in their own remaining life spans and those of their children.

The article examines one metropolitan area. Its findings corroborate those discussed by John J. Macisco, Jr. regarding mobility patterns of the Puerto Ricans in the total United States mainland.

The social mobility of the poor—that is, the ability of people who are uniformly poverty-stricken to evolve an upper, a middle, and a lower class—can be studied in several ways. We can examine it over time, to determine if the rate of mobility is slowing down or accelerating; we can

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also examine the relative social mobility of different populations, to determine if Polish immigrants, say, are more or less mobile than Italians, or if either group is more mobile than the population at large. The lack of definitive answers to most specific hypotheses about mobility had led some observers to conclude that American society has become "frozen," so that today's poor—which includes most Negroes and Puerto Ricans—are trapped in a self-perpetuating "culture of poverty."¹ Our analysis of Census statistics for the New York metropolis leads us to the contrary conclusion: in New York between 1950 and 1960, the children of Puerto Rican migrants,² at least, were upwardly mobile. Thus the institutions of the metropolis were open to social change, if only for this group.³

Lest this finding lead to unwarranted complacency, however, it should be pointed out that the population studied—second-generation Puerto Ricans aged 25 or more in 1960—constitutes only 2.4 percent of New York's 629,430 Puerto Ricans, and that even this group, despite their advances, lag far behind the non-Puerto Rican whites in education, jobs, and income.

The poverty of the Puerto Rican migrants to New York is obvious, for they have less schooling, lower incomes, and poorer jobs (if any) than either nonwhites or non-Puerto Rican whites, and they live in more deteriorated housing.⁴ But this is not an indictment of New York in particular; it may be that the Puerto Ricans are the poorest residents because they are the newest group of the poor to arrive in New York.⁵ The critical

1. Although the evidence is fragmentary, we have concluded that rates of social mobility in the United States have not changed much in recent years. For discussion and analysis of mobility patterns, see Otis Dudley Duncan, "The Trend of Occupational Mobility in the United States," *American Sociological Review*, XXX (August, 1965), pp. 491-498.

2. The term "Puerto Rican migrants" is here used to mean persons born in Puerto Rico who are now living in the continental United States. These people, of course, are native American citizens. Similarly, persons born in the continental United States with one or both parents born in Puerto Rico are referred to here as "the second generation," but are no more and no less a "second generation" than are native Californians whose parents were born in New York.

The source of our statistics on the Puerto Ricans is U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. IV, *Special Reports*, Part 3, Chap. D, "Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States" Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953; *U. S. Census of Population: 1960, Subject Reports, Puerto Ricans in the United States*, Final Report, PC (2)-1D, Washington, D. C., U. S. Government Printing Office, 1963.

3. Our conclusion, limited to one metropolis during one decade (now 8 years past), does not extend to Negroes or to the Puerto Rican migrants themselves; nor does it differentiate nonwhite from white Puerto Ricans.

4. Nathan Kantrowitz and Donnell M. Pappenfort, *1960 Fact Book for the New York-Northeastern New Jersey Standard Consolidated Area: the Nonwhite, Puerto Rican, and White Non-Puerto Rican Populations*, Social Statistics for Metropolitan New York, No. 2, March 1966; C. W. Mills, C. Senior, and R. Goldsen, *Puerto Rican Journey*, New York: Harper & Bros., 1950.

5. There is no unique virtue in studying either New York or the total U. S. labor market. However, most Puerto Ricans in the continental United States live in New York. Moreover, we suspect that there are great variations among cities in opportunities for Puerto Ricans.

question, which this paper attempts to answer, is how well have the *children* of these migrants done?

As we shall see, the answer has many parts. The children are better off than their parents, but they too are poor, for they have begun their move from the lowest rung of the economic ladder. Moreover, even the limited improvement among the second generation can be questioned unless it can be shown that they are closing the gap between themselves and the rest of society by moving into social slots which have promise for the future. Our study concludes that second-generation Puerto Ricans in New York, particularly the young adult males, were upwardly mobile from 1950 to 1960 by the most common criteria: they attained some high-school education, certain white-collar jobs, and, to a lesser extent, higher incomes.

But before we investigate their mobility, we must first emphasize that the people examined here, born and reared in New York, are products of the institutions of this metropolis as well as of their parents' Puerto Rican culture. The parents' poverty has its roots in Puerto Rican society, and its all-too-obvious persistence in New York is the result of differential migration. Consequently, before we can assess the second generation's experience, we must rule out a similar differential migration as the cause of their characteristics. Although the migration statistics are crude and the evidence is limited, they lead consistently to the conclusion that persons of Puerto Rican parentage living in the 1960 New York SMSA are in large part survivors from the 1950 New York City population. The proportion of these 1960 residents that is part of the original 1950 cohort varies by age and sex, but the group of those aged 25 years or older in 1960 includes at least 80 percent of the original 1950 group.⁶ Whatever changes have transpired, therefore, do not reflect on outmigration of the more (or less) successful during this decade but stem, rather, from the effect of the institutions of the metropolis combined with the culture of the Puerto Ricans. Both influences are necessary if movement is to take place: the society must be open to class mobility, and the culture of the migrants must encourage movement among their young.

Theories of social mobility often devolve to such observations as "more schooling leads to better jobs and more money," an idea we shall use to evaluate changes among these children of New York's poorest. We begin with an evaluation of changes in educational attainment shown in Table 1. In this table we assume that high-school graduation, for example, reflects similar accomplishments and socialization across all ethnic groups.

It should be pointed out at the outset that an increase in educational

6. Work in progress by the author. We assume that out-migrants (i.e., second-generation Puerto Ricans who left New York during that decade) and non-migrants had similar characteristics. If the migrants were predominantly upward mobile, then we understate the upward mobility of the remainder of the cohort. If, on the other hand, the migrants come from the opposite end of the mobility spectrum, our overstatement of the remainder's mobility is too small to vitiate our conclusions.

TABLE 1
 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PERSONS OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE AND NON-PUERTO RICAN WHITES
 AGED 15-24 AND 25-34 in 1960, NEW YORK STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA, BY SEX^a

Years of School Completed	1960, Aged			Other-White		Females of Other-White	
	15-24 ^b	25-34	1960 as a % of 1950	Males, 1960 as a % of 1950	P.R. Parentage, 1960 as a % of 1950	Females, 1960 as a % of 1950	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	
None	37	63	170.3%	101.5%	98.6%	93.9%	
Elem. 1-4	252	139	55.2	57.5	52.5	57.3	
5-7	696	319	45.8	78.8	55.8	85.3	
8	983	608	61.9	74.4	66.0	79.0	
High School 1-3	2,629	1,938	73.7	62.7	66.8	65.0	
4	895	1,450	162.0	114.8	151.2	121.1	
College 1-3	210	411	195.7	113.1	190.6	126.7	
4+	40	243	607.5	457.1	485.7	276.4	
Not reported ^c	103						
Total	5,845	5,171	88.5	103.2 ^d	91.6	101.4	

^a The statistics in all the tables of this report are subject to enumeration errors and sampling variation: this is particularly important for the small numbers of Puerto Ricans. The exact numbers of Puerto Ricans are presented here for purposes of illustration. New York City.

^b Comparisons between 1950 and 1960 may not always sum check because (in addition to rounding errors) 1960 education and income statistics are not published with a separate "not reported" classification.

^c 1950 number is 519,000; the 1960 number is 536,000 (both rounded to the nearest thousand).

attainment in itself means little, generally speaking, all young men in our society became better educated in the ten-year span from 1950 to 1960. We are concerned, rather, to see if the Puerto Ricans were narrowing the gap between their parents and the rest of society by improving at a rate higher than was characteristic of that "rest of society." This way of evaluating improvement raises two problems of analysis. Obviously, what we construe to be "the rest of society" will determine the size of the gap. Perhaps not so obviously, what we construe to be the statistical "rate" will determine whether the changes are indeed "high" as compared with "the rest of society."

Unfortunately, there exist no data which would allow us to make a realistic comparison between these children of Puerto Rican migrants, and say, the children of Italian ones. We must consider a "rest of society" which is either not stringent enough, or too stringent: we have chosen to be too stringent. We could choose to compare Puerto Ricans in New York with the total male population of the nation, or of the New York SMSA. However, since these populations include such poverty-stricken groups as the Puerto Rican migrants themselves and nonwhites, their attainment levels would be relatively depressed. For a more stringent comparison we have chosen to examine the educational shifts of second-generation Puerto Ricans against those of non-Puerto Rican whites (or, as we shall refer to them, "other-whites").

We also have the option of considering other-whites in the entire nation or just in New York. The choice of the total United States as a basis of comparison would enable us to interpret educational changes as the result of a change in educational pattern for a given cohort, since the relatively small amount of immigration produces a "closed" population. But most of the Puerto Ricans in the continental United States live in New York. Furthermore, the concentration of corporate central offices in the metropolis raises its proportion of other-white college graduates and white-collar workers—many of them immigrants from other parts of the country—far above the level of the rest of the nation.⁷ Consequently, the selection of New York's other-whites as a basis of comparison again is conservative, since we are evaluating the progress of Puerto Ricans against that of a population containing an unusually large (but unknown) proportion of immigrant college graduates and white-collar workers. Moreover, since the statistics are so limited, any other-white immigration adjustments we might make would be subject to challenge. Our decision to compare New York's Puerto Ricans with the other-whites of the metropolis means

7. For other-whites aged 25-34 in 1960 (Table 1), the proportion of college graduates in the New York SMSA is 23.1 percent; in the remainder of the U. S. it is no more than half this percentage (U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. 1, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part I, United States Summary, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office 1964, Table 173). See also Sidney M. Robbins and Nestor E Terleckyj, *Money Metro-*

that our comparison will always be biased *against* Puerto Rican upward mobility.

With these points in mind, let us now inspect Table 1, aware that different questions cause us to focus on different statistics, which in turn may lead to different conclusions. Columns 1 and 2 show the absolute numbers of Puerto Rican men reaching each rung of the educational ladder during 1950 to 1960.⁸ It is apparent from these figures, and from the percentage-change figures shown in column 3, that they consistently acquired more schooling. Those who stopped short of high-school graduation decreased in number, while the ranks of those who did graduate (some of whom went on to attend college) increased precipitously. The rise from 40 to 243 college graduates, for example, represents an increase of 607.5 percent; in this same period, there was a 457.1-percent increase in New York's other-white college graduates (column 4). Even with our conservative definition of the "rest of society," the Puerto Ricans did well. However, these findings of a large gain owes much to our choice of categories. If we group together all high-school graduates and those who had at least some college, the Puerto Rican rise from 1,145 in 1950 to 2,104 in 1960 represents an increase of 183.8 percent, only slightly higher than the equivalent other-white increase of 154.3 percent. The Puerto Ricans did well, but we must not overstate the gain.

But our conclusions, as we have pointed out, will be shaped, not only by the populations we compare, but also by the statistical manipulations we use. We have two choices here, whether to focus on changes in given educational niches—e.g., college graduation—one at a time; or to deal with changes in the overall achievement pattern of the cohort.

The percentage change in college graduates is an example of the first kind of emphasis. It is analogous to the common definition of a net mobility rate which would state the net number of new college graduates between 1950 and 1960 per 100/college graduates in 1950.⁹ Columns 1

8. Published statistics for 1950 include ages 14-24; we have adjusted these to ages 15-24 by assuming that both Puerto Rican and white non-Puerto Rican 14-year-olds had the same educational distribution as the total population's 14-year-olds, as published in U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of the Population: 1950*, Vol. II, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 32, New York, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office 1952, Table 64, p. 228. Percentages in our tables will not sum to 100.0 because of rounding errors.

9. We have elected to present simple percentages; these are probably underestimates of the "true" rate, which does not affect our conclusions. Elaborate refinements are precluded by limited tabulations of data, the unknown errors in census enumerations, and the known variability of sampling. For a discussion of this first problem, see the papers in "Evaluation of 1960 Census Count," *Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section, 1966*, Washington, D. C.: American Statistical Association, pp. 62-90, presented at the 126th Annual Meeting of the American Statistical Association. To understand the problem of sampling variance, we have only to consider the Puerto Rican college graduates of 1950. From our source (U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of Population*, Vol. IV, Part 3, Chapter D, pp. 8-9, "Reliability of Sample Data"), we see that the estimate of 40 graduates is based on a sample of only 8; just through sampling variance,

through 4 show a similar pattern for both Puerto Ricans and other-whites, a decline in the numbers who stopped their education before high-school graduation, and an increase in those who went on to graduate, and beyond. However, columns 3 and 4 show that this trend toward higher education is consistently stronger among the Puerto Ricans. The young Puerto Rican males show a greater decrease at every level before high-school graduation, and a greater increase thereafter, than the other-white males. Although we have to exercise caution in interpretation because of the small numbers involved,¹⁰ it is still clear that the percentage increase of high-school and college graduates was higher among the Puerto Ricans than among the other-whites.

The same finding holds when we compare young women of Puerto Rican parentage with other-white females (columns 5 and 6), except that the differences in percentage improvement between the Puerto Rican and other-white females are somewhat smaller than those found for males.

So far we have not remarked on the fact that college attendance and graduation presuppose a high-school diploma. This point is of little concern when we approach the data from the standpoint of change in individual educational niches. As we have seen, the Puerto Ricans improved at a higher rate than the other-whites at all levels from high-school graduation on. But the cumulative nature of educational achievement does become an issue when we ask what happened to the entire cohort in over-all educational distribution.

In Table 2, we consider each educational niche in relation to the total cohort. Columns 1-3 show that the 40 Puerto Rican college graduates of 1950 represent only 0.7 percent of the total cohort; that the percentage had risen to 4.7 percent of the total by 1960; and that the change from 1950 to 1960 was therefore an increase of 4.0 percentage points. These data support the trend revealed in Table 1—a decrease in the proportions who stopped their education before high-school graduation, and a corresponding increase in those who went past the third year of high school; but we now see that the greatest relative shift of Puerto Rican males took place into the high-school-graduate category. The same holds true of Puerto Rican females (column 7). But for other-whites of both sexes, the largest shift was into the college-graduate category (columns 6 and 8). A comparison of the “shift” columns, then, indicates that although Puerto Rican youth are moving rapidly into the ranks of high-school graduates and, to some extent, beyond, other-white males are moving even more rapidly into the ranks of college graduates. Thus the proportion of Puerto Ricans who had had at least four years of high school in 1960 (40.6%) was only

the chances are about 66 out of 100 that the actual number of college graduates is not 40 but somewhere between 30 and 50, while the chances are 99 out of 100 that the actual number is somewhere between 15 and 65.

10. There were only 40 Puerto Rican college graduates in 1950 and 243 in 1960. An increase of the same numerical size—203—between 1960 and 1970 would represent a percentage change of only 183.5.

TABLE 2
 PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR PERSONS AGED 15-24 IN 1950 AND 25-34 IN
 1960, NEW YORK STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA, PERSONS OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE
 AND NON-PUERTO RICAN WHITES, BY SEX

Years of School Completed	Males of				Females			
	Puerto Rican Parentage		Other-White Males		P.R. Parentage		Oth-White Females	
	1950, ^a Aged 15-24	1960, Aged 25-34	Diff. (2)-10	1950, Aged 15-24	1960, Aged 25-34	Diff. (5)-(4)	1960-50 Diff.:	1960-50 Diff.:
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
None	0.6	1.2	+ 0.6	0.5	0.5	0.0	+ 0.1	0.0
Elem. 1-4	4.3	2.7	- 1.6	1.8	1.0	- 1.0	- 3.7	- 0.7
5-7	11.9	6.2	- 5.7	4.1	3.1	- 1.0	- 3.7	- 0.4
8	16.8	11.8	- 5.0	7.9	5.7	- 2.2	- 3.5	- 1.5
H. S. 1-3	45.0	37.5	- 7.5	37.6	22.8	- 14.8	- 11.7	- 12.1
4	15.3	28.0	+ 12.7	26.3	29.3	+ 3.0	+ 16.5	+ 7.3
Coll. 1-3	3.6	7.9	+ 4.3	13.2	14.4	+ 1.2	+ 2.7	+ 2.4
4	0.7	4.7	+ 4.0	5.2	23.1	+ 17.9	+ 2.3	+ 7.8
Not Reported	1.8	-	-	3.4	-	-	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	-	100.0	100.0	-	-	-

^a New York City

slightly larger than the proportion of other-white males with at least some college (37.5%). This new look at the evidence indicates that the Puerto Ricans lag far behind the other-whites in terms of both the percentage of the group in the upper educational categories and the dimension of shift into those categories.

It is apparent that our comparisons have asked two different questions, both of which are reasonable. If we look at the educational niches separately, we ask what changes occurred in the number of, say, college graduates produced from 1950 to 1960. In Table 1, we get an optimistic view of the educational attainment of the young Puerto Ricans, all the way up to college graduation.

However, when we view this change from the vantage point of the entire cohort, our optimism is tempered. In the higher reaches of education—i.e., college graduation—Puerto Ricans are greatly underrepresented as compared with other-whites; moreover, the large Puerto Rican shift into high-school attainment is in part a statistical artifact of the other-white shift into college graduation.

Each of these modes of comparison has inherent, and ineradicable, limitations. However, we can now stand back from these two extremes of optimism and pessimism, keeping in mind that our choice of New York's other-whites as "the rest of society" biases us against concluding there has been upward mobility among the Puerto Ricans. If we consider how the cohorts have changed, we can arrive at what we think is a reasonable conclusion. In view of the fact that they started from the bottom of the social and economical ladder, we could hardly expect the young Puerto Ricans to catch up to the other-whites in one decade. What they have done is to move into the category of high-school graduates, thus putting themselves in a position to compete with other-whites for occupations requiring a high-school diploma. As a group, they were less successful in qualifying themselves for jobs at the highest levels of the white-collar world, requiring a college degree. However, the rapid rate of their movement into the college ranks—bearing in mind the inflationary effect of the method of computation—is ground for cautious optimism.

Has this educational achievement actually translated itself into better jobs? In our analysis of educational changes we have had to rely on unstandardized relative shifts. But for the occupational question, we are fortunate in having adequate data with which to standardize¹¹ indirectly

11. George W. Barclay, *Techniques of Population Analysis*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1958, pp. 161-166; A. J. Jace, *Handbook of Statistical Methods for Demographers*, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1951, Chap. 3. Puerto Ricans, as we have seen, have a smaller proportion of college graduates than do other-whites. Since college graduation is a prerequisite for professional jobs the low proportion of Puerto Ricans among professionals may reflect educational deficiency rather than a scarcity of job opportunities. Standardization minimizes education as a casual factor and allows us to focus more closely on the job market. This standardization does not directly compare Puerto Ricans with other-whites. Rather, the comparison is between an "expected" Puerto Rican distribution and their factual census enumeration.

occupation according to years of school completed among the male cohort who were aged 15-24 in 1950¹² and 25-34 in 1960. We have limited ourselves in the comparison to this critical age group, for it encompasses young men who are just reaching their productive years.¹³

The interpretation of this standardization, shown in Table 3, needs some explanation, for occupational shifts are more complex than shifts in educational attainments. This is so because one can obtain only more (never less) schooling, and only by attending an educational institute of some sort. People shift their labor-force status, in contrast, by making new entries (one's first job) and re-entries (e.g., the housewife who returns to work after her children are grown) and by leaving the labor force entirely, through migration, death, or retirement, as well as by moving upward or downward, to better or lesser jobs.¹⁴ However we shall follow the common practice of attributing any shifts to a combination of net mobility (i.e., the difference between upward and downward movement) and new entries to the labor force.

Another problem of interpretation centers about the meaning of individual labor-force categories.¹⁵ We shall discuss the data from the viewpoint of white-collar, blue-collar, and "indeterminate" categories. Among white-collar workers, we have assumed that the upper-echelon professional and technical occupations may be entered directly by means of educational attainment, while the managerial-proprietor category, for those who lack family connections or capital, is more likely to be entered by promotion from the ranks of clerical and sales workers. The usual entrance requirement for the latter occupations, in turn, is high-school graduation.

For a poor boy, the better-paying white-collar world is usually reached by education, rather than by promotion from a blue-collar job. And the blue-collar world is itself capped by the rank of craftsmen-foremen, which is usually attained by promotion from the ranks of operatives, service workers, and laborers. There are no clear-cut distinctions among these lower-level blue-collar occupations, so we have interpreted them as an ill-assorted

12. Published 1950 statistics include ages 14-24; we have adjusted these to ages 15-24 by assuming that all 14-year-olds were "not in the labor force." Additional adjustments have been made in the sample statistics on occupation and labor-force status in order to synthesize cohorts in 1950 and 1960.

13. The specific rates used in the indirect standardization are for total U. S. white males. U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. IV, *Special Reports*, Part 5, Chapter B, Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953 Tables 9, 11; U. S. Bureau of the Census, *U. S. Census of Population: 1960, Subject Reports, Educational Attainment*, Final Report PC (2)-5B, Tables 4, 8. There is a slight incomparability (which does not affect our conclusions) between occupations tabulated in 1950 for the "employed" and in 1960 for the "experienced labor force."

14. See A. J. Jaffe and R. O. Carleton, *Occupational Mobility in the United States, 1930-1960*, New York, King's Crown Press, 1954.

15. See the papers and discussion in the panel on "Standard Occupational Classification," presented at the 126th Annual Meeting of the American Statistical Association, *Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section, 1966*, Washington, D. C.: American Statistical Association, pp. 176-208.

TABLE 3
 EXPECTED AND OBSERVED OCCUPATION AND LABOR-FORCE STATUS, STANDARDIZED BY YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, FOR MALES OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE AGED 15-24 IN 1950 AND 25-34 IN 1960, NEW YORK

Occupation and Labor Force Status	New York City, 1950			New York SMSA, 1960		
	Observed (1)	Expected (Stand.) (2)	Obs-Exp (1)-(2) (3)	Observed (4)	Expected (Stand.) (5)	Obs-Exp (4)-(5) (6)
<i>White Collar</i>						
Professional and Technical	1.8%	1.5%	+ 0.3	8.6%	7.1%	+1.5
Managers and Proprietors	0.5	3.7	- 3.2	3.8	9.6	-5.8
Clerical and Sales	8.6	3.7	+ 0.2	17.2	11.3	+5.9
<i>Blue Collar</i>						
Craftsmen, Foremen	4.0	6.7	- 2.7	14.6	21.1	-6.5
Operatives	13.6	14.7	- 1.1	23.8	23.4	+0.4
Service Workers	4.7	2.6	+ 2.1	10.4	3.8	+6.6
Laborers	2.1	15.1	-13.0	3.8	7.5	-3.7
<i>Indeterminate</i>						
Not reported	0.4	0.9	- 0.5	4.0	3.8	+0.2
Unemployed	11.5	5.5	+ 6.0	5.3	3.9	+1.4
Not in Labor Force	52.5	36.0	+16.5	7.8	4.4	+3.4
<i>Armed Forces</i>						
Armed Forces	0.3	5.0	- 4.7	0.8	4.0	-3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	-	100.0	100.0	-

conglomerate. This is also true of what we shall call an "indeterminate" classification, consisting of those whose occupations were "not reported," those who were "unemployed," and those who were "not in the labor force"; these groups will be discussed as a single category in an attempt to preclude inconclusive debate over whether they actually represent the unemployed, the underemployed, or the demoralized.

A final problem in determining whether job mobility is in fact upward or downward is unsolvable with the labor-force statistics available to us. We lack, first, the precise occupational definitions which might permit us to differentiate a dead-end job from one with a future; and second, an occupation-industry cross classification to differentiate declining from expanding fields. For example, our emphasis on jobs in the sales and clerical category as avenues of upward mobility is based on a speculation that the occupations in this category either have a future, are themselves in expanding industries, or involve skills which are transferable to other, expanding industries. If Puerto Rican penetration into these lower-level sales and clerical positions in fact represents movement into dead-end (e.g., easily automated) jobs, which are open to them only because other-whites abjure them, then the upward mobility shown in our table is a cruel hoax. Although we lack the statistical tabulations to take these factors into account we cannot deny that their absence qualifies our conclusions.

In our view of the life-chances of young Puerto Rican men, their hope for white-collar advancement lies primarily in the lower-level clerical and sales positions, and, to a lesser extent, in the professional and technical jobs in which education may count more immediately. On the other hand, it does not appear that the manager-proprietor or craftsman-foreman ranks—accessible largely by promotion from lower levels—will be easily attainable for them. Table 3 indicates that in New York during 1950, young Puerto Rican men did not obtain the jobs their education theoretically fitted them for. But by 1960 they had overcome much of their initial disadvantage, slightly exceeding expectation in the professional-technical category while continuing to lag in the manager-proprietor group. But among the lower entry-level clerical and sales jobs, where high-school attainment really counts, their education has given them a gain of 5.9 percentage points over expectation.

After their excellent showing in the white-collar ranks, the efforts of Puerto Rican males met with either failure or inconclusiveness in the blue-collar world: there is a 6.5-point lag in promotion to the craftsman-foreman category, coupled with results more or less as expected in the lower categories of operatives, service workers, and laborers. In the indeterminate categories, they have partially overcome their original handicaps by reducing the overrepresentation of unemployed from 6.0 to 1.4, and of those not in the labor force from 16.5 to 3.4.¹⁶ Their excellent showing in the

16. The apparent underrepresentation of Puerto Rican young men in the armed forces reflects the U. S. Census Bureau definitions, which count them as residents of the place where they are stationed; there are few military bases in New

white-collar category in New York is in part undoubtedly the result of the large white-collar demand in this labor market. But we think we have so conservatively hedged our methodological bets that it is still reasonable to conclude that young Puerto Ricans in New York have done well in translating their education into white-collar professional and technical occupations, and particularly into lower entry-level clerical and sales jobs; they have done poorly in the manager-proprietor category, as well as in the craftsman-foreman category.

This is as far as we have precisely traced the consequences of education. We focus again just on unstandardized changes in New York to carry forward a greater range of shifts for women as well as men, for persons who were aged 35 or older in 1960 as well as for those who were aged 25-35 years.

Even without the benefit of standardization, our data indicate that the young Puerto Rican men advanced between 1950 and 1960. Table 4 shows

TABLE 4

OCCUPATION AND LABOR FORCE STATUS OF MALES OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE AND OTHER-WHITES AGED 15-24 IN 1950 AND 25-34 IN 1960, NEW YORK STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA

Occupation and Labor Force Status	Males of Puerto Rican Parentage			Other-White Males
	1950, Aged 15-24	1960, Aged 25-34	1960 as a % of 1950	1960 as a % of 1950
<i>White Collar</i>				
Professional	105	443	421.9	491.1
Managers	30	196	653.3	468.6
<i>Blue Collar</i>				
Craftsmen	235	754	320.9	224.2
Operatives	795	1,232	155.0	119.0
Private Household Service	0	0	—	—
Laborers	275	540	196.4	251.3
	120	194	161.7	98.9
<i>Indeterminate</i>				
Occ. not reported	25	206	824.0	765.3
Unemployed	670	2 75	41.0	40.6
Not in Labor Force	3,070	401	13.1	10.3
<i>Armed Forces</i>				
	15	42	—	62.8
Total	5,845	5,171	88.5	103.2

^a New York City

York. Equivalent standardizations, which we have carried out for the total United States as well as for the nation outside New York, eliminate this distortion. On the average, labor-force participation rates outside New York show no bright spots, particularly in the important white-collar entry-level of clerical and sales workers. This indicates that opportunities vary considerably among metropolises.

how the movement from the categories "not in the labor force" and "unemployed" swelled every occupation in this decade. As we might expect, the greatest numerical increases were in the blue-collar ranks; for example, operatives increased in number from 795 to 1,232. The numbers employed in white-collar occupations also increased greatly, particularly the professionals and clerical workers. The percentage increases also show mobility; for example, among the clerical and sales workers the Puerto Rican increase of 175.8 percent was higher than the increase of other-whites (113.4 percent).

However, when we view each occupational niche as a percent of the total cohort, as shown in Table 5, we get a picture that is even more conservative than we received from the standardized distribution of Table 3; comparing the 1960 cohorts aged 25-24 in Tables 3 and 5, we see that

TABLE 5

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION AND LABOR FORCE STATUS FOR MALES OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE AND OTHER-WHITES, AGED 15-24 IN 1950 AND 25-34 IN 1960, NEW YORK STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA

Occupation and Labor Force Status	Males of Puerto Rican Parentage			Other-White Males		
	1950, ^a Aged 15-24	1960, Aged 25-34	Diff. (2)-(1)	1950, Aged 15-24	1960, Aged 25-34	Diff. (5)-(4)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>White Collar</i>						
Professional	1.8	8.6	+ 6.8	3.9	18.7	+14.8
Managers	0.5	3.8	+ 3.3	2.3	10.6	+ 8.3
Clerical, Sales	8.6	17.2	+ 8.6	16.9	18.6	+ 1.7
<i>Blue Collar</i>						
Craftsmen, Foremen	4.0	14.6	+10.6	7.6	16.4	+ 8.8
Operatives	13.6	23.8	+10.2	10.6	12.3	+ 1.7
Private Household	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	—
Service	4.7	10.4	+ 5.7	2.7	6.6	+ 3.9
Laborers	2.1	3.8	+ 1.7	3.9	3.8	— 0.1
<i>Indeterminate</i>						
Occ. not reported	0.4	4.0	+ 3.6	0.7	5.1	+ 4.4
Unemployed	11.5	5.3	— 6.2	7.2	2.8	— 4.4
Not in Labor Force	52.5	7.8	—44.7	42.8	4.3	—38.5
<i>Armed Forces</i>						
	0.3	0.8	+ 0.5	1.3	0.8	— 0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—

^a New York City

although the over-all picture is the same, it is more conservative in Table 5, which shows gains in clerical and sales occupations and lags in both upper-white-collar levels. Even with their gains, the Puerto Ricans are still far behind the accomplishments of the other-whites. The other-whites are concentrated in the upper echelons of professional workers and managers, while the Puerto Ricans are concentrated in the lower-level and sales positions.

In the remaining distributions, we have used a statistical manipulation which we call the "1950-1960 index of differences." This index, intended only as a convenient and easily understood summary device, can be illustrated from our discussion of Table 5. Our conclusion that the Puerto Ricans fell behind in the professional-worker category was based partly on the fact that the Puerto Rican shift in this category (6.8 percentage points) was exceeded by that of the other-whites (14.8). If we were to subtract the Puerto Rican shift from the other-white shift, we would show a difference of 8.0 in favor of the other-whites. Similarly, among the clerical and sales workers, the equivalent arithmetic would show a difference in favor of the Puerto Ricans ($1.7 - 8.6 = -6.9$). In effect, a plus sign indicates an other-whites surplus; a minus, a Puerto Rican surplus.

Using this summary device, we turn now to Table 6.

The most obvious point we note is that among the men aged 25+ in 1950 and 35+ in 1960, the Puerto Ricans are at a constant disadvantage, as we have noted earlier in discussing education and occupation. We need not further belabor the fact that Puerto Ricans have less education, hold lower-echelon jobs, and are poorer. What we are primarily concerned with are the shifts.

Table 6 reveals that the older Puerto Rican men have overcome many of the disadvantages of the younger men. For example, the lag in the upper white-collar categories is now minimized; the other-white shift is greater among the professionals (+1.2), and the Puerto Rican shift is

17. Since the income of males are not distinguished from females, we cannot tell if, for example, Puerto Rican men are paid well and the women are not. Moreover, we cannot distinguish family from individual income, a serious limitation since families may be institutions that create capital by pooling and organizing individual incomes; consequently, persons with "no income" include, for example, middle-class suburban housewives. To compound the understatement, the data on Puerto Ricans are restricted to the city itself, excluding the better-off Puerto Ricans living in the 1960 SMSA ring (while figures for the remaining population do include the SMSA ring). Moreover, the base population we shall compare with the Puerto Ricans consists of the total population undifferentiated by race or ethnicity. The 1950 income statistics were abstracted from: U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Puerto Ricans in Continental United States*, Vol. IV, Part 3, Chapter D, Table 5; U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Characteristics of the Population*, Vol. II, Part 32, Table 89. The 1960 income statistics for the total population was abstracted from U. S. Bureau of the Census Vol. I, *Characteristics of the Population*, Part 34, Table 134; the 1960 income statistics for the Puerto Rican population were taken from unpublished tabulations made available through the Division of Basic Studies, New York City Department of Planning.

TABLE 6
 1960 DISTRIBUTIONS, AND 1950-1960 INDEXES OF DIFFERENCE, OCCUPATION AND LABOR FORCE STATUS DISTRIBUTIONS, PERSONS OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE AND OTHER-WHITES AGED 25-34, OR 35 AND OLDER IN 1960, NEW YORK STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA

Occupation and Labor Force Status	Males Aged 35 & Older			Females Aged 25-34			Females Aged 35 & Older		
	1960, Puerto Rican (1)	1960, Other-White (2)	1950-60 Ind. of Diff. (3)	1960, Puerto Rican (4)	1960, Other-White (5)	1950-60 Ind. of Diff. (6)	1960, Puerto Rican (7)	1960, Other-White (8)	1950-60 Ind. of Diff. (9)
<i>White Collar</i>									
Professional	3.5	9.9	+1.2	3.4	6.4	+ 0.1	2.1	4.2	+0.9
Managers	4.9	13.5	-0.1	0.7	1.4	+ 0.2	1.3	1.8	+0.2
Clerical, Sales	13.0	14.9	-2.1	19.6	16.6	-19.4	10.9	14.7	+1.5
<i>Blue Collar</i>									
Craftsmen	15.4	14.7	-7.0	0.8	0.3	- 0.1	1.4	0.5	-1.1
Operatives	19.9	12.1	+1.3	10.1	3.1	+ 1.0	16.1	5.8	-2.9
Private Household Service	0.4	0.1	-0.4	0.3	0.5	- 0.2	0.6	1.2	+1.0
Service	12.6	6.8	+1.5	3.6	2.1	- 1.1	3.9	3.2	+1.3
Laborers	3.8	3.2	-0.2	0.1	0.1	+ 0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
<i>Indeterminate</i>									
Occ. not reported	9.0	3.9	-5.0	1.3	2.4	+ 1.2	4.4	2.3	-2.1
Unemployed	3.7	2.9	+4.0	2.2	1.4	+ 0.5	4.1	1.7	+0.5
Not in Labor Force	13.3	17.9	+6.9	58.0	65.6	+17.6	55.1	64.5	+1.0
<i>Armed Forces</i>	0.4	0.2	+0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Totals	100.0	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—

a Numbers of Puerto Ricans are: Males Aged 35+, 2,041; Females Aged 25-34, 5,906; Females Aged 35+, 1,895. Number of Other-Whites are: Males Aged 35+, 2,126,000; Females Aged 25-34, 570,000; Females Aged 35+, 2,403,000.

greater among the managers (-0.1). Moreover, the Puerto Ricans have clearly overcome some of the earlier lack of blue-collar progress, for they couple an improvement (-7.0 percentage points) in the craftsman-foreman rank, with the expected distribution among the remaining lower blue-collar ranks. The indeterminate categories are about as expected: if we omit those not in the labor force, who now include the retired, we see that those who did not report their occupations balance the unemployed (-5.0 and +4.0, respectively). If we synthesize these limited conclusions from the cross-sections of two age groups to create a hypothetical generation of men, we can say that the younger Puerto Rican men have done well in the schools and have translated this success into the lower entry-level white-collar clerical and sales jobs and, to a lesser extent, into professional and technical jobs as well. But among the manager-proprietor category and the blue-collar craftsmen-foremen ranks, the younger men have been held back. However, with age, they surmounted even these obstacles, especially in the blue-collar world.

The female labor-force picture is less clear, for women who are "not in the labor force" are more likely to be contented housewives rather than frustrated breadwinners. However, this fact should not obscure the striking intergenerational shift of the younger Puerto Rican women out of the factory into the office. The shift among younger Puerto Rican women exceeded that among the other-whites in the sales and clerical categories by an amazingly large margin (-19.4 percentage points), while those aged 35+ had no such shift.

All in all, then, (assuming that our lack of detailed occupational and industry tabulations does not vitiate our conclusions), second-generation Puerto Ricans have had upward occupational mobility, helped in part by their upward mobility in schooling. Among the younger men, sufficient education to enter the professional-technical ranks or the lower clerical and sales positions was immediately useful; advancement among the older men, who made striking gains in the upper-level blue-collar positions, seems to have been delayed, not precluded. Among the women, there is evidence of a striking generational shift, with the younger ones going into the lower white-collar positions which had not been attainable by their older sisters.

Finally, these educational and occupational advancements should lead to increased income. We can tentatively state that if income has in fact increased, it has done so only slightly. This conclusion is tentative because the available Puerto Rican income data are extremely limited.

Table 7 shows that the Puerto Ricans did shift upward in the lower income levels, but their relative gain dropped rapidly. At the upper levels, the other-whites exceeded them by 2.8 and 10.7 percentage points. However, some of this lag seems to be eliminated in later life, for Puerto Rican males who were aged 35+ in 1960 did better than the younger group.¹⁸

15. Published 1950 statistics include ages 14-24. We have adjusted these to ages 15-24 by assuming that all 14-year-olds had no income. No other adjustments have been made, so the figures are not in constant dollars.

TABLE 7

1960 INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS, AND 1950-1960 INDEXES OF DIFFERENCES, FOR PERSONS OF PUERTO RICAN PARENTAGE IN NEW YORK CITY AND TOTAL POPULATION (ALL RACES AND ETHNICITIES COMBINED) IN NEW YORK STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA, AGED 25-34, AND 35 AND OLDER, IN 1960, MALES AND FEMALES COMBINED

1959 Income^a
of Persons

	1960 Puerto Rican	1960 Total Pop.	1950-60 Index of Differences	1960 Puerto Rican	1960 Total Pop.	1950-60 Index of Differences
None	26.6	28.6	+14.5	22.7	24.2	-1.8
\$1 to \$999	7.6	7.3	+ 0.3	10.7	12.2	+3.8
\$1,000-\$1,999	8.7	6.3	-2.9	9.1	9.44	+8.5
\$2,000-\$2,999	12.9	8.9	-11.1	16.6	9.1	-1.7
\$3,000-\$3,999	16.9	11.1	- 8.1	17.1	9.3	-9.9
\$4,000-\$4,999	14.6	11.2	- 3.8	9.3	8.6	-4.8
\$5,000-\$5,999	7.0	10.0	+ 2.8	8.9	8.3	-3.5
\$6,000+	5.7	16.7	+10.7	5.6	18.9	+9.1
Total	100.0	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—

^a Low incomes do not necessarily indicate poverty; see text for explanation.

For example, the greatest relative improvement among the older Puerto Ricans (9.9 percentage points) is in the \$3,000-3,999 category, one income level above the highest-improvement category for the younger group. More important, they continue to shift into higher income groups, all the way to the \$5,000-5,999 category. Since the highest income category is open-ended, we expect them to fall behind here because of their relatively poor showing in the higher occupational and educational categories. There is no way to go beyond this fragmentary evidence of income, but I judge that the upward mobility of Puerto Ricans in education and occupation is not being translated immediately into improved income, although the gap is partially overcome at the older ages.

Perhaps we can now assemble these individual findings into a more cohesive conclusion concerning the social mobility of second-generation Puerto Ricans. The basic issue is, were the Puerto Ricans upwardly mobile? We answer "yes"—with qualifications. We expect reasonable men will disagree with specific points in our argument, but we doubt their answer will be "no." To begin with, their parents, the original migrants to the city, found that fulfillment of their aspirations for themselves depended on labor-market conditions; for their children, it depended on educational and labor-market opportunities. As we have already cautioned, we have no way of drawing conclusions for the parents themselves, for the Negro population, for nonwhite Puerto Ricans as distinct from white Puerto Ricans, or for the years since 1960. But we can infer from our data that on the whole, these institutions have operated creditably during 1950-1960, at

least for the children of Puerto Rican migrants. From their impoverished beginnings, they moved into the ranks of those with high-school attainment and graduation. From there, the younger men began white-collar careers as clerks and salesmen and, to a much less extent, as professional and technical workers. We guess it was the lack of capital as well as of family and ethnic "connections" that hindered their advancement among managers and proprietors, or among craftsmen and foremen, but the older men partially overcame even this disadvantage, at least in the upper blue-collar occupations. Just as striking, the younger women began to shift from the blue-collar jobs of their older sisters to a white-collar world, a shift which we regard as an index of change in Puerto Rican cultural orientation toward the white-collar world and its style of life and monetary rewards. Finally our income data indicate that there has been some improvement in monetary rewards. Thus far, however, the second-generation Puerto Ricans in New York are still poor: for example, Table 7 shows that among Puerto Ricans aged 25-34, only 5.7 percent had incomes of at least \$6,000 per year as compared with 16.7 percent of the total population in the SMSA. Moreover, as we have noted, the group we have been discussing comprise only 2.4 percent of the New York's Puerto Ricans, and their advances do not change their parents' over-all poverty.

Résumé

Il est possible pour les immigrants d'améliorer leur condition si les institutions de la société qui les reçoit acceptent des changements d'ordre social et si la culture des immigrants favorise la mobilité sociale. L'auteur justifie son hypothèse par l'analyse des statistiques du recensement de la population fait en 1950 et en 1960 pour la métropole de New York en ce qui concerne les Porto Ricains.

En conclusion, on constate qu'à New York entre les années 1950-1960, les enfants des Porto Ricains, au moins, étaient en train de s'améliorer: ils furent éduqués dans les écoles secondaires; ils acquirent des emplois dans les bureaux et, quelque peu, des revenus plus élevés. Les parents porto ricains, cependant, ainsi bien que leurs enfants sont encore pauvres. Mais si l'expérience de la période de dix ans étudiés peut être la base d'une prédiction, la possibilité de réaliser une distribution de classes sociales semblable à celle d'autres groupes dans la ville est très réelle pour les migrants porto ricains de leur vivant et celui de leurs enfants.

Zusammenfassung

Sozialer Aufstieg ist für eine Einwanderergruppe möglich, wenn die Institutionen der einheimischen Gesellschaft sozialem Wandel gegenüber offen sind

19. Comparable statistics for Puerto Ricans living in the SMSA ring are lacking. But we judge that the total SMSA data, were it available, would change the Puerto Rican distribution only slightly.

und die Kultur der Immigranten zu sozialem Aufstieg anspornt. Der Author untersucht seine Annahme durch Analyse der "Census Statistics" von 1950 und 1960 für dar Stadtgebiet von New York soweit Puertorikaner in Frage kommen.

Die Schlussfolgerung lautet, dass zwischen 1950 und 1960 in New York wenigstens die Kinder der puertorikanischen Migranten einen sozialen Aufstieg erfuhr: sie erhielten einige High School — Erziehung, gewisse "White collar jobs" und in geringerem Masse höheres Einkommen. Puertorikanische Eltern sind jedoch immer noch arm und ebenso ihre Kinder. Wenn jedoch die Erfahrung des untersuchten Jahrzehnts eine Basis der Voraussage sein kann, so existiert eine tatsächliche Möglichkeit einer sozialen Klassenverteilung für die puertorikanischen Migranten ähnlich der anderer Gruppen in der Stadt in ihrer eigenen verbleibenden Lebensspanne und der ihrer Kinder.

Resumen

Es posible a un grupo inmigrante desarrollar movimiento ascendente si las instituciones de la sociedad que lo recibe son favorables al cambio social y si la cultura de los inmigrantes estimula la movilidad social. El autor comprueba este supuesto mediante el análisis de los datos estadísticos de los censos de 1950 y 1960 de la metrópoli neoyorquina con relación a los puertorriqueños.

La conclusión es que en Nueva York, entre 1950 y 1960, los hijos de los inmigrantes puertorriqueños muestran su movilidad ascendente en las siguientes consecuciones: educación, parcial o total de escuela secundaria; ciertos empleos de oficinas; y, en menor grado, mayores ingresos. Sin embargo, siguen pobres los padres puertorriqueños y sus hijos también. No obstante, si la experiencia del decenio estudiado puede servir de pronóstico, es muy real para los puertorriqueños la posibilidad de llegar a una distribución de clases semejante a la de otros grupos de la ciudad durante su vida y la de sus hijos.