

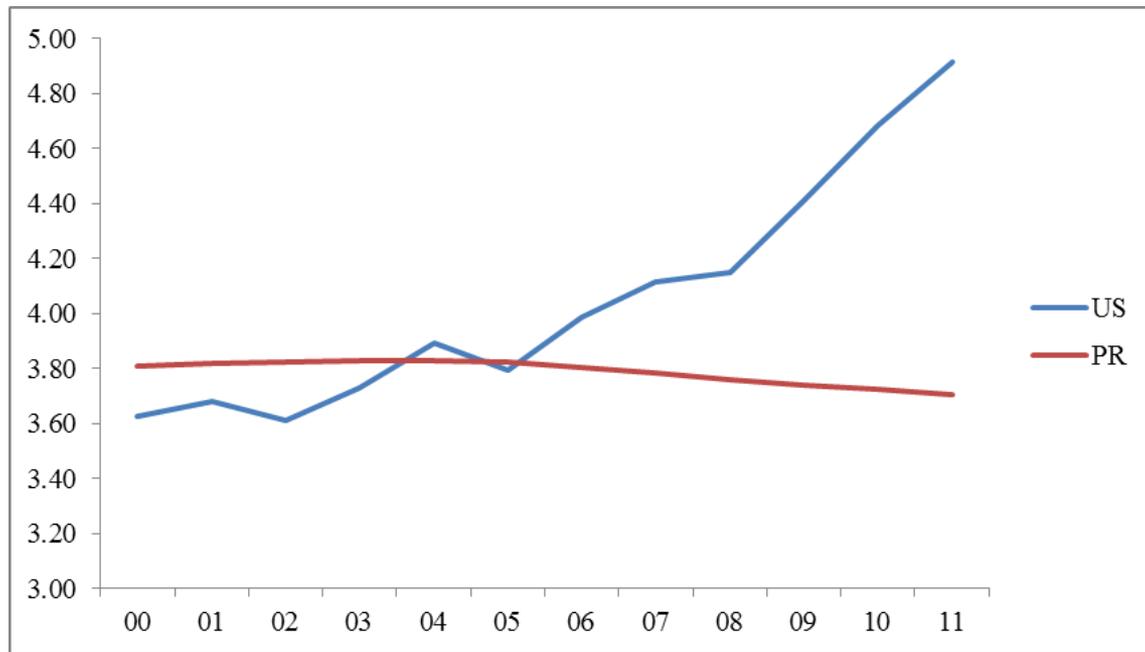
# Puerto Rican Migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Kurt Birson  
Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños  
Hunter College, CUNY

Conferencia de Estudios Poblacionales

# Puerto Rican Population Shifts Drastically in Decade

Figure 1. Population of Puerto Ricans in the United States and Puerto Rico (in millions)



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2000–2011 (1-year estimates) and 2010 Intercensal Estimates

# Methodology

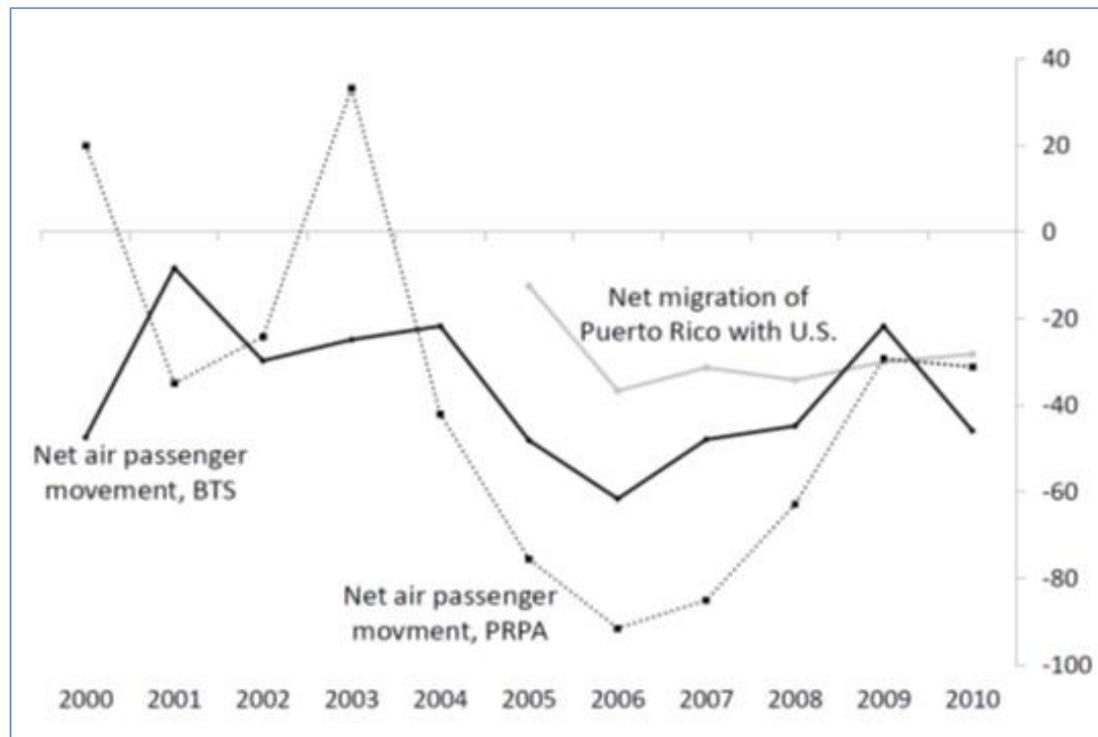
- ▶ American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community Survey, 2006–2011
- ▶ Averages for the 5-year period
- ▶ Relative percentages rather than levels to overcome discrepancies in total figures
- ▶ Compared characteristics of migrating cohort with respect to “sending” region.
  - Emigrants = Puerto Ricans leaving Puerto Rico
  - Immigrants = Puerto Ricans entering Puerto Rico

## Methodology (cont'd)

- ▶ Migrants are either *over-represented* or *under-represented* in a given area depending on their size relative to the non-migrant population

# Differing Measures of Migration

Figure 2. Migration from Puerto Rico as estimated by Planning Board, Port Authority, and U.S. Census Bureau ( in thousands)



Source: Marazzi-Santiago (2012)

# Emigrant Characteristics

- ▶ In general we found that compared to Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico, emigrants:
  - Are mostly younger (overrepresented)
  - Do not have better Educational attainment (neither).
  - Have a stronger attachment to the Labor Force (overrepresented).
  - Found work primarily in Natural Resources, Construction and Maintenance (overrepresented).

# Ages 35 and younger overrepresented in outflow

Table 1. Age and Sex of Puerto Rican emigrants (percent)

	Male	Female	Total	Total in PR	Total in US
>18	27.5	25.3	26.4	24.7	33.3
18-24	14.9	15.6	15.2	10.3	11.4
25-34	24.5	22.2	23.4	13.5	15.1
35-44	11.7	12.6	12.1	13.4	12.6
45-54	6.0	7.0	6.5	12.8	11.7
55-64	7.6	8.7	8.2	11.4	7.8
65+	7.8	8.5	8.2	14.0	7.2

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2011 (1-year estimates)

# Similar representation by level of education

Table 2. Educational attainment of Puerto Rican emigrants 25 years or older (percent)

	Male	Female	Total	25-34	35-44	45+	Total in PR	Total in US
Less than HS	31	26	29	18	19	44	32	27
High School	32	30	30	32	39	25	25	30
Some College	16	23	20	26	21	13	21	28
Bachelor's	14	16	15	18	16	13	16	11
Graduate	6	5	5	6	5	5	6	5

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2011 (1-year estimates)

# Strong overrepresentation in LFP, but high unemployment rate

Table 3. Employment status of Puerto Rican emigrants 16 years or older in the U.S, (percent)

	Male	Female	Total		Total in PR	Total in US
Labor Force Participation	63.6	48.4	55.9		46.8	62.5
Civilian Labor Force Participation	58.7	46.6	52.6		46.4	61.7
Employment Ratio	34.0	46.3	40.1		38.4	53.7
Unemployment Rate	21.9	28.0	24.6		17.3	12.2
Armed Forces	4.9	1.9	3.4		0.4	0.8
Not in Labor Force	36.4	51.6	44.1		53.2	37.5

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2006–2011 (1-year estimates)

# Strongly underrepresented in professions, but overrepresented in construction & maintenance

Table 4. Occupation of Puerto Rican emigrants 16 years or older in United States (percent)

	Male	Female	Total	25-34	35-44	45+		Total in PR	Total in US
Management, Business, Science, Arts	17	25	21	21	18	27		30	27
Services	18	23	20	22	23	21		20	22
Sales and Office	21	36	28	22	29	24		28	29
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	32	7	20	23	23	18		11	7
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	12	10	11	12	7	9		12	13

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2011 (1-year estimates)

# Immigrant Characteristics

- ▶ In general we found that compared to Puerto Ricans residing in the 50 United States, Puerto Ricans arriving on the Island were:
  - Slightly older
  - Slightly lower educational attainment
  - Were less attached to the labor force
  - Participated in more “blue collar” work

# Similar representation to those in US, but younger than those in Puerto Rico

Table 5. Age and Sex of Puerto Rican immigrants (percent)

	Male	Female	Total		Total in US	Total in PR
>18	31.8	29.7	30.8		33.3	24.7
18-24	11.8	11.4	11.6		11.4	10.3
25-34	14.5	18.4	16.3		15.1	13.5
35-44	15.2	11.3	13.4		12.6	13.4
45-54	11.7	9.8	10.8		11.7	12.8
55-64	8.1	9.8	8.9		7.8	11.4
65+	7.0	9.6	8.2		7.2	14.0

Source: US Census Bureau, PRCS 2006-2011 (1-year estimates)

# Immigrants overrepresented with some college, but also with less than HS

Table 6. Educational attainment of Puerto Rican immigrants 25 years or older (percent)

	Male	Female	Total		Total in US	Total in PR
Less than HS	33	31	32		27	32
High School	32	22	28		30	25
Some College	22	28	24		28	21
Bachelor's	8	12	10		11	16
Graduate	4	7	6		5	6

Source: US Census Bureau, PRCS 2006–2011 (1-year estimates)

# Immigrants had much weaker attachment to LF than Puerto Ricans in US, higher unemployment

Table 7. Employment status of Puerto Rican immigrants 16 years or older in the Puerto Rico (percent)

	Male	Female	Total		Total in US	Total in PR
Labor Force Participation	53.5	37.9	45.8		62.5	46.8
Civilian Labor Force Participation	53.1	37.9	45.6		61.7	46.4
Employment Ratio	26.9	21.6	24.3		53.7	38.4
Unemployment Rate	49.2	43.9	47.0		12.2	17.3
Armed Forces	0.4	0.0	0.2		0.8	0.4
Not in Labor Force	46.5	62.1	54.2		37.5	53.2

Source: US Census Bureau, PRCS 2006–2011 (1-year estimates)

# Returning migrants found work in “Blue Collar” industries

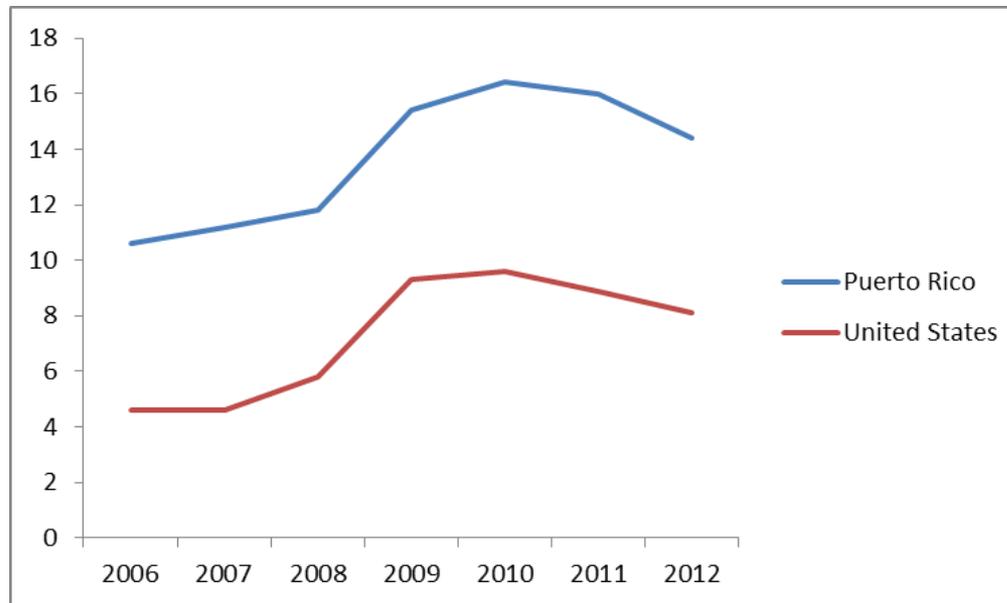
Table 8. Occupation of Puerto Rican immigrants 16 years or older in Puerto Rico (percent)

	Male	Female	Total		Total in US	Total in PR
Management, Business, Science, Arts	15	25	20		27	30
Services	24	26	25		22	20
Sales and Office	19	41	28		29	28
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	25	5	17		7	11
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	17	3	10		13	12

Source: US Census Bureau, PRCS 2006–2011 (1-year estimates)

# Unemployment trends in PR and US, impact of Great Recession

Figure 3. Unemployment in the United States and Puerto Rico (percent)

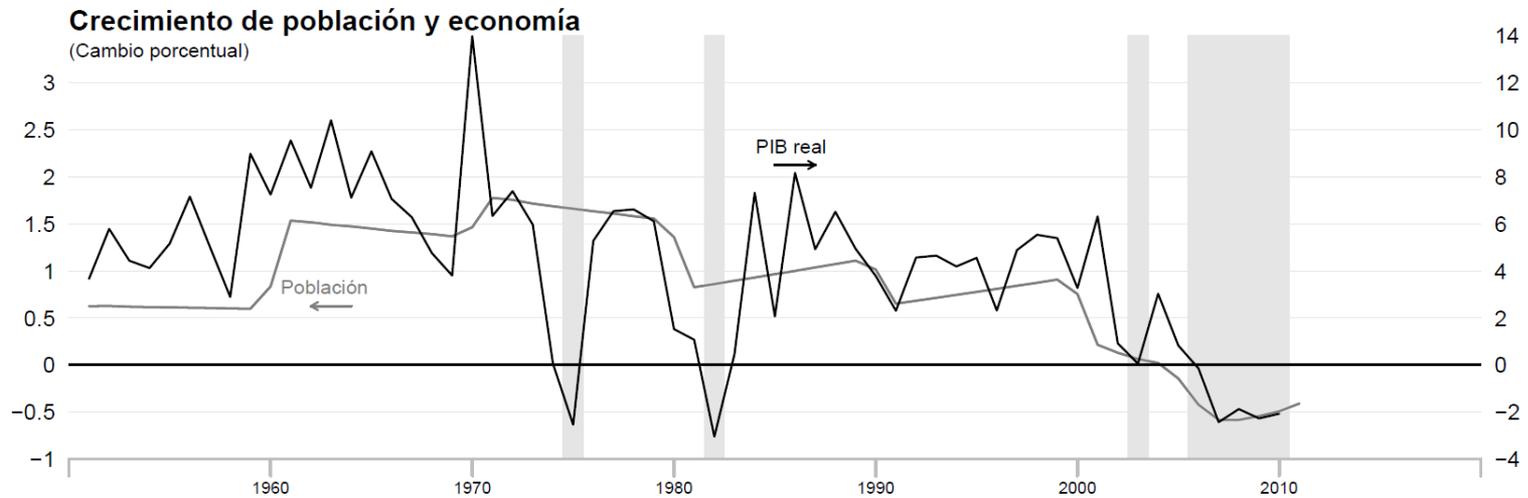


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

# Conclusions

- ▶ Brain Drain not evident – emigrants more likely “blue-collar” with representative levels of education
- ▶ Still, people are leaving in great numbers
  - Strained government resources
    - Layoffs, increased taxes
  - Constricts economic activity (see chart)
  - Loss of skilled/productive workers
  - Pension burdens spread over smaller base

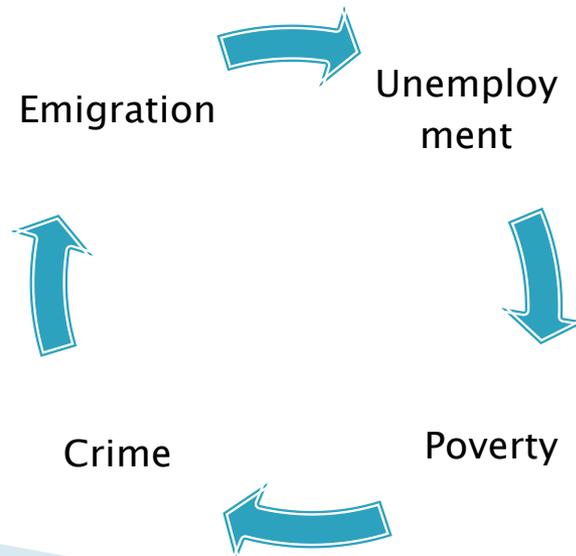
# IEPR Report: 25% of Loss in GDP From Emigration



Source: Instituto de Estadísticas de Puerto Rico (2012). "Población y Crecimiento Económico". *Progreso Económico*. Prepared for Banco Popular de Puerto Rico.

# Conclusions (cont'd)

- ▶ The increasing emigration should be a key concern for policy makers
  - Emigration is a self-feeding system; poor socio-economic conditions (unemployment, poverty, crime, lack of good jobs) drives emigration, which in turn feeds back into increasing unemployment, poverty, crime



## Conclusions (cont'd)

- ▶ Policy initiatives to promote domestic growth, stem tide of emigrating Puerto Ricans
- ▶ Increasing emigration is not a safety valve, but will undermine efforts to address economic concerns
  - Encourage greater LFP (just 46% in PR compared to 61.3% in US for 2011)
  - Improve collection of taxes
  - Develop higher skilled industries over tourism