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Puerto Ricans

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In the early 2000s, the PRTT continues to demonstrate its dedication to providing both small neighborhood communities and larger New York City theater audiences with cultural enrichment and authentic theatrical experiences. The programs have expanded to support further the interests of young theater practitioners. The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre boasts a history of accomplishments that includes appearances by actors like the legendary Raúl Juliá, original plays by playwrights like Lynnete Serrano-Bonabarte (*The Broken Arrow*) and Lynne Alvarez (*El guitarrón*), and the production of diverse epic plays like Luis Rafael Sánchez's *The Passion of Antígona Pérez*, Molière's *The Doctor in Spite of Himself*, and the hundred-year-old play *Un jíbaro* by Ramón Mendez Quiñones. The most heavily endowed Puerto Rican company among mainland theater groups, the PRTT has been funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund; the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Administration of New York City; the New York State Council for the Arts; and the National Endowment for the Arts, among other sponsors. Yet it is the company's dedication to creating a Puerto Rican theater as a permanent part of the professional U.S. theater world that renders it the most enduring Puerto Rican theater institution on the mainland.

See also Colón, Miriam and *Performing Arts and Theater*.

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JACQUELINE LAZÚ

PUERTO RICANS. Located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, Puerto Rico is the smallest and easternmost of the Greater Antilles, an archipelago that also includes Cuba and Hispaniola. In spite of the modest size of their homeland, Puerto Ricans have a significant historical and sociocultural presence in the United States. As a pioneer Latina and Latino community, Puerto Ricans have helped other Latina and Latino groups form a sense of belonging in the United States. Puerto Ricans have provided an example for *latinidad*, increasing Latina and Latino participation in mainstream culture.

But Puerto Rico's colonial past and current relationship with the United States also tend to marginalize it in national and international contexts. As a U.S. possession, Puerto Rico is not a sovereign nation with full autonomy. Yet Puerto Ricans in the United States cannot be characterized simply as immigrants to be incorporated into the nation's dominant structures and acculturated into mainstream sociocultural practices. They actually constitute a minoritized nationalist community whose situation in the United States and relation to other ethnoracial groups are analogous to those of indigenous peoples, another culturally distinctive constituency incorporated into the nation's structures through conquest and colonialism. Their history is marked by violated sovereignty and curtailed autonomy, imperfect integration, unsolicited intervention, and a sense of sociocultural uniqueness. Whether Puerto Ricans' cultural nationalism is cause or effect of their history is a subject open to debate. But it certainly affects their current ambiguous position within the United States and among other Latina and Latino groups in the politics of identity that characterize ethnoracial relations in the United States.

Early Settlers

On November 19, 1493, Christopher Columbus landed in Boriquén, "land of the brave lord," renaming it San Juan Bautista. The Spanish would call the main settlement on the island "Puerto Rico" (rich port) because of its excellent harbor; subsequently, the island became Puerto Rico and the settlement, now its capital, San Juan. Columbus found a watchtower by the sea and a village of well-built dwellings nearby, but no inhabitants. After their two-day stay, the Spanish did not return to Boriquén until 1508 when, ceremoniously received by the Taíno Cacique Agueybaná, Ponce de León arrived to become its first colonial governor.

Taínos include a group of indigenous societies of the Bahamas, the Greater Antilles, and parts of the Virgin Islands that represented the highest stage of cultural development in the Caribbean. Whether these communities—generally depicted as backward and undeveloped—were actually related to reputedly more advanced groups,

the Aztecs and the Mayas, usually characterized as “civilizations,” has been debated. Theorists now lean toward a merger origin theory based on archaeological evidence and sociocultural comparisons documenting commonalities between Caribbean and Mesoamerican societies.

Historical sources document both divergent social and political structures and similar cultural traits, as well as contact, active trade, and mutual consciousness among the groups. The historical record on Taíno culture began with Father Ramón Pané’s 1505 *Relación sobre las antigüedades de los indios* (*Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*), the first proto-anthropological study on American indigenous peoples. Pané, a Catalanian priest, arrived in 1497 to learn indigenous languages and customs. Though his account was based on Hispaniola Taínos, later Spanish chroniclers (Fernández de Oviedo and Bartolomé de las Casas) confirm that there was little discernible difference between them and Puerto Rican Taínos.

The Taínos were agrarian, polytheistic, matrilineal, and polygamous. In 1493 there were some twenty villages in Boriquén—each ruled by a *cacique*, an autonomous chief—that banded together in a loose confederation for defense and ceremonial purposes. Taínos were animistic, with a complex creation story involving the male deity Yucahú, the female deity Guabancex, and Juracán (a principle of destruction embodied in the hurricane). Yucahú issued from Guabancex; the two then coupled to generate all of creation. Taíno mythology thus emphasized female fertility and productivity, making Guabancex the primordial creative source. At least one historian, Stan Steiner, traces the roots of Puerto Rican gender roles to the importance of female authority in Taíno culture.

Taíno culture was obviously antithetical to European societies. They received the Spanish with civility but were quickly farmed out in *encomiendas*, a system of indentured labor devised by the Spanish rulers for mining and cultivation. This system affected their health, generated hostility, and eventually produced a series of native uprisings against the invaders. Puerto Rico’s Taíno population, estimated as high as thirty thousand when the Spanish invaded, had been reduced to some two thousand by the mid-sixteenth century through exploitative labor, disease, wars, and emigration. Many fled into the highlands or intermarried, initiating the racial mix that would characterize Puerto Ricans as well as its *jibaro* (peasant) mountain culture.

The 1582 *Memoria de Melgarejo*, a report on Puerto Rico’s conditions requested by Spain’s King Philip II, claims only “twelve or fifteen” natives, whom it depicts as largely Christianized. Given Taíno mobility and the Spanish inability to distinguish among them, these population counts are not fully reliable. Taínos continued to appear in the royal census until 1802, when they were subsumed with the free *pardos* (browns), mixed people of color.

Incipient National Identities

Taínos occupy a complex place in Puerto Rico’s subsequent history and sociocultural processes as an essentialized component of national identity claimed both in official ideology and through folk consciousness. Critics contend that this appropriation of indigenous culture, given the historical circumstances, is a racializing strategy to minimize the African elements that much more strongly inform Puerto Rican culture. The debate is currently compounded by a revival of Taíno identity, claims partially based on the alleged survival of Taíno highland communities and on anthropological research documenting the widespread presence of Taíno genetic traits in the current population. The emergence of indigenous movements elsewhere in the world, and the alleged appreciation of cultural differences in the United States, have contributed to this revival.

Spanish colonizers implemented their economic agenda upon the shoulders of a dwindling indigenous population. When Ponce de León established Caparra, the first settlement, he triggered a process of colonization that, by the first half of the sixteenth century, was already affected by decreasing gold production and the active resistance of indigenous labor. By the 1530s, settlements had sprouted around the island, and Caparra had been relocated to Puerto Rico (San Juan), a healthier, drier location with a superior bay, a potentially excellent port. Puerto Rico would prove a strategic vantage point for defending the Caribbean basin and the underbelly of the North American continent, making it a prized possession for both Spain and the United States as well as a recurrent target for other European powers.

With the waning of the local gold rush, the Spanish Crown began to develop an alternative economic infrastructure based on agriculture—an incipient plantation economy—through royal concessions of generous land grants. Settlers soon came to believe that their survival hinged upon slave recruitment, a claim they aggressively relayed to the crown. But other colonial regions were more attractive to gold seekers and Puerto Rico sank into centuries of neglect. Its saving grace remained its excellent location at the apex of the Caribbean arc, making it an ideal fortified military outpost and a station for the *situado*, the Spanish treasury ships toiling between Europe and the colonies. However, neglect did not mean lack of development. The foundation for idiosyncratic organizational forms, interactional modes, and shared practices that would, eventually, produce a sense of national identity was being laid. The introduction of slavery, much debated by the Spanish Church, inserted yet another category of inhabitant of color besides Taínos and the free blacks who were already part of the population. Africans were not a foreign element in Spain. Slaves and

free people of color were so numerous there that by 1475 the king had to appoint a judge of African descent to deal with conflict among them. The first black person in Puerto Rico, Juan Garrido, arrived with Ponce de León. He was classified as a free *ladino*, a Christianized person of African descent, whether slave or free. Another *ladino* on the island at the time was Pedro Mejía, who married the *cacica* Yuisa (Luisa).

At first, Spanish policy was that only *ladino* slaves could be imported, on the assumption that Christianized Africans would be less likely to revolt. The crown eventually had no choice but to admit the trade of *bozales*, slaves brought directly from Africa. The first slaves may have arrived by 1513; by mid-century, between free blacks, slaves, *pardos*, *Taínos*, and combinations thereof, the population of color outnumbered Spaniards.

The number of slaves imported to Puerto Rico was never as high as in other Caribbean colonies. Its settlers lacked investment capital to buy slaves, and the trade subsisted through royal permits and subsidies. Slavery did not peak until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but even then never reached the levels seen in other Caribbean locations.

Cimarrones were runaway slaves, either local or from other Caribbean islands, who were allowed to settle in Puerto Rico as long as they converted to Catholicism and swore allegiance to the Spanish monarchy. Their numbers further increased the black population. *Cimarrones* settled in areas near San Juan, Loiza, Cangrejos, and Hato Rey, most of which are still perceived as predominantly African communities. Spain's relative leniency toward other people's *cimarrones* was calculated self-interest since, during the seventeenth century, settlers were quickly emigrating from Puerto Rico to other colonies because of the lack of economic opportunities on the island. The need for settlers, intermarriage, the relative laxity of institutional enforcement, comparatively high possibilities for manumission, and poverty produced a large free population of color by the eighteenth century. Along with the relatively smaller number of slaves, they remained the majority on the island.

Thus the African presence in Puerto Rico is not exclusively the result of slavery, as in other plantation economies. The fact that Africans arrived in various circumstances led to the formation of several social levels: slaves, an upper *criollo* (mixed-race) class, and free "coloreds" in between. Puerto Rican nationalism homogenized and incorporated the African element as an essentialized component of national character in an assumed spirit of egalitarianism. But homogenizing masks the different historical experiences of a colored population, bifurcated into slave and free, and those of hegemonic European colonials and white *criollos*. It also minimizes the significant influence that Africans

have had on Puerto Rican cultural forms and expressions. Puerto Rican intellectual José Luis González (1983) has argued that the African element in Puerto Rican history and society is the most definitive of the three national identity groups—*Taíno*, African, and Spanish. *Taíno* elements in Puerto Rican culture, he maintains, are somewhat attenuated, not just because of subjugation and extermination, but because structural conditions brought African and *Taíno* together as their low position required them to interact more with each other than either did with Spanish and European colonizers, or, eventually, with *criollo* land-owning and merchant classes. A pervasive Hispanophilia, exacerbated by the U.S. conquest, relegated both African and *Taíno* elements as minor "survivals" within the realm of "folk," "low," or "popular" culture while characterizing "high" cultural forms and expressions (arguably rooted in Spain and Europe)—literature, classical music, art—as the "real" essence and genius of Puerto Rican identity. What actually emerged from this history of amalgamation that is, paradoxically, both spurned and exalted, is a Puerto Rican society that is intensely creolized, shaped by the structuring principles of race and class as well as their conflation and contestation.

The Neglectful Centuries

Between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, Puerto Ricans struggled to survive imperial neglect. The island was mostly a military garrison and relay port supported by regular infusions of *situado* money. But *situado* ships could sink, be delayed, or be captured by other European powers or pirates, making them a most unreliable subsidy. Contemporary censuses document a steep decline in population and meager economic development. Land ownership rested in the crown and landholding could be vested solely through royal grace until the eighteenth century, when private land ownership was allowed.

Administered by Spanish bureaucrats and the Catholic Church, Puerto Rico was organized into two major *partidos* (townships), San Juan and San Germán. The Spanish bureaucrats mainly concerned themselves with military matters while the church took on both religious and secular instruction. Though dotted with settlements, the rest of the island was still relatively unsettled; distance and underdevelopment hampered governmental and ecclesiastical regulation of communal life. Contemporary depictions show a people who have been very much left to fend for themselves, most subsisting on the productivity of the soil. Having few institutional resources to draw upon, traditions of self-help, mutual reliance, patronage, and familial networks of support emerged. Outsiders considered these interactions "primitive," regarding Puerto Rico as a place where interpersonal relations were loose and immoral. A countering discourse, though, also characterized island life

in paradisiacal terms. The lack of institutional support and regulation resulted in more flexible gender roles among the poor. In particular, lower-class women enjoyed greater authority than did their upper-class counterparts.

The situado's uncertainty and Spain's restrictive trade policies generated widespread piracy and contraband. Puerto Ricans survived through illegal trade with other European powers and colonies, including the English (and what later became the United States), by exchanging sugar, molasses, ginger, and hides for basic food staples.

But contraband profited only a few landholders, producers, and government officials who had no qualms about combining official authority and illegal activity. The bulk of the population remained poor and resourceless. Puerto Rico at the time was, in modern terms, a nation without an infrastructure, suffering from ineffective secular and religious governance as well as uneven economic growth, yet surviving through local subsistence strategies. Its situation was compounded by a parallel decline in Spanish power:

The Enlightenment and Imperial Recovery

Resolved to restore power and inspired by Enlightenment principles of benign despotism, King Carlos III (reigned 1759–1788) launched major policy initiatives. Fostering economic development would enhance Spain's hold on its colonies. Puerto Rico had high strategic value and a key military role. Development would increase its ability to pay for itself and render it profitable.

The king strengthened Puerto Rico's defenses, mainly the massive fortifications surrounding San Juan, under construction since the late sixteenth century. New tax laws fostered agricultural production, especially in valuable export crops such as sugar and coffee. To curtail contraband and trade with other European powers, restrictive trade laws were eliminated.

Yet conditions on the island improved only slowly, leading the king to commission Field Marshal Alejandro O'Reilly in 1765 to investigate and report on Puerto Rico's situation. O'Reilly's report, a valuable contemporary record, recommended expanding the reforms already in place and fostering immigration. This policy produced a 300 percent growth in population by the end of the eighteenth century, from 44,883 to 155,000, that generated new towns and settlements. The reform of Puerto Rico's system of land tenure, initiating private ownership, contributed equally to expanding agricultural production and trade beyond the subsistence level. The new royal policies thus fostered capitalization, population growth, urbanization, and productivity. They pointed Puerto Rico toward a modern economic system, encouraged a cultural identity, and laid the foundation for the development of a modest middle class over the course of the nineteenth century.

By the late eighteenth century, Puerto Ricans had developed a definite creole identity. In his encyclopedic 1782 portrait of Puerto Rico and its people, *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*, Abbad y Lasierra described how Puerto Rican criollos distinguished themselves from *hombres de la otra banda* (men from the other side), the Spanish and other Europeans among them who were viewed as transient colonial administrators, clergy, military personnel, or exploiters. Puerto Ricans thus participated in contemporary trends that would eventually culminate in modern nationalism.

Nineteenth-Century Colonialism, Nationalism, and Modernity

Subsequent developments, particularly revolutions in Europe and America, impinged on Spain's reforms. Haitian independence stimulated the sugar industry in both Cuba and Puerto Rico as well as the immigration of French planters, while exacerbating colonial suspicions towards people of color. The French Revolution challenged monarchical rule. Spain's embroilment in continental alliances during the Napoleonic era weakened it to the point that it eventually became a French satellite. Given these political and economic crises, Spain allowed Puerto Ricans to trade with neutral powers, largely benefiting the new nation, the United States, which gained a foothold in the Caribbean as a commercial partner. Though Spain later declared this trade illegal, in 1804 it legalized it again in order to tax it for profit. By 1898, the United States had become one of Puerto Rico's most important trading partners.

The crises also facilitated independence movements and wars of liberation in most Spanish American colonies. In spite of their burgeoning sense of difference, though, Puerto Rico's criollo elites retained a sense of alliance with Spain and were reluctant to mobilize the racially mixed masses. An influx of Spanish and French loyalists fleeing revolution (and the Louisiana Purchase) bolstered local conservatism. Spain supported loyalist immigration and reassigned royal troops defeated in mainland colonies to garrison Puerto Rico and "protect" it from upheaval. Though revolutionary leaders had envisioned a united Spanish America and supported independence for all Spanish colonies, the United States, reasserting expansionist interests, threatened to withhold its support if Latin liberators extended their efforts to Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Liberal forces in Spain succeeded in reconstituting the Cortes, its traditional parliament, to establish a constitutional monarchy. In 1809, Puerto Rican criollos participated in the island's first election, choosing as their representative to the Cortes Ramón Power y Giralt, who argued for greater power for Puerto Ricans. Spain's 1812 constitution declared all colonies Spanish provinces,

guaranteed their right to parliamentary representation, and restrained the power of provincial administrators.

This liberal moment was short-lived, however, and absolutism returned the following year. But it set the tone for Spain's subsequent colonial management. Throughout the nineteenth century, Spain would waver between absolutism and liberalism. During liberal periods, Cuba and Puerto Rico, its remaining American colonies, would be granted civil liberties that would then be abrogated with the return to conservatism and repression. With increased political consciousness and desire for democracy, Puerto Rican criollos began to clamor for either autonomy and independence or incorporation on an equal basis with Spain's provinces.

Independence efforts culminated in the 1868 armed rebellion, the Grito de Lares. Infiltrated by a Spanish loyalist, it was suppressed after several days of fighting. Some of its leaders were executed, others reprieved, and those who were exiled continued their struggle from Europe, Latin America, and New York City. Pro-independence conspiracies persisted throughout the century, even under close surveillance and harsh repression. Multiple pro-independence efforts were engineered by noted Puerto Rican abolitionists and progressivists.

The drive toward independence contributed to a Puerto Rican presence in the United States. Pursuing economic relations forged since colonial times, Caribbean expansion was official U.S. policy by 1801. Since Spain had sanctioned trade with the United States, by the 1830s Puerto Rico's (and Cuba's) commercial relations with the United States were so extensive that their merchants had established a *Sociedad Benéfica Cubana y Puertorriqueña* (Cuban and Puerto Rican Benevolent Society) in New York City.

Puerto Rican activists, exiled as subversives, settled in New York City, founding the first of many Puerto Rican communities on the mainland. They established an organizational base to work against Spanish rule, often acting jointly with Cuban exiles equally struggling for sovereignty. These early Puerto Rican immigrants developed local political and communal associations, pioneering in the eastern United States the historic and sociocultural bases for *Latinismo*—the assertion of a Latino identity based on shared linguistic, historical, and sociocultural characteristics. This sense of identity would later spread throughout the United States.

In spite of a checkered political history, or perhaps because of it, Puerto Rico's economy began to thrive with expanding trade opportunities and a diversifying population. Loyalists benefited from incentives granted in royal *cédulas de gracias*, such as tax benefits and generous slave allowances, with a consequent rise in the slave population. Chinese labor was briefly introduced in the nine-

teenth century. Immigrants came from Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque provinces, Galicia, and the Canary Islands, all distinctive Spanish cultural regions, as well as from Corsica, France, Germany, Lebanon, Scotland, Italy, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United States.

In spite of these economic developments, the number of slaves in Puerto Rico remained relatively low. Slave labor was supplemented by *agregados*, sharecroppers, or squatters. In 1837, *agregados* were ordered to attach themselves to a plantation, a labor assignment that was inscribed in municipal records. This led to the 1849 *libreta* (notebook) system, requiring workers to carry a notebook as the public record where plantation authorities recorded their labor. A lost *libreta* entailed uncompensated forced labor; repeat offenses brought six months' imprisonment. Workers were not allowed to change their assigned plantation, especially if they were indebted to its owner, which happened frequently. Because they had no time to tend to their own crops, *agregados* would have to take a larger share of the hacienda produce to feed their own families, thus incurring debt to the landowner.

Sociologist Angel Quintero Alfaro (1977) argues that rather than a cure for vagrancy or a rational economic instrument, the *libreta* system was structurally feudal, binding laborers to land, a specific hacienda, and its owner. This system, by which technically free *agregados* worked alongside slaves, blurred the distinction between the two and produced a distinctive working class in Puerto Rico, incorporating both force and paternalism. Slavery and forced labor were so intertwined in Puerto Rico that the abolition of both was a major issue in the Grito de Lares.

The forced labor system had been eradicated by 1873, when slavery was abolished. Yet the law required that new *libertos* (emancipated people) reside on their former plantations, so that the workers were still bound to the land. This reinforced the reproduction of patron-client relations for generations, perpetuating a paternalistic interactional style among stratified classes. The power that the *hacendado* and merchant classes enjoyed throughout the nineteenth century lingered in the twentieth, and would lead politician Luis Muñoz Marín and his party to political success during their early socialist phase when they challenged local hegemonies by mobilizing rural workers.

By the late nineteenth century, Puerto Rico had developed a relatively prosperous economic base as an agricultural producer and exporter. Though its sugar production never gained the competitive edge that other Caribbean islands enjoyed, it was still a significant economic mainstay. Coffee was the major crop on the island, providing a world-class product for Spain, Europe, and Cuba. Tobacco was significant only locally; it never received the government credits and incentives that the other two crops did. Plantains, rice, maize, root vegetables, citrus,

and other minor crops made Puerto Rico self-sufficient in food production.

The hacendado class was dominant. Its increasing wealth and economic stability transformed small farmers into *medianeros*, who worked part time in haciendas for goods or services. This hacienda culture was characterized by self-sufficiency and communality by drawing together multiple classes—the hacendado family, former slaves, *agregados*, and *medianeros*. It allowed the hacendados to exploit the other classes but also made the hacendados dependent on their workers.

Agricultural development produced an influx of capital as Puerto Rico was drawn into world commerce and industrialization. Export trade enhanced the social status and wealth of landowners who had capital to invest in land and technology. Expanded business and government activity fostered the growth of towns that became service and distribution points for haciendas.

Urban development encouraged labor differentiation and diversified social structures, producing an emergent middle class of administrators, merchants, financiers, artisans, professionals, paraprofessionals, and service providers. The rich upper classes developed cosmopolitan tastes, enjoying leisure activities, the arts, travel, domestic help, and study abroad. These processes encouraged the development of individualism, materialism, and new forms of interpersonal relations. But the urban, and particularly the rural, working class remained poor, exploited, and undereducated.

The nineteenth century also saw the birth of artistic production that was recognizably Puerto Rican. Literary efforts include a collection of prose and poetry by young Puerto Rican writers, the *Aguinaldo puertorriqueño* (1843), and Manuel A. Alonso's *El gíbaro* (1849). Educated criollos drew upon rural life to produce these works. Intellectuals such as Alejandro Tapia y Rivera and Salvador Brau began to write local histories. José Campeche, a major colonial portraitist, worked in the eighteenth century; the nineteenth century produced Impressionist Francisco Oller. Eugenio María de Hostos, a progressive scholar and politician, ranks with major figures of the emerging social sciences such as Émile Durkheim. Institutions such as the Ateneo Puertorriqueño and the Colegio de Abogados, Puerto Rico's bar association, were founded. An educational system based on European models emerged, supplementing ecclesiastical instruction, with the aim of achieving universal literacy.

Consonant with this burgeoning modernity, local intellectuals and politicians escalated their claims for greater autonomy. In the 1860s and 1870s, Spain underwent a period of republicanism that brought Puerto Ricans freedom of the press and of petition, and the right to organize political parties. Liberalism gained strength in the 1880s,

but in spite of Spain's political changes, it was often outlawed and, in 1887, brutally repressed. Local political efforts were complicated by Cuba's open armed rebellions and the rapid alternation of republican and monarchical forms of government in Spain. Eventually the Autonomist Party, headed by journalist and politician Luis Muñoz Rivera, negotiated the Autonomous Charter from Spain's Liberal Party. Muñoz Rivera would be Puerto Rico's leading autonomist under both Spain and the United States.

Granted in 1897, the charter recognized Puerto Rico's right to internal self-government and established an elected bicameral parliament, an executive cabinet, proportional representation in the Cortes, and an appointed governor-general representing the Spanish monarch. It gave Puerto Ricans greater powers than they have ever enjoyed under U.S. colonialism, including the right to participate in commercial negotiations with Spain and other countries, ratify or reject pertinent commercial treaties, and control trade tariffs and customs duties. The charter could be amended only upon petition by the Puerto Rican government. The first autonomous government was constituted by April 1898. But its accession was postponed and parliament barely managed to meet once because the United States declared war against Spain and invaded Puerto Rico.

The War of 1898

In 1895, Cuban patriots unleashed a full-fledged war against Spain under a joint revolutionary agenda that called for Cuba's liberation before Puerto Rico's. The United States, though, saw in it the means to fulfill expansionist ambitions. The press, business groups, and politicians mobilized to advocate for involvement. The 1898 sinking of the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor provided a convenient rationale for intervention.

The War of 1898 thus represented the culmination of long-standing political, ideological, and economic ties and interests, as the instantiation of a Caribbean agenda consonant with such ideological statements as the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny. Although the ostensible focus was Cuba, Puerto Rico figured prominently from the outset as a major military target and political goal for gaining control over the Caribbean. The U.S. Navy attacked El Morro Fort on May 12, 1898, killing four civilians and two military officers and wounding fifty others, including sixteen civilians.

While the new Puerto Rican parliament was having its inaugural meeting on July 17, 1898, Spanish forces in Santiago de Cuba were surrendering, bringing about a ceasefire. The United States hurriedly invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, through the small southwestern town of Guánica. U.S. military forces proceeded to Ponce, the island's second largest city, engaging Spanish militia

in a series of skirmishes, then on to Coamo and Aibonito and the most serious fighting of the campaign. Casualties amounted to six dead and thirty to forty wounded Spanish soldiers, and six wounded Americans. Since it was held by relatively small Spanish garrisons and its people were receptive, U.S. forces rapidly controlled the island. Puerto Ricans assumed that this invader would fully support anticolonial democratic principles and acknowledge Puerto Rican sovereignty. Instead, they got two years of military rule.

Constituting the Colony

The 1898 Treaty of Paris that ended the war did not establish Puerto Rico's territorial status and terms of incorporation into the United States. In 1900 the Foraker Act created the island's first civilian government by reaffirming its colonial character. Unlike under Spain's Autonomous Charter, Puerto Ricans received neither voting rights in Congress nor U.S. citizenship, neither would they enjoy the protection of the U.S. Constitution, not even its Bill of Rights. The U.S. president gained full power of appointment over the office of governor, the local Supreme Court, and the key executive departments of Education, Treasury, and Justice. The United States retained full governing power and authority over the island.

Other "territorial" peoples fared otherwise. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the 1848 United States–Mexican War granted Mexicans constitutional protections and citizenship; native Hawaiians, annexed in 1898, gained citizenship in 1900. Puerto Rico was declared an "unincorporated" territory, a determination that guaranteed the continuation of local separatist movements and of old disagreements between people favoring independence and those seeking statehood. Political parties represented different forms of relationship or "status formulas": independence, statehood, and the enhancement of commonwealth status through greater local control over national matters.

Rather than acknowledge its colonialism, the U.S. Congress equivocated. Although the 1917 Jones Act conferred U.S. citizenship on Puerto Ricans, the colonial relationship was neither redefined nor terminated, and the U.S. government retained full control. The Jones Act expressly established Puerto Rico's continuing status as an "unincorporated" territory. Between 1901 and 1922 the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed this in a series of decisions collectively known as the Insular Cases, in which the court debated whether or not the constitution "followed the flag" into any territory and applied *ex proprio vigore* (automatically, of its own force).

As Puerto Ricans continued to seek resolution of the status issue, they found such congressional and judicial pronouncements and actions undemocratic and cynical.

The granting of citizenship was popularly perceived as a strategy for subjecting the island's youth to military draft in anticipation of World War I by a government that Puerto Ricans had neither elected nor participated in—a situation that prevails in the early twenty-first century.

Colonial Hegemony

U.S. colonial power was not expressed solely in legislation and jurisprudence, but permeated everyday domains. U.S. officials thought themselves engaged in a benign "modernizing" project to correct a society that they considered backward, underdeveloped, and uncivilized. Puerto Ricans were regarded in racial terms as a hybrid of centuries of intermarriage between Europeans and non-Europeans. On their part, Puerto Ricans began to view these efforts at "modernization" as "Americanization," a subjugating agenda that caused cultural erosion, curtailed their autonomy, and denied their modernity. Puerto Rican society was far more complex and mature than the United States seemed willing to recognize.

Puerto Rico's colonial relationship with the United States was sustained through exploitative capitalist practices. The U.S. government fostered and facilitated economic control by absentee mainland corporations with the support of local landowning and merchant elites. The expansion of agribusiness in the cultivation of a single crop, sugar cane, eroded the island's economic diversity and autonomy, greatly impoverishing it. The working class became proletarianized as wage laborers within an industrialized agricultural economy, and the middle class found its economic stability affected by colonial financial policies. Representing the island as both overpopulated and poor in natural resources, the United States encouraged the export of Puerto Rican workers as cheap, unskilled labor to the United States (Hawaii, California, Arizona) and other countries. Eventually Puerto Rican communities were found in every state of the union.

Migration to the United States, encouraged by colonial officials as an economic safety valve, accelerated at the turn of the twentieth century. Certain areas of New York City, in particular, became centers of Puerto Rican immigration: Manhattan's East Harlem, Lower East Side, Upper West Side, Chelsea, and Hell's Kitchen, as well as Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue and the South Bronx. The racism and discrimination that these diasporic communities encountered led to a stronger sense of Puerto Rican identity. Puerto Ricans were an early example of a globalized labor force, working for the benefit of the United States.

Additional "Americanization" efforts on the island targeted other significant sociocultural domains. The implementation of an educational system modeled after that of the United States entailed, most importantly, the imposition of English-only education. Pro-U.S. Puerto Rican

elites were appointed to key government positions. Anglo American common-law principles and practices were incorporated into the island's legal system. Restrictive tariffs and shipping laws prevented the island from competing in world markets and promoted the consumption of U.S. goods. The introduction of U.S. currency by the military government in 1899 devalued the local peso and ruined many middle- and working-class families, making migration to the United States more attractive economically.

Puerto Rican resistance to colonial dependency surged early in the twentieth century. In the 1920s, Pedro Albizu Campos founded the pro-independence Partido Nacionalista (Nationalist Party), historically one of the most militant expressions of Puerto Rican opposition. The 1930s were particularly turbulent. Police slaughtered five Nationalists during a 1935 university strike; two Nationalists countered by assassinating the chief of police and were beaten to death in police custody. In 1937, the U.S. government dealt with the situation by sentencing Albizu Campos to ten years in a federal prison for sedition. To protest persecution, colonialism, and Americanization, Nationalists organized a demonstration in Ponce where participants and bystanders were killed when a police officer fired into the orderly gathering. The 1937 Ponce Massacre remains a significant historical, ideological, and psychological benchmark of colonial brutality.

Other political parties of the period supported statehood and independence. Yet party boundaries were ideologically fluid because of the complexity of the colonial situation. Pragmatic alliances brought together pro-independence and pro-statehood advocates into coalitions such as the Partido La Alianza (Alliance Party) that emerged in the late 1920s and subsisted throughout the 1930s. All parties agreed that the United States, far from recognizing itself as an oppressive colonizer and exploiter, saw its policies as rational measures for magnanimously improving a backward society.

Commonwealth Status

In 1938 Luis Muñoz Marín, Muñoz Rivera's son, founded the Partido Popular Democrático (Popular Democratic Party, PPD), arguably Puerto Rico's most significant contemporary political development. Initially a socialist reformer, Muñoz Marín espoused independence and an agenda of structural change. His charismatic cultivation of the jíbaro vote produced electoral success. By the mid-1940s, Muñoz Marín had achieved local governmental control and initiated socioeconomic reforms addressing the island's extreme poverty. But Congress thwarted his attempts to resolve Puerto Rico's colonial status.

Persuaded that outright independence would be impossible, the Estado Libre Asociado (Free Associated State), or "commonwealth," became Muñoz Marín's strategy for

gaining autonomy after World War II. Commonwealth status reaffirmed Puerto Rico's right to enjoy a degree of self-government, to elect its governor, and to control local affairs. Subject to congressional approval, it also provided for the enactment of a local constitution. Yet the commonwealth's continued colonial status became obvious when Congress struck a number of dispositions from its Bill of Rights after Puerto Rico's Constituent Assembly had approved it. The objectionable sections—mandating universal public education and health services—were deemed too radical, even "communist," in an increasingly conservative United States.

Puerto Ricans approved their new constitution and status in 1952. The United Nations, controlled by the United States, dropped Puerto Rico from its list of colonies; officially, the international community would neither overtly support decolonization nor regard the United States as a colonial power. Not until the 1970s, with the emergence of decolonized Third World and unaligned nations that produced subtle power shifts in the organization, was the Puerto Rican case debated in the United Nations.

Led by an aging Albizu Campos, the Nationalist Party launched the Nationalist Insurrection of 1950, taking over several island towns, attacking the governor's palace in San Juan, and attempting to assassinate the U.S. president, Harry Truman. The subsequent incarceration and repression of Nationalists and other pro-independence leaders had been foreshadowed by local legislation, the Ley de la Mordaza (gag law) curtailing freedom of speech and the use of media for pro-independence advocacy.

Industrialization programs, embodied in Operation Bootstrap, the commonwealth's master developmental plan, accompanied the new commonwealth status. Puerto Rico's cheap but skilled labor force and tax incentives invited its exploitation by U.S. corporations and encouraged economic dependence on outside industrial investments. This economic reorganization also brought about a series of infrastructure changes leading to greater urbanization. An enhanced public educational system, vocational training, and mass higher education were geared toward the production of an educated, skilled labor force and an expanded middle class. Public medical services reduced mortality and increased life expectancy. The construction of an island-wide network of highways and expressways despoiled the environment.

These changes also contributed to the so-called "great migration," as the government encouraged Puerto Ricans to flee the island and seek economic opportunity in the United States. This process conveniently provided cheap industrial and agricultural labor for the U.S. economy while easing the Puerto Rican government's accountability toward its citizens. Though the migrants remained concentrated in the Northeast, mostly in urban areas, the pattern

of labor migration for agricultural work increased the Puerto Rican presence in rural areas. Puerto Ricans acquired critical political mass through expanding communities in Boston, Philadelphia, Hartford, Newark, Cleveland, Tampa, Miami, and Los Angeles. Chicago's substantial Puerto Rican community, though more recent, rivals New York's in stability, spirit, and activism. Radical organizations such as the Young Lords and the Frente Armado de Liberación Nacional (National Armed Liberation Front) originated there in the 1960s and 1970s.

Puerto Rico became a developmental model for newly decolonized nations in the 1960s, having by then reached the highest standard of living in Latin America. But it paid excessive costs: social dislocation, a reduced economic importance for agriculture, increasing income inequalities, consumerism, environmental erosion, corporate penetration, excessive urban sprawl, brain drain, and ever more subtle forms of economic and political dependence. U.S. industrialists fled to cheaper labor markets when their ten-year tax exemptions ended. Progressive labor legislation and educational reform produced a protected, well-trained, educated, but relatively expensive Puerto Rican labor force that became increasingly undesirable as cheaper labor became available elsewhere. Yet the U.S. domination of shipping, manufacturing, tariff laws, banking, and finance limited Puerto Rico's ability to develop the means to compete in international business and markets. Downturns in the U.S. economy and a decline in Puerto Rico's productivity created return migration, perpetuating "revolving door" cycles between the island and the mainland.

Into the Twenty-first Century

In the early twenty-first century, the island's economy hinges upon manufacturing and services. The government has fostered high-technology industries that capitalize on Puerto Rico's educated labor force, while remaining a major employer itself. Leading industries—pharmaceuticals, chemicals, electronics, medical equipment—are problematic for their negative environmental impact and capital-intensive nature. Though tourism is the most important service industry, it no longer attracts as many visitors from the United States. Puerto Rico's familiarity and relative modernity used to be its drawing card, but U.S. tourists now prefer more exotic locales and "unspoiled" environments.

Commonwealth status has not been the solution to Puerto Rico's political situation. Muñoz Marín governed between 1948 and 1964, the PPD's heyday. In 1968 a pro-statehood party, the Partido Nuevo Progresista (New Progressive Party, PNP), came to power, emerging in 1967 from an older pro-statehood party. With the PPD, it remains one of the two strongest parties. The Partido Inde-

pendentista Puertorriqueño (Puerto Rican Pro-Independence Party, PIP) was founded in 1948 by a PPD splinter group disappointed at Muñoz's failure to support independence and his "treason" in advocating for commonwealth status. It remains the leading pro-independence party. Other short-lived political parties have waxed and waned under the commonwealth.

Since 1968, electoral control has alternated between the PPD and the PNP, reflecting ongoing struggles over the island's relationship with the United States. The commonwealth is perceived as limited and colonialist, since the United States unilaterally continues to control significant economic and political domains, including the island's very status. Election returns show differing degrees of support for each party as voters put more immediate problems ahead of the status question. This has contributed to a lack of electoral support for the PIP, whose program is necessarily based on a degree of structural and ideological change that is beyond local control. Its election returns have never matched those from 1952 when it was second only to the PPD; its support now stands at 3 percent to 5 percent of the vote. However, the PIP and other independence advocates play a significant opposition role in local politics and enjoy high prestige as symbols of a noble but unattainable ideal of liberty and sovereignty.

Since the granting of commonwealth status, economic and quality-of-life issues have predominated over colonialism in elections. Yet cultural nationalism, the fact of congressional control, and the ambiguities of the U.S.–Puerto Rico relationship keep it in the public consciousness. Referenda and plebiscites have generated varying yet consistent support for the commonwealth, in spite of a consensus among all three parties that it is unacceptable. Both independence advocates and statehood supporters underscore the inherent colonialism of the commonwealth, while PPD autonomists press for an enhanced commonwealth status with greater autonomy and control over economic and political issues.

Beyond electoral politics, significant opposition to U.S. colonialism is evident in the multiple pro-independence groups, both legal and clandestine, that continue to emerge in both island and mainland communities. Massive protests and mobilization around specific causes, such as the Vieques affair, also crystallize a critical anti-U.S. stance. Puerto Rico's cultural nationalism is also evident in the acclaim with which success in international competitions—Academy Awards, the Olympics, the Ms. Universe contest—is received. Colonialism may also be seen in the relative invisibility of Puerto Ricans as other Latina and Latino groups and communities achieve greater political access, economic mobility, and visibility in U.S. society.

In spite of the effects of colonialism, Puerto Ricans, on the island and in the United States, have managed to excel in diverse fields—sports, the arts, law, entertainment, education, and public service—both nationally and internationally. Perhaps the most important contribution that Puerto Ricans have made to the United States, ironically, is rooted in their lengthy colonial relationship with the most powerful nation in the world. As a culturally distinct and subordinated group, Puerto Ricans have continually encouraged progressive factions in the United States to look critically at the nation and its history. As a Latina and Latino group that enjoys U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans have validated Latinismo and its cultural uniqueness. In this sense, they have opened the way for the inclusion of other Latina and Latino communities in U.S. society.

The number of Puerto Ricans living in the United States may soon surpass that on the island. In spite of their historical and sociocultural commonalities, their relationship is affected by the island's colonial liminality. Race and class inform individual diasporic histories and, thus, island stereotypes concerning Puerto Ricans in the United States. The U.S. community has equally developed stereotypical notions regarding Puerto Rican history, the island's condition, and their island counterparts, overestimating the latter's ability to control issues of class, definition, participation, and belonging. Both communities struggle with inclusion, nationalist ideologies of definition, and the power to control equally what counts as "Puerto Rican." Underlying these tensions, ironically, lies the problem of multiple, overlapping nationalisms and definitions of belonging within the contexts of colonialism and of reductionistic concepts of nationalism.

See also Albizu Campos, Pedro; Americanization; Foraker Act; Insular Cases; Jones Act; Muñoz Marín, Luis; Operation Bootstrap/Section 936; Puerto Rican Home Country Project; Puerto Rican Independence Movement; Puerto Rico, Colonialism in; Treaty of Paris, 1898; United States Interventions in Latin America; War of 1898; and Young Lords Party.

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PUERTO RICO, COLONIALISM IN. Puerto Rico has been a colonial possession of the United States since 1898. What makes Puerto Rico a colony? The simple answer is that its people lack sovereignty and are denied the fundamental right to freely govern themselves. The U.S. Congress exercises unrestricted and unilateral powers over Puerto Rico, although the residents of Puerto Rico do not have representation in that body. Its people are subject without their consent to thousands of federal laws that they have had no role in drafting. Federal legislation supercedes and can negate laws enacted by the popularly elected local legislature. Puerto Rico's young men and women are subject to military draft and deployment to combat zones although Puerto Rico's people have no say in selecting the leaders who make the decisions to take the United States to war. Puerto Rico cannot control its immigration policy, cannot sign international treaties, and has no legal representation in international organizations. According to the respected Puerto Rican jurist José Trías Monge, "There is no known non-colonial relationship in the present world where one people exercises such vast, almost unbounded power over the government of another" (p. 163).

Establishing the First U.S. Colony

The United States obtained Puerto Rico from Spain as the spoils of war. The United States defeated the Spanish armed forces in Cuba and the Philippines, then on July 25, 1898, U.S. forces landed on Puerto Rico in the Caribbean coastal town of Guanica. The Spanish army was quickly defeated, and an armistice was signed in August. A U.S. military government took control of Puerto Rico in October 1898. In December 1898 Spain signed the Treaty of Paris, ceding Puerto Rico and the Philippines to the United States and relinquishing sovereignty over Cuba, which became a U.S. protectorate.

When the United States invaded Puerto Rico, the small island nation had been a colony of Spain for over four centuries. It was a poverty-stricken society, and the conservative Spanish authorities closely monitored economic, political, and cultural activities. In 1898 the Spanish Caribbean was in political turmoil. A destructive war had crippled the Cuban economy, and autonomist forces in Puerto Rico were demanding major changes in Spanish policy. In order to quell the revolution in Cuba and retain the loyalty of its subjects in Puerto Rico, Spain enacted the Autonomous Charter, which granted both of its colonies significant autonomy over domestic affairs as well as the right to enter into international agreements. However, the United States did not recognize the validity of the charter or the substantial powers of self-rule it conferred on Puerto Ricans.

Under the Treaty of Paris, Puerto Ricans lost their Spanish citizenship but did not acquire U.S. citizenship.

They automatically became subjects of the United States without any constitutionally protected rights. Despite the humiliation of being denied any involvement in fateful decisions in Paris, most Puerto Ricans welcomed U.S. sovereignty, believing that under the presumed enlightened tutelage of the United States their long history of colonial rule would soon come to an end. Puerto Rico's cosmopolitan elite expected the United States to quickly either grant their country independence or incorporate it as an equal member into the Union. More than a century after the U.S. invaders landed in Guanica, Puerto Rico remains a colony of the United States, in the words of Trías Monge in *Puerto Rico*, "the oldest colony in the world."

Until May 1, 1900, U.S. Army generals ruled Puerto Rico and reported to the War Department. Using their arbitrary powers, they issued hundreds of decrees that fundamentally altered Puerto Rico's institutions. The political system established by the Spanish was disbanded; the U.S. laws and legal system were imposed, giving federal courts jurisdiction in Puerto Rico; a system of universal public education was established; and English language instruction was mandatory for all children. Many of Puerto Rico's political, economic, and cultural elite were opposed to military rule, which they criticized as undemocratic and accused of destroying the local economy and way of life. U.S. officials in turn treated Puerto Ricans as a primitive people unfit for self-government and lacking any appreciation for how Anglo-Saxon democratic institutions functioned. U.S. officials embraced notions of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and felt it their God-given mission to spread their nation's values and institutions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

The change in sovereignty generated profound economic difficulties for Puerto Rico. Its export products, coffee and sugar, lost their European and Caribbean markets, and the island was subjected to punitive U.S. tariffs. A devastating hurricane, San Ciriaco, struck the island in 1898, killing three thousand people and causing enormous damage. It virtually destroyed the coffee industry. In addition, new economic measures imposed by the military government diminished the wealth and landholdings of Puerto Rico's capitalist class. Although military rule was short-lived, the changes imposed during this period signaled the U.S. intention to convert the Puerto Rican people into bicultural, bilingual, loyal subjects under permanent colonial rule.

In 1901 the U.S. Congress enacted the Foraker Act, which established a civilian administration to rule Puerto Rico. The law strengthened the federal government's control over Puerto Rico and denied Puerto Ricans any meaningful role in governing their country. The U.S. president, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appointed the governor of Puerto Rico. The governor's cabinet consisted