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# Aquí se habla español: Cultural Identity and Language in Post-World War II Puerto Rico

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AQUÍ SE HABLA ESPAÑOL:  
CULTURAL IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE IN POST-WORLD WAR II  
PUERTO RICO

JOANNA MARIE CAMACHO ESCOBAR

Doctoral Program in Borderlands History

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Charles Ambler, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my grandparents and great grandparents, José, Providencia, Fernando, Priscilla, and Leon, Felicita, Ignacio, Luisa, and those who passed too young for me to meet them. Our past was obscured by poverty, I only hope to shed some light into your lives.

Your grateful and proud granddaughter.

AQUÍ SE HABLA ESPAÑOL:  
CULTURAL IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE IN POST-WORLD WAR II  
PUERTO RICO

by

JOANNA MARIE CAMACHO ESCOBAR, B.A., M.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
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## Introduction

At the opening ceremony of Puerto Rico's National Pavilion at the 1992 World Exposition in Seville, the then Governor of Puerto Rico, Rafael Hernández Colón began his remarks by listing the important milestones the pavilion illustrated. Before cutting the ribbon, he masterfully summarized the cultural aspect of the monument: "Entre los hitos que corresponde señalar en la larga jornada de nuestro pueblo encontramos la proclamación de nuestra lengua como única lengua oficial del país y la adopción de nuestra identidad cultural como principio inamovible y fundamento de una relación política con los Estados Unidos de América basada en el respeto mutuo y en la libertad de cada pueblo para ser quién es."<sup>1</sup> This short statement defined the concept of cultural nationalism that Puerto Ricans deliberated for half a century. He simultaneously recognized the island's political relationship with the United States and asserted the separate cultural sphere in which Puerto Ricans existed. Most significantly, Hernández Colón pronounced the centrality of the Spanish language in that identity. This acknowledgment is the culmination of a long process of identity formation.

The following study seeks to understand the process in which language and culture were linked together in order to institutionalize Puerto Rican cultural nationalism. In the decades after 1898, Puerto Ricans went through a U.S.-imposed process of Americanization. What the U.S. originally had in mind was that Puerto Ricans would become American colonial subjects through

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<sup>1</sup> Mensaje del Gobernador del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico Honorable Rafael Hernández Colón con motivo de la inauguración del Pabellón Nacional de Puerto Rico la Exposición de Sevilla '92, 20 de abril de 1992 Sevilla, España, 5. Translation: "Among the milestones to be pointed out in the long journey of our people are the proclamation of our language as the only official language of the country, and the adoption of our cultural identity as an immovable principle and foundation of a political relationship with the United States of America based on the mutual respect and in the freedom of each people to be who it is."

*Disclaimer:* Regarding direct quotes, for the rest of the dissertation, I will preserve the quote's original language. In the cases when the quote is originally in Spanish the translation to English will appear in the respective footnote after the citation.

U.S. control over the curriculum that made English the language of instruction in public schools. With a vague explanation from the U.S. of what Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans meant to the U.S. American nation, Puerto Ricans from various backgrounds debated Americanization practices.<sup>2</sup> However, after the 1952 constitution that renamed the island *el Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico*, defenders of this form of autonomous government within the U.S. empire divorced Puerto Rican cultural identity from the political identity that defined them as U.S. citizens.<sup>3</sup>

The paternalistic cultural project Governor Luis Muñoz Marín called *Operación Serenidad* (Operation Serenity) perpetuated Puerto Rico's colonial status while it attempted to calm the anxieties over the repercussions of this status on *puertorriqueñidad* or Puerto Ricanness. In this process, the local government in Puerto Rico established institutions that adopted the Spanish language, the language of instruction since 1949, and emphasized the historical legacy of the Spanish, African, and Taíno heritage as the core of Puerto Rican cultural identity. However, the rise of the pro-statehood movement under the Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) attempted to reconfigure that identity. Its leaders, such as Governor Luis A. Ferré, argued for a similar cultural identity centered on the Spanish language, but encouraged the acceptance of U.S. citizenship as an additional feature of *puertorriqueñidad*.<sup>4</sup> The earlier efforts by populares, however, would set the tone of acceptable cultural policies later. The primary role of the cultural project was the preservation of the colonial relationship with the U.S. in the uneasy context of the Cold War in the Americas.

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<sup>2</sup> Before the famous Insular cases began to define the U.S.-Puerto Rico in the courts.

<sup>3</sup> The official name of the island after 1952 became *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico* (ELA). The direct translation of this term is "Free Associated State." However, in English, it is officially called a Commonwealth as an approximation of the intention of the ELA. Political scientists argue that Puerto Rico, as unincorporated territory, is not a commonwealth in the traditional sense, as in the cases of Kentucky, Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, in which the term is used as a synonym of state.

<sup>4</sup> Members of the PNP are traditionally called *penepé(s)*.

This dissertation, “*Aquí se habla español: Cultural Identity and Language in Post-World War II Puerto Rico*,” explains the Puerto Rican identity and the link between culture and language using a borderland framework that defines Puerto Rico as a periphery of the U.S. empire. The evidence considered in this study shows how the government institutions created under Operación Serenidad addressed the importance of protecting the Spanish language, starting in the 1950s and continuing through the 1980s. The most important government institutions implicated in the process of constructing a cultural identity through language were the Departamento de Instrucción Pública (Department of Public Instruction, DIP), its División de Educación de la Comunidad (DivEdCo), and the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, ICP).

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

Broadly, this dissertation expands on previous works that examine the cultural implications of the U.S. presence in the island after the Spanish American War in 1898. An extensive investigation of the current multidisciplinary literature that addresses cultural identity in Puerto Rico reveals that much of the scholarship focuses on the immediate political and social effects of U.S. imperialism in the decades since 1898. However, most of the previous studies available are individual case studies of different components of the broader subjects of colonialism, identity, and culture. To interject in the conversation, this research and dissertation offer a comprehensive study of the interplay of these issues. The study’s significance lies in that it considers the intersectionality of fields and subjects crucial in the appreciation of the history of twentieth-century Puerto Rico. Furthermore, this work intersects the broader fields of U.S., Latin America, and Puerto Rican history primarily inside the U.S. academia.

In dialogue with borderlands scholarship, this dissertation contributes to the debates over identity construction on the edges of empire, in addition to the debates over demarcation and difference in political and cultural processes. This work addresses the widely accepted but virtually unexamined implications of the Caribbean as a conflictive border of U.S. imperial expansion during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This study also contributes to the ongoing popular and academic discussion on how Puerto Ricans define themselves in the context of U.S. colonialism. More importantly, it seeks to explain through the cultural prism why Puerto Ricans still accept their status as second-class citizens even after the signing of “Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act” or “PROMESA” by former President Barack Obama in 2016, which sought to “provide a method for a covered territory to achieve fiscal responsibility” at the discretion of an unelected body that slowly erodes their limited autonomy and democracy.<sup>5</sup>

The major themes of this study are cultural identity with a borderlands perspective, language, colonialism, and imperialism. Various theoretical frameworks inform these concepts. As Amy Kaplan would suggest, I frame Puerto Rico as a borderland, a “buffer zone, a blurred borderland between the domestic and the foreign.”<sup>6</sup> Kaplan cites the theory proposed by Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler of “imperial spaces as contact zones and sites of encounter” to describe the reciprocal exchange of empire, which informs my own approach.<sup>7</sup> In agreement, I problematize this theory by adding that in the colonial context of Puerto Rico this reciprocal exchange is uneven. This dissertation considers the suggestions of border historians Pablo

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<sup>5</sup> “H.R.5278 – PROMESA,” 114th Congress (2015-2016) Accessed March 10, 2017  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5278/text?format=txt>

<sup>6</sup> Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 14.

Mitchell and Anthony Mora that identities on the borderlands are complex and susceptible to the forces of imperialism, colonialism and culture, as well as nationalism.<sup>8</sup> The works of borderlands historians Eric Meeks and Andres Reséndes add that culture, citizenship, and race affected the relationship between the nations and border residents, and consequently made the identity of border people malleable.<sup>9</sup> Sociologist Cynthia Bejarano in *¡Qué onda!*, complements this scholarship as she informs us that physical and cultural borders, as defined by language, citizenship, and social status, affect the history of identity making on the borderlands.<sup>10</sup> These studies seamlessly intertwine the history of the borderlands and the history of the U.S. as an empire, while exposing the crucial role of identity in this context. In conversation with these studies, this dissertation examines local actors in order to nuance the perception of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico, an unincorporated territory on a figurative border, beyond the oppressor/victim paradigm.

Historians Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, in their joint essay on the state of the field, “On Borderlands,” explain that the field now accommodates more transnational works, decentralized from the notions of the nation-state. This approach allows me to illustrate the complex issues beyond the boundaries of the nation-state: for example, the influence of cultural components on colonialism and vice versa. This is vital, since Puerto Rico fails to neatly fit into the nation-state concept because a lack of sovereignty leaves it without a state. Yet Puerto Rico’s colonial status during this period forced the debate over defining the nation. In my study, nation,

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<sup>8</sup> Pablo Mitchell, *Coyote Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Anthony P. Mora, *Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> Eric V. Meeks, *Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos in Arizona* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007); Andres Reséndes, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Bejarano, *¡Qué onda! Urban Youth Culture and Border Identity* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2005), 4.

as described by Benedict Anderson, is “a cultural artifact of a particular kind.”<sup>11</sup> Puerto Ricans developed a sense of nation even when they lacked a sovereign state, according to the definition by Anderson as “an imagined political community” “conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” regardless of the circumstances that threatened its members’ identity.<sup>12</sup> Bridging the connection between culture, nation and imperialism, Edward Said proposes that “nations themselves are narrations” and the power to “narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism.”<sup>13</sup> The process of institutionalizing the defining characteristics of cultural identity after Governor Muñoz Marín took power revealed this precise struggle, later accentuated when the pro-statehood movement developed a competing argument to intervene in the process.

My study expands on sociologist Jorge Duany’s work which proposes that Puerto Rico’s identity resides outside the traditional notion of nationhood because of its relationship with the U.S., the repercussions of the diaspora, and circular migration between the States and the island. Duany’s work exemplifies the use of the borderlands perspective by discussing the metaphorical border between the island and the U.S., and how this interaction created a Puerto Rican identity in flux. In two important efforts, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move* and *Blurred Borders*, Duany considers the importance of the movement of Puerto Ricans between the U.S. east coast and the island, as well as the experiences of other Hispanic Caribbean groups who blur the borders between the Caribbean and the U.S., while constructing their identities along the way.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), Kindle location 136.

<sup>14</sup> Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island & in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).



His works sparked a new approach that conceives of the Caribbean as a borderland in the context of U.S. imperialism, which I incorporate in this study.<sup>15</sup>

The works that contrast the histories of Puerto Rico and New Mexico greatly inform my intention to intersect the major themes of this dissertation. Historians John Nieto-Phillips and Rosina Lozano draw connections between territorial New Mexico and Puerto Rico. In his seminal work, *The Language of Blood*, Nieto-Phillips expands on the discussion of identity formation in his study of Nuevo Mexicanos and the process in which they justified their cultural, political, and social fitness for statehood.<sup>16</sup> He emphasizes the prominence of the Spanish language issues in the construction of a Spanish heritage myth that defined both New Mexican and Puerto Rican racial and cultural identity. More recently, historian Rosina Lozano's article, "Managing the 'Priceless Gift,'" compares the approach of New Mexicans and Puerto Ricans to U.S. language policies in education from the 1930s to the 1950s.<sup>17</sup> Lozano concludes that New Mexico opted to maintain a level of bilingualism but favored English over Spanish to prove its interest in the American nation; however, in Puerto Rico the debate over language of instruction only fomented the connection between language and cultural identity. New Mexicans viewed language as the key to citizenship, but Puerto Ricans understood language as vital to their separate cultural identity. Both of these works explain the process of assimilation and

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<sup>15</sup> As mentioned before, my study engages U.S. academia. However, although I don't use them in my study, I must acknowledge the existence of two book on the cultural issue produced in Puerto Rico's academy: Jaime L. Rodríguez Cancel, *La Guerra Fría y el sexenio de la puertorriqueñidad: Afirmación nacional y políticas Culturales* (San Juan: Ediciones Puerto, 2007); Antonio Fernós López-Cepero, *¿Ser nosotros mismos!: La angustia lucha del pueblo puertorriqueño por su soberanía nacional* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> John M. Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Rosina A. Lozano, "Managing the 'Priceless Gift': Debating Spanish Language Instruction in New Mexico and Puerto Rico, 1930–1950" *The Western Historical Quarterly* 44, (2013): 271-293.

colonization in New Mexico, while drawing connections to the inner workings of imperialism in Puerto Rico.

The historiography of the U.S. as an empire is broad; however, works that specifically address the context of U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean form a narrower selection.

Collaborative studies are a popular format to treat the themes of U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico.

Christian Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall's collection of legal studies in *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution* examines the legal sources of the colonial status of the island. A recent synthetic work by scholars Cesar Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, and the edited volume by Alfred McCoy and Francisco Scarano, *Colonial Crucible*, provide broader perspectives on the internal processes of identity construction and colonialism in the context of U.S. imperialism.<sup>18</sup> These works build upon the study of diplomatic historian William Appleman Williams' *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* published in 1959, which suggests that the U.S. imperial culture changed as its sphere of power expanded.<sup>19</sup> My work interject in the more recent scholarship represented in the works by historians Matthew Frye Jacobson, Louis Perez, and Mary Renda that elaborate on the notion that the culture of expansion existed in the U.S. since its inception.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, their works

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<sup>18</sup> Christina Duffy Burnett and Burke Marshall. eds. *Foreign in a Domestic Sense: Puerto Rico, American Expansion, and the Constitution* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2009); César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe. *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, eds. *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Delta Book, 1959, 1962).

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000); Louis A. Pérez Jr, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation & the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

demonstrate continuation, of both ideology and policies, between western expansion and the U.S intervention in the Caribbean and other overseas territories.

Following the topic of imperial policies, earlier works that address the language issue inform this dissertation. Edith Algren de Gutierrez's *The Movement against Teaching English in Schools of Puerto Rico* is also an older study on the language education issue that links the debates over status and language of instruction. The studies of scholars Roamé Torres, Amílcar Barreto, Pedro Cabán and Solsiree Del Moral build on these by reviewing the effects of the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico. Torres and Del Moral discuss the intersection of imperialism, language, and education.<sup>21</sup> Torres and Barreto, a sociologist and a political scientist respectively, explain the language policies from 1898 to the 1990s, as well as the Americanization process and its effects on the political culture and education in Puerto Rico.<sup>22</sup> In *Constructing a Colonial People*, Cabán studies the efforts of the Americanization project that sought to turn Puerto Rico into a bilingual society.<sup>23</sup> The most recent of these, Del Moral's *Negotiating Empire* focuses on the reaction of teachers, parents, and students to language policies, explaining how they negotiated colonialism during the first half of the twentieth century, effectively contributing to the end of the Americanization project. The work of Laura Briggs in *Reproducing Empire*, while it explores the policies that the U.S. imposed to supervise morality through the control of reproduction in rural communities, also informs how this dissertation assess the evolution of U.S. imperial policies on the island.<sup>24</sup> These works make the connection between culture, language,

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<sup>21</sup> Roamé Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> Amílcar Antonio Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Pedro A. Cabán, *Constructing A Colonial People: Puerto Rico And The United States, 1898-1932* (New York: Westview Press, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

and imperial policy essential in understanding the influence of colonialism in Puerto Rico's identity.

Acknowledging the effects of U.S. imperial presence is important; however, this dissertation focuses primarily on the role of local actors in accommodating colonialism through cultural policies. The scholarship that treats the institutionalization of cultural policies is limited and I submit this work to expand on this subject. Cultural policies were institutionalized through the initiative called Operación Serenidad, which used government agencies to address the issues of modernity and its possible effects on Puerto Rican. Serenidad significantly used the local Department of Public Instruction and a new cultural agency to develop its goals. One of the earliest works available is a 1984 unpublished dissertation that includes an oral history of DivEdCo, a unit of the Departamento de Instrucción Pública, and its leadership, providing insight into the inner workings of this institution.<sup>25</sup> More recently, two important synthetic works appeared that study the two major components of Operación Serenidad, the ICP and DivEdCo. In 1997, cultural anthropologist Arlene Dávila published *Sponsored Identities*, and over a decade later, literature professor Catherine Marsh Kennerley published in Puerto Rico her dissertation *Negociaciones Culturales*.

*Sponsored Identities* is the sole study that focuses on the development of the ICP. As the first book of cultural anthropologist Arlene Dávila, this work examines the dynamics of cultural politics in contemporary Puerto Rican society of the 1990s. Dávila first contextualizes the creation of the Instituto, then discusses the development and significance of two of its initiatives, the *centros culturales* and folkloric festivals. She questions the interests of the ICP, since for a

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<sup>25</sup> Waldemar Pérez Quintana, "An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico from 1949 to the Present: The Perspective of Eight Puerto Rican Educators" (PhD Diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1984).

period, it sought to commercialize culture through the two components she studies. Therefore, she casts doubts over the original intentions of Operación Serenidad, which among other things sought to protect Puerto Rican identity and culture from the ills of modernity such as consumerism.<sup>26</sup>

Also evaluating a component of Operación Serenidad, literary scholar Catherine Marsh Kennerley provides the only comprehensive study of DivEdCo, and its connection to the institutionalization of culture in Puerto Rico. She defines the major intellectual currents that informed cultural policies between the 1930s and 1950s. Marsh focuses on the role of Puerto Rican intellectuals in developing the cultural and educational project of the *estado muñocista*, as she names the period of Muñoz Marín's governorship.<sup>27</sup> In this work, DivEdCo, created in 1949, featured as the original cultural institution that associated the intellectual and artistic classes in the island with a didactic mission to help poorly educated *jíbaros* cope with the modernizing forces of *Operación Manos a la Obra* through the Cold War era.

All of these works, including mine, agree that Puerto Ricans defined an identity long before 1898. Puerto Rican historian Francisco Scarano explains that throughout the nineteenth century *criollo* elites in Puerto Rico began differentiating themselves from those whom they called *peninsulares*, the Spanish-born residents in the island. According to Scarano and scholar Amílcar Barreto, the influence of the independence movements in the rest of the American continent helped solidify a strong sense of identity amongst those *criollos* who now called

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<sup>26</sup> Arlene Dávila, *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 218.

<sup>27</sup> Catherine Marsh Kennerley, *Negociaciones Culturales: Los intelectuales y el proyecto pedagógico del estado muñocista* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejones, 2009), 11. This book is based on her dissertation produced at the University of California Berkeley, the work was later translated and published in the island.

themselves *puertorriqueños*.<sup>28</sup> Later, through the early twentieth century, the *jíbaro* emerged as the quintessential Puerto Rican. One of the most influential books on the subject, Lillian Guerra's *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico*, traces the construction of the *jíbaro* and how it homogenized the image of the rural working class on Puerto Rican society in general.

Historian Solsiree Del Moral adds that cultural identity in the context of Puerto Rico “was defined as of Latin/Hispanic heritage, Spanish-speaking, Catholic and shaped by the *gran familia puertorriqueña*.”<sup>29</sup> The *gran familia* romanticized nineteenth-century family makeup and agricultural labor in a patriarchal structure, and it also expanded the Spanish heritage myth to whitewash Puerto Rican identity. This concept of the *gran familia* is important to understand early twentieth-century Puerto Rican society, as Cristóbal Borges suggests, because it reconciled the ideas of *mestizaje* (the racial mixing of the European, the African, and the Native) and the whiteness of el *jíbaro*.<sup>30</sup> To clarify, this *mestizaje* was hierarchical, giving the privileged position to hispanidad, and subordinating African-ness and indigeneity in the process. This dissertation demonstrates that the ICP adopted this seemingly contradictory concept of identity to accommodate the possible competing narratives in order to create a mainstream cultural identity acceptable to most Puerto Ricans. Moreover, Serenidad would charge the ICP to gather evidence that supported this concept of *mestizaje* through archeological, historical and folkloric investigations.

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<sup>28</sup> Francisco A. Scarano, “The Jíbaro Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745-1823,” *American Historical Review*, 101 (1996): 1399; Amílcar Antonio Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Solsiree Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898-1952* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 11. Del Moral bases her assessment on other works such as Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island & in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), Juan Flores, *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning* (New York: Routledge, 2009), and Zilkia Janer, *Puerto Rican Nation-Building Literature: Impossible Romance* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Cristóbal A. Borges, “Unspoken Prejudice: Racial Politics, Gendered Norms, and the Transformation of Puerto Rican Identity in the Twentieth Century” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at El Paso, 2014), 2.

As historian Antonio Sotomayor explains, the constraints of colonialism in the Cold War period fostered the differentiation between political nationalism and cultural nationalism, which in turn made cultural politics a vital colonial tool.<sup>31</sup> I consider that Serenidad and the ICP were successful at establishing a mainstream cultural identity that accommodated colonialism but seldom acknowledged it. However, there were political sectors that pushed against this notion. For example, as Sotomayor suggests, citizenship had implications for Puerto Rican cultural nationalism in the post-World War II era.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation proposes that the PNP argued that the early mestizaje was important for Puerto Rican identity, but the presence of the U.S. through the twentieth century and U.S. citizenship was also an important aspect of their sense of self.

Yet this dissertation considers the Cold War as the connective tissue that underlined the development of cultural policies in the post-war era even when not directly addressed by the sources or the discussions throughout the chapters. The Cold War unquestionably defined the terms of self-determination and democracy that delineated the autonomy ushered in by the Estado Libre Asociado. Therefore, it is this context that demarcated suitable cultural symbols and concepts. Governors Muñoz Marín, Hernández Colón, and Carlos Romero Barceló recognized the contentious environment in which they negotiated their policies, and the constraints of their power. Thus, the issues that emerged from the constraints of Cold War politics aligned the island's experience with that of the rest of the Caribbean basin, as illustrated in the new study of the region by historian Aragorn Storm Miller, *Precarious Path to Freedom: The United States, Venezuela, and the Latin American Cold War*.<sup>33</sup> In addition, this work

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<sup>31</sup> Antonio Sotomayor, *The Sovereign Colony: Olympic Sport, National Identity, and International Politics in Puerto Rico* (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 2016), 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

<sup>33</sup> Aragorn Storm Miller, *Precarious Paths to Freedom The United States, Venezuela, and the Latin American Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016).

engages the study of the Caribbean's role in the global political polarization, as exemplified by Daniela Spenser's "The Caribbean Crisis" in Spencer's and Gilbert Joseph's edited volume *In from the Cold*.<sup>34</sup>

The history of the Cold War in Latin America and the intervention of the U.S. in this region is an ever-growing field. The studies of the Cold War in Latin America contribute to an understanding of the cultural and political development of Puerto Rico because they outline the level of U.S. influence in the Spanish-speaking world. As exemplified in the edited volume *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow*, currently there are two main approaches in the historiography.<sup>35</sup> The first focuses on U.S. dominance in the region, the pressures of the global Cold War, and its implications. The second explains the ways forces in Latin America decisively maneuvered within the constraints of U.S. hegemony to promote their own interest. These trends echo the broader tendency in the discipline to break away from binary studies, specifically disrupting the oppressor/victim paradigm and focuses on the interactions that imply collaboration and exchanges.

The recent works of Patrick Iber and Aragorn Storm Miller best reflect these inclinations in the Cold War scholarship, respectively. As an example of the first trend, in *Neither Peace Nor Freedom*, Iber focuses on the Cultural Cold War in Mexico and the rest of Latin America. His study examines the effects of the global polarization on cultural productions, and concludes that this pressure divided the intellectual and artistic circles into competing camps. On the other hand, Storm Miller's *Precarious Paths to Freedom* questions the assumed understanding of the U.S.

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<sup>34</sup> Daniela Spenser, "The Caribbean Crisis: Catalyst for Soviet Projection in Latin America" in *In From the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 77-112.

<sup>35</sup> Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Julio E. Moreno, eds., *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).



Cold War policies in the Caribbean basin. He argues that the U.S. policies in Latin America were not a total failure, since, even as the U.S. simultaneously “lost” Cuba to the communist bloc, the U.S. found collaborators in the Venezuelan government who exploited the relationship for their own efforts to eliminate internal threats, and influence the rest of the region. In addition the collections *In from the Cold* and *A Century of Revolution* in their respective studies of social movements and violence evaluate the intersection of transnational global political and economic circumstances and internal strife in Latin America’s Long Cold War.<sup>36</sup>

The Cold War topic allows me to intervene in Latin American history, but this dissertation also engages U.S. historiography. Although important specific works exist that intertwine the history of the U.S. and Puerto Rico, most major studies on U.S. imperialism treat Puerto Rico as a footnote of this history.<sup>37</sup> The grand narrative of U.S. history can easily ignore a territory as small as Puerto Rico. However, when the literature focuses on U.S. imperial expansion, the case of Puerto Rico demonstrates how a colonial possession affected imperial policies throughout the second half of the twentieth century. This dissertation’s focus on the intersection of culture, identity, language, and imperialism contributes to the expansion of the historical knowledge of the U.S. as a modern empire. Beyond making Puerto Rico a case study, this work hopes to include it into the larger discussion of empire and identity, especially since this research considers that Puerto Rico was instrumental to display U.S. “benevolent” Cold War policies of economic progress and political stability to Latin America.

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<sup>36</sup> Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph, eds., *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence during Latin America’s Long Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); José Manuel Navarro, *Creating Tropical Yankees: Social Science Textbooks and U.S. Ideological Control in Puerto Rico, 1898-1908* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Once more, this dissertation explores the elements that create a cultural identity, specifically the value of language in its development in a contested colonial space. There are some primary questions that connect the following chapters. First, what were the purposes of the cultural policies developed after 1952? Second, what was the result of centering Puerto Rican cultural identity on the Spanish language? Third, the dissertation will determine what, if any, were the long-term effects of Operación Serenidad in the discussion of culture. Lastly, the study will assess how policies changed as the pro-statehood movement through the Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) challenged the hegemony of the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD) over culture.<sup>38</sup>

The dissertation also addresses a more specific set of questions. What was the scope of the individual institutions that served as cultural policy engines? What were the roles of the Division de Educación de la Comunidad and the Departamento de Instrucción Pública in the “civilizing” segment of Serenidad? How did the creation of the government-funded Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña affect the promotion of Puerto Rican identity in classrooms and beyond? Moreover, what was the contribution of the University of Puerto Rico, specifically its Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos, in this process? What were the effects of these organizations on the articulation of language as a cultural marker?

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<sup>38</sup> Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) translates to New Progressive Party, while Partido Popular Democrático (PPD) translates to Popular Democratic Party. For the rest of the dissertation, I will refer to the parties as the PNP and PPD, using their respective Spanish acronyms. To refer to members of the PPD, I will use the terms *popular* (singular) or *populares* (plural), and to refer to the members of the PNP, I will use the terms *penepé* (singular) or *penepés* (plural). The term *estadolibrista(s)* refers to supporters of the Estado Libre Asociado (Commonwealth) as a status solution, *estadista(s)* refers to supporters of the pro-statehood movement in general, and *independentista(s)* refers to pro-independence sympathizers. The term *nacionalistas(s)* refers to a more radical sector of the pro-independence movement.

In addition, through the study of subsequent administrations this dissertation will gauge the effectiveness of cultural nationalist rhetoric against the rise of a unified pro-statehood movement after the late 1960s. How did this faction define the relationship between language and culture? How did the pro-statehood sector delineate the role of U.S. citizenship and Puerto Rican identity? What was the role of race, especially the Spanish heritage myth, in the construction of the cultural identity in this context? Finally, how did Puerto Rico's participation in the Quincentennial affect internal cultural issues?

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study covers fifty years of Puerto Rico's cultural history, and therefore it is limited to certain issues. First, the research focuses mainly on the pro-Estado Libre Asociado and the pro-statehood movement cultural debates. This excludes the vast discussions within pro-independence and nationalist circles, except when there are clear interactions. As the oldest political faction in Puerto Rico's history, *independentistas* are multifaceted and heterogeneous, and therefore they deserve a closer study. Second, since the study concentrates on the development of cultural policies by those in power, the majority of the sources reflect the opinions of those in high echelons. Although there are attempts to include the voices of regular Puerto Ricans, it is not the emphasis of this dissertation. The study measures the success of the policies by the displays of support (electoral or not) its proponents received.

This dissertation employs primary sources available at different privately and publicly administered archives, consisting of public and internal government documents, reports and internal studies, public speeches, and government-sponsored television programs, news broadcasts, among others. Public documents, such as official statements, government agencies' materials, and legislative procedural documentation, offer insight into the priorities of the

different administrations and the process of constructing domestic policy regarding culture. Published works such as magazines, books, and newspapers feature significantly to assess the academic and popular discussion over the subject.

Several archives provided crucial materials for my research. The University of Puerto Rico Río Piedras Campus (UPRRP) archives in San Juan hold major newspapers such as *El Mundo* and *El Nuevo Dia*, as well as other magazines, *El sol: Revista de la Asociación de Maestros de PR*, and *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*. Meanwhile, the Archivo General de Puerto Rico provides documents from the Office of the Governor, the Departamento de Instrucción Pública, and the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, ICP). The Fundación y Archivo Histórico Luis Muñoz Marín (Foundation and Historical Archive Luis Muñoz Marín) offered the personal and public documents of former governor Muñoz Marín, First Lady Inés Mendoza, and DivEdCo director Jack Delano. The Fundación y Biblioteca Rafael Hernández Colón (Archive and Library Rafael Hernández Colón) and Archivo Histórico Luis A. Ferré offer the bulk of the sources that will explain cultural policies of these two former governors during the 1970s and 1980s. The digital archive at the Archivo Rafael Hernández Colón gives access to executive orders, messages, and videos of his times in office. Also, the ICP's online archives contain the digitized versions of the *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*. In addition, published sources such as memoirs, biographies, and literary works are essential to capture internal and public debates through time.

## **SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

The dissertation contains five chapters. The first chapter, "Política Cultural," provides background to the cultural effects of the arrival of the U.S. to the island, and the conversations that the American entrance sparked within local elites through the first fifty years of U.S.

presence. It offers historical context of early discussions on Puerto Rican identity and culture and the Americanization process, emphasizing the connections elites starting in the 1930s traced between language and culture. These arguments defined the nationalistic undertones *populares* incorporated into cultural policies after the establishment of the Estado Libre Asociado. This discussion concentrated on the role of the academics of the *Generaciones del treinta, del cuarenta* and *del cincuenta*, that included prominent elites, writers, politicians, and faculty members of the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos at the University of Puerto Rico, the premier higher learning institution at the time. The chapter introduces Operación Serenidad, the PPD's platform that organized the cultural propaganda. Finally, the discussion concludes with DivEdCo's influence in its early years on the relationship between education and culture, which foreshadows the prominent role of curriculum in Serenidad's future plans to institutionalize cultural policies.

The second chapter, "Operación Serenidad," explores in the depth that cultural platform articulated by Muñoz Marín since 1954 that accommodated colonialism. The chapter explains how the impact of the economic changes instituted by *Operación Manos a la Obra* (Operation Bootstrap) the economic policy established under the New Deal, exacerbated concerns over the repercussion of industrialization and modernization on Puerto Rican lifestyle and culture. Outlining the contours of the cultural project, this chapter traces the role of its main instruments: first, the educational institutions, the University of Puerto Rico, the Departamento de Instrucción Pública, through its Division de Educación de la Comunidad, also known as DivEdCo and its public radio and television stations WIPR. Then, the study focuses on the two main cultural and language engines of Serenidad, the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña and the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española.

The third chapter, “Somos puertorriqueños,” focuses on the 1960s, which comprise the latter part of Muñoz Marín’s administration in power from 1950 to 1964, and the four years of his successor, fellow *popular* Governor Roberto Sánchez Vilella (1964-1968). First, it explains English and Spanish educational development in light of the institutionalization of cultural policies through Serenidad. Along with the two administrations’ policies on culture, this section also analyzes the deliberations over culture by Margot Arce de Vázquez and Nilita Vientós Gastón, two important academics and cultural critics that contested imperialism and colonialism in their critiques of the cultural project. Crucial to the comprehension of the decade is the exploration of the role of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña in influencing the curriculum that contributed to the institutional message on culture and identity. Finally, the chapter follows the development of Serenidad in light of the intensification of the first debates over status towards the end of the decade.

Chapter four, “Politically Divided, Culturally United,” examines the political struggle for power between the two main status-driven parties after the official retirement of Muñoz Marín from 1969 to 1980. Riding on the division within populares and the results of the status plebiscite, a younger leadership now led the public debate over status and culture. The 1968 electoral victory of the new pro-statehood party, the Partido Nuevo Progresista, positioned its founder, engineer Luis A. Ferré, as the new governor from 1968 to 1972. In addition, this chapter explains the first administration of popular Rafael Hernández Colón from 1972 to 1976, who revisited Serenidad, pushing its message to make a stronger connection to the Spanish heritage as part of his career-long effort to maintain the importance of Spanish as the mother tongue. Lastly, the chapter investigates the approach to cultural policies during the first term of the second pro-statehood governor Carlos Romero Barceló (PNP) from 1976 to 1980, especially since the

rebranding of the pro-statehood message after 1973, which challenged the issue of nationhood and identity as established by the PPD. Specifically it looks at the effects of the creation of a competing government agency to the ICP, the *Administración para el Fomento de las Artes y la Cultura* (AFAC).

The last chapter of the dissertation, “De Puerto Rico para el mundo,” explores how Governors Romero Barceló and Hernández Colón contributed to cultural matters throughout the 1980s. The pro-statehood message of Romero Barceló bemoaned the paradox of second-class citizenship, yet simultaneously wanted to assure the maintenance of Puerto Rican culture after annexation through statehood. After a contentious second term, Romero Barceló lost his reelection to Hernández Colón, who returned to the governor’s mansion, La Fortaleza, for another two terms. Backed by the economic stability of the mid-1980s, Hernández Colón campaigned on the “apertura al mundo” message, pushing for Puerto Rico’s participation in the activities of the Quincentennial of the Discovery of the Americas in 1992, while promoting it as a border between the “new” and “old” worlds. The chapter describes the preparations for the pavilion at the Expo Seville 92 and the Grand Regatta Columbus 92 and their connection to cultural issues. In addition, these events provided another instance in which Puerto Rican officials negotiated colonialism. Lastly, the chapter explains the official language debate that emerged, evaluating how Puerto Ricans remembered their Spanish legacy, Governor Hernández Colón’s role in the re-imagining of this heritage, and local reactions to these issues.

As previously mentioned, the Cold War permeated the cultural policies that institutionalized identity in Puerto Rico during the period of this study. This is discernable because populares clearly accommodate U.S. colonialism, and formulated an identity that disregarded the critical observation of the relationship between the island and Washington. In the

polarized context of the Cold War, local officials made decisions considering the ramifications in the larger context of this divided world. Puerto Ricans, through propaganda and/or awareness, were familiar with the repression against those that resisted U.S. hegemony in and around the island. The political (ELA) and the economic (Bootstraps) policies already provided U.S.-style democracy and progress; the cultural policies would also comply with a U.S.-approved nonthreatening sense of self. The *personalidad puertorriqueña* peddled by Muñoz Marín defined Puerto Ricans as Hispanic-descent, Spanish-speaking, Christian, democracy-loving capitalists, a warm and charismatic people. Sometimes this description included the *sazón* or flavor brought by the afro-caribeño and the Taíno cultures. And the pro-statehood faction would contend that Puerto Rican-ness included the influence of the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. This notion of cultural nationalism established with Operación Serenidad proved very powerful. As the internal political divisions continue and the erosion of ELA reveal the clear colonial and economic dependency of Puerto Rico on the U.S., the cultural identity that accommodates this relationship is now keeping it on life support.



## Chapter 1: Política Cultural

In a special issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* in 1953, Luis Muñoz Marín contributed his famous speech offered in Barranquitas, Puerto Rico, his father's hometown, on the day of his remembrance, July 17, 1951.<sup>1</sup> Muñoz opened the speech stating:

Language was given to man to enable him to make himself understood by his fellow man. But one of the frailties of language is that there are some words which for a time prevent understanding. In Puerto Rico *patria* -the homeland- has been such a word. At first blush this may seem strange, as there is no people of the earth who love their native land more profoundly than do the people of Puerto Rico.<sup>2</sup>

Given a year before the signing of the Constitution of the Estado Libre Asociado (ELA) de Puerto Rico, the document that would define the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, this speech was part of his campaign to rally support from ordinary Puerto Ricans towards this effort. Muñoz Marín centered on language as the mediating link between people to understand each other and the “other.” However, cultural critics debated this connection decades before he used it to support his reformist agenda. The period between the 1930s through the 1950s was a prolific time for the discussion of cultural identity in the island and would affect the concept for the rest of the twentieth century.

This chapter will contextualize the cultural effects of the arrival of the U.S. to the island, and the conversations that the arrival of the Americans sparked within local elites through the first fifty years of U.S. presence. It will offer a historical context of early discussions on Puerto Rican identity and culture, and the Americanization process, emphasizing the association

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<sup>1</sup> It's an annual celebration for the Partido Popular Democrático.

<sup>2</sup> Luis Muñoz Marín, “Development Through Democracy” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 285 (1953): 1.

academics since the 1930s were tracing between language and culture that defined the nationalistic undertones that *populares* would incorporate into the cultural policies after the inauguration of the Estado Libre Asociado. This debate would distinguish the role of the academics of the *Generaciones del treinta, del cuarenta* and *del cincuenta*, that included prominent elites, writers, politicians, and faculty members of the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos at the University of Puerto Rico, the premier academic institution at the time. The chapter will introduce Operación Serenidad, the platform that organized the cultural propaganda according to Muñoz Marín's and PPD's political culture, which would address the impact of the creation of the ELA and the economic policies of Operation Bootstrap on the lives of lower-class Puerto Ricans. The dialogue of the relationship between education and culture will highlight the important curriculum changes that Serenidad promoted in light of the institutionalization of cultural policies.

#### **AMERICANIZANDO LANGUAGE**

Puerto Ricans, in reflecting on their identity, made early links between language and culture, therefore as the Americanization strategy failed between 1898 and 1948, this connection strengthened. Jorge Schmidt in his interpretation of the politics of English in Puerto Rico, points out that the main reason for the failure to “Americanize” Puerto Ricans was “the lack of [English] language stakeholders in favor who were able and willing to invest their time and resources into influencing the educational language policy.”<sup>3</sup> The occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898 failed to attract mass migration of Anglo Americans; therefore the island lacked a significant English linguistic community.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Schmidt explains, Spanish-language

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<sup>3</sup> Jorge R. Schmidt, *The Politics of English in Puerto Rico's Public Schools* (New York: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2014), 13-14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 14.

defenders in the island featured prominently, backed by a wide coalition of language stakeholders or defenders that pushed their cause far even after the failure of the Americanization process.<sup>5</sup>

Schmidt considers that there are three educational language policy eras: the Americanization era from 1898 to 1948, the Puertoricanization era from 1949 to 1968, and the Bilingualization era from 1968 to the present.<sup>6</sup> These useful time periods are defined by the changes in the debate over the use of language in schools, which in turn reflected the political relations between the U.S. and Puerto Rico.<sup>7</sup> Schmidt portrays the first time period as defined by U.S. colonial policies which sought to transform the island's linguistic habits, administrative structures, legal system, and political culture.<sup>8</sup> While the Foraker Act of 1900, which organized the civilian government of the island, easily addressed the Americanization of structural, legal and political aspects, the linguistic issue would prove to be more difficult to change.<sup>9</sup>

Discussing the Americanization period, in *Negotiating Empire*, Solsiree Del Moral maintains the centrality of the classroom in U.S. imperialism, and that in Puerto Rico schools and curriculum “evolved in conversation with the experience that guided Native American boarding schools and African Americans industrial training institutes.”<sup>10</sup> Like Schmidt, Del Moral explains that the Americanization “reflected the racial, ethnic, and cultural hierarchies and practices of early twentieth century educators” within the U.S framework of white supremacy.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>9</sup> Solsiree Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico 1898-1952* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 26; see Pedro A. Malavet, *America's Colony: The Political and Cultural Conflict between the United States and Puerto Rico* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 36.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Schmidt, *The Politics of English*, 48; and Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*, 7.

Plus, one of its main objectives was to either displace or assimilate Puerto Rican culture with the U.S. culture, thereby generating support for U.S. colonialism in the island.<sup>12</sup> The assertion of superiority of U.S. cultural values ideologically intended to maintain the inferiority of the Puerto Rican ones.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, replacing Spanish as the language of instruction with English was key in undermining the culture.

Between 1898 and 1949, Puerto Rico had seven different official language teaching policies.<sup>14</sup> The first policy established in 1898 until 1900 dictated that English was the medium of instruction for all grades and completely omitted the teaching of Spanish. From 1900 to 1903, English became a subject and Spanish was the medium of instruction in elementary schools; this reversed in high school. Under the Faulkner-Dexter policy, named after the Puerto Rican Department of Education commissioners of the period, from 1903 to 1917, English again became the medium of instruction in all grades, and Spanish became a subject. From 1917, the year the Jones Act granted U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans, until 1930 under Commissioners Paul G. Miller and Juan B. Huyke, Spanish and English alternated as subject and the medium of instruction.

However, at the beginning of the 1930 school year President Herbert Hoover appointed the well-known Puerto Rican educator and scholar Dr. José Padín as commissioner of the Department of Education.<sup>15</sup> Padín ordered the use of Spanish in elementary grades and the use of English in high school as media of instruction. Padín resented that for years U.S. officials linked

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<sup>12</sup> Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Edith Algren de Gutiérrez, *The Movement Against Teaching English in Schools of Puerto Rico* (New York: Univeristy Press of America, 1987), 9. The medium of instruction refers to the language used to teach. The list of policies are also found on Roamé Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002), 106.

<sup>15</sup> Algren de Gutiérrez, *The Movement Against Teaching English in Schools of Puerto Rico*, 19.

language to degree of loyalty to the U.S. government and the level of enthusiasm over the Americanization process. In addition, he criticized the politicization of the language of instruction, and stated on various occasions that this was a pedagogical issue, not a political one.<sup>16</sup> The commissioner's curriculum changes and affront to the colonial government led to his forced resignation from the post in 1937 because he defied the colonial policy.

Puerto Rican José M. Gallardo, whose tenure lasted from 1937 to 1945, replaced Commissioner Padín. The Gallardo policy reversed Padín's effort and intensified the education of English but preserved Spanish as the native language. In the first two grades, Spanish was the medium of instruction and English was a subject. From third to eighth grades both Spanish and English were used as the media of instruction in varying subjects, coupled with a progressive increase in the time allotted to English as a subject. In high school, English became the medium of instruction and Spanish was a subject.<sup>17</sup> Gallardo's attempt at balance encountered resistance from the colonial government which regarded it as a failure.<sup>18</sup> Finally, under the tenure of Mariano Villaronga in 1949, Spanish became the medium of instruction and English became a subject.<sup>19</sup>

The abandonment of the Americanization effort led to the Puertoricanization era after 1949, which centered on Muñoz's cultural policies that imagined a common past based on *el jíbaro* and fixed on Spanish as the cultural language.<sup>20</sup> The Villaronga policy that effectively

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<sup>16</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 144.

<sup>17</sup> Algren de Gutiérrez, *The Movement Against Teaching English in Schools of Puerto Rico*, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 151. The resistance came specifically from U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Possessions presided over by New Mexican Denis Chavez, and the Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, who personally reprimanded and later apologized to Gallardo. Chavez expressed "any language should be, and ought to be, of secondary importance to English any place where the United States predominates."

<sup>19</sup> Algren de Gutiérrez, *The Movement Against Teaching English in Schools of Puerto Rico*, 10, 108.

<sup>20</sup> Schmidt, *The Politics of English*, 57-58; the image of the jíbaro as explained by Lillian Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Self, Community, and Nation* (Gainesville:

ended the Americanization effort ushered in the *apuertorriqueñamiento*, responsive to Puerto Rican needs and worldview, of the public education system, and cultural and language policies through the 1990s. Yet, this process contested throughout.<sup>21</sup> The Bilingualization period that Schmidt proposes has encountered challenges since 1969, as a new paradigm emerged when language policies in schools in the U.S. changed and promoted bilingual education.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Schmidt argues that after two decades of using Spanish as the medium of instruction, English arguably was no longer a menace for Puerto Rican culture, and the rise of a strong pro-statehood political elite brought the rejection of the cultural nationalism project of the past and the support of bilingual education.<sup>23</sup> However, between 1985 and 1991, an upheaval of cultural nationalism brought on by the cultural and language policies of the resurgence of the PPD briefly interrupted the emphasis on bilingualism.<sup>24</sup>

The heightened attention on bilingualism would return in 1997, when pro-statehood Governor Pedro Rosselló González signed a law that ordered the use of both Spanish and English in the classrooms, yet it favored Spanish as the classroom vernacular. Once more, the most recent policy reinforced the importance of Spanish in education and consequently the culture.<sup>25</sup> The language issue challenged the intentions of the Americanization project and ultimately contributed to its end, but the cultural identity discussion in other circles would also contest the U.S. colonial intentions.

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University Press of Florida, 1998); and Francisco A. Scarano, "The Jíbaro Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745-1823" *The American Historical Review* 101 (1996): 1398-1431.

<sup>21</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 212.

<sup>22</sup> Schmidt, *The Politics of English*, 61.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. This process during the 1980s will be discussed at length on the fifth chapter.

<sup>25</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 212.

### 1930S CULTURE AND IDENTITY DEBATE

Scholars César Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, in their synthetic work on Puerto Rico in the twentieth century, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, describe the most prominent discussion on culture during the first fifty years of the U.S. presence in the island. In the 1930s, a group of men and women of letters known as the *Generación del treinta* came of age, and redefined the Puerto Rican intellectual landscape.<sup>26</sup> The most important topic for this group of writers was the question of Puerto Rico's cultural identity. Ayala and Bernabe point out that in a 1929 issue of the journal *Indice*, two questions appeared: "Is our personality as a people completely defined?" and "Which are the defining signs of our collective character?" These queries would drive the debate of the cohort.<sup>27</sup> Ayala and Bernabe highlight three main cultural commentators who informed this discussion for the early twentieth century: Antonio S. Pedreira with his 1934 essay *Insularismo*, Tomás Blanco with his response to Pedreira in *Prontuario histórico de Puerto Rico*, and Luis Palés Matos's poetry gathered in his seminal work *Tuntún de pasa y grifería*.

In a span of ten years, Pedreira managed to establish a prolific writing career with his contributions of editorials, literary reviews, essays, biographies, and bibliographies. However, it was *Insularismo*, an essay that reflected on the image of the Puerto Rican peasant, that still resonates the most with his name. He was the director of the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos (Department of Hispanic Studies) at the University of Puerto Rico from 1927 until his death in 1939.<sup>28</sup> This position gave him an important role in the exchange among his cohort of cultural critics. According to Ayala and Bernabe, with *Insularismo* specifically, Pedreira "hoped both to animate a public sphere of cultural debate in Puerto Rico and shape it through his

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<sup>26</sup> César J. Ayala and Rafael Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century: A History since 1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), location 1541.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 1552.

representation of Puerto Rico as an emergent distinct cultural entity.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Pedreira sought to define the turning points that created what he called the “Puerto Rican personality.”<sup>30</sup>

In his quest to construct an “origins story” to this personality, Pedreira first explained that Puerto Rico at the time, in the 1930s, was still a Hispanic cultural colony that lacked uniqueness. In the prologue he pointed out that culture in Puerto Rico existed without “una lengua, ni un arte propio, ni una filosofía nacional.”<sup>31</sup> Yet, Pedreira suggested that Puerto Ricans did have a particular beginning that separated it from the rest of the former Spanish colonies, which he fleshed out in the rest of the essay.<sup>32</sup> He divided the Puerto Rican cultural evolution into three eras: from 1493 to the nineteenth century as an epoch of genesis (“el de genesis, pausado, receptivo, titubeante”), followed by a period of growth and awakening of the collective consciousness (“el crecimiento, nervioso, creador, dramático”) through the early nineteenth century to 1898, and the third era of transition (“el de transición, inseguro, cambiante, inestable”) since 1898.<sup>33</sup> All of these periods encompassed the ideas of cultural evolution but also highlighted the importance of race and language.

In their analysis, Ayala and Bernabe highlight the racist tone of Pedreira’s assessment of the Puerto Ricans’ mixed racial background.<sup>34</sup> Pedreira pointed out the importance of the cultural clash that defined the heterogeneous character of the racial composition of the island, the mixture of whites, blacks, and indigenous. Yet he called this mixture the root of Puerto Rican “confusion” that prevented them from fully developing a strong coherent culture.<sup>35</sup> The essay

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.; Antonio S. Pedreira, *Insularismo* (San Juan: Ediciones Norte, 1934, 2003), 17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Translation: “A language, nor an art of its own, nor a national philosophy.”

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Pedreira, *Insularismo*, 49.

<sup>34</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1559.

<sup>35</sup> Pedreira, *Insularismo*, 19.



used racial stereotypes of passivity, indecisiveness, and impulsivity to discuss the black population, and minimized racial tensions.<sup>36</sup> He portrayed the supposedly light-skinned jibaro, the Puerto Rican peasant, as the heart of the island's culture. However, he proposed that the younger elite generation had the task to move the culture beyond the last epoch, the transitional period underway since 1898 symbolized by the jíbaro.<sup>37</sup>

Pedreira also addressed the significance of language in this construction of culture and the Puerto Rican personality. He suggested that that language “es una arca depositaria de las substantividad de un pueblo.”<sup>38</sup> This highlighted the centrality of language to define the idiosyncrasies of a particular group of people. He added that Puerto Ricans contributed to marking the backbone of the Spanish language with “la nasalidad excesiva de las vocales de contacto con consonantes como en *cantan*, ñapa; la aspiración de la *s* final de sílaba; la velarización de la *n* final de palabra; la aspiración de la *j*” as examples of the peculiar intonation of Spanish in the island.<sup>39</sup> He described the self-consciousness of Puerto Ricans while speaking amongst other Latin Americans, resulting in over-pronunciation of letters and syllables, and the importance of archaic Spanish words left behind in the mouths of jíbaros, considered vulgar or bad grammar by the educated Puerto Rican of the 1930s.<sup>40</sup> Pereira considered all these idiosyncrasies as key to “traducir netamente emociones boricuas,” which in essence is the basis of the culture.<sup>41</sup> This work by Pedreira was the most cohesive discussion on Puerto Rican culture

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<sup>36</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1559.

<sup>37</sup> Pedreira, *Insularismo*, 122.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 113. Translation: “Is an ark depositary of the substance of a people”

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 113. Translation: “The excessive nasality of the vowels of contact with consonants as in sings, ñapa; The aspiration of the final syllable; The velarization of the final n word; The aspiration of the j.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 115. Translation: “Translate Puerto Rican emotions clearly”

at the time; therefore, it had unquestionable influence, for better or worse, on the midcentury debate on culture. His work served as a starting point.

Ayala and Bernabe explain that the 1935 *Prontuario Histórico de Puerto Rico* by Tomás Blanco offered the most influential response to Pedreira's *Insularismo*. While less racist in its analysis of the Puerto Rican cultural evolution, because he still minimized the racial problems, Blanco was more critical of the politics and economics of U.S. imperialism.<sup>42</sup> However, he agreed with Pedreira on the periodization of Puerto Rican history, which included a formation period that ends in the eighteenth century, a transformation period throughout the nineteenth century and finally a period of disorientation after 1898.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Blanco pointed out that by the end of the nineteenth century, Puerto Ricans had achieved a "conciencia de pueblo, de unidad social."<sup>44</sup> However, he remarked that as this solidified "personalidad de pueblo" was immediately subjugated under the colonial status "de una ponderosa y extraña nación con la que no teníamos deuda pendiente alguna."<sup>45</sup> Unlike *Insularismo*, the *Prontuario* reflected the distrust Blanco felt towards U.S. intentions in Puerto Rico, but also supported the gradual process of modernity that liberal-reformists began in the late nineteenth century and saw the New Deal policies as a continuation of them.<sup>46</sup> Blanco's response to Pedreira further problematized the U.S. presence and reflected its potential effect on the "maturity" of Puerto Rican culture.

Throughout the *Prontuario* Blanco emphasized the Hispanic foundation of Puerto Rican identity. In contrast to his treatment of the U.S. colonial presence, when discussing the

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<sup>42</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1622.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 1631.

<sup>44</sup> Tomás Blanco, *Prontuario histórico de Puerto Rico* (San Juan, Editorial del Departamento de Instrucción Pública, 1954), 98. Translation: "Awareness as a people, of social unity."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 99. Translation: "of a ponderous and strange nation with which we had no outstanding debt."

<sup>46</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1624, 1631.

nineteenth century, he was less critical of the Spanish empire. For example, he characterized the local separatist efforts as a response to the conflict between conservative and liberal forces in Spain, rather than a homegrown pro-independence movement against Spanish colonialism.<sup>47</sup> Blanco underlined the success of autonomists that by 1897 wrote the Carta Autonómica, which organized the short-lived civil provincial government of Spain in Puerto Rico. The U.S. invasion interrupted this connection, which according to Blanco, had defined the political and cultural lives of turn-of-the-century Puerto Ricans.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, citing the significance of the Hispanic past, he heavily criticized the imposition of English in education and the Americanization project in general.<sup>49</sup>

While Pedreira and Blanco explored the Puerto Rican origins story in prose, Luis Palés Matos explored the subject through poetry. Ayala and Bernabe explain that early in his career Palés experimented with *modernismo* influenced by Edgar Allen Poe and Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío; he then moved on to participate in the literary avant-garde of the 1920s.<sup>50</sup> The overthrow of all categories that Dadaism brought allowed him the space to use African culture as an alternative to the European aesthetic that pervaded literature in the island. In harmony with the intellectual notions that attributed the degradation of culture to the advance of civilization, Palés pushed for a glorification of the “cultures of the primitives.” A racist notion, nevertheless his works were unique in their effort to actually emphasize and position the African experience as part of the Puerto Rican cultural evolution and history.<sup>51</sup> The poems published in the 1937 anthology *Tuntún de pasa y grifería* were accumulated through the best part of a decade. Literary

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<sup>47</sup> Blanco, *Prontuario*, 98.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 110-112.

<sup>50</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1644.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 1644-1651.

critic and Palés expert, Mercedes López Baralt explains that more than reflect on a realist African experience, Palés sought to reveal *lo negro* -the blackness- still pervasive in Puerto Rican culture.<sup>52</sup> While Pedreira, and to a certain extent Blanco, saw the African as a corrupting element to the Puerto Rican personality, Palés pushed to go “back to basics,” what he calculated were the cultural foundations of Puerto Ricans, associating the African culture as the promise, or saving grace, of their culture.<sup>53</sup>

Critics are mixed on their assessment of Palés’s intentions in emphasizing and/or using the Afro-Caribbean experience to identify Puerto Rican culture. Ayala and Bernabe explain that Palés’s whiteness troubled critics that read his poetry as yet another white intervention in black culture that celebrated “eroticism and pleasure in a repressive culture, an evocation of the female black body by a white male.”<sup>54</sup> However, others read his poetry as subversive, turning racist notions on their heads, by using the sexualized black female body to provoke and have Puerto Rican society “celebrate precisely what it has constructed as inferior.”<sup>55</sup> For example, in “Majestad Negra,” Palés merged the image of a black woman dancing to percussion with the images and sounds of the toils of the sugar industry:

Culipandeando la Reina avanza,  
Y de su inmensa grupa resbalan  
Meneos cachondos que el congo cuaja  
En ríos de azúcar y de melaza.  
Prieto trapiche de sensual zafra...<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Mercedes López Baralt, “El mestizaje literario de Palés: un ten con ten entre neoplatonismo renacentista y mitología yoruba,” Presentation, Congreso Internacional de la Lengua Española, San Juan PR, March 16, 2016, Accessed on March 13, 2017, [http://congresosdelalengua.es/puertorico/plenarias/lopez\\_baralt-mercedes.htm](http://congresosdelalengua.es/puertorico/plenarias/lopez_baralt-mercedes.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1644-1651

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 1651.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 1658; See Mercedes López Baralt, *El barco en la botella: la poesía de Luis Palés Matos*. (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997).

<sup>56</sup> Luis Palés Matos, “Majestad Negra” Accessed on November 14, 2015 [http://www.elboricua.com/Poems\\_Pales\\_MajestadNegra.html](http://www.elboricua.com/Poems_Pales_MajestadNegra.html) Translation: “Swinging her hips the Queen advances, And from their immense rump they slide, sexy shimmy moves, In rivers of sugar and molasses. Dark sugar mills of sensual harvest..”

The poem brought together the images of the stereotypical proclivity of Africans for rhythm, and the most important source of employment and economic stability to Puerto Ricans at the time, the monoculture created by the sugar industry. Considering the racist and minimalist approaches of other contemporary Hispanophile cultural critics, using the African lens to understand such quotidian current circumstances of Puerto Rico in the 1930s was innovative. The poems of Palés, however would become more popular after the 1950s, as the institutionalization of culture is in full swing, and inclusion becomes a point of contention. Language seldom was a topic of discussion in his poetry, but critics point out his incorporation of African, specifically Yoruba, words in his poetic word play with Spanish.<sup>57</sup> This spoke of his intentions to highlight the influence of African languages on Puerto Rican Spanish. Palés and his view on an alternative narrative of the Puerto Rican identity complicated the notions that would inform the policies developed later on under Muñoz Marín.

Ayala and Bernabe suggest that, although the works of Pedreira, Blanco and Palés are more well-known because of their effort to find the roots of the Puerto Rican identity, other more radical works also addressed the origins question, such as those written by nationalists and women. Members of the *Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico* openly defended Catholicism as an essential aspect of Puerto Rican identity.<sup>58</sup> The work of nationalist poet Juan Antonio Corretjer agreed with the contention between culture and civilization, while it argued for the recognition of the centrality of religion in the spiritual resistance to U.S. colonialism.<sup>59</sup> Along those lines, in his manifesto, *nacionalista* leader Don Pedro Albizu Campos stated that U.S.'s colonial assault:

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<sup>57</sup> Mercedes López Baralt, "El mestizaje literario de Palés"

<sup>58</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1672.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 1672.

on our Christian social order in a brutal effort to dissolve our family structure and destroy the morality of a noble race, imposing via governmental agencies the spread of prostitution under the deceitful banner of birth control; the ridiculous effort to destroy our Hispanic civilization with a system of public education used in the United States to enslave the masses; the mad arrogance of claiming to spiritually guide a nation whose soul was forged in the purest Christianity: these are our most serious complaints.<sup>60</sup>

The U.S. form of Christianity that had yet to reconcile the racial (and racial violence) issues affronted the Puerto Rican Christian tradition and character that with Catholicism had “destroyed every deep racial division.”<sup>61</sup> He argued that Hispanic culture, unlike the Anglo-American, accommodated non-whites.<sup>62</sup> Culturally, Albizu Campos considered the Puerto Rican nation a depository of Greco-Latin civilization, based on a Christian foundation that predated Jamestown by a hundred years.<sup>63</sup> Ayala and Bernabe explain that other nationalists such as José Paniagua Serracante and José Toro Nazario maintained that spirituality was key to the process of resistance to the “crass materialism that had led to acceptance of U.S. rule.”<sup>64</sup>

Women voices were rare during this time. However, the increased access to the University of Puerto Rico opened up a space for women to contribute to these male-dominated elite intellectual discussions on culture and identity.<sup>65</sup> The *Generación del treinta* included literary critics such as Margot Arce and Concha Meléndez, and poets such as Julia de Burgos and

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<sup>60</sup> Pedro Albizu Campos, *Free Puerto Rico* (New York: Prism Key Press, 2012), location 71. This manifesto dates to 1935, I used a published translation.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 84. Although, he even encountered racism as he ascended within the nationalist party; Kelvin Santiago-Valles, ““Our Race Today [Is] the Only Hope for the World”: An African Spaniard as Chieftain of the Struggle against “Sugar Slavery” in Puerto Rico, 1926-1934” *Caribbean Studies* 35 (2007): 117. Accessed on March 15, 2017 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25613093>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 84, 107-40.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 84-105, 116.

<sup>64</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1672. Also, Santiago Valles suggests the influence of José Enrique Rodó’s *arielismo* permeated *nacionalista* analysis of U.S. colonialism. As well, José Vasconcelos’s *La raza cósmica*’s influenced Albizu’s concept of pan-Latino racial cohesion against white-Anglo Saxon. Santiago-Valles, “Our Race Today,” (118-120).

<sup>65</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1700.

Clara Lair (Mercedes Negrón Muñoz). Ayala and Bernabe explain that by 1940, the Asociación de Mujeres Graduadas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, organized in 1936, had 368 members, and in 1945 it launched *Asomante*, becoming the best-known literary journal for over 20 years under the leadership of Nilita Vientós Gastón.<sup>66</sup> These women not only discussed Puerto Rican culture, but they also explored other topics such as political activism, gender norms, eroticism, labor issues, racism, and nationalism, usually illustrating a more leftist point of view than their erudite male counterparts. In addition, these women offered counterpoints to the Eurocentric and masculine narrative that mainstream authors such as Pedreira offered. The most renowned work, for its diversity of topics and appeal, was the poetry by Julia de Burgos.

Her poetry illustrated the contention between social conventions at all levels, from marriage to racism. Burgos was actively involved with the Partido Nacionalista since she met Albizu Campos, in 1934. In her poetry, she expressed her leftist nationalism when she addressed concerns over colonialism, fascism, and labor strife. Her two most famous poems “Yo misma fui mi ruta” and “A Julia de Burgos,” published in 1939, are examples of the complexity of her goals as poet and activist. As Ayala and Bernabe put it, these are “declarations of independence from social conventions and traditional women’s role and a declaration of adherence to social and labor struggles.”<sup>67</sup> In “Ay Ay de la grifa negra,” she made a statement against racism, but this poem also, along the lines of Palés, reclaimed the African past as essential to her identity as Puerto Rican:

Dícenme que mi abuelo fue el esclavo  
por quien el amo dio treinta monedas.  
Ay ay ay, que el esclavo fue mi abuelo  
es mi pena, es mi pena.  
Si hubiera sido el amo,

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 1700-1706.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 1714.

sería mi vergüenza;  
que en los hombres, igual que en las naciones,  
si el ser el siervo es no tener derechos,  
el ser el amo es no tener conciencia.

... Ay ay ay, que mi negra raza huye  
y con la blanca corre a ser trigueña;  
¡a ser la del futuro,  
fraternidad de América!<sup>68</sup>

Unlike Palés, Burgos exposed the reality of the African experience and its impact on the culture. Straying away from the concept of the jíbaro, the poem expressed the visibility of blackness in the image of the Puerto Rican. The verses also underlined the immediate historical connection between her generation and black slaves of the past, her *abuelo*. She acknowledged the whitening of the Puerto Rican identity, in which the whitewashed *trigueño (a)*, a term that roughly translated means light brown or light-skinned, hid blackness. Like Palés, she never overtly addressed language in her poetry; however, having spent half her life in New York City, in her later years she wrote in English. Her most well-known English-language poem was “Farewell from Welfare Island,” written in 1953.

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<sup>68</sup> Julia de Burgos, “Ay Ay de la grifa negra,” Accessed on December 12, 2015  
[http://www.elboricua.com/Poems\\_Burgos\\_AyAyAyGrifaNegra.html](http://www.elboricua.com/Poems_Burgos_AyAyAyGrifaNegra.html).

Translation:

They tell me that my grandfather was the slave  
for whom the master paid thirty coins.  
Ay, ay, ay, that the slave was my grandfather  
is my sadness, is my sadness.  
If he had been the master  
it would be my shame:  
that in men, as in nations,  
if being the slave is having no rights  
being the master is having no conscience.

Ay, ay, ay my black race flees  
and with the white runs to become bronzed;  
to be one for the future,  
fraternity of America!

Translation provided by Jack Agüeros as it appears on the webpage  
[http://www.favoritepoem.org/poem\\_AyAyAydelaGrifaNegra.html](http://www.favoritepoem.org/poem_AyAyAydelaGrifaNegra.html) Accessed on April 24 2017.



The *Generación del treinta* had a lasting effect on the cultural identity debate, and to a certain degree on the issue of language. As the upcoming discussion will demonstrate, writers and cultural critics of later generations engaged the works of Pedreira and Blanco most often because they represented the earliest and most overarching efforts to develop the topic of identity. Their recollection of the Spanish past would be especially important to solidify the cultural project decades later. However, the intervention of contemporaries such as Albizu Campos, Palés, and Burgos, even though subordinated in the future larger narrative, brought up significant alternative elements to the Puerto Rican culture. The role of religion and the Afro-Caribbean experience in the origins story of the Puerto Rican identity would continue to challenge the emphasis on the superiority of the Hispanic past and the whitewashing embodied in the image of the jíbaro. The *Generación del cuarenta* would grapple with this discussion, but the new political landscape would subordinate their words considerably.

### **THE PPD IN POWER**

The transition of the identity and cultural debate into the 1940s was wrought with the changes in the political scene. The advent of the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD) in 1938, with its initial determination to bring economic and social reforms while sidetracking the political concerns over the status of the island, affected the cultural debate. The leader of the PPD was Luis Muñoz Marín, the son of Luis Muñoz Rivera, a prominent politician and writer at the turn of the century. Following his father's sudden death in 1916, he moved in the intellectual and literary enclaves of the eastern United States. After a failed attempt at a formal degree in Georgetown University, Muñoz Marín mostly became autodidactic, absorbing information from his beloved *tertulias* in socialist and progressive circles, pursuing a bohemian lifestyle and writing, resulting in the production of essays and articles in socialist publications throughout the

1910s. However by the 1920s, Muñoz Marín began to reconsider his position and became more of a liberal reformist, heavily involved in the labor movements in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.<sup>69</sup> These interests led to his conclusion that the middle-and working-class sectors of the Puerto Rican population needed to become allies to create what he called a “peaceful revolution,” that is, bringing in changes through reforms.<sup>70</sup> With this in mind, by 1931 he returned to Puerto Rico for good and finally fully accepted the charge his father had left him to become involved in the family business, Puerto Rican politics.

Initially, unlike his father, who argued for autonomist powers during the last decades of the Spanish rule, Muñoz Marín entered the Partido Liberal as an *independentista*, joining the younger wing of the party that included Ernesto Ramos Antonini and Samuel R. Quiñonez. This younger crowd successfully pushed the party leader, Antonio R. Barceló to adopt an *independentista* program, despite the objections of the wealthier older wing that favored autonomy.<sup>71</sup> Muñoz Marín became a senator in 1932, and began to roll out his reformist agenda. By 1934, he had suggested the agrarian reform that eventually would be known as the Plan Chardón, named after his collaborator, agronomist Carlos Chardón. The plan proposed that the government buy the properties of the U.S company United Porto Rico Sugar Company, divide the land according to productivity, and distribute it between small farmers and the landless. The point was to control sugar overproduction, while through Puerto Rico’s own recovery agency, the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA), bring social reform and foster new infrastructure across the island.<sup>72</sup> The creation of the PRRA in 1936 under the President’s New

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<sup>69</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1303; Also, see Cristóbal A. Borges, “Unspoken Prejudice: Racial Politics, Gendered Norms, and the Transformation of Puerto Rican Identity in the Twentieth Century” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at El Paso, 2014), 29-73.

<sup>70</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1318.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 1324.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 1358.

Deal, to the chagrin of his opponents, gave Muñoz Marín unprecedented power and access far beyond his senate seat.<sup>73</sup> During his first few years as senator, he sought economic reforms through the New Deal, which would eventually, he argued, regulate capitalism, restructure the economy, and prepare Puerto Rico for political independence.<sup>74</sup>

Yet, the rise of the Nationalist movement between 1936 and 1938 led by Albizu Campos created an ideological conundrum within the political and intellectual world in Puerto Rico. As much as it is still denied or debated, the message of the Nationalist ideology that railed against the U.S. political and economic control, and its consequences, resonated with poor workers still heavily dependent on the sugar industry and affected the way people saw Muñoz Marín's reformist efforts. Ayala and Bernabe suggest that unlike Muñoz Marín, who still at the time was independentista, Albizu Campos understood that independence was not to be received but that self-determination was to be fought for, that Washington would not simply eventually grant it. The violence that ensued between the authorities and Nationalists is remarked as one of the bloodiest episodes in Puerto Rican history, resulting in brutal deaths, executions, civil rights violations, persecution, and torture, among other disastrous interactions. The immediate impact of this clash was the shakeup of the political parties. In this context, alliances were broken and the Partido Liberal ousted Muñoz Marín and his supporters, who created the PPD in 1938, winning its first legislative elections in 1940. A victory of the PPD, Muñoz Marín argued, would inaugurate the age of "the people."<sup>75</sup>

Intellectuals continued the discussion on the topic of culture through the decade. The most important of these forums took place at the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño* in 1940. The Ateneo

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 1378.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 1338.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 1849.

had been the cultural and higher learning institution of the island since 1876, focusing on the arts, history, literature, and the natural and social sciences. By the 1940s, it served as an additional space (outside the University of Puerto Rico, UPR) where academics created forums for widespread discussions. In this occasion, the Ateneo witnessed the rise of an important intellectual debate for the following decades, the conflict between the ideas of cultural “universalism” and autochthonous culture in higher education. In *Problemas de la Cultura en Puerto Rico* a combination of elder and younger academics considered this issue in contrast with the contemporary political context.

In debating the influence of the UPR on the development of Puerto Rican culture, Professors Margot Arce and Jaime Benítez clashed over the approach.<sup>76</sup> Arce insisted on the responsibility of the university to create a “cultured man” instead of a specialist, in service to others, not to his own economic gain. Her concept of culture included a focus on the complexity of the Puerto Rican circumstance, which included their history, sociology, politics, language, art, and traditions.<sup>77</sup> Benítez argued that culture was a set of goals to be attained inspired by universal values constructed by the Greek and Renaissance culture, Christianity and modern science.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, the university should promote a universalist ideology.<sup>79</sup> The implications of this debate would be visible as the upcoming cultural policies were established and Benítez

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<sup>76</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1761-1772.

<sup>77</sup> Margot Arce, “La misión de la universidad,” in *Problemas de la cultura en Puerto Rico: foro del Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, 1940 (Rio Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1976) 238-239; Writer René Marqués would also criticize the universalist trend, calling it a “cosmopolitanismo de pésimo gusto” (“cosmopolitanism of terrible taste.”) Rene Marqués, “Apuntes para una interpretación: Un autor, un intrínquilis, y una obra” 1954, 20, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>78</sup> Jaime Benítez, “Definiciones de cultura,” in *ibid.*, 13, 15.

<sup>79</sup> Pedro A. Malavet, *America’s Colony: The Political and Cultural Conflict between the United States and Puerto Rico* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 101.

defined the role of UPR in the cultural project. However, at this time, the cultural concerns would be subordinated to economic and political matters.

The PPD's "Pan, Tierra y Libertad" slogan demarcated Muñoz Marín's populist agenda and the political changes after the 1940s. In 1946, President Harry S. Truman appointed Jesus T. Piñero governor of the island, the first Puerto Rican selected for the post. Then in 1948, after much negotiation with the U.S. Congress, Puerto Ricans elected a governor for the first time. Senator Muñoz Marín succeeded Governor Piñero on January 2, 1949.<sup>80</sup> As scholars argue, broadly, the democratization of the island's political process was partly in response to the postwar context of decolonization.<sup>81</sup> Internally, this moment gave *populares* the position to negotiate for political autonomy. The immediate focus of Muñoz Marín as governor was to develop his economic and political policies, which he called *Operación Manos a la Obra* (Operation Bootstrap) and *Operación Estado Libre Asociado* (Operation Commonwealth), respectively. Expanding on the earlier Plan Chardón and New Deal policies, Bootstrap promoted industrialization and accommodated American investment and capital, while at the same time, encouraged the movement of Puerto Rican (surplus) workers to the States. Bootstrap would be a long-term strategy to secure a capitalist progress. Politically, however, by this time Muñoz Marín, the most important intellectual of the 1940s in scope and influence, vacillated over the idea of independence, since economic progress was so reliant on U.S. private investment and could be secured by a permanent political relationship.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Lester D. Langley, *The United States and the Caribbean in the Twentieth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 245.

<sup>81</sup> Borges, "Unspoken Prejudice," 71; Antonio Sotomayor, *The Sovereign Colony: Olympic Sport, National Identity, and International Politics in Puerto Rico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 131.

<sup>82</sup> See Malavet, *America's Colony*, 69.

After Muñoz Marín and Resident Commissioner Antonio Fernós successfully negotiated with Washington, the U.S. Public Law 600 of July 3, 1950 (P.L. 600) signed by President Truman allowed Puerto Ricans to begin the process of drafting a constitution for the first time.<sup>83</sup> The law first required that Puerto Rico residents vote to accept or reject the terms of P.L. 600, which among other issues, included accepting U.S. federal jurisdiction over the island. Demonstrating Muñoz Marín's "poder de convocatoria" and the effectiveness of his populist approach, Puerto Ricans overwhelmingly chose to accept the terms of the law, and then elected a constitutional assembly to draft the document.<sup>84</sup> The constitution draft had to contain the terms of the relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico as stipulated in the Foraker Act of 1900 and the Jones Act of 1917; in addition, it included a bill of rights and created a republican form of government.

The U.S. Congress ratified the Constitution of the Estado Libre Asociado (Commonwealth) de Puerto Rico on July 25, 1952, fifty-four years to the day since the U.S. invasion. The constitution seemed to simply revise the colonial relationship with the U.S., since for example, the Jones Act, which replaced the Foraker Act and granted U.S. citizenship to Puerto Rico residents, was renamed the Federal Relations Act.<sup>85</sup> Yet, the local educational campaign orchestrated by Muñoz Marín sold it to Puerto Ricans as new political association that he called "un pacto," a compact.<sup>86</sup> According to the governor, this compact of equals would ensure the best of both worlds: some degree of self-rule and a secured U.S.-style economic progress. In addition, it would allow Puerto Ricans to express their own sense of self as a nation

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<sup>83</sup> Sotomayor, *The Sovereign Colony*, 131; Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2094; and Malavet, *America's Colony*, 70. The resident commissioner is Puerto Rico's representative in Congress who is able to speak in the House and serve on committees, but may not vote nor author bills.

<sup>84</sup> Translation: "convening power"

<sup>85</sup> For more details on the Jones Act, see Malavet, *America's Colony*, 40.

<sup>86</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2121.

within the context of this relationship, and even eventually serve as an example to and bridge between the Spanish-speaking world and the U.S.

With the economic and political reforms in motion, by the mid-1950s, a cultural reform became increasingly important to uphold the previous two. Scholar Catherine Kennerley, in her book *Negociaciones culturales*, explains that Muñoz Marín carefully balanced the socioeconomic, political, and later the cultural, reforms quite successfully, insisting privately and publicly on the importance of each and their interdependence.<sup>87</sup> In her study of the División de Educación de la Comunidad (DivEdCo) at the Departamento de Instrucción Pública (DIP), Marsh outlines the intellectual development that preceded the establishment of the cultural policies under the ELA. The groups of writers and artists active since the 1930s would become essential talent to the task at hand of constructing a democratic pedagogy, which would make citizens active learners in charge of their own acquisition of knowledge with the ultimate mission to become better citizens.<sup>88</sup> However, the mission of DivEdCo would also be predicated on the cultural nationalism constructed by Muñoz Marín.

Scholars recognize the effect of the *Generación del treinta* and to a lesser degree the *Generación del cuarenta* on the policies implemented later on. This latter generation of scholars included Lidio Cruz Monclova, Labor Gómez, Luis Díaz Soler, and Arturo Morales Carrión who created the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas at the UPR in 1946.<sup>89</sup> Also, some scholars include Muñoz Marín as a member of the intellectual production of the decade. All of them contributed to the continuity of the concept of *personalidad puertorriqueña* and drew comparison

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<sup>87</sup> Catherine Marsh Kennerley, *Negociaciones culturales: Los intelectuales y el proyecto pedagógico del estado muñocista* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2009), 46; and Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*, 153.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>89</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2678.

between the PPD's gradualist agenda and the nineteenth-century autonomist movement.<sup>90</sup>

However, beyond influence, the cohort known as the *Generación del cincuenta* were vigorous participants in the creation of the policies that institutionalized culture after ELA.<sup>91</sup> This group included writers René Marqués, Pedro Juan Soto and Emilio Díaz Valcárcel, and artists Lorenzo Homar and Rafael Tufiño. DivEdCo or other components of the government's cultural arm would eventually employ all of these artists. The most prominent voice of the generation was playwright and novelist René Marqués.

Marqués was both an ally and a critic of Muñoz Marín's cultural and political ideologies. In his writing, especially his most respected play presented in 1953, the dramedy *La Carreta*, Marqués criticized the pace of modernity and the impact of Bootstrap's policies, while recalling the centrality of the jíbaro at the core of Puerto Rican identity. The story begins in the countryside. Feeling the economic pull, a rural Puerto Rican family first moves to a San Juan slum, *La Perla*, and later to the Bronx, New York. Both moves were disastrous for the family, since they either lost each other to separation, societal ills, or death, or lost a sense of who they were in the modern industrialized context of the metropolitan cities. It is only when they returned to their agrarian, rural roots to bury the eldest brother, the most enthusiastic seeker "la vida decente" killed by the machine he revered, that they found themselves again.<sup>92</sup> His jíbaros are embattled by the changes, sobered by the reality of their circumstances, but willing to compromise their dignity on their way to a better life. This portrayal stands in contrast to the jíbaro that populares promoted of a man who steadfastly embraced the changes brought in through ELA and

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 2688.

<sup>91</sup> Marsh, *Negociaciones culturales*, 74.

<sup>92</sup> "*La Carreta*" was part of the Puerto Rican literature segment of the Spanish class in high school, therefore I have read it extensively, and have seen two theater revivals of it at the Centro de Bellas Artes Hall.



Bootstrap. In fact, it was that acceptance of progress that made Muñoz Marín worry about the repercussion on the culture and identity.

### **PROPOSING OPERACIÓN SERENIDAD**

The goal of the cultural policies, under what he called *Operación Serenidad* (Operation Serenity), was to create institutions that would maintain the “imaginario cultural puertorriqueño.”<sup>93</sup> For Muñoz Marín, this collective cultural imaginary was protected by the political status. In a speech to the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico in 1953, a year after the signing of the ELA, Muñoz firmly separated the political and the cultural identity:

Si se concibiera que esa lealtad a nuestra ciudadanía de Estados Unidos significa subordinación, significa sentirse cohibido de bregar con la honda cuestión de la inerte asimilación cultural de lengua y maneras y espíritu, de cómo ha de ser el puertorriqueño como tal puertorriqueño, entonces sí que estaría inextricablemente unido el status político a la aspiración cultural de Puerto Rico. Entonces sí que no sería libertad el status político que así cohibirá y angustiará al ser puertorriqueño.<sup>94</sup>

According to him, if culture and its symbols, such as language, were truly subordinated to the U.S., then there would be no democratic freedom as the ELA had promised. This was the selling point of his rhetoric, the democratic values of ELA, which allowed for the cultural development he hoped for at the time. Furthermore, in the same speech Muñoz Marín sought to underscore the ideological equality between Puerto Rico and the U.S., saying “nuestra lealtad es lealtad de hombres libres...es lealtad de iguales que son diferentes, más genuina que la colonia,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 46. Translation: “Puerto Rican cultural imaginary”

<sup>94</sup> Discurso en Asamblea General de la Asociación de Maestros, 29 de diciembre de 1953, “La personalidad puertorriqueña en el ELA,” 3, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín. Translation: “If this loyalty to our citizenship of the United States were conceived to mean subordination, it means to feel constrained to deal with the deep question of the inert cultural assimilation of language and manners and spirit, of how Puerto Rican must be as a Puerto Rican, Would be inextricably linked political status to the cultural aspiration of Puerto Rico. Then, yes, it would not be freedom, the political status that will restrain and distress the Puerto Rican being.”

no menos sincera que la de similares.”<sup>95</sup> He defended this relationship as one of equals that genuinely sought to preserve freedom.

However, when he publically articulated Operación Serenidad for the first time in a speech in Boston at the Harvard Alumni Association on Commencement Day in 16 June 1955, he portrayed it as the most difficult aspect of his modernizing apparatus, alongside the Commonwealth (ELA) and Bootstrap (Manos a la Obra).<sup>96</sup> Muñoz Marín explained that it aimed “to give some kind of effective command to the human spirit over the economic process.”<sup>97</sup> His paternalistic government already had control of the economic and political development; now it would also control the sociocultural changes. At its most rhetorical level, it sought to educate people on how to deal with rapid economic and political changes of modernity after World War II. He emphasized that at its core a society in which Serenidad was successful “would use its economic power increasingly for the extension of freedom, of knowledge, and of the understanding imagination rather than for a rapid multiplication of goods, in hot pursuit of a still more vertiginous multiplication of wants.”<sup>98</sup> Therefore, these modernizing engines would attack poverty at every level, at the physical and at the intellectual, emphasizing the need for a stronger education system that provided for every need, material or not, of its society. While he never actually explained why he called it *Serenidad*, it clearly implied an attempt to appease certain anxieties over modernization, and even more subliminally, colonialism.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 4. Translation: “Our loyalty is the loyalty of free men ... it is the loyalty of equals who are different, more genuine than the colony, no less sincere than those alike.”

<sup>96</sup> Luis Agrait, Luis Rosario Albert, Pedro Reina Pérez, Catherine Marsh Kennerley and Jimmy Seale Collazo, *Explorando la Operación Serenidad*. (San Juan: Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín, 2011), 11; Also, Discurso en la Universidad de Harvard (define la conceptualización de Operación Serenidad), 16 de junio de 1955, section V, serie 9, box, 8, folder 4, document 10, page 5, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>97</sup> Discurso en la Universidad de Harvard (define la conceptualización de Operación Serenidad), 5.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 5.

In this rhetoric, Marsh proposes that the institutionalization of culture started as a popular, democratic, educational project that began to develop under DivEdCo since its establishment in 1948.<sup>99</sup> Muñoz Marín understood that educational campaigns, for example, informed the public of the process that culminated in the establishment of ELA had cemented the triumph of the PPD and changed the political culture of the island, with an electorate that felt included in the conversation of its government, a true democracy. Muñoz Marín solidified the connection between culture and democracy in a post-World War II and post-fascist world, which was entering the Cold War.<sup>100</sup> Marsh explains that Muñoz Marín added a third element to the project, community, which geared its efforts to construct stronger bonds in rural regions through community collaboration.<sup>101</sup> However, it is important to put into context, that with all his rhetoric about democracy, Muñoz Marín had supported the Gag Law of 1948, which punished anti-American rhetoric and kept Nationalists' related propaganda, including symbols and meetings, prohibited under the law. Through his tenure, he would emphasize Puerto Rico's commitment to democratic values, in contrast to communist countries where neither freedom nor democracy were possible.<sup>102</sup> Yet with the cultural policies Muñoz Marín maintained an ambiguous and complicated relationship with the Nationalist and independentista factions since he ultimately coopted their ideas and cultural symbols.

First under DivEdCo and later under Serenidad, the process of institutionalization of culture represented the salvaging of the national from *nacionalismo*, of recuperating the state

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<sup>99</sup> Marsh, *Negociaciones Culturales*, 62.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 63-64.

<sup>102</sup> Mensaje de Estado, Gobernador Luis Muñoz Marín, 22 de enero de 1958 in *Mensajes al Pueblo Puertorriqueño pronunciados ante las cámaras legislativas 1949-1964* (San Germán, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 1980), 199.

symbols, according to Marsh.<sup>103</sup> The most debated act of “rescue” was the use of the once outlawed Nationalist flag as the symbol of the Commonwealth in 1952, which Muñoz argued was an attempt at unity “en su libre diversidad de pensamiento, debe presidir la vida de todo buen pueblo,” not coercion.<sup>104</sup>



Illustration 1.1 Luis Muñoz Marín flies the flag now of the ELA for the first time, officially, on the occasion of the proclamation of the Constitution of Puerto Rico, on July 25, 1952. Archivo Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

The jíbaro was another preserved cultural symbol used by every political faction to represent the essence of the Puerto Rican personality, continued to be central in the cultural policies of the DivEdCo and Serenidad. The foundation of the cultural project was “el campo,” the countryside, as Muñoz Marín regarded it as the utopian or ideal Puerto Rican community. The creation of DivEdCo was an attempt to filter the process of industrialization through education and culture.<sup>105</sup> By 1953, the governor was interested in fortifying this link between

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 65. Translation: “In their free diversity of thought, must preside over the life of every good people”

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 62, 65.

education and culture, and had ordered studies on the feasibility of establishing an organized cultural project through the DIP, all the while building his ideas on Serenidad.

DivEdCo, as a community-centered program, as Solsiree Del Moral in *Negotiating Empire* explains, was one of the DIP's creative ways to address the issues with schooling the majority of the population that still lived in rural communities, using different mediums such as educational radio and film programs.<sup>106</sup> This initiative began to demonstrate the importance of the link between education and culture. With this purpose at hand, the governor initiated a series of closed-door conferences in 1953 at the governor's mansion La Fortaleza with the Secretary of the DIP Mariano Villaronga; University Chancellor Jaime Benítez; Antonio J. Colorado, Director of the Editorial of the DIP; and Teodoro Moscoso, Director of Fomento Industrial (Industrial Development), among others. At the first meeting on July 21, 1953, a year after the signing of ELA, the governor underscored the importance of assessing and improving education in Puerto Rico.<sup>107</sup> Villaronga and Benítez discussed the efficacy of completely reforming education or targeting certain areas of the system, respectively. The governor recommended that the committee should be open to either route.<sup>108</sup> All agreed that mediums of mass communication such as radio and television (in its infancy then) were significant tools to approach education to reach every sector of the population inexpensively.<sup>109</sup>

In the second meeting, a week later, the governor began by revealing his concerns for the effects of the economic and political process on the Puerto Rican character. Muñoz Marín described the modern Puerto Rican as “más dinámico y emprendedor que el de antes y que debe

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<sup>106</sup> Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire*, 154.

<sup>107</sup> “Conferencia sobre educación. Confidencial. Minutas 1953,” section V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 1, folder 4<sup>a</sup>, document 9, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 2.

propiciarse su desarrollo en ese sentido pero a la vez tratar de que su formación espiritual y sus actitudes tiendan hacia la creación de una personalidad moderna y capaz de vivir la buena vida...teniendo unas ideas razonablemente correctas sobre el propósito de su vida y posición en la sociedad en que le ha tocado vivirla.”<sup>110</sup> His concern over industrialization and modernity, and its effects on common Puerto Ricans, seems both genuine and paternalistic. He stated that it was the responsibility of the DIP to “estimular las buenas cualidades y actitudes del puertorriqueño y se deberá corregir aquellas que no lo sean.”<sup>111</sup> In his handwritten notes of this meeting, Muñoz Marín pointed out the importance of making education accessible and practical for children and adults.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, he highlighted the role of parents; he saw that “educación de padres como educadores” as key to successful students.<sup>113</sup>

During the third meeting in September 1953, the committee directly discussed the topic of education and culture. Expanding the discussion on the correlation between the industrial and economic changes and Puerto Rican culture, Moscoso expressed that nothing would have such an impact on the “natural e inevitable desarrollo de nuestra cultura” as the economic growth taking place.<sup>114</sup> The governor replied that recognizing this effect was crucial but it was up to the administration to help Puerto Ricans understand that they could learn to make those changes work for their own growth instead of being swept by them.<sup>115</sup> At the same time, Muñoz Marín articulated his preoccupation over the influence of these changes on language. He explained that

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid, Document 7, 1-2. Translation: “more dynamic and entrepreneurial than the past and that should promote its development in that sense but at the same time try that their spiritual formation and their attitudes tend towards the creation of a modern personality and able to live the good life ... having some ideas reasonably correct about the purpose of his life and position in the society in which he has had to live it.”

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, Document 7, 2. Translation: “stimulate the good qualities and attitudes of the Puerto Rican and should correct those that are not.”

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, Document 8, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, Document 8, 2. Translation: “pedagogy of parents as educators”

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, Document 4, 2. Translation: “natural and inevitable development of our culture”

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, Document 4, 2.

the technological advances brought on by industrialization could affect the way Puerto Ricans expressed their ideas and feelings in their own language, Spanish. This was received by the committee with concern but would become more prominent in discussion in the early 1960s.

In the last memo available from these meetings, dated October 1953, Muñoz Marín closed the encounter explaining his concern with the conservation and development of Puerto Rican culture.<sup>116</sup> Directly stating the importance of maintaining the educational goals they had agreed upon, such as making education accessible, practical, and flexible to the needs of both children and adult students, but also keeping in mind the cultural component, was key to avoiding being “absorbidos culturalmente por la Unión Americana ni tampoco caer en el estrecho y negativo nacionalismo de nuestros vecinos cercanos y lejanos en la América Latina.”<sup>117</sup> He then delegated the task of making these changes possible to the people in charge of each the agencies involved such as Villaronga, Benítez, and Moscoso, who in turn respectively would create subcommittees that would directly implement the determined changes.<sup>118</sup>

In the end these meetings were very influential for the development of Serenidad. As is visible in these memo summaries, Muñoz Marín had a persistent preoccupation with industrialization and the effectiveness of public education to address this changing society. Although he had expressed admiration for the cultural traits that made the U.S. a successful industrial-capitalist society, such as the sense of competition, he worried that the excess of successful capitalist progress would affect the way Puerto Ricans related to those changes.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid, Document 2, 2.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, Document 2, 2-3. Translation: “Absorbed culturally by the American Union, nor fall into the narrow and negative nationalism of our neighbors, far and wide in Latin America.”

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, Document 2, 3.

<sup>119</sup> “Ideal Cultural,” sección: V, serie 17, sub-serie 1, box 2, folder 1, document 1, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

With this in mind, the following summer, in June 1954, Muñoz Marín sent a memo to Antonio J. Colorado, the secretary of the DIP, where he outlined suggestions on a cultural development program.

Muñoz Marín opened the memo stating that the DIP should be considered as a “ministerio de cultura.”<sup>120</sup> Giving this cultural task to the DIP, Muñoz argued, would allow the government to promote literature, sculpture, painting, music, and other artistic expressions.<sup>121</sup> He suggested the creation of a “División de Bellas Artes” that would support these art forms. His ideas went beyond constructing the cultural nationalism that would define Puerto Rican identity to controlling the avenues that supported the expression of these traits. The most curious section of the memo, however, was his list of suggestions for editorial interventions that would contribute to the management of these cultural outlets. Muñoz Marín first suggested a series of anthologies that would highlight historical monuments, Puerto Rican authors, and classical works of literature of the “pensamiento occidental.”<sup>122</sup> Other suggestions include painting murals on public buildings, inviting local and Latin American artists to expand the teaching of art in schools, and creating art exhibits that showcased local artists that could be moved around between cities, town plazas, and schools. Within his more concrete suggestions was the creation of a museum that would encompass art, history, and natural history, open and accessible to the general public, and the establishment of a music conservatory and “escuelas libres de música”

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<sup>120</sup> “Sugerencias para programa de fomento cultural que tuviera su base en el Departamento de Instrucción Pública,” section: V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 2, folder 1, document 6, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 2. Translate: “western (occidental) thinking”



that would focus on the teaching and dissemination of folkloric music.<sup>123</sup> Ultimately, instituting a national symphony orchestra was another of his goals.<sup>124</sup>

He closed the memo remarking that previously the PPD focused successfully on bettering the material necessities of Puerto Ricans. However, the party could not neglect the cultural, “la expresión artística, en la creación y el goce espiritual,” because these promoted a better life.<sup>125</sup> Centering on the DIP as one of the most important agents of cultural propaganda had been part of the discussion for years, as the closed-door meetings reflected, and multiple studies read by Muñoz further pushed for this approach to institutionalizing culture. As remarked previously in this chapter, educating the electorate had been the mission and tool of the PPD before pressing for the signing of the ELA and professedly democratizing the political and economic changes since the 1930s. However, populares employed both formal education in the classrooms and popular forms of disseminating information to push for a higher level of engagement in cultural discussions. Expert advisors such as educational reformer and curriculum specialist Harold Rugg suggested to Muñoz Marín that public schools benefited from the universalization of their curriculum. Teaching students about “their causal framework in critical world developments” was more constructive than solely focusing on the internal circumstances of Puerto Rico.<sup>126</sup> To develop *Serenidad*, Muñoz eventually would take these two points into account.

By 1959, Muñoz had staffer Esteban Padilla summarize the ideas already in place since the launch of *Serenidad*. He proposed that the efforts through *Serenidad* were threefold:

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 3-4. Translation: “Artistic expression, in spiritual creation and enjoyment”

<sup>126</sup> Harold Rigg, “Culture and Education in Puerto Rico” 1955-1956, section: V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 2, folder 5, document 3, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín. Rugg was controversial progressive reformer, known for his 1920s social studies textbooks, see Murry R. Nelson, “Rugg on Rugg: His Theories and His Curriculum” *Curriculum Inquiry* 8 (1978): 119-32.

education, comprehensive planning, and development of cultural and recreational facilities and programs.<sup>127</sup> Its first goal was education, which had heavily focused on reaching school-age children, but under Serenidad it would include adult students. To reach these adults, the Community Education Program (DivEdCo), as stated before, would focus on rural communities to promote “a desire to utilize its own potentialities and resources through community action” and address its own needs.<sup>128</sup> Another initiative under Serenidad was the creation of the Adult Education Program which aimed at eradicating illiteracy through free night school. The Consumer Education Program and the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (ICP) took advantage of the development and accessibility of technology in mass communications, especially the use of the DIP’s television and radio for educational purposes.<sup>129</sup> This Instituto will be discussed in depth in the following chapter. Fundamentally its initial mission at the time of its establishment in 1955 was to promote the creative arts for and by Puerto Ricans, and preserve landmarks of Puerto Rican history, culture and folklore.

The second goal of Serenidad encompassed a set of planning methods to better organize daily life in the island. Headed by Puerto Rico Planning Board, a government agency, it included physical (infrastructure), economic and social planning.<sup>130</sup> At the time, the mid-1950s, the economic planning was the most comprehensive and expensive of all. It was defined by a “Six-Year Financial Plan” revised annually with varied emphasis in adjusting expenditures and taxation, which, according to Padilla, reflected the rate of industrialization, urban development, agricultural development and the development of housing, health, educational and recreational

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<sup>127</sup> Esteban Padilla, “Notes on the Implementation of the Concept of Serenity by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,” section: V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 4, folder 1, document 4, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

facilities. Padilla clarified this point by explaining that since the island lacked proper roads for automobiles the local government imposed a tax to control or discourage the purchase of cars.<sup>131</sup>

The social planning component was based out of the University of Puerto Rico and focused on sociological studies on the conditions and realities of daily life to better organize government resources.<sup>132</sup>

The last outlined mission of Serenidad focused on the promotion of creativity and recreation as part of the emphasis on developing the spiritual and cultural growth of Puerto Ricans that would match the perceived economic progress.<sup>133</sup> The government instrumentalities involved in this aspect were the Parks and Recreation Commission, the UPR, the DIP, the Festival Casals and the Instituto. The UPR, along with the ICP, and Festival Casals, would handle the brunt of the cultural activities, which served forums for the public to be in contact with formal art forms, such as classical music concerts, theatre, and folkloric music and dances. The DIP, among its other functions for Serenidad, was also in charge of literacy programs. As Padilla mentioned, one example was the library-on-wheels or “Bibliotecas Rodantes,” which attempted to reach remote communities and introduce them to classic and Puerto Rican literature.<sup>134</sup>

All three efforts were meant to put into effect concrete ways in which Serenidad would change Puerto Rican society. By the late 1950s, everyone was on message about the importance of the humanistic objective of Serenidad in striking a balance between the material and the spiritual. In a 1958 speech before the Convention of the American Society for Public

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 9.

Administration in New Orleans, Secretary of State, and close advisor to Muñoz, Roberto Sánchez Vilella explained the cooperative and inclusive nature of Serenidad and emphasized the significant participation of the government in organizing the initiatives.<sup>135</sup> Sanchez pointed out that such government intervention was necessary because of the limited “human as well as...material resources.”<sup>136</sup>

## CONCLUSION

After the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, and quickly established a process in which to turn Puerto Ricans from Spanish colonial subjects into American colonial subjects, local elites slowly began to question the intentions and the long-term effects of the U.S. presence in the island. The Americanization project in the island would be characterized by the attempt to displace Spanish as the vernacular through the education system. The shuffle between the Spanish and English as languages of instruction would certainly confuse teachers and students, but more importantly would foster even more resistance. Fifty years after the first official language education policy, the attempt to make Puerto Ricans speak English had failed, in favor of emphasizing the teaching of the mother tongue. Puerto Ricans had long suffered from poor education under the Spanish government, and after the U.S. arrival they immediately began to expand the public education system. Puerto Ricans at many levels understood that learning a new language was not more important than attending to literacy issues, mathematical skills, and other basic skills.

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<sup>135</sup> Address delivered by Roberto Sánchez Vilella at ASPA’s Convention at New Orleans (1958) – Bootstraps and Serenity, collection: Roberto Sánchez Vilella, section: Actividades Profesionales, Subsection: Hombre de Estado Serie: Discursos, Mensajes, Palabras, sub-series: RSV 1951-1964, box 1, folder 5, page 5, University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 11-12.

Americanization was more successful, however, in the political, judicial and structural spheres. In that matter, most elites welcomed the changes. The Foraker and Jones Act formalized the relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The New Deal brought investment in infrastructure and promoted a land reform that benefited the common Puerto Rican. These served as precedent and gave footing to the establishment of Operación Manos a la Obra and Operación Estado Libre Asociado. Manos a la Obra launched the economic “miracle” that industrialized and diversified the Puerto Rican economy. Yet it heavily relied on population flight when dealing with workforce surplus. By the mid-1950s, over 500,000 Puerto Ricans had left the island.

Nevertheless, the “success” of the economic policy demanded political stability. Muñoz Marín and fellow populares envisioned a permanent “pacto” with the U.S. that would give them the best of both worlds. The Estado Libre Asociado was supposed to be the formula that provided autonomy, guaranteed economic development with U.S. capital, and signaled the official end of any attempt of forced assimilation. This “new” form of government would establish a permanent relationship with the U.S. and not threaten Puerto Rican identity, which was now centered on the Spanish language as supported by cultural critics and the public education system. Still, the local government needed to develop a cultural arm in order to maintain their word on this last issue.

The paternalistic nature of Operación Serenidad was in line with the political and economic projects of the PPD and Muñoz Marín, and the nature of their relationship with the electorate. Ultimately, democratizing knowledge was the larger goal, but Muñoz Marín considered the common Puerto Ricans, the so-called idyllic and utopian jíbaros, aimless, and he took it upon himself, especially with Serenidad, to guide them towards the progress that would

define the island as a modern nation. The following chapter will explore in detail how under Serenidad the administration of Muñoz Marín established and developed institutions to support its cultural policies.

## Chapter 2: Operación Serenidad

As the previous chapter explains, the economic change that marked the post-Great Depression years brought on concerns over its repercussion on the Puerto Rican culture outlined by the elite and academics before the 1950s. To address such concerns Muñoz Marín began to discuss the initiative Operación Serenidad. In order to understand the development of Serenidad, this chapter will explain the role of the University of Puerto Rico; the Departamento de Instrucción Pública (DIP), its Division de Educación a la Comunidad, also known as DivEdCo, and its educational television station WIPR; as well as the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña and the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española as engines of Serenidad.

The cultural and limited political autonomy attained through the ELA brought control over the linguistic policies in schools which established Spanish as the language of instruction in 1949. The local political parties, in the past and today, are organized ideologically and politically around their position towards the status of the island. Therefore, these played an important role in the construction of the national identity of Puerto Ricans throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Partido Popular Democrático (PPD) would have the first and deepest impression on this construction. Firmly based on a nationalism that separated the cultural from the political, *populares* promoted the relationship with the United States but defined a cultural identity distinctively Puerto Rican with Hispanic (including the Spanish language) and agrarian roots. As historian Solsiree Del Moral argues, cultural nationalism became a state-sponsored identity that served the colonial government and sectors of local society.<sup>1</sup> The educational and cultural institutions important under Serenidad would secure this goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Solsiree Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico 1898-1952* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 14.

## LA UNIVERSIDAD

Decades before Serenidad, the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) served as one of the premier centers of academic and intellectual debate for these issues of language and culture. Scholar Roamé Torres González explains that cultural nationalism prevailed within the conversations in academic circles through the 1940s, pushing against political nationalism. However, during this decade a new argument began to compete.<sup>2</sup> Torres González expounds that at the UPR the “occidentalista” ideology was promoted by the important PPD leader and chancellor of the university from 1942 to 1966, Jaime Benítez.<sup>3</sup> This “occidentalismo” was characterized for its tendency to emphasize the centrality of the university, and that, according to Benítez, what made the Puerto Rican culture valuable was its “universal values” inherited from occidental cultures. Benítez argued that Puerto Rican culture lacked autochthonous traits.<sup>4</sup> He would charge his generation with the task of clarifying and ordering the cultural conflicts of these influences.<sup>5</sup> However, as Torres González explains, Benítez made Spanish the preferred language at the UPR by 1942, since according to his vision, this language allowed the expression of the universal virtues of the Hispanic culture, the best of those so-called occidental influences.<sup>6</sup> This argument related to the language of instruction was part of the larger discussion regarding public education, and the debate over whether the selection of a language of instruction was a political or a pedagogical decision.

The universalist and anti-nationalist ideology that favored the occidental culture to the Puerto Rican culture would continue to be debated in the UPR academic circles. As Torres

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<sup>2</sup> Roamé Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002), 159.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 159.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 159-160.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 160.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 165.



González suggests, this argument served as an important legitimizing and apologetic discourse of the “unión permanente” with the United States, and the modernizing and industrialization project that the PPD and Muñoz Marín promoted after 1952.<sup>7</sup> In this way, the University collaborated ideologically with the project; however, it also contributed with its technical and professional cadres.<sup>8</sup> Under the supervision of Benítez, the UPR formulated a curriculum that adopted this ideological approach to the Puerto Rican culture and the role of the citizen in this society that the PPD envisioned. These ideas were part of a broader circulation of ideas.

At the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) first regional conference of the National Commissions of the Western Hemisphere in La Habana on December 19, 1950, Benítez pushed a motion supported by the delegations of Costa Rica, Cuba and the U.S. (of which he was a member) that defined the role of universities in the hemisphere. The motion opened stating the role and goals of universities in the “training of men and women in the understanding, safeguarding, and augmenting of the spiritual welfare of man and society.”<sup>9</sup> The delegates asked for academic freedom and autonomy to pursue their responsibilities. In its most revealing point, the motion stated that:

...a university graduate must be, besides a technician or professional man and woman, a citizen nurtured in the great traditions and values of western life, and able, because of superior education, to bring about, through example and leadership, a greater spiritual enrichment of society.<sup>10</sup>

Portraying universities as cultural centers, the motion concluded that as leaders of such aspects of human interaction:

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 182-183.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 183.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO First Regional Conference of National Commissions of the Western Hemisphere, *Motion Submitted by the Delegations of Costa Rica, Cuba, and United States Relative to the Orientation of Universities*, December 19, 1950; Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

American [continent] universities, should strive most energetically to sustain, defend, and accredit the human value of democratic life and, particularly, the value of a free and inquisitive mind as a fundamental promise of civilization.<sup>11</sup>

This motion authored by Benítez, Chancellor Fernando Baudrit Solera of the University of Costa Rica, and University of Havana Professor Jorge Mañach y Robato, would be considered by the International Association of Universities, which was established in 1950.<sup>12</sup>

These words crafted for this international forum correlated with the vision Benítez had for UPR. He put the state university at the service of the economic project, with its influence over the professional and technocrat groups that favored a modernizing mentality.<sup>13</sup> As he proclaimed in his inaugural speech as chancellor, the university had to rise to the Puerto Rican reality “y desde ella hacerse cuestión de nuestra lengua, nuestra historia, nuestra economía, nuestra política, nuestra personalidad.”<sup>14</sup> At the same time, Benítez opposed the concept of the university as breeding grounds for political activism, especially the nationalist kind, and called UPR a “casa de estudio.”<sup>15</sup> Along with the PPD, which had established the Ley de la Mordaza (Gag Law) in 1948 modeled on the Federal Smith Act that suppressed suspected anti-American activities, Benítez repressed nationalist manifestations on campus, expelled students and fired faculty members that sympathized with the independence and the more radical nationalist movement.<sup>16</sup> This repression intensified after Nationalists and pro-independence supporters

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “Lic. Fernando Baudrit Solera,” accessed April 1, 2016 <http://www.ucr.ac.cr/acerca-u/historia-simbolos/rectores/fernando-baudrit-solera.html>; “Havana Conference Resolutions Reflect Regional Support for UNESCO’s Programme,” *The UNESCO Courier*, February 1951, accessed April 1, 2016 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000712/071298eo.pdf#71338>

<sup>13</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 185.

<sup>14</sup> Jaime Benítez, “Discurso inaugural UPR -1943” in Héctor Luis Acevedo, editor, *Don Jaime Benítez: Entre la universidad y la política* (San Juan: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 2008), 469. Translation: “and from it make it a matter of our language, our history, our economy, our politics, our personality.”

<sup>15</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 163, 183; in Héctor Luis Acevedo, editor, *Don Jaime Benítez: Entre la universidad y la política*, 51.

<sup>16</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 163.

attempted a revolt in November 1950, with violent incidents on the island and in Washington, resulting in thousands of arrests.<sup>17</sup> Muñoz Marín would condemn these violent instances calling them “abuso[s] de la libertad.”<sup>18</sup> As the UPR developed into a university system by the 1960s, eventually comprising eleven campuses, the oppression, although heavily contested, worked, and gave rise to the “era del silencio.”<sup>19</sup>

However, at UPR the idea of hispanidad that Torres González explains is what nuanced this “modern” education that Benítez nurtured.<sup>20</sup> Benítez also saw the benefits of Puerto Ricans navigating the “bilingüismo-biculturalismo” that could develop as a result of the political relationship with the U.S.<sup>21</sup> Learning English was a practical accommodation to the relationship, as an “essential, desirable, and required second language.”<sup>22</sup> Benítez never went as far as to promote Americanization. In fact, this current of cultural definitions, like the cultural nationalism of earlier decades, debated and often ignored the obvious U.S. influence in the construction of the Puerto Rican identity. This amalgamation of thoughts aligned UPR with the politics and culture that the ELA wanted to establish after 1952, and Serenidad would institutionalize after 1955. Therefore, in the service of Serenidad, the university, with its controversies and contradictions, would serve as the formative institution for this society in flux.

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<sup>17</sup> Pedro A. Malavet, *America's Colony: The Political and Cultural Conflict between the United States and Puerto Rico* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 92. In 1950 two Nationalists shot at the Blair House in the hopes of assassinating President Truman, and in 1953, four Nationalists fire shots from the U.S. House visitor's gallery. Also, Nationalists attempted to kill Governor Muñoz Marín when they fired at La Fortaleza. All of these violent attacks resulted in federal and local arrests. Albizu Campos especially would spend his last years in prison, until Muñoz Marín pardoned him due to illness five months before his death.

<sup>18</sup> Mensaje de Estado, Gobernador Luis Muñoz Marín, 20 de marzo de 1952 in *Mensajes al Pueblo Puertorriqueño pronunciados ante las cámaras legislativas 1949-1964* (San Germán, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 1980), 70.

<sup>19</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 165. Translation: “era of silence”

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 191.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 184; Jaime Benítez, Statement of Jaime Benítez at the U.S.- Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico, “Social cultural factors in relation to the status of Puerto Rico,” 2: 353-381, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1966), Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

The university after the 1950s had study plans that responded to this modernist push. Under Benítez, UPR adopted a universalist curriculum that would prepare students in all fields before concentrating on a specific major. These general education disciplines were philosophy, biological sciences, physical and chemical sciences, social studies, and humanities.<sup>23</sup> Benítez argued that this curriculum would provide all students with a common denominator of ideas of the world and men that were clear, precise, and efficient.<sup>24</sup> However, the curriculum would still be at the service of the needs of the society, and every college was responsible for instilling students with this mission.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, from the beginning of his tenure, Benítez charged the economics and political science departments to produce studies on the “problemas básicos” of the island.<sup>26</sup> He envisioned the law school as a societal tool to interpret the balance between custom and civil rights, therefore making the law accessible to the common man.<sup>27</sup> The university, and eventually the university system, would venture into this mission accompanying the DIP and the rest of the engines of Serenidad.

#### **DEPARTAMENTO DE INSTRUCCIÓN PÚBLICA, DivEdCo, AND WIPR**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in 1954, Muñoz Marín wrote a memo to the DIP outlining suggestions on the cultural policies the DIP could establish to collaborate with his ideas on Serenidad.<sup>28</sup> Muñoz Marín suggested that the DIP could become a “ministerio de cultura.” By the mid-1950s, DivEdCo, the cultural component of the DIP since 1949, had been in charge of these policies for half a decade. DivEdCo was the agency in charge of the contradictory task to

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<sup>23</sup> Jaime Benítez, “Discurso inaugural UPR -1943,” 467.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 467.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 471.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 470.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 469-470.

<sup>28</sup> Sugerencias para programa de fomento cultural que tuviera su base en el Departamento de Instrucción Pública, section V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 2, folder 1, document 6, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

maintain the “espíritu puertorriqueño” and the hasty process of cultural modernity.<sup>29</sup> Since this process has its political roots in the populism that Muñoz Marín perfected, in which his “pueblo,” in the spirit of Anderson’s “imagined community,” felt involved, a community focus was important for the success of Serenidad. In her study, Marsh estimates that for this process, DivEdCo, working fairly autonomously from the DIP, produced over a hundred films, more than forty books and booklets, aside from hundreds of posters and wallpapers, and about over forty unpublished books and seventeen unproduced screenplays.<sup>30</sup>

As previously discussed, its original task was to address the issues with literacy through community-based initiatives using visual mediums.<sup>31</sup> The second task and the most daunting, was civic education.<sup>32</sup> These visual mediums were going to explain democracy and citizenship, in the modern context Operation Bootstrap and the ELA were setting up. This explanation included the so-called modern concepts of hygiene, science, health, and optimism of progress, the promise of the future, the emphasis on manual labor, the ties to community and the history of the island.<sup>33</sup> This civic education became the focus during the 1950s. Serenidad required that the modern Puerto Rican accepted these concepts in order to be included in the broader efforts for progress.

Following the vision of Muñoz Marín for this mission, the writers and artists at DivEdCo used drawings and simple language to explain these concepts. Jack Delano was founder and head

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<sup>29</sup> Catherine Marsh Kennerley, *Negociaciones culturales: Los intelectuales y el proyecto pedagógico del estado puertorriqueño* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2009), 132.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 133; Waldemar Pérez Quintana, “An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico from 1949 to the Present: The Perspective of Eight Puerto Rican Educators,” (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1984), 66.

<sup>31</sup> Pérez Quintana, “An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico,” 56.

<sup>32</sup> Marsh, *Negociaciones Culturales*, 144.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 144. Marsh includes examples of these posters, images, and other visual works that were part of this campaign.

of DivEdCo's most important section, Cinema and Graphics Section, from 1949 to 1957.<sup>34</sup> In an oral history collected in 1984, Delano, a former Farm Security Administration photographer who became an advisor to Muñoz Marín, explained his role in DivEdCo; there he considered the success and flaws of their mission. In an example he offered to the interviewer, he explained that in order to address one of the most worrisome stomach ailments in the island, gastroenteritis, the División charged his team with creating a short film about water management. The film titled *Una gota de agua (A drop of water)* encouraged and advised people to boil their drinking water. However, as he worded it, "we were learning all the time too," because, Delano explained, when they released the film they realized that it failed to acknowledge that most people in rural areas lacked electricity or running water.<sup>35</sup> He went on to explain that in reality, most people had to walk some kilometers to a river or creek to get water and would need charcoal to boil it. Yet, he argued that the film was still important because it also explained germs and how they could harm those who drank unsterilized water.<sup>36</sup>

By design, DivEdCo was supposed to be well-versed on the needs and ailments of Puerto Rican society. However, it disregarded the opinions of rural Puerto Ricans. Still, Delano considered the activities of the División innovative, as part of a social revolution.<sup>37</sup> This is the social revolution that Muñoz Marín carefully outlined with ELA and later with Serenidad, one consented to by Puerto Ricans and approved by the U.S. authorities. DivEdCo sought that consent by making community participation its hallmark, even if the message was still paternalistic and out of touch. As Marsh explains, the actors in the films in most cases were

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<sup>34</sup> Jack Delano, "My Participation in the Beginning of the Division of Community Education – with special reference to the film production program," section XIII, Collection Jack and Irene Delano, box 7, folder 1A, page 2, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>35</sup> Pérez, "An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico," 68

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 77.

neighbors of the *barrios* where the stories took place. The experience Delano had as a photographer during the Great Depression and the New Deal oriented his art to include the subject as an active participant of the project.<sup>38</sup>

In the first feature film, *Los peloteros* (*The baseball players*), Marsh explains, Delano shot close-ups of Puerto Ricans, as if looking for authenticity, which would become a trademark of the films of the Division. The message was about progress and the ability that common people had to strengthen their communities through will power and dedication.<sup>39</sup> The plot of this first film was the story of a group of men who are encouraged to build a schoolhouse at Barrio Cielito in the town of Comerío by the example of a group of kids that organized to raise funds to form a baseball team and buy their uniforms. This film along with the others, would build the Puerto Rican imaginary, that is, the cues that would identify Puerto Rican society as Benedict Anderson suggests in his theory. As the plot of *Los peloteros* showed, the individual is not as important as the collective, the community. In the barrio, even in this rural and economically depressed environment, decisions were made in a democratic fashion where every voice, including those of women and children, was heard and the majority ruled. The boys in *Los peloteros* decided together on the activities they would do to raise funds, and everyone in the barrio participated in these activities, eventually succeeding in their goal of promoting modernity. However, these films idealized the images of the jíbaro, described in Chapter one, wooden houses, rural gender roles, and agricultural work, as a utopian and generalized version of Puerto Rican society.

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<sup>38</sup> Marsh, *Negociaciones culturales*, 178.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 179. *Los peloteros*. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Núm. Inventario: 239 Fecha: 1951 Producción: División de Educación de la Comunidad, Derechos de Autor: Dominio Público AGPR, Dirección: Jack Delano, Guión: Edwin Rosskam. Accessed April 20, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FJf0qb7ZCk>

In many ways, the earlier works by the División excluded altogether the growing urbanization and urban life in and outside of the island.<sup>40</sup> Yet, in 1955, DivEdCo squarely addressed in a book the role of migration to the U.S. in Puerto Rican society. In their short stories published in *Emigración*, authors Vivas Maldonado and Domingo Silás Ortiz explained the perceived impact of migration on those left behind, the dangers of living in the States, and cultural implications for the individual and the family of those who migrated. The overall message was to stop the migration. Migration was at its highest the previous year, 1954, and Puerto Rican society was reeling over the impact this population flight represented.<sup>41</sup> Although migration had always been a cornerstone of the economic policies of Bootstraps, its effect in the rural and agricultural sector was immense.<sup>42</sup> Families were left without fathers, as many men ventured alone first to find jobs, while women and children waited to be sent for when the men were settled.<sup>43</sup> The book also addressed the cultural repercussions of the migration. For example, author René Marqués explained how worldview, language, morals would be affected by life in the U.S. In his contribution to the book, Marqués explained the difference between the U.S. and the Puerto Rican family:

Como tenemos esta actitud ancha y generosa hacia la familia nos sorprende a nosotros el concepto que de la familia tiene la mayoría de los americanos. Ellos se consideran responsables sólo de los miembros más allegados de la familia. La mayoría de las familias americanas se componen de los padres y los hijos. Sólo de vez en cuando se considera a los abuelos como miembros que han de compartir con uno el mismo techo. Esto del concepto de la familia es uno de los rasgos culturales que son distintos en Estados Unidos y en Puerto Rico.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 78

<sup>41</sup> Marsh, *Negociaciones culturales*, 160.

<sup>42</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2317.

<sup>43</sup> As mentioned earlier, my maternal family experienced this separation, and the struggle of reunion. See Eileen J. Suarez Findlay, *'We Are Left Without a Father Here': Masculinity, Domesticity, and Migration in Post-War Puerto Rico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), location 326-347.

<sup>44</sup> Marsh, *Negociaciones culturales*, 163. Translation: "As we have this broad and generous attitude towards the family, we are surprised at American concept of family. They are considered responsible only the



The illustration that included the quote above showed a Puerto Rican family above and an American family on the bottom. One is large and happy, while the other was small and gloomy. The large family is touching each other, leaning on each other's shoulders, and included aunts and uncles, and other children. The smaller family showed a downcast woman slightly touching a boy's shoulder on one side of a dining table, and on the other side a serious man next to a serious girl with a fireplace in the background. Aside from encouraging people to stay in the island, the book also suggested that if moving was a necessity it urged them to not change "nuestras costumbres por las americanas."<sup>45</sup> Surprisingly, the book had the foresight to address the issues of prejudice that Puerto Ricans would encounter in the States, even warning against learning the "American" prejudice against the black community, while virtual silence clouded the racial discussion in the island. The authors cited Puerto Ricans history of coexistence, its abolitionist movement, and the pacifist nature of their identity, appealing to the docile jíbaro all Puerto Ricans had in them, against American racism.<sup>46</sup> The book warned: "No hay cosa más terrible que ver a un puertorriqueño en Estados Unidos contagiado por los prejuicios de allá. Ese puertorriqueño empieza atacando a los negros americanos y termina atacando a sus propios hermanos puertorriqueños."<sup>47</sup> Emphasizing the possibly contagious nature of racism, the book contextualized U.S. contemporary society.

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closest members of the family. Most American families are made up of parents and children. Only occasionally, it is considered to grandparents as members who share the same roof. This concept of the family is one of the cultural characteristics that are different in the United States and in Puerto Rico."

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 164.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 164.

Marsh quotes the book extensively in her work. Unlike the films, the books and booklets are harder to come by therefore I use her quotes of the primary sources to substantiate my analysis. As I mention previously, her books is a more extensive study of DivEdCo and its role on the institutionalization of culture.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 164. Translation: "Nothing more terrible than seeing a Puerto Rican in the United States infected by the American prejudices over there. That Puerto Rican begins attacking American blacks and ends up attacking its own Puerto Rican brothers."

This book is an example of how DivEdCo portrayed the needs of the 1950s society, while not necessary the actual reality of most Puerto Ricans in the island and of those migrating. The book showed a large Puerto Rican family, which included members of the extended family, but seldom explained that poverty and diseases caused the inclusion of orphaned children or destitute older relatives. DivEdCo in its “civilizing” effort towards the family idealized the U.S. middle-class suburban version, which according to the agency was attainable in the island and through migration.

Arguably, the División responded to the demands of Serenidad, visibly putting forward its “civilizing” agenda. This civilizing effort responded to the Cold War script of capitalist progress that grappled with democratic values and citizenship and modernized its education standards to fit the industrial demands.<sup>48</sup> With the advent of television, these efforts now could be transmitted in a more concrete way. Especially literacy, the adult education program, and the complications of urban living became important subjects of this new medium. Radio had already been working towards these educational goals, since WIPR-AM Radio had been expanded to cover the island in 1949.<sup>49</sup> Interested in the idea of educational television, in 1954 Muñoz Marín commissioned three of his advisors, Gustavo Agrait, Francisco Arriví, and Ismael Rodríguez Bau, under the supervision of the Secretary of the DIP Mariano Villaronga, to research its value and report on it to him. The three men visited the U.S., Mexico, and Cuba to evaluate their development of educational television.

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<sup>48</sup> For examples of this correlation between Cold War and capitalism in Latin America see Julio Moreno, “Coca Cola, U.S. Diplomacy, and the Cold War in America’s Backyard” in Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Julio E. Moreno, eds., *Beyond the Eagle’s Shadow: New Histories of Latin America’s Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> Comisión de Instrucción del Senado, “Estudio sobre la radiodifusión en Puerto Rico Memorandum Recomendaciones de acción que podrían tomarse para mejorar la calidad de los programas radiales,” N.D., series V, sub-series 17, box 1, folder 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

The report first observed some of the technical issues that needed to be addressed to prepare facilities and personnel to establish the television station.<sup>50</sup> It also included suggestions on effective programming such as the arts, sports, lifestyle, news and programs for children, cooking shows for housewives focused on healthy meals, and language teaching shows. The bulk of the report focused on the philosophy of how educational television should work in Puerto Rican society. The report argued that:

La televisión educativa debe despertar entusiasmo y confianza en el mundo en que vivimos...Hacerle comprensible al ciudadano la sociedad universal donde ha estado viviendo, situarlo en el lugar que ocupa en la actualidad cómo la evolución social lo ha traído hasta ese punto y darle un atisbo de las perspectivas futuras.<sup>51</sup>

Since adult education had become an important section of the DIP, the report indicated that in this context educational television should expand formal education and encourage adult students to learn and enjoy the arts. However, in tune with the democratization tone of *Serenidad*, the report finally suggested that educational television should encourage the “crecimiento e incorporación del adulto en las artes de la ciudadanía y el civismo.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, educational television for adults should complement the curriculum and the aid lessons with more effective methods to present material.<sup>53</sup> Although they suggested varied examples of television programming, in their analysis, adult students would benefit the most from the televised material.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> “Informe sobre la televisión educativa” (1954), section V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 2, folder 1, pages 1-12, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 13. Translation: “Educational television should arouse enthusiasm and confidence in the world in which we live ... Make it understandable to citizens the universal society in which he has been living, situate it in the place today how social evolution has brought it to this point and give a hint future prospects.”

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 56. Translation: “adult growth and incorporation in the arts of citizenship and civics.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 55-57.

The educational programming could not be possible without the expansion of the commercial television industry in the island. Commercial television began on 28 March 1954 when WKAQ-TV, affiliated to WKAQ-Radio, owned and operated by the owner of the national newspaper *El Mundo*, Angel Ramos, began to broadcast. He called his television station, *Telemundo*, to maintain the link between his newspaper and the channel. Today Telemundo, after its purchase in 1980s and eventual affiliation to NBC Universal, is the second-largest Hispanic market television station in the United States, after Univision.<sup>55</sup> On May 1, WAPA-TV began transmitting regular programming, the only partially locally owned television station in the island today. However, since its inception, Puerto Rico's first educational television station was conceptualized as an extension of DivEdCo and the DIP.

In the early 1960s a report on the state of the public radio and television stations explained the origins of educational broadcasting in Puerto Rico. After multiple efforts by Mariano Villaronga, the DIP Commissioner, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) first approved the establishment of a government operated radio station through Law 142 of 9 May 1945. Law 50 of 10 June 1948 created the Public Radio Broadcast Commission with the authority to name a Director of Public Radio Broadcast and adopt regulations for such broadcasts. With a plan to restructure the radio public broadcast in 1950, the Board of Directors of the local communications commission passed the facilities and operations of WIPR to the DIP. The Public Radio Broadcast Commission, that was previously composed of the Governor of Puerto Rico as its president, along with the DIP Commissioner and the UPR Chancellor, was abolished and all its faculties were given to the then DIP Commissioner. This change centralized the control over the educational programming to the DIP, with the exception of material related

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<sup>55</sup> "60 años de historia: Una noche para el recuerdo." Accessed April 21, 2016  
<http://www.telemundopr.com/noticias/60-anos-de-historia-Momentos-magicos-de-la-tv-video.html>

to higher education managed by the university. On 25 June 1954 Joint Resolution num. 94, finally assigned funds to establish a television network for the broadcasting of educational and cultural programs. As a result of this legislation, on 6 January 1958, WIPR-TV (Channel 6, San Juan) the first government owned and operated television station, made its first broadcast. Two years later, the government purchased its second television station, WIPM-TV (Channel 3), in the western city of Mayagüez to expand its reach across the island. Finally, Law 172 of 1961 created the Service of Public Radio and Television, merging the public radio and television stations, which previously functioned independently of each other.<sup>56</sup>

With this merger, a general manager under the supervision of the Secretary of the DIP organized and managed content, facilities and personnel for both the radio and television stations.<sup>57</sup> Jack Delano left DivEdCo in 1957 and became the assistant program manager at the channel in 1958, and then in 1961 became general manager of WIPR-TV and radio for the next five years.<sup>58</sup> Early criticism of WIPR-TV (and its original general manager, Rafael Delgado Marquez) pointed at its failure to feature educational programming, because it “did more entertaining than educating.”<sup>59</sup> In the inaugural speech of TV station, Secretary of the DIP Villaronga expressed that the channel would expand the educational and cultural service of the department to the whole island. Keeping in line with the mission of Serenidad, Villaronga added: “Nuestra estación televisora ayudará a crear un clima propicio al fomento, tanto de la cultura

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<sup>56</sup> “Informe sobre el estudio de la organización y funcionamiento del servicio de radio y televisión pública,” section V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 1, folder 5, document 7, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>57</sup> After the ELA the commissioner of Department of Education was renamed Secretary of the Departamento de Instrucción Pública.

<sup>58</sup> Pérez, “An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico,” 80; A.W. Maldonado, “Delano Will Be Named Head of PR Radio, TV” *The San Juan Star*, June 8, 1961, 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

puertorriqueña, como de la cultura universal.”<sup>60</sup> However, it seemed to take the channel some years to figure out how to balance educational and entertainment/cultural material, and how to best function under the DIP. The merger of the government TV and radio stations and appointment of Delano as general manager were perceived by the press as a shakeup to move the stations to their intended purpose as an extension of the DIP.<sup>61</sup>

Yet Delano encountered problems managing the stations from the very beginning. In an article in the newspaper *The San Juan Star*, about a year after accepting the post, Delano had to deny front page accusations from the main national newspaper *El Mundo*, that the stations were “troubled by subversive activities or internal disputes.”<sup>62</sup> Four days earlier, *El Mundo* published an article stating that the FBI was investigating WIPR for communist and nationalist infiltration, information later denied by the local police, the FBI, and the FCC. In the context of 1962, considered the height of the Cold War, Delano complained to *The San Juan Star* that more than anything, the accusation had affected morale at the stations, and made employees uneasy because the mere suspicion had personal repercussions in Cold War Puerto Rico as it did in the United States.<sup>63</sup>

The real motivation behind such a damaging accusation for government-run TV and radio stations is unclear. Deducing from the historical context, perhaps the fact that for decades nationalists were vilified and lumped with the so-called communist threat. Although the Legislative Assembly had repealed the Gag Law of 1948 in 1957, the suspicion and persecution

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<sup>60</sup> “Discursos de Inauguración de la Televisora WIPR-Canal 6,” *Semana*, January 8, 1958, 5. Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín. Translation: “Our television station will help create a climate conducive to the promotion of both Puerto Rican culture and universal culture.”

<sup>61</sup> A.W. Maldonado, “Delano Will Be Named Head of PR Radio, TV” *The San Juan Star*, June 8, 1961, 20. Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>62</sup> Al Dinhofer, “Delano Denies Subversive Activities Exist at WIPR” *The San Juan Star*, September 1, 1962, 6. Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

of dissenters was common practice by populares. Also, most of the talent working at WIPR, like DivEdCo and other components of Serenidad, were PPD sympathizers; however, the party included a pro-sovereignty faction as well as moderate independentistas. Finally, the history of the hysteria over communist infiltration during this time is extensive, especially in the television and film industries, since according to Cold War warriors, these media lent themselves to the use of subliminal propaganda.<sup>64</sup>

The Delano administration also encountered difficulties finding an effective curriculum and programming. On March 1963, *El Mundo* reported on the changes in WIPR programming focused on the children and adult education curricula of the DIP. A fourth of the programming for the WIPR-TV would be educational, including two programs of English for adults, one program for science education, another for math, a program for adolescents, and a program for conversational Spanish for foreigners.<sup>65</sup> At the radio station, the new format offered programming to cover Latin American history, poetry appreciation, beginners' English, and more conversational Spanish for foreigners. However, the article points out that internal issues were brewing because of the program *Hablemos Inglés*, produced, directed and hosted by Sylvia Viera de Lucío, who was also the director of the Unidad de Programación Escolar at the TV station. *El Mundo* suggested that her superiors were uneasy or jealous of her multiple roles as teacher, administrator, and on-air talent. The program had offered her a lot of control over content and curriculum. As the article explains, when Lucío was selected for the post of director

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<sup>64</sup> Malavet in *America's Colony* suggest the work of Ivonne Acosta-Lespier, ed., *El asesinato político en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial LEA, 1998); Ramón Bosque-Pérez and José Colón Morera, eds., *Las Carpetas: Persecución política y derechos civiles en Puerto Rico: Ensayos y documentos* (Rio Piedras: Centro para la Investigación y Promoción de los Derechos Civiles, 1997); and José Martínez-Valentín, *Cien años de carpeteo en Puerto Rico, 1901-2000* (San Juan, 2001)

<sup>65</sup> Luis M. Escribano, "Nuevos proyectos: Aumentarán Programación Escolar por Radio y TV," *El Mundo*, March 21, 1963, 1. Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

of school programming, effectively making her second in command at the station, DIP Secretary Cándido Olivero manifested his interest in her producing “direct education” content to fit the timeslot between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm, representing 50 per cent of the broadcasting schedule of WIPR.<sup>66</sup> Direct education referred to programming that would be shown in closed circuit television sets in classrooms across the island.<sup>67</sup> According to Delano, launching this program was one of the most challenging tasks during his tenure.<sup>68</sup>

Delano wanted to create a balance between educational and cultural programming, emulating NET (National Educational Television), the predecessor to PBS, to which WIPR was affiliated; therefore yielding that much time of the television schedule to such a targeted audience was problematic. Yet such a dispute between a man and a woman sparks questions of whether sexism was part of the issue between Lucío, Delano, and management, even though the larger dispute seems to be around the control of programming. The newspaper articles and the archival video evidence available portrayed her as an educated woman, who had the confidence of the Secretary of the DIP and whose shows had a sizable audience.<sup>69</sup> Still, because of the tensions she submitted her resignation to the Secretary, which he proceeded to not accept. *The San Juan Star* reported that she “was discontented with working conditions;” however, after negotiating with the Secretary and Delano, she stayed on with the promise of better resources and greater participation in the administration of the station.<sup>70</sup> This further fueled the idea that

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 1

<sup>67</sup> Luis M. Escribano, “Transmite WIPR-TV: Programas Educación Directa Tiene Matricula de 20,000” *El Mundo*, March 22, 1963, 19, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>68</sup> Pérez, “An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico,” 79.

<sup>69</sup> Luis M. Escribano, “Objetivo de WIPR: Otras Emisoras Utilizan Sus Programas Educativos” *El Mundo*, March 23, 1963, 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín; “Hablemos Inglés,” 1963, television show, Archivo Histórico Ángel F. Rivera, San Juan: WIPR, Puerto Rico TV.

<sup>70</sup> Margot Preece, “Mrs. Lucio, Assured Help, To Stay On at WIPR” *The San Juan Star*, May 13, 1963, 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.



the argument was tinged with underling issues of sexism, since she was put in such a powerful position within WIPR, threatening the control of Delano. This case offers a glimpse into the inner workings and tensions of a government-run television station that was an essential outlet of the larger mission of the cultural policies.

When recalling this time, Delano focused on the failures of the television station to create appealing educational programming. In addition, Delano complained that direct education demanded more personnel than their budget could handle, especially in the technical aspects to install and maintain the equipment (TV sets) in schools, which made this model, used in such places as England, France, and Japan, costly and ineffective in Puerto Rico.<sup>71</sup> While he remembered his time at DivEdCo as pleasant, for his tenure at WIPR his tone in the interview turned morose, never mentioning the communist accusations and the internal strife.<sup>72</sup> Delano expressed that producing content for DivEdCo was more creatively exciting than it ever was for WIPR. As the channel developed in later decades, this balance between creativity, culture, and education would continue to be a goal. As envisioned by Muñoz Marín and Delano, “Canal 6” contributed to transmission of cultural and educational rhetoric that Serenidad proposed for Puerto Rican society.

#### **EL INSTITUTO DE CULTURA PUERTORRIQUEÑA**

The most important institution created as a direct correlation of Serenidad was the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (ICP). On 22 June 1955, Law 89 created the ICP as an:

...entidad oficial, corporativa y autónoma, cuyo propósito será  
conservar, promover, enriquecer y divulgar los valores culturales

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<sup>71</sup> Pérez, “An Oral History of the Division of Community Education of Puerto Rico,” 79-80.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 79.

puertorriqueños y lograr el más amplio y profundo conocimiento y aprecio de los mismos.<sup>73</sup>

The sole purpose of this agency was to oversee the cultural project that Muñoz Marín envisioned. Muñoz Marín tapped anthropologist Ricardo Alegría, a moderate independentista, as its first executive director.<sup>74</sup> In a letter months prior to signing the law, Alegría had expressed his concerns over the loss of cultural heritage (“patrimonio cultural”) through foreign extraction, abandonment, and natural disasters, since the administration lacked an organized institution that oversaw the maintenance and collection of historical-cultural artifacts, or even less, one that would produce and promote universal and folkloric arts for local consumption; interestingly he failed to acknowledge the work by DivEdCo.<sup>75</sup> Attached to the letter Alegría included a draft of a bill to create such institution, outlining its duties and reach. Appealing to the goals of Serenidad, Alegría stated that this institution would strive for the preservation of the historical-cultural heritage and would serve as strength and inspiration for “la formación de la conciencia nacional y lograr una mejor concepción de nuestra historia y cultura.”<sup>76</sup> In a way, this institution would provide the evidence of the identity or the *puertorriqueñismo* Muñoz Marín sought to promote with the cultural policies and Serenidad.

Within its duties, Alegría proposed that this agency would create exhibits on historical objects and establish museums for the promotion of the indigenous and the colonial past.<sup>77</sup> It

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<sup>73</sup> “Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, “Ley 89 del 22 de junio de 1955. Accessed March 15, 2016 <http://www2.pr.gov/presupuestos/Presupuesto2013-2014/PresupuestosAgencias/suppdocs/baselegal/082/082.pdf> Translation: “... Official, corporate and autonomous entity whose purpose is to preserve, promote, enrich and disseminate Puerto Rican cultural values and achieve broader and deeper knowledge and appreciation of them.”

<sup>74</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2691.

<sup>75</sup> Ricardo Alegría, “Ante proyecto de ley creando la comisión para la conservación, estudio y divulgación del patrimonio histórico-cultural puertorriqueño,” 16 de febrero de 1955, section V, series 1, box 8, folder 10, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 1. Translation: “The formation of national consciousness and a better understanding of our history and culture.”

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 2.

would also oversee archeological sites, historical buildings, and ruins, including study and preservation of their history. The draft also suggested punishments and fines for the illegal extraction of historical pieces from the island or to the undergrown artifact market.<sup>78</sup> The agency would also be in charge of public monuments and supervising the erection of such, even setting parameters for statues and other monuments. Finally, the draft urged that those in charge of public or private construction projects should notify the agency if during the building process archeological objects and sites were found. Failure to do so would subject the organizations to fines and work interruption. All of these suggestions were considered and most were allowed into the regulations and responsibilities of the ICP.

On its first official activities schedule from December 1955 through June 1957, Alegría tried to balance the duties of the ICP of conservation, restoration, collection, study, and the publicly disclosing or sharing of the findings. For the first eighteen months, the ICP pushed for legislation that funded the conservation of historical sites and structures, especially focusing on the historical zone of the city of San Juan (today known as Old San Juan). It also included the restoration of the ruins of the home of the first Spanish governor of the island, Juan Ponce de León in Caparra.<sup>79</sup> His plan also sought to restore the Plazas Ceremoniales Indígenas (Indigenous Ceremonial Plazas) found in the central mountain town of Utuado, which at the time still required further archeological study in addition to the preservation activities. The plan also, although vaguely, outlined the creation of a historical archive. The archive would collect

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ricardo Alegría, "Programa de actividades sometido a la consideración de la Junta de Directores por el Director Ejecutivo, Ricardo Alegría," December, 1955, section V, series 1, box 8, folder 10, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

documents, including speeches, different forms of written artistic expressions, in addition to photos and films.<sup>80</sup>

Alegría sought for the ICP to sponsor historical-cultural studies. Among the works, he suggested was one on Puerto Rican art and folklore that would include paintings, popular art forms, dance, music, and autochthonous musical instruments. The ICP encouraged a general historical study that contained biographies of illustrious Puerto Ricans. Alegría also suggested studies on Puerto Rican literature and theater, either biographies of authors or a general scholarship on the development of these artistic forms in the island. Also, initially the plan sought to establish a library Alegría called *Biblioteca de Cultura Puertorriqueña*, which would house books and magazines relevant to the historical-cultural mission of the ICP.<sup>81</sup> As matter of outreach toward the general public, Alegría suggested creating student art contests and sponsoring free teaching workshops for painting, sculpturing, and drawing.<sup>82</sup> All of these activities outlined the daunting task the ICP had ahead. As the cultural affairs agency of the government, the ICP would be in charge of those aspects of Serenidad. Less focused on the modernizing aspects of Muñoz Marín's initiative, rather the ICP would produce the content to satisfy the civilizing and historicizing aspects of Serenidad that related to Puerto Rican identity and culture.

Nonetheless, the most important proposal for the initial months of the ICP was to develop a publishing department that would circulate written works such as monographs, children's books, and especially a magazine or journal. The ICP sought to organize conferences and forums whose debates would be published in an internal magazine. The first *Revista del Instituto de*

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 5.

*Cultura Puertorriqueña (Revista ICP)* would be issued in October 1958. This first issue had a particular format comprised of essays on literature, poetry, current societal or cultural events, theater commentary, a featured short story, a historical document, a poem, and popular cultural practices, and news and reviews on the activities of the ICP. Every issue would be bookended with bibliographical information on the featured writers and contributors. This first issue featured writers from two important sources, the academics based at the UPR's Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos (DEH) and writers working at DivEdCo.

The mission statement of the Revista specified that the magazine would showcase the works of local intellectuals and academics in the fields of anthropology, folklore, sociology, history, literature, music, and the arts. It added to its mission to feature a piece of artistic expression in every issue, such as short stories, excerpts of novels, and poetry. Ultimately, Alegría stated that the Revista would be an “órgano que divulgará en Puerto Rico y en el exterior todas esas expresiones de nuestro ser y quehacer cultural.”<sup>83</sup> The chair of the DEH since 1945, Professor Margot Arce de Vázquez, opened the first issue with an essay titled “Una imagen puertorriqueña de la Virgen de la Providencia,” (“A Puerto Rican image of the Virgin of Providence”) a state of the art summary emphasizing the importance of religious imagery in Puerto Rican art. Fellow DEH professor Concha Meléndez followed with a study of the verses written by early 20<sup>th</sup> century poet and politician José de Diego. Professor and literary critic Maria Teresa Babín offered a history of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Puerto Rican literature, while novelist Enrique Laguerre contributed a summary of the history of storytelling in the island. The featured short story was “Purificación en la Calle del Cristo” (“Purification on Calle del Cristo”) by René Marqués, writer and the director of the Editorial Section of DivEdCo. The featured historical

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<sup>83</sup> *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*, 1 (1958); San Juan PR, 1. Translation: “a body to disclose in Puerto Rico and abroad all these expressions of our being and cultural activities.”

document was a letter between 19<sup>th</sup> century pro-autonomy activists José Gautier Benítez and Lola Rodríguez de Tió. The featured poem was “Plena del Menéalo” by *Generación del treinta* poet Luis Palés Matos, who, thanks to the interest of the ICP in the black experience in the island, experienced a renewed popularity. The issue closed with news on the ICP activities. This would become the standard format for the Revista.

Of the articles featured in this first issue the most relevant to this study was sociologist Eugenio Fernández Méndez’s “Reflexiones sobre la industrialización en Puerto Rico.” Fernández began the article describing the general impact of industrialization on societies, and the demands this process imposed on the individual caught in the transition. In his closing, as if summarizing the efforts of Serenidad, he explained the importance of government policies that safeguarded the spirit of the worker. He stated that public parks, art galleries, museums, concert halls, libraries, among other venues helped with the “enrique[cimiento de] la vida de las masas de la población” and elevated their spiritual satisfaction.<sup>84</sup> Fernández suggested that government-sanctioned scholarships and curriculum that addressed the needs of an industrialized society were key in stimulating the human or spiritual aspect of the Puerto Rican worker.<sup>85</sup>

Interestingly, the contribution of women to this first issue and following issues is substantial, demonstrating the increased presence of women in academia and intellectual circles. Professor Arce would hold her position as chair of the DEH until 1965; during her tenure she contributed extensively to the Revista, especially on topics related to culture, hispanidad and Catholicism.<sup>86</sup> Literary critic and professor Concha Meléndez featured prominently in the

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<sup>84</sup> Eugenio Fernández Méndez, “Reflexiones sobre la industrialización en Puerto Rico” *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 1, (1958): 21. Translation: "Enrichment of the life of the masses of the population"

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>86</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2721.

Revista with her studies on Puerto Rican poetry. However, popular novelists such as Enrique Laguerre and René Marqués became staples of the Revista. Both friendly to the PPD, Laguerre and Marqués, as mentioned previously, grappled with the issues of modernity in their respective novels *La Resaca* (1949) and *La Carreta* (1952). In accordance with the message of *Serenidad*, these two authors explored the impact of rapid industrialization and called for remembering the agrarian roots of Puerto Rican identity. The ICP republished their works and included excerpts in the Revista. Their works were placing the stated purpose of the ICP and its mission within the cultural policies of the government. The ICP would continue developing as an agency following the vision outlined during its first eighteen months.

#### **ACADEMIA PUERTORRIQUEÑA DE LA LENGUA ESPAÑOLA**

While the ICP was instituted by law as the cultural arm of the government, the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española came about as a non-profit private institution. Although founded in 1955, the idea of the Academia had been discussed since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Poet José de Diego, regarded as the father of the modern independence movement in the island, was interested in establishing an Antillean Academy, headquartered in San Juan, and associated with the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (RAE) in 1915.<sup>87</sup> The plans at the time failed, but the cultural policies of Muñoz Marín resurrected the idea of a local affiliated Academia as supported by the President of the Senate Samuel R. Quiñones. The Academias in Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic also externally pushed for the creation of a Puerto Rican one. At the inauguration on 1 April 1955, the three main speakers were Dr. Alberto Maria Carreño, a member of the Comité Permanente del Congreso de Academias de la Lengua, Senator Quiñones,

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<sup>87</sup> "Historia," Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española, accessed April 2, 2016  
<http://www.academiapr.org/historia/academia/historia>

the first director of the Academia, and Secretary Villaronga, in representation of the governor.<sup>88</sup>

Luis Palés Matos also participated in the ceremony with a reading of several of his poems. The founding members of the Academia included humanities professors Margot Arce, José A. Balseiro, Enrique Laguerre, Emilio S. Belaval, René Marqués, Concha Meléndez, Nílita Vientós Gastón, among many other academics that sympathized with populares or independentistas.

The speeches were important because they elucidated the relationship the Academia would have with the cultural agenda of the government, even though it was a private institution. Dr. Carreño, a member of the Mexican Academia, praised the efforts of the people present, as well as Muñoz Marín, although absent, for placing Spanish at the center of Puerto Rican culture.<sup>89</sup> Carreño especially praised and quoted the so-called “Agapito” speech Muñoz Marín offered before the General Assembly of the Asociación de Maestros de PR in 1953, in which the governor questioned Agapito, a fictional character, for his use of Anglicisms in daily life. Muñoz Marín had criticized Puerto Ricans who elevated the English language over Spanish and angrily accused them for practices that demonstrated contempt for their culture and therefore, themselves.<sup>90</sup> He explained that the use of these words exposed the inert side of the Puerto Rican culture, which “se deja imponer maneras que nadie siquiera está intentando imponerle, que se deja despersonalizar.”<sup>91</sup> Muñoz Marín simply summarized long-held ideas about the passivity and weakness of Puerto Rican culture, which in turn, according to *populares*, was reflected in the

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<sup>88</sup> “Instalación de la Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española: Discursos,” (San Juan: Editorial de el DIP, 1955), section V, series 9, box 8, folder 2, page 1, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Luis Muñoz Marín, “La personalidad puertorriqueña en el Estado Libre Asociado ante la Asamblea General de la Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico,” 29 de diciembre de 1953, (San Juan: Editorial del DIP, 1954), section V, series 9, box 6, folder 4, page 10-12, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>91</sup> “Instalación de la Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española,” 10. Translation: “Allowed to impose ways that nobody is even trying to impose, which is left to depersonalize.”



identity. This rendering of identity and culture is an influence of the *Generación del treinta*, and it underlies all of the cultural policies during Serenidad.

The “Agapito” speech was very important within the academic circles that discussed the issues of preservation, standardization and the malleability of the Puerto Rican Spanish. At the Academia’s inauguration, the room was full of these people. For example, Quiñones, in his first speech as director of the Academia, stated:

Aspiramos, simple y llanamente – y lograrlo sería cumplir a cabalidad nuestro programa de acción – a despertar en nuestro pueblo la preocupación de hablar su idioma sin adulteraciones que lo desnaturalicen y sin mixtificaciones que lo corrompan. Un pueblo que falsifica y adultera su habla rompe el fundamento mismo de su razón de ser. Un pueblo que alienta la preocupación de conservar limpia su habla ha entrado en la sensata y fructuosa madurez de la cultura.<sup>92</sup>

The initial preoccupation of the Academia was the purity of the language. Even though Quiñones stopped short of condemning bilingualism, he presented it as a challenge for the island speaker.<sup>93</sup> Quiñones explained that both languages could be learned well; the learning of English did not have to disrupt the proper use of Spanish. The critique was directed at what today is termed Spanglish. Quiñones indicated that Puerto Ricans who employed the languages in that matter were creating an “abominable papiamento.”<sup>94</sup> However, he encouraged learning English because it was a way to maintain cultural reciprocity with the Anglo. According to Quiñones, this reciprocity was underway in Puerto Rico because its people already navigated two great

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 9. Translation: “We aspire, plainly and simply – and to achieve it would comply with our program of action - to awaken concern our people to speak their language unadulterated, denatured, without mystification that corrupt. A peoples who falsify and adulterate their speech breaks the foundation of its reason for being. A peoples who encourages the concern to preserve a clear their speech has entered a level of sensible and fruitful maturity of culture.”

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 10. Papiamento refers to the Portuguese Antillean amalgamation of the Dutch, English, Portuguese and African languages to create their own creole language.

cultures.<sup>95</sup> In a very concrete way, Quiñones proposed that Puerto Ricans could learn to think in English but should always feel in Spanish.<sup>96</sup> This is the elusive balance between language and culture that would define the 1950s in Puerto Rico. Finally, Villaronga read the closing words of the ceremony on behalf of Muñoz Marín. The governor reiterated his support for the preservation of Spanish and restated that language was the “respiración del espíritu.”<sup>97</sup>

Ultimately, this would make the Academia a controversial institution because its efforts, for some sectors of Puerto Rican society, especially those that promoted Afro-Caribbeanness, represented an attempt at cultural homogeneity, and even worst, erasure of the African, and even the native, cultural and language legacy. The conversation of language authenticity would ebb and flow as the link between the vernacular and culture intensified according to the shifts in the political debate of the status question. The Academia would follow the rules and policy of the Real Academia Española, but in the present day it would take a more progressive approach to the development of the vernacular, even defining language as living entity subject to the sociocultural changes of its speakers through the years.<sup>98</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In that famous “Agapito” speech, given a little over a year before launching *Serenidad*, Muñoz Marín stated that Puerto Rico was “un pueblo hispanoamericano compuesto por buenos ciudadanos de Estados Unidos,” and that it was “frontera cultural y tránsito de entendimiento y

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 20; Luis Muñoz Marín, “La personalidad puertorriqueña,” 13. Translation: “breathing spirit”

<sup>98</sup> María Inés Castro Ferrer, Secretary of the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española, Professor of Linguistics UPR in interview with ENFOQUE 24/7: “El español que hablamos,” YouTube video, 52:02, posted by *Noticias 24/7 WIPR*, March 16, 2016, <https://youtu.be/XJScY1Ekrhc>

buena voluntad a las relaciones entre las Américas.”<sup>99</sup> He put forth a seemingly incongruent message that could be dissected in multiple ways. Puerto Rican identity would include its Hispanic and Latin American heritage and its U.S. citizenship, and it would maintain its agrarian roots while accepting the modernity of economic progress. At the same time it would also keep democratic values and stand up to communism, as mentioned in the previous chapter. These were the overall aspirations of the cultural policies and Operación Serenidad during this period. Keeping in mind the context in which Muñoz Marín and his allies were building this identity, the analysis may no longer seem contradictory and confounding. As it is evident in the political and economic spheres, the ever-present Cold War intimately affected how Muñoz Marín governed, and how he chose to balance progress and culture.

The creation and use of premier educational and cultural institutions were important in molding and disseminating the message. Therefore, the University of Puerto Rico and the Departamento de Instrucción Pública, specifically the Division de Educación a la Comunidad and the stations of WIPR, served as precious sources of talent and intellect to theorize and promote the correlation between culture and progress. If the institutionalization of this culture was going to be supported by those at the bottom, by the common Puerto Rican, education would be key to disseminate and assimilate the message. UPR prepared the technocrats and professionals that would contribute to the modernizing efforts. The common Puerto Ricans, whom *populares* and nationalists alike called jíbaros, would need a special type of approach that made them felt heard, yet simultaneously pushed towards the future. The call to remember their past, which DivEdCo hammered on, was a way of appeasement, demonstrating that the modernizing forces would affect their daily lives but not who they were, especially since,

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<sup>99</sup> “Instalación de la Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española,” 3. Translation: “Cultural and transit of understanding and goodwill relations between the Americas border.”

according to Muñoz Marín, who they were was deeply rooted in their communities and in the cultural symbols ELA was able to maintain. ELA and Bootstraps would feed and clothe them, but it would not change who they were. These were the bases of the state-sponsored cultural nationalism that served at the pleasure of the U.S. government and the benefiting sectors of Puerto Rican society.

To focus on the cultural-historical heritage the establishment of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña and the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española were crucial. Even though they functioned as public and private institutions, respectively, both served as agents of Serenidad. The ICP granted the message evidence with the historical baggage it set out to amass to concretize the Puerto Rican identity. The Puerto Rican past, like that of the great occidental cultures Benítez admired, was rich and extensive enough to solidify the idea that the *mestizaje* that occurred in the process has created a great culture worth preserving. Although Serenidad seldom addressed the racial issue, it idealized the whitewashed image of the jíbaro at the core of the Puerto Rican imaginary. This would confront the long-held understanding that Puerto Rican culture lacked depth. In the end, reinforcing the over 400-year historical legacy of western civilization (Spanish) in Puerto Rico, by the mid-twentieth century, is what Muñoz Marín needed to argue that ELA was a mutually agreed contract between two great nations and not a vaguely new way of managing a colony.

In a different way the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española collaborated with this goal. The Academia seemed to represent the ultimate assertion of hispanidad, at the expense of the African and native heritage, the aspect of the Puerto Rican culture that differentiated it from the U.S. However, this difference was not necessarily of quality but of positionality. Recalling the Spanish heritage and language situated Puerto Rico as a relative of one of the great

occidental cultures of the world. An institution like the Academia would safeguard the maintenance of that important legacy, keep Americanization away from the culture, and focus on the economic and political environment. The effort seems benevolent enough; however, it is a clear attempt at cultural homogeneity since it assumed that Puerto Rican culture and identity was fundamentally defined by the baggage of the past. Like any well-functioning nationalist ideology, this would exclude any “other,” such as Haitians, Dominicans, Cubans, Asians, among other immigrant groups and their descendants that eventually would seek to be included into the cultural fold. To a certain degree, the cultural project failed to fully embrace the Puerto Ricans that identified with Afro-Caribbean currents, since it subjugated them to the Hispanic imagined cultural legacy. The language, and even the particular accent of the island, would be markers for *puertorriqueñidad*.

The hurried process of modernity that defined this period was possible thanks to the populism Muñoz Marín and the PPD developed, whose effectiveness would surpass the attempts of the *independentistas* and the *estadistas* alike, even after his retirement. Muñoz Marín’s “imagined community” came to fruition thanks to his paternalistic approach toward his “pueblo,” (“people”) that with Serenidad would increasingly be brought into the present and future with a democratizing but also very well defined civilizing agenda. The engines of Serenidad helped strengthen this effort, ultimately moving the agenda closer to its goal of balancing modernity and identity. The following chapter will follow this process in light of the renewed debate over the political status that resulted from the first plebiscite in 1967.

### Chapter 3: Somos Puertorriqueños

The cultural agenda established under Operación Serenidad was well underway by the 1960s. While Serenidad was the brainchild of Muñoz Marín, it certainly fits into the approach that historians argue the U.S. embraced towards its efforts for “civilizing” nations within its sphere of power. Historian Kenneth Pomeranz argues that American policymakers, through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focused on creating opportunities for these societies to progress. According to Pomeranz, these “developmental and civilizing purposes” are central for any empire, including the so-called benevolent U.S. empire.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, as much as Muñoz Marín devised the policies for education and culture, specifically those that defined Puerto Rican identity, he worked under the confines provided and allowed by U.S. hegemony and colonialism. Peculiarly, Serenidad had a dual quality, at the local and imperial levels, that of nation building and colonizing. As established in the previous chapter, its local goal was to balance modernity and establish a coherent identity. The 1960s would present different challenges to these goals since dissenters questioned the legitimacy of ELA.

The following chapter discusses the period between 1960 and 1968, which comprised the latter part of Muñoz Marín’s administration, and the four years of his successor and fellow *popular*, Governor Roberto Sánchez Vilella. The first section revisits the political context that frames the cultural policies of the time. The chapter continues with an explanation of the development of English and Spanish education in light of the institutionalization of cultural policies. Along with the policies on culture of the two administrations, this chapter will also analyze the discussions over this issue by two important academics and critics, Margot Arce de Vázquez and Nilita Vientós Gastón. Crucial to this discussion will be exploring the role of the

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Pomeranz, “Empire & ‘Civilizing’ Missions, Past & Present,” *Daedalus* 134, (2005): 43.

Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña in influencing the curriculum that contributed to streamlining the institutional message on culture and identity. Finally, the chapter will continue the discussion of the development of Operación Serenidad as the first debates over status after signing of the 1952 constitution intensified.

### **THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE 1960S**

The 1960s brought a renewed interest and pressure to redefine Puerto Rico's political status. The Fernós-Murray bill of 1959 was the first failed attempt at expanding the autonomous powers of ELA.<sup>2</sup> Muñoz Marín sought an agreement with the Kennedy Administration on new legislation that would later be presented to Congress. However, the White House withdrew support of the proposed legislation HR 5945 known as the Aspinall Bill of 1963. Congress limited itself to the creation of a commission to study the status options and issue recommendations through PL 88-271 of 1964.<sup>3</sup> The commission proposed the celebration of a plebiscite to be held on July 23, 1967 that asked Puerto Ricans their preferred relationship with the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Although the PPD eventually won the plebiscite in 1967, the growing frustration within the party due to the lack of progress on the status question and the persistent control of the old guard aggravated tensions.<sup>5</sup> Many critics, inside and outside the party, thought that by the 1960s the PPD had lost its original orientation towards social reforms. Specially, economists criticized the over-reliance on foreign (American) capital.

By 1964, before the elections, the party had split between the social reformists, called Vanguardia Popular, led by Gerardo Navas, and the old guard, led by Muñoz Marín. The

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<sup>2</sup> Bernabe and Ayala, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2869.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 2879.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Vanguardia Popular warned that the party had to make adjustments to address the challenge of the statehood movement.<sup>6</sup> In response to calls for renewal, Muñoz Marín retired and designated Roberto Sánchez Vilella as his successor; he was elected governor in November 1964. However, tensions continue to grow after the election, since Vilella stuck to the existing economic policies, while Vanguardia moved to the left. For example, Vilella pushed for increased industrialization to include oil refining and petrochemical plants, while Vanguardia Popular opposed U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic, and the draft of Puerto Ricans into the U.S. Army.<sup>7</sup> By 1967, Vanguardia boycotted the plebiscite, and as a result, was expelled from the PPD.<sup>8</sup> This division was so devastating for the party that even Governor Sanchez Vilella, in response to a confluence of events, by the summer of 1968 ran against the PPD.<sup>9</sup>

The opposition was also struggling for a new identity. After the 1940s the pro-statehood party, Partido Estadista Republicano (PER, *republicanos*), was politically weakened as the PPD maintained power for the next 20 years. However, the status debate of the 1960s reinvigorated the statehood movement. As the established pro-statehood party, the PER debated their participation in the plebiscite after the Congressional commission recommended it in 1961. The majority leadership of the PER opted to boycott the plebiscite; however a group of conservatives led by industrialist Luis A. Ferré disagreed.<sup>10</sup> Ferré organized the group Estadistas Unidos to participate in the plebiscite and campaign for the statehood option. After the defeat of the alternative in the 1967 plebiscite, this group founded the new statehood party, the Partido

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 2889.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. The internal party division and a personal scandal, that lost him the support of Muñoz Marín, contributed to Sánchez Vilella's decision to leave the PPD.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



Progresista Unido, later renamed Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP, *penepé*).<sup>11</sup> By 1968, the statehood movement was revitalized and the PNP won its first election, promoting its leader Ferré to La Fortaleza. However, this was a close election, and the electorate split its vote. The PNP controlled the governorship and the resident commissioner positions, while populares maintained control of the legislature.<sup>12</sup>

The independence movement by the end of the 1950s was reeling from at least two decades of intense federal and local persecution. However, it still had vital signs, especially amongst the youth.<sup>13</sup> For example, 1956 saw the creation of the Federación de Universitarios Pro-Independencia (FUPI, Federation of Pro-Independence University Students), and the Movimiento Pro Independencia (MPI, Pro-Independence Movement) launched in 1959. The most important pro-independence newspaper, *Claridad*, also was launched in 1959.<sup>14</sup> Scholars Bernabe and Ayala suggest that the Cuban Revolution offered a dynamic point of reference as an example of a vibrant anti-imperialistic and socialist movement in a country culturally and historically linked to Puerto Rico.<sup>15</sup> A radicalized *independentismo* entered a period of growth and increased visibility. Throughout the decade, the MPI concentrated its effort on denouncing U.S. rule internationally, seeking solidarity, and attempting to reopen the case of the island at the United Nations.<sup>16</sup> It boycotted the plebiscite, arguing that it did not constitute a true process of self-determination, since it lacked support from Congress, which, independentistas recognized

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> José Trías Monge, *Historia constitucional de Puerto Rico Volumen 5* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1995), 93.

<sup>13</sup> Bernabe and Ayala, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2910.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. The U.N. removed Puerto Rico off its list of colonies in 1953.

retained the power to determine what to do with Puerto Rico.<sup>17</sup> Every time the political status debate heated up, the issue of culture became a prominent aspect of the conversation.

### TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE 1960S

Efraín Sanchez Hidalgo succeeded Villaronga in 1957 as Secretary of DIP. Sanchez Hidalgo barely changed education policies, except for a renewed attention to the adult education program, especially the emphasis on conversational English courses for potential adult migrants.<sup>18</sup> In 1960, Cándido Oliveras replaced Sanchez Hidalgo, who also continued the Villaronga policy. Oliveras incorporated the use of the radio and television stations WIPR to introduce English classes for the masses, with such programs as *Hablemos Inglés*, *Niñitos* and *Inglés para Principiantes*.<sup>19</sup> Through the 1950s, Villaronga had originally implemented the use of specialized teachers per discipline, starting with the language classes followed by the areas of math, science, and social studies.<sup>20</sup> Oliveras continued this practice in the 1960s and began offering scholarships for teachers to study English in the U.S. In addition, he opened professional development courses in the newly established Institute for English as a Second Language at the University of Puerto Rico for elementary school teachers.<sup>21</sup> The DIP designed these programs to encourage the use of English as the language of instruction in English classes, since most teachers conducted their classes in Spanish while teaching English grammar. At the same time, these new opportunities for professional development were a response to claims from the

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<sup>17</sup> Bernabe and Ayala, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2879.

<sup>18</sup> Schmidt, *The Politics of English in Puerto Rico*, 60.

<sup>19</sup> “Physics Classes to Chaplin on WIPR-TV, Opening January 6” *The San Juan Star*, June 27, 1961; Jack Delano, “Educational TV in Puerto Rico” *The Sunday San Juan Star Magazine*, April 26, 1964; Luis M. Escribano, “Nuevos Proyectos: Aumentarán Programación Escolar por Radio y TV,” *El Mundo*, March 21, 1963.

<sup>20</sup> “Renuncia Villaronga: Secretario De Instrucción Pospone Interés Personal Por El Interés Público” *El Sol*, February 1, 1957.

<sup>21</sup> Schmidt, *The Politics of English in Puerto Rico*, 61.

teachers' union, the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR), that for long had advocated for the revision of UPR's pedagogy curriculum and resources for preparing teachers.<sup>22</sup> The AMPR pointed to this disconnect between the university and the DIP as critical in the development of a coherent educational mission.

Although the university developed an institute that focused on the teaching of English as a second language, it took a different approach to teaching English than the DIP. Unlike the DIP, the UPR classified English as a foreign language in its more language-centered curricula at the Facultad de Estudios Generales, the Facultad de Comercio, and the Facultad de Humanidades (which included the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos, DEH).<sup>23</sup> During the language conference, the governor also read reports on the role of UPR and the teaching of Spanish at a college level. This report, heavily influenced by the thoughts of Professor Margot Arce de Vázquez, chair of the DEH, expressed the importance of prioritizing the vernacular. Under the College of General Studies, the Department of Spanish was in charge of the basic Spanish class, a required course of every discipline. However, the DEH set the tone for the curricula, charging the university with the promotion of the deep study of the origins, nature, and grammatical structures of the Spanish language, as well as the critical and comparative study of the local and international literature, among other roles.<sup>24</sup> The DEH defined it as its mission to prepare Puerto

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<sup>22</sup> On February 15, 1957, in its newsletter *El Sol*, the AMPR published a scathing press release written by its president Maria Arroyo de Colón, and approved by its Executive Committee, accusing the UPR of ignoring the needs of the Pedagogy Department, its largest and oldest department, which dated back to the university's origins as a normal school. It criticized the lack of professors, modern facilities, access or exposure to new theories and approaches, as well as the lack of adequate standards for admissions. The statement also suggested the growing tension between the UPR and the DIP, which resulted in the eventual resignation of the Secretary Villaronga earlier that year. The national newspaper *El Mundo* declined to publish the lengthy and controversial statement.

See, María Arroyo de Colón, "La Asociación de Maestros, la Universidad y la Situación Gravemente Perjudicial al Hondo Interés Educativo de Nuestro Pueblo" *El Sol*, February 15, 1957, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Colección Puertorriqueña.

<sup>23</sup> Edwin Figueroa Berrios, "La enseñanza del español en PR en el nivel universitario," 2, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

Rican professionals of every field in the intricacies of their vernacular. Meanwhile, Arce and the DEH also argued that the imposition of bilingualism in the culture of the island and the perceived favorable campaign towards the English language belittled the lingua franca. The debate regarding the issues of bilingualism and the position of the Spanish language continued in other sectors.

The debate over the language of instruction in private schools exemplified the continued preoccupation with a coherent mission in the education system. The 1949 language policy established by Villaronga excluded private schools. Thus far, Catholic schools represented the majority of private education institutions, and these reserved the right to choose their preferred language of instruction. Since 1949, private education was only required to include English and Spanish courses in their curricula, but each institution could select the language of instruction at their discretion.<sup>25</sup> In 1962, a group called the Sociedad Obispo Arizmendi Pro Defensa del Idioma (Society Bishop Arizmendi in Defense of the Vernacular) organized to support the emphasis of Spanish language education in all schools.<sup>26</sup> The Society publicly campaigned against the resistance of Catholic bishops to establish Spanish as the language of instruction in the schools under their charge, because they understood it as unnecessary intervention of the government in their affairs. When Oliveras intervened in the controversy by publicly supporting the campaign of the Society, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY), who at the time chaired the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives, threatened to withdrawal federal funds for public education in the island if the DIP changed the language policy for private schools. Muñoz Marín publically rejected the expressions by Oliveras, and

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<sup>25</sup> Schmidt, *The Politics of English in Puerto Rico*, 59-60; Also, see Roamé Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad: La presencia del inglés en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002), 209-210.

<sup>26</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 210.

eventually the DIP continued to allow private schools to use their preferred language of instruction.<sup>27</sup>

By 1965, the succeeding DIP Secretary Angel Quintero was concerned with the politicization of language education. In an interview with a magazine some years after the aforementioned conference on language, Quintero criticized the fact that that Puerto Ricans associated language learning with their political ideology on the island's status. Quintero explained that regarding language learning there were two types of Puerto Ricans, those "who believed that to be in favor of English is to be in favor of the United States, and vice versa."<sup>28</sup> Like linguist Theodore Andersson, he argued that the learning of English "should not in any way represent a deprecatory attitude towards Spanish or Puerto Rican culture."<sup>29</sup> Although he recognized the conflict, Quintero also concluded that this conflict went beyond language, politics, and culture, but there was also correlation between language education and socio-economic circumstance.<sup>30</sup> He admitted that poverty affected basic learning skills, especially language. As he explained, in economically stable and prosperous households, students possibly had family members that reinforced lessons beyond the classroom, such as the proper usage of either language in daily life.<sup>31</sup> Quintero added that "equal time in the classroom doesn't necessarily mean an equal opportunity to learn."<sup>32</sup> This way of thinking perhaps reflected the

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<sup>27</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 210; Also in Schmidt, *The Politics of English in Puerto Rico*, 61. Congressman Powell had an interesting relationship to Puerto Rico. Firstly, his district was in Harlem, close to the historical *barrio*, and secondly his wife at the time Yvette, was Puerto Rican, who had ties to the political elite in San Juan, since her father had been mayor of San Juan in the 1940s. Accessed October 15, 2016 <http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/19872>

<sup>28</sup> "SJR Interviews the Secretary of Education" *San Juan Review* 2 no. 5 (1965), 15.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 16.

local and federal concerns with the bearing of poverty on American society, especially President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty initiative launched in 1964.<sup>33</sup>

### IDENTITY IN THE 1960S

While Muñoz Marín considered the previous reports and studies, throughout the 1960s local academics continued to discuss the relationship between language and culture. Other works such as that of Ayala and Bernabe tend to focus on the opinion of men, as critics and sympathizers of the Muñoz Marín and PPD administration.<sup>34</sup> These authors tend to mention women in academia in passing. However, when reading their works, especially those of Margot Arce de Vázquez and Nilita Vientós Gastón, one finds that they provided a distinctive point of view, but also often shared assertions about the subject of identity with their male counterparts in academia. Both of these two women became strong critics of the way in which *populares* conceived the concepts of culture, language, and identity under the policies established from the 1950s through the 1960s.

Writing some years after the end of her tenure as chair of the Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos (DEH) at the University of Puerto Rico, writer and professor Margot Arce de Vázquez reflected on the effects of the island's colonial status on the Spanish language.<sup>35</sup> In her critical essay originally published in 1968, entitled "Problemática de la enseñanza del español en Puerto Rico," Arce first criticized the amount of attention school curricula gave to the

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<sup>33</sup> See Annelise Orleck and Lisa Hazirjian, Eds, *The War on Poverty: A New Grassroots History, 1964-1980* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 2.

<sup>34</sup> For their discussion on the subject, see Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2675-2817.

<sup>35</sup> Margot Arce de Vázquez, *Obras completas: Vol. 3 Puerto Rico: lengua, educación, reforma universitaria, política, cultura y religión* ed. Matilde Albert Robatto (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2001), 98. The department library kept a large portion of her published (newspaper and magazine articles and columns) and unpublished works, until 1998, 8 years after her death, when scholars from the DEH rediscovered her writings and collected them in a four volume anthology. She had retired as department chair in 1965.

vernacular.<sup>36</sup> She explained the weight and supervision given to each language course, observing that both languages were preferred courses in the public schools' curricula from kindergarten through eleventh grade. On the twelfth grade, Arce pointed out the curriculum provided for students to have more advanced choices for the English language course while the Spanish course was entirely optional.<sup>37</sup> At the university level, she noted, against the prevailing language pedagogical theories, the uneven approach to the courses continued through the first year of college.<sup>38</sup> Unsatisfied with the language education Arce questioned that if the Americanization project, and with it, the push for bilingualism in schools, had ended a decade before, then why the continued special attention to English and irregular teaching approach to both languages.<sup>39</sup> Arce championed the teaching of Spanish as the vernacular, and English as a foreign language, prioritizing and privileging Spanish over English at all levels.<sup>40</sup>

The essay also reflected on her preoccupation over teachers' disregard of the use of proper Spanish in classrooms and its implications. Arce suggested that the lack of appreciation for the vernacular inevitably prevented the deep understanding of culture.<sup>41</sup> She expounded that, for example, parents wanted their children to learn English first for explicit economic motivations, and second for the implicit reason, the "inconfesado deseo de que dejen de ser lo que son."<sup>42</sup> Her critique of the indifference towards perfecting student's command of the Spanish language reveals her own confluence of language and culture. For Arce, language supported the culture; a lack of interest in the first resulted in the disregard for the second. She worried that the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 98-99.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 100-101.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 101. Translation: "unconfessed desire that they stop being what they are."

“la lengua es lo que los hablantes quieren que sea,” fearing for the loss of its beauty, its propriety, and its expressiveness.<sup>43</sup> With this, she demonstrated that language was dynamic, although she preferred it to be static or standard. Language was teachable, therefore so was culture. Thus, she railed against what she called the linguistic *laissez faire* that permitted the interference of English in Puerto Rican Spanish, fearing its toll on the Puerto Rican culture.<sup>44</sup> As an ardent *independentista*, she highlighted the follies of colonialism. The position of Puerto Rico under the U.S. political, cultural, and economic imperialism politicized the issue of language and culture concluded Arce.<sup>45</sup>

Writer and lawyer Nilita Vientós Gastón also reflected on the issues related to the political destiny of Puerto Rico, chastising the Muñoz Marín administration for obfuscating the political questions with its focus on economic and cultural policies.<sup>46</sup> Vientós wrote a series of columns for the *El Mundo* newspaper in 1964 in response to another editorial published earlier that year by political science professor and politician Roberto Rexach Benítez and professor and journalist Celeste Benítez entitled “Puerto Rico 1964: Un pueblo en la encrucijada.” The intent of the two professors, who were married to each other at the time, was to analyze the status of the modern Puerto Rican society developed under to the administration of Muñoz Marín and the influence of the *Generación del cuarenta*. The Ateneo Puertorriqueño, the private cultural institute in the island, published the columns by Vientós as a booklet in 1964-5. Each column addressed a specific subject brought up by Rexach and Benítez. Firstly, they contextualized the years before rise of Muñoz Marín and the Great Depression in the island, followed by the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 101. Translation: “the language is what the speakers want it to be”

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 101-102.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 101-102.

<sup>46</sup> Nilita Vientós Gastón, Comentarios a un ensayo sobre Puerto Rico: “Puerto Rico, 1964: un pueblo en la encrucijada de Roberto F. Rexach Benítez y Celeste Benítez” (San Juan: Ateneo Puertorriqueño, 1964), 17.



exaltations of the development of the ELA, then they described the rapid economic changes, criticized those that opposed the new changes, and lastly addressed the cultural issues that preoccupied the administration.<sup>47</sup>

Vientós directly attacked the praises Rexach and Benítez had for the Muñoz Marín administration and the Generación del cuarenta. Speaking against the idea that the Muñoz Marín administration primarily cared for the poor and successfully modernized Puerto Rico, Vientós stated that Puerto Ricans, especially the working class strata, had grown dependent on an ever-growing welfare state and the seemingly inevitable migration to the States.<sup>48</sup> She believed that Muñoz Marín adopted the American attitude, in her view, of turning a blind eye to poverty and its repercussions.<sup>49</sup> However, Vientós' critiques quickly turned towards the ideas of culture promoted by *populares*. She stressed the importance of preserving and disseminating Puerto Rican history, all of Puerto Rican history, beyond the American and Muñoz Marín periods.<sup>50</sup> She argued that those preoccupied with conserving the Puerto Rican identity had to root these ideas in the past for a stronger foundation to withstand the changes of the future.<sup>51</sup>

Rexach and Benitez characterized as retrogressive those intellectuals that criticized the current economic and cultural policies. The professors accused intellectuals of demonstrating a “hostilidad al presente,” and a developing a closed guild that used the symbols of cultural nationalism as its token for belonging.<sup>52</sup> To this, Vientós charged that intellectuals, writers, artists, and academics were in fact the rightful exponents of culture in a country. However, since

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 24. Translation: “Hostility to the present”

Puerto Rico was a colony, Vientós argued, there was a persecution of the word *nacionalismo* which in this context of colonialism and the Cold War now had a negative connotation, signifying a lack of loyalty to the so-called universal culture and values. She disparaged the belief that universal thinking had to negate the centrality of *puertorriqueñidad*, when these two ideas could complement each other.<sup>53</sup> The way to appreciating universal values, according to Vientós, should evolve from understanding the personal or national ones.<sup>54</sup>

She criticized the imagery Rexach and Benítez offered of a modern, economically stable Puerto Rico. Vientós condemned their denial of colonialism and emphasis on materialistic growth while, according to her assessment, only superficially tending to the cultural and identity concerns. As she summarized it, she feared Puerto Rican society would be “una sociedad que sería no sólo la negación de lo puertorriqueño -que es un modo de ser particular dentro de la cultura occidental- sino también la negación de una verdadera sociedad con sentido de la universal, de un organismo vivo en continuo proceso de formación.”<sup>55</sup> In these essays, her observations mirrored some of the concerns that preoccupied Muñoz Marín as he developed *Serenidad*; however, because she was independentista, she dared to call the problem by its name. The root of those concerns, the political, the economic, and more importantly, the cultural, according to both Arce and Vientós, was colonialism, a term that *populares* refused to acknowledge. In command of this colonial diversion away from culture, the ICP would grow into the successful cultural agency *Alegría* and Muñoz Marín estimated.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 45. Translation: “A society that would be not only the negation of the Puerto Rican - which is a particular way of being within Western culture - but also the denial of a true society with a sense of the universal, of a living organism in a continuous process of formation.”

## THE INSTITUTO DE CULTURA PUERTORRIQUEÑA IN THE 1960S

As Dávila explains, the early mission of the ICP exposed its “reliance on high culture, further illustrating the Hispanophile and occidentalist tendencies prevalent among Puerto Rican intellectuals.”<sup>56</sup> By the beginning of the 1960s, the ICP fought accusations of partisan tendencies because of its adherence to the PPD’s and Muñoz Marín’s cultural policies and narrative. For example, one of the first structures the ICP constructed or restored was the house of and mausoleum to honor Luis Muñoz Rivera, the father of Muñoz Marín and an important turn-of-the-century politician, in his hometown of Barranquitas.<sup>57</sup> In 1961, the opposition’s suspicion heightened when the ICP founded the National Folk Arts Fair of Barranquitas, which rapidly became an annual event for PPD leadership to meet and reminisce on the memory and legacy of Muñoz Rivera.<sup>58</sup> Still today, this celebration is considered the second most important meeting of *populares* after the party’s annual convention. This folk arts fair was part of the approach of the ICP to its mission of concretizing cultural policies.

Throughout the 1960s, the ICP continued with its focus on developing programs dedicated to Puerto Rican folklore and most importantly defining its influence in the public education curriculum. The 1963 social studies syllabus for public elementary schools reiterated its definition of culture as suggested by the Consejo Superior de Enseñanza in 1959: “la cultura incluye el lenguaje, las costumbres, las instituciones, conceptos, actitudes e ideales, y el fondo de conocimientos que se transmite de generación en generación, en proceso histórico.”<sup>59</sup> It

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<sup>56</sup> Arlene M. Dávila, *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 62.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>59</sup> “Prontuario de Estudios Sociales en la Escuela Elemental,” Programa de Estudios Sociales, División de Currículo, Editorial DIP ELA de PR 1963, section V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 4, folder 3, page 16, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín. Translation: “Culture includes language, customs, institutions, concepts, attitudes and ideals, and the fundamental knowledge transmitted from generation to generation, in a historical process.”

explained that for students to understand other nations they had to understand their own, therefore the syllabus set out to teach them to appreciate the “patrimonio cultural de nuestros antepasados, conocer nuestra formación y evolución histórica, valorar nuestro presente.”<sup>60</sup> The syllabus also reflected the influence of Serenidad, in its assessment of daily life and community, by paying significant attention to the effects of economic changes in Puerto Rican society, especially the move from agrarian to urban communities.<sup>61</sup> In addition, in accordance with the modernizing effort of Serenidad, the syllabus stressed the importance of preparing citizens for a democracy.<sup>62</sup> This was a mission it shared with all levels of education, as seen in the previous chapter through the role of DivEdCo.

The work the ICP undertook from its inception –retrieving historical documents and organizing a historical archive- led to the rethinking of history courses in public schools.<sup>63</sup> In a 1963 memo to the governor, Claudio Prieto, a DIP aide, explained how history textbooks could benefit from the compiled information available at the ICP. Prieto argued that the cultural value of an event was a requisite in making it historical, and therefore worthy of inclusion in the curriculum.<sup>64</sup> The memo suggested materials such as primary source documents be used in the curriculum, and especially ones that featured the Spanish colonial past.<sup>65</sup> The curriculum also included the histories of the municipalities, illustrious men and women, important places and buildings, and Puerto Rican society from the eighteenth through the early twentieth century.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 16. Translation: “Cultural heritage of our ancestors, to know our formation and historical evolution, to value our present.”

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>63</sup> *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 30, 24. The National Archives in Washington DC held most of the Puerto Rican historical documents, until 1955.

<sup>64</sup> *Materiales para la enseñanza escolar de la Historia de Puerto Rico*, section V, series 17, sub-series 1, box 4, folder 3, page 10, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 3-9.

Among the different sources named to supplement the textbooks, Pietro included Puerto Rican literature and musical anthologies, and the *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña*.

Prieto also linked history teaching with language education. He proposed a book entitled *La enseñanza de la lengua en Puerto Rico*, which included expert opinions on the issues of bilingualism and biculturalism. According to Prieto, this book explained the benefits of public education in the vernacular as well as the inclusion of various other languages. As he explained, a book as such would encourage history teachers to consider the importance of language in the teaching and learning of history.<sup>66</sup> As will be discussed later, as the political status begins to be seriously questioned before of 1967, the language debate continued through the decade.

The strengthening of ICP influence became more visible in the themes and focus of its *Revista*. In the tenth year anniversary issue, in the first volume of 1966, the ICP highlighted its effort to decentralize its control over cultural production by explaining how the Instituto encouraged cities and towns to create their own cultural centers.<sup>67</sup> The cultural promotion program was to use many forms of “medios de comunicación cultural” such as conferences, expositions, concerts, recitals, theater, ballet, exhibition of documentary films, and publications.<sup>68</sup> The ICP provided financial and technical support to the local “Centros Culturales” but communities had the autonomy to choose the content and develop its productions.<sup>69</sup> By 1965, the ICP had established 43 Centros Culturales around the island; at the time the island had 76 cities and towns. The ICP supported local activities such as collecting regional folklore, publishing local writing, organizing expositions of local artists, establishing of

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>67</sup> *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 30, 22

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 22.

regional museums, organizing activities to commemorate local important dates or events, and installing of plaques to commemorate local historical buildings or historical events.<sup>70</sup>

One of the most important activities of the Instituto during this period was its efforts to promote the visual arts. The “Museo Rodante,” a truck outfitted to display art work, and the international art exhibits in San Juan, featured local and international artists in cooperation with the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the French & Co. Gallery, and private collections of Nelson Rockefeller and Helena Robinstein.<sup>71</sup> On January 17, 1966 the Instituto opened the Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico. Since its early days, the ICP offered free art classes at various times in the year. These classes eventually led to the increased production of art and became breeding grounds for professional local artists. The demand for such classes and the support of local artists led the ICP to open the art school. It established scholarships to support young and veteran artists. The faculty was mostly composed of artists from the *Generación del cincuenta*, such as Rafael Tufiño, Lorenzo Homar, and Jose A. Torres Martinó.<sup>72</sup> The Instituto also encouraged and supported the travel of young artists to Europe, the U.S., and Latin American countries such as Mexico.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 23.



Illustration 3.1 Original caption: “Pie de la foto: “El Museo Rodante del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, inaugurado recientemente en Barranquitas durante la conmemoración del natalicio de Luis Muñoz Rivera, ofrece una exposición de la vida y obra del prócer. El Museo Rodante estará en Ponce desde el domingo 2 hasta el sábado 8 de agosto, mientras dicha ciudad celebra la semana del Centenario de Muñoz Rivera.” Biblioteca Digital Puertorriqueña, Colección de Fotos del Periódico El Mundo, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras.

The ICP’s visual arts program since 1960 had been in charge of a “plan de decoración” that would beautify government buildings and other public works. The plan called for the commission of pictorial works (murals, mosaics, etc) or sculptures to be displayed on the premises of the facilities.<sup>73</sup> In this anniversary edition, Alegría emphasized that the ICP sought to employ local artists because he saw it as part of their mission to support and build an artistic class that could live off their art and represent Puerto Rico within the international artistic world. The Instituto enlisted Puerto Rican artists to create the art work and designs needed for publishing, campaigns, festivals, advertisements, and illustrations, among other visual works. The visual and theatre arts were a large component of the mission of the ICP.. In 1958, the program for the promotion of the theater arts and ballet established the annual festivals of the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 23.

Teatro Puertorriqueño and supported the development of plays and other theater productions in the Centros Culturales across the island.<sup>74</sup>

As described by Alegría, the most daunting task of the Instituto, and as explained earlier its most influential educational tool, was the organization of the historical archives and archeological studies. The ICP personnel received training and advice from the staff of the U.S. National Archives, including receiving multiple visits from U.S. Archivist Dr. Wayne C. Grover.<sup>75</sup> Most of the efforts focused on the early Spanish colonial period, since they began retrieving and receiving documents related to Puerto Rico from Spanish depositories.<sup>76</sup> Before the ICP, the U.S. National Archives oversaw and managed the historical documents. This focus on the Spanish past led to the opening in 1958 of the Caparra Archeological Site, the ruins of the former home of Juan Ponce de León, the first Spanish governor of the island after 1508.<sup>77</sup> Discovered in 1936 in the city of Guaynabo, the Caparra ruins were the first capital of the island, abandoned in 1521 when the isle of San Juan (Old San Juan) became the center of the Spanish administration in the island.<sup>78</sup>

The archeological studies across the island inspired a renewed interest in the aboriginal societies of the island, especially the Taínos. This archeological research led to the restoration of an important site, the Parque Ceremonial Indígena del Barrio Caguana in the central town of Utuado, acquired by the Instituto in 1955 and opened to the public in 1965.<sup>79</sup> The ceremonial site, called a “batey,” was a courtyard used for various ceremonies such as dances, religious

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>78</sup> “The Caparra Ruins.” Accessed August 12, 2016 <https://www.guaynabocity.gov.pr/en/servicios/ruinas-de-caparra/>

<sup>79</sup> *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 30, 27.



rituals, and communal entertainment. These findings marked the activities of the ICP for the decade. The expansion of the ICP reflected the continuation of Serenidad, even as the ELA became under fire. During the next decade, the ICP focused more on the promotion and preservation of Puerto Rican folklore, in addition to figuring out how to survive a changing political context, as the next chapter will discuss. Yet, the 1960s will end with a renewed discussion on political status and its effect on Puerto Rican identity.

### **THE STATUS QUESTION AND IDENTITY**

For most of the 1960s, the renewed interest in the status question became the issue that monopolized the headlines, and as mentioned before, culminated in the 1967 plebiscite. As explained the plebiscite was an attempt at answering the status question; however, since it was not binding on Congress, it frustrated those that supported it. The ELA received 60.4 percent of the vote to statehood's 38 percent. However, two years before, during the summer of 1965, the Puerto Rican Capitol building held hearings for the commission negotiated with the Kennedy administration earlier in the decade. The commission was presided over by Congressman James H. Rowe, and included representatives from the Puerto Rican legislature, including the now Senator Muñoz Marín and Miguel García Méndez, and other local leaders such as Teodoro Moscoso, Luis A Ferré, and Gilberto Concepción de Gracia attended them. The Status Commission sought the opinions and depositions of various cabinet members, union leaders, politicians, and educators. One of the topics that left behind copious amounts of text was education, culture and language in Puerto Rico. While the overall sentiment of the statements expressed the ideology that Muñoz Marín and *populares* had established, which portrayed Puerto Rico as a nation with its own culture and history, the approach varied depending on the positionality of the presenter.

The most important statement on this matter came from the president of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR), María Arroyo de Colón. Arroyo opened her remarks affirming that “Puerto Rico tiene su propia personalidad, su particular cultura, y su lengua vernácula.” Yet she followed that opening with highlighting the AMPR efforts and support of English language education in Puerto Rican public schools.<sup>80</sup> As president of the AMPR, she outlined the union’s position as “con cualquier cambio político que se opera en Puerto Rico, habrá que contar con esa identidad o personalidad puertorriqueña, su cultura, su vernáculo y con su decisión de llegar al dominio del inglés.”<sup>81</sup> Arroyo implied that cultural nationalism should continue to guide the educational future of the island, especially regarding language education.<sup>82</sup> She suggested that the “personalidad puertorriqueña” was impervious to the political changes, therefore the education system should protect it and promote it. Still she made the case for the importance of centering on the Spanish language as the point of reference for language learning and Puerto Rican culture. Arroyo argued that to teach one language (Spanish), and learn a new one (English), students had to embrace its vernacular in “el resto de los contenidos curriculares

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<sup>80</sup> “Educación, cultura e idioma de Puerto Rico, Tema a Discusión ante la Comisión de Status por María Arroyo de Colón, Presidente Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (San Juan, 29 de julio de 1965), Collection Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, box 24, folder 1, page 1, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Centro Investigaciones Históricas. Translation: “Puerto Rico has its own personality, its particular culture, and its vernacular language.”

<sup>81</sup> Translation: “with any political change that takes place in Puerto Rico, it will be necessary to have that Puerto Rican identity or personality, its culture, its vernacular and its decision to command the English language.”

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 3; Pro-statehood supporter Justo A. Méndez in his presentation before the committee also argued that Puerto Rico had a Hispanic past centered in the Spanish language. Justo A. Méndez, “Presentación ante la Comisión de Status” (San Juan, 31 de julio de 1965), Collection Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, box 24, folder 1, page 5, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Centro Investigaciones Históricas; meanwhile another pro-statehood supporter Frank Torres suggested that both the Spanish and U.S. American culture were influential in the development of the Puerto Rican identity. “Audiencia del Lic. Frank Torres ante la Comisión de Status Político de Puerto Rico: Efecto de la contribución cultural de Puerto Rico, presente y futuro como pueblo, a la nación de los Estados Unidos.” (San Juan, 2 de agosto de 1965), Collection Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, box 24, folder 1, page 1-3, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Centro Investigaciones Históricas.

necesarios para formar a los hombres, a los ciudadanos, de mejorar la civilización y la cultura que heredan de las anteriores.”<sup>83</sup>

Again, in accordance with the cultural and language policies Muñoz Marín had set out to establish, Arroyo reiterated the link between language and the conduit of the values and morals of the nation, crucial for the democratic intentions of ELA and the U.S. during the Cold War. In the case of Puerto Rico, as language was the cornerstone of the cultural identity it was also the medium used to transmit the other cultural components, among those, as Muñoz Marín argued was democratic values. Adding the significance of the baggage of Puerto Rican history to the argument, ICP’s director Ricardo Alegría also upheld the narrative of the cultural policies during his deposition, sketched since the 1930s and incorporated with Serenidad. Alegría emphasized the benefits of *mestizaje* while arguing that the Spanish, the African, and the Taíno legacies were the foundations for enriching and understanding the connection between language and culture.<sup>84</sup> All other depositions maintained the importance of language in communicating culture and history, while agreeing that ELA left space for the incorporation of the English language and U.S. American values into the Puerto Rican identity.<sup>85</sup>

## CONCLUSION

By the beginning of the 1960s, Serenidad was well underway as its main engines, the UPR, the ICP, and the DIP, incorporated the goals of the initiative into their development as agencies of the government’s cultural arm. However, three important conflicts threatened the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 3-4. Translation: “the rest of the curricular contents necessary to train the men, the citizens, to improve the civilization and the culture that they inherit from the previous ones.”

<sup>84</sup> “Educación, cultura e idioma de Puerto Rico, Tema a Discusión ante la Comisión de Status por Ricardo Alegría, Director del ICP (San Juan, 31 de julio de 1965), Collection Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, box 24, folder 1, page 2-3, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Centro Investigaciones Históricas.

<sup>85</sup> See Gustavo Agrait, “Puerto Rico: Una comunidad latinoamericana constituida por ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos de América” (San Juan, 31 de julio de 1965), Collection Gilberto Concepción de Gracia, box 24, folder 1, page 1-6, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Centro Investigaciones Históricas.

stability of a coherent cultural identity narrative; the division and eventual interruption of the PPD and Muñoz Marín's hegemony over the island's politics, the resurgence and establishment of the pro-statehood movement as a political adversary to the PPD, and the emergence of the status debate that questioned the legitimacy of ELA as a non-colonial form of self-government. These issues represented a threat to the cultural issues because since its inception the PPD and Muñoz Marín had controlled the narrative of culture and identity.

All the political factions went through a transition during this decade. The PPD found itself struggling between the younger generation and the old guard. The PPP also faced challenges on two fronts: the status question and the rise of a political opponent. The *estadista* movement solidified as a political force after the status question provided an opportunity to promote their theories on statehood and its possibilities. In addition, the creation of the PNP represented the possibility of a new understanding of Puerto Rican culture and the role of language in it, to contrast with the mainstream narrative constructed by the PPD. The independence movement continued to feel the pressure of persecutions but found inspiration in the Cuban Revolution to strengthen their resolve in seeking solidarity for the independence cause.

As discussed before, political changes in Puerto Rico tended to spark conversations on the issue of culture. During the 1960s, a series of closed-door conferences on the public education system revealed the importance of schools on the cultural project. As historians Mary Kay Vaughan and Solsiree Del Moral argue, policy makers use the education system to connect the political and cultural projects. This assessment is evidenced in the discussion of the role of language within culture in these conferences. As the reports concluded, language was a social instrument, a unifying force, a frame of reference, and an agent for the dissemination of a

common world view. The classroom was the prime location to develop and maintain language in this manner. Interestingly, when attempting to understand the issue Muñoz Marín considered studies about policies in border communities highlighting the intersection of Americanization, colonialism, and the borderlands, and acknowledging the parallels with Puerto Rico.

While populares resisted assimilation through the promotion of the Spanish language on the island, they did recognize the importance of learning English as Puerto Rican migrated to the States during this decade. The issue of migration became an important topic during the 1960s for the DIP, in part seen as an essential aspect of the economic policies of Bootstraps, and also understood as a consequence of poverty in the island. The DIP intensified its attention to the English teaching curriculum, and developed and demanded more professionalization from language educators. Feeling the pressure from the AMPR and in collaboration with the UPR, the Departamento updated its approach that even included the newest media, public access television. The discussion over the teaching of English added to the larger language debate that there was also correlation between language education and socio-economic circumstance. The DIP accepted that fluidity in the English language provided opportunities, especially for those Puerto Ricans that sought employment in urban spaces in the island and in the states.

The language policies were always criticized, especially by those academics that recognized the colonial status of Puerto Rico. The works of Margot Arce de Vázquez and Nilita Vientós Gastón provided a distinctive point of view on identity. These two women in Puerto Rico's academia were critics of the mainstream concepts of culture, language, and identity under the cultural policies because they considered these in service of colonialism. Both Arce and Vientós acknowledge the importance of Spanish in Puerto Rican culture. Arce argued that language supported culture, therefore a lack of interest in the vernacular resulted in the disregard

for their cultural identity. Meanwhile, Vientós suggested that universal cultural values could accommodate the centrality of *puertorriqueñidad*; in fact, one complemented the other.

The most identifiable component of Serenidad was the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, and during this new decade, it expanded its functions and reach. Even as ELA came under fire by questions over its future, the expansion of the ICP reflected the unfettered continuation of the ideals of Serenidad. The Instituto juggled multiple responsibilities, including historical preservation, promoting folkloric cultural art forms, and managing archeological sites. This period also witnessed the initial attempt to balance support for universal and folkloric art forms. This effort was somewhat successful and in accordance with the longstanding conversation over the position of universal cultural values and autochthonous Puerto Rican cultural identity. The role of the ICP was particularly important during this period as 1967 approached and the status debate resulted in the first plebiscite of this kind.

Populares argued that the status question of Puerto Rico was answered in 1952 with the ratification of the Estado Libre Asociado, however, the issue of expanding the autonomy pressured Muñoz Marín as the new decade began. Negotiations in Washington resulted in the establishment of a committee that deliberated the viability of any changes to ELA or the overall relationship between the U.S. and the island. As the chapter demonstrates, one of the most important topics for the committee was the effect of a status change on Puerto Rican culture. While the committee heard the opinion of the multiple factions, all seemed to agree on the significance of a separate cultural identity developed and managed by Puerto Ricans. In addition, while most agreed on the importance of the Hispanic past, and the role of the Spanish language in that identity, others suggested that the English language should be accommodated. Even the pro-statehood voices in the hearings agreed with the conceptualization of the cultural identity.

The status question underlined all the issues discussed throughout the period covered in this chapter. Serenidad as the strategy to address culture and modernity became embedded in the governmental institutions created or tailored around it. This is important because it gives a glimpse into how powerful was the message populares, although during this time embattled and divided, created and promoted. The cultural narrative now accepted into the mainstream, mostly thanks to the educational campaigns mastered by all the cultural and educational agencies, was strong enough to withstand the political shifts of the decade. The personalidad puertorriqueña shaped under Serenidad will continue to be tested, but the way it survived this decade would set the tone for what is to come.

## Chapter 4: Politically Divided, Culturally United

The change from over twenty years of populares in control of the Legislative Assembly and La Fortaleza to the new pro-statehood party was a momentous occasion for the discussion over the direction of Puerto Rican society and the significance of its culture. On his first 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration speech in 1969, the new governor Luis A. Ferré assured the people: “It is my conviction that with statehood our American citizenship is completed in its rights and our Puerto Rican identity is guaranteed in its permanence –all these by virtue of the constitutional and political rights thus acquired. And this is so because the American nation is a federation of states under the principle of diversity within unity, with constitutional guarantees so that each state may preserve its identity.”<sup>1</sup> This approach to the pro-statehood message became the point of contention over the next decades; their opposition rearranged their political, social, and cultural policies against this idea, the *estadidad jíbara*. Yet *estadistas* used their turn in La Fortaleza to develop and promote their own ideas of culture and language in their attempt to challenge the mainstream concepts.

This chapter will follow the political struggle for power between the three status-driven parties from 1969 to 1980, after the official retirement of Muñoz Marín. A new, often younger, leadership now led the public debate over status and culture. Riding on the division within the populares and *estadistas* of the previous decade, the new pro-statehood party, the Partido Nuevo Progresista, won the 1968 election, positioning its founder, engineer Luis A Ferré, as the new governor. As a member of one of the most affluent families in Ponce (and the island), Ferré already had shown interest in the humanist ideals Serenidad proposed, founding the Museo de

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<sup>1</sup> “Discurso del Honorable Gobernador Luis A. Ferré el 4 de julio de 1969,” 14, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.



Arte de Ponce in the years before his election. As governor, Ferré projected as his plan of action what he coined, “Nueva Vida” which sought to make true on his campaign promise and slogan “Esto tiene que cambiar.” This chapter will also cover the first administrations of Rafael Hernández Colón and of Carlos Romero Barceló, and their approach to cultural policies, especially since the rebranding of the pro-statehood message after 1973.

### **FERRÉ’S PATH TO LA FORTALEZA**

The years prior to the 1968 election were marred by political division amongst the established parties in the island. As previously discussed, populares were divided over the future of the party as the status question resurfaced in the early 1960s. After Muñoz Marín’s retirement in 1964, his appointed successor, long-time ally Roberto Sánchez Vilella, although he swiftly won the election that November, failed to calm and garner cohesion in the ranks. The looming of the plebiscite scheduled for 1967 also affected the pro-statehood movement. The established Partido Estadista Republicano (PER) as early as 1960 had objected to the celebration of a plebiscite that asked Puerto Ricans their preference on the future of the U.S.-Puerto Rico relationship that included the Estado Libre Asociado as an option.<sup>2</sup> However, some within the movement, including Ferré, saw the plebiscite as a prime opportunity, in the global context of social and political movements, for the statehood movement to grow.

Members of the PER argued that the ELA, unless changed, would always represent a colonial and transitional status, one that could not achieve a permanent relationship with the U.S.<sup>3</sup> In order to gain their support, in August 1962, Muñoz Marín called for an extraordinary session of the Legislative Assembly (Senate and House) to propose a resolution for the

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<sup>2</sup> Guillermo A. Baralt, *Desde el mirador de próspero: La vida de Luis A. Ferré Tomo I 1904-1968* (San Juan: Fundación El Nuevo Día, Inc, 1996), 256.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 256.

legislators' consideration to support a plebiscite that offered the choice between a fully developed ELA, which would shed its colonial vestiges; statehood; and independence.<sup>4</sup> Muñoz Marín had been in negotiation with the Kennedy and later the Johnson administrations to negotiate more equitable terms for ELA, and celebrate a U.S.-backed plebiscite whose results would be seriously considered by Congress and lead to the redefinition of the U.S.-Puerto Rico relationship. The PER resented that Muñoz Marín excluded them from the early discussions with the White House and Congress, and it feared that negotiations would favor ELA. Therefore, at the public hearings held in Congress in July 1963, the PER president Miguel García Méndez publicly opposed the plebiscite, restating that the inclusion of the ELA was an option as their major grievance.<sup>5</sup> While Ferré agreed with the party's objection that statehood was the only path forward, he demonstrated his openness to a plebiscite.

As previously mentioned, in a move that surprised Muñoz Marín, in February 1964, Congress proposed to the Puerto Rican Legislative Assembly the creation of a joint commission with the purpose of studying the factors that affected the present and future relationship of the island and the U.S. The commission was composed of seven congressman and six Puerto Ricans, presided over by Congressman James H. Rowe, and including Muñoz Marín for ELA, García Méndez and Ferré for statehood, and Gilberto Concepción de Gracia for independence.<sup>6</sup> Ferré used this opportunity to shape the conditions and definitions of statehood. On his assessment of the final report to the commission, Ferré argued that statehood would allow for Puerto Rican

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<sup>4</sup> Bernabe and Ayala, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 2266; Baralt, *Desde el mirador de próspero*, 255-256.

<sup>5</sup> Baralt, *Desde el mirador de próspero*, 256-257.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 257.

culture to flourish, and that the new status would be economically viable for the island within a reasonable amount of time given steady economic progress and the will of the people.<sup>7</sup>

According to Ferré's biographer Guillermo Baralt, throughout the discussions of the commission, García Méndez and Ferré clashed over whether or not the PER should support the plebiscite. After the commission concluded that statehood was viable, Ferré, the vice president of the party, determined that in order to seek a mandate from the people, someone had to campaign for the statehood option, and the PER should be the party to do so. García Méndez, as president of the PER, stubbornly disagreed because he did not want ELA as an option in the plebiscite.<sup>8</sup> At the resistance of the PER, on December 1966 Ferré then publicly suggested that non-partisan entities should support and campaign for either of the three options. The first organization that expressed interest in representing the statehood option was Ciudadanos Pro Estado 51, presided over by lawyer Carlos Romero Barceló.<sup>9</sup> Frustrated, as the now scheduled plebiscite approached, Ferré called for a PER assembly to once more propose that the party support the statehood option on the ballot. At the assembly held on 22 January 1967, a heated debate ensued amongst party leadership and their respective supporters. The division between García Méndez and Ferré soon turned personal, since they were actually brothers-in-law; Ferré's sister-in-law Fredeswinda had married García Méndez in 1931. Rumors and accusations flew and ripped apart the party they had once built together.<sup>10</sup> Ferré was the last speaker at the assembly. His strongest statement clarified his support of the plebiscite, which he explained was inspired by the fact that the commission had determined that there was no step forward for a "sovereign" ELA, and it was the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 259.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 260.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 262.

right moment to support the only plausible non-colonial permanent relationship with the U.S., *la estadidad*.<sup>11</sup>

As he walked away from the assembly followed by his supporters, including his son Antonio Luis, Ferré ended his ties with the PER. The next day, he began the procedures to establish the civic organization that would campaign for statehood, the non-partisan entity Asociación de Estadistas Unidos, which included the participation of leaders from other pro-statehood organizations such as the Ciudadanos Pro Estado 51, Populares Estadistas, Moral Estadounidense, and Reformista Pro Americano.<sup>12</sup> The controversy within the PER, and the dramatic exit of Ferré during the assembly, had been broadcasted through the radio, and according to Baralt, ushered a new level of curiosity and served to reinvigorate the pro-statehood movement.<sup>13</sup>

As previously mentioned, statehood lost the plebiscite to ELA; however, the presence of the pro-statehood movement as a political force against populares could not be denied. With an unprecedented 38 percent of support for statehood, Ferré perceived this as victory and a repudiation of the leadership of the PER. To his delight, statehood had won in his hometown of Ponce, and in a victory speech before fellow *ponceños*, Ferré promised to create a new party that would bring social justice and defend the pro-statehood ideal.<sup>14</sup> The Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) was born on 20 August 1967, in San Juan, where the plebiscite's pro-statehood coalition was dissolved, and the new party rose. In his address before the delegates and supporters that day, Ferré assured them that statehood was within reach: "El pueblo de Estados Unidos estaba

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 266.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 269.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 269.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 283.

consciente de que el clamor por la igualdad en el derecho y en el goce de todas las prerrogativas de la ciudadanía Americana en la Estadidad crecía y se afirmaba en Puerto Rico, a pesar de los inmensos obstáculos de un Gobierno, que hizo del plebiscito una burla, violando su propio compromiso de que éste habría de trascender las líneas de partido.”<sup>15</sup> Four months later, in its first general assembly, the PNP nominated Ferré as its party president and gubernatorial candidate for the 1968 election. In his acceptance speech, Ferré delineated the party platform and his vision for Puerto Rico, which he called “Nueva Vida.”<sup>16</sup> The PNP and Ferré appealed to the poor and working-class Puerto Ricans, and turned out to be the most vigorous opponent of a fractured PPD since its inception in 1938.



Illustration 4.1: Logo of the PNP.<sup>17</sup>

### **FERRÉ AND HIS NUEVA VIDA**

On 2 January 1969, as the first *estadista*, Luis A. Ferré, was sworn in as governor of Puerto Rico, he introduced the mission of his administration, “Nueva Vida de progreso y

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<sup>15</sup> *El Mundo*, 21 de agosto de 1967, 1, 23. Translation: “The people of the United States was aware that the clamor for equality before the law and in the enjoyment of all the prerogatives of American citizenship in Statehood grew and affirmed in Puerto Rico, despite the immense obstacles of a government, which made the plebiscite a mockery, violating its own commitment that it would transcend party lines.”

<sup>16</sup> Baralt, *Desde el mirador de próspero*, 289.

<sup>17</sup> Since it was the one that closest to resemble the original logo, I used the image available in the article for the party on the online open source encyclopedia Wikipedia “New Progressive Party of Puerto Rico,” Accessed November 21, 2016, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Progressive\\_Party\\_of\\_Puerto\\_Rico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Progressive_Party_of_Puerto_Rico)

felicidad.”<sup>18</sup> On this day, Ferré remarked that it was the first time that the Puerto Rican executive power transitioned from a governor representing one party to a governor-elect of a different party, a “cambio de poder pacifico y ordenado.”<sup>19</sup> Ferré as the founder of the newly established PNP was the new engine of the pro-statehood movement.<sup>20</sup> In his inaugural speech, he defined the concept of Nueva Vida, as his aspiration for all Puerto Ricans, which was for them to experience material wealth while maintaining a good moral direction and spiritual satisfaction.<sup>21</sup> Along the lines of Muñoz Marín’s Serenidad, Nueva Vida would welcome the economic and material progress of the new scientific and technological advances of the late 1960s, but it remained preoccupied with the effects of these changes on the human spirit.<sup>22</sup> However, Ferré took it a step further and specifically pointed out the impact of the unequal distribution of material wealth, which science and technology had yet to fix.<sup>23</sup> He sought to make it his mission to address the issues of poverty in the island, which he maintained that the rapid industrialization, while important, failed to eradicate, as promised by Governor Muñoz Marín and the PPD decades prior. Echoing Serenidad, Ferré argued that:

El objetivo de nuestro esfuerzo económico no debe ser únicamente el aumento en la producción, sino que también debe tomar en consideración sus consecuencias sociales y su impacto sobre la felicidad del ser humano. No podemos destruir almas para producir tuercas y tornillos...Hay que vivir y trabajar con un claro sentido de responsabilidad social.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Discurso Inaugural del Gobernador Luis A. Ferré, January 2, 1969, 1, Archivo Luis A. Ferré. Translation: “New Life of progress and happiness”

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 2. Translation: “Peaceful and orderly transfer of power”

<sup>20</sup> Members of the Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) will be known colloquially as *penepés*. An *estadista* is a pro-statehood sympathizer, usually associated with the PNP but not exclusively.

<sup>21</sup> “Discurso Inaugural del Gobernador Luis A. Ferré,” 2.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 3

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 4-5.

Within the United States political context, while Muñoz had been a New Deal Democrat, Ferré was a moderate Republican and agreed with some of the Great Society policies established during President Johnson's administration. His policies with Nueva Vida had similar social and cultural concerns to Serenidad, but differed in the approach. The main point of his plan was to address the cycle of poverty many Puerto Ricans were stuck in. He outlined some policy changes for education that pushed for the modernization of the system to keep pace with technological changes, while maintain an emphasis on the promotion of creativity and the arts.<sup>25</sup> Like the Nixon administration, Ferré expressed concerns about the crime rate and drug addiction. He talked about reprioritizing the island's agriculture sector, while also campaigning to attract new industries. Among his most effective messages, and his priorities once in La Fortaleza, were his proposals to increase public employees' salaries and establish a yearly Christmas bonus, lower the voting age from 21 to 18 years old, and give property titles to *parceleros*. Parceleros was the somewhat derogatory name used to call poor peasants that in 1941 received pieces of land, *parcelas*, for sustenance agriculture, and living quarters.<sup>26</sup> The *parcelas* were still owned by the government, and their occupants lacked any legal rights over it. Most *parceleros* were populares, since they felt indebted to the party and Muñoz Marín for providing them a piece of land. However, almost 30 years later, Ferré argued that some wanted a chance to have authority over their land.<sup>27</sup> These were all promises that targeted the traditional popular voter and effectively undermined the PPD stronghold on the poor and working classes.

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<sup>25</sup> "Discurso del Honorable Gobernador Luis A. Ferré el 4 de julio de 1969," 9, Archivo Luis A. Ferré.

<sup>26</sup> The Title V of the Lands Law of 1941, it was part of the land redistribution effort of the PPD under New Deal policies of the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA). Baralt, 290.

<sup>27</sup> Baralt, *Desde el mirador de próspero*, 290; Rafael Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio: Memorias de Rafael Hernández Colón* (San Juan: Ramallo Bro, 2004), 86.

While his social justice agenda barely differed from the PPD, some of Ferré's fiscally conservative ideas alerted his opponents. For example, his push to privatize public properties brought on criticism. However, even his most important political opponent during his term, then the president of the Senate, a young Rafael Hernández Colón, understood that as a moderate, Ferré quickly demonstrated he was less of an ideologue, and more pragmatic with those decisions.<sup>28</sup> This was especially true since, while he had won, the PPD maintained control of the Legislative Assembly and the municipal governments, which limited his governing.

Although the annexation movement had been active since the first days of the U.S. intervention in the island, the PNP and Ferré were a breath of fresh air to the statehood bloc. Before ELA, studies of Puerto Rican economy and society had determined that the statehood process would overburden the pocket of common Puerto Ricans, who wouldn't be able to afford the additional federal taxation.<sup>29</sup> Since then, this report informed the PPD's message and helped support the ratification of the constitution that defined ELA in 1952. However, as a member of the Status Commission, Ferré made it his mission to prove that now Puerto Ricans could afford statehood, financially and morally. He offered that the most important step forward was achieving the right to vote in presidential elections as inherent to U.S. citizenship.<sup>30</sup>

Yet on various occasions Ferré reiterated his commitment to respect the will of the people. Specifically, he clarified that his election was not another referendum on status. On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ELA on 25 July 1972, Ferré explained that the outcome of the 1967 plebiscite was predicated on the "two fundamental pillars upon which it rests and which are permanent

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<sup>28</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 106.

<sup>29</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 1942.

<sup>30</sup> "Message of the Honorable Luis A. Ferré, Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to the Sixth Legislative Assembly at the Third Regular Session, January 14, 1971," 29, Archivo Luis A. Ferré.



union with the United States and the indissoluble bond of our common citizenship.”<sup>31</sup> While he had campaigned against ELA during the plebiscite, the two pillars of the ELA he pointed out were also crucial for statehood.<sup>32</sup> He further stated,

I have the obligation, as Governor of Puerto Rico, to orient Commonwealth in the sense it was conceived, and to repudiate and reject all that, no matter from where it comes, may tend to weaken the ties of union with the United States...I will not allow a substitution of what I understand to be the free and democratic expression of our people, which reflects the will to bring about a closer union with the United States and enrich our American citizenship.<sup>33</sup>

He warned against attempts that “wish[ed] to isolate Puerto Rico from our nation [U.S.], weakening these links that tie us to her and renouncing the prerogatives we are entitled to because we are American citizens.”<sup>34</sup> Again, he still argued that statehood was the way forward, but accepted that ELA was a legitimate form of self-determination that represented the sentiment of the majority of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens.<sup>35</sup>

In his definition of statehood offered in the inaugural speech in 1970, he echoed his campaign message, stating that statehood would not diminish the significance of the Spanish language and the *personalidad puertorriqueña*.<sup>36</sup> In 1972 he again insisted that there was space within the nation for Puerto Ricans to “retain our identity and to enrich our personality with the traditional values of our culture, including our mother tongue, which is Spanish.”<sup>37</sup> Ferré expressed that this reassurance was crucial because human beings depended on their “full

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<sup>31</sup> “Speech delivered by the Honorable Luis A. Ferré, Governor of Puerto Rico, on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, July 25, 1972 in *Puerta de Tierra*,” 11, Archivo Luis A. Ferré.

<sup>32</sup> He was a member of the constitutional assembly, and signed the constitution that created ELA in 1952.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 12; Also in “Discurso Inaugural del Gobernador Luis A. Ferré,” 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> “Speech delivered by the Honorable Luis A. Ferré, Governor of Puerto Rico, on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,” 14.

identification with an autochthonous culture” to survive.<sup>38</sup> However, he cautioned against cultural entrenchment and explained that it was important for Puerto Ricans to accept the influence of other cultures to give vitality and breadth to their own.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, he suggested that Puerto Rican culture enriched “the conglomerate of cultures” that formed the U.S.<sup>40</sup> He pointed out that the intangible values of Puerto Rican culture, such as understanding, compassion, and enjoyment of life, could break down “the hermetic coldness of the Anglo Saxon.”<sup>41</sup> Much like Muñoz Marín, his rhetoric emphasized a reciprocal exchange between Puerto Rico and the United States. However, a colonial relationship is inherently unequal, and in this case, absorption into the mainstream U.S. culture seemed a requirement as the example of New Mexico demonstrated.

#### **CULTURAL POLICIES UNDER NUEVA VIDA**

On the Día de la Raza, 12 October 1969, the day commemorating the “discovery” of the Americas, Ferré expressed his opinion on assimilation. According to Ferré, Puerto Rico was the “fulcro de dos culturas, centro de cambio y adaptación de lo mejor de ambas,” the Latin American and the U.S. American.<sup>42</sup> He argued that “Puerto Rico tiene en este hemisferio la función primordial de contribuir al entendimiento entre los Estados Unidos y la América Latina.”<sup>43</sup> Rather than assimilating to the U.S. American culture, he suggested that Puerto Rico should serve as a bridge between both cultures. He wanted the island to contribute to the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>42</sup> José Prados Herrero, “Ferré Se Opone a la Asimilación” *El Día*, 13 de octubre de 1969, 29, Archivo Luis A. Ferré. Translation: “Fulcrum of two cultures, center of change and adaptation of the best of both,”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 29. Translation: “Puerto Rico has in this hemisphere the primary function to contribute to the understanding between the United States and Latin America.”

unification of the hemisphere and promote coexistence by addressing common issues such as poverty, oppression, and hunger.<sup>44</sup> In this speech, Ferré added that his rejection of cultural assimilation was based on the principals that it should not be a condition for statehood, since, according to him, it had not been required of a territory before.<sup>45</sup>

Rhetorically this message was effective, but, as Muñoz Marín before him, he obfuscated the struggle of non-whites in the U.S. The message failed to explain the context of, for example, the statehood process of New Mexico, which went through a complicated transition of cultural assimilation before its admission in 1912.<sup>46</sup> Reflecting the influence of the civil rights movements, and the calls for embracing the cultural diversity of the U.S., Ferré insisted that academics and public opinion supported his argument that “diversidad, no es asimilación,” but “el nervio y la esencia de la nueva cultura americana.”<sup>47</sup> These concepts echoed the idea of the “American melting pot,” which in his opinion no longer defined U.S. culture, since groups were able to maintain a semi-separate sense of self while also becoming Americans.<sup>48</sup> However, they ignored the fact that all immigrant groups from generation to generation did go through some degree of assimilation and accommodation, to assure a level of success and acceptance and become part of American mainstream culture.

Ferre supported the teaching of English in public schools but he also emphasized the importance of the mother tongue. Addressing the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico, Ferré asked for support of a public education system reform that would intensify the education of both

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>46</sup> John M. Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2004), 4.

<sup>47</sup> Prados Herrero, “Ferré Se Opone a la Asimilación,” 29. Translation: “diversity is not assimilation” “the nerve and the essence of the new American culture”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 29. In the speech, he cited Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan’s *Beyond the Melting Pot* to support his ideas on cultural diversity.

the Spanish and English languages.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the Secretary of the DIP, Ramón Mellado Parsons, had announced that the English language program was going to be reinvigorated in order to emphasize teaching it as a second language.<sup>50</sup> Both Mellado and Ferré exhorted teachers to depoliticize the teaching of either language, since both were crucial to the formation of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens.<sup>51</sup> The education philosophy proposed by Mellado in 1971 for DIP expressly defined the fundamental position of linguistic expression in its effort to form a “hombre culto.”<sup>52</sup> Much like Margot Arce had proposed before, in his assessment of the “cultured man” included basic skills, language fluidity, perhaps bilingualism, along with a deep understanding of culture as taught in public schools.<sup>53</sup>

The philosophy for language education was predicated on the notion that “el pensamiento, en efecto, es ya, como con razón se dice, lenguaje interior, y no hay claridad ni precisión posible en los conceptos o ideas si estos no alcanzan un nivel suficiente de expresión adecuada.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, a strong language education was central for learning basic and complicated concepts in other disciplines. The mission statement also highlighted the importance of learning other languages, but pointed out that in the case of Puerto Rico, English would be prioritized. As mentioned before, the proposal closed by stating that learning another language required the “plena posesión del propio.”<sup>55</sup> Again, in contrast to the policies of Serenidad during

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<sup>49</sup> “Mensaje del Gobernador, Hon. Luis A. Ferré, ante la Sexagésima Primera Asamblea Anual de la Asociación de Maestros de PR, el lunes 27 de diciembre de 1971, en el Hotel San Juan,” 7, Archivo Luis A. Ferré.

<sup>50</sup> “Instrucción intensifica enseñanza inglés” *El Día*, 23 de octubre de 1969, 2, Archivo Luis A. Ferré; Also, “Mensaje del Gobernador, Hon. Luis A. Ferré, ante la Sexagésima Primera Asamblea Anual de la Asociación de Maestros de PR,” 7, Archivo Luis A. Ferré.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 7; “Instrucción intensifica enseñanza inglés” *El Día*, 23 de octubre de 1969, 32.

<sup>52</sup> “Proyecto de una Filosofía Educativa para Puerto Rico, Departamento de Instrucción Pública Oficina del Secretario, julio 1971,” 42, Archivo Luis A. Ferré. Translation: “cultured man”

<sup>53</sup> See, page 42.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 42. Translation: “Thought is, as it is rightly said, interior language, and there is no clarity or precision possible in the concepts or ideas if they do not reach a sufficient level of adequate expression.”

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 42, 50.

the Ferré years, the emphasis relied on the integration of the cultural and political identities of Puerto Ricans, instead of the separation of them. Just as populares, penepés associated Puerto Rican political identity with U.S. citizenship, and understood it as an integral part of the Puerto Rican identity. Language was important but not the sole centerpiece of the Puerto Rican identity.

When listing the special objective of education in the island, the proposed philosophy stated that Puerto Rico was a country of Hispanic origins and identified Spanish as its vernacular. However, unlike under Serenidad it explicitly recognized the effects of the U.S. presence through the twentieth century, specifically the economic and political changes that linked Puerto Rico closer to the U.S. The document acknowledged the process of transculturation that seemed inevitable in the context. Moreover, it outlined the prime mission of the Puerto Rican education system to:

velar celosamente, en todo momento, por el mantenimiento de nuestra identidad cultural, de nuestra personalidad de pueblo; más aún: por el robustecimiento progresivo de la misma; pero debe hacerlo de la única manera que ello es realmente posible, es decir, desde una actitud abierta a todo cambio renovador de tipo positivo que nuestro contacto con otros módulos culturales pueda brindarnos. De muy particular interés para nuestro pueblo son los módulos de la cultura norteamericana, por la unión política que hemos establecido con el pueblo de los Estados Unidos de América.<sup>56</sup>

The proposal reiterated the idea that the administration encouraged anything that brought growth to the Puerto Rican cultural perspective, and severed, though not completely, the relationship between culture and nationalism.<sup>57</sup> Though the objectives stressed the position of Spanish within Puerto Rican identity, they also stated that “la identidad de una

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 49. Translation: "to watch jealously, at all times, for the maintenance of our cultural identity, our personality as a people; more so: by the progressive strengthening of it; but it must do so in the only way that it is really possible, that is, from an attitude open to any positive change that our contact with other cultural modules can provide. Of particular interest to our people are the modules of American culture, because of the political union we have established with the people of the United States of America. "

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 49.

persona o de un pueblo no es algo fijo y estático, sino que es algo que cambia, pero que, al hacerlo, no pierde sus perfiles identificables.”<sup>58</sup> This statement aligned with penepés’ concept of culture that, as previously mentioned, would maintain a level of autochthonous identity while it also accepted new influences.

Ferré both praised and marginalized the role of the Instituto de Cultura. From its inception, Ferré expressed reservations over the influence of populares on the ICP and the potential political propaganda it could promote.<sup>59</sup> Part of his apprehension was over the fact that the ICP increased its focus on folkloric activities in the 1970s, a process Arlene Dávila called the “folklorization of Puerto Rican culture.” While during the previous decade the Instituto attempted to balance its attention to more universal cultural forms, such as classical music and ballet performances, now it featured local cultural traditions.<sup>60</sup> An example of this shift in an issue of the *Revista ICP* in 1971 was an article discussing the contribution of folkloric or traditional medicine in Puerto Rico.<sup>61</sup> The article explained the influence of herbalism, superstition, the environment, magic, and religious beliefs in the search for the cure of physical illnesses. In addition, during this period the ICP explored the influence and role of African slaves in the island. In 1973, as a commemoration of the centenary of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, the ICP dedicated its last magazine issue of the year to the history of slavery and of the abolitionist movement, which also included a collection of documents and photos of artifacts.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 50. Translation: “The identity of a person or a people is not something fixed and static, but something that changes, but that, in doing so, does not lose its identifiable profiles.”

<sup>59</sup> Baralt, *Desde el mirador de próspero*, 195

<sup>60</sup> Dávila, *Sponsored Identities*, 64.

<sup>61</sup> Teodoro Vidal, “Aportación al estudio del folklore médico en Puerto Rico.” *Revista Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 50, 1971, 53-64.

<sup>62</sup> *Revista del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* 61, octubre-diciembre 1973.

However, Ferré's administration soon initiated the PNP trend of slashing the ICP's budget whenever a recession ensued. The budget issue significantly hindered its development and its duties during the early 1970s, and again later in the decade. While the ICP continued publishing its magazine with topics including literature, music, theater, history, and archeology, it was limited in expanding its visibility in other media outlets, especially in television. Also, the ICP's focus on the folkloric cultural legacy of the island, according to Roamé Torres González, received criticism from various sectors because of its perceived nationalist undertones, and its emphasis on promoting the past while seemingly ignoring new cultural currents.<sup>63</sup> However, what Torres and linguist Rubén del Rosario seemed to miss is the budgetary issues that the ICP confronted after Ferré took La Fortaleza. The Instituto would have to wait to receive more attention until well into the administration of Hernández Colón, after its new executive director, Luis M. Rodríguez Morales, appealed to the new governor for much needed funds to end the austerity of the Ferré years.<sup>64</sup>

The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) also encountered major changes during Ferré's administration. In his memoir, Hernández Colón accused Ferré and the penepés of having a vendetta against the administration of long-time UPR system president Jaime Benítez, which culminated with the firing of Benítez from his post in 1971.<sup>65</sup> For over thirty years Benítez controlled the development and growth of the UPR, first as chancellor of the Rio Piedras campus, and the last ten years as president of the what was now the UPR System. As a PPD party elder, and one of the most important intellectual figures of the ELA, Benítez represented a

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<sup>63</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalismo*, 206. He quotes essayist Rubén del Rosario's collection *Ser puertorriqueño y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Fareso, 1984), 97.

<sup>64</sup> Luis M. Rodríguez Montes, "Medios modernos de comunicación masiva y fomento de la literatura," Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>65</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 253-254.

threat to the PNP and its ideas on the future of the UPR. With his *casa de estudio* policy, Benítez had constructed the role of the university system as the prestigious producer of technocrats partly in service of the mission of ELA, Bootstraps, and Serenidad, but he equally guarded the system's autonomy from the influence of party politics to the chagrin of even Muñoz Marín.<sup>66</sup> Benítez centralized power in his hands, from some accounts, following a more U.S. American administrative model. As mentioned prior, throughout his tenure, students and faculty struggled with his micromanaging and overbearing manner of enforcing his rules on political activism and downright persecution of dissension.<sup>67</sup>

However, Ferré's term coincided with vacancies in the Consejo de Educación Superior (CES), which amongst its duties included the selection of chancellors and curricula. By October 1971, an impasse on the appointment of a chancellor for the Mayaguez campus gave the new members of the Consejo and Governor Ferré the incentive to push Benítez out.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, student unrest after 1970 affected both Benítez and Ferré. The protests were directed at Benítez's policies that excluded the voices of students in university decisions; and Ferré faltered at dealing with the general unrest over colonialism and militarization (specifically the presence of the ROTC on campus, and the mandatory draft), which also responded to the general anti-Vietnam War movement in the U.S. The situation escalated when on 4 March 1970 a pro-independence, anti-war protest led by the student organizations Federación Universitaria Pro Independencia (FUPI) and the Comité de Acción Femenina Universitaria (CAFU) resulted in a

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<sup>66</sup> Héctor Luis Acevedo, ed., *Don Jaime Benítez*, 177.

<sup>67</sup> See Martín Cruz Santos, "Jaime Benítez y el caso del profesor José María Lima en la vorágine universitaria del año 1963: La defensa de las libertades de pensamiento, expresión y cátedra" in Héctor Luis Acevedo, editor, *Don Jaime Benítez: Entre la universidad y la política* (San Juan: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 2008), 365-400.

<sup>68</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 254; Héctor Luis Acevedo, editor, *Don Jaime Benítez: Entre la universidad y la política* (San Juan: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 2008), 355.



confrontation between protestors and the police on campus that caused the death of twenty-year old student Antonia Martínez Lagares at the hands of the police.<sup>69</sup> Rubén Berrios, the president of Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP), declared Martínez Lagares the first woman martyr of the Puerto Rican independence struggle.<sup>70</sup> A few days after the first anniversary of Martínez Lagares' assassination, during another confrontational protest, two police officers and a ROTC cadet died in the violent exchange.<sup>71</sup>

The government and university response to these clashes eventually affected the images and political futures of both men. Benítez found himself at odds with the CES when pressured by the members to submit his nomination for the UPR-Mayaguez chancellor vacancy. He resented the pressure since he argued according to procedure candidates had yet to be vetted, and challenged the CES to “declarar vacante la presidencia si así lo estima conveniente.”<sup>72</sup> Perceiving it as a threat to their authority, the CES penned the resolution removing the university president from his post.<sup>73</sup> The one dissenting vote in the CES, José Trías Monges, regarded the move as politically motivated, and an attempt to tarnish the university and Benítez.<sup>74</sup> Amador Cobas replaced Benítez as president of the UPR system. In the case of Ferré, the events of the student dissent and other controversial policies left him politically weakened for his upcoming reelection. This gave the PPD a chance to challenge Ferré and the penepés.

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<sup>69</sup> “Antonia Martínez Lagares, cuarenta años después” *Diálogo* 4 de marzo de 2010, accessed February 10, 2017 <http://dialogopr.com/antonia-martinez-lagares-cuarenta-anos-despues/>

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> José Nicolás Medina Fuentes, “¡Vida Eterna a Antonia Martínez Lagares!: Ponencia leída en la Octava (8va.) Jornada de la Muerte de Antonia Martínez, Plaza Antonia Martínez, UPR, Recinto de Río Piedras” *80 Grados* 7 de marzo de 2014, Accessed February 10, 2017 <http://www.80grados.net/vida-eterna-a-antonia-martinez-lagares/>

<sup>72</sup> “Consejo de Educación Superior, Acta de 8 de octubre de 1971,” in Héctor Luis Acevedo, editor, *Don Jaime Benítez: Entre la universidad y la política* (San Juan: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, 2008), 358. Translation: “declare the presidency vacant if it deems it appropriate.”

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 359.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 360-362.

## THE NEW PPD AND HERNÁNDEZ COLÓN

When remembering his 1972 campaign, Rafael Hernández Colón, perhaps self-servingly, regarded it as the most important, best executed, and most successful effort for the PPD.<sup>75</sup> This was his first campaign as president of the PPD, after serving since 1968 as senator as well as the youngest president of the senate. Previously, during the Sánchez Vilella administration, he served as the youngest secretary of justice. Hernández Colón was the new *popular*; he represented an injection of vitality into the veteran party. However, politically he seldom strayed too far from the party establishment and its elder, Muñoz Marín. He even named Muñoz Marín's veteran advisor and recently deposed university president Benítez as his running mate for the resident commissioner position.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, appearances in politics are essential, and the sight of the young Hernández Colón and his family brought a new sense of direction to the embattled PPD.<sup>77</sup>

In 1971 he proclaimed “el 72 ha de ser el año de la reconquista y de la victoria.”<sup>78</sup> This ushered in a set of steps to reorganize the PPD in order to confront the PNP as a unified party. The party sought the help of pioneering political Democratic consultant Matt Reese to restructure the party platform and outline a winning campaign strategy against Ferré.<sup>79</sup> For the first time in its history, the PPD employed political polling that assessed favorability in important positions and its chances against the PNP. Under Reese's advice, the PPD created a voter registration campaign to reach the youth vote, especially since earlier in 1971 Ferré had lowered the voting

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<sup>75</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 397.

<sup>76</sup> Héctor Luis Acevedo, ed., *Don Jaime Benítez*, 183.

<sup>77</sup> It's worth mentioning that like Ferré, Hernández Colón came from an affluent family from Ponce, and married into the wealthy ponceña Mayoral Serrallés family, owners of the Serrallés distillery, among other businesses.

<sup>78</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 235.

<sup>79</sup> Bart Barnes “Matt Reese, Veteran Political Consultant, Dies at 71” *The Washington Post*, December 3, 1998, Accessed November 23, 2016 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/campaigns/junkie/links/reese.htm>; Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 235.

age from twenty-one to eighteen years old.<sup>80</sup> However, the most important effort outlined by Reese was to reach those *populares* that favored Ferré in 1968, that is, to revitalize the party base.

According to Hernández Colón, the campaign was fierce; Ferré was an avid and tireless campaigner, even though he was well into his 60s. However, one term wasn't enough to resolve all the socioeconomic issues Ferré had pointed out in the previous campaign. In addition, by 1972, a series of strikes by unions and the protests of university students made him an easy target for attacks on his ability to govern and solve problems, since he tended to ignore their claims and repress dissent harshly.<sup>81</sup> Thus, on 8 November 1972, Hernández Colón won the election by a comfortable margin, and with it maintained the control of the Legislative Assembly and the majority of the municipal governments.

The PPD was able to recuperate its base, composed of working- and middle-class *populares*.<sup>82</sup> However, the election was not a landslide, proving the PNP as a political force was there to stay. In his inaugural address, given on 2 January 1973, Hernández Colón painted a grim picture of the economic issues that his administration confronted, especially describing the reality of the island's poor.<sup>83</sup> However, he stressed the importance of maintaining the political (and economic) relationship with the U.S., as mandated by the '67 plebiscite, while also emphasizing the need to expand the connections between Puerto Ricans and the "brother people of Latin America."<sup>84</sup> This administration would continue to show interest in strengthening the

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<sup>80</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 252-253.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 276; Guillermo A. Baralt, *La razón del equilibrio: La vida de Luis A. Ferré Tomo II* (San Juan: Fundación El Nuevo Día, Inc, 1998), 140.

<sup>82</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de Cambio*, 398.

<sup>83</sup> "Address by the Honorable Rafael Hernández Colón on taking office as Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico" 2 January 1973, 3-5, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 8.

ties with the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. For example, a delegation of the Puerto Rican Department of Commerce to the Dominican Republic, on a mission to discuss commercial opportunities, also conveyed the governor's message of exploring possibilities of cultural and artistic exchanges between the Puerto Rican and the Dominican governments in the future.<sup>85</sup>

### **CULTURE UNDER RHC'S "UN NUEVO PUERTO RICO"**

The state of the cultural agencies and departments when populares retook La Fortaleza was somewhat precarious. While the Ferré administration inflicted no significant attacks on the regular functions of the ICP, DivEdCo, the WIPR, and other agencies' cultural components, it restricted its budgets, hindering their growth. The 1972 PPD party platform, called *Programa para un Nuevo Puerto Rico*, included a commitment to the growth of the ICP and other cultural programs, emphasizing the important role of these institutions in maintaining the delicate balance between culture, identity, economic progress, and social changes.<sup>86</sup> An inventorial list of the agencies and their respective budgets as of January 1973 showed that the DIP's cultural programs represented the bulk of the government's budget assignment for cultural matters with \$16.7 million total. Its largest budget item was the DIP's editorial department (\$4.6 million), followed closely by its fine arts programs (\$3.3 million), the adult education program (\$2.8 million), and the WIPR TV and radio stations (\$2.5 million). The ICP had a total operating budget of \$2.2 million, while the UPR cultural programs received approximately \$3 million. In the explanation attached to the list, an aide to the governor assessed that while the overall budget of cultural programs, around \$25 million, was sufficient, it was in need of a restructuration that

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<sup>85</sup> Letter between Ralph Carrión and Damian O. Folch, Secretary of Commerce, 16 September 1974, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>86</sup> "Programa del Partido Popular Democrático, 29 de abril de 1972," 57, Centro de Documentación Histórica Arturo Morales Carrión, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico-Recinto de San Germán.

would allow its expansion, especially in the local fine and cinematics arts. He suggested the decentralization of the ICP, to unburden its heavy load of responsibilities that at times made it inconsistent in its endeavors, and the creation of an umbrella institution that would spread cultural programming components horizontally, what he called the Dirección General de Cultura.<sup>87</sup> However, this new institution would not undermine the role of the ICP, but would expand its educational and professional training programs, increasingly include mass communication forms in its cultural production aspects, and open new possibilities for jobs in these fields while highlighting cultural promotion.<sup>88</sup> While these changes seldom had an effect on the cultural identity Puerto Rican, they demonstrate the continued significance of the institutionalization of the cultural issues to the government.

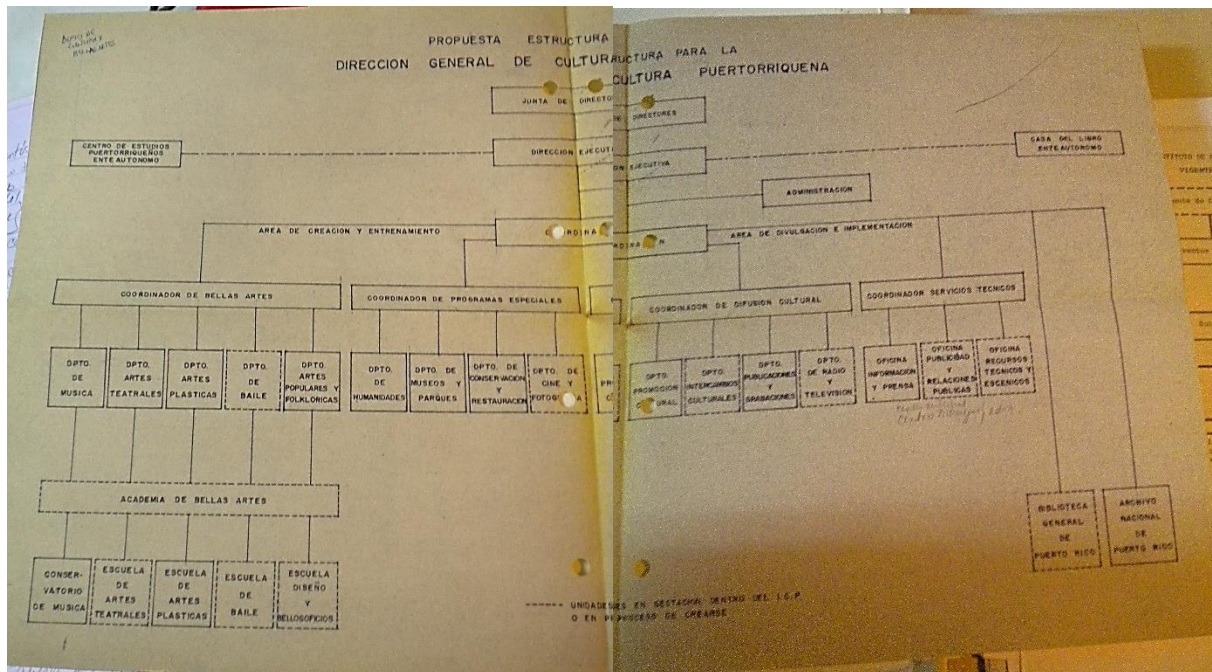


Illustration 4.2: The photo shows the suggested restructuration and new cultural institution dependencies. Photo credit: Joanna M Camacho Escobar, Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín, 2014.

<sup>87</sup> Letter on Dirección General de Cultura, 14 February 1973, 4, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. The letter is addressed to “Fede” and signed by “Elías,” because of where the document was found in the archives, I determined that it was produced by an aide to the governor, but couldn’t precise his full name.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 4.

Alluding to the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the launch of Operación Serenidad, the recommendations represented a push to update its mission of tending to Puerto Rican cultural values in the context of society in the 1970. Populares still adhered to the cultural adaptation concept of “adaptación consciente,” proposed two decades earlier, that expressed the openness of Puerto Ricans, or at least populares, to American cultural influences except for those that came in conflict with the “bienestar espiritual del puertorriqueño y desnaturalicen o desfiguren su personalidad cultural.”<sup>89</sup> However, the impact of these recommendations was tentative, but some institutional changes occurred as the new administration began.

On 19 November 1973, the day Puerto Ricans commemorate the “discovery” of the island by the Spanish, Hernández Colón invited historians to La Fortaleza. At the event, the governor expressed his government’s recommitment to support the work of historians and praised their contribution to the articulation of the Puerto Rican identity.<sup>90</sup> Reflecting the influence of the memo discussed above, Hernández Colón recognized the budgetary limitation, and the changes that the cultural institutions required in order to respond to modern demands.<sup>91</sup> Ultimately, he used the occasion to announce the creation by executive order of the Oficina de Asuntos Culturales (OAC).<sup>92</sup> The new office of cultural affairs, he clarified, would not substitute or interfere with the ICP, but would serve as a coordinator of cultural programming and policies

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<sup>89</sup> “Programa del Partido Popular Democrático, 29 de abril de 1972,” 57; “Programa del Partido Popular Democrático, 8 de septiembre de 1956,” 14, Centro de Documentación Histórica Arturo Morales Carrión, Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico-Recinto de San Germán. Translation: “conscious adaptation” “spiritual well-being of the Puerto Rican and denature or disfigure their cultural personality.”

<sup>90</sup> “Mensaje del Gobernador de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón en ocasión de un acto en honor a los historiadores de Puerto Rico, celebrado en La Fortaleza el 19 de noviembre de 1973,” 2, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 5.

across agencies.<sup>93</sup> Ascribed to the Office of the Governor, the OAC and its director would advise to the governor on cultural policies and budgetary measures to effectively develop cultural promotional activities.

The creation of this office demonstrated the significance of these issues, seemly both as an effort to preserve the homogenizing efforts of Serenidad, and to modify it to reflect the island's current reality. Indicating that continuity, the governor appointed Ricardo Alegría, the executive director of the ICP, as the first director of this office.<sup>94</sup> Alegría would be in charge of coordinating activities between the principal cultural institutions, the ICP, UPR, DIP, and Festival Casals, Inc., in addition to the cultural issues departments of the Departments of Housing, Natural Resources, Transportation and Public Works, Agriculture, and the Company of Tourism Promotion.<sup>95</sup>

The administration's second turn at commemorating the Spanish arrival to the Americas gave the governor the opportunity to express his thoughts on the role of language in the identity of Puerto Ricans. This time La Fortaleza received Puerto Rican writers, a selected few, where Hernández Colón thanked them for their individual contributions to the island's literary body and for their efforts to preserve the Spanish language.<sup>96</sup> Although populares upheld that the teaching and learning of the English language were essential to maintain the relationship with the U.S., it

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 5; Also, Boletín Administrativo Núm. 1963: Orden Ejecutiva del Gobernador del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico Para Crear la Oficina de Asuntos Culturales, 30 de noviembre de 1973, 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>94</sup> "Mensaje del Gobernador de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colon en ocasión de un acto en honor a los historiadores de Puerto Rico, celebrado en La Fortaleza el 19 de noviembre de 1973," 6, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>95</sup> Boletín Administrativo Núm. 1963, 2.

<sup>96</sup> "Mensaje del Gobernador de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colon en ocasión de un acto en honor a los escritores puertorriqueños, celebrado en La Fortaleza el 12 de octubre de 1974," 2, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

also argued that the Spanish language was the “lengua vernácula del país.”<sup>97</sup> In this speech, the governor declared Spanish the “alma de [la] cultura nacional” and emphasized the role of literature in the conservation and proliferation of the lingua franca.<sup>98</sup>

Yet, the most significant cultural contribution of the *popular* intervention during this decade was the reopening and expansion of the island’s first fine arts school in 1976. The Escuela de Artes Plásticas (School of Plastic Arts and Design) opened in 1966 as an extension of the ICP’s plastic arts workshop programs. By 1971, the school had a bachelor’s degree in plastic arts. Since it lacked the proper facilities to grow, with the support of the ICP and the OAC, the administration repurposed a historical building in Old San Juan near the colonial Fort El Morro.<sup>99</sup> This act resulted from the suggestions from that 1973 memo to restructure the cultural institutions and balance the focus of the cultural policies between popular arts, and the universal fine arts. The school would emphasize the fine arts, however it incorporated local artists as faculty members.

As Hernández Colón’s first term got underway, the island began to feel the looming economic downturn that marked the mid-1970s. As Ayala and Bernabe explain, the PPD had banked the economic growth of the island on the most ambitious phase of Operation Bootstrap (after the early success of the pharmaceutical industries), the construction of an oil-processing complex that would include refineries, petrochemical plants, and satellite industries.<sup>100</sup> The

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<sup>97</sup> “Programa del Partido Popular Democrático, 29 de abril de 1972,” 57. Translation: “vernacular language of the country” “soul of [the] national culture”

<sup>98</sup> Mensaje del Gobernador de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón en ocasión de un acto en honor a los escritores puertorriqueños,” 2, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>99</sup> “Mensaje del gobernador del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico Honorable Rafael Hernández Colón en ocasión de inauguración de la Escuela de Bellas Artes en el Morro, 21 de agosto de 1976,” 3, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón; Also, “RHC inaugura Escuela de Bellas Artes en Morro” *El Vocero* 24 de agosto de 1976, 6, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>100</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3149.



reverberations of the oil embargo on the U.S. by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) were felt throughout the international oil industry, especially in Puerto Rico, where it hampered Hernández Colón's plan.<sup>101</sup> The island experienced a recession almost immediately. In a special address before the Legislative Assembly, Hernández Colón explained that the gross product of the island for 1974 rose only 2.5 percent, and the real purchasing power of common Puerto Ricans declined 3.1 percent.<sup>102</sup> He announced that austerity measures were necessary and called for Puerto Ricans to "Save. Produce. Share. Such are the demands of the times we are living in."<sup>103</sup> Beyond revealing the precarious conditions of the ELA, the recession also revealed the economic dependency that Bootstrap promoted as a solution for local economic progress.<sup>104</sup> The renewed commitment to cultural promotion and the arts would fail to absorb the impact of the fundamentally flawed political and economic initiatives that Serenidad set out to accommodate.

#### **1976: "LA ESTADIDAD ES PARA LOS POBRES" PERO...**

Embattled by the economic woes in the last years before the election that saw an unemployment rate of 17 percent, Hernández Colón and the PPD lost both La Fortaleza and the Legislative Assembly in 1976. The PNP, led by mayor of San Juan and founding member of the PNP, Carlos Romero Barceló, unlike 1968, now almost evenly matched the PPD in appeal and votes.<sup>105</sup> Penepés would debate and develop their pro-statehood message through the 1970s.

While the PNP since its origins in 1967 had argued for an "estadidad jíbara," which supposedly

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<sup>101</sup> "Special address of the governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón before the Legislative Assembly on the economic situation," 1975, 4, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 16-19.

<sup>105</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3552.

sustained the Puerto Rican *personalidad* as a state of the union, Romero Barceló redirected and cultivated the message of statehood as a civil rights matter. The influence of the civil rights movements of the 1960s had an effect on the way penepés repackaged their message by 1973, at least rhetorically.<sup>106</sup>

As the previous chapter explains, in 1968, Ferré had successfully campaigned by appealing to traditional populares, middle class and government employees, somewhat convincing them that statehood was now affordable, and possible in the near future. In 1973, Romero Barceló pushed the statehood theory further in his booklet, *La estadidad es para los pobres*. The main idea of the booklet was that the development and progress of the island was tied to the U.S. intervention, yet Puerto Ricans, especially the poor, lacked true political equality.<sup>107</sup> This was a concept that Romero Barceló had long argued, and that Ferré and the PNP adopted.<sup>108</sup> However, as governor Ferré defined statehood as a part of his major social reforms program that also addressed economic and social issues of the island. Romero Barceló opted to subordinate social reform, and prioritized statehood, “refashioned...in the mold of a welfare-based populism, borrowing some of the rhetoric of the antipoverty and civil rights struggles.” Romero Barceló used the new language of equality, civil rights, antidiscrimination, and cultural diversity to legitimize his party’s ideas of the Puerto Rican identity within their concept of statehood.<sup>109</sup> In short, coopting the language of civil rights, penepés argued that statehood accommodated a distinctive Puerto Rican cultural identity.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Carlos Romero Barceló, *Una vida por la igualdad conversación con Antonio Quiñones Calderón* (San Juan: Fundación Carlos Romero Barceló, 2012), 42.

<sup>108</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3562.

<sup>109</sup> Edgardo Meléndez, *El movimiento anexionista en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1993), 210; Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3562.

While the PPD had strived to separate the political from the cultural, the PNP in the 1970s attempted to integrate the two. This attempt revealed the value of the cultural issue to the political relationship. Populares understood that if ELA threatened the Puerto Rican identity then it could spark resistance or make independence the obvious political choice that would protect the nation. Thus, ELA promoted a cultural nationalism that seldom threatened the U.S. hegemony and calmed the anxieties over absorption. Along those lines, penepés recognized that insisting that the U.S. citizenship, and all it represented, was an essential part of the modern Puerto Rican could help their cause. Their concept of *estadidad jíbara* allowed Puerto Ricans to exist culturally in some matter as part of the union of the U.S., cultural assimilation would not be a requirement of statehood. Both factions used the cultural issue to garner support.

In one of the earliest studies of the PNP's brand of statehood, political scientist Edgardo Meléndez explains that the party's attention to the poorer echelons of Puerto Rican society lessened as the 1976 election approached, because their base and largest supporting sector were rich capitalists that Ferré attracted in the 1960s.<sup>110</sup> The message refocused once more from "estadidad para los pobres" to "estadidad como igualdad" and "estadidad ahora." According to Romero Barceló, ELA as a colonial status, was discriminatory towards the U.S. citizens living in the island.<sup>111</sup> Romero Barceló elevated the statehood option to a matter of equality within the U.S. political context.<sup>112</sup> In the cultural sense, like Ferré and even Muñoz Marín, Romero Barceló continued to argue that "la personalidad puertorriqueña" would stay intact, because the Spanish language or the culture would not be negotiable items. He rarely mentioned the actual terms up for negotiation with the federal government in a statehood process. This was the case

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<sup>110</sup> Meléndez, *El movimiento anexionista en Puerto Rico*, 211.

<sup>111</sup> Carlos Romero Barceló, *La estadidad es para los pobres* (San Juan, s.n., 1973), 24.

<sup>112</sup> Meléndez, *El movimiento anexionista en Puerto Rico*, 210-211.

because the arguments for statehood hardly changed from the earliest annexationist manifestations which promoted the presidential vote and a voting representatives in Congress as the two most important benefits of statehood.<sup>113</sup> The importance of Romero Barceló in the movement was his impetus to reprioritize and elevate statehood over local concerns based on his interpretation of the U.S. political context and the effects of the previous decade's social movements.<sup>114</sup>

Yet, Romero Barceló's message was devoid of U.S. political nuance. The obstacles to statehood went beyond the Puerto Rican economy and its readiness at the time to carry the brunt of annexation. Perhaps because he did not considered Puerto Ricans a racial minority, his message of equality lacked a full understanding of the actual process that racial minorities went through to achieve civil rights, the response of the federal government to the demands, and the ongoing repercussions of the legal changes that provided civil and voting rights. In addition, as Bernabe and Ayala point out, Romero Barceló avoided considering the weight of race relations and nativism in U.S. politics, which directly affected the internal conversations about the annexation of Puerto Rico in conservative circles.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps this was the case because he evaded placing Puerto Rico within the U.S. racial context. The idea of inclusion of non-white, non-English speaking, and poor island dwellers was part of the debate against statehood within both U.S. parties.<sup>116</sup> Instead, penepés preferred to argue that the U.S. Constitution, Article IV, Section 3 provided concrete steps for statehood and especially that the concept of popular sovereignty

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>115</sup> Bernabe and Ayala, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3573.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

was crucial to resolve the status.<sup>117</sup> However, the intangible steps, those that dealt with irrational concepts of race, fitness for full citizenship, and governability, were also crucial and often ignored by penepés.

### **THE ICP VS. AFAC**

Romero Barceló had a reputation of being gregarious and confrontational, and many of his political steps were controversial from the start. He arrived at La Fortaleza during the lowest point of the recession, and therefore his administration dedicated its first year to restoring Puerto Rico's fiscal and credit health, after the previous two years, in which it ran on deficits for the first time in the island's history.<sup>118</sup> In this context, cultural policies received little attention early on. However, towards the end of its first term, in 1979, the administration proposed a comprehensive reform of the cultural organizations. Unlike the OAC created in 1973, the Administración para el Fomento de las Artes y la Cultura (AFAC) would consolidate all artistic and cultural activities under one single government agency. The Public Law num. 76, of 30 May 1980, created the AFAC, and it allocated funds for the construction of a Centro de Bellas Artes (fine arts center), establishment of a symphonic orchestra, and cultivation of a theatrical arts program under the AFAC's jurisdiction.<sup>119</sup> The AFAC did not fundamentally change the cultural program or the mainstream concept of cultural identity, but represented a moment in which penepés attempted to control the government's cultural arm.

The AFAC became controversial because it seemed to have been created to compete with the ICP. The new organization would focus on high culture activities, in contrast with the more

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<sup>117</sup> Luis R. Dávila Colon, "La Estadidad: Mito y Realidad" *La Democracia* 19 al 25 de marzo de 1982, 10-11, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>118</sup> Romero Barceló, *Una vida por la igualdad*, 46-47.

<sup>119</sup> Dávila, *Sponsored Identities*, 44; Also, "Nuestra Historia" Corporación de Artes Musicales, Accessed January 15, 2017 [http://sinfonica.pr/?page\\_id=265](http://sinfonica.pr/?page_id=265)

folklore-oriented ICP, tipping the balance between the two approaches Hernández Colón's OAC attempted to preserve. While in an interview Romero Barceló maintained that the AFAC was not established to hinder the activities of the ICP, even though his critics argued that the AFAC diverted funds away from the Instituto.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, the new law, backed in the senate by former governor and now Senator Ferré, formalized the creation of the Corporation of Symphonic Orchestra of Puerto Rico, which would be housed at the Centro de Bellas Artes (CBA) after its completion, and the establishment of the Music Conservatory Corporation. Ferré was very supportive and followed the planning and construction of the CBA closely. The center opened in 1981.<sup>121</sup>

Romero Barceló lamented the vocal opposition of people such as Ricardo Alegría, who strongly opposed the AFAC and accused the governor of anti-cultural tactics by establishing a competing organization to the Instituto he had carefully developed.<sup>122</sup> The governor felt that he had been supportive of the ICP, even advocating for a 40 percent budget increase in 1980, and that the intention of the AFAC was to elevate cultural and artistic matters to cabinet level.<sup>123</sup> Romero Barceló suggested that Alegría's comments were politically motivated because the PPD had dominated cultural policies and institutions and now were threatened by his administration's actions.<sup>124</sup> This debate would continue through his controversial second term in office.

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<sup>120</sup> "Consumatum est, la cultura sin etiqueta" *El Nuevo Día* 31 de mayo de 1980, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón; Romero Barceló, *Una vida por la igualdad*, 237.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 238. The center will later be named after Ferré, and it became the premier theater and concert hall in the island.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 237-238.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 238; "Mensaje del Hon. Carlos Romero Barceló Gobernador de Puerto Rico a la 8va Asamblea Legislativa en su 4ta Sesión Ordinaria, 31 de junio de 1980," 20, University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas.

<sup>124</sup> Romero Barceló, *Una vida por la igualdad*, 239.

## CONCLUSION

The end of the 1960s brought to Puerto Rico a time to reevaluate the discussions of the status question, concepts of identity, and the role of culture in political matters. Even so, penepés and populares fundamentally agreed that what made Puerto Ricans distinctive, their *puertorriqueñidad*, was worth preserving. Their approach differed in accordance to their desired relationship to the U.S. While penepés finally made their message for statehood accessible to the masses, populares had to restructure and evaluate its relevancy in the context of the 1970s, they found it in the leadership of Hernández Colón. Much like what Muñoz Marín had said about ELA, Ferré and Romero Barceló had to convince voters that their conceptualization of statehood would not require of them to relinquish their identity and everything it represented, especially their vernacular. They insisted that American citizenship was also a crucial aspect of the Puerto Rican cultural identity, and therefore seeking to secure all the legal rights it conferred was fundamental to their *puertorriqueñidad*. As the previous chapters demonstrate, populares had successfully separated political and cultural identity in mainstream society as a way to maintain a balance that supported the tenets of ELA. Statehood required the unification of these two identities.

As Ferré stated, “the American nation is a federation of states under the principle of diversity within unity, with constitutional guarantees so that each state may preserve its identity.”<sup>125</sup> The *estadidad jíbara* or the *estadidad para los pobres* were both statehood concepts composed of constitutional, economic, and cultural and political arguments, but completely devoid of the social and race relation baggage that confronted people of color in the U.S. The penepés’ intentions to end the second class citizenship status created by ELA would have

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<sup>125</sup> “Discurso del Honorable Gobernador Luis A. Ferré, el 4 de julio de 1969,” 14, Archivo Luis A. Ferré.

confronted the similar resistance that the appeals of African Americans, Latinos, and other minorities had to endure in order to carve out their position in the Anglo-Saxon mainstream and attain first-class citizenship. The Civil Rights Movement and other social liberation movements that began in previous decades confronted a reactionary wall that pushed the legal and constitutional debates aside. They became struggles against illogical, irrational ideologies that had tough, real-life consequences. This is what the pro-statehood movement obfuscated, perhaps because they did not consider Puerto Ricans members of the racial minorities within the U.S.

Hernández Colón's four-year intervention in the decade renewed the possibilities of continuation from the past by defending ELA and its economic and cultural policies. However, this proved to be complicated, since the plebiscite, the rise of a viable pro-statehood party, and the economic recession all conspired to hinder expansion of Bootstrap and revealed the limitations of ELA. Populares however, were more successful at renewing Serenidad, by responding to the growing mass media and the new educational realities of the 1970s. The vital engines of cultural policies - the Instituto, the UPR, and the DIP- continued their institutional roles in cultural promotion, while striving to balance higher cultural form, and folkloric cultural identity expressions. Though all the administrations would question and/or revise the ICP through the decade, its role was ingrained in the local realpolitik of cultural politics in the island. The core of the cultural policies of Serenidad, which situated the Spanish language at the epicenter of the cultural identity, and pushed for the inclusion of local and universal forms of cultural expressions withstood, the challenge of statehood. This represents the most significant lesson of the decade.



## Chapter 5: De Puerto Rico para el mundo...

In April 1992, a groups of vessels, ranging in size from tall-masted sailboats to luxury cruise liners, sailed from Genoa, Lisbon, and Cadiz tracing the routes of Christopher Columbus's voyage in 1492.<sup>1</sup> In June, the harbors of Old San Juan served as one of the main stops of this "Grand Regatta Columbus." In preparation for the overflow of tourists, Governor Rafael Hernández Colón ordered law enforcement precincts around the island to assist the San Juan sector. My father, Juan, and fellow police officers from the Arecibo Region drove an hour each way to work ten days of twelve-hour shifts in Old San Juan. On the last day, my father's friend and colleague Agent Luis Cruz reported to our family's home video camera, his voice oozing with fatigue and boredom: "Bueno aquí desde la Regata Colón. ¡Hay que joderse! Los españoles vienen acá, nos roban el oro, nos matan a los hombres, violan a nuestras mujeres, y con todo eso hay que celebrarle la llegada."<sup>2</sup> Cruz clearly identified the irony of colonialism in Puerto Rico and its multiple layers epitomized in that moment by the Gran Regatta Colón.

As the previous chapter explains, the 1970s served as a period of transition in Puerto Rican politics. This chapter will trace the debate over the position of culture, identity, and language in this new political context of the 1980s. The PNP strengthened and achieved a higher profile, offering a coherent opposition to PPD's hegemony after 1968. In this tempestuous climate of negotiation between the two parties, these issues were publicly litigated at the local and international levels, as the push for participation in the upcoming 1992 World Expo and Quincentennial Celebrations became important when Hernández Colón returned to La Fortaleza

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Barrington, "In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. In 1992, so..." *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Translation: "Well here from the Regatta Columbus. What the hell! The Spaniards come over here, steal our gold, kill our men, rape our women, and still we have to celebrate their arrival."

in 1985. The pro-statehood message of Romero Barceló bemoaned the paradox of second-class citizenship, yet simultaneously assured the maintenance of Puerto Rican culture. In contrast, Hernández Colón's defense of the ELA during this period focused on the idea that this status protected the Hispanic cultural heritage, all the while downplaying the growing economic dependency on the U.S.

Looking at the years between 1980 and 1992, this chapter first explores the impact of the new pro-statehood message and its representation of Puerto Rican culture during the second term of Romero Barceló. Transitioning to the Hernández Colón years, the chapter will discuss two key events: the organization of the Puerto Rican pavilion in the Seville World Exposition, and the Regatta Columbus '92. Subsequently, it will explore the official language debate that re-emerged during the mid-1980s, evaluating how Puerto Ricans remembered their Spanish legacy, especially Governor Hernández Colón's role in the re-imagination of this heritage. Finally, the chapter examines the reactions to the official language debate and media portrayal of public celebrations.

### **ROMERO BARCELÓ'S SECOND TERM**

Romero Barceló's second term from 1980 to 1985 had a bumpy start. The escalation of nationalist protests during his first term—especially those of the Ejército Popular Boricua or *macheteros*—an armed radical group of nacionalistas, had resulted in the governor's fierce reaction to what he called terrorist threats.<sup>3</sup> The most notorious example of his heavy-handed response was the killing of two independentistas at Cerro Maravilla on 25 July 1978.<sup>4</sup> The police

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<sup>3</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3630. For more on macheteros, see Ronald Fernandez, *Los Macheteros: The Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> Pedro A. Malavet, *America's Colony: The Political and Cultural Conflict between the United States and Puerto Rico* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 92-93; Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3630.

department had created an antiterrorist unit, which specialized in undercover infiltration of suspect student groups. One undercover agent convinced activists Arnaldo Darío Rosado and Carlos Soto Arriví to attempt to destroy the television transmission towers at Cerro Maravilla. Once at the mountain, police officers captured and summarily executed the students. The police attempted to cover up the execution by claiming that Darío and Soto had died as a result of a gun battle. Nevertheless, a taxi driver, who the students and the agent forced to drive them to the Cerro, contradicted the official account. Romero Barceló supported the police's version of the events, but accusations of entrapment and persecution soon swirled in the court of public opinion. Scholars argue that this event was just another example of the repression of dissent in the island from federal authorities and local forces.

This scandal galvanized Romero Barceló's supporters, as well as his opposition. In this tense environment, the populares selected Hernández Colón to run against Romero Barceló, and the campaign quickly turned negative. The Governor Romero Barceló ran his reelection campaign appealing to the electorate with "Mi Compromiso" to put "Puerto Rico Primero," and continue his work toward democratic values and statehood.<sup>5</sup> In light of the political unrest, Romero Barceló promised that the PNP was the "camino de la unidad del pueblo puertorriqueño."<sup>6</sup> He accused populares of exaggerating the scandal to deflect attention from their inability to manage the economic crisis that cost them the 1976 election.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Hernández Colón used his campaign to present *La Nueva Tesis*, which challenged voters to entrust him to guide them to a more democratic ELA. He defined the *Tesis* as "un plan de

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<sup>5</sup> Video "Cierre Carlos Romero Barceló 1980 (1/2)" Accessed February 12, 2017  
<https://youtu.be/kWxsMuxqFmg?list=PL-QFcqUlhxJsKjpMnQtoihH8RrCVXJYm>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, (2/2).

afirmación puertorriqueña que va más allá del status político. Es un llamado a los puertorriqueños, de todos los partidos, para desarrollar una economía y una sociedad de justicia, en la cual sea nuestro pueblo quien determine su propio destino.”<sup>8</sup> Instead of concentrating on his experience as governor, he refocused the campaign on the possibilities of the future under ELA.

The death of Muñoz Marín on April 30, 1980, compounded the difficult and bitter campaign for populares. While Hernández Colón managed to console the party and the people, and rise as its leader away from the shadow of Muñoz Marín, Romero Barceló still won his reelection on November 5, 1980 by a margin of about 3,000 votes.<sup>9</sup> However, election night was the most controversial in Puerto Rico’s electoral history, because an electrical malfunction left the headquarters of the Election Commission without power. Before the blackout, Governor Romero Barceló was losing by 1,000 votes, when the electricity came back, he was winning by a 3,000 vote margin confirmed by the recount weeks later. It was even more controversial when Romero Barceló declared himself the winner anticipating the recount. The rumor persists that he “stole” the 1980 election.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, penepés retook La Fortaleza, but lost control of the Senate.

The “gobierno compartido” was problematic. Populares took advantage of their position and sought to investigate the police cover up of the students’ extrajudicial killings and possible involvement of the governor. The televised hearings that began in September of 1983 revealed that: [1] the police first arrested and then executed independentistas; and [2] it was the agent’s

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<sup>8</sup> “Mensaje Del Lcdo. Rafael Hernández Colón Sobre La Nueva Tesis A Los Estudiantes Y Profesores De La Universidad Interamericana De Puerto Rico, 3 de octubre de 1979,” 3, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: “A Puerto Rican affirmation plan that goes beyond political status. It is a call to Puerto Ricans, from all parties, to develop an economy and a society of justice, in which our people determine their own destiny. ”

<sup>9</sup> “Triunfo de Romero Barceló en las elecciones de Puerto Rico” *El País*, 19 de diciembre de 1980, Accessed February 2, 2017 [http://elpais.com/diario/1980/12/19/internacional/346028418\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/1980/12/19/internacional/346028418_850215.html)

<sup>10</sup> “Unas elecciones para la historia” *El Nuevo Día* 6 de noviembre de 2011, Accessed February 2, 2017 <http://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/nota/unaseleccionesparalahistoria-1113367/>

idea to blow up the telecommunications tower, and he lured the two students to commit the act in order to make them examples of the violent left. Despite these damning conclusions, the hearings failed to determine the involvement of the governor, leaving unclear whether it was the action of a rogue police unit or done at the request of his office. Still, the notoriety of the hearings hurt the PNP and eventually divided the party.<sup>11</sup>

### **CULTURAL POLICIES UNDER ROMERO**

The previous chapter indicated that the most important and controversial contribution of Romero Barceló, in his first term to the institutionalization of culture in the island was the creation of the *Administración para el Fomento de las Artes y la Cultura* (AFAC). Most critics agreed that the agency would rival or overlap with the duties of the ICP, by then the premier cultural promotion government agency. The economic downturn of the mid-70s reduced the funding of the ICP, and the establishment of the AFAC further eroded its impact. By 1983, the ICP had eliminated cultural programs, closed museums, significantly reduced its editorial productions, and deregulated the cultural centers across the island.<sup>12</sup> The encroachment also affected other cultural programs such as theater and literature productions, craft workshops, the management of historical monuments.<sup>13</sup> In his second term, Romero Barceló spoke about the two agencies as they were in equal footing with shared tasks.<sup>14</sup> In his 1983 State of the Commonwealth Address, he even suggested that they collaborate in the development of a

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<sup>11</sup> Ayala and Bernabe, *Puerto Rico in the American Century*, 3649.

<sup>12</sup> “Mensaje del Gobernador del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón en torno a la política pública sobre la cultura puertorriqueña, 31 de julio de 1985 CBA, Santurce, PR,” 4-5, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>14</sup> “Mensaje de situación de estado novena Asamblea Legislativa en su tercera sesión ordinaria, enero 1983,” Collection Rafael Sánchez Vilella, sub-series: Otros, box 15, folder, 9, page 9-10, University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas.

“Museo de la Cultura Puertorriqueña” in the historical building El Arsenal in Old San Juan.<sup>15</sup>

The ICP’s effect on the Puerto Rican culture was far more visible than the AFAC’s, however, the debate that the creation of the latter provoked was significant to highlight the success of the process of institutionalizing culture.

Yet, the AFAC focused on the promotion of “higher” art and cultural forms, steering clear of the ICP’s focus on folkloric cultural promotion. This followed the intentions of the administration of Romero Barceló, to seek the political, and thus, cultural integration of Puerto Ricans into the U.S.<sup>16</sup> In 1981, the governor argued that Puerto Ricans were ready to assume the responsibilities of U.S. citizenship and to demand their rights:

“No con la pequeñez de espíritu de quienes temen que la igualdad política destruya nuestros fundamentos culturales...sino con la firme convicción de que nuestra cultura de 400 años es lo suficientemente recia y profunda como para sobrevivir por lo menos 400 años más.”<sup>17</sup>

The governor trusted that the cultural identity construction process was solid enough to withstand the absorption into the U.S. mainstream. This alluded to Ferré’s concept of “*estadidad jíbara*” which argued that annexation under the U.S. Constitution did not require cultural assimilation. Both Ferré and Barceló contended that U.S. citizenship had become a vital portion of *puertorriqueñidad*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>16</sup> “Discurso del Gobernador Hon. Carlos Romero Barceló en su bicentésimo quinto aniversario de la Declaración de Independencia de los Estados Unidos de América, 4 de julio de 1981,” Collection Rafael Sánchez Vilella, sub-series: Otros, box 15, folder, 9, page 11, University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras, Centro de Investigaciones Históricas.. Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad de Puerto Rico Recinto de Rio Piedras.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 11. Translation: “Not with the smallness of mind of those who fear that political equality will destroy our cultural foundations ... but with the firm conviction that our 400-year culture is strong enough and deep enough to survive for at least another 400 years.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

## RHC RETURNS TO LA FORTALEZA

In 1984, Rafael Hernández Colón received a second chance at the executive office.<sup>19</sup> Since his first term from 1973 to 1977, he had envisioned a Puerto Rican economy-and, therefore, society and culture—linked to the surrounding Caribbean region. As discussed formerly, the recession of the mid-1970s thwarted his first attempt to expand the island’s economy. At his return to office eight years later, Hernández Colón sought to once more push the Puerto Rican economy beyond the development stage, and make it into a meaningful regional player. In contrast to the economic climate of his first term, this second attempt took place during an upturn of the U.S. economy under President Ronald Reagan. This time Hernández Colón reasserted his desire to raise the island’s profile at a regional level or even internationally, “de apertura al mundo.”<sup>20</sup> The effort also included showcasing the culture and history that grounded the economic and political stability which informed that policy. With an avowed cold warrior then in the White House, the Cold War played a more prominent role in Hernández Colón’s assessment of Puerto Rico’s place in the region.

In order to revive the president’s failing Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), Hernández Colón proposed that Caribbean nations share the benefits that Puerto Rican-American industries enjoyed under the 936 section of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, which had subsidized the economic progress of the island since 1976.<sup>21</sup> The new Republican trickle-down economic policy

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<sup>19</sup> Hernández Colón, *Vientos de cambio*, 335-395.

<sup>20</sup> Further explanation of neoliberalism during the decade see, Raymond Laureano Ortiz, “Puerto Rico ante el mundo en los ochenta y los noventa: Paradiplomacia económica y encuentros cercanos con el Caribe” (doctoral dissertation, Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 2016).

<sup>21</sup> Raymond Laureano Ortiz, “Puerto Rico ante el mundo en los ochenta y los noventa,” 184-186. The 936 Section would continue to subsidize the industrial development of the island until 1996 when Gov. Pedro Roselló (PNP) opted out, to allow for the local government to tax the American companies that operated in the island. This bold measure eventually led to the slow disappearance of the industries (especially the telecommunication and pharmaceutical plants) as higher operating costs, and new taxes gave them the excuse to seek cheaper operations and labor abroad.

threatened this concession to Puerto Rico. In order to save it, the governor began negotiations with the federal government through CBI and private corporations to project the benefits of this subsidy to the Caribbean region.<sup>22</sup> He argued that this strategy would both bring much needed economic and political stability to the area and keep the menace of communism at bay. In Bridgetown, Barbados, at a meeting of Caribbean leaders, the governor explained the economic strategy he proposed, in which the island “offered financing, on favorable terms, for new plants in Puerto Rico to corporations ready to invest their own funds on ‘twin plants’ on other Caribbean Islands.”<sup>23</sup> Echoing earlier diplomatic approaches with Latin America, he sought an “alliance for prosperity.”<sup>24</sup> The CBI lost steam as the end of the Cold War revealed the U.S. disinterest in the development of the Caribbean, although it was repurposed to maintain the open market through the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>25</sup>

### **CULTURA AS PRIORITY**

The administration of Hernández Colón profoundly increased its attention to cultural matters. Again following the “apertura al mundo” policy, Colón argued that “ya [era] hora que Puerto Rico proyect[ase] con fuerza su cultura hacia el exterior de modo que se conoc[iera] mejor lo que nos [era] propio.”<sup>26</sup> As the first cultural measure in his second term, Hernández Colón made good on a campaign promise to restore the ICP’s leadership in cultural affairs and eliminate the AFAC, passing the control of the Centro de Bellas Artes and all cultural institutions

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<sup>22</sup> “Documental Rafael Hernández Colón, 1992” Accessed January 12, 2017 <https://youtu.be/6ynFINsliEE>

<sup>23</sup> “Address by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernandez Colon to a meeting of Caribbean leaders,” June 28, 1985, Bridgetown, Barbados, 7, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 10

<sup>25</sup> See Laureano, “Puerto Rico ante el mundo en los ochenta y los noventa,” 171-173.

<sup>26</sup> Mensaje del Gobierno del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón en torno a la política pública sobre la cultura puertorriqueña,” Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: “It’s the time for Puerto Rico to project its culture abroad so strongly for that is ours is better known.”



back to the Instituto.<sup>27</sup> He signed a series of laws to strengthen Puerto Rican culture and further expand the authority of the ICP. The laws addressed concerns related to the management of archeological sites and funded literature, acting, and music education programs.<sup>28</sup> In an effort to promote restoration, preservation, and investment in historical zones, in 1990 he signed a law that provided tax exemptions in areas of San Juan and other cities that had Spanish colonial structures. That same year, he also signed Law No. 54 that bequeathed fiscal autonomy to the Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico, elevating it to the status of a higher education institution and thereby encouraging its growth.<sup>29</sup> All of these efforts were ways in which Hernández Colón reassured his commitment to cultural developments, and the expansion of the government's intervention in preserving the Puerto Rican narrative.

The “apertura al mundo” policy contained two pillars, economy and culture. The CBI provided a way for Puerto Rico to influence the region and, by promoting the initiative, have a seat at the table. Still, economic policies by their nature are slow to implement, their results take years to achieve, and their effects seldom are immediate. On the other hand, the prospect of the impending celebration of the Quincentennial of the “discovery of the New World” accelerated the opportunity for Puerto Rico to carve a space in the international spotlight. Hernández Colón sought to include Puerto Rico as a key enthusiastic player in every stage of the process that

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<sup>27</sup> “Ley Núm. 1, 31 de julio de 1985 Para enmendar el título; Artículo 1, los incisos(b), (c), (h), (i) y (n) del Artículo 2; y enmendar los Artículos 3, 4, 5, 6 y 8, de la Ley Núm. 43 de 12 de mayo de 1980,” 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>28</sup> “Mensaje en la Ceremonia de firma de los proyectos de ley para fortalecer la cultura puertorriqueña, 20 de julio de 1988,” Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>29</sup> “Ley Núm. 54, 22 de agosto del 1990, Para crear la Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico como entidad autónoma, adscrita al Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, determinar sus propósitos, funciones y poderes, transferir sus programas y activos correspondientes y derogar el apartado (13), inciso (a) de la Sección 4 de la Ley Núm. 89 de 21 de junio de 1955, según enmendada,” Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

united Spain and the Americas. It was the premier opportunity for the island to serve a border between the “old” and “new” worlds across the Atlantic.

### **THE FESTIVITIES**

On January 4, 1985, two days after his inauguration, Hernández Colón signed the executive order OE-1985-4386, which established the Puerto Rican Commission for the Celebration of the 500 Years of the Discovery of America and Puerto Rico. The executive order stated: “Por cuanto: La conmemoración de ambas fechas constituyen ocasiones únicas para reafirmarnos en nuestra historia de pueblo y en nuestras raíces y estrechar nuestros lazos con aquellos pueblos hermanos que comparten nuestra trayectoria histórica y cultural.”<sup>30</sup> As the first statement in the order, it showed the primary intent of the island’s participation in the events. In addition, it demonstrated a preoccupation with Puerto Rico’s connection to Latin America, though largely ignoring the island’s relationship with the U.S.

The order also stated: “Por cuanto: El espíritu que debe animar esta celebración no es sólo el de recordar el “Descubrimiento” de América si no el de conmemorar el encuentro fecundo entre dos mundos, que culminó en la creación de la personalidad latinoamericana.”<sup>31</sup> The underlining message is to forget (or forgive) the transgressions and commemorate the outcome. Hernández Colón suggested that Puerto Ricans were part of the Latin American world birthed by this violent encounter. The use of the word “encounter” over “discovery” indicates

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<sup>30</sup> For the purpose of this study, this chapter will exclude the celebration of Puerto Rico’s own Quincentennial celebration in 1993, in order to focus on the international activities of the period.

Oficina del Gobernador Rafael Hernández Colón, Orden Ejecutiva, Para establecer la comisión puertorriqueña para la celebración de los quinientos años del Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico; Definir su composición y funciones; y para otros fines OE-1985-4386, (San Juan, PR, 1985), 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: “The commemoration of both dates constitutes unique opportunities to reaffirm in our history as a nation and in our roots and to tighten our ties with those sibling nations which share our historical and cultural trajectory.”

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 1. Translation: “The spirit that should animate this celebration is not only to remember the “Discovery” of America rather to commemorate the encounter between two worlds, which ended in the creation of a Latin American personality.”

that the governor understood that those words carried historical baggage, especially that of colonial violence. Encounter seems a more benevolent approach, although the changes that this “encounter” brought were wrapped in violence. While historians such as Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper problematize the narrative of the Spanish empire, Hernández Colón certainly saw the word “encounter” as beneficial for his message, because it accentuated the outcomes, not the means.<sup>32</sup>

The order ultimately created the Comisión Coordinadora de las Efemérides de los Quinientos Años del Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico.<sup>33</sup> It established that the President of the Senate would be the President of the Commission (Sen. Miguel Hernandez Agosto), the President of the House would serve as its Vice President (Rep. Ronaldo Jarabo), the Secretary of State would be the General Secretary (Hector L. Acevedo), and finally the Secretary of the DIP (Awilda Aponte), the Executive Director of the ICP (Elías López Sobá), the President of the UPR (Fernando Agrait), and the Director of the Tourism Company (Miguel Domenech), would act as ex-officio members. In addition, the order stated that the governor would select twenty (later changed to thirty-five) commission members representing the community (non-cabinet members, including: TV host Carmen Jovet, Ricardo Alegría, and Prof. Margot Arce). It assigned the commission to the State Department’s budget and stressed the importance of the coordination of festivities with other countries.<sup>34</sup>

The commission managed funds from diverse sources, including local donors, U.S. federal grants assigned for the festivities, and even Spanish government support for the

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<sup>32</sup> See Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1-22.

<sup>33</sup> Orden Ejecutiva, Para establecer la comisión puertorriqueña, 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 2; “Primer año de trabajo,” Encuentro: Boletín Informativo Comisión Puertorriqueña para la celebración del Quinto Centenario de Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico 1 (1986): 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

conservation of colonial era buildings. The commission also presided over student contests, symposiums, conferences, restorations, and conservation efforts in San Juan and around the island, among other activities.<sup>35</sup> *Aventura 92* was one of the earliest activities sponsored by the commission. The event sent 13 public school students, selected through a literary competition, to an intensive educational sports and cultural program sailing from the Puerto de Palos, Cadiz on 24 September 1985. They formed part of a contingent of over 600 students between the ages of sixteen and eighteen from across Ibero-America visited the cities of San Salvador, Habana, and Puerto Plata. By 1989, *Aventura 92* offered at least ten trips annually for high school juniors and seniors to travel and participate in international educational activities through 1992.<sup>36</sup> In its first official local meeting in May 1985, the commission approved the allocation of \$300,000 for the restoration of El Morro Fort's buildings, one of the primary locations for the upcoming celebrations.<sup>37</sup> That same year on May 22, Senator Hernández Agosto participated in his first organizational meeting of "Presidentes de Comisiones Nacionales" in Argentina. The following year, 1986, at the next meeting in London, the commission's effort helped Puerto Rico secure the first stop of the "Ruta del Admirante Cristóbal Colón" in the Americas during the Regatta Columbus '92.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Report to the Legislature, *Proyectos, Actividades y Actos Organizados por el Gobierno del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico para la Celebración del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico 1985-1988*, Biblioteca Legislativa. This report also listed the items on the agenda that were still in the planning stages.

<sup>36</sup> Another summary of *Aventura 92* appeared in *Encuentro: Boletín Informativo Comisión Puertorriqueña para la celebración del Quinto Centenario de Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico* 1 año 3, 22, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón; Memorando A: Miguel Hernández Agosto, Pres. Comisión De: Aníbal Rodríguez Vera, Director Ejecutivo Comisión: "Informe VII Conferencia Iberoamericana de Comisiones V Centenario – Guatemala 24 al 30 de julio de 1989," 7 de agosto de 1989, 2, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>37</sup> "Primer año de trabajo," *Encuentro: Boletín Informativo Comisión Puertorriqueña para la celebración del Quinto Centenario de Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico* 1 (1986): 5, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

At these yearly meetings, the individual commissions would submit multilateral projects, seeking sponsors and collaborators. In 1987, the organizational meeting took place in San Juan, and Hernández Agosto sought international support for the creation of the Museo de las Américas, in Puerto Rico.<sup>39</sup> That same year, from 12-16 October, the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico-Metropolitan Campus (IUPR-Metro), and the Commission sponsored the First International Congress of Caribbean History. Historians from Germany, Colombia, the U.S., the Dominican Republic, and many other countries discussed the economic and social history of the Caribbean basin from 1763 and 1898. The prominent local historian Dr. Luis M. Díaz Soler, along with IUPR President Pedro José Rivera, IUPR-Metro Chancellor Rafael Cartagena, and scholar Dr. José González presided over the conference.<sup>40</sup> Two years later, in 1989, the commissions of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Spain, Chile, and Venezuela were assigned the organization of the Quincentennial official event programming.<sup>41</sup> Aside from providing space to organize the upcoming events of 1992, these meetings, which happened at various times in the year since 1985, facilitated exchanges about culture and history. Representatives also discussed the economic, social, and international concerns of the over thirty participating countries, especially for the nations of the Caribbean basin. Through all these events, Puerto Rico's cultural identity subverted the political.

The commission president of Costa Rica, Carlos Francisco Echevarría organized the Primer Encuentro Caribeño Comisiones V Centenario in 1989. The meeting took place in San Juan and included the participation of commissions from the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Memorando A: Miguel Hernández Agosto, Pres. Comisión De: Aníbal Rodríguez Vera, Director Ejecutivo Comisión: "Informe VII Conferencia Iberoamericana de Comisiones V Centenario – Guatemala 24 al 30 de julio de 1989," 7 de agosto de 1989, 4, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, and Puerto Rico. In his welcoming speech, Hernández Colón stated that it was the prime moment to begin articulating the means to achieve economic progress of the region for the twenty-first century.<sup>42</sup> The call for unity also aspired to “dejar atrás el episodio amargo de las convulsiones político-económicas en la región; es así como aseguramos para nuestras familias el espacio democrático que viabiliza la paz profunda y duradera.”<sup>43</sup> Echevarría echoed the governor’s message and described the region as a “crisol de culturas, como lugar de encuentro entre dos mundos para crear uno nuevo.”<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, the conference was a chance to capitalize on the goodwill surrounding the Quincentennial’s invocation of a common culture and history, in order to strengthen communication, transportation, the exploitation of natural resources, and general mutual cooperation.<sup>45</sup>

After 1990, the commission planned a series of activities meant to prepare Puerto Ricans for the festivities. In a budget request form from September 1989, the commission asked for funding for “El Encuentro de Grandes Veleros de América 1990.” This event was a kind of preamble to the Regatta, where sailboats from the U.S. met at the San Juan harbor between June 16 and 23 and sailors participated in cultural and social activities.<sup>46</sup> Most importantly, the commission focused its efforts on planning Puerto Rico’s participation in the World Exposition in Seville in 1992.

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<sup>42</sup> “Programa 1er Encuentro Caribeño Comisiones V Centenario San Juan PR 15-17 mayo 1989,” 4, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 4. Translation: “To leave behind the bitter episode of political-economic convulsions in the region; this is how we ensure for our families the democratic space that enables profound and lasting peace.”

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Oficina del Gobernador, Oficina de Presupuesto y Gerencia, Ivan R. Orlandi, *Petición Presupuestaria Año Fiscal 1990-1991 Comisión Quinto Centenario y Oficina Regata Colon '92*, September 11, 1989, Biblioteca Legislativa.

## EL PABELLÓN

In the face of two main criticisms, the Puerto Rican commission used economic and cultural nationalism to justify the island's contribution of a pavilion to the World Expo. First, penepés lamented the cost, an estimated \$14 million, the majority of which would come from the island's limited budget. Meanwhile, members of the pro-statehood movement complained that Puerto Rico, a colony, should not have its own pavilion, an honor reserved for sovereign nations.<sup>47</sup> In turn, the commission argued that:

“[E]l desarrollo del proyecto servirá como vehículo para adelantar los propósitos de Puerto Rico en su aspecto de desarrollo económico. Dará la oportunidad de presentar al mundo, tanto a los que visiten el pabellón (más de 2 millones de personas) y a muchos otros millones que tengan la oportunidad de verlo a través de la televisión, el programa de desarrollo económico de Puerto Rico, así como su capacidad para ser la ubicación atractiva, tan buena o mejor que cualquiera en el mundo para el establecimiento de proyectos industriales.”<sup>48</sup>

The grand plan behind the construction of the pavilion, more than housing the greatness of Puerto Rico for the consumption of an international crowd, was to showcase the readiness of the island for investments and argue for its inclusion in the modern economy of the looming twenty-first century. The logic was that the more politically stable, cultured, modern, open, and welcoming Puerto Rico could appear at its pavilion at the world exposition (and its overall participation in the preparations since 1985), the more attractive it would look to international markets.<sup>49</sup> The Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico (Industrial Development Company of PR) was in charge of the construction and management of the pavilion, former ICP Executive Director Elías Lopez was in charge of the project, and Architect Segundo Cardona of

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<sup>47</sup> “Informe Propuesta Pabellón de Sevilla,” 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>48</sup> “Justificación Pabellón de PR en Expo 92 Sevilla,” 2, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

the Sierra, Cardona and Ferrer Architectural Firm, was in charge of its design.<sup>50</sup> Cardona explained that the structure invoked both the history and economic progress of the island.<sup>51</sup>



Illustration 5.1 Newsletter created to inform the public on the developments in Seville, specifically the pavilion. Photo credit: Joanna M Camacho Escobar, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

For many nations, the World Exposition represented a moment to showcase their history and progress. Historian José Hernández García, in his study of the Chilean exposition in Seville, explains that most Latin American countries shared a common pavilion, with the exceptions of Chile, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Cuba and Mexico. For a variety of reasons, these countries had individual pavilions. In the case of Chile, for example, Hernández García argues it was a chance to display the new Chilean democratic nation and announce that it was open for business after a

<sup>50</sup> Video "Pabellón de Puerto Rico en España - Parte 1" Accessed December 15, 2016 <https://youtu.be/DCpjm0aBUow>; "Memo: Pabellón de Sevilla, A: Carlos López Feliciano De: Rafael Ignacio, Presidente Compañía de Fomento Industrial de Puerto Rico" 6 de diciembre de 1989, 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>51</sup> Video "Pabellón de Puerto Rico en España - Parte 1"



long dictatorship.<sup>52</sup> In the case of Puerto Rico, the government sought to prove that the island was now ready for the world stage.

The World Exposition in Seville opened on April 20, 1992 and closed October 20, 1992. The Puerto Rican pavilion, titled “Puerto Rico: Ayer, Hoy y Mañana,” displayed art, music, and cuisine, along with examples of the economic prosperity of the island.<sup>53</sup> Its main exhibit was a film, “Puerto Rico,” produced by the commission in partnership with the UPR, that showcased the history, people, culture, and social and economic development. Directed by Puerto Rican filmmakers Marcos Zurinaga and Roberto Gándara, “Puerto Rico,” which cost \$1.875 million to produce promoted the island as the industrial, economic, and tourist center of the Caribbean.<sup>54</sup> The fifteen-minute film begins with images of island’s natural resources and one (and only) shot of a Taíno ceremonial park. After that, the video features black dancers enjoying plena music, some dancers wearing the folkloric masks known as *vejigantes*, and artisans working on religious imagery. The film then focused on Spanish colonial vestiges, including views from Old San Juan and Ponce and ballet dancers moving to the *danza* evocative of eighteenth century plazas. The movie closes with a look into the present and future. A salsa song plays as the images now focus on the pharmaceutical and telecommunications industry, infrastructure, and

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<sup>52</sup> Juan R. Hernández García, “Transparencias que derriten: El “iceberg” del ’92 y la identidad chilena en la transición” *El Amauta* 5, (2008): 5-6.

<sup>53</sup> “Informe Propuesta Pabellón de Sevilla,” 6.

<sup>54</sup> Oficina del Gobernador Rafael Hernández Colón, Orden Ejecutiva, Para disponer que varias instrumentalidades gubernamentales del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico aporten económicamente para sufragar los costos de una película sobre Puerto Rico, su gente y su desarrollo social y económico, que se exhibirá en la Exposición Universal de Sevilla (Expo ’92) OE-1991-68, (San Juan, PR, 1985), 2, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón; The video of the Puerto Rican television show *¿Qué es lo que pasa aquí? ¡Ah! demostraste* images from inside the different pavilion, the people working there, available at: “Pabellón de Puerto Rico - EXPO 92 - Reportaje del programa *¿Qué es lo que pasa aquí? ¡Ah!.*” Filmed June 23, 1992, YouTube video, 10:07. Posted: April, 2011, accessed December 6, 2016 [http://youtu.be/V\\_7aysBPX6s](http://youtu.be/V_7aysBPX6s). Also, the movie Puerto Rico, is now available: “Película de Puerto Rico en el Pabellón Nacional de Puerto Rico en la EXPO 1992” Filmed 1991, YouTube video, 14:45. Posted; May, 2016, accessed December 6, 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=916LjIQGDT4>

trade. The last image of the short film is Arecibo Observatory, scored with a hint of the “Star Wars” theme as nod to the future possibilities in space technology. While Zurinaga and Gándara divided the film into three major themes, history, culture, and economic progress, there is never a mention of the U.S. presence on the island.

It seems the intention of the film is to project the Latin American or Ibero-American nature of Puerto Rico’s identity, even if U.S. dollars sponsored the film and the Puerto Rican economic and cultural project it displayed. Even the U.S. flag, which is always present next to the Puerto Rican as U.S. territory, is barely identifiable in shots where flags are visible. The focus on the past reflects the interest in recalling the Spanish heritage, the cultural (if only) link to the preferred audience of the film, the Spanish-speaking world. The subtle cues that hint at the possible role of the island as a bridge between the Old and New Worlds suggesting an intermediary position for future European economic investment in the Caribbean. The film epitomized the “apertura al mundo” Hernández Colón championed, but the shift was towards the broad Hispanic community, not necessarily the U.S.

The film was the centerpiece of the pavilion, but the exhibit had seven sections and multiple special events. Among the most important was the “Campeche, Oller y Rodón: Tres Siglos de Pintura Puertorriqueña” art exhibit curated by ICP art historian Dr. Marimar Benítez, which ran from June 1992 to the close of the Expo.<sup>55</sup> The pavilion also included a restaurant, “La Playa,” which served typical food made from ingredients imported from the island. With the Día Nacional de Puerto Rico, on the typical *Víspera de Noche de San Juan*, 23 June 1992 (summer solstice), the Expo celebrated the island in Seville. Hernández Colón and a large delegation from

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<sup>55</sup> Video “Pabellón de Puerto Rico, Entrevista a la Dra. Marimar Benítez” Accessed December 16, 2016 <https://youtu.be/zXFcb8dnCiw?list=PLD237195DD250F989>

Puerto Rico came for a day of festivities, which included a parade and concert.<sup>56</sup> The culmination, the “Puerto Rico es Salsa” concert, brought an array of Puerto Rican musicians and performers, including famed *salseros* Alex D’Castro, Tony Vega, Ismael Miranda, and Andy Montañez. El Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, the island’s premier salsa orchestra, headlined the event at the Sony Plaza.<sup>57</sup>

Puerto Rico’s participation at the World Expo became a momentous occasion to portray the growth of the island during the “American Century” without actually highlighting the colonial relationship with the U.S. The way to obfuscate this controversial relationship was to focus on the cultural nationalism that, according to populares, owed nothing to the U.S. The *puertorriqueñismo* featured in the art, architecture, gastronomy, and music at the pavilion was developed in the island despite the U.S. presence. In addition, Spain was the perfect setting for Puerto Ricans to display their identity, reinforcing their contribution to the Hispanic community culturally, linguistically and historically.



Illustration 5.2 Inside the Puerto Rican pavilion, Expo Seville 1992. Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

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<sup>56</sup> Video “Pabellón de Puerto Rico - Espectáculos - Día Nacional de Puerto Rico” Accessed December 16, 2016 <https://youtu.be/fQFxHrtqwW8>

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

## REGATTA COLUMBUS 92

For the commission, the Expo '92 was an essential part of Puerto Rico's involvement, but the Grand Regatta Columbus was the shining moment after the successfully campaigning to make the island an important stop of the event. Around 100 ships departed from Genoa and Lisbon on April 16 and headed towards Cadiz, Spain. The Regatta was in Cadiz from April 29 through May 11. On May 12, 1992, around 300 ships sailed from the harbors of Cadiz, and crossed the Atlantic to stop in Puerto Rico, the first stop in the Americas. Voyaging the Atlantic took 25 to 30 days, and the ships arrived in the ports of San Juan on June 12.<sup>58</sup> Tourists from all over the world participated in the odyssey by purchasing very expensive tickets on the luxury cruises that accompanied the Regatta on its various routes.<sup>59</sup> In the welcoming speech to the international press, Governor Hernández Colón announced that the Grand Regatta offered Puerto Rico a chance to show "la riqueza de nuestra cultura, las realidades de su economía, de su gobierno y las potencialidades de nuestra tierra cara a los rápidos cambios económicos y geopolíticos."<sup>60</sup> This moment was the island's chance to demonstrate in person what the film was portraying in the pavilion at the Expo simultaneously. More concretely and intentionally than ever, Puerto Rico became an intermediary between the Old and New World.

Showing a glimpse of the scene, the short documentary titled "The Baltic Trader – Nancy" follows the trajectory of *Nancy*, a eighty-year-old vessel and its crew from Cape Town, South Africa to the Caribbean to join the Grand Regatta Columbus in the harbors of Old San Juan. Instead of sailing off the coasts of Europe, these participants sailed across the South

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<sup>58</sup> Carol Barrington, "In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. In 1992, so...", *Chicago Tribune*, September 15, 1991. Also, "Escape To Meet-the-fleet" *Chicago Tribune*, March 29, 1992.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> "Mensaje del Gobernador Rafael Hernández Colón en conferencia ante la prensa internacional con motivo de la Gran Regata Colón, 12 de junio de 1992," La Puntilla, San Juan PR, 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: "the richness of our culture, the realities of its economy, of its government and the potential of our land before the rapid economic and geopolitical changes."

Atlantic towards the Caribbean Sea. Stopping at various islands, they finally arrived at Old San Juan on the first day of the Regatta. The film's narrator Robert Fridjhon (also a crewmember) described the impressive array of tall ships, around 300 vessels with 8,000 sailors from around the world. That first day was the Day of the Grand Parade led by the sailors of the Quincentennial Fleet, a group of sailors that navigated the reconstructed original Columbus fleet that led the Regatta across the Atlantic to Puerto Rico. Sailors and participants from different parts of the world followed behind the Quincentennial Fleet in the parade from the harbor up the streets of the old city.<sup>61</sup>

The sailing ships *Danza*, *Cachondo*, *Timbalero*, and *Crissy* represented Puerto Rico amongst the 300 sailing ships, alongside 27 *buques de escuela* or training ships that completed the journey to San Juan.<sup>62</sup> The Regatta was also a timed race across the Atlantic, and the Norwegian full-rigger *Christian Radich* won the tall ships class (A-class), whereas Puerto Rico's *Danza* sailboat won its C-class competition.<sup>63</sup> Throughout almost two weeks, tourists and Puerto Ricans alike were able to tour the ships, visit the museums, shops, restaurants, and enjoy the daily folkloric and popular musical and dancing events in Old San Juan. The nightly celebrations ranged from free concerts of local "orquestas de salsa" and traditional *trova* groups and saw the participation of an estimated 100,000 people celebrating in the streets. On the last Saturday night, the local national bank, Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, contracted the prestigious Fireworks by Grucci Company to produce the "Noche de Luces." The public left fascinated with

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<sup>61</sup> "The Baltic Trader – Nancy" is available in a ten part installment on YouTube at:  
<http://youtu.be/W3eaSs1ExmA>

<sup>62</sup> Video "Reportaje Especial Regata Colon" *Las Noticias*, Canal Tele-Once, Accessed January 10, 2017  
<https://youtu.be/GdSPtjg3ezg>

<sup>63</sup> Video "Reportaje Especial A Toda Vela" *Noticentro 4*, Canal 4, Accessed January 10, 2017  
<https://youtu.be/GdSPtjg3ezg>

the spectacle that combined a pyrotechnic show with live music.<sup>64</sup> On the next day, folks crowded into the harbor to see the “Desfile de Buques,” where all the ships paraded around the harbor, before continuing their journey towards the third leg of the Regatta.<sup>65</sup>

The two Puerto Rican representative sailing ships, *Danza* and *Cachondo*, led the parade out of the harbor on their way to the New York Harbor. There they participated in the “Salute to the Age of Discovery” on July 4. The Regatta then sailed to Boston Harbor, where it stayed from July 7 until July 15. On July 16, the ships once again crossed the Atlantic towards Liverpool, England, where they arrived on August 12. The Regatta crossed the Atlantic again, finally ended its journey on the island of San Salvador in the Bahamas, on October 12, 1992, the site and anniversary of the date where and when Columbus arguably landed for the first time in the “New World.”

The logistical organization of the Regatta became newsworthy in itself and garnered attention in local media reports. Authorities on the island marshaled police and emergency services to supplement those in Old San Juan and the surrounding districts.<sup>66</sup> To manage the avalanche of people, the Regatta organizing committee selected and trained high school students between the ages of 15 to 17, to serve as *edecanes-guías*. Working in two shifts, 500 edecanes-guías guided tourists through Old San Juan and the adjacent tourist neighborhood of Condado.<sup>67</sup> According to some of the guides interviewed, visiting tourists were most interested in exploring the island beyond Old San Juan, the beaches, and other cities like Ponce and Camuy, while local

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<sup>64</sup> Video “Reportaje Especial Regata Colon” *Las Noticias*, Canal Tele-Once.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Aixà Pascual Amadeo, “Fascinación de los tripulantes con las playas” *El Nuevo Día*, 1992. The newspaper articles were pulled from an online archive and some lack exact date or author, but are searchable at [www.adendi.com](http://www.adendi.com), the website for the online archives of the *El Nuevo Día* newspaper. An interview of edecanes was conducted by Canal 4’s *Noticentro 4* special report “A Toda Vela” available <https://youtu.be/GdSPtjg3ezg>

tourists were usually interested in the artistic presentations happening in the plazas of the city. These students were essentially cultural ambassadors during the event.

There were a few surprising incidents. The emergency and transportation services were tested, for example, when a young woman surprisingly gave birth to her daughter at one of the *Aqua Expreso* gates.<sup>68</sup> Another report alerted that two Russian marine cadets had asked Puerto Rican authorities for political asylum. The reports that crews from former Soviet countries, Russia and the Ukraine, were facing dwindling provisions motivated the Red Cross to coordinate with Puerto Rican companies such as grocery store chains *Pueblo* and *Amigo*, as well as the liquor company Bacardi to provide foodstuffs to continue their journey.<sup>69</sup> There was one minor marine accident between a water taxi and the Spanish royal ship *Sebastián el Cano* in the harbor. Still, participating crews and visitors praised the work of Paul Simpson, Director of Marine Operations of the Regatta, for the management of the hundreds of vessels.<sup>70</sup> Even when it rained during the first two days of the event, people reported satisfaction with the organization, some daring to suggest that Puerto Rico could host larger international events.<sup>71</sup>

In his assessment of the ten days, *Noticentro 4* Reporter Efrén Arroyo closed his newscast stating, “Puerto Rico se preparó durante 500 años y llegó a tiempo a su cita con la historia.”<sup>72</sup> The significance of Hernández Colón’s proposed goal to position Puerto Rico at a world stage had broader implication on the evolution of island’s identity. Colonialism had encapsulated Puerto Rico to a subordinated position within the U.S. context, however, culturally

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<sup>68</sup> Video “Reportaje Especial A Toda Vela” *Noticentro 4*, Canal 4.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Video “Reportaje Especial Regata Colon” *Las Noticias*, Canal Tele-Once.

<sup>71</sup> At the same time, Hernández Colón had set out to campaign for Puerto Rico to host the 2004 Summer Olympics, since it had hosted other regional sporting events. The topic came up several time in the Video “Reportaje Especial Regata Colon” *Las Noticias*, Canal Tele-Once.

<sup>72</sup> Video “Reportaje Especial A Toda Vela” *Noticentro 4*, Canal 4.

Puerto Ricans could climb out of it in the Latin American context. Arroyo counted five-hundred years of history, at the time less than a hundred of those under U.S. control, in that broader context, Puerto Rico projected a layered identity beyond the image of the colonized Antillean Island. The participation in the World Exposition in Seville and as the Grand Regatta's first American stop provided this moment to broadcast the richness of half of a millennium of documented history. While it might have been detrimental, if taken more seriously in Washington, to the relationship with the U.S., the festivities served to demonstrate the success of the goals of *Serenidad* in merging progress and culture.

#### **LANGUAGE DEBATE**

While the festivities for the celebration of the Quincentennial were in the planning stage, Governor Hernández Colón pushed an item of his agenda, seemingly taking advantage of the heightened sense of *hispanidad*: making Spanish the only official language of Puerto Rico. Since 1902, Spanish and English had been the official languages. The first chapter of this study explains the changes in language policies in schools, however the official language issue comes much later in time. In 1976, the Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (PIP) leader and Senator Rubén Berrios Martínez introduced a bill to declare Spanish the official language of Puerto Rico, and to require its use in schools and professional, commercial, and industrial environments.<sup>73</sup> In his efforts to attract Latin American solidarity, for years, Berrios had identified Puerto Rico with its Hispanic roots.<sup>74</sup> In the bill's preamble, Berrios delineated the "language problem" in public

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<sup>73</sup> Appendix 2: The Berrios Martínez Language Bill, March 11, 1976 (SB 1763) in Amílcar Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 157.

As a matter of clarification, since most bills (and passed laws for that matter) from the Puerto Rican Legislative Assembly remain inaccessible online or in-person, I used the translation provided by Amílcar Barreto in his book's appendix section off the original primary sources. Therefore, I treat these as published primary sources.

<sup>74</sup> Rubén Berrios Martínez, "América Latina, Una sola patria" and "Puerto Rico y la solidaridad latinoamericana" in *La Independencia de Puerto Rico: Razón y lucha* (México D.F.: Editorial Línea, 1983), 433-439.



and private schools, and the theories of bilingualism.<sup>75</sup> Its article 2 stated “Spanish is the official language of Puerto Rico and should be used in all functions, activities and pursuits of the Government of Puerto Rico, its corporations, and the municipalities.”<sup>76</sup> The bill also included the use of Spanish as the language of instruction at University of Puerto Rico, and the stipulation that the university would appeal to the Council of Higher Education (CES) for approval for materials in other languages. This mandate included private universities and institutes, which if noncompliant risked losing their CES accreditation. This bill died a quiet death in the Senate, since populares and penepés ignored it.<sup>77</sup> However, the language issue garnered greater attention as the 1980s began, and it became an increasingly volatile topic.

In 1982, PPD Senator Sergio Peña Clos introduced a bill to amend the public education law of 1952. The bill stated that “in order to provide that all education in primary and secondary public schools in the country be in the Spanish language and that among the assignments comprising the school curriculum that English be included as an additional language.”<sup>78</sup> While it made Spanish the language for all official matters, it maintained English as a preferred school subject. The bill quickly became unpopular as penepés labeled it an attack on the annexationist movement, inspired by independentistas within the PPD.<sup>79</sup> Therefore populares, wary of their chance in the 1984 election if perceived too radical, rejected the bill.<sup>80</sup> After the election, in 1986, Awilda Aponte Roque, the secretary of the DIP, in her efforts to reform the education

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 158-159

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 159

<sup>77</sup> Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 53.

<sup>78</sup> Appendix 3: The Peña Clos Language Bill, January 15, 1982 (SB 411) in Amilcar Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 157.

<sup>79</sup> Mickey Miranda, “Editorial: Sentimiento nacionalista” *El Nuevo Día*, 29 de enero de 1982, 31.

<sup>80</sup> José A. Castrodad, “Peña Clos, ‘Una papa caliente para la Pava’” *El Nuevo Día*, 27 de enero de 1982, 18.

system, included a slight change in language policies. To emphasize Spanish as the vernacular, Aponte proposed delaying the teaching of English until the fourth grade.<sup>81</sup> The attacks from penepés once more killed the reform. The next attempt occurred later that same year. Peña Clos and fellow Senator Antonio Fas Alzamora proposed a new bill that merely established Spanish as the official language of Puerto Rico, without addressing school language policies.<sup>82</sup> By then the subject had become toxic, and penepés refused to negotiate and populares preferred to save their political capital.

Yet, as discussed in prior chapters, all factions, populares, penepés, and independentistas, agreed on the centrality of language because of the Hispanic past. Since populares had monopolized the discussion of identity, by then they had tied *hispanidad* to the essence of the island's identity, especially in the context of the Quincentennial. Hispanidad in New Mexico and Puerto Rico, as historian John Nieto-Phillips defines it, "entailed claiming ownership, most notably, of Hispanic history, language, values, beliefs, and culture. It was to identify with these as the basis of one's identity."<sup>83</sup> Hernández Colón championed this ideology and saw no signs of incompatibility between it and the ELA, because he imagined them operating in two separate realms, the political and the cultural. This tendency to compartmentalize issues has been a very particular *popular* characteristic, which has shown their vacillation with colonialism.

After populares maintained their hegemony in the 1988 election, the discussion of a possible new referendum on status, and the increasing Puerto Rican participation in the international activities related to the upcoming Quincentennial, provided the condition for the

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<sup>81</sup> Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 55.

<sup>82</sup> Appendix 4: The Peña Clos and Fas Alzamora Language Bill, April 15, 1986 (SB 857) in Amilcar Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 157.

<sup>83</sup> John M. Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 171.

reemergence of the language issue. In 1989, Representative Héctor López Galarza (PPD) introduced a new bill advocating a Spanish-only policy in official government documents, except when the use of another language was deemed necessary as approved by the governmental agency that required it.<sup>84</sup> The legislature debated the bill for over a year. In 1991, Governor Hernández Colón decided to support the bill that, like the Peña Clos bills, would repeal the 1902 Official Languages Law that made English and Spanish the official languages of island.<sup>85</sup>

H.B. 417, also known as the “Spanish Only” bill, as many populares feared it would be, was unpopular. López Galarza admonished the local press for calling his measure the “Spanish only” bill, since it misled the public of the bill’s intention and linked it to the controversial U.S. “English only” movement.<sup>86</sup> Although it received support from PPD legislators and pro-independence leaders, public opinion, seasoned with the penepés outcry, mostly feared its repercussions, and the message it would send to the U.S. The PNP again condemned the bill, because it perceived it as an anti-American statement, and it thought that recognizing both languages in no way affected the Estado Libre Asociado or U.S. citizenship.<sup>87</sup> To many this sent a mixed message regarding the relationship Puerto Ricans wanted with the U.S. Since this was a cultural issue not a political one for Governor Hernández Colón, rather than anti-American action, it was an assertion of Puerto Rican identity.<sup>88</sup> Still, critics like writer Luis Rechani Agrait called it “un monopolio de lo español” that sought to secure the anti-American vote, or stir up

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<sup>84</sup> Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 66-68; Also: “López Galarza: Obsesión el inglés” *El Nuevo Día*, 30 de agosto de 1990.

<sup>85</sup> Appendix 1: Official Languages Act of 1902 in Amílcar Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 153.

<sup>86</sup> “Legislador critica a la prensa.” *El Nuevo Día*, 16 de noviembre de 1990.

<sup>87</sup> Torres González, *Idioma, bilingüismo y nacionalidad*, 213.

<sup>88</sup> “RHC en Granada ‘Ser puertorriqueño es difícil oficio’” *El Vocero*, 24 octubre 1991, 8.

anti-colonial sentiment.<sup>89</sup> This was the same long-time accusation against populares and Hernández Colón used throughout the debate.

Nevertheless, the heightened sense of hispanidad, and even the Hispanophilia spouting among *populares* in La Fortaleza and the Capitolio, prompted by the Quincentennial, galvanized the support necessary for the legislation. The bill passed, and on April 5, 1991, the governor signed Law No. 4, la “Ley de Idioma” de 1991. The new law declared “that Spanish shall be the official language of Puerto Rico to be used in all municipal departments or other political subdivisions, agencies, public corporations, offices and governmental dependencies of the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico And to repeal the Law of February 21, 1902.”<sup>90</sup> Article 3 of the law explicitly addressed any First Amendment issues by stating that “this law do[es] not limit in any way the constitutional rights of any person on the basis of their vernacular or the language they use as a medium of expression.” Also, Article 5 expressively explained that this piece of legislation would not “expressly regulate the use of languages, nor would it be interpreted to diminish the teaching of English as a second language in the schools or educational institutions of the public educational system of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.”<sup>91</sup> The law only reinforced an English education curriculum without imposing radical changes in the classroom. To clarify how this rule would be enforced, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, governor Hernández Colón issued an executive order listing the agencies exempted from the law, which included but was not limited to his office, the Administration of Federal Affairs, the Electric Company, industrial and medical facilities, the DIP, and the Tourism

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<sup>89</sup> Luis Rechani Agrait, “Monopolio de lo español” *El Nuevo Día*, 29 octubre 1991, 43.

<sup>90</sup> Appendix 5: Official Language Act of 1991, Law No. 4-Approved April 5, 1991 (HB 417) in Amilcar Barreto, *The Politics of Language in Puerto Rico*, 169.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 170.

Company. Still, by October, some additional thirty-seven agencies asked for exemptions from the law; the governor approved all of them except for of the Administration of Economic Progress with no clear reasoning.<sup>92</sup>

#### LANGUAGE AND LA MADRE PATRIA REVISITED

Throughout all of these debates surrounding H.B. 417, Hernández Colón did a fair amount of historicizing the connection between Spain and Puerto Rico that fed the anti-American accusations. In a speech before the Congreso de la Lengua Española in 1992, he remarked: “Sin temor a equivocarnos podríamos afirmar que tras la caída del Imperio de España, quedó otro imperio más poderoso por su carácter espiritual, el de la lengua española.”<sup>93</sup> Hernández Colón often downplayed the importance of the African and indigenous ancestry in Puerto Rican history and culture. For example during the Día de Descubrimiento de América celebration in Gran Canaria, he traced the historical connection between these islands and Puerto Rico, as spaces where different brands of Spanish-ness flourished. He added that to be a *canario* was “una manera de comenzar a ser hispanoamericano, proto-antillano o como queramos clasificar a los habitantes de estas bellísimas y acogedoras tierras.”<sup>94</sup> He made a connection between the identities of Puerto Rico and Gran Canaria as representatives of hispanidad.

Still, Hernández Colón’s effort in revising the historical memory of the Puerto Rican Spanish past was at best, dangerously uncritical of that legacy and the effects of the Spanish

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<sup>92</sup> Nilka Estrada Resto, “Llueven las exenciones a la Ley del Español” *El Nuevo Día*, 28 octubre 1991, 12.

<sup>93</sup> Mensaje del Gobernador Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón sobre la dimensión internacional de la lengua española con motivo del Congreso de la Lengua Española, 10 de octubre de 1992, Sevilla, España, 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: “Without a doubt we could say that after the fall of the Spanish Empire, another empire rose, more powerful because of its spiritual character, the empire of the Spanish language.”

<sup>94</sup> Mensaje del Gobernador Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón con motivo del Día del Descubrimiento de América, 13 de octubre de 1992, Casa Colón, Cabildo Insular de Gran Canaria, España, 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: “a starting point in becoming Hispanic American, proto-Antillean or however we want to classify the inhabitants of these beautiful and embracing lands.”

colonial period. He preferred to ignore the Spanish legacy of slavery, abandonment, repression and ambivalence towards Puerto Rico, which ultimately created the conditions for the welcoming of the U.S. invasion. However, this moment to celebrate hispanidad, and the great Spanish feat of “discovering” the Americas was not the appropriate time to recall the negative aspects of the Puerto Rico-Spain relationship. It was counterproductive for his ultimately goal of projecting the hispanidad of the island.

Writer Rechani Agrait in his editorial warned that this newfound love for Spain was a “dulce nostalgia” that played on peoples’ notions of history for political power.<sup>95</sup> He was referring to the decades-old political maneuvering behind cultural policies that built a sense of cultural homogeneity cemented in the Spanish language. As Muñoz Marín did before him, Hernández Colón sought to separate the political and the cultural with politics (that is, with government intervention.) The Spanish language was more than a symbol of the colonial past; Hernández Colón also understood it as the common bond of the “homo hispanicus.” As he added in that same speech, “ese idioma que amorosamente nos cobija a todos, ha venido conformando la idiosincrasia, la personalidad, de lo que muy bien podríamos llamar el homo hispanicus.”<sup>96</sup> He saw cultural identity as a means to extend the island’s connection to the rest of Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world, as he had set out to do since 1972.

Before the Congreso de la Lengua Española, Hernández Colón expressed that in Puerto Rico “en donde nuestra lengua maternal se vio amenazada tras la Guerra Hispanoamericana, la lucha por la defensa del vernáculo ha sido férrea y constante. Primeramente, porque en ella

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<sup>95</sup> Luis Rechani Agrait, “Monopolio de lo español” *El Nuevo Día*, 29 octubre 1991, 43.

<sup>96</sup> Mensaje del Gobernador Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón sobre la dimensión internacional de la lengua española con motivo del Congreso de la Lengua Española, 10 de octubre de 1992, Sevilla, España, 1, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón. Translation: “That language that lovingly embraces us all, has shaped the idiosyncrasy, the personality, of what we may call the homo hispanicus.”

residía el alma de nuestro pueblo y en segundo lugar, el vínculo que nos ha unido siempre, a un gran reino del entendimiento y de la cultura.”<sup>97</sup> Hernández Colón acknowledged that the English language brought by U.S. colonization threatened Spanish heritage and language. At the same time, he suggested that the Spanish language was the “alma de nuestro pueblo” without recognizing the process of crafting that cultural identity by those cultural diffusers before him.

This phenomenon of Hispanophilia is not unique to Puerto Rico, of course. Nieto-Phillips argues that a similar manifestation happened in territorial New Mexico during its statehood process. He demonstrates that the Spanish heritage claimed by New Mexican or Nuevomexicanos was “the source of collective identification with the land, and with a historical discourse of conquest, settlement, and occupation” which served as a rhetorical tool “for resistance to further marginalization.”<sup>98</sup> Therefore, identifying with their Spanish-ness was a tool against discrimination, recalling the past to portray a cultural superiority that legitimized their intent to become part of the union. Nieto-Phillips argues that in employing their hispanidad New Mexicans asserted a distinctive identity with its own rich historical legacy, and at the same time subverted the Anglo influence, exercising what he called “ethnic agency.”<sup>99</sup> The process jumpstarted with Serenidad had the similar implications on Puerto Rican identity within the lengthy colonial context.

Nieto-Phillips also suggests that like populares after the 1940s, Nuevomexicanos defined themselves as Spanish “in race, blood, language and history,” and American “in civic identity and national loyalty.”<sup>100</sup> This conceptualization of *puertorriqueñidad* not only asserted a

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid. Translation: “where our mother tongue was threatened by the Spanish American War, our fight for our vernacular has been fierce and constant. Firstly, because in it resided the soul of our nation and in second place, the link that has united us always, to a great kingdom of understanding and culture.”

<sup>98</sup> Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood*, 8.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 8,

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 48.

distinctive cultural identity, but also a “white” identity analogous to the U.S. white Anglo Saxon. Therefore, the compatibility that both Muñoz and Hernández Colón perceived between an essentially Hispanic Puerto Rican-ness, and loyalty to the U.S. American body politic, is another manifestation of U.S. colonialism. The major difference is that Nuevomexicanos developed these racial and ethnic ideas in their effort to become a state, while the PPD did so in its effort to defend the hybridity of the Estado Libre Asociado. Neither Muñoz Marín nor Hernández Colón aspired for Puerto Rico to become a state that possessed two official languages, as was the case of New Mexico in 1912. Rather, populares aspired for the U.S. to accept Puerto Rican culture as its equal.

When the Spanish government announced in April 1991 that it had awarded the Premio de Príncipe de Asturias to the People of Puerto Rico, and thus to Hernández Colón, there were mixed reactions. Prince Felipe of Asturias conferred this award beginning in 1980 on individuals and organizations from around the world who made notable achievements in the sciences, humanities, and public affairs.<sup>101</sup> Since the signing of the language law, the Spanish press praised the efforts of Puerto Rico, as the “primer estado norteamericano” to establish Spanish as the official language.<sup>102</sup> The award recognized the island “por haber defendido su vernáculo decisivamente frente a una política implementada durante los primeros 45 años de este siglo para educarle en otro lengua.”<sup>103</sup> In the acceptance speech, Hernández Colón explained that in the

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<sup>101</sup> Since his ascendancy, now is known as the Princesa de Asturias Award.

<sup>102</sup> “PR, Primer Estado norteamericano que establece el español como idioma oficial” *ABC Sevilla*, 5 de abril de 1991; Also, “El español gana la batalla al inglés en PR” *ABC Madrid*, 6 de abril de 1991. They even featured an editorial written by Hernández Colón, “Voluntad de Ser” *ABC Madrid* 6 de abril de 1991, Fundación Rafael Hernández Colón.

<sup>103</sup> Awilda Palau, “El premio desde el gallinero,” *El Nuevo Día*, 24 de octubre de 1991, 64; Also, “Mensaje del Gobernador del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico Hon. Rafael Hernández Colón en la aceptación del Premio Príncipe de Asturias de las Letras 1991 conferido al Pueblo de Puerto Rico, Oviendo, España.” 18 de octubre de 1991, 1. Translation: “For having defended their vernacular decisively against a policy implemented during the first 45 years of this century to educate them in another language.”



island, the aboriginal and African communities' linguistic expressions had enriched the Spanish language. Furthermore, when addressing the twentieth century, he alluded to 1898 as the “cambio de soberanía” (not an invasion by a foreign power), which ushered in the period of language defense.<sup>104</sup>

The local press, which already criticized Hernández Colón's close relationship with Spain, softened its criticism when he emphasized that he only accepted the award on behalf of all Puerto Ricans, perhaps because he avoided taking the credit. A week after accepting the award, the office of the governor organized a ceremony at the Centro de Bellas Artes (CBA) to symbolically present the award to the people. At the ceremony, the award was placed in a clear urn in the lobby of the CBA, where it would be exhibited permanently.<sup>105</sup> In November, after former President George H.W. Bush awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Luis Ferré for his philanthropic work, and defense of democratic values (and perhaps because he was the president of Puerto Rico's chapter of the Republican Party, and Bush was pro-statehood), the press soon drew comparisons of the significance of the awards. For example, in an op-ed, Rehani Agrait criticized Hernández Colón for presenting an award to Puerto Rico for a language law that from his point of view, discriminated against a section of the Puerto Rican electorate, *estadistas* who supported bilingualism. In contrast to Ferré's award which rewarded him for a career in the service of the island.<sup>106</sup>

The fact that one was offered by the crowned Prince of Spain and the other by the President of the United States also demonstrated the conflict *estadistas* had with Hernández

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 3-4. Most populares, at least up until this point, did not recognize the U.S. intervention in 1898 as an invasion but a change in sovereignty from the Spanish to the U.S. American.

<sup>105</sup> Nydia Bauzá, “RHC entrega premio al pueblo” *El Vocero*, 26 de octubre de 1991, 20; Also, Andrea Martínez “RHC entrega al pueblo el Príncipe de Asturias” *El Nuevo Día*, 26 de octubre de 1991, 22.

<sup>106</sup> Luis Rechani Agrait, “Perspectiva: El Premio y la Medalla” *El Nuevo Día*, 19 de noviembre de 1991, 43.

Colón increasing connection with “la madre patria.” As discussed previously, while penepés recognized the Hispanic past (and the Spanish language) as an essential aspect of Puerto Rican identity, it preferred it to be part of the past, according to them, the future of Puerto Rico and its culture was with the United States. Populares, or at least Hernández Colón, were flaunting the Spanish legacy front and center of Puerto Rican cultural evolution, therefore protecting its most obvious symbol, the language, was a statement. Perhaps that last point is what estadistas feared; highlighting the cultural differences excessively might further separate Puerto Ricans from their fellow American citizens. The nature of these outside awards revealed the priorities of populares and penepés during this period, and therefore the source of their now decades-old rivalry.

## OPINIONS

Nevertheless, the revival of hispanidad in Puerto Rico during the years leading up to the Quincentennial sparked a debate which at times undermined the so-called cultural homogeneity Hernández Colón claimed existed on the island. For example, former Senator Ferré in the hearings in the legislature regarding the official language law said: “Derogar ahora una ley que hace oficial los dos idiomas, español e inglés en Puerto Rico, es renegar de un compromiso que recogió esta ley como parte del enriquecimiento de nuestro acervo democrático en el disfrute de nuestros derechos ciudadanos de Estados Unidos y tratar de entorpecer el camino de Puerto Rico hacia la estadidad en el Congreso.”<sup>107</sup> Although, again, throughout this process, Hernández Colón attempted to discuss language as a cultural matter, Ferré argued that it served both the cultural and the political, “el inglés es el idioma de nuestra ciudadanía.”<sup>108</sup> Ferré advocated for

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<sup>107</sup> María Judith Luciano, “Obstáculo lingüístico para la estadidad,” *El Nuevo Día*, September 15, 1990. Translation: “To revoke now a law that makes both Spanish and English the official languages in Puerto Rico, is to renounce a compromise that this law recognized as a part of the enrichment of our democratic heritage in the enjoyment of our rights as U.S. citizens and to hinder the road to statehood for Puerto Rico in Congress.”

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. Translation: “English is the language of our citizenship.”

the acknowledgement of both languages, one of the nation (“pueblo” or “patria”) and one of the state (“idioma oficial”), situating them on equal grounds.

Newspapers printed plenty of public opinion pieces on the new language law. Puertorriqueños from across the island manifested their disapproval of it. From San Juan, Manuel López Santiago criticized a politician he heard on the radio using Spanglish: “What a shame. The same people who endorsed and approved the Spanish-only law do not know the translation” of the English word he inserted into his speech.<sup>109</sup> Helen Font from Villa Caparra suggested that this decision would make the U.S. decide “that we *puertorriqueños* are more trouble than we are worth,” and that perhaps the new law “prepares us for soliciting *pesetas* from Spain when the American dollar becomes scarce.”<sup>110</sup> Pedro Juan Rosso from Mayaguez explained that the English language was a “working tool,” and that Puerto Ricans benefited from a bilingual life.<sup>111</sup> The most scathing (and racist) comment came from Luis Ballester from Isla Verde. He raged against “defenders of Spanish,” alluding to their possible racial or ethnic background: “if our government wants to make Puerto Ricans aware of their origins they should begin by looking far south...to find parts of the roots of most of those ‘defenders’ where you will hear Mandingo, Yaruba, Malinke or even Cafre but not Spanish.” Then he suggested that the law was one of the “undemocratic, authoritarian tricks to separate Puerto Rico from mainstream American politics yet at the same time keep us panhandling for handouts” by the *principito*, the nicknamed critics adopted for Hernández Colón.<sup>112</sup> The opposition voiced its criticisms mostly in a English language newspaper, but so did the supporters.

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<sup>109</sup> Manuel López Santiago, “Spanish Only, please” *San Juan Star* November 12, 1991, 18.

<sup>110</sup> Helen Font, “Constitution may not matter” *San Juan Star* November 12, 1991, 18.

<sup>111</sup> Pedro Juan Rosso, “English as a working tool” *San Juan Star*, November 12, 1991, 18

<sup>112</sup> Luis Ballester, “A dishonorable try,” *San Juan Star*, November 1, 1991, 13.

Writer Elsa Tió called the dissenting opinions over the language law a “campana de miedo.”<sup>113</sup> She indicted the statehood movement of using fear to maintain its influence and power. In her editorial, she listed every one of the vicious attacks, and misguided attempts at power that penepés attempted against populares. Tió suggested “los únicos separatistas son los estadistas que nos han tratado de separar de nuestra historia, lengua y cultura.”<sup>114</sup> Clearly, Tió was a popular, and her skewed analysis revealed the tempestuous relationship the PNP and the PPD had developed since the 1970s. Quoting the 1932 farewell address of former annexionist senator, Luis Sánchez Morales, Tió reminded current leaders of his warning of falling into the “unconditional Americanism” that could blind them from protecting “lo que somos por raza, idioma y costumbres.”<sup>115</sup>

*Independentistas* cheered the new language law and its consequences for the image of Puerto Rico in the international community, although at some point, independentistas feared that the PPD would fail to garner enough support for it. For example, Rep. David Noriega (PIP) declared: "Tengo mis serias dudas que este proyecto pueda sobrevivir si continúa la campana de demagogia."<sup>116</sup> His expression came at a moment when the PNP was waging a fierce campaign against the measure, and the PPD seemed to waver under the pressure. A year later, Rubén Berrios praised the work of the governor in placing Puerto Rico as respected member of Latin American nations. At a summit in Mexico in which both were invited by Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, Berrios noticed that Hernández Colón was received as a head of state,

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<sup>113</sup> Elsa Tió, “Historia general del miedo,” *El Nuevo Día*, November 6, 1991, 59. Translation: “scare campaign”

<sup>114</sup> Translation: "The only separatists are the statesmen who have tried to separate us from our history, language and culture."

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 59.

<sup>116</sup> Luis R. Varela, “No aprobará el PPD el proyecto de idioma,” *El Nuevo Día*, August 26, 1990. Translation: “I have serious doubts this bill will survive this campaign of demagoguery.”

and in his view, this demonstrated that he had stopped acting as a “colonialista.” Berrios added that Hernández Colón “comienza a demostrar que está dispuesto a reafirmar la puertorriqueñidad; por el trato que se le dio al pueblo con el premio Príncipe de Asturias, galardón que debe ser bien recibido.”<sup>117</sup> Yet, he still expected Hernández Colón to retreat into his role of colonial manager like populares had always done.

The actual Quincentennial celebrations also brought up diverging opinions. In the days before the Regatta’s arrival, restaurants prepared their menus for the expected avalanche of tourists. For example, the owners of the restaurant *Al Dente*, located at Calle Recinto Sur, Margie Alcaraz and Giancarlo Amenta, in honor of Columbus created the plate Fettuccini alla Colombo, with seafood *al ajillo*. They also built a doll resembling Columbus to decorate their restaurant and even adjusted their operating hours.<sup>118</sup> Newspapers reported that location was very important for local businesses to benefit from the tourist economic boom for those days in June. The president of the Asociación de Comerciantes del Viejo San Juan, José Luis López protested that the organization of the Regatta concentrated the flow of tourists in the lower half of Old San Juan near the harbors called *La Puntilla*, affecting the commerce of the upper part of the city north of La Fortaleza.<sup>119</sup> Lopez claimed that smaller vendors that set up shop in La Puntilla hurt the well-established businesses in the northern part of the island-city.

Others were concerned with the influx of people in the historic city. During the Regatta, while most enjoyed the festivities, *El Nuevo Día* reported the public’s frustration over accessing Old San Juan by land, because the buses available to move people from the parking areas to the festivities were not enough for the demand. Others commented that the visiting vessels

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<sup>117</sup> José A. Delgado, “Cambia actitud hacia RHC” *El Nuevo Día*, 25 noviembre 1991, 15.

<sup>118</sup> “En honor a la Gran Regata,” *El Nuevo Día*, 1992.

<sup>119</sup> Ángel José De León, “En pie de protesta ‘los de arriba’” *El Nuevo Día*, 1992.

constricted the access to the small island by water through the congested ports while curious tourists flooded the *Aqua Expreso* ferries available to get a closer look at the ships.<sup>120</sup>

Even with such criticism, most felt that Puerto Rico had a chance to showcase its cultural relevance and economic prosperity. Those that shared their opinions with the local newspaper highlighted that the most significant aspect of the Regatta was the international attention it attracted to Puerto Rico.<sup>121</sup> At the same time, others agreed with Juana Baumgartner, in an op-ed she wrote about the conciliatory aftermath of the Regatta that in her opinion had brought Puerto Ricans together to exhibit their culturally rich nation. In her own words: “Necesitábamos un catalizador algo amable que distendiera nuestras tensiones, que nos devolviera la alegría de vivir y la confianza en nuestra capacidad de pueblo unido. Esta Gran Regata Colón 92 lo ha logrado con creces.”<sup>122</sup> While some focused on the tangible repercussions of the Regatta, most Puerto Ricans, as encouraged by Governor Hernández Colón, were preoccupied by the impression tourists’ had of the cultural sophistication a small Caribbean island could export. This is reminiscent of the comment reporter Efrén Arroyo offered to summarize the experience of the Regatta, Puerto Rico had succeeded in showcasing its culture.

However, there were critics that condemned the lack of discussion and whitewashing of the violent repercussions of the Spanish arrival in the so-called New World. The local organization “500 años de Resistencia” protested the events, joining the voices of other Latin American groups that similarly resented the “discovery” of Columbus, what it represented to the

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<sup>120</sup> Lili Garcia, Regatta 92 Special New Report, *Noticentro 4*, Accessed on January 10, 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdSPtjg3ezg>

<sup>121</sup> “Buena convocatoria la Gran Regata Colón 92” *El Nuevo Día*, 1992.

<sup>122</sup> Juana M. Baumgartner, “Viento en popa” *El Nuevo Día*, June 26, 1992. Translation: “We needed a catalyst, something humbling that would release our tensions, and restore our joy for living and the confidence in our capability as a united nation. The Grand Regatta Columbus achieved this in loads.”

native populations, and the subsequent actions of the Spanish empire throughout the continent.<sup>123</sup> One of its leader argued that “esos 500 años han significado para nuestro pueblo 500 años de genocidio, de explotación y de coloniaje.”<sup>124</sup> They peacefully protested every day of the Regatta, carrying around signs with images representing native suffering, the pain of slavery, and the evils of colonialism.<sup>125</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The cultural policies by the 1980s focused less on the construction of an identity and more on the means of projecting one. Romero Barceló and Hernández Colón demonstrated that they grasped their own concepts of *puertorriqueñidad*. In fact, they mostly agreed on the elements that composed the Puerto Rican cultural identity. They agreed that Puerto Ricans of the twentieth century were the result of the combination of the Spanish, the Taíno, and the African, as the previous generations had described. They also agreed that the Spanish language was at the center of it all. Where they significantly disagreed was on the role they assigned to U.S influence and citizenship. Perhaps, to what degree Puerto Ricans were “Americans” by the 1980s, had the constant U.S. presence fundamentally changed them in contrast to the rest of the Spanish-speaking world? As an *estadista*, Romero Barceló argued that after seventy years or so of U.S. citizenship, this legal and political determination was an essential aspect of the contemporary Puerto Rican. Just like the legacies of the pre-Colombian and colonial past, assimilation into U.S culture was ongoing and necessary. Meanwhile, Hernández Colón insisted on that separation of the political and cultural identities constructed decades earlier. He claimed that by design the “free associated state” allowed for cultural matters to function independently from the political.

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<sup>123</sup> Video “Reportaje Especial A Toda Vela” *Noticentro 4* Canal 4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

The presence of the PNP, which solidified the pro-statehood movement, certainly had complicated the assertion on culture since the 1970s with their insistence that Puerto Ricans were Americans through their citizenship. The “estadidad jíbara” accommodated most of the cultural tenets instilled under Serenidad, but added the influence of the U.S. citizenship and political culture to the mix. Populares, however, fiercely attempted to maintain their hegemony on the issue after Hernández Colón retook La Fortaleza in the mid-1980s. The renewed interest in the Hispanic past slightly altered the cultural elements defined earlier. Now the Spanish historical legacy had a more prominent role in the foundation upon which Puerto Ricans built their distinctive selfhood, because even Spain recognized it as a member of that community. The 80s represented a reemphasis on the island’s folklore, and the cultural expressions that were distinctively *puertorriqueño*. Puerto Ricans were secure enough in their particular identity that they could showcase it within the “apertura al mundo” approach, making the participation in the “fiestas de la hispanidad” a crucial turning point.

The promotion of these festivities by the administration of Governor Rafael Hernández Colón of the Partido Popular Democrático afforded him the opportunity to reveal the outcomes of the Estado Libre Asociado and highlight the Puerto Rican culture on the world stage. The commission created in 1985 by Hernández Colón made Puerto Rico an important participant in the planning of international events like the World Exposition in Seville, and the Grand Regatta Columbus. This participation aimed to show Puerto Rico as a modern nation, capable of managing international attention, and sophisticated enough to welcome the flow of international tourists. During those fateful days, Puerto Ricans were at the center of the universe.

Puerto Rico’s participation in these events tested the strength of the cultural nationalism that upheld the Estado Libre Asociado and consequently its defenders, the PPD. This cultural



nationalism confirmed the superiority of the Spanish cultural heritage over the African and Taíno cultures, and even over the U.S. American. In that context, the Spanish language was the cornerstone of the Puerto Rican *personalidad*. This moment of international recognition brought a new sense of pride, as Puerto Ricans saw their island beyond the parameters of their relationship with the U.S. Hernández Colón intentionally highlighted the connections between the island and the Spanish-speaking world, especially Latin America.

Since historically after the fall of the Spanish empire Puerto Rico followed a different path than most Latin American countries, to trace this desired cultural connection Hernández Colón emphasized the shared language and the Spanish colonial legacy. This emphasis attempted to overshadow U.S. colonialism and portrayed the Estado Libre Asociado as the agent of progress that created the Puerto Rico exhibited in the Pabellón in Seville and in the streets of Old San Juan during the Regatta. However, while drawing these connections, Hernández Colón aspired to make economic ties with the Spanish-speaking world, a sort of “open for business” moment, which eventually provided the opportunity to leverage a renegotiation of ELA with the U.S. Perhaps proving once more Puerto Rico’s fitness for self-governing therefore Congress would either expand the autonomy or even transitioning the ELA to an actual sovereign state.

Internally, this Spanish revival of the late 1980s generated the grounds for lingering issues with the official language to resurface. The signing of the Ley del Idioma de 1991 brought Hernández Colón the recognition of the Spanish government with the Premio del Príncipe de Asturias, for his and the people of Puerto Rico’s defense of their vernacular. Hernández Colón and his supporters perceived these efforts as a move towards the preservation of the Puerto Rican culture, but to the opposition they created a conflict with its identity as U.S. citizens. Framing the language debate as solely a cultural issue was no longer possible, and many perceived the law as

a step in the wrong direction regarding the island's relationship with the U.S. It was a cultural policy change; therefore, it was political, and it was disingenuous to argue otherwise.

While most, if not all, of these new internationalization efforts died as Hernández Colón left office in 1993, he still considers this moment a turning point for the island. Almost a quarter of a century later, it seems more like a glimmer or flash of light, comparable to the idea of “fifteen minutes of fame.” As the 1990s rolled through with a new PNP administration, the language law was repealed, the Príncipe de Asturias award was removed from the Centro de Bellas Artes' lobby, the Caribbean Basin Initiative was mostly abandoned, the plans for the use of the pavilion space in Seville were ignored, and the goal for the island to host a major international event was dropped. As penepés swiftly won the 1992 election, changes in priorities and concerns, such as reprioritizing statehood and deemphasizing the individuality of Puerto Rico outside the U.S. context, affected the long-term plans. However, through those eight years of Hernández Colón, the press, and his opponents ridiculed and criticized the governor's grandiose ideas. But the more intangible elements of this period, like the emphasis on cultural nationalism, the defense of the Spanish language, and the broader projection of the island within the Spanish-speaking community, seemed to survive unconsciously even as estadistas increasingly gain control of the island politics at the turn of the twenty-first century.

## Conclusion

This study has explored the process in which language and culture were linked together in order to institutionalize Puerto Rican cultural nationalism. In the 1940s, Puerto Ricans successfully took control of the public education system, effectively ending the Americanization project. From that point on, developing a coherent national identity became imperative, because those in power recognized that they had to replace the Americanization with their own *apuertorriqueñamiento*. However, the process of identity construction started before this period. As other historians have explained, since at least the mid-nineteenth century *criollos* began calling themselves *puertorriqueños*. The U.S. invasion once again pushed the conversation into a new colonial reality. Especially during the 1930s and 1940s, elites in academic and political circles discussed the elements that composed Puerto Rican cultural identity. They proclaimed that the Spanish language, and the legacies of Spanish colonialism, as well as the African and Taíno influences, blended to define this identity.

This consensus and efforts to assert this identity contributed to the discourse of self-determination. Although subordinated to the will of the U.S. Congress that ratified it, the 1952 constitution that created the Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico encompassed Puerto Rican worldviews and priorities. In its preamble, the constitution stated:

“Que consideramos factores determinantes en nuestra vida la ciudadanía de los Estados Unidos de América y la aspiración a continuamente enriquecer nuestro acervo democrático en el disfrute individual y colectivo de sus derechos y prerrogativas; la lealtad a los postulados de la Constitución Federal; la convivencia en Puerto Rico de las dos grandes culturas del hemisferio americano; el afán por la educación; la fe en la justicia; la devoción por la vida esforzada, laboriosa y pacífica; la fidelidad a los valores del ser humano por encima de posiciones sociales, diferencias raciales e intereses económicos; y la esperanza de un mundo mejor basado en estos principios.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: “That we consider the citizenship of the United States of America as determining factors in our lives and the aspiration to continually enrich our democratic heritage in the individual and collective enjoyment

Two important statements stand out: it affirmed the importance of U.S. citizenship, and it accepted the coexistence of the Anglo and Hispanic cultures in the island. The cultural project had to grapple with these two statements. The solution was to compartmentalize Puerto Rican identity, between a political and a cultural self. The polarized world of the ideological war between the Soviet and the U.S. perspectives provided the space to establish institutions that tended to the effects of progress and modernity on culture, and accommodate the flagship symbol of colonialism in the island, U.S. citizenship.

Locals contested the Americanization process from the very start. In the decades after the U.S. invasion, elites discussed the elements that composed their identity under the new colonial context. This time, because of the establishment of the Americanization project in schools, they also deliberated the role of language in culture. Therefore, members of the *Generación del treinta*, *Generación del cuarenta* and *Generación del cincuenta*, such as Antonio S. Pedreira, Luis Muñoz Marín, and René Marqués, found that a nationalism based on the common ideas of an autochthonous culture would best suit the situation in Puerto Rico. In their discourse, they attempted to divorce nationalism from any political affiliation. The alternative narratives proposed by other contemporaries such as Luis Palés Matos, Julia de Burgos, and Pedro Albizu Campos attempted to challenge these ideas. This conflict illustrates Said's concept of nations as narrations, and the importance of who constructs the narrative under colonialism, the account that accommodated colonialism resonated best.<sup>2</sup>

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of their rights and prerogatives; loyalty to the postulates of the Federal Constitution; the coexistence in Puerto Rico of the two great cultures of the American hemisphere; the eagerness for education; faith in justice; devotion to hard, laborious and peaceful life; fidelity to the values for human beings above social positions, racial differences and economic interests; and the hope of a better world based on these principles."

<sup>2</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), Kindle location 136.

Muñoz Marín and the PPD's populist platform after the 1940s incorporated the concept of *puertorriqueñidad* that advanced their reformist agenda. Operación Manos a la Obra brought the economic changes that the rhetoric in favor of a relationship with the U.S. promised. The main goal was to attract U.S. capital and rapid industrialization. However, Muñoz Marín worried that the shift from a primarily rural agrarian society to an urban industrial one would disrupt the Puerto Rican worldview and culture. Once more, like the Americanization project before, the Departamento de Instrucción Pública served as the prime tool to address the changing society.

First, in 1949 DivEdCo established cultural educational programs that aligned a cohesive understanding of modernity, progress, and identity. Since its origins, the División utilized visual mediums in its community-centered initiatives to address issues of literacy and civic education. Like the rest of the reformist policies of the *estado muñocista*, DivEdCo used a paternalistic approach to intervene in the low-income communities it targeted. Working with relative autonomy, influential members of Muñoz Marín's brain trust, Jack and Irene Delano, as well as René Marqués, conveyed the importance of maintaining a sense of self while adjusting to the modern world. The División dealt with real community concerns such as potable water issues or migrating to the U.S., but it seldom actually considered the opinion of those that it apparently served.

By the mid-1950s, the work that DivEdCo started became part of the cultural project called Operación Serenidad, which most importantly created permanent specialized institutions. Muñoz Marín intended for Serenidad, through its engines, to protect Puerto Rican culture and identity from the difficulties of modernity. The establishment of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (ICP) and the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española demonstrated the significant role of the intersection of culture and language for Serenidad. Since 1949, public

schools taught the English language as a preferred subject; the Spanish language, however, was the medium of instruction in classrooms and for cultural matters. The ICP would use Spanish to produce every cultural, historical, and artistic entry. The Academia ultimately legitimized the position of the Puerto Rican Spanish within the Ibero-American world. The Instituto would have the most overarching responsibility, legitimizing Puerto Rican culture within the colonial context.

Serenidad charged the ICP with maintaining the historical, anthropological, and artistic productions of the island. The concept of *puertorriqueñidad* largely existed in the abstract. The Instituto's tasks of preserving, chronicling and disseminating the history of Puerto Rico provided the documentation to support those ideas about identity constructed in the previous decades. With the ICP's control of historical archives, management of historical structures, and the construction of monuments, now there was evidence to inform the notions of the past, and eventually expand the historical conversations. This historical process reconstructed the Hispanic and African past, while the archeological research provided clues of the native Taíno society. The artistic translation of this information was a driving force of the cultural project.

The artistic expression of Puerto Rican culture was the most visible activity of the ICP. The Instituto struggled to balance its attention to formal or universal artistic forms and local folklore. The universal values of fine arts, ballet, and classical music, for example, were key components of Serenidad's "civilizing" mission. In this aspect, the Instituto's handling of local folklore was most controversial. The process of deciding what to include as an autochthonous cultural expression revealed the biases that informed the broader concept of culture. While it promoted local religious (Catholic) art, traditional health remedies, and Afro-Caribbean poetry, it also elevated the Spanish colonial past with its focus on preserving period structures. The ICP

eventually sought to provide local artistic manifestations such as music, theater and the fine arts equal space amongst the recognized universal art forms.



Illustration 6.1 Current logo of the ICP.<sup>3</sup>

Ultimately, the ICP made the *personalidad puertorriqueña* promoted by populares the mainstream concept of cultural nationalism. It incorporated mestizaje and the *gran familia puertorriqueña* as a distinct representation of Puerto Rican history and cultural evolution that downplayed the possible role and influence of U.S. colonialism. When Muñoz Marín proposed Serenidad, as the cultural component of his larger reformist agenda, he asserted that it would be the most difficult to develop. Yet because of the weight of the evidence compiled by the ICP, the cultural project of Serenidad dug deeper into the Puerto Rican consciousness. It is common for Puerto Ricans today to repeat the ideas of *convivencia* (racial and social harmony) between the Spanish, the African, and the Taíno elements united to form the Puerto Rican character in the way the ICP's logo represents it.

From the 1960s on, however the pro-statehood movement contested the mainstream notions on culture. While estadistas, especially penepés, accepted and welcomed the ideas of the Hispanic past, more likely because it whitened the Puerto Rican image, they questioned the populares' persisting efforts to underscore the Latin American roots of their identity. Penepés broached this issue in two ways. During Governor Ferré's tenure, penepés began to suggest that

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<sup>3</sup> Logo of the ICP as it appears in the Instituto's website. Accessed March 24, 2017 <http://www.icp.pr.gov/>

through an “*estadidad jíbara*,” Puerto Ricans could retain their distinctive Hispanic or Latin American cultural identity and still become part of the Union. Meanwhile, Governor Romero Barceló firmly acknowledged the significance of U.S. citizenship to the twentieth-century Puerto Rican. Like Ferré, he also recognized the Hispanic foundations of Puerto Rican identity but argued that modern Puerto Rico was part of the American nation by virtue of their political relationship since 1898. By the early 1980s, Romero Barceló demanded “*estadidad ahora*.” Along with proving politically their fitness for statehood, he also sought to prove the willingness of Puerto Ricans to join the U.S. culturally.

Of course, statehood failed to arrive during his eight-year tenure, and Muñoz Marín’s heir apparent Governor Rafael Hernández Colón once more defended the mainstream cultural identity established by his predecessor, this time taking the official language issue even more seriously. Hernández Colón sought to exhibit Puerto Rico at a world stage. Since politically Puerto Rico was limited in its reach to the international community, culture provided the space for his “*apertura al mundo*” goal. The administration geared its effort to participate in the trans-Atlantic celebration of the Quincentennial anniversary of the Spanish arrival to the American continent. This move was controversial for two reasons: the financial cost to the island, and more importantly for *estadistas*, the message it could send to Washington if Puerto Rico underscored its Latin Americanness on this broader context.

The pavilion at the World Expo Seville 92 and the island’s participation in the Grand Regatta Columbus had broader cultural implications. Puerto Rico played an important role in the transnational planning stages of the festivities. When 1992 arrived, the Puerto Rican Quincentennial commission and the administration believed that it had cemented the island’s inclusion into the Hispanic international community. At least culturally, their efforts revealed



Puerto Rico's Hispanidad to Ibero-America. The Príncipe de Asturias Award, given in recognition of the island's effort to protect the Spanish language, confirmed this assertion, and it gave Hernández Colón the opportunity to declare that, despite the island's relationship with the U.S., it had preserved its link to the Latin America and the Spanish-speaking world. Yet his scarce mentioning of Puerto Rico's political definition as a territory of the U.S. sparked criticism in the island.

Most dissenting voices criticized the intensified sense of Hispanidad and the governor's apparent love affair with Spain. While many Puerto Ricans praised the efforts to open the island for an international event, some were suspicious of the intention behind such a display of national pride. The suspicions heightened when "el principito," the nickname Hernández Colón gained during his last term, approved a law that made Spanish the official language of the island, ending the legal bilingualism established since 1902. However, Hernández Colón only legally established what cultural identity proponents had long argued, the centrality of the Spanish language in the Puerto Rican *personalidad*. While populares linked language to culture, colonialism had always politicized the topic. The Americanization project conflated the language issue with assimilation, and in Puerto Rico's party politics, the matter reflected a status preference. Independentistas rejected forced bilingualism, and populares had wrestled with its effectiveness, but estadistas incorporated it as one of the steps towards statehood. Culture, language, and identity intersected in the context of the worldwide recognition of Spanish imperialism, yet, once more Puerto Ricans compartmentalized their consciousness and joined the celebration, overlooking their current colonial reality.

## EPILOGUE: *ESPAÑOL APUERTORRIQUEÑADO* AT THE CILE 2016

On March 15, 2016, San Juan served as host of the 7th Congreso Internacional de la Lengua Española (CILE) sponsored by the Instituto Cervantes, the Real Academia Española (RAE), and the Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (ASALE). The official theme of the event was “La lengua española y la creatividad,” with a special attention to the state of the language in the U.S. The congress was dedicated to famed Hispanic poets Rubén Darío and Pedro Salinas, as well as to the Puerto Rican poet Luis Palés Matos. The first speaker of the opening ceremony, the director of the Instituto Cervantes, Víctor García de la Concha, called the Spanish language “el elemento que presta identidad a Hispanoamérica y tiene un enorme potencial político y económico a la vez que...facilita los procesos de integración continental.”<sup>4</sup> As the director of one of the organizing institutions of the CILE, he noted “es la primera vez que un CILE se celebra fuera del ámbito de la Comunidad iberoamericana de naciones.”<sup>5</sup> Alluding to Puerto Rico’s relationship with the U.S., García de la Concha and founder of the Spanish newspaper *El País*, Juan Luis Cebrián, described the U.S. as the second largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.

However, the Spanish King Felipe VI, in his address to the *Congreso*, characterized Puerto Rico as a bridge between Latin America, Ibero-America, and the United States. The king stated:

Los puertorriqueños han sabido como pocos, vivir y sobrevivir en la frontera de las sociedades, las culturas y las lenguas. Porque éstas no son contradictorias con la diversidad, basta con aceptarla de forma natural en cada una de ellas, sin detrimentos de sus componentes. Son precisamente las culturas más extensas del

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<sup>4</sup> WIPR. “Congreso Internacional de la Lengua Española 2016”. Filmed [March 2016]. YouTube video, 2:03:09. Posted [March 2016]. <https://youtu.be/TF6B9VzzRIo>

Translation: “The element that lends identity to Hispano-America and has enormous political and economic potential while...facilitating the processes of continental integration.”

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. “It is the first time that a CILE is celebrated outside the scope of the Ibero-American community of nations.”

mundo las que mejor pueden administrar la diversidad en su interior y en sus fronteras. Y en ello los puertorriqueños tienen mucho que decir desde dentro de la Comunidad hispánica y desde dentro de la sociedad estadounidense.<sup>6</sup>

He continued by applauding Puerto Rico's linguistic loyalty to the Spanish vernacular, and explained that "aquí se revelan las lenguas como instrumentos de integración y comunicación. A la vez que formas de expresión comunitaria."<sup>7</sup> The king, who once as the prince, gave Puerto Ricans an award for their defense of the Spanish language, twenty-four years later portrayed the island simultaneously as an ally in the promotion of the *español mestizo*, and as a bridge with the Spanish-speaking community of the United States.

While the speakers from Spain seemingly differentiated Puerto Rico from the Hispanic world, the two Puerto Rican orators begged to differ. The outgoing governor of Puerto Rico, Alejandro García Padilla (PPD), clarified: "Somos un pueblo que con 117 años de relación política con los Estados Unidos, sigue hablando, sigue escribiendo, sigue rezando, sigue soñando y queriendo en español."<sup>8</sup> However, the admonishment for the exclusion of Puerto Rico, came subtly but firmly from one of the special guests, Puerto Rican writer Luis Rafael Sánchez.

Referencing Duany's notion of the "nation on the move," Sánchez explained that:

También va y vuelve, como parte integral de las mudanzas y los regresos, una conmoción que califico de 'puertorriqueñidad'. El Diccionario de la Real Academia Española de la Lengua no acoge la palabra. Sí acoge la palabra 'argentinidad': calidad de lo que es privativo de la República Argentina. Lo que es igual no es ventaja. Ahora divulgo, con deje triunfal, amparado en la opinión

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. "Puerto Ricans have known like few, live and survive on the frontier of societies, cultures and languages. Because these are not contradictory to diversity, it is enough to accept it naturally in each of them, without detriment of its components. It is precisely the largest cultures in the world that can best manage diversity within and across borders. And in this, Puerto Ricans have much to say from within the Hispanic community and from within American society."

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. "Here the languages are revealed as instruments of integration and communication. At the same time forms of community expression."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. "We are a people that with 117 years of political relationship with the United States, continues to speak, continues to write, continues to pray, continues to dream and love in Spanish."

del Diccionario de la Real Academia Española de la Lengua, ‘puertorriqueñidad’: calidad de lo que es privativo de la isla de Puerto Rico.<sup>9</sup>

Sánchez’s suggestion to the RAE is drenched in the vestiges of over half a century of cultural survival despite colonialism. Even as he called today’s Puerto Rico a nomad nation, he singled out the Spanish language as the “idioma puertorriqueño de la vivencia,” and the English language as the “idioma puertorriqueño de la sobrevivencia.”<sup>10</sup> Again, he was restating the connection between language and identity, in front of an audience that perhaps unintentionally had dismissed it.

Dedicating his words to the Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera, at the time still in an U.S. prison, and to Spanish writer Federico García Lorca, Sánchez discussed the fierce and passionate conversations the subject of the political status incites in the island. The topic, he argued, sparked a sociological curiosity since, while independence fails to win electoral support, “el credo puertorriqueñista arrasa en la calle.”<sup>11</sup> As if to explain, or perhaps confess, the secret of the national struggle with colonialism, Sánchez pointed out the Puerto Ricans’ paradoxical desire to maintain U.S. citizenship, and their recalcitrant unwillingness to negotiate the national identity illustrated in the “el idioma español, la bandera, la cultura...lo que es privativo de la isla de Puerto Rico.”<sup>12</sup> He admitted that this could be perplexing to foreigners that a “país entrado en años, pero todavía deshojando la margarita colonial, como un indeciso Hamlet

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. “It also comes and returns, as an integral part of the moving and returns, a commotion that I describe as Puerto Rican-ness. The Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy of Language does not accept the word. Yes, it welcomes the word *argentinidad*: quality of what is exclusive of the Argentine Republic. What is equal is no advantage. Now I divulge, with triumphal leave, protected in the opinion of the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy of Language, Puerto Rican-ness: quality of what is exclusive to the island of Puerto Rico.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. “Puerto Rican language of the experience” and “Puerto Rican language of survival”

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. “The Puerto Rican creed sweeps in the street.”

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. “The Spanish language, the flag, the culture...what is exclusive of the island of Puerto Rico.”

caribeño, un Hamlet afrodescendiente.”<sup>13</sup> Yet he closed his remarks proclaiming the audacity of the creativity of “la lengua española apuertorriqueñada.”

The reminder by the Spanish authorities on language that first, Puerto Rico resided outside the Ibero-American world, and secondly, that Puerto Ricans were part of the United States’ Spanish-speaking community, compounded the ongoing dilemma. For the past ten years, Puerto Rico has been dealing with the most debilitating fiscal crisis since the Great Depression. This situation spiked the conversation over status and resulted in another plebiscite in 2012. For the first time, the statehood option won by a good margin, but with only 52 percent of electoral participation.<sup>14</sup> The process indicated once more that the status question continues to divide Puerto Ricans. The only logical (or illogical) reason that keeps the island in the colonial status is the concept of *puertorriqueñidad*. The political and economic reasons for maintaining the colonial, or even a permanent, relationship with the United States no longer hold against the evidence of the failures of ELA and Bootstraps. Serenidad, the only successful component of the triumvirate that Muñoz Marín masterminded over seventy years ago, is holding the other two by the edges.

ELA is moribund after the advent of “PROMESA.” An oversight board (Junta de Control Fiscal, as it is known in the island) composed of members of the banking and Wall Street industry selected in Washington, now dictates budgetary decisions in order to pay for the national debt accumulated for the last forty years. When campaigning against the measure, populares came very close to acknowledging the colonial nature of ELA when they publicly recognized the limits autonomy imposed on fiscal issues. Meanwhile penepés welcomed the idea

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. “As a country entered in years (elderly), but still deflowering the colonial daisy, like an indecisive Caribbean Hamlet, an Afro-descendant Hamlet.”

<sup>14</sup> Generally, electoral participation in Puerto Rico surpasses the 80 percent.

of “La Junta,” because they perceived it as an opportunity to discuss statehood. Seemingly, Puerto Rican voters agreed and elected penepé Ricardo Rosselló Nevarez governor with control of the legislative assembly, the party’s first agenda item is to push for statehood.<sup>15</sup> However, the election merely served as an illusion of democracy, since soon Rosselló and president of the Senate Tomás Rivera Schatz (PNP) had to admit that the Board reserved the power to override their respective executive and legislative decisions. Another plebiscite looms in summer 2017, as it is the only card available to play for local politicians to negotiate around the Board with Washington.

For Puerto Ricans, determining whether to pressure Congress to decide for either annexation or sovereignty lies on the issue of identity. Annexation would mean erasure, while independence would mean acknowledging colonialism is an important aspect of their identity. There is comfort in colonialism, especially in the unrecognized kind. The type that allows Puerto Ricans to fly the *monoestrellada* but hides the radical history it represents.<sup>16</sup> The colonialism that accommodates subjugation, while threatening persecution for calling attention to the submission. The kind that creates dependency, then called the people *mantenidos*.<sup>17</sup> The kind that insidiously divides those under it and falsely leads them to believe they have a say in their future. This colonialism was a collaborative effort between local and federal forces. The economic and political aspects of the bargain failed, yet the cultural project survived to keep the other two components alive, at least in the colonial fantasy. Only a real threat to cultural identity could ignite a push for independence.

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<sup>15</sup> Ricardo Rosselló Nevarez is the son of former Governor Pedro Rosselló González (PNP) 1992-2000.

<sup>16</sup> *Monoestrellada* means lone star, a common term use to refer to the Puerto Rican flag.

<sup>17</sup> *Mantenidos*, meaning “kept” is a common term use in the island to refer to colonial dependence.

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## **Glossary**

AFAC: Administración para el Fomento de las Artes y la Cultura  
AMPR: Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico  
APLE: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española  
AP: Ateneo Puertorriqueño  
CBI: Caribbean Basin Initiative  
CBA: Centro de Bellas Artes de Puerto Rico  
DEH: Departamento de Estudios Hispánicos (UPRRP)  
DIP: Departamento de Instrucción Pública  
DivEdCo: División de Educación a la Comunidad  
ELA: Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico  
ICP: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña  
PIP: Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño  
PNP: Partido Nuevo Progresista  
PPD: Partido Popular Democrático  
PR: Puerto Rico  
PU: Partido Unión  
RAE: Real Academia de la Lengua Española  
UIA: Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico  
UPR: Universidad de Puerto Rico  
UPRRP: Universidad de Puerto Rico en Río Piedras  
US: United States



## **Vita**

Joanna M. Camacho Escobar is a historian from Arecibo, Puerto Rico that studies cultural identity, language, imperialism, and colonialism with a borderlands perspective. She considers her work is informed by borderlands history and straddles both the U.S. and Latin American history fields. After finishing her B.A. in Secondary Education of History from the University of Puerto Rico at Rio Piedras in 2008, Camacho Escobar received her Master's Degree in History at the University of Texas at El Paso in 2011. She has taught in elementary, secondary, and higher education classrooms. Because of her own experience as a working-class nontraditional student, Camacho Escobar aspires to continue to teach history courses for similar students in diverse classrooms.

To complete this work Camacho Escobar received the Graduate School's Frank B. Cotton Trust Scholarship and the Department of History's Frances G. Harper History Dissertation Research Award from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2014. This funding facilitated the research conducted at the Archivo General, the Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín, the Archivo Luis A. Ferré, the Biblioteca Rafael Hernández Colón, among other archives in Puerto Rico.

Camacho Escobar actively shares her scholarship in conferences such as the American Historical Association, the Puerto Rican Studies Association, the Western Association of Women Historians, the National Council on Public History and the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies. She plans to expand this original research for publication, as well as to continue an active research agenda in other topics in Puerto Rican history. Camacho Escobar has other research interests, which include the history of popular culture in Latin America, the history of the Cold War, and the history of medicine.

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