

1 Colonialism, Citizenship, and the Making of the Puerto Rican Diaspora: An Introduction

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By the 2000 census, 3,406,178 Puerto Ricans resided in the United States and 3,623,392 resided in Puerto Rico.¹ Puerto Rico became “a divided nation” as a result of a long history of colonialism and the massive migration that accompanied it. Puerto Rico was conquered by Spain, which began colonization in earnest in 1508. Under Spanish colonial rule, merchants and workers came to the United States to earn their livings. Political exiles came too, struggling for independence from Spain. In 1898, at the end of the Spanish-Cuban-American War, the United States acquired Puerto Rico and has retained sovereignty ever since. Puerto Rico’s colonial ruler changed, and migration, now from the colony to the metropolis, increased (see Table 1-1). In 1917, the U.S. Congress declared all Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens, enabling a migration free from immigration barriers. Meanwhile, U.S. political and economic interventions in Puerto Rico created the conditions for emigration, by concentrating wealth in the hands of U.S. corporations and displacing workers. Instead of too few jobs and an unequal distribution of wealth, policymakers blamed Puerto Rico’s economic woes on “overpopulation” and promoted colonization plans and contract labor programs to reduce the population. U.S. employers, often with government support, recruited Puerto Ricans as a source of low-wage labor to the United States and other destinations. Labor recruitment increased migration and shaped the formation of Puerto Rican communities. Puerto Ricans also helped each other migrate, settle, find work, and build communities, by relying on social networks of family and friends. Puerto

TABLE 1-1. Puerto Rico's Net Emigration, 1900-2000

Years	Net Number of Out-Migrants
1900-1910	2,000
1910-1920	11,000
1920-1930	42,000
1930-1940	18,000
1940-1950	151,000
1950-1960	470,000
1960-1970	214,000
1970-1980	65,817
1980-1990	116,571
1990-2000	130,185

Note: Net emigration is the difference between in-migrants and out-migrants.

Source: Francisco L. Rivera-Batiz and Carlos E. Santiago, *Island Paradox: Puerto Rico in the 1990s* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 45; with data for 1990-2000 added from U.S. Bureau of the Census, *2000 Census of Population and Housing*, PHC-T-22.

Rico became "the site of one of the most massive emigration flows of this century."²

The public and scholarly imagination has long associated Puerto Ricans with New York City. Yet Puerto Ricans have settled beyond the barrios of New York City from the earliest waves of migration to the present, creating a diaspora of communities (see Table 1-2). Under Spanish colonial rule, Puerto Ricans settled not only in New York City, but also in Tampa, Philadelphia, and Boston. In the early years of U.S. colonial rule, labor recruitment fostered communities in Hawai'i, San Francisco, and New Orleans. It was after World War I that most Puerto Ricans settled in New York City, and by 1940, 88 percent of Puerto Ricans lived there. This concentration was short-lived, however, as the post-World War II era witnessed the emergence of Puerto Rican communities in the Mid-Atlantic, the Midwest, and New England. By 1970, just 59 percent of stateside Puerto Ricans still lived in New York City, and by 2000, just 23 percent did. Fewer Puerto Ricans have settled in other countries, despite government initiatives to establish Puerto Rican colonies in other countries. Instead, the overwhelming majority

TABLE 1-2. Puerto Rican Dispersion in the United States, 1910-2000

	In the United States	In New York City	Percent of Total
1910	1,513	554	36.6
1920	11,811	7,364	62.4
1930	52,774	—	—
1940	69,967	61,463	87.8
1950	226,110	187,420	82.9
1960	892,513	612,574	68.6
1970	1,391,463	817,712	58.5
1980	2,014,000	860,552	42.7
1990	2,728,000	896,763	32.9
2000	3,406,178	789,172	23.2

Note: Figures for 1910-1950 are for persons born in Puerto Rico. Those for 1960-2000 are for persons of Puerto Rican birth or parentage.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1950 *U.S. Census of the Population*, vol. 4 Special Reports, Pt. 3, *Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States*, Table A, pp. 3D-4D; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1970*, Subject Report, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*, Table 1, p. xi; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 *Census of Population and Housing*, Table DP-1, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics.

of the Puerto Rican exodus has been to the United States, as colonialism and citizenship fostered the movement from the colony to the metropolis. The popular use of the term "Nuyorican" to identify Puerto Ricans living in the States, and until recently, the scholarly focus on New York City, suggest the resilience of the association of Puerto Ricans and New York City. This perspective has muted the diversity of Puerto Ricans' experiences and has thwarted comparative analysis of Puerto Rican communities. The chapters in this book begin the telling of these stories, by focusing on the settlement and community-building efforts of Puerto Ricans in eight different destinations. This chapter links the causes of migration with the making of this Puerto Rican diaspora.

Colonialism and Migration: Before and After 1898

Colonialism shaped Puerto Rican migration before and after 1898, as first Spain and then the United States sought to control Puerto Rico's political and economic systems. Even under Spanish rule, Puerto Ricans began making their way to the United States. Emerging economic ties between Puerto Rico and the United States brought merchants to the eastern seaboard and cigar makers to the centers of tobacco production.

Exiles sought safe haven and a base for their efforts to end Spanish colonialism. After 1898, the U.S. occupation radically transformed Puerto Rico's economy and politics, as well as migration. Colonialism molded attitudes as well. U.S. colonial administrators viewed Puerto Ricans as incapable of self-government and as a pliable labor force. These attitudes, many encapsulated in the notion of "manifest destiny," shaped U.S. policies in Puerto Rico and persisted as Puerto Ricans migrated to the States. U.S. corporations recruited Puerto Ricans as a source of cheap labor, within Puerto Rico, to the United States, and overseas. Labor recruitment intersected with social networks of family and friends to provide the foundations of early Puerto Rican settlements.

Under Spanish colonial rule, merchants settled along the eastern seaboard of the United States to ply their trade. Trade initiated two-way travel and relationships between merchants in Puerto Rico and in the United States. Merchants became the first Puerto Rican residents in several cities, many of which would not have significant Puerto Rican populations until decades later. As early as 1830, merchants from the islands established a Spanish Benevolent Society in New York City to promote trade. In 1844, one merchant settled in Bridgeport, Connecticut, while 1860 census records revealed ten Puerto Ricans living in New Haven (see Chapter 8). Trade networks also brought a small number of Puerto Ricans to Boston, where three persons born in Puerto Rico lived according to the 1860 census (see Chapter 9). By 1897, 61 percent of Puerto Rico's sugar exports went to the United States. As ships brought sugar and molasses to the port of Philadelphia, merchants settled in the city, which became a center for sugar processing.³ In addition to settling in the United States, merchants, along with other elites, sent their children to the United States as students. "Educational migration" would continue, as Puerto Ricans came to the States for higher education, or to advance their musical training, as in the case of Boston (see Chapter 9).⁴

In contrast to merchants' scattered settlement, political exiles and cigar makers' settlement was concentrated. Cigar makers were prominent among the early migrants, not just because of their numbers, but also because of their political activism. They settled in the principal centers of cigar manufacturing, especially New York City, New Orleans, and Tampa. In Philadelphia, social networks among cigar makers played an important role in the early Latino community (see Chapter 4). These vibrant, active communities, marked by their Latino diversity and working-class base, became focal points of revolutionary activity.

Puerto Ricans and Cubans often joined forces, struggling to overthrow Spanish rule in Cuba and Puerto Rico. In 1892, José Martí founded the U.S.-based Cuban Revolution Party (Partido Revolucionario Cubano or PRC) in Tampa. The PRC was headquartered in New York City, while Philadelphia was home to at least six affiliated clubs during the 1890s. Boston's chapter of the PRC was formed in 1895, following on the heels of other revolutionary activities to gain independence from Spain (see Chapter 9).

The Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898 had profound and lasting consequences for Puerto Rico. Having expanded territorially from coast to coast, the United States looked to expand its markets overseas. The United States' commercial and strategic interests required naval bases and coaling stations, to protect maritime trade and entrances to the proposed Panama Canal, as well as to respond to European expansionism and international competition.⁵ In a July 1898 editorial in the *New York Times*, business writer Amos Fiske revealed the United States' interests in acquiring Puerto Rico, "There can be no question to perplex any reasonable mind about the wisdom of taking possession of the Island of Puerto Rico and keeping it for all time." Puerto Rico would provide a critical naval station, "a commanding position between the two continents." Puerto Rico's geography and people could be transformed, he thought, to meet U.S. economic interests as well. As a "populous island" with the soil "most prolific" and the "climate exceptionally salubrious," he saw "no reason why it should not become a veritable garden of the tropics and an especially charming winter resort for denizens of the North." Fiske was confident that the Puerto Rican "labor force," which had "never been half utilized" under Spanish rule, could be rendered productive under U.S. rule. He explained, "There are many blacks, possibly a third of all the people, and much mixed blood, but the population is not ignorant or indolent or in any way degraded. It is not turbulent or intractable, and there is every reason to believe that under encouraging conditions it would become industrious, thrifty and prosperous."⁶

Based on a sense of religious and racial superiority, Fiske justified the colonization of Puerto Rico, revealing attitudes embedded in manifest destiny. Notions of manifest destiny drove U.S. expansion and colonial rule in Puerto Rico and elsewhere. Fiske asserted, "Providence has decreed that it shall be ours as a recompense for smiting the last withering clutch of Spain from the domain which Columbus brought to light and the fairest part of which has long been our own heritage." He considered Puerto Ricans incapable of self-government and concluded that

colonization was in the best interests of the Puerto Rican people, "It would be much better for her to come at once under the beneficent sway of the United States than to engage in doubtful experiments at self-government, and there is reason to believe that her people would prefer it. It would be in accordance with the genius of our institutions to accord them self-government in local affairs as soon and as far as they showed themselves capable of it."⁷ The U.S. Army landed in Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898, just two weeks after Fiske's editorial. On December 10, 1898, the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris. The United States obtained Puerto Rico in place of monetary compensation for its costs in prosecuting the war. Puerto Ricans were not involved nor consulted with on the terms of the treaty. Thus began the United States' colonial rule of Puerto Rico.

A highly centralized military rule dismantled and replaced the institutions of self-government and the greater autonomy that Puerto Rico had wrested from Spain in the final days of its rule. From 1898 to 1900, the United States imposed a military occupation. With the Foraker Act (or the first Organic Act of 1900), the U.S. Congress instituted civilian rule that severely limited the participation of Puerto Ricans in their own government. The U.S. President appointed the governor and the heads of key departments, with the consent of the U.S. Senate. The president, along with the governor, also appointed the Executive Council, which performed legislative and executive functions. Five of the eleven members were to be "native inhabitants of Porto Rico."⁸ The House of Delegates consisted of thirty-five elected representatives. Yet the appointed governor, the U.S. President, and the U.S. Congress all retained the authority to veto local legislation. Puerto Rico had no voting representation in the U.S. Congress, as Puerto Ricans were permitted to elect only a nonvoting resident commissioner. Some Democrats argued that the Foraker Act denied Puerto Ricans the basic rights guaranteed in the Constitution, and constituted taxation without representation, thereby making a sham of the democratic principles upon which the country was founded. Nevertheless, the act passed and remained in effect until 1917.

The U.S. occupation radically transformed Puerto Rico's economy. The United States sought to incorporate Puerto Rico into U.S. trade circuits, and to foster U.S. investment in Puerto Rico, by removing obstacles and creating an infrastructure. The Foraker Act enabled these changes, by prohibiting Puerto Rico from negotiating treaties with other countries or determining its own tariffs, by making Puerto Rico part of the U.S. monetary system, and by requiring that all goods be

transported in U.S.-owned shipping. Although the act limited corporations to owning less than 500 acres, this provision was not enforced. Puerto Rico's primary crop shifted from coffee to tobacco and especially sugar. U.S. corporations invested in tobacco manufacturing, U.S. policy provided tariff protection for Puerto Rico's tobacco, and the industry prospered. It was sugar, however, that came to dominate the economy. U.S. sugar corporations purchased large tracts of land and invested heavily in huge grinding mills or *centrales*. U.S. policy provided a privileged and sheltered market for Puerto Rico's sugar. Puerto Rico became a classic monoculture colony, producing one crop, for export, to one market. Land concentration and an economy based on cash crops reduced households' abilities to meet their subsistence needs. Instead of households growing food for home consumption, food was now imported. Indeed, restricted to trading almost exclusively with the United States, Puerto Rico became the twelfth largest consumer of U.S. goods in the world by 1910. In short, Puerto Rico's economy became tied to and dependent on the United States.⁹

Instead of the economic hardships wrought by U.S. policies and investments, U.S. policymakers defined Puerto Rico's problem as "overpopulation." As political economists Frank Bonilla and Ricardo Campos concluded in 1981, "The steady expulsion of 'surplus' workers and efforts to attract greater amounts of capital together have governed all the plans and projects formulated by and for Puerto Ricans to solve the persisting problem of 'overpopulation' and to promote an economic development that remains elusive."¹⁰ In 1901, Governor Charles Allen revealed a demeaning attitude toward rural Puerto Ricans and advocated their migration. Believing that "simple peasants" would "prefer to remain in idleness until someone solicited their services," he reported, "The emigration agent found an excellent field for his enterprise. He penetrated the rural districts and offered golden inducements to these simple folk to travel and see foreign lands. . . . Good wages are offered, and many are persuaded to emigrate." Describing those leaving as "the least desirable elements of this people," Governor Allen explained, "Porto Rico has plenty of laborers and poor people generally. What the island needs is men with capital, energy, and enterprise."¹¹ Similarly, in 1915, Governor Arthur Yager emphasized the problem of "surplus population" and the solution of emigration. Noting, "There is much wretchedness and poverty among the masses of the people of Porto Rico," he argued, "undoubtedly the fundamental cause is the enormous population." He continued, "I do not hesitate to express my belief that

the only really effective remedy is the transfer of large numbers of Porto Ricans to some other region."¹²

As a result, the first major migration under U.S. rule was in the form of labor recruitment to Hawai'i, a U.S. territory. Between 1900 and 1901, U.S.-owned corporations recruited more than 5,000 Puerto Rican men, women, and children to work on sugar plantations (see Chapter 2). This migration illustrated key dynamics of labor migration that would be repeated in the making of the Puerto Rican diaspora.¹³ First, migrants were displaced by economic changes in Puerto Rico, wrought by the U.S. occupation. Coming from the devastated coffee region, these workers made the difficult decision to seek work elsewhere. Second, Puerto Ricans were recruited as a source of cheap labor. Despite Governor Allen's assertions that workers were offered "golden inducements" and "good wages," Puerto Ricans encountered exploitation on the long journey from Puerto Rico to Hawai'i and on the distant sugar plantations, where they had been sought as a way to reduce labor costs and increase profits. Third, although Puerto Ricans were recruited as a source of cheap labor, they were not always welcomed as members of the communities where they settled. Instead, Puerto Ricans encountered stereotypes, racism, and sometimes violence. Finally, labor recruitment often provided the roots from which Puerto Rican communities grew. Puerto Rican communities emerged, not only in Hawai'i, but also at other points along the journey, which involved travel by ship from Puerto Rico to New Orleans, by train to California, and then by ship to Hawai'i. The first expedition left Puerto Rico on November 22, 1900, and did not reach Hawai'i until December 23, 1900, even though labor agents had assured migrants that it was a fourteen-day journey. Of the 114 who started the trip, only 56 landed at the final destination, with most of the others "escaping" in San Francisco (see Figure 1-1).¹⁴

United States corporations also recruited Puerto Ricans to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Mexico. While policymakers encouraged emigration, editorials in Puerto Rico's newspaper, *La Correspondencia*, decried the emigration and warned of exploitation. In 1901, Governor Allen simply reported, "Several thousands have gone to Cuba, and a few to Santo Domingo."¹⁵ In contrast, one traveler observed in July 1900, "In Santiago, Cuba, Puerto Ricans cannot stand up under the duress working the iron mines, owned by an American company. The promises made have not been met and, as a result, many of our brothers have been forced to beg for charity."¹⁶ In 1901, another labor recruitment scheme sought 3,000 men to build a railroad in Ecuador.

Examiner.

SATURDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 15, 1900. NO. 167.

THREATS AND FORCE PUT 66 PORTO RICANS ON RIO, BUT FIFTY OTHERS ESCAPE

J. S. RODMAN COLL.

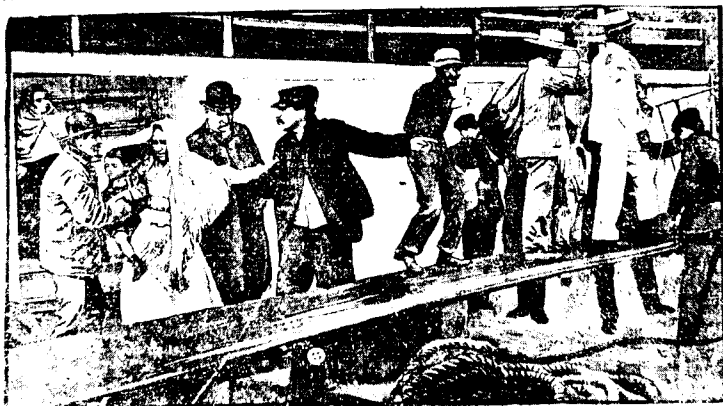


FIGURE 1-1. By Choice? San Francisco *Examiner*, 1900. The question of “force” surfaced as labor contracts took Puerto Ricans to Hawai’i to work on sugar plantations. Puerto Ricans who refused to continue the trip began California’s Puerto Rican communities. Because of the roles of labor contracts and government involvement, debates over the “voluntary” or “organized” dimensions of Puerto Rican migration continued. (Blasé Camacho Souza Papers, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, City University of New York, New York City.)

Workers were offered seventy-five cents an hour in gold, and twenty-five acres of land if they stayed after completing a two-year contract. While one article proclaimed, “This is thought to be the most advantageous contract offered Puerto Rican workers,” another warned, “We must not forget that these are American contractors and that, therefore, one must stand on solid ground and open one’s eyes to avoid falling prey to some unforeseeable circumstance.”¹⁷ The *New York Times* revealed

concerns about the mistreatment of workers, "Judging from the reports of the treatment of Jamaican laborers there, Ecuador is not a desirable country for emigrants, and the Jamaican Government has prohibited further emigration." The article cautioned, "It has been suggested that the authorities might examine and report on the conditions existing in Ecuador, and especially among the laborers on this Guayaquil-Quinto railroad, before allowing Porto Ricans to emigrate thither." Nevertheless, a couple weeks later, the McDonald Company transported ninety-six Puerto Ricans to Ecuador. The next day, the *New York Times* reported that the emigration had been halted "on account of the widespread publication here [in San Juan] of an official report of the Jamaican authorities regarding the ill-treatment of Jamaican laborers in Ecuador."¹⁸

Still promoting emigration, policymakers sought to reduce the problems associated with private agencies by calling for increased government involvement. Puerto Ricans, who had been recruited to Mexico by private agencies in 1909, were repatriated at government expense in 1911 and 1912.¹⁹ A 1914 Labor Bureau report called for government participation in labor contracts to the Dominican Republic and Cuba, as workers had already been recruited. The report declared, "It is certainly unwise for our laborers, who are unable to defend their own rights, to be herded off to these islands absolutely subject to the exploitations of the centrals by whom they may be employed." Instead, given that "there is a great demand for agricultural laborers in those islands, and the wages paid are approximately double those that prevail in Porto Rico," the report suggested, "If selected Porto Rican laborers could be sent in small groups to Cuba or Santo Domingo, protected by proper contracts in which the Government of Porto Rico is a party, such emigration might be advisable."²⁰ Calling for even greater government involvement, Governor Arthur Yager urged colonization as his solution to "surplus population" in 1915. Specifically, he advocated, "Treaty arrangements might be entered into between the governments of the United States and Santo Domingo which would include a practical scheme of emigration under governmental encouragement and aid of the surplus population of the smaller island to the unoccupied lands of the larger." In addition to the benefits of similarities in climate and language, he added that these were "two neighboring islands, over which the American government has assumed the complete or partial control."²¹

Despite government plans aimed at other countries, most migration was to the States. Labor recruitment laid the foundations for Puerto Rican communities in Hawai'i, California, and Louisiana (see

TABLE 1-3. Puerto Ricans' Residence, Selected States, 1910-2000

	1910	1920	1950	1970	2000
United States: Total	1,513	11,811	301,375	1,391,463	3,406,178
Hawaii	3,510	2,581	—	—	30,005
New York	641	7,719	252,515	878,980	1,050,293
Pennsylvania	83	433	3,560	44,947	228,557
New Jersey	23	360	5,640	136,937	336,788
Illinois	23	142	3,570	88,244	157,851
Ohio	11	124	2,115	21,147	66,269
Connecticut	4	69	1,305	38,493	194,443
Massachusetts	25	163	1,175	24,561	199,207
California	342	935	10,295	46,955	140,570
Florida	83	200	4,040	29,588	482,027
Louisiana	42	217	715	1,645	7,670
Texas	14	84	1,210	4,649	69,504

Note: Figures are for persons born in Puerto Rico for all states, 1910-1920, and for Louisiana and Texas 1910-1970. Other figures are for those of Puerto Rican birth or parentage. Hawaii's population is not included in the U.S. total, 1910-1920.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, vol. I, Population, 1910, Table 35, p. 734; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, vol. II, Population, 1920, Table 17, p. 630; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future* (Washington, DC:GPO, October 1976), 23; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *2000 Census of Population and Housing*, Table DP-1, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics.

Chapter 2). Given the long, arduous journey, some migrants refused to continue the journey, while others returned to California when confronted with the harsh working and living conditions in Hawai'i. By 1910, the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans—3,510—lived in Hawai'i (see Table 1-3). Another 342 Puerto Ricans had settled in California, with 213 Puerto Ricans living in San Francisco. Forty-two Puerto Ricans lived in Louisiana, with fifteen in New Orleans. Labor recruitment might also explain the six Puerto Ricans living in St. Louis, Missouri. In June 1904, fifty "Porto Rican girls" between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one were recruited to work at the St. Louis Cordage Company. Problems arose, as *La Correspondencia* published a letter from two of the women who asked for help. Although twenty of the young women returned to Puerto Rico in February 1905, forty-nine Puerto Ricans still resided in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1920.²² While families had been recruited to Hawai'i, women were also recruited as a source of low-wage labor, and their labor recruitment, it seems, could also foster settlement.

Puerto Ricans also migrated and sought work through social networks. Tobacco workers, carpenters, and other artisans continued to

settle in some of the communities established earlier by political exiles and cigar makers. In 1910, New York City was home to 554 Puerto Ricans, and Philadelphia was home to 64 (see Chapters 3 and 4). Bernardo Vega was a skilled tobacco worker who came to New York City in 1916. Vega recalled that while aboard the steamship, "The overriding theme of our conversations, however, was what we expected to find in New York City. With our first earnings we would send for our nearest relative."²³ While networks had increased the Puerto Rican population in these communities, other states had fewer Puerto Ricans and nine states had no Puerto Rican presence. By 1910, the total population in the continental United States had reached 1,513, still less than half the Puerto Rican population in Hawai'i.

U.S. colonialism meant that Puerto Ricans' status was an ambiguous one both in Puerto Rico and as they migrated to the States. With the U.S. occupation, Puerto Ricans were stripped of Spanish citizenship, but not granted U.S. citizenship. Instead, the Foraker Act rendered them "citizens of Porto Rico," a status without clear meaning in the international community or in the United States. In 1901, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Puerto Rico was a "non-incorporated territory," and that the U.S. Constitution's provisions and protections did not automatically apply to Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican leaders decried this treatment in a 1900 message to Congress, "The United States has not been fair to those who gave their hand to their redeemer... who turned their backs upon the old conditions and accepted the new, only to discover themselves cut off from all the world—a people without a country, a flag, almost without a name... Who are we? What are we? ... Are we citizens or are we subjects? Are we brothers and our property territory, or are we bondmen of a war and our islands a crown colony?"²⁴

As Puerto Ricans migrated to the States, the ambiguities continued. In 1902, a Puerto Rican woman was detained at Ellis Island and refused admission. In 1904, the Supreme Court ruled on her case, "That citizens of Porto Rico, whose permanent allegiance is due to the United States, are not aliens, and upon their arrival by water at the ports of our mainland are not "alien immigrants." The Court did not, however, decide the issue of citizenship, avoiding the defendant's contentions that "the cession of Porto Rico accomplished the naturalization of the people" and that "a citizen of Porto Rico is necessarily a citizen of the United States." As a result, Puerto Ricans were legally permitted entry to the United States, yet remained neither U.S. citizens nor aliens.²⁵

Citizenship and Labor Migrations: Between the World Wars

In 1917, the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act (or second Organic Act), and declared all Puerto Ricans citizens of the United States. Puerto Rican citizenship ceased to exist in any meaningful legal sense. Despite this change in citizenship status, Puerto Rico's political status was not changed. Puerto Ricans were now U.S. citizens living in an "unincorporated territory." In the period between the World Wars, U.S. policies and economic interventions continued to have a direct impact on Puerto Rico's economy, concentrating wealth in the hands of U.S. corporations, displacing workers, and creating the conditions for emigration. At the same time, the United States restricted European immigration. Puerto Ricans, now U.S. citizens, became a preferred source of low-wage workers for jobs in the States. Displaced by economic change at home, recruited as a source of cheap labor, and seeking work to improve their lives, Puerto Ricans boarded steamships and came to the States in larger numbers (see Figure 1-2). Between 1920 and 1940, the Puerto Rican population in the States grew from fewer than 12,000 to almost 70,000. New York City was the preferred destination, while the Puerto Rican community in Philadelphia also grew (see Chapters 3 and 4). Still favoring colonization in other countries, Puerto Rico's policymakers, nevertheless, facilitated migration to the States through contract labor programs. As Edwin Maldonado argued in his now classic 1979 essay, contract laborers were "the pioneers who established these communities." Pointing to the connections between contract labor and social networks, he concluded, "The importance of contract workers to the growth of Puerto Rican communities in the United States as well as to the socioeconomic nature of migrants . . . was that they provided the impetus for the coming of other migrants to the mainland. For through their letters back to the Island others made the trip to urban centers outside New York." Hence, U.S. citizenship facilitated a migration freed from immigration barriers, which sparked both labor recruitment and social networks.²⁶

Although there had been earlier discussions and initiatives to grant Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship, the pressures of World War I expedited the passage of the Jones Act. As political economist Pedro Cabán argues, "The grant of U.S. citizenship was proposed as a gambit to abate Puerto Rican dissatisfaction with the colonial regime, quiet political agitation for independence, and serve to permanently bind the country to the



FIGURE 1-2. By Boat: The Steamship *Coamo* in San Juan's Harbor, c. 1900. Before World War II, Puerto Ricans came to the States by steamship, most as paying passengers and some as stowaways. Thousands traveled from San Juan to New York City on the steamship *Coamo*, shown at the pier in San Juan's harbor in 1900.

(The Postcards Collection, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, City University of New York, New York City.)

United States." Puerto Rico figured prominently in U.S. strategic needs for stability in the Caribbean and for a defense perimeter to protect the Panama Canal. The military draft was extended to Puerto Rico shortly after the U.S. declaration of war against Germany. Puerto Ricans were required to register for compulsory military service, despite their lack of voting representation in Congress or for the President of the United States. Puerto Rican men served, with 241,000 Puerto Rican men registered for military service and 17,855 inducted into the army by October 26, 1918. More than 4,000 were sent to Panama to guard the canal.²⁷

The Jones Act expanded Puerto Ricans' participation in their insular government without compromising U.S. colonial authority. The upper and lower houses of Puerto Rico's legislature were now fully elected. Yet the U.S. Congress retained the authority to amend or annul legislation passed in Puerto Rico, as well as the authority to selectively apply federal legislation. Puerto Rico's governor was still appointed by the United States, as were the attorney general and the commissioner of education. The appointed governor then appointed other key administrators. In

addition to military conscription, the United States determined Puerto Rico's tariff and monetary policy, defense, immigration, and communications. Puerto Ricans still had no role in the federal government that controlled these matters, lacking voting representation in Congress and for the president. In 1934, the U.S. government transferred the administration of Puerto Rico from the War Department's Bureau of Insular Affairs to the Department of the Interior's newly created Division of Territories and Island Possessions. The move from War Department to the Department of the Interior did not, however, alter the "colonial formula" put into place by the Jones Act.²⁸

As with the transfer of Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States, Puerto Ricans had no say in the conferral of U.S. citizenship. Political leaders, nevertheless, voiced their views of the Jones Act. Speaking before the U.S. House of Representatives in 1916, Luis Muñoz Rivera pointed to the contradictions between U.S. democratic ideals and U.S. policies in Puerto Rico, "On the 18th day of October 1898, when the flag of this great Republic was unfurled over the fortresses of San Juan, if anyone had said to my countrymen that the United States, the land of liberty, was going to deny their right to form a government of the people, by the people, and for the people of Puerto Rico, my countrymen would have refused to believe such a prophecy, considering it sheer madness." Muñoz Rivera urged the United States to live up to its ideals and grant self-government to the people of Puerto Rico. Emphasizing the disjuncture created by conferring U.S. citizenship while maintaining Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory, he asserted, "My countrymen, who, precisely the same as yours, have their dignity and self-respect to maintain, refuse to accept a citizenship of an inferior order, a citizenship of the second class, which does not permit them to dispose of their own resources nor to live their own lives nor to send to this Capitol their proportional representation." He called for a "full plebiscite on the question of citizenship" so that Puerto Ricans could "decide by their votes whether they wish the citizenship of the United States or whether they prefer their own natural citizenship."²⁹ Puerto Ricans who formally rejected U.S. citizenship were denied the right to vote in Puerto Rico. For José de Diego, the leader of the insular House of Representatives, the Jones Act meant that Puerto Ricans were either "stripped of their natural citizenship" or rendered "foreigners in their homeland" if they rejected U.S. citizenship.³⁰

Like the Foraker Act before it, the Jones Act continued favorable conditions for U.S. economic interests. As economic historian James

Dietz notes, "The Organic Acts guaranteed that political decisions would be governed by the interests of the United States, while U.S. capital investments reoriented the economy." Puerto Rico's economic dependence on the United States increased. To stimulate U.S. investment in Puerto Rico and increase trade, duties would not be collected on Puerto Rico's exports. The economic transformations set in motion by the U.S. occupation continued, as the coffee industry declined and the sugar industry expanded. The land devoted to sugar increased dramatically, from 72,146 to 145,433 *cuerdas* between 1899 and 1909 and to 237,758 *cuerdas* in 1929. Although the 500-acre restriction on corporate land holdings remained intact, it also remained unenforced. Land concentration was pronounced, and by 1930, 34 percent of all land was owned by farms that had 500 acres or more. As corporations, many of these farms were in clear violation of the 500-acre limit. Indeed, four large U.S. corporations dominated the sugar industry, owning or leasing 24 percent of all land devoted to sugar in 1930 and controlling 211,761 acres by 1934. They also owned eleven of forty-one centrales.³¹ The impact on the people of Puerto Rico was striking, as Cabán concludes, "Although Puerto Rico was a remarkably profitable investment zone for U.S. corporations, it had also been converted into a Caribbean sweatshop with its attendant social ills and political difficulties."³²

These economic transformations sent people in search of work. The decline of the coffee industry devastated the mountainous interior of the island. Wages in coffee were lower than those in tobacco or sugar, and the work was seasonal. Despite their efforts to preserve their homes and lifestyles, many coffee growers abandoned their farms. Migrants from the coffee region made their way to the coastal areas, where sugar plantations were taking hold. Yet sugar plantations failed to provide jobs for all the workers displaced by the demise of coffee. As U.S. sugar corporations amassed large concentrations of land, small farm owners in the sugar region lost their land. Even those who secured jobs in the sugar industry faced seasonal employment and harsh conditions. Most workers were employed during the harvesting season, which meant widespread unemployment during the dead season or *tiempo muerto* for six months of the year. Wages were low, and land concentration limited workers' ability to supplement low, seasonal wages by growing food crops or keeping animals. These hardships were worsened by natural disasters, as hurricanes pummeled Puerto Rico in 1928 and 1932. The worldwide depression of the 1930s was felt in its full severity in Puerto Rico.³³

Despite these policy-induced and natural disasters, Puerto Rico's policymakers continued to point to "excess population," as the cause of Puerto Rico's "problem." The Bureau of Insular Affairs acknowledged, "The Bureau has had constantly before it for years the question of the over-population of Porto Rico, and has had in mind various projects to relieve this situation." The chief of the bureau, Frank McIntyre, continued to promote colonization, "As a permanent relief, it favors the colonizing of several hundred thousand Porto Rican people in Santo Domingo." As a "temporary" solution, he proposed, "to bring to the United States from 50,000 to 100,000 laboring men to be used on farms as agricultural laborers, for which they are best fitted, or as right-of-way laborers on the railroads or similar work requiring manual labor."³⁴ Although he supported colonization, Governor Yager was "not enthusiastic about the employment of labor in the United States." As a result, McIntyre abandoned his plan to bring men to the States "under a contract," but concluded, "I should not be sorry if it were tried out in a limited extent without Government intervention."³⁵

Instead of "overpopulation," organized labor pointed to "exploitation" as the cause of Puerto Rico's economic problems. The Federación Libre de los Trabajadores de Puerto Rico's 1918 resolution on emigration explained:

The Free Federation of Labor in Porto Rico does not attribute the poverty prevailing in the country mainly to the large number of laborers in the island, but, on the contrary, to the large number of exploiters who dishearten Porto Rico by grabbing the lands; to absorption by speculating Trusts and Corporations; to the centralization of wealth; and to the decided support rendered unconditionally by the local government to every kind of business, legal and illegal, undertaken by all these combined forces of exploitation.

For the Federation, poverty in Puerto Rico and colonization plans were tied to the interests of U.S. corporations and to the government support of these corporations. The Federation's Santiago Iglesias pointed out the connections: "The Sugar Trust proposes to lay its hands on the neighboring island of Santo Domingo as it is already doing," with the Guanica Central there "enjoying the military protection of our nation since it may be stated that it is our government that dictates the policy of Santo Domingo." He opposed efforts "to oblige" Puerto Ricans "to emigrate to Santo Domingo through hunger and seek employment out there of the Guanica Central under the most unheard of and deplorable conditions." As a result, the Federation opposed

emigration "to Cuba, Venezuela, Hawai'i, Santo Domingo, and any where else outside of the United States."³⁶

The United States was another matter. The Federation "endorsed the idea of emigration, officially protected, guaranteed, and where there was not only security for the Porto Rican workmen, but also for those from any other section." Given conditions in Puerto Rico, the Federation conceded that "to alleviate their condition the laborers had necessarily to make the sacrifice of leaving their homes and seeking wider horizons away from Porto Rico." They hoped for "the great advance the labor element would make by having an opportunity to work on the mainland." In contrast, organized labor charged policymakers and employers with seeking to retain a surplus of workers to keep wages low. The Federation was thus critical of the governor's motives in opposing "migration" to the States, "This idea, of course, was opposed by the insular authorities who were backing up the interests of the exploiters... inasmuch as their biggest business is to be able to have six men for each job." Similarly, Santiago Iglesias charged that policymakers and employers wanted to assure "that a sufficient number of laborers will be available so the barons of wealth and the corporation may obtain labor at the cheapest possible figures at all times."³⁷

Indeed, Puerto Rico's employers complained of labor shortages and opposed emigration. One employer countered the government's view of surplus population and equated strikes with idleness, "There are more workmen needed than can be obtained and there is no reason for any man being idle. Last Spring when some Government officials were in the island, there were idle many men in and about San Juan, the best paid labor in every country—the dock laborers who were then, as is very often the case, on a strike."³⁸ Hence, although policymakers sought to promote emigration and employers complained of insufficient and "idle" labor, both groups sidestepped the issues of economic displacement, as well as wages and working conditions. The Federation, on the other hand, supported emigration only where working conditions "are more favorable than in the island" and only if Puerto Rican workers were "not to be utilized as strikebreakers or to the prejudice of laborers in the United States in the matter of wages." In short, the Federation sought to prevent the use of Puerto Rican workers as a source of cheap labor in Puerto Rico, in the States, and elsewhere.³⁹

Yet during World War I, wartime conditions and Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship led to a contract labor program to bring Puerto Ricans to the States to work in war industries and on military bases. The state played

a central role in this labor recruitment. By May 1918, arrangements were being made for Puerto Rican men to be employed in "construction work on Government contracts." More than 10,000 were slated for "war work at Norfolk, Newport News, and Baltimore and vicinity." The War Department resolved the transportation dilemma by bringing workers on the return trips of supply ships. Workers were to receive thirty-five cents an hour, and time and a half for overtime work. They would pay twenty-five cents per meal for food provided by the government commissary, and housing was to be provided free of cost. By mid-November, 13,233 men had been sent to the following destinations: 2,774 to New Orleans, LA; 3,809 to Wilmington, NC; 2,944 to Charleston, SC; 3,105 to Brunswick, GA; and 601 to Savannah, GA.⁴⁰

Despite state involvement, workers' complaints of mistreatment and poor conditions surfaced almost immediately. Puerto Rico's commissioner received a telegram requesting an investigation, "Workmen brought here from Porto Rico to work for the Government in New Orleans ill treated. They have also been taken out of the city under soldiers guard and knocked with butt-ends of guns. Some have been paid only part of their salaries and other[s] nothing at all. Their goods all lost."⁴¹ Conditions were, it seems, no better at Camp Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In a sworn deposition, worker Rafael Marchán revealed the contrast between workers' expectations and the conditions under which they found themselves. Marchán and 1,700 other men signed on, "it being distinctly and clearly understood" that they "came under the [a]egis and protection of the Government." They "were to be employed in their respective trades; . . . housing accommodations and living and working conditions were to be of such a kind as to insure their health and comfort, and that proper measures would be taken to provide for their welfare and protection against mistreatment and abuse . . . and that they were not to be restrained in their personal liberty or in any way compelled to do any kind of work or live in any given place against their will." Instead, Marchán reported that "owing to the improper and unsanitary conditions under which the said Porto Ricans labor and live . . . it has been the case with some twenty-two of them who have died from utter lack of proper care and medical attention." He noted "cases of such utter and inhuman cruelty as to compel sick men under the pretext of their being lazy, to either go to work or be locked up, just because in fear of the ill treatment which they expected to receive at the hospital they would rather stay in their own beds." Nor were they free to leave: "Some have positively refused to

continue at the Camp and announced their intention to leave, but have been prevented to do so by sheer compulsion of force."⁴² In response, Santiago Iglesias wrote to Secretary of Labor William Wilson attributing the problems to the fact that rather than the Department of Labor, "army officers took charge of the emigration and consequently many deplorable things occurred."⁴³

Workers, recruited to Hawai'i nineteen years earlier, also sought help from policymakers. In 1919, when they heard that sugar companies were planning to recruit additional workers, twenty-six Puerto Rican workers responded with a warning, "In Hawai'i, we Porto Ricans are abused and despised more than any race." They pointed to economic issues, "The cost of living is very high, and what we earn is not enough to clothe our families," and older men, unable to work any longer, were reduced to begging. In addition, they reported, "They usurp our civil rights," through unjust incarceration and denial of their rights to vote. They ended with a request, "We wish and beg to be repatriated at once. We wish to advise our brothers in Porto Rico not to emigrate to Hawai'i, for a Porto Rican in Hawai'i is of less importance than a criminal in Porto Rico." Puerto Rico's Senate passed a resolution requesting an investigation and repatriation for those wishing to return to Puerto Rico.⁴⁴ The next month, legislation authorized the commissioner of agriculture and labor "to intervene . . . in all matters concerning emigration of laborers from Porto Rico," to investigate and regulate offers made to workers, and to secure and enforce contracts, ensuring provisions for "the stability or repatriation" of workers. At the same time, the government would "have no obligation in any emigration to protect or enforce the rights of such persons as shall leave this country, unless the contracts . . . have been approved by the Commissioner." Recruitment without authority was made a misdemeanor.⁴⁵

During the 1920s, approved contract labor programs recruited women, as well as whole families. In 1920, the American Manufacturing Company, a rope factory in Brooklyn, New York, recruited 130 women. The arrangements revealed elements of paternalism and a company town. Residing in company-owned housing, women workers were chaperoned by two women from respected Puerto Rican families, while additional Puerto Rican women provided domestic services. They were transported to and from work in a company bus, which they were permitted to use for other activities. Male companions, with the exception of the driver, were prohibited. When fifteen workers left their positions, charging that the employer violated the terms of the contract,

the commissioner of labor investigated. He found working and living conditions satisfactory and consistent with the terms of the contract. Several women, responding to his questionnaire, complained that the work was not appropriate for women. The commissioner dismissed this complaint as 950 other women worked at the factory, and he attributed their other complaints to one supervisor and to homesickness. Still, twenty-eight women had left their jobs, leaving the company their unpaid debts totaling \$1,600.⁴⁶

In 1926, the Arizona Cotton Growers' Association recruited whole families, with the assurance that there was plenty of work for women. More than 1,000 Puerto Ricans were brought to work in the cotton crops. Although they had been guaranteed two dollars per day for ten hours of work, they were instead paid by the pound picked, with the quickest workers unable to earn more than \$1.37. In an effort to get the Association to honor the terms of the contract, workers went to the Association's headquarters in Phoenix. Discovering ninety men, women, and children on the streets, the Phoenix Central Labor Council raised funds, organized a bread line, and sent telegrams to Santiago Iglesias and William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor.⁴⁷ Yet the assistant commissioner of labor, who had traveled with the workers, labeled it "a misunderstanding" and blamed the workers instead, asserting that the contracts "have been violated by our countrymen." He pointed to "great political activity" as a contributing factor and reassured the commissioner, "We ought not to fear for the people that went to Arizona, because there is a labor shortage and plenty of work."⁴⁸

A pattern was emerging. Confronted with the problems that arose even with government-sanctioned contract labor programs, policymakers began blaming the selection of workers or the workers themselves. Yet, for employers, the impetus behind labor recruitment was to reduce labor costs and increase profits, which led to contract violations, as well as poor working and living conditions. A 1947 report concluded that Arizona cotton workers found "the tents, and adobe and lumber shacks in which they were housed unlivable," and that "they could not live on the 1¼ to 1½ cents per pound they were being paid." In addition, "they were working 10 to 16 hours a day instead of the 8 they had expected."⁴⁹

Still, policymakers continued to explore other possibilities for colonization and contract labor. Some explored another expedition to Hawai'i,⁵⁰ despite a report that conditions remained inadequate and that Puerto Ricans would be used as strikebreakers against 10,000 Filipinos, who were striking to improve those conditions.⁵¹ In his 1947 study,

Clarence Senior, director of the Social Sciences Research Center at the University of Puerto Rico, declared the seven organized migrations before World War II "all almost 100 percent failures." In addition to Hawai'i, Brooklyn, and Arizona, policymakers "organized" several smaller migrations. In 1919 and 1920, 671 workers were recruited to one sugar mill in Cuba, and another 16 workers to another mill. In 1920, ten mechanics were placed at a sugar mill in the Dominican Republic. In 1925, more than eighty-seven people were sent to work on a coffee plantation in Colombia. Two years later, seventeen people were sent to Venezuela to work in a clothing factory, some as mechanics and others as seamstresses, indicating that women may have been among those sent.⁵² In 1927, policymakers turned their attention to the Dominican Republic, which was proposing to offer Puerto Rican settlers eighteen cuerdas, initial necessities for farming, and a cash stipend for a period of six months, while the farms were being established. Other workers had traveled without government involvement to the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and Cuba, as well as the United States.⁵³

Labor migrations, both "organized" and those without direct government involvement, fostered settlement. By 1935, 3,221 Puerto Ricans, 1,905 men and 1,316 women, lived in the Dominican Republic, making it the second largest community after Hawai'i.⁵⁴ Cuba's 1919 census indicated 3,450 Puerto Rican residents, despite "difficulties" with the various contracts. The commissioner's 1921 annual report revealed that 300 workers returned to Puerto Rico at their own expense, less than 100 were repatriated by the company, and another 300 workers remained in Cuba, where "their situation is unknown." A letter, written to Santiago Iglesias and intended for publication in Puerto Rico's newspapers, contended that working conditions were "detestable" and that oppressive conditions were enforced by the Guardia Rural.⁵⁵ Puerto Ricans had also settled in the U.S. Virgin Islands, with 3,000 living in St. Croix and another 700 to 800 in St. Thomas. Although a few Puerto Ricans had settled in St. Croix by 1917, when sovereignty passed from Denmark to the United States, most had gone in 1927, seeking work in sugar cane and often traveling as families. Others had ventured farther, settling in Latin American countries. Estimates suggested that 500 Puerto Ricans lived in Mexico City alone and that between 200 and 300 Puerto Ricans lived in Venezuela. In Brazil, 40 Puerto Ricans protested in 1946 over concerns about citizenship status. Senior speculated that Puerto Ricans resided in the majority of Latin American countries.⁵⁶

Policymakers increasingly promoted supposedly "voluntary" migration, seeking ways to facilitate migration without the direct involvement of the government. In 1927, the Labor Bureau called for the United States to supply low-cost transportation on marine transports and for Puerto Rico's legislature to provide authority for the bureau to establish relations with similar departments in the States.⁵⁷ Two years later, the bureau reported that it knew of no organized or contracted migration, but that an estimated 7,000 migrants had made their way to New York City.⁵⁸ In 1930, the bureau's annual report again called for the U.S. government to facilitate transportation, but this time for youth who had acquired an education to go to Central and South American countries.⁵⁹

In promoting both "organized" and "voluntary" migration, policymakers sought to select migrants' destinations. Arguing that similarities in "climate" would facilitate migrants' adjustment, the chief of the Bureau of Insular Affairs explained, "I have favored the movement along the same parallel of latitude and felt that in Santo Domingo there would be none of the radical changes that Porto Ricans would meet in coming to the United States." The "many difficulties in the way of using Porto Ricans in the United States" included "change in surroundings, in climate, and conditions of language."⁶⁰ A similar principle was applied in the initial migration to the States, as migrants "were to be sent to such States of the Union as are farthest south, where the climate and general conditions are more similar to those under which they have been accustomed to live and work."⁶¹

Puerto Rican migrants, however, invoked different meanings in "climate" than policymakers. Economic opportunities were paramount. As the United States restricted European immigration, low-wage jobs became more readily available, and Puerto Ricans filled many of the vacancies. Puerto Ricans also sought to limit the harsh "climate" created by the dominant society, sometimes by migrating elsewhere and sometimes by building communities. Living in the presence of family and friends, as well as within the contours of Puerto Rican communities, offered certain benefits. While labor recruitment brought Puerto Ricans to a wide range of destinations, local conditions influenced where Puerto Rican communities took root, and where networks of family and friends would foster their growth.

In the interwar period, most Puerto Ricans settled in New York City and a vibrant community emerged. Jesús Colón came to New York City in 1917, as part of a network of tobacco workers and socialists,

reminiscent of the pre-1898 tobacco workers and political exiles (see Chapter 3). As historian Ruth Glasser demonstrates, musicians and veterans were also among the migrants to New York City, and the two groups were not mutually exclusive. Puerto Rico's musicians were predominantly working class and made ends meet by combining musical and other employments. Following the U.S. occupation in 1898, they were affected by the resultant economic dislocations in agriculture and of artisans, as well as by the fact that "virtually no aspect of music making on the island was unaffected by the U.S. political and economic presence." The U.S. takeover of Puerto Rico's music industry paralleled that in other sectors of the economy. Many working-class musicians "opted for migration to New York as a strategy for survival," as New York was not only the largest Puerto Rican settlement but also "the hub of the entertainment industry for the world's population." With the onslaught of World War I and their newly bestowed U.S. citizenship, Puerto Rican musicians found themselves recruited for African American regimental bands. After being trained in racially segregated camps, many served in the 369th Infantry Band. These men were "among the pioneers who introduced jazz to France" and "among the first Puerto Rican musicians to sojourn in the mainland United States."⁶²

The increased migration wrought by U.S. citizenship was visible as the Puerto Rican population grew from 1,513 to 11,811 between 1910 and 1920 (see Table 1-3). New York City was the largest single community with 7,364 residents, and Philadelphia was home to 319 Puerto Ricans. Hawai'i now followed New York City, and its Puerto Rican population had decreased to 2,581. California's community, on the other hand, had grown to 935, with 474 Puerto Ricans living in San Francisco and 101 in Oakland. Some were return migrants from Hawai'i. New England's Puerto Rican population grew beyond the few merchants of the earlier era, with 67 Puerto Ricans living in Boston, and with 25 in Bridgeport and 11 in New Haven, Connecticut. Puerto Ricans had also settled in the Midwest, with 110 living in Chicago and 59 in Detroit.

Despite policymakers' emphasis on promoting destinations with similar climates, few communities took root in these regions. Only 177 Puerto Ricans lived in New Orleans, despite the 2,774 war workers who had been sent. The other southern states with war workers—Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina—also had relatively small populations of 111, 38, and 55, respectively. Similarly, the 1926 recruitment of more than 1,000 Puerto Ricans to Arizona resulted in a population increase from 31 to just 215 between 1920 and 1950. Tampa, Florida's

Puerto Rican population stood at 94. Still, the Puerto Rican presence was dispersed. With the exception of Nevada, in 1920 each state counted at least a couple of Puerto Ricans residents.

While labor recruitment and social networks brought Puerto Ricans to certain destinations, whether or not particular communities grew was also shaped by local conditions including employment opportunities, housing, and the newcomers' reception. Where they settled, Puerto Ricans turned to community activism to improve conditions. Community-building efforts were clearly evident in Hawai'i, New York City, and Philadelphia (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4). In California, two organizations came together in defense of a Puerto Rican youth accused of murder in 1925. Working on a ship from New York to San Francisco, twenty-year-old Primitivo Rodríguez, was repeatedly harassed by fellow worker Charles Stevens. When Stevens saw Rodríguez speaking Spanish to a colleague, he "beat him without mercy." The blow that Rodríguez later delivered to Stevens's head killed him. The two organizations raised funds, provided a defense attorney, and the outcome was Rodríguez's acquittal.⁶³ The case suggests something of the hostilities Puerto Ricans encountered, as well as their responses. After all, U.S. citizenship did not resolve the status of Puerto Rico or of Puerto Ricans in the States. Puerto Ricans continued to migrate as a "colonial people" and were still perceived as "foreigners" and people of color. In other words, as Muñoz Rivera had feared with the passage of the Jones Act, Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship was sometimes only a second-class citizenship, in the States as well as in Puerto Rico.

Contracts and Contacts: World War II to 1970

The peak period of migration and the first airborne migration began with the end of World War II. Puerto Ricans boarded the twin-engine planes, many of them army surplus planes, for the six-hour trip from San Juan to New York City (see Figure 1-3). Despite the increased magnitude of the migration and the newness of air travel, the key dynamics of migration paralleled those of the earlier periods. Political and economic ties between the United States and Puerto Rico continued to shape Puerto Rico's economy, even as policymakers and U.S. investors shifted their focus from agriculture to industrialization. Economic change was rapid, as agriculture declined in rural areas. Displaced workers migrated to Puerto Rico's urban areas in search of manufacturing jobs, while others made their way to the States. Rather than confronting the underlying

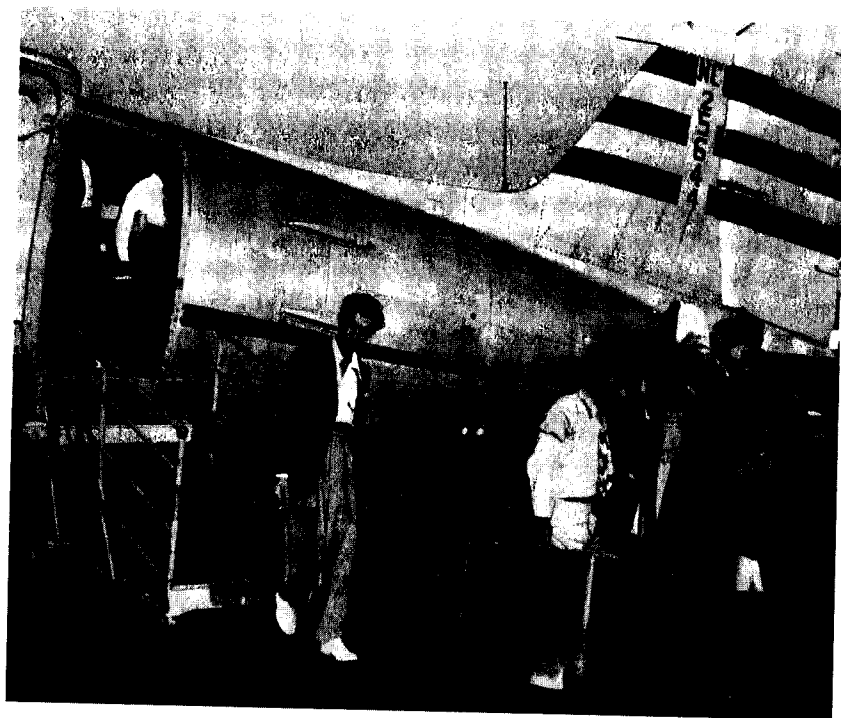


FIGURE 1-3. By Plane: Puerto Rican Workers Arrive, Philadelphia, 1947. After World War II, Puerto Ricans became the first airborne migration, as migrants increasingly came to the States via airplane instead of by ship. Workers, like those pictured here, were often transported in cargo planes—note the absence of windows. These workers came with labor contracts for domestic work for women and canning jobs for men. Other Puerto Rican passengers came on the new commercial airlines, especially American Airlines and Pan American Airlines. (Temple University Libraries, Urban Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.)

causes of unemployment, policymakers again pointed to “overpopulation” as the root cause of Puerto Rico’s economic woes. They aggressively promoted colonization and contract labor plans, and added the sterilization of Puerto Rican women to their arsenal of population control measures. At the same time, U.S. employers continued to recruit Puerto Ricans as low-wage workers for certain sectors of the economy, first through private agencies and then through government-sponsored contract labor programs. Puerto Rico’s policymakers hoped contract labor would reduce Puerto Rico’s population and encourage migrants to settle in areas outside of New York City. Puerto Ricans, displaced by economic change, migrated in search of work, relying on labor contracts,

and on networks of family and friends. As a result, the Puerto Rican population grew from fewer than 70,000 in 1940 to 810,000 Puerto Rican migrants and another 581,000 mainland-born Puerto Ricans by 1970 (see Table 1-2). By 1970, just 59 percent of Puerto Ricans lived in New York City, as Puerto Rican communities grew throughout the Mid-Atlantic, the Midwest, and New England.

In the postwar era, Puerto Rico's political status was modified for the first time since 1917. In 1947, the U.S. Congress passed legislation allowing Puerto Ricans to elect their governor for the first time. The U.S. Congress then authorized Puerto Rico to adopt a Constitution that would be approved by the U.S. Congress and the people of Puerto Rico. As a result, Puerto Rico became the *Estado Libre Asociado* or Commonwealth in 1952. Yet Puerto Rico remained neither a state nor an independent nation. Puerto Rico became self-governing on internal matters within the parameters established by federal legislation, while the United States retained authority over the military, the federal judiciary, and foreign affairs. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico still could not vote in national elections and had no voting representation in the U.S. Congress. They were exempt from federal income taxes but subject to military conscription. Puerto Rico's status has been debated in Puerto Rico, the United States, and the United Nations.

This political modification left the door wide open for U.S. investors. U.S. and Puerto Rico policymakers promoted the industrialization of Puerto Rico with U.S. capital. A key component of the industrialization program, known as *Manos a la Obra* or Operation Bootstrap, was "industrialization by invitation." Tax exemptions, along with low wages, were to attract U.S. investors to Puerto Rico. U.S. investors in Puerto Rico were already exempt from federal taxes under the Jones Act, and in 1947 Puerto Rico's legislature added additional exemptions, creating a nearly complete tax-exempt status. Puerto Rico's policymakers offered U.S. investors tax exemption, freedom from import duties, advisory and technical assistance, and rental subsidies on buildings constructed by Fomento, Puerto Rico's Economic Development Administration. In addition, wages for workers were lower in Puerto Rico than in the United States, as U.S. minimum wages were not applied in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico's ruling political party, the *Partido Popular Democratico* (Popular Democratic Party), under the leadership of Governor Luis Muñoz Marín, promoted the industrialization of Puerto Rico, while the island's agricultural economies collapsed.

Even as U.S. investors went to Puerto Rico to reap the profits from tax exemptions and lower wages, the industrialization program failed to replace the jobs lost in agriculture, agricultural processing, and the home needlework industry. As Dietz notes, "This transformation from an agricultural economy was compressed into less than twenty-five years, from the late 1940s to 1970—one of the more rapid industrial revolutions." During the 1950s, employment in Puerto Rico decreased. The industries that came to Puerto Rico were labor-intensive industries, like the garment industry, which relied on the low-wage labor of women. New jobs were concentrated in urban areas, while rural areas were devastated. Workers were displaced in the wake of these economic transformations (see Chapter 7). "There was a weakness in the development program," as Dietz observes, "Just when the most rapid growth of GNP was occurring, unemployment levels were rising and a growing number of people were migrating to the mainland in search of work."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Puerto Rico was held up as a "showcase" and as a model of industrialization via export processing that the United States and international financial agencies would promote and other countries would follow in the years to come.

Despite this dramatic economic change and displacement, policymakers continued to define Puerto Rico's problem as "overpopulation." In 1947, Senior warned, "The situation is so desperate, however, that emigration must be included in [any] well-rounded program for attacking overpopulation. It must be pushed intensively, with enthusiasm, initiative and imagination, but also with balanced judgment." He assessed the opportunities for colonization in Latin American countries, especially the Dominican Republic and Venezuela. Policymakers were encouraged by the Dominican Republic's lower population density and by the government's promotion of the settlement of as many as 100,000 European refugees. Although he seemed unconcerned by lower wages in agriculture, Senior conceded, "Economic factors must be supplemented with at least a hasty survey of the political situation Freedoms of speech, press and assembly are non-existent. The only political parties are controlled by the dictator." The most significant obstacle, however, was racial policy, "Any Puerto Rican government recruiting emigrants for the Dominican Republic would undoubtedly be embarrassed and justifiably so, by being forced to discriminate against the sizeable Negro minority of citizens of the island. Negroes are barred from the Republic, except those who are allowed to enter temporarily as seasonal day-laborers on sugar plantations." Nor was the Dominican

Republic alone, as, "Almost universally either discriminatory taxes or absolute prohibitions face the Negro." Senior acknowledged that all of Venezuela's previous efforts at colonization had failed. Still, he deemed all of the causes "remediable," and concluded, "The prospects sound good," even though Venezuela was one of the countries that "bar Negroes."⁶⁵

Despite colonization schemes, the exodus continued toward the States, and policymakers promoted this exodus. Puerto Rico and U.S. policymakers expanded contract labor programs and government involvement in them. During World War II, the War Manpower Commission (WMC), an agency of the federal government, recruited about 3,000 workers. Initially, skilled workers, 1,030, were sent in small groups. Recruitment soon shifted and another 2,000 unskilled workers were placed, most with two canneries in southern New Jersey, or with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Two hundred workers were sent to the copper mines of Bingham, Utah. Labor recruitment facilitated migration and settlement. Senior's 1946 survey revealed that 53 percent of war workers had returned to Puerto Rico and the rest had remained in the States, with 35 percent having their families with them.

Workers, facing poor working and living conditions, proved willing to migrate again in search of better conditions than those offered by their initial placement. In the railroad camps, reports of poor conditions surfaced quickly, along with reports that 250 out of 1,038 workers had become "deserters" within a few weeks. In Ohio, 55 workers left the Newton Falls camp, and 14 of 55 workers left Struthers. War workers had been widely dispersed, working in twenty states. Half had been in New York City and nearby towns, 16 percent in New Jersey, 8 percent in Ohio, and 6 percent each in California and Utah. By the time of Senior's survey, however, 73 percent lived in New York City, with Philadelphia the second city of choice, and New Jersey the second state.⁶⁶ Workers, who had been placed in the southern New Jersey canneries, stayed and contributed to the growth of Puerto Rican communities in Camden, New Jersey, and in nearby Philadelphia (see Chapter 4).

Although its officially stated position was that it "neither encourages nor discourages migration," the government promoted contract labor programs. In 1947, Puerto Rico's legislature established, within the Department of Labor, the Bureau of Employment and Migration, which became the Migration Division in 1951. Clarence Senior was the director of the national office, located in New York City. In addition to reducing the population, policymakers hoped that contract labor

programs would foster more dispersed settlement. As historian Michael Lapp argues, policymakers worried about Puerto Ricans' concentration in New York City and "the possibility that massive and uncontrolled migration would sour the spirit of cooperation and good feeling that was developing between Puerto Rico and the United States." Linking development strategies and migration, they were aware that "American investment and tourism were so important to the island's development strategy" and feared that "increasing hostility toward Puerto Ricans on the mainland could only hinder such efforts." So, the Migration Division issued "publicity in Puerto Rico announcing the greater supply of jobs in the Midwest" and promoted the farm labor program as part of its "strategy of dispersing migrants outside of the New York City region."⁶⁷

Indeed, writing in 1954, Senior acknowledged, "The tendency toward dispersion is encouraged and facilitated by the Commonwealth." He claimed success: "When we find Puerto Ricans in substantial clusters far from New York City we almost invariably find that either private or governmental organization has been responsible." Given the restrictions placed on private agencies in 1947, Senior added that "recent group placements" had been of the governmental variety. Aware of the interactions between contract laborers and social networks, he explained, "Once the individual is established he looks for opportunities to bring his family and his relatives and friends." Policymakers no longer promoted migration to the southern states, however, where legal segregation conflicted with the labor contracts' stipulation that "the Employee shall not be subject to discrimination in employment, housing facilities or any other regard because of race, color, creed, membership in or activity on behalf of any labor organization."⁶⁸

With these goals in mind, policymakers actively promoted contract labor programs. Explicitly tying contract labor programs to their population control efforts, the first program sent women of childbearing age to work as domestics. Although private labor recruiters led the way, sending women to Chicago (see Chapter 6) and Philadelphia, Puerto Rico's policymakers assumed control, establishing domestic training centers and arranging placements in collaboration with the U.S. Employment Service. Highlighting their goals of dispersion, the first group was sent to Scarsdale, New York. This program was short-lived, however, as the numbers of placements were relatively low, and women seemed to prefer the manufacturing jobs that were available in some U.S. cities. Puerto Rican women were labor migrants in the postwar era.

They were displaced by the economic changes devastating rural areas, as many had worked on subsistence farms, as well as in the tobacco-processing and home needlework industries. They were recruited as a source of low-wage workers. Working-class Puerto Rican women migrated in search of work, through contract labor programs for domestics and through social networks, as they helped each other migrate and find jobs, especially in the garment industry in places like New York City and Philadelphia.⁶⁹

Policymakers turned their attention to men, hoping for contracts for industrial and agricultural jobs. In 1947, workers were sent to Lorain, Ohio, and employed by the National Tube Company, a division of United States Steel (see Chapter 7). The initial "success story" fostered other placements in industrial jobs in the Midwest. In Gary, Indiana, U.S. Steel housed workers in "Pullman City," railroad sleeper cars placed on company property for this purpose. After a short stay in Pullman City, many chose to find their own housing in the city.⁷⁰ Labor contracts most often recruit workers for the least desirable jobs, and contracted Puerto Rican workers proved no exception. As a result, the largest and the longest government-sponsored contract labor program was for seasonal farmworkers. During the 1950s and 1960s, between 10,000 and 17,000 contracted farmworkers came to the States each year.

Contracted workers sometimes stayed at the end of their contracts, settled where they had been recruited or elsewhere, and sent for family and friends. The interactions of contract labor programs and social networks fostered the rapid growth and increased dispersion of Puerto Rican communities between 1950 and 1970 (see Table 1-3). Where preexisting Puerto Rican populations were small, contract labor programs were critical in initiating migration and sparking subsequent social networks. This was particularly true for the Midwest. Chicago's Puerto Rican community grew from 2,555 to 79,582 between 1950 and 1970 (see Table 1-4). As Toro-Morn suggests, labor recruitment of Puerto Rican women and men provided the foundation for Chicago's Puerto Rican community, which then grew through social networks (see Chapter 6). Likewise, Rivera exposes the roots of Lorain, Ohio's Puerto Rican community in labor recruitment for the steel industry and the subsequent social networks (see Chapter 7).

The farm labor program initially had its greatest impact on New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Here, contracts brought migrants to areas where preexisting Puerto Rican communities were nearby.

TABLE 1-4. Puerto Ricans' Residence, Selected Cities, 1950-2000

	1950	1970	2000
United States: Total	301,375	1,391,463	3,406,178
New York, NY	245,880	817,712	789,172
Chicago, IL	2,555	79,582	113,055
Philadelphia, PA	1,910	26,948	91,527
Newark, NJ	545	27,663	39,650
Jersey City, NJ	655	16,325	29,777
Paterson, NJ	—	12,036	24,013
Los Angeles, CA	—	10,116	13,427
Bridgeport, CT	590	10,048	32,177
Hoboken, NJ	—	10,047	4,660
Hartford, CT	—	8,631	39,586
Cleveland, OH	—	8,104	25,385
Boston, MA	—	7,335	27,442
Miami, FL	—	6,835	10,257
Lorain, OH	—	6,031	10,536
San Francisco, CA	—	5,037	3,758
Dover, NJ	—	—	2,413
Springfield, MA	—	—	35,251
Camden, NJ	—	—	23,051
Rochester, NY	—	—	21,897
Tampa, FL	—	—	17,527

Note: Figures are for Puerto Rican birth and parentage. Cities are in order of 1970 population.

Sources: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Puerto Ricans in the Continental United States: An Uncertain Future* (Washington, DC: GPO, October 1976), 23; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, *2000 Census of Population and Housing*, Table DP-1, Profile of General Demographic Characteristics.

Farmworkers settled throughout New Jersey, in smaller communities, such as Dover (see Chapter 5) and Vineland, as well as in the cities. The state became home to the second largest Puerto Rican population, surpassing California. In Pennsylvania, fewer farmworkers settled throughout the state, gravitating instead to Philadelphia, where they settled along with contract workers recruited to nearby southern New Jersey canneries and farms (see Chapter 4). Philadelphia became the third largest Puerto Rican community, following New York City and Chicago. During the 1960s, increasing numbers of farmworkers were sent to Connecticut and Massachusetts, and communities grew that originally had just small numbers of merchant settlers (see Chapters 8 and 9).

The formula, however, was not a simple one, and workers did not always settle where they had been recruited. In 1950, farmworkers were recruited to Michigan, where conditions were harsh. Leaving the farms,

Puerto Ricans headed for Detroit, the nearest city, but still a journey that took three days walking. The close to 500 men who settled in the city sent for family and friends, and a generation later, Detroit's Puerto Rican community was estimated at 10,000.⁷¹ Michigan's farmworkers had also made their way to Chicago, and to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where they found work in the foundries and tanneries. Pleased employers encouraged workers to come from Lorain, and worked with the Migration Division to recruit additional workers.⁷² Nor did communities flourish everywhere that contracts took workers. Despite the recruitment of war workers, for example, Utah's Puerto Rican population remained small, numbering 220 in 1950 and 378 in 1970.

In the postwar era, urban economies provided jobs, enabling contract workers to settle, and fostered social networks that brought migrants directly to cities without the use of labor contracts. In New York City and Philadelphia, Puerto Rican women found jobs primarily in the garment industry and other light manufacturing. Men found some manufacturing jobs, and many worked in the services sector, especially in restaurants and hotels. Puerto Ricans migrated to Dover, New Jersey, when fellow migrants told them about jobs in the iron mines and in factories (see Chapter 5). With a sense that jobs were easy to get, workers made their way to Connecticut to work in foundries, munitions factories, poultry processing, textile and garment factories, metal plating, and other industries, as well as in the services sector (see Chapter 8). Manufacturing jobs brought Puerto Ricans to Boston, while women also found work as domestics and in the service sector, especially hotels (see Chapter 9). Puerto Ricans found jobs readily available and became concentrated in particular sectors of the economy. Yet many of the jobs available were at the bottom rungs of the economic ladder—jobs that were dangerous, unpleasant, and low paid. As jobs in the secondary sector, they offered little stability and few opportunities for advancement.

While the growth of communities in the cities of the Northeast and the Midwest were most visible, Puerto Ricans were settling in smaller cities and towns, especially within these regions. Although New York City remained by far the largest community in the state, 6,090 Puerto Ricans settled in Buffalo and 5,916 in Rochester by 1970. In New Jersey, smaller communities took root, like Dover in northern and Vineland in southern New Jersey. The steel industry brought Puerto Ricans to Allentown and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In the Midwest, Puerto Ricans settled not only in Chicago, but also in places like Lorain, Ohio, and Gary, Indiana. Here too, the steel industry was central to

settlement. Communities were dispersed throughout Connecticut, and in Massachusetts, farmworkers settled in Waltham, as well as in several smaller communities in the western part of the state. Other communities, such as California and Florida, did not grow as rapidly, especially compared to the relative size of their earlier communities. Still, Los Angeles' Puerto Rican population reached more than 10,000 by 1970. Louisiana did not attract new migrants, with just 715 persons born in Puerto Rico in 1950, and just 1,645 in 1970.

Although labor recruitment increased in the postwar era, the welcome given to Puerto Ricans remained ambivalent at best. For some in the United States, Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship created "problems" as it eased migration and made Puerto Ricans eligible for public services and to vote. In 1947, *Life* magazine's photographic essay revealed attitudes and foreshadowed mounting concerns. It announced, "Puerto Rican Migrants Jam New York City." The photograph depicted one man, with an airplane looming in the background, "As he stands at the airport in his Sunday suit and takes his first bewildered look at America, the Puerto Rican above is the envy of his countrymen." Revealing the ambiguities surrounding Puerto Ricans' citizenship, the journalist's use of the term "America" implied that Puerto Rico was not part of America, and "countrymen" implied a country other than the United States. Noting that "generations of ruthless exploitation of the land for the sake of one crop, sugar" had "reduced the Puerto Rican economy to beggary," the article failed to connect Puerto Rico's economic woes to U.S. investment or policies or even to mention the political ties between the United States and Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans were, he added, "as much American citizens as the residents of Hawai'i or Alaska," intimating that they were perhaps not as much citizens as were New Yorkers. This one migrant was part of the "flood tide," as other photographs depicted a crowded airplane, a travel agency that "caters to Puerto Ricans now in the city who want their relatives to join them," a street scene where "Puerto Ricans swarm around a sidewalk general store," and a crowded "home relief office." It was as citizens, the article continued, that Puerto Ricans complicated "an already critical housing and relief situation" and could vote for East Harlem's "pro-Communist" representative, Vito Marcantonio.⁷³ In the postwar era, scholars and policymakers also focused their attention on New York City and on the "problems" that Puerto Ricans were assumed to cause. Yet while attention was riveted on New York City, Puerto Ricans were settling in other communities as well. As the chapters in this book demonstrate,

Puerto Ricans in other communities confronted similar challenges and responded with an array of community-building initiatives.

Two-Way Migrations: 1970 to 2000

Two-way patterns characterized Puerto Rican migration between 1970 and 2000. During the 1970s, migration slowed considerably and larger numbers of Puerto Ricans, living in the States, returned to Puerto Rico. During the 1980s and 1990s, migration increased again, but retained its two-way patterns. Still, in each decade there was net emigration, as more Puerto Ricans came to the States than returned to Puerto Rico (see Table 1-1). During these decades, the U.S. economy experienced recessions, sharp economic fluctuations, and economic restructuring. Puerto Rico's economic dependence on the United States, the result of continuing political and economic ties, meant that economic recessions in the United States had a devastating impact Puerto Rico's economy. As a result, Puerto Ricans confronted difficult economic conditions in Puerto Rico and in the States. While U.S. citizenship enabled displaced Puerto Ricans to search for work in Puerto Rico or the States, they increasingly confronted fewer opportunities in both locales. Migration continued, others returned to Puerto Rico, and still others came to the States for shorter periods, participating in what some have referred to as "circular migration."⁷⁴ Puerto Ricans also looked beyond previous areas of settlement, continuing the trend toward ever more dispersed settlement. By the 2000 census, just 23 percent of Puerto Ricans lived in New York City (see Table 1-2).

Policymakers continued programs to industrialize Puerto Rico through U.S. investment and export production. In the mid-1960s, policymakers shifted the target of their industrialization programs, while leaving these underlying dynamics in place. Policymakers turned from labor-intensive industries, like the garment industry, to capital-intensive industries, especially petrochemicals. Policymakers envisioned refineries that would process imported petroleum and spin off a number of related industries. Instead, oil prices spiked in 1973, setting off a recession that would last over a decade. Closed oil refineries stood as ghost towns, and unemployment almost doubled between 1972 and 1976. Policymakers responded with renewed tax exemptions for U.S. firms, written into section 936 of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1976. The act allowed subsidiaries of U.S. companies to repatriate their profits without paying federal taxes, provided that the funds were first

deposited in Puerto Rico for a minimum of six months. Puerto Rico's economic dependence now more directly encompassed financial services as well. In 1977, policymakers shifted their focus again, this time to recruiting high-technology manufactures, such as electronics, scientific instruments, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.⁷⁵

Yet Puerto Rico was losing its comparative advantage as a profitable site for U.S. industries looking for cheap labor. The federal minimum wage was instituted in Puerto Rico beginning in 1974 and wages rose. At the same time, the United States and international financial institutions promoted Puerto Rico's "model" of economic development, increasing competition with other countries. The Caribbean Basin Initiative in 1983 and other free-trade initiatives reduced tariffs and taxes, making other countries more like Puerto Rico. Other countries, however, offered greater profits to U.S. corporations through lower wages for workers. In search of cheap labor and higher profits, U.S. corporations increasingly relocated to these other countries. Plant closings took their toll in Puerto Rico. With a U.S. economic recession in 1982, 282 plants operating under the industrial incentives program closed. More than 13,000 jobs were lost, and unemployment reached 22 percent in 1986. While the U.S. economy rebounded from the recession only to slow down again between 1991 and 1993, in Puerto Rico recovery remained elusive.⁷⁶

Despite policymakers' industrialization program, manufacturing still did not provide enough jobs. Between 1950 and 1990, manufacturing fluctuated slightly, employing between 17 and 21 percent of workers. Agricultural employment, on the other hand, plummeted from 35 to just 4 percent of workers. Overall, blue-collar occupations, especially farmworkers, household workers, and machine operators, declined. White-collar occupations, especially in trade, service, and government sectors, increased, but not enough to offset unemployment. While income rose, as a result of more white-collar and capital-intensive manufacturing jobs, income inequality rose, too. Puerto Rico's unequal distribution of wealth paralleled that of developing countries.⁷⁷

As a result, many Puerto Ricans faced persistent unemployment and poverty. In 1990, a staggering 57 percent of Puerto Ricans lived in families with incomes below the poverty line. Unemployment rose during the 1970s and 1980s, reaching 19 and 22 percent for men and women, respectively, by 1990. In rural areas, unemployment reached as high as 38 percent. As with the earlier phase of Operation Bootstrap, rural economies were devastated and existing employment was concentrated

in urban areas. Puerto Rico's urban population grew from 44 to 72 percent between 1960 and 1990, as people migrated in search of jobs, which remained insufficient. The extension of the federal food stamps program to Puerto Rico in 1975 and the subsequent Nutritional Assistance Program helped some households make ends meet.⁷⁸

During the 1970s, Puerto Ricans confronted economic crisis in many communities in the States, as well as in Puerto Rico. Here, too, it was blue-collar workers who were particularly hard hit. Economic restructuring in urban areas in the Northeast and the Midwest displaced Puerto Rican workers. As industries left for lower-wage areas, jobs disappeared. Puerto Rican women were concentrated in the garment industry, which was the first to relocate. In cities, such as New York City and Philadelphia, working-class Puerto Ricans were ill equipped for the white-collar jobs that came to characterize the cities' economies. Unemployment and poverty increased in the inner cities, as Puerto Ricans were pushed out of the labor market or found remaining jobs in a downgraded manufacturing sector or in low-wage service jobs.⁷⁹ Similarly, in Chicago, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos "went from bad to worse as they moved from low-wage manufacturing jobs to lower wage, lower promising jobs in the restructuring economy." As John Betancur argues, "Economic restructuring extended, and indeed, reinforced the role of Latinos in the Chicago economy as low-wage, dominated workers."⁸⁰ Puerto Ricans throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts, as well as in smaller communities like Dover, New Jersey, also experienced the negative consequences of the decline in manufacturing and the growth of a services economy (see Chapters 5, 8, and 9).

Displaced, Puerto Ricans increasingly returned to Puerto Rico, despite the economic crisis there. Return migration peaked during the 1970s. Over 137,000 Puerto Ricans returned between 1975 and 1980, compared to just 34,000 between 1955 and 1960. Another 80,000 returned between 1985 and 1990. There was, according to Francisco Rivera-Batiz and Carlos Santiago, a "predominance of blue-collar workers among the return migrants," especially machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors. These return migrants did not fare well in Puerto Rico's economy, as they were more likely to be unemployed than their counterparts who had remained in Puerto Rico.⁸¹ Blue-collar workers were caught between difficult circumstances in the States and Puerto Rico. Employment opportunities in Puerto Rico had not expanded sufficiently to provide jobs for return migrants, nor for those who had remained in Puerto Rico.

As Puerto Ricans continued their search for jobs, mobility rates were even higher during the 1980s. Emigration increased from 65,817 during the 1970s to 116,571 during the 1980s (see Table 1-1). Two-way patterns persisted as 432,744 people migrated to the States, while 316,172 people were in-migrants to Puerto Rico during the decade. Of those coming to Puerto Rico, half were return migrants, born in Puerto Rico, and another third were persons born in the United States of Puerto Rican parentage. The rest came from the Dominican Republic and other countries, or from the United States without Puerto Rican parentage. Another 130,335 were considered circular migrants, those who had moved to the States for at least six months, but had come back to Puerto Rico. By 1990, almost one out of ten Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico had come from the States during the 1980s.⁸²

For some, the States still appeared to offer better opportunities. Indeed, the gaps in wages and unemployment between the United States and Puerto Rico increased during the 1980s. By 1990, Puerto Rican men working in New York City earned 2.8 times their counterparts in Puerto Rico, and women earned 2.4 times their counterparts. While unemployment in some parts of the States dropped to 5 percent, unemployment in Puerto Rico was about 20 percent. Again, Rivera-Batiz and Santiago found that blue-collar workers were overrepresented among emigrants in terms of occupations and that emigrants were a cross-section of the overall population in Puerto Rico in terms of educational levels. This was not the "brain drain," or the exodus of professional and technical workers that some feared, even as engineers and physicians figured prominently among the migrants.⁸³

Migrating in search of work, Puerto Ricans looked beyond the major urban areas in the Northeast and the Midwest, where so many had settled between 1950 and 1970. These were, after all, the areas most affected by economic restructuring. Puerto Ricans living in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Newark declined from 52 to 41 percent of Puerto Ricans living in the States during the 1980s. In New York City, 86,687 more Puerto Ricans left the city than had entered it, as the city received just 26,000 new migrants. Those leaving went mostly to Puerto Rico, 39 percent, and to elsewhere in New York State, 17 percent. Another 14 percent went to Florida, and 9 percent to New Jersey. Although Puerto Ricans remained concentrated within the Northeast, with 68 percent of Puerto Ricans living in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut in 1990, those states with the largest concentrations of Puerto Ricans, including Illinois, now

had the slowest rates of growth. With the exception of Philadelphia, large cities seemed to lose their appeal. Puerto Ricans increasingly settled in smaller cities, including Bridgeport, Hartford, and Waterbury, Connecticut; Springfield and Lawrence, Massachusetts; and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Massachusetts and Connecticut's Puerto Rican populations grew, at 8 and 5 percent, respectively.⁸⁴

Puerto Ricans turned their attention toward the Southeast and the West during the 1980s. Indeed, the Puerto Rican population grew fastest, by 10 percent, in Florida, and by 7 percent in Texas. The newcomers were from Puerto Rico and from other regions. Increased dispersion was accompanied by high rates of residential mobility. Half of all Puerto Ricans living in the States moved between March 1985 and March 1990, a figure that included migrants from Puerto Rico, as well as those who moved within the States. Of those moving, nearly a quarter went to California, Florida, and Texas. As an estimated 12,000 professionals migrated from Puerto Rico, about a third went to Florida and Texas. Settlement in Florida was scattered, as Miami and Tampa accounted for just 7 percent of the state's Puerto Rican population.⁸⁵

The 2000 census confirmed the fundamental reorientation of Puerto Rican settlement in the States.⁸⁶ Large cities in the Mid-Atlantic and the Midwest, which had drawn so many Puerto Ricans during the peak period of migration, no longer attracted the majority of migrants (see Table 1-3). For the first time, New York City's Puerto Rican population declined, and by 2000 less than a quarter of Puerto Ricans living in the States resided in the city (see Table 1-2). The exception was Philadelphia, where the population grew. However, in Pennsylvania and other states, the Puerto Rican population grew more rapidly in smaller cities, continuing the trend of the 1980s. Massachusetts and Connecticut's Puerto Rican populations surpassed those of the midwestern states of Illinois and Ohio. Boston's population grew but not as dramatically as that in smaller cities. In Connecticut, which had no major metropolitan area comparable to New York City, Chicago, or Philadelphia, Puerto Ricans continued to settle in the five largest cities, but increasingly settled in smaller, formerly industrial towns (see Chapter 8). As manufacturing employment declined in the cities where they had settled during the 1950s and 1960s and as jobs remained few and far between in Puerto Rico, working-class migrants might have constituted the new settlement in the smaller cities. Unfortunately, employment opportunities were not abundant in what were sometimes already economically depressed areas.

It was Florida, however, where the Puerto Rican population increased most dramatically, as it became the state with the second largest Puerto Rican population. The growth of Florida, as well as California's Puerto Rican communities, harkened back to the early days of Puerto Rican migration to the States. Louisiana experienced no such revival. Texas, on the other hand, represented a new phenomenon, as the Puerto Rican population grew to 69,504 and surpassed Ohio (see Table 1-3). Settlement in Florida and Texas seems to have included more middle-class and professional Puerto Rican migrants. In these areas, settlement has been more scattered throughout the states and economic progress has exceeded that for Puerto Ricans in the Northeast and the Midwest. Yet the middle class and professionals were among the migrants to Chicago and Boston as well, creating more economically diverse Puerto Rican communities (see Chapters 6 and 9).

In 1976, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights highlighted the persistent ambiguities of Puerto Ricans' status. For the Commission, Puerto Rican migration was "unique" as "The United States has never before had a large migration of citizens from offshore, distinct in culture and language and also facing the problem of color prejudice." Emphasizing both Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship and the racism Puerto Ricans confronted, the Commission noted that upon arriving, Puerto Ricans found that "some of their fellow citizens viewed these differences, along with the matter of color, as more important than their citizenship or their hopes." The colonial relationship played a role, "It might be said that much of the indifference and insensitivity characterizing United States-Puerto Rico relations has carried over into the relations between the majority group and Puerto Ricans on the mainland." Obstacles were created in employment and education. Pointing to the failure of government programs aimed at eliminating poverty, the Commission added, "Official insensitivity, coupled with private and public acts of discrimination, has assured that Puerto Ricans often are the last in line for the benefits and opportunities made available by the social and civil rights legislation of the last decade." The result was that after thirty years of significant migration and the coming of age of the second generation, Puerto Ricans remained "mired in poverty" and "the economic situation of the mainland Puerto Ricans has worsened over the last decade." While the Commission deemed it "an uncertain future" for Puerto Ricans, it observed, "Puerto Ricans ask that they be given an opportunity to participate on an equal footing with their fellow citizens of the fruits and benefits of our society," and concluded, "This effort to develop

institutions identified as Puerto Rican and offering needed services is one of the more hopeful signs for the community."⁸⁷ Indeed, throughout the communities of the Puerto Rican diaspora, and throughout the chapters of this book, Puerto Ricans' community-building efforts and political activism have been as persistent as the ambiguities surrounding their status and the challenges they have confronted.

Conclusion

Puerto Ricans have a long history of migration to the United States. For most of that history, Puerto Ricans have migrated within the context of the colonial relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. These continuing political and economic ties, as well as U.S. citizenship, have shaped the formation of Puerto Rican communities. U.S. government policies and U.S. investments have had a direct impact on Puerto Rico's economy, often displacing workers and creating the conditions for emigration. U.S. citizenship and the resultant absence of immigration barriers have facilitated both contract labor programs and social networks. For U.S. employers, U.S. citizenship fostered the recruitment of Puerto Ricans as low-wage workers, at the same time that it removed the threat of deportation, an important component of programs designed to recruit foreign workers and assure their acquiescence in wages and working conditions. Colonialism has also generated a political status that is ambiguous for Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico, and attitudes that often create a second-class citizenship for Puerto Ricans living in the States. Despite their U.S. citizenship and government-sponsored labor recruitment, Puerto Ricans have not always been accepted as full and equal citizens in the communities where they have settled.

Colonialism and citizenship have also shaped Puerto Ricans' community-building efforts and politics. Puerto Ricans did not passively accept unemployment and poverty, horrendous working conditions, or second-class status. They migrated to improve their lives, and they migrated again if circumstances compelled it. Puerto Ricans came, not just as workers, but also as family and community members. Arriving without and later with U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans confronted a number of challenges as they settled in the States. Where they settled, Puerto Ricans sought to adjust to and mold their new surroundings to meet their needs, as well as to improve conditions for themselves and others. They relied on social networks, the celebration of cultural traditions, involvement in existing community institutions, the building of

their own community organizations, and political activism. They used their U.S. citizenship to claim the rights that should have been theirs. At the same time, the continued migration that stemmed from colonialism and citizenship kept the connections between Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico and those living in the States strong. These connections had cultural and political dimensions. Many Puerto Ricans promoted an adaptation to U.S. society based on bilingualism and biculturalism. For many, Puerto Rican politics in the States remain shaped by activism surrounding the still unresolved political status of Puerto Rico. The chapters in this book explore the challenges, the responses, and the contested identities that Puerto Ricans experienced and crafted in the various communities they built and called home.