

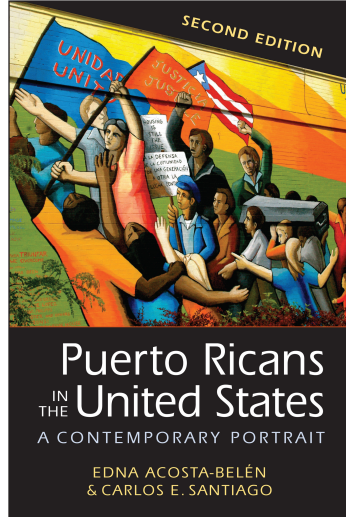
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the United States:  
A Contemporary Portrait

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Edna Acosta-Belén  
and Carlos E. Santiago

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1800 30th Street, Suite 314  
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telephone 303.444.6684  
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# 1

## Puerto Rico: An Island at a Critical Crossroads

The opening chapter of our book—in essence the framework for our comprehensive historical account of Puerto Rican migration and presence in US society and our analysis of the commuting circuit that, after many generations, keeps island and stateside Puerto Ricans interconnected through cultural, family, and personal relationships—has been unexpectedly shaped by the life-changing events of Hurricane Maria (September 20, 2017) and its aftermath. The landscape of widespread destruction and desolation left by the hurricane magnify in almost indescribable ways the island’s decade-long debt crisis and current fiscal insolvency. Most Puerto Ricans would agree that at no other time in their modern history have they faced the critical predicaments and challenges they now confront. Nor have their current precarious state of affairs and relationship with the United States garnered as much sustained US national media coverage as in 2016 and 2017 (see Chapter 5).

Basic facts about Puerto Rico were not widely known among the US population until recently. The island has been an unincorporated colonial territory of the United States since it was ceded by Spain in the aftermath of the Spanish-Cuban-American War of 1898, and since 1917 island Puerto Ricans have been US citizens.<sup>1</sup> On September 26, 2017, nearly a week after Hurricane Maria struck the island, the *New York Times* reported that a Morning Consult poll of 2,200 people showed that only 54 percent of Americans knew that Puerto Ricans born in the Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, known in English as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, are fellow US citizens. The extensive media coverage of the devastating nature of the island’s current conditions and struggles has, at least partially, brought to an end more than a century of Puerto Rico’s virtual invisibility in US public discourse and national consciousness. Discussions surrounding Puerto Rico’s long-standing debt and more recent hurricane-created

humanitarian crisis, along with its prospects for reconstruction and recovery, will be kept alive from here on by virtue of its being a nation of US citizens with a growing stateside diasporic population (which is larger than the island's), expanding its electoral presence and political and economic power in several US cities and states. These sobering realities make it harder for Congress and the current administration and its federal agencies to completely ignore Puerto Rico's most immediate needs. Nonetheless, US agencies and government officials' halfhearted initial hurricane emergency relief efforts and the absence so far of a clear fiscal commitment from the US Congress to the island's long-term recovery from widespread destruction and economic collapse only confirm for many Puerto Ricans their unequal treatment as US citizens and further expose the limitations of the island's subordinate colonial status. The traumatic circumstances created by the overlapping crises also have brought Puerto Ricans to a critical crossroads in dealing with the powerlessness and dependency inherent in their colonial condition. Due to Puerto Rico's decline in strategic military importance to the United States since the 1970s and, in more recent decades, its gradual loss of its status as a tax haven and source of low-wage labor to attract US industries, prompting many of these companies to leave the island, federal funding is no longer a priority and thus a lot less forthcoming than it was in the past.

Having to adjust, at least for the time being, to a less dependable relationship with the United States, Puerto Ricans are realizing that they must embrace a more pivotal role as self-reliant active agents in the rebuilding and renewal of their homeland. Central to achieving this particular goal is envisioning a sustainable path to forge ahead that is based, first and foremost, on providing the citizens of Puerto Rico with basic services, opportunities, and protections under a democratic government that strives to improve their present and future well-being and also safeguards the island's environment and natural resources, rather than on solutions and demands imposed by US officials, debt holders, disaster predators, or other external interests. In many different ways, numerous island and stateside voices are rising to the challenge by calling on the creative imagination and drive of island and stateside Puerto Ricans to join in dealing with the multiple challenges of what appears to be, up to this point, a rugged path to an "uncertain" future (see Chapters 5 and 9).

### **Migration and Its Repeating Cycles**

Migration, a process that remains a central aspect of the island's normal course of life, is even more important in the present, considering the precarious socioeconomic conditions Puerto Rico faces and its low prospects for any swift or sustained recovery. The magnitude of different waves and



cycles of migration to the United States is closely related to the specific socioeconomic and political conditions in Puerto Rico at different historical periods but also connected to its subordinate colonial condition and the enduring US stranglehold on the island's economy. Since the mid-twentieth century, the island's economy has become more integrated into the US economy and, therefore, highly dependent on its priorities and policies, susceptible to its fluctuations, and more intensely affected by its downturns. The continuing migration from Puerto Rico to the continental United States and the rising levels of the massive population exodus of recent decades—markedly accelerating after Hurricane Maria—are only comparable to those of the mid-twentieth-century Great Migration (mid-1940s to 1960s; see Chapters 4 and 5). The expanding range of geographic dispersion of Puerto Ricans to locations throughout the United States and the frequent back-and-forth displacements between the island and stateside communities allow one to see these mass movements and dislocations as defining the contemporary portrait of a diasporic nation of commuters and nomads.

Use of the often-contested term “diaspora” to refer to the deterritorialized communities of Puerto Ricans in the United States—an outcome of their colonial condition and US citizenship—offers a good example of the multiple connotations and boundaries of the word. Deviating from its former conventional usage, the widely used term is now more reflective of contemporary transnational migration practices. In our globalized world, the label is continuously applied in the present to almost “any formation of dispersion from a place” (Dufoix 2008, 2). It has been used numerous times in previous and contemporary scholarship on Puerto Ricans. The consciousness and proliferation of diasporic identities in our global societies, configured by the intersecting relationships among the homeland left behind, the host country, and carved nonterritorial spaces (Golubov 2011), give the actual term its own discursive sense of dispersion.

A cursory statistical portrait of the formation and evolution of the stateside Puerto Rican diaspora based only on census data immediately delineates the magnitude and significance of more than a century of sustained Puerto Rican migration and expanding presence in the United States. In the decennial US census of 2010, the US Puerto Rican population stood at 4.6 million, at the time a figure almost a million higher than that of Puerto Rico's 3.7 million residents. Five years later, the most recent data collected and made available by the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) estimate that the stateside Puerto Rican population has surged to 5.4 million, while Puerto Rico's population has declined to around 3.4 million. Thus, currently there are almost 2 million more Puerto Ricans living stateside than on the island. This significant increase in the US Puerto Rican population and concomitant decrease in Puerto Rico's population during the course of the new millennium is mostly attributed to migration and, to a lesser degree,

declining birthrates on the island due to an aging population (see Chapters 4 and 5; Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).

Unquestionably, migration has been a fundamental aspect of Puerto Rican life since shortly after the United States invaded the island in 1898 as a result of the Spanish-Cuban-American War, a conflict that brought an end to over 400 years of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas and turned Puerto Ricans into US colonial subjects. Puerto Rican migration to the United States, however, did not show a pattern of sustained growth until the second decade of the twentieth century. Back in 1910, the US census only registered a total stateside Puerto Rican population of slightly over 1,500 people, but by 1920, the number had increased to 11,811, a figure that by 1930 was over five times larger, totaling 52,774 people (see Table 4.3).<sup>2</sup> Net out-migration from the island slowed down during the Great Depression years, amounting to only around 18,000 Puerto Ricans coming to the United States in the 1930s. The levels of out-migration increased dramatically in the 1940s, however, most notably after the conclusion of World War II, when the total number of migrants reached 151,000. Migration grew again in the 1950s, with a peak figure of 470,000 migrants during that particular decade. With these levels of migration, by 1960 the total stateside Puerto Rican population had reached 892,513 people, more than twice what it had been in 1950. It took until the late 1960s for net migration to experience a downward trend, with only 214,000 new migrants coming to the United States—still a considerable figure—before showing a more striking decline in the 1970s, surging once again in the 1980s and 1990s, and doing so even more dramatically in the twenty-first century (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2, Figure 4.1, and Chapter 5).

During the major decades of the postwar Puerto Rican Great Migration (mid-1940s to 1960s), an unprecedented number of island residents left to seek better employment opportunities and pursue the possibility of a more prosperous life in the United States, settling primarily in New York City and other cities in the Northeast and Midwest (see Table 4.2). Puerto Ricans became the first and largest airborne influx of migrants of a single nationality to the United States, and a great deal was written at the time about the impact of this still unmatched “invasion” on New York City (see Handlin 1959).

Despite the continuity of Puerto Rican migration since those years, researchers could not anticipate that in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, mass migration from Puerto Rico would occupy, once again, center stage and reach levels currently approaching those of the mid-twentieth-century Great Migration. In this study, we refer to the current migration cycle as the New Millennium Migration—also referred to by demographer Mario Marazzi-Santiago as the Second Great Migration or Second Great Exodus from Puerto Rico (see Acevedo 2016).<sup>3</sup>

The current wave of new migration comes at a time when the United States is dealing with the highly contested issue of immigration control—

enveloped by divisive xenophobic, racist, misogynist, and anti-LGBTQ hatred that fuels the fears and bigotry of the approximate third of the mostly white US population that constitutes the Donald Trump administration's "base" of support. The continued inflammatory rhetoric comes from an administration intent on deporting many of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants (mostly Mexicans and other Latinos/as) currently living and working inside the United States (López and Radford 2017)—including those known as the Dreamers, who had been protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program—and on banning the entrance into the country of Muslims from several targeted nations. The alarming intrusion of racist and anti-immigrant sentiments into the public discourse of various government officials, media pundits, and white supremacists is threatening the foundations of the nation's Constitution and democratic system and weakening the global standing of the United States as a free and open society.

Given their decreed status as US citizens, Puerto Ricans, however, are not immigrants; rather, they are migrants who do not need visas to reside or work in the United States. But regardless of their US citizenship, their stateside condition as an ethnic and racial minority exposes them, along with other Latinos/as, to experiences of racism, discrimination, and socioeconomic inequalities deeply embedded in US society. This has been so ever since the Puerto Rican migrant pioneers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries first arrived in pursuit of freedom or the American dream of socioeconomic prosperity and mobility (see Chapter 3).

Today, about 69 percent of the stateside Puerto Rican population is US born, an indication of the several generations who grew up and forged their lives in this nation. Increasingly, their long-standing historical presence in US society is being unveiled and documented. Yet knowledge about the histories of Puerto Ricans and most of the other non-Anglo populations—namely, those of color—is still overwhelmingly inadequate in most mainstream historical narratives of the nation or in the public consciousness of the majority population. Island Puerto Ricans tend to fare better in this regard, in part because of the vigorous transnational connections that persist between island and stateside Puerto Rican communities and the multiple endeavors of scholars, writers, artists, musicians, politicians, and those engaged in the worlds of business, finance, and trade who navigate and bridge both shores, in addition to the numerous families, relatives, and friends of those who migrate. Overall, new generations of island Puerto Ricans in particular are increasingly more informed about the history and experiences of their fellow compatriots of the diaspora than they were half a century ago.

Because of the long history and experience of migration of Puerto Ricans and the declining socioeconomic conditions in Puerto Rico since the last few decades of the twentieth century, which took a turn for the worse

in the first two decades of the new millennium, large-scale migration is, once again, a pivotal factor in the lives and survival struggles of Puerto Ricans. The high levels of migration are mainly the result of over a decade of negative economic growth and escalating debt accumulation that plunged the island into the previously mentioned fiscal crisis that began a decade ago and has led to Puerto Rico's current portrayal as an island "adrift in debt" (Brown et al. 2017).

In turn, the high levels of migration and rapid decline of the island's population during the course of the new millennium are contributing to a serious decrease in the island's tax revenues, forcing the government to enact vast budgetary cuts in key areas during the last few years, such as civil service employment, education, health services, and the upkeep of the country's infrastructure. These conditions are also having a notable impact on the exodus of many Puerto Rican professionals and members of the middle class, along with larger numbers of lower-income citizens. Although the loss of many professionals does not yet represent a "brain drain" (see Chapter 5), it is, for instance, already affecting the island's pool of available physicians in certain areas of expertise, as well as of science, technology, engineering, and math specialists and teachers. The migration impact is also being felt in those US cities and states that have become preferred destinations for large numbers of Puerto Rican migrants (see Tables 4.4–4.7, Figures 4.2–4.4, and Chapters 4 and 5), particularly by those institutions and agencies that offer a variety of support services to the stateside communities. In some areas, it is also adding to overcrowded urban public schools, increasing a need for bilingual teachers, and reducing the availability of low-cost housing and health services for new migrants. Most recent data show that migration from Puerto Rico is moving at a faster pace in the 2010s and reaching levels that will likely surpass those of the mid-twentieth-century Great Migration.

What, therefore, are some of the key conditions that account for an unabated migratory process unleashed over the course of the island's 120-year colonial relationship with the United States? Throughout this book we address the evolving nature of Puerto Rican migration by examining past and present circumstances and government policies that, at various historical moments, brought waves of Puerto Ricans to the US colonial metropole. Setting aside the specific socioeconomic or political conditions and government-sponsored migration policies, Puerto Ricans' limited control of their territory, economy, trade, and other government affairs by definition facilitates migration. These conditions also provide the fundamental framework for our comprehensive analysis of the factors that historically have contributed to migration and, at different times, have compelled island Puerto Ricans to uproot themselves in mass numbers. In what he calls state "sponsored migration" policies that gave impetus to the post-World War II Great Migration, Edgardo Meléndez (2017) cogently argues, "Puerto Rican migration to

the United States must be understood as a colonial migration—that is, a migration of U.S. citizens coming from a colonial (unincorporated) territory of the United States” (10). Thus the colonial realities make the particular migration circumstances and experiences of Puerto Ricans comparatively different from those of other US Latinos/as, despite many other similarities and conditions that both immigrants and migrants of multiracial backgrounds confront in US society.

From the beginning of colonial rule, US officials clearly proclaimed that the inhabitants of the island they called “Porto Rico” (its official name was changed from the onset and remained so until 1932; see illustrations in Chapter 3) were to be instructed in the art of democratic self-government under “the advantages and blessings of enlightened civilization” and the benevolent guidance of the United States.<sup>4</sup> The condescending nature of this initial proclamation by the imperial power set the boundaries of its relationship with its new colonial subjects and revealed the nature of the discourses that would reinforce its domination of them. Soon after the invasion, numerous photographic books written by US journalists, researchers, travelers, and public officials about Puerto Rico and the other invaded “insular possessions” were published. These publications were the first to introduce an American public to the conquered colonial subjects to be blessed with “enlightened civilization.”<sup>5</sup> The cumulative effect of recycled multiple visual and textual colonial discourses was that they propagated and reinforced what were deemed to be the essentialized traits and attributes for constructing the subordinate “otherness” of Puerto Rico and its people (Thompson 1995; G. García 2000). Thompson’s critical analysis of these books in *Imperial Archipelago* (2010) underscores that it is those “representations, comprised of symbols, meanings, and propositions that create subject peoples and justify imperial rule over them” (3). Those early constructions of Puerto Rican subordinate “otherness” resurface repeatedly in most matters and issues that pertain to past and present relationships and interactions between Puerto Rico and the United States. In fact, similar representations have been used in the past to describe the populations of all US colonial subjects and those of other western European imperial powers.

After the US takeover, the island’s civil government was placed in the hands of a series of US-appointed governors and cabinet members—a situation that lasted for almost five decades—restricting the political power and participation of Puerto Ricans in managing their own affairs. Through the early years of the US regime, the governor and members of his Executive Council were all US-appointed officials. Island Puerto Ricans were only able to elect representatives to a legislative House of Delegates.

Puerto Ricans were endowed with US citizenship by the Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917 (generally known as the Jones Act). According to Venator-Santiago (2017), this citizenship was based on a form of parental

*blood right* that was later transformed into a *birthright* citizenship by the Nationality Act of 1940, available to island Puerto Ricans born after 1941; he also argues that “today, being born in Puerto Rico is tantamount to being born in the United States” (13).<sup>6</sup> Although the factual basis behind this statement is correct, it does not prevent island Puerto Ricans from being treated as “second-class citizens”; nor does it spare stateside Puerto Ricans from experiencing racial and ethnic discrimination and unequal treatment.

A second Jones Act, until recently less known to many Puerto Ricans, specifically refers to the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, which defines the federal cabotage laws that regulate commerce between US ports. This Jones Act requires Puerto Rico to use US-flagged ships and US sailors to transport all island exported and imported goods. Because of the trade limitations imposed by the act, island Puerto Ricans end up paying about 20 percent more for these imported products than other consumers pay in the continental US market. The island is also restricted from engaging in trade with foreign countries without explicit US approval. For a nation that imports about 85 percent of its consumer products from the United States, maintaining the archaic Jones Act is both very profitable for US shipping companies and very costly for Puerto Rico’s residents.<sup>7</sup>

The aforementioned Jones Act is only one way in which being US citizens did not accord island Puerto Ricans the same “inalienable rights” and equal treatment afforded to stateside citizens under the US Constitution. After the US citizenship decree, Puerto Ricans were able to also have a bicameral legislative system composed of a newly added elective Senate, and the existing House of Delegates became the current House of Representatives. Nevertheless, their representation in the US Congress was still restricted to an island-elected nonvoting resident commissioner, a position created in 1904 that continues to limit any effective congressional representation of island Puerto Ricans.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, island Puerto Ricans are not allowed to vote in US presidential elections.<sup>9</sup> They are, however, exempt from paying federal income taxes, although they make federal contributions to programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and other applicable areas of federal taxation.

Shortly after the implementation of a US civil government on the island under the Foraker Act of 1900, two years after the invasion, Puerto Rico’s colonial status quandary was further complicated by several federal court decisions, known as the Insular Cases.<sup>10</sup> Some of these legal challenges regarding the status of US territories acquired in the aftermath of the Spanish-Cuban-American War and the inhabitants of the new “island possessions” (i.e., Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam)—now the stateless citizens of US territories—reached the US Supreme Court. In *Downes v. Bidwell* (1901), a closely divided Supreme Court ruled that the

islands seized by the United States from Spain in 1898 were “unincorporated territories,” not part of the United States, and their inhabitants therefore would not have the same constitutional protections provided to other US citizens unless they achieved incorporation. For Puerto Rico, this particular Supreme Court ruling sent a signal that Congress had no plans for incorporation that eventually would lead to statehood for the island, at least not in any foreseeable future. Thus, as an unincorporated territory, Puerto Rico was to be governed under the “plenary powers” of the US Congress. This was a different path from that taken by the territories in the Southwest United States annexed after the conclusion of the Mexican-American War (1846–1848), which became states of the union in subsequent decades. The *Downes v. Bidwell* ruling also stated that “in an international sense Porto Rico was not a foreign country, since it was owned by the United States, it was foreign to the United States in a domestic sense because the island had not been incorporated by the United States,” and it was merely “a possession” (quoted in Duffy Burnett and Marshall 2001, 13).<sup>11</sup> Torruella (2007) and other scholars (Trías Monge 1999a, 1999b; Cabán 1999; Duffy Burnett and Marshall 2001) agree that this was the most important case in establishing the constitutional limitations of Puerto Rico’s territorial status. A few years after *Downes v. Bidwell*, the Supreme Court ruled in another insular case (*Gonzales v. Williams*, 1904) that for immigration purposes, Puerto Ricans were not to be treated as “immigrant aliens” but rather placed under the ambiguous status of “noncitizen nationals.” In one of the most comprehensive historical retrospectives and analyses of these legal cases, Torruella (2007) characterizes them as establishing “a regime of political apartheid” and as “some of the most notable examples in the history of the Supreme Court in which its decisions interpreting the Constitution evidence an unabashed reflection of contemporaneous politics, rather than the pursuit of legal doctrine” (285); he concludes that “the present legitimacy of the *Insular Cases* is untenable” (286) and “can no longer be reconciled with a rule of law in which all citizens are entitled to equality” (287). Even after Congress made island Puerto Ricans US citizens in 1917, they were still treated as holders of a “separate and unequal” and thus “second-class” citizenship devoid of some of the equal protections afforded by the US Constitution to stateside US citizens. The decision in *Balzac v. People of Porto Rico* (1922) consented to this “unequal” treatment by ratifying the notion that some provisions in the US Constitution indeed did not apply to US “unincorporated” territories—meaning territories not part of the federal union of states. Consequently, the long-lasting legal consequences of the Insular Cases allow for the perpetuation of the subordinate colonial status of the US citizens of Puerto Rico (see Torruella 2007).

Ambiguity surrounds the US citizenship status of island Puerto Ricans and the enduring congressional control over the island’s land, economy,



financial institutions and currency (the US dollar), shipping and trade, military installations and forces on the island, social services programs, and federal courts, as well as which federal laws ultimately do or do not apply to Puerto Rico. This means that despite Puerto Rico's professed autonomy or self-government, the federal courts and the US Congress can easily overrule the authority of its island-elected government.

Under the US regime, Puerto Rico's public school system was central to the implementation of colonialist Americanization policies that made English the primary language of instruction, a policy that was initially implemented in 1902 and lasted until 1947, along with a curriculum that hailed the virtues of American civilization, democracy, and exceptionalism, as well as the benevolent US role in introducing Puerto Ricans to these values (see Chapter 3). The Americanization process also diminished the importance of Puerto Rican historical, cultural, and racial legacies in an attempt to legitimize US colonial authority and curtail nationalist sentiments among Puerto Ricans or political claims for the island's independence (Negrón de Montilla 1971; Méndez 1980; del Moral 2013). Protestant missionaries also made their way to the primarily Catholic island to spread their gospel, another step in the process of immersing Puerto Ricans in white Anglo-Protestant values and ways of life (Silva Gotay 1997).

As US citizens, island Puerto Ricans are also subject to military service in the US armed forces. For many decades, up to the Korean War, Puerto Rican servicemen were assigned to segregated units—an experience also shared by African American and Mexican American soldiers. Over a century later, the 65th Infantry Regiment, also known as the Borinqueneers, was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal in 2016 in recognition of its members' service to the US armed forces and their courage and sacrifices in combat.<sup>12</sup> Many Puerto Ricans were drafted into or volunteered to join the military during World War I (1914–1918). Since the United States did not enter this conflict until 1917, in the past some scholars have argued that the main motivation for Congress's decision to extend US citizenship to Puerto Ricans was the inclusion of the military draft in the Jones-Shafroth Act. However, more recently, other scholars have contended that it was rather an attempt to convey some sense of “US permanence in Puerto Rico” by solidifying US control of the island and strengthening its “bond” with Puerto Ricans (Venator-Santiago and Meléndez 2017) or that granting US citizenship was also aimed at maintaining the “socio-political stability” of an island territory that was of strategic military value to the United States (Franqui-Rivera 2017). Setting aside the various motivations of US officials and island political leaders in supporting the citizenship decree, Edgardo Meléndez (2013) has shown that US citizenship for island Puerto Ricans was envisioned by Congress as “colonial citizenship,” since it maintained the “alien exclusion” status endorsed in the Insular Cases that excluded



them from the same US citizenship rights afforded to citizens of the fifty states of the union under the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution. Notwithstanding, whether through compulsory or volunteer military service, Puerto Ricans have served in the US armed forces since World War I through all subsequent wars waged by the United States.

The extensive militarization of Puerto Rico reflected the United States' territorial control and the island's strategic military importance to expansionist efforts in consolidating US hegemony in the Caribbean and the rest of the hemisphere. This military presence began with the US invasion but grew considerably during the World War II years (1939–1945) (Rodríguez Beruff 1988; Estades Font 1988). The numerous US military installations built throughout an island with a territory of 3,500 square miles included bases in the adjacent smaller island municipalities of Vieques and Culebra, which are part of Puerto Rico's archipelago. This massive buildup started a few years before the United States finally entered World War II in 1941, after the Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii. The military expansion involved all branches of the US armed forces and made Puerto Rico the most strategic territory in the United States' expanding sphere of power and long history of military interventions in the Americas (see Rodríguez Beruff 1988; Rodríguez Beruff and Bolívar Fresneda 2015; Estades Font 1988). Needless to say, for most of the twentieth century the value of the island as a post to protect US geopolitical interests in the hemisphere was immeasurable. But as early as 1973, the US military started a cycle of closing or relocating most of Puerto Rico's military installations, with the closing of Ramey Air Force Base in Aguadilla and Culebra's naval base a year later. After the US Navy's withdrawal from Vieques in 2003 and the closing of Roosevelt Roads, the remaining and largest military naval installation on the island, it became clear that Puerto Rico's key strategic military role in the Americas had ended.<sup>13</sup>

Paradoxically, the significant post–World War II population exodus from Puerto Rico that came to be known as the Great Migration happened at a time when the island was experiencing a heavy influx of US capital investment to support a widely hailed export-led industrialization and modernization project. Both US and island political leaders viewed this economic overhaul, which rapidly transformed Puerto Rico from a traditional agrarian into a modern industrial society, as a magic formula to deal with “a broken pledge” to what was, up to that point, a largely neglected colony (Diffie and Diffie 1931) or a “stricken island” (Tugwell 1947). After decades of US rule, the Puerto Rico of the 1930s and 1940s was still overrun with rampant unemployment, widespread poverty, malnutrition, disease, high levels of illiteracy, precarious living conditions, and what most government officials and policymakers diagnosed as an “overpopulation problem” that served to justify mass migration to the United States as well

as population-control policies that encouraged the mass sterilization of Puerto Rican women (see Chapter 3).

Almost half a century after the US invasion, US and Puerto Rican government officials were marketing the celebrated industrial development project—suitably named Operation Bootstrap (*Operación Manos a la Obra*, which means “putting hands to work”)—as an alternative democratic model for developing countries to achieve socioeconomic prosperity without resorting to socialist revolution, a path followed by neighboring Cuba in 1959. Hence, as a proclaimed “showcase of democracy,” Puerto Rico could not escape being ensnared in the regional and hemispheric Cold War geopolitics of the time (Underhill 1961).

From the 1940s to the 1960s, an array of US capital investors and manufacturing industries descended upon Puerto Rico, mostly driven by the availability of low-wage labor and generous tax-exemption incentives for new industries granted by the island’s government. Under this massive industrial development project Puerto Rico became one of the first global models of capitalist development based on the considerable levels of outsourcing of US manufacturing production for export. In this particular case, however, the chosen nation also happened to be an unincorporated territory of the United States.

The industrial free trade zones (*zonas libres*) created by Puerto Rico’s Operation Bootstrap were precursors to the numerous export processing zones that decades later swelled in numerous Latin American and Asian countries. Ironically, the promise of industrial development and modernization for Puerto Rico gradually devastated its agricultural economic base, then dominated by sugar production controlled by absentee US sugar trusts and members of the island’s landowning elite (Ayala and Bernabe 2007). This dramatic shift in Puerto Rico’s economy displaced massive numbers of already impoverished workers living in rural areas and small towns. Migration from rural to more urbanized areas of the island and also to the United States turned into a government tool to deal with rampant unemployment and a socioeconomically disenfranchised population, despite the occasional public disclaimer from Puerto Rico’s government that it was “neither encouraging or discouraging” migration. However, Meléndez (2017) examines and documents the multiple ways in which the island government did play an extensive role in formulating and implementing the policies and planning strategies that impelled the Great Migration. The establishment of Migration Division Offices in San Juan, New York, and other US cities under the jurisdiction of the US Department of Labor facilitated this management of mass migration (Meléndez 2017; Cabán 2005). The most significant socioeconomic and political changes on the island that propelled the Great Migration will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

## A Changing Portrait in the New Millennium

This revised and expanded second edition of *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait* introduces a fresh and updated analysis of the current status of the stateside Puerto Rican population. Along with this new introductory chapter (Chapter 1), Chapters 5 and 9 are also new for this second edition. The remaining chapters have been updated to discuss new scholarship, cultural and artistic creativity, and institution building endeavors that bring more recent perspectives and enhance our understanding of the changing realities of stateside Puerto Ricans.

As in the previous edition, this inquiry into the origins and evolution of the Puerto Rican diaspora is connected to prevailing conditions and socioeconomic and political processes in Puerto Rico that drive mass migration. It therefore entails a partial revisiting of the island's colonial relationship with the United States: subordinate ties that began in 1898 and endure. Our multiple analyses incorporate the most recent available data from the US census and other sources to provide a comprehensive portrait of what is currently the second-largest group among US Latinos/as. We also pay attention to the historical and cultural legacies stateside Puerto Ricans have forged as US citizens and as part of a wider population of Latinos/as and other people of color. With an estimated total population of 55.4 million (US Bureau of the Census 2014), US Latinos/as are currently the largest minority group, and stateside Puerto Ricans represent 9.5 percent of that total (5.4 million). Among all US Latinos/as in individual states, Puerto Ricans are also the largest single nationality in the states of Connecticut (55.7 percent), Pennsylvania (50.6 percent), Massachusetts (42.2 percent), New York (29.9 percent), and New Jersey (27.1 percent). They also are closing the gap in the state of Florida (21 percent), where Cubans still outnumber them (29.1 percent) (Hinojosa and Vargas-Ramos 2017).

In order to expand our understanding of the main factors that draw Puerto Ricans to specific geographic areas within the United States, we examine the historical formation and contours of some of the larger communities that are part of the Puerto Rican diaspora. We focus on the changing migration and settlement patterns of Puerto Ricans and their physical mobility to an expanding and more diverse array of US cities, states, and regions (Chapters 4 and 5). Additionally, we provide a socioeconomic and educational profile of the latest waves of migrants compared to those of prior generations (Chapter 6). As a whole, this study addresses the conditions and challenges Puerto Ricans face as they continue to leave their homeland in their quest for better employment possibilities and socioeconomic mobility in old and new geographic destinations and in pursuing the prospects of building what most migrants perceive to be a more promising way of life in US society.

Since the mid-twentieth-century Great Migration, researchers have portrayed Puerto Ricans as “a commuter nation” (Torre, Rodríguez Vecchini,

and Burgos 1994) or “a nation on the move” (Duany 2002), characterizations that stem mainly from their back-and-forth migration patterns between the island and the United States. Others have mentioned their “revolving door” or “circular” migration patterns. The metaphor of a *guagua aérea* (airbus or flying bus), introduced in an essay by Luis Rafael Sánchez (1994), one of Puerto Rico’s most prominent writers, came to represent the ease with which large numbers of Puerto Ricans routinely board a plane to cross the ocean that separates the island from the continental United States. The idiomatic phrase *brincar el charco* (literally, to jump over the puddle) was coined in popular lore to refer to the continuity and, by now, almost habitual nature of the constant and enduring experience of migration among Puerto Ricans. Bearing in mind their most recent patterns of internal migration and relocation within and throughout the United States and the incessant influx of new migrants from the island, Puerto Ricans are now also viewed as “nomads,” a term that both captures and illustrates their considerable degree of physical mobility from place to place and the nature of the geographic diffusion and patterns of settlement that now characterize their diasporic experiences (see Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014, 2017; Hinojosa and Vargas-Ramos 2017).

The current decline in Puerto Rico’s population, mostly driven by the startling levels of mass migration during the early decades of the new millennium, should not detract from recognition of the presence of several generations of Puerto Ricans born or raised in the United States. These individuals, for the most part, tend to see the United States as their permanent home. In 2015, US-born Puerto Ricans represented about 69 percent of the total stateside Puerto Rican population. Consequently, for several generations, they have been contributing to the US economy with their labor and as taxpayers, consumers, and voters. Many are still striving to overcome poverty and improve their underprivileged socioeconomic and educational profile, but there has been notable progress in these areas; their collective status also has improved compared to the 1970s (see Chapter 6). As part of an expanding US population of color, Puerto Ricans confront similar experiences of racism, segregation, and socioeconomic inequalities shared by other groups included in this category. Widespread racial mixing is present in Puerto Rican history, an outcome of the violent encounters prompted by the Spanish conquest and colonization of the island that decimated the indigenous Tainos and replaced their forced labor with that of enslaved Africans (see Chapter 2). Hence, Puerto Rican culture evolved from the amalgamation of these three populations during the Spanish colonial period, which also accounts for the wide range of racial mixture and spectrum of skin colors among Puerto Ricans.

Following in the footsteps of Puerto Rican migrant pioneers who arrived in the United States in small numbers in the second half of the nineteenth

century and early decades of the twentieth—and grappled with economic survival, discrimination, exclusion, and unequal treatment—new generations of stateside Puerto Ricans continue to face these challenges, build their legacies of survival, and make enduring contributions to the United States. They have actively engaged in the battles for social, political, and civil rights, fighting for equality and the empowerment of their communities, and created their own institutions and organizations to advance those goals. Equally resilient is their lasting and vibrant creative spirit, which now enriches US cultural and artistic life. These are some significant ways in which Puerto Ricans have become an integral part of the intricate mosaic of productive and engaged colonial migrants and immigrants of all races, colors, and origins that for many centuries have inhabited the vast territory that is today the United States. Although high levels of poverty, racial discrimination, and unequal treatment still curtail their social mobility in some states and regions, collectively their socioeconomic indicators have improved since the 1970s (see Chapter 6).

Puerto Ricans have solidified their presence and upheld their identities among the industrious medley of settlers and newcomers who continue to weave the social and cultural fabric of this nation. This book gives proper recognition to their multiple endeavors in becoming part of US society and offers an up-to-date comprehensive portrait of a productive and lasting historical record of labor output, civic and community activism, institution building, and cultural and artistic expression. In general, prevailing disparaging assessments and preconceptions about underprivileged and disempowered communities of color ingrained in the white Anglo-American mainstream often tend to draw more attention than Puerto Ricans' legacies and invaluable contributions.

Strong and mutually beneficial transnational ties between island and stateside Puerto Ricans increasingly have made these two communities more interdependent. The vitality of these connections and interchanges is expected to persist and become even more visible in the future as the stateside Puerto Rican population continues to grow in significant numbers. As of 2015, there were almost 2 million more Puerto Ricans living in the United States than in Puerto Rico, and a consistent pattern of population growth within the diaspora was evident throughout most of the twentieth century and continues at a faster pace in the new millennium. By implication, one can anticipate that political participation and representation of stateside Puerto Ricans also will continue to grow in the US Congress and at state and local levels—especially in those cities with the largest concentrations of Puerto Ricans (e.g., New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Springfield, Hartford, and Orlando). So far, relatively low voter turnout in US elections, as compared to those on the island, is hindering Puerto Rican political power (see J. Cruz 2017; Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014, 2017).

The lyrics of a classic Puerto Rican *plena* capture the significance and durability of the ties that bind *boricuas de la banda acá* (Puerto Ricans from this shore) and *boricuas de la banda allá* (Puerto Ricans from that other shore), bonds of solidarity that in some instances allow differences in political ideologies to be set aside on behalf of the common good.<sup>14</sup> These mutual expressions of solidarity have been nurtured and given continuity by past and present generations of Puerto Ricans. In more recent times, collaborations between *los de aquí y los de allá* (those from here and those from there—a reference to island and stateside Puerto Ricans) were quite evident on several fronts at different times. Periodically, the island government and press would come out in defense of Puerto Rican migrants, especially in cases of racism and discrimination, labor exploitation by US companies, abuse by the police or slumlords, school segregation in less-than-adequate city schools, vilification in public statements, and the trampling of civil rights. They were equally proud to acknowledge the accomplishments of their organizations, community leaders, writers, artists, and musicians. Notwithstanding, island Puerto Ricans were not exempt from replicating common stereotypes and negative appraisals about the conditions of poverty and other problems that afflicted the lives of stateside Puerto Ricans. In fact, until recent decades the history and contributions of the diaspora remained a neglected chapter in Puerto Rico's historiography and school textbooks, and there was a generalized lack of knowledge among island Puerto Ricans about the generations of Puerto Ricans who built their lives in the United States.

Since the late 1960s, there have been visible instances of the diaspora engaging in the campaigns to free Puerto Rican political prisoners—nationalists and other militant members of organizations working toward the island's liberation and incarcerated for decades in federal prisons. Stateside Puerto Ricans have done so by supporting organizations working on their release and participating in mass demonstrations and rallies. Both island and stateside Puerto Rican writers, artists, and musicians also have lent their creativity to the cause, along with students and other community activists. These joint campaigns to free prominent patriots such as Lolita Lebrón and other nationalists have continued for decades, including the most recent successful efforts for the release of Oscar López Rivera in 2017, and are fresh in the memory of Puerto Rican activists of the late 1960s and beyond.<sup>15</sup>

The Peace for Vieques solidarity movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s gave national visibility to the joining together of island and stateside Puerto Ricans from different social and political sectors in a common cause. For many decades, with the help of pro-independence sectors and grassroots activists and little support from Puerto Rico's government, the people of Vieques struggled to get the US Navy to cease bombing-training practices and withdraw from the small island municipality, before it finally

did so in 2003. The combined activism is manifesting, once again, in how Puerto Ricans from both shores are pressing the US Congress to provide the necessary assistance to allow Puerto Rico's government to deal more effectively with the island's current fiscal crisis and the widespread destruction and desolation left behind by Hurricane Maria. These high-profile contemporary issues show that island and stateside Puerto Ricans are ready to join forces around specific struggles that impact the lives of their compatriots. The fast-growing stateside Puerto Rican population is showing increased awareness of its realistic potential to expand its political power in supporting issues related to the welfare and advancement of its communities and also to persuade Congress and the administration to develop a comprehensive federal aid plan that facilitates the swift reconstruction of the island and that treats the US citizens of Puerto Rico in a similar way to those living in other stateside disaster areas.

In the early years of the US colonial regime in Puerto Rico, authorities began to use migration as a policy tool to deal with the widespread poverty and unemployment that afflicted the majority of the island's population. The new government played a central role in facilitating and managing labor migration to the United States and other overseas destinations—such as to the Hawaiian Islands, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba—places that attracted large US corporate investments during those years, mainly in the sugar and tobacco industries. It also became common practice for US-based companies to send their agents to the island to recruit Puerto Rican workers for employment in stateside farms, manufacturing industries, domestic work, and other service-sector jobs. These early practices foreshadowed the continuous use of migration as social policy in dealing with impoverished and unemployed island Puerto Ricans. The growth of organized labor on the island during the early decades of the twentieth century contributed to increased levels of activism and demands for better wages and other labor protections. It also fostered interconnections with unionized labor in the United States (especially the American Federation of Labor) and other international labor movements and their broad regional networks. These networks included labor organizations and workers from other Caribbean (most notably, Cuba) and Latin American countries, as well as western and eastern Europe. These transnational ties among workers were quite evident between island Puerto Rican workers, many of them anarchists or socialists, and those migrating to the United States (Quintero Rivera 1976a, 1976b, 1988; García and Quintero Rivera 1982; Shaffer 2013). Individual workers and labor groups and organizations from both sides nurtured these alliances and solidarity networks through active participation in international labor congresses and, with their subscriptions and donations, supported a radical labor press that circulated the articles, news items, creative literature, and letters that artisans and other workers contributed to these



Spanish-language newspapers (B. Vega 1977, 1984; García and Quintero Rivera 1982). In addition, since those early years, prominent island and stateside Puerto Ricans from the political, civic, labor, intellectual, cultural, and artistic sectors were drawn into many of the critical issues confronting their mutual communities (B. Vega 1977, 1984; Colón [1961] 1982; Sánchez Korrol [1983] 1994; Acosta-Belén and Sánchez Korrol 1993). Long-standing economic remittances from stateside Puerto Ricans to their families back on the island and the continuing cultural, artistic, and musical endeavors and exchanges between the two communities also have played a significant role in nurturing these vigorous transnational connections (Glasser 1995; Torruella Leval 1998).

It is within the context outlined above that we approach this interdisciplinary portrait of Puerto Ricans in the United States as a nation of commuters and nomads. Accessible low-cost air travel and innovative communication technologies facilitate back-and-forth transnational migration and make the relations between island and stateside Puerto Ricans more vital and mutually strategic than they were in the past.

Since the 1990s both stateside Puerto Ricans and new migrants from the island are showing persisting patterns of geographic mobility, settlement, and dispersal throughout the United States. The most recent demographic data illustrates the significant growth of the Puerto Rican population in a wider range of US cities, states, and regions. It also shows that large numbers of stateside Puerto Ricans are moving from some of the oldest urban centers of population concentration in the Northeast and Midwest to new urban areas and to smaller cities in the South (see Chapter 4).

### **About the Book's Scope and Contents**

This comprehensive introductory chapter is followed in Chapter 2 by an overview of the historical and cultural roots of the Puerto Rican people, with special emphasis on their colonial experience under both Spanish and US regimes. The chapter begins by summarizing the experiences of conquest and colonization of the Taino indigenous population after the Spanish first arrived on the island in 1493 and the racial, cultural, and linguistic legacies of this population for the historical formation of the Puerto Rican people. An indigenous culture devastated by conquest has nevertheless continued to influence and inspire the creative imagination of writers, artists, and researchers of past and present generations. The rapid loss of the aboriginal population impelled the transport of large numbers of enslaved Africans to the island. They replaced the vanishing indigenous labor in agricultural, mining, and domestic tasks during the first century of colonization and, in larger numbers, during the late eighteenth century and throughout a good portion of the nineteenth century, when they were



brought to the island to support the Spanish Crown's efforts to expand the colony's agricultural economy centered on sugar production. The vast array of their past and present contributions is being increasingly recognized since a new Puerto Rican historiography flourished in the 1970s and inspired new generations of scholars, writers, and artists to continue expanding knowledge about the vital but historically neglected Afro-Puerto Rican heritage (Baerga 2015; Rodríguez-Silva 2012; Géliga-Vargas 2011; Géliga-Vargas, Nazario, and Delgado Hernández 2007–2008; Godreau 2006, 2015; Jiménez Román and Flores 2010; Figueroa 2005; Scarano 1984; Sued-Badillo and López Cantos 1986; Valdés 2017; Zenón 1974, 1975). The violent encounter of these three culturally and racially different populations, two of them casualties of a rapacious Spanish colonizing enterprise, unleashed a process of racial, cultural, and linguistic mixture that led to the formation of the Puerto Rican people.

In succeeding chapters, we provide a framework for analyzing migration in terms of the dynamics of colonialism, capitalist development in Puerto Rico, the structural and political conditions that impel migration in a given period, and the social and political struggles that arose among different sectors of the island's population. Control of Puerto Rico's economy by North American capitalist interests intensified after the US occupation, bringing about new social and political antagonisms among colonial authorities, the creole and peninsular elites, and a Puerto Rican working class of peasants, artisans, and other workers. The landless majority of Puerto Rican laborers represented a low-cost and mobile workforce available to serve the employment needs of foreign and creole landowners; it had been so during the last century of the Spanish colonial period and continued as such for almost half a century of US rule. Under the new colonial regime, this workforce became a source of low-wage labor for US companies on the island and stateside. Moreover, for a large portion of the twentieth century, these companies actively recruited island laborers to work primarily in stateside agricultural fields, factories, and service jobs (History Task Force 1979; Edgardo Meléndez 2017).

Early migrations to the United States are the focus of Chapter 3. This chapter deals specifically with the pioneer settlements, or *colonias*, established in New York City and a few other US localities during the second half of the nineteenth century and first three decades of the twentieth. Migration continued to grow throughout the twentieth century, most markedly in the post-World War II decades (1950s–1960s), unleashing a process that is now central to Puerto Rican historical development.

The bulk of Chapters 4 and 5 are dedicated to a discussion of the historical, socioeconomic, and political factors that contributed to the various migratory waves to the United States, including a comparative analysis of different stages and patterns of migration. Chapter 4 focuses on the Great

Migration and the migratory trends that followed in subsequent decades. Contemporary patterns during the New Millennium Migration are the main focus of the newly added Chapter 5. A detailed analysis of this migration period accentuates the conditions contributing to the ongoing waves of large-scale migration from Puerto Rico and underscores the effects of the ongoing debt crisis and the new crisis created by Hurricane Maria in accelerating the pace and scale of migration. This chapter also examines patterns of settlement of both more recent island migrants and stateside Puerto Rican residents in a broader range of US geographic destinations, comparing and contrasting the current New Millennium Migration to the mid-twentieth-century Great Migration. An obvious population decline in Puerto Rico driven by an aging population, increasing death rates, lower fertility rates, and the current accelerated pace of the New Millennium Migration has given rise to “a demographic winter,” also discussed in this chapter.

A comprehensive demographic portrait of stateside Puerto Ricans is the main focus of Chapter 6. Data from the 2010 US decennial census, more recent ACS population report estimates for 2014 to 2017, and other reports provide the basis for assessing their current collective status. Relying on the most recent data and that from previous censuses, we analyze close to two decades’ worth (2000–2017) of changes in the overall status of Puerto Ricans in US society. Our comprehensive analysis emphasizes population increases, geographic settlement and dispersal, labor-force participation rates, income and education levels, and other socioeconomic indicators. We also examine some major differences in the demographic profile of stateside and island Puerto Ricans.

Chapter 7 provides a detailed account of the diaspora’s social, political, and educational struggles during the pivotal years of the US civil rights movement (1960s–1970s), inserting Puerto Ricans into a movement that is still largely identified with the African American population, despite the fact that Puerto Ricans, Chicanos/as, and Native Americans also were active participants in these struggles. The chapter offers a synopsis of the issues that mobilized stateside Puerto Ricans into collective action, as well as the emergence of vigorous and influential Puerto Rican community institutions and organizations of the Puerto Rican movement (Torres and Velázquez 1998) during the civil rights period and in subsequent decades, emphasizing their main goals and range of activities. Organizations and institutions that endured and those that emerged in more recent years illustrate the collective civic and political engagement and institution-building endeavors of stateside Puerto Ricans. They additionally reflect their multifaceted and continuous synergies in empowering their communities in their battles against unequal treatment and in striving for their socioeconomic, educational, and political advancement (see Meléndez 2005; Enck-Wanzer and Morales 2010; Young Lords Party and Abramson [1971] 2011; Acosta-Belén 2011–2012;

Wanzer-Serrano 2015; Morales 2016). The chapter also includes the work being done by numerous researchers to unveil and examine the history and legacies of other stateside communities. More recent scholarship shifts the New York focus of most previous research on Puerto Rican migration and the diaspora to other US cities and to groundbreaking studies that will encourage more comparative work on the different experiences and outcomes of living in other geographic locations.

The diaspora's creativity, manifested through literature, the visual arts, and music, is featured in Chapter 8. These individual and collective endeavors have contributed to build and expand distinctive Puerto Rican cultural legacies and traditions throughout the United States. The voices and images of many writers and artists represent another dimension of the contemporary portrait of US Puerto Rican life captured in this volume. In updating this chapter, we go beyond the creative expressions and cultural movements that dominated the period between the 1970s and 1990s to include those of the most recent generations. Observations about what lies ahead for Puerto Ricans in charting a course that transcends the current "crisis mode" of fiscal insolvency, the traumatic devastation left behind by Hurricane Maria, and a migration exodus that continues to grow in leaps and bounds are at the core of the concluding Chapter 9, which addresses some of the most pressing issues and challenges that lie ahead for both island and stateside Puerto Ricans.

## Notes

1. Some scholars have argued that when the United States invaded Cuba in 1898, sparking what is generally known as the Spanish-American War, there was already a war going on between the Spanish army and the Cuban rebels that had started in 1895. Thus the Spanish-Cuban-American War is a more accurate name for this historical event. This conflict also has been called the War of 1898 by other historians (see Foner 1972; L. Pérez 1998).

2. In his memoirs, Bernardo Vega (1984; Spanish edition, 1977) provides New York City population figures that are much higher than those provided by the 1900–1930 US censuses. Several scholars argue that the census generally undercounted members of poor ethnic neighborhoods. The accuracy of the US census data on the Puerto Rican population of New York City during the first half of the twentieth century is discussed by Sánchez Korrol ([1983] 1994), Haslip-Viera ([1996] 2017), and Thomas (2010).

3. Mario Marazzi-Santiago, executive director of the Instituto de Estadísticas de Puerto Rico, described the ongoing Puerto Rican New Millennium Migration to the United States as the Second Great Migration or the Second Great Exodus of Puerto Rico in an online interview with CNN reporter Jeffrey Acevedo, May 2, 2016, [www.cnn.com/2016/05/02/americas/puerto-rico-exodus/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2016/05/02/americas/puerto-rico-exodus/index.html).

4. Right after the invasion of the island, the US military regime (1898–1900) changed the official Spanish name of Puerto Rico to "Porto Rico." The quoted excerpt in this paragraph is from the public declaration made by General Nelson Miles, who was in command of the invading US troops.

5. Some of these photographic books include Bryan (1899), which according to Thompson (2010, 34) sold 400,000 copies in its first edition; Baldwin (1899); Church (1898); Dinwiddie (1899); Neely (1898, 1899a, 1899b); and White (1898). Acosta-Belén (1992b) provides a critical review of some of the scholarly and journalistic literature on Puerto Ricans published by North Americans during the first half of the twentieth century. These studies tend to disparage an essentialized Puerto Rican national character and diminish the importance of Puerto Rico's history and cultural heritage. Some of these characterizations were often internalized and recycled by a number of Puerto Rican intellectuals prior to the emergence of what is known as the new Puerto Rican historiography in the early 1970s.

6. For a detailed discussion of the legal and political aspects of island Puerto Ricans' US citizenship and its present limitations, see Venator-Santiago and Meléndez (2017).

7. A week after Hurricane Maria, the Trump administration was pressured by several members of the US Congress and Puerto Rican government officials, community leaders, and activist groups to eliminate the Jones Act or suspend it for an extended period in order to provide much needed posthurricane relief to Puerto Rico by reducing the transportation costs that make all US imports transported to the island by US shipping companies at least 20 percent more expensive than they are in the fifty states. The requested suspension was also aimed at allowing direct shipments of disaster aid offered to Puerto Rico by other nations. Instead, the US administration capitulated to pressures exerted by US shipping companies, since eliminating the act would affect their profit margins. Despite the state of emergency and need for disaster relief and an uninterrupted flow of imported goods to Puerto Rico, the Trump administration suspended the Jones Act for only ten days—a meaningless gesture, considering the magnitude of the destruction caused by the hurricane and the island's urgent need for food, water, medicine, and other essential supplies.

8. A nonvoting "resident commissioner," elected by the voting residents of Puerto Rico, has represented Puerto Rico in the US Congress since 1900. Between 1993 and 1995, under the Democratic Party administration of President Bill Clinton, the resident commissioner was given voting rights in the US House of Representatives. This practice was rescinded when the Republican Party won the congressional elections of 1994 and took control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

9. Although island Puerto Ricans are not allowed to vote in US presidential or congressional elections, presidential primaries are held in Puerto Rico and both Democratic and Republican candidates actively campaign on the island for party convention delegates, who are able to cast a vote at the nominating presidential conventions. Island Puerto Ricans can only vote in US elections if they become residents of any of the fifty states and register to vote.

10. Cuba was under US military rule until it was granted independence in 1902. Nine of the Insular Cases deal only with Puerto Rico. Legal experts and scholars disagree on the number of legal cases that should fall under this category. The total number ranges from six to sixteen court decisions.

11. The phrase "foreign to the United States in a domestic sense" is part of the Foraker Act, passed by the US Congress in 1900. This act ended two years of North American military occupation and established a civil government in Puerto Rico (Duffy Burnett and Marshall 2001). A more detailed discussion appears in Chapter 3 of this book.

12. A one-hour version of the documentary film (2011) by Raquel Ortiz/Pozo Productions was first shown by PBS stations in 2007. Since then, the documentary has received multiple recognitions at film festivals and from several organizations.

13. As of 2018, only three US Army installations remain in Puerto Rico: Fort Buchanan, Fort Allen, and Camp Santiago, in addition to the Sector San Juan US Coast Guard station.

14. The expression *Boricuas de la banda allá, Boricuas de la banda acá* comes from the lyrics of the song “A los boricuas ausentes” (To the Boricuas who left) popularized by César Concepción and His Orchestra. *Boricua*, a word of Taino indigenous origin, was used during the Spanish colonial period to refer to the native inhabitants of Puerto Rico and later to identify all Puerto Ricans.

15. Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebrón, Rafael Cancel Miranda, and Irving Flores, Nationalist Party members in federal prisons since the 1950s, were not released until their sentences were commuted by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. Another Nationalist political prisoner, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, was released in 1977 after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. The most recent campaign demanded the release of Oscar López Rivera. Associated with the clandestine group Los Macheteros, he was incarcerated for thirty-five years. His sentence was commuted by President Barack Obama in 2016.

