

## Exiled in Paradise: Puerto Rico

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My contract with the Cornell project was for a period of three years. I had neither a desire to extend it nor an invitation to stay. That put me back on the job market. It helped that in the meantime I had completed the dissertation and had the degree from Harvard and, though I had every intention of using these credentials in my search for a new position, I took it as a point of personal pride not to ask for help from any of my former professors in the Department of Social Relations. Nor did I need to. Quite unexpectedly I received a letter from Pedro Muñoz Amato, Dean of the College of Social Sciences at the University of Puerto Rico. Without so much as an interview, he offered me a position as an assistant professor of anthropology. Reuben Hill, I learned, recommended me to Muñoz Amato. Hill had been one of my undergraduate professors at the University of Wisconsin. I had been President of the Student Union when he was its Assistant Director. Since then, Hill had become an authority on the family largely as a result of publishing a successful book of collected essays with Howard Becker that he had parlayed into a consultancy at the University of Puerto Rico's research center. He knew that I had returned to the University of Wisconsin after the war, but how he knew that I was at Cornell mystified me; we had never corresponded. I surmise that Muñoz Amato, who was then hiring social scientists, had probably asked Hill for recommendations of possible candidates.

In academia, if you are a consultant you are also expected to be familiar with names in the field who might be eligible candidates. If you cannot name names, your status as a consultant loses some of its luster. So somewhere in a conversation with Muñoz Amato, Hill must have mentioned my name and presumably took a chance in promoting me. That, I believe, is how I got the job in Puerto Rico. I went as a greenhorn who had everything to learn about one of America's well-known former colonies.

This was in August 1954. After dismantling a household and storing its contents, my wife and I, with three children aged six, four, and one, left Candor, our farmhouse, and Cornell University. We headed for New York City and a flight to San Juan. Upon landing, a university representative received us at the airport and took us directly to our new residence in a university housing project known as La Finca. La Finca sat on the edge of a dairy farm. The spacious area surrounding the apartments was still used as a pasture, and a group of cows greeted us on our arrival. We had moved from a residence on one farm to another, but in this case, the farm was surrounded by Rio Piedras.

Living in La Finca and being from the mainland with a degree from Harvard endowed me with a status superior to any I could have had on the mainland. My neighbors included distinguished South American and exiled Spanish intellectuals, artists, poets, and social scientists, as well as a new generation of internationally educated Puerto Rican scholars. I found myself a member of an expatriate and cosmopolitan community far exceeding my expectations of what life in Puerto Rico might be like. La Finca was an enclave of privileged foreigners welcomed and accepted by equally privileged Puerto Rican academics among whom I was accepted simply on the strength of being there.

The lifestyle at La Finca included maids, cooks, gardeners, servicemen, nursery schools, and university-affiliated grade schools for the children. These were the colonial-style benefits accorded university personnel. I had no domestic chores. Domestic help was affordable on an assistant professor's salary supplemented by income from an occasional contract for a market research study for an American businessman. The one I remember was a study of potential uses for bagasse, an otherwise unused byproduct of sugar cane. My wife was free to take commercial and university research jobs. On our joint income, we were able to travel to what for us were the exotic Caribbean Islands and to explore the outer reaches of Puerto Rico.

Our apartment was large enough to entertain frequent visitors from the mainland. Joe Bensman and his family visited on occasion while he and I were working on the final stages of *Small Town*. When Warren and Clair Paley and their five children visited for two weeks, we sublet an apartment for them in La Finca. Other visitors included my Harvard friend Bob Wilson when he came to the island in connection with a research project sponsored by Hollingshead at Yale University. In addition to in-laws, a couple from Candor—the storekeeper and his wife with whom we had become friends—also visited us. Frequent contacts with mainlanders dispelled any sense of isolation from our past.

When our fourth son, Joseph, was born in 1956 (all costs covered by university medical insurance) he had his own nanny who arrived in the morning before he awoke and cared for him until his bed time, relieving his parents of all the onerous tasks of child care. Virginia Betancourt lived in Puerto Rico with her exiled father, Romulo Betancourt, a former president of Venezuela. She was a student in my class and took over the household and managed it while my wife Virginia was recuperating from childbirth. Never had I been so

superfluous as a father and husband. Puerto Rico was the place to have children if you were a college professor. As it later transpired, it was also convenient for Joseph to have a Puerto Rican birth certificate. When he became eighteen and applied for admission to Cornell University while we were living in Storrs, Connecticut, he received a letter from Cornell offering him a full scholarship to attend that school's College of Engineering. Cornell was recruiting minority students and had classified Joseph as a Puerto Rican because he was born there, a kind of latter-day manifestation of a colonial attitude in the days of an emergent multiculturalism.

I knew next to nothing about Puerto Rico, but this did not deter my enthusiasm for being in the tropics to which I had become addicted in Guam, Saipan, and Palau. I was confident that my undergraduate courses in beginning Spanish gave me a base for learning the language and looked forward to studying it and lecturing in it. This was my first full-time teaching appointment, and it required me to develop my own repertoire of courses. The teaching load was three courses, but research was also encouraged, and a pool of secretaries was available to serve the needs of the faculty. It was apparent from the beginning that the university administration provided the faculty with the best of facilities. The Faculty Club included a lounge and a restaurant that served a Puerto Rican cuisine that included *arroz y habichuelas rosadas*, a dish I've appreciated ever since I first tasted it. The university had its own journal called *La Torre* that published essays written by the faculty, and it sponsored visiting speakers from Spain, South America, and the mainland. Academic life in Puerto Rico was sharply different from being a project field director and participant observer in a small, rural New York community. President Jaime Benitez hoped to make an international reputation for the university.

Life in Puerto Rico was full of promise. Within a few weeks of my arrival, I had a family membership in the Condado Beach Club located in San Juan on the sandy shores of the Caribbean. On Sunday afternoons, the children could entertain themselves in the pool or on the beach. Waiters in white jackets served drinks poolside or on the beach. Other exotic weekend diversions included visits to El Yunque, Puerto Rico's tropical rainforest. In the interior, Luquillo Beach was an idyllic expanse of shoreline and coconut trees. On a Sunday afternoon, young boys climbed a tree to fetch a coconut and opened it with a machete to make it ready to add one's own rum to its juice. Drinking the combination on a hot Sunday afternoon was a rare experience. Later, the boys returned to split the husk in half exposing the rum-drenched soft coconut meat, making a dessert of it. There was also Loizà Aldea, a quaint town of Afro-Puerto Ricans that was a historical reminder of slavery on the island. The town took pride in its artists, especially the mask makers who used the husks of coconuts as the raw material for making an endless variety of facial expressions. Mata de la Gata, a small island retreat on the south shore of the island, was tended by a caretaker who held his job as a political concession from the governor. He often provided evenings of quiet isolation surrounded by the waters of the Caribbean shelter and lobster dinners prepared to perfection. These were the days before Puerto Rico became a haven for middle-class tourists from the mainland and before the tourist industry left its mark on the spontaneous hospitality of the islanders.

My knowledge of Puerto Rico was that of the average reader of the *New York Times*. Julian Steward, a Columbia University anthropologist, in collaboration with a group of his students, had completed a large-scale study called *The People of Puerto Rico*, but I had not read it. A few years earlier, a group of Puerto Ricans who opposed

the mainland's influence on their island made the headlines of the *Times* when they entered a US congressional session and shot several congressmen; I had yet to learn about the complexity of the island's politics. I knew that the United States acquired Puerto Rico from Spain in 1898 as part of a peace agreement that also included the acquisition of the Philippines and Guam. I was also aware of Puerto Rico's strategic military importance to the naval defense of the western hemisphere during World War II and that German U-boats had dominated the Caribbean shipping lanes, isolating Puerto Rico from the mainland for the better part of the war. I also knew that Puerto Ricans had been granted citizenship status in 1918 and that in 1948, the island had been granted the status of a "Free Associated State," at which time Muñoz Marin, a popularly elected Puerto Rican governor and leader of the *Partido Popular*, replaced the last US colonial governor, Rexford Tugwell. Tugwell was a former professor at the University of Chicago, a university originally endowed by John D. Rockefeller to bring the raucous Midwest the civilizing influence of the eastern seaboard. And it was through Tugwell that the University of Puerto Rico was partially colonized by the University of Chicago. I noticed, of course, that the consequences of Puerto Rico's past colonization might be comparable to those I had studied in Palau and that I was willy-nilly a representative of the dominant colossus to the North.

After World War II, colonialism was not fashionable and ran against the tide of anti-colonial movements around the world; former colonies demanded self-determination and independence. For the United States, competing for world domination in a cold war with the Soviet Union, it was a patent ideological contradiction to proclaim itself a democracy and be a colonial overlord. In order to resolve this contradiction, Puerto Rico was redefined as a Free Associated State.

Later, borrowing from England's post-colonial history, it was called a Commonwealth, an arrangement that fell short of complete independence. To compensate for this political equivocation inspired by strategic military considerations, the United States hoped to make its "former" colony an exemplar to the world by inaugurating a policy to make Puerto Rico a showcase to the world of democratization and enlightened economic development.

Tugwell had joined Roosevelt's "Brain Trust" as Secretary of the Interior in the 1930s, and from that position, he was later assigned the task of designing the formula for decolonizing the island. Muñoz Marin, already a spokesman for Puerto Rican interests in Washington, became his collaborator in defining the conditions of Puerto Rico's "independence." The conditions included the freedom to form political parties and to elect governors in a popular election. That was how Puerto Rico achieved its independence and became a democracy.

Puerto Rico was not a state like the other forty-eight mainland states. Under the terms set by its new status as a Free Associated State, Puerto Ricans retained their rights as citizens free to move between the island and the mainland. This right was to be facilitated by a Puerto Rican Labor Office set up in New York City for the purpose of managing the importation and exportation of seasonal workers from the island and to guide the settlement of islanders into towns and cities other than New York. The new status also included participation in the armed forces, access to certain educational and welfare benefits, and freedom from payment of federal income taxes. In addition, trade between the island and mainland was tax free, and taxes collected in the United States from the sale of Puerto Rican rum were reimbursed to Puerto Rico. Such policies were designed to stimulate economic activity, provide jobs, reduce levels of poverty in

rural areas and urban slums, shift part of the island's population to the mainland, and encourage capital investment by mainland businessmen in local industrial enterprises. The terms of the relationship between the two entities were enacted by the Congress of the United States, which retained legislative authority over the island. Not being a state like the other forty-eight, Puerto Ricans were not represented in Congress. However, since Puerto Ricans paid no taxes to the mainland, they could not claim taxation without representation.

Congress enacted a series of tax abatements and tax incentives designed to encourage American businessmen to invest in the island. Businessmen were offered the opportunity to take advantage of a low-cost labor pool and tax-free export of products to the mainland. Low costs and high prices enticed investors and producers to enter the market and, hence, stimulate the growth of the economy. This formula worked. By 1954, Puerto Rico was well on its way to a new economic prosperity. Mainland businessmen set up shops for the production of textiles and pharmaceuticals. These businesses transferred fully amortized machinery from the mainland to island factories. The low price of labor compensated for the low productive efficiency of obsolete equipment. Other businessmen practiced the ancient putting-out system, paying rural seamstresses by the gross for hand-sewn gloves, brassieres, and undergarments. In addition to low labor costs, cheap air freight rates made it possible to transport the finished products to the mainland. Tax incentives for the housing industry attracted investors to build prefabricated low-cost housing. Roads and transportation facilities supported by federal subsidies provided access to the four corners of the island and put in place the infrastructure required for the tourist industry. In a short period of time, between the end of the war and the time I arrived, Puerto Rico had been transformed into a model of economic development for a

former colony. Muñoz Marin, in collaboration with the mainland government, was the architect of this economic development plan and made it the lynchpin of his career and his administration. In his popular appeal to the rural masses and displaced urban dwellers, he portrayed himself as a man of the people who extolled the rustic countryman, the wholesome, hardworking *jibaro*, who was the carrier of Puerto Rico's authentic values. He called his program "Operation Bootstrap," a slogan suggesting that Puerto Rico could pull itself up on its own and thereby create its own radiant future.

From the point of view of American foreign policy, Puerto Rico was to be a showcase to the world of enlightened post-colonial policy. By 1954, when both decolonization and the Cold War were well under way, Puerto Rico had acquired a positive public relations value for America's struggle against the Soviet Union. It was promoted by the State Department as both an example of a successful transition to democracy and the effectiveness of capitalism for the economic development of the world's former colonies. This little island, seventy miles long and forty miles wide and with a population of two million, was given a role to play on the world stage. Like the hub on a wheel whose spokes point in all directions, it drew visiting observers from all directions—Asia, Africa, South America, wherever former colonies hoped to become independent states with viable economies. Puerto Rico was inundated with State Department and United Nations sponsored visitors who came to witness Puerto Rico's success and to apply its methods to their own countries. America's formerly neglected colony now basked in the glory of this new form of colonial exploitation, a *quid pro quo* designed to serve both the *Partido Popular* and American foreign policy.

Operation Bootstrap, in fact and in psychological effect, instilled a sense of economic vibrancy and optimism in the island's population.

It left no part of the island or its political, social, and cultural institutions untouched. Among those affected was the university.

### *The University*

The University of Puerto Rico's (UPR) president was Jaime Benitez, friend and close political ally of Muñoz Marin. While Muñoz portrayed himself as a man of the people who extolled the *jibaro* as opposed to the urban sophisticate, Benitez was the elegant, worldly man of culture. The two were collaborators in a project to remake the image and the reality of Puerto Rico. Muñoz provided the university with the money it needed to grow and to take on new functions, and Benitez was to give respectability to the university as an institution of higher learning and to make it the scientific and cultural focus of the island.

In the overall scheme of Operation Bootstrap, the university was to serve both economic development goals and the cultural aspirations of its leaders. It was to be a pragmatically oriented university designed to train generations of students for participation in the new economy, to support research in and for social planning, and to sustain the island's Hispanic heritage. This was a mission that followed more in the image of pragmatic American rather than Latin American or Spanish universities. It was to be integrated into society and to serve the public good rather than exist as an entity apart from the state.

The university's Social Science Research Center was directed by Millard Hansen, a mainlander and graduate of the University of Chicago. The research center sponsored projects to further knowledge about the social and economic state of Puerto Rican society and the practical means for its improvement. Muñoz Marin was its supporter and took a personal interest in the research that it conducted.

In addition to Julian Steward's study, the center had also sponsored a study by Melvin Tumin (assisted by Arnold Feldman) that was published as a comprehensive survey of Puerto Rico's class system. John Kenneth Galbraith, before he became famous, and his assistant, Peter Gregory, assembled a team of local researchers to examine the characteristics of the Puerto Rican labor force. August Hollingshead, a social psychologist affiliated with Yale University, directed a study of the Puerto Rican character with the assistance of Robert N. Wilson and Lloyd Rogler. These were a few of the dozens of studies that the center sponsored in the 1950s. In addition to providing useful information for planners, these also provided research training for advanced students at UPR. Those were the days in the post-World War II period when faith in research aimed to support the rational planning and administration of society could still command the kinds of resources made available to social scientists during the war. The center also hired a variety of consultants who were brought in for a week or two: Robert Redfield, Herbert Blumer (whom I met for the first time, and whose essay on economic development, presented at UPR, I published forty years later in an anthology of his work), and Daniel Boorstin (who later became the Librarian of Congress), all from the University of Chicago. Reuben Hill and Porter Butts came from the University of Wisconsin. Butts, the creator and long-time director of the Student Union at Wisconsin, of which I had been president, was brought over to evaluate UPR's Student Union and its place in the culture of campus life. Butts, of course, had invented the very idea of student unions. So he was an authority and consultant on this unique campus institution to universities throughout the United States. When Butts learned that I was on the campus, he contacted me and offered me the directorship of UPR's union, a job that would have reconnected me to a part of my past I wished to

forget. UPR was a crossroad where social scientists, many of whom later became eminent, began their careers. Had I not been in Puerto Rico, I would never have met them. With so many Americans consulting and doing research—many of them living in La Finca—I had no need to feel like an exile; the mainland had come to me. From the point of view of some Puerto Rican social scientists, however, these mainland researchers and consultants were viewed as another form of colonial penetration.

In practice, Benitez distanced the University of Puerto Rico from American influence by making it international and cosmopolitan. He appointed a diverse faculty that included such republican Spanish exiles as Francesco Ayala (humanist, writer, and social theorist, and later a professor of sociology at New York University); Eugenio Granell (author and surrealist painter whose paintings now occupy a museum of their own in Santiago, Spain); Garcia Palayo (political scientist and legal theorist); and Federico O’Nis (Spanish literature and language, formerly the head of Columbia University’s Spanish Department). These Spaniards were a remnant of the “Generation of 1936” who opposed Franco and Stalin and lived in exile in the Caribbean and Latin America. Other members of the faculty were the Mexican painter Rufino Tamayo; the Chilean philosopher José Echeverría; an Argentine social philosopher and specialist on George Herbert Mead and American pragmatism; Franz von Lichtenberg, a world-renowned expert in the study of shistosomiasis, later appointed a professor at Harvard Medical School; Belagi Moncur, an Indian specialist in electronic microscopes, later hired by the University of Connecticut; Kurt Bach, an MIT-trained psychologist; Leopold Kohr, an Austrian economist and proponent of small-size states; Gordon Lewis, English specialist on the Caribbean region; Beate Salz, an anthropologist trained at The New School for Social Research and

the daughter of the émigré economist, Arthur Salz; and other poets, philosophers, and scientists whose names I no longer remember. This illustrious collection of professors recruited from around the world gave UPR an international luster unmatched elsewhere in Latin America.

Knowing these people opened my eyes to other worlds. For example, the Spaniards gave me their interpretation of the Spanish Civil War and opinion of George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*. But also their presence added to the impression held by some in the university that jobs that rightfully belonged to Puerto Ricans were being given to outsiders. Academic colonialism seemed to pervade the university.

In fact, a strong residue of colonialism in the form of language policy was still a reality as it had been when Puerto Rico was a colony. Though English was no longer mandated as the official language of instruction, the island in practice was now bilingual. Many students, however, were not fully bilingual. Some were disadvantaged when they took courses with English-speaking professors; the burden of accommodation was on them. By the same token, a linguistic divide existed between Spanish-speaking and English-speaking professors. Though almost all Spanish-speaking professors (except for a few Spaniards) spoke English, many English speakers could not speak Spanish. If independence had been achieved, the island's official language would have been Spanish, and non-Spanish speaking visitors would have borne the burden of accommodating to its usage. In fact, however, Puerto Ricans were expected to speak English to mainlanders, that is, to accommodate to the linguistic deficiencies of the outsider, the visitor, and the stranger. Since both languages were acceptable in any situation, the first to speak English determined by default the language of choice. Moreover, an American, even when

in a Spanish-language conversation, had the privilege of reverting to English at any time, whereas the reverse was not acceptable. The burden to participate fully in the English-speaking community was placed on the Spanish speakers rather than the other way around. For Puerto Ricans, such linguistic etiquette could be a constant source of irritation. By the same token, in order to avoid the discomfort of bilingualism, the intruder could be selectively excluded from intimate gatherings of Puerto Ricans. A sublimated cultural divide that separated the Puerto Ricans from the Americans pervaded the public life of the island.

This, however, was only one dimension of the language problem. Spanish as it is spoken by Puerto Ricans has its own inflections, elisions, pronunciation, and tempo. It bore almost no relationship to the academic Spanish I had studied as an undergraduate. I was confounded all the more when my private tutor thought I should learn a pure Castillian Spanish and emphasized its diction—the rolled “r” as in *perro* and the aspirated “c” as in *gracias*—rather than grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. As a result, even after three years in Puerto Rico, I never learned the language well enough to lecture in it. Failing to achieve fluency was a disadvantage that limited my participation in the public affairs of the university. I was lucky that my colleagues in the social science faculty generously accepted me along with my limitations. Some of them, including sociologist Hector Estades, political scientist Milton Pablon, anthropologist Eugenio Fernandez Mendez, and psychologist Carlos Albizo, had studied at the University of Chicago (the old Rexford Tugwell connection), and others—economists and philosophers—had studied at mainland universities. They generously conducted their conversations and group discussions in English when I was present. This was not just a matter of etiquette but an effort to make me part of their community, despite the

linguistic concession it required them to make. I was, after all, still a quasi-representative of the older colonialism that persisted into the era of the Free Associated State.

### *The College of Social Sciences*

It made no difference to Muñoz Amato that I had little teaching experience. It was also of no concern that I could not lecture in Spanish; it was enough that I had a Harvard degree and an affiliation with Cornell. That my prior teaching experience consisted of a seminar in Oceania in Cornell's anthropology department, and before that, while still a graduate student, a summer school course in social problems I had taught at the University of Rochester was hardly worth mentioning. Everything I knew about Oceania was irrelevant to Puerto Rican students whose intellectual horizons were the Caribbean and South America. Muñoz Amato advised me that I could define my own curriculum and that my courses were intended for advanced students. Some of the courses I remember teaching are American Society, The Sociology of Community, and Social Structure and Personality. The latter was my variant of the then trendy subject in anthropology called Culture and Personality. Gerth and Mills's *Character and Social Structure: The Psychology of Social Institutions* was published in 1953, and I used it as my text in this course. It provided me with a comprehensive introduction to Max Weber's sociology. I had previously only read his essays in *From Max Weber*, edited by Gerth and Mills. I read the book like a bible and wrote a review of it for *American Anthropologist*. Teaching this course was a major learning experience for me. I have no idea what my students may have learned, but two of them at least, Manuel Maldonado and Anna Basso Bruno, grasped it and understood its framework and historical perspective. They taught me some fundamental lessons

about the teaching racket, namely, never to underestimate the intellectual capacity of undergraduates and to make my teaching a learning process for both my students and myself. That I was lecturing in English to some students who were not proficient in English required extra effort on my part to ensure that I was being understood. When I used a technical term that I thought might be new to some students, I took to asking the class for its Spanish equivalent. I could tell the extent of comprehension by the number of students who volunteered a word. That was a measure for me that I had contact with the class. The need for this practice also taught me a fundamental lesson about lecturing—to encourage students to respond and question as a part of the process of lecturing.

Teaching a full load of courses was a new experience for me and conflicted with the time I needed to finish the *Small Town* book with Bensman. Bensman and I sent chapters back and forth for more than a year before we had a rough draft of the book, not including the first chapter, which we wrote last. I usually did my writing in the evening after the children were put to bed. I wrote until two or three in the morning, staying awake by smoking packs of cigarettes and drinking Baranquilla rum until I could no longer stay awake at the typewriter. As we finished chapters, I submitted them for presentation at sociology and anthropology meetings. Hans Speier accepted the chapter on Springdale's class system for the sociology meetings held in Detroit in November of 1954 and, in 1955, the anthropologists accepted a paper on social structure and the psychology of adjustment that I presented at meetings in Philadelphia. Had we not had the help of Muñoz Amato's secretarial office at the College of Social Sciences, we could not have prepared the manuscript copies we needed for submissions. I handed drafts to Ernestine Ferrer de Ballesler, who assigned them to one or two of the ten typists in the pool

and, presto, within a few days, she supplied me with the work. That typing pool was an academic luxury I've never encountered in any other university. When we thought we had a book, we sent copies to commercial publishers, five of whom rejected it before both Harvard and Princeton reluctantly accepted it in early 1957, as I described earlier. With the book and the complex negotiations with publishers out of the way, I had time to do other things.

I wrote an essay, "The Social Role of the Anthropological Advisor." This was a subject that first caught my attention in Palau where I had observed anthropologists giving advice to naval officers under the pretense that they did so as objective scientists. In the immediate postwar period, anthropologists seemed to be completely unaware of the implications and subtleties of playing this role. I noticed similar attitudes on the part of American advisors to social policy-makers in Puerto Rico and wrote the article as a critique of the practice on the grounds that it was a form of political influence. It was published as a brief communication in the *American Anthropologist*, the only article I published in that journal. I was already on my way to distancing myself from anthropology.

Despite Benitez's efforts to make UPR a pragmatically oriented place, many academicians were, if not obsessive, at least preoccupied with the island's political status. The island's dependence on the United States rankled Puerto Ricans. Theirs was an anti-colonial mentality that could not be directly expressed as colonialism because that status had been ended. Surrounded by colleagues who expressed dissatisfaction with America's influence on the island (Gordon Lewis, the English political scientist and historian, was vociferous and incisive in his critique of the excessive presence of the United States), and especially the use of Puerto Rico and the university as a dumping ground for incompetent Americans who could not succeed on

the mainland, I decided to do a study in order to discover how the island's political status was refracted in the countryside. I began a study on a small town, Trujillo Alto, located a short distance from Rio Piedras. With the help of Anna Basso Bruno and Gilberto Valcarcel, an older student and a member of a respected family in the town, I began this study after finishing the *Small Town* project. I investigated two questions: 1) Who commanded the loyalties of traditional *caciques* who were pivotal gatekeepers in the electoral process; and 2) What kind of political influence did Catholic, Evangelical, Spiritualist, and Scientologist religious leaders exercise? I interviewed local leaders and gathered some historical data, but never finished this study, despite putting a substantial amount of work into it and, after leaving the island, returning twice to gather more material. The work remains a manuscript called *Trujillo Bajo*. I didn't try to publish it because I never had confidence in either my framework or my data, and I had not solved a problem. Nevertheless, I learned a few things about the political psychology of the islanders. At least it gave me some background for talking about the island's politics.

That knowledge was useful in the long-winded discussions I had with Gordon Lewis while we drank coffee in a local *cafetin* across the street from the social science building. In one of these discussions, we decided to organize a small group for the purpose of discussing what we termed Puerto Rico's political problems.

The intellectual community in Puerto Rico was small but conspicuous. Like gossip in a small town, the word spread with remarkable rapidity about any event on the island that might have the slightest political implications. Our purpose was to analyze the changes taking place in Puerto Rico under Muñoz's administration and their consequences for its future. We named the group the Country Circle and decided to meet off campus at Gordon and Sybil Lewis's house,

located on the road to Trujillo Alto. Our format was to be that of a seminar limited to ten members with one member presenting a paper each month, followed by an open discussion. Hector Estades, Carlos Rosario, Carlos Albiso, Eugenio Fernandez Mendez, Milton Pabon, Beate Salz, Sybil Lewis, and Delia Pabon agreed to join. We had not thought of this as an exclusive group, but rather as a group of compatible friends (I was godfather to Lewis's son). Occasionally, we invited visitors assigned to the research center.

Though nothing exceptional had transpired at any of our first three or four meetings, the group's existence became known. In short order, we received requests from others who wished to join. Among those was Muñoz Marin himself. Why, we asked, and what should we do? We all understood that the governor could not be refused, but we also understood that the group was now too conspicuous to survive in its original form. When we met with him, Muñoz made no special claims for deference and seemed to enjoy an open discussion among a group of younger professors, something that was perhaps a reminder to him of his days as a free-floating radical intellectual in New York's Greenwich Village. Our discussion focused on the hottest issue of the island, the status question. Muñoz used the occasion to measure the range of academic opinions concerning his political creation. What he discovered was, no doubt, what he already knew—that, under the ethos of Cold War psychology, Puerto Rico had no other alternative. He also discovered this group had no intention of becoming a political movement and could conclude that we were both harmless and posed no threat. We assumed that like any other master politician he was simply checking us out as he did with any other new group that might talk about the island's politics. We had been discovered, and after that it was impossible to keep the Country Circle small. Too many others, whose requests to join

we could not refuse lest we appear to be exclusionary and elitist in this recently created democracy, meant we could no longer meet in the Lewises' living room. When we scheduled a meeting with Robert Redfield, who was visiting from the University of Chicago, we changed our format to an open meeting held on university property, and the public was invited. Like the others who attended, I became another member of the audience, and that was the end of the Country Circle.

### *The Political Status Question*

The question of the political status of Puerto Rico dominated all discussion of the island's political parties. After fifty years of American colonial rule, the quasi-independence granted under the arrangement of the Free Associated State was a relationship that was neither independence, nor colonialism, nor indirect rule. Muñoz had staked his political career on this arrangement, but it was not universally accepted. On the far left, there was Albizo Campos, a communist doing time in jail and a powerful symbol of anti-Americanism. Another outspoken enemy was Vito Marcantonio, a Puerto Rican living in New York and organizer of disaffected Puerto Ricans living in the city. He was taken seriously as a political opponent, so much so that he was killed in what appeared to be a politically inspired assassination. The murderer was never apprehended. Albizo Campos and Marcantonio were the last of the 1930s and 1940s radicals who were categorically opposed to capitalism and American colonialism.

Muñoz's formula for mediating the relationships between Puerto Rico and the United States subverted the issue of colonialism. Under the Free Associated State, the issues became political autonomy and economic development aided and abetted by the United States.

Muñoz and the *Partido Popular* could take pride in their economic consequences. New factories, roadways, luxury hotels, and construction projects resulted in jobs, higher income levels, greater opportunities for education and health care, and higher standards of living. Mainland economic penetration was accepted along with an admiration for American consumption styles in the form of cars, clothing, and industrial production and efficiency. While the American way was accepted and admired, its acceptance was tempered by the effect that this new penetration was having on traditional Puerto Rican institutions. Traditional festivals were disappearing, and even the *jibaro* was becoming a slum dweller in the larger cities or an industrial worker in regional cities.

Spanish, the mother tongue, was being vulgarized with words borrowed from English. Americans as governmental advisors, factory managers, researchers, and university professors appeared like carpetbaggers from the North. Traditional cultural practices were changing under the overwhelming weight of mainland influence and technology. A social psychology of ambivalence developed as a result of the tension between admiration for and resentment against the United States.

However, the resentments could not be expressed directly. US-owned factories could be seen as exploiting the local labor force for profits that were returned to the mainland, but the same factories provided jobs and stood as symbols of economic reconstruction. Some saw the US military bases—Vieques in particular—as foreign sovereign domains within the society, but because they were partly staffed by Puerto Ricans and provided employment to local civilians, they could be both resented and appreciated as a source of employment. Individual Americans in the midst of the Puerto Ricans were

almost as inaccessible as targets of resentment as that of the abstract, symbolic Navy. Americans could be regarded as “crypto-carpetbaggers,” interested only in short-term, selfish gains—good jobs—at the expense of the indigenous population; they did not commit themselves to Puerto Rico, but lived off it. The same Americans, however, brought the industrial, bureaucratic, and commercial skills through which Puerto Rico’s economic development was taking place, so that the Americans, even the incompetent ones, were surrounded by the halo of prestige that adhered to almost anything that represented the mainland way. What might otherwise remain free-floating, diffuse resentments were given focus by the diverse ideologies of the political parties.

The Statehood party stood for absorption into the United States. The party ignored the issues of traditional culture and American penetration. It identified with industrialism, American lifestyles, and the English language. In fact, it eschewed traditional culture, believing that statehood would make Puerto Ricans full citizens of the United States.

The Independence party identified with an image of Puerto Rican society free of external domination. Stressing the negative features of the relationship with the “Goliath of the North,” it promised the creation of a sense of identification with Puerto Rican cultural traditions—the Spanish language, traditional songs and dances, the preservation of the past, and full autonomy: Puerto Rico for the Puerto Ricans.

Muñoz’s *Partido Popular* stood for partnership between unequals, and thus both expressed and gave legitimacy to the prevailing ambivalence that was intrinsic to the society at almost all levels of institutions. It provided a dual structure of identification, affirmation of

selected elements from the past, and the promise of a future based on acceptance of US penetration.

The status ideologies that the parties invoked mobilized and organized the emotions of the population by providing points of focus for forming a political identity. In each case, however, the identity was defined by a reaction to the penetration by mainland institutions. To the extent that the various status ideologies organized the social psychology of the population, they provided focal points around which the identification of individuals could be organized, but it appears that in the case of each of the available alternatives, the character of the identity was negative.

Independence allowed for a potential re-creation of a sense of identification with the past along with an expression of a sense of hostility toward foreigners. Cultural items such as music, dance, traditional places, linguistic usage, and social types were selected and emphasized as points of identification. The selection itself was shaped by the hostility to the penetration of island society and culture by American institutions. Even the idea of *independentista* nationalism is an imported product learned from the study of American, rather than Spanish, history. But irrespective of the source and content of the ideology, it provided a basis for identification that rested upon *ad hoc* selections from a myriad of possibilities. The symbols were selected self-consciously and did not comprise an integral pattern of identification that reflected immediate experience.

Statehood emphasized specifically American elements and de-emphasized both tradition and Spanish history. In identifying with an image of the United States, specifically Puerto Rican experiences were denied and ignored. This meant a denial of one's own past and an organization of the self around a set of self-imposed expectations

of what it meant to be an “American.” The identification with the elements of penetration made the proponent of statehood a carpetbagger in his own society. This identification rested upon an equally *ad hoc* selection of elements of Americanism combined with hostility to one’s own society and resulted in a similarly negative and artificial identity.

The ideology of the Free Associated State was an attempt to provide a dual structure of identification; the Spanish past was affirmed, and the American penetration was acknowledged and accepted. This resolution was not easy to absorb since all of the consequences of penetration resulted in deeper modernization and greater dissolution of the past. At times, the penetration appeared to be so great as to create anxieties concerning the loss of all links to the past. On such occasions, the Spanish heritage and Puerto Rico’s past were reaffirmed. This reaction could temporarily result in changes in educational policy—renewed efforts to teach Spanish, attacks on the cosmopolitan university—or legislation designed to favor local agricultural producers over imported products. At other times, if for example, rates of emigration fell off or large federal housing or highway grants were announced that gave further stimulus to the economy, it could be asserted that Puerto Ricans were American citizens with equal rights. Such shifts in referents left few stable reference points. In this case, the identity was less negative than artificial and was a dynamic that skirted the existence of dependence, but did so by providing an ever-shifting set of identity referents.

At the same time, however, the entire society continued to respond to the events, decisions, price fluctuations, legislative acts, and so on that occurred in the United States. When there was a recession in the US, emigrants returned, business fell off, remittances declined, and the economy presented new problems. When technological,

scientific, and educational changes took place in the US, these were brought to Puerto Rico irrespective of internal policies. There was no way for insular politics to determine the fate of the island, and so each of the political parties gained its focus by responding to evolving trends in the United States. It is in this sense that the ideologies of the parties were artificial rather than intrinsic to a uniquely Puerto Rican experience.

### *Paradise Lost*

After three years in Puerto Rico, I too was drawn into its insularity and ambiguous relationship with the mainland. Now was the time to choose—either stay or return to the mainland. I calculated the implications of the decision. If I chose to remain with my family, neither my wife nor I could become Puerto Ricans and our children would have an ambiguous identity as American Puerto Ricans. Because our families and friends were on the mainland, most of my personal and intellectual past was linked to the United States. When I went to the island, I had not been forced into exile by events beyond my control. Instead, I had voluntarily elected to take the job I was offered rather than undertaking the more risky and sometimes lengthy process of conducting a job search. I had no education in Caribbean or Latin American history or culture and was not a fluent Spanish language speaker. After finishing the Springdale study, I realized that the subject of my research and study was American society. As the son of Slovenian immigrants who from the beginning felt marginal to American values, I did not want to repeat that marginality in Puerto Rico. Despite a pay raise, promotion to tenure, and an associate professorship, I decided to leave the island.

My academic marketability was not quite the same as it was when I left Cornell, though I had been very active professionally. I

had read papers at conventions, published several articles, and had a book accepted for publication. I had Barrington Moore as a referee, and I learned indirectly that Moore had told Clyde Kluckhohn of my whereabouts. In 1956, without an accompanying letter, Kluckhohn sent me copies of two of his articles that he signed, "Regards, Clyde." It was an invitation for reconciliation, and I was expected to respond. It had been more than five years since Kluckhohn abruptly cut me out of his world. But I had survived the initial shock and had gained my independence from a mentor who, no matter how unceremoniously, had actually given it to me. It didn't take me long to decide what to do. I looked at the copies of the articles, tossed them in a wastebasket, and decided not to respond. I felt no need for reconciliation. I no longer wanted Kluckhohn's help. That was the final episode in my relationship with Clyde Kluckhohn.

Still I had no trouble finding another job. Through a concatenation of circumstances, I was offered a job at the University of Connecticut. I had met a visitor from that school, Denison Nash, at the faculty club while he was a tourist in Puerto Rico. This was a casual encounter that gained significance only later after Reuben Hill, again consulting at the University of Connecticut, recommended me to James Barnett, head of that school's Sociology and Anthropology Department. Nash could say that he knew me and seconded the recommendation. That is how I got the job as an assistant professor at the University of Connecticut.

In those days, James Barnett hired staff without formal consultation with the department, doing it, instead, on his own authority, and in my case, without letters of recommendation. The position became vacant when Melford Spiro, who had also been on the CIMA project studying Ifaluk Island with Edwin Burrows, resigned his position and Burrows died. This was the second time my fate was affected by

Reuben Hill's intervention. I had not seen him since 1943, but when I met him again in Moscow in 1966 at the International Sociology Association meetings, I had the occasion to thank him for his unsolicited help. Later, when he was a candidate for the presidency of the American Sociological Association, I voted for him in an election he lost. Although we were worlds apart in our attitudes toward religion (he was a Mormon) and our perspectives on sociology (he was a moral advocate for family values), none of this mattered when it came to remembrances of a fraternization that had its beginning at the University of Wisconsin.

It was a jolting experience to exchange the warm, vibrant Hispanic and Caribbean culture for the cold winters and Congregational culture of Connecticut. At this stage in my life, three years was a long time, and I had no desire to cut myself off—as I had from Cornell and Candor—from friends and my research in Trujillo Alto. The next two summers, I continued my research and, even later, I was invited to give a public lecture at UPR. Throughout the years, Puerto Rican colleagues funneled graduate students to me at the University of Connecticut and The New School for Social Research. Virginia Betancourt and her father, Romulo, who regained the presidency of Venezuela in 1958, became lifelong friends—we exchanged children for summer vacations. When Eugenio Grannel and Francesco Ayala came to New York City, we picked up where we had left off as neighbors in La Finca. I supervised the dissertation of Hector Estades's sister at The New School. I had a reunion with Eugenio Fernandez Mendez when we accidentally met in the *Museo Nacional de Antropología* in Mexico City and years later another reunion with Manuel Muldonada when we met in a hotel in Bogota. I maintained a lifelong correspondence with my colleague Beate Salz, who lived in retirement in Saskatoon where she wrote about her garden and read

the *National Geographic*, and she regularly sent me her love. When I first arrived at the University of Puerto Rico, I was given a desk in her office. She had given me my orientation to Puerto Rico and later, at my suggestion when I was at The New School, made a bequest to the sociology department from which she had received her degree. Though it has been forty-five years since I left the island, my experience there left me with a lasting admiration for the vitality, passion, and spontaneity of its people.