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I Am Not Your Immigrant: Puerto Ricans, Liminal Citizenship, and Politics in Florida

Author
Valle, Ariana Jeanette

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I Am Not Your Immigrant:

Puerto Ricans, Liminal Citizenship, and Politics in Florida

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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in Sociology

by

Ariana Jeanette Valle

2019

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Vilma Ortiz, Chair

This dissertation investigates how colonialism, citizenship, migration, and racialization intersect in a new destination and shape Puerto Ricans' contemporary experiences. Puerto Ricans are a strategic case to examine through these frameworks because Puerto Ricans' have been U.S. citizens for over a century due to an ongoing colonial relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico. There have been various waves of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. mainland throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Moreover, Puerto Ricans are a phenotypically diverse group due to the historic intermixing between Indigenous, African, and European groups in Puerto Rico. And, Puerto Ricans are an original member of the institutionally created Hispanic ethnic group.

Our current understanding of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is largely based on their experiences in traditional destinations of migration located in the Northeast and Midwest. Scholars that have studied this experience have argued Puerto Ricans experienced a racialized mode of incorporation in traditional destinations, which explains their lower socioeconomic outcomes, marginalized experiences, and placement on the lower rungs of the social hierarchy in traditional destinations. However, the Puerto Rican experience is quite different today. In the latter part of the twentieth century, Florida emerged as a new destination for Puerto Ricans. The popularity of Florida has been

such that as of 2017, Florida's Puerto Rican population (1,128,225) surpassed New York's historic Puerto Rican community (1,113,123). Florida presents a distinct context relative to traditional destinations because Florida is located in the U.S. South, it is a politically conservative state, and Central Florida specifically lacks the extensive migration history that characterizes gateway cities. Moreover, Florida has attracted Puerto Ricans of distinct socioeconomic and education backgrounds as well as Puerto Ricans from Puerto Rico and from traditional mainland destinations.

Given Puerto Rico's and Puerto Ricans' relationship to the United States, unique contextual dynamics in Florida, and current Puerto Rican migratory patterns and migrant characteristics, this article-based dissertation examines: 1) how Puerto Ricans experience their status as U.S. citizens in Florida; 2) how they make sense of the current immigration debate and how their political and social position influences their perceptions on immigration; 3) and how Puerto Ricans experience natural disasters and become structural and climate refugees.

This research relies on 129 in-depth interviews and participant observations conducted in Orlando, Florida. First, focusing on how Florida Puerto Ricans experience the institution of U.S. citizenship, I find respondents define U.S. citizenship as partial rights and as a formal status yet they feel excluded from the American national community. Second, in terms of the politics of immigration, I find Puerto Ricans largely express supportive attitudes toward undocumented immigration, nevertheless, respondents deploy mainstream views of migrant deservingness and undeservingness. Furthermore, I find Puerto Ricans' immigration attitudes convey a group consciousness, and at times a sense of linked fate, with Latin American immigrants. I also find that for some respondents immigration is a critical election issue, such that a candidate's stance on immigration would determine their vote for president in 2016. Lastly, I find Puerto Rico's political and territorial status exacerbated the experiences of Hurricane María evacuees. Specifically, most Hurricane María evacuees experienced material losses, lacked access to vital essentials for weeks, and

they experienced inadequate and insufficient governmental relief and aid in Puerto Rico. Further, they deployed migration to Florida as a disaster relief strategy. Based on these findings, I advance that Puerto Ricans have a *colonial racialized citizenship*. I argue this concept accounts for Puerto Ricans' unequal political relationship with the State and group level relations that are racial.

The dissertation of Ariana Jeanette Valle is approved.

César J. Ayala

Rubén Hernández-León

John Christopher Zepeda

Vilma Ortiz, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

I dedicate this dissertation to Orlando's Puerto Rican and Latino communities. Thank you for sharing your experiences and knowledge and for your support and kindness.

Le dedico esta disertación a la comunidad puertorriqueña y latina de Orlando. Gracias por compartir sus experiencias y conocimientos y por su apoyo y bondad.

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VITA

EDUCATION

2015	C.Phil. Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles
2012	M.A. Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles
2006	B.A. Economics, University of California, San Diego

PUBLICATIONS

2019 Valle, Ariana, J. "Race and the Empire-state: Puerto Ricans' Unequal U.S. Citizenship." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 5(1):26-40. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649218776031

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2015 Abrego, Leisy, and Ariana J. Valle. "Salvadoran-Americans." *Oxford Bibliographies*. New York: Oxford University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199913701-0096

2018 Valle, Ariana, J. *"¡Puerto Rico Se Levanta!*: Hurricane María and Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Migration." QR 279. *Quick Response Reports*, Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado.

2009 Valle, Ariana, J. "The Vitality of Spanish in Barrio Logan, San Diego." Pp. 37-53 in *Multilingual San Diego: Portraits of Language Loss and Revitalization*, ed. Ana Celia Zentella. San Diego, CA: University Readers Publication.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2018-2019	UCLA Dissertation Year Fellowship
2017	Natural Hazards Center, Quick Response Research Grant, University of Colorado
2017-2018	Dorothy L. Meier Dissertation Fellowship
2016-2017	UCLA Institute for American Cultures: Chicano Studies Research Center, Research Grant
2016	UCLA Edward A. Bouchet Graduate Honor Society
2015-2016	UCLA Institute for American Cultures: Chicano Studies Research Center, Research Grant
2014	Department of Sociology Summer Research Fellowship, UCLA
2013-2014	Marvin Hoffenberg Fellowship, Center for American Politics and Public Policy, UCLA
2013-2014	Graduate Research Mentorship Program, Fellowship, UCLA
2013	Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Program, Fellowship, UCLA
2012-2013	Department of Sociology Excellence in Teaching Award, UCLA
2012	Honorable Mention, Ford Foundation, Predoctoral Fellowship Program
2012	Chancellor's Prize, UCLA
2011	Chancellor's Prize, UCLA

2011 Honorable Mention, National Science Foundation, Graduate Research Fellowship Program

2010-2015 Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship, UCLA

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

2018 "Race and the Empire-State: Puerto Ricans' Unequal U.S. Citizenship," American Sociological Association, Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, August 11-14.

2018 "*Conversatorio*: A Dialogue on Puerto Rico pre- and post-Hurricane Maria," American Sociological Association, Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, August 11-14. (Panel Organizer with Fernando Rivera, Roberto Vélez-Vélez, and Michael Rodriguez-Muñiz)

2018 "Rebuilding and Remaking Puerto Rico: Towards a New Politics of Decolonization?" American Sociological Association, Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, August 11-14. (Presider)

2018 "Nation, Territory, and Diaspora: Examining the Location of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans in the Latin America and U.S. Contexts." Cities in Latin America: Ancient to Modern, LAUSD K-12 Educator Workshop, UCLA Latin American Institute, Los Angeles, CA, June 18-22. (Invited Speaker)

2018 *"¡Puerto Rico Se Levanta!*: Hurricane María and Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Migration," Southern Sociological Society, Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, April 4-7.

2017 "Negotiating Political Identities, Reconciling Social Issues: Puerto Rican Voters in Florida." The Politics of Latino Identity: From Hispanic to Latinx, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA, October 5. (Invited Speaker)

2017 "'Florida! Florida! Florida!': Puerto Ricans' Political Attitudes during the 2016 Presidential Elections," Politics of Race, Immigration, and Ethnicity Consortium (PRIEC), University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA, March 24.

2016 "'Magic Kingdom Dreams, Florida Realities': Puerto Rican Migration and Settlement in Orlando, Florida," Puerto Rican Studies Association, Biennial Conference, University of Maryland, Hyattsville, MD, October 27-29.

2016 "Living Citizenship in Latino Communities," Latina/o Studies Association Conference, Pasadena, CA, July 7-9. (Panel Organizer with Laura Enriquez)

2016 "We're the Same on Paper but We're Not Accepted as Equals": Negotiating Legal and Social Understandings of U.S. Citizenship among Puerto Ricans in Florida. Yale Bouchet Conference on Diversity and Graduate Education, Yale University, New Haven, CT, April 1-2.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Our current understanding of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is largely based on their experiences in traditional destinations located in the Northeast and Midwest. Scholars that studied this experience have found Puerto Ricans have among the lowest socioeconomic outcomes relative to all native and migrant groups (Rodriguez 2000). For example, they have a low educational attainment, are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, and they are among the lowest income earners (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2009; Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014; Reyes 2014); they are residentially segregated (Massey and Denton 1993); and have the lowest mean net wealth of all groups (Birson, Borges-Méndez, and Ampaabeng 2014). Also, Puerto Ricans often feel they do not belong to the U.S. (Duany 2002; Landale and Oropesa 2002), causing some to return to the Island[1] (Aranda 2007), while those who remain in the U.S. feel marginalized and excluded from mainstream society (Flores 1985; Grosfoguel 1999; Ramos-Zayas 2003). Scholars have explained these outcomes by pointing to the colonial relationship between the Island and the U.S., which produced low-skilled labor migration to the mainland and set in motion Puerto Ricans' racialization in traditional destinations (Grosfoguel 1999, 2003; Duany 2002; Ramos-Zayas 2003; Pérez 2004).

Today, the Puerto Rican experience is quite different. In the latter part of the 20th century, Florida emerged as a new and popular destination for both Island and mainland Puerto Ricans. The popularity of Florida has been such that as of 2017, Florida's Puerto Rican population (1,128,225) surpassed New York's historic Puerto Rican community (1,113,123) (ACS 2017). And in particular, the Orlando metro region is attracting more Puerto Ricans than any other metropolitan area, rivaling

[1] "Mainland" refers to the United States, that is, the jurisdiction that includes the 48 contiguous and adjoining states as well as offshore states. I use Mainland and the U.S. interchangeably throughout this dissertation. "Island" refers to Puerto Rico. "Mainland-born" refers to individuals of Puerto Rican descent born in the U.S. "Island-born" refers to Puerto Ricans born in Puerto Rico.

New York City as the mainland Puerto Rican "capital." Orlando presents important contextual distinctions that can uniquely shape Puerto Ricans' contemporary experiences. First, as a new destination of migration, Orlando lacks the extensive immigration history and broader ethnoracial diversity that characterizes traditional gateway cities (Zuñiga and Hernández-León 2005). Second, Orlando is in a politically conservative Southern state and in a region of Florida where the black/white binary continues to shape race relations (Silver 2017). Third, Puerto Ricans in Orlando are bypassing urban centers and moving directly into suburban communities, having implications for contact with Whites and homeownership possibilities. Another distinctive feature is that three streams of Puerto Ricans have converged in Orlando—one has arrived from the Island, a second from traditional mainland destinations, and a third includes Puerto Ricans born and/or raised in Florida (Duany-Matos 2006). However, in a post Hurricane María context, we can say a fourth stream has also arrived that consists of Hurricane María evacuees[2].

Current Puerto Rican migratory patterns, migrant characteristics, and unique contextual dynamics present an ideal opportunity to study the contemporary intersection of colonialism, citizenship, migration, and race/ethnicity. As an unincorporated territory of the U.S., Puerto Rico as a place and Puerto Ricans as a people are subjected to an unequal political status, unequal rights, and unequal protections. Therefore, Puerto Rico is a modern colonial possession of the U.S. (Grosfoguel 2003; Rivera Ramos 2007; Baldoz and Ayala 2013). Yet, Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens. Citizenship theorizing emphasizes the legal and social significance of citizenship status. Citizenship awards individuals important rights, including unrestricted access to the territory and to social institutions, while also granting them membership into the core national community (Marshall 1950; Bosniak

[2] Hurricane María evacuees refers to Puerto Ricans who experienced Hurricane María in Puerto Rico and were displaced in Florida as a result of the storm's aftermath in Puerto Rico. I use the term evacuees because this is the term used at institutional and organizational levels in Orlando at the time of data collection. Other terms used at the community level to refer to this population include Hurricane María refugees.

2000; Bloemraad et al. 2008). Thus, as citizens, once on the mainland Puerto Ricans are in theory entitled to the full legal and social privileges of this status. And race scholars have emphasized racial categories are not fixed but rather race-making is an ongoing process contingent on a particular historical moment and a social context. Consequently, racial groups are created, transformed, and deconstructed overtime (Omi and Winant 1994). The historic racialization of Puerto Ricans in traditional destinations coupled with their settlement in a new location and distinctive migrant characteristics make this moment ideal for examining emergent racialization processes. Thus, this dissertation investigates how colonialism, citizenship, migration, and racialization intersect in a new destination and shape Puerto Ricans' contemporary experiences. Specially, this dissertation is guided by the following questions:

1) What does it mean to be a citizen, subject, and migrant of the U.S.?
2) How do these simultaneous positions shape Puerto Ricans' experiences in their new destination of migration and how do they navigate this liminal status? More specifically, how do they experience the institution of U.S. citizenship? How do they make sense of the current politics of immigration? And, how do they experience and respond to natural disasters?

I investigate these questions throughout four articles that: 1) contextualize the contemporary wave of Puerto Rican migration and generates a socioeconomic and demographic profile of Puerto Ricans in Orlando, Florida; 2) investigates how Florida Puerto Ricans experience their status as U.S. citizens in Florida; 3) analyzes Puerto Ricans public opinion on immigration; 4) and examines the experiences of Hurricane María evacuees that were displaced in Florida.

In the first section of the introduction, I review the main theoretical frameworks guiding this dissertation. First, I draw on theories of empire, colonialism, and race to contextualize the structural underpinnings of the United States. I proceed with a discussion of Latinos in the U.S. and their

history of racialization and exclusion. Next, I focus on the case of study by reviewing Puerto Rico's colonial relationship to the U.S and focusing on the various citizenship categories created for Puerto Rican over the course of the past century. I then examine how colonialism, citizenship, and migration have intersected for Puerto Ricans and the migration frameworks advanced for understanding Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. In the second and third sections of the introduction I review the research case and I detail the research methodology. In the fourth section, I present my arguments, conceptual contribution, and interventions. And, I conclude with a roadmap of the dissertation that includes a summary of each article.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Empire, Colonialism, and Racialization

The perception that the era of empires ended in the mid-twentieth century and was followed by independent nations predominates in social science and historical literatures (Cooper 2005; Jung 2015; Winant 2019). Yet, multiple forms of imperial and colonial relations continue to exist globally (i.e. Native Americans in the United States, Catalunya in Spain, neocolonialism, global coloniality[3]) (Winant 2019; Quijano 2000; Grosfoguel 2003). These ongoing and modern forms of imperialism and colonialism provide important sources of labor, land, and resources for core countries and their capitalist entities while also advancing their global hegemony and power (Winant 2014; Grosfoguel 2003). These ongoing relations are often connected to classical forms of colonialism deployed by European imperial powers. Indeed, the perception that the U.S. is an exception to empire and colonialism predominates in popular, political, and traditional academic discourse. Yet, some scholars emphasize that while the United States conceives of itself as an anti-colonial republic

[3] Global coloniality refers to the condition in which non-European populations remain under European and/or Euro-American exploitation and domination. In other words, it captures the "continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of the colonial administration." A continuity produced by persistent colonial structures and cultures in a modern capitalist world-system (Quijano 2000; Grosfoguel 2003).

founded upon democratic and egalitarian principles, the empire model applies to the U.S. (Cooper 20005; Ayala and Bernabe 2007; Go 2008, 2011; Jung 2011, 2015; Winant 2014, 2019)

For example, sociologist Moon-Kie Jung (2011, 2015) argues the U.S. is not a nation-state but rather the U.S. is an empire-state. Drawing on Frederick Cooper (2005) and Ann Stoler (2006), he defines empire-states as political units characterized by a hierarchical differentiation of: power and control, geographic spaces, and populations. More specifically, empire-states infringe upon the "sovereignty of foreign territories" and their inhabitants; empire-states contain "territories of unequal political status"; and populations under the domain of the empire-state have differentiated rights and privileges (Jung 2015, 59). Historical and ongoing imperialistic tendencies in the U.S. provide support for the empire-state model. These include the conquering of Native American lands, the imposition of U.S. sovereignty on Native nations, and the creation of complex legal systems that historically have, and continue to, disadvantage Native American communities (Biolosi 2005; Wolfe 2006; Glenn 2015). Moreover, the United States' numerous and vast territorial acquisitions during the 19th century and the creation of distinct and unequal political statuses for acquired territories (i.e. incorporated vs. unincorporated territories) provide further support for historic imperial practices (PR scholars; Burnett and Marshall 2001; Baldoz and Ayala 2013; Smith 2017). Presently, U.S. colonial possessions—that is, territories not fully incorporated territorially or politically into the U.S. and whose residents possess different citizen statuses and rights—include Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Taken together, these features of the U.S. "nation-building" project has resulted in the "hierarchical differentiation" of "spaces and people," demonstrating the applicability of reconceiving the U.S. as an empire-state rather than nation-state (Jung 2011, 2).

Colonial projects are co-constituted and supported by racial projects (Mills 1997). The United States was established through settler colonialism, which involved the violent appropriation

of Indigenous lands, the murder and confinement of Indigenous peoples, and projects of biological and cultural erasure that aimed to eliminate Native communities (Wolfe 2006; Glenn 2015). The forced migration, enslavement, and exploitation of Africans and their descendants was just as critical to the development of the United States (Harris 1993). Settler colonialism in the United States was justified with logics of European superiority and of Natives' and Africans' savage and subhuman status. That is, race as a concept arises out of a "social and political need" to conquer, enslave, and dominate. An important feature of the racial project executed over time involved the "phenotypification" of the "other" (Winant 2014, 5). Native and African colonial subjects were constructed by white settlers as different in appearance, as inhabiting inferior bodies, and as possessing inferior intellectual abilities (Mills 1997; Bachetta, Maira, and Winant 2019). Not only was the U.S. founded on *ideas* of white/European superiority, the political, economic, social, and cultural *structures* established promoted the dominance and advancement of whites (Harris 1993; Mills 1997). Consequently, Natives and Blacks were ideologically, politically, and socially excluded from the white settler "American nation." Moreover, these processes are the foundation for a racial hierarchy that situated those deemed as white at the top, Blacks at the bottom, and erased Natives. As such, race and processes of racialization in the U.S. are not only socially, but also, historically and politically constructed (Omi and Winant 1994; Cornell and Hartmann 2007; Bachetta, Maira, and Winant 2019).

Given settler colonial foundations, race, citizenship, and membership have historically intersected in the U.S. From the founding of the nation, racial status was made a condition for citizenship as is exemplified by the Naturalization Act of 1790, which limited citizenship to Whites (Masuoka and Junn 2013). Race was also a key factor determining the incorporation of territories into the nation (Venator-Santiago 2013; Baldoz and Ayala 2013; Gómez 2007) and the entry of individuals into the core national community (Yuval-Davis 1997; Tichenor 2002; Ngai 2004).

Because historic notions of who is worthy of membership in the U.S. have been closely tied to race, those perceived as White have encountered fewer barriers to enter the polity, while non-Whites have been granted an incomplete membership (Masuoka and Junn 2013). Thus, in the U.S., race has been a key criterion along which membership and belonging have been defined.

Latinos, Racialization, and Exclusion

Latinos constitute an important and historical segment of the U.S. population. At 59 million, Latinos make up 18-percent of the total population and they are the largest minority group in the U.S. (ACS 2017). Despite Latinos' magnitude and historic presence in the U.S., they have been largely excluded from the national imaginary. The political and social exclusion of Latinos in the U.S. is tied to historic and contemporary forms of racialization they have undergone. Racialization refers to a process by which individuals "are sorted into the social hierarchy based on the meanings that members of society give to presumed physical or cultural characteristics" (Telles and Ortiz 2008, 131). In the case of Latinos, their racialization entails their treatment as a non-White "racial" group and the negative framing of their physical and cultural characteristics, which in turn informs their position in the racial hierarchy (Cobas, Duany, and Feagin 2009; Feagin and Cobas 2014). Despite dominant perceptions that Latinos are recent immigrants, they–primarily Mexicans and Puerto Ricans–have been present in the U.S. for over a century, and in fact, their racialization can be traced to the early nation-building project.

During the mid and late nineteenth century, race played a critical role in debates about whether to colonize, incorporate, and extend citizenship to Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. Colonization presented a dilemma for U.S. policymakers: on the one hand, the desire for territorial expansion and economic gains and, on the other, the resultant incorporation of non-Whites who inhabited the desired lands (Baldoz and Ayala 2013). This was problematic because both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were perceived as racially inferior, uncivilized, and as having a backwards culture.

Consequently, it was believed that if admitted they would dilute the racial and cultural integrity of the U.S. (Gómez 2008; Font-Guzmán 2013). In the case of Mexicans, even though those who lived on conquered lands were eventually granted U.S. citizenship[4], they were denied full access to schools, institutional participation, and they had restricted political rights (DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Gómez 2008). On the other hand, Puerto Rico was retained as colony, while Puerto Ricans were first made into subjects and later they were granted an unequal U.S. citizenship (Meléndez 2013). Thus the racialization of Latinos in the U.S. is rooted in a colonial legacy that constructed Mexicans and Puerto Ricans as inferior and racial "others," as such, unsuitable for full membership into the territorial and national community.

The contemporary racialization of Latinos is manifested by their treatment as a low-status non-White racial group and by dominant perceptions of Latinos as foreign. Even though Latinos are officially defined as an ethnic group, in practice Latinos are often perceived and treated as a distinct racial group. This is exemplified by the process in which non-group members assign the Latino/Hispanic label onto individuals on the basis of phenotypic characteristics, particularly mestizo or mulatto features that in the U.S. have been constructed as markers of Latin American ancestry (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). This practice is reminiscent of historical biological designations of racial group membership that associated particular body types and physical features with a specific group[5]. It is important to note physical features do not exist in the abstract as they carry ideas of worth and desirability that influence the group's placement in the social hierarchy (Cornell and Hartmann 2007). In the case of Latinos, dominant social perceptions cast them as

[4] Because the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo stipulated that Mexicans who lived in conquered lands be granted U.S. citizenship, colonized Mexicans were "legally" defined as White to bring treaty requirements in alignment with the Naturalization Act of 1790 that made Whiteness a condition for U.S. citizenship.
[5] Even among racially mixed and light skinned Latinos, cultural markers are used to challenge their "American" identity and to assign them to the Latino group, subjecting them to dominant Latino stereotypes and expectations (Jiménez 2010; Vasquez 2011).

uneducated, immoral, and violent criminals (Lichter et al. 1987). Not surprisingly, Whites often have similar stereotypes of Latinos and Blacks, perceiving members of both groups as poor, less intelligent, and more prone to abuse public service programs relative to Whites and Asians (Bobo et al. 2000). Thus, negative stereotypes of Latinos place them at the lower rungs of the racial hierarchy and reinforce their low social status (Cobas, Duany, and Feagin 2009).

Another way in which Latinos are racialized is through popular perceptions of them as foreigners although the majority of Latinos are U.S.-born (66%)[6] (Flores 2017). For example, the Spanish language is used to emphasize Latinos' outsider status and hence, their incompatibility with mainstream White society (García 2009). This is exemplified by the negative characteristics that have been assigned to Spanish as the language of foreigners and as a threat to the Anglo-Saxon cultural make-up of the U.S. (Huntington 2004). Similarly, others have framed Spanish as a deficient language that impedes Latinos' educational attainment and economic mobility, which has resulted in anti-Spanish movements that have targeted Latinos and that further reinforced perceptions of Spanish as a low-status language (García 2009). Mainstream media portrayals as well as a politics of racialized illegality contribute to the construction and re-construction of Latinos as "immigrants," "illegal," "criminals," and as such deportable; perceptions that are adopted by voters and thus have important policy implications (Chavez 2001; Santa Ana 2002; De Genova 2002; Lacayo 2013; Zepeda-Millán 2017). Taken together, the treatment of Latinos as a low-status non-White group, and perceptions of them as foreign and outsiders, contribute to their contemporary racialization regardless of nationality, class background, or generation status (Zepeda-Millán and Wallace 2013; Feagin and Cobas 2014).

[6] In 2015, the Latino population in the U.S. numbered 56.5 million. Foreign-born Latinos accounted for 19.4 million of the Latino population and U.S.-born Latinos accounted for 37.1 million.

In the U.S., being ascribed a non-white racial identity is significant because it limits achieving full inclusion into U.S society. The experiences of minorities in the U.S. show that historically, sorting into non-white racial categories has been used to create distinctions between groups and to justify the unequal allocation of status and rights to those considered racially inferior. Indeed, the State has played a critical role in defining who is and is not a deserving member through racialized policies that have privileged Whiteness, and at a social level, the idea that "American" is synonymous with Whiteness continues to prevail (Huntington 2004; Flores-González 2017; Valle 2019). Similarly, contemporary perceptions of who is worthy of membership into the national community continue to be racially coded. Indeed, the racial hierarchy has been and continues to be key for defining who is a full member of U.S. society (Masuoka and Junn 2013). Thus, contrary to universalistic conceptions of citizenship, racial minorities are granted an incomplete membership in the U.S.

The Making of a Modern Colony: Puerto Rico, Race, and a Colonial Citizenship

Historic debates and decisions related to the incorporation of Puerto Ricans and the Island into the U.S. were highly racialized. Despite the potential economic and political benefits of acquiring the Island, Puerto Ricans were initially excluded from the national community due to their racial incompatibility, cultural inferiority, and unassimilability. These perceptions influenced the pseudo-territorial incorporation of the Island, and the creation of a series of citizenship categories that granted Puerto Ricans inferior rights and denied them social membership. Currently, the Islands' colonial belonging persists and is manifested by its pseudo-territorial incorporation and by Puerto Ricans' unequal U.S. citizenship.

"American" Subjects: Conquest and the Treaty of Paris

The seizure of overseas territories resulting from the Spanish-American war led to animated debates about the boundaries of the American polity. Federal law mandated constitutional rights and protections be applied in all territories acquired by the U.S. However, the challenge for U.S. policy-

makers was the desire to expand territorially for economic, commercial, and military interests, without having to expand national boundaries (Baldoz and Ayala 2013; Grosfoguel 2003). Consequently, the U.S. Congress created a new and ambiguous territorial status that essentially allowed congress to leave Puerto Rico in an undetermined legal position and to decide the status and civil rights of its inhabitants in the future (Venator-Santiago 2013; Baldoz and Ayala 2013). This decision was motivated by policymakers' unwillingness to expand the national polity via the naturalization of individuals who were perceived as less capable and racially inferior, as such, unfit for becoming U.S. citizens. Thus, to circumvent expanding membership boundaries the Treaty of Paris made Puerto Ricans into U.S. subjects, granting them unclear political rights and excluding them from national membership.

Puerto Rican Citizenship: U.S. Legal and Social Membership Denied

The Foraker Act of 1900 officially annexed Puerto Rico yet denied Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. The Act maintained the Island as a separate territory, as doing so would yield greater economic benefits through the collection of commercial taxes (Meléndez 2013). Additionally, Congress opposed giving Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship because doing so would imply the eventual incorporation of the Island as a state (Meléndez 2013), an undesirable situation because Puerto Ricans were perceived as uncivilized and racially incompatible (Font-Guzmán 2013). Consequently, the Foraker Act created a new status that made Puerto Rico into "a U.S. territory in an international sense but foreign in a domestic sense" (Venator-Santiago 2013, 58). Paradoxically, the Foraker Act also created "Puerto Rican citizenship" and conferred a distinct yet non-alien nationality that denied Puerto Ricans equal rights in the U.S. and inclusion into the national community (Venator-Santiago 2013).

U.S. Nationals: Limited Rights, Ambiguous Legal Status

The ambiguous political designation of Puerto Ricans led to a series of court cases known as the Insular Cases, which sought to define their political status and rights. A major issue debated in the Supreme Court was whether the U.S. constitution applied to the insular territories. For example, *Downes v Bidwell (1901)* concluded, "Puerto Rico *belongs* to the U.S but *is not part of* the U.S.," (my emphasis). Of particular influence in the decision was the perception that conquered territories were home to "alien races" that were different in religion, customs, and thought, and thus, they threatened the "American" national community (Meléndez 2013, 116). Thus, defining Puerto Rico's political status in this manner was useful because it precluded the U.S. from having to incorporate different people into the nation (Meléndez 2013; Venator-Santiago 2013), legally legitimizing the exclusion of conquered territories on their inhabitants on racial grounds.

Another important outcome of the insular cases was the designation of Puerto Ricans as U.S. nationals. Restrictions to enter the U.S. mainland and limited rights stemming from an ambiguous political status led Isabel Gonzalez to demand U.S. citizenship in the Supreme Court (1904). A major juridical contention was the legal designation to give Puerto Ricans, as the type of status granted–alien, citizen, or something in-between– would determine their rights. Ultimately, the court decided Puerto Ricans were not "aliens," since technically they were not foreign, but they were not citizens either. Instead, Puerto Ricans were defined as U.S. Nationals, a significant category because it distinguished between those who had *full* constitutional rights, and those who *solely owed* allegiance to the State. Thus, the national category created an intermediate status that granted Puerto Ricans the right of entry but excluded them from electoral and national representation and from constitutional protections (Meléndez 2013).

Statutory Citizenship, Colonial Belonging

The Jones Act of 1917 collectively naturalized Puerto Ricans on the Island as U.S. citizens without changing the Island's colonial status. Despite becoming U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans on the

Island were not granted any voting rights or representation in the U.S. Congress (Venator-Santiago 2013). Additionally, the perception that Puerto Ricans were culturally and socially alien persisted in public and political spheres (Meléndez 2013). Puerto Ricans' colonial status was further institutionalized in the decision for *Balzac v People of Porto Rico (1922),* which maintained Puerto Ricans are citizens but they do not have full constitutional rights; consequently, producing a colonial citizenship for Puerto Ricans. In 1940 congress extended *statutory*[7] birthright citizenship to all individuals born on the Island, a citizenship category that reaffirmed their exclusion from the national community by refusing to grant them constitutional citizenship (Venator-Santiago 2013). In the twenty-first century, limited political rights, a fragile and unequal citizenship, and the persistence of the Island's colonial status characterize Puerto Ricans' colonial status.

Colonialism, Citizenship, and Puerto Rican Migration

Colonialism and citizenship are also significant because they have historically shaped Puerto Rican migratory movements to the U.S. There have been several waves of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and various factors contributed to these historic migrations. For example, during the first half of the twentieth century, emigration was used as a mechanism by the State (U.S. and Puerto Rico) to relieve the island of overpopulation and in response to poor economic conditions (Senior 1953, 1954, 1955; Meléndez 2017). Island Puerto Ricans were also an important source of cheap and disposable labor for U.S. industries (Bonilla 1981; Grosfoguel 1999; Ramos-Zayas 2003; Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006). While U.S. citizenship facilitated the direct (i.e. via contract labor programs) an indirect recruitment of Puerto Rican

[7] Statutory citizenship is different from constitutional citizenship in that it is fragile as it can be reversed by the U.S. Congress at any time. On the other hand, constitutional citizenship can only be revoked by amending the U.S constitution, a process that would entail a lengthy legislative process at the state and federal level. In brief, the Constitution provides that an amendment may be proposed either by the Congress with a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, or by a constitutional convention called for by two-thirds of the State legislatures. A proposed amendment becomes part of the Constitution as soon as it is ratified by three-fourths of the States (38 of 50 States).

laborers, Puerto Ricans were treated as foreign laborers alongside Mexican and Caribbean immigrants. The Great Migration of the mid 20th century is particularly significant as over 500,000 Puerto Ricans arrived in the U.S. as part of this wave (Meléndez 2017). In the decades following the Great Migration, the U.S. government's use of Puerto Rico as a tool to pursue geopolitical interests (i.e. the spread of U.S. hegemony regionally and globally) led to the displacement (again direct and indirect) of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the U.S. (Grosfoguel 2003; Ayala and Bernabe 2007). Historic migrations of the twentieth century are now rivaled by the arrival of half a million Puerto Ricans in the last decade. The significance of migration for the Puerto Rican experience is such that by 2006, more Puerto Ricans resided stateside than in Puerto Rico. This demographic pattern is expected to hold as emigration accelerates in the aftermath of Hurricane María in Puerto Rico.

Despite the history and complexity of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S., Puerto Rican migration is often excluded from mainstream migration scholarship as well as from studies that focus on U.S. migrations (Meléndez 2017). A possible explanation for this omission is that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, as such, they do not cross international borders nor do they encounter the immigration system. Nevertheless, some scholars emphasize that while Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, they in fact cross cultural, linguistic, geographic, and political boundaries. Thus, Puerto Ricans occupy a unique position as citizens and migrants (Duany 2002; Pérez 2004; Vargas-Ramos 2013). Some of this work has explained Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. through a transnationalism lens (Duany 2002; Pérez 2004; Aranda 2007). This scholarship draws similarities between the migrations and settlement experiences of Puerto Ricans and Latin American immigrants. Additionally, transnationalism allows for understanding the connections maintained by Puerto Ricans in the diaspora with Puerto Rico and with Island Puerto Ricans. In comparing U.S-bound migrations from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, more recent work has begun to bridge the

transnational framework with the underlying colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. arguing for Puerto Rican migration as a case of *colonial transnationalism* (Duany 2011).

While transnationalism paradigms are useful for understanding dimensions of the Puerto Rican migration experience (i.e. cultural, linguistic, economic, emotional), others question the applicability of these models, as movement between independent nation-states is a key aspect of the transnational migration framework (Meléndez 2017). Edgardo Meléndez (2017) emphasizes Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. is characterized by the movement of U.S. citizens from a colonial possession (i.e. Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory) to the main jurisdictional and territorial boundaries of the core polity (i.e. the U.S.). As such, Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. is a *colonial migration*, that is, a migration that occurs under the structural conditions of both U.S colonialism and U.S. citizenship in Puerto Rico (2). It is the colonial nature of Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship that has influenced the causes, content, and direction of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. and how Puerto Ricans were historically incorporated into U.S. society. While this conceptualization emphasizes the colonial relationship is critical for understanding Puerto Rican migration, it also recognizes the role of Puerto Rico state institutions in organizing and promoting emigration as well as in channeling and facilitating the settlement of Puerto Ricans in stateside communities. Overall, I contend the case of Puerto Rican migration to Florida presents an opportunity to center empire as structure and migrations under empire in the study of contemporary migration to the U.S.

RESEARCH CASE

Puerto Ricans are a strategic case to examine through colonialism, citizenship, migration, and race/ethnicity frameworks. More specifically, Puerto Ricans' have been U.S. citizens for over a century, a status that stems from a historic and ongoing colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States (Rivera Ramos 2007; Ayala and Bernabe 2007; Baldoz and Ayala 2013; Venator-Santiago 2013, 2017). As a result of this political relationship, millions of Puerto Ricans

migrated to the U.S. mainland throughout the past century (Aranda 2007; Duany 2011; Meléndez 2017). Puerto Rican migration to the mainland does not only involve crossing geographic borders, but also, crossing linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries (Duany 2002; Pérez 2004; Vargas-Ramos 2013). Puerto Ricans are a phenotypically diverse group due to the historic intermixing between Indigenous, African, and European groups, thus, Puerto Ricans do not fit neatly into U.S. racial categories (Duany 2002; Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2009). Additionally, Puerto Ricans' as a group experienced a racialized mode of incorporation in the Northeast and Midwest, which led to their lower position on the social hierarchy (Grosfoguel 1999; Grosfoguel and Georas 2000; Ramos-Zayas 2004). Moreover, Puerto Ricans are an original member of the institutionally created Hispanic ethnic group (Mora 2014).

Thus, by examining Puerto Ricans' contemporary experiences I capture the ways in which colonialism, citizenship, migration, and race/ethnicity converge in a new destination of migration. Specifically, I examine: 1) how Puerto Ricans experience their status as U.S. citizens in Florida; 2) how they make sense of the current immigration debate and how their political and social position influences their perceptions on immigration; 3) and how Puerto Ricans experience natural disasters and become structural and climate refugees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I relied on qualitative methods to conduct this research. I conducted 129 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and participant observations in Orlando metro. Fieldwork was conducted over a total of fourteen months and over the course of three periods: July 2015-February 2018; August 2016-November 2016; and mid-December 2017-mid-January 2018. Data collection periods capture critical sociopolitical moments, including, contemporary Puerto Rican migration and settlement experiences in Orlando metro (2015-2016), the 2016 presidential election (summer and fall of 2016), and the arrival of Hurricane María evacuees (December 2017- January 2018). The interview sample

primarily consists of Puerto Rican respondents (N=119[8]) with a minority of respondents (N=7) of Latin American origin[9]. By employing a qualitative methodology, this research is able to capture and explain meanings, experiences, and perceptions at the individual level as well how social and political processes unfold at the community level. Moreover, this methodology captures the significance of contextual dynamics as well as structural conditions and social forces shaping phenomenon of interest (Abbot 2004; Zepeda-Míllan 2017).

Population and Research Site

At 5.59 million[10], Puerto Ricans are the second largest Latino subgroup in the U.S. (ACS 2017). Currently, there are more Puerto Ricans living in the mainland than on the Island (3.2 million), and due to the ongoing exodus from the Island that was stimulated by Puerto Rico's deteriorating economic conditions, and further propelled by Hurricane María, the Puerto Rican population stateside is expected to grow significantly in upcoming years (Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014). Given the historic and contemporary significance of Puerto Ricans in the United States, shifts in Puerto Rican population movements, and the emergence of Florida as Puerto Ricans' new and leading mainland destination, I collected data in Orlando, Florida.

I selected Orlando Metropolitan Statistical Area (Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford) as the research site because in the latter part of the twentieth century it emerged as a new and popular

[8] Respondent total (N=126) does not add up to the interview total (129) because three respondents were interviewed twice—the purpose of the first interview was to capture their experiences as Puerto Ricans who had migrated and settled in Orlando (2) and as a leader of voter engagement efforts in Orlando (1); the second interview captured their unique insight in the aftermath of Hurricane María in their capacity as institutional and community leaders who led local responses to the hurricane in Puerto Rico and to the arrival of Hurricane María evacuees in Orlando.

[9] The Latin American subset of the sample are respondents who were key community leaders as well as directors and staff of important community organizations in Orlando, Florida. These respondents self-identified as Bolivian, Colombian, Cuban, Ecuadorian, and Venezuelan.

[10] This figure includes only Puerto Ricans residing stateside and excludes Puerto Ricans residing in Puerto Rico. The total Puerto Rican population within the domain of the United States, including those in Puerto Rico and stateside, is 8.79 million (ACS 2017).

destination for Puerto Ricans. Today, Orlando metro is not only home to the second largest concentration of Puerto Ricans stateside (380,055), it is also the site of the fastest growing Puerto Rican population outside of the Island (ACS 2017; Duany and Silver 2010). Furthermore, Orlando has attracted direct migration from the Island and migration from historic mainland Puerto Rican communities. While Puerto Ricans arriving in Orlando have been largely framed as college educated and professionals, flows also include Puerto Ricans with lower levels of education that provide an important source of labor for Orlando's service and tourism industry (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006; Duany and Silver 2010; Meléndez and Vargas Ramos 2014). Additionally, Orlando presents a distinct settlement context relative to traditional Puerto Rican destinations of migration—Orlando is located in a Southern state that is politically conservative; Florida has traditionally been dominated by a large and influential Cuban community; and Orlando lacks the extensive immigration history of migrant gateway cities (i.e. New York or Los Angeles). Nonetheless, given Puerto Rican migration flows since the 1980s, a prominent Puerto Rican community has developed in Orlando (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006; Duany 2010).

Interview Sample Characteristics

The research project's overall interview sample includes 126 respondents. Below, I describe the project's sample by dividing it into three subsamples. The first subsample consists of 99 respondents who are of Puerto Rican descent and who were interviewed about their experience migrating to and settling in Orlando, Florida. While respondents' age ranged from 21 to 80, the sample's median age is 46. Women make up just over half of respondents (n=53 or 54% of the sample). This subsample includes Puerto Ricans who were born or raised in Puerto Rico (n=73 or 74%) and Puerto Ricans who were born or raised in U.S. mainland communities (n=26 or 26%). Most respondents had obtained a four-year college degree or more (n=53 or 54%) and a slightly smaller share had completed some college or less (n=46 or 46%). The vast majority of respondents

were long-term residents (n=68 or 69%)—they had lived in Orlando metro for ten years or more—and just under a third of respondents were recent-arrivals (n=31 or 31%)—they had lived in Orlando metro for five years or less. Thus, this sample captures variation in experiences along gender, age, education, generation, and migration background as well as the complexity of Orlando's Puerto Rican community.

The second subsample includes 13 respondents (out of N=126) who were interviewed in their capacity as local leaders. This subset includes directors and staff of local Latino and Puerto Rican organizations and representatives for the City of Orlando and the Government of Puerto Rico. The local leaders subsample includes respondents of Puerto Rican (6), Bolivian (1), Colombian (2), Cuban (2), Ecuadorian (1), and Venezuelan (1) descent. Through these interviews, I documented the issues affecting the Puerto Rican and Latino community, the strategies local organizations and government agencies deployed to address issues, the relationship between organizations with local and state governments, and I gained insight into the broader organizational infrastructure in Central Florida. Respondents in the subsamples described above were interviewed July 2015-February 2016 and August-November 2016.

The third subsample is comprised of 14 Hurricane María evacuees that arrived in Orlando, Florida from Puerto Rico in the aftermath of the storm. Respondents arrived in Orlando metro from October 7, 2017 - December 27, 2017 and interviews were conducted December 2017-January 2018. Respondents were identified via existing networks in the region that were established during previous fieldwork visits, at community-based organizations serving hurricane evacuees, and through respondent referrals. This subsample is relatively young with a median age of 35. By far, women make up the largest share of the sample (12 out of 14 respondents). Just over half of Hurricane María evacuees interviewed had completed some college or less (eight out of fourteen) while the remaining (six out of fourteen) respondents had completed a college degree or more. All

respondents in this subsample were connected to Orlando through their social networks, that is, they had a relative (specifically, a parent, sibling, cousin, or child) or a friend who lived in the region.

The project's interview sample is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1.1: Project Interview Sample by Subsamples, Total Sample N=126	
Puerto Rican Respondents Subsample, N=99	
Median Age	46
Gender	
Female	54%
Male	46%
Generation	
Island-born/raised	74%
Mainland-born/raised	26%
Education	
Some college or less	46%
College degree or more	54%
Residency in Orlando	
Long-term	69%
Recent arrival	31%
Local Leaders Subsample, N=13	
Directors/staff of local organizations	10
Government representatives	3
Hurricane Maria Evacuees Subsample, N=14	
Median Age	35
Gender	
Female	86%
Male	14%
Education	
Some college or less	57%
College degree or more	43%

Recruitment, Interviews, and Data Analysis

I recruited respondents using a snowball sampling technique. I relied on key community members with access to distinct social and professional networks to identify and recruit an initial wave of respondents. I also recruited respondents at local businesses, community-based organizations, churches, schools, cultural groups, and at public events. And, I drew on personal contacts that had social ties in Orlando, through which I identified potential respondents. I expanded my interview sample by employing a referral-based system through which I requested referrals for potential study participants from respondents once the interview was completed. Overall, I captured a range of experiences by using various recruitment nodes.

Interviews conducted during the July 2015-February 2016 and August-November 2016 data fieldwork periods lasted between 1.5 to 4 hours. Interviews were conducted at a location selected by respondents, most often at a coffee shop or their home. Respondents were given a twenty-five-dollar monetary incentive once the interview was completed. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire. For the Puerto Rican subsample (N=99), interview questions were framed around major topics of interest including: personal and family background, migration and settlement experiences, identity, experiences with inclusion and exclusion, civic and political participation, citizenship and belonging, and perspectives on current and future Island conditions. I also conducted a socioeconomic and demographic survey at the end of each interview. Interviews of local leaders (N=13) aimed at getting expert insight into community-wide issues, the issues that specifically affected Puerto Rican and Latino populations in the region, responses of local and state government to the needs of Puerto Ricans and Latinos, as well as the organizational landscape in Orlando metro. Overall, interviews were conducted in Spanish, English, and Spanglish.

Interviews for the Hurricane María subsample (N=14) were conducted December 2017-January 2018. These interviews were also guided by a semi-structured interview guide that covered a

range of topics including: preparation for the storm, how the storm was experienced, conditions and survival strategies in the aftermath of the hurricane, sources of aid and relief, migration decision-making and migration to Florida, and perspectives on governmental responses. These interviews lasted 45 minutes to 2 hours and they were conducted at a location selected by respondents, most often at a relative's home or at the FEMA hotel they were temporarily residing. All fourteen interviews were conducted in Spanish.

All Interviews were digitally recorded and they were transcribed verbatim. Data analysis was conducted using Dedoose, an online data management and analysis platform. Using Dedoose, I systematically analyzed data by reading through interview transcriptions, relying on an inductive (theory-driven) and deductive (data-driven) approach to code data (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006), and identifying recurring codes and themes. I also examined data across comparison categories to identify sources of variation. I analyzed interviews in the language they were conducted to preserve the integrity of the narratives. This data analysis technique allowed me to identify meanings and experiences from the raw data while also being guided by existing conceptual understandings. All respondents have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Participant Observation

I also conducted ethnographic observations in the Orlando metro area during the fieldwork period. I conducted participant observations at city-wide events that catered to Latinos of various nationalities, events that targeted the Puerto Rican community, at community-based organizations, and when I volunteered for grassroots and established organizations. During fieldwork conducted from July 2015-February 2016, I attended local organization meetings, I assisted with organizing and executing community gatherings and events, I collected and organized local demographic data to be used by local organizations, and I attended political lobby visits with community members and local organizations in Orlando, the Florida state capitol of Tallahassee, and in Washington D.C.

Data collection conducted during August-November 2016 particularly relied on participant observation. The purpose of this round of fieldwork was to collect data on local voter engagement efforts that targeted Puerto Ricans and Latinos in preparation for the 2016 presidential election. I identified the main organizations involved in these efforts and I volunteered in voter registration and engagement campaigns that targeted Latino and Puerto Rican communities. This ethnographic work allowed me to collect data on targeted precincts in Orlando metro, the strategies organizations deployed, and inter-organizational challenges. I also documented community members' response to voter registration and get-out-the-vote activities and to organizational efforts. During this period, I mainly conducted participant observations with two organizations, however, I was also exposed to the broader organizational landscape focused on political mobilization.

One of the organizations I volunteered with is a large New York-based organization with a satellite office in Orlando, Florida. With this organization, I assisted with voter registration at local colleges, festivals, and at Latino businesses. I also participated in door-knocking and get-out-the-vote efforts in Latino and Puerto Rican neighborhoods of Orlando and Kissimmee. Additionally, I was exposed to the planning and execution of civic engagement trainings that aimed to target Puerto Ricans in Orlando metro. The second organization is a local grassroots organization established by Puerto Rican residents. As a volunteer for this group, I was a part of meetings that sought to develop strategies to stimulate Puerto Ricans' interest in the U.S. political system. I also participated at events organized to draw residents' attention to local, state, and national elections, and to the issues affecting the local Puerto Rican community. And, I participated in coalition-based get-out-the-vote events and activities.

Conducting participant observation at the community level and as a volunteer for two organizations gave me unique insight into the process of engaging Puerto Ricans as political actors, and into the agents and institutions that are driving the political mobilization of Puerto Ricans and

Latinos in Central Florida. Moreover, engaging in participant observation granted me direct contact with Puerto Rican (and Latino) residents, gave me first-hand exposure into their political views, the reasons motivating them to or discouraging them from participating politically, and their reaction to organizational efforts and strategies. These data collected via ethnographic methods are critical given the significance of the 2016 presidential election, the impact of Puerto Rican voters in Florida, and for understanding Latino politics more broadly.

My research methodology was guided by community-engaged research principles. By embedding myself in the local community and institutions, I engaged with community members on a regular basis and I developed my own ties to the local community, which facilitated data collection. It also allowed me to contribute my skills, knowledge, and labor to the local community in an effort to make the research process more collaborative and less extractive. Moreover, it allowed for members of the community to play an important role in the research process by recognizing their expertise and knowledge as local residents and as members of the populations of interest.

ARUGUMENTS AND CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTION

This research capitalizes on important shifts in Puerto Rican migratory patterns to analyze contemporary Puerto Rican migration, the institution of U.S. citizenship, the politics of immigration, and how natural disasters are experience by populations that occupy an unequal political status. While much public attention has focused on Puerto Rican migration to Florida after Hurricane María, I argue that this trend is in fact part of a longer pattern. In the past ten years, over five-hundred thousand Puerto Ricans left Puerto Rico and instead of New York, Florida emerged as Puerto Ricans' leading destination. In fact, Florida's Puerto Rican population exceeds one million and now ranks the largest stateside. The shift away from historic destinations in the Northeast and Midwest to the South means Puerto Ricans have settled in a vastly different racial and political context, with consequences not fully examined by contemporary scholarship. Through 14 months of

participant observation and 129 in-depth interviews with Puerto Ricans and community leaders in Orlando, Florida, I develop a concept of *colonial racialized citizenship*.

Colonial racialized citizenship accounts for Puerto Ricans' unequal political relationship with the state and group level relations that are racial. The *colonial* dimension of this concept refers to the relationship between Puerto Rico (as a territory), Puerto Ricans (as a people), and the State (i.e. the United States). Specifically, this dimension emphasizes Puerto Rico's ongoing inferior political and territorial status; Puerto Ricans' unequal citizen status; Puerto Ricans' differentiated citizen rights. In other words, this dimension recovers colonial legacies and accounts for contemporary colonial realities, which have created a group with different citizenship statuses and unequal rights and that is excluded from the American national imaginary.

The racialized dimension accounts for layered racializations that exclude and marginalize Puerto Ricans today. At one level, the colonial construction of Puerto Ricans as uncivilized and culturally and racially inferior—a racialization that was used to execute the American colonial project in Puerto Rico and to maintain Puerto Ricans at the periphery during the early 20th century. At a second level, the historic othering of Puerto Ricans in traditional mainland destinations, which constructed them as deviant and dependent, as a racial other, and that assigned a negative social value to a Puerto Rican identity. And, In the current context of immigration, racialized illegality, and nativist sociopolitical moment, Puerto Ricans are subjected to the broader racialized perceptions of Latinos. I contend these layered racializations produce Puerto Ricans' invisibility as members of the American nation, while simultaneously making them hypervisible as "foreigners", "unrightfully present" and "removable." While these layered racializations capture temporal dimensions of Puerto Ricans' history in the U.S., this research captures they are experienced as interlocking forms of marginalization in Florida.

I argue that the concept of a colonial racialized citizenship provides a framework for understanding the contemporary Puerto Rican experience at the structural and inter-group levels. Interviews with Puerto Ricans moving to Florida show how colonial racialized citizenship explains current Puerto Rican migratory patterns to the South. More specifically, Puerto Rico's colonial status and Puerto Ricans' citizenship facilitates the recruitment of both skilled and unskilled Puerto Rican labor necessary for Central Florida industries. Further, the colonial relationship is a root cause of the economic and fiscal crisis driving the arrival of more recent and economically vulnerable Puerto Ricans. A colonial status that has excluded Puerto Ricans from the national imaginary couple with Puerto Ricans distinct cultural background and the broader racialization of Latinos also explain the hostile social and institutional context of reception they encounter in Central Florida. This form of citizenship also explicates Puerto Rican and Latino relations characterized by tension, struggle, and cooperation stemming from differing relationships to the State yet occupying a similar structural position in the region.

However, I contend Puerto Ricans also find ways to assert agency within the confines of colonial racialized citizenship. This form of citizenship allows for the act of migration with no restrictions and it gives Puerto Ricans legal standing to assert a legitimate presence in Florida. It also positions Puerto Ricans to become political entrepreneurs who are creating political projects and leading mobilizing efforts. I contend Puerto Ricans have navigated these features of colonial racialized citizenship to become a potentially transformative electorate in the largest swing state, and as such, critical to the national politics. Overall, a colonial racialized citizenship has important implications as it captures both liberal republic and colonial forms of citizenship coexist in the United States.

Colonial racialized citizenship also provides a lens for understanding Hurricane María as not only a natural but also as a structurally-made disaster. For example, coloniality is at the center of U.S.

imposed economic policies that have disrupted Puerto Rico's economy, laid the foundation for the decade-long recession and growing public sector debt, and contributed to disinvestment in the island's infrastructure—all of which increased the island's economic and structural vulnerability. A more current manifestation of the political inequality is the undemocratic Financial Control Board appointed by the U.S. President, which oversees and must approve the financial decisions of the Puerto Rico government, even in the wake of Hurricane María—an imposed political body that is reminiscent of a colonial administration and colonial control of the past.

The differential treatment of the island and of Puerto Ricans as a people is also illustrated in the federal government's response to the storm, including: the delayed deployment of key disaster-response leadership to execute recovery efforts and the delayed deployment of critical military assets necessary for delivering aid and performing rescue operations (FEMA 2018). Indeed, a governance by difference that is further exacerbated by Puerto Ricans' lacking representation in Congress that could make demands on behalf of the Puerto Rican people. The racialized position of Puerto Ricans in the aftermath of the storm is captured in the paternalistic discourse of the 45th president of the United States which denies the responsibility of the State, places blame on Puerto Ricans for the level of the devastation and the slow recovery, and dismisses the loss of thousands of lives (see Cillizza 2017; Landler 2017; Ballhaus 2018; Karni and Mazzei 2019).

Colonial racialized citizenship also helps us understand how Puerto Ricans have navigated and responded to the storm, its aftermath, and the government's response. Puerto Ricans have drawn on their status as citizens to engage in migration to the mainland as a form of disaster relief. In fact, the migration of 160,000 Puerto Ricans in the year after Hurricane Maria is one of the most significant migratory movements of Puerto Ricans to the U.S. (Centro RD2018-01 2018). Puerto Ricans on the mainland and the island also engage in acts of resistance through which they challenge the differential treatment of Puerto Rico and oppose narratives that dehumanize Puerto Ricans and

that dismiss their collective and individual suffering (see Cortés Chico 2018; Florido 2018; Rua 2018). Moreover, as documented by this research, members of the diaspora seek to leverage and promote an emergent group consciousness with the goal of converting Puerto Ricans' demographic magnitude into political influence in the largest swing state of the nation.

Theoretical and Empirical Interventions

This dissertation bridges colonialism, citizenship, migration, and race/ethnicity literatures to analyze and explain the contemporary experiences of Puerto Ricans—a group that is simultaneously citizens, racialized subjects, and migrants. More specifically, sociological research on racialization has made significant contributions to our understanding of social relations and group experiences in the United States, and the discipline's renewed interest in colonialism is also providing stronger theoretical groundings for understanding a "history of the present." But while these scholarships are not separate pursuits, there is a dearth of empirical treatments of their present-day intersection. Here, the case of Puerto Ricans examined in *I Am Not Your Immigrant* is crucial to multiple lines of sociological inquiry—to understand the experiences of Puerto Ricans is to understand the contemporary nexus of migration, race/ethnicity, and colonialism. *I Am Not Your Immigrant* also contributes to social scientific knowledge by providing an innovative analysis and conceptual framework for understanding a group that occupies an ambiguous political, social, and epistemological position. Additionally, it provides the first comprehensive sociological account of the contemporary Puerto Rican experience in Florida, a place where the intersection of migration and citizenship is having profound consequences. Indeed, this work provides timely insight into the national sociopolitical climate by illuminating the on-the-ground anxieties and struggles for economic well-being, space, and power in regions undergoing demographic and political transitions. Ultimately, this research intervenes in issues of self-determination, equality, and full democracy that remain unresolved in the United States.

ROADMAP OF THE DISSERTATION

The first article of the dissertation (chapter 2), "Puerto Ricans in Florida: A Historical, Demographic, and Socioeconomic Portrait," contextualizes the case of study and the research site. Specifically, I provide a historical overview of various waves of Puerto Rican migration during the twentieth and early twenty-first century. I also review traditional destinations for Puerto Ricans stateside. Next, I discuss the emergence of new destinations of migration and I focus on Puerto Rican migration to Florida. Lastly, I analyze U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data and I generate a socioeconomic and demographic profile of Puerto Ricans in Florida and in the Orlando metro.

The second article (chapter 3), "Race and the Empire-state: Puerto Ricans Unequal U.S. Citizenship," interrogates dominant citizenship frameworks by examining the meaning of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans. Much of mainstream citizenship scholarship builds from liberal nation-centered conceptualizations of citizenship that emphasize the legal and social significance of citizenship—this status awards individuals exclusive rights and obligations, formal belonging in the territorial community, and membership into the imagined national community. Drawing on 98 in-depth interviews with Puerto Ricans, this article illuminates incongruencies in modern citizenship scholarship. Specifically, while Puerto Ricans define U.S. citizenship as a formal status and as rights, they perceive their status as U.S. citizens does not grant them membership into the American national community. I explain this incompatibility between legal definitions of citizenship and social conceptions of membership by incorporating coloniality and racialization to the study of citizenship. I argue Puerto Ricans' understandings of and experience with U.S. citizenship stem from: (1) the State marking Puerto Rico (as a place) and Puerto Ricans (as a people) as different and inferior, and (2) racialization processes that have led to the conflation of Latino with foreign and racial other. Moreover, I argue U.S. citizenship is not a category that produces political and social uniformity but

rather, U.S. citizenship is an internally stratified institution that produces politically and socially marginalized citizen populations. This article is published in the January 2019 issue of *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*.

The third article (chapter 4), "The Politics of Immigration in a Colonial Context: Puerto Ricans' Attitudes Toward Undocumented Immigration," examines the contemporary intersection of immigration, citizenship, and colonialism by studying the immigration attitudes of Puerto Ricans in Florida. I draw on in-depth interviews conducted in the Orlando metropolitan area during the 2016 presidential election to better understand how Puerto Ricans make sense of the immigration debate, how they formulate their position on the debate, and how their attitudes toward immigration impact their political behavior in the largest swing state of the nation. I find Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration convey a group consciousness and a sense of linked fate with Latin American immigrants. Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans adopt and deploy mainstream views of migrant deservingness and undeservingness. I also find immigration is a critical election issue for respondents, such that, a candidate's stance on immigration would determine their vote for president. I argue Puerto Ricans' immigration attitudes are shaped by their position as colonial racialized citizens. On one hand, this status makes Puerto Ricans outsiders and subject to nativism and xenophobia in Central Florida; on the other hand, Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship grants them an insider status and authority to enforce the political boundaries of the nation.

The final article (chapter 5), "*¡Puerto Rico Se Levanta!*: Hurricane María and Narratives of Struggle, Resilience, and Migration," examines the experiences of Puerto Ricans who experienced Hurricane María in Puerto Rico and evacuated to Orlando in the storm's aftermath. Hurricane María, a category 4 storm, ravaged Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017. The storm flooded Island communities, thousands of houses endured structural damage or were completely destroyed, and the storm devastated the Island's infrastructure. Since Florida has become Puerto Ricans' primary

mainland destination in recent decades, the state was expected to attract a significant proportion of Hurricane María evacuees. This article draws on resiliency and migration models to analyze the experiences of Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane María. Specifically, it examines how respondents and their families experienced Hurricane María and relief efforts, the survival strategies they deployed after the storm, their migration decision-making and journey to Florida, and their interpretations of governmental response to the hurricane. This study elucidates how populations who occupy an unequal political and territorial status experience natural disasters, engage in recovery behavior, and experience displacement. This article is published by the Natural Hazards Center as part of their Quick Response Reports series (QR 279).

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CHAPTER 2:

PUERTO RICANS IN FLORIDA:

A HISTORICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND SOCIOECONOMIC PORTRAIT

ABSTRACT

This article contextualizes Puerto Rican migration to Florida through a historical analysis of Puerto Rican migration and by examining key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics in Florida and Orlando metro. First, I provide a historical overview of various waves of Puerto Rican migration to the mainland during the twentieth and early twenty-first century. I also review traditional destinations of migration for Puerto Ricans and prevailing settlement experiences in these regions. I follow with a discussion of the emergence of new destinations of migration for Puerto Ricans and I focus on Puerto Rican settlement in Florida. Lastly, I draw on 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) data made available by the Minnesota Population Center as Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) to analyze Florida's ethnoracial landscape, identify the top metropolitan destinations for Puerto Ricans in Florida, and to generate a socioeconomic and demographic profile of Puerto Ricans in the Orlando metropolitan statistical area. The group-level analysis includes comparisons between island-born and U.S.-born Puerto Ricans as well as analyses of indicators of interests for working-age Puerto Ricans (ages 25-64).

Keywords: Migration, Puerto Ricans, Florida, Orlando, Demographic factors, Socioeconomic status

In recent years, Puerto Rican population flows and settlement patterns have changed significantly. First, current emigration flows from Puerto Rico are comparable to those of the Great Migration of the 1950s (Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014; Cohn et al. 2014). Second, the direction of Puerto Rican migration has shifted away from the Northeast and Midwest to new destinations in the U.S. South. In fact, Florida now has the largest concentration of Puerto Ricans in the mainland (1.1 million) (ACS 2017), and three of the top ten metropolitan destinations for Puerto Ricans are located in Florida (Duany and Silver 2010; García-Ellín 2014). Third, flows arriving in Florida are more selective relative to previous migration waves as current flows include a significant proportion of college educated and professional Puerto Ricans (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). Lastly, several streams of Puerto Ricans are converging in Florida—one has arrived from the Island, another from traditional mainland destinations, and a third consists of Florida born or raised Puerto Ricans.

These new migration patterns contrast to historic flows, which were primarily directed to the Northeast (New York) and secondarily to the Midwest (Chicago). In these regions, Puerto Ricans were incorporated into the secondary sector of the labor market and they were sorted into the bottom rungs of the ethnoracial hierarchy (Grosfoguel 1999, 2003; Ramos-Zayas 2003). This racialized mode of incorporation contributed to Puerto Ricans' persisting low socioeconomic status, a status characterized by lower levels of education, an overrepresentation in low-wage jobs, and being among the lowest income earners (Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2009; Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014; Reyes 2014). However, given Puerto Rican migratory shifts to the U.S. South, as well as the educational and class diversity of contemporary Puerto Rican migrants, what are Florida Puerto Ricans' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics? What do these suggest about Puerto Ricans structural position in Florida and relative to counterparts in the U.S.

In this article, I use U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey data to create a socioeconomic and demographic portrait of Puerto Ricans residing in Florida and in Orlando metro. To historicize and contextualize this contemporary migration, I first provide a historical review of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. Next, I review Puerto Rican settlement in traditional mainland destinations and the rise of new destinations. Lastly, I examine Florida's ethnoracial landscape and I conclude with a socioeconomic and demographic analysis of Puerto Ricans in Orlando metro.

PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Early 20th Century Migration

Initial Puerto Rican migrants to the U.S. can be traced to the early twentieth century. U.S. citizenship and deteriorating economic and social conditions in the Island produced low-skilled labor migration to the mainland during this period (Aranda 2007). The demand for Puerto Rican laborers expanded during WWI, which further channeled Puerto Ricans into agricultural and industrial work primarily in the Northeast and secondarily in the Midwest (Duany 2002; Bergad and Klein 2010). This was a key migration period because it provided the base for Puerto Rican communities on the mainland (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006), and it also set in motion the racialization of Puerto Ricans, particularly in the labor market (Grosfoguel 1999). For example, while European migrants were becoming upwardly mobile in New York, Puerto Ricans were confined to low-wage undesirable manufacturing jobs alongside Blacks. Although Jews and Italians were at the bottom of the European ethnic hierarchy, Puerto Ricans were further below them earning significantly less in comparable occupations (Grosfoguel 1999). The above migratory patterns and settlement processes had significant implications for Puerto Ricans in the U.S, particularly for their future mobility.

The Great Migration: 1945-1965

During the Great Migration, approximately half a million Puerto Ricans left the Island for the U.S. (Acosta-Belén and Santiago 2006; Birson 2014; Meléndez 2017). The effects of colonization on the Island's economy were key contributors to this exodus. Colonization allowed U.S. companies to take over Island sugar plantations leading to the displacement of local landowners and triggering high levels of unemployment (Ayala 1999, 2007). The Great Depression of the 1930s exacerbated the effects of U.S penetration on the Island, further propelling emigration as Puerto Ricans sought economic relief in the mainland. In the following decade, WWII shutoff the European migration and with that an important supply of labor for the U.S., consequently, U.S. employers turned to the Island once again for contracted laborers who were channeled into low-wage menial occupations in the Northeast (Grosfoguel 2003; Aranda 2007; Meléndez 2017).

In the post-WWII years, Puerto Rico acquired greater geopolitical value for the U.S. During this period, the U.S. implemented a series of policies to transform the Island into a Caribbean showcase for capitalism. A cornerstone piece of this campaign was Operation Bootstrap, which sought to shift the Island from an agrarian toward an industrialized economy, and to attract investment capital into the Island via low-wages and tax incentives for U.S. companies (Dietz 1989; Grosfoguel 2003; Ayala 2007). This economic restructuring displaced local landowners and agricultural workers, prompting high levels of rural to urban migration; however, nascent Island industries were unable to absorb the surplus labor. In response, both the U.S. and Island governments relied on various institutional mechanisms to promote outmigration in an effort to remove excess low-skilled labor from the Island and reduce overpopulation and poverty (Grosfoguel 2003; Ayala and Bernabe 2007; Birson 2014). Thus, colonial and economic forces, and the pursuit of U.S. hegemonic influence, stimulated the Puerto Rican Great Migration.

Beyond the Great Migration: 1960s-1990s

Economic changes continued in the Island from 1960 through 1970. At the end of both decades there were signs that the Island's economic model was failing. Despite the federal and local tax incentives offered to U.S. businesses, other industrializing economies attracted U.S. firms away from Puerto Rico, decreasing the Island's competitive advantage in labor-intensive industries (Aranda 2007; Ayala and Bernabe 2007). These conditions prompted an industry shift away from labor-intensive towards capital-intensive production in the Island. The government continued to leverage federal tax incentives to attract new industries, specifically pharmaceutical, electronics, and multinational corporations. The entrance of new companies attracted return migration to the Island while lowering outmigration (Birson 2014). However, regardless of the structural changes implemented, unemployment remained high because new capital-intensive industries did not generate sufficient labor demand (Aranda 2007; Birson 2014). In an effort to maintain its Caribbean showcase, the U.S. responded by expanding federal funds transfers to the Island for social assistance programs, setting in motion the State's future reliance on such programs for job creation and as a buffer against economic fluctuations (Grosfoguel 2003).

Contemporary Migratory Patterns: 2000 – Present

There have been important shifts in Puerto Rican population movements during the first decade of the twenty-first century. A notable feature is the size of the current migration wave, which is said to rival the exodus observed during the Great Migration (Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014; Cohn et al. 2014). The state of the Puerto Rican economy is a major factor triggering emigration. Deteriorating economic conditions in the early 2000s, the effects of the Great Recession and the fiscal austerity policies that followed, and the termination of corporate tax incentives all led to massive private and public sector layoffs. In fact, unemployment remains in the double digits (13.1%) years after the end of the Great Recession (Birson 2014; Cohn et al. 2014). Additionally, the

Island's growing government debt over the past 20 years led to the downgrade of Puerto Rico's credit rating to "junk" status in 2014 (Cohn et al. 2014) and in 2015, Governor Alejandro García Padilla declared Puerto Rico's debt insolvent. The economic and financial crisis are exacerbated by deteriorating social conditions, particularly, rising crime and an overall sense of insecurity, which have further contributed to growing emigration (Duany and Silver 2010; Birson 2014).

Another notable trend is that the direction of Puerto Rican flows has shifted to new destinations in the U.S. South, particularly to Florida. The popularity of Florida has been such that the Sunshine state has attracted Puerto Ricans from the Island and from historic stateside communities. In 2013, Florida was home to the second-largest Puerto Rican population (900,000) in the mainland (ACS 2013), and by 2017, Florida's Puerto Rican population (1,128,225) displaced New York's historic Puerto Rican community (1,113,123) (ACS 2017).

RECEPTION AND INCORPORATION IN MAINLAND COMMUNITIES

Traditional Destinations: The Northeast and Midwest

Scholarship on Puerto Ricans has largely focused on their experiences in the Northeast and Midwest because these have been traditional destinations for Puerto Ricans. A notable feature of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. has been their persistently low socioeconomic position (Rodriguez 2000; Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich 2009). Early scholarship attributed their marginal social and economic status to a "culture of poverty"—values, behaviors, and attitudes that perpetuate impoverished living conditions (Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Lewis 1966). However, more critical scholarship explained political, economic, and social forces led to marginalized conditions and experiences in traditional destinations (Padilla 1987; Ramos-Zayas 2003; Grosfoguel 2003; Pérez 2004). This line of work argues that their labor migration, negative social reception, and incorporation into the secondary sector of the labor market led to their racialization in New York (Grosfoguel 1999). Further, Puerto Ricans' distinct culture diverse phenotype marked them as non-White and contributed to their

exclusion from mainstream society (Duany 2002). Consequently, Puerto Ricans were economically marginalized, residentially segregated, and sorted into the bottom of the racial hierarchy in New York (Massey and Denton 1993; Grosfoguel and Georas 1996; Grosfoguel 1999).

Others have noted that these racialized experiences discouraged Puerto Ricans' feelings of belonging to the American community and contributed to maintaining emotional ties to the Island (Flores 1985; Duany 2002; Aranda 2007). Feelings of (dis)belonging led to the rejection of an American and hyphenated American identity among mainland Puerto Ricans and to the persistence of a national Puerto Rican identity across generations. Additionally, exclusionary experiences contributed to the emergence of a Nuyorican identity among mainland-born Puerto Ricans in New York—an identity that emerges from a sense of being racially distinct from the mainstream, an awareness of their socioeconomic disadvantages, and from experiencing discrimination in the mainland (Flores 1985).

Puerto Ricans in the Midwest had a similar experience to that of their counterparts in the Northeast. Employment opportunities in the manufacturing industry made Chicago an attractive destination for low-skilled working-class Puerto Rican migrants in the post-WWII era. Migration to the region was encouraged by government-sponsored and private recruitment efforts in the Island and was further reinforced by migrant networks (Ramos-Zayas 2003; Pérez 2004; Meléndez 2017). The racialized division of labor in Chicago steered Puerto Ricans into low-paying, unstable, and undesirable jobs that offered few, if any, opportunities for mobility. And economic restructuring–which made education credentials a requirement for better employment–further solidified their tenuous position in the labor market (Padilla 1987).

Although early Puerto Rican migrants in Chicago were perceived more positively relative to counterparts in New York (Pérez 2004), once Puerto Rican migration to the region was set in motion, members of the host society largely extended them an unfavorable reception (Padilla 1987). Puerto Ricans were stigmatized as a racial "other" and Whites often perceived them as lazy, lacking "American" values, poor at their own fault, and dangerous. Negative social

attitudes towards Puerto Ricans led to various forms of discrimination, particularly in the labor market–which limited their occupational mobility–and in housing–which constrained them to impoverished and marginalized communities (Padilla 1987; Pérez 2004). Further, Puerto Ricans in the city were hyper-policed and encounters with law enforcement were often characterized by physical and verbal abuse (Padilla 1987; Ramos-Zayas 2004). Moreover, Puerto Ricans' Scholars argue that these forms of institutional discrimination led to Puerto Ricans' inferior economic, social, and political position, and perpetuated their racial minority status in Chicago (Padilla 1987; Ramos-Zayas 2003).

New Destinations: Current Migration Trends and Settlement in Florida

Mid-twentieth century Puerto Rican migrants to Florida included a significant proportion of business migrants that were later followed by labor migrants. (Duany and Silver 2010). Surplus labor in the Island coupled with employment opportunities in Florida provided a convenient mechanism for the Puerto Rican government to relieve the Island of a growing population. Certainly, Florida employers also benefited from economic conditions in Puerto Rico, as they saw a source of abundant and disposable labor in the Island. During the 1940s-1950s, Puerto Ricans were largely contracted to perform agricultural and menial work in the state. Although their employment was seasonal, the increasing presence of working-class Puerto Ricans led to local antagonism against them due to their non-English background, racially ambiguous position, and because they were stereotyped as prone to criminal behavior. Thus, in order to prevent Puerto Rican laborers from settling in Florida, employers withheld part of their earnings to be paid upon their return to the Island (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006).

During the 1990's, the Puerto Rican population in Florida grew significantly, which contributed to making the state an important destination by the early 2000s. Puerto Ricans became concentrated in the Central and South Florida regions, and by the turn of the century, Orlando, Tampa, and Miami were among the top ten cities home to Puerto Ricans stateside (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). Not only do a fifth of U.S. Puerto Ricans reside in Florida, they have become the second-largest Latino group (1.1 million) in the state behind Florida's historic Cuban population (1.5 million) (ACS 2017). From 1990 to 2010, Florida's Puerto Rican population grew by nearly 250%[11] and Orlando metro (Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford), more specifically, emerged as the leading destination for Puerto Ricans during this period. By 2008, Orlando metro (222,481) had displaced New Jersey metro (213,076) as the metropolitan area with the second-largest Puerto Rican population stateside (Duany and Silvers 2010).

[11] Florida's Puerto Rican population was 247,010 in 1990 and by 2010 it had grown to 847,550. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau data for Puerto Rican population of Florida in Duany and Silver 2010; U.S. Census 2010, Table DP-1: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: Florida.

A deteriorating Island economy, a contracting labor market, fiscal instability, and rising crime have been identified as factors contributing to Island emigration (Duany and Silver 2010; Birson 2014; Cohn et al. 2014). On the other hand, a better quality of life–including improved housing and education opportunities, safety, and health–family reunification, and the proximity to Puerto Rico have drawn Island Puerto Ricans to the region (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). Further, higher wages, better working conditions, and the potential for occupational mobility have attracted middle-class, professional, and educated Island migrants (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). This region has also attracted low-skilled blue-collar workers who have sought out employment in the tourism and service industries. In particular, Walt Disney has played an important role in drawing in both low-skilled and educated Puerto Ricans by directly recruiting in the Island and through employees' networks (Duany and Silver 2010).

Orlando has also become the preferred destination for stateside Puerto Ricans. Preliminary reports indicated internal Puerto Rican migration to Florida consisted largely of working class, lower-educated second-and-third generation Puerto Ricans from the Northeast and Midwest (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). A decline in manufacturing jobs in traditional destinations, coupled with employment opportunities, a lower cost of living, and improved climate attracted stateside Puerto Ricans to Florida. The early stream of stateside Puerto Ricans was smaller relative to the flows originating in the Island; however, more recent reports have found internal Puerto Rican migrants have not only gained greater prominence among flows, they have also become more educationally selective (Meléndez and Vargas-Ramos 2014).

Puerto Ricans' settlement in Orlando differs from historic patterns as they are bypassing urban centers and moving directly into suburban communities. These settlement patterns have important implications for intergroup contact, the quality of public services and schools Puerto Ricans have access to, and for the accumulation of wealth via homeownership (Vélez and Burgos

2010). Another important feature of the Puerto Rican population in Orlando is that it includes a significant number of entrepreneurs (Duany and Silver 2010). The growing Puerto Rican community and emerging Puerto Rican firms have attracted several Island based companies to the region, while local professional organizations, such as the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce, have further facilitated entrepreneurial activities (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). In fact, by 2002 Puerto Ricans owned a larger share of businesses (25%) in the Orlando area relative to Cubans (23%) (Duany and Silver 2010).

METHODS AND DATA

Data for this analysis are drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and made available by the Minnesota Population Center as Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). The American Community Survey is an ongoing nationwide survey that collects detailed demographic, social, economic, and household information. Because the survey is conducted on an annual basis, it is a reliable source of the most up to date population characteristics at the state and local levels. The specific sample used is the 1 percent integrated public use microdata sample for the 2013 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, which is a 1-in-100 random sample of the population. I use ACS 2013 data because this was the most recent data available when I entered the field for the qualitative component of this research. As such, the profile generated in this article reflects the ethnoracial, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics in Florida and Orlando metro and among Puerto Ricans at the time the investigation began.

For the analysis, I generate a demographic profile for the state of Florida and I examine demographic and socioeconomic indicators of Puerto Ricans in the Orlando Metropolitan Statistical Area (Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford). I also conduct a comparative analysis between island-born and

U.S.-born Puerto Ricans[12]. Cases for the group level analysis are limited to individuals who self-identified as Puerto Rican in response to the ethnicity question in the American Community Survey. Because I am particularly interested in the position of working age adults, some portions of the analysis also limit cases to Puerto Ricans who were ages 25-64 when the survey was conducted. Overall, the analytical samples consist of 191,034 valid cases at for the Florida level analysis; 18,340 cases for the Orlando MSA; and 2,002, cases for the Puerto Rican group level analysis in Orlando MSA. Person weights were applied to generate a representative person-level statistical analysis of the populations of interest. Person weights indicate how many persons in a population of interest are represented by a given person (i.e. case) in an IPUMS sample. Person weights are provided by the IPUMS. The statistical analysis was conducted using STATA 12 software.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The goal of the following analysis is to first provide an understanding of demographic characteristics of Florida and of the distribution of Puerto Ricans in the state. Second, the analysis focuses on the settlement of Puerto Ricans in the Orlando metro. In this section, I create a profile of the Puerto Rican population by examining their gender and generational distribution in Orlando as well as their marital status. I follow with an analysis of Puerto Ricans' educational attainment and their occupational distribution. This section concludes with an overall assessment of Puerto Ricans' socioeconomic standing, which includes a review of their employment status, education, income, and levels of poverty.

Florida

Table 2.1 illustrates the ethnoracial composition of the state of Florida. Non-Hispanic Whites are the majority making up 56-percent of the state's population, followed by Latinos, which

[12] Island-born refers to individuals who were born in Puerto Rico. The terms "island" and "Puerto Rico" are used interchangeably in this article. U.S.-born refers to individuals of Puerto Rican ancestry who were born in one of the fifty U.S. states.

account for about a quarter Florida's population. In fact, Latinos have surpassed the Black population by 1.5 million, an interesting demographic feature in a Southern state and a context where race relations have historically been shaped by the Black/White racial binary. Latinos in Florida are an important demographic group for various reasons. For example, at 4.6 million, Florida's Latino population is the third largest in the nation. Moreover, Florida Latinos make up nearly 10-percent of the total Latino population in the U.S. (ACS 2013). Indeed, the magnitude of Florida's Latino has made them a particularly important voting bloc in this critical swing state both at state and national levels. In fact, Florida's Latino population nearly doubled from 1990-2010, outpacing the growth of the state's total population. Furthermore, the Latino population increased in nearly all of Florida's counties (with the exception of one) during the same time period (Office of Economic and Demographic Research 2014). While Florida's Latino population has typically been associated with the Cuban community due to Cuban migration patterns to the U.S., the Latino population in Florida has become increasingly diverse and includes various Latin American ethnicities.

Table 2.1: Ethnoracial Groups in Florida, 2013

Latino or Hispanic	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic Asian	Non-Hispanic *Other	Total Population
24%	56%	15%	3%	2%	100%
4,620,459	11,033,549	3,027,074	505,619	413,299	19,600,000

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). *The category "Other" includes: Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic Other Race, and Non-Hispanic Two or More Races.

Table 2.2 provides a breakdown of the Latino population by origin. Among Floridian Latinos, Cubans remain the largest subgroup (1,345,030), accounting for 3 of every 10 Latinos in the

state. Cubans are followed closely by Puerto Ricans (990,782) who make up of 2 of every 10 Latinos. Florida's Puerto Rican population is significant due to its magnitude in a relatively new destination, and because given Puerto Rican migratory patterns, the Puerto Rican population can potentially surpass the Cuban population in upcoming years (Silver 2014). These current population trends and forecasts are particularly salient for political reasons. Cubans have historically supported of the Republican Party and until recently, they have helped maintain Florida a republican stronghold (Krogstad 2014). On the other hand, Puerto Ricans in the U.S. typically support the Democratic party; consequently, they have been identified as a key electorate that is contributing to the state's shifting political inclination (Flores, Lopez, and Krogstad 2018). South Americans (773,759) and Mexicans (639,204) also make up an important segment of Florida's Latino population. These groups are followed by Central Americans (515,011) and Dominicans (205,791).

Table 2.2:
Hispanic or Latino by Origin in Florida, 2013

	Percent	Total
Puerto Rican	21	990,782
Mexican	14	639,204
Cuban	29	1,345,030
Dominican	4	205,791
Central American	11	515,011
South American	17	773,759
*Other	3	150,882
Latino Total	100	4,620,459

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). *The category "Other" includes: Spaniards and Latinos that did not specify their origin.

Table 2.3 identifies the top metropolitan areas in Florida with a Puerto Rican population. The size of the Puerto Rican population in each metro area, and its relative size to Florida's Puerto Rican population and to the metro area's overall population are also presented. The Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford Metropolitan Area (Orlando MSA) is the leading Puerto Rican settlement in the state; at 313,544, Orlando MSA was home to 32-percent of Florida's Puerto Rican population in 2013. Not surprisingly, the Orlando MSA is followed by Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach Metro (Miami MSA) and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Metro (Tampa MSA), as these are also home to Florida's historic Puerto Rican communities. However, Orlando emerged as *the* destination for island and stateside Puerto Ricans in recent decades, attracting more Puerto Ricans than any other metro area in the Florida and in the U.S. (Duany and Silver 2010). While the Orlando (313,533), Miami (239,829), and Tampa (173,576) metro areas all have sizeable Puerto Rican

populations, Puerto Ricans in Orlando make up a greater share (14%) of the total metro population, whereas Puerto Ricans in Miami and Tampa make up just 4-percent and 6-percent respectively of the total metro population. These levels of concentration highlight the significance of Orlando's Puerto Rican community as Florida's Puerto Rican enclave. Taken together, the Orlando, Miami, and Tampa metro areas account for 74-percent of Florida's Puerto Rican population, reflecting Puerto Ricans are concentrated in Florida's major cities. Just as noteworthy, Puerto Ricans in Orlando and Tampa metro collectively account for nearly 50-percent of Florida's Puerto Rican population, which illustrates the significance of Central Florida as a Puerto Rican destination.

The metropolitan distribution of Puerto Ricans in Florida also reflects Puerto Ricans have a presence in the major regions of the state (Southern, Central, and Northern Florida). Miami, metro, located in South Florida, has the largest Latino population in the state, it is characterized by a historic Cuban presence, and it is known as Latin America's financial capital. Jacksonville on the other hand, is located in Northern Florida, a region that is less diverse and one that more closely resembles the racial and cultural make up of Southern states. And Orlando, located in Central Florida, lies between these contrasting regions. Thus, this regional distribution means Puerto Ricans are situated in distinct ethnoracial contexts, thus, Florida Puerto Ricans are embedded in and must navigate distinct race relations based on region of residency.

Table 2.3: Top Metropolitan Areas in Florida with a Puerto Rican Population, 2013

Rank	Puerto Ricans	% of Florida Puerto Rican Population	% of Metro Area Population
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford	313,544	32	14
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach	239,829	24	4
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater	173,576	18	6
Lakeland-Winter Haven	39,749	4	6
Jacksonville	32,000	3	2

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (ACS 2013, 1-Year Estimates). * The total Puerto Rican Population in Florida was 990,782 in 2013.

Orlando Metropolitan Statistical Area

The following analysis draws on data for the Orlando MSA. Table 2.4 presents major ethnoracial groups and their share of the Orlando metro population. Similar to the ethnoracial composition of the state of Florida, non-Hispanic Whites are the largest racial group, accounting for 50-percent of the Orlando MSA population; they are followed by Latinos (28%), and non-Hispanic Blacks (15%). Together, these three ethnoracial groups comprise ninety-three percent of the total Orlando metro population. A particular point of interest is that Latino and non-Hispanic Black minority groups account for forty-two percent of the Orlando metro area population, and with the projected growth of Orlando's Latino population, a shift towards a majority-minority region could be likely. Given current demographic features and potential future shifts, the nature of ethnoracial group relations in Orlando, as well as the lines along which group solidarity is being established, are fertile ground for study.

Table 2.4: Ethnoracial Groups in Orlando MSA, 2013

Latino or Hispanic	Non-Hispanic White	Non-Hispanic Black	Non-Hispanic Asian	Non-Hispanic *Other	Total Population
28%	50%	15%	4%	3%	100%
618,663	1,112,307	336,324	91,304	63,789	2,222,387

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). *The category "Other" includes: Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic Other Race, and Non-Hispanic Two or More Races.

Table 2.5 presents the national origin of Latinos in Orlando MSA. Representing over 50-percent of all Latinos, Puerto Ricans (313,544) are undoubtedly the largest Latino subgroup. South Americans (94,563 or 15%) come in at a distant second and they are followed closely by Mexicans (82,266, or 13%). In contrast to the Latino population of the state, Cubans in Orlando are a minority, making up only 7 percent of the Latino population.

Table 2.5: Hispanic or Latino by Origin in Orlando MSA, 2013		
	Percent	**Total**
Puerto Rican	51	313,544
Mexican	13	82,266
Cuban	7	40,337
Dominican	6	36,925
Central American	5	30,502
South American	15	94,563
*Other	3	20,526
Latino Total	100	618,663

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). *The category "Other" includes: Spaniards and Latinos that did not specify their origin.

The national origin distribution depicted above shows Puerto Ricans have a strong presence in the metro area, however, the extent to which their numeric majority transfers into economic gains and political leadership remains to be seen. Further, given Puerto Ricans status as U.S. citizens, yet the similarities they share with other Latin American migrant groups, the extent to which they become brokers between Latin Americans and native Whites and Blacks remains unknown.

Characteristics of the Puerto Rican Population in Orlando MSA

Age. Table 6 separates Puerto Ricans in Orlando by age group. While a significant proportion of Puerto Ricans are minors (28%), the majority are ages 18-64 (63%), and a small proportion is of a retirement age (9%). These demographic features reflect that the Puerto Rican population in Orlando is relatively young, indeed over 80% are under the age of 54, and that the Puerto Rican population in Orlando consists largely of working age adults (between the ages of 25-64). Comparing Puerto Ricans' age by generation provides insight into intra-group differences. The median age of island-born Puerto Ricans is 41 years old, while U.S.-born Puerto Ricans have a median age of 20 years old. Thus, the

U.S.-born generation in Orlando is much younger relative to counterparts born in Puerto Rico. This is noteworthy as earlier work documented both Florida and Central Florida were appealing destinations for older Puerto Ricans who relocated to these regions for retirement purposes (Duany and Matos-Rodriguez 2006). However, the current analysis finds this segment of the population is lower in 2013, which suggests that retirees are no longer the major age group residing in Orlando metro. Moreover, these intra-group age differences may reflect the arrival of younger U.S.-born Puerto Ricans as well as family formation taking place in Orlando.

Table 2.6: Age of Puerto Ricans in Orlando MSA, 2013

Age	Percent
Less than 18	28
18-24	11
25-34	15
35-44	17
45-54	12
55-64	8
65-94	9
Island-born Median Age	41
U.S.-born Median Age	20

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). Island-born includes individuals born in Puerto Rico, N=152,989. U.S.-born includes individuals born in the 50 U.S. states, N=152, 242. Island-born and U.S.-born categories exclude individuals who reported a Puerto Rican ethnic origin but that were born abroad.

Generation, Gender, and Marital Status. Table 2.7 examines additional demographic characteristics for Puerto Ricans. It presents the generational and gender composition of the working-age Puerto Rican population in Orlando as well as their martial status by generation. In terms of generation, six out of ten working-age Puerto Ricans in Orlando were born in Puerto Rico,

while four out of ten were born in the U.S. While this generational composition may suggest the majority of working-age Puerto Ricans in Orlando belong to the migrant generation, it is important to note that due to Puerto Rican migratory patterns, it is common for island-born Puerto Ricans to have spent their formative years stateside and for mainland-born Puerto Ricans to have spent their formative years in Puerto Rico. Another common experience is that due to circular migration, members of both nativity groups may have resided for parts of their lives in both Puerto Rico and mainland communities.

An analysis of the gender composition of the group shows women are slightly overrepresented, making up 53-percent of working-age Puerto Ricans in Orlando. In terms of marital status, just over half of the island-born generation is married (52%) and a quarter is single or has never been married. Similarly, the majority of the U.S.-born generation is married (43%) and a slightly larger proportion are single or never married (35%) relative to those born in Puerto Rico. Overall, these trends show families are the dominant household structure for both island-and U.S.-born Puerto Ricans in Orlando, which may be indicative of long-term settlement in the region in contrast to short-term or circular migration.

Table 2.7: Characteristics of the Puerto Rican Population in Orlando MSA, Ages 25-64, 2013		
	Total	**Percent**
Total Puerto Rican Population	159,245	100
Island-born Puerto Ricans	96,278	60
U.S.-born Puerto Ricans	62,967	40
Gender		
Female	83,691	53
Male	75,554	47
Marital Status of Island-born	96,278	100
Married	49,842	52
Separated or Divorced	21,160	22
Widowed	961	1
Never Married or Single	24,315	25
Marital Status of U.S.-born	62,967	100
Married	27,356	43
Separated or Divorced	12,047	19
Widowed	1,253	2
Never Married or Single	22,311	35

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). Puerto Rican population excludes Puerto Ricans born outside of the 50 U.S. states and Puerto Rico.

Socioeconomic Indicators: Puerto Ricans in Orlando MSA

Educational Attainment. Table 2.8 provides the educational distribution of island-and-U.S.-born Puerto Ricans in Orlando ages 5-64. The table shows that members of both generations have acquired similar levels of education. For example, island-born Puerto Ricans have on average 12.91 years of education, while U.S-born counterparts have 12.89 years. In other words, both the island-and-U.S.-born have completed just about one year of college. The percentage of Puerto Ricans that have less than a high school education is also similar across generations, 9 percent of those born in Puerto Rico and 7 percent of those born stateside. In terms of high school graduates, more U.S-born Puerto Ricans have completed only a high school education relative to the island-born (42%

and 35% respectively). On the other hand, the figures for post-secondary levels of education are similar for both generations. About a third of both generations have completed some college and similar shares have a bachelor's degree (15-percent of the island-born and 14-percent of the U.S.-born) and a professional or advanced degree (4-percent of those born in Puerto Rico and 3-percent of those born in the U.S.). While these figures show that those born in Puerto Rico have a slightly higher percentage of college and post-college graduates (a 2% difference), overall, working age island-and U.S.-born Puerto Ricans in Orlando have comparable levels of education. The level of education found in this analysis (i.e. 13 mean years of education) is noteworthy given the extent to which media accounts and early reporting emphasized the higher education background of Puerto Ricans arriving from Puerto Rico. Yet, based on the analysis presented here, most Puerto Ricans (for both generations) have completed high school and some college (68%-75%).

Table 2.8: Education Level of Puerto Ricans in Orlando MSA, Ages 25-64, 2013

	Island-born	U.S.-born
Mean Years of Education	12.91	12.89
No School (%)	2	1
Less than High School	9	7
High School Graduate	35	42
Some College	34	33
Bachelor's Degree	15	14
Professional or Advanced Degree	4	3

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). Island-born Puerto Ricans, N=96,278; U.S.-born Puerto Ricans, N=62,967.

Occupational Distribution. Table 2.9 shows the occupational category of employment for Puerto Ricans who reside in Orlando and are 25 to 64 years old. This analysis shows U.S.-born Puerto Ricans (20%) are more likely to be employed in Management and Professional occupations relative island-born counterparts (13%). However, the island-born and U.S.-born generations are comparably employed in Education, Health, and Social Services (8% and 8%), Sales and Office (24% and 25%), and Service occupations (17% and 17% respectively). On the other hand, the island-born (14%) were slightly more concentrated in Construction and Transportation occupations relative to U.S-born counterparts (10%), and occupations in Production and Manufacturing had the smallest shares of Puerto Ricans. Other than the overrepresentation of the U.S-born in Management and Professional occupations, members of both generations have followed similar occupational trajectories in the Orlando MSA. Overall, these results show that Puerto Ricans born in the Island and the U.S. are primarily concentrated in blue-collar jobs[13] (57% and 56% respectively) and secondarily in white-collar[14] occupations (21% and 28% respectively). This occupational distribution indicates that about a quarter of Puerto Ricans in Orlando are in professions that provide higher wages, better opportunities for professional advancement, and economic mobility; while the remaining are in occupations that most likely pay lower wages, provide fewer benefits, and may also be characterized by greater instability.

[13] Blue-collar jobs refer to occupations in Sales and Office, Services, Construction and Maintenance, Transportation and Material Moving, and Production and Manufacturing.

[14] White-collar jobs refer to occupations in Management and Professional, and Education, Health, and Social Services.

Table 2.9: Occupations and Industries of Employment of Puerto Ricans in Orlando MSA, Ages 25-64, 2013		
	Island-born	U.S.-born
Management and Professional (%)	13	20
Education, Health, and Social Services	8	8
Sales and Office	24	25
Services	17	17
Construction and Maintenance	5	4
Transportation and Material Moving	9	6
Production and Manufacturing	2	4
Military	0	0.1

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). Island-born Puerto Ricans, N=96,278; U.S.-born Puerto Ricans, N=62,967. Note: percents do not add up to 100 because figures exclude those who are unemployed, with no work experience in the last five years, or never worked.

General Socioeconomic Indicators. Table 2.10 presents socioeconomic indicators for island-and-U.S.-born Puerto Ricans as well as figures for Puerto Ricans at the national level. In Orlando, among island-born Puerto Ricans 25-64 years old, 66-percent are employed, 4-percent are unemployed, while 30 percent are not participating in the labor force. An examination of the same labor market indicators for U.S.-born Puerto Ricans in Orlando shows they have slightly higher employment (71%) and unemployment (6%) rates relative to island-born counterparts, and a smaller proportion of the U.S.-born generation (23%) is not participating in the labor force. Both island- and U.S.-born Puerto Ricans are in a better position relative to Puerto Rican's nationwide, which have a lower employment rate (53%), a higher unemployment rate (8%), and a larger share of individual that have exited the labor force (38%).

In terms of educational attainment, members of both generations have about the same mean years of education (12.9), which translates to about one year of college education. Those born in Puerto Rico have a slightly higher percentage of individuals who did not graduate from high school

(9%) relative to those who were born in the U.S. (7%); however, Orlando has a significantly smaller proportion of Puerto Ricans with a less than high school education in comparison to Puerto Ricans in the U.S. (23%).

An analysis of personal income shows U.S.-born Puerto Ricans in Orlando are in a better position relative to their island-born counterparts, earning four thousand dollars more per year. Yet, two out of ten island- and U.S.-born Puerto Rican families live at or below poverty, just under national figures for Puerto Ricans (23%). Overall, Puerto Ricans in Orlando are doing better than their counterparts nationwide. Puerto Ricans in Orlando have a better employment status, lower rates of non-high school graduates, higher proportion of college graduates, and in the case of U.S.-born Puerto Ricans, higher personal incomes. Focusing on Puerto Ricans in Orlando, the U.S.-born generation has a slightly better socioeconomic standing than those who were born in Puerto Rico. A point of interest is that even though both generations in Orlando have similar mean levels of schooling (12.9 years), U.S.-born Puerto Ricans earn more than island-born Puerto Ricans, perhaps an indication that returns on education are lower for those born in Puerto Rico. However, professionals arriving from the Island may encounter challenges with transferring or applying their credentials in Orlando's labor market. Additionally, they may also encounter linguistic barriers that interfere with their ability to get jobs they are educationally qualified for, leading to taking lower paying jobs.

Table 2.10: Socioeconomic Indicators of Puerto Ricans in Orlando MSA, Ages 25-64, 2013

	Island-born	U.S.-born	Total in U.S.
Employed (%)	66	71	53
Unemployed	4	6	8
Not in Labor Force	30	23	38
Mean Years of Education	12.91	12.89	?
Less than High School	9	7	23
Bachelor's Degree	15	14	11.6
Median Personal Income ($)	18,000	22,000	18,362
At or Below Poverty Line	21	19	23

Source: Author's calculations based on 1 percent Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) sample (American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates). Island-born Puerto Ricans, N=96,278; U.S.-born Puerto Ricans, N=62,967. Data for Puerto Ricans in the U.S. obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey 2013, 1-Year Estimates. Table S0201: Selected Population Profile in the United States.

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CHAPTER 3:

RACE AND THE EMPIRE-STATE:

PUERTO RICANS' UNEQUAL U.S. CITIZENSHIP

ABSTRACT

Contemporary theorizing regarding citizenship emphasizes the legal and social significance of citizenship status. Citizenship awards individuals a formal status and exclusive rights while also granting them membership into a national community. This study investigates tenets of liberal citizenship by examining the meaning of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans. Drawing on 98 in-depth interviews with Puerto Ricans in Orlando, Florida, this study finds incongruences between theoretical understandings of citizenship and the experience of citizenship on-the-ground. Specifically, respondents define U.S. citizenship as a formal status and a set of rights, however, they express their U.S. citizen status does not grant them membership into the American community. This study captures incompatibilities between legal and social dimensions of citizenship. I argue Puerto Ricans' understandings of and experiences with U.S. citizenship stem from: 1) the State marking Puerto Rico (as a place) and Puerto Ricans (as a people) as different and inferior, and 2) racialization processes that conflate Latino with foreign and as racial other. I advance the argument here that Puerto Ricans have a colonial/racialized citizenship constituted by unequal citizen status, differentiated citizen rights, and exclusion from the American national imaginary. As such, this study highlights the stratified structure of the institution of U.S. citizenship.

Keywords: Citizenship, Puerto Ricans, Colonialism, Racialization, Latinos

What is the meaning of citizenship? What are the sites of citizenship? Who can claim and enact citizenship? These are some of the questions driving the renewed interest in the concept of citizenship (Bosniak 2006). This renewed intellectual conversation stems in part from processes of migration, globalization, and transnationalism that have increased the mobility of people, goods, ideas, and attachments across political borders (Castles and Davidson 2000; Rocco 2014). A primary concern of citizenship scholarship has been to understand how the influx of culturally, linguistically, and ethnoracially diverse populations challenge principles of modern citizenship and alter the concept's overall meaning (Bloemraad et al. 2008). In fact, this inquiry has led to new formulations of citizenship, including, global, postnational, and transnational citizenship[15].

Yet, scholars maintain that at its core citizenship continues to be a political concept (Brubaker 1989; Bosniak 2000, 2006; Joppke 2010). Drawing on liberal conceptualizations, these scholars emphasize citizenship's conveyance of formal belonging to a defined political community while simultaneously denoting membership into the imagined national community (Walzer 1983; Brubaker 1989, 1992; Bosniak 2000, 2006). Citizenship also defines who has full rights and complete access to political, economic, and social institutions (Marshall 1950). Furthermore, because citizenship is an exclusive social good, its protection and preservation is contingent on excluding those deemed outsiders (Walzer 1983; Bosniak 2006). Drawing on these prevailing understandings, much of the contemporary conversation has focused on how growing noncitizen populations, diasporas abroad, and expanding rights regimes challenge and reconfigure modern citizenship and membership[16].

[15] See Bosniak 2000 and Isin and Turner 2002 for a discussion of these citizenship models.

[16] See Walzer 1983; Brubaker 1992; Soysal 1994; Kymlicka 1995; Bosniak 2006; Perry 2006; Bloemraad et al. 2008; Joppke 2010; Enriquez 2013.

However, another line of work questions liberal nation-centered citizenship and membership frameworks altogether. This scholarship emphasizes the exclusionary citizenship experienced by ethnic/racial, gender, and religious minority groups in modern societies (Young 1990; Yuval-Davis 2011; Oboler 2006). In the case of the United States, proponents of this view argue that nation-building was not guided by the democratic ideals of achieving congruency between territory and nation; rather, nation-building was contingent on creating "hierarchically differentiated" spaces and peoples, which produced marginal forms of belonging (Jung 2011 p.3). Others point to the historical role of race for determining access to U.S. citizenship and the rights and protections accorded by this status (Bonilla-Silva and Mayorga 2011). And those who focus on the experiences of Latinos contend that racialization is critical for understanding Latinos' relationship to U.S. citizenship (Rocco 2014).

This study intervenes in contemporary citizenship scholarship by examining the meaning of and experiences with U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans. Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory since 1898 and Island Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens since 1917. Because of this political relationship, large numbers of Puerto Ricans have migrated to the continental United States for more than a century. Drawing on the experiences of 98 Puerto Ricans in Orlando, Florida, I illuminate tensions in mainstream citizenship theorizing. Specifically, I find that while U.S. citizenship means formal status and rights for Puerto Ricans, it has not granted them full membership into the American polity. Thus, this study captures incompatibilities between legal definitions of citizenship and social conceptions of membership. I argue that Puerto Ricans understandings of and experiences with U.S. citizenship stem from: 1) the State marking Puerto Rico (as a place) and Puerto Ricans (as a people) as different and inferior, and 2) racialization processes that have led to the conflation of Latino with foreign and racial other. In agreement with Smith (1997, 2017) and Barreto and Lozano (2017), I contend that U.S. citizenship is stratified. I argue that

Puerto Ricans have a colonial/racialized citizenship constituted by an unequal citizen status, differentiated citizen rights, and exclusion from the American[17] national imaginary.

LITERATURE

Modern Citizenship, the Nation-State, and Membership

Contemporary citizenship scholarship has identified and explained the multiple meanings of modern citizenship (Bosniak 2000, 2006; Bloemraad et al. 2008). At its simplest level, citizenship is a legal status that represents formal membership in a political community; as such, citizenship as status distinguishes between citizens and foreigners (Brubaker 1989; Joppke 2010; Castles and Davidson 2000; Bosniak 2000, 2006). Modern citizenship is founded on principles that emphasize freedom, rights, and equality, consequently, it confers social, civil, and political rights, as well as duties and responsibilities to all citizens (Marshall 1950; Rawls 1985; Bosniak 2000). Because citizenship grants exclusive political rights, citizens engage in self-governance through their participation in the political system and democratic processes (Bosniak 2000, 2006; Bloemraad et al. 2008). Lastly, citizenship represents a subjective experience. That is, citizenship conveys a sense of belonging to the broader national community and sharing a sense of solidarity with others (Bosniak 2000, 2006; Bloemraad et al. 2008).

Political and social belonging are key features of modern citizenship. This stems from its intimate relationship to the nation-state model. This model presumes that the parameters of the territorial political unit (the State) overlap with the parameters of "the people" (the nation) (Castles and Davidson 2000; Brubaker 2010). Thus, this conceptualization assumes a single State membership based on a correspondence between resident of the territory, formal citizen, and

[17] This paper recognizes the term American captures someone who originates from or is a citizen of the Americas (North, Central, and South). However, the use of American to convey citizenship or origins in the United States is dominant in citizenship and belonging literatures. As such, this paper deploys the term American to denote the United States for clarity and consistency purposes.

member of the nation. However, focusing on the impact of immigration on the State's membership structure, sociologist Rogers Brubaker has advanced a more nuanced membership structure. He contends population movements have produced a multidimensional membership that includes a uniform core citizenry—those with political membership and as such who are part of the "imagined community"—and resident foreigners—those who live in the State, participate in some institutions, but lack full membership (1989, 1992). While Brubaker (2010) has demonstrated that migrations challenge the correspondence between territory and nation assumed in traditional membership models, he emphasizes that in terms of membership, the major distinction is between citizens and noncitizens.

While mainstream citizenship scholarship has clarified the meanings and enactments of citizenship and emergent memberships in modern states, it has not explored whether underlying tenets of democratic egalitarian citizenship hold. This line of work has not clarified whether all dimensions of citizenship are accessible to and experienced by various citizen populations. It does not address whether formal political membership (i.e., citizen status) is a sufficient condition for inclusion into the collective "we" (i.e., the peoplehood). And it is unknown whether the political and social uniformity foundational to modern citizenship actually characterizes the citizenry of modern states. Bosniak (2006) recognizes that liberal citizenship scholarship does not acknowledge distinctions *between citizens,* as a result, it treats citizenship as an "undifferentiated" category (p.29). Karst (1989) similarly notes that in practice some groups are nominal citizens who lack substantive membership. And Brubaker (2010) acknowledges that "persisting legacies of empire" contribute to "deviations" in the nation-state model, nonetheless, he contends these "incongruencies" do not sufficiently challenge liberal citizenship and membership frameworks (p.71). Despite these recognitions, there is a lack of substantive and theoretical engagement with these deviations in modern/liberal citizenship.

Empire-States, Coloniality, and Race

Another body of literature scrutinizes egalitarian and universal citizenship tied to the nation-state model. This scholarship argues that most nation-states have had territorial possessions or groups living in the state but excluded from full belonging to the nation. Consequently, these places/groups were denied citizenship, endured *de facto* social and political exclusion, or have been forced to assimilate (Castle and Davidson 2000; Bilosi 2005). Focusing on the United States, Jung (2015) argues the United States is not a nation-state but rather the United States is an empire-state—a political entity that infringes upon the "sovereignty of foreign territories" and their inhabitants, and that contains "territories of unequal political status" and populations that have differentiated rights and privileges (p.59). The conquering of Indigenous lands and imposing U.S. sovereignty on Indigenous nations are evidence of historic U.S. imperialistic tendencies. Further, territorial acquisitions of the nineteenth century and the subsequent creation of inferior political statuses that conferred different rights and protections show that the empire-state model applies. Ultimately, through expansion, exploitation, and colonial modes of incorporation the United States created a "hierarchical differentiation of spaces and of people" rather than political and social uniformity (Jung 2011 p.2).

Race scholars contend that traditional citizenship scholarship overlooks the historical and contemporary centrality of race in the United States They note the category of citizen and notions of liberty and equality are misconceived as all-inclusive, particularly because in the United States, citizenship has not been a neutral category (DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Bonilla-Silva and Mayorga 2011). From the founding of the nation, White racial status was a precondition for citizenship, resulting in the exclusion of Blacks, Native Americans, and non-European immigrants from citizenship (Ngai 2004; Jung 2011; Masuoka and Junn 2013). Indeed, a restricted U.S. citizenship was necessary for executing a nation-building project premised on northern-western

European descent and Eurocentric political, religious, and economic ideologies (Omi and Winant 1994). Even once racial minorities were granted citizenship, they were given inferior rights, legally segregated (Feagin 2006), excluded from government programs (Fox 2012), and only allowed a marginal participation in social institutions (Smith 1997; Oboler 2006). Therefore, the racial hierarchy has historically played a critical role in structuring political membership and conceptions of belonging in the United States (Masuoka and Junn 2013).

Political theorist Raymond Rocco (2014) argues that mainstream citizenship frameworks do not account for Latinos' experiences with U.S. citizenship. He emphasizes disentangling political membership (i.e., being a citizen of the state) from social membership (i.e., being accepted as a member of the national community). Doing so reveals that Latinos have been excluded from the American imaginary despite their historic presence in the United States—an exclusion that stems from their racialization as *perpetual foreigners*. Others concur adding this "outsider" status encompasses Latinos regardless of national-origin and generation status (Young 2000; Oboler 2006) while nativist and xenophobic rhetoric mark them as "illegal" and "invaders" (Chavez 2013). Flores-González (2017) finds ethnic and racial traits also position Latinos outside of the American community. Through daily experiences where Latino millennials are marginalized on the basis of their immigrant background, ancestry, culture, and phenotype they learn they do not fit the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant "American prototype." Thus, although they are U.S.-born citizens they understand they are not recognized nor do they feel as members of the American nation. Flores-González argues Latino youth experience an *ethnoracial citizenship*—a form of belonging characterized by their racial and cultural incompatibility with dominant conceptions of American. Overall, these scholars show Latinos' racialization along dimensions of foreignness, criminality, and racial otherness limit their access to full U.S. citizenship.

Puerto Ricans' Unequal U.S. Citizenships

Puerto Rico's and Puerto Ricans' incomplete incorporation into the American nation is rooted in complex territorial and citizenship categories that have resulted in the peripheral existence of both. Puerto Ricans first entered the United States as stateless subjects (Meléndez 2013). Unlike previous annexations, Congress left Puerto Rico's and Puerto Ricans' political status and rights undefined when acquired via the Treaty of Paris (1898)[18] (Baldoz and Ayala 2013). A few years later the Foraker Act (1900) officially annexed Puerto Rico yet lawmakers ambiguously defined the Island as both a *U.S. territory* in an international sense and *foreign* for constitutional purposes. This act also created Puerto Rican citizenship marking the first time Congress refused to naturalize the residents of an annexed territory (Venator-Santiago 2013). Supreme Court decisions have also served as important mechanisms of exclusion. In *Downes v Bidwell (1901)* the Court created the "unincorporated" territorial category for the Island reasoning that Puerto Rico is a territory "*belonging* to the United States, but *is not part of* the United States" (Meléndez 2013:116 emphasis added). And in *Gonzalez v Williams (1904)* the Court denied Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship instead relegating them to a liminal position as U.S. nationals who owed allegiance to the United States but possessed limited rights and lacked constitutional protections (Baldoz and Ayala 2013).

Eventually, the Jones Act (1917) collectively naturalized Puerto Ricans on the Island by establishing *a jus sanguinis* (blood right) U.S. citizenship because Puerto Rico's territorial status remained unchanged. Despite becoming U.S. citizens, Island Puerto Ricans were denied voting rights and representation in the U.S. Congress (Font-Guzmán 2013). This unequal citizenship was further institutionalized in *Balzac v People of Porto Rico (1922),* which upheld Puerto Ricans are citizens

[18] Guam and the Philippines were also acquired in this treaty and endured similar ambiguities with respect to their territorial status and the type of political membership granted to their inhabitants.

that lack full constitutional rights. In 1940 Congress extended a statutory[19] *jus soli* (birthright) U.S. citizenship to all individuals born in Puerto Rico without expanding their political rights (Venator-Santiago 2013). Today, Puerto Rico continues to be an unincorporated territory subject to the plenary power of the U.S. Congress (Jung 2015). A territorial status that produces critical inequalities, including unequal funding for federal programs in Puerto Rico, shipping laws that create trade disadvantages for the Island, and exclusion from federal bankruptcy options for Puerto Rican public entities (Torruella 2017). Furthermore, Island Puerto Ricans continue to have a second-class U.S. citizenship that is revocable and that grants inferior rights, protections, and political representation[20] (Venator-Santiago 2013; Smith 2017).

Grosfoguel and Georas (2000) contend Puerto Ricans' current racialization is tied to this colonial legacy. The colonial relationship established unequal power and social relations that relegated the Island and Puerto Ricans to a subordinate position. Because colonization is contingent on creating and maintaining a racial hierarchy (Mills 1997), representations of Puerto Ricans as culturally inferior, uncivilized, and ignorant justified the colonial project while more contemporary depictions sustain coloniality by portraying them as lazy, welfare dependent, and criminal (Duany 2002; Grosfoguel 2003). As Puerto Ricans arrived in New York, they entered a society that institutionally and culturally privileged White/European populations, and although Puerto Ricans occupied a racially ambiguous position they were still viewed as "other" by White-Americans. Puerto Ricans' racialization was further compounded by their socioeconomic vulnerability, which stemmed from labor recruitment programs that used Islanders as a source of cheap and disposable labor for mainland industries. Ultimately, Puerto Ricans were sorted into the bottom of the ethnoracial

[19] Statutory citizenship is different from constitutional citizenship in that it can be reversed by congress at any time. On the other hand, constitutional citizenship can only be revoked by amending the U.S constitution, a process that would entail a lengthy legislative process at the state and federal level.

[20] Puerto Ricans have full citizenship rights once they move to the United States, however, those born on the island continue to have a reversible statutory U.S. citizenship even when they reside in the United States.

hierarchy near the position of Blacks. As such, Grosfoguel and Georas (2000) contend Puerto Ricans' incorporation into the United States is best characterized as colonial/racial subjects—a status emergent from colonial relations and racialization processes that constructed Puerto Ricans as socially and racially inferior.

Given dominant liberal understandings of citizenship and the historic relationship between Puerto Ricans with the United States, this study investigates: What does U.S. citizenship mean for Puerto Ricans? How do Puerto Ricans currently experience U.S. citizenship? What do Puerto Ricans' understandings of and experiences with U.S. citizenship reveal about the institution of U.S. citizenship?

DATA AND METHODS

Data for this paper come from 98 in-depth interviews with island- and mainland-born Puerto Ricans. Interviews were conducted in the Orlando Metropolitan Area from July 2015-February 2016. At the turn of the century, Florida, and Orlando metro (Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford) more specifically, emerged as the new mainland destination for Island and mainland Puerto Ricans. Florida is now home to the second largest Puerto Rican community stateside (1,067,747) (ACS 2016) with nearly a third of the state's Puerto Rican population concentrated in Orlando metro (359,641) (ACS 2016). This shift in Puerto Rican migratory patterns away from traditional mainland communities in the Northeast and Midwest to new areas in the U.S. South means Puerto Ricans are now settling in a vastly distinct context. Not only is Orlando metro located in a politically conservative state, it is also in the Central Florida region, which lacks an extensive immigration history and where the Black/White binary dominates race relations.

I identified respondents through snowball sampling. I relied on key community informants with access to distinct social and professional networks to identify and recruit an initial wave of respondents. I then recruited additional study participants from interviewees' own networks. I also

expanded my interview sample by recruiting respondents at community events and when I volunteered with local organizations. Respondents were selected to vary in education background, nativity, gender, and phenotype. Although respondents were between 25-70 years old, the median sample age is 40. The interview sample includes long-term residents—ten years or more of residence in Orlando metro—and recent arrivals—residence in the region for five years or less.

Interviews lasted between 1.5 to 4 hours and were digitally recorded. Interviews were conducted at a location selected by respondents, most often at a coffee shop or their home. Respondents were given a twenty-five-dollar monetary incentive once the interview was completed. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire that ensured covering major topics of interest and allowed for the emergence of significant experiences in respondents' lives. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed in the language they were conducted (i.e., Spanish, English, and Spanglish) to preserve the integrity of the narratives. I used the online platform Dedoose to analyze interviews. The analytical strategy relied on an inductive and deductive coding approach; that is, it was guided by theory-driven and data-driven codes. For example, theory driven codes included "meaning of citizenship" with sub codes "rights," "legal status," "participation," and "sense of belonging." Data driven codes were generated by conducting an initial read of interviews and paying close attention to themes emerging from narratives, including but not limited to, "not accepted," "colony," "foreign," and "second-class citizen." I then systematically read through interviews and applied the deductive/inductive coding scheme to the interview text. I sorted interview segments by codes, I read through these narratives and I refined coding where appropriate, and I identified recurring codes and themes. This process allowed me to uncover prevailing meanings of citizenship, the extent to which study participants felt a part of the national community, and the factors influencing these meanings and understandings. All respondents were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

FINDINGS

The following section examines the meaning of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans and the extent to which they feel accepted into the American national community. In the first part, I show that for Puerto Ricans, the meaning of citizenship falls primarily along two dimensions: formal status and rights. In the second part, I show that despite having U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans feel excluded from the national community. Thus, this analysis shows that while Puerto Ricans have political membership (i.e., citizenship status) they lack social membership (i.e., inclusion into the national imaginary).

Meaning of U.S. Citizenship: Formal Status and Rights

The majority of respondents (80 percent) described the meaning of citizenship as formal status, rights, and privileges. Most of those who articulated this meaning of citizenship specified the right to enter the United States and others also noted the right to work and to access public programs and services. Malia illustrates a common description of the meaning of U.S. citizenship:

> I can travel freely to the U.S., I can return to my country [Puerto Rico] whenever I want, I can return to Florida... [It means] healthcare benefits, nutritional benefits… wow so many things, education, [English] language, because English is taught in Puerto Rico…the benefits are significant in all aspects.

Malia highlights the significance of the right to enter the U.S. and the freedom to move between the Island and the mainland at her will. This was a particularly salient right for her, as she had arrived in Florida with her husband and four-year-old son just a year prior to our interview. The family's emigration was motivated by her unstable employment in the pharmaceutical industry and her husband's underpaid job as a correctional officer. Given their dire economic circumstances in Puerto Rico, Malia's ability to leave the Island with her family and settle in Florida has been critical.

Malia's case illustrates the ways in which colonialism, citizenship, and migration intersect for Puerto Ricans, particularly for those arriving in the contemporary wave. The elimination of federal

corporate tax incentives that were established to attract U.S. corporations into the Island, including pharmaceuticals, led to the departure of these employers during the 2000s. All the while, century-old maritime laws designed to protect the U.S. shipping industry raised cost of living in Puerto Rico and dragged down the Island's economy. The prolonged effects of the Great Recession further exacerbated deteriorating economic conditions. During this period, the government relied more heavily on borrowing and by 2015, the Island's $72 billion debt had become insolvent; however, Puerto Rican public entities are excluded from U.S. bankruptcy laws. These compounding economic issues led to the implementation of severe austerity measures that reduced or cut government services, especially affecting public employees. For those enduring the brunt of Puerto Rico's economic crisis, like Malia's family, migration to the mainland is an economic and survival strategy; a strategy that is ironically available by the citizenship that is the source of structural inequalities on the Island[21].

Esmeralda, a 26-year resident of Orlando and social worker at the local school district, offered a similar meaning for U.S. citizenship:

> It is the ease of coming here [to the U.S.], I can enter and leave whenever I want, I can vote, because in Puerto Rico I can't vote for president, which I think is ridiculous… other [Puerto Ricans] that I work with qualify for public assistance programs, for health, for education, for all of those things without being questioned, all they have to do is complete the application [and] you have the right to those programs. I wouldn't have a right to any of those things if I was not a citizen.

Esmeralda echoed the right to enter and exit the United States is central to the meaning of U.S. citizenship. And like Malia, Esmeralda draws attention to the right to social programs, including public healthcare coverage, nutrition assistance, and education benefits (i.e., federal financial aid) that she and other Puerto Ricans have in Puerto Rico and in the United States. In emphasizing that their

[21] For a more detailed discussion of how the colonial relationship has affected the Puerto Rican economy and U.S.-bound migrations see Ayala and Bernabe (2007).

status as citizens grants them the right to apply for these programs without question, Esmeralda makes an implicit comparison to the experiences of noncitizens who may have to go through a lengthier review process and who may not qualify for benefits. Another important right that Esmeralda identifies as a Puerto Rican residing stateside is the right to vote for president, which highlights the inferior U.S. citizenship in Puerto Rico.

Fabiola, a recent arrival from Puerto Rico who works as a school cafeteria monitor, offered the following meaning of U.S. citizenship:

> I think [it] only [means] the opportunity to enter and exit the country without fear of being detained, being able to have the same opportunities other Americans have, perhaps the opportunity to get a good education, a good job… but we still have to work hard, it's not like you arrive in this country and because you are an American citizen you are equal to the rest, you also endure a lot of discrimination… we should have [the same rights], I don't think we have them… I think the key is having to work hard, and get educated, it's not like you're a citizen and [because of that] you're going to have privileges. I don't feel American. I am Puerto Rican [the] same as any Latino immigrant.

The right to enter and exit the United States also features prominently in Fabiola's interpretation of U.S. citizenship, especially because this status allows her to be present "without fear," reflecting an understanding of her formal status and rights vis-à-vis the position of undocumented immigrants. She also notes that citizenship to her means having access to the same opportunities that are available to Americans; however, she recognizes that in practice, citizenship status does not make her equal to other Americans. Fabiola tellingly reveals she does not feel American but rather she is "Puerto Rican [the] same as any Latino immigrant," a critical sentiment because it suggests Puerto Ricans' perceive their position in the United States as comparable to that of Latin American immigrants despite their status as citizens.

Some respondents noted that U.S. citizenship initially lacked significance but that it became meaningful once they learned about the experiences of Latin American immigrants. Jacqueline, a

three-year resident of Orlando who left Puerto Rico with her family due to rising costs of private education and crime, shared:

> I didn't know the value of being a citizen of the United States because [when] I lived in Puerto Rico I could enter, leave, I would go everywhere. When I arrived here [in Orlando] and I realized my friends from work didn't have citizenship, they can be deported at any moment, they have to study to become citizens, they get married to obtain citizenship, it really saddened me that I didn't value my citizenship. For me citizenship is now something sacred, and I thank the Lord that I was born in Puerto Rico and that I am Puerto Rican…

Similar to Jacqueline, other respondents described not fully understanding the significance of U.S. citizenship while they lived in Puerto Rico. In Jacqueline's case, the meaning of U.S. citizenship was less clear to her while living on the Island, perhaps because she was less exposed to the issues encountered by those with noncitizen statuses. Once she moved to Orlando, she learned about the challenges that immigrants who lack legal status endure while also experiencing the rights and privileges accorded by her status as a citizen. Through relationships with Latin American immigrants she learned about the potential of being deported, the challenges encountered when seeking legalization, and the (direct and indirect) pathways for becoming a naturalized citizen. Becoming aware of these experiences not only makes Jacqueline sympathetic to immigrants but also makes the legal dimensions of U.S. citizenship more salient.

Citizenship without Membership

Nearly all study participants (92 percent) expressed that despite having U.S. citizenship, Puerto Ricans are not accepted as full Americans. Respondents provided multiple explanations for their exclusion, which are captured by three interrelated themes: (1) Puerto Rico's colonial political status, (2) perceptions of Puerto Ricans as foreign, and (3) Puerto Ricans'/Latinos' racial incompatibility with "American."

Puerto Rico's colonial political status. Among study participants who feel that Puerto Ricans are not accepted as members of the American community, over 40 percent reported that Puerto Ricans

are excluded due to the Island's political status. Most of these respondents (six out of ten) noted Americans lack an understanding of Puerto Rico's political relationship to the United States, and as such, of Puerto Ricans' status as U.S. citizens. For instance, Yolanda, a 16-year resident of Orlando who was born/raised in Puerto Rico, shared:

> Many of them do not even know Puerto Ricans are American citizens … what we have to do is educate them, how I had to do with my boss at Walmart. Once I found the information about the law [Jones Act] in English, I printed the information and I took it to him and I told him "look since you asked me the other day, well I felt the need to bring you the law that states I am a U.S. citizen, here it is." He just looked at me without knowing what to say… We have to launch an educational campaign to instruct the North American why we are American citizens.

Yolanda is referring to an instance in which her manager at a Walmart questioned why she did not have a green card—a resident alien card issued by the U.S. government that verifies authorized and permanent resident status. Yolanda recalled feeling surprised by the question and was not sure how to respond because she had never had to justify her status as a citizen. Although she informed him "I am an American citizen just like you," she felt compelled to search for the law that granted Puerto Ricans citizenship in order to prove her status to her supervisor and to prepare for future inquiries about her legal status in Florida.

> Kelvin, a New York born/raised Puerto Rican and local teacher, similarly reported:
>
> No. They don't see them [as full Americans] here… I mean this is still Southern parts, so you hear and understand that for Americans in Florida [they ask] "Puerto Ricans, who are these people?" or "why should they be here?" Even some [of my] colleagues at the [high] school [say] "you know I hope this trend doesn't continue." We've had the highest turn[over] in terms of teachers quitting… 38 teachers quit this year, veteran teachers, [because] they don't want to deal with the [Puerto Rican student] population.

Yolanda and Kelvin's accounts draw attention to important contextual dynamics that shape how U.S. citizenship is experienced. First, Orlando is located between "Latin" South Florida and "Southern" (White/Black) North Florida (Silver 2014); that is, geographically Orlando is between regions that are characterized by distinct ethnoracial groups and race relations. Second, Orlando is a relatively new destination of migration that has not only attracted Puerto Ricans, but also a

significant number of South American migrants; consequently, the region is in the midst of demographic transitions and Latinos are leading these changes. Just as noteworthy, both respondents' experiences capture a lacking awareness among important institutional agents of Puerto Ricans' legal position in the United States. An experience echoed by other respondents who in their capacities as non-profit directors, public employees, and professionals also encountered local resistance to the growing Puerto Rican population.

While the majority of respondents pointed to a lacking knowledge among Americans of Puerto Rico's relationship to the United States as the source of Puerto Ricans' exclusion from the American community, others (four out of ten) noted that it is the Island's colonial status that influences the perception of Puerto Ricans' un-Americanness. For example, Ángel, a 20-year resident of Orlando and local engineer, explained:

> Well, it depends on who you ask, I think it depends on their intellect. Yes, legally we are [Americans], legally, but for some people, they perceive it as "they are not even a state, they are a territory, they can't even vote in elections, so they are not [full Americans]."

According to Ángel, some do not see Puerto Ricans as full Americans because Puerto Rico is not completely incorporated into the U.S. territorial community. This perception is further reinforced by limited citizen rights on the Island, which to some Americans conveys Puerto Ricans are lower status citizens. This perception demonstrates historical legislative and judiciary decisions that defined the incorporation of the Island critically shape contemporary understandings of Puerto Ricans' place in the American national imaginary. Ángel elaborates that for those who understand the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, they see Puerto Rico as dependent and as a burden, a view according to Ángel that was heightened in that moment amid the Island's $72-billion debt crisis and Puerto Rico's efforts to obtain federal bankruptcy protections.

Perceptions of foreignness. Sixty-six-percent of respondents expressed Puerto Ricans are not accepted as full Americans because they are perceived as foreign. Of these respondents, the majority

(six out of ten) specified Puerto Ricans are perceived as immigrants while a smaller share (four out of ten) noted perceptions of Puerto Ricans' foreignness are related to cultural factors.

Julian, a New York born/raised Puerto Rican who moved to Orlando in the 1990s, shared:

> I think there are still some groups that don't even realize that [Puerto Ricans] are U.S. citizens… When I first started coming to Florida… some of the White people would yell "I'm going to call immigration to reverse your green card!" [and] I was like "I don't have a green card idiot what are you talk[ing about]?"… And you saw [it] with the nomination of [Sonia] Sotomayor where conservative republicans and other ethnic and racial groups in Florida [would] say "how could she be [nominated] if she's not even a U.S. citizen? Her parents are immigrants, she's an immigrant!" … it's not as bad as it used to be but [it] truly still is [an issue], Puerto Ricans in a lot of parts of the South, and still in a few parts in Florida are truly viewed as migrants that sailed over from Puerto Rico.

Julian's various experiences are significant because they capture notions of foreigner, illegality, and deportability have framed Puerto Ricans in Orlando throughout the last three decades. When he arrived in Florida he encountered situations in which Whites perceived him as a deportable immigrant. During our conversation, he also recalled his work as a political consultant through which he encountered instances in which staff for the Florida State Legislature remarked "we should just revoke [Puerto Ricans'] immigration status!" While Julian acknowledges an improvement over the years, there are moments in which perceptions of Puerto Ricans' status as foreigners resurface, such as the nomination of Justice Sonia Sotomayor for the U.S. Supreme Court in 2009. Although she is Puerto Rican and was born/raised in New York, there was strong local opposition on the basis of her "noncitizen" status and "immigrant" background. Julian also draws attention to a regional perception that Puerto Ricans are seeking entrance into Florida similarly to other immigrants (e.g. Cubans, Dominicans, and Haitians)—a perception that subsumes Puerto Ricans under racialized constructions of Caribbean immigrants despite Puerto Ricans' status as citizens.

When I asked Janelys whether Puerto Ricans are accepted as full Americans, she responded:

> No, definitely not. We are Latinos just like any other [Latino]… You see it today with what is happening, everyone is Mexican, we are all the same. And for me we are all the same, I don't feel that being Puerto Rican makes me different from a Mexican, a

> Colombian… for me we are all Latinos and I don't see a difference… I think Americans don't see that I am Puerto Rican or that I am an American…for them Latino is Latino. It doesn't matter. And the treatment towards a Latino will be the same regardless of whether s/he is Puerto Rican or not.

Janelys expresses Puerto Ricans' place outside of the American imaginary is shaped by Latinos' position in the United States as perpetual foreigners. As she points out, the perception that Latino is synonymous with immigrant is connected to the conflation of Latino as Mexican; as a result, stereotypical representations of Mexicans as undocumented immigrants spillover onto Latinos regardless of their national-origin, legal status, or generation (Johnson 1997; Lippard 2011). A devalued citizenship has also characterized Puerto Ricans in other mainland communities. Ramos-Zayas (2004) argues that Chicago Puerto Ricans experienced a *delinquent citizenship*—a form of belonging that approaches a similar condition of "illegality" and marginalization of undocumented immigrants. In Chicago, Puerto Ricans' racialization as criminal and as outside of the American imaginary was rooted in their nationalistic politics and anti-colonial activism; however, I find that in Orlando, their perceived deviance and inferior citizen status is tied to perceptions of them as unwelcomed foreigners whose presence can be disciplined via the immigration system. Indeed, Orlando Puerto Ricans' contemporary citizenship experiences are being shaped by the broader context of immigration—the large-scale influx of Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in the post-1965 period, their settlement and growth in new destinations in the South, and the broader criminalization of immigrants.

Other respondents reported that perceptions of Puerto Ricans' foreignness are also based on cultural factors, primarily their Spanish-language background. Victoria, a 21-year resident of the region, reported Americans do not accept Puerto Ricans because "they still consider them, because of language and culture, Hispanic. Americans are people from the U.S., they're not Hispanics in any way, shape, or form. I think that's the distinction." Malia offered a similar understanding, "no, [Puerto Ricans] are not accepted. They are not accepted, mainly because of the language. Although

we are citizens, we mostly speak Spanish, and because of that we are treated like any other Hispanic." Both respondents understand Puerto Ricans are excluded from the American community because they are a Spanish-speaking group, which defines them as "Hispanic" in the eyes of others. Victoria emphasizes that in practice, "American" and "Hispanic" are mutually exclusive groups: Hispanic is proxy for foreigner while American is understood as U.S.-native and Hispanics are culturally different and incompatible. Malia adds these perceptions are consequential as Puerto Ricans are also subjected to the differential treatment other Hispanics endure. Indeed, these perceptions are informed by instances in which Whites interjected "English only!" or "You're in America speak English!" while respondents spoke Spanish in public. These narratives show that despite being U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans are affected by a racialized nativism that targets Latina/os—an ideology that not only constructs Latinos as foreigners but also as a demographic and cultural threat to the "American nation" (Sanchez 1997; Huber et al. 2008; Lippard 2011). This ideology was particularly salient during the political climate of the time when then candidate Donald Trump made anti-Mexican/anti-Latino rhetoric a cornerstone of his campaign.

While DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas (2003) found that in Chicago the "politics of citizenship" produced differentiation, and as a result, cleavages between citizen Puerto Ricans and undocumented Mexicans, I find that in Orlando, a nativist social and political context absorbs Mexicans, South Americans, *and* Puerto Ricans, as in the eyes of others these groups do not conform to notions of Americanness. Aranda (2007) found comparable experiences among middle-class Puerto Ricans in the Northeast. Their ethnoracial marginalization—that is, the stigmatization of Spanish language and of their culture coupled with discriminatory experiences—contributed to feelings of (dis)belonging in the mainland, which led some to resettle in Puerto Rico. Although Orlando Puerto Ricans also don't feel accepted as Americans, the overwhelming majority of

respondents planned on permanently settling in Florida as dire economic and social conditions in Puerto Rico made return migration improbable.

Racial incompatibility. Over a third of study participants (37 percent) reported Puerto Ricans are not perceived as full Americans due to their racial incompatibility. Most of these respondents specified Puerto Ricans' nonwhite status (six out of ten) and others (four out of ten) described becoming part of a racialized Latino group. For instance, Matiás, a 26-year resident of Orlando, explained Puerto Ricans are not accepted as full American because:

> I understand there is still a distinction between who is an American in the way that most people from the United States use the term American. I understand that there is still a large proportion for whom being American means having decedents who arrived on the Mayflower.
>
> AJV: And Puerto Ricans don't fit that meaning?
>
> Matiás: No. As a matter of fact, using the terms African-American and Native-American to distinguish between [them] [and] those who arrived with blonde hair and light eyes… the fact that a distinction exists tells me there is still a difference today.

Matiás draws attention to the racialized meaning of American. He alludes to the significance of physical features (blonde hair and light colored eyes) and he points to generational and ancestral dimensions (arriving on the Mayflower). In other words, he understands belonging in the United States is not just premised on physical characteristics but it is also defined by having ancestral ties to European settlers. This perception of belonging is further reinforced by what he interprets as the incomplete inclusion of Native Americans and African Americans, groups that are referred to as qualified Americans despite their historic presence in the United States. Interestingly, Matiás can phenotypically pass for white and an argument could be made about his own European ancestry given Puerto Rico's four-hundred-year colonization by Spain, yet Matiás believes he does not meet the criteria of American. Drawing on Flores-González (2017) elucidates how Matiás understands his and Puerto Ricans' location in the American imaginary. She argues that an ethnoracial ideal—racial (white) and cultural (Anglo-Saxon-Protestant heritage) characteristics—is the most salient

component of an American identity. Because Latinos are ethnoracially incompatible with conceptions of American, they are excluded from the nation despite their U.S. citizenship or adherence to American values.

Esperanza, a recent arrival from Puerto Rico, expressed a similar point of view regarding Puerto Ricans' place outside of the national community, "[W]hite Americans from here [the U.S.] … they are very specific about their race, they think that Puerto Ricans are not worth it."
And Mariaelisa, also a recent arrival in Florida, noted "I don't think [Puerto Ricans are accepted as Americans] … because even though Americans say they don't discriminate, deep inside they feel superior. Americans feel superior and they see us as if we were still Indians in canoes over there [in Puerto Rico]." Esperanza and Mariaelisa also understand American means White, however they add the boundaries of Americanness are also impenetrable for Puerto Ricans because they are stigmatized as a lower status group. Marielisa highlights that despite egalitarian ideals that characterize the U.S., she believes Whites continue to hold historic views of Puerto Ricans as a "primitive" and "backward people." Duany (2002) demonstrates these racialized perceptions were significant for legitimizing the colonial project and maintaining Puerto Rico at the periphery during the early 20th century, and as respondents indicate, these perceptions transcend time and continue to exclude Puerto Ricans a century later.

Malcom, an Island Puerto Rican who has lived in Orlando for a handful of years, explained that although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens they are not granted membership:

> Because of racism. They [Americans] see us as inferior. Why? Because we are American citizens by imposition, we are Latin Americans, and we are Caribbean, and we are Afro-Caribbean, we are Afro-Antillean, we are different. We are not North Americans, we are not Caucasian… we are different.

Malcom articulates Puerto Ricans are excluded from the American nation due to *ethnoracism*—an ideology that defines individuals as inferior on the basis of geopolitical, cultural, and racial factors (Aranda and Rebollo-Gil 2004; Aranda 2007). Respondents

understand that Puerto Ricans occupy an outsider status in the American imaginary due to the colonial project that made Puerto Ricans into U.S. subjects rather than equal members (Grosfoguel 2003). Because a Puerto Rican identity embodies this colonial history, being Puerto Rican itself racializes an individual as an inferior other in the United States (Grosfoguel and Georas 2000; Aranda 2007). By drawing attention to the geographic location of Puerto Rico, Malcom also points to what Grosfoguel and Georas (2000) call global coloniality, that is, the current location a country/region occupies within a global hierarchy that is rooted in European colonization. The lower status of Latin American and Caribbean nations (previously colonized non-European societies) relative to the United States (a White settler imperial State) also contributes to Puerto Ricans' social exclusion. Lastly, Malcom addresses the significance of race for defining belonging in the United States. In the case of Puerto Ricans, their mixed African, Indigenous, and Spanish background is incompatible with racial and cultural conceptions of American.

Malcom's perspective resonates with Sebastián's, who understood Puerto Ricans are not accepted because:

> I think that they [Americans] see us low on the ladder… they don't see [Puerto Ricans] the same as them, our language is different, we are invading their territory, at the end of the day, Puerto Ricans are part of that group they call Latinos, which will eventually make decisions over them [Americans], while their population is declining the Latino population keeps growing.

Sebastián describes Puerto Ricans have undergone a racialization process that has sorted Puerto Ricans to the lower rungs of the social hierarchy (Grosfoguel and Georas 2000). Sebastián also draws attention to important state and national demographic trends that contribute to the perception of Puerto Ricans as a threat. In Florida, Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rican spaces and culture have become more visible due to the population's significant growth (300-percent) over the last three decades (U.S. Census 1980; ACS 2016); in fact, the state has consistently ranked the top

destination for Puerto Ricans leaving the Island since 2005 (Velázquez Estrada 2017). Moreover, in the United States Puerto Ricans are included in the Latino group—another group whose projected growth is expected to alter the social, cultural, and political order.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study draws on 98 in-depth interviews to examine the meaning of and experiences with U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans. I find Puerto Ricans in Florida express aspects of the liberal model of citizenship, yet they also show legacies of empire and racialization mitigate egalitarian and universal citizenship and membership frameworks. The meaning of U.S. citizenship that respondents articulate reflects the centrality of citizenship as political; specifically, the significance of territorially bounded exclusive political communities, citizenship as formal status, and exclusive rights granted by formal political membership (Walzer 1983; Brubaker 1989; Bosniak 2000; Bloemraad et al. 2008). The ability to enter the mainland, live and work stateside, and to access social programs is critical for respondents. A perception that is further informed by recognizing their more privileged legal position in relation to that of Latin American immigrants. Therefore, two dimensions (formal status and rights) of modern citizenship are the most salient for Florida Puerto Ricans.

However, legacies of empire produce important incongruencies in Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. First, legacies of empire have created a group with differentiated citizen statuses (a fragile statutory citizenship for the island-born and a more permanent constitutional citizenship for the mainland-born) and differentiated citizen rights (inferior rights on the Island and full citizen rights stateside). Second, legacies of empire coupled with racialization are sources of Puerto Ricans' exclusion from the American imaginary. Florida Puerto Ricans experience invisibility as members of the American nation due to the Island's colonial status. In most cases, Americans are unaware that Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States and that by extension Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens.

Among those who are familiar with the colonial relationship, they interpret it as indicative of Puerto Ricans' marginal position in the American community. Thus, the colonial relationship renders Puerto Ricans invisible and inferior.

Paradoxically, Puerto Ricans in Florida are simultaneously hypervisible as "foreign" and "unrightfully" present. This hypervisibility stems from being subsumed into the Latino group and the broader racialization of Latino with foreigner, undocumented, and removable regardless of national-origin, legal status, or generation (Young 2000; Oboler 2006; Rocco 2014). Additionally, Puerto Ricans' Latino background (Spanish-language, culture, and racial distinctiveness) makes them incompatible with the ethnoracial ideal of an American as White and Anglo-Saxon European descent. Puerto Ricans experience membership boundaries comparably to other U.S.-born Latinos who also feel excluded from the American imaginary (Flores-González 2017). These experiences are telling because they demonstrate that conceptions of belonging and membership in the United States remain connected to the racial hierarchy (Masuoka and Junn 2013).

Thus, this study captures an important dissonance between citizenship as political membership (i.e., citizen status) and citizenship as social membership (i.e., member of the American nation). I argue that Puerto Ricans' understandings of and contemporary experiences with U.S. citizenship stem from: 1) the State marking Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans as different and inferior, and 2) racialization processes that construct Latinos as foreign and as a racial other. In agreement with Smith (2017) and Barreto and Lozano (2017), I contend U.S. citizenship is not a politically and socially uniform category, rather, U.S. citizenship is *internally stratified*. As part of this stratified system, and building from Grosfoguel and Georas (2000), I advance Puerto Ricans have a *colonial/racialized citizenship*. This concept emphasizes the structurally produced marginalization of Puerto Ricans, which is illustrated in an unequal citizen status, differentiated citizen rights, and exclusion from the American imaginary. Indeed, a colonial/racialized citizenship demonstrates how

legacies of empire and racialization work together to mark individuals through time, geographic spaces, and generations. However, this concept also acknowledges the agency allowed by this status. As colonial/racialized citizens, Puerto Ricans have unrestricted access to and freedom of mobility throughout the territorial community, full citizen rights stateside, and access to institutions that facilitate incorporation in Florida.

Shedding light on the internally stratified structure of U.S. citizenship is important for multiple reasons. First, a system of stratified citizenships sustains a political, economic, and social system founded on and for the advancement of white supremacy. Second, by deeply examining the institution of U.S. citizenship we can pull back the veil of egalitarianism and uniformity, allowing us to better understand how citizenship creates inequalities not only between those that have citizenship and those that do not (Bosniak 2006; Menjívar 2006), but also among citizen populations, as U.S. citizenship itself creates classes of formal citizens that possess differentiated rights, abilities to enjoy rights, and with varying degrees of social inclusion. Third, the conceptual lens offered by this study is also timely. A colonial/racialized citizenship explains the federal government's slow response to Hurricane María and the extent of the structural damage caused by the storm in Puerto Rico. Given conditions in the Island, Central Florida has become an important recovery site as thousands of Puerto Ricans have arrived seeking temporary relief from the devastation while others plan to settle permanently. Many of these arrivals will need institutional support as they transition into Florida and resources to recover and rebuild their lives on the mainland. This research provides insight into how Hurricane María evacuees may be perceived and treated as they enter a social landscape in which Puerto Ricans are already less than equal counterparts. The contestations about space and territory, rightful belonging, and the contours of the American nation documented in this research may become amplified as more Puerto Ricans make Central Florida their home.

Although at a social level a colonial/racialized citizenship excludes Puerto Ricans from the American imaginary, Puerto Ricans in Florida can draw on this status to enact full citizenship. Specifically, with 29 electoral votes Florida is the largest swing state in the nation; further, the margin of victory in the state has been narrow (ranging from 73,000 to 205,000 votes) in the last three presidential elections. With over one million Puerto Ricans residing in Florida that have now been joined by thousands more who have fled the aftermath of Hurricane María, Florida Puerto Ricans have an opportunity to translate their demographic magnitude into political influence by way of their full citizenship rights stateside. Indeed, elite political actors have taken notice of Puerto Rican voters in Florida, liberal and conservative donors have already poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the state to mobilize this specific electorate[22]. Thus, a colonial/racialized citizenship can be activated into a meaningful citizenship by participating in the electoral process in the mainland. If Puerto Ricans manage to swing Florida in a national election and/or alter the state's political power structure, they will become political actors with increased political leverage and negotiating power.

[22] See Dixon (2016) and O'Keefe (2018).

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CHAPTER 4:

THE POLITICS OF IMMIGRATION IN A COLONIAL CONTEXT: PUERTO RICANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION

ABSTRACT

This article examines the contemporary intersection of colonialism, citizenship and immigration by studying the immigration attitudes of Puerto Ricans in Florida. I draw on 98 in-depth interviews conducted in the Orlando metropolitan area during the 2016 presidential election to better understand how Puerto Ricans make sense of the immigration debate, how they formulate their position on the debate, and how their attitudes toward immigration impact their political behavior in the largest swing state of the nation. I find Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration convey a group consciousness and a sense of linked fate with Latin American immigrants, which stems from a shared migrant narrative and a racialized illegality that also subsumes Puerto Ricans. Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans adopt and deploy mainstream views of migrant deservingness and undeservingness. Respondents articulate migrant deservingness by emphasizing undocumented immigrants' important role in the U.S. labor-market, immigrants' good moral character, family values, and children's academic orientations. Immigrant exclusion emphasizes migrant criminality and the burdening of society through a lack of material contributions. I also find immigration is a critical election issue for respondents, such that, a candidate's stance on immigration would determine their vote for president. I argue Puerto Ricans' immigration attitudes are shaped by their position as colonial racialized citizens. On one hand, this status makes Puerto Ricans outsiders and subject to nativism and xenophobia in Central Florida; on the other hand, Puerto Ricans' U.S. citizenship grants them an insider status and authority to enforce the political boundaries of the nation.

Keywords: Immigration, Politics, Puerto Ricans, Latinos, Florida

Immigration was a key issue of the 2016 presidential election in the United States. Republican candidate Donald Trump contentiously introduced the issue when he launched his presidential campaign on June 16, 2015. During this announcement, he made an anti-immigrant position the centerpiece of his campaign, particularly disparaging Mexican and Latin American immigrants as "rapists" and as immigrants who introduce "drugs" and "crime" into the U.S. (see C-SPAN 2015). Public commentators have debated Donald Trump's rise during the Republican Primaries, throughout the presidential nomination process, and his eventual election as the forty-fifth president of the United States. Scholars emphasize Donald Trump's appeal is not unique to this particular social, economic, and political moment, rather it fits into a history of racial exclusion and nativism in the U.S. (Higham 1955; Feagin 1997; Manza and Crowley 2018). Nonetheless, as demonstrated by much of the political and public discourse of the 2016 presidential election cycle, contemporary nativism in the U.S. is not an anti-foreign sentiment that encompasses all immigrants, it is a racialized nativism that targets Latino immigrants (Sanchez 1997). A racialized nativism that targets Latinos is also reflected in state and federal level policies that target Latin American immigrants, Latin American culture (i.e. Spanish language), and immigration enforcement that disproportionately affects Latino populations[23] (Perea 1997).

These social attitudes and legislative measures are a response to massive immigration to the U.S. in the latter part of the 20th century. Since 1965, 59 million immigrants have arrived in the U.S. and in contrast to previous waves of immigration, contemporary immigrants originate in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asian countries. For example, the Latino population grew by nearly 50

[23] Examples include California Proposition 227 and Proposition 187 during the 1990s, U.S. House of Representatives Bill 4437 in 2005, Arizona SB 1070 in 2010, and Georgia HB 87 in 2011.

million from 1965 to 2015[24] and today, at 18-percent of the U.S. population, Latinos are the largest minority group. Undocumented immigration is also an important component of the post-1965 immigration wave. In 2014, there were an estimated 11.4 undocumented immigrants in the U.S. (Passel and Cohn 2016; Flores 2017). While undocumented immigrants have arrived from various countries, Mexican immigrants make up the largest share of the undocumented migrant population. The growth of the Latino population over the past five decades as well as the proportion of undocumented immigrants that originate in Latin America have made Mexicans and Latin American immigrants the focus of the immigration debate.

Because the issue of immigration is often connected to Latinos, social scientists (particularly political scientists) have turned to studying Latinos' attitudes toward immigration. Some of these analyses challenge an expected perception that Latinos are more supportive of a liberal immigration policy. Yet, other examinations have found Latinos do indeed hold more favorable attitudes toward immigration. Overall, this largely quantitative body of work gives us insight into predictors—demographic, socioeconomic, identity and acculturation, temporal, and immigration-related—of Latinos' immigration attitudes (see de la Garza et al. 1991; Binder, Polinar, and Wrinkle 1997; Newton 2000; Uhlander and Garcia 2002; Sanchez 2006; Branton 2007; Abrajano and Singh 2009; Rouse, Wilkonson, and Garand 2010; Vega and Ortiz 2018). However, what remains unanswered by this literature is *how* Latino political attitudes are formulated and *how* these attitudes impact political behavior (Sanchez 2006).

This article qualitatively examines Latino public opinion by analyzing Florida Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration. Examining immigration attitudes in Florida is important because the Sunshine State is the largest swing state of the nation. Moreover, Florida has

[24] Both the arrival of immigrants and their U.S.-born children have driven the overall growth of Latino population.

the fourth largest Latino population in the U.S. and the third largest Latino electorate in the nation. Florida has traditionally been a Republican stronghold; a political position historically supported by Cubans, which are the state's largest Latino group (1,528,046) (ACS 2017) and who make up the largest share of Florida's Latino electorate (31%)[25]. However, the arrival of over one million Puerto Ricans (1,128,225) over the past three decades has important political implications (ACS 2017). Because Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, they are immediately eligible to vote upon settling in the state. In fact, as of 2018, Puerto Ricans also comprised 31-percent of eligible Latino voters in Florida (Flores, Lopez, and Krogstad 2018). Moreover, Puerto Ricans in the United States have typically leaned Democratic. Thus, the magnitude of Florida's Puerto Rican population and Puerto Ricans' historical political orientations have led to much speculation about the impact of the Puerto Rican vote in Florida and its national reverberations.

I draw on 98 in-depth interviews conducted in Orlando, Florida during the 2016 presidential election to better understand how Florida Puerto Ricans make sense of the immigration debate, how they formulate their position on the debate, and how their attitudes toward immigration may impact their political behavior in the largest swing state of the nation. I find Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration convey a sense of linked fate with Latin American immigrants that stems from a shared migrant narrative and racialized experiences as members of the Latino group. Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans also adopt and deploy mainstream views of migrant deservingness and undeservingness. I also find immigration is a salient election issue for Puerto Ricans, such that, Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration provide insight into their voting behavior during the 2016 presidential election. I argue Puerto Ricans' views on undocumented immigration are explained by their position as colonial citizens. At a social level, this status makes

[25] For generational differences among Florida's Cuban electorate see Krogstad and Lopez 2016.

Puerto Ricans subject to nativism and discriminatory treatment in Central Florida, however, at a political level, this status grants authority to enforce the boundaries of the nation while residing stateside. Overall, I contend Puerto Ricans' immigration attitudes reflect the ways in which they experience and straddle their liminal position as insiders (i.e. citizens) and outsiders (i.e. subjects and migrants). This study contributes to Latino, immigration, and public opinion scholarship by foregrounding a structural analysis to explain Puerto Ricans' political attitudes.

LITERATURE

U.S. Empire-building: Colonialism, Race, and Immigration

Although the United States is often referred to as "a nation of immigrants," it is important to historically contextualize its founding. The United States is a product of colonial and racial projects. Specifically, the U.S. was born out of the violent appropriation of Indigenous lands and resources, the murder of Indigenous peoples and the confinement of survivors in reservations, and projects of biological and cultural erasure that sought to eliminate Native communities (Wolfe 2006; Glenn 2015). Critical to the development of the United States is also the enslavement and exploitation of Africans and their descendants, an oppressive system that was contingent on dehumanizing and converting African/Black bodies into property (Harris 1993). European colonization of the United States was driven by capitalism and justified with logics of European superiority and of Natives' and Africans' savage and subhuman status. Not only was the U.S. founded on *ideas* of white/European superiority, the political, economic, social, and cultural *structures* established promoted the dominance and advancement of whites (Harris 1993; Mills 1997). Consequently, Natives and Blacks were ideologically, politically, and socially excluded from the "American nation." Thus, rather than a "nation *of* immigrants," white supremacy, colonialism, and slavery are foundational pillars of the U.S., which together shaped citizenship and belonging from the nation's inception.

Immigration is an important feature of the colonial and racial projects executed in the U.S. European settlers understood immigration was critical for economic development as well as for the nation-building project. Immigrants did not only provide necessary labor, they also populated the vast lands that were seized from native populations. Nonetheless, since this early period "founding fathers" favored the arrival of European immigrants as the developing nation was imagined as Anglo-Saxon Protestant (Feagin 1997; Tichenor 2002; Zolberg 2008). This vision was institutionalized in the 1790 Naturalization Law, which made whiteness a requirement for political membership and citizenship rights. Thus, foundational democratic ideals of freedom, inclusivity, and consensual citizenship, which critically distinguished the U.S. from European powers of the time, were only accessible to European newcomers (Smith 1997; Zolberg 2008).

Race, immigration, and citizenship continued to intersect during the 19th and 20th centuries (Tichenor 2002; Ngai 2004; Masuoka and Junn 2013). The arrival of Chinese immigrants in the mid 19th century was met by nativist backlash, which resulted in immigration laws and agreements that restricted the entry of Chinese women (1875), prohibited the entry of Chinese laborers (1882, 1888), and limited the arrival of Japanese immigrants (1907) (Tichenor 2002). The Immigration Act of 1924 set numeric limits on immigration premised on a global national and racial hierarchy, and in doing so, it created multiple forms of otherness among migrant populations. While this law limited southern and eastern European immigration by assigning entry quotas on the basis of national desirability, it simultaneously deemed European immigrants as racially white and as such, eligible for eventual full political membership in the U.S. On the other hand, this same act continued to exclude the Chinese and expanded exclusion to Japanese, Indian, and other Asian immigrants on the basis of their racial ineligibility for naturalized U.S. citizenship (Ngai 2004). Mexican migration was not subjected to national origin quotas yet Mexicans were the targets of repatriation (1930s) and deportation (1950s) movements that stemmed from anti-Mexican public sentiment. In fact, nearly five million Mexicans (immigrants and citizens) were removed from the U.S. during the first half of the 20th century (Vázquez 2015). Immigration policies of the 19th and early 20th sought to protect the social, cultural, economic, and political dominance of Anglo-Saxon whites by restricting the entry and settlement of immigrants deemed ethnically and racially unsuitable (Ngai 2004).

Construction of Migrant "Illegality"

Early restrictionist policies were not only racialized, they also created the "illegal alien" and "illegal" immigration. The restrictionist regime of the 1920s created migrant "illegality" by establishing numerical limits, a system of visas for entry, and by criminalizing unauthorized entry into the U.S. This regime also emphasized border control and the removal of those deemed "illegitimately" present (Ngai 2004). Despite the presence of undocumented immigrants of various nationalities, the creation of "illegality" and deportation enforcement (internal and at the border) targeted Mexicans, resulting in the coupling of "illegal status" with Mexican identity, and constructing Mexicans/Mexican Americans as outside of the national community. These racialized immigration enforcement practices reflect the simultaneous "welcome and unwelcome" of undocumented Mexican migrants/laborers who were a critical component of the U.S. economy (Nagai 2004). Thus, the economic and political treatment of Mexicans constructed them as a desirable source of disposable cheap labor yet as undesirable for permanent membership in the U.S. (Carrasco 1997; Vázquez 2015).

In the contemporary period, restrictive immigration laws and enforcement mechanisms remain a powerful racialization force. The current immigration system does not only reinforce the construct of migrant "illegality," it specifically re-produces Mexicans *and* Latinos more broadly as "illegal" and "criminal aliens" (Ngai 2004; Aranda, Menjívar, and Donato 2014; Armenta 2017). This stems from the convergence of immigration and criminal law, which: criminalizes (at the federal level) and punitively punishes immigration-related violations; expands immigration policing to state and local agencies; and implements immigrant detention practices comparable to criminal imprisonment (García Hernández 2013). Latinos are disproportionately affected by this nexus—regardless of legal status or nativity, Latinos are subjected to increased surveillance (at federal, state, and local levels) and Latino immigrants are overwhelmingly subjected to the enforcement mechanisms of this system (apprehension, detention, and removal) (Vázquez 2015; Armenta 2017).

This system stimulates public fears by perpetuating the perception that immigrants are a threat to U.S. citizens and national security (García Hernández 2013). This is exacerbated by political discourse and media representations that conflate immigrants with criminality (i.e. immigrants as law breakers, drug traffickers, terrorists) and that alarms of an undocumented immigrant invasion at the U.S.-Mexico border (Santa Ana 2002; Chavez 2013; García Hernández 2013). In this way, U.S. immigration policy is a component of the broader U.S. racial structure as it re-enforces racial hierarchies, reproduces racial inequalities, and sustains white supremacy (Vázquez 2015; Aranda and Vaquera 2015; Armenta 2017).

Latinos, Identity, and Politics

Group Consciousness and Linked Fate

Theories of group consciousness and linked fate seek to explain the relationship between identity and political behavior among ethnic and racial groups. The concepts of group consciousness and linked fate are developed based on the experiences of African Americans in the U.S. (Junn and Masuoka 2008). Group consciousness refers to a politicized group identification that motivates collective action (McClain et al 2009). More specifically, group consciousness consists of three dimensions including: a group identity; a recognition or awareness of the group's disadvantaged social position; and a desire for collective action as a means to improve the group's social position (Miller et al 1981; Garcia 2003; Sanchez and Vargas 2016). Linked fate is a form of group consciousness that encourages political cohesion, particularly among Blacks. Linked fate is characterized by a perception that an individual's fate is connected to that of members of their racial group, as such, their political choices and behaviors are influenced by the needs/interests of the racial group as a whole rather than simply by individuals' own self-interest. For Blacks, their perception of a linked fate stems from a shared experience of oppression in the U.S—from slavery, to historical unequal treatment and exclusion, and ongoing marginalization (Dawson 1994). Linked

fate is significant because it demonstrates the import of racial identity in determining Black political unity despite internal group diversity. In other words, Black racial identity transcends other social identities (i.e. class/socioeconomic status) and encourages collective political action (Dawson 1994).

Scholars have debated whether the above concepts can be used to understand collective and political identities as well as political behavior among Latinos. Some emphasize the emergence of a collective group identity is challenged by the heterogeneity of Latinos, including: distinct national origins, each group has a unique and complex history in the U.S., variation in migrations and access to citizenship, and phenotypic and generational differences (Beltran 2010; Fraga et al. 2006). Others caution that both group consciousness and linked fate were created to explain the identity and political experiences of Blacks in the U.S., therefore, these concepts should not be forced onto non-Black groups (McClain et al 2009). In fact, some analyses have found Latinos report lower levels of linked fate relative to Blacks, Asians, and whites (Sanchez and Vargas 2016).

However, another body of scholarship finds evidence of group consciousness, and in some instances a sense of linked fate, among Latinos (Masuoka 2006; Junn and Masuoka 2008; Masuoka and Sanchez 2010; Sanchez and Vargas 2016). For example, Latinos trail slightly behind Blacks in the three dimensions of group consciousness (i.e. identity, perceived group disadvantage, and collective action) (Sanchez and Vargas 2016). In terms of identity and political engagement, Latino citizens and non-citizens who participated in the 2006 protests against the anti-immigrant Sensenbrenner Bill justified their political action on the basis of a collective panethnic group identity and an immigrant identity (De Casanova 2012). Relatedly, Zepeda-Millan (2014) finds that Latinos' participation in the 2006 protests in New York was somewhat explained by how the proposed legislation was perceived to harm participants as individuals and as members of a panethnic group. And, Masuoka and Sanchez's (2010) analysis of the Latino National Survey found a large segment of the Latino population perceives their individual fate is tied to that of other Latinos; a perception that

appears to be based on level of social integration and degree of marginalization resulting from socioeconomic status and immigration experiences. While scholarship has found support for collective group and political identities among Latinos, how Latino group consciousness and linked fate are constructed remains unclear (Masuoka 2006).

Latinos' Attitudes Toward Immigration

Because Latinos are a growing sector of the electorate, scholars are interested in understanding Latinos' unique policy interests and the circumstance in which Latinos vote as a group. This work has identified immigration as an issue of special importance for Latinos (Sanchez, Madeiros, and Sanchez-Youngman 2012; Wallace 2012). A common perception is that Latinos in the U.S. support a very liberal immigration policy (Sanchez et al. 2015). However, analyses of Latino public opinion suggest support for expansionist immigration policy has not always been widespread (cite). While Latinos have been more likely than whites, Blacks, andAsians to support amnesty for undocumented immigrants and to express favorable views of immigrants (Cain and Kiewiet 1987; Sanchez et al. 2015), over time a sizeable proportion of Latinos has also expressed the perception that there are too many immigrants coming to the U.S. (Cain and Kiewiet 1987; De la Garza et al. 1992; Epenshade and Hempstead 1996; Binder, Pollinard, and Wrinkle 1997; Uhlaner and Garcia 2002). Branton (2007) finds the relevance of immigration varies across Latinos and it does so by level of acculturation. Those further removed from a personal experience of immigration are less likely to hold the issue as salient. On the other hand, knowing someone who is undocumented and/or was deported does make an individual more likely to perceive immigration policy as the most important issue affecting Latinos. Others have found favorable immigration attitudes among Latinos (insert citations); of notable influence is the perception that Latinos as a group experience discrimination in the U.S. which in turn promotes a shared group identity. Overall, work on Latino public opinion has given us insight into factors (demographic, socioeconomic, identity, temporal,

and immigration-related variables) that affect Latinos' immigration attitudes (de la Garza et al. 1991; Binder, Polinar, and Wrinkle 1997; Newton 2000; Uhlander and Garcia 2002; Sanchez 2006; Branton 2007; Abrajano and Singh 2009; Rouse, Wilkonson, and Garand 2010; Vega and Ortiz 2018); nevertheless, what remains unanswered by this literature is *how* Latino political attitudes are formulated and *how* these impact political behavior (Sanchez 2006).

DATA AND METHODS

Data for this paper come from 98 in-depth interviews with island- and mainland-born Puerto Ricans. Interviews were conducted in the Orlando Metropolitan Area from July 2015-February 2016. At the turn of the century, Florida, and Orlando metro (Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford) more specifically, emerged as the new mainland destination for Island and mainland Puerto Ricans. Florida is now home to the second largest Puerto Rican community stateside (1,128,225) (ACS 2017) with nearly a third of the state's Puerto Rican population concentrated in Orlando metro (380,055) (ACS 2017). This shift in Puerto Rican migratory patterns away from traditional mainland communities in the Northeast and Midwest to new areas in the U.S. South means Puerto Ricans are now settling in a vastly distinct context. Moreover, Orlando metro is located in the state's I-4 corridor, a swing region of the state that is described as critical for national election outcomes.

I identified respondents through snowball sampling. I relied on key community informants with access to distinct social and professional networks to identify and recruit an initial wave of respondents. I then recruited additional study participants from interviewees' own networks. I also expanded my interview sample by recruiting respondents at community events and when I volunteered with local organizations. Respondents were selected to vary in education background, nativity, gender, and phenotype. Although respondents were between 25-70 years old, the median sample age is 46. The interview sample includes long-term residents—ten years or more of residence in Orlando metro—and recent arrivals—residence in the region for five years or less.

Interviews lasted between 1.5 to 4 hours and were digitally recorded. Interviews were conducted at a location selected by respondents, most often at a coffee shop or their home. Respondents were given a twenty-five-dollar monetary incentive once the interview was completed. Interviews were guided by a semi-structured questionnaire that ensured covering major topics of interest and allowed for the emergence of significant experiences in respondents' lives. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed in the language they were conducted (i.e., Spanish, English, and Spanglish) to preserve the integrity of the narratives. I used the online platform Dedoose to analyze interviews. The analytical strategy relied on an inductive and deductive coding approach; that is, it was guided by theory-driven and data-driven codes. I systematically read through interviews and applied the coding scheme to the interview text. I sorted interview segments by codes, I read through these narratives and I refined coding where appropriate, and I identified recurring codes and themes. This process allowed me to uncover prevailing attitudes towards immigration and the experiences and views that influenced respondents' attitudes. All respondents were assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

FINDINGS

Florida Puerto Ricans largely expressed supportive attitudes towards undocumented immigration. This view was conveyed in their responses to questions about their opinion of the current immigration debate and in the significance of immigration as an election issue during the 2016 presidential election. Overall, respondents expressed support for granting undocumented immigrants already residing in the U.S. a pathway to legalization. Just as noteworthy, respondents' narratives show they understand undocumented immigration as a Latin American immigrant issue. Three dominant themes explain respondents' perceptions of undocumented immigrants and their position on the immigration debate. First, undocumented immigrant deservingness stems from their important contributions to the U.S., specifically, through their labor, consumption, and taxes.

Second, while there is overall support for immigration reform that allows undocumented immigrants to remain in the U.S. and obtain legalization, some respondents have adopted and deploy mainstream narratives of migrant undeservingness. Third, Latino group consciousness, and in some instances linked fate, are coalescing along notions of panethnic group membership, a common migrant narrative, and a shared structural position between Puerto Ricans and Latin American immigrants.

Narratives of Migrant Deservingness and Legalization

Respondents often identified the contributions made by undocumented immigrants to U.S. society when they discussed their views on immigration, or when they expressed immigration was a top and critical election issue. For instance, Isaac, an island-born/raised Puerto Rican that has resided in Orlando for 28 years, reported the following opinion on the current immigration debate:

> I am in favor of granting citizenship to all of them [undocumented immigrants] because if you think about it, they do many things for this country, they are hardworking. I think they [the government] should be fair with them… Americans forget this country is a melting pot, this country basically grew due to foreigners… Latin Americans are in this country and they contribute, and they do many jobs that Americans don't want to do.

He attributes anti-immigrant positions to "Americans" (i.e. whites) noting they "forget" the U.S. was developed by immigrants. In doing so, he expresses a commonly held view of the U.S. as a country of immigrants. A view that although seeks to be inclusive of the historic contributions and presence of immigrants, in actuality erases the presence of Native Americans in the U.S. and their own history of conquest and colonization. Additionally, Isaac coveys an understanding of the current immigration debate as an issue about Latin American immigrants. He emphasizes Latin American immigrants contribute to society, particularly through their labor and by accepting undesired jobs. While Isaac acknowledges the need for immigration control, he also emphasizes immigration policy needs to recognize undocumented immigrants contribute to society. He adds the immigration system should not just privilege the contributions that professional migrants can make but also, the

ways in which non-professional immigrants contribute. Moreover, his support for immigration is not limited to granting undocumented immigrant a pathway to legalization (i.e. permanent resident status) rather he supports their full political inclusion (i.e. citizenship).

Luis, a 10-year-resident of Orlando who was born/raised in Puerto Rico, also expresses a positive view of undocumented immigrants:

> I think that when it comes to construction, to the development of the U.S., the majority of people who have labored here are Mexicans… there is always a Mexican working in construction. I have worked with Mexicans and hats off to them. They are truly hardworking… I have friends who have [U.S.] citizen children but they [parents] are not [citizens], I think it would be fair to give them the privilege of belonging to the U.S. I have encountered instances in which my friends have been sent back to their countries of origin and their families have stayed in the U.S. Donations were collected for the family members that stayed behind because they lost the breadwinner.

When I asked Luis about the debate over undocumented immigration to the U.S. he responds by discussing Mexican immigrants. Luis emphasizes Mexican immigrants' strong work ethic and their vital contributions to the U.S., especially in labor-intensive fields. A perception that is informed by his own experience working side-by-side with Mexicans in construction projects when he moved to Orlando. Luis' opinion is also shaped by his personal insight into the effects of deportation on mixed status families. Within his own social network, he has witnessed the rupturing of migrant families and the vulnerability encountered by those who have lost a breadwinner. Luis expresses enduring the spillover effects of punitive immigration policies that target Latino communities; effects that are experiences by Latinos despite nativity and legal status (Szkupinski, Medina, and Glick 2014).

Similar to Luis, family separations caused by deportation were an important issue for Kiara. In fact, when I asked her to identify the most important issues a candidate should address during the 2016 presidential election she noted:

> My priorities are the family, the economy, and immigration—all the people who have come from other countries and whose families have been separated, for me that is very important… there are children who have been left without parents because they were

> born in the U.S. but their parents don't have papers or a permit to stay, so they have been separated. And these are children who are now growing up without parental guidance due to family separation. That is very important for me and that is what I will consider the day I cast my vote.

Kiara adds she experienced first-hand the effects of immigration control. She was deeply saddened when a fellow churchgoing family was deported; a family which she described as good, honest, and hardworking with academically outstanding children. She was stricken by the removal of this family because it not only represented an important loss in her community but also, due to the potential contributions this family could have made to the U.S. Luis' and Kiara's experiences demonstrate that although they as Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth, and as such they are not directly impacted by immigration policy, immigration control does impact them at a social level. That is, deportations disrupt their own social networks whether it may be at church, places of work, or residential communities (Wallace 2012; Sanchez et al 2015). Kiara concludes she supports providing a pathway to legalization that includes access to citizenship. What is also telling is the significance of immigration as an election issue for Kiara. In contrast to anti-immigrant views and rhetoric that were pervasive among a sizeable segment of the citizenry during the 2016 election cycle, she is supportive of undocumented immigrants and their ability to remain in the U.S. In fact, this is such an important issue that it would determine which candidate received her vote for president in 2016. Indeed, both Luis and Kiara give us important insight into the role that the current context of immigration and anti-immigrant policies have on Puerto Ricans' political thinking and behavior (Vargas, Sanchez, and Valdez Jr. 2017; 2017; Zepeda-Millán 2017).

Jacob, a Puerto Rico-born/New York-raised 16-year-resident of Orlando metro, provides insight into how his view on undocumented immigrants has changed over time:

> I used to have a different opinion because when I didn't know Mexican people, the only ones I knew were the ones in [New] Jersey. [Then] it was like, "Mexicans are taking the jobs," my opinion was, "Man, this Mexican guy is taking my job" and when I got a job and they [management] was working me really hard [I thought] "What do

> you think? I'm Mexican? Working me so hard!" But they [Mexicans] are people to really admire, their work ethic, [they] are very family-oriented, like us Puerto Ricans.

Abraham added that now that he resides in Florida his view on the issue is:

> I think the people [undocumented immigrants] that are here should stay here because they worked so hard to get here, and they're struggling. If they get citizenship, they could get help because a lot of them go out in the fields and work and they get underpaid. Plant City [in Central Florida] is a place where, if you travel [on the] I-4 [interstate 4] and you look to the right, you'll see all the strawberry fields [and] when they're in season, you'll see all the Mexicans there. You'll see trailers, [the growers] actually have homes built for Mexicans on their plantation.

While living in the Northeast, Jacob had a common view of Mexican immigrants as taking jobs away from U.S.-born workers. Specifically, he understood Mexican immigrants as the cause of his unemployment in New Jersey. He also revealed that when he did get a job and was overworked, he resisted being treated like a "Mexican worker." This perception provides insight into on-the-ground understandings (acceptance and reproduction) of racialized labor relations and exploitation: Mexican workers are subjected to greater labor demands due to their vulnerable legal position, however, citizens (in this case Jacob) occupy a more privileged position in the U.S. labor-market, which allows them to resist labor exploitation. During this experience, Jacob does not challenge the racialized position of Mexican immigrants as exploitable labor; rather he resists his treatment as such on the grounds of his citizen status. Today, Jacob no longer sees Mexicans as a threat, but rather as hardworking and as possessing strong family values comparable to those of Puerto Ricans. As a resident of Florida, he has learned Mexican immigrants are also an important source of labor for the state's agricultural industry. During the 2016 presidential election, he supports granting undocumented immigrants access to citizenship, particularly, due to the strenuous journey to the U.S. and the violations undocumented immigrants encounter once residing in the U.S., including lower wages and he adds, workplace abuse, restricted mobility, and living in fear of apprehension.

Daniel, an island-born/raised Puerto Rican and long-term resident of Orlando metro, echoed many of the views expressed above, however, he also articulated a systemic understanding of undocumented migration. He explained:

> The problem is the existing system not immigrants who are here illegally. If you look at it, who is harvesting… in California, grapes, fruit, livestock, poultry, who is working those jobs? Hispanics. They say that [undocumented immigrants] are stealing money [and] jobs from Americans, but that isn't true because none of them want to do that work. Many growers prefer them [undocumented immigrants] because they will work for lower wages and [that] means greater profits for them. They approach the politician [and say], 'I will help with your campaign but I need you to turn a blind eye on immigration.' And that happened for many years. The system that has maintained this situation is to blame.

Similar to other respondents, Daniel perceives undocumented immigrants as a source of labor for U.S. agriculture and meat processing industries. Just as noteworthy, he specifies Latinos are this source of undocumented migrant labor; in other words, he sees undocumented migration as a Latino issue. He draws attention to claims that undocumented migrants create an economic burden by taking jobs away from the U.S.-born, yet he believes U.S.-born workers would not perform the type of jobs migrants do. Daniel challenges narratives that place responsibility of undocumented immigration onto migrants themselves by pointing to the forces that sustain an undocumented population. That is, he alludes to how legality, capitalism, race, and politics converge in the U.S.—agrobusiness influences policy makers (presumably via financial contributions) to maintain the status quo on undocumented immigration, in doing so, it preserves a vulnerable, exploitable, and disposable class of Latin American laborers in the U.S. that sustains the growth of U.S. industries.

During our conversation, Franky, a Chicago-born/Puerto Rico-raised 15-year-resident of Orlando, explained the multiple ways in which undocumented migrants, specifically Latin Americans, contribute to the U.S. According to Franky, "they're hardworking," "they're buying," and "they're paying taxes." He added:

> There has to be a more human approach in dealing with immigration because we come from immigrants, the whole United States… when Italian immigrants were coming

> over, when the Irish were coming over, Germans were coming over, [when] Europe was coming over at the turn of the century... they were accepted, [they were] given the opportunity of enjoying this country, the American dream and so forth. Well, we continue to see [immigration] in America. But they're not coming from Europe; they're coming from the South. Do we have a double standard? Is it okay to accept the mass immigration from Anglo-Saxon communities versus the Hispanic community? They come in to work… they're contributing to society. They're building the economy… To say that migrants do not contribute to the community I think is erroneous… they do the hard-backbreaking work that guys that have been here don't want to do… I hear about building a wall… what an absurd waste of time, waste of effort to build a 2,000-mile wall… I would say that would be a monument to the stupidity of man.

Franky emphasizes current immigration policy needs to recognize the development of the U.S. as a nation is tied to a history of immigration. He points to Southern and Eastern European immigrants who arrived during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and who were allowed to enter and create a life in the U.S. While Franky perceives them as being accepted into U.S. society upon arrival, Southern and Eastern Europeans did encounter nativists attitudes and they were socially marginalized. However, over generations members of these groups achieved white racial status and became uncontested Americans (Ignatiev 1995; Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2007). On the other hand, Franky draws attention to the origins of contemporary migrants; the majority are no longer coming from European nations but rather from Latin America. In asking "Do we have a double standard?" he understands the current treatment of Latin American immigrants as one that is racialized. He sees a distinction between how European immigrants were received and allowed to incorporate into the U.S. relative to efforts to exclude and remove cotemporary immigrants that are largely of Latin American-origin. This understanding is further reinforced by immigration policy proposed by then candidate Donald Trump who vowed to construct a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border to prevent the entry of migrants originating from countries south of the U.S. Indeed, Franky's narrative recognizes today's conflation of the categories "immigrant," "illegality," and "Latino" in public and political discourse, an equivalence that contributes to the current racialization of Latinos and Latin American immigrants (Armenta 2017; other citations).

Narratives of Migrant Undeservingness and Exclusion

Although the majority of respondents expressed a supportive position on undocumented immigration and they favored granting undocumented immigrants a pathway towards legalization, a minority of respondents deployed mainstream narratives of migrant undeservingness. In other words, respondents identified characteristics that were grounds for punishment and in some instances removal.

André, an island-born/raised long-term resident of Orlando, exemplifies the ways in which these respondents expressed support for undocumented immigrants while also deploying notions of immigrant undeservingness:

> I like Bush's plan, I think that it is very reasonable. I think that they should allow these people, like he says, to step out of the shadows. I think that's horrible. I have a friend who doesn't have the paperwork, he's been here for years… He goes to work, he pays his taxes, he pays Social Security. It's crazy, he does everything that an American does and he is more disciplined than me. But I feel for him because he lives in constant fear that at any given point they will find out and he's going to be deported… So, I think that his [Jeb Bush] plan of allowing these people [undocumented immigrants] to step out of the shadows, register, keep doing what you're doing, pay a fine, go through the process, and as long as you do that, and you're not a criminal or have done anything stupid, feel free to stay.

André adds that he supports giving undocumented immigrants the choice of legal permanent residency or U.S. citizenship. During our conversation, André noted he had read Jeb Bush's (co-authored) book on immigration, and in the excerpt above he expresses support for the immigration policy it advanced. André's close relationship with someone who is undocumented has exposed him to the experience of living in the "shadows" for many years. He is in support of undocumented immigrants, like his friend, who contribute to the U.S. via their labor, taxes, and payments into public assistance programs. In fact, André notes that in this way, undocumented immigrants are no different from other working U.S. citizens. Although André expresses a favorable view of undocumented immigrants, his narrative also illustrates the ways in which the broader legal, political, and public framing of immigration along axes of legality/illegality are internalized, reproduced, and

legitimized by individuals; moreover, he shows the ways in which notions of punishment (i.e. "paying a fine") for occupying a structurally created undocumented status become normalized.

When I asked Sergio, an island born/raised Puerto Rican and three-year resident of Orlando, his opinion on the immigration debate he offered:

> I think [they should be given] an opportunity, because [although] they arrived in an inappropriate manner, they are here, they are established, they probably have children that were born here. I think a concession should be made with those people, give them an opportunity. I understand deporting someone who is causing problems, who has been a delinquent, who has not contributed to society; they should [deport them] whoever it may be, whether they be Puerto Rican, Asian, whatever. You don't want people who cause problems in your country. But someone who is progressing, who is working, someone who hasn't done anything negative should be given an opportunity.

When I inquire about the type of status undocumented immigrants should be granted, Sergio adds: "Citizens, they're already here." While Sergio notes that undocumented immigrants entered the U.S. in an "inappropriate manner," an idea that reproduces notions of "lawful" and "unlawful" modes of entry and indirectly places responsibility onto migrants, he believes some should be allowed to stay in the U.S. and become citizens. He defines the criteria for a deserving/eligible immigrant as one that contributes to society, is moving forward, or is already established and has U.S.-born children. On the other hand, an underserving and thus deportable immigrant includes those who are idle or lawbreaking. Like André, Sergio defines immigrant deservingness and undeservingness along axes of contributing to society and criminality. Moreover, his support for the removal of those that engage in undesirable behavior regardless of national origin (i.e. citizen/non-citizen status) suggests support for broader system of state surveillance and policing.

Janielys, an island-born/Florida-raised Puerto Rican, explains her position on the immigration debate by recounting:

> I know a lot [of undocumented immigrants] that have studied here and have been sent back home because of that. I always think that's unfair because they came here with their dream to get educated, become someone and learn… and have a job and [to] be able to provide for themselves or a family. They should be able to do that. The ones that are here and breaking the law and they're doing things they're not

> supposed to, why are you here? I think it should be on a preferred basis. If you're doing what you're supposed to be doing and you're working hard, I don't see why you should be sent back.

Janielys' experience attending college in Central Florida exposed her to instances in which undocumented immigrants were returned to their country of origin despite their educational accomplishments—a removal that she believes is unjust. Similar to previous respondents, Janielys distinguishes between deserving and underserving immigrants; a deserving immigrant is one that is pursuing higher education and occupational mobility while an undeserving immigrant engages in delinquent behavior and thus should not be allowed to stay in the U.S. Janiely's narrative demonstrates the ways in which having undocumented immigrants within social networks influences how individuals' understand the immigrations debate (Wallace 2012); however, she also illustrates how prevailing narratives of migrant deservingness and undeservingness co-exist and are deployed among Latino groups.

Aleysha, an island-born Puerto Rican who has resided in Orlando for 15 years, explained her position on the immigration debate by first comparing undocumented Dominican migration to Puerto Rico with undocumented migration to the U.S., noting that because of this similarity she understands arguments against unauthorized entries and the need for border control. However, she adds:

> If it were up to me, all those who have good goals, who want to do something positive should be allowed to enter… For those who are already here, they should be given an opportunity [to stay] as long as they don't have a criminal record. They are already here. What are you going to do? Are you going to spend money to search for them? To find them and send them back [to their country of origin]? Money being spent [on deportations] should be used to educate them so they can contribute to the country.

Although Aleysha understands restrictionist positions on immigration, she clarifies that she would allow entry to any immigrant that is goal-oriented. In terms of those already in the U.S., she supports granting legalization to immigrants that do not possess a criminal record. In fact, she believes that resources used to identify and remove undocumented immigrants could be more

efficiently used if directed towards integration programs. Like other respondents, Aleysha was personally familiar with the experiences of undocumented immigrants, which influenced her views on the matter:

> I have friends who are not here legally. And [they are] very intelligent, they left their country… they are people who were well off in their country… they [even] had chauffeurs, and [then] the government changed… [and] they had to come [to the U.S.]. They entered legally but they stayed. They had a good education in their country, they arrived here and couldn't study. They are people who could give a lot to this country but because they are here illegally they have to accept a job that doesn't require an education, and they can't think of a future. That's when I get frustrated [because] I have that opportunity.

Aleysha reports some of her friends in Florida are immigrants who fell into an undocumented status as a result of overstaying their travel visas. She emphasizes that although these individuals were in a higher socioeconomic position prior to emigrating, they left their countries of origin due to political regime changes. Despite the educational credentials that her friends brought with them, they encounter limited prospects in the U.S. due to occupational stagnation and the inability to pursue education caused by their undocumented status. Both Janielys and Alysha emphasize education, pursuit of professional careers, and goal-oriented as features of "good/worthy" immigrants and "criminality" as features of "bad" immigrants. Aleysha also draws on undocumented immigration to Puerto Rico to make sense of a restrictionist perspective, yet through her personal relationships in Florida she has also witnessed the limitations imposed on her peers due their undocumented status. Limitations that she recognizes do not affect her due to her status as a U.S. citizen.

Valeria, a Puerto Rico-born/New-York raised recent arrival in Orlando, expressed the following position on the immigration debate:

> Well if they come here and they have a purpose, to get a job, get a home, give their child a good education, or if they're persecuted, I think they should be given the opportunity… like if they're suffering in their country, they are being persecuted, they are living in poverty… But there's a two-sided story to that. I'm talking about families, but when it comes to men that come from [another] country and that have committed murders or they have abused children, I don't think they should be allowed, that's my opinion.

Valeria defines immigrant deservingness on the basis of family migration, contributing to the U.S. through labor, and seeking mobility. Other conditions that merit stay include repression or life-threatening situations and being impoverished in countries of origin. She adds those who meet the above criteria should be given the opportunity to become citizens of the U.S. Like others, Valeria agrees with the removal of undocumented immigrants that have a "criminal" history. Valeria's narrative also demonstrates that undocumented immigrant "criminality" is viewed through the lens of violent crimes (e.g. murder and sexual or physical abuse). Additionally, Valeria's view of "criminal undocumented immigrants" is gendered as she emphasizes single immigrant men as the potential perpetrators of violent crimes, and as such, as underserving of legalization in the U.S. Indeed, this view is a product of immigration enforcement that is a gendered and racial removal project of the state, specifically, one that targets brown and black immigrant men (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013).

Forging Latino Group Consciousness and Linked Fate

Respondents also raised the significance of immigration when discussing critical issues for the 2016 presidential election. For example, when I asked Xavi, an island-born/raised 33-year-resident of Orlando metro, the most important issues candidates should address he responded, "immigration, although we Puerto Ricans are not affected by immigration, we do believe our Hispanic and Latino brothers need the immigration issue to be resolved…" And Joel, a Puerto Rican veteran and 15-year-resident of Orlando, provided:

> Well, number one, support for immigrants, obviously because we are all Latinos, we are Hispanic. That is number one for me… giving immigrants access to the same benefits that us Puerto Ricans have, one way or another, giving them similar benefits. I understand they [immigrants] come here [to the U.S.] motivated by the desire to progress, similar to us. That is the main reason.

Xavi and Joel's framing of immigration is telling. First, they both articulate immigration as a Latin American immigrant issue (Wallace and Zepeda-Millán 2019). Second, they both convey a sense of

being uniquely connected to Latinos, which informs their position on immigration. Xavi acknowledges Puerto Ricans are unaffected by immigration policy, yet he sees Latino immigrants as kin that are negatively impacted by the immigration system. In doing so, he expresses a sense of panethnic group belonging and solidarity. As a matter of fact, immigration and Latino immigrants' current position is so pressing for Xavi that it is among his top three issues for the 2016 election cycle. Joel also expresses Latino panethnicity when explaining a more liberal immigration policy is his primary election issue because "we are all Latinos." He advocates giving Latin American immigrants access to the same benefits Puerto Ricans have in the U.S., presumably citizenship and the rights and benefits accorded by this status, which indicates he disagrees with the differential treatment extended to panethnic group members. Just as noteworthy, despite Puerto Ricans' status as citizens, Joel believes Puerto Ricans and Latin Americans are connected by a comparable migrant experience. In other words, a shared migrant narrative promotes a sense of panethnic group belonging between Puerto Ricans and Latin American immigrants, illustrating the ways in which a racialized politics of immigration is promoting elements of an identity politics in Florida (Lee 2008).

Mia, a 12-year-resident of Orlando metro that was born/raised in Puerto Rico, also expressed support for undocumented immigrants. In explaining her opinion on the immigration debate she recounted:

> I was really sad when all those people arrived [Central American children] … I wanted to house kids here when they came because they were at that place [U.S.-Mexico border]. Many people died in the desert, many died on that train, The Beast. All of that made me very sad and caused me a lot of pain because those are lives!... I would get desperate with the lack of solutions, I would plea "God please give them a solution!" … They are looking for quality of life like us Puerto Ricans, we move to seek a good quality of life, the difference is that we have papers and they don't, it makes me feel bad that they don't [have papers].

Mia's response shows the impact the arrival of thousands of Central American children at the U.S.-Mexico border in 2014 had on her. The compassion she felt for migrant children was such that she wished to refuge some of the children herself. She is also affected by migrant deaths, citing those

that occur as a result of clandestinely riding the infamous train that many Central American and Mexican migrants take to reach the U.S.-Mexico border . Mia recounts the frustration she felt at the lack of an institutional response to the situation and lacking aid for these migrants. While Mia and her family are protected by citizen status, she expresses a sense of powerlessness that is reminiscent to that experienced in mixed status families who endure the brunt of a punitive immigration system (Aranda and Vaquera 2015). And Like Joel, Mia evokes a shared migrant narrative between undocumented Latin American immigrants and Puerto Ricans—as conveyed by respondents, both migrate to the U.S. seeking a better quality of life, yet unlike undocumented immigrants, Puerto Ricans do not encounter legal barriers to entry.

When I asked Alanys, a Puerto Rico-born/raised 2-year-resident of Orlando metro, about the most important issues for the presidential election, she provided:

> Number one, immigration… the discrimination towards and abuse of Mexicans, of those from Guatemala, Salvadorans, Peruvians, everyone. Those who cross the Mexico and United States border with a dream, which is destroyed in one minute… When I see how much those people have sacrificed, they have endured hunger, they have to cross deserts, and then they are removed. I feel very sorry about that. So, I think that is the major [election] issue. You know why? Although they may say it won't, it will affect us Puerto Ricans due to that man's, Donald Trump, stupid comments. He is against Mexicans, but it will affect us, he is a Republican, he is racist… He will begin by targeting Mexicans and he will end with Puerto Ricans… today he focuses on Mexicans, he will continue with Colombians, with all of us who are immigrants and with everything that means immigrant in this country… he didn't only say Mexicans, he said immigrants, and that is all of us because we all migrate. I think that is the main issue.

For Alanys, the most important election issue is immigration. The significance of this issue is related to what she perceives as discriminatory treatment towards Latin American immigrants, who despite enduring a treacherous journey to the U.S., are removed if caught by authorities. The significance of immigration as an election issue is also influenced by the political climate of the moment. She elaborates Puerto Ricans would eventually become subsumed by the anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican rhetoric that was promoted by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. This is

telling because it captures a sense of vulnerability among Puerto Ricans despite their status as U.S. citizens—Alanys expects Puerto Ricans will eventually become targets of the pervasive anti-immigrant rhetoric because according to her, Puerto Ricans are migrants as well. Overall, Analys' response captures a perceived shared structural position between Puerto Ricans and other Latin American immigrants. The commonalities between these groups stem from a shared migrant experience and a racialized anti-immigrant politics that encompass Latino groups despite their historical presence, legal status, and national origin. In other words, Analys expresses a Latino group consciousness coalescing—a group identity; an awareness of the group's disadvantaged social position; and a desire for collective action to improve the group's social position (McClain et al 2009); an she expresses a sense of linked fate between Puerto Ricans and Latinos under the current political moment—the perception that her fate as a Puerto Rican is connected to that of members of other Latin American groups, as such, her immigration politics are influenced by the interests of the ethnoracial group as a whole.

When I asked Gustavo, a 10-year-resident of Orlando, whether he would be voting in the 2016 presidential election he responded, "Yes, yes, I have to vote." He added not participating in the election would be equivalent to "turning my back on Mexican and Cuban brothers and any others that are talked about so negatively." In terms of issues, he identified "migration, for me that is most important" and elaborated:

> This is one country and obviously, the whole world doesn't fit here, but they have given liberty to Germans, people from Europe, they have given them the liberty to live here, why do they want to remove those of us who are from nearby? I understand [migrants are] mostly Mexican, they want to come to get ahead just as Donald Trump did… The least indicated person is speaking because he is the son of undocumented, of immigrants as well… [He] says he wants to build a wall so that they [Mexicans] don't enter. Why? They are the ones feeding you. Why doesn't he send his sons to work the fields?... Mexicans are working the fields… and there are also Puerto Ricans in the fields. Why does he have to target them? It's inconceivable [and] inhumane.

Immigration is also Gustavo's primary election issue. While he acknowledges limitations to the number of immigrants the U.S. can receive, he observes a racialized immigration policy and anti-immigration politics. He contrasts what he understands as a preference for European immigrants of the past with the present exclusion of Latino immigrants. What is also telling is that in stating "why do they want to remove *those of us* who come from nearby?", William deploys a migrant identity—he perceives anti-immigrant sentiment not only targets those who migrate from sovereign Latin American countries but also Puerto Ricans who are simultaneously U.S. citizens and subjects (Grosfoguel 2003; Rivera Ramos 2007; Meléndez 2017). In other words, exclusionary immigration rhetoric and policies that target Latino immigrants are also internalized by Puerto Ricans. Gustavo is also critical of Donald Trump's anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant comments by drawing attention to the Trump family's own immigrant background. He adds the irony of building a wall that seeks to keep out Mexican immigrants who perform vital work for U.S. agriculture and also, the important role that Puerto Rican labor has played for the agriculture industry as well. Commonalities between Mexican immigrants and Puerto Ricans are not only established along dimensions of migration, but also, as sources of cheap and disposable labor for the U.S. As Meléndez (2017) has shown, Puerto Ricans historically participated in labor recruitment programs for agriculture and manufacturing industries, a labor migration comparable to that of Mexican migrant laborers who participated in the Bracero Program. Indeed, via contracted labor programs, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans and millions of Mexicans were channeled into low-skilled labor-intensive industries during the mid 20th century.

Julián, an island-born/raised recent arrival in Orlando reported that during the 2016 presidential elections:

> The main election issue is racism against Latinos, the problem we have with Mexicans, the racism towards them is palpable. You see the support Americans are giving Donald Trump. You can see racism towards Latinos exists. I want to improve

> that, end racism, stop marginalizing people, it's not acceptable just because they are Mexican. No, we are one community, everyone.

When I follow up by asking whether racism towards Latinos affects Puerto Ricans Julián responds, "Yes, it also does. There are people here who see Puerto Ricans and they comment, 'look at these freeloaders.'" Julián identified racism against Latinos as the major issue for the election. Although he had just lived in Orlando for a couple of years, he had already become aware of racialized practices against and discourse about Latinos and Mexicans. The recency of his arrival and settlement in Florida shows how those arriving from Puerto Rico quickly learn the inferior position Latino groups occupy in the U.S. racial system, which was further reinforced by the current political context. According to Julián, the extent and depth of this racism is exemplified by the level of support Donald Trump received during the election season. Julián's narrative shows panethnicity and group consciousness coalescing due to racism towards Latinos and common experiences with marginalizing rhetoric, which was amplified during the 2016 election season. This awareness and experience is important because it shapes what Julián perceives as a critical election issue and gives us insight into his future voting behavior.

Jade's, a New York-born/raised Puerto Rican and 22-year-resident of Orlando metro, position on the current immigration debate conveys a sense of linked fate between Puerto Ricans and Latinos. She offered:

> I subscribe to [Congressman] Luis Gutierrez's argument—what affects any Hispanic, Latin person, is going affect all of us. The only thing that we [Puerto Ricans] have that is different is that we were born with a little piece of paper [citizenship] that can be taken [away] at any time. There is no guarantee that it's going to be there. The plight is the same, discrimination is discrimination regardless of who it is… What I find disturbing, [and] that is happening more and more, the use of immigration to divide people. The divisiveness. And its mean and dangerous divisiveness… As far as immigration is concerned, I am all for fix[ing] it because [otherwise] we're going to end up with a different [system] of civil rights, and some significant deaths if we continue on this route and allowing conversations that are so disruptive and divisive within the Republican party. My party [Democrats] is not perfect by any means, shape, or form, and we have our own closeted bigots, but they are not at the forefront.

Jade believes the national immigration discourse affects Puerto Ricans because they are Latino. According to her, the main difference between Puerto Ricans and Latino immigrants is that Puerto Ricans are citizens. However, she draws attention to a legal vulnerability and uncertainty Puerto Ricans experience—island-born Puerto Ricans have a statutory rather than a constitutionally protected U.S. citizenship that can be revoked by the U.S. congress at any time. Adding to this sense of vulnerability is the island's colonial status, which has persisted for over one-hundred years with no indication of a future equal territorial incorporation into the U.S. Although Jade is mainland-born and as such has birthright constitutional citizenship, she has internalized the inferior political status of island Puerto Ricans. Additionally, despite differences in legal status between Puerto Ricans (citizens) and Latino immigrants (non-citizens), Jade contends they experience similar issues with discrimination, which for her fosters a sense of a common group struggle. She expresses her disagreement with the current immigration conversation, which she describes as spiteful and one that is unproductive for making needed changes to the immigration system. While she points to the Republican party for allowing this type of anti-immigrant rhetoric to prevail, she also recognizes members of the Democratic party also embrace similar racialized views. Moreover, this narrative also captures the role of Latino political elites in the construction of linked fate between Florida Puerto Ricans and Latinos.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article examines Florida Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration. Respondents largely expressed support of granting undocumented immigrants who are already present in the United States a pathway to legalization. Just as noteworthy, Florida Puerto Ricans understand undocumented immigration as a Latin American immigrant issue. Respondents' attitudes toward undocumented immigration capture the significance of migrant deservingness and

undeservingness. For example, Florida Puerto Ricans construct migrant deservingness by emphasizing undocumented immigrants' critical role in the U.S. labor-market, immigrants' good moral character, their family values, and their children's academic orientations. Overall, these criteria of deservingness emphasize what respondents interpret as immigrants' positive contributions to society. Of particular salience is undocumented immigrants' willingness to labor in undesirable occupations and industries; jobs that according to respondents, Americans including Puerto Ricans will not perform. Others also drew attention to the dangerous and arduous journey immigrants endure as well as the sacrifices they make to thrive in the U.S. While these views demonstrate a positive outlook toward undocumented immigrants, it also further solidified notions of migrant deservingness and undeservingness. That is, immigrants that do not meet these characteristics or do not possess these qualities do not merit a pathway to legalization.

Notions of immigrant deservingness and undeservingness are further supported by the ways in which some Florida Puerto Ricans engage in protecting the boundaries of the nation. This is exemplified when respondents articulate criteria of immigrant exclusion, and in some instances, immigrant deportation. Criteria of exclusion emphasize migrant criminality, particularly committing violent crimes, as well as immigrants that burden society through a lack of contributions. Some respondents also point to undocumented immigrants' mode of entry, which some described as unlawful and as such necessitating a penalty. Some of the views that convey immigrant undeservingness were gendered framing undocumented men as potential threats to safety and society. Other views supported undocumented immigrant *families*; in other words, a view that excludes single undocumented immigrants as well as those who are not part of traditional family structures. Overall, the majority of respondents expressed positive views of undocumented Latin American immigrants and support for a pathway to legalization. For several respondents,

undocumented immigration was one of the most critical election issues, and a candidate's stance on immigration would determine respondents' vote for president.

Florida Puerto Ricans' attitudes toward undocumented immigration also reflect a coalescing of Latino panethnicity. In explaining support for undocumented immigrants, respondents' often conveyed similarities between Puerto Ricans and Latin American immigrants stemming from a common migrant experience. This perception captures the significance of migration for Puerto Ricans, a process and experience that is rooted in the intersection of colonialism and citizenship—a nexus that has stimulated various Puerto Rican migration waves to the mainland since the early 20th century and that is critical for understanding contemporary Puerto Rican migration to Florida. Respondents' attitudes toward undocumented immigration also convey a shared structural position between Puerto Ricans and Latin Americans in Central Florida. Despite Puerto Ricans' status as U.S. citizens, respondents' expressed a sense of vulnerability in the anti-immigrant sociopolitical context of the time. This can be understood because as Latinos, Puerto Ricans are also presumed foreigners and as such, they are also subjected to a racialized nativism that targets Latinos and to discriminatory treatment. Furthermore, due to Puerto Rico's status as a territory of the United States, Puerto Ricans have been politically and socially excluded from the nation, therefore, they have not been treated or perceived as equal citizen counterparts. Relatedly, because Puerto Rico is a territory and not a state, the island is subject to the plenary power of the U.S. Congress, as such, Puerto Rico and island-born Puerto Ricans occupy a more vulnerable position relative to that of U.S. states and stateside-born citizens.

I argue Puerto Ricans' position as colonial racialized citizens allows us to understand how they make sense of the immigration debate and how they formulate their position on the issue. As colonial racialized citizens Puerto Ricans have been excluded and erased from the national imaginary, as such at a social level, Puerto Ricans are subject to a racialized nativism that targets

Latinos and that characterizes the current sociopolitical moment; however, at a political level, this status grants Puerto Ricans political rights stateside and with that, the authority to enforce the boundaries of the nation. Overall, I contend Puerto Ricans' contemporary attitudes toward undocumented immigration capture the ways in which colonialism, citizenship, and immigration are converging in Florida and are shaping Puerto Ricans' political attitudes as well as informing their political behavior in the largest swing state of the nation.

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CHAPTER 5:

¡PUERTO RICO SE LEVENTA!" HURRICANE MARÍA AND NARRATIVES OF STRUGGLE, RESILIENCE, AND MIGRATION

ABSTRACT

Hurricane María, a Category 4 storm, ravaged Puerto Rico on September 20, 2017. All regions of the island were affected, given María's trajectory and magnitude. The storm flooded island communities, thousands of houses endured structural damage or were completely destroyed, and the storm devastated the island's infrastructure. Island residents lacked access to public services and everyday essentials for months, including food, potable water, and adequate medical services. Florida has become Puerto Ricans' primary mainland destination in recent decades, and the state has attracted the largest proportion of Hurricane María evacuees. This study draws on resiliency and migration models to analyze the experiences of Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane María. Data for this research come from 17 in-depth interviews and observations conducted in the Orlando metropolitan area from December 2017 through January 2018. The research examines how respondents and their families experienced Hurricane María and relief efforts, the survival strategies they deployed after the storm, their migration decision-making and journeys to Florida, and their interpretations of governmental response to the hurricane. This study demonstrates how populations with unequal political and territorial status experience a natural disaster, engage in recovery behavior, and experience displacement. The article concludes with policy recommendations for addressing housing, employment, and healthcare needs of Hurricane María evacuees in Florida.

Keywords: Hurricane María, Puerto Rico, Resilience, Displacement, Florida

On September 20, 2017, Hurricane María—a Category 4 storm—ravaged Puerto Rico. Hurricane María arrived less than two weeks after Hurricane Irma, a storm that brought heavy rain, toppled trees, and left over 1 million Puerto Ricans without energy. Hurricane María is the most catastrophic storm to impact Puerto Rico in nearly a century (Centro 2018). María made landfall on the island's southeastern coast with winds of 155 miles per hour, and it exited through the island's northwest coast as a Category 3 storm (National Hurricane Center 2017). Because of the storm's magnitude and trajectory, all regions of the island were affected. María flooded many island communities, some to waist-deep levels, while others were affected by mud slides that uprooted homes, trees, and roads. Thousands of houses endured structural damage or were completely destroyed. Various communities were rendered inaccessible given the damages to the island's infrastructure, with those located in rural and interior areas most affected. Moreover, Puerto Rico's archaic power grid was destroyed, leaving all 3.4 million island residents without power. Many also lacked access to basic necessities, including food, safe water, and shelter.

One month after Hurricane María, conditions on the island remained dire. Eighty percent of island residents did not have electricity. Almost 40 percent of islanders lacked access to telecommunications, as nearly half of all damaged cell phone towers required restoration (StatusPR 2017). Access to potable water continued to be a critical issue four weeks after Hurricane María, with almost 1 million Puerto Ricans lacking safe drinking water. Journalistic reports documented desperate island residents collecting water from contaminated creeks, and soon after health issues surfaced, adding to concerns of an outbreak of waterborne diseases (Sutter 2017). Health issues were compounded by limited access to medical services in Puerto Rico (StatusPR 2017). A slow response by the federal government and logistical coordination issues with the Puerto Rico government critically exacerbated the effects of the storm.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) predicts that it will take years to rebuild Puerto Rico. Early economic analyses estimated that Hurricane María would cost Puerto Rico between $45–$95 billion dollars (Friedman 2017), and others estimate the storm will produce a loss of $180 billion in economic output in Puerto Rico over the next fifteen years (Centro 2018). These economic forecasts add to already dire economic conditions on the island, most notably, a decade-long recession, high levels of unemployment and underemployment, a looming $72 billion debt, and severe austerity measures. Existing economic and social conditions in Puerto Rico had previously set in motion a massive exodus—in the past ten years, over 400,000 Puerto Ricans left the island, a migration wave comparable to the Puerto Rican "Great Migration" of the 1950s. In the last three decades, Florida has become Puerto Ricans' primary migration destination. In fact, the Puerto Rican population in Florida surpasses 1 million and is now the largest stateside (ACS 2017).

The devastation caused by the natural disaster and Puerto Rico's ominous future prompted Puerto Ricans to leave the Island for the mainland within weeks after the hurricane. Given the rise of Florida as Puerto Ricans' new and leading mainland destination, the state attracted the largest proportion of those who fled the island (Centro 2018). Officials in Florida expected the arrival of at least 100,000 Puerto Ricans, and in anticipation of this influx, Florida Governor Rick Scott declared a "state of emergency" two weeks after the storm to enable state agencies to prepare for the arrival of Puerto Ricans fleeing the devastation on the island (Healy and Ferré-Sadurní 2017).

This study builds on literature that examines natural disasters from a sociological perspective. Particularly, it focuses on the aspect of resiliency—"the process by which communities confront and try to resolve different social, political, and economic forces impacting the way they…mitigate, respon[d] [to], and recover from a disaster" (Rivera and Kapucu 2015, 2). This literature has also drawn attention to the significance of community-based disaster resilience (Fischer 1998; Aldrich and Meyer 2015). For example, formal and informal social ties are critical resources

drawn upon during and following disasters (Aldrich and Meyer 2015). Community members engage in search and rescue operations, provide immediate assistance and access to resources and information, and they are also a source of important emotional and psychological support (Hurlbert, Haines, and Beggs 2000; Aldrich 2011). Another line of scholarship examines the relationship between climate change, natural hazards, and migratory movements. This work has found that migration in response to natural disasters is informed by various factors, including financial resources, social networks, and access to and historical ties with destinations. It also finds that temporary rather than permanent migration is the most prevalent pattern (Newland 2011). This study engages with the above literatures by centering the narratives of Puerto Ricans who experienced Hurricane María and were displaced to Florida. This investigation is guided by the following interrelated research questions:

1) How did Puerto Rican evacuees in Florida experience Hurricane María and relief efforts? How did evacuees respond in the storm's aftermath?
2) What factors influenced Puerto Rican evacuees' migration decision-making, and why did they choose Florida as their destination? What type of material and social resources did Puerto Ricans draw on to migrate?
3) What are evacuees' settlement plans in Florida? What type of resources have Hurricane María evacuees accessed in Florida (e.g., disaster relief, housing, employment, social services) and what challenges have they encountered?

METHODOLOGY

Data for this article come from 17 in-depth interviews conducted in the Orlando metropolitan area (Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford). The Orlando metro area was selected as the research site because it is home to the second largest Puerto Rican community on the mainland (380,000) (ACS 2017). Moreover, Orlando is located in Florida, the state that has consistently ranked

as Puerto Ricans' top mainland destination for over a decade (Velázquez Estrada 2017). Given these settlement patterns, the Orlando metro area was expected to attract a significant proportion of those fleeing the island in the wake of Hurricane María.

The interview sample includes 14 families that arrived in Florida from Puerto Rico after Hurricane María. These families originate from various parts of Puerto Rico, including the San Juan metro area (5), and the central (3), eastern (3), northern (2), and northwestern (1) regions of the island. Families arrived in the Orlando metro area from October 7, 2017–December 27, 2017. The interview sample also includes three local government and community leaders who had unique insight into institutional and community-led efforts carried out for Puerto Rican evacuees. Interviews lasted 45 to 120 minutes and they were guided by a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were conducted at a location selected by respondents, most often at a relative's home or at the FEMA hotel where they were temporarily residing. The majority of interviews were conducted in Spanish (14) and a smaller share in English (3). All interviews were digitally recorded. The analysis was conducted in the same language as the interviews to preserve the integrity of the narratives; the author translated interview excerpts included in this article. The analysis relied on an inductive/deductive approach that allowed for the capture of themes emergent in narratives, as well as theory-driven themes. Respondents were identified via existing networks in the region, at community-based organizations serving hurricane evacuees, and through respondent referrals. Interviews were conducted in December 2017 and early January 2018. All respondents have been assigned pseudonyms to protect their anonymity and confidentiality.

Other types of data collected include: 1) fourteen socioeconomic and demographic surveys of evacuees that were conducted at the end of interviews; 2) ethnographic observations conducted at two local community organizations; 3) City of Orlando emergency operations data that capture the number of Puerto Rican evacuees seeking assistance at the Orlando International Airport Multi-

Agency Resource Center (MARC) and air travel data from October 2017 through March 2018. Air travel data includes flight information (airline, arrival/departure times, and passenger volume) for flights arriving at that Orlando International Airport from Puerto Rico (and surrounding areas) as well as information for outgoing flights to Puerto Rico.

FINDINGS

Experiencing Hurricane María and the Aftermath

Descriptions of Hurricane María

Respondents' descriptions of Hurricane María capture the magnitude of the storm and the profound impact it had on respondents and their families. Victoria, a 70-year-old respondent from Toa Alta's countryside, recounted that Hurricane María was "like no other storm I have experienced in Puerto Rico." Kamila, from the metropolitan municipality of Cupey, described Hurricane María as a "horrible experience," the storm was "incessant." She recalled that at one point "you begin to panic, and you're just waiting for your house to fall apart." Nayelis, from the coastal town of Aguadilla, noted, "María was a monster!" adding the "wind made a dark ominous sound." The winds were so powerful that at one point, her 7-year-old son, in tears, asked "Mommy what is this? It seems like it's the end of the world." She recalled, "we would ask ourselves when is this going to end?!" In fact, most respondents reported that Hurricane María lasted anywhere from 24 to 36 hours, with some unable to leave their home for two full days. Fabiola from Adjuntas, a municipality in the central region of the island, offered a similar description of the storm's duration, "it was an eternity… it was horrible." Alondra, who resided in an urban area of Trujillo Alto, described the early morning as "twelve horrific hours. It was never ending, it felt as if [Hurricane María] lasted three days… it was truly a difficult experience."

Surviving the Hurricane

All families described having to enter "crisis-management" in the midst of the Category 4 storm. Homes became inundated with rain that filtered through windows, doorways, and air conditioning units. Many reported spending much of the hurricane trying to soak up water with towels and bed linens while also trying to save their furniture and personal belongings. Some men held up doors as the wind threatened to knock them off their frames, while others held wooden panels over shattered windows. Some respondents drew on their ingenuity to deal with emergent issues. For instance, because Victoria did not install protective panels over her windows, her niece used candle wax to seal aluminum window frames while Victoria tied down cranks on her glass windows to keep them shut. And Sarah from Caguas rearranged her bedroom furniture during the storm to bolster a sliding glass door that seemed unlikely to resist powerful winds.

Some families sought shelter in single rooms or confined spaces when the hurricane strengthened. One respondent described spending the duration of the storm in a narrow hallway with her three sons to protect themselves from glass projectiles, as she expected her apartment windows to burst. Others recounted that entire families relocated into single bathrooms to escape flooding in other areas of the home and because they feared debris and zinc roof plates would fly through windows. Kamila and her family retreated to her son's room because it was the safest room in their house. While in her son's room:

> there were instances in which the wind strengthened and the hallowing was more piecing, this is when we would pull blankets over our heads to protect ourselves… at various points we all got on our knees and prayed, we asked God to protect us, to end the storm, we begged him to end the noise because it was making us anxious.

While all participants described María as unrelenting, they did emphasize that the early morning hours (1 a.m.–8 a.m.) of September 20th were the most difficult. Sofia, from Rio Piedras, recalled that nobody slept that night because "you could feel and hear a buzzing coming through the windows. I would plead, 'Lord Father, when will it dawn?'"

The Aftermath

Respondents described the devastation caused by Hurricane María was immediately visible the moment they stepped outside of their homes. All respondents described broken and uprooted trees, as well as downed electricity poles and power lines, all of which blocked roads in their communities. Local streets were also covered in debris, including metal roof panels and loose hardware, as well as carcasses of animals that did not survive the storm. The deforestation caused by the storm impacted many; emotionally, respondents described that all vegetation had been blown away. Fabiola recounted what her family observed in Adjuntas once María had passed:

> As you walk out you see the destruction… [We saw] a lot of pain, a lot of pain and suffering… We cried with my children, everyone in my house from men to children cried. It was very impactful to see trees grounded, the landscape looked burned, it was just brown, everything was brown… to see the neighbor's house without a roof… downhill the river had overflown into homes. Thursday morning, we had to begin removing debris from roads [because] we were uncommunicated, we couldn't leave and nobody could come in, we were isolated.

Survival and Strategies Deployed Post-María

Challenges: Access to Daily Essentials

Conditions worsened in the days and weeks following the storm. Respondents did not expect the level of destruction caused by the hurricane or the amount of time they would spend without access to vital necessities and public services. They described "chaotic conditions" and "a sense of desperation" that came over residents as they sought food, water, and fuel.

The majority of families prepared for the storm by purchasing canned food and water. Participants purchased varying amounts of food supplies. The most prepared thought they had purchased enough food and bottled water for about one month. These respondents seemed to be those with greater financial resources, as well as those who had previously prepared for Hurricane Irma and restocked their supplies for Hurricane María. Those who purchased fewer items noted that they did so because they did not anticipate the impact

Hurricane María would have on access to groceries; for others, their vulnerable financial position limited how much, or whether they could purchase additional food in advance of the storm.

Most families ran out of food within one to two weeks. They described going to the grocery store as a "horrible" experience; lines were "miles-long," in some instances containing hundreds of people, and the wait was endless. Entrance to grocery stores was limited to 10 people at a time, and purchases were rationed—each customer was only allowed a few canned goods and beverages. Availability of food items was limited, especially fresh foods, and entire grocery departments were empty. A major issue was also the rise in prices that occurred in the weeks after the storm; some respondents reported being unable to afford the higher priced canned goods and drinking water. Overall, families relied on crackers, dry cereal, canned meats, and canned pastas as their major sources of nourishment in María's aftermath. This diet took a toll, particularly on children who asked for home cooked meals, and on individuals with health conditions that require a low-sodium diet.

Access to potable water emerged as another critical issue. Respondents lacked access to running water for months. Although some families had filled their external water tanks prior to the storm, Hurricane María often destroyed these tanks, or the water became contaminated with debris and dirt. Several families had to seek out natural sources of water, collect water in plastic containers, and carry water back to their homes to be used for personal hygiene and for cleaning. While there was a concern about potential contamination and waterborne illnesses, respondents expressed not having another option. Respondents waited in line for 2–3 hours to collect water at springs, creeks, and wells. For some who lived in the metro area, running water was reinstated within 1–2 months; however, this water was not drinkable because at times it was dirty, and at others it was heavily treated with

chemicals. Respondents had to purchase drinking water at local stores once their supplies diminished. Purchases of filtered water were limited to one case per customer, and when water became scarce, purchases were further limited to two bottles per person. Bottled water prices increased significantly in the wake of the hurricane—a 24-pack that typically cost $3 tripled in price to $10. Increased prices also impacted the amount of drinking water that families could buy.

All families lost access to power on the eve of Hurricane María regardless of whether they lived in urban or rural areas. One family lost power since the passing of Hurricane Irma. Most study participants reported that they lacked access to electricity anywhere from 30 to 98 days. While a small share of respondents had access to electrical generators, they noted that they did not use these regularly because they were costly to operate. One family had power restored 60 days after Hurricane María; the rest of respondents' homes in Puerto Rico continued to lack electricity at the time of the interviews. The majority of families did not regain full and regular access to electricity until they set foot in Florida.

Fuel was an important commodity in the wake of the hurricane, as it was necessary for gas stoves, transportation, and to operate electrical generators. All families were affected by fuel shortages that followed the hurricane; fuel purchases were limited to $10 worth per customer. All respondents described hours long waits at gas stations and instances in which fuel supplies had been depleted by the time they made it to the front of the line. One respondent recounted that her granddaughter fainted while waiting in line under the hot sun for hours. Respondents developed fuel strategies after realizing the difficulties of purchasing gas. For instance, some noted their spouses stayed at gas stations overnight in order to be among the first customers in line in the morning; others were up by 2 a.m. in order to arrive

early at gas stations and limit their wait in line to a few hours; and others took their entire family to gas stations and had each individual purchase a share of fuel to maximize the trip.

Limited access to food and fuel was compounded by the inability to withdraw cash. Banking centers were closed and automated teller machines (ATMs) were nonoperational given the lack of power. Because power and telecommunications collapsed, electronic payment systems were also down, and as such, all purchases were made in cash. Many respondents recounted that their bank account balances were irrelevant, as their financial position after the hurricane was defined by the amount of cash they had on hand. In other words, an unanticipated cash economy emerged in the wake of Hurricane María. Respondents recalled spending frugally, as it was unknown how long it would be before they could access their accounts. Once systems were restored, respondents reported that cash withdrawals were initially limited to $100 and eventually to $50. One respondent recounted waiting in line at an ATM for twelve hours to withdraw cash.

Survival Strategies

Given post-María conditions, all respondents' way of life drastically changed in the wake of the hurricane. All families described developing a new daily routine that was necessary for their survival amidst new living conditions. The new routine required rising before dawn to minimize waits at water wells, creeks, gas stations, and grocery stores. For many families, a typical day began at 5 a.m., and they returned home just before the evening curfew after being in miles-long lines much of the day. Only enough supplies for one or two days could be purchased at a time because purchases were rationed, as such, the routine was repeated in the following days. The narratives below capture emergent daily survival strategies in post-María Puerto Rico:

> We would make a list, a map, [and] we religiously left every day at 6 a.m. to look for water. Every day. We used the water we collected to bathe, clean, and flush the toilet for that day… Once gas arrived, we had to make a new schedule because we needed to be on the road by 4 a.m. to get in line to buy gas, to have

> gas by 6 or 7 a.m., and then we would look for water, followed by whatever other tasks of the day… It was terrible.
>
> Kamila, Cupey, Puerto Rico

> [Every day] I had to go out and look for food, look for gas, we waited [in line] 8 hours at gas stations... There was a curfew, which was a problem because you had been waiting in line all day and then the police would tell you to leave. I had my children with me and at times… one child fell asleep and the other complained about being tired, but we had to get gas. Entrance to grocery stores was controlled, lines [to get in] were extremely long, stores were empty [and] at times food was spoiled, it was all very hard. Finding water was also very difficult, there was no water [to buy], there was no running water.
>
> Alondra, Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico

Most families reported receiving little to no aid from local and state governments or federal agencies while in Puerto Rico. Some received aid once, often in the form of "military food" (Meal Ready-to-Eat (MRE)) that was delivered by local government officials or members of the military. Of those who received military food, most received enough meals for one day (2–4 meals). However, families from the central and southeastern regions of the island received more food aid relative to other participants. For example, Mikaela from Cidra received ten meals. Fabiola from Adjuntas was coincidentally in town when the U.S. Marine Corps helicopter arrived three weeks after Hurricane María; she recalled taking several boxes of food and distributing them among twelve community members. Melanie and her children, who resided in Las Piedras, survived an entire month on MREs; in fact, while at first these meals were not appetizing, her son reported "meal [labeled] #31 eventually became my favorite," which suggests that a degree of normalization occurred.

Some families received bottled water from municipal mayors; however, this typically occurred once or twice and came weeks after the hurricane. Two respondents noted that their mayors supplied their countryside communities with portable water tanks; however, these were only available for limited hours. A respondent who resided in public housing in the metro area recounted

that her mayor eventually sent a food truck, which distributed one meal per registered resident on a biweekly basis. Others reported that sources of food and water aid included the Red Cross and the Ricky Martin Foundation.

Several respondents reported an unsatisfactory experience with FEMA. Those who lived in mountainous regions noted that FEMA arrived with tarps six weeks after Hurricane María; moreover, FEMA had stationed in the municipality's town, which made it difficult for residents who lived in the highlands to access FEMA supplies. In the weeks that residents awaited tarps, they searched for whatever debris or plastic coverings they could find to use as improvised roofs. In some cases, FEMA did not arrive in communities for weeks (21–70 days) after Hurricane María. In fact, some respondents had relocated to Florida by the time FEMA representatives arrived at their Puerto Rico homes to assess damages. Respondents' move to Florida further complicated and delayed FEMA aid applications because they were not present when inspectors arrived. Another issue that emerged with requests for FEMA assistance was the method of application: on the web, over the phone, or at municipal emergency management centers. Because telecommunications had collapsed, the first two options were not available to many, while those who were isolated due to road blocks, or who did not have a means of transportation, were unable to get to local/regional application centers. Overall, respondents were disappointed and frustrated with what they described as insufficient aid received, especially once they learned about the amount of aid that had arrived in Puerto Rico and was held at the port. They largely attributed their survival to their individual and community-wide efforts.

All respondents recounted that Hurricane María fostered unity between neighbors and relatives. A consistent theme that emerged was resident-led community clean-up efforts. Upon realizing the extent of the devastation, respondents understood that they could not rely on the arrival of government agencies to remove broken trees and clear roads of debris and mud. For

example, neighborhood residents used machetes, axes, and saws to break down trees that had collapsed. Others recalled that men in their communities organized a meeting to conduct an inventory of their tools and to create a debris removal plan. These efforts were necessary as communities were trapped by uprooted trees, broken branches, and downed electricity posts and cables. In the most extreme case, a respondent revealed a neighbor died on the eve of Hurricane María. The neighbor's family endured the storm with the deceased in their home, and once the hurricane passed, local officials refused to remove the body because FEMA had to document the level of destruction in the community prior to any clean-up. Community members responded by removing debris themselves and creating a narrow passageway that allowed funeral transportation to reach the home. These experiences demonstrate the significance of collective support and resilience in the wake of Hurricane María.

Another important form of community support that emerged was the sharing of supplies and resources. Neighbors shared: energy produced by electrical generators by adding extensions and running these across properties; gas stoves so that families could prepare warm meals; and water previously collected in external water tanks. Community members also provided food to respondents who had run out, and in other instances, community-wide meals were prepared. One respondent's family led and organized food distribution efforts. The respondent and her spouse picked up food and supplies when these arrived in town, and her mother and sister maintained a log of community members who were given supplies to ensure equitable distribution. Another respondent led a youth group in his working-class community. The group sought and distributed food aid and planned activities to entertain community members. They also collected funds to photocopy FEMA aid applications, which they delivered to community residents whom they assisted with completing the applications. He noted that through this type of collective work "is how we slowly got up again."

Migration Decision-Making and Migration Resources

Factors Influencing Migration Decision-Making

Study participants arrived in Florida from early October 2017 through late December 2017. All respondents had relatives or friends in the region, and some had vacationed in the Orlando metro area in the past. Most participants migrated to Florida as *family units* (8); a smaller share had undergone *temporary family separation* as spouses or children stayed in Puerto Rico (3); and another small subset *migrated individually* (3). Migration decisions were informed by several factors; however, three prominent themes emerged: unbearable conditions, children's education, and employment prospects.

Unbearable living conditions in Puerto Rico motivated emigration. The lack of power and running water and the emergence of waterborne diseases affected residents' quality of life and raised concerns about children's well-being. Empty grocery stores, lacking access to fresh food, and the need to survive on canned goods also took a toll. Some respondents emphasized enduring the new daily routine for weeks and noted that life characterized by "lines, lines, lines" was no longer sustainable. Others pointed to fumes produced by electrical generators, which affected air quality and triggered respiratory conditions. Respondents emphasized that it was physically and mentally exhausting to live under those conditions. In explaining their decision-making, one respondent noted, "the situation in Puerto Rico was becoming more complicated, in reality we were no longer living, we were surviving… just trying to survive every day." Similarly, another respondent said: "I was trying to be strong for my kids and for her [my wife], but I couldn't deal with it anymore, it was too much. Having to wake up and figure out where we would go to wait in line that day."

Children's education was another factor that motivated migration for parents and a set of grandparents. Children had almost missed the entire fall semester due to the destruction caused by Hurricane María and the lack of power and potable water. Some children had not resumed their

academics since the passing of Hurricane Irma in early September. Given the lack of improvement in conditions, parents did not foresee schools in their communities reopening in a timely manner. There were also concerns with the quality of education and the facilities that children in Puerto Rico would experience once the academic year resumed. For example, one respondent said, "We made the decision for our daughter. I arrived December 13, and her school didn't reopen until the Monday [December 10] before our trip." In another case, a couple accelerated their retirement plans and obtained guardianship over their grandson so that he could move with them to Florida and complete his senior year of high school. Respondents were encouraged to move by relatives and friends who reside in Florida and who spoke highly of Florida's public education system, which they compared to private schooling in Puerto Rico. All parents enrolled children in Florida schools within days of their arrival, and they noted that the children were adjusting well.

Other respondents understood the negative impact that Hurricane María would have on Puerto Rico's labor market. Teachers who had become unemployed prior to the hurricane realized that the destruction caused by the storm, coupled with resulting population displacements, would lead to additional school closures, further limiting employment possibilities in Puerto Rico's education system. Others had lost their jobs as a result of the hurricanes, as the storms impacted their fields of employment or damaged/destroyed their actual work sites. The loss of employment was further aggravated for some by the loss of their homes due to damage or because their landlords lost their own primary residences and had to move into their rental units. One recent PhD graduate who had previously considered the academic job market stateside was encouraged to migrate because she understood that the storm would further tighten the island's professional labor market.

Social and Material Migration Resources

Social Ties

Social ties, as previously documented by migration scholars (see Massey et al. 1987; Hagan 1998; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002; Aranda 2007), were critical sources of support, as well as resources that facilitated migration and settlement. Relatives and neighbors in Puerto Rico provided financial support to those who wanted to migrate but could not afford airfare costs. Relatives and friends in Florida provided respondents with emotional support and often encouraged respondents' migration to the state. Because telecommunications were largely unreliable in Puerto Rico, relatives in Florida searched for flights and made travel arrangements for respondents. Some participants noted that while they were still in Puerto Rico, their siblings in Florida researched the types of assistance available to Hurricane María evacuees in Florida so that such assistance could be sought as soon as families arrived. Florida relatives and friends also provided guidance and helped respondents identify and navigate local institutions, such as schools, healthcare facilities, and government agencies. Housing was another important form of support that families arriving from Puerto Rico received from Florida relatives. And, for those temporarily living in FEMA approved hotels, relatives in Florida provided groceries, meals, and transportation.

FEMA TSA Program

Seven (of fourteen) families were temporarily residing in local hotels as part of the FEMA Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA) program. This program provided short-term housing for individuals displaced as a result of Hurricanes Irma and María. FEMA covers lodging costs for eligible applicants at an approved hotel or motel in the United States or Puerto Rico. Some families noted that their migration to Florida was only possible because they were able to secure shelter through the FEMA TSA program. Although they had relatives and friends in the Orlando metro area, they did not want to "burden" them with the arrival of an entire family from Puerto Rico. Others reported learning about the program and their eligibility once in Florida. They initially migrated to a relative's home but noted that it was difficult to have numerous people (in some cases

up to nine) living in one house. For another respondent, her Florida relatives were also recent arrivals who did not have secure housing arrangements. At the time of the interviews, the FEMA TSA program was set to expire on January 13, 2018. All respondents who were participating in the program expressed anxiety about the impending deadline. They hoped for an extension because they needed more time to find jobs, to generate the financial resources necessary to secure permanent housing arrangements, and to become familiar with the Orlando housing market. Several respondents noted that if the program was not extended, they would likely become homeless or have to move into a shelter in the area given that returning to Puerto Rico was not an option for them.

Settlement Plans and Community Support in Florida

Preliminary Settlement Patterns

Settlement plans varied across respondents. One respondent on a fixed income indicated that she planned to engage in *circular migration* mainly because she could not afford to settle in Florida given the higher cost of living. Two families reported *uncertain settlement* plans, largely due to the highly fluid nature of their circumstances in Puerto Rico and Florida. Four families/individuals reported *potential permanent settlement* in Florida; this was often contingent on employment prospects in the region, as well as children's adjustment to local schools and the level of progress made in Puerto Rico. The majority of families planned on *permanently settling* in Florida (7). This pattern emerged among respondents who had lost a home or experienced significant damage to their home, those who had lost their job, those who had previously considered migrating to Florida, and parents who were focused on their children's overall well-being. One respondent explained, "We [plan to] move forward. I want to get a job, I want to have a house. I wasn't able to have my own house in Puerto Rico because salaries are too low. I want to go to school here [in Florida]… There is no turning back."

Institutional and Community Support in Florida

Multi-Agency Resource Center

Several families visited the MARC at the Orlando International Airport. During our interview Mr. Soto, the MARC director, explained the center was a joint effort between the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, the City of Orlando, and the State of Florida with the purpose of serving evacuees from Puerto Rico. Governor Rick Scott led this collaborative effort—upon visiting Puerto Rico days after Hurricane María, Scott understood that Florida would become an important destination for island evacuees. While comparable disaster relief centers were also established at the Miami International Airport and Seaport, the director noted that the Orlando MARC received the highest volume of evacuees. Agency records show that the MARC served approximately 30,000 evacuees from October–December 2017, with the majority seeking services in the month of October; in fact, the center served nearly 1,000 evacuees from Puerto Rico on a single day in October. Overall, the center's director observed that younger arrivals were seeking work opportunities, permanent housing, and schooling for their children; he believes they are likely to stay in Florida if they find work and housing and are able to incorporate their children in the local education system. However, he noted that retirement-aged arrivals expressed temporary settlement plans in Florida to await the restoration of public services in Puerto Rico.

MARC provided information, assistance, and referrals to those arriving from Puerto Rico. Respondents reported that the services and information they received at the MARC were helpful as they transitioned into Florida. For example, they initiated applications for a Florida driver's license or identification card. They obtained various types of information, including on local schools and enrollment procedures, distinct state and federal social programs and applications processes, and services provided by community-based and non-profit organizations in the region. They also had

access to FEMA representatives on site, which provided information about available aid and assisted with applications.

Community-Based Organizations

Some respondents received assistance from community-based organizations in Orlando, among these, CASA (Coordinadora de Apoyo, Solidaridad, y Ayuda) and Latino Leadership. These organizations provided respondents with non-perishable food, baby food and supplies, toiletries, and clothing and shoes. They also gave respondents information about various services in the region. For some, their visit to these organizations resulted in social connections that facilitated job opportunities; others met local government representatives who referred them to additional services and programs in their districts. CASA—a group created and led by Puerto Rican community members that was initially established to provide support for Puerto Rico in response to Hurricane Irma—also planned holiday activities for Hurricane María evacuees in Orlando. Additionally, CASA was involved in relief efforts for the island, literally collecting tons of supplies that were shipped to Puerto Rico. Other local leaders initiated their own efforts through which they collected donations to purchase tarps, solar-powered lamps, first-aid kits, and other essentials that they personally delivered in Puerto Rico; they also created initiatives such as, *Adopta Un Pueblo* (Adopt a Town), with the goal of providing consistent aid to Puerto Rico communities.

Local Schools

Parents reported that local schools had also been supportive. School administrators were understanding of the circumstances in Puerto Rico and allowed children to continue their studies in Florida without holding them back, despite the fact that they had missed most of fall semester. Some schools provided children with school supplies, free uniforms, and meal vouchers. Some local schools donated groceries on multiple occasions, as well as clothes and Christmas gifts for the children. Schools also provided career support services for parents by helping them create resumes

to facilitate their job searches in Florida. One respondent recounted becoming emotional when she realized the level of support and empathy her family received from her children's school. Another parent expressed significant gratitude for the support she had received from a Puerto Rican teacher who was not only helping her child adjust to the local high school, but also identifying local sources of aid for the family and helping the respondent research the process for transferring Puerto Rico teaching credentials to Florida. Overall, parents were optimistic about their children's ability to adjust to Florida's education system, and they were encouraged by the level of support they had received in local schools and by educators.

Interpretations of Government Response to Hurricane María

Distrust in Government and Political Inequality

The majority of respondents were critical of the response by local, Puerto Rico, and federal government officials to Hurricane María. Respondents claimed that Puerto Rico party politics, which is divided along ideologies on the island's political status, interfered with the distribution of aid at the local level by influencing which residents were prioritized by local officials. Others noted that it was necessary for residents to help one another in the aftermath of María because they could not count on government entities to provide vital support and services. Similarly, another respondent expressed that "the government responded once all the clean-up work had been done." Several respondents also felt that the government of Puerto Rico was slow to respond because it was focused on conforming to federal bureaucratic disaster procedures despite the precarious conditions that residents were enduring. These respondents felt that the Puerto Rico government failed to assert its authority, particularly with FEMA, and to work in the interest of island residents. Respondents also mentioned a belief that Puerto Rican government leaders were purposely delaying the distribution of supplies at the ports for their own political interests. A former employee of the Puerto Rico Agency for Emergency and Disaster Management agreed, noting that per his experience

in the field, Puerto Rico government officials knowingly lied to island residents, not only about actual death rates, but also about the extent of progress being made in the hurricane's aftermath and about projections for the reinstatement of utility services.

Respondents were also very critical of the federal government, particularly of Donald Trump's presidential visit. Respondents rejected and were appalled by the comparisons he made between Hurricane María and Hurricane Katrina. They also felt his four-hour visit was dismissive, as it did not allow for him to grasp the extent of the destruction and the severe conditions that people were enduring. He (and Governor Rosselló) were also critiqued for only visiting middle and upper middle class communities in the metro area instead of visiting the regions of the island that were devastated the most. Some respondents were disturbed and felt disrespected by the president's comments on the negative impact that post-María Puerto Rico would have on the federal budget and comments [tweets] in which he blamed Puerto Ricans for their conditions and slow recovery. One respondent, referencing his infamous visit to a local church, said, "I feel like tossing a bunch of Bounty paper towels at him like he did to us." Some respondents expressed feelings that the federal government's slow response to Hurricane María, and the inferior treatment given to Puerto Ricans, stemmed from Puerto Rico's political status. David, a retired member of the U.S. Air Force who served for 25 years, offered the following:

> We are U.S. citizens since 1917, but this is just on paper. Outside of that, the U.S. doesn't consider us for absolutely anything; they see the island as a territory that they own where they can come and play golf, but that's it. In moments like these [Hurricane María], we see our lacking importance. Not only is the response slow, they control and restrict the aid they provide us. There has been so much corruption, I hate to admit it, in our existing and former governments [in Puerto Rico]. As a result, [the federal government] closely oversees the aid they provide us… they've treated all towns, whether severely impacted or not, in the same manner. They just visited to say they did so without moving with the speed and sense of urgency that was necessary. Who can fix this? I don't know.

These perceptions are significant because they demonstrate the ways in which individuals that reside in unincorporated territories experience and make sense of their social and political positions in the aftermath of a catastrophic natural disaster. These perceptions also capture an important erosion of trust in government actors and entities at all levels, a distrust that stems from the dynamics and structural conditions created by Puerto Rico's unequal territorial and political status.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The experiences documented in this research reveal inadequate and insufficient governmental responses to a catastrophic natural disaster. They also highlight the physical, emotional, and psychological impacts that the destruction and subsequent redefined normality had on respondents and their families. The level of devastation caused by Hurricane María is not only a product of the storm's magnitude, it is also a consequence of a political relationship that has deemed Puerto Rico as unequal and inferior. For example, U.S. imposed economic policies have disrupted the Puerto Rican economy, set in motion the decade-long recession, and led to austerity measures that contributed to the substandard development of the island's infrastructure. Post-María living conditions were exacerbated by colonial legal mechanisms and paternalistic bureaucratic procedures that complicated efforts to receive and distribute aid and provide disaster relief. As scholars have argued, the federal government's response—disaster wise, verbal/written, and behavioral—reflects a neglect of and double standard toward Puerto Ricans (Rivera and Aranda 2017). Indeed, these structural conditions further increased the island's vulnerability to a natural disaster and shaped how Puerto Ricans on the island experienced relief efforts. The devastation caused by Hurricane María has also contributed to the ongoing exodus of Puerto Ricans from the island. Given that migration has emerged as a form of disaster relief for Puerto Ricans, as well as the number of Hurricane María evacuees that have arrived in Florida (over 40 percent of total evacuees) (Centro 2018), the policy

areas of focus provided below identify particular challenges caused by displacement that warrant policymakers' attention.

Limited Housing

The most vulnerable respondents were those participating in the FEMA TSA program. At the time of the interviews, the FEMA TSA program was set to expire on January 13, 2018; however, the program was later extended until May 14, 2018, on a case-by-case basis. Some respondents assumed that they would become homeless in Florida if they did not receive an extension, while others would turn to local relatives for shelter; however, the latter was not a guaranteed option, as homeowner's associations and leases may restrict the accommodation of relatives. Public housing assistance was not an immediate option, as various regional programs had waitlists that extended several years. Respondents who were part of Puerto Rico's Section 8 housing program could transfer their vouchers to Florida, but they were responsible for finding a rental property that participated in the program in a limited timeframe. Entering the private housing market was not feasible for many, as this required sufficient financial resources needed for a deposit and first and last month's rent, as well as commitment to a multi-month lease. Certainly, Hurricane María evacuees in Florida will need long-term housing assistance as they settle in Florida and are able to generate the resources needed to secure more permanent housing arrangements.

Jobs

The majority of respondents were seeking employment in Florida, and a few respondents had found temporary or part-time jobs. Because migration to Florida was unplanned and unexpected, several families arrived with limited resources and without the opportunity to research the Florida labor market prior to their arrival. Respondents who had professional occupations in Puerto Rico were seeking information about transferring their credentials to Florida—for many this would require developing greater English language fluency, getting Florida certifications, or

downward occupational mobility. Working-class respondents were particularly vulnerable and likely to become incorporated in low-paying service sector occupations. Respondents' willingness to perform any type of work they could find, including minimum-wage jobs, reflects the urgent need for employment; in fact, a couple of them had taken jobs in the region's agricultural sector to begin generating income. For many, securing employment in Florida would determine whether they would settle or return to the conditions they left behind in Puerto Rico, as well as their incorporation trajectory in Florida. Access to jobs with living wages as well as employment opportunities that allow them to draw upon their skills, knowledge, and work experience is a critical need for evacuees that have arrived from Puerto Rico and are seeking to start a new life in Florida.

Healthcare and Mental Health Services

Some respondents and their families were in need of important healthcare services. Many families were dealing with the trauma of experiencing a Category 4 hurricane, post-María living conditions, and uprooting and leaving loved ones and their homes behind. Some, including children, arrived with health conditions that could not be treated in Puerto Rico due to lacking medical services on the island. In one case, a respondent's brother became very ill in the wake of María because he needed a liver transplant; doctors in Puerto Rico urged the family to seek medical care on the mainland, as he would not receive the necessary treatment on the island. After being in Florida for over a month, the respondent was unable to get his brother on an organ transplant waitlist due to issues with insurance coverage in Florida. Whether it is mental health services, treatable conditions or illnesses, or life and death situations, Hurricane María evacuees of all ages will need healthcare coverage and access to healthcare services in Florida.

Conceptually, disaster resilience is important, as it allows us to understand how regions, communities, individuals, and government agencies prepare for, navigate, and respond to and recover from disasters (Kapucu et al 2013; NRC 2009). Critical to this process is the capacity for

community redevelopment and the ability to progress beyond pre-disaster conditions (Kapucu et al. 2013; Rivera and Settembrino 2013). Literature that focuses on building disaster response capacity emphasizes that increasing resiliency necessitates having an understanding of areas and regions that are susceptible to natural or human-made hazards, as well as the vulnerabilities of those areas. Moreover, examining the distinctive aspects of communities enables the building of more adequate and effective disaster response and recovery capacity (Rivera and Kapucu 2015). Just as important is the role of social infrastructure for disaster survival and recovery; that is, networks of formal and informal ties that provide vital forms of assistance throughout various stages of a disaster (Aldrich and Meyer 2015).

This study contributes to disaster, resilience, and migration literature by centering the experiences of Puerto Rican evacuees. In doing so, this study expands our understanding of how populations with unequal political/territorial status experience natural disasters and relief efforts, engage in recovery behavior, and experience displacement. The study also analyzes the act of migration and settlement in Florida (short- and long-term) as a form of disaster resilience and demonstrates how social capital (e.g., neighbors, relatives, friends, and co-ethnics) located within (i.e., Puerto Rico) and beyond (i.e., stateside) the disaster site promotes community resilience. Additionally, by examining the narratives of Puerto Rican evacuees in Florida, this study captures how Florida state institutions responded to a natural disaster that did not make landfall in the state, but had reverberating impacts within its boundaries. As such, this study contributes to reconceiving resilience and recovery as multi-sited processes. Scholars have established that regional differences (urban versus rural residence), community socioeconomic status, human resources, and social context combine to create unique community vulnerabilities (Henstra 2010; Rivera and Kapucu 2015). Given that Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the United States, the findings from this study can inform disaster response policies and practices that more effectively address the

vulnerabilities and needs of millions of U.S. citizens who are subjected to differentiated rights and protections as a result of Puerto Rico's territorial status. Finally, this research furthers our understanding of social inequalities, and in particular, how these manifest during natural disasters along political, racial, and cultural lines.

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