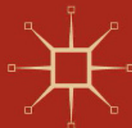
Silencing Race

Disentangling Blackness, Colonialism, and National Identities in Puerto Rico

"Some real natives of the interior, Porto Rico"

Ileana M. Rodríguez-Silva



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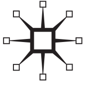

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Introduction

Racial (Dis)Harmony in Puerto Rico

> It is a theory with no foundation. She does not know what *bomba* is. Our *bomba* is a fusion of many races and cultures: Indigenous, Spanish or European, and African. This is the only authentic one. Everything else is just an invention.
>
> —Puerto Rican performer Modesto Cepeda, April 13, 2005[1]

After my first semester in the United States, I was desperate to leave the mainland and return to my home at the urban core of the northern city of Bayamón, Puerto Rico. My family and friends welcomed me with many gatherings, some in the San Juan area and others in my family's hometown of Yauco in the southern part of the island. Everyone peppered me with questions about life away from home. On one of these occasions, a relative asked me if I had become friends with other Puerto Ricans. I answered that I had become very close to a Puerto Rican black woman. I did not realize that I had spoken openly about blackness, instead of the customary muffled modalities that many islanders often employ, until my relative responded, "Then she is not Puerto Rican! Only the *americanos* would make reference to a person's skin color." My relative's response was surprising to me because in our extended family, antiblack racism had been at the heart of many conflicts, despite (or because of) our racially mixed heritage.

After years of archival research on racial struggles in Puerto Rico, I find myself repeatedly recalling this one exchange, one of many others that have a similar pattern. Perhaps I recall it because of the array of important questions my relative's response elicits about Puerto Rican immigration, US colonialism, national identities, constructions of whiteness/blackness/racial mixture, and gender (all of which I will explore in the pages of this book). But, most probably, this moment is fixed in my mind because I was struck by the quick and effective way in which my cousin silenced me when I acknowledged my friend's cherished sense of self as a black Puerto Rican woman. There was no better strategy to shut down a possible conversation about the historical and contemporary realities of racialized marginalization than (a) to deem race, racialization, and racism as foreign matters, specifically as US phenomena, and (b) to question one's commitment and love to the Puerto Rican nation. My own commitment was already in question; I too was quickly becoming an outsider. Given this oft deployed silencing

device, this book is particularly attentive not to reify a Latin American paradigm of race relations or a US model.[2] Instead, Puerto Rico's move from Spanish to US rule provides a unique opportunity to flesh out some of the sociocultural and political processes that made necessary the organization of knowledge about racialized marginalization along the lines of opposite racial paradigms. To do so, it is imperative to look at silencing and racialization practices historically, as well as investigate the many struggles that elicited these practices. In the following pages, I explore a few key historical moments between the 1870s and 1910s when silencing became especially urgent in politics. It is worth noting that the reasons for and the modes of containing race talk have continued to shift and change after the period under scrutiny in this study.

These gaps and silences, produced through vacillation, ambivalence, and avoidance, about racialized identification in Puerto Rico have been documented in different ways for the contemporary moment. In his ethnography of the barrio Gandul in San Juan, anthropologist Jorge Duany captures some of the manifestations of these silences that I also encounter in everyday life on the island. Duany recounts, "I asked our informants, 'What race do you consider yourself to belong to?' Responses to this seemingly innocuous question ranged from embarrassment and amazement to ambivalence and silence."[3] The unbalanced results in the 2000 demographic census of the island also highlight some of these silences: According to that US census, 84 percent of Puerto Rico's inhabitants defined themselves racially as white, while only 10.9 percent claimed to be black.[4]

The census results provoked a fruitful public debate on the island concerning the perpetual marginalization of Puerto Rico's blackness, a public debate that emerges periodically, particularly during holidays such as March 22 (the Day of Abolition) or October 12 (the *Día de la Raza*).[5] Since the 2000 census, journalists, community organizers, sociologists, lawyers, psychologists, literary figures, and historians have, once again but more forcefully, taken on the task to denounce and illustrate the concrete reality of racialized marginalization and racism on the island.[6] Challenging the prevalent notion of Puerto Rico's racial democracy (the notion that racial hierarchies are nonexistent and manifestations of racisms are minimal, nonsystematic, and therefore irrelevant), these men and women explained that Puerto Ricans in fact associated blackness with diminished intellectual abilities and negative aesthetic images persistent since slavery.[7] Consequently, Puerto Ricans resorted to casting themselves as whites (a practice known as whitening) as a vehicle for economic and social improvement.

Many of these critics of Puerto Rico's version of a racial democracy myth[8] have focused their efforts on uncovering the structural and individual practices of racial discrimination. By highlighting the ongoing practices of racism, these critics contest Puerto Ricans' denial of racialized marginalization on the island.[9] Some of these analysts, however, have also argued that as a consequence of racism, many Puerto Ricans reject their blackness and pursue biological and cultural whitening. However, the latter interpretation does not fully unravel the complexities of racialized identity formation or Puerto Rico's racial politics. Individual and collective silences about African-derived cultural heritage, ancestry, and history are intricately linked to Puerto Ricans' denial of racialized domination as a fact of

life. These forms of suppression are connected to historical practices of containing discussions about racial subordination on the island, which at the same time, are intricately linked to its colonial history and the imperial fields Puerto Ricans have navigated for centuries. Thus there are more complex, contingent, multilayered, long-term historical processes underlying the erasures and evasions revealed by the results of the 2000 census. It should be noted that after many debates on the matter since then, the 2010 US census in Puerto Rico registered an increase in the black and American Indian populations for the first time since 1800.[10]

To unearth these historical processes, we should carefully examine the standpoints of colonial authorities, Creole elites, and most importantly, the popular groups who maneuvered to insert themselves and their demands into the complex set of struggles within Puerto Rico and in the imperial fields they navigated. To understand the rearticulations and, therefore, the persistence of racialized domination in postemancipation Puerto Rico—and in the Americas more generally—scholars must first uncover how people of diverse social origins have avoided explicitly addressing the matter of racialized subjugation, at times enabling them to gain political and economic rights within the colonial (or postcolonial/neocolonial) frameworks in which they continue to operate. At the same time, scholars must also consider how these various peoples, in this case Puerto Ricans, especially from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth century, developed alternative means, such as idioms of labor, to address problems regarding racialized subordination. This should not be misunderstood as an argument about complicity but about complexity. I explore how conscious and unconscious silencing practices, emerging from within groups with divergent demands and visions of the future, converged to thwart sustained debate and mobilization against racialized domination. At the same time, we get the opportunity to explore the processes through which labor is constantly racialized and race becomes classed.

I aim to uncover the ways in which the history of slavery, the processes of emancipation, and the nature of colonialisms in Puerto Rico contributed to the contradictory construction of national and racial discourses at different historical moments since the late nineteenth century. For more than a century after emancipation in 1873–76, government institutions, academic studies, and cultural organizations have reproduced the idea that Puerto Rico is a unified nation—despite its colonial relation to Spain and later the United States—whose people originated from a mélange of three cultural roots: the indigenous *Taínos*, Africans, and Spaniards. This national discourse holds that because these races mixed harmoniously to create the Puerto Rican race/nation, racial conflict has never existed on the island. In fact, the lack of racial conflict defines Puerto Ricanness. Therefore, to address issues of racialized exclusion or to express/embrace a racialized sense of self is understood by most Puerto Ricans as antinational. Paradoxically, the Puerto Rican dominant classes have persistently underscored the white, Hispanic experience as the main thread that provides coherence to the history of the Puerto Rican people.[11] In this discourse of the nation, the presumptively racially mixed, harmonious society ensures the unity of all social classes. Yet that discourse also preserves the rights of white Creole men as political and social

superiors, and consequently, the struggles and aspirations of those deemed or self-identified as black continue to be systematically marginalized.

The attempts to silence discussions about racialized domination (especially the persistent denial of racism) and the corollary suppressions regarding individual and communal racialized histories coexist with Puerto Ricans' everyday antiblack racist practices and racialized talk. Most Puerto Ricans, however, do not recognize their everyday references to racialized markers of difference—mostly derogatory remarks about blackness—as a product of and form sustaining racialized domination. To explore this tension I have chosen the analytics of silence, where silence means something other than total absence. I am here interested in both the attempts to shape or prevent talk and the partial and fragile silences produced through such endeavors. Hence, as I explain later in this introduction, silence is communicative in nature, comprising a wide array of practices that were, in fact, generative of more talk.[12] The many disruptions of silences and the other idioms elaborated to advance mobilization for social justice also fostered talk on race. As such, the practices of censorship shaped (creating gaps, voids, misrecognition, and euphemisms, among others) but did not impede the talk of race. Conversely, efforts at repressing the talk of race have indeed prevented sustained conversations about racialized domination because these could crystallize into projects for sociopolitical transformation. This book seeks to track both the fraught processes through which silences are constantly reconstituted and the overall effect of a plurality of silences, intended and unintended, which have prevented open discussions about racialized domination.[13]

KEY CONCEPTS AND THE LANGUAGE OF RACE

This book investigates the processes constituting various forms of the silence on race amid multidirectional forms of racialization. I speak of racialization—the symbolic and material practices of marking individuals and/or the self as people, in the Puerto Rican case, of Indian, African, and European origin—in its plural form because these are dynamic processes always working at multiple registers at once. These processes also focus on strictly one or a combination of various factors such as phenotypic characteristics, class status, ancestry, cultural beliefs, and social behavior. As a result, multiple modalities of racialization were and are in operation at any one historical moment and geographic space, depending on the changing social locations of individuals inhabiting the landscapes.[14]

While keeping in mind that racialization is a relational practice, I focus this study on the interrelated exercises of erasing and reconstructing blackness (in relation to various formations of whiteness) but not of indigeneity. For the large majority of historical actors in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Puerto Rico, indigenous people did not constitute recognizable, tangible communities that could affect the outcome of sociopolitical processes.[15] The Spanish colonial government had not registered indigenous people in their censuses since the late eighteenth century, when the governor asked to record the remaining Indians under the *pardo* category, a category often employed to mark black racial mixture. Since then, indigeneity has been more commonly used as a social descriptor to mark

physical traits (skin color, hair, and/or facial features) or invoked as a symbolic cultural device in the political quest to define Puerto Ricanness.[16] In contrast, the realities of African slavery in the Caribbean, especially for the nineteenth-century Spanish colonies, made constructions of blackness, more than indigeneity, a central discursive terrain in sociopolitical struggles.[17]

As the reader may have noted already, I often employ the concept of blackness throughout the text. The intention is not to collapse the large variety of racialized descriptions and ascriptions elaborated throughout the centuries in Puerto Rico. In the process of writing and developing a vocabulary that would allow me to speak about racialization, I reconceptualized blackness as a way to designate two things at the same time: (a) the various forms and degrees of racial mixture and (b) the one mark (African heritage) historical actors have construed as something to be measured, controlled, erased, celebrated, and/or embraced. The referents black/brown and racially mixed are also used for the same purposes. In the quotes I use throughout the text, I have kept the original racial terminology in Spanish.

As in any other locale where ethnoracial miscegenation has taken place, Puerto Ricans forged a plurality of terms to describe the varied degrees and forms of mixture: *pardo*, *moreno*, *mulato*, *cuarterón*, *aindiado*, *trigueño*, *café con leche*, and *negro colorao*, among many others.[18] These long-standing classificatory practices have multiple points of origin (the colonial state, colonial or Creole elites, urban workers, rural inhabitants, coastal or mountain dwellers, migrant laborers), reinforcing their meanings or at times emerging in contestation to the impulse of fixing always-shifting boundaries. Nevertheless, the multitude of terms should not be interpreted as a lack of racialized social boundaries or as proof of their fluidity. Rather, this plurality of terms reflects both the attempt to catalogue racialized transgressions and efforts to resist such classifications.

While the lexicon for describing ethnoracial mixing continued to expand throughout the period of this study, use of the term *negro* diminished (at least in the documentary evidence), especially after the abolition of slavery. In my observations of the post-1873 period, the category *liberto* was rarely accompanied by a racial adjective—unlike the widely used *negro esclavo*—but stood alone in most documents as if freed not only of slavery but also of race. The concept *liberto* is part of the expanded vocabulary—and increasingly more used in the following decades—designating workers that emerged at the time (old ones such as *jornalero, agregado*, *bracero*, and newer terms such as *clases productoras*, *clases trabajadoras*, *obrero*, and *clases proletarias*.) *Negro* underscored a certain purity of blackness and links to slavery, a past many were invested in erasing. Often *negro* was used in reference to other Caribbean islanders (particularly West Indians) or US-based Afrodescendants; thus *Lo negro* was strongly cast as foreign and with no place in debates about Puerto Ricans' present or future. Another commonly used term, *raza de color*, was sometimes deployed as a euphemism or synonym of *prieto* or *negro*, but in many other instances *raza de color* became a preferred term, perhaps because of its elasticity. *Raza de color* was an open concept, encompassing everyone of recognizable blackness. As we will see, this elasticity of the term was forged through processes of debate.

The island's ethnoracial hybridity should not be seen as a signal of racial harmony and the absence of racial oppression. Rather, we may consider that, especially in postemancipation Puerto Rico, the designation *raza de color* signaled the collapsing of all variations of nonwhiteness into a single category.[19] Part of this term's work, then, was not to erase subtle differences among people embodying different degrees of mixture, but rather to mark the boundary between those of varying degrees and kinds of color and those defined by the absence of color—those perceived as unmistakably white. In this way, in Puerto Rico and elsewhere, people (especially elites) emptied whiteness of the tensions and historical struggles shaping its many formations. In naming blackness, they made whiteness imperceptible and, as such, made it natural and normal.[20] In the process of countering the efforts at silencing, different actors would also contest these naturalized forms of whiteness.

The Politics of Silencing and Nation-Making in Puerto Rico and Latin America

Puerto Rico provides insight into the inextricable relationship between national formation, colonialism, and the need for concealing the workings of racialized subjection. In its more than five hundred years of history under European and US rule, Puerto Rico has experienced profound transformations in imperial and colonial organization. Racialized notions of otherness have been fundamental in challenging, changing, or maintaining colonial rule throughout the centuries. In the period under study here, the 1870s through the 1910s, undermining racially based conflicts was often understood by political participants of the upper-middle and working classes as necessary to their struggle for democratic reforms. To many of them, the population's blackness and/or the appearance of racial unrest could hinder negotiations with colonial officials and alternative allies to increase political participation. For the white dominant classes specifically, racial impurity was an impediment for the full and conscious exercise of citizenship rights and responsibilities. As a result, colonialisms and nationalist struggles reproduced the marginalization of blackness. To comprehend the complexity of Puerto Rico's present-day sociopolitical and economic challenges, we need first to understand the ways in which racialization helped organize colonial regimes and alternative imaginations during the crucial historical moment of transition from Spanish to US colonialism.

The analysis of civil and criminal records, newspapers, correspondence, private collections, fiction, and census records provides insight on the conflictive social and economic realities that became the basis for these national and racial narratives in the 1850s. The last three decades of the Spanish empire in the Americas were profoundly shaped by the armed conflicts in Cuba. These conflicts reinvigorated and expanded long-standing anxieties between and among colonial and Creole elites about the black population, which they understood as a subversive force that would destroy the empire from within. Within this context, struggles over racialized exploitation in Puerto Rico were successfully deflected and subordinated to issues of class and nationality. For instance, the

social and economic changes induced by emancipation in 1873 led to new political alignments, especially between Creole autonomist elites and sectors of the laboring classes to reform the colonial arrangement under Spain. At a time when race remained an explicitly articulated category of social differentiation (within the colony and between colony and metropole), class became—especially from a subaltern standpoint—a racially constructed category through which demands for citizenship rights and political participation were legitimized.

An ethos of work increasingly became hegemonic in framing island life during the nineteenth century.[21] The political and economic changes on the island, as well as the continuous transatlantic circulation of peoples and ideas—as many ideological changes had been taking place simultaneously in the Americas and Europe—produced a rhetoric about work as the one mechanism for individual upward mobility (in contrast to noble status), change from an old colonial regime (anchored on aristocratic and inheritance values), and modernization. Of course, not all work was the same: some were more adept to the labor of knowledge production (intellectuals, professionals, and liberal politicians) while the nature of others made them better at manual labor. In this discursive context, island members of working-class organizations in general, and black and brown urban artisans in particular, perceptively understood that demands framed in the language of class were much more effective when working with colonial authorities and their liberal Creole counterparts, while those demands employing an explicit racialized language sparked further conflict and resistance.

This language of class and the political identity of the worker—one that even former slaves deployed—were further consolidated during the first decades of the twentieth century. The 1898 US takeover of the island directly challenged the ongoing political and racial negotiations between Creole elites and the laboring classes. The new set of political and economic circumstances influenced the Creole political elites' eventual construction of the white, male peasant from the highlands—the *jíbaro*—as the trope of Puerto Rican identity. Politicians, intellectuals, and the growing professional middle class—identified with a project of increasing self-government within the new imperial apparatus—appropriated the icon of the mountain peasant as a way to capture the reality of displacement occasioned by the reorganization of the sugar industry. Rural folks migrated in large numbers from the highlands to the coast. Puerto Rican elites understood US racial politics as a clear war between blacks and whites. In their dealings with US officials, this elite wanted to stress their whiteness and that of the true islanders—the mountain folk. Simultaneously, powerful forces within the labor movement constituted a competing class-based identity: a raceless male worker. Labor leaders sought alliances with a sector of the US labor movement, the American Federation of Labor, clearly invested in the preservation of privileges for its working-class, white constituents. In so doing, influential leaders of the reformist labor movement cast many of the attempts to address the problem of racialized marginalization as direct challenges to workers' aspirations. The post-1898 labor movement thereby sought to deracialize labor organizations' discourse on work. Both Puerto Rican elites and sectors of the working classes collaborated in

neutralizing discussions of racialized domination and strengthened the national myth that portrays Puerto Rico as a racially harmonious society.

Throughout this history, many voices challenged the concealing of racial injustice, repeatedly interrupting the accounts of harmony and sparking heated debates about the workings of racism on the island.[22] These interruptions did alter the sociopolitical basis through which to negotiate the nation. Within the terrain structured through silencing, racially based claims were not generally accepted as a legitimate means to demand citizenship rights, just as race could not be the sole basis for explicit exclusion from the nation.[23] At the same time, these disruptive debates were absorbed into ritual public performances of accusations and refutations of antiblack racism that proved Puerto Ricans' openness to discuss racial issues, only possible because of true racial harmony. As such, the interruptions were often successfully contained and, consequently, strengthened the national myth. The analytics of silence allow us to make sense of the insidious and elusive nature of racialized domination in Puerto Rico, the lack of a sustained and profound critique to racial injustice, and the hesitancy of many Puerto Ricans to voice a racialized sense of self (although assertions of whiteness in the past and today are quite common). These dynamics had become more palpable since Puerto Ricans fully joined the migratory circuits between the island and the United States and within US borders, where their discursive constructions of race, particularly blackness, at times clash with those of other racialized minority populations.

The constant attempts to deflect attention from race as an organizing principle in politics and society at the turn of the twentieth century in Puerto Rico speak directly to the role of silencing in the functioning of liberal-democratic political regimes. The preeminence of liberalism as a modern form of sociopolitical and economic order hinges on the many ways in which its principles of equality, freedom, and universality enable simultaneously the naturalization of specific practices of violence and domination. In Latin America and the Caribbean, efforts at suppressing and circumventing discussions about racialized domination have been a long-standing recourse feature of sociopolitical life. Many people in the region have been invested in obscuring the ways in which state formation—that is, the historical development of the host of institutions, functionaries, and the bodies of laws, policies, and regulations that organize particular nation-states—have been racially constituted and, simultaneously, have constituted racialized social dynamics.[24] Since the nineteenth-century wars of independence, many Latin American racial states helped construct and popularize narratives of racial integration, selected figures and symbols that validated these stories, and, at times, strategically implemented policies and practices that sought to address superficially the claims and efforts of marginalized but often politically organized (and sometimes armed) populations. These actions have enabled white superiority to remain as the racial principle organizing power relations in Latin America and the Caribbean.[25] To many Latin Americans, the institutional forms of white supremacy in places such as Nazi Germany, Australia, the US South, and South Africa during much of the twentieth century became symbols and signifiers of what constituted a racial state and a racist society. The United States, for instance,

became the model against which Latin American and Caribbean nation-states (and other national entities in the region) favorably contrasted themselves in terms of equality and freedom. As a result, the many other sophisticated institutional and social modalities sustaining an order hinged on white superiority were quickly and persistently deemed insignificant. Therefore, the historical analysis of the contested production of fragile silences, and of alternative political languages I explore in the Puerto Rican case, suggests that the struggle for racial justice in the Hemispheric Americas is unlikely to be effective until we uncover the multiple ways in which large majorities of its inhabitants have been invested in the construction and reproduction of the silences sustaining the myths of racial democracy.

Silence and Race as Subjects of Analysis

In the last three decades, Latin American, Caribbean, and Puerto Rican scholarship on the social construction of race has expanded significantly in number and theoretical sophistication.[26] This literature has employed a wide variety of methodological approaches—teasing out the contested nature of the formulation of scientific knowledge, education policies, cultural production, choices in artistic expressions, and the making of revolutionary movements—to explore the links between the formation of racialized identities and nation-building processes.[27] More importantly, these scholars have uncovered the many ways in which subaltern groups have coincided with, negotiated, and challenged elites' perceptions and prescriptions. In the process, these popular groups have also reproduced old hierarchies and created nuanced forms of racialized differences.[28] I build on this scholarship by taking on an avenue of inquiry not yet fully explored: the relevance of the contested management of the conversations about racialized exploitation in the never-ending processes of community (particularly, the national) formation.

Recently, scholars of race in Latin America have asked us to move beyond dichotomous and narrow understandings of myths of mestizaje. In a 2003 essay, anthropologist Peter Wade asks us "to nuance the opposition between, on the one hand, the nationalist glorification of mestizaje as a democratic process leading to and symbolic of racial harmony and, on the other, mestizaje as a rhetorical flourish that hides racist and even ethnocidal practices of whitening."[29] Wade calls for a study of mestizaje as entailing both inclusion and exclusion, allowing for both equality and inequality to be imagined and experienced because racial democracy was not simply an illusion or an effectively created element of false consciousness for the working classes.

At the same time, and in spite of recent calls by academics, contemporary Afro-Latin American groups continue to denounce the myths of mestizaje as a mechanism that has seriously impeded their full enjoyment of social, political, and cultural rights. One such collective is the Afro-Puerto Rican Testimonies: An Oral History Project in Western Puerto Rico.[30] This community-based project has been able to flourish thanks to the labor of community organizers and community-oriented scholars and the funding offered by the 2007 *Otros Saberes* initiative from the Latin American Studies Association. In a 2010 published

document, the collective articulates their critique in the following terms: "The mythical view that the Puerto Rican is the fusion of the three races . . . . has operated to silence, veil, and marginalize Afro-Puerto Ricans. The state and the political parties, the church, the academy, the public education system as well as other institutions, including the family, have all conspired in this operation. Together they have exerted an ideological and psychological control that has often precluded Afro-Puerto Ricans from speaking as one to collectively denounce and defy our discrimination and marginalization."[31]

How are we to bridge the gap between these interpretative camps, in ways that recognize the power structures at play as well as the agency of historical actors in navigating those structures? For scholars working on Cuba, Brazil, and more recently Uruguay, a black press, a black intellectual community, black religious organizations, and groups of black activists appear as well-designated groups ready to be studied. In Puerto Rico, scholars, artists, and community activists have been invested in decades-long efforts to at least uncover and name black and brown publics and historical actors. The history of harmony in Puerto Rico, anchored in the story of mestizaje, has successfully erased the histories of racial struggle. Few fragments have survived in public consciousness mostly thanks to the relentless labor of popular cultural workers. Thus to nuance our understanding of mestizaje politics is not enough to unearth a hidden history. We need to take one step further to ask how the nature and workings of power have shifted, in the case of this book at the turn of the twentieth century, to enable the dynamics of inclusionary exclusion. I suggest that a historical exploration of the practices of silencing is one way to begin unraveling these conflicting dynamics. Like Wade, I believe subaltern actors saw in mestizaje an opportunity to open spaces for participation not available in earlier moments. I would argue, however, that such equality came at a high price, especially for the black and brown laboring peoples, whose incorporation as junior partners in the nation was conditional upon their appropriate behavior as liberal political subjects and not openly contesting their subordinate status. Hence silencing was crucial to participate in the emerging liberal democratic sphere of the political. While racial democracy discourses did allow brief moments of relief for a few, they did not provide sustained sociopolitical and economic transformations for the majority.

The discipline of history has not fully explored silencing as an object of study. Instead, the dynamics of silencing have received more attention from scholars in its psychological, linguistic, and sociological dimensions to answer questions about individual and/or group responses to trauma, violence, and multiple forms of social oppression.[32] The Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot deviates from this path to study silence in a much broader sense: its role in the production of knowledge, with knowledge being the foundation of power.[33] Considering historical narratives as a form of knowledge production, Trouillot illustrates how the dialectic between what is mentioned and what is silenced shapes these narratives. In historical production, he notes, not everything can be mentioned, thus, there is always a selection process about what should be recorded and what should be forgotten. The selection process begins even before the historian reaches the facts.

Silences are produced and persist in a variety of processes: the survival of certain sources, the collecting and arrangement of sources in archives, the historian's interests, and his or her preferred audience. Silences, then, are conscious and unconscious. By studying silence in its different manifestations, the historian can unearth the power struggles that have led to the disappearance or exclusion of characters, groups, and events from historical narratives. Through this selective process we can reveal that silence, like speaking, is an action and an exercise of power. The study of silences, then, is a story of the workings of power. In this book I focus on a particular sort of suppression—which have only allowed for cryptic and fragmented conversations about racial domination—to uncover how silences are sustained and reproduced by dominant groups and subalterns living and working within the framework of white supremacy. But silence may also be a strategy.

Most works on racial formation and race relations, especially in Latin America historiography, do acknowledge the many erasures, misinformation, and gaps regarding the histories of racialized populations in the region and have recorded rich accounts about the crucial role these groups have played in producing communities at the local, regional, national, and transnational levels. For example, historians Greg Grandin and Jeffrey Gould have identified major strategic erasures in master narratives and have sought to uncover the history of indigenous communities that had been erased from national histories.[34] But my study is principally indebted to the early explorations of tensions between absence(s) and presence(s) of blackness conducted by George Reid Andrews in Argentina and Brazil and by Peter Wade and Aline Helg in Colombia.[35] These scholars have brought our attention to well-worn technologies of erasure such as inadequate census enumeration, inaccurate historical accounts, and the persistent overlooking and devaluing of Afro-descendants' popular organizations and cultural production in official descriptions of national culture. They also have uncovered important political and economic structural dynamics that have contributed to perpetuate these absences in national imaginations such as the regionalization of race, the economic and political dominance of nonblack regions over others in the national sphere, the influx of European immigrants, increasing urbanization, industrialization, and so on. These scholars too have examined how the dynamics of racial mixing and whitening among elites and subalterns have further advanced the absence of blackness.

Historians of Puerto Rico have also tackled the tensions between absence and presence of blackness and have produced comprehensive accounts about Caribbean black migration to Puerto Rico and on the centrality of African slavery through the study of areas such as Ponce, Guayama, and San Juan.[36] The works of Francisco Scarano and Lillian Guerra on the dynamic racialization of the *jíbaro* figure and the studies by Eileen Suárez-Findlay and Astrid Cubano have brought to our attention the ongoing connections between racial formation, national imagination, gender, and different forms of coloniality.[37] My present study builds upon all these contributions and expands the conversation by looking at the logics of silencing not only as an effect of political and social relations but more precisely as a constitutive dynamic of liberal sociopolitical and economic forms.

In this regard, Ada Ferrer and Robin Sheriff's analyses of silence per se have had the most influence on my thinking about the historical crafting of silences.

In her study of the 1890s revolutionary effort in Cuba, historian Ada Ferrer analyzes the metalanguage of the discourse of racelessness that wove together the anticolonial movement.[38] The discourse of racelessness conveyed the idea that the struggle for independence had forged a new individual, the Cuban, who had transcended racial classifications. The revolutionaries' vision of the Cuban nation challenged the racial categories (black/white) that the colonial state had fostered as a means to sustain Spain's domination over its possessions, and that colonial agents, Creole elites, and Cubans in general had also deployed to further their interests within the colony. The discourse of racelessness is explicit not only in the revolutionaries' enunciations but also in the details they chose to silence. At a historical moment in which race permeated all discursive production and practices of Cuba's dominant classes, Ferrer observes that references to race disappeared from the documentary sources revolutionaries produced. The author argues that revolutionaries' silence about race was intentional and strategic in the war effort and, therefore, worthy of studying as a subject of historical inquiry. Ferrer uncovers that the discourse of racelessness was not indicative of the absence of racial tensions among revolutionaries. Silence was never absolute or under control. In studying silence, disputes and disagreements about race surfaced, revealing that the practice of racelessness was a difficult task, a goal in the making more than a living reality. Ferrer conceptualizes the revolutionaries' silence as "an argument, a slogan, a fantasy."[39]

During her fieldwork in Morro do Sangue Bom, a shantytown of Rio de Janeiro, anthropologist Robin Sheriff also noticed the presence of patterned silences and began interrogating its social function.[40] While Ferrer notes a silence on race in nineteenth-century Cuban sources, Sheriff investigates a similar silence in 1990s daily interactions among Brazilians. Previous scholars have interpreted such silence on race as a sign of the absence of systematic and endemic racism or as symptomatic of Brazilians' lack of racial consciousness, especially among people of African descent.[41] This silence has been crucial in sustaining the public discourse of racial democracy. Through her interviews of residents in Morro do Sangue Bom and middle-class neighborhoods, Sheriff uncovers how silences are produced by different groups. Among the former, most of whom noted their African ancestry, silence does not represent the absence of racial consciousness but a strategy for the protection of their dignity. The author argues that because of the lack of institutional avenues to address issues of racial discrimination Afro-Brazilians resort to silencing their painful experiences in order to shield relatives and friends from the cruel realities of the outside world as well as to avoid disclosing their own inability to defend themselves from racism. Silence serves also as a mechanism of forgetting. Many noted that the recounting of instances of racial discrimination led to the unnecessary reliving of painful experiences.

Her white middle-class informants were also strong proponents of the racial democracy myth. These informants often described their relations with people of African ancestry, mostly their domestic employees, as intimate. But as their

narratives unfolded, they revealed how racial and class differences shaped these working relations, clearly demarking the limits of what these employers considered appropriate interactions within the intimate domestic spheres. White informants' silence about racial inequality marks the racialized difference between them and their beloved domestic workers. Most importantly, their silence resulted from their unwillingness to acknowledge their own participation in systems of oppression. Despite the rising popularity of black organizations whose goal is to break the silence regarding racial marginalization, large numbers of the population have yet to become invested in the same endeavor. The author describes this persistence of silence as a form of cultural censorship, one that is not systematically and explicitly enforced and policed by the state but, nonetheless, is shaped by the interests of the dominant classes. This notion of cultural censorship underscores the shared nature of silence. Different social groups "have markedly divergent interests at stake" intricately weaved into the production of silence, interests ranging from an individual's emotional survival to the reproduction of elites' social, political, and economic power.[42]

Like Sheriff and Ferrer, I too encounter patterned silences regarding the workings and reproduction of racialized domination. These gaps are apparent in late-nineteenth-century documentary sources and in Puerto Rico's present reality as well. The well-marked temporal and geographic localities in which speaking of race takes place in Puerto Rico highlight the vast landscapes silence inhabits. I also understand silence not as the absence of deeper conflicts but as both an expression of conflicts and an engine that produces them. I see these manifestations of silence as part of a long history of struggles that unfolded in racially volatile sociopolitical terrains shaped by centuries of European and US colonialisms and the various forms of racially codified, forced labor systems. Silences are ambiguous, unstable, and shifting because they are constantly challenged, broken, and then rearticulated. Divergent groups and interests are invested in each moment of rearticulation and different sociopolitical contexts call for different forms of suppression as well. Feminist poet Adrienne Rich identifies multiple technologies of silences: namelessness, denial, secrets, taboo subjects, erasure, false naming, encoding, omission, veiling, fragmentation, and lying. Dismissal and the restriction of talk to specific moments and sites are crucial practices of silencing. These technologies produce multiple silences, overlapping and shaping each other, weaved into local, regional, national, and international circuits of power and connected throughout time.

I also see silences as multivalent: they are both tools of domination and a means of survival. I argue that efforts at controlling the talk of race are meant to prevent the acts of deciphering, uncovering, revealing, and denunciation of the material and symbolic violence entailed in the current forms of racialized discrimination, marginalization, and dispossession. The oppression embedded in silencing liberates individuals from analyzing their own investment in maintaining certain privileges, while it blames others—as individuals, not as people negotiating a broader, historical context—for all faults and failures. But silences are not only about the crushing force of domination. Subjugated populations also produce silences.[43] Silence can be a weapon of resistance, empowerment,

and/or a strategy of survival. More often than not, subaltern populations lack the power to radically transform the parameters of domination, but they do appropriate tools from the colonial cultural arsenal to increase their chances for survival and/or improve their living situation. Silence is among those available tools deployed in the everyday negotiations between subalterns and their respective dominant subjects. Nevertheless, while appropriating tools from above, subaltern groups—through political campaigns and social and cultural practices—have also exposed the tensions, contradictions, and fissures of racial domination. That is, they have challenged and reproduced silencing at the same time. The overlapping of the many forms of silences produces an overarching effect that hinders the possibility of fundamental structural changes.

Yet this study encompasses more than an analysis of the construction and practices of silence. Communication studies scholars Marsha Houston and Cheris Kramarae argue that the power to repress not only prevents talk but also shapes and controls what is spoken.[44] To them, breaking silences is more than the empowerment to speak, but taking control of the form and content of speech. After all, as Trouillot suggests, silencing is always in a dialectic relationship with mentioning. What kind of talk was acceptable among Puerto Ricans and how was it connected to the silencing of racialized domination? Most studies about racial identity formation and racial politics in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean note but do not delve into the tendency of the large majority of the population to describe everyday experiences of marginalization as a byproduct of class inequalities. Thus I trace the mutually constitutive formulation of the fragile and partial silences about racial domination and the crafting of a language (a set of idioms and scripts) of labor that became the grammatical foundation for sociopolitical organization throughout Puerto Rico's many centuries of colonialism. The repeated enunciations on the problems of labor (its supply, distribution, and control, or its lack or overabundance) served as the language in which to articulate the island's realities and to justify the continuation of the status quo or the struggle for reforms. The laboring classes appropriated and expanded the language of labor in order to attain basic wage and living improvements and to organize and claim political rights. In doing so, postabolition laboring groups and dominant classes engaged in a struggle to define who was a worker and what place they occupied in the sociopolitical and economic order on the island. The language of class (rich versus poor, landowner versus peasant/artisan/field worker, capitalist versus worker) had great relevance in the nineteenth century and has retained its validity to the present day. This language of labor, however, was always racialized and, at times, served to indirectly debate or completely elude discussing the effects of racialized domination, especially because most workers self-identified or were labeled by others as black or brown. Thus I explore the sociopolitical struggles and ideological transformations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that enabled the forging of the worker as a political identity and laborers as a political constituency.

Mapping Silence and the Language of Labor

To understand the marking of racialized difference as a powerful means of organization in Puerto Rico, it is crucial to study the historical efforts to control discussions over racialized domination. This book, however, should not be read as a conventional social history seeking to describe a complete picture of past society. Rather, this book offers one *acercamiento* (not a paradigm), an interdisciplinary mode to read historically different sets of practices (occurring at various sites of struggle and with participants from among various social groups) that—while discontinuous, dynamic, and changing throughout time—generate persistent silencing effects. As such, I am not concerned with identifying an originary moment and/or charting a progressive, forward development of silences and idioms of labor in a historical continuum. Instead, I identify various transformative moments within a particular historical period that serve as focal points to unearth the undercurrent of conflicts that shape the rearticulating process of the pieces in this larger puzzle. In so doing, I uncover how constructions of racialized difference (through silencing and occasional open debate) served as both regulatory and disruptive tools in the struggles over hegemony. I also seek to unearth how racialized domination worked and was contested through the formation, policing, and transgression of heterosexual gender/sexual norms. Gender and sexual domination often conceal the simultaneous workings of racialized subjugation. To achieve this goal, I employ various lenses to look at the codified ways in which islanders spoke about racialized difference and their crafting of alternative languages that simultaneously addressed issues of social justice while also diverting in-depth attention from the question of racial domination.

The study is divided into two parts, signaling two historical moments in the construction of silences about racial domination. The first part examines Puerto Rico during the latter years of the Spanish colonial regime, while the second half treats the consolidation of silence about race as a political strategy under US colonial rule. The study explores various geographic locations, looking at rural and/or urban areas, the northern (San Juan) and/or the southern coast (Ponce), and the coffee and/or sugar-producing areas. I also narrow or widen my focus either to provide an in-depth analysis of the negotiations I describe or to demonstrate the large scale and complexity of those negotiations.

The first chapter begins with an analysis of elites' discursive construction of the labor problem in Puerto Rico from 1760 to the 1870s, to show how racialized notions of labor, especially male labor, became the basis of social organization. I then analyze former slaves' use of labor legislation to constitute themselves as workers. In doing so, the freed people became an important political force within the colony.

The second chapter analyzes the works of Dr. Manuel Zeno Gandía, Dr. Francisco del Valle Atiles, and historian Salvador Brau written in the 1880s and 1890s, which constitute today's canon in Puerto Rican history, literature, and social sciences.[45] The aim is to delineate the ideological framework that made possible the conflictive relationship between liberal Creole elites and the multiracial popular classes—a relationship that served as the foundation for the Puerto Rican

nation. In crafting a viable national project, these liberals introduced a secular and scientific racialized language of social control based on notions of morality, work ethics, sexual restraint, and hygiene. In reading their texts, I unearth the few explicit allusions to race and make clear the connections the authors established between race and the social problems they encountered. In the process, I am partially reconstructing a set of conversations underlying the political negotiations of the time, conversations that challenge the sense of racial harmony many liberals sought to convey. In so doing, the chapter highlights the racialized coordinates orienting the mutually constitutive formation of disciplinary knowledge (sociology, history, medicine, and literary arts) and of a public sphere of political participation through the doings of an emerging political group struggling to subvert the colonial regime while also carving their own leadership position.

These reformist men introduced these nuanced idioms and practices through their participation in municipal politics, crafting new regulatory policies at the local level. Hence the local dimension of these processes is at the heart of chapter three, which examines the everyday struggles shaping urban development and political negotiations in late-nineteenth-century Ponce. In Ponce, the criminalization of vagrants and beggars shaped the constitutive process of the worker as a political entity. Urban artisans in the city expanded their political mobilization by appropriating the memory of slave emancipation. Ponce liberals often evoked their role in abolition to highlight their leadership in the formation of a Creole alternative political project. The success of the project hinged upon the ability to maintain social harmony.

Chapter four investigates how the 1898 US invasion altered the terms of the national debate about race, labor, and nationality for both Creole elites and organized labor, making silence on race even louder than it was during the last years of Spanish rule. The heated debates in the press about antiblack racism and racial inequality drew wide attention in the island. An examination of these exchanges shows how Puerto Ricans tested the limits of race speech under the new regime.[46]

The fifth chapter reframes the received narrative of organized labor in early twentieth-century Puerto Rico, reconstructing internal debates over race that are otherwise missing. A brief exploration of the struggles at the heart of Puerto Rican organized labor, especially between the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT) and its main rival, the Federación Regional de Trabajadores (FRT), illustrates how island laborers defined the scope of their interventions, demands, and strategies as they sought to participate in and shape an increasingly narrow public sphere of political action. In the process, discussion of the racialized basis of workers' subjugation was muted. The final chapter investigates three different instances that demonstrate how Puerto Rican elites and representatives of the popular classes spoke about the unspeakable subject of race after the 1910s. I show how these different groups designed alternative languages for political debate that deflected attention from Puerto Rico's blackness.

In sum, the nature of the political struggles Puerto Ricans fought during the last decades of the Spanish colonial regime and the first decades of US colonial rule set the stage for the construction and constant reproduction of the island

as a unified, racially mixed, harmonious nation. As a result, racialized domination appears as a problem of the past. These practices of silencing emerge here as key mechanisms in the enabling of racialized domination, particularly after the abolition of slavery. In other words, silence about racialized domination is an organizing practice of modern liberal societies. Therefore, we must investigate the history of these strategies of suppression in its different dimensions and multiple directions. Because Puerto Ricans have painfully navigated—materially and symbolically—the intricate Spanish and US imperial fields, they are simultaneously marked as Latin American, Caribbean, and US-based Latinos. Therefore, the struggles of Puerto Ricans offer a privileged lens for the study of the longstanding practices of censorship and multiple forms of silences we encounter in the Americas.

Figure 1.1

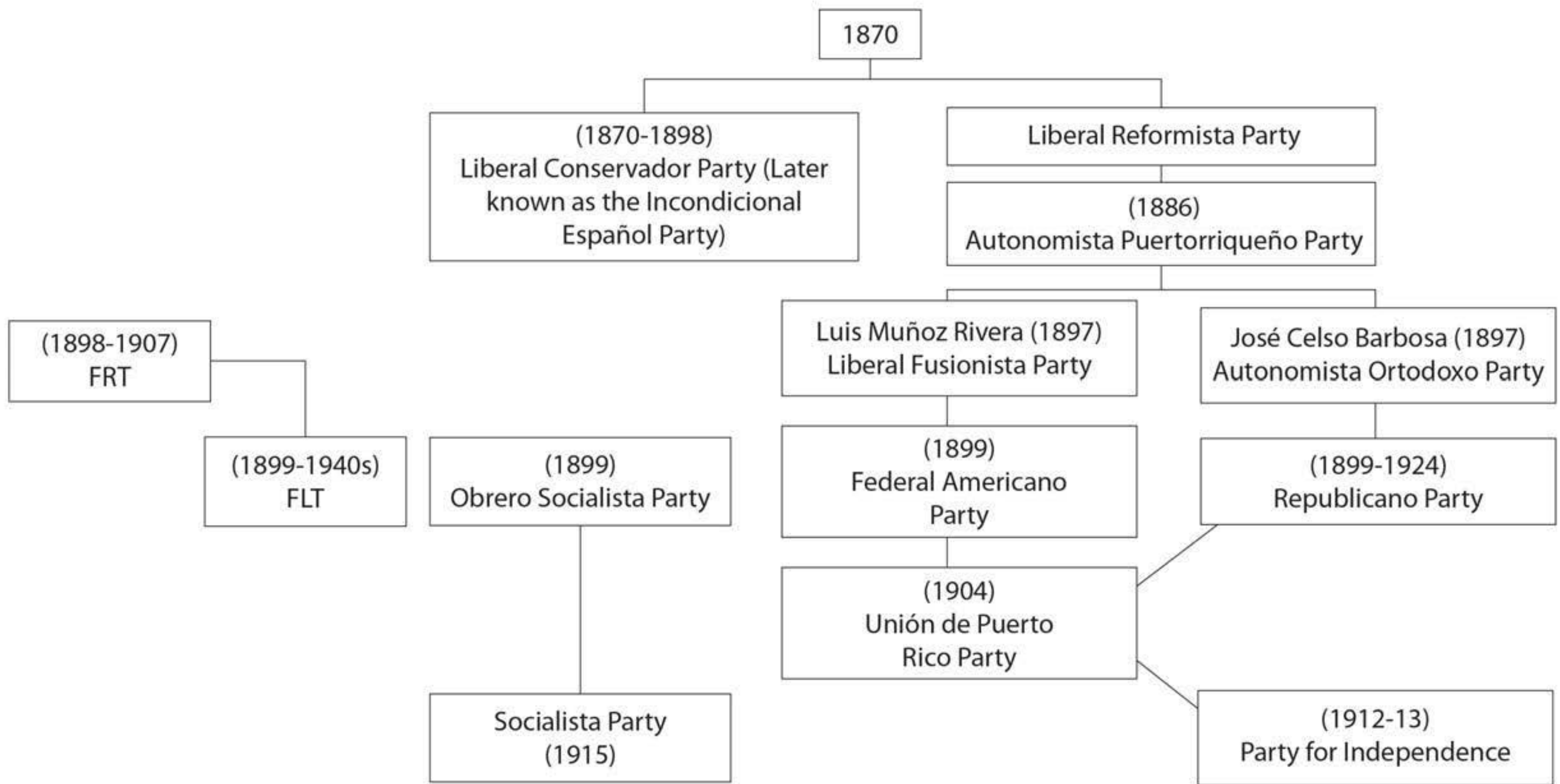

Figure 1.2 Main Political and Labor Organizations in Puerto Rico (1870–1915)[1]

Part I

Slavery and the Multiracial, Racially Mixed Laboring Classes

Since the early colonial period, the racially mixed nature of the population is the most prominent quality in descriptions of Puerto Rico and its people. In the last two centuries, emphasis on *mestizaje* (and the so-called harmonious race relations that enabled it) has often minimalized the role of African slavery in Puerto Rico. Ironically, the sugar-slave complex, especially that of the nineteenth century, contributed more than any other factor to the racial diversity of the free population while simultaneously reaffirming—more than ever—whiteness and blackness as opposite extremes of the social hierarchy. Narratives of mestizaje, however, are plausible (and compelling) because of the many ebbs and flows of the institution of slavery on the island.[2]

While always central to the overall economic performance of the colony, slavery was one of several intricately connected forms of labor organization. Spanish conquest formally began in 1509, but by 1530 colonial administrators struggled to retain the Spanish population, who were more interested in the new riches of Peru and Mexico. By then, indigenous people and African slaves constituted the large majority of the island inhabitants. Governor Francisco Manuel de Lando's census of 1530 described the labor force as 2,281 black slaves and 1,545 indigenous people (enslaved and *encomendados*) while only 327 were registered as colonizers/proprietors,[3] revealing that slaves were the largest population group on the island (five times larger than the Spanish group). By 1565, the slave population reached 15,000, but it decreased by the end of the century to between 5,000 and 6,000 slaves.[4]

Because of trade, financial and credit instability, and rising international competition, Puerto Rico did not become a Caribbean sugar hub until the nineteenth century. Instead, from the 1620s to 1700, the island was characterized by its low population—depleted by frequent epidemic diseases and natural disasters—with an economy based on sustainable agriculture and cattle ranching. However, the rise of the plantation-slave complex on neighboring islands sparked an intense

smuggling economy (of commodities and peoples) that authorities sought to contain by turning Puerto Rico into a military bastion.[5]

Although the slave population was small, slaves were an important source of labor. Slave ownership was a sign of prestige, and enslaved labor could make the difference between the mere survival of the owner's household and the economic flexibility to display wealth or invest in more advantageous enterprises.[6] Nevertheless, slavery in this small-scale mixed economy differed from intense plantation slavery, allowing slaves more physical mobility. Because of the lack of effective surveillance from authorities, some slaves engaged in independent economic activities. And many free blacks and mulattos worked in profitable enterprises—given the lucrative informal economy—and became well-known figures in island society.[7]

The frontier quality of Puerto Rican society during these two centuries indeed led to a high level of miscegenation among different ethnoracial groups. Colonial institutions such as the state, the church, and the plantation economic regime charged with maintaining, enforcing, and reproducing the organizing structures of colonial society (especially racial boundaries) had a weak and intermittent presence in most of the rural landscapes of the island. Although Spanish origin and whiteness were prized commodities to secure a place in the upper strata of society, people frequently transgressed racial boundaries. Spaniards and other European immigrants often established intimate relations with Indian and black women. The indigenous and African populations, who worked the fields or lived together in the hinterlands, established similar intimate arrangements. In addition, the maroon-like societies of the interior were open communities that frequently accommodated a wide array of fugitives from neighboring islands.[8] As a result, free people of color constituted the large majority of the population, while the small Spanish and island-born elite carefully guarded their privileges on the basis of their racial purity.

The mid-eighteenth-century reorganization of the Spanish Empire made possible the sustained development of agricultural production in Puerto Rico and increased the need for a slave labor force.[9] Approximately 10,000 slaves entered the island between 1766 and 1770. By 1800, the official count of slaves was 21,952, but many others were smuggled onto the island. With these changes, the official count of the general population increased rapidly, from approximately 6,000 people in 1700 to 75,000 inhabitants in 1780 and to 155,000 in 1800.[10]

Dramatic changes continued into the nineteenth century. In the first half of the century, elite groups such as metropolitan and local colonial authorities, Spanish merchants, and planters converged around a political and economic project centered on the expansion of the sugar industry and slavery. The successful refashioning of the Spanish empire, especially after the Haitian Revolution and the wars for independence in most of Spanish America, hinged upon Spain's ability to strengthen its hold on its last American possessions, Cuba and Puerto Rico. In this context, Spain allied with local planters to revitalize Puerto Rico's economy by supporting the sugar industry and the import of slaves at a time when rival empires were already undoing this equation in part by abolishing slavery.[11] The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804), the short Liberal period in Spain

(1808–1814), and the enactment of the 1815 Cédula de Gracias[12] set the stage for the development of a profitable sugar industry. Puerto Rico and Cuba became the main sugar producers in the Caribbean. For Puerto Rico, the peak of the sugar boom lasted from 1815 to 1845, although its expansion continued until the 1870s. The island exported 838 tons of sugar in 1812; 14,126 tons in 1830; 52,622 tons in 1848–50; and an annual average of 78,553 tons in the 1874 to 1878 period.[13] The coastal districts of Ponce and Guayama in the south and Mayagüez on the west coast emerged as the leading sugar-producing regions.

The expansion of sugar cultivation in Puerto Rico, and the decline of sugar on other Caribbean islands, attracted more immigrants to the island who, in turn, fueled the industry's growth with their labor, skills, networks, and capital.[14] Those immigrants included French, German, and British planters; skilled, black and mulatto laborers;[15] Spanish loyalists fleeing from the wars for independence in the continent; and Spanish, Canarian, and Corsican workers. Contemporary observers often noted that the free population rejected the exigencies of plantation work and fled the coastal areas. We can also note that free peasants did not have the resources to claim land ownership, as planters held on to large tracks of land for sugar cultivation, with areas dedicated to pasturing and foodstuffs for the plantation. Peasants could continue practicing sustainable agriculture if they moved to the interior. Therefore, about 60,000 to 80,000 more slaves entered the island between 1815 and 1845. In response to the gradual decline of sugar prices on the international market from the 1840s onward, *hacendados* forced slaves to work harder and longer hours to increase production and maintain the profit level of previous years. Inhumane living conditions and severe exploitation provoked frequent slave rebellions.[16]

The sudden influx of slaves, the threat of rebellion, and the need for highly disciplined labor drove authorities to enact a series of strict slave regulations such as the *Reglamento de esclavos* (1819)—expanded in 1826—and the *Bando contra la raza africana* (1848).[17] To hacendados and colonial authorities in Puerto Rico, the recent Haitian revolution and the news of conspiracies and rebellions on and outside the island made slavery a threatening institution, even as the scale of plantation agriculture made it a necessary one.[18]

Slavery in Puerto Rico had such appeal that even some committed abolitionist liberals found ways to reconcile slavery with liberal modernity. In a letter to his sister, describing his visit to San Juan at the height of the slave system in 1845, Spanish abolitionist Ignacio de Ramón Carbonell provided insights on both the transformations of slavery on the island and the ideological contradictions at work. San Juan was not the backward colonial site he expected to encounter, but a city showcasing all the material signs of modernity: paved, well lit, clean, well policed, and with streets designed in a grid. Most importantly, the slaves in the city, he noted, seemed well dressed and content, defying his earlier views on slavery as a dehumanizing institution. He seemed utterly surprised by the absence of fear as "a mob of *negros* wandered around the city in total freedom, which makes the city look like Babylonia. The *blancos*, however, were at peace and happy, otherwise one could believe the city had been invaded by savages . . . because there were only *negros* everywhere I looked."[19]

In the course of the letter, Ramón Carbonell displayed an increasing fascination with the African other, not as a threatening being primed to rebel but as a mysterious and exotic being. "I am the most struck," he stated, "by the luxury of the *negras*' (black women) clothing; their dresses made out of silk, satin, and other fine textiles. They wear nice shawls and gold jewelry, including some with precious stones." After attending a dance of Congo slaves, he observed "not even among our upper classes you would find as much luxury as I found there."[20] He was also captivated by their artisanal skills, good manners ("I also observed that they behave impeccably."), and intellectual potential.

The free movements of slaves that Ramón Carbonell witnessed were not the normal run of affairs, as it turned out. He had arrived in San Juan during the preparations for and celebrations of the Epiphany (January 6), a Catholic holiday during which it was customary for authorities to allow African religious brotherhoods to gather. He failed to recognize that the freedoms allowed to slaves during these holidays ultimately reaffirmed and reinvigorated white colonial authority and redrew boundaries among the popular classes—even though he was told about the strict ethnic and racial boundaries ("They told me that the different *razas* do not mingle in these events, *libres* (free people) do not mix with slaves, nor *mulatos* with *negros*."). The absence of any mention of cross-racial intimacy (noted by many other Spanish officers and visitors in earlier periods) might indicate that those opportunities may have narrowed. It also might well have been impossible for Ramón Carbonell to recognize that even in the free space of the celebrations, slaves could not reveal the interethnic, interracial networks they may have started forging as they traveled through the middle passage and worked the various plantation sites. Instead they were forced to perform repeatedly their tribal distinctions.

Ramón Carbonell's letter illustrates the limits of midcentury Spanish liberal thinking and abolitionism. In spite of his overstated abolitionist sentiment, he immediately showed misgivings about emancipation as the right path for Africans and quickly reconciled imperialism and slavery with modernity: "In order to judge adequately how humanitarian our laws on African slavery are, one needs to see these *negros* when they had just arrived from Africa. Even today, after the increased contact with European races unleashed by the slave trade, they differ from the white men not because of their skin color but because of their lagging intellectuality . . . it is enough to point out the large number of *libertos* living in the Spanish possessions that today enjoy considerable wealth of all kinds and own slaves of their own race."[21] For Carbonell, colonialism had not impeded San Juan's growth into a modern city, and the institution of slavery was the only avenue through which Africans could become cultured individuals and modern subjects, if never totally devoid of their African primal forms of sociality, as illustrated by their retention of their garbs, jewelry, and rituals. His narrative also reinscribed the myth of benign slavery in Puerto Rico and the Spanish empire overall, an ideological device central in diverting attention from a direct engagement with the nature of racial domination in the Spanish Caribbean.

Most importantly, in Carbonell's writing we can see the nuanced racialized logic underlying the liberal racial order: when guided efficiently, Africans can

exercise self-discipline (internalize authority to become reliable workers), and can become property owners and consumer subjects. By this logic, the authoritarian ruling of the Spanish overseas empire had been fruitful. Africans had been brought in for their labor, and the system of labor, in turn, had become the means for their social transformations. Carbonell is already advancing the logic linking work and racial uplifting (racialized labor) that liberal elites envisioned as the basis for the social pact in postabolition Puerto Rico.

While slavery was one of several systems of labor in Puerto Rico, the political, sociocultural, and economic logics of transatlantic slavery, especially as it manifested in the Caribbean, shaped this colony in all spheres since the 1500s. Thus emancipation was not to be understood merely as an end to an old system and the beginning of a new one. Instead, it was a moment of disruption and rearticulation. As such, the first part of this book explores the undoing of the slave system as the struggles that sparked it permeated all aspects of life in the colony and constituted the liberal forms of politics and society that became increasingly hegemonic in the late-nineteenth-century Spanish Empire in the Caribbean. These chapters describe the mechanisms of silencing and the simultaneous legitimizing of the social subjectivity of the worker as some of the technologies through which a racial order privileging white superiority was reconstituted after abolition.

Chapter 1

Becoming a Free Worker in Postemancipation Puerto Rico

The 1873 Abolition Act ending slavery in Puerto Rico stipulated a temporary apprenticeship period in which former slaves would contract with former masters to continue laboring until April 20, 1876.[22] Alarmed by the possible consequences for sugar production, planters appealed to the colonial authorities for protection. In March 1876, a group of influential hacendados proposed a plan to regulate the labor of all *jornaleros* and, most importantly, *libertos*,[23] or former slaves. In introducing the plan to the *Ministerio de Ultramar* (the administrative office of the overseas possessions), governor Don Segundo de la Portilla stated, "The period of forced contracting has come to an end. Thirty thousand *libertos*, forced by law to become industrious, will be free after April 20th. It is easy to imagine their behavior once they have achieved complete freedom. At that instance, it is most probable that all of them will abandon their jobs at the plantations in an attempt to finally enjoy the freedom they so much desired but I commit to do everything in my power to ameliorate the damages if I cannot entirely impede them."[24] Here Governor Portilla echoed conservatives' fears at the twilight of the contract regulation. What would happen if freedpeople were not compelled to work by a rigorous system? Portilla's fears went beyond the issue of labor: "I cannot allow these pitiful people, without homes, family or education to transform and guide their passions, to spread around the various towns of this Province, endangering our moral and material interests and threatening the public order." Freedpeople would spread all over the island—like an epidemic disease—disturbing the moral and material basis of the colony. If freedpeople achieved rights, then what would mark the difference between the Creole elites and the laboring classes?

While reassuring conservatives, Portilla spoke on the basis of family, morality, and education—the liberals' preferred terms—instead of deploying an explicit racial or ethnic language to support his claims. Portilla's word choices are one indicator of how compelling the language of labor and liberal terminology (property,

nuclear family, morality) had become to many island inhabitants by the mid-1870s. Even among conservatives, labor had increasingly become a preferred idiom to articulate anxieties about a disintegrating social order, which masked its racialized nature. This period of transition makes harder any clear-cut ideological distinction between conservatives and liberal forces given the wide range of overlapping interests between its members. Nonetheless, conservative forces often composed a sector of the sugar planter elite, merchants, and a large number of government, military, and ecclesiastical officials. The liberal class included sugar and coffee producers, the urban middle class, artisan groups, and a few colonial administrators. For elite sectors in both camps, racialized domination was key to their projects. Consequently, the form of emancipation that emerged out of their struggles was not to fundamentally alter the racial hierarchy forged throughout the previous four centuries under European colonialism.

Puerto Rican intellectuals and politicians have always highlighted abolition in 1873 as a foundational event in island history.[25] In most accounts written before the 1970s, abolition signified the opposite of slavery: it was the eradication of the last obstacle, forced labor, in the path to progress and modernity, and the transition from slavery to freedom was a peaceful period in which dissimilar Puerto Rican races and classes converged into a harmonious society. Their interpretation of emancipation in the Puerto Rican context implied that, by 1870, slavery was already an outdated system lacking popular support, and they paid scant attention to the history of slavery itself. More recent studies have stressed that these earlier interpretations failed to acknowledge slavery's crucial role in shaping the political, economic, and social organization of the island.[26] This chapter argues that abolition was indeed a foundational moment in island history: it signified the undoing of one form of racialized domination and the rearticulation of nuanced modalities of racial subjection.

To disrupt the story of slavery and abolition told by both observers at that time and later scholars, I provide here an alternate history of slavery and abolition that attends to conflict and not to harmony. The debates surrounding abolition, the various pieces of legislation, and the practices by which elites and workers negotiated over laws and other mechanisms of surveillance—all these mark the ideological and cultural transformations that began to take shape in Puerto Rico, within the larger Spanish empire, and more broadly in the Atlantic world of the late eighteenth century. Debates about the future of slaves were not mere arguments in the process of finding a resolution to broader issues of ideology and power. Instead, struggles about defining the appropriate role of the state in the economy, the relationship between the state and the individual, and what constituted moral and sociopolitical progress all hinged on the question of slavery.

The apprenticeship system after abolition embodied much more than a compromise between the island's conservative forces and liberal elites over labor and the future of the sugar economy. Through the regulations, policies, and surveillance practices of this system, different elites converged in an effort to turn Puerto Rico into a different society. The most conservative elites wanted to shape former slaves into disciplined workers. Liberals hoped to turn them into future citizens at the service of the Spanish Crown or members of the Puerto Rican independent

state, depending on their political orientation. Through contracts, employer and employee would have a different relationship, one that could serve as an allegory of the state and its citizens. While conservatives doubted that slaves had the capacity to become active members of society, liberals sought former slaves' inclusion into their sociopolitical project. To liberals, blackness did not completely exclude former slaves from the social order, although it definitely guaranteed their marginalization from direct political power and subjected them to liberals' "mentorship."

Furthermore, for liberals, former slaves were to become not only free workers but a particular kind of man and woman: the sort that not only would reproduce the economic and social hierarchies that secured local elites' power in the colony but would also lead to the social regeneration required for the island's industrial development and progress. Elites sought to inculcate a work ethic of compliance and reliability among *libertos* while also using the system to discipline *libertas* into domesticity and moral decency. Though elites profited from *libertas*' compulsory labor, and indirectly recognized the centrality of their economic performance, they did not perceive freedwomen as legitimate workers. To liberals and conservatives, men were the main producers. Although the language of labor often blurred racial lines—marginally incorporating blacks into a wider social project—it did not guarantee the same position for former female slaves.

In this age of ideological transformations, liberal ideals of womanhood rendered female labor as supplementary and subordinate to the needs of the family. Thus I focus in particular on how female former slaves used the language of labor but in a way that unintentionally excluded them from the sociopolitical category of the worker. Freedwomen constituted the most marginalized sector of nineteenth-century Puerto Rican society. Even then, when freedwomen used the language of labor and contract, authorities responded positively to some of the women's claims. Therefore, an analysis of female former slaves' contracts highlights two interrelated phenomena: (a) the growing compelling force of a language of labor that allowed subaltern groups to address issues of inequality despite their race and (b) the definition of the free worker (the potential citizen) as masculine, despite women's crucial economic roles.

Perhaps most importantly in disrupting canonical narratives about abolition, this chapter seeks to recover the ways in which slaves and newly freed people took part in these debates. For the latter purpose, I analyze two samples of freedpeople's contracts: a set of 148 contracts dated from April 28 to May 9, 1873, for the agricultural areas of Ponce and a collection of 380 contracts registered in the urban areas of San Juan from April 25 to May 7, 1873.[27] To uncover how former slaves challenged contract stipulations, I also employ the fines and complaints in the *Register of Infractions to the Authorities* (April 1874 to April 1876) and the authorities' recollection of daily events in the *Register of Local Matters* (April 24 to December 31, 1873).[28]

In sum, by providing a more nuanced take on race and the story of slavery and abolition, and by closely examining postemancipation labor relations, I demonstrate how, through contract negotiations, employers, state regulators, and freedpeople forged an effective language—which at times mediated racial

differences, though not gender/sexual ones—for political and social negotiation. With the process of abolition, a new political category of identity gained currency—the free male worker—that often blurred racial lines. As a result, the island did not experience a political mobilization explicitly calling for racial equality but a movement to improve labor. The racialized nature of these labor struggles, a constitutive force in late-nineteenth-century colonial/imperial politics, went unnamed.

LABOR AS AN ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

From the beginning of Spanish colonization, labor framed debates and decisions about the island. Early on, the lack of reliable labor on the islands was a major concern for elites, prompting administrators to implement the tribute labor system of the *encomienda* for indigenous people and the early African slave trade.[29] The "idleness" of the Puerto Rican population became elites' main idiom to describe the island's problems during the imperial restructuring of the mid-eighteenth century: for example, Alejandro O'Reylly, the colonial official who visited the island in 1765 to assess its economic condition, identified the leisurely, unproductive population and the absence of government surveillance as the causes of Puerto Rico's precarious economy. O'Reilly depicted inhabitants as economically irrational subjects, spread through the wild, content with living from what the land, abundant in natural resources, accidentally provided.[30] At the turn of the nineteenth century, colonial administrators and landowners rearticulated these same perceptions and could not envision the rise of a plantation economy without addressing the issue of supply, distribution, and control of labor.[31] Such debates only intensified during the nineteenth century. The numerous labor regulations issued by authorities in subsequent decades tell us that labor discipline was deemed the key to sustaining this colony and the broader imperial enterprise.

Even at slavery's peak (1815–1840s), slaves never constituted more than one-eighth of the population because of the recurrent problems of supply, lack of credit, and prices. As such, planters worried constantly about any possible threat to their hold over their few but highly priced slaves. Furthermore, planters obsessed about satisfying their need for workhands. Therefore, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, elites designed strategies to force the free multiracial peasantry into labor. In Ponce, the largest producer of sugar on the island, authorities enacted vagrancy laws—stipulating fines and arrests—for the free population "without permanent employment" as early as 1817, followed by circular letters reinstating the regulations twice in 1818, 1819, twice in 1820, and again in 1828.[32]

The continuous redesign of regulations for slaves and free workers underscored the fact that laborers continued to challenge and often circumvented the systems of control imposed on them. Vagrancy statutes before 1830 had been ineffective, so authorities tried a more drastic approach. In 1838, Governor López de Baños organized the first registry for *jornaleros* (dayworkers). Under the law, every free worker had to introduce evidence of his or her occupation to a *Junta de Vagos y Amancebados*, a council comprising municipal council members who met once a

month to discuss denunciations against individuals accused of vagrancy and concubinage.[33] The peasantry's lack of compliance with the regulations led San Juan authorities to complain about the local Junta's inefficiency and demanded regularity in their meetings as well as strict compliance with the law.[34] Additionally, nine more island-wide vagrancy laws were enacted between 1838 and 1862.[35]

Since emancipation, planters brought immigrant laborers on one-year contracts from the British West Indies (especially Antigua and St. Kitts). Later, as the three-year forced contract period for former slaves was coming to an end in 1876, a group of planters also petitioned to the authorities for support to bring indentured workers to the plantations.[36] Colonial authorities did not support these immigration schemes but did enact further antivagrancy legislation in 1874 and 1876, in addition to proposing several comprehensive projects for regulating work. In theory, these labor regulations also served to mold the laboring class into moral, healthy men and women.

Compelling the peasantry to plantation work was not the only challenge elites faced. The severity and regularity of slave conspiracies pushed Governor Juan Prim to enact the 1848 *Bando contra la raza africana*, a special decree that established severe punishments for people of African ancestry who committed any crime against an individual or property and also regulated all their social activities.[37] As its focus on *la raza africana* implies, the *Bando* addressed elite concerns not only about slave rebellions but also about the increasing number of skilled, mulatto, and black workers from the West Indies who flooded the island to work on sugar plantations.[38]

In 1839, Juan Duro de Espinosa, a magistrate of the *Real Audiencia Territorial* in Puerto Rico—the highest judicial body on the island—linked all these concerns (the idleness of island workers, the rising immigration of West Indians, and rebellion) in his address to his superiors in Spain and advocated for immigration control "in order to preserve the stability and security of this island."[39] He described West Indian migration unfavorable because "the *morenos*' overtaking the provision of services only encourages our inhabitants' idleness and laziness, turning them into vagrants and thieves." Most importantly, it was politically dangerous because "the large number of immigrants and their proximity to Santo Domingo could, at least, threaten the stability of the country." Because Britain had abolished slavery already, colonial authorities and the plantation elite believed that these *gente de color* (people of color) who had migrated were supporters of abolition and revolutionaries. Hence Duro de Espinosa recommended the enactment of a stricter *código negrero* (black [slave] code) and the systematic incorporation of the free population into agricultural work while encouraging the immigration of additional laborers from the Canary Islands.

Immigration did diminish, but slave conspiracies continued, pushing the governor to circulate a letter demanding that military commanders send a report every three months about foreigners and slaves and ordering the enforcement of the more comprehensive slave regulations of 1826 (*Reglamento de Esclavos*).[40] Despite these efforts, slave conspiracies persisted.[41] In essence, for a brief period (late 1830s to 1840s), the colonial administration and white planters developed a

siege mentality in response to the threat embodied in the large numbers of slaves and free black workers.

The next governor, General Juan de la Pezuela, sought to address the island's problems of labor discipline differently and derogated the *Bando* in 1849. To Pezuela, the pressing issue was not to control the black population alone but rather to discipline all laborers (slaves and the multiracial free peasantry). He enacted the *Bando de Jornaleros,* which implemented the *Reglamento de la Libreta*, in 1849 to expand the labor pool accessible to planters. The *Reglamento* constituted an assault to the *agregado* system, a popular living arrangement in rural areas through which landowners allowed landless families to settle in their estates—often cultivating a piece of land—in exchange for labor or a share of their crops. The existing local *Juntas de Vagos y Amancebados* were charged to implement the *libreta* system with the assistance of the municipal police. The law required each *jornalero* to carry a notebook (*libreta*) in which his name, physical characteristics, occupation, and employment history was noted. It applied to small peasants as well, whose limited access to land did not provide the means to be totally independent. The authorities made periodic inspections and arrested for vagrancy anyone who did not present evidence of employment.[42] Those who did not comply were charged a fine or eventually drafted to forced labor in public works. Like the 1838 regulation, Pezuela's law also forbade social activities and gatherings, such as cockfights, drinking, and dancing, and imposed a nighttime curfew.[43] The law required permission from the authorities to rent a house, change residences, or move to other towns. Taken together, these laws forced the *jornaleros* and small peasants who lacked a work contract or a property title to move or frequently visit the urban core of towns in order to arrange for employment. By the 1860s, however, the *Reglamento* was no longer enforced systematically. On the one hand, resources became increasingly scarce because Spain was invested in the reconquest of Santo Domingo. On the other hand, *jornaleros* created familial and community networks that allowed them to avoid the regulations of the *Reglamento*.[44] The *libreta* system ended with the abolition of slavery.

Through the institutional arrangement of the *libreta*, historian Silvia Alvarez Curbelo contends, elites turned the multiracial *jornaleros* into a class or, better phrased, into a political subjectivity.[45] And coercing the multiracial free peasantry—including white lower-class men—to work alongside slaves muddied the clear distinctions of the earlier decades between blackness and slavery on the one hand, and whiteness and freedom on the other. Authorities subjected the multiracial *jornaleros* to strict surveillance, punishment, and repeated imprisonment. Certainly, the ordeals of free laborers were not comparable to the exploitation of chattel slaves. Nevertheless, whiteness was not enough to define freedom. In the contrasting case of the nineteenth-century United States, David Roediger argues that white urban workers of the republican era made their freedom and independence—which they achieved because of their whiteness—the core of their working-class political identity;[46] blackness and dependence characterized slaves and reaffirmed their noncitizen status. Such a clear distinction did not exist in Puerto Rico after 1850.

Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans lived in and reproduced a racial hierarchy that placed whiteness and blackness at opposite ends of the spectrum. Elites, including intellectuals, repeatedly asserted their whiteness (and European origin) against the mulatto and black lower classes. They often perceived white agricultural workers as racially impure because of their intimate interactions with the black and mixed race classes.[47] And whiteness signified privilege even within the working classes: lighter skin could facilitate an individual's upward mobility, letting him enter crafts mostly reserved for whites (watchmaking or silversmithing.) or marry into a family with a better social network. But a complex interrelation between ethnic origin, physical traits, and economic status combined to determine an individual's social position. So among the lower classes, blackness did not always guarantee social rejection, just as whiteness did not warrant inclusion.[48]

The ambiguity of racial lines among the laboring poor did not mean that race was meaningless; it meant that the black-white racial logic operated in amorphous, inconsistent, and unpredictable ways. The many instances in which racialized boundaries were clearly drawn sparked distrust and raised racial awareness among many. At the same time, the irregularity of these instances also allowed others, like the liberal elite, to dismiss, distort, and silence the racial reality.

The Decline of Sugar and the Rise of Liberal Politics

If the slave-sugar complex consolidated the colonial ties between the islands and the metropolis in the first half of the nineteenth century, its decline constituted a threat to that colonial relationship. Between the 1840s and 1870s, the Puerto Rican slave-sugar complex suffered severe blows—saturated markets, declining prices, the abolition of slavery, droughts, and lack of credit, capital, and better technology—which led to its stagnation in the 1880s and 1890s.[49] Sugar planters began competing against the rising coffee industry in the interior.[50] As a result, the infrastructure and the political alliances that had sustained the island during the first half of the century began to crumble. Elites were wary of making reforms to the slave system because it entailed a transformation of their political relationship with Spain, but changes were badly needed.

The rise of coffee opened new economic and political possibilities.[51] In the second half of the century, Cuba continued to rely on sugar while Puerto Rico began developing coffee as an alternative industry with better market conditions. Most importantly for our purposes, coffee did not depend on slave labor, so the abolition of slavery became economically feasible in Puerto Rico; it signaled to Spanish administrators that Puerto Rico, in contrast to Cuba, could survive without slavery.[52] The US Civil War (1861–65) affected Puerto Rico's sugar trade with their primary trading partner, the United States, but not coffee, which continued circulating to Cuban and European markets. Furthermore, emancipation in the United States (1865) hinted to many in both Cuba and Puerto Rico that slavery as a system was truly in the wane in the Western Hemisphere.[53]

According to Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, a proactive abolitionist campaign emerged in Puerto Rico before Cuba or Spain not only because of coffee but because of the particularities of the institution in Puerto Rico.[54] The Puerto Rican

slave population had diminished significantly for several reasons: high prices, limited supply, shipments to Cuba, and the 1855 cholera epidemic. By 1860, the slave population was 41,738, while in Cuba it was close to 400,000.[55] A small fraction of planters had begun contemplating gradual abolition with monetary compensation.

By increasing the Puerto Rican coffee trade with the Iberian Peninsula and Cuba, then, moderate liberal politicians in Spain thought both to strengthen the political and commercial relationship with the colonies and to incorporate the colonies into a tighter market web, replacing the colonial sugar economy sustained by US trade. The free trade possible with coffee could expand and consolidate the Spanish empire rather than encourage the overseas territories to be independent.

But within Puerto Rico, most planters preferred to continue with the profitable US trade, and Spanish merchants on the island were wary of Spanish liberals. Preserving the colonies—and their exclusive control over trade between the peninsula and the overseas territories—depended on authoritarianism, they believed. These conservative loyalists needed the colonial infrastructure to maintain the profitability of sugar, especially to supply labor in the midst of ongoing worries about the supply of workers, and a stable market relationship.[56] In fact, they believed the retention of slavery was crucial to maintaining a profitable colonial relationship. A large number of planters, government administrators, and merchants—the conservative forces—worried that abolition would provoke economic instability that in turn could lead influential members of the planter class to think about independence as a better alternative. Furthermore, although the official number of whites (346,984) was near that of nonwhites (309,344), proslavery elites resorted to inflaming fears about the revolutionary potential of the black population, such as those in Haiti and other Caribbean islands.[57] The circulation of news about the crucial role of the black/brown population in Santo Domingo's 1860s war against Spain and the 1865 Morant rebellion in Jamaica must have reaffirmed Puerto Rican conservative elites' fears of black radicalism. Indeed, the fear of blackness and slaves in both Puerto Rico and Cuba was essential to the colonial pact between planters and authorities. The metropolitan government had denied the Caribbean islands any political representation in the Spanish Liberal Courts since 1837 because race could upset the colonial framework. It was a conundrum: Spanish commissioners to the Spanish Liberal Courts (1836–1854) feared a rebellion in Cuba if they refused representation to free people of color, but feared a rebellion if political freedoms were extended to them.

The rise of the plantation economy stimulated an increase in construction, the expansion of cities, government services, and cultural and intellectual activities; it also depended on interrelated services that attracted numerous skilled workers (artisans) as well as professionals (engineers, architects, accountants, lawyers, doctors, and pharmacists, among others). By the 1860s, sugar planters and coffee producers shared the political arena with these emerging urban, middle, and upper-middle classes. Many professionals were the children of the agricultural elite, and because of the lack of opportunities for secondary education, many traveled to Europe to further their education. Their travels throughout the empire

and beyond and the education they received sparked their awareness about the different ways to understand and remedy the island's state of affairs. Unlike the planters, then, Creole urban professionals began to constitute a leading voice among liberal reformists and abolitionists.[58]

Slavery contradicted the social order reformists had envisioned, and abolitionists sought to eradicate slavery and all other forms of forced labor. Their main point of contention with sugar planters and merchants was the issue of labor. Liberals challenged the planters' main argument: the problem of the supply of labor. Obviously, they contended, planters' complaints derived not from the lack of workers but rather from the inefficiency of the forced-labor systems—slavery and the *libreta*—to attract workers. The island had plenty of laborers who just needed the right incentive to work. The market economy and the moral and intellectual education of inhabitants would foster a reliable laboring population. By attacking slavery and suggesting new ways of dealing with labor, liberal abolitionists meant to reform the foundation of the colony.

The Racial and Gendered Configurations of Puerto Rican Abolitionism

The abolitionists saw that the promise of the modern hinged upon the racially mixed peasantries and also on the former slaves' capability to become consumer subjects. In their eyes, the regulatory power of capital was pervasive enough that it could transform laborers' sense of being and bring about self-discipline despite racial difference. The market would weave the social fabric together. Liberals could envision black and brown bodies not as commodities but as producers, sellers, and, most notably, consumers, one of the main ideological transformations of this historical moment.

Unlike conservative elites, many Puerto Rican abolitionists, like Don Nicolás Aguayo from Caguas, dismissed blackness as a political threat or an inconvenience in molding the free peasantry into reliable workers. In a letter to the island governor, for example, Aguayo argued that the mulatto peasantry could overcome "their circumstances (first, their race: most of the proletarian classes belong to the *clase de color*—they exhibit different shades born out of the union of the two *razas* that colonized the island, therefore they are of slave origin—and, second, their education)."[59] When taking into account their physical, moral, and political conditions, he stated, the "Puerto Rican field worker is as hard-working as any other, because labor output should be measured against the conditions in which it takes place." Using the people of the barrio Cangrejos in Santurce—who Aguayo deemed laborious in spite of the *condición de raza*—as point of reference, he argued that the peasantry indeed could become the productive force needed for progress on the island because "necessity fuels individuals' will to work." But Aguayo was also quick to delineate intrinsic differences among the various social sectors because "not everyone has the same needs. Their needs differ in quantity, quality, and kind depending on climate, education, and the political institutions in which they are born into, live in, and develop as grown individuals."

While the potential for personal reform and moral uplift defined the abolitionists' paradigm for former slaves, they never thought of workers as their equals, in either class or racial terms. They trusted that the market would eventually generate consumer desires in the black/brown laboring population, turning them into consumers and pushing them to work harder for money to purchase things. In addition, they believed moral and intellectual education was required to domesticate those desires in order to produce reliable workers. Thus liberal reformists supported the three-year apprenticeship system for freedpeople following the abolition of slavery and other disciplinary tools to keep them in their proper place. These liberal reformists introduced the equation of reliable labor with morality.

Liberals also found the racially mixed origin of the free peasantry a less-than-ideal condition, one that needed to be addressed. For example, abolitionist Baldorioty de Castro strongly opposed the immigration of Africans and Asians to work in the plantations after abolition, instead advocating for the immigration of white Spaniards and peasants from the Canary Islands to whiten the peasantry.[60] At the same time, liberal abolitionists did not hesitate to stress Puerto Rico's whiteness. For instance, authors of the 1867 abolitionist project *Proyecto para la Abolición de la Esclavitud en Puerto Rico* blamed the authoritiarian colonial regime for the limited "immigration of the *raza blanca*" to the Americas," which, in turn, exacerbated "the already existing distance between the latter and the population *negra esclava*."[61] They quickly noted, however, that Puerto Rico was different: "it is impossible to learn this province's history without noticing the numerous policies, often effective, geared to increasing the *población blanca*." Consequently, there was little danger in liberating slaves as the population was overwhelmingly white. Asserting the island's whiteness amid the black, unstable Caribbean was crucial in order to justify the call for political reforms in the colony. To be more specific, in the previous lines Puerto Rico is implicitly compared to Cuba, thus reinscribing the neighboring island as the black counterexample.

Puerto Rican abolitionists responded to the Crown's anxieties about economic instability and revolution by underscoring that, in contrast to Cuba, the number of slaves on the island was quite small (41,000) while whites amounted to 300,430 inhabitants.[62] They also redeployed a narrative common in the Spanish and Portuguese Americas about the planters' unusual kindness to their slaves (in contrast to the French and the British) in order to highlight the large number of free people of color (often manumitted slaves) on the island.[63] Abolitionists repeatedly asserted that the island slaves were not African but Creole and, consequently, less inclined to rebellion because they were already "civilized."[64] There was no danger of Africanization.

Furthermore, abolitionists of the 1860s inverted the conservatives' earlier fears of free people of color. The *Proyecto para la abolición* authors underscored several times the vital role this population (241,015) could perform in the process of abolition: They would serve as a buffer that would prevent social instability. They had proven their loyalty to the administration and had worked hard. Therefore, they would teach former slaves about freedom and responsibilities.[65] These

politicians did not perceive the free population as one condemned to blackness but rather as one already in the process of racial miscegenation and, consequently, whitening.

In the *Proyecto para la abolición*, liberals assuaged planters' angst about the availability of labor and the instability of racial hierarchies and provided a vague outline of how they intended to bring former slaves closer to a liberal, market-oriented subjectivity.[66] In particular, they highlighted freedpeople's sense of gratitude to authorities for their new freedom as the basis of the harmonious postslavery future:

> Once a slave is freed, no matter how perverted and lowly we believe they are, once a slave recognizes that they are indebted [to us] because of the great gift of freedom—because for him freedom is a bequest not the realization of their right—, once he realizes that he is free to be with his family and has ownership over his labor and property, he surely will forget the indignities he has suffered . . .[67] What is the ultimate goal of emancipating a slave? To give them back their personhood and their inalienable rights . . . it is to rescue him from arbitrary domination and transform him into a dignified man and citizen.[68]

In later decades (see Chapter 3), liberal elites will cultivate further this argument into a politics of gratitude to consolidate unequal alliances with artisans. In Cuba too, José Martí highlighted former slaves' sense of gratitude for abolition to argue that there could never be a racial war in Cuba like it took place in Haiti.[69]

The excerpt also offers a glimpse of the gendered assumptions organizing Puerto Rican abolitionism. Former slaves would turn into heads of households, property owners, and eventually citizens[70]—categories coded as male attributes. Liberals regarded the free worker as male and excluded freedwomen and free female peasants from the formula that equated labor and morality with political rights. Indeed, in the *Proyecto para la abolición,* Puerto Rican abolitionists underscored to both authorities and planters that emancipation would not disturb production or the political stability of the island because men (no mention of women) would remain in the fields.[71] They argued that abolition would only affect production negatively if male laborers refused to work. Furthermore, the abolitionists contended, the island only had 10,000 male slaves in agriculture, a small number that would be easy to discipline; the remaining slaves were mostly women dedicated to domestic service. These abolitionists focused on male labor as the foundation of the island agricultural economy (while female labor was to be confined to irrelevant domestic services) not only because of their own beliefs about gender roles but also because planters historically preferred male workers. Yet the reality was that both men and women were central to agricultural production. In spite of the rapid decline of the slave force and an increased number of complaints about the unreliability of free workers, planters continued valuing male slave labor over women's, regardless of their heavy reliance on the latter. In 1870–73, two-thirds of the manumissions in Guayama were granted to women. In coffee-producing Adjuntas, a town nearby Ponce, only 4 out of 18 slaves registered in 1870 as working in the fields were women.[72]

As in rural areas, the urban labor reality also contradicted desires for a clear, gendered division of labor.[73] Historian Félix Matos uncovered that San Juan elites were terribly anguished that abolition would decimate the ranks of domestic workers (predominantly slave women), which underscores the elites' dependence on women's labor for the reproduction of their symbolic and material livelihood. Nevertheless, they consistently continued to regard female domestic labor as supplementary. The increasing tendency in San Juan to manage poor women's labor through beneficence institutions underscored the tension between the elite's deep reliance on women's work and their discursive representation of such labor as peripheral.

The process of abolition reveals how Puerto Rican liberals also sought to rearticulate patriarchal power, and how that process did so by redrawing the hierarchies of race and class. In analyzing freedpeople's contracts, subsequent legislation, and the practices of surveillance, one can see that the legal infrastructure built for carrying out abolition was a means to inculcate nuanced notions of proper womanhood and manhood among former slaves and the free racially mixed peasantry, which often clashed with conservatives' older notions of social organization and/or with the labor demands imposed by the economic realities of the time. In essence, the abolitionist project intended to deeply transform the basis of colonial society but sought to retain a racial and gender order that would guarantee their white patriarchal authority. Conservatives' constant opposition to change limited the extent of those transformations. However, these elites' struggles were not the only ones to shape the process of emancipation; former slaves' actions did as well.

THE MOMENT OF ABOLITION

The expansion of the two export-oriented industries—coffee and sugar—engendered great social dislocation and fostered dissatisfaction from various fronts. Exploited slaves, the dispossessed free peasantry, and underrepresented Creole elites demanded more political control and better opportunities for economic development.[74] As a result, the Ministerio de Ultramar organized the 1867 *Juntas de Información*—a series of meetings in Spain with colonial deputies. Spain's failure to address their demands prompted diverse social groups to join forces in a separatist revolt against Spain known as the *Grito de Lares* (1868). Rebels were a heterogeneous group. Small coffee hacienda owners mobilized against the financing structures that tied them and made them vulnerable to Spanish merchants. The free laboring poor sought to challenge the increasing proletarianization and dispossession of land brought about by the expansion of the coffee industry. To the rebels, an increase in taxation earlier that year, while already enduring an ongoing economic crisis, confirmed once more Spain's disregard of islanders' needs and Spain's disinterest in seriously transforming the colonial relationship.

The radical abolitionism of the revolt sparked the authorities' quick mobilization. The revolt was short-lived. Colonial authorities reestablished control over the population, imprisoned or exiled key participants, and effectively neutralized the most radical wing of Liberalism on the island. At the same time, a similar revolt in Cuba sparked a bloody ten-year war, which over time became

increasingly radicalized. In the process, numerous slaves achieved emancipation and fiercely fought for the Cuban separatist, antislavery, anti-Spanish cause.[75] Cuban planters and administrators labeled that conflict as a race war and increased violent military actions against insurgents. In contrast, the brief armed revolt in Puerto Rico did not spark prolonged racial fears, perhaps because authorities had been successful in extinguishing the revolt, or perhaps because the smaller slave population did not offer a similar threat. In addition, the Puerto Rican revolt's brevity signaled to the authorities that a large sector of planters and, maybe, many coffee hacendados were not yet inclined to independence. Historian Astrid Cubano argues that, throughout the second half of the century, the Spanish administration had already tried to alleviate economic adversity among coffee and sugar landowners, thereby thwarting their desires for separatism.[76] Additionally, the strong antislavery sentiment among Puerto Rican revolutionaries kept them from winning wide support from the coastal elites. Cuban revolutionaries did not embrace abolitionism at the beginning, allowing them to build a wider network of alliances with sugar elites of the eastern province and engendering a larger mobilization. Cubano contends that Cuban insurgents became abolitionist in the course of the uprising as many slaves joined the insurgent ranks to achieve their freedom.[77]

Simultaneously, Spain was undergoing its own liberal revolution in a political process that had also begun in September 1868. The new liberal government enacted important reforms in peninsular Spain such as universal male suffrage and freedom of the press, assembly, association, education, and religion.[78] Amid the many struggles throughout the empire, the colonial administration was cornered into reconsidering the issue of slavery in its colonies.

In 1870, the colonial government enacted the Moret Law for both Cuba and Puerto Rico. As a first step toward emancipation, the law established that every child of a slave born after 1868 would be free, as would slaves over sixty years of age.[79] However, the Moret Law also stipulated that slave children born after 1870 were to be subordinated in a form of tutelage to their mother's master, who was to provide for the basic needs of the child in exchange for unremunerated work. The apprenticeship law was a compromise between the abolitionists who asked for immediate emancipation and those proslavery advocates who defended the status quo.[80] Colonial administrators and planters attempted to halt even this version of emancipation. In Cuba, authorities did not implement the law. In Puerto Rico, local officials did not issue the law until after four to five months from its pronouncement.[81] Moreover, colonial officials modified slave censuses, and planters altered birth certificates to adjust the age of their slaves to keep them under their service.[82] Despite these obstacles, the Moret Law opened a crack in the structures of power. Many slaves tried to use it to their advantage in order to advance their freedom and that of their families. In one case, a group of slaves in Juana Díaz refused to work because they believed that they had been granted full freedom.[83] Abolitionists remained dissatisfied with the Moret Law and continued pressing for the end of slavery.

On March 22, 1873, the colonial government issued the Abolition Act only for Puerto Rico. In the context of the war in Cuba, abolition in Puerto Rico

was both a reward for loyalty and a means to avoid the political radicalization of island liberals, most of whom were committed to the integrity of the empire.[84]

The Contract System

Like the Moret Law, the Abolition Act and subsequent regulations for apprenticeship in Puerto Rico embodied Spain's urge to balance the struggle between the proponents of newer forms of governance and the conservatives interested in maintaining the old authoritarian imperial order.[85] Because labor control had been the most pressing issue for the elite since the late eighteenth century, it is not surprising that the labor contract became the foundation of the three-year apprenticeship system for former slaves established after emancipation was enacted.

Many conservatives did not believe that the black slave population would comply with contracts. Their perceptions were based on their experiences with the free population, many of whom managed successfully to avoid labor arrangements. In contrast, liberal abolitionists insisted that free contracts should rule society. Well-known liberals such as Baldorioty de Castro and Nicolás Aguayo repeatedly asserted their belief in the "spirit" of the contract.[86] They saw the free arrangement between employer and employee over rights and responsibilities as a metaphor for the relationship they thought should exist between the citizen and the state. These liberals believed blacks could become functional (though unequal) members of Puerto Rican society. But neither conservatives nor liberals expected former slaves to redefine the notion of the free worker to their own advantage. Yet former slaves actively bargained and negotiated their contracts to accommodate their needs and those of their families.

The 1873 Abolition Act forced freedpeople to establish three-year contracts with their former masters, some other party, or the state, with full emancipation only after 1876 and political rights in 1878.[87] The law also compensated slave owners: the government would pay 23 percent more than the standard compensation to planters whose former slaves abandoned their hacienda in search of new employers. It is clear that the authorities were aware that a high number of freedpeople would cease to work for their former owners, as had happened in other areas of the Caribbean.[88] With this article, authorities sought to appease planters concerned over the economic impact of abolition.[89]

Once Governor Primo de Rivera took office in April 1873, he enacted a 37-article regulation for contracting freedpeople.[90] The new regulations divided the islands into three main departments, each supervised by a Freedpeople's Advocate (*Protector de Libertos*) and several assistants (*Síndico Protector de libertos*), who oversaw contract negotiations, filed and registered documents, and updated information on each contract.[91] These officials were required to keep track of every *liberto/a* within their geographic area. Often, these *protectores* and *síndicos* were members of wealthy, sugar-producing families, so their personal interests may have conflicted with their assigned duties.[92] Both parties to the new contracts were supposed to sign the document in the presence of a *protector* or an assistant. In practice, planters frequently used labor recruiters to negotiate

contracts with workers and later passed on the information to the *protectores*, thus circumventing state regulations.[93] However, this practice also allowed former slaves to negotiate contracts to their advantage, getting shorter terms or exchanging wages for other sorts of benefits.

These provisions were designed to perpetuate the exploitation of former slaves. Inevitably, they also inscribed some liberal discourse into law. The language of the contract law in Puerto Rico described former slaves not as commodities, whose contracts could be sold or exchanged among "employers," but as individuals with rights and responsibilities. The apprenticeship legislation in the British Caribbean was more restrictive: it did not allow for a change in employer or legal cancellation of the arrangement in case of a breach of contract from either one of the parts involved. In Cuba, during the 1880s *Patronato* system, planters continued to sell, rent, or exchange their rights over former slaves' contracts. But in Puerto Rico, legislation was slightly different.[94] For instance, the thirteenth article stated that contracts had to be agreed upon freely by employer and employee and define clear boundaries between regulated work time and individuals' free time.[95] The fourteenth article went even further to recognize the right of the employer and the employee to rescind the contract if either side did not comply with contract stipulations. Certainly, contract provisions such as the fourteenth article were meant to protect employers should they no longer require *liberto* labor and provide planters with tools to bargain for cheaper labor.

According to historian Luis Díaz Soler, at least 92 percent of former slaves made contracts or were accounted for by authorities in 1873.[96] This percentage includes freedpeople exempted from the law: *libertos/as* under 12 or over 60 years of age. (About two thousand slaves did not comply with the legislation at all, a very small but important group.) The significant number of contracts signals that former slaves on the island had few other options for their economic support, especially because of their limited legal access to cultivable land.

Yet the relative success of the forced-contract system led many contemporary observers and later students of the period to define former slaves as passive or obedient and to praise the island for its ability to implement a potentially dangerous transition so efficiently. A writer in the newspaper *El Abolicionista* stated that "in regards to the *libertos*, their good sense and propriety is admirable."[97] And the writer added, "previous claims about the Law of abolition leading to disturbances, disorder, and indolence were clearly untrue."

In his seminal work on slavery, Díaz Soler notes that contemporary newspapers described in great length the pleasant reactions of former slaves and several planters.[98] In one instance, the excited *pueblo* (the masses) in San Juan went to the cathedral to celebrate a *Te Deum*.[99] After the religious ceremony the masses proceeded through the streets of the city, where the houses had been specially lit to celebrate the occasion. In other towns such as Ponce, site of the largest concentration of slaves, people celebrated similarly. Influential hacendado*s* such as Don Gustavo Cabrera, Don Guillermo Oppenheimer, Don Guillermo Tirado, and Mr. Albert Lee organized parties with dancing and food to celebrate the freedom of their slaves. The revered abolitionist Don Román Baldorioty de Castro actively participated in such festivities. He took advantage of the occasion to emphasize

the social pact embedded in the Abolition Act: colonial authorities granted justice and freedom, and in exchange for this freedom, slaves had to commit to hard and continuous work. Great celebrations took place in other towns, like Guayanilla, where supposedly freed slaves offered a banquet to a group of reformists in gratitude for abolition.

Liberal colonial representatives, such as Governor Juan Martínez Plowes, highlighted the stability of the transition process and "the positive response of the *negradas* (black masses) living in the haciendas" when they learned of the "great event."[100] In his 1873 letter to superiors in Spain, Plowes stressed that former "slaves have behaved gratefully and have remained obedient to the Authorities and former masters. Because of the good treatment they received as slaves, without doubt most of them will remain working under contract agreement with their former masters."

While there were certainly celebrations at emancipation, it is important to remember that the story of a harmonious transition from slavery to free labor is also a narrative told for particular purposes. The story of harmony emerged in 1873 as a liberal counterdiscourse aiming to disrupt the centuries-old dominant narratives about the lack of hands, the idleness of the mixed raced peasantry, and the threat of the blacks. These earlier racialized narratives had organized the colonial regime that liberals desired to change, so they needed to reconstitute the old story in nuanced ways to accommodate (and allow for the preeminence of) new political actors.

Defying the Contract System

In contrast, other primary sources show a more complex picture in which the transition appears as a moment of confusion and conflict. Because most conservatives were fervently opposed to emancipation, they refused to join in the celebrations, resisted following the stipulations of the laws, and were quick to denounce the limitations of the new labor system. For example, in San Sebastián the town priest refused to perform a Catholic ceremony and the *Te Deum* under the conditions requested by a group of freedpeople. The municipal council, which canceled all its functions in order to celebrate the event and participate in the festivities, had to intervene. In Sabana Grande and Guayama, where the municipal council granted freedom to the slaves, many planters refused to comply with the law. In his 1874 letter to the authorities, the staunch conservative Marquéz de la Esperanza voiced the hacendados' dissatisfaction with the inefficiency of the contract system: (a) the Slaves Advocates appointed to oversee the contracting of former slaves were not well acquainted with the details of their job, (b) they did not enforce the three-year contract stipulation, and (c) these advocates "have allowed *libertos* to change masters at their will in strict violation of the Law."[101] As a result, the Marquez explained "landowners have been forced to refrain from arranging contracts that will never be complied with." He demanded immediate state intervention to alleviate the crisis. These complaints, however, are more than evidence of mere dissatisfaction from the conservative planter elite; they provide a window into a more complex social reality.

At the same time that conservatives were resisting the contract system, former slaves soon learned to use the new legal apparatus to increase physical mobility, abandon former masters, and improve living conditions. Where the 1873 regulations, for example, exempted former slaves from contracting only in the case of physical or mental incapacity, former slaves reinterpreted the law and used their family obligations, alternative sources of income (self-employment), or contracting with relatives as reasons to justify exemptions to the contracting law or to be taken into consideration during the negotiating process. The law intended to insert former slaves into the discipline of the "free" labor market, but former slaves appropriated the law to restore their humanity.

In one of many examples, the *Register of Local Matters* of police authorities in the southern city of Ponce stated that on July 17, 1873, authorities responded to the suit of a former slave, Bartolo, and granted him permission to move to the town of Humacao in order to "get a contract with whoever suited him."[102] Bartolo's legal request forced authorities to recognize his right as a former slave to change employers. In another case, *liberta* Catalina Rivera petitioned to work without an employer, explaining that before emancipation she had lived and worked on her own, though regularly paying rent to her master. Under the new system, she could employ the money she usually sent to her master for her own support. In the request, Catalina Rivera portrayed herself as a self-sufficient worker and claimed her right to freedom from an employer and authorities alike. The contract register shows that authorities complied with Rivera's demand.[103]

Moreover, liberal Governor Primo de Rivera's regulations indirectly empowered freedpeople to bargain for benefits and wages. Planters might have wanted to contract slaves only during the harvest, from January to May, but the irregularity and scarcity of labor compelled them to seek out more permanent arrangements.[104] Conversely, former slaves sought out short-term contracts—ranging from two to eight months instead of the three-year contracts stipulated by law—to preserve their recently acquired freedom. These arrangements enabled former slaves to bargain with other parties for better benefits, since the law allowed them to contract with former masters, another party, or the state. Thus former slaves frequently cancelled contracts that did not benefit them.

The gender of former slaves often shaped their responses. Men resorted to direct challenges such as physical confrontations with employers, violent acts against property, or running away to other towns or cities. Women tended to use more subtle strategies such as foot-dragging, disobedience, feigning illness, or missing work. At the same time, many freedpeople worked within the contract system and used the system's language creatively to legitimize their claims and gain more autonomy over their lives. In the process, freedpeople became free workers, aware of the value of their labor and their rights (wages, benefits, leisure time, etc.).

Freedpeople creatively appropriated elites' language of labor to their benefit. Male former slaves pressed for demands as reliable, hardworking men not only in regard to improvements in work and living conditions but also to assert their new authority at home. Freedwomen also manipulated the language of labor and became workers as an unintended result of a labor system that applied to all

former slaves—in spite of their gender—and the economic constraints that led to their recruitment in crucial jobs like fieldwork. In fact, among all freedpeople, women engaged the legal system more directly. For example, women constituted 63 percent of the former slaves' contracts I analyzed. Often *libertas* appropriated the language of womanhood to argue that legislation interfered with their female duties, and they should therefore be exempted from making contracts. Freedwomen exploited elites' views of female domesticity, which at times allowed them to challenge their male partner's behavior and reassert their centrality to the functioning of their own forms of family and community. In using their family obligations to include certain benefits in their contracts or to petition exemptions from the law, women subverted the contract system and demonstrated their acute understanding of the political environment that surrounded them and that they helped to shape. However, they often did so by appealing to dominant mores of domesticity and, consequently, eroded their political legitimacy as workers in the eyes of elites. Men, in contrast, stressed their role as workers to increase their autonomy and benefits.

The fines and complaints filed at the Ayuntamiento de Ponce also show many instances of chaotic change. For example, authorities detained the *liberto* Mauricio in May 1875 because he threatened and disobeyed the orders of the hacienda's overseer.[105] Authorities arrested *libertos* Lina and José Primo because of their "unwillingness" to work.[106] These examples are evidence of freedpeople's resistance to planters' and authorities' attempts at coercion. While former slaves on the island did not embark on a war or an island-wide revolt, freedpeople did manage to upset the systems of control, at times overtly, but more often subtly by using the contract system. Freedpeople's bargaining ultimately undermined the power of the hacendado class, who were unable to rely on their previous labor force. Indeed, freedpeople's multiple challenges led to modifications in the contracting laws in subsequent years.

Modifying the Means of Labor Control

The restoration of the conservative forces in Spain directly affected the island and also brought about changes in contracting. In 1874, the new governor, General José Laureano Sanz, agreed with conservatives' complaints about the contract system. He said that he "witnessed the total disorganization of work, great damages to agricultural production, and a failed contract system at great cost to landowners."[107] To him it was imperative "to reestablish the rule of law and bring to a halt the abuses committed under the [Liberto] Reglamento in order to prevent more of the same ills already hurting our agricultural industry and society."

Thus Sanz issued a new and stricter ordinance stating that freedpeople could not rescind their contracts and that they would need special permission from their employers and the *Protector de Libertos* to move away from their municipality. Freedpeople were also obliged to live with their employers. Moreover, former slaves were required to carry at all times a *cédula* (an identification form) that contained all personal and employment information. Sanz's ordinance

demanded a revision of the contracts signed prior to 1874 in order to nullify those that did not meet the legislation's standards. It also ordered the obligatory extension of those contracts until April 20, 1876, to fulfill labor needs for the next three years. Then, in a desperate attempt to provide a more stable labor force, Sanz also promulgated a *Bando de Vagos*, which applied to free *jornaleros,* on April 15, 1874.[108] In this decree, the governor defined anyone who was not engaged in a stable job as a vagrant.

Sanz's new and reinforced apparatus of control did not always succeed.[109] First, paradoxically, the *Consejo Supremo*—the governing body in Spain—ordered the *Ministro de Ultramar* (head of the Ministry for Overseas Territories) to derogate the *Bando* and articulate a liberal philosophy about the relationship of the state and its citizens, one in which the "state does not have any particular kind of obligation toward workers nor hacendados that would compel it to regulate free labor."[110] "Any regulation," the *Consejo's* reply continued, "limiting the free arrangement of contracts or restrictions over personal activities constitutes an assault to the laws of supply and demand, capital and interest, and the notion of value."

Moreover, complaints against freedpeople registered in Ponce's *Secretaría Judicial* (Office of Judicial Affairs) provide many instances of former slaves resisting authorities' attempts to restrict their physical mobility. For example, the register indicates that the *liberto* Andrés left the plantation and went to Peñuelas, a neighboring town, without permission.[111] Another employer denounced the *liberto* Alberto because he was frequently late for work at the plantation. Similarly, authorities detained the *liberto* Clemente for twenty days because he did not sleep in his employer's house.[112] It is also plausible that some *libertos* and *libertas* coordinated some of these actions. For example, Don Francisco Salich denounced a group of workers, the *libertos* José, Lino, Fernando, Rodulfo, and Juan Bautista, who temporarily abandoned his hacienda.[113] The men were imprisoned for thirty days.

It is also evident in these complaints that after Sanz's modifications to the contracting laws, freedpeople continued to bargain for higher remuneration. For example, an employer denounced the *liberto* Loreto Archeval because he refused to fulfill his labor arrangement without higher pay. In another case, authorities detained the *liberto* Simón because he refused to work "according to the price stipulated in the contract."[114] In the face of increasingly limited opportunities for bargaining, others chose to seek total freedom, such as the *liberto* Vidal Lorán, who escaped into the mountains.[115] And despite new restrictions, *libertos* continued to press for moments and spaces in which to cultivate their sense of self outside of work. Often employers complained to the authorities about the *libertos*' leisure activities, or the police detained freedpeople because of their participation in dances, parties, and drinking. Police arrested the *liberta* Dominga, for example, because she attended a dance without permission, along with the *liberta* María Belén who became drunk and, consequently, did not show up for work.[116] Authorities held that these social activities disrupted the stability and regularity of work.

The policing practices enforcing these labor regulations reveal again that many saw the free worker as essentially masculine. Authorities prosecuted an

overwhelming number of men, both *libertos* and free male peasants, for not complying with, respectively, the contract system or vagrancy laws. Ponce police records, for example, attest to authorities' concerted efforts within the city and with other municipalities in searching for former slaves who had abandoned their contract arrangements. A quick reading of these records shows that men engaged in fieldwork for sugar plantations were prosecuted more often. Once found, these *libertos* were required to pay a fine and return to their former place of employment. At other times, they were imprisoned and forced into manual labor in public works. Authorities did not systematically apply vagrancy laws to lower-class free women,[117] and did not prosecute *libertas* who had abandoned their contractual relationship in the rural areas as frequently as they did freedmen. Nonetheless, these women were systematically policed, mostly in the urban setting and especially when authorities thought they had transgressed the boundaries of accepted female behavior. Ponce police records show a large number of women, among them female former slaves, arrested for scandalous behavior (gambling, drinking, dancing, and fraternizing with men). This policing of women suggests that their contract arrangements were meant to fulfill the demand for domestic-related work. Indeed, the need for female labor led authorities to force freedwomen into contract arrangements, particularly domestic-related occupations, while fieldwork increasingly became a masculine endeavor.[118]

The frequency of arrests and detainments suggests that surveillance mechanisms—criminal and civil inquiries, circulation of arrest notices, daily policing of public order and hygiene standards, requests for identification and property-ownership documents, among many others—did not deter freedpeople from attempting to take control of their own lives. For example, the police sentenced the *liberto* Salo to thirty days because he abandoned his contract, but he escaped prison four days later.[119] In another instance, enforcement officials detained the *liberta* Felícita Garrats—who had been previously denounced on several occasions—for thirty days because she did not comply with her contract, and she also escaped.[120] The case of *liberta* Josefa Cortada was the most amazing. She had been arrested three times, at which point the authorities decided to arrange a contract for her: "in detention until a contract is arranged."[121] Nevertheless, Josefa was subsequently arrested eight times because of her refusal to engage in a contractual relationship.

Colonial officials and planters only worried more with the approach of the end of the contract system in the spring of 1876. Their proposed project of labor regulation sought to fully govern workers' lives.[122] It stipulated that laborers should work daily from sunrise to sunset. They were required to have a series of documents stating their place of living and work as well as details of their labor agreement. *Jornaleros* had the opportunity to look for jobs outside of their municipality but had to inform the *Ayuntamiento,* and permission to look for a job in another municipality lasted for only three days. Moreover, workers were not allowed to leave the municipality unless they had already agreed to a contract with an employer.[123]

The proposed project also illustrates the slow shifts in attitude toward female slave labor. The authors of the project defined *jornaleros* as persons without

property or capital.[124] In a separate paragraph, conservative proponents added that single women without family should also work for a wage. Governor De La Portilla, a staunch conservative, made some corrections to the original project before introducing it to his superiors in March 1876, redefining *jornaleros* to include all single and married women over 15 years of age.[125] (The conservatives' moves might have been a response to the lack of systematic policing of female labor in the rural area by authorities.) However, the *Ministerio de Ultramar* rejected the project as a whole because it constituted a frontal assault on free labor. At the same time, the *Ministerio* demanded that local authorities reissue the 1874 *Bando de Vagos*, which had a non-gender-specific definition of *jornalero*, allowing for its inconsistent application to women. The different definitions of women as *jornaleras* in the two proposals point to contradictions within the conservative camp regarding the role of women in labor and family. Neither liberal nor conservative elites perceived women as the main producers of society; therefore, they were neither free workers nor political subjects with rights and responsibilities.

In 1877, planters once again voiced their concerns. Don Antonio Alfau y Baralt, spokesman for the *Sociedad de Agricultura de Ponce*, wrote to the *Ministro de Ultramar* demanding regulations that would force all *jornaleros* to work in the fields and avoid the "life of decadence" that could bring the Province to its ruin.[126] To Alfau, the lower classes had no other aspiration but to live like animals because "due to their nature, have not formed families following any legal or moral prescription . . . They do not know the practice of saving or have any of the ambitions that result from having a home, a family, or from just everyday human social interaction: love, charity, religious sentiments, and minimum education."

Like Governor Portilla, Alfau y Baralt applied the liberal language of work, nuclear family organization, the practice of money saving, and property ownership. Conservatives also pronounced work to be the vehicle to achieve moral status and, consequently, rights. Yet for both Portilla and Alfau y Baralt, the multiracial working classes—not only former slaves—were far from becoming citizens or bourgeois subjects. They believed the basic problem was that the *clase trabajadora* (working class) could not overcome its natural idleness. While the authors were speaking about the general working population, in reality former slaves were the source of their concern. These conservatives implicitly equated the *jornaleros*' lack of work ethic with their blackness (biological and cultural), thus the emphasis on the worker's nature, instincts, or passions. However, while privileging the language of labor and speaking about the *clase trabajadora* in general, these political elites continued to reinstate class and racial boundaries between them and different kinds of laborers.

In the end, the *Ministro* refused again to directly interfere with free labor arrangements, though colonial authorities continued to issue regulations against vagrancy. In fact, the persecution of vagrants became the main way to discipline and moralize black and brown bodies in the absence of a forced labor system. We should also consider the many other ways authorities could compel the population into formal employment. For example, coffee and sugar hacendados often paid miserable salaries in chits (*vales*) only redeemable in the hacienda store—never enough to pay in full for the goods workers needed—thus leading the

worker into debt peonage.[127] Technological innovations in the sugar industry in the subsequent decades required less labor, which translated into fewer jobs. And the numerous taxes and duties the colonial administration imposed over consumer goods, the lack of legal access to land, the devaluation of the currency, and the inflated prices of imports all drove many to seek employment even without the state's direct intervention.

It is important to understand the 1873–76 contract system as the elites' first comprehensive attempt to turn the Puerto Rican working population into "modern" workers. By 1876–77, even the most reactionary members of the conservative class had adopted some of the liberal notions defining the modern, free laborer.

The Possibilities of Contract Bargaining

In spite of elites' gendered economic and social designs, the contracts show that *libertas* in agricultural areas did become "free workers." Females laboring in fieldwork, like men, were able to bargain successfully for better contracts because of harvest demands. These higher wages, and the lack of access to land, pulled and pushed women into remaining longer on the plantations as fieldworkers instead of migrating quickly toward the urban areas to work in female occupations deemed more appropriate.[128]

Many former slaves in agricultural areas actively sought out housing when they bargained for contracts. Planters may have understood the provision of housing as an imperative to retain labor. Employers in rural Ponce provided housing and other benefits (such as food, health care, clothing, or some combination of these) to their workers. In 85 percent of the contracts in Ponce, medical care was provided and 94 percent included housing.[129] In contrast, urban San Juan employers included medical care with 71 percent of contracts and housing with 87 percent. Planters' needs shaped salaries too. Wages in Ponce seem to have been higher for both freedmen and freedwomen:[130] 76 percent of the employees in the sample received wages that ranged from two to eight pesos per month, while in San Juan only 30 percent of the contracts recorded wages within that range. The rest of the San Juan employees received less than two pesos per month.[131]

The majority of contracts in rural Ponce were signed for short periods, providing former slaves with enough room to bargain with other parties for better benefits. In Ponce, 45 percent of freedpeople in my sample changed employers (64 percent women and 35 percent men) while 59 percent (64 percent women and 35 percent men) in San Juan did the same. Women changed employers at a higher rate than men. Most former slaves in rural Puerto Rico did not have material investments such as provision grounds—small plots of land for subsistence cultivation—that tied them to any specific plantation, which can explain the high number of former slaves who changed employers.[132]

The contracts further show that *libertas*, like *libertos*, used this leverage to increase their bargaining power. The case of *liberta* Andrea in Ponce is a good example. On May 7, 1873, Doña Bernardina Franco hired two of her former slaves and provided them with clothing, housing, food, and medical care but no wages. However, her former slave Andrea chose to leave. She signed a contract

with Don Santos Almiroti, who provided her with all the items supplied by Doña Franco plus four pesos as a monthly wage.[133] In contrast, Don Salvador Más was successful in keeping his fieldwork team of 24 freedpeople by providing both good benefits and better wages.

Another unintended result of the provision allowing freedpeople to change employers was the sharp increase in physical mobility of *libertos/as*. That mobility was not confined to the plantation districts. Many former slaves moved to urbanized areas. Authorities, especially mayors, often sanctioned these relocations. In the *Register for Local Matters*, almost 50 percent of the entries were about former slaves who moved to the urban core of Ponce from surrounding rural areas. At the time, Ponce was a center for opportunities because of its economic diversity. On the other hand, 22 percent of the entries registered former slave migration out of Ponce. For example, the *liberta* Eleuteria, former slave of Don Jaime Clavel, had permission to live with her mother who settled in Aibonito. The entry stated that Eleuteria "is going there to get hired," which suggests that she did not have an employer yet, but even then authorities granted her permission.[134] Eleuteria's example not only highlights female former slaves' initiatives to look for better opportunities and increase their mobility but also stresses the importance of family ties in their lives. More importantly, Eleuteria used the state's language of labor in order to reunite with her mother.

Freedwomen's claims to tend their families cannot be understood as simply replicating elite forms of domesticity. Frequently, the family and sexual arrangements freedwomen sought to reconstitute and maintain differed substantially from the nuclear, patriarchal family liberals imagined. Most freedwomen were the sole providers for their household; family members comprised a combination of blood kin and fictive kin; and families often included several generations of women with children, with no adult male to act as an authority figure. Sexual arrangements did not necessitate religious or civil recognition, did not entail women's confinement to the "private" realm—nor could they afford it—and did not hinge upon the promise of permanence. *Libertas'* increased physical mobility under the pretext of finding a job (which included plantation fieldwork) was yet another way in which their lives contradicted elites' expectations of female domesticity. By taking advantage of the rural elites' economic situation, negotiating contracts, and changing employers, *libertas* often resisted the pull toward urban domestic employment, consequently challenging elites' understandings of female domesticity and the definition of the free worker as male.

The Gendering of Domesticity, Labor, and Contract Bargaining in Urban San Juan

Some women migrated to mountainous areas, where they remained active in agricultural work. Further research may reveal that the rising coffee industry (while the sugar industry was in decline) became an attractive opportunity for *libertas*.[135] Notably, freedwomen in Puerto Rico, like in most of the British Caribbean, remained crucial to agriculture in the postemancipation years.[136] But there was a clear tendency for women to migrate to Ponce's urban core. Rural female

slaves often had the opportunity to develop easily marketable skills that they could transfer to Ponce's large urban settings in postabolition years. Female former slaves in the urban areas did not directly challenge the gendered ideal of labor as they did in the rural setting.

In towns and cities, work was distinctively gendered: contracts show that most men joined specialized jobs, as *caleteros* (stevedores), dockworkers, and *carretilleros* (cart drivers), while *libertas* engaged in domestic service.[137] Lower-class men participated in heavy physical or manual work such as construction and transport, while others entered more specialized occupations as artisans (shoemaking, masonry, carpentry, and others). The need for transportation in the urban setting provided freedmen many more opportunities for physical mobility and social interaction than in agricultural areas. Women, on the other hand, were excluded from traditionally defined artisanship and were expected to perform domestic-related duties in and out of elite households. Liberal gender ideology held that middle-class and elite households were spaces to discipline women into acceptable female behavior while profiting from their labor. Working-class women served as seamstresses, laundresses, childcare providers, and dominated the business of food preparation, distribution, and selling.

Nonetheless, *libertas* actually performed domestic services in ways that defied elites' attempts to gain absolute control over former slaves' mobility and tested dominant notions of womanhood. Female former slaves showed a similar rate of intracity mobility compared to their male counterparts. They changed employers as often as freedmen. Furthermore, contracts demonstrate that *libertas*, more often than *libertos*, actively manipulated contract legislation in order to increase benefits in labor arrangements and achieve more autonomy.[138]

Women's productive labor was essential for the functioning of the city, and this gave women some bargaining power. But the higher rate of migration toward urban centers during these years created a large pool of laborers, benefiting city employers. Thus elites' gendered design was not overtly subverted in San Juan, unlike in the sugar fields where women remained in "productive" roles. Moreover, the San Juan of the postabolition years had a more saturated labor market than rural Ponce (Ponce's urban core was more like inner city San Juan), so San Juan employers did not need to provide benefits in order to lure workers. In addition, the lack of benefits in the contracts is likely an example of elites' move from patron-client arrangements (providing clothing, food, and housing) to a wage-based, capitalist, contractual, relationship.

On the other hand, freedmen probably attempted to negotiate for those benefits as they did in Ponce, even though the labor market structure would not have favored positive results. However, could it also be that freedmen's notions about labor relations were also under transformation? For some freedmen, a wage-based, contract relationship could have been seen as an opportunity to assert a nuanced sense of masculine autonomy, a promise guiding freedmen's activities. Although wages were not enough to live comfortably, freedmen might have perceived the provision of food and housing as employers' mechanisms of coercion or as an uncomfortable emulation of the slave-master relations of previous times.

Notably, the majority of these *caleteros* did not make contracts with their former owners. For example, Juan Pedro Otero, an overseer at an important *caletero* company in San Juan, employed many former slaves as stevedores. Among them, he hired two of his sons, *libertos* Manuel Ríos and Benigno.[139] Otero illustrates how lower-class men's interactions with slaves later facilitated the incorporation of *libertos* into the ranks of artisans and other occupations such as cart drivers and stevedores, workers who later in the century became politically well organized. Most importantly, this example demonstrates freedmen's use of the possibility of changing employers as a means to reconstitute their families. Unlike freedwomen, male former slaves did not use family obligations to legitimize a contract arrangement with their sons.

The San Juan documents unveil a great occupational diversity; nonetheless, among freedwomen, domestic service was the most common occupation. Domestic service, however, entailed many tasks other than work within the home. The contracts refer to various services that women performed both in the intimacy of one household and as labor they sold to other households or in the streets to the benefit of their employer. After emancipation, for instance, *liberta* Aquilina was hired by Doña Cristina Faforo de Pastor to "cook outside the house for her as well as for other people paying the standard price."[140] Among domestic services in San Juan, laundering was in high demand.[141] Washing clothing was an incredibly hard task because of the lack of fresh water in the city. Therefore, laundresses had to carry heavy loads of clothing to the areas where the few wells were located. Because many of these tasks required flexibility and physical mobility similar to men's transportation-related occupations, domestic services such as laundering also allowed for greater autonomy among *libertas*.

In contrast to *libertos*' contracts, most of the contracts for domestic service included benefits such as food, clothing, housing, and medical assistance. In both San Juan and Ponce, women were more likely than men to receive benefits. Furthermore, *libertas* in domestic service managed to include some unusual benefits in their labor arrangements; employers' willingness to accept some of the *libertas*' demands suggests San Juan's high demand for domestic workers, and that freedwomen's labor was crucial to materially and symbolically sustain the elite households and reproduce the racial and gender order. For example, the *liberta* María Isabel, hired for domestic service by Don José Claudio, confirmed in her contract her right to sleep out of the employer's house whenever necessary.[142] Similarly, the contract of Simplicia Velázquez, a new employee of Don Pedro Vidal, stated that "she will live in the house but she has the right to sleep outside whenever it suits her."[143] Both women used legislation and manipulated notions of free labor to reaffirm their right to a private life. In negotiations, these women probably claimed the need to attend to their own family responsibilities, using a language that resonated with dominant mores of femininity.

Libertas in the urban areas challenged elite expectations of domesticity when they used the language of labor to look for more favorable employers. In San Juan and Ponce, women changed employers at a similar rate as men. The case of *liberta* María Francisca Rivera is an example of the ongoing negotiations between employers and female employees. María Francisca, *liberta* of Don Manuel Noa,

was hired for domestic service by Don Félix Noa. The contract stated "that the employee is going to Curazao and she is forced to comply with her obligations as soon as she returns from that place." Despite the language of force, this was not slavery: a master would never have accommodated this sort of mobility for a slave. These contract negotiations also illustrate how postemancipation legislation did enable former masters to continue intruding and managing the most intimate realms of freedpeople's lives. But *libertas* manipulated the liberal notions embedded in contractual language to halt those interventions and create a space for the private or the personal outside the constant probing of employers or the state.

It is not surprising, then, that according to the San Juan data, *libertas* were responsible for most of the 106 contract cancellations. The nullified cases of freedwomen such as Teresa Cotto, Prudencia Ferrer, Nolberta, María Felipa Ressi, and Heraclia are registered immediately above their contracts with different employers.[144] This strongly suggests that these women revoked their contracts in order to engage in better labor agreements with different employers. Although few of these cases provide sufficient information to establish further generalizations, these cases are evidence of the deep knowledge and refined skills with which *libertas* navigated their new circumstances.

Freedmen and freedwomen equally challenged the statutes of the apprenticeship system by appropriating the language of labor and in the process became workers. Though urban freedwomen did not challenge the gendered ideal of labor organization as in the rural settings, through their practices they repeatedly contested the characterization of the worker as male. As domestic workers, these women were the main producers in their households. But *libertas*' actions and petitions were contradictory in nature. While they openly contested the contract system in creative ways, their use of the legal framework also legitimized its patriarchal authority over them. Although both men and women used labor legislation to reconstitute their families and communities, men did not compromise their identity as workers when they sought to reconstitute their families after slavery. It is probable that authorities did not recognize male former slaves' claims to fatherhood and family as readily as they accepted women's claims. On the other hand, *libertas*' stress on family needs as a means to achieve more freedom limited their legitimacy as workers and heightened dominant understandings of womanhood.

The Family and Community of the Emancipation Years

Without question, child bearing and raising were crucial factors shaping freedpeople's decisions. Certain aspects of freedpeople's gendered family roles overlapped with some elite moral dispositions, though they surely differed in meanings and functions. The fact is that postemancipation regulations heightened the gendered division of labor within the *liberto* family. The need for greater material security not only for themselves but also for their families is a factor that explains the agency and initiative of women in manipulating labor legislation. According to the Ponce and San Juan data, 93 percent of the freedpeople charged with the guardianship of children were females. Being the primary caretakers of

children affected women's labor choices in several ways. For example, it could force women to seek or stay longer in plantation work, which although extremely exploitative offered higher wages. (This might also explain the large number of women who were field workers.) In Puerto Rico, the process of women leaving plantation work for other occupations occurred gradually. In the plantation area, according to the Ponce data, half of the fieldwork force in the months following emancipation was female.

Family obligations could also push freedwomen to accept contractual relationships—mostly domestic service, with lower or no wages—if these provided other material benefits for themselves and their children, such as housing and medical care, or allowed women to keep their children close to them. Although illegal, these arrangements may have benefited employers (or mothers) because children could also be assigned household tasks.[145] It is not surprising that freedwomen represented 66 percent of the cases of domestic servants hired without pay. In contrast, in the few cases in which men took care of children, all of them in San Juan, the children were old enough to be trained in some sort of profitable task. For example, the *liberto* Celedonio was hired to work on the estate of Don Pedro Gerónimo Goyco with the advantage of being able to plant "as much as they want for their own benefit."[146] Celedonio brought along his 16-year-old son, Martín, in order to teach him carpentry and have him work on the farm. Arguably, most freedmen viewed young children as an obstacle in their quest for jobs with higher remuneration, and most children thus became the responsibility of freedwomen.

Women's initiative in the process of reconstituting familial connections after abolition also underscores their vital role within the *liberto* family. The San Juan sample included 28 cases of freedpeople, the majority of them women (82 percent), who made claims for relatives, such as sons, daughters, spouses, and grandmothers. Distant and substitute relatives also participated in this process, which also reveals the tendency to form alternative family arrangements during slavery. For example, the *liberta* María Avelina, 12 years old and a former slave of Don Juan Serrallés, went to "Barranquitas in order to join her godmother [Doña Felipa Rivera] who claimed her."[147] The *liberta* Carmen Barril also "claimed her underage son, the *liberto* Eusebio who was a slave of Mr. Llompars y Pons."[148] I believe these attempts to bring families together were even more frequent than the sample indicates.

Contract language sometimes makes it clear that former masters were aware of freedpeople's attempts to reconstitute their families: Doña Ysabel de Santana was in charge of two underage children—11-year-old Juliana and 10-year-old Onorio—and, according to her contract, would be in charge of the children "until their relatives claim[ed] them."[149] The reconstitution of families went beyond the simple desire to reestablish family relations. Freedpeople, especially freedwomen, used it to avoid subjection to an employer. Thus when the *liberta* Gavina's employer released her from her contract obligations, she did not search for a new employer. Instead, Gavina's mother, Josefa Besares, informed the authorities that her daughter and her two children could live and work with her. According to Besares "they can all support the family and her daughter can take

care of her during illness."[150] Authorities released Gavina and her children to the care of Besares.

Indeed, freedwomen used their obligations to the family to avoid the standard process of contracting altogether. For instance, the *liberta* Margarita requested to be released from her obligation to sign a contract, arguing that she had to take care of her children.[151] Similarly, *liberta* Albina used family concerns as an excuse to be exempt from contract regulations. Albina stated to the authorities "that it was inconvenient to sign a contract with her former employer or any other person because she is in an interesting state and for now she will live with her sister Catalina Díaz who is willing to sign a contract for domestic service."[152] By "an interesting state" Albina probably meant that she was pregnant and was demanding time to wean her newborn child.[153] Alvina not only asserted her right to have a family but also used her female condition to manipulate the widely accepted notions of motherhood and, consequently, avoid contracting. Furthermore, cases such as those of *libertas* Alvina and Gavina reveal the importance of a network of women, most of them relatives, in former slaves' maneuverings for more autonomy. Libertas' claims of family responsibilities to justify exemption from the apprenticeship regulations not only denote freedwomen's specific role within the *liberto* family as caretakers but also reveal *libertas*' awareness of elites' stress on domesticity in their definitions of acceptable womanhood.

Within the contract process, as free workers, *libertas* used their contracts to design labor arrangements that could accommodate their roles as employees and family caretakers. At other times, freedwomen appealed successfully to the authorities to recognize their family duties over their labor obligations. Nevertheless, *libertas'* subversion of the system was limited, given that their claims reinforced dominant notions of female domesticity. For instance, the *liberta* Elvira Romaní, former slave of Marcelino Romaní in San Juan, effectively requested her release from contract obligations so she could live with her father, Alejo López, who had the economic means to support her. In this case, officials recognized Elvira's obligations as a daughter and released her to her father's care, thus enabling Elvira to achieve greater autonomy. However, Elvira's challenge to patriarchal colonial rule was limited; she substituted the state's authority for her father's.

The emancipation process also provided *libertos* with an opportunity to renegotiate family roles, and therefore set up the possibility of conflict between freedmen and freedwomen. Men sought to reassert their authority over their family, yet women did not always comply easily, and might well have perceived emancipation as an opportunity for greater liberation as women. The case of Paulino Márquez illustrates this possible conflict. On June 21, 1873, Márquez filed a complaint against his wife, a *liberta*, with the mayor of Ponce.[154] Márquez contended that his wife refused to comply with her traditional obligations as a married woman. His wife responded that she was impeded from fulfilling her traditional role as a wife because she was forced to undertake contractual labor. This could be understood as one more example of how apprenticeship perpetuated the exploitation of former slaves and its constraints on their family lives. In particular, it stresses the burden for women of serving two masters: a husband and an employer. However, it is also possible that Paulino Márquez's wife used her

obligations as a contract worker to justify leaving her husband. Either way, Paulino sought out the mayor's intervention because he agreed that women's role as workers did not supersede their roles as wives and mothers. After emancipation, then, freedmen were able to resort to the state in order to assert their masculine authority over women at home in ways that were not possible during slavery.

In sum, women were thought to be the heart of *liberto* families, and this role within the family both limited their choices for employment and provided justification for avoiding or subverting the contract labor system to their own advantage. Often, freedwomen claimed that they could rely on the support of family for sustenance or that family obligations did not allow them to comply with their contract obligations. Contradictorily, such claims reinforced elites' definitions of women's place in society. In other instances, emancipation also allowed freedwomen to look for their own benefits as women. In their individual lives, freedwomen were able to challenge aspects of the oppressive patriarchal system in both its colonial and its personal dimensions. Generally, freedwomen articulated these challenges through channels provided by legal institutions. While partially recognizing the legitimacy of government authorities through their use of a language of labor and family, many freedwomen and freedmen managed to avoid the system they saw as a continuation of slavery.

Conclusion

On August 1, 1873, the *liberta* Dominga presented a complaint to the mayor of Ponce against her employer, Doña Manuela Cuesta.[155] Dominga argued that Doña Manuela had not complied with her part of the contract, and she was "suing her for not complying with the pact they both had agreed upon." The authorities ordered the employer to attend a hearing. Unfortunately, there is no further information about the resolution of the case. Nevertheless, Dominga's legal action against her employer only months after abolition evinces a significant shift in the sociopolitical and cultural landscapes of the island. The apprenticeship system in Puerto Rico institutionalized a language of labor as a legitimate vehicle for employees to address issues of inequality and their concerns over living conditions. Neither conservative nor liberal elites expected former slaves to take on an identity as workers to individually or collectively claim for rights to better wages, access to resources, and the reconstitution of their sexual partnerships, families, and communities. For four centuries, these rights had been denied to former slaves on the basis of their racial origin. The language of labor became an alternative idiom for the political mobilization of the multiracial working population. As a consequence, the language of race remained unarticulated as a legitimate discourse to address issues about political representation. Late-nineteenth-century elites and government officials were more inclined to respond to the claims of the working population if they were based on issues of labor, rather than racial equality.

The silencing of race and the articulation of discourses about labor were mutually constitutive processes. Labor had emerged as a principle of social organization under Spanish rule, and elites' concerns over supply, distribution,

and control over labor have historically organized island society. The interplay between government legislation and surveillance practices, elites' public debates over labor, and the slaves and free peasants' constant challenges to regulations served to delineate a new subject: the worker. The gender and racial definition of the Puerto Rican working population changed over time. With the rise of the slave-sugar complex at the turn of the nineteenth century, black slaves (male and female) constituted the core of the labor force. By midcentury, however, elites designed a system of forced labor that systematically targeted men from among the multiracial, free peasantry. For the most part, the white elites perceived the working population as mulatto. To them, white peasants were racially impure given their liberal interaction at work and in their living arrangements with black and brown workers. Therefore, lower-class whiteness did not guarantee social and political freedoms.

By defining workers in general as black or racially mixed, elites intended to create a broader pool of laborers. As an unintended result, labor emerged as a language that black, brown, and white workers could use to their advantage. Former slaves' creative manipulations of work regulations are evidence of how this language of labor allowed some subaltern populations to achieve more autonomy.

The language of labor at times cut across racial lines but it also recreated gender differences. If race was strategically "classed"—thus race went unmentioned—through a discourse on labor, race was also strategically "gendered" through discourses on morality and appropriate womanhood and masculinity. The gendered formations elicited by legislations and policing practices were always forms that further racialized laboring individuals as morally deficient black and brown men and women. Through the apprenticeship regulations, colonial authorities, conservatives, and the more liberal elites sought to mold the *liberto* class not only into free workers but, most importantly, into hardworking men and decent family women who could enable the industrial and social development of the colony. The demand for female workers exposed the different expectation of domesticity elites had for *libertas* in contrast to upper-middle-class white women. *Libertas*' labor was too crucial for them to be permanently confined to the "private" realm.

Former slaves' understandings of freedom were fundamentally different from those of elites.[156] *Libertos*' challenges to the 1873–76 apprenticeship regulations and their negotiating skills in bargaining with employers and authorities for better working conditions or exemptions to the contracting laws, transformed the political alignments of late-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico. In addition, the emancipation process signaled the preeminence of a discourse on free labor that obscured the racialized nature of labor exploitation in the centuries to follow.

These gendered and racialized dynamics are at the heart of the late-nineteenth-century colonial politics of autonomy explored in the following chapters. Both the language of labor and the social formations of gender and sexuality concealed the racialized logics that organized them. The regulations and policing that served to turn freedpeople into modern workers and to instruct them on certain standards of womanhood and masculinity further marked them as racially impure, idle bodies without the need to actually refer to them with

explicit racial descriptions. At the same time, freedpeople's measures to reconstitute individual and collective senses of being contributed to the racialization of gendered and classed formations fashioned at this historical juncture. Exposing the violence of racial differentiation in Puerto Rico, the ways that slaves and former slaves contested it, is crucial to questioning the intellectual formations and historical processes that have served as key points in narrating racial harmony.

Chapter 2

Liberal Elites' Writings

The Racial Dissection of the Puerto Rican Specimen

In October 1879, the Ponce newspaper, the *Heraldo del Trabajo,* printed a front-page announcement by a former slave woman requesting news about her missing son. Her son had been sold to another master in Cuba before the abolition of slavery. The announcement read as follows:

A Historical Event

> During the period in which human beings were sold on this island, my son, 5 to 6 years old José Eusebio, disappeared from my side, and recently I found out that he was sold and shipped to Havana that same year. The child's skin color is *mulato claro*, dark brown *crespo* hair, and black eyes and because he was taken away from me . . . it may be possible his name was changed. Despite the very young age of the poor child when he last saw his mother, he may still have a vague remembrance of her. At least, he may be able to remember her name, the subscriber, and the town of Santa Isabel where we used to live at the time, or the names of don Antonio Aponte and Mr. Martín Torres. Now I am of old age and need him more than ever. I can pass on to him a few assets. My greatest joy would be if Providence would bring him back into my arms. I live in the town of Salinas, right next to Mr. Miguel Godreau in the barrio of Aguirres.
>
> Salinas, September 15, 1879. Micaela Rivera.[1]

The note following the announcement—written by the newspaper's editor, the liberal journalist Mario Braschi—demanded active and consistent support from newspapers and their readers in both Puerto Rico and Cuba for this woman's request: "Additional note: The editorial board of the *Heraldo* asks our colleagues in Puerto Rico and Cuba to also publish these lines for as long as they deem appropriate."[2]

Liberta Micaela's request was one of several in the liberal press and a few others in the conservative newspaper *El Boletín Mercantil*.[3] Micaela's search for her son speaks to freedpeople's creativity in attempting to reconstitute their families and communities, and her ability to provide a small inheritance points to the ability of some to achieve economic autonomy and social freedom despite

many constraints.[4] And the press notice of Micaela's search provides a glimpse of the means, categories, and narrow terms in which political elites were willing to recognize—socially and politically—specific groups from among the laboring population. The framing of the announcement allowed Micaela to speak, although it conveyed only certain intonations of her voice. Two distinctive late-nineteenth-century liberal forms of representation, communication, and political negotiations shaped the personhood that Micaela was able to regain and display: the press and public opinion.

Through a careful reading of a heterogenous set of writings—a novel, newspaper articles, historical essays, a medical manual—this chapter primarily analyzes the wide array of desires, interpretations, and associations that emerged as political elites, particularly liberals, negotiated the postabolition political scene. Different generations of readers have read these texts as strong critiques of the colonial system and how-to manuals in nation making. The emerging upper-middle class seemed to articulate a challenge to nineteenth-century common wisdom by imagining a multiracial Caribbean colony as a feasible national political community. These texts shined with the gleams of possibility: in spite of the many challenges, changes were viable and these intellectuals and politicians knew best how to carry them out successfully. As such, many of these late-nineteenth-century liberals achieved mythical standing in the island imaginary, especially in the century after the US takeover.[5] In the face of a new colonial regime after 1898, they became the "founders" of the Puerto Rican nation, a nation endangered by US political and cultural imperialism. Over the course of the twentieth century, their intellectual production became the inspiration for Puerto Rican historical and sociological studies and part of their canon.[6]

These liberal authors were actively pursuing subalterns' political trust and had recognized the growing economic and potential political influence of some key popular actors. At the same time, this liberal group was distancing itself from conservatives, whose repressive campaigns had only furthered social divisions among the inhabitants. In supporting Micaela's personal quest, these liberals were not only demonstrating their benevolence to different audiences (including more traditionalist liberals) but also assuming the role of the subalterns' spokesmen. In showing concern for the well-being of formers slaves, liberals, unlike conservatives, sought to demonstrate their desire and commitment to creating a unified, harmonious society despite the many insurmountable social differences. In the process, they crafted a historical narrative anchored by their antislavery political past and their present role in amending the pain produced by that past. Thus it was no coincidence that the newspaper announcement at the *Heraldo* featured a *liberta*'s attempt to reconstitute her family in the years after abolition.

Yet reading these texts only as pioneering and full of possibility misses how race continued to be both central to their visions and a central silenced issue. In exploring the incessant ways in which these intellectuals marked racial ancestry through repeated discussions about the peasantry's racial impurity linked them directly to the centuries-long practices and preoccupations with *limpieza de*

sangre (blood purity) at the basis of the caste system in the Spanish Americas.[7] At the same time, these intellectuals' practice of marking race was always at the service of debating the possible future of the worker, which allow us to trace the emergence of a language of labor (referencing not the *negro esclavo* but the *productor*, *obrero*, *proletario*) in relation to the heightened significance of health, class positioning, and gendered morality as primary technologies of racialization in the postemancipation decades. Particularly in the 1880s and 1890s, liberal and conservative factions argued more aggressively over political legitimacy as elites understood economic and social circumstances to be urgently in need of transformation. Each faction invested tremendous effort to deploy images of themselves as leaders who would differentiate one from the other and appeal to various social constituencies as well. Both conservative and liberal elites believed that it was imperative to demonstrate their dominance over the island inhabitants in order to solidify their competing political projects in the eyes of the Spanish colonial administration. Both sides deployed discourses of labor, health, and morality to organize, participate, and contest political processes.

All elites thought the host of free, racially mixed peasants and freedpeople were in need of informal and formal "schooling" and policing to become moral laborers. Both conservatives and liberals sought to channel laborers' sympathies and build key political alliances with some of them, especially urban artisans—many of whom shared a history of slavery or were freedpeople themselves. But conservatives were much more apprehensive about seeking political alliances with black and brown subalterns. After 1874, sugar planters and Spanish merchants could still count on the support of the ultraconservative Spanish governors. For these conservatives, the colonial state's repressive forces were the most efficient means to appease the population. However, violence and persecution were not enough to discourage popular mobilization, especially when liberals were already invested in forging their image as sympathetic fathers to the poor. Conversely, liberal political participation at the local level was always fraught with contention, a product of their lack of support from the colonial state; constraints from the top also prevented political ascendancy. These dynamics, in addition to the activism of the popular classes, forced liberal politicians to broaden their support base. But their commitment to maintaining a racialized class and gender order provided few opportunities for subaltern engagement.

In truth, many Liberals were reluctant to court members of the working population for political favor. And the members who actively pursued those political alliances did so while also underscoring the subalternity of workers—their blackness, unhealthy bodies, and immoral social and sexual behavior—and the workers' need for parental guidance. By the same token, liberals legitimized their leadership by stressing their own whiteness, education, health, patriarchal authority, and sexual restraint. Liberal authors portrayed themselves not only as the leaders of a nation in the making but also as the patriarchs of the larger population.[8]

Liberals' main audience for these writings may not have been the broader population of freedpeople but were conservative opponents, colonial administrators, and the host of skilled workers filling the ranks of the artisan class, many of

whom shared a history of slavery. Some of these artisans might have wanted to distance themselves from that history of slavery, but liberals reminded them of it frequently. Others retained the slave past at the core of their sense of being.[9]

Since the antislavery debates of the 1860s, liberal elites had reaffirmed that the formation of nuclear, patriarchal families among islanders was crucial to Puerto Rico's economic and moral progress. The ongoing transformations in patriarchal rule on the island not only were about engendering a benign, rational paternalistic form of family and political authority but also directly linked the pater/family to an economy focused on consumption and free markets. Family obligations (wife and children) would compel male heads of households to labor and produce, hold property, save, and consume. These middle-class aspirations were not within reach for everyone (not that popular classes sought them either); many inevitably would and were expected to fail, which liberals took as signs of subaltern moral and racial inferiority. Within this parental-paternal mode of authority, liberal elites were quick to assume the role of the white father caring for his black and brown children. In printing and supporting Micaela's endeavor, liberals were not only taking on a public parental role to their subordinates but also stressing the absence and inadequacy of black and brown fathers. The racially mixed and black families were deemed deeply handicapped—particularly because they were injured by slavery, an institution from which liberal politicians distanced themselves despite (or because of) the fact that their class and racial status was also the product of the economics and politics of slavery—and their moral progress depended on their white, patriarchal superiors. In essence, liberals expected the popular classes' vote of confidence as their social benefactors, benign fathers, and political leaders. But they never imagined them, particularly former slaves, as active political partners.

Simultaneously, postabolition liberals continued to focus on "work" in their writings and speeches and through the regulations they supported as the principal means for an individual's moral regeneration and to bring civilization to the island. The unreliability of work is the ultimate signifier for all social, political, and economic maladies suffered on the island. Thus labor served as the language through which liberals and multiracial workers built their political alliances in the 1880s and 1890s. Like freedpeople in the 1870s, rural and urban workers used the language of labor to present claims to authorities and employers. Liberal politics expanded the modalities of rule—for example, disciplining labor through police surveillance and by regimes of sanitation and moral uplifting—at the turn of the century. Late-nineteenth-century struggles behind the rearticulation of racial, gender, and class hierarchies allowed for limited forms of democratic participation but also precluded more radical and substantial changes then and in the future.

In this chapter, I look at a representative sample of the intellectual endeavors of the liberal reformist elite. I privilege the work of physician Manuel Zeno Gandía—the most circulated author of his time. I also analyze the work of Dr. Francisco del Valle Atiles and historian Salvador Brau to demonstrate how Zeno Gandía's ideas were part of a broader conversation among peers. These three urban professionals were relevant members of the Autonomista

Party (1886) and occupied varied positions of influence in the governing structures of the island under both Spanish and US rule. All three were affiliates of the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, the cultural organization that brought together the island's *letrados* (professionals and intellectuals). Founded in 1876, the *Ateneo* quickly became the center for artistic, literary, and scientific production on the island. Its mission was to foster the most sophisticated intellectual work among its members, a mission that proved that Puerto Ricans had equal intellectual standing to other Spanish provinces.[10] The *Ateneo* also sponsored the widely read journal *Revista Puertorriqueña*, multiple literary contests, and public lecture series.

Even though elite and laboring women participated in and fundamentally shaped the island's political arenas, I focus here on men's writings.[11] This chapter aims to uncover the social representations of authority that, despite many challenges, became canonized and naturalized. And as I argued in Chapter 1, politicians and many among their subaltern allies defined politics as a masculine endeavor. Liberal politicians reinstated their legitimacy as political leaders through claims about whiteness, formal education, moral behavior, good health, and masculinity. The analysis explores the convergence of anxieties around the organization of labor, the persistence of racial mixing, and inappropriate sexual behavior with the growing preeminence of a medical and hygienist framework and language to diagnose and implement measures to ensure the health of the nation-to-be.[12] The application of a medical approach to social organization redrew preabolition racial and gender hierarchies, marking as diseased the bodies and minds of the black and racially mixed working classes.[13] The writings of Zeno Gandía, Brau, and Valle Atiles aimed to analyze in depth the roots of the peasantry's degeneracy for the purpose of proposing strategies through which to heal them and turn them into liberal subjects. The social hygiene movement on the island was an important arena for liberal professionals, especially male physicians, pharmacists, and scientists, to establish their social and political preeminence locally while participating in the crafting of other international networks of knowledge formation.

In mapping an economic and political project and determining who would participate and which roles everyone would perform, the writings of Zeno Gandía, Valle Atiles, and Brau represent liberals' intellectual efforts to define Puerto Ricans as a stratified but culturally bound community. Puerto Ricans were not unique in their varied mapping efforts, although many did so while working to transform the empire, not in a resolute effort to break away from it. The peoples in most of the newly organized Latin American republics of the nineteenth century engaged in similar struggles.[14] Latin American upper and middle classes, far from distancing themselves from the social constructions that served as coordinates to colonial domination, in fact expanded their repertoire of racialized, gendered, and classed categories and modes of reproducing long-standing hierarchies. The economic and political progress and civilization of the republics depended on the cultural and biological whitening of their populations. In order to do so, political leaders across the political spectrum implemented numerous policies such as aggressive European immigration and

military campaigns for the pacification (and at times extermination) of indigenous communities. They also manipulated demographic statistics and designed creative measures to manage interracial sociability, sexual reproduction, and mother-child interactions. Most importantly, through electoral politics, political leaders opened a few more spaces for partial engagement of selected members of the subaltern populations.

While embedded in similar struggles, the conditions and means available to Puerto Rican liberals were different. By the mid-1880s, most liberals had modified their political project not to pursue the organization of a nation-state formula but to alter the configuration of the Spanish empire by pushing for the Caribbean colony to be recognized as an autonomous province in a republican nation-empire, thus preserving the island's distinct character. The imperial field would be the stage through which to connect with a variety of markets and the broader international order. The success of the project of autonomy hinged on these island leaders' ability to demonstrate their capacity to control the laboring population, a significant issue given the recent armed struggles in nearby Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Jamaica. At a moment in which most imperial politicians equated blackness with instability and destruction, particularly in the Caribbean, Puerto Rican liberals sought to represent themselves and the island population as white and hence harmonious and stable. The constraints of operating within an empire and their limited direct access to the operating political structures on the island forced liberals to make modest political concessions to potential allies, a practicality that contributed to the fragmented and often cryptic ways of speaking of race in island society.

Manuel Zeno Gandía and the Biological History of Puerto Ricans

In present-day Puerto Rico, Manuel Zeno Gandía is the most widely read writer of his time. For more than five decades, Zeno Gandía worked as a politician, government employee, journalist, and a medical and fiction writer. The physician, however, is best known for his literary work. His 1894 novel, *La Charca* (*The Pond*), is widely considered a foundational text in Puerto Rican literary history.[15] *La Charca* fits within the array of nineteenth-century Latin American works that literary critic Doris Sommer identifies as foundational texts, most of which were authored by postindependence statesmen. In these texts, the romantic entanglements of characters resonate with the struggles between political leaders from across regional, economic, and party divides in their quest for national consolidation. The recurrent narrative in these romances about sexual desires between a man and a woman that are never fully realized spoke of the necessity to define the national community while retaining ethnoracial, gender, and class stratifications. In the process, these authors also crafted origin narratives delineating a coherent, linear, and progressive historical movement that ultimately engendered the nation.[16] Novels—as well as essays and newspaper writings—were privileged modes of expression of Western European rationality. Hence novels became a preferred medium for Latin American

and Caribbean intellectual-politicians to display their own rational self to local and international audiences as well as to articulate, disseminate, and discipline others into the political and social projects guiding their nation- and empire-building efforts.

A brief description of Zeno Gandía's familial, political, and intellectual genealogy allows us to map the points in which key members within the liberal elite intersected with and departed from earlier forms of political, economic, and social authority. The Gandía family's social standing derived directly from the institution of slavery. He was born in the northern sugar district of Arecibo in 1855. His father, sugar planter Manuel Zeno y Correa, was the only conservative—initially proslavery and later a gradual abolitionist—representative to the 1866 *Juntas de Información*. Zeno Gandía's erasure of a history of slavery in his work is particularly salient in light of his own father's strong defense of the institution.[17]

From an early age, the author lived and studied in Spain, where he became a physician. He continued his studies in Paris and, after traveling throughout Europe, returned to the island in 1876. After marrying into another wealthy family, he settled in the southern city of Ponce, where he lived for more than twenty years. He worked for the colonial government there as the medical consultant for the office of Maritime Health (*Sanidad Marítima*); his main responsibility was to control the potential spread of dangerous diseases on the island from overseas. While holding that position, Zeno Gandía witnessed as yellow fever and chicken pox devastated the laboring population. Thus his medical experience—and the fact that science had become an important and widely employed lens to understand society—clearly influenced the central role of illness and poverty as themes in his fictional work. In these, he linked the moral and physical deterioration of the peasantry, as signified by the unhealthy body, to the moral and political decay of the larger social body.[18]

Zeno Gandía published in the newspapers *El Estudio*, *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, and *La Azucena*. He was owner and editor of the widely read *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico* and director of *La Opinión*. He was also a founding figure of the 1886 Autonomista Party and a member of a host of international and local health and charity organizations. After the transition to US rule, Zeno Gandía continued his political undertakings by becoming a member of the first Puerto Rican commission to visit President William McKinley in 1899, a legislative representative (1902), and a founding member of the Unión Party (1904).

Zeno Gandía was an influential leader in the organized reformist (and later anticolonial) struggle of the late nineteenth and twentieth century.[19] As such, his novel *La Charca* is today compulsory reading for students in middle and high schools as well as in college level courses. In addition, the piece has become a fixture of popular culture. Theater groups adapted the novel into a play, performed frequently for young student audiences in schools and for a general audience in the island's best theaters.[20] In 1992, *La Charca* also became the subject of a television drama, a project funded and broadcasted by the state-owned Canal 6.

More than any other text, *La Charca* echoes the liberal (and racial) sensibilities that have fundamentally shaped islanders' historical imagining since then.

I also briefly analyze a health manual Zeno Gandía published in 1891 to uncover the ways in which male liberal leaders use medical science to make sense of, craft new knowledge about, and impose their social mores onto the wider population. In his writing, the author focused on probing the many factors he thought had contributed to the peasantry's social decay and had prevented the island's forward progress to modernity: backward colonial policies, immoral behavior, and racial miscegenation. Zeno Gandía's works were more than a diagnosis; they prescribed remedies: wide acceptance of white, masculine, liberal leadership; inculcating male and female sexual restraint; strengthening fatherly authority; and forging a close but not intimate relationship between the white elite and the racially degenerated peasantry.

La Charca introduced the reader to two different yet connected social worlds: the tragic life of a young woman, Silvina, was emblematic of the island's interior and the world of the highland peasants; and the world of the liberal hacendado, Juan del Salto, his absent son Jacobo (studying in Spain), and his friends and colleagues (the priest and the doctor), representing different strands within the island's liberal camp. Interaction between these two segregated worlds is infrequent, and racial and gender differences were at the heart of their incompatibility. The social distance between the two is only bridged when the educated, moral, "good" men (the priest, hacendado, or doctor) feel obliged to interfere in their subordinates' lives in order to save them from their mistakes.

The author appropriated and domesticated literary styles and genres associated with European subjectivities, specifically romantic and naturalist sensibilities. The mix of images and metaphors did not merely show his engagement with contemporary styles but marked important social, geographic, and political distinctions.[21] Through his ability to combine these forms of expression, the author displayed the wisdom of a world-traveled, well-educated, cosmopolitan intellectual. Concurrently, in the detailed description of the rural surroundings in the text, he also displayed his in-depth knowledge about the local modalities of sociability and his expertise on how to deal with or treat the simpler members of society. In portraying the countryside as chaotic and mysterious and its people as primal, romanticism served as a means to highlight the laboring people's degeneracy and incapacity for rule. The "scientificism" and "judiciousness" of elite characters, as well as the sociological frame organizing the narrator and the hacendado's interventions, speak to the centrality of naturalism as a literary philosophy in the internal constitution of the novel. The author also made the novel an important site in which to build a political project[22] and to fashion and represent himself as a rational political being.

While the novel was as much an act of performance as an exercise of individual and collective imagination, the author's appropriation of naturalism enables an additional reading of *La Charca* as a sociological treaty and a medical prescription. In general, adherents to naturalism as a current of thought believed that every natural phenomenon had a direct cause and effect. It suggests that human beings are shaped primordially by their race, social environment, and historical context. Naturalism in literature was one form of cultural expression of nineteenth-century European positivism and emblematic of the consolidation

of European rationalist, scientific knowledge as the only way to obtain truth and achieve order. This literary paradigm was a collage of contemporary scientific theories about human behavior, evolution, and biological inheritance. Naturalist writers thought of the literary field as a site to explore how human instincts, heredity, behavior, and environment determined individuals' lives and, thereby, society. Therefore, literary production focused on social problems in order to search for solutions. French writer and naturalist par excellence Emile Zola, for example, believed that the literary text was similar to a scientific document, and human beings were subjects for study.[23] For Zeno Gandía, like Zola, the literary text was meant to mimic reality.[24]

For many naturalists, the artistic endeavor was aesthetic and ethical but not political. Zola, for instance, insisted that the writer's task was to reveal the causes behind social problems but that legislators were responsible for designing and implementing solutions. But Zeno Gandía could not separate the writer from the politician struggling to transform the colonial context. Like other Latin American writers, he also rejected the determinism that characterized French naturalist thought in particular. In order to effect political change in colonial Puerto Rico, it was well accepted among the liberal elite that the peasantry had to be regenerated, otherwise they would never progress; an unambiguous embracing of determinism would have meant that such a goal of reform could not be accomplished. *La Charca*, nevertheless, revealed that Zeno Gandía, like his contemporaries, seriously doubted the possibility of reforming the peasantry.

La Charca was one of a four-novel series titled *Crónicas de un mundo enfermo* (*Chronicles of a Diseased World*).[25] The series title alone anticipated the author's objective in writing the novels. By employing the concept of "chronicle," Zeno Gandía differentiated his text from other forms of fiction. The author assumed the role of a positivist historical narrator, rationally identifying a detailed progressive sequence of events. The author's authority derived from the objectivity embedded in the chronicler's role. The legitimacy of the professional historian, especially in late-nineteenth-century positivism, resided on the fiction of neutrality and the careful application of the scientific method in historical research. In Zeno's case, the physician's scientific medical training bolstered his authority in the eyes of his educated audiences.

Moreover, Zeno came of age as Western Europe and the United States as well as their respective colonial worlds appropriated medical language and sanitary and medical practices to address social problems. He was part of an emerging medical class in Puerto Rico that reaffirmed its leadership and authority in social and political matters by inserting itself into these wider scientific and medical circuits of knowledge. More broadly, the social dislocation produced by the expansion of industrial and finance capitalism, particularly as European empires continued their predatory expansion in Asia and Africa, prompted social scientists and health-related professionals to quantify, categorize, and generate measures objectively to offset such social problems. Chemists, hygienists, nurses, public health officials, pharmacists, and physicians achieved high social standing. This context speaks to Zeno Gandía's decision to title his literary series the *Chronicles of a Diseased World*.

The novels' narrator appears to observe and examine different sets of characters through a microscope. The narrator adjusts the lens of that microscope, sometimes focusing on the details of one scene and, at other times, widening the view to observe the broader setting under scrutiny.[26] But the use of objective and pragmatic science serves to mask the social prejudices that distanced the author, the narrator, and the elite characters from their object of concern. The medical language had a pragmatic use, part of the larger articulations and consolidation of the language of labor in late-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico. Restoring the social health of the peasantry meant that they would become the reliable, strong, and disciplined workers that liberals thought necessary for the island's economic and political development.

La Charca begins with a scene in which Silvina's mother, Leandra, is washing the family's clothes at the edge of a river, which runs at the bottom of a steep cliff. In the scene, she kneels down with her dress pulled up, exposing her bare legs. Her body is wet and sexually provocative. The recurring images of Leandra's sensuality in the text clash with, for example, images of the sexually restrained Juan del Salto. The author identified the peasantry's unrestrained sexuality as one cause of the existing physical and moral problems. Indeed, sexual behavior was the primary way that Zeno Gandía's fiction marks gender, class, and racial differences between characters. Particularly in *La Charca*, sexual practices defined the boundaries between the elite and peasant worlds. As such, Zeno Gandía's work exemplifies how the disciplining of gender, like labor, is simultaneously the management of race.

In the same scene, Silvina calls for her mother from the top of the cliff because she does not know what to do with her little brother, who is crying from hunger. With resilience, Leandra picks up the laundry, places it on her back, exposing her bare chest, and walks up the cliff, entering a different geographic space: the chaotic jungle of the interior. Throughout the text, the author weaves together the descriptions of the environment with that of the physical and moral deficiencies of the characters. Like many nineteenth-century scientists, Zeno Gandía believed that warm, tropical environments were detrimental to the body and mind, despite their primitive beauty.[27] In contrast to the running river at the bottom of the cliff, the tropical environment of the mountains conveys the sense of exhausting heat, dirt, insects, and contained air and water. As the title *La Charca* (*The Pond*) suggests, the peasantry in the interior lived in a pool of stagnant water, the perfect environment for the growth and spread of devastating diseases.

The author did not limit his descriptions to the natural environment, but also included the peasants' built environment. The author was disturbed, for example, by what he viewed as unhealthy, poor huts inhabited by peasants, or in other words, the lack of urbanization in the interior. The peasants seemed scattered around the mountains, instead of in well-organized communities of workers. Indeed, contemporary concerns over the tropical environment not only permeated literary production but were at the heart of reform proposals such as calls for urban development and improvements in schooling. Puerto Rican liberals saw the rational organization of education, services, and work embedded

in urbanization as crucial to their quest for modernization. The chaotic environment of the interior—with the exception of the rational oasis provided by the rural hacienda—only furthered the moral and physical corruption of its inhabitants, whether in fiction or in reality. Thus representations of nature in *La Charca* were not solely a demonstration of stylistic skill but strategic sociopolitical matters.

The dysfunctional relationship between Leandra and her daughter Silvina is emblematic of the peasantry's moral deterioration. Leandra is a bitter and cruel woman with multiple children, born to different partners. At the moment, Leandra lives in a shack with her youngest son, Pequeñín, and Silvina. Pequeñín's father, Galante, is an unscrupulous, small hacendado and businessman. Leandra depends on Galante for the family's survival. When Galante rapes young Silvina, Leandra does not object and instead encourages Silvina to accept Galante's future sexual advances. Leandra dismisses Silvina's pain, humiliation, and her romantic feelings for another man, Ciro. Galante and Leandra force 14-year-old Silvina into a marriage with Gaspar, a 50-year-old thieving, gambling drunk who physically and emotionally tortures her.

Leandra does not embody the liberal ideal of womanhood; she is not loving, selfless, protective, or nurturing. Instead of protecting Silvina, Leandra readily offers her daughter to sexual predators like Galante and Gaspar. In this way, Zeno Gandía completely subverts the maternal role, turning Leandra into another one of her daughter's predators for the sake of money. Not only is Leandra an unsuitable mother, but the family unit is also fatherless. When Gaspar appears as a possible father figure to Silvina, their relationship becomes a violent, incestuous union. In essence, Zeno Gandía depicts a rural, dysfunctional family: a family of unfit mothers, absent fathers, sexual promiscuity, and sick children. In portraying the rural family as inadequate, Zeno Gandía asserts the need for the liberal elite to stand as fathers of the peasantry and thus of Puerto Rico if modernization was to become a reality.[28]

This sociopolitical stratification is more evident when the author contrasts the dysfunctional mother-daughter relationship in the peasants' world with the loving father-son relationship in the elite sphere. Juan del Salto was born to a wealthy sugar family. Paralleling Zeno Gandía's life, Del Salto studies abroad in Europe during his youth. However, unlike Zeno, he does not finish his studies because his family begins experiencing financial difficulties, so he returns to the island, as a dutiful son, to take charge of the family's affairs. After his parents' deaths, Del Salto's profitable investments enable him to buy a coffee hacienda. He falls in love, marries, has a son (Jacobo), but unfortunately becomes a widower. Unlike the fathers of Leandra's children, Juan devotes his life to raising his son after his wife's death, works to build an inheritance for him, and supports his studies abroad.[29] In contrast to the sexually unruly Leandra and Gaspar, Juan del Salto embodies all the qualities of liberal manhood. He is educated, economically successful, a good father, selfless, generous, and, most importantly, sexually restrained. Like a priest, Del Salto has remained faithful to his wife's memory and has channeled all physical urges into furthering his own education. The narrator depicts a homosocial, elite world from which women are absent and where men

have rational control over their physical bodies. Their restrained sexuality protects them from disease.

If Leandra is an unsuitable mother, Juan del Salto, in contrast, is an excellent father—not only to Jacobo but also to his workers. Del Salto's relationship with the *jornaleros* is an example of the benign labor system in the coffee mountains, a world fundamentally different from the sugar-slave economic model that dominated the coast.[30] According to the historical interpretation offered in this novel, the coffee elite were not responsible for the peasantry's misery. Instead, they constitute the peasantry's only salvation. Within this framework, the narrator recounts Del Salto's repeated efforts to change the workers' living conditions.

However, Del Salto's paternalism toward his laborers also served to infantilize the peasantry. The hacendado treats the workers like children because "he had no patience for the seed sowers' stupidity."[31] But like a father, "he closely supervised every detail on the plantation, intervening in everything by inspecting every detail, offering his opinion and advice to each of the *obreros*, looking after their interests, supporting their hopes, always with wisdom." Del Salto treated his works with the "pure affection of an hacendado father caressing the *cabecitas rubias* (blonde heads) of his offspring."[32]

These lines illustrate the understated ways Zeno Gandía racialized the workers throughout the text. To underscore Del Salto' generosity, the narrator highlights the hacendado's whiteness (confirmed by the blond hair of his children) and redraws a sharp racial line between the hacendado and the nonwhite workers.[33] Subtle constructions of whiteness such as this simple remark are key to denoting racial differences, while simultaneously silencing blackness. The celebration of whiteness appears as a positive construction of racial difference while disguising the negative connotations associated with the absent, nonwhite referent. This subtle racialization allows for easy dismissal, if not complete erasure. For example, in the 1982 English translation of *La Charca*, the racial referent is removed: "a father caressing the tiny heads of his offspring."[34]

The scenes between Del Salto and the *jornaleros* are the few instances where the two worlds intersect. Elites and workers harmoniously interact despite their racial differences because of the importance of labor. In this story, liberal employers are benevolent men who cross racial boundaries in order to take care of their workers. In return, workers owe gratitude and unconditional support to their superiors' decisions. These passages, among others, served as entry points for the author-physician to suggest "treatment" for the degenerated peasantry.

In so doing, the author elevated the role of the hacendado in *La Charca*. The employer becomes not only a father but a confessor—the ultimate manifestation of benign paternalism. The scenes between Juan del Salto and his worker, Marcelo, model an ideal employer-employee relationship. Marcelo has been a witness to a homicide, an event that haunts him, and his physical health suffers from the emotional weight of concealing this knowledge. Juan del Salto notices Marcelo's anguish and encourages him to reveal his secret. That night, Marcelo returns to the hacienda and confesses his troubling secret to Del Salto. In the process, Juan del Salto became the representative of the highest morality by listening and providing forgiveness and spiritual relief to Marcelo. Liberal men like Del Salto

were prepared to fulfill all the patriarchal roles—political leader, teacher, father, and confessor—to the impoverished masses and, in so doing, could regenerate the peasantry. Del Salto is qualified to perform all these leadership roles because "his travels and studies had taught him how to think. This cultivated intellect has placed him over the social masses."[35] In this story, women, peasants, and the racially mixed could never become leaders.

While colonial mismanagement was the dominant concern in most liberal writing of the period, many of these writers were also preoccupied with the limits of their own reform projects. Racial mixture was the main hurdle and a source of deep anguish: Was the island doomed to misery, illness, and backwardness because of the peasantry's racial inferiority? Or, could transformations in education and living conditions improve the Puerto Rican stock? Most of these concerns were not explicitly articulated in public debates but they emerged, if just in short form, in the writings. In *La Charca*, Juan del Salto ponders these questions. What was the root of the peasantry's problems: its body or its spirit? Through Del Salto's character, the author examines, like a good scientist, the various contemporary hypotheses about the negative effects of racial mixture on the body and mind, before diagnosing a treatment:

> In studying the people of the mountains, Juan was witness to the evolutionary development of a race: its prehistory, its obscure origin, its migrations, and then—upon contact with the Europeans—its mixtures and transformations.
>
> He was well acquainted with the life these people led in the colony. He saw them descend in a straight line of ethnic mixtures whose end product was contaminated with a deadly, invincible weakness, leaving its arteries bloodless, without nerve fluid for the brain, the arms without strength, turning them into an organic mass impossible to inject life into, leaning toward misery, immorality, and death.[36]

In this excerpt, racial miscegenation was identified as the root cause of physical weakness and, consequently, the moral degeneration that characterized the peasantry. The docility of the peasant in liberal representations contrasts with the violence and hostility often associated with the black population. In the context of the late nineteenth century, the construction of the peasant as docile may have also been an important step in whitening—distancing from blackness and slavery—the representations of the countryside population in the eyes of authorities. Docility may have contrasted well with representations of the unruly Cuban countryside, for example. While concepts of blood and lineage remained crucial for Zeno Gandía, he did not uncritically embrace biological determinism. Therefore, Del Salto examines a second and even a third possibility: perhaps the problem is that of a weak soul, a spirit lacking appropriate educational stimuli, or just a psychological challenge.[37] If Puerto Rico's main problem was the population's lack of culture or psychological deficiencies, leaders could provide a practical solution.

Similarly, if the problem was simply physical, rather than embedded in the ethnoracial mixture, physicians could just treat the peasants:

> Other times, his ideas followed a different course. No, it was not the spirit. The body is contaminated, feeble, and deformed. It was only a physical problem . . . The sick stomach is unable to distribute well its energy. This irregularity in energy distribution upsets the equilibrium of the body. As a result, the lack of equilibrium is transferred from the individual to the offspring from this generation to future ones and, in this way, to the race. It is true, the stomach that does not fulfill its primary function, engenders illness and the death of a people![38]

In this last possible explanation, Del Salto again wrestles with notions of the body and race but in a different mode. He ponders the possibility of physical diseases eventually becoming encoded in the imprint of the larger social body. The word race here is employed in reference to Puerto Ricans as a single social body, rather than marking blackness and whiteness within the population. An interpretation of decay anchored in the physical constitution of the body meant that leaders could design and implement systematic measures to attend to the peasantry's needs for nutrition, medical care, clothing, and housing.

This form of conceptualizing race—which would crystallize in the early twentieth century—placed sex, gender, and reproduction at the center of new constructions of political and social governance. In this modality, the analytical gaze sought to move away from preoccupations with the past—and its degenerate mixture of racial groups—to the present and future processes through which the nation can become naturalized as a material body, a race (the Puerto Rican race). In doing so, it appears as if earlier understandings of race—especially the negative attributions to blackness—had been transcended, shifting the focus from difference to harmonious blending. But other notions of race would continue to mark internal differences, and in the decades that followed, the black and racially mixed population would be once again singled out by a much larger array of reformist groups. Thus in *La Charca* we can uncover the seeds of later forms of speaking about race and nation.

But liberals like Zeno Gandía ultimately believed that racial mixture caused the physical and moral weaknesses of the population—problems exacerbated by the environment—and stalled the island's progression toward modernity. Del Salto voices this conclusion in his debate with the priest, Esteban:

> Don't be fooled, my dear Padre; the causes of this great disaster date back to distant origins. Imagine for yourself an ethnic that comes to the colony in the days of the conquest, and struggles to adapt itself to the torrid zone . . . they could not have prospered physically. Then came the cross-breedings. So many mixtures! A *cruce caucásico y aborigen* determined the population of these woods . . . The *aborigen* woman was the pasture, her savage grace the only genetic choice . . . That mixture was prolific, but at such a price! The sturdy native of the forest yielded his physical strength; the sprightly man who set foot upon the soil of the Occident gave yielded vigor and force. From this lot, the born composite emerged physically inferior, and was abandoned to the flow of the centuries. The *aborigen* race was unequal to the collision and succumbed, disappearing forever from the face of the earth.[39]

Because of this biological history, Del Salto concludes that schooling, hygiene, and exercise may not be sufficient to improve the Puerto Rican stock. He embraces a Darwinist position arguing for the planning of better and newer ethnic hybridization.[40]

In *La Charca*'s biohistorical account, people of African descent are absent, and the peasantry derives from the intermixing of Spaniards and indigenous people.[41] The author and many other liberals of the time focused on the peasantry of the interior as if they constituted the heart of Puerto Rico and ignored the slavery/sugar cultures of the coast in their imagining of the nation. Their rejection of the coast stemmed from their belief that it embodied a failed colonial economic system and political conservatism and received the largest shipments of African slaves. Liberals' projects for reform emerged from a growing coffee culture in the interior and the urban experience.[42]

In this modified biohistorical narrative, liberals were so concerned about the peasantry's blackness that they erased the history of slavery and its impact on the population of the interior altogether. These intellectuals were convinced of the role of biology, inheritance, and environment in an individual's character, and slavery was an unacceptable antecedent. Instead they privileged the *bravura* (courage) of the Taíno indigenous people on the island at the moment of conquest, whom they considered emblematic of male courage, while black slaves signified servility, shame, and masculine dishonor. The lack of identifiable indigenous communities ready for political mobilization at this historical moment made the Taíno imaginary (or the imaginary Taíno) nonthreatening to liberal intellectuals and easy to romanticize as something from the past, rather than acknowledging the concrete claims for equality from the identifiable African and mulatto population on the island.[43] (They rarely acknowledged the inconvenient fact that early indigenous people were also enslaved.)

The multiplicity of theories and interpretations about the social reality of the island was the result of pluralities within the liberal camp itself. In *La Charca*, the author presented these variations through the characters who befriend the hacendado, Juan del Salto: the priest (a progressive but impractical church), his son (the proindependence sector), and the doctor (the urban professionals). These characters reveal how different liberal-minded groups approached the island's problems. In depicting a harmonious relationship between these characters, Zeno Gandía might have wanted to mark a sharp contrast between the peasantry's chaotic lives and the liberal elites' civilized behavior.

Among these elite characters, the physician, Dr. Pintado, stands out. His interpretation of social problems and medical approach coincide with Del Salto's. Pintado visits the mountain communities regularly and is alarmed by the inhabitants' overall weakness and the widespread disease. He believes superstitions and indifference have aggravated their physical problems. After briefly tending to a sick Silvina and learning of her sexual past, Pintado reflects upon the state of the peasantry to assess that "premature sexual experience was deadly to the species. Precocious sensual desires denigrate and debilitate the species by diluting the germs of physical misery into the offspring"[44] To him, control over the peasant women's sexuality is the key to halt social degeneration because "the uterus

is a sacred organ, blessed by Nature to serve as a merciful cloister for life. To bruise it, to pressure it into premature labor, was horrible . . . it emaciated families and peopled the world with lunatics and individuals with weakened brains." Liberals in real life sought further control over female sexuality, influenced by scientific knowledge establishing that early sexual activity had an irreversible negative impact on the body. More important, such control was a means to contain further racial miscegenation in the postabolition period.[45] The liberal elite's emphasis on women and their capacity for sexual reproduction contrasted starkly with the absence of women in their homosocial world. Meanwhile, as in the novel, the realities of the labor and sexual exploitation of laboring women by men were carefully suppressed.[46]

The political message of the novel is clearly stated in a dinner scene, close to the end of the book, in which the hacendado, the priest, and the physician are brought together in conversation to voice a critique of the island's colonial administration. They believed the island is in desperate need of industrial growth, better water and soil management, free trade, better budgetary administration, and a public health system.[47] Despite their social and philosophical differences, they coincide in their ultimate goal (to modernize Puerto Rico): "The three of them confessed to supporting Liberalism . . . They spoke about rights and obligations, the expansion of these to the nation, to all classes, to every individual."[48] Furthermore, they coincided in identifying the peasant and the current colonial system as the root of the island's problems. Their vision of society and politics contrasts sharply with the chaos and political violence ruling the peasant world.

La Charca ends tragically. In the final section, the story moves from the liberal elite's world back to Silvina's. After much suffering, Silvina and Ciro are finally able to consummate their love. But Ciro dies tragically, and Silvina cannot support herself economically. She is forced to become the lover of a man she despises, living in misery. In the final scene, Silvina stands on the cliff top, contemplating the river running along the bottom. At that moment, she suffers an epileptic attack, falls down the cliff, and dies. The final scene brings Silvina back to where the story started, on the cliff top. This circularity emphasizes the repetitious cycle of immorality and disease that has gripped the peasantry. Only an outsider, like Del Salto, can break the cycle.

The metaphor of illness was more than a discursive strategy for liberal elites to articulate Puerto Rican social realities. The medical field provided a catalogue of practices and defined a course of action for specific problems. Zeno Gandía formally engaged in designing such a catalogue of practices: his 1891 health manual for mothers with young children.[49] If *La Charca* reveals how Puerto Rican liberals rooted social illness in women's bodies and their reproduction, the medical manual and many texts like it focused on lower-class women and their children's care in medical research and practice. After all, the younger generations were the future of the nation and the "new Puerto Rican stock."

A San Francisco publishing house, The History Company, printed the health manual in Spanish. Its editor stated in the prologue that the press wanted a medical text in a language accessible to a broader audience of mothers (primary caretakers) because most of them lacked education. The press might well have

taken interest in publishing a book geared to uneducated, Spanish-speaking women to address reform groups in California concerned over the Spanish-speaking laboring population.[50] Puerto Rican liberal thought was in tune with ideas and practices circulating across the Americas.

In this medical manual, as in *La Charca*, Zeno Gandía marked racialized boundaries by policing gender and family norms. The manual was also a site for Zeno Gandía to cultivate the authority of physicians and the Western, masculine medical field as a tool of social engineering. In particular, he focused on delegitimizing and taking authority away from the figure of the midwife, discrediting midwives as women lacking knowledge, professional training, and skills. Midwifery was common among the popular classes and was mostly performed by laboring women who drew from a wide array of popular healing practices. In reality, the hybridity of these popular knowledges and practices resulted from intense racial and cultural mixture on the island. In the manual, Zeno Gandía left unnamed the clear association of these knowledges with blackness; instead these knowledges are embodied in the female figures of the midwife and the *nodriza* (nanny)—who, in societies with a history of slavery, were often women of African descent. Unlike Cuba, Puerto Rican authorities did not persecute African-derived cultural forms by mobilizing anti*brujería* (antiwitchcraft) fears.[51] Instead, the state and elites battled them in a different form: denouncing superstition; condemning, legally regulation, or banning altogether *nodrizas*, *parteras*, and *curanderas* (healers); and constantly policing *bomba* and *plena* gatherings.

Zeno Gandía adamantly denounced the common practice of hiring *nodrizas* to breast-feed young children when the mother was unavailable.[52] He believed these women could transfer physical and emotional illnesses to children through their breast milk. If the family had no choice but to hire a *nodriza*, they had to make sure that she had a normal relationship with her husband and children, was always in a good mood, did not work strenuously, and didn't breast-feed other children. Zeno Gandía thought *nodrizas* were commercializing the female body, like prostitutes, because they exchanged money for their breast milk. He called them "mercenary mothers." His concerns over midwives and *nodrizas* went beyond their lack of scientific knowledge and skills. He clarified in a footnote that these women belonged to the lowest ranks of society, and he may have wanted to restrict the intimate relationships lower classes established across racial lines. The "degenerating" racial miscegenation occurred not only through sexual unions but also through the sharing of breast milk and social intimacy among community members.

Medical manuals, like Zeno Gandía's, emerged as legitimate tools to shape the behavior of the laboring poor family. He discussed, in intimate detail, daily matters such as breast-feeding, first-aid remedies, appropriate clothing for children, and sleeping techniques, and he also made recommendations regarding family values. He stated that a healthy child needed the attention of a moral—sexually restrained, sober, educated, gentle, and religious—father, implying that monogamous lifetime unions created the best environment for the future citizen.[53] But it was not enough to prescribe liberal manhood to lower-class men. Zeno Gandía also prescribed liberal womanhood to lower-class females. Women

had to be good mothers—passive, loving, caring, always in a good mood, and delicate. Women had to possess these characteristics if they wanted to reproduce effectively. Medical science, then, perpetuated the image of submissive women and demanded behavior modifications for lower-class men in order to implement the patriarchal family model, in which men were the benevolent and generous leaders at home and in the political world. Here too, the molding of gender and sexuality along the lines of liberal morality was as much an attempt to constitute a productive laboring population as it was an effort at racial management.[54] These concerns also shaped Salvador Brau's intellectual production, although his work was more optimistic and, in fact, celebratory of cultural if not racial miscegenation.

Salvador Brau: Consolidating a Puerto Rican Identity through Historical Writing

Salvador Brau, like Zeno Gandía, was a prominent intellectual in Puerto Rico. He was an influential scholar during his lifetime, and his historical studies were later integrated into the island's educational curriculum, especially his textbooks *La historia de Puerto Rico* and *La colonización de Puerto Rico.*[55] In contrast to Zeno Gandía's gloomy representations of the peasantry as a serious hurdle to progress, Brau offered a more positive depiction of the population and a brighter future for the island. Brau was one of the main architects of the Puerto Rican version of the myth of racial harmony.

Unlike Zeno Gandía, Brau was born into a modest middle-class family. His father was a Spaniard from Barcelona, and his mother was a Creole woman. Unlike most Creole urban professionals, Brau did not receive formal higher education, because his family lacked the resources to send him for overseas studies to France or Spain. The author was a self-taught man who devoured the materials and books his wealthy colleagues collected in their personal libraries. His white Spanish ancestry may have gained him access to some of the most exclusive elite circles. Brau became a prolific journalist and editor of several liberal newspapers such as *El Agente* and *El Clamor del País*, both published in the capital city of San Juan. In 1894, the colonial government named him the *Cronista Oficial* (State Historian) of the island and funded his first research trip to the historical archives in Spain, where he worked for three years. After Spain granted autonomy to Cuba and Puerto Rico, Brau returned to the island, where he continued in public service as director of the Customs Office. After the US occupation in 1898, the new colonial government retained Brau in the same public office. But in 1900, Brau abandoned his position out of disappointment with the new regime. However, in 1905, the island government reappointed Brau as the *Cronista Oficial*, a position he held until his death in 1912.

Over the course of his life, Brau's political thought shifted from an *asimilista* perspective—advocating for the island to join Spain as a province—to an autonomist (self-government under Spanish rule) position.[56] Autonomism emerged as the arrangement that would enable the nation to crystallize. Brau's intellectual legitimacy hinged on his adherence to a systematic research methodology based

on archival labor in his examination of Puerto Rico's past. As such, the discipline of history and the essay genre were Brau's way to map out the inception of the Puerto Rican nation,[57] which he understood as a linear progression. But Brau's work marked a shift in the way racial miscegenation was portrayed by intellectuals: now the cultural miscegenation that resulted from racial harmony was a cultural foundation to be celebrated.[58]

Although Brau did venture into fiction writing, he has been better known for his historical and sociological essays. Here I focus on a selection of his essays, compiled in *Disquisiciones sociológicas,* written from 1882 to 1887.[59] This collection focuses on historical events that Brau recognized as foundational to the island's history and analyzes specific cultural practices (such as the *danza*) that he identified as embodying the cultural miscegenation defining Puerto Ricanness. Most of these essays were originally submitted to contests sponsored by the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño* or lectures offered at the *Ateneo*. The *Ateneo*'s embrace of Brau's work testifies to the wide support his research received within local intellectual circles.

Like his liberal contemporaries, Brau was consumed by questions of how to turn Puerto Rico into a modern society. It is not surprising that in the first essay compiled in *Disquisiciones*, the historian focused on the island's productive base: the workers. To account for the laboring classes, the author resorted first to an ethnoracial history of the island, concluding that Puerto Rico's distinctive society was the product of interactions among three ethnic/racial groups: indigenous people, Spaniards, and Africans. In his assessment of the existing Puerto Rican scholarship, the author recognized that his contemporaries often denied the presence of Africans on the island, perhaps because these scholars were ashamed of slavery. In contrast, Brau embraced the presence of Africans as a true and unequivocal historical fact. Perhaps by uncovering a historical fact previously dismissed, the author reaffirmed his legitimacy/authority as an objective historian able to provide a broader and truthful interpretation of the past. Notwithstanding, Brau emphasized that even though the different ethnic groups on the island lived together (sometimes intimately), not all Puerto Ricans were biologically miscegenated. Puerto Ricans were, however, culturally mixed. While Zeno Gandía offered a biohistory, Brau emphasized a cultural history that partially embraced mixture among races in the cultural realm and downplayed racial mixture in the biological one.[60] In a volatile racialized context, Brau may not have wanted to compromise the biological whiteness of the elite (and his own) but attempted to forge a cultural base that all Puerto Ricans could share.

In fact, the author compared the cultural amalgamation in Puerto Rico to that of Spain.[61] Brau argued that Spain incorporated many cultural features from its Moorish invaders, just as the Puerto Ricans integrated the various ethnic influences on the island. This comparison allowed Brau to define cultural miscegenation as a norm in world history, a mixing that also accounted for each society's particularity. To Brau, racial harmony was the essence of Puerto Rican society, a feature that liberal reformists began to think was crucial for the successful implementation of their political and social projects, especially during these

turbulent postabolition years. But while the historian embraced this cultural miscegenation, he established a hierarchy among those ethnic influences, with Spain as the main civilizing force.

Brau aimed to provide a more balanced account than previous scholars, narrating both the indigenous and African presence and recognizing certain forms of violence in the colonial process. He considered this balance necessary because unlike indigenous people, who already "disappeared," Africans were still present. Nevertheless, he paid almost no attention to Africans but significant attention to the indigenous population. The disappearance of the indigenous population led him to further reflection: the more powerful Spanish influence had absorbed the indigenous population, a process not always peaceful. Despite Spain's civilizing power, the indigenous population was also seriously diminished because of the conquerors' abuses and exploitation. However, as a good historian true to the archive, he called for caution: the indigenous people's disappearance was not as fast and as far-reaching as his contemporaries have suggested. After his careful examination of documents, Brau concluded that even after many years of colonization and repression, indigenous people continued outnumbering the Spanish population. He suggested, in fact, that indigenous people disappeared from documents not because they had died off but because of a change in census-taking practices, which erased the *Indio* category.

Brau the historian, as an objective scholar, did acknowledge that their presence on the island could not compare with that of the Africans, who did not become invisible because Puerto Rico continued to bring in regular slave shipments throughout the centuries. But recognition of African slaves or the persistence of African heritage did not translate into in-depth interest. Brau's emphasis on the Taínos signaled a broader interest among Puerto Rican intellectuals in the study of the indigenous past as well as the *madre patria*, Spain. During these same years, scholars such as Dr. Agustín Stahl and Calixto Romero Cantero published many articles in the *Revista Puertorriqueña* on their ongoing research about the indigenous population.[62] A parallel research endeavor on Africans or people of African descent did not take place.

For Brau, race was a matter of the past with no place in the nineteenth century because Puerto Rico had already become a class society. His narration of the emergence of this society enables us to capture a glimpse of the ideological mindset that privileged a language of labor and occluded any reference to racialized domination. Brau began by arguing that the centuries in which Puerto Rico remained at the margins of the Spanish empire were crucial because the frontier nature of that society allowed intimacy among peoples and fostered the amalgamation of cultures. He noted that certain social differences existed during those centuries, especially between the free and enslaved populations, but he did not interpret social differences between the free and enslaved populations as being based on distinctions between blackness and whiteness. The nineteenth century, Brau stated, brought radical changes in the island's social organization. Many immigrants arrived (including large contingents of African slaves) and the sugar boom sparked a nuanced form of social stratification: class distinctions (the owner against the proletariat). In the early nineteenth century, Brau

observed the development of early capitalist sensibilities on the island. Class distinctions became more prevalent than distinctions based on social status (free or enslaved)—still he did not speak of race. The 1837 enactment of the *Bando de la Policía y Buen Gobierno* by Governor Miguel López de Baños facilitated the consolidation of class as the basis for social organization. This decree forced everyone to work regardless of his or her social status (free or enslaved).[63] Brau perceived this historical moment as the birth of the *clase jornalera*. He thus implied that class differences alone shaped Puerto Rican history.

Brau's historical account supported and legitimized liberals' moralizing and education campaigns to transform the peasantry into productive agents. Like his liberal colleagues, he believed the peasantry had always been unreliable. Therefore, in contrast to Zeno Gandía, Brau rejected direct biological explanations of the moral, mental, and physical degeneracy of the peasantry: the peasantry's social vices (concubinage, gambling, and vagrancy) were, rather, the byproduct of particular historical circumstances. At the same time, the historian's interpretations of social problems were subtly racialized. This is evident in Brau's condemnation of the common practice of concubinage—cohabitation without legal marriage—which he attributed to the combination of two phenomena: (a) an uneven and unstructured colonization process, which resulted in a deficient development of institutions that could prevent the illicit sexual liaisons among inhabitants, and (b) slavery. During slavery, he explains, slave owners, overseers, and members of the church failed to maintain social structures among the slave population (like religious teachings and Catholic rituals such as baptisms and marriages) that could have halted slaves' unregulated sexual encounters. These institutions' inefficiency allowed the wide spread practice of concubinage among the peasantry. Brau's interpretation emerged from and reproduced representations of Africans' dangerous hypersexuality.

Despite the subtle racialization of the peasantry in this essay, Brau examined the *jornaleros*' problems as a result of their class experiences, not as a product of their innate racial inferiority (nor of their racialized class status). Brau strongly criticized workers' addiction to gambling but did not hold workers accountable for those social sins. According to Brau, the blame went to the colonial administration, the church, and unscrupulous members of the upper classes such as storeowners (mostly Spaniards). Members of these groups often participated in and protected gambling activities, such as cockfights, thus contributing to their social denigration and hindering the cultural and intellectual improvement of the population.

Indeed, in his critique of vagrancy, Brau defined the aristocratic (conservative) classes on the island as the real vagrants. He emphasized that despite the peasants' fragile appearance, they were indeed vigorous and competent workers, like the African slaves had been. The profitability and expansion of coffee production proved that the peasantry was not idle, but rather hardworking and industrious. Brau challenged the dominant belief about the demise of the sugar industry—an interpretation that centered on the lack of labor hands—to argue that structural problems such as the flight of capital and the lack of investments and agricultural diversity were responsible for the sugar downfall. These stumbling blocks

to business innovation, for which the colonial administration was responsible, hurt the Creole elites and were responsible for Puerto Rico's more general lack of progress.[64]

In contrast, *jornaleros* were capable of becoming the engine of change under the right circumstances because they were industrious men. Education was the most effective mode to shape laborers into the right kind of worker: "Our *clases obreras* need instruction, moral education, professional schooling, the habit of saving, social manners, and a nutritious diet. [We] need to instill in them a fear of vices, respect for [private] property, devotion toward the household and the family, and compliance of their contract arrangements."[65] Most importantly, the *jornaleros* needed to be taught that "work is not a punishment but a duty, natural to men."[66]

Brau did not perceive the laboring classes as citizens yet, but as citizens-to-be. The path to citizenship comprised a set of behaviors such as contractual compliance, self-regulation, participation in market relations (savings and consumption), and hard work. For the author, the labor contract—more than any other relation—regulated and defined the individual, social relations, the market, and the state: "If the relationship between the property owner and the *bracero* [field worker], based on paid labor, is ultimately defined as an exchange of services; and if this exchange is based on an explicit or tacit agreement between two capable individuals, both are fully executing their freedom of action and rights of citizenship, then it is not clear what kind of intervention the State should have in this business."[67]

Inspired by these ideals, Brau strongly advocated for associations as a base for working-class improvement, especially if they invited overseers and property owners to join—he promoted harmony between labor and capital. Like the more socially democratic reformists, Brau sought concessions for the working classes as a means to contain and shape workers' activism. Like Zeno Gandía, Brau often infantilized the uneducated workers, portraying them as children in need of guidance and mentorship, a mentorship the liberal elites would provide. In essence, the modernization of Puerto Rico depended on how different economic classes managed to coexist harmoniously while maintaining a hierarchy of power, which retained liberal elites in the upper strata and *jornaleros* at the bottom.

Like most liberals, Brau also conceived of workers as male. But lower-class women had a crucial role in the nation by recreating and consolidating the patriarchal, nuclear-family model. Like Zeno Gandía, Brau contended that many of the population's social illnesses could be remedied by regulating women's lives. He, though, advocated for the education of lower-class women. Because of their illiteracy, women lacked sexual restraint, were superstitious, and employed all sorts of popular religious and medical practices in their everyday lives. These preoccupations with sex and popular religious practices revealed that racial/cultural miscegenation had to be kept in check. The civilizing campaign would be more effective if it targeted women who could, then, instill containment, direction, and diplomacy in the family's men. Women's actions, according to this design, were to be constrained to the household, not practiced in the public space.

Brau expanded on his concerns about women in the essay "La campesina," originally written for the publication *Almanaque de las Damas* in 1886.[68] Here he advocated for the education of the peasantry, particularly women, to eradicate detrimental behaviors. Although Brau sought to undermine predominant ideas about the peasantry's biological and racial inferiority by emphasizing environmental concerns, his methods reinscribed their problems onto the peasant woman's body. Gender and sexuality once again served as a conduit to channel racial anxieties about miscegenation. Brau tackled the problem of concubinage that would end once women were educated. He believed that women's uncontrolled sexuality often led to unions with their own kin, which resulted in malformed children. As in Zeno Gandía and later in Del Valle Atiles' works, incest was emblematic of the peasantry's sexual corruption. Liberal intellectuals' pervasive concern with the so-called deviant sexual behavior among peasants resonated with elites' irrational fears about the black man's hypersexuality and their understanding of the poor peasant woman's sexual union with him as monstrous and horrific.[69] It is worth thinking of these worries about intrafamilial sex as a channel to express publicly the profound anxieties about sexuality and reproduction, especially interracial unions. Control over women's sexuality was a means to contain the reproduction of blackness, even if the more acceptable cultural amalgamation continued.

To avoid malformed workers, then, women had to receive rational and moral education, which would allow them to control their natural instincts: "We do not have to make women wise but we should not leave them behind condemned to irrationality."[70]At the same time, women would learn to remain a function of men. In order to guarantee the successful education of women, schools required some changes, like the feminization of the teaching profession, in order to limit women's inappropriate contact with men.[71] Obviously, Brau conceived of teaching as an extension of women's maternal roles. In turn, women would become teachers in the home.

The education of the lower classes not only turned men into producers and women into mothers and teachers but was also a means to build a racially harmonious society. Brau underscored that black men and women had contributed significantly to the improvement of the island through their education efforts. Black women often served as educators even when they were persistently marginalized by the colonial educational system: gender-mixed schools directed by women, some of whom were black, achieved great results in Puerto Rico.[72] While Zeno Gandía and also Del Valle Atiles rejected and diminished the black *nodriza* and the [black] healer as contaminants of blood and culture, Brau integrated the black woman as a teacher, perhaps because her interaction would be cultural and not physical, and the regulatory practices embedded in the profession already transformed teachers into appropriate, nonthreatening social subjects. In the educational realm, Brau saw the opportunity to rehearse an inclusive, though racially stratified, Puerto Rican national community. His essay on Rafael Cordero offers another example of this thinking.

Brau's 1891 essay "Rafael Cordero" praised a black tobacco worker who established and ran an elementary school from 1810 to 1868. The essay was a response

to the *Ateneo*'s inclusion of a portrait of Rafael Cordero, painted by Francisco Oller several decades earlier, in a permanent exhibition at one of the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*'s galleries. At different historical moments, Puerto Rican intellectuals have embraced the figure of Rafael Cordero as a symbol of Puerto Rico's racial harmony. First, Francisco Oller honored Cordero in his portrait as a way of communicating his antislavery sentiments. In 1868, the politically conservative *Sociedad Económica del País* had refused to include the portrait in one of their exhibitions. Brau, like other contemporaries such as Manuel Fernández Juncos and J. A. Daubón, recovered Cordero's image to stress that blacks could be compliant citizens too. For them, the classroom was the site in which Cordero fought racism, not through weapons but through love and tolerance.

Other contemporary liberal autonomists also appropriated Cordero's figure. Manuel Fernández Juncos wrote a poem to the *maestro* titled "Ante el retrato del maestro Oller." This poem praised Cordero as a black worker who overcame poverty and slavery as well as fought against racial hatred through his dedication to education. The figure of Cordero became the emblem for the education campaign of these liberal elites.[73] The appropriation of Cordero's figure continued into the twentieth century. Labor leaders also participated in this endeavor. For example, Prudencio Rivera Martínez, union leader and later head of the Department of Labor in Puerto Rico, organized an important conference in 1932 honoring Cordero. Much of the literature on the history of education in Puerto Rico has contributed extensively to this narrative of harmony by appropriating Cordero.[74] Together with politician Dr. José Celso Barbosa, the educator Rafael Cordero is one of the few blacks to have been included in the pantheon of Puerto Rican *hombres ilustres*.

Liberal elites' embrace of Cordero's figure in the late 1880s illustrated their ideological transformations in the postabolition period. The multiracial popular classes constituted a political class that the liberal leadership sought to recruit as supporters to their sociopolitical project. The selection of Cordero as the only representative of blacks' contributions to Puerto Rico reveals how limited and selective racial inclusion was within the liberal project.[75] In addition, the selection of Cordero served to define what type of blacks could be part of the nation: educated, hard-working men who sought to unify Puerto Ricans rather than divide them along racial lines.[76] Brau, on the other hand, neglected to comment on white racists who fomented racial divisions by violence and segregation.

Brau insisted—"I am speaking with certitude"—that classrooms like that of Cordero's, where "caste subdivisions between blacks and whites did not exist" and "children mixed and together learned catechism and grammar"—were real despite a regime that allowed "the corporal servitude of the *obreros de color*."[77] He lived that racialized experience of harmony: "I do not need to put much effort in remembering the name of several slave descendants who were my co-disciples in my hometown school during the years between 1849 and 1854."

However, it is clear to Brau that black former slaves were subordinated members of Puerto Rican society, their subordination sustained by gratitude to white liberals. At the very beginning of the piece on Cordero, the author dedicated the essay to the island's greatest republicans and abolitionists, Segundo Ruiz

Belvis, José Julián Acosta, and Francisco Mariano Quiñones, because in 1866 they demanded "the reinstitution of human rights to the black race." In honor of these men's efforts, the author provided this piece about a black man who lived up to these liberals' expectations: "[In their honor] I offer this exaltation describing the sublime virtues of a humanitarian black [Rafael Cordero]." Even when Brau intended to highlight a black man's contributions, he undermined his agency by stating that white liberals achieved equality and freedom for blacks.[78]

In sum, Brau spent his career as a historian and sociologist tracing the evolution of a distinctive Puerto Rican society,[79] a whole cultural entity, deflecting the racial differences that perpetuated inequalities among islanders. In his essay "La danza puertorriqueña," the Puerto Rican music genre *danza* embodies the fusion by integrating "the Andalusian *playeras*, the Arabic *kasida*, the Aragonese *jota*, the Indian *areyto*, the Ethiopian *bomba*, the Moorish *juzla*, and the liturgical psalmody."[80] All these "dances, chants, and instruments" converged on the island because the colony "was opened to all races. Latinos, Saxons, Africans, Indians, slaves, Germans, and Scandinavians, all brought with them the peculiar harmonic sense of their respective home countries."[81] As such Puerto Ricans' uniqueness, like that of the *danza*, resulted from "their sentiments . . . mixed in our soil, modifying the generic character of each of them, as well as their [physical] complexion."[82]

Brau's efforts to define the cultural contours of Puerto Rico never included a claim for political independence. The notion of social harmony on the island was a quality that proved Puerto Ricans' capacity to renegotiate the relationship with Spain as equals, but not as separatists. After all, Spain was the civilizing force on the island.[83] These hierarchies of race and civilization were also key to physician Francisco del Valle Atiles' interpretation of future possibilities for the island.

Francisco del Valle Atiles and the Scientific Measurement of Racial Inheritance

In contrast to Zeno Gandía and Brau, Dr. Francisco del Valle Atiles is not well known among Puerto Ricans today.[84] Perhaps his more explicit articulations about race and, later, his association with the eugenics movement on the island have made him a less desirable figure for later generations. While his intellectual production is not a fixture in present-day Puerto Rican popular and academic culture, he was a deeply influential figure from 1880 to the 1920s. He wrote numerous articles for newspapers and journals and was an active member and, later, president of the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*. He served as faculty member at the *Institución de Enseñanza Superior* of the *Ateneo*, founded in 1888.[85] Del Valle Atiles also had an active political life. After Dr. José Barbosa split from the Autonomista Party in 1897, Del Valle followed the black, liberal leader Barbosa to the newly founded Autonomista Ortodoxo Party.[86] Del Valle Atiles was actively involved in the efforts to join the two liberal camps (the ortodoxos and the fusionistas) against the conservatives for the 1898 elections, after Spain granted autonomy in 1897. He served as San Juan's mayor in the immediate years after the 1898 US occupation. Most importantly, under US rule, Del Valle Atiles became one

of the most, if not the most, influential Puerto Rican physicians on the island, ultimately founding and presiding over the *Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* (Medical Association of Puerto Rico), directing the Health Commission (1917), and becoming member of the Board of Trustees of the *Biblioteca Insular* (Insular Library).

Del Valle's most notorious work is *El campesino puertorriqueño* (*The Puerto Rican Peasant*), a sociological and medical study published in 1887.[87] The lengthy essay, which won an essay contest of the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño* and made it a widely read and discussed piece among its contemporaries, is an in-depth study of the Puerto Rican peasantry in the highlands. Del Valle likewise perceived the peasantry to be the heart of Puerto Rico and deemed their racial heritage, immorality, lack of health, and poverty as the main obstacles to the island's progress and modernization. This text is not a novel or a historical account. Its purpose was to report on the peasants' environment and physical and moral deficiencies as well as to provide a set of recommendations for their improvement, including modifications to the colonial political system.[88]

Del Valle's essay began with an interpretation of the island's ethnic/racial history, the stumbling block for liberal intellectuals. He catalogued Puerto Ricans' different ethnic/racial influences throughout the centuries (Indians, Spanish, and Africans) to explain the racial mixture of the population.[89] However, the islanders were not the only ones with racial mixture. He argued that indigenous people and Spaniards were also racially mixed. As in Brau's work, underscoring the "impurity" of Spaniards may have served to indicate that racial mixture did not necessarily condemn Puerto Ricans to a primitive existence, as Spain had achieved great civilization despite its miscegenation.

In this historical account, Del Valle—in contrast to Zeno Gandía—explained the demise of the indigenous population as the result of the conquest and subtly acknowledged the role of African slaves and their descendants in the constitution of the Puerto Rican population. Islanders had long lived in a caste-based society, defined along color lines. However, at a certain historical moment, the caste society evolved into a class society, and miscegenation became even more pronounced.[90] Like Zeno Gandía, Del Valle Atiles racialized the island's geography by insisting that the commercial nature of the coast fostered miscegenation among its inhabitants. In contrast, such racial/ethnic mixture did not take place in the rural areas. Although at times the author diminished the relevance of racial miscegenation (directly or implicitly by emphasizing racial mixture in Spain), Del Valle Atiles could not move beyond the racist framework organizing his historical interpretation. In the Puerto Rican liberals' imaginations, the peasant of the interior remained closer to pure whiteness. Hence Del Valle's exhaustive scientific study certified the whiteness of the highland inhabitants.

While Del Valle Atiles did not deny miscegenation, especially on the coast, he believed that the miscegenation "problem" could be treated. Eventually, white blood and civilizing culture would overpower the black heritage. Del Valle Atiles contended that this substitution process was already in progress, since black influences had diminished considerably after the island's abolition of the slave trade and white immigration to the island.[91] In this take on

mestizaje, Del Valle Atiles understood the long process of "shedding" blackness as part of an evolutionary progression toward whiteness and thus modernity. In the larger text, the author contrasted Puerto Rico's preeminent whiteness to the blackness characterizing other Caribbean islands, especially Haiti, continuing a long-standing tradition within the reformist camp. Del Valle Atiles also linked social and racial harmony to the abolition of slavery, as if abolition erased racialized conflict. Like his counterparts in Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, Del Valle Atiles advocated for white immigration to accelerate what was already an inevitable evolutionary process on the island, foreshadowing his future advocation of eugenics.[92]

Del Valle Atiles's recommendations throughout the text were geared to improving the multiracial peasantry's work capacity (*capacidad industrial*). In order to become workers/citizens in the modern nation, the multiracial peasantry had to improve physically, morally, and intellectually. The *jornaleros*' lack of work ethic derived from the combination of physical problems, climate, sociopolitical status, and ethnic history. All these factors could be treated to a certain extent.

The racial scientific knowledge in vogue at the time influenced Del Valle Atile's work. He systematically employed anthropometrics—the measurement of body parts, which strove to scientifically prove that differences between races were rooted in their biology—to study the Puerto Rican population. While Zeno Gandía sought to evoke the image of the scientist carefully looking at the population through a microscope, in this essay the physician Del Valle Atiles almost literally examined Puerto Ricans through a microscope, as if he were dissecting insects for a laboratory experiment. He segregated the island population according to race: mixed-bloods, blacks, and white rural folk. He recorded and compared information on body size, body symmetry, skin color, hair, facial and brain shape, and size of torso. He also recorded details about the shape and weight of the head, thorax, pelvis, brain, nervous systems, lungs, and liver. The physician contended that he could catalogue the illnesses that affected each population group according to sex, age, and race. As in *La Charca*, Del Valle Atiles also linked physical illnesses (especially malaria) to the lush vegetation, humidity, and warmth of the interior tropical environment. According to his study, blacks were better suited to survive the dry, warm areas of the coast than the whites, who required the breeze and coolness of the interior. Science and health served to mark racially geographic boundaries and also justify the elites' push to urbanize the rural areas. Ultimately, the physician's prescription to treat the physical ailments afflicting the population was to whiten it. In this process, the *mestizo* was just a transitional stage, which in time, and with further white immigration, would improve the Puerto Rican stock.

Science and health invested the physician with the authority to dictate radical changes in the peasantry's lifestyle, such as the improvement of educational opportunities, living conditions, and diet. Many of these interventions sought to shape the intimate realms of individuals' lives: the allocation of time and work (to grow their own produce and raise livestock), control of leisure activities (eradication of alcohol consumption), and patterning of sexual behavior (encouraging

selection of white sexual partners). In particular, Del Valle Atiles repeatedly lamented what he saw as the peasants' deviant sexual behavior, drawing a direct correlation between the peasants' immoral behavior (sexual unions among kin) and physical degeneration (sick children).

All three intellectuals in this chapter were preoccupied with intrafamily sexual relationships. The implication that incest, the most fearful of taboos, was a common practice among the peasantry signaled the primitive or chaotic aspect of the rural folks and how mentally, spiritually, and physically sick they were, especially in a society with such strong ties to Catholicism. Of course, these intellectuals ignored that the practice of marriage between kin was also common among members of the elite, who were attempting to keep properties and inheritance within the extended family. Moreover, liberals' obsession with peasants' sexual practices coincided with the historical moment in which slavery and apprenticeship—state mechanisms implemented to maintain racialized boundaries—were transformed. Control over the sexual practices among the laboring classes became elites' preferred way to recreate a racialized order, and to do so without explicitly disclosing its racialized nature. Liberal intellectuals might have perceived the peasantry's aberrant behavior of supposedly incestuous sex as the product of what they saw as the hypersexual nature and moral corruption of the African component of the population. Sexual restraint thus figured at the center of Del Valle Atiles's preventive and corrective treatment.

For Del Valle Atiles, "hygiene and protective administrative measures, education, and stimuli by way of reward are the only way of achieving something positive" in Puerto Rico.[93] He called for the designing of a "rational plan," which in the "end will benefit the government because it will be able to collect the profits from the growth in production directly resulting from strengthening and improve the health of the *productores*."[94] In deploying this language of labor, Del Valle Atiles furthered the constitutive process of the worker as a political identity at the end of the century.

As the medical guardian of the peasantry, Del Valle Atiles indicted the colonial system for the ailments of the population. The colonial government strangled the population with its high taxes, for example, making it impossible for peasants to get basic nutrition. Del Valle Atiles specifically denounced the colony's labor exploitation: the colonial government halted the introduction of technological advances that could have eased peasants' overwork and provided the additional time they needed to mature intellectually. Despite these problems, Del Valle Atiles noted glimpses of the peasantry's intellectual capabilities, for instance, in their poetry and *décimas*.

However, for Del Valle Atiles race was indeed a weighty factor in explaining the deficient minds of peasants. In his recommendation for education, Del Valle Atiles noted important distinctions: "there are several natural dispositions—especially among *jíbaros* of the *raza blanca*, whose brains are much better organized."[95] Nevertheless, "because nothing has been done up to now," he claimed everyone, including "the peasant of *filiación caucásica* as well as that of *africano* or *mixto* origin," are "idle more than living an active intelligent life," and in need of education. Thus Del Valle Atiles envisioned elementary schools as treatment centers

where teachers could shape peasants into moral beings and skilled workers, learning new agricultural techniques and practices, in order to sustain a new colonial political/economic system.

Del Valle Atiles also criticized colonial institutions for their failure to monitor and segregate the island population; the resulting long-standing social and sexual interactions between Africans and Spaniards, he argued, negatively afflicted their moral character. Consequently, the peasantry often mixed Catholic beliefs with folk practices and superstitions and widely accepted concubinage as the norm. Perhaps worst of all, their hypersexuality resulted from norms established among Africans during slavery. Del Valle Atiles argued that slaves always exhibited a strong sexual appetite but that white masters' sexual abuse of slave women contributed to further moral corruption. Furthermore, slave owners encouraged illicit sexual unions among slaves to increase the number of slave hands. Because the long centuries under slavery had deteriorated the social body, emancipation, then, was the first step to social regeneration.

Slavery and the repressive colonial administration were also responsible for the subservient and apolitical character of the peasantry. While he portrayed rural folks as at times selfless, nonviolent, and welcoming to strangers, the physician emphasized their ignorance and lack of agency and initiative. For these reasons, political leaders, he argued, "at times distrust and fear them."[96] These leaders were not only concerned about the manipulations to the electoral system, "but they also doubt the peasantry has the inner strength to overcome not only outside threats and coercion but their own selfishness, idleness, and, though rarely, petty interests that previously have led some of them to vote against their own inclinations."

Furthermore, the peasantry's social organization was fundamentally different from that of the educated, white elites: peasants did not live in patriarchal nuclear families and did not behave like capitalist, market-oriented, consumer beings. An illustrative sign of this deficiency was that popular classes disregarded private property. Most rural folks did not perceive taking plantains, chickens, or other articles from a neighbor as robbery, nor did these actions provoke outrage among the victims. Because of these many shortcomings suffered by the rural population, the author noted, many liberal politicians seriously doubted the *jíbaros*' competency as political allies.

Despite all the problems he carefully catalogued, the physician remained hopeful that transformation could indeed succeed because he had seen encouraging signs. For example, the peasantry had actively demonstrated their affection toward Spain, such as the time they headed the armed struggle in defense of the island from the Dutch and British invasions. In this sort of mobilization, he recognized a sense of patriotism and loyalty among popular classes. Del Valle Atiles called for religious, government, and civil organizations to join efforts in a transformational project seeking to constitute liberal but laboring subjects: "they can found organizations that can cultivate the field workers' trust and can communicate the benefits of saving, praise work as a noble virtue that should be loved, recognizing those who are hardworking, honoring them, assisting them when in need so they can appreciate the benefits they can obtain by doing the right thing."[97]

Like Brau, Del Valle Atiles saw economic rationality (embodied in the virtue of money saving and capable of consuming) at the heart of this subject formation. He also advocated for workers' associations. The mutual aid societies Del Valle Atiles suggested for workers were avenues to cultivate a self-disciplined, compliant worker. In this liberal design there was no need for direct government intervention; the civil society and its host of institutions would internally regulate and engender new desires in individuals. Elites would stop "yearning for government regulations" that "maybe were necessary in earlier times but which now are understood as unfair and ineffective in inciting others to work."[98]

In essence, Del Valle Atiles's essay shared with Brau and Zeno Gandía a preoccupation with the future of Puerto Rico, a future that depended on modernizing not only the political, economic, and social structures but also the subjectivities of those inhabiting the island. Racialized mixture was the main feature of the population that intellectuals and politicians had to consider. In the process, they constructed their own whiteness.

Conclusion

By the late nineteenth century, the nation-state had become the preferred mode of governance among powerful economic and political elites throughout postcolonial Latin America, especially as they sought to profit from an expanding free-market-oriented, international economy. These late-nineteenth-century global dynamics also captured the imagination of a sector of the middle and upper-middle class in Puerto Rico. The economic and political dynamics of the century had provided the conditions for these sectors to emerge in this Spanish colony and fueled their desires and ambitions for change and sociopolitical preeminence in the regimes of transformation. But those new dynamics also made possible the constitution of other social groups such as the free workers who developed nuanced ways of sidestepping, participating, and thus shaping the processes of change. The fragile position of these colonial social groups within the larger Spanish empire, where their access to governmental apparatus was elusive at best, forced dissimilar groups such as liberals and artisans to forge an ambivalent, discontinuous, and conflictive set of paternalist social relations and political alliances, which later allowed them to turn the colonial regime on its head and fundamentally alter the imperial order. They argued that equal participation in imperial governance was the path to follow while unequivocally constituting a national community. The constitutive relationship between nation and empire had defined the Western European community and state formations for more than a century. The realities at the turn of the century led Puerto Rican autonomists to design parallel imaginations.

In this context, Puerto Rican liberal intellectuals employed an array of texts and discourses—genres such as essays, novels, and newspaper articles; the appropriation of the scientific method to conduct research and debate; the idioms of medicine, hygiene, and morality—to present themselves to different audiences as the modern subjects they desired to be. At the same time, they

articulated the hurdles and projects they believed they faced in constituting modern popular subjects out of the laboring populations. In other words, an important share of the intellectual production of the time was an in-depth assessment of the various segments of the working classes. The liberal elites attempted to impose guidelines on the population that would indicate which inhabitants could and should be active political allies: peasants had to become healthy, moral, educated, and whitened. Above all, these intellectuals' objective was to transform, in particular, the peasants of the interior into industrious and hardworking men.

The works of Dr. Manuel Zeno Gandía, Dr. Francisco del Valle Atiles, and historian Salvador Brau are a window into the desires and contradictions embedded in the Puerto Rican liberal mindset that organized the complex relationship between political liberal elites and their subaltern populations. In their efforts to interpret the island's social, political, and economic realities, these elites disclosed their deep submersion and active participation in multiple trans-Atlantic circuits of knowledge.[99] Most importantly, these writings highlight the elites' preoccupation with the peasantry as the productive basis of society on which the possibility of creating a modern sociopolitical entity rested. In the quest to materialize those ambitions, these intellectuals recreated racial and gender hierarchies that legitimized their political superiority over women and the racially mixed masses. They did so, however, by acknowledging racial mixture and silencing histories of racialized domination.

These silencing practices are even more evident in the ways in which these writers attempt to understand the extent to which black African ancestry affected the bodies, minds, and affections of the laboring classes. They crafted cultural and biohistories that either completely erased or undermined blackness while emphasizing indigeneity or Spanish ancestry. They persistently celebrated whiteness in explicit ways and avoided speaking of the negative associations attributed to nonwhites. They employed subtle racialization of characters and populations to explain inappropriate social behaviors. Often they blamed slavery as a system, or the condition of the slave, as the source of moral corruption. They sought to present a more complex array of factors influencing human nature and behavior beyond race, but they all also marked racial mixture as a crucial problem. And these intellectuals consistently focused on laboring women and their sexual behavior as an obstacle to the improvement of ill bodies, always racializing them indirectly as nonwhite (*india*, *mulata*, *trigueña*). Regulation of sexuality was an alternative means to prevent or manage appropriate racial miscegenation. The contradictory and discontinuous ways in which these writers dealt with the "problem" of blackness—trying to avoid direct debate but unable to stop racializing the world they were assessing—accounts for the multiplicity of silences that coalesced in these writings and would inform their practices as local-level politicians.

The liberals' strategic negotiations with selective popular sectors did achieve concrete results. Spain finally granted the Autonomic Charter in 1897,[100] and a faction among liberals won the first elections in 1898 because of the male popular vote.[101] The liberal elites' project to reform the peasantry also took a concrete

form in everyday life. These men held considerable power over the municipal governing structures. Through an examination of the urban rearrangement of Ponce during the 1880s and 1890s in the next chapter, we can see how liberals, through the policies they implemented, put into practice their social and political project.

Most importantly, we can witness how the subjects of such reforms challenged and negotiated the liberal elites' dispositions. Puerto Ricans of African descent did not accept these erasures. Many Puerto Rican blacks challenged the contradiction white liberal intellectuals found between blackness and modernity, and some of these liberal black intellectuals crafted alternative discourses. For example, Pedro Carlos Timothée, a black elementary school teacher, appropriated the idea of "racial harmony" in an 1893 *Revista Puertorriqueña* essay[102] advocating for racial reconciliation. Embracing his blackness and denouncing those who attempted to deny their African descent, Timothée stressed that blacks were not against progress on the island. He also emphasized that blacks knew how to be grateful to the white elites, in a conciliatory tone that was probably a response to white liberals and conservatives who repeatedly claimed that blacks were a threat to democracy. In his essay, the author reaffirmed that social harmony was also the blacks' main goal and that, if any blacks stood against that unity by instigating racial hatred, they did not deserve to live in their civilized society. In spite of advocating for accommodating white elites, the black liberal politician, Timothée, emphasized blacks' commitment to modernity and their ability to behave like citizens.

Moreover, the liberals' intense focus on the discourse of labor made that discourse a way for the multiracial classes to gain political recognition. They seized the opportunity to emphasize their hard work in order to justify their claims to better living and working conditions. They contested liberal dismissals of their intelligence and citizenship, employing a language of labor on some occasions and using their own silences at other times.

Chapter 3

Race and the Modernization of Ponce after Slavery

In 1874, a group of former slaves working at the hacienda La Florida, in the town of Santa Isabel in Ponce's administrative district, organized as laborers to demand payment for their services.[1] After the death of its owner, La Florida had become the object of a legal battle between its overseer and the hacienda's heir, Don Carlos Cabrera. In the midst of their dispute, a group of *libertos* working at the hacienda mobilized to demand payment of owed wages and relief money, which they had not received at the moment of emancipation. They presented their demands to the town's mayor, the *Síndico Protector de Libertos* (the assistant to the Freedpeople's Advocate), and the *tribunal de juicios verbales* (the municipal court for small claims). All agreed that Cabrera was responsible for the money. When Cabrera refused to comply with the court's decision, the judge referred the matter to the Spanish governor, noting that the owner's breach of his "sacred obligations" had become "the subject of unfavorable commentary against the authorities."[2] The governor and other colonial administrators in San Juan shared the local authorities' concerns over the workers' "disgruntled"[3] state and sent reminders to all municipal authorities to pay special attention to salary payments to other newly freed workers. Authorities recognized the mounting pressure from below, the vigilant *clase jornalera*. In the end, Cabrera sold some of his assets to pay the former slaves.

These *libertos*' demands for salary payment *and* monetary compensation illustrate the circulation of knowledge, practices, and bodies shaping the labor culture of the postemancipation moment. They successfully employed the language of contract and labor to win concessions (such as relief money) never discussed among island authorities or slave owners, taking advantage of their knowledge that some former slaves had received relief money. Trapped within their own discourse that equated labor with rights, island officials simultaneously perceived the working population as a racialized political force with which to be reckoned.

While these former slaves rarely used race in the demands, elites considered former slaves as a problem population because of their race, and figuring out how to both incorporate and contain them was an incredibly tense and contested

process. Even as certain workers became an influential sociopolitical constituency, the liberal and conservative elite of Ponce repeatedly labeled the broader laboring classes as uneducated, immoral, idle, and racially mixed (i.e., impure), particularly those who migrated into the city after 1870. City leaders designed strategies to control, repress, and shape the floating population from the interior—and, even worse in their minds, from the coast—into reliable workers: the engine of a new and diversified economy. The black and brown populations, especially women, were the favorite targets of these modernization campaigns to remove and marginalize the "dangerous" laboring poor to the fringes of the city, where they would constitute a reliable pool of workers. Ponce's authorities deployed the mutually constitutive languages of morality, health, hygiene, labor, and sexuality articulated in the works of Zeno Gandía, Del Valle Atiles, and Brau. In doing so, city leaders and government officials deflected attention from the underlying racialized coordinates organizing the city's geography. These idioms constituted an intricate weave of ideologies and practices informing the remapping of towns, cities, regions, and the island as a whole. The objective was to manage a laboring population that was increasingly becoming a political force and who, with their grievances, threatened both the status quo and the emerging reform projects.

Within these contradictory processes of exclusion and inclusion, the groups of workers who appropriated and expanded the language of labor and the corollary idioms of health and decency were able to gain some economic and political leverage, despite their racial and ethnic origins. In particular, urban artisans, the majority of whom were black and mulatto, were able to forge and systematically deploy their identity as workers. Race did not disqualify them from becoming political allies, especially with liberals, although it surely limited their sphere of political action. Such cross-class, cross-racial alliances, as discussed in chapter 2, were indeed crucial to the struggle to alter the colonial arrangement governing the island. The success of the proautonomy coalitions in 1897—which various interests wove together mostly through the rhetoric of labor—has come to fuel the story of racial harmony and obscure the ways in which antiblack racism mediated these political processes. The accounts of racial struggle have been muted in the process not only in the production of histories in subsequent times but also because silences were crucial in the success of such alliances.

Indeed, despite this silencing, an expanded repertoire of techniques of racialization organized a wide array of symbolic and material processes at the end of the nineteenth century. Antiblack racism and struggles to challenge its many forms permeated all aspects of Puerto Rico's reorganization in the three decades following emancipation. These struggles are particularly visible in negotiations over urban development in Ponce, a city experiencing the political and ideological battles that, in many ways, would lay the foundation of the labor movement and US reform projects after 1898. Here liberals and conservatives put in practice their desires to forge a clean, rationally organized, well-adorned, and culturally thriving city, campaigns that racialized the laboring poor as black and rendered lower-class women and the black/brown population once again as the main targets of political repression. Urban skilled workers, many of whom were of African descent, managed to gain some political recognition amid the elites' disciplining

and marginalizing efforts. Although politicians and artisans articulated these cross-class, cross-racial alliances through a language of labor, race was fundamental to their realization. Collective and contested memories and commemorations of slavery and abolition constituted an arena to speak about racial inequality and to rehearse racial inclusion in a political environment shunning an open debate about the place of blacks and the racially mixed in Puerto Rico. In and through public debates over health and labor after slavery, different interests silenced race for different reasons, strategically encoding it in articulations of class interests.

The Reorganization and Racialization of Ponce after Abolition

On May 11, 1880, Juan José Mayoral, an assemblyman of liberal tendencies, proposed to the municipal council of Ponce that the city construct a monument and a plaza (known as the *Parque de la Abolición*) in one of the main streets to commemorate abolition.[4] The monument would honor Spain's goodwill, embodied in the humanitarian act of freeing the slaves, and celebrate the peaceful transition from slavery to freedom, which they claimed was a unique case in Latin America. Perhaps they were thinking about how the many wars of independence and subsequent armed conflicts in the continent have eroded the system of slavery. The council decided ultimately to make the project into an island-wide effort and encouraged every individual and municipality in Puerto Rico to contribute financially. Through the project, Ponce's reformist elites sought to reaffirm their association with Spain while reasserting their city's position within the island as a site of civilization and progress. Ponce was the alternative capital, capable of social transformations without compromising social harmony.[5] They aimed their message not only at their Spanish superiors and counterparts in other municipalities but also at the larger working population within the city's boundaries.

Although Mayoral's proposal received widespread support, including from the Spanish Crown,[6] it also ignited disagreements. Some influential hacendados from Guayama refused to offer any support, perhaps because they had previously opposed abolition. Others, such as some representatives from Río Piedras, argued that the monument ought to be built in the capital, San Juan, not in Ponce, thereby contesting Ponce's preeminence over the capital.[7] José Mireli, another Ponce councilman, delivered the most interesting critique. He denounced the vanity of the project and suggested instead that the city use the monetary contributions for concrete material improvements. Mireli believed it would be more useful to construct a building in which the city could provide services to the poor classes and, in so doing, commemorate the end of slavery. He argued the monument and plaza benefited neither the general population nor those who had gained their freedom in 1873. Mireli clearly understood the multilayered meanings behind the monument. The debates about the monument and Mireli's critique highlight how the dynamics of abolition and its remembrance fueled both the modern processes of urban development and, most importantly, the contours of liberal political culture in the city.

Mireli's counterproposal challenged Ponce's reputation as the *Ciudad Señorial* (the Patrician City), a title pointing to the monetary and cultural wealth of late-nineteenth-century elites. Parallel to the wealth was another reality: the increasing impoverishment of Ponce's working population, especially the former slaves. The council dismissed Mireli's critique and constituted a committee to oversee the monetary collection, design, and construction of the plaza.[8] Other local leaders, however, embraced Mireli's growing concerns about the urban population. Mireli not only exposed the more complex social reality of the postabolition years but also employed a nuanced language, the idiom of social reform, which had gained currency in local politics. By looking at the making of Ponce, we will be able to appreciate how elite concerns over a growing undisciplined population were a means to express apprehension about the recurring blackening of its human landscape. This blackening was the direct result of the many overlapping processes of dispossession underlying the municipality's economic and population growth. As the municipality expanded and contracted to accommodate economic demands and opportunities, white Creole elites and colonial administrators competed against each other and against long-term settled and incoming laborers for control over the direction the infrastructural, ideological, and cultural changes would take.

Like the economic trajectory of the rest of the island, Ponce's economic course changed drastically in the late eighteenth century, from ranching, grazing, and minor crop agriculture to export-oriented sugar and then coffee production.[9] By the second half of the nineteenth century, the concentration in sugar and coffee had produced lasting social transformations, dramatically increasing the number of slaves in Ponce and alienating many free peasants from their land and turning them into *jornaleros* for larger haciendas.[10] Ponce, in turn, grew from a town into a city.[11] The material needs and cultural aspirations of the sugar and coffee families facilitated the expansion of transportation and other services and stimulated civic and cultural organizations, particularly beginning in the 1850s.[12] The city's growing economic power attracted numerous migrants in the last decades of the century, even through the sugar industry's woes in the 1870s. In 1860, Ponce's population stood at 28,156; by 1899, it had grown to 55,477 inhabitants.

The economic and population boom prompted the administrative reconfiguration of the city in the late nineteenth century. The profitability of the coffee industry led to the merging of some *barrios* and the creation of new ones, with their inhabitants lobbying the municipal assembly for schools, roads, and other services.[13] In particular, the Playa *barrio*, formerly a neighborhood of warehouses, trading company offices, and working peoples' homes, developed quickly into an urban center. The wealthy classes began claiming La Playa for their businesses and residences after the 1870s.[14] Influential families frequently requested land grants and housing permits from the municipal assembly, as well as schools, teachers, medical facilities, larger paved streets and sidewalks, and other goods and services. The municipal council responded readily to these requests and additionally granted them permission to build monuments and plazas like those in the downtown areas. Municipal elites—administrators and civic leaders—intended, in effect, to build a new city.

Their mutual project encompassed and traversed private and public domains. Individual citizens' desires to craft a civil space of action within a repressive colonial regime was an important engine behind the modernizing impulse.[15] Because of state surveillance and the colonial apparatus's unwillingness to fully integrate the emerging citizenry into political structures—after all, it was a Spanish colony—the modernizing endeavor rested on the shaping of public space through an infrastructure of private residences and businesses. At the same time, many of these individuals or their kin were members of the local municipal councils that granted land and construction permits and relied heavily on support from the city's wealthy classes. The state was deeply invested in the modernization of the city, at least whenever it did not threaten the state's authority. If the partnership between the colonial administration and the local elites was not without tense and discordant encounters, such as when a group of Playa residents requested independence from Ponce in 1888,[16] it coalesced around a common fear of the growing working population as a threat both to the political stability of the colonial state and to the modernizing project liberals embraced.

The Population Problem

Lower-class migrations into Ponce after abolition sparked great concerns among city administrators. A brief look at the censuses of one of Ponce's barrios for 1875 and 1877 seems to confirm that a sharp population increase was real, particularly among the *libertos*. As of 1875, the sugar barrio of Coto registered 465 workers as white, 13 workers of color, and 61 *libertos* as black or mulatto.[17] Two years later, the barrio counted 506 whites (including proprietors and field and domestic workers) and 461 mulattos and blacks (mostly field and domestic workers). The categorization of new inhabitants in Coto as black and mulatto—most certainly done by the *alcalde de barrio*, a prominent resident of the locality usually charged with census tabulation and tax collection—reflected a common wisdom among the middle and upper classes that the incoming, troublesome population was largely black and mulatto. On July 9, 1887, the municipal assembly called for an extraordinary meeting to debate immediate solutions to the problem because of an impending visit by the governor general to the city. "Some come looking for a job to provide for their subsistence while others come to do illegal acts," a reform advocate explained. "I called this meeting so a group can propose to our superior authority measures that could help these workers achieve their goals. I also called attention to the fact that a significant number of islanders are illiterate and that with no doubt this class can take on cultivation fostering agriculture, which is this country's main source of wealth."[18] To stem the tide of backward migrants and the attendant rise in criminal activity, the councilmen called for work. For authorities and Creole elites, the ethics of labor constituted a regulatory practice necessary to enable the modern liberal, wealthy, and market-oriented society they envisioned.

Even without overt references to race, their discourses about migration and labor held deep racial meanings. At this particular meeting, for example, the councilmen did not specify when the troublesome migration into the city had

begun, perhaps because they all assumed that abolition had provided the spark. Police records indeed indicate that many former slaves from the nearby towns of Peñuelas, Villalba, Santa Isabel, and others sought work in the plantation and urban areas of Ponce after emancipation.

The steady stream of black and brown migrant bodies into Ponce appeared to threaten the political order, to the advantage of proautonomy liberals. Mayor Ramón Elices perceived Ponce as teeming with wandering vagrants and mobs attacking the authority of the police and the colonial administration. On December 24, 1886, he noted, a mob threw rocks at the new chief of police and his accompanying officers, an incident that quickly escalated into violence in the *Plaza las Delicias*. Elices sent in more police officers. Although the violence most likely stemmed from the mayor's harassment and surveillance policies implemented earlier in the year, he used the occasion to call for greater security measures. "Realizing that the main source of crimes was found at the taverns, brothels, and gambling houses," Elices argued, "I re-directed the officials of Public Order to watch vigilantly over the former and persecute tenaciously the latter sites, which in short time began disappearing."[19] Unable to recognize that state repression fueled popular uprisings, Elices depicted the autonomists as dangerous radicals, especially because of their presumed alliance with black and brown migrants in the city.

Political instability in Spain fueled concerns about further instability in the colony. Madrid had experienced a series of republican revolts in September 1886 and, in light of the crisis engulfing the island's sugar industry in the 1880s, authorities feared an alliance between liberal elite and the lower classes. Elices and other colonial authorities responded with a violent wave of state repression and immediately issued a new decree for public order,[20] allowing police to make arrests indiscriminately.[21] In 1887, Elices issued another alarm against the "rising tide" of antigovernment forces in his city. "The particularities of the political conflict here have given way to the formation of only two local political parties," he argued. "One is committed to the principle of integration and is always on the side of government. The other one aspires to self-government (*Autonomía*) or maybe to the Republic and perhaps seeks out something else which they hide very carefully." Echoing the growing concerns of local and island-wide colonial authorities over the mobility of laboring-class bodies, Elices gestured toward a liberal conspiracy converging in Ponce, where "ninety percent of its inhabitants are always against the government, incessantly looking for opportunities to mortify it and slander it through intrigues, scandals, messy deals, only because they cannot destroy it by force."[22]

Elices' actions responded to a series of earlier incidents (robberies and fires) against a few Spanish businesses. The years 1885 through 1887 saw severe economic distress, and several secret organizations emerged on the island, which perceived Spanish business owners as the culprits of all economic maladies and sought to organize boycotts. Conservative forces saw in these incidents a large threat and blamed the autonomists for the incidents. The new governor general, Romualdo Palacios, had received reports about the popular roots of the autonomist movement, which was composed of "negros de la clase artesana y jornaleros"

and had elected "three *negros* as councilmen" in Arroyo.[23] Governor Palacios sought to thwart dissent by sending the Guardia Civil to raid the houses of many autonomists in towns through the southern coast. The wave of state repression in 1887 extended to central leaders of the Autonomist Party and redrew the political boundaries between the conservative and liberal political camps. Colonial authorities charged many autonomist sympathizers with conspiring against the state and subsequently imprisoned and tortured them. Articles detailing state abuses proliferated in newspapers across the island, especially in the liberal *Revista de Puerto Rico*.[24] The persecution, imprisonment, and torture of autonomists, most of whom hailed from the southern coast, in 1887—known as the year of the *compontes*, a form of torture inflicted on prisoners—also constituted a moment of severe rupture between the most conservative elites and the liberals, as well as a growing divide between San Juan, the home of the Spanish colonial state, and Ponce, the emerging Creole capital. The assault to autonomist leaders was also a way for authorities to disrupt the cross-racial, cross-class alliances forged in the ongoing meetings of anticolonial secret societies.

Despite the divergences between conservatives and liberal leaders, these two political groups generally coexisted and often collaborated in the making of the Puerto Rican nation. They shared a similar approach to the "vagrancy" problem by appropriating, once again, the language of labor and, consequently, silencing race. Labor as a principle of social organization, particularly in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico—and as a main frame of organizing counterhegemonic forces—necessitated the constitution of its antithesis, the vagrant.[25] The municipal council of Ponce coined the term "*los indeseables*" (the undesirables) in the 1880s, to refer to recent migrants who seemed to embody vagrancy and criminality because they lacked stable wage jobs. "Because of its prominent position, the city [of Ponce] attracts the vast majority of vagrants and ill-living people from other towns," Mayor Elices argued. "This is the reason for the large increase in the number of ill-entertained, wandering people we see here and who already have turned into a school of crime." He called for the mass surveillance of "vagrants," "the cause of mayhem" in the city, and demanded more authority since there were "no modes of prevention in place or even sufficient legal status enabling their effective repression."[26]

The colonial administration across the island and local authorities in Ponce had enacted laws, regulations, and edicts persecuting vagrancy as early as 1817, in a drive to contain workers' mobility and to control the labor supply.[27] They worked hand in hand in the ensuing decades—antivagrancy measures were passed in 1838, 1839, 1841, 1843, 1844, 1847, 1849 (the *Reglamento de Jornaleros*), 1850, and 1862[28]—to tighten and expand the state apparatus, including regulations compelling *hacendados* to pay taxes owed by *agregados* on their property,[29] requiring official permits to move between municipalities,[30] and ordering lands without titles to be placed under private ownership.[31] Such laws greatly restricted peasants' access to land and created a labor pool under the state's authority, particularly for public works projects.[32] Hence the "vagrant" became a catch-all category through which the state and civil allies could manage the lives of the free peasantry and dispose of their labor. As Governor Gonzalo Arostegui stated in 1820, the island's

economic growth depended on the authorities' capacity to exterminate the "lazy, apathetic, and invasive individuals," whom he described as *polilla* (moth) eating away at the internal social fabric of the island.[33]

Colonial authorities resorted to moments of intense repression like in 1887 to contain and manage general social unrest while at other moments they joined civic leaders in more subtle practices such as classifying the "unhealthy," "racially impure," "uneducated" lower classes as "vagrants" who needed to be arrested, trained, and employed for a wage. More traditional forms of repression—the blunt criminalization and systematic persecution of vagrants—overlapped with nuanced forms of social control. Vagrants were portrayed as physically and morally degenerate beings requiring reform schools, hospitals, asylums, and charity organizations. When the Ponce municipal assembly decided, again in 1887, to employ "vagrants" in the construction of a road from Ponce to Adjuntas (on which prisoners were already working), liberals like the abolitionist Ramón Baldorioty de Castro supported the measure.[34] In the liberal conception of the world, labor was a self-governing technology through which individuals could regulate themselves and cultivate their sense of self, a mode of internal moral regeneration distinct from slavery and coerced labor. Paradoxically, the liberal worldview legitimized the forced relocation of potential workers from Ponce's downtown to the state's labor sites in the interior.

Although these labor regulations applied in theory to the multiracial lower classes, race and gender shaped their enforcement. Conservative elites had framed their opposition to abolition by claiming over and over that black slaves lacked the capacity to become reliable producers, a racial rhetoric and logic that outlived slavery's end. State officials and plantation owners demanded the categorization and surveillance of the working population. In the leading sugar-producing barrios, the census of 1873 exclusively registered men between 16 and 60 years old, who composed the core of the plantation labor force.[35] Perhaps more significantly, census and police records from the 1870s to the 1880s repeatedly kept track of a person's relationship to slavery, a crucial marker of social difference in the years following abolition. The census of 1875 and 1877 for the barrio Coto, for example, accounted for all *libertos* and *libertas*.[36] The police log *Registro para la toma de razón de requisitorias Ciudad de Ponce, Año 1883–1885*, was likewise filled with such references, such as a 19-year-old fugitive described as a *pardo libre*[37] and another man identified as a *negro liberto* of Don M. Figueroa, as if he were still Figueroa's property.[38] Individuals were also categorized as *condición libre ingenuo*, which meant that the person had been born free before abolition.[39]

Although such categories were employed more in the rural barrios of Ponce than in the urban ones, the criminal records from 1870 to 1890 illustrate a similar process of racialization that bound the city's people of color to criminality and work.[40] A host of phenotypical traits, including skin color, served as tools for the authorities to identify potential workers and criminals. The police daily logs, where officers registered complaints, accusations, ongoing investigations, arrests, and resolutions, listed an overwhelming number of black/mulatto men of working age (especially from the midteens to late thirties) accused of committing crimes, even though former slaves constituted only about 10 percent of the

population on the island and in Ponce. In most reported cases of robbery, persons of middle- and upper-class backgrounds accused freedpeople of stealing a wide range of articles such as a bag of coffee, plantains, a chicken, a pig, a watch, a basket of bread, and other small items. More than anything else, instances of petty theft spoke to the increasing impoverishment of the lower classes.

The close association between blackness and criminality and especially vagrancy drove state authorities to persecute persons of African descent for their absence from work. In the apprenticeship period (1873–76), officials had helped employers track down *libertos* who did not comply with their contract obligations. In May 1873, for instance, Don Vicente Fano complained to the police that the *liberto* José (a.k.a. Calabozo) had left his hacienda without notice. Authorities searched for him for two years, inquiring about José's whereabouts in various barrios such as Playa, San Antón, Bucaná, Sabanetas, Vaya, and Capitanejo, before locating him in 1875.[41] This was not an exceptional case, for freedpeople frequently changed employers, even taking jobs in different barrios.[42] Not surprisingly, most complaints were filed against former male slaves in agricultural barrios, especially Coto, Canas, Pastillos, Machuelo Abajo, and Machuelo Arriba. The numerous arrests, either for robbery or for absence from work,[43] then enabled state officials to assign black and mulatto workers to public works projects, private agricultural enterprises, or, in the case of women, private homes as domestics.

Such a strong emphasis on work did not translate into equal standing before the state for all employed workers. As *liberta* Josefa Capó discovered firsthand, race and gender profoundly defined the colonial state's priorities. In 1878, according to the police records, *liberto* Etanislao Marques raped Capó, who was 22 years old and pregnant, on the hacienda where they both lived and worked. Capó, Marques, and another *liberta* had just returned to the hacienda grounds after a night of *bomba* dancing.[44] As Capó informed the police, once the other *liberta* left them to walk to her house, Marques threw her down, raped her while silencing her mouth with a handkerchief, and once finished, hit her. Under excruciating pain, Capó was unable to stand up until another *liberto* found her and took her to the police headquarters. She lost her baby. Although Marques confessed to the crime, state authorities absolved him completely. The physician who had treated Capó concluded that she might not have been raped at all, suggesting that her injuries could have been self-inflicted and (contradicting himself) that she should have shown more resistance.

Capó's inability to find a hearing before the state underscored the racial and gendered roots of the language of labor framing and infusing Puerto Rican politics after slavery. First, Capó was a black female, a former slave who did not follow white elites' prescriptions for proper female behavior. Not only was she pregnant, most likely out of wedlock, but Capó had been engaging in a "boisterous," "African" event. State authorities believed she lacked the self-discipline required of proper workers and therefore did not deserve state recognition or protection. Marques' assault did not contradict but complemented institutional modes of disciplining laboring black women. Second, Marques was a young, healthy male fully employed on a sugar plantation that depended on the labor of men like him. For authorities and planters, male labor was much more valuable than that

of females. Marques's imprisonment would have undermined the overriding interests of colonial authorities and *hacienda* owners. The language of labor and its antithesis, the idiom of vagrancy, served to discipline the black and mulatto population in particular and the lower classes in general.

Illness and Labor

In addition to criminalizing vagrants, Ponce elites conflated the language of labor with a discourse on hygiene, which they deemed crucial to their modernizing crusade. Like vagrancy, the rhetoric of illness silences race while being deeply racialized. Liberal intellectuals directly linked the "idleness" of Puerto Rican peasantry to their unhealthy bodies and minds. The island's progress, in their worldview, depended on their ability to transform lower-class men into compliant laborers and women into sexually restrained, properly behaved, good mothers. The health of the entire society appeared to rest on the health of individuals, and the individual's physical and mental health depended on her or his racial and ethnic origins, environment, behavior, inheritance, and other factors. The educated class therefore actively intervened in all aspects of the subalterns' lives, from their diet, leisure activities, and education to the realm of the intimate—family organization and sexual behavior. Liberals were not alone. Over time, conservatives and their representatives among the municipal authorities likewise began employing notions of health and hygiene to inform their surveillance practices. The city elites' concerns about health shaped the policing of the lower classes, especially after the abolition of slavery.

Under the modernizing logic of public health, vagrancy emanated from both a moral deficiency and a degenerated racialized body.[45] Physicians Zeno Gandía and Del Valle Atiles, for example, argued that a sick body inevitably corrupted the mind, a connection encoded thoroughly in colonial state records. Census records from the 1870s consistently included information on an individual's ability to work, segregating the *útil* (fit) from the *inútil* (unfit). Each person's disability—illness, blindness, missing body parts, and so on—was duly noted, pointedly under the heading "Occupation."[46] Like the censuses, criminal records, which registered a high number of blacks and mulattos, also emphasized an individual's illegitimate birth, inappropriate clothing, and physical disability in addition to occupational skills and education.[47] For the most part, the "criminals" were described as almost naked, with their few clothing items listed as "old, dirty, and torn to rags." Their appearance—dressed "like others of his class" and lacking shoes and teeth—came to be the main visual symbols of their physical illness and general unfitness for work.[48]

The elites believed the dismembered, naked, or ill bodies of the lower classes represented their racialized and sexual degeneracy and posed a threat to the city's health and progress.[49] Island physicians repeatedly warned peasants about becoming infected with parasites through their bare feet. The *Revista Puertorriqueña*, the liberal literary/scientific journal published by the *Ateneo Puertoriqueño* beginning in the late 1880s, printed several articles on the parasite *sarcopsylla penetran*. Commonly known as *niguas*, the flea-like insect penetrated human and animal skin,

especially through the feet, depositing its eggs and provoking incessant itching and skin ulcerations.[50] Alarmed by the high frequency of infection among Puerto Ricans, the *Revista Puertorriqueña* encouraged the use of appropriate clothing and shoes. The lack of teeth likewise appeared to indicate ill health, particularly as a sign of malnourishment, a source of concern for Puerto Rican physicians. It was no accident that many of the popular characters in Zeno Gandía's fiction lacked teeth, a physical trait that signified forcefully the misery, illness, and poverty of peasants.[51]

The incessant attention to bodily appearance racialized the Puerto Rican population distinctly along class lines. The criminal records, which centered on blacks and mulattos, included very detailed bodily descriptions, such as hair color and texture, beard, mustache, skin color, shape of face, eyes, forehead, eyebrows, nose, and mouth. And the mutilated state of many of these criminal bodies received special scrutiny. Men and women were consistently described as underdeveloped (boney, skinny, or short) and as missing a leg, finger, arm, or eye. Befitting of their criminal status, they had physical deformities, with limps, scars, and ulcers marking their bodies. Such descriptions contrasted starkly with the only middle/upper-class man I found in the police records. Don Juan Bernecet, wanted for murder, seemed to be the embodiment of health, wealth, and whiteness. He was described as corpulent, 67 years old, and married, with reddish-toned white skin, light brown hair, a blond mustache, a full set of teeth, and fancy clothing, including buffalo-skin shoes.[52]

To manage and dispose of the wandering *indeseables*, the elites of Ponce founded hospitals, asylums, and other social institutions—in addition to prisons—in the 1880s and 1890s.[53] The Albergue Caritativo Tricoche, Hospital Civil, Asilo de Locos, Asilo de Damas, Asilo de Mendigos o Ancianos Desamparados, Asilo de Ciegos, and other institutions emerged as alternate repositories for the "criminally irresponsible," as a police officer informed the mother of a misbehaving youth.[54] Asylums and charity institutions were not unlike jails, where inmates were sentenced to labor in public works, channeling previously unproductive people to employers in need of laborers or training their residents in high-demand occupations.[55] Institutions like the Casa de Beneficiencia in San Juan, one of the few for which documentation is available, had long held a reform mission that correlated with the elites' demand for labor. It was no accident, as historian Félix Matos Rodríguez argues, that the Casa de Beneficiencia was founded in the 1840s when San Juan was experiencing a great labor shortage. It actively trained its residents—the mentally ill, widows, prostitutes, orphans, criminals, slaves, and freed slaves (*emancipados*)—to become productive workers.[56]

Letters received by Ponce's municipal council in the 1880s, like the proceedings of that council, revealed that the city elites perceived the increasing number of "vagrants," "beggars," and "*alienados*" (mentally ill) as an urgent health crisis. Unable to detain and confine all of them in hospitals and prisons, the elites believed that by loitering around the urban core of the city the *indeseables* were trespassing on their domestic space. They demanded more asylums.

Calling for and building such institutions after slavery simultaneously encoded and erased race.[57] The litany of racialized and racializing labels for the *indeseables*

constituted categories through which the elites spoke of the unproductive members of society, those who rejected and challenged elite notions and norms on gender and work. These categories comprised a liberal, modern vocabulary that simultaneously silenced the workings of racialized marking while still branding and tracking the black and brown bodies of the subaltern population.

The Discourse on Hygiene and the Reorganization of the City

In tandem with a discourse on personal hygiene, concerns over urban sanitation served as another means to remove the diseased and racially mixed lower classes from the main areas of Ponce. The modernizing project brought together elites in an effort to reorganize the city's physical structures. Municipal authorities, for example, sought to systematically remove houses from the downtown area that failed to comply with the city's construction codes.[58] Particularly beginning in the late 1870s, municipal authorities[59] required all property owners to obtain a permit before making any modifications to their properties (e.g., tear down a wall, add a room or balcony, or change the roofing).[60] As those who could not afford the construction materials specified in the city codes moved out and those who could afford them moved in from other barrios,[61] the ownership of dwellings in the downtown area increasingly became a sign of status and privilege.

Resting on and couched in the city elites' notions of "safety," "cleanliness," and "aesthetics," the modernization impetus produced and sanctioned a new incarnation of racial and class segregation. An island-wide decree from the governor general in 1893 accelerated the removal process already under way in Ponce. Citing numerous fires in various towns around the island, the governor general established a new construction code. According to his new plan, urban areas would be divided into three circular zones designed from the center outward. Structures in the area immediately surrounding the main plaza (zone 1) would be required to use *mampostería* (rubble masonry); in zone 2, the areas surrounding zone 1, buildings were to be in stone; and finally, structures in the outer circle (zone 3) would be built with wood.[62] Those who could not meet the new construction code were to leave their particular zone. The physical reorganization of cities, in effect, translated into a new regime dividing physical spaces along racial and class lines, with the heart of the city becoming the reserved domain of upper-class whites.

Concerns over hygiene and health legitimized and increased the state's authority to supervise private and public spaces. In the 1870s and 1880s, Ponce officials tried to limit social gatherings (e.g., *bomba* dances, *velorios*) long associated with the black/brown population. They demanded that individuals secure a permit and pay a fee to the municipal council before sponsoring a party in a private home. Large social gatherings, Mayor Elices argued in 1886, fostered immoral behavior—sensual dancing, drinking, and gambling—that could impede workers' productivity. In his *Cartilla de Higiene* published the same year, physician Francisco del Valle Atiles contrasted the physical benefits of upper-class dance forms like the *danza* with the ill effects of violent

and sudden movements in working-class dance forms (most likely a reference to the *bomba*).[63] Though defied constantly by Ponce residents, which led to many arrests, and relaxed by officials at times, the city ordinance enabled a greater state surveillance of black and brown bodies.[64] As if to display the state's increasing powers, Ponce's mayor, under the banner of public safety, ordered *alcaldes de barrios* in 1894 to enter all private homes in their jurisdiction to assess their physical condition.[65]

Municipal authorities likewise extended their regulation of social spaces to public establishments like *ventorrillos* (kiosks) and *pulperías* (small stores) that often served food and drinks until late at night. Because they attracted large numbers of working-class men, particularly in the downtown areas, Ponce officials implemented multiple measures to supervise such businesses in the 1880s, from the repeated dispatching of police officers to more indirect regulations. In 1884, the municipal council organized a permanent commission—comprising a *comisario de barrio*, a medical doctor, and a pharmacist—in each of the five urban barrios and in the areas of Cantera, Playa, and Canas to assess the health conditions of bakeries, *pulpería*, and other businesses offering food and alcohol.[66] Ostensibly seeking to guarantee health standards, the state regulation of these businesses also served as a means to impose the elites' social and sexual norms on the lower classes. Arming the commission with the power to take legal action, including the forced closure of businesses, and authorizing the police to make mass arrests, city officials sought to contain spaces that might foster transgressive interactions and practices across racial boundaries.

In addition to private homes, small stores, kiosks, cafeterias, and bakeries, such spaces also included open public areas such as the city's streets, *lavaderos* (laundering places), and plazas, where subaltern populations gathered. Not surprisingly, the municipal council issued multiple decrees regulating loitering on the sidewalks, group conversations in public areas, and traffic on the streets.[67] *Fuentes públicas* (water wells) in Ponce, too, came under special scrutiny, as they conveyed a precious resource in the island's driest region, particularly to the city's many domestic servants, laundresses, and other workers. In 1886, councilman Porrata Doria demanded that the deteriorating *fuente pública* near his property in the Playa barrio be relocated farther away.[68] Doria made effective use of the matter of public safety to keep all those laundresses and domestic workers, most of whom were of African descent,[69] away from their modern white preserves.[70] Wealthy residents of the downtown area registered similar complaints about the city's *plaza del mercado* (the market), a site of constant commingling of diverse peoples, but they failed to effect its relocation. City officials, however, began regulating who could participate in trading, what could be exchanged, and when and where such exchanges could take place.[71]

Beyond the banishment and imprisonment of vagrants, criminals, beggars, and *alienados*, the policing of female prostitutes exemplified and epitomized how the elites' preoccupation with health, morality, and modernization produced racialized categories to organize Ponce's social order. For politicians, intellectuals, and reformers, female prostitutes represented a corrosive agent, diseased subjects who transmitted immorality, miscegenation, venereal diseases, and unwanted

children to upper-class men, their families, and Puerto Rican society at large. In a series of articles on "*La moral pública en Ponce*" published in 1890, the liberal newspaper *Revista de Puerto Rico* demanded a strict regulation of prostitution and prostitutes in the name of moral health, but not their prohibition. Condemning female prostitutes' scandalous clothing and "obscene acts" in downtown Ponce, including such distinguished locations as the *Teatro La Perla*, the author called for the medical supervision of prostitutes and their confinement to an area far from the eyes of moral citizens. In contrast to upper-class, conservative women who advocated the outright proscription of prostitution, the liberal newspaper targeted the prostitutes themselves, not their patrons or the sex trade, to sanitize the city and protect its inhabitants.

Expressing no sympathy with the economic plight of the laboring classes, especially women of color, the *Revista* journalist and others infused their reform campaign with racial inferences that rendered female prostitutes distinctly black and brown. First, the series contended that prostitution as a problem had originated in Ponce 16 to 20 years earlier (i.e., between 1870 and 1874), thereby linking it directly to the abolition of slavery (the issuing of the Moret Law in 1870 and the Abolition Law in 1873). The chronological reference was enough for his audience to understand that abolition was the source of the problem. Second, the series turned to biology, the language of race, to warn of prostitution's lasting impact. "At every step we note a multitude of young people who were full of life while in their infancy, promising to develop into strong men but in the development process they were subjected to a high number of illnesses which poisoned their blood and brought about premature aging," the writer observed. "This contagious infection, which will never disappear entirely from the economy, will be the sad inheritance that they will leave for their children, innocent victims of the transgressions of their parents, condemned beforehand to live a poor and measly existence always hounded by herpes, scrofula, tuberculosis, and other illnesses that can make life hateful and cursed."[72]

Far from a discrete occupational category, the "prostitute" stood for a host of social traits and behaviors deemed inappropriate and immoral. Prostitutes were often portrayed as predators, preying on young men and children. Alerting the police to a particular house of ill repute, the editors of *La Bomba* suggested that "very young children" visited the place that promoted "scandals with no consideration and to the detriment of the honest families that live in its surroundings."[73] Given such characteristics, the police predictably arrested women like María Vega in December 1898 for "attracting attention to herself," even though she rejected the charge that she was a prostitute. That she was no longer involved in sex work did not matter to Ponce's authorities.[74] Indeed, elites employed the label "prostitute" to vilify a wide range of behavior among the popular classes beyond the exchange of money for sex, from women engaging in extramarital affairs to those engaging in insurgent politics.[75] In San Juan, for example, the police arrested a "prostitute," whom they identified by her political affiliation—an "*autonomista*." The criminal logs in Ponce and San Juan registered many arrests of women for looking "suspicious" or "scandalous" in public, vague charges that could refer to sexual, social, and political transgressions.

The surveillance and regulation of prostitutes and prostitution proceeded apace. By 1893, authorities had created a formal registry of prostitutes that included their place of birth, first and last names, nicknames, and home addresses.[76] According to the registry compiled on July 7, 1893, Ponce had 121 identifiable prostitutes, among whom only 38 had been born in Ponce. Eighty-three of them had arrived from other municipalities or other Caribbean islands (like Santo Domingo and Saint Thomas).[77] These women's diverse places of origin seemed to corroborate the widely held view that Ponce received a large influx of people in the decades after abolition. The register also indicated that prostitutes lived and worked in or near the busiest areas of downtown Ponce—around the streets of Vista Alegre, Mayor, Salud, Luna, Unión, Coto, Estrella, Virtud, and Cristina and the sectors known as Callejón del Gato, Buenos Aires, Rabo de la Culebra, Rabo del Buey, and the area surrounding the *Hospital de Higiene*. Numerous complaints by white elites with dwellings nearby drove city authorities to designate certain areas as off-limits to prostitutes.

The policing of prostitutes became more systematic after July 1894, when authorities issued the *Reglamento de higiene para prostitutas,* a formal set of regulations.[78] The *Reglamento* reinforced previous guidelines mandating the registration of prostitutes and their prohibition from specific areas of Ponce. In addition, it required prostitutes to undergo biweekly medical examinations, either at the hospital de Madera or at the police headquarters, in order to practice prostitution legally.[79] Performed by male physicians, these medical examinations subjected women to painful and humiliating experiences, which often involved emotional and physical assaults. City authorities also required women to pay a tax to obtain and maintain their licenses. Physicians referred the prostitutes they deemed sick to the *Hospital de Higiene*, an institution that was becoming a leading depository for Ponce's "*indeseables*." Disparaged by nuns who tended to patients at the hospital,[80] the "sick" prostitutes shared rooms with the mentally ill, lepers, and patients with epidemic diseases such as smallpox.[81] Severely overcrowded and understaffed, the hospital could not even dispose of human waste properly.[82] Carrying out the hospital's defined role of containing the "*indeseables*," its director, rather than calling for capital investments to improve conditions, recommended its complete isolation from the surrounding area.

The economic and symbolic value of prostitution ensured its reproduction, despite *and* because of the social proscriptions encoded in the *Reglamento*. Police logs from 1894 to 1899 attested not only to the increasing authority of police officers to arrest women on a variety of charges but also to working prostitutes' challenging the new regulatory regime. They defiantly walked the downtown streets, picked up men in daytime and escorted them into their houses in off-limits areas, and refused to submit to routine medical exams.[83] Other women requested to be removed officially from the register.[84] Lacking alternative means of survival, however, many women had no choice but to engage in sex work. Prostitution was a profitable business. The municipal government collected taxes from women; pimps and madams ran the *casas de citas*; the coachmen drove prostitutes around the city in search of potential clients; police officers often received money from bribes; and businesses such as small stores, kiosks, and cafeterias benefited from

these women, who attracted male customers.[85] Perhaps as importantly, prostitutes and prostitution became crucial markers to distinguish privilege and status, a means to reproduce racial and gender hierarchies in Ponce and beyond.

Not limited to Ponce's elites, working-class newspapers and activists likewise railed against the immorality of prostitutes in order to gain a legitimate voice in city politics. *La Bomba*, a newspaper of popular origins, for example, appropriated the discourse on moral and physical hygiene, publishing repeated editorials against prostitutes.[86] Ramón Mayoral y Barnés, who identified himself as an honest, working-class man, waged a vigorous campaign against prostitutes.[87] In a series of letters to the mayor in 1898, as well as a regular column in the liberal newspaper *La Democracia*, he requested the removal of prostitutes from his residential neighborhood, where authorities had allowed prostitutes to work. "In the area known as Vista Alegre in Aurora Street there are several good families who cannot further tolerate the constant scandals and immoralities caused by women of dishonorable life and the unemployed people who join them," he wrote. On behalf of these families "imprisoned in their rooms," Mayoral y Barnés demanded that prostitutes be relocated elsewhere.[88] When the mayor failed to respond, Mayoral y Barnés penned a fiery letter threatening to appeal to the recently arrived US military authorities. "My well-justified demands sparked only indifference in you and have led the Aurora Street prostitutes to believe they have won the battle," he wrote. "Now they gather almost every afternoon on the sidewalk right in front of my house."[89]

If Mayoral y Barnés expected a hearing from above through his righteous claims to morality and decency, Ponce's elites retaliated on the same grounds. Municipal authorities continued to disregard his letters. When Mayoral followed through with his threat and wrote to the US secretary of state, the State Department refused to intervene and directed his letter back to Ponce's mayor.[90] The mayor, in turn, replied not to Mayoral y Barnés but to US officials to argue that the relocation of prostitutes to the Vista Alegre neighborhood had nothing to do with the residents' poverty. Vista Alegre, he explained, was sparsely populated and located far from the downtown streets. He then undermined the moral and social authority of Mayoral y Barnés, who repeatedly signed his name with the *don* title, charging that he was living in concubinage with a "colored woman, a former slave," who had mothered his children. Municipal authorities persisted in their campaign to discredit Mayoral y Barnés by distributing a flyer in the neighborhood describing the details of his "turbulent" family life.[91]

Mayoral y Barnés's struggles bore witness to the enduring power of race and gender in shaping Ponce after slavery. The spatial reorganization of Ponce meant the racial segregation of the population, where elite whites resided in the downtown core and the poor, diseased, and racially impure—embodied by the prostitute—occupied marginal neighborhoods like Vista Alegre. Mayoral y Barnés contested that racial and spatial logic by asserting his and his neighbors' morality and work ethic but did so by condemning the immorality and illness of female prostitutes.[92] Nonelite men, as Eileen Findlay argues, often shared with liberal elites a common understanding of morality and gender norms that enabled cross-class political alliances.[93] If men like Mayoral y Barnés hoped to participate

in the modernizing project of the city, at the expense of women, Ponce's elites, especially the most conservative elements, did not hesitate to evoke race to undo such alliances. They pointed to Mayoral y Barnés's intimate relationship with a black woman to undercut his claims to power. His proximity to blackness, in the end, placed Mayoral y Barnés in the same marginalized (and racialized) category, and indeed in the same neighborhood, with the prostitutes he scorned.

The hygiene discourse, which permeated all aspects of modernization campaigns in Ponce and Puerto Rico at large, simultaneously reproduced *and* obscured race. The modernizing impulse to build a cleaner and healthier city rested on the disciplining of the city's peoples, particularly those deemed incapable of disciplining themselves through work and morality. The surveillance, regulation, and institutionalization of female prostitutes exemplified how a discourse of health and hygiene recreated gender, racial, and class hierarchies in the postabolition period. Through their descriptions of—and prescriptions for—those represented as sick and criminal, city elites spoke of the broader multiracial, racially mixed working population and their beliefs, in turn, translated into state policies targeting black and brown bodies. Such discourses and policies reinforced pre-existing racial hierarchies that divided society into productive (healthy, educated, fit) individuals and unproductive (unhealthy, uneducated, immoral, and sexually loose) ones. Many nonelites ironically appropriated those notions of productivity, morality, and health to assert their right to participate and shape the modernizing project, furthering the erasure of race. And the debates around prostitution illustrated how elites and nonelites alike came to demonize certain forms of racialized labor (female sex work) while incorporating others (male artisan crafts) into the political life of the modern city.

Productivity and Recognition

With the end of slavery and the *libreta* system, the island's modernizing sectors—interested in economic diversification, increased trading, and greater investments for which labor discipline was indispensable—became increasingly concerned about the productive capacity of the population, an anxiety that permeated political and cultural production. Intellectual Alejandro Tapia y Rivera echoed these preoccupations. In 1870, the liberal thinker published a series of letters in the journal *La Azucena*, in which he voiced his opinion on a wide array of social and political issues. Tapia y Rivera assumed the identity of Isaura, an upper-class young woman who often corresponded with her two friends, Julia and Graciela. By assuming a female mask in a journal addressed to a female audience, Tapia intended to redefine and delimit the role of the white middle- and upper-class woman: educated, cultured, charitable, dedicated to her household, and moral. In a moralistic tone, Isaura consistently denounced the frequent drinking and the vagrancy she observed among the population.

Concern over the moral corruption of the lower classes emerged most clearly in one of Isaura's letters describing the Ponce celebrations in honor of the Virgen de la Guadalupe, the city's patron saint. Isaura lamented that the November celebration had lost its religious meaning and had become a ten-day-long event mostly

characterized by the populace's disorder in the streets. Consequently, "decent" (white, upper-class) women could not walk safely through the city during those days. The main concern, however, was that these public festivities eroded the laboring class's work ethics.[94] According to Isaura, workers abandoned their jobs just to participate in the celebrations and engage in worthless activities such as gambling and drinking.

Like Tapia y Rivera, Ramón Marín also denounced the "immoral populace" in his description of the 1875 celebrations of the Virgen de la Guadalupe in Ponce.[95] However, Marín was careful to emphasize that even these poor classes had a place within the city. For the author, important occasions such as the November festivity brought together all sectors of the population to "participate spontaneously in these festivities, out of their own initiative with a joy and enthusiasm that cannot be fabricated or imposed on." The peoples of Ponce shared a common sense of belonging, their enthusiasm, he contended, "emerges out of love for the motherland [Puerto Rico], ignited by national pride, and sanctified by a great ideal."[96]

In the larger text, Marín described in detail the festivities different social groups (peasant, urban artisans, and the Creole elite) organized, so as to emphasize how Ponce's dissimilar population had come together into a well-stratified society, which could serve as a model for the future liberal nation. However, Marín could not conceal how troubled he was by the populace, whose immoral behavior contradicted his ideal of a civilized society. In witnessing the public dance at the Plaza del Mercado, he was forced to admit that "in practice, it was different: Only the most contemptuous people attend these dances."[97] The danger with the lower classes was that they were polluting agents. The poor had the dangerous power of corrupting beauty and morality. For example, Marín observed "they have unconsciously done a lot to degenerate our dance [the danza] to the extreme of turning it into a repugnantly licentious event in contrast to the surrounding civilization and peoples of good costumes."[98]

Despite his repeated efforts to distance himself (and those like him) from the degenerated, immoral, and uneducated population, the author recognized that these popular sectors were part of Ponce society. Liberal thinkers like Marín had realized that their national project needed to accommodate these subaltern sectors. "These people are part of this municipality," and as such "they do contribute to alleviate its burdens," he stated.[99] Despite their "degeneracy," these *contribuyentes* ("contributing members," a term also used for taxpayers) "should not be forgotten at the moment of organizing the programs for public festivities."[100]

Ramón Marín's notion of the popular classes as *contribuyentes* (although with very limited rights) denoted liberals' nuanced political thinking about how to reorganize Puerto Rico's social and political structures. To these liberal elites, however, not all popular classes were *contribuyentes*. For an individual to gain recognition from the liberal leaders as a *contribuyente*, he needed to be productive and follow elites' codes of behavior. Ponce artisans often did, and Marín recognized it in his description of the artisans' dance in honor of the *Virgen* in 1875. In contrast to masses, the artisans "have their own honest, decent, and enlightened social events."[101] Every year during the second day of festivities, the artisans held their own private parties either at a private home or at a salon above

the theater La Perla in downtown, where they showed "great taste in the room decoration; refinement in the garments worn by both men and women; moderation and order in everything; and an agreeable harmony in the event as a whole. It all reflected the social sophistication of the honest class that was in the room."[102] Their social comportment—"sober tone and harmony from beginning to end"—was the "main quality" that made them "worthy members of Ponce's society and for whom we will always have praising words."[103]

Ponce liberals did not perceive artisans as their equals, but their productivity and desires for intellectual development set them apart from the populace. The artisans' adherence to the elites' work ethics, moral standards, and understandings about the place of women in society made them the model subaltern group in the liberal nation. For liberal politicians and intellectuals, artisans could serve as a role model of how the racially mixed, working poor could become fruitful citizens.

Liberal elites' attention to artisans did not emerge solely from an ideological shift in political organization; in large part, they were reacting to the artisans' own activism. Artisans were formally organized in Ponce, San Juan, and Mayaguez beginning in the late 1860s, especially after the 1868 Spanish Liberal Revolution brought changes to the island's administration.[104] Unlike pre-1860 artisan guilds, these new organizations sought the intellectual and material improvement of their membership. Artisans' casinos, cooperatives, and mutual-aid societies provided economic assistance, medical help, and educational opportunities and became preferred sites for the political and economic networking of their members.

Artisans aimed for their associations to represent an alternative form of political and social organization. In an 1874 letter published in the artisan-edited newspaper *El Artesano*, one artisan from Mayaguez wrote about how they (artisans) constituted a model of sanity and an example of good judgment despite the backward nature of the colonial system in which they lived. According to the author, artisans were the real bearers of democracy on the island. However, the author wrote, their democratic project was in danger of failure because "this evil passion [racism] is still alive among our artisan class, a passion which encourages disdain among its fellow men and which at its foundation are the accidents of skin color."[105]

In equating racism with colonialism ("This colonial system has been the ruin of nations, the source of decadence and immorality of communities, and has weakened the minds of individuals. Its demoralizing roots are still latent"[106]) and calling for its utter rejection, the author places racial justice at the heart of the artisans' alternative political project. The writer points to racial equality as fundamental to the success of their political as well as economic project. Racism had a severe impact on economic organization. For example, the author denounced certain artisan groups who intended to make their craft racially exclusive in order to play into already existing racial hierarchies. Elites regarded certain occupations, especially those performed by all-white artisans, as more prestigious than the occupations performed by multiracial or exclusively black artisans. The author believed these discriminatory practices were destructive to the artisan class because their crafts were interdependent. An artisan could not survive alone.

The mason needed the blacksmith and the carpenter to complete a construction project. Likewise, a tailor needed the collaboration of the shoemaker and the hatmaker because together they could materialize a customer's idea of elegance. This interdependency, then, required artisans to relate like brothers, not enemies. The analogy of interdependent crafts for successful productivity (the languages of labor and brotherhood) served to effectively convey this author's antiracist vision. The writer perceived artisans as proponents and leaders of a new governing system, one through which to build a racially democratic society. For this reason, he suggested that artisan organizations should prioritize workers' education about their rights and duties as Puerto Rican citizens. The antiracist vision articulated by this one artisan journalist seems to capture a critique forged at the heart of the artisan classes. These artisan classes had among their ranks a large number of black and brown men, but they were also constantly racialized by the upper classes and the administration as of the *raza de color*.

ARTISANS AND CRAFTS

Throughout the centuries, the makeup of the artisan class experienced several changes. Using the island's eighteenth-century censuses, historian Ángel López Cantos found that slaves and free racially mixed and black men constituted the majority of the people in manual trade occupations, such as shoemakers, masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, *pulperos*, silversmiths, and musicians.[107] Official sources referred to these occupations as "despicable and petty trades," most probably because of elites' conflation of manual labor with blackness and slavery. In the following century, the artisan class would become a more complex group.

The nineteenth-century sugar boom brought about an influx of immigrant laborers to the island. Some of the immigrants from Spain and the Canary Islands, as well as other Europeans (some of whom had lived in the West Indies), entered artisan occupations, though Jorge Chinea discovered that European workers in manual trades filled most supervisory positions as master craftsmen, earned higher wages, and often hired slaves as apprentices and common laborers.[108] Chinea also found that many artisans of European origin during the early nineteenth century were able to save and invest in more profitable enterprises such as land, workshops, and stores. Thus European artisans had more upward mobility than Creole mulatto and blacks, who remained the majority of the rank and file of the artisan class.

Simultaneously, the sugar industry attracted numerous West Indian skilled workers, black and brown men, to labor in the emerging plantation economy, and in subsequent urbanization projects. These West Indians worked as carpenters, lumbermen, masons, caulkers, distillers, brewers, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, silversmiths, locksmiths, sail makers, tailors, boiler men, brass makers, gunsmiths, foundry men, candle makers, dyers, turners, soap makers, perfume makers, miners, barbers, florists, domestics, cigar makers, butchers, cooks, weavers, sugar makers, and stonecutters, among others.[109] West Indian men were especially attractive to planters because of the skills and knowledge they had learned in

their home countries' sugar industry, facilitating their economic integration on the island.

The sugar boom was also responsible for the increase in the slave population, many of whom learned mechanical skills for plantation-related functions. As the slave trade progressively diminished, many sugar planters forced their few male slaves to learn and perform the most highly skilled jobs in sugar processing and then employed a higher number of seasonal, nonslave workers in the fields. Often slave owners in rural and urban areas profited from hiring out some of their highly skilled slaves. Throughout the years, many of the slaves who earned their freedom supported themselves and their families by exploiting their specialized skills, mainly in the growing urban areas. After abolition, scores of former slaves joined the ranks of artisans, bolstering an emerging organized labor force. By the end of the century, other groups of male workers had also begun to organize, among them coachmen and stevedores.

The racial and ethnic makeup of the Puerto Rican artisan classes did not experience the drastic changes Cuba endured during the last third of the century (1860s–1890s). Cuba received a large number of Spanish immigrants during the period, many of whom came as seasonal workers or to serve in the military during the Ten-Year War and then settled permanently on the island.[110] These Spaniards organized numerous artisan groups and other large organizations throughout Cuba. Between 1868 and 1898, Cuba received 90 percent of the Spanish immigrants to the Americas, drawn by the island's economic expansion in the sugar and tobacco industries. In contrast, Puerto Rico's economic vulnerability made it less attractive to Spanish immigrants. Nevertheless, the Puerto Rican artisans were a complex mix of men, divided along racial and occupational lines.

An overwhelming majority of the artisan class were people of color, except in few occupations such as boilermakers, printers (the most educated), silversmiths, and watchmakers.[111] Men of color and whites were equally represented in trades such as bakers, carpenters, coopers, cigar makers, masons, shoemakers, and tailors. Black and mulatto men dominated the occupations of barbers, butchers, confectioners, potters, sailors, and turners. The few barrio censuses available for Ponce indicate that most individuals involved in the manual and mechanical trades were also black and mulatto men. The absence of people of color in Ponce was noticeable in just a few occupations such as store attendants, machinists, and silversmiths.

The sources available do not show women involved in manual trades to the same extent as males. In Ponce, many freedwomen worked as seamstresses. Ponce newspapers also made references to poor women involved in straw-hat making, crochet knitting, and embroidering.[112] Women developed other sorts of specialized skills fundamental to the workings of the cities. They often worked as fieldworkers, street vendors, cooks, nannies, laundresses, ironers, and domestic workers. Although elites and male artisans did not perceive these occupations as crafts, women recognized their relevance and demanded respect from the authorities. For example, laundresses, a common occupation among freedwomen, often organized (in Ponce and San Juan) to lobby authorities for resources or policies that would facilitate their job performances. In one instance, a large group of

laundresses gathered in Ponce's municipal council building in 1887 to request the reopening of the downtown public washing place, because droughts in the municipality had made water scarce in other areas.[113] The council ordered the immediate reopening of the building, arguing that these women were of "the proletarian class."[114] Female laundresses, like many male artisans, knew that their labor-based organization could capture the attention of the authorities, despite their blackness and their transgression of female domesticity. The attention from authorities these women's requests received may have resulted from their skillful manipulation of the language of labor as well as from their knowledge that their occupation was crucial in maintaining the health of the city. Unfortunately, significant changes in the elites' and artisans' formal recognition of women as workers did not occur until after 1898. The legal and economic restructuring experienced under US rule enabled women to enter into new fields of work, forcing their formal incorporation into an expanding labor movement. But between 1860 and the 1890s, the artisan organizations only took a multiracial, male membership seriously.

Through their education circles, mutual-aid societies, newspapers (pamphlets, essays, and poetry), public ceremonies, holidays, dances, theatrical performances, and musical concerts, the artisan classes became important political brokers in the city.[115] Since the 1860s, the colonial state had identified artisans and skilled workers as important social intermediaries between the authorities and popular classes. The 1860s *Regulations for the Learning of Skills and Trade* enacted by the Municipal Administration of San Juan sought to pull together a vast array of artisans and skilled workers in the city's urban quarters to teach specialized skills to the increasing number of poor children.[116] The artisan class (workshop owners, headmasters, and their employees) were key in teaching not only work skills but an ethic of labor that would "moralize the working classes," deterring vagrancy and other social vices. The artisans were also responsible for cultivating their apprentices' intellect by providing them with means to learn reading and writing.[117] Early efforts at social reform hinged upon the artisan class.

The Politics of Race and Race in Politics: Remembering Abolition

Because of the artisans' development as an important political force in the postabolition years, liberal elites sought to integrate them into their political camp. While we should avoid reducing liberal politicians' decisions to instrumentalist reasoning, liberal leaders did want to cultivate alliances with popular classes, albeit selectively, for another practical reason. In their competition for political hegemony against the most conservative forces, liberals needed to gain control over the colonial political machinery to effect any significant transformation.[118] Liberal politicians sought the expansion of voting rights to get new electoral members who would vote for them and thus begin reshaping the political apparatus from the municipalities outward. Such political rights could not be entrusted to everyone but, despite their blackness, artisans appeared to fit the model of workers that liberal leaders envisioned: they were skilled, somewhat educated, and moral men.

The liberals' debates about the emancipation process and their coordination of grandiose celebrations on Abolition Day became crucial means through which they cultivated the modern sociopolitical formation they envisioned materializing once in political control: a racially diverse but hierarchically organized colony/national community. Although liberal politicians refused to speak of racialized domination directly when courting artisans, they could not ignore such a central issue. These debates and celebrations were alternative ways to debate the terms of racial inclusion on the island. Even colonial authorities attempted to join in what became a heated argument about race and political participation. The narratives that conservative and liberal elites crafted about abolition, however, served to underscore their leadership as well as highlighted the elites' whiteness in contrast to the blackness of the population they had liberated. It was particularly crucial for Creole liberal autonomists to emphasize their own racial purity, because their political ascendancy within the Spanish colonial system was conditional, among other factors, on their racialized position as white islanders of European descent. The public memory of the abolition of slavery provided a common ground in which these dissimilar groups (colonial administrators, liberals, artisans, and popular classes) defined the boundaries of a political project—autonomy—that could enable their coexistence and partially accommodate their interests.

Abolition became the focus of argument because, from the moment of its enactment, many members of the elite and the authorities saw in emancipation a symbol of modernity in Puerto Rico, especially because of the smooth transition from forced to free labor. According to liberals, the peaceful character of the emancipation process signaled the civilized nature of Puerto Ricans, which made the island's white Creole elites deserving of more political rights, at least more deserving than their black revolutionary counterparts in Cuba. Liberals frequently described the success of abolition in 1873. In his writing for the newspaper *El Derecho*, abolitionist José Julián Acosta emphatically spoke of the peaceful outcome of emancipation and clarified that any trouble witnessed during those months resulted not from former slaves' lax attitude toward work but because of other factors that negatively affected the harvest.[119] These liberals portrayed emancipation as a firm step toward progress.

Liberals' characterization of emancipation as a peaceful process hinged upon the image of the thankful and thus indebted former slave. They were keen to portray former slaves not as anticolonial revolutionaries or political agents but rather as appreciative recipients of modern reforms. For the liberals' political project, it was crucial to demonstrate to authorities that former slaves could become law-abiding subjects. Their obedience and respect for boundaries emerged out of their gratitude for the restoration of their humanity. *El Derecho*, for example, published the story of *liberto* Tomás de la Ceiba.[120] Tomás was so appreciative of his owner's "attentions" during slave times that after abolition he stayed with her, a woman of advanced age, to help her financially with his newly obtained earnings. Tomás's gesture toward his former owner exemplified on a small scale the society that liberal elites desired, one in which racial, gender, and class hierarchies prevailed but in which these racial groups peacefully cohabited and collaborated to sustain a new sort of colony.

In the many short articles published in *El Derecho* during 1873 focusing on descriptions of the compliant nature of former slaves and their gratitude toward Spain, Creole elites and their masters compose one of the multiple forms of silences embedded in the fashioning of the thankful *liberto* character. This process of representation of the former slave as "mere recipient" was a crucial means of suppressing the wants, needs, and deeds of former slaves and free people of color. This figure of the thankful *liberto* negated the political agency of former slaves who effectively bargained contracts and of the artisans of color who challenged work structures and taxation.

Silencing took a more repressive form when former masters in fact supplanted the former slaves' voice, expanding beyond their previous role as translators of *libertos'* sentiments of gratitude. In June 1873, *El Derecho* printed a public letter supposedly authored by a group of former slaves from Ponce. "We, the freedmen of Ponce, express our immense gratitude to our Excellence [the Governor General] so you can convey our feelings to the rest of Spain."[121] "The Spanish Republic," they stated, "has restored our moral freedom, taken away from us against God's will. The Spanish Republic has given us back the fruit of our labor." The deteriorated condition of the original document prevents us from deciphering details about the nature of its composition. The articles were written in sophisticated language and grammar. It is impossible to determine with certainty if former slaves were indeed the original authors of the letter or if a liberal politician impersonated the freedmen to further their political project. Many former slaves may have indeed demonstrated gratitude toward some elites now that they finally saw the possibility of a better future for themselves and their families. However, the performance of former slaves in this letter fits too well within the role liberal politicians and intellectuals had crafted for them: obedient and obsequiously appreciative of white superiors. This letter signals an increasing tendency among liberal writers to impersonate former slaves as a device to restrict and shape the ways in which abolition and consequently racial politics were spoken about and understood.

These instances of impersonation of former slaves in the last third of the nineteenth century are instances of a long-standing global practice of racial minstrelsy.[122] At the local level, it also echoes the *jíbaro* masquerades historian Francisco Scarano encountered during an earlier period.[123] At the turn of the nineteenth century, Puerto Rico's Creole elites began dressing as native peasants in public festivities. These impersonations revealed their familiarity with local dynamics and marked the emerging differences (social and in political/economic interests) between the island-born and the *peninsulares*. Scarano notes that these masquerades progressively became more accurate in their depictions of the Creole peasantry, demonstrating the closer political proximity between very dissimilar groups, an important cultural formation in the processes of imagining the national community. Simultaneously, the caricature-like nature of these masquerades underscored the social distance between Creole elites and their social subalterns.

Liberals' impersonation of the thankful slave reflected their expectations for gratitude from former slaves and popular classes in general for their leading role

in the enactment of abolition. Through their writing and public celebrations, liberals construed gratitude as a perpetual moral debt that would secure social order as it entailed deference, conformity, and obedience. Appreciation would internally regulate popular classes and maintain hierarchies within the postslavery social order. The publication of letters supposedly written by former slaves to the authorities or former masters also highlights the centrality of the male *liberto* character in forging the political culture of the late nineteenth century. These letters, articles, and public ceremonies were meant to be a model to follow and delineate the parameters of the associations between liberals and popular classes. Thus liberals' textual impersonations of the former slave were a device of repression in which by suppressing the voice of former slaves they also shaped the nature of cross-class, cross-racial associations. The 1890 "Cata Abieta: A l'amo Menisaba," a letter published 18 years after abolition in the *Revista de Puerto Rico,* illustrated the continuing relevance of the figure of the former slave and the memory of abolition in postemancipation politics, especially in the political rearticulations following the 1887 *compontes*.[124]

The *liberto* addressed his letter to a Creole representative to the Spanish Courts. Unlike the 1873 letter "written" by freedmen in *El Derecho*, the 1890 one was written in an almost incomprehensible Spanish, attempting to simulate (and differentiate) the speech of blacks on the island. In it, the former slave began by identifying himself first as a supporter of the Autonomist Party and expressing his gratitude to the liberals who made abolition possible. The letter was addressed to *l'amo* (Master) Ricardo because he was running for the position of representative to the Spanish courts for the Maricao district. The *liberto* states that the goal of his letter was to ask Master Ricardo to speak in the Courts against administrative irregularities and the authorities' tyranny on the island. In contrast to the *liberto* representations described previously, this letter reads as humorous, more along the lines of the blackface performances circulating at the time through the region. The humor embedded in the black character—one who can barely speak Spanish but nevertheless seeks to instruct the white, literate, upper-class master on how to carry out political business—is the means to mask a critique. In this case, the critique is directed against the Creole conservative class for supporting the abuses (the *compontes*) of the colonial regime. As such, it labels the *incondicionales* (members of the conservative party) as island traitors. In contrast, former slaves—who the letter identifies as autonomists because the party's leadership had brought about abolition—are committed to the island's well-being.

In this 1890 letter, gratitude continued to frame negotiations between the *liberto* and the politician. The autonomists' endeavor on behalf of abolition had won the former slave's respect, and he trusted Master Ricardo would speak on his behalf once in Spain. From our vantage point, the letter could elicit an additional ironic reading: after so many years, former slaves still referred to autonomist leaders as "masters," which contradicts the proautonomists' democratic claims. The 1890 representation of the former slave as uneducated, uncultured, grateful, and respectful of liberal authority echoed liberals' political desires and imaginings of the 1870s. In addition, the reemergence of writings and celebrations about abolition by liberal intellectuals and politicians during the period suggests that the

publication was not meant to convey criticism of the social hierarchies at work. The publication sought to reaffirm gratitude and deference at the center of post-1887 political alliances among the various sectors of the liberal camp.

The reemergence of this explicit form of racialization in the political struggles of 1890 was perhaps shaped by the internal division with the liberal camp in Ponce. The *Revista* editor, Francisco Cepeda Taborcías, sought the leadership of the liberal Autonomist Party (reorganized in 1886) and in the following years led an ideological war against other well-known leaders such as Luis Muñoz Rivera. By the end of the decade, another liberal, Dr. José Celso Barbosa, would also cultivate political alliances with artisans of color against Muñoz Rivera.

Like the early-nineteenth-century characterizations of the *jíbaro*, the performances mentioned previously, with their accuracy in language, performance of gratitude, and liberal alignment in political desires, were meant to demonstrate the existing (though well regulated) political proximity between the liberal elite and the freedmen class, especially those in the artisan groups who had a history with slavery. Like in minstrelsy theatrical acts, cross-racial proximity and intimacy must have existed for the masquerading to capture the attention of and be believable for the readership/audience. It was feasible for the readership to imagine a former slave as proautonomist. But the acts of minstrelsy in these instances are more than just revelations of cross-racial intimacy and/or opportunities to use pleasure to negotiate anxieties about cross-racial interactions. They became a distinct local mode of regulating and organizing cross-racial interactions while seeking to dismantle old colonial structures. These masquerades marked the cultural, racial, and class differences that reaffirmed the white, elite liberals' superiority. The masquerade delineated the role of the former slaves within the autonomist project: grateful and dependent on white liberals to serve as their spokesmen. In addition to a new array of idioms and institutional arrangements for the surveillance and containment of people, liberals meant for the effects of gratitude, deference, and compliance to constitute mechanisms of self-regulation maintaining the new racialized order.

These representations and masquerades did not go uncontested. In 1887, the newspaper *El Buscapié* published a pointed critique of a few theater performances based on the *negros catedráticos* (the black professor who feigns education).[125] For the author, signing as IZ, these satirical performances, which were very popular in Cuba, sought to entertain the public by portraying a social type that did not exist in Puerto Rico but at the same time ridiculed "an important sector of our population." IZ self-identified as a member of the "honest class" of Puerto Ricans of color and took this opportunity to demand respect and consideration from his "*conciudadanos*" (cocitizens). The author also noted that Puerto Rican writers had not cultivated this particular form of dramatic playwriting. Minstrelsy-like performative practices permeated political culture and artistic expressions, but blackface theater performances themselves may not have had the same centrality enjoyed in Cuba in the constitution of an anticolonial public. The more racially ambiguous *jíbaro* masquerades appear to have served that cultural function more often or at least at the popular level. For example, the artisan newspaper *Revista Blanca* sought to stress its regional flavor by frequently publishing works of social

critique that imitated the peculiar mode of speaking of the *jíbaros* instead of the *negro catedrático*.[126] For urban, black and brown artisans, the *jíbaro* may have served too as the "racial Other" through which to speak. The marking of the *jíbaro* as different (and outside of a nascent political community) is evident in the 1880s and 1890s writings by black artisan Manuel Alonso Pizarro and the 1914 play by unionized laborer Antonio Milián.[127]

These performative practices continued under US rule with altered meanings. In 1901, another man of color—labor leader Eduardo Conde—employed textual minstrelsy to denounce the racist statements uttered by Ramón Rivera Castro. Rivera had suggested that authorities should whiten Puerto Rico by sending blacks as migrant workers to other areas of the Americas. While impersonating a black servant, Conde replied that only a white man could espouse such racism. Rivera, however, was not white but *beteao* (racially mixed). In this instance, blackface was not the representation of a silly or ridiculous character. Instead, the piece subverts the deferential logic of gratitude and love of the black servant. Because of love, it is the duty of the black servant to attack his master for his outrageous statements. More importantly, it is from his position as a black man that the servant can recognize and call out the blackness of his master, which the latter jealously hides. The concealing effort of his true racial origin reveals the master as a fraud.[128]

Commemorating Abolition through Public Performances

Liberal leaders cultivated their political relationship with popular classes and colonial officials by stressing their crucial role in the abolition of slavery and highlighting the performances of gratitude, especially from former slaves, in as many ways as possible. Every year, around Abolition Day, liberal newspapers published accounts of the emancipation process and detailed descriptions of the public ceremonies commemorating the event. For example, *El Derecho* published in June 1873 an account of the festivities in honor of Governor Primo de Rivera's visit to Ponce. People from nearby towns joined the governor, his delegation, and town officials from the barrio Tallaboa to Ponce, "the whole trajectory was one great spontaneous ovation." Among those in the group, "freedpeople's enthusiasm stood out . . . the entourage occupied the road while the multitude cheered them as they went along and the freedpeople . . . with flowers spread all over the road at the same time that many of them held up large signs praising the Republic, the Governor, deputies, and the Abolition Act."[129] Also, a "large number of the participants had been slave owners and they were among the first and more enthusiastic men in the celebration of this immortal event of Emancipation." The active participation of former masters and former slaves who together cheered the political establishment made Ponce a unique place: "Praises to the generous sentiments of the members of Ponce's society." Bringing together dissimilar groups (slave owners, the Spanish colonial administrators, and freedpeople) in celebration of abolition, public ceremonies constituted a signifier of the successful transition from forced to free labor in Ponce and a process that only strengthened the ties binding colonial society. It seems that the editors of *El Derecho* sought

to reassure authorities that mild reforms could indeed reinforce the ties between Spain and Puerto Rico instead of severing them.

Similarly, the 1880 proposal to construct in Ponce a monument in celebration of abolition sought to bring together the city's distinct population under the leadership of the liberal class that materialized emancipation. Authorities understood well the intentions behind the project and attempted to wrestle away such an accomplishment from Ponce's Creole elite by underscoring in several letters to the municipal council that emancipation was Spain's achievement and, for that reason, the authorities would contribute economically to the project. Emancipation became an instrument to speak to authorities about the feasibility of political transformations, despite the racial composition of the island. It also became a tool for the authorities and other conservatives to reply to liberals, and for the elites in general to address the larger population.

Like liberals, who through their argument about abolition sought the support of popular classes, artisans made similar efforts to gain the sympathy of influential liberal leaders. In October 1886 the liberal newspaper *Revista de Puerto Rico* (published then in San Juan, and later in Ponce) reported that a group of artisans of color serenaded the newspaper headquarters to honor the director, Francisco Cepeda, and his wife.[130] The artisans' act of solidarity toward the *Revista*'s liberal leaders coincided with the reorganization of the Liberal Party, a process that began that same year with the publication of the manifesto the *Plan de Ponce*.[131] Artisans seem to have been cultivating their political alliances with a particular faction (Cepeda's) within the Liberal Party.

During 1886 and 1887, the *Revista* continued fostering its connection with the popular classes, particularly artisan readers, by consistently publishing articles on the Cuban abolition process, which ended in 1886.[132] The reports praised the triumph of liberal democratic rulings in Cuba. In the article "Bravo for the Black of Cuba!" the author described the festivities that organizations of the *raza de color* sponsored in celebration of abolition. The article carefully highlighted the speeches by men of color that praised the actions of the leader who defended the people of color: Mr. Gamazo, the Cuban Autonomist Party, Rafael de Labra, and other Cuban, Puerto Rican and Spanish representatives in the Spanish Courts. "The raza de color will always bless these names."[133] Like abolition in Puerto Rico, the Cuban emancipation became a tool for Puerto Rican liberals to underscore their role (on both islands) as defenders and proponents of the unrepresented popular classes and demand gratitude, loyalty, and obedience from the *raza de color*. Liberals portrayed themselves in the eyes of the authorities as the future leaders who could preserve a colonial arrangement.

The historical narrative that the director of the *Revista de Puerto Rico,* Francisco Cepeda, wrote in 1888 (one year after the *compontes*) continued this trend: he constructed abolition as a foundational moment in island history, one that only materialized because of the efforts of liberal leaders. Through their struggle for abolition, in which they "fought against slavery in the battlefield of ideas and rights with no other weapon but a scrawny pen to translate our thoughts into words, our bare chests were our protective shields, always at the mercy of our adversaries' raging force," liberals represented themselves as the architects of

democracy.[134] A "cruel battle" after which they needed to celebrate "here today together, the winners and the vanquished in brotherly embrace, singing a civic anthem of victory in front of this glorious monument and to join in their joy and gratitude those who primarily benefited from the event of March 22, 1873."[135] Most importantly for Cepeda, only liberals could bring together the "winners and vanquished" after the cruel battle, an alliance that had to be "consecrated" on the altar of the monument to abolition. For liberal politicians, the celebration of abolition was a means to command respect from the rest of the population because of their successful leadership. In 1890, the *Revista de Puerto Rico* published a reminder to men of color about the proximity of the seventeenth anniversary of abolition. The author asked men of color not to forget about March 22, the date in which liberals and Spain brought the abolition of slavery: "Men of color should never forget this date because it was the result of the liberal abolitionists' relentless campaign of defiance and a deed of justice of democratic Spain."[136]

Certainly, abolition celebrations did open a door to the political presence (although limited) of the *raza de color*. In fact, a "man of color" was the main speaker in the 1886 Cuban celebration of abolition described in the Puerto Rican *La Revista*. In Puerto Rico, artisans also took advantage of these public celebrations as an alternative means to assert their crucial role in making island history. Therefore, they took the initiative to organize these celebrations as well. On April 3, 1890, the liberal newspaper *Revista de Puerto Rico* (now located in Ponce) described the obstacles artisans in Yauco faced when they attempted to celebrate the seventeenth anniversary of abolition.[137] According to the article, Yauco's mayor, Don Francisco Romera, did everything in his power to suppress the celebration. Given the political environment during those years, mayor Romera was unable to deny the artisans' request for permission to organize the celebration, but he imposed many limitations and conditions. The mayor asked to examine the program ahead of time, and by the time he was done with it he had completely eliminated most of the activities related to the celebration. In fact, he restricted the celebration to a small demonstration in which people walked toward the downtown area, but without speeches, music, or chanting. The article denounced the influence of the reactionary Yauco resident, Pancho Piquer, in the mayor's decisions, a man very much involved in the *componte* events of 1886–87. The article's author requested that the representative of that jurisdiction in Spain, the well-known Spanish abolitionist Don Rafael María de Labra, ask the Ministro de Ultramar if each mayor had the power to decide which civil liberties to observe. The history of slavery carried a heavy weight in the postabolition political realignments, especially when dealing with the artisans. Therefore, it is not surprising that the title of the article was "*An enslaving mayor*." Ponce liberals undermined Yauco conservatives by underscoring these reactionaries' attempts to hold on to old preabolition political and social practices.

For the authorities, public celebrations were also a conduit to foster congeniality with the popular classes. The press noticed the participation of Spanish governors in several commemorative celebrations of abolition throughout the 1880s in the capital of San Juan.[138] The authorities' lukewarm efforts to cultivate ties with the broader population through public ceremonies were more evident

in the February 1894 festivities in San Juan. On that occasion, the governor, General de la Torre, paraded through the city with his face painted black, with the objective of looking like "the people." The editors at the San Juan–based liberal newspaper *La Libertad* responded with silence to the derogatory racialization embedded in the "minstrel-like" performance but strongly criticized the governor's actions as a desperate attempt to cover up his inefficient administration of the island.[139] They repudiated his effort to create a liaison with the *pueblo*, an action they considered illegitimate for conservatives, who did not have the intimacy with popular classes that the liberals had. In the eyes of these liberals, the Spanish governor's performance constituted one more example of the authorities' intrusion into an arena (popular politics) that liberal politicians had carefully cultivated for several decades.[140]

Abolition Celebrations and the Rehearsal of the Autonomist Sociopolitical Project

The 1888 celebration in Ponce of March 22 (Abolition Day) illustrates best how emancipation served a crucial role in the forging of a liberal political culture and the refashioning of the colonial relationship. The public celebration of emancipation was particularly significant because it addressed a transformative event in the island, which appealed to a large number of its inhabitants.[141] With the exception of Abolition Day festivities, most public events on the island celebrated the birth, marriage, or death of members of the Crown, venerated patron saints, or honored high-ranking visitors. The emancipation celebration had a special meaning to the island's residents: it was a celebration of their own and one step toward the modernization of productive and social relations. Furthermore, the structure of Abolition Day celebrations was fundamentally different from other social festivities on the island. For example, in 1875, Marín had described how "a large number of poor people were generously provided food" by ecclesiastical authorities: "kindness is the trait that characterizes Puerto Ricans during these events and deserves the support and appreciation of even the most severe critics of public festivities."[142] According to the program included in Marín's account, the clergy was expected to gather a hundred poor individuals among whom to distribute meat, rice, bread, and some money (one *real*). This charitable gesture was meant to create a bond between the clergy and the people, but in fact it highlighted the social distance between authorities (in this case, the clergy) and the broader population. The distribution of alms was central, not only in religious events but also in festivities of a more secular character. In the San Juan celebration to honor the birth of the Spanish heir to the Crown in 1880, authorities stood on the stairs to the Casa-Palacio Provincial looking down toward the people in order to distribute "as many alms—comprised of one peso and a pound of bread—as we can provide for each adult poor person we can identify."[143] These two scenes illustrate the hierarchical power relationship embedded in colonial political life. In contrast, the 1888 celebration of emancipation demonstrated a slight change, one in which popular classes did not appear as mere recipients of *limosnas* (alms) or ignorant people to be entertained but as agents in island history.

The editors at the newspaper *Revista de Puerto Rico* dedicated several pages to this 1888 remembrance. According to the account, the members of the Taller Benéfico de Artesanos, organized the event.[144] The reporter underscored the civilized and well-organized nature of the activity, maybe to illustrate that democratic freedoms (which had been severely threatened by the 1886–87 *compontes*) did not entail social disorder: "The Puerto Rican people, and especially the people of Ponce, are very clear that freedom is crucial to preserve not only individual rights but the rights of society as a whole. We show our regard for such freedom when our events do not transgress the limits imposed by our laws." Through this peaceful celebration, the author suggested, artisans had demonstrated that it was feasible to open some arenas for participation and recognition without altering the political order.

The celebration began in the Plaza del Mercado, where a multitude of people from all points within the municipality and guests from other towns first gathered. From the Plaza, the multitude paraded through the city's main streets to tunes played by the famous Don Juan Morel Campos' orchestra. Artisans from the Taller Benéfico led the demonstration, carrying banners that said: "¡Long live Spain! ¡Glory to March 22!" Another banner displayed the names of Creole and Spanish liberal abolitionists and, at the bottom, carried the signature of the artisan organization Taller Benéfico. Following that first banner, another six followed with enormous portraits (painted by Don Juan Ríos) of the great 1860s and 1870s abolitionists. These paintings honored Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Spanish abolitionists, including one governor general. The multitude continued walking toward de Plaza de la Abolición, where a stage was built for the speeches to follow. Other banners hung in the Plaza: "¡Hurray to Spain!" "¡Glory to the 1873 Assembly!" "¡Long live Puerto Rico!" "¡Long live the King!" "¡Praises to Cuban abolitionists!" "¡Glory to the abolitionists of Europe and America!" "¡Long live Freedom!" A statue, imitating the Statue of Liberty in New York, stood in the middle of the Plaza with the inscription: "March 22, 1873, ¡Glory to Spain! 1888."

The newspaper transcribed two of the speeches given that day by two autonomist women: Doña Concepción E. de Roca (probably the wife of the Taller Benéfico's founder, Don Francisco Roca) and Doña Ramona Pérez y Ayala. Both women spoke about how abolitionist Spain finally embodied the democratic nation liberals had envisioned for so long, a nation that respected democratic freedoms and that opened up an arena for participation. However, these two women, especially De Roca, emphasized that abolition was the achievement of a group of elite men (liberal leaders) to whom the *libertos* should be grateful. "On behalf of a group of distinguished young ladies," De Roca declared, "I am here to bring our modest offering in front of this magnificent monument to freedom and also to congratulate the freedpeople of Ponce for progressing on the path of legitimate ideals, once again showing their gratitude for the reforms made possible by a group of illustrious patricians on the memorable March 22, 1873!"[145] De Roca addressed the *libertos* of Ponce as a group different from her (from whom she subtly commanded gratitude to liberal men).

If indeed De Roca was an artisan's wife, the assertion of her whiteness and social distance from the *liberto* class reveals the racialized fissures among the

artisans. Her sense of distance and superiority toward *libertos* could have been shared by her husband, translating into an ambivalent attitude toward his peers of slave ancestry. It is probable that these celebrations of abolition, then, also served to build bridges within the artisan class. Similarly, it is crucial to note that white, nonelite women shared the stage with the multiracial artisans. Women of different classes also found in these celebrations an arena to participate in the proautonomist project, an arena probably denied to them in the more aristocratic events in the city. Nevertheless, this opportunity to speak in an artisans' event was not available to black and brown women.

It is also significant that authorities allowed this particular celebration to take place in 1888 Ponce. Authorities sought to restore political balance in the colony after the violent *compontes* of the previous year, which had been concentrated in the Ponce district. The commemoration of abolition provided authorities an opportunity to portray themselves as a modern colonial power.

However, those public celebrations not formally coordinated by the liberal elite and their political allies, the artisan class, were quickly deemed disorderly and threatening. The newspaper *La Bomba*, a popular liberal journal, constantly denounced the "scandals," "disturbances," and "festivities" in the city's streets, reflecting its readership's concerns about the growth and mobility of impoverished individuals in the city. In 1895, the editors could not contain their racial assumptions and fears in a report on a *velorio de angelito* (a little angel's wake), "the loudest and most entertaining than anyone can imagine." "What a ruckus and disorder! Perhaps those people that night thought they were in Hayti," the newspaper editorialized. "For Godsake, *veloristas* (wake attendants), do not attempt to descend to that degree of backwardness, one that does not fit our country! We call on our authorities to impede these sorts of scandals so the neighbors are not compelled to address their complaints to the newspaper."[146] Though a ritual prevalent across Latin America and the Caribbean, the *velorio de angelito*—a wake for a young child, whose untimely death is celebrated as the birth of an angel—was particularly popular among peoples of African descent in rural areas of Puerto Rico.[147] Lest their readers miss the racial message, the editors invoked Haiti.

This particular *velorio* might have elicited especially strong responses from its participants and its critics because it fell on March 22, the day commemorating abolition. The event did not follow the social and political codes of the liberal leadership and as such it was labeled an "African" disorder. The celebration also disrupted the liberal politicians' narrative of abolition as a sign of modernity and civility. While politicians in the city sought to inscribe a historical narrative of liberal progress through public ceremonies and newspaper writings, laboring people had their own cultural forms and expressions to celebrate the end of slavery. Although city elites may have tolerated some of these events and perhaps even enjoyed their peculiar and eccentric character when directly connected with their formal celebrations or when confined to spaces in the outskirts, they could not countenance them as autonomous festivities in the heart of the city. In casting these traditions and celebrations as out of place and foreign in the modern city, Ponce's elites identified these rituals as sites that enabled the sort of unregulated

racial and sexual encounters they wished to banish to history, to backward places like Haiti.[148]

Contesting the Narrative of Gratitude and Other Accounts

If emancipation became a trope through which divergent groups came together behind a project of reform, the accounts of abolition became also the source of heated argument. For example, accounts by racial subalterns challenged liberals' repeated demands for gratitude. A black teacher from Guayama, Eleuterio Derkes Martinó, wrote an 1883 play, *Tío Fele*, in which the gratitude of the former slave was not taken for granted nor did it go unrewarded by his former master.[149] The character of tío Fele is aware of his material debt to his former slave, Cangáa, who remained at his loyal service after abolition and during subsequent difficult times for Felé's family. And at the end of the story, Cangáa's loyalty received due payment in the form of a plot of land. Through the Fele character, the playwright embraces a history of miscegenation and cross-racial relations not as symbols of social harmony but as concrete actions in a just society. In reprimanding his wife Doña Leonor for opposing their daughter's love for a man of color (Ricardo), Fele reminds her that she herself is the descendent of blacks. In fact, her black relative, Ma. Juana, is hidden in the house. In this and other of Derkes' plays, education, morality, and civility are the traits that make a good male citizen, not class or racial background. As such, in *Tío Fele*, the *pardo* Ricardo is a suitable partner for Fele's daughter because he has a brilliant legal mind, and through hard work he helped resolve the legal matters afflicting Fele's business. At the end, Ricardo obtains the recognition he deserves and marries into Fele's family with Doña Leonor's approval.

Derkes participated in an active black and brown intellectual community in the southern part of the island. Many of them were likewise skilled, educated artisans. Artisans also often challenged the liberals' rendering of the popular classes as passive, posing instead an alternative historical narrative that portrayed workers as the engine of island history. The unidentified author, most likely an artisan, of an 1889 article, "El obrero puertorriqueño: sus antecedentes," places the origin of the Puerto Rican working class in slavery. Printed in the artisan-edited newspaper *El Obrero*, the article was originally produced in two parts but only the first section, which described the period from 1868 to 1886, has survived.[150] The author uses the image of slavery to first speak of the enslavement of Africans and second, in a broader sense, in reference to all popular classes who in one way or another were subjected to arbitrary colonial politics (e.g., the free peasantry who were forced to work under the 1849 *Régimen de la Libreta*). The author builds cross-racial alliances by stressing the links that have unified all popular classes, like colonial tyranny. In his account, the working classes received political recognition during the revolt of 1868, thanks to the revolutionary men involved in the *Grito de Lares*. It was through the 1868 revolt and its aftermath that working men gained political consciousness. According to the author, workers remained organized after the failure of the *Grito de Lares* by sponsoring political meetings,

organizing workshops, and distributing propaganda. He argues that the reforms granted in 1873 (abolition of slavery and other individual freedoms) derived from the workers' political activism. After 1873, the author contends, the laboring people became a working class and their concerted efforts became widely noticed. In this narrative, the 1887 *compontes* sought to demobilize the workers because of their intense political life. By the end of the first section, the author reveals that master artisans, probably whites, had condemned workers who had actively opposed the regime, generating divisions among themselves.

While the second part of this historical narrative is lost, its general intentions are not: the author rejects the portrayal of workers as submissive and instead traces in detail how the working classes became not only agents of their own history but also active participants in the foundational events of the island's history. Moreover, the author attempts to gloss over racial differences among workers by stating that all members of the popular classes had been enslaved under the colonial system. Workers became the representatives of true democratic values given that they had been able to fight together, overlooking racial differences. In this working-class discourse, class was the unifying force among the racially diverse laboring groups. This article documents that at least some laborers had adopted a worker identity instead of an identity based exclusively on racial difference as a political strategy. Despite the focus on class experience as the bind connecting the workers, the author indirectly recognizes the workers' history of slavery. He contends that the laborers' transformation into a Puerto Rican working class took place in 1873. The journalist probably thought that the temporary individual freedoms (freedom of speech, association, press, and others) granted in 1873 permitted the flourishing of organizations. But the author could have also witnessed how former slaves in 1873 entered the ranks of artisans, and other occupations that required specialized skills, and observed how freedpeople actively negotiated with employers and authorities for better contracts.

Claiming ties to slavery was a way for many artisans to reaffirm their contribution to the making of Puerto Rican society and to reiterate that they played an important current role in the political life of the city. This strategy became clearer in an article published in the artisan-edited newspaper *El Obrero*, which spurred an argument with members of the liberal elite. Traces of this dispute appear in the pages of the *Revista de Puerto Rico* of June 18, 1890.[151] Apparently an artisan columnist at *El Obrero* had accused the Ponce liberal elite of taking credit for the abolition of slavery and of demanding continuous gratitude from artisans for the liberals' achievement. The author in *El Obrero* reiterated that the artisan class did not owe a thing to the so-called abolitionists.

In the *Revista*'s response, the columnist demands recognition not only of the liberal abolitionists' efforts but also of the role liberals continued to play in protecting the working classes, which the author identifies as groups of blacks and mulattos. As evidence of their protective role, the author says liberals tipped workers off about the state's suspicions of conspiracy in 1887. The columnist reveals that liberals were involved in the conspiracy as well, but that workers, men of color, intended to lead the conspiracy toward a revolutionary path. The author argues that those actions brought the repression of workers (in his account, 197

pardo and *moreno* artisans were captured, of whom 130 were tortured) and some innocent autonomists (among them the *Revista*'s director, Francisco Cepeda). The columnist insists that the artisans of color had a tendency to steer away from liberal leadership and favored direct confrontation as a political strategy, which could jeopardize social harmony on the island and the workers' welfare in general. The author claims that liberals would continue "loving" and "protecting" the men of color, and declares that they (liberals) would forgive the artisans' ingratitude and the insults printed in *El Obrero*.

The article was not only a response to the critiques in *El Obrero* but also a means for the author to condemn an imminent workers' strike in 1890. The *Revista* columnist warned the artisans of color about again employing a strategy of direct confrontation. In the past, such strategies resulted in the 1887 *compontes*, and now another group of artisans of color, the bread makers, was organizing a strike.[152] That strike, the author contended, would spark additional demonstrations by other workers creating a potentially explosive conflict like that of 1887. In fact, the author's alarmed tone—"a racial war will begin, a bloody one like the others in the neighboring Antilles"—stemmed from his fear that the bread makers' strike was more than just a labor conflict and instead was a means for men of color to push forward their racial interests. The author warned that ultimately "the poor and ill-advised *hombres de color*—who are 10 to 11 times less numerous than the *blanco* population in the country will be the ones to pay the price."[153] He called on workers to rectify their actions: "Workers, you can choose a tragic end if you follow the path that the men of your race are pushing you into or choose dignity and betterment when following the path of peace and fraternal association with the *blancos*, who have always looked out for your well-being." In better words, workers should recognize and follow the established autonomist leadership.

The *Revista* columnist seems to have exaggerated the potential danger artisans of color represented but corroborated that artisans constituted a crucial political force at the end of the nineteenth century. Most importantly, he confirmed that artisans of color had crafted their own historical narrative, designed their own political strategies, and had their own political goals. Workers, then, threatened the delicate balance of power in the colony, a balance that liberals needed to gain political power. The article also highlighted the limits to the reformist liberal rhetoric that, in spite of the populist tone used to romance artisans politically, always sought to reproduce the class and racial hierarchies that could guarantee the liberals' hegemony over the working classes.

The liberal leadership did not see the artisans' blackness as impeding political negotiations. However, those political negotiations did not mean that liberals sought racial or class equality. In fact, these elites avoided speaking directly about racial inclusion. Their celebrations of the abolition of slavery were an indirect way of approaching an issue—racial inclusion—crucial to Puerto Ricans. For liberals to acknowledge openly Puerto Rico's blackness or the potential of racial struggle could have hampered their future as political leaders of a reformed colonial government on the island.

The article "Las condiciones étnicas" published in the *Revista de Puerto Rico* (in the same issue as the previous article) demonstrated further the intricate

link between colonial politics and race. The article provided another example of how the liberal Creole elites refused to acknowledge Puerto Rico's blackness and instead focused on Puerto Ricans as the offspring of three races (who eventually would become white) because it was fundamental to their political aspirations.[154] The article's author began by quoting at great length the Ministro de Ultramar's argument against the proposal of Cuban and Puerto Rican liberals to grant universal suffrage to islanders.

The Ministro's refusal was predicated on the basis of racial/ethnic concerns. In his speech to the Spanish Courts, the minister Becerra argued against political rights on the islands because they (the islanders) had failed to achieve ethnic unity, like Spain had already done. Becerra added that given their recent history of slavery, Caribbean colonies were not ready to comply with the rigorous demands of such democratic freedom, and in particular could not be trusted with voting. It was within this broader context that Creole writers such as Salvador Brau or Francisco del Valle Atiles highlighted Puerto Ricans' evolution into one, "Spanish/white," people. And we can understand why liberal Creole elites felt compelled to repeatedly reassert their whiteness in the eyes of the authorities. In the article, the author strongly criticized Becerra's arguments. The journalist contended that to deny universal suffrage because of the colonies' history of slavery was ridiculous. Slavery was a despicable system in which both *peninsulares* and white Creoles participated. In fact, by limiting suffrage, Spain not only was unfairly punishing the islands' white population but continued enslaving the black inhabitants because it denied them the opportunity for political participation: "not only whites are being punished: also the blacks. They all are punished by denying them universal suffrage: the former because they were slave owners and the latter because they were enslaved . . . the neo-citizens [former slaves] will always be perceived as inferior to the other citizens."[155]

The journalist became, then, an advocate for the political rights of people of African descent, which distinguished him and other liberal autonomists from the Spanish authorities and their conservative allies. The author discredited the Ministerio de Ultramar by suggesting that the Spanish authorities regarded men of color as unequal to whites, who were unprepared to take on the rights and duties of citizenship. In contrast, the author suggested that liberals believed in the men of color's capacity to become citizens. The journalist cited other Caribbean islands, like Martinique and Guadalupe, as examples of how people of African descent had enjoyed universal suffrage without sparking political chaos. Therefore, Cuba and Puerto Rico, islands with a much smaller population of color than Martinique and Guadalupe, could exercise their right to universal suffrage without compromising the social order. Finally, the author accused the metropole of manipulating the elites' racial fears in order to maintain tight control over the colonies because they knew that people of color would vote for the autonomists: "The truth is that they fear whites not the blacks. With universal suffrage the pro-Autonomists will achieve electoral control." Like in the other articles authored by liberals, this journalist also limited the role of black voters in Puerto Rican politics. He believed black voters could only aspire to support white liberals in office, their aspirations always mediated by the liberal leadership.

The Autonomista Party leadership was always ambiguous about their negotiations with sectors of the popular classes, especially the well-organized artisans of color. These political leaders were caught between Spain's tight colonial control and the increasing activism of the working classes. In the face of limited choices, the liberal leader sought to partially include the artisans in their political project. Nonetheless, the artisans' participation, sometimes on their own terms, at times constituted a threat to the autonomist project. Several autonomists voiced this concern. In an 1890 article printed in the *Revista*, one author longed for the times of slavery when people used to respect social differences: "there are no more divisions among classes, no differences. Now that slavery has ended, we think we are all equal."[156]

Conclusion

"Are there still blacks who support integration [pro-Spanish, antiautonomist movement]?" asked a journalist in an article printed in the *Revista* in 1890.[157] The article first described a controversy in Cuba sparked by a series of derogatory remarks against blacks in a pro-Spanish newspaper published on that island.[158] The *Revista* journalist used the Cuban controversy to warn Puerto Rican men of color against supporting the conservatives' (members of the Spanish bureaucracy, church officials, the military, and the merchant class) political campaigns:

> The *hombres de color* of Puerto Rico should see their reflections in that mirror [Cuba]. These men of color in the past and now are supporting the integrationist candidates their previous owners and overseers suggested to them.
>
> The *mulato* Pérez . . .
> The *negro* López . . .
> The *grifo* Gómez . . .
> The *pardo* Suárez . . .
>
> This is how they are being treated [always noting the various degrees of black mixture]; this is how they are regarded by the integrationists.

The article implied that liberals, unlike conservatives, sponsored a national project that transcended racial differences.

However, in the social, political, and economic restructuring of Ponce in the 1880s and 1890s—that is, after abolition—racialized differences, blackness, and racial impurity significantly troubled not only conservatives but, most importantly, liberals. The activism of the popular classes, especially of those who appropriated and modified the elites' language of labor, forced liberals (and a few conservatives) to struggle with their own racism in order to negotiate political alliances that were key to maintaining the colonial system. Race fundamentally shaped the political realignments of late-nineteenth-century Puerto Rico.

Processes of racialization underlay the attempts of liberal and conservative elites—working together despite their differences—to reorganize the physical and social urban fabric into a modern city. In their quest for modernity, progress, and power, Ponce elites joined forces to discipline, supervise, criminalize,

institutionalize, and remove the city's "undesirable" population. The upper classes formulated an idea of Puerto Rican modernity that reproduced the gender, racial, and class hierarchies of the preabolition period, while introducing new idioms and modalities for regulation. Criminal records show that poor, black and racially mixed men and women were the most frequent targets of the disciplining policies.

The elite's emphasis on work and productivity opened a door for the political participation of some sectors of the subaltern population. The subaltern population designed many strategies to contest the elites' disciplining efforts. These strategies ranged from individual acts of disobedience, occasional outbursts of violence, and the appropriation of elements of the elites' discourse, especially the idioms of labor. Those who were productive claimed their rights to participation in the city's decision-making processes.

Artisans were among those popular groups that emerged as a crucial political force in the colony, heavily courted by liberals and, at times, conservatives. In the eyes of the elites, especially liberals, the artisans' productivity and adoption of white values (education, skills, cultural activities, political organization, and so on) had transformed them into acceptable political allies, in spite of their racial origins. Although artisans were a racially complex group, which included Creole whites and Spaniards, the elites perceived them and portrayed them as nonwhites. Groups within the artisans also portrayed themselves as nonwhite. However, the issue of racial inclusion was not the basis of the political negotiations between artisans and liberals. In fact, liberals attempted to deflect attention from a discussion of Puerto Rico's blackness, as it would have negatively affected their political aspirations. For a long time, racial inferiority had justified the permanence of the colonial relationship because racially impure colonial subjects could not govern themselves.

The problem of racial domination, however, needed to be addressed, even if indirectly. Liberals, conservatives, and artisans used the memory of abolition as an arena in which to debate the terms of racially based exclusion or inclusion. By taking credit for the enactment of abolition, liberals asserted their leadership in island politics, portraying themselves, in contrast to the authorities, as the true bearers of democratic values. This strategy enabled liberals to build bridges with the artisan class, at the same time that it confined artisans to a position of subalternity because their freedom supposedly resulted from the liberals' efforts. Authorities used the memory of slavery to appear more democratic to the broader population, especially since the liberals' influence had grown progressively. And finally, artisans employed the memory of slavery as an opportunity to participate in the city's political life and present their own political project. The memory of slavery was central to the artisan class as the only means available to address the persistent racial inequality.

When the United States took over the island, the terms of the political debate were transformed once again. Discussion of racialized domination became even more difficult. This change in the political debate led to the design of new political strategies. The post-1898, working-class movement moved further away from the racialized artisan identity to become race-less workers.

Part II

Changing Empires

After several months of surveillance off the coast of Puerto Rico, US military forces commanded by General Nelson A. Miles entered Guánica Bay in the early hours of July 25, 1898.[1] After landing on the southern beaches of the island, US troops marched rather easily through the town of Yauco. By July 28, they set foot in the main plaza of Puerto Rico's "alternative capital," Ponce, while additional soldiers made port in the same city. As more servicemen arrived in Puerto Rico, US regiments headed toward the interior, occupying towns and villages surrounding the main points of Coamo, Arecibo, Adjuntas and Utuado. The war armistice was finally announced on August 13, 1898,[2] and it officially ended with the formal signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898.[3]

Antagonism toward the Spaniards led many Puerto Ricans to welcome any sign of change, even if it came in the form of a military invasion. In his remembrances of the war, Emmanuel Rossiter of Company I of Superior, Wisconsin, described the favorable reactions some Puerto Ricans had to the arrival of the American troops: "We were met by a wildly excited and gesticulating crowd of Porto Ricans, who welcomed us with 'Viva Americano.'"[4] Other witnesses attributed a similar reaction to elected officials of the seized towns. For example, just several days after the first landing on July 29, the mayor of Yauco, Francisco Mejía, circulated a manifesto welcoming and celebrating the arrival of the US forces. In that statement, Mejía stressed the pivotal role of the events on July 25 for Puerto Rican history and cast that date as a holiday. He ended the manifesto with the following celebratory words: "¡CITIZENS! LONG LIVE THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA! LONG LIVE ITS BRAVE TROOPS! LONG LIVE AMERICAN PUERTO RICO!"[5]

In Ponce, too, municipal officials expressed pro-American sentiments. They went even further in expressing their joy toward the change in sovereignty. According to the minutes of the municipal council meeting of August 1, not even a week after the first landing, officials agreed on the organization of a commission responsible for the celebration of July 28 (the day the US military entered the city) as a civic holiday.[6] In addition, the council ordered the two most important streets in the downtown area to be named after General Miles and General James H. Wilson. Most importantly, council members stressed that the making of July

28 into a civic holiday served an equally important role as that of the earlier construction of the Plaza de la Abolición (1880).[7] Council members perceived the fact that the American troops first entered the city by walking through the Plaza de la Abolición as a symbolic connection between two stages in their path toward freedom and leadership in the process. This connection was reinforced on October 17 when the municipal government organized a party in the Plaza de la Abolición to celebrate the transfer of the island from Spanish to the American government.[8]

However, these joyful expressions toward the US officials should be qualified. The Spanish-Cuban war, which began in 1895, had a negative impact on the economic life of Puerto Rico. The war drained the financial reserves of the metropole and significantly limited Puerto Rico's commercial trade with other islands, the United States, and Spain itself. Consequently, the majority of the inhabitants were living in misery. For many, the arrival of the United States meant the near end of the war and possible improvement to their living conditions.

Nevertheless, Serviceman Edward C. Niebuhr wrote to his cousin on August 19, 1898, that many natives of the island showed caution regarding Americans. Many thought that Americans would rob and plunder as the Spaniards had done before. For that reason they "gave us cigars, cigarettes and fruits to keep on the right side of us." Niebuhr perceptively understood that inhabitants of the island knew how to take advantage of the invasion. The volunteer narrated that as soon as the inhabitants realized US soldiers had money, they increased the prices of the few goods available.[9]

The municipal officials' favorable sentiments also reflected their own political agendas. Throughout the nineteenth century, municipal councils had become the niche for Creole political participation. In the last years of the century, liberal Creoles finally achieved limited control over island structures of power through the enactment of the 1897 Autonomic Charter.[10] To them, the United States did not represent an imperial power but instead a democratic republic that would enable them to finally seize the overall governing structures.[11] On October 5, 1898, for example, the municipal authorities in Ponce sent a proposal to the military governor, General Henry, asking him to respect municipal autonomy. The letter also outlined their plans to expand the workings of the municipal government regarding instruction, public works, and hygiene. Only three months after the first landing of US troops, the municipal council in Ponce had already designed a plan to maximize their power in the new governing arrangements. However, others were not so quick in their celebration of the invasion. In his diary, Dr. Esteban López Giménez of Fajardo stated his distrust of the United States. He believed that his counterparts' celebratory manifestations were premature.[12] History proved López Giménez's instincts right.

The US invasion and permanent seizure of the island dislocated all components of island society, sparking Puerto Ricans to realign political factions, restructure the economy, and reformulate social identities. Among those changes, government centralization was pivotal. Party politics ceased to be grounded in the local *ayuntamientos* (municipalities) as they had been during the previous century.[13] The military regime, and later the US-appointed civil government, centralized

decision-making processes and policing authorities in San Juan, fracturing the power of liberal Creole forces and diminishing municipal power considerably. In Ponce, military governor General Henry ousted José Llorens y Echevarría, the city mayor elected by the municipal council, and instead appointed Luis Porrata Doria on November 12, 1898, setting a pattern that would be followed in other arenas.[14] Correspondingly, organized labor stepped out of its local boundaries to become more general, island-wide forces. Thousands of workers from local artisan groups in all towns and cities organized under two island-wide associations, the Federación Regional de Trabajadores (FRT) and Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT).[15] While the localized nature of power struggles made it possible for us to focus on Ponce as a case study of socioeconomic and political processes in the first half of the book, in this second part we must broaden our scope to capture the island-wide picture.

I should stress that "dislocation" does not mean rupture, but disruption. In the first decades of the twentieth century, elites and laborers rearticulated (with old and new elements) social, political, and economic projects that had been forged in the last three decades of the previous century. Social unrest and its nemesis, government repression, continued to unfold as economic constraints multiplied.[16] Dispossession of land and seasonal work were constants in the lives of the laboring classes.[17] Claims for political participation and the problematic crafting of a national identity under a colonial system became more complicated.[18] And the liberal reformist discourse on morality and hygiene expanded, resonating not only with the benevolent paternalist philosophy of the colonial government but among elite men across party lines, women of all classes, and the labor movement.[19]

The second part of this book examines how this new imperial landscape enabled various Puerto Ricans to reconstitute and produce new modes of silence about the forms and effects of racialized domination, even as it also enabled various actors to powerfully interrupt that silencing. Various political sectors hurled accusations and refutations of racism—a crucial performative tool—in forging a legitimate public arena for political contestation. In their quest for alternative ways to mobilize effectively within that public sphere, powerful forces within the labor movement attempted to constitute a race-less worker's identity based on class—even as most of the political elite moved closer to the construction of the white peasant as the embodiment of Puerto Rican identity. In so doing, the labor movement also cast others' deployment of race-based identities and antiracist critiques as a direct challenge to the labor cause. Their efforts to suppress discussions of race did not mean impoverishment, and dispossession along the lines of race was not at work. The idioms and practices of social hygiene, morality, and racial harmony served again as tropes to validate and organize racialized marginalization.

The chapters in this second part provide an alternative reading of Puerto Ricans' efforts to forge a legitimate sphere of political action under a new colonial regime. As such, these chapters prioritize the analysis of how overlapping or subsequent processes relate to the silencing of racialized domination thus, at times, betraying chronology. Political realignments shaped and were shaped by debates about race.

A brief chronological narrative of some of these realignments is necessary. After decades of censorship and persecution seeking to demobilize colonial critics in the Liberal Reformista Party, island reformers sought to revive the political scene by reconstituting their forces under the Autonomista Puertorriqueño Party in 1886. By this point, the bulwark of the Incondicional Español Party was the colonial bureaucracy; meanwhile the number of Autonomista Party sympathizers grew significantly among Creole upper, middle, and popular classes. Strategic differences on how to negotiate for autonomy with the Spanish government caused a split within the Autonomista Party, crystallizing by 1897 in the formation of two new organizations of proautonomist orientation. Regardless of subsequent name changes, they remained crucial in island political contestation during the following decades. The fusionista camp, led by journalist Luis Muñoz Rivera, wanted to make a deal with the Liberal Party in Spain: in exchange for Puerto Rican support, the Spanish Liberal Party would grant autonomy once they achieved power in the peninsula. They founded the Liberal Fusionista Party. Meanwhile, the ortodoxo camp, under the leadership of revered black physician José C. Barbosa, rejected this strategy, arguing that such a deal would undermine the principle of autonomy by bringing Puerto Rico closer to (and more dependent on) Spain's government structures. The *ortodoxos* sponsored a more radical and populist view—in contrast to the fusionistas' conservative planter and merchant classes—through the Autonomista Ortodoxo (or Puro) Party. They believed that the fusionist strategy was meant to appease the most conservative forces within its camp by signaling that autonomy was about modifying not overhauling colonial society. Their strategy worked, and autonomy was granted in 1897. The first Puerto Rican elections, based on universal male suffrage, took place in early 1898 after a bitter contest between the two new parties.[20] The fusionistas won and Luis Muñoz Rivera was elected governor. For these political classes, the prospect of an invasion was unnerving. And their worst dream came true: The 1898 war brought these processes to a halt and instated a new colonial regime.

The political contestation between these two parties in the late 1890s took place in the midst of intense labor organizing, with numerous strikes on plantations and in urban settings. The Spanish colonial administration had banned labor unions, although such laws did not prevent their extralegal organization. The United States legalized labor unions after the war with the installation of the US military government.[21] Workers, mostly urban, skilled laborers, from all political orientations—socialist, anarchist, communist, proautonomy, prostatehood, and proindependence—coalesced under the Federación Regional de Trabajadores in 1898. In 1899, a group split off to constitute the Federación Libre de Trabajadores. One of the reasons behind the split was that the faction that remained within the FRT, led by Rosendo Rivera, wanted to continue their political relationship with José Barbosa's party, now renamed as the Republicano Party, dominated by a constituency who wanted annexation to the United States. Among them a very socially conservative faction saw an opportunity for economic growth in the revival of the sugar industry under the new regime. The party also accommodated popular groups grossly marginalized under the

Spanish regime and who now could have access to improved infrastructure and services. The FLT rejected close affiliations to political parties that were not to the sole service of labor interests. For this purpose, the FLT leadership created the short-lived Obrero Socialista Party in 1899, sought out alliances with the US American Federation of Labor (AFL), and by 1915 founded the Socialista Party.

In the years between the first and second socialist parties, the FLT continued its tradition of political contestation by supporting (but not formally joining in) existing political parties. First, they supported Luis Muñoz Rivera, whose Liberal Party had changed its name to the Federal Party. This party's political orientation was quite ambiguous, but it accommodated those with a more forceful critique of the terms of the United States–Puerto Rico colonial relationship, among them dislocated coffee producers and small/medium business owners. Later, the FLT would support the efforts of Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón in creating a political reform movement, which crystallized with the formation of the Unión Party in 1904. Matienzo Cintrón was well regarded as a close ally of Muñoz Rivera in the fusionist autonomist block of the pre-1898 period. After 1898, Matienzo switched camps, becoming an influential member and eventually a legislator for the Republicano Party.

The 1900 Foraker Act transformed the US military government of the island into a civil administrative unit but denied Puerto Ricans any significant political participation in the governing of their society. Disappointed Puerto Rican politicians, especially Matienzo Cintrón's faction of the Republicano Party,[22] believed that the Foraker Act condemned the island to a colonial relationship with the United States. Subsequently, when Matienzo Cintrón campaigned to create a new organization (which eventually became the Unión Party in 1904), one element of his political program was to defend Puerto Ricans' interests within the new governmental structures. He received support from members of Muñoz Rivera's Federal Party, and the latter ultimately dissolved into the new Unión Party.[23] The republicano leader, José Celso Barbosa, a true annexationist, disagreed with Matienzo's project.[24] Barbosa's populist social project of political participation, religious freedom, education, and other individual rights was contingent on the process of Americanization and eventual annexation of the island to the United States.[25]

After defeat in the 1906 strikes, the FRT dissolved and its members joined the FLT by 1907. Despite constant repression and persecution, especially of the anarchist faction, the FLT was able to compel the colonial administration to implement important labor legislation and organize a department of labor on the island in 1914. The labor movement worked arduously to get US citizenship for Puerto Ricans, an endeavor that displeased many islanders with growing nationalist sentiment and criticism for the lack of avenues for significant political participation within the regime. Nationalist forces constituted the Party for Independence in 1912 under the leadership of Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón and others. They also attempted to revive the FRT but now with a proindependence orientation. The latter effort was fruitless. Throughout the 1910s, the Republicano Party remained an important force in the political realm as it shaped

debate, but it had lost a significant number of its working-class membership, especially as a consequence of the increasing popularity of the 1915 Socialist Party. Although outside of the scope of this book, readers should note that new political realignments would be set in motion in the years after World War I by a new generation of political actors. These post-1920 realignments would make necessary and feasible the renegotiation of the colonial regime, one that crystallized in 1952 under the Commonwealth framework.

Chapter 4

US Rule and the Volatile Topic of Race in the Public Political Sphere

> The problem of *color* cannot exist in Puerto Rico no matter what the US Congress decides in regards to the island's political status. The well-being of the island demands it this way. It would be a criminal act if any one, *blanco* or *de color*, in any form, no matter what the circumstances are, attempts to encourage on our blessed island the most hateful of all debates, the most brutal of all battles: the struggle between the *razas*.
>
> —José Celso Barbosa, "El problema del color," in *El Tiempo* (August 2, 1909)

Figure 4.1 The physical and mental characteristics of the masses of the [Puerto Rican] people are not easily described. Consider that during the early years of colonization no Spanish females came to Porto Rico, but soldiers, marines, monks and adventurers; these bred with the Indians; then negroes, almost exclusively males, were brought in, and these, too bred with the Indians and the offspring of Spaniards and Indians; then came negro women from Santo Domingo and added to the "mongrel mess." Obviously, to tell "which is which" at the present day is not easy. From the original blend of Indian, negro and Castilian stock, and later crossings and recrossings, have come what are generally called *jibaros*, the Porto Rican peasant.[26]

THE CAPTION ORIGINALLY APPEARING WITH FIGURE 4.1 DECLARED "SOME REAL NATIVES OF THE INTERIOR, Porto Rico" as if the picture were able to capture and fix the racialized essence—that is, blackness—of the new US imperial subjects. The caption stands in contrast to the imprecise racialized descriptions of islanders included in the main text (and excerpted previously) of William Boyce's *The Hawaiian Islands and Porto Rico Illustrated* (1909). The crossings and recrossings among different ethnoracial groups render the author unable to ascertain Puerto Ricans' exact racial nature. The animalized language of stocks, breeding, and crossing employed to describe the mixing serves to highlight the class, gender, sexual, and racial distance between the author, the Chicago-based publisher William D. Boyce, and the new imperial subject. In the larger text, Boyce depicted the Puerto Rican peasantry as a debilitated (consequently feminized), simple-minded, impoverished, racialized other. As in the writing of many social reformists of the time, the overall tone of Boyce's text was rather sympathetic, although racial mixing emerges as a quality that validates his labeling of the Puerto Rican peasantry as a "different civilization."[27] In the text, a sketch of the peasantry's deviant culture can only follow an account of its racial origins, as if the ultimate explanation rests on the peasantry's race. Boyce's depictions of rural inhabitants resemble those offered by the island's Creole reformists of the postabolition decades, revealing a multitude of competing and overlapping colonial projects.[28] Most of these projects centered on the moral and socioeconomic uplifting of the island's peasantry, though some certainly included the Creole elites as either subjects or partners.

The year 1898 signaled Puerto Rico's full incorporation into the US imperial orbit. This reorientation forced Puerto Ricans to navigate a more varied racialized landscape, although many of its racialized formations were already familiar. Some of the racialized formations that were new to Puerto Rico had emerged out of the United States' own colonial past and early nation-building processes, while others were totally novel for both US-based actors and Puerto Ricans.[29] Boyce's imprecision suggests that the impulse to categorize did not produce a single or coherent way for US agents to mark Puerto Ricans except as unequal racialized others. Mostly, they understood Puerto Ricans as a mix of suspect white, brown, and black bodies, depending on who else figured in a particular imperial imagination (Cubans, Filipinos, Hawaiians, American Indians, US blacks, Mexicans, Chinese, South Asians, recent European immigrants, or Euro-Americans).[30] Their articulations of racialized ascriptions and definitions became bolder and multiplied as debates over the exact position of the new possessions within the empire intensified.[31] Notwithstanding, Boyce's picture and caption also suggest that in this new colonial relationship, the new colonizers (and also Creole elites) were always measuring and registering blackness, making it the dominant mode through which they made sense of the "mongrel mess."

Turn-of-the-twentieth-century imperial formations engendered an intensive production of narratives, photographs, and displays manufactured and assembled by the host of imperial agents and new subjects of rule alike in spite of their unequal positions. Many Puerto Ricans were keenly aware of their ambiguous racialized position and sought to navigate the imperial waters by engaging the

processes of racialization and/or, most importantly for our purposes, producing a wide array of silences, such as downplaying the history of slavery and its impact on the island. Islanders constantly attempted to erase, minimize, or evade discussions about the racialized basis of their subjection (be it political, economic, or sociocultural) and its multiple levels (local, regional, hemispheric, and transcontinental). They forged silences not in contradiction but alongside images and narratives. Just as they contested images and narratives, their attempts at suppression and elusion also met with contestation. Their disruptions stirred up controversy and unveiled the volatility of "race" as a political issue. Different actors denounced instances of antiblack racist practices, but did not mean to debate racialization itself as an operative means of collective dispossession. Instead, they cast racism as an individualized experience and legacy of a past to be denounced and quickly dismissed.

The terms of conversation and efforts to contain or shape conversations about race varied depending on who was speaking and who the audience was. Were the Creole elites talking with US representatives on the island or the mainland, among themselves or with organized labor? Labor leaders likewise sought to control conversations about race when engaging Creole elites, US officials (on the island or abroad), US labor organizers, or their own constituencies of Puerto Rican laborers. Racialization constituted the island's political landscape at the same time that (and perhaps because) many worked intensely to represent the island as a place where racialized differences were inconsequential.

Indeed, racialized constructions were crucial in rendering various political projects viable, including this moment of US imperial expansion itself. Puerto Rican politicians from both major parties sought to gain political leverage over their adversaries by making and rebutting charges of racism. In so doing, political elites attempted to legitimize their own parties or organizations as true leaders of the multiracial working classes. The leaders of organized labor likewise accused different political leaders of racism, understanding that racial equality was a central concern for its constituency. Most importantly, they recognized that debates about racialized domination among Puerto Ricans challenged the image of island political elites as whites ruling a society free of racial strife and undermined the moral authority the elites sought to forge in the eyes of the colonial rulers. Yet many labor leaders, engaged in ongoing negotiations with alternative imperial agents like the American Federation of Labor, deemed debates about racialized marginalization and explicit articulations of black identities as problematic to the advancement of their cause.

The 1898 Landscapes of Race

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Chicago publisher W. D. Boyce (best known for founding the Boy Scouts of America) had become a newspaper tycoon with bases in Chicago, Illinois, and Indiana and a roster of daily publications with national distribution.[32] Like many of his contemporaries, Boyce developed a keen interest in the world outside of the newly defined US territorial boundaries. The publisher traveled extensively around the world, organizing large exploration and hunting expeditions that included relatives, photographers, cartoonists, servants,

guides, porters, and others. Boyce thus joined a host of white, US and northern European upper- and upper-middle-class men who, as civilized explorers of primitive lands in South America, Africa, and Asia, viewed the world through "imperial eyes."[33]

Boyce serialized his exploits of these travels in his newspapers as well as based influential texts on them, such as *Illustrated South America* (1912); *United States Colonies and Dependencies* (1914); *Australia and New Zealand* (1922); and *Illustrated Africa* (1925). Turn-of-the-century advances, particularly in representational technologies such as photography and film, enabled the massive production and circulation of images, narratives, and displays. In this sense, Boyce fully participated in the design "of mechanisms, processes, and apparatuses that produce and circulate representations constitutive of cultural difference."[34] Hence the constitution of cultural difference was an immensely profitable business fueling the turn-of-the-century explosion of newspaper and book-printing industries.

First visiting the Caribbean as a journalist working to keep US audiences informed about the 1898 war, Boyce was a strong supporter of the US military campaigns in the Caribbean and Pacific islands.[35] In the immediate years after the war, and when concerns about the future of these possessions were at their height, the journalist visited all the other newly conquered territories. US public demand for information on the new possessions provided the perfect market conditions for the 1914 publication of Boyce's account, *United States Colonies and Dependencies*, which included many illustrations and abundant details about the history, people, geography, and economy of the new territories.[36] Boyce also disaggregated the larger text and published its constituent parts as smaller volumes that grouped together different sites. These were titled *Alaska and Panama*; *Hawaii and Porto Rico*; *The Philippines*; and *United States Dependencies* (which grouped Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Panama). Boyce's pairing of distinct sites for republication provides insight on the various logics organizing the US imperial fields. For example, Boyce linked "Porto Rico" and Hawaii because he deemed them the "best examples of our colonial rule."[37] This book portrayed the incorporation of the islands into the United States as "peaceful" and "unproblematic," as though these territories were unexpected but priceless gifts. In addition to the wealth they offered (property and sugar production), the author highlighted the islands' strategic value as military strongholds. Situated east and west of the Panama Canal, they were crucial to US economic and political expansion in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

For Boyce, these islands, more than any other sites, demonstrate the benign quality of US expansionist endeavors, which distinguished them from European imperialist interventions. He characterizes "Porto Rico" as the "example of what can be done in the way of fair-dealing and benefits given" and proclaims that "our treatment of Porto Rico as a colony is one of the best. In matters of moral and educational uplift, in respect to the physical health of its people, and in material improvements, our adoption of Porto Rico has been a blessing to the island and its people."[38] Puerto Rico was the mirror in which the United States and others could see the entirely positive merits of foreign intervention. Erasing colonialism's detrimental effects on Puerto Ricans—even in the present—was a key practice

in setting the island as the peaceful stage on which the United States sought to constitute its own image as a nonimperialist global power.

While US-based actors mass produced racialized images of islanders as nonwhite, simple people, Puerto Ricans also produced a vast array of images of themselves and others.[39] In doing so, they too became engineers in the representational machine of empire. While many islanders attempted to deracialize such image production, others engaged racial images with a fury. Creole elites in particular worked to rearticulate their own whiteness in order to guard against their marginalization from the political process and also to prevent others from winning substantial political recognition.[40]

The document that the first Puerto Rican commission to the United States submitted to President William McKinley is one example of the Creole elite's participation in this war of images. In April 1899, after the ratification of the Treaty of Paris, the physician-politicians José Julio Henna and Manuel Zeno Gandía visited Washington to demand that the United States make a transition from a military to a temporary civil government administered by Puerto Rican officials while Congress decided on the ultimate fate of the relationship between the United States and the island. The commissioners justified the island's right to democratic government on the basis of Puerto Ricans' gendered, class, and racial nature: "Neither the US President nor the American people could ever reject Puerto Ricans who are noble, virile, highly educated people of the Caucasian race."[41]

The black racial essence signified in the photograph that opens this chapter, together with its caption identifying the individuals pictured as "real natives of the interior" can be read as Boyce's response to the island elites' persistent efforts to whiten islanders in the eyes of US officials. Boyce contradicted Puerto Rican politicians by stating that the *jíbaros*, the peasantry of the interior, were everything but white and, therefore, in need of the uplifting guardianship colonialism could provide.[42] In doing so, Boyce brought together US progressive reformism and imperialism by stressing the overall positive results of social uplift resulting from the intervention.[43]

US agents of both imperialist and anti-imperialist[44] inclinations coalesced in their representations of Puerto Ricans as feeble, helpless, and sometimes untrustworthy—conditions they strongly correlated to the islanders' nonwhite ethnoracial ancestry. Like Boyce's writings, the reports of policy makers such as Henry Carroll and the members of the Insular Commission (appointed by the Department of War) echoed a reformist stance that simultaneously marked the islanders' racialized inferiority and their potential for moral and social uplift.[45] For example, Carroll argued that islanders' cultural assimilation—acquiring English language skills and appropriating US cultural norms—was a first step in bridging the gap between islanders and the United States.[46]

Puerto Ricans' Views of the New Colonizers

Through their everyday acquaintances with soldiers, administrators, reformers, and journalists, as well as their reading of newspapers and books, many Puerto

Ricans became increasingly knowledgeable about US history, particularly the country's wide array of racial categories and practices. Most importantly, islanders were familiar with the host of images and definitions of themselves produced in this context of empire. Puerto Ricans responded to such imperial social constructions in various ways. Ponce's newspaper *El Combate* (The Battle) took the lead in such public challenges, openly contesting the deprecating images of Puerto Ricans engendered through the war effort. The *El Combate* editors, especially its director Evaristo Izcoa Díaz, had long assumed the role of social critic in Ponce. Izcoa had founded *El Combate* in 1895 under the name *La Bomba*, a journal identified with artisans and popular classes.[47]

As *La Bomba*, the journal had become an important site for forging a cross-class, cross-racial, masculine alliance between artisans and liberal reformist politicians in 1890s Ponce, groundwork that made the 1897 Autonomic Charter possible.[48] This alliance was predicated on, among many other things, a shared sense of manhood, exclusionist renderings of working-class womanhood, and a mutual desire for increased political participation. In forging this collaboration, artisans in Ponce had negotiated a racialized workers' identity that rendered them acceptable to the autonomist elite as political allies. The racialized and gendered images circulating and shaping the war effort and decisions about future rule ran against and devalued the coalition and their political project. The commentary in *El Combate* echoed the alliance's concerns.[49]

El Combate reported regularly on the battles waged in Cuba and the Philippines. The tone was celebratory and supportive of Cuban and Filipino rebels, particularly of the latter's military confrontations with US troops, while the journal strongly criticized US supporters in Puerto Rico.[50] In a June 8, 1899, article, "El incondicionalismo Americano," *El Combate* reproached those US supporters on the island who unconditionally accepted all military government decisions:[51] these supporters only furthered the "degrading" image of Puerto Ricans, especially men, "who now appear to the world as a race of effeminate followers."[52]

At the same time, both US agents and Puerto Rican elites understood miscegenation as the byproduct of unrestrained sexual desire, and thus signaled the absence of "virility," a term employed often in reference to the strength of character of the ideal liberal Puerto Rican man. *Virilidad* entailed morality, sexual restraint, physical strength, and scientific rationality, all qualities that had earned artisans the right to participate in the autonomist project of the 1880s and 1890s. *El Combate* now drew from that patriarchal political culture in Ponce to portray the invasion and some islanders' support of it as a violent assault on working-class virility. Thus an image of the Puerto Rican as an emasculated man emerged in distinct sites and in divergent political projects (from US colonial agents and also among island political leaders) that mutually reinforced each other.

The most common response from *El Combate* to explicit US racializations was to deflect them and manufacture an alternate set of images. For example, in June 1899, the journal reported on an allegorical procession in the streets of New York, where organizers portrayed Puerto Ricans as mulattos.[53] The *Combate* commentator did not delve into the production of the racial representation, but judging by his response it is clear that he understood the highlighting of Puerto Ricans'

Figure 4.2 John Bull: "It's really most extraordinary what training will do. Why, only the other day I thought that man unable to support himself."

Philadelphia Inquirer, reprinted in Literary Digest (August 20, 1898)

mulatto-ness as a way to demean islanders. The commentator proposed the organization of a counterprocession in celebration of the US invasion, July 25, where Americans would be the ones mocked and "othered:" "To commemorate the disembarking in Guánica we have a proposal. Another procession in which an American appears drunk, dirty, and with pestilent feet." *El Combate* organized its debates around the question of who was fit for political rule. In portraying the colonizer as immoral, unhygienic, and sickly (pestilent feet), they challenged the purported superiority of US representatives.

In the process of contesting gendered, sexualized, and racialized images, *El Combate* writers did not themselves articulate racialized descriptions of Puerto Ricans. Rather, they let it be known that racial ascriptions were produced in

the United States or by its representatives on the island. For writers in *El Combate*, the racialized violence that characterized life in the US South embodied the essence of the US imperial project, not separate from but constitutive of the imperial apparatus. This violence of the US civilizing campaign was evident in the imperial reformists' desire to erase the cultural identity of the new colonial subjects: "To civilize and to cleanse are not synonyms. The Yankees argue that to civilize one has to strip away bad habits from the men it intends to regenerate . . . and so they are cleansed."[54] To these writers, the imperial project was deeper than cultural cleansing, it was also rooted in the body: "These children from the North are convinced that knowledge does make its way only through blood . . . We believe that the only thing the United States will help Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico with is . . . to die." Here journalists took ideas and practices associated with notions of cleansing, so central to the 1880s Puerto Rican reformists, and deployed them against the United States to describe their ultimate assault on islanders, perhaps because they were also the target of such cleansing projects.

Figure 4.3 *The World*, reprinted in *Literary Digest* (November 26, 1898)

The writers in *El Combate* agreed that islanders needed to be uplifted; their question was who was fit to do it. Could the United States carry out a civilizing mission on the islands? US racist history testified to the nation's incapacity for implementing anything close to civilization.

The debate continued in a May 1899 issue, when an *El Combate* contributor commented extensively on a cartoon that recently had appeared in the New York daily *The World*.[55] *El Combate* did not reproduce the cartoon, but a commentator described it in great detail: the right side of the cartoon showed a group of US northerners in the South, where numerous black men hang from a tree, "resembling tree fruit."[56] In the center of the picture, a woman stands with a sword in her hand, representing Justice. To the left, a gigantic Yankee, representing the people of the United States, looks out into the distance toward the islands of Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. To the *El Combate* writer, the most crucial element in the cartoon was its inscription: "Civilization Begins at Home." The cartoon echoed the anti-imperialist sentiment held by some within the United States and spoke to the Puerto Rican newspaper's own anti-imperialist stance. For both US-based and Puerto Rican critics of US imperialism, the racialized domination embodied by the US South delegitimized the United States as a civilizing power. These anti-imperial critics argued that racialized violence was a feature unique to US national and imperial formations, and thus foreign to Puerto Ricans. *El Combate*'s implicit message was that Puerto Rico was characterized by racial harmony, which proved the moral authority of Puerto Rico and its elite over the United States.

Disrupting Silences in the Island's Political Debates

As hostilities between Cuba, Spain, and the United States increased, anxiety over the imminent US military invasion of Puerto Rico permeated all discussions, especially among politicians. Because of the war, Spain quickly suspended the freedoms granted by the Autonomic Charter.[57] Liberal autonomists, especially those of the fusionist camp who had won the majority in the 1898 elections, did not know what to expect from the United States. Their new political power was under serious threat.[58] The larger population was suffering the worsening effects of a paralyzed economy and awaiting the end of a conflict that had originated in Cuba in 1895.[59]

In the midst of this general uncertainty, Mariano Abril, a liberal autonomist journalist and close political collaborator of Luis Muñoz Rivera's (the leader of the fusionist camp), published an article in the June16, 1898, issue of Ponce's newspaper *La Democracia*, advising islanders to be cautious. His targeted audience was not his peers but the *raza de color*. While I bring debates about racialized difference to the forefront of this analysis, race rarely was an independent subject of public discussion in turn-of-the-century Puerto Rico, and this was especially true after the US invasion. Rather, explicit articulations of racialized identities and discussion of racial domination often emerged tangential to debates about other matters. People used political debate as a proxy for discussing what they ultimately understood as racially based conflicts. Racial undercurrents thus could surface in surprising and unpredictable ways. Prompt and strong responses to

seemingly benign statements reveal, for example, how matters of race, though often masked or unspoken, were central to the everyday life of the wider population. Abril's article illustrates this complexity.

The article's source of concern were the "naive individuals" in both Cuba and Puerto Rico who were convinced that living under US rule would allow them to enjoy US sociopolitical progress and economic wealth. To Abril, that was just a dream, an illusion: the United States would never share its wealth, and its investments would only be justified by the profits it could extract from the islands. Abril explained that the United States believed progress was conditioned by the ethnic and sociological history of a nation's people, and therefore Puerto Rico and Cuba would never achieve success. For this reason, the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico could never join the United States. Abril warned that if the US ever set foot in Puerto Rico it would be to the detriment of the island's population because the US was certain of its racial superiority over the islanders.

Abril argued that among all groups, the island's *raza de color* would be worse off under US rule. He specifically warned the *raza de color* because they were supposedly the major supporters of the US take-over, but "they [the United States] are declared enemies of that race [*raza de color*]." He stressed that the members of the *raza de color* in Puerto Rico were treated differently than their nonwhite counterparts in the United States, and if the United States were to rule over the island, the *raza de color*—now free and enjoying the same rights as whites—would be brought back into slavery. The ensuing mistreatment and violence would eventually drive them to migrate from their island home. Ultimately whites would be the only ones to enjoy any social and legal privileges brought about by the US takeover. He listed some of the assaults on the citizenship of men of color in the United States, such as segregation and the denial of voting rights—the latter being something Puerto Ricans of color had achieved under Spain. Abril ended by claiming that "only ignorance" could drive the *raza de color* to support US rule. "Why they would choose Yankee slavery over the freedom they already enjoy here," he asked. "¡The *raza de color* will only encounter misfortune if Yankees get to rule over Puerto Rico!"

Like many of his contemporaries, Abril sought to construct the United States as the embodiment of antiblack racism, invoking the specter of slavery in contrast to Puerto Rico's racial harmony—the achievement of island liberals alone. In doing so, he was cultivating continued support for the newborn autonomist government.[60] Building upon a decades-long political strategy, he again made the success of the abolition process in Puerto Rico the center of political and sociocultural discourse. Puerto Rico's postabolition path differentiated the island and the Spanish empire from the United States, while simultaneously erasing the racialized violence embedded in the centuries-long formation of the Spanish empire and in the course of the ongoing Cuban-Spanish war.

Contrary to his intention, Abril's statements actually illuminated the racial divide between the liberal autonomist leadership and the rest of the population. While equating the *raza de color* with ignorance, betrayal, antipatriotism, and pro-Yankee sentiments, he did not miss the opportunity to identify himself as white: "only us whites will enjoy any privilege." By denouncing their supposedly

unconditional support of the United States, Abril branded the *raza de color* as the enemy of the liberal national project and its motherland, liberal Spain. This image of the *raza de color* as dissidents rang true to many who associated the radical men of color with the 1887 anti-Spanish conspiracies that brought about the *compontes* and the sweeping repression of the following years. If in 1887 the colonial state took the lead in using blackness as a political strategy to neutralize oppositional movements, in 1898 the fusionist liberals marked blackness negatively to protect their political preeminence (fusionists won the local elections of March 1898).

Although many newspapers of the period have not survived in the archival record, those that are available provide enough material to piece together these debates. Abril's article sparked a heated controversy, which many tried to use to their political advantage. Soon after the article's publication in *La Democracia*, a response appeared in a Mayagüez newspaper, *El Diario Popular*. The author, who provided only his initials, FTR, objected to Abril's statements because they constituted an insult to the laboring classes of Puerto Rico.[61] This critique reflected the truism that for many, the category "*raza de color*" was synonymous with that of "worker," and thus, many understood an insult against the *raza de color* as a direct offense to the black and brown working classes.

A response to FTR appeared in another Mayagüez journal, *La Bruja*. The author of the commentary section "Mete y Saca" came to Mariano Abril's defense by arguing that FTR's reaction was unfounded. In this writer's view, FTR had misunderstood Abril, who had not meant that all people of the *raza de color* were Yankee supporters. He insisted that Abril's strong advocacy of the working class was evident in his writings on the subject. The *La Bruja* commentator blamed Abril's enemies for exploiting his statements solely for their political advantage. He was referring to the members of the orthodox camp, the Autonomista Ortodoxo Party led by the black politician José Celso Barbosa. The commentator asserted that these political enemies intended to damage Abril's relationship with the incipient organized labor movement.

Loyal to Abril and the fusionist camp, *La Bruja* published another reply, this time in the commentary section "Brujerías," to the ongoing criticism directed toward Mariano Abril.[62] The author of the commentary section, known by the pseudonym of Maüser, was incensed because, in his view, the political opposition had continued to maliciously exploit Abril's article. Through this reply, we learn that other newspapers such as *El País* and *La Unión* were praising themselves for refuting Abril's statement.[63] *El País*, which frequently published the writings of the orthodox Barbosa, insisted that it was the first to publicly stand up for the *raza de color*. The conservative journal *La Unión* did not hesitate to proclaim that it was second in its quick support of the *raza de color*, followed by the Ponce journal *El Popular*. In *La Bruja*, Maüser claimed that the *raza de color* was not insulted by Abril's statements; they knew he was their ally. He also maintained that political enemies were using the controversy to increase their political leverage among the laboring classes. "All this so-called support and effort to clarify who said what and when in their defense only shows that these newspapers' ultimate goal is to

call the attention of a class of people that has not felt insulted at all! One can only wonder, what do they want from them [the *raza de color*]?"

Maüser's concern over a potential wedge between the autonomist fusionist faction and the working classes was well founded.[64] The controversy reached deeper than expected, not only stressing the divide between elite groups and the laboring classes, but also highlighting divisions within organized labor. On December 30, 1898, the journal *El Porvenir Social*, associated with the newborn Federación Regional de Trabajadores (FRT), published an article in the commentary section "De Norte á Sur" that started a debate in which various parties again used Abril's statements to question political allegiances. The article centered on the struggle between Santiago Iglesias Pantín (a founding member of the FRT) and Fernando J. Matías, member of the Liga Obrera, a workers' organization in Ponce affiliated with the FRT.[65] The article described a visit to San Juan by Matías and his collaborator Ramón Morel Campos as a trip to court members of the Liberal Fusionista Party instead of their fellow workers.[66] The author of the article accused Matías and Morel Campos of investing themselves with the authority to negotiate with the fusionists over terms to end strikes being waged by printers and tobacco workers. Matías and Iglesias Pantín disagreed primarily over strategy. In his newspaper *La Liga Obrera*, Matías repeatedly denounced Iglesias Pantín's violent and radical methods of achieving workers' demands—that is, strikes. *El Porvenir Social*, in contrast, criticized Matías for his interest in peaceful negotiations. Matías sponsored an ideology of harmony between labor and capital, which in the end benefited only the bourgeois classes and not workers.

In an interesting twist to this conflict, Quintín Petifré, a regular contributor to FRT's *El Porvenir Social*, not only questioned Matías's and Morel Campos's authority within the organized labor movement in Ponce but further discredited their leadership by highlighting their relationship to the fusionist camp and specifically to Mariano Abril, the one who had tarnished "the reputation of the *hijos del trabajo* in the eyes of the Spanish government when stating that many among the *raza de color* supported the Yankee cause."[67] Like Abril, Matías also had made a point of identifying himself as white: "He [Matías] who has written columns in *El Autonomista* and *La Pequeña Antilla*, speaking of the workers who were previously slaves while simultaneously asserting he is *blanco de pura raza* and highlighting as proof his family's surname, cannot be a trustworthy advocate of the humble class." As such, Matías could not be a leader of the working class if he thought it necessary to publicly state his whiteness (in contrast to implicitly black slaves).

In the same December 30 edition of *El Porvenir Social*, a fellow worker, V. Márquez, wrote a letter of support to Iglesias in view of the controversy with Matías.[68] Acknowledging Matías's and Morel Campos's relationship to racist fusionists and the attacks against Iglesias Pantín because of his Spanish nationality, Márquez denounced the two men as a danger to the FRT. In his view, workers had overcome racial hatred. Along the lines of an internationalist socialist position, Márquez declared that for workers there was no religion other than work itself and no land but the world as a whole.

The story of Mariano Abril's statements did not stop with the US invasion or with the end of the 1898 war. The statements carried an unexpected weight. A year and a half later, on December 5, 1899, the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, associated with the newly formed Republicano Party, reprinted Abril's article.[69] The republicanos, many of whom were members of Barbosa's orthodox liberal faction, sought to further their political advantage by reminding the paper's audience that the newly founded Federal Party, having evolved mostly from fusionist sympathizers under Luis Muñoz Rivera's leadership in 1899, was their political enemy.[70] Editors of *La Vanguardia* explained that, by reprinting articles authored by individuals who were now members of the Republicano Party but that they had written during the period of Spanish government, the editors of the Federal newspaper *La Democracia* were reproducing controversial material prejudicial to the image of the republicanos in 1899.[71] In retaliation, republicano members at *La Vanguardia* published Mariano Abril's statements, thereby reminding others of the controversy over political racial profiling by the Federal Party. This long and multilayered controversy over Mariano Abril's statements exposes the political leverage the labor movement had achieved at the turn of the century and illustrates the ways race was again foundational in the political realignments brought about by the US invasion.

A similar dispute arose several years later as a result of a public lecture given by Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, the well-known former republicano politician who would help found the Unión Party in 1904. The lecture took place in early 1902 at the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, the center of the Puerto Rican intelligentsia since 1880.[72] The *Ateneo* had a well-established tradition of sponsoring lecture series to gather together the most important intellectuals and politicians on the island.

The transcript of his original speech is not available, but Matienzo's subsequent manifesto published in the San Juan newspaper *La Araña* introduces us to the controversy. In this manifesto titled "A los hombres de color," Matienzo sought to clarify his earlier statements.[73] The reproduction of a second lecture at another San Juan location also provides insight into the topics discussed at the Ateneo.[74] There, Matienzo advocated for the unification of all Puerto Ricans as a single community. Puerto Ricans under one banner, he argued, could forge a front to struggle for the advancement of Puerto Ricans' rights to political participation. Matienzo Cintrón, like other members of the elite, subscribed to fashionable Social Darwinist interpretations of race and nation, and the accompanying notion that some nations or people were more sophisticated, civilized, and progressive than others. In order to build up a forceful *patria* (motherland), Matienzo suggested a program to regenerate islanders politically, intellectually, and physically.[75] He stated that Puerto Ricans, an inferior race, had to undergo regeneration in order to survive the encounter with the superior race, North Americans. But Matienzo was concerned that Puerto Ricans' national character would disappear in the so-called path toward "civilization."[76] Politicians from the opposition and even workers soon challenged the antiblack racism embedded in these statements.

In his response, Matienzo described himself first and foremost as antiracist. Throughout the controversy over his statements, he insisted that his sole goal was to unify all Puerto Ricans. Supposedly, people misunderstood his reference

to an inferior versus superior race as a racialized insult, rather than an issue of contingent factors that gave advantage to one nation over others. However, by portraying himself as spokesman and advocate of the *raza de color*, the author highlighted the racial distance between his white self and the *raza de color*, betraying the race-less national community he was proposing: "Now they want to vilify me in the eyes of the *clase de color* who I appreciate and consider more than whites because that is my duty as an immortalist."[77]

Matienzo turned the situation around by accusing his critics, people of the *raza de color*, of racist behavior. These critics, he implied, did not consider themselves Puerto Rican first: "In the Ateneo I was speaking about the coalition of all Puerto Ricans. So what happened? Are you not as Puerto Rican as whites are?"[78] The latter's racially based agenda contradicted his own proposal for a national project: "Unity runs against the personal interests and prejudices of many who do not dare to be upfront with their opposition, so they seek subtle forms of disruption." Therefore, Matienzo argued, whoever attacks his persona and makes race-based allegations "are the enemies of the unification of all Puerto Ricans!" Matienzo regarded the accusations as absurd and mostly based on a malicious reading of his public statements. As they had done regarding race, he stated, his opponents would next accuse him of being an enemy to Puerto Rican women, for whose rights he had strongly advocated throughout his career. Matienzo seemed to have recognized that like gendered domination, racial matters were to be carefully danced around in order to push forward a nationalist project within the colonial context of the time. But by diminishing the racial—and potentially gender—based critiques of his view of the nation, Matienzo Cintrón only highlighted the importance of both issues among Puerto Ricans.

Barbosa's republicano followers—including the Federación Regional de Trabajadores—were not the only ones concerned with Matienzo's statements.[79] In February 1902, Santiago Iglesias Pantín, leader of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT), invited Matienzo to speak in a workers' assembly organized at the San Juan Coliseum.[80] Matienzo participated in subsequent workers' assemblies also organized by Iglesias, such as one in La Perla Theater in Ponce and the tobacco workers' assembly in March 1902. Since his separation from the Republicano Party, Matienzo had become Santiago Iglesias' political ally, if only temporarily. Santiago Iglesias' political stance was attuned to Matienzo's proposal for a unified Puerto Rico. Both understood that certain "differences"—that is, racialized differences—could upset the fragile social balance required to push forward a political project guaranteeing broader political participation for people in the colony. "True Union means we cannot allow antagonisms of race or color. We all, *negros* and *blancos*, young and old, workers and the wealthy, should be in Union," he told workers.[81]

Iglesias' invitation to Matienzo Cintrón to act as a guest speaker served as a means to clarify his stance to the FLT membership—"I am *anti-razista*. I love *negros* as much as *blancos*"—and entice them into the Unionista project—"Only our Unión can save our country." Furthermore, Iglesias used this controversy to discredit the political opposition: Barbosa and his supporters in the FRT. Barbosa and Iglesias had embarked on a long struggle for the leadership of the

laboring classes. In his speech following Matienzo's, Iglesias accused the opposition of misusing racial concerns in order to attack a political project that would benefit the laboring classes in general. By this attack on the opposition, Iglesias aimed to silence criticism that drew attention to the racial ideology embedded in the Unionist project. The Unión Party's electoral triumph over the republicanos in 1904 brought about the partial success of its purportedly race-less national project.

Matienzo Cintrón and his followers never intended to define their political project in racial terms. The race-less aspect of the Unión project emerged because the criticism and questioning that erupted from workers under both the FRT (Barbosa's close allies) and the FLT forced Matienzo Cintrón to defend his program's position on race. As a result, the Unión project did not recognize racially based claims and aspirations, but its call for racial unification prevented overt exclusion from the structures of power on the basis of race.[82]

Redrawing Racialized Boundaries

As they struggled to shape the form and direction of imperial rule on the island, many Puerto Ricans cast racialized domination in one of two ways. Either race was exclusively a US problem, and thus foreign to the island, or race was a problem that had emerged as a direct outcome of the new imperial framework. Both positions were grounded in the notion that the problems of racial division and exploitation had been purged from Puerto Rican society by the abolition of slavery and the accompanying myth that Puerto Rican society was a shining example of racial harmony. At the same time, many other islanders also saw that the shifting circumstances of the new imperial order provided the opportunity to redraw and even create new lines of racial identity and categorization.

The most conservative members of the Puerto Rican elite aimed to whiten the island, and they perceived the United States as a potential ally in that project. In a March 1901 letter to the governor, Ramón de Castro Rivera introduced himself as a concerned citizen of Ponce and pleaded with the authorities to encourage US companies to recruit Puerto Rican blacks for migrant work elsewhere in the empire.[83] De Castro saw migration as an outlet by which Puerto Rico could dispose of the undesirable black population. His proposal was not a radical one: his letter appeared in the midst of Hawaiian sugar planters' recruitment of large numbers of Puerto Ricans. Soon after 1898, migratory cycles that provided labor to sites of US investment such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Yucatan, Ecuador, and Hawaii had fully absorbed Puerto Rican workers. The economic instability of the island during the years of transition from Spanish to US rule worsened, as large sectors of the population were unable to recover from the damages caused by the 1899 hurricane, San Ciriaco. In just two years, from 1899 to 1901, 6,000 Puerto Ricans left for Hawaii.[84] In 1901, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association responded to labor unrest on their islands by sending agents to recruit workers from Puerto Rico, taking advantage of that island's new position within the empire.

In his letter, De Castro asserted that labor agents from the Pacific islands were deliberately selecting the whiter inhabitants over the darker population to work on the plantations. At the same time, numerous black workers from the French and British colonies were migrating to Puerto Rico, attracted by its revitalized sugar economy.[85] This racial imbalance worried De Castro. In his mind, the Puerto Rican population had never been racially pure and now the incoming flow of black Caribbean workers meant further deterioration of the island's racial makeup. As a well-informed eugenics sympathizer, De Castro proposed emigration control as a solution.[86] First, the governor should lobby companies to recruit a more racially balanced group of Puerto Ricans that would include equal numbers of pure blacks, mulattos or *pardos*, and whites. In addition, the governor should encourage those companies to recruit workers directly from the Virgin Islands. In so doing, they could steer away the inflow of black workers (*tortoleños*) from those islands. This project should begin with the immediate transfer of workers to Ecuador, where the black population was minimal and where citizens would not oppose the shipment of black Caribbean workers. De Castro insisted on the immigration to Puerto Rico of white individuals from the United States and Europe, to parallel the emigration of black Puerto Ricans. While similar schemes did take place in Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, they never took off in Puerto Rico, where under US control the discourse quickly shifted from one about the lack of workers to one of overpopulation.

It is difficult to know whether De Castro's letter had a significant impact on colonial policy, but his petition did reflect a more general concern regarding blackness and migration on the island. In August 1901, the immigration commissioner asked several heads of governmental agencies to report on the number of residents who had come to Puerto Rico from the West Indies, as a way to assess the size of the island's black immigrant population.[87] Among those who replied, M. G. Brumbaugh, the island's education commissioner, reported that there were 73 "colored"[88] teachers employed in Puerto Rico, constituting 9 to 10 percent of the teachers in the island's public system; 28 percent of that year's student body also was colored. According to Brumbaugh, these children were especially bright in the imitative studies such as drawing, reading, and writing, but "they did not show marked ability where constructive thoughts were required." The education commissioner states that these children resembled those of African descent in the southern United States. Brumbaugh's numbers supported De Castro's claim that West Indians were reproducing blackness in Puerto Rico.[89] Anxiety about the increasing number of West Indians continued in subsequent years. In his 1903 report, Immigration Commissioner Fred V. Martin informed the governor that, despite strict and thorough examination, 153 "African (black)" natives from the neighboring West Indian islands had entered Puerto Rico: "The Bureau recognizes the fact that this class of immigration is not beneficial to Porto Rico and her people, and in the administration of the new Act, approved March 3, 1903, the proportion of such admissions will be greatly reduced."[90] In contrast, "the greatest percentage of immigration into the island is of the Spanish race . . . As a class they are healthy, in good financial condition, peaceably inclined, and make desirable additions to the population."

De Castro's letter and the colonial authorities' attitude toward West Indian black workers underscore that the racial makeup of islanders was of great concern to members of both the Creole and colonial elites.[91] Like Dominicans in Puerto Rico today, West Indians then embodied the black African subaltern, many steps behind the racially mixed Puerto Ricans already on the path toward progress and civilization. As the success of the social uplift project depended on the race of the population (understood in both cultural and biological terms), the growing number of West Indians was a cause for concern.

Other Puerto Ricans did not easily dismiss De Castro's crude racism.[92] Ramón Romero Rosa, an FLT labor leader and collaborator with Santiago Iglesias, replied promptly in a letter published by the labor newspaper *La Miseria*: "You are Despicable! Despicable! Despicable! You are supposed to kiss the hand of the blacks who have been and are the source of endless wealth but instead you ask for further punishment. Such action only demeans you."[93] In this angry response, Romero Rosa stated that the working classes in Puerto Rico were direct descendents of African slaves because very few whites ever came to work in the plantations, factories, or workshops. Black hands produced all wealth on the island, so De Castro's recommendations to expel the Puerto Rican black population were not only outrageous and immoral, but ultimately criminal. Whites were responsible for slavery and prostitution, denigrating the island as a whole solely for economic purposes. More than anyone else, Puerto Rican blacks were entitled to live on the island; others such as De Castro should be the ones to leave. Romero Rosa ended the letter with a call to Puerto Rican blacks to defend themselves from these attacks.

Although he acknowledged the early presence of indigenous groups in Puerto Rico, Romero Rosa quickly dismissed them by portraying them as a vanquished race, totally exterminated by white European conquerors. In his historical account, the important actors were African slaves, valorized as the first Puerto Rican workers.[94] As Ponce artisans had done a few years earlier, Romero Rosa reclaimed Puerto Rican history as the history of black workers: "The children of Africa, by this I mean, those who unfortunately were brought in to colonize this region, constituted our first laboring community after the conquest."[95] In contrast to Creole elites who sought to extricate blackness from Puerto Ricanness, Romero Rosa placed blackness at the center of the nation. Even the title of his letter, "Al negro puertorriqueño," suggests this inversion: "black" is the noun, signaling that race is the core of the subject's identity, while "Puerto Rican" functions as a mere adjective.[96] With his explicit language, De Castro had broken the consensual silence about racialized domination.

The Political Value of Race

This overt articulation of racial identity was unusual in public debates and even more so within the labor movement. Moments when Puerto Ricans broke the silence regarding racial domination provided opportunities for the political classes to redefine the boundaries of the public political arena, especially in the context of a new colonial relationship. Accusations of racism and rebuttals became central

to the struggle for political advancement in Puerto Rican partisan politics. The audience for these exchanges was often the working-class constituencies of the political factions vying for power and influence under the new colonial regime. With formal unionization, workers had gained sufficient political capital to make their needs and interests—including their struggles against racialized subjugation—a new force shaping larger political agendas.

The leadership of the Republicano Party used these moments as opportunities to take on the role of the watchdog of racial politics on the island. Acting as the guardians of the *raza de color* in Puerto Rico (a role the FLT had evaded), the republicanos tentatively broached the uncomfortable issue of race, often accusing their rivals, the Federales, of racism. The Federal Party and its successor, the Unión, responded to the republicanos' accusations by asserting that those who introduced the matter of race were the real traitors of Puerto Rico. The Federal and Unionista responses unveiled the tensions organizing these institutions as they sought to avoid the minefield of racialized politics. Most republicanos only denounced racism selectively, turning accusations into a political weapon against their enemies and completely ignoring the internal contradictions within their own leadership. The republicano strategy of policing racial politics may have served as a device to bridge the class and racial gap between the pro-American, republicano capitalist elite seeking to expand the sugar and tobacco industries, and its black and brown working-class constituency.

In 1900, a group of republicano sympathizers wrote a manifesto against the Federal Party's political program.[97] The signatories accused the Federales of perpetuating master-slave power relationships and thus destroying the integrity of the Puerto Rican national family. In their historical account, slavery was an institution far removed from the current historical moment—much further distant than the thirty years since its abolition. The republicanos insisted that racism was the exception, not the rule, among islanders because the large majority of Puerto Ricans identified first as "native sons of the island." Only a very miniscule aristocratic group remained concerned with racial purity, and their descendents were the contemporary members of the Federal Party.

The authors identified two incidents that prompted them to write the angry manifesto. The first concerned presumably racist language in the Federal party's political program. Its official documents stated that the Federal Party would accept "among its leadership brilliant and generous men no matter who they are or what they mean in terms of their race." To Federales, the statement sought to express generosity and inclusiveness. But for the republicanos, such statements showed the Federales already making inappropriate distinctions between their white and nonwhite leadership.

The second incident involved a letter written by Don Santiago R. Palmer, the Federal candidate for the mayoralty in San Juan. Denouncing the republicano leader José C. Barbosa because of his race, Palmer openly questioned whether Barbosa, a black man, could be an effective leader: "[Barbosa is] a 'negro,'" Palmer wrote, "who is completely worthless in the eyes of the US because of his skin color."[98] Palmer's statements were taken not as a critique of United States racialized politics, which republicanos conveniently ignored, but as evidence of the

racism among their political opponents who marked Barbosa as black. For the authors of the republicano manifesto, Palmer's letter was one more attack in the aggressive mobilization among Creole political leaders against Barbosa's nomination to join the governor's executive committee in 1900. The sector opposing Barbosa argued that the appointment of a black man to such an important political position was an insult to Puerto Rican society.[99]

The republicano manifesto authors called for "Casanovas, Rodriguez Sierra, Nolasco, Delvalle and all of you people of color who are militant in the Federal Party. To protect your honor, dignity, the love for your parents and the future of your children, you cannot belong to a party that employs such ruses to vilify and denigrate this group of the Puerto Rican family, a family to which you are tied by blood." To them, the Federal Party was the slave-master party of modern times. Belonging to the national community superseded and nullified any other form of identification. Operating within the customary idiom of racial harmony, the republicanos judged the marking of racial difference itself to be an act of racism. In spite of the party's narrow take on race, some political actors—Barbosa, Dessús, Carrión Maduro—did find a space to articulate their blackness.

Charges and countercharges regarding racism continued during subsequent years, especially as republicanos attempted to wrest the working-class constituency from the newly formed Unión Party. The supposedly race-less position of the Unión Party became an easy target of criticism, and in the 1906 elections, the republicanos placed antiracism at the center of the campaign against their main political rivals. The Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT) also entered the fray. This workers' organization had belonged to the coalition that became the Unión Party in 1904. But the Unionista leadership sided with sugar corporations in several strikes and hesitated over universal male suffrage. Debates about this volatile issue became the wedge that broke open the usual silence about race, and the FLT abandoned the Unión and now operated as an independent political organization.[100]

In the closing decades of the previous century, the struggle for universal male suffrage had led to crucial political and social compromises between liberal Creole elites and the emergent, organized working class. The 1897 Autonomic Charter granted universal male suffrage, among other important statutes, but those suffrage rights were soon nullified in 1898 when the United States took over the island. It was not until 1904 that legislation allowed for all men over the age of 21 to vote, without literacy, property, or tax restrictions. Though the legislation stipulated that no more illiterate men would be allowed to register in the 1906 elections, an electoral reform measure enacted that year secured the right to vote for all Puerto Rican men.[101] The restoration of universal male suffrage provoked intense debate among members of the island's Chamber of Delegates (the representative body established by the colonial government under the 1900 Foraker Act).[102] It was evident to many participants and observers that antiblack racism shaped these debates.

In 1906, a group of self-identified republicano workers circulated a manifesto titled "Workers and Men of Color: Read and Reflect Upon."[103] The republicano workers who authored the manifesto aimed to stress the profound

divergence between the Unionista leadership and the working classes it explicitly regarded as inferior and immoral. This manifesto critiqued a collection of articles published in various Unionista newspapers. First, the authors attacked the statements Unionista Matienzo Cintrón made against male universal suffrage characterizing Puerto Ricans as unfit to exercise political rights because of their moral inferiority. Matienzo held that those Puerto Rican laborers who had left their Caribbean homes to work on the Sandwich Islands best exemplified the moral and physical inferiority of the popular classes: these men and women provoked jokes and laughter when off of the island because of their despicable appearance and the vices and lax moral standards their appearance betrayed.[104] Matienzo's characterization of the Puerto Rican migrant worker as an example of moral decline came at a time when the suffering and mistreatment these workers experienced constituted an open wound for many islanders, especially members of the organized labor movement, who publicly condemned the migrant labor system.[105] Puerto Rican laborers were subjected to the violence of migration work because of their racialized colonial position on the island and within the broader empire.

Incendiary statements published in a 1906 issue of the Arecibo newspaper *El Duende*, a journal affiliated with the Unión Party, were a second target of the Republican manifesto. While the original publication is not available, its partial reproduction and many references to it in other newspapers allow reconstruction of the article's contents. The article in question argued against universal male suffrage because "here is too much blackness among the people and the darkness can make us confused. Passion is particular to the inferior race of the Siberian orangutans and we should be careful to not get dizzy or nauseous by their fetid bodily smells."[106] This unusually explicit articulation of antiblack racism may have been a response to the political landscape shaping local elections in the region. The FLT had decided to concentrate their campaigning efforts in the area of Arecibo, where workers were well organized and consequently had a realistic opportunity to elect their representatives.[107] The article was likely an angry backlash against the central role organized labor had come to play in the political process.

At the end of the manifesto, the republicano workers included Barbosa's response to the racist statements in *El Duende*: The Puerto Rican family is one that should never be divided by racial prejudice.[108] Thus the *raza de color* should not vote for a party that "unfairly mistreats them." Through this denunciation of the vitriolic statements published in *El Duende*, Barbosa spoke to the issue of race and thus broke the familiar silence on matters of race. But by the content of his response—a call to restore national unity and put national unity above race—Barbosa also reproduced the code of silence. Many of the denunciations of racism, like this one by Barbosa, necessitated validation of the national myth that Puerto Rico was a racially harmonious society.[109] This practice of validating the story of harmony constructed ongoing racism as the action of specific individuals at exceptional moments.

The Unión Party replied to the republicano attacks in a publication titled "Dr. Barbosa Indicted: Against Falsehood, Speak the Truth: The Unión de Puerto Rico Supports Universal Suffrage and the Raza de Color."[110] The Unionista article

asserted that the Republicano Party had lost its political strength in the capital-city area of San Juan, while Unión support had grown significantly there since the party's first electoral campaign in 1904. Under these circumstances, Unionistas depicted the republicanos—particularly Barbosa—as desperate politicians willing to employ any means to advance their political cause; by doing so, Barbosa was injuring the Puerto Rican family with nonexistent racialized divisions only to serve his political aspirations. Barbosa had violated an island sociopolitical principle by placing Unionista racism at the heart of the republicano electoral campaign, traveling throughout the island (San Juan, Guayama, and other towns) spreading false accusations. The authors pointed out, however, that Barbosa and other republicanos did not support universal male suffrage, which Unionistas had supported. Barbosa was the racist one because he brought up the issue of racialized domination and because he reprimanded and insulted his own people: the colored men affiliated with the Unión.

Unionists sought to portray themselves as the ultimate supporters (or, perhaps patrons) of the *raza de color*. They underscored the actions in recent years of the Unionista leader Muñoz Rivera on behalf of several workers of color who had been attacked in earlier years by violent mobs operating under the sanction of the Republicano Party. While the article proclaimed Unionists' special regard for the *raza de color*, it also revealed the party's investment in the repression of any discussion about race. In defense of *El Duende*, the author of "Dr. Barbosa Indicted" argued that the phrase "Siberian orangutans" had been misunderstood and was not in reference to the *raza de color*. It could not be so because, according to the author, the *raza de color* had not played any significant political role in Arecibo, the town where *El Duende* was published. By this assertion, the author erased Arecibo's history as a crucial urban and sugar-producing region with an active maritime economy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, dynamics that accounted for its large black and brown laboring population. If the *raza de color* did not have a role to play in politics, then why bother to refute Barbosa's accusations? Whereas the Unionistas used the designations "laborers" and "*raza de color*" interchangeably, here they resorted to separating the two categories as distinct constituencies, thus decoupling racial identity from that of the "worker." In doing so, Unionistas aimed to salvage a political relationship with the labor movement but also dismissed the constitutive force of race in the formation of workers' identities as political actors. Barbosa, on the other hand, understood that the relationship between race and class was mutually constitutive and rich in political potential.

The dialectic of charges and countercharges of racism opened up unintended areas of debate and opportunities for action. While most among both the elite and organized labor agreed that racial domination and its consequences were dangerous topics better left unexamined, they nonetheless ruptured these silences in the act of denouncing others as racist. An important and inadvertent outcome of these debates was the selective inclusion in the political arena of black figures who otherwise would have been invisible.[111] For example, the Unionista manifesto critiquing Barbosa affirmed the increasingly important role of Enrique Lefebre, a black Unionista leader who defended the Union Party and thus made

himself indispensable to that group. These moments of spectacle (the visibility of Lefebre and Barbosa) can easily be dismissed as mere instances of racial tokenism. But they are important for what they reveal of the narrow spaces of action produced by the commitment to a discourse of racial harmony, and how political actors big and small reaffirmed the validity of racial harmony while simultaneously silencing the questioning of its limitations.

Another episode in the popular press exposed the deep racial tensions organizing the Republicano Party. In May 1901, the journalist Luis Felipe Dessús published an article in the newspaper *La justicia* expressing his disappointment and frustration with the republicano leadership.[112] Specifically, the article described how presumably white republicano leaders in the city of Ponce had lured working-class men to the party with false promises of full participation in the political process. When it came time to elect a Ponce candidate to the Cámara de Delegados, however, the republicano committee imposed their own candidate, without regard for the workers' different preference. The workers' candidate, it was argued, was too black for such a position in the Puerto Rican legislature. With this incident, in which the popular vote was mobilized (and manipulated) only to the benefit of the upper class, white leadership left Dessús disillusioned with the Republicano Party and its deep contradictions.

Dessús felt further betrayed when the republicano newspaper in Ponce, *La Opinión*, canceled his column. The newspaper had published a series of profiles on important republicano figures, and Dessús had decided to produce a parallel series profiling men of the working classes, especially black men such as Antonio Guilbes, José N. Acosta, and Cosme Díaz. The republicano committee in Ponce responded by canceling Dessús' column because it was perceived as "*propaganda de raza*" ("promoting race"). The committee argued that writing about black men could divide the Republicano Party but, as Dessús noted, discussing the actions of white politicians was not considered divisive at all. It was foolhardy for blacks to continue to support the republicanos, Dessús insisted, because the party continued to perpetuate the master/slave relationships of the past: "Blanco levanta foete, Negro boca abajo [The white raises its whip while the black lies face-down on the floor]."[113] The tensions and distrust between the white leadership and the popular constituency could partially explain the electoral loss and weakening the republicanos suffered after 1904. Even though a small sector within the Republicano Party took on the issue of racialized domination as an organizing principle, the racial struggles waged within the party eroded the legitimacy of their claims as the advocates for the *raza de color*.

The exchanges of accusations and refutations of racism constituted a crucial operative means in partisan politics. Island political leaders, most of whom refused to engage in any discussion of the multiple forms of racialized domination in Puerto Rico, recognized that these performances were fundamental in directing or deflecting attention to other matters. The volatility of any remark about potential racism only highlights how many people understood racialized domination as a power struggle always in operation, constitutive of social experience, and always at risk of full disclosure of its maneuvers.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of disruptions in silences and the processes of repairing them, this chapter unearths how stories about racialized domination were erased and censored as well as how these were rewritten and reenacted. The silences about racialized domination within Puerto Rico were produced alongside a wide array of stories about the workings of racialized domination within the imperial fields (Spanish or US) they inhabited. The story of racial harmony forged and deployed in the struggle for the abolition of slavery and in the postemancipation quest for autonomy was rearticulated once again in the post-1898 decades. After the US takeover, island political leaders cast racialized domination as a means of imperial subordination. The disruptions of silences in Puerto Rico often occurred during discussions about matters related to colonial subjugation. As a result, anti-black racism always appeared as a means or by-product of imperial intervention.

By looking at different instances where silencing was seriously challenged (in the course of electoral campaigns, calls for labor and immigration management, surveying of the school population, organization of a new political party, denunciation of censorship in the press, and attempts to manage and contain the military invasion), we discover that silence and its disruptions were produced at multiple locations and out of widely varied impulses. The production of silences was not systemic in nature but a contingent process in unequal struggles for power. Often the silences and narratives told overlapped and mutually reinforced each other despite their distinct aims.

As in the postabolition decades, the repositioning of Puerto Rico as a US colony created the conditions for reproducing old silences and forging new ones. Creole political elites were in a fragile position of negotiation, which made it clear to them that they needed the support of the rapidly expanding labor movement. Therefore, elites often resorted to the interplay between repressing/containing conversations revealing the dimensions of racialized domination and the subtle discursive whitening of the population.

However, silences about racialization in the organization of socioeconomic exploitation cannot be explained solely by the Creole elites' need to manage labor and US impositions. We must also take into account workers' political practices and strategies. The following chapter explores how the management of the talk of race became an important practice among workers, especially because their leadership engaged in direct negotiations with US politicians and alternative colonial agents such as US labor leadership.

Chapter 5

Racial Silencing and the Organizing of Puerto Rican Labor

I begin this chapter with an event that represents the consolidation of key silences within organized labor in Puerto Rico during the period of US empire. In 1911, the Second Congress of Tobacco Workers in Puerto Rico approved the *Proyecto de bases para defender las organizaciones de sus difamadores y sus enemigos*,[1] a set of regulations that sought to control dissent from the organization. The matter that brought about the design and approval of this set of intricate measures was the critique of racism within the American Federation of Labor.

The Puerto Rican organizer of the Cigarmakers International Union of America, Eugenio Sánchez López, informed affiliates of the controversy through his report to the members of the tobacco workers' unions gathered in the northern town of Bayamón on January 22, 1911. He read out loud a letter Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), sent to him for the occasion.[2] The Puerto Rican workers had invited Gompers to participate in their second assembly, as they were affiliated with the AFL. Gompers wrote back that due to other commitments—a meeting of the AFL's executive committee set for January 16—he could not attend the assembly, but that he fully supported their organization. At first the letter seemed to be a formality, a brief reaffirmation of the ties binding Puerto Rican tobacco workers and the AFL as well as a kind apology for his absence. But as the letter continued, another goal became apparent. After stressing his personal connection with tobacco workers—he had been a representative of the Cigarworkers International Union of America—Gompers revealed an additional motive: to reassure the tobacco workers of Puerto Rico that he was not racist.

Santiago Iglesias Pantín, president of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores de Puerto Rico (FLT)—the main umbrella for Puerto Rican labor unions at the time—and official organizer of the AFL on the island, had informed Gompers that Puerto Rican newspapers portrayed him as racist. These newspapers echoed mainland criticism of the AFL president for suggesting that black

workers in the United States, because of their recent history of slavery, were unable to understand their rights and duties and lacked the class consciousness that was well rooted in other (i.e., white) American workers. Regardless of the actual words, mainland critics interpreted Gomper's statement to imply that black US workers could never achieve the sophisticated organization their white counterparts had attained, probably a justification for the AFL's meek efforts in organizing black labor. Gompers denied the accusations in multiple forums, arguing that he was terribly misunderstood. Following the reading of the letter, Eugenio Sánchez advocated for an assembly resolution in support of Gompers. Such a resolution from Puerto Rican workers, all of whom were of the "raza de color," would prove to others, on and off the island, that criticism against Gompers was unfounded. "Together with his letter, I provide a copy of Gompers' statement . . . so one of our commissions can draft a statement based on our experiences here on the island where all are people of the *raza de color*," Sánchez said.[3] "The statement should circulate among our peers on and off the island to counter the lies told about this man, and that ultimately seek to damage the institution [the AFL]."

Puerto Rican leaders of organized labor rarely uttered such unequivocally racialized descriptions. On the contrary, leaders, labor intellectuals, and many working-class activists of the early twentieth century repeatedly affirmed that racialized difference, and the inequity that ensues from the marking of those differences, did not have a place within organized labor. But Sánchez explicitly racialized islanders, especially the laboring class, as the *raza de color* in relation to a broader aspiration—to consolidate the ties between Puerto Rican organized labor and the AFL at a moment (1911) of increased state repression against labor radicals such as anarchists. In the aftermath of turn-of-the-century imperial transition and the island's exponential capitalist expansion, elites targeted politically radical groups as the island became consumed in the debate over the possibility of being granted US citizenship. In the name of labor solidarity with very important allies—the AFL and Samuel Gompers—Sánchez did not hesitate to ask his fellow workers to intervene on Gompers's behalf, even if along an argumentative line often avoided by island labor organizers. And Sánchez believed the AFL's embrace of Puerto Rican laborers was the best example of the organization's racial egalitarianism and commitment to racial harmony.[4]

At the same time, Gompers's statements and their ripple effects revealed to the likes of Sánchez the complexity and depth of the historical racial struggles at the heart of US organized labor. The incident must have also offered an opportunity for Sánchez to reflect on the long-running racialized struggles Puerto Rican laborers waged daily. In fact, local critics often undermined labor movement activists by describing them as the "negrada socialista."[5] The threat of unchecked, and often racialized, defamation pushed participants in the Second Congress of Tobacco Workers to establish unusual measures to protect their collectives from these and other potentially divisive forces; the *Proyecto de bases para defender las organizaciones de sus difamadores y sus enemigos* approval was one such instance.[6] Among the resolution's 34 sections were provisions to create a democratic process. If initiated to foster labor egalitarianism, the

Proyecto still defined all dissenting voices as traitors to labor, declaring that "everyone who publicly or privately discredits, insults or defames" the AFL and its leadership was an enemy to the International Union of Tobacco Workers of America, the FLT, the AFL, and their affiliated unions. These strong practices of suppressing internal dissent, to be sure, must have been a response to the unprecedented repression and persecution unleashed by the colonial state in 1911 against anyone thought to be sympathetic to anarchism—most of whom were tobacco labor activists.[7] The latter were the most effectively organized workers on the island and, as such, represented a large problem to the colonial state and cigar manufacturers.[8]

While navigating the treacherous terrain generated by a new imperial context and also developing distinct idioms for pursuing social justice, organized labor both reproduced old ways and forged new ways to suppress discussion of the workings of racialized domination (e.g., how race shaped the division of labor and wages). Labor movement leaders, intellectuals, and activists differed from Creole elites in their investment in silencing a discussion of racism. Whereas Creole elites were committed to the industrialization of the nation, members of the labor movement sought political forms that could undo (or mitigate the impact of) industrial capitalism, which they understood as the basis of their subjection.[9] For these leaders of organized labor, the capitalist mode of production was the source of all social maladies. As the working-class journal *Ensayo Obrero* declared in an 1898 article, "To workers there are only two races: the exploited and the exploiter; the oppressed and the oppressor; honest men and the wicked. There is no more or less."[10] Consistent with this understanding that the problem of labor exploitation trumped all other forms of subjugation, including those grounded in race, organized labor leaders aimed to deracialize their movement.[11] Labor activists did develop a variety of critiques of racial oppression in the lives of Puerto Rican workers. But calls for class unity worked to undermine and marginalize such explicit engagements with the problem of racial domination, particularly as the commitment to class solidarity furthered the myths of racial harmony that had been forged in earlier moments of struggle. As a result, the oppositional culture of organized labor both fought against and reinforced the historical practices that had silenced discussion of race since the nineteenth century. Labor's discourse as well as those by related actors who explicitly addressed the problem of race in this period, even if only for strategic purposes, reveal the complex negotiations that underlay the efforts at silencing racial discourse in this moment of the island's imperial history. To understand how labor's consolidation and unification by 1911 is also a genealogy of racial domination and silencing, this chapter reviews the complex rise of labor in Puerto Rico. My review of the history of labor's emergence out of slave society reveals that the silencing of race (through a project that sought to unify the labor movement) was not merely the result of following the edicts of an ideological stance on class consciousness. Rather, discourse served as a screen and medium for important material struggles among leaders of the working classes who found in the US imperial field opportunities to develop their labor agendas. While I briefly refer back to the artisans' experiences as they took place in Ponce, this chapter explores the moment in which the

organized labor movement crystallized as an island-wide phenomenon through the organization of the Federación Regional in 1898.

THE MAKING OF AN ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT

Both the number of unions and the size of their membership grew at a fast and steady rate in the first decade of the twentieth century—from 30 unions with 5,500 members in 1900 to 54 unions with 8,300 members in 1910. But these numbers appear quite small in relation to the size of the island's laboring population. In 1899, according to the census, 33.18 percent of the island's 953,243 inhabitants had gainful employment, representing 316,365 men and women over ten years of age.[12] The same census divided the population in two racial categories: whites (589,426) and colored (363,817). Moreover, whereas the largest workers' federation (the FLT) comprised mostly urban factory workers, the majority of the island's laboring population worked in agricultural occupations (a trend that continued until the 1950s).[13] The colonial government reports on labor conditions made it look as if the island's organized labor movement reflected the concerns of a relatively small sector of workers.[14] But the relentless attempts of the various political parties and the colonial state to gain support from either the FLT or the FRT suggests that organized labor's influence went well beyond the measure of its formal membership or occupational categories.

The memoirs, newspaper articles, criminal records, and official reports reviewed in previous chapters and in this section allow us to look beyond the formal institutional histories and membership rolls of the major labor organizations to see more clearly the reach and longevity of labor activism on the island. What emerges is a broader and longer tradition of mobilization among laboring peoples—one that reaches back to the period of Spanish rule—when the colonial state responded to workers' initiatives by outlawing their participation in the political sphere. It was also a tradition that crossed the false urban/rural divide and did not follow neat distinctions between formal labor demands (wages and work hours) and general attempts to improve the basic conditions of daily life. Laboring peoples continued and expanded on these traditions of opposition under US colonial rule.

As we saw in Ponce, since the late 1860s urban artisans had openly created various institutions (not always strictly divided by notions of racial purity) that served as sites for educational debates and the surreptitious discussion of matters directly affecting the efficacy of their lives and work. These urban artisans—a heterogeneous group comprising workshop owners or renters, apprentices, and a network of skilled migratory workers—were generally better socially positioned than other workers because they possessed specialized skills.[15] By organizing casinos, clubs, mutual-aid societies, libraries, dances, and a host of other cultural events, these artisans appropriated institutions and practices long denied to them. In so doing, they altered the meanings embedded in those institutions: as laboring men, many of whom were black and mulatto, these men demanded political recognition by demonstrating their ability to organize in ways recognized as legitimate by the hegemonic classes, especially the Creole reformists.

Late-nineteenth-century newspapers depict artisan organizations that were in constant communication with each other and heavily involved in both municipal and island-wide political matters. Routinely, Ponce newspapers reported on (or responded to) the activities, protests, and negotiations of workers in the surrounding areas such as Yauco, Santa Isabel, or Guayama, as well as those of their counterparts in more distant locations such as Mayagüez, San Juan, or Arecibo. Though the urban artisans did not actively seek formal affiliation with (or the mobilization of) the larger number of *jornaleros* (rural, day laborers), these groups did inhabit and move through the same sociocultural landscapes. Sugar and coffee production relied heavily on the services of skilled workers such as carpenters, boilermakers, and masons who worked in rural settings but retained their living quarters in the urban cores of their respective municipalities. Similarly, not all *jornaleros* lived permanently on the plantations or coffee haciendas; many worked temporarily on different estates while maintaining their households on the fringes of the cities.[16]

In the postabolition years, the island's towns and cities experienced an outburst of migration from rural areas, infusing the urban artisan class with skilled workers from the countryside. Rural laborers also traveled regularly to the most urbanized sites for work-related purposes or for leisure. Small farmers, *agregados*, or day workers in larger haciendas brought their produce to be stored in warehouses or sold in the town's market. Colonial and municipal authorities often organized commemorative activities—including religious events, dances, and musical performances—that drew people from rural areas into towns. Thus the laboring population, urban and rural, socialized together in the many *pulperías*, cafeterias, inns, and kiosks as well as in the frequent house dances celebrated in the urban barrios.

These sites received regular attention from police authorities, who targeted these arenas as the locus of immoral behavior (gambling, drinking, and nonmarital sexual exchanges). These places also constituted inappropriate sites of interaction, debate, and networking for laboring groups. With the arrival of the US colonial state, the surveillance of these locations continued as that state sought to neutralize discontent while also narrowing the spaces from which discontent was transformed into discourse. In 1900, when the police repeatedly harassed and finally closed down a San Juan "gambling house" as part of their antigambling campaigns, the target was none other than a group of artisans gathered in the house of Rosendo Rivera García, head of the FRT.[17]

While government officials produced an account of the labor movement that minimized its real impact (coincidentally when the movement extended island wide), the post-1898 labor movement likewise constructed a narrow historical narrative that did not fully account for the history and extent of popular political activism. It is most probable that this limited historical account was the result of the struggles between the FRT and the FLT for the leadership of the labor movement. For both, history was a way of legitimating the preeminence of their institutions and their leadership. Although conceding that the 1890s strikes—particularly the 1895 mobilizations in the urban areas and in the plantations—forced the Spanish colonial authorities to negotiate autonomy in

1898, labor leader Rafael Alonso Torres stressed in his memoirs that the participating men and women were just "blind cattle" following the leadership of local businessmen, belittling their negotiating capabilities. For the most part, leaders of the post-1898 labor movement looked at their earlier history as fragmented pieces that only came together once the Spanish labor leader Santiago Iglesias Pantín arrived in Puerto Rico in 1896 from Cuba and the US authorities legalized unionization. For Alonso Torres and other affiliates of the FLT, Iglesias Pantín initiated the "real" labor movement—a narrative that Iglesias Pantín himself perpetuated in his autobiography.[18]

These contemporary accounts do not fully explain what prompted the particular form of post-1898 labor organization. The years following the 1898 war brought great economic, political, and social turmoil. The Cuban-Spanish War had already limited trade and halted imports to the island beginning in 1895, limiting the access to crucial staples and commodities—a situation that worsened after the United States intervened in the armed conflict in 1898. The political weight of the labor federations—the FRT and FLT—grew steadily as the laboring population sought additional ways to articulate and address effectively its increasing impoverishment and marginalization. Their misery increased with the 1899 hurricane San Ciriaco, which devastated the most prosperous agricultural areas of the island. In subsequent years, the new US colonial government implemented several new economic policies, including conversion of Puerto Rico's unstable currency system to US dollars. As the Spanish currency was valued significantly lower than the dollar, islanders suffered a tremendous financial loss in the exchange.[19]

The transition from Spanish to US rule also meant a change in economic direction more attuned to the interest of the new colonial power. Revitalization of the sugar industry brought restructuring and mechanization of production; and emerging markets for the tobacco and needle industries demanded a reorganization of labor supply, control, and distribution. Rapid processes of land dispossession (already in place since the late nineteenth century) and the deskilling of artisan crafts touched everyone, but above all it increased the vulnerability of women and peoples of African descent.[20] According to Lillian Guerra, the 1910 census shows that 14,000 blacks/mulattos owned land, compared to 45,000 whites, but in 1920 the number of black and brown landowners had shrunk to only about 6,000, though 35,000 whites still retained their property. Racial segmentation and its convergence with gender are most clear in the tobacco industry. The highest concentration of black/brown and women were among the unskilled, worst-paid tobacco strippers. In his study of the tobacco workers of the San Juan barrio Puerta de Tierra, the 1910 census historian A. Bird also found that blacks had far less formal education than their white and mulatto counterparts. The rapid pauperization of the working population heightened their discontent and consequently set the stage for a stronger labor movement.[21]

The new colonial state routinely registered laboring people's struggles as random mob attacks, petty theft, and crimes against property, eclipsing the complex nature and context of exploitation that organized these activities.[22] Police reports for 1915–16 indicate that approximately 4 percent of the island population was

arrested in a single year, a high crime rate that alarmed authorities. It was this growing sense of alarm that Fred K. Fleagle, the US official appointed as Dean of the University of Porto Rico, attempted to appease. In his 1917 essay on the social problems of Puerto Rico, Fleagle stressed islanders' good nature and noted that the crimes were "unimportant" and not serious felonies.[23] He inadvertently revealed, as an afterthought, that the high number of arrests coincided with elections and numerous strikes in which tens of thousands of workers participated. But for Fleagle, "This tends to prove that the average lawbreaker in Porto Rico is easily influenced by economic circumstances and by social surroundings."[24] He understood these mobilizations as evidence that islanders could not behave like rational political subjects, illustrating the challenges the US colonial project of political education continued to face. Social reformists like Fleagle contributed to the representation of laboring people as depoliticized, irrational beings. As in the postabolition decades, itinerant male laborers were seen as a criminal, antisocial element to be monitored and persecuted, instead of dispossessed members of communities trying to survive: "The rest of the towns where crime is found in large proportion will be discovered to have a large floating population, people who are day laborers and who have no particular interest in the community, except as it provides them with an opportunity for earning daily wages."[25] He concluded that this "class of population is always unfavorable to a community."

Fleagle's perspective coincided with Creole reformists' long-standing interpretations of island social reality. In January 1902, the physician J. M. Amadeo wrote to the governor requesting a stronger police force that could ensure the safety of property in rural areas.[26] According to Amadeo, the main source of insecurity was the large number of idle peasants who refused to work and resorted instead to theft of small livestock or food. Above all, he was particularly concerned about the proliferation of weapons, such as guns and knives, among the popular sectors. The elite's collective alarm about an armed population led the insular police forces to continuously search suspicious people in the streets for weapons, a practice that continued in subsequent decades, particularly in the 1920s.[27]

Colonial authorities and Creole elites believed that workers' mobilizations, especially those whose timing coincided with armed conflicts in Cuba and the Philippines, threatened the colonial apparatus from within. By criminalizing and pathologizing activist laborers, the elites sought to discredit their voices. In February 1900, for instance, the Corporal of the Insular Police in the mountain town of Ciales reported on a proindependence conspiracy in the barrio Frontón, supposedly organized by members of the Federal Party.[28] At the same time, official police reports notified the central authorities in San Juan of a series of anti-American groups in the areas of Ponce, Guayama, Guayanilla, and Utuado. According to the reports, the Spaniards remaining in those areas, affiliated with the Federal Party, had effectively organized the "ignorant" peasantry, armed them with weapons, and prompted them to attack the US colonial government. In all these cases, authorities and participating local elites depicted the figure of a simple, isolated, and apolitical peasant rather than that of a worker—a subject with more political currency. In manufacturing this image of the passive and unworthy peasant and

suggesting that it was only Spanish property owners who resented the change in rule, elites also deflected and disavowed popular anti-US critiques.

However, the political formation of the peasantry always disrupted the depoliticizing efforts organizing elite narratives. In an 1899 letter to the US appointed governor, José Ma. Nazario, a priest in the southern town of Guayanilla, spoke of how pained he was by the "inappropriate" activities in which Puerto Rican children engaged because he saw "little children holding political meetings like grown up men, making speeches and hurraing for their chiefs, in denouncing their political adversaries."[29] Though his aim was to critique popular parenting practices and the constitution of the peasant family, Nazario also painted a picture of the early formation of the laboring classes and how they shaped modern partisan politics on the island. Organized labor drew its strength from its capacity to intervene in the political sphere the hegemonic classes had crafted in the narrowest possible terms for several decades.

The recognition of the right to free association—although never free from persecution—by the 1898 Spanish autonomist government and, later, by the US colonial administration enabled workers to coalesce formally in island-wide organizations such as the Federación Regional de Trabajadores (FRT) and the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT). Workers coordinated numerous assemblies and events with representatives from all the island's cities and towns, and cultivated their relations with working-class organizations abroad. By 1899, labor leaders had arranged celebrations around May 1 in such towns and cities as Manatí, Mayagüez, Cayey, Guayama, Ponce, Lares, Aguadilla, Arecibo, and Juana Díaz.[30] Labor also created a number of channels through which they could address their many grievances: they constituted negotiating committees and commissions, founded political parties like the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (1899), affiliated with international organizations like the AFL and New York Socialist Party, and coordinated local and island-wide work stoppages and strikes. Their organizing assisted the 1898 typesetters' strike as well as labor mobilization in the northeastern sugar plantation zone.[31] Among these early efforts, the San Juan carpenters' strike of 1899 was of particular relevance: it concerned US officials so much that they proclaimed martial law for two weeks.[32]

On May 28, 1901, a coalition of approximately five hundred Ponce workers representing numerous occupations signed a petition to the US-appointed governor. The signatories sought to convey their disillusionment with the US colonial administration.[33] For these protestors, it was impossible to reconcile how the island had come to experience the worst misery and poverty in its history with living under the "protection" of the US flag. This state of increasing impoverishment had forced islanders to leave their homes in search of jobs in remote places where they had only suffered more distress. The petitioners demanded from the governor: "Trabajo, Trabajo y Trabajo."[34] The large number of signatories alarmed US officials, and prompted Acting Secretary J. H. M. Leary to order an investigation into the circumstances of the petition's signing.[35]

On September 9, 1901, 235 men from the first group of signatories sent a second letter to the newly appointed US governor, William A. Hunt, describing again the horrific economic hardships islanders had suffered in recent years.[36]

This time, however, the signatories advised Hunt to behave with prudence and diplomacy. They insisted he should display a sense of patriotism—they acknowledged he was an American governor but serving the Puerto Ricans—if he was to avoid further conflicts with the laboring classes. In a more threatening tone, workers stated their hope that the new governor would not give them any more reasons to contact President McKinley directly, again in demand for work. In contrast to the increasing number of labor strikes, which authorities used to publicly discredit workers as troublemakers, these two letters are excellent examples of how organized labor subtly demonstrated knowledge of the inner workings of the political machinery and revealed to the authorities their potential to become a powerful and dangerous oppositional force. As had happened in the postabolition years, workers managed to place themselves at the center of struggles inside, outside of, and beyond sites deemed to be within the legitimate sphere of the political. Consequently, in the following decades both colonial authorities and the main political parties attempted to incorporate workers into their structures and programs, while simultaneously seeking to repress their direct participation in the political sphere.

Defining the Politics of Organized Labor

The management of race talk was a key mechanism in the political formation of early-twentieth-century organized labor. Laboring people navigated treacherous sociopolitical and economic landscapes in the decades following the establishment of US rule. New dynamics inevitably created fissures, misunderstandings, and even violent confrontations among island political factions; and these tensions manifested at the heart of organized labor. As they engaged in these confrontations, workers assessed what was possible: they defined standpoints, outlined courses of action, and identified goals the organized labor movement would pursue. The years-long struggle between the FRT and the FLT serves here as a window into some of these conflicts and ensuing negotiations. In particular, the struggle between the two federations reveals that the continued silencing of "race talk" shaped the politics of the organized labor movement. The issues highlighted in the battles between the FRT and FLT included disagreements about strategy, partisan politics, personal antagonisms, challenges to patriarchal social relations, and questions about the relationship between Puerto Rican workers and their US counterparts in the American Federation of Labor. Like many other political figures, most organized labor leaders could, at best, only begin to critique how race shaped their lives when speaking of their subjection in relation to US-based institutions, peoples, and practices. Their impulse to control the conversation about race—in this case, through deracialization—came from historically rooted political practices through which islanders, especially the laboring classes, tried to participate in and expand the narrow political sphere in formation.

In the first two decades under US rule, there were many violent confrontations between the two main new parties: the Federal Party (formerly the fusionists) and the republicanos (formerly the orthodox). These confrontations spilled over into the labor movement, which had split into two federations: the FRT and

FLT.[37] Conflicts within labor groups had been evident since the last decades of the nineteenth century, but in the 1890s a split at the heart of the proautonomist movement further divided its working-class membership. As noted already, after 1897, Luis Muñoz Rivera became the primary leader of the Liberal Fusionista Party (forerunner of the Federal Party, its members were also known as fusionists), while José Celso Barbosa emerged as the main figure in the Ortodoxo Party (soon to become the Republicano Party). Barbosa was an appealing political figure to many artisans and other laborers because of his populist rhetoric and demands for a more radical form of autonomism than what was espoused by the liberals. The political repression and coercion of labor leaders by Muñoz Rivera's Liberal Party during the first autonomist elections in 1898 only strengthened workers' empathy for Barbosa, whose rhetoric also may have been more credible to these constituents because of his working-class background and black racial identity.

Writings in the artisan newspaper *Ensayo Obrero* encouraged participation in the "democratic and populist" Autonomista Puro Party because, as such, it was the artisans' only way to "directly intervene on behalf of our administrative interests."[38] To them, Barbosa's (and his party's) "ultimate goal is the improvement of the *clases productoras* and by this means it can bring to the elections the genuine representation of our afflicted class." Labor intellectuals behind *Ensayo Obrero* saw the Ortodoxo Party as offering labor the means to participate in the political sphere. Some of these intellectuals would become major labor organizers in the following decades: Ramón Romero Rosa, José Ferrer y Ferrer, Eduardo Conde, Fernando Gómez Acosta, and the Spaniard Santiago Iglesias Pantín. *Ensayo Obrero* also revealed the wide admiration that the rank and file felt for Barbosa, exemplified by laborers' enthusiastic reception of the ortodoxo leaders during the early 1898 electoral campaigns in the cities of San Juan, Bayamón, and Cataño.[39] For example, according to the journal, a group of 5,000 workers gathered to welcome the director of the Ortodoxo Party at the San Antón Bridge in Ponce.[40] Editors at *Ensayo Obrero* linked the ortodoxos to positive changes and opportunities for the working classes. *Ensayo Obrero* referred to the Ortodoxo Party as an organization of the people, "*hombres del pueblo*."[41] In contrast, the journal portrayed Luis Muñoz Rivera's Liberal Party as representative of the old regime: "*fusionistas* [Muñoz Rivera's faction] have come to occupy the place of the *Incondicionales* [the conservative pro-Spanish party]."[42] But after a heavily contested electoral campaign, especially in the urban areas, the Liberal Party won the elections of March 1898 with 70 percent of the ballots. The landed elite in the liberal ranks were successful in shaping the voting behavior of their longtime dependents.

As noted already, the divisions between the ortodoxos and the liberals were always racialized. As fusionist Mariano Abril's comments casting the *raza de color* as supporters of the US invasion show, many fusionistas depicted the heart and soul of the Ortodoxo Party as black and working class, and thus traitors to the Puerto Rican hispanic nation. For many sympathizers of the Ortodoxo Party, the organization represented a distancing from the old colonial Spanish regime, a venue for working-class vindication, and a place for blackness to be articulated, if only rhetorically.

For his part, FLT founding member Iglesias Pantín recognized, and disparaged, the role race played in the relationship between workers and the Ortodoxo Party. In his memoirs, Iglesias Pantín reduced Barbosa's appeal to working-class men to mere racial identity politics: the majority of workers were black men and affiliated with Barbosa because he too was a black man.[43] This kind of racial identity politics challenged Iglesias Pantín's own claims to leadership: People such as FRT's Rosendo Rivera García had challenged Iglesias Pantín because he was a foreigner, a Spaniard. To counter such claims, Iglesias Pantín opposed making alliances with political parties on the basis of racial solidarity, one more reason behind his call for nonpartisanship in organized labor. In 1929, remembering his arrival in Puerto Rico in 1896, Iglesias Pantín lamented that "the personality of the worker was emerging slowly and was deeply flawed. The racial differences that socially separated families and the more general loathing of the laboring class made the civilizing effort toward liberation difficult."[44] For Iglesias Pantín, the way forward required avoiding the racial dimension of workers' political identities.

If Iglesias Pantín sought to deracialize labor politics by suppressing assertions of blackness, other workers denounced affirmations of whiteness. In December 1898, a worker named V. Márquez wrote a letter to the FRT's journal *El Porvenir Social* expressing his concerns that labor leaders distanced themselves from the black majority of laborers.[45] Fernando Matías, for example, had publicly stressed his white ancestry, which Marquez took as a strategy to become acceptable to the leadership in the fusionista camp. Márquez's letter confirms the ongoing racialization of the two political factions and, in his critique of Matías, reveals how labor leaders also engaged in the processes of racialization. Márquez himself, however, advocated for deracializing rather than celebrating blackness.

The question of race among workers on the island became more pressing as a large sector of the organized labor movement (later, the FLT) sought out close alliances with the American Federation of Labor, a thread not fully explored in the literature about Puerto Rican labor.[46] Under US rule, the colonial project of liberal education allowed labor organizations to enjoy official recognition although legalization did not prevent the government from violently persecuting labor activists. The US labor movement had waged important legislative battles on the US mainland, producing a body of labor laws that, to Puerto Rican working-class leaders, signified the possibility for dramatic changes on the island. Iglesias Pantín stated these ambitions in his interview with the Carroll Commission in late 1899: US rule promised "rational," "scientific" administration that would prevent corruption; free trade that would decrease inflation; expansion of public education; eight-hour work days; labor protection for pregnant women; elimination of sales taxes; minimum wage; child labor laws; food programs for the poor; and job creation programs for the unemployed.[47]

The materialization of some of these ambitions could be easily imagined. After all, during the invasion US officials used island labor organizers as mediators to assist them as they laid claim to the new colonial landscape. For example, when strikes erupted in the plantations of Fajardo and nearby towns following the war and the invasion, the head of the military campaign for the eastern coast sought

support from labor leader Iglesias Pantín. He had been imprisoned by Spanish authorities for his labor agitation and had recently escaped from jail while San Juan was under attack by the US fleet under Admiral Sampson.[48] Major Scott, commander of the forces on the eastern coast, invited Iglesias Pantín to speak to laborers in the main plaza of Carolina. When Spanish authorities requested that the occupation army relinquish Iglesias Pantín to them, US Army officials refused. Instead, Iglesias Pantín accompanied the military campaign all the way back to the capital city.

Fissures soon appeared in the main labor organization (the FRT) as the broader conflicts between republicanos (ortodoxos) and federales (liberal fusionistas) wove themselves into the fabric of the new labor federation. The racial concerns at the heart of these fissures are not apparent to us right away but come to the surface in various ways as the conflict developed. Iglesias Pantín led one faction of the FRT, discouraging workers' affiliation to political parties because, as he argued, political parties addressed workers' interests only as an electoral strategy and did not sustain a commitment to labor. This issue of affiliation to specific political parties temporarily set Iglesias Pantín against other influential labor leaders such as Ramón Romero Rosa and José Ferrer y Ferrer of the printers' union of San Juan. In his memoirs, Iglesias Pantín commented on Romero Rosa and Ferrer y Ferrer's desires to continue their direct support for Barbosa's Ortodoxo Party, a position that was stated repeatedly in the pages of the pro-Barbosa journal *Ensayo Obrero*.[49] While Romero Rosa and Ferrer y Ferrer would soon shift to a nonpartisan stance themselves, other members of the FRT did not follow suit, and they denounced the nonpartisanship stand as an implicit endorsement of the liberal fusionistas.

Conflicts that erupted at a June 1899 workers' assembly marked the formal split between what were now two distinct labor factions, disputing the legitimacy of each group's claim to leadership of the FRT.[50] The confrontation took on a personal character when FRT President Rosendo Rivera García attempted to undermine Iglesia's growing leadership, and perhaps also to display his increasing influence beyond laborers, by asking the municipal police to interrupt the assembly and arrest Iglesias Pantín. Iglesias questioned Rivera García's honest commitment to the labor cause, arguing that Rivera García was only pursuing his personal interests by continuing his affiliation with the Republicano Party. He also accused Rivera García of mismanaging the organization's finances. Rivera García and his followers stressed that Iglesias Pantín was a recently arrived Spaniard and sympathizer with the old, Creole, prohispanic, elite in the Federal Party, and thus should not be at the forefront of the FRT.[51] Iglesias Pantín, together with Ramón Romero Rosa, José Ferrer y Ferrer, Eduardo Conde, and others who now took up the antirepublicano and purportedly nonpartisan position responded to the workers' assembly dispute by constituting a second organization, the Federación Libre de Trabajadores de Puerto Rico (FLT), and its political arm, the Obrero Socialista Party.[52]

The new federation insisted that the real cause of the division was not disagreement among workers—who remained "unified"—but rather the bourgeoisie's attempts to destroy the growing labor movement. The FLT leadership sought

to discredit the critiques emerging from the FRT in every way possible, stressing that dissension was the result of outside instigators. Various labor unions, such as the Bakers' Guild, questioned the necessity of the split in the larger organization, and evidence suggests that the bakers resented the split and remained loyal supporters of the Republicano Party.[53] The bakers' guild believed the FLT cohort was to blame for the conflict and pleaded for explanations in a letter published in *El Porvenir Social*. In their response to the letter, FLT leaders Romero Rosa and Pérez Félix reiterated their position regarding nonpartisanship, blamed the FRT for becoming an instrument of disruption, and stressed again their commitment to racial and ethnic unity. Coming only thirty years after abolition, this emphasis on the FLT's commitment to racial unity was a response to real concerns among a rank and file torn between two labor federations. The FLT portrayed members of the FRT as betrayers of Puerto Rican labor, minimized the number of its affiliates, and cast the FRT's claims as manipulative. At the same time, the FLT began an organizational campaign in the various workers' barrios of San Juan: Santurce, Puerta de Tierra, the Marina, and Río Piedras.[54] These campaigns educated workers on the postulates of the Socialist Party, and were also meant to legitimize the FLT's claim to be the official voice of laborers.

All the while, police records and newspaper accounts of the period registered repeated violent attacks associated with republicano animosities against both the federales and the newly formed FLT. Violence spread to the major urban areas of the island as well as many rural settings. The upheavals led the US governor to order a formal police investigation in 1902, and the ongoing conflict ultimately brought intervention from the AFL; Samuel Gompers stated that one of the main goals for his 1904 visit to the island was reconciliation between the two labor organizations. In the years that followed, two issues were particularly indicative of the ongoing division between the FRT and FLT: the formal participation of women in labor organizing and the relationship between the FLT and the AFL.

Gender, Racialization, and New Forms of Labor Affiliation

The new conditions of US rule demanded new forms of affiliations that were the source of conflict within organized labor and, in turn, fostered more silencing. The silence on race among laboring women ideologues should be understood within this context of political rearticulation.

Women, especially black and brown women, were always at the heart of material and symbolic production of island communities. Despite their incessant struggles and creativity, they were systematically marginalized from the political identity of the worker emerging in the nineteenth century.[55] The revitalization of the colonial economy in the early twentieth century rested on new forms of extracting labor, especially that of women. Women joined the ranks of wage labor in unprecedented numbers, especially in manufacturing activities like the tobacco industry. Their position, however, was also the most precarious of all.

The cigar industry concentrated women in low-skilled jobs, under unsanitary and dangerous conditions, paying the lowest salaries. For example, in the tobacco

industry, women quickly became the preferred workers for stemming tobacco leaves. According to the governor's report, there were thirty shops in 1912 dedicated exclusively to stemming, employing 1,750 workers, out of whom 1,641 were women.[56] The 1920 census reveals that women surpassed the number of men working in the tobacco industry, constituting 8,766 of a total of 16,561 workers.[57] The workshop, thus, became another site for women to address old and new forms of gender and sexual subjection.[58] Their presence, practices, and criticism posed new challenges to the masculinist premises organizing the liberal sphere of politics, a challenge many male workers welcomed but many others resented. Women's incorporation into wage labor and their activism transformed the labor movement, at least forcing the rearrangement of the patriarchal structures at home and at work. Most importantly for our purposes, these women's actions contributed to the expansion of silences about racial domination within the labor movement.

The journal *Federación Obrera* voiced male laborers' sense of threat about the increasing enrollment of women into traditionally male occupations. These men elaborated upon a late-nineteenth-century liberal understanding of women as individuals holding a much higher, nobler responsibility in their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers. Women's labor in gender-mixed workshops, *Federación Obrera* contended, threatened their purity and nobility. In addition, women were taking away the few jobs available to male Puerto Rican workers. Without jobs, men could not satisfy their demands as fathers and heads of households. Women, then, directly threatened their masculinity. Furthermore, women were a problem for organized labor, driving down wages and serving as strikebreakers. They disrupted union organizing and hindered laborers' interests. Saturnino Dones denounced fellow male workers who "dragged" their daughters to the workshop and, in so doing, betrayed the notion of responsible fatherhood they upheld, their brothers in labor, and the Puerto Rican family.[59] These critics stressed that in spite of their rejection of women as laborers they remained true to socialism. Other factions within the FRT responded that a rejection of women as work peers was also a betrayal of socialist postulates. These critiques emerged during the first months of the FRT's existence, before the split and formation of the FLT. Male laborers' debates over women's rightful place at work and in labor organizing exemplify the new colonial context's significant challenges to working-class masculinist social formations. These challenges demanded the reformulations of popular patriarchal structures.[60] Women's activism in and outside the workshop; the increasing influence of socialism and anarchism among labor ideologues as guiding principles for the growing labor movement; and the new forms of organization/affiliation the labor movement sought to undertake in order to increase their effective participation in political decision making—all these required the extension of labor solidarity toward women workers. In doing so, some male leaders began to take into consideration gender-specific needs and develop nuanced forms of understanding the relationships between capitalism and gender, and that of men and women in and out of the workshop.

After the 1899 split into two federations, members of the FRT continued voicing their resentment toward women laboring in the workshop. Writings in the FRT-affiliated *El Criterio Libre* continued stressing the importance of women in their supportive role as wives, daughters, and mothers of workers. Women were taking part in the organization in marginal roles, such as hostesses and performers for their events. The journal's editor, José N. Acosta (another self-identified black journalist), praised Rosendo Rivera García, head of the FRT, because he had encouraged women to support the labor movement. But Acosta celebrated the participation of women not as workers but as "decorations" that made the headquarters of the federation a more pleasant place for men: "[The women] have embellished the saloons with their charming presence and the fire in their eyes . . . the Federación looks now more like a garden with beautiful and perfumed flowers."[61]

While praising women's role in the organization as supporters of their male relatives in labor, the *Criterio Libre* denounced the FLT strike for allowing women to participate. Writing in the *Criterio*, a worker known by his initials, CMJ, sought to discredit the strike by attacking the participating women, denouncing them as sexually loose females who lived in concubinage. Their loose morals discredited the good name of the labor cause. The FLT directorship was to blame for this immorality because their male leadership also lived in concubinage. Thus the FLT was not a moral and legitimate representative of workers: "These disturbing spectacles are not representative of the fathers who are heads of households, the recreational organizations, the dignified young ladies, the married women who deserve consideration and respect . . . [these spectacles] are a mockery to moderation, order, and culture."[62] For FRT members, women in the workshop and in the strikes transgressed gendered and sexualized social prescriptions and directly challenged the masculine political identity of the worker crafted in previous decades. In contrast, important male leaders within the FLT had modified aspects of their thinking about laboring women's morality: capitalism put women in vulnerable positions, creating conditions that shaped their sexual practices; and to some male workers concubinage signified a rejection of elite social conventions.[63]

Different parties found different modes of wrestling with these new challenges to the masculine political identity in the negotiations over the potential reunification of the two federations in 1900.[64] In an FLT workers' assembly to discuss the reunification, Santiago Iglesias Pantín revealed that Rosendo Rivera García had attempted to unify the labor movement several times but Iglesias Pantín had refused because he did not trust Rivera García. In July of 1900, Iglesias Pantín finally agreed to meet with Rosendo Rivera García and other members of the FRT. He insisted that the main problem between the two federations was their approach to labor conflict resolution. Iglesias Pantín accused the FRT's members of supporting "harmony between capital and labor," while the FLT sponsored direct confrontation through organized strikes. Rivera García replied by explaining that the FRT's strategy was that of exhausting negotiations before jumping into strike actions. At the end, Rivera García called for a large workers' assembly where the audience could take a final vote regarding these positions. But in the

assembly, the leader Eduardo Conde argued against coming together again—not because of sharp differences on negotiation strategies but because of the FRT's attacks on the women in the FLT. Making reference to *El Criterio Libre*'s article, Eduardo Conde insisted that the FRT had offended the FLT's women and had assaulted their morality, just because they lived in concubinage with their partners. As a result, he exhorted the assembly to vote against the merger of the two federations, and the audience followed his advice.

Women within the FLT such as Francisca (Paca) Escabí and Luisa Capetillo, among others, became important labor leaders, especially though not exclusively in the tobacco industry. These women's work and life experiences led them to acutely critique gender inequality and sexual exploitation in marriage through their advocacy for free love.[65] They also politicized motherhood in new ways, arguing that their obligations to their families required them to participate in the narrow political sphere instead of becoming the reason for their exclusion.[66] The journal *El Pan del Pobre*, edited by the FLT leader José Ferrer y Ferrer, published more than a few articles authored by women praising female participation as workers and wives, daughters, and mothers of workers.[67] Female organizers such as Ramona Delgado de Otero and Josefa G. de Maldonado did not distinguish between labor exploitation in the workshop and at home: in *El Pan del Pobre*, they exhorted women to join their male partners in labor organizing because women at home also suffer from their partners' exploitation at work. The publication of these articles on the first page of *El Pan del Pobre* indicates the existence of a narrow opening for women in the FLT as ideologues in the labor movement—a foreclosed possibility in the FRT. The consistent publication of reports about feminist congresses or activities in international arenas in the pages of the FLT-affiliated journal *El Porvenir Social* speak to the solidarity the FLT leadership sought to demonstrate to their female membership.

The challenges women posed to the masculinist premises of the political identity of the worker did not include an explicit critique of racialized domination. The writings of women organizers were also filled with silences. Additionally, as I argue, we must understand working-class women's gender and sexual critiques as racialized accounts as well. After all, nineteenth-century liberalism had employed gender and sex to structure racialized domination: laboring women's supposedly loose sexuality accounted for racialized deficiencies, making control over their sexuality central to the reform movement. In the eyes of elites, laboring women were racialized individuals whose political legitimacy had appropriately been denied because of their gender, sex, and nonwhiteness. (In a sense, working women were already black.) In turn, women might have strategically chosen silence in their search for a way to break into various public sites of political struggle. That is, while racialized conflicts among women and between male and female laborers might have been frequent, their organizational participation had to conform at times to the idioms and practices deemed legitimate in the narrowly defined political sphere of the colony; this produced a de facto silencing once again of those very conflicts. For if they had interrupted historical silences

about racialized domination at that moment making visible "internal" conversations on race, they might well have compromised their already tenuous incursion into these arenas.

Despite their silences, women's ideological innovations and their activism in expanding/sustaining labor organizing and negotiations forced the FLT male leadership not only to take a stand on behalf of female members but also to wrestle with a more complex—though partial and fraught with tensions—gendered analysis of class exploitation.[68] The account of these transformations would be incomplete if we disregarded how the competition with the FRT over the leadership of the labor movement also forced the FLT to adapt to the changing circumstances, one in which women had become a significant and demanding sector of the labor pool for formal employment. The new colonial context prompted changes that called for not only a rearrangement of the masculinist principles of labor organizing but also new forms of affiliation.

Racialization and New Forms of Labor Affiliation

The FRT strongly criticized some of the new forms of affiliation/organization prompted by the new colonial context: they resisted the full incorporation of women into labor organizing because they sought to preserve their working-class male authority at work and home, and they disapproved of the affiliation of island workers to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), mainly out of a concern that island interests would be subsumed to the AFL's broader ambitions. However, the FLT's modes of building up credibility for the AFL among Puerto Rican workers—for example, by highlighting the AFL's commitment to racial equality—reveal that the Federación Regional also voiced an additional set of concerns. They stressed that workers could legitimately organize on the basis of racialized solidarity, and they could use organizing to denounce racialized inequities and discrimination. Indeed, the controversy over the relationship of island labor to the AFL was one more instance in which the FRT articulated these concerns. In the process, leaders and members of working-class organizations participated in and created their own performances of accusations and denials of racism. These performances interrupted efforts at silencing and enabled limited debates on racial inequality, although they were unable to forge the means for a sustained critique of racialized domination.

FLT sympathizers often conflated the FRT with the *Comité para la Defensa del Partido Republicano*, the group accused of carrying out violent attacks (the *turbas*) against the Federal Party and the FLT. Leaders and members of the FRT did sympathize with and/or participate in these encounters. In an *El Trabuco* article titled "Asesinos del pueblo,"[69] an unidentified author directly denounced the *turbas*, a group he despised because of their violent doings and affiliation with municipal structures of government. The author thought the *turbas* were full of contradictions. Mainly, they claimed to be advocates for the working people, yet they allied with the bourgeoisie and the political elites constituting the Republicano Party. Furthermore, the *turbas*' worst move was that of discussing race as a main issue in its political platform: "The people know who you

are already. The people are also aware that you moved up because of their [the people's] help and they do not need you to create more problems by bringing up the matter of race. You are beating a dead horse."[70] The author pointed out the FRT's hypocrisy and described the talk of race as a mere political strategy: "People, beware of those who claim to be your advocates: Now they speak of the matter of race, only after becoming autocrats. If you counted on this campaign strategy alone as your latest recourse to make a living, for sure you will fail." He continued admonishing the *turbas*:

> Why did you betray the [presplit] Federación Regional?
> Because of employment.
> For your "[political] wedding," why did you embrace the *blancos* instead of the *negros*?
> You are already employed, we are of not help to you anymore. The *blancos* will provide for you.

The author also identified as one of the discarded black workers ("we are of not help to you anymore"), committed to the labor cause (not tempted by the opportunity of secured government employment) and, as such, one with the authority to state that the matter of racial inequality was an unproductive endeavor. Another article in the same issue denounced the Republicano Party for its racist practices. In the article "¡Alerta! ¡Alerta!" the author, under the alias of Dinamita (Dynamite), indicts republicano members of the Toa Alta municipal council for their betrayal of black workers.[71] Toa Alta's municipal authorities had offered a wage increase to municipal employees, and republicano council members approved it instead of creating a few new positions—at a time of economic crisis, this was a betrayal to the laboring classes. Dinamita expected labor representative Cruz Rosado and especially councilman Pepín, because "of his skin color" (black), to stand up on behalf of his "own" people (black workers). In contrast, Dinamita praised the federal representatives because they opposed the raise. Such accusations and denials of racism allowed people to make insightful critiques on the important racialized ramifications of everyday political decisions among workers, even if these insights paradoxically emerged in the process of silencing debates on these same matters.

At the same time, this form of politicization of blackness was not just a rhetorical party device but also a direct response to popular forms of racialized politics. For example, the federales regarded Ponce's main authorities—the republicano Mayor Guzmán Benítez and the Chief of the Municipal Police Rodulfo Figueroa—as highly controversial figures because they had developed strong ties with "dangerous" members of the lower classes, the mayor's "black guardians."[72] Among them, Antonio "el Negro" Guilbe and his peers provoked concern among Ponce elites supposedly because of their participation in the *turbas*. But these elites were more threatened by the support that figures like Guilbe galvanized among the laboring classes. *La Democracia* describes the dangerous Guilbe walking freely, proudly, and defiantly throughout the city, followed by a large crowd and intimidating well-known federales. Even worse, this black man wandered the

Ponce streets with a weapon on his waist and an American flag wrapped around him.[73] Federales were keenly aware that Guilbe's black body in various sites of political struggle (in municipal institutions and on the streets) and his practices (wrapping himself in the US flag) were powerful articulations of racialized politics in need of undermining and silencing. The federales resorted to linking blackness to antinationalism and a submissive position toward the United States.

The popular politicization of blackness was also worrisome to the upper echelon of the Republicano Party, which likewise sought to manage the intraparty conversations about race. Republicano members of the council, who worried over the popular character of city politics, demanded Mayor Guzmán leave his position. The divergence within the party degenerated into a violent takeover of the municipal council's meeting hall by a group of about two thousand people in support of Guzmán.[74] Important leaders within the Republicano Party (and its working-class affiliated organizations) insisted that they were the only ones invested in doing justice to the lower classes. The republicano newspaper *La Defensa* explicitly stated so. Island blacks could not expect anything from the federales, whose membership included the old Spanish colonial elite, the elite who had enslaved them.[75]

While the Republicano Party became a site for the black male intelligentsia and working-class activists, its white, wealthy leadership seriously limited their realm of action. Revisiting Luis Felippe Dessús' outcry in the newspaper *La Justicia* allows us to unearth these intraparty constraints. The journalist and FRT affiliate denounced the hypocrisy of Ponce republicano leaders when they canceled his serialized newspaper column in which he profiled important black leaders such as José N. Acosta and Antonio "El Negro" Guilbe.[76] The republicano leaders argued that Dessús encouraged racial divisions by focusing only on popular black figures. The republicanos who Dessús admonished in his article—councilmen Chevalier and Besosa, among others—were the same who had pushed Ponce Mayor Guzmán Benítez out of office. Party leaders were trying to contain and eventually suppress the racialized forms of politics that had become so central in republicano popular political endeavors.

The escalating violence between federales and republicanos prompted colonial authorities in San Juan to launch a formal investigation in June of 1902.[77] To get to the "heart of the matter," authorities called on members of both federations as witnesses and closely interviewed the main leaders of the struggle: Rosendo Rivera García and Santiago Iglesias Pantín.

The interviews reflected some of the points of contention already discussed. The FRT claimed to be the true spokesman of laboring poor while the FLT portrayed its membership as well-behaved, law-abiding, moral workers. In the midst of an ongoing contest over who founded or was the main leader of the labor movement, a group of FLT sympathizers published a public manifesto contending that Santiago Iglesias Pantínwas the true founder of the labor movement because he ended the hierarchies that divided workers during earlier times: "All previous working-class organizations (with few exceptions) functioned just as dance centers, artisan casinos, study circles where they only discussed the differences of color, the mysticism of the races, the superiority of certain occupations:

the printer argued he was better than the mason; the carpenter better than the tailor; and all of them thought they were better than the day workers and field workers."[78] Unlike "others" (Rosendo Rivera García?), Iglesias Pantín created a unified organization that constituted "the beginning of a positive and genuine life for the Puerto Rican worker." In addition, the signatories discredited Rivera García, accusing him of defrauding the federation and pointed to contradictions in his claims about his commitment to racial equality. (Rivera García, who claimed to be an advocate for the laboring poor in Puerto Rico, had made a series of statements rejoicing over the death of Antonio Maceo, the revered black, working-class leader in the Cuban wars for independence. Instead of mourning the death of a fellow black rebel, Rivera García condemned Maceo for his pro-independence, nationalist stance. The point was to stress that, for Rivera García, politics trumped racial solidarity.) The manifesto authors thus sought to depict the republicano take on racial matters as mere capricious manipulation for political advantage.

Again, the FRT's politicization of blackness was a critical means to unearth the ramifications of new forms of association under US rule, especially with the American Federation of Labor. The relationship between the FLT and the AFL had begun as early as 1900 when Iglesias Pantín arrived in New York City and immersed himself in an unusually vigorous, working-class, political scene.[79] Throughout the years, Iglesias cultivated a relationship with AFL leaders and established a network of influential people in the metropolis through which the FLT hoped to shape island politics. For the FLT's leaders, the AFL was to become a pressure group as well as a means to access metropolitan governmental authorities. Gompers facilitated Iglesias's meetings with President McKinley and his staff as well as numerous encounters with President Roosevelt's officials and representatives. At other times, the AFL president wrote in the US press about Puerto Rico or addressed letters to metropolitan officials on the island and the mainland on behalf of Iglesias Pantín and the FLT.

The FRT questioned the FLT's affiliation with the AFL out of fear that Puerto Rican workers' interests could be subsumed to those of US organized workers. FRT leader Rivera argued that the AFL could encourage the entry of outside workers onto the island (who employers would prefer over native workers) as had happened earlier with West Indians. The AFL was also concerned about migration, but its fear was of Puerto Ricans traveling to the mainland, increasing competition in job markets and consequently decreasing wages.

Both the FRT and AFL shared a concern about the impact of the circulation of racialized workers through the imperial field. The growth of US industrial capitalism and its imperial expansion at the turn of the century pulled into its orbits an unprecedented number of immigrant and migrant laborers. The sustainability of this economic and political growth rested on, among many other things, a racialized labor market that pitted different working-class sectors against each other, enabling the reproduction and new production of modes of racialization as forms of structuring the imperial field. These politics did not escape the FRT, who articulated their apprehension as a critique of the FLT.[80]

The FRT's concerns were addressed subtly at first. In May of 1903, the labor journal *Unión Obrera* reproduced an article by Frank Duffy, the secretary general of the Carpenters' Union, addressing all workers of color in the United States.[81] Along the lines of the FLT's philosophy, Duffy stressed the correlation between the rise of a workers' consciousness, the advancement of the labor cause, and the improvement of race relations. In recent assemblies in New York and Atlanta, the Carpenters' Union had decided to use all its resources to organize black workers in the US South. Duffy explained that the resolution had emerged not only from black southerners' representatives in the Carpenters' Union but also from numerous caucasian men in the assemblies who recognized that black laborers in the south worked longer hours for less pay. Duffy claimed that there was no room for racial differences in the labor movement as workers were constructing an alternative world. Duffy stressed that white men had an obligation to free blacks, and the Carpenters' Union was to raise workers' consciousness among the southern black laborers.

Not long after the publication of Duffy's article, Joaquín A. Becerril called on black Puerto Rican workers to reject the AFL. Becerril was a self-identified black journalist and active member of the FRT who repeatedly spoke against the FLT. After the 1905–6 strikes, however, Becerril rejoined the FLT.[82] As director of *La Voz del Obrero*, Becerril published the editorial titled, "La comedia de los loros," in which he accused the AFL of reproducing racial discrimination in its organization. According to the author, important US newspapers had attested to racial discrimination within AFL-affiliated unions. Even a Federal Party member in Puerto Rico, the author contended, had published a letter in the newspaper where he stated that black Puerto Rican men who migrated to the United States faced numerous obstacles. For the author, a black Puerto Rican worker affiliated with the AFL was either a good man deceived by politicians (Iglesias Pantín?), a servile individual, or just a selfish man. For Becerril, a dignified black man in the United States or on the island would not support the AFL.

Becerril's diatribe against the FLT did not translate into an anti-US stance. While the author denounced the AFL, he praised the general advancement of blacks in the United States. The journal *La Voz del Obrero* repeatedly published notes underscoring the achievements of black men, an advancement only possible in the United States. For instance, the richest man in Memphis was black, black students in the North were winning all academic awards, Yale University had 15 black students, and Oklahoma held 10 colored judges. Other articles by Becerril highlighted the success of black politicians in the Bronx, New York, and praised the performance of black soldiers in a reception for President Roosevelt—a reception where Captain Charles Young, the only officer of color to have graduated from West Point, marched in front of the parade, leading troops of color.

Becerril's editorial commentary—as well as the actions and claims of other black republicano, male leaders—can be read as a desire to participate in a visual economy of race (black/white dichotomy) predominantly associated with the US South and North East. Such a reading fits perfectly with contemporary (and present) impulses to cast (and simplify) US racialized dynamics as radically different

from those in Puerto Rico. But Becerril's and other republicanos' modality of politicizing blackness emerged in relation to the historical practices of silencing about racialized domination (in the form of segregation, swift economic dispossession, and increased health disparity) that defined colonial reform and nationalist politics on the island: Becerril's journalistic notes appeared as the FLT drew closer to political leaders who were forming the Unión Party, an organization with a proautonomist, raceless program.

A deeper reading of the republicano black leaders suggests that they may have been calling attention to the workings of a visual racial economy also in operation in Puerto Rico, a history systematically suppressed. Romantic discourses about racial mixture as the source of national origin, racial harmony, and practices of deracialization rested upon the negation of all color lines. Becerril and his peers interrupted these silences by providing varied, if partial and brief, accounts of the workings of color lines on the island and highlighting the empowerment that racialized recognition could offer (as it did for certain US blacks). The FRT's rejection of the AFL responded to a complex understanding of the relationship among organized working-class politics, colonialism, and racialized domination within the US imperial field.

Race and the Impossibility of Unifying the Puerto Rican Labor Federations

Unlike Cuba or the Philippines, the AFL did not consider Puerto Rico as a main source of concern at the time of the war, although it is mentioned sporadically in the pages of their journal. In comparison to other US interests, Puerto Rico may have appeared to them as a relatively peaceful Spanish colony with no black or Asian armed revolutionaries contesting US forces.[83] For the AFL, the US administration was solely driven by their interest in the profitable Cuban sugar industry, not on a small coffee-producing island like Puerto Rico.[84] But a few years after the war, Puerto Rico became more important for the AFL. The FLT leader Iglesias Pantín and Samuel Gompers joined forces in their goal for the Americanization of Puerto Rico. The FLT sought US citizenship and statehood for the island as a way to gain labor rights already granted to workers in the United States. In turn, the AFL advocated for the extension of labor rights for Puerto Rican workers in order to halt their massive immigration to the United States, just as they sought to prevent immigration from Cuba and the Philippines. Also, it may not have escaped the AFL leaders that knowledge production and decision making in the Bureau of Labor was informed by comparativist exercises, especially studies between US labor and conditions of their counterparts in the Philippines, Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.[85] For example, the authors of the first two reports on Puerto Rico's labor conditions, written by Dr. Azel Ames (1901) and Walter Weyl (1905), were commissioned by Carroll D. Wright, head and main organizational force of the Federal Bureau of Labor (1885–1905), also known as the founder of "labor statistics."[86] Dr. Azel Ames served as major and brigade surgeon of the corps of US volunteers, directing vaccination programs as military and civil sanitary inspector for the Department of Porto Rico. His later book on hygiene in the

tropics was based on his experiences in Puerto Rico and the Philippines.[87] Walter Weyl was a statistician from the University of Philadelphia, a close collaborator with Carroll Wright, and the founding editor of the *The New Republic* (1914), the leading magazine of the US Progressive movement.[88] His expertise in labor issues derived from his in-depth studies of workers in France, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. The control over racialized labor within the growing imperial field was an engine in the discipline of statistics, the formation of government administrative sciences, and the production of labor legislation. As such, AFL leaders also sought to intervene in labor struggles in these sites.

Samuel Gompers arrived in Puerto Rico in 1904. In his letters to the *American Federationist* describing the various stages of his journey, Gompers explained that the main goal of the trip was to gather firsthand information regarding the poor conditions of Puerto Rican workers in order to publicize Puerto Rico's situation on the mainland and for the AFL to demand improvements from metropolitan authorities.[89] His address at a reception in Washington on his return from the island makes clear that Gompers had a second objective—the final unification of the Puerto Rican labor movement. The divergence between the FLT and the FRT had become so significant that Samuel Gompers sought to mediate the conflict. In his memoirs, the labor leader Rafael Alonso Torres explained that Gompers arrived to "smooth away differences and [racial?] prejudice" within the labor movement on the island.[90]

Colonial officials, Puerto Rican state administrators, political leaders, the directorship of the FRT and the FLT, prominent journalists, and large crowds of men and women welcomed and treated Samuel Gompers as a head of state.[91] Workers gathered to receive the labor leader upon his arrival at San Juan harbor, followed him to the hotel, to the FLT meeting hall, the FRT hall, and throughout the island as Gompers visited many towns and cities.[92] Parades and demonstrations were organized in San Juan and Ponce to celebrate the visit of the labor agitator. On the second day of his trip, a committee from the FRT approached Gompers to greet him and welcome him to the island. Gompers took advantage of the opportunity and asked them to organize a commission for a meeting the next morning (Friday, February 19, 1904). Fifteen members met the leader, and they agreed to appoint a four-member committee to meet with their counterparts from the FLT. The four men were Joaquín Becerril, Stevan Rivero, Pedro Falú, and Pedro C. Timothee.[93] The FLT also appointed a four-member committee.

According to Gompers's account to the Washington Central Labor Union, the first meeting took place on Sunday, February 21, and they extensively discussed the problem of unification. The FRT representatives' main objection focused on the persona of Iglesias Pantín. The FRT rejected Iglesias as the leader of the movement and demanded his resignation. Gompers purposely delayed a response to the demand and encouraged the fast unification of the movement. He dictated a declaration in favor of the amalgamation of the federations and called for a vote on the issue. While all four members of the FLT voted in favor, two out of the four FRT representatives rejected it. Gompers quickly characterized the dissenting voices as politicians and traitors to the labor cause. The following day, the two FRT consenting representatives agreed to call for an island-wide convention

of labor union representatives to reach an agreement on a process to achieve the unification of both federations. That same day, Gompers addressed a multitude of FRT-affiliated laborers. In that public speech, Gompers talked about the need for a strong labor movement and for its autonomy from established political parties. The most interesting part of his speech was his need to clarify the AFL's position regarding accusations of racism. As Gompers described it, the FRT representatives to the Sunday meeting constantly asked for clarification regarding the exclusion of black workers in the AFL, accusations he strongly denied. In his 1904 speech to the FRT, Gompers stated, "I do not want you to infer that our union men in the United States have had their prejudice entirely eliminated, but the American Federation of Labor, and the great overwhelming principle in all organizations, has declared that the working people of the world must unite, regardless of color, politics, religion, or nationality."[94] Gompers echoed the same argumentative line well established within the FLT ranks.[95]

Similarly, the labor leader spoke to the FLT assembly on Wednesday, February 24. Once again, Gompers addressed workers' concerns regarding the AFL's racist practices: "Let me say, my friends, that the American Federation of Labor is the living aggressive organization and factor in American affairs to stand for the equal right of the Negro workingmen to receive the same consideration at the hands of an employer as any white man may ask for himself."[96] He recognized, however, that there was still some prejudice, but the AFL cannot be blamed for it, as "our record is clear by the principle which we have enunciated to the whole world . . . the working people of America must unite without regard to politics, color, religion, or nationality."

The general meeting to discuss the future of the two federations never took place. The federations' committees met on March 11 to confer about the general gathering, but the FRT representatives refused to continue dialoguing unless Iglesias Pantín resigned. Gompers explained that the FRT's reaction signaled their weak position: they lacked support outside San Juan, and he refused to remove Iglesias Pantín from his job as AFL organizer on the island. Back in the United States, Gompers asserted that he never believed in the legitimacy of the FRT, characterizing them as enemies of the workers and saying that "the so-called Federación Regional" was an "aggregation of politicians [that] was not a labor organization in any sense of the world, but a clique which sought to domineer over some workmen in the hope of using them for its own political and personal aggrandizement."[97] In another instance, Gompers stated, "I was not going to . . . humiliate that man [Iglesias Pantín] by granting the malicious and malevolent request of a gang of politicians and political heelers."[98] Gompers did not acknowledge that FRT leaders may have rejected Iglesias because, as a figure, he signified forms of racialized and partisan politics they sought to challenge. Gompers left the island on March 15, and the Puerto Rican labor movement remained divided.

The ongoing controversy with the FRT led the FLT repeatedly to address issues of racial equality and discrimination. In its 1905 program, the FLT once again reaffirmed its commitment to racial equality and also defended the AFL. The document stated their embrace of "honest men and reject all individuals, no matter their class up-bringing, who in the name of Puerto Rico, the Motherland

and the 'black color'—because the latter is often exploited on the island—seek to deceive and betray the good faith of the people for his own benefit and that of his allies."[99] The document also included a defense of the AFL: "it is important to stress that the boundaries between whites and blacks have been completely erased within that organization." Ultimately, the experience as a worker superseded other forms of identity: "It would be abnormal for black and white workers who are forced to work together, side by side, under the same adverse conditions, suffering the same forms of degradation from usurers, to disagree on the need to join forces as workers only because there are some differences of color."[100]

The FLT's explicit references on the matter of racial conflict and its defense of the AFL reveal that Gompers minimized and misrepresented the reasons for which the FRT leadership rejected joining forces with the AFL, which he deemed an unreasonable personal attack against Iglesias Pantín. It seems that the history of racial exclusion of the AFL and the deepening/expansion of the practices of silences about racialized domination within the Puerto Rican labor movement were not just side issues to FRT representatives.

The FRT's stance on race reflected its distrust of an organization (the AFL) that in their eyes privileged white, skilled workers and wanted to avoid Puerto Rican immigration to the mainland at all cost. The FRT's rejection of US labor organizations resembled Barbosa's position a few years earlier, in 1897, when he and his followers (now members of the Partido Republicano) refused to follow Muñoz Rivera in forging alliances with Spanish political parties with the objective of advancing autonomism. At that time, Barbosa and his followers argued that Puerto Rican interests would become subordinated to those of the Spanish parties. Similarly, the FRT argued that the needs of Puerto Rican workers would become subordinate to the interests of US labor.[101]

The urgency of the 1905–6 strikes was the only force that was finally able to unify the labor movement. In April 1905, thousands of plantation workers participated in strikes in the southern areas of Guánica, Yauco, Guayanilla, Tallaboa, Peñuelas, Ponce, Juana Díaz, Santa Isabel, and Salinas, among others. Not long after, workers in the northern town of Arecibo also organized a strike. The 1905 strikes were violent, and at the end workers achieved mixed results, among them a ten-hour day restriction (instead of the eight-hour day restriction) and a 15 to 30 percent wage increase.[102] The rising tide of workers threatened the colonial administration, which then implemented more repressive practices against the June 1905 longshoremen strike (against the New York Porto Rico Steamship Company) in the San Juan docks. The majority of dock workers belonged to the FRT. At the beginning, longshoremen were willing to negotiate with a commission of San Juan administrators, business owners, and representatives from the Steamship Company, but negotiations broke down because the company refused to increase wages. Consequently, the strikers continued and received support from other unions such as truckers and cigar makers, who were affiliated with the FLT.[103] In July, the strike degenerated into violent confrontations between workers and police authorities. The conflict resulted in destroyed property, personal injuries, and one death. The strike ended without meeting any of the workers' demands.

However, the circumstances of the strike brought the FRT and the FLT to work together in strategizing about the uprising. The FRT had lost strength as the Republicano Party lost the 1904 election and subsequent elections to the fast-growing Unión Party. Meanwhile, the FLT leadership progressively began to distrust their allies in the Unión Party, who became indifferent and refused to support the strikes, moving politically and socially closer to the employing class.[104] Both federations continued to work together until the FRT was officially dissolved into the FLT the following year.[105] The leadership of the FRT, such as Joaquín Becerril, then became active members of the FLT. With the political and economic support of the AFL, the FLT finally achieved the leadership of organized labor by 1907. As a consequence, a critique of racialized domination became absolutely absorbed by a critique of capital, forged in the process of constituting the worker's political identity.

Conclusion

For many among the late-nineteenth-century elite, the Day of Abolition (March 22) had become the landmark for racial harmony. For the emerging organized workers in the various trades and occupations, in contrast, March 22, 1873, was a day to celebrate not necessarily racial inclusion or racial harmony but their official recognition as free workers. But within the new colonial context and in the FLT's attempt to mark its internationalist outlook, the FLT membership began commemorating the Chicago massacre on May 1 as a new historical landmark for the Puerto Rican labor movement.[106] The labor press, laborers' memoirs, and historians' accounts describe the varied activities celebrated by workers on May 1. Dances, concerts, plays, poetry readings, and speeches by important figures took place for the first time on May 1, 1899. In 1907, celebrations were moved to the officially recognized Labor Day in the month of September.[107] The FLT appropriated a labor tradition that embodied what it aspired to become: a strong and influential workers' organization that could shape and force political changes on behalf of its membership. As a consequence, the FLT slowly diverged from the Puerto Rican labor tradition of celebrating abolition as central to its political formation.

This disassociation unraveled at the same time the factions of the labor leadership began to distance working-class organizations even further from discussions regarding blackness and/or matters of racialized domination within its ranks and the general population. In 1910, for instance, the labor ideologue Jesús María Balzac published a pamphlet where he praised the FLT for all its achievements on behalf of the labor movement, especially "by undoing racial prejudices and encouraging harmony and equality of rights among the different social classes."[108] With the final absorption of the Federación Regional de Trabajadores into the ranks of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores in 1906–7, the critique of racialized domination emerging from organized labor was silenced. For many ideologues in the FLT, racialization as a process of marking difference and dictating inequality was not silenced but finally transcended.

Under a liberal project for political education and economic exploitation, the new colonial rulers continued and expanded the Creole elites' efforts of earlier decades under Spain to constitute a public political sphere. Like them, the colonial state deployed rhetoric and practices that marked the laboring population as ignorant peasants and/or criminals. In doing so, the public sphere of legitimate political action became narrower, mediated by selected individuals and organizational forms, shaped through restricted means (elections) and few sites for legitimate interaction (the meeting hall). Popular classes extended and devised new means for engagement (unions, federations, and labor parties). Economic and demographic changes also demanded new forms of organization/affiliation to integrate new members, like women, and associations with new groups for support, such as the American Federation of Labor. These processes of reorganization, expansion, and ideological transformation brought about conflicts within the labor movement. In the context of these many struggles, we encounter numerous interruptions to the silencing of the workings of racialized domination in Puerto Rico and within organized labor. Many labor ideologues, however, believed that discussion of these matters diverted attention from more pressing issues: the struggle to eradicate or modify the structural forms that enabled employers to exploit labor. In their attempts to shape the public sphere of political action in the midst of many challenges and internal fissures, organized labor also sought to reestablish harmony and engaged directly in the production of many more silences.

The performances of accusations and refutations of racism in which the FRT and the FLT engaged for years illustrate the forms of interruption and the rhetorical devices for forging a culture of suppression within organized labor. Black political leaders and working-class activists within the Republicano Party were the engine behind these interruptions. While their performances and forms of politicization promised to uncover the complexity of racialization as a process of domination, they ended up registering only one of its modalities: a black and white dichotomy determined by a visual economy of race (i.e., categorization based on phenotype). The disclosure of this one modality of racialization did not withstand the force of a politics of racial harmony at the heart of anticolonial and reformist endeavors. The endeavors of the latter succeeded in casting this one manifestation of racialized domination (white versus black) as something extraordinary and/or foreign (a US phenomenon). While political elites progressively whitened the nation in the face of the new empire, the labor movement remained silent, consolidating a class identity—the worker. Unfortunately, the working-class organizations' practice of silence did not contest the Creole elites' strategies for whitening the population and did not challenge the racial hierarchies that continued marginalizing large sectors of the population.

The transformations at the beginning of the century prompted the need for rearticulating means and forms of political struggle. The process enabled a series of interruptions to the persistent efforts at silencing discussions about race. These interruptions prompted the reformulation of already existing idioms (morality and hygiene) employed in earlier decades to speak about preoccupations regarding blackness and the racial mixture of the Puerto Ricans. In the following pages,

I analyze the muffled debates over race during the second decade of the century through the unearthing of these codified ways of referencing blackness, which enabled the intractability of many modes of racialized domination. Some of these muffled debates occurred around events in Cuba, the concerns over the effects of US cultural imperialism, and the struggles to obtain US citizenship. Public hygiene and medicine emerged, once again, as means to manage the negative effects of blackness among the population.

Chapter 6

Deflecting Puerto Rican Blackness

If the laboring classes and some elites politicized blackness—asserting black/brown identities in a range of circumstances and denouncing racially based marginalization—the dominant classes used that politicization to lump all the disgruntled sectors of the growing impoverished population together and name them as dangerous. Anticolonial mobilizations in the Caribbean islands throughout the nineteenth century and local experiences with the *turbas republicanas*—mobilizations where many people died, others were injured, and property was destroyed—only confirmed the elites' misguided association between the politicization of blackness and the violent and unmanageable disruption of order. In response, they sought to silence all accounts about racialized domination. As both elite and working-class leaders increasingly committed themselves to a liberal public sphere of politics, they fueled these silencing impulses. Many undermined or deflected attention from racialized domination by participating in the ongoing reconstruction of an island historical memory based on racial harmony and miscegenation. Others acknowledged sociopolitical inequalities but obscured an understanding of it as racial by employing idioms other than race—including class, morality, and health—to inquire, speak about, explain, and/or legitimize them.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, accusations and refutations of racism were a less prominent dynamic, and elites elaborated new forms of silencing. First, the cultural construct of the *raza iberoamericana* (Iberian American race) was forged by leaders and intellectuals associated with the Unión Party of Puerto Rico and the Party for Independence, founded in 1912. This important group within the Puerto Rican intelligentsia responded to the cultural Americanization of the island by constructing a national historical memory that marked the cultural, religious, linguistic, and historical commonalities tying the island to other countries in Latin America and Spain. The *raza iberoamericana*, however, was also a racial construct: it sought to accommodate the African, Indian, and Iberian ethnic origins but essentially stressed how European whiteness overrode any negative trait inherited from those supposedly racially inferior groups.

In marking the many commonalities with Latin America, these Puerto Rican nationalists systematically refused to explore similarities with their black Caribbean neighbors with whom they also shared a history of slavery, sugar and coffee economies, plantation work, colonial rule, and direct US intervention.

The preeminence this historical imagination won among Puerto Rican intellectuals needs to be seen in conjunction with conflicts in Cuba in 1906 and, most importantly, in 1912 when the Partido Independiente de Color on the neighboring island revolted. Different political groups in Puerto Rico saw that such racialized conflicts could affect the island's political relationship with the United States. The 1912 conflict shadowed a hearing occurring at the same time in the US Senate regarding the possibility of granting US citizenship to islanders: Different factions at the hearing (and in Puerto Rico) intensely debated the meanings of US legal citizenship and the possibility of increasing political autonomy for the island within the US colonial regime, citing the Cuban example for different ends. Thus the central issue of race was muffled but always present, such as in the cultural construct of the *raza iberoamericana* and in the debates and practice of health reforms. The political and sociocultural modernity the upper and upper-middle classes sought for the island was incongruent with blackness, which to them signified immorality, disease, and political instability.

Hence in spite of their political disagreements, Creole elites, colonial officials, and representatives of all ideological variants—even labor leaders—did come together in their concern over the working classes' immorality and unhealthy bodies. To agents of the colonial state and Creole and US reformers, the racial makeup of the Puerto Rican working classes accounted for their poor condition and their incapacity for self-rule. These elites used a language of morality and health to implement social reforms that would supposedly facilitate the island's political and economic development. Labor union representatives appropriated aspects of these idioms but, for the most part, rejected the biological racialization of the worker. Labor leadership insisted on deracializing working-class politics by constructing an alternative image of the hardworking, family-oriented, sober, and sexually constrained worker: an image that could speak to their multiracial labor constituency. The narrow scope of their deracialization and their participation and elaboration of the idioms of health and morality only discouraged critiques about the workings of racialized domination.

Puerto Rico Belongs to the Raza Iberoamericana

The cultural construct of the *raza iberoamericana* appealed to a large majority of the Creole elite regardless of party affiliation.[1] The late-nineteenth-century struggles against Spanish rulers, the 1898 War, and subsequent US colonial policies prompted many Puerto Ricans to search for, discuss, and attempt to stipulate what and who constituted their communities. These cultural debates were not the side effects of political and socioeconomic struggles but were a preferred modality through which islanders sought to position themselves within local, regional, and global political mappings. The *raza iberoamericana* positioned islanders to look in the direction of the Latin American republics and Spain, and away from the

imperial United States, if not politically at least culturally. This vision of the local and global, most popular among cultural and political nationalists, diluted the island's blackness and erased the Caribbean as a site of imagination.

The proliferation of references to and about the *raza iberoamericana* responded to the reemergence of strong voices arguing in favor of political independence for the island. While many had advocated for political independence throughout the previous century, colonial authorities—from Spain and the United States—had managed to neutralize their mobilization through a combination of coopting leaders, violently repressing protests, and exiling the most ardent proponents of independence. In contrast, liberal autonomism survived as a political reformist alternative—although also a target of numerous attacks—because even in its most radical form, it preserved (in fact, provided legitimacy to) a framework of empire. In the first decades of the twentieth century, independence proponents emerged among the most active critics of US rule. While political parties, especially the unión, had incorporated independence in their program as one solution to the new colonial status, independence was systematically marginalized.[2] In 1911–13, the independence alternative once again gained momentum through the efforts of politicians such as Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, the original founder of the Unión Party.

The reemergence of the proindependence movement in those years responded to two interrelated phenomena. First, native politicians and industrialists were frustrated with the increasing marginalization of Puerto Rican representatives in the decision-making process. Second, the colonial authorities' disregard for the economic future of the island was one more example of Puerto Ricans's lack of political power under the new regime. In particular, Creole elite resented the colonial government's enactment of the Underwood Law, eliminating sugar tariffs from foreign countries and placing Puerto Rican sugar in a precarious position where it was unable to compete with the competitors' prices.[3] Under these circumstances, political ideologues and industrialists in Puerto Rico moved in two directions. First, the Unión Party, the republicanos, and the leadership of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores de Puerto Rico (FLT) mobilized in defense of the Puerto Rican sugar industry. In their logic, sugar was the national industry, which needed protection. Coffee producers in the unión also defended Puerto Rican sugar's special entry to the US market because they aspired to a similar treatment.[4] Creole economic elites coincided in their defense of native capital by guaranteeing their privileged access to US markets. This special access was only possible by retaining the colonial relationship with the United States.

A smaller group of politicians and intellectuals followed a different direction by proposing independence from the beginning of these debates. One of the strongest proponents of independence was Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, who together with Rafael López Landrón and Luis Lloréns Torres, organized the short-lived Party for Independence in 1912. Matienzo, for example, argued for a complete break from the United States in order to make decisions that did not compromise the interests of the Puerto Rican people. He envisioned important reforms such as the implementation of antitrust regulations, the significant redistribution of land and wealth, the introduction of cooperatives (for consumption

and production), and the creation of a Puerto Rican bank. The proindependence leadership, among them Matienzo, was responsible for expanding the repertoire of sociocultural constructions of the Puerto Rican nation that has remained at the core of most Creole political endeavors throughout the century.[5] Their definition of Puerto Rico as a distinct sociocultural community was anchored in the celebration of a modified, if not distorted, history of racial mixture, which glossed over the centuries of dispossession, repression, and racialized subjection organizing such miscegenation.[6] Regardless of political partisanship, island politicians and intellectuals were keen on distinguishing the Puerto Rican island community from their new colonizers. This would be a crucial endeavor for proponents of autonomism and political independence. The forging of the *jíbaro* (the Puerto Rican highland peasant) trope and the cultural construct of the *raza iberoamericana* were fundamental (and coconstitutive) elements of this endeavor.

For many of the Creole elite, moral authority rested on their ability to forge an image of themselves as leaders and protectors of the Puerto Rican national community. In the face of increasing marginalization from colonial governance, they sought to reassert their authority. In this quest, they came to wrestle (politically and ideologically) with one of the most important sectors of the population and hotly debated issues of the time: the displaced highland peasant, the *jíbaro*, now forced to migrate to the coast in search of wage labor in the sugar industry. At the same time, like many of their Latin American counterparts, island Creole elites at the turn of the century were heavily invested in cultivating and displaying their own whiteness, particularly through the celebration of their European ancestry. They were deeply disturbed by the challenges the racial mixture of the popular classes posed to their projects of modernization and their incursion into the international arena.

Under these circumstances, elites embraced the figure of the *jíbaro* as the embodiment of the nation and its plights. In so doing, Creole elites walked a fine line between identifying and cultivating commonalities with the *jíbaro* and maintaining their social distance. The new racialized characterization of the peasant from the interior illustrates this tension between identification and distance. While in the late nineteenth century the Creole intelligentsia focused on the racially mixed body of the peasant (especially women like in Zeno Gandía's and Del Valle Atiles's works) as the source of all social maladies in the colony, in the early twentieth century intellectuals and politicians increasingly represented the peasant as savvy and wise (although illiterate), male, and predominantly of Spanish ancestry, thus white. Intellectuals and politicians in Cuba, facing similar political challenges, engaged in parallel efforts cultivating the figure of the *guajiro*.[7]

For Creole elites in Puerto Rico, the figure of the highland *jíbaro*—not the black or brown worker most intellectuals circumscribed to the coastal areas—was a racialized way to draw a local political map to guide their endeavors, and the *raza iberoamericana* served a similar role in their regional and global reorientation, both anchored in Spanish ancestry. Matienzo fleshed out some of these ideas in a gathering organized by the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño* on February 8, 1912,

the same day on which he issued the *Proclamation of the Party for Independencia*. Matienzo argued that Puerto Ricans should redirect their political efforts away from the United States and join Iberian America, with whom they had much more in common. Puerto Ricans belonged to the *raza iberoamericana*, a *mestizo* race that had transcended individual races and melted together harmoniously. American countries, he stated, owed much to the Spaniards, who through their hard work had quietly conquered these lands. The politician admitted that in the miscegenation process, the intellectual capabilities of the white race suffered, but on the other hand, the inferior races had increased their intellectual capacity: "We have not only granted them [the inferior races] freedom, we have also given them our [white] blood for their use and appropriation."[8] Most importantly, for Matienzo, Iberian America had an advantage over the United States because "progressively the pure African type is disappearing from Iberian-America at the same time that it is dangerously growing north of the Río Grande."

In his many writings, Matienzo asserted the island's connection with Spanish America through the Pancho Ibero character.[9] Pancho Ibero was to Iberian America what Uncle Sam was to the United States. The character was a derivative of Santiago Ibero, a character embodying the Spanish nation in Benito Pérez Galdós's book *Episodios Nacionales*. In similar fashion, Pancho Ibero was to embody Latin America while underscoring its Spanish genealogy. The character was generic enough to represent any Iberian American country, stressing what Matienzo saw as the thread that linked all countries of Spanish descent. Matienzo's construct of a *raza iberoamericana* was at the heart of a search for an alternative political configuration, a desire he made clear in a letter to his former political associate, the Spaniard Vicente Balbás.[10] In this letter, Matienzo commented on a newspaper article he had written about Spain's need to turn back to America and join the Iberian American union. In his opinion, Spain and Portugal should reject their Mediterranean/European past and forge a transatlantic future. This transatlantic alliance was at the heart of his vision for Puerto Rico: "I have not forgotten the mother countries, Spain or Portugal, in my assessments about and recommendations for the future of Puerto Rico." Spain's role in the Iberian American union was not meant to be an extension of its previous imperial role, but ultimately it was the Iberian "stock" that made the Pan-Iberian union a potentially successful project: "[Iberian America] is the richest land in the world, from the Río Bravo in northern Mexico to the Southern Pole." These natural resources were complemented by the "mixture of Iberian *blancos* from the Iberian Peninsula, *indios*, and *negros* in different proportions. The dominant type is the Iberian, because of its larger numbers, intelligence, and wealth."[11]

For Matienzo, Puerto Ricans were beyond black and white: they were *iberoamericanos*. In this regard, the colonized (Puerto Ricans) were more advanced than the colonizers. To Matienzo, Puerto Ricans had evolved to accept a broader sense of race in which it was impossible to recognize individual races. As such, he could feel sympathy for the plight of US blacks, but to him, racialized oppression was alien to the Puerto Rican reality. Matienzo's embrace of the *raza iberoamericana* and his hispanophilia constituted a counterdiscourse to the

racialized imperial politics of the United States. The debates over the possibility of granting US citizenship to islanders foregrounded the United States' racialized characterizations of Puerto Ricans: they were black and as such incapable of upholding US citizenship. Matienzo explained further in the newspaper article "Guachafita Fuá," "They are not granting us U.S. citizenship . . . arguing that we already have Puerto Rican citizenship, or that American citizenship would only bring the ruin of Puerto Rico, or there are too many *negros* in the United States to add one million more."[12]

The *jíbaro* trope and the *raza iberoamericana* were enmeshed in overlapping and competing transnational ideological and political struggles. To many Latin American political leaders and intellectuals, *mestizaje* became a way to define that which was truly *latinoamericano*. As such, discourses on miscegenation became crucial in the struggles of Latin American intelligentsias to counter the pervasive US presence in the region.[13] Imaginations such as that of mestizaje and *latinoamericanismo* were complex and ambiguous discursive fields that enabled the designing and implementation of important socioeconomic and political interventions at the national and local levels.[14]

In Puerto Rico, the black politician José Barbosa embraced both mestizaje and *latinoamericanismo* in order to manage the racial politics undermining his project for statehood.[15] In his view, the island's tradition of racial harmony, which enabled mestizaje, would prevent US antiblack modalities of racism from altering the island's social relations. His denunciations of racism were often framed as efforts to preserve the long-standing racial harmony in the island.

However, more often than not these discursive fields allowed dominant classes to rearticulate racialized hierarchies that maintained colonial-like structures of social, political, and economic subordination within Latin American nation-states. In Puerto Rico, this dominant tendency did not escape activists such as the black journalists Tomás Carrión Maduro and Luis Felipe Dessús. In his essay *Alma Latina*, Carrión Maduro[16] directly criticized the Unión Party and self-identified as a republicano like Barbosa.[17] While recognizing the reformist aspirations behind some of the forces that coalesced into the 1904 Unión Party, he charged that its leaders were not committed to serious change. Unionista leaders' appropriation of the *alma latina* (Latin spirit) as a rhetorical device illustrated that lack of commitment; the Latin spirit echoed the same ideals of the *raza iberoamericana*. Carrión was skeptical of the effort to uncover the commonalities threading together Latin America and Europe, which supposedly had crystallized in a poetic spirit utterly different from the utilitarian United States.[18] He believed that this sort of inter-American imaginations obscured ongoing inequalities and had enabled neocolonial structures all over Latin America. Puerto Ricans should not be invested in uncovering their affinities with remote places and peoples, affinities that did not emerge out of a harmonious past. Their commitment should be to the Puerto Rican nation.

The notion of nation Carrión deployed was not one that erases particularities but one that was born out of them. His commitment, he stated firmly, was first to himself and his family, his municipality, his administrative department (Ponce), and then the island. His contemporaries might well have understood

this as a racialized statement. Carrión Maduro was a well-known, self-identified black man, born and raised in Juana Díaz, a southern coastal municipality that together with Guayama, Peñuelas, and Santa Isabel comprised a "black" sugar-cultivating region. Many black activists of the area (Felipe Dessús, Eleuterio Derkes, and others) gravitated toward Ponce, the district head municipality, as the largest urban site for their work and leisure.[19]

Black republicano intellectual Felipe Dessús also rejected a Hispanic American imagination but saw a need for Latin American or, even, Pan-American affiliations.[20] The inclusion of Spain in the *raza iberoamericana* was unacceptable to Dessús, as Spanish colonialism had brought about and structured the exploitation of blacks and Indians.[21] He understood racial miscegenation as a defining trait of *latinoamericanismo* but as the product of exploitation, not of harmony. Often in his writing, he rejected the idea of mestizaje as mere fusion or a form of racial transcendence. Instead, it became a discursive space that enabled the recognition of racialized histories and struggles. For example, in his poems "Indiana" and "Gesto Indiano," the narrator explicitly identified as a black man, the heir of the oppression indigenous and black peoples had suffered, and ultimately a Borincano.[22] Dessús's mestizaje was the site of nonwhiteness, the true nature of Puerto Ricanness, and the place for denunciation of racialized domination. His challenge to the most common deployments of mestizaje as fusion brought the attention of many other black intellectuals outside the island.[23] Despite these important critiques, the *raza iberoamericana* proved to have significant staying power.[24]

The racialized cultural constructions in mestizaje discourses enabled Puerto Ricans to trace transnational/trans-Atlantic links among Latin American countries and the Iberian Peninsula. Such discourses emerged in tandem with other influential and powerful transnational/trans-Atlantic racialized political imaginaries such as the Pan-African movement[25] and the international workers' movement. Notably, the workers' movement critiqued capitalism, not racial domination; nonetheless, racialized subordination organized their experiences as workers and the form of their mobilization. The debates and silences in Puerto Rico about the 1912 race war in Cuba highlights this dynamic of avoiding the naming of race while the terms of discussions (and the structures shaping experience) were always racialized.

The Struggle over US Citizenship and the Race War in Cuba

The 1912 hearing before the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico in the US Senate to discuss the possibility of granting US citizenship to Puerto Ricans had as a backdrop the Cuban race war. While the struggles over the equal participation of blacks had brought Cuba to war, Puerto Ricans took a different path: erasing race. Mobilization to achieve racial equality in wages, employment opportunities, legal protection, and electoral participation always compromised political and economic stability. The story of harmony and the erasure of race as the basis of conflict invalidated these claims among Puerto Ricans of African

descent. The interviews that took place in the 1912 hearing and the debates in Puerto Rico about the Cuban conflict reveal the need of these historical actors to shift the terms of debate away from race while simultaneously recognizing how crucial race was in determining a political future.

Cubans had forged a discourse of a racially inclusive nation in the course of the war for independence and the first years of the republic.[26] But soon the practices of US colonial administrators (1898–1902, 1906–9) and the republican Cuban government betrayed the project of inclusion by implementing segregation policies, denying government jobs and representative positions to Afro-Cubans, and designing policies to increase white Spanish immigration to the island. Afro-Cubans organized under the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC) in 1908 in order to challenge these affronts.[27]

The simple existence of the party was threatening to elites.[28] Rumors regarding a potential race war in Cuba spread quickly, and by 1910, the government banned the PIC and any other party organized along racial lines.[29] While the PIC criticized the government for betraying the nation by marginalizing blacks, the state, in turn, actively persecuted the PIC for instigating racial differences in Cuba. The state and its mostly white elite supporters successfully created an ambiance of fear of the so-called black revolutionaries and the imminent danger of Cuba turning into Haiti. Growing tensions exploded in an armed revolt on the eastern part of the island beginning on May 12, 1912. Authorities portrayed the protest as a race war that could bring the end of Cuba and unleashed a wave of indiscriminate repression against all Afro-Cubans. The authorities' violent attacks led to further radicalization of the PIC protesters and the revolt escalated into a major armed conflict. As a result, the United States mobilized troops to the shores of the eastern provinces for the so-called protection of their properties and US citizens residing in Cuba.[30] The conflict ended by mid-July with the murdering of key leaders and thousands of Afro-Cubans.[31]

The 1912 revolt in Cuba coincided with some Puerto Ricans' renewed efforts in the US Congress to demand US citizenship. The constraints embedded in the 1900 Foraker Act (and the interim government) forced island politicians to search for various ways to effect change.[32] For the Republicano Party—seeking further access to investments and markets—and the leadership of the organized workers' movement who sought more labor protections and benefits, US citizenship paved the road to future annexation.[33] Unionistas were ambivalent toward citizenship: leaders like Luis Muñoz Rivera understood that it would curtail any probability of increasing autonomy over Puerto Rican affairs, but at other times, the unión strategically sought out US citizenship, especially because with full rights they could increase local preeminence. This ambiguity characterized the party's stand in regard to the United States in 1912 when Muñoz Rivera was resident commissioner, the Puerto Rican representative in the US Congress. The Party for Independence rejected US citizenship altogether.

Several days before the outbreak of the revolt in Cuba, Puerto Rican labor leader Santiago Iglesias Pantín and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson spoke on behalf of US citizenship in a hearing before the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico in the US Senate.[34] News about the Cuban revolt in Puerto

Rican newspapers appeared alongside the most relevant stories on the debates of Puerto Rican representatives in Washington. Each political group debated or ignored the news according to its concerns regarding the US colonial administration's interpretation of both Cuba's and Puerto Rico's ongoing internal conflicts and its connection to the islands' racial histories. For these politicians, the Cuban revolt highlighted the centrality of racialization in the struggle for citizenship and all future solutions to the colonial status. US officials made these concerns over race explicit during the 1912 hearing in Congress, when Senator Kern asked Secretary of War Stimson about his hesitation to grant ultimate statehood to Puerto Ricans: "What is the principal objection that occurs to you as against that, a racial difference?"[35] Secretary Stimson replied that "racial difference is a very great difference" but not the only one: "The difference of climate, habit, tradition, and distance, but perhaps more than anything else the fact that it would be for the first time going beyond the territorial limits of the United States, thus making a precedent for going beyond those territorial limits in other cases."

In this hearing, the secretary of war agreed with Iglesias Pantín in arguing for extending US citizenship to Puerto Ricans. Secretary Stimson also made a case for granting citizenship and partial self-government to islanders, supporting the program of the unión (and the resident commissioner). The changes the secretary advocated for were a strategy of containment, a means to retain the island as a peaceful colony and thwart islanders' future demands for increased political participation. This was clear in the way Secretary Stimson envisioned US citizenship for islanders: though he did not detail it, it carried different prerogatives than the citizenship enjoyed by mainland residents.[36] Even Senator Clarke had difficulties understanding how US citizenship could be used in this manner: "I ask if you know of any legal or constitutional plan by which persons can be admitted as American citizens and then subsequently denied any of the rights of American citizenship as these are known in this country and enjoyed by our own people? You spoke of giving them [Puerto Ricans] a separate government which, whilst possessing the feature of American citizenship, would still not give them full measure the rights of the citizenship."[37]

It was clear to the secretary of war that citizenship was a racialized privilege, and for his strategy to work, he needed to undermine Puerto Ricans' blackness when comparing them to other peoples of the Caribbean. The migration of thousands of black workers from Haiti and other West Indies to Cuban plantations had sparked many conflicts in Cuba.[38] Hence when one senator asked about immigration to the island, the official resorted to describe Puerto Rico "as very homogenous. There is a very slight admixture of Negro blood as compared with other West Indian islands. You see it only here and there on the seacoast. It has retained more pure Spanish-American blood, I should say, than either of the other islands I visited last year—Santo Domingo, Cuba, and Jamaica, very much less."[39]

Unlike Stimson, Iglesias Pantín did not seek the whitening of Puerto Ricans in his statements during the hearing. He just did not acknowledge race as a matter to be discussed, even when pressed by senators. The American Federation of

Labor (AFL) and FLT spokesman only spoke of divisions among Puerto Ricans along class lines. Iglesias Pantín argued that Americanization had impacted the two tiers of island society differently. The upper classes (planters, merchants, and property owners) had benefited significantly while the laboring classes did not:

> The *laborers* expect their greatest benefits not from the material advantages, but from the introduction by the American institutions, the American spirit, and the American idea of *labor*. The *laborers* of Porto Rico desire the Americanization of the island. They desire *labor* to be regarded as honorable. They desire the uplifting of *labor* by permitting it to participate to a greater degree in the material advantages obtained from the American connection. It will profit the *labor* of Porto Rico little unless it obtains from this American connection, at least gradually, the treatment which is extended to *labor* in the United States. We believe that the conferring of American citizenship on the people of Porto Rico will put the *laborer* and *artisan* in a position in which he will be better able to profit by the introduction of American institutions. (*emphasis mine*)[40]

Iglesias Pantín consistently deployed the all-encompassing label of "the laborer" in an effort to represent the multiracial laboring classes as homogenous.

Because of the racial politics at play in the debates over US citizenship and the possibility of self-government, island leaders struggling to increase political participation sought to diffuse or deflect the news about the race war in Cuba. The labor press in Puerto Rico seems to have avoided the news completely. The number of surviving issues of working-class newspapers is too small to tell with certainty whether or not the labor press completely avoided the matter. However, no other source mentioned the events in Cuba. This silence is hardly coincidental, particularly if we take into account that Iglesias Pantín, the president of the FLT, had lived and actively participated in labor organizing in Cuba in the early 1890s. In fact, he arrived in Puerto Rico as a result of his persecution by Cuban colonial authorities. Moreover, a large number of Puerto Ricans had emigrated to work in Cuban plantations during the first decade of the century. During those early years, the organized labor movement had voiced great concerns about Puerto Rican labor migrants in Hawaii, St. Louis, and other areas of the Caribbean and Latin America. Yet in 1912, when the organized labor movement demanded US citizenship, the fate of these workers in Cuba was forgotten.

In remaining silent about the Cuban conflict, the FLT sought to prevent US officials from drawing further comparisons between Cuba and Puerto Rico regarding their common racialized histories and recurrent disorder. The FLT had worked hard to cultivate a close relationship with the AFL, whose leadership had framed their opposition to the annexation of Cuba and the Philippines in racialized terms. Cubans were depicted as black savages and the Filipinos were deemed barbaric Chinese.[41] The 1912 black revolt in Cuba also took place while the United States waged war against the Moros in southern Philippines, a conflict that only officially came to an end one year later (1913). Ignoring the Cuban conflict suited the FLT's strategy of silencing debates about race, especially when the FLT depended on AFL support for their dealings with Congress. Earlier that

year, AFL Secretary Frank Morrison contacted key congressmen and all heads of committees in the US Senate to encourage their support for extending US citizenship to Puerto Ricans and urging a hearing before the Senate on the matter.[42] Puerto Rican organized labor did not have the contacts or economic resources to do the legwork required to reach the upper strata of colonial government, thus it could not afford to compromise its access to the AFL's political machinery.

The Unión Party also ignored the revolt in Cuba perhaps because they too were lobbying in Washington, trying to gain more control over local politics and were concerned about any news that could cast doubts about their aptitude for self-government. News of the armed revolt appeared in a small column in the newspaper *La Democracia*, titled "The Latest Cables," along with other short notices on world events. At other times, the reports appeared in the back pages in a section called "Today's Cablegrams." The columns had short and small headlines with very sensationalist connotations, such as "Great Panic in Cuba's Oriente," "The Cuban Rebels in a Mission of Destruction: Ransacking and Setting Fire to Haciendas," and "Disturbances Continue in Cuba. White Women Are Under Threat."[43] These headlines echoed the Cuban government's alarmist propaganda. Indeed, the short reports were alarmist, focusing on the advancement of black rebels, the massive destruction of property, the arrival of US troops, and arrests and other government attempts to stall the rebellion. However, the brevity and small print of these reports, printed alongside other noncritical world news, made it easy for the reader to dismiss them in favor of what the editorial board considered more important news. The reports of Puerto Rican representatives in Washington, the sinking of the Titanic, and conflicts in Western Europe covered many pages with great illustrations and literally marginalized the events and the complexity of the Cuban revolt.

Only two full-length articles appeared in reference to the Cuban revolt of 1912. The first was a statistical breakdown of the Cuban population according to race.[44] The author stated that, contrary to the statements of Evaristo Estenoz, a leader in the Partido Independiente de Color, blacks did not outnumber whites in that island. The Cuban population was overwhelmingly white, if the number of Creole whites and Spanish immigrants were combined. What meaning did this article have for a Puerto Rican audience? If Cuba was overwhelmingly white, Puerto Rico was even whiter. At least in most comparative accounts, for Spaniards and US administrators, Puerto Rico always appeared whiter than Cuba. And the most recent censuses demonstrated that the Puerto Rican black population was a minority, decreasing since the turn of the century.[45] Thus the island did not have to worry about a racial conflict like in Cuba.

The second article reported on a series of statements of the Cuban president, José M. Gómez, about the rebels.[46] Gómez portrayed them as a few barbaric criminals threatening the advancement of civilization and progress on the island and as traitors of the nation. As a result, the state was to proceed with full strength to defend the real Cuba and called out to "all valuable citizens, all the men who believe they deserve such title, regardless of their race, to lend his services to the noble cause for which I am a spokesperson."[47] The publication of these statements sought to highlight the Cuban state's control over the situation. By

depicting rebels as marginal, the article conveyed a sense of national cohesiveness and invalidated any claim about racial injustice or racial conflict in Cuba. In dismissing the workings of racialized domination in Cuba, stressing the control of the Cuban government over the rebels, and emphasizing how Cuba's independent government was operating successfully, unionistas were speaking about Puerto Rico's ability to manage self-government and maintain social harmony. Other than these two articles, the unionista press avoided further debate on the revolt. These events were quickly overshadowed by other news.

Republicanos paid more attention to the revolt and eventually became involved in a heated debate about race and politics with their political adversary *La Correspondencia*, constituting a long interruption of silences. Like the unionista press, the republicano editors of the bilingual newspaper *El Tiempo* (*The Times*) did not address the news directly, only publishing a series of brief updates. No republicano wrote an analytical piece on the matter. Nonetheless, the numerous headlines and brief reports suggest that the members of the upper ranks of the party were interested in the conflict. It is clear from the location of the reports that the newspaper board had a message to convey. Editors organized the news as a series of brief telegrams from different sources (Havana, New York, and Washington), with headlines focused on the amount of destruction of US property by black rebels. Progressively, the news became an assessment of the need for US intervention in the neighboring island: "Intervention May Come: In Cuba Troops with Machine Guns Are Now in the Field—The Object of Those Who Planned the Uprising Was to Burn Foreign Property and Cause United States to Take Charge of Affairs—Situation Is Considered very Grave."[48] Another headline read, "Chaos Reigns: Cuban Situation Is Growing Steadily Worse, Additional American Marines Have Started for Guantanamo—Insurgents Are Destroying Foreign Property."[49]

Unlike the writings from the unionistas, the sensationalist tone in the republicano reports highlighted the instability of the independent government in Cuba. Obviously Cuba was facing challenges in managing independence, issues Puerto Rico could also face if it followed the same political path. Under independence Puerto Rico might not be able to control racialized conflicts, destroying its economic future: "It is now definitely known here that the president expects that it will be necessary to send American regimes to Cuba within a week or ten days. Information received from the island shows that the Gómez government has not only been unable to cope with the situation but it is losing strength hourly."[50] The implied message about the inability of Puerto Ricans—like Cubans—to govern was clear to the readership of the nationalist cohort.

Editors of *La Correspondencia*, a newspaper with a nationalist bent, were the only ones to address the Cuban revolt directly. They argued that republicanos had misrepresented the revolt. On May 28, Mariano Abril wrote an extensive article denying the republicanos' alarmist descriptions of the events, but in doing so Abril denied all legitimacy to the rebels.[51] The statehood and proindependence parties, although in opposite camps, at least recognized that racialization was at the heart of Puerto Rico's political future, but they could only explore the matter through the figure of Cuba. After all, the race war in Cuba could have a tremendous impact on US practices and policies toward the rest of the Caribbean.

In this context, Abril proceeded to diminish the impact of the revolt. This so-called revolt was no more than a few *negros* in the mountains, which republicanos and others represented as a race war in Cuba. In fact, the author stated, there was no race war because there was no racial conflict in Cuba. Whites and blacks had sustained good relations since the wars against Spain. Abril listed all the black men in Cuba who were revered as national heroes. The United States was the only place that had a race war. Cuba emerged here as the example Puerto Rico had to follow if it achieved independence, not only because of its racial democracy, but also because the government was able to make substantial material progress on its own as a sovereign nation. This exercise of seeing Cuba and Puerto Rico as a reflection of each other recurred among colonial rulers and Puerto Rican people, becoming particularly relevant during the 1912 revolt. For example, Abril commented and expanded on this discursive practice—one that often has race as its main axis—when he said, "The Americanized journalists [the republicanos], who are unaware of Cuba's progress, tell us: look at yourself in that mirror! But look, the example they use is in fact counter-productive and only reaffirms our commitment to Independence." He explained that through independence Puerto Rico "could have made progress proportional to our resources, just like Cuba because Cubans are not of a dissimilar race or have not been educated differently from us."[52]

Abril argued that the labeling of the revolt as a race war was mere propaganda. He challenged the validity of the rebels' claims and questioned the strength of the support they garnered among Cuba's people of color—"What does a bunch of negros alzados (defiant) really mean?" Furthermore, he contended that perhaps the rebels were just mere puppets of more powerful people conspiring to undermine the success of the republic because they did not believe these *pueblos* were ready for independence.[53] Abril was blind to Cuba's segregationist practices, the immigration policies seeking the country's whitening, and the many other forms of politically and economically marginalizing Afro-Cubans. His dismissal of rebels' claims in Cuba also served to invalidate critiques of similar problems in Puerto Rico. After all, the Cuban elites' take on the all-inclusive nation was similar to the Puerto Rican elite's discourses on racial harmony.

The editors at *The Times* responded to the proindependence cohort's interpretation by reproducing an excerpt of an interview about the depth of the conflict in Cuba with General Emilio Nuñez, the leading voice of the Veterans' National Council of Cuba, which had appeared earlier in the Cuban newspaper *La Lucha*.[54] *The Times* underscored that the insurgency could not be easily dismissed because it was caused by serious problems within the republican Cuban government. As such, the rebellion was not the doing of a few antigovernment blacks but it encompassed a broader problem. Nuñez described the state of confusion and chaos ruling in Cuba, a situation the government had not dealt with properly. Instead the republican government had made things worse by laying off many Afro-Cubans at the Agency of Public Works. Nuñez understood that the rebels did not seek to become a privileged class but rather to be treated equally because they fought for the independence of the country like their white counterparts. Corruption such as the misappropriation of funds was one of the fundamental problems in governance. Veterans had protested because of injustices committed

against them by the Administration of Public Works. The government responded only by becoming increasingly repressive, exacerbating the conflict. He recommended the abolition of the Morúa Law, which forbade the PIC, and to allow freedom of association. If there was a racial war in Cuba, it was only because the Cuban government lacked vision. For republicanos, the Cuban conflict highlighted the dangers of independence. The republican government's inadequacy in managing conflicts such as those brought about by racially based demands could trigger insurgency and a foreign intervention that would threaten political liberties. Puerto Rico must continue on the road to statehood. With colonial guidance and resources, islanders could balance out social problems and their autonomy would not be under threat.

The critiques from the proindependence cohort forced republicanos to dig further into the recent problematic in Cuba. The editors provided insights about the realities of the marginalization of Afro-Cubans in government structures as the reason behind the armed conflict. In fact, the publication of Nuñez's interview legitimized the revolt as the logical result of systematic political disenfranchisement instead of misrepresenting the conflict as a mere race war. By publishing this interview, republicanos highlighted how the proindependence cohort (in or outside the boundaries of the Unión Party) had once again dismissed the complexity and depth of the problems of independent Cuba.

On June 5, Matienzo wrote an article against those politicians in Puerto Rico who used the Cuban insurgency as an example of the problems the island would confront in the case of independence.[55] For Matienzo, the problem was not independence but rather the degraded character of the political leadership, not only in Cuba but in Puerto Rico. In fact, corruption had condemned Puerto Rico to colonialism. In turn, republicanos published another interview with General Nuñez, under the heading "For the Separatists in Puerto Rico."[56] In the interview, Núñez demonstrated serious concerns about the government's ability to deal with the conflict. In his view, the Cuban state had resorted to extreme actions such as the abolition of constitutional rights. The editorial board of *The Times* may have sought to underline the potential for authoritarianism in newborn (and thus fragile) republican governments even when the threats were illusory. Puerto Rico's incursion into political independence could turn into a threat to democracy as a result of their mishandling of challenges.

The multitude of brief reports, comments, headlines, and side columns in the newspapers reveal that the Cuban revolt touched a nerve among political classes in Puerto Rico, even if they did not have a sustained public debate on the matter. Cuba remained a source of concern because of what it could reveal about Puerto Rico, at least for supporters of independence. Interruptions from afar, such as the 1912 armed revolt in Cuba, underscore how different sectors spoke about racial subjection in the process of reestablishing silence—and how susceptible and fragile silences about racial domination were, how strategic their function was at times. The ways in which Puerto Rican politicians debated the 1912 Cuban revolt and the massacre of sympathizers of the *Partido Independiente de Color* is illustrative of Puerto Ricans' use of strategies of silencing in their struggles with the United States.

The project of political and economic modernity hinged upon the efficient management of blackness, what I call here silencing. Efforts at social reform, especially through health, were crucial in that impulse at subtly managing race.

The (Race-less) Moral Worker

The *raza iberoamericana* and the figure of Cuba became tools for elites to silence discussions of blackness in Puerto Rico and, paradoxically, ways of reracializing islanders by distancing the popular classes from their African ancestry and stressing their whiteness. In contrast, the organized labor movement disengaged from explicit race talk altogether—that is, deracialized political and cultural discussions. These intellectuals, political leaders, labor activists, and social reformers elicited muffled conversations about the links between the racialized history of islanders, the racialized constitution of their bodies (racial biology), and the island's political future. Thus sometimes despite themselves, they reaffirmed the racialization of islanders per se, not just as a mere strategy but as a site of political struggle. In particular, Creole elites stressed the laboring population's lack of morality and health to explain their delayed or partial integration into the legitimate public sphere of the political; the labor movement appropriated the language of hygiene and participated in moral and health campaigns. They even designed their own campaigns for the regeneration of all workers (despite racial origin) as a crucial component of their political project: "Its [the Federación Libre de Trabajadores'] most important goal and mission for the Puerto Rican laboring masses is to forge respectful citizens loving of their soil; to eliminate the vices and habits that weaken the mind and harm the body; to cultivate the workers' being; and to ennoble and dignify labor."[57] Through morality, health, and virility, the (raceless) workers would become the only legitimate US citizens, above white Creole elites. While they sought the path of deracialization, organized labor participated in and at times expanded the languages and practices that sustained silences and enabled further reracialization.

In the late nineteenth century, Puerto Rican elites, especially liberals, had become increasingly concerned about social reform. To them, the island's peasantry was illiterate, disease ridden, poverty stricken, and therefore morally dysfunctional. Because they thought the body reflected the state of the mind and soul, these politicians/intellectuals thought the future of the nation was in jeopardy.[58] Puerto Rican reformers elaborated a disciplinary language of medicine, health, and education that excluded the multiracial popular classes and justified entrusting government power to the hands of white, professionally educated, liberal, Creole, male elites. Simultaneously, the Spanish colonial state on the island had oscillated between supporting innovative social policies and reformist institutions and the repression of the growing upper-middle-class reformists who challenged the Crown's preeminence on the island.[59]

At the turn of the twentieth century, a similar reformist outlook sustained the new colonial state's hold over islanders, casting the US imperial enterprise as a liberatory endeavor, freeing islanders from barbaric, antiquarian monarchical rule. The social and political reformism of the Progressive Era in the United States was

as central as the military in the consolidation and expansion of the imperial project on the island: health, education, and morality campaigns for the physical and moral uplifting of islanders became pillars of US colonial rule in Puerto Rico.[60] US colonizers, though, did not always make sharp distinctions between Puerto Rican Creole elites, urban workers, and the large masses of rural inhabitants. To them, the Puerto Rican signified a racially inferior, weak, ill, impoverished, and consequently feminized body. Deteriorated bodies signaled a lack of morality and intellectual ability. In response, decency and health necessarily became arenas through which Puerto Rican elites defined themselves against colonizers and claimed their superiority over the lower classes—a moral superiority based on their sexual restraint and regard toward family. Morality became a class and racial marker.

A 1902 published manifesto from a member of the Creole elite illustrates how morality served as a contested terrain.[61] *La Democracia* printed the manifesto as a response to a statement made by William Hunt, the first US civilian governor in Puerto Rico (1900–1904). Hunt himself was responding to a recent sex scandal, in which a Puerto Rican judge caused a great stir when he publicly acknowledged having left his family for another woman. Hunt suggested that such practices were common among the population, stating—in an official government report—that "before Americans arrived, it was common for Puerto Rican men to procreate illegitimate families." The name of the author of the manifesto against Hunt is unknown, but the content suggests the author was white, wealthy, male, and affiliated with the Federal Party. According to the author, Governor Hunt, already a much-despised official because of his violently repressive campaigns against workers and other popular groups, had insulted Puerto Ricans' national honor in an unprecedented way. The author contended that during the few years under US rule, Puerto Ricans had been the target of numerous insults: US journalists had characterized islanders as negroes and beggars, and officials had described islanders as children, ignorant, or people of diminished capacity for self-government. However, the author said, none of these insults ran so deep as to question Puerto Rican men's decency and commitment to family. This direct attack on the islanders' masculinity also translated into a direct assault on the Puerto Rican nation/family because, to the author, Hunt's statements implied that Puerto Rican males' uncontrolled sexuality not only led them to disregard their nuclear family but was a reflection of their disregard of the nation: "Up to now, no one has dared to insult that which we hold dearest and most sacred and which we are called to defend with our lives: our homes, our Puerto Rican Family."[62]

For the author, in contrast, morality varied depending on class and, to a lesser extent, race. While Hunt's interpretation resonated with sexual practices among the laboring classes, to the author it did not reflect elite men's behavior. To him, the Puerto Rican judge was an anomaly. Puerto Rican elite men honored and respected family but the peasantry, most of who lived in concubinage, did not. Concubinage, he explained, resulted from economic despair: the peasantry could not afford to pay the required fees for legal or religious marriages. Although there was justification for male peasants' indecency, they still could not be fully incorporated into civic and political life. Morality defined white, upper-class Puerto

Rican masculinity against that of multiracial lower-class men. Class and race combined guaranteed morality, a central characteristic for political leadership. It was these elite men who could lead the country, not the lower classes or the male colonizers.

Decency also distinguished island elite men from colonizers. For the author, "our country's upper class, the country that he and his countrymen deem backward and ignorant of social manners, are more moral than the upper classes of his country." Puerto Rico was unlike the United States, where "a prostitute just by marrying a millionaire finds the doors to the great saloons wide open to her and can mingle with the most distinguished in society." This example was a pointed one: the accepted, socially upward mobility of a prostitute called into question the moral integrity of the United States as a whole and, in particular, of its men. In the previous decades, liberal Creole elites had led extensive antiprostitution campaigns, as they considered these mostly poor, black women conduits of venereal diseases because of their lack of sexual restraint. For Puerto Rican elite men of the late nineteenth century (a class dominated by physicians, among other professionals), these women constituted open sores on the national body. Through the language of morality, they laid claim not only to political participation but to leadership.

Members of Puerto Rico's subaltern classes also appropriated the gendered reformist language of health and morality to assert their rights as members of the body politic. Artisans in nineteenth-century Ponce had effectively done so through their participation in antiprostitution campaigns.[63] In the early twentieth century, control over female sexuality remained a concern among male workers, especially at a moment in which women forcefully entered the salaried labor market, at times displacing male workers.[64] Indeed, management sought to undermine male workers by hiring women for their cheaper and nonunionized labor. But their concerns were also a response to the increasing participation of women in labor unions. The proceedings of union meetings show that many women took on and expanded their leadership roles by organizing other women, and by formulating and implementing reforms geared to the improvement of women's living and working conditions. One of the most important battles they took on was access to education for all women: unorganized, organized, and homemakers.

Most men believed women lacked the moral solidity of male workers. In the Third Congress of the FLT in 1905, following Paca Escabí's resolutions on education for women and work improvements for laundresses, a group of male laborers introduced a resolution that at first appeared to recognize the importance of organizing women but ultimately regarded them as loose sexual cannons in need of strict male supervision.[65] The resolution began by encouraging the education of women because "they are completely in the dark in regard to moral and intellectual education." The proponents supported the organization of women, but as subcommittees within unions and associations that would be led by women and would deal with and supervise issues of labor pertinent to women. This structure marginalized women's issues from broader concerns of the union at large. The proponents suggested that the legislature should not consider women equally

responsible for their behavior, perhaps because their lack of moral and intellectual education made women unable to take responsibility for their actions. In fact, the authors requested that women guilty of criminal behavior should not be sent to prison but to asylums where they could get access to some form of education. This group of men even suggested the drafting of rigorous legislation to punish women for their immoral behavior, which justified their strict supervision. Ultimately, the assembly rejected the last item in the proposition, but this example illustrates how working-class masculinity, morality, and political legitimacy were defined by working men's control over female sexuality. Organized labor shared and expanded on the rationale and means for the disciplining of female sexuality. According to Findlay, a new current within organized labor reinterpreted female prostitution, suggesting that capitalist exploitation was the root of this social and moral problem.[66] This shift also entailed a redefinition of working-class women's appropriate sexual behavior, which regarded practices like serial monogamy and concubinage as socially acceptable.

However, this nuanced ideological consideration of women did not mean that working men relinquished control over their female counterparts, but elaborated new means of regulation. For example, the father figure became central to definitions of working-class masculinity during these first decades, reclaiming male authority over women, not as sexual partners but as the desexualized parent. The relevance of the father figure in working-class politics was explicit in a resolution proposing a three-month organizing campaign for women approved at the Sixth Congress of the FLT in 1910.[67] Tobacco worker Prudencio Rivera Martínez explained that the Puerto Rican American Tobacco Company was training women to displace men, and the tobacco industry was under threat because workshops would soon be filled with inexperienced, uneducated women. To regain control over the situation, Rivera Martínez called upon working-class fathers (and/or father-like figures) to force their daughters into a labor organization: "Resolution: Every organized worker in the City of San Juan and its barrios . . . who is a father or, if not a father, a head of household, is obligated to make [his female relative] join a labor organization immediately."[68] The proponent of the resolution (and his supporters) saw managers and employers as usurping workers' paternal roles by teaching female laborers the skills they were bound to learn from their fathers. Male tobacco workers were aware of the relevance of this male-female parental role and manipulated it to their advantage.

The father figure advocated by organized labor was not to be authoritarian, but gentle, at least according to labor ideologue Prudencio Rivera Martínez as expressed in his 1910 proposal: "Resolution: All men working in the organizing campaign [directed to women] should employ the softest and most persuasive tone in order to make the campaign as cultured and accessible as possible." In the process of stressing fatherhood, these men infantilized women by portraying them as ignorant, docile, and vulnerable, which did not fit with women's activism at the time. The protective father figure also had a crucial role among workers in the rural plantations, even when the industry did not incorporate women, as the tobacco industry did. Working-class plays centered on work in the sugar centrals, like Limón de Arce's *Redención*, also underscored the vulnerability of women in

the absence of the father figure.[69] In sum, organized workingmen constructed a trope of the moral, desexualized father figure in contrast to the capitalist, sexual predator.

In its own moralizing campaign, the labor leadership partially appropriated some of the concepts often evoked by elites—work ethics, sobriety, and fatherhood—as a way to reconstitute working-class masculinity and imbue them with political subjectivity. In the making of the moral worker, the labor movement rejected the racialization of its constituency, although it did remain enmeshed in (and reproduced) the intricate web of practices and values that sustained the racialized subordination of the impoverished classes such as the sexual control over women or strengthening the ethics of work (and sometimes the practice of unionization) as the source of moral authority. These deracialization efforts became more evident in the workers' treatment of issues related to public hygiene and sanitation, especially as the field of eugenics (the science of better breeding) gained currency among reformers and the medical class.

Racial Mixture, Health Campaigns, and the (Race-less) Worker

As the century advanced, workers actively sought out improvements in health and sanitation conditions for their constituencies, but did so through the use of the same ideology and idioms as their sociopolitical adversaries. Under the new colonial rule, Creole political leaders, colonial officials, and island/US middle-class reformers once again centered on the critical state of the island peasant,—that is, their sick bodies and feeble minds. G. G. Groff, the secretary of the Superior Board of Health (founded in 1900), articulated this thinking succinctly: "Give tropical communities good laws, and good sanitation, restrain the use of tobacco, rum and the early promiscuous illicit relations between the sexes, and diseases will not be widely different from those in temperate regions."[70] As such, these upper and middle classes collaborated in designing and implementing health campaigns and health-related institutions. As in the 1880s, their impulse toward social reform cannot be decoupled from a desire to constitute a large and capable labor pool, ready to serve the demands of the new economic regime. In fact, a preoccupation with the source of the island peasant's laziness prompted the new colonial administration to invest significant resources in the study, diagnosis, and treatment of *uncinariasis* (anemia) for more than a decade.

While their explicit emphasis was the reconstitution and reform of the worker's physical and moral body, a careful reading reveals that the racial makeup of that body was always at the heart of their explanations. The universal humanitarianism and rehabilitation associated with these and other medical efforts (in subsequent years, tuberculosis and venereal diseases) obscures the complex workings of racialization.[71] As such, these idioms of health conceal the multiple threads sustaining and furthering racialized subjugation of and among Puerto Ricans.[72] Organized labor also participated in these conversations with hopes of transforming the economic and political infrastructures that furthered their impoverishment. But it joined these efforts with a set of premises centered on

class exploitation, which sought to deflect elite and middle-class reformers' attention away from the racial makeup of the laboring classes. From their point of view too, the laboring masses were in need of *political* education, a process hindered by their impoverished health but for which they were not at fault. In this way, organized labor sought the immediate integration of laborers into public political life. Despite their different intentions, workers left untouched the racialized foundations of the idioms and practices of health they borrowed, enabling the expansion of the muted forms of racialization embedded in them.

Public health and sanitation improvements quickly became a cornerstone of turn-of-the-century US projects for colonization, especially in the Philippines and Puerto Rico,[73] with the aim of disciplining and forging civilized colonial subjects.[74] This form of imperial intrusion in the Americas, Africa, and Asia, commonplace in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, constituted the basis for the expansion of tropical medicine as a field of medical knowledge. Medicine became a crucial tool in marking constitutive biological and moral differences between colonizers and colonized. According to historian Laura Briggs, "tropical medicine constructed a singular, metonymic relationship among race, place, and disease, albeit newly triangulated by microorganisms: people were sick because they lived in the tropics and were infected by tropical parasites; tropical people were (racially) different from those living in the temperate zone."[75] These benevolent health campaigns were founded on and expanded racialized accounts and explanations of the challenges these populations never seemed to overcome.

As soon as US military forces arrived in Puerto Rico, medical officers quickly began to study and analyze the diseases endemic to this tropical area that were consuming islanders and newcomers as well. Sustained US interventions in the Caribbean opened a door to new and fascinating medical research.[76] The first and most renowned of these endeavors in Puerto Rico was the *uncinariasis* campaign, headed first by Dr. Bailey K. Ashford, major in the US Army Medical Corps. This effort emerged out of an earlier mobilization of the Army Medical Corps commanded by US volunteer surgeons Majors John McG. Woodbury and Azel Ames (author of the first report on island labor for the US Bureau of Labor in 1905) to provide relief and compulsive vaccination after the devastating 1899 hurricane. It was by attending to patients at a provisional military hospital in Ponce following the hurricane that Ashford was able to collect a broader range of observations, guided by his thorough study of the most recent literature in tropical medicine. Ashford identified *uncinariasis* as the problem.

According to *Uncinariasis (Hookworm Disease) in Porto Rico: A Medical and Economic Problem (1911)*—the account of the campaigns authored by Ashford and Dr. Pedro Gutierrez Igaravídez, an island physician who became director of Tropical and Transmissible Diseases—Ashford coordinated clinical and laboratory research; published articles in the key medical journals; exchanged samples of the worm with other physicians and zoologists; sought support from Puerto Rican physicians; and pressed the insular government to mobilize a campaign against anemia. Ashford described at length his initiative in persuading an indifferent colonial administration and Creole physicians of the urgency of the matter. Although he did not explain the reasons, Ashford's presentation of findings to the

recently founded Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico was not initially well received. Finally, Governor Hunt created the Anemia Commission in 1904, opening treatment centers throughout the island, a point at which—says Ashford—Creole physicians began collaborating in all aspects including laboratory research. The major hurdle, then, was the municipal administrators, islanders who did not have the "vision" and "social commitment" of physicians and impeded the speedy mobilization of resources.

The commission concluded that Puerto Rico's source of *uncinariasis* arrived from the African Gold Coast through the slave trade. Black Puerto Ricans on the coast did not suffer the effects of the parasite. In contrast, the white population in the highlands was vulnerable to the disease because they had been contaminated as a result of their contact with African slaves, the lack of effective colonial policy under the Spaniards, and the area's climate. These racialized assumptions guiding research and policy continued and were reproduced in subsequent texts, like in the influential essay *Social Problems in Porto Rico* (1917) by rural sociologist Frank Fleagle, then dean of the University of Puerto Rico.[77]

Creole physicians, mostly trained in Europe (Spain and France) had become influential politicians at the municipal level. With the 1898 US takeover of Puerto Rico, Creole physicians became active participants in an imperial project to regenerate a diseased and racially mixed social body—a social body from which they were often (but not always) excluded by virtue of their class, race, and gender. The lack of political autonomy and participation of the elites under the new imperial relationship was a source of constant distress for Creole elites and, among them, physicians. However, the colonial state's funding for public health campaigns also became the site for these physicians' social project, collaborating closely with an array of US physicians, researchers, and other health-related professionals circulating among the various US possessions and mainland.

The medical class grew in size, increasingly incorporating a larger number of Creole physicians trained in US academic centers. Puerto Rican physicians took part in health initiatives and founded new organizations from which to exercise political influence and launch their programs of social regeneration. Doctors were not mere agents of imperial designations. They responded to a wide set of local and international/imperial boundaries, as Steven Palmer has shown in the case of Costa Rica.[78] The news about Puerto Rican physicians participating in international conferences, workshops, and discussion circles shows that they were not an exception. The *Uncinariasis* account describes at length these physicians' transnational/transcontinental research collaborations. With colonial officials and Creole political leaders, they shared concerns about the diseased and impoverished bodies of the workers. However, they also competed against Creole politicians, colonial administrators, and US reformers to shape policy and dictate the paths to follow.[79] Moreover, they also criticized imperial governance for not delivering the promises of development and for furthering displacement and impoverishment.[80]

The field of tropical medicine was intricately connected with the field of eugenics, the science of "better breeding." Eugenics became a preeminent framework of knowledge informing the reform efforts for the regeneration of the Puerto

Rican social body. Historian of medicine Nancy Leys Stepan defines eugenics as both a social movement and a branch of science focused on the manipulation of biological heredity laws in order to stimulate the reproduction of healthy bodies.[81] According to Stepan, the popularity of eugenics was directly related to the increased concerns about social maladies many European countries faced as a result of industrialization and modernity: crime, immigration, endemic diseases, and pauperism. Although widely disputed, a significant portion of turn-of-the-century scientific research on biological heredity laws claimed that social illnesses were already genetically codified. The best approach to improve society was to discourage the reproduction of the unfit (racially mixed, lower classes) and encourage that of the fittest. Eugenicists thought that certain races should be discouraged from reproduction while others should be encouraged. In effect, science reinforced already existing racial hierarchies that celebrated whiteness and condemned blackness.[82] In the postslavery/emancipation era, eugenics became a crucial component in the reproduction and sustainability of national and imperial projects of domination.[83]

Among Puerto Rican physicians, Neo-Lamarckian understandings about the effects of the environment on heredity led them to pursue reforms that would seriously improve the living conditions of the laboring classes. To them, however, the racialized biological and/or cultural history of the laboring classes marked them as particularly vulnerable to the environment, and thus they became targets of reform.[84] As such, colonial tropical medicine progressively became a project for Puerto Rican Creole elites, particularly for the medical class, to achieve the racial, moral, and physical uplifting of the island's lower classes. Since the late nineteenth century, island physicians had shown deep concern for the effect of tropical and venereal diseases, sexual promiscuity, and alcoholism on the future generations of Puerto Ricans.[85] The US colonial project and infrastructure enabled them to voice and act upon those concerns over degeneracy.

The mayor of San Juan, Roberto H. Todd, organized a 1913 conference on eugenics as the inaugural talk for the city's new cultural center, the Biblioteca Insular. And Todd chose Dr. Francisco Del Valle Atiles as the speaker, one of the most prominent Puerto Rican turn-of-the-century physicians and researchers and whose earlier work on the peasantry is discussed in Chapter 2.[86] The public conference on Eugenics that Del Valle Atiles offered in 1913—and a following one in 1914—at the Biblioteca Insular in San Juan offers insights on how the field had gained currency among the upper and middle sectors as an important component of the modernization project.[87] Organized laborers also participated in these conversations.

Eugenics, as Del Valle described it, appealed to Puerto Rican reformers because it appeared as a hands-on theory: control over heredity provided the opportunity to bring about larger social transformations at an accelerated pace. Del Valle rejected biological determinism and stressed the crucial impact of social reforms in reshaping the population. He marked the most vulnerable sectors of the laboring population—the insane, alcoholics, the mentally "weak" (developmentally disabled), criminals, tuberculosis patients, epileptics, the hearing and speech impaired, the blind, those afflicted with venereal diseases, lepers, prostitutes,

sexual perverts, and paupers—as the source of degeneracy and the target of containment. Even when the author recognized that some of these problems were not properly hereditary, he believed that such conditions weakened the bodies and the moral constitution of individuals, their offsprings, and as such, society as a whole. As preventive measures, the author advocated for government regulation over the reproductive capacity of the population and marriage choices, targeting the female working poor and looking for ways of managing the reproduction of society as a whole.

The faith Del Valle had in the project of reconstituting the peasant body was intricately linked to the possibility for its whitening. As he had stated in his earlier work *El campesino puertorriqueno*, Del Valle stated that Puerto Ricans were the product of miscegenation between three main ethnic/racial groups: indigenous, Africans, and Spaniards. Although the physician argued that each group contributed positive characteristics to the islanders' final composition, there was an internal racial/ethnic hierarchy at work, with Spaniards in a dominant position: "The dominant element in the ethnic constitution of the Puerto Rican is the white man because of its larger population number and most developed civilization."[88] The influence of inferior groups among islanders could deter intellectual and industrial progress: "The groups of people born out of backward, inept, decadent races and for which their vices and indolence work as deterrent forces cannot fulfill the physical and mental activities the law of progress demands."[89] In order to overcome such ethnoracial hurdles, Del Valle Atiles advocated for eugenic policies and practices to induce changes in some of the islanders' negative ethnic characteristics while enabling the retention and improvement of positive ones and avoid degeneracy.

Tuberculosis was among the diseases Del Valle called upon for special attention because of its degenerative force. It is through the work of the Anti-Tuberculosis League—of which Del Valle was an active member—that organized labor joined in island-wide health campaigns as they too were interested in health improvements for the working classes. The tobacco workers' general assemblies of 1907, 1908, 1911, and 1913, as well as the 1910 general assembly of the FLT, consistently featured health conferences by members of the Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico. Physicians spoke mostly about tuberculosis but also about venereal diseases (syphilis) and the need for willpower (*fuerza de voluntad*).[90]

In these conferences, Creole physicians explicitly marked the laboring poor as prone to endemic illnesses due to their fragile bodies and antihygienic living conditions.[91] Racially and class biased, these physicians identified workers as the source of diseases that spread into the upper strata of society. Their recommendations for prevention included frequent cleaning and washing of clothing items, kitchen utensils, bedding, proper sleeping habits, and better nutrition. Physicians and reformers also evaluated aesthetic choices as markers of immorality. In his 1919 study of prostitutes, eugenicist Dr. del Valle Atiles noted that the prostitutes' taste for body tattoos, their preference for bright colors, and the use of makeup and cheap perfumes reflected their immorality.[92] The advice also had clear aesthetic and moral purposes, seeking to make workers' behavior more appealing to upper- and middle-class sensibilities.[93] Physicians advised workers to

drink only water instead of alcohol, discouraged workers from gatherings at coffee shops and bars, and asked them to constrain their physical expressions of love and friendship, such as caressing and mouth kissing.[94] Tuberculosis campaigns became a legitimate tool for physicians to mold sexual and affective practices as well as restrict the political socialization of the working classes. Through the antituberculosis campaign in particular, physicians sought to prevent an endemic disease but also to reshape workers' home environments, moral behavior, and sexualities. The increasing number of deaths due to tuberculosis provoked a sense of urgency among physicians, who in turn regarded tuberculosis patients or their relatives as dangerous criminals. For Dr. José Barreras, the highly contagious character of this disease called for radical measures, from isolation of the patient to the demolition of their house walls.[95]

Workers were aware of the racialized, class, and sexual assumptions and explanations through which upper and middle classes continued to mark them as inferior and sought to justify their marginalization. In 1910, after Dr. Barreras once again criminalized tuberculosis patients and their relatives in a conference, Santiago Iglesias Pantín had to intervene to calm down the infuriated audience, which verbally attacked the guest.[96] Given the implications, why did the organized labor movement embrace public hygiene and sanitation campaigns (particularly antituberculosis and temperance), which were clearly inspired by racist concerns?

Public hygiene and sanitation campaigns enabled organized labor to use the voices of reformers to speak on behalf of workers' demands for adequate living and working conditions. In fact, laborers readily appropriated the language of degeneracy so often deployed by physicians and reformers. For example, in the Sixth Workers' Congress of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores, held in the town of Juncos on March 18, 1910, the assembly passed Resolution No. 55, titled "Regarding the hygiene campaign in the cities and towns of the island of Puerto Rico," introduced by labor representatives A. Escalet and José Soto García.[97] The president of the Committee on Resolutions, José Ferrer y Ferrer, stated that organized labor should dedicate more attention and effort to improving social hygiene among workers. To the resolution's proponents, diseases such as anemia had indeed weakened the bodies of workers, eroding their physical and mental capacity for labor activism. In order to counteract potential degeneracy, the laborers demanded that each FLT-affiliated union create a committee on public health. These local committees were meant to serve as a link between individual communities and the island's government. The workers' awareness of the need for social reform and public health was not new, though the inclusion of ideas about social degeneracy ingrained in future generations of workers was a twentieth-century innovation they employed as they sought to become legitimate contenders in the public arena of liberal politics.

For example, in his presentation to tobacco workers, Dr. Narciso Doval advocated for the restriction of the working day to seven or eight hours and suggested changes in workshop conditions such as appropriate seating, adequate supply of running water, better ventilation, and the availability of an on-site hygienist.[98] In another conference, Dr. Barreras insisted that workers had the right (and duty) to request authorities to supervise the hygienic conditions of workshops, no matter

the economic cost to owners.[99] The eugenicists' focus on women also resonated with male workers' anxieties about their formal incorporation into the labor market. For eugenicists, if women were working, that meant they had abandoned their duties at home as mothers and wives, increasing the risk of sexual intercourse with inappropriate partners and weakening future childbearing women with unhealthy working conditions.

Therefore, the education of workers, but most importantly of women, was a common cause for proponents of eugenics and working-class leaders. In his speech on syphilis, Dr. José Chacar insisted to the workers that women sick with venereal diseases were not to be blamed or marginalized for their mistakes. They were victims of male deception, and through education they could be morally rehabilitated.[100] These worries coincided with those of many Puerto Rican male workers who believed working women were at risk of more exploitation given their lack of instruction, low wages, long working days, and unhealthy conditions at the work place.[101]

The 1917 report written by Fred K. Fleagle, the dean of the University of Puerto Rico, illustrates the overlapping reformist language of eugenicists and organized workers in Puerto Rico. Like eugenicists, the sociologist was concerned about how poverty and homelessness "contributes a great deal to physical as well as mental and moral degeneration."[102] For Fleagle, "promiscuous sexual relations undoubtedly contribute to this degeneracy." Hence he advocated for better living condition for homeless children, or otherwise "they will serve as the propagators of another generation of equally homeless, pauperized, and degenerate citizens."

To Fleagle, blackness was one of the main obstacles the island population faced. Unlike Del Valle, Fleagle was unconvinced that whitening (through further miscegenation) in Puerto Rico could eventually bring about positive results because "the biological tendency in cases of mixed races, according to most authorities, is a decrease in the number of children in the family as generation succeeds generation, unless there is an addition of new blood to a considerable extent. [A]s the succeeding generations become fewer in regard to numbers, they also become less capable mentally and physically."[103] He observed that the assimilation of blacks was slowly taking place, but it was impossible to predict if "this will in time lead to a complete assimilation, or whether the mixed race will become weakened through this racial intermarriage to such an extent that it will eventually refuse to propagate."

Despite his doubts, Fleagle did reject racial determinism and argued that social reforms could make a difference. Among these social reforms, the author proposed the rigorous practice of eugenics "by which the physically and mentally unfit, who contribute largely to the pauper class, may be eliminated from society and prevented from propagating a second generation."[104] But in addition, the author strongly advocated for the education of the peasantry, the organization of groups for self-support such as labor movements, the legal protection of workers in the factories ("woman and child labor laws, minimum wage, and accident laws"), and "rational charity" by which the author meant temporary assistance in the search of employment to prevent further impoverishment of families.[105]

Fleagle also proposed the expansion of rural schools, an increase in wages for unskilled workers, better housing, and access to land for the lower classes.

In the 1910s, questions about degeneracy and heredity were commonplace among the upper and middle classes, as well as organized labor. Reformers in particular began advocating for improvements in work and living conditions but, with few exceptions, never voiced a critique of the sociopolitical and economic regimes that led to the material and physical impoverishment of the population. These problems of hygiene, health, and morality were always linked to their racialized biological history and a racialized culture of poverty and ignorance. In contrast, organized labor crafted a different account based on class, which denounced capitalist exploitation as the main source for social degeneracy and the obstacle to progress. In highlighting the effects of economic exploitation, workers sought to deracialize their reform endeavors.

Tobacco worker Manuel Rojas's 1914 historical account of the island's lack of political development and of his concerns over the workers' social illnesses illustrates working-class ideologues' critique of class exploitation while appropriating (and thus expanding on) eugenicists' vocabulary of degeneracy. In the essay *Cuatro siglos de ignorancia y servidumbre*, Rojas commended the US administration for their social reforms, reforms that in four centuries the Spanish could not implement. Rojas was an influential tobacco organizer and FLT leader. He clearly linked the lack of political participation among workers to their degeneracy: poor health, intellectual ability, and lack of morality. The 1914 essay was a workers' intervention at a moment in which proindependence/nationalist groups were voicing their critiques of US colonial administration as well as reformists' and government officials' persistent denial of further political participation for workers by stressing their hereditary incompetence.

Surprisingly, Rojas echoed the colonial administration, traditional political leaders, and reformers in his characterization of Puerto Ricans as incapable of self-government. He called upon Puerto Ricans to be careful in changing government structures (i.e., independence) until they were certain that the new governing sector would be truly democratic and that inhabitants were sufficiently trained in civil education, social liberties, and morality. The author, however, did not speak of a racialized cultural or biological history to explain the sociological and economic problems at hand. While mestizaje and racial fusion were at the core of political imaginations of the time, these were completely absent in Rojas' account. In the text, slavery was devoid of its racialized history and appeared only as a general way of describing colonial oppression of the laboring population. Rojas thus deflected the racialized/racist explanations others put forth and, instead, placed blame on the four-centuries-old social hierarchies of the Spanish colonial regime, social structures that many proponents of independence helped reproduce in the past.

The reform idioms of physical, intellectual, and moral uplift and the recommendations it prompted for improved working and living conditions often obscured the many ways in which these idioms reproduce and sustain racialization. The study and design of uplifting measures helped colonial administrators, Creole political elites, and US/island reformers work through their anxieties and

fears about the already known and unanticipated effects of blackness in the population. On the other hand, organized labor sought to silence those conversations by producing alternative accounts focused on political and economic exploitation. To these labor ideologues, however, the body of the laboring poor remained the site of degeneracy.

The language of labor alone could not dismantle or challenge the racialized logics of eugenics-informed reformism. Labor ideologues's and activists's attempts to deracialize by disengaging from racial biological explanations did little to challenge the many other ways in which racialized marginalization operated. A glance at the program of cultural activities and performances officially sponsored by the FLT shows that even they privileged intellectual and creative forms associated with white, European political and social subjectivity. For example, the performance of plays, couplets, intermezzos, symphonies, and anthems were abundant, whereas African–Puerto Rican forms of intellectualism were absent or marginalized to workers' street rallies and strikes.[106] Organized labor's silences about the long history of African slavery on the island and the reality of disharmony embedded in racial miscegenation meant that its mainstream leadership did not see racialized domination at the heart of their exploitation as workers.

The Limits of the Morality and Health Discourses

Since the late nineteenth century, health and morality had become effective code words to manage and control the racialized labor population in order to bring about political and economic modernity. The 1918 incarceration of hundreds of island women was one of those instances that exposed the racialized assumptions guiding the reform movements of the time. The debate over the incarceration of women constituted an important disruption but also provides another opportunity to explore the process of restoring harmony.

After granting US citizenship through the 1917 Jones Act, the US Congress quickly drafted Puerto Rican men to serve in the US Army in World War I. Federal officials and members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Puerto Rico urged colonial representatives to take measures that would guarantee the perfect health of the new soldiers. Like on the US mainland, many understood venereal diseases as a serious threat that could undermine the efficiency of the army. However, instead of targeting soldiers' sexual behavior, the colonial state cracked down on Puerto Rican prostitutes. Consequently, the long-standing practice of regulating prostitution through surveillance and registration changed drastically to a policy of incarcerating Puerto Rican working women. The suspected women were jailed at various sites around the island under excruciating conditions and were subjected to painful and humiliating medical examinations and treatment. Federal Attorney Howard Kern reported in 1919 that 1,197 women had been arrested.[107]

Puerto Ricans' reactions to the events varied.[108] Puerto Rican reformist women, members of the WCTU, supported the effort wholeheartedly and organized groups of volunteers around the island to help implement the new policies. The leadership of the Republicano and Unión parties initially endorsed

the effort, joined by the Catholic Church and Protestant organizations, on the basis of moral uplift, reform, and the improved health of the Puerto Rican people. But this idiom of health and morality, which had served as common ground for more than two decades, had its limits. Like workers' reactions to Dr. Barrera's attempt to criminalize tuberculosis patients, many Puerto Ricans furiously contested the radical criminalization of poor women, many of whom were also perceived as *de color*. Several republicano leaders denounced the treatment of these women and mobilized to provide them with legal defense. Members of the unión also voiced dissatisfaction. The newly formed Socialista Party and workers' unions from around the island likewise sided with the so-called prostitutes. The women in custody rioted to protest their mistreatment in the jails. For all these dissenting people, reform could not take place by violating the fundamental rights of citizens.

The imprisonment of prostitutes brought a temporary breakdown of the discourse on morality. By confining poor women, colonial authorities and sectors of the Creole elite broke the unspoken pact with labor over morality and health—a pact that was supposed to lead Puerto Rican people to exercise their rights of political participation, not to serve as an excuse to violate their civil liberties. Morality and health were two things that concerned both organized labor and elites. The debate during these months not only led men to claim their rights over women and politics, but it also opened spaces for some reformist women (like the members of the WCTU) to join the struggle over moral and political boundaries.[109] Men and women struggled over legitimate definitions of manhood and womanhood that could advance their political power. In 1918, the bodies of poor, Puerto Rican women served as the arena through which contesting groups attempted to define the terms of the post-1917 colonial relationship.[110]

The 1918 situation did not lead to a rejection of the idiom of morality and health. In fact the moral pact was effectively restored once the arrests and sentencing of women stopped. Some were allowed to return home, and the federal attorney was removed from office.[111] But most importantly, the idiom of morality was reinforced when authorities and reformists changed their language and practices from one of repression to that of reform. Jails were turned into hospitals and asylums supposedly geared to the health and moral rehabilitation of "fallen" women. Historian Eileen Findlay explains that "the campaign was now presented as necessary for the *women's* own good, not only for the protection of public morals and the troops."[112] Consequently, many opponents of the antiprostitution campaign became supporters of the reformist effort.

The reform effort directed at fallen women never ceased to be based on racialized assumptions. Although writings about the antiprostitution campaign did not clearly state their racial biases, a study of prostitutes by Dr. Francisco del Valle Atiles clearly reveals the connections many physicians and reformists made between blackness, mental incapacity, and immorality. In 1919, the eugenicist published a study of 168 prostitutes interned in the Hospital Especial de Mujeres in San Juan, one of the institutions recently transformed to treat women with venereal diseases.[113] The main goal of the study was to research the reasons why women became prostitutes. To the physician, female prostitutes were mentally

deficient, and hence susceptible to their unrestrained sexual urges. As such, reformists and physicians of the time did not see the imprisonment of women as a violation of civil liberties because, to them, prostitutes were not capable of being citizens.

Del Valle researched these women's lives in order to account for all the illnesses, disabilities, and moral transgressions (precocious sexual behavior, concubinage, etc.) they and their relatives (grandparents, parents, and siblings) had experienced. To him, the patients were predisposed to degeneration, emphasizing that heredity was crucial to morality. Through the objectivity of statistical analysis—in which the physician "classified according to color, there were 70 white [women] and 98 of black origin for a proportional distribution of 40.70% and 58.80% respectively"—Del Valle concluded "that sexual passion is most impetuous among the colored race and that this uncontrollable overindulgence is related to their mental capacity."[114] The author reported that in the few instances his patients registered an occupation, most of them worked in the tobacco industry or as domestics, two occupations where Puerto Rican blacks (men and women) predominated.[115]

The clear racist implications underlying the antiprostitution campaigns did contribute in 1918 to the temporary rupture in the generalized idiom of morality and health. After all, republicano journalist Alonso Gual, a leading antiracist voice on the island, was among the first ones to denounce the mistreatment of poor women.[116] Like Gual, other influential Puerto Ricans of African descent mobilized quickly in defense of the women, who, according to Del Valle Atiles's study, were mostly of the *raza de color*. The racism organizing the campaigns did not escape members of the Unión Party either. In 1919 journalist José Coll y Vidal wrote an article questioning the republicano alliance with the racist, segregationist United States. His analysis cannot be understood outside the context of the antiprostitution campaigns that occurred just a few months earlier and the role the republicanos *de color* had in providing legal aid to the women.[117]

The republicano José C. Barbosa replied to the accusation indirectly—one predominant way of debating blackness in Puerto Rican politics, as we have seen throughout the book—in a series of essays published between August and September of 1919 in the newspaper *El Tiempo* (*The Times*).[118] The response was framed as an essay exploring the history of African Americans in the United States instead of directly analyzing Puerto Rico's conflict-ridden racial relations. Barbosa argued that the constitutional development in the United States, amid all the racism and segregation, had allowed for blacks to demonstrate their economic, political, and intellectual capabilities: "The black race has only had the opportunity to demonstrate ability to adapt to modern civilization while living in the United States . . . where the atmosphere in which they have lived and grown is always hostile and repressive. They have been forced to overcome bigger obstacles."[119] Puerto Ricans, Barbosa stated, should not worry about the implementation of segregationist practices like in the US southern states if annexation took place because under the federal constitutional structure individual states enjoy great autonomy to preserve their own social practices. In doing so, he did not contradict the paradigm that contrasted the United States' racist history with the racial democracies

of Latin America: "In the countries of South America, the Antilles, and Europe, blacks have achieved great distinctions . . . but they were living in an atmosphere of tolerance where they were accepted on equal terms. As soon as they excelled they were no longer seen as representative of the African race, but moved on to occupy a distinguished position as part of the great Latin culture, becoming just one more in the heterogeneity of the Latin civilization and, later on, transforming his descendants through amalgamation."[120] Ultimately, Barbosa reproduced the all-encompassing ideological construct of mestizaje that was so widely accepted among Latin American elites.

The author used these articles to address his audience of Puerto Ricans *de color* without the risk of being labeled as a racial separatist by his opponents. In the process, he also sustained a muffled conversation. Through his historical account of African Americans' achievements, Barbosa attempted to debunk widespread ideas about racial inferiority, many of which circulated freely, mostly in the medical and reformist circles (antiprostitution campaigns and Del Valle Atiles' study) in Puerto Rico.[121] To Barbosa, the achievements of African Americans in the United States, who were recognized as blacks, was an example of the opportunities of recognition and success not possible in Latin American countries under the presumption of mestizaje. In the United States, various social identities could coexist, among them race, which were not acceptable on Puerto Rican soil. Black republicanos like Barbosa perceived that possibility as liberating and considered the history of blacks in the United States "an inspiration to all men of color who should be proud because blacks through their own efforts have progressed and have put to shame those who supported the inferiority theory."[122]

Barbosa's 1919 articles about race serves as an example of a codified language designed to challenge the prevalent stereotypes about blackness in Puerto Rico. He spoke extensively about blacks' progress and civilization in the United States without ever directly challenging the racial politics that maintained the marginalization of islanders of African descent. Despite Barbosa's and other black political leaders' attempts to break the silences about racial inequality in Puerto Rico, often they remained within the boundaries of those silences and, in doing so, contributed to the broader sense of censorship about the topic ruling island society.

LIVING UNDER THE WEIGHT OF SILENCE

The cultural construct of the *raza iberoamericana*, the figure of Cuba (particularly the 1912 armed revolt), and the public sanitation and health campaigns erased blackness in different ways. At the same time, these also became sites to sustain muffled debates about the problem of blackness in the various projects of modernization articulated in the first decades of the twentieth century. These erasures, silences, and muffled conversations are illustrative of the elusive and insidious modes of operation of racialized domination.

The many kinds of silencing make it difficult to draft a conventional historical account of the workings of racialized domination, especially after the abolition of slavery. Complicating the matter is the elasticity of racialization itself, expanding

and contracting to reference geographic spaces, the broader laboring population, dark-skinned peoples, and islanders in general within imperial fields. In the absence of an institutional tradition of data gathering on the effects of racialized domination, we can resort to alternative forms of registering the ways in which it shaped everyday life experiences. We know that racialization often involved criminalizing the laboring classes but (unlike the Spanish archives) most criminal records in Puerto Rico under US rule do not offer individuals' detailed accounts of events, making it difficult to see how laboring classes understood their experiences. We can employ instead, despite their limitations, expressions of popular culture collected by ethnographers during the first half of the century.

Anthropologist J. Alden Mason's collection of songs, folktales, jokes, and riddles gathered in 1914–15 offers valuable insight into the effects of racialized domination.[123] A few pieces of these materials showed members of the popular classes expressing a vague desire for whitening, while acknowledging a shared African ancestry. Others revealed the humiliation and pain individuals sought to inflict when marking blackness on others, and some offered alternative island histories centered on blacks' struggles for survival and liberation.[124] One of the collected décimas—a musical genre associated with the rural mountain folk—reveals that some Puerto Rican blacks did expect real transformation once the former slave masters (Spaniards) had been defeated. This décima offers us a glimpse of new expectations and how these may have shaped racialized interactions under the new colonial configuration.[125]

Other ethnographic works, such as those of Robert A. Manners and Sidney W. Mintz, also provide glimpses of how laborers navigated a new imperial landscape. Economic reorganization and the ensuing internal migration brought about old and new forms of racialized conflict. While their materials were collected later (in the late 1940s), both anthropologists were keenly aware of the historical processes that shaped the social interactions they had witnessed. In Manners's study of a rural community based on tobacco and mixed-crop agriculture, he noted a sharp distinction in attitudes toward racial difference between the lower rural class and the middle and upper classes.[126] Despite acute color-consciousness, the lower classes in the town of Tabará commonly intermarried and frequently socialized. But there were few if any racial intermarriages among the middle and upper ranks. These middle and upper classes referred to the workers of Tabará as "people of color," regardless of their actual phenotype; poverty meant blackness.

The harmonious racial world of the rural worker Manners had presented was contradicted by the historical accounts of war veterans he recorded. These World War II veterans, most of who lived in the barrios of Tabará, spoke primarily about their disaffection with the US military.[127] The root of their dissatisfaction was fundamentally racial. During the war effort, Puerto Ricans had been lumped together in segregated battalions (Puerto Rican only) under the command of US officers. Puerto Ricans were treated as a homogeneous group regardless of their race. These self-identified white island veterans expected better treatment because of their whiteness. US Army racial practices did not instill racism among Puerto Ricans. Instead it provided new means for its manifestation.

Sidney Mintz's study offers another side of these new racialized dynamics, describing the racialized clash between highlanders and coastal workers when brought together to labor in the reenergized sugar industry. Mintz's research centers on a sugar-producing community of the southern coast in the 1940s, which had increased in economic relevance after two of the largest US sugar central mills set foot there after 1898.[128] Organized labor targeted workers in the cane fields, in addition to a wide range of urban workers, as one of their most important constituencies and went to great lengths (if not always successful) to bring them under their wing.

In his account of Cañamelar, Mintz places the rural proletariat of the 1940s squarely in the middle of processes prompted by the revitalization of a sugar economy. Like Manners, Mintz noted sharp distinctions between racial attitudes among workers and those of the middle and upper classes in the town. For Mintz, the unusual rate of racial miscegenation among rural laborers proved that race was not a meaningful category. His interviews, however, revealed that the social world of the rural proletariat was much more complicated.[129] In one instance, a white highlander disclosed that when he arrived from the interior to work at the Cañamelar plantation in 1907, he refused to interact with the colored people of the area.[130] Highlanders believed, the worker said, that blacks were witches. His attitude finally changed when another group of white workers, who had lived in the area longer, told him that there was nothing to fear from the black families. As a result, the interviewee began visiting his neighbors, a family of slave descent, and participated in their *bomba* dances during the weekends. Another informant explained that many of the highland families built fences around their houses with palm leaves to protect their gardens from the coastal neighbors.[131] Coastal workers, on the other hand, also participated in the racialization embedded in these everyday labor struggles by forging negative stereotypes of the white highlanders, whom they "regard[ed] as clannish, tight-fisted, opportunistic, and provincial."[132]

Mintz explained that the coexistence of black slave and black and white free workers in nineteenth-century sugar plantations had resulted in a labor environment propitious for postemancipation, cross-racial alliances and frequent intermarriages. The author argued that former slaves were not only present among the lower ranks of workers, but many had risen to the artisan ranks. As slaves, these men had developed crucial specialized skills in sugar processing and achieved higher social status. As a result, for a brief period of time there was a more racially integrated laboring force. Whatever fragile accommodation had existed before 1898, the economic changes brought by the new sugar industry threatened to upset, once again, those racial relations and to reproduce old racial conflicts. Puerto Rican sociologists José Colombán Rosario and Justina Carrión also captured these deep-running racialized tensions in their 1930s interview of a highland peasant. The *jíbaro* explained that blacks worked in the coffee of the interior only temporarily, as they could not withstand the lack of sun and would soon return to the coast. To him, "in the lowlands there are more bad people than in the central areas. There are too many blacks on the coasts." He continued, "Blacks are the worst pests you could ever find . . . Blacks never get old and

live long . . . I don't want to have anything to do with blacks or deal with them, because they are the lowest, because blacks are always blacks wherever they stand and whites, like us, are always white and much better than them."[133]

Coastal workers resented highlanders too, a glimpse of which we can gather from the labor literature of the time. The 1916 play *El poder del obrero o la mejor venganza* by Antonio Milián narrated the story of one of the many workers' strikes that took place on the island around World War I.[134] He offered a view of the social fissures dividing workers, casting highlanders as disloyal to the labor cause and portraying them as allies of the central mill administration. Prisco is one of the plantation overseers in charge of supervising a gang of day workers. He opposes the strike and helps police authorities blame workers for a fire that he started at the suggestion of the plantation owner. In the play, Prisco scorns his fellow workers for their lack of vision because, in his opinion, strikes only complicate matters further. The author associated Prisco with highland culture and described Prisco's speech as following the intonations and word forms commonly associated with highland peasants. Their form of speaking appeared as a distortion of Spanish language. His inability to speak properly (like the workers' organizers do) renders him unable to express his thoughts to workers about the strike.[135] Through this character, the author portrayed *jíbaros* as malicious, uneducated, and ignorant—an image that contested both the highlanders' self-image and the Creole elites' depiction of the peasant as generous, just, and although lacking formal education, smart. The character of Terror, the policeman in charge of repressing the strike, also communicates using *jíbaro*-accented Spanish. These characters, an overseer and a policeman, are the only ones in the play with the highland *jíbaro* speech patterns. The speech of the other working-class characters, the urban workers that helped link the strike to the FLT and the wife and sister of two imprisoned agricultural workers, is never differentiated. Perhaps the author wanted to underscore how highlanders often failed to perceive themselves as part of the larger community of coastal workers, sometimes becoming their enemies. In contrast to the dominant form of cross-racial textual impersonations of the nineteenth century analyzed in Chapter 3, Millán marked highland whiteness (not blackness) as foreign to the community of organized workers (not the national one).

In the labor literature, there are few instances in which authors touched on the problematic of racialized domination, and when they did it was timid. In the 1920 play *Pelucín el limpiabotas o la obra del sistema capitalista* (*Pelucín the Shoeshiner, or a Play about the Capitalist System*), the author Magdaleno González briefly inserted the character of Lolu, a black domestic servant and the only one to be racially described, maybe to underscore the marginality of domestic workers as a group.[136] In the story, Pelucín is a poor, starving orphan who receives some food from Mr. S., the bourgeois character for whom Lolu works. When he delivers the food to Pelucín, Lolu states that he is even worse off than an orphan on the street because even though he lives in Mr. S.'s house, he does not have access to food. Through the character of the black servant, González subtly recognized racial inequality and the legacies of slavery. The play lends itself to a few different assumptions or interpretations, one being that the author was suggesting that

slave-like relations prevailed in occupations that were not unionized. Or perhaps González was indeed making a point in regard to racialized marginalization in general. Unfortunately, the deracialization stand of the FLT discouraged further engagement on the part of authors like González, Limón de Arce, Milián, and others on the issue of internal divisions among workers.

The ethnographic works of Mason, Manners, Mintz, and Colombán Rosario, as well as the plays by Millán and González, reveal the complex dynamics of racialization among sectors of the popular classes. We can read how people appropriated and deployed historical narratives constructing the highlanders as white and the coastal worker as black. Their social and racial mapping of the island reconfigured centuries-long processes of maroonage (the practice of running away from slavery and establish free communities in the hinterlands, away from colonial authorities) and racial mixing in the highlands. As many more highland folks migrated to the coastal sugar plantations founded and expanded under US rule, some of these workers reinscribed a geographically marked distinction drawn from a more recent history of slavery on the coast, a racialized geographic distinction also central in late-nineteenth-century historical and political narratives. Indeed, racialized geographies were crucial to a wide array of political imaginations emerging throughout these years, among them the cultural construct of the *raza iberoamericana*. Hence the constructions of whiteness and blackness that emerged out of these struggles reproduced many silences and enabled liberal forms of racialized domination that have made it very difficult to track and counter how race shaped the sharp inequalities Puerto Ricans experienced—and continue to experience—in terms of access to adequate health, housing, employment, wages, and legal protection.

CONCLUSION

THE HEAVY WEIGHT OF SILENCE

BY EARLY 1930S, THE PUERTO RICAN POET Luis Palés Matos, as well as a few other island writers, had already published some of his "black verses." Palés was not unique in placing Caribbean blackness (i.e., *lo negro* and the wide spectrum of black/white racial mixing) at the center of his artistic expression. The writer participated in the broader 1920s and 1930s cultural and political movements in the Americas and beyond that sought to explore and, at times, anchor the sociocultural making of their populations in blackness and African heritage.[1] Palés' work was not a call to embrace Africa in the Americas or to encourage Puerto Ricans to embrace a black identity as a form of political mobilization. In the verses, he placed the *mulatto* at its center, not *lo negro,* because for Palés Africa was in the past. Palés identified African heritage as a constitutive force of island history, but he also represented blackness as something quite exotic and folkloric. In so doing, the poet reproduced stereotypes about mulatto women's hypersexuality and eroticism. His emphasis on the musicality, rhythm, and festive attitudes of people of African descent evoked images of the noble savage, emphasizing their primitive and uncivilized state. Palés' portrayal of the mulattos' contentment while working in the plantations tended to obscure the realities of exploitation, impoverishment, and social marginalization of the laboring majority. The pro-independence intellectual, however, constructed an alternative cultural paradigm, one that placed Puerto Rico in close contact not with the United States, Latin America, or the Iberian Peninsula (like *raza iberoamericana*) but rather with its Caribbean neighbors. The center of Puerto Ricanness was coastal culture, not the mountainous interior (and its *jíbaro*). With his verses, Palés rejected the cultural models operating on the island in the previous decades—the colonial administration's Americanization projects and the growing hispanophilia with which many Puerto Rican nationalist elites responded. In his case, Palés' black poetry was a means to cultivate the links between Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean.

At the time of their production in the island, the 1930s, Palés' black verses were unusual and transgressive. His poetry was a significant interruption to many of the silences operating on the island that precluded a sustained debate about

the workings of racialized domination. These silences comprised a wide array of practices such as neglect, denial, secrecy, taboo subjects, erasure, false naming, encoding, omission, veiling, fragmentation, mocking, lying, dismissal, transposing/supplanting voices, and restriction of talk. Throughout these pages, I have explored these silencing practices, various modalities of interruption, and alternative idioms forged to critique and/or explain marginality. In order to make sense of these dynamics, I had, at times, to betray chronology—thus moving back and forth between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—and examine divergent sites of production (debates about citizenship; electoral campaigns; struggles for abolition; celebrations of emancipation; labor unions' assemblies; public health campaigns; policing and surveillance practices; and fictional, historical, and sociological writings, among others).

To begin unraveling the complex processes of racialized social formation in Puerto Rico, I focus on the struggles for, and prompted by, the reorganization and redefinition of the arenas and practices for political mobilization. I restrict my scrutiny to two historical moments: the last half of the late nineteenth century under Spanish rule and the first decades of the twentieth century under US control. Since the late nineteenth century, Creole elites and sectors of the popular classes constructed silences around problems of racial differences among the island population. The language of labor emerged then as a common ground, an alternative idiom to that of race, through which the emerging liberal Creole elite and the multiracial urban artisan class built political alliances that led to the success of the autonomist project in 1897. The island liberal elite cultivated an image, particularly to appeal to Spanish authorities, of the population as peaceful, in contrast to the racially divided, quick-to-revolt Cuba. In other words, they argued that Puerto Ricans were more deserving of political and economic reforms. As a result, Creole elites censored claims, critiques, and debates that could become means to uncover their own investments in the subjection of the racialized laboring poor. Urban artisans, many who identified or were labeled as black and mulatto, cultivated their political legitimacy by underscoring their role as workers in the modernization of the island. They refrained from employing the explicit language of race that political elites rejected. While artisans similarly avoided explicit talk of race, they, nevertheless, developed codified ways of addressing issues of racial equality, such as the celebrations of Abolition Day (March 22). In so doing, this sector of the working population expanded the forms of controlling and eluding discussions about racialized domination, although these efforts originated from another set of interests.

After the US invasion in 1898, the practices of silencing and its sites of production multiplied as islanders negotiated and participated in forging the forms of racialization that emerged through the constitution and expansion of the US empire-nation. At times, Creole elites responded to the new circumstances by discursively whitening the Puerto Rican population in their dealings with US officials as they tried to increase political power. At other times, they joined colonial administrators and Creole and US reformers in endeavors that reveal their deep preoccupations with the negative effects of blackness on the moral, intellectual, and physical state of the national community. As such, Puerto Rico's march

toward progress, modernization, citizenship, and sovereignty all hinged upon the moral uplift and sanitizing of the laboring population. In the process, political and intellectual elites sought to censor, diffuse, modify, and deflect any account that could unveil the workings of racialization and hamper their quest for hegemony. Twentieth-century organized labor also imposed its own forms of silencing. The economic and social transformations prompted by US rule demanded new ways of affiliating. Among them, the island labor leadership initiated its own negotiations with alternative colonial agents, the American Federation of Labor. To participate successfully in these sites of action—sites for which their constituencies were deemed unfit to participate because of their racialized biological and cultural histories—the labor leadership sought to rearticulate the terms of engagement by deracializing their endeavors. Capitalist exploitation, not racial biology, explained their subjection. As a result, accounts and practices that described other related forms of domination, such as race, were marginalized. Organized labor's endeavors to improve the health and morality of the working population shared idioms (degeneracy) and sites of action (the female body) with political elites and reformers. Thus the labor leadership expanded the means of racialization as a form of marginalization as well as contributed to its intractability. By the 1910s, Puerto Ricans with divergent social backgrounds and interests, moving on and off of the island, had forged a long tradition of silencing, successfully sustaining and rearticulating the national discourses on racial harmony.[2]

Silences, however, are unstable and fragile, and so they are often interrupted. Those interruptions have often been absorbed into a dialectic public performance of accusations of racism and refutations that render valid the myth of racial harmony. Overt racist statements were publicly shunned and any critique of the regime of whiteness organizing islanders and their communities on the move was censored. These performances have become necessary political rituals, even today. When acted upon, everyone is left with a sense that there exists an organic popular force committed to equality and national unity in the face of foreign intervention. Palés's work was one of these interruptions, later absorbed into those ritual dynamics of accusations and refutations.

Palés's black verses sparked controversy and provoked strong criticism from island intellectuals. Despite the problematic messages of his poetry, Palés spoke of islanders as racialized beings and how racialization was at the heart of a shared history with the rest of the Caribbean: Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba. Palés contradicted elites' and middle-class reformers' desire to distance the island from slavery and *lo negro*. Therefore, when the poet stepped outside of the acceptable line of debate, he needed to be publicly censored. Literary critic Magali Roy-Féquière has analyzed some of the responses Palés's publications sparked among his contemporaries in the 1930s and 1940s.[3] For example, Luis Antonio Miranda published an article titled "*El llamado arte negro no tiene vinculación con Puerto Rico*" ("So-called black art has no ties to Puerto Rico"), in which he denied the existence of an "Antillean" culture or identity. To him, only the continental Iberian heritage defined Antillean culture. In another instance, writer G. Miranda Archilla wrote an article titled "*La broma de una poesía prieta en Puerto Rico*," which stated that black poetry could not emerge on an island like Puerto Rico in which there was no black referent.

More interestingly, Palés's supporters also partially silenced his cultural proposal. For example, Roy-Féquèire analyzes how literary critic Margot Arce praised Palés' work by highlighting not the importance of the topic treated in the verses but rather his artistic style. Arce insisted that Palés's true contribution was the technical mastery through which he managed to portray the essence of the black soul. To her, Palés had successfully employed the techniques and forms of civilized and modern art to speak of primitive cultures. At the same time, Arce underscored that the black referent in Palés's work was nonexistent in Puerto Rico but present in other places of the Caribbean.[4] Arce praised Palés's work while distancing it even further from the racial reality of islanders. Palés's black verses signal a moment in which the island's hegemonic classes sought first to contain and later, by 1950, to define where expressions of blackness could take place. This place was the sphere of cultural and creative production constructed as one separate from that of political action (of course, political actions narrowly conceived as electoral politics). In the end, these dynamics have offered a certain visibility to Africans' contributions to Puerto Rican national culture and have depoliticized these expressions, obscuring the critiques of domination embedded in them. Thus the 1950s constitute a third historical moment in the construction of silences about racialized domination on the island.

The new Commonwealth government, under the leadership of the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), inaugurated in 1952, sought to foster Puerto Rico's national culture. After half a century under US control of the upper echelons of colonial administration, the newly Puerto Rican–staffed government sought to counter the effects of decades of cultural Americanization by organizing cultural institutions and revamping an education curriculum that stressed Puerto Rican values. Government agencies such as the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña (ICP) and other agencies reformulated the national myth: three races, the Indian, African, and Spanish, fused together into one nation/race: Puerto Rico/Puerto Ricans.[5] Once again, the Indian and African roots were located far in the island's past. The government narrative stressed that Spanish heritage remained at the heart of Puerto Rican culture, evident in the use of Spanish language and customs. In this process, government institutions allowed for the selective incorporation of Indian and African elements into national culture, though they were deemed folkloric, which underscored their distance in the past. As part of this effort, Palés's black verses became central to the island's education curriculum. Administrators selected Palés Matos's problematic representation of blackness as one of the few referents to the racial history of the island. During my own years of schooling in Puerto Rico in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, I remember reading Palés and learning to dance *bomba* and *plena* to the tune of his poetry while memorizing the names of the "great" white Puerto Rican abolitionists for my history classes. It was not until I arrived at the University of Puerto Rico that I encountered alternative narratives of island history within an institutional setting.

Because of Palés's officialdom within the new institutional cultural paradigm, his work serves also as a stage for many to disrupt the silences on debates about the workings of racialization and racialized marginalization. Black performers such as

Sylvia del Villar and Juan Boria have built successful careers by performing Palés's verses since the 1970s if not earlier.[6] In so doing, Del Villar's and Boria's performances directly contested Palés's, Arce's, and the Commonwealth government's interpretations of blackness as something located in the past. Their physical presence and the conviction in their performances of celebration and pain disrupted historical silences and assumptions. Although often working within the parameters of cultural and educational institutions, the challenge embedded in these performances was not imperceptible to their audiences, and their reaction was not always favorable.

I remember one afternoon in 1980–81 when my 16-year-old brother arrived home from high school earlier than usual. My mother, surprised by his unexpected arrival, asked him what had happened, especially after she noticed he was upset. And so he told her. His Spanish teacher, Luis Palés Matos's daughter, had organized a celebration in honor of her father's work and had invited Sylvia del Villar to perform some of the black verses at the school. The public school is named after the poet and located at the urban core of the northern city of Bayamón. Once Del Villar began her presentation, a group of students began throwing notebooks, food, paper, pens, and pencils at her while laughing and yelling racial slurs. As she cried from embarrassment and outrage, the Spanish teacher managed to help Del Villar leave the room and the school. My parents were outraged and so were the school administration and faculty. In the following days, the school principal identified the group of teenagers and suspended them. Nevertheless, no one spoke publicly of this event as an act of racialized violence. Instead, everyone portrayed it as the reprehensible actions of a group of undisciplined, public-school (working-class) children. The incident never made it to the media, not even the weekly municipal newspaper.

Del Villar's performance had broken the silence: she embodied and celebrated real blackness, not a romantic idea from the past. For the student audience, the celebration of that blackness did not resonate with what they had learned about their histories. Many found it a laughable matter while others perceived it as a threat to react against violently. The audience needed to reestablish the silence, and they did so successfully. Blackness, however, is not the only means to disrupt the narrative of racial harmony. Since the 1970s, an increasing number of Puerto Ricans on both the island and the US mainland have cultivated and deployed Taíno (indigenous) identities.[7] In so doing, these communities have also crafted an alternative political cartography, orienting their actions toward communities in Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Guyana, and other sites in the Caribbean Basin. Also prompted by the silencing about racialized domination, these individuals have gone to great lengths to recover and reconstruct the knowledge and practices of their ancestors. In so doing, the Taíno movement has also forged a critique of colonial, racialized domination, but one that does not destabilize nationalist narratives to the same extent that blackness does. The post-1950s processes—especially the exponential growth in circularity between the island and locations within the United States—that have shaped these different forms of racialization, and how these have become new grounds for nuanced forms of silencing and interruption, deserve more attention from researchers.

Through the study of silencing, this book constitutes a serious attempt to uncover the constantly changing yet persistent racialized social formations in Puerto Rico. In doing so, I hope to break free from the paradigms organizing much of the study of race that continue to mark stark differences between Latin America and the United States. Instead, I seek to highlight the wide array of racialization practices on which the liberal nation-state, modern imperial organizations, and opposition movements are predicated. The undoing of racialized domination does not require reracialization, but it demands an exploration of its complex workings.

Notes

Introduction

1. In reply to a scholar's claim that the musical form of *bomba* from the town of Loíza is the closest to its African roots. *Bomba* is an afro-diasporic cultural expression that combines music, lyrics, and dance. Cultural institutions on the island had appropriated *bomba* performance as one expression of Puerto Rico's African cultural roots. Different towns around the island had their own style of *bomba*. Given its history as a maroon community, the town of Loíza is perceived among islanders as the heart of blackness in Puerto Rico. In fact, assertions of black identity are only acceptable in two geographic sites: Loíza and the barrio San Antón in Ponce. Cepeda's remarks appear in Torres Torres, "Histórica grabación de la bomba," *El Nuevo Día*, April 13, 2005, 32.
2. I agree with Micol Seigel's critique of the comparative framework organizing the study of race in the Americas, which takes for granted the divide between Latin American nations (in her case study, Brazil) and the United States. Often, the object of analysis becomes the framework for investigation. As such, many scholars reproduce the idea that Latin American nations are sites organized by a three-tier racial model (defined by miscegenation), while the United States is a two-tier model (characterized by racial purity). The emphasis on the oppositional nature of these paradigms—one founded on racial harmony and the other on racial conflict—obscures the many ways in which race has been central in structuring social hierarchy across the Americas. These paradigms also necessitate an understanding of nation as substance defined by specific traits (a racial system) instead of ongoing processes and struggles. As such, the national framework tends to simplify and/or neglect the large variety of social experiences that take place within the vast territories and distinct peoples the nation tries to designate. See Micol Seigel, "Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn," *Radical History Review*, no. 91 (Winter 2005): 62–90; and Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), xi–xvi. For a similar critique but specific to Puerto Rico, see Miriam Jiménez-Román, "*Un hombre (negro) de pueblo*: José Celso Barbosa and the Puerto Rican 'Race' Toward Whiteness," *Centro: Focus en Foco* 8, nos. 1&2 (1996): 9–10.
3. Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 236.
4. In addition, 0.7 percent of Puerto Ricans self-identified as Native Americans, 0.5 percent Asian, 0.1 percent Pacific Islander, and 8.3 percent self-described as other. The census administration noted that "the sum of the absolute numbers may add to more than the total population and the percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race." See US Census Bureau: Census 2000 Data for Puerto Rico, http://www.census.gov/census2000/states/pr.html (accessed May 31, 2004). A descriptive analysis of the U.S census results for the year 2000 pertaining to

Puerto Rico appeared in the article "Como somos: Puerto Rico a la luz del censo 2000," *El Nuevo Día*, August 21, 2001. Many scholars and public intellectuals have focused on the use of US racial classifications in the Puerto Rican context as the main problem. It is true that US government classifications often clash with Puerto Ricans' historical articulations of racial identities, but the problem is not just one of different systems of classification but one of silence about the depth of antiblack sentiment on the island.

5. The "Day of the Race" is known in the United States as Columbus Day and commemorates Columbus's arrival in the Americas on October 12, 1492. The *Día de la Raza* in Puerto Rico is intimately linked to the figure of José de Diego, an early-twentieth-century revered Puerto Rican nationalist, known by many as the "Gentleman of the Race." José de Diego understood the *Día de la Raza* and Columbus's arrival to be the foundational moment of the Latin American race. In his view, the Hispanic tradition was the thread that unified all people in Latin America.
6. In 2000, the daily *El Nuevo Día* ran a series of articles examining the persistence of racial discrimination in Puerto Rico. For example, Santos Febres, "Por cientos contranatura," section "Mirador," *El Nuevo Día*, May 6, 2001; Pérez, "La raza: Reflejo de lo que se quiere ser y no se es," *El Nuevo Día*, August 21, 2001, 12. See readers' comments in section "Foro," *El Nuevo Día*, October 8–9, 2000, http://endi.zonai.com.
7. The concept of racial democracy is commonly associated with anthropologist/sociologist Gilberto Freyre's interpretation of Brazil's racial relations in his seminal work *Casa Grande e Senzala*: *Formação da familia brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal*, 4th ed (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1943). While his description of Brazil as a racial democracy responded to a precise historical moment in the country, his interpretation echoed similar arguments made by Latin American and Caribbean politicians and scholars since the late nineteenth century, most of whom were invested in reconciling their national projects with the racially diverse populations within their home countries. Therefore, I believe it is appropriate to borrow the concept of "racial democracy" to describe similar phenomena in other areas of the Americas.
8. The term *myth* here alludes to a set of widely accepted and interconnected ideas that characterizes Puerto Rico as a racial democracy. I understand myths to be symbolic narratives, shaped by and speaking to multiple actors/audiences at different historical times. Myths are crucial narratives that attempt to answer fundamental questions about the human experience. I do not equate the concept of myth with falsehood or illusion. Instead, I believe these symbolic narratives are the product of power struggles and informing practice and together constitute the social field in which diverse communities negotiate conflicts over power. For this reason, the constant reformulation of myths makes a good topic of historical research.
9. See the articles "Racismo que se niega a morir," *El Nuevo Día*, March 17, 2003; "Raíz del problema la negación del discrimen," ibid.; "Fatal el silencio en los casos por discrimen racial," *El Nuevo Día*, March 18, 2003; "Culpas a la educación pública por ignorar la raza negra," *El Nuevo Día*, March 19, 2003; "Mil formas de rechazar la existencia del racismo," *El Nuevo Día*, March 21, 2003; "'Negación' de una raza," *El Nuevo Día*, March 23, 2003.
10. "'Crece' la raza negra en el país," *El Nuevo Día*, March 25, 2010.
11. Arlene Dávila illustrates the institutional practices that enforced this racial/national myth especially through the organization of the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, founded in 1952. See Dávila, *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997). Also, see Duany, *Puerto Rican Nation*. Other Latin American countries have undergone similar cultural processes, including the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. See Richard

Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Introduction to Dominican Blackness* (New York: CUNY, Dominican Studies Institute, City College of New York, 1999); Jeffrey Gould, *To Die in This Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880–1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

12. On the communicative value of silence, see Muriel Saville-Troike, "The Place of Silence in an Integrated Theory of Communication," in *Perspectives on Silence,* ed. Deborah Tannen and Muriel Saville-Troike (Norwood: NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1995). On talk while simultaneously erasing or displacing, see Caroline Simpson, *An Absent Presence*: *Japanese Americans in Postwar American Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001) 2–4.
13. Several scholars have used the notion of "conspiracy of silence" to decribe the widespread denial of racism on the island. See Gordon K. Lewis, *Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power in the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1963); Eneid Routté-Gómez, "A Conspiracy of Silence: Racism in Puerto Rico," *San Juan City Magazine* 4, no. 8 (1995): 54–58; and Duany, *Puerto Rican Nation*, 258.
14. My take is informed by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (NY: Routledge, 1994), 54–61.
15. Miriam Jímenez-Román, "The Indians Are Coming!: The Taíno and Puerto Rican Identity," in *Taíno Revival: Critical Perspectives on Puerto Rican Identity and Cultural Politics*, ed. Gabriel Haslip-Viera (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2001); Arlene M. Dávila, "Local/Diasporic Taínos: Towards a Cultural Politics of Memory, Reality and Imagery," in *Taíno Revival.*
16. For a more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which Taíno heritage has developed into cultural capital see Duany, *Puerto Rican Nation*, 261–80.
17. The critique to the myth of extinction—the claim that indigenous people had died off in the sixteenth century—posed by the indigenous revival movement among Puerto Ricans since the 1970s speaks directly to our need to explore the multiple forms of racial silencing.
18. On racial mixing and language see C. C. Rogler, "The Role of Semantics in the Study of Social Distance in Puerto Rico," *Journal of Social Forces* 22 (May 1944), 448–52. For a reflection on the contemporary composition and uses of a vocabulary of race in Puerto Rico, see Isar Goudreau-Santiago, "Slippery Semantics: Race Talk and Everyday Uses of Racial Terminology in Puerto Rico," *Centro Journal* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2008).
19. On a different use of the phrase *raza de color*, see Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 3–4.
20. For some examples of the scholarship exploring the mutual constitution of blackness and whiteness in Puerto Rico, see Isabelo Zenón-Cruz, *Narciso descubre su trasero: El negro en la cultura puertorriqueña* (Humacao: Puerto Rico: Furidi, Vol. 1–2, 1974 [1975]); Magali Roy-Féquière, *Women, Creole Identity and Intellectual Life in Early Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); Lillian Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Self, Community, and Nation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); Gladys M. Jiménez-Muñoz, "¡Xiomara, mi hejmana! Diplo y el travestismo racial en el Puerto Rico de los años cincuenta," *Bordes*, no. 2 (1995); Kelvin Santiago-Valles, "Vigilando, administrando y patrullando a negros y trigueños: Del cuerpo del delito al delito de los cuerpos en la crisis del Puerto Rico urbano contempoáneo," *Bordes*, no. 2 (1995); Santiago-Valles, "The

Imagined Republic of Puerto Rican Populism in World-Historical Context: The Poetics of Plantation Fantasies and the Petit-Coloniality of Criollo Blanchitude, 1914–48," in *Race, Colonialism, and Social Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Jerome Branche (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 59–90; Yeidy Rivero, *Tuning Out Blackness Blackness: Race and Nation in the History of Puerto Rican Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Jiménez-Román, "*Un hombre (negro) del pueblo*"; Jerome Branche, *Colonialism and Race in Luso-Hispanic Literature* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006). On US constructions of whiteness, see David Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrant's Became White: The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs* (New York: Basic Books, 2005) and *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed (London: Verso, 2000); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

21. Luis A. Reyes Rodríguez, "Honor professional y honor military: Dos discursos sobre el honor en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX, 1850–1899" (PhD diss., Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2009), 1–17, 114–34.
22. The debate surrounding the results of the 2000 census is a good example of the challenges that took place all throughout the century.
23. In *A Nation for All*, Fuente points out a similar dynamic in Cuba.
24. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 81–84; Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2002) 5.
25. Anthropologist Ginetta Candelario reflects on the different somatic construction of whiteness among Dominicans in contrast to those in the United States. Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 177–222.
26. For selected early works on the social context of racial identity formation, see Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States (NY: Macmillan, 1971)*; Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas (NY: Random House, 1946)*. These US-based researchers expanded on arguments and research produced in Latin America, one of the most famous being Gilberto Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala*. For Puerto Rico, see Zenón-Cruz, *Narciso descubre su trasero*; José Colombán Rosario and Justina Carrión, *Problemas sociales: El negro* (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940); Sidney Mintz, "Puerto Rico: An Essay in the Definition of a National Culture," in *Status of Puerto Rico: Selected Background Studies Prepared for the United States-Puerto Rico Commission on the Status of Puerto Rico* (Washington, DC: [Washington], 1966), 340–434; Juan Rodríguez Cruz, "Las relaciones raciales en Puerto Rico," *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 9, no. 4 (1965); Melvin M. Tumin, *Social Class and Social Change in Puerto Rico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971); and Thomas M. Mathews, "The Question of Color in Puerto Rico," in *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America*, ed. Robert Brent Toplin (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 299–323.
27. Beginning in the 1980s, but more forcefully in the 1990s, the scholarship on racialized formations of identity took a different direction. See George Reid Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800–1900* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Pierre-Michel Fontaine, ed., *Race Class, and Power in Brazil* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, UCLA, 1985); Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Vera Kutzinski, *Sugar Secret's: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism (Charlottesville:*

University Press of Virginia, 1993); Winthrop Wright, *Café con Leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990)*; Nancy L. Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics": Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Graham, *The Idea of Race*; George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Sagás, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); David Howard, *Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2001); Jerry Dávila, *Diploma of Whiteness: Race and Social Policy in Brazil, 1917–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Peter Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nations in Brazil, 1864–1945* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Alejandra Bronfman, *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1901–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); Claudia Mosquera, Mauricio Pardo, and Odile Hoffmann, eds., *Afrodescendientes en las Americas: Trayectorias sociales e identatarias: 150 años de la abolición de la esclavitud en Colombia* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2002). For Puerto Rico, some are José Luis González, *El país de cuatro pisos y otros ensayos* (Río Piedras, Ediciones Huracán, 1989); Luis Rafael Sánchez, *La guaracha del Macho Camacho* (Barcelona: Argos, 1982); Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá, *El entierro de Cortijo* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1983); Ana Lydia Vega, *Encancaranublado y otros cuentos de naufragio* (Río Piedras: Antillana, 1990); Juan Flores, *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1993); Arcadio Díaz-Quiñones, *La memoria rota* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1993); Yazmín Pérez-Torres, "'Raza' en la narrativa puertorriqueña contemporánea: Redefiniciones de la 'identidad nacional'" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1996); Jay Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth Century Puerto Rico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

28. Some examples are Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, eds., *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia 1795–1831* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 2007); Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770–1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); James Sanders, *Contentious Republicans: Popular Politics, Race, and Class in Nineteenth-Century Southwestern Colombia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Alfonso Munera, *Fracaso de la nación: Región, clase y raza en el Caribe Colombiano (1717–1821)* (Bogotá: Banco de la República: Ancora Editores, 1998); Helg, *Our Rightful Share*; Ada Ferrer, "Social Aspects of Cuban Nationalism: Race, Slavery, and the Guerra Chiquita, 1879–1880," *Cuban Studies* 21 (1991); Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Ferrer, "Cuba, 1898: Rethinking Race, Nation, and Empire," *Radical History Review*, no. 73 (Winter 1999); Fuente, *A Nation for All*; Kim D. Butler, *Freedoms Given, Freedoms Won: Afro-Brazilians in Post Abolition Sao Paulo and Salvador* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1998); Anthony W. Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes, *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban*

Revolution (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998); Jonathan W. Warren, *Racial Revolutions: Antiracism and Indian Resurgence in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). For Puerto Rico, see Goudreau-Santiago, "Missing the Mix: San Antón and the Racial Dynamics of "Nationalism" in Puerto Rico" (PhD dissertation, University of California-Santa Cruz, 1999); Arlene Torres and Norman Whitten, ed., *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean: Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Kelvin Santiago-Valles, *"Subjected People" and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Roy-Féquière, *Women, Creole Identity, and Intellectual Life*; Rivero, *Tuning Out Blackness*; Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico*; Eileen Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); Francisco Scarano, "The 'Jíbaro' Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745–1823," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 5 (December 1996); Idsa E. Alegría-Ortega and Palmira Ríos-González, *ed. Contrapunto de raza y género en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras, 2005); Milagros Denis, "One Drop of Blood: Racial Formation and Meanings in Puerto Rican Society", 1898–1960" (PhD diss., Howard University, 2005); Hilda Llorens, "Fugitive Blackness: Representations of Race, Art, and Memory in Arroyo, Puerto Rico" (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2005); Aixa Merino Falú, *Raza, género y clase social*: El discrimen contra las mujeres afropuertorriqueñas [Puerto Rico]: Oficina de la Procuradora de la Mujer, (2004); Solsirée Del Moral, *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898-1952* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, forthcoming 2013); Reinaldo Román, "Scandalous Race: Garveyism, the Bomba, and the Discourse of Blackness in 1920s Puerto Rico," *Caribbean Studies* 31, no. 1 (2003).

29. Wade, "Race and Nation in Latin America: An Anthropological View" in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, 263.
30. Afro-Puerto Rican Testimonies, "Against the Myth of Racial Harmony in Puerto Rico" in *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States*, Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 508–11.
31. Ibid., 510.
32. On this corpus of academic works, see Robin E. Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality Equality: Color, Race, Racism in Urban Brazil* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001). Also see María-Luisa Achino-Loeb, ed., *Silence: The Currency of Power* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006); Tilly Olsen, *Silences* (New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1978); and Elaine Hedges and Shelley Fisher Finshkin, *Listening to Silences: New Essays in Feminist Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
33. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
34. Gould, *To Die This Way*; and Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).
35. Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines*; Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Helg, *Liberty and Equality*.
36. Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico: The Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800–1850* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin University Press, 1984); Luis A. Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and*

Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Matos Rodríguez, *Women and Urban Change in San Juan.*

37. Scarano, "The 'Jíbaro' Masquerade"; Guerra, *Popular Expression*; Findlay, *Imposing Decency*; and Cubano, *Rituals of Violence in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico: Individual Conflict, Gender, and the Law* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006).
38. Ferrer, "Rethinking Race and Nation in Cuba" in *Cuba, the Elusive Nation: Interpretations of National Identity*, Damién Fernández and Madeline Cámara Betancourt, eds. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 60–76.
39. Ibid., 62,
40. Sheriff, *Dreaming Equality*.
41. Ibid., 29–58.
42. Sheriff, "Exposing Silence as Cultural Censorship: A Brazilian Case," *American Anthropologist* 102, no. 1 (March 2000).
43. On reading silences as an array of subversive techniques in feminist writing, see Helene Carol Weldt-Basson, *Subversive Silences: Nonverbal Expression and Implicit Narrative Strategies in the Works of Latin American Women Writers* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2009).
44. Marsha Houston and Cheris Kramarae, "Speaking from Silence: Methods of Silencing and of Resistance," *Discourse & Society* 2, no. 4 (1991).
45. These are Manuel Zeno Gandía, Francisco del Valle Atiles, and Salvador Brau.
46. I am grateful to F. Scarano for pointing out this aspect of the early debates on race during the first decade of the US colonial regime.

Chapter 1

1. See Bolivar Pagán, *Historia de los partidos politicos puertorriqueños*, 2 Vol. (San Juan: Academia Puertorriqueña de la Historia, 1972); and Francisco A. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 2nd Ed. (México: McGraw-Hill, 2000).
2. Francisco Moscoso, *Agricultura y sociedad sociedad en Puerto Rico, siglos 16 al 18: Un acercamiento desde la historia* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña and Colegio de Agrónomos de Puerto Rico, 1999); Angel López Cantos, *Los puertorriqueños: Mentalidad y actitudes (siglo XVIII)* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico and Ediciones Puerto, 2000); Jalil Sued Badillo and Angel López Cantos, *Puerto Rico Negro* (San Juan: Editorial Cultural, 1986); Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico: The Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800–1850* (Madison, WI[0]: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Luis Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico*, 3rd ed. (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1970); and Fernando Picó, *Historia general de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1986).
3. Sued Badillo and López Cantos, *Puerto Rico Negro*, 83–93; and Scarano, *Puerto Rico: cinco siglos de historia* (México: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 192.
4. Stark, "A New Look at the African Slave Trade in Puerto Rico in Puerto Rico Through the Use of Parish Registers, 1660–815," *Slavery and Abolition* 30, no. 4 (2009), 491–520.
5. On the smuggling of slaves during the 1600s, see Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 82–83.
6. David Stark, "Discovering the Invisible Puerto Rican Slave Family: Demographic Evidence from the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Family History* 21, no. 4 (October 1996): 395–419.
7. See the case of Miguel Enríquez in López Cantos, *Los puertorriqueños*, 127–71.

8. Angel G. Quintero Rivera, "Cultura en el Caribe: La cimarronería como herencia y utopia," *Estudios Sociales Centroamericanos* 54 (September–December 1990): 85–99.
9. The Bourbon Reforms liberalized commercial routes, which enabled new economic ventures on the island. Scarano, *Puerto Rico*, 341–71.
10. Demographic sources for the pre-1700 period are few. Ibid., 329.
11. Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 4.
12. The 1815 royal decree known as the Cédula de Gracias stimulated agriculture through increased trade, freer technological exchange, and the attraction of foreign capital. Francisco Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico,* 18.
13. James L. Dietz, *Historia económica económica de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1989), 36.
14. See Francisco Scarano, *Inmigración y clases sociales en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX*, 3rd ed. (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1989).
15. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the British island had already reduced their sugar output because of soil exhaustion. The 1830s abolition of slavery disrupted further sugar production in these islands. See Franklin Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
16. Guillermo Baralt, *Esclavos rebeldes: Conspiraciones y sublevaciones de esclavos en Puerto Rico, 1795–1873* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1981).
17. The1826 legislation not only stipulated slaves' obligations to their masters but also regulated the masters' treatment of slaves. See "Reglamento sobre la educación, trato y ocupaciones que deben dar a sus esclavos los dueños y mayordomos en esta Isla, 12 [de] agosto [de] 1826," in *El proceso abolicionista en Puerto Rico: Documentos para su estudio*, Centro de Investigaciones Histórica (UPR) (San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1978), 2:103–11.
18. Baralt, *Esclavos rebeldes*; Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery*; and Jorge Luis Chinea, *Race and Labor in the Hispanic Caribbean: The West Indian Immigrant Worker Experience in Puerto Rico, 1800–1850* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).
19. "Carta de don Ignacio de Ramón a su hermana sobre un viaje a Puerto Rico," in Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 392.
20. Ibid., 394.
21. Ibid., 397.
22. See Article 2 and 7 in *Abolition Act* and Article 1 in Primo de Rivera, *Reglamento*, in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:144 and 2:149.
23. *Libertos* or *libertas* translates as freedmen or freedwomen. *Libertos* can also refer to the gender neutral term freedpeople.
24. Letter by the Governor don Segundo de la Portilla to submit the project to the Ministro de Ultramar, 14 March 1876, in *El proceso abolicionista*, Centro de Investigaciones Histórica (UPR) 2:340–42.
25. Salvador Brau, *Disquisiciones sociológicas y otros ensayos* (Río Piedras: Ediciones del Instituto de Literatura, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1956); Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*.
26. José Curet, "From Slavery to Liberto: A Study on Slavery and Its Abolition in Puerto Rico, 1840–1880" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1980); Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery*.
27. Contracts for *libertos* in Ponce are at the Archivo General de Puerto Rico (henceforth AGPR), Fondo Gobernadores Españoles (henceforth FGE), Municipalidades: Ponce 1870–80, box 535. The Ponce contracts are documents of similar format indicating names, wages, duration of the arrangement, and benefits provided, such as housing,

access to health care, and clothing. The set of contracts analyzed for San Juan are a small sample extracted from the *Register of Freedpeople's Contracts* in San Juan, 1873–75, which is also at the AGPR. Only volume one of this register is available and includes contracts for the year 1873 in the capital, with information on wages and benefits. Unlike in Ponce, each contract in the San Juan register included official updated information, in the margins, detailing the current (as of 1874) status of the contracts.

28. *Copiador de oficios (1872–1875)*, Archivo Histórico Municipal de Ponce (henceforth AHMP), Ayuntamiento (henceforth Ay.), Secretaría (henceforth Secr.), Judicial (henceforth Jud.), Libro Copiador (años 1872–97) and *Libro para anotar los correccionales por faltas gubernativas*, AHMP, Ay., Secr., Jud., Faltas Gubernativas (años 1874–80), caja S146.
29. The *encomienda* system allowed selected Spanish settlers to extort labor from a group of indigenous people in exchange—in theory—of religious education and care. See "Queen Isabella's Order," in *The Puerto Ricans: A Documentary History*, ed. Kal Wagenheim and Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1994), 18–19.
30. *Memoria de D. Alejandro O'Reylly*, in ibid., 30–31.
31. For an analysis of the correlation between labor regulation and the sugar industry, see Gervasio García, "Economía y trabajo en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX," *Historia Mexicana* 38, no. 4 (1989): 855–79.
32. AHMP, Ay., Gobernador (henceforth Gob.), Alcalde, Circulares (henceforth Circ.), Años 1817–, Caja G36, Expedientes G36-1-10, G36-3-2, G36-4-3, G36-4-5, G36-6-5, G36-9-2, G36-9-8, and G36-11-2. In Chapter 3, I discuss these regulations in more detail.
33. Picó, *Historia General*, 170.
34. Picó, *Libertad y servidumbre en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1979), 117.
35. García, "Economía y trabajo," 857–58.
36. Luis A. Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 146–47.
37. Picó, *Historia General*, 173.
38. Jorge Luis Chinea Serrano, "Fissures in El Primer Piso: Racial Politics in Spanish Colonial Puerto Rico during Its Pre-Plantation Era, c. 1700–1800," *Caribbean Studies* 30, no. 1 (January–June 2002): 321.
39. The Spanish Crown asked members of the *Real Audiencia* to evaluate the statistical assessment that Colonel Pedro Tomás de Córdoba prepared about the administration of the island. Duro de Espinosa's remarks come from his evaluation of De Córdoba's report. See "Extracto de la opinión de la Audiencia de Puerto Rico sobre la Memoria de Pedro Tomás de Córdoba, 9 de mayo de 1838," in *El proceso abolicionista*, 1:33–36.
40. Baralt, *Esclavos rebeldes*, 88–89.
41. Ibid., 92–94, 132, and 135.
42. Picó, *Libertad y servidumbre*, 173.
43. Dietz, *Historia Económica de Puerto Rico*, 62.
44. García, "Economía y trabajo," 859.
45. Silvia Alvarez Curbelo, *Un país del porvenir: El afán de modernidad en Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2001), 82–83.
46. David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2000), 31–36.
47. I analyze the works of several 1880s intellectuals in Chapter 2.
48. In his study of the 1820s and 1830s marriage registers in San Juan, Jay Kinsbruner uncovered that most unions were racially endogamous: whites married white partners,

free *pardos* married other *pardos*, and so on. These marriage patterns speak of the some of the mechanism marking clear-cut racial boundaries on the island. Church authorities actively discouraged interracial marriages by charging fees or conducting investigations on families. See Jay Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth Century Puerto Rico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996).

49. Curet, "From Slavery to Liberto."
50. On the history of coffee, see Fernando Picó, *Amargo Café: Los pequeños y medianos caficultores de Utuado en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1981); and Bergad, *Coffee*. In regard to the competition between sugar and coffee, see Astrid Cubano Iguina, *El hilo en el laberinto: Claves de la lucha política en Puerto Rico, siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1990). On sugar, see Andrés Ramos Mattei, "Technical Innovations and Social Change in the Sugar Industry of Puerto Rico, 1870–1880," in *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, Frank Moya Pons, and Stanley L. Engerman, 158–78 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).
51. Cubano Iguina, *El hilo en el laberinto*.
52. Ibid., 48.
53. Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery*, 49; and Luis Martínez-Fernández, *Torn between Empires: Economy, Society, and Patterns of Political Thought in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1840–1878* (Athens, Georgia[0]: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 153–226.
54. Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery*, 37–50.
55. See *Anuario Estadístico de 1860*, quoted in Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 259.
56. Rafael Bernabe argues that coffee producers of the post-1898 period did not advocate for independence because, like the sugar sector, they wanted access to the US markets. See Rafael Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo en la política puertorriqueña, 1899–1929* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1996).
57. For details on these rebellions, see Silvio Torres-Saillant, "The Tribulations of Blackness: Stages in Dominican Racial Identity," *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (May 1998): 126–46; Gad Heuman, *"The Killing Time": The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994). Population numbers are for 1867 in Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom*, 48.
58. Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery*, 37–50.
59. Ibid., 470–71.
60. Ibid., 42.
61. Segundo Ruiz Belvis, José Julián Acosta, and Francisco Mariano Quiñones, *Proyecto para la abolición de la esclavitud en Puerto Rico, presentado a la Junta de Información reunida en Madrid, el 10 de abril de 1867* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1969), 54.
62. Ruiz Belvis, *Proyecto para la abolición*, 58.
63. Ibid., 71. Since the early nineteenth century, international visitors to Puerto Rico contrasted the size of its slave population and its slaveowners' kind treatment of slaves to the harsher realities of slavery in other Caribbean islands. As such, Puerto Rican abolitionists contended that the island could transition to emancipation without problems, perpetuating these myths about island slavery. Later, historian Díaz Soler also described Puerto Rican slavery as "mild" because of the masters' good treatment of slaves, resulting in a Puerto Rico free of racial conflicts. Puerto Rico was not unique in undermining the impact of slavery on the racial politics of slave societies. In the 1920s–1930s, a generation of intellectuals in Brazil adopted a similar argument. See Freyre, *Casa grande e senzala: Formação da familia brasileira sob o regime de economia patriarcal*, 4th ed. (Rio de Janeiro: J. Olympio, 1943). Other US scholars followed this interpretation to explain

the difference in racial politics between Spanish and Portuguese America and the United States. See Frank Tannenbaum, *The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Random House, 1946); and Carl Degler, *Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

64. "Additionally, there is nothing to fear from them in Puerto Rico: the enslaved population there is very small. In most of the country, blacks are already civilized and we should also add that because of our generous laws and the kindness of our customs they are already prepared to be free." Ruiz Belvis, *Proyecto para la abolición*, 81.
65. Ibid., 61.
66. I borrowed this phrase from Thomas C. Holt's study of how liberals' ideals clashed with the racial and political reality of Jamaica. See Thomas Holt, "The Essence of the Contract: The Articulation of Race, Gender, and Political Economy in British Emancipation Policy, 1838–1866," in *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832–1938*, ed. Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca Scott (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 50–56.
67. Ruiz Belvis, *Proyecto para la abolición*, 71.
68. Ibid., 72.
69. See analysis of José Martí in Armanda Lea Lewis, "The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on José Martí's Political Thought" (MA thesis, Rice University, 2000), 25–26. In particular, see 20n39.
70. In Puerto Rico, it is through labor and consumption that former slaves—and free peasants—could become members of the nation-to-be, whereas in the newly independent Latin American countries, participation in military campaigns became one way of securing national membership. On the importance of military action to claims of national membership, see Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9. In a militarized colonial society like nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, access to the military for island-born people of color was significantly limited. In 1860s Puerto Rico, 11,133 whites were in the military, while only 44 blacks were registered. I assume that the number of whites does not differentiate between soldiers of Spanish origin and Creoles. Although the Spanish administration organized mulatto militias on the island, the army was not a common path to social upward mobility. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 256.
71. Ruiz Belvis, *Proyecto para la abolición*, 60.
72. Carlos Buitrago Ortíz with Beatriz Riefkohl, "Transiciones: Esclavos y libertos en Adjuntas, Puerto Rico: 1870–1903," *Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 30, no. 3–4 (May 1995): 101–46.
73. While the *Reglamento de Jornalero* targeted mostly men, authorities created a register of domestic workers (men and women) in the area of San Juan. Matos Rodríguez also found that the Casa de Beneficiencia, a midcentury liberal institution in San Juan, often admitted women for disciplining in "womanhood" and training in domestic work. Félix V. Matos Rodríguez, *Women in San Juan, 1820–1868* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 89–96, 112–14.
74. Coffee hacendados resented Spanish merchants' trade monopoly of the industry. Therefore, ethnic difference (Creole versus Spanish) was a crucial component in the conflict. Laird W. Bergad, "Toward Puerto Rico's Grito de Lares: Coffee, Social Stratification, and Class Conflicts, 1828–1868," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, no. 4 (1980): 617–42.
75. Rebecca Scott, *Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860–1899* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Ada Ferrer, "Social Aspects of Cuban Nationalism," 37–56.

76. Cubano Iguina, *El hilo en el laberinto*, 44–46.
77. Ibid. For more details on that shift in Cuba, see Scott, *Emancipation in Cuba*, 45–62.
78. Arthur F. Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817–1886* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 217–22.
79. The *Moret Law* is also known as the *Preparatory Law*. For Puerto Rico, see Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 307–10; for Cuba, see Scott, *Emancipation in Cuba*, 63–83.
80. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 307; Rebecca Scott, *Emancipation in Cuba*, 65; and Figueroa, "Facing Freedom: The Transition from Slavery to Free Labor in Guayama, Puerto Rico 1860-1898" (PhD diss.: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991), 174.
81. Rafael M. de Labra, *La cuestión social social en las Antillas Españolas; discurso pronunciado en la Conferencia del 26 de febrero de 1872* (Madrid: Secretaría de la Sociedad Abolicionista Española, 1872), 9.
82. Ibid., 10.
83. Figueroa, "*Facing Freedom*," 174–78.
84. See the summary of the debates about abolition among deputies in the Spanish Courts in Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 327.
85. Liberalism was not a uniform current of thought. Schimidt Nowara's study of nineteenth-century Spanish politics demonstrated how different liberal groups (from more conservative to radical) fought over the limits to individual freedoms and free trade. Radical liberals took power in 1873, a position they lost to most conservative forces in the following year. See Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery*.
86. See letters from Baldorioty de Castro and Nicolás Aguayo in Labor Gómez Acevedo, *Organización y reglamento reglamentación del trabajo en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX (propietarios y jornaleros)* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1970), 455–64, 469–75.
87. It is not clear what the administration defined as political rights.
88. See "Acta inaugural de la Junta Central Protectora de Libertos: Abolición de la esclavitud y fomento del trabajo," in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:282–85. In this document issued January 23, 1873, two months before actual abolition on the island, the colonial authorities encouraged hacendados, farmers, and slaveholders to get together in small councils in order to help the authorities regulate labor in agricultural, industrial, and domestic settings once abolition took place.
89. Many planters did not receive compensation, or when they did, it amounted to little given the devaluation of currency. Planters were disappointed because many planned to use the money to invest in technology.
90. Primo de Rivera, *Reglamento*, ibid., 149–54. These regulations were published in April 20, 1873.
91. Ibid.
92. Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom*, 123–24.
93. Andrés Ramos Mattei, "El liberto en el régimen de trabajo azucarero de Puerto Rico, 1870–1880," in *Azúcar y esclavitud*, ed. Andrés Ramos Mattei, (Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1982).
94. The *Patronato* system in Cuba stipulated that *patrocinados* were to be employed by their former masters for at least eight years. The colonial state did not pay compensation to former masters because former slaves remained under their service. Former masters could transfer their rights to some other party through a sale or by a bequest. Moreover, freedpeople could buy their freedom but at prices equally high to those in pre-*Patronato* years. The fact that former slaves could buy their freedom or that former masters could sell their rights over the *libertos* and *libertas* meant that legally freedpeople were still

commodities. In contrast, authorities in Puerto Rico did not legally recognize former masters' rights to sell or transfer freedpeople. The Cuban *Abolition Act* may have been less progressive than Puerto Rico's because it was enacted in 1886, during the aftermath of the conservative restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain and after the defeat of the Cuban rebels in the Ten Years War, which delayed any social reform that could disrupt the social order in the island. In the cases of Antigua and Barbados, colonial authorities bypassed the apprenticeship period and imposed a contract system over "free workers." See Nigel O. Bolland, "The Politics of Freedom in the British Caribbean," in *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics, and Culture after Slavery*, ed. Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 113–46; Scott, *Emancipation in Cuba*, 127–40; Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, ed. UNESCO (Paris: UNESCO, 1980), 26–28; Figueroa, "Facing Freedom," 65n4; and Corwin, *Spain and Abolition*, 301–2.

95. Primo de Rivera, *Reglamento*, 150–51.
96. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 355.
97. A rich hacendado's letter in regard to the island situation addressed to and published by *El Abolicionista*, Año V, no. 16, April 15, 1873, in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:298–99.
98. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 346–47.
99. Te Deum is a thanksgiving chant performed by the Catholic Church during or at the end of the mass.
100. Letter to the Marine Minister from the Governor of the island, Don Juan Martínez Plowes, April 11, 1873, in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:389–90.
101. Letter from the Márquez de la Esperanza to the Ministro de Ultramar on January 24, 1874. Cruz Monclova, *Historia de Puerto Rico, Siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1957, vol. 2, pt. 1, 380.
102. Archivo Municipal Histórico de Ponce (henceforth AMHP), No. 129, Ay., Secr., Copiadores (henceforth Cop.), *Copiador de oficios á autoridades locales y particulares, 1872–1875*.
103. AGPR, *Libro de Contratos de San Juan, 1873–1875*, April 26, 1873.
104. The planter class in Puerto Rico did not have the economic capacity to import indentured labor. Furthermore, planters were aware of the crisis in sugar production during the postabolition years in other Caribbean islands. "Letter from the British Consul in the island, H. August Cowper, April 6, 1873," in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:288–89.
105. AHMP, Ay., Secr., Jud., *Libro para anotar las correccionales por faltas gubernativas, 1874–1880*, May 1875.
106. Ibid., 21 de enero de 1875 and 23 de enero de 1875.
107. *Decreto [de 10 de abril de 1874 expedido por el gobernador don José Laureano Sanz regulando el sistema de contratación de libertos] 1874*, in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:162–64.
108. Ibid., *Bando de Vagos*, 449–50.
109. The main goal of General Sanz's regime was to demobilize all liberal forces on the island through tight censorship and surveillance.
110. Lidio Cruz Monclova, *Historia de Puerto Rico, Siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1957), vol. 2, pt. 1, 389.
111. AHMP, Ay., Secr., Jud., *Libro para anotar las correccionales por faltas gubernativas, 1874–1880*, February 4, 1875.
112. Ibid., May 1875 and January 13, 1875.
113. Ibid., June 28, 1875.
114. Ibid., February 4, 1875.
115. Ibid., May 6, 1875.

116. Ibid., May 9, 1875.
117. Before 1876, vagrancy laws applied to free workers, while the apprenticeship regulations applied to the *liberto* class.
118. Matos Rodríguez, *Women in San Juan*, 94–96.
119. AHMP, Ay., Secr., Jud., *Libro para anotar las correccionales por faltas gubernativas, 1874–1880*, November 24, 1875.
120. Ibid., August 22, 1875.
121. Ibid., July 8, 1875.
122. Its title in English is *Project on the Regulations of Capital-Labor Relations in the Agricultural Industry*, in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2, 340–56.
123. Ibid.
124. "Gobierno General de la Isla de Puerto Rico," in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:340–55.
125. Janis Palma notes Portilla's modification to the original proposal in her essay "Vienen tumbando caña (todavía)," in *Historia y género: Vidas y relatos de mujeres en el Caribe*, comp. Mario R. Cancel (San Juan: Asociación Puertorriqueña de Historiadores, 1997), 105–21.
126. Letter from D. Antonio Alfau to Ministerio de Ultramar, in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:357.
127. Bergad, *Coffee*, 197–98; and Ramos Mattei, "Technical Innovations," 166–74.
128. In her study of postemancipation Jamaica, Diana Paton argues that freedwomen rejected plantation work and moved to free villages in an attempt to recreate their family life. See Diana Paton, "The Flight from the Fields Reconsidered: Gender Ideologies and Women's Labor after Slavery in Jamaica," in *Reclaiming the Political in Latin American History: Essays from the North*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 176–204. In contrast, Bridget Brereton argues that in the British Caribbean, female former slaves remained in the estate work force long after abolition. See Brereton, "Families Strategies, Gender and the Shift to Wage Labour in the British Caribbean," in *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History*, ed. Bridget Brereton and Kevin A. Yelvington (Barbados: University of the West Indies Press), 77–107. Puerto Rico followed a similar trend.
129. Medical care was a recurrent benefit in the contracts. Contracts did not specify what "medical care" embraced but stated that the employer would take care of the employee in case of illness but that the latter would not receive salary for the time he or she was sick.
130. Nonetheless, women's wages in Ponce were lower than men's.
131. Better wages and benefits for fieldwork are important factors in explaining why 50 percent of women stayed on the plantation during the early stages of the emancipation process.
132. Figueroa, "Facing Freedom," 1–34.
133. AGPR, FGE, Mun. Ponce, Box 535, *Liberto* contracts for the Municipality of Ponce, May 7, 1873.
134. AMHP, Ay, Secr., Cop., *Copiador de oficios dirigidos a las autoridades locales y particulares*, June 27, 1873.
135. On coffee production, see Picó, *Amargo café*; and Guillermo Baralt, *La Buena Vista, 1833–1904: Estancia de frutos menores, fábrica de harinas y hacienda cafetalera* (San Juan: Fideicomiso de Conservación de Puerto Rico, 1988).
136. Brereton, "Families Strategies."
137. AGPR, *Libro de Contratos de San Juan, 1873–1875*, April 26, April 28, April 30, May 3, and May 6, 1873
138. Ibid., sixty-five percent of contracts in San Juan and most contract cancellations were by women.

139. Ibid., April 28, 1873
140. Ibid., May 3, 1873.
141. Matos Rodríguez, *Women in San Juan*, 89–94.
142. AGPR, *Libro de Contratos de San Juan, 1873–1875*, April 25, 1873.
143. Ibid., April 26, 1873.
144. Ibid., April 30, May 2, May 5, and May 6, 1873.
145. Children under 12 years old could not be involved in a contractual relationship. Artículo 31, "Reglamento para la aplicación de la Ley de 22 de marzo de 1873," in *El proceso abolicionista*, 2:153.
146. AGPR, *Libro de Contratos de San Juan, 1873–1875*, April 28, 1873.
147. AMHP, Ay., Sec., Cop., *Copiador de oficios*, July 31, 1873.
148. AGPR, *Libro de Contratos de San Juan, 1873–1875*, April 25, 1873.
149. Ibid., May 3, 1873
150. Ibid., April 25, 1873.
151. AMHP, Ay., Sec., Cop., *Copiador de oficios*, July 16, 1873.
152. AGPR, *Libro de Contratos de San Juan, 1873–1875*, April 25, 1873.
153. I thank Eileen Findlay for her suggestions in understanding the meaning of "an interesting state."
154. AMHP, Ay., Sec., Cop., *Copiador de oficios*, June 21, 1873.
155. Ibid., August 1, 1873.
156. Bolland, "The Politics of Freedom," 113–46.

CHAPTER 2

1. Micaela Rivera, "Suceso histórico," *Heraldo del Trabajo*, October 29, 1879, 1. Although I do not have the exact dates, I noted a few other announcements of this sort in several journals published around the same years. One of them appeared in the *Boletín Mercantil*, a conservative newspaper.
2. Ibid.
3. Although I lack details on Micaela's case, it appears to be more complex than I can explain in this chapter. Micaela describes her son José Eusebio as "mulato claro" (light-skinned mulatto), which indicates that he was probably the offspring of a mixed-race union. Was José Eusebio the son of Micaela's master or another free white man? How did Micaela earn her living? What constituted her son's inheritance? Further research could answer some of these questions.
4. On late-nineteenth-century popular forms of subaltern activism, see Carrasquillo, *Our Landless Patria: Marginal Citizenship and Race in Caguas, Puerto Rico, 1880–1910* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Cubano Iguina, *Rituals of Violence in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico: Individual Conflict, Gender, and the Law* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006); and Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).
5. Liberals organized the Liberal Reformista Party in 1870, which for the most part advocated the island's assimilation with Spain as a province. That year the conservatives organized the Liberal Conservador Party. In 1886, liberals reorganized into the Autonomista Party, which advocated for municipal and provincial autonomy from Spain. See a summary of this political history in Francisco Scarano, *Puerto Rico: cinco siglos de historia* (México: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 513–15, 592–96. I provide a brief narrative in the introduction to Part II of this book.

6. Zilkia Janer, *Puerto Rican Nation-Building Literature: Impossible Romance* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), 7.
7. Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 1–21; and Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth Century Puerto Rico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 36–41.
8. Liberals' concept of *la gran familia puertorriqueña* emphasizes the solidarity among islanders and stresses the distance between Puerto Rican interests and those of the colonial government. See Angel Quintero Rivera, *Conflictos de clase y política en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1978) and *Patricios y plebeyos: Burgueses, hacendados, artesanos y obreros: Las relaciones de clase en el Puerto Rico de cambio de siglo* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1988).
9. "El obrero puertorriqueño: Sus antecedentes," *El Obrero*, November 19, 1889, 2. See also the debate in *Revista de Puerto Rico*, June 18, 1890, 3. For more details, see Chapter 3.
10. "Acta de la primera junta general de socios," 30 de abril de 1876, included in Cayetano Coll y Toste, "Fundación del Ateneo Puertorriqueño," in *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, 2:141–43.
11. On women, see Matos, *Women in San Juan, 1820–1868* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001); Martínez-Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space: Charity and Its Wards in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press), 1999; and Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
12. Benigno Trigo has argued that Puerto Rican Creoles used disease as a language to discourage racial miscegenation among the working population. Benigno Trigo, "Anemia and Vampires: Figures to Govern the Colony, Puerto Rico, 1880 to 1904," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 1 (1999), 104–23. Also see the in-depth analysis provided by Rodríguez-Santana, "Conquests of Death: Disease, Health and Hygiene in the Formation of a Social Body (Puerto Rico, 1880–1929)" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2005).
13. On the consolidation of nineteenth-century categories of racial purity and sexual morality as mutually constitutive means to draw the contours of the European nations while embedded in colonial endeavors, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).
14. See Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800–1900* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) and *Black and Whites in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1888–1988* (Madison, WI[0]: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Wright, *Café con Leche: Race, Class, and National Image in Venezuela (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990)*; Graham, *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990; and Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics:" Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). For samples of the more recent literature on the topic, see the essays in Appelbaum, Macpherson, and Rosenblatt, *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
15. See Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 6–29; and Sommer, "Irresistible Romance: The Foundational Fictions of Latin America," in N*ation and Narration,* ed.

Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 71–98. Zilkia Janer also describes *La Charca* as a "foundational" text. See Janer, "Colonial Nationalism."

16. "The writers were encouraged both by the need to fill in a history that would help to establish the legitimacy of the emerging nation and by the opportunity to direct that history toward a future ideal." Sommer, *Foundational Fictions*, 7.
17. In Zeno y Correa's report for the 1866 *Juntas de Información*, he defends slavery by describing the slaves' subhuman nature. Report of Manuel Zeno y Correa, "Información sobre reformas en Cuba y Puerto Rico," delivered on November 20, 1866, 48–54, quoted in Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, Universidad de Puerto Rico[0], 1965), 276–78.
18. For a similar reading of the medicalization practices and gaze embedded in *La Charca*, see also Gabriela Nouzeilles, "La esfinge del monstruo: Modernidad e higiene racial en La charca de Zeno Gandia," *Latin American Literary Review* 26, no. 50 (1997), 89–108.
19. In the late nineteenth century, Zeno Gandía advocated for colonial reform (autonomy), but he became more radical in the post-1898 years. By the 1920s, the politician advocated for independence from the United States.
20. I worked on a set of these traveling performances at the University of Puerto Rico in the early 1990s.
21. Juan Flores interprets the turn to naturalism as a reorientation of the educated elite toward a means that could enabled them to speak concreatly about social problems. Juan Flores, "Preface," in Zeno Gandía, *La Charca*, translated by Kal Wagenheim (Maplewood, NJ: Waterfront Press, 1982), 27.
22. Science and "rational" thinking are at the core of late-nineteenth-century positivism.
23. Arlyn Sánchez de Silva analyzed Emile Zola's *Le romance expérimental* (1898) in her book *La novelística de Manuel Zeno Gandía* (San Juan, PR: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1996). On naturalism more generally, see Alvarez, *Manuel Zeno Gandía: Estética y sociedad* (Río Piedras: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1987), 1–36.
24. Because of Zeno Gandía's understanding of literary writing as an exercise of mimicry, I perceive the narrator in his novels, especially in *La Charca*, as an extension of the author, not as an entirely separate literary construct.
25. The first novel, *Garduña*, was written in 1890 and published in 1896. *La Charca* followed in 1894. Zeno wrote the third text, *El negocio*, in 1903 and published it in 1922. Finally, *Redentores* appeared in 1924.
26. See *Garduña* in Zeno Gandía, *Obras completas* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1973), 2:93–94.
27. Zeno Gandía wrote "Influencia del clima en las enfermedades del hombre" in 1873 as a member of the Scientific Society of Madrid.
28. The family imagery in *La Charca* responds directly to the rhetoric of the *gran familia puertorriqueña* (large Puerto Rican family) deployed in liberal political discourse of the period. This metaphor describes the national community as a nuclear, patriarchal family—one in which the benevolent father was the leader and protector of the wife and children. To liberal politicians, the stratified but "harmonious" paternalist social relations in the coffee hacienda embodied this vision.
29. Zeno Gandía, *La Charca*, trans. Kal Wagenheim, 49–50.
30. Historian Laird Bergad portrays hacienda life differently. In his work about the economic and social causes of the 1868 *Grito de Lares*, Bergad describes how the rising coffee industry in the mid-nineteenth century violently disrupted the peasantry's way of life. See Bergad, *Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). The 1880s and 1890s generation liberals began the tradition of romanticizing the coffee hacendado class.

31. Zeno Gandía, *La Charca*, 19.
32. Ibid., emphasis mine.
33. Nouzeilles also reads this scene and uncovers a series of practices for labor and social control meant to protect markets and property that complements and supports my reading about a focus on labor and paternalism as a regulatory practice. See Nouzeilles, "Modernidad e hygiene racial en *La charca*," 96–97.
34. *La Charca*, trans. Kal Wagenheim, 46.
35. Ibid., 23.
36. I have borrowed from the Kal Wagenheim translation but modified it to offer a more complete repertoire of Zeno Gandía's medical vocabulary. *La Charca*, trans. Kal Wagenheim, 50–51.
37. Again, I draw mostly on Wagenheim's translation, p. 51, with some slight modifications.
38. Ibid., 25 (my translation).
39. *La Charca*, trans. Kal Wagenheim, 72.
40. Ibid. 53.
41. References to blackness or African heritage appeared sporadically in Zeno Gandía's work, only to underscore servility or backwardness. See Zeno Gandía, *Garduña*, 45.
42. The racial dichotomy between people of the interior and people from the coast has transcended time. In the present, most Puerto Ricans believe *the jíbaro,* the mountain peasant, was the descendant of white European immigrants. Blackness, on the other hand, was limited to the coast. It is not a coincidence that in the popular imaginary, real blackness only exists in two areas: Loíza and the San Antón barrio in Ponce.
43. Ginetta Candelario encounters a similar dynamic in the Dominican Republic. See the first chapter of *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
44. Ibid., 183. I modified Kal Wagenheim's translation, 186.
45. Trigo, "Anemia and Vampires," 111; Nouzeilles, "La Esfinge del Monstruo," 100–101.
46. Early-twentieth-century working-class writers consistently break this form of silence about labor and sexual exploitation. In doing so, they end up producing other forms of erasure, such as their own role in the exploitation of their working-class female counterparts. See Findlay,"Free Love and Domesticity: Sexuality and the Shaping of Working-Class Feminism in Puerto Rico, 1900–1917," in *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: The Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean*, ed. Aviva Chomsky and Aldo Lauria-Santiago (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 229–59.
47. Zeno Gandía, *La Charca*, (trad. by Wagenheim), 187; 190.
48. Ibid., 188.
49. Manuel Zeno Gandía, *Higiene de la infancia al alcance de las madres de familia* (San Francisco: History Co., 1891).
50. Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
51. See Román, *Governing Spirits: Religion, Miracles, and Spectacles in Cuba and Puerto Rico 1898-1956 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)*; Helg, *Our Rightful Share*; and Bronfman, *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1901–1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
52. Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
53. Ibid., 39.
54. For a comprehensive study on the mutual constitution of sexuality, gender, and race in Puerto Rico at the turn of the twentieth century, see Findlay, *Imposing Decency*.

55. Brau, *Historia de Puerto Rico* (1892, Río Piedras: Editiorial Edil, 1966) and *La colonización de Puerto Rico: Desde el descubrimiento de la isla hasta la reversión a la corona española de los privilegios de Colón* (1907, San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1981).
56. See Fernández Méndez, *Salvador Brau y su tiempo: Drama y paradoja de una sociedad* (San Juan: Ediciones "El Cemi," 1974).
57. Cortés Zavala, "La memoria nacional puertorriqueña en Salvador Brau," *Revista de Indias* 57, no. 211 (1997), 765–66.
58. Ibid., 761–82.
59. Brau, *Disquisiciones sociológicas y otros ensayos* (Río Piedras: Ediciones del Instituto de Literatura, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1956). I also used a later edition, *Ensayos (disquisiciones sociológicas)* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Edil, 1972).
60. Cortés Zavala also notes the "cultural" interpretation of history in Brau. Cortés Zavala, "La memoria nacional," 767–68.
61. Brau and Del Valle Atiles knew each other very well. In one of his essays ("Rafael Cordero"), Brau revealed that Del Valle Atiles had been a student of the black teacher Rafael Cordero. I believe these two men read each others' work and engaged in personal discussions facilitated by their affiliation with the *Ateneo*. Therefore it is not surprising that some of their historical interpretations coincide.
62. The serialized articles appear in volumes I through IV (1887–89) of *Revista Puertorriqueña*.
63. Brau contends that the *Bando de Policía y Buen Gobierno* was enacted in 1837. However, in his research, Navarro García states that it was implemented in 1838. In my own research, I use the latter date. See Navarro García, *Control Social*.
64. Brau, "Las clases jornaleras," in *Disquisiciones sociológicas* (1956), –173.
65. Ibid., 181.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., 173.
68. Brau, "La campesina," in *Disquisiciones sociológicas (1956)*, 207–36. Debates among liberals about the role of women appeared constantly on the *Revista Puertorriqueña*. For instance, Alejandro Infiesta, an elementary school inspector for the southern district, agreed with Brau on the need to educate women and turn them into the main educators of the family. For Infiesta, teaching was an extension of women's maternal instincts. In the article, Infiesta displays his knowledge of child psychology and development that infused his work as a school inspector. Infiesta took advantage of this forum to denounce concubinage, a practice prejudicial to children and society in general. Infiesta associated social degeneracy with female sexuality. Alejandro Infiesta, "Educación de la campesina puertorriqueña," *Revista Puertorriqueña* 1:444–51. The essay "La mujer" by Fernando López Tuero is an example of a negative response to the debate over female education. López Tuero's essay argues that although men and women were equally valuable to society, they performed different roles. He believed in the division of labor, in which women's duty was to remain at home and reproduce. If women were to receive any education, that knowledge should only be related to her duties as a mother. See López Tuero, "La mujer: Estudios sociales," *Revista Puertorriqueña* 4:677–90; 845–59. See Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 64–76, for a discussion of how women stretched the role liberal men ascribed to them in family and society. These feminists advocated for women's education, economic self-sufficiency, and the transformation of gender relations within marriages. However, these elite white women accepted the class and racial limits of the liberal discourse.

69. I am borrowing the notion of monstruosity as linked to racial miscegenation developed by Nouzeilles, “La esfinge del monstruo.”
70. Salvador Brau, “La campesina,” in *Disquisiciones sociológicas* (1972), 116.
71. The feminization of the teaching profession in Puerto Rico materialized as a result of post-1898 US policies.
72. Brau, “La campesina,” 234, in the 1956 edition.
73. Fernández Juncos, “Ante el retrato del maestro Rafael,” *Revista Puertorriqueña* Tomo V, 835; J. A. Daubón, “El maestro Rafael,” ibid., 916–19.
74. For an example, see Gómez Tejera and Cruz López, *La escuela puertorriqueña*. I thank Solsirée del Moral for her insights on the pervasiveness of Cordero’s figure in twentieth-century narratives about schooling in Puerto Rico (personal communication, October 2, 2010).
75. Peter Wade proposes a similar cultural/political practice in his anthropological study of *mestizaje* in Colombia. See Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
76. Brau, “Rafael Cordero,” in *Ensayos*, 158–59.
77. Brau, “Rafael Cordero,” in *Disquisiciones sociológicas*, 270.
78. Brau, “Rafael Cordero,” in ibid., 261–73.
79. Brau, “La danza puertorriqueña,” in ibid., 191–206.
80. Brau, “La danza puertorriqueña,” in *Ensayos*, 88–89.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. The author elaborated on the island’s political affinities with Spain in the essay “Dos factores de la colonización de Puerto Rico,” in *Ensayos*, 215–45.
84. Few scholars have done extensive work on Del Valle Atiles.
85. Del Valle Atiles and Brau were active participants in the 1880s debate on education reform.
86. In 1897, the Autonomista Party split into two new organizations: the Liberal Fusionista Party and the Autonomista Ortodoxo Party. For a long time, the autonomistas fought over the best strategy to achieve autonomy for the island. One camp, fusionistas, advocated for a close alliance with a Spanish political party, while a second camp, ortodoxos, believed that such a strategy compromised the idea of autonomy. See the brief political narrative in the introduction to Part II of this book.
87. Del Valle Atiles, *El campesino puertorriqueño sus condiciones físicas, intelectuales y morales, causas que las determinan y medios para mejorarlas*. (Puerto Rico: Tip. de J. González Font, 1887).
88. In a treatise on hygiene written during these years, the doctor stated that “health” and “hygiene” should be the basis of all social policies. Del Valle Atiles, *Cartilla de Higiene* (Puerto Rico: Imp. de José González Font, 1886).
89. Del Valle Atiles uses race and ethnicity interchangeably.
90. As Del Valle Atiles was not a historian, his narrative lacks historical specificity. The author most likely based his narrative on Salvador Brau’s historical account.
91. Tomás Blanco appropriated this same rhetoric in his discussion about miscegenation on the island in an article originally published in 1937. Tomás Blanco, *El prejuicio racial en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Editorial Biblioteca de Autores Puertorriqueños, 1948). For a direct reference, see Del Valle Atiles, *El campesino*, 12.
92. Del Valle Atiles, “Eugénesis,” 9–21; and “Puerto Rico ante la eugénica,” 56–84 in *Conferencias dominicales dadas en la Biblioteca Insular.* vol. 1 (San Juan, PR: Bureau of Supplies, Printing, and Transportation, 1913–14).
93. Del Valle Atiles, *El campesino*, 92.

94. Ibid.
95. Ibid., 114.
96. Ibid., 142.
97. Ibid., 158.
98. Ibid.
99. Nancy Leys Stepan provides an insightful analysis of the circulation of scientific knowledge between European and Latin American intellectuals. Stepan argues that Latin American scientists and intellectuals modified European knowledge to fit the Latin American realities and their political and economic projects. See Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics."*
100. The *Carta Autónomica* granted a local parliament with extensive powers, representation in the Spanish Courts, and (male) universal suffrage. See more details in José Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 5–20.
101. Cubano-Iguina, "Political Culture and Male Mass-Party Formation in Late-Nineteenth Century Puerto Rico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (November 1998), 631–62.
102. See P. C. Timothée, *Revista Puertorriqueña* (1893), 5.

CHAPTER 3

1. AGPR, Tribunal Superior Civil de Ponce, 1870–1879 (henceforth TSCP, 1870–1879), box IRS-C. Documents of the Tribunal Superior Civil and the Tribunal Superior Criminal de Ponce (henceforth TSCrP) were not yet catalogued at the time of my research. I marked boxes unofficially. This one is IRS-C. The dates in the documents available for this case ranged from April 1873 to November 1874. The town of Santa Isabel belonged to the administrative department of Ponce. Ponce was the island's fifth administrative department, which included Coamo, Barros, Barranquitas, Aiboinito, Adjuntas, Yauco, Guayanilla, Juana Díaz, Peñuelas, and Santa Isabel. See Girón, *Ponce*, 173.
2. AGPR, TSPC, 1870–1879, box IRS-C.
3. Ibid.
4. "Trata sobre la creación de un monumento conmemorativo de la abolición de la esclavitud en Puerto Rico," AHMP, Ay., Secr., Obras Públicas (henceforth Obr. Pub.), Proyectos (henceforth Proy.), Monumentos (henceforth Mon.), 1890–1919, Caja S320, Expediente S320–1. I want to thank the AHMP director, Ms. Gladys Tormes, for directing me to these documents.
5. In regard to Ponce as Puerto Rico's alternative capital in the nineteenth century, see Quintero Rivera, *Ponce: La Capital Alterna: Sociología de la sociedad civil y la cultura urbana en la historia de la relación entre clase, "raza" y nación en Puerto Rico* (Ponce: Ponceños de Verdad, Centro de Investigaciones Sociales de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2003).
6. In a letter to Ponce's mayor and the municipal council, Mr. Antonio Alfau stated that the king had been informed about the proposal and had agreed to allow the construction of the monument that would commemorate such a glorious event in the history of the "*patria*" (homeland; in reference to Spain). He noted the king wanted to become a primary economic contributor to the project. AHMP, Ay., Secr., Obr. Pub., Proy., Mon., 1890–1919, Caja S320, Exp. S320–1–1. Although the lists of contributors are incomplete and don't consistently provide personal information on donators, there were two former slaves: Simón Rodríguez and Agustín Félix, from the municipality of Barros. In

addition, the lists registered several groups of hacienda workers as financial contributors. It is plausible that some of these workers were former slaves who remained working in plantations.

7. See José Mirelis's address to the Municipal Assembly in May 20 1880, AHMP, Ay., Secr., Obr. Pub., Proy., Mon., 1890–1919, Caja S320, Exp. S320–1–1.
8. By 1888, the plaza was in place, but the monument project had been abandoned. In late 1888, the municipal assembly tried to gather support to finish the project, but according to the 1897 municipal council, discussions on the topic of those efforts had been unsuccessful. The monument was finally built in the mid-twentieth century.
9. See Ramón Marín, *La villa de Ponce considerada en tres distintas épocas: Estudio histórico, descriptivo y estadístico hasta fines del año 1876* (Ponce, PR: Establecimiento Tip. "El Vapor," 1877); and Neumann, *Verdadera y auténtica historia de la ciudad de Ponce* (1911; San Juan, PR: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1987). Also see Ramos Mattei, *La hacienda azucarera: Su crecimiento y crisis en Puerto Rico (siglo XIX)* (San Juan, PR: CEREP, 1981); *La sociedad del azúcar en Puerto Rico, 1870–1910* (Río Piedras, PR: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1988; Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico: The Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800–1850* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); and Baralt, *La Buena Vista, 1833–1904: Estancia de frutos menores, fábrica de harinas y hacienda cafetalera* (San Juan, PR: Fideicomiso de Conservación de Puerto Rico, 1988).
10. On the coffee industry, see Bergad, *Coffee and the Growth of Agrarian Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983); Buitrago Ortiz, *Haciendas cafetaleras y clases terratenientes en el Puerto Rico decimonónico* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1982); Picó, *Amargo Café: Los pequeños y medianos caficultores de Utuado en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1981); and Gil-Bermejo García, *Panorama histórico de la agricultura en Puerto Rico* (Sevilla, España: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1970).
11. Many wards changed their names or redefined their boundaries as the century advanced. See Municipio de Ponce, *Memoria suplementaria al mapa de límites del municipio y sus barrios,* Memoria no. 27, 1953 (San Juan, PR: Junta de Planificación, 1974).
12. Ramón Marín, *La villa de Ponce*, 185–95.
13. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asamblea Municipal (henceforth Asam. Mun.), Actas Años 1874–1875, Cajas G86-G105 and AHMP, Ay., Sec., Seg. Púb., Solicitudes, Creación de Barrios, Caja S114, Exp. S114–1.
14. According to the 1875 census of the Playa barrio, the population amounted to 2,184 people. According to the 1899 census, the population had doubled to 4,660 people. See AHMP, Ay., Sec., Registros, Censos, Habitantes (henceforth Hab.), Caja S551; and Neumann, *Verdadera y auténtica historia de la ciudad de Ponce*, 88.
15. Quintero Rivera, *Ponce: La Capital Alterna*, 63.
16. See the minutes for the municipal council meetings of March 2, 1888, and June 6, 1888. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Act., Años 1887–1888, Caja G96.
17. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Reg., Cen., Hab., Caja S551.
18. Councilmen conveniently agreed that the key solution was to provide employment to all these working-class men. The council decided to employ the incoming people in the construction of the connecting road between Adjuntas and Ponce. The well-known liberal abolitionist Ramón Emeterio Betances supported this decision. The construction of this road was crucial for Ponce's commercial development because Adjuntas was an important coffee-producing town and the produce could be stored at the warehouses and shipped out by trading houses in the Playa barrio. See the minutes for the meeting on July 9, 1887, AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Serie Actas, años 1887, caja G95. Many of the men employed at the road had been arrested and sentenced to work on road

construction. A large number of those arrested and sentenced were *libertos* and men of African descent.

19. March 20, 1887, "Ramón Elices, Ponce y su término municipal: Observaciones generales." AGPR, Gob. Esp., Ponce 1870–1880, Caja 535, Entry 290.
20. The *Bando* Elices issued in 1886 was also a response to a second problem: the city's lighting system malfunctioned suddenly and left the downtown area in the dark. Perceiving the local situation as a potential moment for armed struggle, the mayor resorted to strengthening vigilance over the city's inhabitants. "La noche triste de Ponce," *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, September 29, 1886, p. 6.
21. *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, "Coalición de la Dignidad," October 6, 1886.
22. March 20, 1887, "Ramón Elices, Ponce y su término municipal: Observaciones generales," AGPR, Gob. Esp., Ponce 1870–1880, Caja 535, Entry 290.
23. Cited in Scarano, *Puerto Rico: cinco siglos de historia* (México: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 597.
24. *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, "Por donde viene la muerte: Atropellos en Camuy" and "Por donde se va la vida: Atropellos en Morovis," September 8, 1886, p. 1; "Por donde saltó la liebre: Atropellos en Ponce y conflicto municipal," September 22, 1886, p. 3. *La Revista de Puerto Rico* emerged in 1886 in the capital city, San Juan. The well-known liberal Francisco Cepeda founded the journal, and many other important liberal leaders like Mario Braschi, José Abad, Manuel Zeno Gandía, Diego y Texera, Félix Matos Bernier, and Agustín Navarrete wrote for the paper. The colonial government closed the newspaper's headquarters in October 1887, but it reappeared later in July 1888 with headquarters in Ponce and under the direction of Mario Braschi. The newspaper favored an autonomist stance, which became clear in their article "La asimilación." See "La asimilación," *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, September 8, 1886, p. 1.
25. See Rivera Rivera, "El problema de la vagancia en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX"; and Estévez Martínez, "La lepra que urge estirpar."
26. "Elices, Ponce y su término municipal: Observaciones generales," AGPR, Gob. Esp., Ponce, Caja 535, Entry 290.
27. Governor Salvador Meléndez signed this circular letter. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Alc., Circ., Años 1817-, Caja G36, Exp. G36–1–10.
28. Gervasio García, "Economía y trabajo en el Puerto Rico del siglo XIX," *Historia Mexicana* 38, no. 4 (1989), 855–79.
29. *Agregado* describes a work and living arrangement in which landless peasants and their families were able to live in a piece of land without paying rent in exchange for labor or a share of their crop. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Alc., Circ., Años 1817–, Caja G36, November 23, 1818, Exp. G36–4–5.
30. Ibid., March 6, 1828, Exp. G36-11-2.
31. Ibid., September 19, 1820, Exp. G36-9-8.
32. Ibid, Circular N. 130, October 30, 1819, Exp. G36-6-5.
33. Ibid., Circular N. 30, October 21, 1820, Exp. G36-9-2.
34. The physician Ramón Emeterio Betances was a well-known abolitionist and separatist leader.
35. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Reg., Censos, Hab., Caja S550.
36. Ibid.
37. This translates as "free pardo." Pardo is a term signaling racial mixture. See the entry for fugitive José Agudo Gavera. "Registro para la toma de razón de requisitorias Ciudad de Ponce, Año 1883–1885," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Subsección Judicial, Serie Ordenes Judiciales, Años 1840, Caja S194, Exp. S194–15, Entry No. 37, January 31, 1883.
38. Ibid., Entry No. 110, April 17, 1883.

39. Ibid., Entry No. 60, February 20, 1883; No. 69, March 1, 1883; No. 76, March 8, 1883; No. 112, April 20, 1883.
40. See the relationship between occupation and race in the barrio Cantreras' census in AHMP, Ay., Sec., Reg., Censos, Hab., Caja S551.
41. Ibid., Exp. S136A-2, Entry 66, February 18, 1875.
42. The police found Calabozo on August 11, 1875, and sentenced him to thirty days of public works on the road from Adjuntas to Ponce. Ibid., Entry 246, August 11, 1875.
43. In addition to petty theft and absence from work, a third type of crime common in the register is domestic violence against women. The recurrence of physical attacks and aggression against women was significantly high. These crimes ranged from verbal fights between men and women to physical abuse (hitting, cutting with a machete, rape, and homicide). Interestingly, the punishment administered to male perpetrators did not respond directly to the severity of the crimes. The sentences for robbery, vagrancy, and physical assault against women were very similar, ranging from one to three months in prison (and consequently in public works). Authorities refused to actively pursue cases of domestic violence as they did cases of robbery and vagrancy. In fact, cases of domestic violence were often dismissed.
44. The case of Josefa Capó took place in the nearby municipality of Santa Isabel, not in Ponce itself. I use this case, not because there were not similar cases for Ponce, but because of the abundant details provided in this particular case. AGPR, Judicial, Audiencia Territorial, Criminal, Juzgado de Ponce, Fecha 1879, Caja 46.
45. On race making and systems of forced labor, see Santiago-Valles, "'Bloody Legislations,' 'Entombment,' and Race-Making in the Spanish Atlantic: Differentiated Spaces of General(ized) Confinement in Spain and Puerto Rico, 1750–1840," *Radical History Review*, no. 96 (Fall 2006), 33–57
46. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Reg., Censos, Hab., Caja S550. Occupations were systematically registered in other censuses, especially in the urban barrios.
47. These descriptions appear in more detail in the *Registro de requisitorias*, but they also appear in the other police registers.
48. "Registro para la toma de razón de requisitorias Ciudad de Ponce, Año 1883–1885," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Jud., Ord. Jud., 1840, Caja S194, Entry No. 13, December 4, 1882.
49. See more on these descriptions in Rivera Casellas, "Cuerpo politico, memoria racial, escritura y diaspora," in *Contrapunto de género y raza en Puerto Rico*, ed. Idsa E. Alegría Ortega and Palmira N. Ríos González (San Juan, PR: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2005: 115–34); and Nistal-Moret, *Esclavos prófugos y cimarrones: Puerto Rico, 1770–1870* (Río Piedras, SJ: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1984), 123.
50. See series of articles in *Revista Puertorriqueña*, Año II, Tomo II, 1888.
51. Read the entire series *Crónicas de un mundo enfermo*.
52. "Registro para la toma de razón de requisitorias Ciudad de Ponce, Año 1883–1885," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Jud., Ord. Jud., 1840, Caja S194, Entry No. 56, febrero 19, 1883.
53. The discourse on hygiene was all encompassing, calling for the cleansing of bodies (medical treatment), minds (education), and the environment (houses, streets) in which individuals lived. Many social groups welcomed those hygiene-related reforms. The proceedings of the municipal council during the 1880s and 1890s registered numerous requests of people demanding schools, teachers, and resources (books, paper, and pencils). The municipal authorities did not have the resources to fulfill these requests. Some initiatives came from the working classes, such as the teacher who agreed to give free classes to adults in the Playa barrio, the artisan's reading circles, and the few schools for *libertos*. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1874–1898, Cajas G86-G109. Lidio

Cruz Monclova, *Historia de Puerto Rico, Siglo XIX* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1957), 2:1, 273n17.

54. "Copiador de oficios dirigidos al Señor Juez de Primera Instancia, año 1874 y 1875," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Jud., Lib. Cop., Gen., 1872–1897, Caja S136-A, Exp. S136A-1, Entry No. 370, October 8, 1874.
55. AGPR, FGE, Esclavos 1860–1874, Caja 69, Entry 23. Also see Matos Rodríguez, *Women in San Juan, 1820–1868* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001) and Martínez-Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space: Charity and Its Wards in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 72–90.
56. Martínez-Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space*, 72–90.
57. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1879–1880, Caja G89, April 29, 1880, Entry #9.
58. See Guillermo Baralt, *Desde el mirador de Próspero*, vol. 1.
59. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1876–1877, Caja G87, October 20, 1876, Entry #5: "Proyecto de ensanche de la ciudad de Ponce."
60. These requests were common through the late 1870s to the 1890s. For one example, see ibid., January 24, 1877, Entry #12: "Permiso a la Sra. Cristina Petit."
61. Tereza Lara's request is a good example. In 1877, she requested permission to move her house from the San Antón barrio to Aurora Street. The council granted it. Ibid., February 7, 1877, Entry #2.
62. AHMP, Ay., Alc., Circulares, 1817-, Caja G36, Exp. G36–23–10. In the *Circular de Gobierno General sobre incendios, junio 6 de 1863* (Ponce: Establecimiento Tip. De M. López, 1893), the governor general stated that these measurements emerged in response to the fires in Ponce and Arecibo, two important economic centers at the end of the century.
63. Francisco del Valle Atiles, *Cartilla de Higiene* (Puerto Rico: Imp. de José González Font, 1886), 35. In his novels, Francisco Zeno Gandía often employed scenes through which he could describe in detail the social interactions among popular classes. Zeno Gandía, *La Charca* in *Obras completas* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1973), 1:85–95; and *Garduña*, ibid., 2:93. Obviously, Del Valle Atiles and Zeno Gandía were not the only ones concerned about these public sites.
64. In one meeting, a councilman stated, "There have been several dances in the haciendas and we have to remind them that to have dances you have to obtain the proper permits." AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1874–1875, Caja G86, May 13, 1874, Entry #13.
65. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Alc., Circulares, 1817–, Caja G-36, Exp. G36-24-5.
66. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Subsección Beneficiencia (henceforth ben.), Serie Actas, Subserie Junta de Sanidad, Años 1885–1890, Caja S262, Exp. S262, July 23, 1884. These interventions were not unusual and had taken place few years earlier, coinciding with the abolition of slavery. See the Ponce mayor's mandate to the *comisarios de barrios* in the newspaper *El Avisador*, November 10, 1874. The mandates published in *El Avisador* in October 6, 1874, asked *alcaldes de barrio* to oversee food preparation and selling in grocery stores and taverns as well as to check that *libertos* in the area complied with contract obligations, to enforce anticoncubinage regulations, and to persecute vagrants.
67. Municipal authorities often recognized the fragmentation of their power as they moved farther from the downtown area. On several occasions, the municipal council tried to organize an *effective* rural police, a project that never crystallized under Spanish rule. In the rural areas, authorities relied heavily on the *comisarios de barrios*.
68. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1886–1887, Caja G94, December 17, 1886.

69. See the analysis of freedwomen's occupations in Chapter 1. Also see Merino Falú, *Raza, género y clase social*, 125–43.
70. See the laundresses' petition to open the *fuente pública* in AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1886–1887, Caja G95, March 4, 1887, Entry #8.
71. During the 1880s, the Plaza del Mercado was topic of constant regulation. One example is in AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1886–1887, Caja G94, April 15, 1886, Entry #10.
72. "La moral pública en Ponce, VII," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 19, 1890, 2.
73. *La Bomba*, March 17, 1895, 2. The newspaper had written about this house in earlier issues.
74. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Serie Denuncias, Subserie Prostitución, Años 1897–1899, Caja S300, Exp. S300–33.
75. "La moral pública en Ponce, IX," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 26, 1890, 3.
76. "Relación de las mujeres de vida licenciosa que asisten en la actualidad en esta ciudad," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Serie Tratado de Higiene, Años 1893–1918, Caja S298, Exp. S298–2.
77. The women listed came from the towns of Cabo Rojo, Guayama, Arecibo, Guayanilla, Mayaguez, Isabela, Juana Díaz, Yauco, Santa Isabel, Humacao, Aguadilla, San Juan, Peñuelas, San German, Vieques, Caguas, Arecibo, Coamo, Cayey, Naguabo, Aibonito, and Río Piedras.
78. At the same time, the San Juan authorities published a similar set of regulations for prostitutes—the Expedientes de Seguridad Pública—indicating that authorities there and in other towns around the island were dealing with prostitution in a similar way. See AGPR, FGE, Agencias de Gobierno, Seguridad Pública, Cajas 376 and 379; Vázquez Lazo, *Meretrices: La prostitución en Puerto Rico, 1876–1917* (Hato Rey: Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 2008), 82–132.
79. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 88–100; and Vázquez Lazo, *Meretrices*, 134–63.
80. "Traslado de las meretrices del hospital de higiene al Tricoche," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Tratado de Higiene, 1893–1918, Caja S299, Exp. S298–3, July 7, 1897.
81. "Oficio del Doctor Rondón interesado se disponga la completa incomunicación del asilo de higiene," ibid., Exp. S298–5, November 21, 1899.
82. The disregard for prostitutes' health is exemplified by the efforts of the hospital's administration, who, by arguing that the institution was too old and overcrowded, suggested the relocation of prostitutes to a back room in the *hospitalillo* for the insane. That back room was used to store utensils and tools to clean the latrines. I see this suggestion as symbolic of the elites' perception of these working-class black and brown women. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1895, Caja G104, April 19, 1895, Entry #25.
83. See the register of trials for Ponce in 1899. See "Juicios celebrados por el tribunal de la policia en 1899 and 1900," AHMP, Ay., Sec., Jud., Serie Juicios, Años 1866–1899, Caja 174, Exp. S174–3.
84. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Tratado de Higiene, 1893–1918, Caja S298, Exp. S298–7.
85. Police logs make references to coachmen who drove prostitutes around the city and to owners of brothels. Some of the proceedings of the municipal council meetings registered discussion about police officers who accepted bribes from brothel owners. Small businessmen often felt prostitutes were crucial to attract a diverse clientele to their establishments. This is the argument that appeared at a 1920 assembly meeting during the second antiprostitution campaign. While this argument is made few decades later, it is feasible to believe that *pulpería*, cafeteria, and *ventorrillo* owners in the 1890s also profited indirectly from prostitution.

86. See *La Bomba*, February 7, 1895, 2. In comparison to the newspapers *La Democracia* or *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, *La Bomba*'s articles and its language denote that it intended to reach to a wider audience. In 1895 (the only issues that remain today), *La Bomba* published numerous editorial comments complaining about prostitutes and gambling.
87. Mayoral y Barnés's use of the title *Don* suggests that he was probably white, literate, and a member of the artisan upper strata.
88. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Tratado de Higiene, 1893–1918, Caja S298, Exp. S298–4. Eileen Findlay provides an insightful analysis of Mayoral y Barnés's antiprostitution campaign in *Imposing Decency*, 101–9. Findlay analyzes in detail Mayoral y Barnés's writings in the liberal newspaper *La Democracia*.
89. *La Democracia*, January 27, 1899.
90. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Tratado de Higiene, 1893–1918, Caja S298, Exp. S298–6. This exchange of letters and complaints took place exactly during the transition months from Spanish to US colonial rule. For this reason, this letter was sent to the secretary of the Department of State.
91. AHMP, Ay., Sec., Ben., Tratado de Higiene, 1893–1918, Caja S298.
92. Mayoral worked as a salesman, an occupation reserved mostly for white men. According to Cubano Iguina's study of Arecibo, most salesmen were of Spanish origin. Cubano Iguina, *El hilo en el laberinto*, 50–52. In the 1870s barrio censuses of Ponce, most salesmen were also described as white. See AHMP, Ay., Sec., Reg., Censos, Hab., Caja S550.
93. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 105–9
94. "Carta de Isaura a Julia y Graciela, Ponce, 19 de Diciembre de 1870," *La Azucena. Revista Decenal. Literatura, Ciencias, Artes, Viajes y Costumbres. Dedicada al Bello Sexo Pto-Riqueño*, December 20, 1870, 1.
95. Ramón Marín, *La villa de Ponce*, reprinted in *Las fiestas populares de Ponce* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1994), 175–269.
96. Ibid., 68.
97. Ibid., 45.
98. Ibid., 42.
99. Ibid., 45 (emphasis mine).
100. Ibid., 45
101. Ibid., 45.
102. Ibid., 51.
103. Ibid., 51.
104. García and Quintero Rivera, *Desafío y solidaridad: Breve historia del movimiento obrero puertorriqueño* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1986), 13–34.
105. *El Artesano*, January 25, 1874, 4.
106. Ibid.
107. López Cantos, *Los puertorriqueños: Mentalidad y actitudes (siglo XVIII)* (San Juan: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico and Ediciones Puerto, 2000), 127–81.
108. Chinea Serrano, *Race and Labor in the Hispanic Caribbean: The West Indian Immigrant Worker Experience in Puerto Rico, 1800–1850* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 252–80.
109. Ibid., 226–33.
110. Casanovas, *Bread or Bullets! Urban Labor and Spanish Colonialism in Cuba, 1850–1898* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 53.
111. Luis A. Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom*, 90–168.
112. In an article for *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, also written under the pseudonym of Isaura, Alejandro Tapia y Rivera complained about the economic situation of poor women, who were forced to work in hard occupations (as hat makers, seamstresses, embroiderers)

under extraneous conditions. See *La Revista de Puerto Rico*, August 26 and 28, 1886, 6, 3–4.

113. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1887, Caja G95, March 4, 1887, Entry #8. Laundresses had an early history of organization, dating back to the 1850s in San Juan. See Matos, "Economy, Society and Urban Life : Women in Nineteenth Century, San Juan, Puerto Rico (1820-1870)" (PhD diss.: University of Columbia, 1992), 237; and Rodríguez Santana, "Las mujeres y la higiene: La construcción de 'lo social' en San Juan, 1880–1885," in *Historia y género: Vidas y relatos de mujeres en el Caribe*, comp. Mario R. Cancel (San Juan, PR: Asociación Puertorriqueña de Historiadores; Posdata, 1997), 80–95.
114. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Asam. Mun., Actas, 1887, Caja G95, March 4, 1887, Entry #8.
115. See request for permission for the organization of the artisans' mutual-aid society in AHMP, Ay., Gob. Asam. Mun., Actas, 1874–75, Caja G86. In 1887, a mixed group of city dwellers, among them artisans, requested permission to organized the *Biblioteca Pública Popular*. See ibid., Caja G95, February 4, 1887.
116. *Reglamento para el aprendizaje de artes y oficios*, 1860, AGPR, Obras Públicas, Asuntos Varios, Caja 78.
117. Ibid.
118. Since 1837, Cuba and Puerto Rico were administered through the *Leyes Especiales* (a set of decrees) instead of the Spanish Constitution. They also lost the right to elect representatives to the courts. After the 1868 *Revolución Gloriosa* in Spain, the Spanish government reinstituted colonial representation in the courts and granted individual freedoms such as the right of association, which enabled the formation of the Puerto Rican Liberal Party. Once Spanish counterrevolutionary forces in the peninsula regained power in 1874, Puerto Rico lost representation in the Spanish courts again, centralization of local matters under the island governor-general increased, and voting rights were further limited by higher property qualifications, which benefited only the wealthy, most politically conservative classes. After the 1878 Paz de Zajón—the treaty that ended the armed conflict in Cuba—the islands regained limited representation in the Spanish courts, but other promised reforms to expand local political rights did not materialized. Instead, censorship and persecution grew in intensity. See Sendras y Burín, *Como se gobierna en Puerto Rico* (Madrid: Imp. de Burgase, 1886).
119. "La abolición," *El Derecho*, May 17, 1873, 1–2. In the early 1870s, the liberal newspaper *El Derecho* was very careful in its criticism of the colonial regime. All articles asserted loyalty to Spain, although the journalists always called for reforms such as the abolition of slavery, free labor, and free trade.
120. "Gacetillas," *El Derecho*, June 12, 1873, 3.
121. "Excmo. Sr. Gobernador Civil de Puerto Rico," *El Derecho*, June 7, 1873, 1.
122. See Branche, *Colonialism and Race in Luso-Hispanic Literature* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006) and Chude-Sukei, *Bert Williams, Black-on-Black Minstrelsy and the African Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). Among white working classes in nineteenth-century, northern United States, these cross-racial performances were ridden with ambiguity instead of a manifestation of white absolute power or a mere form of white racial aversion. See Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 6. For a study of blackface performative practices in Cuba since the 1830s onward, see Lane, *Blackface Cuba, 1840–1895* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 143. The black subject in Cuba (the character of the *bozal*, the representation of the African slave, and later the *negro catedrático*, a black figure with pretensions of professorial-like knowledge and taste) progressively became the vehicle through which also to articulate anticolonial affects.

Racial impersonations became popular because of their capacity to evoke a sense of proximity among different racialized subjects, and they became an important operative device in the ongoing articulation of the *mestizaje* fantasy at the core of the Cuban nation. In Puerto Rico, the literate classes engaged in similar practices of white racial impersonation in journalistic accounts in the press, literary works, and theatrical performances since midcentury onward. For earlier racial impersonations as a way of conveying critique to colonial situations, see Curet, *Los amos hablan: unas conversaciones entre un esclavo y su amo, aparecidas en el Ponceño 1852-53* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Cultural, 1986). For representations in *costumbrita* plays and *bufo* theater in Puerto Rico after 1870s, see Morfi, *Historia crítica de un siglo de teatro puertorriqueño* (San Juan, PR: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueño, 1980), 109–18. For blackface performances in the twentieth century, see Rivero, *Tuning Out Blackness: Race and Nation in the History of Puerto Rican Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 22–66; and Jiménez-Muñoz, "¡Xiomara mi hejmana! Diplo y el travestismo racial en el Puerto Rico de los años cincuenta," *Bordes*, no. 2 (1995), 15–27.

123. See Scarano, "The Jíbaro Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745–1823," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 5 (December 1996), 1398–1431.
124. "Cata Abieta: A l'amo Menisaba," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 26, 1890; Scarano, "The Jíbaro Masquerade," 1398–431.
125. "Los negros catedráticos," *El Buscapié*, May 20, 1887, in Ramos Perea, *Literatura puertorriqueña negra*, 319.
126. See the 1896 debate between the artisan newspaper *Revista Blanca* and the more bourgeois journal *La Democracia* in ibid., 65.
127. One can see the marking of the *jíbaro* as the outsider when contrasting Alonso Pizarro's pieces *Me saqué la lotería* (1886) and *Cosas del día* (1892), in Ramos-Perea, *Literatura negra del siglo* XIX, 244–63. Milián, *El poder del obrero,* in *Teatro obrero*, ed. Dávila, 239–82.
128. See Eduardo Conde, "A Niño Ramón Rivera," *La Miseria*, April 2, 1901, in Ramos-Perea, *Literatura negra del siglo XIX*, 343–44.
129. "Visita del Excmo. Sr. Gobernador Civil á la Villa de Ponce," *El Derecho*, June 2, 1873, 1–2.
130. "Puntos negros," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, October 6, 1886.
131. The *Plan de Ponce* was a program of mild political reforms that fundamentally demanded provincial and municipal autonomy and the reinstitution of individual freedoms. Scarano, *Puerto Rico, cinco siglos de historia*, 595.
132. See articles in the *Revista*: "D. Rafael Fernández de Castro: Sesión 27 de Julio," August 21, 1886; "Los diputados cubanos," August 25, 1886; "El veintitrés de agosto," August 25, 1886; "La abolición de la esclavitud," September 1, 1886; "A la extinción de la esclavitud," January 1, 1887; and "¡Bien por los negros de Cuba!," January 23, 1887.
133. "¡Bien por los negros de Cuba!," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, January 23, 1887.
134. "22 de marzo de 1873," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 21, 1888, 2.
135. Ibid.
136. "1873–1890," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 16, 1890.
137. "Un alcalde esclavista," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, April 2, 1890, 3.
138. Cruz Monclova, *Historia de Puerto Rico*, 2:1n17.
139. "El General de la Torre," *La Libertad*, February 27, 1894, 2.
140. Cubano-Iguina, "Political Culture," 631–62.
141. Public festivities were common throughout the island during the nineteenth century. These festivities constituted rituals that accommodated unusual behavior and disorder in

a limited context while still preserving social hierarchies. See Alvarez Curbelo, "Las fiestas públicas de Ponce: Políticas de la memoria y cultura cívica," in *Los arcos de la memoria: El '98 de los pueblos de puertorriqueños*, ed. Silvia Alvarez Curbelo, Mary Frances Gallart, and Carmen I. Rafucci (San Juan: Oficina del Presidente de la Universidad de Puerto Rico and Asociación Puertorriqueña de Historiadores, 1998), 208–30. Public festivities in Ponce offered a host of activities such as operas, street parades, public concerts and dances, religious liturgies, dramatic representations, literature circles, tertulias, lectures, horse races, religious masses, fireworks, and games. These activities attracted people from all areas within the city boundaries. Therefore public celebrations became one arena in which to build social support for political projects and forge political alliances.

142. Ramón Marín, *Las fiestas populares de Ponce*, 35.
143. "Relación: Sobre festejos públicos para celebrar el nacimiento del heredero del Trono de España, 1880," AGPR, Obr. Pub., Asuntos Varios, Caja 145, Legajo 183.
144. "La fiesta de la Abolición" and "Discursos," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 25, 1888, 2. The title *don* is often associated with social status. Many artisans also used the title, among them mulatto artisans.
145. "La fiesta de la Abolición" and "Discursos," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, March 25, 1888, 2.
146. *La Bomba*, March 24, 1895, 3. This issue of *La Bomba* was in commemoration of the abolition of slavery (March 22).
147. Schechter, "Divergent Perspectives on the *velorio del angelito*," 43–84. In Puerto Rico, this ritual is commonly known as *baquiné*.
148. The 1893 painting *El velorio*, by the famous Puerto Rican artist Francisco Oller, portrays a moment in a *velorio de angelito*. The painting captures the liberal elites' uneasiness with this sort of gathering because of their conflation of social/physical degeneration with blackness. Trigo, *Subjects of Crisis: Race and Gender as Disease in Latin America* ([Middletown, CT]: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 77. See a reproduction of the painting in Hermandad de Artistas Gráficos de Puerto Rico, *Puerto Rico: Arte e identidad* (San Juan, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1998), 44.
149. In the 1870s and early 1880s, Derkes wrote the plays *Ernesto Lefevre o El triunfo del talento*(1872); *La nieta del proscripto*; *Non Nuño Tiburcio de Pereira* (1877); and *Tío Fele* (1883). See Morfi, *Historia crítica*, 115–18; and Ramos-Perea, *Literatura negra*, 104–52.
150. "El obrero puertorriqueño: Sus antecedentes," *El Obrero*, November 19, 1889, 2.
151. The original article in *El Obrero* is not available but is described at length in *Revista de Puerto Rico*, June 18, 1890, 3.
152. The breadmakers' strike started on May 9, 1890. The *Revista de Puerto Rico* reported that the mayor of Ponce incessantly mediated in order to arrive at an agreement, but nothing had been resolved by May 11, 1890. The strike was in demand for better wages. See "Huelga," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, May 11, 1890, 2.
153. *Revista de Puerto Rico.*
154. "Huelga," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, June 18, 1890, 3.
155. Ibid.
156. "Manía de los motes," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, April 11, 1890, 2.
157. "¿Y habra todavia negros integristas?," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, April 13, 1890, 3. *Integrismo* refers to the political ideology supporting the integration of the Caribbean colonies as distinct provinces of Spain but subjected to Spanish constitution.
158. The controversy revolved around the racist remarks published in the newspaper *El Centinela*, the official journal of the Cuban Civil Guard. In turn, the mulatto Jesús M. Pérez wrote an angry response in the newspaper *El Criterio Popular*, published in the town of Remedios, Cuba. *El Centinela* responded by publishing another article reiterating his

previous statements and unleashed a personal attack against Pérez. "¿Y habra todavia negros integristas?," *Revista de Puerto Rico*, April 13, 1890, 3.

CHAPTER 4

1. Guánica Bay closes in the shores of the town of Guánica, which at the time of the invasion was a barrio of Yauco.
2. Negroni, *Historia militar de Puerto Rico* (San Juan, PR: Comisión Puertorriqueña para la Celebración del Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento de América y Puerto Rico, 1992), 309–41. Also see the memoirs of Spanish Army Captain Rivero Méndez, titled *Crónica de la Guerra hispanoamericana en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Edil, 1972).
3. In the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded to the United States all the islands under its possession in the West Indies (Puerto Rico and Cuba), the island of Guam (in the Marianas), and the Philippine Islands. See Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 26–29.
4. Rossiter, *Right Forward, Fours Right, March! A Little Story of Company I* (n.p.: Private Printing, 1899). Rossiter's remembrances and that of other servicemen of the Third Regiment Infantry, Wisconsin Volunteers, who served in Puerto Rico in 1898 are compiled in Rick, ed., *Company G, Third Wisconsin: Spanish American War* (n.p., 1996).
5. A facsimile of the manifesto appears in Rivero Méndez, *Crónica de la Guerra hispanoamericana*, 218.
6. Acta 1 de agosto, 1898 in AHMP, Ay., Gob. Subsección Asam. Mun., Actas, Año 1898, Caja G109.
7. The making of the Plaza de la Abolición and its political ramifications are discussed in Chapter 3.
8. AHMP, Ay., Gob., Alc., Correspondencia, Años 1896–1898, Caja G20, Exp. G-20–17, #5. Alvarez Curbelo describes the festivities in more depth in her essay "Las fiestas públicas de Ponce: Políticas de la memoria y cultura cívica," in *Los arcos de la memoria: El '98 de los pueblos de puertorriqueños*, ed. Silvia Alvarez, Mary Frances Gallart, and Carmen I Rafucci (San Juan, PR: Oficina del Presidente de la Universidad de Puerto Rico and Asociación Puertorriqueña de Historiadores, 1998), 208–30.
9. Letter of Edward C. Niebuhr of Wausau Wisconsin, member of Company G in the 3rd Regiment while stationed in Coamo, August 19, 1898. This letter is transcribed in Stevens, comp., *Letters from the Front, 1898–1945* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1992), 9–10.
10. Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico*, 13–15.
11. *Memoria Presentada al Honorable General Henry sobre extension de la autonomía municipal*, AGPR, FGE, Correspondencia General, Gob., Mun.: Peñuela, Las Piedras, Ponce (abril 1897–1902), Caja 100.
12. López Giménez, *Crónica del '98: El testimonio de un médico puertorriqueño* (Madrid: Ediciones Libertarias, 1998), 51–52.
13. See the discussion about the imposition of the central government over the municipality, specifically in regards to the redrawing of municipal boundaries, in Fernández Aponte, *El cambio de soberanía en Puerto Rico: Otro '98* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992), 101–5.
14. AGPR, FGE, Correspondencia General, Gob., Mun.: Peñuela, Las Piedras, Ponce (April 1897–1902), Caja 100. Also see Ponce's Municipal Council, Minutes of November 11, 1898, Issue #1, AHMP, Ay., Caja G109.

15. See García and Quintero Rivera, *Desafío y solidaridad: Breve historia del movimiento obrero puertorriqueño* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1986).
16. See Picó, *1898: La guerra después de la Guerra* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1987).
17. Santiago-Valle, *"Subjected People" and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994).
18. See contributed essays in *Revista de Indias* 57, no. 211 (September–December 1997).
19. See Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).
20. See Cubano-Iguina, "Political Culture and Male Mass-Party Formation in Late-Nineteenth Century Puerto Rico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (November 1998), 631–62; Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras (crónicas de Puerto Rico)* (San Juan: n.p., 1958), vol. 1 (1929).
21. The Federación Regional was in the making since 1897. The FRT was created in the assembly of October 20, 1898. Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 93.
22. See Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico*.
23. Luis Muñoz Rivera and Matienzo Cintrón were not always political friends, although at times they were active in the same organizations. Matienzo Cintrón was one of Muñoz Rivera's severe critics as the latter became more autocratic within the fusionist camp. For this reason, Matienzo Cintrón progressively moved to the orthodox camp and eventually became a member of the Republicano Party. Later, Matienzo Cintrón sought to create a nonpartisan organization, the Unión Puertorriqueña. For a while, Muñoz Rivera opposed Matienzo's idea. Matienzo did not reject a relationship between the United States and the island. The politician recognized some advantages to that relationship. However, the leader believed that the relationship should be one among equals and that Puerto Ricanness should not be compromised in the process. This rhetoric appealed to the most nationalist faction within the Federal Party, led by José de Diego. Matienzo Cintrón's political career is among the best examples of the constitutive process of Puerto Rican nationalist thought during the first decades of the twentieth century. See Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón: Orientador y guardian de una cultura* (Río Piedras: Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1960), chapters 7–9.
24. For a succinct account of this political realliance, see Scarano, *Puerto Rico*, 720–23. Barbosa opposed Matienzo Cintrón's idea of dissolution of the Republicano and Federal Parties into a new political organization. For Barbosa, it was impossible to ally with the political enemies of the last twenty years. Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 242.
25. Ramos, *Las ideas anexionistas en Puerto Rico bajo la dominación norteamericana* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1987), 16. For Barbosa and other island supporters of the United States, statehood was the culmination of the quest for ultimate autonomy. These politicians perceived the relationship between individual states and the US Federal Government as more of a confederacy. Under the democratic republican umbrella, individual states were essentially sovereign. See Barbosa's article "En nuestro terreno," published in the newspaper *El Tiempo* in 1915. Also see Barbosa, *Problemas de razas: Documentos para la historia* (San Juan, PR: Imp. Venezuela, 1937), 41.
26. William D. Boyce, *The Hawaiian Islands and Porto Rico Illustrated* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1914), 95–96.
27. Ibid., 97.
28. García, "I am the Other: Puerto Rico in the Eyes of North Americans, 1898," *Journal of American History*, 87:1 (Jun, 2000), 39–64.

29. See Kramer, "Race-Making and Colonial Violence in the U.S. Empire: The Philippine-American War as Race War," *Diplomatic History*, 30:2 (April 2006), 169–210; and Thompson, "The Imperial Republic: A Comparison of the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898," *Pacific Historical Review*, 71:4 (November 2002), 535–74.
30. Thompson, "'Estudiarlos, juzgarlos y gobernarlos': Conocimiento y poder en el archipiélago imperial estadounidense," in *La nación soñada: Cuba, Puerto Rico y Filipinas ante el 98*, ed. Consuelo Naranjo, Miguel A. Puig-Samper, and Luis Miguel García Mora (Madrid: Ediciones Doce Calles, 1996), 685–93.
31. Sparrow, *The Insular Cases and the Emergence of American Empire* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006).
32. By 1914, Boyce published *The Saturday Blade*, *The Chicago Ledger*, *The Farming Business*, and *The Indiana Daily Times*. See advertising pages in *The Hawaiian Islands and Porto Rico Illustrated* (1914).
33. On imperial subjectivity, see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2008); and Sheller, *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (London: Routledge, 2003). On masculinity and exploration in the formation of US imperial subjectivity at the turn of the twentieth century, see Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), especially 170–215. Boyce's imperial eyes were but one set out of many in Puerto Rico. See also José de Olivares, *Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (N. D. Thompson, 1899); and White, *Our New Possessions* (A. J. Holman, 1898). For an analysis of the latter texts, see Thompson, *Nuestra isla y su gente*.
34. D. Salvatore, "The Enterprise of Knowledge: Representational Machines of Informal Empire," in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations,* ed. Gilbert Joseph, Catherine C. Legrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 69–104. Salvatore builds upon Greenblatt's concept of representational machine in his book *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
35. Journalism and travel writing were main modalities in the enterprise of knowledge in Puerto Rico, while ethnography became central in digesting the Philippines. See Okihiro, "Colonial Vision, Racial Visibility: Racializations in Puerto Rico and the Philippines during the Initial Period of U.S. Colonization," in *Racial Transformations: Latinos and Asians Remaking the United States,* ed. Nicholas de Genova (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 23–39.
36. Boyce, *United States Colonies and Dependencies* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1914).
37. Boyce, *The Hawaiian Islands and Porto Rico*, vii.
38. Ibid., viii.
39. See Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 39–121; Santiago-Valle, *"Subject People"*; Morillo Alicea, "Looking for Empire in the U.S. Colonial Archive: Photos and Texts," *Historia y Sociedad* 10 (1998), 23–47; Thompson, *Nuestra isla y su gente*; González, "La ilusión del paraíso: Fotografía y relatosde viajeros sobre Puerto Rico, 1898-1900," in *Los arcos de la memoria*, 273–304.; and Díaz Quiñonez, *La memoria rota* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1993).
40. See Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Self, Community, and Nation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998).
41. AGPR, Colecciones Particulares, Documentos Sueltos, Caja 15, Exp. #663. Here Manuel Zeno Gandía portrays islanders as white, but a few years earlier, his awareness and anxiety about the population's racial mixture was apparent.

42. Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during U.S. Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Clark, "'Educating the Natives in Self-Government': Puerto Rico and the United States, 1900–1933," *The Pacific Historical Review*, 42:2 (May, 1973), 220–33.
43. Go, "The Provinciality of American Empire: 'Liberal Exceptionalism' and U.S. Colonial Rule, 1898–1912," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 1 (2007), 74–108.
44. US expansion was heavily contested among political and intellectual classes in the US mainland. The opposition were often known as anti-imperialists. See Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
45. US Bureau of Insular Affairs, *Report of United States Insular Commission to the Secretary of War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1899); and Henry Carroll, *Report on the Island of Porto Rico; Its Population, Civil Government, Commerce, Industries, Productions, Roads, Tariff, and Currency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1899). See an analysis of these reports in Del Moral, "Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Imperial Imagination: Officials, Soldiers, and Colonization, 1898–ca.1901" (MA thesis, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1999).
46. See analysis of Carroll's report on this matter in Del Moral, "Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Imperial Imagination," 63.
47. *El Combate* was the target of both Spanish and US governments censorship campaigns. General Henry suppressed it in 1898 because of its relentless criticism of US military troops. "Confidential," Letter of A. L. Myer, Major 11th Infantry to Capt. Geo T. Langhorne, A.d.C. in San Juan, October 12, 1899, AGPR, FGE, Corr. Gen., Seguridad Pública, Tema Informes policíacos octubre 1898–1899, Expediente #5414, Caja 197. In this letter, Major Myer reassures his supervisor that the editor of *El Combate* has been neutralized. Myer links the newspaper's editor to a series of incendiary anti-American popular meetings in Ponce and to fifty machetes that the municipal police found not long before his report. General Henry suppressed the newspaper, which reappeared several months later after a new general, Davis, took office. General Davis also bullied the journal for their denunciation of US antidemocratic actions. See "Fuego graneado: Nuestra conducta ante el gobierno dominador," *El Combate*, June 13, 1899, 2. Colonial authorities feared that the social unrest unleashed on the island against Spaniards after the invasion would systematically target US agents too. Picó, *1898.* On the journal's name change, see Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico: Bosquejo histórico desde su iniciación hasta el 1930* (La Habana: Imp. Ucar, García y Cía, 1941), 358, 367. Its contemporaneous newspaper *La Democracia* described it as "essentially popular." See the comment on *La Democracia*'s article in *La Bomba*, February 7, 1895, 2. Findlay identified *La Bomba* as "artisan-edited." Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 106.
48. See Findlay's analysis of the political alliance between liberal reformists and their working-class counterparts in *Imposing Decency*, 77–109.
49. The journal published an editorial note in the section "Bombas y bombos" reporting that workers had just declined an offer from Ponce's mayor to organize a dance in celebration of the Fourth of July, in exchange for 100 pesos. Workers rejected the offer. *El Combate*'s commentator said, "Excellent! They have dignity. The editorial board invites the dignified workers of Ponce to drink a beer that afternoon in celebration of the honorable stand they took in regards to the current situation." *El Combate*'s close relationship with working-class organizations in Ponce continued throughout the years. "Bombas y bombos," *El Combate*, July 4, 1899, 3.

50. In the July 4 issue, the commentator praised the courageous Philippines, which under Emilio Aguinaldo's leadership vigorously attacked the American troops. See "Bombas y bombos," ibid.
51. The pre-1898 conservative, pro-Spanish party was known as the Partido Incondicional Español. Following that tradition, *El Combate*'s article referred to US supporters as "Incondicionales Americanos." See "El incondicionalismo americano," *El Combate*, June 8, 1899, 2.
52. Ibid.
53. "Escaramuzas," *El Combate*, June 8, 1899, 2.
54. Juán Elías Cortapluma (pseudonym), "Fuego Lento," *El Combate*, May 23, 1899, 2.
55. "Fuego Lento" *El Combate*, May 23, 1899, 2. The newspaper did not reproduce the cartoon—cartoons do not appear very often in Puerto Rican newspapers at this moment—but they described it in detail.
56. This is the journalist's description/interpretation of the cartoon. In reprints of the cartoon, it is impossible to identify the men with guns as from either the US North or the US South. The gigantic Yankee is meant to be President McKinley, and the islands depicted were the Philippines.
57. The governor-general of the island, General Manuel Macías Casado, sent a decree on April 21 discontinuing the individual freedoms guaranteed by the Autonomic Charter. Soon after, another decree announced that Puerto Rico was in state of war. Negroni, *Historia militar*, 321.
58. Fernández Aponte, *El cambio de soberanía*, 39–65.
59. See the newspaper quote in *La Bruja* in Picó, *Puerto Rico 1898*, 10.
60. Historian Thomas Skidmore describes a similar take on US segregation by Brazilian politicians to highlight the racial egalitarianism of the Brazilian society. See Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 69–77.
61. The original article by FTR is not available. It is referenced at length in the newspaper *La Bruja*, July 3, 1898, 4.
62. "Brujerías," *La Bruja*, July 10, 1898, 3.
63. My informed guess is that the journal *El País* referenced in this debate was the one published in San Juan. The orthodox autonomist José Celso Barbosa was an active contributor to this journal. *La Unión* was also published in San Juan and was sponsored by the conservative camp. See Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico*, 426–27.
64. In using titles associated with proscribed, African-derived religious practices such as *La Bruja* and *Brujerías* and in adopting the pseudonym Maüser—which referred to a German-manufactured rifle US soldiers introduced to the islands during the 1898 war—the journal directors attempted to cast the newspaper as representative of popular voices and of an "antiestablishment" stance.
65. "La Liga Obrera," *El Porvenir Social*, December 30, 1898, 1.
66. Angel Quintero and Gervasio García briefly noted that on the eve of the invasion there were insistent rumors about Fernando J. Matías's opposition to US intervention. This position would have pushed him closer to the fusionist camp. See García and Quintero Rivera, *Desafío y solidaridad*, 31n27.
67. "Del dicho al hecho . . . ," *El Porvenir Social*, December 30, 1898, 3.
68. "Una carta," *El Porvenir Social*, December 30, 1898, 3.
69. *La Vanguardia* was a short-lived newspaper published in Ponce from October 29, 1899, until 1900. It reemerged for a brief period in 1901. The directors of this newspaper were José Nemesio Acosta and Luis Felipe Dessús. See Antonio S. Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico*, 463. As a journalist, Dessús repeatedly denounced racial discrimination not

only in the governing structures in Puerto Rico but within his own party, the Republicano Party.

70. Earlier in the 1880s, Abril had worked as a contributor to *El Clamor del País*, a newspaper directed by Salvador Brau (see Chapter 3).
71. In 1899, Mariano Abril was the director of *La Democracia*.
72. See Chapter 3 for a discussion on the foundation of the Ateneo Puertorriqueño. Matienzo Cintrón was a member of the directive council of this organization. Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 214.
73. "A los hombres de color," *La araña*, February 22, 1902. The initial Ateneo conference took place February 13, 1902. See excerpts in Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 220.
74. In his detailed history of the numerous political parties on the island, Bolívar Pagán reproduced a speech by Matienzo Cintrón on February 19, 1902. The author explained that the speech took place in the Municipal Theater of San Juan. Comparing Bolívar's reproduction and the description provided by Matienzo Cintrón in his article in *La araña*, both are very similar. Even if they are not exactly the same, Bolívar's reproduction is useful to understand Matienzo's project because the speech in the Municipal Theater was one in a series of conferences Matienzo Cintrón gave in January and February 1902 on the same issues. See Pagán, *Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, 1898–1956* (San Juan: n.p., 1959), 1:89–94; and Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 218–29.
75. His ideas on reformism in regard to the larger population are very similar to those sponsored by the Creole elites of 1880s and 1890s. Matienzo advocated for the intellectual and moral uplifting of the Puerto Rican people, especially of men. See Bolivar Pagán, *Historia de los partidos políticos*, 1:91–93. Matienzo's reformist language echoed that of Manuel Zeno Gandía in 1890. In fact, Zeno Gandía and Matienzo Cintrón became close collaborators in the Republicano Party. As time advanced, both men experienced a similar disillusion with the colonial situation under the United States.
76. In early twentieth century, the Latin American intelligentsia in general had created a binary perception between progress and civilization (US technology) versus culture (Hispanic tradition and history). This Latin American, nationalist intelligentsia worried that their unique character as Latin Americans would disappear under the growing imperialist power of the United States. The 1898 war confirmed those fears. In the face of this threat, these intellectuals moved closer to praising their Hispanic cultural connections as the thread that unified Latin America against the Anglo-Saxon United States. The most relevant written example of this intellectual generation is the 1900 essay *Ariel* by José Enrique Rodó. See Rama, *La ciudad letrada* (Hanover, NH: Ediciones del Norte, 1984); and González Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters: Writing and Authority in Modern Latin American Literature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988). In the case of Puerto Rico, the United States was not a threat but a living reality. As their counterparts on the continent, members of the Puerto Rican elite constructed a Hispanic identity that linked them to Latin American brotherhood. After 1910, for instance, Matienzo Cintrón and José de Diego consolidated the use of the notion of "Raza Ibero-Americana" in their quest for political independence from the United States. See Matienzo's subsequent writings compiled in Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, vol. 2.
77. His referente to be an immortalist concerns his belief on and practice of spiritualism. Matienzo Cintrón, "A los hombres de color," *La Araña*.
78. Ibid.
79. Luis Díaz Soler's account of the republicano assembly of May 1902 notes that workers' representatives were among the most fervent opponents to Matienzo's idea of political

unification with the Federales. Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón,* 243. To many workers, the Federales embodied the old Spanish regime and social order.

80. See Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 233–35.
81. "Matienzo Cintrón y Santiago Iglesias: Por la redención del pueblo trabajador," *El porvenir social*, February 26, 1902. This article was distributed independently from the rest of the journal. The original is microfilmed under the series title "Periódicos Obreros," section "Hojas Sueltas," reel S95A at the Colección Puertorriqueña, Biblioteca José M. Lázaro, Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras.
82. Alejandro de la Fuente points out a similar contradiction in the Cuban case. De la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
83. AGPR, Oficina del Gobernador (henceforth OG), Corr. Gen., Emigración e Inmigración, Caja 16, Letter to the Governor from Ramón de Castro Rivera, March 24, 1901. In her essay on José C. Barbosa, Miriam Jiménez Román briefly comments on this letter and identifies De Castro as a "(presumably) 'white' Spaniard." Jiménez Román, "*Un hombre (negro) del pueblo*: José Celso Barbosa and the Puerto Rican 'Race' Toward Whiteness," *Centro Journal: Focus en Foco* 8, no. 1&2 (1996), 9–29.
84. See Rosario Natal, *Exodo puertorriqueño: Las emigraciones al Caribe y Hawaii, 1900–1915* (San Juan: n.p., 1983); History Task Force, *Documentos de la migración puertorriqueña/ Documents of the Puerto Rican Migration* (NY: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, 1977); and Scarano, *Puerto Rico*, 705. Also *Centro: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2001) contains several articles on the Puerto Rican migration to Hawaii; and see Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom: The Plantation Economy of the Spanish Caribbean 1898–1934* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999, 148–82.)
85. See Ayala, *American Sugar Kingdom*; Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All*, 47–48; Aviva Chomsky, "'Barbados and Canada': Race, Immigration, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Cuba," *HAHR* 80, no. 3 (August 2000), 415–62; McLeod, "Undesirable Aliens: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in the Comparison of Haitian and British West Indian Immigrant Workers in Cuba, 1912–1939," *Journal of Social History* 31, no. 3 (Spring 1998), 599–623. The circulation of Caribbean laborers increased exponentially during these years as capitalist investments in agriculture and trading endeavors in the region grew.
86. The forging and implementation of immigration policies is a crucial site of nation-state building processes. It is in immigration debates and implementation of restrictions that the selection process (inclusion or exclusion of members) for the nation is legitimated and where the role of racialization in the selection process becomes explicitly articulated. See Andrews, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires, 1800–1900* (Madison,WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Helg, "Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880–1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 37–69; Skidmore, *Black into White*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Ong, *Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, and the New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Lesser, *Immigrants, Minorities, and the Struggle for Ethnicity in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); and Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
87. AGPR, OG, Corr. Gen., Emigración e Inmigración, Caja 16, Expediente #2103. Caribbean immigration to the island was small in comparison to the numbers in Cuba.

88. This exchange was conducted in English. It is imprecise what the term refers to, but my best guess is that it seeks to mark blacks.
89. Working-class West Indians had been at the center of Puerto Rican cultural and artistic traditions. For example, *tortoleños*' rhythms, lyrics, and experiences of living and working in Ponce sugar plantations are featured at the heart of the music and dance of Puerto Rico's *Plena*. Flores, *La venganza de Cortijo y otros ensayos* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1997); Barton, "The Drum-Dance Challenge: An Anthropological Study of Gender, Race, and Class Marginalization of Bomba in Puerto Rico" (PhD diss., Cornell University, 1995); and Dufresne González, *Puerto Rico también tiene tambó: Recopilación de artículos sobre la plena y bomba* (Río Grande, PR: Paracumbé, 1994), 17–29.
90. United States Immigration Service, Office of the Commissioner, July 13, 1903 in AGPR, OG, Corr. Gen., Emigración e Inmigración, Caja 16, Expediente #931.
91. Concerns over West Indian "black" migration were not an early-twentieth-century phenomena on the island but rather a recurrent pattern in Puerto Rican history. The bulk of these migrants were single colored men, which alarmed colonial authorities and provoked strict immigration regulations and the repeated harassment, detention, arrests, and deportation of those who settled in Puerto Rico. See Chinea, *Race and Labor*. The harassment and close surveillance did not dwindle by the mid-nineteenth century, as is revealed by the case of the *tortoleños*' revolt of August 21, 1871, in Naguabo's hacienda, Quebrada Palma. See details in AGPR, OGE., Agencia de Gobierno, Guardia Civil, Caja 324, Entry 222.
92. De Castro's letter must have been published in a newspaper because the FLT replied publicly.
93. *La Miseria* was a labor newspaper published in San Juan in 1901–2. The editors were the well-known labor leaders José Ferrer y Ferrer and Ramón Romero Rosa. The letter is dated March 27, 1901, but was published in the March 29 issue. The original letter, "A los negros puertorriqueños," is reproduced in History Task Force/Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, *Sources for the Study of Puerto Rican Migration*, 30–33.
94. See this line of argument in González, *El país de cuatro*. See critique of González in Flores, *El país de cuatro pesos y otros ensayos* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1989).
95. Romero Rosa, "A los negros puertorriqueños."
96. Isabelo Zenón Cruz has discussed this tension between a black Puerto Rican identity and a Puerto Rican black identity. He notes that in Puerto Rico it is unacceptable to embrace a racial identity: one must impose a national identity first. Zenón Cruz*, Narciso descubre su trasero: El negro en la cultura puertorriqueña*, Vols. 1–2 (Humacao: Puerto Rico: Furidi, 1974 [1975]).
97. The manifesto "¡¡Sólo es esclavo quien merece serlo!! ¡¡Los federales infaman; los republicanos dignifican!! ¡¡El hijo del negrero hiere al negro!! ¡¡Malditos sean los que separan á la familia puertorriqueña!!" was published by the printing shop La Lucha, but the document does not offer an exact date. Based on its content, I assess that it was published in early 1900. This document appears microfilmed in a collection of several working-class newspapers and loose articles compiled by Eric Pérez. See Periódicos Obreros y Hojas Sueltas, reel 95A, Colección Puertorriqueña (henceforth CPR), Biblioteca José M. Lázaro (henceforth Bib. Lazaro), Universidad de Puerto Rico-Río Piedras (henceforth UPR-RP).
98. The original letter contained more aggressive insults. However, the undersigned did not reproduced them, referring the reader instead to look through this and other racial attacks on Barbosa in federal newspapers such as *La Región*, *El Territorio*, and *El Diario*.
99. Barbosa, "En nuestro terreno," 3:51–52.
100. García and Quintero Rivera, *Desafío y solidaridad*, 35–58.

101. Pagán, *Historia de los partidos politicos puertorriqueños*, 1:116–24. Women's struggle for voting rights did not succeed until the 1930s. In 1935, all women were allowed to vote without literacy, property, or tax restrictions.
102. Among its provisions, the Foraker Act of 1900 established the Cámara de Delegados (Chamber of Delegates). Thirty-five Puerto Rican men were elected every two years as delegates. It was the only political forum for islanders to influence policy, a very limited influence given that the US governor on the island had veto power over all resolutions passed by the chamber. Dietz, *Económica de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1989), 104; and Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico*, 52–66. For election results, see Pagán, *Historia de los partidos políticos puertorriqueños*, 116–24.
103. I identified the year of publication for this document as 1906 only because it references other newspaper articles published that year and through the response of the Unión Party, which described the Cámara de Delegados debates on suffrage from 1900 to 1906. The manifesto "Lean y mediten los obreros y los hombres de color" appears in the collection "Periódicos obreros y hojas sueltas," under subsection "Hojas Sueltas," Reel 95A, Bib. Lázaro, UPR-RP.
104. The discourse on the physical and moral inferiority of the popular classes goes back to the late nineteenth century. Zeno Gandía's work exemplifies the link between immorality (alcoholism, gambling, loose sexual liaisons, and racial miscegenation) and the corruption of the body (diseases).
105. Many labor unions protested against the mistreatment of Puerto Rican workers in Hawaii. Those labor unions were affiliated with the Federación Libre de Trabajadores. Some of these documents appear in AGPR, OG, Corr. Gen., Emigración e Inmigración, Caja 16.
106. Ibid.
107. García and Quintero Rivera, *Desafío y solidaridad*, 54.
108. Barbosa spoke in a public meeting about these articles. The publication of this manifesto followed Barbosa's speech.
109. For an incisive reading of Barbosa's political practice and writings, see Labrador-Rodríguez, "Mulatos entre blancos."
110. AGPR, Colección Junghnns, Documentos Históricos, Caja 20, Doc.#619–752, Exp. #748, CP 25. This document does not provide an exact date, only the year 1906, and it appears as a one-article publication by the La Democracia printing shop.
111. Peter Wade uncovers a similar dynamic in the organizing structures of national politics in Colombia. In his study, he notes that the internal struggle for consolidating a discourse on racial harmony opened some spaces for selective nonwhite politicians. See Peter Wade, *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
112. Luis Felipe Dessús, "El cinismo de ayer," *La Justicia*, May 3, 1901, 2.
113. Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

1. "Project for the Defense of Organizations from Slanderers and Other Enemies." Resolution No. 13, in FLT, *Actuaciones de la segunda y tercera asambleas* (1914), 91–94.
2. "Informe del organizador-presidente," Bayamón, PR, 22 de enero de 1911, ibid., 26–33.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

5. This translates as "a bunch of socialist blacks." Noted by critic José Luis González in his study of early twentieth-century Puerto Rican literature, cited in Ramos Perea, *Literatura puertorriqueña negra del siglo XVX escrita por negros: Obras encontradas de Eleuterio Derkes, Manuel Alonso Pizarro y Jose Ramos y Bran* (San Juan: Ateneo Puertorriqueño, 2009), 99.
6. "Project for the Defense of Organizations from Slanderers and Other Enemies," ibid., Resolution No. 13, 91–94.
7. While legally the new colonial regime recognized laborers' right to unionize Dávila Santiago, authorities persistently repressed and persecuted its members. In 1911, the colonial administration sought to suppress the most radical faction within the movement, the anarchists. Dávila Santiago, *El derribo de las murallas: Orígenes intelectuales del socialismo en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural, 1988), 164–68.
8. Findlay, *El derribo de las murallas: Orígenes intelectuales del socialismo en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural, 1988), 165.
9. The writings in *Voz Humana* of the workers' study group, Solidaridad, make clear their apprehension of the "nation," which they understood as a bourgeois invention to further the subjection of the laboring classes. Ibid., 151–52.
10. The article responded to an attack on organized labor in the liberal autonomist newspaper *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*. The exchange between the two newspapers appears originally in Romero del Romeral, *El ideal del obrero en Puerto Rico*, and is quoted at length in Dávila Santiago, *El derribo de las murallas*, 48–49.
11. Dávila provides an in-depth analysis of the ideological formation of Puerto Rican organized labor at the turn of twentieth century. Ibid., 82–119.
12. These numbers are from the Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), analyzed in Weyl, "Labor Conditions in Porto Rico," *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor*, no. 61 (November 1905), 723–856.
13. Of those reported in the 1900 census, 62.8 percent worked in agriculture, fisheries, and mining; 20.5 percent engaged in domestic work or provided other personal services; 8.4 percent worked in the manufacturing and mechanical industries; 7.6 percent were involved in trade or transportation; and 0.7 percent were professionals. Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), analyzed in Weyl, "Labor Conditions in Porto Rico," 723–856. During 1900–1906, the FLT shared the stage with the FRT. The latter organization also derived most of their membership from urban workers. Thus the number of unionized workers could be much higher. Nonetheless, the contrast between rural and urban numbers remains significant.
14. See Weyl, "Labor Conditions in Porto Rico"; and Ames, "Labor Conditions in Porto Rico," *Bulletin of the Department of Labor*, no. 34 [0](May 1901), 377–437.
15. This characterization of the urban artisans appears in Padró Quiles, *Luchas obreras y datos históricos del Pepino: 60 años atrás* (San Sebastián, PR: n.p., [1950]), 24–25. Padró Quiles was born in the late nineteenth century, became a shoemaker, and finally joined the Socialist Party in 1917.
16. The census of the barrio Playa in Ponce shows a large number of farm workers living in this urban setting. Figueroa also notices this trend among day laborers in Guayama. Figueroa, "Facing Freedom: The Transition from Slavery to Free Labor in Guayama, Puerto Rico 1860–1898" (PhD diss.: University of Wisconsin, 1991), 148.
17. AGPR, OG, Corr. Gen.; Seguridad Pública; Informes policíacos, Caja 201; Exp. 2745.
18. Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras (crónicas de Puerto Rico)* (San Juan, PR: n.p., 1958), 1:37.
19. See letter of Pedro Ma. Descartes to the American Governor in 1904, AGPR, OG, Correspondencia, Centrales, Caja 211a, Exp. 2223. See also Schwartz, "The Hurricane of San Ciriaco: Disaster, Politics, and Society in Puerto Rico, 1899–1901," *Hispanic*

American Historical Review 72, no. 3 (August 1992), 303–34. Gompers also wrote on the starvation of the Puerto Rican people in the AFL newsletter, the *American Federationist*.

20. Lillian Guerra, "The Promise and Disillusion of Americanization: Surveying the Socio-Economic Terrain of Early Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," *Centro Journal* 9, no. 1 (Fall 1999), 9–31. See also Bird Carmona, *Parejeros y desafiantes: La comunidad tabaquera de Puerta de Tierra a principios del siglo XX* (San Juan, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 2008), 180–98.
21. I borrow the concept of "pauperization" from Guerra, "The Promise and Disillusion of Americanization."
22. Picó, *1898: La guerra después de la Guerra* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1987); Santiago Valle, *"Subjected People" and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 77–109.
23. Fleagle, *Social Problems in Porto Rico* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1917), 85
24. Ibid., 87.
25. Ibid., 90.
26. J. M. Amadeo was a physician who graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. University of Pennsylvania Catalog 1888–1889, pages 71–111 in http://www.archives.upenn.edu/primdocs/upl/upl1/upl1_1888_89pp71_111.pdf (December 7, 2009). AGPR, OG, Corresp., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 201, Exp. 2619. A similar complaint appeared in a petition to the US Comandante General del Departamento (de Mayagüez?) in San Juan from a group of farmers in Mayaguez on June 24, 1899. In their letter, the farmers requested the quick implementation of a criminal punishment system that would stall the high rate of petty theft in the countryside. See Juan Torrellas et al. to Comandante General del Departamento, Mayagüez, June 24, 1899, AGPR, Ofic. del Gob., Corresp., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 197, Exp. 5414.
27. For 1920s examples, see AGPR, TSCrP, Tarea 61–10, Siglo 19, Caja 63.
28. AGPR, OG, Corr. Gen., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 198, Exp. 7480 (1900).
29. José Ma. Nazario, parish priest, to the governor, Guayanilla, 12/17/99, AGPR, OG, Corresp., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 197, Exp. 6831.
30. Ibid., 230.
31. Alonso Torres, *Cuarenta años de lucha proletaria*, ed. Nicolás Noguera (San Juan: Imp. Baldrich, 1939), 224–25; and Santiago Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 1:97. There had been some strikes in plantations in the areas of Loíza, Carolina, and Río Grande.
32. Ibid., 227.
33. AGPR, OG, Corresp., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 201, Exp. 1050. Among the signatories were carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, field workers, shoemakers, barbers, hat makers, mechanics, clerks, painters, cabinet makers, farmers, brick makers, bread makers, tailors, candy makers, haberdashers, cigar makers, coopers, cart drivers, butchers, confectioners, tinsmiths, sailors, machinists, retail dealers, and pottery makers.
34. "Work, Work, Work."
35. See JHM Leary to the Chief of Insular Police, San Juan, August 1, 1901. AGPR, OG, Corresp., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 201, Exp. 1050
36. AGPR, OG, Corresp., Seg. Púb., Inf. Pol., Caja 201, Exp. 1050.
37. See Negrón Portillo, *Las turbas republicanas, 1900–1904* (Río Piedras: Ediciones Huracán, 1990). Previous scholars have stressed the role of popular groups associated with the Republicano Party (known as the turbas republicanas) in sparking violent confrontations between members of the two political parties and the two workers' federations. Some members of the turbas were ideologues and rank-and-file members of the FRT. The

turbas republicanas are better understood as a complex phenomenon in which various popular sectors formally organized and affiliated with official parties. For instance, the turbas' official name was Comité para la Defensa del Partido Republicano (Committee for the Defense of the Republican Party). The turbas reflect a post-1898 context in which social and economic tensions—together with the new US-based discourse of democratic participation, representation, and equality—created new opportunities for popular groups to participate in island politics. Sociologist Kelvin Santiago Valle likewise has placed the turbas in a broader and denser web of popular struggles to shape individual, community, and working lives. See Santiago Valle, *"Subjected People" and Colonial Discourses,* 99–106. Still to be explored is what this conflict reveals about the inner workings of Puerto Rican labor politics.

38. *Ensayo Obrero* was a San Juan weekly newspaper founded in 1897. Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico: Bosquejo histórico desde su iniciación hasta el 1930* (La Habana: Imp. Ucar, García y Cía, 1941), 385; Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 1:43.
39. "Por nuestro decoro," *Ensayo Obrero*, January 19, 1898, 3.
40. "Puntos y comas," *Ensayo Obrero*, January 19, 1898, 2
41. "Por nuestro decoro," *Ensayo Obrero*, 3.
42. "Crónica," *Ensayo Obrero*, January 30, 1898, 1.
43. Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 1:59.
44. Santiago Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 1:92.
45. *El porvenir social* was the Federación Regional de Trabajadores' official newspaper. "Una carta," *El Porvenir Social*, December 30, 1898.
46. The absence of race is salient even in the most recent scholarship on organized labor. For example, see Sanabria, "The Puerto Rican Organized Workers' Movement and the American Federation of Labor" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2000).
47. Senior, *Santiago Iglesias, Apóstol de los trabajadores* (Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad Interamericana, 1972), 39–40.
48. Ibid., 1–3.
49. Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 1:53.
50. "Sesión borrascosa," *El Porvenir Social*, June 13, 1899, 1–2.
51. Ibid., 2.
52. The FLT leadership refused earlier to join the existing political parties because they did not want the labor cause to be sidelined by other issues. The sought a political organization at the service of the labor cause alone.
53. "Al gremio de panaderos," *El Porvenir Social*, August 5, 1899, 2.
54. "Federación Libre de Trabajadores de la isla de Pto. Rico y Partido Obrero Socialista de los Estados Unidos de América," *El Porvenir Social*, August 1, 1899, 3.
55. Rodríguez-Silva, "Libertos and Libertas in the Construction of the Free Worker in Post-Emancipation Puerto Rico," in *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World,* ed. Pamela Scully and Diana Paton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 199–223.
56. Rivera-Giusti, "Gender, Labor, and Working-Class Activism in the Tobacco Industry in Puerto Rico, 1898–1924" (PhD diss., State University of New York–Binghamton, 2004), 42.
57. Ibid., 46.
58. See Rivera-Giusti, "Gender, Labor, and Working-Class Activism"; Valle, *Luisa Capetillo*; Ramos, *Amor y anarquía*; and Findlay, *Imposing Decency*.
59. Saturnino Dones, *La Federación Obrera*, February 4, 1899, 3.
60. Ruben Dávila Santiago registers these growing ideological distinctions as anchored on generational differences among factions within organized labor. See Dávila, *El derribo de las murallas*.

61. Ibid., 3.
62. Ibid., 2.
63. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 144–53.
64. "Acta de la asamblea celebrada la noche del día 6 de Julio de 1900," Hojas Sueltas, reel 95A, CPR, Bib. Lázaro, UPR-RP.
65. See Findlay, "Free Love and Domesticity."
66. Rivera-Giusti, "Gender, Labor, and Working-Class Activism in the Tobacco Industry."
67. See Delgado de Otero, "A los trabajadores de Puerto Rico," *El Pan del Pobre*, August 30, 1901, 1; Josefa G. de Maldonado, "Manifiesto Obrero: A mis compañeras, *El Pan del Pobre*, August 31, 1901, 1; Ramona Delgado de Otero, "Labor funesta," *El Pan del Pobre*, September 7, 1901, 1.
68. This solidarity, nevertheless, had its limits. Factions within the FLT rejected women in the workplace and strikes, and male ideologues failed to comprehend working-class men's forms of gender exploitation. See more details in Chapter 6. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 153–58.
69. In his book on the history of journalism in Puerto Rico, Antonio Pedreira described *El Trabuco* as a Republican affiliate. A close reading of the journal contradicts the Republican label. In fact, the journal editors insisted that this was an independent news organization. However, the articles published exhibited a clear pro-FLT stand while severely criticizing the Republican Party and their affiliated organizations. See Pedreira, *El periodismo en Puerto Rico*, 460.
70. "Los asesinos del pueblo: La calumnia por defensa," *El Trabuco*, January 12, 1901, 1.
71. Section Cañonazos, "¡Alerta!, ¡Alerta!," *El Trabuco*, January 12, 2–3.
72. Quoted by Negrón Portillo from *La Democracia*, November 10, 1900, 1.
73. Ibid.
74. Carta del Alcalde Guzmán Benítez to the Secretary of Puerto Rico, November 22, 1900, AGPR, Fortaleza, Caja 63. Document quoted in Negrón Portillo, *Las turbas republicanas*, 164.
75. *La Defensa*, August 11, 900, 1, 2. This article is quoted in Negrón Portillo, *Las turbas republicanas*, 123.
76. Dessús, *La Justicia*, May 3, 1901.
77. Interview trancript of Santiago Iglesias Pantín and Rosendo Rivera García, June 23, 1902, "Varias Uniones II," Exp. "Federación Libre de San Juan," AGPR, OG, Corresp., Organizaciones no gubernamentales, Caja 179.
78. "Una vez para siempre: A los trabajadores de Pto. Rico," Documentos sobre obreros, 1898–1920, AGPR Colección Junghanns, Caja 22A, Documentos 927A-798, Exp. #977A. This document lacks a date. Nonetheless, the defense of Santiago Iglesias Pantín and its take on Rosendo Rivera García's declarations are consistent with the debate in the transcripts from the authorities' investigation.
79. See Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, "The Migrations of Arturo Schomburg: On Being Antillano, Negro, and Puerto Rican in New York, 1891–1938," *Journal of American Ethnic Studies*, (Fall 2001), 3–49; and Arroyo, "Technologies: Transculturations of Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Arturo A. Schomburg's Masonic Writings," *Centro Journal* 17, no. 1 (2005), 5–25.
80. Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876–1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 15–97; and Glickman, *A Living Wage: American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 78–92.
81. "Los hombres de color en los Estados Unidos," *Unión Obrera*, May 17, 1903, 1.
82. Joaquín Becerril is listed repeatedly in the various FLT-sponsored assemblies.

83. "If we have intervened in behalf of Cuba, and driven a foreign tyrant from her shores, we have at least authority for our action by the appeals of the struggling Cubans. But what of the Porto Ricans? They have not asked our intervention; they have not pleaded for annexation. Their country was invaded as a military necessity. They number eight hundred thousand people, and have not been divided by fierce conflict. If we give freedom and independence to Cuba, to which she is entitled, is there any justification for our enforced conquest and annexation of Porto Rico?" Gompers's address to the National Committee of the Chicago Peace Jubilee in October 18, 1898. "Imperialism: Its Dangers and Wrongs," *American Federationist* 5, no. 9 (November 1898): 179–83.
84. In fact, as early as February 1900, Samuel Gompers visited Cuba, where he was welcomed by Cuban organized labor, though not by the press or the authorities. Bedford, "Samuel Gompers and the Caribbean," 7–10. Bedford indicates that Gompers did not develop a longtime relationship with Cuban labor as he did later on with Puerto Rico. One can argue that Cuba did not become a labor problem for the AFL, as the Platt Amendment prevented its incorporation to the US. That was not the case with Puerto Rico, which had been a nonincorporated territory of the United States since 1900.
85. See the *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor* for these years. This comparative gaze regarding labor is evident in the publication of the 1903 special issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.
86. Lames Leiby, *Carroll Wright and Labor Reform: The Origin of Labor Statistics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 3–6.
87. Ames, "Labor Conditions in Porto Rico." See also his *Elementary Hygiene for the Tropics* (D. C. Heath, 1902). See announcements of his death in *The New York Times*, November 13, 1908.
88. Weyl, "Labor Conditions in Mexico," 12.
89. See *American Federationist* 11, no. 4 (April 1904) and no. 5 (May 1904). US government officials created an image of the Puerto Rican as poor, starving, childlike, and ignorant. Gompers was not an exception. The FLT sought out Gompers's assistance and did not directly challenge his characterization of Puerto Rican workers. Santiago Iglesias Pantín and other leaders of the FLT believed that this representation could lead to changes from the colonial administration and bring positive benefits to the laboring classes. Similarly, Santiago-Valles insisted that colonial officials constructed an image of workers as a violent and rioting mass. More importantly, the Federal Party and the AFL actively participated in the production of that image for political advantage over the Republicanos. Kelvin Santiago-Valle, *"Subjected People,"* 77–110.
90. Alonso Torres, *Cuarenta años*, 331–34.
91. Samuel Gompers letter of February 21, 1904, in "President Gompers in Porto Rico," *American Federationist* 11, no. 4 (April 1904), 295–97.
92. Samuel Gompers, "In Porto Rico," *American Federationist* 11, no. 5 (May 1904): 391–95.
93. Laborer/journalist Vicente Castrillo identified three of these men as important black men who contributed significantly to Puerto Rico. See Castrillo, *Mis experiencias a través de 50 años* (Caguas: n.p., 1952). Castrillo was an active member of the FLT as a tobacco worker in Caguas. His memoirs are a great treasure, as they constitute a historical collage of the achievements of Puerto Ricans of African descent.
94. Gompers, "Address Before Federacion Regional," *American Federationist* 11, no. 4 (April 1904): 298–300.
95. On race in the AFL, see Mandel, "Samuel Gompers and the Negro Workers."
96. "President Gompers Speaks to Workingmen," *American Federationist* 11, no. 4 (April 1904): 304–5.

97. Gompers, "In Porto Rico," *American Federationist*, 394.
98. Gompers, "Talks on Labor," *American Federationist*, 415.
99. "Programa de la Federación Libre de Puerto Rico," 3, as it appears in the FLT, *Report de procedimientos del tercer congreso de la Federación Libre de los trabajadores de Pto. Rico, afiliada a la American Federation of Labor celebrado en Mayaguez del 18 al 25 de junio* (Mayaguez, PR: Imp. Union Obrera, 1905).
100. Ibid., 3–4.
101. When Gompers met with the committees from both federations in 1904, he stated that the workers' convention to discuss the future of the labor movement could only accept representatives from bona-fide unions. In his definition, "bona-fide" referred to unions affiliated to national or international organizations. After the FRT refused to participate in the convention, Gompers stated that the FRT lacked bona-fide unions. The FRT did not have those affiliations because they distrusted the internationalist aspect of the labor movement that the FLT and the AFL sponsored. Gompers, "Talks on Labor," *American Federationist*, 415.
102. Bedford, "Samuel Gompers and the Caribbean: The AFL, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1898–1906," *Labor's Heritage: Quarterly of the George Meany Memorial Archives* 6, no. 4 (1995)[0], 20–22.
103. The FRT did not count with the infrastructure that the FLT had because of its affiliation to the American Federation of Labor. Miles Galvin discovered that the AFL financed several strike efforts: for instance, $5,000 were sent to the FLT in 1905 and $20,000 in 1908–9. See Galvin, *The Organized Labor Movement in Puerto Rico* (London: Associated University Press, 1979), 60.
104. Quintero Rivera and García, *Desafío y solidaridad*, 53.
105. Alonso Torres, *Cuarenta años*, 340.
106. Dávila Santiago, *Teatro obrero.*
107. Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas Obreras*, 376.
108. Jesús María Balzac as quoted in Iglesias Pantín, *Luchas emancipadoras*, 2:22.

CHAPTER 6

1. The republicano leader José Celso Barbosa often identified Puerto Rico with Latin American in contrast to the United States. The politician repeatedly argued that the island had developed as a racially harmonious society like other Latin American countries, which would prevent Puerto Rico from developing racial conflicts (such as those in the southern United States) when it became a state of the Union. Barbosa, "En nuestro terreno: VI," in *Problema de razas: Documentos para la historia* (San Juan: Imp. Venezuela, 1937), 85.
2. The Unión Party accommodated various political tendencies. Party officials eliminated the statehood option in 1912 and independence in 1922, privileging autonomism. See Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo en la política puertorriqueña, 1899–1929* (Río Piedras, PR: Ediciones Huracán, 1996).
3. In reality, island sugar producers did not experience a dramatic change in their ability to compete because the war in Europe reduced competitors' productive capacity. The Underwood law was abolished in 1916. Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo*, 66.
4. Puerto Rican scholars traditionally have portrayed coffee hacendados as the matrix of Puerto Rican nationalism, but Bernabe shows the economic limits of their nationalist sentiments.

5. Proautonomists in the Unión Party also shared these cultural constructs, especially José de Diego, Muñoz Rivera's closest collaborator, known in Puerto Rico as the "Gentleman of the [Iberian American] Race."
6. In the Dominican Republic, elites deployed an analogous cultural construct, the Hispanic race, also within the context of persistent US intrusion in national affairs. See Torres-Saillant, "The Tribulations of Blackness in Dominican Racial Identity," *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (May 1998), 126–46.
7. Naranjo, "La historia se forja en el campo: Nación y cultura cubana en el siglo XX," Historia Social, no. 40 (2001), 159–61.
8. Even Barbosa subscribed to these ideas at different moments in his political career. Evolution will continue and the problem of blackness will disappear." Barbosa, "En nuestro terreno: I," in *Problemas de Raza*, 42. This article was originally published in the newspaper *El Tiempo*, September 4, 1915. In the following years, Barbosa's racial thinking changed, becoming more critical of eugenics.
9. Barbosa, "En nuestro terreno: I," in *Problemas de Raza*, 555–57; and Matienzo Cintrón, "Pancho Ibero" and "El Tío Sam y Pancho Ibero," in Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón: Orientador y guardian de una cultura* (Río Piedras, PR: Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1960), 2:283–89.
10. Matienzo Cintrón, "Carta al señor Vicente Balbás," in Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 2:139–41. The original letter does not provide a date, but it is plausible that Matienzo wrote it around 1907. Balbás had joined Luis Lloréns Torres and Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón in the 1907 organization La Fraternidad Social, Psicológica y Benéfica. Before 1898, Balbás was a member of the pro-Spanish Incondicional Conservador Party. In the 1910s, Balbás joined Matienzo in an effort "to save" the Hispanic heritage and tradition against the force of Americanization. Bernabe, *Respuestas al colonialismo*, 155.
11. Matienzo Cintrón, "Crecimiento de la población," in Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 2:269–70.
12. Matienzo Cintrón, "Guachafita Fa," in Díaz Soler, *Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón*, 2:110–12.
13. Miller, *In the Shadow of the State: Intellectuals and the Quest for National Identity in Twentieth Century Spanish America (NY: Verso, 1999)*, 174–209.
14. See Luis-Brown, *Discourses of Race and Hemispheric Citizenship in Cuba, Mexico, and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). Ambiguity in these imagination enabled far-reaching and radical projects such as Marti's.
15. Barbosa, "En nuestro terreno" in Problemas de raza, 41–42.
16. Carrión Maduro, "Americanización," in *Cumba* (San Juan, PR: Imp. "El Boletín Mercantil," 1903), 51–69; and *Alma Latina* (San Juan, PR: Tip. "El Boletín Mercantil," 1905).
17. Carrión Maduro, *Alma Latina*, 19, 74.
18. Ibid., 1–19.
19. I am grateful to Carmen Tristani for sharing with me her research on Dessús, Carrión Maduro, and other intellectuals from Juana Díaz (personal communication, August 12, 2005).
20. Dessús, "Dos Tendencias," in *El Albúm de Guayama* (San Juan, PR: Tip. Cantero Fernández, 1918), 240.
21. Ibid., 238.
22. Borincano refers to a native of Borinquén, the pre-Colombian name for the island among indigenous people in the Caribbean. In the poem, blackness and indigeneity define Puerto Rico, not whiteness, which the narrator identifies with Castile, Spain. Dessús, "Indiana," in *Album de Guayama*, 146. Also see "Gesto Indiano," in Morales,

Poesía afroantillana y negrista: Puerto Rico, República Dominicana y Cuba (San Juan, PR: Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2004), 40. It was originally published in Dessús, *Flores y balas (estados del alma)* (Guayama, PR: Tip. Unión Guayamesa, 1916).

23. The NAACP journal *The Crisis* announced the availability of Dessús's book *Flores y balas*. "The Looking Glass," *The Crisis* 16, no. 1 (May, 1918), 21.
24. For later formulations, see Rodríguez-Vásquez, *El sueño que no cesa: La nación deseada en el debate intellectual y politico puertorriqueño, 1920–1940* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2004), 75–101, 243–51, and 487–94.
25. Although not trans-Atlantic in nature at this historical moment, indigenismo sought trans-American political imaginations based on the commonalities among Indigenous communities. Kuenzli, "Acting Inca: Race, Ethnic Identity, and Constructions of Citizenship in Early-Twentieth Century Bolivia," (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2007), chap. 3.
26. See Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
27. Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 147; and de la Fuente, "Myths of Racial Democracy: Cuba, 1900-1912," *Latin American Research Review* 34: 3 (1999), 63–64.
28. Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, 155–59.
29. Ibid., 164–65.
30. The Cuban government feared that the United States would use the crisis to justify another full-scale intervention like that provoked by the August Revolution in 1906. Nevertheless, President Gómez used the US involvement in his favor to warrant the brutality employed in suppressing the armed revolt. Ibid., 219.
31. The most conservative sources estimate that approximately two thousand rebels died in the conflict. Ibid., 225.
32. Trias Monge, *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 52–66.
33. For most republicanos, statehood as a political framework did not negate the Puerto Rican nation.
34. H.R. 20048, *Hearing before the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico*, United States Senate, Sixty-Second Congress, Second Session, May 7, 1912, 3–16.
35. Ibid., 7.
36. The secretary did not offer details on his views about how to tailor a US citizenship for Puerto Ricans.
37. H.R. 20048, *Hearing before the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico*, 10.
38. Although crucial for the working and expansion of Cuba's sugar industry, the large West Indian migration to the island was the source of a wide array of conflicts. Thus colonial officials in Puerto Rico and the US Congress were concerned about the effect of these "black" migrations to Puerto Rico. On West Indian migration to Cuba, see Aviva Chomsky, "'Barbados and Canada': Race, Immigration, and Nation in Early-Twentieth Century Cuba," *HAHR* 80, no. 3 (August 2000), 415–462.
39. H.R. 20048, *Hearing before the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico*, 10.
40. Ibid., 21–22.
41. Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 59–102; Ada Ferrer, "Cuba, 1898: Rethinking Race, Nation, and Empire," *Radical History Review*, no. 73 (Winter 1999), 22–46.
42. The document published with the transcript of the hearing includes other documents such as Morrison's original letter and the congressmen's acknowledgement letters upon receipt. *H.R. 20048*, 33–42. See also AFL, *Report of Proceedings of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor Held at Rochester, New York,*

November 11 to 23, Inclusive, 1912 (Washington, DC: Law Reporter Printing Company, 1912), 17–18.

43. These and other sensationalist titles appeared under the column "Últimos Cables," in the newspaper *La Democracia* on May 24, 1912; May 27, 1912; June 4, 1912; June 10, 1912; June 11, 1912; and June 13, 1912.
44. "La población de Cuba," *La Democracia*, June 17, 1912, 6.
45. The US censuses in Puerto Rico of the first decades showed a "decrease" in the black population and an "increase" in the racially mixed population. On the social and political dynamics driving the production of these numbers, see Duany, *Puerto Rican*, 236–60; and Loveman, "The US Census and the Contested Rules of Racial Classification."
46. José M. Gómez, "Al pueblo de Cuba," *La Democracia*, June 22, 1912, 2.
47. Ibid.
48. "Intervention May Come," *The Times*, May 22, 1912, 1.
49. "Chaos Reigns," *The Times*, May 24, 1912, 1. Subsequent front-page headlines focused on the same intervention issue: "Escuadra de los Estados Unidos Para Cayo Hueso y Florida" (May 27, 1912), "Battleships Have Been ordered to Key West" (May 27, 1912), "US Has Sufficient Proof to Intervene" (May 28, 1912).
50. "US Has Sufficient Proof to Intervene," *The Times*, May 28, 1912, 1.
51. Mariano Abril, "Cuba Independiente: I," *La Correspondencia*, May 28, 1912, 1.
52. Ibid.
53. Mariano Abril, "Cuba Independiente: II," *La Correspondencia*, May 29, 1912. 1.
54. The original interview appeared in the Cuban journal *La Lucha* on May 17, 1912. See the reproduction in "La situación en Cuba el día 17 de mayo de 1912," *The Times*, May 30, 1912, 4.
55. The author does not reveal its name, but it is possible to attribute it to Matienzo, as he is well known for writing about the island political leadership as a form of *caudillaje*. "¡Ahí Tenéis a Cuba!," *La Correspondencia,* June 5, 1912, 1.
56. "Para los separatistas de Puerto Rico: Cómo opina el General Núñez sobre la situación de Cuba," *The Times*, June 14, 1912, 4.
57. Alonso Torres, *Cuarenta años de lucha proletaria*, Nicolás Noguera, ed. (San Juan: Imp. Baldrich, 1939), xvii.
58. See Trigo, "Anemia and Vampires: Figures to Govern the Colony, Puerto Rico, 1880 to 1904" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 1 (1999), 104–23.
59. See Martínez-Vergne, *Shaping the Discourse on Space: Charity and Its Wards in Nineteenth-Century San Juan, Puerto Rico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).
60. Silvestrini, "The Impact of the US Public Health Policy on Puerto Rico: 1898–1913," Paper presented at the Fourteenth Conference of Caribbean Historians, San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 16–21, 1982; Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 21–45; Amador, "'Redeeming the Tropics': Public Health and National Identity in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Brazil, 1890–1940" (PhD diss.: University of Michigan, 2007).
61. "Eso es mentira: (De "La Democracia" correspondiente al 3 de Julio)," AGPR, Colección Junghanns, Documentos Históricos, Caja 20, Doc. 719–752, Exp. 741, C.P. 25. The document is not dated, but references in the text indicates that it must have been published around 1902.
62. Ibid.
63. Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 101–9.
64. For a brief description of these changes, see Baldrich, "Gender and the Decomposition of the Cigar-Making Craft in Puerto Rico, 1900–1934," in *Puerto Rican Women's History:*

New Perspectives, ed. Félix V. Matos Rodríguez and Linda C. Delgado (London: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 105–25.

65. FLT, *Report de procedimientos del tercer congreso de la Federación Libre de los trabajadores de Pto. Rico, afiliada a la American Federation of Labor celebrado en Mayaguez del 18 al 25 de junio* (Mayaguez, PR: Imp. Union Obrera, 1905), 30–32.
66. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 144–53.
67. FLT, *Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso de la FLT celebrado en 18–24 de marzo en Juncos* (San Juan: Tip. M. Burillo y Co. 1910), 65–66.
68. Ibid.
69. Rubén Dávila Santiago's anthology provides several examples of fatherhood as central to working-class masculinity. In those plays, capitalist exploitation undermined working-class men's ability to act as good fathers. Therefore, capitalist elites robbed lower-class men of their masculinity. See the 1920s plays by González, *Los crímenes sociales* and *Pelucín*, in *Teatro Obrero en Puerto Rico (1900–1920): Antología*, ed. Rubén Dávila (Río Piedras: Editorial Edil, 1985), 308–40, 343–54.
70. Quoted in Silvestrini, "The Impact of the US Public Health Policy on Puerto Rico," 12.
71. See the review essay by Choy, "The Health of a Nation: Race, Place, and the Paradoxes of Public Health Reform," *American Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2003), 141–47.
72. Similar contemporary dynamics in the US mainland are explored in Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879–1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemic and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
73. Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Espinosa, *Epidemic Invasions: Yellow Fever and the Limits of Cuban Independence, 1878–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Palmer, "Migrant Clinics and Hookworm Science: Peripheral Origins of International Health, 1840–1920," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 83, no. 4 (Winter 2009), 676–709; Amador, "Redeeming the Tropics."
74. Ashford and Pedro Gutiérrez Igaravidez, *Uncinariasis (Hookworm Disease) in Porto Rico: A Medical and Economic Problem* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), 1–3
75. Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, 35.
76. Silvestrini, "The Impact of the US Public Health Policy on Puerto Rico: 1898–1913," paper presented at the Fourteenth Conference of Caribbean Historians (San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 16–21, 1982), 4.
77. Fleagle, *Social Problems in Porto Rico*, 78.
78. Palmer, "Central American Encounters with Rockefeller Public Health, 1914–1921," in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, ed. Gilbert Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 311–32.
79. Quevedo Baez, "Memorias de un medico," *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* 9, no. 85 (October 1912), 1–4.
80. Del Valle Atiles, "Algunas generalidades acerca del problema de la casa en Puerto Rico," *Boletín de la Asociación Médica de Puerto Rico* 8, no 15 (September 1912), 89–101.
81. Stepan, *"The Hour of Eugenics:" Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).
82. For scientist, politicians, and intellectuals, not all whites were equal. Eugenicists rendered Nordic groups better than Mediterranean societies. In addition, the white population of the metropolis held onto their whiteness as a precious commodity that differentiated them from their white counterparts in the colonies, whose racial purity was in question.

For a discussion of these distinctions in various realms within the US mainland, see Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (London: Verso, 2000); Jacobson*, Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

83. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
84. See Briggs, *Reproducing Empire.*
85. The language of future degeneracy was prevalent in the labor movement by the 1910s. *FLT, Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso de la FLT*, 61.
86. See Chapter 2 for details on Del Valle Atiles's career.
87. Del Valle Atiles, "Eugénesis: La base más firme de nuestro progreso," in *Conferencias dominicales dadas en la Biblioteca Insular (desde octubre 12, 1913 hasta abril 19, 1914)* (San Juan: Bureau of Supplies, Printing, and Transportation, 1913–14), 56–84.
88. Del Valle Atiles, "Puerto Rico ante la eugénica," in *Conferencias dominicales dadas en la Biblioteca Insular (desde marzo 9 a mayo 25 de 1913)*: 9–21 (San Juan: Bureau of Supplies, Printing, and Transportation, 1913–14).
89. Ibid., 65.
90. Among them were Dr. Del Valle Atiles, Dr. Doval, Dr. José Chacar, Dr. Barreras, Dr. Font y Guillot, Dr. Gutiérrez Igaravídez, and Dr. Roses Artau. Dr. Chacar spoke about syphilis in FLT, *Libro de actuaciones de la primera asamblea regular de las uniones de tabaqueros en Puerto Rico celebrada en Caguas, P.R. durante los días 14, 15 y 16 de julio del 1908* (n.p.: Cuerpo Consultivo Conjunto de las Uniones de Tabaqueros en Puerto Rico, n.d.), 22–23. On how ethnoracial concerns shaped the understanding and treatment of tuberculosis, see Hardman, "The Anti-Tuberculosis Crusade"; and Reber, "Blood, Coughs, and Fever."
91. In fact, Dr. Barreras states that only rich people had managed to recover their health after contracting the illness. FLT, *Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso*, 98–99.
92. Ibid. Also see Del Valle Atiles, *Un estudio de 168 casos de prostitución: Contribución al examen del problema del comercio carnal en Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Tip. El Compás, 1919), 10. Organized workers also manipulated these aesthetic values. In the FLT's 1910 assembly, a tobacco workers' union petitioned the central leadership to encourage manual laborers to wear shoes. The FLT leadership not only approved the resolution but designed a complex contest to encourage workers around the island to wear shoes, not only for health reasons, but also because the image of barefoot workers was unfavorable, especially to foreign visitors. See *FLT, Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso de la FLT*, 105–8.
93. Conference "Como evitaría el tabaquero la tuberculosis" by Dr. N. Doval, summarized in FLT, *Libro de actuaciones de la asamblea magna de los tabaqueros de P.R. celebrada en los días 22 y 23 de enero del 1907* (San Juan: Tip. El Alba, 1907), 28–29.
94. Ibid.; and Dr. Barreras in FLT, *Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso de la FLT*, 98–99.
95. Dr. Barrera, in FLT, *Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso de la FLT*, 98–99.
96. FLT, *Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso de la FLT*, 99.
97. Ibid., 61.
98. Dr. Doval, "Como evitaría el Tabaquero la tuberculosis," in *Libro de actuaciones de la asamblea magna de los tabaqueros de P.R.*, 28–29.
99. Dr. Barreras, FLT, *Procedimientos del Sexto Congreso*, 99.
100. FLT, *Uniones de Tabaqueros de Puerto Rico, Libro de actuaciones de la primera asamblea*, 22–23.

101. FLT, *Actuaciones de las segunda y tercera asambleas regulares de las uniones de tabaqueros*, 80–81. The assembly's debate was not circumscribed to women's work but also denounced the use of child labor.
102. Fleagle, *Social Problems in Porto Rico*, 104
103. Ibid., 35–36. This excerpt is part of the sociologists' discussion of the *jíbaro* family.
104. Ibid., 70.
105. Ibid.
106. See the cultural programs compiled in *Teatro obrero en Puerto Rico,* ed. Dávila Santiago, 31–32, 81–83, 205–7, 283–85, and 289–92.
107. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 178.
108. Findlay describes in detail the arguments posed by the supporters as well as the opposition. Ibid., 179–89.
109. Ibid., 185; Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, 67, 70–71.
110. Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*, 52, 71–73.
111. The earthquake of 1918, the lack of funding to continue with the incarceration, and the furious opposition (a delegation had gone to Washington to discuss the problem) were some of the factors that led to the end of the antiprostitution campaigns. See ibid., 51.
112. See Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 189. Emphasis in the original.
113. Francisco del Valle Atiles, *Un estudio de 168 casos de prostitución*.
114. Ibid., 7.
115. Ibid., 10–11.
116. Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 172–73.
117. José Coll y Vidal was a journalist in the Partido Unión-affiliated newspaper *La Democracia.* Bolívar Pagán, *Historia de los Partidos Políticos Puertorriqueños, 1898–1956* (San Juan: n.p., 1959): 1:12. I do not have Coll y Vidal's original article (titled "La lucha de razas en el Norte: El ejemplo de Puerto Rico"), but it is referenced in José C. Barbosa's response, compiled in "Problema de Razas." See Barbosa, *Problemas de Razas*, 63.
118. For another analysis of these texts, see Labrador-Rodríguez, "Mulatos entre blancos: José Celso Barbosa y Antonio S. Pedreira. Lo fronterizo en Puerto Rico al cambio de siglo (1896–1937)," *Revista Iberoamericana* 65, nos. 188–9 (July–December 1999), 715–22.
119. Barbosa, "Problemas de Razas," part 6 (August 16, 1919), 85.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. See the comprehensive analysis in Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: The Struggle for Self, Community, and Nation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998). Mason's collected materials were edited by Aurelio Espinosa and published in various numbers of the *Journal of American Folk-lore* between the years 1916 and 1924.
124. Guerra, *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico,* 238–48.
125. Ibid., 243–45.
126. Manners, "Tabara: Subcultures of a Tobacco and Mixed Crops Municipality," in The People of Puerto Rico: *A Study in Social Anthropology,* ed. Julian H. Steward and University of Puerto Rico, Social Science Research Center (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), 152, 156, and 164.
127. These veterans lived in the rural barrios, not in the urban core, thus they did not belong to Tabará's local elite. Ibid., 139.
128. Sidney W. Mintz, "Cañamelar: The Subculture of Rural Sugar Plantation Proletariat," in *The People of Puerto Rico: A Study in Social Anthropology,* ed. Julian H. Steward and University of Puerto Rico, Social Science Research Center (Urbana: University of Illinois

Press, 1956), 314–417. This research led also to the publication of Don Taso's life story in Mintz, *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History* (NY: Norton 1974).

129. In contrast to Manners, Mintz is much more critical of racial interactions on the island. The author notes the contradiction between his interviewees' praising of whiteness as an ideal and their assumption that everyone on the island had at least a black ancestor. Mintz, "Cañamelar," 411.
130. Ibid., 348.
131. Ibid., 375.
132. Ibid., 358.
133. Colombán Rosario and Carrión, *Problemas sociales: El negro* (San Juan: Negociado de Materiales, Imprenta y Transporte, 1940), 126–27.
134. Milián, "El poder del obrero o la mejor venganza," in *Teatro Obrero en Puerto Rico,* ed. Dávila Santiago, 239–82.
135. Ibid., 255.
136. González, "*Pelucín, el limpiabotas o la obra del sistema capitalista,*" in *Teatro Obrero en Puerto Rico*, ed. Dávila Santiago, 343–54.

CONCLUSION

1. *Negrismo* in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, *Negritude* among writers in French colonies*,* *Indigénisme* in Haiti, explorations in Afro-Brazilian culture, and the Harlem Renaissance in the US are examples of these cultural movements of the 1920s and 1930s. See Giusti, "Afro Puerto Rican Cultural Studies: Beyond Cultura Negroide and Antillanismo," *Centro: Focus en Foco* 8, nos. 1&2 (1996), 56–77; Rivera Casellas, "Cuerpo politico, memoria racial, escritura y diaspora," in *Contrapunto de género y raza en Puerto Rico*, ed. Idsa E. Alegría Ortega and Palmira N. Ríos González (San Juan: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2005), 115–34; Branche, "Negrismo: Hibridez cultural, autoricad y la cuestión de la nacion," *Revista Iberoamericanana* 65, nos. 188–89 (July–December 1999), 479–80; Branche, *Colonialism and Race in Luso-Hispanic Literature* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 185–211; and Roy Féquèire, *Women, Creole Identity, and Intellectual Life in Early Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 197–262.
2. Puerto Ricans living and traveling between the island and various sites within the United States have also created their own silences about racialization on the island. Puerto Rican workers in the United States, like the tobacco worker Bernardo Vega, often romanticized the island as a racial paradise when contrasted to US practices of racial segregation during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, Vega published an article in the New York–based newspaper *Alma Boricua* about the increasing tendency toward whitening he observed among recently arrived Puerto Ricans to New York. He argued that this tendency was an innovation among immigrants to the mainland because in Puerto Rico whitening was unnecessary, given that everyone was racially mixed. He insisted that racial distinctions did not exist in the homeland. One can presume that similar interpretations among immigrants, many of whom frequently returned to the island, reinforced the island's myth of racial harmony. Andreu Iglesias, ed., *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega: A Contribution to the History of the Puerto Rican Community in New York* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984); Bernardo Vega, "Al margen de la lucha," *Alma Boricua*, October 1, 1934, 6. Similarly, Puerto Ricans "on the move" have also helped to disrupt silences. See Flores, *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning* (New York: Routledge, 2009)..

3. Roy Féquèire, “Negar lo negro sería gazmoñería: Luis Palés Matos, Margot Arce, and the Black Poetry Debate,” *Centro: Focus en Foco: Race and Identity, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueño* 8, no. 1&2 (Spring 1996), 82–91.
4. In her analysis of Palés's poetry, Arce insists that Palés's depiction of blacks was more theoretical, abstract, or a construct than a Puerto Rican reality. To her, Palés was more a skillful artist following the in-vogue themes of other modernist intellectuals than an artist mirroring a Puerto Rican racial reality. See ibid., 86.
5. Dávila, *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).
6. Giusti, “Afro Puerto Rican Cultural Studies,” 62.
7. Haslip-Viera, ed., Taíno Revival: Critical Perspectives on Puerto Rican Identity and Cultural Politics (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2001). See http://www.taino-tribe.org/jatiboni.html; http://members.dandy.net/~orocobix/tedict.html; http://www.uctp.org; and http://www.pantribalconfederacy.com (February 15, 2010).

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