

Global Challenge of Refugees & Migrants

PUERTO RICANS AS INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

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The obligation of the State is to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of its citizens

U.S. presence and legislature in Puerto Rico since 1898 has restrained the island's ability to develop their political and economic infrastructure, thereby limiting citizens' basic needs

Currently in a ten year economic crisis, the people of Puerto Rico are migrating in historical numbers as they notice their insular government is weak and the U.S. federal government will not protect them unless they move to the mainland

The objective of this case study is to elucidate U.S. interests and policies that have influenced the development and autonomy of Puerto Rico. For of this case study U.S. interests will be analyzed through trade, military, and political decisions.

Keywords: Internally Displaced Persons, Puerto Rican Islanders, U.S. Commonwealth (Compact), Statehood

1898-1930

1898 Acquisition of Puerto Rico from Spain
1900 Foraker Act
1901 Hollander Act
1920 Occupation Vieques begins
1917 Jones Act: Puerto Rico becomes a U.S. Territory
1917 Selective Service Act

1930-1950

1934 Sugar Act
1936 Tydings Bill
1947 Elective Governor Act
1948 Gag Law
1950 Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act (PL 600)

1950-1970

1951 Puerto Rican Constitution written
1952 Puerto Rico becomes a Commonwealth of the United States (Compact State)
1953 UN no longer considers Puerto Rico a U.S. colony (Resolution 748)
1968 United States v. Manuel Army Valentine (Selective Service)

1970-1990

1974 United States v. Vargas (Selective Service)
1975 Increased Military Activity on Vieques Island
1976 Institution of Section 936 Puerto Rico Corporate Tax Code
1980 Vieques Military Personnel Restricted to Base
1980 Hamis v. Rosario (Welfare)
1987 U.S. v. Lopez (Double Jeopardy)

1990-2016

1992 Death of David Sanes in Vieques
1996 Section 936 Ten Year Phase -Out Begins
2000 Institution of the The Presidential Task Force on PR's Status
2003 Military leave Vieques
2006 Economic Crisis begins
2016 US. v. Sanchez (Nullifies Double Jeopardy)
2016 Institution of PROMESA

RESEARCH QUESTION

How has the United States interests and policies regarding Puerto Rico influenced their self-autonomy and development within the island?

HYPOTHESIS

United States' interests and policies in Puerto Rico have influenced the island's political and financial development and self-autonomy.

FINDINGS

U.S. Trade Decisions

U.S. Military Decisions

- Foraker Act of 1900
- Free Market Economy
- Termination of Section 936 in 1996

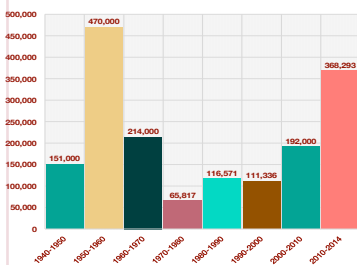
- Occupation of Vieques
- Selective Service Act of 1917

U.S. Political Decisions

- Presidential appointment of local government
- Jones Act of 1917
- Tydings Bill of 1936
- P.R. Federal Relations Act (Public Law 600)

- The Presidential Task Force on P.R.'s Status (Executive Order 13183)
- The Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, & Economic Stability Act (PROMESA)

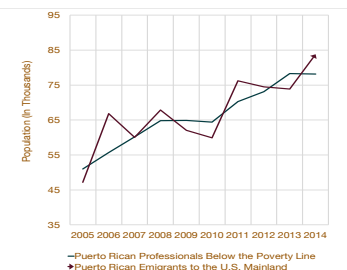
Figure 1: Migration Numbers to Exceed West Side Story Era



Industrialization of Puerto Rico led to the first great migration to the U.S. mainland in the 1950s as depicted in *West Side Story*

In the ten years of the West Side Story Era, almost 500,000 Islanders migrated to the U.S. mainland; from 2010 to 2014 almost 400,000 Islanders have arrived

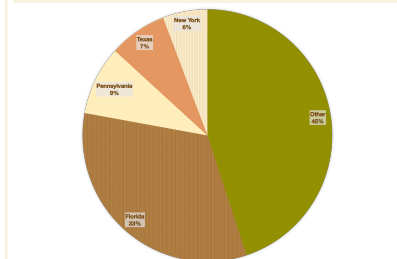
Figure 3: Section 936 ends, economic crisis begins Puerto Rican Professionals: Flight or Plight



In 1996, President Clinton begins a ten year phase out of Section 936 corporate tax incentives in Puerto Rico. In 2006, Puerto Rico enters into its current economic status, as various corporations fled the island

Since the end of the ten year phase out the population of Puerto Rican Professionals (individuals with least a Bachelors degree) in poverty has increased and this group has contributed to the amount of Islanders emigrating to the U.S. mainland.

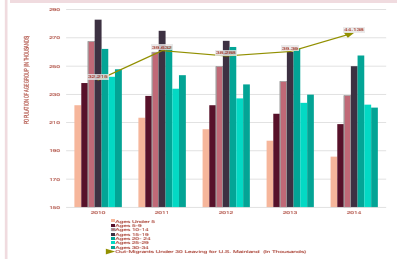
Figure 2: Top U.S. Destination for Puerto Rican Migrants: The Sunshine State



In 2014, 83,814 Puerto Rican Islanders moved to the U.S. mainland

That same year Florida alone received 27,596 Puerto Rican migrants

Figure 4: Brain Drain: Young Puerto Ricans Leaving Motherland for Mainland



Various sociological factors pull young Islanders off the island and to the mainland including; family, education, and jobs

This is creating a much older population in Puerto Rico and threatening the future through population decline and brain drain

PUTTING IT INTO PERSPECTIVE (Results)

The United States interests and policies infringe on Puerto Rico's autonomy to such an extent that even after becoming a Commonwealth in 1952 the island is not illustrative of a Free Associate state, yet is indistinguishable to a colony.

The lack of self-autonomy is quantifiable in the island's financial debt, brain-drain, internally displaced persons population from Puerto Rico throughout the U.S. mainland, and existential insecurity.

- This existential insecurity is inclusive of Puerto Rico's natural disaster readiness and infrastructure in sanitary, energy, and transportation sectors.
- The limited autonomy politically and economically have left these sectors underdeveloped and unable to support the people of Puerto Rico.

United States' interests and policies are not inclusive to Puerto Rico's development or Puerto Rican Islanders.

Among non-Puerto Rican Americans there is intolerance and ignorance towards Islanders and those who migrate to the mainland.

- This has led to increasing xenophobic responses which is illustrative through the creation and use of the derogatory term 'Spic' for Puerto Ricans in New York City.
- The existential insecurity found in Puerto Rico due to U.S. interests and policies has increased in-group solidarity among non-Puerto Ricans resulting into an "us versus them" mentality, especially when Puerto Ricans migrate to the U.S. mainland.

This issue of underdevelopment in Puerto Rico is found to be social, economic, and political.

The best resolution for Puerto Rico is statehood into the United States of America.

Bibliography
Francisco L. Rivera Batiz and Carlos Santiago
José L. Vázquez Calzada
U.S. Census Bureau (factfinder.census.gov)



Acknowledgements
For inspiration to produce superior scholarly work Dr. Washington & Dr. Scott
For their constant support of this study the Toussaint & Flores Families,
Colin Antrand, Angelica Benitez, Cameron Cooper, & Daniel Rivera