

# **RACE**

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Rodriguez, C.. Challenging Racial Hegemony:  
Puerto Ricans in the United States. In S. Gregory  
& R. Sanjek (eds.), *Race*, pp. 131-143.

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**Rutgers University Press**  
**New Brunswick, New Jersey**

1994

## Challenging Racial Hegemony: Puerto Ricans in the United States

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Puerto Ricans came to the United States with racial perceptions and experiences that differed from those on the North American mainland. Like the conceptions of race of other Latin Americans, those of Puerto Ricans are as much cultural and social as folk-biological (see Ginorio 1979, 1986; Harris 1970; Padilla 1958:75; Petrullo 1947:16; Pitt-Rivers 1975; Wade 1985; Wagley 1965). These concepts of race have been a strong theme in Latin American literature and political thought (Muñoz 1982; Vasconcelos 1966). With antecedents in Spain, New World Hispanic views of race were redefined in the colonial context of extensive mixing among Europeans, Africans, and Indians. They may now again be in the process of redefinition by Latinos in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Although each country in Latin America has evolved its own unique racial context, a number of authors argue that Latinos, as a whole, have a different conception of race than that commonly held in the United States (Ginorio 1986; Wade 1985; Wagley 1965). First, in Latin America, race is often conceived of as a continuum with no fixed demarcation between categories. This is in contrast to the United States, where race is seen as a dichotomous variable of white or black, and differences in appearance among whites and among blacks are subordinate to the biracial dividing line. Second, in the United States, racial distinctions are limited to a very small number of categories—three or perhaps five, if, in addition to white, black, and yellow, red and brown are used as racial categories. In Latin America there are usually many more categories. In Brazil, for example, over a hundred racial terms and their variations may be used in a single community (Sanjek 1971). Finally, the basis for racial distinctions in the United States is strictly genealogical, while in Latin America other social variables may be calculated in racial identification, for example, class and education (Ginorio 1986).

That race may be perceived differently in Latin America, or that it may be less discussed there, does not mean that all tensions or sensitivity about race have been effectively resolved (Betances 1972; Rodríguez

1991: chap. 3; Wade 1985). Race has always been an important, but not always commendable, part of the evolution and development of Latin America. The enslavement of both Africans and indigenous peoples was widespread, and it was often accompanied by cruelty and harsh treatment. Neither Puerto Rico nor other parts of Latin America have been racial paradises. The emphasis on the racial superiority of white Europeans during Spain's colonization period became part of Spain's legacy to Latin America. This emphasis can be seen among some elites and others who maintain their "pure" European ancestry as a way of distinguishing themselves from the masses.

As Latin Americans, Puerto Ricans thus came to the U.S. mainland with perceptions of race that differed from the perceptions of those they met here. After 1917, they arrived as an ethnically different but homogenous group of multiracial U.S. citizens. They entered a U.S. society that had a biologically based biracial structure that assumed a white-nonwhite division of the world. Euro-American whites were at one pole, and African-American blacks were at the other.

Groups who had also been in the United States since its earliest beginnings, such as Native Americans and Asians, occupied ambiguous gray positions vis-à-vis this dichotomy. They were not white; they were not black. The geographic distribution or enforced isolation of these groups, plus historical events, tended to make their racial position more ambiguous in the white American public mind. What was most salient was the basic white-black racial dichotomy.

Puerto Ricans also entered a society where the racial status of other Latinos had been similarly ambiguous. This ambiguity is reflected in the changing racial classifications that Hispanics have had in the U.S. census over time.<sup>2</sup> In 1930, Mexican and Mexican-origin persons who were *not* "definitely White, Negro, Indian, Chinese, or Japanese" were counted as "Mexican." By 1960, all Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and other persons of "Latin descent" were counted as "White" unless they were "definitely Negro, Indian, or some other race (as determined by observation)." In 1980, Hispanics were free to identify themselves as they chose, and those who indicated they were "other" than black or white were left in this category (Martin et al. 1990:4).

Thus, some Hispanics have been variously counted as Mexicans who were not any other race; as "white," unless they were definitely one of the other races; and finally as they chose to identify themselves by race. Given the different racial perceptions that Puerto Ricans bring, and the ambiguity in the United States over the racial status of Hispanics (or other multiracial groups), the racial experience of Puerto Ricans in the United States has not been an easy one.

## Racial Themes in the Literature on Puerto Ricans

The difficulties of this experience and the clash of race orders can be clearly seen in the social science literature on Puerto Ricans published between 1938 and 1973. During that period, Puerto Ricans were relative newcomers, and issues of race were not yet affected by the subsequent and substantial changes introduced by the Black Power movement. The Black Power movement affected Puerto Ricans and other groups by increasing pride in African ancestry and by increasing ethnic pride.

In my review of nearly a score of works of the period, most by North Americans, I found that all authors agreed that race in Puerto Rico was different from race in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Running across this literature were three major themes: (1) Puerto Rico had a continuum of racial types, with a corresponding nomenclature for this variation; (2) Puerto Rico had a more "benign" quality of race relations than did the mainland United States; and (3) darker Puerto Ricans experienced negative social and economic consequences upon migrating to the United States. There was as well some discussion of what I term "mistaken identity," that is, being identified in the United States racially, as black or white, instead of culturally, as Puerto Rican.<sup>4</sup> This theme is found more emphatically in biographical or fictional writing by Puerto Ricans themselves.

The continuum of racial types referred to in several of the studies carries with it such terms as *blanco* (white), *indio* (dark skinned and straight haired), *moreno* (dark skinned but with a variety of Negroid or Caucasian features and hair forms), *negro* (black or African-American in appearance), and *trigueño* (wheat-colored), a term that can be applied broadly to each of the foregoing types except for very blond blancos (Fitzpatrick 1971; Glazer and Moynihan 1970; Gosnell 1945; Landy 1959; La Ruffa 1971; Mills et al. 1950; Mintz 1960; Padilla 1958; Steward 1956). (The term *negro* is also commonly used in Puerto Rico as a term of endearment, without regard to racial appearance.)

Where each of these categories ends and another begins is vague, and there is not a *ways* agreement on their use or range of application (Ginorio and Berry 1972). A more analytic conception of this continuum was advanced by Padilla (1958:74). She argued that in Puerto Rico there was a biracial continuum, with the two poles being white and black. Within this overarching biracial structure, however, she maintained that, contrary to the situation in the United States, the categories in the middle of the continuum were not castelike social groups and that one could experience mobility within one's lifetime from one racial designation to another.

In contrast to this spectrum of racial categories, found in similar forms elsewhere in the Caribbean and other parts of Latin America, racial discourse in the United States had evolved around how to best conceptualize the "other" or nonwhite group. In the United States, racial terms for African Americans have changed over time, from *African* to *colored* to *Negro* to *black* to *African American*. The U.S. census has even used mixed-race categories, like *mulatto* or *octoroon*, at various points in its history (Martin et al. 1990). However, the underlying referent remained the same—they were members of an "other," nonwhite group. In comparison, in Puerto Rico the terms *moreno*, *trigueño*, and even *negro* have multiple connotations and do not refer to socially and politically bounded groups (Rodríguez and Cordero-Guzmán 1992). In Puerto Rico, members of the same kin groups can be identified with varying racial terms, and an individual might change racial status with changes in class or education. On the contrary, in the United States no individual of any degree of African descent can leave the "black race" group, regardless of changes in social and economic status.

The majority of North American social scientists who studied the island found race relations within its body politic to be "benign," as they often phrased it, and relatively unimportant (Chenault [1938] 1970; Glazer and Moynihan 1970; Mintz 1960; Petrullo 1947; Steward 1956; see also Giles et al. 1979). Overall there was general agreement that the quality of race relations in Puerto Rico made for a less divided and unequal society than that in the United States. Despite this consensus on the relative insignificance of race in institutional treatment, there was some disagreement on how salient or significant race was on other more personal levels. Some authors concluded that color was also less important to Puerto Ricans in their primary interpersonal social and family relations than was the case in the United States (Chenault [1938] 1970; Glazer and Moynihan 1970:142). Others (Landy 1959; G. Lewis 1963:424; Steward 1956:291; Tumin and Feldman 1971:228) argued that Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico were very conscious of race, especially skin color. La Ruffa (1971) went further and asserted there was covert racism on the island toward African ancestry and heritage, while Padilla (1958:74) stated that it was to one's advantage to look white in Puerto Rico.

An interesting perspective was presented by Gordon Lewis, who saw racial mixture in Puerto Rico as having produced a massive psychological color complex "with serious results both for the quality of self-esteem and of social life" (1963:225). Lewis agreed there was little overt racism but said there was a very real sense of color snobbishness based on the awareness of "shades." The whitening or bleaching phenomenon that

exists in Latin America is to some degree rooted in the idea that one should *adelantar la raza* (improve the race) by always attempting to marry individuals who are lighter than one is. Thus, upwardly mobile, darker males, for example, would marry lighter or white women, and darker women would marry lighter men, even those who might be lower in socioeconomic status or of lower "moral" quality, for example, womanizers. Lewis viewed this type of racial transformation as a problem, for it implied that self-worth revolved around whether or not individuals were able to garner the resources and recognition necessary to become so "whitened." (Lewis did not discuss the increasing economic and political influence of the United States on racial perceptions in Puerto Rico and Latin America.)

If Lewis is correct, then migrants to New York may have brought a sensitivity to color and race that became all the more acute with the sharp, biologically based segregation existent in the United States, and with the significant changes wrought by the Black Power movement. Fitzpatrick (1971) alluded to this when he said that the Puerto Rican's problem with color in New York was a concern already present in a much different context in Puerto Rico.

In this literature from 1938 to 1973, there is an awareness of the harshness of the U.S. race order, particularly on darker Puerto Ricans. The influence this system had on economic status and migration patterns was noted by a number of authors (Chenault [1938] 1970:24, 60-61; Katzman 1968; Mills et al. 1950:48, 72-74; Petruccio 1947:23; Senior 1965:28). Chenault ([1938] 1970), speaking of the pre-World War II New York community, noted that instances of difficulty on account of color were so frequent that numerous examples could be given. Rand stated, "An outsider cannot easily tell how the color line works in Puerto Rico but there seems no doubt that dark skin is a worse handicap in New York than there, and that realization of this can shock the dark-skinned migrant" (1958: 27).

In the housing area, there were many mentions made of difficulties experienced because of race (Chenault [1938] 1970:127; Gosnell 1945:313; Senior 1965:28). Also noted were the less visible but nonetheless significant social and psychological racial reassessments experienced by Puerto Ricans as a result of the new race order in the United States (Gosnell 1945:310-311; López 1973; Mills et al. 1950:7; Padilla 1958:75ff). There was even speculation about the negative impact of race on mental health (Berle 1958; Longres 1974:67; Malzberg 1967; Teichner and Berry 1981:281).

Being classified according to U.S. racial standards meant being identified racially instead of culturally. For many Puerto Ricans this meant

being reclassified into a different culture. This reclassification and its consequences have affected Puerto Ricans of all colors and have been persistent themes in the autobiographical literature, found in the *Memorias de Bernardo Vega* (Iglesias 1977), Jesus Colon's *Puerto Rican in New York* (1961), Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* (1967), and Edward Rivera's *Family Installments* (1983). The most-cited experience was that of the darker Puerto Rican who is taken to be "Negro," "colored," or "Black."

However, the perplexing situation of the Puerto Rican who is viewed as a white American is a complementary experience that similarly yields confusion, anger, and a clear awareness of group divisions. In the stories retold by Colon (1961), a white-looking daughter cannot meet her darker mother at her workplace because her employers do not like colored people; or *only* the white Puerto Ricans in an extended family are served at a segregated restaurant in the pre-1960s period. Vega notes how an apartment was rented to a white-looking member of a family, but when the others arrived, they all became the object of discrimination (see Iglesias 1977).

If such reclassifications did not have real-life consequences, they might be seen as trivial aberrations in the stream of life. However, this has not been the case. Identification by white Americans as Black, or even as a racially mixed or white-appearing Puerto Rican, has had economic, residential, social, and even political results. The real-life consequences of such classifications in the United States—*regardless of appearance*—were made explicit by one respondent in Oscar Lewis's *La Vida*: "I'm so white that they've even taken me for a Jew, but when they see my Spanish name, they back right off" (1966:180-181). Although the political consequences of race for Latinos have been less well documented in the literature reviewed here, it is clear that gerrymandering made possible by housing discrimination has been used to suppress the Puerto Rican "minority" in the U.S. mainland.

Some Puerto Ricans were faced with the historical choice that many white ethnic Americans met, whether to Anglicize their name and pass for nonethnic, or whether to keep their ethnic name and pay the consequences. But for Puerto Ricans the process was more complicated. Another choice had to be made, whether to be of the "white" race, or of a "not white" race. It appears that when Puerto Ricans first arrived on the mainland they perceived that there were two paths, one to the white world and one to the not-white world. Two realities seemed to be evident, and the choice of paths was dependent on racial classification according to U.S. standards. Race influenced the rewards to be gained from the system—housing, jobs, income. It seemed, however, that use

of these standards would divide the group, split families, negate the cultural existence of Puerto Ricans, and ignore their expectation that they be treated as one group, irrespective of race (Rodriguez 1989).

This was the situation into which the earliest Puerto Ricans in the United States stepped. The assumption or conclusion of many scholars was that, with greater time on the mainland, Puerto Rican racial attitudes would become more like those in the United States (Chenault [1938] 1970:151; Fitzpatrick 1971; Handlin 1959:60 ff.). Thus, it was anticipated that Puerto Ricans would become white or black over time. Alternatively, if Puerto Ricans were to retain a "coherent," integrated, cultural community, their success would ultimately depend on the reactions of the larger community and on a decline in biracial consciousness.

That the prediction of racial assimilation to U.S. standards has *not* occurred is evidenced by the 1980 and 1990 U.S. census results. While most non-Latinos responded they were "white" or "black" on the census race question, the responses of Puerto Ricans and other Latinos were quite different.<sup>5</sup> Over 40 percent of Puerto Ricans and Latinos in the country did not check off "white," "black," or any of the Asian or indigenous categories provided in this question (Denton and Massey 1989; Rodríguez 1991).<sup>6</sup> Instead, they checked off the last category, "other." In the blank space adjacent to the "other" category, many further specified that they were Puerto Rican, Spanish, Boricua (referring to the Amerindian name for the island), and so on.

Between 1980 and 1990, the proportion of Hispanics indicating they were "other" in response to the census race item increased by 2.7 percent. This occurred despite changes in the format of the census that were intended to discourage this "other" response (Rodríguez 1992). These results suggest that the racial self-identification of many Puerto Ricans and other Latinos in the United States continues to defy assimilation to either Euro-American or African-American groups.<sup>7</sup>

## Case Studies

The experience of Puerto Ricans in the United States illustrates a clash of race orders. This clash has been experienced by other Latino groups to greater and lesser degrees. By examining the life histories of individuals within the Puerto Rican community we see the choices people are forced to make under these conditions and the resistance they display. The following case studies are extracted from a larger, ongoing research project on racial identity.<sup>8</sup> The major question probed in these life histories is how Latinos identify racially in the United States. The first case study illustrates a Puerto Rican adaptation to the traditional mode of

European immigrant racial assimilation; the second, resistance to the U.S. biracial requirement; and the third, an encounter with the U.S. racial system and its pressures on dark Latinos to identify as Black.

The first subject, José Peterson, is single, twenty-five, and a college graduate who works as an administrator in the arts field. Peterson's parents migrated from Puerto Rico to New York when they were in their early twenties. They settled in a section of the city with a high incidence of violent crime. Peterson lived in this area for the first eight years of his life, until his parents moved to a more stable working-class area, where he continues to reside. Both Spanish and English are spoken in the home, but Peterson says his Spanish is not good. He indicated his background was working class and said he felt this way because his father did manual labor. He is the fourth child in a family of five siblings and the first to receive a college education.

Peterson was viewed by the interviewer as being "white." When asked questions about his race, Peterson answered consistently and unequivocally that he was "white." However, when asked questions that he interpreted as relevant to his ethnic identity, he answered Puerto Rican American. For example, on the census race question, he had checked "other" and specified he was "Puerto Rican-American." He explained that he attributed his Puerto Rican heritage to his parents, but that he identified as American because he was born in the States. He also added that he was bicultural because he was influenced by "various aspects of both the American and Puerto Rican cultures." When asked the general question of how he identified himself, he again said, "Puerto Rican American."

When asked how he would racially identify himself—white, black, or other—he said "white" because of his European (Spanish) background. He also made reference to being "white" when asked about his color, how North Americans viewed him, or how he would describe himself over the phone. He classified everyone in his family as white—except for two grandmothers who, he said, had "Indian blood."

Thus, Peterson consistently answered that he was white when he understood the questions to be about his physical appearance, but he said he was a hyphenated American (Puerto Rican-American) when he perceived the question to be about his cultural identity. He has thus adapted to the U.S. racial system in the same way that previous European immigrants have. His responses are similar to those we might expect of Italian, Greek, or Irish Americans—the only difference being that they would not say they have grandmothers with Indian blood.

More resistant to the U.S. biracial scheme is the second subject, Arco Iris, a sixty-two-year-old professional in the criminal justice system.

Arco Iris also represents a unique resolution to the clash of race orders, but one that is more innovation than adaptation. He, and others like him, identify strongly with color and express a preference for racial diversity and mixture. Such individuals acknowledge a bi- or triracial heritage with pride. They see themselves as combinations of African, European, and indigenous Indian and are proud of these racial components. The consolidation or crystallization of these rainbow identities represents a unique form of resistance to the dichotomized racial structure of the United States.

Arco Iris was born and raised in East Harlem and the South Bronx, in predominantly Black American and Hispanic neighborhoods. Both of his parents were born and raised in Puerto Rico and migrated to New York before World War II. He describes the household in which he was raised as a Spanish-speaking, lower-middle-class home. He feels his roots are in Harlem; he has spent little time living in Puerto Rico. He is fluent in Spanish but is more comfortable in English. He is married to a West Indian woman and has three children.

He was described by the interviewer as "not white/not black." In response to the census race question, he had checked "other" and had written "Puerto Rican" in the blank space. Responding to the question "How would you describe yourself racially?" and "What do you consider yourself to be?" he stated in both instances: "I am a mixture of black, white, and possibly Indian." He described his color as brown and stated that North Americans tend to see him as a "brown-skinned Puerto Rican or a light-skinned black."

On a five-point color scale, he described his mother as a one (light) and his father as a five (dark), and he identified himself as a four. This was darker than the interviewer's view of Arco Iris as a three (intermediate in color). When asked why he characterized himself as darker than North Americans might perceive him, he stated that "four is more biologically accurate" and further explained that he identified himself as dark out of respect and loyalty for his brown-skinned father.

Arco Iris's race varies with the eye of the beholder. He noted that since childhood he has been taken to be white, black, Greek, Arab, and Asian. These many instances of "mistaken identity" have prompted him to think about his identity more than others might. That he is able to crystallize his identity in the way that he has is a result of this self-reflection.

Arco Iris's racial identity is also of interest because he noted that it has changed over time. "As a child, I perceived myself as a Puerto Rican and distinctly apart from black and white. But as I grew, I understood Puerto Rican as a mixture, and I could identify with both blacks and whites." The way he viewed his ancestral background has also changed:

"I would have considered myself more white up to the age of nine. As I got older, I developed a broader definition of race and acknowledged greater mixture."

The third subject, José Ali, who is not Puerto Rican but Dominican, illustrates that the dynamics described for Puerto Ricans are also at work among other Latino groups. Ali presents the conflict depicted in the literature on the Puerto Rican migration since earliest times (Colon 1961; Iglesias 1977), perhaps most vividly in Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* (1967). It is the imposition of the black-white racial order on Latinos, thereby separating them into whites and blacks, and in the process attempting to create new African Americans and new hyphenated Americans—"Puerto Rican-Americans," "Dominican-Americans," "Colombian-Americans," and so on.

This phenomenon is understood by Latinos as one wherein they are perceived racially but not culturally, for Latinos today are subject to the pressure to be black, white, or perhaps now brown in the United States as opposed to being identified by national heritage and culture. At the same time, members of Hispanic groups whose continuing arrival in the United States accentuates their national identity focus on cultural differences between their own and other groups, both Latino and non-Latino.

José Ali's case represents the pressure to be Black. Ali is a twenty-four-year-old single Dominican male, and a full-time student at a public university. He has a part-time job in an advertising firm, where the majority of his co-workers are white. He was born and raised in New York of Dominican immigrant parents. He has visited the Dominican Republic only once, when he was five. He was raised in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood until he was eight years old, and Spanish was the only language spoken at home until he was twelve. Subsequently he moved to another area of New York that had a large African-American population. He describes his family as working class; his father worked in the metal goods industry, and his mother was an office worker. He does not have a Hispanic surname.

His appearance is described by the interviewer as "a stereotypically dark-skinned Latino or a light skinned Afro-American." He answered "other, Hispanic" to the census race question. He commented, "By inheritance I am Hispanic. However, I identify more with Blacks due to the fact that to white America, if you are my color you are a nigger. I can't change my color, and I do not wish to." He consistently alluded to his identification as Black when responding to other racial items in the interview, responding, for example, "Hispanic, yet I identify as black," or "I describe myself as black." When asked what the word *black* meant to him,

he said, "As other people see me." Finally, when asked, "Why do you see yourself as black?" his answer was: "Because, when I was jumped by whites I was not called a 'spic,' but I was called a 'nigger.' "

During the interview, José Ali explained that he feels everybody at his job assumes that he is Black, and he does not "want to burst their bubble." He said he goes along with their assumption as long as he is treated well. He admitted that he accepts the identity attributed to him because it would take him more time to explain why he is not, culturally, an African American. He pointed out that "when you are seen as a certain race, you are also seen culturally the same." But when people assume that he is Black American, they are "disregarding my own feelings. They don't ask, they simply assume."

Asked if his identity had changed over time, Ali said yes. "I realized that although I feel Hispanic, I was not seen as Hispanic or Latino, but as Black. Now, I agree with whomever thinks I'm Black. There is no point in trying to prove that I'm not Black . . . after being practically attacked by whites because of the way I look. I decided to accept the fact that no matter who I feel to be, I am categorized as Black."

Many other respondents in the sample also described how non-Hispanics assumed they were black or white Americans, and therefore not Hispanic. For many Latinos in the United States, their world was inverted; their racial appearance became more important than their culture. These intense pressures led, in many cases, to the development of both an internal cultural identity as a Latino or Dominican, for example, and an external identity as black or white in U.S. terms. It resulted in some cases in their adopting or affecting more than one racial or ethnic identity, and in hiding their background or exhibiting chameleonlike behavior in differing social contexts (see Rodríguez 1991).

The three cases presented illustrate paradigmatic reactions to the U.S. race order. The first case, José Peterson, depicts the familiar immigrant model of white racial-identity formation, although in this Latino case, the acknowledgment of "Indian" ancestry was offered unproblematically. The second case, Arco Iris, illustrates defiance of the dichotomized racial classification system in the United States. Arco Iris does not place himself in any of the accepted U.S. racial categories. Rather he presents a "mixed" racial identity that acknowledges racial mixture positively. The last case, José Ali, illustrates the clash of racial structures at work. His case represents the conflict that occurs when society racially classifies individuals in a way that differs from the way in which the individuals see themselves. These three case studies illustrate the range of choices people

are forced to make, and the resistances multiracial Latinos display, in a biracial United States.

### Notes

1. The terms *Latino* and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably throughout this essay.

2. When the 1990 census was being planned, the issue of how Latinos should be counted was again raised, and the suggestion was made that perhaps they should be counted as a separate racial group. This suggestion was defeated through strenuous community opposition, "the most aggressive campaign ever seen by the bureau" (Nampeo McKenney, a Bureau of the Census official, qtd. in *Hispanic Link Weekly Report*, May 26, 1986). Census agency officials decided to abandon the proposal, fearing it would cause a withdrawal of needed community support. In essence, Latinos rejected the conception that they should be counted as a separate race group. From the perspective of some, this left Latinos again straddling the white-not white race order.

3. These works were: Berle 1958; Chenault [1938] 1970; Fitzpatrick 1971; Glazer and Moynihan 1971; Gosnell 1945; Handlin 1959; Katzman 1968; Landy 1959; La Ruffa 1971; G. Lewis 1963; O. Lewis 1966; Longres 1974; López 1973; Malzberg 1967; Mills et al. 1950; Mintz 1960; Padilla 1958; Petruccio 1947; Rand 1958; Senior 1965; Steward 1956; Teichner and Berry 1981; Tumin and Feldman 1971. With the exception of community studies by Gosnell, López, and Padilla, all are by North American social scientists using a variety of descriptive, ethnographic, and survey-research methods.

4. Over other themes in this literature there was disagreement. One was the question of whether Puerto Ricans are a race or a multiracial society. Although this has been a constant question, it has not yielded a definitive answer.

5. According to the 1980 census, the overwhelming majority of non-Hispanic Americans chose racial categories traditional in the U.S., i.e., white or black; the percentage who identified as "other" was less than 3 percent in all states, including Hawaii (Rodríguez 1991).

6. The other categories indicated on the census form were: Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Indian (Amer.), Asian Indian, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, Eskimo, and Aleut.

7. The various Hispanic groups differed in the extent to which they checked off "other," but they all used this category to a considerable degree. Tienda and Ortiz (1986) had suggested that the format of the race item may have made for some misinterpretation of the question. The item included as possible answers to the race question various Asian groups; it was argued this may have induced some Latinos to respond culturally, seeing "white" and "black" as two North American cultural populations to which they do not belong. However, the work of Martin et al. (1990), which explored the format and order of the race and Hispanic identifier, suggests that the tendency to select "other" persisted, especially for the foreign-born.

8. See Rodríguez et al. 1991 for a description of the racial identity project.

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