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A New *State* of Puerto Rican Politics: Framing the Plebiscites on Status

Justin Bigelow

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Advised by Professor Paul Dosh
April 2007

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An Introduction

On November 7, 2000, two million United States citizens cast their ballots without voting for president, not by choice, but by federal mandate. This is tradition. Since 1917, when residents of Puerto Rico were granted United States citizenship, they have been denied the right to vote for president. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans have been denied any form of voting representation in the federal government: no voting congressperson or senator, and no electoral votes for president. Still, citizens continually exercise their right to vote in local elections at higher frequency than any state of the union.[1] The right to vote in federal elections is just one aspect of what has been deemed *the* Puerto Rican question.

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[1] Manuel Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico*. (2007) www.electionspuertorico.org. and David Lublin and D. Stephen Voss. *Federal Elections Project*. Washington, D.C. and Lexington, KY : American University and University of Kentucky. 2001. Although the official Puerto Rican voter turnout for 2000 (82.2 percent) is inflated, the island persistently boasts higher voter turnout than any state in the union based on a comparison of ballots cast versus voting-aged population. Using Census 2000 data of people over the age of 18 residing in Puerto Rico, an estimated 74.1 percent of the voting-aged population voted in 2000. This compares to the highest state estimate for the 2000 election of 68.75 percent for Minnesota.

What is Puerto Rico's political status with relation to the United States and what should it be? This question has been studied by scholars from various academic disciplines, as well as politicians and pundits. Works tackling the topic have been published in student newspapers, scholarly journals, multi-volume compilations of academic research, and the Congressional Record of the United States Congress. However, the Puerto Rican question is not the focus of my research. Rather, I investigate how the status question has been framed in the past and what framework of analysis best represents Puerto Rican views. The vast majority of works about status, regardless of author, follow one of two theoretical frameworks: the first emphasizes an economic, cost-benefit analysis, while the second focuses on an ideological, nationalism-based interpretation of political status. While these two frameworks offer unique insights into the status debates generally, neither can fully account for the findings of the two "Plebiscites on Status" held on the island in the 1990s. Grounded in these explicit demonstrations of national sentiment as benchmarks, I utilize and expand upon George Lakoff's *Moral Politics* to identify the Puerto Rican political status debate as a moral issue which incorporates and supersedes frameworks based solely on economics or ideology.

What is "political status"? Abstractly, the question asks for a simple legal definition. Political status refers to the official, legal relationship between two governing entities, i.e. the legal relationship between the governments of Puerto Rico and of the United States of America. This concrete example, however, exemplifies the difficulty in answering such a basic question in a real world context. Although continually contested,

Puerto Rico's official political status has remained the same since 1917. A White House report published in December, 2005, supports this view. The "Report by the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status," recognizes that the island is and has been an "organized, unincorporated territory" since the Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917.[2] In effect, this status means that residents of Puerto Rico are to remain U.S. citizens. However, under the U.S. Constitution, territories are not sovereign entities and all power to govern them is held by the federal government. Furthermore, "unincorporated" status leaves Puerto Rico in obscurity in the federal system, as only "organized, incorporated territories" may become full fledged states, incorporated as equals with voting representation in the federal government.

Although the report was not signed by President George W. Bush, Puerto Rico's status as an "organized, unincorporated territory" has been the federal government's status quo for nearly a century. Conjuring connotations of colonialism, exploitation and repression, this status was immediately rejected by the governor of Puerto Rico, Aníbal Acevedo Víla. In an open letter to the public, Governor Acevedo Víla renounced the report as "the most distorted, factually and legally wrong declaration on Puerto Rico ever produced."[3] This interaction reflects the heated debate over Puerto Rico's political status and does not begin to scratch the surface of the century-old struggle to come to consensus about the island's future.

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[2] Barrales, Ruben and Kevin Marshall, Gilbert Gonzalez, Elizabeth Dial, Frank Jimenez, Kathleen Leos, Theresa Speake Jack Kalavritinos, Joshua Filler, Loretta Greene, David P. Smith, Veronica Vargas Stidvent, Portia Palmer, David Kelly, Tony Fratto, and William McLemore. *Report by the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status*. December 2005. http://charma.uprm.edu/~angel/Puerto_Rico/reporte_status . pdf 3.

[3] Governor Aníbal Acevedo Vilá. "Public Letter." San Juan, Puerto Rico: La Fortaleza. 24 January 2006.

In order to establish consensus on the island regarding the status question, the government of Puerto Rico held two "Plebiscites on Status" in the 1990s. In 1993 and 1998 residents cast ballots for their preferred status option. During the two plebiscites, U.S. citizens with permanent residency in Puerto Rico chose from various options what they viewed to be the best political status for Puerto Rico with relation to the United States. After all the ballots were counted, some observers believed Puerto Ricans supported the "status quo."[4] While in 1993 a plurality of voters supported a slightly altered configuration of the current "Commonwealth" status, none of the three options on the ballot received an outright majority. In 1998, a majority of voters rejected all four of the given status options by voting for "None of the above." An in-depth description of the two plebiscites is included in Chapter 1.

Before exploring the plebiscites, it is crucial to understand the importance of "political status." As an abstract legal definition, political status has everyday implications for those who live in Puerto Rico. The repercussions of political status are entangled within the greater debate over the future of the island and affect nearly every aspect of life on it. From the language spoken in public schools and in the halls of government, to zoning regulations and tax benefits, from the way people get to work in the booming metropolitan capitol, San Juan, to expressions of Puerto Rican pride in international competitions like the Olympics and Miss Universe Pageant, from questions of citizenship and the creation of distinct political parties, to systematic

[4] "Puerto Rico." *CIA World Factbook*. 2007. https://cia.gov/cia//publications/factbook/print/rq.html

disenfranchisement on the federal level, political status perpetually defines the island and the people who reside in it.

Because of the importance political status holds for Puerto Rico and its residents, politicians, scholars, and pundits have written volumes discussing different options and the means of achieving them. All of the options invoke one of three thematic ideologies: independence, assimilation (federal statehood), or autonomy (commonwealth status with[5] the U.S. federal system). The finer details of each ideology have changed over time and will be discussed throughout this work in their respective historical contexts.

These abstract ideologies (independence, assimilation, and autonomy) define politics in Puerto Rico. Because the status question is so pervasive, the three thematic categories are the defining planks of political parties on the island. The Popular Democratic Party (PPD or *Partido Popular Democrático*) crafted the current Commonwealth government and has carried the torch of autonomous status with relation to the United States for 60 years. The New Progressive Party (PNP or *Partido Nuevo Progresista*) promotes a version of assimilation and has continually demonstrated the popularity of federal statehood after the party won the governorship in 1968. As its name suggests, the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP or *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño*) advocates for independence from the United States. While the PPD and the PNP dominate politics in Puerto Rico, consistently garnering over 90 percent of the

[5] Even the preposition used to relate commonwealth status to the U.S. is questioned. Does "with" or "within," imply "under" the federal government? Commonwealth advocates traditionally have promoted a bilateral compact with the United States, though many question the validity of a bilateral compact between a nation-state and a non-state entity.

vote between the two parties in island wide elections,[6] the PIP also retains "major party" status. All three parties receive public funding for their political campaigns and have a strong presence on the island. Even if the PIP remains only mildly popular at the ballot box, its opposition to statehood and commonwealth through grassroots protest and fiery rhetoric has kept alive the hope for an independent Puerto Rican republic.

The three major parties reflect the historical division that has organized politics in Puerto Rico; people are divided by the ideologies of status. Unlike in the United States (Figure 1.1), the parties do not reflect a political spectrum delineating liberal-versus-conservative, or ideologies of left-versus-right. While the Democratic and Republican parties have a small base of supporters and each holds a presidential primary on the island, neither party participates in mainstream electoral politics.[7]

Figure 1.1 U.S. Party/Ideology Spectrum

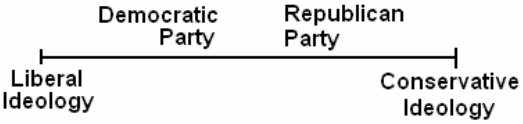
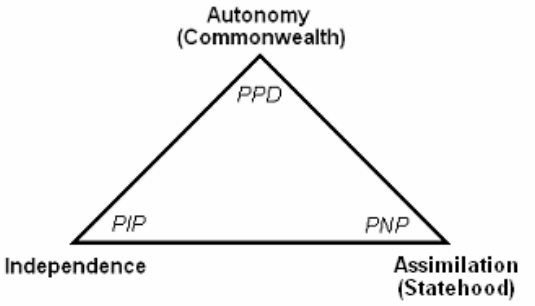


Figure 1.2 Puerto Rican Ideology/Party Triangle



Rather, citizens have assembled themselves in a non-linear triangle of independence-versus-statehood-versus-commonwealth (Figure 1.2). While some may argue that the three status themes create a linear progression from federal statehood to independence, with Commonwealth somewhere between the two, this is a gross oversimplification of

[6] Manuel Alvarez Rivera, interview by author, tape recording, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, 5 June 2006.
[7] Though they caucus with either the Democratic or Republican Party, Puerto Rico's non-voting member of congress runs as a member of one of the Puerto Rican political parties.

the ideologies behind status and is not as accurate a model of political ideology in Puerto Rico as a non-linear triangle. In practice, each ideological corner does not carry the same weight; the independence party is rarely victorious in electoral politics. Many politicians and scholars, including PIP party members, agree that supporters of independence have, at times, voted with the PPD as a vote in opposition to statehood.[8] Such votes are then seen as practical and not strictly ideological. Thus, the weight and strategy of a specific vote does not affect the ideological model.

The non-linear triangle model is crucial when analyzing Puerto Rican politics. The unique party divisions highlight the importance of the Puerto Rican question in political life. Still, it does not place the island outside of typical frameworks used to examine politics. Based on my research I conclude that two theoretical frameworks are deployed when analyzing Puerto Rican political structure and thus, when tackling the Puerto Rican question.

Political status is studied either through an economic framework or through a nationalist framework. In this thesis, I explore the two frameworks and expound upon their implications for political discourse by analyzing scholarly literature, partisan narratives, and congressional reports. I also draw upon personal interviews I conducted in the spring of 2006 with senators from each of the three main political parties and one of the Puerto Rican Electoral Commission's independent observers of the 1998 plebiscite on status. From these sources, I identify the two dominant theoretical frameworks employed to interpret the status question. I then examine the applicability of the economic and

[8] Senator Maria de Lourdes Santiago Negrón, interview by author, tape recording, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 9 June 2006.

nationalist frameworks by emphasizing the importance of the two plebiscites on status held in the 1990s as a political reality that must be explained by any relevant framework. Furthermore, I offer a new framework through which to view the Puerto Rican question by expanding on George Lakoff's *Moral Politics*.

It is important to note that none of the theoretical frameworks conclusively answers the Puerto Rican question, including the moral framework I expound upon later in this thesis. Rather, the theoretical frameworks offer a perspective on the debate. While the frameworks may suggest a specific status option (as will be shown in Chapters 2 and 3), I argue that a new, more neutral and therefore more inclusive framework offers a better perspective on the debate. Furthermore, the moral framework of status acknowledges morality as a crucial aspect of the debate that is often neglected or relegated to fringe movements supporting independence. The moral framework is more adequate than the economic or nationalist frameworks. Recognizing and actually stressing the morality of status better represents sentiments expressed from all corners of the Puerto Rican political triangle.

In Chapter 2, I explore the economic framework frequently used to shape the status debate and guide adherents of the economic model toward statehood. Drawing on secondary research and primary government documents, I illustrate the cost-benefit "balance sheet" often used by pundits and policymakers in attempts to unfurl the status debate. In this analysis I emphasize the importance of both economic and non-economic issues including taxation and subsidies, trade relations, and federal payment transfers (welfare), as well as cultural dimensions of status including the income/standard of living

disparity between Puerto Rico and the U.S., language differences, and each entity's distinct history.

While economic, cost-benefit analyses are valuable tools, they fail to fully capture socio-cultural aspects of the status debate. Chapter 3 shifts focus from an economic analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each status option, emphasizing statehood, to investigate theories of nationalism, which traditionally promoted independence. Much has been written about whether Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans themselves comprise a "nation." Various theories of nationalism have been applied to the political and social realities people on the island face. In this chapter I evaluate the different theories of nationalism, focusing on Paul R. Brass' vision of nationalism as "elite competition" as well as James M. Blaut's Marxist theory of Puerto Rican nationalisms to locate and define the Puerto Rican nation. Unlike many nationalism scholars, I emphasize the importance of distinctly Puerto Rican nationalisms for both commonwealth (the PPD) and statehood advocates (the PNP). I then extrapolate the relevancy of these theories of nationalism as they apply to the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites on status.

After demonstrating shortcomings of the economic and nationalist analyses relevant to the Puerto Rican case, emphasizing each framework's inability to accommodate the breadth of the Puerto Rican question, I recognize a new framework to define the status debate. In Chapter 4, I apply George Lakoff's *Moral Politics* to the issue of status in order to explain the plebiscites of the 1990s within the greater debate. I emphasize Lakoff's foundational metaphor of "nation as family" to translate U.S. moral

politics to Puerto Rico. I argue that identifying the status debate in the realm of moral issues better accommodates all aspects of Puerto Rican political status, including both those that have been studied at length (economic and ideological analyses) and those aspects which have been ignored by traditional scholarship (moral).

Before delving into the various frameworks of political status it is important to contextualize status historically in order to understand the details of each thematic option and how it has been presented to the people of Puerto Rico. For this purpose a brief history of Puerto Rico with special emphasis on the island's political status is included in Chapter 1. Likewise, the specifics of each option will be outlined later in Chapter 1. The presentation of the options to the Puerto Rican public will be discussed throughout this work.

Chapter 1: A Brief History of Puerto Rico

The following is a relatively sparse but informative recounting of the historical trajectory of Puerto Rican political status, beginning with the European colonization of the island. This account is far from comprehensive and is not intended to be. Rather, it offers a historical setting for and proposes some roots of the current Puerto Rican status question. Specifically, I locate in antiquity each of the three status ideologies that currently define Puerto Rican politics. Identifying the historical creation of each of these options will demonstrate that both the Puerto Rican question and its various answers are by no means new. After tracing the antecedents of statehood, independence and commonwealth in Puerto Rico, I outline the current tenets of each option as identified during the campaigns for the Plebiscites on Status held in 1993 and 1998. Throughout this thoroughly brief history, I highlight various anecdotes and moments in history that have, and continue to greatly affect the current debate.

The history of Puerto Rico is long in terms of its interactions with European colonizers. The island was "discovered" by Christopher Columbus 1493, a distinction the United States does not hold. However, this long, "modern" history can be broken down quite easily into three distinct epochs. The first two epochs are distinguished by the imperial power that colonized the island, namely: Spain and the United States of America. The third epoch presented is discernable primarily in rhetoric regarding status, proclaiming the "decolonization" of Puerto Rico.

The Spanish Epoch and Transitional Period

Spain's rule over Puerto Rico from 1508, when they first permanently settled the island, until the downfall of the Spanish empire in 1898 was perfect neither by Spanish nor Puerto Rican standards.[1] Throughout its domination of the island, Spain defended its interests in Puerto Rico against internal and external threats. As a final plea for solidarity with the inhabitants of Puerto Rico, the crown attempted to acquire support by granting the islanders autonomy, but to no avail. Although Imperial Spain's domination of Puerto Rico lasted nearly four centuries, the years were marred by numerous economic and social problems, leading to social protests, civil unrest and the first posing of the status question.

With the death of prominent indigenous leader *Cacique Agueybana* in 1511 and the *Taíno* revolt that ensued, Spain struggled early to gain complete control of its possession in the Caribbean. The indigenous rebellion of 1511 was suppressed as the

[1] Nelson Hernández, "*Desarrollo de la nación de Puerto Rico*" (lecture, La Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1 February 2006).

surviving *Taínos* fled to the mountains of central Puerto Rico, leaving Spain unfettered control of the Puerto Rican coastal plains. Nationalism scholar James Blaut cites 1511 as the last year Puerto Rico can be considered an independent, sovereign territory.[2]

Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, Spain slowly developed Puerto Rico's economy by emphasizing the island's sugar and ginger exports. The economic development of Puerto Rico necessarily increased the population on the island, including new migrants from Spain, slaves from Africa, and native born Puerto Ricans. Still, every aspect of life on Puerto Rico was mandated by the Spanish Crown or its appointed Spanish Governor; Spaniards born in Puerto Rico were systematically denied roles in the local government. From 1508 through 1898, the appointed military and civilian governors implemented Spain's oppressive taxation of Puerto Rican goods and enforced laws prohibiting Puerto Rico from trading with any location other than the metropolis.

As the island's economy grew, so did the dissatisfaction of native born Puerto Ricans. Numerous revolts against Spanish imperial authority resulted in brutal repression, most notably the Cry of Lares[3] in 1868. During this revolt, plantation owners armed their slaves and captured the small town of Lares in Southwest Puerto Rico, declaring the island an independent republic. When revolutionaries attempted to seize a neighboring town the next day, nearly all were killed, or captured and later put to death. Though other revolts took place prior to September 23, 1868, the Cry of Lares is recognized as the most influential early independence movement and is still celebrated today.

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[2] James M. Blaut and Loída Figueroa. *Aspectos de la cuestión nacional en Puerto Rico*. Editorial Claridad: San Juan. 1988. p. 7.

[3] Known in Spanish as *"el grito de Lares"*

The first political parties were established in Puerto Rico in 1870, only two years after the Cry of Lares. Still prohibited from the highest levels of government, Puerto Ricans were allowed to join Spaniards in a congressional body that advised the governor. Adherents of the Conservative Party were known as *incondicionales* (unconditionals) for their unconditional support of the Spanish Crown. A few months after the Conservative Party was founded, the Liberal Reformist Party arose and was comprised of *asimilistas* (assimilationists). Their stated goal was to become a new Spanish province in order to be represented in the Spanish Court. By 1887, however, the Liberal Reformist Party had split in two: those who wanted the island to become a Spanish province, and the *autonomistas* (Autonomist Party) who wanted Puerto Rico to become a semi-autonomous, self-governing entity under Spanish sovereignty. Both factions of the party were violently repressed by the Puerto Rican government led by the Conservative Party as well as by the Spanish military.

In practice, Spain violently opposed any political influence from within the island, a precursor to Puerto Rico's future colonizer—the United States of America. However, on the eve of the U.S.-Spanish War, Imperial Spain changed its stance toward the autonomists. In 1897, Luis Muñoz Rivera[4] of the Autonomist Party signed a pact with the monarchy of Spain granting the island self-government and a degree of autonomy never before seen in the Spanish Colonies. However, due to the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico in 1898, the autonomous government of Puerto Rico never actually governed the island.[5]

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[4] Luis Muñoz Rivera was the father of Luis Muñoz Marín, who also redefined Puerto Rican political status.
[5] Nelson Hernández, "*Desarrollo de la nación de Puerto Rico*" (lecture, La Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1 May 2006).

The U.S. Epoch

The overarching themes of exclusion and repression from the Spanish Epoch continued in Puerto Rico during the U.S. Epoch. After the fall of the Spanish military presence in Puerto Rico in 1898, the United States dominated the island economically, politically and militarily, in varying degrees up to the present day. For the purpose of simplicity however, I refer to the U.S. Epoch as the time between the fall of Spanish domination in 1898 and the creation of the current Commonwealth Constitution of Puerto Rico, ratified by the U.S. Congress, the government of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans via referendum in 1952 as the "*Estado Libre Asociado*" ("Commonwealth"). While some scholars argue that Puerto Rico's political status did not fundamentally change after the ratification of the new constitution,[6] the change in rhetoric surrounding the island's political status does delineate a new era.

The U.S. Epoch, like the Spanish before it, was comprised of a near-constant battle to define a "mutually acceptable" formulation of status between colonizer and colonized. Politicians debated the same status options that were discussed under the Spanish Crown: assimilation (federal statehood), independence, and autonomy. At the same time, the grassroots Puerto Rican independence movement was violently repressed by U.S. military and intelligence agencies.[7] Furthermore, the movement for autonomy was not popularized until the 1940's, leaving statehood as the most prominently debated status option for nearly 40 years.

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[6] Including Edwin and Edgardo Meléndez, James M. Blaut and the U.S. Federal government, among others

[7] Nelson Hernández, "*Desarrollo de la nación de Puerto Rico*" (lecture, La Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 17 April 2006). And Marie Antoinette Merrill Ramirez. *The Other Side of Colonialism: COINTELPRO in Puerto Rico in the 1960's*. The University of Texas at Austin. 1990.

Still, all three status options were recognizable during the early 20th century. The battle between these three conceptions of Puerto Rican political status was shaped by a few key occurrences. I will briefly recount the debates on citizenship, self-government, official language and legal political status from the U.S. Epoch that combine to provide a basic foundation for the current status debacle.

Beginning in 1900, Puerto Ricans became citizens of Puerto Rico via the Foraker Act (Organic Act of 1900), under which Puerto Rico persisted as a colony subject to the authority of the federal government. While the Foraker Law afforded Puerto Ricans their first self-elected legislature, the government was still headed by a U.S. Citizen appointed by the U.S. President. Under this law, English and Spanish were both recognized as official languages of the island and its government. Translation between the two languages was mandated to foster mutual understanding when deemed necessary.

The Foraker Law was greatly modified by the Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917. This law continued Puerto Rico's status as a political entity under the jurisdiction of the federal government, but afforded Puerto Ricans more rights. Most notably, the act gave Puerto Ricans "statutory" citizenship,[8] granting Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship in lieu of Puerto Rican citizenship. However, U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans was and continues to be based on the will of congress and is not guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. While the Jones-Shafroth Act awarded Puerto Rico new political rights and more governmental autonomy than the Foraker Act of 1900, it instituted a policy shift regarding the official language of the island. The law recognized English as the only official language of

[8] "Statutory citizenship" is a phrase coined by the PNP in the late 1980's, used to emphasize that Puerto Rican's U.S. citizenship is not guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, but is granted by Congress—a valid legal distinction. Statutory citizenship is discussed further in Chapter 2.

Puerto Rico. Likewise, the act unofficially recognized Puerto Rico as a colony of the United States by identifying the island as an "organized, unincorporated territory." This legal status put the island on a path away from statehood and set the course of Puerto Rican political status for the next 30 years.[9]

The reasons behind the creation and granting of "unincorporated" status are complex and worthy of study. However, such an investigation is not the goal of this paper or this brief history. Rather, it is noteworthy that the political trajectory of the island can be summed up in one word: unincorporated. In 1948 Puerto Ricans were allowed to elect the governor by popular vote for the first time. They elected Luis Muñoz Marín, who led his party, the newly founded *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD) in crafting a new form of government for the island.

The New *State* of Puerto Rico

The repression of those in favor of independence and Puerto Rico's status as an "organized, unincorporated territory" were the two crucial factors that led to the creation of an ambiguous new status formula. The new commonwealth status deviated from complete sovereignty and the traditional path toward statehood. The Commonwealth Constitution[10] was crafted primarily by Luis Muñoz Marín as an answer to Puerto Rico's then decades old status question. Commonwealth status was approved by the U.S.

[9] By naming Puerto Rico an "organized, unincorporated territory," congress clearly defined that Puerto Rico was **not** on a path toward statehood. Historically, "organized" status implied that Congress has allowed the territory self-government. "Unincorporated" status has meant only that a territory is not on the path to statehood. After the U.S.-Spanish War, Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines were designated as "unincorporated," which facilitated the secession of the later two territories.

[10] "Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico"

Congress in 1952 and received nearly 82 percent of ballots cast in Puerto Rico during a yes-or-no ratification referendum later that year.[11] Since its inception, however, Puerto Rico's commonwealth status has been questioned repeatedly from within the island.

The new status accepted that absolute sovereignty over the island's affairs lay in the hands of the federal government but envisioned Puerto Rico as an autonomous region, self-governed by a popularly elected government. As before, permanent residents of Puerto Rico would retain U.S. citizenship, be eligible for the draft, and would receive no vote in federal government. Like a state however, the government of Puerto Rico would have the power to regulate internal affairs on the island and levy taxes; yet, it would not have the authority to sign treaties and would defer to the federal government in matters of foreign relations. However, unlike a state, Puerto Ricans would not pay federal income taxes and would not be equally eligible for some federal benefits like federal housing assistance, and education and health care financing programs.[12] This autonomous status has been further defined over the last 54 years by federal statutes, which have created economic and socio-political advantages and disadvantages for U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico.

Questioning and Reinforcing the New *State*: The Plebiscite Era

After commonwealth was implemented in 1952, the status debate did not end. The father of the Commonwealth Constitution, Governor Muñoz Marín, accepted that commonwealth was not the final solution to the Puerto Rican status question. Rather

[11] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico*.
[12] *Puerto Rico: Fiscal Relations with the Federal Government and Economic Trends during the Phaseout of the Possessions Tax Credit*. GAO Report 06-541.

Muñoz Marín viewed commonwealth as a temporary solution to be revisited later. During his 16 years as governor of Puerto Rico from 1948-1964, Muñoz Marín practiced the belief that the commonwealth government should be left alone while Puerto Rico focused on economic development.[13]

Despite this desire, in 1967 the commonwealth government held the first island-wide plebiscite on status. All eligible[14] voters were given the opportunity to vote for one of the three status formulas on the ballot. While the plebiscite yielded an incredible 60.4 percent of the vote in favor of commonwealth status as compared to the 39 percent of voters in favor of Statehood, these margins are almost universally deemed unreliable. There was an organized effort by those in favor of Puerto Rican independence to boycott the plebiscite, believing that they would not receive fair treatment in the electoral process. Likewise, a faction of statehood advocates also boycotted the plebiscite. For these and other reasons, the plebiscite itself is widely viewed as invalid.

> *[The] referendum held in 1967—which affirmed the present commonwealth status—was tainted by blatant interference by United States intelligence agencies documented and denounced as 'hanky-panky' in a White House memorandum issued during the Carter administration.*[15]

Though the results of this plebiscite are inconclusive, a new political party was born in the process. When, in 1966 PPD Governor Roberto Sánchez Vilella announced that a plebiscite was to be held the following year, the leader of the minority party, the Republican Statehood Party (*PER* or *Partido Estadista Republicano*) announced his plan

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[13] Nelson Hernández. "*Desarrollo de la nación de Puerto Rico*" (lecture, La Universidad del Sagrado Corazón, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 10 May 2006).
[14] In 1967, Puerto Rico practiced universal suffrage over age 21.
[15] Garcia-Passalacqua, Juan. "The 1993 plebiscite in Puerto Rico: a first step to decolonization?" *Current History*. 93:581 Philadelphia, PA (1994): 103-113. 106.

to boycott the vote alongside (but certainly not "with") the PIP. When the party decided to support a boycott at a *PER* convention in January, 1967, a contingent of prominent pro-statehood politicos left the party to found a new pro-statehood party, the PNP (*Partido Nuevo Progresista*).[16] The PER waned to irrelevance after the alleged failure of statehood in the 1967 plebiscite. As the dominant statehood party, the PNP thwarted the PPD (pro-commonwealth party) for the first time in a gubernatorial race since the governorship became popularly elected post in 1948. In 1968 the PNP gubernatorial candidate, Luis A. Ferré, won with a plurality of 43.6 percent of votes cast.[17]

The end of PPD electoral dominance in 1968 suggested a new era in Puerto Rican politics and demonstrated what many already believed: not all Puerto Ricans were satisfied with commonwealth status. While the Commonwealth Constitution was supported in the 1952 referendum by over 80 percent of votes cast, twenty years of governing by the same party had taken its toll on the popularity of the Commonwealth. Although the PPD reclaimed the governorship in 1972, verifying Puerto Rico had become a multi-party democracy, the status question resurged as a valid topic of debate. While advocates of independence (including the PIP and other, more radical organizations), were still harassed and persecuted by local and federal authorities, statehood became a viable option for the first time in the minds of average Puerto Ricans.

During the next twenty years the governorship changed parties three times, when in 1988 commonwealth advocate Rafael Hernández Colón was elected to a third term as

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[16] "Historia." Partido Nuevo Progresista. www.pnp.org/historia.htm
[17] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico*.

governor.[18] After his reelection in November, 1988, he announced that he would pursue the solidification of Puerto Rican political status via a new plebiscite that he hoped would be supported by the federal government. This was a drastic and unexpected move by the leader of the PPD party, which stunned prominent party insiders.[19]

Between 1989 and 1991, Governor Hernández Colón led his at times fractured, party into battle in Washington D.C. to obtain congressional support for a new plebiscite on status in Puerto Rico. Just as his efforts seemed to be coming to fruition in the form of Senate Bill #244, Colón received a stunning blow. Senate Bill #244 failed to pass the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on February 27, 1991, where it received a ten-to-ten tie vote.[20] With the bill essentially killed in committee, Governor Hernández Colón attempted to garner support for a new plebiscite from within Puerto Rico by offering a referendum on "Democratic Rights." This constitutional amendment would guarantee Puerto Ricans the right to democratically determine their political status with relation to the United States by voting for whichever status option they preferred, and that any majority-winning status option would be supported by the government. Although this referendum was passed by the PPD dominated Puerto Rican legislature, voters soundly rejected this amendment by over 100,000 votes.[21] Even before the referendum was voted upon, Governor Hernández Colón took a very unpopular stance, which many believed strongly influenced the amendment referendum. On April 5, 1991, Colón signed a bill recognizing Spanish as the only official language of Puerto Rico, rebuffing a precedent

[18] Gov. Hernández Colón served three non-consecutive terms: first from 1973-1977, then 1985-1993.
[19] Celeste Benítez de Rexach. *El día que Puerto Rico habló: el plebiscite de 1993.* Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1998. 18.
[20] Ibid., 21.
[21] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico.* 53 percent voted "no;" 45 percent voted "yes."

set in 1902 with the "Spanish Law." Admittedly, the 1902 law had been reinterpreted at various times prior to 1991. However, declaring Spanish to be the only official language of Puerto Rico enraged statehood supporters and provoked many Puerto Ricans to question the PPD's desire to continue its connection with the United States.

These failures by the pro-commonwealth party set the stage for what would be the worst electoral defeat for the party since its inception. In 1992, the PNP won the governorship as well as the statutorily-limited majority of seats possible in the Puerto Rican legislature. With this mandate, the new leader of the PNP, Dr. Pedro Roselló reevaluated the progress Congress had made with regard to the plebiscite on status in 1991, and announced that he would support legislation to hold a new plebiscite on status. This plebiscite would be based primarily on the status options Congress had discussed from 1989 to 1991 and would be held in November, 1993. This would become the first plebiscite on status to be recognized as free and fair for the various status formulations.[22] Governor Roselló believed that the political winds would continue in the PNP's favor and that such sentiment would translate into votes for statehood in 1993.

During the campaign for the plebiscite, which was run much like an electoral campaign for a candidate, the PNP had an obvious advantage. After the PPD's poor showing in the 1992 elections, former Governor Hernández Colón stepped aside as party president, which created a power vacuum in the party and a lack of leadership for the plebiscite. With four prominent politicos announcing their intent to become party president, the PPD had the potential to split into various factions. Instead, the four

[22] Garcia-Passalacqua. "The 1993 plebiscite in Puerto Rico: a first step to decolonization?" 103.

candidates had the foresight to set aside their individual political ambitions and focus on the plebiscite itself, naming then Vice-president Miguel Hernández Agosto as acting president until after the plebiscite.[23]

In spite of supported party leadership, the PPD was still at a disadvantage logistically. After the bruising defeats in the 1991 referendum and 1992 general elections, the party had no funds for a new media campaign. Furthermore, the party infrastructure and morale was greatly deflated, while the PNP was well-funded and optimistic about their chances in the plebiscite they instigated. Accordingly, the PNP began their public media campaign in favor of statehood on July 4, 1993 with a series of television advertisements, public appearances, and rallies. Meanwhile, the PPD continued with their traditional celebration of the anniversary of commonwealth status with an island-wide rally centered in the city of Caguas on July, 25. This celebration of the Commonwealth Constitution was the PPD's first public foray into plebiscitary politics and came 21 days after the pro-statehood campaign began in earnest. However, the actual PPD campaign wouldn't begin for another month. On August, 28, now less than 2 ½ months from the plebiscite, the PPD held a "telethon" to raise funds for the pro-commonwealth campaign. The telethon was a great success, raising $775,000 dollars for the campaign. Still, by pro-commonwealth campaign estimates, the PNP had already spent over half that amount in their campaign for statehood on television, radio and other advertisements.[24]

In the two weeks following the telethon, the PPD released its first television advertisements in favor of commonwealth status, with the slogan of "Commonwealth: the

[23] Benítez de Rexach. 60.
[24] Ibid., 90-91.

best of both worlds." The first round of ads in favor of statehood had emphasized the alleged economic benefits of statehood, and repeated their mantra: "Statehood, the only guaranteed permanent union," referencing Puerto Rico's supposedly tenuous pact with the United States. One commercial focused on statehood as the option "full of zeros," referencing not only the increased federal funds the PNP expected to receive as a fully-incorporated state, but also invoking the Puerto Rican Electoral Commission mandated symbol for statehood, a circle.[25] The commonwealth campaign had two themes in its first wave of television advertisements: both highlighted commonwealth as "the best of both worlds," but the second theme focused directly on Puerto Rican nationalism as it showed a victorious Puerto Rican basketball player react to the physical action of covering up the "Puerto Rico" logo on his jersey. This ad directly addressed and exploited a deeply held fear in Puerto Rico that statehood would rule out any recognition of Puerto Rico in international competitions, including the Olympics and Miss Universe pageants. These ads were viewed as highly successful by commonwealth advocates.[26]

After the PPD commercials broke out into the public sphere, the PNP changed its advertising strategy and focused the pro-statehood campaign on one figure, Governor Roselló. Attempting to shift debate from the status question to the popularity of the governor, Roselló became the only person to speak for the statehood option. Meanwhile, the PPD organized many speakers and emphasized the importance of keeping the same status, over the draw of celebrity. This was an important shift, as a newspaper poll in

[25] To simplify the electoral process, the Puerto Rican Electoral Commission granted by lottery one geometric symbol to each status option on July 20, 1993: a circle for statehood, a rectangle for commonwealth, and a triangle for independence.
[26] Benítez de Rexach. 89.

August, 1993 cited that 91 percent of the PPD would vote for Commonwealth, while only 78 percent of the PNP would vote for statehood.[27] A new poll in October found that only 76 percent of those who voted for Governor Roselló planned to vote for statehood.[28] Regardless, opinion polls on the plebiscite itself repeatedly placed Commonwealth and Statehood in a statistical tie.[29]

On November 14, 1993, a plurality of voters supported Commonwealth. The final count after nearly 1.8 million ballots were cast was 48.6 percent in favor of Commonwealth, 46.3 percent supporting Statehood, and 4.4 percent for Independence.[30] Although the PPD had garnered the most votes, the PNP finished a close second and emphasized that no option had received a majority of votes; the 1993 plebiscite had not settled the status debate.

The 1996 general election once again inflated the hopes of statehood advocates as Governor Roselló was reelected by an even larger margin than in 1992.[31] Having achieved a majority vote for governor, a feat not realized since 1972, statehood advocates recharged their efforts to solve the status issue. Governor Roselló announced plans for a new plebiscite on status to be held in 1998. Not only did the PNP win the governorship, but also held overwhelming majorities in both houses of the Puerto Rican Congress. With PNP dominance, the terms of the 1998 plebiscite seemed to favor statehood.

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[27] Ibid., 92. *El Nuevo Día* poll of 1,000 adults between July 16 and August 2, 1993.
[28] Ibid., 139. *El Nuevo Día* poll.
[29] The August poll cited: Commonwealth, 38 percent; Statehood, 36 percent; Independence, 4 percent; undecided, 22percent. The October poll showed some change: Commonwealth, 43 percent; Statehood, 40 percent.
[30] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico*.
[31] Ibid., Roselló received 51.1 percent of votes versus 44.5 percent for the PPD candidate.

Governor Roselló asserted a graduated process to define status, advocating for statehood as he went. First, an open plebiscite with four status options would be held in 1998 to determine the will of Puerto Ricans. Afterward, a bill would be proposed in Congress to support the Puerto Ricans preferred status option. Lastly, this bill would be voted upon in a yes-or-no referendum in Puerto Rico. Because the 1998 plebiscite did not originate in the U.S. Congress, many liberties were taken from the 1993 format. Specifically, four options, not three, would be presented to the people of Puerto Rico. In 1993, three options were placed on the ballot: "Statehood," "Commonwealth," and "Independence."[32] In 1998, a fourth option was added, allegedly to reflect a growing movement within the PPD that promoted a new "Enhanced Commonwealth."[33] The definitions of each option reflected the PNP and PIP belief that the current commonwealth status was a "colonial" status. The definition of "Commonwealth" that accompanied each ballot stated that the commonwealth government was subject to the authority of the federal government according to the Territorial Clause of the U.S. Constitution.[34] Meanwhile, the "Enhanced Commonwealth" definition claimed an association with the United States that was "not colonial, not territorial."[35]

As many politicians and pundits anticipated with these four definitions, the PPD was split. Commonwealth advocates settled on a position and appealed directly to the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico. In Báez Galib v. Commonwealth, PPD Senator Báez Galib argued that the four option ballot violated Puerto Ricans' right to free speech and

[32] "Estadidad," "Estado Libre Asociado," and "Independencia" For official descriptions of the 1993 options see Appendix 1.1
[33] The new option was "Libre Asociación." For official descriptions of the 1998 options, see Appendix 1.2
[34] See Appendix 1.2 Column 1
[35] See Appendix 1.2 Column 2

petitioned the court to add a fifth column: "None of the above."[36] After short deliberation, the Supreme Court agreed with Báez Galib's argument, but ruled that because it was an issue of free speech, no political party could promote the option with public campaign financing. The PPD had won, yet they were required to privately finance the campaign for "None of the above." Similar to the effort in 1993, the PPD was fractured and poorly financed due in part to their crushing defeat in the 1996 general elections.

On December 13th, 1998, only three months after Hurricane Georges devastated the Southern coast of Puerto Rico and two weeks after the FBI arrested a prominent PNP mayor on charges of corruption, Puerto Ricans again voted for their preferred status. In 1998, however, "None of the above" attained a clear majority of votes, with 50.3 percent of the nearly 1.6 million votes cast.

While researchers have investigated and attempted to decipher the 1993 plebiscite on status, little scholarly work has been produced to decipher the meaning of the 1998 vote. Some politicos and pundits believe the vote was used to reproach Governor Roselló, while others have interpreted "None of the above" to represent the PPD's traditional vision for commonwealth or a protest vote against the plebiscite generally. In 1999, research on the Puerto Rican question shifted to the plight of Vieques, an island with approximately 10,000 residents and a live-fire target range for military practice and war games. As social unrest blossomed in 1999 as the result of the accidental death of a local Puerto Rican, the results of the 1998 plebiscite faded from political prominence. In the

[36] Senator Eudaldo Báez Galib, interview by author, tape recording, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 12 June 2006. and Alvarez Rivera. Interview by author.

following chapters, I resurrect the importance of the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites as direct representations of the will of Puerto Ricans to answer the status question.

"The message is clear, federal transfers are important to all, and they are especially important to those who support statehood." [1]

"Colonialism is a political-economic-legal constraint that assumes the existence of economic exploitation and impedes the adoption of policies intended to break the cycle of dependency."[2]

Chapter 2: Political Status in an Economic Framework

During a 1990 subcommittee briefing on status in the House of Representatives, the Congressional Research Service cited that "about 62 percent of Puerto Rico's population had incomes below the Federal poverty level, compared with about 12 percent of the United States population."[3] Likewise, "Puerto Rico's 1988 per capita personal income of $5,157 was only half that of Mississippi's $10,992, the State with the lowest per capita income."[4] These statistics were repeated and dwelled upon throughout the

[1] Luis Raúl Cámara. "The Madness of Every Four Years: A Comparative Study of Voting and Turnout in Puerto Rico and the United States." (Dissertation. University of Michigan, 1999), 149
[2] José Javier Colón Morera. *Economic Constraints and Political Choices: U.S. Congressional Deliberations on the Status of Puerto Rico, 1989-1991*. Boston, Massachusetts: Boston University. 1992. 440
[3] *Briefing on Puerto Rico political status by the General Accounting Office (GAO) and Congressional Research Service (CRS): oversight hearing before the Subcommittee on Insular and International Affairs of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, One Hundred First Congress, second session ... hearing held in Washington, DC, January 30, 1990*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991. 25
[4] Ibid., 25

1989-1991 deliberations in congress regarding bills providing for a plebiscite on status in Puerto Rico.

While the compatibility of the economies of Puerto Rico and the United States is a fundamental tenet of the status debate, that this tenet was emphasized sheds light on the way Congress views political status. Congress and many others view Puerto Rican political status through an economic framework of cost-benefit analyses. This economic lens frames the debate in terms of the costs and benefits of each political status option, and purports that those deciding Puerto Rico's status are rational actors who will logically chose the option that offers the most benefits with the least costs. While I offer this framework primarily in response to congressional hearings on status, various scholars have utilized this economic lens. A logical cost-benefit framework has been heavily relied upon by the pro-statehood party, the PNP, during the campaigns leading up to the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites on status.

Scholars have long believed that Puerto Rican political status revolves around the question of how the Puerto Rican economy should interact with that of the United States. José Javier Colón Morera argues that the status debate, for the United States, was prompted by congressional displeasure with Puerto Rico's dependent economic status.[5] He quotes Richard Weiskoff's 1985 work *Factories and Food Stamps: The Puerto Rican Model of Development*. "The economic problem can be approached [and] indeed solved, only as part of the solution to the status question."[6] After approving the Commonwealth

[5] Colón Morera. *Economic Constraints and Political Choices…* 4
[6] Ibid., 4

Constitution in 1952,[7] the federal government acknowledged that was Puerto Rico had been, but was no longer a U.S. colony; Puerto Ricans had freely chosen to continue in association with the United States.[8] Recent scholarship has questioned this stance. Many scholars of nationalism argue that Puerto Rico's political status has not changed in nature since 1900.[9] Thus, Puerto Rico remains a colony with little ability to control its economy. "As Carr (1985), Bloomfield (1985), and Negrón (1986, 1991) have underscored, without political means to direct its economic activity, the Island [sic] will remain as a passive recipient of the effects of federal policies not formulated to tackle the specific needs of a Caribbean developing nation."[10]

An economic framework has often been used in the status debate not only to shape the issues discussed, but also to define which issues of status should be emphasized and which should be marginalized. This is particularly true with respect to congressional attempts from 1989-1991 to pass legislation mandating a plebiscite on status in Puerto Rico for 1991. While none of the legislation offered was passed, the congressional record of hearings, reports, and floor debate all demonstrate the power of the economic framework to shape status into a cost-benefit analysis of the three options offered by the

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[7] HJ. Res. 430, the Commonwealth Constitution of Puerto Rico, was signed into law by President Truman on July 3, 1952.

[8] Victor Gutierrez-Franqui and Henry Wells. "The Commonwealth Constitution." in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science: Puerto Rico, a study in democratic development*. v. 285 Philadelphia, Pennsylvannia: Sage Publications, Inc (1953): 33-41.

[9] Edwin Meléndez and Edgardo Meléndez, editors. *Colonial Dilemma: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Puerto Rico*. South End Press: Boston. 1993. p. 1

[10] *Briefing on Puerto Rico political status by the General Accounting Office (GAO)…* 7

political parties of Puerto Rico. Notably, Congress seemed to reject statehood for the same reason the PNP promoted: Puerto Rico would receive more federal funding.[11]

Logically, the economic framework emphasizes the importance of traditional economic factors and measurements, such as standards of living, tax policies, and various financial incentives for businesses and individuals alike. Some adherents to the economic lens (who may or may not accept this title), recognize that cultural aspects indeed play a role in the status debate. While some cultural issues are easily aligned in economic terms including standards of living and poverty rates, issues need not neatly boil down to dollars and cents to be framed by an economic cost-benefit analysis of status. Rather, the economic framework is used to highlight a variety of topics, both economic and non-economic. Perhaps the most contentious of the cultural issues included in the economic framework is the official language of the island. The Spanish-English divide helped to shape the status debate in Washington, D.C. as well as Puerto Rico and demonstrates the breadth of analysis of the economic framework.

This chapter identifies and analyzes the economic framework of status. I argue that the economic framework employed in the debate classifies Puerto Rican political status as a rational choice, based on an objective analysis of a cost-benefit dichotomy of specific issues within the status debate. This means that rational actors (voters) are expected to shift importance from the broad themes of independence, assimilation, and autonomy, to the outcome or effect of individual issues with respect to each status option.

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[11] Colón Morera. *Economic Constraints and Political Choices…* 437-438. And Juan M. García-Passalacqua and Carlos Rivera Lugo. *Puerto Rico y los Estados Unidos: el proceso de consulta y negociación de 1989 y 1990*. Translated by Cordelia Buitrago Díaz y Betsy López Abrams. Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico**,** 1992. 25-26

The economic lens encourages voters to question under which status formula they would profit the most. In this economic framework, the outcome and effect of each individual topic is described as either a positive or negative attribute of one status option. For instance, voters are not asked for their opinion regarding taxation, but instead are prompted to ponder whether a tax policy under statehood, commonwealth, or independence would best promote their own personal interests.

Tax policy is just one aspect of the status debate that is framed in a positive-or-negative dichotomy. Citizenship, official language, and conceptions of nationalism are also thrown into this economic framework in an attempt to rationalize these normative concepts. The economic lens promotes individuals to objectively analyze specific issues in hopes of translating personal interests into a yes vote for one status option. In the following pages I recount and explain what pundits and the U.S. Congress found while applying an economic framework to the Puerto Rican status debate. Specifically, this chapter analyzes traditionally economic issues including taxation, subsidies and benefits, as well as Puerto Rico's historic importance as a military outpost and as a pawn in U.S. international public relations. The chapter then focuses on an investigation of cultural issues viewed through the economic framework, including Puerto Rico's official language, citizenship and national sentiment as expressed in the Olympics and Miss Universe competitions. In the end I conclude, as other scholars have, that statehood appears to be more appealing when viewing the status debate through an economic framework. With this conclusion, I question the importance of the economic framework in light of the outcomes of the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites on status.

The Economic Framework

After his reelection in 1988, Governor Rafael Hernández Colón of the PPD petitioned congress to implement a plebiscite in Puerto Rico to define the island's political status. Beginning in 1989, various bills were introduced to both chambers of congress to create a plebiscite, culminating with the 1991 defeat of the Puerto Rican Status Referendum bill (S. 712). Following the multilateral spirit of the 1952 Constitution, S.712 was crafted in consultation with the PPD, PNP, and PIP parties. U.S. Senators worked with each party in crafting the definitions of each status option, weighing the implications each would have on Puerto Rico and the United States to ensure that each option was mutually acceptable. The bill, supported by the three main political parties in Puerto Rico, became the basis of the 1993 plebiscite on status prompted by pro-statehood Governor Pedro Roselló.

While S.712 was not passed, it is instructive of the issues Congress and the Puerto Rican political parties viewed as important and were a precursor to the campaigns for the 1993 plebiscite on status. However, before any deliberation began, three guiding principles were created in Congress to guide any change in status:

- "first, that there ought to be an even playing field, politically between the three political parties with regard to the status options;
- second, that there ought to be a smooth transition so that any change in political status, to statehood or independence, ought to work economically; and
- third, economic adjustment should be revenue-neutral to the extent possible, in that it does not cost the Treasury additional dollars over a period of time."[12]

[12] S. Rep. No. 101-120, at 26. quoted in *Tax rules relating to Puerto Rico under present law and under statehood, independence, and enhanced commonwealth status (S. 712, Puerto Rico Status Referendum Act): scheduled for hearings before the Senate Committee on Finance on November 14-15, 1989.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1989. 20

These principles shaped deliberations in Congress by emphasizing the importance of economic issues and invoke the economic framework when stressing that any resolution of status be economically sound and not burden the U.S. treasury. An examination of Puerto Rican status with regard to tax policy demonstrates these congressional concerns.

Puerto Rico and Federal Taxes and Benefits

As an organized, unincorporated territory, Puerto Rico's relationship with the Internal Revenue Code wavers between treatment as a state and as a foreign country. For the purposes of this paper, the Internal Revenue Code can be divided in two categories: its treatment of individuals, and of businesses and corporations. In both categories Puerto Rico is the exception to the rules set forth for states and foreign countries.[13]

Generally, residents of Puerto Rico do not pay Federal income taxes, yet they contribute to Social Security and Unemployment Insurance and pay income taxes to the Commonwealth Government. If Puerto Rico were to become a state, residents would be subject to pay both federal and state taxes, a fact often highlighted by the commonwealth party when campaigning for commonwealth status. The PPD alleges that this new tax burden would stifle the economy, create a disincentive to work and financially hurt Puerto Rico overall. As expected, Statehood advocates retort that a new tax system could create new incentives to work. The Staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation conclude both options to be possible, as a new state tax system would be required under statehood

[13] Ibid., 2-3

to reflect a shift in financial responsibilities from the Commonwealth Government to the Federal Government.[14]

Regardless of a new tax code, Federal benefits to individual residents would increase under statehood. As U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans are granted access to Federal benefit programs including Aid to Families with Dependant Children (AFDC), Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, Adult Assistance and a Federal Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps). However, funding from the federal government for AFDC, adult assistance and nutrition assistance programs in Puerto Rico is not based on the eligibility of residents, as it is for states. Rather, funds for federal programs in Puerto Rico are subject to Federal caps mandated by Congress. If funding were based on eligibility, it is clear that the federal government would be required to send more money to the island. For instance, "the Federal share of Puerto Rico's adult assistance program was $2.9 million. The average monthly payment was $32, plus half of actual shelter costs, compared with the U.S. average under SSI (the equivalent program for states) of $362 a month."[15] If Puerto Rico were to become a state, beneficiaries of Federal assistance programs could expect an increase of eleven fold, with a corresponding increase in cost to the Federal government.[16] Such an increase in benefits was highlighted by the PNP in their statehood plebiscitary campaign. Though the PPD believed such increases to be disincentives to work, they did not contest that more transfer payments would accompany statehood.

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[14] Ibid., 28
[15] *Briefing on Puerto Rico political status by the General Accounting Office (GAO)*… 21
[16] Ibid., 27

Likewise, statehood would bring dramatic changes to business interactions with the government. Scholars and pundits alike have identified one crucial provision of the U.S. tax code as perhaps the most important with relation to the status debate in the early 1990s.[17] The possessions tax credit under section 936 of the Internal Revenue Code "may eliminate all income tax on a domestic corporation doing business in Puerto Rico where the corporation is also excused from Puerto Rican income tax pursuant to a tax incentive provided under Puerto Rican law…"[18] In effect, 936 businesses, as they became known, paid no Puerto Rican tax and no Federal tax on their profits, which encouraged investments from the U.S. While section 936 was recognized by every political party as an important economic tool for the island's manufacturing based economy, each party took a different stance on what to do about it. Autonomists elected to leave the tax code untouched and independence advocates wanted to immediately revoke the provision upon the creation of a new republic. In accordance with the Uniformity Clause of the U.S. Constitution, [19] statehood supporters wanted to gradually phase-out the tax credit to minimize any impact on the Puerto Rican economy. Celeste Benítez, who organized the PPD's 1993 plebiscitary campaign, cites section 936 as one crucial factor that led to commonwealth's success. "The plebiscitary campaign and the triumph of commonwealth was stamped with the luck of Section 936." [20]

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[17] Celeste Benítez, Juan M. García-Passalacqua, and José Javier Colón Morera, among others, emphasize the importance of section 936.
[18] *Tax rules relating to Puerto Rico*… 10
[19] Deutch, Philip Joseph. "The Uniformity Clause and Puerto Rican Statehood." *Stanford Law Review*. v. 43, No. 3. (1991): 685-732. JSTOR. 731-732
[20] Benítez de Rexach. *El día que Puerto Rico habló: el plebiscite de 1993*. 127

In the economic frame of status, statehood and commonwealth would both incur positive and negative effects from the Internal Revenue Code and Federal benefit programs. The PNP emphasized the expected increase in Federal benefits to residents when campaigning for the 1993 plebiscite on status, while they minimized the actual impact of section 936 incentives to businesses and purported income of Federal income taxes. The PPD emphasized the opposite during their successful campaign in 1993. However, the PPD lost an important talking point when Congress repealed the section 936 possessions tax credit in 1996.[21] Though it was replaced by a nearly identical section 30A Economic Activity Credit, which applies only to Puerto Rico (not other U.S. possessions and territories), commonwealth advocates could not rely on the popularly recognized section 936 in the 1998 plebiscite on status.

"Permanent" and "Statutory" U.S. Citizenship

Puerto Rico's alleged "colonized" status affects more than just the island's economic relationship with the United States. While permanent residents were granted U.S. Citizenship beginning in 1917 based on birth within the geographic confines of Puerto Rico, statehood and independence advocates have long questioned the permanency of U.S. citizenship. As an offshoot from the PNP's unsuccessful campaign for governor in 1988, in which they falsely accused Gov. Hernández Colón of promoting a new, "associated republic" status with the United States, proponents of statehood

[21] "Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act of 2005." *House Report 109-304: 109th Congress, 1st Session*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005. http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_reports&docid=f: hr304.109.pdf

coined the term "statutory citizenship."[22] In this term, the PNP acknowledged the tenuous, colonized status of commonwealth. They claimed that congress could revoke U.S. Citizenship from Puerto Rican natives at any time, because it was an act of congress that granted Puerto Ricans U.S. Citizenship and not the U.S. Constitution.[23] Statehood supporters argued that as an organized, unincorporated territory, Puerto Rico was subject to the whims of Congress that could become hostile to the island's interest and retract funding and citizenship from islanders at any moment.

In the 1993 plebiscitary campaign, the PNP promoted statehood as the only permanent union with the United States, noting that no state had ever successfully seceded from the union. The PPD countered this sentiment with the slogan: "Commonwealth: The best of both worlds," highlighting U.S. Citizenship yet continued autonomy over island affairs. However, a 1989 Report of the Senate's Committee on Energy and Natural Resources rejected the 1952 Commonwealth Constitution as a bilateral compact of shared sovereignty over the island and instead recognized that Puerto Rico was ultimately governed as a territory by the Federal government.[24] This conclusion reinforced the PNP's simple assertions that Puerto Rican's would secure permanent U.S. citizenship and increase Federal benefits under statehood. Yet, it was ineffective in garnering a majority of votes for statehood in the 1993 plebiscite.

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[22] Benítez de Rexach. *El día que Puerto Rico habló: el plebiscite de 1993*. 19
[23] The Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917 granted Puerto Ricans U.S. Citizenship.
[24] García-Passalacqua and Carlos Rivera Lugo. 79

Language of the State

Puerto Rico's colonial status prior to 1952 cannot be discounted when analyzing the official language of the island. While the Jones Act of 1917 recognized both English and Spanish as official languages, English had been mandated to be the primary language of the schools by various U.S. appointed governors before the first popularly elected governor was voted into office in 1948.[25] Since that time, both English and Spanish have been recognized as official languages, though Spanish "is the language of daily life," and is the dominant language used in Puerto Rican classrooms.[26] In spite of this, in 1991 PPD Governor Hernández Colón signed Public Law #4, the "Spanish Only" law.[27] Public Law #4 recognized only Spanish as the official language of Puerto Rico, and seemed to solidify the PNP's assertion that Gov. Hernández Colón wanted more than autonomy from the United States. Still, the PNP purported throughout the 1989-1991 Congressional Hearings as well as the 1993 campaign for statehood, that Puerto Rico would retain both English and Spanish as official languages under a PNP governorship and under statehood. Reverting to aspects of the 1988 campaign against Colón, pro-statehood candidate Pedro Roselló won the governorship in 1992 and quickly signed a bill to reauthorize both Spanish and English as official languages of the island.

Despite its legal recognition of bilingualism, Puerto Rico remains a predominantly Spanish speaking island, reflective of its Hispanic roots. This was a great cause for concern in Congress. Still, in both the 1993 and 1998 plebiscitary campaigns,

[25] Hernández. "*Desarrollo de la nación de Puerto Rico*." 10 May 2006.
[26] *Briefing on Puerto Rico political status by the General Accounting Office (GAO)*… 19
[27] Benítez de Rexach. 23

the PNP advocated for "*jíbaro* statehood,"[28] meaning that Puerto Rico should become a state of the union on their own terms—with Spanish as one of the official languages.

These episodes in language politics exemplify the difficulty of viewing status primarily through an economic, cost-benefit lens. The "Spanish Only" Law put in place by the PPD deviated from Puerto Rican desires for bilingualism and played a large role in Governor Hernández Colón's defeat in the 1992 elections. However, statehood advocates also lacked a solid foundation to promote bilingualism under their preferred status option. The United States has a history of forcing territories to promote English as the language of government and education in order to become a state.[29] With respect to the official language of Puerto Rico, neither statehood nor commonwealth advocates had the correct answer in 1993 or 1998.

International Recognition of the Puerto Rican Nation

Official language was not to be the only recognition of distinction between Puerto Rico and the United States. Under the Commonwealth Government, Puerto Rico competes in international competitions including the Olympics and Miss Universe pageants separate from the United States. However, these competitions are the only international recognition Puerto Rico receives. According to the Commonwealth Constitution, Puerto Rico may not be a party to any international treaties and, like a state, is subject to Federal authority in every other aspect of international relations. However,

[28] As a rural working man, the *jíbaro* is the mythic icon that symbolizes Puerto Rican-ness, similar to the *guajiro* of Cuba.
[29] Trías Monge, José. *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World*. New Haven Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1997. 185.

these competitions serve as a rally point for national pride. International competition draws great debate on the island and has ignited the passions of many people in favor of autonomy and continued participation. The PPD appealed directly to this national sentiment in a 1993 television advertisement alleging that Puerto Rico would be stripped of its international identity in such competitions if residents voted for statehood in the 1993 plebiscite. Still, the PNP claimed that under *jíbaro* statehood, Puerto Rico would continue to compete.

Much like the issue of official language, voters are not asked which policy outcome they like best, and instead must choose which party to believe. International competition is an important issue for advocates of statehood and commonwealth, and both parties contend that such competition would not change with their respective status preferences. Regardless of who is right, such an intense debate (which will be explored further in Chapter 3) is not easily settled by an objective analysis of the facts presented. Both the PPD and PNP promise to continue Puerto Rican participation in international competitions; this leaves the real question to be which party, and status option, to trust.

The Puerto Rican Balance Sheet

Perhaps the most unifying concept found when examining each issue through the economic cost-benefit analysis is subjectivity. Throughout the course of the 1989-1991 Congressional Hearings, as well as the 1993 and 1998 plebiscitary campaigns, statehood and commonwealth advocates asked voters to trust their vision of the status debate. However, as repeated throughout the 1989-1991 hearings, the specific implications of a

change in status with respect to taxation and benefits, citizenship, official language and international recognition are difficult to project. Furthermore, each specific issue can be interpreted differently by people in favor of the same political status. Thus, Governor Hernández Colón and his "Spanish Only" law were soundly rejected by statehood advocates as well as some commonwealth advocates in the 1992 general election. Division between and within the status options exist, and the affect of a new Puerto Rican political status would depend upon how any change would be implemented.[30]

Beyond the subjective interpretations of the status options projected into the public sphere by the PPD, PNP, and PIP, the three parties agreed on many fundamental issues. All three parties' proposals in the 1989-1991 hearings agreed to: free trade with the United States, preserve manufacturing as a critical economic component, expand agricultural and tourist sectors, become less dependent on section 936 credits, fight unemployment beyond increased governmental opportunities, create an "indigenous" entrepreneurial sector, and reform the education system to emphasize "high skills."[31] Likewise, the three parties agreed that U.S. military installations in Puerto Rico would not be altered by any change in status, including independence.[32]

With these major issues in common, the parties emphasized the purported differences in taxation and benefits, citizenship, official language, and international recognition that each status option offered. In this way, voters were presented with a

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[30] *Briefing on Puerto Rico political status by the General Accounting Office (GAO)*… and "Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act of 2005."
[31] Colón Morera. *Economic Constraints and Political Choices...* 464
[32] Wide scale deliberations regarding the U.S. military presence in Puerto Rican territory did not begin until 1999, when Puerto Rican David Sanes was killed in an accident while working on a military bombing range in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

rational choice: which option best serves my interest with respect to each issue and how do those issues define political status holistically? Although the vote was competitive in 1993, Commonwealth won a plurality of votes and appeared to answer the question. A plurality of voters preferred the PPD's vision of taxation and benefits systems, supported U.S. citizenship in spite of its precarious legal foundation, wanted both Spanish and English as official languages and were in favor of at least some international recognition of Puerto Rico as a distinct nation.

It follows that in 1993, autonomy appears to more closely resemble the national results of the balance sheet than statehood or independence. Scholars argue that this sentiment was challenged when pro-statehood Governor Roselló was reelected in 1996 by a majority of voters, with a margin of victory greater than any gubernatorial race in the last two decades.[33] Governor Roselló directly questioned whether Puerto Ricans were in favor of Commonwealth when he called for a new plebiscite on status to be held in 1998. This foray into the status debate, he argued, would be a true test of the sentiment of the island.[34] For this reason, the 1998 plebiscite was not subject to congressional hearings or approval, but was offered as a first step toward petitioning congress for a change in status.

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[33] Cámara, Luis Raúl. *The Madness of Every Four Years...* and Alvarez Rivera, interview by author. And Hernández, interview by author.

[34] quoted in Cámara. "The Madness of Every Four Years…" Gov. Roselló stated in 1995 that Puerto Rico "is not, and had never been a nation."

Table 2.1 Plebiscite Votes (and Percentages) in 1993 and 1998			
	1993	1998	
Commonwealth	826,326 (48.6%)	993 (0.1%)	"Territorial" Commonwealth
		4,536 (0.3%)	"Enhanced" Commonwealth
Statehood	788,296 (46.3%)	728,157 (46.5%)	Statehood
Independence	75,620 (4.4%)	39,838 (2.5%)	Independence
		787,900 (50.3%)	"None of the above"
Null and Blank Ballots	10,748 (0.6%)	4,846 (0.3%)	Null and Blank Ballots
Total Ballots Cast	1,700,990 (100%)	1,566,270 (100%)	Total Ballots Cast

With five options on the ballot, the "Balance Sheet" for the 1998 plebiscite became more complex. The three thematic options of statehood, independence and autonomy were represented by four options. A fifth column, "None of the above," allegedly allowed voters to voice their disapproval of the plebiscite.[35] Due to constraints placed upon the fifth column by the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico,[36] "None of the above" represented no costs or benefits; it did not represent a status option at all. Though statehood advocates believed statehood to be gaining momentum as section 936 credits were no longer part of the balance sheet, a majority of voters chose the only option with no costs or benefits. The majority vote for "None of the above" was radically different from the 1993 plebiscite results.

Whether the economic framework Congress and scholars use to analyze status accurately represented and rationalized the outcome of the 1993 plebiscite is unknown. Many scholars and Congress have focused on economic factors like taxes and federal transfer payments to define the best status policy. Congress also extrapolated costs and benefits from non-economic factors like citizenship, state language, and forms of

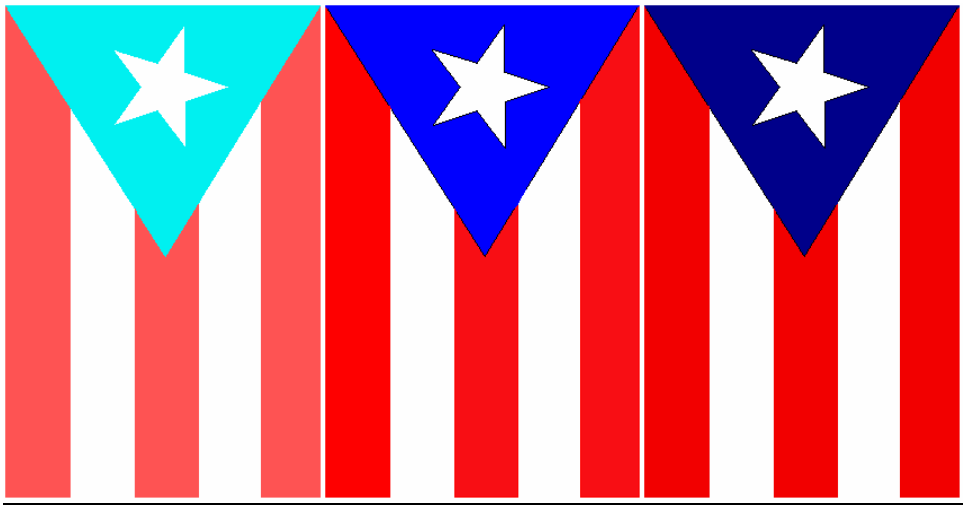
[35] See Appendix 1.2
[36] See Chapter 1

international recognition for Puerto Ricans during their deliberations on status from 1989 to 1991. Still, these deliberations did not decisively conclude the status debate in Puerto Rico or in Washington, D.C.

Furthermore, the 1998 plebiscite results demonstrates that a strict economic, cost-benefit analysis of the ballot options cannot be used. Puerto Ricans did not vote in favor of a tax and benefit policy, a definition of citizenship, a compromise on the language of the state, or some form of international recognition in 1998. They chose the option with no definition, the option that has no apparent costs or benefits.[37]

The difference between the 1993 and the 1998 plebiscites indicate a departure from the importance Congress and scholars have placed on the economic framework of Puerto Rican political status. In the next chapter I depart from an economic, cost-benefit analysis of status. Chapter 3 investigates a non-economic mode of inquiry that emphasizes ideology. Though the economic framework attempted to incorporate intangible conceptions of culture via language and international recognition, many scholars have emphasized the power of ideological nationalisms to contextualize and interpret the status debate.

[37] Some scholars argue that "None of the above" was a vote for the "status quo." I refute this argument in Chapter 4.



Chapter 3: Contested Nationalisms in Puerto Rico

What shade of blue truly represents the people of Puerto Rico? This seemingly insignificant question was fought out in a bloodless battle in the halls of the capitol building with reverberations throughout the island and beyond until an official "armistice" was ratified by the Puerto Rican Department of State on August 3, 1995.[1] The point of contention was the proper shade of blue for the equilateral triangle situated on the mast-side of Puerto Rico's official flag. Both historical tradition and modern day politics collided to create an uproar illustrative of the Puerto Rican question: What should be Puerto Rico's political status with the United States? The flag color debate mirrored the general status debate as advocates of independence, statehood, and commonwealth each had a different color preference. Supporters of commonwealth status were generally in favor of "sky blue" for the official flag, while proponents of statehood preferred a

[1] *Reglamentos de Puerto Rico*. "Reglamento sobre el Uso en Puerto Rico de la Bandera del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico." *LexJuris Puerto Rico*. Reglamento Núm. 5282 del 3 de agosto de 1995 http://www.lexjuris.com/Reglamentos/estado/lex955282 percent20bandera.htm

"navy blue" similar to the blue used in the U.S. flag, and independence advocates often used a shade of blue lighter than the other two.

In Puerto Rico, the contested color of the national flag reflects the contested nature of the Puerto Rican nation. Both flag color and the status debate exemplify the dynamic character of nation and nationalism in Puerto Rico. In this chapter, I discuss recent incarnations of Puerto Rican nationalisms in the political status debate. While a great deal of scholarship has emphasized the importance of Puerto Rican nationalism in independence movements, I argue that nationalist sentiment permeates all three status options for Puerto Rico. Due to the abundance of nationalist scholarship regarding independence movements, I emphasize the nationalisms of statehood and commonwealth status as they were articulated in the 1990s plebiscitary campaigns. The nationalisms of commonwealth and statehood politics are important as both options consistently receive strong support in Puerto Rican electoral politics. Thus, the nationalisms of commonwealth and statehood status more accurately reflect the relevance of the nationalist framework in the overarching status debate, than nationalisms of independence advocates.

However, it is imperative to recognize that "nation" and "nationalism" are not only the topic of debate in Puerto Rico, but they are also contested terms in an extensive body of theoretical literature. First, I recount the individualistic interpretations of nationalism in Puerto Rico to emphasize the importance of the nationalist framework. In order to analyze Puerto Rican expressions of nationalism, I situate "nation" and "nationalism" in the relevant literature and theory. I then locate Puerto Rico as a nation

via individualistic interpretations of Puerto Rican history, geography, society, and symbols through the flag debate. After establishing the theoretical foundations of the nationalist framework, I recognize that expressions of the framework persist in Puerto Rico. Still, I argue that the nationalist framework fails to holistically represent the Puerto Rican status debate.

Individual Expressions of Nationalism

Nationalism has been studied by a variety of scholars who, in some aspects of the concept, have arrived at a consensus. In the following section I will briefly recount the conceptual development of nationalism by discussing the two dominant fissures in the theoretical study of nationalism, which eventually led to a relative consensus. Though most scholars have discounted primordialism in favor of a social constructionist view of nationalism, the debate is worth revisiting. The second fissure dissects the principal concepts that give shape to the social construction of nation, including instrumentalist views of kinship, elites and class. The relevance of these theories is clear when one recognizes "nationalism" as a powerful force in everyday life.

While the color of the flag and the political status of Puerto Rico have been hotly contested, there is also a degree of consensus among the populace. Walking in San Juan during one of the capitol city's many festivals, the masses of people on the street hardly think twice as they repeatedly chant, "I am a Boricua, just so you know!"[2] to the sound of

[2] "*¡Yo soy boricua, pa' que tu lo sepas!*" The word "Boricua" is commonly used in place of "Puerto Rican" for reasons I will discuss later in the paper. This is one of many musical slogans, somewhat similar to nursery rhymes, which everyone knows and sings aloud, led by roaming bands of amateur and professional musical troupes during festivals on the island.

beating hand drums. Likewise, inhabitants of the island can often be found passionately performing Marc Anthony's "Preciosa" in karaoke bars, joining together to sing the finale: "No matter what happens I will be Puerto Rican, I love you Puerto Rico!"[3] These two seemingly innocuous examples of popular culture demonstrate the reach of nationalism into daily life. References to "being Puerto Rican" are implicitly understood, despite the ambiguity of "Puerto Rican-ness" specifically, and "nation" generally.

It can seem *natural* to include or exclude various actions and situations under a heading of "nationalism." In other words, the theoretical boundaries of nationality *appear* logical or based in common sense, and lead to a straightforward identification process of what is, and what is not an expression of nationalism. It would seem easy, without the help of an organized, academic theoretical framework, to focus a case study of nationalism on specific symbols or examples of nationalism, such as a national flag, a slogan or song invoking the nation, or another symbol that resonates with a geographically specific population.

However, nationalism is not a simple concept. Rather, I argue that this extremely complex set of concepts unified under the broad headings "nation" and "nationalism" are so pervasive in society that they seem natural to the individual, and can be evoked and superficially understood via rudimentary symbols like the color of a flag, or a simply worded phrase. A pseudo-consensus exists regarding Puerto Rican nationalism in part because many symbols of the nation are ambiguous. As Marc Anthony bellows "I love you Puerto Rico," the listener must interpret what Puerto Rico is and who belongs to it. In

[3] "Preciosa" performed by Marc Anthony. *Desde un principio*. Sony International. 1999. "*¡Aunque pase lo que pase, yo seré puertorriqueño! ¡Yo te quiero Puerto Rico!*"

this way nationalism can be viewed as a primarily individualistic sentiment. While nationalism is socially constructed (which will be described later) and is therefore a communal concept, each individual must decide which parts, if any, of the socially constructed nation to accept as truth and which parts to consider less-important or discount completely. That nationalisms can be personal conceptions of social constructions is supported by the Jewish Nationalist Ahad Ha'am when he states, "Once, however, the spirit of nationality has so come into being… it becomes a phenomenon that concerns the individual alone, its reality being dependent on nothing but its presence in his psyche, and on no external or objective actuality."[4]

The Nationalist Framework

The simple task of identifying for oneself what is a national symbol is complicated when undertaken as a group. Nationalism is extremely complicated collection of concepts and metaphors, when individual interpretations lead individual actors to join together for a common cause. The discourse of nationhood is employed almost continuously in the United States and Puerto Rico, and as explained by Paul R. Brass and others, has been applied and analyzed in nearly every "modern" nation-state and even some not-so-modern nation-states.[5] More important than the fact that

[4] Ahad Ha'am quoted in an extract by Elie Kedourie titled, "Nationalism and Self-Determination." in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 54.

[5] Brass explains nationalisms in South Asia, India, and the Soviet Union in *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, describes various formulations of nationalisms present throughout the western hemisphere, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, including Russia, China and Japan amongst others. Ernest Gellner even applies nationalism to Megalomania and Ruritania in an extract titled "Nationalism and High Cultures" in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

nationalism has been utilized to varying degrees across the globe, nationalism is almost universally understood. It is this universal understanding of nationalism that demonstrates the first theoretical division in the academic theories of nationalism. Brass explains that there is a

> *fundamental difference among scholars concerning the very nature of the groups involved, namely, whether they are 'natural,' 'primordial,' 'given' communities or whether they are creations of interested leaders, of elite groups, or of the political system in which they are included*.[6]

He attributes this division within the theories of nationalism to the works of various authors but draws the conclusion that the difference can best be summed up as a "primordialist" view versus an "instrumentalist" view where the "latter term refers to a perspective that emphasizes the uses to which cultural symbols are put by elites seeking instrumental advantage for themselves or the groups they claim to represent."[7]

Indeed, Brass recognizes primordialism as a formerly influential theory and then justifiably discounts it as too narrow to accurately reflect applications of nationalism in the world. A strict adherence to primordialism envisioned physical features and tangible attachments such as birthplace, race, skin tone, or direct blood relations, as the various causes of nationalism.[8] Brass implicitly discounts this theory of nationalism when he explains his vision of an instrumentalist view of nationalism. However, he appears to discount the value of primordial characteristics in his instrumentalist vision when he hesitates to accept that elites may employ such characteristics for their advantage or the

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[6] Brass, Paul R. "Elite Competition and Nation-Formation" in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 83.
[7] Ibid., 333.
[8] Geertz, Clifford. "Primordial and Civic Ties" in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism.* New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 29-34.

advantage of the people they represent. It would be outrageous to assume that elites would not use primordial attachments instrumentally for their benefit, unless primordial attachments do not exist. The location of an individual's birth, however, is a tangible, physical truth, and thus primordial,[9] and has been employed to instill nationalist sentiment (particularly regarding citizenship under the doctrine of *Jus Soli*).

More appropriate than a juxtaposition of primordialism and instrumentalism would be one contrasting primordialism and social constructionism. Perhaps unconsciously, Brass falls into the latter category as he states, "it is not actual descent that is considered essential to the definition of an ethnic group, but *a belief* in common descent,"[10] and that "new cultural groups can be created for the purposes of political and economic domination."[11] By accentuating the importance of a belief in ethnicity and the fluidity of cultural groups, Brass rejects a static, primordial view of culture and nationalism and embraces a modern view of these concepts and implicitly accepts that there may be different causes for different nationalisms.

Still, social constructionism alone does not specifically detail a causal argument for the creation of nationalisms around the globe. After discrediting a strict adherence to primordialism, Brass' instrumentalist theory of nationalisms offers a universal, causal principle that provides for the creation of disparate nationalisms around the world: elite competition.[12] Specifically, he argues that an elite class in any given geographic location,

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[9] Strong adherents to a post-modernist philosophy might disagree with this view. While I admit that the definition of the location of birth is socially constructed and accepted, I would argue that the physical, geographic location exists regardless of its socially constructed definition.
[10] Brass. "Elite Competition and Nation-Formation." 83. My emphasis.
[11] Ibid., 86
[12] Ibid., and Brass. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*.

which may be comprised of economically, politically and religiously powerful persons, competes within itself to define the nation and its symbols for that geographic location. It is important to note that this competition, in Brass' view, takes place within the elite class, and that the winner or winners of this perpetual competition present their version of nationalism to the masses. Brass provides various scenarios of elite competition including the competition between elites from within the geographic location, as well as competition between local and foreign elites who attempt to impose their vision of the nation from afar. He predicts that such competition may take on many forms, but offers two primary avenues of contestation: appealing directly to the masses for approval via elections, and competition between elites for the approval of higher ranking elites via appointments. Brass also describes two main concepts, religion and language, over which nationalism can be contested by elites. He alleges that both can play integral roles in elite competitions, though he doesn't identify them as the sole areas of contestation.

The concept of elite competition does give a generally universal rule that can be applied to case studies of nationalism in various geographic locations. It is applicable in part because the concept of elite competition is extremely general. While over-generalization may be a drawback to a theory in most academic bodies of literature, it can be seen in this instance as a positive attribute. By generalizing the concept with the relatively universal term "elites," Brass recognizes that nationalisms vary greatly both between distinct geographic locations and within them depending upon the elites who are competing to promote their formulation of nationalism.

However, Brass' elite competition nationalism is not the only dissection of the social constructionist theory of nationalism. Notably, Pierre Van Den Berghe offers a social constructionist variation of primordialism in his vision of nationalism as an extension of ethnicity and kinship in an extract entitled "A Socio-Biological Perspective."[13] He explains how individual actors prefer to associate with and help those they believe to be most closely related to, thus a nation is conceptually an individual's greatly extended family. Van Den Berghe's theory of nationalism gives more credence to primordial characteristics in the creation of nation but emphasizes that the primordial characteristics utilized to create modern nations are not primordial, but actually socially constructed versions of primordial characteristics. While his theory does provide a systematic view of nationalism that is applicable to Puerto Rico, the system cannot be generalized in order to apply to the modern applications in multi-ethnic states. As such, I view Van Den Berghe's theory of kinship nationalisms as an important component of Puerto Rican nationalism, which I will describe later. Ultimately, however, Van Den Berghe's theory can be applied within Brass' vision of nationalism and does not constitute an overarching theory of nationalism that is as applicable as elite competition.

Just as Van Den Berghe offers an important insight and a new lens through which to view Brass' theory of nationalism, Benedict Anderson's important work, *Imagined Communities*, elucidates the context of Puerto Rican nationalism through another social constructionist lens. In his book, Anderson explains that nationalism is a modern phenomenon that was first utilized in the colonized Western hemisphere and emphasized

[13] Van Den Berghe, Pierre. "A Socio-Biological Perspective" in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds.) *Nationalism.* New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 96-103.

the importance of language in the creation of nation.[14] Interestingly, in their respective major works Brass and Anderson do not cite each other as resources, even though on a very broad scale both theorists emphasize the consequence of elite actors creating nationalism with a significant focus on language.[15] Still, a very important distinction can be made between the two theories. While Brass emphasizes the importance of various forms of competition among elites, Anderson attributes elite competition to capitalistic market factors, especially the dissemination of the printing press. In doing so, Anderson does not give proper credit to the possibility that more than one set of elites exists and that they compete against each other in order to wield the tools of nationalism such as the printing press and various vernaculars.

In the preceding section, I have briefly recounted the major debates within the theories of nationalism. Perhaps the most important theory of nationalism that was not presented is best represented by James Blaut's update of a Marxist theory of nationalism. This theory proposes that the proletariat, and not solely the elites, uses nationalism to pursue state sovereignty.[16] While Blaut portrays his theory as an all-encompassing vision of nationalism that caters specifically to colonized peoples (and refers specifically to Puerto Rico), his Marxist view emphasizes the importance of nationalism as a means to attain state sovereignty and relegates the goal of autonomy to another work.[17]

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[14] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York, New York: Verso, 1983. 46.
[15] Ibid. and Brass. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*.
[16] Blaut, James M. *The National Question: Decolonizing the Theory of Nationalism*. Newark, New Jersey: Zed Books, 1987.
[17] Ibid., 13-16. Blaut explicitly states that autonomy may be a goal of nationalism, but instead focuses on absolute sovereignty.

Unfortunately, Blaut never transcends the concepts of sovereignty and only emphasizes nationalisms of the independence movement.[18] As Puerto Ricans have twice voted in favor of political autonomy in national plebiscites, both times leaving independence in a distant third place or worse, it is imperative that any applicable theory of nationalism accommodates nationalist movements that pursue political goals other than sovereignty. Because Blaut primarily discounts autonomy as a viable goal of nationalist movements, I must continue to base my analysis of Puerto Rican nationalisms in Brass' elite competition theory of nationalism as the most broadly applicable theory.

Political and Social Nationalisms in Puerto Rico

Recent nationalisms in Puerto Rico can begin to be interpreted through Brass' concept of elite competition. Elite competitions exist between the three main political parties in electoral contests on the island, as well as within the political parties themselves as they attempt to create cohesive messages for the public to consume regarding nationalism. Political parties in Puerto Rico were specifically created and are perpetuated based on each party's vision of Puerto Rican nationalism, as each party is founded on a different preference for a political status with the United States.

The voting populace of Puerto Rico has been split nearly in half between advocates for full incorporation as the 51st state of the United States (as represented by the PNP) and those who advocate for a more legally ambiguous, permanent union with the United States (as represented by the PPD). While the Puerto Rican Independence

[18] Blaut and Loida Figueroa. *Aspectos de la cuestión nacional en Puerto Rico*. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Claridad, 1988. 5-6.

Party (the PIP) still holds "major party status" under Puerto Rican law, the movement for absolute sovereignty has been supported historically by approximately 5 percent of the voting population.[19] It is for this reason, that James Blaut's modern Marxist theory of nationalism is not applicable to Puerto Rico. While Blaut espouses the virtues of his Marxist theory of nationalism in explaining movements for independence, most Puerto Ricans do not support Puerto Rican national sovereignty as expressed by traditional methods of electoral competition.

However, before interpreting current Puerto Rican nationalisms, it is important to understand and analyze the roots of nationalism found in the island's historical trajectory. The use of violence against colonial powers occupying the island can be traced as far back as 1511, when the indigenous *Taínos* unsuccessfully rebelled against Spanish colonial powers. However, it is questionable at best to argue that such a rebellion was the fruit of nationalist sentiment. Rather, the conception of Puerto Rican nationalism is often attributed to the 1868 *Grito de Lares*,[20] which was a movement by rural middle and lower class inhabitants of the island who rose up in arms against the Spanish Empire to declare independence for Puerto Rico. This violent uprising is still celebrated by proponents of Puerto Rican independence. In the decade following the insurrection, official political parties were established on the island that were based on political status preferences. Many individuals in the party in power, the Conservatives, were referred to as *incondicionales*, in reference to their unconditional support for Spanish imperial rule of

[19] de Lourdes Santiago Negrón.
[20] *Grito de Lares* roughly translates to the "Cry of Lares," which was a call to arms in the Southwest town of Lares for those advocating for Puerto Rican independence. While independence activists successfully took the town, the insurrection was quelled by the Spanish Army as they advanced toward the next town.

Puerto Rico. The two current political parties often trace their beginnings to the often persecuted Liberal Reformist party. At different times factions within the Liberal Reformist party advocated for different versions of autonomy within the Spanish Empire. The assimilationists, as they were referred, promoted the incorporation of Puerto Rico into Spain as a province, with equal representation in the Spanish Imperial Court. Later, an autonomist faction led the Liberal Reformist party and proposed autonomy for Puerto Rico, including the right to self-govern and sign treaties with other countries.[21]

Both of the political parties under Spanish rule, much like the current political parties, diffused visions of nationalism as they advocated for various political status formulations with Spain. It is clear that the independence advocates from the *Grito de Lares*, as well as the assimilationists and autonomists of the Liberal Reformist party articulated visions of Puerto Rico as a distinct nation. It is important to recognize, however, that even the *incondicionales* utilized nationalism when promoting the acceptance of Spanish rule on the island. According to James Blaut's interpretation of Lenin's Marxist theory of nationalism, the *incondicionales* were promoting a form of "great nationalism" as opposed to the "narrow nationalisms" of the independence advocates, assimilationists and autonomists.[22]

Current political parties can be viewed in the same light. Modern independence advocates envision Puerto Rico as its own nation, separate from and equal to the United States. Likewise, the PPD which opposes both independence and U.S. statehood, believes

[21] The autonomists eventually attained their goal of self-government in late 1897. They had no time to govern, however, as the United States invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 under the auspices of the Spanish-American War.
[22] Blaut. *The National Question: Decolonizing the Theory of Nationalism*. 13-16.

that Puerto Rico is a nation of people distinct from the United States but asserts that autonomy through self-government is an acceptable political expression of the nation.[23] Just as the *incondicionales* of the late 19th century expressed Lenin's "greater nationalism" by promoting Spain's importance, the PNP expresses "greater nationalism" when it supports the United States and statehood for Puerto Rico. Still, the PNP's position is very nuanced, and while it promotes "greater nationalism," it also promotes "narrow nationalism," as a Puerto Rican U.S. state would still exercise some form of autonomy under the U.S. federal system. By advocating for autonomy within the United States' Federal Government, the PNP is tacitly arguing that Puerto Rico is a distinct nation from the United States, though not so distinct as to stifle the incorporation of the island into the "greater nation" of the United States.[24]

Each of the current major political parties in Puerto Rico could be considered elites according to Paul R. Brass' elite competition theory of nationalism. In viewing the parties themselves as elites, both of Brass' explicit conceptualizations of competition can be seen in Puerto Rico. First, elite competition exists within each political party in Puerto Rico, as each party, in the process of electoral politics, must support various candidates to act as representatives of their party. Perhaps the best example of intra-party elite competition is demonstrated by the PPD. This party advocates for a commonwealth compact of permanent union between Puerto Rico and the U.S. While the actual, legal status has not changed greatly since the Commonwealth Constitution was ratified by

[23] The PPD is considered a "big tent" political party, and thus includes many different factions who propose very different visions of autonomy, including but not limited to the current Commonwealth government.
[24] The PNP has explicitly stated that Puerto Rico is a fundamentally distinct nation from the U.S. and promotes the continuation of this difference even after incorporation of Puerto Rico as a new state of the union by allowing Puerto Rico to compete in international events like the Olympics separate from the U.S.

Puerto Ricans and Congress in popular votes in 1952, different party presidents have promoted alternate visions of the Puerto Rican Commonwealth. Most notably, upon reelection in 1988 PPD governor Rafael Hernández Colon explicitly stated his desire to revisit the status debate via a plebiscite. While the plebiscite did not take place under his leadership,[25] he articulated a vision for a commonwealth status distinct from the one under which he governed. Specifically, he promoted binding permanent union with the United States that could be altered only by mutual agreement. Colon's vision for a new commonwealth status was defeated in the 1992 elections and elites within the PPD competed for a new leader to define a new vision for commonwealth status. Eventually this role was filled by Sila Calderón, who won the governorship for the PPD in 2000 after eight years of a PNP led government.

The inter-party electoral politics between the three major parties of Puerto Rico constitutes Brass' second conceptualization of elite competition. In seemingly benign fashion, each electoral contest held on the island is a competition to redefine the Puerto Rican nation. Because each party is founded on its preference for a particular political status formulation, each election is an institutionalized contest between competing visions of Puerto Rico as a nation.

While Blaut's modern Marxist theory of nationalism does not relate to the inter-party electoral contests on the island, his revision of Lenin's "narrow" and "greater nationalisms" inform Puerto Rico's social location. Situated in a veritable sea between the world's only superpower and a loose coalition of nation-states that occasionally agree

[25] The first free and fair plebiscite on status in Puerto Rico was held under PNP Governor Pedro Roselló in November, 1993. Though a plebiscite on status was held in Puerto Rico in 1967, it is inaccurate due to U.S. and Puerto Rican government interference, including voter suppression as discussed in Chapter 1.

to call themselves *Latin* America, those who inhabit the island occupy a problematic geography. Currently, that location is viewed as an intermediate ground between arguably two different "greater nationalities" that are comprised of various "narrow nationalities." The two greater nationalities of the Western Hemisphere, generally characterized as an affluent, greater Western-U.S. American nationality and a lesser-developed, greater Latin American nationality, converge and create conflict in Puerto Rico. The physical location of Puerto Rico in the Caribbean Sea is a starting point to begin to explain the historical importance that the island has held for the two civilizations, while the current social location of Puerto Rico in the cultural periphery of both Latin America and the "Western" United States of America demonstrates the fluidity and flexibility of nationalisms in the country.

As the status debate highlights, "Puerto Rican-ness" is distinct from both greater U.S. American and greater Latin American nationalities, but both are invoked in the debate to define what is "Puerto Rican." These two greater nationalities are brought to light through language and economic status of Puerto Rico. Despite nearly 100 years of U.S. American influence, Puerto Ricans are a Spanish speaking people. As such, Puerto Ricans are innately connected to the greater Latin American nationality, which is created in part by the relatively common Spanish language[26] and the historical bond many narrow nationalities within Latin America share as former Spanish colonies. However, Puerto Rico's bond with the greater Latin American nationality is complicated by Puerto Rico's

[26] Though most countries within Latin America recognize Spanish as their national language, some countries have accepted various indigenous languages as official languages as well. Furthermore, some Latin American countries have few ties to Spain, but strong historical roots in Portugal. Connections to Portugal or Spain have traditionally constituted general acceptance as a "member" of Latin America.

economic status. Though Puerto Rico's GDP is far below that of the poorest state in the United States, it is much larger than the GDP of any Latin American nation.[27] This economic disparity situates Puerto Rico in between both greater nationalities of the Western Hemisphere and further distinguishes Puerto Rico as a unique narrow nationality.

Most importantly, a unique Puerto Rican nationality is promoted by everyone on the island, regardless of political party and status preference. As demonstrated by both the popular culture and the continued political status debate on the island, Puerto Ricans are constantly presented with symbols of nationalism. These various symbols of nationalism represent the Puerto Rican nation as a socially constructed entity, and thus support Paul R. Brass' instrumentalist theory of nationalism. However, social constructions of primordial characteristics are used to define "Puerto Rican-ness." The use of primordialism contrasts with Brass' elite competition theory of nationalism that emphasizes only elite competition to define a nation and the symbols that represent it. Still, Brass' elite competition theory was validated by both the intra-party elite competition within the three main political parties in Puerto Rico and the inter-party electoral competitions. Both forms of elite competition explicitly organize distinct visions of the nation of Puerto Rico that are promoted by elites within the parties and against one another, in order to win the support of the populace.

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[27] *CIA World Factbook*. U.S. Census Bureau, (2007) www.census.gov and U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, (2007) www.bea.gov. Puerto Rico's estimated per capita GDP in 2005 was $18,700, while Argentina's was $13,700, Brazil's was $8,300, Chile's was $11,900, and Venezuela's was $6,300 (as estimated for all countries for 2005). Mississippi's estimated Gross State Product per capita in 2005 was $27,545.

However, the question of Puerto Rican nationality is unlike the flag debate. The color of blue in the Puerto Rican national flag acted as a symbol for each individual's preferred political status, and thus, preferred vision of the Puerto Rican nation. But, the question of Puerto Rican nationality cannot be answered by an edict of the Puerto Rican Department of State. Elite competition may be able to mediate and control the debate regarding Puerto Rican national symbols, as it did in 1995 by decreeing that both the "sky blue" and "navy blue" variants of the flag may be used officially to represent the Puerto Rican nation. However, the answer to the larger question of what is the Puerto Rican nation and who belongs to it lies within each individual's interpretation of the socially constructed and continuously contested nation of Puerto Rico.

The nationalist framework offers an important perspective on the larger status debate. Yet, previous scholarship emphasizing Puerto Rican nationalisms has failed to recognize the importance of nationalisms in statehood and commonwealth status. However, even when the nationalist framework is applied to commonwealth and statehood status, nationalism does not provide a holistic framework to analyze the status debate. The nationalist framework resembles the economic framework by emphasizing individual interpretations. In the next chapter, I offer a new framework that structures individual interpretations of Puerto Rican nationality into the status preferences articulated in the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites.

Chapter 4: The Morality of Status

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court remarked that Puerto Rico "occupies a relationship to the United States that has no parallel in our history."[1] The island's political status remains ambiguous in spite of economic and ideological arguments which beckon a solution to the century-old status debate. The U.S. government officially recognizes Puerto Rico as an "organized, unincorporated territory." The meaning of this seemingly benign, if not logically suspect phrase raises concern on the island and in Washington, D.C. Puerto Rico is not a state of the United States and is not a sovereign country, leaving the island's commonwealth government to flounder in uncharted territory with regard to political status. Two plebiscites were held in 1993 and 1998 to allow residents to choose their preferred status. In 1993, a plurality of voters supported commonwealth status, while the 1998 plebiscite resulted in a majority of voters favoring

[1] Examining Board v. Flores 426 U.S. 572 (1976) quoted in Trías Monge. 191.

"None of the above." Pundits argue that the 1998 outcome further perpetuated Puerto Rico's ambiguous status, fueling questions about the meaning of "None of the above."

In this chapter I interpret "None of the above" via economic, ideological and moral frameworks to rationalize the 1998 outcome in the context of the century-long status debate. I analyze "None of the above" with moral metaphors extrapolated from George Lakoff's *Moral Politics*. However, as a foundation for the morality of status, I evaluate the frameworks discussed in the previous two chapters which emphasize an economic, cost-benefit analysis and an ideological interpretation of nationalism in the status debate. I have argued that these two frameworks are often isolated from each other by scholars and other interested parties in the status debate (like the U.S. Congress). As isolated concepts, neither lens can properly frame the realities of the Puerto Rican political status debate. I argue that a moral framework accommodates both economic and ideological interpretations of the debate. I demonstrate that Puerto Ricans, like residents of the United States, view political issues through a moral framework, as articulated by George Lakoff. Buried deep within that moral framework, I argue that political status should be interpreted through a metaphor of "family composition."

The Economics and Ideologies of Status

An economic framework greatly influences the status debate. Advocates of statehood and commonwealth have argued that their preference is in the best financial interests of those who reside on the island; economic self-interest was one of the main

tenants of both the PNP[2] and PPD's[3] respective plebiscitary campaigns in 1993 and 1998. However, the campaigns for statehood stressed the notion that Puerto Ricans would receive large amounts of new funding if the island were to become a U.S. state. This campaign promise was reinforced by Congressional hearings regarding Puerto Rican status held between 1989 and 1991. However, the plebiscites held in 1993 and 1998 both resulted in a minority of Puerto Rican voters favoring statehood (albeit a large minority). Statehood does not have a mandate from the Puerto Rican populace even though many commentators believe, and the PNP has promoted for years, that statehood would bring everyday Puerto Ricans prosperity by strengthening ties with the U.S.

The economic argument has never garnered enough support to acquire a majority vote in Puerto Rican history. Still, the popularity of statehood nearly equals that of commonwealth status according to the 1993 plebiscite. Despite such popularity, statehood advocates have had trouble deflating the argument that statehood would require assimilation with the U.S., and the loss of their distinct "Puerto Rican" identity. The PNP attempted to counteract this sentiment when Governor Roselló touted "*jíbaro* statehood."[4] This vision of statehood invoked the national symbol of Puerto Rico as peasant laborer, and alleged that a distinct island state with a robust culture could fit into the U.S. federal system. Residents were unconvinced.

Some might argue that residents were convinced that commonwealth status best supported their economic interests. Thus, the economic framework could validate the

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[2] PNP is the acronym for the *Partido Nuevo Progresista*, the pro-statehood party of Puerto Rico.
[3] PPD is the acronym for the *Partido Popular Democratico*, the pro-commonwealth party of Puerto Rico. For further explanation of the dominant political parties in Puerto Rico, see Chapter 1
[4] "*Jíbaro* statehood" is discussed in Chapter 1.

slight plurality that commonwealth received in 1993. Though possible, an economic interpretation emphasizing commonwealth status is both unusual and offers no explanation why Puerto Ricans changed their mind so drastically five years later. In 1998, when 50.3 percent of voters cast ballots for "None of the above," not much had changed. Certainly, new political winds had blown in and out of Puerto Rico over the years, including the powerful Hurricane Georges just three months before the second plebiscite. Still, the outcome came as a surprise to many. The Puerto Rican Supreme Court mandated that "None of the above" offer no economic policy; it was put on the ballot as an officially sanctioned form of free speech and then promoted by the PPD. Some could misconstrue voters' actions in 1993 as a basic, rational decision based on their interpretations of the pervasive economic argument surrounding status. However, this hypothesis fails to inform the 1998 decision, as "None of the above" did not offer an economic alternative.

Where the economic interpretation fell flat, other theorists emphasize the importance of various ideologies to shape the political atmosphere in Puerto Rico. Most importantly, nationalism has been interpreted as the ideological compass that guides Puerto Rican politics. Many scholars of nationalism focus on various independence movements as the only valid options for Puerto Ricans to express nationalist sentiments. The PPD and other commonwealth supporters believe a distinct Puerto Rican nation thrives under commonwealth status.[5] The nationalist argument offers an easy explanation

[5] For further description of ideological nationalisms specifically highlighting the nationalisms of commonwealth and statehood in Puerto Rico, see Chapter 3.

of the 1993 plebiscite results: slightly more residents believed that commonwealth better represented the Puerto Rican nation than would statehood.

However, the ideology of nationalism does not explain the dramatic deviation from standard voting patterns presented by the 1998 plebiscite. "None of the above" offered no new vision of a Puerto Rican nation; it offered no vision at all! The enabling law for the plebiscite, as well as the Supreme Court order to revise that law, mandated that no political party could advocate for "None of the above" with government funding.[6] Though the PPD had a limited campaign in favor of the fifth column, it had no official description, merely the title "None of the above."[7] This option gave no description of a political status, much less a vision of Puerto Rican nationalism. Thus, the two primary theories scholars have used to define Puerto Rican politics cannot account for the outcome of the 1998 plebiscite on status.

Other Interpretations of Status

A cacophony of lesser-recognized theories, both rational and irrational, could be used to interpret the seemingly strange outcome of the 1998 plebiscite. Are Puerto Ricans apathetic and cynical, disinterested in status, or—as the U.S. government once believed—unfit to self-govern? Many politicians and politicos discuss an increase in cynicism in the electorate.[8] This claim is somewhat substantiated by a decrease in overall

[6] Álvarez Rivera, interview by author. and Báez Galib.
[7] See Appendix 1.2 for the 1998 ballot descriptions of the status options.
[8] Álvarez Rivera, interview by author. and Báez Galib. and de Lourdes Santiago Negrón. and Hernández. interview by author.

voter turnout from the 1993 plebiscite to the one held in 1998.[9] However, it would be disingenuous to argue that Puerto Ricans have lost their appetite for politics and government. Turnout for the 1998 plebiscite was depressed due to Hurricane Georges. Furthermore, Puerto Ricans face more restrictive voting laws, cannot vote in federal elections, and still vote more frequently than residents of any other state in the union.[10] While both voter registration and voter turnout was lower for plebiscites than for general elections, voter turnout for the two plebiscites resembled the high turnout in the United States during the 2000 presidential election.[11] Likewise, Puerto Ricans interpret each vote they cast in general elections, especially those for governor, as *de facto* votes for their status preference.[12] Lastly, Puerto Rico has been largely self-governed for the last 50 years, after centuries of both strict and the more recent, relatively relaxed colonial rule. Arguments that Puerto Ricans are somehow inherently unfit for self-government have long been discounted as racist rants of ignorance.

A cursory explanation why "None of the above" garnered over 50 percent of the vote has been introduced by commonwealth and independence advocates alike. Adherents of both groups argue that in 1998, some independence advocates and most commonwealth supporters cast their ballots for "None of the above" to ensure that

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[9] Álvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico*. Voter turnout from 1993 to 1998 decreased from 1,700,990 to 1,566,270 votes cast. When voter registration is also accounted for, the percentage of registered voters who voted in 1993 versus 1998 also decreased, from 73.5 percent to 71.3 percent.

[10] Cámara. 4.

[11] Begman, Michael. "Registered Voter Turnout Improved in 2000 Presidential Election, Census Bureau Reports." U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Commerce. 27 February 2002. http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/voting/000505.html. Based on U.S. Census data, 2,716,509 Puerto Ricans were 18 or older in 2000, which translates 63 percent and 58 percent turnout rates of eligible voters in the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites (though the actual turnout was likely higher than population data from 2000 represents). Voter turnout for registered and non-registered citizens in the U.S. in 2000 was 60 percent.

[12] Cámara. 92.

statehood did not win.[13] Superficially, this argument is captivating; yet, it is easily refuted by the 1993 plebiscite results. Whether advocates of independence voted for one of the commonwealth options, or independence, or "None of the above," makes no difference with relation to support for statehood. An additional vote for any of the non-statehood options lowers the percentage of votes for statehood. In 1993, the commonwealth and independence options combined garnered 53 percent of votes cast. In 1998, the commonwealth options combined with independence and "None of the above" received 53.2 percent of the votes cast. Regardless of which of the four options other than statehood was voted for in 1998, statehood would not have acquired a majority. A vote for commonwealth, independence, or even a blank or null ballot[14] could all be viewed as votes against statehood. Independence advocates did not need to for "None of the above" to oppose statehood. Rather, something motivated individuals to vote *for* "None of the above."

Independence advocate's alleged votes for "None of the above" further dispel the myth that nationalisms alone define the status debate. Regardless of how the votes were actually cast, supporters of independence vocally promoted a different option (at least retrospectively). As discussed in Chapter 3, "None of the above" offered no vision of the Puerto Rican nation, yet independence advocates supported it. Certainly the independence column in 1998 represented an independent Puerto Rican nation as it described, "The recognition that Puerto Rico is a sovereign republic with full authority

[13] Báez Galib. and Hernández, interview by author. and de Lourdes Santiago Negrón. and Senator Charlie Rodriguez Colón, interview by author, tape recording, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 13 June 2006.
[14] Notably, the percentage of null or blank ballots decreased between 1993 and 1998 from 0.6 percent to 0.3 percent, a real decrease of 5,902 votes.

over its territory and in its international relations…"[15] Likewise, the PIP campaigned in favor of the independence column in the 1998 plebiscite. The PIP did not openly support "None of the above" or an allegiance commonwealth advocates. Rather, individual independence advocates disregarded their political party and nationalist framework to vote for "None of the above."

Perhaps a statistical analysis, followed by a well implemented survey of voter choice from 1993 to 1998, could be able to validate the theory that independence advocates played the role of "swing voters" supporting "None of the above" in the 1998 plebiscite. Years of sometimes violent opposition demonstrate independence advocates' desire to neutralize the possibility of statehood. Still, the independence advocate as swing voter hypothesis offers no insight into why independence voters would oppose statehood under the banner of "None of the above" in place of independence.

A more compelling argument specific to the 1998 plebiscite alleges that statehood advocates created two commonwealth options to split the support for commonwealth.[16] The 1993 plebiscite demonstrated the popularity of some form of commonwealth, which could be considered a voting bloc. The hypothesis claims that two definitions of commonwealth (columns 1 and 2)[17] would divide the commonwealth voting bloc and statehood would emerge as the most popular option by a large margin.

Still, a split of the commonwealth voting bloc would not, by itself, create a majority vote in favor of statehood. Just as independence advocates could have voted for independence, commonwealth or "None of the above" to oppose statehood,

[15] See Appendix 1.2, Column 4
[16] Báez Galib.
[17] See Appendix 1.2

commonwealth supporters would still oppose statehood with either option. Likewise, the two commonwealth options reflect a real division within the PPD party over the future of commonwealth status.[18] However, it is possible that an evenly divided commonwealth voting bloc contrasted with a united statehood voting bloc could have been construed as a mandate for Puerto Rican statehood. This is not beyond the realm of possibility in Puerto Rico. After the 1998 plebiscite, PNP Governor Roselló's administration said that statehood had won with over 90 percent. The Roselló administration arrived at this conclusion by counting "None of the above" as an invalid option. Thus, they argued, that of the viable status options presented in 1998, statehood was approved by over 90 percent. Just as the Puerto Rican Supreme Court mandated that "None of the above" be placed on the ballot, they obliged the Roselló administration to publish the plebiscite results including "None of the above."[19]

The hypothesis that statehood advocates simply wanted to divide the commonwealth voting bloc in 1998 is both compelling and logical. This hypothesis deserves further study. However, my research does not focus on the commonwealth voting bloc in 1998, as this argument would apply only to the 1998 plebiscite.

The mere assertion of this theory accurately reflects the voracious emotion embedded deep within the status debate. My interests lie in the deeper meaning of status, which evokes such strong emotions. I argue that the deeper meaning of status can be seen through a holistic analysis of the two plebiscites held in the 1990s. The two predominant theories used to describe Puerto Rican politics (economic self-interest and ideological

[18] See Chapter 3 for a synopsis of the internal divisions within the pro-commonwealth PPD party.
[19] Báez Galib. and Alvarez Rivera, interview by author.

nationalisms) have each failed to offer a unifying theory to characterize the results of both plebiscites. Likewise, Puerto Ricans remain interested in island politics and political status. Thus, a new theoretical framework must be found to fully accommodate the nuance of the plebiscite results in the context of the greater status debate. For this purpose, I now turn to George Lakoff's *Moral Politics*.

Moral Politics

Puerto Rican status politics can best be viewed through the framework of moral politics, as the theory offers a well formulated foundation from which a holistic hypothesis to inform voting in the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites can be extrapolated. In this section I contextualize Lakoff's work within U.S. and Puerto Rican societies to demonstrate the similarities between the two political climates in the 1990s. I then recount the pertinent aspects of his theory as a foundation to interpret one of Lakoff's fundamental metaphors (the "nation as family" metaphor) and apply it to Puerto Rican status politics.

Cognitive linguist George Lakoff, in his innovative 1996 work *Moral Politics*,[20] describes a situation surprisingly similar to the political divide in Puerto Rico. Lakoff offered *Moral Politics* as his interpretation of, and hope for the political landscape after Democrats in the United States received a crushing defeat in the 1994 general elections. According to Lakoff, Republicans, led by former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, took control of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate based on their fluid

[20] Lakoff, George. *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think.* 2nd Edition. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

utilization of morality in politics. The use of "moral issues" and moral discourse was also exemplified in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, which highlighted "morally divisive" issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage. Lakoff believes this framing of politics often casts Republicans as moral and Democrats as immoral. Throughout his work he argues that liberals, like their more conservative brethren, utilize a framework of morality to craft political positions. Democrats and liberals have a systematic view of morality, but they often fail to articulate the morality of their positions. According to *Moral Politics*, both liberal and conservative formulations of morality are based on conceptual metaphors.

The foundational argument in *Moral Politics* frames the primary political division in the United States not as liberal-versus-conservative, but rather as the difference between two moral visions of the world. In order to define what is and is not "moral," Lakoff believes liberals and conservatives use the "metamoral" concept of "Moral Accounting." It is metamoral, because the metaphor of moral accounting does not itself "tell you exactly which actions are moral or immoral."[21] The moral accounting metaphor frames every topic in economics by creating a moral "account" of well-being, similar to a checking account that can be withdrawn from and replenished. This moral account translates the qualitative concept of well-being into a quantifiable system of relative increases and decreases. Though Lakoff doesn't offer a unit of analysis to quantify well-being, the metamoral concept makes sense of financial terminology commonly used in

[21] Ibid., 44

non-economic situations such as “to *owe* a favor,” or to be “*worth* it.” The moral accounting metaphor frames otherwise non-economic issues in a cost-benefit dichotomy.

Likewise, moral accounting is metamoral because it is pre-moral. Individuals rely on moral accounting as the foundation for a moral hierarchy. Lakoff argues that just individuals organize, or “balance,” their moral account using various different theories. He describes the concepts of “work as exchange or reward,” “reward and punishment,” “absolute goodness versus retribution” and a myriad of other ways to conceptualize distribution and redistribution of well-being. These concepts build upon the foundation of moral accounting.

All of these disparate concepts that could be used to balance the moral account are organized by family structure. Specifically, Lakoff identifies two dominant family structures in the United States that organize the moral account: the “strict father family” and the “nurturant parent family.” Each family structure emphasizes one concept to organize the moral account. This emphasis creates morality. Thus, Lakoff identifies strict father morality and nurturant parent morality as those moralities which reflect strict father and nurturant parent families.

With a foundation in moral accounting, the two moral frameworks are applied to politics in the United States via the metaphor of “nation as family.” This metaphor holds that the nation is a family, where the government acts as parent and the citizens are children. In this metaphor, the politics of a nation are the interactions between government and citizen, parent and child. Focusing on the most basic elements of his argument, moral politics is a hierarchy of metaphors that dictate what is right and wrong.

Figure 4.1 An Outline of Lakoff's Moral Framework[22]

I. Well-being is quantifiable via the Moral Accounting metaphor
II. The Moral Account ought to be balanced, and can be by implementing various metaphors to distribute and redistribute well-being, including:
    a. Metaphor of work/employment as one of the following:
        i. A system of even exchange between employer and worker
        ii. A hierarchical system where employer has the power to reward an employee
    b. Metaphor of Reward and Punishment
        i. Good actions should be rewarded, adding to one's moral account
        ii. Bad actions should be punished, subtracting from the account
    c. Metaphor of Absolute Goodness, which states that regardless of the action, it is always unjust to willfully subtract from your own, or another's moral account
    d. Metaphor of Retribution, which states that good actions should be rewarded and bad actions should be subtracted from the actor's account, even if that means inflicting harm upon him or her
III. Family Structure dictates which theories of distribution and redistribution are important, thus defining what kind of actions are just or morally correct
IV. The Nation is a Family in which government is a parent and citizens are children

Using this hierarchy of metaphors, political actions become moral or immoral depending upon the family structure that defines which metaphor to distribute well-being is most appropriate (step III). Thus, Lakoff argues that strict father and nurturant parent moralities frame every aspect of politics in the United States.

The Morality of Status

"The people are advocates of independence, or statehood, or commonwealth basically from a moral conviction."[23] The status debate lays the foundation for and invigorates with emotion every aspect of Puerto Rican politics. "It is said that everything in Puerto Rico revolves around the status problem: the way people evaluate their leaders,

[22] Lakoff. 44-64 and 154. (my synopsis)
[23] de Lourdes Santiago Negrón.

their party affiliation, and their preferred solutions to the nation's problems."[24] Likewise, politicians from each political party agree that status is an emotional issue that incites passion and emotion.[25] Prominent politico Manuel Alvarez Rivera characterizes the status debate as a "war of attrition" between "fanatics, who see what they want to see."[26] The characterization of the debate as a war illustrates the strong emotions evoked by status and reinforces the emphasis politicians have placed on personal emotions when Puerto Ricans vote in plebiscites on status.

While scholars of Puerto Rican politics have highlighted both economics and ideology to define the status debate, they have not incorporated the two in a unified theory and further, have not adequately incorporated the intense emotions of Puerto Ricans in a holistic analysis of political status. George Lakoff's theory of moral politics unites the economic and ideological frameworks and gives proper weight to the passions that inform personal political preferences. Just as politics in the United States are simultaneously based on interpretations of moral accounting and family structure, Puerto Rican status is based simultaneously on different interpretations of economics and ideological nationalisms. Framed in moral politics, the cost-benefit analysis of Puerto Rican economics quantifies the relative change in well-being residents would encounter based on a change in status. Similarly, ideological discussions of nationalism are recast as questions about family composition. Within the framework of morality, emotions inform

[24] Cámara. 5.
[25] de Lourdes Santiago. and Rodríguez. and Báez Galib. PIP Senator de Lourdes Santiago believes that people don't vote "as a result of a cold, objective analysis." PNP Senator Rodriguez simply states, "status is emotional." PPD Senator Baez Galib says, "people don't analyze the formulas, (they are) emotionally attached."
[26] Alvarez Rivera, interview by author.

both an economic cost-benefit analysis and an interpretation of ideological nationalisms that combine to specify an individual's status preference. Moral politics, which emphasizes the organization of family, offers a unique framework through which to view a coherent politics of Puerto Rican status. However, before delving into the morality of Puerto Rican political status, it is necessary to examine whether U.S. moral politics can translate to the Puerto Rican status debate.

Translating the "Nation as Family" Metaphor into Puerto Rican

The "nation as family" metaphor begs the obvious question: Where and what is the Puerto Rican nation (if it is indeed a nation)? However, this set of questions is *not* the entirety of the Puerto Rican status question. Nor is it the underlying theme behind status. Rather, defining the Puerto Rican nation is foundational to discuss and apply the nation as family metaphor to Puerto Rico.

Consensus regarding the Puerto Rican nation has been reached by major scholars and politicos: Puerto Rico constitutes a nation unto itself. It fits the criteria laid out by most scholars for nationhood. As discussed in Chapter 3, Puerto Ricans living on the island generally believe they share:

- a common descent or history
- a common language (Spanish, though English is an official language)
- a common economy (even if highly dependent on the U.S.)
- a claim to a geographic territory
- a founding myth (similar to the common descent and history, while Puerto Ricans may still be creating and contesting the "official" founding myth, the *Grito de Lares*, Luis Muñoz Marín, and the indigenous Taínos are all celebrated as authentic roots of Puerto Rico)

- a common cultural identification (Perhaps the most important of all, Puerto Ricans call themselves Puerto Ricans. In keeping with a socially constructed theory of nationalism and Benedict Arnold's "Imagined Communities," Puerto Ricans identify themselves as "Puerto Rican")

However, Puerto Rico does not perfectly conform to the ideal conception of a nation due to the island's ambiguous national sovereignty. Though the question of national sovereignty is particularly important for some nationalism scholars, most Puerto Ricans do not support complete sovereignty for the island. James Blaut and other nationalism scholars solve this problem by focusing on the simple aspects of the question of sovereignty; they focus on various independence movements. However, the vast majority of Puerto Ricans do not support independence, as demonstrated in the plebiscites and general elections. While a holistic investigation should recognize independence, the exclusive study of Puerto Ricans nationalisms via independence advocates is inappropriate.

To my knowledge, no scholar has analyzed either commonwealth or statehood from a nationalist perspective. In Chapter 3, I initiate such a study and conclude that nationalisms affect and influence both status options and their respective parties (the PPD and the PNP). But nationalisms alone cannot make sense of the status question. It would be interesting and informative to analyze both options through the lens of nationalism described by Vladimir Lenin. Lenin describes both "Great Nation" and "Narrow Nation" typologies of nationalism. This theory could posit Puerto Rico as one part of a Great Nation (the U.S.), while still retaining its Narrow Nation status (as Puerto Ricans) under statehood and commonwealth. A simultaneous Great-and-Narrow Nation interpretation would likely be highly contested. Commonwealth and independence advocates question

whether Puerto Rico could retain its Narrow Nation identity while being an equal part of the Great Nation. This important question is debated in Puerto Rico without explicitly citing Lenin's theory. Notably, the PPD affirms the validity of this question with regard to statehood, yet denies the question with respect to commonwealth status. As expected, commonwealth advocates argue that the national identity present under commonwealth would be lost under statehood.

Andrés Sánchez Tarniella explicitly rejects the notion that identity is connected to status when he argues that "status" is a myth. He believes that even talk of "status" puts the question in political, legal, and juridical spheres and ignores social reality. He concludes by stating that Puerto Rico does have a distinct "national culture" regardless of status, and furthermore, that there is not and need not be any relation between citizenship and nationality.[27] Sánchez Tarniella creatively interprets the status question and his analysis appropriately responds to the existence of a national culture. However, he unfairly discounts the importance of the political, legal and juridical spheres, denying each sphere's profound impact on the social realities of Puerto Rico.[28]

Likewise, it is interesting to question the location of the Puerto Rican nation, and the importance of the Puerto Rican diaspora. Yet, the status question has long focused on the islands under Puerto Rican jurisdiction.[29] Puerto Ricans residing in New York voted in a local plebiscite on status, which had little effect on the island. Puerto Ricans who live

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[27] Sánchez Tarniella, Andrés. *El mito del status: un nuevo oscurantismo*. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Bayoán, 2000. 80-83

[28] Political Status affects tax policy, federal benefits including personal and corporate welfare, the official language of government and schooling, and much more. For further explanation of the import of political status, see Chapter 1

[29] Puerto Rican jurisdiction includes Puerto Rico, Culebra, Vieques and Isla Mona.

in the U.S. enjoy the same rights and responsibilities as any other U.S. citizen. Only permanent residents of Puerto Rico are treated differently. Scholars do not question that Puerto Rico culturally comprises a nation, and politicians only do so as a strategic battle of semantics. Former Governor Pedro Roselló (PNP) said in 1995 that Puerto Rico "is not and had never been a nation."[30] His contention is tenuous. As governor from 1993-2001, Roselló presided over the PNP and acted as the spokesman for the statehood campaign in the two plebiscites. During this time he often envisioned Puerto Rico as a *jíbaro* state, thus identifying Puerto Rican statehood with a national symbol and character that would transcend political status.[31]

The nation as family metaphor envisions government as a parent and citizens as children.[32] The implementation of ideology can be viewed in the interaction between parent and child, between government and citizen. In *Moral Politics*, Lakoff focuses on specific policies and issues, including abortion, affirmative action, criminal justice, economic policies, environmental policies, gay rights, and public education, to name a few. However, he does not address which level of government responds to each issue. Lakoff does not define how two governments (parents) that govern the same constituency (children) interact. The separation of powers in a federal system of government is neither taken for granted nor questioned; it is ignored. Lakoff abstractly refers to government as a parent who creates and implements public policy. In this way, government becomes one monolithic entity, negating the nuance of which level of government creates and

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[30] quoted in Martínez, Hector M. "Religious Leaders, Religious Groups and Politics in Puerto Rico." (Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2000).
[31] For further discussion of Roselló's "*estadidad jíbaro*" see Chapter 1.
[32] Lakoff. 154.

implements which policy. This works when discussing the United States. Although contested in specific policies,[33] the current federal system in the U.S. is well established and is not generally questioned. Furthermore, Lakoff need not make the distinction between whether it is a federal, state, or local government that is implementing strict father or nurturant parent morality in its policies. In order to validate and justify his vision of moral politics, he merely needed to show that *some* level of government implements it.

The level of government action is of utmost importance in Puerto Rico. This reflects the question of Puerto Rican political status: what should be the relationship *between* the Puerto Rican and federal governments. The question posits the debate beyond the various expressions of nationalism evoked by the nation as family metaphor. Instead of emphasizing nationalisms, one can emphasize the interaction between and composition of the family in the nation as family metaphor. In the next section, I apply the nation as family metaphor to the overarching status debate to envision the options presented in the 1993 and 1998 plebiscites.

Status as Family Composition

Political status invokes much more than just economics or nationalisms when framed in the nation as family metaphor, though both aspects are important. *Applying the framework of moral politics to the status debate envisions status as family composition.* Following this model, the federal and Puerto Rican governments can be seen as two

[33] Does the No Child Left Behind Act's implementation overstep the constitutional boundaries that give states the right to regulate public education? Does transit funding contingent upon a minimum drinking age overstep a state's right to govern/set policy within its jurisdiction?

parents of the Puerto Rican citizenry (the children). This vision of the debate incorporates all aspects that influence the various options, including economics, ideology (nationalisms), culture, history, and geography by emphasizing these different aspects to reconstitute the national family.

Each status option provides a different vision of the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Under statehood the two governments would be unified in one relatively cohesive force, just as Lakoff inadvertently describes the federal system in the U.S. Commonwealth advocates have long supported a mutualistic relationship, though it is uncertain whether the two governments would, or could, be equal.[34] For independence advocates, Puerto Rico should only be governed by Puerto Ricans.

Extrapolating the family composition metaphor from Lakoff's concept of nation as family, the status question translates as follows: 1) Should Puerto Rico be governed by one parent as envisioned in a federal system, in which national, state, and local governments abstractly unite in one hierarchically organized structure? 2) Should Puerto Rico be governed by two parents in a new system of government, and if so, how should those two governments interact? 3) Should Puerto Rico be governed by one parent comprised of a Puerto Rican national government and local municipalities acting together? In this light, the way different levels of government interact remains the entirety of the status debate, but the interpretation of the century-old debate is framed not just as an abstract cost-benefit analysis of economics, nor only as an ideological question of what is the Puerto Rican nation. The moral politics of status frames the debate as an

[34] García-Passalacqua and Carlos Rivera Lugo. 24. Congresspersons quickly rejected the idea of "mutual sovereignty" when it was proposed during the 1989-1991 Congressional hearings on Puerto Rican status.

extremely personal question of family composition. Who should, and can, belong to the Puerto Rican national family? Who should, and can, belong to the U.S. national family? And lastly, are these two national families distinct and can they be combined?

Given these broad questions, it is worth examining the current commonwealth status through the framework of family composition to understand why the plebiscites were held in the 1990s, and why status defines nearly every aspect of Puerto Rican politics. An interpretation of the Commonwealth Constitution as the composition of the Puerto Rican national family sheds light on the motivation behind more than fifty years of ambiguity in political status.

Puerto Rico has been governed by a two parent system since the ratification of the Commonwealth Constitution in 1952. However, the Puerto Rican and U.S. governments have mostly divided the labors of governing; the two parents generally do not compete. This division of labor resembles the more traditional relationship between U.S. state and federal governments, but important distinctions remain.[35] The commonwealth government plays no role in deciding foreign policy, yet unlike states, may partake in some international competitions (like the Olympics and Miss Universe Pageants). Similarly, the commonwealth levies island-wide taxes, but the federal government does not impose most federal taxes (including federal income taxes on individuals and businesses). Likewise, Puerto Ricans are eligible for most federal benefit programs and services (or similar programs crafted specifically for Puerto Rico), yet they receive

[35] Further discussion of similarities and distinctions can be found in Chapter 2

between 40-60 percent of what residents of a U.S. state would receive.[36] Even with this level of funding, "the second largest source of revenues [for Puerto Rico's central and municipal governments] is Federal aid, which is 17 percent. This is about 3 percent more than the average for the 50 States."[37] At the same time, the federal government retains a policy of inattention and inaction with regard to Puerto Rico's affairs.[38]

The federal government could write all public policy on the island under the guise of the territory clause and the plenary powers of Congress. However, Congress seldom dictates activities in Puerto Rico. Thus, the two parents in the family system governing Puerto Rico are separated, where the Puerto Rican government has daily custody over the citizens of the island and the federal government pays a significant portion of the bills generated by both residents and the Puerto Rican government. Federal payments to the government as well as to individuals can be seen as "child support." Such a reading of commonwealth status prompts questions of sustainability. How long should the federal government support Puerto Rico and why should it?

U.S. financial support for Puerto Rico is discussed at length by former Chief Justice of the Puerto Rican Supreme Court José Trías Monge. In his 1997 work, he emphasizes the importance of mutual benefit both in the creation of the Commonwealth Constitution in 1952, and in any other discussion of status with the United States. Trías Monge discusses Puerto Rico's impact on the United States' economy, military, and international standing. For many years U.S. businesses maximized profits in Puerto Rico because they could operate nearly tax-free and pay Puerto Ricans low wages. Likewise,

[36] Alvarez Rivera. interview by author.
[37] *Briefing on Puerto Rico political status by the General Accounting Office (GAO)*… 24.
[38] Trías Monge. 196.

Puerto Rico's strategic importance for the U.S. military was paramount. The island housed Roosevelt Roads, the second largest military installation in the Atlantic, which was often characterized by military officials as crucial for U.S. national security and strategic interests.[39] After the 1952 constitution was enacted, the U.S. touted Puerto Rico as a success story in decolonization and democratization, attempting to improve its world image.

Puerto Rico's ability to increase economic opportunities, advance military security and provide a talking point for U.S. diplomats greatly benefited the United States. The benefits to the island were diluted if not negated by the costs. To offset the imbalance, the United States paid residents and the government of Puerto Rico via federal programs and subsidies; the status as family composition metaphor envisions these payments as child support. The best way to ensure U.S. benefits in Puerto Rico was to promote some semblance of Puerto Rican prosperity. The easiest way for the U.S. to promote prosperity on the island was via direct and indirect handouts to the Puerto Rican government and residents.

However as early as 1997, Trías Monge argued that the configuration of benefits to the United States was vague.[40] Thus, he implied that the support given to Puerto Rico and its residents may have been unwarranted. Federal transfer payments could be seen as punitive if financial support for Puerto Rico does not correlate with benefits received by the U.S.. In essence, the U.S. is retroactively paying for arguably 100 years of colonialism. Such rhetoric in Puerto Rico, although uncommon with respect to the United

[39] McCaffrey, Katherine T. *Military Power and Popular Protest: The U.S. Navy in Vieques, Puerto Rico*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002. 136.
[40] Trías Monge. 181-182.

States, emerges when discussing Spanish colonialism. Senator Báez Galib of the PPD believes he "still has a check to cash from Spain… the balance sheet says, 'you owe me.'"[41] While the treatment of Puerto Rico as a colony under Spain versus the U.S. is drastically different, Trías Monge reflects on colonialism in Puerto Rico generally:

> *Continuation of the present policy of inattention and inaction is the only alternative that should be scratched. Such a do-nothing policy will lead to further exacerbation of the virulent status debate in Puerto Rico, contraction of the center, and possibly polarization and violence. Continuation of the present policy will mean that over five hundred years of subjection and despair are considered not to be enough, that further penance need be done for Puerto Rico to purge whatever sins account for its present wretchedness.*[42]

In this statement, Trías Monge describes the current commonwealth status as undue penance for past wrongs. However, the U.S. pays to perpetuate Puerto Rico's ambiguous status, currently receives few benefits from it, and exercises little control over the island. Its financial support can also be characterized as penance.

The power structures of the current commonwealth status illustrate a strange family portrait via the status as family composition metaphor. The United States becomes a negligent, yet financially supportive parent unwilling to relinquish its authority over Puerto Rico, its child. In a similar fashion, the commonwealth government has coddled this relationship with the U.S., unwilling to allow the residents of Puerto Rico to grow into full sovereignty. PPD Senator Báez Galib invokes this metaphoric interpretation as he sums up his desire for Puerto Rico to "move out" of the current status.[43] Both Trías

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[41] Báez Galib.
[42] Trías Monge. 196.
[43] Báez Galib.

Monge and Senator Báez Galib imply that Puerto Rico has reached the age of majority and can fend for itself, further invoking the nation as family metaphor.

It is within this framework that the 1990s plebiscites were held. Of the eight options presented to the public in the two plebiscites, only one explicitly supported the current configuration of the two parent system, or status quo. The commonwealth option recognized Congressional power over Puerto Rico via the Territorial Clause of the Constitution and received less than 0.1 percent of the vote in 1998.[44]

Every other option, via the status as family composition metaphor, can be interpreted as a petition to drastically change the actions of one or both parents in the status relationship. In 1993 and 1998, statehood and independence were presented to voters. Statehood would force the federal government to incorporate the Puerto Rican government and citizens into a unified federal system. Metaphorically, statehood would pressure the U.S. parent to both give Puerto Ricans a vote in the federal government and to further include Puerto Ricans in the U.S. national family, while Puerto Ricans would agree to live within such a family structure. Conversely, independence would specifically pressure the Puerto Rican parent to support itself and its citizens, inferring that residents need only live within the Puerto Rican national family. The two plebiscites offered different versions of enhanced commonwealth which can be seen as a marriage of the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments. Still, both versions specifically pressured the Puerto Rican parent to take action. In 1993, the description of commonwealth recognized the current status as an unequal relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico and identified

[44] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico*. The first option of the 1998 plebiscite received 993 of 1,566,270 votes cast.

four points of contestation that a new commonwealth government would need to rectify with the United States. Commonwealth in 1993 represented a new marriage proposal between the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments that would closely resemble the Commonwealth Constitution of 1952. The proposal to enhance commonwealth in the 1998 plebiscite drastically changed the terms of union between the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The second column of the 1998 plebiscite envisioned Puerto Rico as a sovereign state that would immediately sign a compact of permanent union with the United States, creating a free association between Puerto Rico and the U.S. The enhancement of commonwealth envisions two equal governments in permanent union.

The status as family composition metaphor simplifies the plebiscitary options. The metaphor depicts the current commonwealth status as a failed marriage, which necessitates revision of the union, if not nullification. Both statehood and independence would nullify the commonwealth marriage and unite the Puerto Rican national family under one parent, the U.S. Federal government or a Puerto Rican government, respectively. New versions of commonwealth or free association were also offered in the plebiscites. Both of which offered new ideas to strengthen the bonds between the two parent governments, though both options included significant pre-nuptial agreements that would ensure a clear distinction between the U.S. and Puerto Rican national families. In 1993, the commonwealth option did not recognize the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments as equal. The 1998 option of free association attempted to rectify this

problem at the expense of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Rican residents.[45] However, none of these new arrangements of the national family received a majority vote in either plebiscite.

Interpreted with the status as family composition metaphor, "None of the above" is a rational answer to a plebiscite which asks citizens to choose the parent with which they wish to live. By choosing "None of the above" in lieu of commonwealth, Puerto Ricans at once recognized the failure of the 1952 constitution to unify the Puerto Rican and U.S. nations into one great national family, while celebrating their connections with both narrow national families. Likewise, a majority of voters rejected the domination of one side of their family over the other when they rejected independence and statehood, however narrowly. Voters soundly renounced the only new, two parent option of free association, as it also emphasized one national family over the other by creating a Puerto Rican citizenship to replace U.S. citizenship. "None of the above" emphasized the importance of both national families and identified the lack of an officially sanctioned formulation of family that would give equal weight to both national families. This idealistic vision to connect the U.S. and Puerto Rican national families in an equal and mutually beneficial relationship was the only option in either plebiscite to receive a majority of votes cast.

Some may argue that Puerto Ricans are not interested in an equal relationship between their U.S. and Puerto Rican identities. Countless polls have shown that Puerto Ricans identify as "Puerto Rican" over "American" by at least 2 to 1, if not by a greater

[45] Enhanced Commonwealth in 1998 would have created Puerto Rican citizenship for people born on the island. See Column 2 of Appendix 1.2

margin.[46] However, the question of "what is Puerto Rican?" is extremely important when analyzing an equal relationship between national families. To be "Puerto Rican" is to be a pure hybrid, to straddle the line between Latin and North Americas. The Puerto Rican national family at once glorifies the poor *jíbaro* subsistence farmer who eats rice and beans, as well as the United States citizenship that allows nearly half of the Puerto Rican population to live in the fifty United States. The U.S. is no longer thought of as a melting pot but as a salad bowl, in which individual identities remain intact and compliment other identities to create a national family; Puerto Rico blends aspects of Latin American and North American identities into a distinctly Puerto Rican identity. Still, the Puerto Rican national identity is flexibly ambiguous. The color of the national flag was highly contested when statehood, commonwealth, and independence advocates used different shades of blue to emphasize their preferred status option. The Puerto Rican compromise did not mix all of these colors into one acceptable shade of blue. Instead, Puerto Ricans officially recognized each shade of blue as an equal representation of the national family. Individuals need not pass a Litmus Test before joining others on the street to proudly proclaim their Puerto Rican identity. Thus, Puerto Ricans self-identify as Puerto Ricans because to be Puerto Rican is to be connected with the U.S. national family.

In light of the morality of status and the status as family composition metaphor, "None of the above" logically and rationally expresses the conundrum of the Puerto Rican dilemma. From strictly economic and nationalistic frameworks, "None of the above" may seem illogical and imply that Puerto Ricans cannot rationally choose a

[46] Trías Monge. 185

mutually beneficial status. However, an extrapolation of George Lakoff's *Moral Politics* illuminates the complexity of the Puerto Rican situation. Economics and nationalism, separate or combined, cannot account for the hybrid nature of Puerto Rican-ness. Only by recognizing the importance of morality in the Puerto Rican status debate can the gravity of the question be fully understood.

The morality of status offers a reasonable account of why a majority of voters chose "None of the above" as their preferred option in 1998. Furthermore, moral politics along with the status as family composition metaphor surpasses other lenses of analysis by properly framing the status debate. A strictly rational cost-benefit analysis of status discounts the importance of nationalism, while a nationalist interpretation of the Puerto Rican question does not account for the hybrid status of Puerto Rican-ness. By recognizing the importance of morality in political status and framing status as a question of family composition, economic and ideological factors can be included, just as the very personal and passionate nature of the debate can be understood and celebrated as a recognition of the complexity of the situation. Emphasizing the morality of status discredits the notion that Puerto Ricans are incapable of making up their minds and instead illuminates the nuance of the Puerto Rican question and places that question within a moral framework of politics popular in the United States and throughout the world.

A Conclusion

The debate over Puerto Rican political status has endured over five centuries, survived two military takeovers, two different colonial powers, and most recently, the ambiguity of commonwealth status. This ambiguity is both a product of and symbolized by Puerto Rico's geographic location nearly one thousand miles from the continental United States. The island occupies a space between the United States and Latin America, between colonialism and sovereignty. Current commonwealth status is unacceptable to Puerto Ricans. Puerto Rico's non-voting member of congress recently stated,

> *We have an overall consensus in Puerto Rico that our current relation with the U.S. is territorial in nature, not fully democratic, not fully self-governing, not based on equal rights and duties of citizenship, and does not fully implement the principle of government by consent of the governed. We have an overall consensus that our current political relationship with the United States no longer serves either Puerto Rico or the U.S. well.*[1]

[1] Fortuño, Luis. "Opening Remarks." Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives. 3-22-2007. http://www.house.gov/fortuno/pdf/Legislation/OpeningRmks-03-22-07.html

Residents demonstrate their desire for resolution with every vote cast for a local representative, senator or governor from one of the three major political parties. In the 1990s, the Puerto Rican government instituted two plebiscites on status with hopes of reaching a consensus. The only majority-gaining option was "None of the above." In 1998, a majority of voters rejected statehood, independence, status-quo commonwealth, and an enhanced version of commonwealth. Instead, Puerto Ricans chose "None of the above," which offered no definition of status.

The Puerto Rican question has often been characterized as an aberration, a circumstance "without parallel" in U.S history. Indeed, Puerto Rico's status is unique. However, Puerto Rico is not the only existing U.S. colony. Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and other territories occupy a political position similar to Puerto Rico. Still, Puerto Rico's population dwarfs that of the other territories[2] and further sets the island apart when discussing the implications of different status options.

In a global context, Puerto Rico is not a lonely outlier. Comparisons can be made between Puerto Rico and other semi-autonomous regions, most notably Hong Kong, Tibet, and Taiwan's relationships with China. When discussing the prospects of statehood for Puerto Rico, many opponents have cited secession movements in Quebec, the French speaking province of Canada, as well as turmoil in the Basque region of Spain. Further comparisons could be extrapolated between Puerto Ricans and the plight of ethnic Kurds to create a new nation-state in the Middle East: Kurdistan. Though Puerto

[2] Puerto Rico's population reported in Census 2000 was 3,808,610. Guam's population in 2000 was 154,805. The drastic difference in population would greatly affect each territories' representation in federal government if they were to become states.

Rico may stand alone in the United States context, the island's peculiar status and the problems associated with the Puerto Rican question could cast light upon various semi-autonomous and sovereignty seeking populations throughout the world. The morality of Puerto Rican political status provides a first step toward the study of morality with respect to other similar situations around the globe.

In this thesis, I reorient the status debate from the two dominant paradigms used by scholars and politicos to describe Puerto Rican political status. In place of a strictly economic or nationalist lens, I contextualize the status debate within a framework of morality based on George Lakoff's *Moral Politics*. This systematic approach to morality emphasizes the metaphor of status as family composition to define the Puerto Rican question. The morality of status reframes the debate to account for traditionally rational arguments based on economics and ideological nationalisms, as well as the emotive aspects of status.

In order to recognize Puerto Rican political status as a "moral issue," I have drawn from various bodies of literature. In Chapter 2, I recount the economic lens, through which many people (including the U.S. Congress) have viewed the status debate. In this chapter, I reflect upon the tenuous conclusion reached by two somewhat opposing parties: the pro-statehood PNP and the U.S. Congress. Both groups agree that statehood would bring more funds to Puerto Rico. With this common understanding of Puerto Rican statehood, the groups diverge in action. As the PNP advocated for statehood in the 1990s, Congress opposed it and began to view the PPD and commonwealth as the "lesser

of evils."[3] Still, no one in Puerto Rico campaigns for less federal funding for the island. The three political parties, and their respective answers to the status question, all advocate for a prosperous Puerto Rican economy closely connected to the U.S. economy. The similar economic plank from all three parties and the diverging interpretations of what might happen if Puerto Rico's status were to change, do not support an economic interpretation of the debate. Rather the economic framework succumbs to individual interpretations that depend upon which politician is believed. Likewise, the status option most often promoted by the economic framework, statehood, has been rejected twice by a majority of Puerto Rican voters. Furthermore, the interpretation of status as a purely economic debate rings hollow to Puerto Ricans who deeply believe in the existence of a distinct Puerto Rican culture.

In Chapters 3 and 4, reflect and expand upon two different theoretical bodies of literature to investigate the status debate. Chapter 3 investigates the importance of ideological nationalisms in Puerto Rican culture and politics. The chapter recognizes how many texts about Puerto Rican nationalisms, including those from James Blaut, Rubén Berríos, Edwin Meléndez, Edgardo Meléndez, and others, promote the PIP and other independence movements as the only true expressions of Puerto Rican nationalism. These scholars stress the importance of absolute sovereignty when applying various theories of nationalism to Puerto Rican status. Chapter 3 discredits this acute interpretation as the only proper incantation of nationalism. As independence has been soundly rejected in both plebiscites on status and in general elections, I examine nationalist expressions from

[3] Colón Morera. *Economic Constraints and Political Choices*… 438.

the PNP and PPD in their respective campaigns for statehood and commonwealth. I argue that Puerto Ricans believe in a unique Puerto Rican national identity regardless of political persuasion. The PPD and PNP promote a unique Puerto Rican identity within the status debate. This is evident after careful analysis of the 1993 plebiscitary campaigns as well as in everyday interactions with Puerto Ricans. The importance of nationalist sentiment in the statehood and commonwealth campaigns demonstrates one of the shortcomings of the traditional nationalist interpretation of the status debate. By emphasizing absolute sovereignty as a requirement of nationalist expressions, the traditional nationalist interpretation presented by Paul Brass and James Blaut does not represent the realities of the Puerto Rican status debate.

Likewise, the nationalist framework heavily relies upon individual interpretations of nationalism. Thus, the power of nationalism (allowing individuals to form their own understanding of nationality by employing universal symbols like a flag) also presents one of the drawbacks of nationalism as a theoretical framework. The different versions of Puerto Rican nationalism promoted by the PIP, PNP, and PPD overly complicate the nationalist framework. Thus, no single nationalist analysis can represent the spectrum of Puerto Rican sentiment. Similarly, the nationalist framework offers little insight into the majority gaining status option in 1998. “None of the above” offered no explicit interpretation of nationalism. Ultimately, the nationalist framework fails to adequately address the nuances of the two plebiscites within a larger context of the debate.

To unify individual interpretations of the economic and nationalist lenses, I turn to a framework of morality. Chapter 4 utilizes George Lakoff’s *Moral Politics* as a

foundation for the status as family composition metaphor. I translate to Puerto Rican politics, Lakoff's foundational metaphor of the nation as family, where the government is parent and citizens are children. However, the nation as family metaphor does not function equally in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Lakoff describes the U.S. national family as having one parent, that is to say one government. I emphasize the implicit assumption that government is a singular entity to demonstrate the ambiguity of Puerto Rico's political status. Under the current commonwealth status, the Puerto Rican national family lives with two parents who do not communicate, two governments that do not cooperate to create a prosperous Puerto Rico. This metaphor frames the plebiscites on status and Puerto Rican politics generally, to ask Puerto Ricans to decide with which parent they wish to live.

Characterizing the Puerto Rican status debate as a moral issue is not merely an intellectual endeavor. Lakoff states, "The point is not just to categorize. Classification in itself is relatively boring."[4] Properly situating the academic study of the Puerto Rican status debate in moral terms is important because Puerto Ricans view status as a moral issue. The status as family composition metaphor offers an alternative vision of the debate and more adequately accommodates economic, nationalist, and emotive aspects of the Puerto Rican question.

In 1998, voters chose "None of the above" to express their dissatisfaction with the status quo and the lack of an acceptable union between the parents of the U.S. and Puerto Rican national families, the governments of Puerto Rico and the United States. "None of

[4] Lakoff. 17.

the above" demonstrates current Puerto Rican status to be unacceptable, even though it is not an answer to the Puerto Rican question. "None of the above" does not offer a solution to the status debate, but it is not an illogical or irrational conclusion to the 1998 plebiscite. It embodies the desire of most Puerto Ricans to balance in some form of union, the Puerto Rican and U.S. governments.

Many things have changed since December 13th, 1998. The following year saw the largest mobilizations ever witnessed on the island. Puerto Ricans protested U.S. military practices in Vieques, Puerto Rico. The massive social mobilizations of hundreds of thousands of people in Vieques, Puerto Rico and the U.S. led to the closing of the Roosevelt Roads Naval Base in 2003. When announcing the decision to stop military practices in Vieques in 2001, President Bush referred to Puerto Ricans. He said, "These are our friends and neighbors and they don't want us there."[5] PPD Senator Báez Galib reflected on President Bush's word choice:

> *President Bush did not refer to the Vieques issue as "domestic" or "internal to the U.S." He didn't refer to "our American citizens in Puerto Rico" or our "American friends," or "our citizens in Puerto Rico," he deliberately chose "friends and neighbors."*[6]

An emphasis on word choice is indicative of the morality of status and status as family composition after the 1998 plebiscite. Senator Báez Galib dwelled on the language, because language defines the debate. By characterizing Puerto Ricans as "friends and neighbors," President Bush metaphorically reinforced Senator Báez Galib's

[5] Snow, Kate and Kelly Wallace. "Bush says Navy will quit bombing Vieques" *CNN.com.* 14 June 2001. http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/06/14/vieques.halt.04/index.html
[6] Báez Galib.

characterization of Puerto Rico "moving out."[7] The status as family composition metaphor illuminates these two phrases as expressions of the national family. Senator Báez Galib unites the U.S. and Puerto Rican national families with words like "domestic" and "internal," and an emphasis on shared citizenship, even if the two families should not live under the same roof. President Bush, however, rejects the connection between the two national families by characterizing the relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. as that between friends and neighbors.

Benedict Anderson's oft cited work *Imagined Communities* instructed individuals to view nations as socially constructed groups of people united in a common language, history, and future. Imagining the Puerto Rican community as one family offers a rich illustrative framework to better understand Puerto Rican politics of status. By examining Puerto Rican political status through a lens of morality and the metaphor of family composition, the debate moves beyond simple cost-benefit analyses and ideological struggles to define the nation. The economic cost-benefit analysis and ideological nationalisms used to frame the status debate have failed to account for the voracity and longevity of the debate on the island, and ultimately have failed to offer an acceptable solution to the 109 year old question of political status.

The morality of status, and status as family composition models do not, by themselves, answer the Puerto Rican question. However, the model offers a fresh vision of the century-old debate with the U.S., and may bring new light and new possibilities to the table of options spread before Puerto Rico and the United States. There is no doubt

[7] Ibid.

that after five centuries of colonial rule by two different powers, Puerto Rico has come of age and must be allowed to fully self-govern. The morality of status proffers that the solution to the status question can not be found in choosing one parent over another. Rather, Puerto Ricans occupy the unfortunate position of mediator between the conflicting U.S. and Puerto Rican parents. While this undertaking gives agency to those who pursue it, Puerto Ricans must manage the undesirable task of defining the boundaries of the Puerto Rican national family with respect to, and perhaps in spite of the island's historical, economic, nationalist, and moral position with the United States. The definition of the Puerto Rican national family poses a great challenge that may take another century to overcome. The Puerto Rican status question is but one legacy of the families hastily created by 19th and 20th century colonialism, a legacy that continues to burden the shared U.S. American and Puerto Rican national family.

1993 Plebiscite Options[1]

DEFINICIÓN DE ESTADIDAD

- **Un voto por la Estadidad es un mandato para reclamar el ingreso de Puerto Rico como Estado de la Unión.**

La Estadidad:

- Es un status no colonial de plena dignidad política.
- Nos permitirá tener los mismos derechos, beneficios y responsabilidades de los cincuenta estados.
- Es la unión permanente garantizada y la oportunidad de progreso económico y político.
- Es la garantía permanente de todos los derechos que da la Constitución de los Estados Unidos de America - incluyendo la preservación de nuestra cultura.

DEFINICIÓN DE ESTADO LIBRE ASOCIADO

Un voto por el Estado Libre Asociado es un mandato a favor de:

- Garantizar el progreso y la seguridad nuestra y de nuestros hijos dentro de status de plena dignidad política, basado en la unión permanente entre Puerto Rico y los Estados Unidos, consagrada en un pacto bilateral que no podrá ser alterado sino por mutuo consentimiento.

El Estado Libre Asociado garantiza:

- Ciudadanía americana irrevocable;
- Mercado común, moneda común y defensa común con los Estados Unidos;
- Autonomía fiscal para Puerto

DEFINICIÓN DE INDEPENDENCIA

La independencia es el derecho de nuestro pueblo a mandarse en su propia tierra; es el disfrute de todos los poderes y atributos de la soberanía.

En el ejercicio de ese derecho inalienable e irrenunciable, Puerto Rico se regirá por una constitución que establezca un gobierno democrático, proteja los derechos humanos y afirme nuestra nacionalidad e idioma.

La independencia dará a Puerto Rico los poderes que son necesarios para lograr mayor desarrollo y prosperidad, incluyendo los poderes para proteger y estimular nuestra industria, agricultura y comercio, controlar la inmigración y negociar acuerdos internacionales que amplíen mercados y promuevan

[1] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico.*

- Es la garantía permanente de ciudadanía americana, nuestros dos idiomas, himnos y banderas.
- Es la participación completa en todos los programas federales.
- Es el derecho de votar por el Presidente de los Estados Unidos y elegir no menos de seis representantes y dos senadores puertorriqueños al Congreso.

- En el ejercicio de nuestros derechos como ciudadanos americanos, negociaremos los términos de dicha admisión, los cuales se someterán al Pueblo de Puerto Rico para su ratificación.

Rico;
- Comité Olímpico puertorriqueño y representación deportiva internacional propia.
- Pleno desarrollo de nuestra identidad cultural: con el ELA somos puertorriqueños primero.

Desarrollaremos el Estado Libre Asociado mediante planteamientos específicos al Congreso. De inmediato propondremos:

- Reformular la sección 936, asegurando la creación de más y mejores empleos;
- Extender el Seguro Social Complementario (SSI) a Puerto Rico;
- Obtener asignaciones del PAN iguales a las de los estados;
- Proteger otros productos de nuestra agricultura, además del café.

Todo cambio adicional se someterá previamente a la aprobación del pueblo de Puerto Rico.

inversiones de otros países.

Un Tratado de Amistad y Cooperación con Estados Unidos y un proceso de transición a la independencia acordes con la legislación ya aprobada por la Cámara y los comités competentes del Senado federal dispondrán para: la continuación de beneficios adquiridos de Seguro Social, veteranos y otros; la ciudadanía puertorriqueña y la de Estados Unidos para quienes deseen conservarla; el derecho a usar moneda propia o el dólar; acceso libre al mercado de Estados Unidos; incentivos contributivos para la inversión norteamericana; aportaciones federales por igual cantidad que al presente durante al menos una década; y la eventual desmilitarización del país.

1998 Plebiscite Options[1]

PETICION AL GOBIERNO DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS

Nosotros, el Pueblo, por la presente y en el ejercicio de nuestro derecho al amparo de la primera enmienda a la Constitución de los Estados Unidos, firmemente solicitamos al Congreso de los Estados Unidos, que con toda rapidez deliberada y tras cien años de subordinación política, se defina de manera concluyente la condición política del Pueblo de Puerto Rico y el alcance de la soberanía de los Estados Unidos de América, a los fines de resolver el actual problema territorial de la isla bajo la siguiente opción:

1	2	3	4	NINGUNA DE LAS ANTERIORES
"La aplicación sobre Puerto Rico de la soberanía del Congreso, que por virtud de la Ley Federal 600 de 3 de julio de 1950, delega a la Isla la conducción de un gobierno limitado a asuntos de estricto orden local bajo una Constitución propia. Dicho gobierno local estará sujeto a la autoridad del Congreso, la Constitución, las leyes y tratados de los Estados Unidos. Por virtud del Tratado de París y la Cláusula territorial de la Constitución federal, el Congreso puede tratar a Puerto Rico en forma distinta a los estados, mientras haya una base racional. La ciudadanía	"Un Tratado que reconozca la soberanía plena de Puerto Rico para desarrollar su relación con los Estados Unidos en asociación no colonial, no territorial. Estados Unidos renunciará a todos sus poderes sobre Puerto Rico, entrando al Tratado en el mismo acto. Puerto Rico retendrá todos los poderes que no se deleguen expresamente a los Estados Unidos. Puerto Rico dispondrá sobre la ciudadanía puertoriqueña. Los ciudadanos actuales de los Estados Unidos en Puerto Rico retendrán la ciudadanía americana, si así lo desean, y podrán trasmitirla a sus descendientes, sujeto a lo	"El ingreso de Puerto Rico a la Unión de los Estados Unidos de América como un estado soberano, en completa igualdad de derechos, responsabilidades y beneficios con los demás estados. Reteniendo, además, la soberanía de Puerto Rico en aquellos asuntos no delegados por la Constitución de los Estados Unidos al Gobierno Federal. El derecho al voto presidencial y la representación igual en el Senado y proporcional en la Camara de Representantes, sin menoscabo de la representación de los demás estados. Manteniendo también la presente Constitución de Puerto Rico y las mismas leyes estatales; y con ciudadanía americana	"El reconocimiento de que Puerto Rico es una república soberana con autoridad plena sobre su territorio y en sus relaciones internacionales con una Constitución que será la Ley Suprema que provea para un sistema de gobierno republicano y la protección de los derechos humanos. Los residentes de Puerto Rico deberán lealtad a, y tendrán la ciudadanía y nacionalidad de la república de Puerto Rico. El haber nacido en Puerto Rico o tener parientes con la ciudadanía americana estatutaria por nacimiento en el anterior territorio, dejarán de ser fundamento para la ciudadanía	

[1] Alvarez Rivera. *Elecciones en Puerto Rico.*

americana de los puertorriqueños será estatutaria. El inglés continuará siendo el idioma oficial de las agencias y tribunales del Gobierno Federal que operen en Puerto Rico."	que dispongan las leyes de los Estados Unidos o el Tratado. Debe entenderse que, a partir de la vigencia del Tratado, el solo hecho de nacer en Puerto Rico no concederá derecho a ser ciudadano americano. El Tratado a negociarse dispondrá sobre asuntos de mercado, defensa, el uso del dólar, asistencia económica y la protección de derechos personales adquiridos. El Tratado tambien reconocerá la capacidad soberana de Puerto Rico para concertar convenios y otros tratados internacionales."	permanente garantizada por la Constitución de los Estados Unidos de América. Las disposiciones de la ley federal sobre el uso del idioma inglés en las agencias y tribunales del gobierno federal en los cincuenta estados de la Unión aplicarán igualmente en el Estado de Puerto Rico, como ocurre en la actualidad."	americana; excepto que las personas que tenían la ciudadanía americana tendrán el derecho estatuario de mantener esa ciudadanía de por vida, por derecho o decisión, según provisto por las leyes del Congreso federal. Los beneficios de los individuos en Puerto Rico, adquiridos por servicios o por contribuciones hechas a los Estados Unidos, serán honrados por los Estados Unidos. Puerto Rico y los Estados Unidos desarrollarán tratados de cooperación, incluyendo asistencia económica y programatica por un período razonable, libre comercio y tránsito y el status de las fuerzas militares."	

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