



# Ethnopolitics

Formerly Global Review of Ethnopolitics

ISSN: 1744-9057 (Print) 1744-9065 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/reno20>

## Unpacking Political Identity: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in a Federal Political System

Jaime Gerardo Luch

To cite this article: Jaime Gerardo Luch (2018): Unpacking Political Identity: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in a Federal Political System, Ethnopolitics, DOI: [10.1080/17449057.2018.1526461](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2018.1526461)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2018.1526461>



Published online: 05 Oct 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# Unpacking Political Identity: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in a Federal Political System

JAIME GERARDO LLUCH

Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Political Science, Universidad de Puerto Rico, USA

**ABSTRACT** What distinguishes race, ethnicity, and nationhood as categories of political identity? How can we explore the commonalities and dissimilarities between these three categories of political identity? Most of the existing scholarship has looked at one or another of these forms of identity in isolation. I compare these three forms of identity by examining one case of peoplehood within the federal political system that we call the United States. Puerto Ricans are an ideal case study because they are a group that can exhibit racial, ethnic, or national political identities, depending on where they find themselves in the United States. Puerto Ricans on the island have a primary political identity that reflects their sense of nationhood. This is characteristic of sub-state national societies in multinational democracies. Puerto Ricans in the continental United States are racialized and ethnicized by the mainstream, majority culture. Their primary political identities become racial or ethnic, although this takes place through a process of contestation, negotiation, and relativization.

Complex multiethnic and multinational federal systems such as Canada, Spain, and the USA have populations in which immigrant minorities (both historical and recent), sub-state national societies, native peoples, and majority groups coexist. In general, ‘sub-state national societies’ are historically settled, territorially concentrated, and previously self-governing societies with distinctive socio-linguistic traits whose territory has become incorporated into a larger state. The incorporation of such societies has in some cases been through imperial domination and colonization, military conquest, or the cession of the territory by an imperial metropolis, but in some cases reflect a voluntary pact of association. These are also known as ‘stateless nations,’ etc. Such groups include the Quebecois and Puerto Ricans in the Americas, and the Flemish, Catalans, Scots, South Tyroleans, Valle d’Aostans, Corsicans, Welsh, and Basques in Europe (Kymlicka, 1997, pp. 19–20). Such stateless nations are to be contrasted with immigrant minorities, which are also often ethnic and racial minorities. For the latter, ‘the principle of equal respect requires that we treat people in a difference-blind fashion’ (Kymlicka, 1997, p. 43). while stateless

---

*Correspondence Address:* Jaime Gerardo Lluch, Political Science, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, USA. Email: [jaime.lluch@gmail.com](mailto:jaime.lluch@gmail.com)

nations usually stress the unique identity and distinctiveness of their group, usually seeking political recognition of the special status of their territory.

Although the difference between these two types of minority groups (stateless nations and racial/ethnic minorities) has been often mentioned in the literature, very few scholars have ventured to investigate empirically how political identities are expressed in these two very different types of minority groups.

Most scholars have looked at one or another of these forms of identity in isolation. This article seeks to contribute to social scientific work on identity because it is one of the few attempts to investigate empirically the panoply of political identities in a minority group that is both a stateless nation, and an ethnic, racial minority. With such an empirical referent, I will be able to examine the categories of race, ethnicity, and nationhood, exploring the commonalities and dissimilarities that exist between these categories.

I will compare these three forms of identity by examining one case of ‘peoplehood’ within the United States. I will use the terms ‘peoplehood,’ ‘people,’ or ‘political people’ to refer to groups such as Puerto Ricans in the United States (Smith, 2003, p. 20). ‘Political peoples’ are forms of ‘imagined community’ because they are communities ‘imagined’ by their members (and by the larger society of which these communities are a part) as a social unit, and generally recognized by political actors as such. Puerto Ricans are an ideal case study because they are a political people that can exhibit racial, ethnic, or national political identities, depending on where they find themselves within the United States. Puerto Ricans on their island of origin have a primary political identity that reflects their sense of nationhood in view of their political status. Puerto Ricans in the continental United States are racialized and ethnicized by the mainstream/majority culture, the federal and state governments, and the commercial establishment. Their principal political identities vis-à-vis mainstream USA society then become racial and ethnic. I think we can profit from applying my analytic framework on identities to this case study of one ‘political people’ within the United States. By examining one case of ‘peoplehood,’ and the diverse ways in which race, ethnicity, and nationhood are experienced by them, we can explore the commonalities and dissimilarities between these three fundamental forms of group identity.

My data for this paper comes from 272 answered questionnaires from the militants of the three political parties in Puerto Rico (‘PR’) on their sense of nationhood, and interviews with top-level political leaders. For my subjects’ identities as a race or an ethnicity in the continental USA, I depend on empirical studies performed by other scholars, on the literature produced by the U. S. Census Bureau, and on secondary sources.

### **An ‘Unincorporated Territory’ within the U.S. Federal Political System**

Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the U.S. (Rivera Ramos, 2001) and it is subject to the plenary powers of the U.S. Congress under the Territory Clause of the U.S. Constitution (Aleinikoff, 2002, p. 76). Article IV, Section 3 of the latter gives Congress the ‘Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.’ It gives Congress ‘general and plenary’ power with respect to federal territory (Lawson & Sloane, 2009), which relates specifically to ‘full and complete legislative authority over the people of the Territories and all the departments of the territorial governments.’<sup>1</sup> ‘Case law from more than a century ago gives Congress freedom to legislate for at least some territories in a fashion that would violate the Constitution in other contexts’ (Lawson & Sloane, 2009, p. 1146). A series of decisions

by the Supreme Court, dating from the period 1901–1922 and known as the *Insular Cases*, created the category of ‘unincorporated territories’ and it held that the inhabitants of these areas only enjoyed the protection of those provisions of the Constitution deemed as ‘fundamental’ by the Court, in the absence of congressional action making other provisions applicable.<sup>2</sup> The *Insular Cases* are still good law, although no contemporary scholar, of any methodological or political inclination, defends them (Lawson & Sloane, 2009, p. 1146).<sup>3</sup>

The political status quo in Puerto Rico is known as the *Estado Libre Asociado* (ELA) (literally, ‘free associated state’), which came into effect on July 25, 1952. (Ramírez Lavandero, 1988)

Watts’ typology of federal systems is highly regarded (Watts, 2008, p. 8). ‘Federal political systems’ is a broad genus encompassing a whole spectrum of specific non-unitary forms, i.e. species ranging from ‘quasi-federations,’ ‘federations,’ and ‘confederations,’ and beyond. Following Watts, if we see the United States as a federal political system composed of 50 constituent units of the core federation, one federal district, two federacies, three associated states, three unincorporated territories, Native American domestic dependent nations, etc. (Watts, 2008, p. 12), then it is clear that Puerto Rico is part of this broad federal political system that we call the United States, although it is not a constitutive unit of the federation, nor is it seen by Congress as part of the majority ‘nation.’

Two recent developments must be mentioned in relation to the ELA. First, Puerto Rico’s current economic and fiscal crisis has deep historical-structural causes. The federal government has responded with a statute known as P.R.O.M.E.S.A.—after its acronym, the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability—which became law on June 30, 2016,<sup>4</sup> establishing a Fiscal Control Board. The Board’s seven members have been designated (none of which represent the interests of the Puerto Rican people nor were elected by them), and the Board has been fully operational since early 2017. The residents of Puerto Rico are no longer in charge of their own affairs through their institutions of government. Instead, the major decisions affecting the people’s welfare in the next few years will be taken by an unelected and unaccountable Fiscal Control Board.

Second, the most devastating hurricane in 90 years hit the island on September 20, 2017. Category 4 winds battered the island for many hours, as the eye of Hurricane María crossed the island diagonally. The hurricane has been a huge economic blow to the island, caused physical devastation, killed over 3,000 people, destroyed livelihoods, forced many to abandon the island permanently, and further set back the island’s possibilities for economic recovery.

I do not think these two ongoing calamities will have any effect on the political identities of Puerto Ricans discussed in this article, but they can certainly affect the future political orientations of Puerto Ricans as they seek to resolve their constitutional status.

### **Peoplehood and Political Identities**

Interest in political and social identities has grown in the social sciences, in part responding to the continued vitality of identities and allegiances in the world at large. A number of scholars have underscored the importance of identities in the study of politics (Laitin, 1998; Smith, 2004), and defined with greater analytical ambition the meaning of identity as an explanatory variable in the social sciences (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, & McDermott, 2006).

Scholars have observed how accounts of political identity formation have failed to develop a unified field theory of political identities, because it is generally taken to be impossible. Any account presenting an all-encompassing theory of such diverse phenomena as the formation of political identities and allegiances based on national, religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic, gender, sexual orientation, regional, or cultural characteristics is likely to be overextended and thin (Smith, 2003, p. 14). A better strategy for now is to set our sights on types of identities that have specific linkages and affinities, and to focus on these in order to develop meso-level theories about the origins and implications of such political identities. An enormous range of phenomena are subsumed under the broad rubrics of race, ethnicity, and nationalism (Brubaker, 2009, p. 25). It is generally agreed that race, ethnicity, and nationhood are the kinds of political identities that have obvious linkages and affinities, while also exhibiting dissimilarities (Brubaker, 2009). After all, different political identities are undoubtedly crafted through divergent processes and may be differentiated, but there may also be some illuminating commonalities (Smith, 2004, p. 304). For example, ‘race is said to be involuntary, ethnicity voluntary; race to be a matter of external categorization, ethnicity of internal self-identification ... race to be rigid, ethnicity flexible ...’ (Brubaker, 2009, p. 25). But the distinctions, if any, do not always map out along clear, sharp lines. Thus, sometimes racial categories may be flexible, and ethnic categories sometimes rigid. Racial differences can in some cases be based on ancestry, way of life, and phenotypical differences implicated in ethnic categorization (Brubaker, 2009, p. 26).

### **Political Identities: Meaning and Content**

Political identity may be conceptualized as the set of characteristics by which persons are recognized by political actors (both state and non-state) as members of a political group (Smith, 2004, p. 302). They are ‘political’ because both the bearers of the identity and exogenous state and non-state political actors interpret the identity in question as having political repercussions. Political elites who control the mechanisms of governmental power tend to see all such holders of a defined political identity as one group for purposes of deciding who gets what, when, and how. There are many forms of political identity, such as party affiliation, economic status, regionalism, language, gender; and race, ethnicity, and nationhood. I argue that the latter three types of identity are among the most politically relevant, because they are among those identities that ‘define a person’s trumping allegiances in cases where the demands of some memberships conflict with those of others’ (Smith, 2004, p. 304). Whenever the members of a political people believe they owe primary loyalty to some political memberships,<sup>5</sup> combined with others’ conviction that they are likely to hold such beliefs, these identities are bound to ‘have major consequences for how people understand their political interests, how they act, and how others act toward them on a range of politically significant matters’ (304). In the case of such politically meaningful identities as race, ethnicity, and nationhood, we should be investigating not only the political origins of identity formation, and how and when they become politically salient, but also the commonalities and dissimilarities between them.

I am especially interested in the linkages and affinities with respect to the content and meaning of racial, ethnic, and national identities. There may also be within a political people disagreement about the content of an identity, and this needs to be understood as well. In order to explore different kinds of identities, I use an analytic framework proposed

by Abdelal et al. (2006, p. 696). The content of a political identity may take the form of four non-mutually-exclusive elements, as follows.

### *Constitutive Norms*

The normative content of a political identity determines its constitutive rules, which are the practices that define that identity and lead other persons to recognize it. These norms—which may be unwritten or codified, conscious or taken for granted—appear to define meanings and set collective expectations for the holders of the identity in question. The practices that determine group membership help to generate in-group recognition and are therefore in many cases understood as obligations, and may be seen as having an ethical content. Constitutive norms are the very actions that lead others to recognize an actor as having a particular identity (Abdelal et al., 2006, p. 697). These constitutive norms are akin to what Barth observed in relation to ethnic categories: there is no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and divergences. ‘The features that are taken into account are not the sum of ‘objectivé differences, but only those which the actors themselves regard as significant; ... some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others are ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied’ (Barth, 1994, p. 14). The process of internalizing constitutive norms is akin to socialization; it is the process through which the collective expectations of the members of an identity group come to feel taken for granted by new members.

It is interesting to note that other attempts to map out the significant commonalities/dissimilarities between political identities exhibit some agreement with the framework proposed by Abdelal et al. For example, Rogers Brubaker echoes this first element in the Abdelal, et al. framework when he sets up a framework for analyzing race, ethnicity, and nationhood and lays out as the first element ‘categorization and membership,’ which includes criteria and indicia of membership, external categorization versus internal self-identification, identifiability, hierarchy, markedness, stigmatization, and transmission and socialization, etc. (Brubaker, 2009, p. 26).

### *Social and Political Purposes*

A political identity may be imbued with a social or political purpose. The purposive content of an identity helps to define group interests, goals, or preferences. Clearly, what groups want is intimately related to their self-understanding. The social and political purposes of an identity create obligations to engage in practices that make the group’s achievement of a set of goals more likely. The literature on nationalist movements and national identities, for example, has identified a number of political goals and orientations that are embraced as part of the programmatic agenda connected with such identities (Abdelal et al., 2006, p. 698).

Brubaker echoes this second element when in his framework for analyzing race, ethnicity, he includes ‘politics,’ referring to identification and loyalty, social closure, organization and mobilization, etc. (Brubaker, 2009, p. 27).

### *Relational Comparisons*

The content of a political identity is also relational to the extent that it is composed of comparisons and references to other political identities from which it is distinguished. An

identity is often defined by what it is not, i.e. by distinguishing it from other types of identities. Group identities are fundamentally defined by an actor's intersubjective interaction with others. The holders of an identity are often strongly inclined to consider their identity as exclusive, or may be very attentive to the relative value of their identity compared to others, or may be responsive to the degree of accommodation offered by the holders of other identities (Abdelal et al., 2006, p. 698). Again, this is akin to what Barth observed in relation to 'ethnic boundaries.' The identity boundary shapes the contours of social life. 'The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgement. It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally "playing the same game ..."' On the other hand, a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgment of value and performance ...' (Barth, 1994, p. 15).

Brubaker echoes this third element when in his framework for analyzing race, ethnicity, he includes 'social organization,' referring to boundaries, groupness, salience, and thickness, territorial concentration or dispersion, and reproduction (Brubaker, 2009, p. 27).

### *Cognitive Models*

The cognitive content of a political identity may be conceived as a worldview, or mental framework that allows the holders of an identity to make sense of social, economic, and political events. This is how the holders of an identity describe their social reality, i.e. this is a group's ontology and epistemology (Abdelal et al., 2006, p. 699). Accordingly, it has been noted that '... race, ethnicity, and nation are not things in the world but ways of seeing the world. They are ways of understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one's problems and predicaments, identifying one's interests, and orienting one's action. They are ways of recognizing, identifying, and classifying other people, of construing sameness and difference, and of "coding" and making sense of their actions' (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamatov, 2004, p. 47). Schemas are core ideas in cognitive science, and categories such as race, ethnicity, and nationhood are mental structures that represent knowledge and process information (Roth, 2012, p. 12). Cognitive frameworks have an impact not only on broad worldviews but also on understandings of self, group, and of the other. One of the ways in which this can happen is through language, given that it is a means by which human beings create their understandings of self, community, and otherness.

The above analytical framework is not the only one available, but I believe it is one of the most useful. It is a powerful tool in helping us understand the meaning and the content of collective political identities. It helps to clear away some of the analytical underbrush in the study of identities. I propose to focus on the constitutive norms, political purposes, relational comparisons, and cognitive mode held by persons who are holders of racial, ethnic, and national identities. To do so, this article takes as its empirical referent the case of a single political people within the federal political system of the United States.

### **Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in the Constructivist Tradition**

The approach taken here to the study of political identities has strong affinities with the constructivist tradition. There is no space here to discuss in full the successive sedimentations

of scholarship on race, ethnicity, and nationhood (Horowitz, 1985, p. 52; Hale, 2008, p. 41; Varshney, 2002; Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Keating, 2001, p. 3; Kymlicka, 1995, p. 12; Kymlicka, 2007, p. 68; Hechter, 2000, p. 14; Gellner, 2008, p. 67; Tierney, 2004, p. 4; McGarry, O'Leary, & Simeon, 2008; Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 55; Bulmer & Solomon, 1999). But it is useful to present an overview, from the constructivist perspective, of some of the efforts to clarify the meaning and content of identities that are formed on the basis of racial, ethnic, or national identities.

Rogers Brubaker famously argued that we should seek to avoid treating race, ethnicity, or nationhood as substantial entities, or essentializing these categories as basic constituents of social life, i.e. as internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, unitary actors, or as static, unchanging entities (Brubaker, 2004; Brubaker, 2009, p. 28). He recommended instead a dynamic and processual understanding of how ethnicity, race, and nation actually work. Inspired by Barth's approach, Brubaker observed that identity boundaries (such as ethnicity, race, and nation) are built 'in and through categorical we-they distinctions drawn by actors themselves and through the channeling of interaction through sets of prescriptions and proscriptions about who can interact with whom in what sorts of social relationships' (Brubaker, 2009, p. 29). Race, ethnicity, and nationhood work not only through bounded groups, but also through categories, schemas, institutional forms, and it is important to be attentive to changes in degrees of ethnic, racial, and national 'groupness.' These forms of political identity are variable, not a constant, and cannot be presupposed. In sum, 'the strength, salience, content, and consequences of ethnic, racial, and national identifications are variable across time, contexts, and persons' (Brubaker, 2009, p. 30). Such a focus on variability across context makes one sensitive to the multiplicity of available political identities and the need to highlight 'contextual or situational variability in the salience, scope, and content' of political identities (Brubaker, 2009, p. 31; Chandra, 2008).

Brubaker, Fox, Grancea, and Feischmid (2006) has argued that the alternative to a substantialist approach to political identities was a 'relational, processual, and dynamic understanding of ethnicity and "nation"' (Brubaker et al., 2006, p. 10). Thus, he invites us to start with categories, instead of groups, as our point of departure. By focusing on categories, we can focus on processes and relations rather than substances. We can turn our attention to the 'organizational and discursive careers of categories—the processes through which they become institutionalized ... and embedded in culturally powerful ... narratives' (Brubaker et al., 2006, p. 12). Importantly, if we focus on categories, we can focus 'from above' on how categories are proposed, propagated, imposed, and organizationally entrenched, and 'from below,' on how categories are appropriated, subverted, internalized, evaded, or transformed by the categorized (Brubaker et al., 2006, p. 12).

A non-substantialist approach is also characterized by the adoption of a cognitive perspective, through which ethnicity, race, and nationhood are perspectives on the world: including 'ways of identifying oneself and others, construing situations ... systems of classification, categorization, and identification, formal or informal.' (Brubaker et al., 2006, p. 32). Ethnic and racial schemas, like all cognitive schemas, are partly independent of the beliefs of individuals, and are in part publicly shared because of the way schemas and categorizations are institutionalized by the state, the market, and bureaucracies (Roth, 2012, p. 13).



### One Political People in the United States: Three Political Identities

Let us now examine the constitutive norms, social/political purposes, relational comparisons, and cognitive mode held by persons who are holders of racial, ethnic, and national identities. To do so, I examine the case of a single political people within the world's most influential federation, the United States. Puerto Ricans are an ideal case study because they are a political people that can exhibit racial, ethnic, or national political identities, depending on where they find themselves within the United States. In Puerto Rico, relations with Puerto Rican communities in the continental USA have become thoroughly transnationalized and deterritorialized: fluid circular migration characterizes the flow of migrants between the island and the continental USA. Puerto Ricans are circulators between the U.S. mainland and the Island: 3.5 million live on the Island and another 5.4 million plus Puerto Rican descendants live in the continental U.S. Circulators test the limits of spatially localized images of life, work, ethnicity, state, and nation given that dense kinship networks characterize the transnational circuit between Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland.

### Peoplehood and Nationhood

For over 50 years, the three major political parties on the Island have been the *Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño* (PIP), *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD), and the *Partido Nuevo Progresista* (PNP). The PIP is an independentist nationalist party with a social democratic lineage, while the PPD is a centrist to center-right autonomist party that lately has developed a sovereigntist wing. The PNP is a right-wing federalist party, which advocates becoming the 51<sup>st</sup> unit of the U.S. federation. These three parties have their Congresses every year or two, usually in the summer, and I was able to attend the Congresses of the PPD and the PNP in 2006–2008. There I distributed a questionnaire among the militants<sup>6</sup> of these parties. This is part of a larger project designed to further my research on varieties of nationalism in minority nations' national movements and majority-nation nationalism, and is a continuation of previous research I have done on Canada, Italy, and Spain. The PIP did not give me permission to attend their 2007 Congress, and instead they distributed my questionnaire by email to some of their militants, and in August, 2008 I attended the Congress of another independentist organization, the *Movimiento Independentista Nacional Hostosiano* (MINH). Militants of these parties go to these party Congresses from all the geographic regions of the Island and all the social strata. Some of the questions are very useful for exploring the depth and breadth of these militants' national identities. In total, I have received 272 answered questionnaires. Numerous interviews with upper echelon political leaders have also been conducted.

I should note that academic survey research in Puerto Rico is relatively under-developed: there is no institution like the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* in Madrid or the *Centre d'Estudis d'Opinió* in Barcelona, or an ongoing survey program like the Eurobarometer. Individual academics may prepare and administer their own surveys (as I did), but there is no systematic and programed effort to probe citizens' opinions and preferences. Regarding the issue of the depth and breadth of national identities in Puerto Rico, I have inquired with all the academics at the University of Puerto Rico who work on these issues, and the consensus is that there are no recent surveys in the last few years on the issues discussed herein (except for one survey conducted by Prof. Ángel I. Rivera,

which I will discuss below), and so the data I provide here is the best data available at this point.

Tables 1–3 below present the results of the quantifiable portions of the questionnaire responses received from the militants of the three major political parties in Puerto Rico. The questionnaire answers summarized below refer only to Part I of the questionnaire, on Nation and Identity. Moreover, it was open-ended and therefore there were certain responses that could not be fitted into a table, but will be presented in the discussion below.

The evidence shows that the principal political identities of these representatives of the main political currents in Puerto Rico revolve around their sense of nationhood and questions of national identity. These militants’ responses represent 99% of all Puerto Ricans’ views on constitutional politics, since 1952 to date. For all three political currents—independentism<sup>7</sup>, autonomism, and federalism—the national question is of vital importance, and politics for these militants often revolves around issues of national identity and of the constitutional accommodation of Puerto Rico within the federal political system known as the United States. In the survey by Prof. Ángel I. Rivera (discussed below), he found that the reasons expressed by autonomists and independentists for rejecting the option of becoming a state of the USA shows the heavy influence of national identity and concerns about cultural/linguistic identity for Puerto Ricans on the Island (Rivera, 2017b).

*Constitutive Norms*

As expected, independentists and autonomists show a strong sense of Puerto Rican nationhood, while federalists seem to exhibit dual national identities, or, in some cases, they exhibit a single USA national identity. Independentists and autonomists agree that Puerto

**Table 1.** National identities among independentists in Puerto Rico. Responses from PIP and MINH militants (N = 27)

Puerto Rico is a Nation?	National Identification	What is the United States?	What is Puerto Rico?	Puerto Rico is Cultural <sup>a</sup> or Political <sup>b</sup> Nation?
Yes – 99%	Only Puerto Rican – 93%	My <i>Patria</i> – 0% ('country')	My <i>Patria</i> – 85% ('country')	Political – 7%
No – 0%	More Puerto Rican than United States identity – 0%	My Nation – 0%	My Nation – 14%	Political and Cultural – 74%
Other – 1% Colony	Other – 7% Caribbean, Latin American	The State to which I belong as a U.S. citizen – 7% The colonizing state that conquered PR in 1898 – 81.4% Other – 12% Imperial state, Intervener	A region of the USA without a national personality – 0% Other – 1% Colony	Only Cultural – 19%

<sup>a</sup>Defined as one presenting the distinctive traits of a people, like customs, language, or culture.

<sup>b</sup>Defined as one presenting a political will combined with a national consciousness.

**Table 2.** National identities among autonomists in Puerto Rico. Responses from PPD militants ( $N = 197$ )

Puerto Rico is a Nation?	National Identification	What is the United States?	What is Puerto Rico?	Puerto Rico is Cultural or Political Nation?
Yes – 99%	Only Puerto Rican – 58%	My <i>Patria</i> – 1% ('country')	My <i>Patria</i> – 45% ('country')	Political – 22%
No – 0%	More Puerto Rican than United States identity – 33%	My Nation – 1%	My Nation – 54%	Political and Cultural – 54%
Other – 1% Colony	Equally Puerto Rican and U.S.A. identity – 9%	The State to which I belong as a U.S. citizen – 63%	A region of the USA without a national personality – 1%	Only Cultural – 24%
	Other – 1% PR with US citizenship	The colonizing state that conquered PR in 1898 – 28%	Other – 1% Colony	
		Other – 7% Partner, Good Neighbor, Nothing		

**Table 3.** National identities among federalists in Puerto Rico. Responses from PNP militants ( $N = 49$ )

Puerto Rico is a Nation?	National Identification	What is the United States? <sup>a</sup>	What is Puerto Rico?	Puerto Rico is Cultural or Political Nation?
Yes – 45%	Only Puerto Rican – 6%	My <i>Patria</i> – 16% ('country')	My <i>Patria</i> – 63% ('country')	Political – 2%
No – 55%	More Puerto Rican than United States identity – 6%	My Nation – 38.7%	My Nation – 22%	Political and Cultural – 25%
Other – 0%	Equally Puerto Rican and United States identity – 71%	The State to which I belong as a U.S. citizen – 49%	A region of the USA without a national personality – 16%	Only Cultural – 28%
	More United States than Puerto Rican identity – 14%	The colonizing state that conquered PR in 1898 – 14%	Other – 2% Colony, An Island	Other – 8% None
	Other – 3% PR, but US citizen	Other – 0%		No answer – 37%

<sup>a</sup>These add up to more than 100% because the respondents sometimes chose more than one alternative, out of five presented.

Rico is a nation and they were almost monolithic in identifying as Puerto Ricans, not as 'Americans.'<sup>8</sup> Very few of them think of the USA as their country or their nation, and, at best, merely see the US in legal realist terms: by law, they are U.S. citizens and thus

the US is simply the state to which they belong as citizens. The codes and practices that help us recognize the Puerto Rican sense of nationhood are revealed in part in these militants' responses to the open-ended question about what they thought about what elements defined Puerto Rican nationness. Most replied it was language and culture, and, secondly, a sentiment of belonging and a common history. Very few referred to ethnicity as a defining characteristic.

On the other hand, federalists exhibit dual national identities, with the great majority of them identifying as both Puerto Ricans and Americans, or more Americans than Puerto Ricans. In fact, the majority of them wrote that Puerto Rico was not a nation. Yet, the vast majority also identified Puerto Rico as their country ('patria') or nation, and the majority wrote that the USA was either the state to which they belonged as citizens or the colonizing state that acquired their island in 1898. In-group recognition for them is also promoted by codes that refer to culture, language, and history.

### *Social/Political Purposes*

The national identities of these militants have a clear purposive content. These are highly politicized and institutionalized national identities. The codes, practices, and in-group recognition schemes of these militants are oriented towards one of three possible political orientations: pro-independence, pro-autonomy, or pro-federation. The national identities they have constructed within the in-group that is defined by those who belong to one of the three major political tendencies on the Island are malleable and instrumentalized identities with the principal purpose of assuring the political viability of the political orientation they favor.

### *Relational Comparisons*

For autonomists and independentists especially, their national identity is defined by what it is not: it rejects its opposite (the 'American' identity). For federalists, the militants were trying to maintain a delicate balance between their dual national identities. For them, the 'Other' is harder to define, precisely because they are trying to juggle two national identities at the same time. What is interesting about them is that at times it seems the 'Self' is also hard to define. At times, they seem to come close to being a nation-less people. For them, only 38% saw the USA as their nation, while only 22% wrote that Puerto Rico was their nation (the term '*patria*' is a bit more rhetorical and has less emotional force than the term 'nation'). Relational comparisons are also formed vis-à-vis the majority nation. Independentists have the least favorable opinion of the majority nation, seeing the US as the state that invaded and conquered the Puerto Ricans in 1898. Autonomists occupy a middle position, with many seeing the US as just the state with whom they share citizenship, while a smaller proportion sees it as the colonizing power. Federalists have the most favorable opinion of the USA state, some seeing it as their nation or country, and far fewer seeing it unfavorably, as the colonizing power.

All militants were asked their opinion on what has been the effect of immigration (especially Cuban and Dominican) and emigration (circular migration between PR and the USA mainland) on national identity in Puerto Rico. Their responses tell us more about these militants' conceptions of in-group/out-group boundaries. About 44% of independentists and 40% of autonomists wrote that such migratory flows were having a negative

effect on national identity on the Island. They worried that the immigration by Cubans and Dominicans was helping to make Puerto Rico more pro-U.S. and more right-wing, and that the PR-US circular migration was helping to ‘Americanize’ Puerto Rico, to import socially dysfunctional patterns, and to further dilute national consciousness. Only 14% of federalists seemed to think that these migratory flows were having a detrimental effect on identity in Puerto Rico, although some worried that social problems and dysfunctionality (crime, drugs, etc.) were increasing.

### *Cognitive Models*

Nationhood is a totalizing political identity. It sets clear in-group/out-group boundaries, and creates codes and semiotic practices to delimit the membership within the nation. It complements this with a purposive content, which is highly politicized, rigidly structured, and institutionalized. National identity thus translates into national mobilization for a political purpose. Thus, the cognitive content of national identities tends to be all-encompassing, defining the relation between self, others, and the state, and accompanied by a political program that imagines alternative political futures, and which can have deep repercussions on the personal and collective lives of the holders of such national identities.

There is a survey conducted in 2015 by Ángel Israel Rivera, a professor of Political Science at the University of Puerto Rico, which he has not published yet in full detail in an academic journal, but partial results were published online, and Prof. Rivera and I have communicated regarding his work. In 2015, he and his students realized 263 interviews with militants of the major political orientations in Puerto Rico. It was not a survey seeking a *random* representative sample of the entire citizenry. Instead, he and his students delimited five kinds of political orientations: independence, sovereignty-association (which many may see as a variety of independence), autonomists, federalists, and non-affiliated people. Approximately 53 interviewees from each of these five political camps were interviewed. Because he was covering all the political orientations in Puerto Rico, as I did in my own surveys above, he stated that this was a representative sample of Puerto Ricans, insofar as this is representative of their political preferences, as I do above (Rivera, 2017a, 2017c).

### **Peoplehood and Ethnicity**

Puerto Ricans are circulators: there is a heavy bidirectional flow of people between the U.S. continent and the Island. Estimates of the extent of circulation vary widely, but what is clear is that more and more Puerto Ricans are remapping the borders of their identity by moving frequently between the Caribbean and North America (Duany, 2002, p. 33). Sometimes several times a year, many Puerto Ricans continually cross the cultural and linguistic boundary between the Caribbean geocultural world and the North American one. In experiencing this constant boundary-crossing, categories of national identity (which are prominent on the Island, as we have seen above) are confronted with the categories of ethnic and racial identity that are prominent in the continental U.S.<sup>9</sup>

Upon arriving in the continental U.S., Puerto Ricans join the debate about how to reconcile ethnic and racial identities with the notion of a unified national identity. There are three competing normative views on this issue: nativism, cosmopolitan liberalism, and multiculturalism (Citrin & Sears, 2014). The U.S. today defines diversity in terms of the pan-ethnic

categories (Hispanic, African-American, Asian-American, etc.) commonly employed since the 1960s. These are convenient categories for the U.S. state, allowing for greater legibility of its ethnic minorities (Scott, 1998). Many immigrant groups in the U.S. have faced discrimination, but over time European immigrant groups have overcome these obstacles, and have consolidated as the majority group known as ‘whites,’ practically doing away with hyphenated ethnic categories such as Italian-Americans or Irish-Americans. Minority groups that are viewed as nonwhite by the majority group (such as ‘Hispanics’ or ‘Latinos’) comprise the ‘other four sides of America’s ethnoracial pentagon that are similarly treated as internally homogenous when it comes to qualifying for the benefits of diversity-based programs such as affirmative action and government contracts’ (Citrin & Sears, 2014, p. 21).

In Puerto Rico, the pan-ethnic ‘Hispanic’ label is not used as a primary identifier by people there. The term is not absolutely rejected, but when questioned about it, respondents use it differently from the way it is used in the U.S.: they acknowledge the term ‘Hispanic’ only because they know it is a U.S. term, and think it refers to those who trace their ancestry to Spain or whose native language is Castillian (Morris, 1995, p. 119). Upon arrival in the U.S., contemporary Latin American immigrants are quickly informed in no uncertain terms that, despite the tenuous bonds that tie such diverse nationalities, that they are all ‘Hispanics.’ Supranational, racialized ethnicities such as Latino or Hispanic are not new. Sicilian or Calabrian peasants in the past, for example, were informed upon their arrival in New York that they were ‘Italians’ (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996, p. 135), a group which was originally understood as a race but that today is now seen as an ethnic group (Halter, 2006, p. 163.) Hispanic was first used as a label by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1970, as a catch-all category for Latin American immigrants, and it was not a self-identifying category, although over the course of several decades it has become one for many immigrants from the Americas (Halter, 2006, p. 164).

### *‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino’ as an Ethnic Identity*

According to the U.S Census Bureau, the 1970 census was the first to include a separate question on Hispanic origin, although it was only asked of 5% of households. Respondents were asked to choose whether their origin or descent was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or South or Central American, or other Spanish. Prior to that, the 1950 and 1960 censuses collected data on ‘persons of Spanish surname’ in five Southwestern states (US Census Bureau, 2001).

The 2000 census marked a milestone, changing the questions on race and Hispanic origin. The federal government now considers race and Hispanic origin to be separate and distinct. The question on Hispanic origin asked respondents if they were Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino, based on self-identification. The question on race next asked them to report the race or races they considered themselves to be, including White, Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian, American Indian, Chinese, Korean, etc., and then there was the category of ‘Some Other Race.’

Good qualitative data on the self-identities of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is not easily available. Jorge Duany has worked on the identities of middle-class Puerto Rican migrants in Orlando, Florida. This is based on field research performed in 2008 in that location.<sup>10</sup> Orlando has in the last few decades become a favorite location for middle-class and professional Puerto Rican migrants, who generally move there in search of a better quality

of life and wider professional horizons. Between 1990 and 2007, the Hispanic population of the metropolitan Orlando area nearly quadrupled from 64,946 to 259,240. Of the latter figure, more than half are Puerto Ricans, of which half were born on the mainland and the other half on the Island. The rest are primarily Mexicans, Cubans, Colombians, Dominicans, and Venezuelans (Duany, 2011, p. 106). One of the distinctive features of the recent Puerto Rican exodus to Orlando is the large number of well-educated professionals and managers, many of whom define themselves as white on the census. Duany's research was based on in-depth interviews with Puerto Rican business, civic, political, educational, and religious leaders in Orlando, complementing earlier work based on census statistics (Duany & Matos, 2006). The aim was to investigate migrants' motivations, attitudes, and experiences, and to see how they represent their identities, and whether they identify primarily as an ethnic, national, or panethnic group (Duany, 2011). He used 28 open-ended questions about the participants' migration history, socioeconomic profile, kinship networks, and identity. In the last section of his interviews, Duany explored identity issues. He asked: 'How would you define yourself, as Puerto Rican, Hispanic, Latino, or something else?' Duany found that most of the respondents said simply Puerto Rican, and a small minority said Latino or Hispanic. Some respondents answered as follows:

Like Sandra, Angel responded that he was "100 percent Puerto Rican," but that you have to be part of the "Hispanic umbrella ... ." For him, "being Puerto Rican is something different. There's a passion, a love for the Island." He talked about a "clash of mentality" between Puerto Ricans, who prefer to speak Spanish, and third- and fourth-generation Cubans, who are supposedly more "assimilated" to American culture. "If I'm talking with other Hispanics," Angel said, "there's always the pride of being Puerto Rican. Still, I have very cordial relations with Cubans. We support each other." He also pointed out that Colombians have become well integrated with Puerto Ricans in the Catholic Church, to which he belongs. Angel has witnessed the growing significance of Orlando's Hispanic community, which he believed had "a more profound spirituality" than Americans, as expressed in more "excited music and devotions."

Another respondent answered that she was Puerto Rican but lamented the fact that they were not making a common front with other Hispanics in Orlando. Another lamented the fact that relations with Cubans and Venezuelans showed some tensions, which was echoed by several other respondents. One said that Cubans took over the Chamber of Commerce, so Puerto Ricans had to form their own Chamber. One noted that she was Puerto Rican, but also Hispanic, and she used the terms interchangeably.

Another saw it this way: 'Ernesto argued that the "Hispanic or Latino" idea is totally American, it doesn't exist in Puerto Rico. It's a sociopolitical concept used for their [Americans] benefit and to distribute funds.' He prefers not to answer Hispanic/Latino on census forms, because people from Latin America have different cultures, dialects, and 'races.' 'We're not colored ... We're multicolored,' he insisted' (Duany, 2011).

For some respondents, being Hispanic, Latino, and Puerto Rican 'represents the same thing.' Still, one felt Hispanic (not Latina) and 'above all Puerto Rican.' Although Alberto's primary identity is Puerto Rican, being Latino or Hispanic is also 'OK' with him. 'The term Latino unites us (*nos hermana*) with other Spanish-speaking people, such as Cubans, Colombians, and Dominicans' (Duany, 2011).

Duany found out that ‘contrary to other parts of the United States, Puerto Ricans in Orlando rarely use the term “Latino.” “Hispanic” is more common, but lacks a strong emotional appeal for most participants in this study. Perhaps this is because most of my informants recognize the cultural differences as well as the similarities between various groups of Latin American immigrants. According to a Venezuelan businessman in Orlando, “one of our main challenges as Hispanics is the integration of different cultural traditions”’ (Duany, 2011).

Only one of Duany’s respondents felt more Hispanic/Latino than Puerto Rican. “I was born there [on the Island],” said Manuel, “and I’m very proud of it. But when I’m defining myself, I emphasize the Latino root ...” He had always felt a special affinity with Cubans, even before leaving San Juan, where many of his teachers and fellow students were Cuban. He often went to Casa Cuba, a social club in Isla Verde, with his Cuban friends ... He has observed some tensions among Hispanics, notably ‘Cuban resistance’ to mingling with other groups. By and large, however, there is a ‘contagion of identity’ between various Hispanic groups in Orlando, including Puerto Ricans, Colombians, and Venezuelans. According to Manuel, they all seek to ‘maintain their [Hispanic] roots’ (Duany, 2011).

In this sample, ‘none of the interviewees defined themselves as Nuyoricans, an epithet applied by Island-born Puerto Ricans to all U.S.-born residents of Puerto Rican ancestry, regardless of their place of residence ... In my interviews, Island-born Puerto Ricans were at pains to distinguish themselves from Nuyoricans’ (Duany, 2011).

In Duany’s sample, most respondents identified primarily as Puerto Rican and secondarily as Hispanic or Latino. For many, relations with other Latin American immigrants were conflict-ridden. ‘They tended to view “Hispanic” and “Latino” as externally imposed, problematic, and psychologically distant terms of reference’ (Duany, 2011). This sample was mostly of lighter-skinned individuals, and of a professional and managerial background, and also mostly first-generation. In general, this is a very different community when compared with Puerto Rican communities in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, or Chicago. Their middle-class backgrounds, as well as their light skin color, shielded them from the intense prejudice and segregation experienced by lower-class, dark-skinned Puerto Rican immigrants in the United States. In the United States, the physical appearance and cultural practices of Latinos have been racialized. As Duany noted: ‘the dominant image of a “Latin look” draws on age-old stereotypes of swarthy people of mongrel races ... Moreover, carving a motley category out of different national and ethnic groups is partly based on the lingering belief that Spanish-speaking people are racially mixed and culturally inferior to Anglo-Saxons.’

From this study, and other sources, it is possible to derive some generalizations about ethnicity among Puerto Ricans in the U.S.

### *Constitutive Norms*

The ethnic categories known as ‘Latino’ or ‘Hispanic’ were invented by the U.S. Census Bureau to group together a number of immigrants that happened to be coming into the US from elsewhere in the Americas. It is a cultural marker invented by the government but also propagated by the media and the commercial establishment (Citrin & Sears, 2014, p. 21). After several decades, the new current of peoples from the Americas are starting to adopt this label, although as we have seen the national designation for the place of origin continues to be of greater weight for some groups such as Puerto Ricans. Yet, as



second and third generation dynamics settle in, it is likely that these ethnic categories will establish deeper roots, as the various groups of Spanish-speaking peoples develop common interests, values, and political prospects.

### *Social/Political Purposes*

Pan-ethnic labels typically consolidate persons who look or sound the same for the majority group into a single group based on their physical traits, language, or geographic origin (Duany, 2011, p. 111). A ‘catchall term such as Hispanic or Latino “homogenizes class experiences and neglects many different linguistic, racial, and ethnic groups within the different nationalities themselves.” For instance, the U.S. government, media, and public opinion commonly assume that all Hispanics or Latinos are racially mixed’ (Duany, 2011, p. 111). The ‘Latino look’ in the U.S. usually denotes olive or brown skin and dark, straight hair. ‘This body type is ambiguously located between prevailing Anglo-American images of whiteness and blackness’ (Duany, 2011, p. 111). Thus, in the U.S., pan-ethnic categories serve to racialize an ethnic group.

Another social/political purpose of the pan-ethnic label ‘Hispanic’ is its usefulness for the government. The term ‘Hispanic,’ as noted previously, groups together disparate groups and views them as internally homogenous when it comes to qualifying for the benefits of diversity-based programs, especially from the federal government (Citrin & Sears, 2014, p. 21).

Other social purposes of identifying as Hispanic or Latino can be gleaned from the evidence presented above. It is a way of forming alliances and a common front in order to address issues and problems of common interest. Some respondents are willing to adopt these invented ethnic identities in order to maximize their chances of success in U.S. society. ‘Some people of Latin American origin have embraced a broader category to advance their collective plight as a racialized minority in the U.S. Others, like the middle-class Puerto Ricans in Orlando ... usually reject the pan-ethnic label’ (Duany, 2011, p. 132).

### *Relational Comparisons*

The racialization of Latinos in the U.S. shows that the group is neither deemed to be part of the white majority nor black (Duany, 2011, p. 112). The Hispanic pan-ethnic identity is constructed by defining it in terms of its various opposites. On one side, there is the mainstream, majority society, known as ‘whites,’ where power is held. On the other side, there are various competing minority pan-ethnic groups, like the Asian-American category, and the increasingly diverse African-American minority.

### *Cognitive Models*

If imagining a national community requires an act of imaginary prowess, constructing a supra-national pan-ethnicity such as Hispanic/Latino requires the development of an expansionary worldview. As we have seen above, this is not a step that is quickly taken by first-generation immigrants in Central Florida. The evidence from elsewhere in the U.S. seems to show that the label can eventually respond to a more genuine mental framework in the case of second and third generation migrants. Doubtless these pan-ethnic categories exist in the

mental worldview of majority groups and the federal government, but whether the ‘Hispanics’ themselves subscribe to this cognitive framework may apparently take some time. For example, the 2002 National Survey of Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center found that 54% of the respondents preferred to identify themselves by national origin, while 24% preferred Hispanic or Latino, and 21% simply American (Duany & Matos, 2006, p. 28). The Hispanic category ‘glosses over a wide variety of immigrant histories, colonial legacies, racial and ethnic groups, social classes, cultural traditions, languages, and dialects ... Thus, some argue, Puerto Ricans should not be pigeonholed with other populations of Latin American ancestry’ (Duany, 2011, p. 112). In sum, a generic Hispanic category rarely outweighs specific national identities such as Puerto Rican (Duany, 2011, p. 133).

### Peoplehood and Race

Racial categories and identities continue to be obviously fundamental in the way the social world works in the United States. How is racial identity represented in Puerto Rico itself, and in Puerto Rican communities in the U.S., and how do racial categories shift as Puerto Ricans cross the cultural border between the Island and the continental U.S.?

Different nations and cultures have their own ways of dividing the world into racial categories. Puerto Ricans are circulators between the continental U.S. and the Island, and so the question posed is how these processes of migration change concepts of race for the circulators, for their host society, and for those who stay at the point of origin (Roth, 2012, p. 4). We need to think of race as an aspect of culture, and this cultural framework can be transformed by processes of migration (Roth, 2012, p. 5). ‘Concepts of race and ethnicity are challenged and re-created in this transnational space, as new ideas about ... race and ethnicity can be transformed by migration simultaneously in both sending and receiving societies’ (Roth, 2012, p. 10).

Popular racial taxonomies in Puerto Rico cannot easily be reduced to the white/black binary paradigm of race in the U.S., given the proliferation and fluidity of racial constructions in Puerto Rico. These range along the following continuum: *blanco, blanquito, colorao, rubio, cano, jincho, jabo, trigueño, moreno, mulato, indio, café con leche, piel canela, prieto, grifo, de color, negro, negrito* (Duany, 2002, p. 238). This continuum, which is typical of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean basin, was famously characterized by Harry Hoetink as an ‘interweaving of European, African, and Amerindian strands. These multiple influences were reflected in a local conceptualization in which physical traits ranged from dark to light, different typed of which could well manifest themselves within a single family. Pure types gave way to a racial continuum’ (Hoetink, 1985, p. 58).

The mainstream majority culture in the U.S. often treats Hispanics as a race, but Hispanics do not fit into the standard binary racial structure of Whites/Blacks (Roth, 2012, p. 6). Despite the changes inaugurated in the 2000 U.S. census, the federal government’s efforts to understand racial identities continues to reproduce the dominant, majority-nation discourse on race in the United States. Puerto Ricans continue to represent themselves in a different way from official discourses on race and ethnicity in the U.S., both on the Island and on the continent. The mainstream official view propounded by the majority has been to continue to draw a rigid color line between white and non-white people, while Puerto Ricans use a more fluid continuum of physical types, as we have seen above (Duany, 2002, p. 239).

In the 2000 Census, the only racial identifier, other than white, that captured a major share of the Hispanic population (42%) was the *Some Other Race* (SOR) category. These are people who identified SOR as their race, most often by writing in Hispanic or a similar term. The white category captured 48%. Six percent described themselves as being of two or more races (Pew Hispanic Center, 2004, p. 1). In addition, ‘although the Census Bureau officially recognizes that “Hispanics can be of any race,” it tends to treat them apart from non-Hispanic whites and blacks’ (Duany, 2011, p. 132).

On the 2010 Census, 37 % of Hispanics identified themselves as ‘Some Other Race.’ According to Roth, ‘*many scholars interpret this response as indicating a Latino or Hispanic racial identity and a rejection of existing racial categories of the United States*’ (Roth, 2012, p. 7 emphasis added). A recent national survey (the 2006 American Community Survey) in the U.S. revealed that among Puerto Ricans in the U.S., 45.9% identified as white, 5.3% as black, and 41.1% as ‘Other.’ Among all Latinos, the ‘Other’ alternative was chosen by 41.2% (Roth, 2012, p. 10).

### *Constitutive Norms*

According to Duany, a growing number of Puerto Rican descendants on the U.S. mainland prefer not to label themselves as white or black when they have another option (Duany, 2002, p. 257). Either as Hispanics or as persons in the SOR category, Puerto Ricans in the United States are increasingly racialized, and thus they may be contributing to the assigning of new meanings to traditional racial categories in the U.S.

I have presented evidence above showing that many Puerto Ricans in the U.S. seem to have invented a third way of identifying themselves racially, in an effort to move beyond the white–black binary paradigm of race in the USA. Either as Hispanics or as persons who have affirmed the SOR category, they are signaling a desire to belong to a racial category that transcends the rigidity of the whiteness-blackness duality.

There are three major predictions about how Latinos will fit into the U.S. racial structure: (1) Latinos will eventually form a new racial group of their own; (2) the definition of Whiteness will expand to include Latinos; or (3) a tri-racial stratification system will emerge, with a ‘pigmentocracy’ that ranks groups and individuals on the basis of their skin color, i.e. some privileged white Latinos will join the privileged White upper crust, some light-skinned Latinos may be able to pass as ‘honorary Whites,’ while dark-skinned Latinos will be seen as part of the Black category (Roth, 2012, p. 7). In order to ‘get a handle on these possibilities, it is crucial to understand how Latinos see themselves fitting into American racial classifications, and how they are seen by others,’ as I have done here (Roth, 2012, p. 7).

### *Social/Political Purposes*

I have presented evidence above showing that many Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are putting forth a third way of identifying themselves racially, challenging the white–black binary paradigm of race in the U.S. Most Puerto Ricans see themselves as culturally and racially distinct from *los americanos* (Roth, 2012, p. 8), challenging the White–Black historic dualism (Roth, 2012, p. 6), and do not see themselves (as many Latinos do) as fitting into the official racial classifications of the Census Bureau (Roth, 2012, p. 6). In their quest to carve themselves a novel racial niche in the U.S. racial constellation, Puerto

Ricans (and many other migrants from the Americas) are trying to find themselves a social identity that fits their social characteristics. It seems like a necessary correction to the classificatory schemes invented by the federal government and the conventional wisdom that is propagated in mainstream, majority society.

### *Relational Comparisons*

Race is a cognitive process that is part of a shared culture in a society, and migrants who move into a new society bring with them not just their individual identities but also a cognitive mapping of race (Roth, 2012, p. 11). This is why Puerto Rican migrants' efforts to avoid a bipolar racial order leads them to distinguish themselves from the polar categories of white and black (like other groups coming from the Americas). This vision of their racial identity seems to be consistent with the effort to transcend the historically-dominant U.S. scheme of racial classification, which originated in the legacy of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights era, etc.

### *Cognitive Models*

Schemas are mental structures that represent knowledge and process information. They are not just an assortment of categories but a complex of information about the relationships among them (Roth, 2012, p. 12). 'Racial schemas are a bundle of racial categories and the set of rules for what they mean, how they are ordered, and how to apply them to oneself and others. Racial schemas are necessarily cognitive phenomena, because they are mental processes that shaper our knowledge' (Roth, 2012, p. 12). The mental framework that accompanies the racial identities I have detailed above reflect Puerto Ricans' racial schemas as they move to the U.S., and as they search to find a social niche within U.S. society that fits their racial schemas. Sometimes the answer seems to be 'none of the above' and, at that point, new racial categories need to be recognized and accepted.

## **Conclusion: Unpacking Political Identities**

Race, ethnicity, and nationhood are interrelated political identities, and in spite of the obvious differences between them, there may yet be illuminating commonalities between them (Brubaker, 2009, p. 26). What have we learned about such possible linkages, affinities, and divergences by looking at these political identities in a single political people within the U.S. federal political system?

As discussed above, the approach taken here has strong affinities with the constructivist tradition. One of the most notable linkages and affinities of the racial, ethnic, or national identities of Puerto Ricans examined here is that they dovetail very well with some of the fundamental presuppositions of the constructivist tradition. These identities can best be understood if we do not essentialize them, and if we realize that 'Puerto Rican' is a category, not a static and unitary group, nor an unchanging reality. Instead, as we have seen, being 'Puerto Rican' in the federal political system that we call the United States means that this category is a dynamic reality that can vary depending on one's location in the U.S., and is best seen as a processual category, as a variable, or as a schema. Like all cognitive schemas, the notions of race, ethnicity, and nationhood associated with the category of 'Puerto Ricans' show that at times these identities are independent of the beliefs of

individuals because of the way the ‘institutions like the state, schools, workplaces, families, social movements, and bureaucracies of various kinds play a role in creating and conveying ... schemas’ (Roth, 2012, p. 13).

When examining the identity of Puerto Ricans at their point of origin, we saw that between the repertoire of national identities they have available, a sense of Puerto Rican national identity seemed to be predominant, but these are relational in nature, always in relation to the other possible identity they have available (the ‘American’ one). When those who exemplify the category ‘Puerto Rican’ move to the continent, we noted that they become ‘Hispanics’ for the majority society and its institutions, and the federal government. But, we saw how this new identity is resisted or rejected, negotiated, adapted, and how official classification systems, and the bundle of expectations and hierarchies they inspire, come in conflict with Puerto Ricans’ preferred self-categorizations.

Finally, the cognitive schemas on race of those who hold the category of ‘Puerto Rican’ operates in a certain way on the Island but upon traveling to the continent, the schemas they hold are contested, questioned, and relativized by the federal government and other majority-society institutions.

In sum, race, ethnicity, and nationhood among Puerto Ricans in the U.S. share these important linkages and affinities: they are best seen as dynamic, relational, processual, and variable categories, thus validating the constructivist canon.

But there are also dissimilarities between race, ethnicity, and nationhood. For Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico, neither race nor ethnicity is the basis for their principal political identities. The evidence presented above shows that the principal political identities of the main political currents in Puerto Rico revolve around their sense of nationhood, which is relational in the sense that they have two possible identities. This is characteristic of sub-state national societies in multinational democracies. Indeed, in Puerto Rico, two axes exist in its political party system: one on national identity and about the constitutional relationship between the substate unit and the central state, and the other on political economy. As in many other stateless nations throughout the world, the former predominates over the latter.

National identity is constituted by clear codes and practices that tend to foster in-group recognition<sup>11</sup> and one can point to specific markers that are used to delimit membership in the in-group (culture, language, sentiments of belonging, etc.) National identities look at state structures as inherent components of what the Other is. Ethnic and racial identities are similarly formulated by thinking of what the opposite is, but these oppositional constructs are conceived in social terms. Thus, as evidenced above, in Florida many Puerto Ricans prefer their self-designation instead of ‘Hispanic.’ Also, in the U.S. many ‘Hispanics’ and Puerto Ricans reject the White/Black paradigm of race and are forging ahead with another racial schema. One could argue that national identities are the most totalizing and all-encompassing of all these identities. These identities make their holders visualize culture, state structures, and society in different ways. On the other hand, ethnic and racial identities are more effective in generating schemas that generate group solidarities, often in competition with official classification systems. For example, I showed how Puerto Ricans’ racial schemas are different from official classifications, as they search a social niche within U.S. society that fits their racial/ethnic schemas.

The difficulties encountered by the notion of a Hispanic pan-ethnic identity demonstrate that such identities cannot simply be invented and externally imposed. To be successful, ethnic identities need to emerge organically out of the self-understanding of the groups

that are supposed to hold them. Racial identities are also constituted not just by cultural markers (which are just as important as strictly phenotypical markers) but by socio-historical processes that develop through time. Note how Puerto Ricans in the U.S. position themselves racially and ethnically, in contrast with the way the majority society and its institutions categorize them.

'Puerto Ricans' is a category, not a static, unchanging group. Within-case variation in this category allows us to explore race, ethnicity, and nationhood. Depending on where they are in the U.S., this same political people interacts in different ways with the majority society of the U.S. and experiences race, ethnicity, and nationhood in a dynamic, contested, intersubjective, and variable fashion, enriching the multiplicity of cultural repertoires in the United States.

## Notes

1. *Nat'l Bank v. County of Yankton*, 101 U.S. 129, 133 (1880).
2. *Balzac v. Porto Rico*, 258 U.S. 298, 312-13 (1922).
3. See *Boumediene v. Bush*, 128 S. Ct. at 2255 (2008) ('century old doctrine [of the Insular Cases] informs our analysis in the present matter.')
4. Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act, Pub. L. No. 114-187, §§ 101-09, 201, 130 Stat. 549, 553-65 (2016).
5. In Laitin's terms, one might say they have a strong commitment to an 'identity project,' on the basis of the categories that exemplify them as individuals and tie them to a social group (Laitin, 1998, p. 11).
6. In Romance languages, the word 'militant' is used to describe the party members who are most committed to their party, are willing to attend party Congresses and Assemblies, and take a very active role influencing the orientation and trajectory of their party, without being part of the top leadership. In English, the alternatives are using the term 'activist' or using the term 'militant.' I have opted for the latter.
7. Sovereignty-Association is a variant of Independence.
8. The term *estadounidense* (or equivalent) is used in Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Latin America, but USA English has no equivalent term. 'Americans' literally refers to those who are residents of all of the Americas, but we will use it here as shorthand to refer to those who consider themselves holders of the U.S. national identity.
9. A similar phenomenon occurs in the literary world: literature in Puerto Rico has been primarily preoccupied with questions of national identity, whereas Puerto Rican literature on the continent is part of an ethnic and racial minority canon, enriching the contributions made by African American and Chicano authors (Duany & Matos, 2002, p. 31).
10. Jorge Duany, 'The Orlando Ricans: Overlapping Identity Discourses among Middle-Class Puerto Rican Immigrants,' UPR-RP Department of Sociology and Anthropology (2009), subsequently published in Duany (2011).
11. In this sense, national identities are uncertainty reduction devices that help to foster a sense of solidarity (Hale, 2008).

## References

- Abdelal, R., Herrera, Y., Johnston, A. I., & McDermott, R. (2006). Identity as a variable. *Perspectives on Politics*, 4(4), 695-711.
- Aleinikoff, A. (2002). *Semblances of sovereignty*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Barth, F. (1994). Enduring and emerging issues in the analysis of ethnicity. In H. Vermeulen & C. Govers (Eds.), *The anthropology of ethnicity: Beyond "ethnic groups and boundaries"* (pp. 77-96). Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- Brubaker, R. (2004). *Ethnicity without groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Brubaker, R. (2009). Ethnicity, race, and nationalism. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35, 21-42.

- Brubaker, R., Fox, J., Grancea, L., & Feischmid, M. (2006). *Nationalist politics and everyday ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Brubaker, R., Loveman, M., & Stamatov, P. (2004). Ethnicity as cognition. *Theory and Society*, 33(1), 31–64.
- Bulmer, M., & Solomon, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Racism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chandra, K. (2008). *Ethnic invention: A new principle for institutional design in ethnically divided societies*. In M. Levi, J. Johnson, J. Knight, & S. Stokes (Eds.), *Designing democratic government: Making institutions work* (pp. 89–114). Washington, DC: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Citrin, J., & Sears, D. O. (2014). *American identity and the politics of multiculturalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duany, J. (2002). *The Puerto Rican nation on the move: Identities on the island and in the United States*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.
- Duany, J. (2011). *Blurred borders: Transnational migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Duany, J., & Matos, F. (2006). *Puerto Ricans in Orlando and Central Florida*. (Policy Report 1, no. 1). New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, City University of New York.
- Gellner, E. (2008). *Nations and nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hale, H. (2008). *The foundations of ethnic politics: Separatism of states and nations in Eurasia and the world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Halter, M. (2006). Ethnic and racial identity. In R. Ueda (Ed.), *A companion to American immigration* (pp. 89–110). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Hechter, M. (2000). *Containing nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hoetnik, H. (1985). Race and color in the Caribbean. In S. Mintz & S. Price (Eds.), *Caribbean contours* (pp. 55–84). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Horowitz, D. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hutchinson, J., & Smith, A. (Eds.). (1996). *Ethnicity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Keating, M. (2001). *Plurinational democracy: Stateless nations in a post-sovereignty Era*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kymlicka, W. (1997). *States, nations, and cultures*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Kymlicka, W. (2007). *Multicultural odysseys: Navigating the New international politics of diversity: Navigating the New international politics of diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Laitin, D. (1998). *Identity in formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lawson, G., & Sloane, R. (2009). The constitutionality of decolonization by associated statehood: Puerto Rico's legal status reconsidered. *Boston College Law Review*, 50, 145–198.
- McGarry, J., O'Leary, B., & Simeon, R. (2008). Integration or accommodation? The enduring debate in conflict regulation. In S. Choudhry (Ed.), *Constitutional design for divided societies: Integration or accommodation?* (pp. 41–90) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Morris, N. (1995). *Puerto Rico: Culture, politics, and identity*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. London: Routledge.
- Pew Research Center. (2004). *2004 national survey of Latinos: Politics and civic participation*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. (1996). *Immigrant America: A portrait* (2nd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ramírez Lavandero, M. (1988). *Documents on the constitutional relationship of Puerto Rico and the United States* (3rd ed). Washington, DC: Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration.
- Rivera, Á. (2017a). *80 Grados*. Los estadistas en su laberinto. March 31, 2017.
- Rivera, Á. (2017b). *80 Grados*. Delirios. May 6, 2017.
- Rivera, Á. (2017c). *80 Grados*. ¿Quiénes son los libre asociacionistas? June 9, 2017.
- Rivera Ramos, E. (2001). *The legal construction of identity*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Roth, W. D. (2012). *Race migrations: Latinos and the cultural transformation of race*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Scott, J. C. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Smith, R. (2003). *Stories of peoplehood: The politics and morals of political membership*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Smith, R. (2004). Identities, interests, and the future of political science. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2(2), 301–312.
- Tierney, S. (2004). *Constitutional Law and national pluralism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2001). *Census of the population: Social and economic characteristics*. Puerto Rico. Washington DC: Government Printing Office.
- Varshney, A. (2002). *Ethnic conflict and civic life: Hindus and muslims in India*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Watts, R. (2008). *Comparing federal systems* (3rd ed.). Montreal: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University by McGill-Queen's University Press.