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The racialization of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans: 1890s–1930s

VÍCTOR M. RODRÍGUEZ DOMÍNGUEZ

ABSTRACT

This article describes the basic processes of racialization. The paper begins by analyzing how Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans were racialized during the first decades of the 20th century. This was a significant time, when the ideologies of scientific racism and imperialism became part of the popular culture; it was also a time when Puerto Ricans and Mexicans were being colonized, both in their nations of origin and in their diasporic homelands. While there is some significant descriptive work on contemporary racialization in the Chicano and Boricua experience, very little comparative and theoretical understanding supports these efforts. By looking at the patterns that emerge in the process of subordinating, controlling, and classifying Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, we gain a perspective on the role of colonialism (both internal and external), as well as the role of class and gender in racialization, and we begin to create the basis for a theoretically grounded perspective on racialization. [Key words: racialization, racism, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Latinos/Hispanics, race/ethnicity]



Mexican
Americans
Puerto
Ricans

Introduction

Understanding the process of the racialization of Latinos in the United States is a necessary task.¹ Clara Rodriguez (2000) writes that the study of Latinos serves as a good illustration of the “social constructedness” of race in the United States.² However, while there is a significant literature that has focused on specific aspects of this process, very little comparative work is available on the similarities and differences between the racialization process of the various “Latino” groups.³ We will have a better grasp of the process of racialization if we understand the particularities and similarities of racialization within the various ethnic components of the Latino community.

Flores (2000) reminds us in his article “Pan-Latino/Trans-Latino” that the Latino concept must be extended as fully as possible:

The adequacy of the embattled ‘Latino’ or ‘Hispanic’ concept hinges on its inclusiveness toward the full range of social experiences and identities, and particularly its bridging of the divergence within the contemporary configuration between recent ‘Latino immigrant’ populations and, for want of a better term, the ‘resident minority’ Chicano and Puerto Rican communities. (Flores 2000: 164)

The homogenization of differences among people of Latin American origin in the United States is part of the process of racialization.⁴ An important constituent of pigeonholing groups into a racial taxonomy is the erasure of the distinctive qualities that humanize them. Rough edges are erased in the process of categorizing. This makes the fit within the cells more precise. These individualizing characteristics, which tend to fade in the process, are the historical, cultural, and political differences among and within Latin American immigrants. To racialize Latin Americans is to describe them with racialized characteristics that will tightly fit them into the carefully constructed social grids that constitute the racial architecture of the United States.

A strategic way of demystifying and revealing the fissures of this process requires the use of a comparative model. By comparing different Latino groups we can highlight the salient features and patterns of the process of incorporating people of Latin American origin into the nation’s racial grid. It seems strategic, then, to focus on the experience of the two Latino groups who have become, to use Flores’ term, the “resident minority” groups among Latinos in the United States. Many Latinos who have arrived in the United States, particularly after 1965, are racialized in the context of the preceding and accumulated racialization experience of Boricuas and Chicanos. For many people of Latin American origin, past experience becomes the foundation for a racialized identity.⁵

To demystify racialization, we must theoretically delineate some of the salient features of racialization. These features will provide the contours for a framework that will help understand the particularities of racialization. Re-reading these texts within a theoretical framework serves to illustrate the need for and benefits of further comparative work between Chicanos and Boricuas; additionally, their experience needs to be compared with the racialization experience of other groups.

Racialization is part of a dialectical process. Those groups who are subordinated not only challenge and contest but also contribute to the racialization of themselves

and others. Racialization is a process that includes socialization into a culture signified by race, with individuals internalizing patterns of behavior and thought that contribute to their own subordination and to the perpetuation of the system.

Scope and concepts

Renato Rosaldo (1987) developed the useful notion of “cultural citizenship.” This idea is central to how we understand racialization. For Rosaldo, racialization is challenged by a whole range of strategies and practices, which allows a group to establish a contested territory or social space, in which Latinos can challenge and survive subordination. The process of creating a social space is called “cultural citizenship.” Efforts challenging racialization include resisting the polarized system of racial categories in the United States.

A recent attempt to utilize Rosaldo’s concept is found in William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor (1997). However, while these narratives serve as data for work on the comparative dialectic of racialization, they do not include within them a comparative approach. In the United States, racial categories are constructed in binary opposition to each other; they become part of a comparative taxonomy of white/black, wherein racialization occurs in the context of comparison and categorization with an “other.” It is precisely in this process of comparison, where meaning is constructed by creating categories, that racialization becomes cognitively intelligible. In order to understand racialization, which is in its core a process of creating meaning, one must use a comparative approach.

Early work on the racialization of African Americans was conducted by W.E.B. Du Bois in his classic treatise *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903). In this work, he introduced the concept of “double consciousness” as a pivotal component of racialization.⁶ However, while much can be gleaned from the African American experience, the racialization of Latin American people requires a historically specific and comparative approach to be understood.

It is important to recognize that the racialization of Africans occurred in a comparative taxonomy that included whites as the “non-other.” As Haney Lopez (1996) has revealed, the legal process of determining which immigrants were “white” (so that they could be naturalized as U.S. citizens) implicitly recognized the dialectic of racialization:

No court offered a complete typology listing the characteristics of Whiteness against which to compare the petitioner. Instead, the courts defined “white” through a process of negation, systemically identifying who was non-White. (Haney Lopez 1996: 27)

Obviously, the courts assumed that a person was “white” if that person was not “non-white.” The double negative suggests that racialization implies a process wherein the incorporation of individuals and groups takes place in a system of racial categories that are not absolute; instead, they are “comparative taxonomies of relative difference” (Haney Lopez 1996: 27).

This means that if we are to understand racialization, we must do it in a comparative way. We need to see the striking similarities and differences that occur in the racialization of groups. In the United States, the “black/white” relationship was the foundation for the construction of the racial grid of the United States.

But the experience of people of Latin American origin is so very significantly different, a different framework is required.

Additionally, people of Latin American origin have been incorporated into the racial grid in more diverse ways. Some came from nations or regions that were conquered and colonized as the United States expanded, and others came as immigrants from nations with varying degrees of neocolonial involvement with the United States. People of Latin American origin came from countries that already had developed different systems of racial hierarchies. So the process of racializing people of Latin American origin into a “Latino/Hispanic” category is built upon the previous memory of racial hierarchies the immigrants or conquered peoples brought with them.⁷

The homelands (or fractions thereof) of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans were conquered, and this conquest was followed by their emigration to the new metropolises. This meant that while the relationship of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans with the United States was similar, it was not exactly the same as that of European immigrants.⁸ For example, the trauma of the African middle passage was not part of their historical memory as a group. In fact, many persons of Latin American origin came to the United States strongly believing in the American Dream. There was no possible American Dream for enslaved Africans.

The racialization of people of Latin American origin (in particular Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans) was also distinct from the racialization of others in the U.S. because emigrating Latinos came from countries where miscegenation was common and where the idea of *mestizaje* was part of nation-building efforts (Klor de Alva 1997). Furthermore, their racial hierarchies, contrary to the polarized system of the United States, had intermediate racial categories that allowed people to be described in terms other than black (Guerra 1998). In Mexico, the indigenous peoples who led a rebellion against Porfirio Díaz’ regime (1876–1911) used the concept of the *mestizaje* to help the coalescing of forces against the dictator. In practice, this meant erasing the African category from the racial hierarchy of Mexico. Earlier, the way the elite treated Afro-Mexican patriot Vicente Guerrero, in contrast to treatment of right and left opponents, indicates a strong anti-African undercurrent in Mexican colonial culture.⁹ In Benedict Anderson’s terms (1991), Mexico “imagined itself” as a *mestizo* nation and incorporated Mexicans of African descent into the concept of the *mestizaje*. Therefore, the *tercera raza* (African) is conspicuously absent from the Mexican imaginary.

In Puerto Rico the racial system was not a bifurcated system of categories, making it easier to move from one racial category to a more prestigious status.¹⁰ The Puerto Rican racial hierarchy was not based on an either/or framework but rather a series of racial categories constructed according to a less rigid continuum. Each intermediate category was a composite of color and physical features, boundaried one end of the spectrum by the concept of whiteness and on the other end by the concept of blackness. The closer the cluster of physical characteristics resembled that of whites, the higher social status the person possessed. This meant that it was feasible to move into whiter categories; in the United States, however, “passing” was only possible in exceptional circumstances.¹¹ In Latin America, the “whitening” process was formalized: the Spanish King Carlos III in 1783 issued a decree by which a person of mixed Spanish and African heritage could receive a “*cédula de gracias al sacar*” (Guerra 1998: 215). This *cédula* would grant the status of “white” to the recipient.

The extensive experience of miscegenation among Latinos has led to a strong challenge regarding this “othering” process, especially in response to the bureaucratic racializing of the U.S. Census Bureau. In recent decades, 42.2 percent of Latinos,

when asked to choose a racial category for the census, have chosen the category “other” instead of black, white, or American Indian.¹² And in the 2000 US Census more than 80.5 percent of Puerto Ricans in the island chose “white” when asked to answer the racial categories question, given for the first time since 1950.¹³ In contrast, only 46.4 percent of Puerto Ricans in the mainland chose to describe themselves as white, while 38.2 percent chose “other” (Inter-University Program for Latino Research 2002). This is a trend that, according to Duany (2002), signifies a gap in the outcome of the racialization experience of Boricuas in Puerto Rico and those in the United States.

Historical scope

The comparative look at racialization for Puerto Ricans focuses on the period after the Spanish-American War of 1898 and until the 1930s for a number of reasons. While Puerto Ricans had engaged in significant trade relations with the United States during the latter part of the 19th century, it is not until the conquest and occupation of the island that Puerto Ricans as a collective were significantly drawn into the process of racialization. It is during this period that racialization is established through the creation of bifurcated racial categories and a biological ideology that ascribes differences to immutable biological characteristics. A qualitative change in racialization took place between the Spanish and Anglo Saxon periods in the island. After the abolition of slavery in 1873 in Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans of African descent experienced a relative rise in social status. In Puerto Rico, intermarriage was more common, and the skills acquired by enslaved Africans in the plantation economy, coupled with the existence of a significantly large population of free blacks, eased their gradual although subordinated integration into Puerto Rico’s society.

Meanwhile, the United States’ influence in the island, especially its racial paradigm, was not as pervasive as in Cuba. Unlike Cuba, which was very much in the American consciousness, Puerto Rico was not in the public imagination of the United States. The end of the “Splendid Little War” brought Puerto Rico to a more visible place in the United States imagination as the issue of citizenship and future political status became part of the political discourse (Cabranes 1979). It also brought Puerto Rican culture into direct contact with the racial paradigm of the United States. It is during this period that racialization in Puerto Rico begins to change, becoming more and more a part of the bifurcated racial system of the United States, whose understanding of biological differences are signified and encoded in ways that shape the racialization of Puerto Ricans.

However, within the island, Puerto Ricans were better able to challenge racialization than in the mainland. The relatively small number of Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. during this period limited their ability to challenge racialization effectively. By the late 1930s the significant political and cultural changes that were taking place in the United States and Puerto Rico began to give rise to a new context for racialization. Within the social sciences, more culturally based perspectives began to challenge biological and evolutionary frameworks; the rise of radical politics in the United States and nationalism in Puerto Rico also served to contest racialization (Duany 2002: 264). This transition needs further exploration and analysis. The intensification of racialization that occurs after this transitional period in the United States is of special interest.

The racialization process of Mexicans in the first two-thirds of the 19th century was qualitatively distinct from the one that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As Tomas Almaguer (1994: 45) argues, “White immigrants actually assigned Mexicans an intermediate location in the new society they imposed in the region.”

In other words, in the racial hierarchy constructed by white settlers in the newly conquered southwest, Mexicans, because they were Christians and mestizos and still included a significant landed elite who mediated between Anglo whites and Mexicans, were not entirely racialized in the process. As a social group, Mexicans became an ethnic group akin to European immigrants, in the sense that the basic process of differentiation was rooted in culture, not race. During this period, the otherness of Mexicans was rooted in culture rather than in some assumed biological difference.¹⁴ This more biological racialization begins to occur at the end of the 19th century and is particularly powerful during the 20th century.

Traditional Chicano scholars have represented Chicano history as a seamless narrative that begins with the Mexican American War and continues until today. As other Chicano/Latino scholars begin to look at the social and economic structures being developed after the conquest, a more nuanced historical perspective is beginning to arise. Gonzalez and Fernandez (1998: 83) argue that in order for Chicano history to achieve its place within U.S. mainstream history there is a need to “break down barriers to historical understanding among the various groups that comprises the United States.” One way to accomplish this, Gonzalez and Fernandez suggest, is by engaging in comparative research and understanding that “capitalism did not come to every region (of the U.S.) at the same time nor on the same terms” (1998: 83). For a truer picture, the political economy of the region must also be examined.

Throughout the Southwest, the expansion of capitalism and the building of the railroads increased the demand for labor and contributed to significant demographic changes. Because of the growth of the white population, by the 1890s, Santa Barbara, California, the last politically significant Mexican enclave, lost its ability to influence and mediate with the white political system (Gonzalez 1999: 88–9). In Los Angeles, the arrival of the railroad had increased the Anglo population and by the 1880s had placed Mexicans in a minority status by the end of the century. In Arizona, it was also around the 1880s that Mexicans lost control of local politics (Gonzalez 1999: 93). During that decade, the last members of the landed elite lost their lands and Mexicans lost their numerical majority. In Los Angeles, for example, in 1850, 60 percent of Mexicans owned some property, and by 1870, less than 24 percent owned any property (Acuña 1988: 127). The political control of the city was transferred to the rising Anglo elite, closing a chapter of significant resistance to racialization in Mexican American political history and opening a new chapter signified by subordination.

With some exceptions, specifically in New Mexico, Mexicans become racialized subjects rather than a conquered nation struggling to resist political domination. In New Mexico, the process of subordinating and racializing the Mexican population took a while longer. Until the 1890s, New Mexicans were able to maintain a degree of local control even after significant Anglo immigration in the 1890s. One indicator of their ability to leverage political protection was the creation of a substantial bilingual educational system. The system was maintained despite significant criticism from whites that it was a symptom that New Mexicans were not sufficiently “American” (this was one reason used by members of congress for not admitting New Mexico as a state until 1912) (Nieto Phillips 1999: 56). From 1848 to 1880, throughout the southwest, the nature of resistance against Anglo encroachment and domination took the character of an anticolonial struggle. Insurrectionary efforts of men such as Juan Nepomuceno (Cheno) Cortina in Texas, and the Gorras Blancas in New Mexico, and the acts of social bandits such as Juan Flores and Joaquin Murieta in California and, later, Gregorio Cortez in Texas begin to fade away as the Mexican American population is racialized and pigeonholed into its new racial identity.

“Mexican,” then, becomes a racial category rather than an ethnic descriptor. The process of racialization of Mexicans was quite advanced in Southern California by the end of the century. On August 20, 1892, Francisco Torres accidentally killed the foreman of a ranch in Modjeska Canyon (Orange County, California), where he was a ranch hand. A posse was organized, and Torres was captured and lynched, with a sign hung around his dead body saying “change of venue.” The reference was in response to efforts to have him tried elsewhere. The *Santa Ana Standard* wrote:

Torres was a low type of Mexican race, and was evidently more Indian than white. True to his savage nature he had no more regard for human life than for the merest trifle... He belongs to a class of outlaws in southern California and old Mexico.

(Acuña 1988: 129)

By the 1890s, Mexicans had reached the status of a racial group in the United States; their previously held intermediate position in the racial hierarchy now gave rise to a new, more modern form of subordination. In Puerto Rico, however, while Puerto Ricans had been racialized, they still did not achieve the fully racialized status Mexican Americans had in the U.S. For Puerto Ricans in the mainland, their racialization was more intensive than for those in the island but less intensive than for Mexican Americans.

Social theory, racialization, and popular culture

Clara Rodríguez (2000: ix) recently argued that much work in the area of racialization is not theoretically rigorous. It is necessary to contribute to that process of theoretical grounding and clarification—not only because it makes a scholarly contribution, but also because it clarifies how theory has insinuated itself into popular culture. No project can achieve this without having an awareness of the history of the process. It is unfortunate that only until very recently have sociologists and other social scientists begun to deconstruct the racialized character of the content and context of the origins of social science. The period in which sociology developed its fundamental character in the United States is also the period in which scientific racism and imperialist ideology developed, crystallized, and perhaps more important, permeated the popular culture of the West. This blind spot in social theory is illustrative of how steeped U.S. culture is in racist ideology.

Before we can begin to understand the nature and character of racialization of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, we must contextualize racialization by looking at the origins of scientific racism. Scientific racism provided, at the level of popular culture, the ideological support for the shift in the process of racialization of these two groups. Scientific racism is based on the notion of biological continuity through biological evolution. Ascribed to Charles Darwin in his *Origin of the Species* (1859), evolutionary thought was quite common as a way of thinking during this period. At this time, most macro and micro concepts about society were influenced by the idea of evolution. Indeed, the world view that science can solve social problems is a product of these intellectual efforts, and is accompanied by strong racializing influences, particularly in the marriage of biology and statistics.

Underlying all of these efforts is a Western cultural teleology defined by the need to find or impose order in chaos. In other words, part of the paradigm of the Western

mode of thought is its need to organize, to classify, to pigeonhole. This need made taxonomy a basic tool of science during this period. Taxonomy organizes the raw facts arising out of experience, making them intelligible on the basis of a comparative framework. Newton, for example, gave us order in the physical world, and Darwin gave us a taxonomical system for the biological world. A framework for the social world was needed as well. While Carolus Linnaeus, Johann Blumenbach, Immanuel Kant, and others contributed terms used to construct racial taxonomies, others contributed to the legitimation of race-based thinking in popular culture and in the academy.

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) was a thinker who had a vast knowledge of many disciplines. He chose to focus a major portion of his work on social theory. He was an engineer by profession, but unlike others who dabbled in social theory, he was not wealthy, nor did he have a patron who would subsidize his work. In order to make a living, he depended on the rising market for printed materials. A gifted writer, Spencer was able to make a living selling articles for popular science magazines such as *Contemporary Review* in England and *Popular Science Monthly* in the U.S. This was a time in which a growing middle class reading audience in Great Britain and the United States provided a market for novel scientific thinking. Spencer was the person who coined and popularized the phrase associated with evolution that many ascribe to Darwin: “the survival of the fittest” (Collins and Makowski 1998).

Spencer, the person most recognized for the development of social Darwinism, utilized his popular writings to acquaint his middle class audience with evolutionism and laissez-faire or free market ideologies. He provided his readers with a common sense way of appropriating and popularizing these concepts. His basic idea was that society was part of the natural order and could not function contrary to the laws of nature. Using a biological analogy, he described society as an organism, with specialization and division of labor (from simple to complex). Some human beings within this organism were destined to be on top, some on the bottom. He gave an elegant, rational justification for social stratification. According to his framework, it was useless to try and civilize the natives in the colonies. They can be “trained” but they will only reach a certain stage of development.¹⁵ Spencer questioned the value of a universal education. He believed that before women are given suffrage their psychology should be studied, which in those days meant that the innate qualities of women should be addressed to determine whether they deserved the suffrage. Spencer built the infrastructure for the ideologically sexist and misogynist thinking of his time.

But popular culture was not only influenced by academic social theory; it was also shaped by other sources that provided content for the construction of these racial taxonomies. During these years numerous travel books, popular ethnographic descriptions of Captain Cook’s travels in the South Seas, Dr. Livingstone’s experiences in Africa, and the numerous Caribbean travelogues became popular with the growing number of readers in the United States. These writings contributed to providing a context to the racialization of the Other in the United States. As lay ethnographies, they fulfilled the needs of a consumer public which vicariously experienced these travels while at the same time internalizing notions of difference that could now be easily integrated into a world view. Why did the differences occur? The exotic descriptions were finally provided with a taxonomical system that helped make sense of this raw information (Matos Rodríguez 1999). The new frameworks and taxonomies contributed to racialize—that is, to give racial/biological meaning to cultural differences.

That is why Spencer is crucial. His work most likely reached a wider audience than any other sociologist of his time, especially in the United States. He completed a 12-volume compendium of sociological analysis of every major area of knowledge, from psychology to ethics, from biology to philosophy. Andrew Carnegie, the United States millionaire, brought Spencer to the United States, where he became very popular on the lecture circuit. His foundation was very prominent in contributing to the development of the eugenics movement in the United States.¹⁶

Interacting and mutually supporting each other, a strong anti-immigrant, nativistic movement, along with the popularization of pseudoscientific racist thinking, became part of mainstream discourse in the United States. These prejudices were evident in congressional debates, pedagogical practices, and public discourse. Whites, as products of a socializing process that normalized racial thinking and transformed it into “common sense,” brought to their relationships with Puerto Ricans and Mexicans a paradigm steeped in the culture of casual racism. White people were socialized into the culture and acquired attitudes they never questioned. Indeed, these hidden paradigms helped them explain and classify social phenomena while also legitimating their lives of privilege in a world of inequality. White supremacy was efficiently and scientifically rooted in the basic institutional cultures of the United States. Racialized thinking was so embedded in U.S. core culture that it was unquestioned, becoming an example of Rosaldo’s concept of “cultural invisibility” (Rosaldo 1989).¹⁷

The racialization of Mexican American and Puerto Ricans

“Racialization,” in the sense that Omi and Winant use it, means “to signify the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group” (1986: 64). Racialization is also an ideological process, a historically specific concept that assigns ethnic groups a racial identity and status: “Racial ideology is constructed from pre-existing conceptual (or if one prefers, ‘discursive’) elements and emerges from the struggles of competing political projects and ideas seeking to articulate similar elements differently” (1986: 64). A more descriptive way of talking about racialization is seen as follows:

Racialization is the social and historical process of assigning individuals and groups a socially constructed racial identity and status. As populations compete for land, status and resources they build hierarchies based on clusters of phenotypical biological factors which are then assumed to represent archetypes for members of a particular racial group. Those who become the dominant group interpret those presumed phenotypical biological differences as indicators of essential differences and assign a negative meaning to them, subordinating the contending group and limiting their access to those things their society values. The process of racialization in modern societies, is historically specific, and is carried out by its basic social institutions: economy, education, family, religion, government, criminal justice system, media, etc.

(Rodríguez 2002a: 7)

I situate my preliminary project within what Omi and Winant call the need for accounts of “racialization processes that avoids the pitfalls of U.S. ethnic history” (1986: 64). In other words, I ask the question, How has this subject been constituted in the social sciences and popular culture? I will illustrate this model by citing historical events contributing to the racialization of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans.

The historical context of racialization occurs during the period when the United States became an empire and its economy effected a transition from competitive capitalism to the capitalism of trusts and corporations. During this period, at the end of the 19th century, the popular American sense of manifest destiny clearly became global in character and projection (Rodríguez 1988). Racialization, then, occurs within a nation defining itself politically and economically as an empire, and racialization, domestically and abroad, becomes a way of managing the “natives” and/or “subalterns,” foreign and domestic, by placing them within racialized hierarchies of power.

Historical Processes of Racialization

There are at least four identifiable phases or moments in the racialization process (Rodríguez 2002a: 9). The four moments of racialization are delineated in the table below:

Primary Processes	Consequences
Limiting access/control of land	Imposition/subordination
Ideology/cultural racism	Institutional arrangements
Negotiation/contestation	Placement in racial system/hierarchy
Acceptance and participation in discrimination by ethnic groups	
Assimilation/Americanization, homogenization (lumping), internalized racist oppression, etc.	Crystallization of a racialized identity

Rather than being dichotomous and mutually exclusive, these phases overlap each other and do not necessarily follow a specific sequence. Each of these stages contributes to the social construction of a cultural group (in Rosaldo’s terms), that is, a group that becomes a racial group in the perception and experience of the dominant white power structure.

Imposition/subordination

The first stage is a process of subordination that entails limiting the collective control and/or access to land. This process may entail some degree of violence and/or coercion that has the function of limiting the range of responses. In the Mexican American experience this process includes the colonial conquest and racialization of Mexicans in Mexico’s former northern provinces (the Southwest of the U.S. today) and the neocolonial experience of Mexico that followed its defeat in the Mexican American War, which ended in 1848. The process of land expropriation rendered Mexicans subjects of the racializing forces of United States’ social institutions. The basic social institutions—government, education, state, economy, etc.—produced a new racialized subject that was then positioned in its proper place in the racial hierarchy of the historical moment.

This stage also set the scene for the migration of millions of Mexicans, who were transformed into racialized subjects in the United States. These events excluded

millions of Mexicans from having control and/or access to land, both in their homeland and in the diaspora. In the Southwest, this process included the legal and illegal ways in which the white, Anglo power structure took control of the millions of acres of lands that were in the hands of the Mexican landed elite (Acuña 1988). The lands were appropriated by laws that eased the expropriation of the landed elite, by outright theft (through squatting), and by the intermarriage between Anglo men and the daughters of the landed and lighter-skinned Mexican elite (Acuña 1988: 89).¹⁸ Although the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with Mexico (1848), which included protection for the religious, civil, and land rights of the Mexican community in the United States, American legal institutions did not impede the almost complete expropriation of the Mexican community. In the words of Mexican American historian Griswold del Castillo: “The promises the U.S. government made with respect to the conquered Mexican populations... have remained largely unfulfilled” (1990: 173).

This first moment of racialization not only led to the expropriation of Mexicans in the newly conquered territories of the Southwest, it also extended itself, geographically, to the interior of the Mexican nation. In a recent essay, Gilbert Gonzalez and Raul Fernandez (2002) explain how the expansion of U.S. imperial hegemony inserted itself into Mexico, creating “internal migration movements, mass population concentrations along the border, the bracero program, low wage maquila plants, Mexico’s agricultural crisis, and more important, a century of migrations to the United States” (2002: 42). These are the dynamics in Mexico that run parallel to institutional changes taking place in the Southwest, which in the late 19th and 20th centuries led to the later crystallization of a Mexican American racial group.

If political, economic, and cultural dynamics are examined, rather than limiting the focus to a cultural model, as traditional Chicano historians have done, the history of the Mexican American/Chicano community is not a continuous history beginning in 1848, but a discontinuous process with an early phase of expropriation, disenfranchisement, and conquest, leading to a second phase forming a racialized Chicano population. While it was true that the racialization process began earlier, it did not produce a racialized subject until this last period described by Gonzalez and Fernandez (1998).

This distinction is crucial because it underlies a distinct periodization of the racialization process, a process quite different from that envisioned by traditional Chicano historiography. It provides a framework to understand the forms of resistance against racialization during the early process of expropriation, when a racialized Mexican American subject arose. During the period preceding the late 19th century, resistance to racialization had an insurrectionist character, similar to an anticolonial struggle.¹⁹

As the racializing process crystallized during the late 19th century and early 20th centuries, resistance to racialization revolved around community-based, legally defined civil rights. During the early stage of racialization, before the 20th century, resistance is from the outside, while in the latter stage the resistance is from the inside.

During this latter period, resistance to racialization took the form of *mutualistas* (mutual aid societies), labor unions, and community cultural groups. While other forms of resisting racialization did not disappear entirely, they were no longer as prevalent as in the period after 1848. While the Mexican American population was being expropriated, it was also gradually being proletarianized. The mode of integration of Mexicans into the social and economic structure of the United States,

particularly in the later decades of the 19th century, was rooted in their transformation into proletarians, namely, workers within the expanding industrial capitalist economy of the United States. It is within this process that race, class, and gender were woven together in the Mexican American experience.

This distinction also served to highlight the social, economic, and political forces unleashed by the United States when it became a modern empire. It was in Mexico that the first full-scale imperial model of control, which Gonzalez and Fernandez (2002) call the “transnational mode of economic domination,” was implemented.

The neocolonial process in Mexico began in earnest during the 1870s. John Kenneth Turner described the process in his classic study *Barbarous Mexico* (1911): “The partnership of Díaz and American capital,” he argued, “has wrecked Mexico as a national entity. The United States government, as long as it represents American capital...will have a deciding voice in Mexican affairs” (1906: 256–7). The United States allied itself as a senior partner with the Mexican elite and particularly with their representative President Porfirio Díaz. During his regime, called the *Porfiriato* (from 1876 to 1911), the United States, using threats of military intervention, invested heavily in railroads, mining, cattle farming, and cotton production (Gonzalez and Fernandez 2002: 3). By 1902, U.S. investments in Mexican railroads rose to \$281 million; 80 percent of all investments in railroads in Mexico came from U.S. sources (2002: 17):

Foreign investment (almost entirely of U.S. origin) was on the order of two thirds of the total for the decade of 1900–1910; foreign ownership by 1910 has been estimated at half the national wealth. (2002: 18)

This model allowed the United States to control economically an entire nation without having to control it militarily. After the Spanish American War of 1898, Puerto Rico and Cuba, however, experienced a different model. In Puerto Rico, a classic colonial model was imposed, and the island was directly controlled by the United States. In Cuba’s case, a more intense model of neocolonial control was implemented, under the facade of a formally independent country, with U.S. investment and the Platt amendment.²⁰ As U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles would later say in the 1950s, in reference to Guatemala and Iran: “there [are] two ways of dominating a foreign nation, invading it militarily or controlling it financially” (Gonzalez and Fernandez 2002: 3). Cuba was controlled using both methods of neocolonial control.

In summary, by the end of the 19th century the United States had extended its imperial hegemony over Mexico while at the same time completing the subordination and racialization of Mexican Americans in the Southwest. The Mexicans, displaced by the dislocating forces of U.S. capital in Mexico, ended up migrating into the racialized space of the Southwest. These newly arrived Mexicans constitute the material out of which a racialized Mexican American population was constructed.

Puerto Ricans

For Puerto Ricans, the first stage in the process of racialization occurs later, after the island has become a possession of the United States following the defeat of Spain, during the Spanish-American War. On the island, the American colonization process (economic, political, social, cultural) of Puerto Rico was completed by sugar, tobacco, textile, and

other U.S. corporate interests. It is within this historical context that Puerto Ricans were racialized. American forces and interests eventually would give rise to the forces that created the process of migration and the beginning of the Puerto Rican diaspora.

During this stage Puerto Ricans were racialized in the diaspora and in the island with distinct consequences. In Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican landed elite was not entirely expropriated, as happened in the U.S. Southwest. Instead, members of the elite were integrated into the sugar plantation complex controlled by major United States sugar corporations and interests. The integration of the landed elite took place in the form of central sugar mill owners, or as *colonos*, who were small- and medium-scale farmers who cultivated sugar cane for the sugar mills. A significant number of the Puerto Rican elite were able to develop and maintain their own sugar mills and control a significant amount of agricultural land. In fact, during the 1920s, Puerto Rican producers were in control of 58 percent of the sugar output in the island. This percentage was even higher than the percentage under the control of the Cuban bourgeoisie at that time.²¹

The Puerto Rican elite served as a force mediating between the colonial institutions and the Puerto Rican population. This mediation was much more complex because of two basic factors: one, contrary to the Mexican landed elite in the Southwest, who not only were expropriated of their land but were also integrated by marriage into the Anglo population, some members of the Puerto Rican elite supported forces that offered opposition to the colonial nature of Puerto Rico; and two, while only 100,000 Mexicans lived in the conquered Southwest, close to one million Puerto Ricans were living in the island when the United States conquered it. These two factors made the process of racialization more complex and its outcome more diverse in Puerto Rico than in the Southwest.

While racialization was developing in Puerto Rico, thousands of Puerto Ricans found themselves thrown into the migratory outflows created by economic and colonial policies. The collapse of the coffee industry, hurricanes, and labor brokers from Hawaiian sugar plantations all contributed to a process of out-migration that involved coercion more than the exercise of free will.²² The coffee industry did not receive the same tariff protection sugar did, and was unable to compete in the U.S. Puerto Rican immigrants in the United States, particularly before U.S. citizenship was imposed on Puerto Ricans, found themselves vulnerable. They were stateless in the sense that they were citizens of a colony with no international standing, and did not have the protection of a consulate or an embassy in the United States. They did not speak English, and a significant number were black or mulatto.

As Bernardo Vega, one of the early Puerto Rican immigrants, recalls in his memoirs, “We came from a colony and had no citizenship of our own” (1984: xiii). The colonization process of Puerto Rico had rendered Puerto Ricans even more vulnerable in the diaspora. In Puerto Rico the landed elite served as a cushion against racialization, but in the metropolis, racialization was more intense. For Bernardo Vega, “forced migration of colonial peoples was just another way of holding them in bondage” (1984: x). Puerto Ricans were excluded from trade unions despite the fact that many of them were militant socialists who had taken part in trade union struggles in Puerto Rico.

In sum, limiting the access of a people to land began a process of subordination and of cultural change. Most of the island’s political, economic institutions were in the hands of the military between 1898 and 1901 and, later, U.S.-appointed civilian authorities. The process of subordination was aided because lack of access to and control of the land limited and shaped contestation of the racialization process.

While the Puerto Rican landed elite had some economic power, their economic foundation was based on the fact that the United States included Puerto Rico within its tariff structure. Its ability to sell its product, sugar, was dependent on the state policies of the empire. But, like the Mexicans, Puerto Ricans also underwent a process of proletarianization, both in the homeland and in the diaspora. Former peasants and small agricultural producers became a part of the growing and expanding sugar plantation complex under the hegemony of U.S. capitalist investment. In the metropolis, Puerto Ricans became part of the rising industrial working class in cities such as New York. It is predominantly as proletarians that Puerto Ricans and Mexicans experienced the process of racialization during this period. For both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, migration to the United States simply changed the context of racialization, not its consequences.

Ideology and institutional arrangements

The second stage of racialization entails what Karenga (2002) describes as a process in which “institutional arrangements” are constructed and supported with an ideology that gives legitimacy, stability, and continuity to a system of exploitation based on class, race, ethnicity, and gender. These institutional arrangements comprise the systems and social institutions that ensure the continued subordination of racialized subjects. They perpetuate subordination—but without the same degree of coercion that marks the first stage. The arrangements include the establishment of clusters of norms such as slavery and Jim Crow Laws in the African-American experience, reservations and federal laws in the American-Indian experience, and dual wage systems, school segregation, and Americanization programs in the Chicano and Boricua experience. As an ideology, Americanization legitimates institutional arrangements that lead to a process of cultural racism that distorts and trivializes the indigenous culture and imposes a different way of life on the subjects. The most strategic institutional arrangements include education and the organization of production and the ideologies that support their role and function. The educational system and the organization of production will be briefly examined in their role in both the Puerto Rican and Mexican American contexts.

In the Mexican American experience, both in Mexico and the conquered Southwest, “a widely promulgated imperial ideology appeared highlighting a pathological Mexican culture that concluded that a ‘Mexican Problem’ existed for foreigners, especially Americans, to resolve” (Gonzalez 2000: 1). This “Mexican Problem” ideology was constructed on the basis of writings of travelers, Protestant missionaries, journalists, academics, businessmen, and engineers who went to Mexico during the late 19th and early 20th century. The writings shaped a popular understanding of Mexicans, who were seen as a group that had to be colonized and racialized both in Mexico and within the United States. The U.S. had a putative civilizing mission; Mexicans, domestically and abroad, were to be the subjects of these efforts. The following quote, from an article by F. E. Prendergast for an 1881 issue of *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, captures the racialized content of the civilizing mission:

It is evident that any progress in Mexico must come through colonization by some higher and more progressive race, or by the introduction of capital in large amounts to develop her natural resources by the aid of native races....(Gonzalez 2000: 2)

This ideology, similar to thinking in regard to Puerto Rico later in the 20th century, led to the export of racializing social economic practices, such as the dual wage system, in which whites and Mexicans received unequal wages for the same work, and the segregation of Mexican workers from U.S. personnel and their families. In mining, oil, and railroad camps, U.S. companies kept separate quarters for their Mexican and U.S. employees. The civilizing efforts never had the objective of equalizing colonizer and colonized; instead, they merely had the objective of teaching the Mexican his or her proper place in the racialized order.

Also, the ideology assumed a biological content as it crystallized into a way of understanding the differences between Mexicans and U.S. whites. One writer, Chester Lloyd Jones, commented: “It must be confessed that (mestizos) often exhibit the well-known tendency to follow the vices and weaknesses of both sides of their ancestry rather than the virtues” (Gonzalez 2000: 10).

This ideology was then applied in the United States to the education of Mexican Americans as they underwent the process of being transformed into racialized proletarians. The stereotyping isolated Mexican Americans; racialized workers were described as childish, brutish, and highly sexual. Wallace Thompson, in his book *The Mexican Mind: A Study in National Psychology* (1922), argues that Mexicans have compulsive sex drives and that they “have a child’s or savage’s unwavering grasp of the details of desire.” These negative representations were then said to be related to the fact that Mexicans were a product of miscegenation (Gonzalez, 2000: 16).

It becomes clear that a racist ideology was implemented in the development of an educational policy that justified segregation and the Americanizing of Mexicans into racialized Mexican Americans. As racialized subjects, Mexicans would eventually be domesticated, becoming the docile and obedient labor force that the various sectors of the U.S. economy needed. A racialized view of Mexicans was already anticipated in the writings of various authors who influenced educational policy, including Victor Clark, who also wrote a significant book on Puerto Rico, entitled *Puerto Rico and Its Problems*, in 1930 and who earlier was in charge of the island’s educational system. In 1908, Clark describes the Mexican worker as “unambitious, listless, physically weak, irregular and indolent. On the other hand he is docile, patient, usually orderly in camps” (Gonzalez 2000: 27).

In sum, when U.S. educators began to develop a pedagogy to educate Mexicans, they tapped into the materials written about Mexico. So the “Mexican Problem” was in need of a dose of Americanization in order to snugly set the newly racialized subject into the racial hierarchy of the United States. Between 1912 and 1957 no less than 25 theses and dissertations were written citing the ideology of people such as Thompson and Clark (Gonzalez 2000: 29). The racialized view of the Mexican had become a common sense pedagogical perspective on how to educate and Americanize the Mexican. Since the objective of Americanization was to forge a docile and obedient labor force, Mexican children were educated using “a separate curriculum, emphasizing English and American standards of conduct, vocational education over academic work, group discipline over individuation and logically, lower expectations” (Gonzalez 2000: 36). Also, with the exception of New Mexico, in many areas of the Southwest, Spanish and some Mexican customs were prohibited as uncivilized. To achieve the subordination of Mexicans, the colonizer had to isolate them from a language and culture that affirmed them and that provided resources for resistance. But this process of racialization was not without challenges, particularly in those instances where the racialized subjects had access to some forms of

organization. The absence of landed elites in the 20th century intensified the social construction of Chicanos as racialized subjects; however, labor organizations were able to mediate between racialization and the subalterns. During this early period, most Mexican Americans were involved in the agricultural sector in the Southwest. California, especially, through irrigation systems that enabled the deserts to flower, became one of the largest employers of agricultural labor in the U.S.

Almaguer (1994), in his analysis of the sugar beet workers' strike in Ventura, California, in 1903, provides a good example of how agricultural proletarians were able to contest their racial and class exploitation. For the first time in agricultural labor struggles, a group of Japanese and Mexican workers won a decisive victory against sugar beet growers. This was a rather unusual event in a number of ways. Union organizing among agricultural workers was not favored by the major labor organizations in the United States. The American Federation of Labor (AFL), particularly, did not organize agricultural workers. So the sugar beet workers organized themselves under one of the first multiethnic unions in the U.S.: the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association (JMLA). The JMLA was able to organize a strike in 1903, despite ethnic differences, because organizers counted on a number of factors:

1. The timing of the strike coincided with the need for thinning the sugar beet crops. If the weaker beets were not thinned quickly, the crop could be lost. This gave the strikers some leverage with the bosses.
2. Organizers carefully developed an ethnically sensitive, culturally appropriate democratic process, whereby both Mexican and Japanese were informed in their respective languages about the kinds of styles governing the organizational process. They also shared resources and developed a growing sense of camaraderie and brotherhood.
3. Socialist ideology led organizers to emphasize their class position rather than their racial status. This was reinforced by the participation of Fred C. Wheeler and John Murray from the Los Angeles Council Labor Council, who provided moral support to the strikers throughout the negotiation process. These labor organizers were socialist radicals who had been active in the Los Angeles labor movement.
4. Organizers were able to maintain a very consistent policy of militancy. Most of the time, in a peaceful but nonetheless militant way, they convinced most of the workers brought in to join them in their organizing effort.

Chicanos and Japanese organizers and strikers were quite effective in contesting racialization by avoiding the kind of divisions that help the perpetuation of the process. They avoided categorizing each other in merely racial terms by using their class and ethnic background as unifying mechanisms and as tools for communication and internal unity. They avoided their bosses' tactics of dividing them against each other.

This contrasts quite clearly with another important agricultural strike studied by Gilbert Gonzalez (1999): the El Monte farm workers strike of 1933. In this case, Mexican farm workers were allied with Filipino workers. During the El Monte workers' strike the Mexican Consul, through Vice-Consul Ricardo Hill, made sure that the strikers did not develop the strategies that led to the victory that the JMLA achieved. Hill attempted to limit the militancy of the strikers by isolating the most militant, some of whom were socialists or radicals. In fact, the consulate allied itself with the Los Angeles Police Department's notorious Red Squad by identifying the

most active and radical Mexican labor leaders. During this period being accused of being a socialist or radical was tantamount to being accused of sedition and would ensure repatriation because socialist activity was an excuse commonly used to deport Mexicans during the 1930s (Balderrama and Rodríguez 1995: 48).

All of these interventions led to the demise of the Cannery Agricultural Industrial Workers Union (CAIWU) and to the defeat of the strike. In many ways, the role of the consular officers was to lessen the concern of growers that, in fact, Mexican workers were not as docile as they thought. The consular officers reinforced the stereotypical and racialized notion that Mexicans were innately docile and malleable. This contributed to an internalization of racial ideology by many workers who, by following the lead of the consular officers, led the union to its demise and to the defeat of their strike. A racialized ideology also led to racial and ethnic divisions between Mexican and other workers, notably Filipinos. In this context, racialization progressed much further.

The JMLA, after winning the strike, collapsed in a few years. Agricultural unions are difficult to maintain because of the seasonal nature of work of their members. The only way that local agricultural unions survive is by allying themselves with larger unions, particularly those in the industrial sector. The American Federation of Labor (AFL), the largest organization of workers at that time, refused to organize agricultural workers, particularly racialized minorities. Unfortunately for the JMLA, the AFL refused to grant workers a charter because Samuel Gompers did not want to have Japanese members in his union. (During that time the fear of Asian groups was foremost in popular culture.) African Americans had a very small presence in California, and Mexican Americans were racialized as a more docile and malleable group.

In the meantime in Puerto Rico, the same Samuel Gompers who had refused to allow Japanese agricultural workers in his AFL allied himself with Santiago Iglesias Pantín, the leader of Puerto Rico's Federación Libre de Trabajo (Free Labor Federation—FLT), which consisted mainly of sugar and tobacco workers. Black and mulatto Puerto Ricans comprised a significant part of the workforce. For example, Prudencio Rivera Martínez, referring to the leadership of the FLT in the first decades of this century, argued that of each ten leaders "8 would be mulattoes" (Guerra 1999: 22). In Puerto Rico the FLT in many ways accepted the tutelage of white men in order to develop the leverage the organization needed to deal with their local economic contenders, the sugar mill owners, who were both Anglo and Puerto Rican (Rodríguez 1988).

However, in Puerto Rico, because the labor movement had a strong presence and a strong egalitarian socialist and anarchist ideology, racialization was challenged more strongly within the labor movement than in the United States. Although the situation is not often discussed by island historians, during the first decades of U.S. domination labor activists began to engage in a public discussion of race (Suárez Findlay 1999). In fact, socialist activists often publicly identified as black:

Instead of distancing themselves from blackness and racial diversity, numerous federation organizers claimed them as an integral part of Puertoricanness. Many FLT (Federation of Free Labor) members and leaders were clearly of African descent themselves. They also affirmed this heritage for the entire working class. The white man was our father. The Black woman was our mother. (1999: 141)

So, in order to challenge the racialization process they were undergoing as workers, Puerto Rican laborers constructed an identity that challenged the divide-and-conquer tactics of U.S. and local white elites. They also went further and questioned the whiteness of the local elites, given the high degree of miscegenation in the island. In addition, the existence of significant and important political leaders who were black, such as José Celso Barbosa, among the supporters of statehood for Puerto Rico, and Pedro Albizu Campos, among pro-independence supporters, shaped racialization dynamics. Interestingly, the system of bipolar racial categories that the U.S. culture developed at the time did not take hold, unlike Puerto Rico today. Now most of the political leadership in Puerto Rico, both on the left and on the right, is white.

However, the understanding then that Puerto Rican activists had of racism was one that focused on attitudes and not on the institutionalized and systemic nature of racism. The metaphors of freedom and slavery were used to unite workers in challenging racial prejudice (Suárez Findlay 1999). However, ideological sophistication was greater in issues of gender than in issues of race. In fact, most labor leaders directly addressed issues of gender oppression as important issues in the class struggle:

In the years before World War I, leftist labor leaders recognized that women's oppression was rooted in both waged labor exploitation and the dominant norms and sexual practices of the day. (1999: 143)

They saw that gender issues raised by institutionalized practices went beyond attitudes and were rooted in the dominant economic system. Activists saw the need to transform institutions such as marriage and family in order to liberate women from oppression. Unfortunately, with the exception of labor ideologue Ramón Romero Rosa, most of the labor intelligentsia did not see the intersection of race, class, and gender. As Suárez Findlay explains: "Radical activists never acknowledged that women's racial identities might shape their experiences. Thus they implicitly recognized gender as a separate and more enduring social difference than race, demanding more extended analysis and practical reforms" (1999: 143).

In the educational system in Puerto Rico, racialization through Americanization took its course. But in terms of form and content, the experience of Puerto Ricans in the island and Chicanos in the Southwest was quite different. The attempt to Americanize the entire Puerto Rican population presented obstacles. However, because Puerto Ricans were the numerical majority in the island, there was no need to segregate them. However, teachers were brought in from the United States to teach American cultural norms to domesticate Puerto Ricans and instill the kind of loyalty the United States required to maintain its colonial domination. Martin G. Brumbaugh, Commissioner of Education (1900–1901), said, "Under wise and conservative officers, the people of Puerto Rico have turned to this Republic with a patriotism, a zeal, and enthusiasm that is perhaps without parallel" (Negrón de Montilla 1970: 37).

Also, as happened in other areas of the United States and in the Mexican economy, the process of subordinating Puerto Ricans included the dual wage system. According to Negrón de Montilla (1970), a newspaper article said in 1900:

The American teachers enjoy a better salary than the Puerto Rican teachers, yet instructions are given to the School Boards in the official newspaper, *La Gaceta*, that all American teachers must sign their contract for next year. No mention is made of Puerto Rican teachers, who are in more need because they earn lower salaries. (1970: 55)

The dual wage system taught American teachers they were superior and Puerto Rican teachers that they were inferior. This institutional arrangement was part of the process to socialize the Puerto Rican population into acceptance of its new inferior status in regard to white Americans.

The implementation of this educational system included the use of English as the medium of instruction and the relegation of Spanish to a subordinate status within the curriculum. The Puerto Rican, like the Mexican, was being domesticated into accepting his proper place within a racial hierarchy that had whites as the archetype of what Puerto Ricans should aspire to be.²³ This internalization was expected to be smooth, particularly since Puerto Ricans already were understood by Americans to be a malleable and peaceful people. Victor S. Clark's representation of Puerto Ricans is representative of such a concept:

The great mass of Puerto Ricans are as yet passive and plastic... Their ideals are in our hands to create and mold. We shall be responsible for the work when it is done, and it is our solemn duty to consider carefully and thoughtfully today, the character we wish to give the finished product of our influence and effort. (Negrón de Montilla 1970:13)

In a manner similar to what had happened in the Mexican experience, travelers, academics, and businessmen, began to shape the popular notion of Puerto Ricans as children, as inferior products of miscegenation, who needed the strong paternal hand of the master in order to learn their proper role in a racialized relationship. As historian Matos Rodríguez (1999) explains in his article, U.S. writers represented Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans as a problem:

Racial stereotypes in the U.S. also reinforced the vision that Puerto Ricans were intellectually inferior people given the high incidence of "*mestizaje*." U.S. writers and government officials constructed a perfect justification for colonialism: a disorder in need of intervention, an able United States willing to serve as problem solver, and an anxious Puerto Rican people striving to improve under U.S. guidance. (1999: 42)

However, such a "disorder," while in need of reorganization, nonetheless had the potential for helping Puerto Ricans achieve a higher if still subordinate status in the United States. Thompson (1995), in his reading of *Our Islands and their People*, finds that some U.S. observers believed that Puerto Ricans were to some extent redeemable:

[The Puerto Ricans] are a different race from the sodden populations of the Orient and the humbled and degraded masses of many European countries. When one looks into the intelligent faces of the Porto Rican girls or boys employed in the various little factories that exist in the island, he realizes that they have souls.... Spanish tyranny, during the three hundred years of its iron rule, did all it could to crush the spirit of the people but the benign climate and fructifying soil counteracted the poison of official repression, and the masses of the Porto Rican are today nearer the high standard of American thought and intelligence than the common people of any other country. (1995: 55-7)

These institutionalized arrangements, supported by a racist ideology spread through the economy, the educational system, criminal justice system, religious institutions, among others, helped maintain the system of racialization, while integrating leaders of the subordinated groups as gatekeepers. These institutional arrangements perpetuated white supremacy, simultaneously undermining the resistance of other sectors of the racialized communities. The structural organization of racialization set the stage for further development of a racialized hierarchy.

Placement in the racial hierarchy

During this third phase the racialized group is assigned a racial status within the racial system of stratification. Communities of color participated in what Clara Rodríguez calls “the acceptance of and participation in discrimination against people of color” (2000: 17). This stage leads into “negotiations regarding the group’s placement in the U.S. racial ethnic queue” (2000: 18). During this phase the racialized “Other” is taken up by the culture of both the dominant and the dominated group. Since racial categories are comparative taxonomical systems, a process of categorization includes a process of comparison. The comparison and categorization not only occurs between whites and the racialized “Other,” but may also include additional racialized subjects. This stage of racialization is shaped by historically specific recognitions of power and by social and economic changes taking place within the United States.

Precisely because the system is based on comparative taxonomies, new groups entering the racialized system began to internalize the norms that guided and maintained the racial hierarchy. As these groups were socialized and assimilated, they attempted to gain leverage by discriminating against the group either just beneath them or close to their own standing in the racial ladder. The Irish discriminated against blacks to establish their whiteness, or more accurately, their non-blackness, and assure for themselves a better placement in the racial ranking. Blacks became the “Other” that whitened them. Boricuas and Chicanos attempted to distance themselves from African Americans or other Latinos. This distancing also took place within racialized groups, particularly in terms of the native versus the foreign born.

In 1917, all Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship, an anomalous act given that a significant proportion of the population was, in the U.S. racial system, non-white. There were a number of factors involved. One was geopolitical:

the United States wanted to assure control over Puerto Rico for strategic reasons—as Pedro Albizu Campos, the nationalist leader, said, “The U.S. wants the cage, not the birds.” Second, many members of congress perceived the island as the whitest of the Antilles.²⁴ This process, which enabled Puerto Ricans to be granted U.S. citizenship in 1917, included the perception that they were less socially distant than Filipinos in American popular culture (Cabranes 1979: 17-8). Sectors of U.S. congress were concerned about opening the doors to a nation of “Orientals” and worried that Puerto Rico would become a precedent for the Philippines. Once it was clear the Philippines would not be annexed, Congress granted statutory U.S. citizenship to all Puerto Ricans. The racialized comparison with regard to Filipinos was also present in museum representations of Puerto Ricans and Filipinos during the early 20th century (Duany 2002).

Puerto Ricans living in the United States had a different experience from those in the island. Jesús Colón (1961), in his collection of stories based on his experience in New York in the early decades of the 20th century, describes how some Puerto Ricans faced the racially bifurcated system in the United States. Puerto Ricans in the United States experienced racialization by being perceived as non-white. In the early days many lived within African American communities and experienced racial discrimination in employment (1961: 44). Jesús Colón, a socialist and self-educated man with significant writing skills, had been hired to do some part-time translations for a film agency that distributed a film series popular in the Spanish-speaking community. The agency liked his work so much he was offered a job. But when Colón showed up at the agency’s door, the office manager said: “Yes, I wrote that letter.... That was to be your desk and typewriter. But I thought you were white” (1961: 51).

This experience also was reproduced with Puerto Rican musicians who performed in the United States. Juan Flores (2002) tells the story of Davilita, the Puerto Rican musician, who recalled how Puerto Ricans and Cubans, the darkest among Latinos in the United States, were paid less than other Latin Americans (Flores 2002: 69). In addition, Puerto Ricans experienced discrimination in cultural centers begun by Spanish immigrants. In her book on Puerto Rican musicians, Ruth Glasser (1995) explains how Asturian, Galician, Valencian, and other Spanish cultural clubs and centers had policies that excluded non-whites. In an effort to maintain their status as aspiring whites, Spanish immigrants coped by racially discriminating against Puerto Ricans. A similar experience occurred among Cubans in Tampa, Florida, at the turn of the century. The racial codes of the south divided white from black—categorizations that went unchallenged by Cubans aspiring to a white status (Santiago-Valles 2000: 15-6).

In the Mexican experience, differences between native and foreign-born Mexicans in the United States signified different positions of status within the Mexican-American community. While the Mexican American was racialized and subordinated to whites, a foreign-born, non-citizen Mexican occupied a lower position in the racial hierarchy. The conflicts that existed in the Mexican community in the 1930s, when close to one million Mexicans were repatriated, raised the issue of who occupied a lower racial status within the community (Balderrama and Rodríguez 1995). Those who were not repatriated were able to avoid, temporarily, being placed in the lowest racial status possible in the Southwest during this period.

Also, the conflicts between the “Spanish” Mexicans and the “Indian” Mexicans, which arose as groups negotiated their standing within the racial hierarchy, were rooted in an acceptance of the racial hierarchy and an attempt to leverage a higher

status by distancing themselves from the lower racial category (Almaguer 1994). The creation of a Hispano category in New Mexico was also a way of establishing distance between the newly arrived Mexican immigrants and the native New Mexicans of Mexican ancestry. In fact, the term “Mexican” had become so racialized that Mexican Americans preferred to be described as “Spanish” or “Hispano” than as “Mexican.” These distinctions reinforced a system that in practice would not make any meaningful distinction between one or the other. In some states, for example, Texas, the distancing was so great that the Mexican elites at times even allied themselves with the Ku Klux Klan, hoping to achieve in this alliance a measure of whiteness (Acuña 1988).

Among Puerto Ricans, the internal distinctions between darker- and lighter-skinned Puerto Ricans became more pronounced. The United States, in its process of Americanization, also tended to narrow the range of racial categories in the racial continuum (Rodríguez 1997). The ideal Puerto Rican was not a real, concrete mulatto or *mestizo* Puerto Rican but a “Spanish” Puerto Rican. For some, the real Puerto Rican was white, and, could trace his lineage to Spain (never to Africa). Lillian Guerra (1998) explains how the Puerto Rican historian Cayetano Coll y Cuchi, who was educated in the United States, began to question U.S. imperial policies in Puerto Rico by assuming a Hispanic Puerto Rican identity. His resistance identity, however, was still problematic:

Yet, importantly, the reference point for the resistant identity that Coll y Cuchi discovered within himself he did not articulate as essentially “Puerto Rican,” but as Spanish. Coll y Cuchi’s defensive prescription against Americanization’s critique of all things Puerto Rican as well as his own avowal of that critique were both equally colonial. (Guerra 1998: 46)

Efforts to whiten the image of being a Puerto Rican as a way of resisting racialization through Americanization led to a process of whitening one of the most important symbols of Puertoricanness, the *jíbaro*: the Puerto Rican peasant. As a symbol of the true Puerto Rican, the *jíbaro* began to spread through Puerto Rican popular culture during the 19th century. The opposing “Other,” racially speaking, was composed of the Spanish at that time; however, in the 20th century, the category of the “Other” comprised U.S. whites, who were devoted to the process of Americanization.

Lillian Guerra (1998) further develops José Luis González’ (1993) analysis of how the concept of the *jíbaro* became an instrument used to leverage the Puerto Rican into a whiter status within the racialized hierarchy in Puerto Rico. The myth of the *jíbaro* as representative of true Puertoricanness pivoted on the “denial of an Afro-Mestizo historical reality from which many Puerto Rican customs and world views were derived—even by creole peasants, the *jíbaros* themselves” (1998: 55).

However, U.S. white colonizers were not entirely convinced:

Brigadier General George W. Davis, one of the colonial governors of Puerto Rico, states that ‘between the Negro and the peon there is no visible difference.’ Davis found it difficult to ‘believe that the pale, sallow and often emaciated beings’ were indeed ‘the descendants of the conquistadors.’ (Santiago-Valles 1994: 45)

The civilizing mission of the United States utilized Americanization efforts to bring the “native” into a closer, albeit still unequal, status with U.S. whites. Native inhabitants were seen as amoral, primitive, violent, childish, overly sexual beings who required domestication. The multivalenced image of Puerto Ricans provided a contradictory image of the new colonial subjects, who were seen as docile yet violent, innocent yet amoral; these opposed categories defined Puerto Ricans as noble savages. Thompson (1995) describes how Puerto Ricans were read in their pictorial representations as living in Eden yet engaging in “uncivilized” behaviors that were not conducive to equal status with the colonizer:

They [the Puerto Ricans] live so close to nature that the things which would seem improper to us are with them the innocent affairs of their daily life. In many respects they are still in that Edenic state which thinks no evil and consequently knows none. (Thompson 1995: 30)

This characterization also leads to dehumanizing Puerto Ricans because a racialized conception of identity sees rational people as weighing the consequences of their actions, while animals are judged by instincts rather than reason. In fact, Puerto Ricans were described as animals by authors bent on perpetuating a racialized conception of self:

Morals, in the technical sense, they have none, but they cannot be said to sin, because they have no knowledge of the law, and therefore, they cannot commit no breach of law. They are naked and are not ashamed... There is evil, but there is not the demoralizing effect of evil. They sin, but they sin only as animals, without shame, because there is no sense of being wrong. (Thompson 1995: 31)

Also, the natives, in order to fit within the new system, had to have their sexuality and family life reshaped. Americanizing the culture became a way of transferring Yankee moral standards into the everyday practice of the subaltern. Suárez Findlay (1999: 111) clearly demonstrates the almost evangelical way colonial administrators sought to alter the Puerto Rican:

They endeavored to homogenize their new colonial subjects sexually, to reduce diverse popular sexual practices and morals to a unified standard of heterosexual marriage and two-parent families, thus instilling their Anglo-Saxon, bourgeois social and cultural ideas in the island’s populace.

Both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans found placement in the new racial order and, rather contradictorily, contributed to their own subordination. The new racial identity and status created competition within and between groups, all of which sought to leverage the most advantageous and least stigmatizing position within a hierarchy in which whites were at the top while the subalterns were divided against each other.

Crystallization of a racial identity

The fourth and final stage is the crystallization of a racialized identity; this process of individuation takes place through the systemic processes of assimilation, Americanization, and homogenization. During this phase, the internalization of racist oppression becomes a signifying characteristic that jointly, with institutional arrangements, serves to reinforce the systems at the individual level and limit the process of contestation at the systemic level (Rodríguez 2002). Internalization is a major factor limiting resistance; the process is described by Franz Fanon (1986) as “the most powerful weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” It is within the tactic of internalization that the racial system finds its strategic self-perpetuating mechanisms.

The internalization of racist oppression becomes the *carimbo*, or branding, marking the racialized subject. The mark is not physical but socio-psychological instead.²⁵ The changes in culture and identity that take place in this stage do not appear as the products of coercion; instead, they are perceived as innate to the individual and the culture. A racialized culture and identity, either Mexican American or Boricua, is created in response to and in contestation of the process of racialization. Therefore, the individual and groups that arise as racial groups, Mexican Americans and Boricuas, not only are racialized by the institutions and systems of white supremacy, they are also racialized by colonized and racialized cultural practices. They are colonized from within the cultural spaces of these communities. These new racialized cultures are constructed by oppressed communities using, in these cases, Mexican and Puerto Rican cultural elements together with the new cultural traits that arise out of an experience of oppression.

However, at times these new learned behaviors are divisive and self-destructive. The sense of self that is constructed in this stage of racialization is one imbued with a sense of powerlessness. It is the mode by which “race,” in its political sense, becomes a lived reality. Subordination becomes embedded in the culture in subtle and powerful ways. Although *parejería* and *pochismo* in the Puerto Rican and Mexican American context don’t lead to liberation, they provide the means to survive in hostile environments.²⁶

Through this sociocultural process, identities are socially constructed to fit into the racial hierarchy. This enables white supremacy to extend the power of racism into the deepest recesses of the personhood of the subaltern.²⁷ Internalized racist oppression leads racialized subjects into behaviors that are, at times, due to coping mechanisms. Other ways of coping in a racialized society include denying one’s true self and mimicking the dominant archetype. In a society where the racial categories are fluid, and where gradations of color are what determines a person’s racial status, it is possible to pass and become white.

In Puerto Rico, an interesting phenomenon took place: the statistical disappearance of blacks and the whitening of the Puerto Rican population. The process of seeking whiteness had a deep impact on the sense of Puerto Rican racial identity. In 1910, 29.98 percent (335,192 persons) of the population identified itself as mulatto and 4.49 percent (50,245 persons) as black. In the next decennial census, in 1920, there were 7.5 percent less blacks and mulattos in the census (Guerra 1998: 221). Concurrently, this decline in persons of color was accompanied by an increase of 7.5 percent in the number of whites. Nearly 34,000 mulattos and blacks disappeared statistically from the census data.

As Guerra (1998) and González (1993) have pointed out, Puerto Rico during the 18th and early 19th century was composed of a population with a high percentage of

blacks and mulattos. Although there were thousands of whites who, prompted by the liberal immigration incentives of the 1815 Cédula de Gracias, migrated from Haiti, Spain, and other parts of Europe, their influence in the whitening process was balanced by the illegal immigration of thousands of blacks from the English-speaking West Indies. In fact, the first census of Puerto Rico carried out by the U.S. government in 1899 showed that 38.2 percent of the Puerto Rican population was non-white (Duany 2002: 248). By 1920 the non-white population, statistically speaking, fell to 27 percent without any major emigration of black Puerto Ricans taking place.

Additionally, according to Guerra (1998), no significant migration of whites into Puerto Rico occurred between 1910 to 1920; the 7.55 percent increase in the white population could not be justified in this way. The only thing that had changed is that Puerto Ricans did not want to be considered black. To be black in an Americanizing colony meant being left in the lowest rung of the racialized colonial order. Although the process cannot be considered genocide in the traditional sense of the word, it does suggest that certain forms of representation and identity were vanquished in the culture. The African in Puerto Rico could not be physically exterminated but could be conceptually eliminated as a form of identity and as an expression of self.

But contrary to the racialization of Mexicans before the 1890s in the United States, the tendency toward racializing the new subjects during the early part of the 20th century was rooted in pseudoscientific racism (Shipman 1994). As mentioned before, before the 1890s Mexicans were seen as a culturally distinct people. They were seen as an ethnic group which, while racialized and subordinated, is still considered to have a higher status than American Indians or African Americans. Mexicans in the newly conquered states were Christian (although Catholic), spoke a European tongue (although Spanish), and were not as dark (although brown) as the other two other groups. As long as the Mexican population was not completely subordinated, they were perceived as culturally different.

During the 20th century Mexicans become racially distinct in the new racialized order, which was shaped by a new popular culture that biologized difference. In the documentary *Los Mineros*, directed by Paul Espinosa and produced by Héctor Galán in 1991, we are told the history of the racialization of a mining community in Clifton/Morenci Arizona during the first four decades of the 20th century. Sylvester Morris, a mine owner, is quoted: “My own experience has taught me that the lower class of Mexicans are docile, faithful, good servants, capable of strong attachments when firmly and kindly treated. They have been ‘peons’ for generations. They will always remain so, as it is their natural condition.”

In terms of gender, there is a cultural dynamic that reflects how a racialized subject develops through gender role socialization. This can be seen among women members of the Mexican American working class during the 1930s in the United States. In Vicky Ruiz’ study (1996) on acculturation and child-rearing practices, we notice the internalization of racist oppression in quite a distinct way. For example, families engaged in the practice of steering women away from members of their own group and promoting marriage with whites, an action also seen in Puerto Rican and other Latin American cultures. This activity was labeled as *mejorar la raza* or improving the race. This is a way of whitening one’s offspring so that they will be able to pass as whites and leave the racialized community behind. It becomes an individualistic way out of subordination, although it is a process that reinforces the same system it pretends to challenge.

Ruiz also talks about how the culture viewed Mexican women as “morally loose, Latina actresses in Hollywood ... typecast as hot blooded women of lower repute.” This viewpoint assumes that almost animalistic urges and instincts exist in groups already racialized as subpersons. Although racialization of the sexuality of Chicanas also took place among Puerto Rican women in Puerto Rico, active labor socialist-feminists contested some of the sexist discourse. The FLT (Federación Libre de Trabajadores) in Puerto Rico actively organized women workers and provided a culture that developed the leadership skills of women.

This racialized view of Puerto Ricans is contrasted with that of Mexicans. In the relationship between Anglos and Mexican, the racialization of Mexicans is rooted in the assumption that miscegenation processes supposedly tainted Spanish blood (Spaniards were already a questionably racially pure European group given the role of Romans, Muslims, Jews, Africans in Iberia). The focus is on the specific role of indigenous ancestry. In Puerto Rico’s racialization, the process pivots around the assumed African ancestry present in all Puerto Ricans. But it is in the United States, rather than in the island, where the African ancestry of Puerto Rico becomes a clearly stigmatizing, biological characteristic.

Mark Reisler describes how Anglo perceptions of this racialized subject during the 1920s were deeply biologized, and how they shaped public policy. He points out how the debate about restrictions in immigration took place within the same set of discursive racialized themes: Mexicans in the U.S. are an inferior group, that is, they are “docile, indolent and backward” (1996: 25).

The weakness of organizations such as labor unions among Mexican Americans and their exclusion from political parties led to a different level of racialization in the mainland. For example, on one side of the debate concerning the restriction of immigration were those who argued that bringing into the nation persons who had those kinds of qualities would alter, stain, and dilute the higher set of qualities that were part of the contributions of people of European stock. In other words, since it was assumed that cultural characteristics were rooted in race, and since Mexicans represented a racial group with Indian blood, it was feared that these characteristics might enter the American gene pool through miscegenation. But in this hierarchy of racialized groups, Puerto Ricans fared worst.

The growers of California in the 1920s wanted to have access to cheap labor to reduce the costs of agricultural production. White labor was not willing to do the hard, backbreaking work in the fields, so growers depended on Filipino, Japanese, and Mexican labor. In order to protect their source of labor power, the growers argued that if the government curtailed Mexican migration, they would have to look for another source of labor. They openly expressed their fear of bringing in blacks and facing in California what they described as the racial problems of the South. But particularly they feared being forced to bring in Puerto Ricans for work. In the words of George Clements, director of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce agricultural department:

While they all have Negro blood in their veins, the greater part of them are without those physical markings which can only protect society. They are red-headed, freckle-faced, thin lipped Negro hybrids with the vicious qualities of their progenitors....
(Reisler 1996: 36)

Puerto Ricans are tolerated within the confines of the island because there they are perceived as reformable, racialized subjects. However, in the mainland they are perceived as a threat. The threat occurs because the growers see miscegenation as so pervasive among this population that it is not always possible to distinguish who is really a white Puerto Rican and who is not. This obviously could lead to further miscegenation, which would result in the Puerto Rican population’s continuing to taint and degrade the white race. This is particularly troubling for a system based on white supremacy. Leo Stanton Rowe (1908: 98) warns the United States in the following quotation:

A country in which the mass of the population has been kept in either slavery or in a condition of social inferiority is certain to retain the sexual relations of a primitive period for a long time after the causes giving rise to these relations have disappeared.

The fear of “mongrelization” leads the supporters of imperialism and expansion to call for a settler policy in Puerto Rico. It is suggested that white Americans should begin to settle Puerto Rico to insure control and avoid the invasion of inferior races into the United States (Healey 1970).

Conclusions

Unfortunately, race was and continues to be an enduring social difference, and its systemic challenges then and today still pose a contemporary challenge to an antiracist social movement and perspective. Racialization is a powerful concept that provides insights into the way racism works in the United States and the Caribbean.

Racialization is a process that reclassifies groups into a lower racial status. Racialization is a process of subordination and domination. It is rooted in an intellectual scientific tradition that permeated the popular culture in the United States and that emphasized supposedly biological differences. Rather than being the cumulative effect of individual actions, racism and racialism are better understood as part of a pattern that is constructed in a systemic way. All societal institutions practice racialization in particular ways, using pre-existing conceptual materials proper to the tradition (educational systems, previous racial hierarchies, religious systems, media, etc.). Racialization has a structure that can be discerned, with different consequences and methods identified with each stage.

Racialized individuals both challenge and contribute to the process of racialization. The role of internalized racist oppression is crucial to understand how racialization impacts the sense of self. We need to look at racialized groups when they challenge racialization, or when they reinforce racialism by to maintaining the stereotypes used to construct racialized images.

Racialization leads to the homogenization of ethnic groups and their transformation into a racial group that obliterates the heterogeneity of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. The colored lens used by the racializer blinds him to the diversity of racial groups existing within the racialized group. The impact of this perception is so powerful that subordinated racialized groups have assumed the prejudiced persona the racializer gave them. Clara Rodríguez, in her book *Puerto Ricans Born in the USA*, finds that New York Puerto Ricans describe themselves as darker than what they appear. This is particularly more evident among those who have lived in the U.S. the longest.²⁸

The intersection of race, class and gender during this period needs to be looked at more closely within a theoretical framework. There is a need to look at racialization within the Spanish period in Puerto Rico, so that its differences from racialization under the United States can be understood. The economic process, the institution of slavery, and other important structural components of the racial system under Spain have been researched, but there is a need to connect all of these within a theoretical framework that focuses on racialization.

There is also a need to look and contrast the experiences of Puerto Ricans in the United States and the island. The racialization of Puerto Ricans in New York during this period is quite distinct from what was taking place in Puerto Rico. How can we otherwise explain why one of Puerto Rico's leading intellectuals in the U.S., Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, chose to lead an African consciousness movement in the mainland? In contrast, Albizu Campos chose the nationalist road to unite Puerto Ricans irrespective of race. Two powerful Puerto Rican intellectuals of African ancestry chose two different roads to address and challenge oppression.

Racialization is a process that has its greater impact on groups. In others words, while a small number of Mexican or Puerto Rican individuals may be able to pass and eventually become "whitened," that has not been the experience of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans as a group. There were points in time when this might have happened, particularly after World War II; however, the racially stratified system was reinforced after the 1960s (this is another topic that needs to be explored). After World War II, Chicanos were in the process of becoming "whitened." Veterans had been able to achieve a modicum of status and economic security through the GI Bill, Federal Housing Administration (FHA), etc. They had been able to move, particularly in California, to the suburbs, which, while aging, were nonetheless suburbs. They were able to enter many unions; and so it seemed that the slow process of integration was going to happen. One index of this was increasing Mexican support for the Republican Party, and the early integration of Mexicans into the Democratic Party (through Viva Kennedy clubs). However, the economic restructuring that began to be salient in the 1960s, the re-racialization that took place ironically as a result of the Civil Rights movement, and the increased immigration brought about by the 1965 migration law shifted the course of racialization again.

For Boricuas as well as Chicanos the challenge today will be learning how to resist racialization in light of the increasing economic polarization within both communities. The large, growing middle class and upper middle class in both communities have less and less contact with the working class majorities. It is the working class segments of both communities, those groups that are being racialized more intensely, that constitute the majority among the Latino population of the United States. Any anti-racist agenda in the United States and Puerto Rico will most likely include a clear linking of class, race, and gender if the dismantling of white supremacy and racism in the U.S. is to be successful.



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NOTES

¹ Throughout this essay racialization is defined as a process understood to "signify the extension of racial meaning to a previously unclassified relationship, social practice or group." (Omi and Winant 1986: 64). Racial categorization is constructed on the basis of assumed biological characteristics, which are assumed to represent some essential difference. The final outcome of racialization is the construction of a racial group that is then seen and experienced as a subordinate, homogeneous category of people in a hierarchy of racial groups.

² There is a vast literature that has contributed to the ideological deconstruction of the racialization process in the United States. Racialization's genealogy has its origins in the efforts of the plantation elite to divide and conquer poor whites and black indentured servants in the plantation economies of the early U.S. colonies (Allen 1994). We have come to understand the legal process of delineating the boundaries of the politically constructed racial categories (Haney Lopez 1996), and there is a significant amount of work on the construction of whiteness and the racialization of European immigrants (Roediger 1991; Ignatiev 1995; Brodtkin 1998). These efforts have deepened our understanding of how the categories are constructed and how new ethnic groups are incorporated into the racial system.

³ I will use the concept of "people of Latin American origin" (Mexicans or Puerto Ricans) to differentiate from "Latinos/Hispanics," which is the term I will use for these groups after they have experienced racialization. I recognize that the category "Latino" is often used among academics who challenge the Eurocentricity of the term "Hispanic" (Oboler 1995; Acuña 1996, 2000) and the process of "whitening" people of Latin American origin, but it should be remembered that the term is as problematic as "Hispanic" is. The term "Latin America," coined by Francophiles during the 19th century, to provide a counterhegemonic myth to Anglo-Saxon expansion. This makes both the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" problematic since they are both the outcome of European efforts to control the new nations and groups from the Americas (Phelan 1968).

⁴ Suzanne Oboler (1997) argues that the process of homogenization is a product of the experience of people of Latin American origin within the United States. Despite the linguistic similarities, Latinos' historical experience, the racial make-up of their population, and their relationship to the United States created significant cultural differences among different groups.

⁵ In New York, for example, Latin Americans became racialized within the so-called Puerto Rican melting pot. While Puerto Ricans are losing their numerically predominant position in an increasingly diverse Latino New York, Puerto Rican culture remains a significant avenue for Latin Americans participating in the Latinization of New York (Kugel 2002). A similar process exists in Southern California, for example, where other people of Latin American origin have become acculturated in a Mexican cultural milieu (Godinez 2001).

⁶ By "double consciousness" DuBois meant the process of racialization, wherein people of African descent are provided with a racialized self that feels uncomfortable because it is an identity created to dominate and control. DuBois writes: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused

contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (1906: 12).

7 For a description of the racialization of Puerto Rican ethnicity, see Rodríguez’ (1997) description of the racialization of Puerto Rican ethnicity.

8 As Nieto-Phillips (1999) has argued in his helpful historical comparison of the New Mexican and Puerto Rican experience under imperialism, although the histories of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans are quite distinct, at times “at various points in time and in the context of U.S. imperialism, [such histories are] inextricably connected . . .” (1999: 51).

9 Vicente Ramon Guerrero Saldaña (1782–1831) was the second president of Mexico. He had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Mexican War of Independence. Of African and Indian heritage, he was a brilliant military strategist. He was executed in 1831 after leading a rebellion against General Anastacio Bustamente. The leftist Leonardo Zavala and conservative Nicolas Bravo, both of whom also rebelled against the central government, were sent into exile—only the black Guerrero was executed.

10 The “one drop rule” or the rule of hypodescent assigns the offspring of a mixed race couple the less prestigious status of the two parents. Therefore, a black and white couple’s child will be “non-white.” Within this system black women can never have a “white” child but a white woman can have a “non-white” child. See Harris (1997: 320).

11 See Taylor Haizlip (1995) for a historical account of “passing” within the African American community.

12 U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Redistricting. Summary Files, Tables PL and PL 2.

13 See Rodríguez (2000, 2002b) for an article on the background politics behind the use of race questions in the census in Puerto Rico.

14 Race has two definitions that are used in this work in different contexts, for example, “race” as a demographic characteristic, as it is used by the census, and “race” as a political concept. In the demographic sense race “reflects a social definition of race recognized in this country” (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Politically, however, “race” is “a social category used to assign human worth and social status using Europeans as a paradigm” (Karenga 2002).

15 The influence of “Taylorism” in pedagogical thought during the first decades of the 20th century was rooted in the need to domesticate (not educate) workers for brutish work in assembly lines of industrial production. Most of the workers were immigrants from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Southern and Central Europe, those from the last category forming some of the most racialized European immigrant groups. For more on the situation in Mexico, see Gilbert Gonzalez (2000).

16 The Carnegie Institution in 1903 awarded Charles Benedict Davenport \$34,250 for “the formation and continuance of the Station for the Experimental Study of Evolution in Cold Spring Harbor, New York.” He also became a leader of the American Breeders Association and its Eugenics section, under whose aegis he researched “heredity in the human race and emphasize[d] the value of superior blood and the menace to society of inferior blood” (Selden 1999: 4).

17 Renato Rosado (1989: 201) argues that culture is a marker of difference in a society with social stratification: “As one approaches the top rungs on the ladder of social mobility, however, the process reverses itself. At this point one begins a process of cultural stripping away.” Also, the ideology of the process tends to obscure power in the relationship between social groups: “Analysts rarely allow the ratio of class and culture to include power. Thus they conceal the ratio’s darker side: the more power one has, the less culture one enjoys, and the more culture one has, the less power one wields” (1989: 202).

18 Most of the early Anglo immigrants in the Southwest were men who sought new avenues of upward mobility. Many Anglos entered the Mexican elite by marrying their daughters. In Arizona, for example, “between 1872 and 1899, intermarriage remained high,

with 148 of 784, or 14 percent of all marriages, being between Anglo men and Mexican females; during the same period only 6 involved Mexican men and Anglo women” (Acuña 1988: 89). In California, a similar process occurred; in some cases, it was a way for the Anglo elite to assure an incontestably “white” status for their progeny (Acuña 1988: 116–8).

19 Another reason for the form of resistance was the level of violence and criminalization used against Mexicans after the Mexican American War, which ended in 1848. See Alfredo Miranda (1987) for a historical description of the demonization and violent subordination of Mexicanos.

20 The Platt Amendment, imposed by the United States, allowed the United States to maintain a naval base in Cuba (Guantanamo) and to intervene any time it thought necessary to “preserve Cuban independence” (Keen and Haynes 2000: 431).

21 A recent inquiry into the land tenure of Puerto Rico, from 1899 to 1915, by Cesar J. Ayala and Laird W. Bergad (2001) argues that land tenure in fact became less concentrated in the early years of U.S. imperial hegemony. However, the power of U.S. sugar and tobacco interests, while mediated in more nuanced ways than thought before, still exercised hegemony over the island’s agricultural economy.

22 The role of labor brokers in attracting Puerto Rican labor to the United States was made easier after Puerto Rico’s economic debacle caused by U.S. policies following the Spanish–American War of 1898 see E. Maldonado (1979) and B.C. Souza (1984).

23 A process of subordination was utilized in various shapes and forms in the racialization of Native Americans/Indians and African Americans; see Spring (1997), who provides a good synopsis of the impact of imperial education on the subaltern.

24 The perception that most Puerto Ricans were “white” in the eyes of congress was crucial to conferring citizenship to Puerto Ricans. Since the 1790 Naturalization Act, only whites could become U.S. citizens. This did not change until the 1951 Walter-McCarren Act, which opened the door to “non-whites” who wanted to become U.S. citizens.

25 Internalized Racist Oppression (IRO) is defined by Anne Stewart (2000) as a “complex, multi-generational process of socialization that teaches people of color to believe, accept and live out a negative societal definition. These behaviors contribute to the perpetuation of the race construct.”

26 Parejeria is one way of individually challenging dominant groups or individuals without outright confrontation. Pochismo is a culture that arises out of rejection by the mainstream for not being fully “American” and rejection in the Mexican culture for not being “Mexican” enough. Other racialized coping mechanisms are gendered, as Gina Pérez in her lecture “Puertorriqueñas rencorosas y Mejicanas sufridas” points out. “Constructing Self and Others in Chicago’s Latino Communities,” a paper of hers given at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, explains how these gender-based coping mechanisms are stereotypes that are then presented as positive traits. While these mechanisms do not challenge racialization, they help survival. Web published by CENTRO Talks at http://www.prdream.com/patria/centro/02_26/perez.html.

27 The impact of racism on subordinated, racialized groups was first discussed sociologically by African American sociologist W.E.B. Dubois (1961). Classic accounts of racism by Albert Memmi and Franz Fanon broadened this understanding by incorporating it into the colonial experience. Contemporary antiracist theory and perspective identifies racialized identity as “internalized racist oppression” (Rodríguez 2002).

28 In some exploratory focus groups among students in a course at the University of Puerto Rico (1998), I found that those who had lived in the United States (there is significant circular migration in Puerto Rico) were more likely to describe themselves using color categories that were darker than those used by the other respondents who rated them. Rodríguez calls this phenomenon a “browning tendency,” which operates as an index of racialization.

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