THE SHAPING OF PUERTO RICAN IDENTITY ON THE MAINLAND OF THE UNITED STATES

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MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This explorative work tries to understand the ways Puerto Ricans define themselves as such on the mainland of the United States. Due to the history of the island, including a lengthy colonial period, Puerto Ricans can find themselves in the precarious position of being in between different cultures or aspects of culture as defined by the cultural discourse in the United States. A relatively recent hurricane that devastated the island has seemingly reopened discussions about the island and the way it and its inhabitants are viewed in the United States. This work attempts to understand the ways in which Puerto Ricans living on the mainland of the United States shape their identity within this context. In order to examine this topic, in depth semi structured interviews have been conducted with people who identify as Puerto Rican in the New Jersey and New York area. These interviewed were based on a framework comprising known aspects of Puerto Rican culture such as music, food and language, as well as the insights provided by phenomenology, embodiment theory and intersectionality. The information provided through the interviews were transcribed and analysed to contribute to the understanding of Puerto Rican identity and how these people have changed aspects of these identities before and after the hurricane and the corresponding governmental response. Puerto Rican identity seems to be a balancing act between a multitude factors that are deemed more or less important according to the people Puerto Ricans interact with. The interviews also suggest that Puerto Ricans are reevaluating their social cultural position in society after the inadequate response of their government pertaining the hurricane.Puerto Ricans on the mainland appear to be aware of their social and cultural position in society, and seem to be willing to become more vocal about the inequalities inherent to this position.

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Introduction

The island of Puerto Rico represents an interesting case for many different topics of research. From its colonial past, and arguably present, to all forms of identity its culture has brought forth. The island and its people are a mix of all kinds of cultures and ethnicities, that over time were distilled into a multitude of cultural practices and identities. But, unlike a 'regular' country, the case of Puerto Rican identity is unique in many ways.

First of all, Puerto Rico is not a sovereign country. It is a territory of the United States of America as of 1898, after it became a colony under United States rule after the Spanish American war (Duany, 2017; Welcome to Puerto Rico, 2018). This has made for a very special status for the island, the status of territory. Due to this status, Puerto Rico constitutes an example of a post-colonial colony. And while the United States has granted more and more self-governing freedom to the island, the final political authority of the island remains in the hands of the United States Congress (Neuman & Brown-Nagin, 2015).

The particular status of Puerto Rico can be seen as the catalyst for this research. As a territory of the United States, Puerto Rico has been the recipient of some forms of legislation that have greatly affected the island and the lives of every Puerto Rican. Chief of these legislations is the granting of the United States citizenship to any person born in Puerto Rico since 1917 (Jones-Shafroth Act, 1917), subsequently allowing any Puerto Rican to live on the mainland of the United States. This has led to several waves of migration, if one can call it as such, towards the mainland of the United States and back. This dynamic

has shaped the identities of the people on both sides of the sea to a great extent over time. One group living in the English speaking mainland while the other stayed on the island, and their identities stuck somewhere in between.

After years of living in a different country/world, identities started to shift and change. As such, Puerto Ricans living on the mainland used many different strategies to redefine their identities, and as such changed the way they identify themselves. It resulted in the many ways Puerto Ricans on the mainland identify themselves, and the differences in identification between them and the inhabitants of the island. However, the identity and social position of Puerto Ricans across regions has been shaken after hurricane Maria struck the island in 2017, and with the subsequent help, or lack thereof, from the United States. This subject has reactualized the topic of the relationship between the United States and its territory, and subsequently the relationship Puerto Ricans on the island and outside towards the United States, including the way they define themselves in the changing socio-political landscape.

Societal and scientific relevance

The response to the hurricane has possibly laid bare the true nature of the relationship between the island and the mainland for many Puerto Ricans. The lack of help and attention towards disaster relief for the island, especially as compared to the response of previous hurricanes that made landfall in the United States specifically in Texas and Florida has opened up an avenue for protest towards the government and the status quo between the island and the United States (FEMA, 2018; CNN, 2017). Such an important series of events could likely have led to changes in attitude and subsequently identity for any involved. Even before these recent events, the question of identity has always been relevant, especially in the case of Puerto Ricans on the mainland. Ever since their integration into the sphere of influence of the United States, many argue they have been seen as typical loyal subjects at first and as second rate citizens after they became legal citizens of the United States (Aranda, 2007; Duany, 2017). This may in part be due to the lack of knowledge many mainland non Puerto Rican Americans have regarding the status of Puerto Rico and all of its people. Many people in the United States do not know that Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States. (Pew Research Center, 2017). One could also add the spectrum of skin colour present in the Puerto Rican population as an important factor of identification, especially in the racial landscape of the United States. What one looks like determines their place in the white-black racial divide in the country. With a group as racially diverse as Puerto Rico, two members of the same family can and end up on either side of the racial divide. Needless to say, this can have great effects on how is perceived and identified, which in turn can influence the way one identifies themselves (Erikson, 1959; Worchel & Austin, 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

Trying to understand the identities of the estimated 5.5 million Puerto Ricans living on the mainland of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017) may be difficult, but I argue it is equally important. Important for anyone who wants to understand this group as a whole, be it for political, sociological and/or psychological reasons, to name a few. As the second largest group of Latin Americans living in the United States, understanding their

identities should be a worthwhile endeavor for anyone who is living in the same country as these people.

The question remains how one can research the identity of Puerto Ricans. As stated above, many factors can and have probably influenced the way mainland Puerto Ricans identify themselves. Some researchers have looked into this subject a few decades ago, looking at migration, cultural expressions like music, food and dance (Duany, 1984; Tropp et al, 1999; Renta, 2004; Aparicio, 2010; Cuadra, 2013; Negus, 2013). Others have looked at specific Puerto Rican groups, like the people who engage in return migration between the mainland and the island (Aranda, 2007). While it is true that the many aspects of identity and specific Puerto Rican groups have been researched before, recent years have not been very kind to the island. An ongoing recession (World Bank, 2019) and two hurricanes have hit the island severely (FEMA, 2019).

The study of identity has many aspects that could all be called important to its forming and maintenance. In the specific case of Puerto Rico, one could think about racial identity, a prominent subject in the social debate of the United States (Omi & Winant, 1998; Lawrence, 2000; Bederman, 2008), cultural identity and its many aspects like the aforementioned food, music and dance, the effect of language on the subject of identification (Zentella, 1990; Duany, 2000) and even the influence of the physical and social environment (Allport, 1954; Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Tajfel & Turner. 2004). The goal of this research is not to unearth all these topics again in the hopes of reigniting the debate about said topics, but to use all these known influencers of identity to try to understand the ways mainland Puerto Ricans have formed their identities over time and how these identities may have changed in the past few years. Particularly in the context of the 2017 hurricane and its physical, social and political aftermath.

The identity of mainland Puerto Ricans in a broad sense will not be the only focus of this research. With regards to this identity and identity forming, Puerto Ricans find themselves in a very particular position. A position that is not dictated by a single major influence, but by at least two, the ‘American’ and the Puerto Rican. They are potentially exposed to both of these cultures/societies while simultaneously being judged by their standards. As such,

Puerto Ricans on the mainland may be forced to navigate, mix and match their identities, whether they want to fit in with the dominant culture and identity or differentiate themselves from it. To put it plainly, are they American (from the United States), Puerto Rican, both, none or something else entirely?

The examination of these themes will hopefully bring new insights into the forming of mainland Puerto Rican identities by looking at the ways these people identify themselves and are perceived to be identified by others. Furthermore, the hurricane could prove to be an event that may have changed the perceived social position of (mainland) Puerto Ricans. If this is the case, it could provide highlight about how these changes can take place, and how this specific catastrophe has influenced their identities. This may not only provide an update to research about identities of mainland Puerto Ricans, but hopefully also provide a better understanding as to how the hurricane, its aftermath and relatively recent changes in the United States socio-political landscape as a whole may have changed mainland Puerto Rican identities.

Objectives and Questions

It should come as no surprise that the main topic of this research will be mainland Puerto Rican identity. More specifically, the different ways it is constructed. This leads us to the main question of this thesis: 'How is mainland Puerto Rican identity shaped?'. In other words, how is mainland Puerto Rican identity constructed from the perspective of mainland Puerto Ricans? The question of identity shaping is still a very broad question. Identity can be constructed in many ways, as I hope to have made clear with the previous chapters. As such, the different possible aspects of identity will be subdivided in different sub questions.

The first subdivision of questions will cover some of the many aspects that constitute Puerto Rican culture in general. Thus, the question of identity will be subdivided into these following categories regarding culture: music, dance, food and language. These aspects have all been linked to expressions of Puerto Rican culture (Tropp et al, 1999; Duany, 2000; Aparicio, 2010; Negus, 2013; Duany, 2017), both on the island and on the mainland. To put it in research questions: 'How does language shape mainland Puerto Rican identity?. This template will also be used with the subjects of dance, food and language, resulting in the next few questions: 'How does dance shape mainland Puerto Rican identity?', 'How does food shape mainland Puerto Rican identity?' and 'How does music shape mainland Puerto Rican identity?'. As many more cultural expressions may come forth while collecting data, more questions may be added to give a more complete image of the influence of cultural expressions, customs and practices on the forming of identity.

Besides the importance of cultural factors, one should not neglect the influence of the social world people inhabit. External factors can also influence identity in many ways (Erikson, 1950; Austin & Worchel, 1986), for example through the dynamic of group membership. Within this dynamic, the identity of a person can be based on perceived group membership and the perceptual categorization that comes with it (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). While the format of this research proposal does not allow for a full explanation

of these social phenomena, the research will still take into account the possible effects of external factors in the forming and changing of identity. To this end, a research question about the social world of the subject group will be formulated: 'How are mainland Puerto Ricans identified by other mainland Americans?'. This does not just pertain to the people that live around them and the people with whom they have regular social interactions with. While friends, family and acquaintances are important in the creation of a sense of belonging, and therefore identity, they are not the only outside influence on the subject. The broader and more general perception of the group can have at least as much influence on many aspects of identity. With regards to the United States (and in Puerto Rico), one could think of race as being a particularly important identifier. Yet, both regions categorise race, in general and personally, in different ways (Landale & Oropesa, 2002). Race deserves its own questions, specifically the following two: 'How do mainland Puerto Ricans identify themselves racially?' and 'How are mainland Puerto Ricans identified racially by other mainland Americans?'.

The next sub questions pertain to the reason why, in my opinion, a reactualization of this topic was in order. Up to this point, the questions related to identity have been based on either self-identification and identification through others. Yet, as will be discussed further in a future chapter, identity is not static. It can change over time. Adapt to the social context. The last question is meant to capture the changing nature and potential difficulties of mainland Puerto Ricans in the adaptation of their identities. The changing socio political landscape reactualized the question of Puerto Rican belonging in the United States and the possible changes in identify that may have resulted from it. For that reason, the aspect of socio political landscape will be represented in the next question: 'How did hurricane Maria shape mainland Puerto Rican Identity?' and 'How did the disaster response to hurricane Maria influence mainland Puerto Rican identity?'

Theory and Conceptual Framework

Theories of identity

There is something quite ironic at trying to explain identity, as you need the definition and explanation of the word to try to define the word itself. It is literally trying to identify identity. Instead of starting a philosophical essay about the impossibility of this undertaking, a more pragmatic approach will be taken to inform about how the word has been used in the scientific community and how it will be used in this thesis.

While the word identity may feel like an extremely commonly used word, it has only been in use for a relatively short period of time, especially in the scientific world. According to Gleason's article about the semantic history of the word identity, the term itself only became popular in scientific literature in the 1950s (Gleason, 1983). It is difficult to pinpoint a scientific definition before that time. Identity was mostly used in a more literal sense. Stemming from the Latin word Idem, meaning "the same", it's use in the English language goes back to the 16th century, and even to Middle French in the 14th century, indicating the sameness of a person or thing. Some of the first uses of the word in a more psychological sense (according to the Oxford English Dictionary) come from David Hume's "A treatise of Human Nature" and John Locke's "An Essay concerning Human Understanding". Identity isn't used in a rigid manner in these examples. They opted to use identity as a reference to personality without attaching a specific definition.

Gleason argues that Will Herberg's "Protestant-Catholic-Jew" (1955) piece on religious societies in the United States is one of the first works of scientific literature to use identity as a main theme. Identity itself is a pivotal part of the issues discussed in the book. Several other essays and articles appeared in the following years with the word identity in the title, showing a distinct increase in interest in the subject. Focal works about the topic include "On Shame and the Search for Identity" (Lynd, 1958), "Identity and the Life Cycle" (Erikson, 1959) and "Mirrors and Masks: the search for identity" (Strauss, 1959). This trend continued in the 1960s and became a prevalent research topic throughout the decade. However, the prevalence of the word and its (over) use attracted criticism by the

1970s. Coles even called it “the purest of clichés” (Coles, 1974). The word was so broad in its definition that it failed to mean anything specific. It was too vague to be used in a same manner by every single user of the word.

One of the more influential writers on the topic of identity starting in the 50s was Erik Erikson. He was one of the main authors that set the word identity into motion in scientific literature (Gleason, 1983). His definition remains elusive. He speaks of identity as interplay between the inner self; or the “core of the individual”, and the “core of his (the individual’s) communal nature” (Erikson, 1959). In Erikson’s mind, identity is the combination of what could be called personality and the participation in society. Additionally, he also identified eight different life stages that an individual passes through in their life cycle, each stage introducing a new existential problem which the individual has to resolve to advance to the next one (Erikson, 1998 for the latest edition on this theory). These problems are linked to both biological factors, such as aging, and the social world the individual has to circumnavigate in their life.

Erikson wasn’t the only one who tried to define the term of identity. Allport used the term in his famous work “The Nature of Prejudice”(1954), albeit in a different way compared to Erikson. Allport saw identity more like a part of child development, following a more psychoanalytical definition of the term. He understood identification as a part of the process through which people realize where they belong as dictated by the relations they have with specific groups. This view had somewhat been expressed by Foote. As a response to role theory (See Linton, 1936; or Biddle, 1986 for more information on role theory), he set out to correct said theory, which he argued had a lack of explanation for why people are motivated to be cast in specific roles. He used his definition of identification as the base for this motivation. He saw identification as an individual’s process where a particular identity or multiple identities is or are appropriated. To complete the process, one also had to accept the name associated with these different groups. Being part of a group would be an experience self- discovery, and they could be experienced multiple times, change and combine according to the social situations one would be experiencing (Foote, 1951). This definition ultimately received a lot of attention and was used in the field of sociology in the following years.

Furthermore, the first half of the 20th century also saw the rise of the use of the word identity as a kind of synonym for "character". Following many studies that focused on national character, particularly in the United States, saw the rise of the word identity. These studies focused on how the specific culture of an individual were related to his or her personality; one's character. These studies were particularly popular post world war II, when said war inspired many scientists to help their respective countries. Furthermore, the aftermath of the war brought with new questions about society, and in particular, the fear of totalitarianism that had led to the war. As such, nationalistic perspectives on character and society became more and more popular in scientific literature. This social climate allowed for the proliferation of the term identity as a substitute for character. It was particularly suited for the job, as its terminology in science would quickly incorporate the relationship between society and individuals. The question "Who am I?" was no longer purely seen as an individual question. It was a question both about the personal and the external influences on the self.

The interplay between the personal and societal aspects of character were the main reason for the mounting confusion regarding the term starting in the 1960s. Identity, besides being used very often in literature, could mean different things depending on the nature of the author and/or the work. Erikson's definition and the sociological definition differed on a few points, chief of them being was about the nature of identity. Erikson's approach understood identity more as something that comes from within a person. He argued that identity was internal, located within the psyche of an individual. Change in identity was possible, and outside influence could definitely play a big role in changing it. Yet it would ultimately a personal aspect of the self, coming from within. On the other end, the sociological definition viewed identity as a part of the interplay between society and any individual. It is a social construct, bestowed upon us by social forces, and individuals act upon the name they are given by it. Identity is a process according to the sociological definition. It can change as the social world of an individual changes. In short, both definitions agree about the existence of the interplay between self and society in the forming of identity, but disagree about the importance and resilience of either the self or society in the forming of identity.

The popularization of social psychology saw the rise of yet another theoretical stream trying to explain the workings of identity. The works of Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1975; Tajfel et al, 1979) posited that identity was formed in a process of intergroup conflict. To define oneself as being a part of a group, one had to emphasize the difference between groups. As such, the more tensions exist between opposing groups, the more membership to the own group will be formed and maintained based on these tensions. This theory, called the intergroup conflict theory, could be seen as an extension of the sociologist perspective view on identity. Symbolic interactionism is another theoretical framework that saw a form of identity take shape. This theory argues people interact not based on each other's actions but on the interpretation of these actions (Blumer, 1986). Interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, which are in turn interpreted by others. These symbols, which can take the form of habits, conducts, language or anything that can serve as a tool to interpret action, are acquired through socialization processes, heavily influenced by the social structures these take place in (White & Burke, 1987). These symbols can be part of a shared identity, and thus used to identify oneself. Symbolic interactionist literature examined different form of identity, including identity based on role theory (Biddle, 1986) and ethnic identity (Mackie & Brinkerhoff, 1984; White & Burke, 1987).

Phenomenology and Embodied Identity

A clear dichotomy is felt with all these theories. Identity as a social construct and identity from within. However, many researchers spanning a great number of fields have fought this divided notion of self, developing new theories putting the outer and inner together in one body, being fittingly named 'embodiment'. This theory is based on a specific type of phenomenology studies as pioneered by Merleau-Ponty (1945; 2013), a current of studies focussing on the structures of consciousness that is experienced from the point of view of a person. According to his specific brand of phenomenology, the body plays the main role in perception, and encompasses both the subject and the object in analysis, instead being separate entities altogether. He views the starting point of experience of perceiving in the body. Everything that comes from perception is thus a product of analysis stemming from our bodily perception of the perceived phenomenon (Csordas, 2002). As an example, Merleau-Ponty talks about a boulder. The boulder was already sitting there, ready to be encountered. Yet it is not perceived as an obstacle until one encounters it and sees it as something to be surmounted. This example shows how we objectify things (the boulder is now an obstacle) and the ways our thinking is based on our own bodies (how our body could be used to climb over the obstacle).

This way of viewing the body and the surrounding world as inseparable is the ground upon which embodiment of identity is built. Continuing from the previous points regarding the unity of body and experience, the body and its environment form the basis of this view on identity. Again we see the unity of the body and the surrounding world as a prominent point. The body is phenomenal, "interacting with an environment to which it responds and actively structures" (Simonsen, 2012). This interaction is particularly interesting to geographers as it conjures the topic of space. The space which the body inhabits and the space it traverses. The space the body is and the space the body has. We shape the space around us, and the people inhabiting that space at a particular moment, but are also shaped by it and those same people inhabiting it. The body in this sense is also an agent, being able to change the surrounding space and act according to itself and its own perception, while also being an object of change from the space and other actors (Coole, 2007).

In short, there is no way to keep it short when talking about embodiment. The sheer amount of aspects to take into account paired with the intricacies of these aspects can make embodiment a difficult concept to fully comprehend. While I won't discuss all these aspects (as it is not the subject of this thesis), I do want to acknowledge some of them to illustrate the complexity of the matter. Some of these points are reversibility (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Coole, 2007; Simonsen, 2012), intentionality (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; 1962), expressiveness (Csordas, 2002; Coole, 2005) and reflexivity (Merleau-Ponty, 1968).

To help illustrate the ways in which embodiment can be used to analyse identity, I want to give an example from Koefoed and Simonsen (2011). This paper analysed the so called stranger as a figure in relation to the city and/or the nation and the stranger as experienced by someone designated as such. The nation in this case being Denmark and the city being Copenhagen. The examples given are from the interviewed respondents from this study, and later reused in another paper by Simonses (2012)

Firstly, embodiment can be a way to objectify someone, and to be objectified by. The article highlights the experiences of Abbas who recalls his experiences on the train between Denmark and Malmo. He tells of the people looking at him, especially after the 2005 bombings in London. He experienced both the attitudes of strangers, with them even saying "Now we have to look out". They clearly see him as a potential threat, purely based his outward appearance and their (recent) perception of the people associated with the then recent attacks. The people around him potentially see him as the embodiment of religious extremism and the danger they associate with it. Abbas became the embodiment of a geopolitical conflict and of terrorism within a single entity, without having had anything to do with it. He was clearly affected by these looks and attitudes. "You begin to think 'I am the wrong one here. I am standing in the wrong place'." This speaks to the power the other can have on self-perception and identification.

A second example comes from Hanif, who, following an earthquake in Pakistan (the homeland of his parents), decided to do something for the victims. Despite not being directly affected by the disaster, contact with people in Pakistan and news coverage, it triggered an emphatic reaction from Hanif. No matter the physical distance between

him and the affected, his ties with the country of his parents were reinforced. He started to embody a certain agency with regards to the earthquake and the affected people, organising a support concert with two brothers which became a big public event. The disaster reinforced his embodiment of a transnational part he might not have felt before, or at least not in this manner. It also bears repeating that he did not need to be either present or physically/geographically close to the incident to be embodied in the experience.

Intersectionality

Following these examples, it should be clear identity is not set in stone. Embodied experiences can have a deep impact on how people identify themselves. This way of thinking started to be expressed more and more in the scientific community. Identity started to become more malleable, more fluid. Growingly, identity wasn't viewed as a single unchanging entity. It became a much more fluid term, which could be changed over time. It could be interpreted in different ways depending on the individual. Additionally, one needn't have only a single identity. Multiple identities can coexist within a single person. An example of the difference in perceived identity can be seen in a 1990 study about the assessment of identity of Hispanic students (Ethier & Deaux), in which the identity of Hispanic was interpreted and expressed in many different ways depending on the respondent.

Up to this point, identity is still a mish-mash of different points of view, with only agreement over the fact identity can take many different forms and is interpreted in many different ways. One theoretical current trying to explain how the many different possible identities can operate is intersectionality. This concept, first coined by Crenshaw (1989), endeavoured to challenge simplistic views on women's oppression by looking at the multiple dimensions that can the subject of oppression. Crenshaw looked at violence against women of colour in the United States through the lens of gender and race simultaneously. It tries to understand identity and behaviour by looking at the ways different identities intersect with each other in different situations (Nash, 2008). As Minow (1997) put it, intersectionality is "The way in which any particular individual stands at the crossroads of multiple groups." It operates in the space between categorization and the deconstruction of categories (McCall, 2005). The way intersectionality examines the individual and the context in which they find themselves simultaneously demonstrates the embodied nature of the concept. Intersectionality does not limit itself to the analysis of gender oppression. It can and has been used through different lenses, one of these being the theme of diasporas. This is what Anthias (2008) did, reflecting upon translocational identity through the intersectionality of social locations and processes. It is less about the personal categories ascribed to a particular individual and more about the role

location and context in the forming of identity. Brah (1996) dedicated a book about the intersectionality of diasporic identity, looking at concepts like “border”, “politics from home” and “diaspora” itself to explain feelings of belonging (Brah & Phoenix, 2004).

Mainland Puerto Rican Identity

Finally to the question at hand, how does all this information help us understand Puerto Rican identity? To put it bluntly, phenomenology and intersectionality can be useful terms to try and understand the diversity of Puerto Rican identity in a multicultural society. It can take into account both internal and external variables simultaneously, something particularly useful in the case of Puerto Ricans. It can help us understand the changes in identity someone may experience through time and in different spaces. It can show us where and when someone may have agency in the shaping of their identity, and crucially where and when they do not.

Puerto Rican identity is in a unique position partly due to its historical roots. While officially being U.S. citizens, Puerto Ricans from both the mainland and the island can maintain physical and cultural ties to either. At the very least, Puerto Rican identity has the potential to be both diasporic yet local in its nature, or any combination of any number of identity and groups. The ties to the island can be seen as the first, and one of the only common denominators shared by Puerto Ricans on the island and on the mainland. The whole group is named after it, after all, or has a name based on it. One could argue that the mere accepting of the moniker 'Puerto Rican' is an acknowledgement of the tie to the island. It can also be seen as a place of belonging and of return. A common way to identify with a group and give it cultural, geographical and historical ties (Grosfoguel, 1999). It may be one of the reasons as to why no matter where Puerto Ricans may live, they could still identify with (aspects of) Puerto Rico (Duany, 2017). Another reason could be the relative ease with which one can maintain tied to the island through reduced travel costs, improved infrastructure and the advent of new forms of communication. All of these aspects have permitted a form of circular migration to form (Ellis & Bailey, 1996; Duany, 2000; Duany 2002; Aranda, 2007). Maintaining ties to the island and its culture has become relatively easier throughout the years. Yet (perceived) differences started to emerge as soon as Puerto Ricans started to settle on the mainland of the United States.

There are other, more specific ways that shape Puerto Rican are identified and identify themselves. One such example is Nuyorican, used to designate Puerto Ricans who settled

in New York. Names like “Nuyorican” have however become derogatory and are used more and more frequently by the population of the island of Puerto Rico as a way to stereotype and discriminate against mainland Puerto Ricans. They are not seen as the same as island native Puerto Ricans (Grosfoguel, 1999, Duany, 2017). No matter where on the mainland Puerto Rican comes from, be it New York, Los Angeles or Florida, they are branded as someone who is not from the island, whether or not they were born there. The issues with the perception of mainland Puerto Ricans do not end there. Many mainland Americans misunderstand or simply do not know much about the Puerto Ricans in general. This lack of information regarding Puerto Ricans both on and off the island only complicates the matters of identity and identification further. Many polls held on the mainland show this lack of knowledge, mainly about the confusion surrounding their citizenship status. One such poll, as recent as 2017, shows that 24 percent of correspondents did not know if people born on Puerto Rico were given American citizenship, and 22 percent affirmed this was not the case (Morning Consult, 2017). There is a clear gap in knowledge, which mainland Puerto Ricans have to navigate on a daily basis.

Race and ethnicity

Further ambiguity with regards to mainland Puerto Rican identity is visible with regards to the topic of race. Identity in the United States is often represented and divided along the lines of race (Omi & Winant, 1998; Lawrence, 2000; Bederman, 2008). The visual characteristic of race, and it's simplistic divide between white, black and increasingly Hispanic/Latino does not lend itself well to the identification of Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans do not particularly fit into any of these categories due to their multiethnic genetic and cultural background. The mix of Spanish, Taíno and African people resulted in a racially diverse people. Despite the importance ascribed to the different backgrounds being frequently unequal and the importance of the colonial period of the United States being underestimated (Duany, 2005), Puerto Ricans do not necessarily rely on skin colour to differentiate between in and outgroup (Duany, 2017). A telling sign is the denomination of Puerto Ricans both from the island and the mainland. Instead of using a denomination of ancestral heritage coupled with the current nationality (for example African American and Mexican American), Puerto Ricans are usually known as just Puerto Ricans. Another example that illustrates the confusion surrounding the denomination of Puerto Ricans in pre-existing ethnic categories can be read in the autobiographical book "Down these mean Streets" By Piri Thomas (1997). Thomas narrates his experiences as a young man living in the melting pot known as the United States. He describes the invisibleness of Puerto Ricans in the racialized American landscape, where he is interchangeably seen as White, Hispanic and Black.

These changing racial associations may be due to a multitude of reasons. Grosfoguel ascribes these racial associations with the heritage of colonization, which formed an interplay between race and ethnicity into what he calls "racialized ethnicities" and "ethnicized races" (2004). He argues that "the symbolic capital attached to the 'identity' of different groups in the racial/ethnic hierarchy is related to the ongoing 'coloniality of power'" (Grosfoguel, 2004). He understands coloniality of power as the naming of the hierarchical relationships between the dominators and the dominated during the centuries of colonization, and argues that these hierarchies are still present today. This position could explain some potential behaviour towards racial association for and from Puerto

Ricans on the mainland. They could be seen as racially black on the mainland, underlining their colonial past. For very much the same reason, they could be identified as Latino or Hispanic. On the other hand, Puerto Ricans themselves could want to associate and identify themselves with the dominant racial group, namely white.

Other factors could also be of importance for the racial identification of Puerto Ricans on the mainland, especially in New York City, is the proximity in physical and social spaces between Puerto Ricans and African Americans (Flores, 2000). Despite the cultural and demographic exchanges that took place, it also served as a source of conflict between the groups (Ramos-Zayas,2007). A similar conclusion could be drawn between other Latin American groups and Puerto Ricans, as they share a largely similar language in the form of Spanish. Yet the use of Spanish has also been noted as a point of contention between Puerto Ricans and other Latino groups. As an example, De Genova and Ramos-Zayas (2004) discuss the animosity between Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities in Chicago, noting that differences between the different dialects were often brought up in daily interactions between the communities. This may lead to this specific Puerto Rican community to avoid associating themselves with Latinos, and thus avoid identifying themselves in this manner

This leaves mainland Puerto Ricans with a few potential issues regarding identification, especially on the racial and ethnic level. On a racial level, they can be misidentified . On a national identity level, they can be seen as outsiders by both mainland Americans and island Puerto Ricans, as migrants in their own country. This seems to leave them in a flexible yet vulnerable social position. Depending on the colour of their skin, they may be identified by others as belonging to the "higher" white racial group. But if they decide to accept at least parts of their Puerto Rican identities, it could mean not being able to identity as white, no matter the colour of their skin. This is only one example of the situations regarding race and ethnicity mainland Puerto Ricans may face. They have the potential to embody many different types of racial categories, depending on their appearance, prevalent in the United States. But that, in turn, leaves them in the position to be (mis)identified based on the same appearance.

Talk Spanish to me

Language is an important factor in the categorization of others (Giles & johnson, 1981), and thereby a potentially hugely important aspect of identity (Eastman, 1985). They are often so important in defining each other that they are reciprocal in many cases. As such, ethnic identity influences language usage, and language can influence the formation of ethnic identity (Gudykunst & Schmidt, 1987). This importance attributed to language is no different for Puerto Ricans, although they differ in their use of it depending on where one resides.

The Spanish language is a very important component of Puerto Rican identity on the island. Puerto Ricans actively combated the potential hegemony of the English language on the island after it became a united States' colony. Defenders of the Spanish language included Luis Muñoz Rivera, father of the first elected Puerto Rican governor, with his vocal opposition to the use of English in schools (Munoz Rivera, 1925) José de Diego, who worked to preserve the Spanish language through, for example, the founding of the Antillean Academy of Languages 1916 (Fonfrias, 1988). More recent calls to preserve the Spanish language have been heard from, for example, Rubén del Rosario, a Puerto Rican philologist. He states that "Es evidente que lo hace al puertorriqueño no es solo la lengua (su entonación, sus palabras, su fraseología particular) [...]". It is evident that what makes a Puerto Rican is not just the language (its intonation, its words, its particular phraseology. Yet he also states that "el ser puertorriqueño envuelve el conservar vivo el idioma corriente de nuestra pueblo". Being Puerto Rican entails the live conservation of the common language of our people (Rosario, 1998; Zentella, 1990).

These acts of language preservation and protest against the English language were focused on the island of Puerto Rico, and many of them predate the large scale migratory movements towards the mainland of the United States. As such, the island remained largely Spanish focused, English being the minority language. However, the position of Puerto Rico as a territory of the United States has kept the English language close by. This is especially the case for Puerto Ricans who decided to move to the mainland. While many Puerto Ricans kept their Spanish language long after moving to the United States,

loss of language is inevitable. Kaplan (1982) found that mainland Puerto Ricans spoke Spanish with greater difficulty than their island living counterparts. This diminishing mastery of Spanish has subsequently become an identifier for Puerto Ricans, especially when a comparison is made between mainland and island Puerto Ricans (Chaclar, 1997; Melendez & Melendez, 1993). As new generations were born and raised in the United States, the salience of Puerto Rican (linguistic) culture dwindled. As the loss of language occurred over the span of generations, it is the younger generation whose mastery of Spanish is being lost the most (Duany, 2017). This loss of language is one of the ways island Puerto Ricans identify mainland Puerto Ricans. When returning to the island as visitors or return migrants, mainland Puerto Ricans are often perceived as violators of important values of Puerto Rican culture and/or society (Hernandez, 1999). Categories like physical appearance and demeanor both influence the way mainland Puerto Ricans are categorized. Yet language is the most important factor in the categorization of Puerto Ricans (Hernandez, 1999).

The English language is chief amongst the languages in the United States. The Puerto Ricans who moved to the mainland had to adapt accordingly to the language and the culture of the country, or at the very least the region they resided in. People, and especially children, were thus likely raised in a dual culture on the mainland. At home, they may have been speaking Spanish and participating in acts of Puerto Rican culture. Outside of the house, they probably went to an English speaking school. The interplay between the Spanish Puerto Rican culture and the Anglo culture is what defined their identity (Clachar, 1997), and there are a few ways in which this dynamic is visible.

As an individual is raised with multiple languages, a few dynamics may develop in the production of language and communication to include said languages. One of the main ways this is accomplished is through code switching. While there is a certain lack of consensus surrounding the exact definition of code-switching, it can generally be understood as the altercation of multiple languages (usually two) in verbal or written text (Torres, 2007). In the verbal manner, it is seen as code switching if switching between languages is done within a conversation (Milroy & Muysken, 1995). Whether this is exclusive to frequency or form of the code switching is up to debate (Nilep, 2006).

Code switching is prevalent between the English and Spanish language (Lipski, 2005), and often used by Puerto Ricans. Poplack (1980, 1981) studied its use in the New York Puerto Rican community in Spanish Harlem, where she saw that the use was not done out of lack of fluency in either language. The code switching transitioned smoothly between languages, without any repetition of specific segments in both languages. It showed that many 'Nuyoricans' she interviewed were very fluent in both languages, regardless of age of arrival in the United States. Bilinguals showed the best ability to code switch within single sentences, suggesting that code switching is a sign of linguistic competence in multiple languages.

Another way English and Spanish have formed new ways to communicate is through the emergence of so called 'Spanglish'. Just like code switching, the term describes a form of language that is a coexistence between English and Spanish (Nash, 1970). However, Spanglish is not limited to the interplay and switching between languages. In some of its forms, iot can borrow words and sentence structures from the other language. Sentences could for example be spoken in Spanish with some English words written in a Spanish way (Ardila, 2005).

Spanglish: "Los visitantes de esta facilidad deben ser todo el tiempo escortados por un official."

Spanish: "Los visitantes de esta instalación deben estar todo el tiempo acompañados por un guardia."

English: "Visitors to this facility must be escorted by an officer at all times."

Other forms may include the same 'Spanification' of English words used in conjunction with an English sentence (Ardila, 2005).

Spanglish: The kids create gangas.

Spanish: Pandillas.

English: gangs.

This mixture of code switching and borrowing of words are the main phenomena that define Spanglish. Further characteristics can include Anglization, Spanishation, neologisms and many grammatical changes. While these features can all be potentially incorporated in Spanglish, there is no unified way of speaking it. It is not a language in the sense that there are no specific rules to define it. This could be a reason why it has been seen as a corrupted version of Spanish (Zentella, 1997), associated with low-educated people (Bertran, 1995) and generally seen in a negative light (Otheguy & Stern, 2010). Some positive associations do however also exist. It can be used as a badge of biculturality in the Latino community (Zentella, 2008), and has found its way into the scientific discussion of linguistics (Nash, 1970; Zentella, 1997; fairclough, 2003; Rothman & Rell, 2005)

As such, the union of Spanish and English formed new linguistic patterns,. While the form these different ways of expression are interesting in themselves, they could have a deeper meaning behind them. They could be a telling sign of the cultural mix between the different cultures Spanish speakers in the United States may find themselves in. Mainland Puerto Ricans are no strangers to this blend, and may use it as a strategy to both conserve and retain the multiple linguistic aspects that they identify with. Furthermore, the use of language

Language is also another example where the flexibility and vulnerability of mainland identity is prevalent. There is a struggle between their ties to the Spanish language and the main language of the mainland of the United States. Historically, as mentioned above, retention of the Spanish language was fought for on the island of Puerto Rico. This sentiment, which seems to still be especially prevalent on the island, seems to still be present on the mainland. As such, mainland Puerto Ricans can find themselves two groups that demand a high proficiency in two different languages. Mainland Puerto Ricans may be expected to know Spanish if they want to be considered Puerto Rican by their island residing peers. From the perspective of the United States, English is the language to know and use. lack of mastery of it could result in marginalisation. This marginalisation can in turn be both linguistic and social in nature. If one cannot communicate, one may find it difficult to get a job where communication in English plays any role. On the other hand, knowledge of Spanish may reinforce their Puerto Rican roots, and reiterate the

potential issues with ethnicity and race discussed in the previous section. Thus mainland Puerto Ricans again find themselves in a potential pickle regarding their shaping of their identities. Do you focus on English and forego Spanish? Do you try to learn both and risk having an accent in either, which is a surefire way for others to assume your identity? There is pressure from both sides of the linguistic/geographic spectrum that mainland Puerto Ricans have to deal with.

Salsa, Reggaeton and other hip gyrating activities

Music has been an important cultural symbol for Puerto Rican identity both on the mainland and on the island. From bomba to plena, from salsa to hip hop and even reggaeton. Music and its associated dances have been prevalent in the expression of Puerto Rican culture everywhere, especially due to the fact many of these types of music originated from the mainland, while others came from the island. Despite its geographical identity, most of the music genres that are now associated by and with Puerto Ricans are, just like its multi ethnic people, a mix of multiple influences. Through this mix came numerous and diverse expressions of Puerto Rican musical culture.

To understand the potential cultural significance of these musical currents, one needs to understand where they come from and how they were formed. Furthermore, the history of Puerto Rican reflects many important beats of its history. First of all, little is known about the musical forms of the Taíno people, other than the guiro and maracas, two gourd percussion instruments (Duany, 1984). On the island, the blend of Spaniards, Taíno and later African slaves brought forth the multiple genres of music and dance still present today. The relatively large amount of slaves in sugar plantations in the coastal areas of Puerto Rico insured the persistence of music with strong African influences. The bomba was such a musical genre, accompanied by dance. Played on the eponymous Bomba, a drum made out of whatever material was available, shows strong African components in the rhythms and vocal styles of call and response.

The highlands of Puerto Rico saw the development of different styles. The farmers living there, often called Jibaros, developed their own musical culture based on the music brought with the Spanish settlers (Glasser, 1997). It is from these parts that the seis song format was formed. It is heavily influenced by (southern) Spanish melodic and harmonic elements, and is usually sung accompanied the guitar, the cuatro and the aforementioned guiro. One of the most popular forms of this format was the seis decimas. It is based on a ten line verse, also of Spanish origin, with precise rhyme schemes.

While these two musical styles originated from the lower class of Puerto Rican society, the danza was the dance of the rich white upper class. It originated from the 19th century Creole aristocracy (Duany, 1984) and was based on European music and the Cuban contradanza (Manuel, 1994). It employed European instruments like the piano, violins, flutes and brass instruments. Despite the fact that these danzas were often composed by people in the lower social classes, they were seen as the music for the hacendados, the landowners, and were a musical expression that had "the mark of the hacendados' hegemony." (Quintero-Rivera, 1989).

The 19th century also saw the birth of the plena. Believed to have come from Ponce, it gained popularity on the other side of the wealth spectrum, in the lower and lower-middle classes of Puerto Rico all around the island (Manuel, 1994). Plenas featured Spanish rhetorical forms that spoke about events that happened at the time of writing. As such, they would chronic recent events while adding a dash of exaggeration to the lyrics (Duany, 1984).

All these currents originated from specific social groups in Puerto Rican society. Despite their differences, all these musical genres have in common that while their roots were in different parts of the world, all were later created in Puerto Rico based on their respective genres. The blend of people in Puerto Rico gave birth to a blend of different music. While these styles were heavily associated with Puerto Rico, but also served to emphasise social class differences between consumers and producers of the music. The seis for the marginalized Jibaros, Danza for the rich aristocracy and both bomba and plena for the lower classes. Only in the 20th century did musical genres start to get associated with a national Puerto Rican character and culture.

As the island became more and more urbanized, the different people that were familiar with the different musical genres of Puerto Rico started to live more and more together in the cities. This was coupled with the growing expat community of Puerto Ricans in the States, particularly New York. It was in this context that arguably the most famous Latino musical genre was born, in the city of New York.

Salsa was developed in the 1960s in New York City, primarily by Puerto Rican musicians. It is a product of migration between the United States, Puerto Rico and many other places. The music itself is heavily based on Cuban music, specifically the Son. Cuban music had been part of Puerto Rican musical tastes for several generations (Manuel, 1990) and has been adopted by the latter in the forms of musical genres like the bolero and the contradanza. Newer genres came with the travelling Cuban 'teatro bufo' troupes who performed theater and songs (Glasser, 1997). These musical varieties were incorporated in Puerto Rican culture naturally over time. In fact, it was often Puerto Rican musicians that performed Cuban style music in New York since the 1920s (Glasser, 1990). It is therefore no wonder salsa incorporated both Cuban and Puerto Rican influences in its design, with the Cuban son at its core.

The 1960s was the decade of many changes in western society, including the United States. Civil unrest and social tensions led to many a marginalized group to re-evaluate their position in society. Inequality and injustice became topics of societal discourse. Salsa became a conduit for identity, a way to express one's sense of culture and community (Padilla, 1990). As such, salsa, despite its Cuban musical origins, very much became a Puerto Rican thing. It was a blend of Caribbean influences mixed with flavours from New York. It is a product of the Latino community living in the Barrios of New York. The name alone suggests the mixture of different flavours that entail this musical genre.

The popularity of Salsa rose in subsequent years, becoming a staple of the record industry. Such was its popularity that the annual Grammy awards added a Latin record of the Year category to the ceremony from 1976 to 1983, with some of the first winners including staple musicians of the salsa genre Tito Puente and Eddie Palmieri. This was a big step in the representation of salsa as a legitimate musical current, which was previously often seen as "low and outside", possibly due to its humble beginnings (Berrios-Miranda, 2004). The music and dances associated with it have grown into a musical phenomenon, enjoying popularity all around the world (Hosokawa, 1999). As such, this Afro-Caribbean genre has transcended its geographical borders to become the popular style we know today.

New York was not only the breeding ground for salsa. The 1970s saw the rise of new forms of artistic expression in what would be called hip hop. Widely recognized as the place hip hop was founded, the South Bronx at the time were inhabited by mainly Puerto Ricans and African Americans (Rodriguez, 1991). These two groups, along with other Caribbean people, all contributed to the main forms of hip hop, namely MCing, DJing, graffiti and breakdancing (Rivera, 2001). These forms were originally inclusive in a racial sense; African Americans, Puerto Ricans and other Caribbean people all lived under similar circumstances in New York city and all had the legitimacy to participate in and produce hip hop (Rivera, 2001). Unfortunately, ethnic rifts started to form in the participation and appropriation of hip hop. Puerto Ricans were welcome in the production of the art form, but were often relegated to second fiddle, especially in MCing and DJing. Even early on, hip hop was seen as a black American form of expression. Yet Puerto Ricans were still welcomed as partners in creative production (Flores, 1996).

Puerto Ricans were further pushed away from the identification of the biggest aspect of the hip hop culture, rap, through circumstances and the way it was framed once the musical form became known outside the New York sphere. The way rap was sold was with the association of raw, dangerous, ghetto based and black images (Allinson, 1994; Rose, 1994). Puerto Ricans were not necessarily identified with the same images of African Americans the media projected on rap. The ethnic identity of Puerto Ricans, and Latinos as a whole, did not fit the dichotomy between black and white with which people in the United States framed identity. They were not seen as black, but also definitely not white. As such, they did not have the same type of exoticism associated with Black Americans, which was one of the reasons for the success of the mass mediatization of hip hop. It would have been risky to invest in the lighter version of that blackness, to invest in the Puerto Rican side of hip hop (Rivera, 2001). The ethnic identity (or lack of a distinct one) of Puerto Ricans living in the United States deprived them of identifying with an art form they greatly influenced and helped create. But the Puerto Rican roots remain, and can be seen in more recent groups like Puerto Rican rap group Calle 13 and new forms of music, of which the most famous would become reggaeton.

The creation of reggaeton is somewhat similar to Salsa. It draws from many different influences all across the American continent to form a single new style of music. Spanish rap from Puerto Rico, reggae and dancehall from Jamaica, hip hop from the United States and many more styles and genres are represented in reggaeton (Kattari, 2009). It may therefore be no surprise that it is difficult to pinpoint a specific origin to reggaeton, as it could be argued it originated from Puerto Rico, Panama or even Jamaica. However, the prevailing view on the conception of reggaeton is that it came from Panama under the name reggae en Español and was transformed into its modern form in Puerto Rico (Samponaro, 2009; LeBron, 2011). This view is limited, as the many musical influences that lead to reggaeton (as they did with salsa) are not linear in a geographical sense. In the words of Marshall, Rivera and Hernandez (2009): "the genre known today as reggaeton is the product of multiple and overlapping musical circuits that do not comply with geographic, national, or language boundaries, nor with ethnic or pan-ethnic expectations."

Yet reggaeton is often framed as a national product, a genre appropriated by a specific country or culture. Such is the case for reggaeton and Puerto Ricans. The genre has undoubtedly thrived in Puerto Rico and been popularized by Puerto Rican artists worldwide. One only need to look up the most viewed video on Youtube to find that a reggaeton song is the most viewed song worldwide (6.1 billion views at the time of writing), and is performed by Puerto Ricans. But before this worldwide success, the appropriation of reggaeton on the island was a matter of controversy. Reggaeton was seen as a part of the hybrid Afro Caribbean/latino culture, and thus part of the lower social classes. Furthermore, the macho and street culture imagery and themes often used in the genre, not unlike hip hop, have led to critique. Particularly the (submissive) image of women in reggaeton has sparked debates about its use and perceived vulgarity (Samponaro, 2009). Yet the appeal of reggaeton, especially for the pan-Latino/a community is undeniable, and the roots and influence of the genre in Puerto Rico have made sure that reggaeton is seen as a national product for Puerto Ricans (LeBron, 2011).

The vastness of the subject and its expressions could be an open door to identification and embodiment. Music in the form we know today is quite open thanks to mass media and the internet. As such, one could expect music to be a more free space to self-expression and embodiment, especially as it can be a more private form of identity. That

doesn't mean there are some types of musical expression that may be guarded based on ethnicity, nationality or social status. Yet the sheer popularity of some (partly) Puerto Rican musical expressions throughout the world potentially makes them much more easy to identify with. This connection can be different for (mainland) Puerto Ricans, who could embody different types of music and dance as a part of their culture. However, the matter may become more complicated as musical genres receive different amounts of recognition of Puertoricanness. You could ask yourself if salsa is more or less Puerto Rican than reggaeton. And as such if salsa is a 'better' expression of Puertoricanness than reggaeton. Or even if performing a Plena is a stronger expression of Puerto Rican culture than performing Bomba. Thus, despite the open nature of musical consumption and identification, the question of embodiment of Puerto Rican culture through music may still be a contested subject.

Cuisine

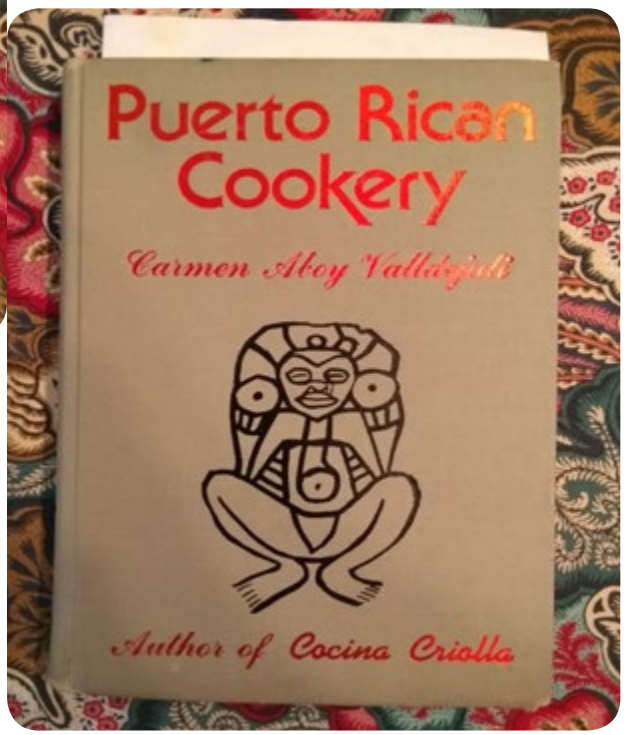
The importance of food in culture should not be underestimated. Kittler, Sucher and Nelms (2011) emphasize the importance of food in regional identity. Cuadra (2013) even wrote a whole book about the link between food, culture and identity for Puerto Ricans, underlying the fact that the food we eat and learn how to cook at home can be a big part of ethnic identity. One example of food as part of culture can be seen in an article by Perez (2003), who found food to be one of the benchmarks Puerto Ricans use to construct their identities. In her studies, Puerto Rican culture was often expressed and spread through the role of women and their activities, specifically with their cooking and transmission of the art of cooking. Both the preparation and the food that is the result of said preparation fall under the category of ethnic expression, and thus as a cultural identifier. In addition, the specific foods and associated designations serve as a kind of border to differentiate Puerto Ricans from other groups. A study in Chicago, Illinois found that type of food to be an important part of defining one's ethnic identity between people who identified as either Mexican or Puerto Rican (Potowski & Matts, 2008).

Despite the importance of food for identity, it is not easy to continuously maintain (food) tradition throughout the years. And while women have played a big role in the continuation of such traditions, as mentioned previously, one cannot underestimate the influence of the United States' (food) culture. A 2011 study (Bowen & Devine) among Puerto Rican girls both on the mainland and on Puerto Rico found that around half of the 23 interviewed people had experienced dietary acculturation, often due to the lack of traditional cooking in the house. Furthermore, the geographical situation and distance from sources of Puerto Rican ethnic cooking did not help. In other words, dietary acculturation occurs most often with people who were raised in the States, or at the very least by parents that didn't cook Puerto Rican food. This dietary acculturation can lead to general acculturation, a loss of Puertoricanness.

The lack of knowledge about Puerto Rican food can however be amended. cooking books or online recipes can both give people a way to (re)connect with the culinary part of their heritage. The main difficulty would be that it was not an inherent part of their diet, like in

the study shown above. Much like music, this aspect of embodiment is not necessarily a visible one, which could lead to people more freely associating with this aspect of Puerto Rican culture. Food and cooking could therefore be an easier aspect of Puerto Rican culture to embody.

Pictured below are two books in the posession of Maria, a respondent. She uses them extensively.



Religion

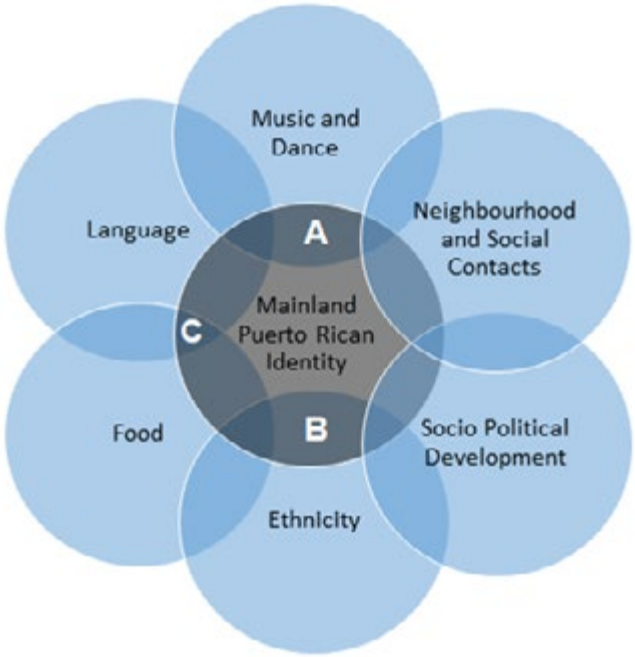
Religion has in the past served as a way to identify oneself as Puerto Rican. It started to be used in particular after the United States took over the island as a way to create a sense of Puerto Rican nationality and to differentiate this nationality with the protestant Anglo-Saxon United States. Ferrao, a Puerto Rican historian, in his article about identity formation of Puerto Ricans in the 1930s described it as: "Opposing the unstoppable wave of 'exotic' influences coming from the Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, and Utilitarian north, this sector adopted an Hispanist stance that conceived of the Iberic tradition, the Spanish language, and in many cases, Catholicism, as values inherent to Puertoricanness." (Ferrao, 1993). A few proponents of using religion in the discourse of Puerto Rican nationality around that time were José de Diego and Pedro Albizu Campos (Maldonado-Denis, 1976; Barreto, 2001; Gotay, 2015). The former led the more militant parts of Puerto Rican nationalists, especially active from the 1930s to 1950 (Villanueva, 2009), and advocated for the use of (amongst others) religion as an expression of Puertoricanness (Barreto, 2001).

However, the idea did not stick particularly well. The notion that religion was an important part of Puerto Rican identity was used by many intellectuals after the second world war (Duany, 2003). Yet according to Barreto (2001) in his study looking at the goals of Puerto Rico's elite in the construction of a Puerto Rican identity, he found that religion was not the perfect trait to emphasize Puerto Rican identity. Its main flaw was the fact it couldn't be used as a means to accentuate the differences between the United States' and Puerto Rican identity, as millions of Americans belonged to the Catholic church. As such, religion was, at least within that specific group, not used too often as an identifier of Puerto Rican identity. Religion could still be used as an aspect of embodiment of Puertoricanness, but I expect to have been used more in the past than in the present.

Conceptual model

This research being exploratory in essence, the conceptual model is mostly useful as a visual tool to see all the possible angles and variables can play into the forming of an identity in the case of mainland Puerto Ricans, and the many facets of identity they choose to embody in specific situations. All relevant points from the previous chapters will therefore be included.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



The varying circles represent the different aspects that can shape identity on the mainland Puerto Rican context discussed in chapter one and two. The circles should not be seen as static, which is difficult to convey in a static image on paper. All of these bubbles, and many others, can move in and out of identity depending on the situation or life course of an individual. They may grow in size (and thus importance) or shrink and move away from one's identity. The current identity of a person, in the mainland Puerto Rican context, is then found in all the different parts that overlap with each other. The center circle is just a visual aid to represent the many overlapping places that can be part of one's identity and the idea that someone can change identities depending on the context. A more accurate version of this figure would be highly dependent on the individual, and could arguably be relevant for only one individual at a time.

For example, during festivities, one could emphasize his or her Puertoricanness through knowledge and competence of dance, as exemplified by the **"A"** in the figure. The same person may experience the racialized way in which many people in the United

states identify others and each other with. When interacting with people who think as such, they could use an ethnic or racial angle to define themselves, the overlap shown around the **“B”**. A last example could be that this particular person speaks Spanish and cooks Puerto Rican food with their family at home. As a result, their identities at home would be typified by the intersection between Puerto Rican food and the Spanish language, the space represented by the **“C”**. This figure somewhat demonstrates the flexibility of the theoretical model that will be used to try and understand the many ways in which one embodies, or fails to embody, a Puerto Rican identity in different contexts. It is important to realise this embodiment is influenced by both the person and external factors simultaneously. People have the agency to change the way they carry themselves in different contexts, but are also subjected to the gaze of others who in turn draw their own conclusions. A static image fails to capture the intricacies of the matter, but hopefully helps to understand it.

Methodology

The methodological choice

Semi Structured Interviews

It should come as no surprise that the search for the contributors of mainland Puerto Rican identity may not be easily found. The contributors require a deep dive into a person's life history and opinions to retrieve relevant information about identity. A surface level questionnaire is therefore out of the question, as it would be limited by not necessarily accounting for different and yet undocumented ways mainland Puerto Ricans identify. Many parts of this research are explorative in nature, looking for the different ways individuals all find a way to identify as Puerto Rican in their own ways. The more explorative aspects of the research are therefore more suited to be researched through a qualitative research design.

There are a few ways to conduct this type of research. Many of these methods revolve around some form of interviewing. As it turns out, talking with people happens to be a very good way to get information (Longhurst, 2003), especially when one emphasises the listening part (Krueger & Casey, 2014). For this particular project, I have chosen to conduct semi structured interviews. Once again, the fickleness of the subject comes to mind when deciding for this approach. While some research has been conducted towards cultural expressions of (mainland) Puerto Ricans, it is not improbable that individual differences may be found between respondents. A semi structured interview research design would allow for an in depth look at the forming of identity through time. Simultaneously, it would allow for the interviewer to ask about both previously discussed and known (mainland) Puerto Rican cultural expressions while also giving interviewees the space to elaborate upon the ways they personally identify possibly outside of the documented spectrum. It would enable the different topics that form identity to show how they interact with each other, all from the perspective of the interviewee.

The format of semi structured interviews could also prove helpful to get the information needed to answer the research question. The hope is that this format would allow all the relevant topics to shine adequately for each individual interviewee, while leaving room for any other aspect of identity to be explored that may pertain to the specific respondent. Not all previously discussed aspects of identity may not be as important to some, while they may be more pertinent to others. Furthermore, I hope a more loose structure will allow the conversation to proceed more smoothly, hopefully resulting in a more relaxed atmosphere where the respondents may be more talkative and thus more willing to share information. The addition of non-verbal components during conversations could also prove helpful to understand what the interviewees want to convey (Barriball, 1994), even if it may not be reflected in the recordings.

Research Site

As the subjects of this research are mainland Puerto Ricans, it stands to reason to look for them on the mainland of the United States. Historically, Puerto Ricans have lived around the east coast of the United States, with a large amount of them living in and around the city of New York (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The site of research was consequently set in and around the metropolitan New York area. Cities such as New York itself, Jersey and Newark come to mind, as well as the general northern New Jersey area. The research was thus centred around that area, where all respondents were approached.

This approach would fit the moniker of a 'single sited' approach. This choice was made while comparing another approach, the 'multi sited ethnographic' approach. Both possibilities have advantages and disadvantages, and could both lead to interesting research with regards to this topic. The choice for single sited research was made for its fit with the research question and the feasibility of the approach. In essence, single sited ethnography involves investigating the research subject in a single geographical location (Ekstrom, 2006; Falzon, 2016). How this geographical location is delineated depends on the research. It could be a country, city, village for one. Outside these topographical categories, one could also see a location as a place with, for example, a unified cultural background. The multi-sited approach simply means conducting research in multiple locations or spaces. While this approach can be very helpful depending on the information one is looking for, it may prove unneeded for this particular research, at least at this stage.

The emphasis of the research is on the people and their stories, experiences and feelings that have led to a particular identity that involves being Puerto Rican. The main focus is therefore on the people themselves and the subjectivity in the ways they identify. A multi-sited approach could help see differences between the identity of people on the island of Puerto Rico and the mainland. But it is not the goal of this research. The goal is to see if and how mainland Puerto Ricans identify as Puerto Ricans, and how this may have changed over time. It is a piece about people possibly living with two or more cultural backgrounds on the mainland of the United States, and potentially creating their own. This research is meant to help lay a new foundation of knowledge of Puerto Rican identities

with regards to old and recent events. I personally see this research as a sample of the ways Puerto Rican identities can survive and possibly flourish on the mainland of the United States, outside of the space where the culture was developed.

Respondents and Approach

It should come as no surprise that the respondents for this research should have some form of Puerto Rican identity to be able to participate in this research. A mix of identities is possible, as long as Puerto Rican is a distinct aspect of their identity. Furthermore, they should be residing on the mainland of the United States. It is possible that some respondents also own a house or other estate on the island of Puerto Rico, but as long as they spent the most time on the mainland they will be seen as eligible for the study. As this is meant to be an explorative look at Puerto Rican identity, no further criteria have been given to get the best chance of finding respondents. In an attempt to represent as many forms of Puerto Rican identity on the mainland, gender and age were taken into account after the first few interviews to get a more complete picture of the possible forms Puerto Rican identity can take. More information will be given in a later paragraph.

Seen as I did not know many people in the area, any type of approach was considered, as long as it did not form any issue with the respondents and afected the useability and pertinence of the data itself. As such, I physically looked for respondents throughout New York City and New Jersey, entering cafes, bars, restaurants and institutes; and asking if anyone knew someone who identified as Puerto Rican, lived on the mainland and would be interested in an interview. Besides this approach, I tried to use the internet to get to know people who may know, or themselves were, someone who fit in the criteria to be interviewed. Emails were sent to cultural and community centers, institutes and restaurants. Phone apps were also used to reach as many people as possible. These included Meetup and Tinder. Meetup is a website and application where people can post events and invite strangers to participate in whatever activity is planned. These include book clubs, language exchanges, music groups, talk groups, and many more. I registered to a few language exchange groups, which included Spanish, in the hopes of finding Puerto Ricans and, if there were not any there, asking if they knew Puerto Ricans that I could interview. Tinder was used in a slightly different way. This app, advertised as a dating app, is perfect to quickly look at many different profiles with a specific goal in mind. When using the app in a more traditional sense, it would be to look for a date or partner. However, I made a profile with a description saying I was a foreign student looking for

people who identified as Puerto Rican to interview for my thesis. I proceeded to read every persons description, looking for any sign of Puertoricanness. These usually manifest themselves as an emoji of a Puerto Rican flag, the letters PR, the naming of Puerto Rico or any combination of the three. As soon as I saw any of these signs, I proceeded to show my interest in a conversation, which in the app would be “to swipe right”. From then on, I would proceed to start a conversation with potential interviewees and figure out if they truly identified as Puerto Rican, if they were interested in an interview, when they had the time for a rather long interview and where they wanted the interview to take place. The plan also included a form of snowball method implementation. After every interview, I asked the respondents if they knew anyone that was a mainland Puerto Rican and would be interested in an interview. While unsuccessful at first, I managed to get three interviews by getting into contact with people through a respondent after the specific interview.

Roughly after the first month passed, I only had one male respondent. As such, I decided to prioritize finding mainland Puerto Rican men to interview, which resulted in the three total male respondents of the bunch. In the end, three interviews were held thanks to Tinder, three from Meetup, and two through emails and two through asking around. All interviews were held in New York City and the Northern part of New Jersey state. As a result of these approaches, ten people were interviewed in a two month period.

Table 1: Respondents' Basic Information

Respondents	Gender	Age at time of interview	Profession	Interview type
Nancy	Female	58	Shop owner	recorded
Anne	Female	20	Student	recorded
Emily	Female	23	Assistant fashion designer	recorded
Christina	Female	22	Student/ Startup co-founder	recorded
Orlando	Male	50	Bar owner	recorded
Maria	Female	67	Language teacher	recorded
Xavier	Male	60	Academic journal editor	recorded
Amelia	Female	67	Clinical social worker	written
Jorge*	Male	-	-	written
Zoraida	Female	56	Teacher/Therapist	recorded

**Jorge did not provide additional information*

The interviews

After the future respondents were approached, an interview location and time were scheduled. Any location was acceptable as long as the recorder could capture the interview with the least amount of background noise interference. These locations ranged from a New York City park to restaurants, offices, meeting rooms, living rooms and cafes. Prior to the interview, I asked the respondent if they would allow me to record the interview. Of the ten interviews, one person did not want to give away personal information, but is an expert in the field Puerto Rican studies. As such, that specific interview will not be taken into account in the analysis. Of the remaining nine people, one did not want to be recorded. Her interview and data will be analyzed in the form of the notes I made during said interview. Of all the interviews, two were set in an environment where the background noise was excessive at times, but nothing major that would derail either the interview or the recording of the interview. When something did happen that interfered or demanded the attention of either one of the participants, the interview and recording was put on hold and resumed at most a few minutes later. The interviews lasted anywhere between 75 and 145 minutes, and were individually held in one session. This discrepancy in interview time can be attributed to the format of the interviews. Being semi structured, a lot of room was left for the respondent to elaborate on what it means for them to be Puerto Rican. Some people were more talkative than others, or simply had more stories and examples to tell. All other respondents did not mind being recorded and allowed their real first names to be known. Their last names will not be included for their privacy. In total, seven women and three men were interviewed, ranging in age from 20 to 69.

After having gathered the data, the interviews were fully transcribed and analyzed using qualitative research methods. The full transcription of the recordings was done to be as transparent as possible regarding the data, and additionally help eliminating any bias I may have had towards any number of aspects of the interview. By transcribing everything, the full context of the interviews is made more clear, and helps with the interpretation of the information shared in the interviews. Using the program Atlas, some key words and phrases that pertain to the subject of identity were coded as a means to find information and passages more easily in the interviews.

Reflections

Despite my best efforts, some flaws can be identified in the data gathering process. Yet I believe that these flaws will not be sufficient grounds to dismiss the findings in this thesis.

A first criticism would be the relatively small geographical scope in which the interviewees were found and the interviews were held. North New Jersey and New York City do not, contrary to popular belief of the latter, represent the entirety of the United States. As such, the mainland Puerto Rican population, while numerous in those areas, also does not reflect on the entire group living on the mainland. The choice to base research in those areas was pragmatic on a scientific and personal count. The New York area is arguably excellent when trying to conduct research on Puerto Ricans living on the mainland due to the long history of Puerto Ricans in the region and the sheer number of Puerto Ricans living there. But to get a complete image of the group, one would need to cast a broader net to find Puerto Ricans who reside in other regions of the mainland. Through a lack of funds and time, I could not get interviews from people outside of the aforementioned area. Readers should keep this in mind.

Another aspect to take into account is my complete un-Puertoricanness. Much like a 19th century armchair anthropologist, I mostly gathered information about the subject of Puerto Rico from the safe haven that is the university library. Even during and after talking with Puerto Rican people during the gathering of data, I was still an outsider to the culture, only knowing about it without having participated in many aspects of it. The long conversations with people who considered themselves Puerto Rican were enlightening, but not enough to compensate for the lifelong lack of exposure towards Puerto Rican culture. This confession is mostly to firmly explain the position I held during the interviews. As an interested outsider. As an enthusiastic visitor to the culture I was researching. As a researcher from some far away university. I knew quite a few things about the culture and the language, but am not proficient in either of those. These facts have undoubtedly influenced parts of the data collection, and I want to clarify the potential issue this can form.

However, I believe that positioning myself as a stranger to the culture has had positive effects with regard to the data gathered and received. By emphasizing my enthusiastic student, researcher and outsider parts, I believe people were more willing to give and explain information. It also potentially allowed me to have some form of legitimacy with regards to data collection and handling. The legitimacy to handle the data with care and respect the wishes of any of the respondents. With regards to the willingness to give me information, I believe the positioning as an outsider, which I was and am, particularly helped during the interview. Respondents were patient with explaining cultural and historical aspects of Puerto Rican culture. They helped with the spelling of Spanish words, explained them in English when needed and were thorough in the answers they gave.

History of Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico before 1898

The island of Puerto Rico has a rich history despite the fact western historians know precious little about it before Europeans “discovered” the island. It was then inhabited by the Taíno population before being claimed by Spain in 1493 after Christopher Columbus arrived. The ancestors of the Taíno people are believed to have migrated from the Amazon Basin around 500 BC. By the time the Spanish Caravels showed up, the Taínos lived in villages, called Yucayeques. These villages were all governed by a different chief, called Cacique. These villages were organized in a more centralized chiefdoms, under the rule of the most prominent chief of the area. There was an extensive system of agriculture in place on the island, mostly growing Cassava, corn and sweet potato.

The arrival and subsequent colonization of the island by the Spanish had far reaching consequences for the indigenous population. While it is hard to tell how many people lived on the island before the Spanish landing, there is little doubt the population decreased in the following years. This has mainly been attributed to the use of the indigenous population in forced labour and the diseases the Europeans brought with them. The case of Europeans diseases and their effects on the population on the people all over the Americas has been well documented (Guns, Germs and Steel, 1999), and have been devastating for the population of the entire continent. Due to the decline of the indigenous population, Spain decided to import African slaves to its Caribbean colonies, mainly from the West African coast. Around 7000 African slaves were brought to the island throughout the 16th century, where they mainly worked in the gold mines and in the sugar cane fields. The amount of African slaves kept growing well into the first half of the 19th century, up to 51,265 in 1846.

Under Spanish rule, the island of Puerto Rico was managed by a governor appointed by the Spanish crown. Nearly all governors during the Spanish tenure were military men. This led to a high degree of militarization on the island, which had become a defensive point for the Spanish continental territories. The island was even nicknamed “the key to the Indies”, emphasizing its importance as one of the main entrance points to the region. Several fortresses were constructed on the island, especially around the ports and a permanent garrison was formed in the capital, San Juan. The island’s economy was insufficient to cover these military expenses since the decimation of the local population and the depletion of the gold mines, and thus relied heavily on subsidies from the viceroyalty of New Spain. The island of Puerto Rico, and especially the city of San Juan, was and remained a key strategic and military point for the Spanish empire for many years.

The Spanish also brought their religion, Catholicism, to the island. It soon became the official religion of Puerto Rico. This was especially apparent in the urban centres on the island. Catholic holidays permeated the calendar, like Easter and Christmas. The Catholic church even monopolized the educational system of Puerto Rico up until 1898. Like many other cases of religious implementation, the catholic faith became a hybrid between the new and existing religious systems. This was especially apparent in more rural area, where Catholicism was fused with the indigenous Taíno beliefs into the cult of saints.

Puerto Rico remained modest in population size and economic importance for most of the Spanish colonial period. It was one of the last Spanish colonies in the Caribbean region in 1825 together with Cuba. Around that time, Puerto Rico transformed from a military function to an export oriented agricultural colony, first relying on sugarcane and later coffee, which became the main export crop in the late 19th century. These export oriented replaced much of the subsistence agricultural land during this century. Due to the agricultural character of Puerto Rican economy, most of the island’s inhabitants were dispersed over the territory, with relatively few larger cities. The same century also saw the abolition of slavery in 1873, in part thanks to the efforts of prominent Puerto Ricans that had followed overseas education. Furthermore, Puerto Rico secured many new liberties from the Spanish government in 1897, including the right for Puerto Rico to elect its own parliament, enter trade treaties on its own, decide on import and export tariffs and the

receiving of the same citizenship rights as the citizens of Spain. This new found freedom was however very short lived, as Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States after the Spanish American war of 1898.

Puerto Rico after 1898

The United States' government was interested in the island of Puerto Rico for a few reasons. First of all, it was a trading partner, seen as a lucrative overseas market for US products and a provider of tropical goods, especially sugar cane. Additionally, the strategic position of Puerto Rico was once again brought up, as it would allow the United States to increase their control over the Caribbean sea and one of the main passages between the Caribbean and the Atlantic sea. On the 25th of July 1898, the United States invaded Puerto Rico as a part of the Spanish American war. It was the second objective of the offensive in the Caribbean sea, Cuba being the prime target. The American troops encountered very little resistance from Puerto Ricans, who greeted the invaders with joy. They saws the coming of the Americans as a new opportunity to break with its colonial history, reap economic benefits and expand their political freedoms. A few months later, on the 10th of December, Spain ceded the territories of Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam to the United States. Under the same treaty, the United States could determine the political status of Puerto Rico and the civil rights of its citizens. Unlike previous acquisitions like Hawaii, the United States did not extend an avenue for statehood to the newly acquired territories. Puerto Rico became the recipient of a new legal category; it became an unincorporated territory, where legislative power resided in the United States congress.

The new autonomous Puerto Rican government was dismantled as soon as the island was ceded to the United States, and was put under military administration until the first of May 1900. Under the Foraker act in that same year, Puerto Rico became governed by a centralized administration that were appointed by the United States' president. This extended from the island's government to its supreme court. Puerto Ricans had some input, but it was very limited, especially compared to the short lived autonomy granted from the Spanish government in 1897. The act also established free trade between the island and the mainland of the United States, but only through the merchant marine.

The status of Puerto Ricans took a new turn in 1917 with the Jones-Shaffron act. It granted them US citizenship as well as a new form of government, freedom of speech,

religion and press, amongst many other liberties. However, power still resided in congress, which could change or simply annul any form of legislation coming from the island's government. Mainland Americans also continued to occupy most key political positions on the island, and the voting rights of Puerto Ricans did not reach further than the island, meaning they could not participate in congressional or presidential elections. Still, free movement between the mainland and the island was now possible and allowed Puerto Ricans to continue to "migrate" to the mainland of the United States, which had already started around the turn of the century (Portes & Walton, 1981). It also had military applications for the United States, as it recruited many Puerto Ricans for the war effort against Germany.

The United States not only used Puerto Rico and its people as a recruiting station for the military, it also changed the economy of the island in big ways. Sugar cane became the main export product again, especially for the United States market. The Jones-Shaffron act put up new barriers for exporting goods, resulting in a dwindling coffee industry. The only market which was easily accessible was the United States' market, which the latter took advantage of. Four American corporations produced over half of the island's sugar cane in the late 1920's. This growing industry hit a wall with the great depression, and never truly recovered. Many people started to leave the plantations and move to the urban centres.

Apart from the economic interference, the United States actively sought to Americanize Puerto Ricans. This was done through the teaching of United States history, culture and customs. The main way however was the mandatory use of English as the main language in the classroom. This was paired with the recruitment of many mainland United States teachers and the importation of American textbooks. It was mostly to little avail, as growing resistance towards the English language and an increasing Spanish linguistic sense of nationality kept Spanish as the main language on the island. Cultural and national resistance was further fuelled by a ban on the display of the Puerto Rican flag in public between 1898 and 1952. Law 53 was even adopted in 1948, commonly known as the 'gag law' which made owning and/or displaying a Puerto Rican flag a felony. It also prohibited the proclamation of ideas against the government of the United States and/or in favour of Puerto Rican independence. This law lasted until 1957.

Puerto Rico as a commonwealth

Puerto Rico's political reality saw many changes in the 1950s. These changes were ignited by Public law 600, signed by President Truman, which allowed Puerto Rico to draft and establish its own government, based on the republican form of government from the mainland. After a referendum in 1952 and a US congress approval of the constitution, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth, after which the United Nations removed Puerto Rico from the list of colonial territories. In the eyes of the UN, Puerto Rico was a self-governing entity, and thus not considered a United States colony anymore. This was meant to be a transitory state according to the ruling party and the first self-elected governor, Luis Munoz Marin. A transition towards eventual statehood. The commonwealth status brought an increased amount of political autonomy to the island, especially on the local scale. The elected governor could choose its own cabinet and the Puerto Rican government could pass its own laws as long as they didn't go against the constitution of the United States. Nevertheless, the United States government held the power with many other matters that didn't directly relate with the island only. To name a few, foreign trade, citizenship, military and immigration affairs were still in control of the US congress.

The commonwealth status is still the official status of Puerto Rico. While it accommodates many of the characteristics of a sovereign nation, it is not sovereign in the full political sense. This has sparked debates surrounding the course the island should take with regards to its status. The question of independence and sovereignty had already been debated in the Spanish colonial times. The United States, and the newly acquired status of commonwealth, opened up the debate once more. The three main movements regarding this matter are the status quo movement, advocating for the retaining of the current commonwealth status, the pro-statehood movement, seeking full incorporation into the United States as a state; and the pro-independence movement, wanting Puerto Rico to be a fully independent nation. Over the years, the independence movement has declined in popularity while the other two political currents have increased in size. The 1968 governor election saw the pro-statehood party seize a majority of the votes, and have since battled for the majority with the status quo political party. The current governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló Nevares, is a member of the new Progressive party, advocating for the inclusion of Puerto Rico as a state.

Current day Puerto Rico

To put it bluntly, Puerto Rico has had a number of subsequent difficult years. To start off, the island has been in an economic crisis, culminating in 74 million US dollars in bond debt and 49 billion in unfunded pension liabilities according to a 2018 report (Kobre & Kim, 2018). This debt and crisis did not happen overnight.

Soon to be governor Luis Munoz Marin and the United States government started promoting the industrialization of the island in 1947 in what would become known as operation bootstrap. The main component of this operation was the tax break American companies could receive if they based their factories and businesses in Puerto Rico. As a result the 1950s and 60s saw a booming Puerto Rican economy due to the arrival of United States businesses. The industrial sector in particular received an enormous boost and supplanted the agricultural sector in the 50s. One of the reasons for this governmental concern for Puerto Rico had to do with the cold war. The island was buried under grants and government aid to transform Puerto Rico into a capitalistic paradise and to showcase the benefits of joining the ideological camp of the United States (Grosfoguel et al, 1997). Despite the huge increase in economic power, the jobs on the island were far too few too accommodate the whole population. The exportation of labour therefore became part of the Puerto Rican government's plan to fight unemployment and control population growth on the island.

The next phase of operation bootstrap saw the implementation of other industries on the island. Industries that relied on cheap labour lost their competitive edge as wages rose, and were replaced by industries that needed skilled workers. Chief among them was the petrochemical industry, which represented 33.5 percent of the island's net manufacturing income by 1970. Unfortunately, the 1973 oil crisis devastated this part of the Puerto Rican economy, and the economy of the island as a whole.

The current phase of operation bootstrap relied more on high skilled and high technology industries settling on the island. In 1976, section 936 of the tax code gave united States corporations a tax exemption from income coming from United States

territories (Tax Foundation; legal Information Institute). The pharmaceutical industry took advantage of this and started establishing factories on the island. The abolition of the tax exemption in 1996, with a ten year phase out period, marked the end of the economic growth on the island. As section 936 was fully repealed, foreign investment in the island diminished, and the island found itself in an economic recession (World Bank Database, 2017). The recession has lasted ever since, with the economic crisis of 2008 dealing an additional blow. Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla declared that the island's increasing debt was unpayable. Unfortunately, the lack of statehood does not permit the island to qualify for federal bankruptcy, nor can it apply for international financial assistance due to the fact it is not a sovereign country. It is with these conditions that Puerto Rico was hit by hurricane Maria.

The hurricane started as a category five hurricane after it formed above the tropical Atlantic Ocean. It made landfall in Dominica first on the 18th of September 2017 and pressed onward towards Puerto Rico. On the night of the 19th of September, storm winds started hitting the island of Vieques, east of the main island. On the 20th, the hurricane made landfall on the south-eastern part of the island (National weather service). By then, the storm had lost a bit of power, becoming a category four hurricane, but remained a very dangerous. The island was already reeling from previous hurricane Irma, who's eye passed within 30 miles from the island on the 6th of September (FEMA, 2018). This new disaster devastated roads, power lines, water supplies, homes and the canopy due to the heavy winds and flooding. Most of the estimated 90 billion dollar damage occurred in Puerto Rico.

Next to the material damage, controversy arose as the death toll for the hurricane became public. During the weeks after the disaster, the death toll slowly increased up to 64, which became the official tally. This figure met with much scepticism as investigations about the direct and indirect causes of death in the months following the hurricane started to push forward much higher numbers. An official study was commissioned by the governor of the island, and was led by the George Washington University. This study concluded an estimate of 2975 people died as a result as a direct result of the hurricane and its subsequent effects. This discrepancy in numbers has caused controversy for the United States' government, and has raised questions and criticism about the adequacy and

urgency of the government's response to the disaster (CNN, 2017; BBC, 2018; Amnesty International, 2018; The New York Times, 2018; NBC, 2018).

Due to the long winded recession and hurricane devastation, many Puerto Ricans started to leave the island. According to the PEW research center, the island has lost around 400.000 of its inhabitants between 2004 and 2016 (PEW research center, 2017), and expects this number to grow. This figure was researched before the catastrophe of Maria. Between the 1st of July 2017 and the 1st of July 2018, approximately 130.000 people are believed to have left the island according to the United States Census Bureau (2018).

History of Puerto Rican migration to the mainland

The change of power from Spanish to United States' hands immediately impacted the migration of Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans were recruited to work in the sugar industry on Cuba, Hawaii and the Dominican Republic after 1900 (Castor, 1971). Hawaii especially saw a relatively large group of Puerto Rican migrants come its way. The amount of migrants remained modest up until the Jones-Shafroth Act of 1917 through which Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens, and all people born on the island were granted U.S. citizenship. Migration to the mainland of the United States picked up again. Puerto Ricans had already started to travel to and within the United States in the early 1900s (Portes & Walton, 1981). After a court case between a Puerto Rican woman and the US government, the supreme court ruled that Puerto Ricans were not alien in a migrational sense (Gonzales v Williams, 1904). The Jones-Shafroth act removed the last barrier of citizenship. Henceforth, every Puerto Rican could live anywhere they wanted to on the mainland, provided they could back it up financially. Hundreds of Puerto Ricans were recruited in mainland factories and in the United States' army and many skilled workers started moving to the mainland, settling in New York city's working class neighbourhoods. The great depression send some of them back to the island, but the amount of Puerto Ricans living on the mainland kept on crawling upwards.

The volume of this migration fluctuated throughout the years, as did the class composition of the migrants (Levine, 1987). While the start of the 20th century saw migration mostly based on recruitment from external sources, migration as a form of social mobility started to be promoted by the insular Puerto Rican government as early as 1930 when the Bureau of Employment and Identification was instituted on the mainland. This institution, and others of its kind, facilitated employment migration to the mainland. Mainland employment which was promoted by the same institutions. This type of migration greatly increased after the second world war.

The great migration, as it was later called, saw 650.000 Puerto Ricans move from the island to the mainland between 1945 and 1964. A great demand of cheap labour paired with the easier and cheaper modes of transportation, planes instead of ships, facilitated

the flow of people (Grosfoguel, 1992). A big part of this wave was comprised of unskilled workers, many unfamiliar with the English language. Some went to work in agricultural sectors, through for example the Farm Labour Program, while others were hired as cheap factory labourers. Again, most Puerto Ricans ended up in the North East of the United States. Bit by bit, the Puerto Rican diaspora spread over the United States. While New York remained one of the centers of the diaspora, many started to live in other areas such as Chicago and Philadelphia in the 1950s, Florida saw a great increase in Puerto Rican population around the 1970s, particularly in Miami and Orlando. These last two continue to grow as a Puerto Rican migrational destination.

The freedom of movement between Puerto Rico and the mainland also meant that many Puerto Ricans decided to return to the island, or engage in so called revolving door migration. Depending on a great many aspects, such as but not limited to job opportunity, family ties, wages, climate or language, Puerto Ricans could decide to return to the island at any point. Provided of course they could afford it. As such, many mainland Puerto Ricans decided to move to the island between 1965 and 1980. The return of these people, many of whom were born on the mainland, started an identity crisis for Puerto Ricans everywhere. One main issue was the language, as Puerto Ricans born on the mainland were raised in a different cultural context than the people on the island. Chief difference was the difference in language. Spanish for islanders and English for mainlanders. Island Puerto Ricans started differentiating themselves from the "Americanized" Puerto Ricans from the mainland. One way of achieving this was through the denomination of any mainland Puerto Rican as "Nuyorican", referring to the city of New York and the many Puerto Ricans living there.

Emigration picked up again in the late 80s. One of the main reasons was the socio economic climate on the island. Wages in Puerto Rico were far lower than the average mainland counterpart. Poverty and unemployment numbers were also much higher compared to the United States. With time, people started to move to other areas on the mainland, deciding not to go to the Puerto Rican enclaves of, for example, New York and New Jersey. Texas and (especially) Florida were prime destinations for newer migrants. The latest migration waves also meant a loss of high skilled and educated people for the island. As economic opportunities, living conditions and wages improved on the

mainland compared to the island, more and more people used migration to improve their socioeconomic position (Aranda, 2007). The long lasting recession and recent natural disasters have only exacerbated the situation.

Analysis

This next chapter will explain the ways the people I have interviewed express their Puerto Rican identity. The first section will discuss and show examples of individual aspects that are important in this expression for some or all respondents. It will be followed by an exploration of the younger respondents' ways of identification, despite being at least second generation Puerto Ricans in the United States.

Aspects of Puerto Rican Identity

Language

Language stood out unanimously as one of the main ways the respondents both identified as Puerto Rican and how they expected Puerto Ricans on the mainland to affirm their Puerto Rican roots. This general sentiment was echoed throughout all interviews. Yet it was stated through many different viewpoints, that many respondents shared. One of these is the importance of language as coming forth from the tumultuous history between Puerto Rico and the United States.The so-called gag law is an example of the antagonistic relationship the United States has had with the Spanish language on the island of Puerto Rico. This specific sentiment is captured by Xavier who states:

> *"Well, it's a... You have to understand the...language is such a sticking point for Puerto Ricans, largely because of its colonial history to the United States. So... it was something they tried to take away from us. And despite the fact that Puerto Ricans never put up an effective resistance to ehm, to American colonization, one of the, one of the areas they did resist was in the retention of language. Not only here but, but specifically in Puerto Rico. [...] Why is language such a sticking point for Puerto Ricans? And it's largely because it, it had to be, it was fought for.*

A similar train of thought was expressed by Orlando:

> *"Yes. Ehm, you know one must remember that when.. even though Spain didn't push an education and in the 19th century if you read, people who are fighting for Puerto Rican independence never mention culture. It wasn't important. And never.. and when defining Puerto Rican is never mentioned language. But once the United States invades in 1898, ehm, the soldiers are followed by the educators. And one of the first things that the US government does is that it sets up a public school system. [...] And the United States then imposes English as the official language of instruction. [...] And, this goes hand in hand with a lot of other racist policies and the views that Americans had that because they were of Spanish heritage, Puerto Ricans were inferior, because they were Catholic blablabla. All of that. And so language becomes in the beginning of the 20th century, very important marker. Ehm, and there is even in the level of the school, there is a resistance form the teachers teaching English and from the kids learning English. There is a resistance."*

In this point of view, language is an expression of culture through its resistance to the imposed English language. Language didn't become an important aspect of culture until it was threatened. This seems to be in line with what was discussed in chapter two. These two people, who happen to be the only men in the analysis, were the only ones to specifically mention a detailed part of the importance and the historical background of language for Puerto Rican identity forming.

Spanish

Outside of these historical reasons, languages are often used to delineate specific ethnic, cultural and geographical groups. The use of Spanish for Puerto Ricans on the mainland and on the island is no exception. For those that speak the Spanish language, usually the older generations, it is a way through which they quite literally convey their identity. One such example is Nancy, who is fluent in both languages. In her area of residence in New Jersey, she rarely speaks anything other than English. Yet she tells about her times going to Miami and having to switch languages:

"You know you talk to the cashier, you talk to the.. everybody! It's, everybody talks Spanish. If you go to.. Miami is a very Latin city in Florida, whereas in other areas it's generally not like that but Miami it's... You need to know Spanish. [...] I don't, you know, people ask me "Oh, where you from?". I grew up in Rockaway. I just don't even say "Oh, I'm Puerto Rican" you know, or "I'm Cuban" I'm ehm "I'm Spanish", oh, I don't say anything of the sort because it's just.. here. But if I'm in Miami, oh, I'm Boricua hahahaha."

Unfortunately, knowing and speaking Spanish have had some negative effects, discrimination being the main one. This discrimination can be pretty direct in some cases, and be much more subtle in many other cases. Zoraida gives a good example of direct discriminatory remarks that have been said to her. She speaks of an incident where she was at the theater with her children and spoke to them in Spanish:

"Well, ehm, actually when my kids were little ehm, here [unintelligible] in the theater, ehm, I, I said something in Spanish. Cause people see me, they don't know where, where I'm from because they try to figure out. Sometimes they'll ask me "Are you Egyptian?". Sometimes Indian, sometimes Columbian. You know, everything else but Puerto Rican. Like oh, not really. So ehm, and they.. I spoke Spanish to my kids and they said "Go back to your country."

Other examples include Christina and her experiences living on Staten Island, which she describes as “Trump supporting America”. One of these recurring experiences was within her Italian side of the family, where family members were openly racist about her father.

“I don’t speak Spanish right. So a lot of Spanish speakers would come to me and say I’m not Puerto Rican, because I don’t speak Spanish. And.. it really hurts, because we’re all the same. Like literally, like there’s Puerto Rican blood in my veins but because I don’t speak it they have a, a need to be negative and like disconnect you from the community.”

English

The English language also plays an important role in Puerto Rican identity on the mainland. One could argue that it started at least since 1898, from the moment Puerto Rico was taken over by the United States. The language became especially important to people that crossed the sea to work and settle on the mainland. Many respondents spoke about the ways they or their parents did or did not learn English. The importance of that process, especially in the household is described by Cristina as an important part of culture:

Christina: Will I ever know the true Hispanic experience, you know coming here from Puerto Rico or from the Dominican republic? Not knowing the language is huge. Not knowing English. Cause that is a huge part of Hispanic culture that I will never be able to identify with.

Interviewer: The language.

Christina: Language. Cause I am a native English speaker. And a huge part of Hispanic culture is that transition to learn English. Like if you ask any ehm, Dominican or Puerto Rican where English is not their first language, their life story is told through how they learned English. They'll say I came to this country you know, I knew no English. But then I got a job here, and that's how I started to learn English. it's like they tell their life story through the lens of language, ehm, which I will never have, as a native English speaker.

The importance of the English language cannot be understated. Christina's point of view came back in many different forms throughout the interviews, but never as explicit as in her interview. Still, it did not take much questioning to get a picture of every person's history with the language. This was also seen through the relation of family members when coming to the mainland of the United States. Learning English was something every

member of the family had to do, both children and parents. It was seen as an important part of living on the mainland, especially during the big migrational waves around the midway point of the 20th century. The ways in which families divided the attention paid to learning English and/or maintaining the Spanish language differed between interviewees. In Maria's situation, home was where Spanish was spoken, and school was where English was learned. She called him the "Spanish dictator", as he wanted his family to only speak Spanish at home. She even tells of a specific interaction between her father and a teacher during a parent teacher conference:

"I remember.. Oh my god. I think I was in... first..? I was in first right... I think it was in first grade or maybe kindergarten. Maybe kindergarten. I feel I was in kindergarten. My father came with my mother to teacher.. parent teacher conference. And they said: "Mister Gonzales, Miss Gonzales, you need to speak English to your daughter. We're in America. This is America. So you need to speak English to your daughter." So my father, with his little broken English that he knew, he said: "I don't speak good English. I speak bad English. I wanted my daughter to speak good English. You speak good English? Teach my daughter good English. I teach my daughter good Spanish. Ok? ok."

Nancy's story is very different. Contrary to Maria, Spanish was spoken very little in the house, much to her father's chagrin. Her mother wanted them to be "Americanized", as Nancy puts it:

"Nancy: So my dad was much more prouder than my mom. My mom was proud to be Puerto Rican, but she ehm, was much more adamant about ehm, making sure that her children were viewed as Americans and not Puerto Ricans.

Interviewer: So you think it's because of the stigma?

Nancy: Not only the stigma but also the , the culture of ehm, wanting her not to be... Again that stereotype of ehm, Latino mentality.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Nancy: She very much wanted us educated in the States [in order] for us to be successful from what she perceived to be successful. She worked really hard and education was very important to her. Both my parents for that matter, both my parents. but ehm, my mother more so was the one who was, you know, don't marry Latino hahahaha. She really wanted us again, Anerican. Quote unquote, what I perceived to be Americanized. That she didn't want us speaking our language, feeling the culture of the language…"

Unfortunately, Nancy is not the only example of this situation. Zoraida speaks of instances where she spoke to people who chose not to speak Spanish themselves or did not teach it to their children.

"Zoraida: Maybe their parents didn't.. Sometimes what happens, and I've, I've talked to a few Puerto Ricans and other Latino ehm.. Cubans, that ehm have chosen not to speak the Spanish language because... they probably don't wanna be discriminated against. Because they ehm, that might be some of the cases that I've heard stories of. Maybe because of the discrimination they don't wanna be seen, you know, like "Uggh, here's you know.."...

Interviewer: ..."here's this spick again".

Zoraida: Ehm, exactly. So they they they have ehm, had this this fear of you know, "I'm gonna have an accent"."

The fear of discrimination, the fear of being seen as a Latino/Latina and all the perceiverd associated negative aspects thereof inhibited the learning of Spanish. Some people seem to feel the need to assimilate to minimize their "Latinoness", which can include putting the American language and culture on top, potentially to the detriment of their Latino heritage. This may be one of the reasons younger Puerto Ricans are believed to speak less

and less Spanish. This seems to somewhat be the case with these specific respondents, as none of the three younger Puerto Ricans speak Spanish fluently. Yet, despite the importance attached to language to the identification as Puerto Ricans, it is not a defining factor in the end. Despite not knowing the language, all three younger respondents identified as Puerto Rican. This phenomenon was acknowledged by other respondents, with some differences in points of view. Zoraida argued that someone who does not speak Spanish could still very much legitimately identify as Puerto Rican.

Orlando even sees the loss of language as something somewhat inevitable, and that people find other ways to identity. When speaking about the loss of language and culture, he replied:

> "It, it has be, it has been lessened in [unintelligible] you know, as a method of adaptation and survival. Ehm, it, there are very many, you know, by now people of my age group have had children ehm. There were already people of my generation whose Spanish language shows got completely deteriorated. So, they couldn't pass it on. You know. They were incapable of passing it on. But yet they still identify as Puerto Ricans. [...] And then you know, ehm, there are other ways, and this is why, I said this to you the last time we spoke, cultural.. culture and nationalism, who identify nationally, has something.. is, is not as ehm, is something that's fluid. And is affected throughout time by different cultural influence. "

Language is seen as an important part of the Puerto Rican culture. There is no exception on the mainland. Yet the difficulties arise when mainland puerto Ricans find themselves in between cultures, one where Spanish is extremely important and the other where speaking Spanish may lead to unwanted attention and discrimination. As such, the ones who can speak both are acutely aware of when they can speak Spanish and when they shouldn't. They can switch between them, and do so on a regular basis. As for the ones who do not speak Spanish, they face other issues. They can and have been exposed to discrimination from within the Latino and Puerto Rican community specifically for their lack of mastery of the Spanish language. Yet they still feel Puerto Rican, and identify as Puerto

Rican through other channels. This puts them in an interesting position with regards to embodiment of their Puerto Rican identity. They want to embody a different state depending on the people interacting with them. Their embodied states can also be rather opposite from one another. They can change from wanting to show off their knowledge of Spanish (if present) to the toning down of such knowledge. Mainland Puerto Ricans can face the scrutiny of mainland Americans and island Puerto Ricans. While they are in a position to be able to identify with Spanish and English, they are scrutinized by both 'native' speakers for it. This leaves them in the unenviable position that may seem to leave room to identify with both languages, but mostly highlights their lack of agency to freely identify with either of the main languages they speak and embody.

Dance and Music

The aspects of dance and music were present in every interview. Every interviewee had some sort of connection with music they perceived as Puerto Rican, and was seen as a way to identify as a Puerto Rican. For some, it was another part they could identify with their culture. For others, it was one of the main ways they could express their Puertoricanness. For some, it was more of a natural pathway they were served through their cultural education. Maria and her sister … speak of songs they would perform as a family during christmas, which included the use of Carribean/Puerto Rican instruments. Amelia even showed me some of the instruments she owned, like the Guiro (pictured left) and Sambal (pictured right).

For Maria, salsa was particularly important as music and dance. Ever since salsa became popular, she started practicing it and eventually taught it in a dancing school, where she also taught cha cha cha and merengue. She speaks of salsa, and dancing in general, as an important part of her identity. A part she decided to entrust love of dancing to her children, which may be an aspect of her family:

> *"Maria: I love my music. I love my dance. It is part of my life. It has become part of my life. Has been every part of my life ever since the ha, the 70s. Ehm… Oh, I did the [bachata] when I was little. My father was an amaz.. I didn't tell you, my father was an amazing dancer. My father was just someone I think about, even now I picture my father dancing. Trying to look her up. He's an amazing dancer. […] Dancing is very important*

and I made it very important to my kids.

Interviewer: Your kids can dance?

Maria: My kids are dancers. My daughter, the pastor, she uses dance as.. with her church. Just, she went to a Presbyterian assembly and she actually taught them. She was in the newspaper. She, teaching everybody. All the fat pastors are all, they're all learning to dance salsa hahaha. So, it's like a form, you know, like, you know, she's proud.. I... My pride in dance and my love for dance and for the language became my kids'"

For the younger people I interviewed, music and dance serves as a conduit to Puerto Rican culture that can compensate for other aspects they may be "lacking". None of the three younger Puerto Ricans I interviewed spoke Spanish fluently, all three spoke of how "regular" Puerto Ricans viewed their lack of language as a lack of Puerto Rican identity, and all three expressed their Puerto Rican culture through, amongst other aspects, music and dance. Christina summarises it neatly:

"You know, listening to things like reggaeton and things that are, you know, very, you know, popular. Being integrated into Spanish music culture has helped me like get more ingrained into like what is this thing that I am."

Emily too identifies with her Puertoricanness through music. She even specifically speaks of the way identifying with the music and dances does not have to be conveyed through language, or rather, music and dance represent a separate type of language. This is particularly interesting for the people that do not have a great command of Spanish. In the next example, while foregoing any form of verbal communication, Emily was able to embody and convey her Puertoricanness without words.

"Ehm, music wise this is something that I could share. Music, everyone can connect to music in some way. So, the way I connect to my Spanish people, my Spanish people, my identity, is through music. Especially the music. People can never [know] that you speak Spanish, not until you open your mouth. But when you rhythming and you're moving in the street and you're dancing and you hear Salsa music from a car across the street and you're just like wow [...] And, you also, you start dancing and then if someone accosts you, recognizes that you're Spanish, even though they're saying "Hey! I wanna start dancing with you." [...] I can just, as a Spanish person you can start dancing Salsa on the street and someone could just come up to you and take your hand and, and dance with you, and we're just so happy and excited about this music and that we're Spanish. It's something that our Spanish community really loves and connects with. So without speaking, you'll know."

Newer forms of musical expression were also popular, especially to the younger generation of mainland Puerto Ricans. These genres are specifically rap/hip-hop and reggaeton. They serve a different purpose than for example salsa, as they were not always used as a form of cultural expression according to the interviewees. Reggaeton is the most recent and popular arrival in the worldwide musical landscape. It was seen as Puerto Rican, yet only a few (younger) people expressed their culture through that style. A similar thing could be said about rap and hip hop, with the exception that it was often used to point out the African and urban mainland American influences are present in Puerto Rican culture, at least in its modern iteration. Rap was historically conceived in and around the Bronx, New York City, mainly by black Americans and Puerto Ricans, who each concentrated on certain aspects that make up hip hop. This collaboration of sorts shows the inherent African influences in Puerto Rican culture. Yet not many people seemed to know or at least speak about it as part of their culture. Only a couple of interviewees spoke about this genre and its link to both its Puerto Rican and African American roots. Whenever these musical genres came up, they were viewed as music of the younger generation, and one of the ways they identified with. Some people hinted at the fact it was

one of the ways they or people they knew identified as Puerto Rican, but it did not come up very often or in detail during the interviews.

Music and dance seem to hold a special place in the identity of mainland Puerto Ricans, especially salsa. It is a style that was spoken of with pride, both in tone and in content. The interviewees knew of its impact outside of their culture, and was the main style with which they identified. Attitudes towards it ranged from acknowledging to being downright enamored with it. Interviewees saw it as one of the ways one could identify as mainland Puerto Rican. Listening and dancing to salsa is a way they embody Puertoricanness. The good reputation and popularity of salsa around the world may be a reason as to why interviewees who had trouble finding ways to embody their Puertoricanness through other means used music and dance to that end. Pair that with the pride many respondents conveyed towards this cultural expression and you get an infectious cocktail that everyone can taste. Salsa seems to be a very inclusive form of expression, offering an uncontested way for young and old mainland Puerto Ricans to identify and be identified as such. Race, ethnicity and language be damned.

Concerning the other forms of musical expression with ties to Puerto Rico, they were certainly popular depending on the person. The younger generation seemed to listen to reggaeton and hip hop of Puerto Rican origin. The embodiment of Puertoricanness seemed to be associated more with reggaeton than with hip hop. But the validity of this embodiment was not as clear as with salsa. Thus, it could be a way the younger generation, as reggaeton seems to be popular with this group, to embody their Puertoricanness through music that doesn't rely on salsa.

Cuisine

When it comes to food, every respondent had some cultural attachment to it. From learning to cook from their mother to eating special Puerto Rican dishes during holidays. Food was more or less important as a factor for identification for every interviewed person. As Orlando put it: " It's the easiest part to fall in love with". It was also seen as the most accessible part of Puerto Rican culture Hence, it was also the part where even the people who did or could not identify with other parts of the Puerto Rican culture identified with.

Starting with the older generation of mainland Puerto Ricans, Puerto Rican food was not always a staple of a regular family dinner. For some it was all they had while others only prepared and ate it during special occasions. Zoraida recounts her eating a lot of Puerto Rican food on the mainland, and significantly more on the island.

"Yeah, I knew I was Puerto Rican here, in the United States. Because my, my family had very strong ehm, cultural values. I mean the music was always on and the food that we would eat, it was all Puerto Rican food ha."

On the other hand, Nancy has had a different experience with Puerto Rican food:

"[...] but ehm, getting back to the food aspect, I, I can tell you, that in my 58 years old, I think I've made one or two pots of real Puerto Rican rice. Ehm, I've never made a pastele in my life, I have ehm, and I'm thinking about it, and it's kinda sad."

Maybe the reason Nancy has not identified with food (and her Puerto Rican identity in general) until rather recently could be ascribed to the active downplaying of the Puerto Rican identity in her family when she was young. As stated in a previous section, her mother actively fought for the Americanization of her children, possibly to a point where the Puerto Rican heritage was repressed. Despite the initial lack of Puerto Rican cultural knowledge and habits, Nancy now embraces the culinary part of Puerto Rican identity more and more.

Besides the food one would eat on a (semi) regular basis, special occasions were also an important part of the Puerto Rican food culture for the interviewees. Many spoke about the making of Pasteles during Christmas. Maria remembers it as a familial activity:

"Pasteles! Oh my god. This is Christmas time. Everybody would get in a line and we would make.. except my problem is that I never made pasteles on my own. I only know how to wrap 'em. Hahaha. [...] I know how to put them in there. My mother, my sister would make the fillings "

The younger generation also maintains a bond with their Puerto Rican identity through food. One could even argue it is one of the main ways they identify with. All three younger respondents equated some of their culture to Puerto Rican food. Starting with Anne, she tells about her Puerto Rican side of the family (the other part being Chinese) and how food was always an important part of her Puerto Rican side:

"Anne: Yeah, my father was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Ehm, his father is originally from Spain but his mother, her family has been on the island for years and years.

[...] Puerto Rico is very much still so.. such a huge part of him. It's extremely.. It's an extremely (large) part of how he identifies and how he lives his life. [...]. Ehm, so yeah, growing up there really really formed his identity, and even so like passed on to me [unintelligible].

Interviewer: And, in what ways do you feel it passed on?

Anne: [...] And food especially is probably the biggest thing. Everybody I know who is Puerto Rican and lives in the States, has a cookbook. It's called cocina criolla I think? Ehm, and, everybody has that, I mean, everybody I know at least has that cookbook and... You know my mum is not much of a cook and he's the one who... taught me how to make things, [food especially is very good]."

Emily on the other hand did not learn to cook Puerto Rican food through her family. She speaks of her Puerto Rican father as having wandered away from his Puertoricanness. She never learned how to cook the Puerto Rican way. The one who is responsible for introducing her to many aspects of Puerto Rican culture, including food, is a friend of hers, and her experiences with her and her friend's Puerto Rican mother:

"Ehm, well, when I first, cause when I was young, I really didn't identify myself as Puerto Rican till 6th grade. Ehm, because like they said my colour.. She's not as Puerto Rican as you would think. So there's some things that you don't understand or you don't learn. Some slang that you don't understand or, or music. Ehm, I met my best friend in 6th grade, going to elementary school. And she was Puerto Rican. And then like her mom she was Puerto Rican. And I didn't connect with her because she was Puerto Rican. I connected with her because we had a certain understanding. Cause we were both new, going to the same school. But as I kept seeing their household, it was very, it was very Borinquen. You can tell that. There's some things that certain households have when you walk in. Does not have a lot of pictures hanging from walls. It'll be black and white, a lot of family photos. A lot of Puerto Rican flags hehe. A lot of Puerto Rican flags everywhere. Puerto Rican flag shirt, towel, a keychain, things that go on the refrigerator. Certain magnets, a lot of Puerto Rican families have a lot of magnets on their refrigerators. Certain magnets, a lot of Puerto Rican families have a lot of magnets on their refrigera-

tors. Cooking with yellow rice. I never had yellow rice before. I..always like, when I go to my family's house, do I have yellow rice, but, when I go to best friend's house, they make yellow rice all the time. Everyday. [...] I never really celebrated being Puerto Rican until I met my best friend, cause she, when we used to go to the pool, she would bring a Puerto Rican flag towel with her, and she would wear it proudly around her. And I did finally understood what it was like to be Puerto Rican."

Her love for many things Puerto Rican came from the exposure of (possibly mainland) Puerto Rican culture through her friend and her experiences in and around her house. It opened her up to a part of Puerto Rican culture she had not experienced before, allowing her to indentify through and potentially embody her Puertoricanness through food:

"The music and food makes me definitely Puerto Rican. There's a certain happiness that I get when I hear Spanish music and my taste of food. [...] there's a certain happiness knowing that this is my food"

For Christina, who has an Italian Puerto Rican background, food is one of the two things she identifies with in her Puertoricanness. This was not always the case. It wasn't until she left Staten Island to go study in New York city that she started to get to know Puerto Rican culture and food. She speaks of the active process of finding parts of the culture she belongs to, which can include language, music and of course cuisine:

"Yeah, so I think ehm.. when you are the people who are being colonized, you know, you have a whole new set of rules that are imposed upon you right? A new religion, a new language, [...] but it's kind of what you do is you weave your, your previous indigenous culture into the new. you know, it's kinda just like why Christmas trees exist right. you know Christmas

trees were, you know, like that was from the Norse culture. that was integrated into Christianity. It's like, it's the little things that keep a reminder of your roots. And, and I think parents and grandparents and great grandparents do stuff like that so it's never forgotten. Ehm, so even though you have to adapt to survive when you're there, cause it's either you adapt to your colonizer or you die. There's only two options here. […] So, ehm, the, so either adapt or you die. And it's leaving like breadcrumbs. It's like leaving a breadcrumb trail back to the original culture […] And I think being able to take things like language and recipes and ehm, the basic building blocks of our music and tracing the breadcrumbs back to that, the adaptability that took us, that got us here, but bringing us back we can maybe get to some semblance of what we were."

This is how she, more or less on her own, constructed her own Puerto Rican identity. By tracing it back the aspects of Puerto Rican culture she was familiar with and digging deeper, she enhanced her understanding of the culture and started to embody it, make it her own. This seems to be what the connection between people and Puerto Rican food does, especially for the younger generations. They provide a gateway to Puerto Rican culture. A connection to their culture that they may not have had before. The older generation has, on average, a stronger tie with many of the aspects of Puerto Rican culture, yet food seems to be somewhat of an equalizer. It is not the most visible aspect of embodiment to people, but it becomes more obvious once you visit a Puerto Rican household or talk to people who identify and practice this cultural facet. Everybody connects with what they call their food and have the possibility to embody this part of culture, no matter their ties with other aspects of Puerto Rican culture.

Race

Race was not often used as a building block of one's identity. Puerto Rican was the main ethnicity people identified with, but this appellation hardly includes a racial dimension. This could be because of the many different phenotypes present and represented in Puerto Rico, and thus in Puerto Ricans in general, or the difficulties of the general United States' society defining Puerto Ricans racially. As such, race and ethnicity, when used, were a source of confusion or frustration for the respondents. Where do they fit in? What race are they considered and how do they consider themselves racially, if they define themselves racially at all? As such, race was mostly used as a marker of identity to conform with the standards of racial categories on the mainland of the United States. Zoraida gives the best example:

"So then ehm... going to college, it was, you know, I took classes and took ehm, ethnicity classes and.. even filling out like applications I didn't know what to put.cause, what am I? Like the race. The race was considered the colour of your skin, and you know, right now I have a tan. But I'm pretty fair. And.. so I said "But wait a minute. If race is the colour of your skin, then I must be white Hispanic. White Spanish. White Puerto Rican." [...] I don't know, identifying myself, if it said Puerto Rican, then I would say Puerto Rican. If it said Hispanic, then I would [un-intelligible]. But if it said just race, I would put white, because I'm not black. Right? I don't know."

This confusion is not limited to Puerto Ricans, or Latino people in general. Other people had trouble correctly identifying the ethnicity of the respondents, based on racial characteristics. Emily speaks of the misidentification and questioning of people about her mixture of Puerto Rican, Italian and Native American identities:

> *"Most people just automatically see I'm Spanish by my looks. Like again it's, a lot of people use their eyes more than they use their brain hehehe. So.. you could see something, and think differently of it. Or you can see something and not judge right away. And [unintelligible] your brain and think, they could be something else. You don't know. You're basing judgement on looks that you see every day around you. You, you judge me on looks you see in music videos and judging on looks you see in magazines and books. Can't judge from what you see. So ehm, yeah I walk outside knowing what I am, but I always have to explain what I am, because [they] just automatically think I'm just Spanish. And ehm seeing by the way I speak, and with my Asian features, I don't look completely Spanish. So people are like "Are you half black? Are you white? Are you this?". "*

This confusion seems to stem from the differences in racial identification in Puerto Rico and on the mainland of the United States. Nearly every respondent spoke of the mixture of race and skin colour in the Puerto Rican community. Both young and older people were aware of the differences in racial identification, either in the Puerto Rican community specifically or the Latino community in general. For Puerto Rico, and the specific notion of mestizaje mentioned in the previous section, race is a gradient, not a specific category. Simply put, the cultural and societal categorisation and use of race between the mainland and Puerto Rico is different. Therefore, the Puerto Ricans interviewed for this work had trouble identifying racially using the mainland notions of race, despite it being an important point of reference for identity on the mainland of the United States. In short, mainland Puerto Ricans do not seem to embody race in the way is customary on the mainland.

Racial ascription can be a source of issues for (mainland) Puerto Ricans. This means Puerto Ricans may not have a say in the way they embody race. Whether or not they want to embody their choice of race, they will be seen as the category assigned to them based on their skin colour. As such, their agency in this particular aspect of identity is very limited. In the best case, their skin colour allows matches the way they would want to be identified as. Any divergence from this specific scenario takes away any choice. In the eyes of the beholder, they will embody either the white or the black race. A racial dichotomy that does not even conform to the views on race in place on the island. Mainland Puerto Ricans can thus find themselves in the position where they embody some part of identity they themselves don't identify with.

None of the interviewees had a clear way to solve this issue. Conformity seemed to be the answer, yet this does not solve any potential identity conflicts, or any misidentifications for that matter. The choice between black, white and even Latino embodiment may seem like an easy one, but in many ways it is forced upon.

The African in the Puerto Rican

Only about half the interviewed people made allusions to the African and Spanish aspects of their culture and potentially identity. Yet, as discussed in the theory of this thesis, African and urban African American culture is a big segment of many aspects of puerto Rican culture. Zoraida specifically mentioned the African influences in dance and music in Puerto Rico. But for a deeper dive, I will use examples from Xavier's and Orlando's interviews.

The notion of the African segment in Puerto Rican culture is anything but new. Yet the renewed interest shows a break in the older notions surrounding skin colour and race. These notions were given different names in the interviews, but all had in common that the white was seen as better than black. Xavier calls is the notion of mestizaje, while Orlando sees it as a racial pyramid:

"Well there is this [thing] in Spanish, it's called mestizaje. This notion that we are like a [unintelligible], a mixture. But the mixture hides behind a lot of discrimination. Because the mixture always emphasizes the white, the lightskins.

Interviewer: So, light as being ehm, more important.

As being more important."

" Puerto Ricans have been trying to figure this out for for for, for years and it's m.. even in some of our greatest thinkers have dedicated some thought to this but, the, what, when they started culminating, back in that period that I told you about, they started formulating the racial idea of what a Puerto Rican is. They created what [Pedreida] called a racial pyramid. And that, at the bottom of that pyramid was the African, and at the top of that pyramid was the European. So they racially privileged the European heritage at the expense of the African."

Yet this notion of racial grading was seen as archaic by both interviewees when speaking about the different parts that form Puerto Rican culture. Orlando the bar owner said it best:

> *"To say that it's only Tai.. Spanish, Taíno and African is to stop that mixture in 1898. And that culture in 1898. And the United States, culturally has contributed things through Puerto Rican culture. Positive, negative or neutral."*

The old notions of black and white transformed over the years, particularly on the mainland. Events between Puerto Ricans and African Americans, particularly in new York city in the 20th century have shaped these changes. Living in similar neighbourhoods has allowed for cultural exchange, but were ultimately made much easier because of the inherent Africanity within Puerto Rican identity and culture Orlando speaks of this history and exchange:

> *"It's a complex history to a degree, but it's also a beautiful history. Ehm, the truth is we share very many of the same neighbourhoods. There's already a certain level of Africanity in the Puerto Rican culture. Ehm, Africa and the African diaspora was a strong influence in our, in our culture. It's in our food, it's in our music, it's in the way we speak and I say it's also part of our spirituality and the way we see the world, our worldview. Ehm, it's.. so I, I think for the Puerto Rican to have a, an exchange ehm, a cultural exchange ehm, with, with African Americans, ehm, is.. was very natural. [...] Ehm, but there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that that is the reason we, we form these ehm, these cultural ties ehm, through the African American community. And that's, to me that's looking beyond the surface of the idea that "Well, we share the same neighbourhoods.". I say yeah, we share the same neighbourhoods with the Italians and the Irish as well and we never formed the same alliances that we did, and we never had a cultural production that we have with the African Americans. And I said, and music in particular: hip hop, ehm boogaloo, jazz ehm... ehm... you know these were all.. these were all aspects that where, where*

collaboration between African American and Puerto Ricans produced something that became a part of America's lexicon, musical lexicon. So, there, there's a.. that doesn't happen just because you share the same neighbourhood."

The reevaluation of the African segment within Puerto Rican culture was brought forth politically too, according to Xavier and Orlando. This reevaluation even travelled back to the island.

"Ehm, I also think that the revalorisation of the African roots, African heritage of Puerto Rican culture, comes from Puerto Ricans in the United States. and the Puerto Ricans in the United States that, especially New York, Chicago, that those second generation, people in the 60s, that grew up with the, with the civil rights and the black power movement, are.. began to revalue the African heritage. Not.. and began to, to forth the idea that "Hey! The main core of Puerto Rican.. the mainstay of Puerto Rican culture is African, it's not Spanish." Or Afro Caribbean. And that went back to Puerto Rico."

The acknowledgment of the African ties is one thing, but what do they mean for the respondents? Orlando also spoke in length about the importance of both the African heritage of Puerto Rican culture and the influences the United States have had on the current Puerto Rican culture, mainly on the mainland. His studies of the African diaspora allowed him to delve into the deep corners of the African heritage in Puerto Rican culture. He spoke of the Africanity in Puerto Rican food and cooking, in the respect of elders and in Puerto Rican music were mentioned. He also spoke of two examples of remnants of the African culture he has studied and experienced in more detail. He speaks of the cult of the saints:

"[...] then, you have what's basically the practice of folk Catholicism. the cult of the saints. This is African man. They don't, you know. This is, this is not European, you know. You have these cults of the saints and the the, the African and, in the island, on the islands ehm, were able to mask ehm, through the veneer of Christi.. Christianity the practice of their own religion, through the form of survival and retention."

... and the tradition of hospitality:

"One of the national traits that Puerto Ricans are associated with is hospitality. [...] Our willingness to open up our homes to other people that are not from our own group. I think that, that to me once again is, is an African trait. It's not a European trait. [...] A large part of the slaves that came to the island of Puerto Rico were from one specific region, and that's west Africa, you know. [...] When I started reading about that, or listening to Africans say, invite me to Africa, which I had.. still not had the pleasure of going, but in, in, in, in all knowing people that have gone, it's such an [unintelligible], the kindness, I was the first one to eat. And you know, if they, if you would have asked the shirt off his back, you would have gotten the shirt off his back. that is... Puerto Rican. that's what we do haha. Haha that is what we do. I'm like holy shit! that's that that.. Those traditions. That, the the fact is when you invite someone to your home they are a guest of honor immediately. And it's not just paying lip service to that, it's the [expression] of that. In how you feed them and how you treat them in your home ehm, that is from I'm hearing and from what I read an African trait primarily coming out of Nigeria."

The Africanity of Puerto Rican culture, and thus identity, is an aspect not many people realize. It is a much more subtle side of the culture that permeates all other aspects of it.

Every respondent knew of the three major ethnic groups that formed the multiethnic people on the island of Puerto Rico, but many underestimated the African influence within their culture. Yet it has influenced the general Puerto Rican culture on the island and the later mainland side of things, especially in New York City. The food has many traces of direct African influence. The music, from Bomba to Hip Hop cannot deny its African (American) roots. The hospitality, religion and other traits that are seen traits whose roots inseparable from their African influences. Despite this evidence, not many people identify with this part of the culture, yet they embody it as part of Puertoricanness. Similarly, (mainland) Puerto Ricans are not seen as the embodiment of Africanity, except when the person in question fits in the black and white categories that frame the United States' mainstream racial thinking. In this last sense, the association between the African and Puerto Rican can be a choice depending on the skin colour of the individual. Africanity is linked to race on the mainland, meaning that Africanity is expected if one looks black. For any lighter skinned Puerto Ricans, it may be preferable to not be associated with the bottom part of the racial status, and therefore not associating oneself with the African part of Puerto Rican culture. But if any (mainland) Puerto Rican embodies any of the aspects highlighted above, they by definition embody some African part of their culture, whether they are aware of it or not. But unlike with the issue of race, as long as your skin is light, you have the choice to one: embody these aspects of Puerto Rican culture, and two: acknowledge the African roots in these facets of Puerto Rican culture. In a sense, some Puerto Ricans may have a choice in this matter. A choice that is heavily guided by racial categories and the social status of these categories, but a (limited) choice nonetheless.

Hurricane and recent Politics

It is difficult to gauge the impact the hurricane and its aftermath has had on Puerto Rican identity. Yet it is quite easy to see how the response of the United States' government to the hurricane has been viewed by mainland Puerto Ricans. In short, everybody agreed that the tragedy has been very badly handled by the government. From relatively late help and slow improvement of the situation, many Puerto Ricans, even on the mainland, have felt that their government has left the Puerto Ricans on the island to their own devices. Just to give a few examples of the opinions people have surrounding the disaster response. In general, Xavier puts the attitudes of Puerto Ricans like this:

"Interviewer: And speaking of the hurricane, [...] could you tell me about that?

Xavier: Do you mean, how it has changed perceptions?

Interviewer: For example. Just, what could you tell me?

Xavier: [...] I think that people there, even those who favour the United States and becoming a state realize that ehm, the United States really doesn't care. [...] That sense that they (Puerto Ricans) were American citizens, an equal, even if they believed it, now it's gone. And there is a deep feeling among many that the United States just doesn't care. And will never care. [...] It took something like 5 days for the help to arrive. The US said "Well, you're an island. You're far away." People say "But you knew we were far away. I mean you took our sovereignty in [unintelligible]. You were aware." Ehm, so there was that. I think it was really the hurricane and then I think the hurricane made people look back into the whole fiscal crisis and the position of, of this [situation] by congress that controls the government. I think it made them look back into that."

The hurricane has become a catalyst for reevaluation of the Puerto Rican situation as a whole. It has made people reflect on their place in United States' society as a Puerto Rican on the mainland and on the island. The two main ways this was manifested in the interviews was through a political lens and through a societal value lens. For the political lens, it was mostly about questioning the current government's (in)actions and the reevaluation of the status of Puerto Rico to the United States. Many interviewees talked about the lack of aid during the crisis and how it has changed the way Puerto Ricans feel about the United States. Ana specifically thinks that it is going to change voting patterns of those involved:

" But Puerto Rican people will never, want to become a state, especially now after what, the experiences with like the US, with like the government especially after Maria where everybody is like "We need resources. We're.. you know, we're a commonwealth of the United States but we're still not relevant enough to get what we need to rebuild, like communities in Puerto Rico." And I think that definitely has gonna have a huge impact on voting, like in the future, in terms of like independence, statehood or remain a commonwealth even."

Emily goes one step further and is of the opinion that, partly due to the handling of the hurricane, Puerto Rico should become independent:

"I do believe Puerto Rico should separate from the US, so they could take care of themselves better. Cause the US is not giving Puerto Rico any aid. [...] the US doesn't really care about the island itself."

For bar owner Orlando, who was already well versed in the history of Puerto Rico and the United States thanks to his previous studies, the political situation of the last decade and recent governments' actions have rendered the political position of the status quo unviable. After talking about the economic crisis, migrational wave to the mainland and deplorable situation on the island, he stated his opinion on what should be the political course for Puerto Rico:

"Orlando: You know ehm, a complete shutdown, by all sectors that are affected by this, and demand to the US government.. to do what is right in the case of Puerto Rico, which is to release it from it's colonial obligations to the United States, to forget this ridiculous debt that was created by investment bankers on Wall Street. And to put back, almost as a form of reparations, to help rebuild the Puerto Rican infrastructure. You've gotten enough out of the island, for over a hundred years. 1898.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Orlando: You know. But unfortunately that, that opinion is in the minority at the moment. There are Puerto Ricans under the illusion that they're gonna be made a state. I'm telling you now, they're not gonna do that.

Interviewer: Cause for now it's either..

Orlando: Especially now with with.. under this guy's watch (Trump), but ehm, you know, it's not gonna be made a state.Interviewer: So now the options are, right, same as now, state and independence? That's the only real option anymore. In, in, in that other option of the current, the status quo is, it's obviously not viable. "

The situation, brought up mainly through the influence of the Mainland and the hurricane, has surely impacted his views. While they may have already been pro-independence, he specifically the current government as a reason for why other solutions to the political question are not viable. Orlando often spoke from a historical perspective in the interview, and the last decade may have sharpened his critique towards the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States.

Beside the political dimension, people have felt a social and emotional impact as a result of the handling of hurricane Maria. Feelings of neglect, foreshadowed by Xavier came back during the interviews of Maria and Zoraida. They specifically mention feeling like second or worse rate citizens after seeing the managing of the situation regarding the hurricane. The also both mention the sitting president, Trump, and some of his actions while on the island just after the hurricane hit. Maria tells:

> *"I haven't been there since Maria, so I have no idea the devastation has been there. And what they.. and how this administration has paid, you know, the people that, you know, who are.. who treated.. That's when I felt that this how, ehm, this government really really really treated ehm Puerto Ricans as super second class citizens. You know, I think we, we never, we were all very proud. Like my mother was a proud citizen. I was a proud citizen of my country, you know. And ehm... And I feel... I feel angry. I feel angry that ehm... that you know, if this would have happened in any other state, in the United States, it would never have gone this far. You know, from the devastation occurring to not bringing the people enough food. To people that are still devastated right now.*

[...]

Here is our president [throwing] paper towels to the, to our people. How degrading. You know, seriously. Would you throw paper towels at your brother so he can clean up his own mess, you know, whatever? And, you know, it's to me, I just feel it was a slap in the face, towards any Puerto Rican who has contributed, [...] You know, so. That was... ehm, it's been my hardest now, and that's where I'm at now. I'm still very very disappointed. very disappointed. And the Puerto Rican people are very disappointed. "

Zoraida had a very similar attitude regarding the situation. The topic during the start of this section was about voting rights, or lack thereof, for Puerto Ricans living on the island and we went on to speak about the situation one year after the hurricane:

" I think they're considered like a third or fourth class citizens.

I mean, we're a commonwealth of the United States. And after this ehm, hurricane, [unintelligible], the whole world knows about.. That's a lot of little towns still have no running water and no electricity. That should not be happening. Not in, not in.. anywhere in the world. But Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the United States. That's very upsetting. Ehm, and ehm I know that... Trump like threw paper towels, and like, ok, you guys are like garbage here. You know what I'm saying?"

Every single interviewee spoke about the hurricane and the management of the aftermath by the national administration, and all said that it has been an important talking point for Puerto Ricans everywhere. It is hard to quantify if and how much attitudes regarding the relation between Puerto Rico and the United States have changed as a result of that, but many interviewees are of the opinion that it has made Puerto Ricans realize how the political administration thinks and acts with regards to the island and its people.

What could this mean for mainland Puerto Ricans and the ways they identify and how they embody said identity? First of all, it is too soon to reliably identify important differences in embodiment and identification within the many mainland Puerto Rican communities. This rings especially true due to the format of this research, which does not include follow up interviews to identify any type of changes in identification and embodiment of the respondents. Luckily, the apparent lack of concrete evidence does not hinder speculation based on what respondents said in the interviews. For one, the obvious attitude and actions of (parts of) the government could result in two things. The first thing would be that this showing results in mainland Puerto Ricans reducing the apparent connection to their Puerto Rican identity. If Puerto Ricans are seen and treated as less important than other citizens, mainland Puerto Ricans may choose to hide and conceal this part of their identity. By diminishing their embodiment as Puerto Ricans, they could try to avoid some of the negative effects this embodiment seems to bring with it. This strategy has been highlighted in a previous section about language.

The second option that, in my mind, is more likely is that they will use the hurricane and its aftermath to advance socially and politically in the United States. The interviews seem to suggest people have had enough of the status quo and have been exposed to negative attitudes some elements of the United States' population harbor for them. It could lead to a counter reaction, where actively identifying and embodying Puerto Rican culture could become a way for people to empower their seeming second rate social standing. One could arguably see Alexandra Ocasia-Cortez as an example of a proactive stance to change the status quo. Due to her political ideas and the fact she is the youngest congresswoman to ever be elected in the United States, she has been a voice for Puerto Rican concerns in congress. Besides political means, empowerement could manifest itself in the more active learning and teaching of Spanish to people of Puerto Rican descent on the mainland. It

is hard to say what the consequences for the embodiment of Puerto Rican identity may be. On a more concrete note, political action seems to be in the air. Many interviewees conveyed their outrage and disappointment in the actions of their government. This could very well result in concrete political consequences. A loss of support for the president Trump from his mainland Puerto Rican constituents would be the most obvious consequence. In Puerto Rico, the political parties advocating for the conservation of the current political status of Puerto Rico may lose power. Power that could go to the parties representing the wish for Puerto Rico to become a state and the ones who want Puerto Rico to be independent.All in all, the interviews suggest people have received some kind of wakeup call and may be ready to take action. What they do with it is yet to be seen and/or felt.

Conclusion & Discussion

Mainland Puerto Ricans can shape their identities in a multitude of ways. The way in which they embody Puertoricanness, varied though it may be, is often contested by people within and outside of their cultural group(s). Puerto Ricans can see them as lacking some important parts of what they consider Puerto Rican culture, while non Puerto Ricans can misidentify them based on arbitrary variables that don't necessarily fit with the way they want to embody their Puertoricanness.

The goal of this explorative research is to investigate the ever so fluid ways in which Puerto Ricans on the mainland identify themselves as Puerto Ricans and how they embody this puertoricanness. We can see that while all of the respondents more or less agreed on the stereotypical important aspects of Puerto Rican culture, they have wildly different ways to identify as Puerto Rican. Mainland Puerto Ricans feel an attachment to the island and/or the culture, and this attachment can manifest itself in a multitude of ways. Prior research that has been done on the subject seems to come to similar conclusions (Duany, 1997; Grosfoguel, 1999 and 2004). Thus it seems that the basic building blocks of Puerto Rican identity forming and embodiment have not changed much in their blueprint. Every single individual aspect researched can be one of these building blocks, but they are very supple in their importance and implementation. Outside of the older facets like language, food, (salsa) dance, music and even the debated topics of ethnicity and race, some new facets of Puerto Rican culture have come into existence, like reggaeton music. Even the African characteristics inherent of what many people consider to be Puerto Rican culture are prevalent in embodiment, even though the particular roots of said characteristics are often unknown or ignored. Whether or not people realise the roots of their culture, it is still up to the person to decide whether to identify with specific aspects of culture and whether to embody them.

As such, it seems that both theories of embodiment and intersectionality are prevalent in the case of mainland Puerto Ricans. They do embody their culture in a multitude of ways. The embodiment goes both ways, people are seen as the embodiment of a particular group and people choose to embody a specific nationality or culture. This last

aspect relates directly to intersectionality. Mainland Puerto Ricans have the flexibility to highlight or hide parts of their Puertoricanness. However, they can often find themselves in situations where they are forced to hide certain aspects of what they consider their culture. This intersectionality, which calls attention to the multidimensionality of marginalized subjects and their lived experiences (Crenshaw, 2008), is prevalent in the lives of every mainland Puerto Rican interviewed in this research. They can, and often have to switch between multiple identities, emphasizing the forced nature of many (but not all) of these acts.

Language is a contested area of Puerto Rican identity and embodiment. While English is seen as the most important language from a practical standpoint, Spanish is seen as a requirement to identify as a Puerto Rican, and thus to be allowed to embody Puertoricanness. This point of view, believed to originate from the island of Puerto Rico, was widely known by the respondents. There might not be something inherently wrong with the requirement to know at least these two languages, issues arise once learning or knowing one of both are seen as a potential issue. It is apparent that both sides exert power over mainland Puerto Ricans. Power through the fear of discrimination and separation from a group one identifies with. Language in this case is not purely a tool for communication. It is also part of a social strategy. A strategy where knowing either one, or even both, may be detrimental to the person in question. Race and ethnicity is another contested topic with regards to identity and embodiment. The issue here lies with a difference in values with regards to racial classification. It is not the topic through which the respondents choose to define their Puertoricanness, or even define themselves at all. Yet living on the mainland of the United States requires one to be identified based on the prevalent societal racial categories. These categories are not shared with Puerto Rico, and are not a requirement to embody Puertoricanness. On the other hand, they are forced upon on the mainland, pressuring people to at the very least be seen as the embodiment of their perceived race. There is no choice to be had, and is another aspect of embodiment that is forced upon mainland Puerto Ricans.

Not all aspects of identity were as contentious. Music, dance and cuisine were all facets that were used to embody puertoricanness across generations. The younger generation especially seemed to show or find their Puerto Rican identity through these music, dance

and cuisine. These were all important building blocks that can compensate for the lack of for instance language. As such, they sometimes even supplanted other traditionally foundational aspects of Puerto Rican culture. No matter how important Spanish may be for island Puerto Ricans or race may be for identification on the mainland, people will find other ways to embody and show this embodiment when they do not possess, or are seen as not possessing, the conventional major aspects of a group or culture. The culture itself is a mixture with distinct ingredients. Taino, Spanish, African and the United States influences mix and match to make a different cultural cocktail for each and every (mainland) Puerto Rican. The only thing that seems to be shared amongst all the people who identify as Puerto Rican is some tie to the island and/or the people from there. Any acquired facet of Puerto Rico can be used as an ingredient for embodiment of Puertoricanness.

These facets of Puerto Rican culture are also ever changing. New forms of dance and music are a good example of relatively new aspects. Yet cultural inventions are not the only way culture and cultural embodiment can change.

The embodiment is often a bottom-up process. The importance of language is not underestimated by anyone. Yet the prominence attached to it by, for example, people on the island was not shared in the same way by mainland Puerto Ricans. This indicates the subjective nature of any given facet of culture, as they can vary in importance depending on the person while still being recognised as a part of the culture. If what is considered as one of the most important facets of culture and nationality can be disregarded in the construction and embodiment of said culture and nationality, there must be no specific way to be Puerto Rican, or to embody its culture. It truly seems to be a hybrid and subjective identity, swerving not only between geographical space, but also between people, their experiences, their knowledge and their choices.

These choices are however limited in many ways. The power distribution does not swerve in the way of (mainland) Puerto Ricans. As such, they are forced to make some choices with regards to embodiment, and many other choices are made for them. Ethnicity, or at the very least the categories used by other people to identify ethnicity, are imposed. They are numerically and socially a minority, which appears to bring a

certain degree of discrimination with it. Racist experiences do not seem to be uncommon for mainland Puerto Ricans, which can lead to significant changes in the way they carry and/or present themselves to other people. It can also alter the skills parents pass on to their children, in the hopes of countering possible discrimination in the future. Overall, mainland Puerto Ricans find themselves on the lower end of societal power distribution. This position is further exacerbated by their hybrid status, between Puerto Rican and mainland American, as they may need to appease both sides to maintain said hybrid status.

The power, or lack thereof, seems to remain present in a general sense. The newest development in this dynamic can be attributed to the hurricane and the response of the government to this disaster. It showed the power discrepancy between people from the mainland and Puerto Ricans, particularly from the island. The comparisons made with other hurricanes that hit the mainland (notably hurricane Harvey and Irma) made people aware of the lesser status Puerto Rico and its inhabitants possesed, with the governmental response being seen as late, inadequate and at some points simply disrespectful. There seems to be a generally negative response from Puerto Ricans both on the island and the mainland towards the response of the United States' government. It has shown to many that the societal position of Puerto Ricans on the mainland is that of a second rate citizen, if not worse. What this awareness will and will not bring remains to be seen. Will it make mainland Puerto Ricans change their embodiment to Puertoricanness to hide it more, as has been the case for language? It may go the other way and make the (substantial) group of mainland Puerto Ricans fly their colours even brighter. Will people choose to avoid potential negative stereotypes or actively combat them? The hurricane and its aftermath could become the catalyst for substantial change in the ways Puerto Ricans embody their culture and their puertoricanness, on the island, mainland and everywhere else.

This last point brings up the strengths and weaknesses of this study. On a conceptual level, this study cannot generalise these findings to the general mainland Puerto Rican public. Thus, it cannot provide answers or substantial predictions about the group as a whole.. In the end, this research is meant to provide an understanding of the ways these people identify and embody themselves, as well as how they are identified and seen as embodying a specific group. Yet, the format allows for an in depth look at the intricate

puzzle that is a person's identity and embodiment of said identity. I would therefore encourage researchers to complement findings like the ones from this type of research to fuel larger scaled ventures. Qualitative research and its quantitative counterpart should reinforce each other, this subject being no exception.

With regard to the actual gathering of data, potential and actual concerns have been addressed in a previous section. The gist of these issues had to do with my position as an outsider with regards to Puertoricanness. After all, I am a European man who has not really had contact with Puerto Ricans, on the mainland or on the island. The knowledge I have gathered about these people comes from lectures and books, not from primary sources. Therefore, the starting questions might be more or less pertinent with regards to the people that were interviewed. Yet the use of a semi structured interview format helped to broaden the potential topics and added more flexibility to the interviews and subsequent gathered data. The looser form of the interviews also loosened the tongues of the interviewees. In the end, this method had obvious weaknesses and obvious strengths, with the latter overshadowing the former, especially if subsequent research moves in to cover those weaknesses.

Once these weaknesses are covered with research, I have no doubt new understanding will be reached with regards to (mainland) Puerto Ricans, their culture and the way they embody this culture. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, it could provide insight into power structures in United States' society using mainland Puerto Ricans as an example of a substantial subgroup within the country that, based on this research, is often seen or treated as subpar by both the people of the island they identify with and the top social class in the country.

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