

Introduction

THE PUERTO RICAN EXPERIENCE in farm-labor migration challenges our understanding of U.S. citizenship in relation to immigration policies. Seasonal farm-labor migration reveals how Puerto Ricans occupy a complicated status within the U.S. nation, regularly confronting questions about their citizenship in job interviews, government offices, and everyday encounters with North Americans and immigrants. Since 1898 Puerto Rico's incorporation as a U.S. colonial territory has complicated North Americans' perceptions of Puerto Ricans. Even after 1917, when the United States granted citizenship to the inhabitants of Puerto Rico, mainstream U.S. society has always suspected them of being "illegal aliens." Their designation as colonial subjects, mixed racial backgrounds, Latin American culture, and Spanish speaking marked them as different in a polity where being a white Anglo-Saxon embodied a dominant notion of citizenship.

Recent events illustrate the complexity of Puerto Ricans' role in farm labor in the United States. On January 5, 2015, Charlene Rachor, regional director of the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), announced charges against Cassaday Farms, in southern New Jersey, for unlawfully rejecting thirteen qualified Puerto Ricans who had applied for seasonal employment and hiring guest workers, in violation of the regulations of the H-2A visa program.¹ The owners agreed to pay \$57,870 in civil penalties and \$117,130 in back wages to settle the charges (Forand 2015). Because many agricultural employers view Puerto Ricans as undesirable owing to their U.S. citizenship, Cassaday Farms-type incidents have become more common, particularly as the current economic crisis in Puerto Rico impels migration to U.S. farms. Two cases illustrate how employers' ability to deport guest workers and undocumented workers shapes the agricultural-labor market. In 2016

LatinoJustice PRLDEF (Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund) filed a case before the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission against a Michigan apple grower for discriminating against and unjustly firing a group of Puerto Rican workers (J. Delgado 2016; Llorente 2016). In January 2017 some dairy farmers in South Dakota expressed interest in hiring Puerto Ricans, but state officials and some farmers were skeptical, arguing that migrants could leave their jobs easily and return home because they do not depend on visas. One official added that U.S. workers “are not hungry enough” to remain in this type of job (Garcia Cano 2017).

Nowadays the majority of U.S. agricultural employers disdain Puerto Ricans, while guest workers and undocumented laborers have become what Cindy Hahamovitch (2003) calls “perfect immigrants” for a low-wage agrarian-labor regime that seeks a deportable, seasonal, and easily replaceable labor force. The undesirability of Puerto Rican migrant workers underscores the long history of contradictions in how farmers and government officials have acted to promote and control farm labor (see Duke 2011).

Since the late 1940s most Puerto Rican seasonal farmworkers have migrated to the northeastern United States, although many also went to Florida and Ohio and smaller numbers to Washington State, California, and Michigan. The center of Puerto Rican farm-labor migration was southern New Jersey, in and around Gloucester and Cumberland Counties, where workers harvested fruits and vegetables. Workers also migrated to Pennsylvania for the mushroom harvest in Chester County but also throughout the state, to Lancaster and Hamburg Counties and as far west as Lake Erie. Other migrants arrived in Maryland and Delaware, working on small farms that supplied the Green Giant Company. In New York the Buffalo and the Hudson Valley areas were the main destinations where migrants harvested vegetables and apples. The canneries around Rochester hired Puerto Ricans until 2017, housing hundreds of workers in labor camps. Workers also traveled to Long Island to harvest potatoes, and the tobacco fields of the Connecticut River Valley attracted migrants from tobacco-growing municipalities in Puerto Rico. Migrants also worked in the cranberry industry on Cape Cod and in apple orchards throughout New England.

In 2007 I began to document the experiences of farmworkers in the United States. My quest took me to southern New Jersey, where I expected to find elderly retirees who had migrated many years ago, so I was surprised to find several labor camps with Puerto Ricans. For more than sixty years, Puerto Ricans have ventured to U.S. farms in search of better opportunities,

working in an industry that pays low wages and where immigrant labor predominates. Although the stream of migrant farmworkers has decreased, a couple thousand still travel seasonally to camps in New York and New Jersey. I met workers from different backgrounds, some as young as nineteen years old and as old as their late seventies. Some have been doing the same kind of work for more than fifty years, like Ramón, a seventy-eight-year-old who began to migrate seasonally in 1959. Some migrants become farmworkers because they like the work, but most indicate that they do it because of their family responsibilities. Grandparents send money to their children and grandchildren on the islands, and some young workers, among them many new fathers, work to support their families. Others have to pay rent in Puerto Rico or make car payments. Some had migrated to escape family problems and bad influences.

When I talk with other scholars about Puerto Rican farmworkers, some express surprise upon hearing that thousands of Puerto Ricans have migrated as seasonal farmworkers. Because of the long history of labor migration from Mexico, most North Americans think of migrant farmworkers as Mexicans—and undocumented. This perception corresponds to reality, since 75 percent of contemporary farmworkers are of Mexican origin, and 53 percent are undocumented (Pfeffer and Parra 2005, 4; 2006, 81; Gray 2010, 170; USDL 2005, ix; Alves Pena 2009, 856–57). Even so, Puerto Ricans, along with Filipinos, West Indians, African Americans, Chicanos, and Native Americans, are part of the history of U.S. farm labor. They were or still are the dominant labor force in some regions.

Few in number compared to Mexican migrant workers, Puerto Rican farmworkers nevertheless numbered more than 60,000 per year at the peak of their migration, during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Morales 1986). Today Puerto Ricans in agriculture-related activities in the United States number approximately 5,200, and most work on farms in Florida, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York (García-Colón and Meléndez 2013). Most of these seasonal migrants come as freelancers, but approximately 1,000 come on contracts through the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and in conjunction with the H-2A visa program (J. Delgado 2014, 4).

Puerto Rican migration to U.S. farms has grown and shrunk because of immigration policies and guest-worker programs. In 1948 Puerto Ricans began to migrate through contracts sponsored by the Puerto Rico Farm Labor Program (FLP) under the Puerto Rico Department of Labor, which oversaw

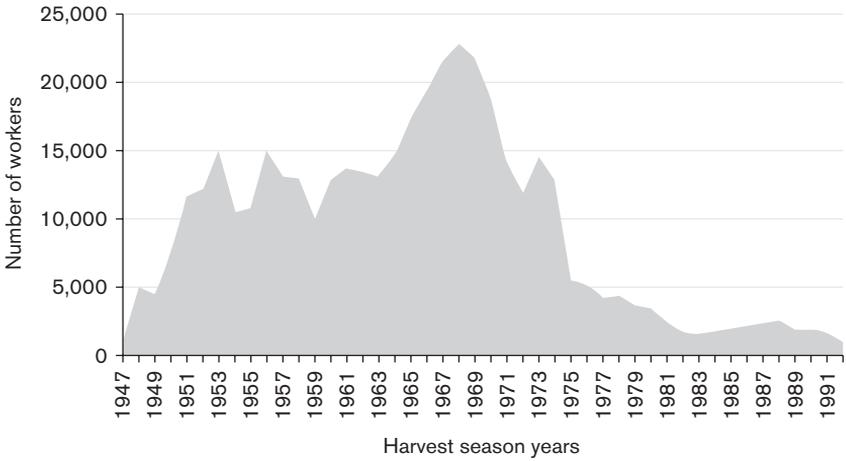


FIGURE 1. Number of Puerto Rican migrant contract workers on U.S. farms, 1947–92. OGPUS (1953–92).

recruiting, arranged contracts, and transported workers to the continental United States (Lapp 1990; Meléndez 2017). By promoting migration and assisting workers, the government of Puerto Rico sought to eliminate unemployment on the islands while answering the postwar labor demands of U.S. employers. U.S. colonial status offered the government of Puerto Rico an important tool to shape both migratory flows and the formation of stateside communities (García-Colón 2008). Colonial officials, in effect, forced federal agencies and elected officials to pay attention to migrant farmworkers. In addition, the termination of the Bracero Program in 1964 and restrictions on H-2 workers increased the use of Puerto Rican farmworkers throughout the United States. During the mid-1970s, however, apple growers were successful in thwarting the preference for Puerto Rican workers over H-2 workers, contributing enormously to decrease the number of migrant contract farmworkers. Still, despite discrimination and shrinking numbers, contemporary Puerto Ricans continue their quest to earn a living by working in U.S. agriculture.

Labor migration from Puerto Rico to U.S. territories began as soon as the U.S. military invaded Puerto Rico in 1898, and U.S. elected officials immediately began to debate the place of their new colonial subjects in the nation. Between World Wars I and II, after Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship and the first Mexican braceros began to arrive, growers' preference for Puerto Ricans decreased. Farmers feared that Puerto Ricans would contest violations of their rights, become a burden for welfare agencies, and mix with

whites, and, unlike Mexicans, they could not be deported. Puerto Ricans thus became part of a long history of how agricultural employers construct and maintain a labor force in part by elaborating and deploying racial myths about certain kinds of workers and their work ethic. Examining the processes of constructing labor forces exposes how employers use and dispose of women, children, immigrants, colonial subjects, and minorities (Griffith 1993).

Farmers' objections to Puerto Rican farmworkers went unchallenged until after World War II, when the Puerto Rican government established the Bureau of Employment and Migration (BEM) and its Migration Division (MD). Influenced by New Deal policies for managing labor markets and modeled after the U.S. Employment Service, the BEM devised a campaign to lobby federal officials and stateside farmers to employ contract workers, which resulted in the establishment of the FLP.

This book explores the long history of the administrative and legislative attempts to manage farm-labor migration and the experiences of migrant farmworkers to reveal how U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico and the political economy of U.S. agriculture intersected with projects of citizenship and guest work. Citizenship and immigration discourses and practices reveal the connections of farm-labor migration to political and economic concerns within global processes of capitalism and states' attempts to manage migration (Grosfoguel 2003). My goal is to understand the social forces that shaped Puerto Rican migration to the United States and the impact of that migration on U.S. farm labor and, in doing so, broaden the discussion of farm-labor migration from its impact in Puerto Rico to its place in U.S. agriculture. Along the way I also want to illuminate the role of the FLP in U.S. farm labor.

Puerto Rican migrants were not passive objects of state projects. Their formation as farmworkers depended on their networks, perceptions of working and living conditions, and their own reproductive labor and that of their households and communities, as well as farmers' roles in recruitment and labor practices and the attitudes of rural communities toward migration. It also relied on the government of Puerto Rico's initiatives and those of local, state, and federal governments to manage labor (Binford 2009; Griffith 1993). Pioneer migrants in the Northeast transformed the racial, ethnic, and gender landscape of many towns and established an initial Puerto Rican foothold in some cities (Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández 2005).

Traditional paradigms of the Puerto Rican experience analyzed migration as part of capitalist development (History Task Force 1979; Padilla 1987). Newer studies have moved toward analysis of migration to large cities

through the lenses of ethnic politics, citizenship, gender and domesticity, and transnationalism (Cruz 1998; Grosfoguel 2003; Whalen 2001; Ramos Zayas 2003; G. Pérez 2004). Meanwhile, studies of Puerto Rican farmworkers have centered on the problems encountered by migrants, unionization, contract labor, development, livelihood strategies, gendered labor, and transnationalism (Bonilla-Santiago 1986; Duany 2011; Duke 2011; Findlay 2014; Meléndez 2017; Nieves Falcón 1975; F. Rivera 1979; Stinson Fernández 1996; Valdés 1991). While these studies link migrant farm labor to the development strategies of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD; Partido Popular Democrático) government in Puerto Rico, what is missing from most is a sense of the formation of Puerto Rican farmworkers in relation to the overall history of U.S. farm labor. To address this oversight, this book focuses on migration from rural areas in Puerto Rico to the rural United States. I outline the construction of the Puerto Rican labor force by considering its relationship to the formation of Puerto Ricans as a U.S. ethnic group, the political economy of farm labor, and processes of state formation in the United States and Puerto Rico.

In general, scholarship on Puerto Ricans in the United States focuses on the settlement and dynamics of urban communities, often ignoring the role of farmworkers in the construction of Puerto Rico as a modern colony and the development of U.S. immigration policies, although some newer work does address this gap. Edgardo Meléndez (2017), for example, explores the differences between Puerto Rican and other farmworkers as U.S. citizens, colonial subjects, and domestic workers as well as the relationship of the FLP to other U.S. farm-labor programs and the development of Puerto Rico's migration policy. In *Borderline Citizens*, Robert C. McGreevey (2018) focuses on how colonial policies, U.S. citizenship, the labor movement, and the settlement of migrants in New York City shaped Puerto Rican migration, and how, in turn, migrants pushed the limits of colonialism and blurred the boundaries of U.S. empire. Other studies have examined how the colonial relationship and citizenship of Puerto Ricans and the immigrant status of Mexicans shape their convergence in workplaces and neighborhoods. Lilia Fernández (2010) describes how Puerto Ricans' and Mexicans' common sense of exploitation and discrimination transcends their differences, despite their being pitted against each other. Nicholas De Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas (2003) explore how the unequal politics of citizenship results in different relations of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans to the U.S. state. Drawing on these contributions, I expand and explore the long history of

U.S. farm-labor policies and immigration laws affecting Puerto Rican migrant farmworkers.

The role of the Puerto Rican government in labor migration is central to the experiences of farmworkers. Michael Lapp's (1990) "Managing Migration," Meléndez's (2017) *Sponsored Migration*, and Gina Pérez (2004), in *The Near Northwest Side Story*, have documented the various roles played by the BEM and the MD. They argue that these migration offices worked as public-relations agencies to promote a positive image of Puerto Ricans, influencing private and public agencies' responses to their migration, facilitating their assimilation, and attempting to transform them into a constituency. My analysis takes these interpretations further and considers these agencies as tools of state formation in both Puerto Rico and the United States. By promoting migration and assisting Puerto Ricans, the BEM and the MD sought to eliminate unemployment in Puerto Rico, a critical problem for the emerging new colonial state during the 1950s. The colonial relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States offered a unique opportunity for the government of Puerto Rico to shape the formation of Puerto Rican communities throughout the Northeast. In stateside communities the MD acted, contradictorily, as a quasi-civil rights organization and labor union, fighting to protect the civil, labor, language, and cultural rights of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens while incorporating them into ethnic identity politics. Its presence distinguishes the history of stateside Puerto Rican communities from the histories of other ethnic groups.

Scholars have extensively documented how government policies in both the United States and migrants' countries of origin have sustained U.S. agriculture based on seasonal labor and inequality, concentrating on Mexicans and British West Indians (Daniel 1982; González 2006; Griffith 1993, 2006; Griffith and Kissam 1995; Hahamovitch 2011; A. López 2007; Plascencia 2018; Weber 1994). While scholarship on U.S. farm labor has often overlooked Puerto Ricans, the literature on Puerto Rican farmworkers has ignored their integration into a labor market shared by other minorities (D. Cohen 2011; Grosfoguel 2003; Hahamovitch 2011; Mitchell 2012; Molina 2014; Ngai 2004). Thus, although I draw on recent studies of Puerto Rican migrant workers as part of transnationalism and gendered history (Duany 2011; Findlay 2014), I believe that attention to social fields of power provides a more encompassing framework for the study of migrant farm labor. For Puerto Rican farmworkers, colonialism facilitated the insertion of Puerto Rican officials into the U.S. Department of Labor as well as the creation of the MD as an

agency operating in the United States and lobbying congressional representatives and federal officials on behalf of Puerto Rico. My research focuses on the formation of Puerto Rican farmworkers within the complex fields of power in which U.S. colonialism made it possible to harness their labor (Mintz 1998; Narotzky and Smith 2006; Roseberry 1994, 2002; Wolf 2001).

One goal of this book is to expose how Puerto Ricans became part of the economic and political forces linked both to the demands of U.S. farming and to colonialism in Puerto Rico. Using historical anthropology rooted in the study of power and state formation, I trace the specific ways power has shaped the formation of Puerto Ricans as particular social subjects within U.S. farm labor. In analyzing how political and economic changes in Puerto Rico and the United States affected migrant farm labor and the development of the FLP, this case study illuminates the intersection and consequences of economic development and migration policies. The study of Puerto Rican farmworkers, especially how immigration policies, colonialism, and attempts to manage labor migration regimes shaped farm labor, offers a unique opportunity to understand the relationship of U.S. colonialism and citizenship to immigration and deportation policies, as well as to guest-worker programs.

THEORIZING PUERTO RICAN FARM-LABOR MIGRATION

The intersection of the study of fields of power with the literature on colonialism and labor migration, citizenship, and immigration provides an important lens for analyzing Puerto Rican farm-labor migration that the dominant paradigms used to study Puerto Rican migration cannot provide. Therefore, this book privileges an anthropological political economy approach to the study of the history of migrant farmworkers to reveal how social forces shaped the options and action of farmers, officials, and migrant workers (Roseberry 2002; Wolf 2001; see also Foucault 1982; Narotzky and Smith 2006).

Colonialism and Labor Migration

In discussing colonialism I draw on Eric Wolf's concept of structural power, which "not only operates within settings or domains but . . . also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves, and . . . specifies the distribution and direction of energy flows" (2001, 384). Specific U.S. colonial policies,

legal decisions, and actions transformed migrants' field of action by incorporating them into the U.S. labor market. In turn, migration expanded the occupational, political, social, and educational opportunities for a population suffering economic distress. But, while the U.S. government developed public policies to manage the migration and employment of Puerto Rican agricultural workers by incorporating them into U.S. internal migration, and thereby into the U.S. labor market, agricultural employers preferred cheaper foreign labor (Pagán de Colón 1956a).

One of the pioneer works on Puerto Rican migration is *Labor Migration under Capitalism* (History Task Force 1979), a book that opened the door for political economy analyses of migration to the United States by discussing the role of colonialism and migration in the development of capitalism in Puerto Rico and the emergence of stateside communities. One of the limitations of this book, however, was its concentration on economic processes, which marginalized the place of state formation in Puerto Rico's development as a modern colony. This oversight is critical, because colonial migration and its role in the construction of a U.S. farm labor force also emerged from processes of state formation.

In Puerto Rican studies, the work of José Cruz (1998) and Carmen Teresa Whalen (2001) proposes a similar approach but considers political economy within the study of colonialism and citizenship. As to why Puerto Ricans migrated to the States, Cruz argues,

economic pull was matched not just by sources of information but by a favorable legal and political context created by the state. . . . Colonialism and capitalism and economics and politics provided the conditions that made migration possible, but individual Puerto Ricans, with help from institutional actors, such as Puerto Rico's Department of Labor, the U.S. Employment Service, and representatives of interested corporations, made the decisions to come. . . . All took the promise of American citizenship seriously, hoping that Americans on the mainland would welcome them as equals. (1998, 3-4)

While some scholars of Puerto Rican migration ignored Cruz's insightful analysis of the role of state institutions in migration, Whalen observed that federal and local policies shaped economic changes and promoted migration, intertwining the economic and political causes of migration, such that migrating in search of work became a survival strategy (2001, 4). Crucially, Whalen points not only to structural forces but to their interplay with migrants' agency (see also Grosfoguel 2003).

Understanding how Puerto Ricans migrated involves studying the role of government officials who sought to modernize the country. It also requires considering the role of several federal and Puerto Rican government agencies in contracting, transporting, and overseeing workers; negotiating with employers; and dealing with the diverse responses of local communities. The study of farmworkers thus demands examination of colonialism as a process for incorporating Puerto Ricans into the U.S. labor market and its implications for their fields of action.

Constructing Puerto Rican Farmworkers

Although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, like other colonial subjects they cross visible colonial, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural borders when migrating stateside (Duany 2002; Grosfoguel 2003; G. Pérez 2004). Migrants encountered these borders in a world that consisted mostly of labor camps, fields, and small towns. These new spaces contributed to classifying Puerto Ricans as desirable or undesirable subjects for U.S. farm labor. While noncontract workers could live in labor camps or rented rooms in towns surrounding the fields, contract workers were usually consigned to labor camps, which, for most, represented the center of their lives in the United States.

The formation of Puerto Rican farm labor depended on employers' control of production, state policing of borders, and regulation of recruitment, as well as workers' consciousness, common sense, ideologies, *habitus*, and culture, which together reproduce forms of control (Binford 2009). U.S. farms that use migrant labor still rely on systems of recruitment for low-wage workers based on complex relationships of capital, the state, and migrants' households and communities (Griffith 1993). To understand these forces in the case of Puerto Ricans involves studying the processes and technologies devised by farmers, the government of Puerto Rico, and federal agencies to entice workers to migrate and then maintain them as an available labor force. Puerto Ricans experience, discuss, and act on their migration with reference to how they perceive their working and living conditions and wages abroad in relation to those at home (Binford 2009). Their home communities subsidize periods of unemployment and illness through wage or nonwage income activities, such as odd jobs, cultivation of crops, fishing, and small family enterprises. These activities relieve employers of paying living wages, sustain households during shorts periods of unemployment, and provide forms of

health insurance and pension funds (Griffith 1993, 6, 43, 225), contributing to the construction of a domestic low-wage labor market for U.S. farms.

The status of Puerto Rico as a U.S. colonial territory also reveals how citizenship shapes the similarities and differences between the migration of Puerto Rican farmworkers and other migrants. With U.S. citizenship, migration became a viable alternative for Puerto Ricans to surmount their working and living conditions, while enabling U.S. employers to access and mobilize a labor force from other regions. In this regard, Puerto Ricans share experiences of struggle with other colonial migrant laborers who have endured policies of colonialism and imperialism while undergoing massive migration from their homelands to their metropolitan countries: Filipinos in the United States, Algerians in France, Koreans in Japan, and Caribbean colonial migrants in the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands (Bender and Lipman 2015; González 2006; Grosfoguel 2003; Guerin-Gonzales 1994; Hahamovitch 2011; Plascencia 2018; Mitchell 2012; Ngai 2004; Valdés 1991). Moving thousands of workers for temporary jobs, the United States and other imperial powers shaped a global economy connecting their possessions in the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific (see also Casey 2017; Giovannetti-Torres 2018). Nevertheless, migrant workers also defied colonial and imperialistic plans while managing to benefit from wages.

From the 1940s to the 1960s, Puerto Rican workers experienced an array of government policies that sought to plan and control their labor. In the late 1940s the government of Puerto Rico concocted a series of strategies designed to transform a mostly landless, rural, and agrarian population into urban workers for the manufacturing sector through land distribution and industrial manufacturing. Colonial officials were unable to provide enough employment, however, so they devised neo-Malthusian population-control policies—including migration—as the solution to underdevelopment and unemployment. One effect was the continuous migration of Puerto Ricans as farmworkers.

The colonial relationship of Puerto Rico to the United States facilitated the government of Puerto Rico's presence in stateside Puerto Rican communities. The BEM, and later the MD, administered the FLP, setting the tone for the elaboration of policies and the establishment of relationships among farmworkers, local officials, and residents of farm communities. The BEM, the MD and the FLP are examples of state institutions seeking to improve social and economic conditions among subalterns. Using Tania

Murray Li's (2005) concept of the will to improve, I consider the FLP as one of the state tools of development that launched processes unimagined by the officials involved in its creation. Puerto Rican migration to U.S. farms depended on political economic conditions in the United States and Puerto Rico, as well as the emergence of a new colonial state in Puerto Rico.

The creation of the FLP is part of the history of the formation of U.S. agrarian-labor regimes. Employment of Puerto Ricans in agriculture depended greatly on their citizenship status within the U.S. nation. From 1899 to 1917, as U.S. nationals but not citizens, Puerto Ricans migrated to other U.S. territories such as Hawaii and the Panama Canal Zone. The onset of naturalized U.S. citizenship in 1917 facilitated the recruitment of Puerto Ricans for work stateside but also began to mark their undesirability because they lacked deportability status. This issue still plagues Puerto Rican migrants.

The Modern Colonial State

Between 1941 and 1952 Puerto Rico experienced a process of social, economic, and political transformation into a modern colony. World War II and the Cold War created a consensus among federal government agencies that sought to grant autonomy to the government of Puerto Rico while further incorporating Puerto Ricans into U.S. domestic and foreign policy (García-Colón 2009). By 1941 Puerto Ricans' status as "native-born" citizens intensified lobbying efforts by colonial-government officials for inclusion in the wartime effort to maintain agricultural production (Venator Santiago 2013). The new colonial government of Puerto Rico took advantage of this climate of labor demand. The PPD, with its populist and social democratic ideology, controlled the local legislature, while Roosevelt appointee Rexford G. Tugwell, one of the most radical New Dealers, led the executive branch. Working together, they began a project of modernization, government reform, and intense bureaucratic planning, focusing on child labor, minimum-wage laws, and the plight of poor rural laborers.

U.S. colonialism allowed Puerto Rican officials to directly lobby the federal government. When the federal government sought to bring Mexican, Canadian, Bahamian, and West Indian guest workers, North American governors in Puerto Rico, such as Tugwell (1941–46), sought to persuade the federal government to use Puerto Rican workers in other parts of the United States. Colonial officials collaborated with their federal counterparts by overseeing the hiring, transportation, and performance of migrant farmworkers.

The successful insertion of Puerto Rico's officials into the sphere of the federal government illustrates a distinctive feature of modern colonialism.

The reform trends in Puerto Rico were part of global changes in the western European and U.S. empires that led to modern colony formation. Colonial administrations organized or fostered the migration of colonial subjects, mostly unskilled workers from rural areas serving a labor market that offered them low-wage jobs at the core of the capitalist economies during the postwar economic boom. Modern colonies provide their citizens with democratic and civil rights, while the metropolitan governments provide large transfers of funds for welfare, loans, and credit. Modern colonial subjects usually earn higher wages than their counterparts in postcolonial countries, and, in addition to working under modern protective labor laws and regulations, they have easy access to mass consumption of manufactured goods (Grosfoguel 2003, 178, 180; Pierre-Charles 1979). Migrants from modern colonies share the citizenship of the metropolitan population and enjoy free mobility within their respective empires. Managing the migration of these subjects became an integral part of modern colonialism, and a constellation of policies and regulations aimed to organize the labor supply for employers claiming labor shortages.

At the end of World War II, as most colonial powers began to concede self-rule to their subjects, U.S. political reforms in Puerto Rico initiated an intense process of state formation that turned the colony into a laboratory for U.S. modernization policies. In 1946 the PPD gained control of the executive branch when President Harry S. Truman appointed Jesús T. Piñero as governor. In 1948 Puerto Ricans elected the PPD leader Luis Muñoz Marín as governor, and the U.S. Congress allowed the drafting of a constitution. During this period of intense colonial state formation, the PPD expanded its industrialization and land-reform programs and began to aggressively tackle population control, initiatives viewed as key to spurring development.

Facilitating farm-labor migration meant reducing the population and unemployment on the islands as well increasing the political power and influence of Puerto Rico's government officials in the States. The Mexican Bracero Program and the British West Indian Temporary Alien Program offered Puerto Rican officials excellent examples of labor migration, but they could also draw on their own history: Puerto Ricans had been moving to continental United States in increasing numbers since the 1930s.

In the postwar period, because Puerto Ricans were migrating in response to labor demands on the States, their recruitment by private and public

agents gave government officials an ideal way to eliminate surplus population on the islands. But migration had unexpected consequences, as migrants encountered problematic work and living conditions. By 1946 negative news from migrants recruited for stateside farm labor prompted a visit to the camps that housed them by the Puerto Rican secretary of labor, who recommended that the government of Puerto Rico organize the recruitment of agricultural workers. In this context the government established the BEM, the MD, and the FLP, but discrimination against Puerto Rican migrants because of their “foreignness” continued, despite their U.S. “native-born” citizenship status.

The history of Puerto Rican farmworkers shows that U.S. agriculture has developed a labor regime in which the perfect worker is an immigrant whom authorities can deport. Puerto Rican farm laborers are thus imperfect for employers because their U.S. citizenship grants them rights. But one cannot explain fully how citizenship, race, and immigration policies shaped Puerto Rican farm-labor migration without understanding modern colonialism. Because of the colonial relationship, Puerto Rican officials could position the FLP within the implementation of U.S. labor and immigration laws. The eventual demise of the FLP, however, shows that Puerto Ricans, as distinctive U.S. citizens and colonial subjects, occupy a nebulous position between other U.S. minority workers and immigrants within the modern agrarian-labor regime.

PICKING UP THE FRAGMENTS AT THE HEART OF EMPIRE

Researching the local history of western New York, I was frustrated about the invisibility of Puerto Ricans. I found only one reference to Puerto Rican farmworkers, in *History of Erie County, 1870–1970*, by Walter S. Dunn (1972). Dunn chronicles how immigrants and, later, Puerto Ricans solved the problems of labor shortage in the agricultural sector of Erie County, at the same time revealing his distaste for Puerto Ricans even while recognizing that other U.S. citizens did not want to accept farmwork.

For Dunn, Italian and Polish immigrants won their place in the community through their years of hard work. Their determination led them to ownership of their own farms and to membership in the community, while Puerto Ricans, in contrast, were the last and, it seems, least desirable resort

for maintaining agricultural production. Dunn portrays farmers as benevolent employers who improved living conditions in the camps and complains about politicians' involvement in improving those conditions. His reference to Puerto Ricans offers a brief glimpse into how local communities rendered migrants as inconvenient necessities for the harvest (1972, 215).

Colonial Migrants at the Heart of Empire is part of my effort to document how government policies formed and transformed the lives of Puerto Rican agricultural workers in Puerto Rico as well as in the United States. This interest arises from my previous experience researching the impact of land reform in Puerto Rico on landless workers. Many of the interviewees for my first book, *Land Reform in Puerto Rico*, were former migrant farmworkers, which led me to analyze the impact of land distribution on migratory labor. My research has also been profoundly shaped by my experiences growing up in working-class rural Puerto Rico and by my relatives' experiences as migrant farmworkers.

Different from other studies on Puerto Rican farmworkers, this book uses ethnographic and extensive archival research to situate Puerto Ricans within global labor migration. I carried out interviews among former and current farmworkers and community organizers in New York, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico, some of whom began migrating as early as the late 1950s. My interviews document farmworkers' relationships with non-Puerto Ricans, incidents of unequal treatment, and the government's role in their migration. Conversations with farmers, supervisors, and officials illuminated labor practices, the history of agriculture, and attempts to manage labor migration.

The ethnographic research took place in Cidra, Puerto Rico, from 1993 to 1999 and in 2009 and in New Jersey and New York during the summers of 2007 and 2013. I interviewed current and former migrants and labor organizers. Research at the National Archives, the New York State Archives, the New Jersey State Archives, Cornell University, the Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Archivo Luis Muñoz Marín, the University of Puerto Rico, and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies yielded data about cooperation and conflicts between federal and state agencies and the Puerto Rican government from the 1940s to the 1990s and information on workers' claims, farmers' practices, disputes, changes in migration policies, and the formation of stateside communities. To my knowledge most scholars of Puerto Rican migration have not previously used a combination of these vast and rich sources.

Colonial Migrants at the Heart of Empire consists of two parts. In this introduction I lay out the conceptual framework of the book, which offers a