

## POLITICAL CULTURE IN THE HISPANIC CARIBBEAN

AND THE BUILDING OF U.S. HEGEMONY, 1868-1945

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### Abstract

Despite the seemingly endless possibilities for fruitful comparisons afforded by the Hispanic Caribbean, there exists a hardly justifiable dearth of comparative studies focusing on the region composed of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. This interpretative essay, based on the extant secondary literature on the individual islands, seeks to begin to fill this void by tracing the trajectory of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic's political cultures from a regional and comparative perspective. While the case could be made for including other non-Hispanic components of the Caribbean, this study recognizes the Spanish-speaking Antilles as a cultural region composed of societies sharing similar insular geographies and historical backgrounds. The Hispanic Caribbean region, because of its common Spanish heritage and its persistent vulnerability to U.S. expansionism and imperialism, stands out as a particularly useful unit for comparative analysis.

*Key words:* Comparative studies; Puerto Rico; Cuba; Dominican Republic; The Hispanic Caribbean; political culture.

### Resumen

A pesar de las numerosas posibilidades comparativas que surgen del Caribe Hispano la escasez de estudios comparativos que abordan la región que incluye Cuba, Puerto Rico y la República Dominicana, es poco justificable. Este ensayo interpretativo, que se basa en las fuentes secundarias existentes en las islas individuales, busca llenar el vacío y propone abordar la cultura política de estas tres islas desde un punto de vista regional y comparativo. Se podía argumentar por la inclusión de otras áreas no-hispánicas del Caribe, pero este estudio reconoce la unidad cultural de las sociedades del Caribe hispano, y su experiencia histórica compartida. El Caribe hispano, por su herencia española y su constante vulnerabilidad frente al expansionismo e imperialismo norteamericano, destaca como una unidad particularmente relevante para el análisis comparativo.

*Palabras clave:* Estudios comparativos; Puerto Rico; Cuba; República Dominicana; El Caribe hispano; cultura política.

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## CULTURA POLÍTICA EN EL CARIBE ESPAÑOL

Y LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA HEGEMONÍA DE EE.UU., 1868-1945

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### Résumé

En dépit des nombreuses possibilités de comparaison offertes par la Caraïbe hispanique, la rareté des études comparatives qui touchent la région comprenant Cuba, Porto Rico et la République Dominicaine se justifie mal. Cette étude interprétative basée sur des sources secondaires existant dans ces îles, tente de remplir un vide et se propose d'aborder la culture politique de ces trois entités d'un point de vue régional et comparatif. Il serait possible d'envisager l'inclusion d'autres aires non-hispaniques de la Caraïbe, mais l'auteur souligne l'unité culturelle des sociétés de la Caraïbe hispanique et leur commune expérience historique. La Caraïbe hispanique, du fait de son héritage espagnol et de la constante vulnérabilité qui la confronte à l'expansionisme et l'impérialisme nord-américains, la désigne comme une unité particulièrement propice à l'analyse comparative.

### Samenvatting

Hoewel er legio mogelijkheden bestaan om de delen van het Spaans Caribisch gebied met elkaar te vergelijken, bestaan er weinig vergelijkende studies tussen Cuba, Puerto Rico en Dominikaanse Republiek. Deze essay, die gebaseerd is op secundaire bronnen van de verschillende eilanden, analyseert de politieke cultuur van deze drie eilanden vanuit een regionaal en vergelijkend perspectief. Men kan argumenteren dat de niet spaanstalige gebieden ook betrokken moeten worden in de analyse, toch kiest deze studie voor de culturele en historische eenheid van de maatschappijen van het spaanstalig Caribisch gebied. Het spaanstalig Caribisch gebied vormt een eenheid, wegens de Spaanse erfenis en het Noordamerikaanse imperialisme en expansionisme, en daarom kan het een object zijn van vergelijkende studie.

**D**espite the seemingly endless possibilities for fruitful comparisons afforded by the Hispanic Caribbean,\* there exists a hardly justifiable dearth of comparative studies focusing on the region composed of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly evident with regards to twentieth-century political history, where the remarkably disparate trajectories of these three societies should have fueled at least some comparatively focused attention. This interpretative essay, based on the extant secondary literature on the individual islands, seeks to begin to fill this void by tracing the trajectory of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic's political cultures from a regional and comparative perspective. While the case could be made for including other non-Hispanic components of the Caribbean, this study recognizes the Spanish-speaking Antilles as a cultural region composed of societies sharing similar insular geographies and historical backgrounds with varying degrees of scarring produced by extended Spanish colonialism, African slavery, and, particularly relevant for the period studied here, far-reaching U.S. imperialism. To be sure, most of the other islands of the Caribbean endured the brunt of slavery; many, like Jamaica, began as neglected Spanish colonies; and others, like Haiti, suffered prolonged U.S. interventions. Still, the Hispanic Caribbean region, because of its common Spanish heritage and its persistent vulnerability to U.S. expansionism and imperialism, stands out as a particularly useful unit for comparative analysis.

While sharing many common circumstances and historical experiences, the resulting political cultures of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic are notably different and what sets them apart has roots buried deep into the nineteenth-century, when the political cultures of the three nations began to unfold

\* This interpretative essay is a preliminary sketch for a larger comparative project on the relation between political culture in the Hispanic Caribbean and U.S. presence in the region over the past century.

<sup>1</sup> Among the few recent regional or comparative studies that include two or more components of the Hispanic Caribbean, one finds: Marte ([1988]); Martínez-Fernández (1994; 2002); Schmidt-Nowara (1999); and Ayala (1999).

along markedly dissimilar paths which produced different political models and political struggles. The term political culture is used throughout this essay to simply mean the beliefs and behaviors of a particular group of people vis-à-vis the political processes of which they are part either as active or passive participants.<sup>2</sup> By political struggles and models, I mean the recurrent dominant manifestations of political action and organization that result from a particular political culture. Like other cultural manifestations, political culture is transmitted through various mechanisms of socialization: family influence, education, the media, legislation, etc. A given group inherits a political culture by learning from the previous generation: did their fathers fight in wars, join mass parties, etc.? By exposure to historical texts and educational materials: do textbooks glorify civilian and democratic institutions? Through music and popular culture: does the national anthem make one feel like bayoneting the nearest Spaniard – as with *La Bayamesa* – or asking a beautiful woman out to dance – as with *La Borinqueña*;<sup>3</sup> and even by everyday iconographic messages: do the statues in public parks depict sword-wielding men on horseback or three piece suit-clad politicians? Through these and other similar mechanisms, particular aspects of political culture are transmitted from one generation to the next, perpetuating values and behaviors such as the veneration of strong leaders, high or low voter participation, the propensity to military solutions, and the absence or prevalence of political suicide, to give but a few examples.

The structure of this essay reflects the recognition of the overcastting presence of the United States over a region often referred to as the “American Mediterranean,” during a century widely regarded as the “American Century.” It is precisely that dominant influence – economic, military, political, and even cultural – that provides the strongest argument for recourse to

<sup>2</sup> For a fine discussion of political culture and the literature on the concept’s evolution, see Benítez Nazario (2001, 1-40).

<sup>3</sup> Cuba’s *La Bayamesa* is a military march that calls to battle while Puerto Rico’s *La Borinqueña* is a melodious danza that describes the island’s physical beauty.

a regional chronology based on the evolution of U.S. presence in the Hispanic Caribbean. Still, U.S. desires and impositions over the region have had to contest with the particular circumstances and political cultures of each island. The building of U.S. hegemony over the region depended, in fact, on its success at confronting and manipulating the existing political struggles and models in order to achieve at least partial local consent for intervention and varying forms of domination; local political actors, while facing a formidable world power, struggled to assert their own interests, often limiting or redirecting the extent of the United States' imperial designs.

The periodization that stemmed out of this perspective (1868-1898, 1898-1909, 1910-1929, and 1930-1945) reflects the evolving and negotiated results of the region's political cultures, in the light of impinging external forces. The dual titles used below for each period point both to a recognition of U.S. preponderant influence and the role played by insular political actors in determining their own fates, even if constrained by overwhelming foreign influences.

#### OVERLAPPING EMPIRES/BULLETS OR BALLOTS (1868-1898)

During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the Hispanic Caribbean, when viewed as a region, endured a dual colonialism resulting from the oppressive reality of overlapping empires exerting different forms of domination over the region. Even though Spain retained formal colonial domination over Cuba and Puerto Rico until 1898 and several European powers vied for control over the precariously independent Dominican Republic, during the second half of the century the United States assumed the role of the region's dominant trading partner with the capacity to transform the islands' economies to suit its market demands. Growing economic power soon translated into political influence as well.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See Martínez-Fernández (1994, chaps. 2, 3, and 5).

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century political struggles and political models in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic unfolded along clearly differentiated paths, responding to the respective political culture of each island. By that juncture, the three political cultures that would shape the following century's political developments had already assumed their respective pivotal positions within each of the individual components of the Hispanic Caribbean. In Cuba, the struggle for national sovereignty and social justice brought into conflict the revolutionary model of the island's insurgent masses vs. the captain-general's model representing Spanish colonial rule. In Puerto Rico, the status definition along the lines of enhanced self-rule emerged as the dominant political struggle and was played out through the application of the lobbyist and parliamentary model. In the meantime, the central struggle in the Dominican Republic was the quest for the formation of a national state in opposition to the stubborn legacies of regionalistic caudilloism and foreign intervention, its corresponding models being: the authoritarian *caudillo* and controlled, caudillo-led mobilization.

The economic and historical backgrounds of the three societies of the Hispanic Caribbean begin to help explain the islands' divergent political trajectories. Despite sharing the same colonial status under Spanish rule until 1898, Cuba and Puerto Rico differed significantly in terms of the orientation of their economies, and their links with the outside world. Cuba had become the world's leading sugar exporter on the basis of large-scale production, predominantly for the U.S. market, while Puerto Rico's economy gradually veered toward coffee production to satisfy European demands. Moreover, unlike the case with Cuba's economy, which by the middle decades of the nineteenth century had grown dependent on the U.S. market for its sugar, Puerto Rico's trade links were mostly within the Spanish commercial system that absorbed the bulk of the island's coffee and other exports. This helps explain why Puerto Rico's political actors sought to continue operating within Spain's imperial system. The Dominican Republic, for its part, had a peculiar history of earlier national independence followed by many decades of subordination to a variety of foreign powers that contested for trade and territorial concessions and even the annexation of the vulnerable

republic. Its independent status notwithstanding, the Dominican Republic endured the assault of many of the same external pressures afflicting the island colonies to its east and west.<sup>5</sup>

Cuba's older and more influential Creole elite – its planocracy and associated intelligentsia – enjoyed a privileged economic and social standing that arguably would have allowed it to lead a challenge to Spanish rule at almost any time during the second half of the nineteenth century. Other considerations, however, such as the fear of sparking a racial war and concern over disrupting productivity and trade, forced the Cuban élites to waiver between loyalty to Spain and a variety of recurring radical options including separatism and annexation to the United States, whichever seemed to offer the best chances for maintaining social peace. The Ten Years' War (1868-1878) against Spanish colonialism exposed the persistent regional, class, and racial cleavages that thus far impeded a successful struggle for independence. By the mid-1890s a wide multi-class and multi-race military coalition crystallized which was capable of mounting a politically and militarily feasible project of national liberation. During the Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898) the island's planters remained, for the most part, opposed to the armed struggle, however. Radicalized Cuban patriots saw them increasingly as an obstacle to the nationalist and progressive revolutionary agenda (Pérez, 1986a, 23-25).<sup>6</sup>

Thus in the Cuban context the political struggle of the last three decades of the nineteenth century was played out as an all-out war of independence in which the revolutionary model of political action was used to demolish the increasingly despotic colonial captain-general's model. Conscription of able-bodied men by both armies and the re-concentration of hundreds of thousands of civilians by Spanish authorities, in effect, militarized the island's entire population. The unremitting quest for Cuban independence, which was intimately tied to growing aspirations of social justice, reflected a violent political culture in which differences were fought out in the battlefields and political might was measured on the basis of how many troops a

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* (chaps. 4, 6).

<sup>6</sup> Also see Ferrer (1999).

given officer commanded. A concomitant development of this war culture was the possibility of social mobility through military service in a frontier-like context that helped blur otherwise rigid class and race distinctions. Extended warfare also produced a military class as potential breeding ground for the type of caudillo that plagued Latin America after independence.

In marked contrast, neighboring Puerto Rico experienced a peaceful end of century as its political actors resorted to parliamentary, constitutional, and lobbyist means in their quest for concessions from Madrid's colonial authorities. Puerto Rican delegates were elected to Madrid's Cortes in 1869 and served there intermittently until the end of Spanish colonial rule. Neither independence from Spain nor annexation to the United States, the two alternating radical Cuban formulas, took much hold among Puerto Rico's political leaders. Quite significantly, Puerto Rico's counterpart to the Cuban Ten Years' War, *El Grito de Lares* (1868), lasted only one day and left a toll of only four dead.<sup>7</sup> The island's Creole elite opted, instead, for the middle-of-the-road autonomist formula that promised a considerable extent of self-rule while remaining under the crown of Spain. In an 1873 speech on the floor of the Spanish Cortes, Puerto Rican delegate Joaquín M. Sanromá established a revealing comparison between his island and that of his rebellious neighbors:

Speak about Cuba, if you wish, I will speak to you about Puerto Rico; speak of war, I will speak to you of peace; speak about the country where passions simmer, where bullets whistle, where conspirators and their associates boil; I will speak to you about another country where reason prevails, where serenity reigns...<sup>8</sup>

The Puerto Rican elite's inclination toward electoral and parliamentary solutions to its colonial dilemma became a defining characteristic of the island's political culture. Such strate-

<sup>7</sup> On *El Grito de Lares*, see Jiménez de Wagenheim (1984), and Bergad (1983, chap. 3).

<sup>8</sup> Quote from *Los diputados americanos...* (1880, 159).



gies proved less disruptive to Puerto Rico's economy and society thus preserving the existing rigid and hierarchical class structure.

The most obvious political difference separating the Dominican Republic from Cuba and Puerto Rico at the end of the nineteenth century was the fact that while the latter remained Spanish colonies, the former had achieved its independence. Actually, the Dominican Republic had gained its independence three times: in 1821 from Spain, in 1844 from Haiti, and once again from Spain in 1863. Political instability, caudillo warfare, foreign meddling and intervention, relative disconnection from the world trade system, and the absence of anything resembling a national state plagued the Dominican Republic throughout most the nineteenth century. Between 1865 and 1879 alone, twenty-one different governments reached power (Hartlyn, 1999, 29). As a by-product of chronic instability and warfare several Dominicans of humble background, mostly black or mulatto, rose to positions of high authority, notably Gregorio Luperón and Ulises Heureaux. During the iron-fisted rule of caudillo Heureaux (1882-1899), the Dominican Republic finally entered a stage of sustained economic growth and incipient state building that made the republic more closely resemble its neighboring Spanish colonies.

Employing a combination of harsh repression and selective co-optation, Heureaux led his country through a process of state formation that included the creation of a national army and the expansion the state bureaucracy. This process was financed by revenues stemming from rising sugar production and exportation. Foreign loans, which poured into the Dominican economy, also helped the consolidation of Heureaux's regime and the building of an agro-exporting infrastructure.<sup>9</sup> After nearly two decades of authoritarian rule, Heureaux left a mixed record. Paradoxically, while he laid the foundations for a modern national state, he also made his country more vulnerable to foreign meddling and control. As part of a loan agreement with a Dutch company in 1888, the Dominican Republic literally mortgaged its future tariff revenues, 30 percent of which now had to be set

<sup>9</sup> On Heureaux's regime, see Domínguez (1986) and Sang (1989). Betances (1995, 18).

aside to service the loan. In 1893 the Dominican debt was acquired by the San Domingo Improvement Co., a company controlled by U.S. bondholders (Moya Pons, 1984, 414; Betances, 1995, 47-48; Sang, 1989, 154-157). The company soon wrested from local authorities the privilege of managing the republic's customs houses. Thus, before century's end, U.S. financial interests dominated in the Dominican Republic. By that time U.S. capital was also dominant among the republic's foreign investments. Control over Dominican foreign trade was yet another way in which U.S. economic interests outpaced their North Atlantic competitors, with the United States purchasing the bulk of the republic's sugar. A trade reciprocity treaty negotiated in 1891 would have sealed U.S. dominance over the republic's commerce but it did not materialize due to tenacious European opposition (Moya Pons, 1984, 417-418; Sang, 1989, 48; Betances, 1995, 62-74).

In sum, political circumstances in the three components of the Hispanic Caribbean contrasted sharply from island to island. A revolutionary-military political culture gained ascendancy in Cuba while a reformist-civilian one took hold in Puerto Rico. In the Dominican Republic, meanwhile, a caudilloistic authoritarian culture, brewing since the days of independence, culminated under the repressive regime of Heureaux. In all three countries U.S. interests and influence, particularly commercial and financial, made headway as Spain and other European nations lost ground.

#### LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR U.S. HEGEMONY/POLITICAL BIFURCATION (1898-1909)

The 1898-1899 juncture brought sweeping changes to all three components of the Hispanic Caribbean. The United States intervened militarily in Cuba and Puerto Rico proceeding to pluck the withering islands like flowers from what was left of Spain's once impressive imperial bouquet. This intervention frustrated the ongoing struggles of the region: the revolutionary struggle in Cuba and the struggle for autonomic concessions in Puerto

Rico. Regardless of how bleak the prospects of achieving those aspirations may have been had there been no U.S. intervention, the United States got the blame; and the frustrations of 1898 traumatized both islands' political élites to the extent that more than a century later, those wounds continue to ooze with no end in sight. The end of the nineteenth century also brought profound transformations in Dominican politics. On July 26, 1899 an assassin's bullet brought Heureaux's rule to an end. The dictator's demise exposed the vulnerable nature of the infant Dominican State that thus far rested on personalistic and repressive means. Regional fragmentation had persisted, indeed, under the blood-laden coat of national unification. The other threat to the consolidation of the Dominican State, foreign intervention, lurked menacingly against the backdrop spectacle of caudillo warfare that followed Heureaux's rule. In all three societies the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed political bifurcation that had been kept at bay by either despotic colonial rule or repressive dictatorship. Under the new sets of circumstances, Puerto Rico's political actors split along status options while Cuba's split along Liberal-Conservative party lines and a host of Dominican caudillos surfaced seeking to control various regions and ultimately the national government.

1898 clearly marked the beginning of a new era of U.S. presence and domination in the Caribbean. With a swift victory over Spain that year and the ensuing occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico, the United States entered a phase of direct administration of conquered territories. Although a long record of U.S. expansionism predated the 1898 interventions, this was the United States' first experience administrating heavily populated territories with distinct cultures and without the intention of welcoming them as states of the Federal Union. While the Dominican Republic did not figure among the United States' end-of-century acquisitions, the demise of Heureaux led to a convulsive period of caudillo warfare that made the republic increasingly vulnerable to foreign interference, particularly at the hands of the United States which aggressively asserted its regional preeminence. The republic, then, became the object of U.S. desires much like neighboring Cuba and Puerto Rico. In geopolitical terms

all three societies came to constitute a geographical unit of vital importance for the defense of navigation routes and the projected Isthmian Canal.

A first phase of U.S. imperial presence in the western Caribbean began in 1898 and lasted until about 1909. During that decade the United States managed to install the bases of colonial and neocolonial domination over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. In all three cases this required some measure of military intervention, the restructuring of legal-constitutional foundations inherited from Spain, the establishment of alliances with particular political groups in the insular contexts to achieve hegemonic control, and the securing of preferential trade and economic concessions. In each of the components of the Hispanic Caribbean these efforts required different mechanisms, depending on the specific U.S. designs and on how far the United States could go in each case. The United States, thus, had to contend and negotiate with the circumstances and political culture of each society. In Cuba, where three decades of war made clear the impossibility of long-term, direct colonial rule, it required three years of military occupation (1899-1902), the imposition of the Platt Amendment (1901) and the Reciprocity Treaty (1903), and a second military intervention (1906-1909). In Puerto Rico it involved two years of military rule (1898-1900), the imposition of the Foraker Act (1900), and continued colonial rule thereafter. In the Dominican Republic U.S. intervention took the form of small-scale military interventions in 1903 and 1904 and the assumption of control over Dominican customs houses in 1905, an arrangement that was formalized in 1907. All of these mechanisms of domination, seen together as a group, reflect a level of coherence that has not been fully recognized due to the persistent fragmented view of the Hispanic Caribbean's history. Though varied in their implementation and reach, these mechanisms yielded astonishingly similar results for the United States.

The timing of U.S. intervention in the ongoing Cuban War of Independence in 1898 – three years into the struggle – secured two principal goals of the United States, namely a quick victory over Spain and control over the Spanish colonies in the conflict's aftermath. By 1897, Spain's grip over Cuba had been weakened

to a point that victory for Cuban patriots seemed to be at hand. By that juncture the war had ruined the island's economy and had literally decimated its population. Early on, the war had turned into one of destruction and extermination. An estimated half a million people died as a direct result of the conflagration; another 100,000 sought exile to escape the horrors of the bloodiest and most brutal war the Americas had even witnessed. The island's economy was utterly devastated, the vast majority of its sugar mills destroyed. In such state was the Pearl of the Antilles that the United States occupied in 1898 (Healy, 1963, 63; Pérez, 1995, 189-195 and 1986a, 11; Foner, 1972, I: 105-115; Offner, 1992, 71-93, 112; Portell Vilá, 1986, 70).

The U.S. military also intervened in Puerto Rico but the situation there was different on many counts. First, Puerto Ricans had not staged a war of independence against Spain. Although there was widespread dissatisfaction with Spanish rule and many Puerto Ricans fought and died on Cuban soil, it did not translate into armed revolt on the smaller island (Freire, 1966). Puerto Rico's reformist politicians, in fact, realized their aspirations of an autonomous government not as a result of fighting Spain but rather as a result of remaining loyal while war ravaged through Cuba. The majority faction of Puerto Rico's autonomists headed by Luis Muñoz Rivera bartered its loyalty and support for the Liberal Party in the Spanish Cortes in exchange for concessions of enhanced self-rule. Significantly, when Cuban patriot Antonio Maceo fell in battle, Puerto Rico's autonomists publicly celebrated his death as Muñoz Rivera assured Spain: "We are Spaniards and wrapped in the Spanish flag we shall die." Naively hoping to appease the Cuban insurgents, Spain, in a last ditch effort, offered autonomy and reforms to both islands. These reforms were welcomed in Puerto Rico but rejected outright in Cuba, where advocating autonomy was treated as a treasonous offence by the Cuban Republic-In-Arms (Burgos-Malavé, 1997; Offner, 1992, 93; Rosario Natal, 1975, 57-67). The brevity and relative bloodlessness of the U.S. military campaign in Puerto Rico spared the island from the extreme social dislocation and economic ruin that befell Cuba. Wartime disruptions, however, were serious enough to further weaken the island's planter class and

to make it more vulnerable to the onslaught U.S. capital in the war's immediate aftermath. Comparatively speaking, however, Puerto Rico's white social and economic elite remained more intact than its counterparts in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, where destruction, exile, confiscation and other ravages of war severely eroded their standing. The wars also allowed a degree of social mobility to blacks and mulattos in the Dominican Republic and Cuba which produced the likes of Heureaux, the Maceos, Quintín Banderas, Juan Gualberto Gómez, etc. Significantly, Puerto Rico's most visible end-of-century black leader, Dr. José Celso Barbosa, moved up socially not in the battlefields but by earning a medical degree at the University of Michigan.

Following the United States victory over Spain, both Cuba and Puerto Rico endured military rule under the United States flag. In Puerto Rico it lasted until May 1900, when a civilian colonial government was established under the provisions of the Foraker Act. The act recognized Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory of the United States while denying U.S. citizenship to the island's one million inhabitants. U.S. military government in Cuba lasted until 1902. The Cuban independence that followed, however, was mediated by the Platt Amendment to the Cuban Constitution. One of its most insidious articles recognized that the United States retained the right to intervene militarily to guarantee peace, the protection of property, and stability. Most Cubans rejected, and many protested the humiliating clauses of the Platt Amendment but notwithstanding their opposition, it was imposed as a precondition to the U.S. recognition of independence. As Governor Leonard Wood warned: "there will be no Republic if the amendment is not approved." (Berbusse, 1966; Riera, 1955, 27).

The U.S. military governments in Cuba and Puerto Rico shared many similarities but also adapted to the particular circumstances of each island and varied according to the different long-term policy goals for each island. The resulting realities reflected the negotiation between the new imperial designs and the old political cultures. On both islands the military intervention reduced the powers of municipal governments, the traditional power base of the Creole élites. Also, the powers and privileges

of the Catholic Church endured erosion as a result of various secularizing military decrees. Not only had the church served as an arm of the Spanish colonial state, it also remained an obstacle to the desired Americanization of the newly acquired territories. In the Cuban case, one of the most urgent matters was the demobilization and disarmament of the Cuban army of liberation, moves deemed critical for the erection of a stable neo-colonial edifice and the future consolidation of hegemony that would make the use of forceful intervention no longer necessary (Berbusse, 1966; Healy, 1963, 77-78; Aguilar, 1974, 17). Although disarmament was achieved with relatively small investment on the part of the United States it did not eradicate the warrior culture that had developed over the previous half century. War heroes continued to have enormous political influence particularly in the countryside, where many acquired sugar mills or *colonias* (cane farms) (Whitney, 2001, 18). This was made patent four years later when a massive insurrectionary army challenged the established insular government. In Puerto Rico, the island that the United States wanted to, and could manage to, retain indefinitely, the constitutional and juridical foundations of North American hegemony were laid during the military occupation. These were more far reaching than those applied in Cuba.<sup>10</sup>

In the war's aftermath the United States fostered and manipulated fragmentation within insular politics that thus far had remained hidden by the unifying forces of war, dictatorship, and the promise of enhanced self-rule. During and after the military interventions the U.S. meddled in local politics to maintain the region's political actors divided and to secure the collaboration of particular groups. In Puerto Rico, following a very brief honeymoon during which both factions of the old autonomists welcomed the invading troops, tensions arose between the military authorities and the Federalist Party of Muñoz Rivera. By 1899 hostility had grown to the point that Governor Guy V. Henry's administration included very few Federalists: the dispensation of political patronage and the absence of a clear agenda regard-

<sup>10</sup> For a summary of the military decrees applied in Puerto Rico, see Carroll (1975, 53-55).

ing the island's status became key weapons for the manipulation of insular politics. Puerto Rican historiography has tended to present the escalating tensions between *Muñocistas* and U.S. governors as a clash between liberal-minded nationalists and reactionary imperialists; in reality, though, many of the issues over which the Muñoz Rivera's partisans and colonial rulers clashed had to do with the beleaguered Creole élites' desire to defend their threatened privileges vis-à-vis the rights of the subordinate working class masses. Although not altogether satisfied with the military government and the Foraker Act, the island's Republicans, heirs of the old *Barbocista* autonomist faction, were able to establish collaborative relations with U.S. rulers. For their collaboration, insular Republicans were rewarded with patronage. During the 1900-1904 period, when the Federalists were a parliamentary minority, U.S. colonial administrators, with the help of Barbosa's Republicans, put in place new civil and penal codes. In 1904 the Federal Party disbanded and the bulk of its supporters reunited in the new Unionista Party. Although the *unionistas* constituted a multi-status party – they were willing to go either with independence, statehood, or an intermediate option – their orientation was increasingly autonomist and even leaning towards independence. Shortly after the unionistas secured a majority in the insular legislature (Cámara de Delegados) in 1904, colonial administrators maneuvered to reduce the powers of the legislature through an amendment to the Foraker Act. When the unionistas tried to use the Foraker Act to their advantage by blocking the island's budget in 1909, the U.S. congress responded by, once again, amending the existing legislation, thus further frustrating the unionista leadership (Berbusse, 1966, 119, 122; Trias Monge, 1997, 52, 57; Morales Carrión, 1983, 146; Estades Font, 1999, 126).

In the Cuban case, U.S. colonial authorities also played politics, choosing favorites and fueling bifurcations among the island's political actors. The Cuban revolutionary leadership, particularly its more socially radical faction, found itself in a situation of a leadership vacuum. Three of its four most respected and capable leaders (José Martí, Antonio Maceo, and Calixto García) died during or shortly after the war. A fourth one, Máximo Gómez



who died in 1905, was not Cuban and therefore could not realistically aspire to be Cuba's first president. Early on, Governor Leonard Wood applied pressure so that Cuba's constitutional convention would include more moderate and conservative delegates. It was clear that U.S. policy-makers had a preference for the pro-U.S. and socially conservative Tomás Estrada Palma, who represented the civilian wing of the anti-Spanish struggle (Pérez, 1986a, 36-41). Estrada Palma, who was 67 years old at the time, briefly counted on the support of the Nacionalista and Republican parties that made possible his election to the presidency in 1902. His major opponent, General Bartolomé Masó, removed his candidacy shortly before the elections. Estrada Palma's administration was not openly critical of the Platt Amendment and proved friendly to U.S. economic interests.

By 1905 the virtually unanimous support for Estrada Palma had crumbled and a more populist and more anti-Plattist Liberal Party had formed under José Miguel Gómez, a veteran general of the war against Spain and caudillo from the province of Las Villas, Alfredo Zayas Alfonso, and Juan Gualberto Gómez. Veterans and urban dwellers and popular sectors tended to support the Liberal Party to a greater proportion than the Conservative Party of Estrada Palma (Kline, 1979, 455). Also, by that juncture politics had become a means of social mobility and capital accumulation for Cubans who had been displaced by U.S. capital from the economic arena. Access to political power, thus, became of paramount importance to political caudillos and their partisans. Despite the expansion of suffrage for the 1905 elections, the party of Estrada Palma held on to power through widespread fraud. The Liberals responded with a massive insurrection consisting of about 25,000 men. Despite the Liberals' opposition to the Platt Amendment, by revolting, they were forcing U.S. intervention as a means to reach control of the island's political apparatus. Interestingly, the *Estradistas* also wanted to provoke U.S. intervention, demonstrating that like the Liberals they had accepted the reality of the Platt Amendment. Indeed, as time went on, it became increasingly evident that no major ideological differences separated Liberals from Conservatives (Lockmiller, 1969, 36-37; Domínguez, 1978, 15).

Political chaos led to a second U.S. intervention in Cuba in September of 1906. It was motivated by U.S. fears of the mobilization of the Liberal Party, the one party that could recombine the two revolutionary agendas of national sovereignty and social justice. If the Liberals were in fact to become the island's ruling party, it was necessary for the intervention government of Charles Magoon to establish legal and judicial mechanisms that would limit the power of insular politicians and guaranteed the unchallenged dominance of the United States. During Magoon's tenure as provisional governor (1906-1909), Cuba's laws endured a profound overhaul affecting municipal, electoral, public service, judiciary, and military legislation. Moreover, manipulation of patronage and outright corruption under Magoon co-opted, demilitarized, and deradicalized the Liberal leadership which now became acceptable to win the elections of 1908 (Lockmiller, 1969; Portell Vilá, 1986, 122; Riera, 1955, 111-112).

U.S. officials did not have the same opportunities to manipulate internal Dominican politics during the first decades of the twentieth century, as they did in Cuba and Puerto Rico, where a military presence was established. Politics in the Dominican Republic, furthermore, was more a matter of caudillo-led mobilizations than electoral politics. Still, the United States exerted a great deal of political pressure during the convulsed aftermath of Heureaux's dictatorship. Meanwhile, Dominican caudillos often courted U.S. support to gain or retain power. In October 1899 Juan Isidro Jimenes was elected to the presidency and was overthrown in 1902 by fellow caudillo Horacio Vásquez, who in turn was toppled in 1903 by Carlos F. Morales, who incredibly led a revolt against his own government. There were no major ideological differences separating the various caudillos contesting for power as made evident by the personalistic nature of their movements and the ever shifting political alliances. A momentary semblance of political stability was reestablished in the Dominican Republic following the ascent to power of the Vásquez partisan Ramón Cáceres in 1906. He came to represent a somewhat less repressive version of Heureaux. During his tenure regional warfare was reduced, the economy expanded, and better relations with U.S. capital were established (Wells, 1928, I: 127-131; Bectances, 1995, 31, 74; Hartlyn, 1999, 31; Bosch, 1984, 348-358).

Along with the imposition of new legal-judicial packages and the direct manipulation of internal politics came new forms of economic domination. Cuba and Puerto Rico, as well as the Dominican Republic came under the control of U.S. economic interests. Long before 1898 the needs and designs of the U.S. economy had exerted considerable, arguably dominant, control over the Cuban economy. The new century brought a new set of circumstances allowing U.S. monopolistic capital to gain virtual control over sugar production, mining, the utilities, and banking in the Hispanic Caribbean.

In spite of, and perhaps because of the chronic instability in the Dominican Republic, U.S. interests gained control over Dominican finances. The San Domingo Improvement Company continued to hold the bulk of the Dominican foreign debt. U.S. control over the Dominican debt proved to be irritating to European bondholders, who pressured Dominican authorities to deal directly with them. European warships were actually deployed to the republic's territorial waters in 1900 and 1903 seeking to collect part of the debt owed to European bondholders. President Jimenes yielded to the growing pressures and momentarily reduced the privileges of the San Domingo Improvement Company. These developments pushed the U.S. government to apply the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, by virtue of which U.S. troops intervened in the Dominican Republic in 1903 and 1904 to avoid the risk of European intervention (Wells, 1928, II: 24-27, 70; Moya Pons, 1984, 436-437). What followed was the U.S. government's takeover of Dominican customs houses and the confiscation of 55 percent of all yearly customs receipts to service the loans. The remaining 45 percent was allotted to the Dominican government for its operations. Although this arrangement was not immediately approved by the U.S. Senate, it was nonetheless imposed on the Dominican Republic in the form of a protocol beginning in February of 1905. The following year the Dominican foreign debt was renegotiated and acquired by a single lender: Kuhn, Lock, and Co., of New York. The customs receivership was finally formalized in 1907. The U.S. takeover of Dominican customs houses represented the establishment of a virtual protectorate because it included many restrictions simi-

lar to those imposed on Cuba by virtue of the Platt Amendment: tariff rates could not be altered nor could the foreign or domestic debts be augmented without U.S. authorization (Betances, 1995, 52-55; Wells, 1928, II: 90-92; Cassá, 1991, II: 195; Moya Pons, 1984, 440-445).

Meanwhile, the economic measures imposed by the U.S. military governments on Cuba and Puerto Rico had far reaching economic and social repercussions. Instead of taking steps to alleviate the crisis endured by the islands' planter classes the military governors imposed measures that froze agricultural credits and further debased the value of land. Such measures made the region's planters even more vulnerable to the uneven competition posed by the torrent of U.S. capital that poured on Cuba and Puerto Rico after the war. Moreover, military authorities made scandalously generous concessions to U.S. corporations and entrepreneurs who soon gained control over the islands' mining resources, utilities, banking systems, and transportation infrastructures. In Cuba alone, an estimated 30 million dollars were invested by U.S. corporations and capitalists during the military occupation of the island (Healy, 1963, 94). A presidential decree of 1901 targeting Puerto Rico and a reciprocity treaty negotiated in 1903 between Cuba and the United States further reduced the islands' economic autonomy and pushed them deeper into the commercial orbit of the United States. In 1901 Puerto Rico was fully integrated into the United States' tariff system, its exports gaining free access to the U.S. market and U.S. exports entering the island duty free. The reciprocity treaty of 1903 reduced the tariff on Cuban sugar by 20 percent and allowed U.S. exports to enter the island at tariff reductions ranging from 25 to 40 percent. During his provisional governorship, Magoon dug Cuba deeper into debt by arranging for several million dollars in loans (Portell Vilá, 1986, 78, 128; Bergad, 1978, 75; Zanetti Lecuona, 1989).

The various economic decrees and other impositions by the U.S. government on Cuba and Puerto Rico had immediate results on the islands' economic orientation, trade relations, and landholding patterns. Cuba's decades-long trend toward a sugar monocrop economy and dependence on the U.S. market contin-

ued to gain strength. The new economic measures had an even greater impact on Puerto Rico, where the end-of-century economy had been based on the exportation of coffee for the Cuban and European markets. While in 1897 coffee represented 66 percent of Puerto Rico's exports and sugar 22 percent, and the United States absorbed only 20 percent of all Puerto Rican exports; as early as 1901, sugar constituted 55 percent of all exports, the ratio of coffee exports had fallen to only 20 percent, and the United States received a whopping 85 percent of Puerto Rico's export output (Vivian and Smith, 1899, 102-3; Bergad, 1978, 74).

The postwar years signaled the arrival of yet another form of U.S. economic penetration into the Hispanic Caribbean. Before 1898 direct U.S. investment in Cuba had been small and even more negligible in Puerto Rico. Beginning in 1898 U.S. capital flowed torrentially into both islands, where it faced minimal competition from the crippled insular planter classes. By 1902 the United States Tobacco Trust had gained control of over 80 percent of Cuba and Puerto Rico's tobacco exports. Fully three-fourths of Cuba's cattle industry came under U.S. control shortly after 1898 and by 1905 only a quarter of Cuba's land belonged to Cubans. By the end of the first decade of U.S. domination, only 7 percent of the total capital in Puerto Rico was in Puerto Rican hands and by 1911 U.S. holdings in the Cuban economy were valued at 220 million dollars (Pérez, 1986a, 72-85; Bergad, 1978, 83; Whitney, 2001, 23; Stubbs, 1989; and Zanetti Lecuona and García, 1987).

In summation, by 1909 the United States had successfully established the legal and institutional bases of colonial and neo-colonial domination over Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. The extent of direct control over the local state apparatuses and insular economies was a negotiated result that varied in each case according to local circumstances. In the Cuban case the United States sought to halt revolutionary mobilization and to impose stability by reviving the captain-general's model, whether applied by a Wood, an Estrada Palma, or a Magoon. Liberal caudillos became acceptable once legal and constitutional guarantees were firmly in place and more so once these

demonstrated the ability to control the unruly masses. In Puerto Rico the goal was to retain the island as a territorial conquest of ambiguous political status and to play favorites with the most pro-U.S. political actors. In the Dominican case, the most viable option to achieve stability was to support and befriend promising centralizing caudillos like Cáceres. In the Hispanic Caribbean, the politics of bifurcation and fragmentation served to either consolidate colonial rule, as in the case of Puerto Rico, or justify stability-seeking interventions as in the case of Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

ADJUSTING THE HEGEMONIC APPARATUS/PERSISTENT BIFURCATIONS  
(1910-1929)

The period comprised roughly between 1910 and 1929 marked yet another stage in the process of extending and securing U.S. domination in the Hispanic Caribbean. Whereas the first decade of U.S. dominance over the region witnessed the installation of the legal and institutional bases of colonial or neocolonial domination (Foraker Act, Platt Amendment, Reciprocity Treaty, Customs Receivership), the second and third decades of the twentieth century saw radical readjustments in U.S. policy that responded both to challenges stemming from the region and to challenges from the broader Atlantic context including the outbreak of World War I. Greater adjustments to the neocolonial apparatus, including extended military intervention, were required in the Dominican Republic and Cuba, where the bases for the achievement of hegemony had been only partially installed. Although the existing direct colonial rule over Puerto Rico required less adjusting and no further military intervention, there too domestic needs made necessary the restructuring of relations between the U.S. government and its Puerto Rican subjects and continuing manipulation of insular political divisions. Special attention to the region also responded to the geopolitical challenge posed by Germany during World War I as military-strategic considerations became of paramount importance (Mitchell, 1999; Estades Font, 1999, 57).

During this period, political developments within the three components of the Hispanic Caribbean continued to unfold along the lines marked by the respective political culture of each island. The three frustrated political struggles continued to play central roles in each society and the U.S. government continued to use or to confront them according to its hegemonic aspirations. In the Cuban case, U.S. strategy was to continue bifurcating the heirs of the revolutionary struggle in order to separate the military leadership and the caudillos from the masses and their aspirations for social justice. In the Dominican case, with its chronic anarchy and less developed state, the primary desire of U.S. interests was the island's pacification and the hope that a strong unifying leader would emerge and maintain order throughout the national territory. In Puerto Rico, the apparent goal was to maintain the political groups divided and to keep the island in limbo state as far as political status went. In all three societies, reaching political power whether via ballots or via bullets became a matter of increasing importance given the insular élites' persistent lack of economic power.

Political struggle in Puerto Rico during the 1910s continued to focus around the perennial status issue. That issue became increasingly pressing for two major reasons. First, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the Foraker Act's limitations on native political power and this pushed growing numbers of unionistas to the ranks of *independentistas* (partisans of independence). In 1912 a splinter of the Unionista Party created the Partido de la Independencia; the next year, unionistas made independence their platform's sole status option. Secondly, the colonial political system, as it stood, took on farcical characteristics because the unionistas, who received electoral majorities in every election since 1904, had less actual influence than the minority Republicans who enjoyed better relations with U.S. colonial authorities. Through the dispensation of patronage U.S. rulers were able to gain and retain the support of the pro-statehood insular Republican Party. Another development in Puerto Rico's party politics during the 1910s was the emergence of organized labor as an important political force. In 1915 Santiago Iglesias Pantín's Federación Libre de Trabajadores formed the

Partido Socialista, which would continue to play major roles in electoral politics in the years to come (Córdova, 1980).

In Cuba political struggles during the 1910s also took on greater importance in light of the lingering legacies of the war and the establishment of a neocolonial system that left Cubans virtually out of other avenues for economic power. Access to positions of political authority turned out to be one of the few remaining means for social mobility and capital accumulation as an increasing number of Cubans saw the state as the preferred source of income. As a reflection of this, political parties turned into power-seeking machines built around caudillos, who could mobilize ballots, and if necessary bullets. Ideology was a matter of secondary importance and party alliances shifted continuously (Pérez, 1986a, chap. 6; Aguilar, 1974, 33; Domínguez, 1978, 49; Ibarra, 1992). Also during this period, due to the limitations imposed by the Platt Amendment and other neocolonial restrictions, the political struggle in Cuba retained the warrior side of the revolutionary struggle while its radical social manifestations were temporarily submerged due to the impossibility of their implementation. Cuba's chief political-military caudillos, whether Liberal or Conservative had learned that U.S. support was critical for their survival and that the best way to guarantee that support was demonstrating that they could keep the masses under control.

José Miguel Gómez, the Liberal caudillo who ruled Cuba between 1908 and 1912, became a master at controlling the masses having learned from the results of Estrada Palma's failure to achieve those goals. Instability under Estrada Palma had led to a protracted U.S. intervention that, among other things, reduced the ability of political chiefs to have direct access to the state's riches. In 1912 he suppressed the mobilization of thousands of blacks, who out of frustration had left the Liberal Party and created their own: El Partido Independiente de Color. A total of between 3,000 and 7,000 died during the repression of the 1912 "race war."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The most exhaustive treatment of the 1912 "race war" is Helg (1995). Also see, Pérez (1986b) and de la Fuente (2001).



In the 1912 elections, the Conservatives under veteran General Mario García Menocal confronted a divided Liberal Party and defeated Zayas. Menocal's administration proved to be even more corrupt than previous ones and even more distant from the social revolutionary desires of labor and other popular groups. He also strove to demonstrate that he could maintain the masses under firm control. The Conservative Party tried to hold on to political power through electoral fraud in 1916 and this led to yet another insurrection in 1917 when 10,000 Liberals mobilized to topple the Conservative government. This revolt, popularly known as La Chambelona, was the fourth large-scale insurrection since Cuban independence (Portell Vilá, 1986, 196-211).

Dominican politics were even more unstable even though the state there was far more underdeveloped and therefore offered less of a bounty for those seeking political power and economic gain. The period following Cáceres' assassination in 1911 was marked by anarchy and intensified caudillo warfare in detriment to the Dominican economy. A total of six different administrations ruled the republic between the fall of Cáceres in 1911 and U.S. military intervention in 1916, averaging terms of ten months in office. In 1912 the U.S. government took steps to restore stability by deploying 750 troops and intensifying its meddling in Dominican politics, including pressuring the Dominican government to create an armed forces under the direction of U.S. officers. In 1914 Jimenes was elected president one more time but remained in power only until May 1916, when he resigned in protest to the impending U.S. occupation. U.S. policy makers by that time had recognized the chronic nature of political instability on the island and the weakness of the Dominican State and had reached the decision that major surgery was needed and that it would require an extended intervention. The intervention was also motivated by the fact that some Dominican caudillos could prove vulnerable to German pressures, most notably General Desiderio Arias, who threatened to bring down Jimenes' government and whose pro-German stance was no secret (Hartlyn, 1999, 37).

The mid- to late- 1910s were years of escalating political turmoil throughout the Hispanic Caribbean. Caudillo warfare con-

tinued to plague Cuba and the Dominican Republic and both Cuba and Puerto Rico experienced increased mobilization of their popular classes, which increasingly operated independently of the traditional oligarchies and entrenched political bosses. The background context of World War I gave more urgency to the U.S. desires for political stability in the region and for loyalty to the U.S. in the light of the growing German menace. Concern over German expansionism in the Caribbean was the main reason moving the United States to purchase the Danish Virgin Islands in 1917. Defensive and strategic considerations, including the defense of the Panama Canal, also played a determining role behind the U.S. interventions in the Dominican Republic (1916-1924), Haiti (1915-1934), and Cuba (1917-1921). Political instability had proven endemic in these societies and the looming German threat made it all the more dangerous. The war context also made patent Puerto Rico's strategic relevance and the importance of the Puerto Ricans' loyalty to the United States, including the possibility of conscripting Puerto Rican soldiers for the war efforts. These considerations made the Woodrow Wilson administration somewhat more attentive to the Puerto Ricans' demands for political reform. While in Cuba and the Dominican Republic the United States responded with military intervention, in Puerto Rico the response was a new constitutional package that came to be known as the Jones Act.

The Jones Act had the seemingly contradictory effects of, on the one hand, bringing Puerto Rico closer to the United States and on the other, granting it a greater degree of self rule. It made the island's upper legislative body elective and granted U.S. citizenship to the people of Puerto Rico. The insular governor, however, remained an appointee of the U.S. president as well as the members of the insular cabinet. The extension of citizenship, no longer openly advocated by most insular political leaders, had the backing of the U.S. War Department and Bureau of Insular Affairs and Wilson deemed the entire legislative package as vital during the context of war (Estades Font, 1999, 202-213). In part because Puerto Ricans played a minimal role in the process leading to the passing of the Jones Act and in part because it delivered too little too late, it did not satisfy the aspirations of

the island's political élites. Rather than solving the status question, the Jones Act intensified the status struggle. The unionistas, who continued to enjoy comfortable electoral majorities, began to push for enhanced self-rule immediately after the act's passage (Trías Monge, 1997, 79). It is highly emblematic of the centrality of the status issue that Puerto Rico's most important elective post was that of the Resident Commissioner to Washington, D.C. An electoral and lobbyist culture persisted but Washington had replaced Madrid as its sphere of action.

Another factor complicating Puerto Rico's political equation during the 1910s and into the 1920s was the fact that political struggles were played out triangularly, as sociologist Ángel G. Quintero has pointed out. On one side of the triangle stood the unionistas, who represented the interests of the beleaguered insular *hacendado* class; on the next side, stood the colonial state with its local allies in the insular Republican Party; the third side of the triangle represented the island's working classes, which had often been at odds with the unionistas for their antilabor stances (Quintero, 1976, 125-132). This triangulation became fertile breeding ground for the coalition electoral agreements that characterized Puerto Rican party politics between 1924 and 1944. In 1924, as the Socialists' influence continued to grow, the U.S. government pressured the insular political élites into coalescing to block the ascendancy of the party and its affiliated mass labor union. The pro-independence unionistas, now under the leadership of Antonio R. Barceló, obliged and joined in an electoral pact with the most conservative segment of the prostatehood Republican Party to form the Alianza Puertorriqueña (García Passalacqua, 1993, 66; Álvarez Curbelo, 1993, 23). This forced the remaining Republicans and the Socialists to form their own electoral alliance: la *Coalición*. Much to the disadvantage of labor's aspirations, both the Alianza and the *Coalición* became power-seeking machines operating in a context of weakness vis-à-vis the U.S. colonial government. The formation and longevity of the cross-class *Coalición* was indicative of the centrality of the status issue that often brought together militants from socially opposed parties.

The extent of U.S. intervention in Cuba and the Dominican Republic during the 1916-17 juncture went far beyond the con-

stitutional tailoring that occurred in Puerto Rico. Whereas Puerto Rico remained relatively peaceful and its political élites continued to operate within the established electoral and constitutional frameworks, Cuba continued to endure recurrent armed uprisings against the established government and the Dominican Republic continued submerged in caudillo warfare. Earlier attempts at state building along the patterns of Western representative democracy had proven only partially successful and the previous legal impositions proved lacking the scaffolding of the necessary social and economic conditions.

As mentioned earlier, in Cuba, another civil war erupted in 1917 when an army of at least 10,000 under the command of José Miguel Gómez rose up in arms protesting Menocal's attempt to retain power via fraudulent elections. The Chambelona insurrection of 1917, with war in Europe as its backdrop, led to yet another U.S. intervention between 1917 and 1921, despite Menocal's insistence that he had the situation under control. During and following this intervention the United States began a more active and direct role in the administration of Cuban affairs. During the presidency of Zayas, who succeeded Menocal in 1921, U.S. officials pressured insular politicians to produce favorable legislation, taxation rates, economic concessions, and even specific budgetary allotments. While U.S. officials achieved a greater degree of influence in Cuban politics, U.S. financial and corporate interests exerted other forms of control that curbed Cuban autonomy; it was dollar diplomacy at its best (Pérez, 1986a, 118-120).

For the 1924 elections the newly formed Popular Party of Zayas presented Menocal as its presidential candidate to confront Gerardo Machado y Morales of the Liberal Party. Of humble background — a butcher by trade — Machado had risen within the ranks of his party as a result of his exploits during the War of Independence and later in the Chambelona revolt. Machado won by a wide margin and managed to amass multi-party support for his administration which came to be known as "*cooperativismo*." By 1927, Machado had decided to seek reelection and he maneuvered to extend his term by forcing a new constitution on the Cuban people (Portell Villá, 1986, 317; Whitney, 2001, chap. 2).

Meanwhile, the Dominican Republic presented even greater challenges to U.S. desires of stability because of the extent of caudillo warfare that plagued it and the persistent absence of a functional national state. The achievement of political and economic hegemony necessitated an extended military intervention producing sweeping legal and constitutional measures that could build a sound neocolonial edifice from the ground up. Still, however, the problem remained that a modern centralized state required a parallel social development that could not be legislated into existence within a single generation. Wilsonian democracy could not flourish in a social context characterized by a weak and subordinate elite and a population with an illiteracy rate of around 90 percent (Calder, 1984, 34).

U.S. troops landed in the Dominican Republic in May 1916 and the military occupation of the country was officially declared on November 29. The various decrees of the military occupation, which lasted until 1924, point to a highly coherent package of state building measures. The most immediate goal was the disarming of the caudillo-led armies with the object of putting an end to the regionalistic warfare that had plagued the country for seven decades. The next step included the formation of a professional, and hopefully apolitical, national military force that would secure the monopoly over the use of force. National territorial integration through road building and other infrastructural developments was aimed at reducing regional antagonisms and facilitating the economy's development along the lines of the enclave plantation model. Several of the military measures were clearly directed toward the elimination of barriers against U.S. monopoly capital. A new land-tenure law of 1920 put an end to the ancient practice of holding communal lands and made it easier for U.S. corporations to acquire extensive tracks of land, especially in El Seibo and San Pedro de Macorís. New tariffs put in place in 1919 and 1920 made it possible for Dominican sugar to be exported to the United States virtually duty-free, while eliminating the tariff protection of Dominican manufactures.<sup>12</sup> Viewed as a package, the occupation legisla-

<sup>12</sup> For the best treatment of U.S. measures during the occupation of the Dominican Republic, see Calder (1984). Bosch (1984, 379); Cassá (1991, II: 228-229).

tion aimed at creating a neocolonial state that was strong enough to guarantee internal stability but vulnerable and dependent enough not to pose a challenge to U.S. economic interests.

Dominican opposition to the U.S. occupation came from two major sources: the *gavilleros*, peasant and sugar worker guerrillas, and the urban-based, nationalist intelligentsia. Gavillero resistance surfaced in the eastern provinces of El Seibo and San Pedro de Macorís, where U.S. capital and new land tenure legislation threatened the subsistence of large segments of the traditional peasantry. Meanwhile, the urban intelligentsia unleashed an unremitting national and international campaign denouncing the U.S. occupation. Nationalist agitation peaked during the crisis of 1920, when sugar prices hit rock bottom; before the end of the year, U.S. military governor Thomas Snowden announced his government's plans to withdraw the occupation forces. The last troops left in 1924.

The post-intervention political panorama in the Dominican Republic included many of the old political actors, men like Horacio Vásquez, Federico Velázquez, and Luis Felipe Vidal, who had cooperated with the occupation forces and had accepted the terms of the troops' withdrawal as imposed by the United States. In 1924 an aging Vásquez was elected president and Velázquez, his opponent, was elected vice-president. The major new political actor was the national military force that had been created and trained by the U.S. military during the occupation. Since 1925 the Dominican armed forces were led by Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina, a thirty-four-year old Vásquez's protégé of mixed racial ancestry and humble background. The U.S. occupation had also dealt a near mortal blow to the regional caudillos and had further debilitated the standing of the Dominican economic élites. What remained after the intervention was a handful of old-time politicians, some with reduced personal armies, and a well-armed military under the leadership of Trujillo, an ambitious and cruel young man who resented the Dominican élites.

The application of the various hegemonic mechanisms during the 1910s and 1920s produced the desired results of U.S. control over the economies of the Hispanic Caribbean. By the late 1920s the dominance of U.S. capital over the region was

well established. Preponderant control had been achieved not only in terms of virtual exclusivity in foreign trade but also in direct ownership of extensive sugar lands. Although U.S. corporate ownership of sugar lands had expanded consistently during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the crash of 1921 accelerated the passing of agricultural land to U.S. corporate interests in all three societies. The four largest U.S. sugar corporations in Puerto Rico came to own 24 percent of the sugar land and controlled half of the sugar production while total U.S. investments in Puerto Rico reached an estimated 120 million dollars by 1930. U.S. investments in Cuba surpassed 1,200 million dollars in 1924; and four years later U.S. corporations produced 75 percent of the island's sugar output. U.S. control of Dominican sugar production was even higher with nearly all sugar lands and a quarter of all agricultural land in U.S. hands. A parallel pattern of U.S. dominance was evident throughout the region in banking, finances, mining, ranching, the utilities, and transportation (Ayala, 1999; Whitney, 2001, 23; Mathews, 1967, 13).

DEPRESSION AND NONINTERVENTIONIST HEGEMONY/  
THE ERA OF THE CAUDILLOS (1930-1945)

The 1930s stand out as a clear watershed in the history of the Hispanic Caribbean. The most obvious reason for this was the Great Depression, whose worldwide reverberations afflicted the economies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic in ways similar to other agro-exporting societies during that critical decade. The 1930s also represented profound changes in the region politically and geo-politically. Pertaining to the region's relations with the United States significant changes took place, most notably the application of a new U.S. policy package that came to be known as the Good Neighbor Policy. We also find the ascendancy of new political actors in the region, who represented new generations and different social and economic backgrounds. Significantly, however, the political cultures and their respective struggles and models with deep roots in the nineteenth century continued to shape the course of politics in the three societies of the Hispanic Caribbean.

The Great Depression had a deleterious impact on the Hispanic Caribbean given the region's long-standing dependence on the exportation of sugar to the United States. Cuba's sugar export quota to the United States was cut in half in 1930 and the Hawley-Smoot Tariff further reduced Cuba's sugar exports. That had a drastic impact on salary and employment levels: rural wages dropped 75 percent as a quarter of the island's workers lost their jobs. Puerto Rico's economy also went into a tailspin, unemployment there reaching 60 percent in 1930. The Depression also afflicted the Dominican economy, where collapsing sugar prices translated into a 50 percent reduction in wages and mass lay off among government employees. The deterioration of living conditions for the working classes in the region spurred a flurry of labor strikes, particularly in Puerto Rico and Cuba. Radical, and often violent, political movements, like the Nationalist Party in Puerto Rico, and the ABC and Directorio Estudiantil Universitario in Cuba became increasingly active during the 1930s (Whitney, 2001, 61-62; Cassá, 1991, II: 244-247).

The profound social and economic crisis also shook the incumbent governments of the Hispanic Caribbean, not unlike in other parts of Latin America between 1929 and 1933. Throughout Latin America, the effects of the Great Depression debilitated the power base of the traditional agrarian oligarchies, creating a power vacuum that was soon filled by other social sectors, including the urban bourgeoisie, the middle classes, and organized labor. Populist multi-class coalitions emerged among the republics of Latin America and in some instances achieved political power through controlled mobilization of the masses and through electoral means. There were no comparable agrarian oligarchies in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic and the political power of the region's political actors remained limited by a variety of neocolonial mechanisms imposed by the United States. Still, political transition in the Hispanic Caribbean during the 1930s came to represent a rift with the past. Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic endured similar political crises during the early 1930s but responses in each case varied in reflection of the particular political culture of each society. In Cuba, political struggles continued to follow the two inherited mod-



els: revolutionary mobilization and the captain-general; in the Dominican Republic, they were played out along the authoritarian model of limited, selective mobilization of the masses; in Puerto Rico, despite increased and radicalized nationalist mobilization, political struggles continued focused on the electoral model with special attention to the perennial status issue.

A variety of circumstances, both global and regional, allowed the development of a new U.S. policy toward the Hispanic Caribbean characterized by the end of direct U.S. military intervention and the application of other forms of hegemonic domination. For one, the 1930s witnessed the virtual elimination of European competition for influence over the region both politically and economically. Of equally great significance is the fact that the 1930s saw the rise to power of pro-U.S. authoritarian caudillos in Cuba and the Dominican Republic who provided political and social stability that no longer made necessary U.S. direct intervention. Political scientist Jorge Domínguez has referred to this transition as the end of the imperialist stage of the United States and the beginning of the hegemonic phase. Other students of U.S. foreign policy have concurred that the advent of the Good Neighbor era was more the result of new geopolitical and political circumstances, than any profound philosophical shift or major change in U.S. objectives (Domínguez, 1978, 54; Smith, 1996, 65; Dunkerley, 1999, 27). Indeed, decades of raising, adjusting, and readjusting the hegemonic edifice, in addition to the culmination of favorable geopolitical circumstances, allowed the Roosevelt administration to dismantle the scaffolding of empire through intervention now that domination had been established with a degree of local consent. Stability-producing insular leaders were also able to submerge political fragmentation through varying degrees of combinations of repression and co-optation.

The 1930s marked the beginning of a clearly defined new era in Dominican politics under the fist of Trujillo, perhaps the most brutal dictator in Latin America's history. In the late 1920s, his predecessor, Horacio Vásquez maneuvered to extend his term in office in a fashion similar to Machado's constitutional tinkering in Cuba. This move weakened the already feeble legal foundations of the Dominican Republic. At the time, Trujillo, had

already become a powerful player in Dominican politics from his position as head of the national armed forces. While trying to appear loyal to Vásquez, Trujillo plotted to bring down his government along with Rafael Estrella Ureña and Desiderio Arias. Following the collapse of Vásquez's regime, Trujillo ran for president and won through fraud and intimidation in the elections of May 1930, amassing 99 percent of the vote. Soon thereafter, he went after Ureña, Cipriano Bencosme, Arias, and any other possible challenger to his regime. In 1930 Trujillo was able to move into a virtual power vacuum in which the military, under his command, enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the use of force. The U.S. government, which was highly responsible for the conditions leading to Trujillo's rise to power, quickly recognized the regime, its unconstitutionality notwithstanding (Hartlyn, 1999, 39; Diedrich, 1990).

Trujillo's rule was the culmination of a long tradition of authoritarian state-building dating to the birth of the republic. The new caudillo followed on Heureaux's bloody footsteps, taking his predecessor's goals and methods to new levels of violence and sophistication; he also incorporated some of the aesthetics of the old caudillo such as the use of ostentatious nineteenth-century military uniforms with plumed field marshal hats, flashy epaulets, and a chest full of self-awarded medals.<sup>13</sup> This latest in a succession of tyrants inherited a state in the process of centralization and he further strengthened the central government and its executive branch. Significantly, Trujillo's nation-building also included nationalistic and protectionist measures. As early as 1931 he attempted to regain control over the nation's customs houses. During the Depression Trujillo also implemented various protectionist measures that allowed for some import substitution (Espinal, 1987, 74; Cassá, 1991, II: 258-259).

Besides economic power as the nation's wealthiest man, Trujillo enjoyed enormous military power. He expanded the

<sup>13</sup> Salient among the many who recognized the similarities between Heureaux and Trujillo was Heureaux's son, a Trujillo supporter. In 1933 he published "Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina" where he compared his father and the new dictator. See Hartlyn (1999, 297-298).

nation's armed forces and in the process created a new economic elite that was both dependent and loyal to his leadership. Significantly, mixed race Trujillo loyalists moved up socially and militarily as a result of their services to the regime. Through fraud and intimidation Trujillo was reelected in 1934 and the puppet candidate of his choice, Jacinto B. Peynado, was elected in 1938; incredibly, both candidates received 100 percent of the vote. By that point Trujillo's regime had assumed clearly totalitarian features. Though falling far short from the Wilsonian dreams of a successful tropical democracy, Trujillo's regime fulfilled other U.S. desires, namely the achievement of stability and the creation of a climate friendly to U.S. investments and commerce. The U.S. government supported Trujillo's regime and turned a blind eye to his domestic excesses of brutality. Even the atrocious 1938 massacre of around 18,000 Haitians under his direct orders received only mild official protests from the United States. Trujillo's ironfisted regime had clearly fulfilled the new United States goal of stability without intervention; hegemony was secured through a local tyrant.<sup>14</sup>

The 1930s also saw a transition in Cuban politics with generational and class overtones and the eventual ascent to power in Cuba of a military caudillo, Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar; who achieved political stability by cunningly combining repression and co-optation. The devastating effects of the Great Depression made Machado increasingly vulnerable to the opposition posed by his old political rivals and new political actors representing a new political generation and different sectors of Cuban society; the severe economic crisis made his administration unable to finance his support through government contracts and *botellas* (no show state jobs). Machado responded by repressing the island's increasingly agitated and radical labor and student movements: adversaries like student leader Julio Antonio Mella were targets of assassination plots and violent mobs called "*porras*" were let loose against opponents. If Gómez had not already done so, he demonstrated that Liberals could be as good heirs of the captain-general's model as their Conservative counterparts (Pérez,

<sup>14</sup> See Castor (1987), and Derby (1994); also see Sagás (2000).

1986a, 188, 279; Bergad, 1978, 79-81; Betances, 1995, 29; Gleijeses, 1978, 18; Santiago-Valles, 1994, 150; also see Whitney, 2001).

Machado faced both old model caudillo-led insurrections like the failed one staged in August 1931 by Carlos Mendieta and Menocal, and the increasingly massive opposition from organized labor, armed student organizations, and middle class terrorist groups. In one instance, the ABC went to the extreme of executing Senate President Clemente Vázquez Bello – a Machado partisan – with the intention of luring Machado and his staff to the Colón Cemetery, where ABC operatives had interred a large number of explosives. While this plot failed because Vázquez Bello was buried elsewhere, hundreds of acts of political violence left a bloody toll. The dictator's response to an increasingly militant opposition was to tighten the screws of repression (Whitney, 2001, 58; Riera, 1955, 386-387).

By early 1933 the U.S. government withdrew its support from Machado as it became evidently clear that he was losing control of the situation and that the post-Machado transition could require the kind of intervention that the new Roosevelt administration wanted to avoid. With the opposition to Machado being increasingly dominated by progressive, and even radical, groups. Machado fled the island on August 12 in the face of pressures from the meddling U.S. Ambassador Sumner Wells and the Cuban armed forces and most other sectors of Cuban society; his partisans, meanwhile, endured the violent wrath of anti-Machado mobs that ransacked houses and dragged corpses down Havana's streets. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, son of Cuba's founding father, momentarily assumed the presidency with support of the U.S. government (Portell Vilá, 1986, 382-397; Whitney, 2001, chap. 5; Riera, 1955, 412).

Three weeks later, on September 3, a revolutionary coalition reached power, representing a new generation of civilian and military leaders who revived many of the revolutionary goals of the generation of '95. Ramón Grau San Martín, Batista, and Antonio Guiteras soon emerged as the leading figures of the post Machado era. Reflective of the Grau San Martín-led revolutionary government's progressive social agenda were several measures of land reform, utility rates control, expansion of the suf-

frage, and establishment of the eight-hour workday. During the early months of the revolutionary government the state nationalized U.S.-owned estates and factories while radical workers established soviets in seized lands. Nationalism also manifested itself with the unilateral abrogation of the Platt Amendment by the Grau San Martín government as well as moves to wrest control of the Isle of Pines from U.S. control (Aguilar, 1974, 165-178; Whitney, 2001; Carr, B., 1996). For a while it seemed as if the dual revolutionary goals of national liberation and social justice, which first merged during the War of Independence, would be achieved by the generation of '33.

Neither the post-Machado political chaos nor the radicalization of the ensuing revolutionary government was welcomed by U.S. interests and their representatives in Cuba. The U.S. government withheld recognition from the Grau San Martín government as Wells maneuvered to propel Batista to the center of political power. Batista soon transferred his support to Carlos Mendieta, and Grau San Martín's government collapsed on January 15, 1934. In a revealing move the U.S. recognized Mendieta's government only 5 days after it assumed power. The power behind the throne, however, was Batista, who ruled through puppet presidents until 1936, when he staged a coup against Miguel Mariano Gómez and assumed direct power until 1940. Significantly, he was elected president in clean elections in June 1940 and willingly stepped down in 1944 when a now acceptable Grau San Martín replaced him as chief executive. Like Trujillo, Batista enjoyed good relations with the United States. His regime was propped with favorable sugar quotas and sugar tariffs of the 1934 Jones-Costigan act and he was rewarded with the abrogation of the Platt Amendment in also in 1934 (Pérez, 1986a, 332).

Batista's first regime (1933-1944), while serving many of the same U.S. needs and sharing some characteristics with Trujillo's, differed from it in many regards. This was true because Cuban society more closely resembled Argentina and Brazil than its neighboring Dominican Republic. Batista's brand of authoritarian populism was closer to the regimes of Juan Domingo Perón and Getulio Vargas than to those of Anastasio Somoza, Sr. and Trujillo. The existence of a large urbanized middle class, and na-

tional industrial bourgeoisie, and the higher extent of labor organization and mobilization in Cuba necessitated a negotiated and corporalist type of government that at the time was neither necessary nor possible in the Dominican Republic. Batista was also heir to a different political culture, one that intermittently combined aspirations for social justice and national sovereignty. He did share with Trujillo a mixed racial ancestry, the accomplishment of social mobility through military exploits, and a deep-seated contempt for old oligarchs and their heirs.

Like other contemporary populists, Batista relied on a shifting combination of co-optation and repression. During his first regime, Batista successfully suppressed his opposition and proceeded to cultivate harmonious and collaborative relations with a now tamed organized labor and co-opted leaders of the Cuban Communist Party, the ABC, and other former foes. Batista's government also exhibited a reformist strain that has often been overlooked. In fact, he allowed the implementation of many of the goals of the Revolution of 1933, acceptable to the U.S if implemented by a strong hand caudillo. Among his regime's noteworthy reforms were a mild agrarian reform, measures of rent and utilities control, and the establishment of numerous rural schools run by the military. Batista succeeded at imposing the captain-general's political model while diffusing the revolutionary goals through populist reformism (Kline, 1979, 456; Whitney, 2001, 2). The successful achievement of political stability during Batista's dictatorship and especially during the crisis years of the Great Depression earned the dictator the support of the United States.

In Puerto Rico, meanwhile, the years of the Great Depression brought about major social disarticulations with multiple political ramifications. Political transitions there during the 1930s were marked by ideological, generational, and geographical differences. In 1932, the Republican and Socialist coalition achieved its first electoral victory, bringing to a close almost three decades of control of the insular legislature by the unionista, later Liberal, parties. This coalition, however, was different from the one formed in 1924 for it now included the Republican bourgeoisie which faithfully represented the interests of the sugar pro-

ducers; patronage and the aspiration of turning Puerto Rico into a state of the United States solidified an otherwise seemingly unholy alliance of political forces (Meléndez, 1993, 82). As a result of this, the Socialist side of the coalition lost credibility among labor and other political groups such as the Nationalists and years later the Partido Popular Democrático managed to attract the support of organized labor.

The pro-statehood Republican-Socialist coalition led by Rafael Martínez Nadal and Bolívar Pagán though victorious at the polls in 1932 and 1936 failed to achieve cooperative relations with U.S. colonial administrators appointed by the Roosevelt administration (Carr, R., 1984, 58-61; Mathews, 1967). Just like was the case during the 1910s and 1920s, one party triumphed at the polls while another enjoyed better working relations with the continental colonial administrators. U.S. authorities were quick to recognize that the Socialist Party had lost its earlier influence and control over labor, that the Republicans represented dangerous reaction, and that the most viable way to ride the depression was through the application of top-down palliative reforms of the New Deal administered in association with local reformers. They also recognized that the application of reforms could weaken the increasingly violent Nationalist Party of Pedro Albizu Campos. In this process members of the younger reformist wing of the Liberal Party, like Luis Muñoz Marín, Carlos Chardón, Guillermo Esteves, and Rafael Fernández García played increasingly important roles and many were incorporated into the bureaucracy of the newly formed New Deal agency called the Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA) and later the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA) (Carr, R., 1984, 58-61; Mathews, 1967, 214). The Liberal Party's reformists, though mostly pro-independence, were pragmatic politicians, recognized the urgency of the current crisis, and subordinated the status issue to other more pressing matters. They also converged ideologically with the New Deal reformists in Washington (Mathews, 1967, 51).

In 1938 Muñoz Marín and other reformists abandoned the Liberal Party and founded the Partido Popular Democrático that emerged victorious in the elections of 1940 and achieved land-

slide victories over the next fifteen years. Though a civilian and democratically inclined, Muñoz Marín once elected as senator (1941-1949) and later as governor (1949-1965) came to play the role of stability-producing, state-building strong leader parallel to the roles played by Trujillo and Batista in the neighboring islands. Conditions in Puerto Rico, such as the existence of a firm U.S. colonial apparatus and a long tradition of electoral democracy, did not make necessary the application of extensive martial and repressive means in place in Cuba and the Dominican Republic. The quasi-military Nationalists, however, had abandoned electoral politics after the elections of 1932 and faced unrelenting persecution at the hands of the colonial state's police forces, culminating in the arrest and conviction of Albizu Campos and several of his associates in 1936 and the Ponce massacre in 1937 (Moraza Ortiz, 2001).

In summation, the 1930-1945 period marked the definite achievement of U.S. hegemony in the Hispanic Caribbean. The foundational bases for hegemony had been successfully installed during the first decade of the twentieth century, and were readjusted according to local conditions during the second and third decades. In each case, the United States utilized the local political culture to achieve its goals. In the Dominican Republic the means was Trujillo, a figure like Heureaux but far more sinister and sophisticated. In Cuba it was Batista who reconciled the stability of the captain-general's model with toned down aspirations of the revolutionary tradition. Both caudillos produced the conditions that guaranteed U.S. interests without recourse to direct meddling in neither local politics nor intervention. In Puerto Rico hegemony culminated with the gradual transference of local power to reformist oriented politicians led by Muñoz Marín.

By 1940-41 there were clear indications of the success of U.S. hegemony in the Hispanic Caribbean. Trujillo's regime entered its second decade and boasted brutality-imposed stability and economic growth. Quite significantly the U.S. returned the nation's customs houses to Dominican hands in 1941 and in 1947 Trujillo paid off the national debt that had burdened the Republic for over a century. Trujillo also managed to nationalize the U.S.-owned electric company and buy the also U.S.-owned Na-



tional City Bank and most of the island's sugar plantations (Hartlyn, 1999, 44). President Batista, meanwhile, allowed and even promoted the creation of a new and very progressive constitution in 1940, which fulfilled many of the revolutionary goals of 1895 and 1933. According to historian Robert Whitney, this transition to democracy was possible only after "state violence [was] unleashed against the *clases populares* and the various opposition groups." (Whitney, 2001, 123). Muñoz Marín, for his part, enjoyed excellent collaborative relations with the colonial administration of Rexford G. Tugwell (1941-1946) and other like-minded New Dealers (Lugo Silva, 1955). It would be a matter of a few years before the U.S. president would appoint the first Puerto Rican governor (1946) and later allow the people of Puerto Rico to elect their own governor (1949). The three Caribbean caudillos, despite many differences, played similar roles as stabilizing figures who helped consolidate local consensus for U.S. hegemony through the application of various combinations of coercion and co-optation. Looking at their respective societies in comparative perspective, a paradox becomes apparent: the two most unstable, war-torn, and undemocratic countries (the Dominican Republic and Cuba) allowed the emergence of two dictators of humble background and mixed racial ancestry who helped end the era of the white oligarchs; while in the most stable and democratic of the three (Puerto Rico) the son of a nineteenth-century white patrician inherited his father's social standing and leadership role. In the process, the forces that allowed his rise to power battled the Nationalist movement led by Albizu Campos, a mulatto of working class background (Ferraó, 1990).

#### EPILOGUE: CRISIS OF HEGEMONY/PERSISTENT POLITICAL CULTURES

Developments in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s against the backdrop of the Cold War, demonstrated the vulnerability of the hegemony that the U.S. had finally achieved. The recent past has also made evident the persistence of the region's centuries-old struggles along the lines of deeply ingrained political cultures as well as the threat of resurfacing political bifurcations.

In 1956 a large-scale revolutionary struggle erupted against Batista's second dictatorship which had become increasingly brutal and rested more and more on the authoritarian captain-general's model. The Cuban Revolution's triumph made evident very soon that Fidel Castro's government, in its own way, reconciled the revolutionary and the captain-general's models. While certainly not a friend of the U.S., Castro managed to impose the stability that neither Valeriano Weyler nor Estrada Palma nor Machado nor Batista could ever produce; redistribution of wealth, political imprisonment, executions, re-concentrations, repression, and massive exile served to submerge political fragmentation, producing a lasting mirage of unanimity. At age seventy-six, with the Cold War long-thawed, Castro stubbornly holds on to power as both friends and foes fear the impending chaos to follow after his demise. Like in 1898, Cuba is in ruins after decades of revolutionary struggle, more than one in ten Cubans live in exile, U.S. corporations circle the sky above the agonizing island like a flock of vultures, and a host of Estrada Palmas in designer suits make plans for Castro's still warm throne.

Trujillo's regime, meanwhile, while useful as an anti-Communist ally of the United States, became increasingly brutal during the 1950s and early 1960s, to the point that it lost the support of two of its staunchest backers: the U.S. government and the Catholic Church. Like Heuraux's sixty years earlier, it came to an end by an assassin's bullet on May 30, 1961 and was followed by a period of civil war that culminated with yet another U.S. intervention in April 1965. Trujillismo lingered, however, during the twelve-year U.S.-backed rule of Joaquín Balaguer, formerly a sycophant lackey of Trujillo's. As this essay goes into print, ninety-five-year-old Balaguer, who also ruled the Dominican Republic between 1986 and 1996, remains the caudillo of the Christian Democratic Reformist Party, and arguably the most powerful Dominican alive.

In Puerto Rico, meanwhile, Muñoz Marín and his *populares* led the country through a process of unprecedented economic prosperity and social development between the 1940s and 1960s turning what had been the Caribbean's poorhouse into the "Showcase of Democracy" and the hemisphere's model for economic

development. Economic boom, the orchestration of the massive exodus of hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans to the U.S., and the successful suppression of the Nationalist resurgence of the 1950s and other dissonant voices, produced a semblance of political unanimity parallel to those imposed by the one-party regimes of Trujillo and Castro. Significantly, Puerto Rico's politicians – like their predecessors a century before – contrasted the island's stability and loyalty to the situation in nearby Cuba. As the Partido Popular's grip over power eroded and the status issue reemerged with a vengeance in the 1960s the island's politicians, once again, resorted to delegations to Washington, referendums, and plebiscites hoping for a final status solution. Significantly, the Puerto Rican grandchildren of the nineteenth-century patrician and hacendado class still hold on to social, political, and economic power while their Cuban and Dominican counterparts have faded into oblivion in exile or God knows where.

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