

Puerto Rican Identities

Construction of the Puerto Rican Middle Class through Place, Education and Nationalism.

Heidi Rasmussen



Masteroppgave ved sosialantropologisk institutt

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

Våren 2010

Puerto Rican Identities

Construction of the

Puerto Rican Middle Class

through

Place,

Education and

Nationalism

© Heidi Rasmussen

2010

Puerto Rican Identities. Construction of the Puerto Rican middle class through place,
education and nationalism

Heidi Rasmussen

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Trykk: Oslo Kopisten AS.

Summary

In this thesis I want to highlight the question of identity and class consciousness among Puerto Ricans in San Juan through the concepts of habitus, and cultural and symbolic capital. I explore this consciousness through following my informants through physical and social space and come to see that the movement is filled with symbolic control and struggle in their attempt to define themselves opposed to others. The movement done in space brings forward issues of class consciousness and boundaries. I highlight this by demonstrating the educational system as a way of producing and maintaining these boundaries and I also see it in a historical context by referring back to processes endured under Spanish colonial power. Furthermore, I place the Puerto Rican consciousness in a larger discussion of identity. First of all, by discussing if one can talk of a Puerto Rican national identity by exploring myths and contesting notions of identities. Secondly, by expanding the discussion of identity over its geographical borders I see that Puerto Rico has in fact a discussion of not only national identity, but also of an island identity shared with the Caribbean region it shares its history with.

Foreword

I'm sitting in Mexico in an internet café with my friend Randi, we have traveled South and Central America and now we have come to the point where we have to choose what to do with our lives when arriving back home. As we search the internet for different university programs I come across the site for social anthropology. It catches my attention as I see the possibility to travel and experience a society for a whole semester! I did not think about the fact that it would take me almost four years before I could realize this dream, luckily for me I fell in love with anthropology from the very start. Doing preparatory courses before fieldwork we read about all the different obstacles we might encounter along with the loneliness and frustration during our time away from home. But nothing could really prepare us for what lay ahead. I would therefore thank all those that made my stay in Puerto Rico so much better, though I cannot mention you by names you are all in my heart. I especially want to thank my *nenas* for supporting me in every way. I would also like to thank those people at home, first of all my fellow students who have made this journey so much better and for encouraging me to push forwards when times were tough. To my teaching supervisor, Sarah Lund, thank you for making me feel a whole lot better after our meetings and making me believe in my thesis. To my parents for giving me advice and support, to my sister Kristina and aunt Sue for looking through my paper, and my brother Terje for opening up his home for me and my friends. To Knut Johan who supported me even though things did not work out. Last but not least I'd like to thank all my friends who I have neglected socially these last couple of years, but who still encouraged me to keep up the work.

Heidi Rasmussen

Oslo June 22, 2010

Nunca se le quita la mancha de plátano

Contents

Summary	IV
Foreword	VI
Pictures	XII
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
What am I? You're Puerto Rican!	1
Theme and Research Question	1
Historical context	3
Puerto Rico under Spanish rule	4
From a Spanish colony to an American colony	4
Postcolonial?	6
The great migration	7
Regional Ethnography	8
Theory	10
Benedict Anderson	11
Pierre Bourdieu	12
Sherry B. Ortner	14
Concluding remarks	16
Chapter 2: Methodological Reflections.....	17
Introduction	17
Methodological Strategies.....	17
Urban anthropology.....	17
A waltz between theory, method and data	18
Choosing informants	19
Interviews	19
Social Class Shown Through Selected Informants	20
Ethical principals.....	25

My Role.....	26
Chapter 3: the City; where space confirms identity	27
Introduction	27
Imagining the City.....	29
The Enclaved City.....	31
Expressing Cultural Capital in the construction of Puerto Rican Middle Class	32
The Contested City.....	36
Symbolic control and struggle over space.....	38
Concluding remarks	40
Chapter 4: The Elite	44
Introduction	44
Empowering place.....	46
Empowering emotions.....	49
Creating meaning through movement.	51
Education and school enrollment in Puerto Rico	55
Education as a means of constructing and transmitting capital	59
Concluding remarks	61
Chapter 5 You're Puerto Rican!.....	63
An imagined community?	65
Social Space and symbolic power.....	67
Social class	68
The myth of the <i>jíbaro</i> in the search for a Puerto Rican identity.....	69
The construction of the <i>jíbaro</i> myth	72
Contested identities	74
Puerto Rican or island phenomena?	76
Concluding remarks	78
Final Remarks	79

Bibliography.....	82
Internet Resources:	86
Newspapers:	87

Pictures

Picture 1: Graffiti art in San Juan proclaiming Puerto Rican pride.....42

Picture 2: Replica of a traditional Puerto Rican *casita*.....42

Picture 3: Early morning in the streets of Old San Juan.....43

Picture 4: Fiesta de San Sebastian, early morning.....43

Chapter 1: Introduction

What am I? You're Puerto Rican!

I'm standing in a room filled with about 10-12 people, of which only one is female. The conversation between the people present is a mixture of Spanish and English. Its lunch hour and we are gathered together for a meeting held by a charitable and social organisation in the heart of the financial district of San Juan. I look around the room and see the amazing view of San Juan; the immense network of roads and highways crisscrossing between malls, office buildings and residential areas. In the not so far distance one can see the bay where international cruise and commercial ships dock and which leads out to Old San Juan and the Atlantic Ocean. This particular day I've been invited by the organisation to hold a presentation for them about the purpose of my stay and why I chose Puerto Rico as a point of interest for my research;

“First of all I have to tell you a bit about my background: I was born in Norway, I have a Norwegian father and an English mother. I have lived in Norway almost all my life, but I have never felt fully Norwegian nor quite English. I tell people that I am from Norway, but I have an English passport – and I don't want to get rid of it either. My Norwegian friends have always told me that my family is not a typical Norwegian family, and my cousins and friends in England have never really seen us as English. So what does this make me? What am I?”

A lady in the audience exclaims with a big smile on her face; “You're Puerto Rican!” and people start laughing.

Theme and Research Question

Who am I? This is the major question many Puerto Ricans struggle with answering.

Experiencing the longest influence of Spanish rule in the area and having been an American territory since 1898, with American citizenship since 1917, over 3.4 million people of Puerto Rican origin residing in the U.S. mainland (compared to 3.8 million on the island. See U.S. census 2000 a&b) Puerto Rico today finds itself in a unique position politically, economically and culturally. Not to one's surprise the focus on recent studies of the island and its diaspora has been how the Puerto Ricans, both in the diaspora and on the island, experience and are

affected by the islands political situation (see Davila 1997, Duany 2002a, Flores 2000 & Pérez 2004). The question of identity ‘whereby persons (or a group) define themselves in relation to the world and to other people...’ (Fitzpatrick 1971: 7) is a central concept in the Puerto Rican literature and public discourse. Even though the American influence has been immense (politically, economically, socially and culturally) the Puerto Ricans today still have a strong sense of unity and sense of Puerto Rican pride – yet only a small percentage of the population wants independence for the island and its people. What is interesting is the contradiction between the perceived Puerto Rican “national” identity and the majorities wish for the continuing relation with the United States. I use quotation marks on the term national because Puerto Rico is not a nation, and it is therefore debatable if they can say they have a national identity.

As I was collecting my data during my fieldwork I noticed a clear class distinction among my informants. However they never talked about their own or others class background directly and it was not easy to see class distinction through appearances such as clothing. Class was always hidden behind subtle words and phrases such as; ‘those living in houses on San Sebastian Street’ when referring to the upper class, or ‘the unfortunate’ when referring to the poor and economical restricted. As one informant told me, who I would describe as coming from a middle class background; ‘we [the family] are not rich, but we do ok. It’s not like I don’t have any money, but I like to be careful so I can spend my money on things I really want.’ Social class (to use the Bourdieudian phrase) has not been an important part of anthropological research on the Puerto Rican political situation, maybe due to the resentment among Puerto Ricans on the work produced by Oscar Lewis in *La Vida* (1968) where he claimed that there was a culture of poverty among his Puerto Rican (and Mexican) research subjects.

Nonetheless, social class exists among Puerto Ricans and it is a major part of how they experience and interpret their lives, especially when concerning the way they understand the islands political future. In this thesis I therefore want to answer questions concerning; what kind of social dynamics have gone into making and sustaining the popular discursion of the Puerto Rican identity? And how the role of a more personal experienced social class in Puerto Rico today can speak to a larger discussion of identity? I stress that the aim of this thesis is not an effort to offer an explanation for why Puerto Rico still is a colony¹ or whether it should

¹ Though I use the term colony I am aware of that it is a political loaded term and which I discuss further in this chapter (see p.7).

continue to be or not. My aim is to get a wider understanding of the Puerto Rican identity by looking at the appropriation of space, education and nationalistic discourse among middle class Puerto Ricans. By using the Puerto Rican middle class as a point of departure I want to expand the discussion of identity to include discussions of identity in general. Identity comes into being through a range of factors but always in the meeting between individuals and others. By classifying others we also allow others to classify us and though Puerto Rico is in a unique political situation I see that questions concerning identity is not unique to them.

Historical context

Time, in anthropological research, has customarily been recorded through the study of the society's myths, legends and genealogies because societies traditionally studied by anthropologist have had a tendency of not having a dominant historical dimension (DaMata 1991: 11-12). Events in these "traditional societies" were seen as standing outside of "time" and not something which moved in sequence along a straight line. On the other hand, in societies where the succession of events is seen in a straight, time has intrinsically come part of everyday life. These different perspectives of time is often used today to analytically divide societies, though I feel that both perspectives should be taken in consideration when analysing the daily rituals conducted by informants.

When looking at classical anthropology from the Caribbean, Sidney Mintz (1989) and Eric Wolf (see Abink & Vermeulen 1992) stand out as two anthropologists who have highly influenced the research in the area. With their historical approach they came to argue that processes happening on the local level had to be understood through larger historical forces (such as economics and politics). In this thesis I am influenced by these two historical anthropologists and their studies of complex societies because even though Puerto Rico has myths which stand outside of time and which are seen as an important part of understanding Puerto Ricanness (see the appropriation of the jíbaro in chapter 5), being part of the global world, implies that Puerto Rico has to have a sense of time and duration which connects it with the rest of the world. Historical events fixed in time have become an important part of the Puerto Rican understanding of themselves in connection with others.

I therefore see it as crucial that when explaining the ambiguous relationship between the Puerto Ricans political stance and their subaltern notions of (national) identity, we have to look closer at the economical and political transformations Puerto Ricans experienced through the Spanish and American colony. Puerto Ricans themselves use these historically fixed

events (along with myths and legends) to explain and understand their place in Puerto Rico, America or the rest of the world. The following section will therefore introduce the readers to important historical events which today influences the experience of the Puerto Rican identity. The historical sources are mainly collected from the historical anthropologist Sidney Mintz (1989) and Lillian Guerra (1998) a professor of Caribbean history, but I have also collected data from the Puerto Rican anthropologist Jorge Duany (2002a) for those historical processes experienced after World War II.

Puerto Rico under Spanish rule

Puerto Rico (or Estado Libre Asociado as Puerto Ricans call it) is sometimes associated with Latin America, but most commonly with the Caribbean islands surrounding it. The island is situated both culturally and geographically between North and South America, in the Caribbean Sea. Since Columbus' arrival to the area in 1492, all of the 7000 islands in the Caribbean Sea have had a similar shared history of foreign colonial rule. In Puerto Rico, like many other islands, the indigenous people were almost wiped out during the Spanish conquest. The people on the island today have no heirs from former indigenous natives, but consist of a mixture between the descendants of the European settlers and the Africans brought in as slave labourers.

At the end of the Spanish colonial era (late 1800s) the elite on Puerto Rico saw that rather than fighting for independence like its sister islands, Cuba and the Dominican Republic, there were benefits connected with working alongside the Spanish colony. Through collaboration with the colony the elite worked for autonomy over island issues in the mid and late eighteenth century. Their efforts paid off: Spain who wanted to avoid the expenses of yet another uprising in their colonial domain, it decided to let Puerto Rico govern their internal affairs and choose its own representatives for the Spanish Cortes in 1897.

From a Spanish colony to an American colony

In *Caribbean Transformations* Mintz (1989) combines historical documents and data collected through informants to distinguish the ways life in Puerto Rican rural communities have changed over the years. Under the Spanish colonial rule the island, agriculturally, consisted of mostly coffee plantations, which were shipped to Spain and other countries². As the plantation system became more capitalistic, the division of land was altered; through their ever more access to capital, the islands elite got hold of bigger areas of land. These processes

² The strong coffee produced in Puerto Rico did not work well with the American taste palate.

meant that before the American invasion in 1898, the Puerto Rican island had become relatively closer associated with Spanish commercial interests and the island elite saw the benefits of continuing its relationship with Spain rather than work for independence.

In 1898 a series of events would change this factor; after a naval blockade held by the North Americans in April and the later bombing of San Juan in May, the starved and exhausted Puerto Ricans seemingly opened their arms for the North American invasion on the 25th of July. In the beginning the popular masses of Puerto Rico (i.e. peasants) met the American invasion with optimism and cooperation, as they would work together against their common enemy; the Spanish elite. Ironically the Americans would soon defend the Spanish plantation owners from rebellions and peasants. North America soon set out to start its ideology as a new colonial government and transform Puerto Rico into a mini version of the United States; '[The] Americanization defined the North American society as the ideal model of modern civilization that at all levels – political, cultural, economic, religious, intellectual, or racial – should and would be considered superior to that of Puerto Rico' (Guerra 1998: 22). North America came to take on a paternalistic role and was to teach the form of government and culture it saw suited best for the island of Puerto Rico.

As the first years under American influence went by, Puerto Ricans experienced massive changes. First of all the islands agricultural system changed from being mostly based on private coffee plantations to American corporate owned sugar and tobacco industries. Secondly the acceleration of the capitalisation of the sugar industry meant the islanders belonging to the lower classes ended as landless, wage dependent and an ever reliant on imported food. Due to the high competition with corporate owned plantations, many of the earlier high placed elites found themselves in middle-level positions such as in the public schools system or managers for the American absentee sugar barons. (Guerra 1998:25)

Even though the island and its people lost control over its economic destiny and self sufficiency, the American invasion cannot be seen entirely as a negative process. Through different forms of juridical changes (e.g. being granted U.S. citizenship in 1917) the islanders experienced different types of collective empowerment never before experienced. The (if only official) legalization of labour organizing and the right to strike, the empowerment of women's rights, the expansion of public education and creating greater opportunities for the darker skinned Puerto Ricans 'had everything to do with the way in which Puerto Ricans

articulated disparate responses to U.S. colonialism that weighed its “pros” and “cons” in seemingly unexpected ways across class.’ (Guerra 1998:40)

Postcolonial?

Even though there was a local movement for sovereignty during the first third of the twentieth century, the dominating force in the political movement after World War II was those parties that worked for autonomy and annexation (Duany 2002a: 17). A main contributor for this change of direction was Luis Muñoz Marín who was the islands governor from 1949 to 1964. Originally being for independence, Muñoz Marín came to see economical benefits of an economical and political incorporation with the United States through autonomy and at the same time maintaining a distinct Puerto Rican identity. During this period one spoke of cultural nationalism rather than political nationalism and Muñoz Marín came to incorporate the islands economic and political issues with the United States whilst at the same time talking of a Puerto Rican identity (Duany 2002a: 17). In 1952 the island became officially known as Estado Libre Asociado (Free Associated State), or Commonwealth under the United States. The Public Law 600 passed by the U.S. Congress provided the Puerto Ricans self-government within internal affairs and administration. They also got the right to establish a government and a constitution for the internal administration, which were approved by the Puerto Ricans through a referendum.

Talking to people in Puerto Rico about political issues, they often referred to the terms colony and colonialism when referring to the islands political status. This is also present in the intellectual discussion about the Puerto Rican identity and nationalism (see Duany 2002a). In the eyes of some Puerto Ricans, the island is a colony to the United States of America. Though I see the word colony as a somewhat difficult word to use when referring to Puerto Rico, it’s a term that provokes strong feelings among those that are (supposedly) the colonized, but also among the colonizers. Colonialism is a form of domination ‘the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behaviour of other individuals or groups’ (Horwath 1972: 46). Puerto Rico has been and still is directly influenced economically, politically and socially by the United States and would therefore be seen as under domination. But the Puerto Rican people in general do not see the contradiction in defending their rights for American citizenship and at the same time expressing their cultural identity and distinctiveness. This along with the fact that Puerto Rico was given to the United States as a result of the Spanish-American war (as Norway was given to Sweden 1814) and that many of

the Puerto Rican elite welcomed the Americans in 1898 (there was some resistance but this was not a significant amount) makes the issue all the more complicated.

Still the political status is an important part of the self definition among Puerto Ricans today, and any discussion on the issue brings forth the different Puerto Rican political parties all of which have ideas on how the islands political status should be. The island has three principal parties; the Popular Party³ who works for Puerto Rico's right for self-determination and sovereignty through the commonwealth status, the New Progressive Party⁴ who advocate for the island becoming the United States of America's 51st state, and the Puerto Rican Independence Party⁵ who work for the islands independence. All of these political parties (including the popular voters) actively shape the popular discourse of Puerto Rican identity through influence and articulation.

The great migration

Today more than half of the population reside outside of Puerto Rico, and many of those with Puerto Rican background do not use their "national" language, Spanish, as a primary means of communication (Duany 2002a: 28). But moving from the island is not a new phenomenon among the Puerto Ricans and they can be seen as part of the global story of migration. In 1951-1955 60,000 Puerto Ricans emigrated from the island (migration reached its peak in this period). In 1960 almost 900,000 Puerto Ricans were residing in the U.S mainland and almost 70% of these had been born on the island and had now migrated to the mainland (Fitzpatrick 1971). With a decrease in the death rate (due to improved medical services and hygiene) and the underdeveloped island economy, Puerto Rico found itself under pressure to accommodate its increasing population. The availability of employment on the mainland, along with the freedom to move to and from the mainland due to the granting of the American citizenship, meant that by end of World War II the great migration had begun. The migration has always been afflicted by economy, as employment goes down so does the migration to the mainland, and vice versa. These processes places the Puerto Rican migration in the more general discussion on global migration and where one of the most common reasons to explain the migration has exactly been that of finding a better livelihood⁶ (Olwig & Sørensen 2002). We can further see these factors throughout history and in different parts of the world e.g. the great migration of Norwegian peasants to America during the nineteenth century. Another

³ Full name: The Popular Democratic Party (PDP). Spanish: Partido Popular Democrática de Puerto Rico, PPD)

⁴ Spanish: Partido Nuevo Progresista de Puerto Rico, PNP

⁵ Spanish: Partido Independista Puertorriqueño, PIP

⁶ Though Olwig et al. also see other influential factors for migration as discussed later in this chapter.

crucial factor is transportation; with the mass availability of cheap airline tickets Puerto Ricans today can move freely and effortlessly between the mainland and island. The movement done by Puerto Ricans is known as “*vaivén*,” (on the move) or ‘*irse pa’fuera*’ (to move/go outside, i.e. travel outside of the island) as the constant circular movement to and from the island is still present and an important part of experiencing the Puerto Rican way of life. All of my informants had, if only once, moved or visited the mainland due to economic and educational purposes. Though they do not cross national barriers and they do not need to apply for a visa or use a passport, Puerto Ricans still cross cultural barriers. This along with the circular movement means that one has to look at a broader definition of cultural identity among Puerto Ricans, both on the mainland and on the island.

Regional Ethnography

‘Anthropological insights are products of academic discourses; they are shaped by the discipline’s (and other discipline’s) internal discussions of theoretical and methodological questions.’ (Krohn-Hansen 2007: 77). My anthropological insights on the Caribbean and Puerto Rican island have to be seen as partly deriving from this discourse. And many of the questions I try to answer are influenced by the theoretical discussions regarding the vast areas of the Caribbean. Here I will introduce the readers to what I see as important anthropological theoretical discussions bounded to my study of the Puerto Rican society.

To place my research in a larger social and historical context I connect my findings with the Caribbean region and see it as Mintz (1989) as extending from Trinidad, Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Margarita and other islands along the coast of Venezuela in the south, to Jamaica, Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico in the north. We are therefore dealing with an area with more than 50 inhabited island societies (along with mainland areas such as Belize and Surinam) where different languages and political regimens make them into distinct territorial boundaries. Still, the islands in the Caribbean area are intrinsically part of a common history filled with imperialism and slavery, and where the ‘rural communities... have [had] a long history of modernization and integration into the Western world system and are [therefore] not the repositories of cultural tradition and continuity.’ (Olwig 1993:201) This because the indigenous populations were almost extinct after the hardships and epidemics introduced by colonial conquerors. We therefore find that Puerto Ricans today, like many other Caribbean islanders have a heritage mainly mixed between European immigrants and African slaves.

Accommodation, resistance and constraints have consequently become a big part of anthropological theories in the region. In *Caribbean Transformations* Mintz (1989) does extensive research on exactly this by looking at how the Caribbean population have experienced these processes since the arrival of Columbus in 1492. The political, economic and social issues the Caribbean population experience today are in part shaped by the socioeconomical processes introduced by the European colonial powers. The introduction of corporate owned sugar plantains and the need for slaved labour are for example a huge part of the Puerto Rican historical background. However the African slaved population of Puerto Rico did not experience the same sufferings as many other African slaves on other islands. African descended Puerto Ricans have consequently experience a different politics of colour on the island than those living in the mainland United States today (Mintz 1989: 35).

It is also important to mention that due to the near extinction of the indigenous population, anthropological research in the area has, rather than studied the 'original' indigenous culture, studied the migration that has formed the region and the people who live in it. This leads us to two influential anthropological gate keeping discussions from the area; migration and transnationalism. 'Much of the existing knowledge on transnational population movements is based on the premise that people move once, in a single direction, and settle permanently in another country.' (Duany 2002a: 233). This has also gone hand in hand with the assumptions that the main purpose of the migration is the search for better livelihood and that these processes are relatively new phenomenon attached to the globalization of capitalism (Olwig & Sørensen 2002: 1). But both Duany (2002a, 2002b) and Olwig (et al 2002), who I see as influenced by historical anthropologist such as Mintz, want to show that migration movements done today are linked to historical backgrounds. Migration is not only done for the purpose of achieving a new life in host countries, but it is also done so that they can achieve a better way of life (through practises and values) back home. Further contemporary studies also show that transnational movements (of people, commodities and ideas) do not imply full assimilation or loss of cultural background, but that people rather 'interact and identify with multiple nations, states, and/or communities' (Olwig et al 2002: 2). Even when crossing national boundaries people tend to look back at their home community and preserve their cultural backgrounds, though this does not mean that they do not integrate into the host country.

Though one has a tendency to talk about crossing national and state boundaries when discussing migration and transnationalism, a central part of the discussion today is centred

around the fact that control over national and state boundaries have changed throughout time. In Europe for instance, the Schengen agreement allows those within its borders to travel freely without the use of passports. Additionally restrictions on migration into a country fluctuate depending on for example economical or political factors in the receiving countries. Still, migration across borders has prevailed and one even sees an increase in migration of undocumented entries. But migration also takes place within national borders, for instance, Puerto Ricans who are U.S. citizens by birth do not cross national borders when migrating from the island to the mainland. Though one cannot talk of a Puerto Rican nation in the strictest sense (technically Puerto Rico is an ‘unincorporated territory’ under the United States) they do still cross cultural borders (Duany 2002a). Puerto Rican migration challenges elderly notions about migration. Puerto Ricans travel freely and regularly between the island and mainland, but they do not always end up back where they started. Most importantly Puerto Rican migrants on the mainland and Puerto Rican residents on the island have not assimilated completely into the ‘host’ society; in other words they have not assimilated fully into the American culture, but maintain a distinct Puerto Rican identity while living alongside the society of the United States.

Theory

Anthropology comes into being when the empirical and theoretical concerns are systematically put together (Hylland Eriksen 2002: 21). Here I want to introduce three theorists who talk about issues concerning identity and who I see as an important part of the analytical framework in my thesis. First of all I look at Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (2006) because his way of defining nationalism as historically produced artefacts helps me to understand the political situation in Puerto Rico today. I see that earlier creole elites journeys to and from the metropolitan centre continuing today among the Puerto Rican elite (as shown in chapter 4). Though I feel that his nationalistic discussion might be expanded to concern also those societies without a sovereign state (see chapter 5).

This thesis is about class and belonging, who am I? Our identities are constructed through a variety of social and cultural factors, at the same time it’s constructed through individual taste. Bourdieu’s (e.g. 1977, 1996 & 2002) analytical terms of habitus and symbolic and cultural capital become focal part in my understanding of the construction of the Puerto Rican identity. To expand my understanding of Bourdieu I have used the works of Ortner (1998, 2003 & 2006) as I see them in a relationship with one another. But Ortner moves beyond

Bourdieu by looking at class production through historical, cultural and political movements in that society. Additionally I emphasise Ortner because she works in an American context and because Puerto Rico is in many ways part of the American identity. Though I am inspired by these theorists I do not say that Puerto Ricans and their perceptions are fixed to these theories.

Benedict Anderson

Though Puerto Rico is not a sovereign state they do have a sense of community, or what Anderson describes as an ‘imagined community’. In *Imagined Communities* (2006) Anderson sets out to explain the almost indefinable definition of nation, nationality and nationalism. Anderson sees nationalism as something which has come into being through historical processes and where its meanings have changed over time, and so nationalism has to be seen as cultural artefacts which engage emotional feelings among groups and individuals (2006:4). The nation is “imagined” because individuals in a nation will never be able to know or get to know all of its fellow nationals. Nations and nationalism are at the same time fundamentally different from kinship groups because ones loyalty is not towards a person – but to a set of laws or a state. Further the nation is imagined as limited as no one perceives a nation to encompass the whole human race, and last but not least it is imagined as sovereign because nations dream of being free. The European nationalistic sense of community was helped spread among people and vast areas with the help of the invention of the printing press. Through print-capitalism a vast amount of individuals could dedicate themselves to the same types of knowledge, in the same type of ‘national print-language, without having to have face-to-face contact with the producer of that knowledge.

The invention of the printing press along with the diversity of languages was something which helped produce nationalistic sentiments around the world. Though the printing-capitalism reached the American continent, language was not something which divided the continent into new American states in the late eighteenth century. Under colonial rule, language was not different from the respective metropolises. In other words, another cultural artefact had to be the background for people on the American continent to “imagine” their national unity. Anderson explains how earlier Spanish colonial administration units (existing from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century) came to be seen, over time, as natural fatherlands (2006: 52-53). The organization of these administrative units came to produce sets of meanings through journeys conducted by creole functionaries. A Creole in this sense was someone who was born outside of Europe but with European parents. Though they had the

same cultural background (language, religion, ancestry and so on) as Spanish born Spaniards, they were discriminated by the mere fact of where they were born. Due to their background and social position, the creole elite set out on different journeys, starting with journeys connected with education. These journeys must be seen as part of the historical process towards a nationalistic sentiment, and which over time gave the creole elite a certain meaning of being united by, among other things, their common experiences of discrimination under colonial rule.

In this thesis I will therefore use Anderson's definition of nation and nationalism when discussing the Puerto Rican imagined community.

Pierre Bourdieu

In *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (2002 Norwegian edition) Bourdieu examines difference in taste and that the ways people decide what they like, or not, have a social meaning. Taste is something which varies by social classes. Some like wine over beer, others prefer coffee over tea. But he goes further in his examination of the link between social classes and taste, by asking why an individual chooses the way he or she does? What is the relationship between the individual and the collective, or the individual and the social position one finds oneself in? These are questions connected to identity; who am I and what is my relation to others?

So what defines a social class? In the classic Marxist perspective there are two types of classes; those that own the means of production on the one side and the workers on the other. Dividing society into two fundamentally different classes (the owners of the means of production and the workers) would, according to Marx eventually lead to revolution. This definition does not take into account how individuals themselves define their social position and that of others. It is clearly solely generated by economical factors. In the making of the distinction between oneself and others (or one group from another), the individual, or the group, give certain objects or ideas the meaning of containing more value than those objects/ideas of other persons/groups. The economical boundaries between the social classes depicted by Bourdieu are more fluid (though not unimportant) as social class is seen as something both objectively and subjectively.

Social class is therefore not only connected to objective values such as who owns the means of production and who are the workers, but the identity of a social class (along with the social identity) is also connected to a shared habitus. By habitus Bourdieu refers to 'Systems of

durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures...’ (Bourdieu 1977:72). In other words habitus are those dispositions (thoughts, actions and perceptions) individuals have developed in their encounter with objective conditions (social structures). What he is interested in showing is how the relationship between the dominant and the dominated persist (economically, socially and culturally) – especially in a society based on freedom and equality.

In other words, there is a constant struggle over people and groups’ lifestyles and tastes, and it is the elite’s tastes and lifestyles which are seen as “cultivated”. Being cultivated can be seen as a conscious, but mostly a un- or subconsciously strategic action in the search for humiliating others (Østerberg 1989: 19).

Further, an upward mobility into the cultivated class is something which one should not take on lightly, even though Bourdieu himself experienced this mobility. It is not something which is easy. One has to know how to act on and react to the different tastes one might not be accustomed to. These interactions between different social classes often lead to the dominated individual to act timid or out of place. Individuals do not always act out of a calculation of the winnings or losses, but Bourdieu shows how thinking is intrinsically part of the individual’s habitus. How one acts and reacts to the social world depends on ones upbringing and what kind of class values one is used to; actions have a purpose though they are seldom acted out consciously. But again as Bourdieu’s own life experience shows; it is important to be aware that individuals are not idle actors and that one’s social position can be altered.

Additionally there are the situations where in which objects or ideas become more accessible and thus loses their value. An object or idea attains value by the mere fact that not all members of the society have access to it. Society is a space where everything is constantly evaluated and reevaluated, where objects or ideas gain or lose their values. The value given to ideas and objects is what Bourdieu calls capital and is part of the relationship between the dominating and the dominated; those that have capital have a form of power over those that do not. What is interesting for Bourdieu is that ‘seemingly natural social relations rest on arbitrary power relations which do not claim any form of legitimacy’ (Bugge 2002:224 my translation). The access to capital is at the expense of others and as I see power as someone’s ability to force its interests through at the expense of others, capital can be seen as a form of power. There are different types of capital; economic capital are resources which can be converted into money. Social capital implies relations and networks individuals take

advantage of to secure profits. Cultural capital on the other hand is all types of knowledge. Finally when capital is no longer experienced as a form of power or domination it becomes symbolic capital, i.e. it seems natural and “just the way things are”.

With *Distinction* Bourdieu narrowed the analytical gap between objectivism and subjectivism which had been prevalent in the social sciences. He pointed out that on the one hand one can ‘treat social facts as things’ and see how structural constraints influence social interactions. On the other hand one can ‘reduce the social world to the representations that agents have of it,’ to see how their understandings of individual and/or collective struggles transform or preserve the social world and the relations within it (Bourdieu 1989: 14-15). In doing this he offered a resolution to the discussion among sociologists and anthropologists; the actor was seen as part of the social process and who also was constrained by this process in certain ways, but at the same time these processes enabled social action.

Sherry B. Ortner

Sherry B. Ortner is highly influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, and other practice theorists, as their work enabled cultural processes in the social relations of people and at the same time opening up for questions of power and inequality (Ortner 2006:3). In *Identities; the Hidden Life of Class* (Ortner 2006), Ortner asks the question of why anthropological research on class in America is so often “fused” with or “hidden” in questions of race and/or ethnicity. Ethnicity, race or personal initiative has more than often been the sole explanation of the relationship between power and privilege on the one side and poverty and social impotence on the other (Ortner 2006:78). Furthermore class is hidden in the sense that people have different perceptions on what class means. Many of my informants would categorize themselves as middle class though they did not have a steady income or own their own residence. At the same time they might be offended by being placed in lower class category. In this thesis I have a wide understanding of the middle class label. I include those from lower classes because their efforts for upward mobility implies the use of middle class notions and practices. Furthermore, I see the financial elite (upper class) also part of this classification because their way of life is the ultimate goal for most middle class people.

As Bourdieu, Ortner sees class in both objective and subjective terms. Classes are placed in social space through cultural and economical capital. At the same time class positions give certain possibilities or constraints. In other words class is ‘a habitus of both external practices and internal senses of boundaries and/or possibilities.’ (Ortner 2006:78) Rather than

explaining the identity of a group/individual through cultural interpretations, she wants us to look at how group's/individual's experience firstly are very different internally and secondly, and most importantly, that these experiences are formed by economical and historical factors.

For Ortner, actions from the past have effects which might not be visible or understood until sometime later. In *New Jersey Dreaming* (2003) she placed the social mobility of members of the class of '58 of Weequahic High School to the larger cultural and political movements in the United States. Ortner sees history as patterns which persist over longer periods of time. She wants to answer why there is a continuous reproduction and transformation of the relation of power and inequality and connects this with larger events unfolded in the world. Last but not least Ortner discusses the relationship between practice theory and the concept of culture which she points out is lacking in the works of Bourdieu (Ortner 2006:11). Though the culture concept has been critiqued for its essentialist tendencies, Ortner finds it would be more fruitful to look at the concept of culture again, and its relation to social process. So rather than talking solely of a typical or culturally distinct Puerto Rican, one has to take into consideration their social class. At the same time, to be able to understand contemporary Puerto Ricanness one has to look closely at colonial history.

The critique by Ortner on practice theory presented in *Anthropology and Social Theory* (2006) is that, even though it does not ignore power, it does not make it a central part of the theoretical framework on inequality and domination. Rather than specifically working on power Bourdieu would mainly focus on the notion of habitus – ‘a deeply buried structure that shapes people’s dispositions to act in such ways that they wind up accepting the domination of others...’ (Ortner 2006:5). For Ortner the questions to answer now are the relations between practice, power (as mentioned above), history and culture. She also argues that the ‘imagination, at both the level of the individual and the level of public culture, can always exceed the limits of any given position. People are never wholly constructed by their class position... But even staying within the system one can always, as the saying goes, dream.’ (Ortner 2003: 13). This departs from that of Bourdieu. Though Ortner critiques the lack of centrality of power among the practice theorists, I do not fully agree with her as I see the different forms of capital as power due to their abilities of being scarce, acknowledged and making distinctions (Bugge 2002)

Concluding remarks

To answer the questions introduced in this chapter I have had to come to terms with certain discussions and I am influenced by the theorists presented in chapter 1. In chapter 2 I show through my methodological strategies how I came to see the different issues concerning Puerto Rican identity in an urban context. I also show different perceptions and notions about Puerto Rican middle class identity. In chapter 3 I look at space as something more than just a geographical location. And by looking at how people make their impact and compete over space in the city, I ask the question of how social interactions (or lack of interactions) and public space in San Juan, including Old San Juan, produce and maintain boundaries between social classes? Seeing that space both separates and unites people I want to expand discussion of social class through historical and educational processes and so in chapter 4 I ask the question of how difference between social classes are produced and maintained in Puerto Rico. Because the islands political situation is such a huge part of the question of Puerto Rican identity I discuss whether one can speak of a Puerto Rican national identity in chapter 5. Finally I wrap it all together and discuss whether it is a Puerto Rican phenomena or if I can expand the discussion outside the island borders.

Chapter 2: Methodological Reflections

Introduction

Classical anthropological fieldwork has typically been conducted in small-scale societies such as villages. These societies are seen as a bounded social system (Hylland Eriksen 1993: 134). Contrary to these small-scale villages my fieldwork was conducted in a large urban environment, that is, in San Juan the capital of Puerto Rico. Classified as an urban community by being ‘characteristically large, dense and social heterogeneous’ (Hannerz 1982: 29), the field gave certain obstacles in my methodological research. Being in a city I could not get to know everyone and because of its vast geographical size I found it difficult to follow my informants in all their daily chores. Nevertheless, I was able to face social complexity through participant observation and study the logic of the differentiated structure. In this chapter I want to argue through methodological strategies used during my fieldwork, that urban anthropology can in fact be anthropological. Additionally I see this chapter as foundation for a wider understanding of my thesis. Because my methods, informants, the data collected and the field I in which I was in (the city) all interact together and shape my analytical outcome, in a sense they all speak to one another.

Methodological Strategies

Urban anthropology

The question of whether one could do anthropological research in a city context or not, was something which frightened me before I started my fieldwork. How would I get to know people and how would I be able to participate in their everyday activities? And most importantly; where would I start? As Frøystad (2005) who did fieldwork in the city of Kanpur, India, I came get a selection of informants as my fieldwork progressed. Getting to know people through casual conversations I was eventually allowed to follow my informants in their daily activity, whether this was grocery shopping, driving a car, eating dinner, watching movies, visiting bars and the local bodega, walking the streets of Old San Juan or relaxing on balconies and watching life unfold itself beneath us.

By selecting informants through multiple entries I had to manage the task of doing several separate and miniature fieldworks at the same time (Hannerz 1982: 30). Because of this I met

certain obstacles in juggling my time between my informants. On one occasion I had been asked to accompany a group of informants to a folk music concert, but that same night the Puerto Rican national baseball team was playing an important match against the U.S. I did not know anyone who was going to watch the match, but I still felt I should visit a bar and observe the people watching the game on TV. Another consequence of making multiple entries to the field is that one group can come to question the other. I experienced this with my landlady María (see chapter 4), but I do not see this as a consequence of my urban anthropology. Rather, I see that by exposing myself to different social groups I got a wider understanding of the bigger context.

Looking back at the night of the baseball match I had a choice of going to two different bars. One of which was in the better part of Old San Juan, and the other which was by the gates connecting Old San Juan to the slum of La Perla. After talking to people about security issues and whether I would be safe going alone to the latter, I headed off to the bar by La Perla. As I approached the bar I saw a well known drug baron sitting outside. I had been introduced to him on another occasion but I had really not talked to him, though I felt I should say hello. After telling him the purpose of my visit his face turned into one big smile and he insisted on introducing me to everyone present, exclaiming in a thick Puerto Rican accent; ‘This is Heidi, she’s my friend. Say hello and be nice!’ He knew I was in Puerto Rico researching for my university degree. I later heard that he liked that I had chosen to go to this bar and that I was interested in socialising with other people and not only with the ‘snobs of Old San Juan’. He became in a way a gate keeper to other informants who had not been interested in me earlier because they thought I only talked to certain people.

By participant observation I came to see that the social world of the city was not bounded to the factual urban borders. Hannerz (1982: 29) criticise those urban anthropologists who treat small groups within larger urban structures as well-bounded social entities. My fieldwork showed that thoughts and practices conducted in the city influenced people living outside the city boundaries and vice versa. Therefore informants living in other towns also came important for my research (see chapter 3).

A waltz between theory, method and data

As I mentioned earlier, my theoretical and regional perspectives have been influenced by the discipline’s academic discourses, but my theoretical focus has without doubt also been influenced by the information I collected during my fieldwork. Before I left for Puerto Rico I

had plans to research Puerto Rican identity and family structure in a transnational environment and based my theoretical stances on this. After almost two months in the field I understood that my research question and theme had to change as what I wanted to study no longer seemed to exist. I found myself starting my research nearly from scratch and having to read up on new theories after fieldwork. Though the theory I use was mostly collected after my fieldwork and clarifies or questions my findings, I must also point out that theoretical focus is influenced by my personal interests and convictions. The process I experienced is what Wadel (1991) describes as a waltz (runddans) between theory, method and data which is quite common in qualitative oriented sciences.

Choosing informants

If one looks past the fact that I chose to study Puerto Ricans on Puerto Rico, it was not only me who chose who would be my informants. When I arrived to Puerto Rico I had only one person on the island that knew that I was coming, this person I got a hold of through a friend of my boyfriend. In the end she and I spent almost every day together, either looking for apartments for rent, shopping, eating or going to the cinema. She became one of my best informants, and even though I liked spending time with her and her friends it was as if she herself chose to be one of my research subjects. Another person I would say chose to be my research subject was María, my landlady. She would take me around the neighbourhood and introduce me to some of the people in my area, she would tell me which people she thought would be interesting for me to do interviews with and in the end when I chose to change my theme of my project she literally said; ‘You should study me!’.

Through the help and through the advice from my father, I took contact with an international social/charity organisation that had local weekly gatherings in my area. I did get a lot of useful information through these meetings and it was how I met Robert and his family. Even though he and his family were American (see later in this chapter) I saw him as a door opener as he introduced me to people I might be interested in talking to. It was only at the end of my stay in the field that I realised that he was a great resource as an informant exactly because of his in-betweenness, of not being seen as neither one thing nor the other.

Interviews

These three people would be my key research subjects, but also by using the ‘snowball effect’ (Thagaard 2003) I got in total 7 subjects that I would see and talk to regularly and about 20 people that I would contact now and then or just do an interview with. The interviews where

semi-structured in the sense that I had already written down what kind of questions I wanted to ask, but at the same time I let my informants steer the conversation and letting them talk about things they thought were important. At the same time I was very aware of that answers I got during these interviews (especially those concerning the islands political situation and history) were influenced by what kind of political background they had. This is where my participant observation became an important part of my fieldwork because ‘[u]sing participant observation implies that the ethnographer comes closer to the “insider’s” point of view but at the same time hold a intellectual distance so that they can commit to a critical analyses over the events which they have been part of’ (Hume & Mulcock 2004: xi). I came aware of that even though people said one thing, the reality might not be this way. Through my participant observation I came to see structure hidden in interactions.

Social Class Shown Through Selected Informants

I have already presented a discussion on class. In this thesis I want to part from the strict Marxian definition in an effort to go beyond the theory of revolution. I am inspired by Bourdieu’s work and therefore choose to see social class through *habitus*. In other words I treat social class as thoughts, actions and perceptions of which individuals have developed in the encounter with social structures (as described in chapter 1). These dispositions are not something which people think very much about, as one of my informants reflected on her own and her families economy; ‘It’s not as if we are poor or anything, we do quite well financially. It’s just that I like to save up money so that I can go travelling and eating out with my friends whenever I want to.’ She did not reflect over whether her family and herself were from the middle class or not and I also don’t think this is the point either. The point is that she (and my other informants) did certain things, moved certain ways and had certain cultural assumptions that I associate with social class, which at the same time made them think and act in certain ways. The movement through the city done by my informants helps us see this more clearly, though it does not mean that there was no movement between social classes. Here I present three informants who negotiate identity in different ways, but who I all see as representing different ways of Puerto Rican middle class way of life. I want you to hold these in mind when continuing reading this thesis. Here I also have to mention that I have anonymized all informants mentioned in the thesis as best as I could without losing the analytical ability.

María

I have just come back from the launderette on the corner and as I walk up the stairs to my room I meet María on the first floor. She looks exhausted and frustrated as she greets me with; 'Heidi! My room and personal things are full of shit!!' That morning the landlady María and Don Diego (a long term tenant at the guesthouse) woke up with sewage seeping up through the pipes and into their rooms. I thought this would be the final straw for María as this was just one of several things she had to put up with at the guesthouse the last couple of months. The guesthouse, which is situated in the heart of Old San Juan serves as a medium cheap place for tourist, but along with María there are several other long term tenants that pay for a room on monthly bases. The building is grand, with tall ceilings, crisp white painted walls and tiled floors – all reflecting the colonial architecture. The rooms were simply furnished with beds and night tables, some had an en suite bathroom and others had shared shower and toilette rooms. Water was scarce and unpredictable due to old piping systems and broken cisterns so one constantly had to make sure that buckets were filled with water to flush toilettes with and for washing hands. There were no kitchen utilities, though there was installed a common fridge and microwave at the end of my stay. María shared the common areas with the rest of the guest and her room was in no better standard than the others. After a couple of months she moved from a room without any windows to a room with a balcony overlooking the streets of Old San Juan, this was the room that was now flooded with sewage. Even with flooding María did not want to move rooms as this room with access to the balcony meant a lot for her as she was finally where she wanted to be.

María is a 39 year old Sanjuanera⁷, she does not look her age – she jokingly says it's because she never had any kids. Her upbringing was hard, her parents divorced when she was very young. Her father moved to the United States and she did not have contact with him until later in her teens. Her mother remarried to another Puerto Rican and María relates to him as if he was her father. During these years of her childhood and early teens, she and her mother experienced some economical mobility upwards as her stepfather earned money through crime and drug relations – for which he has been, and still is, serving time in prison in the United States. María is a strong woman, who has not followed the general path like many other of her friends. She moved to the United States in her late teens and studied to become a veterinary technician. She worked almost half her life in this profession, she has travelled the

⁷ Sanjuanera/o is the emic word for people who are from San Juan, even though I heard it used for people who had lived a long time in San Juan, it is a term used to describe people who were born and raised in the capital. They see themselves and are seen by others as different from other islanders. My informants would tell me that when visiting another town they would often be classified as Sanjuanera even though they had not said anything out loud. Apparently people could just look at you and tell that you were from the capital.

world and lived and worked in several different countries on the American continent. She is jokingly described by herself and her friends as a hustler; she uses her knowledge and connections to get things done. That is how she has ended up as a landlady in Old San Juan. Through her connections she has been given what she herself describes as a dream job and a way of “living life” after many years of hard work; as a somewhat personal assistant for the owner⁸ of the guesthouse of which she is also the landlady. Though she did not earn a lot of money through this job, she had been given a room for free in the guesthouse with a balcony overlooking the street in Old San Juan. She grew up in Old San Juan and says that the old town has changed a lot since she was a kid; *‘Now there’s people with more money here, people who spend money on refurbishing the old colonial buildings. It didn’t look like this before you know! When I was growing up here the buildings were in ruins.’* Her friends are a mixture of old high school friends, and artist and musicians she has met through her work and friends, and by living in Old San Juan. Politics and art is a major part of this social scene, as many of the inhabitants of Old San Juan are connected with the ideas of the independence movement. María’s life was in many ways very different from my other informants lives, as I will explain in more detail later on in this chapter, but now we have to move on to another important informant; Rosa.

Rosa

Every morning after getting ready for her work, Rosa opens the front door to hear a mechanical voice say: ‘Front door opening’. This is the new alarm system her mother has put in and it tells them every time a window or a door leading to the outside is opened and closed. She often complains about it because it makes a noise when she comes in late at night. After locking the door behind her she has to open and close the big gate that surrounds the garden and house. As there are already two cars in the driveway her car is parked out on the street. She always has her car key ready in her hand to open up the car as quickly as possible. When I ask her about this, she tells me that she does this for security reasons, but she doesn’t really think about this action. It is something that she does automatically. After getting into her car she drives through her neighbourhood, passing middle-sized one story houses, all painted in a white or light colour and all with a small garden in front with neatly cut lawns. There’s always more than one car (sometimes one can see four or five cars) parked in the driveway in front of the different houses. Some of these houses have big iron fences surrounding their

⁸ The owner is an acquaintance of María, he also lives in Old San Juan and owns several bars in the area.

houses and small gardens, others have iron grids in front of their windows and doors. If the house has a patio there will be iron grids in front of these too. Everywhere there are people getting up and ready for work, most of the people are heading the same way as she is, they drive past more houses with post-boxes made of concrete, some are made to look like small houses and different sculptures, some of them have somehow been broken and are hanging by their iron skeletons.

Driving out of the neighbourhood the cars turn on to a big eight lane motorway. It's a long, straight road that goes from the east of the island and ends up in the capital city. Most of the vehicles are private cars and have only one or two passengers in them, the cars do not look like they are more than a couple of years old. As she drives along the road all four lanes are filled with cars and the speeds varies from almost full stop or walking pace to driving in a steady speed, but almost always bellow the speed limit. In front of her she sees the red lights from the cars and the stoplights at the different sections, most cars are heading for the capital San Juan where they work in different service industries in areas such as Hato Rey and Santurce. All along the highway there are low buildings which are what they call Malls. We spent a lot of time in these different malls either to eat, shop or see a film at the cinema. As the car approaches the city, the straight roads get curvier, the exits are closer together, commercial signs and tall buildings are surrounding you and one has to be concentrated to get through the maze of cars and roads. On a day without any traffic she might use 20-30 minutes in to the city, but because a lot of people work in the city and live outside of it she sometimes has to sit in traffic for up to two hours one way. As she arrives to work along with several other co-workers, she swipes her identity card through a machine and so her work day begins.

Though Rosa has had similar experiences as María by the fact that she is not married and has no children, her life, along with the lives of her closest friends, is very different from that of María. Rosa is a single 33 year old lady who lives in a mid-sized house with her mother and her stepfather in a town just outside of San Juan. The town is almost being swallowed up by the city of San Juan. In fact so much that it is often described as a suburb of the city. She tells me that when she grew up there were almost no houses around here, but now a lot of people who work in San Juan have moved here because it's cheaper than living in the city. Rosa's mother was born in Puerto Rico but her family moved to New York when she was young and she did not move back until a couple of years after Rosa was born. Her parents divorced and her mother stayed in Puerto Rico, where most of her family eventually also moved back. Rosa

is a smart lady and did well in school, she studied at the University Of Puerto Rico⁹ (UPR) where she got her bachelor degree and she also studied for a short period in Europe. After university she worked her way upwards in the bank and finance sector where she today has a relatively well paid job with a fixed salary and good insurance benefits. Living with her parents she has the opportunity to travel several times a year and eat out in restaurants with her friends. Rosa has never felt pressure to get married in the same sense as María. Where María almost had to flee the island to get away from the same destiny as her friends (get pregnant and/or get married) Rosa has many university friends who are not yet married and do not have any children.

Robert

Walking down the steps to the front gate of the guesthouse I see people in the streets curiously looking in through the gates at the door. They ask me in Spanish if I live here and I tell them that it is a guesthouse, they exclaim; 'Que linda!'¹⁰ as they admire the tall ceilings and chalk white walls. After letting them take pictures I step out on to the street and lock the gate. I am met with masses of mainly young Puerto Ricans who have found their way here to drink and meet friends. The music blares out of the different overfilled bars. There's a steady stream of cars driving slowly along the cobbled streets in search for a parking space; 'good luck!' I think and head away from the masses. It's the first Tuesday night of the month and therefore Noche de Galería¹¹ (Gallery Night) in Old San Juan. It's still early night but the roads in Old San Juan have already filled up with cars and people. I turn the corner and immediately the noise is softened and there aren't that many people around. I am on my way over to Robert's house to pay a visit. He lives with his family in a privately owned three story house in Old San Juan. The house is approximately 400 years old and they have done extensive renovations on it over the last few years to make it a comfortable home. They have tried to keep the buildings layout as close to the original as possible and so they have kept the small patio with a fountain on the ground floor so that fresh breeze can run through the building without having to open up the windows towards the street. I am invited up to the kitchen to join Robert and his wife. As he makes coffee from an espresso machine we talk about how crazy it is outside. Robert tells us that apparently they are going to stop Gallery Nights all together. Some of the

⁹ Universidad de Puerto Rico

¹⁰ How beautiful!

¹¹ In an effort to boost the visits to local art galleries, artist and bar/restaurant owners started Gallery Night which is held every first Tuesday of the month. Galleries were held open until, today it attracts mostly young teens in search for a party scene.

neighbours have complained about how Gallery Nights have become just a night to party, as most of the visitors on these nights do not visit galleries. The crowds get even bigger with every month; the bars play louder music and for longer hours and loitering of the streets have become a major nuisance for the residences. Roberts wife exclaims; 'it's a shame really, that something which was meant to help the artists around here has grown so out of proportions from its original purpose.'

Robert who is in his early fifties lives a comfortable life in Old San Juan with his wife and child. He has a relatively high position in the bank and finance sector and is doing well financially, though they have over the last year cut down their expenses due to the world financial crises; 'Not necessarily because we have to, because it doesn't feel right to spend a lot of money when looking at how the financial world is today.' Robert was born in the United States by American parents but he moved to Puerto Rico with his mother when he was a young child and has grown up with a Puerto Rican stepfather. He has fair complexion, along with how his wife dresses him (told with his own words) makes him stand out as a *gringo*¹². But he speaks perfect Spanish and English and feels more at home with the Puerto Rican culture than the American. After high school Robert went to university in the United States where he met his wife, and after studying and working several years in Europe they decided to move back to Puerto Rico and 'Live life.' Robert and his wife are very active in their local community and both of them do different types of charitable work and this is how I met them.

Ethical principals

One of the most important ethical principals a fieldworker has to take into account is informing the people one interacts with about your research and observations. I found this problematic when moving around in an urban setting; it was not possible to inform all people in my surroundings that I was observing. When sitting on the bus or on the plaza I would observe interactions and overhear conversations which I later would jot down in my field notes. The information I gathered this way was not sensitive data and one cannot trace them back to the persons in question.

On the other hand, those that I interacted with on a regular basis were informed about my research, I also made this present by having my notepad in my purse at all times. Often my informants would tell me to take out my notepad and write down things they saw as important. Other times they would also literally take my pen and paper and start writing

¹² Gringo is the Spanish word used in Latin America when referring to people from the United States.

themselves. In the end people were so used to me that I often felt they were forgetting the fact that I was observing. When they let their guard down I came to know private and sensitive information which I have for this purpose excluded from my thesis because I do not see it as important for my analyses. As mentioned earlier I have changed the names of all of my informants, but I have not anonymized to the extent that the data has been changed in a significant way. Furthermore, I have not anonymized geographical locations as I do not see that people can be traced back to these places.

My Role

As a tall, white girl I stood out in the crowds in San Juan. Though after learning that I was a European and not an American many of my informants opened up to me. Many appreciated the fact that a university student all the way from Norway actually found Puerto Rico and its political situation interesting. This gave me access to people and perceptions I think might not have been given to an American. Being an outsider was also to my advantage because I could ask seemingly banal questions.

On the other hand because of my university degree some people steered away from me, either because they thought we might not have anything in common or because they thought they did not have any interesting things to say. I also noticed this avoidance when concerning the use of language. Because I am fluent in English many saw the opportunity to practice their English with me, while others again saw it natural to speak English when talking to me. Even though my Spanish was at the basic level, I could converse in it. But people almost expected that they had to speak English and therefore avoided talking to me because of their lack of confidence in speaking English.

Chapter 3: the City; where space confirms identity

Introduction

It's hot and humid, but the cool air-conditioned taxi makes the ride all the better. We are driving along a busy motorway from Luiz Muñoz Marín International Airport to the capital of Puerto Rico, San Juan. The traffic is going slowly and I get a chance to absorb the city around me; intersections lead the road into twists and turns connecting it with the rest of the city. Big buildings are all around us with huge commercial signs, but as we drive along I start to see the ocean in between the buildings, in the not so far distance. As we get closer to the old part of town we drive along the coast lined up with palm trees, the traffic has slowed down to an almost stand still as the road has narrowed. Following the slowly crawling traffic my boyfriend and I absorb the contrasting impressions of what the city of San Juan has given us on this first day as the taxi drives along the narrow and blue cobbled stoned streets of Old San Juan, so strikingly different from what we have driven past earlier.

I am anxious and excited for this is my first encounter with the neighbourhood and the city of which I would live in for the next five months. Everywhere I turn there are cars parked along one side of the road, bumper to bumper. The taxi driver finds the street where my guesthouse is situated and makes a turn, but he has to back up again because it is a one way street. I hear the taxi driver muttering something under his breath as the cars behind us honk their horns. He drives along slowly and as we come closer to the next street he makes sure we can drive through before he turns the corner. He makes a turn, but a big four-by-four car has parked too close to the corner and the taxi driver has to back up the car to position it so that he can make the corner without hitting the parked car. It seems as though we all hold our breath as he barely makes it. We drive around the block and find my street. There are people and cars everywhere, and we try to look for the house number or the name of the guesthouse, but with no luck and we end up at the end of the street. He makes a turn, the traffic is still going slowly, and we end up at the end of the Old Town with amazing views over the old Spanish colonial fort and the Atlantic Ocean. My taxi finally drives along my street, it has become dark and the bars and restaurants are filling up with tourists and Puerto Ricans celebrating

the holidays. The car slows down and the driver opens up the window, the hot humid air fills the air-conditioned car, music blares out of the different bars and restaurants and I am struck by the lively and vibrant colonial atmosphere.

In this chapter I will introduce the movement done by my informants and myself through the capital of Puerto Rico, San Juan. Living in any urban environment where many people are gathered in a relatively small area implies that one cannot know everyone (see chapter 2). Due to the (sometimes perceived) lack of local authority or the lack of peoples trust in the local authority, we are today experiencing changes in urban life all over the world. In cities like São Paulo and Los Angeles, who are known for their high crime rates, along with other cities around the world are experiencing a massive increase in the building of gated communities and malls which are guarded and monitored by surveillance cameras and private surveillance guards. Urban planning has come to a state where the use of private cars is easier than, and often preferred over, the use of public transportation or walking in the streets (see Caldeira 1999). San Juan, like other big cities in the world, has experienced a transformation where (public) space has come to structure social relations.

At the same time social classes (and groups) make their impact on social space through the formation of communities or competing over territory. In San Juan the distance between poor and rich has diminished significantly and so the Puerto Ricans have come to establish new forms of boundaries to distance themselves from the perceived threat of lower classes. Though my fieldwork experience showed that this inward privatization was a central part of the urban experience (through the use of malls, gated communities and the huge dependency on cars), it was not present in all of San Juan. In Old San Juan daily tasks were done in public; one walked to the small neighborhood supermarket, big open windows let people on the outside become part of the private actions done at home and people gathered outside bars and in plazas when meeting friends and family. Yet, even here there was another type of boundary making, one which also excluded the “foreign” people.

The question of interest is therefore; how has social interactions (or the lack of interactions) and public space in San Juan, including Old San Juan, produced and maintained social boundaries between social classes? I see it as crucial that theorising the city is a necessary part of understanding how social class is experienced in San Juan and its metropolitan area (or any other city for that matter). The movement made by my informants María and Rosa (and Robert shown in chapter 4) in the city and the comprehensions of these different social spaces

visited mentally and/or physically by them can give us a better understanding of identity in general. Drawing boundaries between social classes implies not only a matter of accumulating positive goods (nicer neighbourhoods or more/better consumer goods) but also making a boundary between one's own group and those below it (Ortner 2003: 52). Boundaries cannot only be drawn through objects, but through certain dispositions (*habitus*) which are associated with these objects (Bourdieu 2002). Spatial boundaries are therefore also a question of taste.

Imagining the City

Urban planning and boundary making is not a new phenomenon, but something which can be seen in the Spanish colonial city planning and architecture. Old San Juan, established in 1521 by Spanish settlers, consists of mainly old, stone buildings, and plazas strategically placed around the town. Surrounding the old town one can still see the intact city walls flanked by two forts; El Moro and Castillo de San Cristóbal. Taking in the impressions through the systematically gridded streets of Old San Juan one gets the impression of being in a confused time warp. Earlier gas lampposts which have now been electrified light up the way as we pass ancient trees and hear the distant noise of the *coquí*¹³. The brightly painted buildings surrounding us are mostly dated back to the 1500 and 1600s and they have survived over 400 years of hurricanes and earthquakes. One is bright pink with white edges around the windows and doors, another might be lime green or blue, but it all seems to fit so perfectly together. The doors are grand and made of wood, and which are either painted in white or stained in a dark brown colour. The windows are big and have shutters also made of wood, there are only a few buildings which have glass windows, and some people leave their windows open when they are at home to let the Atlantic breeze cool down the front rooms. In front of the buildings there are no front gardens or patios, there's only a small pavement for pedestrians. This means that when walking along the streets of Old San Juan it's as if one is literally standing inside their living room or kitchen. One gets a good glimpse into people's private lives; how they arrange their furniture, playing the guitar or dancing flamenco for their family and friends.

Walking is a big part of experiencing the old town, cars that are seen as a necessity other places in San Juan, has become a nuisance in the old town. Parking spaces are scarce and roads are narrow and bumpy. These problems are emphasized during festive occasions and weekends when hordes of people drive into town to eat, drink or just admire the colonial buildings and ambience. By walking the streets one finds a good mixture of different classes.

¹³ A *coquí* is a frog which has become the national animal and which has gotten its name from the sound it makes.

In front of the local supermarket and Subway restaurant one comes across the same beggars that sit all day long hoping to get some spare change from people passing by. Frequently people would buy them food or cups of coffee and start casual conversations, talking about everything from the weather or about the city mayor who walks across the plaza shaking hands with people coming up to him.

In stark contrast to the colonial town, even before you have driven past its fortress walls, one is immediately thrown back to the 21st century. American chain stores such as McDonalds, Burger King, Subway, Starbucks and Marshalls greet us with bright signs and the taste of American capitalism. Driving away from the centre of the old town the brightly coloured colonial buildings are farther apart, big boxlike buildings of concrete are more evident, roads have big holes that should have been fixed but rarely are. On one block you can find modern apartment complexes with 24hour security services, then one or two blocks away one encounters rundown apartment buildings, clearly inhabited by the poorer part of the population. Stopping for a red light one is met by drug addicts and other socially excluded people walking among the cars in hope for spare change from drivers. Roads zigzag in confusing turns and intersections, big commercial signs are placed on buildings and along the roads. Pedestrian areas and plazas are far apart but malls, which are mostly just accessible by cars and have taken over the plazas' functions, are seen everywhere.

A new form of living has been introduced to the Puerto Rican people and especially in San Juan; scattered around the city, and especially in the outskirts, one finds neighbourhoods where physical boundaries have been put up and surveillance from private security guards are frequently used to keep certain parts of people out. Rosa lives in a neighbourhood which once had been a gated community. I never got the chance to ask why it was not so anymore, but she often said that gated communities gave a false sense of security. Many of her friends grew up and lived in such communities and she said that though they had checkpoints for monitoring who came into the neighbourhood it did not always serve its purpose of keeping certain people out or monitoring those that already lived there. One informant living in one of these gated communities experienced shooting in her street as her neighbour, who turned out to be a big drug baron, had somehow displeased one of his own drug dealers. Others living in similar gated communities, experienced burglaries in their homes from neighbourhood kids who needed quick cash for their drug addiction. Still these spatial boundaries such as gated communities and the growing use of large empty spaces have become an ever increased part

of the city's inhabitant's daily lives, as physical boundaries between rich and poor have diminished.

The Enclaved City

The city of San Juan is the second eldest city in the Americas founded by Europeans¹⁴ and the eldest city in the territories of the United States. The capital is today seen by many as the island's and the Caribbean's financial centre along with being one of the biggest seaports in the Western hemisphere. Though the capital inhabits 434,374, over 2.5 million inhabit the metropolitan area¹⁵. In other words, over half of the population on the island live in a geographic region with close economic ties to San Juan, a capital which also wields substantial influence over the metropolitan area.

In this thesis I make two distinctions when talking about the city of San Juan. First of all when referring to San Juan I include the metropolitan area which incorporates districts such as San Juan, Caguas and Guaynabo. Secondly I refer to Old San Juan, the eldest part of San Juan which is still fully intact and consists of old colonial buildings within the surrounding colonial city walls. The distinctions between these two spaces are important as I came to see that daily rituals conducted and understood by my informants were remarkably different depending on where in the city they moved. The city is a site where everyday practices come to life and my informants' movements (the way they moved, but also how and where they moved) came to give me valuable insights into larger processes occurring in the Puerto Rican society. I came to see that the use of and the control over spaces was a certain type of struggle, a struggle for social mobility and/or a struggle over social boundaries.

Due to the diminishing distance between social and physical boundaries and the fear of violence, San Juan is experiencing new forms of urban and social separation. Citizens of San Juan, like L.A. or Sao Paulo, use physical dividers (fences, walls and large empty spaces creating distance and discouraging pedestrian circulation), private security systems, and private universes turned inwards as new forms of organizing social differences and creating segregation (Caldeira 1999). The fear of violence has meant that middle and upper class *Sanjuaneros* seek out different means of constructing barriers between themselves and the poor or socially unwanted individuals. These barriers are what Caldeira call fortified enclaves, in other words; 'privatized, enclosed, and monitored spaces for residence, consumption,

¹⁴ The eldest European founded city in the region is Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic.

¹⁵ According to the U.S. Census 2000

leisure, and work... appeal to those who are abandoning the traditional public sphere of the streets to the poor, the “marginal,” and the homeless.’ (Caldeira 1999: 83).

While in Old San Juan boundaries between private and public activities are blurred. Partly due to the old residential building architecture where windows are left open to let the cool breeze in, but also because walking is the easiest way to get around the neighbourhood. However in the rest of San Juan the boundaries between private and public practices are becoming more and more segregated. Private practices in these areas are turned inwards for the middle and upper class, while the public areas are left to those that cannot afford this way of living. What is interesting, in a Bourdieudian perspective, is to see how spatial structures influence human action, and, how action influences experience, allocation and utilization of space. For instance the Kabyle house and its organisation were experienced through governing practices and at the same time representations (such as perceptions, thought and action) (Bourdieu 2008: 89-90). Space can therefore be divided into on the one hand physical space, where individuals or objects are situated or exist. On the other hand, individuals are positioned in this space where exclusion is a main factor, this is what Bourdieu calls social space. ‘In fact, social space translates into physical space, but the translation is always more or less *blurred* [and] the power over space...comes from possessing various kinds of capital...’ (Bourdieu 1999: 124) Space makes deep impressions on the individual body as it moves through it, and, gradually over time gives us mental impressions on “how things should be” when regarding social structures and preferences.

In San Juan and Old San Juan this movement was experienced in different ways; San Juan and Puerto Rico in general was almost inaccessible without a car, while Old San Juan was best experienced by foot. Still, these different locations and how they were appropriated and understood have come to reify expressing one's cultural capital. In the next section I will show empirical examples of middle class appropriation of capital and how this has come to produce new forms of social boundaries.

Expressing Cultural Capital in the construction of Puerto Rican Middle Class

Rosa and I are sitting in her car and we have just arrived at the mall where we are meeting her friends for dinner. She circles around the parkinglot looking for an available space while we are talking about her day at work. I point towards an area in the lot where there are several available spaces, but she does not seem to take them into consideration. She says she wants one closer to the entrance so she doesn't have to walk that long of distance. The

available spaces are approximately 20 meters away but I decide not to go further with the discussion.

It's a typical day for Rosa; she has just finished her day at work and I have met her outside her office building in San Juan. The restaurant we are eating at today is located in a mall which has the same characteristics as every other mall. First of all most of the malls encourage the use of private cars with big parking lots and the fact that most malls are only accessible through driving a car. Secondly malls give consumers an indoor space where they can enjoy shopping, eating and watching movies in the presence of private security guards and camera surveillance.

All malls are built in a similar shape and all serve the same purpose. They are often built rectangular or in a horseshoe shape, some are several storeys high while others are just built on one level, but all have a passageway in the middle of the building leading all the way from one end to the other. Along this passageway are different kinds of shops on either side. Most of them are stores that sell clothing and/or shoes and there will always be one or more stores that sell mobile phones and mobile subscriptions. There are also several different international and Puerto Rican fast-food restaurants such as McDonalds, Burger King, Subway, and El Meson, often with a common area in the centre for consumption of food. At the end of each mall there are either restaurants and/or cinemas. These restaurants are mostly what people call American chain restaurants. They have the same owner with locations all over the island and there is often more than one of the same restaurants in one single town.

These are what my informants call 'fast-serve' restaurants. When I ask them what they mean about this, they describe it as a place where they can have a casual dinner, where the food is served at the table by a waiter, prices are cheaper and the food and service is quicker than in more exclusive restaurants. At the same time they can get healthier options than at the so called fast food restaurants, even though these are usually cheaper and the food comes even quicker. Additionally, the 'fast-serve' restaurants have a more homely and warm feel to them than the fast-food restaurants, with dark wood furniture, warm colours on the walls and different types of memorabilia's placed around in the restaurant. My subjects say that they would rather pay \$10 more for a meal and go to these types of restaurants.

The visit to the mall and the restaurant is a perfect example of what anthropologists theorizing the city refer to as fortified enclaves:

‘...all types of fortified enclaves share some basic characteristics. They are private property for collective use; they are physically isolated, either by walls or empty spaces or other design devices; they are turned inward and not to the street; and they are controlled by armed guards and security systems that enforce rules of inclusion and exclusion.... [T]hey are codified as something conferring high status. The construction of status symbols is a process that elaborates social distance and creates means for the assertion of social difference and inequality.’ (Caldeira 1999: 119)

Rosa and her friend’s daily lives consisted of undertaking precautions either unconsciously or consciously by themselves or imposed by others. Starting at the break of dawn when they stepped out of their homes and the alarm was set on, or when they locked themselves out through the gates surrounding their houses holding their car keys ready in their hands. By driving around parking lots, in search for parking spaces close to the entrance in an effort to prevent attacks from strangers. Or the fact that most people had an automatic lock on their car doors, so they could prevent high jacking and robbery while waiting for green lights at the light junctions.

The decrease in the geographical distance between the rich and the poor, and the increase of violence closer to one’s home is a reality many Puerto Ricans face today. Statistics made by the Puerto Rican Police Department show that the total number of homicides alone, raised from 731 in 2007 to 807 incidents in 2008. Every week during my fieldwork I would read in the newspapers about the homicides that had happened during the previous week. During my stay, the number had risen to 286 incidents (Primera Hora May 7th 2009), even though this number was 3 homicides less than at the same time last year, it’s still a big number.

When I talked about this with people in San Juan they were all aware of the high number, but it did not seem to upset them. Rosa told me that she of course knew that these things happened, but she did not see herself in any risk because she did not spend time in “these sorts” of areas or with “those” kinds of people. She like many other people I talked with would associate these types of incidents with drug crime and if an innocent was killed or injured they would say the person was at the wrong place at the wrong time and that they were unlucky. Talking to Rosa one day in a parkinglot I noticed a butterfly sticker on the back side of her car. I said I liked it she laughed and said that it was actually there to cover up a bullet hole. As she told me the story of how she had, unwillingly and unknowingly, driven through crime related crossfire at an intersection. She did not seem horrified about the fact

that she was inches away from being killed or seriously injured – it was just one of many strange things that had happened in her life.

Even though driving a car does not give full security, it does separate the owner/driver of the car from those that are left to use public transportation or walking the streets. Middle class Puerto Ricans distinguish themselves from those that are associated with the lower social class as Rosa exclaimed; she did not spend time with “those kinds of people”. All these actions show a new way of life many *Sanjuaneros* experience today, these actions or precautions are justified by *Sanjuaneros* as a way of preventing acts of violence on their personal bodies and private properties. Though I see this new way of urban segregation as not only a way of enhancing safety, it is also a means of segregating the urban population through social class distinctions.

As the empirical example shown through Rosa (see introduction chapter), driving several hours each day is a major part of experiencing the lives of the middle class Puerto Ricans. Driving has to be seen, in some ways, as city dwellers’ way of disengaging themselves from the public life where there is no control over who’s in the present surroundings. Cars have a big part of the Puerto Rican way of living, with approximately four million inhabitants, it is reported that the island has over three million cars, making it one of the highest density of cars in the world (see New York Times 19.11.2005). At the same time owning a car is not only a matter of having money associated with a middle class lifestyle (though it is important), and it is not under their monopoly either. As Ortner explains the “class project” as moving upwards, but that ‘[r]ising up is not only a matter of gaining positive goods – a better house, a nicer neighbourhood... but also drawing negative lines between one’s own group and those below it’ (2003: 52). Here I have to clarify what I mean with upward mobility. I see that Puerto Rican class is in a sense like American class, where one strives to climb up and out of lower class social backgrounds. The desire for a better future is always present, and I see class like Ortner as a “class project” rather than occupants of a class-as-locations (2003:13). But by being able to move upwards one also has to face the possibility of moving downwards.

Boundaries therefore become invested with a (irrational) fear of social pollution and danger (Douglas 1970 in Ortner 2003: 52) and owning a car becomes a way of drawing boundaries with those below you. Bourdieu argues that habitus ‘implies a “sense of one’s place” but also a “sense of the place of others”’ (Bourdieu 1989: 19). By choosing to use a private car over public transportation, or eating at fast-serve over fast-food restaurants, Rosa and her friends

classify themselves (and expose themselves to classification) according to their taste which also works well with their social position. At the same time by choosing these types of attributes (car over buss, fast-serve over fast-food) they confirm and recognize 'the relation between practices or representations and positions in social space' (Bourdieu 1989: 19). Looking back at the physical space *Sanjuaneros* did also find themselves in open spaces where social classes mixed, e.g. the beach or Old San Juan. Here I came to see social boundaries dealt with in a different way than the rest of San Juan.

The Contested City

As described earlier, Old San Juan is experienced in a different way. The old part of town is best experienced through walking the streets and absorbing the impressions given by the bodily movement through the old town and through the opening up of one's homes through the colonial architecture. Walking in the old part of town one never really felt the fear of violence, this could be due to the towns effort in making the area safe and attractable for the thousands of cruise ship tourists visiting for a short period of time or because of the presence of local police in the streets. It could also be that people living in Old San Juan were not afraid of sharing the public space with people with different social backgrounds or social class. This could be argued through their conversations and sharing a cup of coffee with local beggars in front of the local supermarket.

Old San Juan was also the site for several public festivals which naturally attracted Puerto Ricans not only from all over the island, but also from other parts of the world during the festive seasons. As mentioned earlier many of the buildings have fallen into ruin and neglect by their owners. The skeleton of the houses stands alone as evidence of its once impressive, but now faltering grandeur. My landlady María told me that even with these dilapidating buildings present, the neighbourhood had undergone major changes since she grew up here in the 70's and 80's. The neighbourhood has over the last years experienced an increase in residents with higher income and investments from upper middle class Puerto Ricans who refurbish and rent or sell apartments and houses. In other words Old San Juan has become gentrified as middle class residents have moved in.

Old San Juan has in the last 10-20 years experienced an increase in investments and increase in both America and foreign tourists, and through the effort of many local persons to boost the residences incomes by hosting different festivals. This along with the tourist office headquarters, the National Gallery and most importantly the UNESCO and American

National Heritage site designation helped make Old San Juan into the symbol of the islands cultural expression. It would seem as though Old San Juan could be used as a contrasting example of how urban planning and architecture makes social relations and boundaries. The old town has come to symbolise the Spanish heritage and to what is unique to all Puerto Ricans, regardless of their social background.

Though Old San Juan has a more European urban planning with public sidewalks and plazas that are frequently in use, there is still is an ongoing struggle or contest over the neighbourhood. This struggle is coincidently also a struggle over social relations and boundaries. I came to see Old San Juan as something which anthropologist call a contested space. In other words;

‘geographic locations where conflicts in the form of opposition, confrontation, subversion, and/or resistance engage actors whose social positions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power. While these conflicts principally centre on the meanings invested in sites, or derive from their interpretation, they reveal broader social struggles over deeply held collective myths’ (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003: 18)

Looking at the different festivities taking place in the neighbourhood of Old San Juan and the local discourse which elaborated during my stay I came to see how some people in the neighbourhood used their contacts and resources in an effort to control what and who could have access to the public streets.

Symbolic control and struggle over space

We are sitting in the car driving into Old San Juan. Rosa and I have had dinner at a ‘fast-serve’ restaurant and she is driving me back to the guesthouse. It’s about 10 o’clock in the evening and as we talk and approach the centre of Old San Juan we notice the congesting of traffic. It takes a while before we both understand that we are stuck in the middle of the Gallery Night festive¹⁶. As we get closer to the guesthouse we are met by barricades and police sitting on motorcycles directing the slowly crawling traffic. Only cars with local residences are allowed to pass, the rest of the traffic is redirected. Rosa’s car crawls slowly towards the barricades. A drop-off which should only take a couple of minutes will take up to 30 minutes tonight as the traffic is intense and slow. We agree on dropping me off before the barricades so that Rosa can head back home.

As I walk towards the guesthouse I notice that the cars driving in the streets are mostly filled with people in their late teens and early twenties. I’m guessing that most of these young Puerto Ricans are not going to visit a gallery while in town and that the main purpose of the trip is to drink and have fun with friends. The streets are filled with people and music blares out of the different bars which are so crowded that people have gathered outside to drink alcohol. I have made plans with my landlady María to go visit the different bars and as we make our way through the crowds we hear live music, music which is played during the Fiestas the Calle San Sebastian¹⁷. We walk towards the music and see a group of people playing trumpets and drums, while others wearing clown-like costumes walk and dance on

¹⁶ See page 22

¹⁷ Las Fiestas de Calle San Sebastian is an annual festival which has taken place in over 50 years and was yet another attempt to boost the artisans and artists income.

high stilts. The crowd cheers them on but at the next corner they stop. The police have made a human barricade along the street. It doesn't look as though the police are saying anything they just stand still, letting no one through. The dancers and musicians keep on and try to befriend the police by smiling and jokingly dancing with them but with no luck. The police stand their ground and the musicians eventually stop playing and the dancers get of their stilts and disperse into the crowd. We head off to a bar owned by Maria's boss, but we are not there for long before the police come in and asks the DJ to turn off the music. 'Prevention' Maria exclaims when I ask her why only this bar has to turn off its music; 'It's because there are too many people in here now, and if the bars don't have music on people will go home.'

We end up heading back to the guesthouse, there are just too many people out to get any place to sit. As we stand on the balcony by Maria's room and watch the crowd below some of the other long term tenants come back. I ask them why they are not outside as these are all young men who like to have fun and never say no to a party. But tonight it seems as though all of us have had enough of the crowds and would rather hang out on the balcony and in the hallway of the guesthouse. Suddenly I notice the police gathering outside in the streets below. I call for the rest of the people inside and we watch the strange situation unfolding itself down bellow. It's not even two o'clock at night, but the bars below us have turned off the music and people have gathered in the streets. The police start walking in a line towards the crowd and sweeping with them all the people down towards the end of the street. In less than 10 minutes the police have been able to clear the street. Only the rubbish and used plastic beer cups left in the street are evidence of the previous gathering of crowds. But even this evidence does not last for long as an hour after the police have cleared the streets the cleaners come along and hose down the street and remove all the rubbish.

In *Carnivals, Rouges and Heroes – An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma* DaMata (1991) sees such street festivities as an expression of a certain kind of communitas. He explains that in tribal societies rites have come to express “time”, but that rites in societies like ours have come to express the movement ‘from the particular into the universal... or the individual to the collective’ (DaMata 1991:15-16). Further it is through these sets of transformations ‘that society reveals itself as a differentiated collectivity, as a unity that perceives itself as unique and different from other groups’ (DaMata 1991: 15-16). But where DaMata (1991) sees carnivals as a rite where Brazilians set aside their social hierarchies I see that Gallery Nights and other festivities in Old San Juan can be seen as rituals of contest and a way of producing and reproducing social class. On the other hand I agree with DaMata when I

see Gallery Nights, like rituals in general, as a social creation and that it expresses problems of the society that produces them.

Gallery Nights were started in an effort to boost Old San Juan galleries income, but it has recently become a festivity which has rather boosted the bars and restaurants income. It has also come to create a love/hate relationship among the residents as it brings with it economic prosperity but at the same time it has come to produce a temporarily invasion and control over the neighbourhood from outside residents.

Looking back at the habitus and its connection with taste (where individuals choose different characteristics to suit their social position) it is clear that Gallery Nights no longer fit the position inhabited by Old San Juan's residents. From being a festivity which was originally started to attract people of same social position (i.e. those that appreciated the galleries) it had over the past years attracted (mainly young) people from all backgrounds, but who were not there for the purpose of supporting local artists. With the increase of investments in the area by new residents (refurbishing of old colonial buildings and greater presence of restaurants, shops, etc) Old San Juan has come to symbolise a lifestyle associated with middle class way of life. Here I see that 'space takes on the ability to confirm identity' (Low 1996: 397) The physical space of Old San Juan was used to confirm middle class identity which was reaching an ever more presence in the neighbourhood. When this way of life was in danger, those that had the resources (connections) set out different measures to turn things the way they themselves saw fit. In other words, the residents used their connections (cultural and social capital) to prevent Gallery Nights from becoming just another uncontrollable big party with loud music, extreme amounts of alcohol and loud, obnoxious people.

Concluding remarks

I began this chapter by letting San Juan and Old San Juan stand as two contrasting physical spaces where individuals move in different ways. San Juan has in many ways become an enclaved city by discouraging pedestrian movement and turning private lives inwards. Old San Juan on the other hand has become a contested city, by the mere fact that people 'temporarily invert the urban power structure through symbolic control over the streets' (Low 1996: 391). This leads us back to the central argument of this chapter which shows that urban struggle and resistance is also a matter of struggle over social mobility and social boundaries. The appropriation of space shows struggle and contest between social classes over who has the influence to control and influence the spatial and social surroundings. But also by

classifying oneself and others (also by letting ourselves be classified), through the habitus of dispositions and tastes, we find ourselves in a society where things are “just the way things are”, or natural and self-evident. In the next chapter I want to expand my understanding of this matter of self-evidence by looking at notions of space, history and education.





Chapter 4: The Elite

Introduction

In the last chapter the discussion was centered on the concept of space and how today it is used as a means of separating, but also bringing together through festivities, people who live within that space or society. Looking at this closely one cannot ignore the fact that this has something to do with class, those that have the resources (economic, social and cultural capital), use them to protect themselves from the outside, foreign threat as described by Caldeira (1999) and Berg (2006). This we saw in chapter 3 through the Puerto Rican middle class moving to suburbs and gated communities. Furthermore, the contested and gentrified space of Old San Juan shows us that even though not all middle class residents move out to the suburbs there still is a struggle over public space. The problem with the class concept is that it was rarely used by my informants, 'it is "displaced" or "spoken through" other languages of social difference' (Ortner 1998: 40). My informants would never say that their family belonged to the upper, middle or lower class. But for me, there was still a clear class distinction and I therefore see it the way Ortner does in her extensive fieldwork research conducted in the United States (Ortner 1998, 2006).

Ortner (1998) argues that class has been "hidden" in the anthropology of American cultural thought and that it is "fused" to race and ethnicity which are more commonly used terms to explain social difference in America. To make class more evident Ortner treats class like Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which explains class both in an objective and subjective sense; 'Objectively, "classes" are positions in social space defined by economic and cultural capital. People are born in those spaces and... [this] has consequences.' At the same time "the objective conditions of life are made to seem natural, immutable, "just the way things are,"" (Ortner 1998: 13-14). Class is not just something which is "out there" in the Marxian sense, even though the access to resources is unequally divided. But class (like any other form of social collective) only comes into being when people acknowledge that they are part of that collective. And the position one holds in the social class (or any other group) shapes how one perceives the world and surroundings.

At the end of my fieldwork I was out having some drinks with my landlady María and she introduced me to some people who were active in a national independence group¹⁸. At this point of the fieldwork I had been introduced to Robert and had been spending some time with people living in big private houses in Old San Juan and attending meetings in the financial district with some of these informants, i.e. I had been gathering information about the upper class. María expressed her concern about this to the group of people we were talking to. She thought I would not get the right picture of how Puerto Ricans really were because of my recent interest in this social group. For María, having money meant that one generally was in favor of the idea of Puerto Rico becoming the 51st state and therefore not advocating for the *real* Puerto Rican identity.

In the highly politicized population of Puerto Rico, where voters' turnouts are relatively high¹⁹ and where politics is related to issues of national identity, the issue of becoming a 51st state, is almost without exception among my informants, tied to the Puerto Rican financial elite and the issue of Puerto Rico's economic future. Those opposing this political stance claim that a further merge into the American political, economic and social structure will eventually lead to the diminishing of the Puerto Rican culture and interests.

This popular discussion is highly contradictory when looking at election results. In the 1998 status referendum almost 47% of the population voted for statehood. Furthermore, looking at the most recent gubernatorial election in 2008 where the New Progressive Party (NPP) got 58% of the votes, one is further perplexed by the contradiction between the facts and the popular notion of the Puerto Rican identity. What is interesting is that this high percentage cannot be seen as only consisting of Puerto Rican financial elite. Nevertheless people still link the NPP and the support for annexation into a 51st state as something almost belonging to these elites. As the general election results showed in 2008, most people do not see the problem in being part of the United States either through statehood or commonwealth.

Politics is something which engages both young and old Puerto Ricans, but they are all very aware of their strong Puerto Rican identity and see themselves as different from Americans, or in fact any other nation. The common answer I was given on the question of why so few were in favour of independence was that people in general were afraid of ending up like

¹⁸ Hereafter referred to as *independistas*

¹⁹ Numbers from the early nineties showed that more than 90 percent of the eligible citizens were registered to vote and where the voter turnouts at gubernatorial elections have been between 73 and 88 percent since 1948 (Morris 1995: 2)

people “over there,” i.e. that through independence, Puerto Rico would end up economically like their sister islands Haiti, The Dominican Republic or Cuba. This was often used by the *independistas* to explain why so many poor Puerto Ricans voted the same as the financial elites. However the fear of becoming like the ones “over there” cannot be the sole answer to the question of social difference and voting turnouts. How is difference between social classes produced and reproduced in Puerto Rico? In this chapter I want to show that the historical background as a Spanish colony has set out to produce a distinct social consciousness among the Puerto Rican elite and I see these historical processes continuing among the elite today through their circular migration and education²⁰. Journeys and education become important factors in the production and reproduction of social class.

The nationalist movement in South and Central America was, contrary to the European nationalist movement, not connected to the middle class. According to Benedict Anderson the movement was set by landowning elites due to Madrid’s colonial administration system (2002: 51-53). Several factors were important, as e.g. Madrid’s tightening control over its colonies and resources, and through the spread of liberalizing ideas. But what is important for this thesis are seeing that the journeys conducted by the Creole elite (either trans-Atlantic to the Spanish colonial centre, or within their own colonial administration unite) came to be interpreted by, and given meaning to the Creole elite. This movement in physical space set out to produce social relations, space can therefore be seen as ‘system of relations’ (Bourdieu (1989: 16) and gives us the opportunity to study the space of positions of power. Furthermore, the Puerto Rican elite still experience such journeys even today; physically through the movement of the body (e.g. through travelling to and from the island for educational purposes) and mentally via ideas spread through interchanging of views. Through these movements particular group meanings are created and can be seen as embodied cultural understandings – or habitus. Because people who are distant from each other in social space (social positions) can interact in physical space one has to look deeper under the surface to see the hidden structures in society.

Empowering place

Anthropologists create meaning with places by connecting issues they are concerned with to that place; this does not mean that place is just an academic creation. Places are socially constructed; it is a lived experience where human actions unfold and are sensed by individuals

²⁰ Though circular migration is experienced among Puerto Ricans of all social backgrounds, the center of attention in this chapter will be the elite’s experience.

in different ways (Rodman 2003). Even though María had never met the people I had spent some time with, she associated them with the upper class because of where they lived, worked or met for social gatherings. To look at the elite in San Juan one has to look at place as something else than just location.

I have taken the bus to Sagrado Corazon where I changed to the Tren Urbano, the metro is relatively new as it was finished in late 2004 and it has 16 stops along its route. I get off at Hato Rey which is the bank and finance centre for San Juan and Puerto Rico but also for the Caribbean, most businesses that have something to do with finance and banking have an office in this area. To get from the metro to the office building I have to walk around a tall fence made of concrete and metal, behind the fence I see cars parked in rows on gravel. It looks temporary and as though it's been put up in a big rush.

Walking out of the station, I notice that the area seems new and different compared to the rest of San Juan. The few blocks I walk and can see seem as though they have been planned from the start on a blank slate. There are no old buildings, it has big broad boulevards for cars which go in straight lines and not zigzags or confusing turns I'm used to from other parts of San Juan. Along the sides of the boulevards are pedestrian areas lined with trees. They must have been planted within the last two or three years as they do not give much shade from the blazing sun. All around me are tall office buildings with glass and concrete exteriors, it has not yet got that claustrophobic feeling some other areas in San Juan have – one can still see the sky between most of the buildings. On top of the buildings I see company signs of banks, finance institutions and insurance companies and I also notice the Caribbean Fine Arts Cinema & Café which shows independent and foreign films. It is lunch hour, but there are hardly any people walking the streets and I do not notice any restaurants. As I enter one of the buildings I notice how hot I've become from walking the short distance from the metro to the office building (5-10 minute walk), I've already started sweating before I enter the building. Earlier on the previous day, I'd been discussing with María what I should wear for conducting the interview at a business center. I chose to wear short sleeved top and smart looking linen trousers, but as I enter the building hall I immediately feel out of place. There are many people in the lobby, moving between the escalators coming up from the underground parkinglot and some elevators in the middle of the room, they are all dressed in dark suites or smart dresses or skirts, all in the grey/black colour pallet. As I walk towards a person I assume is some kind of a security guard in a dark suite, a white shirt and a tie, I get an overview of the lobby. The building seems nice with its tall ceiling, big glass windows and

white walls. On one side of the room I notice a big artwork which covers the whole wall from ceiling to floor, it cannot be missed. It depicts a hardworking Jibaro²¹, reaping what had been growing in the field pictured in the background.

As this empirical example shows, Hato Rey is an area associated with wealth and prosperity. For María this again was associated with people who had certain perceptions about Puerto Rico's political future, a perception which is more prominent (along with the pro-commonwealth stance) among Puerto Ricans than that of independence. Where Old San Juan symbolizes the traditional Spanish colonial heritage, Hato Rey has become a symbol of modernity and prosperity and by connecting oneself to this area one also symbolically connects oneself to the United States and capitalism. What the example also shows is how urban planning can be used to show forms of superiority. Early in the 1900s French colonial officials and professional planners started the task of modern urban planning in colonies such as Morocco and Vietnam as an expression of political effectiveness. The effect they wanted was 'to use architecture and city planning to demonstrate the cultural superiority of the French, both to the indigenous populations and to the French themselves' (Rabinow 2003: 353). Urban planning was used consciously by the colonial power to show and execute power.

In San Juan, urban planning in the Hato Rey area can be seen as the elite's attempt to show the world, the United States *and* the Puerto Ricans that the island also has the ability to compete with capital cities all over the world. For the Puerto Ricans, Hato Rey stands as a symbol of economic and financial superiority and consequently as a symbol of modernity and upper class. Once again one sees that 'space takes the ability to confirm identity' (Low 1996: 397). Where one lives and where one shop expresses the cultural and symbolic capital one inhabits.

The habitus (the dispositions) one has, which is also associated with one's social origin, can only come into being through acting out in physical space, in other words, in social relations. It is formed through the possibilities given by different positions in the social space, but at the same time it is also determined by the social position one inhabits. In San Juan and Puerto Rico in general, knowing people is an important part of being able to move around. At the same time these contacts and relationships also place you in a certain social category. David, a foreigner I met through a Puerto Rican informant, and who had lived in Puerto Rico for five years, emphasised how important it was "to know the right people". He, as a foreigner, came

²¹ Jíbaro is the Puerto Rican farmer. See further analyses in chapter 5

to Puerto Rico with a good educational background, but it was only when he one day coincidentally came to know a respected elderly man in the bank and finance sector that he got called into interviews. After attaining a fairly high position in a financial office in Hato Rey he and his Puerto Rican wife experienced that some friends would not contact them because they now associated him with the so called snobs of Hato Ray.

Back in Old San Juan María introduced me to people she viewed as important for me to meet. They were mostly people working in or owners of bars. This gave me the opportunity to move more freely around the old town, but at the same time others would seem to shy away because of the people I was associated with. When I was in a social setting with upper class elites and talking about my project they often excused my findings through the fact that I lived in Old San Juan. They, like María, had perceptions of what kind of ideas came from a physical space and the people which were associated with that space; ‘...social agents operate (and compete) within fields of symbolic power in ways that are structured by the thoughts and feelings that are part of their dispositions’ (Reed- Danahay 2005: 101). Feelings are, as knowledge and classifications, culturally and socially produced; it is through the cultural images that subjectivity is formed

Empowering emotions

For María, Hato Rey was a symbol of the island elite’s power to hold and influence the pro-statehood discourse. The fact that I was socializing with the Puerto Rican elite provoked several emotions in María and the *independistas*, emotions which surprised me. It thereby became evident that the discursive of the city landscape and the movement through this landscape was a way of showing class distinction and class mobility. Ortner sees class as part of habitus; ‘an external world of cultural assumptions and social institutions that ordinary people inhabit without thinking very much about them, and an internalized version of that world that becomes part of people’s identities, generating dispositions to feel/think/judge/act in certain ways.’ (Ortner 2003: 12). Class is not just an objectively social position where one either owns the means of production or one is the worker of the capitalist production mode (which is the classic Marxist perspective). It is also part of one’s identity and which makes one act in certain ways – what is interesting is that it can take form in bodily emotions. Emotions are, as part of the habitus, structured by systems and at the same time they help to structure systems of power and domination (Reed-Danahay 2005:102).

It's a week later and I have been invited back to the same banking building in Hato Rey by one of my informants Robert. On this particular day I have been asked to do a presentation about my fieldwork, my findings and why I had chosen Puerto Rico as a point of interest for an international social and charitable organisation. We arrive early and head for the elevators that will take me up to the penthouse where the meeting will be conducted. Robert leads me down a hall with wall-to-wall carpeting and dark wooden walls towards the room where the meeting will be held.

The room has an amazing view over San Juan, it must be one of the tallest buildings in the area as I can see all the way to the harbour and Old San Juan. In the back of the room two tables have been put up and covered with crisp white tablecloths. On top of the table there's an arrangement of different kinds of drinks such as wines, liquors and fizzy drinks. Further in the room about half a dozen tables have been arranged, each with the same creamy white tablecloths and set with white plates, two knives and forks and glasses filled with iced water. They are all centred in front of a speaker's podium which has the emblem of the organisation on it and flanked by an American and Puerto Rican flag on each side. A waiter wearing black dress trousers, a white shirt, a black waistcoat and bowtie comes over and asks if we want to have something to drink. I notice the small sign on the table which says; \$3 for fizzy drinks and \$5 for wine and liquor – which is quite expensive compared to other places.

As people arrive some seem intrigued by my presence and come over and talk, many of them have been to Norway or Scandinavia on vacations and talk about their cruise trips. Others seem as though they don't notice me and just talk among themselves. The conversation is a mixture between English and Spanish as they converse about different charitable works they are interested in, family and friends, but mostly about the global financial situation and how it is affecting people they know. As I stand there, it suddenly dawns on me that this group of people must be some of the top financial elites in Puerto Rico and that the majority most definitely will have another political stance than those people I have spent my time with until now. Further, as we are lead in to another room to collect our buffet lunch, I am met with several tables filled with all types of different extravagant culinary dishes from France. Behind the tables are chefs with white uniforms and hats handing out the different dishes most unfamiliar to me. I stand there not knowing what to take and I feel out of place. I become nervous and anxious not only because I don't know what to eat or how to eat it, but also about my presentation which is based on the information I have collected the last 3-4 months.

My emotions showed me that I was out of place, I was in a setting where someone else's taste was presented as more superior than of that I had experienced before. For Bourdieu emotion and tastes are strongly associated with one another and further, taste has the capability of seeming natural (Reed-Danahay 2005:110). When I became aware of my difference, or rather my inexperience, in the taste and emotions surrounding me, I became nervous and afraid I would seem unnatural in their presence. David (mentioned earlier) experienced that his Puerto Rican wife's friends consciously did not invite them out to dinner anymore because they presumed that his job and the people he consequently socialized with had changed his preference in types of restaurants. This shows that the dominated 'often unwittingly, contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting the limits imposed, [and] often take the form of bodily emotions – shame, humiliation... or passions and sentiments – love admiration, respect' (Bourdieu 2001). Emotional responses and tastes can therefore be seen as a process which shapes and maintains boundaries between social classes.

In the above I link the upper class' power to Bourdieu's works on capital, the distribution of capital in this sense is seen as forming power relations in a society (Bugge 2002). But before I can go further on the elite's production, reproduction and appropriation of cultural capital I have to show how the Spanish colonial administration system in the Americas helped shape the sense of unity among the Creole elite. I see this as crucial part of the collective identity we find today because collective experiences are formed by historical factors.

Creating meaning through movement.

In the Americas, the Spanish colonial empire divided the different conquered areas into specific colonial administration units, where '[a]ll competition with the mother country was forbidden...' (Anderson 1991: 52-53). It became natural for Creole elites to conduct journeys either within their own administrative unit or between their administration unit and the Spanish colonial centre (see also introduction to this chapter). These journeys were conducted for different reasons (commerce, education and so on), what is important for us in this thesis is that journeys came to produce sets of meanings within the Creole elite. They came to produce an appreciation of themselves as someone different from or someone standing outside of the Spanish empire. And finally it's important because journeys are still a major part of the Puerto Rican experience today. Due to Puerto Ricans natural rights for American citizenship circular migration has become an important part of their way of living (see chapter 5). For this chapter it's the elite's experience I am concerned with.

Gennep (1977) and Turner (1967) understood movement within society as a process in which its individuals become part of, and reproduce the society of which they are members. Through the rites individuals participate in, they are reminded which society they are part of and so it is through these *rites of passages* that the society recreates itself. Anderson (2006) draws on these theories of *rites of passage* when explaining how administrative units around the world could over time be seen as “fatherlands” (2006: 53).

The Caribbean islands have experienced the longest influence of Western colonialism, dating back to 1492 after Columbus’ arrival, which is a significantly longer period than that experienced by African colonies. Further the indigenous population soon became almost extinct due to war, disease and exploitation brought by the colonial powers. In Puerto Rico those Taínos²² that did survive were quickly assimilated genetically by the Spaniards and today there is no one who can claim to come from a pure Taíno background. Due to the lack of indigenous workforce the colonial powers had to import foreign workers, and so the colonial powers became heavily dependent on migrant labour (African slaves, European settlers and Asian migrant workers). Mintz (1989) explains how European colonialism took many different forms depending on who was the colonial power. But the similarities were that plantation system was a central part of integrating the colonies with the metropolises and it combined forced labour with “free” enterprise. Further, the political and economic objectives differed not only between different colonial powers, but also within a colonial power and also depending on which period of history is being examined.

What all colonies in the Americas had in common was the fact that there was no central European-style middle class present at the end of the eighteenth century. Instead of having a wage-earning population, the small group of European plantation owners on the different Caribbean islands were predominantly dependent on huge numbers of slave labour. The social organisation on the islands were therefore ‘in the form of a bipolar structure...[;as] broad at the base as it was narrow on the top’ (Mintz 1989: 306). In Puerto Rico plantations and peasants coexisted, but they occupied different market relationships, further the slave population was constantly denied the opportunities to coexist in community affiliations²³. These processes meant that community feeling among the different social groups did not have an opportunity to flourish.

²² The indigenous population.

²³ The slaves lacked the freedom of purchasing power, economic choice, political power, education, ect. (Mintz 1989: 306)

The nationalist process was consequently different compared to what was occurring in European countries. In Europe it was the bourgeoisie's, and not the elite's worldviews and lifestyle that set the nationalist discourse. In *Det kultiverede mennesket* Frykman and Løfgren (1994) show how the cultured, i.e. the bourgeoisie person stood as a symbol of a certain ideology in the Swedish 1900s, which was seen in opposition to the ruling nobility. It was the "inner qualities" and the "everlasting values" (Frykman et al 1994: 223) that characterized the cultivated person, a stark contrast to what characterized the superficial and snobbish aristocratic elite. The bourgeoisie culture grew in strength and became the normative for other social classes, even the working class and so it can be seen as the bearer of the future nationalist discourses. On the Caribbean islands the agricultural and industrial system developed by the Europeans, together with the wish for further economic prosperity for the European colonies, meant the necessity for slave labor (Mintz 1989). The social division on the Caribbean islands was therefore different from that in Europe, the social structure on the different islands did not let a middle class flourish as in Europe. And so 'the European-style 'middle classes' were still insignificant at the end of the eighteenth century' (Anderson 2006: 48) and could not, therefore, be the main influence in the nationalistic discourse.

In the Americas, it was the Creole elite who developed a sense of social group and community institutions (Anderson 2006: 47-65). The Creoles were characterized by their European heritage (religion, language, education, values, etc.), but at the same time they faced discrimination as they were born outside of Europe. As a result of this, they would only be able to move a certain distance up the power ladder²⁴, and that was within the administration unite they were already a part of. Through the journeys, to the centres of power, destined by his background of birth, the Creole met other like-minded functionaries who faced the same discrimination.

Just as Gennep's (1977) and Turner's (1967) theories about *rites de passage*, the Creole's journeys became a ritual in the sense that it produced meaning and community feeling between those in motion. Over time the individuals discovered they had common backgrounds, not only because they had set out on the same journey or had the same language, but also because they realised they were all in the same position of political and economical discrimination by the colonial administration. The community feeling and

²⁴ '...[O]f the 170 viceroys in the Spanish Americas prior to 1813, only 4 were Creoles. These figures are all the more startling if we note that in 1800 less than 5% of the creole 'whites' in the Western Empire... were Spanish-born Spaniards.' (Anderson 2006:56)

meanings produced by these Creole journeys form the background for the emerging new South American republics. Even though this experience of shared meanings unfolded itself in a different social group than in Europe, it too yielded not only a nationalist consciousness, but also a class consciousness. I see that similar processes occurring in Europe during the 1900s also occurred in Puerto Rico, but the group consciousness unfolded itself in among people from a different social class. In Puerto Rico it was the plantation owners (the Creole elite) who were able to obtain an education and they would also be the ones that had the time and resources to promote the Puerto Rican culture. The Puerto Rican elite were, like the Swedish bourgeoisie, in opposition to the ruling Spanish elite. Where the Swedish bourgeoisie came to challenge the aristocratic elites' world views, the Puerto Rican Creole elite came to challenge the Spanish through their unifying background as someone discriminated against because of their place of birth. It is therefore crucial to see the production and maintenance of the Puerto Rican culture through the island's colonial history and the movement of its people to and from the island.

During the last years of the Spanish colonial domination of Puerto Rico, the administration in Madrid lessened some of its economic and political restrictions on the island. This opened up the opportunity for the Puerto Rican plantation owners to invest and fuse economic attachments with the United States. 'Only a year before the [American] invasion, 60.6 percent of Puerto Rican sugar, as well as almost all of the island's molasses, was exported to the United States' (Negrón-Muntaner 2004:12). Already before the American invasion Puerto Ricans and their thoughts and ideas were moving between the Island and the U.S. The economical unity and market exchanges produced a natural affiliation among the Puerto Rican elite and the American trading institutions. This relation to the U.S. along with the elite's position in society made it natural for the Puerto Rican elite to educate their children in schools in the United States after 1898. But even with the establishment of a university²⁵ on the island, the elite today still seem to point their departure towards the US for higher education²⁶.

Robert (who I presented in chapter 2) has invited me back to his home after another meeting with the social/charitable organization. As we sit in the kitchen sipping freshly made coffee and cold juice, his wife comes in and joins the conversation. Their son is about to start his

²⁵ The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) was only established in 1903, four years after the American invasion.

²⁶ Though I here refer to the elite as the ones that travel to the U.S. mainland I do not imply that they are the only ones. The island has a rich history of migration, not only among the elite but through all the different classes. For instance, the great migration between 1920s and 1940s were led by the poorer Puerto Ricans.

last year of high school and so he is therefore in the process of looking at different colleges and universities he'd like to visit during the next school year. Talking with them about his choices they did not mention him attending any universities in Puerto Rico. When questioning them about this they proclaimed that they did not consider this as an option and that all of his (private high school) classmates were looking at U.S colleges and universities. This surprised me in some way as I had noticed how many of my informants had gone to universities in Puerto Rico; I confirmed this when talking to a professor at UPR. He claimed that when he was a young student (in the 1960s) it was expected of him and his fellow students to go to the U.S to study, but that it seemed to have changed in recent years. Talking to Rosa and her closest friends who are three generations younger than the professor and who were all educated in Puerto Rico, it never seemed as though they felt this pressure to study in the U.S.

This was not the only incident where I noticed that education could show social class. When talking to another informant about her upbringing, family and educational background I asked her why she had chosen to study at a university on the U.S. mainland. The response was that she felt it as natural to go there (to the U.S mainland) because she came from a highly educated family and it was expected of her to do this. Again I relate to Ortner (1998, 2003) when looking at concept of class, even though class is not mentioned here in direct terms I still see it present. Though I did not think in class terms during the fieldwork, class was in a sense also hidden, not only for me, but also among the Puerto Ricans. Class among my informants in Puerto Rico was, like Ortner's Weequahic High School informants (2003), "hidden" in the sense that they did not talk about it or see it as an important aspect of their personal success or failures in life. Though I now clearly see class distinction in the ways my informants had (and in the case of Robert's son; still has) obtained their educational level.

Education and school enrollment in Puerto Rico

Though many scholars have looked at the relation and implications of the U.S. – Puerto Rican relationship, not many have addressed the economic situation in which the island is today. In *The economy of Puerto Rico* (Collins, Bosworth & Soto-Class 2006) contributors from both American and Puerto Rican economics institutions address how the different policies enforced by the U.S. and Puerto Rican government affected the economic development on the island. Though the per capita income is higher among Puerto Ricans than the rest of Latin America and literacy rates and life expectancy is close to those of developed countries, almost half of the Puerto Rican population today live under the U.S. poverty line (Collins et al. 2006: 1).

What motivates the authors of this book is answering the question of what can be done to restore the island's economical growth. In the chapter *Education and Economic Development* (Ladd & Rivera-Batiz 2006) the authors look systematically through Puerto Rico's educational system in search for an economic development strategy for the island. Puerto Rico has had a remarkable educational development since the Puerto Rican government started a dramatic increase of education funding in the mid-1940s. The average length of schooling has risen from 2.7 years in 1940 to a staggering 11.0 years in 2000²⁷. The 2000 census shows that elementary and secondary school enrolment has risen to 98.9 percent and 91.3 percent.

Rosa and I are eating dinner with her friend Laura and we start talking about marriage and boyfriends. Both Rosa and Laura are in their early 30s, both of them got their higher education at UPR and none of them have married or had children. Laura reflects over their social status compared to that of their mothers and grandmothers; 'We are lucky, because I know that I don't need a man to take care of me. I got my university education and I can take care of myself. My mother and grandmother could not do the same as me, they had to get married and they got children very young. They made it easier for me in a way because they said get an education and get a good job. And look at Rosa and me now – we can say no to men if we don't like them!'

Where higher education is concerned, UPR, which is the island's main public institution of higher education experienced an increase from less than 20.000 students in 1960 to approximately 70.000 in 2002-03. Ladd et al (2003) compare Puerto Rico's percentage of educated labour force with those of high income countries; for an island where almost half of its population lives under the U.S. poverty line²⁸, Puerto Rico's educated labour force matches or even exceeds countries such as France, Denmark and Great Britain. Finally the 2000 census shows that Puerto Ricans on the island have a higher percentage of college degrees than those residing on the mainland. Taking all this into consideration, the population in general (along with the policy makers and the educational establishment) talk of the education system on the island as if it was in a state of crisis.

²⁷ All figures concerning educational background are taken from the chapter *Education and Economic Development* (Ladd & Rivera-Batiz 2006: p. 189- 254)

²⁸ Though the per capita income among the Puerto Ricans is substantially higher than the rest of Latin America.

In 2000, 21.3% of the young population between 18-24 years of age had not received a high school diploma, or equivalent certification²⁹. This is pessimistic when compared to a 16.2% dropout rate in the whole of the United States, but compared to black Americans it is almost the same percentage, but lower to that which represents the U.S Latinos. In addition, though Puerto Rico has had a remarkable era of educational development this does not imply that the schooling achievements are of higher quality. The common notion that overfilled classrooms, and overworked and underpaid teachers will not give your children the best education was the justification my informants gave me for spending such an extensive amount on private schooling. Not only is the desire to send their children to private school quite common among many Puerto Ricans, but they will also work hard to give their children the opportunity to go to these private schools.

Education in Puerto Rico (and other places) has become a commodity and it has therefore also become a part of 'the increasing role for mass consumption, [where] the negation of the abstract nature of the commodity through rituals of appropriation by which social groups (in this case [the Puerto Rican financial elite and middle class]) is created.' (Miller 1993a: 19). But when education becomes a commodity, which has to be purchased with money, it does not only become an impersonal transaction. In fact the consumption of education in Puerto Rico produces many emotions among those that can and cannot purchase this commodity. Don Diego (a long term tenant mentioned in chapter 2), a hardworking man in his early fifties, took on several different jobs to be able to fund his children's education. He became very upset when his son, Juan, dropped out of high school; '*I did not break my back with hard work to pay for his private schooling so that he could run around with his friends flirting with girls! I had high hopes for him, but what can I do? He's got the charms and looks... and in the end, he's still my son.*' Don Diego's nagging about how Juan should be going back to school and get (at least) a high school diploma shows his anxiety for downward mobility. The mass consumption of education is strengthened by this anxiety of downward mobility and that their children will not get the best opportunities in life through public schooling, this anxiety meant that Don Diego (and many other Puerto Ricans) were willing to work very hard to put their children through private school.

Like Miller's (1993b) empirical example from Trinidad, where the rituals of Christmas and the increase of labour which takes place to get just the right commodities, are seen as

²⁹ Not coincidentally, the high majority of the high school dropouts are students from the lower classes.

consumption, so is education in Puerto Rico. Miller explains how Christmas preparations in Trinidad have come to be the focal point of discussion, housewives literally consume Christmas through decorating their homes with different purchased goods. The household becomes a site where values are expressed, the purchase of commodities during the Christmas festivities becomes ‘an activity that fills each purchase with sets of positive, if complex, associations constructed through the festival of Christmas itself.’ (Miller 1993b: 149). The consuming of foreign goods (apples and grapes) suggests something about the Trinidadians that go out of their way to get these types of goods to have “the perfect” Christmas, it gives symbolical meaning. In the same way the materialism of Christmas produces social bonds, so does education in Puerto Rico. It gives symbolical meaning by constructing social bonds when referring to the elite and their journeys. Remember earlier on when I introduced Hato Rey and how it had become to symbolise modernity by connecting itself (symbolically) to the U.S. and capitalism. Hato Rey is where the Puerto Rican financial elite end up after returning from the U.S. and so the people working in Hato Rey have a common bond through their education and the journey’s they have had to do in the pursuit of this education.

Of the total amount of children enrolled in levels from first to twelfth grade in 2000, one quarter (25%) attended some form of private school (either religious affiliated or not) and of the Puerto Rican students who had graduated from a private high school a total of 8744 students attended a mainland university (compared to 5064 in 1980). These numbers confirm the findings from my fieldwork, even though more people attend Puerto Rican universities today, the majority of the elite’s children still see themselves as future students of U.S. mainland universities. The elitist children’s futures are shaped from such journeys through the education system. Those that have the resources have greater opportunities to determine their children’s educational and economic future through private schooling. These elite’s ‘journeys’, within the education system today (both on the island and in the U.S.) seem to resemble the (aforementioned) Creoles’ continuous travels to and from the colonial centre. Anderson (2006) claimed that such journeys produced a set of meanings which eventually led to the independence movement in the Spanish colonies, but which also “formed” the participants into an elite group with their own consciousness. But in Puerto Rico these journeys have not produced the same outcome; Puerto Rico is not, and has never been a sovereign state. On the other hand it has produced a set of common values – or symbolic capital, to use Bourdieu’s term.

Education as a means of constructing and transmitting capital

Bourdieu (1990, 1996) has himself and in collaboration with others, done extensive research on how the education system reproduces the cultural capital of a certain social group, namely the dominating group's views on the social, the world, and certain notions about knowledge and culture. Through statistical and ethnographic studies, Bourdieu argued that social origins are the main factor for determining how students will achieve in future schooling (Reed-Danahey 2005). This does not mean that students are doomed by their background as Bourdieu himself was very aware of, but students have to make do with what they have and make the best out of the opportunities they are given. These possibilities are therefore not bound to a certain social group, but Bourdieu makes it clear that the elites are the ones which have the best access to these possibilities not only because of their economic advantage but also because they have more time for thought. As individuals experience life, their trajectory is not only shaped by the possibilities given to them but also through certain obstacles laid in front of them. For Bourdieu it was crucial to look at the education system in late capitalist societies to see how these modern societies sort out and eliminate certain individuals in search of power relations.

He claimed that by scrutinizing the education system one would be able to see the system of power and social division in modern societies. This power relation and social division could be seen as the elimination process held in France. Educational qualifications would have an impact on the formation of reproduction of social class through sets of elimination processes. In France this elimination process has already started before a child enters university level; 'whereby the students from the lowest social classes are eliminated at greater rates than those of the higher social classes' (Reed-Danahay 2005: 47-47). Village students who wanted to continue on to secondary education had to leave their village (at the age of fourteen). Furthermore, the elitist secondary schools and universities were all (and still are) in Paris as the French capital was seen as the cultural and intellectual capital of France.

Even though the average Puerto Rican student does not leave the family home for schooling until university level, the elimination process starts before this age and on different terms. Most people in Puerto Rico cannot afford the schooling offered by private schools. This together with the high percentage of high school dropouts in public schools, and the fact that the percentage that do drop out are primarily students with parents from a lower class background, demonstrates how the education system further eliminates and separates the

social classes in the Puerto Rican society. As shown earlier, most of those students who attend private high schools travel overseas to elite schools in the U.S for higher university education. Thus the gap widens even more. The United States can be seen as the Puerto Rican elite's cultural and intellectual "capital"³⁰. These wishes, or wants, for a U.S higher education is not only inculcated from the school system, but also from the child's habitus. That is, the embodied dispositions and cultural capital associated with their habitus (Reed-Danahay 2005: 46).

Cultural capital consists of different types of knowledge which can be everything from scientific knowledge, physical appearance, manners, education, familiarity with the social codes, etc (Bugge 2002: 237). This knowledge has to be recognized and regarded as giving exclusive advantages and so it cannot be equally divided among all the members of that society. Knowledge (i.e. cultural capital) is therefore placed in a hierarchic relation to one another and it is the dominating group which decides what is seen as the most prestigious form of cultural capital. However it is not the actual well-informed person who has the ability to produce cultural capital, it is the ability to use the knowledge and make it seem "natural" and 'just the way things are' that turns it into cultural capital. So according to Bourdieu, the elite's children learn from an early stage and through their whole lives as part of their family's environment how to behave "properly". What is expected from them is to attend a U.S schooling institution after high school. Children learn from an early age how to socialise (through the habitus) within a group of people whom their parents have a common set of values or symbolic capital, the habitus determines the social orbit but at the same time it presents 'possibilities that a social agent can manipulate or take advantage of in various social fields.' (Reed- Danahay 2005:23).

Bourdieu treats the body as a "memory pad" (Reed-Danahay 2005: 101), it's through the body that the learning takes place and is stored. Though cultural capital cannot be handed down like economic capital, I still see it having the ability, as produced through the habitus, of further reproducing, or being inherited from one generation to the next. The emotions and feelings affecting individuals and being expressed through the social person in different social gatherings (as explained earlier; through timidity, humiliation, admiration, etc) are in part handed down from the family through the child's upbringing.

³⁰ An interesting study would be to look closer at which institutions the elitist children choose and/or attend in the United States to make further comparisons, but I do not have sufficient information about this.

In addition, because education today is seen as something quite natural and consequently something which is not queried, one has to look at other factors in the education system to see the disparity in the Puerto Rican society. The elite's access to private schools is one way. On the other hand, disparity is further widened by how private schools in Puerto Rico practise instructions in English (with the exception of language classes such as Spanish and French). By focusing on the English language in the learning environment, the private schools give their students certain advantages when looking for higher education. The last census shows that a very high percentage of the Puerto Rican population do not speak sufficient English (Census 2000c). Not knowing the English language certainly makes the option of further education in the U.S quite limited. Education is therefore a system that produces and maintains power and class distinction because it reproduces the cultural capital already characterized by the dominant class. This production of social class is further emphasized when reflecting on the earlier part of this chapter and the journey's conducted by the elite. The private schooling and the high school graduate's journey's to and from the U.S for educational purposes, funnel the elite's ideas and thoughts into a certain knowledge domain which helps to reproduce the upper class' position in Puerto Rico.

Linking this back to the journeys completed by the Creole elite and the meaning that these journeys conveyed (Anderson 2006), one can still see the trace and reproduction of their meaning in the Puerto Rican society today, through the elite's educational system, and the journeys they conduct in search for higher education.

Concluding remarks

I started this chapter with the statement that place is more than just location and that Hato Rey stood as symbol of modernity and capitalism (which María meant gave the wrong picture of Puerto Rican identity). Space is where social relations unfold and where movement (i.e. journeys) produce social meaning and social relations. Looking at this from a historical perspective one can trace this back to the Spanish colonial administration system and how this set out to produce class consciousness among the Creole elite under Spanish rule. This production of class consciousness is an ongoing project which Puerto Ricans still experience today, and among the island elite this takes place in their educational surroundings and the circular migration between the mainland and the island (from private Puerto Rican high schools, to mainland elite universities, and back to Hato Rey).

The rise in university enrolment in higher education in Puerto Rico today has to be explained by a new and emerging social development among the Puerto Ricans. First of all it can be explained through the fact that education, which was previously only associated with the privileged few, is today seen as a universal right – more people are getting educated. With the lower class representing the highest percentage of high school dropouts in Puerto Rico and the upper class private school pupils attaining their education in U.S mainland universities, the relatively new emerging middle class are the ones that represent the numbers of higher education on the island. Education therefore seems to open up for upward mobility, but with this mobility one also has the anxiety of downward mobility. Here I find that the Puerto Rican population, along with policy makers actively constructs a state of crises by perceiving the public education as the way for downward mobility when regarding social class. I therefore see education in Puerto Rico as producing and maintaining social class and that journeys (conducted to realize this education) have in a sense molded these people (both the Creole elite under Spanish rule and the Puerto Rican elite). It has produced an elite consciousness and is an expression of taste.

Chapter 5 You're Puerto Rican!

Rosa (see chapter 2 & 3) and I have just looked at an apartment for rent in Old San Juan, it's late at night but we decide to go somewhere to have a coffee and something to eat. Rosa is not from this part of town so I lead her to a small plaza where we can sit outside and have a café con leche and enjoy the warm night. As we walk towards the plaza she notices a Starbucks and asks if we can go there, as it's such a long time since she's been to one. We go inside the air-conditioned café and order something to drink and eat and pay with our American dollars. The interior is like any other Starbucks, the counter where you order and pay for the coffee is the first thing one sees after walking through the big glass doors. Cakes and sandwiches are neatly arranged behind glass panels and on the wall behind the counter the menu hangs with all the different types of hot and cold drinks one can order, it is all written in English. Further in, the café is arranged with sofas, chairs and tables where people are sitting with their PC's and MAC's surfing the free internet. On the walls around us are black and white photos from New York City and San Francisco. The only thing that might tell us that we are in Puerto Rico right now are a couple sitting next to us speaking Spanish to each other.

We sit down and talk about my day at UPR and how I've been drawn to the idea of studying how Puerto Ricans themselves define what a Puerto Rican is. Her face immediately lightens up; 'That's very interesting, because we are always arguing about who is Puerto Rican. When I was little... I don't know, maybe in 3rd grade or 5th grade, I was very confused because my teacher said that I was not Puerto Rican... But I would ask what am I? (Her voice goes higher and she gesticulates with her hands) And she would not know what to answer, you know? I would keep pestering and she would say; (with frustration in her voice) I don't know what you are, you are nothing! ... (She laughs) Apparently she did not see me as Puerto Rican as I was born in the United States...'

In *Distinction* (2002) Bourdieu narrowed the gap between objectivism and subjectivism which had been prevalent in the social sciences. He points out that on the one hand one can 'treat social facts as things' and see how structural constraints influence social interactions. On the other hand one can 'reduce the social world to the representations that agents have of it,' to see how their understandings of individual and/or collective struggles transform or preserve the social world and the relations within it (Bourdieu 1989: 14-15). According to Bourdieu a

person's social status or position affects what that person does with its life. Decisions made in life are not merely calculated strategies, but rather a result from the individual's habitus (embodied feelings and thoughts) and from a specific social position (e.g. class, gender, nationality, and ethnicity). Additionally, all individuals coexisting in a society are located in both geographical and social space. Those that reside geographically closer to each other would theoretically have more in common with each other; this coincides (theoretically with) also with social space. Though this spatial segregation does exist, it is also true that those that are distant from each other in social space can and will, interact in the physical space (Bourdieu 1989: 16). Puerto Ricans claim to have a "national" identity by the mere fact of being Puerto Rican and as someone opposed to the Americans.

But can one speak of a unified Puerto Rican "national" identity? The interaction one observes may not be fully truthful as the foregoing chapters show; even though people lived in close proximity to one another it did not mean that one came from the same social background (chapter 3). Even though the educational level of Puerto Ricans is high compared to other Latin American countries social boundaries are reproduced through private versus public education (chapter 4). It is therefore crucial to look at the reality that though Puerto Ricans claim to have a common "national" identity, the understanding of this identity differs internally because the social world of which they are a part is experienced differently.

This chapter's title refers back to the introduction chapter and the fact that the Puerto Rican identity consciousness is somewhat in a state of in-betweenness, even though they all speak of a unified Puerto Rican identity. In this chapter I will argue that though the sense of peoplehood among Puerto Ricans is strong, this sense of unity is fluid and contrasting. That even though people interact in a similar social space of common background, i.e. claiming to be Puerto Rican (symbolically denying the distance of the objective reality), this space of interaction is fluid and contrasting. All Puerto Ricans claim to be symbolically united by the mere fact of being Puerto Rican and use historical constructed national symbols to emphasize this. At the same time perceptions on what it means to be Puerto Rican are contested and national symbols are given different meaning. These contested perceptions and meanings depend on what kind of (social) position people have in that space and on the significant influence of economic and historical factors. In this chapter I will have a discussion on national identity, contrasting meanings of the *jibaro* symbol. Ultimately I see that Puerto Rican identity can be placed in a larger discourse on identity in general and island identity.

An imagined community?

First of all it might ask if Puerto Ricans reflection over their cultural distinctiveness can be seen as a form of nationalism. I have earlier used quotation marks when referring to the Puerto Rican national identity because in the strictest sense one cannot call Puerto Rico a nation. Nevertheless, this is a term that many of my informants used when referring to Puerto Rico. The task of defining the concept of the nation is something which one should not take on lightly. Is it based on language, religion, territory, or shared history or other forms of collective identity? The task is no easier when looking at nationalism, for here too one has the interdisciplinary differences. Is it an aspiration for self government and sovereignty, or is it based on sameness and cultural background? The debate about nations and nationalism is varied and oppositional (Hutchinson & Smith 1994: 4 -7).

According to Gellner 'nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and,... should not separate the power-holders from the rest.' (Gelner 2006:1) Furthermore, nationalist sentiments or movements are defined as: 'a feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfillment. A nationalist movement is one actuated by sentiment of this kind.' (Gellner 2006: 1). Here nationalism is based on the idea of a political national sovereign state which either opens up feelings of anger or pride depending on whether a group of people (who see themselves as the dominant group) are able to be the dominating in a state or not. Often the unifying symbols are those that distinguish a common language, religion, common myths of origin, and so on from others. Puerto Ricans are unified by these types of symbols, which are an important part of their identity and which are boasted with pride whether by waving the Puerto Rican flag or by proudly exclaiming 'Soy Boricua!'³¹ These are symbols which arouse feelings of pride and emphasize their profound sense of distinctiveness from Americans. Yet the majority of Puerto Ricans do not see sovereignty as a future goal for the island. Though Puerto Rico has a certain type of self-government, it is not a sovereign one, but they still have the sentiment of a unified people, a sentiment which is often loudly proclaimed publically and symbolically.

³¹ 'Soy Boricua' means 'I'm Puerto Rican'. Boricua is the emic term (also used are the terms Boriquén, Borinquén, or Boriqueño) which derives from the Taíno word Boriken. Boriken was originally used by the indigenous people when referring the island of Puerto Rico and is today used by the Puerto Ricans to identify themselves with one another through a common origin.

On the other hand, one has Anderson's definition, which says that a nation 'is an imagined political community – and imagined as both limited and sovereign' (2006:6). Anderson sees nations as cultural creations and where the modern European nation emerged through the invention of the printing press and through the distribution of texts which portrayed the nation as a community at the end of the eighteenth century. A nation is imagined because no member of that community will ever be able to know or meet most of their fellow-members, but they still see themselves as part of a unified community. This must not be confused with other styles of imagined communities such as kinship. Rather one has to look at how the group imagines themselves as a political, sovereign community. Anderson sees nations as 'not necessarily fabrications but rather cultural creations rooted in social and historical processes' (Duany 2002: 8). The imagined community Anderson speaks of is therefore not "fictitious" or "false" as criticized by Gellner. When considering the Puerto Rican situation, the people themselves do have a sense of imagined community other than kinship. As the empirical example above shows; islanders distinguish themselves from others, both from Americans and mainland Puerto Ricans. However, this limitedness is debatable because even though Rosa's teacher was quite clear that Rosa was not Puerto Rican due to her being born on the U.S. mainland, she did not see her as an American either and nor did Rosa. One cannot ignore the fact that over 3.4 million people residing in the U.S mainland see themselves as part of the Puerto Rican community on the island in some way or another (Census 2000a). I will illustrate this further later on in this chapter.

None of the above definitions of nations and nationalism fit exactly the Puerto Rican way because neither takes into account nations that do not have a state³². Can we understand nations solely by their political status and/or invented traditions? Here I find that Hutchinson (1994) might bridge the gap between Gellner and Anderson. In *Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration* Hutchinson (1994) makes a contrast between cultural and political nationalism. Where political nationalists see a state as crucial for securing the political aspirations for a group, cultural nationalists 'perceive the state as accidental, for the essence of a nation is its distinctive civilization, which is the product of its unique history, culture and geographical profile' (Hutchinson 1994: 122). In this sense nations are 'natural solidarities' (Hutchinson 1994: 122) and not only fixed in their political origin, but based on feelings and passions fixed in history and nature. It is not the glory of political power, but the contribution from its members to humanity which is important among the cultural nationalists. My

³²Along with Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland.

informants often talked about Puerto Rico as if it was a nation in the sense of them having a shared history, language and culture. They would boast about their poets, musicians, athletes and Miss Universe winners. They would talk about their struggle for control over *la isla nena* (the baby island) Vieques³³, which in a sense extended the Puerto Rican nation symbolically beyond the mainland (Duany 2002:3). This sense of shared unity, territory, and history are all factors which have been, and still are, prevalent among nationalist movements around the world. So by looking at Puerto Rico in the cultural nationalist's eyes, one can say that Puerto Ricans do have a form of nationalism and national sentiment. What these discussions on nationalism and nations do not take into account is that the sense of unity and comradeship extends beyond the territorially bounded island. Puerto Ricans who have never visited the island and who might not even speak the mother tongue still feel a sense of comradeship with fellow Puerto Ricans. Finally, and what is most important for this chapter and thesis is that they do not take into account that national sentiments may differ depending on which social position one inhabits.

Social Space and symbolic power

Though talking of a Puerto Rican national identity is debatable and problematic, I noticed during my fieldwork that the perception of the Puerto Rican identity differed among my informants. Rosa defined herself as Puerto Rican, but she understood that she was in a different position to those born in Puerto Rico – if the island were to get independence, she would not have to worry about losing her American citizenship as she was born in the U.S. mainland. Even so, the experience she had as a young girl with her teacher made a deep impression on her and at the same time it shows that she has another way of identifying herself than many other informants. María, my landlady (see chapter 2, 3 and 4), defined herself as a Puerto Rican, but a Puerto Rican who was undeniably colonized by a foreign and (in her mind) unwanted state. On the other hand, Señor Santiago (a member of the social and charitable organization presented in chapter 4) became very defensive when I talked about a sense of Puerto Rican national identity. He could not understand why I did not speak of an American national identity and pride among the Puerto Ricans, because he (and many of his surrounding acquaintances) saw himself as an American who just happened to have a different cultural background. Robert (see chapter 2 and 4; being born in America, of

³³ Vieques is a small island on the eastern coast of Puerto Rico which has been used by the U.S Navy as training ground. In 2000 massive protests erupted after an accidental death and engaged many political and religious leaders, university students and community activists. The general feeling was for the Navy to exit and give the island back to the civilian residents.

American parents) felt more at home with the Puerto Rican way of life, though everything about him (the way he dressed and looked) signaled that he did not fit the “authentic” Puerto Rican identity.

Anthropological research conducted amongst Puerto Ricans has had a tendency to focus on their desire to communicate their cultural authenticity while they at the same time live in a reality structured by a larger cultural, political and economic hegemony (Davila 1997, Duany 2002a & Flores 2000). Like Ortner (2006), I would like to go further than this and examine how the Puerto Rican identity is experienced differently and how these experiences are formed by economical and historical factors. By looking at these factors along with the internal structures one notices certain power relations which are essentially bound to social class.

Social class

We have discussed earlier the question of what social class is. Marxist theorists emphasize that class comes into being through an exploitative form of production called capitalism and inevitably results in conflict. What Marxist theory does not take into account is how the individuals themselves understand and define their social position and that of others. Class is not only an objective form of structural domination, and I do not see it as more important than other forms of social identifications. Nonetheless it has a reality through structures of domination and constraints. As I have been arguing power and inequality between social relations have to be seen through both objective and subjective terms; social class is placed in social space in cultural and economic capital, at the same time social class gives the individual certain possibilities or constraints (see chapter 4).

In the introduction chapter I discussed in short how I understood middle class. Class concept is diffusing it is not only something which is out there and something which people possess. It also a project, struggle, desire or dream (Ortner 2003:14). Don Diego (who lived in the guesthouse) dreamt that his children would finish high school and further education so they would have a stable life and own a home. My landlady María persisted on living under stressful housing conditions and unstable work circumstances because she had a room with a balcony overlooking the streets of Old San Juan. Even with these stressful conditions, she was living where many people (for instance Rosa) only could dream about doing. In a sense she was living her middle class dream, though she did not hold variables associated with middle class (owner of a home, car, income, etc).

According to Bourdieu these perceptions, or points of view that my informants have, depend on which position the individual has in the space of the reality of which they are a part. In this space, there is constant competition of various kinds and it is through the distribution of these scarce resources that power relations emerge. The power is distributed through economic, cultural, and social capital and lastly, when these various capital forms are perceived and recognized as legitimate, symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1989:17-18). The inequality of distribution of capital means that one has the capability to enforce one's own interests at the expense of others. This power relation can be used when looking at the question of identity among Puerto Ricans. Some aspects of culture are valued more than others, in the empirical example at the beginning of this chapter it was place of birth that was important. For María it was the issue of independence and for Señor Santiago it was the American affiliation which evoked deep emotions. Finally, for Robert it was not the detail of where one was born or where one's parents were from, but rather where one felt at home. But what they still all have in common is a sense of Puerto Ricanness united by, among other things, common history, language and symbolic myths. They all identify themselves with, and feel they have a stake in being Puerto Rican.

The myth of the *jíbaro* in the search for a Puerto Rican identity

I'm back in the same bank building in Hato Rey (presented in chapter 4) . I've been invited back to do a presentation on my fieldwork and my experience of Puerto Rico. As I enter the building and walk past the big mural of the Jíbaro standing in the field with his machete, I'm perplexed about why they would choose a picture of a Jíbaro in this building, and especially in this area. This confusion is further deepened after my presentation and the response I received there. In my presentation I discussed how I understood the Puerto Rican identity as something fluid and contrasting, that all in all people saw themselves as Puerto Rican and as different from Americans but still entitled to American citizenship. One man in the gathering (Señor Santiago) seems almost insulted by my presentation; he wonders why I didn't think they could be proud of being American first of all, and then Puerto Rican. Why couldn't they have the same sense of unity as the Texans, who are fully American citizens, but still have a strong sense of unity and common history? After the meeting is over I am invited back to Robert's house in Old San Juan and we talk about my presentation and the response I got

from Señor Santiago. Robert told me he was about to defend me by saying: 'Hey, remember she lives in Old San Juan and you know what they are like there!' At the same time he told me that I had to remember that these people come from very influential families which have a long history in the work for the island becoming a 51st state.

Through casual conversations with people and reading literature during my fieldwork, I often heard the Puerto Rican word *jíbaro*. *El jíbaro* is a 'humble, hardworking, and fiercely independent and rebellious worker of the land... [and] is the spiritual and moral symbol of Puerto Rican identity.' (Perez 2004: 58). He is a historical figure who represents a shared past and by always being a white male he symbolises masculinity and Spanish heritage. On several occasions I was asked if I'd eaten yet at *El Jíbarito* (the little farmer) a restaurant in old San Juan which had become a major institution in the old town. Rosa and her friends would talk of it with nostalgia, thinking of when they were children and their parents would take them there at Christmas time or when families came for vacation from the U.S.. Tourists would venture outside of the typical tourist paths in search of *this* particular restaurant, either after reading Lonely Planet's guide to eating with the locals, or after it being recommended by talking to locals.

The restaurant is located quite a distance from other restaurant areas in Old San Juan and its interior is plain, and, like many other simple Puerto Rican restaurants they had fixed a TV to the wall which showed Spanish Telenovelas. The dishes were not high cuisine, but simple traditional Puerto Rican dishes such as *Mofongo* with plantains or *yucca*, rice and beans, pork soup or *tostones*. Yet the interior walls were highly decorative. One side was decorated with what tourists would recognize as the architecture and balconies of Old San Juan and its magnificent pastel and crisp white colours. Then in the far back end of the room, over the kitchen, the owners had built a second level under the high ceiling which was used as an office space. This level was built to depict the traditional Puerto Rican *casita*, a small one-roomed hut built of wood and standing on poles over the ground. Hanging on the walls were different photos, both in colour and black and white, of the *jíbaro* sitting in a field with his straw hat and machete. The kitchen, with its glass panelling, looked like the popular *kioskos de Luquillo*³⁴ and which gave it a casual ambience. The restaurant had become a symbol of true Puerto Ricanness by incorporating different symbols associated with Puerto Rico, both for

³⁴ Luquillo situated on the coast outside of San Juan consists of about 30 kiosks or so where they serve traditional fried Puerto Rican treats, such as Baciloaitos (fried cod), pinchos, pastelitos filled with shrimps, chicken, meat, etc. and arroz con habichuelas (rice with beans).

the Puerto Ricans visiting for the Christmas holidays and tourists, though they would have different meanings even among the Puerto Ricans themselves. By attracting tourists the owners had made the restaurant into a global space, where people from different backgrounds and from all parts of the globe had come to have a “traditional” and “authentic” Puerto Rican experience.

Looking back at the questions about whether one can talk of a Puerto Rican nationalism or not one notices similar processes in Puerto Rico as in Europe. Both Gellner and Anderson see nationalism and nations as ideologically constructions ‘seeking to forge a link between a (self-defined) cultural group and the state’ (Hylland Eriksen 2002: 99). This forged link is a relatively new phenomenon developed in Europe and the European colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth century (see Anderson 2006), but which often emphasizes and glorifies older traditions shared by those within that nation. In Puerto Rico these symbols are mostly associated with Spanish heritage, but have been invented after the American invasion – the *jíbaro* is one of these symbols.³⁵

Puerto Ricans would mostly refer to the *jíbaro* with a certain pride in their voice³⁶, referring to the traditional values and him being *the* symbol of the Puerto Ricanness – he was *not* American. On the other hand it is also the symbol used by the political party, Partido Popular (PPD)³⁷ which supports Puerto Rico’s rights to sovereignty and self-government through the Commonwealth status. This is why I was a bit perplexed as to why a big bank in the financial district would choose to have the *jíbaro* painted in the lobby where all the people going in and out of the building had to pass. Surely the elites in banking and finance on the island would have a pro-statehood stance and support the New Progressive Party (NPP)³⁸. The understanding I had of the symbol did not coincide with the understanding I had about the elite group and their political stance on the island. Nor did my understanding of the symbol coincide with how Puerto Ricans live their daily lives; the *jíbaro* is an illiterate man who works the land, isolated from the rest of society– he does not travel overseas, which is such a

³⁵ Though the *jíbaro* had been associated with Puerto Rican culture before the American invasion, it had not been standardized or publicly embraced as part of Puerto Rico’s national identity (Davila 1997:63).

³⁶ Even though most people would refer to the *jíbaro* with pride, I did also hear the word used in negative terms. For example when referring to someone backward or stupid, girls would especially use the word as a scolding towards boys who had been obnoxious towards them, or when Sanjuaneros would defend themselves by saying; ‘I’m not stupid, I’m not a *Jíbaro*!’

³⁷ Full name; Partido Popular Democrático de Puerto Rico, PPD or in English; the Popular Democratic Party of Puerto Rico, PDP

³⁸ Full name; Partido Nuevo Progresista de Puerto Rico, PNP, or in English; The New Progressive Party of Puerto Rico, NPP

huge part of Puerto Ricans lived experience. The *jíbaro* symbol was used in different ways; the owner of the restaurant used it as a branding of what is authentic Puerto Rican to attract tourists and Puerto Rican visitors. While the PPD use it as an emblem in their effort to legitimize the issue that the Puerto Ricanness is still an important part of their political goals, even though they are pro-commonwealth. But why was the *jíbaro* depicted in Hato Ray, an area clearly associated with a pro-statehood stance?

In *Distinctions* (2002) Bourdieu attached symbols to cultural class, arguing that the dominating class in a society were at the top of the hierarchy due to the ranking of symbols and vice versa. These symbols stand for what is seen as cultured or refined. In chapter 4 we saw how the education system was used as a symbol of domination. Education in private schools and in the U.S. mainland stood as the best (if not the only) way of educating one's children and giving them the best start in life. What is interesting with symbols is that they give different meanings depending on their relationship with other symbols, but also depending on what social position one inhabits. Victor Turner (1967) shows how the Ndembu milktree in Zambia stood as a symbol for the integration of young girls into womanhood, in other words a symbol for continuity and unity. At the same time, by focusing on this female unity, it made an opposition towards the male domination and consequently stood as a symbol of disunity. The *jíbaro* can in this sense stand as a symbol of unification among the Puerto Ricans, and at the same time by being applied in different contexts it has come to symbolise the struggle between the contesting notions of self-determination. As a result I have come to see it as symbolising both unity and the disarray of the Puerto Rican society. This coincides with festivities in Old San Juan which gathered people from different social backgrounds, but at the same time became a ritual of contest and a way of producing and reproducing social class (see chapter 3).

The construction of the jíbaro myth

Though the official promotion of the cultural nationalism was set out by the Puerto Rican government only in the 1950s one can trace the debates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Davila 1997: 4). After the American invasion in 1898 when the American colonial administration policies and Americanization process became part of the everyday life, Puerto Ricans experienced immense social, economical and cultural changes. The agricultural system changed from consisting of mostly privately owned coffee haciendas to U.S. corporate owned

sugar plantations. This implied that Puerto Ricans in all social levels experienced socioeconomical changes and an increase in material uncertainty (Mintz 1989: 95-130).

But as mentioned in chapter one, Puerto Ricans also experienced a new form of collective empowerment especially among the black and among women. According to Lillian Guerra, this mobilization and organized struggle for liberation from below generated a fear among the Puerto Rican elite. Who in response to this fear saw the necessity ‘to respond discursively to colonial pressures that had ensured the survival of labor from above...’ (1998:41). The empowerment from below along with the new social position many Puerto Rican elites faced during the first half of the twentieth century³⁹, had the effect of awakening the elites to the realization of the necessity of reaffirming and legitimizing their position in the social hierarchy.

In their effort to legitimize the contradiction between their social position under American colonial rule and the feeling that their values, identity and customs were compromised with the collaboration with this colonial rule. The Puerto Rican elite came to look at the margins of their society for inspiration⁴⁰. This attempt to draw closer to “the other” during the twentieth century was also a process seen in the seventeenth and eighteenth century among the Swedish bourgeoisie (Frykman & Løfgren 1994). In Sweden the industrialization led to a change in the use of landscape. Before it had mainly been a landscape of production, now on the other hand the distance between nature’s raw materials, the finished product and the direct knowledge of the utilization of nature became more present among the bourgeoisie. ‘...[T]he nature was now populated by other forces and ideologies. The industrializations of landscape is shaped by innovative technology and economy’ (Frykman et al 1994: 50, my translation) These readjustments in the use of nature has, according to Frykman & Løfgren, not only changed the way in which we use the landscape, but also in how we experience it. From being a landscape of production for the majority of the population, it became instead a landscape of consume experienced through tourist, nature lovers, artist and authors. Just as the Swedish bourgeoisie paints a picture of the nature lover who in solitude climbs over hazardous mountains and rivers, i.e. the individual against nature, the Puerto Rican elite paints a picture of the solitary

³⁹ The majority of the Puerto Rican elite experienced a downfall in their social position due to the American capitalistic force. Earlier plantation owners were now repositioned as teachers in the public school system or managers on plantations for American absentee sugar plantations. Further by virtue of their class background and their closeness to the American ideal (skin colour, class and education), the sons of the Puerto Rican elite were expected to attend higher education in the colonial metropolis. Through this education they came to appreciate and learn the American political, economical and social ideals.

⁴⁰ This was also present under the Spanish colonial rule.

fortitude Puerto Rican *jíbaro* holding a machete in his hand. Additionally, as the Swedish bourgeoisie attempted to draw closer to ‘the other’ through opposition of the snobbish and superficial aristocratic elite, so has the Puerto Rican cultural identity developed under – and often in outright opposition to – U.S. hegemony (Duany 2002: 16). By centering the images of Puerto Rican identity on the agrarian past, Puerto Rican culture comes out as the total opposite of the American commercial culture; in the restaurant *El Jíbarito* this was what attracted tourist because of its seemingly rural and cultural authenticity. In Hato Rey the depicted *jíbaro* can be seen as the financial elite’s effort to unify themselves with the rest of the population and at the same time legitimizing their social position under foreign rule. The era of Spanish colonialism has been used by the Puerto Rican elite to unify the Puerto Rican people across class borders and at the same time maintaining their class position on the top of the power hierarchy.

Contested identities

The construction of identities only comes into being after the encounter with difference. It is in the meeting between two individuals or groups that one comes to see one’s difference from others and/or chooses an affiliation with a group. What has happened among the Puerto Rican population is that their ideas of who they are, have come to be defined as conflicting or contested. In their efforts to claim their Puerto Rican uniqueness, they have somehow become stuck in an in-betweenness. This identity crises has become to be a major part of their popular and literary discourse claiming that they are in a unique situation. What they do not take into account is that identities are fluid and a complex interplay of decisions, choices, life events, possibilities and limitations.

As Juan, a 22 year old informant told me⁴¹; *‘I get really mad when people talk about independence, look at McDonalds and Starbucks! People would not tolerate them [American chain restaurants] not being here! (he laughs) I mean, Puerto Ricans can’t live without them...’* But he would also be infuriated when talking about his stay in America; *‘They [Americans] always thought I was Mexican, asking for my greencard. I tell them; I don’t need a greencard, I’m an American citizen. But they don’t know about us.’* For Juan, and many other Puerto Ricans, independence is not an option because they see the economic benefits of either staying as a commonwealth or becoming a 51st state. Among the lower class Puerto

⁴¹ Juan, even though he is a smart kid, did not graduate from high school. He lived approximately a year in the U.S. mainland with his former American girlfriend. He now shares a small room with his father Don Diego in Old San Juan and he gets odd jobs through his friends by working in restaurants and bars.

Ricans the, fear of not receiving financial aid through welfare benefits is a major issue when talking about the island's political future. At the same time when they move to the mainland they are not recognized by their fellow Americans as part of that community, even when they have the same legal rights as any other American. Identity is not only an issue of individual choice and decisions, as the empirical examples in this chapter and previous chapters have illustrated; identity is something which is produced through complex and contradicting processes such as historical, economic, social, political, geographical, etc. However it is not only among fellow Americans that Puerto Ricans are categorized as the other – Puerto Ricans themselves have different ideas on what it means to be Puerto Rican.

The term Nuyorican is widely used among islanders and mainlanders to distinguish non-island born or raised Puerto Ricans. It is a term which, on the island, is used negatively. The term consists of the two words; New Yorker and Puerto Rican, and which was originally used to categorize Puerto Ricans who had lived a long time or all their lives in New York. Today the term is used more widely. My informants explained Nuyoricans as people who have lost their original roots and that they had assimilated too much into the American culture by having poor or nonexistent Spanish language skills. They are accused of dressing like African American gangsters or of not being ladylike and not respecting the society around them by being loud, rude and obnoxious (see also Negrón-Muntaner 2004: 24). At the same time several studies have shown that Nuyoricans see themselves as different from island-born Puerto Ricans and Americans, but that they still 'claim inclusion in the broader view of the [Puerto Rican] nation, both in literary and political terms.' (Duany2002:31).

The experience Rosa had with her teacher and the feeling of an in-betweenness was made clearer on several occasions during my fieldwork. I heard her friends and family say '*Well you have to remember she's not really from Puerto Rico!*' Even though this was said with a smile on their faces, it is a reality which Rosa and many other Puerto Ricans experience. Because national consciousness is firmly grounded as a legitimate feeling among Nuyoricans the Puerto Rican imagined community has forced itself beyond the island's borders. These continuing emotional attachments among Nuyoricans have along with other processes such as the nonstop circular migration and the invention of telephone and internet somehow blurred the spatial boundaries. One cannot talk of the Puerto Rican community as limited to the Island as it was in the past. Puerto Ricanness has in a sense become contested between different people who claim to have the rights to this identity. The public debate about the Puerto Rican

identity is further contested among Puerto Ricans living on the island and how various groups see the island's political future (Davila 1997, Duany 2002 and Negrón-Muntaner 2004).

Puerto Rican or island phenomena?

It's a strange day as we walk the streets of Old San Juan. The streets feel empty and deserted and people working in the bars and shops stand in the doorways waiting for customers or just for time to pass by. María, Alice⁴² and I head off to visit a friend of ours at her job in a local bar. As we walk we speak English, jokingly exclaiming Puerto Rican slang here and there. Outside a shop we bump into some Puerto Rican friends of Alice and the conversation continues in English as we are introduced. They ask us where we are from, and when they turn their attention towards María she exclaims in Spanish; 'Soy de aquí.' One young man seems surprised and reconfirms; 'De verdad? De aquí, aquí?!'⁴³ María nods her head in confirmation as the man bursts out in English; 'Wow! You're more Puerto Rican than mofongo⁴⁴!'

The editors of *American Identities* (Rudnick, Smith & Lee Rubin 2006) have collected diverse texts from authors all coming from different cultural and social backgrounds and who all have in common the question of identity: What or who am I? Looking at texts concerning the different ways of being American since World War II to the present the book shows that it's in the encounter with other persons that such questions arise; Who are you? Where are you from? The answer one gives does not always affirm the notions others have of one. María was questioned about her identity by fellow Puerto Ricans, just as Rosa (and many others) who have been presented in this thesis.

Puerto Ricans today see themselves as, in a sense, having a hybrid identity; they are neither one thing nor the other. The "fifty-fiftyness" is such a major part of their daily lives and public debates whether concerning the language (Spanglish⁴⁵), salsa⁴⁶, or the myth of the *jíbaro*. This identity crisis (if one can go so far as to call it this) is something which actually is not unique to the Puerto Ricans but something which is not only seen in the anthropological, but also in American identity debates. What is interesting is that Puerto Ricans have treated their identity as what Hylland Eriksen (1993) refers to as the 'cultural island phenomena', or

⁴² Alice is an American girl working in Old San Juan.

⁴³ Translation; Rosa; 'I'm from here.' Puerto Rican man; 'Really? From here, here?!' Referring to Old San Juan

⁴⁴ Mofongo is a dish made of plantains and is seen as one of the most typical Puerto Rican dishes one can get.

⁴⁵ Spanglish is a term used to describe how the language among Puerto Ricans have increasingly come to use English words in connection with Spanish.

⁴⁶ Salsa was developed in New York in the 1960s and 1970s by Puerto Rican and Cuban immigrants.

in reality the fear of losing their cultural distinctiveness. We all know today that no society can live in isolation in fact, even the most far away societies, have never lived in total isolation. Still, anthropological research does in some ways (if only analytically) still treat the societies studied as closed and isolated entities.

Looking back at Hylland Eriksen (1993) and the cultural island phenomena Puerto Rico, like Mauritius, is literally a physical island situated between the Atlantic and Caribbean Ocean. Puerto Ricans have maintained a distinct Puerto Rican identity, even with immense intrusion and influence of economic, political and social processes from the United States and earlier Spain. The Puerto Rican culture can therefore be seen as a ‘cultural island’ because societies ‘must have boundaries in some respect or other in order to be a society’ (Hylland Eriksen 1993: 140). Puerto Ricans have in a sense, forged relations with one another in an effort to create a certain stability and belonging. Yet, the Puerto Rican culture, like that of Mauritius did not come into being through a vacuum. They have both experienced colonial domination. Both islands have been populated by people coming from different parts of the world and further they are today both part of the global world and experience the presence of return migrants and other migrants (both documented and undocumented). Therefore Puerto Rico, like Mauritius, cannot be seen as an isolated island.

Even when migrating across borders (whether this is across national, or in the Puerto Rican sense, cultural borders) people do not abandon one culture for another, but rather create a new type of community. These immigrants also influence host country residents. In Puerto Rico I was always told that the fear of the islands economy becoming like ‘those over there’⁴⁷ was the main issue for why Puerto Ricans did not want to become independent. With the presence of Dominican and Cuban immigrants in Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans have come to produce sets of ideas on how things might be under independence. One cannot treat the Puerto Rican island (or Puerto Rican migrants) through the ‘myth of separability’ (Krohn-Hansen 2007). Because Puerto Ricans, like all others, interact with people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds we cannot treat them like an ‘ethnic enclave’. I use the term enclave in the same manner as I did in chapter 3, but rather than having physical boundaries (fences, open spaces, etc) ethnic enclaves use images of nationalism to ‘give an idea about immigrant populations as discrete, bounded entities.’ (Krohn-Hansen 2007: 89-90).

⁴⁷ Referring to the Dominican and Cuban islands.

Concluding remarks

In an attempt to answer the question for this chapter I have had to discuss the definition of nation and nationalism. Speaking of a Puerto Rican cultural nationalism lets us understand how Puerto Ricans can talk of a common national identity. To understand the social world they live in we have to look at the representations they have of it – and they clearly have a distinct Puerto Rican national identity. But this representation is both contested and fluid because their understanding of it differs depending on what position they inhabit in both geographical and social space. Juan did not see a future in an independent Puerto Rico because he associated independence with the loss of certain commodities associated with middle class life. On the other hand his experience from the U.S. mainland infuriated him because Americans did not see him as a Puerto Rican with natural rights of U.S. citizenship. In America he was “just another Mexican” to be suspicious of. This in-betweenness catches up with them in their home turf due to their own contesting notions of self-determination (so visible in the appropriation of the *jíbaro* as a symbol).

Final Remarks

I started this thesis by asking the question of; Who am I? By looking at the different notions Puerto Ricans have of their identity I extended the question to; what kind of dynamics have gone into making and sustaining the popular discursion of the Puerto Rican identity? And to, how the role of a more personal experienced social class in Puerto Rico today can speak to a larger discussion of identity? The point of interest in this thesis was the political aspect of Puerto Rican identity, but to be able to handle this and place it into a more individual and experience near context I had to come to terms with local discussions of difference and imagined community. I came to see that the highly contradictory notion of Puerto Rican national identity was connected to social class.

I struggled with understanding the idea of class because, like identity in general, it is fluid and cannot be understood as an object in itself. In fact there is not a lot of theory on class in anthropology, as Ortner (1998) explains it is often hidden beneath other factors such as race and ethnicity. By using terms like habitus and social and cultural capital, I came to see that social positions shape how one perceives one's surroundings at the same time individuals are to a certain extent, restricted by these positions. Furthermore, it is in the meeting with other individuals and groups that one categorises oneself and others according to these perceptions. By gradually moving through the landscape, a mental impression is made in individuals on "how things should be". As many of my informants, Rosa did not pay attention to whether her family was middle class or not, but she made the distinction between herself and "those kinds of people". Class is not only an objective form of structural domination, and I do not see it as more important than other forms of social identifications, but it is nonetheless real.

Additionally, making social boundaries influence the allocation and utilization of physical space. I have come to see that the use and control over space is actually a struggle for social mobility and over social boundaries. By looking at the movement done by my informants (both mentally and physically) I have come to understand identity in a different way. In urban cities like San Juan, geographical boundaries between the rich and poor are diminishing. City residents are experiencing the city in new ways by building gated communities and through the use of physical dividers such as fences, walls or discouraging pedestrian areas in an effort to separate themselves from the others. In Old San Juan on the other hand, the colonial architecture meant that people of all social backgrounds interacted in the public area such as

plazas or in street festivals. Still, I noticed a clear contestation over the streets of Old San Juan when middle class residents feared social pollution and danger. Space in the city of San Juan symbolizes both unity and disunity.

Another social feature which has helped create social identity in Puerto Rico is education. Seen as a way of producing class consciousness through the circulation of elite it also points back to historical factors as the Spanish colonial era and the journeys conducted by the Creole elite. Education is given symbolic meaning through its construction of social bonds. Education also implies the possibility of mobility, though it might be a struggle or even just a dream. María was a perfect example of the struggle for upward mobility, with her wish of continuing staying at the guesthouse even if it meant struggling with difficult conditions.

Taken a step towards the discussion on national identity I found that even though Puerto Ricans imagine themselves as a community, this idea of Puerto Ricanness is also fluid and contrasting. First of all one has to question the fact of national identity because of the islands political situation. By looking at the natural solidarities created through cultural nationalism one can talk of a shared and imagined community. I have argued that this sense of shared unity has crossed the geographical borders of the island as Nuyoricans on the mainland U.S. connect themselves with this imagined community. The representations people have of the social world, helps us understand the social world they live in. Furthermore, these representations are contesting and fluid because they depend on from what position the individual has in the social world. The fear of downward mobility has in a sense influenced Puerto Ricans in fearing Puerto Rican independence. I also want to argue that these representations varies depending on in which physical location one is in, as Puerto Ricans in America constantly have to negotiate their identity in different terms than when they are on the island. By distinguishing oneself from others, one also lets others distinguish you. Consequently one also is faced with the possibility that others do not affirm your classification of yourself (and that of others).

To be able to discuss Puerto Rican identities I have had to use metaphors of insularity to be able to analyze. I have in a sense treated Puerto Rico as a cultural island to be able to compare it with the U.S. mainland. This does not imply that Puerto Ricans residing on the island live in isolation. On the contrary, I throughout this thesis argued that ideas, people, and social processes have crossed the island border in a circular migration. Even though Puerto Ricans distinguish themselves as unique and different from others, I see that this question of identity

is not unique to Puerto Ricans. The question of identity and who you are is something which is present among all people, but it is shown and expressed in different ways. In fact the island consciousness that Puerto Ricans experience today is actually a shared phenomenon among Caribbean islands. Furthermore, I see that the question of identity is also a big part of the American identity discourse.

I end this thesis with what I see could be interesting in a further research of the Puerto Rican identity. A point of interest would be to see how the Puerto Ricans encounter with the American society and see how and if their social category changes. Further it would be interesting to take into consideration the influence imposed by Cuban and Dominican immigrants to the island.

Bibliography

Abink, Jan & Vermeulen, Hans. 1992:History and Culture. Essays on the Works of Eric R. Wolf. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

Anderson, Benedict. 2006: Imagined communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London & New York: Verso.

Berg, Leo van den. 2006: The Safe City: Safety and Urban Development in European Cities. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977: Outline of a Theory of Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

----- 1989: "Social Space and Symbolic Power" in *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring,1989), pp. 14-25

----- 1990: Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture. Second Edition. London: Sage Publications

----- 1996: The State Nobility. Cambridge: Polity Press

----- 2001: Masculine Domination. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

----- 2002: Distinksjonen. En Sosiologisk Kritikk av Dømmekraften. Oslo: De Norske Bokklubbene

Bugge, Lars. 2002: "Pierre Bourdieus Teori om Makt" in *Agora. Journal for Metafysisk spekulasjon*. 20 (3-4) p. 224-248.

Caldeira, Theresa P.R. 1999: "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation" in Holston (Ed.) *Cities and Citizenship*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Collins, Susan M., Bosworth, Barry p. & Soto-Class, Miguel (ed). 2006: *The Economy of Puerto Rico. Restoring Growth.*

DaMata, Roberto. 1991: *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes. An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma.* Notre Dame & London: University of Notre Dame Press.

Dávila, Arlene. 1997. *Sponsored Identities: Cultural Politics in Puerto Rico.* Philadelphia: Temple University press

Duany, Jorge. 2002a: *The Puerto Rican nation on the Move. Identities on the Island and in the United States.* Capital Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press.

----- 2002b: "Irse pa' fuera: The mobile livelihoods of circular migrants between Puerto Rico and the United States" in Olwig & Sørensen (Ed.) *Work and Migration. Life and Livelihoods in a Globalizing World.* London & New York: Routledge.

Fitzpatrick, Joseph P. 1971: *Puerto Rican Americans. The Meaning of Migration to the Mainland.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Flores, Juan. 2000: *From Bomba to Hip-Hop.* New York: Colombia University Press.

Frykman, Jonas & Løfgren, Orvar. 1994: *Det Kultiverte Mennesket.* Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S.

Frøystad, Kathinka. 2005: *Blended Boundaries. Caste, Class, and Shifting Faces of 'Hinduness' in a North Indian City.* Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

Gellner, Ernest. 2006 (1983): *Nations and Nationalism.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Gennep, Arnold van. 1977: *The Rites of Passage.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

Guerra, Lillian. 1998: *Popular Expression and National Identity in Puerto Rico: the Struggle for Self, community, and Nation.* Florida: University Press Florida

- Hannerz**, Ulf. 1982: "Washington and Kafanchan: a View of Urban Anthropology" in *L'Homme*. Vol. 22, No. 4, p.25-36
- Horvath**, Ronald J. 1972: "A definition of Colonialism" in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Feb., 1972), p.45-57
- Hume**, Lynne & Mulcock, Jane (Ed). 2004: *Anthropologists in the Field. Cases in Participant Observation*. New York: Colombia University Press.
- Hutchinson**, John. 1994: "Cultural Nationalism and Moral Regeneration" in Hutchinson & Smith (Ed.) *Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hutchinson**, John & Smith. 1994: *Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hylland Eriksen**, Thomas. 2002: "Begynnelser og Tilløp" in Hylland Eriksen & Nielsen: *Til Verdens Ende og Tilbake. Antropologiens historie*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Krohn-Hansen**, Christian. 2007: "The Understanding of Migration and the Discourse of Nationalism: Dominicans in New York City" in Lien & Melhus (Ed); *Holding Worlds Together: Ethnographies of Knowing and Belonging*. Berghahn Books. pp. 77-102
- Ladd**, Hellen F. & Rivera-Batiz, Francisco L. 2006: "Ch.5 Education and Economic Development" in Collins, Bosworth & Soto-Class (ed). *The Economy of Puerto Rico. Restoring Growth*. Colombia: The Brookings Institution
- Lewis**, Oscar. 1968: *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty: San Juan and New York*. New York: Vintage Giant.
- Low**, Seta M 1996: "The Anthropology of Cities: Imaging and Theorizing the City." *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol 25: 383-409

----- 1999: "introduction: Theorising the City" in Low (Ed.) *Theorizing the City. The New Urban Anthropology Reader*. London: Rutgers University Press.

Miller, Daniel. 1993a: "A theory of Christmas" in Miller (Ed.): *Unwrapping Christmas*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

----- 1993b: "Christmas in Trinidad" in Miller (Ed.): *Unwrapping Christmas*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Mintz, Sidney W. 1989: *Caribbean Transformations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Morris, Nancy 1995: *Puerto Rico: Culture, Politics, and Identity*. Westport: Praeger Publisher.

Olwig, Karen Fog. 1993; *Global Culture, Island Identity. Continuity and change in the Afro-Caribbean community of Nevis*. London: Routledge

----- & Sørensen, Ninna Nyberg. 2002: *Work and Migration. Life and Livelihoods in a Globalized World*. London & New York: Routledge.

Ortner, Sherry. 1998: "Identities: the Hidden Life of Class" in *Journal of Anthropological Research*. University Press of Mexico 54 (1) page 1-17

-----2003: *New Jersey Dreaming. Capital, Culture, and the Class of '58*. Durham & London: Duke University Press

-----2006: *Anthropology and Social Theory. Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. London: Duke University Press.

Perez, Gina M. 2004: *The Near Northwest Side Story; Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families*. California: California University Press.

Rabinow, Paul. 2003: "Ordonnance, Discipline, Regulation: Some Reflections on Urbanism" in Low, Setha M. & Lawrence-Zúñiga, Denise (Ed.) *The Anthropology of Space and Place. Locating Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Reed-Danahay, Deborah. 2005: *Locating Bourdieu*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Rosaldo, Michelle. 1980: *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Rudnick, Lois P., Smith, Judith E., and Lee Rubin, Rachel. 2006: *American Identities*. An Introductory Textbook. Malden & Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Thagaard, Tove. 2003: *Systematikk og Innlevelse. En Innføring i Kvalitativ Metode*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget Vigmostad & Bjørke AS.

Turner, Victor W. 1967: *The Forests of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. New York: Cornell University Press

Wadel, Cato. 1991: "Feltarbeid som runddans mellom teori, metode og data" in Wadel: *Feltarbeid i egen kultur. En innføring i kvalitativt orientert samfunnsforskning*. Flekkefjord: SEEK.

Østberg, Dag. 1995 [1979]: "Innledning" in *Distinksjonen; En Sosiologisk Kritikk av Dømmekraften*. Pax Forlag.

Internet Resources:

Hylland, Thomas Eriksen. 1993: "In Which Sense do Cultural Islands Exist?" extracted from <http://folk.uio.no/geirthe/Islands.pdf> (last checked 13.06.2010)

New York Times 19.11.2005:

http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/19/national/19train.html?_r=1&scp=6&sq=puerto%20rico%20and%20cars&st=cse (last checked 19.06.2010)

U.S. Census 2000, a: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-3.pdf> (Last checked 13.06.2010)

b: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US72&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U_DP1&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U
(last checked 13.06.2010)

c: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US72&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U_DP2PR&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U&-lang=en&-redoLog=false&-sse=on (Last checked 09.06.2010)

Newspapers:

Primera Hora – Puerto Rico