Los distritos "M" y la producción colonial del espacio: rompiendo silencios para entender la desigualdad en San Juan

The "M" districts and the colonial production of space: Breaking the Silence[s] to Understand San Juan's Unevenness

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Resumen

Este artículo pretende mostrar cómo las fuerzas políticas y los agentes de desarrollo/planificación, durante las décadas de 1940 y 1960, han dado forma al actual paisaje urbano desigual. En particular, explora cómo la implementación de ciertos instrumentos reguladores (es decir, los Distritos M o Distritos de Rehabilitación-Conversión) son clave para entender los actuales patrones de segregación. Específicamente, pretende comenzar a rastrear cómo los procesos políticos y las políticas de planificación/desarrollo se articularon para estimular el crecimiento económico, a la vez que se combatía la expansión urbana de los barrios autogestionados en Puerto Rico. Y como este proceso, comenzó a producir formas desiguales de desarrollo urbano, en San Juan, particularmente en Santurce y Hato Rey. Además, da cuentas de cómo estas formas desiguales de desarrollo urbano contribuyeron a privar a los habitantes de los asentamientos autogestionados del acceso a oportunidades sociales y materiales a largo plazo. Para ello, proporciona nuevas formas de leer las transformaciones urbanas y de rastrear el desarrollo histórico de los

Abstract

This article aims to show how pivotal political forces and development/planning agents, during the 1940s and 1960s, have shaped the current uneven urban landscape. In particular, explores how the implementation of the regulatory instruments (i.e., Distritos M or Rehabilitation-Conversion Districts) are key to understand the current segregation patterns. Specifically, aims to start tracing how political processes and planning/development policies were articulated to stimulate economic growth, while combating the urban expansion of self-made neighborhoods in Puerto Rico. Hence, started producing uneven forms of urban development, in San Juan, particularly in Santurce and Hato Rey. Furthermore, how these uneven forms of urban development contributed to depraving self-planned settlements dwellers of access to social and material opportunities on the long run. To do so, provides new ways to read urban transformations and trace historical development of urban landscapes that allow us to uncover silences present in current planning official histories

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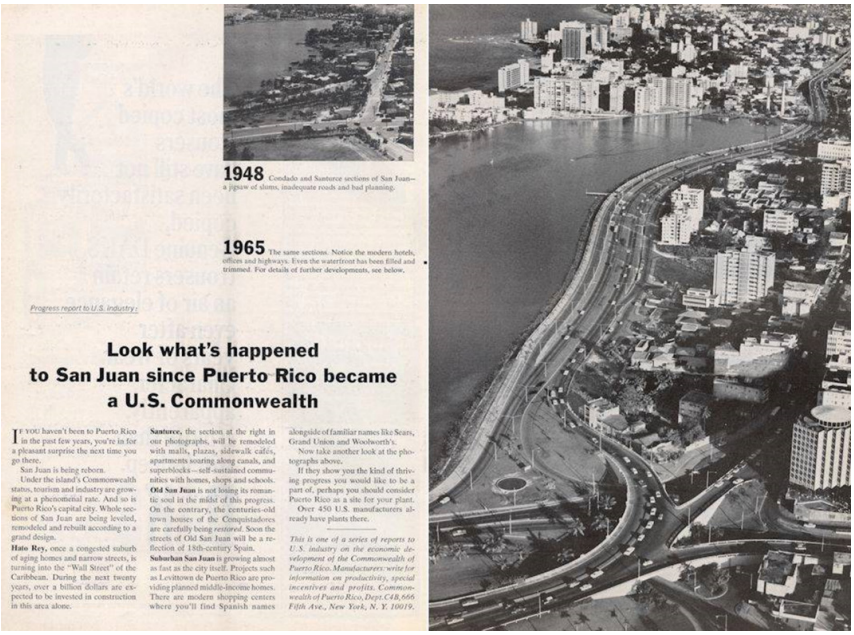
paisajes urbanos para romper con los silencios presentes en las historias oficiales de los procesos de planificación.

Palabras clave: Distritos "M", Distritos de Rehabilitación-Conversión, Producción del espacio colonial, San Juan

Keywords: "M" districts, Rehabilitation-Conversion Districts, colonial production of space, San Juan

Introduction



1948 Condado and Santurce sections of San Juan—a jigsaw of slums, inadequate roads and bad planning.

1965 The same sections. Notice the modern hotels, offices and highways. Even the waterfront has been filled and trimmed. For details of further developments, see below.

Progress report to U.S. industry:

Look what's happened to San Juan since Puerto Rico became a U.S. Commonwealth

IF YOU haven't been to Puerto Rico in the past few years, you're in for a pleasant surprise the next time you go there.

San Juan is being reborn.

Under the island's Commonwealth status, tourism and industry are growing at a phenomenal rate. And so is Puerto Rico's capital city. Whole sections of San Juan are being leveled, remodeled and rebuilt according to a grand design.

Hato Rey, once a congested suburb of aging homes and narrow streets, is turning into the "Wall Street" of the Caribbean. During the next twenty years, over a billion dollars are expected to be invested in construction in this area alone.

Santurce, the section at the right in our photographs, will be remodeled with malls, plazas, sidewalk cafés, apartments soaring along canals, and superblocks—self-sustained communities with homes, shops and schools.

Old San Juan is not losing its romantic soul in the midst of this progress. On the contrary, the centuries-old town houses of the Conquistadores are carefully being *restored.* Soon the streets of Old San Juan will be a reflection of 18th-century Spain.

Suburban San Juan is growing almost as fast as the city itself. Projects such as Levittown de Puerto Rico are providing planned middle-income homes. There are modern shopping centers where you'll find Spanish names alongside of familiar names like Sears, Grand Union and Woolworth's.

Now take another look at the photographs above.

If they show you the kind of thriving progress you would like to be a part of, perhaps you should consider Puerto Rico as a site for your plant.

Over 450 U.S. manufacturers already have plants there.

This is one of a series of reports to U.S. industry on the economic development of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Manufacturers: write for information on productivity, special incentives and profits. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Dept. CA 866 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y. 10019.

San Juan is being reborn. Under the island's Commonwealth status, tourism and industry are growing at a phenomenal rate. And so is Puerto Rico's capital city. Whole sections of San Juan are being leveled, remodeled and rebuilt according to a grand design . . . Now take another look at the photographs above. If they show you the kind of thriving progress you would like to be a part of, perhaps you should consider Puerto Rico as a site for your plant. (Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company, 1965).

The process of becoming "urban" is much more than just a spatial transformation; it implies a complete shift in social, political, and economic relations that can be traced in the urban landscape (Lefebvre, 1996). In other words, the organization of space and space itself are a product of pivotal social and political relations, which are temporal in nature. However, space as a social and political product also implies that other social actors (e.g., urban dwellers, private actors, and the media, among others) are involved in the production and reproduction of space. Hence, as with many other societal alterations, urbanization does not happen on a continuum; rather, it is reconfigured due to political mediations, conflicts, changes in economic priorities, and political crises. During this process of becoming "urban," the "state-political power becomes omnipresent: it is everywhere, but its presence varies in intensity; in some places it is diffuse, in others concentrated . . . [s]pace is what makes it possible for the economic to be integrated into the political" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 321). Overall, the shift toward "urban" life signals "the processes through which the production of space becomes the prime engine of economy and society" (Roy, 2011, p. 8).

In the case of Puerto Rico, the process of becoming "urban" also involved the reconfiguration of US hegemonic powers over the Colonial State and a readjustment of the development/planning ensemble agents, which started in the early 1940s. Hence, the initiation of San Juan's dramatic urban transformation, in the 1950s, was linked to Puerto Rico becoming a showcase of democracy. By

the early 1960s, in contrast to earlier periods when headlines emphasized Puerto Rico's precarious living conditions, the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company (PRIDCO), in alliance with other planning/development ensemble agents, started changing the image of Puerto Rico, using San Juan as a symbol of the Commonwealth's "thriving progress." Echoing this rhetoric, many planning instruments (e.g., Plans, zoning ordinance, health condes) were developed or enforced to transform San Juan into a world-class city. As presented in the magazine clip, in the opening postscript, the modern buildings and capital improvements in San Juan were branded as tangible proof of the benefits of Puerto Rico's new political status. While certain areas of San Juan became privileged spaces, the marsh and mangrove areas of Caño Martín Peña (hereafter, CMP) became home to thousands of rural migrants looking for jobs and other benefits of economic "progress." However, these settlements in the heart of the capital city turned out to be a source of a "major embarrassment to the US government" (Grosfoguel, 2003, p. 108). Thus, to build many of these new urban amenities and address the "disgraceful" image, many self-made poor neighborhoods were erased from the San Juan landscape. Many families were "temporarily" resettled in public housing complexes, while their former neighborhoods were converted into highways, high-rises, new urbanizations, hotels, malls, and government offices, among others.

In an attempt to uncover historical silences and motivated by the long and persistent contestations about space and territory and the rightful belonging of San Juan, my research endeavor aims to show how pivotal political forces and development/planning agents, during the 1940s and 1960s, have shaped the current uneven urban landscape. In doing so, it sheds light on how a wide array of development/planning agents, spatial strategies, and colonial political interventions in San Juan were deeply tied to economic growth policies designed to attract US investors and uphold US hegemony and the Colonial State power blocs.[1] Specifically, this article aims to start tracing how political processes and planning/development policies were articulated to stimulate economic growth, while combating the urban expansion of self-made neighborhoods in Puerto Rico. Hence, started producing uneven forms of urban development, in San Juan, particularly in Santurce and the Hato Rey area, with attention to the surroundings the Caño Martín Peña. Furthermore, the article explores how, on the long run, these uneven forms of urban development contributed to depraving self-planned settlements dwellers of access to social and material opportunities. In particular, I contend that implementation of the regulatory instruments (i.e., Distritos M or Rehabilitation-Conversion Districts) designed to combat these urban poor settlements are key to understand the current unequal urban landscape and segregation patterns. The case of Puerto Rico sheds light on how the tension between urban development and national planning priorities may increase the exploitation and marginalization of poor urban populations, especially at the neighborhood level in capital cities in Latin America. Thus, my focus on multiple scales is particularly important in order to understand the histories and patterns of uneven development, especially the distinctive role that the state has played in the production of space and inequalities. This research, also, provides new ways to read urban transformations and trace historical development of urban landscapes that allow us to uncover silences present in current planning official histories.

1 This article is the first of a series of publications derived from a larger research project, which is still ongoing, but also serves as partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (dissertation) presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin under the title *Becoming urban: A historical ethnography of Puerto Rico's development/planning ensemble and its spatial production in Santurce (1940-1960)* on May 2021. A digital version of the dissertation may be found in the following direction: https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/86901

Becoming "urban": Erasure and "order"

For decades, Puerto Rico's colonial development/planning model has been framed around alternative ways to attract capital despite the limited natural resources for extraction available compared to other countries in the region (Concepción, 1995). As a result, land became an important resource for economic development, and Puerto Ricans' relationship with the land has always been the subject of struggle. Instead of using other development strategies focused on export-led platforms, the national development model has focused on promoting the island as an investor's paradise. Within this development model, the State provides individual and corporate tax breaks (at both local and federal levels) and coordinates a wide range of benefits for investors (Baver, 1993). Thus, this model construed Puerto Rico as a tropical paradise with luxury hotels and casinos for investors and visitors, but not for its poor residents. Hence, Puerto Rico's official planning and urban development history obscures how colonial political forces have influenced the configuration of different state development and planning agents and thus contributed to the production of the urban landscape of the Archipelago over time.

At the state level, I distinguish between the Metropolitan state (i.e., the US, federal government) and the Colonial state (i.e., Puerto Rico's national administration or Commonwealth of Puerto Rico government). Even though the Metropolitan state upholds ultimate authority and control over the Colonial state, this relationship is complex and negotiated. Instead, this relationship is sustained by a "dialectic process of accommodation, articulation, [and] condensation of often competing and sometimes conflictive interests between the local and metropolitan" agents (Pantojas-García, 1990, p. 24). This differentiation is important for understanding key moments (i.e., moments of hegemony in the Gramscian sense) in which the Colonial space is inscribed by a particular form of social and political struggle (Forgas, 2000; Hall, 2016). Thus, in terms of administration, the Colonial state has not operated according to a consistent political logic under the US regime. Instead, it has been shaped by the shifting engagement of local political coalitions (Cabán, 2002) and evolving, and often contradictory, legal and institutional arrangements through which US hegemony has been reproduced and legitimized (Rivera, 1998). In the case of Puerto Rico, these contestations not only resulted in pivotal legal and institutional arrangements but also contributed to the production and reproduction of space and the creation of a specific context for action and resistance. To deal with Puerto Rico's colonial complexity, I use the concept of the development/planning ensemble ("the ensemble") to understand how both the Colonial and Metropolitan states contribute to the organization of space.[2]

Within this context, the function of planning can be said to be twofold. First, planning is the medium that bridges western economic knowledge and experience with local state actions and policies, mainly through the modernization process and the sustained quest for progress (Escobar, 1995). Second, planning is one of the leading politico-institutional agents that facilitates the qualitative transformation that occurs when "the State takes charge of growth, whether directly or indirectly" (Lefebvre, 2001, p. 773). Furthermore, the planning terrain is fragmented, and development/planning practice resides in many state micro-level institutions that together further the national development project through diverse instruments and plans, particularly post-WWII. In the case of Puerto Rico, the dominant development/planning logic has historically served the Colonial State as a medium to quell social unrest through the use of social justice discourse while ensuring the reproduction of uneven development and social inequalities in colonial or neocolonial arenas.

In order to comprehend the current uneven landscape of San Juan, particularly in Santurce and the Caño Martín Peña surroundings, it is necessary to step back and examine the backdrop in which

2 See Encarnación Burgos (2021) for further details.

these processes emerged in the late 1930s and 1940s. Furthermore, it is imperative to understand how US agents framed the 'slums' concept and Puerto Rico's precarious economic and social conditions before these types of settlements became a contested issue; and to understand how the discourse of slums contributed to the stigmatization of specific neighborhoods, which in the long run served or justify Colonial State actions such as displacement and redevelopment that would produce San Juan's uneven landscape.

San Juan's Urban Expansion (1910-1950): A brief geographical background

After the shifting of Metropolitan states (i.e., after the Spanish American War, 1898), the population and activities in Santurce grew from 5,840 inhabitants in 1899 to 17,338 in 1910 (Sepúlveda & Carbonell, 1987). Santurce's access to Puerto Rico's rail system fostered rapid development, which in turn made this area an employment hub for rural migrants. Thus, during the 1920s the Archipelago's socioeconomic conditions forced many rural dwellers to move to San Juan. During this process, many newcomers settled in the margins of Santurce's marshlands along Caño Martín Peña. Figure 1 shows the historical expansion of the San Juan Metropolitan Area, while Table 1 summarizes key population trends for rural and urban populations in Puerto Rico, San Juan, and in Santurce. As noted in these illustrations, Santurce's urban footprint dramatically expanded between 1900 and 1920, and it kept expanding in the subsequent periods. Thus, its population exponentially increased with the successive urban expansions in 1920, 1940, and 1950.

Table 1. Puerto Rico's Population Trends (1910-1950)[3]

Population	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
Puerto Rico (total)	1,118,012	1,299,809	1,543,913	1,869,255	2,206,414
Urban	224,620	283,934	427,221	641,356	929,021
Rural	893,392	1,015,875	1,116,692	1,227,899	1,277,393
San Juan (total)	48,716	71,443	114,715	169,247	223,949
Santurce Barrio	17,338	35,096	81,060	133,091	195,007

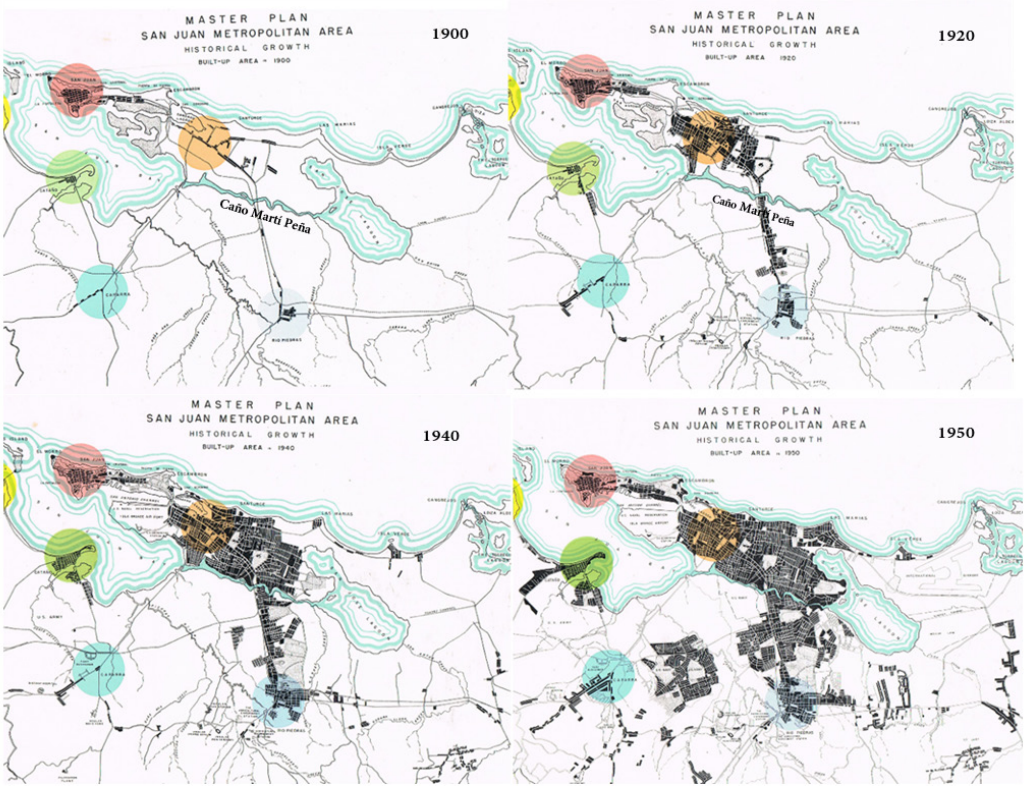
In contrast with other cities, San Juan's urban center was not a fixed geographical area; through this historical expansion, the core of the capital city shifted as a direct consequence of the Archipelago's sociopolitical circumstances. Between 1930 and 1950, Santurce became the formal center of the Capital city. Most of the population of the capital resided in Santurce during these years—around 71, 79, and 87 percent, respectively, at the turn of each decade—and many of the city's commercial and institutional activities were moved to this area. Hence, urban poor settlements were located primarily along the margins of the Caño Martín Peña, Los Corozos, and the San José lagoons. Even though these later settlements dramatically expanded during the 1940s and 1950s, after 1960 the population started rapidly decreasing due to slum clearance, redevelopment projects and urban renewal initiatives. Thus, the article focuses on San Juan, particularly on Santurce and the areas

3 Data complied using the historical library Puerto Rico's State Data Center (SDC-PR), a program supported by the U.S. Census Bureau. https://censo.estadisticas.pr/censo-decenal

surrounding the Caño Martín Peña, because it was the epicenter of Puerto Rico's economic, social, and political activities following "the rise to dominance of capitalist production" (Dietz, 1986, p. 133) in the mid-twentieth century.

In this context, urban development— specifically in Santurce and Hato Rey, and to a lesser degree in other parts of San Juan—has been tied to policies designed to stimulate economic growth and urban regulations (e.g., zoning ordinances). These policies were part of the commodification of the city that was induced by Metropolitan state's development patterns, federal funding, and urbanist visions and models (Segre & Sepulveda, 1986). Today, this area presents an intriguing, contested urban geography that reflects the shifting historical dynamics of urban planning and development strategies.

Figure 1. Urban Expansion: San Juan Metropolitan Area (1900- 1950)



Source: A city is people: The San Juan metropolitan area 1508-1975, a basis for planning. (1954). Published by the Puerto Rico Planning Board as a souvenir for the delegates of the Fifth Interamerican Congress of Municipalities celebrated in San Juan. The illustration shows Santurce with an orange circle, and Old San Juan with salmon circle. Adapted by the author (Encarnación Burgos, 2021).

The emergence of the development/planning logic

In 1933, the first social programs of the New Deal policy regime were extended to Puerto Rico. In the process, planning became one of the vehicles to frame new social goals and an ideal tool capable of framing solutions to the economic and social crisis while concealing the emergence of new forms of power. Thus, the establishment of planning in Puerto Rico was deeply tied to the emergence of the discourse of modernity —, i.e., a new form of governance anchored in the ideas of "development" and "progress" through a distinctive use of scientific and technical knowledge—in addition to concrete and formal planning products (Rodríguez, 2002, 2010).

To implement and administer the New Deal programs, two federal entities were established within the Colonial State; the Puerto Rico Emergency Relief Administration (commonly known as PRERA, hereafter referred to as the Relief Administration) and the Puerto Rican Reconstruction Administration (commonly known as PRRA, hereafter referred to as the Reconstruction Administration). Both, the Relief Administration and Reconstruction Administration, contributed to the production of development/planning logic. Thus, the Emergency Relief Administration programs provided the foundation for a shift in colonial governance that became more visible with the establishment of the Reconstruction Administration in 1935. Furthermore, both institutions were used as training centers for the future Colonial State's technocrats (Santana Rabell, 1984; Dietz, 1986; Rodríguez, 2002). As these young professionals received training and practice in development/planning techniques, new technical classification schemes and scientific rationales emerged to direct social and economic change (Dietz, 1986; Rodríguez, 2002). Accordingly, the development/planning discourse and practices shaped the Colonial State's technocrats' rationales and interventions as these young professionals became part of the Puerto Rico development/planning ensemble in the 1940s. This disciplining of Colonial State technocrats was especially important for the understanding and representation of poverty and the attendant categories/definitions for action they relied on —such as the need for an aggressive slum clearance program— which contributed, in part, to San Juan's uneven form of urban development.

During the post-World War II period, the US needed to promote itself as a benevolent nation. Changes began in 1941 when Luis Muñoz Marín and the Populares assumed control of the Puerto Rican legislature, and Rexford Guy Tugwell became the appointed Governor of Puerto Rico. On the one hand, while Puerto Rico's social and economic conditions were not improving, in 1938, Muñoz Marín was able to provide a venue to stabilize the regime by forming a new domestic political party: the Partido Popular Democrático. "Thus, wartime conditions actually enabled the PPD to fulfill many of its promises and to consolidate its popular base support" (Pantojas-García, 1990, p. 50). Soon, the Populares "came to power, campaigning against large sugar interests and absentee landownership. Bread, land, and freedom became the rallying cry for the [P]opulares" (Duany, 1997, p. 196). To some extent, "Muñoz was able to channel the discontent of the majority," settling the social and political unrest during the 1940s (Dietz, 1986, p.182-183).

On the other hand, Tugwell's appointment was centered on managing and controlling the ongoing social, economic, and political crisis through implementing a 'modern' development project capable of transforming the discomfort with the US colonial regime. Tugwell himself later discussed these efforts in his memoir, *The stricken land: The story of Puerto Rico* (1946), asserting:

> My task as Governor would be to defeat the forces of reaction and to rally Puerto Ricans behind the effort into which the nation was going…. My duty as a representative of my country in Puerto Rico was to shape civil affairs, if I could, so that military bases, which might soon (before they were ready) have to stand the shock of the attack, were not isolated in a generally hostile environment. (p. 116)

As noted in the excerpt, Tugwell's priority was securing the US military presence in Puerto Rico due to its strategic location. To do so, Tugwell rescaled and adjusted many New Deal scientific development/planning proposals going beyond what would be possible in the US due to the political climate. Tugwell was "convinced that unregulated capitalism invited economic instability and social unrest" (Dietz, 1986, p. 156). Together, Muñoz and Tugwell established new state development/planning agents (e.g., the Development Bank and Planning Board) to contend with Puerto Rico's social, economic, and political crisis. In doing so, Puerto Rico's development and political project "served as a blueprint [i.e., 'showcase of democracy,' 'economic miracle'] for US development policy in the era of decolonization" and as proof that the US model of democracy and capitalism could be replicated (Neveling, 2015, p. 64). Hence, this institutional expansion was accompanied by a strong technical and scientific discourse, which had already been initiated by the Relief Administration and the Reconstruction Administration and reproduced in the recommendations outlined in the Chardón Plan.

The Chardón Plan outlined recommendations to solve Puerto Rico's core social and socioeconomic tensions. These tensions were rooted in absentee land ownership, the US monopoly of the sugar industry, unemployment, and precarious living conditions, among others. Furthermore, to strengthen the professional, academic, and technical capabilities of these new state agents, the Colonial State administration also started embracing Puerto Rico as an ideal place for social experimentation, which attracted many US scholars who were interested in the New Deal-like development/planning interventions (Santana Rabell, 1984; Lapp, 1995). Following the Chardón plan's recommendation, the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) and the Archipelago started to be framed as a perfect bridge to grow US connections in Latin America (Santana Rabell, 1984). Thus, the UPR became an important venue to showcase Puerto Rico's planning/development strategies to become 'urban' and the institutional arrangement (i.e., planning/development ensemble) that facilitated the transition. As such, the expansion of the Colonial State institutional structure was part of a broader set of political mediations to maintain US power and control over the Archipelago through the careful articulation of knowledge and power. Furthermore, this modernization strategy buttresses development/planning discourses promoted by Metropolitan agents since the 1930s, which sought to "combat" poverty and its visible consequences through modern social and economic programs.

Overall, the end of WWII brought a strong discourse against colonialism, contrary to the core tenets of the economic and political project that the North-West was preaching (Escobar, 1995). Post-war tensions forced the readjustment of many politico-institutional arrangements worldwide, causing a shift in the relationship between the State and civil society in many contexts. In the case of Puerto Rico, the shift in the Colonial administration was also tied to the rising demand for self-governance, which was, officially, set in motion in 1946. Hence, the Cold War period between the mid-1940s until the 1960s brought a change in the Archipelago's political status, which furthered the integration of the Archipelago into the US system through a more subtle form of control: the "Estado Libre Asociado" (hereafter the Commonwealth or ELA).[4] The change in the Archipelago's political status also established a common development project for the US and this new Commonwealth: showcasing democracy and the potential of state development capitalism for Latin America and other former colonies at the time. Moreover, this sociopolitical shift was accompanied by a shift from an agricultural to an industrial (i.e., urban) economy, which was the most rapid and dramatic social and spatial transformation ever experienced in the Archipelago (Dietz, 1986;

4 Legally, Puerto Rico is defined in Spanish as the "Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico" and in English as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Duany, 1997). However, the official institutionalization of planning, within the Colonial State, as a key element in the development process started in the early-1940s, as I explain in the next section.

The development/planning agent formation and the beginning of the "war" against the slums

On May 12, 1942, the Colonial State passed legislation to establish the Planning Board as a central authority with broad powers to guide

> a coordinated, adjusted and economic development of Puerto Rico, which, in accordance with present and future needs and human, physical and financial resources, will best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, defense, culture, economic soundness, the welfare of the present and future inhabitants, and such efficiency and economy in the process of development and the distribution of population, of the uses of land and of public improvements as will tend to be favorable thereto.[5]

Unlike other planning entities established during that historical period (the 1930s-1940s) across the Metropolitan state, the Planning Board held broad powers that extended to the national, regional, and local levels (Santana Rabell, 1987).[6] In other words, the Planning Board had more far-reaching power than any other planning entity (i.e., Relief administration or Reconstruction administration) established within the Metropolitan state jurisdiction at that time. In the words of its first Chairman (i.e., Rafael Picó), the role of the Planning Board

> within the administrative structure of the [Colonial] Government…[was conceived as advisor of the] Governor and the Legislature on matters of economic and social development and fiscal policy, and [as a coordinator of] the development activities of the other government departments and public corporations within the framework of policy set.

In 1942, the Puerto Rico Development Company (commonly known as the Development Company and PRIDCO after 1945) and its companion agency, the Government Development Bank (hereafter the Development Bank), were also established. At first, the Development Company oversaw promoting industrial initiatives and was the leading economic growth state coordinator, while the Development Bank was the state fiscal agent (Dietz, 1986; Pantojas-García, 1990). Meanwhile, the Planning Board was focused "on the physical aspect of planning" (Stead, 1958, p. 14), especially on organizing and programming the necessary public infrastructure to establish a successful economic development program and attain (Santana Rabell, 1987).

Around the same time, the precarious economic and social conditions of Puerto Rico's urban poor settlements became the subject of internal political contention between different US political actors. On the one hand, some political actors argued that the relief money was mishandled and that socioeconomic conditions were not improving, asserting that Tugwell was trying to "socialize" the Archipelago.7 On the other hand, other political actors, especially those who favor Tugwell's

5 Act No. 213, May 12, 1942 "Puerto Rico Planning, Urbanizing and Zoning Act," Section 3 General Purpose. The translation of the statute was retrieved from the Appendix of Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Insular Affairs (April 23, 1943, p. 146). Special Committee Investigation of Political, Economic and Social Conditions in Puerto Rico. Seventy-Eighth Congress First Session H Res. 159.

6 This legislation was based on a project "prepared by a consultant of the [US] National Resource Planning Board and amended locally by the [US] National Resource Planning Board's field office" (Planning Board, 1943). Nevertheless, not all of Governor Tugwell's allies' recommendations were incorporated into the Planning Act's final version. For example, Puerto Rico's legislature excluded rural areas from the Planning Board's jurisdiction; at the time, these areas were under Land Authority's jurisdiction (Villamil, 1967).

7 Representative Jasper Bell, quoted in the House group, urges Puerto Rico inquiry: Rules committee hears charges against Tugwell regime. (1943, March 20). New York Times (1923-Current File) http://ezproxy.

administration, asserted the problem was the lack of funding to expand programs and projects. This public discussion was also accompanied by vivid images of these settlements, underscoring the magnitude of the socioeconomic problems. Thus, these settlements began to be construed as "a disgrace to the [US] flag" (President Roosevelt, in Tugwell, 1947, p. 98) and a reflection of poor US management. For example, Life magazine, in March of 1943 (p. 23), in light of the findings of a US Senate sub-committee, which was investigating Puerto Rico's social and economic conditions at that time, published the following account:

> …a shocking disgrace to the U. S. They [, the images] portray conditions in our island possession of Puerto Rico. While millions of young men are fighting to clean up the Axis and to create a better post-war world, the cesspool of Puerto Rico has been festering in our backyard for over 40 years. If Americans cannot straighten out the relatively small mess of this small island, how can they expect to bring order to chaos in the rest of the big world? . . . Last winter Puerto Rico's U. S. Governor Tugwell asked Congress for a $15,000,000 relief appropriation. Congress, which doesn't approve of Tugwell or his methods, refused. His administration has been under constant fire from both Houses ever since. Tugwell's supporters claim such attacks are "politics" meant to embarrass the Roosevelt Administration.[8]

Under the title "Puerto Rico: Senate Investigating Committee finds it an Unsolvable Problem", the article also included pictures to illustrate the conditions described in the previous excerpt, Figure 2 shows the images in question.

lib.utexas.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/historical-newspapers/house-group-urges-puerto-rico-inquiry/docview/106499894/se-2?accountid=711.

8 Problems in Connection with Slum Clearance in Puerto Rico with Special Reference to the San Juan Area; ca. 1939; Slums; General Records, 1935 - 1946; Records of the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, Record Group 323; National Archives at New York, NY. [Online Version, https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/problems-in-connection-with-slum-clearance-in-puerto-rico, January 6, 2019]

Figure 2. Illustrations from Life's article on Puerto Rico's social and economic conditions

Source: *Life Magazine,* March 1943.

This magazine article also used Puerto Rico's "disgraceful" living conditions to question the US's capacity to become the 'world savior' if conflicts between political parties were not solved. As noted in phrases such as "bring order to chaos in the rest of the big world," this was not the first time that the living situation within these working-class settlements unsettled US visitors or that Puerto Rico's socioeconomic conditions were used as a political bargaining chip.

Thus, working-class settlements in urban areas started to be actively labeled "slums," and the need to 'fix' became an important part of the Metropolitan State's agenda (Stevens, 1985). Nonetheless, it soon became an essential part of the local (i.e., Puerto Rico) political agenda. From U.S. visitors' perspectives, a slum became defined as a high-density neighborhood located in substandard topographic conditions (e.g., marshlands), where sanitary conditions were far from acceptable, streets were

poorly laid out, and open spaces were almost nonexistent. In her autobiography, Eleanor Roosevelt (1934) described these settlements in the following way:

> I remember going down a street, looking into the houses of factory workers. Most of them consisted of two rooms; the back room had no light, and practically the only light in the front room came through the doorway. There were no screens and, of course, no plumbing or other modern conveniences.[9]

As noted in the excerpt above, the critique of slum conditions also bemoaned the lack of "modern conveniences" and hence the backwardness of these communities. This backwardness reflected poorly not only on the Colonial State but also on the Metropolitan State, which needed to be 'fixed' as pointed out in Ickes' memories of a follow-up trip to Puerto Rico in 1936 (1953, p. 504):

> Such slums are a reflection not only upon the government but upon that of the United States. It is unbelievable that human beings can be permitted to live in such noisome cesspools.[10]

Moreover, some of these Metropolitan State official visitors were unsettled by the working-class settlements' seeming lack of "order", which was entangled with a cultural perception of what was acceptable in an urban setting. For Tugwell, too (1947, p. 55), San Juan was a space full of contradictions that needed to be "fixed" As Tugwell wrote in his memoir, "[t]here was no thought, no order, no community discipline, "and "the rising tide of slums . . . seemed about to overwhelm the city" (p. 55). On the other hand, Tugwell (1947, p. 55) recognized that these settlements followed a logical and functional pattern; in particular, "the shack city over the marshes beside the Martin Peña Channel . . . had a kind of order and governance of its own".

Meanwhile, at first, Puerto Rican politicians saw these working-class settlements as a symbol of freedom and resiliency that needed to be rewarded. For example, the Popular Democratic Party 1940 electoral platform, led by Muñoz Marín, noted:

> La libertad más elemental del ser humano es la posesión de tierra en la que clavó los zocos de su hogar. Esta libertad, para los que la necesiten y la deseen, será garantizada por el Partido Popular Democrático. . . En San Juan y en otras poblaciones donde el pueblo, agobiado por el desempleo, se ha visto obligado a construir sus hogares en terrenos públicos, debe otorgársele título sobre el terreno en que estén construidos estos hogares a los dueños de las casas construidas en tales terrenos.[11]

As illustrated in the excerpt, the Popular Democratic Party presented homeownership as implicated both in freedom and social justice, two tenets that the State should guarantee. However, Muñoz Marín and the Populares later changed their opinion and appreciation for this type of settlement as political relations with the Metropolitan agents shifted. By the mid-1940s, these settlements were no longer seen as heroic; instead, they were seen as undesirable. This vision was strengthened during Muñoz Marín's s 1948 campaign for Governor when he promised that his administration would continue allocating funds for low-income housing construction and continuing the slum clearance program:

9 Roosevelt, E. (1934). Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. https://fdrlibrary.tumblr.com/post/91749749174/day-53-eleanor-visits-puerto-rico-and-the-virgin

10 Ickes, H. L. (1953). The secret diary of Harold L. Ickes. New York: Simon and Schuster.

11 Quoted in Prieto (1971, p. 59) appendix: Sample of statements on the public policy of "home ownership": Program of the political parties, Messages from the governor to the legislature, Economic programs of the planning board, and some documents of the Urban Renewal and Housing Corporation.

> El Partido Popular Democrático continuará desarrollando con todos los recursos disponibles el programa de eliminación de arrabales y construcción de viviendas para familias pobres y recursos limitados. (PPD platform, 1948)

By the mid-1940s, the label "slum" had been incorporated into the Colonial State discourse. Following the work of the Metropolitan agent (i.e., the Reconstruction Administration), the Puerto Rican Housing Authority and Planning Board started shaping a new urban development and housing discourse, which was accompanied by a policy regime that aimed to stop the proliferation of "insecure" and "unsanitary" settlements.

The public health and eugenic discourse during the 1930s and the early-1940s promoted by the Reconstruction Administration and other Metropolitan State agents provided the rationale for Colonial State action:

> for the elimination of unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions, for the provision of decent, safe, and sanitary dwellings for families of low income, and the reduction of unemployment and the stimulation of business activity (US Department of the Interior, 1938).

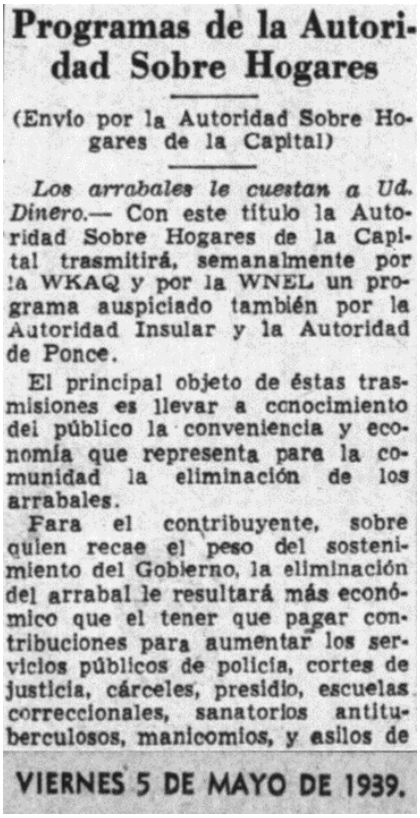
As noted in the U. S. Department of Interior report quoted above, these Metropolitan State actions, including allocating financial resources, were needed to make the colony profitable. At the same time, setting this agenda was complicated due to the economic conditions of many urban dwellers, who did not have the resources to acquire houses or pay rent at then-current market rates, as noted in a study by the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (1939):

> With the prevailing high rental rates in San Juan, Santurce…there is no alternative for these poor people but to look to the swamps….as a place to build their humble shacks. Detailed survey …. show that a large percentage of those living in slum areas pay no rent whatsoever. Many slum dwellers are squatters who, without authority and with no respect for the existing legislation, have built their poor and inadequate shacks upon swamp land owned by the Municipal or Insular Government.[12]

Hence, the strategies and regulations implemented in the Metropolitan cities were not transferable. With the emergence of the Colonial State development/planning ensemble in the 1940s, this discourse initiated by Metropolitan State agents became dominant. Thus, Colonial State actions fostered the criminalization and stigmatization of slum dwellers.

12 Problems in Connection with Slum Clearance in Puerto Rico with Special Reference to the San Juan Area; ca. 1939; Slums; General Records, 1935 - 1946; Records of the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, Record Group 323; National Archives at New York, NY. [Online Version, https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/problems-in-connection-with-slum-clearance-in-puerto-rico, January 9, 2019]

Figure 3. Housing Authority advertisement



Programas de la Autoridad Sobre Hogares

(Envio por la Autoridad Sobre Hogares de la Capital)

Los arrabales le cuestan a Ud. Dinero.— Con este titulo la Autoridad Sobre Hogares de la Capital trasmitirá, semanalmente por la WKAQ y por la WNEL un programa auspiciado también por la Autoridad Insular y la Autoridad de Ponce.

El principal objeto de éstas trasmisiones es llevar a conocimiento del público la conveniencia y economía que representa para la comunidad la eliminación de los arrabales.

Para el contribuyente, sobre quien recae el peso del sostenimiento del Gobierno, la eliminación del arrabal le resultará más económico que el tener que pagar contribuciones para aumentar los servicios públicos de policía, cortes de justicia, cárceles, presidio, escuelas correccionales, sanatorios antituberculosos, manicomios, y asilos de

VIERNES 5 DE MAYO DE 1939.

Source: *El Mundo*

An example of state actions that fostered this discourse and thus, the polarization of urban dwellers may be found in an advertisement for the Housing Authority's radio program titled "Los arrabales le cuestan a usted" ("The slums cost you money"), which was published in "El Mundo" in May of 1940. Figure 3 shows an advertisement by the Capital Housing Authority, which in English read:

> The slums cost you money - With this title, the Capital Housing Authority will transmit weekly through WKAQ and WNEL, a program also sponsored by the Island Housing Authority and the Ponce Authority.
>
> The primary purpose of these broadcasts is to make the public aware of the economic benefits of eliminating the slums.
>
> For the taxpayer, who is responsible for the government's support, eliminating the slums is more economical than paying taxes to increase the public services of police, courts of justice, prisons, jails, correctional schools, anti-tuberculosis sanatoriums, asylums, and retirement homes.

As one might expect, this type of official discourse in the media significantly impacted how other Puerto Ricans perceived urban poor settlements. In other words, from that point onward, these settlements were perceived as criminals and slums as dangerous places, especially the ones in Santurce.

In contrast with this official vision, in March 7, 1945, in the same news outlet (i.e., El Mundo) the residents of "El Fanguito" complained in a Legislative Hearing that

> se le atribuyen a " El Fanguito" crímenes, fechorías que tienen lugar en otras zonas...además casi todos los médicos se niegan a ir al barrio...que casi nunca se ve policías por allí, nunca han recogido la basura...[sin embargo] en "El Fanguito" impera un orden relativo, impuesto particularmente por los mismos residentes. (El Mundo, p.17)

Even though poor urban dwellers were stigmatized as dangerous and criminals by planning/developing Colonial State agents, in the early-1940s, residents started organizing to resist these violent attempts to enforce 'order' and claim their right to stay in place. Thus, "[p]lans for the eradication" of these impoverished areas were one of the primary activities of the Board (Picó, 1944, p. 22) in cooperation with the Housing Authority.

The Puerto Rico Housing Authority was established on May 6, 1938, by law No. 126. P.R. Laws tit. 17, § 31-85, to deal with Puerto Rico's precarious living conditions and housing shortage. The organizational structure of Puerto Rico's Housing Authority was attuned to the social and geographical conditions of the Archipelago. Although the Puerto Rico Housing Authority emerged following the Metropolitan State's New Deal developments in housing and urban development policy, an often-overlooked part of this history is how these developments, in Puerto Rico's case, were also entangled with economic and political tensions and disputes. In other words, despite Puerto Rico's access to US Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal programs and funds, the motivations and rationales were not the same as in other Metropolitan State localities.

As such, both Colonial agents, the Puerto Rico Planning Board and the Housing Authority, started defining what would be the 'proper' and 'orderly' way of urban development through regulation. Hence, the Planning Board's discourse was consistent with modernist urban planning approaches, which regarded "the administrative order of nature and society" (Scott, 1998, p. 88) as the ultimate aspiration. Although foreign agents initiated this view, the idea gradually became part of the core tenets of the Colonial State development/planning ensemble. These regulatory efforts were later used in conjunction with federal provisions that supported slum clearance and urban renewal programs.

The 'M' Districts and the Production of Space

In order to operationalize the "attack" against impoverished urban settlements, the Planning Board started drafting a series of regulatory instruments which provided the bureaucratic pathway to transform San Juan into a "modern" city. As previously discussed, the Housing Authority's projects and plans were overseen by the Planning Board, which held the power to decide on redevelopment and development matters. Meanwhile, the primacy of the Planning Board's role as a leading agent, or "sole arbiter," in the local redevelopment decisions was noted in many Metropolitan State official documents, especially regarding the Planning Board's support for Puerto Rico's industrial development strategy (i.e., Operation Bootstraps) through the articulation of aggressive slum clearance program. For example, in a publication of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (1952, p. 8-9), which summarized local redevelopment programs across the Metropolitan State, the Planning Board's highly centralized authority, ordering role, was presented as a crucial component in efforts to combat the rampant "unemployment, and poor living conditions":

> "Operation Bootstraps" is the term commonly applied to Puerto Rico's attack on its two basic problems, unemployment, and poor living conditions.

> Among the devices being used to encourage industrial development is current planning and study looking toward the provision of sites for industry through the slum clearance and urban redevelopment program, assisted by the US Government through Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, the slum clearance title…. In Puerto Rico's stepped-up program of development, the question of priority—industry versus housing—frequently arises. The sole arbiter of such posers where publicly-financed projects are concerned is the Puerto Rico Planning Board. This Board has complete and final jurisdiction over all public improvement undertakings. All such planning must be approved by the Board before the programs can move ahead. In addition to being responsible for housing and redevelopment approval, the Board also develops master plans for education, highways, and airports, for each municipality as well as for the island as a whole (Housing and Home Finance Agency, 1952, p. 8-9).

Furthermore, as briefly described in a previous excerpt and further explained by Telesforo Carrero, the director of the Urban Development division of the Planning Board in Housing in Puerto Rico (Technical Paper, no. 5), this institutional "attack" was facilitated by the Federal Housing Act of 1949, especially the provisions in Title I and III, which provided the funds required to initiate a more aggressive program of slum clearance and urban redevelopment (Carrero, 1950). Nevertheless, in this section, I am interested in showing how the Planning Board allocated sites for development through planning regulations, while slowing excluding poor urban dwellers.

Overall, the urban development and planning regulatory instruments included the approval of Puerto Rico's zoning ordinance, the enactment of laws, and the incremental approval of zoning maps for urban areas. Nevertheless, formally, the Colonial State's 'attack' against informal settlements in Santurce started in the mid-1940s with the approval of Puerto Rico's zoning ordinances, which were enacted "before and separately from any zoning map…without a study on the ground" (Martocci, 1961, p.3).

These rules included a particular district whose main goal was to facilitate the slum clearance processes. Such districts were known as Distritos M, or Distritos de Mejoramiento ("M" Districts or Rehabilitation-Conversion Districts). The Distritos M provided not only the means to control the expansion of "slums" but also the necessary authority to force the redevelopment of those areas to reorganize the city in parallel with the economic development strategy, i.e., Operation Bootstraps. However, this planning instrument's conceptualization started in the Planning Board's early days. In its first annual report in 1943, the Planning Board informed the Governor that

> The [Urban Development] Division has started preliminary studies for a broad plan for rehousing slum dwellers… It has established in the zoning regulations a special district called Rehabilitation-Conversion which it considers the first basic step towards the solution of the problem of "arrabales" [slums]. (Planning Board, 1942-1943, p. 20).

To enable this urban transformation, the Distritos M provided the legal basis to ban new construction on already built-up land until the approval of a redevelopment plan (Martocci, 1946). The proscription also included the construction and provision of essential public services such as sewage under the assumption that occupancy was temporary. For many observers, particularly US planning practitioners experimenting in Puerto Rico, this type of zoning control was considered a promising approach for US redevelopment practices. As Martocci (1946, p. 33) explained to his peers[13]:

13 At that time, the Urban Development Division of the Planning Board was led by Frank T. Martocci, who was the Senior planner and chief of the Division until 1945. Martocci was a trained architect who came from New York to work at the Planning Board. He later worked as a consultant for urban planning until 1951, when he resigned from this position ("Investigation of Political, Economic, and Social Conditions in Puerto Rico," 1943; Pico, 1952). Furthermore, during his time as Consultant to the Planning Board, Martocci drafted a "Plan for the

> [I]t is quite possible that in this in case [i.e., zoning as an instrument of redevelopment], as in others, the measures taken may have something to offer to the folks back home. . . Their [i.e., Puerto Rico Planning Board,] Zoning Regulation includes a new type of district, entitled "Rehabilitation-Conversion" or "M" District, the purpose of which is to permit the Board to define areas in which no public or private construction of any character may be made until property owners and appropriate government agencies submit to the Board a comprehensive plan for its redevelopment.

The regulation had two aims: first, to freeze public investment in designated areas to maintain minimal costs for clearing and preparing land for redevelopment; second, to contain the expansion of "slums." In practice, this regulatory tool was primarily tied to controlling the expansion of these settlements, primarily in San Juan, which in turn served to improve Puerto Rico's image and attract US investors. Furthermore, it was deeply tied to fostering economic growth and spreading the Colonial State's "know-how." In this regard, Picó (1952, p. 127) asserted in the journal The American City,

> The Planning Board was the first in the United States to prohibit any kind of permanent development in slums districts until a plan for the improvement of these districts as a whole could be put in effect… Permanent building has been forbidden on some 450 acres in Santurce, now known as "M districts," but plans for redevelopment along acceptable lines by private interests are always welcomed by the Board.

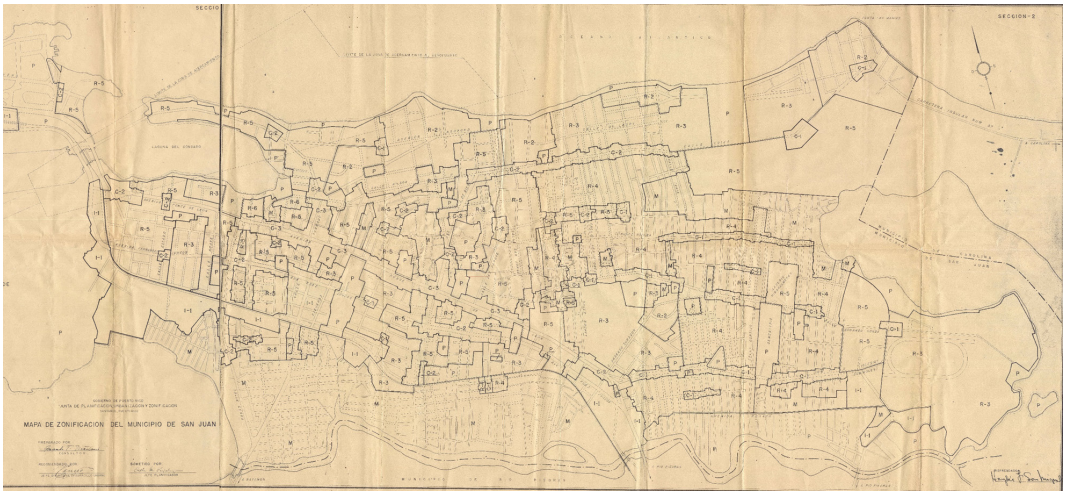
As Picó highlighted, the approval of the first section (i.e., the Old San Juan and Santurce section) of San Juan's Zoning Map, in June of 1946, prohibited the construction of permanent buildings in 450 acres of Santurce— an area where thousands of urban poor had established their homes and barrios. These construction freezes also restricted the Distritos M barrios from capital improvement and outlawed the right of thousands of Puerto Ricans to live in certain parts of Santurce with dignity not just during the 1950s but also in the long run. By this, I mean that the Distritos M started dividing Santurce into areas for development or certain populations while urban poor settlements were slowly erased from official maps and plans.

Figure 4 shows the San Juan Zoning Map. As shown in the Map and partially explained by Pico's editorial, Santurce was divided into eleven zoning categories (six residential, three commercial, and two industrial zones) and two special district categories (Distritos M and Public use districts). The Southern section was a mosaic of industrial, residential, and public use districts along with Distritos M. The Northern section of Santurce, the Condado area, was reserved for high-density residential development and small commercial development, which provided the basis for the expansion of wealthy neighborhoods and tourist attractions (hotels, designer stores, jewelry stores, and apartment complexes, among others).[14]

Development of Tourist Industry in Puerto Rico" in 1948; he also worked in a similar capacity for the Virgin Islands Government, drafting the "Proposed Master Plans of Urban Areas-Virgin Islands' in 1951 (Virgin Island Planning Office, 1974; Goldsmith, 1974).

14 Condado urban development was started during the late 1930s by private developers such as the Behn Brothers and was empowered by the Federal Housing Administration mortgage program.

Figure 4



San Juan Zoning Map

As shown, Santurce was divided into eleven zoning categories based on use and admissible density (six residential, three commercials, and two industrial zones) and two special district categories (Distritos M and Public use districts). The Southern section was a mosaic of industrial, residential, and public use districts along with Distritos M. The Northern section of Santurce, the Condado area, was reserved for medium and high-density residential development and small commercial development, which provided the basis for the expansion of wealthy neighborhoods and tourist attractions (hotels, designer stores, jewelry stores, and apartment complexes, among others).

Source: Mapa de Zonificación del Municipio de San Juan (1946). Archivo General de Puerto Rico. Fondo: Oficina del Gobernador. Tarea: 96-20. Caja #443. Boletín Administrativo 989. Adapted by the author (Encarnación Burgos, 2021). The original map was divided in two sections, which were in different piece of paper of 36 x 48 inches.

The Distritos M zoning tool was used in combination with other planning instruments, including the Slum Clearance Act (1945) and the Redevelopment and Housing Act (1947).[15] On the one hand, the Redevelopment and Housing Law authorized the Housing Authority and its municipal counterparts to carry out redevelopment projects, granting these organizations power to acquire, assemble, and dispose of real property within Zonas de Arrabal (slum zones), and blighted areas. On the other hand, the Slum Clearance Act outlined the administrative processes and criteria to designate an area as a Zona de Arrabal, which included a complete assessment of the area, notification to the affected parties about the intention to declare it a Zona de Arrabal, public hearings, and the possibility of an appeal process. Even though the power to designate Zonas de Arrabal was conferred upon the Planning Board, the process could start either by the Board's initiative or by the request of the Housing Authority or Health Department. This collaborative process started between 1943 and 1944, and its progress was discussed in several Planning Board annual reports. In this regard, the 1943-1944 Annual Report explains

> The [Urban Development] Division collaborated with the Puerto Rico Housing Authority in a review of the Rules and Regulations of that agency to bring them into conformity with those of the Planning Board. A conference was held with representatives of that agency on the proposed legislation designed. To give the Housing Authority power to designate slum areas for the purpose of controlling their spread. This was done to coordinate the proposals of the above legislation with the proposed rehabilitation-conversion districts and other requirements of the proposed zoning regulations of the Planning Board. (Planning Board, 1943-1944, p. 27)

Despite establishing these regulatory planning regimes, in the 1940s, informal settlements kept expanding. In response, zoning regulations were reinforced by establishing a surveillance program.[16] This surveillance program was authorized by Law No. 28 of 1950 and allowed for the appointment of Planning Board watchmen to enforce the freeze on constructionin Zonas de Arrabal and Distritos M. In addition, the watchmen were authorized to dismantle "illegal" construction in these areas and were also in close communication with police officers in case further punitive actions were needed. This show of force and active surveillance in Zonas de Arrabal was featured in local newspapers. Figure 5 shows some pictures circulated in *El Mundo* in the 1950s.

15 PR Law No. 264 of May 14, 1945. May 9, 1947, No. 97

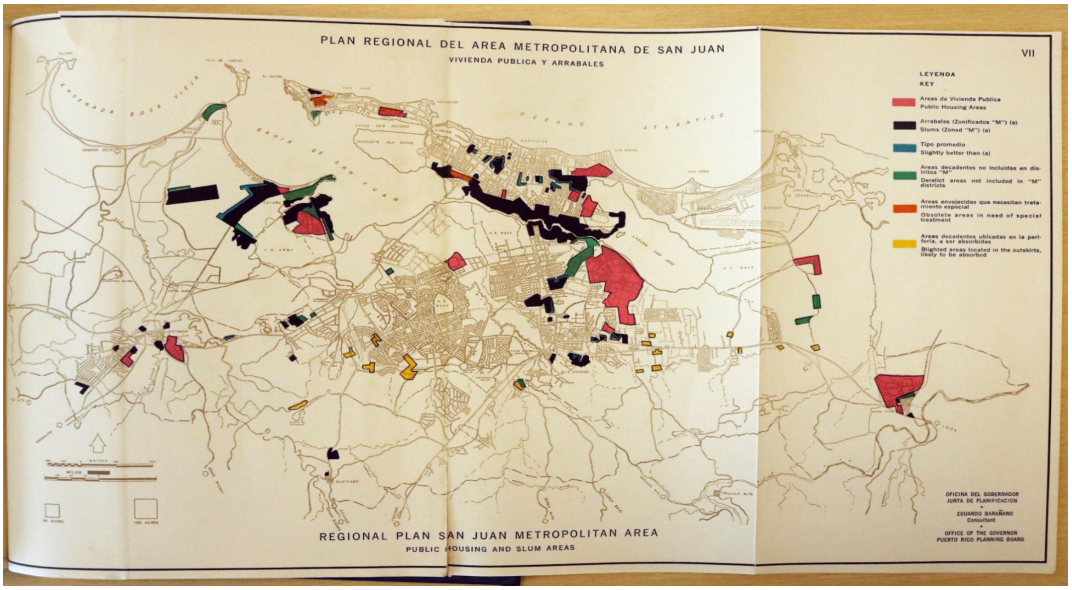
16 PR Law No. 28 of 1950, Vigilancia en las Zonas de Arrabal.

Figure 6. Slums surveillance program

(1) Police confronting men building 'clandestine' houses in the vicinity of the Las Casas public housing development. EL Mundo, September 30, 1958 edition. (2) Planning Board employees destroying one of the shacks in the Zona de Arrabal near the Israel neighborhood School in Hato Rey. EL Mundo Newspaper, November 24, 1958 edition. Arrables. Colección de Fotos del Periódico El Mundo. Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. PRDH014PH04456 (1) and PRDH014PH01535 (2).

Figure 6

Designated Zonas de Arrabal and locations of public housing complexes



Source: Regional Plan for the San Juan Metropolitan Area (1956), commonly known as Plan Barañano. The Puerto Rico Planning Board commissioned this plan from a consultant named Eduardo Barañano. Adapted by the author (Encarnación Burgos, 2021), the original colors were retouched. The maps the following zones: as "to be redeveloped" or Distritos M (in black), "slightly better than Distritos M" (in blue), blighted areas which were not included in the initial Distritos M designation (in green), deteriorated areas that needed "special treatment" within the historic center or within Santurce's commercial area (in orange), and areas reserved for public housing development (in pink).

The discourse used to justify the Planning Board intervention, as previously introduced, was consistent with the one used in other latitudes, which associated slum areas with disease and social pathologies that needed to be contained in order to safeguard the general welfare of the population (Tillotson, 2010; Outtes, 2003). On the other hand, this discourse also highlighted that addressing these areas' physical and social conditions required an excessive and disproportionate expenditure of public funds. As such, relocating and clearing these areas was in the public interest, and public housing projects were branded as the "civilized" solution to the housing problem to support this effort. In a monthly newsletter of the Housing Authority titled El Caserio (June 1950, p. 6), the Superintendent of the agency at the time, José R. Janer, even framed slum clearance as a patriotic duty:

> ¿Qué podemos esperar de ese ciudadano que nace, crece y envejece en el ambiente de insalubridad, de promiscuidad y miseria que es el arrabal? Si a esto le añadimos el hambre y la ignorancia, ambos bien arraigado en estos sitios inmundos, ya nos podremos imaginar cuán serio es este problema y el sitio importante que el mismo ocupa en el futuro de nuestro terruño. Ante esta situación. nuestro gobierno no ha permanecido con los brazos cruzados…. no podríamos esperar otra reacción de nuestros hombres de gobierno que no fuera el grito enérgico, sincero y patriótico de "Guerra contra los arrabales."

Thus, the public housing projects were branded as a transitional measure that would allow families to become part of Puerto Rico's transformation and also benefit from modern low-rent accommodations. By the mid-1950s, approximately 50% of Puerto Rico's urban areas were considered "slums." However, the political and social opposition to slum clearance and redevelopment policies resulted in adjustments; thus, even though the official designation of "slum" was given to a lower-class neighborhood, this did not necessarily mean the area would or should be eliminated entirely (Stevens, 1985). However, neither did it mean there should be significant investment in improved conditions. Figure 6 illustrates the designated " Zonas de Arrabal" in San Juan during the 1950s. These zones were categorized as "to be redeveloped" or Distritos M (in black), "slightly better than Distritos M" (in blue), blighted areas which were not included in the initial Distritos M designation (in green), deteriorated areas that needed "special treatment" within the historic center or Santurce's commercial area (in orange), and areas reserved for public housing development (in pink). Even though Distritos M were meant as a "temporary" denomination, the establishment of "Zonas de Arrabal" in coordination with the use of these special districts started transforming the distribution of social activities and groups in San Juan. In the long run, these transformations intensified class segregation and poverty.

Distritos M and the Zonas de Arrabal: The case of "El Fanguito"

The first redevelopment project empowered under the Slum Clearance Act (1945) and the Redevelopment and Housing Act (1947) was "El Fanguito" This first redevelopment venture, motivated by a proposal to expand the San Juan Port and create industrial spaces, resulted in the displacement of 3,000 families (2,000 units) to a public housing project located in the eastern section of Caño Martín Peña. See Figure 7 for the Planning Board project proposal and the location of the resettlement areas, the Extención Las Casas (located in the Santurce barrio) and he San José housing projects (located in Río Piedras) (Carrero, 1950). Consistent with this clearance mindset, the idea of developing the Caño Martín Peña was also sustained with the enactment of two pieces of legislation (Law #11 and 85 of 1947) when the channel was still navigable. While these two pieces of legislation allocated the financial resources to start the redevelopment of "El Fanguito", the Distritos M and the Zonas de Arrabal designations provided the technical justification and federal dollars for the displacement of thousands of urban dwellers. Figure 8a and Figure 8b shows the historical transformation of "El Fanguito" and its surroundings (1957-1987).

From that point onward, the Caño Martín Peña area became the epicenter of San Juan's land struggles. The Caño's marsh areas housed many rural migrants looking for jobs since the late-1920s but could not afford to rent or buy private homes. Thus, in the 1950s, when private housing projects were booming in other areas of San Juan, these urban dwellers still lived on the margins of Puerto Rico's development project. However, the Caño Martín Peña area became a strategic location for both the Colonial and the Metropolitan States, as articulated in the A General Plan for the Martín Peña Channel Area: A Preliminary Report published by the Urban Development and Housing Administration (ARUV):

> [L]ocation is perhaps the Martín Peña area's most important asset in the metropolitan area. Beyond a doubt, its location is extremely strategic; it lies between the recently established metropolitan commercial business center in Santurce and the emerging office cultural center in Rio Piedras. . . . Like Rome, all roads will lead to the Martín Peña Area and make it an important focal point (ARUV, 1960, p 9).

Figure 7. "El Fanguito" Redevelopment Area and location of the resettlement areas: Planning Board Project proposal

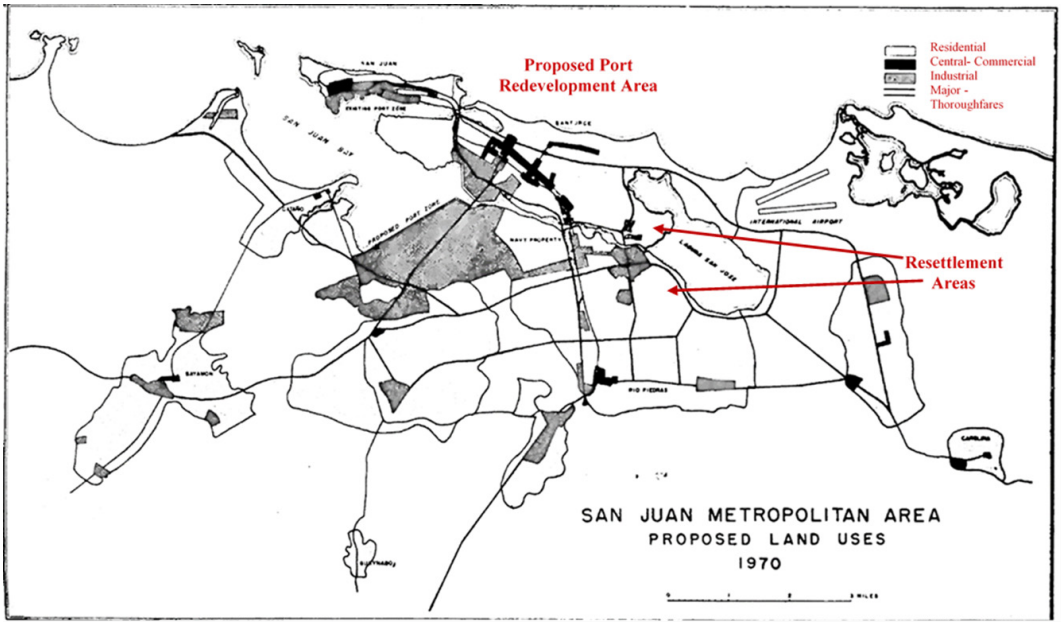
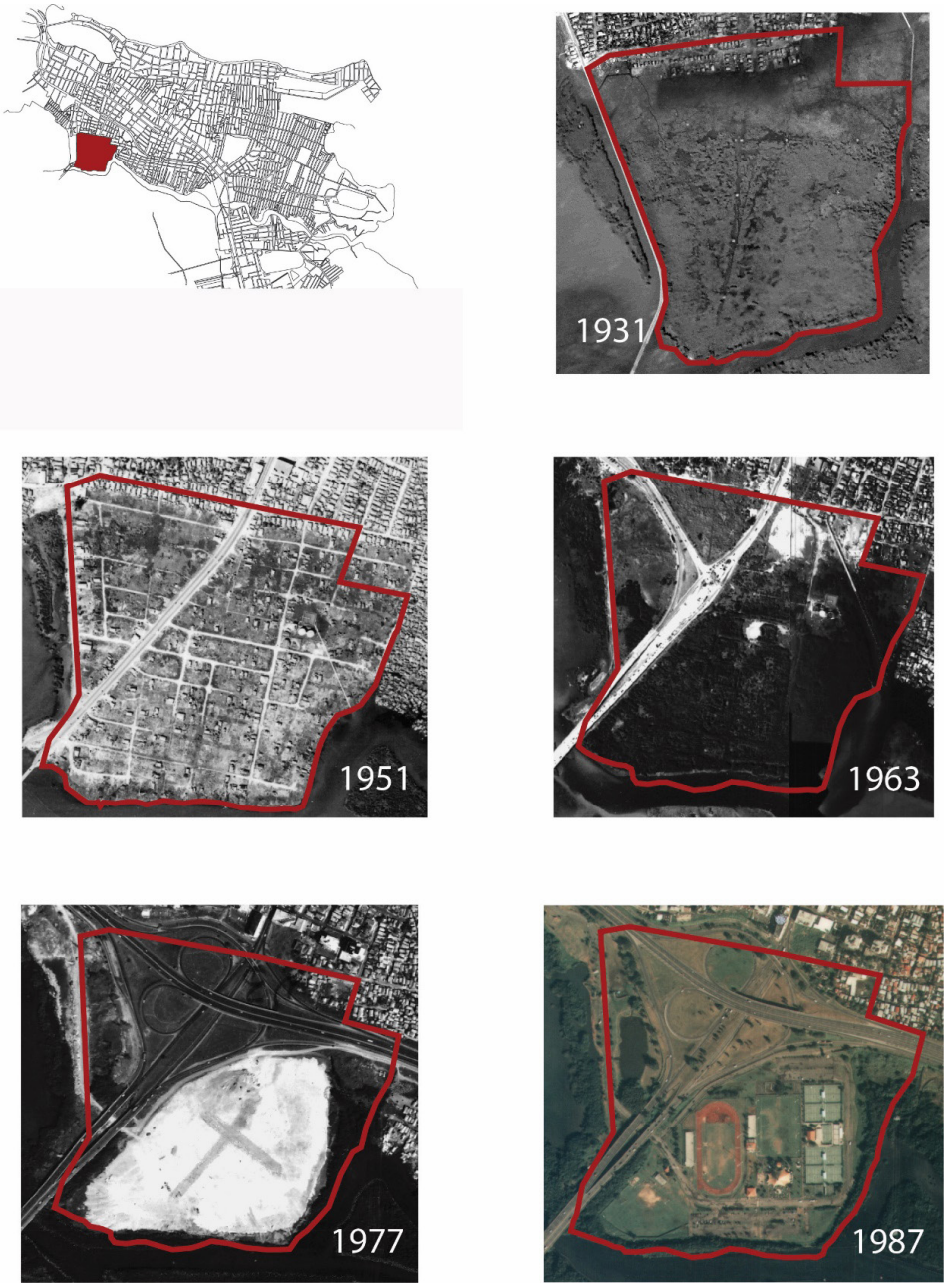


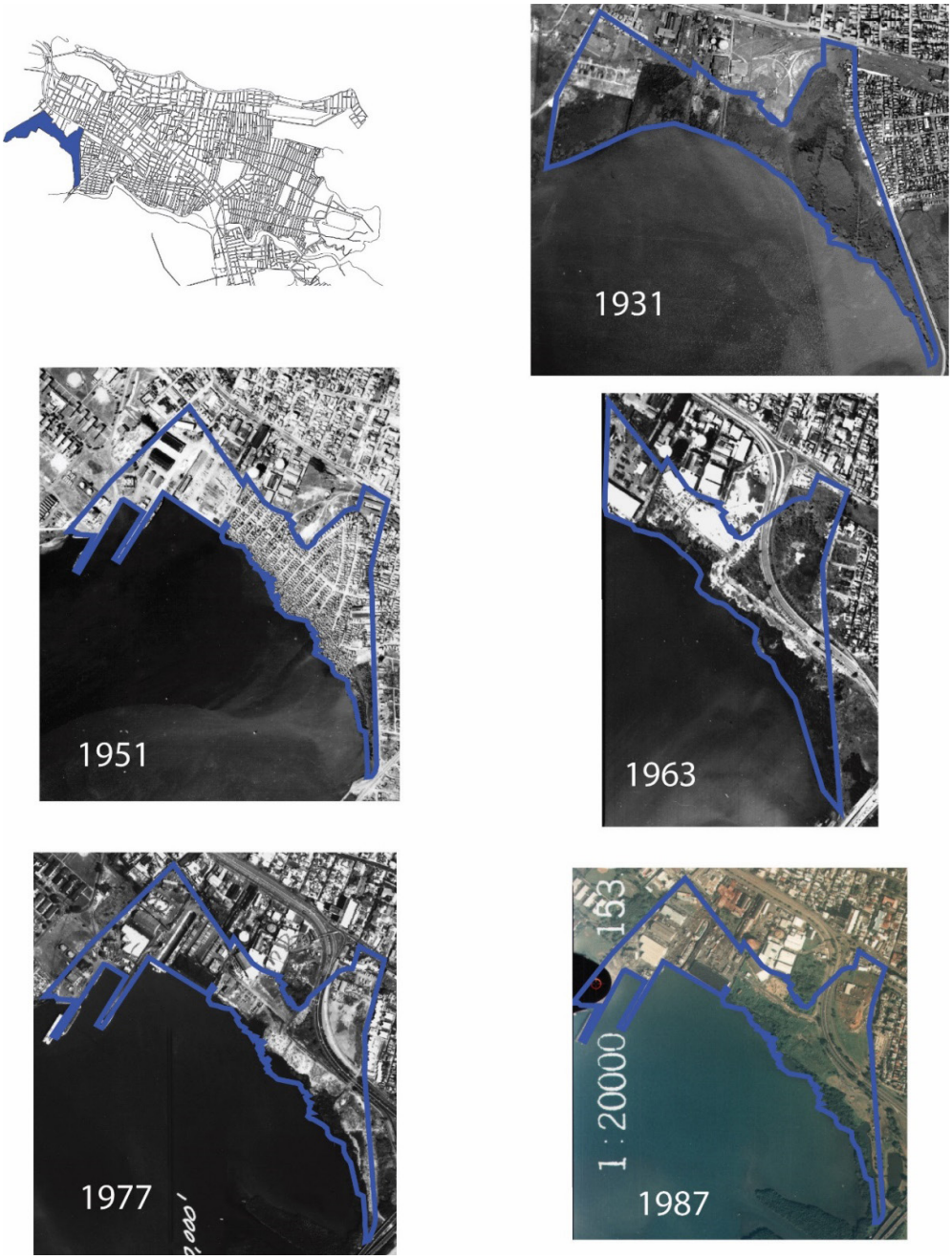
Image retrieved from Picó (1950). Adapted by the author (Encarnación Burgos, 2021), to highlight the Port Redevelopment Area and the Resettlements areas, original colors were retouched.

Figure 8a: The historical transformation of "El Fanguito" and its surroundings (1931-1987)



Source: Aerial imaged were retrieved Oficina Inventario científico, Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales. Adapted by the author (Encarnación Burgos, 2021), to highlight the historical transformation of "El Faguito" neighborhood.

Figure 8b: The historical transformation of "El Fanguito" and its surroundings (1931-1987)



Source: Oficina Inventario científico, Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales. Adapted by the author (Encarnación Burgos, 2021), to highlight the historical transformation of "Hoare" neighborhood.

Thus, Colonial State agents regarded Santurce's urban settlements as disposable for the sake of expansion in these areas. The official plans endorsed moving poor residents so that highway construction, new private housing construction, and other forms of development could take place. As such, the Caño Martín Peña settlements became an impediment to the development/planning strategies envisioned for the area. However, the Colonial State's development agenda was challenged by Caño Martín Peña dwellers, who responded by articulating a counter-discourse centered on the fact that:

> Las comunidades a lo largo del Caño surgieron de las aguas negras del mangle. Pero no surgieron como milagro. Se construyeron con nuestro esfuerzo, especialmente el de nuestros padres….Ahora resulta que el Caño vale mucho. Seguro, si nosotros le dimos ese valor, si hemos estado medio siglo creándolo con nuestras manos. Y son bastantes los chavos que hemos metido aquí. Ahora todo el mundo le tiene el ojo puesto, todo el mundo tiene planes: la C.R.U.V., Ciudad Modelo, Obras Públicas y la Autoridad de Carreteras.[17]

As noted in this excerpt from a letter to the Governor, the Caño Martín Peña dwellers started pushing for their recognition as legitimate contributors to the wealth of San Juan and, therefore, their right to their space within it. In other words, dwellers actively challenged the official discourse, which framed the self-made barrios as a burden on the State and society. By asserting their contribution to the formation of the city and a right to inhabit it, the dwellers pose an act of resistance to the established order and claimed the right to inhabit San Juan with dignity. Other examples of how this pattern fostered later ordering practices outside the Caño Martín Peña area can be found in Minilla and its surrounding districts of Campo Alegre and San Mateo, as well as in other areas. However, this case will not be discussed in this article due to space limitations.[18]

Closing Remarks

While many scholars have described the ascendency of the Partido Popular Democrático and the establishment of the Commonwealth as a "passive revolution" and Puerto Rico's development project as a "miracle" (Maldonado, 1997; Ross, 1966, Wells, 1969), I argue that the shift from the colonial rural to urban society was violent and exacerbated social and economic disparities while effecting the criminalization of poverty. Moreover, I maintain that in many instances, planning has been used to reproduce and conceal colonial violence. As such, the segregation patters in San Juan did not evolved organically. Rather, state-led urban development processes and official narratives, from both the Colonial State and the Metropolitan State, started dividing and differentiating San Juan's urban space. In the long run, these practices seriously affected the positions of the poor in the capital city and systematically have denied these dwellers access to social and material opportunities, resources and public investments. In turn, the whole process resulted in unhealthy neighborhoods, and persistent residential segregation. A great example of these historical struggles within San Juan is the case of Santurce and Hato Rey, precisely the Caño Martín Peña surroundings. As shown, the overall urban development of this area has been fundamentally derived from the economic transformation fostered by this shifting engagement of the Colonial and Metropolitan States to attract US investors and sustain the political-economic relationship.

17 Carta del Comité Acción Pobres del Cano dirigida al Honorable Gobernador de Puerto Rico explicándole por que los residentes del Caño pararon la construcción del Expreso Muñoz Rivera. El Caño. Octubre-noviembre de 1968: Núm. 3.

18 For further details of these other cases, see *Becoming urban: A historical ethnography of Puerto Rico's development/planning ensemble and its spatial production in Santurce (1940-1960)* on May 2021. A digital version of the dissertation may be found in the following direction: https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/86901

Furthermore, the case illustrates how Distritos M and Zonas de Arrabal designations were tied to the construction of "slums" as incompatible with becoming a showcase of democracy. Thus, these ordering practices disrupted the lives of families for generations, marginalizing and depriving them of many of their rights as inhabitants of the city. Furthermore, these ordering practices led to today's uneven urban landscape. Particularly in the Caño Martín Peña area, such practices have harmed self-made neighborhoods by perpetuating state disinvestment while sustaining segregation patterns and stereotyping narratives that deny poor residents access to healthy neighborhoods and wealth-building opportunities. Although these spatial ordering practices have been constantly reframed to facilitate integration with US reforms and programs, the initial designations (i.e., Zona de Arrabal y Distritos M) permeated the Colonial State planning/development agents' actions and prompted later redevelopment actions. Even though, one case is not sufficient to sustain completely my claim. The article aims to start recounting and deconstructing San Juan's development patterns to understand the root causes of its current unevenness. Furthermore, exploring the origins and consequences of this type of urban policies and space "ordering" practices, used to sustain national development projects, is crucial to understanding the consequences of Western experimentation in our countries.

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