



The impact of Hurricane María on the political participation of Puerto Rican University students in UPR Cayey

Adriana M. Rodríguez Vázquez

To cite this article: Adriana M. Rodríguez Vázquez (2022) The impact of Hurricane María on the political participation of Puerto Rican University students in UPR Cayey, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 35:8, 873-890, DOI: [10.1080/09518398.2022.2061071](https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2022.2061071)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2022.2061071>



Published online: 03 May 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 25



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



The impact of Hurricane Maria on the political participation of Puerto Rican University students in UPR Cayey

Adriana M. Rodriguez Vazquez 

Social Sciences, University of Puerto Rico – Cayey, Cayey, Puerto Rico

ABSTRACT

This research paper focuses on the political participation of students from the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey (UPR-Cayey) after Hurricane Maria. The culture, perspective, politics, and resistance of these students are researched in light of other sub-contexts, such as the protests pressuring the former governor of Puerto Rico Ricardo Rossello to resign. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 23 years old; they were all students from UPR-Cayey, and they were interviewed. The researchers are also students from the UPR-Cayey. The perspective of this research project is an anthropological one and uses analytical coding tools with interviews followed up with field notes from the protests of July 2019. We found that most of the people interviewed for this research project were very interested in the government's corruption and Puerto Rican resistance. Our investigation indirectly illustrates the aspects of our Puerto Rican culture that become salient during the protests.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 4 April 2021

Accepted 22 February 2022

KEYWORDS

Resistance; Puerto Rican university students; Puerto Rico; protests; politics; culture; perspective; political participation

Introduction

The challenging political circumstances of Puerto Rico led us to identify the need to study politics within the university community at the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey, before and after being impacted by Hurricane Maria and how this potentially amplified demonstrations and political participation of the people. Given the situation of the UPR system as a whole, if we were to study the political participation in a single precinct (campus), the political and historical context of where the precinct resided is vital. With that in mind, our key question for this study is how did Hurricane Maria impact the political participation of undergraduate students at the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey?

Public higher education in Puerto Rico

The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) has been suffering from a financial crisis that (in many ways) mirrors the debt problems experienced by the government of Puerto Rico (Bonilla, Brusi & Godreau, 2018). By August 2017, the UPR received the most recent round of serious cuts in its budget, and a rise in the cost of tuition of up to 175% was in sight. These budget cuts and raises in tuition made it harder for students to lead a successful university life and for the university itself to maintain its administrative structure. With the passage of Hurricane Maria, the UPR

CONTACT Adriana Maria Rodriguez Vazquez  adriana.rodriguez45@upr.edu  Social Sciences, University of Puerto Rico in Cayey, Cayey, 00736, Puerto Rico

faced a new catastrophic problem that put its existence at risk. This historic event in Puerto Rico caused unexpected damage to the island.¹ The precincts were able to reopen, however much of the work to fix the structural damage done by Hurricane Maria was left in the hands of the UPR administration.

The Promise Act had been approved in the summer of 2016 and began its implementation in January 2017 by the United States Congress, which appointed a Fiscal Oversight Board (JSF) to oversee all financial maneuvers by the government of Puerto Rico. This board is responsible for seeking a solution to the fiscal crisis facing the Island. According to the Organic Law of the Puerto Rico Fiscal Oversight and Economic Recovery Board, also known as Law number 208 of 8 December 2015, the Board can hold hearings and sessions at any time, can request and obtain information, can summon people at any time, has the authority to award contracts, and can award penalties. The power to give penalties refers to the fact that if, in any case, someone disobeyed an order of the Board, the case would be taken to the Court of First Instance of Puerto Rico. The Board must also approve an economic and fiscal growth plan submitted by a working group of the government of Puerto Rico or a supervised entity. The budget cannot begin to be implemented until it has the final approval of the Board. One of the audited entities that the Board allows to create fiscal plans for them is the University of Puerto Rico, hence the increases in tuition and other services at the UPR. The former governor Ricardo Rossello, and the Board, were participants in encouraging the millions in budget cuts to the UPR system. In the process, they also managed to raise the cost of credit and other services provided by the UPR.

These historical events have induced the UPR into its own destruction, as it tries to survive the budget cuts that have been imposed by the Oversight Board. Hurricane Maria added to the catastrophe of the UPR system. The University suffered serious infrastructure damage, and as a result, there was a significant period of time where the school was unable to offer classes. The experience of students and administrative staff within the University varies in different magnitudes, but their experiences have something in common. It's the resilient effort to overcome obstacles that both share. The importance of collecting these experiences is that they help the researchers understand, from a personal perspective, how Puerto Ricans adjusted to the new changes. Resilience in this devastating period caused erratic and hasty changes in the UPR university community in Cayey, so that it could continue its services. Several university buildings suffered flood damage, and many were shown to be a danger to the well-being of university workers and students. However, intending to continue classes, students found themselves receiving their courses outside of the buildings.

Adding to this crisis, the Puerto Rican government was in complete chaos. Without communication, without order, and without a plan of action, the Puerto Rican people were forced to govern themselves at the time. The slogan "Puerto Rico rises" began to gain momentum, being used as propaganda in the media that gave a breath of hope to the people. In an ethnography about Puerto Rico facing the crisis of the aftermath of Hurricane Maria it says the following: "Yet for most people in Puerto Rico, the state seems like an obstacle to survival. The process of attaining basic social services was difficult... It took the US military eight days to arrive in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria and it took the USS Comfort 39 days to dock in San Juan" (Garriga-Lopez, 2019). The government of Puerto Rico was faced with an unexpected crisis that it could not handle. The help that was coming from the United States was slow, "The Federal Emergency Management Agency was largely distinguished by its absence in the hardest hit parts of Puerto Rico" (Garriga-Lopez, 2019).

The negative effect of the crisis and the poor governance of Puerto Rico became more evident at UPR. Although about approximately 6–8 months later a majority of the students were still without electricity and without means of communication, another increase in the cost of tuition was implemented at the end of that academic year after Hurricane Maria struck. This increase more than doubled tuition from \$55.00 per credit to \$115.00 per credit. In the academic year that followed, tuition increased again, this time from \$115.00 to \$124.00. In 2021, it increased

yet again to \$134.00 and as of January 2022 the cost per credit is at \$145.00. It should be noted that laboratory fees increased from \$33.00 to \$100.00 and maintenance fees increased from \$47.00 to \$75.00 in 2018. These increases were originally outlined in the 2018 Fiscal Plan for the UPR and carried out despite the crisis brought on by Hurricane Maria (insert that reference for the fiscal plan). In the newest Fiscal Plan for the UPR it is stated that tuition would rise to \$169.00 for students by 2026 (De Jesus Salaman, 2021).

Looking back to the situation pre-Hurricane Maria, at the start of 2017, students from the UPR in Rio Piedras declared a strike against the budget cuts demanded by the Fiscal Board and thus imposed by the Puerto Rican government. The strike was for 48h and asked for an audit of Puerto Rico's debt. On 23 February 2017 a march was conducted and students from all the precincts attended. The claims were denied and almost a month later the strike commenced in all the UPR precincts (Garcia Ortiz & Gomez Hernandez, 2017). Among the demands of the strike, one of them was that raising tuition should not be forced upon the UPR. As we know now, this request was denied but not forgotten by the students. We believe this is one of the brewing concerns that led to the massive summer 2019 protests, as all of this happened during former governor Ricardo Rosello's time in the government.

This series of protests of 2019 would begin when 800 pages became known that contained a private "Telegram" chat with various public officials including former Governor Rossello (Valentin Ortiz & Minet, 2019). It can be said that it was this event, using a Puerto Rican idiom, "colmo la copa". It can be translated as the idiom "the last straw" in English. During the term of ex-governor Ricardo Rossello, Hurricane Maria had passed and during his term there were many irregularities and incidents of negligence. Once the hurricane passed, all the communications and electricity systems collapsed (Vazquez Perez, 2018, 2021). What we learned was that on 26 September 2017, the company "Whitefish" had been hired by the government to work on the restoration of the electrical power system. However, it became known that this contract was void. The contract was for about \$300 million, which went to the company, located in Montana, USA. This company had little experience and only two employees. The contract also stated that Whitefish employees would be earning double the usual salary of employees in that area of work (Fernandez Campbell & Irfan, 2017).

During this fiasco, one of the largest Puerto Rican out-migrations in the history of the island was taking place. Between September and December of 2017, 6% of the Puerto Rican population left the island (Criollo Oquero, 2018). Other memorable events occurred during that time, such as the massive lines at gas stations and, a few months later, in supermarkets (Domonoske, 2017). In October 2017, there was an outbreak of cases of leptospirosis and gastroenteritis. There were enough cases of leptospirosis to declare an epidemic or an outbreak, but the government denied what happened (Sutter & Sosa Pascual, 2018). In November 2017, the CNN television network presented an investigation that put the death toll at 499, from 20 September to 19 October. Nevertheless, in December 2017 the Puerto Rican Department of Public Health indicated that the official death toll was only 64 deaths, while the *The New York Times* presented an investigation that placed the death toll at 1052. In March 2018, several municipalities were still without power. In May 2018, Harvard University published a study estimating a total of 4645 deaths from Hurricane Maria. In August 2018, 12 unopened wagons full of essential items were brought to light in Toa Alta, P. R. and Utuado, P. R. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) admitted they lost them. In that same month, a study commissioned by the government of Puerto Rico to the Milken Institute of the George Washington University School of Public Health indicated that Hurricane Maria caused some 2975 deaths. In September 2018, it came to light that shipments of over a million bottles of water were found unused at the Ceiba, P.R. This account of some events that happened related to Hurricane Maria are important because they encapsulate the reasons why the Puerto Rican people were enraged by the Telegram chat.

The public officials involved in the 889 pages of the Telegram chat implicating former governor Ricardo Rosello included the following: the former secretary of Public Affairs, Ramon

Rosario; the former representative of the Fiscal Oversight Board, Elias Sanchez Sifonte; the former chief financial officer and former secretary of the Department of Finance, Raul Maldonado; the former Secretary of State, Luis Rivera Marin; the former legal adviser to the governor, Alfonso Orona; the main ex-financial officer and former representative of the Government before the Board, Christian Sobrino; the relationship members Carlos Bermudez and Rafael Cerame; the publicist Edwin Miranda; the former Secretary of the Interior, Ricardo Llerandi; and the former Secretary of Public Affairs, Anthony Maceira. The chat had misogynistic comments about public officials and insulted various public officials. Public information was revealed to people in the group who should not have had access to it, such as information on the island's budgeting process. In the chat, victims of Hurricane Maria and students from the University of Puerto Rico were also mocked.

As a result of this, the General Student Council of the UPR in Cayey expressed repudiation towards what was expressed in the Telegram chat in a written statement which said the following, "We are concerned that the most important administrative group of our island uses biased and malicious language against the student community" (Varela Henriquez, 2019). In response, the Puerto Rican people joined together to protest. These protests were massive. On 22 July 2019 about a million people on the Luis A. Ferre expressway in San Juan joined in on the protests. The protests went on for about 2 weeks without stopping until the ex-governor Ricardo Rosello announced that he would be resigning. What's more is that these protests were not of any exclusive political party. "The massive marches were remarkably non-partisan. In photos from the protests, none of the banners or standards seemed to reference the PPD, PNP or Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), among thousands of Puerto Rican flags that the protesters briskly waved." (Caban, 2019). We believed this "political vaccum" would provide enough momentum to disrupt the bipartisanship present in Puerto Rico's elections. However, it did not. Still, in the elections of 2020 in Puerto Rico, governor Pedro Pierluisi won by only 32.93% (Rosario, 2020), significantly lower than when former governor Ricardo Rosello won, which was by 41.76% (CB en Español, 2016). We believe that the influence of the protests will permeate in the next elections and we will be seeing a turn of the bipartisanship that lingers over Puerto Rico's political history.

Historical background and literature review

Throughout its history, Puerto Rico has had multiple reasons for resistance. It was colonized by Spain, with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1493, and then it was ruled by the United States since 1898. During the Spanish Colonization, the Indigenous people known as Tainos had many uprisings against their colonization. However, the difference in technology between the Tainos and the Spaniards along with the spread of European diseases for which the Tainos had no immunity caused their erasure on the island they called home. After the protests of the Tainos, there have been other well recognized resistances and protests in the history of Puerto Rico as the "Grito de Lares" in 1868. It was planned by Dr. Ramon Emeterio Betances and Secundo Ruiz Belvis. Both men organized the Revolutionary Committee of Puerto Rico to recruit people and organize the protest. There were around six hundred rebels on the day of the protest. At that time Puerto Rico was under the command of Spain.

After those events, Puerto Rico had a U.S. military government ruling for nearly half a century until the first governor of Puerto Rico arrived in 1946. Jesus T. Piñero, who was Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner in Washington, DC, USA, was the first Puerto Rican to hold that position. Then Puerto Rico had its first elected governor in 1948 named Luis Muñoz Marin. In 1950 the U.S. President at that time, Harry S. Truman, signed Public Law 600, giving Puerto Rico the right to write its constitution. The constitution was approved in 1952, and it established Puerto Rico as a commonwealth (territory) of the US. Section 1 of the article of the Constitution of Puerto

Rico establishes the following: "The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is established. Its political power emanates from the people and will be exercised in accordance with their will, within the terms of the agreement agreed between the people of Puerto Rico and the United States of America."

In Puerto Rico, there is always a march on Labor Day (May 1st) and UPR students orchestrate strikes and demonstrations during that time as well. They use that day to express the concerns they have about the UPR at that given moment. The most massive protest in the history of Puerto Rico was in the summer of 2019, as previously mentioned. This protest lasted 15 consecutive days, and it was reported that in one of the marches there were 1 million Puerto Ricans, all to demand the resignation of the then governor Ricardo Rossello. These historical events reflect a form of collective resistance recognized as "taking to the streets" to protest.

However, other forms of resistance are also important to acknowledge, because they often occur over longer periods of time within the context of routine daily life and work. According to James C. Scott (1989), more individualized everyday forms of resistance are also practiced by those who are disempowered, often because what is needed for larger forms of resistance is not always readily available for oppressed groups. This kind of resistance is often silent and small enough to go unnoticed by those other than the people performing it. It does not require much coordination or organization and happens mainly among those who are routinely surveilled and fear coercion if resistance is more blatant. This type of resistance can bond communities together.

In Puerto Rico, resistance is daily. People take action with words and social media. They look for spaces where they are among people with whom they can freely express what they think of the country, especially public policies. These types of resistance are disorganized, opportunistic, sometimes illegal, but without large-scale systemic consequences and without implying intention or much collective logic. The act of resisting on a daily basis can remain quite undetected and almost invisible. It moves passively, but defiantly. Scott describes where everyday aspects of society or pre-established government rules are challenged, and this is accomplished through coordination between peers, often occur silently, and are not usually recorded in history (James Scott, 1989).

In Puerto Rico, for example, skirting taxes or slowing the implementation of or compliance with particular government policies because the people recognize the corrupt nature of the government could be seen as acts of everyday resistance. There are myths that we hear about Puerto Ricans being docile or lazy, paired with the idea that larger scale collective action is infrequent and wanting. The absence of frequent protests may not mean that the spirit of daily resistance is not there. It does not mean that Puerto Ricans accept the government's corrupt actions as good. Puerto Ricans may be using a range of resistance strategies—from collective activism and protest to passive everyday resistance. A heavier reliance on passive resistance as a survival strategy does not mean that they accept the status quo or that they aren't defiant.

Other literature presents daily resistance as silent or loud, selective or shocking, and any of those forms can be considered ideology-based (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). The act of resisting demonstrates in one way or another that you do not fully agree with what is happening in a social context or the beliefs that justify the actions taking place in that context. Resistance can manifest in different forms, including "publicly declared resistance," "everyday resistance" and "direct resistance" among other (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). Resistance does not have to be organized, planned, or formal. Daily resistance can be informal, and it can be the starting point for other, more formal types of resistance (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013). Puerto Rican's use of defiant acts of resistance to undermine power should be studied in all its various forms when attempting to consider the link between everyday practices, Hurricane Maria, and the impact of that event on political activity moving forward. It could be the case that past acts of daily and indirect resistance routinely enacted by Puerto Ricans are inextricably linked to the more active protests that occurred more recently post-Maria.

Culture, music and our identity are important to understand other aspects of our research and Puerto Ricans, like many other countries, learn to understand and connect to each other

from their own cultural roots. Juan Gudiño Cabrera (2019) in his article, *Music as a political tool for the condemned: an approach to the Puerto Rican bomba*, tries to show how culture is itself a political demonstration and how it serves as an instrument to demonstrate resistance to colonialism. It is more than simply a national culture. A historical view is given about the bomba, a traditional Puerto Rican dance, and how it was seen as the poor, the old, the folklore, the belated ... (Gudiño, 2019, p. 168). Moreover, over time, it was given a modern colonial meaning, when in reality it has always been decolonial. Gudiño analyzes works by illustrious folklorists, such as Rafael Cepeda Atilas, who said, "the people who had money were [sic] against our music." (Gudiño, 2019, *Plena is Work, Plena is Song*). Gudiño concludes that dance and music are individual and collective expressions that serve as a vehicle to carry a message of resistance against oppression, not only now, but it has been since we were colonized and even before.

Methodology

Identifying the root problem

This research was started by conducting participant observations in spaces such as the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey and Casa Pueblo in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico, among other places, to take field notes with the purpose of channeling what key questions we wanted to focus on to do interviews. The visit to Casa Pueblo was on 12 June 2019. The experience helped the author and research partners understand how a Puerto Rican community decided to face the political dilemma of Puerto Rico and how they decided to be self-sustaining. It was founded in 1980 by engineer Alexis Massol Gonzalez. Before being founded as an organization, Casa Pueblo was born as a movement to face a mining project, which would have had 17 open field deposits of 1 mile in diameter each and which would have affected water sources, the land, the ecology and the people who lived near those areas (2). Alexis Massol, founder of Casa Pueblo, and several people decided to provide information to the communities that were going to be affected by the mining project, but only one person attended the call. Then they changed their strategy, disseminated and raised awareness through activities of typical music from Puerto Rico. As Massol Gonzalez told us, this caused an evident social transformation by increasing the number of attendees to 100,000 people through the calls they offered to inform people. Since then, it has been a community that lives on itself: it educates itself, creates and sells its own products, obtains solar energy, and most importantly: they did it without financial aid from the Government of Puerto Rico.

After the visit to Casa Pueblo, in the research group, we performed the exercise of creating a tree to be able to visualize the problem to be investigated. With the roots, the fundamental problem was posed, the trunk seeks to understand the details of the problem and the branches represent the different problems that emanate from the fundamental problem. The branches were filled with problems that had happened in the UPR-Cayey and other communities during Hurricane Maria. Then we put in the roots of the tree, the fundamental problem that led to the other emerging problems. This helped sharpen our vision and thus make a question guide with our topic in mind where we could get the information, we wanted based on the problems we encountered. These questions were developed as a guide. The intention was to give the interviewee the space to speak freely about their thinking about the issues presented. Each of the group members asked questions derived from the responses of the interviewee.

Once all the interviews were carried out, a method called "Matrix" was used in which recurring themes of great importance were searched for within the interview transcripts. Once the themes were found, they were coded as long as the themes were repeated. The most relevant encodings in our research were: culture, resistance, perspective, politics and recovery. Each of the encodings was justified in its analysis. Each person in the group chose one of the topics on which to write a "Memo". The memo is a way to begin to research the topic of relevance and look for how this topic

is relevant through the literature review and its possible correlation with the interviews and the general topic.

Before the analysis of the data for each matrix began the infamous protests of the Summer of 2019 occurred. Therefore, we conducted four sessions of participant observations of the demonstrations that took place over 12 days in July 2019 in front of and in the surroundings of the executive mansion, along Fortaleza street, in Old San Juan, the historic center of the capital. We took notes for approximately 30 h altogether.

Field notes

Our field notes were written during our visit to Casa Pueblo in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico on the first occasion and then during the protests of July 2019. Both were done in the same year. The field notes were written in our notebooks and then fully completed on Google Documents. After that those field notes were encoded using the Matrix and placed in different categories: Political, Resistance, Culture and Perspective.

At Casa Pueblo in Adjuntas, we made participatory observations with the issue of politics in perspective. We stayed for about 4 h, and we observed a community completely detached from the government for its operation. The water services were supplied by them, through filtration methods; the light was solar; They had coffee production and other products that they sold, from which they obtained the funds to operate. The idea of being self-sufficient arises from a community effort to prevent the government from giving up the land where Casa Pueblo is now located for mining exploitation. Seeing the problem that this would bring to nearby communities and natural resources, such as rivers, green areas and fauna, the community of Adjuntas decided to rise up against the government through protests and managed to stop the massive mining exploitation, which would affect 17 miles of land.

The author and research partners participated in the protests of July 2019, albeit on different occasions. We calculated that between the author and research partners we participated a total of 4 days in the protests. The protests were in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico and Luis A. Ferre Avenue. Some had gone with other friends while others had participated by going via a bus filled with many students from the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. The four research partners did go together once which was in what Puerto Ricans call the National Strike that begun in Luis A. Ferre Avenue. The different experiences by the author and research partners are highlighted in the Field Notes and analyzed by their excerpts in this paper.

Interviews with University of Puerto Rico in Cayey students

Two interviews were conducted with students from the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey. The students were from different academic years and from different baccalaureate degrees offered at UPR-Cayey. The age range was 19–22 years. The questions asked were based on the situation experienced by those interviewed after Hurricane Maria and how they were affected by the decision-making by the government in the face of the emergency. Among the questions highlighted in the interviews are: How did you handle your responsibilities after Hurricane Maria? How did you feel when you returned to college? Explain the ways in which you were ready and not ready to return? What were your feelings about whether or not more time should have been given before returning? How did you experience the state of the university regarding how much it was inhabited or not? What is your process when voting? How do you think your experiences with Hurricane Maria influence your political participation?

This interview data was analyzed for this research and provided a rich set of different experiences, contexts, and perceptions in response to the questions asked. A table was made with the main data of the interviewees and interviewees using pseudonyms (Table 1). It's important to

Table 1. Table of the data of the interviewees.

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Degree	Academic year	Interview duration
Michael	Male	22 at the time of the interview. 24 as of the year 2022.	Bachelor of Science concentration in Biology and Bachelor of Arts concentration in Psychology	4th year (more than 100 credits approved)	Done in June 2019. It lasted approximately 27 min.
Pedro	Male	20 at the time of the interview. 22 as of the year 2022.	Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education concentration in Spanish	4th year (more than 100 credits approved)	Made in August 2019. It lasted approximately 50 min.

note that the interviews were in Spanish originally, so all the excerpts found in the data were translated to English.

The interview participants were chosen from our network of students we knew because we had taken a class with them or because we worked together on university projects. It was about not interviewing students that I knew, but rather that they were people that I knew because I had taken a class with them or because we worked together on university projects. The student's profile was one that would have been part of the student body at the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey who studied on campus before and after Hurricane Maria. This also implies having been part of a series of changes that arose after the impact, such as the rise in the cost of undergraduate credit, from \$55.00 to \$75.00 (Nazario Bonilla & Lopez Correa, 2018) at the time of the interviews.

The questions were asked based on the topics collected that were relevant to the research question. The interviews served as a basis to begin to collect a feeling and seek the direction of the investigation. In the analysis, each important area relevant to the research question is extracted from the interviews. From the interviews, the themes of the literature review were born and the search for information that would define and help us to understand what was happening in the minds and lives of the students of the University of Puerto Rico in Cayey in terms of the experience of Hurricane Maria in relation to political participation.

Data collection

Each interview was coded. Specific sections were highlighted in the interview transcripts that corresponded to the research problem. Each was highlighted in groups of: 1 (best), 2 (average), and 3 (not so good). The analysis of each of the key concepts was created and how the review influences the responses of the interviewees. In view of this, analyzes of each key concept have been made in a memo format. The memos involve using the quotes taken and analyzed in the matrix and making a complete analysis of all those that have the same designated topic. The key concepts are resistance, politics, culture and perspective; and from these analytical memos were born. These methods are from the "Qualitative Data Analysis: An User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists" by Ian Dey. From the interviews two key concepts were established: resilience and future generation. These key concepts come from the fact that both interviews speak on a more personalized experience of the aftermath of Hurricane Maria and how it reflects on the hopes of students for the future. They can be considered "the future generation".

Data analysis and findings

Our study revealed how, among Puerto Ricans, a spirit of resistance manifested in everyday forms of passive resistance and has existed among Puerto Ricans for quite a while and can be

found through cultural expressions. This more indirect and relatively invisible, silent, or undetected resistance became amplified by the conditions endured for nearly two years in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. These conditions set the stage for more coordinated and massive political resistance, and the link between the passive individual acts of resistance and the more activist forms are revealed through particular cultural mediums of cultural expressions.

Political

The protests of “Ricky Renuncia” were a great example of resistance on the part of the Puerto Rican people, despite what might appear to be a history of relative docility. The expose of the private conversations between government officials and then-Governor Ricardo Rosello led to unexpected resistance. The following quote is from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled “Ricky Renuncia” from July 2019:

After a chat that belonged to the governor and his cabinet was revealed, in which what was already known and suspected of government corruption was confirmed, it was what filled the cup (*colmo la copa*), and many Puerto Ricans began to protest to ask the resignation of the governor.

Gossip is common entertainment for Puerto Ricans through television programs, such as “La Comay.” It is therefore not surprising that a leak of private conversations between government officials and the governor of Puerto Rico himself, but part of the Puerto Rico investigative journalism center, caused national controversy. Corruption is assumed as a default in our government but seeing clear evidence of the hypocrisy revealed ... truly “*colmo la copa*” (a Puerto Rican idiom that indicates that enough is enough.) of the country.

The following quote are from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled “Ricky Renuncia” from July 2019:

The Calle de la Fortaleza was covered with the word resistance. From what we now read Calle de la Resistencia; and I think it is the word that best defined the history that was being written on the cobblestones of those streets.

La Calle de la Resistencia is a historical moment, demonstrating an unruly spirit in the Puerto Ricans who managed to find relative unity to bring out a corrupt governor unmasked. Relative unity is of particular importance, as it could be seen as what began as a largely youth-dominated movement that eventually branched out to a significant number of people of all ages.

The following quote are from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled “Ricky Renuncia” from July 2019:

This generation was sick of sitting around and watching us get trampled on. We will no longer allow what our parents and grandparents allowed. We are not fooled with false propaganda and cheap politicking. We only accept action changes, not empty words. So, it's time to go out and raise our voices.

This quote demonstrates how the young generation took the reins of change. Many people assume that the young people are the ones who removed the governor, but something more memorable happened. Different people from all walks of life joined what the youth started, which was evidenced in our July 2019 field notes titled “Ricky Renuncia” by Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez:

There the picket ² had started, there was a lot of live press and many people photographing. I was surprised and proud to see people of all ages. Although the young adults were the obvious majority, there were small children and older people on walking sticks. Even a man in a wheelchair with no legs, which moved me a lot.

The younger generation managed to influence the political arena and has come to be known as “the generation of “I do not leave”.

This younger generation has placed an incredible emphasis on participation and the need for results. However, not all of them could participate in the protests, but that did not mean that they wouldn't show support in their own ways.

However, the following quote from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled "Ricky Renuncia" from July 2019 helps to understand the situation is a little more complex:

When I arrived, I heard a young girl, a store employee, shout "That's right, the people are coming!"; as if to say "I'm working but my soul is there".

Different levels of participation can be appreciated. In the town of San Juan, where the protests took place, many businesses remained open. Later, many businesses were recognized for providing basic necessities like water and a lot of support to the protesters. Through expressions by different means, many workers supported the protests by going to work out of necessity. Some of them attended the demonstrations on their days off.

Of course, there were Puerto Ricans were against the protests. Here in the last two statements, from the perspective of the protests as evidence of political resistance by the people, a glance towards docility. Those who did not participate, and, worse still, those who were against, are evidence of an element of Puerto Rican docility. From the perspective of protests such as political resistance, the one who supported former Governor Ricardo Rosello shows himself to be docile.

Despite the docility seen by a significant number of Puerto Ricans towards the old structures, they could recognize those in power that facilitated the chaos after Hurricane Maria. nonetheless, this perspective of leaving everything as is, is not readily accepted by everyone. As seen represented in the following quote from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled "Ricky Renuncia" from July 2019 that can point to an unruly attitude:

I don't belong to the same (political) party. Or I mean I can't favor a party, I can favor ideals perhaps, I can favor positions of people, but the structure of the political party, well as we are in Puerto Rico, it is not something that one can simply favor.

What is shared in this last quote is a direct rejection of the bipartisan custom in Puerto Rico. This rejection may not represent all Puerto Ricans, but it does show evidence of a resilient and resistant attitude towards a custom that results in assuming that corruption is the norm, rather than the exception. There is an unruly attitude in Puerto Rico that has increased since Maria. A former governor has already suffered the consequences. The elections in Puerto Rico happened with the baggage of everything that has happened in its history since 2017. Albeit, the governor that won the election, Pedro Pierluisi, is of the same party as the governor that was kicked out by the protests, he only won by 33%. Change is happening.

Resistance

During the Ricky Renuncia protests, there was a lot of resistance. It was not just resistance against the regime or against the former governor himself. Against all odds, they persisted and held out against anything that tried to stop them. People before the protests resisted the faulty government liability and unacceptable living conditions. Puerto Ricans had endured life after Maria, and it was not sustainable. Government actions to restructure the island were limited and negligent. The following quotes are from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled "Ricky Renuncia" from July 2019:

The whole thing was peaceful and when it rained, I felt like Puerto Ricans felt empowered. The rain couldn't stop us. And neither could they.

Puerto Ricans were willing to get sick and wet because they wanted the governor out.

Many people say the protests were never violent, but peaceful. The then governor had to listen to the complaints of the protesters and follow their wishes. And although criticism of being

“violent” arose, there was also the prejudice that Puerto Ricans were submissive. The disparity, therefore, between asking for what they wanted versus being criticized for it, while being told that they never asked for what they wanted, was likely frustrating for the protesters. The following quote are from the research partner Julian Lopez field notes labeled “Field Notes Protesta”:

The place was highly crowded and very hot. The event was loud, and it was evident that more than one ideology was present. It carried on for hours and eventually the police retaliated. Before that happened however, the author (of the field note, who is a research partner) had suffered a panic attack.

The data clearly presents the severity of the political turmoil up to that point. It shows the personal experience of witnessing a political demonstration in Puerto Rico that wanted its governor to resign. People would not leave until the claim was completed. It shows the dedication that was given and how much the purpose mattered to Puerto Ricans. It also shows the stress these protests caused. It was a sacrifice, indeed, given the time and the emotional and physical stress involved. Where in the crowds to exercise the right to express an opinion, you also had to be placed in a time of high stress and can cause a panic attack. Within those crowds, it was impossible to breathe at some points. The following quote are from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled “Field Notes from July 2019: Protests July 16th”:

The day before, at night, there was a large protest, and expressions against the governor were graffiti. The most obvious #Rickyrenuncia and many other obscene words, which were covered early in the morning all with paint. That for me was oppressive, in such a historic moment they still try to silence people, when the most they needed was to express themselves.

People were writing on the walls of buildings close to those in the protest with expressions of repudiation of the governor. They were covered with white paint although you could read what they covered. A strong symbolism of the violation of the right to free expression, an oppression that is so prevalent on the island: As if saying, “What you feel is not valid,” “Shout, we are going to shut you up.” In such a historic moment that we lived, the government always acted the same. The following quote are from the author Adriana Rodriguez Vazquez field notes labeled “Field Notes from July 2019: Protests July 16th”:

The slogans were clear and forceful, [after] the first hour of being there, I already knew them. Some of these were: “From North to South, from East to West, this fight continues, whatever it takes,” “Where’s Ricky? Ricky is not here, Ricky is selling what is left of the country ‘; Where is Ricky, Ricky is not here, Ricky is following dad’s advice ‘.

Slogans are vital in Puerto Rican protests. I can’t speak for other protests since I haven’t been, but Puerto Rican protests have the feeling of emulating precise emotions. “Where’s Ricky? Ricky is not here, Ricky is selling what is left of this country/island. “And. Where is Ricky? Ricky is not here, Ricky is following the advice of his father.” For having sold Puerto Rican companies and privatizing them, such as the telephone company and the Puerto Rican seaports, as well as for having cases of corruption during his term as governor, “On Monday, July 22, a national strike was called at the Luis A. Ferree Express with the intention of showing the governor of Puerto Rico Ricardo Rossello that the people who wanted him to leave were more than those who had voted for him, around 660,000. “

One of the most shocking data of the protests was the number of Puerto Ricans participating in them. According to the State Elections Commission, former Governor Ricardo Rossello won the 2016 elections with about 41%, or a total of 660,510 votes. The number of people who appeared in the July 22 protest reached more than 1 million protesters. The impact it had was enormous, as two days later, the former governor announced his official resignation. The collective struggle and the disdain on the part of the government brought Puerto Rico to the brink of resistance. This mass action had never happened before on this magnitude. The following quote are from the research partner Yareliz Zayas field notes labeled “Plaza las Americas y Expreso Luis A Ferre Paro Nacional”:

That's when it hit me. There I saw the reality of the matter, because although I knew there would be many people, I still had the belief that the Puerto Rican was lazy, that he was not going to get up. There the opposite was demonstrated, they knew how to differentiate who was good and bad, they did not listen to those who wanted to discourage us by saying that it was not worth it, why protest.

Here's a clue and it mentions the thought that Puerto Ricans are lazy. Laziness is something that is attributed in this country to people who work every day, who struggle to make ends meet and somehow live a stable life. The fact that the protests continued for over 2 weeks non-stop with thousands of people constantly there was enough to ask us if the saying is true. If they are lazy, why are they there? There they will sweat, they will be hungry, they will feel uncomfortable and many other things, is that what makes them lazy? They decided to resist for the first time in a long time. They wanted to be heard. The pain of the remains of Hurricane Maria ignited everything. The chats and what they said. Although voting is basic political participation, they decided to induce another form of political participation through protests. A citizen has a voice and has the right to raise it towards his governors. And he has the power to make changes with that voice, since we are in a democracy. And the protesters used that power to get up. They used that power to obtain what they were protesting, the end of former Governor Ricardo Rossello. The analysis of these field notes is from the perspective of resistance in a political arena. On how Puerto Ricans have shown resistance in their own way to the situations they face in a political context interspersed with the before and after the impact of Hurricane Maria.

The following is a quote from the interview with Michael, one of the interviewees mentioned in [Table 1](#).

[...]de un lado de mi familia son de un partido y pues yo era la oveja negra, yo no voy a votar si no se de que hablan. Cuando me pongo a ver los candidatos y todo esto es bien abrumador, primero porque caigo en presion porque quiero votar en quien esta bien, alguien que represente, pero obviamente mi "goal" gira en quien me, quien me beneficia a mi como estudiante porque en ese momento ya yo estaba pensando en la universidad, en quien me va a apoyar.

This family dynamic in relation to politics is not uncommon in the newer puertorican generations. Families in Puerto Rico tend to stick to a political party throughout their generations. I am speaking of this from my own experience as a Puerto Rican in the island. Puerto Rico has a two party system, the predominant are the "New Progressive Party" (PNP by its initials in Spanish) and "Democratic People's Party" (PPD, by its initials in Spanish). The interviewee speaks about the pressure their family can build upon them to keep the loyalty to the party they vote on. Michael said that they consider themselves the "black sheep" because they decide to study all the candidates running for positions in the government, rather than just voting for the party, which in turn makes you vote for all the candidates running under that political party.

Resilience

The following are quotes from the interview with Michael, one of the interviewees mentioned in [Table 1](#).

"I had no signal and with this I had nothing. I spent time without seeing my sister, without talking to my uncles (who are here) (The participant refers to the uncles who live in Cayey, another town in Puerto Rico), with no one. Well, the little information that I received from the university, I'm going to be honest with you, was when I had a signal and went to the post office and looked for what was happening with the university, at least, they gave us the time. Although it was a horrible year that had no end. But... what information do you collect? Well, very limited, because most of the information I received was from classmates, through emails from the university, and it was to ask them things."

Michael speaks about how, even without access to cellular or internet signal, he still had to find ways to learn about how the University of Puerto Rico (where he attends) would continue

to operate post-Maria. When he got signal he searched for emails, and tried speaking to other students he knew. He speaks of this as his duty as a student. His responsibility, if you will, and doesn't express complaints about it. Even though, he was still recovering from the hurricane's aftermath, he focused on what he needed to do to comply with his student responsibilities.

Let's assume this, a situation where you have to improvise, obviously, to generate a plan. You have to have a plan but at a time when we can't think, eh, how is this going? how is this hurting me? It's not like you have to be aware as well and you have to take into account what... there are very few things. A hurricane happens, we are without resources, we are without this, but I can't think about okay, what did they do? what are they doing? So and so. That's my main point, I first have to seek to stabilize myself and wait to see if government starts to do something, [...] at least I am informed through the radio, on the radio I think it was that we found out about some other things. When we had batteries, because these batteries did not last...

Michael, like most other Puerto Ricans on the island, thinks about how they were going to work on surviving the hurricane aftermath. He talks about forming a plan and what he had to do to make himself stable again. And that he doesn't have time to think about how everything that is happening is affecting him. He didn't have time to process how traumatic what was happening actually was. And no time to think about if or when the government was going to provide any help for his needs. His response to trauma was to survive.

[...] well, at least the water arrived quickly as they say, but the electricity, well, that's different, at least I say that, that's a luxury. Water is essential. Well, they helped however they could. I don't know what happened there. But I don't know anything about embezzlement. But there is always a benefit and the benefit is for... us.

Michael expresses that he understands, within the circumstances of the aftermath, that he at least had the bare necessities he needed to survive. He doesn't decide to place blame on the government for the lack of other things he was lacking at the moment, like electric energy for his home. He decides to look at what was provided, instead of what was sorely lacking.

The following are quotes from the interview with Pedro, one of the interviewees mentioned in [Table 1](#).

[...] it is not easy, it is not easy to arrive at an institution where you hear everything go by and you even hear the cars go by—even in the classrooms. For a person who has learned fully within the university environment, it is difficult and uncomfortable. So the space inside the university, even though it was uncomfortable, has been an oasis space, not only for me for people who didn't have the slightest idea how to continue with their lives. Having an open and available university allowed many of us to get back on track and find again the purposes of what we are going to study. That we were going to graduate one day.

Pedro, the other interviewee, speaks on the emotional damage brought by seeing the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey after the hurricane. He describes the precinct as an oasis and a way to escape the troubles he was in. Therefore seeing it in shambles was awful. But, it provided for the students "something to look forward to" in the face of adversity. It's compelling to think that, although the university might not have been in better shape than the homes of students, it still provided a sense of normalcy and comfort for them.

Puerto Rico looks at itself and we are screwed and we don't know who can help us, we don't know who is going to help us, we don't know how they are going to help us. We create our own bubble, our own methods of communication, we have to rebuild ourselves as a community immediately, so the bubble with all the needs and all the desires of the people come together in a collective bubble of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has its own bubble in other communities where help simply was not going to arrive, where they depended on each other to survive. That is not my case, I want to make it clear that this is not my case, my immediate family is my mother's uncles, my grandmother, my parents, my brothers. As we live quite close to each other, although we do not live in the same community, we live quite close to each other, we were able to communicate quickly and everyone already knew that we were fine, but there were people who did not even know if their relatives were fine right away because they were in another town and that brought a new series of complications that I didn't have.

Pedro talks about how communities in Puerto Rico were left on their own, even though that wasn't entirely his case. He speaks of how, in the aftermath, Puerto Rico created its own different communities within the island that served to provide help and comfort to those in need within those communities. It wasn't about the towns, it was about who was closest to you that you could help or be helped by. Puerto Ricans couldn't really depend on government officials for assistance, but they could depend on their neighbor.

Future

The following are quotes from both of the interviewees mentioned in [Table 1](#).

It was receptive, social media, in fact, millennials, we let ourselves be carried away by the internet. I remember that I like it, I am one of those people who are very empathetic, like the way people think. I'm not one of those who stay with the take of the family, no, what do you think about this and what do you think about that, I'm one of those people who asks questions, I ask a lot and always tending to give my part (opinion), detach myself from the group so that the person can tell me what works for them and why. There are times that they kind of show me, "Oh, I don't know" ...

The interviewee Michael tells that they find the internet, more specifically, social media a great place to learn about other's opinion about the news surrounding politics. But I believe he's referring to the opinions of people in his generation, the ones he refers to as millennials. He says he seeks to understand why people would choose x or y opinion, and that helps him generate his own opinion on the political subject matter. It is very different from simply choosing to have an opinion based on a political party's ideology.

[...] I think it is disrespectful, the least they should do is be grateful for the services of the university, of our system. Not only our system, but it is the public education system, it is a person who denotes that he does not have the education to be able to lead. Our system is the best in the country, I am not saying this because I study here, the numbers say it, their graduation rates say it, we are still, even with credit increases, an accessible university and this hurts me a lot that the leaders that we choose think that, think bad things about our university and that is the mentality of our leaders, definitely, on other occasions they cannot be our leaders.

The interviewee Pedro spoke on the Telegram chat that had government officials badmouthing the University of Puerto Rico, amongst other things. He talks about the grievances the university has gone through, at the time of the year 2019, and how even with those issues, the university was still attempting to remain accessible and one of the best institutions for higher education in the island. Grievances that were placed because of budget cuts those same government officials were doing nothing to stop. It's the realization of how little the people who are supposed to care and protect the institutions that are made to educate and to help future generations of Puerto Rico prosper cared so little. The corruption was running deep within the roots of the government and what it stands for.

Culture in political participation

The Puerto Rican demonstrations are unique, since violence is replaced with culture, as a fighting method. This is demonstrated in the field notes we took in June 2019 and the July 2019 protests against the government. This poem was written by the research partner Yareliz Zayas.

Data analysis matrix 1:

De Puerto Rico el corazon
 En casa pueblo y Adjuntas
 Combaten con manos juntas
 Ruinas y demolicion
 Con cultura y educacion
 Gracias a un noble ingeniero
 Derrotan el agujero
 Cultivaron la esperanza

Con musica y con danzas
 Cuidan la tierra que quiero
 Autogestion comunitaria
 Desde niños hasta adultos
 Destruyen a los incultos
 Aunque al principio fue solitaria
 Sin ayuda monetaria
 De un gobierno embustero.
 Con un mensaje sincero
 Cafe, libros y artesanos
 Todo hecho con sus manos
 Cuidan la tierra que quiero

In this “decima”³, it is explained how a community in the town of Adjuntas managed to build a community project to try to stop some mining works that would destroy several nearby communities, for exploitation. They achieved this not through warfare but through folk music and culture. Using this medium, they managed to inform people that they were going to be affected and although at first it was only one person, thanks to the music they attracted many more, becoming a massive movement. Thus, they managed to stop mining and founded Casa Pueblo, which to this day is self-sustaining, without ties to the government.

Data analysis matrix 13 from the field notes taken on the protest of July 22, 2019 by research partner Yareliz Zayas: Culture overflowed in this manifestation. Music and art have never been lacking in the expressions of the Puerto Rican. They all brought their instruments, costumes, hands, voices and encouragement to express repudiation in the most natural way for us. Our roots unite us and make us stronger, that was the best way to show it.

Data analysis matrix 15 from the field notes taken on the protest of July 22, 2019 by research partner Yareliz Zayas: The anthem of the national protest was the song “Afilando los cuchillos” by Bad Bunny, Residente and Jle⁴. It repudiates the expressions made by the governor in an intimate chat with other politicians, according to him, to “release tensions.” It also criticizes politicians for openly supporting revolutions against corrupt governments in other countries, but not in Puerto Rico.

In these field notes, we can see how the impact of culture on politics is highlighted. We use music, dance and our voices to inform, to fight and to win. It is evident that this same method has been used on many occasions throughout history, e.g. in Casa Pueblo, Adjuntas in 1980 and in the protests in July 2019 in San Juan. The noise and the hubbub are part of the Puerto Rican identity. And this is why the struggles against the closure of schools, the budget cut to the University, the mismanagement of the emergency in Hurricane Maria and the negligence and political corruption caused a cultural overflow, so that the world will look at us and listen to us. Finally, the famous “Ricky Renuncia” protest against the governor, who executed all of the above, had a victorious outcome. United in a massive demonstration we managed to get the political figure that had been the cause of much suffering and oppression of Puerto Ricans to resign. Thus, we demonstrate once again that when we fight together, we end oppression and win.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to see if there is an effect on the political participation of UPR students in Cayey given the effects after Hurricane Maria and, later on in addition, the protests that occurred in Puerto Rico during the summer of 2019. Hurricane Maria was one of the most important themes of the protests, because although the cause of the protests was a chat between politicians, the content of that chat that angered the public was mostly topics of Hurricane Maria. What ended up being a strong motivator for Puerto Ricans was the minimal care given to Puerto Ricans by the government after Hurricane Maria.

Students are an important factor in the research paper since their perspectives are the base of the data. They were studied since the author and research partners make part of the undergraduate student population. The perspective of the undergraduate students from the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey was very significant in the literature review and data analysis. Moreso

since the author and research partners are part of that student community of the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. Students in the University of Puerto Rico suffered through the aftermath of Hurricane Maria and the infamous budget cuts to the institution simultaneously. The political history of Puerto Rico is intertwined with the university since it is the only public higher education institution in the island. The only higher education institution where students protest for their rights and where students actively participate in protests outside of it. The aftermath of the hurricane reflected on the political participation of students because of it affected their lives not only because of government neglect, but also because of the attack on the university's abilities to provide its educational services.

The six data categories studied in this paper were strictly relevant to the excerpts from the interviews and field notes. As said in the introduction the research question was: How does the political history of Puerto Rico influence the political participation of the university community in the UPR, Cayey after Hurricane Maria? It is a broad question. In its history, Puerto Rico has brief, but impactful moments of resistance to the status quo that is imposed on them. Students at the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey are not strangers to hardship or strikes. During the aftermath of Hurricane Maria both interviewees had to face their own hardships to survive in order to go back to the precinct once it opened again. But these experiences that students lived through, not just the interviewees, but the author and research partners as well, were a factor in their decision to advocate for the lives lost during and after Hurricane Maria. And the damages that the University of Puerto Rico had to endure, as well as the raises and tuition for the students. This, altogether, makes for the motivations for students to go protests in the streets of San Juan or, years later, going on indefinite strikes. As the one that happened last year during the months of October through late November 2021. I recognized both interviewees in the precinct during the indefinite strike. One of them had already graduated but had come to visit and the other became part of the Student Movement (El Nuevo Día, 2021).!

The themes of resistance attempt to analyze how Puerto Ricans and students decide to resist. They may be making verbal expressions of disagreement on social media as many tend to do. Or it can be with a banner in front of the Fortress in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico, vocalizing and affirming that disagreement with actions or decisions taken by the government. Any act in defiance of the regime established by the current government is an act of resistance. Puerto Ricans might appear to have a history that support a myth about the docility of our people, but it seems that a desire to resist was present simmering just below the surface. Hurricane Maria and its aftermath was when discontent reached a boiling point. From our perspective, a collective of anger, despair and sadness was generated during the years since Hurricane Maria passed. When that discontent, and the feelings surrounding it, finally boiled over, resistance transitioned from everyday indirect manifestations to direct resistance

Recommendations/action plan

And now what should we do with this information? From our perspective, what has taken place should encourage Puerto Ricans that it is okay to disagree, and it is okay to express it. Defiance against injustice is not a malicious act. It is vital to look at what the government has done and hold them accountable. Power should not be from the top towards bottom, but vice versa.

After listening to the students, their perception of the government, seeing how thousands of people came out to fight against a corrupt and denigrating government, we do believe that Puerto Ricans can fight and resist; because students are the future. Just as Puerto Ricans and students did in the protest of the summer of 2019, using music, dancing our typical dances, our artistic figures to defeat and bring down those above. Artistic figures should continue to use their forums, as some have millions of followers, for the government to hear the echo of the people. The protests with saucapans, and with noise are some of our strongest tools. And most of all,

the union between different Puerto Rican communities. The University of Puerto Rico had always prided itself in being a institution that promotes critical thought in their students and it reflects with student actions in resistance activities. The more we are, the louder our voices are heard in the Capitol and in Fortaleza. We solve the problem by educating the people, showing them who govern us, teaching that protest is a right, even if the press wants to criminalize it. And that that tool is there to be used. So that when they close a school, or when they make more cuts to the university, or when the public university tuition goes up, everyone knows that they can do something about it, and that raising their voice does have an effect, as well as had in Casa Pueblo in the 1970's, when they managed to stop the mining exploitation, and just as we removed a corrupt governor in the summer of 2019.

Notes

1. It is a common practice to refer to Puerto Rico as "the island" despite that fact that it is, in reality, an archipelago that includes the municipalities of Vieques and Culebra.
2. This is translated from Spanish to English. The word "picket" it stemming from the Spanish word "piquete". This refers to a group of people that are protesting using a strike slogan.
3. Decima translates to tenth in English. The Royal Spanish Academy defines it as "Metrical combination of ten eight-syllable lines, of which, as a general rule, the first rhymes with the fourth and fifth; the second, with the third; the sixth, with the seventh and the last, and the eighth, with the ninth. It supports full stop or colon after the fourth line, and does not support them after the fifth."
4. Bad Bunny, Residente and Ile are famous Puerto Rican musicians.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Janelly M. Rosa Vazquez, Yareliz Zayas Cruz & Julian A. Lopez Lopez in earlier drafts of this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Adriana M. Rodríguez Vázquez is an undergraduate psychology and sociology student at the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey. She has worked with Dr. Julio Cammarota in research about political participation of students of the University of Puerto Rico at Cayey within the aftermath of Hurricane María. And is working with Dra. Elisa Rodríguez in research about sexuality and love with people who have physical functional diversities. Adriana has presented her research before in the Symposium of Interdisciplinary Research in UPR-Cayey and in the 2021 ASHE conference. She will begin to work as a voluntary research student with Dr. Emily Saéz in the University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras in May 2022. She currently is president of the Association of Psychology Students at UPR Cayey and is part of the board of directors of the Psychologists of Puerto Rico Association.

ORCID

Adriana M. Rodriguez Vazquez  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3421-2880>

References

- Nazario Bonilla, M. N., & Lopez Correa, K. (2018, March 7). *A pagar mas todos los estudiantes de la upr*. Pulso Estudiantil. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://pulsoestudiantil.com/a-pagar-mas-todos-los-estudiantes-de-la-upr/>

- Bonilla, Y. B., Brusi, R., & Godreau, I. (2018, September 20). When disaster capitalism comes for the University of Puerto Rico. *The Nation*. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/when-disaster-capitalism-comes-for-the-university-of-puerto-rico/>
- Caban, P. (2019). The summer 2019 uprising: Building a New Puerto Rico. *Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies Faculty Scholarship*, 37.
- Casa Pueblo. (2021, March 1). *Historia de Casa Pueblo*. <https://casapueblo.org/index.php/proyectos/casa-pueblo>
- CB en Español (2016, November 8). *Resultados de las Elecciones Generales en Puerto Rico*. CB en Español. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://cb.pr/rossello-arranca-al-frente-en-primeros-resultados-ofrecidos-por-la-cee/>
- De Jesus Salaman, A. (2021, May 29). *Aumento de Matricula a la vista en nuevo plan fiscal de la UPR*. Aumento de matricula a la vista en nuevo plan fiscal de la UPR. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.noticel.com/upr/educacion/ahora/top-stories/20210329/aumento-de-matricula-a-la-vista-en-nuevo-plan-fiscal-de-la-upr/> <https://casapueblo.org/index.php/proyectos/casa-pueblo/>
- Domonoske, C. (2017, September 26). *At a gas station with no gas, Puerto Ricans settle in for an interminable wait*. At a gas station with no gas, Puerto Ricans settle in for an interminable wait. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/09/26/553632771/at-a-gas-station-with-no-gas-puerto-ricans-settle-in-for-an-interminable-wait>
- Criollo Quintero, A. (2018, March 9). *Puerto Rico Perdió 6% de su Población tras Huracán María*. CB en Español. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://cb.pr/puerto-rico-perdio-6-de-su-poblaciontras-huracan-maria/>
- Elnuevodía.com (2021, December 1). *Estudiantes de La Upr en Cayey logran acuerdos con la Administración para Ponerle fin a la huelga*. *El Nuevo Día*. Retrieved February 21, 2022, from <https://www.elnuevodía.com/noticias/locales/notas/estudiantes-de-la-upr-en-cayey-logran-acuerdos-con-la-administracion-para-ponerle-fin-a-la-huelga/>
- Fernandez Campbell, A., & Irfan, U. (2017, November 15). *Puerto Rico's deal with whitefish was shady as hell, new records show*. Puerto Rico's deal with Whitefish was shady as hell, new records show. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/15/16648924/puerto-rico-whitefish-contract-congress-investigation>
- García Ortiz, A. M., & Gómez Hernández, S. (2017, June 6). *Cronología: Cada Detalle de la #HuelgaUPR en el recinto de Río Piedras*. Cronología: Cada detalle de la #HuelgaUPR en el recinto de Río Piedras. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://pulsoestudiantil.com/cronologia-cada-detalle-de-la-huelgaupr-en-el-recinto-de-rio-piedras/>
- Garriga-Lopez, A. (2019). PUERTO RICO: THE FUTURE IN QUESTION. *Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures*, 13(2), 174–192. <https://doi.org/10.21463/shima.13.2.13>
- Gudiño Cabrera, J. (2019). La música como herramienta política de los condenados: un acercamiento a la bomba puertorriqueña. *Centro Journal*, 31(2), 161–180.
- Resilience. (n.d). Retrieved March 4, 2021, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/resilience>
- Rosario, F. (2020, November 7). *Pedro Pierluisi Gana La Gobernación por 16,934 votos al finalizar el conteo*. *Primera Hora*. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.primerahora.com/noticias/gobierno-politica/notas/pedro-pierluisi-gana-la-gobernacion-por-16934-votos-al-finalizar-el-conteo/>
- Scott, J. C. (1989). Everyday forms of resistance. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 4, 33–62. <https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v4i1.1765>
- Sutter, J. D., & Sosa Pascual, O. (2018, July 3). *CP I + CNN investigation: Records suggest Puerto Rico saw a leptospirosis outbreak after Hurricane María – But officials won't call it that*. Centro de Periodismo Investigativo. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://periodismoinvestigativo.com/2018/07/records-suggest-puerto-rico-saw-leptospirosis-outbreak-after-hurricane-maria-but-officials-wont-call-it-that/>
- Valentín-Ortiz, L. J., & Minet, C. (2019, November 15). *LAS 889 Páginas de telegram entre Rossello Navares y sus allegados*. Centro de Periodismo Investigativo. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://periodismoinvestigativo.com/2019/07/las-889-paginas-de-telegram-entre-rossello-nevares-y-sus-allegados/>
- Varela Henríquez, R. M. (2019, July 15). *Estudiantes de La upr en Cayey Repudian Mofas Emitidas por el gobernador en telegram*. Pulso Estudiantil. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://pulsoestudiantil.com/estudiantes-de-la-upr-en-cayey-repudian-mofas-emitidas-por-el-gobernador-en-telegram/>
- Vázquez-Pérez, S. (2018, September 18). *Cronología: Una Mirada a Puerto Rico a un año de María*. Metro Puerto Rico. Retrieved April 5, 2022, from <https://www.metro.pr/pr/noticias/2018/09/18/cronologia-una-mirada-a-puerto-rico-a-un-ano-de-maria.html>
- Vázquez Pérez, S. (2021, November 17). *Cronología: Una Mirada a Puerto Rico a un año de María*. Metro Puerto Rico. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.metro.pr/pr/noticias/2018/09/18/cronologia-una-mirada-a-puerto-rico-a-un-ano-de-maria.html>
- Vinshagen, S., & Johansson, A. (2013). "Everyday Resistance": Exploration of a concept & its theories. *Resistance Studies Magazine*, 1, 1–46.