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PENTECOSTAL EXPANSION AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN PUERTO RICO¹

Héctor M. Martínez-Ramírez

ABSTRACT

As in other countries, Pentecostalism has become a force of religious, social and political change in Puerto Rico. The first part of this article examines the origins and evolution of Puerto Rican Pentecostalism and Post-Pentecostalism. The latter advocates the theology of prosperity, preaching a gospel that promises financial wealth to converts. The second part of the article explores the causes and consequences of Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal political activism in the island. It explains why key religious leaders supported the pro-statehood candidate for governor and political party in the 1992 and 1996 general elections, and assesses the implications of such activism in the context of Puerto Rico's status politics. These religious leaders and groups have the capacity to foster political change in a predominantly Catholic country.

Keywords: Pentecostalism, Post-Pentecostalism, Evangelicals, political activism, political parties, political status

RESUMEN

Al igual que en otros países, en Puerto Rico el Pentecostalismo se ha convertido en una fuerza de cambio religioso, social y político. La primera parte del artículo examina el surgimiento y desarrollo del Pentecostalismo puertorriqueño y del fenómeno Pos-Pentecostal. Este último predica la teología de la prosperidad y un evangelio que promete riqueza material a los creyentes. La segunda parte del artículo analiza las causas y consecuencias del activismo político Pentecostal y Pos-Pentecostal. Explica qué llevó a sus líderes a apoyar la candidatura a la gobernación de Pedro Rosselló y al Partido Nuevo Progresista (PNP) en las elecciones generales de 1992 y 1996, y las implicaciones de tal activismo en el marco de la política de status en Puerto Rico.

El activismo político Pentecostal y Pos-Pentecostal demuestra que sus líderes y grupos tienen la capacidad de legitimar y de cuestionar instituciones y procesos políticos en un país predominantemente católico. Tal capacidad e influencia debe ser tomada en consideración para tener un cuadro completo de los grupos que convergen en el ambiente religioso y político de Puerto Rico.

Palabras clave: Pentecostalismo, Pos-Pentecostalismo, Evangélicos, activismo político, partidos políticos, status político

RÉSUMÉ

De même que dans d'autres pays, à Porto Rico le pentecôtisme est devenu une force de changement religieux, social et politique. La première partie de cette article examine le surgissement et le développement du pentecôtisme portoricain et le phénomène post-pentecôtiste. Ce dernier prêche la théologie de la prospérité et un évangile qui promet la richesse matérielle aux croyants. La deuxième partie de l'article analyse les causes et les conséquences de l'activisme politique pentecôtiste et post-pentecôtiste. On explique ce qui a amené leurs leaders à appuyer le Parti Nouveau Progressiste (PNP) et la candidature de Pedro Rosselló au poste de gouverneur, lors des élections générales de 1992 et 1996 et les implications d'un tel activisme dans le cadre de la politique de statut à Porto Rico. L'activisme politique pentecôtiste et post-pentecôtiste démontre que ses leaders et ses groupes ont la capacité de légitimer et de mettre en question les institutions et les processus politiques dans un pays majoritairement catholique. Une telle capacité et influence doit être prise en considération pour avoir le cadre complet des secteurs qui convergent dans l'ambiance religieuse et politique de Porto Rico.

Mots-clés: pentecôtisme, post-pentecôtisme, évangéliques, activisme politique, partis politiques, statut politique

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Research in the field of religion and politics reveals that Pentecostalism has become a religious and political force in numerous countries around the world (Berryman 1996; Cleary and Stewart-Gambino 1997; Garrard-Burnet and Stoll 1993; Jelen and Wilcox 2002; Levine 1995; Mariz 1994; Martin 1990, 2001; Smith 1998). Although recent developments suggest that Puerto Rican Pentecostalism is not an exception, the island is a missing case in these studies. These developments are a notable increment in the number of Pentecostal churches, Pentecostalism's growing popularity among the urban middle and upper classes, and the rise of Post-Pentecostalism.² The latter advocates the theology of prosperity and preaches a gospel that promises financial wealth to converts (Sipierski 1996). In addition, during the 1990s Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders and groups became a highly visible and influential political force. Their support helped the pro-statehood leader Pedro Rosselló and the New Progressive Party (*Partido Nuevo Progresista-PNP*) gain striking victories in the 1992 and 1996 elections, thus demonstrating the capacity religious leaders and groups bear to foster political change in a predominantly Catholic country.

This article fills a gap in the scholarly literature by first examining the evolution of Puerto Rican Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals. Its second part explores the causes and consequences of their recent political activism. It explains why their leaders forged an alliance with Pedro Rosselló and the PNP, and the role that status-politics played in this religious-political dynamics.³ The relationship between the Rosselló administration and the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership was so close as to convert the separation of church and state into a controversial public issue. Issues and events linking religious leaders and organizations to political institutions had not been so intense since the Christian Action Party (*Partido Acción Cristiana-PAC*) was organized at the instance of the Catholic hierarchy in 1960.⁴ The article also assesses the causes for the breakdown of such an alliance and the implications of religious activism for Puerto Rican politics.

Previous literature

Studies on religion, its forms of organization, and their relationship with politics and the state in contemporary Puerto Rico are scant. Most of the research has focused on the history and development of the Catholic and the historic Protestant churches during the first half of the 20th century, but very little is about Pentecostals. These studies underscore the role that the Catholic and historic Protestant churches played in sustaining and legitimizing the United States domination and colonial regime in Puerto Rico (Agosto 1996; Pantojas-García 1974; Silva-Gotay 1985a, 1985b). Both Catholicism and Protestantism are considered instruments of political domination and effective means of acculturation or Americanization. Another perspective portrays popular religion and folk Catholicism as a cultural and social reaction from the people of the mountains and the rural areas to the conservative and Americanizing nature of the Catholic and historic Protestant churches (Agosto 1996; Zayas-Micheli 1990).

Work on Pentecostalism traces its origins back to the Catholic and historic Protestant churches neglecting of the poor in the cities, the rural areas and the countryside. Despite accounts of the proliferation of Pentecostalism since Puerto Rican Juan Lugo began his mission and established the first Pentecostal church in the island in 1916, scholarship has attributed its expansion to the economic crisis of the 1930s (Agosto 1996; Mintz 1960; Moore 1969; Silva-Gotay 1970, 1985b, 1997).⁵ Pentecostalism is a medium of escapism from the effects of economic crisis and a source of individual, social, and political alienation (Silva-Gotay 1986). A variant of the escapism theory portrays Pentecostalism as the poor people's ideological medium and social mechanism for coping with the psychological effects and social dislocation resulting from the country's transition from an agrarian to an industrial society (Mintz 1960; Pérez-Torres 1995). The literature underscores the pre-millennial and "apocalyptic" elements of Pentecostal theology, that is, the doctrine about the Second Coming of Jesus and the near end of the world (Silva-Gotay 1985b, 1986). Additionally,

it links Pentecostal expansion in the second half of the 20th century to American fundamentalism.

The issue about fundamentalism and Puerto Rican Pentecostalism warrants further clarification. On one hand, there is no direct historical and institutional linkage between Christian fundamentalist groups in the United States and Puerto Rican Pentecostals. Most Pentecostal churches in Puerto Rico are the result of local initiatives; and even those associated to churches in the United States (like the Assemblies of God and Mission Board) are autonomous and self-sustaining in terms of human and economic resources.

In Puerto Rico there is a common misperception of what fundamentalism and the fundamentalist movement in the United States are. Fundamentalism goes beyond believing in the literal truth of the Bible. The fundamentalist movement originated in the early 20th century from members of historic Protestant denominations who were reacting to modernist tendencies in US Protestantism, including the preaching of social gospel. Fundamentalists embraced religious orthodoxy by interpreting the Bible literally as well as believing in keeping themselves apart from what they consider an impure world (separatism), and in the importance of personal salvation (Wilcox 1996:25-34). In spite of their fervent separatism, fundamentalist focus on issues such as values, morality, temperance, religious tradition and abortion drove them to conservative political activism. The movement also became interdenominational by attracting conservative adherents from varied Christian denominations, including historic Protestants, Pentecostals, and even Catholics (Lienesch 1994; Wilcox 1996; Green 2000).

In recent decades, American Pentecostals became identified in increasing numbers with the fundamentalist conservative crusade. However, members of historic Protestant denominations still constitute the core of the leadership and the majority of Christian fundamentalists. Also, traditional fundamentalists are harsh critics of Pentecostal theology, doctrine, and emphasis on

emotionalism, religious ecstasy, healing and glossolalia, commonly known as “speaking in tongues” (Wilcox 1996:29-30). Although in Puerto Rico both the noun and the adjective fundamentalist are used to portray Pentecostals exclusively, to portray them as “American fundamentalists” is misleading. Stewart-Gambino and Wilson sustain that equating Pentecostalism to American fundamentalism is one of the “widely known and persistent, although inaccurate stereotypes about Pentecostals in Latin America” (1997:228).

Roger Finke’s argument about religious innovation in the United States is helpful to explain Pentecostal expansion in Puerto Rico. Working from a supply side approach, Finke argues that “religious innovation and sectarian growth are often a response to opportunity, not to a reaction to changing consumer demands” and that “Sectarian growth relies on market openings rather than cultural crises or troubled social times” (Finke 1997:108, 119). Following his assertion, it can be said that Pentecostalism in Puerto Rico did not grow because it was the alternative poor people from the countryside and the rural areas were looking for as a means of escapism from “trouble times” like the economic depression. Pentecostalism grew up because the institutional Catholic and the historic Protestant churches neglected the rural areas by remaining mostly urban (Agosto 1996:17; Díaz-Stevens 1993:52-58; Silva Gotay 1970:210). Therefore, Pentecostalism found fertile ground for development because it was the only religious alternative the poor people from those areas had, or was offered to, for satisfying their spiritual needs.

Other factors facilitated the expansion of Pentecostalism: language and the national origin of pastors. In the Pentecostal churches, Puerto Rican pastors delivered their message in their native language, Spanish. In contrast, English was the language of many historic Protestant churches led by US missionaries while a mostly foreign clergy delivered Catholic mass in Latin.

Anthony LaRuffa wrote one of the very few scholarly studies on Puerto Rican Pentecostalism. He presented an argument that

runs against the theory that the economic depression led to the dramatic expansion of Pentecostalism and suggested a relation between Pentecostalism and status politics:

Pentecostalism as a religious movement showed a mild growth spurt during the 1930s but experienced a marked expansion in the post-World War II era. Not surprisingly, this paralleled stabilization at least for the time, of Puerto Rico's political status. ... [A] commonwealth association was negotiated with the US government with statehood as an unlikely alternative, and independence as a distinctly remote possibility. (LaRuffa 1980:56)

Puerto Rico became a Commonwealth in 1952 and experienced economic growth due to the diversification of its economy from an agrarian-based economy to industrial and the common market established with the United States. If LaRuffa is right, then the most notable expansion of Pentecostalism took place in the context of political and economic stability linked to the United States, not in the period of economic and social crisis. Furthermore, many years after the economic depression Pentecostalism has maintained its pace of growth, not only in the rural areas, but in the urban areas and cities as well.⁶ The religious landscape also experienced the emergence and proliferation of Post-Pentecostal churches.

As it was stated above, Post-Pentecostal churches preach a gospel that promises financial health to the convert and believer. This is called the theology of prosperity and proposes that the more the convert contributes in tithes and offerings to the church, the more will receive from God, including material blessings.⁷ In contrast, traditional Pentecostalism took root as a religion of the poor people for its social base and its message of humbleness and praise for those economically disadvantaged. The fast growing Fuente de Agua Viva Council (*Concilio Fuente de Agua Viva-FAV*) is the main representation of a Puerto Rican Post-Pentecostal church. FAV is also well known for its controversial post-millennial theology and the charisma of its founder and leader, Rodolfo Font.⁸

Although Post-Pentecostals are clearly a minority in Puerto Rico, their theology of prosperity is exerting significant influence upon traditional Pentecostal churches. The discourse of important Pentecostal leaders and churches shows the consistent tendency of integrating elements of the theology of prosperity and of justifying its legitimacy theologically and biblically. The most notable element of this tendency might be the stress pastors are putting on becoming wealthy so people can increase their purchasing power, practice consumerism, enjoy expensive things and contribute more to the churches in tithes. This practice has raised criticism and debate within the traditional Pentecostal movement, already characterized by its diversity and relative lack of unity. Pentecostal leaders acknowledge that Post-Pentecostalism has become a source of doctrinal transformation for traditional Pentecostalism.⁹

It is difficult to tell whether these Pentecostal churches and pastors are incorporating the theology of prosperity into their discourse because of the competition FAV poses to them, or because the social composition of their current audience or followers forces them to do so. The social composition of traditional Pentecostal churches located in urban settings compares favorably with the social composition of FAV. However, the impact of the theology of prosperity on the Pentecostal churches of the rural areas has still to be assessed in order to draw further conclusions about this phenomenon. So is the commitment of Post-Pentecostal converts. According to Smith, adherents to the theology of prosperity “seem to have the highest degree of recidivism since their commitments to their new denominations are less permanent than those of poor converts” (1998:28). Although this contention has to be tested in the case of FAV, there is no doubt that the theology of prosperity appears to be very attractive and has fertile ground for expansion in a consumerist society like Puerto Rico’s.

On the topic of the political activism of Pentecostals, leaders of historic Protestant and Pentecostal churches that I interviewed underscored the Evangelicals’ historical identification with the

Popular Democratic Party (*Partido Popular Democrático-PPD*),¹⁰ as also documented by Silva-Gotay (1985b:75). Nonetheless, religion is a missing variable in the wide variety of studies carried out in Puerto Rico about social conflict, class formation and struggle, political movements and political parties.¹¹ On the political identity of Pentecostals, LaRuffa (1980) wrote that they stood in opposition to the national independence of the island and tended to support the Commonwealth status.

This section has addressed the state of the scholarship on Pentecostals, Post-Pentecostals and politics in Puerto Rico. The following sections analyze the dynamics between these religious groups and its leadership with political actors, parties, and the state. Main focus is on the leadership of churches, religious groups and political institutions. Leaders play a key role by taking a stand on important issues at critical moments, thus exerting influence upon their followers and upon the leaders of other institutions in critical moments. Documentary research, organizational analysis, and personal interviews to religious leaders constituted the base of this study.

Evangelical Organization and the PPD

The Association of Evangelical Churches (*Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas-AIE*) and the PPD were both organized and founded in the 1930s. They also shared the same social base composed by the working people of the rural areas and the countryside as well as cane workers of the coastal zone. As a populist political party, the PPD built political power by integrating the disfranchised *campesino* and agrarian workers to the political process. To gain support of Catholics and Evangelicals together, the PPD program of rural and social reform allocated ground plots (*parcelas*) in every rural community for the construction of a Catholic chapel and one Evangelical church.

In contrast to Pentecostal churches that were led mostly by Puerto Ricans since their origins, historic Protestant churches remained under the leadership of American missionaries until

the early 1930s. Then, many American missionaries and pastors exited the island for the destruction caused by strong hurricanes early in the decade and the economic depression. Puerto Rican ministers took over the churches that the US missionaries left behind and joined Pentecostal leaders for the creation of the AIE in 1934. The final exodus of American missionaries and pastors took place in 1954, leaving the historic Protestant churches under a full native leadership.

The native leadership of historic Protestant churches proposed in 1955 the creation of the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico (*Concilio Evangélico de Puerto Rico-CEPR*). There began the organizational schism and the restructuring of Puerto Rican Protestantism. Pentecostal leaders understood that despite the fact that their churches had a higher membership, ministers from the historic Protestant churches intended to control the proposed organization. As a result, many Pentecostals refused to join the CEPR and created their own umbrella organization, the Fraternity of Pentecostal Pastors (*Fraternidad de Pastores Pentecostales-FRAPE*). Nowadays FRAPE gathers pastors of over 25 Pentecostal churches and is one of several organizations representing Pentecostal ministries. Throughout the years the majority of Pentecostal churches and councils have refused to work along with the CEPR in response to the ecumenical collaboration between the CEPR and the Catholic Church.¹² They also became ardent critics of the CEPR support to liberation theology, its progressive stand in social and political issues, and the CEPR leadership identification with the movement for the independence of Puerto Rico.

The political and religious opposition to the Catholic Church's intervention in party politics in 1960 had the effect of consolidating the ties between the PPD and Evangelicals. The leadership of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (*Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño - PIP*) and the pro-statehood Republican Statehood Party (*Partido Estadista Republicano - PER*) gave implicit support to the formation of a Catholic political party, thus alienating Evangelicals from their ranks. As a result, Evangelicals voted

in bloc for Muñoz-Marín and the PPD in the 1960 election and very likely in 1964 in the name of protecting the separation of church and state. The PAC issue and the stand of PIP and PER leaders also provoked a realignment of the country's political forces. The PIP lost a significant part of its Catholic constituency to the PAC. Many voters never returned to the PIP, and it is fair to argue that the PIP never achieved full recovery from the results of that election.¹³ In like manner, the erosion of the PER and its leadership began with their intervention in the PAC controversy, leading to the formation of the current pro-statehood PNP in 1967. The PNP won the 1968 election putting an end to the PPD political hegemony.

Pentecostal support to the PPD declined during the late 1980s when a new leadership in both the religious and the political landscape emerged. New Pentecostal churches and councils were founded and the leaders of Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal churches became influential religious, social, and political actors. The leadership of the political parties experienced renovation too. The PNP maintained its pace of growth and became a dominant political party.¹⁴ A concurrent realignment of the island's religious and political forces was under way.

PPD – Pentecostal Breakdown

Contrary to its preceding generation, key leaders of the Evangelical churches would not be identified with the PPD. On one hand, leaders of historical Protestant churches and the CEPR identified themselves with a “progressive” stand in religious, social and political issues and narrowed its relationship with progressive elements of the Catholic Church. Such “progressive stand” entailed advocacy to liberation theology and for many of them, to the political independence for Puerto Rico.¹⁵ On the other hand, breaking up the tradition of previous PPD administrations, the PPD government elected in 1984 implemented or proposed policies that Pentecostals perceived were detrimental to them. It is doubtful whether these policies responded to governmental needs,

but their implementation or proposal had the effect of undermining the relationship between both groups and eventually carried a political cost for the PPD. The policies were the following:

THE POLICY OF *ACERCAMIENTO* TO SPAIN. Following his reelection in 1988, Governor Rafael Hernández-Colón implemented a policy of *acercamiento*, of rapprochement back to Spain intended to intensify the Commonwealth's cultural and economic ties with Puerto Rico's former metropolis.¹⁶ The "rapprochement policy" tended to exalt the Catholic evangelization of the island and the Catholic faith of Puerto Ricans while undervalued the history and impact of Protestantism. Among many others, Evangelicals believed that the rapprochement policy to Spain was unnecessary and out of time. On the political front, the PNP led the attack against the policy by accusing the PPD of tightening cultural and economic relations with Spain as part of a strategy to drive Puerto Rico toward its political independence.

Rather than an instrument of public policy, Pentecostals envisaged the PPD rapprochement policy as a threat to their doctrine and churches, as well as a threat to the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Throughout the years many Pentecostals, both leaders and members, have thought that political independence will carry the institutional restoration of Catholic social and political power (as during the Spanish colonial period). This would curtail the increasing religious and social influence of Evangelicals. The message admonishing about such a possibility was delivered through Pentecostal congregations and the religious media. The message reached converts who took the political ties with the United States for granted, and for whom until that moment, the advent of independence did not represent a problem or a threat. The PPD itself helped to revive Pentecostals' fear of Puerto Rico's political independence.

THE 1991 REFERENDUM ON THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS. Following the failure of the two-year congressional process (from 1989 to 1990) that allowed a Congress-binding plebiscite on the

island political status, Governor Hernández-Colón proposed a referendum as controversial as the rapprochement policy to Spain. The “Referendum on the Democratic Rights” proposed asking Congress to guarantee Puerto Rico’s culture, language, identity, international sports representation, and US citizenship under any political status option among commonwealth, statehood, and independence.

From the outset the referendum faced political and legal challenges. The proposal guaranteed “rights” clearly inconsistent with statehood and with the plenary powers of Congress upon Puerto Rico. A “YES” vote also nullified the PNP strategy for an eventual “Statehood: YES or NO” plebiscite because it guaranteed Puerto Rican electors the right to choose between three alternatives in a status plebiscite (commonwealth, statehood, and independence), requiring the winning alternative to obtain over 50% of the votes cast. Despite the legal efforts to block the proposal the referendum was finally scheduled and held in December 1991.¹⁷

The rapprochement policy to Spain and the proposal for the Referendum on the Democratic Rights sparked the intervention in the political debate of Pentecostal leader Reverend Jorge Raschke. He is the founder of the *Clamor a Dios* Ministry and, at the time, one of the country’s most popular radio Evangelist, moral and social critic. Raschke is also known for the *Clamor a Dios* event, an Evangelical mass gathering that takes place every Labor Day in San Juan since 1974 with the participation of most Pentecostal councils and independent churches. Although attendance tends to vary year by year, the most notable characteristic of *Clamor a Dios* is the participation of the island’s political leadership, the vast majority of it Catholic.¹⁸ Politicians and governmental officials attend the event regardless of their party affiliation, and despite Reverend Raschke’s apparent support to statehood and the PNP. Raschke’s discourse is highly charged with political content in both the *Clamor a Dios* event and his daily radio broadcast. He discusses public issues and encourages his audience to realize that Evangelicals are a social power of their

own, with the capacity of participating in politics and competing for positions of power.

Newspaper coverage shows that Raschke carried out a controversial campaign against a “YES” vote in the referendum. He claims that God himself told him in a dream that a “YES” vote would eventually bring up political independence and social instability to Puerto Rico.¹⁹ Earlier, during the 1989-1990 congressional process, Raschke suggested publicly that a vote for an “enhanced Commonwealth” (a Commonwealth granted with more political and economic powers) denoted a vote for independence. Raschke believes that political independence will lead to a reestablishment of Catholic dominance in Puerto Rico, thus banishing religious freedom and fostering prejudice and discrimination against Evangelicals.

The “NO” vote got the majority of ballots cast in the Referendum on the Democratic Rights thus defeating the proposals. The big winner of the event was Pedro Rosselló, who led the “NO” campaign and emerged as the PNP’s main leader and sole candidate for governor. As will be explained below, Rosselló drove the PNP to victories in 1992 and 1996 with the support of Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders and adherents.

TAXES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHURCHES. PPD governmental officials proposed imposing taxes upon Evangelical churches. The proposal required Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal churches and councils to fill out tax forms for their assets, properties and earnings for being incorporated. The measure did not target the Catholic Church or the historic Protestant churches.

PPD Senator Victoria Muñoz, who had declared her intention to run for governor in 1992, supported the proposal in the state legislature.²⁰ Evangelicals responded by accusing the government of interfering with the operation and the very existence of innumerable churches, of civil discrimination for the imposition of taxes to Evangelical churches exclusively, and of violating the constitutional separation of church and state. Even Catholics

depicted the proposal as unfair and dangerous. Due to its polemical nature, the proposal was finally withdrawn.

The church-tax issue was followed by a proposal to examine the requirements for the construction and establishment of churches. The idea worsened the relationship between Evangelical leaders, the PPD, and the Regulation and Permits Administration (*Administración de Reglamentos y Permisos-ARPE*), the state agency that regulates construction permits and building codes. For several years, Evangelical leaders had denounced publicly the restrictions imposed by the state governments for the establishment and construction of churches. Leaders also criticized municipal governments for imposing limits to the churches use of public space such as *plazas* and public parks. Senator Muñoz dismissed the Evangelicals claims and sided with those who opposed the establishment of Evangelical churches in their communities and neighborhoods.²¹ In response, Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostal leaders increasingly declared Governor Hernández-Colón, Senator Victoria Muñoz and the PPD enemies of the Evangelical people (*el pueblo evangélico*) for treating them contemptuously.

On his way to the 1992 election, Pedro Rosselló realized the opportunity he had as an opposition candidate to build a base of electoral support composed of Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals in discontent with the PPD. During the 1992 electoral campaign Rosselló told these groups what they wanted to hear: “no taxes for the churches.” Likewise, Rosselló made the commitment of solving the ARPE issue. And above all was the political status issue. Because of his pro-statehood ideology, Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals envisaged Rosselló as a protector of the political association between the United States and Puerto Rico which they believe allows them to practice their religion freely in a predominantly Catholic country. Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders pursued a politics of retaliation against the PPD and accommodation with the PNP. In order to “punish” the PPD’s anti-Pentecostal policies, pastors, evangelists, and council leaders began endorsing and backing up Rosselló’s candidacy both

privately and publicly.²² And more importantly, they encouraged their adherents to do so.

During the 1992 electoral campaign both groups played politics pragmatically. On the one side, Pedro Rosselló secured the electoral support he and the PNP needed for a victory over the PPD and its candidate for governor, Victoria Muñoz. On the other side, the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership got the commitment from the PNP not to tax their churches. The party also opened the door for Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals to gain access to policy-making and earn religious, political, and even economic benefits in return.

Religion in the Rosselló Government

Wilson argues that even if Pentecostals do not vote as a bloc, “they nevertheless share many concerns about the future of their nation and, to some extent, a network of informal communication for contributing to the political process” (1997:146-147). The political role Puerto Rican Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals played during the campaign of electoral events such as the Referendum on Democratic Rights and the 1992 Election supports his contention. This was also the case for the PPD electoral defeat in 1996, despite a much warmer relationship between Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders with the party’s candidate for governor and mayor of San Juan Héctor Acevedo. Unlike Victoria Muñoz, Acevedo avoided controversy with religious groups, attended religious services, and made numerous appearances in their radio and TV programs.

Over the course of the PNP administration, Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders became unofficial public policy advisors and exerted significant influence upon governmental decisions. Additionally, religious concepts became integral components of the Governor’s official discourse. He made constant reference to God in his speeches, messages and press conferences underlining the significance of God and religious values for his administration.²³ Such a stress on religion was not typical of Puerto Rican

politics at all. Conversely, the relationship of Governor Rosselló and his administration with the leadership of the Catholic Church was characterized by mutual constant public criticism, often severe.

In retribution to the electoral support he received from Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals, Governor Rosselló himself made controversial proposals and ordered the implementation of policies favoring the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal interests and demands. The policies made of the separation of church and state an issue of intense public scrutiny:

THE ECUMENICAL WEEKLY BREAKFAST. The Rosselló administration organized the “ecumenical breakfast,” a weekly meeting with religious leaders for the discussion of social and moral issues. The activity took place every Monday morning in La Fortaleza (the governor’s official house) with the participation of the governor, his aides, and representatives of different religious denominations. However, as weeks passed only ministers of the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal churches attended the activity. The leadership of the Catholic and some historic Protestant churches decided to boycott the meetings declaring that, in reality, they were held for discussing and designing Pentecostal-tailored policies.

LEGALIZATION OF NATUROPATHY. Responding to the request of practitioners and clients, PNP legislators introduced bills for the legal recognition and regulation of natural medicine, also known as naturopathy. Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders lobbied intensely in favor of the bill. During the legislative hearings council leaders, pastors, and evangelists defended naturopathy calling it “medicine of God” and justified it by citing biblical passages.

The Medical Association and the Doctors Association of Puerto Rico led the opposition to the bill. But Governor Rosselló, who is a well-known cardiovascular surgeon, disregarded the opposition of his colleagues and signed the bill after being reelected in 1996. Governor Rosselló also signed a bill revoking the compulsory membership of doctors to their professional

association.

THE “FIVE MINUTES OF MEDITATION” IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. In September 1995 Governor Rosselló unexpectedly announced “five minutes of meditation” at the start of daily classes in public schools. Although it was called a proposal, the Governor’s announcement was an executive order. Documents from the Department of Education showed that the “five minutes of meditation” were to be put into effect immediately instructing teachers and students to spend, “individually and intimately,” five minutes either praying in silence, or meditating about other topics, most of them carrying a religious connotation. A Department of Education memorandum on the executive order (dated 27 September 1995) included phrases that read “we should allow God in our heart” and “God gets in our schools through the heart of every Puerto Rican child.” The order lacked any other guidelines or orientation to teachers and students on how to practice the five minutes of meditation.

Opposition to the executive order was widespread and multi-sectoral. Civil rights groups, the Civil Rights Commission, the Bar Association, political organizations and the leaders of historic Protestant churches and organizations questioned the legality of the five minutes of meditation almost immediately. Of main concern was the possibility of religious proselytism in schools. And indeed, some cases of religious proselytism in the classrooms took place where teachers and students asked others to meditate about a particular religious doctrine. The Catholic Church, which had historically supported religious instruction in public schools, accused the governor of playing religion and politics according to the Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals interests.

Facing such an opposition, the Department of Education ordered new guidelines for the “five minutes of meditation,” removing from its documents every reference to God or religion (Memorandum dated 17 October 1995). Still, the Civil Rights Commission concluded that the proposal was unconstitutional (Comisión de Derechos Civiles 1996).²⁴ Due to all the contro-

versy the Governor's order raised, and the unanswered questions regarding its implementation, month after month fewer teachers and students put the "five minutes of meditation" into practice.

The "five minutes of meditation" proved to be a public policy fiasco. Aides of the Secretary of Education acknowledged that the order "came down directly from La Fortaleza," meaning directly from the Governor without legal evaluation.²⁵ An advisor to Governor Rosselló that I interviewed claimed that the proposal was the result of both "careful planning" and the Governor's personal consultation to the people on the need to pursue the discussion of values in schools. She refused to tell whether the Governor had discussed it with religious leaders.²⁶

All the Evangelical leaders I interviewed denied being consulted by the Governor on the issue. Nonetheless, Reverends Raschke, Torres-Ortega, and Font stated that the Governor himself had told them, either by phone or in person, to expect a "very important announcement" in his weekly radio broadcast.

LAND LOTS FOR ONE DOLLAR. This was the most controversial policy of the Rosselló Administration involving Evangelicals. In his speech at the *Clamor a Dios* gathering in 1996, Governor Rosselló announced he would sign a bill that offered rural land lots to non-profit institutions for the nominal amount of \$1. He said the bill was an item in his program for the "reformation of moral and Christian values." The original bill had been submitted to legislative review six months earlier and offered the land lots or plots (*parcelas*) to churches only. Legislative committees concluded its dispositions violated both the US and the Commonwealth's Constitution for the preference it gave to religious institutions over non-religious ones. To overcome such limitation, the term "non-profit institutions" replaced "churches" in the bill's final version.

The new law allowed the sale of public land lots occupied by non-profits institutions that "provided social, civic, cultural, and sports services in communities" and sponsored programs fostering "ethical, moral, charitable, humanitarian values or programs of

rehabilitation and social re-adaptation.” Although non-religious organizations obtained benefits from the law, main focus was on churches and church-related institutions. At least 600 of approximately 900 churches or church-related organizations getting benefits from the law were Pentecostal. Historic Protestant churches and church-related organizations were also favored.

The hierarchy of the Catholic Church and some PPD leaders accused Governor Rosselló of acting politically in favor of Evangelicals just weeks before Election Day. The president of the state Supreme Court, who as the other Supreme Court judges is a Catholic, fired up the controversy for stating in public that the bill was unconstitutional for providing state subsidies to churches. Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders responded that religious and political opposition to the bill was the result of institutionalized Catholic discrimination against Evangelicals. Despite all the controversy, PPD legislators voted in favor of the bill and the constitutionality of the law was never challenged in the courts. The PPD realized that opposing the law just weeks before the election put Evangelical votes at risk even further.

Governor Rosselló signed the bill in a ceremony with the exclusive attendance of the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership and to which the Catholic hierarchy was not invited. Such exclusion drove Puerto Rico’s major Catholic figure, Cardinal Luis Aponte-Martínez to accuse Governor Rosselló of playing politics according to the interests of Evangelicals. Later that day in a press conference, Governor Rosselló candidly declared he was not chasing Evangelical electoral support because “he and his administration already had it.”

As seen, beginning in the 1992 electoral campaign the relationship between Governor Rosselló and most of the leadership of Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal churches was of mutual benefit. In exchange for political support, Rosselló increased the influence of Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders in policy-making and implemented policies that benefited those churches and related groups overtly. Both sides sought to maintain this relationship

during the 1996 electoral campaign.

The 1996 Electoral Campaign

The participation of religious leaders during the 1996 electoral campaign was meaningful and controversial. In like manner, the campaign showed as a distinctive feature an unprecedented fusion of political and religious discourse.

Pentecostal leaders with no previous involvement in political issues became identified with Governor Rosselló's reelection campaign. For example, three weeks before the election the internationally known Evangelist Yiye Ávila appeared in a PNP-sponsored TV program endorsing governmental social policies and declaring Pedro Rosselló the governor "elected by the people and placed in power by God." The program covered the whole religious spectrum by featuring José Basols, a well-known Spanish Catholic priest and the director of an important Catholic school in the city of Ponce. He declared his support to governmental educational policies and argued that their continuity depended on the Governor's reelection. Governor Rosselló also appeared making numerous references to God and linking his governmental policies to a "plan of God." So he did during the televised debates between the candidates to governor.

The TV program became a campaign issue in itself and attracted the attention of the people regardless of their religious denomination or party affiliation. Facing criticism, both Evangelist Ávila and Father Basols claimed that their comments were not a political endorsement to the Governor and requested the cancellation of the program. Despite their petition, the program was broadcast until the very last days of the electoral campaign and was a significant force of publicity behind Rosselló's reelection.

The 1996 electoral campaign also showed candidates of all political parties, the overwhelming majority of them Catholic, attending services at Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal churches. Candidates also participated in religious radio and TV programs frequently to explain how their individual projects and party plat-

forms took Evangelicals into account.²⁷ Religious media became a forum for political debate. Like many other candidates, Governor Rosselló and his wife visited the main FAV temple. There, a guest African preacher blessed the couple and assured the Governor's reelection according to God's will. The FAV TV network aired the tape of the ceremony several times while the PNP converted the video into a campaign advertisement.

The day of the inauguration of his second term as governor, Pedro Rosselló and his family attended private Catholic mass at La Fortaleza. Unlike previous inauguration public ceremonies characterized by the notable participation of leaders of the Catholic Church, this time Governor Rosselló chose Reverend Jorge Raschke to deliver the "Invocation" and a speech on behalf of the country's religious groups. Again, the Governor's inaugural speech was full of religious connotations and references to God beyond what is considered the normal use in such events of state.

Rosselló's Second Administration

The relationship between Governor Rosselló and the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership was not as overt and harmonious during his controversial second administration. Pentecostal leaders led by Reverend Jorge Raschke joined critics of Governor Rosselló's policy of privatization. Likewise, they opposed the Governor's decision of holding a non-binding referendum on Puerto Rico's political status, originally scheduled for November 1998, less than two months after the islandwide disaster caused by Hurricane Georges.²⁸ Governor Rosselló and the PNP neglected the opposition to the referendum from numerous social, political, and religious sectors and scheduled it for mid-December. He was confident the statehood alternative would win the referendum in order to impel Congress to act upon the political status issues and hold a "Statehood: YES or NO" vote. However, the statehood alternative was defeated.²⁹ By then, religious concepts and references had banished from the Governor's political messages and public appearances.

Months later Catholics as well as Evangelicals joined forces to oppose the governmental proposal to distribute birth control devices among public schools students. Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals criticized the Governor and his administration as never before, accusing him of rejecting what they called non-negotiable Christian values and moral principles by encouraging free sex among children and adolescents. This issue was raised in the middle of further criticism to a governmental administration plagued by mistaken decisions, the implementation of controversial public policies and above all, corruption scandals. The public debate on contraceptives and corruption issues brought to an end the alliance between Governor Rosselló and the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership.³⁰ During the months to come this leadership avoided self-identification with elements within the PNP and adopted a position of “neutrality” during the 2000 electoral campaign.

The current leadership of the ruling PPD avoided controversy with Evangelicals during the electoral campaign and afterwards. Still, some Evangelical leaders got involved in more recent controversies like Vieques and the revision of Puerto Rico’s juridical codes. Regarding Vieques, the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership remained divided. As expected, Jorge Raschke and Rodolfo Font voiced their tacit support to the US Navy bombing of Vieques, a small island offshore the eastern coast of Puerto Rico. A group of ministers and pastors, including some from churches established in the US, expressed their solidarity and support to the Vieques cause. Others simply remained silent. The US Navy finally withdrew from Vieques in May 2003, for the tranquility and safeness of its civilian population.

Beginning in 2002, Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders built a block to oppose the decriminalization of homosexuality resulting from the proposed revision of Puerto Rico’s juridical codes. Such a unity among Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders was not seen since 1998. In addition to lobby the Puerto Rican legislature, these leaders threatened publicly to organize

and mobilize Evangelicals politically against governmental elected functionaries and legislators favoring striking down the state's sodomy statutes. However, the heated debate on the issue and its potential political consequences came to a sudden end in June 2003 when the US Supreme Court declared sodomy laws unconstitutional.

In order to fill the vacuum of political clout left after the breakdown of its alliance with the PNP and this party's defeat in the 2000 election, some Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leaders have debated supporting Evangelicals as independent candidates to the state legislature in the 2004 election. In like manner, they have encouraged Evangelicals to run as candidates to elective positions at the municipal, district and state level.

At this moment such an idea appears doomed to fail. In fact, a similar effort did fail when a group called Evangelical Political Action (*Acción Política Evangélica-APE*) was organized on the same grounds before the 1992 election. APE tried to recruit Evangelical voters and obtain Evangelical electoral support from electors of all political parties by running a sole candidate to the state Senate, to the state House of Representatives and to the position of Resident Commissioner, the sole representative of the Commonwealth in Congress. APE had no candidate for governor, therefore an elector could vote for the APE candidates, all of which had previous political experience, and still support the political party of his/her preference. Nonetheless, APE was a big disappointment. Evangelical councils, churches and organizations from all denominations rejected the creation of the slate, did not allow APE to address their congregations, and refused to support its candidates.³¹

Among all the Evangelical leaders I interviewed only Jorge Raschke agreed to speak about APE. He stated that 1992 was not the "right moment for organizing APE" given that Evangelicals had "a real opportunity" to advance their religious and social position with the Pedro Rosselló's election.³² Regardless of the APE leadership political experience, apparently Pentecostal and

Post-Pentecostal leaders stayed away from them because Pedro Rosselló and the PNP offered greater possibilities of exerting social and political influence at the highest level.

The PAC and the APE experiences unveil a characteristic element of Puerto Rico's political culture and history. Puerto Rican Catholics and Evangelicals know where to draw the line by rejecting candidates running on a religious-based platform. The participation of religious actors in political issues and debates seems to be accepted, but religious actors trying to run as political candidates are not, even when the candidate is "one of their own."

Conclusion

This article has provided an analysis of the origins and evolution of Puerto Rican Pentecostalism and Post-Pentecostalism and assessed its religious, social, and political influence. Research shows that traditional Pentecostalism has continued to grow islandwide, satisfying the spiritual needs of people of all socio-economic levels whereas the theology of prosperity has made of Post-Pentecostalism an attractive alternative within Evangelicalism. Pentecostalism and Post-Pentecostalism have been capable of exerting influence upon the country's social and political institutions thanks to the pragmatism of its leadership, the widespread use of communication resources, and the improvement of the educational and economic status of its members. Such an influence should not be overlooked or underestimated in order to draw an accurate picture of the different forces converging in the Puerto Rican religious and political landscape.

Unlike traditional fundamentalists in the United States, Puerto Rican Pentecostals are neither apolitical nor are alienated from political processes. Puerto Rican Pentecostals have consistently participated in party politics and related processes. Since the late 1930s Evangelical leaders backed up the PPD for over four decades. However, policies proposed or implemented by the PPD government between 1988 and 1992 undermined this relationship.

The charismatic leadership of Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal churches considered those policies an attack to Evangelicals. In retaliation, they decided to seek an alliance with the leadership of the PNP. Their support was a factor in the victory of the PNP in the 1992 and 1996 elections and increased the Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal influence upon policy-making. Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals thus expanded the means and scopes of their political participation beyond the traditional participation in elections. Their political activism suggests that these religious leaders and groups have the potential to legitimate or question social and political arrangements, institutions and processes.

One big issue is whether in addition of having supported Governor Rosselló and the pro-statehood PNP in the aforementioned elections, Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals adherents will increasingly tend to support statehood as a political status option. This does not seem to be the case in the foreseeable future. The PNP electoral defeat in the 2000 election and the subsequent findings of corruption and moral scandals in the Rosselló administration minimizes that possibility even further. Since, Pentecostal leaders have maintained distance from the PNP. This was still the case throughout 2003, despite Rosselló's decision to run again for Governor in the forthcoming 2004 election. On the other hand, the statehood option has never obtained the majority of votes in referendums, being defeated twice in the 1990s after PNP victories in elections. Survey and election results confirm that support for Governor Rosselló was much bigger than support to the statehood option that he and his party represented. This is particularly correct for Pentecostals who showed a clear preference for Pedro Rosselló as a political candidate and for the PNP, but also expressed their preference for the Commonwealth over statehood as a political status option.³³

Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals might remain suspicious of a PPD driven by a Catholic leadership and the party's interest in pursuing changes to the Commonwealth. Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal support for statehood might increase only if a

reformed PNP and religious activists like Reverend Jorge Raschke convince voters that proposals for an enhanced Commonwealth will place it closer to independence than the current Commonwealth to statehood. If Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals, both leaders and members, believe that such political change will curtail their social and political achievements and will place them in a position of subordination *vis-à-vis* Catholicism they might get organized and mobilized to oppose it. Only under these particular circumstances Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal might see statehood as the only political status that guarantees the security and welfare of Evangelicals in general. In the meantime they will see the current Commonwealth as a satisfactory social, political and economic arrangement. The fear of a Catholic take over in an independent Puerto Rico is still deeply inserted in the mind of many Puerto Rican Evangelicals, even when it is not likely to occur.

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Notes

- ¹ The author would like to thank Emilio Pantojas, Antonio Vázquez, Giselle Lombardi, and two *Caribbean Studies* anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.
- ² Estimates of religious affiliation in Puerto Rico are uncertain. Around 75% of the population identify itself as Catholic, but only a fraction attends religious services regularly. Estimates of Protestants range between 20% and 35% of the total population of which the overwhelming majority are Pentecostals.
- ³ No one has explained the significance of the political status issue better than Robert W. Anderson: "it is the status-identity of Puerto Rico with regard to the United States which provides the ultimate framework for the posing of all other problems. The so-called "status problem" provides the moral context within which all meaningful

issues in Puerto Rico are expressed” (Anderson 1973:17). Religious political activism is one of those meaningful issues. Puerto Rican political parties are status-oriented. The party system scheme according to political status looks as follows: the Popular Democratic Party (*Partido Popular Democrático-PPD*) is the defender of the current status, the Commonwealth. The New Progressive Party (*Partido Nuevo Progresista-PNP*) advocates annexation to the United States and statehood while the Puerto Rican Independence Party (*Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño-PIP*) is the pro-independence electoral organization.

- ⁴ The creation of the PAC led to a controversial debate that extended for over five years on the issue of church and state. The PAC stood for religious instruction in public schools, for state economic support to private schools and against governmental approval of birth control programs (Custer 1965; Díaz-Alonso 1972; Silva-Gotay 1995).
- ⁵ Juan Lugo was the missionary that brought Pentecostalism to Puerto Rico. He was a member of the US Assemblies of God, but in 1922 Lugo incorporated 15 churches and founded “The Pentecostal Church of God” (*Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal*). Nowadays this is the largest Puerto Rican Pentecostal Church. Adams (1997) erroneously reports that the Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal is still associated to the US Assemblies of God.
- ⁶ LaRuffa also noted: “Although beginning as a religion of the poor and oppressed... Pentecostalism adjusted itself to more affluent conditions. Some Pentecostal churches in Puerto Rico, for example, have a constituency that is part professional and fits into the middle and upper sectors of the population” (1980:60).
- ⁷ As Sipiarski (1996) argued Post-Pentecostalism is a better term to depict the phenomenon also called Neo-Pentecostalism. The latter is very common in the literature, but it is used to depict different phenomena like churches and groups that emerged from charismatic renewals, urban churches, so called modern Pentecostals, churches of recent formation, as well as those churches that put emphasis in the theology of prosperity. This conceptual diversity is found, for example, in Berryman (1996:169); Wilson (1997:145-147); Sipiarski (1996:7); Brouwer, Gilford, and Rose (1996: 6-7, 266-267, and chapter 4 on Guatemala).
- ⁸ Rodolfo Font argues emphatically that his church is not Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, or charismatic and should not be considered an expansionary variation of traditional Pentecostalism. FAV pastors

are harsh critics of traditional Pentecostalism and their interpretations of Christ's Second Coming. FAV rejects the idea of the end of the world and the very idea of the Second Coming by arguing that we are already living the kingdom of God. Personal salvation is not the main concern for post-millenarian Christians like FAV adherents, who practically assume salvation has been already granted. Consequently, individual and world improvement is desirable and justified, both economically and politically speaking. Despite his claims of neutrality, the political discourse of Rodolfo Font and FAV is clearly partial to the PNP and the project of statehood. I interviewed Rodolfo Font in August 1996. Since, every request for an interview with FAV pastors has been unsuccessful.

- ⁹ This is the case of Evangelist Jorge Raschke, leaders of the Pentecostal Church of God, and Pérez-Torres, a Pentecostal himself. The issue is also a topic of discussion in Pentecostal radio and TV programs.
- ¹⁰ As in most of Latin America, Evangelical is an umbrella term for all Protestants and Pentecostals. These leaders were Moisés Rosa, Executive Secretary of the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico, Jaime Rivera-Solero, Regional Secretary of the Latin American Council of Churches (*Concilio Latinoamericano de Iglesias-CLAI*), Rafael Torres-Ortega, Minister and leader of the Church Defenders of the Faith, and Pentecostal attorney and former political candidate Luis Salgado. The PPD had notable Evangelical leaders and collaborators, including Hipólito Marcano, Enrique Rodríguez and Reverend José Lebrón-Velázquez.
- ¹¹ The exception is the very few studies that focus specifically on the PAC. See note number 4 above.
- ¹² An exception took place for the visit to Puerto Rico of Evangelist Luis Palau in 1984. Perhaps, the most significant collaboration between Pentecostals and historic Protestant churches took place for the March 1995 visit and campaign of Evangelist Billy Graham. The biblical justification for Pentecostal rejection of ecumenism and interdenominational work with Catholics is found in II Corinthians 6:14-18.
- ¹³ Ironically, the PAC joined Catholics at opposite sides of the spectrum against the PPD: independentists and nationalists on one side, and annexionist Republicans on the other. The PIP almost lost its electoral franchise in 1960 and barely managed to maintain the franchise in the following elections. In the 1956 elections the PIP

received 86,386 votes. In 1960 the PIP only got 24,103 votes while the PAC obtained 52,096. In the 1964 and 1968 elections the party received around 24,000 for governor. In 1972 the PIP began showing some signs of recovery by obtaining 52,000 thanks to the party's campaign against the Vietnam War and the draft of Puerto Rican youngsters. Electoral data is available at <http://www.ccepur.org>.

- ¹⁴ The party system has become a closed two-party system in which the PPD and the PNP obtain approximately the same electoral support. Both parties have shared over 90% of the votes in national elections since 1968, dominating widely the elective positions at all levels. After winning all elections between 1948 and 1964, the PPD obtained victories in 1972, 1984, 1988 and 2000. Since its formation in 1967, the PNP won the elections held in 1968, 1976, 1980, 1992, and 1996. Electoral support to the PIP remains between 3 and 5%. Despite its low electoral support, the PIP is an institutionalized party that has deep roots in Puerto Rican society and mobilization capacity. The PIP is usually considered the country's "third political organization."
- ¹⁵ Interviews with Moisés Rosa-Ramos, Jaime Rivera-Solero, and Father Pedro Ortiz, Assistant to the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Caguas, July and August 1996.
- ¹⁶ Puerto Rico was a Spanish colony from 1493 to 1898 when as a result of the Spanish-American War and the Treaty of Paris that put an end to the conflict, Puerto Rico was "ceded" to the United States as a form of compensation. In virtue of the Treaty of Paris (1898), Puerto Rico became a possession, a territory under the sovereignty of the United States Congress. Despite the changes brought up by establishment of the Commonwealth in 1952, the island remains under the plenary powers of Congress.
- ¹⁷ The PPD was divided on the issue of the referendum. Some leaders of the PPD criticized the proposal publicly, including the candidate for governor in the 1992 elections, Victoria Muñoz. A review of newspaper reports shows how controversial the referendum was and how many people thought of it as a waste of time, money, and as another "senseless" proposal of the PPD administration. The PIP supported the PPD's initiative.
- ¹⁸ Estimates of the attendance to the *Clamor a Dios* event is an issue every year, as occurs with the estimates of almost every mass gathering in Puerto Rico. The fact is that from a few hundred worshippers in 1974, *Clamor a Dios* came to gather thousands years later.

- ¹⁹ Interview with Jorge Raschke, November 1996.
- ²⁰ Victoria Muñoz is the daughter of the founder of the PPD and former governor Luis Muñoz-Marín. Muñoz-Marín died in 1980 and was the governor during the PAC controversy in 1960. He was governor of Puerto Rico between 1948 and 1964.
- ²¹ Evangelical churches have been accused of disorderly conduct for the sound they produce and the music they play during their religious services. In March 27, 1974 Pentecostal groups and the CEPR marched in protest of the Commonwealth's Supreme Court rule that called the Pentecostal Church located in Old San Juan a public nuisance. It is no coincidence that the first *Clamor a Dios* took place in San Juan in 1974.
- ²² One notable exception was Rafael Torres-Ortega, the leader of the Church Defenders of the Faith and a well-known PPD supporter. Still, Torres-Ortega expressed publicly his disagreement with the "anti-Evangelical" policies of the PPD and attended the 1992 *Clamor a Dios*, held just two months before the Election. That year's event was special because the whole Pentecostal and Post-Pentecostal leadership put their differences aside and attended it. This was seen as a form of expressing both unity and support for Rosselló, who was cheered throughout the event. In contrast, PPD candidate Victoria Muñoz was booed. I interviewed Torres-Ortega in August 1996.
- ²³ The governor put emphasis on religious values, but not on morality. In contrast to what takes place in the United States, rarely, morality, temperance and abortion are issues of extended public debate in Puerto Rico.
- ²⁴ The US Supreme Court has ruled that "Neither a state nor Federal Government can... aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another," also that "government should not prefer one religion to another, or religion to no religion" (Serrano-Geyls 1996). On the issue of meditation at public schools the US Supreme Court has ruled that "It is not a trivial matter, however, to require that the legislature manifest a secular purpose and omit all sectarian endorsement from its laws. That requirement is precisely tailored to the Establishment Clause's purpose of assuring that government not intentionally endorse religion or a religious practice" (Comisión de Derechos Cíviles de Puerto Rico 1996:18) (my translations).
- ²⁵ Interview with María Rosa Dávila, Assistant to the Secretary of Education, July 1996.

- ²⁶ Interview with Myriam Rodríguez, Advisor to Governor Rosselló on Education, Health and Social Welfare, July 1996.
- ²⁷ Pentecostals and Post-Pentecostals dominate religious media in Puerto Rico by owning over 25 radio stations and four TV networks. The Catholic Church owns two radio and one TV station only.
- ²⁸ The referendum was non-binding because the US Congress was not obliged to act upon its results.
- ²⁹ For the fourth time in eight years the Puerto Rican electorate rejected the alternative endorsed by the government or the ruling party in referendums. In 1991 the “NO” alternative won the “Referendum on the Democratic Rights.” The statehood alternative failed to obtain a majority of votes in non-binding referendums held in 1993 and 1998, and in 1994 the electorate rejected Governor Rosselló’s proposal for constitutional amendments that allowed the elimination of the absolute right to bail and increased the number of judges of the Supreme Court.
- ³⁰ Anyhow, Governor Rosselló had decided not to seek reelection.
- ³¹ As acknowledged by Luis Salgado and Víctor Rodríguez, APE candidate to Resident Commissioner and to the House of Representative respectively. Regarding the political experience, APE candidates to the Senate and the House of Representative had been PNP and PPD legislators.
- ³² Interview with Jorge Raschke, November 1996.
- ³³ This is shown by the results of the World Values Survey carried out in Puerto Rico in 1996 and also by private and newspaper polls.