This work addresses the question of how the patron saint festivities in San Germán Puerto Rico, focusing primarily on its annual programs, assisted in the reconstruction of the Puerto Rican nation during the 1950s. Particularly, I focus on how community leaders through these programs reproduced ideas of nationhood based on hispano-centric, white, Catholic, and patriarchal parameters. I investigate how an activity that is perceived to be cultural/religiously oriented has been also used to filter political agendas that legitimized a colonial relationship, while at the same time celebrating a unique collective regional and national identity.

[Key words: Puerto Rico, Nationalism, San German, Politics, Culture, Colonialism, Patron Saint Festivities]
PUERTO RICO, MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED YEARS

after the first European power began its conquest of the hemisphere, is the last part of a “Latin” American colonial legacy that has not ended. However, colonialism over the Puerto Rican territory is no longer controlled by those European empires, but by former North American colonies: the United States of America. While it is true that the U.S. has employed a neo-colonial control over many Latin American and Caribbean countries in post-independence Latin America, the fact is that Puerto Rico is the only Caribbean and Latin American nation actually owned by the U.S. since 1898, the year that began what can be considered Puerto Rico’s second colony period. For this reason, Puerto Rico presents a unique opportunity to study Latin American nationalism and U.S.-Latin American relations. Nevertheless, Latin American scholarship often ignores the case of Puerto Rico, and prefers to give more attention to larger countries.

Puerto Rican nationhood, within its Caribbean context, has been influenced by its close ties to the U.S. However, as stated by Juan Manuel Carrión and others, Puerto Rico’s colonial relationship with the United States has not resulted in cultural assimilation (Carrión 1996; Fenton 1969; Guerra 1998; Silva Gotay 2005). Indeed, public rituals present under Spanish colonialism have continued into the twenty-first century. Examples of these rituals are the fiestas patronales, or patron saint festivities, which are held once a year throughout different towns of the islands (López Cantos 1990). The patron saint festivities are celebrations in honor of the patron saint of a town and originate from the Catholic tradition brought by Spain to the Americas, but were and are transformed in the New World context (Goldstein 2004; Guss 2000; Quintero Rivera 1989).

This study will analyze the role that the patron saint festivities and its programs played in the development of a national sentiment, including dynamics of class, race, and gender in the township of San Germán during the 1950s. As John Lynch and others have argued for other Latin American nations, religion and politics often have engaged in a double-binding relationship that placed them on equal footing of social influence (Lynch 1989; Voekel 2007; Beezly 1994; Levine 1981; Montagne González and Ramírez Calzadilla 1994). Community leaders, cultured and humble, not only redefined the notions of San Germán identity and Puerto Rican nationhood, they also legitimized their privileged role in society. Indeed, I find David Guss’s approach to the study of rituals and festivals useful. In his study of four Venezuelan festivities he found that individuals in different hierarchical social strata switch positions in an effort to aid in the construction of regional and national identities (Guss 2000: 7).
Thus, my aim is to understand how sangermeños/as came to comprehend themselves and reaffirm a collective identity in a time of rapid political and economic reconfigurations that included the new political status of Commonwealth under the United States in 1952. I will argue that San Germán’s patron saint festivities played a key role in the identity formation of not only their immediate surroundings, but also in the shaping of an Andersonian (Anderson 1991), island-wide “modern” sense of nationhood, which nevertheless consents to imperial political and economic control, while maintaining and claiming its cultural distinctiveness. Here, I depart from Anderson’s conceptualization of the sovereign sense of nation-states and propose that Puerto Ricans live and to some extent celebrate the parameters of a colonial nation.3 Hence I differentiate between political nationalism and cultural nationalism.

Eric Hobsbawm states that “invented traditions,” which are the basis of the modern concept of the nation, are sustained by formalization and ritualization. He argues that the process of invention of tradition occurs when there is a rapid transformation in society that breaks with “old” social patterns (Hobsbawm 1992: 2). While for many the Commonwealth meant a disguise for a continued colonial status, for many others it represented a break from colonialism in the form of “internal autonomy.” Thus, the festivities in San Germán for many was a ritualistic tool to “invent” the meanings of the Commonwealth and the colonial nation, and restate hierarchies of class, race, and gender.

I agree with Arlene Dávila and her emphasis that popular festivals in Puerto Rico are crucial if we want to understand the dynamics not only of cultural but also of political identities (Dávila 1996). However, I do not agree with her exclusion of the patron saint festivities due to her assertion that these were state-sponsored festivities solely organized by the city hall (Dávila 1996: 159). Indeed, while she is analyzing cultural politics in Puerto Rico through community festivals, and while she is stating that patron saint festivities are “linked to the political party that dominates,” she does not address these religious festivities in her analysis. Precisely due to the fact that patron saint festivities are directly tied to the city hall, they should be included as a vital aspect in understanding political culture on a colonial island.

My argument is more in line with Silvia Álvarez Curbelo’s analysis of the public festivities of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ponce, Puerto Rico. She analyzes the ways in which these public festivities were indicators of a “fragmented but irresistible secularization process” (1998: 209) in the transition from Spanish to U.S. colonialism. While my argument inherently assumes the secularized elements of San Germán’s society, I concentrate on the reaffirmation of a colonial identity in the programs of a religious festivity in a slightly different historical context.

While I interviewed sangermeño/a community leaders who were involved in the fiestas during the 1950s, my primary sources are the annual festivity programs published by the Junta de Festejos from 1950 to 1959. Taking into account that these programs were prepared by the Comité de Programa, they show the selective inclusion of certain topics and the exclusion of others (Trouillot 1995: 27). Michel-Ralph Trouillot argued that the exclusionary process in “any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences” (1995: 27). Therefore, the process of historical writing is attached to individual and collective values that consciously or unconsciously select what enters into the narrative or what is left out. Moreover, I agree with William Roseberry (1989) in that culture and rituals cannot be seen as static “texts” departing from a constant transformative historical process. My analysis of the programs of these festivities is to understand a particular moment, with its historical figures and context, in the fluid process of the formation of sangermeño/a culture and identity.
San Germán: A place of converging identities

San Germán in the 1950s was a city very proud of its extensive Spanish colonial history, embodied by their beloved Porta Coeli church erected in 1606. This is the second oldest town in the island; it traces its foundation to 1511. Sangermeños/as proudly claim that Porta Coeli holds the essence of their most precious values: Catholicism and hispanidad. Nevertheless, sangermeños/as are also very proud of the U.S. presence in their town, which is materialized by the Polytechnic Institute (Poly), the first private university founded on the island in 1912, and only the second higher education institution on the island. The values that the Poly projects to sangermeños/as are the nonauthoritarian and democratic educative “characteristic” of U.S. rule. Nevertheless, it also represents U.S. hegemony over Puerto Ricans. Although sangermeños/as were and are very proud of the Hispanic and Catholic traditions, their pride in the Polytechnic Institute, which in 1956 became the Inter-American University, is also evident. In fact, one of the nicknames for San Germán is Ciudad Universitaria (University City) in honor of the Poly. Although the Poly was founded by English-speaking Protestant missionaries, and its medium of instruction was English, it nevertheless received support from sangermeños/as since it represented the advancement of the U.S.-American culture.

Nowhere on the island of Puerto Rico, except for the capital San Juan, can we see such starkly different sets of institutionally represented characteristics of Puerto Rican identity. On the one hand, we have the “traditional” values of the “authoritarian” Catholic Spanish hegemonic colonial system, while on the other, we have a “modern democratic Anglo-Protestant” hegemonic colonial system, both converging in a town that for many locals is foundational to Puerto Rican culture and society. San Germán, a town rich in traditions, was the stage for the encounter of two very different societies and their most important representative institutions.

During the 1950s San Germán’s conviction of grand and prominent city was long gone due to its history of territorial fragmentation that left it politically and economically isolated in the southwest of the island (Vélez Dejardín 2003).
The 1960 Census indicates that San Germán had a population of 27,667 inhabitants, of which 7,790 (28.2 percent) lived in the urban area and 19,877 (71.8 percent) lived in the rural area. By 1959 the median income of San Germán was $948, whereas the median income for Puerto Rico was $1,268. The censuses indicate that San Germán’s economy revolved around the agriculture industry. Indeed the 1960 Census indicate that 42.5 percent worked in the agricultural industry, while manufacturing comprised 14.7 percent of the economically active population. By 1960 sangermeños/as had an 82.6 percent literacy rate, while Puerto Rico’s average consisted of 83 percent.

In racial terms the 1950 Census indicated that 24.4 percent of sangermeños/as were “non-white,” while the “white” population represented 75.6 percent. The numbers for Puerto Rico were 20.3 percent “non-white” and 79.7 percent “white.” Nevertheless, as Jorge Duany shows, the census in Puerto Rico exhibits the U.S. racial binaries of “white” versus “black” without acknowledging the racial kaleidoscope of Puerto Rican society (Duany 2002: 233–60). This allows people to self-identify as “white,” which is socially and racially more desirable.

Contextualizing patron saint festivities in 1950s Puerto Rico

On October 30, 1950, Puerto Rican nationalists led a pro-independence insurrection that included nine towns on the island, and Washington, D.C. (Seijo Bruno 1997).7 However, by November 7th of the same year, the revolt was violently suppressed by the Puerto Rican National Guard and the local police. Despite this insurrection, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was established in 1952 as the result of public Law 600, approved by the U.S. Congress and signed by the U.S. President, which allowed Puerto Ricans to develop their own constitution and administer insular affairs that did not contradict U.S. Federal statutes (Torruella 2001). Nevertheless, Puerto Rico was still subjected to the “plenary powers” of the U.S., such as economic and political agency in the international arena (Trias Monge 2001; Dietz 1987: 231–39). Throughout this period, a Gag Law (1948–1956) was instituted against the radical nationalists and others who opposed the Commonwealth (Acosta 1987; Seijo Bruno 1997). The nationalists nevertheless attacked the U.S. Congress in 1954.

Luis Muñoz Marín, which in 1948 became the first governor elected by the Puerto Rican people,8 was convinced that industrialization of Puerto Rico, under Operation Bootstrap, was imperative for the economic and social advancement of Puerto Ricans. However, Muñoz Marín, convinced that there should be a cultivation of the “spiritual” principles of the Puerto Rican culture, developed “Operation Serenity,” which included

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the establishment of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture (ICP) (Alegría 1978; Duany 2002). The development of Operation Serenity signified his understanding of a cultural nationalism that could go parallel to a political and economic attachment to the U.S. (Dávila 1996: 34). However, my research, supported by interviews with sangermeños José Vélez Dejardín and Reinaldo Mejía Garcés, preliminarily indicates that the ICP and the central government had minimal participation in San Germán’s patron saint festivities of the 1950s. For example, these sangermeños argued that the ICP was invited to participate by sponsoring activities, such as the 1956 ballet performance, but they did not take control or dictate the parameters of the festivities. This was left to the local festivity committees.

San Germán’s patron saint festivities: Exploring Sangermeñidad
San Germán’s patron saint festivities are held the last week of July, ending with the day of St. Germanus’s death on July 31st, usually lasting for ten days. For the church, the most important events are the celebration of diverse Catholic activities each and every day at different times of the day. For example, in 1955 the festivities began Friday, July 22nd, with the chime of the bells at noon. Everyday at 7:30 pm there was the recitation of the rosary, and a mass directed to the patron. In addition, everyday at 7:00 am there was another mass directed to the patron. The evening and morning mass were dedicated to different intentions, such as the associates of the Holy Name, the pious union of Christian wives and mothers, the daughters of Mary, among others. The procession to the saint was held July 31st at 6:30 pm, when 10 or 12 men carried the saint’s statue through the streets of the town. Throughout the week there were sermons that “discussed diverse and current themes,” and the sermon (panegírico) on the day of the saint was in charge of an Augustine priest.

The activities for the entertainment of sangermeños/as varied from dances to popular games to fireworks. There were popular parties called “retretas” almost every night at the Plaza Francisco Mariano Quiñones, a public space where everybody could
attend. In addition, there were “private” dances separated by social and racial lines. Luis Torres Oliver remembers the dances from the Círculo de Recreo reserved for the “high class” of San Germán, who usually celebrated the day of the patron. Men would dress in tuxedos and women would wear specially designed dresses (Torres Oliver 1997: 53). He further explains that the public would gather in front of the locale to watch people of high class show off their tremendous dresses and dance to the rhythm of the island’s best bands. There were other dances, such as the one sponsored by the Casino de Artesanos; however, this was for individuals of the lower class.

During the festivities young people would gather at the plaza in circles. The girls were in the interior circle, the majority without boyfriends. The outer circles, walking in opposite direction, boys without girlfriends were either in search of a romantic conquest, or just to have fun. Adults and older people sat in benches around the plaza looking at the youngsters or enjoying music from the retreta (Torres Oliver 1997: 52).

Popular games were played every day of the fiestas in the plazas. Games such as juego del sartén, palo encebado, and juego de sortijas were very popular. Juego del sartén consisted of a black painted pan with a coin at the bottom and kids needed to take the coin with their teeth. The palo encebado was a tall upright pole covered with oil; a prize waited whoever could reach the top. Juego de sortijas was a version of medieval tournaments (López Canto 1990), in which a person riding a horse, a bicycle, or a motorcycle needed to insert a ribbon in a small ring as they rode at high speed (Quiñones 1954). The festivities also included mechanical machines such as ferris wheels and carousels among others. Moreover, U.S. sports such as baseball, basketball, and volleyball were played along with “traditional” popular games. Finally, fireworks gathered the attention of children and grown-ups alike. Fireworks were held at the atrium of the church and included buscapies, luces de bengala, rockets, and air balloons (Vélez Dejardín 1972). The most popular firework was the burning of the patron saint’s portrait, which was burned on the day of the saint.

FOR MANY PUERTO RICANS WHO HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE DEFINITIONS OF PUERTORRIQUEÑIDAD DEVELOPED BY THE TENETS OF “OPERATION SERENITY” MAY ASSOCIATE THIS IMAGE WITH THAT OF A JÍBARO.

Ideas about the Puerto Rican nation during the 1950s were presented in the work of Dr. María Teresa Babín. Babín rather romantically stressed the idea of a Puerto Rican racial democracy that, nonetheless, privileged the white jíbaro. For Babín the jíbaro “is the white Puerto Rican peasant... (he) represents the innermost... and pure of the Puerto Rican nationality” (1958: 110). Regarding “traditional festivities,” Babín said that they derive from the Hispanic tradition, and are “seasoned” with Indian and African “sap” (1958: 184). Just as Dr. Babín placed a hierarchical racial value masked
under a convenient lens of racial democracy and homogeneity, the patron saint festivities in San Germán also played the game of nationhood that privileged a few.

The reconstruction of a white-cultured identity of sangermeñidad may be seen in different ways in the programs of the patron saint festivities in honor to San Germán de Auxerre. Although many of the stories included by the editors of the programs were the stories of other “cultured” individuals (as they often saw themselves), there were a few cases where they narrated the stories of lower class “humble” individuals. An example of white humble culture can be found in Raquel Quiñones’s “Los Aguadores” from 1950. Siño Isidro was an “aguador,” a person who delivered water carrying it in buckets over his shoulders. Ms. Quiñones said, “Aún me parece estar viendo a Siño Isidro, un viejo blanco, muy fuerte, con su aparato al cuello y sus dos latones en los cuales echaba unas ramas verdes para que el agua al caminar no salpicara” (Quiñones 1950). For many Puerto Ricans who have been in contact with the definitions of puertorriqueñidad developed by the tenets of “Operation Serenity” may associate this image with that of a jíbaro. The image of a white old man struggling to make a living and working all day long despite an injured foot, was glorified as a symbol of a “pure” or even “spiritual” San Germán. It is interesting to see the selection of popular characters by Raquel Quiñones in her stories. As explained by Gladys Martínez, a community leader and teacher during this decade, even though Quiñones was of humble origins, she was able to become a legitimate leader of San Germán (Martínez 2005).

Gustavo Ramírez de Arellano, one of San Germán’s distinguished families, wrote extensively for the programs of the fiestas and often positioned himself and the few of his “distinguished” class in a privileged position. In his essay “Haciendas de Moscabado” from the 1955 program, Ramírez de Arellano glorified the sugar plantation system while ignoring the abuses that came with slavery and overworked peons. The author explained how these haciendas on the contrary “le ha dado a esta Antilla puertorriqueña renombre internacional” and have contributed to the “progreso de Puerto Rico.” Not only did he ignore the institution of slavery in his romanticized view, he also portrayed it as a cradle of culture and civilization. Moreover, Ramírez de Arellano helped to construct the idea of a Puerto Rican identity that revolves around the hacienda culture and directly stated that these haciendas were part of the patria (fatherland):

El recuerdo de estas haciendas nos evoca la patria puertorriqueña. Despierta en nosotros un intenso fervor patriótico. No concibo que pueda haber una escena más típica del Puerto Rico que se nos ha ido para siempre que un retrato de uno de estos establecimientos en plena molienda. Si pudiéramos desde un alto arropar con nuestra vista toda la bajura de San Germán, captando al mismo tiempo todas sus haciendas y el trajín de sus hornos, contemplaríamos un panorama evocador, inigualable por su belleza y digno del pincel de un Rendir o un Van Gogh o del Greco. (Fiestas Patronales 1955)

While Gustavo Ramírez de Arellano participated extensively in the writing and editing of these programs, other individuals participated and reproduced similar ideas. Such was the case of Adan Szaszdi, professor at the Universidad Interamericana (Poly), who wrote for the program of 1957 an essay entitled “Los registros del siglo XVIII en la parroquia de San Germán.” Szaszdi claimed that San Germán within Puerto Rican society was the “cuna de sus apellidos de
mayor tradición.” In addition, Amparo Rivera de Nazario wrote a poem for the 1956
program entitled “Cantares de mi pueblo,” in which she praised among other things
San Germán’s culture, tradition, and the Círculo de Recreo.

The Círculo de Recreo is regarded as one of the most important markers of
sangermeñidad. Established in 1879, the Círculo de Recreo was a social and civic
club for the most prestigious and accommodated men in San Germán (Vélez Dejarín
2003). They defined their mission as “propender a la cultura de las letras y bellas artes
y proporcionar a los socios pasatiempos de lícita recreación, siendo completamente
ajena a toda cuestión política o religiosa” (Círculo de Recreo 1945: 3). Admittance
into the Círculo was extremely selective, and only those who had monetary affluence
could gain access. In fact, the Círculo de Recreo’s book of rules, published in 1888
and revised in 1945, stipulated in Article 14, Chapter 2 that “la facultad de admitir
socios pertenece única y exclusivamente a la Junta Directiva, y ésta es la única que
se podrá dirigirse a cualquier persona, invitándola para que se haga socio de este
Centro” (1945: 6).

The patron saint festivities included several dances sponsored by different
organizations. Because of lack of space I am unable to scrutinize the actual
performance of these dances, but, even so, it is important to have a general view of
them in order to gain an idea of class and racial hierarchies. The Círculo de Recreo
was one of the few clubs that had the privilege of being announced in the program.
These dances were listed as “bailes de confianza” or selective dances, which meant
that only those who belonged to their group could enter.

Needless to say, the Círculo de Recreo was only for white families. Nevertheless,
there were other social clubs in San Germán that grouped different peoples from
different backgrounds and classes. Such was the Casino de Segunda, established circa
1935. According to my interview with festivity organizer Reinaldo Mejía Garcés,
the Casino de Segunda was composed of “gente de color que no le era permitida la
entrada al Círculo de Recreo” (Mejía Garcés 2005). This “people of color” were middle
class individuals and their families. Their dances required formal attire. Another social
club present during the festivities was the Casino de los Artesanos. This Casino was
composed of lower class individuals, among them plumbers, bricklayers, and carpenters
to mention a few. Finally, the Casino de Empleados grouped different employees
from around the community and had their activities next to the Porta Coeli Convent
(Mejía Garcés 2005). These different clubs or Casinos were many times hidden
from the formal program of the fiestas. Even though July 27, 1954 was dedicated to
the Artesanos, there were no dances or other activities included in the program to
celebrate their contributions to San Germán. While they might have been included
nominally, they were excluded from the other performances.

It is important to recognize the different ways in which the Comité de Programas
and the Junta de Festejos in general excluded particular elements of San Germán’s
society. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot would argue, the omission of certain topics and
themes from these programs are in itself revealing. The representations of black
sangermeño/a heritage in these programs informed the reader and viewer that these
cultures were not welcomed in the identity of the town. For example, the 1950
program does not mention any contribution by a black Puerto Rican in politics or
culture, contrasting with the plethora of acknowledgements to white men and some
women in the portrayed history of the town.

We know of the presence of black sangermeño/as in San Germán due to the
census information, but also through the writings of Reinaldo Mejía Garcés,
a white businessman active in the patron saint festivities since the 1950s. In his book *Estampas de San Germán y algo más...Recordando el ayer* of 1995, Mejía Garcés presents the history of a community of black sangermeños/as in the essay “Los negros de Trujillo.” This barrio was known to be a community of ex-slaves after the abolition of slavery. He informs us that they still maintained their cults to their African gods like “Yoruba, Achún, and Abbayeye” (Mejía Garcés 1995: 36). One time he was invited by Mr. Taforó, a black sangermeño, to attend a bomba dance that would include “métodos primitivos auténticos africanos” performed by blacks from San Germán, Carolina, and other towns (1995: 37). Moreover, Mejía Garcés identifies three different dances that he remembers were performed in this community:


Due to Mejía Garcés we know of a specific example of black culture in San Germán, who otherwise was excluded from the programs of the festivities. There were, nonetheless, few instances where Afro-sangermeño/a culture appeared in the programs, yet in interesting ways. First, the 1952 program includes a poem by Félix Arce Lugo recalling a black sangermeño called Juan de la Cruz entitled “Juan de La Cruz: el hombre que peleó consigo mismo” (*Fiestas Patronales* 1952). In this poem Arce Lugo portrayed the “moreno” Juan de la Cruz as an alcoholic, violent, and abusive man. Due to alcohol, Juan de la Cruz loses control, often getting violent and harming innocent bystanders. Finally, he ended killing himself, blaming alcohol, his violent temperament, and his race. Even though Arce Lugo tried to make the audience take pity on de la Cruz’s case for his alcoholic and almost involuntary violence, the fact is that he reproduced the stereotypical image of blacks as violent and dangerous.

The general trend in regards to the visible presence of black Puerto Rican culture in the fiestas was one of exclusion from the parameters of puertorriqueñidad. On July 30, 1953, at 10:00 am, one day before the day of the patron, the community gathered to place a plaque on the tomb of Francisco Mariano Quiñones in commemoration of his leading role in the abolition of slavery on March 22, 1873. The plaque said:

*Su colaboración destacada en la emancipación de los esclavos con indemnización o sin ella constituye uno de los más bellos gestos de este paladín de las causas nobles.* (*Fiestas Patronales* 1953)

This plaque may be seen as a real effort to include the history of blacks in the identity of a society with a long history of slavery. However, it was a homage to the white man who “liberated” the slaves, and not to the slaves who had to endure the awful practice of slavery.

Histories of extraordinary women were minimal in comparison with the overwhelming recounts of male personalities. When histories, poems, or essays addressed the role of women in San Germán history, they often portrayed women stereotypically: as caretakers, mothers, or child educators. The well-respected sangermeña Olimpia Delgado vda. De Gelpí aided in the reproduction of women’s stereotypical gender role in her poem “Amor de madre, sublime amor” from the 1955 program. In her poem Delgado wrote: “Es la madre una heroína/cuando cumple su misión,/consagrándose a sus hijos/de alma, vida y corazón” (*Fiestas Patronales* 1955). Her poem was accompanied by a drawing of a woman with a long dress and an apron leaning towards a baby’s crib.

If the mentality of sangermeñidad involves much of the values of institutions like the Círculo de Recreo, where if a man marries he is excluded from the society,
this identity then falls into an ideology of patriarchy. When Gustavo Ramírez de Arellano wrote in 1953 that the “Tertulias en las boticas” were reserved for the most intellectually and culturally driven men of society, he recreated not only a class privilege, but the patriarchal canon as well. As we know the Círculo de Recreo was a society of “intellectual and cultured” men. Women could only be part of the Círculo de Recreo as “guests.” In the list of members from 1965, 128 members were males residing in San Germán and 74 more had homes outside San Germán, for a total of 202 male members. Only 29 women were listed as “guests.”

Moreover, it is also important to understand some societies or clubs for women and their purposes. On the one hand the Sociedad de Hermandad, as described in the program of 1955, was founded in 1912. Its purpose was to lend “ayuda material y espiritual a un gran número de pobres insolventes que no saben pedir de puerta en puerta.” The Club Altrusa, founded in 1954, had 26 members by 1955 and was composed mainly by women who carried out “actividades culturales y cívicas.”

Nevertheless, there were a few women depicted in these fiestas outside of the patriarchal norm. Lola Rodríguez de Tió, the revolutionary champion of the nineteenth century and writer of the revolutionary hymn “La Borinqueña,” was consistently portrayed as the brave sangermeña, who with her patriotic love and passionate defense for independence was exiled from the island. There was also sangermeña Alma Delgado Tió de Torres, whose biography appeared in the 1955 program. She became judge during the 1940s, and among other things was the first Puerto Rican to become District Attorney in 1950 (Fiestas Patrtonales 1955). Also, the 1955 program dedicated a page to Doña Patria Tió, daughter of Lola Rodríguez de Tió. She was portrayed as an academic and diplomat, who obtained her Ph.D. at the University of Havana and participated in different international conferences. However, these women were the only ones to get a more elaborate biography or essay on their public lives. If other women were presented as being outside their motherly role, they were patronized for their accomplishment. For example, the program of 1954 featured two recent graduates from medical school: Dr. Sally E. Flores, “gentil primicia”; and Dr. Efrén Ramírez, “gallardo triunfador.” Based on this example, it did not matter if women succeeded outside their motherly role, they were still seen as less than men, or at the least still were given submissive adjectives such as “gentle” and “beginner.”

Cultural sovereignty versus Americanization

René Marqués was one of the most distinguished Puerto Rican writers of the 1950s. Marqués works addressed the danger of losing the Puerto Rican “humanistic traditions” over the imposed “materialistic” values brought by U.S. colonialism. One of his most controversial essays was the 1960 article “The Docile Puerto Rican,” in which he sought to “scientifically” prove the essential docility of the Puerto Rican “personality.” My intervention criticizes this view of the Puerto Rican “personality” by acknowledging the complexity of colonialism in Puerto Rico. What follows is an analysis of the agency of sangermeños/as in the development of cultural nationalism, as expressed in the programs of their patron saint festivals during the 1950s.

As we have seen, San Germán’s patron saint festivities and its organizers had a strong identification with their Spanish past. However, in many instances this identification was paralleled by sangermeño/a struggles for autonomy and independence from Spain. This same struggle for sovereignty was celebrated within
different stories and histories in the programs as a way to express their sense of a national character. For example, in the 1951 program Tomás Agrait, Jr. gave a short history of the musical traditions in San Germán and mentions the contributions of Juan Sanabria (Nico), “cuyos pensamientos, en espíritu y en alma, simbolizan el sagrado amor a la libertad del pueblo puertorriqueño, en los años borrascosos de las postrimerías del siglo XIX” (Fiestas Patronales 1951). Agrait included a poem by Juan Sanabria entitled “Libertad,” which ended with the following stanza:

De Borinquen los gemidos
No se escucharan jamás
Pues la cubre con su manto
Nuestra Santa Libertad

Agrait was a sympathizer with the Republican Party of Puerto Rico that supported U.S. statehood for the island. His desire that Puerto Rico become another state did not impede his affection towards a culturally vibrant and unique “nation” that produced many talented artists such as Juan Sanabria.

The separation between political and cultural nationalism was replicated by Gustavo Ramírez de Arellano and his essay about Segundo Ruiz Belvis. Even though Ramírez de Arellano also identified with the annexation of Puerto Rico to the U.S., he still wrote about Ruiz Belvis, one of the symbolic characters of the Puerto Rican independence movement. Even though he focused on Ruiz Belvis’s efforts in the abolition of slavery and not on his pro-independence activism, he nevertheless referred to him as a leader “en defensa de las libertades patrias” (Fiestas Patronales 1951). For Ramírez de Arellano, Ruiz Belvis was not necessarily a great independence advocate, but a leader of social and just causes who advanced the ideals of a democratic Puerto Rican nation. As he stayed away from political overtones, he reinforced the idea that culturally, yet not necessarily politically, Puerto Rico was a nation.

Nationalist sentiment is further expressed in the 1951 program by Juan Ángel Tió in the poem to the “A los valientes soldados del 65.” Tió wrote the poem in honor to Puerto Rican soldiers fighting in Korea. At the end of the poem he wrote that “Soy un valiente, de Corea vengo/En sus Colinas me engrandecí/Y mi bandera que amo y sostengo/Con gran bravura defendí” (Fiestas Patronales 1951). The flag that Tió referred to was the Puerto Rican flag. In the next stanza he wrote about the U.S. flag: “Otra bandera que es también la mía/Gallardamente yo tremolo/Y al defenderla con valentía/Cumplí el mandato que fiel juré.”

While Tió appeals with affection to the Puerto Rican flag, and therefore his nationalism, this same flag was considered a symbol of insurrection under the U.S. regime in 1951 and it was considered a crime to even have it (Acosta 1987). The fact that in 1951 Tió was willing to talk about his preference and affection to the Puerto Rican flag tells much about the feelings of cultural nationalism present in San Germán. This poem is important because it expresses not only a sense of Puerto Rican nationhood symbolized in the flag, but also a sense of political defiance against a repressive colonial state that was willing to criminalize freedom of speech.16

The establishment of the Commonwealth in 1952 brought a new vision of the Puerto Rican nation. On the one hand, it made appropriate and legal the use of the Puerto Rican flag, yet on the other hand it brought a stronger impulse to showcase and perpetuate the idea of what Luis Muñoz Marín called “Puerto Rican
personality.” The program of 1953 presented a photo of San Germán’s Municipal Assembly, where it shows the Puerto Rican flag with the images of Luis Muñoz Rivera (an autonomist), José de Diego (a pro-independence supporter), and Francisco Quiñones (an autonomist). While the flag was taken out of the composition for the program of 1955, it still represented the desire of sangermeños/as to showcase the flag of their “nation” as soon as it was made “legal” after 1952.

The flag was again the center of attention in the 1954 program when Julio Guzmán, a school director, wrote the poem “Nuestra bandera.” Mr. Guzmán was not referring to the U.S. flag as “our flag” even though the U.S. had been the only flag hoisted in all public buildings from 1898–1951. “Our Flag” was the Puerto Rican flag, symbol of the beloved República de Puerto Rico for the pro-independence groups. However, for Guzmán, who identified with the Commonwealth and the Popular Democratic Party, the flag represented the “pueblo concebido [en el] crisol de la piedad Cristiana” (Fiestas Patronales 1954). For Guzmán, the flag did not necessarily represent the sacrifices of heroes in heroic battles for national liberation, or the conceived political entity of a sovereign nation-state; to the contrary, it represented more cultural values. The following fragment should further illustrate the flag’s meaning:

Hoy la bandera del Estado Libre
De Puerto Rico flota sobre el asta
Mirando al sol, radiante de colores,
Bello emblema de logros y esperanzas.

Dos banderas hoy flotan en los aires
Bajo la luz del sol de nuestra patria;
Símbolos son las dos de libertad
En un mundo de luz y democracia.
The flag’s meaning is attached to nature and is vaguely related to *achievements* and *hopes*. However, one might ask, what achievements and hopes is he talking about? Might it be achievements of the independence movement, or the Commonwealth? Hopes of complete political freedom or social justice in a continued colonial framework? While this meaning is ambivalent and could reproduce colonial compliance, it maintains an element of non-political nationalism to the Puerto Rican national identity.

Furthermore, when Guzmán talks about freedom, he talks about both flags, the U.S. and the Puerto Rican, as if saying that freedom can only be achieved by being attached to the U.S. This apparent contradiction is what constitutes the mentality of a people who have internalized a sense of political accommodation and cultural autonomy in the parameters of their “national” identity under a “Free Associated State.” This is not uncommon coming from a Commonwealth and PPD follower. Although Luis Muñoz Marín was an independence supporter, he opted to leave independence as a political solution when he founded the PPD in 1938 (Dietz 1986: 178–9).

For the PPD political justice, respecting Puerto Rico’s “personality” was understood to be in “association” with the U.S. Therefore, Guzman’s poem could be understood as a reflection of cultural autonomy within a political “association” that for the reader was undeniably patriotic. Freedom was achieved under the tenets of association and the clearest image was that of the flags.

Despite a strong pro-independence movement, this Free Associated State was not only accepted and internalized by the majority of sangermeños/as, but it was also celebrated in the patron saint festivities of San Germán. The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was established on July 25, 1952, a date that falls coincidentally within the week that the celebration of San Germán’s patron saint festivities every last week of July. I say coincidentally because the date of the festivities of San Germán de Auxerre was established before the Commonwealth and before the U.S. occupation. However, what was not coincidental was the establishment of Commonwealth on July 25th.

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*Borinquen Hall, Polytechnic Institute, today the Inter-American University at San Germán. Photograph taken from *Fiestas Patronales de San Germán de Auxerre* (San Germán: Tipografía el Águila, 1952). Photographer unknown.*
July 25th is a very special date in Puerto Rican history. During Spanish colonialism in Puerto Rico this day was a national holiday because it celebrated St. James (Santiago), patron saint of Spain. According to historian María Margarita Flores Collazo, the U.S. selected July 25th to invert the meaning of this date to make it no longer a Spanish-affiliated holiday, but rather a U.S. holiday celebrating the coming of the “free era” (Flores Collazo 2004). However, July 25th never acquired the celebratory meaning that the U.S. wanted. For this reason, the Commonwealth was established on this date in order to return to some extent the celebratory air that it once had. Therefore, July 25th has served as a symbolic date that through a hegemonic principle has aided in the celebration of a colony throughout the epochs.

This celebration was included in the programs of the patron saint festivities of San Germán. Indeed, every July 25th after 1953 there was a special commemoration to the establishment of the Commonwealth. For example in 1953 we find the photo of the flag of the Commonwealth beneath the program of July 25. In 1955, at 10:00 am there was an “Acto conmemorativo del aniversario de la Constitución en el Salón de Actos de la Casa Consistorial,” which was replicated in 1957. The fact that the anniversary of the Commonwealth had a special place in the fiestas indicates that the political nature of these festivities is not unusual since they were the festivities from the mayor to the community. However, what is important here is that these festivities served as an instrument of legitimization of a particular notion of the

![Image of Colegio San José](Colegio San José. Photograph taken from Fiestas Patroionales de San Germán de Auxerre (San Germán: Tipografía el Águila, 1957). Photographer unknown.)
nation, which cannot be subdued. They are important because of their contribution to the definition and celebration of a colonial nation.

While for sangermeños/as freedom can only exist being associated or attached to the U.S., the fact is that they are convinced that Puerto Rico is a separate entity, culturally that is, from the U.S. This identity goes even further as to call Puerto Rico a “country” and the U.S. not as mainland or fatherland, but as “U.S.,” or a separate nation. The idea that Puerto Rico is a “country” is not only present in writings of cultured intellectuals in the stories of sangermeños/as, but also among the town’s businessmen. The programs of the festivities included a plethora of advertisement for different businesses of the town and nearby towns. The 1955 program included an advertisement of the colmado of Moisés Ramírez. The announcement said “Cortesía de Moisés Ramírez. Provisiones, Carnes del país y Americanas, Artículos de Colmado, Vegetales, Leche Pasteurizada” (Fiestas Patronales 1955). Moisés Ramírez’ colmado, which was very popular at the time, made sure that the public understood that he carried beef from the U.S., “Americanas” and from “del país,” or our country.

**THE FACT THAT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HAD A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE FIESTAS INDICATES THAT THE POLITICAL NATURE OF THESE FESTIVITIES IS NOT UNUSUAL SINCE THEY WERE THE FESTIVITIES FROM THE MAYOR TO THE COMMUNITY.**

Referring to products as “del país” is not uncommon when buying different products in Puerto Rico. Even today, when buying certain products produced in Puerto Rico, people refer to them as “del país”: the connotation is that Puerto Rico is a “country,” even though legally the island is not. Hence, if during the 1950s, as we see today, people in the streets and in the local colmados referred to Puerto Rico as a country, it further reproduces the idea of at least a cultural uniqueness in comparison to the U.S.

However, while sangermeños/as were proud of being part of a distinct and identifiable cultural nation, they were also welcoming of Americanizing ideas. The Polytechnic Institute (Poly) has been part of San Germán identity since 1912. The Polytechnic Institute was founded by Dr. John Harris, a Texan missioner who went along the wave of U.S. missioners to Puerto Rico to evangelize and Americanize (Silva Gotay 1997). Sangermeños/as are very proud of their Poly because it represents the centuries-long awaited success of establishing a university in the town. In the 1951 essay “El Instituto Politécnico” by Eugenio Velázquez Martín, the Poly was elevated to national importance when the author stated that it was “una institución genuinamente puertorriqueña” (Fiestas Patronales 1951), recognizing
at the same time that the Poly was developed by U.S. donors. However, Velázquez Martín did not indicate that the Poly’s medium of instruction was English and that this was at odds with the parameters of hispanidad that the organizers of the festivities had constructed. The fact that the Poly, and the Americanizing agenda that Mr. Harris envisioned, had been celebrated in essays and pictures informs us that sangermeños/as had accepted the Poly within their definitions of identity. However, the meanings that the Poly carried were filtered to fit an overarching Hispanic identity: the elimination of English as an element of sangermeñidad.

In relation to the representation of classroom dynamics, Velázquez Martín said that they “siempre han sido un foro libre donde se discuten en un ambiente de tolerancia y de respeto todas las ideas dignas que pugnan en un mundo de incesante controversia” (Fiestas Patronales 1951). Nowhere was the English language used within the classroom; instead, what was highlighted was the educational system brought by the U.S.

A similar situation may be seen with the Colegio San José in San Germán. The Colegio San José was founded in 1930 by a group of U.S. nuns from the Order of St. Joseph. This group of nuns might be representative of the Americanizing Catholic branch of the Catholic Church on the island (Silva Gotay 2005). The Colegio San José was a private school with English as the medium of instruction and was reserved to educate the children of the cultured class (Martínez 2005). However, the school was established in a Spanish church built in the eighteen century. The organizers of the patron saint festivities of 1957 included a picture of the school and wrote “Colegio San José: que aún conserva aspecto de construcción española.” The school’s Americanizing efforts were hidden from the audience and instead its “Spanish construction” was highlighted, thus filtering culturally “extraneous” elements in the construction of San Germán Hispanic identity.

Even though the construction of sangermeñidad included a primarily Hispanic layout, it nevertheless welcomed U.S. values and individuals. For example, Hispano-centric Gustavo Ramírez de Arellano, in his essay “Tertulias en la boticas” of 1953, recognized the “young” and “prosperous” characteristics of the U.S. nation. In addition, the 1954 festivity included a mass on the 28th of July in honor to the “sisters” of the Colegio San José. The regards from the Ramírez de Arellano and the mass in honor to the U.S. sisters makes us assume that not only U.S. culture was present in San Germán, but also achieved a level of inclusiveness in the identity of the town. Moreover, when we notice that the Poly was also present in the contributions to the activities of the festivities, we understand that the organizers of the festivities allocated a space for the “Americanizing” institution to place their views on sangermeño/a identity. For example, in 1956 the Poly co-sponsored and hosted a lecture about Emerson and Whitman, two important authors in U.S. culture. The patron saint festivities of 1956 were to some extent transported physically to the university, identifying with the “extraneous” but admired culture.

The Poly had more of an effect than just hosting a lecture on nineteenth-century U.S. writers. The Poly was the focus of essays and pictures throughout the programs of the festivities in different years during the 1950s. However, these essays constituted the views of members of the community about the institution. The 1956 festivities constituted in a way the Poly’s agency in influencing the festivities. But there was another instance where people from the Poly actually collaborated in the literature of the programs. In a rather rare contribution, the 1959 program included an essay from Frederick E. Kidder, Registrar of the Inter-American University (in 1955 the Poly became the Inter-American University). The utterly unusual act was not
that a member of the university’s staff wrote the essay, as Prof. Szaszdi had written before for the festivities, but that his essay was presented in English. The essay “The Life of San German, Obispo de Auxerre (378–448 A.D.)” narrated the story and importance of St. Germaine of Auxerre to Christianity and to sangermeños/as (Fiestas Patronales 1959). Not only is it important to understand that the organizers were willing to open their precious patron saint festivities to an essay in English, but that this essay was written by an official from a U.S. protestant institution. Moreover, they welcomed an essay in English that narrated the history of their beloved patron saint, a direct connection to their Spanish Catholic heritage.

The debate in San Germán’s cultural nationalism extended to a very important aspect of the patron saint festivities, their games. According to Ángel López Cantos, games in Puerto Rican patron saint festivities originate from Spanish medieval games (López Cantos 1991). He explains that these festivities had the purpose to organize the village’s inhabitants in order to create an environment of joy and play since there were few instances of community entertainment. The Cabildo (or town major) would organize different events in order to raise the morale of the people, along with the religious observance to the patron saint. The games from the Spanish medieval ages survived and were handed into the hands of twentieth-century sangermeños/as. During the patron saint festivities of twenty-first-century San Germán, these games were known simply as juegos populares. During the 1950s, these games included the palo encebao, juego de la sortija, el juego del sartén, pescaito, and others (Mejía Garcés 2005). Juegos populares were played at the town’s plaza almost every day of the festivities and were promoted as enjoyable for children and for adults.

For centuries, these games were considered an essential part of the festivities and therefore were essential to the identity of the community. However, these festivities saw the rise of a different set of games brought from the U.S. also known as “sports.” When the U.S. invaded the island, it brought with it its political and bureaucratic machineries, its religious missions and educative institutions, and it also brought modern conceptions of sports.18

Introduction of modern sports to the island directly came with the invading military forces during the Spanish-U.S. War. According to Donald Mrozek, U.S. sports and its emphasis on regulation, precision, and social order became the emblem of citizenship, patriotism, and the “American” way of life (Mozek 1983). Sports became one of the parameters of a nationalist “American” unity after the Civil War and the late nineteenth century (Mozek 1983: 161). The patron saint festivities in San Germán were not exempt from this influence; in fact, its organizers welcomed these new games and quickly made them integral part of the community. For example, baseball and basketball were introduced in San German as early as the 1902 and 1915, respectively. Basketball quickly had a huge impact as San Germán became one of the most victorious basketball teams on the island (Stewart 1998).

The Atléticos de San Germán won championships during the 1930s, 1940s, and enjoyed an unmatched championship streak, including the years 1947, 1948, 1949, and 1950. The programs of San Germán’s patron saint festivities, in addition to the traditional popular games, included U.S. sports such as basketball, baseball, volleyball, boxing, and shooting clubs as part of their scheduled activities. For example, on July 26, 1953 at 3:00 pm, there was a baseball game between San Germán and Añasco, and the next two days there were “juegos populares en la Plaza Principal” at 3:00 pm. Sometimes popular games and sports coincided on the same day as it happened, for example, on July 26, 1952. At 2:00 pm there were juegos populares at the Francisco Mariano Quiñones Plaza
and at the same time there were open inscriptions for boxing, and the Shooting Club championship. At 8:30 pm, on the same day, there was “Superior League Basketball” when San Juan played San Germán.

Just as the cultured Bailes de Confianza can be considered activities of exclusion in regards to sangermeñidad, games and sports can be considered activities of local and national identity. Just as David Guss argues for the Venezuelan case, we should be attentive to non-literary mediums of nationhood production, such as sports and games. In regards to San Germán, their traditional popular games were an important part of their identity, but also were the sports brought from the U.S. Therefore sangermeños/as found during the patron saint festivities an entertaining and widely accepted way to reconstruct a sense of identity that reflected values of traditional Hispanic games and growing U.S. sports.

THE DEBATE IN SAN GERMÁN’S CULTURAL NATIONALISM EXTENDED TO A VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE PATRON SAINT FESTIVITIES, THEIR GAMES.

Conclusion
Sangermeños/as during the 1950s exhibited their sense of nationhood, yet this nationhood was able to cohabit inside the control of the U.S. Empire. Indeed, Puerto Rico is the only example in Latin America where we can see in the twenty-first century the effects of a long-term imperialistic political and economic occupation that has not resulted in overwhelming reactionary movements. In other words, while having different independence movements, U.S. colonialism has been accepted and ratified. Moreover, Puerto Ricans present an example of the varied interpretations of Latin American nationhood, one that can even exist regardless of possessing U.S. citizenship.

The example of San Germán’s patron saint festivities presents an important case of how a group of community leaders, cultured and humble, came together to legitimize their role in society by redefining sangermeñidad, which for them was the cradle of puertorriqueñidad. This was done by excluding the black Puerto Rican culture and reaffirming their white-cultured-patriarchal Hispanic identity through the use of their patron saint festivities’ programs. For that reason this study serves as an example on how to view critically the messages that patron saint festivities, and other celebrations, are carrying out today. As Puerto Rican national identity keeps changing and redefining itself, we must always critically (re)examine the ideas that might be privileging for some while silencing others.

My main concern in this work was to understand how a group of Puerto Ricans in the 1950s constructed their idea of a national identity that respected and celebrated their Hispanic cultural makeup, but at the same time accepted political and economic control from the U.S. imperial regime. Moreover, my research on the patron saint festivities in the city of San Germán not only draws attention to an event that helped
construct notions of nationhood through religious and popular rituals, but also serves as a means to understand its cultural and political legacy. The fact that Puerto Ricans uphold their national flag, feel pride in their Olympic team and beauty Queens, and identify as a Caribbean and Latin American cultural nation does not necessarily mean that they want to become at the moment a politically independent nation. In spite of everything, the majority of the electorate regularly votes to maintain some kind of political association with the U.S., as expressed in the plebiscites of 1967, 1993, and 1998. Therefore, even after the 1950 pro-independence revolt led by the Nationalist Party, Puerto Rican nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century, in its majority, does not seek to promote political secession, opting to continue in a colonial political status. Today, Puerto Rican national identity is more concerned with upholding its cultural characteristics as a Latin American nation that is attached to the U.S. Nonetheless, it is imperative for scholars and social leaders concerned with the idea of democracy and colonialism to constantly evaluate and deconstruct the discourses that prolong the life of the oldest Latin American and Caribbean colony.

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**NOTES**

1. Spanish colonial domination lasted 400 years in Puerto Rico. The United States took absolute control of the island in 1898 following the Spanish-US War. Although I am referring to this conflict as the Spanish-US War, we should understand that this war not only involved Spain and the US, it also included primarily Cuba, which had been at war with Spain on and off since 1868, and Puerto Rico and the Philippines, which were
Spanish colonies at the time (see Pico 1998). In addition, in this year the islands of Hawaii and Guam were also taken by the U.S.

2 When I refer to Puerto Rico, I include the islands of Vieques and Culebra.

3 I depart from John Schmidhauser’s (1992) use of colonial nation that refers to the empire in control of its colonies and use it to stress that a feeling of nationhood can be created by colonial subjects in their colony.

4 Trouillot argues that the exclusionary process of history and historians can be understood as the silences in the construction of history.

5 Although some scholars point to San Germán’s roots as taking hold during the first voyage by Juan Ponce de León to the island in 1506 and a following visit by Cristóbal de Sotomayor in 1510, it was Miguel Díaz de Aux who in 1511 founded San Germán in honor of Germana de Foix, second wife of King Ferdinand and niece of French King Louis XII (see Vélez Dejardín 2003).

6 The first university officially founded on the island was the University of Puerto Rico in 1903 (see Osuna 1949).

7 Founded as a pacific political party in 1922, the Nationalist Party entered the electoral race in 1932, with its president Pedro Albizu Campos running for office (Scarano 1993). However, after no member of the party won a seat in legislature, the party opted to drop the electoral method and adopted a more radical position.

8 While Luis Muñoz Marín was the first Puerto Rican governor elected by the Puerto Ricans, the first Puerto Rican governor was Jesus T. Piñero in 1946—he was appointed by then U.S. president Harry S. Truman.

9 San Germán de Auxerre is a Catholic saint from the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. Germanus (b.378–d.448), as he is called in Latin, was the son of a distinguished Gallo-Roman family and the military governor of Armorica in Gaul, today the northwest of France (See McGuire, “Germain of Auxerre, St.,” 2003, 168). Germanus was elected Bishop of Auxerre in 418 after the death of then Bishop St. Amator. Soon afterwards Germanus abandoned all of his material possessions and wealth giving these to the poor. His wife was made a nun, and he aspired to a life of poverty and simplicity. It is known that Germanus believed in nourishing his soul by starving his body (see Kidder 1959) and along with St. Martin of Tours was the founder of cenobitic monasticism in Gaul (see McGuire 2003: 168). A cenobite is defined as “a member of a religious group living together” (The New Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary 1971: 78). In Puerto Rico, Miguel Díaz de Aux founded San Germán in 1511 in honor of Germana de Foix, second wife of King Ferdinand, and niece of French King Louis XII (see Vélez Dejardín: 2003).

10 As expressed by Father Eulogio Rodríguez, O.S.A. vicar of the parish for the program of the patron saint festivity of 1955 (Fiestas Patroales 1955).


12 The idea of cultured people was used often in the programs to refer to individuals of high class, who achieved high levels of education and mingled with the privilege circles of San Germán.


15 For an exploration into Puerto Rican cultural nationalism, see Carrión (1996).

16 The Gag Law (1948–1956) was established by the Puerto Rican legislature in order to
criminalize any expression of political nationalism because it was considered a movement to overthrow the U.S. government in Puerto Rico. Among the “criminal acts” were being in possession of Puerto Rican flags, attending meetings of the Nationalist Party, attending funerals of Nationalist leaders, and even expressing opinions in favor of the Nationalist Party (Acosta 1987).

17 Free Associated State is the literal translation of “Estado Libre Asociado,” which is the official Spanish term for Commonwealth.

18 For an explanation of how sports are attached to the rise of modernity, capitalism, and Protestantism, see Guttmann (1997) and Pope (1995).

19 In the 1998 plebiscite to decide the political future of Puerto Rico, the pro-Commonwealth party and the pro-U.S. Statehood party received more than 96 percent of the votes, while independence received 2.5 percent (Duany 2002).

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