

Missing Links in the Study of Puerto Rican Poverty in the United States

James Jennings

Introduction

The groundwork for studies and analyses of poverty in the Puerto Rican community in the United States during the past two decades was provided by the pioneering work of scholars like Oscar Lewis, Patricia Sexton, and others in the 1950s and 1960s. While a few scholars involved with activism, including Frank Bonilla, Clara Rodriguez, Lloyd Rogler, Antonia Pantoja, Angelo Falcon, Jose Cruz, and Andres Torres, continued to examine the causes of Puerto Rican poverty and related issues in the United States, the topic was until recently generally ignored by many researchers. In fact, a report prepared for the Ford Foundation in 1984 by Frank Bonilla, Harry Pachon, and Marta Tienda and titled *Public Policy Research and the Hispanic Community* pointed out that there existed “a critical shortage of information about Hispanic-origin groups...There still remain substantial gaps limiting the extent to which policy research about specific demographic topics can be conducted.”¹

Recently, more attention has been paid to the problem of poverty in this community, a result of improvements in data collection methods developed since the 1984 report and of the realization that this group is among the most consistently poor in the country. In fact, some have suggested that, while research studies and discourses have identified the problem of poverty in the black community as entrenched, growing, and intensifying, the situation may be far worse for Puerto Rican communities in the United States. While not completely new, this attention to analyzing and understanding Puerto Rican poverty in this country should be encouraged; however, research on this issue should not be confined solely to quantitative tools and approaches, an emerging bias in the germane literature. Despite increased systematization and sophistication in the collection of data, researchers should be aware of the potential limitations of a strictly quantitative analysis of Puerto Rican poverty. While quantitative analyses based on census data or surveys are important, policy discussions and suggestions for resolving the problem of poverty in this community are incomplete if they rely exclusively on quantitative measurements. In fact, quantitative analysis may have quite limited value if implemented without the

benefit of other research that provides insights into the causes, nature, and development of poverty among Puerto Ricans in the United States.

Several kinds of research limitations and biases are evident in some of the studies on Puerto Rican poverty in the United States that rely only on quantitative data and analysis. These limitations include the following:

- Surveys and “official” data, such as the census and government agency data, are usually time bound.
- Analysis is driven primarily by “hard” data, presuming that complex social conditions and situations can easily be captured in quantifiable paradigms; language and “counting” are assumed to be neutral within research and evaluative designs.
- Research analysis can be ahistorical, ignoring important and revealing patterns and trends over long periods of time.
- Poverty-related studies may approach a group’s culture with the presumptions that pathology exists within it.
- The unit of analysis of much poverty-related research is the individual or the family, rather than the community.
- There is an absence of input from the targets of research studies in determining the conceptualization, design, analysis, and interpretation of research related to poverty.
- Terms that are not defined analytically, such as *underclass* or *inner city*, are used arbitrarily, without precise definition.
- Research is conducted without the benefit of comparative analysis.
- The role of politics and power is minimized or ignored in the analysis of poverty-related issues.

In the following section these criticisms are explained more fully in the context of studying Puerto Rican poverty in the United States.

Data and Numbers Are Time Bound

Perhaps an obvious limitation of some research studies on poverty is that quantitative data collected at one point in time tend to be time bound. This is unavoidable, of course. Some of the literature on poverty raises discussions based on the “latest” census or survey data available, but even the latest can be outdated in terms of recent and even daily developments of people and communities on a broad scale. Official data, such as the census, can be time bound, while living conditions associated with poor communities continually change daily and, at times, rapidly; this kind of limitation is especially evident among the Puerto Rican poor in urban communities due to the continual back-and-forth migration between cities in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Despite this limitation, census and survey data carry much weight in the determination, or justification, of public policies directed at resolving problems related to poverty. But, as observed by the late Sar Levitan in his article “Measurement of Employment, Unemployment and Low Income,” “Data needs are not immutable. As reality, application and theory change, measures must be adjusted or added in order for the labor force statistics to remain useful and accurate.”² Partially for this reason, a major

survey of Latino social and civic attitudes, *The Latino National Political Survey*, conducted in the early 1990s, was critiqued by a group of researchers, who pointed out, "Survey research can rarely provide adequate consideration of the historical dynamics that have produced the snapshot it takes; yet such dynamics are essential to the interpretation of survey results. Likewise, the survey snapshot has little ability to predict how historical dynamics will influence the future."³

Analysis of Social Conditions Is Based Exclusively on Hard Data

Analysis of poverty should, for the most part, be data driven. But an exclusive reliance on quantification may prevent the discovery of the many facets of social reality among the poor in urban settings. Too many social realities, relationships, and personal and community histories simply cannot be captured by hard data. Yet these kinds of realities may be critical in the formulation of effective and long-lasting antipoverty strategies. Attempts to overly quantify human interaction, as well as the impact of broad social and economic forces, may lead to assumptions that are geared more toward keeping the experiment statistically neat and simple than toward building a theoretical understanding of the history, nature, or causes of poverty and the ways communities can overcome the problems associated with poverty.

Quantification, furthermore, is not an absolute guarantee that the researcher has shed all biases. As we are reminded by Robert Bogdan and Margaret Krander, something as simple, and as "neutral," as mere counting can also reflect bias: "Counting is an attitude to take toward people, objects, and events. Phenomena only appear as rates and measures after an attitude is developed toward them which acknowledges them as existing, important to count, and susceptible to counting procedures."⁴

Poverty Is Not Seen as a Sociohistorical Process

Too many studies that analyze poverty among racial and ethnic groups are ahistorical. This serves to obfuscate certain kinds of queries that should be part of attempts to understand the nature of continuing poverty among some groups. Almost three decades ago, the sociologist Stephen Thernstrom, in his essay "Further Reflections on the Yankee City Series: The Pitfalls of Ahistorical Social Science," issued a warning regarding the use of hard data in the absence of social and historical analysis: "the student of modern society is not free to take his history or leave it alone. Interpretation of the present requires assumptions about the past. The actual choice is between explicit history, based on a careful examination of the sources, and implicit history, rooted in ideological preconceptions and uncritical acceptance of local mythology."⁵

A major issue overlooked by studies that rely exclusively on hard data and fail to consider social history are the persisting gaps in the United States between the living conditions of Puerto Ricans and blacks, on the one hand, and whites, on the other, even when schooling is controlled. Yet continuing racial and ethnic gaps, especially over a long period of time, should be as important a subject for investigation as a group's current social and economic status. Focusing on racial and ethnic gaps may provide insight about

the limitations of strategies and policies directed at alleviating living conditions associated with poverty.

As one studies the ongoing debates and discussions regarding the relationship of family structure and poverty in the black community, one can easily get the impression that poverty in the black community emerged only after certain kinds of structural family changes occurred—that is, after the proportion of female-headed households increased. But a disparity in the proportion of poor blacks and whites has remained unchanged for more than fifty years. In other words, blacks were generally three times more likely to be in poverty than whites in the 1940s, and into the 1990s blacks were still generally three times more likely to be in poverty than whites—regardless of changes in black family structure, national administrations, or the national economy.⁶ This is also the case for Puerto Ricans in the United States, who have consistently been among the poorest groups in this country for a period of more than fifty years, since World War II.

Lack of sociohistorical analysis has led some researchers on Puerto Rican poverty to repeat the mistake of Daniel P. Moynihan and Nathan Glazer in their study, published in 1963, that viewed the Puerto Rican community in New York City as post-World War II in its origins.⁷ In fact, the history of this community shows that a culturally and socially identifiable and growing Puerto Rican community existed in New York City from the late nineteenth century. Works such as *Memorias de Bernado Vega*, Jesus Colon's *A Puerto Rican in New York*, or the writings of Arturo Schomburg all point to a culturally vibrant, albeit relatively small, Puerto Rican community decades before World War II.⁸ And this community, while more involved with politics on the island of Puerto Rico before World War II, continued to interact with the city's political establishment. Yet, today, some studies still analyze Puerto Rican poverty within a conceptual framework that depicts Puerto Ricans as having arrived after World War II.

I contend that one should understand the role of the history of groups like Puerto Ricans—and blacks—in the United States, as a critical element in a full and comprehensive discussion of race and poverty in this nation. Is poverty a “new” problem for the Puerto Rican community? How is poverty among Puerto Ricans today similar to or different from white and black poverty forty or fifty years ago? Has this relationship changed over periods of time? If so, how? Unfortunately, studies on Puerto Rican poverty in the United States have generally overlooked this area of inquiry. Yet it might be useful to understand how the nature of Puerto Rican poverty has changed and is changing and whether it has changed at all in relation to other groups and the broader society in different periods of U.S. economic history. This information may shed light on what actually works and what does not in responding to poverty conditions.

Some of the literature over the years has suggested that the strengths and assets of the black community should be utilized as building blocks for effective social welfare policy. Writers have identified the role of the black church, the resiliency of the black family, racial consciousness as a tool for social and economic development, and black protest as some of these strengths. Can we begin similar discussions about the Puerto Rican community in the United States? Are there not important cultural and social resources in the Puerto Rican community that could be tapped by institutions and government as they attempt to reduce poverty in this community? Again, this is an issue that is easily overlooked when researchers become bogged down with the “official” numbers that describe segments of a group's social realities.

Some researchers who are studying Puerto Rican poverty today either have not been exposed to the history of this group, both in the United States and in Puerto Rico, or have decided that it is not relevant in the study of contemporary urban poverty. Both of these positions are problematic in terms of providing an understanding of the causes and resolutions of poverty among Puerto Ricans. Indeed, to conduct studies of poverty in black or Latino communities without attempting to understand the history of these groups is to assume implicitly that the histories and cultural traditions of these groups are insignificant and have nothing to add to the understanding of the researcher.

Culture and Language Are Not Viewed as Assets Rather Than as Pathology

Cultural patterns and behaviors among Puerto Ricans, as well as their use of a different language, are generally approached as pathological by many researchers, who assume that something must be wrong with these people because they do not seem to think or act like white middle-class Americans, nor are they accepted by white middle-class Americans. Many authors of studies on poverty approach a group's culture as, a priori, the major factor explaining the poverty status of that group. This approach reflects a simplistic method to studying the relationship between culture and a group's poverty status; the researcher presumes that culture can be captured in a neat, well-articulated formula. But, as the social anthropologist Lloyd H. Rogler has reminded us, "Culture penetrates human life in multitudinous ways, some of which we are beginning to understand but most of which still remain to be discovered."⁹

A similar criticism has been made by some observers regarding research on the black family in the United States. Robert B. Hill has noted that the media and many social scientists arbitrarily employ a framework for studying the black family that assumes the existence of fundamental cultural deficiencies and uncritically accept "the assumptions of the 'deficit model' which attributes most of the problems of black families to internal deficiencies or pathologies."¹⁰ Despite the complexities and subtleties that are inherent in all cultures, some surveys and questionnaires used in research on poverty are structured in such a way as to impose a "category fallacy"; that is, they employ "categories developed in one culture or another culture without determining the cultural appropriateness of the category."¹¹

"Community" Is Not Used as the Unit of Analysis

Another problem with the research on poverty among Puerto Ricans and blacks is that it focuses on the individual or the family as the unit of analysis. Some Puerto Rican scholars and civic activists, like many black intellectuals, have for some time, proposed that "community" be used instead as the unit of analysis, incorporating a presumption of assets and resources rather than pathology. But it seems to me that some researchers assume that community is nonexistent among the poor blacks and Puerto Ricans. Moreover, when poverty researchers do discuss communities in urban areas dominated by people of color, pejorative terms like *slum*, *ghetto*, or *underclass* frequently show up in their work.

The unit of analysis used can determine which questions are viewed as the important ones. Using only the individual or the family as the reference point for analysis means that questions will typically focus on what has happened to the black individual or the black family rather than on the effect of policies on the community and its institutional, economic, and cultural fabric. An example of this, as pointed out by the housing researcher Sheila Ards, is the debate around housing vouchers.¹² This debate has been confined in some forums and journals to examining whether black individuals or families can be best served by receiving vouchers to seek out housing. But what is the effect of vouchers on the use of land in the black community? This question has been ignored because the unit of analysis in much of the mainstream literature is either the individual or the family, not the community.

Another example of how the particular unit of analysis can mold or influence the kinds of conclusions of even so-called objective studies is commentary on the nature and degree of racial and economic progress in the United States. One might look at this question in terms of the number of black middle-class individuals or families. Using some criterion of "middle-classness" (usually arbitrarily defined), has the number of blacks in this status increased or declined over a period of time? Depending on the answer, the researcher will examine policies that might explain the result.

This same narrow approach has been utilized by scholars examining Latino economic progress in the United States. But another way to examine racial and economic progress is to ask, What has happened to Puerto Rican communities? What has happened to the social, economic, or educational institutions operating in these communities? How have self-help institutions, such as the Sons of Puerto Rico clubs in places like New York City, described by Patricia Cayo Sexton in the 1960s, or community institutions in the 1970s and 1980s fared under various kinds of public policies and national administrations? Changing the unit of analysis may lead to different sets of questions, and a different kind of critique and evaluation of current public policies on poverty.

The Community Is Not Consulted in Designing the Research

Many of the popular perceptions about poor Puerto Ricans and blacks are based on what is presented in the media. Anthony Barker and B. Guy Peters argue that "a great deal of the scholarly literature on public policy is written from the perspective of the decision-maker attempting to make an optimal choice about a policy that will best serve the 'public interest.' ...Unfortunately, however, the real world of policy-making is not so neat as that."¹³ Because they have relatively little influence in many cities, Puerto Ricans do not have the political or economic clout to counter such images or to present their thinking or collective experiences in a favorable light in the pages of the city's major newspapers.

Perhaps it is the paucity of understanding, knowledge, and appreciation of the culture and history of groups like Puerto Ricans in the United States that permits researchers to rely on the media to influence their own social perceptions of these communities. Thus, as one critic writes, "Journalists have become the publicly recognized ethnographers... Anyone who talks to or lives among the poor is considered an authority and can describe them and speak on their behalf."¹⁴ Using this kind of "expertise," the media present

commentary *about* poor people, seldom on *behalf* of, or *by*, poor people. As one journalist, Dorothy Clark, has pointed out, there may be valid and technical reasons for this.¹⁵ But it is important to note that the methodology of collecting news, and the fact of who collects it and decides what to report and how to report it, not only molds the perceptions the general public has about race, ethnicity, and poverty but contributes to the conceptualizations utilized by researchers on the nature of poverty among Puerto Ricans.¹⁶ Too often, the media-driven conceptualizations are borrowed without question or scrutiny by “objective” researchers to construct their own methodologies for investigating urban poverty, race, and ethnicity.

Pejorative Terms and Arbitrary Definitions Are Used in Research

The research community has defined arbitrarily basic poverty-related terms without the benefit of analytical scrutiny. Researchers assume that language, descriptive terms, and phrases are neutral, if the researchers just treat them as neutral. But this is not the case. The validity of this criticism is evident if one looks at questionnaires and interview instruments that seek information about poverty experiences but are developed by researchers who lack an understanding of or a familiarity with the nuances of everyday life and language usage in various parts of poor communities. Even commonly used names of specific groups should not be approached or treated as research-neutral. As was pointed out by David E. Hayes-Bautista some time ago, the name utilized to identify a racial or ethnic group can have important research implications. Definitional differences (e.g., “Mexican American” versus “of Spanish heritage”) may cover major social differences, making it difficult to generate comparisons between groups.¹⁷

A related problem among researchers in the use of terms that have not been defined analytically or explained in research operational terms. Among the more famous examples of such terms used in poverty research are *middle class*, *slum*, *ghetto*, *broken family*, and what social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s used frequently, referring to the *culturally deprived*. These are imprecise terms, open to a range of definitions and connotations that vary with the user. The definition of the term *middle class*, for instance, depends on who is using it and, in many cases, for what purpose. Both scholars and the media have used this term loosely, sometimes relying on varying measures of income ranges, social attitudes, or occupation. Not specifying the analytical content of such terms leads to major ideological and polemical abuse in political and policy discussions focusing on poverty.

The political scientist Adolph Reed Jr. argues that one term that has been used extensively without the benefit of consistent or analytical rigor is *underclass*.¹⁸ Too often researchers seem to have allowed journalists, in particular, to guide the use of this highly connotative term without insisting on a precise definition. There have been attempts to explain what is meant by the underclass, but invariably the models still include many assumptions about poverty and poor communities. For example, one of the latest attempts is to examine an area with high levels of poverty and unemployment and to assume that the residents of this particular area include the “underclass.” This form of social-areas methodology glosses over the many important differences in status, attitudes, and life histories that coexist among the residents of such areas. One needs only

to have a few firsthand experiences in such a “high-poverty” area to notice how aggregated census and survey data can hide and arbitrarily oversimplify continually changing social situations.

Poverty Research Lacks a Comparative Basis

Poverty research in the United States tends to be discipline based to an extreme. Developing overarching policy paradigms that allow the perspectives and training of economists, historians, and humanists to integrate their findings and think broadly and dialectically is difficult. The conceptualization of public policy responses to social welfare issues is highly specialized within disciplines and generally lacks comparative frameworks. As suggested by Walter Korpi in his essay “Approaches to the Study of Poverty in the U.S.,” poverty research in this country is usually conducted without the benefit of comparative analysis across nations.¹⁹

This deficit limits our understanding of the nature of poverty among Puerto Ricans in urban America. Though there are many questions about urban poverty that should be raised within a comparative framework, given the social history and current situation of Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rico, the simple one posed decades ago by the sociologist Dardo Cuneo in his introduction to the work by Jesus de Galindez, *Puerto Rico en Nueva York: Sociologia de Una Inmigracion*, is still relevant today: “Donde se marcan las fronteras diferenciales entre la America del Norte y la latina; en donde dejan de marcarse?”²⁰ In this case, the poverty experienced by Puerto Ricans in the United States could perhaps be better understood if we also noted the nature of poverty in Puerto Rico. The work and insights of scholars who have studied poverty in Puerto Rico should not be ignored or summarily excluded from analyses of the poverty experiences of Puerto Ricans in American cities. Thus, I would point to the classic works of Eugenio Fernandez Mendez, as well as the exceptional reader by Rafael L. Ramirez, Carlos Buitrago Ortiz, and Barry B. Levine, *Problemas de Desigualdad en Puerto Rico*, as studies that are still relevant to inquiries about Puerto Rican poverty in the United States today.²¹

The essay by Ramirez, “Marginalidad, Dependencia Participacion Politica en el Arrabal,” included in the anthology just mentioned, might suggest models and approaches for studying behavior related to poverty in Puerto Rican communities in the United States other than the pathological and ahistorical approaches popular among many economists in the current period.²² Another essay in this same reader, “Quienes Son Los Pobres en Puerto Rico?” by Celia F. Cintron and Barry B. Levine, reminds us that the Puerto Rican poor may not make up a monolithic category, as has usually been implied in the discussions among poverty researchers in the United States.²³ There are other, more current studies that can assist us in understanding poverty among Puerto Ricans in the United States in a broader context than would be suggested by research that relies exclusively on hard data and surveys. In fact, because of Puerto Ricans’ history, culture, and patterns of migration, there is no justification for discussing poverty among Puerto Ricans in the United States as totally separate from the issue of poverty in Puerto Rico.

The Role of Politics and Power in Maintaining Poverty Is Ignored

The role of politics is ignored in many research studies about urban poverty. While everyone acknowledges the importance of politics in driving public policy, when it comes to urban poverty and Puerto Ricans or blacks, research discussions automatically switch to a nonpolitical mode. There seems to be a myopia that exists among some poverty researchers regarding political factors that may lead to and sustain persistent poverty. One widespread presumption among researchers is that the United States has tried everything conceivable to reduce poverty and that, therefore, continuing poverty must be caused by undesirable individual and family characteristics. This "political disclaimer" is interesting in that there is general acknowledgment of the significance of politics and political decision making in driving public policy in other areas. Research studies and findings on poverty are frequently discussed and debated on technical grounds, separated completely from issues of power and wealth. It is suggested, implicitly if not explicitly, in some new research studies on poverty among Puerto Ricans that their lack of political power has virtually nothing to do with the ongoing problem of poverty in their community. This relationship is not even explored for its explanatory possibilities; it is merely assumed that poverty has more to do with pathology or the social welfare planning failures of liberals than with the low level of political power and political respect that Puerto Ricans (or blacks) command.

This weakness is related to the refusal on the part of researchers to acknowledge poor people as participants in research studies and projects. This may be due to the fact that the poverty research community is smug and conceptually incestuous, according to Adolph Reed Jr.²⁴ This inbred approach is reflected in researchers' bias against the participation of poor people in the conceptualization of public policy and antipoverty efforts. In fact, research is sometimes used to actively discourage such participation. But this is unjustified and should be vigorously challenged. Barker and Peters write that more

"public interaction" even in "scientific issues" is justifiable and more desirable. Indeed the "trans-science" nature of many issues requires that the public be involved and that science to some extent become more responsible to the public. This is by no means a plea to create an "official science" of some sort. Rather, it is a statement of the important public interest issues involved in science and technology.²⁵

The importance of the call for this kind of participation on the part of poor people in the formulation of antipoverty efforts has led the Center for Law and Social Welfare Policy in New York City to urge the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services to strengthen and expand rules that would permit poor people to participate in the decision making of federal and state agencies. It has also been suggested that demonstration projects should not be approved unless the opinions of poor persons have been solicited regarding policies and procedures.²⁶ Researchers should pick up this cause as well.

There is a wide gulf between the policy discussions of researchers who focus on poverty in the United States and the concerns and insights offered by poor people regarding their own status. In some cases, researchers investigating poverty have done so without the benefit of understanding or experiencing how poor people live or appreciating the contributions that poor people can make toward better policies. The

political scientist M. E. Hawkesworth has suggested that policy analysis built exclusively on scientism and quantitative technocracy has discouraged people from coming together and deliberating about how to emphasize their common concerns and solve problems that ultimately affect all of society. She adds, furthermore, that the "charge of scientism will continue to haunt the discipline as long as policy science is promoted as a form of objective political problem-solving superior to, and therefore preferable to, democratic deliberation."²⁷

Another observer critiques David Ellwood's book *Poor Support*, for the same reason: "He spends 200 pages discussing poor family dynamics without talking to an actual person or reading the work of someone who does. Ellwood seems to believe that one can infer the behavior of all poor people by extrapolating from census data and imagining what their lives might be like."²⁸ Researchers might take umbrage at the suggestion that they should experience the lives of poor people, or at least allow poor people to explain their experiences for research purposes, arguing that processes to involve the poor would politicize their supposedly objective studies or even give the poor undue influence or veto power over the conduct and findings of their research. But this kind of danger exists to a larger extent with other groups with whom researchers must develop cozy and financial relationships (i.e., sources of research grants), according to Robert Formaini.²⁹ It is interesting that some researchers take for granted the participation of other sectors in their research that have a much greater capacity than poor persons to control and direct their findings, analysis, and recommendations.

Many people who work for civic and neighborhood organizations and who are involved with antipoverty efforts, like poor people, do not participate in research on the problem of poverty done by academics. This means that researchers may not have the benefit of input from people and organizations who are on the front line in combating urban poverty. It also means that community workers have not been able to utilize applicable findings of the researchers in their own efforts to combat poverty and its effects. Policy processes must be developed to give these workers opportunities to mold the thinking of antipoverty strategies and approaches and to be involved in all aspects of the public policy process in the area of social welfare: setting the civic agenda, conceptualizing and defining the nature of the problem, formulating adequate responses, and determining how such policies should be implemented and evaluated. Amitai Etzioni suggests that only an increase in civic involvement may result in creative and effective social policies regarding the problems facing society. He argues that all citizens, poor and nonpoor, can make a significant improvement in public policies that influence their quality of life by becoming more involved in the political process.³⁰ Only through the inclusion of more people in the process of formulating policy will the academic and political communities be able to develop new and creative models and concepts that overcome the limitations of current research paradigms.

NOTES

This chapter is based on a presentation to the National Puerto Rican Coalition in Washington, D.C., on June 22, 1992.

1. Frank Bonilla, Harry Pachon, and Marta Tienda, *Public Policy Research and the Hispanic Community: Recommendations from Five Task Forces* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1984), 3.
2. Sar Levitan, "Measurement of Employment, Unemployment and Low Income," *Workforce* (Spring 1994): 19.
3. Luis Frage, Herman Gallegos, Gerald P. Lopez, Mary Louise Pratt, Renato Rosaldo, Jose Saldivar, Ramon Saldivar, and Guadalupe Valdes, *Still Looking for America: Beyond the Latino National Political Survey* (Stanford, Calif.: Public Outreach Project of the Stanford Center for Chicano Research, 1994), 5.
4. Robert Bogdan and Margaret Krander, "Policy Data as a Social Process: A Qualitative Approach to Quantitative Data," *Human Organization* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 303.
5. Stephen Thernstrom, "Further Reflections on the Yankee City Series: The Pitfalls of Ahistorical Social Science," in his book, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), 239.
6. See Gerald D. Jaynes and Robin M. Williams Jr., eds., *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1989); also see Elizabeth Pleck, *Black Migration and Poverty: Boston 1865-1900* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); and W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967).
7. Daniel P. Moynihan and Nathan Glazer, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963).
8. Bernado Vega, *Memorias de Bernado Vega: Contribución a la Historia de la Comunidad Puertorriquena en Nueva York* (Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Huracan, 1977); also see Jesus Colon, *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* (New York: Argo Press, 1975).
9. Lloyd H. Rogler, "The Meaning of Culturally Sensitive Research in Mental Health," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 143, no. 3 (March 1989), 301.
10. Robert B. Hill, "Research on the African American Family: A Holistic Perspective," in Wornie L. Reed, *Assessment of the Status of African-Americans*, vol. 2 (Boston: University of Massachusetts, William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, 1989), 2.
11. Lloyd H. Rogler, "Cultural Sensitivity: Research with Hispanics," *Contemporary Psychology* 37, no. 9 (1992): 942.
12. Sheila Ards, "The Theory of Vouchers and Housing Availability in the Black Community," in *Race, Politics, and Economic Development: Community Perspectives*, ed. James Jennings (London: Verso Press, 1992).
13. Anthony Barker and B. Guy Peters, *Science Policy and Government* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 1.
14. Brett Williams, "Poverty among African Americans in the Urban United States," *Human Organization* 51, no. 2 (1992): 166.
15. Dorothy Clark, *Race, Poverty, and the Role of Media: A Review of News Coverage of Boston's Black Community, 1985-1990* (Boston: University of Massachusetts, William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, 1994).
16. *Ibid.*
17. David E. Hayes-Bautista, "Identifying 'Hispanic' Populations: The Influence of Research Methodology upon Public Policy," *American Journal of Public Health* 70, no. 4 (April 1980): 353.
18. Adolph Reed Jr., "The Underclass as Myth and Symbol: The Poverty of Discourse about Poverty," *Radical America* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1991).
19. Walter Korpi, "Approaches to the Study of Poverty in the U.S.: Critical Notes from a European Perspective," in *Poverty and Public Policy: An Evaluation of Social Science Research*, ed. Vincent J. Covello (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1980).
20. Dardo Cúneo, "Introduction," in *Puerto Rico en Nueva York: Sociología de Una Inmigración*, ed. Jesús de Galíndez (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1969), 7.

21. Eugenio Fernandez Mendez, ed., *Portrait of a Society: Readings on Puerto Rican Sociology* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: University of Puerto Rico Press, 1972); and Rafael L. Ramirez, Carlos Buitrago Ortiz, and Barry B. Levine, *Problemas de Desigualdad en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Libreria Internacional, 1972).

22. Rafael L. Ramirez, "Marginalidad, Dependencia y Participación Política en el Arrabal," in *Problemas de Desigualdad en Puerto Rico*, ed. Rafael L. Ramirez, Carlos Buitrago Ortiz, and Barry B. Levine (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Libreria Internacional, 1972).

23. Celia F. Cintron and Barry B. Levine, "Quienes Son Los Pobres en Puerto Rico?" in *Problemas de Desigualdad en Puerto Rico*, ed. Rafael L. Ramirez, Carlos Buitrago Ortiz, and Barry B. Levine (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Libreria Internacional, 1972).

24. Adolph Reed Jr., "Pimping Poverty, Then and Now," *Progressive* 58, no. 8 (August 1994): 6.

25. Barker and Peters, *Science Policy and Government*, 6.

26. Henry Freedman, "Chronology of HEW/HHS Actions and Recommendations Concerning Participation by Poor Persons and Their Advocates in Agency Policymaking and Decisionmaking," March 1993, no. 645. (Note: This file was obtained from handout computers services.)

27. M. E. Hawkesworth, *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 189.

28. Williams, "Poverty among African Americans in the Urban United States," 164.

29. Robert Formaini, *The Myth of Scientific Public Policy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

30. Amitai Etzioni, *Public Policy in a New Key* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the limitations in utilizing purely quantitative measures of poverty among Puerto Ricans?
2. Discuss the implications of viewing poverty within a sociohistorical rather than a behavioral context.
3. Discuss the important cultural and social resources in the Puerto Rican community.
4. Analyze the validity of the "culture of poverty" explanation of Puerto Rican poverty.
5. Discuss the significance of using the community rather than the individual or the family as the unit of analysis for understanding poverty.
6. Discuss the implications of the use by researchers of concepts such as *underclass*.
7. Discuss the consequences of incorporating the experiences and views of the poor themselves in constructing a comprehensive understanding of poverty.

FOR FURTHER READING

Bonilla, Frank, Harry Pachon, and Marta Tienda, *Public Policy Research and the Hispanic Community: Recommendations from Five Task Forces* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1984).

- Du Bois, W. E. B., *The Philadelphia Negro* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967).
- Hawkesworth, M. E., *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 189.
- Hill, Robert B., "Research on the African American Family: A Holistic Perspective," in Wornie L. Reed, *Assessment of the Status of African-Americans*, vol. 2 (Boston: University of Massachusetts, William Monroe Trotter Institute for the Study of Black Culture, 1989).
- Levitan, Sar, "Measurement of Employment, Unemployment and Low Income," *Workforce* (Spring 1994): 19.
- Moynihan, Daniel P., and Nathan Glazer, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963).
- Reed, Adolph, Jr., "The Underclass as Myth and Symbol: The Poverty of Discourse about Poverty," *Radical America* 24, no. 1 (Summer 1991).
- Rogler, Lloyd H., "The Meaning of Culturally Sensitive Research in Mental Health," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 143, no. 3 (March 1989), 301.
- Thernstrom, Stephen, "Further Reflections on the Yankee City Series: The Pitfalls of Ahistorical Social Science," in Stephen Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City* (New York: Atheneum, 1969).
- Vega, Bernado, *Memorias de Bernado Vega: Contribucion a la Historia de la Comunidad Puertorriquena en Nueva York* (Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Huracan, 1977).
- Williams, Brett, "Poverty among African Americans in the Urban United States," *Human Organization* 51, no. 2 (1992): 166.