HURRICANE [_____] IN PUERTO RICO:

THE PROMISED CATASTROPHE 'RESTRUCTURED'

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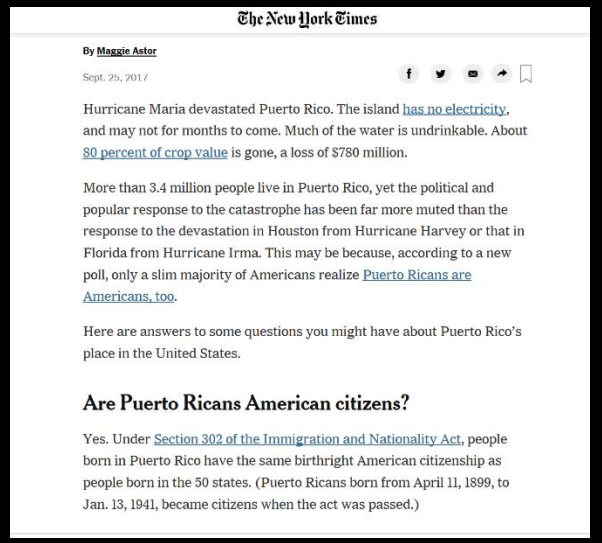
Where's Puerto Rico?

Media coverage coming from the island, forced a short national and global discussion about Puerto Rico.



The New York Times

By Maggie Astor

Sept. 25, 2017

Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico. The island has no electricity, and may not for months to come. Much of the water is undrinkable. About 80 percent of crop value is gone, a loss of $780 million.

More than 3.4 million people live in Puerto Rico, yet the political and popular response to the catastrophe has been far more muted than the response to the devastation in Houston from Hurricane Harvey or that in Florida from Hurricane Irma. This may be because, according to a new poll, only a slim majority of Americans realize Puerto Ricans are Americans, too.

Here are answers to some questions you might have about Puerto Rico's place in the United States.

Are Puerto Ricans American citizens?

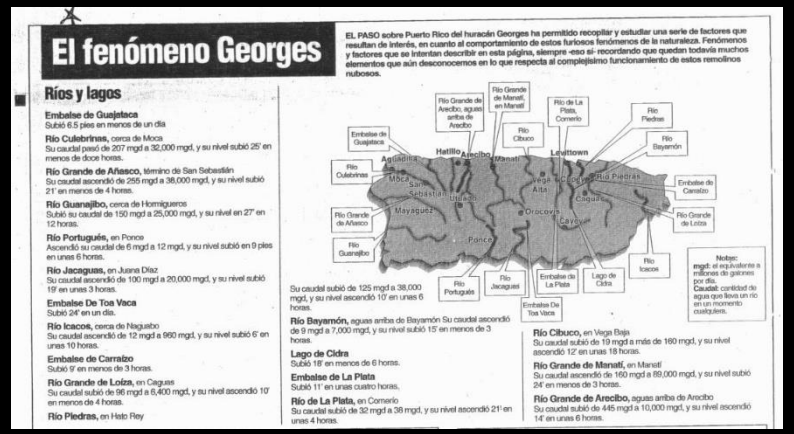
Yes. Under Section 302 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, people born in Puerto Rico have the same birthright American citizenship as people born in the 50 states. (Puerto Ricans born from April 11, 1899, to Jan. 13, 1941, became citizens when the act was passed.)

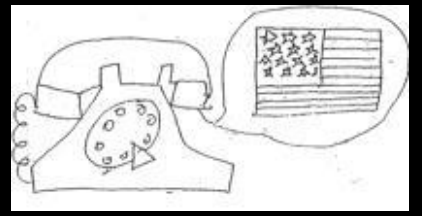
Damages

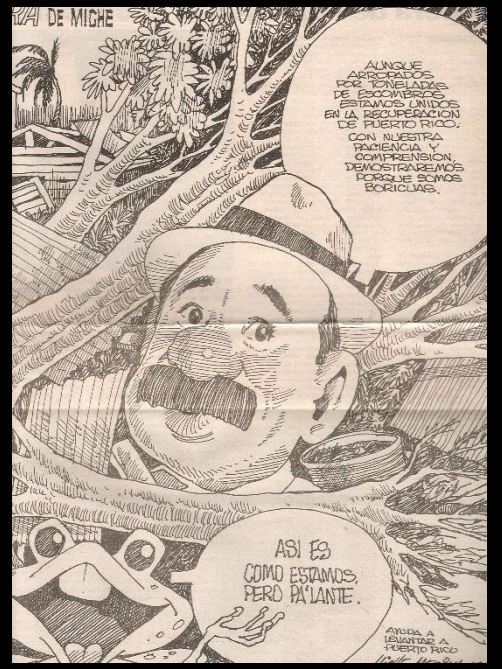
- Homes destroyed: 70,000
  - Close to half of them were self-built and many do not have titles.
- All phone services were affected.
- Telecommunications: All phone and Internet services were affected.
- 80% of all utility poles and all transmission lines were knocked down. The whole island was without electricity.
- Access to health services was limited and unreliable.
- Water service disrupted.
- Uprooted trees, landslides, and broken bridges limited mobility and the distribution of goods and emergency services
- Significant population loss
- Schools and universities closed for over a month
- 'The thin ice': Federal and Territorial Relations

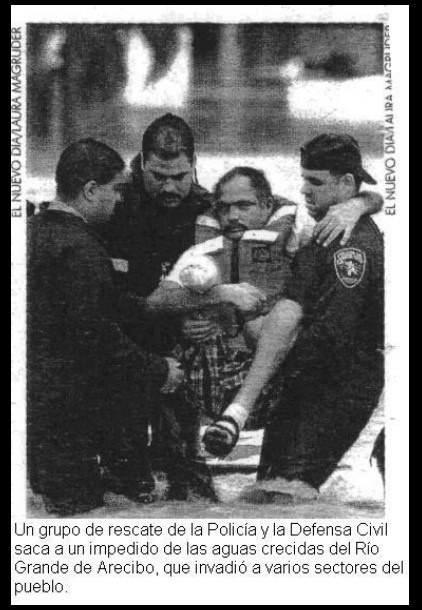
‘RESILIENCE’ BEFORE RESILIENCE

Our history is anchored in disasters… and in failed recovery.









Un grupo de rescate de la Policía y la Defensa Civil saca a un impedido de las aguas crecidas del Río Grande de Arecibo, que invadió a varios sectores del pueblo.

INSISTING ON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- What do we mean by communities?
- What are the different meanings and interpretations of resilience?
- How can we better support neighborhood preparedness?
- Is Puerto Rico ‘recovering’? Are current processes exacerbating our social vulnerability to disasters?
- What this past year of historic losses might teach us? What have we failed to learn?
- Are we taking climate change seriously?

RESTORATION

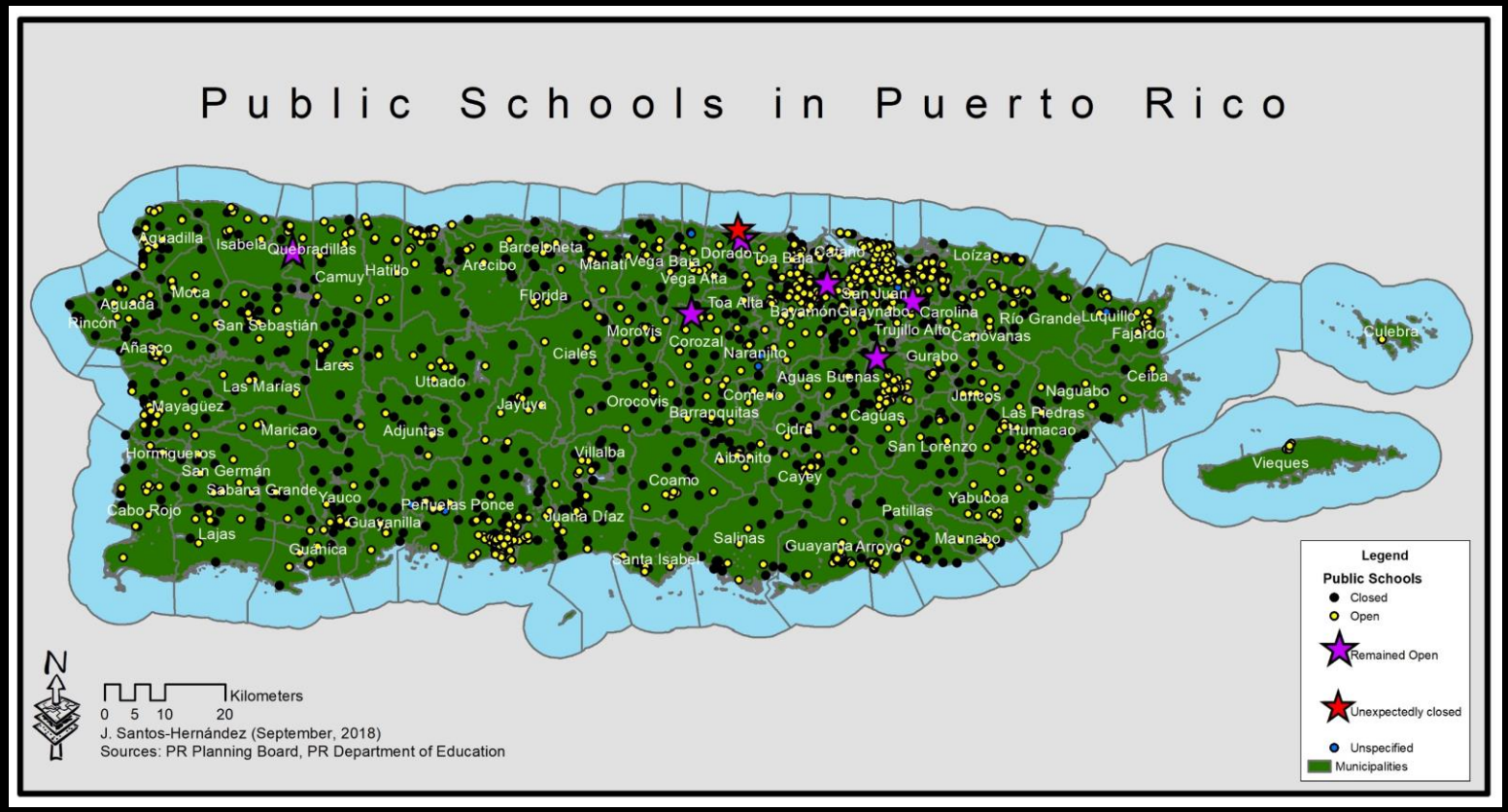
RECONSTRUCTION

RECOVERY... HOW?

RESTRUCTURED

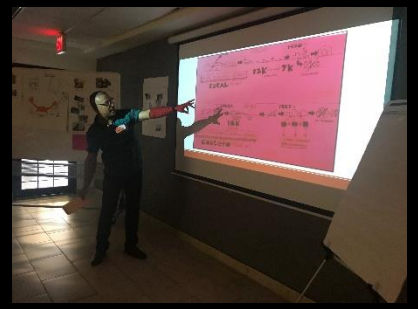
Puerto Rico's Recovery in the Midst of Restructuration

- Agency consolidation – from 144 to 22 agencies
- Pension cuts – between 5% and 20%
- UPR Tuition raise - ~150% increase
- Labor reform – elimination of benefits
- Minimum salary –
  - 18-24 years - $7.25
  - 25 years and up - $7.50



- The Department of Education must save $53 million in personell spending and $6million in non-personnel spending.
- Elimination of subsidies to Municipalities and UPR - $451 millions in savings
- An additional $1.1 million Budget cut to the Forensic Sciences Institute
- $1.1 million cut for the Bureau of Emergency Management
- $2.34 million cut for the Bureau of Medical Emergencies

In the meantime… what can be done?



Thank you!

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