

Connecticut College

Digital Commons @ Connecticut College

Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies
Honors Papers

Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies
Department

2021

In the Belly of the Beast: The Legacy of Puerto Rican Women in the Development of Anti- Imperialist Feminism

Grace Amato

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/genderhp>



Part of the [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Latin American Studies Commons](#), and the [Latina/o Studies Commons](#)

This Honors Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies Department at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies Honors Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact bpancier@conncoll.edu.

The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

**In the Belly of the Beast: The Legacy of Puerto Rican Women in the Development of Anti-
Imperialist Feminism**

**A thesis presented by Grace Amato to the Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectionality Studies
Department in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts**

Connecticut College May 2021

Thesis Advisor: Ariella Rotramel

Readers: R. Danielle Egan and Leo Garofalo

Contents

Introduction, 3

Chapter 1: The Impact of United States Colonialism on Puerto Rican Feminist Thought, 17

**Chapter 2: *Triple Jeopardy*: Connecting Women of Color in the United States and Abroad,
31**

**Chapter 3: “Vieques Is Our Home!”: The Role of Feminist Activists and Transnational
Solidarity in Demilitarizing Vieques, 51**

Conclusion, 68

Introduction

We cannot emphasize enough the link between our struggle for national liberation and our struggle for emancipation as women. Though we currently live in the United States, we follow the model of our Latin American sisters - a model that recognizes that without women's participation there is no revolution and that women's struggles are not separate from national liberation struggles. For us, as Puertorriqueñas, this model is of the utmost relevance and importance since we find ourselves here in the United States, in the belly of the beast (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 130).

The sentiment expressed by El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez's statement, "In the Belly of the Beast: Puertorriqueñas Challenging Colonialism" (originally published in 1992) encapsulates the mission of contemporary anti-imperialist Puerto Rican feminism. El Comité highlights their positionality living in the continental United States as migrant, colonized people while using an intersectional analysis to reflect on their particular politics as women who understand themselves as part of a broader Latin American feminism that is invested in national liberation. El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez was "a collective of Puerto Rican women committed to the empowerment of all women," (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 125) based in New England. They formed in response to the tragic domestic violence-related murder of Miriam López Pérez in Boston, Massachusetts. Miriam López Pérez's life highlights upon the need for an intersectional analysis that responds to local realities: "She was concentrating on defending her rights and those of her family [...] her life and death speak to the level of commitment and to the *espíritu de lucha* of Puerto Rican women as clear examples of what feminists mean when they say the personal is political" (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 132). The *espíritu de lucha* is present in the feminist organizations studied throughout this thesis, as anti-imperialist feminism is embodied differently through the figures on the covers of the

Third World Women's Alliance's periodical *Triple Jeopardy* and the Vieques Women's Alliance use of civil disobedience against militaristic violence.

The *espíritu de lucha* is also explored through the intersections between Puerto Rican independence and women's struggles. The statement outlines the need for specifically anti-imperialist feminism, citing Puerto Rico's exploitation by the United States. U.S. economic and political control through a continuing military presence requires a "struggle for national liberation" that is linked to the "struggle for emancipation as women" (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 130). Their rejection of a separation between feminism and nationalist struggles is central to their positioning alongside other Latin American anti-imperialist feminists. This recognition is prominent in Puerto Rican history and key to U.S. Third World feminist politics, a feminist movement popularized in the 1970s. El Comité uses a historical and social analysis drawn from this movement to connect the ongoing colonization of Puerto Rico to larger themes about imperialism. As they articulate the history of Puerto Rican women under United States colonialism, they also uncover themes of militarism and its centering of misogynist white supremacist violence. This analysis speaks to the shared histories and realities between Puerto Rican women and other women of color, Latina and beyond. Anti-imperialist feminism in the Puerto Rican context navigates assumptions about women's roles and approaches to activism in a way that values and centers their lived experiences and shared histories. This approach opens up the ability to simultaneously build transnational activist networks while centering Puerto Rican women's leadership and issues. This activist model holds promise for continuing efforts by feminists to simultaneously root their activism in the specific while building the alliances that are both necessary and inspiring to counter ongoing imperialism, racism, and sexism.

Puerto Rican Women and Intersectionality

Our understanding of the exploitation and racism that result from this colonial relationship shapes our political development and our consciousness as oppressed women. The oppression faced by women both in Puerto Rico and in the United States is a direct consequence of the political, economic and military interests of the U.S. government. There is an urgent political need for other women living in the United States to grasp this understanding and to join us in our struggle (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 125).

The Puerto Rican feminists at the heart of this study necessarily engage questions of intersectionality and anti-imperialism, partially due to the island's unique position as an unincorporated United States territory. The relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico is a form of contemporary colonialism with the United States government controlling the economic and political functions of the island while Puerto Ricans do not have access to the full privileges of United States citizenship. El Comité connects their feminist analysis to the "colonial relationship [which] shapes our political development and our consciousness as oppressed women," and identifies their oppression as the "direct consequence of the political, economic and military interests of the U.S. government" (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 125), providing a feminist politic based on lived experience. Puerto Rico's status, especially in the broader post-colonial contexts, shares an affinity with other communities controlled by the United States. Their status is ambivalent and complicated by the deep economic relationships. As feminist scholars M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty argue, "in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Pacific these [capitalist] operations are masked by an ideology of statehood and commonwealth status" (Alexander and Mohanty 1997, xxi). This statement alludes to the shared experiences of Puerto Ricans and Pacific Islanders and the potential for transnational solidarity. Specifically organizing "in the belly of the beast," as women living on the continental United States, El Comité also calls for "other women living in

the United States to grasp this understanding and to join us in our struggle” (El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas-Miriam López Pérez 2003, 125). An understanding of these connections alongside the particular history of the island and its people is necessary to situate the development of an explicitly anti-imperialist and feminist Puerto Rican feminism in the 20th century.

Puerto Rico, called Borinquen by the Taíno peoples, was colonized by Spain in 1493. Its population includes a mix of Indigenous, African and European peoples that simultaneously has created a sense of particular racial and ethnic pride in being uniquely Puerto Rican while also containing racial tensions. Puerto Rican women on the island are also racialized differently than women living on the continental United States due to the differences in how race and ethnicity are understood in mainstream United States culture. For example, the Black-white binary fails to capture nuances of Puerto Rican racialization that include a recognition of Afro-Latinidad while a privileging of features associated with whiteness is a form of colorism that is more explicit within the community. Organizing around race in the United States highlights the complicated racial identity of Puerto Rican women: “When we speak of ‘race’ as an isolated issue: where does the Black Puerto Rican sister stake out her alliance in this country, with the Black community or the Latin?” (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981, 105). Therefore, when discussing Puerto Rican womanhood, feminism and activism it is critical to take into account the diversity of Puerto Rican women’s experiences including intracommunal tensions and the importance of *puertorriquenidad* as a shared identity under United States occupation. As Puerto Rican women continue to experience and resist oppression, this project examines the relationship between Puerto Rican women and anti-imperialist feminism across locations. Contrary to assumptions that multiple identities cause political fractures I identify how their desire to embrace both a

Puerto Rican national identity and a feminist identity benefits their ongoing efforts. In other words, through an intersectional politics, Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminists have uniquely been able to secure concrete wins for their community despite the ongoing occupation of their lands and exploitation of their people by the United States.

“Intersectionality” is an important concept for popular feminist movements of the twenty first century and illuminates the necessity for multi-identitarian political efforts. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term in 1989 through her legal scholarship, arguing that perceiving discrimination through a single-issue lens creates “the paradigmatic political and theoretical dilemma created by the intersection of race and gender: Black women are caught between ideological and political currents that combine first to create and then to bury Black women's experiences” (Crenshaw 1989, 160). Crenshaw’s analysis, rooted in Black feminist theory, has been expanded to highlight the way that identities such as race, gender, class, age, sexuality, and ability, among other categories, intersect in a white-dominated, patriarchal society. Her work put a name to the work of earlier feminists of color. In the 1960s and 1970s, women of color activists sought to carve out a place for their overlapping issues and communities. In 1969, Frances Beal wrote “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female” critiquing the oppressive treatment of Black women under capitalism and ultimately arguing that Black women faced a “double jeopardy” of two by-products of capitalism: sexism and racism (need citation?). In 1977, the Combahee River Collective published a statement asserting that Black feminism is “the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face” (Combahee River Collective 1981, 210). They built off of the idea that the intersection of race and gender created a specific form of oppression that could not be named as solely sexism or racism. Black feminism in this form was developed by and for Black women as well as to the benefit of all

women of color. Intersectionality theory undergirds my study of anti-imperialist feminism. In the feminist genealogy that I trace, imperialism is conceptualized as a symbiotic relationship with societal oppression such as racism, sexism and classism. Anti-imperialist feminism, therefore, achieves intersectional politics by recognizing the need to address imperialism in connecting local realities to global struggles that connect to domestic or community-specific concerns

Explicitly situating their identities at the intersections of race, class, gender and nationality, Puerto Rican women have historically been involved in the development of anti-imperialist feminism and transnational solidarity. Since Alexander and Mohanty position “the state as a focal point of analysis for feminists” (1997, xxi), understanding the occupation of Puerto Rico as imperialist and exploitative is key. The anti-imperialist Puerto Rican feminists I center in this thesis claim a feminism that addresses nation and state relations and their “colonial legacies” (Alexander and Mohanty xxi). The shared experience of colonial legacies contributed to the development of Third World feminism, which aimed to unite women of color in the United States to transnational struggles against oppression. Chicana theorist, Chela Sandoval, who studies the role of women of color in the development of feminist politics, argues that Third World feminism “comprised a formulation capable of aligning U.S. movements for social justice not only with each other, but with global movements toward decolonization” (Sandoval 2000, 42). Third World feminism, therefore, relies on an “imagined community,” a concept coined by nationalism scholar Benedict Anderson. This approach suggests that Third World feminists’ alliances are based on politics rather than biological or cultural essentialism (Mohanty 1991, 4). Indeed, Chandra Mohanty argues that the Third World feminist community is not “‘imagined’ not because it is not ‘real’” but rather creates political alliances through identification with this community “in spite of internal hierarchies within third world contexts” (Mohanty 1991, 4).

Rather than demanding a static, authentic performance of “third worldness,” this approach explains why Puerto Rican women may identify as Third World women whether or not they live in Borinquen or in the continental United States that is considered first world despite its rampant racist and classist challenges.

Recognizing the effects of shared colonial legacies allows for an expansion of the term “feminism.” Intersectional theory confronts the “reproduction of normative accounts of woman that always imply a white feminist subject” (Muñoz 1999, 8) which contributes to an exclusive version of feminism that “can only consider blackness at the expense of feminism or vice versa” (Muñoz 1999, 8). Therefore, many Third World-identified women have been skeptical of the term itself as feminist movements have defined “the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experiences, and in terms of internal racism, classism and homophobia” (Mohanty 1991, 7), reproducing cultural imperialism. Since feminism has implied a white subject, the lived experiences of Third World women have existed on the periphery of mainstream feminist movements. However, participating in anti-imperialist feminist thought and practice includes rethinking the term “feminism” to take into account the experiences of Third World women. Therefore, I use the term “feminism” and “feminist” to describe the politics of Puerto Rican women activists because “third world women have always engaged with feminism, even if the label has been rejected in a number of instances” (Mohanty 1991, 7).

Third World Feminism

Third world feminist theory plays an important role in the demand for and development of a cross-racial, transnational and intersectional feminist analysis. Within the context of multiple feminist of color schools of thought and the Cold War political context that supported a backlash against liberationist struggles, the Third World liberation movement gained momentum. The

Cold War organized the world through the lens of the “first world,” the capitalist, Western countries in the United States’ sphere of influence, the “second world,” socialist-communist countries in the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence and the “Third World,” countries that were not aligned with the United States nor the Soviet Union, mostly regarded as “underdeveloped” countries in the language of international organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Dirlik 2012, xi). The first, second and Third World terminology has been problematized as it reproduces a global hierarchy, valuing capitalist and predominantly white countries as “developed.” More recently and in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union, countries are commonly organized as the Global North (read as “developed”) and the Global South (read as “underdeveloped”) to reject the stigmatizing nature of the earlier language (but hold onto a binary categorization). Despite the fact that the term “Third World” cannot fully characterize the differences within the peoples and nations it refers to and its negative connotations it “retains a certain heuristic value and explanatory specificity in relation to the inheritance of colonialism and contemporary neocolonial economic and geopolitical processes that the other formulations lack” (Mohanty 1991, 7). In other words, “Third World” names and unites an imagined community through colonial legacies and can be politically powerful in the face of economic, political, and cultural imperialism.

Radical protest movements of the 1960s called for Third World liberation and the work of cross-racial and transnational solidarity amongst Third World peoples. Most famously the Black Panther Party became intertwined with Third World liberation politics as “decolonizing the Third World meant freedom at home for African-Americans, and vice versa” (Christiansen and Scarlett 2012, 1). BPP activists recognized that “underdeveloped” countries had been most affected by colonization by “developed” countries. For feminists organizing in the United States,

Third World Liberation movements differentiated women of color activists from middle-class white women, who represented “first world women.” More specifically, it represented a brand of feminism that responded to not only gender inequities but also the realities at the intersection of gender, race, class and sexuality. Notably, U.S. Third World feminism was able to focus on women of color, whose issues were typically on the periphery in both mainstream Third World liberationist and feminist activist groups, while not calling for gender separatism. Identifying with Third World liberation through a “new form of historical consciousness” (Sandoval 2000, 42) allowed social movements in the United States to reconceptualize their positionality on a global scale. Focusing on decolonization as social justice, U.S. Third World feminism became more commonly known as postcolonial feminism in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the Third World feminist frame has continued to create a sense of solidarity and understanding between women of different countries with the goal of fighting against United States imperialism, whether that be manifested through military presence or political occupation. Moreover, for Puerto Rican feminists, it more explicitly names their continuing struggle as a colonized people.

Methodology

In order to investigate the relationship between anti-imperialist feminism and Puerto Rican women activists, I conduct a feminist genealogy of Puerto Rican feminist thought. Genealogy “opposes itself to the search for ‘origins’” (Foucault 1977, 141). Instead, it traces ideologies and practices that build upon one another at important historical moments. A specifically feminist genealogy “understands women to have a genealogy: to be located within a history of overlapping practices and reinterpretations of femininity” (Stone 2005). Uncovering Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism through a feminist genealogy allows for nuanced approach to the organizations and activists studied in this thesis, as their work does not exist in a

vacuum but rather influences and builds upon each other. In order to study the development of Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminist praxis, I focus on different historical moments that shape “overlapping practices and reinterpretations of [Puerto Rican] femininity,” thus influencing the organizations and activists studied on Borinquen and on the continental United States. Studying both theory and practice, I incorporate an analysis of discourse, visual and social movement analysis. While not searching for the “origins” of anti-imperialist feminism but rather uncovering important historical moments of its development and practice, the genealogy also engages an important point of contemporary Puerto Rican feminism: reclaiming feminist lineage. Tracing these actions is part of an intersectional “decolonization process that has also helped them in reclaiming their Indigenous and African identities as the two groups also battle their invisibility in the larger Puerto Rican story” (Guzmán 2019). Puerto Rican feminism has a rich history but has not been as heavily engaged within United States Anglophone gender studies and conducting a feminist genealogy can bridge some of these gaps through an intersectional focus.

At the center of my research are two organizations that engage with Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism, the Third World Women’s Alliance and the Vieques Women’s Alliance. The Third World Women’s Alliance, founded in 1969 in New York City, was a multicultural organization focused on feminist consciousness raising for the community of Third World women on the continental United States. The Vieques Women’s Alliance was composed solely of Puerto Rican women living on the island of Vieques, off the coast of the main island of Puerto Rico. Forming in 1999, the Vieques Women’s Alliance organized civil disobedience protests against the United States naval bases, responsible for civilian deaths due to bombing practices. The comparison between the two groups, with an understanding of Puerto Rican history explored

in the first chapter, highlights how they navigate identity, representation and alliances and network building.

First, I provide historical context on the effects of the United States' and Puerto Rico's political relationship on Puerto Rican women then more specifically analyze the organizational frameworks of the Third World Women's Alliance and the Vieques Women's Alliance. In order to more fully understand the development of anti-imperialist feminist thinking and practice in the Puerto Rican context, knowledge creation will not be limited to academics, scholars or published theory but instead activists, organizations and political action will be considered part of development as well. For this purpose, the methodology draws from Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* which provides an understanding of Third World feminist organizing as differential consciousness. Differential consciousness proposes, as defined by Sandoval, "a tactical subjectivity with the capacity to recenter depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted" (Sandoval 2000, 14). Sandoval's work provides a way to value and analyze decolonial thinking that does not fit the traditional definitions of academic theory or dogmatic political approaches.

The feminist genealogy of Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminist thought focuses on primary source materials to dive into the relationship between Puerto Rican women and anti-imperialism. Key primary source materials include newspaper articles, independently published periodicals and pamphlets as well as documentary photography. The focus on media allows for an understanding of activists studied as knowledge creators and as active agents in their own narratives. Additionally, the study of self-created media is inspired by the poem "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures with You" published in *This Bridge Called My Back* which highlights

the hypocrisy of the power relations between white feminists and Third World women in United States feminist movements:

Our white sisters

radical friends

love to own pictures of us (Carrillo 1981, 63)

The phrase “white sisters / radical friends” mocks the term “global sisterhood” that has ignored the privilege that white North Americans hold as beneficiaries of North American imperialism. The phrase “love to own pictures of us” points to the power imbalance between the white sisters and non-white women experiencing oppression in the United States or internationally. The pictures imply a distance between the white and non-white women as well as a form of dehumanization through idolization, as a spectacle. Similarly, Judy Tzu-Chun Wu studied the impact of orientalist thinking by North American peace activists and feminists in the Anti-Vietnam War movement. She asserts that during this movement, North American women exhibited a radical orientalist sensibility, “regard[ing] Asian female liberation fighters, especially those from Viet Nam, as exemplars of revolutionary womanhood” (Wu 2010, 194) which upholds a binary between the East and West. As Vietnamese women served as radical orientalist figures for United States feminists, Agatha Beins “adopted the term ‘radical other,’ widening the scope of this romanticization to include black women and potentially other women of color” (Beins 2015, 157). The experiences of women of color undercovers their objectification by white feminists, a contradiction in the mainstream feminist movement that leads to the foundations of specifically women of color led organizations studied throughout this thesis. Therefore, the analysis of media focuses on how women of color activists represent themselves and each other

while trying to achieve credibility and build their movements through imagery, discourse and framework.

Conclusion

To study the relationship between Puerto Rican women and anti-imperialist feminism, I focus on the development of this form of feminist analysis, first through tracing the impact of the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico on Puerto Rican women, then through two organizations, the Third World Women's Alliance and the Vieques Women's Alliance. The first chapter serves as a feminist genealogy tracking the discourse and activism around womanhood, gender oppression and feminism in Puerto Rico. It also provides historical context to the politics of the Third World Women's Alliance and the Vieques Women's Alliance, as both of these groups demonstrate a rich historical understanding of their struggles against oppression. Diving into the Third World Women's Alliance and the Vieques Women's Alliance connects broader anti-imperialist feminist politics to the organizational level, which responds to tangible experiences of oppression. Chapter 2 looks at how activists and organizations started developing a specifically cross-racial analysis and solidarity while claiming feminism with the influence of Puerto Rican feminists through the New York based Third World Women's Alliance's publication *Triple Jeopardy*, active between 1971 and 1976 (Springer 2005, 145). Despite being a multicultural collective, the Third World Women's Alliance reconciles with the local realities of Puerto Rican women and their connection to global struggles against imperialism. Chapter 3 focuses on the Vieques Women's Alliance, founded in 1999, and their successful movement to force the United States Navy off Vieques, an island off the East coast of Puerto Rico. The chapter uncovers the different ways that the Alliance uses anti-imperialist feminist analysis in the movement to demilitarize Vieques while also building a popular transnational movement.

Anti-imperialist feminism, as explored through Puerto Rican feminist activism, proposes a type of feminism that deals with the material manifestations of imperialism. Although the labels change over time, such as Third World and postcolonial feminisms, the core of this thesis is a combination of analyzing ideology and practice. Tracking the development of these ideas throughout different historical and political contexts uncovers a “transnational feminist praxis foregrounds women’s agency in the context of oppressive conditions that shape their lives” (Naples 2002, 267). At the intersection of Puerto Rican independence activism and feminism develops a theory in the flesh which allows for cultural and local specificity while retaining a nationalist identity. The personal experiences of women of color, as they linked their daily lives with larger structural issues, coined “theory in the flesh” by Moraga: “A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives— our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings— all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity” (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981, 23). The politic born out of necessity is one that responds to the experiences of women of color, as opposed to responding only to middle-class white womanhood. As Puerto Rican nationalism is at odds with United States imperialism, it also aligns with transnational activist networks struggling against imperialism as the root, despite different experiences.

Chapter 1

The Impact of United States Colonialism on Puerto Rican Feminist Thought

Through the Puerto Rican independence movement of the mid-20th century emerged the powerful Puerto Rican feminist Dolores “Lolita” Lebrón Sotomayor. Alongside three Puerto Rican men, she opened fire on the United States Capitol in 1954 in the name of Puerto Rican freedom. During her arrest, Lebrón stated, “Yo no vine a matar, yo vine a morir” (I did not come to kill, I came to die), declaring her willingness to die for Puerto Rican freedom from United States colonial rule (Lebrón 1954). Remarkably, Lolita Lebrón and her comrades survived, and, despite its dangers, continued to engage in activism during and after incarceration. As the appointed leader of the assault on Congress, Lebrón’s actions and words led to her image becoming Puerto Rican feminist iconography. Notably, the reproduced images from her arrest focus on her feminine appearance, highlighting her lipstick, hairstyle and jacket. Through her image as a patriot of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, Puerto Rican feminism and femininity tied to the Puerto Rican independence struggle. Additionally, Lebrón’s activism connects to both the Third World Women’s Alliance as she was the subject of pieces within their magazine, *Triple Jeopardy*, and she herself was a subscriber, and the Vieques Women’s Alliance, by participating in demilitarization demonstrations. In this fashion, Lolita Lebrón serves as a marker of anti-imperialist feminism as her activism shifts over time to respond to the relevant historical and political contexts. Lebrón’s engagement with anti-imperialist feminism is one means of unpacking the development of this theory and practice over time and within the Puerto Rican colonial context.



Image 1: Puerto Rican nationalists Irving Flores Rodriguez, from left, front row, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Lolita Lebron, and Andres Figueroa Cordero, all from New York, stand in a police lineup following their arrest after a shooting attack on Capitol Hill, in Washington, D.C. March 1, 1954. Photographer uncredited. Associated Press.

Lebrón’s activism emphasizes the role of Puerto Rican women in anti-imperialist activism as crucial revolutionary players but also uncovers the intense scrutinization of women taking on public forms of leadership. Standing alongside her co-conspirators, Lebrón stands out as the only woman and through her clothing. Her light toned jacket sticks out in the black and white photo as well as her dark lipstick. Lebrón’s face is holding a “trompa” the Puerto Rican colloquial term used to describe the restrained, slight grimace and blank facial expression that Puerto Rican women use as a means of expressing dissatisfaction or distaste without saying a word. While not necessarily legible to a non-Puerto Rican audience, her facial expression communicates a loathing of United States power despite her being held in police custody and having an unknown future. Although Lebrón’s feminine appearance during the Congress protest became Puerto Rican feminist iconography, Lebrón recalled that she faced backlash for her

appearance: “Some people called me bourgeois because I wore make up and I always fixed my hair” (Power 2017, 42). The issues around Lebrón’s appearance as a feminine presenting, light-skinned Puerto Rican woman inspires discussion of her perceived embrace of bourgeois aesthetics within a movement that espouses proletariat struggles. The questions around Lebrón as an activist, although she continues to be an important Puerto Rican figure, relates to Roland Barthes’ ideas on ideology that are taken up by Chela Sandoval: “Barthes goes so far as to define ideology as *the process of colonization itself*: the occupation, exploitation, incorporation, and hegemonic domination of meaning— by meaning” (Sandoval 2000, 99). Sandoval builds on this idea to identify differential consciousness, “a tactical subjectivity with the capacity to recenter depending upon the kinds of oppression to be confronted” (Sandoval 2000, 14), with which Puerto Rican feminists engage constantly to respond to the lived experiences of women in their communities. The conflation of Lebrón’s presentation with her politics highlights the scrutiny of women in the public sphere and the limitations of ideologies that take on a form of fundamentalism. To identify makeup as bourgeois, thus policing women’s appearances, structures ideology as static, unable to leave room for women’s individual choices.

Born in the hometown of the Puerto Rican independence movement, Lares, Lebrón did not become engaged with the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party until after moving to New York for promised economic opportunity. Working in a garment factory in the United States, Lebrón faced a lot of racist discrimination: “I noticed so much injustice against us [Puerto Ricans], and this created a deep sense of Puerto Ricanness in me” (Power 2017, 38). Lebrón’s experience speaks to the importance of lived experience in anti-imperialist feminist politics and its ability to empower individuals and communities. Within the anti-Puerto Rican discrimination that Lebrón faced in her factory job, she also noted that she held white privilege: “they treated my Puerto

Rican compañeras badly in the factory, but not me, because I was whiter” (Power 2017, 38). Her experience also highlights the need for an intersectional analysis that takes into account race, nationality, class and gender in order to respond to Puerto Rican women’s lived experiences. Feeling a strong connection to the Party’s values, Lebrón held multiple positions in the Party, eventually becoming the top delegate in the New York chapter (Power 2017, 39). Although she never met the party leader Pedro Albizu Campos in person, he assigned Lebrón as the leader for the Congress attack (Power 2017, 40), after she began their correspondence through letters. Lebrón’s importance in the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party speaks to the connection between anti-imperialist Puerto Rican feminism and the Puerto Rican independence movement. This intersection between movements is not seamless, as respectability and maternalist politics are complicated in both contexts. Lebrón’s trajectory is important for understanding Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism, particularly as it challenges an overly machista reading of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party and underscores its connections to anti-imperialist feminist development.

Tracing Puerto Rican Womanhood

Tracing Puerto Rican women’s development of and identification with anti-imperialist feminism provides a genealogy of the modern concepts of gender, and more specifically womanhood, in Puerto Rican communities. Gender roles were heavily influenced by Spanish colonialism as it enforced strict expressions of European Roman Catholic institutions such as the family that contained hegemonic ideas of womanhood. The resulting sexism, racism and classism thus exist co-constitutively with colonialism itself from the beginning. However, gender and culture are not static, and expressions of Puerto Rican womanhood are also influenced by Indigenous Taino societal norms along with African enslaved communities’ values and cultural expression. Therefore, unpacking the history of Puerto Rican feminist politics requires rejecting

cultural essentialism which “assumes and constructs sharp binaries between ‘Western culture’ and ‘Non-western cultures’ or between ‘Western culture’ and particular ‘Other’ cultures” (Narayan 1998, 88). In particular, avoiding cultural essentialism in this context means that the term “woman” has a more fluid connotation than commonly assumed. Gender identities are dynamically related to both mainstream and subaltern ideas and expressions, as explored Puerto Rican women activists differing relationships to anti-imperialist feminism.

The Taino population, indigenous to the Caribbean islands along with other groups like Caribs, was traditionally matrilineal before Spanish colonization. On the island of Borinquen, women had access to the highest positions in society and participated significantly in political affairs in their communities. Despite focusing on biological sex in Taino society, gender roles in Taino society did not enforce a restrictive domestic and public sphere binary on men and woman. This dynamic was quite unlike European society that insisted on a binary, particularly for people of the upper classes. According to historians, Taino women shared communal work with men and participated fully in the production of crafts and goods as well as ritual ceremonies. Some women, although less commonly, learned how to handle weapons and fought in battles. Notably, there were a number of women *cacicás* (chiefs), according to Spanish documents from the sixteenth century, proving that Taino society did not follow the European model which named women as wives and mothers, barred from holding positions of power in the public sphere, such as political offices (Acosta-Belén 1986, 2).

The Guabancex, “mother goddess,” one of the two main deities, underscored the significance of women’s maternal role in Taino society (Acosta-Belén 1986, 2). Since the pre-colonial Taino communities were horticultural and engaged in subsistence agriculture, “extraordinary importance was given to the female as a source of creation and the great powers

were attributed to the great earth mother” (Acosta-Belén 1986, 2) as demonstrated through women’s high political and social participation and the reverence of Guabancex. Therefore, Taino women’s power was tied to their reproductive role, seen as a “source of creation,” tying their significance to the environment as well. The Taino understanding of womanhood, though heavily undermined through Spanish colonization, promotes a model that encourages women’s participation in political and social spheres, as well as revering her reproductive role.

The violent process of Spanish colonialism heavily influenced the concept of gender, and more specifically womanhood. Due to the imposition of the public and domestic sphere binary, the Taino woman lost her political and social power along with her male counterparts as they resisted colonial rule. Many Spanish settlers sexually exploited the Indigenous women of Borinquen as well as African enslaved people that were brought to the island, highlighting the connection between colonialism, racism, sexism, and sexual violence. As Borinquen continued to be settled by the Spanish, Spanish women who came to the island played an important role in importing Spanish cultural values, such as the institution of the family, to Borinquen society. In order to justify Spanish domination on the island, discourses around honor and moral respectability became intertwined with discussions of political power. These discourses were “racially as well as class and gender based” (Findlay 1999, 7) in order to uphold a racist heteropatriarchal order on the island. Tied to women’s societal norms and expectations were anxieties about whiteness as “discussions of sexual morality or unruliness became a prime way for Puerto Ricans to talk about race and create racial labels, without directly naming racial distinctions” (Findlay 1999, 7). In other words, these ideas allowed for a color hierarchy to be reinforced that placed women of indigenous and African descent on the bottom and thus deserving of economic, sexual, and racist exploitation. In sum, resistance to sexism in Puerto

Rico is inherently tied to the resistance of colonialism and racism as their roots have been intertwined from the beginning.

Some scholars consider the Spanish colonial period of Puerto Rico as the absence of a feminist movement, due to the inscription of restrictive gender roles through Spanish institutions such as the Catholic Church, the family, and the creation of the domestic sphere. However, although it may be hard to trace explicit feminist writings in the colonial period, women were involved in resistance against Spanish colonialism. *El Grito de Lares* (the Cry of Lares) was the first armed rebellion of the independence movement. The revolutionaries of Lares proclaimed the First Republic of Puerto Rico based on anticolonial and antislavery ideas, as they fought for Puerto Rican independence and abolition (Power 2017, 37). The rebellion took place in Lares, now hailed as a revolutionary Puerto Rican town, on September 23, 1868. Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances, an Afro-Puerto Rican who is considered to be considered to be the father of the Puerto Rican independence movement, and Segundo Ruiz Belvis, who founded the Comité Revolucionario de Puerto Rico (Revolutionary Committee of Puerto Rico) (“The Grito de Lares”) organized and led the rebellion. Mariana Bracetti was heavily involved in the Puerto Rican independence movement, remembered for embroidering the first Puerto Rican flag, designed by Betances (“The 'Grito de Lares' Flag”). Her participation is not fully documented but remembered for a highly gendered contribution for the movement. *El Grito de Lares* was ultimately unsuccessful in resisting Spanish colonial rule; however, slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico in 1873 (“Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico” 2011). The movement’s origins highlight both the role of women and Afro-Puerto Ricans in the history of organized resistance against colonialism and this uprising continues to inspire Puerto Rican liberationists.

The United States became explicitly involved with Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War, purportedly in reaction to the 1898 sinking of the USS Maine in Cuba's Havana Harbor. The United States exploited the political situation in Cuba, a colony of the Spanish seeking independence. Increasingly, there was a recognition of the importance of the Caribbean as the United States' coastal border. Since Puerto Rico was also a Spanish colony, the battles between Spain and the United States primarily occurred on the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico (citation). This war was significant for multiple political reasons. On the one hand, it marked a shift in the global power dynamic as the United States asserted naval dominance over Spain and the country began to engage in a more global imperialist approach. Less than nine months after the United States declared war on Spain, the United States and Spain signed a peace treaty which established Cuba's independence, ceded Puerto Rico and Guam as territories to the United States, and allowed the United States to purchase the Philippines Islands from Spain for \$20 million ("Introduction" 2011). The Spanish-American War thus serves as a critical moment in the shared struggles of Puerto Ricans, Filipinos and Chamorros against Spanish and United States imperialism.

The transition from Spanish colonial rule to the United States, looking to assert global dominance, "accelerated its immersion into capitalist, modernizing strategies, becoming a model for the emerging new international division of labor" (Colón-Warren and Alegría-Ortega 1998, 665). The Foraker Act of 1900 established a civilian government in Puerto Rico, appointed by the United States government rather than democratically elected by citizens. The Act also put United States federal laws into effect on the island as a U.S. territory ("Foraker Act" 2011). In 1917, Congress passed the Jones Act, granting citizenship to Puerto Ricans and thus making its men eligible to be drafted into the ongoing World War I. In the late 1940s, in another effort to

“develop” Puerto Rico’s economic sector, Governor Luis Muñoz Marín developed Operation Bootstrap, inviting United States corporations to use Puerto Rican land and labor, accelerating the role of women workers (Ruiz Toro 2021). The political and economic shifts resulted in social changes on the island as well, challenging “the most traditional definitions of femininity on the Island” (Colón-Warren and Alegría-Ortega 1998, 665) as women became increasingly involved in the formal labor market. Notably, Puerto Rican women became central to the tobacco and needle industries in the early twentieth century. They became involved more broadly in manufacturing, social services, commerce and public administration fields (Colón-Warren and Alegría-Ortega 1998, 665). These economic changes influenced changes in women’s status and “saw the emergence of both bourgeois and working-class feminisms, as well as a multiracial, islandwide labor movement and increased Afro-Puerto Rican political activism” (Findlay 1999, 14). The intense economic changes in Puerto Rico did not improve the lives of working-class Puerto Ricans, and therefore, many Puerto Ricans began migrating to the United States after the end of World War II. By the mid-1960s, more than a million Puerto Ricans had migrated to the United States (“Migrating to a New Land” 2021).

Feminismo en Acción: Early Twentieth Century Puerto Rican Feminist Thought

United States colonial control is inherently intertwined with Puerto Rican feminist thought, as women respond to political and economic changes as well as continental feminist influences and interventions. Therefore, the Puerto Rican feminist movements have responded to socioeconomic conditions of women’s lives, intertwining gender and class. Under United States colonial rule, Puerto Rican underwent intense economic changes in order to “develop” it, opening up more job opportunities for both middle-class and working-class women. Feminist writings addressed the class divide between women, as middle-class writers such as Lola

Rodriguez de Tio and Ana Roque de Duprey advocated for “women's access to an adequate education and the right to vote” while Luisa Capetillo and Dominga de la Cruz who worked in the tobacco industry were tied to worker’s struggles (Romero-Cesareo 1994, 771).

Feminist thought produced by middle-class writers did not seek to disrupt social expectations but instead celebrated Puerto Rican women’s responsibilities under a changing economic system. Through *La Liga Femenina Puertorriqueña*’s publication, Solá wrote about “*La mujer del siglo veinte*” (The Woman of the Twentieth Century), in 1919: “Es un triunfo feminista, porque el feminismo implica el despertar de la mujer, consciente de su personalidad, a la vida de sus deberes, tanto, como de sus derechos” (It is a feminist triumph, because feminism implies the awakening of women to an awareness of their personalities, and to their responsibilities as well as to their rights) (Roy-Fequiere 2004, 64). According to Solá, a feminist is better equipped to fulfill her role as a woman in Puerto Rican society by participating in the public sphere. By embracing liberal, individual rights for Puerto Rican women in the public sphere, Solá argues that women will not ignore their responsibilities but rather, as they embrace their true personalities and, therefore, their potential, their womanhood continues to be tied to their reproductive duties.

While advocating for liberal Puerto Rican feminism, Solá additionally described *feminismo de acción*, associated with Puerto Rican women in the public workforce. According to Solá, “all working women de facto practice a *feminismo de accion* by their very presence in the paid workforce” (Roy-Fequiere 2004, 63). This framing suggests that previously this form of feminism in action has gone unnoticed by middle-class and elite Puerto Ricans. However, due to the imposition of United States capitalist models onto Puerto Rico that pushed more women into the formal economy, more middle-class women became “nurses, pharmacists, dentists, medical

doctors” (Roy-Fequiere 2004, 63) as “proof of the triumph of our feminism of action” (Roy-Fequiere 2004, 63). Feminism in action did not celebrate the capitalist relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico but rather advocated for women’s labor across classes to be valued, as working-class women led the way for visibility in the public sphere. In response to the political, economic, and social transformations caused by United States’ colonization, Puerto Rican feminist writers and activists began to articulate their own intersectional politics across different feminist circles.

“He Dignified the Puerto Rican Woman”: The Puerto Rican Nationalist Party Complicated Relationship with Feminism

Central to the intersection of Puerto Rican independence movements and Puerto Rican feminisms was the nationalist motherhood debate and its ties to feminist concerns over birth control in the second half of the twentieth century. Nationalist Party leader Pedro Albizu Campos proposed a Puerto Rican nationalist ideal vision of a “pre-American Puerto Rico, imagined to some extent as an agrarian utopia in which everyone had enough to eat” (Briggs 1998, 32). Within this vision Puerto Rican women were identified with motherhood and reproduction of its people. As Albizu Campos’s nationalism focused on Puerto Rican agricultural society before the American colonial relationship, his speeches equated the United States to invaders. Therefore, as birth control options were introduced to Puerto Rico, he was suspicious: “The brazenness of the Yankee invaders has reached the extreme of trying to profane Puerto Rican motherhood; of trying to invade the very insides of nationality” (Briggs 1998, 32). His language suggests that birth control methods imposed by the United States government would be a violation of bodily integrity, as it tries to invade “the very insides of nationality.” Albizu Campos’ focus on the United States’ interventions reaching into women’s bodies was not unfounded. “As early as 1901

government officials attributed Puerto Rico's poverty and underdevelopment to an 'overpopulation problem'" (Lopez 1993, 301). The United States government's usage of "underdevelopment" as synonymous with "overpopulation" underlines the exploitative relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. It desired control of Puerto Rico's population for its economic benefit. On another side of this struggle, the Catholic Church opposed birth control and sterilization efforts on the island, spreading discourse equating sterilization to federal genocide. The opposition to birth control by both the Nationalist Party and Catholic Church became a strong movement in Puerto Rico, aligning with the general population's political and/or religious beliefs.

Puerto Rican feminist politics around motherhood and birth control complicates the movement's connection to the Puerto Rican independence struggle. For Puerto Rican feminists, relying on the "mother" as a representation of the "nation" was not sustainable, and negatively affected women seeking bodily autonomy. The anti-sterilization account relied on the nostalgia promoted by members of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party for a "pre-U.S. intervention family, large and dominated by fathers and husbands" (Briggs 1998, 32). Therefore, Puerto Rican feminist activism has critiqued and complicated the Nationalist Party's maternalist vision of womanhood, advocating for bodily autonomy as well as Puerto Rican independence. Part of the complication lies in the 1937 bill which legalized sterilization but also included the legalization of birth control. Although the introduction of "la operación," the sterilization process aligned with the United States' desire to control the Puerto Rican population, women also sought to control their reproductive options. In support of the 1937 bill, "independentista Carmen Rivera de Alvarado allowed herself to be arrested in order to test the bill's standing under federal law" (Briggs 1998, 31) However, Puerto Rican feminists' complex relationship to reproductive

decisions and technologies has often been overshadowed by United States feminists who, in a desire to be in solidarity with Puerto Rican women, promoted the history of sterilization of Puerto Rican women as “an exemplary case study of how birth control could be used for capitalist social engineering with racist ends” (Briggs 1998, 31). These activists, discussing this issue in the 1970s alongside other instances where women of colors’ reproductive freedoms were contested and violated, ignored the role of Puerto Rican feminists who advocated for bodily autonomy. Rather than simply victims of the United States’ colonial project, they “negotiated far more complex relationships with the various nationalist ideologies, adopting their anticolonialism while refusing their pronatalism” (Briggs 1998, 30). The Puerto Rican feminists in this debate engaged with differential consciousness as they navigated the Nationalist Party and their own different politics around motherhood and reproductive rights as they tied to gender, race and class experiences.

As a woman leader within the Party, Lebrón asserted that the Nationalist Party’s vision of womanhood was not limiting but rather “dignified the Puerto Rican woman and gave her a lot of power” (Power 2017, 39). Lebrón’s accounts of Pedro Albizu Campos as “the first leader in the world to say that women and men have the exact same ability to struggle” (Power 2017, 39) not only underlines her admiration for Campos but also the Party’s underexplored connection to Third World feminism. While the Party’s reverence for women as mothers is read often as simply reproducing gender norms, the role of women as leaders such as Lebrón demonstrates a broader understanding of women’s political potential in the movement. Moreover, a review of the cultural roots of Puerto Rican society illuminates multifaceted understanding of women’s roles as logical as women’s leadership existed before and during colonization of the island.

Conclusion

Focusing on historical moments that shape Puerto Rican feminist ideologies uncover the challenges faced by women in the public sphere as political activists in relation to gender, class, race and nationality. Focusing on the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States government highlights the impact of colonization on Puerto Rican women's daily lives in Borinquen and in the continental United States. These moments can help us think about the ways that family, gender and motherhood will be negotiated by activists in the Third World Women's Alliance and the Vieques Women's Alliance. Both groups demonstrate an understanding of Puerto Rican feminist history in their references to important figures, such as Lolita Lebrón, and in their analysis of imperialism as co-constitutive to sexism, racism and classism. In response to gender roles and cultural expectations, The Third World Women's Alliance, based in New York, engages with Puerto Rican femininity differently than the Vieques Women's Alliance, based in Vieques. However, although influenced by political and historical climates, both groups understand motherhood as political, as a connection to community struggles. Additionally, there is a sensitivity to lived experiences to shape anti-imperialist feminist praxis, building upon early Puerto Rican feminists who responded to class, race, gender and nationality.

Chapter 2

Triple Jeopardy: Connecting Women of Color in the United States and Abroad

As the island's population was pushed to seek economic opportunities in the continental United States, migrant Puerto Rican women brought feminist traditions with them into these newer communities. Arriving primarily in New York, Florida, Massachusetts and New Jersey, they brought a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico as well as the importance of Puerto Rican women in the social sphere. Within feminist circles and Puerto Rican nationalist organizations, Puerto Rican women identified the United States as a continuing imperialist state. Understanding their positionality as living within "the belly of the beast," they contributed their lived anti-imperialist analysis to the development of the Third World Women's Alliance (TWWA). The TWWA had grown out of SNCC's Black Women's Caucus in 1970. The identification of the United States as the "beast," a perpetrator of imperialist violence, uncovered an urgently needed unity among communities of color in the United States and other countries. The Alliance wrote: "It is up to the Third World peoples living in the belly of the beast to destroy his ability to reproduce; we must kill it" ("Editorial" 1971, 16). The experience of survival within the "belly in the beast" while seeking its destruction suggests that TWWA embraced the oppositional differential consciousness described by Chela Sandoval. As a group of women of color, asserting that their duty is to "destroy his ability to reproduce," underscores the gravity of the situation since the last chapter discussed Puerto Rican women's relationship to reproductive justice. Through its periodical *Triple Jeopardy*, Puerto Rican women contributed to the development of anti-imperialist feminism by articulating theory and praxis of cross-racial and international solidarity work.

Triple Jeopardy frequently highlights the role of Puerto Rican women in the development of Third World feminism. In the first issue, *Triple Jeopardy* asserts that

the development of an anti-imperialist ideology led us to recognize the need for Third World solidarity. Although Asian, Black, Chicana, Native American and Puerto Rican sisters have certain differences, we began to see that we were all affected by the same general oppressions (“Women in the Struggle” 1971, 8).

The Alliance ties anti-imperialism to Third World feminism through their multicultural organization. They articulate a need for intersectionality, balancing the differences between women in different communities while “affected by the same general oppressions.” Puerto Rican women are specifically named in the quote among other cultural and racial groups, which highlights their significance in the organization as well as an emphasis on racial and cultural identification. As explored through *Triple Jeopardy*, Puerto Rican women brought their feminist consciousness and organizing to the United States in diaspora and played a significant role in the development of US Third World feminism, as characterized through transnational feminist anti-imperialist solidarity.

From Double to Triple Jeopardy: US Third World Feminism

TWWA’s origins were in Black feminist organizing. The formation of the Black Woman’s Caucus in 1969 within the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) brought together Black women activists seeking to simultaneously engage their experiences with gender and race-based oppression. The Caucus, fostered by Frances Beal, Mae Jackson and Gwendolyn Patton, grew out of frustration and dissatisfaction with the treatment of women and women’s issues within SNCC while maintaining a desire to address SNCC’s main concerns from a Black woman-centered perspective. Soon, the Caucus started to outgrow SNCC, transforming into an independent group in New York City called the Black Women’s Alliance. As a separate organization, the Black Women’s Alliance aligned itself with nationalist and Marxist leaning

ideologies while sustaining close political ties with SNCC (Farmer 2017). TWWA's origins as a Black woman-focused committee that formed out of a cross-gender Black radical organization points is a key reason why the Alliance was not limited to traditionally feminist issues. For example, the first issue showed solidarity with men of color in Attica State Prison, as well as an embrace of militaristic language and symbols that more closely aligned it with the Black Panther Party. From its start, the group sought to be a revolutionary group led by women of color.

The Black Women's Alliance transitioned to the Third World Women's Alliance, expanding its membership and ideology to a multicultural organization. This shift occurred particularly because of similarly-minded Puerto Rican women's desire to join the Alliance. In 1969, The Black Woman's Alliance was approached by New York City activists who wanted to join, citing that there was not a similar organization for Puerto Rican women in the city (Burnham 2005, 192). The Alliance faced an important political decision, as it was originally founded to focus on Black women's unique issues about whether to open up their organization to women who were not Black-identified. Beal, one of the founding members, recounts the debates around including Puerto Rican women in the organization: "we saw that they were trying to deal with both their national oppression of living within the United States and a kind of racial and class thing that was separate from just being a part of America as a whole, and then how does your gender fit in when you have this other overriding oppression" (Beal 2005, 39). Therefore, members of the Alliance decided to expand because "the two forms of oppression, while not precisely exactly the same— race versus, say, nationality— but the idea of the complexity of women's liberation in that context was fundamentally the same" (Beal 2005, 39). The discussion around race, class and nationality uncovers the limitations of the Alliance's ideology in dealing with the Puerto Rican women's experience. The language of "kind of racial and class thing"

conflicts with “race versus, say, nationality” as Beal unpacks their thought process around expanding the Alliance. Beal’s quotes do not acknowledge Puerto Rican women experiencing racism, as a racialized community in the United States, nor the experience of Afro-Puerto Rican women. When trying to address the differences between Third World women in the United States, labels such as nationality, race and culture can become inflated.

Notably, the shift in the organization from the Black Women’s Alliance to the Third World Women’s Alliance was accompanied by a change in their feminist analysis. The new analysis of “triple jeopardy” builds on the Alliance’s co-founder Frances Beal’s 1969 essay, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female.” She critiques the treatment of Black women under capitalism and ultimately argues that Black women faced a “double jeopardy”, sexism and racism, theorized as by-products of capitalism (Beal 1970, page #). However, triple jeopardy complicated the original argument. Instead of focusing on capitalism, it focuses on United States imperialism as upheld by and reproducing racism and sexism. The transition from “double” to “triple” jeopardy marks the influence of Puerto Rican women, who have historically identified the relationship between the United States and other territories, connecting their movement to larger struggles against imperialism. Building off of Puerto Rican feminist thought, activists additionally reconciled with their own positionality living on the continental United States

By 1970, the Alliance changed its name to the Third World Women’s Alliance, to reflect its evolving membership and political ideology. The name change allowed the organization to reach other women activists, connecting Third World women across living in the United States. In 1971, the Alliance began to expand to the Bay Area, with a high Asian American population. The same year, TWWA began publishing the periodical *Triple Jeopardy* out of its New York chapter. The inaugural issue’s cover introduces an ideology that identifies with the shared global

struggles against imperialism, racism, and sexism. It asserts the connection between Black, Puerto Rican and Asian women in the United States not only through their articles but also through *Triple Jeopardy's* cover images. The imagery on the covers of *Triple Jeopardy* reinforces the Alliance's idea of cross-racial solidarity in addition to a gendered analysis of political struggles, such as incarceration, that were not typically associated with gender. The first cover presents viewers with a drawing of three women, Latina, Asian and Black, standing in a formation inside a circle (Image 2). The three women are identifiable as representing these three groups by their respective shading, hair styles, facial features, and dress. This representation does not engage with the embodied variation across and within each community and reflects an attempt to symbolize each group without such nuances. Above the figures, the words "Racism, Imperialism, Sexism," wrap around the circle. The three words clearly point to the reasoning behind the periodical's title, *Triple Jeopardy*: the triple oppression and exploitation of women of color in the United States and internationally. Three is repeated throughout the cover from the title *Triple Jeopardy* to the three terms: racism, imperialism, sexism arching above the three women in the of the circle and in the organization's name itself. The number three reinforces how the Alliance believes that all three modes of oppression, racism, imperialism, and sexism, must be dismantled to liberate all Third World people. The trios could also be a reconstruction of the Christian trinity's unification, as imperialism, racism and sexism are distinct but uphold each other. Similarly, while all three women are identifiably racially different as Asian, Black and Latina, all face imperialism, racism and sexism, uniting them against these modes of oppression. Therefore, the prominence of number three works both visually and linguistically to emphasize their mission to liberate all Third World women and their commitment to cross-racial solidarity.

The drawing in the center of the cover underscores the Third World Women Alliance's priorities in its representation to be understood as a militant multiracial feminist group. In a circle in the center, three women share a gaze directly at the viewer, making them appear serious while their eyes and tilted mouths point to a sense of pride. Drawn lines come out from behind them, highlighting their strength and power. They are standing in a clear formation, with the Asian woman in the front with a rifle and the other two women side by side behind her, creating a militaristic presence. Despite standing in a militaristic formation, they are wearing contemporary clothing, as another symbol of a multiracial organization. The Black woman on the right wears a stylized African print on her shirt, and her hair is in an afro, both symbols of the Black nationalist movement of the time. The Latina on the left wears a blouse and her hair is styled in big curls. The Asian woman in the middle, holding the rifle, has straight hair and wears a Mandarin collar dress, alluding to her claiming an Eastern cultural heritage. As mentioned earlier, the Chamorro, Filipino and Puerto Rican communities hold a shared history as exploited United States territories acquired through the Spanish-American War in the late 1800s. The first issue's cover image alludes to possible alliance-building between these three groups through the Third World Women's Alliance.

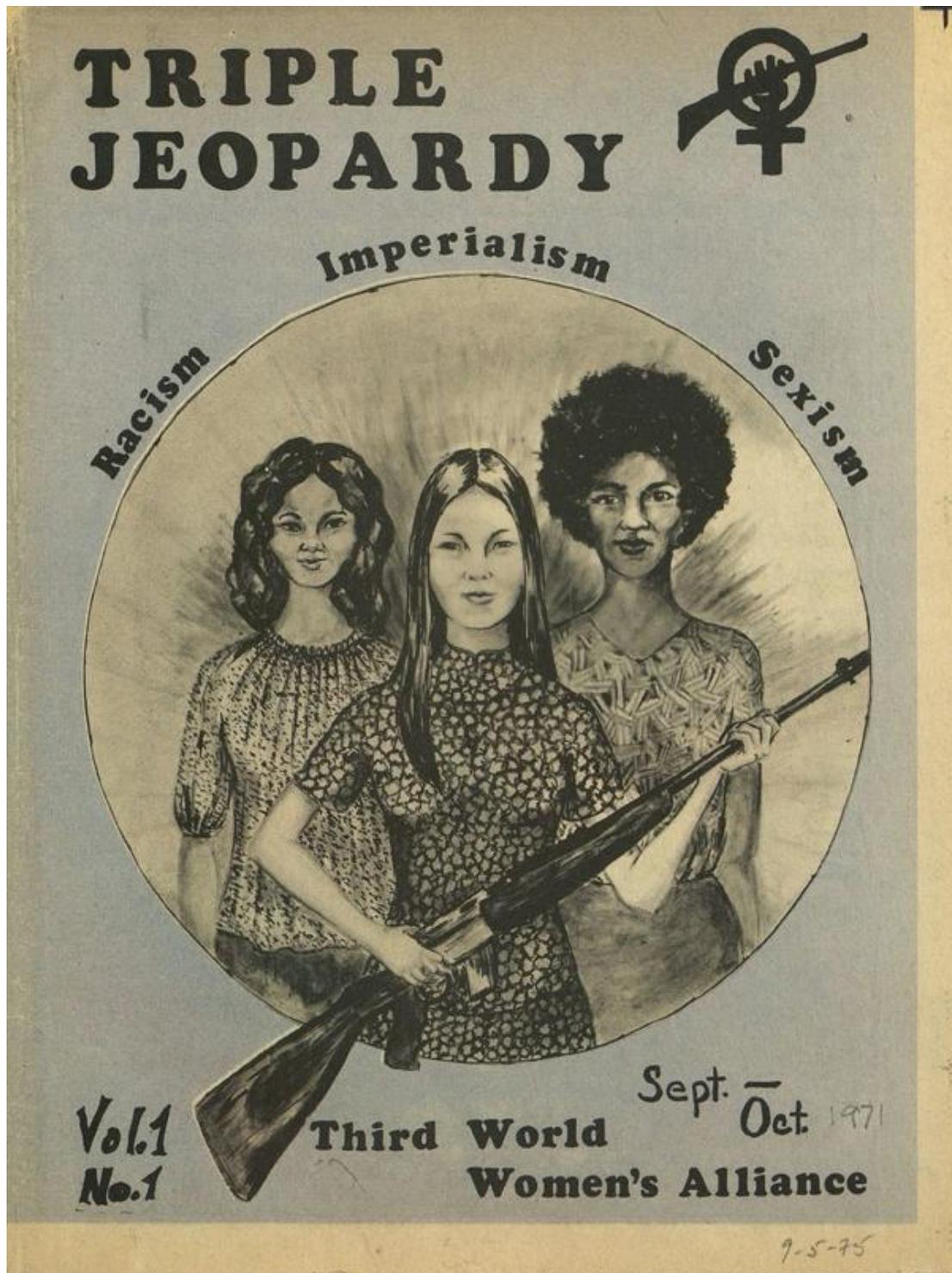


Image 2: *Triple Jeopardy* 1, no. 1 (September-October 1971).

Within this issue of *Triple Jeopardy*, the members of TWWA show their historical consciousness, understanding that “the Third World woman has played in the on-going struggle against racism and exploitation,” (“Editorial” 1971, 16). They continue by underscoring the different social roles that Third World women, and their real life understandings of racism, sexism and classism: “As mother, wife, and worker, she has witnessed the frustration and anguish of the men, women and children living in her community” (“Editorial” 1971, 16). They connect these three roles, mother, wife and worker, to her role as “revolutionary, she will take an active part in changing this reality” (Editorial” 1971, 16). While different racial and cultural groups are represented on the cover, they are unified through this language along with the visual representations. This statement politicizes motherhood, connecting it to engaging with community struggles. By equating “mother” and “wife” to the same political status as “worker” additionally underscores their approach to socialism. Similar to Mariana Bracetti and Lolita Lebrón, the TWWA values Third World women’s ability to engage with feminist activism across a range of social roles and identities. In this connection, TWWA asserts that to be a Third World woman is inherently revolutionary, due to her place in history in social struggles and movements.

While TWWA asserts that Third World women, including those living in the United States, hold an important role in the revolution, the periodical also upholds radical orientalism as the imagery and content hails Vietnamese women as revolutionary role models. The rifle is in the hands of the Asian women, stresses the perspective of the organization and others at the time of Vietnamese women guerilla fighters as a revolutionary role model, to the point of radical orientalism (Tzu-Chun Wu 2013). In the circle, the three women could be interpreted as at attention, ready for orders. However, they are not dressed in soldiers' uniforms but instead in contemporary dress specific to their respective cultures. The woman in the front wears a dress

with a mandarin collar, most likely an áo dài, a traditional Vietnamese tunic traditionally worn by women (Nguyen). The woman holds a rifle in both of her hands, alluding to the types of guns being used by the Vietnam guerilla soldiers. The rifle's butt breaks the frame of the circle, drawing attention to it. The drawing of the Asian woman in the middle is based off of one of the most reproduced images: the Vietnamese woman guerilla soldier holding a rifle. The Vietnam War became an important topic of feminist dialogue not only due to the movement's involvement with peace demonstrations but also because of the inclusion of women within the struggle. Therefore, the image of an Asian woman holding a gun on the cover of *Triple Jeopardy* was not out of the ordinary in United States feminist circles. However, in this image, she is not wearing a military uniform, possibly to present her as an American woman or to emphasize her cultural pride through traditional dress. The image on the first cover is simultaneously stereotypical while hailing Asian militants' embrace of women fighters, much like the Puerto Rican Nationalists and Lolita Lebron decades earlier.

Dedicated to explaining the history of the purpose of TWWA and reporting on relevant local, national and international news, *Triple Jeopardy* opens with a demand for revolution at Attica State Prison, a men's prison known for racist and violent practices. Through the demand for United States prison abolition, they demonstrated their political alignment with other liberation movements of the 1970s such as the Black Panthers and the Young Lords. They believed that that women's liberation cannot be limited to demands based on sex and gender oppression. Rather they embrace solidarity with men of color at Attica State Prison: "we are mourning the deaths of comrades who were swallowed up within the deepest pits of oppression in capitalist amerikkka ... prison" ("Now Attica!!!" 1971, 2), noting their shared racial struggle: "that institution (Attica), where 85% of the prisoners are Puerto Rican and Black" ("Now

Attica!!!” 1971, 2). Not only did the Alliance identify the need for an intersectional analysis, but also recognized the necessity of solidarity among people of color in the United States and globally, identifying imperialism as their shared source of oppression. Within this analysis, they identified as Third World women living within the United States to recognize local connections to international problems, shown through their support for prison abolition.

Their political approach was explicit in its connecting systems of oppression. As they explain in the first issue of *Triple Jeopardy*: “As a socialist organization, the Third World Women's Alliance recognizes the fact that our primary fight at this stage is the overthrow of imperialism. Nevertheless, out of imperialism has grown two destructive forces which we, as Third World women must contend with - racism and male chauvinism” (“Editorial” 1971, 16). In this sense, “imperialism” refers to both the exploitation of Third World nations as well as Third World people within first world countries, such as Indigenous nations in the United States. At the same time, they align themselves with socialism through a unique standpoint. They focus on socialism through an anti-imperialist light, since “it is economically profitable to exploit and suppress Third World women” specifically. Third world women “represent a surplus labor supply, a cheap labor supply, a cheap labor supply (in our homes)” (“Women in the Struggle” 1971, 8). Within this analysis, they do not align themselves with mainstream socialist movements, but rather recognize a particular “triple exploitation” that only Third World women resist that cannot be subsumed under a singular focus on class. Racism and sexism serve imperialism as tools utilized to protect the elite: “The rulers of this society would like to keep us thinking that the problem is only one of racism or that men are inherently the enemy, thus diverting our attention from the economic basis of our oppression” (“Women in the Struggle” 1971, 8). While Puerto Rican figures like Luisa Capetillo had embraced labor organizing, by the

1970s, United States unions were popularly represented as hubs of white men's resistance to women workers and workers of color. Therefore, the TWWA's centering of Third World women is logical as a response to the lack of focus on Third World women within other contemporary popular movements.

Puerto Rican Women and TWWA

Frequently, *Triple Jeopardy* explores the colonial relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, as well as the experience of Puerto Rican women in New York. Puerto Rico is mentioned in all 15 of the issues studied for this thesis (1971-1975), even if in short. One prominent theme explored is Puerto Rican women's place in revolutionary history. While exploring Puerto Rican women as revolutionaries, the periodical balances respectability politics in white American society as well as cultural stereotypes and expectations. Living in the continental United States, Puerto Rican communities faced racist discrimination and stereotypes. Respectability politics served as a response to harmful racial stereotypes as it "emphasized reform of individual attitudes of behavior both as a goal in itself and as a strategy for reform of the entire system of American race relations" (Higginbotham 1993, 187) and additionally "equated public behavior with individual self respect" (Higginbotham 1993, 14). Respectability politics negotiated the stereotypes perpetuated by white American society. The Third World Women's Alliance adhered to a different form of self-expression as they highlighted many of the Puerto Rican women revolutionaries who rebelled against gendered and racialized stereotypes. Machismo as a Puerto Rican cultural norm is critiqued throughout the periodical as well. The Third World Women's Alliance created a space to be able to critique one's cultural norms without the fear of white women feeling validated in racist statements. The ability to balance

Puerto Rican revolutionary history and Spanish colonial influence is explored throughout *Triple Jeopardy* through images and articles.

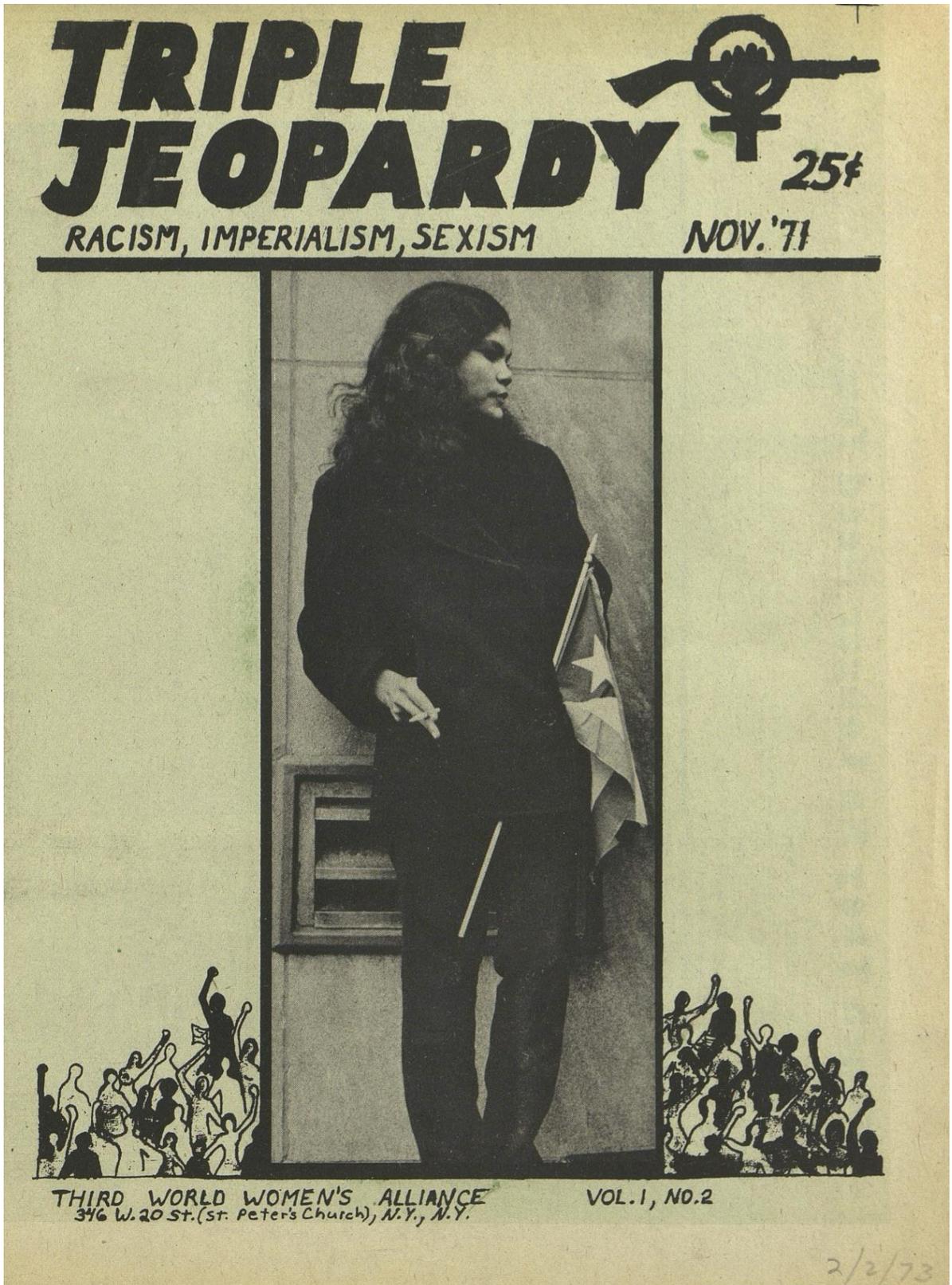


Image 3: *Triple Jeopardy* 1, no. 2 (November 1971).

The second issue of *Triple Jeopardy*, published in November 1971, features a Puerto Rican woman in New York (Image 3). Her presence reflects the prominence of Puerto Rican women within the organization. The cover is a photograph of a woman leaning against a wall, holding the Puerto Rican flag and smoking a cigarette. She does not look at the camera and is dressed in a black coat with black pants. Her attire blends together in the black and white image, as the Puerto Rican flag stands out against her clothing. As an important and well-known symbol of the Puerto Rican independence movement, holding the Puerto Rican flag characterizes the woman as a proud Puerto Rican, rather than as an ambiguously racialized figure. The photograph paints Puerto Rican women in a revolutionary light, rebelling against social norms and stereotypes by wearing men's fit clothing and smoking a cigarette alone in the city.

The woman on the cover of the second issue subtly rejects the traditional expectation of a Puerto Rican woman upheld by machismo. The societal expectations discussed in the article titled "Machismo" within the issue focus on Puerto Rican women's respectability. The article, by an anonymous author, defines machismo as ideology that supports "a man who puts himself at the head of everything without considering the woman" ("Machismo" 1971, 5). The article discusses the role of the Catholic Church and the family unit in the oppression of Puerto Rican women. Interpretations of Church teachings propose double standards in Puerto Rican culture such as the expectation of women to remain a virgin until marriage while men are allowed to, if not expected to, have sex with multiple women before marriage without consequence. Church teachings exist alongside machismo: "[Puerto Rican women] are always reminded that they are supposed to be like the Virgin Mary. A good woman is one that does not drink, curse, or do anything that will give her a bad reputation" ("Machismo" 1971, 5). This cover image differs from the first because the woman is not standing in an explicitly revolutionary pose but rather,

she rejects Puerto Rican machismo, which requires the viewer to have an understanding of these expectations. By smoking a cigarette, she is rejecting the idea that women cannot smoke along with other acts like drinking or cursing if she is to be considered “virtuous.” Additionally, she stands alone although “the [Puerto Rican] woman was not allowed to go out by herself” (“Machismo” 1971, 5). To stand alone on a street corner rejects upholding the Virgin Mary archetype, as the pure and obedient woman. However, on the opposite end of the binary exists the hypersexualization of the Puerto Rican woman, addressed in the article. Her clothing, then, plays another role in this image as she wears loose-fitting clothing that modestly covers her body. The woman in the cover image, then, embodies the struggle of Puerto Rican woman to navigate stereotypes surrounding race, gender and class.

A critique of “machismo” by Puerto Rican women while also advocating for Puerto Rican activism aligns with other women of color feminist theory coming out at the time. In *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), Puerto Rican Jewish feminist Aurora Levins Morales discusses the white critique of machismo versus the experience of a Latina feminist in a predominantly white circle. Levins Morales addresses other Latina women, writing “you have forced me into a room full of Anglo women who nod sympathetically and say: ‘Latin men are soooo much worse than Anglo men... Why the last time I was in Mexico, you couldn’t walk down the streets without some guy...’” (Levins Morales 1981, 56). She expresses how in that moment, she feels that she cannot express her frustration with other women in order to not “betray you in the face of their racism, I betray myself, and in the end, you, by not saying: It’s not the men who exile me... it’s the women. I don’t trust the women” (Aurora Levins Morales 1981, 56). In predominantly white feminist spaces, Levins Morales feels that she cannot have a nuanced conversation on the Latinx community without racist comments from white women. Since *Triple*

Jeopardy is published for a Third World women audience by Third World women, TWWA is able to publish critiques of machismo without contributing to racist stereotypes within predominantly white feminist circles.

Davis and Lebrón: Connecting Feminist Histories

The Third World Women's Alliance relies on revolutionary imagery not only to communicate their contemporary understandings of anti-imperialist feminism, but also to celebrate important feminist histories and figures. The cover of the fourth issue of *Triple Jeopardy* features a drawing of Angela Y. Davis and Lolita Lebrón for International Women's Day (Image 4). Angela Y. Davis, a Black woman activist, became emblematic of incarceration struggles as an advocate for abolition and other causes as well as a feminist scholar. Lolita Lebrón holds a particular meaning for Puerto Rican feminism, as a leader in the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party (explored in Chapter 1). Artistic renderings of iconic images of Davis and Lebrón take up most of the page, with each woman labeled for clarity. Drawn behind them both are prison bars to mark them as political prisoners. The image of Angela Davis is most likely inspired by a photo of Davis at a press conference in New York City in 1969 by F. Joseph Crawford. His image was reproduced by the New York Committee to Free Angela Davis as well as other abolitionist groups with slight alterations (Marks 2013). Meanwhile, the image of Lolita Lebrón is a rendition of the 1954 image of Lebrón lined up with other Puerto Rican nationalists after being arrested for open-firing on Congress for Puerto Rican liberation. Highlighting Lebrón for International Women's Day recognizes the importance of Puerto Rican history in TWWA activism, and recognizes the intersection between the Puerto Rican independence movement and Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminist consciousness.



Image 4: *Triple Jeopardy* 1, no. 4 (February-March 1972).

The cover presents a connection between Third World struggles, the Black liberation struggle and Puerto Rican nationalism through the dual image of Davis and Lebrón. As the Alliance celebrated International Women's Day, they decided to "honor two of our sisters who are presently incarcerated in amerikkka's prisons: Angela Davis and Lolita LeBron" ("International Women's Day" 1972, 2). Lebrón's crime is described as "taking up arms against the U.S. colonial domination of her country (Puerto Rico)" ("International Women's Day" 1972, 2). Coverage of Lebrón expands on the gendered analysis of incarceration and political prisoners. Lebrón led a group of Puerto Rican nationalists who immigrated to New York City, as they were "forced out of Puerto Rico by the United States migration politics" ("Lolita Lebrón" 1972, 5), to open fire on the United States House of Representatives chamber. Through her readiness to sacrifice herself for the movement, her activism is connected to both Puerto Rico's ongoing struggle against imperialism alongside other Third World women such as the Vietnamese women guerilla fighters. Additionally, within the article, Lolita is compared to Mariana Bracetti, remembered in Chapter 1 for embroidering the Lares flag, also recognized as the revolutionary Puerto Rican woman who helped organize and finance the Lares Revolt of 1868 against Spanish colonial rule. Through *Triple Jeopardy's* account, Lolita Lebrón becomes part of the revolutionary Third World woman lineage.

The Puerto Rican nationalist movement becomes an example for women's inclusion in United States liberation movements, an ongoing theme throughout *Triple Jeopardy*. In comparison to United States movements, "these revolutionary sisters," referencing Bracetti and Lebrón, "were seen by men as 'compañeras del Lucha' (comrades of the struggle)" ("Lolita Lebrón" 1972, 5). Navigating nuances in Puerto Rican history and culture, TWWA asserts that the Puerto Rican independence movement values women's participation while critiquing

machismo in a past issue. Lebrón's leadership in the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party defines her as "what the Puerto Rican independence movement would generally conceive of as a 'Liberated woman,' one who functions politically" ("Lolita Lebrón" 1972, 5). Since a "liberated woman" is one who functions politically according to the Puerto Rican independence movement, it recognizes the Puerto Rican independence movement as valuing women in the political sphere. Lebrón's importance as a woman activist is based on her willingness to die for Puerto Rican independence and therefore "was called by Puerto Ricans as 'una Hembra' (a complete woman)" ("Lolita Lebrón" 1972, 5). Negotiating Lebrón's role in the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party with the previous discussion on respectability politics and machismo complicates the idea of "una Hembra" and who is defined as a "liberated woman" in Puerto Rican communities while other women are defined as unruly and require protection. Lebrón and Davis, as hailed revolutionaries in their respective communities, are meant to serve as an example to the reader, as the article ends with a call to action in honor of International Women's Day. The placement of both Davis and Lebrón on the cover of the fourth issue continues to emphasize the connection between Third World women in their struggle against United States imperialism.

The cover presents a gendered analysis of incarceration, as TWWA discusses Lebrón's incarceration in the United States. TWWA connects incarceration to racism, imperialism and sexism as Lebrón was confined to "St. Elizabeth's mental hospital in Washington, D.C. in 1954, because they felt that this gallant woman was mad to struggle for national independence" ("Lolita Lebrón" 1972, 5). Equating a politically active woman to being mentally unstable paints a different picture of Lebrón, considered a complete woman by Puerto Rican culture. TWWA reclaims the "mad" label as the driving force of the movement: "Well, if Lolita is mad, so is Angela Davis, so was Mariana Bracetti, and so are freedom fighters all over the world, for it is

this kind of madness which will bring about the destruction of all the evils which plague our peoples” (“Lolita Lebrón” 1972, 5). Madness functions as a racialized and gendered term in the United States, as it “focuses for the projection of Western culture’s anxieties” and is a “product of the mythologizing of both the black and the mad” (Gilman 1985, 148). In the United States, Lebrón is racialized as a light-skinned Puerto Rican woman. Therefore, Lebrón represents a revolutionary figure as her resistance to United States imperialism draws on Western culture’s anxieties. Even though Lebrón is racialized differently than Davis, their experiences as incarcerated Third World women unites them according to *Triple Jeopardy*. TWWA’s intersectional analysis of incarceration and its connection to “madness” aligns with the idea that Third World women are inherently revolutionaries.

Conclusion

The Third World Women’s Alliance contributed to anti-imperialist feminism in the United States through publishing *Triple Jeopardy* and engaging with Third World feminism, creating activist spaces for women of color. However, the Alliance had some internal problems, such as homophobic attitudes towards queer members, that led many members to leave. By 1977, the New York chapter closed and the Bay Area chapter transformed, forming committees to work on external organizing. In response to a changing political climate, the Alliance changed its name to the Alliance Against Women’s Oppression, to let in white members in 1981. These changes allude to possible limitations in the TWWA’s organizing methods as they focused on a united Third World feminism. The Alliance effectively contributed to developing cross-racial and multicultural alliances in the United States and transnationally through their anti-imperialist analysis, and demonstrate Puerto Rican women’s contributions to Third World feminist organizing.

Chapter 3

“Vieques Is Our Home!”: The Role of Feminist Activists and Transnational Solidarity in Demilitarizing Vieques



Image 5: Still from “48 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequesenses.” YouTube Video. February 26, 2019. https://youtu.be/dd15epN_Dhg.

As Puerto Rican women in New York struggled against imperialism within “the belly of the beast,” the residents of Vieques, an island off the East coast of Puerto Rico, have been in constant struggle against a literal militarized manifestation of the “beast.” The United States Navy began occupying two-thirds of the island in 1941. With bases situated in the center of the island, the occupation disrupted daily life, using the land for military exercises in the name of United States’ national security. The naval bases proved dangerous to civilian workers, the environment, and nearby communities. In response to the tragic civilian death of David Sanes

Rodriguez, caused by naval bombing practice, on April 19, 1999, Judith Conde, Gladys Rivera Cintrón, and Miriam Sobá founded the Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses (Vieques Women's Alliance). Judith Conde functioned as the spokesperson for the Vieques Women's Alliance, as the most documented member of the Alliance. The still from the recorded 2004 interview (Image 5) demonstrates a different physical embodiment and dress than the images of Lolita Lebrón (Image 1 and Image 6). The interview took on a conversational style, and her body language and clothing show her comfort in talking about her experiences with the Alliance. She represents the ability for different types of women, in particular Afro-Puerto Rican women, to participate in Puerto Rican feminist movements.

The Vieques Women's Alliance functions as a provocative case study of anti-imperialist feminism in Puerto Rico, as the Alliance was the first women-led and women-focused organization within the movement to demilitarize the island of Vieques. Made up of a diverse group of Vieques women they organized civil disobedience protests against the military base, resulting in a powerful victory when the United States Navy left the island in 2003. Leading large scale protests, their woman-centered framework asserted that, as women, "Vieques es nuestra casa y por eso la defendemos" (Vieques is our home so we will defend it) (Sobá 2000). They publicly drew upon the role of women as caretakers in the domestic sphere, *la casa*. The Vieques Women's Alliance's ability to frame the entire island of Vieques as their "home" and therefore under their realm of influence, not only validated the role of women's voices in resistance but was also extremely effective and subversive against the United States military. In contrast to the effort of TWWA writers to publicly both claim and challenge how domestic ideas of womanhood mattered in their lives and politics, the Alliance successfully framed Vieques as a domestic issue in order to connect Puerto Rican and Vieques pride with women's leadership. By

responding to and embracing Vieques women's role as caretakers as activism, the movement also gained transnational support, connecting their local movement to other anti-imperialist women's groups internationally.

The Vieques Women's Alliance engaged in contemporary popular Caribbean feminist practices as they organized ordinary women concerned about their community. They first gathered women in Vieques through an open meeting, called an *encuentro* in the tradition of feminist consciousness raising in Latin America that emerged in 1981 ("The first Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encuentro"). *Encuentros* allow women to share lived experiences, finding commonalities and differences, in an accessible setting to raise feminist consciousness around systemic oppression. The meeting consisted of community members as Conde noted:

...Hay algunas que eran maestras, comerciantes, amas de casa, se habían visto en el correo, en el supermercado, en la farmacia, pero no necesariamente se conocían por su nombre" (There are some that are teachers, merchants, housewives, they had seen each other in the post office, the supermarket but did not necessarily know each other by name) ("48 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequesenses" 2019).

Conde's point highlights lived experiences and knowledge of Caribbean women. Caribbean feminist politics finds itself at the intersection of "the post-Independence discourse which has been grappling with the past and present experiences of colonialism and neo-colonialism" (Baksh-Soodeen 82, 1998) and international feminist discourses. An interview with Magaly Pineda (Margaret Randall 1995), a Dominican feminist, describes Caribbean popular feminism as having the "ability to penetrate so many different areas and acquaint many different types of women with our ideas" (Pineda 1995, 114) partially because it "includes the perspectives of race and class" (Baksh-Soodeen 1998, 82). Pineda's observations found that Caribbean housewives and working-class women, who typically did not organize as feminists, were not disinterested in feminism or lacked a feminist consciousness but rather were not interested in a type of feminism

that did not respond to socioeconomic issues faced by both men and women. By responding to each context's "particular feminist discourse," this form of feminism becomes popularized and intersectional in nature, developing a theory in the flesh. The Alliance thus engages with popular feminism in the Vieques context, in which, like other Caribbean popular feminisms, "theory and practice are inextricably linked" (Randall 1995, 83). As they contested a military occupation, Vieques' activists highlighted the potential of Caribbean popular feminism to connect with anti-imperialist politics.

The Vieques Women's Alliance took advantage of transnational feminist networks, developed in the twentieth century, in the post-Cold War context. In the post-Cold War context, the first, second and Third World hierarchy did not feel as accurate and the language was problematized. Responding to this shift, Third World feminism became more accurately understood as anti-imperialist feminism, recognizing the ongoing threat of United States militarism and capitalist exploitation. Therefore, the Vieques Women's Alliance, when organizing between 1999 and 2003, did not specifically use the terms "Third World women" or "Third World feminism" but took advantage of pre-existing Third World feminist networks, such as The International Women's Network Against Militarism and Radio Feminista, to spread information along with inviting activists to protest in Vieques.

"Fuera La Marina de Vieques": The Presence of the U.S. Navy on Vieques

In 1939, the Navy began to use Culebra, an island near Vieques for military exercises. Then, in 1941 as the United States joined the Allies in World War II, the Navy took over two thirds of the small island of Vieques for more bombing practices. Since the U.S. Navy began occupying Culebra and Vieques, the islands' populations engaged in local resistance to their presence, with periods of organized activity. In the 1970s, fishermen organized anti-military

protests against the Navy on both Culebra and Vieques (Berman Santana 2002, 42). Fish populations were negatively affected by the bombing and directly threatened their livelihoods. Organizing around fishing was relatively successful in mobilizing the community due to a longstanding relationship between Vieques residents and the fishing economy (Berman Santana 2002, 39). Therefore, their protests were focused on the economic and political implications of the Navy's presence on the subsistence of local populations. Although men led the movement, the fishermen's wives also organized a committee called the Comité de Esposas de Pescadores "because the Navy destroyed our spouses' art of fishing, deprived us of food in the home and the ability to cover the necessities" (Lee 2001, 82). The protests ultimately forced the Navy out of Culebra but not Vieques, as a compromise to protestors. After losing Culebra as bombing practice, the Navy escalated their use of Vieques (Berman Santana 2002, 41).

After the fishermen protests of the 1970s, the demilitarization of Vieques continued to be a part of Puerto Rican nationalist politics. On May 28, 1980, Lolita Lebrón called for solidarity in the struggle against "North American imperialism" in a speech in San Francisco addressing the National Committee Against Repression, the New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence along with other similar organizations. Her speech marks rising tensions between Puerto Rican activists and the United States Navy occupation of Vieques. She drew attention to Angel Rodriguez Cristobal, a member of the Puerto Rican independence movement who "dedicated his life to our cause," died suspiciously as a political prisoner in Tallahassee, Florida in 1979. Rodriguez Cristobal, a Central Committee member of the Socialist League, had been incarcerated for trespassing on Navy property during a Vieques protest ("Puerto Ricans Vow to Avenge Death in U.S. Prison" 1979, 33). In response to the imperialist violence that Lebrón witnessed in Puerto Rico, she calls on a peaceful message: "Puerto Rico, by the will of God,

desires to remove violence and terror from its territory and from the planet earth” (Lebrón 1980, 1). Lebrón, who risked her life for Puerto Rico’s freedom in 1954, calls for the end of violence. Her own embrace of anti-violence marked a shift in the political and historical context of the late twentieth century. Her message connects to the development of a feminist definition of peace that includes the end of United States imperialist violence. This perspective was promoted and explored by the Vieques Women’s Alliance alongside figures like Lebrón at the turn of the twenty first century.

As expressed through the fishermen’s protests and Lebrón’s speech, activism around Vieques was fundamentally about human rights and the environment. However, it was specifically politicized in the Puerto Rican context as a peace that must include an end to the exploitative relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. There were harsh economic implications of the U.S. Navy’s presence on Vieques as well as political and social considerations. When the base was first built in 1941, the promise of jobs through its construction quelled most local opposition. Originally, the base on Vieques was meant to shelter the British fleet, before the United States was involved in World War II. However, in 1943 it became clear that the British Navy would not need the base, halting its construction and leaving the Vieques population without land and jobs (Berman Santana 2002, 40). This fundamental shift in how residents’ lived continued as the US Navy took over the military position. Therefore, at the heart of this ongoing struggle was the economic strain on the general Vieques population as the Navy base took over land and damaged the surrounding environment on land and sea. The environment had previously been the source of the island’s economy. The lived experiences of the Vieques population, specifically a gendered perspective, become the centerpiece of the

Vieques Women's Alliance's organizing as they sought to articulate and sustain a challenge to the occupation that had not previously been successful.

Defining Vieques Feminism

On April 19, 1999, two errant 500 pound bombs dropped by the United States Navy during training landed 100 years away from David Sanes Rodriguez, killing him while he was on duty as a civilian security guard for the United States naval base (The Associated Press 1999). In response to this tragedy, Judith Conde, Gladys Rivera and Miriam Sobá founded the Vieques Women's Alliance. The Alliance prioritized women's leadership and lived experiences in the movement to demilitarize Vieques. Best described as popular anti-imperialist feminism, their feminist praxis pulled on the legacy of intersectional organizing by Puerto Rican women, connecting local realities to larger global struggles. Their work was pursued within a global feminist landscape that had seen marked changes since the 1970s as women staked claims to the right to resist gender-based violence and women of color refused to be marginalized by their white feminist counterparts. Feminist organizing by the Alliance directly responded to cultural expectations of womanhood while utilizing feminine associations with domesticity and peace against the masculine and violent United States military. Additionally, their movement was not limited to a gender analysis. Like their Puerto Rican predecessors, they understood sexism's connection to classism, racism and as constructed co-constitutively with imperialism. Organizing as the caretakers of Vieques, the leadership and membership of the Alliance consisted of women who would not initially describe themselves as feminist activists but rather as concerned community members. Their approach to Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism allowed room for flexibility in organizing as women which created a stronger and successful movement to demilitarize Vieques.

Alliance expanded assumptions about women's limited place within a tightly bound domestic sphere, and therefore the realm of women's influence, to the entire island by organizing as caretakers of Vieques. They explained their organizing as women thusly: "Vieques is our house. Women are heads of the household. Women care for people and society" (Cockburn 2007, 76). As the Alliance organized as *amas de casa* (housewives), they followed in the tradition of other women-led Latin American movements which equated women's issues with community issues. Identifying Puerto Rican women's organizing as caretakers in the realm of "activist mothering" responds to racial and cultural specificity, better reflecting the impact of the Alliance's framework. Mothering cannot be confined to the white, heterosexual nuclear family but rather women's issues are connected to larger community issues (Naples 1998, 4). This approach also made it possible to be inclusive beyond *amas de casa* as women without children may also identify with activist mothering, describing their activism "on behalf of their communities as a form of community caretaking" (Naples 1998, 3). Activist mothering is a part of the Latin American feminist legacy, for example witnessed through the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and Domitila Barrios de Chungara, the wife of a Bolivian miner. Vieques women in the Alliance felt that they endured a specific gendered burden from the occupation, as Miriam Sobá explained in an interview: "we see and deal with the emotional effects, the psychological and social dimension, not only the political" (Suárez Toro 1999a). Sobá underscores the need for specifically feminist organizing on Vieques by connecting women's perspectives to not only political issues but also social and health issues, engaging in community caretaking. Although the Vieques Women's Alliance does not specifically organize as mothers, by identifying as community caretakers, they engage in the feminist legacy of activist mothering.

Central to the Alliance's activism was challenging the United States military. The threat of the military as a force of white United States nationalism and the ongoing colonial occupation of Puerto Rico was a constant issue for their community. As a small island within a colony, Vieques resistance efforts sought to navigate their threat to the United States' idea of progress in its nationalist and imperialist agenda to have maritime dominance in the Caribbean. In the post-Cold War context, the identification of imperialism as the perpetuation of social oppression developed into an analysis of militarism as a toxic masculine force. Out of Third World feminist theory, post-Cold War anti-imperialist theory identified that sexism, misogyny, homophobia, classism and racism justified colonialism and are sustained through United States imperialism. Theoretically, the United States military was examined as the "imperial (white) masculine self in the project of Western colonialism" (Mohanty 1991, 16). Practically, this is manifested in the white male soldier in United States military bases globally. In Vieques, military personnel "engaged in sexual assaults on women and children and drunken brawls with local men," not facing any criminal charges (Berman Santana 2002, 41). This history highlights the feminist definition of peace "that leads to the reduction of all forms of violence in society and moves toward the 'ideal of how society should be'" (Bunch 1990, 77), with an emphasis on eliminating gender based violence. According to the Alliance, peace is "the right to live and develop fully" (Suárez Toro 1999a). The Alliance's focus on peace and domesticity as a means of countering US imperialism is a different strategy than the women of the Third World Women's Alliance who used militaristic language in organizing. Their approaches arguably did not limit their anti-imperialist analyses but rather responded to the political climate of their times, connecting their local struggles to broader liberationist movements.

Identifying the United States military as “masculine,” the Vieques Women’s Alliance organized “feminine” forms of resistance. They organized civil disobedience protests at the Vieques naval bases, continuing the approach that had been used previously by activists such as the fishermen and their supporters. After the death of David Sanes Rodriguez, the Alliance began tying white ribbons to the fence of Fort Garcia, where Rodriguez worked:

Inicialmente había 15 cintitas locas, el viento le daba, y como que: "Ay, qué bonito, que idea tan, tan femenina, tan bonita, sí, bien delicada, un asunto bien delicado, bien de mujeres". Nosotros: "Pues sí, es bien de mujeres, queremos que sea bien de mujeres, porque precisamente lo que queremos es acercar a las mujeres al proceso. (Initially, there were 15 crazy little ribbons, the wind gave [the appearance], and like: ‘Oh, how beautiful, what an idea so, so feminine, so pretty, very delicate, a very delicate matter, [representative] of women.’ We [said]: ‘Well, yes, it is good for women, we want it to be good for women, because precisely what we want is to bring women closer to the process’) (“48 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses” 2019).

Conde connects the white ribbons with their organizing as women, describing the ribbons as “feminine, beautiful and very delicate,” and to her this act of tying white ribbons to the fence of Fort Garcia fits the Alliance’s caretaker framework. The Alliance also held weekly peace vigils at the wall. As more supporters tied white ribbons to the fence, it became known as the peace wall, serving as a symbol of their occupation of naval bases. Peaceful organizing carried a subversive element as the Alliance asserted that “peace and justice are our weapons against violence and against war” (“A New Civil Disobedience Action” 2000). The white ribbons were the first act of civil disobedience by the Alliance, serving as a catalyst for forming over a dozen protest camps throughout the island, preventing the Navy from bombing (Thompson and Suárez Toro 2000b). On December 3, 1999, the US Presidential Commission on Vieques announced that the Navy would not leave for more than five years. In response, “the women transformed their vigil site and peace wall into a permanent camp of civil disobedience” (Thompson and Suárez Toro 2000b). Though organizing peacefully, protestors faced arrest and over two hundred people

were forcibly removed on May 4, 2000 (Thompson and Suárez Toro 2000a). More than 1,200 protesters were arrested over four years of resistance (Roman and Bureau 2003). By occupying naval bases on Vieques through protest camps, the Alliance heightened women's visibility as well as used "feminine" elements like the white ribbons against the "masculine" military.

As women activists, the Alliance faced scrutiny for existing outside of the expectations of women's respectability. Notably, they were called "lesbianas" (lesbians) for "haber dejado la familia" (abandoning their family) to struggle against the Navy ("48 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses" 2019). However, the backlash faced by the Alliance did not affect their organization style or framework. In an interview with Judith Conde, she remarks that the word lesbian was weaponized against them "en la calle" but that the word did not offend her ("48 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses" 2019). The lesbian-baiting was one of the many ways that community members and critics attempted to undermine their movement. Instead, the group benefited from having a cross-sexual identity membership. Olga Orraca, working with the Alliance, connected this struggle not only to her womanhood but also her sexual orientation, stating that lesbians, "are familiar with violations of basic human rights, we are familiar with injustice and... with violence" ("A New Civil Disobedience Action" 2000). Additionally, she connects the struggle to the Puerto Rican identity: "as Puerto Ricans we are familiar with oppression that endangers our health, our welfare and our quality of life" ("A New Civil Disobedience Action" 2000). Orraca's intersectional analysis shows the legacy of Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism, which intersects with Puerto Rican nationalism, as well as the organization's ability to respond to different lived experiences.

The elements of Vieques anti-imperialist feminism connected Vieques women and their broader community to expel the United States Navy from the island. Responding to the history

and contemporary realities of the occupation of Vieques, women identified shared experiences as well as navigating their differences to create a strong peace movement. The feminine elements, as women identifying as *amas de casa* tied delicate white ribbons to the Fort Garcia fence, targeted the masculine military, which perpetuated violence in the surrounding communities. The importance of the movement to demilitarize Vieques, connected to a long history of organizing, propelled the successful movement. Not only did the Vieques Women’s Alliance connect their local community but also uncovered a shared history between women in Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines, Hawai’i, and other territories occupied by the United States military through transnational feminist networks.

Decolonizing Solidarity: Transnational Solidarity



Image 6: International Women’s Network Against Militarism, East Asia US Puerto Rico Women’s Network Against Militarism, <http://iwnam.org/>.

The bright red handwritten words “Tu Victoria Es Nuestra Vieques” stand out in the above image, a photograph taken by the International Women’s Network Against Militarism, known as East Asia U.S. Puerto Rico Women’s Network Against Militarism at the time, as they

participated in solidarity work with the Vieques Women's Alliance (Image 6). The Spanish phrase, "Tu Victoria Es Nuestra Vieques" translates to "Your Victory is Ours Vieques," illuminating the importance of transnational feminist solidarity between women affected by United States militarism. Not only was transnational support important to the Alliance's movement's success, but Vieques's struggle against the U.S. Navy functioned as a symbol of hope for other movements against militarism. The banner hung between the group of women emphasizes the solidarity between anti-imperialist feminist movements through the paper chain of people in dresses and pants hand in hand next to the words "En Solidaridad Para Paz" (In solidarity for peace) in neat purple cursive. This photograph helps illustrate the particular practice of "decolonizing solidarity" promoted by the transnational and multicultural Network Against Militarism ("Decolonizing Solidarity" 2015). According to the Network, to decolonize solidarity means to work in five different languages, English, Spanish, Tagalog, Korean and Japanese, to accommodate different member organizations while "other practices of decolonizing solidarity involve sharing worldviews and building relationships among participants" ("Decolonizing Solidarity" 2015). In the photograph, six women, a majority of Asian descent, pose smiling with the banner hanging on a chain link fence outside of a Naval base on Vieques. The two Spanish phrases on the banner allude to their commitment to working in multiple languages while organizing with women from multiple countries. In other words, to decolonize solidarity is to avoid reinforcing social hierarchies in solidarity work. This definition builds upon the transnational solidarity developed by the Third World Women's Alliance. As TWWA built space for women of color within "the belly of the beast," decolonizing solidarity adds another dimension of positionality recognition regarding language and nationality, decentering the United States. The Vieques Women's Alliance's anti-imperialist feminist

analysis allowed for transnational connections, engaging with other anti-imperialist movements led by women and overall strengthening their movement.

The East Asia U.S. Puerto Rico Women's Network Against Militarism consists of women-led organizations in South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico and the continental United States, connected by experiences of militarism. The Network began in South Korea as Durebang (My Sister's Place) in 1986 as a center for women working near United States bases ("Our Journey" 2015). It transformed into a transnational network, with the Vieques Women's Alliance joining in the 2000s. The Network connects the struggles of women against militaristic violence transnationally, focusing on the impact of war, militarism and nuclear weapons on women and their communities. According to the Network, true security "requires respect for land, air, water and the oceans, and a very different economy with an emphasis on ecological and economic sustainability, not the pursuit of profit" (Cockburn 2007, 68). The Network's definition of true security expands on the feminist definition of peace, connecting women's security to the greater community as well as the environment. True security also requires the "de-militarization of cultures and national identities" which includes a redefinition of "masculinity, strength, power, and adventure; an end to war toys and the glorification of war and warriors" (Cockburn 2007, 68). Additionally, part of the reason that the Alliance found connection with other anti-military movements may have been the connection between the Naval base on Vieques and the United States long history of war. The 1999 Report by Radio Feminista reported that the United States Navy "has continued to use the island to practice with live ammunition in preparation for every war that the US has engaged in around the world since the 1940s: Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama, Iraq, Bosnia, and most recently, Kosovo" (Suárez Toro 1999a). Therefore, the end of military practices on Vieques could represent an end

to United States military aggression against other nations. The intersection between Puerto Rican self-determination, feminism and environmentalism in the face of United States militarism exist in Vieques as a site of anti-imperialist feminist activism.

As the movement gained support, protests occurred not only on Vieques but also on the continental United States and the movement to demilitarize Vieques became a popular Puerto Rican cause. During the weekend of August 11, 1999, the Puerto Rican community in New York led demonstrations in support of the movement. As part of the demonstration, Reverend Jesse Jackson and Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez led an ecumenical service in St. Cecelia's Church in East Harlem, to "pray for peace and justice in the island" (Suárez Toro 1999b). Having a multi denomination service led by a well-known Black activist minister and the Archbishop of San Juan harkens back to the Third World Women's Alliance, which organized crossracial and multicultural unity against imperialism. Archbishop Gonzalez called the Navy's occupation of Vieques "an offense against the principles of which the US wishes to stand.... For these reasons we appeal to principles that surpass all social, political and economic facts" (Suárez Toro 1999b). The events of August 1999 demonstrate the connection between Puerto Ricans living on the continental and those living on the island, especially highlighted through the phrase "All of Puerto Rico With Vieques" (Suárez Toro 1999b). The role of religious leaders also connects back to the work of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party with the Catholic Church in Puerto Rico. The movement to demilitarize Vieques engaged with not only the history of organizing for Puerto Rican independence but also United States Third World feminism.



Image 7: Lolita Lebrón arrested in Vieques, Puerto Rico, 2001. Image from Margaret Power, “If people had not been willing to give their lives for the *patria* or there had not been the political prisoners, then would be nothing.” *Radical History Review* 128 (May 2017), 43.

Not only were Puerto Ricans in the continental US and their allies involved in putting pressure on United States officials, Puerto Rican nationalist Lolita Lebrón also took part in a protest in Vieques. On June 2, 2000, led by the Vieques Women’s Alliance, a group of thirty-one protesters took boats to advance upon the Navy’s firing range in Vieques as an act of civil disobedience, in order to “denounce the unjust, unnecessary suffering to which our people have

been submitted ever since our beaches and seas were usurped by the Navy of the United States” (The Post 2000). By this time, Lebrón was eighty years old, participating in Puerto Rico’s next generation of activism against its colonial status. Joining the protest camps in 2000, Lebrón participated in acts of civil disobedience and was arrested multiple times. The image of her arrest in 2001 (Image 7) looks different from the iconic 1954 photo (Image 1). She cups her hands, handcuffed, around her face. Her hair, though nicely styled, is windswept and has turned gray with age. Although she is not serving an iconic trompa, the image of her arrest holds significance to Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism. Lebrón stayed committed to Puerto Rican independence throughout her life, responding to changes in activism due to different political and historical climates. Studying Lebrón as a revolutionary figure who opened fire on Congress in 1954 but participated in non-violent civil disobedience demonstrates Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism’s ability to shift to activist’s current experiences.

Conclusion

The Vieques Women’s Alliance used a collective voice, garnering support for their movement as well as standing in solidarity with similar struggles globally. In one of their speeches (2000), they called on all women to join the movement: “I want to [invite] all of you women who hear this message to unite in one voice, to unite your voices with ours, because the only requirement that you need to belong to the Alliance, to be part of this blessed struggle, is to be a woman, to have the desire to be free and above all to want to live in peace.” (McCafferty 2008, 157). Their collective voice inspired action from all over the world to end the military occupation of Vieques. Different groups from other anti-imperialist feminists groups to church leaders to environmentalists joined the cause either by protesting on the continental United States or by traveling to the island of Vieques to lend their support. In this way, the movement against

Vieques was also connected to ending military aggression globally. By using this language, they also took advantage of pre-existing feminist networks to gain transnational support. As a result of ongoing popular protests, Clinton attempted to negotiate with the population of Vieques as the population declined a \$90 million economic incentive in exchange for indefinite military use of Vieques. However, the population was extremely set on demilitarizing the island. In July 2001, an informal referendum was held on Vieques, resulting in 70% of the population voting for the Navy to leave immediately. In response, President Bush stated that the Navy would halt use in February 2002 and leave the island by May 2003 ([Global Nonviolent Action Database](#)).

Conclusion

Tracing the legacy of Puerto Rican women in the development of anti-imperialist feminism reveals the role of media, especially self-made media, in the spreading of feminist ideas. *Triple Jeopardy*, published by the Third World Women's Alliance, created a space for women of color feminists to focus on their communities' respective struggles, without interference from white audiences. For example, their discussion on machismo allowed for a critique of chauvinist behavior in the Puerto Rican community without affirming white women's racist attitudes towards Latinos. As the Alliance expanded across the country, the periodical functioned as a unifying media for members of the organization, connecting local struggles to other Third World movements. The Vieques Women's Alliance worked with Radio Internacional Feminista, an online radio based in Costa Rica, publishing fifteen articles between 1999 and 2000 explicitly detailing the protests organized by the Alliance. Their efforts demonstrate how the internet started to become an important networking and media tool for activist groups in the early twenty first century. Internet streaming broadened the program's reach to not just Costa Rica but to other countries, building solidarity amongst feminist listeners. In this way, Radio Feminista was a way to practice decolonizing solidarity through online radio access, although internet access was not, and still is not, universal. As internet use continued expanded, social media created new spaces for debate. Social media, as an asynchronous platform, can increase anti-imperialist feminist dialogue that navigates feminist theory in relation to lived experiences.

The Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminist imaginary values intersectionality, a term popularized on social media. Intersectionality scholars Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge discuss the role of social media in "providing platforms for feminists of color who hitherto rarely had access to larger audiences," mostly on Twitter and the "feminist blogosphere" (Collins and

Bilge 2016, 112). Collins and Bilge also credit gaining popularity on social media platforms to the increasing number of feminists of colors being traditionally published and building a career. Within feminist discussions on social media, there continues to be “debates over intersectionality [that] underscore feminist fault lines that divide along racial lines” (Collins and Bilge 2016, 106). While the failure to recognize the intersections of race, gender, class and other identities in contemporary feminism continues the legacy of anti-imperialist feminism, these biases increasingly and publicly being contested. Although using a new form of media, feminists of color on social media are a part of the legacy of developing intersectional theory and practice.

While younger generations are less likely to use Facebook, preferring Instagram and Twitter, Facebook continues to be an important platform for organizing. It is a common social media platform and accessible to internet users internationally. Judith Conde, co-founder of the Vieques Women’s Alliance, continues to engage with the Vieques community through her individual profile and the “Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses” Facebook page. In this way, Conde’s migration from Radio Internacional Feminista to Facebook marks the importance of social media in sustaining feminist organizations. Conde’s presence on social media underscores the genealogy of Puerto Rican anti-imperialist feminism, as she participates in activism through new platforms alongside younger activists building upon her legacy. While Conde uses Facebook to communicate with her community, a new generation of activists who identify as anti-imperialist feminists bring these ideas and practices to other social media platforms.



Image 8: Screenshot Judith Conde Facebook profile.
<https://www.facebook.com/judith.conde2>.

The Third World Women’s Alliance and Vieques Women’s Alliance advocate for anti-imperialist feminism, which relies on nuanced approaches to activism as they promoted transnational solidarity. Radio Internacional Feminista, a simple HTML coded website that hosted online articles and audio clips, was constructed in the early Web 1.0, described as “essentially a prototype— a proof of concept” (DiNucci 1999, 32). As computer science and coding advanced, Web 2.0 would be “understood not as screenfuls of text and graphics but as a transport mechanism, the ether through which interactivity happens” (DiNucci 1999, 32). In other words, instead of privately searching through webpages, Web 2.0 focuses on individual user experience and media creation as blogging platforms began to emerge in the early twentieth century. The contemporary internet climate differs from the media experiences of *Triple Jeopardy* and Radio Internacional Feminista, as their publications emphasized a collective organization. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter are built for single user profiles, which emphasizes the individual in self-made media on the web. Although tangible organizations can create their own social media profiles, acting as an individual, these platforms frequently uplift personal profiles. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter provide

new spaces for engaging with anti-imperialist feminist praxis but add new complications to spreading self-made media.

Since social media platforms rely on individual profiles, anti-imperialist feminists engage with the legacy of identity politics. Articulated by the Combahee River Collective, identity politics asserts that “the most profound and potentially radical politics come directly from our own identity” (Combahee River Collective 1981, 212). Unlike TWWA’s subscription-based periodical *Triple Jeopardy*, it can be difficult to target a particular audience. Therefore, in an effort to express positionality within internet debates, where people engage in an asynchronous conversation through curated profiles, many anti-imperialist feminist accounts list how they identify in their “bio.” Twitter users may indicate their race, culture, nationality, political affiliation as well as tag other users that they organize with:

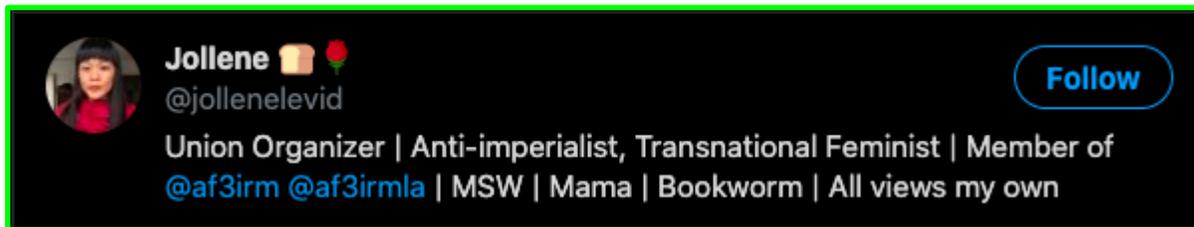


Image 9: Screenshot of @jolleneleid Twitter



Image 10: Screenshot of @mykalita_ Twitter

These bios point to the deconstructive yet adaptable nature of anti-imperialist feminism explored through this thesis. Twitter users, forming a new group of anti-imperialist feminist activists, build upon the lessons learned by Puerto Rican feminists, such as the Third World Women’s

Alliance and the Vieques Women's Alliance. Social media also opens ways to connect local issues to transnational organizing in a quicker manner, as one user can tag or message another without the limitations of physical distance. Looking at the social media profiles of anti-imperialist feminist activists brings hope that feminists will continue to "decolonize solidarity," building upon the legacy of Puerto Rican women in the development of anti-imperialist feminist praxis.

References

- “Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico.” 2011. United States Library of Congress.
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/slaves.html>. June 22, 2011. Accessed May 5, 2021.
- Acosta-Belén, Edna. 1986. “Puerto Rican Women in Culture, History, and Society.” In *The Puerto Rican Woman: Perspectives on Culture, History, and Society*, edited by Edna Acosta-Belén, 1-29. New York: Praeger.
- Alexander, M. Jacqui and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. 1997. “Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies, Movements.” In *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, edited by M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, xiii-xlii. New York and London: Routledge.
- Associated Press. 1954. “Puerto Rican nationalists Irving Flores Rodriguez, from left, front row, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Lolita Lebron, and Andres Figueroa Cordero, all from New York, stand in a police lineup following their arrest after a shooting attack on Capitol Hill, in Washington, D.C.” March 1, 1954.
<http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Rafael-Cancel-Miranda-Obit/ae007ed430d64792b61988c143ef7c1b/20/0>
- 1999. “Navy Attributes Fatal Bombing to Mistakes.” *The New York Times*, August 3, 1999. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/03/us/navy-attributes-fatal-bombing-to-mistakes.html>.
- Aylesworth, Gary. 2015. “Postmodernism.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring), edited by Edward N. Zalta. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/postmodernism/>.
- Baksh-Soodeen, Rawwida. 1998. “Issues of Difference in Contemporary Caribbean Feminism.”

- Feminist Review*, No. 59, (Summer): 74- 85.
- Barriteau, Eudine. 1998 "Theorizing Gender Systems and the Project of Modernity in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean." *Feminist Review*, No. 59, (Summer): 186-210.
- Baver, Sherrie L. 2006. "Peace is More than the End of Bombing: The Second Stage of the Vieques Struggle." *Latin American Perspectives* 33, No. 1 (January): 102-115.
- Beal, Frances. 1970. "Double Jeopardy." In *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, edited by Robin Morgan, 340-353. New York: Random House.
- 2005. "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project: Frances Beal" Interview by Loretta Ross. Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, March 18, 2005. Transcript.
<https://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/transcripts/Beal.pdf>.
- Beins, Agatha. 2015. "Radical Others: Women of Color and Revolutionary Feminism." *Feminist Studies* 41, No. 1: 150-183.
- Berman Santana, Déborah. 2002. "Resisting Toxic Militarism: Vieques Versus the U.S. Navy." *Social Justice* 29, No. 1/2: 37-47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29768117>.
- Briggs, Laura. 1998. "Discourses of 'Forced Sterilization' in Puerto Rico: The Problem With the Speaking Subaltern." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 10, No. 2 (Summer): 30-66.
- Bunch, Charlotte. 1990. "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 12, No. 4 (1990): 486-498.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/762496>
- Burnham, Linda. 2005. "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project: Linda Burnham." Interview

- by Loretta Ross. Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, March 18, 2005. Transcript.
<https://www.smith.edu/libraries/libs/ssc/vof/transcripts/Burnham.pdf>.
- Caribbean Human Rights Network. 1999. "Us Navy Military Practices In Vieques, Puerto Rico."
Radio Interacional Feminista. June 1, 1999.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070819215231/http://www.fire.or.cr/humanrig.htm>.
- Capetillo, Luisa. 2007. "Mi opinión." In *Essential Feminist Reader*, edited by Estelle B. Freedman, 186-191. New York: Modern Library.
- Cockburn, Cynthia. 2007. *From Where We Stand: War, Women's Activism and Feminist Analysis*.
 New York: Zed Books.
- Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. 2016. *Intersectionality*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- La Colección Puertorriqueña. 2017. "La Mujer del Siglo xx (1919)." February 8, 2017.
https://issuu.com/coleccionpuertorriquena/docs/la_mujer_del_siglo_xx.
- Combahee River Collective. 1981. "A Black Feminist Statement" In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 210-218. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- El Comité de Mujeres Puertorriqueñas. 2003. "In the Belly of the Beast: Puertorriqueñas Challenging Colonialism." In *Sing, Whisper, Shout, Pray!: Feminist visions for a just world*, edited by Jacqui M. Alexander, 125-136. EdgeWork Books.
- Carrillo, Jo. 1981. "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You." In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 63-64. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.

- Colón-Warren, Alice E. and Idsa Alegría-Ortega. 1998. "Shattering the Illusion of Development: The Changing Status of Women and Challenges for the Feminist Movement in Puerto Rico." *Feminist Review* 59, No 1 (June): 101-117.
- Colón, Alice E. 2000. "Vieques, Puerto Rico: A Case for a New Definition of Security." *Radio Internacional Feminista*. August 2000. <https://web.archive.org/web/20010221091003/http://www.fire.or.cr/alicecolon.htm>.
- Conde, Judith. "48 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses." YouTube Video. February 26, 2019. https://youtu.be/dd15epN_Dhg.
- "49 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses." YouTube Video. February 26, 2019. https://youtu.be/dd15epN_Dhg.
- "50 Interview Judith Conde, Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses." YouTube Video. February 26, 2019. <https://youtu.be/blmmw9O7HmU>.
- "Declaration of Ultimatum of the People of Vieques to the United States Navy, July 31, 1999" 1999. *Radio Internacional Feminista*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20020220064230/http://www.fire.or.cr/ultimeng.htm>.
- DiNucci, Darcy. 1999. "Fragmented Future." *Print Magazine* (April): 32, 221. http://darcyd.com/fragmented_future.pdf.
- Farmer, Ashley. 2017. "The Third World Women's Alliance, Cuba, and the Exchange of Ideas." *Black Perspectives*. April 7, 2017. <https://www.aaihs.org/the-third-world-womens-alliance-cuba-and-the-exchange-of-ideas/>.
- "The First Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encuentro." *Center for Global Women's Leadership*. Accessed May 5, 2021. <https://globalfeministjourneys.com/event/the-first-latin-american->

and-caribbean-feminist-encuentro/.

“Foraker Act (Organic Act of 1900).” United States Library of Congress. June 22, 2011.

Accessed May 5, 2021. <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/foraker.html>.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and*

Interviews, edited by Donald F. Bouchard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Gilman, Sander. 1985. *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness*.

New York: Cornell University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. “The Intellectuals.” In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited

and

translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 5-23. New York: International

Publishers.

“The Grito de Lares: The Rebellion of 1868.” United States Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/puerto-rico-books-and-pamphlets/articles-and-essays/nineteenth-century-puerto-rico/rebellion-of-1868/>. Accessed May 5, 2021.

Guzmán, Sandra. 2019. “Meet the Women Leading Puerto Rico's Feminist Revolution.”

shondaland. August 9, 2019. <https://www.shondaland.com/change-makers/a28653844/puerto-rico-protests-feminist-revolution/>.

Halleck, Dee Dee. 1978. “The Defense of Lolita Lebron: An Interview with Conrad Lynn.”

Independent Media Archive. Video. <https://mediaburn.org/video/the-defense-of-lolita-lebron-an-interview-with-conrad-lynn/>.

Herr, Ranjoo Seodu. 2014. “Reclaiming Third World Feminism: Or Why Transnational

Feminism Needs Third World Feminism.” *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, 12, No. 1: 1–30.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. 1993. *Righteous Discontent The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Idalí Torres, Maria. 2005. “Organizing, Educating, and Advocating for Health and Human Rights

in Vieques, Puerto Rico.” *American Journal of Public Health* 95, No. 1. (January): 9-12.

“Introduction.” 2011. United States Library of Congress. June 22, 2011. Accessed May 5, 2021.

<https://loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/intro.html>.

“Judith Conde.” 1999. *Radio Internacional Feminista*. [https://web.archive.org/web/](https://web.archive.org/web/20070819231226/http://www.fire.or.cr/judieng.htm)

[20070819231226/http://www.fire.or.cr/judieng.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20070819231226/http://www.fire.or.cr/judieng.htm)

Lebrón, Lolita. 1954. “Audio of Lolita Lebron from 1954 attack.” The Freedom Archives.

Accessed May 5, 2021.

https://www.freedomarchives.org/audio_samples/Lolita_Lebron.html.

-- 1980. “Speech by Lolita Lebrón-San Francisco, May, 28, 1980.” *Freedom Archives*.

https://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC41_scans/41.LolitaLebron.Speech.1980.pdf.

Lee, Mollie M. 2001. “¡Vieques Sí, Marina No! Cultural Models And Collective Action Frames In The History Of A Social Movement.” MA thesis, University of Georgia.

https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/lee_mollie_m_200112_ma.pdf.

Levins Morales, Aurora. 1981. “...And Even Fidel Can't Change That!” In *This Bridge Called*

My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 53-56. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.

Lopez, Iris. 1993. “Agency And Constraint: Sterilization And Reproductive Freedom Among

- Puerto Rican Women In New York City.” *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 22, No. 3/4 (Fall and Winter): 299-323.
- Marks, Ben. 2013. “Trailing Angela Davis, from FBI Flyers to 'Radical Chic' Art.” *Collectors Weekly*, July 3, 2013. <https://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/angela-davis-from-fbi-flyers-to-radical-chic-art/>.
- McCafferty, Katherine T. 2008. “Because Vieques Is Our Home: Defend It!: Women Resisting Militarization in Vieques, Puerto Rico.” In *Security Disarmed: Critical Perspectives on Gender, Race, and Militarization*, edited by Barbara Sutton, et al., 157. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- “Migrating to a New Land.” United States Library of Congress. Accessed May 5, 2021. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/puerto-rican-cuban/migrating-to-a-new-land/>.
- “Miriam Sobá.” 1999. *Radio Internacional Feminista*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070819215236/http://www.fire.or.cr/mirieneng.htm>.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1991. “Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.” In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, 1-50. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- 2013. “Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique” *Signs*, 38, No. 4: (Summer): 967-991.
- Moraga, Cherríe and Gloria Anzaldúa. 1981. “Between the lines: On culture, class, and

- homophobia.” In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 105-106. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- 1981. “Entering the lives of others: theory in the flesh” In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 23. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Morales, Rosario. 1981. “We’re All in the Same Boat.” In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 91-93. Watertown, MA: Persephone Press.
- Muñoz, José Esteban. 1999. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Naples, Nancy. 1998. *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class and Gender*. New York and London: Routledge.
- 2002. “The Challenges and Possibilities of Transnational Feminist Praxis.” In *Women’s Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*, edited by Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai, 3-14. New York: Routledge.
- Narayan, Uma. 1998. “Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism.” *Hypatia* 13, No. 2, (Spring): 86-106
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3810639>.
- “Navy Arrests Vieques Activists: 31 Protesters Had Taken Boats to Disputed Firing Range.” 2000. *The Washington Post*. June 2, 2000. A24.
- “A New Civil Disobedience Action by Women on Vieques.” 2000. *Radio Internacional*

- Feminista*. August 8, 2000. <https://web.archive.org/web/20040301104549/http://www.fire.or.cr/viequesengaug2000.htm>.
- Nguyen, Huong Thi. "Áo Dài – The Traditional Costume of Vietnam." *Global Storybook*. <https://globalstorybook.org/ao-dai-pride-vietnamese-culture/>.
- Power, Margaret. 2017. "‘If people had not been willing to give their lives for the patria or there had not been the political prisoners, then we would be nothing.’: Interview with Lolita Lebrón." *Radical History Review*: 37-45. doi:10.1215/01636545-3857754
- "Puerto Ricans Vow to Avenge Death in U.S. Prison." 1979. *New York Times*. November 18, 1979. 33. <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/11/18/archives/puerto-ricans-vow-to-avenge-death-in-us-prison.html>
- Rabin, Robert. 1999. "Vieques: Five Centuries Of Struggle and Resistance." *Radio Internacional Feminista*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20040217221515/http://www.fire.or.cr/hisengvie.htm>.
- Ruiz Toro, Juan. "Puerto Rico’s Operation Bootstrap." *Brown University Library*. Accessed May 5, 2021. <https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-12-strategies-for-economic-developmen/puerto-ricos-operation-bootstrap/>.
- Romero-Cesareo, Ivette. 1994. "Whose Legacy?: Voicing Women's Rights from the 1870s to the 1930s." *Callaloo* 17, no. 3: 770-89. doi:10.2307/2931854.
- Roy-Fequiere, Magali. 2004. *Women, Creole Identity, and Intellectual Life in Early Twentieth-Century Puerto Rico*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Sandoval, Chela. 2000. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sobá, Myriam. 2000. "Una voz de mujer en el deseo compartido de vivir en paz" *UNESCO de*

Educación para la Paz, Universidad de Puerto Rico

<http://unescopaz.rrp.upr.edu/act/Lecciones/tercera/3raSoba.html>.

Springer, Kimberly. 2005. *Living for the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980*.

Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Suárez Toro, María. 1999. "Alianza de Mujeres Viequenses on FIRE." *Radio Internacional*

Feminista. September 1999. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070625183230/>

<http://www.fire.or.cr/etasept.htm>.

-- 1999. "News Update: The Struggle of the People of Puerto Rico to Get the

Navy Out of Vieques." *Radio Internacional Feminista*. [https://web.archive.org/web/](https://web.archive.org/web/20070625164803/http://www.fire.or.cr/newsvieq.htm)

[20070625164803/http://www.fire.or.cr/newsvieq.htm](http://www.fire.or.cr/newsvieq.htm)

Stone, Alison. 2005. "Towards a Genealogical Feminism: A Reading of Judith Butler's Political

Thought." *Contemporary Political Theory* 4: 4-24.

Third World Women's Alliance. 2005. "Equal to What? 1969" In *The Movements of the New*

Left 1950-1975, edited by Van Gosse, 131-134. Boston and New York: Bedford/St.

Martin's.

The Third World Women's Alliance. *Triple Jeopardy*. September 1, 1971-June 1, 1975. New

York: The Third World Women's Alliance. Accessed through *Independent Voices*.

<https://voices.revealdigital.org/?a=cl&cl=CL1&sp=BAHDECFC&ai=1&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-----1>.

Thompson, Margaret, Gómez, Katerina, and Suárez Toro, María. 2005. "Women's Alternative

Internet Radio and Feminist Interactive Communications: Internet audience perceptions

of Feminist International Radio Endeavour (FIRE)." *Feminist Media Studies*, 5: 215-236.

10.1080/14680770500124306.

- Thompson, Margaret and María Suárez Toro. 2000. "Vieques Protestors Forcibly Removed From Camps, US Navy Plans to Resume Bombing." *Radio Internacional Feminista*. August 2000. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070623200954/http://www.fire.or.cr/viearrests.htm>.
- 2000. "Women's Civil Disobedience: Confronting Militarism on Vieques." *Radio Internacional Feminista*. March 2000. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070623202917/http://www.fire.or.cr/mareng.htm>.
- United States District Court of Puerto Rico. "The 'Grito de Lares' Flag." <https://www.prd.uscourts.gov/%E2%80%9Cgrito-de-lares%E2%80%9D-flag#:~:text=The%20Grito%20de%20Lares%20flag,Betances%20was%20exiled>. Accessed May 5, 2021.
- "Update on Vieques." 2000. *Radio Internacional Feminista*. March 2000. <https://web.archive.org/web/20040226055001/http://www.fire.or.cr/febeng2.htm>.
- Vélez-Vélez, Roberto. "Reflexivity in Mobilization: Gender and Memory as Cultural Features of Women's Mobilization in Vieques, 1999-2003." *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 15, No. 1 (February): 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.15.1.rw1w1260n466684u>
- Wu, Judy Tzu-Chun. 2010. "Rethinking Global Sisterhood: Peace Activism and Women's Orientalism" In *No Permanent Waves*, edited by Nancy A. Hewitt, 193–220. Rutgers University Press.
- 2013. *Radicals on the Road: Internationalism, Orientalism and Feminism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.