

*The Correct Body: Fashion and Modernity in a Society in Transition, (Puerto Rico, 1900-1930).*

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This project examines how Puerto Ricans considered conceptions of modernity through fashion texts and images. My argument is that they appropriated transnational discourses on fashion and modernity to construct an identity as modern subjects, while keeping a tense relationship with the unfolding processes of a paradoxical modernity.

I analyze their gendered representations and how people from across the social spectrum feared modernity would impact and change those representations. I also analyze how advertisers linked and spread ideals of fashion and modernity, crafting the foundations of a consumer society on the island. In this interdisciplinary project, I draw upon a wide range of literature from history, fashion studies, gender studies, sociology, consumer culture, and advertising studies. My sources range from magazines and newspapers to literary fiction of the period.

Beyond my dissertation, I have two book-length research projects in the planning stages. As a pre-dissertation fellow at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, I conducted research on Puerto Ricans' responses and reactions to consumer society in New York City during the first half of the 20th century. How did Puerto Ricans in the city respond or react to the emergence and consolidation of a consumer society at the beginning of the 20th century? What role did consumption play in the formation of identities – individual and/or collective – and claims of citizenship of Puerto Ricans in NYC? Why scholars on consumption studies and Puerto Rican studies have ignored each other? As part of my doctoral exams I produced a comparative historiographical essay in which, focusing on their approach to consumption, I analyzed the historiography on Mexicans/Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans in the United States, and argue that in the case of the latter it is just beginning to address the subject due in part to the influence of a neonationalist/anti-colonial – and, sometimes, anti-American – discourses have hindered the analysis of this aspect of the historical context in which the first Puerto Ricans lived and developed the early communities.

The second project examines the relationship between history and memory in the historiographical production about Puerto Ricans in the United States. While researching the first topic I noticed a very direct influence of the tone and content of the memoirs of Puerto Rican *pioneros* in New York City. On this project I use insights from studies of the Holocaust and extreme violence, and from literary studies to analyze how the *pioneros* structured and narrated their memoirs and how those narrations have influenced the historiography about Puerto Ricans in the United States.