

**Rámon Grosfoguel. *Colonial Subject: Puerto Ricans in Global Perspective*. (Berkeley: University of California, 2003). xi, 268 pp., \$21.95 paper.**

Merging world-systems and postcolonial analyses, Grosfoguel presents an insightful look at Puerto Rico's colonial status and its consequences on the Puerto Rican migration experience while comparing these experiences to those of other Caribbean migrants. While asserting that "world-system theorists have difficulties theorizing culture, whereas postcolonial theorists have difficulties conceptualizing political-economic processes" (13), Grosfoguel challenges scholars of the modern world-system to move from paradigms of earlier centuries and go outside their disciplines in order to reduce the risk of reductionism. The analysis is grounded on "Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic capital" and Quijano's notion of "coloniality of power [to] redress these limitations" (3).

The first part of the book, *The Political Economy of Puerto Rico*, contains two chapters – the first explores various status scenarios/strategies for the island's future after focusing on how the United States' selfish interests with the island have shifted since 1898. This shift has been from one of geographic/military strategy to one of symbolically showcasing the island's capitalistic superiority vis-à-vis communism during the Cold War. Currently, the United States' main focus is on transforming the island into a neocolony which "seeks to cheapen Puerto Rican wages, eliminate environmental regulations, and reduce the social and civil rights won by popular sectors" (64). The second chapter explores Caribbean urban transformations, focusing on Miami and San Juan. Miami, as a core world city, and San Juan as a semi-peripheral world city, possess strategic military advantage and both have benefited from the United States' effort to highlight the superiority of capitalism over communism throughout the world, and specifically in the Caribbean Basin.

The second part of the book, *Puerto Rican Migration and the Caribbean Diaspora in the United States*, brilliantly compares and contrasts Caribbean migration histories to the United States. The most fascinating comparative analysis focuses on the migration processes of Puerto Ricans and Cubans to the United States from a geopolitical symbolic and military logic perspective. Based

on this perspective, the author lays out divergent policies of the United States government toward both groups. For example, Cuban migrants between 1960 and the mid-1970s were afforded welfare benefits which included a disproportionate amount of Small Business Administration loans, bilingual education programs, job training, subsidized college loans, health care benefits, and monies for relocation outside of Miami. While the United States invested in the showcase of Cuban prosperity in the United States, it invested similarly in showcasing the island of Puerto Rico but **not** its low wage workers which were enticed by the United States government to the mainland. Thus, not surprisingly, Grosfoguel is quite critical of micro reductionist theories that rehash culture of poverty arguments in the quest to understand Cuban's "model minority" status vis-à-vis Puerto Ricans "failed" status.

The third, and final part of the book, compares colonial migration and incorporation into the labor market of migrants from Puerto Rico, Martinique/Guadeloupe, Suriname/Dutch Antilles, and the West Indies to their respective metropolis of the United States, France, the Netherlands, and England. This portion of the book does a fantastic job analyzing how the racial construction of the above mentioned migrants has impacted their labor market incorporation or marginalization in the metropolises.

Although at times repetitive, this book makes a great contribution to the literature. This book would be an excellent addition to courses in migration history, race and ethnicity, Latino studies, and urban studies as it challenges mainstream attitudes toward immigrants in the United States.

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**David Mason, ed. *Explaining Ethnic Differences: Changing Patterns of Disadvantage in Britain.* (Bristol, UK: The Policy Press, 2003).vii,183 pp., \$79.95 cloth, \$37.50 paper.**

A series of "communal disturbances" took place in several north of England towns during the spring and summer of 2001.