Edgardo Meléndez, *Sponsored Migration: The State and Puerto Rican Postwar Migration to the United States*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2017. xiv + 260 pp. (Paper US\$32.95)

Sponsored Migration demonstrates the relevance of history for understanding contemporary Puerto Rican migration. Recent migration caused by the economic crisis in Puerto Rico is leading to news about incidents of discrimination and labor exploitation. In the 1940s, Puerto Rico's migration policy emerged from similar complaints and press coverage of labor abuses. Edgardo Meléndez breaks with the dominant scholarship on transnationalism by analyzing these developments within the history of U.S. citizenship and colonialism. The status of Puerto Ricans as citizens, together with colonial policies of the United States, defined the nature of their migration to the mainland.

The book's first three chapters explain the principal historical forces that shaped migration policy. Meléndez discusses what are known as the Insular Cases: the famous Supreme Court decision in *Downes v. Bidwell*, which defined Puerto Rico as foreign in the domestic sense; and *Balzac v. The People of Porto Rico*, which acknowledged full-citizenship rights for Puerto Ricans who moved stateside. Puerto Rican officials acknowledged that despite their U.S. citizenship, migrants crossed cultural and linguistic borders, and they felt a duty to protect and facilitate their integration. While the official policy was that the government neither discouraged nor encouraged migration, officials established the mechanisms needed to migrate and settle. For Meléndez, the Puerto Rican problem showcased in the U.S. press shaped Puerto Rico's policy making. Puerto Rican Secretary of Labor Fernando Sierra Berdecía attempted to address the concerns of government officials and private institutions with the arrival of Puerto Ricans to New York City. He also insisted on the importance of host communities understanding migrants' background and easing their adaptation. Migration to the United States was cheaper and less controversial than resettlement of families in Latin America. This situation led officials to regulate contract migration and create the Bureau of Employment and Migration (BEM).

The most significant contribution of this book is the attention given in Chapters 4 and 5 to the infrastructure for air travel and English instruction that was created by the Puerto Rican government to foster migration. Meléndez debunks the idea that tourism promoted the development of air transportation in Puerto Rico. The government was instrumental in making air transportation cheap, safe, and available in order to increase labor migration. In the 1950s, it enacted plans for the construction of the international airport, chartered flights for contract workers, lobbied for new airlines to start operations,

asked federal agencies to regulate unscheduled flights, and pushed for lower ticket costs. In addition, it increased English instruction while providing information about housing, employment, weather, and cultural expectations for potential migrants. Classes for adults and seasonal migrant workers and radio lessons were among the strategies to intensify English instruction. As Meléndez indicates, mass air travel and English instruction accelerated the influence of English and American ideals in Puerto Rico more than previous efforts at Americanization had.

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the importance of the Farm Placement Program. The BEM transported more than 5,000 Puerto Rican workers to Michigan for the 1950 harvest. The Puerto Rican government immediately received reports of protests by migrants about working and living conditions. Although Meléndez argues that this caused changes in migration policy, my own research indicates that it did not. However, he is correct that Puerto Rican officials defended migrants because of unscrupulous employers, though it also protected some employers in order to secure the hiring of Puerto Ricans. Workers did not care about these efforts because most of them migrated without contracts.

Meléndez emphasizes that scholars cannot separate the analysis of migration from mid-twentieth century policies of economic development and political autonomy and reminds scholars that they still need to theorize Puerto Rican migration. Looking at colonialism and citizenship through the lens of migration policy demonstrates the limits of transnationalism. A transnational approach does not explain what set the stage for the relationship between Puerto Rican officials and stateside officials, and how migrants arrived in U.S. farms. *Sponsored Migration* is also an invitation to understand the incorporation of stateside Puerto Ricans, through their second-class citizenship, the role of race, and the importance that these played in colonialism. Scholars must abandon interpretations arising from assimilation models, including segmented assimilation theory. Puerto Rican definitions of culture and identity are not an obstacle for social mobility and incorporation. Instead, scholars should acknowledge how inequalities of power shape migration; U.S. immigration policies are part of the way they transform the lives of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens and colonial subjects. In the end, even after all their complaints, migration remains for many Puerto Ricans the only alternative for surviving a colonial order devastated by economic austerity and, most recently, Hurricane Maria.

Ismael García Colón

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, College of Staten Island, CUNY

Ismael.Garcia@csi.cuny.edu