

Penelope Acevedo Diaz

INGL 3104

Prof. Lopez

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**How was Puerto Rico's development affected throughout time?** The first elements you must take into consideration is the island's history and geography. Since you cannot comment on the actual situation if you don't reflect about the past. In the following paragraphs I will be talking about Puerto Rico's location, it's seismic activity and our U.S citizenship. The purpose of understanding these factors will be to realize the detrimental effects they have caused in Puerto Rico.

According to an article by Live Science: **"Puerto Rico is an archipelago in the Caribbean Sea consisting of a main island and a handful of smaller ones. It is part of the Greater Antilles, a grouping of the larger islands in the Caribbean and it has made Puerto Rico an important and strategic port for centuries."** Sadly, based on other research I have done **it made the island a target for hurricanes as well.** We all remember the devastating category 4 hurricane Maria, which struck on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. This hurricane caused catastrophic damage throughout the whole island leaving its infrastructure totaled. The entire population suffered from power outages and lack of water. Many houses destroyed and one year later there were still houses with blue awnings for ceilings. The hurricane caused a major downfall in economy due to the destruction of projects meant to stimulate economy. The cost of repairs in the island according to an article on CNN were "a staggering 45 to 95 billion dollars."

**"The region is very seismically active- an average of five earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 1.5 occur near Puerto Rico every day."** On January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 a 6.6 earthquake shook the island both physically and emotionally. The epicenter of the earthquake struck in "Guayanilla" leaving citizens without a stable home and many were forced to evacuate for their own safety. Nonetheless earthquakes kept happening which caused further damage to Puerto Rico's already weak infrastructure. This includes buildings, highways and more than 500 houses and five schools collapsed in the southwest area.

**"Puerto Ricans were granted full U.S citizenship in 1917. However, Puerto Ricans living on the island cannot vote for president (they can if they reside in a U.S state)."** How can we prosper if we don't have a say in the election process of the United States president? We are an unincorporated territory of the United States evidently what they do affects us all. Given the fact Puerto Rico is not fully independent the islands government is not autonomous. Puerto Ricans are also covered by a group of "fundamental civil rights" but, because Puerto Rico is not a state, they are not covered by the full Bill of Rights. I believe this leaves us exposed to the fact we mandatorily must serve in the U.S Army if need be and if you don't oblige you can't participate in the benefits of financial aid for university. This continues to set back Puerto Rico's social development and growth as an island.

In conclusion I believe we should evaluate the root problem within these factors. What are we as an island doing with the money given to us? The main thing holding us back would be the unauthorized use of the funds provided to us. After hurricane Maria FEMA gave Puerto Rico enough money to repair damages and the government handled it poorly. If we had used it correctly maybe the impact of the earthquakes wouldn't have been so devastating. As for Puerto Rico being an unincorporated state, we would have to take into consideration the effects of becoming completely independent versus remaining as we are now.

#### References:

<https://www.livescience.com/60792-puerto-rico-facts.html>

Light blue (main idea), green (support of main idea), dark blue (conclusion), orange (grammar discussed in the unit)