

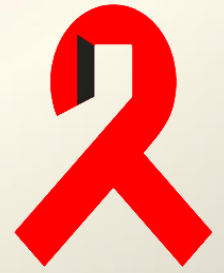


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# Old Colony: Puerto Rico, Puerto Ricans, and continuity of HIV care

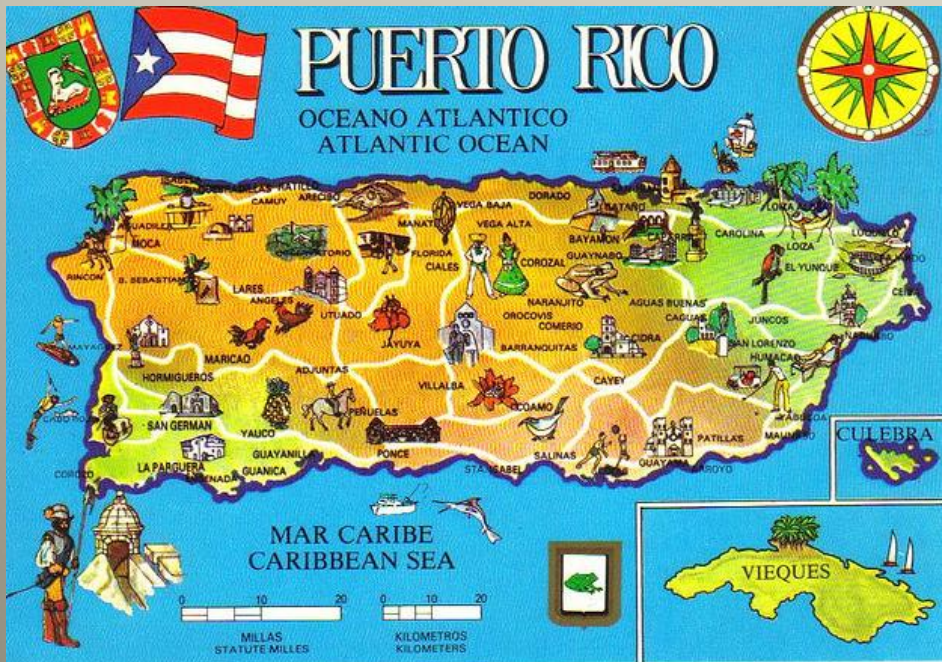
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Graduate School of Public Health

# Objectives



1. Discuss the current economic and healthcare environment in Puerto Rico (PR).
2. Describe the HIV/AIDS epidemic among Puerto Ricans.
3. Describe the intersections of HIV care, migration, mobility, and continuity of care for Puerto Ricans.
4. Illustrate transnationalism in the context of Puerto Ricans, migration, and the HIV epidemic.

# Puerto Rico: *La isla del encanto*



- Located in the Caribbean Sea
- “The mix of three cultures: *Taíno*, Spanish, and African”
- A Commonwealth of the United States of America (US)

# A very brief history of Puerto Rico



- Ponce de León y Taínos
- African slaves
- Sugar becomes gold
- Short-lived autonomy
- Slave trade stopped
- Spanish-American War
- US Rule
- WWI & US citizenship
- WWII and migration
- PRERA & Korean War
- Commonwealth and economic boor



Street art in Santurce – San Juan as part of the project “Santurce es Ley”

# Politics, policies, and health



## Tales from the colony

- Ambiguous and subjugated position within the US body politic.
- US is continuing to rely on the congressional cap on federal funding for health care in Puerto Rico established in 1967.
  - There have been no changes to the congressional limitation on health care funding for Puerto Rico since its inception.
- Effective HIV prevention and equal access to treatment is structurally impossible in this context.

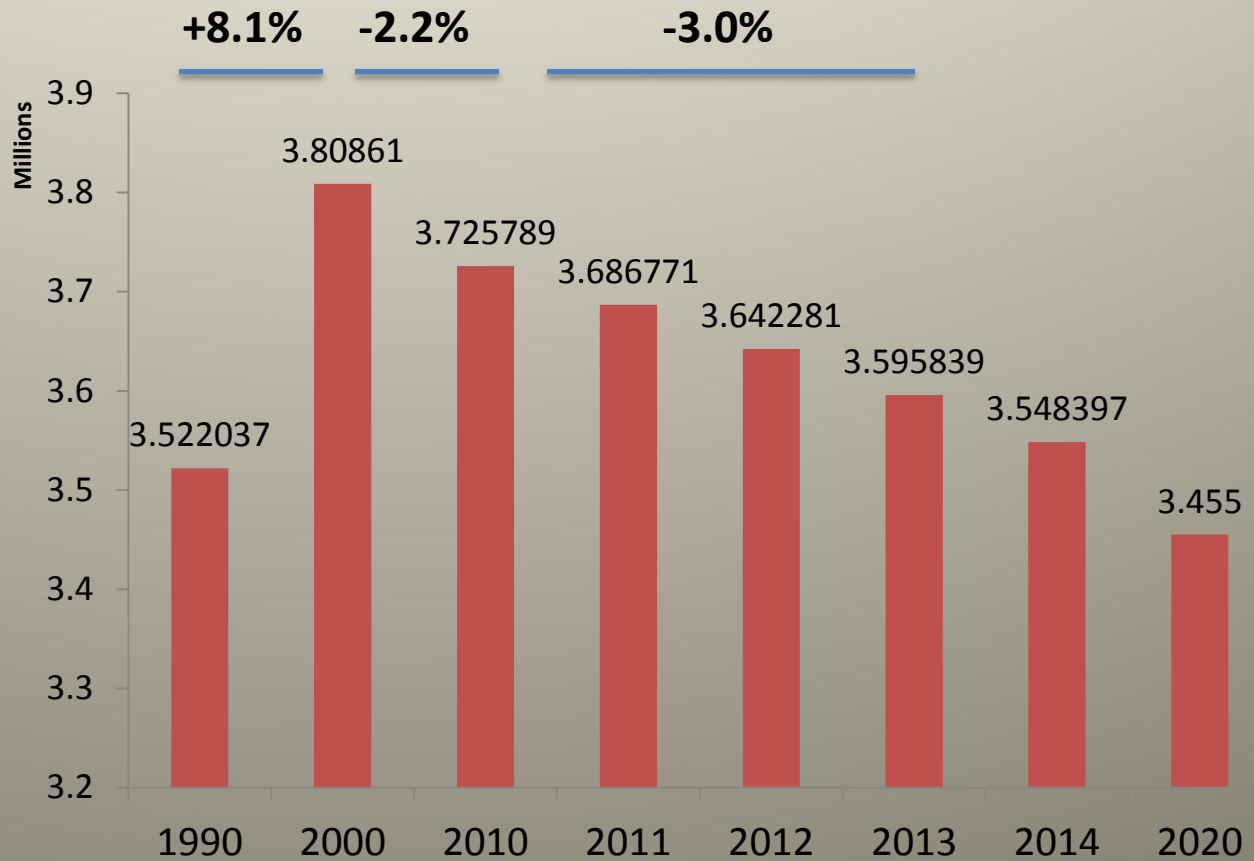
# PR: Politics, policies, and health



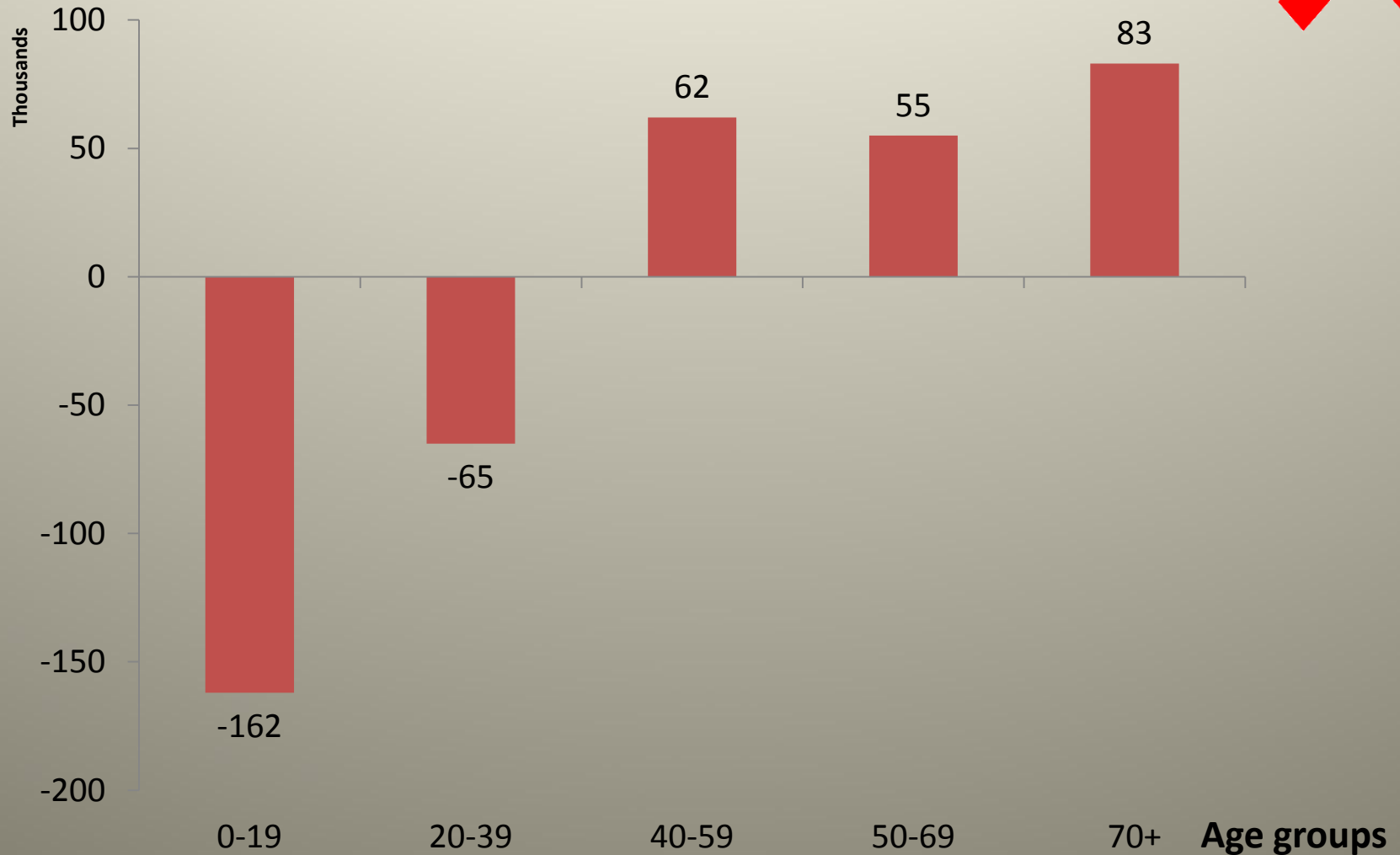
POSTED ON [JULY 3, 2015](#) BY [HECTOR LUIS ALAMO](#)

## Puerto Ricans Aren't Real Americans, Apparently

# Current population trends in PR



# Current population trends in PR Cont.





# Economic issues



## Why Puerto Rico's Debt Is So Big

Puerto Rico's public debt has ballooned because of a failing economy and an inefficient government that has spent more than it has taken in. JULY 3, 2015

**Puerto Rico**

## Greece in the Caribbean

Stuck with a real debt crisis in its back yard, America can learn from Europe's Aegean follies

Oct 26th 2013 | From the print edition

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**Paul Krugman**

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## No, Puerto Rico Isn't Greece

By PAUL KRUGMAN

JULY 4, 2015

# Economic issues Cont.



## *Despair and Anger as Puerto Ricans Cope With Debt Crisis*

By LIZETTE ALVAREZ JULY 3, 2015

**Puerto Rico**

### A Caribbean fuse

An American territory wants to restructure its debts but doesn't know how

Jul 2nd 2015, 14:48 | From the print edition

The Opinion Pages | EDITORIAL

### Puerto Rico Needs Debt Relief

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD JULY 1, 2015



The Economist explains

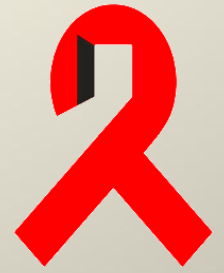
**The Economist explains**

## Could Puerto Rico become America's 51st state?

Oct 21st 2013, 23:50 by D.R. | NEW YORK

WHILE Europe's debt crisis seems to have stabilised, the vigilantes of the bond market have found a new target on the other side of the Atlantic.

# PR and the Affordable Care Act



- When ACA was launched in 2014 there was some confusion about how the law would apply to US territories, including Puerto Rico.
- In July 2014, DHHS declared that US territories aren't required to follow most of the roles of the ACA.
  - Technically, that means that 4 of 5 of the US territories were essentially untouched by the bill.
  - PR's government passes its on series of bills adopting ACA roles.

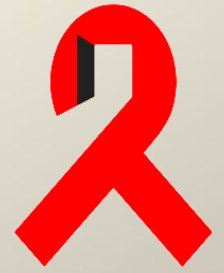
# PR and the Affordable Care Act



- Insurance companies in PR must follow all the provisions of the law and cannot deny coverage and must pay for essential health benefits.
- However, there is no individual mandate, the rule that says everyone must get health insurance.



# ACA, *Mi Salud*, and HIV care in PR



- Funding for HIV services in PR is not administered as part of *Mi Salud*
- PR Department of Health is the primary administrator of ADAP/Ryan White funding



# History of HIV care in PR



- Impacted by the US regulation
  - Changes in the “Emergency Metropolitan Areas”
- Mostly administered by PR government
  - Complicated history of corruption (ie: *Instituto del SIDA*)
- Important participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations
- Major contributor in HIV research
  - Research as a mean to access to care

# HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR

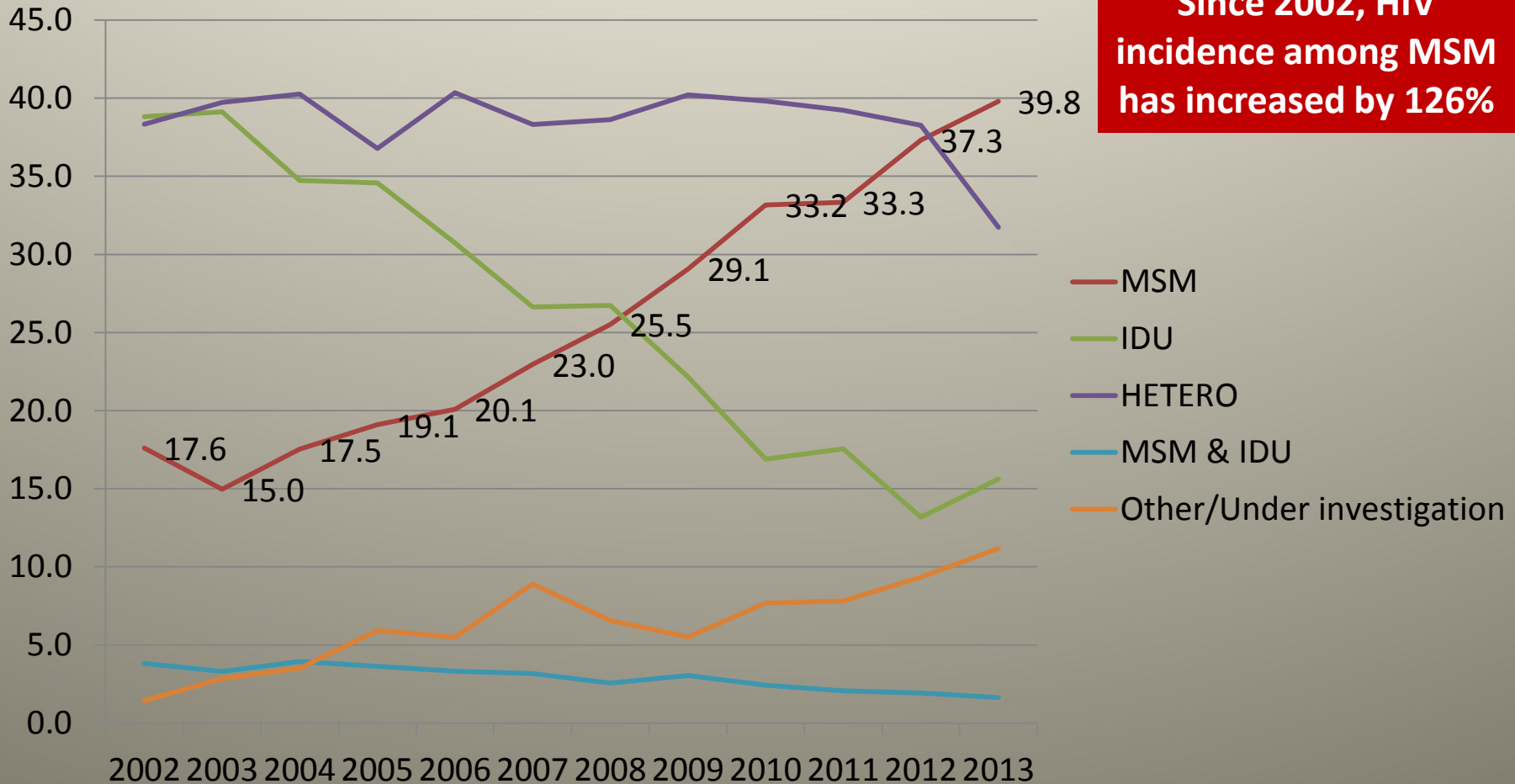


- More than 46,600 persons has been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS
  - 26,304 have died
  - Approximately, 20,305 people with HIV in Puerto Rico
- Two (2) persons are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS every day
- One (1) out of six (6) persons who have HIV don't know he/she has the virus
- Perinatal transmission was officially eliminated in 2013

# HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR (Cont.)

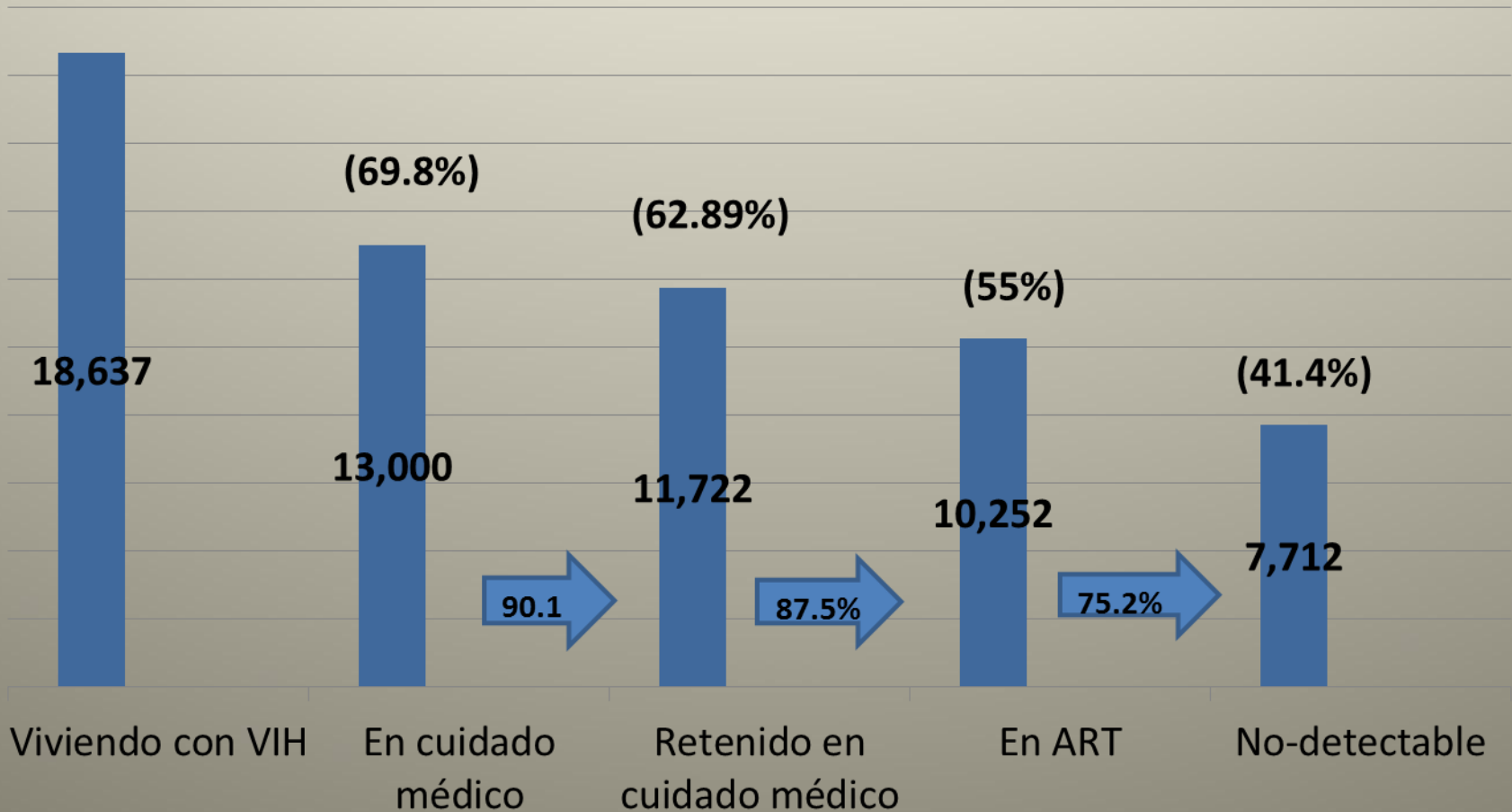


**Since 2002, HIV incidence among MSM has increased by 126%**

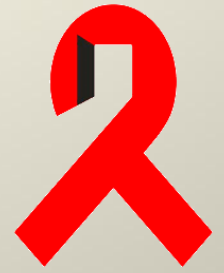




# Cascade of HIV care in PR, 2010



# HIV/AIDS unmet needs



1. Mostly among men (75%)
2. Between the ages of 35 to 45 years
3. Drug users (38%) and heterosexuals (30%)
4. Residents of the San Juan metropolitan area

# HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR (Cont.)



## Behind the bars of Paradise: Incarceration and HIV

	Puerto Rico*^
Correctional population	12,130
Types of correctional facilities by security level	Minimum: 4 Medium: 20 (2 juvenile) Maximum: 5 (1 female)
Conviction type	23.4% violations of local laws related to illicit drugs 66.0% offenses related to substance use
Annual average of people passing through the system	16,000
Health care system	Funded by the government and administered by a non-profit organization

### Incarcerated population in PR:

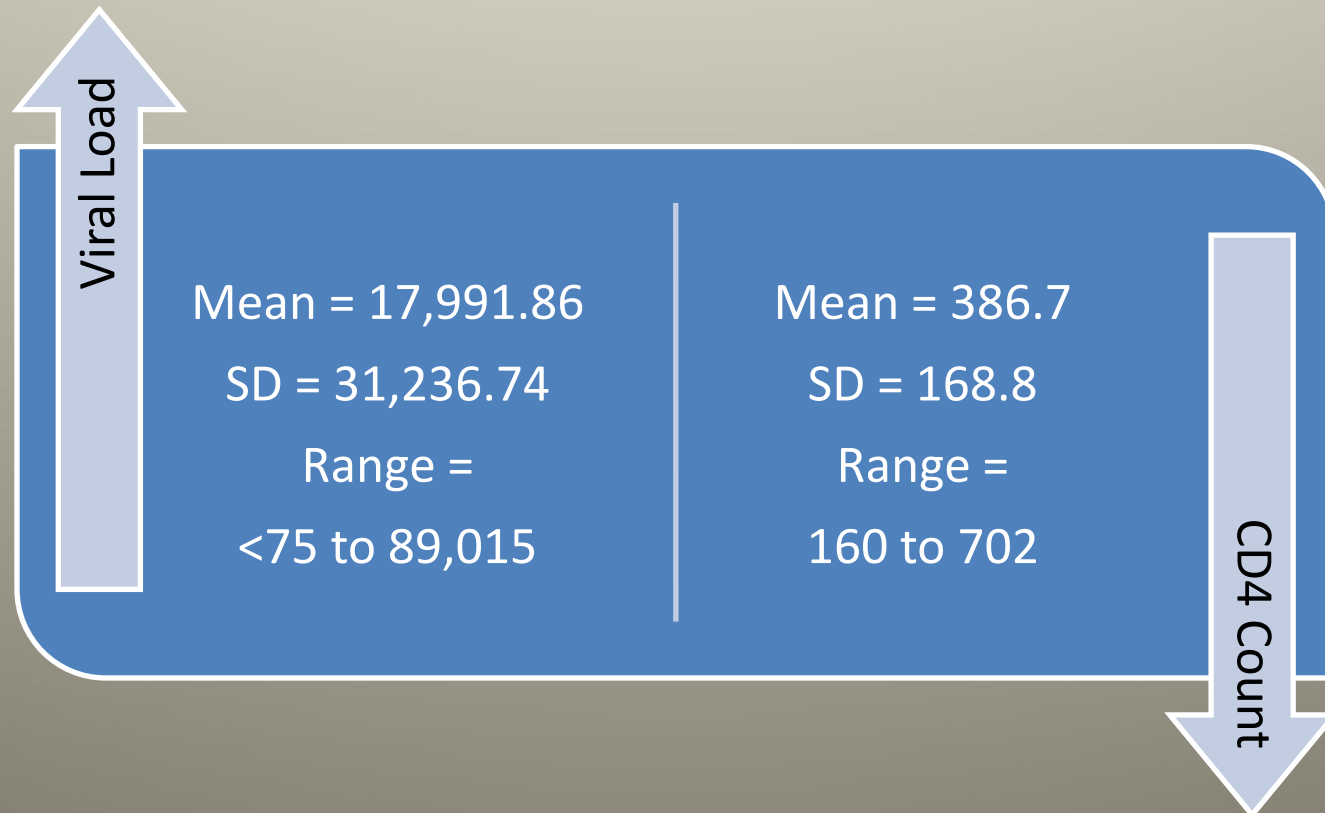
- 73.8% have history of drug use
- 6.9% are HIV+
  - 6.7% adult males
  - 14.3% adult females
  - 50% meet criteria for ART
    - 88% are in care

# HIV/AIDS epidemic in PR (Cont.)



## Behind the bars of Paradise: Incarceration and HIV

- In PR, we have documented it can take an average of 4 years to link to care at the community level



# Stigma as a determinant of health



- HIV-related stigma continue to impact HIV prevention and access to care
  - Mediate healthcare provision
- Perceived and felt gay-related stigma multiplies the impact of HIV stigma
  - Recent studies evidence the impact on the quality of life and mental health of gay men and other men who have sex with men in PR

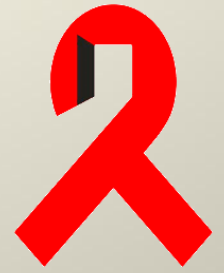
# HIV and health equity



The Capitol of Puerto Rico on June 26, 2015 after the SCOTUS decision on equal marriage

“After celebrating: The hard work for LGBT health equity continues”. – Makadon, 2015

# Mobility and migration



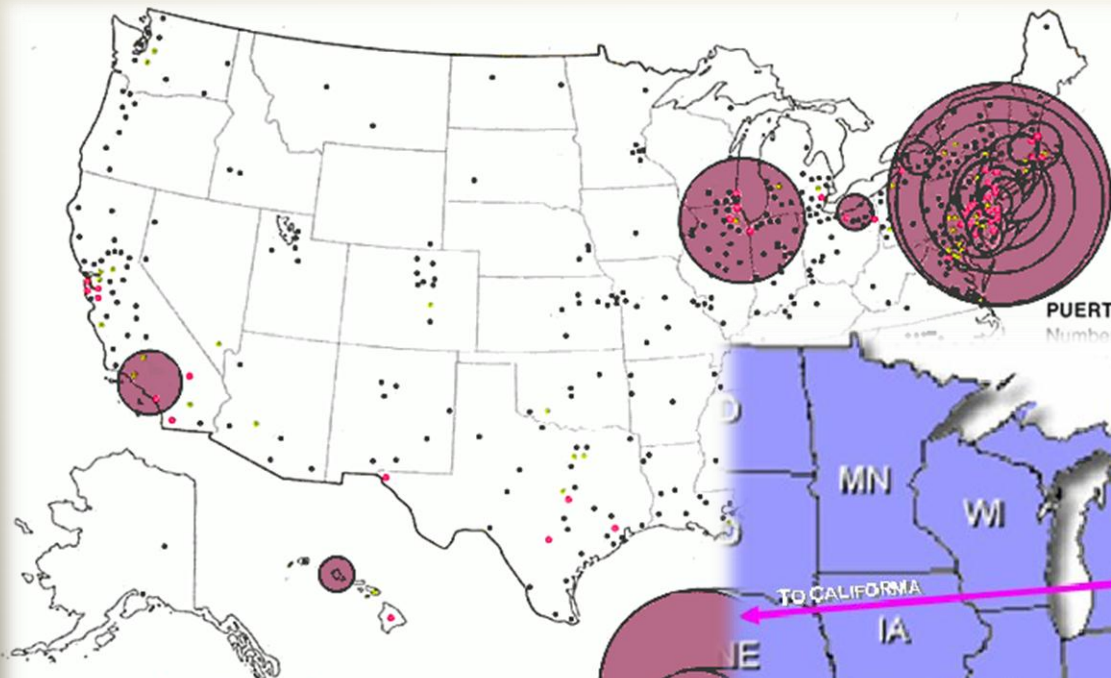
- A migratory pattern between PR and the continental U.S. (particularly to the east coast) has been documented since the 1950's.
  - This migration and mobility has been characterized according to the needs and opportunities that historic periods (industrialization, economic recession, etc.) have posed for those of Puerto Rican descent.
- Currently, there are nearly 761,000 Puerto Ricans living in NYC and over 4.7 million Puerto Ricans in the continental US.

# Mobility and migration (Cont.)



- Puerto Rican migration to the continental US, particularly the northeast, has increased mostly due to the island's economic landscape and inequity for sexual minorities.
- Simultaneously, although at a lower rate, the "returning migration" - people of Puerto Rican descent returning to the island - continues.



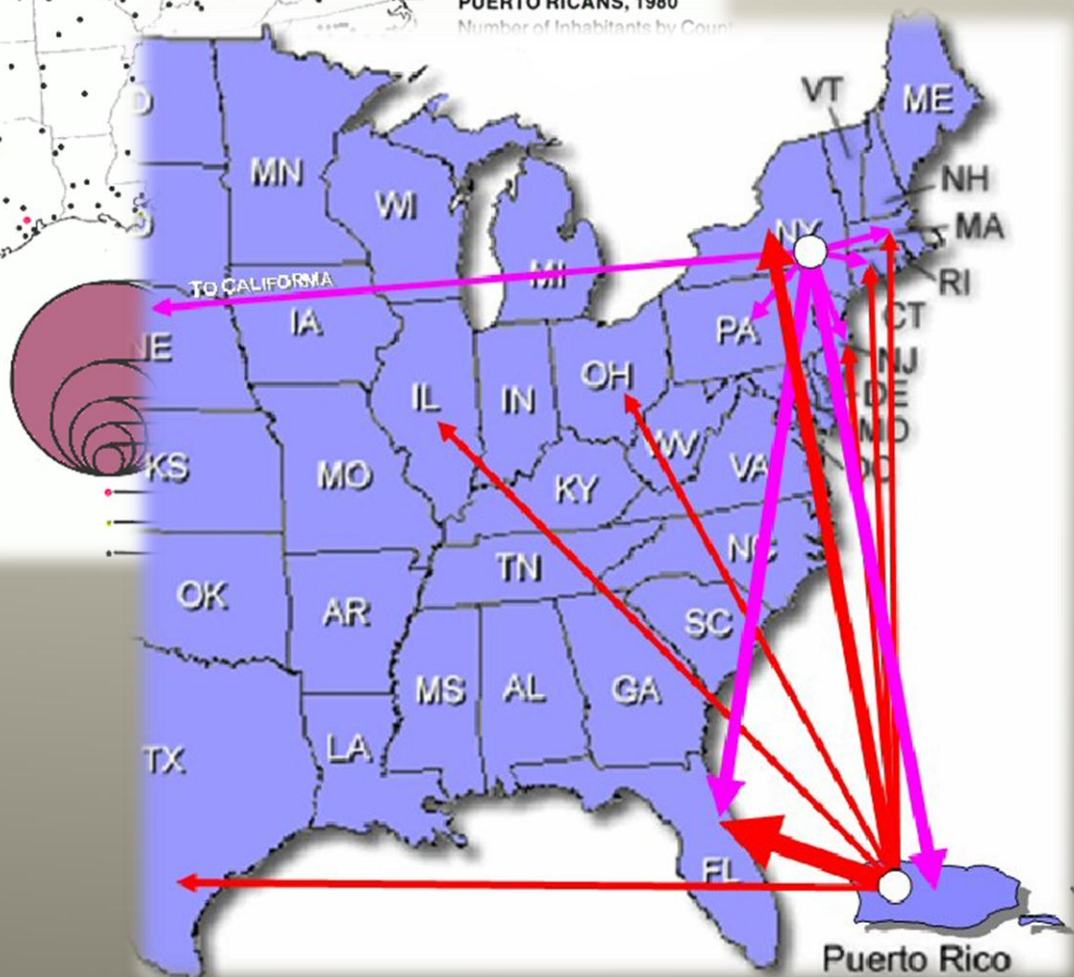


**PUERTO RICANS, 1980**  
Number of Inhabitants by County

### Puerto Ricans in the 50 states

In the 1920s factory jobs—many in New York City's garment industry—drew Puerto Ricans to the

urban Northeast. As of 1980 half of the two million mainland Puerto Ricans lived in New York City and Chicago.



Puerto Rico

# Mobility and migration (Cont.)



- Mobility patterns have impacted the HIV trends in PR and among Puerto Rican descendants in the continental U.S.
- This “airbridge” has been studied specifically among injecting drug users.
  - Findings show inadequate risk reduction options for IDU in PR and increased sexual risks among mobile (migrants from PR to NY and vice versa) drug users.

# HIV/AIDS epidemic among Puerto Ricans



- Puerto Ricans who inject drugs, both in the Northeast US and in PR are among Latinos at the highest risk for contracting HIV.
- Puerto Rican comprise only 9% of the US Hispanic population, but nearly 23% of HIV cases among Hispanics are among those born in PR.

# Transnationalism



- Defined as “*the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.*”

- “The form, frequency, and intensity of transnationalism largely hinges on the nature of the relationship between sending and receiving countries”



# Transnational Identity Cont.



## Puerto Rican Transnational Identity

- The interaction between mainland-born and island-born Puerto Ricans brings to light other processes of identity formation and issues of belonging that demonstrate how Puerto *Ricanness* is constantly negotiated in the migration experience.
- The construction of a Puerto Rican identity within the migrant community is based on various notions of differences where place of origin and the ability to speak Spanish are important markers. Furthermore, the presence of numerous Puerto Rican institutions in the US is helping create a unique community landscape, a “new” Puerto Rico.

# Transnational Identify cont.



## Puerto Rican Transnational Identity

“Although Puerto Ricans are US citizens, they cross significant geographic, cultural, and linguistic borders when they migrate between the Island and the mainland, and this displacement helps to reconfigure their national identities”.

# Transnational practices Cont.



## Puerto Rico: Migration and Politics

- Transnational colonial state is exemplified by Puerto Rico's relationship with the U.S. In this case, the sending and receiving nations share the same citizenship, but migrants from the dependent territory to the metropole are treated as “foreigners in the ‘mother country’”.
- Due to the political status of Puerto Rico with the US, diasporic communities often develop different representations of identity from the US canon by stressing their broad kinship, cultural, and emotional ties to Puerto Rico, rather than its narrow linguistic and territorial boundaries.

# Transnational practices Cont.



## Communication

Ease of communication due to shared electronic networks, including cellphone and fiber optic-based services





# Transnational practices Cont.



## Travel

Meet Oscar and the  
experience in the PR-NY  
airbridge



# Transnational practices Cont.

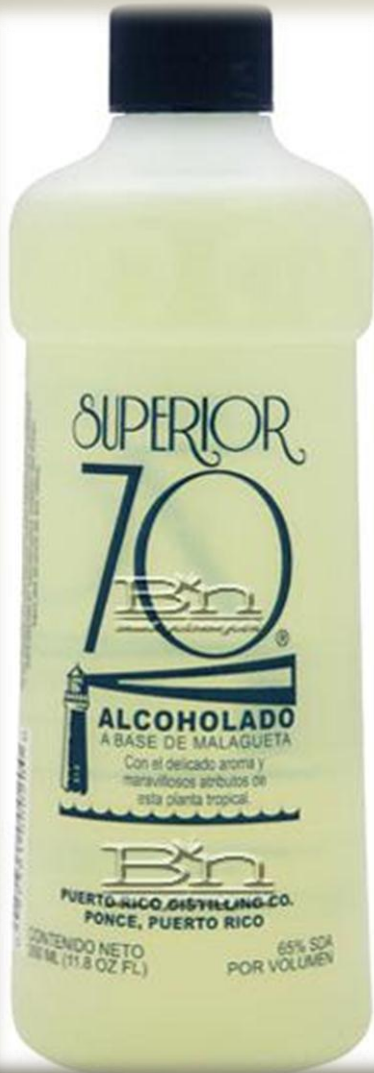


## Language

Preference of Spanish, English or Spanglish



# Transnational practices Cont.



## Economic and Social Remittances

- It is common to send money to PR
  - Cost of living vs. average salary in PR
  - Taking care of family members
- Exchange of food and remedies using USPS

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Questions?

**THANK YOU!**

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