

# 2.4 Comparing Cuba and Puerto Rico



**Main Idea** Cuba and Puerto Rico took very different economic paths in the 20th century.

In a quest for silver, gold, and other riches, Spain settled the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico as colonies. The islands had ideal conditions for growing sugarcane, and both had good natural **harbors**, or places where ships could land protected from the open sea.

## Cuba's Path to the 21st Century

Spain ruled Cuba as a colony from 1511 to 1898. The Spanish built the city of Havana, where European ships carrying cargo such as silver and corn stopped before crossing the Atlantic. Spanish colonists also built sugarcane plantations.

However, native Cubans wanted to control their own resources and political destiny. During the 1800s, they staged several failed rebellions. They finally won independence from Spain in 1898, after the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War. The U.S. military continued to occupy Cuba and control much of the country's economy. Over the next 50 years, Cuba's government was controlled by a series of leaders. Many of them were corrupt, or dishonest, and led with complete control as **dictators**.

In 1959, a revolutionary leader named Fidel Castro overthrew Cuba's dictator. Castro's military took control of the government, seized all land and personal property, and established communism in Cuba. Castro took over U.S.-owned businesses and built ties with the Soviet Union, an enemy of the United States. The United States eventually cut economic and political ties with Cuba.

Until the early 1990s, the government in Cuba controlled all economic activity. In 1993, to improve Cuba's economy, the government started to allow citizens to open their own businesses.

## Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

Like Cuba, Puerto Rico was a Spanish colony from the 1500s until 1898. During this time the Spanish mined gold and built huge sugarcane plantations. Spanish control made most native Puerto Ricans poor, so they tried to rebel against Spain.

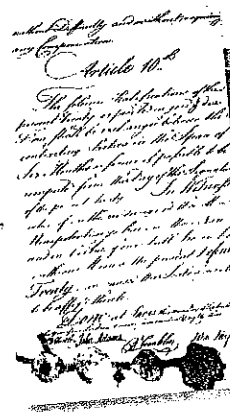
During the Spanish-American War, the United States sent troops to Puerto Rico. The island's location was important to U.S. military and economic interests. After Spain surrendered to the United States in 1898, the Treaty of Paris made the island a U.S. territory. In 1917, Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship.



CUBA

1850

### PUERTO RICO



1898 Treaty of Paris grants Cuban independence. U.S. continues to occupy.

1900

1901 U.S. sets up naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

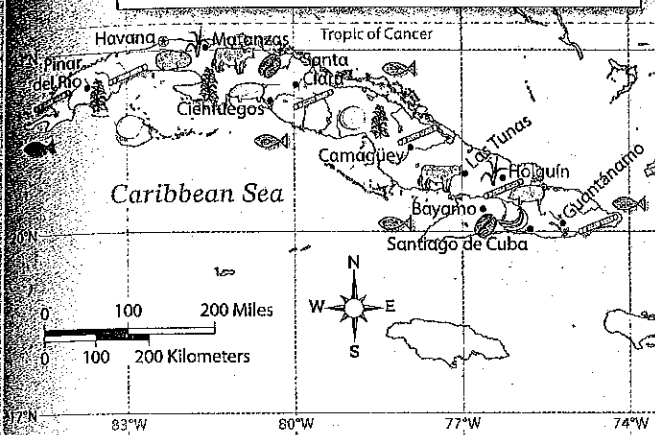
1898 Treaty of Paris grants control of Puerto Rico from Spain to U.S.

1917 Puerto Ricans are made U.S. citizens.

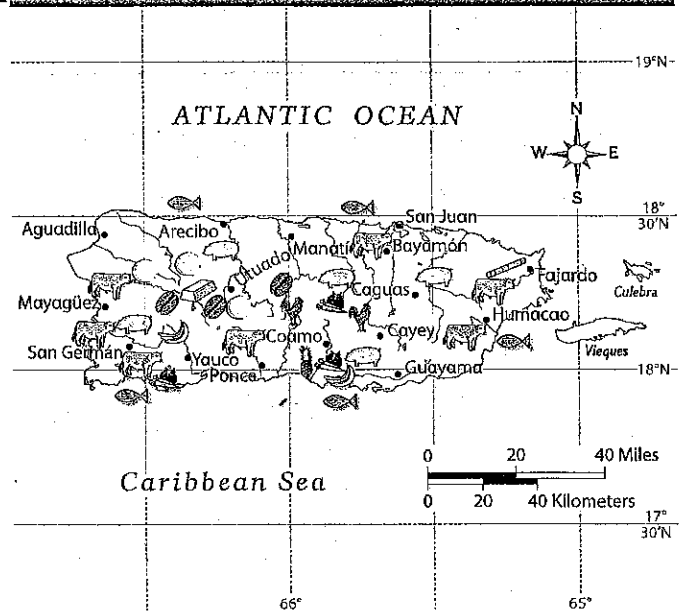
## CUBA'S ECONOMIC RESOURCES

### Economic products and resources

Bananas	Fish	Sugarcane
Cattle	Pineapples	Swine
Citrus fruit	Potatoes	Tobacco
Coffee	Poultry	Vegetables
Copper	Rice	



## PUERTO RICO'S ECONOMIC RESOURCES



For many years, Puerto Ricans worked for more freedom from the United States. In 1952, Puerto Rico became a U.S. **commonwealth**, a nation that governs itself but is part of a larger country.

Unlike Cubans, Puerto Ricans have political freedom. Like the United States, Puerto Rico benefits from a free-enterprise economy. The government has done what it can to help Puerto Ricans start new businesses, and shift the economy away from farming toward manufacturing. Thousands of Puerto Ricans work in factories that make high-tech products. Many also work in the tourist industry.

### Before You Move On

**Summarize** How did differences in the governments of Cuba and Puerto Rico affect economic opportunities in the two countries?

### ONGOING ASSESSMENT

## MAP LAB

- Interpret Maps** Which resource is most of the land used for in Cuba? in Puerto Rico?
- Region** Look at the climate map in Section 1.1 and the maps above. Why would the economic resources be similar in both countries?
- Make Inferences** Why would the United States have wanted control over Cuba and Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War?
- Interpret Time Lines** Which events show each country's connection to the United States?

Fidel Castro



1959

Castro seizes power; Cuba becomes a Communist country.

1950

Silvia Calderón



PRESENT

2000

Puerto Rico elects its first woman governor, Silvia Calderón.

1925

Communist Party of Cuba is formed.

1920s

Nationalist Party in Puerto Rico argues for Independence from United States.

1952

Puerto Rico becomes U.S. Commonwealth.