

Coral Murphy Marcos

Master's Project Abstract

### **Faith Moves Mountains In In Puerto Rico's Elections**

The master's project by Coral Murphy Marcos describes the emergence of Proyecto Dignidad, a conservative political party in Puerto Rico, and the island's political shift. Amid economic recessions, political corruption, and natural disasters, the church has had major influence in rural communities by providing essential support to residents in times of crisis. Proyecto Dignidad is capitalizing on this sentiment by promising to inject Christian values in local government.

The party's popularity is growing, with over 400 candidates running for political seats under its banner, a huge spike from the 29 candidates in 2020. Economic woes, exacerbated by events like Hurricane María in 2017, have led to a decline in the island's population and a lack of trust in traditional political parties. Proyecto Dignidad, using populist and nationalist sentiments, seeks to address Puerto Rico's issues by prioritizing conservative causes such as anti-abortion policies and opposition to vaccination requirements in public schools.

Proyecto Dignidad's emergence has disrupted Puerto Rico's traditional two-party system, offering an alternative to voters disillusioned with the status quo. The party's success in the 2020 elections, including the election of two conservative lawmakers, points to a shift in political dynamics. By focusing on rebuilding Puerto Rico and appealing to younger voters, Proyecto Dignidad aims to transcend the statehood question that has long divided the island's politics.

## Source List

**Wanda Arzuaga:** A candidate for Proyecto Dignidad running for mayor in Juncos

**Rafael Cox Alomar:** a law professor at the University of the District of Columbia

**Juan Caraballo Resto:** an anthropology professor at the University of Puerto Rico who focuses on the intersection of religion and politics

**Javier Jiménez:** Proyecto Dignidad candidate running for governor