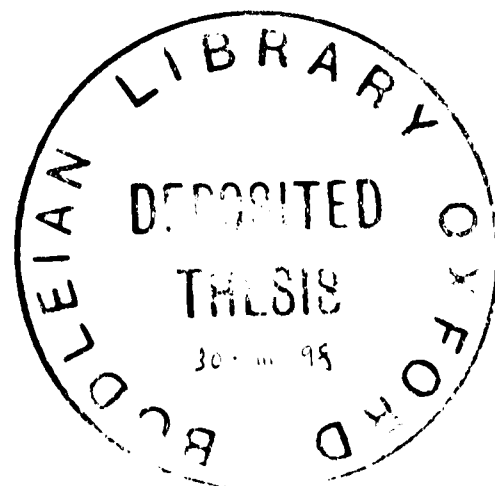


COLOURING THE NATION: RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

David Howard
Jesus College, Oxford

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Oxford
Trinity Term, 1997



Abstract

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This thesis analyses the importance of race for the construction of nation and ethnicity in the Dominican Republic, a situation in which racial ancestry and spatial proximity to Haiti are paramount. Firstly, racial legacies are of primary importance among a Dominican population where cultural, linguistic and religious differences are limited. Racial differences are manipulated through the unequal standing and significance given to European, African and indigenous ancestries. European and indigenous heritages in the Dominican Republic have been celebrated at the expense of an African past. Secondly, Dominican identity is constructed *vis-à-vis* Haiti, most notably with respect to race and nation, and through the ancillary variables of religion and language. The importance of the Dominican Republic's shared insularity and shared history with Haiti is stressed throughout the study, though a racially-constructed fault-line has arisen from this territorial and historical association.

In general terms, social geographers would describe the Dominican population as *mulato/a*. Dominicans, however, describe race with a plethora of colour-coded terms, ranging from coffee, chocolate, cinnamon and wheat, to the adoption of *lo indio*, a device which avoids using *mulato/a* or *negro/a*. The term *indio/a* is a key component of Dominican racial perception. It translates as 'indian', a much-used reference to the island's indigenous inhabitants before the arrival of Columbus in 1492. *Negritud* is associated in popular Dominican opinion with the Haitian population. *Dominicanidad*, on the other hand, represents a celebration of whiteness, Hispanic heritage and Catholicism.

The analysis of secondary material is contextualised throughout the thesis by the results of field work undertaken during twelve months of research in the Dominican Republic, consisting of two visits between 1994 and 1995. Semi-informal interviewing of three hundred residents in three study sites focused on the issues of anti-Haitian sentiment and the bias towards a light aesthetic in Dominican society. Two survey sites were urban neighbourhoods of lower and upper-middle class status in the capital city of Santo Domingo, and the other was an area of rural settlement named Zambrana. Interviews were structured around a mixed fixed and open response survey.

The first chapter introduces the outline of research and the location of survey sites. Chapter two analyses the historical basis of race in the Dominican Republic, examined in

the context of relations with Haiti. The development of Dominican society from the colonial period is outlined, and the influence of anti-Haitian sentiment and the use of *indio/a* as an ambiguous racial term discussed with reference to contemporary opinion. The third chapter opens up the analysis of social differentiation in the Dominican Republic by considering the role of class stratification and its implication for racial identification. The development of social classes is described and the impact of race and class studied in the three survey sites.

The fourth chapter addresses the role of race in popular culture, with a specific focus on the household. Racial terminology is frequently used in combination with the presuppositions inherent in a patriarchal culture. Women's roles are reviewed with particular reference to household structure, occupation and the gendered nature of race under patriarchal norms. The domestic or private sphere is a key site for the expression of patriarchy, but it is also the location for the practice of Afro-syncretic religious beliefs, which themselves are racialised and gendered. Aspects of race in everyday lives, thus, are inherently gendered, domesticated and sanctified.

Chapter five expands the analysis of race to include the influence of international migration on Dominican racial identification. The Dominican Republic is a transnational society which relies on migrant remittances and commerce, in particular from the migration of Dominicans to the United States. International migration has dramatically shaped Dominican society over the last three decades. The chapter considers the effect of this two-way flow of people, capital and culture on Dominican perceptions of race. Despite the influence of transnationalism on most aspects of Dominican society, the impact of United States' race relations on migrant and non-migrant racial identity has been limited.

The last two substantive chapters focus upon the specific aspects of race and nation as revealed through contemporary Dominican literature and politics. The sixth chapter reviews the importance of *negritud* in contemporary literature, and argues that many modern writers maintain idealised and misleading perceptions of the racial reality. Chapter seven concentrates on the impact of race during the Dominican elections in 1994 and 1996. Overt racial prejudice marked the campaigns of leading political parties, and the alleged Haitian 'threat' to Dominican sovereignty became a dominant item on the election agenda.

Finally, the concluding chapter outlines existing theories of race and ethnicity, analysing their applicability to the Dominican situation and suggesting alternative viewpoints in the light of the current research. It is suggested that the promotion of a popular democratic ideology of multiculturalism could provide the basis for effective anti-racist policy in the Dominican Republic.

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Lauda finem.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The meanings of race, nation and ethnicity hinge on the context in which they are discussed. This research analyses the importance of race for the construction of nation and ethnicity in the Dominican Republic, a situation in which racial ancestry and spatial proximity to Haiti are paramount. Firstly, racial legacies are of primary importance among a Dominican population where cultural, linguistic and religious differences are limited. Racial differences are manipulated through the unequal standing and significance given to European, African and indigenous ancestries. European and indigenous heritages in the Dominican Republic have been celebrated at the expense of an African past. Secondly, Dominican identity is constructed *vis-à-vis* Haiti, most notably with respect to race and nation, and through the ancillary variables of religion and language. The importance of the Dominican Republic's shared insularity and shared history with Haiti is stressed throughout the study, though a racially-constructed fault-line has arisen from this territorial and historical association.

An ethnic group relates to a collectivity of people who are conscious of having common origins, interests and shared experiences. The feeling of belonging to such a group may follow national, linguistic, religious, cultural, or, as in the Dominican case, predominantly racial lines. Ethnicity is, thus, an umbrella term under which to group shared identities. These experiences are linked by commonalities of race, nation, religion, aesthetics, language and kinship. The current study is concerned primarily with race (that

aspect of ethnicity informed by socially-constructed issues of colour and phenotype) and nation (where real or imaginary territorial belonging is salient).

Race, as a component of ethnicity, is created by attaching social and cultural significance to physical features or colour, and then by grouping individuals according to phenotype. Colour categories represent arbitrary ascriptions or imposed discontinuities along a continuous spectrum. Inherent in the discussion of race in the Dominican Republic is the importance given to facial features and aesthetic evaluation. Colour plays an important role in social definition and self-description, becoming a sign of cultural and social affiliation. Degrees of whiteness and blackness denote not only racial distinctions but also signify European and African ancestries, hence cultural associations and ethnic origins.

The issue of race is fundamental to the discussion of nationalism in the Dominican Republic. The nation is a collective noun to represent a population, delimited by a territory, whether real or imaginary, which attaches that population to a place. Dominican nationalism, constructed with respect to Haiti, has often been coloured by a pervasive racism, centred on a rejection of African ancestry and *negritud*. This exclusion of an African past, and the manipulation of a European colonial legacy and indigenous heritage underpin the current analysis of race and nation in the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic is part of the former Spanish Caribbean. Contrary to Commonwealth Caribbean beliefs, the Spanish colonial legacy is demographically and by land area the most significant in the region (Table 1.1). For almost two centuries after 1492, the entire Caribbean region was part of the Spanish colonial empire. Hoetink contests the tendency in academic circles which has equated Caribbean characteristics

with those of the British Commonwealth. He stresses the importance of linguistic homogeneity and the influence of Catholicism as unifying factors amongst the former Spanish territories.¹ The Hispanic Caribbean constitutes two-thirds of the regional population, and accounts for three-quarters of the land surface area.

Table 1.1 **Caribbean populations and land area**

Region	Population	Land area (‘000s km ²)
Spanish-speaking Caribbean	22.6 million	173
Cuba	11.0 million	115
Dominican Republic	7.1 million	49
Puerto Rico	3.5 million	9
Haiti	6.7 million	28
English-speaking Caribbean	5.0 million	25
French Caribbean	1.0 million	3
Dutch Caribbean	0.2 million	1
Total Caribbean	35.5 million	230

Sources: Population Reference Bureau 1994 *World Population Data* Washington: Population Reference Bureau
 Rayner, C. et al (eds) 1996 *Philip’s Geographical Digest 1996-97* London: Heinemann

¹ Hoetink, H. 1985 “Race” and colour in the Caribbean. In Mintz, S. W. and Price, S. (eds) 1985 *Caribbean Contours* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 55-85, pp. 56-57

Race, racism and identity

The quantitative and qualitative aspects of the Dominican Republic's demographic composition pose great problems of accuracy and applicability, given the ambiguities involved in the definition and ascription of race. Strict racial categories become meaningless, confusing or blatantly inaccurate depending on the viewpoint of the observer or statistician. A census in 1940 declared that *mulatos/as* made up 77 percent of the population, *negros/as* 12 percent and *blancos/as* 11 percent.² In 1960, the enumerators of the national census were instructed to avoid registering Dominicans as *negro/a* where feasible, thus classifying less than a tenth of the population as such.³ Census material concerning race is therefore either unavailable or unreliable.

A national census was carried out in 1993, but only preliminary results have been published at present. The Dominican Republic experienced two presidential elections in 1994 and 1996, during which the analysis and publication of complete census details was given marginal priority. Accusations of fraud surrounded the results of the 1994 election, and it is likely that it became politically expedient for the government to withhold accurate details of the electorate's size.

In general terms, social geographers would describe the Dominican population as *mulato/a*. Some authors divide the population up into various proportions - 65 percent

² Alvarez Perelló, J. de J. 1973 La mezcla de razas en Santo Domingo y los factores sanguíneos *Eme-Eme* 2, 8: 67-98, p. 68

³ Larson, E. 1986 *A partially annotated working bibliography of and guide to publications of the 1920, 1935, 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1981 national population censuses of the Dominican Republic* Austin: Texas Population Research Centre Papers, University of Texas
Dirección General de Estadística 1960 *El cuarto censo nacional de población* Ciudad Trujillo: Sección de Publicaciones

mulato/a, 15 percent *blanco/a* and 15 percent *negro/a* are commonly quoted figures, the remaining five percent of the population being made up of other ethnic groups, such as Chinese or Lebanese.⁴ However, these figures are fairly meaningless. One author suggests that 96 percent of the Dominican population could be represented as *jabao*, describing a ‘multiplicity of colours.’⁵ Firstly, the continuum of skin colour and phenotype does not fall into neat groups. Secondly, and more importantly, what to one person may be *mulato*, will be *negro* to another. Racial terms are highly specific to person and place. Thirdly, Dominicans describe race with a plethora of colour-coded terms, ranging from coffee, chocolate, cinnamon and wheat, to the adoption of *lo indio*, a device which avoids using *mulato/a* or *negro/a*. The term *indio/a* is a key component of Dominican racial perception. It translates as ‘indian’, a much-used reference to the island’s indigenous inhabitants before the arrival of Columbus in 1492.

Bernardo Vega suggests that the refusal to acknowledge African ancestry was common thirty years ago, but that this perception has changed a great deal since then:

‘With the possible exception of Brazil, we have the greatest racial mix. Our culture is, essentially, a half-caste one. There are no reliable statistics on this, but it is probably right to say that two thirds of our population are half-caste and the other third is divided into fifteen percent of genuine blacks and fifteen percent genuine whites. The mix is not just racially apparent. It comes out in all sorts of other ways too - in music, for example... We are the only country in the whole of Latin America not to have claimed our independence from Spain. We claimed ours from Haiti. And although that was halfway through the last century, there is still the idea that we have to look for a way of separating ourselves from the country which conquered us for more than twenty years, hence the temptation to seek in Spain something that will distinguish us from the other part of the island.

⁴ For example, Logan R. W. 1968 *Haiti and the Dominican Republic* London: Oxford University Press, pp. 13-14

⁵ Corcino, D. A. 1988 *Identidad nacional* Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, p. 18

It's a quest which has really lost its *raison d'être*. What we are looking for now is a way of maintaining our identity in relation to North America, not Haiti.'⁶

Vega makes a salient comment regarding the importance of North American cultural influence with respect to Dominican society, but his words are otherwise heavily loaded with the conservative terminology and racist essentialism which, he argues, is redundant. He conceives race as a biochemistry of 'genuine' elements and 'half-caste' compounds. Race under these terms conflates biology, social experience and ethnicity, since it suggests that cultural traits are determined by genetic make-up. Musical ability thus becomes an outcome of the 'racial mix.'

Definitions of race and racism have filled many tomes of academic debate, frequently providing textual examples of the pervasive lack of action against racism. Racism remains a harsh fact based on theoretical fiction. Is the term 'race', as Montagu implies, so weighed down with false meaning that the use of the word is now untenable, provocative and dangerous?⁷ Or is there still room enough to use such a highly inflated and false theoretical concept by redirecting the evident potency of its use back upon itself? Williams argues that we cannot divorce words and concepts from the social context of their use.⁸ The discussion of race and ethnicity in Dominican society, whilst acknowledging etymological changes within racial discourse, is placed in the context of the everyday language of race.

⁶ Interview. In David, D. 1992 Dominican Republic Country Report *The Courier* 131: 10-46, pp. 14-15

⁷ Montagu, A. 1974 *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: the fallacy of race* fifth edition New York: Oxford University Press

⁸ Williams, R. 1983 *Keywords* London: Fontana

Can we legitimately use the term 'race'? Race as a biological category does not exist. The range of human gene frequencies provides a correspondingly infinite kaleidoscope of body forms and colours. Grouping humans into biological categories of gene types has been recognised as a fatuous exercise, although terms such as Caucasian still appear in the popular media. Biological definitions linked to socio-cultural traits have long been refuted, and the arbitrary choice of gene-type frequencies to label 'race' groups has been shown to be worthless, leaving social scientists to delve into the social-psychological concept of race as a social construction. Phizacklea and Miles have argued that if social scientists employ the term 'race', then they themselves are guilty of providing an heightened analytical status to what is nothing more than a social or ideological construction.⁹ Authors must therefore be wary of projecting and legitimising race as a predetermined or relevant concept. People recognise and endorse the hollowness of race, yet continue to believe in it, organising their social relations accordingly.¹⁰ Race is therefore subjectively real, or as real as people want or believe it to be.¹¹

This research focuses on individual and group constructs of race, but social interaction cannot be divided into independent categories of specific cause and effect. Class, race, gender and cultural traits never act independently of one another. The individual labelling of social categories may falsely suggest the independence of their nature and effect, since their influences cross-cut and interact according to the situation

⁹ Phizacklea, A. and Miles, R. 1980 *Labour and Racism* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 2

¹⁰ Cashmore, E. and Troyna, B. 1990 *Introduction to Race Relations* second edition London: Falmer, p. 32

¹¹ Cashmore, E. (ed). 1995 *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* third edition London: Routledge, p. 268

which stimulates the ethnic response. An individual's reaction to a specific situation will be determined by that individual's accumulated experience of mixed class, race, gender and cultural relations. Hence any consideration of, for example, racial identity in isolation from class, gender and cultural influences, and vice versa, becomes a flawed and sterile account.

When an individual reacts to a given situation he or she draws the response from a collective belonging - collective in terms of the accumulated personal experiences, and collective also since the individual's response corresponds to a similar group sentiment. An individual will exhibit a variety of situational responses, displaying various components of multi-faceted identities. Latin American identities are increasingly studied as cultures of mediation and paradox, which move away from previous racial and cultural stereotyping. Defining moments of selfhood are impossible to locate since identity 'blurs and dissolves as soon as it is confidently asserted.'¹²

Identities are both inclusive and exclusive. This notion of inclusion and exclusion is again manifest in the well-worked ruminations concerning Self and Other. The concept of the Other errs towards the acceptance of strict dichotomies, the either/or rigidity that pigeon-holes West and East, Black and White, Right and Wrong into binary, non-porous categories. Such dualism creates false structures biased towards established philosophies and reductionist analytical frameworks. Responses to the question, 'What does it mean to be Dominican?' frequently provoke the reaction, 'not Haitian.' The Other would appear to have significant potency in the construction of identity - not rich, not black, not gay,

¹² Wilson, R. 1995 Shifting frontiers: historical transformations of identities in Latin America *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 14, 1: 1-7, p. 6

not from there - yet changes in near schizophrenic leaps depending upon the context of the situation. Schizophrenia splits the mind, incorporating contradictions and self-denials which are evident in the widespread Dominican negation of African ancestry and antagonism towards Haitians. The Other is invariably perceived as black, heathen and alien to white, Spanish *dominicanidad* or 'Dominicanness.' Haiti in popular prejudice, stands for all that is not Dominican: *négritude*, Africa and non-Christian beliefs.

A recent psychological study has emphasised the importance of the stigmatised Other in the construction of racial and ethnic prejudice.¹³ In the Dominican Republic, popular belief about Haitians provides the false stereotypes from which to construct an out-group, a coherent focus amid a confusion of racial visibility and explanation. An alternative interpretation of the contrasting medley of ethnic identities within and between Caribbean societies seeks order through the theory of chaos. Benítez-Rojo uncovers the confusion of syncretic cultures, and recounts their ordered repetition throughout the Caribbean islands, most notably via the framework of plantation society.¹⁴ The plantation, he argues, is the commonality from which to explore the region's ethnicities.

Identity is the feeling of belonging which informs an individual or group character at a given time and place. It is constructed both in the context of the current situation and with reference to the past whereby meaning and identity are continually negotiated through interaction. Contact occurs within the field of research, and between the

¹³ Westhoff, W. 1993 A psychological study of albinism in a predominantly mulatto Caribbean community *Psychological Reports* 73: 1007-1010

¹⁴ Benítez-Rojo, A. 1992 *The Repeating Island: the Caribbean and the post-modern perspective* London: Duke University Press

researcher and the researched. Barnes and Duncan have noted that 'writing about worlds reveals as much about ourselves as it does about the worlds represented.'¹⁵ This analysis considers the complete context - social, historical, institutional, political - of the subject under study and the written text itself. Thus, an attempt by a male, middle class, European writer to grasp the realities, in his terms, of Dominican ethnicities may reveal as much about the author as about the subject under investigation. The subjectivity of study extends through to the reaction of the audience. Barnes and Duncan again note in their research on text, discourse and metaphor that critical judgement ultimately remains within academia.

In the field of research, identity holds a negotiated status, an amalgam of subjective and objective impulses negotiated by the researcher and the researched. Negotiation, however, invariably follows partisan lines. Analysis aims to study identity expressed as a conscious feeling, but the student may then manipulate the consciousness of the informant, knowingly or otherwise. The subconscious informs the perception of identity, but remains an enigma to the researcher. The observer aims to experience the experience of others in order to understand the context of the research - here lies the fundamental problem for any study of identity. A conscious effort by the researcher to reveal an identity may at best hover at the margins of the subconscious, or at worst distort a subjective reality. Wittgenstein suggests that the opaque lens through which the researcher frames the subject is a problem inherent in any study of social interaction:

¹⁵ Barnes, T. J. and Duncan, J. S. 1992 *Writing Worlds: discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of the landscape* London: Routledge, p. 3

We... say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language, we do not *understand* the people... We cannot find our feet with them.¹⁶

A similar distance has been expressed by Kristeva, who argues that even fluency in another language will never allow the linguist to pronounce and understand all that can be spoken in that language.¹⁷ Research has to contend with the unfathomable noises which echo through any methodological framework or analytical approach, even when seemingly constructed in the most practical and unbiased manner. Given the subjectivity of identity and its analysis, Geertz outlines a best-guess policy:

Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape.¹⁸

Of course, the researcher will not know for sure which are the better guesses, but that remains the dilemma of research. The consideration of ethnicity and identity in the Dominican Republic can only be an interpretation of what the researcher perceives the situation to be, producing an analysis consisting of, one hopes, the better guesses.

Forms of identity are transitory and situational. Identity is an impulsive response to various stimuli. As a negotiated status, it is a reaction to a physical or emotional impulse or challenge that elicits a psychological response. Hence, identity is a temporally and spatially-induced phenomenon. The following stanza was written at the beginning of

¹⁶ Quoted in Geertz 1975, p. 13

¹⁷ Kristeva, J. 1988 *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* Paris: Folio Essais, pp. 26-29

¹⁸ Geertz, C. 1975 *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 20

the nineteenth century, and illustrates the transitional nature of identity through the changes in sovereignty experienced by the Dominican people:

Yesterday I was born Spanish,
in the afternoon I was French,
by the evening I was Ethiopian,
today they say I am English.
I do not know what I will be!¹⁹

Within a shorter time scale, identity may be evoked instantaneously. A family member may not consciously register an ethnic identity whilst in the household, but only when confronted by forms of prejudice in the wider Dominican society. Identity only becomes a reality to the individual when certain responses are stimulated from a reservoir of identities capable of being summoned in differing contexts. This is fundamental to the analysis of identity as a transitory and situational reaction. The stimulation of racial identities will occur in a context where race is believed to be salient to the form of social interaction. Racism is often the basis for this identification.

Racism describes the range of prejudiced and discriminatory sentiments which extend from nationalism to more overt forms of hatred based upon race. It is an ideology which uses visual or biological criteria to signify unequal collectivities. Hall makes a distinction between overt and inferential racism. Inferential racism describes apparently naturalised or allegedly neutral representations of race based on the premise of unquestioned assumptions.²⁰ Immigration, for example, is often opposed on the grounds

¹⁹ Padre Juan Vázquez, quoted in Franco, F. J. 1989 *Los negros, los mulatos y la nación dominicana* eighth edition Santo Domingo: Editora Valle, p. 74. (Translations throughout the thesis are by the author.)

²⁰ Hall, S. 1990 The whites of their eyes. In Alvarado, M. and Thompson, J. O. 1990 *The Media Reader* London: British Film Institute, pp. 7-23, pp. 12-13

that nationalism is a natural human response, rather than an exclusionary, racist reaction.

Overt racism is the elaboration of an openly racist argument.

Racist discourse tends to be polarised around issues of inferiority or superiority, subordination or domination, or expressed through a false history of naturalness. Inferential racism expressed in the literature and history of the Dominican Republic is well encapsulated by Hall's statement: 'The 'white eye' is always outside the frame - but sees and positions everything within it.'²¹ This white bias in Caribbean social relations, the reification of the white aesthetic, is well documented. However, the eye does not have to be 'white' to cast a racist glare. Racial prejudice operates between and among all members of society.

Dominican society is, of course, not only subject to racial stratification, but divided by class relations. How does race relate to class in the Dominican Republic? Race is not reducible to class even when they become mutually entangled and enmeshed in societal structure. In Caribbean societies, neither race nor class may be dismissed. Hall adopts a useful approach to relations of race and class. He argues that social divisions can be explained largely by economic processes - race is the 'modality' through which class relations are experienced.²² Race is not reducible to class, but, in Hall's terms, social struggles may be 'articulated' through race. Race relations always operate within the framework of a class-based society.

²¹ Hall. In Alvarado and Thompson 1990, p. 14

²² Hall, S. 1980 Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance. In UNESCO 1980 *Sociological Theories: race and colonialism* Paris: UNESCO, pp. 305-345, p. 341

The Dominican Republic has a specific history and physical location which heavily influence the perception of race today. The population of seven million contains people of diverse origins, but Pérez Cabral describes the Republic as the only true *mulato* country in the world.²³ However, the term *mulato/a* has seldom been used by Dominicans to describe their ethnicity. Historically, strong European heredity and ‘purity of blood’ were emphasised by the Dominican elite.²⁴ Three groups formed the demographic basis for colonial society in the Dominican Republic - the indigenous population, Spanish settlers and African slaves. By the middle of the sixteenth century only a minute fraction of the indigenous population remained, although the notion of *lo indio* has become very much a part of contemporary Dominican identity. Lizardo, in an analysis of African culture in the Dominican Republic, has attempted to incorporate *indio/a* into a racial classification of the population.²⁵ Another survey stressed the importance of *indio/a* as an ethnic group rather than a mere notation of skin colour.²⁶ History has been re-negotiated, re-signified and reinvented to create a sense of the past appropriate to the social and political present.

Three statues outside the *Museo del Hombre Dominicano* in Santo Domingo tell a similar story. The statues, erected in the early 1980s, represent the figures of the indigenous leader Enriquillo, the African slave Lemba, and the Spanish priest Bartolomé de Las Casas. The inclusion of Lemba created some opposition to its position outside the

²³ Pérez Cabral, P. A. 1967 *La comunidad mulata* Santo Domingo: Editora Montaivo, p.11

²⁴ Deive, C. E. 1981 ¿Y tu abuela, dónde está? *Boletín de Museo del Hombre Dominicano* 16: 109-114

²⁵ Lizardo, F. 1979 *Cultura africana en Santo Domingo* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller

²⁶ Alcántara Almánzar, J. 1975 Encuesta sociológica de la ciudad de Santo Domingo *Ciencia* 2, 3: 5-30,p. 27

national museum of Dominican culture. Lemba was the leader of an important slave rebellion against the Spanish colonists. African heritage is deemed unsuitable not only at the individual level, but also in institutional terms.

Aesthetics are a key aspect of Dominican race. In advertisements which ask for employees of 'good presence' there is an implied bias towards whiteness or *la blancura*. In Dominican banks, for example, colour prejudice is most clearly seen at the cash desks. It is still very rare for a major bank to be staffed in the public space by dark-skinned cashiers. The aesthetics of racism are illustrated in a study of university students who were asked if they would marry a darker-skinned partner. Fifty-five percent replied that they would not, frequently expressing their concern for the 'corruption' of physical appearance through 'race mixing.'²⁷ Subsequent writing by the same author outlines a basis of racist logic in the Dominican Republic which is often portrayed as harmless, or disguised by a traditional rivalry with Haiti.²⁸ Common sayings or popular folklore frequently incorporate racial or ethnic prejudice.²⁹

African ancestry in Dominican society is largely ignored or denied. By downgrading African-Caribbean identity, aspirations for a lighter aesthetic automatically rise on the other side of the scale of perception. Hoetink writes that 'few Dominicans have not

²⁷ Menéndez Alarcón, A. V. 1987 *El universitario dominicano* Santo Domingo: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, p. 52

²⁸ Menéndez Alarcón, A. V. 1994 Racial prejudice: a Latin American case *Research in Race and Ethnic Relations* 7: 299-319, p. 303

²⁹ Fernández Rocha, C. 1975 El refranero popular dominicano: apuntes sobre el blasón popular negro en la República Dominicana *Eme-Eme* 8, 18: 53-62

Deive, C. E. 1973 El prejuicio racial en el folklore dominicano *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* 8: 75-96

Rodríguez Demorizi, E. 1975 *Lengua y folklore de Santo Domingo* Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra

judged the period of Haitian domination as a black page in the history of a people that would have liked to be white.’³⁰ Does this represent a clear aspiration to be *blanco/a*, or simply the wish not to be perceived as African-Caribbean? Many Dominicans are more concerned to disassociate themselves from Haiti, than claim ‘white lineage.’ A plethora of terms is used to avoid the implication of African ancestry. *Trigueño/a*, *rosadito/a*, *desteñado/a*, *rubio/a* and *cenizo/a* respectively refer to skin colour as wheat-coloured, rosy, faded, blond or fair, and dark or ashen. These terms are regularly applied to the slightest variation of colour and tend to be wholly inconsistent and variable in their usage. The latter two, *rubio/a* and *cenizo/a*, are located at opposite ends of the colour spectrum, but differentiation may be slight according to the context of their usage.

The aesthetic matters. Racial description frequently focuses on perceptions of ugliness and beauty. One respondent during interviewing combined her confusion of the racial complex with that of physical attraction: ‘*Prietos haitianos*, they’re ugly. There are some *negritos dominicanos finos*. Not all are rough-looking. Being *prieto* is the same as *azulito*... *Blancos*? They’re too white... they’ve all been washed in milk!’ Haitians, she says, are dark-skinned and ugly, and *blancos/as* are too pale. Some *negros* Dominicans may be good-looking, but not if their skin colour is so dark as to appear blue (*azul*). The regular correlation of ‘bad hair’ and ‘ordinary’ features, and their juxtaposition *vis-à-vis* the desired traits of ‘straight’ hair and ‘fine’ features, manifests itself through a bias for European, and now North American, identity in terms of aesthetics and culture. The white bias, especially in elite circles, stems from a history of antagonism with Haiti.

³⁰ Hoetink. In Mörner 1970, p. 117

Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic from 1930 to 1961, actively castigated Haitian and African ancestry. His grandparents were either *negro/a* or *mulato/a*, so he resorted to lightening his skin with cosmetic powders. Trujillo was acutely aware of his ethnic and socio-economic origins, having been born outside the traditional elite. Commissioned biographies stated that he was descended from a Spanish officer and a French *marquis*, and his parents were officially declared 'pure' French and Spanish.

Spain, the former colonial power, has frequently been celebrated in elite circles as *la Madre Patria*, and Europe was conceived as the source of Dominican culture and civility. In 1896, a Dominican writer constructed a 'mental photograph' of himself in a national newspaper, which illustrated his European aspirations.³¹ His musical and literary tastes were exclusively European, and his desired residence was Paris. None of the twenty statements which he made about himself included any reference to Dominican society. Whilst this bias has been substituted for a dependency on the United States in virtually all aspects of Dominican life, the bias towards a light aesthetic remains fundamental to any consideration of contemporary social relations.

The location of research

The analysis of secondary material is contextualised throughout the thesis by the results of field work undertaken during twelve months of research in the Dominican Republic, consisting of two visits between 1994 and 1995. Semi-informal interviewing of three

³¹ Quoted in Hoetink 1982, p. 162

hundred residents in three study sites focused on the issues of anti-Haitian sentiment and the bias towards a light aesthetic in Dominican society. Two survey sites were urban neighbourhoods in the capital city of Santo Domingo, and the other was an area of rural settlement around Zambrana (Appendix A). Interviews were structured around a mixed fixed and open response survey (Appendix B). One hundred residents were interviewed in each site, and the duration of interviews ranged from thirty minutes to two hours. Additional non-structured interviews were arranged with academics, writers, politicians and members of organisations concerned with issues of race and ethnicity. A discussion group was also held with students from a government school in Gualey, an urban neighbourhood in Santo Domingo.

The interviews were carried out following the presidential elections in May, 1994. The elections were of great significance, since the elderly, white President Balaguer was opposed, principally, by Dr Peña Gómez, a black politician of Haitian parentage. Given the long-standing and pervasive antagonism between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and the evident racism in many aspects of Dominican society, the presidential elections became a bitter forum for thinly disguised racial politics. A second research visit to Santo Domingo during the summer of 1995 allowed further discussion and informal interviews to be carried out, this time during the run-up to the 1996 presidential elections, which were again characterised by a racialised political agenda. Whilst the survey results cannot claim to represent the views of an entire population of over seven million people, they nevertheless provide informative insights into the issues of race and ethnicity in the Dominican Republic.

The survey sites were chosen to provide a sample with a varied range of incomes and urban or rural experiences. Santo Domingo has a population of over 2 million people and is the capital of the Dominican Republic. Sixty percent of the Dominican population are classified as urban dwellers, with just under half of this urban population living in Santo Domingo itself.³² The national economy, however, is less marked by the urban primacy of Santo Domingo. The agricultural region of the Cibao in the north has always rivalled the capital's economy, and has traditionally been perceived by many as the cultural heartland of the country.³³ During the last decade, with the expansion of export production zones and the tourist industry, secondary urban centres have experienced rates of growth above that of Santo Domingo. The economy on the whole is one of the poorest in the western hemisphere, heavily reliant on tourism, ferronickel extraction and sugar production. Low labour costs have encouraged the growth of foreign-owned export manufacturing, located in free trade zones throughout the country.

The two neighbourhoods in Santo Domingo chosen for interview work exhibited markedly different socio-economic profiles (Table 1.2). The first site, Gazcue, is predominantly a middle and upper-middle-class neighbourhood. Following the rebuilding of the city after severe hurricane damage in 1930, Gazcue established itself as an elite residential area.³⁴ Today the neighbourhood is still perceived as a well-to-do residential zone, although the upper classes began to move out to the more modern and

³² Portes, A. , Itzigsohn, J. and Dore-Cabral, C. 1994 Urbanization in the Caribbean Basin: social change during the years of the crisis *Latin American Research Review* 29, 2: 3-37, p. 12

³³ Mella, P. 1989 Regiones y imaginaciones... en un breve espacio insular... *Estudios Sociales* 76: 89-101

³⁴ Moya Pons, F. 1994 Dominican Republic. In Greenfield, G. M. (ed). 1994 *Latin American Urbanisation: historical profiles of major cities* Westport: Greenwood Press, pp. 188-214, p. 209

affluent suburbs in the west of the city during the 1960s. The architecture of Gazcue is a mixture of modern apartment blocks and single-storey nineteenth- and twentieth-century town houses. The Presidential Palace is located in the north-east corner of Gazcue, and ambitious redevelopment during the 1970s led to the construction of the *Plaza de la Cultura* in the northern half of the neighbourhood, which houses the national theatre, art gallery and museums. Several companies have set up offices in the area, combined with a number of successful small businesses, restaurants and hotels. Despite this affluence, a few areas of the neighbourhood have become visibly run-down as the local property market stagnated during the 1980s. There have been recent calls for the government to recognise Gazcue as a national heritage site in an attempt to maintain the neighbourhood's traditional 'character.'³⁵

The second urban survey site, Los Guandules, is a low-income neighbourhood, situated north of the city centre, partly on marshland near the river. Los Guandules, the northern half of the district of Domingo Savio, originated during the late 1950s as a result of the relocation of city centre residents by the government, and more importantly, due to the increasing influx of rural migrants to the capital. The population of Santo Domingo doubled to over 300,000 between 1950 and 1960, largely because of rural-urban migration.³⁶ Many of these migrants settled to the north of the city centre, establishing the area as one of working-class housing and squatter settlements, particularly along the banks of the River Ozama. These *barrios obreros* have been a traditional location for

³⁵ *Listín Diario* 7 September 1994

³⁶ Navarro García, A. and Salzar Heredia, G. 1990 *El arquitecto y participación popular: mejoramiento urban de Los Guandules* unpublished thesis Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, p. 160

political militancy and civil unrest since the April Revolution of 1965, and continue to give rise to popular protests.³⁷ The initial settlement of Los Guandules was consolidated during the 1960s with the construction of a primary school, church and surgery. However, an element of residential uncertainty remains. The area has been targeted for urban renewal by the government during the last five years to provide a site for a new wharf development. It is unlikely that such plans will come to fruition in the foreseeable future, but the threat of relocation and forceful government intervention remains.³⁸

Los Guandules can be divided into two sections: the upper part of consolidated, single-story concrete housing, and the lower, poorer section of shanty dwellings on the edge of the river. The latter area is frequently affected by flooding, yet the installation of basic drainage could improve the living conditions and health environment for the whole neighbourhood.³⁹ Over three-quarters of residents have no direct source of potable water, and, although the majority have access to electricity (especially in the upper section), the supply is usually tapped illegally making it irregular and dangerous.⁴⁰

³⁷ *El Siglo* 21 July 1994

³⁸ Ureña, C. 1994 *La Ciénaga: ¿foco de contaminación o una excusa?* *Hoja* 5, 11: 25, 27

³⁹ *El Siglo* 21 August 1995

Cela, J. 1987 *Espacios urbanos y conflictos sociales: el caso de la zona norte de Santo Domingo* *Ciencia y Sociedad* 12, 3: 347-359

⁴⁰ Censo Parroquial 1983 *Un barrio se estudia a sí mismo: Los Guandules* Santo Domingo: Ediciones Populares

Table 1.2 Survey sites and interviewees: comparative characteristics

Characteristic	Site	Gazcue	Los Guandules	Zambrana	Dominican Republic
Population estimates		16,000	22,000	6,000	7.1 million
Male: female ratio		50 : 50	47 : 53	46 : 54	50 : 50
Average age of interviewee (years)		43.2	36.3	40.6	-
Average household size (persons)		4.4	5.1	5.5	3.9
Completed secondary education male: female (%)		74 : 46	11 : 11	9 : 9	34 : 42

Sources: Predominantly from the author's survey 1994, otherwise from:
 Oficina Nacional de Estadística 1985 *Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 1981*
 Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadística
 Oficina Nacional de Estadística 1994 *Resultos preliminares del Censo Nacional 1993*
 Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadística
 Báez, C. and Taulé, G. 1993 *Posición socio-cultural y economía de la mujer en la República Dominicana Género y Sociedad* 1, 2

The third study site is Zambrana, the name given to a dispersed collection of rural settlements in an area of mixed and subsistence farming in the centre of the country. Several foreign-owned banana and pineapple plantations provide agricultural labour opportunities, although the majority of holdings are less than five hectares. Incomes in this rural region are low, generally much lower than those found in poor urban areas, and many households exist at the subsistence level. An agro-forestry initiative, begun in 1984

by the non-governmental agency Enda-Caribe, has developed a successful programme of multiple cropping, diversifying local production from the traditional crops of coffee and cacao. Outside agriculture, the local economy and environment is dominated by the Falconbridge ferronickel mine and the gold mine of La Rosario Dominicana. The former Canadian company was handed over to Dominican management in 1986, although mining operations were curtailed dramatically in the 1990s due to falling profitability. The main river running through Zambrana has been contaminated by out-wash from the mine, and several residents were recently relocated by the mining company away from highly polluted sites.

Despite its position on a main road, Zambrana is a relatively remote location. There are no telephone lines, electricity mains or piped water supply. Lighting and the occasional television set are run off car batteries, and water is drawn from a series of wells located away from the contaminated groundwater near the mine. There are two primary schools, although secondary education requires a half-hour road trip to the regional urban centre of Cotuí. A surgery, four small Catholic and two Protestant chapels are visited on a weekly or monthly basis by the doctor and priests who live in Cotuí.

Interviews in Los Guandules and Zambrana were undertaken with the assistance of two local organisations, Ciudad Alternativa and Enda-Caribe, respectively. Members of these organisations provided valuable introductions to influential community leaders and helped to establish recognition and acceptance for interviewing in the area. As a resident in Gazcue for much of the research period, the researcher's access to an interview sample in this location posed fewer problems of trust. The timing and topic of the survey work were controversial, following the international denunciation of

fraudulent presidential elections in the Dominican Republic, in which the losing candidate also endured a long-running series of racist attacks as a result of his Haitian ancestry. National strikes and brief incidents of civil protest hindered research work at times, but overall the salience of the topic made respondents more ready to express their opinions and offer comments, since the very same issues were topics of popular conversation at that time.

Socio-economic differences between the survey sites are obvious even to the casual observer. A walk through the paved streets of Gazcue might be accompanied by the sound of classical music playing on an expensive stereo system, or by the crowd noise from a World Cup soccer match being broadcast live by cable television. In contrast, the dirt tracks of Zambrana linked remote clusters of houses, where the quiet of the landscape was occasionally broken by the *bachata* or *merengue* blaring out from the bass-bereft loudspeakers of a village store or *colmado*. The densely-packed neighbourhood of Los Guandules resonated more frequently to the frenetic tunes of the *merengueros*, but it was also the site of regular typhoid outbreaks.⁴¹ In order to illustrate concern over conditions of urban poverty, a national newspaper published a front-page photograph of three children in Los Guandules playing in the highly polluted waters of the Ozama river.⁴²

A questionnaire was used as the principle research tool for interviewing respondents in the three neighbourhoods, and a pilot test was carried out to assess the suitability of questions. The street layout of each area was obtained and the study site

⁴¹ Ferguson, J. 1993 Pain and protest: the 1984 anti-IMF revolt in the Dominican Republic. In Beckles H. Mc D. and Shepherd, V. A. (eds) 1993 *Caribbean Freedom: society and economy from emancipation to the present* London: Currey, pp. 566-574, p. 570

⁴² *Listín Diario* 12 September 1994

divided into quarters. Twenty-five interviewees were selected by random house calls in each quarter. Only one respondent per household was interviewed, and all interviewees were over sixteen years of age. The first half of the survey questions sought to establish a socio-economic profile for each interviewee, from which a class framework was calculated for the total sample. The remaining questions focused on issues of ethnicity, and acted as a template for further conversation. Comments were noted during the interview or recorded in writing as soon as possible afterwards. As much was gained from the way in which questions were perceived and dealt with during interviews, as from analysing the answers themselves.

An interview sample of three hundred people cannot be expected to represent the views of a population of over seven million people. It does, however, provide examples of opinions which are replicated in society at large. Results from the survey work are used throughout the thesis to support or challenge arguments formulated from the analysis of secondary data sources or from evidence gained via alternative sources, such as the media or everyday observations.

Interviewees were asked to describe their own race, as well as that of their partner and a close friend. Categories of race were also ascribed by the interviewer. The descriptions illustrate the complexities of internal and external definitions of ethnicity. For example, the racial description of an interviewee by the author is based on appearance and guesswork, whereas the self-definition of the interviewee incorporates personal bias and sentiment.

The definition of race in the Dominican Republic is related very closely to aesthetics - people have 'fine' or 'bad' hair, a 'clear' or 'burnt' complexion. An

investigation carried out by a Dominican researcher in the 1970s attempted to define and categorise Dominican racial characteristics, by analysing skin colour, hair colour and type, as well as eye colour among forty-eight interviewees in the city of Santiago. The study tried to classify people into five racial categories based on physical appearance, but used implicitly derogatory labels such as ‘bad’ and ‘good’ hair, and ‘fine’ and ‘ordinary’ features.⁴³ By definition, *negros/as* and *mulatos/as* had ‘bad’ hair.

Social prejudice is frequently phrased in aesthetic terms, and being *blanco/a* remains a social and aesthetic ideal for many. The subjectivity of race is shown by the discrepancy in the usage of the term *mulato/a*. In parts of the former British Caribbean, the term mulatto incorporates the notion of a lighter aesthetic, having been associated during colonial times with the legal category of freemen. Whereas many outsiders may view the Dominican population as *mulato/a*, within the country itself, the term is seldom used since it projects the negatively perceived image of African ancestry. This negation of African descent is the key to an understanding of race in the Dominican Republic.

Racial subjectivity is clear when the researcher’s ascriptions are compared with the self-descriptions of interviewees. From the author’s perspective, over two-thirds of the sample population could be described as *mulato/a* (Table 1.3). The vast majority of those interviewees described as *blanco/a* were from the Gazcue sample, with *negros/as* concentrated in Los Guandules and Zambrana. The author’s ascriptions differed markedly from the self-descriptions of race among interviewees. For the sample as a whole, 16.3 percent of respondents described themselves as *blanco/a* (Table 1.4). Racial identification

⁴³ Guzmán, D. J. 1974 Raza y lenguaje en el Cibao *Eme-Eme* 2, 2: 3-45

among Gazcue residents was more likely to employ terms such as *blanco/a* or *trigueño/a*. Three-quarters of all interviewees who used *blanco/a* to describe themselves were from this neighbourhood. *Trigueño/a* is a lightening term, corresponding to wheat-coloured.

Table 1.3 The author's description of the race of interviewees, according to survey site

% Race	Site	Gazcue	Los Guandules	Zambrana	Total sample
<i>Blanco/a</i>		8.0	0.7	1.0	9.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>		24.0	23.3	20.0	67.3
<i>Negro/a</i>		1.3	9.3	12.3	23.0
Total		33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 1.4 Self-described race among interviewees, according to study site

Survey site Race %	Gazcue	Los Guandules	Zambrana	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>	12.3	2.7	1.3	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>	5.7	23.3	26.3	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	2.3	2.7	0.7	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	2.0	-	0.7	2.7
<i>Moreno/a</i>	0.3	1.3	2.0	3.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>	5.0	-	0.3	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>	3.0	1.7	1.3	6.0
Other	2.7	1.7	0.7	5.0
Total	33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

With respect to *mulato/a* and *negro/a*, the differences are more marked - only 5.3 percent and 6.0 percent respectively of interviewees employed these terms to describe their race. In addition, *negro/a* was used predominantly in the more affluent neighbourhood of Gazcue, rather than in the lower income areas of Los Guandules and Zambrana. The discrepancy in the usage of *mulato/a* and *negro/a* is a result of the term *indio/a* which was employed by over half of all interviewees to describe their race. This symbolic reference to an indigenous past is crucial for an explanation of the Dominican racial complex. *Mestizo/a* is used to a limited extent, largely due to the popularity of *indio/a*. *Moreno/a*, again seldom used as a term of racial self-description, may be translated as 'brown.'

Dominican identity incorporates a racism that is more often insidious than overt. A respondent from Gazcue, who described his race as *trigueño*, stated: ‘Socially, to be *blanco* is an advantage. It’s never mentioned openly, but inwardly there is a real sentiment which says ‘*that negro.*’ *Trigueño/a* is a term used by Dominicans to stress their generally lighter skin colour which refers to the colour of wheat. A resident from Los Guandules adhered to a similar perception that racism exists, although it is usually expressed in a covert manner or in terms that are popularly accepted as derogatory: ‘There’s racism. Nothing’s happened to me, but if two people are arguing, and one is slightly lighter than the other, he’ll call the other *negro.*’ The interviewee described himself as *negro*, but said that he too would use the same term as a mark of disparagement, but in a different tone.

Structure of the thesis

Issues of race, nation and ethnicity are discussed in a variety of contexts. The underlying prejudice against African ancestry, its ‘common sense’ expression through anti-Haitian sentiment, and the ensuing practices of discrimination are the foci on which the discussion is structured. The following four chapters analyse Dominican society with respect to Dominican-Haitian relations, social classes, relations of patriarchy and popular culture, and finally international migration.

Chapter two analyses the historical basis of race in the Dominican Republic, examined in the context of relations with Haiti. The development of Dominican society from the colonial period is outlined, and the influence of anti-Haitian sentiment and the use of *indio/a* as an ambiguous racial term discussed with reference to contemporary

opinion. The third chapter opens up the analysis of social differentiation in the Dominican Republic by considering the role of class stratification and its implication for racial identification. The development of social classes is described and the impact of race and class studied in the three survey sites.

The fourth chapter addresses the role of race in popular culture, with a specific focus on the household. Racial terminology is frequently used in combination with the presuppositions inherent in a patriarchal culture. Women's roles are reviewed with particular reference to household structure, occupation and the gendered nature of race under patriarchal norms. The domestic or private sphere is a key site for the expression of patriarchy, but it is also the location for the practice of Afro-syncretic religious beliefs, which themselves are racialised and gendered. Aspects of race in everyday lives, thus, are inherently gendered, domesticated and sanctified.

Chapter five expands the analysis of race to include the influence of international migration on Dominican racial identification. The Dominican Republic is a transnational society which relies on migrant remittances and commerce, in particular from the migration of Dominicans to the United States. International migration has dramatically shaped Dominican society over the last three decades. The chapter considers the effect of this two-way flow of people, capital and culture on Dominican perceptions of race.

The last two substantive chapters focus upon the specific aspects of race and nation as revealed through contemporary Dominican literature and politics. The sixth chapter reviews the importance of *negritud* in contemporary literature, and argues that many modern writers maintain idealised and misleading perceptions of the racial reality. Dominican black writing has largely failed to develop a literary expression of *negritud*

from beyond the racial stereotyping which characterised black literature during the first half of the century. Chapter seven concentrates on the impact of race during the Dominican elections in 1994 and 1996. Overt racial prejudice marked the campaigns of leading political parties, and the alleged Haitian 'threat' to Dominican sovereignty became a dominant item on the election agenda.

Finally, the concluding chapter outlines existing theories of race and ethnicity, analysing their applicability to the Dominican situation and suggesting alternative viewpoints in the light of the current research.

2 LA RAZA DOMINICANA AND HAITI

La raza dominicana, traditionally, represents *blancura* or whiteness, Catholicism and an Hispanic tradition. It clashes dramatically with the popular Dominican image of Haiti - an image of *negritud* or blackness, *vodú* and African ancestry. Bluntly, *la raza dominicana* defines an alleged difference between the civilised and the savage - a sentiment which is regularly expressed in everyday language, in the newspapers and in contemporary literature. The current chapter explores Dominican perceptions of Haiti, and their importance in defining racial identity in the Dominican Republic. The development of Dominican society since the colonial period is outlined, and the interlinking histories of the Dominican Republic and Haiti illustrated. The manner in which race has been constructed in relation to Haiti has coloured, or perhaps more accurately bleached, the image of the Dominican nation.

Historical notions of *la raza dominicana* have combined overt racism and nationalism. Rather than be translated directly as race, *la raza*, in this context, refers more openly to race and nation. When Dominicans talk of *la raza* it may include colour, phenotype, nationality or cultural traits. A respondent in Gazcue suggested, 'Most people here are *negros*. *La raza blanca* is a mixture - Jews, *blancos*, Arabs, Chinese... But I'm *blanca*, my family is Spanish. My husband, well, he's pure European. His parents are Italian and Spanish.' The quotation illustrates the importance placed on a light aesthetic and European heritage. It is typical of many Dominicans who are able to claim direct familial links with Europe to confirm their racial ancestry. *La raza blanca* translates

literally as 'the white race', but *la raza* is more readily interpreted here as ethnicity, where it acts as an umbrella term to incorporate notions of race and nation. *La etnicidad* is a seldom used term in Dominican vocabulary.

The history of the Dominican Republic is ultimately tied up with that of Haiti. This is reflected in the use of Haiti to construct *la raza dominicana*. The Haitian population has always acted as a scapegoat for Dominican woes, and popular anti-Haitian sentiment has often been deployed by the Dominican elite to further their nationalist projects, not least under the regime of Trujillo which is discussed later in this chapter.

A comparison of socio-economic indices between the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States, illustrates quite substantial differences between the three countries (Table 2.1). The severity of Haitian poverty is much greater than that of the Dominican Republic. The United States is a dominant influence in both countries, culturally, economically and politically - not least because the United States' military occupied each state during the first two decades of this century, and invaded the Dominican Republic again in the 1960s and Haiti during the 1990s. Literacy rates, urban infrastructure and health services are generally of a higher standard in the Dominican Republic than in Haiti, which is economically one of the poorest countries in the world.

Table 2.1 Comparative socio-economic indices for the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States

Country	Dominican Republic	Haiti	United States
Index			
Population	7.1 million	6.7 million	258.3 million
Population 'doubling time'	31 years	25 years	92 years
Fertility (average number of children per woman)	3.3 (7.3 in 1965)	6.4	2.0
Child mortality (per 1000 live born)	43	105	9
Annual GNP per capita	US\$ 950	US\$ 370	US\$ 22,560
Literacy rate male: female (percentage)	77 : 78	35 : 40	-
Urban population (percentage of total population)	60	44	75
Drinking water in urban: rural areas (percentage of each population)	78 : 32	59 : 32	100 : 100

Sources: Population Reference Bureau 1994 *World Population Data* Washington: Population Reference Bureau

Federación Internacional de Planificación de la Familia 1994 *Planificación familiar del los países del hemisferio occidental* New York: Federación Internacional de Planificación de la Familia

The Dominican Republic has a stronger economy which was formerly focused on the export of four agricultural products - sugar, coffee, cacao and tobacco. Sugar production made up 43 percent of export earnings, but its continued decline in importance meant that it represented only 8 percent in the early 1990s.¹ The four main export crops now account for only 13 percent of Dominican Republican income, as tourism, export manufacturing and migrant remittances have become the main income generators.

The higher fertility and more rapid population growth rates of Haiti are important for many Dominicans' assessment of the so-called 'Haitian threat' - an exaggerated fear of the 'silent invasion' (through clandestine migration) as a result of which the Dominican Republic will be inundated by Haitians. The key component to this fear is that of race. Despite the malleable and subjective nature of racial difference, Haitians tend to have a darker phenotype or skin colour than Dominicans. This difference has been a cause of two centuries of racist antagonism between the countries. It should be remembered that racism flows both ways. Although research focuses upon anti-Haitian sentiment among Dominicans, Haitians share similarly prejudiced views of Dominicans. Dominican women are typically depicted as prostitutes, owing to the relatively large number of Dominican-managed brothels and beauty salons in Port-au-Prince. Haitians naturally resent the frequent, and often discriminatory or violent repatriation of Haitian migrants from the Dominican Republic. The forced removal of Haitian labourers, allegedly only those without legal documentation, increased at the start of 1997. Statements of mutual political rapprochement between the two governments were

¹ Vega, B. 1993 Etnicidad y el futuro de las relaciones dominico-haitianas *Estudios Sociales* 94: 29-43, p. 41

simultaneous with forced repatriations.² Some Dominican authors have suggested that the antagonism between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has been deliberately propagated by foreign powers in an attempt to weaken the island's economy and encourage external intervention. Muñoz, for example, claims that the conspiratorial aims of European and North American powers are the main basis for long-standing enmity and division in Hispaniola.³

An adjunct to the prevalence of anti-Haitian sentiment has been the popular use of a glorified indigenous past in which to frame race in the Dominican Republic. *Indio/a* is an ambiguous term, not least because the entire indigenous population of Hispaniola died or were killed within fifty years of Columbus' arrival. Ostensibly, *indio/a* refers to skin colour, but the term's racial significance has frequently been extended incorrectly in popular and academic writing. The chapter concludes by expanding on conceptions surrounding the use of *indio/a*, using results from survey work to outline this and other connected issues of race and ethnicity.

Race and the development of Dominican society

Dominicans frequently talk of the 'race problem.' Dr Joaquín Balaguer, the former President of the Republic, has written that 'the race problem... is the principal problem of the Dominican Republic.'⁴ The 'problem' of race is usually deployed in the context of

² *Listín Diario* 1 February 1997

³ Muñoz, M. E. 1995 *Las relaciones dominico-haitianas: geopolítica y migración* Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, p. 210

⁴ Balaguer, J. 1947 *La realidad dominicana: semblanza de un país u de un régimen* Buenos Aires: Imprenta Hermanos Ferrari, p. 124

racial mixing, particularly with regard to the immigration of Haitians and the immediate concern to protect *dominicanidad* - an appeal to the elusive identity of the Dominican nation. Guzmán remarks in her study of the central region of the Dominican Republic on 'the blurry borderline between the races' which makes the differentiation of people so subtle that distinction at the individual level becomes completely arbitrary and subjective.⁵

Race has been considered, historically, from biological and social perspectives. In the racial theories of the nineteenth century, racist ideology was rooted in biology - race was a physical characteristic determined by genetic heritage. The ideology of scientific racism suggested that the human species could be divided into a number of fixed biological categories which determined individual behaviour and cultural variation. It was argued that the races of the human population could be ranked hierarchically in terms of biological and cultural superiority. Race has since been viewed as a social construction rather than as a natural division of mankind.⁶ Van den Berghe outlines race as a group that is defined socially through physical criteria, and, thus, is devoid of objective reality outside of its social definition.⁷ Similarly, Guillaumen argues that race is found in symbolic form but not as a real object; race exists only in discourse, and racism is transmitted through this discourse to legitimate domination.⁸

⁵ Guzmán, D. J. 1974 Raza y lenguaje en el Cibao *Eme-Eme* 2, 2: 3-45, p. 42

⁶ Jackson, P. 1987 The idea of 'race' and the geography of racism. In Jackson, P. (ed). 1987 *Race and Racism* London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 3-21, p. 6

⁷ van den Berghe, P. 1967 *Race and Racism: a comparative perspective* New York: Wiley, p. 9

⁸ Guillaumen, C. 1972 Caractères spécifiques de l'idéologie raciste *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 52: 247-274, p. 272

The genetic make-up of features evidently influences the perception of race. Hoetink comments that 'social prejudice against the black was, and is, ... phrased in terms of aesthetic aversion.'⁹ A light skin colour has continued to be the social and aesthetic ideal, as defined by society. This underlines the simultaneously inclusive and exclusive nature of racial prejudice - by defining oneself or identifying another as 'us', a statement immediately is made about 'them.' Thus, 'where *ego* identifies *alter* as a member of a particular 'race'... *ego* is necessarily also defined as a member of a particular 'race.'¹⁰ The social recognition of race often varies greatly from individual appearance, which produces a transient, malleable conception of race in everyday discourse. The concept of race as a 'problem' in the Dominican Republic is fundamental to the perception of racial identity, but first the demographic history of the country must be outlined.

Three broad ethnic groups initially formed the basis for colonial society in Santo Domingo, the name given to the Spanish colony on the island of Hispaniola. These groups were the indigenous indian population, African slaves and the Spanish colonialists. The first group has left few obvious traces today because of its rapid extinction. The indigenous population is often named Taino, but it has been argued that they should, correctly, be termed Arawak since the former merely refers to a single social class within an Arawak group.¹¹ When Columbus arrived on the island of Hispaniola in

⁹ Hoetink, H. 1982 *The Dominican Republic 1850-1900* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 188

¹⁰ Miles, R. 1987 Recent Marxist theories of nationalism and the issue of racism *British Journal of Sociology* 38: 24-43, p. 27

¹¹ Watts, D. 1987 *The West Indies: patterns of development, culture and environmental change since 1492* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 53

1492, the indigenous population was around 400,000.¹² A census taken in 1508 accounted for an indigenous population of only 60,000. A little over a decade later there were no more than 3,000 Arawaks left, the rest having been killed in combat, through forced labour or by illness brought over by the colonialists and African slaves.¹³ Watts adds that suicide via the consumption of untreated roots of bitter manioc was common.¹⁴ The size and demise of the indigenous population is a contentious issue. Other estimates suggest that this population ranged from 100,000 to four million.¹⁵ If larger the figures are accepted, then the decline of the indigenous groups becomes all the more notable.

The Arawak influence today in Dominican society is limited to certain foods such as cassava bread; the construction of some rural housing; fishing techniques; words such as *bohio* (hut), *huracán* (hurricane) and *hamaca* (hammock), and the names of physical features, places or administrative demarcations. Modern versions of indigenous domestic implements include wooden implements and earthenware designs.¹⁶ Words and artefacts aside, the influence of the Arawak past is most significant in contemporary notions of Dominican racial identity.

The African heritage, long neglected or denied by many Dominicans, is denigrated in both elite and popular cultures. Indigenous heritage has consistently been upheld in contrast to the devaluation of African influences in the Dominican Republic.

¹² Moya Pons, F. 1992 *Manual de historia dominicana* ninth edition Santo Domingo: Caribbean Publishers, p. 26

¹³ Moya Pons 1992, p. 29

¹⁴ Watts, D. 1987 *The West Indies: patterns of development, culture and environmental change since 1492* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 110

¹⁵ Watts 1987, pp. 73-74

¹⁶ Vega, B. 1990 La herencia indigena en la cultural dominicana de hoy. In Vega, B. et al. 1990 *Ensayos sobre cultura dominicana* Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, pp. 9-53

Hoetink notes the limited African influence in traditional Dominican folklore.¹⁷ The slavery debate during the sixteenth century sought to determine whether the indigenous people were potential converts to Christianity, or whether they should be deemed savages, who were unable to be baptised and receive the sacrament. Antón de Montesinos first spoke out against the exploitation of the indigenous population in 1511.¹⁸ Bartolomé de Las Casas then argued that the Arawaks were created as humans by God, and should therefore be treated as Christian equals.¹⁹ His decision, which he later renounced, was to import slaves from Africa to replace the indigenous labourers, since the former were allegedly less able to grasp the Christian faith. Thousands of Africans were employed in the Dominican sugar mills and plantations which developed from the 1520s onwards. By the middle of the sixteenth century, there were approximately 13,000 African slaves on the island of Hispaniola, and Santo Domingo was the main slave entrepôt for the region.²⁰

The importance of slavery in the Spanish colony of Hispaniola declined with the growing competition for sugar production, especially from Brazil. In addition, most early colonists moved to the mainland of Latin America where silver and gold were said to be abundant. The sugar plantation economy deteriorated during the sixteenth century as the world market for sugar collapsed, and the slave population was severely affected by epidemics during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The economy became concentrated on cattle rearing which was far less labour intensive than sugar production,

¹⁷ Hoetink, H. 1982 *The Dominican Republic 1850-1900* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 185

¹⁸ Tolentino Dipp, H. 1992 *Raza e historia en Santo Domingo* Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, p. 53

¹⁹ Sanderlin, G. (ed). 1971 *Bartolomé de Las Casas: a selection of his writings* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 100-102

²⁰ Watts 1987, p. 123

and limited the supervision required of the slave labour force. In 1794, out of a total Dominican population of 103,000, there were only 30,000 slaves and 38,000 freed former slaves.²¹ The number of slaves remained low in relation to the Spanish settlers, and sexual relations between the settlers and the female slaves eventually created a population with a mulatto majority.

Del Castillo and Murphy argue that the violent imposition of European culture upon African slave labour reduced the possibilities for the transfer of material culture from Africa to the colonies. Thus, 'the contribution of the African ethnic groups to the Dominican society are found predominantly in the areas of religious expression and beliefs, music and dance, certain characteristics of expressive culture and speech, family organisation and particular funerary rites.'²² The syncretism of African religions and Catholicism resulted in the fusion of Catholic saints with corresponding African deities. Brotherhoods or *cofradías* existed as organised cults dedicated to specific saints, for example San Juan Bautista in Baní, and Peravia and the Virgen de Dolores in Los Morenos. As part of these cults, specific music and dance forms have developed such as the *sarandunga* in Baní.²³ Dominican Spanish vocabulary shows a similar legacy of African slavery where words have entered common usage, for example *la bachata* (a popular form of music), *el guineo* (banana) and *el baquiní* (a funeral ritual).²⁴

The legacy of Spanish colonialism had the greatest impact on Dominican society:

²¹ Hoetink 1982, p. 182

²² del Castillo, J. and Murphy, M. F. 1987 Migration, national identity and cultural policy in the Dominican Republic *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 15, 3: 49-69, p. 50

²³ del Castillo and Murphy 1987, p. 51

²⁴ Deive, C. E. 1973 Glosario de afronegrismos en la toponimia y español hablado de Santo Domingo *Aula* 6-7: 85-113

... Spain brought to Santo Domingo the great wealth of its cultural values, and there is little doubt that throughout all of our subsequent historical development... *la Madre Patria* has revitalised its ancient roots amongst us.²⁵

Moya Pons lists the three key factors of *hispanidad* as Spanish heritage, white skin and Catholicism.²⁶ Spanish laws, religion, architectural styles, political structures and language clearly stamped their mark on the country as an Iberian outpost. The five-hundredth anniversary in 1992 of the arrival of Columbus to the island was a government and Church-inspired celebration of *hispanidad* and evangelisation. The myth of the superiority of *hispanidad* was the ideological mechanism used by the light-skinned elites to maintain dominance.²⁷ This backbone of racist ideology is illustrated by the concern over the immigration of workers from the Lesser Antilles and Haiti to work in the sugar industry at the end of the nineteenth century. Fears that the Hispanic culture would be swamped led to subsequent attempts to 'lighten' the population by encouraging white immigration, preferably directly from Europe. As the sugar industry has declined, many Dominicans have expressed concerns over the ability of the state to control potentially restless, unemployed immigrant labour and squatters on the plantations.²⁸

Immigration has been important in the development of the Dominican population. The racial complex is not the simple historical outcome of a three-way meeting of indigenous, African and Spanish groups: 'the process of migration has had a marked impact on Dominican self-identity in the area of race.'²⁹ Immigration grew in influence

²⁵ Dobal, C. 1990 Herencia española en la cultura dominicana de hoy. In Vega, B. et al. 1990 *Ensayos sobre cultura dominicana* Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, pp. 63-104, p. 66

²⁶ Moya Pons, F. 1986 *El pasado dominicano* Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, p. 238

²⁷ Cassá, R. 1976 El racismo en la ideología de la clase dominante dominicana *Ciencia* 3,1: 61-85, p. 65

²⁸ Fink, M. 1979 A Dominican harvest of shame *Caribbean Review* 8, 1: 34-38

²⁹ del Castillo and Murphy 1987, p. 61

during the nineteenth century with the introduction of agro-export capitalism, and the development of the modern sugar industry from the 1870s. Large-scale intensive sugar cultivation in the Dominican Republic led to the denationalisation of national territory and the growing influence of foreign business interests.³⁰ The impact of sugar production was regional: dozens of sugar mills were constructed in the south-west near Barahona and Azua, on the south-east coastal plains and in the north near Puerto Plata, as well as around the outskirts of Santo Domingo.³¹ The industry was financed largely by Cuban, Puerto Rican, North American, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and some Dominican business interests, who soon established themselves as powerful urban elites.

From the beginning of the present century, significant numbers of Chinese arrived in the country, many arriving from other Caribbean islands such as Cuba. Later, after upward socio-economic mobility and the more recent arrival of middle income groups from Taiwan and Hong Kong, many Chinese immigrants established small businesses and manufacturing enterprises.³² The Lebanese are another influential ethnic minority who began migrating to the Dominican Republic towards the end of nineteenth century, and who have firmly established themselves in the political, economic and social spheres of national life.³³ Collectively known as *árabes*, migrants from the countries of the Middle East often settled in Santo Domingo, their first port of entry in the Caribbean. It was common for many to change their Arabic names to Spanish equivalents which,

³⁰ Baud, M. 1987 The origins of capitalist agriculture in the Dominican Republic *Latin American Research Review* 22, 2: 135-153

³¹ Calder, B. J. 1981 The Dominican turn toward sugar *Caribbean Review* 10, 3: 18-21, 44-45

³² del Castillo and Murphy, pp. 51-59

³³ Nicholls, D. 1992 Lebanese of the Antilles: Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad. In Hourani, A. and Shehadi, N. (eds) 1992 *The Lebanese in the World: a century of migration* London: Centre for Lebanese Studies and I. B. Tauris, pp. 339-360, pp. 352-354

combined with success in commerce and politics, aided their rapid assimilation into Dominican society.³⁴ Lighter skin colour also helped to limit overt racial discrimination against them.

The *cocolos/as* were black migrant workers who were contracted largely from the British territories of St Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla to work on sugar plantations between the 1880s and 1920s.³⁵ They faced high levels of discrimination from Dominicans since they worked for lower wages and were a distinctive target for racial prejudice.³⁶ Complaints were often printed in local and national newspapers which suggested that they were ‘ruining the labour market.’³⁷ The migration of *cocolos/as* ended during the occupation of the country by the United States between 1916 and 1924 when the North American authorities announced that immigration would be prohibited ‘for any race except Caucasian.’³⁸ Paradoxically, the Haitian presence increased throughout the 1910s and after, as a result of being contracted to work on Dominican sugar plantations. It has been suggested that racism in the Dominican Republic was given a substantial impetus during this period by the dissemination of racial prejudice by the United States’ soldiers and administration.³⁹

³⁴ Inoa, O. 1991 Los árabes en Santo Domingo *Estudios Sociales* 85: 35-58, p. 54

³⁵ Bryan, P. E. 1985 The question of labour in the sugar industry of the Dominican Republic in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. In Moreno Fragnals, M. , Moya Pons, F. and Engerman, S. L. 1985 *Between Slavery and Free Labour: the Spanish-speaking Caribbean in the nineteenth century* London: Johns Hopkins Press, pp. 235-251, p. 240

³⁶ Mota Acosta, J. C. 1977 *Los cocolos en Santo Domingo* Santo Domingo: Editora La Gaviota, p. 29

³⁷ Plant, R. 1987 *Sugar and Modern Slavery: a tale of two countries* London: Zed Books, p. 18

³⁸ Plant 1987, p. 19

³⁹ Castor, S. 1983 *Migraciones y relaciones internacionales: el caso haitiano-dominicano* Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, p. 70

Despite anti-*cocolo/a* campaigns and resistance from the white and merchant elites, *cocolos/as* consolidated their presence, founding many Protestant churches and greatly influencing the society of former sugar centres, particularly around the area of San Pedro de Macorís in the south-east of the country. Del Castillo and Murphy note how the success of some of the *cocolo/a* population required a social reconstruction of race which employed lighter colour terminology. This enabled the immigrants to distance themselves from the increasing numbers of Haitian immigrants:

Their superior formal education, strict child rearing practices, discipline in the capitalist system, the ability of most to speak to the North American plantation owners and managers in English, and the specialised skills of many, converted the image of these Black immigrants in the Dominican society to that of the *negros blancos*.⁴⁰

Following the sharp fall in sugar prices during the 1920s, the *cocolo/a* labour force on the sugar plantations came to be replaced by migrant Haitian labourers, who worked for much lower wage rates. Haitian migrant labour has a history of employment in the neighbouring Dominican Republic, but the number of workers substantially increased during the United States' occupation of the Dominican Republic and Haiti (1915-1934). Haitian cane cutters have been employed in Dominican sugar mills since the 1880s, although Cuba was the favoured destination until Fulgencio Batista ordered the mass expulsion of Haitians from Cuba in 1937.⁴¹ This was the same year during which thousands of Haitians were massacred in the Haitian-Dominican borderlands by the Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. The policy of the dictatorial regime was to

⁴⁰ del Castillo and Murphy 1987, p. 57

⁴¹ Plant 1987, p. 59

strengthen an Hispanic national identity, whilst contradictorily relying on the exploitation of Haitian labour. Trujillo himself was one of the major employers of Haitian contract labour since virtually all of the Dominican sugar industry was under his personal control. By the time of his assassination in 1961, Trujillo controlled eighty percent of the country's industrial production, and approximately sixty percent of the population relied directly or indirectly upon his patrimony for employment.⁴²

Plant argues that whilst Dominican migration to the United States acted as a safety valve during the 1960s, a key stage in the development of anti-Haitian rhetoric was the legalised abolition of tenancy arrangements.⁴³ This, together with the stipulation that tenured lands be granted to the former tenants, played an important part in displacing Haitian labour to other parts of the economy. A recent survey of Haitian labour suggested that whilst under 20 percent worked in the sugar industry, 8.3 percent were employed in the construction industry, 8.3 percent in commerce and 7.2 percent in domestic service.⁴⁴ Plant claims that the agrarian reforms in 1972 also encouraged a preference for undocumented Haitian labour.⁴⁵ This resulted in heightened antagonism towards Haitian workers as immigrants increased the demand for subsistence plots, and allegedly deprived Dominicans of cash income from casual labour.

Popular media attention highlighted the Haitian influence in the economy, and popular pressure led the Dominican government to pursue a policy of forced repatriations

⁴² Hartlyn, J. 1993 *The Dominican Republic: contemporary problems and challenges*. In Domínguez, J. I. , Pastor, R. A. and Worrell, R. D. (eds) 1993 *Democracy in the Caribbean: political, economic and social perspectives* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 150-172, p. 155

⁴³ Plant 1987, p. 69

⁴⁴ Doré Cabral, C. 1995 *Los descendientes de haitianos no son picadores de caña* *Rumbo* 62: 52

⁴⁵ Plant 1987, pp. 66-68

which has continued throughout the 1990s. Between November 1996 and January 1997, 15,000 Haitians were deported during a renewed wave of government activity.⁴⁶ Haitians are scapegoated as the harbingers of moral and medical decay, their presence blamed for the existence of malaria in rural settlements and the spread of AIDS. In an overtly racist polemic, Cornielle states that the Haitian presence is the root cause of the moral and biological degeneracy which is spreading throughout the Dominican Republic.⁴⁷ Haitians are generally excluded from union organisation despite making up an estimated eighty percent of sugar workers in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁸ The practicalities of providing representation for a temporary or undocumented labour force, and the evident lack of government empathy, maintains the disempowered and unstable position of Haitian workers. The status of dark-skinned Haitian immigrants in the country and the long history of enmity between the two nations is fundamental to the nature of racial identity among Dominicans.

⁴⁶ *Listín Diario* 18 February 1997

⁴⁷ Cornielle, C. 1980 *Proceso histórico dominicano-haitiano: una advertencia a la juventud dominicana* Santo Domingo: Publicaciones América, pp. 111-112

⁴⁸ Lartortue, P. R. 1985 Neoslavery in the cane fields *Caribbean Review* 14, 4: 18-20, p. 18

Dominican-Haitian history and *la raza dominicana*

During the latter half of the seventeenth century, Hispaniola was invaded by French settlers who slowly began to occupy the western part of the island. This new French settlement was called Saint Domingue, and tobacco plantations were cultivated which established profitable trade relations with the less developed eastern part. Under the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, the western part was formerly handed over to France following years of border disputes and tension between the two parts of the island. During the eighteenth century, Saint Domingue continued to develop an affluent plantation economy, extending its export production to sugar, coffee and cotton. The Spanish part also profited from this development, largely through the export of meat to Saint Domingue. In the French territory, the number of African slaves increased dramatically as a result of the massive scale on which they were used on the plantations. Many slaves escaped and fled to the Spanish part of the island. In 1739, there were 117,000 slaves in Saint Domingue, by 1764 there were 206,000 and in 1791 there were 480,000.⁴⁹ By that time they formed nearly ninety percent of the total population.

The 1791 slave uprising in Saint Domingue marked the extreme discontent of the population of African descent. The developing class of prosperous *mulâtres*, which had gained much influence in commerce and agriculture, demanded their own full political rights in a separate battle against the white elite. By 1793, with the country fighting itself, the French governor of Saint Domingue decided to abolish slavery. In 1795, Spain ceded the eastern part of the island to France under the Treaty of Basle, and Toussaint

⁴⁹ Fennema, M. and Loewenthal, T. 1987 *La construcción de raza y nación en la República Dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, p. 17

L'Ouverture, the general-in-chief of the armies of Saint Domingue and former slave leader, declared the island "une et indivisible." The eastern part of the island was occupied and slavery abolished at the start of the nineteenth century, only for the Haitian rebels to withdraw within two years as a French army landed in the east in 1802. However, the successor of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, defeated the French forces in the west of the island and declared Haiti independent in 1804 - the first independent republic in the western hemisphere with a majority population of African descent. All Haitians, regardless of skin colour, were declared *noir/e* under the Constitution of 1805. This included the German and Polish groups who had fought with the liberation movement. Nicholls suggests that this may have been the first time that 'black' was used in an ideological sense.⁵⁰

The eastern part of the island, reclaimed by the invasion of 1802, remained under French colonial rule until 1809, when a rebellion led by Juan Sánchez Ramírez returned sovereignty to Spain. The Dominican elite continued to fear the abolition of slavery in the eastern half of the island, and the danger that this posed to their position in society. Racial differences fuelled their perceptions of the Haitian threat:

There was also a cultural fact which made the inhabitants of Santo Domingo sympathise with the foreigners, as if they were French, rather than with the former slaves of Saint Domingue. This fact had much to do with the racial self-perception of the inhabitants of the Spanish part, who in spite of being mostly people of colour, that is, *mulato* descendants of former slaves, always considered themselves as Spanish.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Nicholls, D. 1994 *From Dessalines to Duvalier: race, colour and national independence in Haiti* third edition London: Macmillan, p. 36

⁵¹ Moya Pons, F. 1992, p. 196

In 1805, Pétion, Geffrard and Dessalines led a series of attacks on Dominican territory and besieged the capital of Santo Domingo, but withdrew when it was falsely rumoured that the French had planned a new invasion to reclaim Haiti.⁵² Dessalines ordered his troops to ransack Dominican settlements on their return to Haiti. The atrocities committed by the Haitian army formed an important historical basis for popular anti-Haitian sentiment in the Dominican Republic.

A pro-Haitian minority attempted to claim Dominican territory under Haitian sovereignty in 1812. The rebellion was extinguished, and Spanish rule remained until 1821, when an ephemeral declaration of independence was made in the towns of Dajabón and Montecristi by a faction which favoured unification with Haiti.⁵³ The Dominican leader, José Núñez de Cáceres, responded fifteen days later with another declaration of independence, this time suggesting a federation of Dominican territory with the Gran Colombia of Simón Bolívar. Both declarations were short-lived. The following year, the Haitian president, Jean-Pierre Boyer, invaded and occupied the eastern part of the island for a twenty-two year period.

The Haitian occupation lasted from 1822 until 1844, and has continued to be the key historical referent for anti-Haitian sentiment in the Dominican Republic. Unification of the island under Haitian rule intensified relations between what are now the two countries. Torres-Saillant, contrary to conservative views that the Dominican population never accepted Haitian governance, suggests that during the two decades the populations

⁵² Franco Pichardo, F. J. 1992 *Historia del Pueblo Dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, p. 158

⁵³ Torres-Saillant, S. 1995 *The Dominican Republic*. In Minority Rights Group (ed). 1995 *No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans today* London: Minority Rights Group, pp. 109-138, p. 114

were brought closer together, notably with the abolition of slavery by Boyer in 1822.⁵⁴ During the 1820s the Haitian leader actively encouraged the immigration of former slaves from the United States, and a sizeable community established itself in the Samaná peninsular.⁵⁵ Despite emancipation of the slaves, Dominican politics remained restricted to a small, mainly *blanco* elite.⁵⁶ In 1844, this elite declared independence from Haiti. Two decades of political strife and violence ensued, resulting in Spanish protection being sought again in 1861. Spanish rule finally came to an end with the War of Restoration in 1865, after four years of conflict between Dominican nationalist and Spanish sympathisers. Moya Pons suggests that race was an important factor which united the struggle for independence from Spain:

The War of Restoration, which started as a peasant rebellion, very soon changed into a war between races, because the coloured Dominicans, who formed the majority of the population, feared to be enslaved again. Thus, from here onwards, it became a true populist war which set in motion all the energies of the Nation to gain its independence and the restoration of sovereignty.⁵⁷

Hoetink adds that the War of Restoration against Spain marked a new social cataclysm for the nascent Dominican state.⁵⁸ The *blancos/as*, who had remained in the country or had since returned to it, were compromised as collaborators with Spain, while at the same time, the years of war and consequent events enabled numerous *mulatos* and *negros* to take up positions of responsibility. Despite increased access to power, it was always more necessary for the darker-skinned Dominicans to demonstrate their national and cultural

⁵⁴ Torres-Saillant. In Minority Rights Group 1995, p. 115

⁵⁵ Hoetink, H. 1962 'Americans' in Samaná *Caribbean Studies* 11, 1: 3-22

⁵⁶ Fennema and Loewenthal 1987, p. 23

⁵⁷ Moya Pons 1992, p. 352. Dominicans feared to be enslaved since slavery still existed in the Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico at that time.

⁵⁸ Hoetink 1982, p. 185

identity in opposition to the Haitian enemy. Phenotypical signs of African descent among the 'well-to-do' or 'respectable' Dominican families were blamed on Haitian atrocities during the occupation. A revulsion for the Haitian enemy legitimised a collective aversion to African ancestry. Consequently, Dominican *mulatos/as*, condemning the exclusive *négritude* of Haiti, aimed to forge a Dominican nation of Hispanic and indigenous ancestry.

Anti-Haitianism has been, and remains, virulent. The most remarkable and disturbing manifestation of this hatred was the massacre in October, 1937 of around 12,000 Haitian peasants in the western provinces of the Dominican Republic by the army and police of the dictator Trujillo.⁵⁹ Racism was a founding component of *trujillismo*, the intellectuals of the era seeking to consolidate the Dominican nation-state on the superiority of *hispanidad*. The creation of enduring myth was a key element to establish the legitimacy of the dictatorship.⁶⁰ Firstly, the ideology of Trujillo created the image of a dangerous external enemy to legitimise the nationalist efforts of the dictatorship. The effect of the massacre was to heighten this conception of Haitian labourers in the Dominican Republic as the enemy within.⁶¹ Secondly, it attempted to 'save' the Dominican nation from 'Africanisation' and the 'illegal' entry of Haitian immigrants. In this manner, the events of 1937 were justified. Balaguer, then Dominican ambassador to Colombia, defended the massacre as part of Trujillo's nationalisation programme:

⁵⁹ The number of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans murdered has been the subject of some debate. The estimated death toll has ranged up to 30,000, and the figure of 12,000 is suggested by Roorda. In Roorda, E. P. 1996 *Genocide next door: the Good Neighbour Policy, the Trujillo regime, and the Haitian massacre of 1937* *Diplomatic History* 20, 3: 301-319, p. 301

⁶⁰ Mateo, A. L. 1993 *Mito y cultura en la era de Trujillo* Santo Domingo: Editora de Colores

⁶¹ Derby, R. L. H. and Turits, R. 1993 *Historias de terror y los terrores de la historia: la masacre haitiana de 1937 en la República Dominicana* *Estudios Sociales* 92: 65-76, p. 72

... by 1935 there were 400,000 Haitians in our country, resulting in the corrosion of national solidarity; voodoo, a kind of African animism of the lowest origins, became the preferred cult among Dominicans of the border area. The *gourde* replaced the *peso*. Peasants were learning from the Haitians anti-Christian customs, such as incestuous unions. We were about to be absorbed by Haiti.⁶²

Balaguer's political and intellectual life has been strongly affected by Haiti. The border between the two countries is a symbolic ethnic and political divide, and a focus for the prejudice and myth which enters academic discourse. Augelli extrapolates his discussion of the Haitian-Dominican border as a contested space of clashing ethnic stereotypes. He suggests that there are few 'pure blacks' and Europeans in the Dominican Republic: 'The Dominican may be a mulatto or black racially but he [sic] speaks Spanish, is baptised Roman Catholic and 'thinks white.'⁶³ This form of essentialism forms the backbone of racist ideology in the Dominican Republic.

Haitians are the scapegoats in Dominican society. Cassá compares their pariah status with that of the Jewish population in Germany during the 1930s.⁶⁴ 'Haitian' is a signifier which functions as a switch word, connecting themes of poverty, criminality, *negritud* and backwardness. In this manner it is similar to the term Arab, used as a motif to link terrorism, Islam and a variety of nationalities.⁶⁵ Haitians in the Dominican Republic have limited *de facto* rights. The Haitian experience is one of internal colonialism as a core element of Dominican economy, yet peripheral to polity.⁶⁶ Haitians

⁶² Quoted in Fiehrer, T. 1990 Political violence in the periphery: the Haitian Massacre of 1937 *Race and Class* 32, 2: 1-20, p. 11

⁶³ Augelli, J. P. 1980 Nationalisation of the Dominican borderlands *Geographical Review* 70, 1: 19-35, p. 21

⁶⁴ Cassá, R. 1994 La verdad del nacionalismo Unpublished paper, p. 13

⁶⁵ Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. 1991 *Race, Nation, Class: ambiguous identities* London: Verso, p. 206

⁶⁶ Hechter, M. 1975 *Internal Colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

exist as an internal colony, marginalised individuals in a society which demands their labour, but refuses to accept their presence beyond that as units of labour. Haitian settlements in the sugar fields are effectively ethnic ghettos, segregated physically and socially from Dominican society.

Contemporary racist ideology has its basis in nineteenth-century Dominican historiography. Dominican nationalist ideology established the country as part of Hispanic America, and clearly differentiated it from Haiti. After a series of failed Dominican annexations to either Spain or the United States by Pedro Santana and Buenaventura Báez, between the end of the 1850s and the early 1870s, Dominican writers developed a keener sense of patriotism.⁶⁷ Rafael Deligne, Emilio Prud'Homme and Salomé Ureña de Henríquez were the leading patriotic authors at this time. Moya Pons remarks that during this period a romantic notion of the island's indigenous past began to develop in literary circles.⁶⁸

At the end of the nineteenth century, positivism reoriented Dominican nationalist literature. The Puerto Rican writer, Eugenio María de Hostos, was highly influential in the Dominican Republic, particularly through the work of Ramón Lopéz and Américo Lugo. The positivist approach argued that Spanish colonialism, particularly the Catholic church, had severely hindered the development of the country. This hypothesis directly attacked the traditional Hispanophilia that had occluded Dominican intellectual production, as well as introducing a dominant element of historical determinism and

⁶⁷ Martínez-Fernández, L. 1993 Caudillos, annexation and the rivalry between empires in the Dominican Republic 1844-1874 *Diplomatic History* 17: 571-597

⁶⁸ Moya Pons, F. 1994 Dominican national identity: a historical perspective unpublished paper, p. 6

fatalism within the intelligentsia. Out of positivism grew the depressing voice of the pessimist school. Ramón Lopéz, Guido Despradel Batista and Jiménez Grullón were the key writers during the early twentieth century who developed this fatalistic view of *la raza dominicana*. Writing at the start of the present century, Ramón Lopéz contrasted the decadence of consumption in the Dominican Republic with that of the growing degeneracy of its people.⁶⁹ Despradel Batista published *Las raíces de nuestro espíritu* which lamented the hopeless situation of the Dominican population as a conjuncture of three failing 'races' - the primitive *indio/a*, the libidinous *negro/a* and the lazy Spaniard.⁷⁰ Jiménez Grullón published articles which depicted the statehood of the Dominican Republic as a fiction. It was not, and never could be, a nation-state, but would remain a hollow and meaningless political entity.⁷¹

The rise of Trujillo and his creation of a dictatorial presidency in 1931 led to a re-evaluation and reconstitution of the Dominican nation. The 1937 massacre of thousands of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the borderlands was the violent expression of an ideology which aimed to fortify and re-build the republic. Two key intellectual progenitors of *trujillismo* were Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle and Joaquín Balaguer. The Trujillist ideology re-stressed the Dominican Republic as an Hispanic, Catholic and white nation. African influences were considered non-Dominican and, thus, subversive of the state. Haiti was the antithesis of the renovated national image. The immigration of Haitians into Dominican territory had been eroding the Dominican homeland, therefore

⁶⁹ Lopéz, J. R. 1975 *El gran pesimismo dominicano* Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra

⁷⁰ Despradel Batista, G. 1936 *Las raíces de nuestro espíritu* Ciudad Trujillo: Sección de Publicaciones

⁷¹ Jiménez Grullón, J. I. 1965 *La República Dominicana: una ficción* Mérida: Talleres Graficos Universitarios

the nation needed to be 'reclaimed' through a Dominicanisation programme which operated in an overtly racist framework. Haitians were deported or killed, and light-skinned immigrants from Europe were encouraged to migrate to the Dominican Republic. The principal aim of a large-scale agricultural colonisation programme was to bolster the sparsely-populated frontier against Haitian influence.⁷² A Jewish enclave was established in Sosuá during the 1930s, following the direct invitation by Trujillo for East Europeans to settle in the country.

Balaguer maintained an anti-Haitian policy and European bias during his time as president (1966-1978 and 1986-1996), following the assassination of Trujillo in 1961. During an interview in the 1992 he expressed his belief in the European basis of Dominican culture:

'Historically our culture is Hispanic and that's a fact. But it is French too. Our legal texts, for example, are French in origin. Our civil code comes from the Napoleonic Code and so do our labour laws. What is special about the Dominican Republic is its cultural mix.'⁷³

Víctor Salmador, a Dominican citizen but Spanish by birth, stresses a sentiment similar to that of Balaguer in his adulation of *hispanidad*:

Spain continued to be the fundamental, intellectual, spiritual and emotional axis of our culture. It is the epicentre in which the Dominican Republic wishes to keep itself in order to preserve the sacred values of our spirit and the permanency and steadfastness of our beliefs, of our idiosyncrasies, of our way of being. It is the unique geopolitical orbit to which we all belong with our hearts and souls.⁷⁴

⁷² Augelli, J. P. 1962 Agricultural colonization in the Dominican Republic *Economic Geography* 38: 15-27

⁷³ David 1992, p. 32

⁷⁴ Salmador, V. 1994 *La isla de Santo Domingo: desde los indios tainos hasta Peña Gómez* Santo Domingo: Editora de Colores, p. 347

These views have been criticised, but the critiques often substitute eulogy for pessimism, rearranging words rather than replacing sentiment. Pérez Cabral criticises the cruelty and the corruption of the Dominican political culture, which he blamed on the servility and *blancofilia* of the Dominican *mulato/a*.⁷⁵ More recently, Núñez has defended *dominicanidad* against anti-Hispanic and anti-nationalist attacks from the Dominican political left. He laments that the defence of the nation is frustrated by contemporary Dominicans who have lost their identity and show little understanding of the historical values which underpin Dominican nationality.⁷⁶ He argues that *dominicanidad* should be protected against the increasingly incursive nature of Haitian culture, in order to perpetuate *la raza dominicana* as a viable cultural and ethnic reality.

Anti-Haitianism

Shared insularity is an important part of explaining perceptions of race in the Dominican Republic. The sharing of an island territory between two separate states is unique in the Caribbean - unless one includes the tiny island of Saint-Martin/Sint Maarten, which is divided between French and Dutch authorities, respectively. Other islands which are partitioned between two states, for example Ireland, New Guinea and Cyprus, often have histories of conflict and violence as rival authorities compete for dominance or to maintain fragile truces. Overt violence between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has not occurred in recent history.

⁷⁵ Pérez Cabral, P. A. 1967 *La comunidad mulata* Santo Domingo: Editora Montalvo, p. 157

⁷⁶ Núñez, M. 1990 *El ocaso de la nación dominicana* Santo Domingo: Alfa and Omega, p. 313

The main language of the Dominican Republic is Spanish, and that of Haiti is Haitian French Creole. Language variance, however, is only one of several factors which have marked two centuries of hostility between the two countries. Differences between the two populations have their origins in the different colonial regimes which governed each country and their subsequent economic development. During the eighteenth century, Haiti was the most important French colony, providing half of the metropole's transatlantic trade. A booming plantation economy produced sugar for the extensive market in Europe. The intensity of production meant that thousands of Africans were brought to the French colony as slave labour for the plantation system.

The situation was somewhat different in the eastern part of Hispaniola. After initial interest during the sixteenth century, the Spanish colony of Hispaniola was largely ignored by the new colonists, who were more inclined to enter the rush for the alleged gold and riches to be found in Mexico and Central America. The eastern part of the island, in contrast to the sugar-slave economy of what is now Haiti, had fewer requirements for slave labour. This colonial legacy is the cornerstone of racial differences between the two countries. Haitian control meant the formal end of the Spanish colonial regime of slavery, but it also meant that the Dominican Republic would gain its independence not from a metropolitan colonial power, but from Haiti - a former society of African slaves. The twenty-two years of Haitian occupation and subsequent liberation from Haitian control are fundamental for an understanding of Dominican-Haitian relations and the Dominican racial complex.

The high fertility rates and more rapid population growth rates of Haiti have given rise to the so-called Haitian 'threat.' The migration of Haitian workers into the country is

posited as the 'silent invasion' or the 'Haitian problem.' The perception of an increasing visible Haitian labour force in the fields or on the streets raises a growing 'voice of alarm' and demands for action, which range from a census of Haitian workers to mandatory expulsion.⁷⁷

We are neighbours, but... we could never tolerate the neglect of our national origins, the integrity of our citizenship and social influences... without realising the dangers which threaten our future. We must defend the Dominican Republic!⁷⁸

The preceding extract is from a national newspaper article concerning the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic. A Dominican geography student described the Republic as 'an island surrounded everywhere by water and Haitians.'⁷⁹

The very foundations of nationhood would appear to be at grave risk - a view shared by Dominicans from all backgrounds. Sixteen percent of those interviewed, during my previous research (in 1992) in the city of Santiago suggested that Haitians should not be allowed to work in the Dominican Republic, and thirty percent agreed to temporary migrant labour only with strict legal documentation - the majority were very much concerned with the increase in Haitian labour.⁸⁰ Field research during 1994 showed that nearly a half of the interviewees in Santo Domingo and Zambrana were opposed to Haitians gaining Dominican residency. The higher level of opposition may be due to the inclusion of a rural survey site in the survey sample, but also reflects a heightened

⁷⁷ *Hoy* 28 April 1969

⁷⁸ *Listín Diario* 22 December 1987

⁷⁹ Yunén, R. E. 1985 *La isla como es: hipótesis para su comprobación* Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, p. 183

⁸⁰ Howard, D. J. 1993 "We're neighbours, but..." A study of racial identification in the Dominican Republic unpublished thesis for the M. Phil. in Latin American Studies, University of Oxford, p. 54

awareness of Haitian residency in the aftermath of the Dominican presidential elections in 1994.

The number of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic is a highly contentious issue. Estimates vary widely, some suggest up to 1.5 million, but there are probably around 500,000 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent on Dominican territory.⁸¹ The size of the population of Haitian descent in Dominican Republic is said to have doubled in past ten to fifteen years.⁸² Despite a history of annual labour contracts between the Dominican and Haitian governments, the Dominican military regularly deports Haitian workers. A quota system in which the Dominican government paid the Haitian authorities for each Haitian labourer existed up until 1986. It continues to operate today, albeit informally or via agreement and payment between the countries' military forces. The Haitian sugar workers live mostly in rural communes, called *bateyes*, under conditions that have been equated with slavery by international human rights organisations.⁸³ An increasing number of Haitians have been incorporated into coffee production, heightening the dependency of the Dominican economy on Haitian migrant labour.⁸⁴ A widely-published account of the oppression and discrimination suffered by Haitian labourers in the Dominican Republic has been written by Lemoine.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Báez Evertsz, F. 1986 *Braceros en la República Dominicana* second edition Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, p. 27

⁸² Corten, A. and Duarte, I. 1995 Five hundred thousand Haitians in the Dominican Republic *Latin American Perspectives* 22, 3: 94-110, p. 94

⁸³ Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights 1991 *Expulsions of Haitians and Dominico-Haitians from the Dominican Republic* New York: Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights

Americas Watch 1992 *Troubled Year: Haitians in the Dominican Republic* New York: Americas Watch

⁸⁴ Grasmuck, S. 1982 Migration within the periphery: Haitian labour in the Dominican sugar and coffee industries *International Migration Review* 16, 2: 365-377

⁸⁵ Lemoine, M. 1985 *Bitter Sugar* London: Zed Books

Many Haitians remain as seasonal labourers after being brought to the Dominican Republic. Their continuing residence in the country, the indeterminate nationality of their offspring (without Dominican or Haitian citizenship) and the scale of undocumented Haitian immigration are emotive issues. My sample of interviewees were evenly divided when questioned on their opinion of Haitian workers being allowed to gain residency in the Dominican Republic (Tables 2.2 and 2.3). They were asked if, in principle, they would allow existing Haitian labourers to legalise their residency in the Dominican Republic. The concept of residency is an important issue in Dominican society. *La residencia* is a term frequently used in the context of Dominicans attaining residential rights and citizenship in the United States. As such, it is a much sort-after status and a significant sign of prestige. Dominicans often compare their attempts to gain residency in the United States with those of Haitians trying to acquire legal status in the Dominican Republic - although interviewees tended to assume that most, if not all, Haitians lived without legal documentation in the Dominican Republic.

Table 2.2 Opinion among interviewees concerning the appropriateness of granting residency to Haitians working in the Dominican Republic, according to survey site

Opinion Survey site %	Agree with residency	Disagree with residency	Unsure	Total
Gazcue	16.3	14.0	3.0	33.3
Los Guandules	19.7	11.7	2.0	33.3
Zambrana	10.7	20.7	2.0	33.3
Total	46.7	46.3	7.0	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 2.3 Opinion among interviewees concerning the appropriateness of granting residency to Haitians working in the Dominican Republic, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Race	Opinion %	Agree with residency	Disagree with residency	Unsure	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>		6.3	8.3	1.7	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>		24.7	28.0	3.0	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>		2.7	2.0	0.7	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>		0.7	1.7	0.3	2.7
<i>Moreno/a</i>		2.3	1.3	-	3.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>		3.0	1.7	0.7	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>		4.7	1.0	0.3	6.0
Other		2.3	2.3	0.3	5.0
Total		46.7	46.3	7.0	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Overall, the opposition to Haitian residency is apparent across all study sites. The respondents in the Los Guandules sample were more favourable to the Haitian presence in the country. This may be due to their greater contact with Haitians as low income urban dwellers. Respondents from the rural sample, however, opposed Haitian residency to a greater extent, outlining their hostility in often vehement and overtly racist terms. Two-thirds of the interviewees in Zambrana disputed Haitians gaining residency in the Dominican Republic (Table 2.2). They were more likely to castigate Haitians as *vodú* worshippers and malefactors who meant harm to Dominican society. High levels of anti-Haitian sentiment among this rural group may be explained by the vulnerability of their

economic position and the perceived threat from Haitians who are assumed to work for lower wages.

The threat from Haitian labour is more imagined than visible in this region. The agricultural labour force of the Zambrana region has an extremely low presence of Haitian workers and none were encountered during field interviews. The lack of visual or social contact with Haitian labourers allows racial stereotyping to become escalated and exaggerated since very few Haitians are present in Zambrana to dispel myths or dispute the typecast images.

Haitians are perceived by many interviewees to be totally incompatible with Dominicans. Haitian culture represented the antithesis of Dominican society. Haitians were commonly linked to *vodú* or with 'black' magic. A middle class *trigueña* describes Haitians thus: 'They work like dogs, but they have feelings, a religion and a language which we just can't share, and their governments are run by dictators. There's a lot of witchcraft. It's a backward country - they live by witchcraft.' Haitian witchcraft was associated with evil or mischief, unlike Dominican *brujería* which was typically referred to as a form of good or 'white' magic.

In the rural sample, much was made of Haitian vampire-like qualities. Haitians, it was said, suck Dominican blood and eat human flesh. The verb 'to suck', *chupar*, can also be used as a vulgar expression for having sexual intercourse, which in this context, implies that Haitians are sexually attacking Dominican 'bloodlines.' The myth of Haitians who eat children was particularly evident during discussion with interviewees from the rural lower classes. One respondent from Zambrana expressed her concern:

‘Haitians? No, things aren’t good. They’re brutes - they harm children and eat people. They won’t eat me though, because I’m too old. They want young, fresh meat.’

Interviewees who described themselves as lighter-skinned, for example, *blanco/a*, *indio/a* and *trigueño/a*, more frequently opposed the granting of resident status to Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic (Table 2.3). Interviewees who described themselves with darker racial terminology, such as *mulato/a*, *moreno/a* or *negro/a*, tended to agree with Haitian residency. Just under a half of all interviewees agreed in principle to allow established Haitian labourers some form of legal residency in the Dominican Republic. The more significant total is the similar proportion who refused outright to acknowledge any form of residency, however limited, for Haitian workers, many of whom were contracted to work in the sugar industry by the Dominican government.

Comments recorded during interviews with those who opposed Haitian residency perhaps illustrate more than figures alone. The vehemence of anti-Haitian feeling and the extreme comments expressed are not revealed in the tables of data. A phrase often heard whenever the subject of Haitian labour enters discussion is, ‘Ellos por allá, nosotros por aquí’ - ‘them there, us here’ - emphasised with abrupt hand gesticulation. *Haitiano/a* is used as a term of abuse against Dominicans with a dark skin colour. Similarly, many dark-skinned Dominicans tend to pre-empt suspicion by emphasising their Dominican citizenship. One interviewee, who described herself as *india*, was sure to avoid any doubt when describing her friend’s race: ‘My friend, he’s *prieto haitiano*, but he’s Dominican.’ Her friend had very dark skin colour, by implication like that of an Haitian, but he was definitely not Haitian.

Racial prejudice against Haitians is self-evident. The rural Haitian population is physically segregated as a racial labour enclave in the rural *bateyes*, and socially by racism and popular opposition to assimilation. Dominicans recognise a necessity for Haitians as units of labour, but condemn their presence to one of marginalisation and inferiority. A Dominican interviewee, describing himself as *indio oscuro*, commented on Haitians: 'Their labour is necessary - Dominicans don't cut cane - but, I'd never want to see one of my children marry one of them. Each to their own. It's not the colour of their skin, but they themselves - they're Haitians, and we're Dominicans.' Dominicans have traditionally scorned work in the canefields, which is seen almost exclusively as Haitian labour.⁸⁶ Interviewees argued that the Haitian physiology was more suitable to working outdoors than the lighter-skinned Dominican population.

Is anti-Haitianism functional to the Dominican state? Haitian migrants provide low-cost labour, especially in the sugar industry, and increasingly in domestic service, commerce and construction. It could be argued that wages are depressed and conditions worsened for Dominican labour, who then vilify the darker-skinned Haitian labourers. The presence of low-paid Haitian workers in the country has been suggested in the media as a restricting influence on the modernisation and development of the economy.⁸⁷ Bernardo Vega, the Dominican ambassador to the US and former Governor of the Central Bank, proposes that, 'large numbers of Haitian workers (who make up between five and ten percent of the foreign population) keep wages down and sustain a non-mechanised

⁸⁶ Fink, M. 1979 A Dominican harvest of shame *Caribbean Review* 8, 1: 34-38, p. 34

⁸⁷ *El Siglo* 27 July 1992

system of farming.’⁸⁸ It may be suggested that anti-Haitianism is a divisive force manipulated by the Dominican government to weaken labour alliances, thus forcing a false racial hierarchy upon the Dominican working classes. Even restrictions on immigration and residency, imposed by the Dominican government, deliberately place Haitian labour in a vulnerable, servile position of illegality, in the context of widespread racial prejudice.⁸⁹

Hoetink has outlined the key aspects of Dominican attitudes towards Haiti. He sees animosity being fostered by Dominican national historiography *vis-à-vis* the Haitian state, which continually emphasises the preoccupation of the Haitian government to unify the island.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, a history of mutual political and financial support exists between the ruling elites. There is also an awareness of the open border between the two countries, which has for many years been crossed by both Haitians and Dominicans. Vega has suggested that Haitian and Dominican forces co-operated with each other during the nineteenth century Haitian occupation, and that Haitian troops helped Dominican rebels to defeat Spain during the War of Restoration. He adds that at the end of the nineteenth century there was little anti-Haitian sentiment among the Dominican population.⁹¹ However, it would be naive to underestimate the strength of antagonism

⁸⁸ Interview. In David 1992, p. 23

⁸⁹ Acosta, M. 1976 *Azúcar y inmigración haitiana*. In Corten, A. , Vilas, C. M. , Acosta, M. and Duarte, I. 1976 *Azúcar y política en la República Dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, pp. 115-154, p. 151

⁹⁰ Hoetink, H. 1992 *Ideology, intellectuals and identity: the Dominican Republic, 1880-1980*. In Hennessy, A. 1992 *Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean* volume two London: Macmillan 1992, pp. 132-144, pp. 138-139

⁹¹ Vega 1993, p. 30

between the two populations. Anti-Haitianism provided a strong element for national cohesion during the last century, and was the focus of much nationalist rhetoric.⁹²

The influx of Haitian labour to Dominican sugar plantations at the end of the nineteenth century led to the fear of a passive invasion. Dominican employers have frequently deplored the immigration of Haitian workers in terms of their demographic and social influences, while simultaneously employing their labour at extremely low wages. Many Dominican merchants also prosper from the Haitian domestic market. This trade gained world attention during the early 1990s with the breaking of international trade embargoes against the Haitian military regime imposed by the United Nations.

Race is the dominant factor which underpins the fear of Haitian immigration. Despite the malleable and subjective nature of racial difference, Haitians tend to have a darker phenotype, or skin colour, than Dominicans. This difference has been the cause for two centuries of racist antagonism between the countries. Anti-Haitianism not only influences political discourse, sentiment and action, but has been institutionalised in many Dominican schools. An extract from a school textbook used during the era of Trujillo is cited by Bueno, who concludes that anti-Haitian prejudice remains evident in the Dominican education system:

Haiti is inhabited by a mob of savage Africans. We Dominicans should be in debt to our blood. The Haitian is an enemy. Haitians should be transferred to French Guyana or to Africa. The Dominican race and civilisation are superior to that of Haiti. Haiti has no importance in the world. The poorest sectors of the Haitian population are an ethnic group incapable of evolution and progress.⁹³

⁹² Sagás, E. 1993 A case of mistaken identity: antihaitianismo in Dominican culture *Latinamericanist* 29, 1: 1-4, p. 1

⁹³ Citation. In Bueno, R. A. 1992 Estudio del prejuicio hacia los haitianos en tres escuelas intermedias con diferentes niveles de interacción social unpublished Masters thesis, Department of Social Studies, Universidad Católica de Madre y Maestra, Santiago, p. 45

Bueno studied anti-Haitian prejudice in three Dominican schools located in different regions of the Cibao. One school was situated in a predominantly rural area where frequent social and economic interaction occurred between Haitian workers and Dominicans. Another school was located in the city of Santiago, where the students could expect some contact with Haitians, principally through their employment in the construction industry or street-vending. The third school was located in the highlands south-east of Santiago, where very few Haitian immigrants reside. Bueno aimed to investigate how levels of anti-Haitian prejudice varied with Haitian-Dominican interaction. He concluded that the degree of social interaction had little significance in determining the relatively high level of prejudice. Much of the anti-Haitian sentiment, he argued, developed as children grew up in a social environment that had always seen the Haitian population as a 'natural' enemy. He suggested that the most significant event that continues to shape such prejudice is the Haitian invasion of 1822. A reminder of the salience of the past for the construction of the present.

Prejudice against Haitians similarly expresses itself in contemporary Dominican politics. Anti-Haitianism was the major stimulus for the deportation, decreed by Balaguer in June 1991, of all undocumented Haitian immigrants aged under 16 or over 60. Within three months, around 50,000 Haitians had been rounded up and deported by the Dominican army, or else had left the country voluntarily to avoid maltreatment. There were alleged abuses of human rights by the Dominican forces who used violence and split

up families.⁹⁴ Second generation immigrants of Haitian descent, though born in the Dominican Republic, were forcefully deported to a country where they had never lived. The government received popular support for the deportation programme. The history of antagonism between the two countries was revived and retold extensively by the national media. Dr Leonel Fernández, the current Dominican president, has expressed his intention to improve relations with Haiti, distancing himself from the former policies of Dr Joaquín Balaguer. However, the deportation of Haitians in the Dominican Republic was re-intensified within months of his inauguration as President in August 1996.

A year after the nation-wide deportations in 1991, 40 percent of respondents in a study based in the city of Santiago supported the removal of Haitians as a legitimate and necessary government action.⁹⁵ Support reached 64 percent among the highest income group, but only 33 percent from the lowest.⁹⁶ Higher income groups could look upon the poor Haitian immigrants from a disdainful distance, whereas the lower income sectors were more attuned to the problems that widespread poverty presented for all inhabitants of the Dominican Republic. However, the theme of anti-Haitianism was manifest in many interviews across all socio-economic groups, and the similar experiences of poverty often did little to appease Dominican contempt for their neighbours.

Anti-Haitianism lies at the core of Dominican racial identity, but provokes the question, anti-Haiti or anti-*negritud*? The influences that feed perceptions of Haiti have largely been negative in terms of the historical and contemporary manipulation of the

⁹⁴ Ferguson, J. 1992 *The Dominican Republic: beyond the lighthouse* London: Latin American Bureau, p. 89

⁹⁵ Howard 1993, p. 67

⁹⁶ Howard 1993, p. 54

subject. The enemy of the Dominican nation is Haiti, and Haitians are identified directly with African ancestry. Nation becomes closely associated with race, incorporating characteristics of nationalism with overt racism.

Few Dominicans have grown up without hearing private or public defamation of the neighbouring country. The Haitian population, subconsciously and consciously, becomes a threat. A phobia is openly promoted through the racist discourse of politicians, or, more subtly, through everyday language and stereotypes. Typical of this attitude was a cartoon in a national daily newspaper, professing sympathy for the plight of the neighbouring population, but which bolstered the general view of Haitians in the Dominican Republic as undocumented immigrants, treading unwelcome steps on Dominican soil.⁹⁷ The Haitian migrant is characterised as illegal, destitute, desperate and about to usurp Dominican nationality. The same migrant may have arrived in the Dominican Republic as a contract worker or 'guest-worker' following inter-governmental negotiation.

The hatred of many Dominicans for Haiti is not based solely on nationalist sentiment. Overt racism has etched itself on popular opinion to such a degree that it has gained a level of respectability. Individual and institutional biases have led the way to continuous sources of racial prejudice. The danger of racialised politics is clear since 'racist ideologies have severe practical consequences particularly where they become institutionalised through the power of the state.'⁹⁸ Those Dominicans who speak out in

⁹⁷ *Última Hora* 28 July 1992

⁹⁸ Jackson, P. 1989 *Maps of Meaning: an introduction to cultural geography* London: Unwin Hyman, p. 151

favour of Haitian workers and who acknowledge African descent incite treason in popular opinion.

Ambiguity and the *indio*-myth

Anti-Haitian sentiment is aligned with the use of *lo indio*, which extends across all classes in Dominican society. *Indio/a* is an ambiguous term, not least because the entire indigenous population of Hispaniola died or was killed within fifty years of Columbus' arrival. Historically, *indio/a* has been used as a term to describe a brown skin colour, and it was not until the dictatorship of Trujillo that *indio/a* was established as an official and popular description of Dominican race. The Haitian massacre of 1937 has been mentioned as part of Trujillo's 'lightening' project to distance somatically the Dominican nation from its Haitian neighbour and African ancestry. In parallel to the physical violence, *lo indio* was the ideological assault. Today, most official identity cards describe the colour of their holder as *indio/a*. Popular usage has added the embellishments of *oscuro/a*, *quemado/a*, *canelo/a*, *lavado/a* and *claro/a* - dark, burnt, cinnamon, washed and clear.

My previous research in Santiago supports the frequent use of the term *indio/a* in the context of individual racial identification and with respect to the Dominican nation. Over half of those interviewed in a study in Santiago described themselves as *indio/a*, but of these, over 70 percent refused to consider themselves as *mestizo/a*.⁹⁹ A similar study in

⁹⁹ Howard 1993, p. 74

Santo Domingo showed that 43 percent of the sample perceived themselves as *indio/a*.¹⁰⁰ In other parts of Latin America the latter term refers to a person born of Indian and European parentage. In the Dominican Republic, this term corresponds with what might be referred to elsewhere as mulatto. *Lo indio* and *lo mestizo* (which is rarely used locally) have therefore developed meanings and identities specific to the context of Dominican historical and spatial relations.

In Gazcue, the twilight zone of the traditional elite, interviewees described themselves using lighter terminology, although *indio/a* was by far the most popular across all three study sites (Table 1.4). When more affluent respondents describe themselves as *indio/a*, it is usually qualified by lightening adjectives such as *claro/a* or *fino/a*. The former refers to clear, pale skin; the latter to 'finer' facial features. Adjectives such as *oscuro/a*, *quemado/a*, and *canelo/a* acknowledge the darker skin colour of the individual, but their incorporation with *indio/a* maintains a somatic and cultural distance from African ancestry.

In the lower-income sites of Los Guandules and Zambrana, the term *indio/a* is more prevalent, either on its own or with darker adjectives. The affectionate diminutive ending of *-ito/a* is often added to lessen the impact of darker racial terminology. For example, *indiocito*, *morenita*, or *negrito*. An interviewee in Gazcue, describing himself as *trigueño*, used the diminutive to acknowledge the darker skin colour of his friend: 'My friend has darker skin. He's *indiocito*. I know *indio* doesn't exist... Well, my friend's colour is equal to mine, but he's *indiocito*, you see?' A professed lack of colour bias is

¹⁰⁰ Silvestre, E. 1986 Definición de las razas en Santo Domingo Unpublished conference paper from Coloquio sobre Hombre y Sociedad, INTEC, Santo Domingo, October 1986, p. 9

negated by the respondent's need to soften the potentially derogatory ascription of a lower aesthetic status.

Most interviewees described the race of the majority of Dominicans in their own image or as *indio/a*, although interesting anomalies appear (Tables 2.4 and 2.5). Almost two-fifths of the total survey sample considered the majority of the Dominican population to be *indio/a*, and a half of these were from the Zambrana sample. A further twenty percent believed the majority to be a racial plurality which they described as *ligado/a*, translated as mixed or alloyed, or *mestizo/a*. Over a fifth of the total sample described the majority population as *mulato/a* or *negro/a*. These respondents, in general, lived in the urban survey sites, and almost a half described themselves as *indio/a*, perhaps reflecting a greater willingness to accept an African past for the population at large, rather than for themselves.

Two-thirds of those interviewees who believed the majority of the population to be *blanco/a* were from the low income neighbourhood of Los Guandules (Table 2.4). The concentration of opinion may be explained by the frequently-heard phrase, 'Los dueños son blancos' - 'the bosses are white.' This refers to the white power bias in business and political spheres. Most members of the elite have light-coloured skin. Ownership, or the control of power, is equated among the lower classes with whiteness. Those respondents who described themselves as *blanco/a*, 16 percent of the total sample, perceived themselves as a minority group, describing the majority of Dominicans as *indio/a* or with darker skin colour (Table 2.5). Those who saw themselves as *blanco/a* frequently took on the role of the embattled minority, remnants of the white Hispanic tradition under threat from the process of *mulatización*.

Table 2.4 Interviewees' perceptions of the race of the majority of Dominicans,
according to study site

%	Site	Gazcue	Los Guandules	Zambrana	Total sample
	Race of the majority				
	<i>Blanco/a</i>	0.7	2.0	0.3	3.0
	<i>Indio/a</i>	7.7	11.3	19.7	38.8
	<i>Mestizo/a</i>	6.0	3.0	1.0	10.0
	<i>Trigueño/a</i>	1.3	-	0.7	2.0
	<i>Moreno/a</i>	0.3	1.3	0.7	2.3
	<i>Mulato/a</i>	6.7	4.0	1.3	12.0
	<i>Negro/a</i>	2.7	4.3	2.3	9.3
	<i>Ligado/a</i>	2.3	2.7	4.7	9.7
	Other	5.7	4.7	2.7	13.0
	Total	33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 2.5 Interviewees' perception of the race of the majority of Dominicans, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Race of interviewee % Race of the majority	<i>Blanco/a</i>	<i>Indio/a</i>	<i>Mestizo/a</i>	<i>Trigueño/a</i>	<i>Moreno/a</i>	<i>Mulato/a</i>	<i>Negro/a</i>	Other	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>	1.3	0.7	-	0.3	-	0.3	-	0.3	3.0
<i>Indio/a</i>	4.3	31.0	0.3	-	1.0	-	1.7	0.3	38.8
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	2.0	3.0	2.7	-	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.3	10.0
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	0.3	-	1.7	-	-	-	-	2.0
<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	-	0.3	-	2.3
<i>Mulato/a</i>	2.7	3.7	0.7	-	0.3	4.0	0.7	-	12.0
<i>Negro/a</i>	2.0	4.0	1.0	-	0.3	-	2.0	-	9.3
<i>Ligado/a</i>	1.7	6.0	0.7	-	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	9.7
Other	2.3	5.7	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.7	2.7	13.0
Total	16.3	55.3	5.7	2.7	3.7	5.3	6.0	5.0	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

The following interview quotes illustrate the confusion surrounding the use of *indio/a* and its reference to a mythical racial heritage. A female interviewee from Gazcue was more clear on what *lo indio* did not mean, than what it represented in positive terms: 'I'm an *india*, but that doesn't exist. We Dominicans aren't *blanco* or *negro*. We're *indio*, but that's a Dominicanism.' Another resident from Gazcue, describing himself as *indio*, suggested: '*Indios*... we're very *blancos*, but not *blancos claros*.' There is confusion between *lo indio* as a reference to an indigenous descent and as an expression of colour. An *indio* acknowledged the term as a colour designation, but also linked it to the presence

of African ancestry ('a little bit of black behind the ear'): '*Indio* isn't *negro negro*, but *chocolate*. We're a mixture - everyone's got *negrita detrás de la oreja*.' He was countered by a neighbour: 'The term *indio* is used poorly... It refers to *raza*, not to the colour of indigenous people.'

The use of *indio/a* evidences a denial of African ancestry and a rejection of Haiti - a racial cover-up. The situation is similar to Degler's concept of the Brazilian 'mulatto escape hatch' in which a racial category is created that cannot claim to be white, but somatically distances itself from being black.¹⁰¹ Rejection and the aesthetics of colour are closely tied together. A Gazcue resident was keen to distance her race from her colour when interviewed during research: 'They say that the majority is *negra*, but there are no *negros* here, only *indios* and *blancos*. My parents are Spanish, so even though I look like a *mulata*, I'm definitely *blanca*.' Aesthetically she may be *mulata*, but her self-defined race was *blanca*, with a definite Hispanic bias.

It has been argued that the term *indio/a* functions as a neutral term in relation to colour.¹⁰² Hence, a variety of adjectives has been used in conjunction with the word *indio* to acknowledge darker and lighter skin tones in the population. This explanation of *indio* as a 'colourless' term is untenable in a society so conscious of light and dark aesthetics. The use of colouring adjectives merely illustrates the underlying bias in Dominican society. The majority of interviewees describing themselves as *indio/a* would be unable to validate a secure claim to whiteness.

¹⁰¹ Degler, C. N. 1971 *Neither White nor Black: slavery and race relations in the Brazil and the United States* New York: Macmillan, pp. 224-225

¹⁰² Fennema and Loewenthal 1987, p. 63

Three main hypotheses have been suggested for the origin of the term *lo indio*. Firstly, the term may refer purely to skin colour, providing an alternative to *mulato/a* without the connotation of African origins. The colour was perceived, historically, to be similar to that of the population of India or to that of the indigenous Americans. Secondly, it has been suggested that *indio/a* is derived from the belief of Columbus that he had actually arrived in India.¹⁰³ Thirdly, the use of *indio/a* has been linked to the rise of *indigenismo*.¹⁰⁴ Knight gives an account of *indigenismo* in Mexico, where the generic concept was part of Spanish rather than indigenous vocabulary.¹⁰⁵ *Indigenismo* in Mexico was an important element of post-revolutionary ideology, emphasising the indigenous element in Mexican national culture, as in Gamio's *Forjando patria*.¹⁰⁶

The influence of *indigenismo* was limited in the Dominican Republic. Unlike other Latin American countries, the indigenous population was quickly eradicated with the development of European colonisation. Attempts were made to resurrect an indigenous heritage towards the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Haiti experienced a similar resurgence of interest in an indigenous past at that time. Knight comments on the more successful endeavour in Mexico where the indigenous population is still an important constituent of society. Nevertheless his comments are apt for the Dominican experience:

When later *indigenistas* set out to recover a pristine Indian culture, they either attempted the impossible, or, more realistically, they took the syncretic culture of the colonial Indian as their yardstick... *indigenismo* thus represented yet another

¹⁰³ Jorge Cela interview 28 July 1992

¹⁰⁴ Bernado Vega interview 27 July 1992

¹⁰⁵ Knight, A. 1990 Racism, revolution, and indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940. In Graham, R. (ed). 1990 *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940* Austin: University of Texas Press, pp. 71-113, p. 75

¹⁰⁶ Gamio, M. 1960 *Forjando patria* second edition Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa

¹⁰⁷ Moya Pons, F. 1995 *Indios no somos Rumbo* 75: 4

non-Indian formulation of the 'Indian problem', it was another white/mestizo construct.¹⁰⁸

The evolution of the term *indio/a* in the Dominican Republic attempted a historical-racial fix that continues up to the present. This involves the blocking out of a reality, and the denial of an African ancestry which has led to an uneasiness over issues of race. The tension between a racially complex reality and the logic of a preferred indigenous and Hispanic heritage frames any discussion of race in the Dominican Republic.

The most obvious example of history and literature combining to emphasize the indigenous past is the narrative surrounding Enriquillo. Manuel de José Galván wrote *Enriquillo* to recount the story of the indigenous leader in the former colony of Santo Domingo.¹⁰⁹ Franco suggests that this novel, first published in 1882, marks the zenith of *indigenismo* in the Dominican Republic.¹¹⁰ In 1519, Enriquillo led an insurrection against the Spanish colonisers which resulted in peace negotiations with the Spanish authorities. In return for a form of self-government, Enriquillo agreed to pursue and return runaway slaves. Galván describes Enriquillo as a Christian hero, a faithful adherent of Spanish culture and Christianity. *Enriquillo* represents the archetypal 'noble savage', the effective syncretism of Spanish civilisation and indigenous heritage.

Hoetink considers *Enriquillo* to be an attempt to fulfil a national psychological need. It aimed, 'to establish a continuity between the earliest inhabitants and the present population and, by so doing, to legitimate the latter's historical claim on the land they

¹⁰⁸ Knight 1990. In Graham 1990, pp. 76-77

¹⁰⁹ Galván, M. de J. 1989 *Enriquillo* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller

¹¹⁰ Franco, F. J. 1979 *Santo Domingo: cultura, política é ideología* Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, p. 98

inhabit. The custom, still very much in use today among many classes, to name one's children after a native *cacique* flows from this same need.'¹¹¹ *Enriquillo* aims to establish a racial authenticity for Dominican society through the pursuit of an ancestry perceived as distinguished and legitimate.

The descendants of Dominican slave society wished to distance themselves from the legacy of enforced servitude. This necessitated the denial of African slave ancestry and the forging of a contemporary identity which marginalised *negritud*. African slaves who fled enslavement in the French part of the island during the eighteenth century established themselves in Santo Domingo as *indios/as*.¹¹² This was a psychological attempt to break with the stigma of slavery, but it undermines those who wish to employ *lo indio* as an emblem of non-African descent. *Lo indio* invokes a past in order to mould the roots of the present:

In the formation of the Dominican nation [the merging of the identity of coloniser and colonised] served as a point of reference for all those Dominicans who, for the colour of their skin, could never hope to be called white and Spanish, but desperately wanted to get rid of the negative stamp of being black and African... Thus, the word '*indio*' became current, instead of *mulato*, invoking an indigenous and romantic past rather than that of African tribalism and slavery.¹¹³

Cohen argues that 'one of the most important functions of myth is that it anchors the present in the past.'¹¹⁴ *Enriquillo*, and a similar period work entitled *Fantasías indígenas* (1877), became platforms for the construction of a national and personal myth.¹¹⁵ This

¹¹¹ Hoetink. In Hennessy 1992, pp. 137-138

¹¹² Fennema and Loewenthal 1987, p.28

¹¹³ Fennema and Loewenthal 1987, p. 28

¹¹⁴ Cohen, P. S. 1969 Theories of myth *Man* 4, 3: 337-353, p. 349

¹¹⁵ Pérez, J. J. 1989 *Fantasías indígenas y otros poemas* Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio

literary basis provided one influence, although the *indio/a* identity was most keenly worked into popular and official psyches during the era of Trujillo. School text books, the press and political discourse propagated the indigenous illusion to dispel an African heritage and separate the Dominican Republic from Haiti.¹¹⁶ Hoetink warns against stressing the exclusivity of the term *indio/a* for the Dominican racial complex.¹¹⁷ However, its use can be singled out as having special importance in the Dominican Republic, primarily due to its effectiveness as an institutionalised myth during the *trujillato*. The legacy remains potent. A recent editorial in a Dominican American newspaper heralded the importance of *indio/a* as an affirmation of ‘our identity as a people.’¹¹⁸

The *indio*-myth has, historically, played a significant role in Dominican anti-Haitian racist ideology. The potency of *lo indio* illustrates the power of racial ideology in a Dominican society that superficially treats race as benign. It is an attempt to legitimise and vindicate the construction of a false history inspired by racial prejudice. The use of myth is often clearly ‘a device for blocking curiosity and the search for further explanations.’¹¹⁹ Myth blocks off the false presence (*lo indio*) from the true absence (*lo negro*), justifying the mistaken identity of the former through an elaborate historical and ethnic rationale.

¹¹⁶ Mateo, A. L. 1993 *Mito y cultura en la era de Trujillo* Santo Domingo: Editora de Colores

¹¹⁷ Hoetink. In Hennessy 1992, p. 143

¹¹⁸ *Listín USA* 11 May 1994

¹¹⁹ Cohen, P. S. 1969 Theories of myth *Man* 4, 3: 337-353, p. 348

In 1992, Dr Joaquín Balaguer, the former Dominican President, made a speech to the second Ibero-American summit in Madrid, which eulogised the synthesis of indigenous and Hispanic culture, and made no reference to African influence:

*'El mestisaje, the violent alloy of two heroic metals which are mixed in the blood of our indigenes and the descendents of those who arrived with Columbus from the other side of the Atlantic, is perhaps not the cosmic race described in the fascinating rhetoric of the master, José Vasconcelos. However, with certainty and without reservation, it is the fusion of two cultures, or one could say, two civilisations.'*¹²⁰

The display of Hispanophilia by Balaguer was extravagant. He extolled Spanish as one of the most dignified languages for human thought, arguing that it was the basis for one of the best literary works, *Don Quijote*, which came a close second to the Bible. *Lo indio*, and with greater resonance, the Hispanic cultural heritage, form the bedrock of Balaguer's conception of *dominicanidad*.

The indigenous heritage of the Dominican Republic is a popular topic for study. It was recently the subject of a series of educational cartoons in the national daily newspaper, *Listín Diario*.¹²¹ The premise of the series was to illustrate the significance of the Arawak past. The Castilian language, it was argued, has been 'polished and enriched' by 'thousands' of indigenous words. The fervour to produce a verifiable indigenous heritage has led to a number of scientific studies of dubious merit. Many authors have attempted to show the salience of an indigenous past, although Veloz Maggiolo

¹²⁰ *Hoy* 24 July 1992

¹²¹ *Listín Diario* July-August, 1992

cautiously suggests that it is more often found in attitude than contemporary Dominican reality.¹²²

Alvarez Perelló has attempted to discover the extent to which there is indigenous ancestry in the present population by analysing blood groups.¹²³ He concluded that there is a strong suggestion of such a component in the population today, but that it is more evident in the highlands where Spanish influence was limited during colonial times. The study pinpointed the indigenous genetic component of the current Dominican population at 17 percent, regional differences having been taken into account. The research was originally published in the United States in 1951, during the era of Trujillo. The methodological and theoretical merits of the research are doubtful, although its eventual publication in the Dominican Republic, twenty-two years later, says much about the enduring legacy of *lo indio*.

Another study which purported to verify biologically the *indio*-myth was undertaken by Omos Cordones as recently as 1980.¹²⁴ From an analysis of language, colour vision and tooth shape in a village 'renowned' for its indigenous ancestry, the research failed to find conclusive proof of direct indigenous descent. However, the author does provide five photographs which allegedly illustrate indigenous phenotypical characteristics among the local children. The author relies heavily on the subjective

¹²² Veloz Maggiolo, M. 1986 *Sobre cultura dominicana... y otras culturas* second edition Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, p. 70

¹²³ Alvarez Perelló, J. de J. 1973 La mezcla de razas en Santo Domingo y los factores sanguíneos *Eme-Eme* 2,8: 67-98

¹²⁴ Omos Cordones, H. 1980 Tres rasgos genéticos en una población dominicana *Boletín del Museo del Hombre Dominicano* 15: 89-102

construction of race to enable the reader to envisage such characteristics. The five children appear little different from children in any other part of the Dominican Republic.

Finally, the contemporary manifestation of the *indio*-myth finds its institutional support through the personal identity card issued by the government. All residents in the Dominican Republic over the age of eighteen are expected to have a *cédula*, which is renewed every five years. In order to vote, the possession of a *cédula* is necessary, which has provoked protests against governments accused of withholding cards from opposition voters. Many Haitian-Dominicans are disenfranchised by this system, since they cannot afford to purchase the necessary personal documents to prove their birth status, or else fear deportation as undocumented immigrants if they approach government officials.

The *cédula* carries personal details of the holder, including skin colour which is assessed either by the clerk issuing the identity card, or alternatively, the individual herself or himself may be asked to describe their own colour. The descriptive terms authorised by the government illustrate much about the reproduction of the *indio*-myth. From previous research in Santiago, it was found that almost half of all respondents were described on their *cédulas* as *indio/a*.¹²⁵ Current research also shows *indio/a* to be the dominant term used on identity cards within the three study sites (Table 2.6). Over two-thirds of interviewees were holders of *cédulas* which described their colour as *indio/a*.

In Gazcue, almost half of the interviewees had *blanco/a* on their cards, illustrating the subjective nature of colour allocation by the Dominican authorities, who tend to 'lighten up' residents of higher-status neighbourhoods. Only four percent of the interview

¹²⁵ Howard 1993, p. 84

sample from that neighbourhood described their race as *blanco/a*. Anecdotal evidence suggests that affluent Dominicans were more likely to be described as *indio/a*, or in lighter terms, on their *cédula*. This may be a result of self-description, but is most probably due to the interplay of status and power relations with colour-coding by government officials. Clerks working in the offices which issue identity cards are unlikely to risk offending members of the affluent classes by describing them as *indio/a*. This show of deference is possible since few affluent Dominicans would renew their *cédulas* themselves. They will often send an employee with the relevant papers to deal with the bureaucratic requirements. The employee is unlikely to insult an employer by ascribing her or his colour as *indio/o*. Several respondents who wanted to state their colour as *mulato/a* recounted stories of having to insist that this term be placed on their personal identity cards. Each card has a colour photograph of the holder, but the government clerks were reluctant for these affluent residents to describe themselves by dark aesthetic terminology, especially since they could easily have ‘passed’ as *blanco/a*.

The use of the term *indio/a* focuses attention away from African ancestry as a response to racial prejudice:

We live with our backs turned to the Caribbean because we do not want to see ourselves as blacks... we believe that we are whiter than the Spanish.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Andújar, C. 1992 El proceso de conformación de la identidad cultural dominicana unpublished conference paper from Día del mulato, Centro de Trabajo Popular, Santiago, 5 September 1992, p. 9

Table 2.6 Skin colour stated on the identity card (*cédula*) of interviewees, according to study site

<i>Cédula</i>	Site %	Gazcue	Los Guandules	Zambrana	Total sample
<i>Blanco/a</i>		15.7	1.7	0.7	18.0
<i>Indio/a</i>		14.3	26.7	27.3	68.3
<i>Negro/a</i>		-	2.0	1.3	3.3
Other		2.0	1.0	-	3.0
Unsure/Don't have		1.3	2.0	4.0	7.3
Total		33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

African heritage is swapped for an indigenous, non-African past. The function of myth is important, because it shapes perceptions and connects the individual to a shared sense of ethnicity. The lived falsehood of *lo indio* is founded on racist discourse, and thus, constitutes a major obstacle to encountering racial identification without prejudice at the individual and national level in the Dominican Republic.

Racial perception and assumed ancestries differentiate Dominican society, as does class stratification. Do factors of class encroach upon perceptions of race? The following chapter considers the importance of social classes, and their influence on race and the aesthetics of colour in Dominican society.

3 RACE, COLOUR AND CLASS IN DOMINICAN SOCIETY

The following chapter incorporates class analysis into the study of social differentiation in Dominican society. In particular, it asks how does race relate to class in the Dominican Republic? The Dominican Republic is a class-structured society, but one in which race clearly differentiates. A dark-skinned Dominican is still '*ese/a negro/a*', regardless of class in many instances. Race, it is argued, is not reducible to class even when they become mutually entangled and enmeshed in social stratification.

Theories of race and class are outlined at the start of the chapter, before the development of social classes in the Dominican Republic is discussed. The chapter then focuses on the relations of class and race in the three study sites. An index of social class is calculated for the total sample which forms the empirical backbone for the analysis of class variation. Interviewees were questioned on their perceptions of race and their opinions on the presence of Haitian labour in the Dominican Republic.

Theories of race, colour and class

The structures of societies in the Caribbean have been viewed through theoretical prisms which focus on class, caste, race, colour and ethnicity. Insularity, slavery, the plantation economy, migration and colonialism link the experiences of Caribbean societies, and provide the general framework for studies of social stratification and the interplay of the above variables. Generalisations, however, hide the complexities of differing colonial

regimes, forms of labour recruitment and contemporary social and political histories. Many analyses of stratification have attempted to delimit and to isolate theoretically the modes of differentiation in society. Smith, for example, seeks such an approach:

Concretely, stratification is manifest by and in the differential distribution of resources, opportunities, rewards and sanctions among the members of a society... Analytically, stratification can be reduced to a set of specific principles that generate and organise the prevailing distribution of resources and opportunities.¹

Race and class are two analytically distinct concepts fundamental to the stratification of Dominican society, and to Caribbean social formations in general. Class is a socio-economic category based on attributes of status, power and income, defined and ascribed by individuals as reference groups for hierarchical relations in society. Class position represents a status negotiated between economic attainment and social standing. Economic attainment corresponds to the level of an individual's access to income, and social standing is based on an individual's standard of living, level of formal education and prestige associated with birth or occupation.² A definition of class need not be strait-jacketed into reductionist theory, yet conceptual ambiguity weakens analysis.

Definitions will always contain the bias of the author.³ An observation of Dominican social classes in the 1950s provides a clear example, where the author equates class and race, combining snobbery with racism. Mejía-Ricart asserts, after Ginsberg, that class represents a group of individuals who share forms of conduct, language, dress, education and social norms. He defined a concept of class which reifies Eurocentric culture and 'breeding', and lamented:

¹ Smith, M. G. 1974 *Corporations and Society* London: Duckworth, pp. 271-272

² Weber, M. 1947 *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* London: William Hodge, p. 394

³ Williams, R. 1983 *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* London: Fontana, p. 17

... the non-existence in Santo Domingo of a class with clearly superior cultural roots and wealth, equivalent to those in the great countries of Europe and America.⁴

In the Dominican Republic, he argued, there was no upper class of sufficient social and economic standing compared to European standards. He outlined the psychological inferiority of the lower classes, suggesting that the origins of Dominican social stratification were threefold - racial, economic and cultural. His analysis of Dominican social classes provides an inaccurate and racist overview of society, painting images of a false racial democracy:

In our country, there are no extremist attitudes: there is no violent racial discrimination, and no social colour barriers exist outwardly.⁵

The study is itself a product of a discriminatory society. Higher social classes aspired to be *blanco/a* or to protect the 'gift' of whiteness where it existed. Only exceptional merit, it was proposed, had allowed *negros/as* into the highest classes. The middle classes were *mulatos/as*. Most of lower classes were *negros/as* or dark *mulatos/as*. Ultimately, social advance was perceived in terms of white cultural superiority: '... *los blancos* will predominate, since they have the indispensable cultural traits for relations with people of a superior level.'⁶

Mejía-Ricart's analysis gives much significance to the factors of class and race. His framework of reference for social classes was social status. According to Wolch and Dear, social status has profound importance: 'a central dynamic in life is the innate human

⁴ Mejía-Ricart, M. A. 1953 *Las clases sociales en Santo Domingo* Ciudad Trujillo: Librería Dominicana 1953, p. 23

⁵ Mejía-Ricart 1953, p. 27

⁶ Mejía-Ricart 1953, p. 29

tendency to strive for security and status, and to protect those gains that have already been achieved.’⁷ Race and class are the key variables that determine an individual’s status in the Dominican Republic - both require close analysis.

Analytical distinctiveness is more apparent in theory than in practice, which impedes the disentanglement of race and class factors in complex social matrices. The segregation of theoretical concepts may in practice oversimplify the social admixture. Race structuration takes place in the context of class, and class is structured within the context of race. Race, colour and class are often conflated, and distinct analytical terms lost in composite descriptions of Caribbean societies:

Race and colour are shorthand designations of class, but they often overwhelm all other connotations; colour visibility may transcend other elements of class.⁸

Hall has described Caribbean societies in terms of ‘the profound stability of a system of stratification where race, colour, status, occupation and wealth overlap and are ideologically mutually reinforcing.’⁹ The response is twofold, although Hall himself would surely question the starkness of his comment. Firstly, the complex social experiences of over thirty-five million people living on more than fifty islands within the Caribbean cannot be reduced to a single explanatory system. Secondly, the dynamics of race, colour and class are such that societies are constantly changing and challenging societal frameworks. Dr José Francisco Peña Gómez is an established politician in the Dominican Republic, yet his Haitian origins and dark skin colour do not correlate with

⁷ Wolch, J. and Dear, M. (eds) 1989 *The Power of Geography; how territory shapes social life* London: Unwin Hyman, p. 8

⁸ Lowenthal, D. 1972 *West Indian Societies* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 134

⁹ Hall, S. 1980 Pluralism, race and class in Caribbean society. In UNESCO 1980 *Sociological Theories: race and colonialism*. Paris: UNESCO, pp. 150-182, p. 167

the normal status markers in Dominican society.

Analyses of Caribbean societies which aim to determine the dominance of either race or class-based theories of stratification cannot arrive at a succinct answer, but they are able to summarise complex realities, provided that the summaries do not bolster oversimplification at the expense of explanation. Clarke has developed a four-fold typology of Caribbean societies, expanding the work of Lowenthal and M. G. Smith.¹⁰ The typology outlines the dominant cleavages in Caribbean societies by adopting four frameworks of stratified or segmented pluralism, class stratification and folk communities. Hispanic territories are categorised as class-stratified societies since class structuration is considered to be dominant over racial and cultural stratification. Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic developed under the influence of Spanish colonialism and on a different time scale from the rest of the region. These countries experienced two main periods of expanding sugar production, during the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. The development of sugar plantation economies during the last century and the relatively higher incidences of white immigration or conditions of free-labour meant that these countries evolved as societies with slaves rather than slave societies. The Dominican Republic developed as a miscegenated society with a small minority of *blancos/as*.

Hoetink argues that historical relations of slavery are insufficient to explain the concept of race in the Dominican Republic, which experienced a relatively late development of its sugar plantation economy after the abolition of slavery in 1822.¹¹ The

¹⁰ Clarke, C. G. 1991 Introduction: Caribbean decolonisation – new states and old societies. In Clarke, C. G. (ed). 1991 *Society and Politics in the Caribbean* Oxford: Macmillan, pp. 1-27

¹¹ Hoetink, H. 1970 The Dominican Republic in the nineteenth century: some notes on stratification.

Spanish-speaking countries, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, generally have lighter-coloured populations due to their demographic histories of slavery and migration. In the eastern part of Hispaniola, the predominance of cattle rearing rather than labour intensive production between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, limited the number of African slaves in that region. Hoetink has suggested that the Moorish influence in Iberia was an important aspect of the Spanish and Portuguese colonial regimes, allowing narrower chromatic bridges to ease social relations and influence perceptions of race following emancipation and during the post-colonial era.¹²

Caribbean societies in general are typified by lighter-skinned elites, and darker-coloured lower socio-economic strata. A glance at the 'society' pages in any newspaper confirms this generalisation. An edition of *Ritmo Social*, the weekly supplement to a Dominican national daily newspaper, contained photographs of 274 members of Santo Domingo's social elite; 260 of these could have been described as *blanco/a*, only two could have been *negro/a*, or more probably *indio/a oscuro/a*.¹³ *Negros/as* and *mulatos/as* are disproportionately represented among the lower social classes in the Dominican Republic. In general, they have considerably lower incomes than *blancos/as*, experience less social mobility and are more likely to be in the urban informal market. Darker-skinned Dominicans tend to have lower occupational and socio-economic status, but the relationship between race and class cannot be represented by a simple empirical correlation.

immigration, and race. In Mörner, M. (ed). 1970 *Race and Class in Latin America* New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 96-121, p. 96

¹² Hoetink, H. 1967 *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations: a contribution to the sociology of segmented societies* London: Oxford University Press, p. 13

¹³ *Listín Diario* 15 July 1995

The concept of caste as a structuring term has been used by several Caribbean scholars. Leyburn and Lobb, for example, recount Haitian history using the framework of a rigid caste society, in which class variation is reinforced by colour differentiation.¹⁴ Castes are social formations which have the general characteristics of endogamy, ascriptive membership by birth, and a system of hierarchical ranking in relation to other such groups.¹⁵ Hall remarks that following emancipation, slave societies became colonial societies, which later changed to decolonising societies.¹⁶ As colonialism developed, the racially-based caste systems of slave societies evolved into class systems. Post, also adopting the concept of caste, viewed early Caribbean slave societies in terms of a class-caste system.¹⁷ The growing class cleavages of miscegenated populations created groups of intermediate social status - the result not of the economic mode of production, but the outcome of reproduction. Post describes how as the capitalist economy developed, the class-caste system evolved into a hierarchy of bourgeois, petty bourgeois and working classes during the nineteenth century, while the racial legacy of slavery still informed perceptions of social status.

Balibar links caste and class systems to the division of a population into super-humanity and sub-humanity, a process which emphasises the discourse of blood, skin colour and cross breeding.¹⁸ The perception of nobility as a superior race or slaves as predestined for servitude falls under the category of aristocratic racism according to Balibar, who defines racism as 'an institutionalisation of the hierarchies involved in the world-wide

¹⁴ Lobb, J. 1940 Caste and class in Haiti *American Journal of Sociology* 46: 23-34

Leyburn, J. G. 1941 *The Haitian People* New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 79-110

¹⁵ van den Berghe, P. L. 1995 Caste. In Cashmere, E. (ed). 1995 *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* third edition London: Routledge, pp. 56-58

¹⁶ Hall 1980. In UNESCO 1980, p. 162

¹⁷ Post, K. 1978 *Arise Ye Starvelings: the Jamaican labour rebellion of 1938 and its aftermath* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff

¹⁸ Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. 1991 *Race, Nation, Class: ambiguous identities* London: Verso, p. 208

division of labour.’¹⁹ Aristocratic racism and caste society were linked from the start to the primitive accumulation of capital, the plantation economy. The importance of early caste or class signification was the fusion of a socio-economic category with an anthropological and moral category to institutionalise the racialisation of labour. The ideology of slavery envisaged slaves as members of a degenerate race. Balibar has used the concept of class racism to extrapolate the institutional racism of slavery, aristocratic racism, onto the exploitation of manual labour. He graphically describes the process in terms akin to the disembodiment induced by slavery in the cane fields:

... it creates *body-men*, men whose body is a machine-body, that is fragmented and dominated, and used to perform one isolable function or gesture, being both destroyed in its integrity *and* fetishized, atrophied *and* hypertrophied in its ‘useful’ organs... That the body-men are men with fragmented and mutilated bodies (if only by their ‘separation’ from intelligence) means that the individuals of each of these type have to be equipped with a *superbody*, and that sport and ostentatious virility have to be developed, if the threat hanging over the human race is to be fended off...²⁰

Class racism utilises racial signification to mark sectors of the population which are collectively destined for capitalist exploitation. It aims to keep people ‘in their place’ via the ascription of generic signs, producing the equivalent of a caste closure for part of the lower classes.

The concept of caste, however, confuses the situation by conflating notions of race, class and culture, providing a conceptual bucket without proposing a framework for rigorous analysis. Balibar’s conception of class racism, constructing a medley of race, caste and Weberian and Marxist class variants tends to confuse the issue further. Cox highlights

¹⁹ Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, p. 6

²⁰ Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, p. 210

theories of caste as unhelpful distractions from the central concerns of class and race relations.²¹

Previous studies have tried to tease out distinct and separate concepts of race, colour and class in the context of Caribbean social stratification. The studies by UNESCO, Williams and Girvan, for example, emphasise class relations.²² Lowenthal, however, focuses on race and colour in his description of social stratification:

Race and colour have always supplied critical distinctions among creoles. Segregated by law or by custom since the seventeenth century, white and non-white have played distinct social roles. Codified differences forced each class to institutionalise separate modes of organisation and ways of living... Race and colour are not the sole determinants of status in the West Indies. But class distinctions are mainly seen, and grievances expressed in racial terms. Colour in the sense of physical appearance carries extraordinary weight.²³

Phenotypical difference is a significant social marker. Skin colour, Banton argues, 'is a feature which varies along a continuous scale when measured by a light meter, but in social life it is used either as a discontinuous or a continuous variable in ordering social relations.'²⁴ Discontinuous categories are the semi-fixed 'racial' groupings of, for example, black, brown or white. Continuous categories assign colour a place on a scale of social status. Colour, as the dominant index of phenotypical difference, is thus perceived as a sign of wealth, education, accent or demeanour. It becomes a matter of culture, which is formulated with respect to appearance, social associates and ancestry. Pitt-Rivers comments

²¹ Cox, O. C. 1970 *Caste, Class and Race* New York: Monthly Review Press

²² UNESCO 1977 *Race and Class in Post-Colonial Society: a study of ethnic group relations in the English-speaking Caribbean, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico* Paris: UNESCO

Girvan, N. 1975 *Aspects of the political economy of race in the Caribbean and the Americas* Institute of Social and Economic Research Working Paper 7 Kingston: University of the West Indies

Williams, E. 1944 *Capitalism and Slavery* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina

²³ Lowenthal 1972, pp. 92-93

²⁴ Banton, M. 1991 The race relations problematic *British Journal of Sociology* 42, 1: 115-130, p. 125

on the role of colour in the make-up of Mexican national identity. Colour is part of an aesthetic continuum, forming a pliable framework to legitimise indigenous-based ideas of race and nation:

National unity demands that to be truly Mexican they must have some Indian blood, but aspirations require that they should not have too much. Colour is a matter of degree, not the basis of a division into black and white.²⁵

Colour adds a chromatic scale to levels of social interaction in Caribbean societies. Emancipation freed the Caribbean from the strict colour lines that demarcated society under slavery. The legal strata of citizens, freeman and slaves readily translated into the social hierarchy of whites, browns and blacks in most parts of the region.²⁶ Colour exists as a social, rather than simply biological, construction which tends to correlate with social mobility and economic status, and is an important element in the aesthetic formation of race. Elites tend to be lighter coloured than the rest of the population, and the saying that 'money lightens' holds true throughout the Caribbean region. Ambitions of 'marrying lighter' express the widely recognised view that marriage to a lighter partner may enhance social status, or increase the opportunities for offspring by 'improving the colour' of a darker-skinned parent.

Studies have recognised the colour continuum as a fragmented and blurred marker of status in Caribbean societies, quite different from the dichotomised view of race in North American societies. An interviewee in Los Guandules, who described himself as *indio*, remarked: 'Some people here are racist, but many coloured people have positions

²⁵ Pitt-Rivers, J. 1967 Race, colour and class in Central America and the Andes *Daedalus* 96: 542-559, p. 548

²⁶ Clarke, C. G. 1984 Pluralism and plural societies: Caribbean perspectives. In Clarke, C. G. , Ley, D. and Peach, C. (eds) 1984 *Geography and Ethnic Pluralism* London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 51-86

of importance - there is no colour discrimination here like in the United States.' Wade argues that the recognition of a black-white continuum has created an ambiguity and ambivalence towards black identity in Latin America.²⁷ The lack of anti-racist pressure groups can be attributed to the ability of many *mulatos/as* to dissociate themselves from *negritud* and be accepted as socially distinct. There are only two small non-governmental organisations, Identidad and Onérespés, which directly confront racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic, despite the high level of inequality that comes from pervasive racism, and despite a semi-official ideology of racial democracy which denies racism.

The myth of racial democracy tends to strengthen a perception that race has little or no effect on life chances, at least for individuals of similar socio-economic position. Persistent racist practices may thus seem less conspicuous, or become channelled via a scapegoat, frequently under the banner of nationalism. Haitians are scapegoats in Dominican popular prejudice, the majority stereotyped as poor and *negro/a* or *prietola*. The absence of clearly defined racial categories in official statistics or legislation diffuses the intensity of discriminatory labelling, but also limits coherent terms of reference for anti-racist policy. Colour aesthetics are a major element of racial prejudice, but racism cannot be understood adequately without accounting for the wider economic, political and ideological context. State legitimisation of racism, which reproduces racially-structured situations in the public sphere, is a key consideration.

The historical role of the state in the structuration of race and class in Caribbean societies was most apparent under the colonial system of slavery. The system of labour

²⁷ Wade, P. 1985 Race and class: the case of South American blacks *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 8, 2: 233-249, p. 233

incorporation under slavery involved of the exploitation of African slaves by a minority ruling class of European descent. Slave society was constructed on:

a regime of labour exploitation which itself depended on sufficiently gross disparities of race and power between the exploiters and the exploited to establish, 'legitimate' and sustain the slave 'mode of production'... That being so, the rigid 'class' lines that distinguish planters from labour, whether free or slave, are clearly entailed by the political, demographic and racial structures of these societies.²⁸

Smith refuses to adopt Marxist terminology with respect to class relations since, he argues, slavery was not dependent on relations of wage labour. Only with the abolition of slavery could capitalist relations of production between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie be established. The slave system, nevertheless, sought to accumulate capital through the appropriation of surplus value from an exploited labour force. Miles considers racism to be a historically specific ideology which structured economic relations in order to bring about and reproduce the colonial system of production. He bases his observations on colonial Kenya where:

...racism became a relation of production because it was an ideology which shaped decisively the formation and reproduction of the relation between the exploiter and the exploited: it was one of those representational elements which became historically conducive to the constitution and reproduction of a system of commodity production.²⁹

Class and race were the dominant markers of status in Caribbean societies. Miscegenation resulted in the creation of ambiguous racial categories which gave further strategic emphasis to race, since lighter colouring could procure a higher class status for *mulatos/as*. Recognition of the importance of race and class, however, does not disentangle the complexity of their influences on the social matrix. Nor does it resolve the debate over

²⁸ Smith, M.G. 1984 *Race, Culture and Class in the Commonwealth Caribbean* Mona: University of the West Indies, p. 122

²⁹ Miles, R. 1989 *Racism* London: Routledge, p. 111

the concepts of race and class themselves.

Wade argues that sociological studies in Latin America have not helped to dispel the ambiguity and ambivalence about the relations of race and class. He generalises that racial discrimination is recognised, but that class is more important: poor blacks suffer more because of their low income rather than their colour.³⁰ Wade suggests that class is a more accurate way of accounting for group composition in general; an earlier study of racial awareness in Colombia similarly attributes greater significance to class rather than race.³¹ Race, although a deeply rooted identity, can never dominate as a principle of stratification: ‘... in analysis of social inequality class must be the dominant principle and race a factor that impinges on the basic structures of class, transforming certain aspects of them.’³² In the United States, Wilson propounds a neoliberal view which suggests that the significance of race has declined in North American society during the second half of the twentieth century, as labour relations have become dominated by market forces.³³ Despite racial division within and between communities, it is argued that class relations stratify society at large.

Cox was one of the first contemporary writers to address the composition of race in terms of class analysis. Racism, he suggests, grew out of capitalism as a means to further the use of labour as a commodity. Racial inequality, thus, is not a ‘natural’ phenomenon, but an outcome of the interests of the capitalist class in exploiting sections of the working class. Cox attempted to reassert the significance of Marxist class analysis in a post-world war context which was highly unfavourable to Marxism, and when Weberian

³⁰ Wade, P. 1993 *Blackness and Race Mixture: the dynamics of racial identity in Colombia* London: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 337

³¹ Solaún, M. and Kronus, S. 1973 *Discrimination Without Violence: miscegenation and racial conflict in Latin America* New York: John Wiley and Sons

³² Wade 1985, p. 235

³³ Wilson, W. J. 1978 *The Declining Significance of Race* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

analyses of class incorporating economic position, status and power were entering studies of race. To Cox, 'race prejudice is the social-attitudinal concomitant of the racial-exploitative practice of a ruling class in a capitalistic society.'³⁴ Having aligned racial prejudice with class interest, Cox could argue that racial antagonism was essentially political class conflict since racial exploitation equalled a specific form of labour proletarianisation and exploitation.

Miles criticises Cox for presenting a limited reading of Marx, and for failing to provide a convincing argument for the equivalence of race and political class.³⁵ He agrees that the essential relations are those of class, overlaid by distortions of racism, but sees that racial categorisation, as a product of consciousness, does not in any way alter class determination since it leaves the dominant mode of production unaffected:

In a capitalist social formation the boundaries of social inclusion/exclusion are laid across the already given and qualitatively distinct class relations between bourgeoisie and proletariat but, as previously argued, do not alter their structure.³⁶

Miles, thus, overlays the influences of race and colour on society, but maintains that social relations are ultimately governed by class.

The concept of class in Marxist terms has been reworked from Marx's vision of two antagonistic classes, the capitalists and the workers. The emergence of middle classes or the petty bourgeoisie has demanded a reformulation of less deterministic forms of class analysis. Williams has emphasised the slippery nature of class definition, and the frequent

³⁴ Cox 1970, p. 470

³⁵ Miles, R. 1980 Class, race and ethnicity: a critique of Cox's theory *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 3, 2: 169-187, p. 184

³⁶ Miles 1980, p. 186

confusion over the term as a group, category, rank or formation.³⁷ It is, however, not possible to refer to class as a unitary category. Anthias and Yuval-Davis assert that classes are heterogeneous in terms of race, ethnicity and gender, and that these social divisions cannot be seen as 'epiphenomena of class.'³⁸ Social classes must be considered as the product of struggles within concrete historical processes which will include relations of gender, ethnicity and race, as well as economic, political and ideological relations.³⁹ Class conflict occurs not only in the workplace but via all spaces of social interaction and over a variety of issues. Some would argue, though, that a broader focus away from the economic relations of production diverts attention from the key Marxist analysis of class structure. Miles and Phizacklea express concern over the potentially divisive impact of racism on workers' organisations and radical political action.⁴⁰

The dominance of economic factors is maintained by Hall, who states that racial or ethnic divisions in society can be explained by reference to economic processes.⁴¹ However, class is not just the result of economic structures and processes. Omi and Winant suggest that an 'analytical leap' is required to link economic factors and race. The correlation between economic status and race does not actually require the postulate of class, if the neoclassical focus on market relations is adopted.⁴² It is easy, they hold, to show that darker-skinned people are, on the whole, positioned in the lower echelons of economically-defined class groupings. However, it is not easy to show that this is due to

³⁷ Williams 1983, p. 68

³⁸ Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N. 1992 *Racialized Boundaries: race, nation, gender, colour and class and the anti-racist struggle* London: Routledge, p. 92

³⁹ Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992, p. 93

⁴⁰ Phizacklea, A. and Miles, R. 1980 *Labour and Racism* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

⁴¹ Hall, S. 1980 Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance. In UNESCO 1980, pp. 305-345

⁴² Omi, M. and Winant, H. 1994 *Racial Formation in the United States: from the 1960s to the 1990s* second edition London: Routledge, p. 24

racism.

Hall sees race as important for class formation as class is for race structuration. Gilroy has developed this view to assert that class formation itself is predicated upon race structuration.⁴³ Using the concept of articulation, both view race and class as separate but connected sets of relations where antagonism is a primary driving force. Gilroy sees racial meaning as embedded in culture, 'the life-world of subjects' who have different, but connected, histories.⁴⁴ Race and class, as factors of this life-world, are analytically distinct concepts, but cannot be treated as two distinct sets of relations. Class position is structured by racism in society, although racism on its own cannot be used as an explanation for economic position. Hoetink warns of separating race and economics in too absolute a fashion, while equating economic stratification with objective analysis and racial or cultural influences with subjectivity.⁴⁵ He argues that the greater objectivity of class is powerless against the greater subjective reality of race, but it is clear that both terms are stirred by emotional and non-empirical perception.

Racism is not always functional to capitalism, since the latter simultaneously undermines and reproduces the former.⁴⁶ The commodification of labour tends to reduce racial discrimination, yet the dynamics of the class struggle aim to intensify racial discrimination as a basis for a 'divide and rule' agenda. Race exists within and between classes, but the effects of race are not structured by class relations.

The crux of the discussion rests between the extremes of separation and conflation

⁴³ Gilroy, P. 1987 *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': the cultural politics of race and nation* London: Routledge, pp. 28-38

⁴⁴ Gilroy 1987, p. 17

⁴⁵ Hoetink, H. 1973 *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas* New York: Harper Torchbooks, p. 123

⁴⁶ Wright, E. O. 1979 *Class Structure and Income Determination* New York: Academic Press, p. 201

of race and class terminology. Race and class may be separated theoretically, as the framework within which social formation ferments. However, practical analysis cannot separate the influence of the two terms, nor should it attempt to demand answers to 'critical' questions such as:

... under what conditions in biracial and in multiracial Caribbean societies of differing size and composition does political conflict develop on bases of race or culture rather than class; on bases of class and race rather than culture; on bases of class and culture rather than race; or on the basis of class, independent of race and culture?⁴⁷

Race and class are legitimate terms of analysis, but their effects and results are not independent. Each is irreducible to the other, making it impossible to define any simple relation between racism and class struggle.⁴⁸ To determine the dominance of either, particularly for a society as a whole, is an unrealisable task. Race and class impinge on one another according to the individual, the situation and the time - as aspects of identity, their influences are temporal and situational. The core of research is the articulation between the two in historically specific contexts. Robinson, for example, argues that Marxism was constructed in an Eurocentric framework, thus, it is redundant as an explanation of race and class relations in non-western societies.⁴⁹

The irreducibility of class and race relations ought not to lead to theoretical conflation or essentialism. Analytical terms should be concise, distinct, but not deterministic. They are the glasses through which the field is surveyed. The framework of study is conditioned by location, scale and history. Wade regards ethnicity as a variant of race which is 'locative and spatial.'⁵⁰ His statement requires expansion since race and class

⁴⁷ Smith 1984, p. 129

⁴⁸ Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, p. 206

⁴⁹ Robinson, C. 1983 *Black Marxism* London: Zed Press

⁵⁰ Wade 1985, pp. 237-8

are place-bound and temporal factors which situate individuals and groups in specific contexts. The focus of the following sections will be both locative and spatial, describing the development of social classes in the Dominican Republic, before addressing issues of race and class in the three study sites.

The development of social classes in the Dominican Republic

Dominican society has been characterised by a light-skinned elite and *mulato/a* majority since the seventeenth century. The lack of directed economic growth under the Spanish colonial system, an extensive cattle rearing economy which limited slave labour, and the late expansion of the sugar plantation economy provided the basis for the country's racial demography. Slaves made up under 30 percent of the population in 1794, with another 35 percent classified as non-white freemen.⁵¹ Following the demise of slavery after the Haitian invasion in 1822, colour maintained its importance in Dominican society. The *mulato/a* population formed the bulk of the emergent middle class, lighter skin colour allowing a greater chance of social mobility than for darker-coloured Dominicans.

Following the War of Restoration between 1861 and 1865, which finally confirmed Dominican sovereignty from the Spanish, the military became an important mechanism for upward social mobility, especially among the poorer and darker-skinned families. Luperón came from a low-income background, and both Guillermo and Heureaux were *negros* from poor families. All three were military officers who went on to become presidents. In 1865, there were at least forty-five generals vying for power. A

⁵¹ Hoetink, H. 1982 *The Dominican People, 1850-1900* London: Johns Hopkins University Press, p. 182

decade later, there were over one thousand officers of similar rank.⁵² The Dominican Republic has had more *negro* or *mulato* presidents than any other Hispanic country in the western hemisphere.⁵³

Economic growth, based on sugar production during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, created new avenues for social mobility. Limited profitability brought the Dominican sugar industry to a virtual standstill during the seventeenth century, but export production was revitalised by Cuban and North American growers in the 1870s and 1880s.⁵⁴ While the colonial system and slavery established the racial bases of Dominican society, the expansion of the merchant groups was the main influence on contemporary social class formation in the Dominican Republic. The growth of the sugar industry similarly parallels stages in the development of the class structure.

Small-scale sugar production had existed in the Dominican Republic since the sixteenth century. Large-scale production began with the sugar boom of the late nineteenth century, although agriculture in the country was unevenly developed. Economic power rested with the large capitalist sugar plantations in the south and export-oriented, agricultural, petty commodity production in the northern Cibao valley. Smaller-scale coffee, tobacco and cacao production, however, was soon overshadowed by the dominance of southern agricultural production at the end of the nineteenth century.

Sugar production had been encouraged by a series of external events: the Ten Years' War which disrupted the Cuban economy between 1868 and 1878, and led to the

⁵² Hoetink, H. 1980 El Cibao, 1844-1900: su aportación a la formación social de la República Dominicana *Eme-Eme* 8, 48: 3-19, p. 107

⁵³ Wiarda, H. J. and Kryzaneck, M. J. 1992 *The Dominican Republic: a Caribbean crucible* second edition Oxford: Westview Press, p. 58

⁵⁴ Chardon, R. 1984 Sugar plantations in the Dominican Republic *Geographical Review* 74: 441-454, p. 447

migration of Cuban producers to the Dominican Republic; the demise of sugar beet production due to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and the Civil War which affected sugar plantations in Louisiana between 1861 and 1865. Betances suggests that two important phases followed these initiating events.⁵⁵ Firstly, the emergence of large-scale plantations with the investment of Cuban, Italian, German, Puerto Rican and North American capital which encouraged the growth of a Dominican business class. Secondly, after 1907, the dominance of large sugar conglomerates, incorporating the Dominican Republic into the world economy. In 1907, the Dominican-American Convention established a relationship whereby the debt-ridden Dominican Republic would have its finances controlled by the United States. The Dominican Republic became a semi-protectorate of the United States. The affluent upper classes had profited as internal creditors to the Dominican government, but reduced access to government stunted the growth of an incipient national bourgeoisie.

At the end of the nineteenth century, global overproduction of sugar reduced prices and slowed down Dominican production. A new elite of sugar planters had been established, who, along with the merchants, formed an emerging bourgeoisie. However, the continuing dominance of foreign capital interests, and their close relationship with the state, limited the development of a national bourgeoisie. Instead, the influence of the United States became dominant. United States sugar corporations and banks replaced other foreign resident sugar planters and merchants. Despite early competition from the smaller scale production of coffee, tobacco and in particular, cacao, sugar was now the

⁵⁵ Betances, E. 1995 Social classes and the origin of the modern state: The Dominican Republic, 1844-1930 *Latin American Perspectives* 22, 3: 20-40, p. 25

dominant crop. Agricultural production in the interior was limited by poor and expensive communications to the export market.

Two schools of thought have suggested explanations for the class structure in Dominican society.⁵⁶ Firstly, Bosch has suggested that no bourgeoisie existed in the Dominican Republic in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. It was the occupation of the country by the United States between 1916 and 1924 which laid the basis for the creation of a bourgeoisie, but it was not until the era of Trujillo that a bourgeois class was able to develop under the umbrella of the dictator.⁵⁷ Bosch suggests that there was only one class, the petty bourgeoisie, which was subdivided into five hierarchies: high, medium, low, lower poor and lower very poor.⁵⁸ Political conflict was therefore of an intra-class nature. However, the fivefold hierarchy fails to account satisfactorily for the position of the landed oligarchy and the very wealthy merchant class.

A second school of thought, followed here, considers the Dominican merchants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as an incipient bourgeoisie, operating within the full sphere of capitalist relations. Betances views the development of Dominican social classes at the turn of the century in terms of an embryonic bourgeois class, arguing that the structural weaknesses of the state could not cater for local and international capitalist development.⁵⁹ A weak state, unable to respond to the needs of advancing capitalism, was vulnerable to the influences of imperialist powers, seeking to restructure the weaker states as theatres for capital accumulation. The Dominican Republic thus became a site for

⁵⁶ Betances 1995, p. 21

⁵⁷ Bosch, J. 1992 *Clases sociales en la República Dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, p. 195

Bosch, J. 1982 *La Guerra de Restauración* Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, pp. 214-226

⁵⁸ Bosch 1992, p. 107

⁵⁹ Betances 1995, p. 22

United States intervention in 1916, and the consequent political restructuring of the state.

The development of modern capitalist agriculture on the sugar plantations created a salaried rural proletariat and an incipient national bourgeoisie.⁶⁰ Whereas Betances considers a structurally homogenous bourgeoisie and fails to mention the intertwining factors of race and class, Hoetink argues that the last quarter of the nineteenth century heralded notable social and political changes in the Dominican Republic. Racial criteria gained greater emphasis as a means of maintaining social control and access to power. In particular, he argues that society became more organised, incorporating a vertically structured patronage system where colour was an increasingly significant factor.⁶¹ The occupation of the Dominican Republic by the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century propagated further changes in Dominican society.

The occupation between 1916 and 1924 aimed to establish a national government favourable to United States interests. A national guard and road network was developed, and local elites were weakened through the creation of national tariffs. Local industry could not develop, given the negative influence of high export tariffs, but an import-export merchant class emerged.

Regionalism and the importance of local *caudillos* had restricted the earlier development of a national bourgeoisie following independence in 1844. The declining importance of the timber industry and the *rancheros* in the eastern part of the country had helped to establish an incipient commercial and agrarian bourgeoisie in the Cibao in the mid-nineteenth century. Hoetink described the Cibao as the heart of the nation, with a

⁶⁰ Hoetink 1982, p. 171

⁶¹ Hoetink 1973, p. 109

traditional peasantry and relatively prosperous medium-sized tobacco, cacao and coffee farmers, plus a strong economy and traditional customs, making it a characteristic 'national domain.'⁶² However, the strength of the Cibao upper classes, already weakened by the sugar boom in the south, was further challenged by the United States' intervention in domestic affairs. Moya Pons emphasises the importance in the latter half of the nineteenth century of establishing a class-based society, and the significant weakening of regionalisms and closed local elites.⁶³ The absence of effective communications during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries restricted the development of a national elite and bourgeois class, but the modernising process of the occupation firmly established national and international capitalist relations.

Following the withdrawal of occupation forces, whose position was made untenable partly by opposition groups from the urban middle classes and the peasantry, conflicts between the political and military elites developed. The discord enabled Trujillo, leader of the national guard, to gain power in 1930 as a national military *caudillo*. He had sufficient influence to prevent the re-emergence of regional elites, and succeeded, through political and economic power, in subordinating all social classes. Betances suggests that Trujillo was not simply a product of United States' largesse, but the result of continuing weakness from nineteenth century social and political history:

Under the United States military government, import-export merchants improved their economic condition but remained too weak to exercise meaningful political influence on the state... The structural weakness of civil society contributed to the emergence of an authoritarian regime. The United States military occupation strengthened the existing authoritarian tendencies within civil society and the

⁶² Hoetink 1980

⁶³ Moya Pons, F. 1981 *Modernización y cambios en la República Dominicana*. In Vega, B. et al 1981 *Ensayos sobre cultura dominicana* Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, pp. 211-245, p. 215

state.⁶⁴

Betances emphasises the importance of a class perspective in the state-building process, a social structure which permitted foreign capitalist penetration, and the continued underdevelopment of national industries.⁶⁵ For Betances, Trujillo personified the dominance of the national bourgeoisie and upper classes. In contrast, Bosch claims that Trujillo was a surrogate for a bourgeois class, arguing that the *caudillo* restricted its development. Either way, Trujillo clearly had his own agenda for Dominican ethnicity and the nation. *Trujillismo* dominated Dominican life for over thirty years until his assassination in 1961. Vast socio-economic differences have characterised Dominican society for most of this century, but only during the 1960s has civil conflict surfaced to the point of war.

The election victory of Bosch and the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) in 1962 represented a success for the urban and rural masses over the traditional ruling upper and upper middle class. The PRD was elected on a platform of economic reform and social justice - a democratic social revolution for the country. Conservative opposition from the military, the church, the economic elite and the United States government were united through anti-Communist fears. In 1963, a military coup overthrew Bosch after seven months in office, and replaced him with a three-man civilian *junta*, headed by Donald Reid Cabral. On 24 April, 1965, a PRD-led coalition force of politicians and renegade military officers attempted to seize power, aiming to reinstate the constitutional government of Bosch. The following four months was a period of bitter

⁶⁴ Betances 1995, p. 38

⁶⁵ Betances, E. R. 1983 Agrarian transformation and class formation in the Dominican Republic 1844-1930 *Latin American Perspectives* 10, 2-3: 60-75

fighting between the Constitutionalist and the ousted conservative military. The latter were assisted by 23,000 United States marines who had intervened, ostensibly to protect United States' citizens resident in Santo Domingo, but in reality were there to prevent a leftist group gain power.

Cassá argues that the short-lived civil war essentially reflected the opposition of the lower and middle classes to domination by the upper classes of the national bourgeoisie.⁶⁶ However, the main combatants in the revolution were the inter-class pro-Bosch factions against the supporters of *neo-Trujillismo*. Both Constitutionalist and conservative forces had members of all classes, although the former received the majority of support amongst the lower classes.

Economic development and socio-economic gains since the mid-1960s have been unevenly spread through Dominican society. A two-speed society exists where the bottom 50 percent receive 18.5 percent of the national income, and the top 10 percent receives 38.5 percent.⁶⁷ An attitudinal chasm separates upper and lower classes, the haves and the have-nots, as economic growth has left behind the urban and rural poor. The middle classes make up 15 to 20 percent of the Dominican population, and are a rising political and economic force.⁶⁸ The 1970s Dominican 'miracle' of economic growth created an expanding middle class. New middle-class neighbourhoods, shopping malls, cinemas and businesses were developed in Santo Domingo as the affluent suburbs moved to the north and west. In the countryside, where 300,000 families own tracts of two

⁶⁶ Cassá, R. 1982 *Historia social y económica de la República Dominicana* Volume Two Santo Domingo: Punto y Aparte Editores, p. 333

⁶⁷ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, p. 58

⁶⁸ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, p. 65

hectares or less, economic gains were less evident.⁶⁹ Land reform in rural areas has traditionally been blocked by the landed upper classes, due to the association of land ownership with social standing. Rural unemployment affects over half the economically active population, according to government statistics, and illiteracy stands at 80 percent. Incomes are noticeably lower in rural areas, where life expectancy is 10 years less than for urban zones.

Bray argues that the high prices of the 1950s reactivated the process of class differentiation in Dominican rural areas.⁷⁰ The rural middle class expanded land-holdings and diversified production, whilst also investing capital in urban areas. This led to a more rapid process of proletarianisation. These rural capitalists were able to survive times of lower prices during the 1960s by cutting production costs and resorting to debt. Export agriculture provided the base for the rural and urban (merchant) middle classes to expand, but high rates of international migration began to influence the Dominican economy and demography.

During the 1960s, President Balaguer relaxed restrictions on migration to the United States and on foreign investment in mining, sugar, tourism, cattle ranching, communications and finance. By the mid-1970s, huge profits were being repatriated by multinational companies, with 125 United States' subsidiaries operating in the country. High sugar prices enabled the Balaguer government to invest in construction and middle-class housing projects. Building permits for relatively expensive modern homes nearly doubled between 1966 and 1972, and the value of savings increased from US\$8 million to

⁶⁹ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, p. 61

⁷⁰ Bray, D. 1984 Economic development: the middle class and international migration in the Dominican Republic *International Migration Review* 18, 2: 217-236

US\$111 million.⁷¹

The urban middle class boomed. Between 1966 and 1973, the number of registered cars more than doubled and the number of telephone lines increased fourfold, with over three-quarters of new installations in Santo Domingo.⁷² The number of university graduates per annum rose from around 600 in the late 1960s to 4866 in 1977. In Santo Domingo during the 1980s, 44.1 percent of the economically active population worked in the informal sector and 48.5 percent of informal workers were self-employed. Modern industries have been unable to absorb labour, leading to a greater expansion in the informal than the formal sector.

Despite these growing differences, there appears to have been little class conflict within the Dominican Republic since the 1965 rebellion. Wiarda and Kryzanek summarise three reasons for this lack of conflict.⁷³ First, Dominican society has tended to respect traditional social norms. The civil conflict of 1965 was, thus, an anomaly. Secondly, popular opposition groups have never achieved a strong united front, and government repression, particularly under Balaguer during the 1970s, subdued radical forms of discontent. Thirdly, Dominican politics have been dominated by personal agendas rather than party policies. The 1965 rebellion, for example, could be seen as an explicit reaction to replace the weak leadership of Donald Reid Cabral.

Economic depression caused some contraction of the middle classes, but in general, the upper and middle classes have survived the economic downturn during the

⁷¹ Bray 1984, p. 225

⁷² Reyes, R. 1991 Microenterprise and the informal sector in the Dominican Republic: operation and promotion policy. In Díaz-Briquets, S. and Weintraub, S. (eds) 1991 *Migration, Remittances, and Small Business Development: Mexico and Caribbean Basin countries* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 45-70, p. 49

⁷³ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, pp. 67-68

1980s and 1990s. These same groups were nurtured during the Balaguer government of the 1970s, having been associated with the patronage of Trujillo. Dominican society is composed of several elite factions. The established landed gentry, the business-commercial classes who emerged at the turn of the century, and the new upper class which developed under Trujillo, whose wealth has been concentrated in finance, agribusiness, the professions, light industry and tourism.

Smith's study of class in the Caribbean recognises the importance of differentiating between the established and new middle classes.⁷⁴ The rise of *nuevos/as ricos/as* today is associated not so much with direct government patronage, but with the growing transnational community and influence of successful returned migrants. The upper classes form a patchwork of contending factions, superimposed upon the class structure. Wiarda and Kryzanek include family and kinship groups, the military, the church, student groups, organised labour and representatives of the United States as important elite factions which impinge upon class relations in Dominican society.⁷⁵

The Gross Domestic Product increased by over five percent during the 1970s, but the last two decades have experienced low or negative rates of growth, and per capita income has stagnated at around US\$1,000. The Dominican Republic is an economically vulnerable state. The 1980s were described as the 'lost decade', when the country, in line with many other Latin American and Caribbean states, achieved minimal economic development.⁷⁶ Wealth creation has focused on the existing elite, exacerbating income differentials. Unemployment is consistently over 30 percent of the economically active

⁷⁴ Smith R. T. 1988 *Kinship and Class in the West Indies* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁷⁵ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, pp. 69-75

⁷⁶ Vega, B. 1990 *En la década perdida* Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana

population, underemployment affects another 20 percent. Life expectancy and literacy rates showed only slight improvement during the last decade, while infant mortality has almost doubled since 1978.⁷⁷ Life is a constant struggle against poverty for the majority of Dominicans, a struggle which worsened during the 1980s and 1990s as earnings became increasingly concentrated among the upper and middle classes, leading to greater levels of economic segregation.⁷⁸

There is no overt racial segregation of the type studied in the United States and Europe, largely due to the existence of a large mixed population.⁷⁹ Neither does the Dominican experience agree with inferences from Brazilian cities. Telles argues that social transformations in Brazil during the 1980s support the hypothesis of increasing segregation by race and by class, in which greater class segregation also meant greater race segregation.⁸⁰ However, in Santo Domingo middle and upper-class neighbourhoods tend to have lighter-skinned residents. Interviewees in Gazcue, for example, described themselves as *blanco/a* with a far greater frequency than in the other two sites (Table 1.4). Nevertheless, residential location corresponds to economic differentials and historical factors rather than contemporary forces of racial-residential segregation.

Within Gazcue, there is no racial segregation at street or household level, though this is not to say that racial prejudice does not exist. One *mulato* interviewee reported that

⁷⁷ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, p. 58

⁷⁸ Contreras, A. M. 1991 Dinámica urbana en la década de los 80s: concentración del ingreso, segregación especial y exclusión social *Estudios Sociales* 83: 37-59

⁷⁹ Kantrowitz, N. 1973 *Ethnic and Racial Segregation in the New York Metropolis* New York: Praeger
Ward, D. 1982 The ethnic ghetto in the United States: past and present *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 7, 3: 257-275

Peach, C. , Robinson, V. and Smith, S. (eds) 1981 *Ethnic Segregation in Cities* London: Croom Helm

Peach, C. 1996 The meaning of segregation *Planning Practice and Research* 11, 2: 137-150

⁸⁰ Telles, E. R. 1995 Race, class and space in Brazilian cities *Journal of International Urban and Rural Research* 19.3: 394-406, p. 404

he was initially not offered a rented apartment in a housing block because the owner did not like blacks in the neighbourhood. The owner himself was *mulato*. Only subsequently, with the intervention of a mutual white friend, was the respondent able to rent the apartment. The landlord was reassured on discovering that the potential tenant could pay the relatively high rent 'up-front.' As the interviewee remarked, 'You can improve your race [mejorarse su raza] with cash.' With money, a *negro* may become a *negro blanco*. Thus, although residential segregation is not overt, racially-prejudiced gatekeepers may have some influence upon a neighbourhood's racial mix. People living in the same neighbourhood, often hold strong, antagonistic feelings towards certain racial groups.

Social and economic exclusion rather than residential segregation characterise Dominican society. One Dominican author has framed this separation in terms of the alienating coldness of the modern supermarket, affordable for the affluent, against the openness of the popular *colmado*, or local store. Dominican society is divided by two markets which have their separate clientele: 'one, more participatory with features typical of the national character, and the other, foreign and tempting, cold and alienating.'⁸¹

Race and class in three study sites

The following section analyses class variation in response to issues of race in the three survey sites - Gazcue, Los Guandules and Zambrana. Race and class are spatial and locative, historical and contemporary variables. Location is a key factor in any social analysis: 'social practices are inherently spatial, at every scale and all sites of human

⁸¹ Sáez, J. L. 1991 El supermercado: punto de encuentro de dos sociedades en cambio *Estudios Sociales* 85: 59-69, p. 68

behaviour.’⁸²

An earlier study of poor urban neighbourhoods in Santo Domingo examined the causes which led to radicalism among low-income groups. The main factors were not frustration with, or alienation from, mainstream society, but the impact of local social issues. The key to class consciousness was an understanding that poverty was a result of the economic class structure and a recognition of common local problems.⁸³ Likewise, Sharpe’s study of an upland coffee-growing community shows the importance of the locality for the formation of class consciousness.⁸⁴ Local leaders, regional salespeople and the church were key influences.

These two studies illustrate the significance of local issues for the growth of class awareness. The previous section discussed the development of social classes at the national scale. The responses from the three research sites, two urban and one rural, are combined in the following discussion. While accepting the limits of a relatively small sample at the national scale and acknowledging local variation, the results give an insight into race and class issues in Dominican society. The evaluation of social class for the three study sites owes much to the methodology underlying the calculation of the Index of Social Characteristics, pioneered by Warner, and used by M. G. Smith in his work on social stratification in Grenada.⁸⁵ For Warner, social class was:

... based upon two propositions: economic and other prestige factors are highly important and closely correlated with social class; and that these social and economic factors, such as talent, income, and money, if their potentialities for rank are to be realized, must be translated into social-class behaviour acceptable to the

⁸² Wolch and Dear 1989, p. 9

⁸³ Cruz, C. de la 1978 El radicalismo izquierdista en barrios marginados *Estudios Sociales* 42: 59-126

⁸⁴ Sharpe, K. E. 1977 *Peasant Politics: struggle in a Dominican village* London: Johns Hopkins University Press

⁸⁵ Smith, M. G. 1965 *Stratification in Grenada* Berkeley: University of California Press

members of any given social level of the community.⁸⁶

Four characteristics are rated to assess an individual's status: the occupation of the head of the household in which the interviewee resides; the monthly household income per capita; house quality and standard of living, and the level of the interviewee's formal education (Tables 3.1 to 3.4). These characteristics are:

no more than evaluated symbols which are signs of status telling us the class levels of those who possess the symbols. By measuring the symbols we measure the relative worth of each; and by adding up their several "worths," reflecting diverse and complex economic and social values, we get a score which tells us what we think and feel about the worth of a man's [sic] social participation, meaning essentially that we are measuring his [sic] social class.⁸⁷

Each characteristic is ranked and combined with the others to create an index of social class. Ranking produces finite class categories and boundaries, yet an analytical framework can only suggest social status groups rather than delimit them in practice. Both factors of race and class operate along continua, transgressing the neat boundaries of theory.

⁸⁶ Warner, W. L. 1960 *Social Class in America* New York: Harper and Row, p. 39

⁸⁷ Warner 1960, pp. 40-41

Table 3.1 Characteristics for the analysis of class - the ranking of the occupational group of the household head in which the interviewee resides

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD	
1	MANAGER/PROFESSIONAL WORKER
2	OTHER NON-MANUAL WORKER including shopkeepers
3	SKILLED MANUAL WORKER
4	SEMI-SKILLED MANUAL/PERSONAL SERVICE WORKER
5	FARMER owning land
6	UNSKILLED MANUAL WORKER
7	AGRICULTURAL WORKER lower social status than unskilled manual due to generally lower wages and limited opportunities for social mobility

Source: modified from Warner, W. L. 1960 *Social Class in America* New York: Harper and Row

Table 3.2 Characteristics for the analysis of class - the ranking of the mean monthly household income percent capita for the household in which the interviewee resides

MEAN MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER CAPITA*	
1	RD\$ 6,000 and above
2	RD\$ 4,000 - 5,999
3	RD\$ 3,000 - 3,999
4	RD\$ 2,000 - 2,999
5	RD\$ 1,000 - 1,999
6	RD\$ 200 - 999
7	RD\$ 0 - 199
RD\$13.46 = US\$ 1.00 in August 1994	
*Total monthly household income divided by household size.	

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.3 Characteristics for the analysis of class - the ranking of house quality and standard of living of the interviewee

HOUSE QUALITY AND STANDARD OF LIVING	
1	EXCELLENT
2	VERY GOOD with car
3	GOOD with television, video, telephone
4	AVERAGE likely to have inside water supply, with refrigerator, maybe with car telephone or television
5	FAIR with public water supply, maybe moped/motorcycle, television, or refrigerator
6	POOR public water supply, limited hours standpipe
7	VERY POOR public water supply, no standpipe

Source: modified from Warner, W. L. 1960 *Social Class in America* New York: Harper and Row

Table 3.4 Characteristics for the analysis of class - the ranking of the level of formal education attained by the interviewee

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	
1	UNIVERSITY
2	FURTHER EDUCATION other than university
3	SECONDARY
4	UNCOMPLETED SECONDARY
5	PRIMARY
6	UNCOMPLETED PRIMARY
7	NONE

Source: Author's survey 1994

The four characteristics were rated on a seven-point scale and the ranks totalled to indicate an overall class rating (Table 3.5). The index groupings follow natural breaks in the accumulated data. The influence of remittances from former household or family members who have migrated overseas make income the most significant indicator of social class. Many Dominican households which receive an income from a migrant overseas are able to adopt a class position which is not immediately indicated by their occupation alone. The rankings were not weighted to express the importance of a particular status characteristic, although the level of household income is emphasised indirectly as an enabling factor; higher incomes allow the achievement of higher-status household type, and higher educational-level and occupational-group indices.

Table 3.5 Class rating and accumulated index

CLASS RATING		INDEX
1	UPPER	4-5
2	UPPER MIDDLE	6-9
3	MIDDLE	10-15
4	LOWER MIDDLE	16-18
5	LOWER	19-24
6	LOWER LOWER	25-28

Source: Author's survey 1994

The Gazcue sample was predominantly middle class, though over a half of the total sample of three hundred was from the lower classes, and located mainly in Los Guandules and Zambrana (Table 3.6). Gazcue was the only survey site to have interviewees in the

upper and upper middle classes, though Los Guandules and (to a lesser extent) Zambrana, had a few middle class and lower-middle class residents. Men and women were evenly represented throughout the class groups (Table 3.7). This parity was achieved through random sampling in the study areas.

Table 3.6 Class distribution of interviewees in the three survey sites

% Class	Site	Gazcue	Los Guandules	Zambrana	Total sample
Upper		2.3	-	-	2.3
Upper middle		11.7	-	-	11.7
Middle		16.7	3.3	0.3	20.3
Lower middle		2.3	6.0	2.3	10.7
Lower		0.3	22.3	20.0	42.7
Lower lower		-	1.7	10.7	12.3
Total		33.3	33.3	33.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.7 Class composition by sex for the total sample of interviewees

Class	Women	Men	Total
Upper	4	3	7
Upper middle	14	21	35
Middle	31	30	61
Lower middle	19	13	32
Lower	68	60	128
Lower lower	21	16	37
Total	157	143	300

N = 300

Source: Author's survey 1994

The occupational status of the household head was used as an index of class. Respondents adopted the same class position as the head of their household, if they themselves were not the head (Table 3.1 and Tables 3.8 to 3.10). This is important for the analysis of class where a married women in the Dominican Republic usually adopts the status of her male partner. The work of Erikson and Goldthorpe makes a useful contribution to the analysis of class structure and occupation. They consider that employment relations are crucial to the delineation of class position.⁸⁸ In cases of similar household type, income level and educational attainment, the occupational group of the household head is the key factor which explains higher class status.

As expected, the upper classes are associated more with professional and non-manual employment, while manual work characterises lower class occupations. The only

⁸⁸ Erikson, R. and Goldthorpe, J. H. 1993 *The Constant Flux: a study of class mobility in industrial societies* Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 37-40

manager, and nearly all the professional workers in the sample, resided in Gazcue and were predominantly upper middle class (Table 3.8). Skilled and semi-skilled manual workers in the upper and upper middle classes achieved their class positions as a result of an elevated income status from migrant remittances, particularly in the Gazcue sample. The two farmers living in Gazcue, both middle class, commuted weekly to their farmland.

Table 3.8 Occupational group among interviewees in Gazcue, according to class

Class % Occupational group	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Manager	-	1.0	-	-	-	-	1.0	0.3
Professional worker	3.0	14.0	5.0	-	-	-	22.0	7.7
Other non-manual worker	2.0	13.0	27.0	2.0	-	-	44.0	30.3
Skilled manual worker	1.0	1.0	3.0	-	-	-	5.0	3.0
Semi-skilled manual and personal service worker	1.0	1.0	6.0	1.0	1.0	-	10.0	10.0
Unskilled manual worker	-	5.0	7.0	4.0	-	-	16.0	36.3
Farmer	-	-	2.0	-	-	-	2.0	9.7
Agricultural worker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.7
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.9 Occupational group among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to class

Occupational group	Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Manager		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3
Professional worker		-	-	1.0	-	-	-	1.0	7.7
Other non-manual worker		-	-	8.0	13.0	6.0	1.0	28.0	30.3
Skilled manual worker		-	-	1.0	-	2.0	-	3.0	3.0
Semi-skilled manual and personal service worker		-	-	-	2.0	14.0	-	16.0	10.0
Unskilled manual worker		-	-	-	3.0	45.0	4.0	52.0	36.3
Farmer		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.7
Agricultural worker		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.7
Total		-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.10 Occupational group among interviewees in Zambrana, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Occupational group								
Manager	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3
Professional worker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.7
Other non-manual worker	-	-	1.0	2.0	16.0	-	19.0	30.3
Skilled manual worker	-	-	-	-	1.0	-	1.0	3.0
Semi-skilled manual and personal service worker	-	-	-	2.0	2.0	-	4.0	10.0
Unskilled manual worker	-	-	-	2.0	21.0	18.0	41.0	36.3
Farmer	-	-	-	1.0	17.0	9.0	27.0	9.7
Agricultural worker	-	-	-	-	3.0	5.0	8.0	2.7
Total	-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

The majority of respondents in Los Guandules and Zambrana were unskilled manual labourers employed in the informal economy (Tables 3.9 and 3.10). Both samples, however, accounted for over a half of the non-manual labour, other than the managerial and professional categories. These non-manual workers were normally university students or employed in small-scale retail and commerce. In Zambrana, it was evident that shopkeepers tended to earn more and have a higher social status in the community than many farmers, even though the latter owned land. However, such status is highly place-specific. A farmer

in Zambrana, who was also the leader of the regional agricultural co-operative, had a high social status by virtue of his institutional position. An index calculated from the four characteristics does not make this enhanced status evident. The category of 'other non-manual worker' incorporates a wide range of occupations from shopworkers to employees of larger businesses. The incorporation of other characteristics balances the calculation and makes the evaluation of social classes more accurate.

Researchers often face difficulties in obtaining accurate income details, therefore occupation is frequently used as a key factor in analysing class.⁸⁹ Misinformation, due to modesty, or more normally, a reluctance to divulge personal income, affects the assessment. In general, income was underestimated, although the ranking of mean monthly household income per capita provided a useful indicator of class (Table 3.2 and Tables 3.11 to 3.13). An analysis of household income was important, since the influence of migrant remittances may allow a more affluent level of living than would be expected from an interviewee's occupation alone.

⁸⁹ Drudy, S. 1991 The classification of social class in sociological research *British Journal of Sociology* 42, 1: 21-42

Table 3.11 Mean monthly household income among interviewees in Gazcue, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Household income*								
RD\$ 6,000 and above	5.0	7.0	-	1.0	1.0	-	14.0	5.0
RD\$ 4,000 - 5,999	1.0	9.0	6.0	1.0	-	-	17.0	6.3
RD\$ 3,000 - 3,999	-	8.0	8.0	-	-	-	16.0	6.0
RD\$ 2,000 - 2,999	-	2.0	18.0	-	-	-	20.0	9.7
RD\$ 1,000 - 1,999	-	3.0	12.0	3.0	-	-	18.0	21.3
RD\$ 200 - 999	-	-	6.0	1.0	-	-	7.0	34.3
RD\$ 0 - 199	1.0	6.0	-	1.0	-	-	8.0	17.3
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

*Total monthly household income divided by household size

RD\$13.46 = US\$ 1.00 in August 1994

Table 3.12 Mean monthly household income among interviewees in Los Guandules,
according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Household income*								
RD\$ 6,000 and above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
RD\$ 4,000 - 5,999	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	6.3
RD\$ 3,000 - 3,999	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.0
RD\$ 2,000 - 2,999	-	-	2.0	1.0	1.0	-	4.0	9.7
RD\$ 1,000 - 1,999	-	-	3.0	5.0	9.0	-	17.0	21.3
RD\$ 200 - 999	-	-	4.0	8.0	48.0	2.0	62.0	34.3
RD\$ 0 - 199	-	-	1.0	3.0	9.0	3.0	16.0	17.3
Total	-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

*Total monthly household income divided by household size

RD\$13.46 = US\$ 1.00 in August 1994

Table 3.13 Mean monthly household income among interviewees in Zambrana, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Household income*								
RD\$ 6,000 and above	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	5.0
RD\$ 4,000 - 5,999	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	6.3
RD\$ 3,000 - 3,999	-	-	-	-	2.0	-	2.0	6.0
RD\$ 2,000 - 2,999	-	-	-	2.0	2.0	1.0	5.0	9.7
RD\$ 1,000 - 1,999	-	-	-	3.0	17.0	9.0	29.0	21.3
RD\$ 200 - 999	-	-	-	-	30.0	4.0	34.0	34.3
RD\$ 0 - 199	-	-	1.0	-	9.0	18.0	28.0	17.3
Total	-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

*Total monthly household income divided by household size

RD\$13.46 = US\$ 1.00 in August 1994

An underestimation of monthly household income is most apparent in the upper middle and middle classes of Gazcue, as is the influence of migrant remittances on household income among the lower middle and lower classes (Table 3.11). Several respondents have limited levels of education and non-skilled occupations, yet their incomes are boosted by cash remittances from relatives living in the United States. Very low incomes are characteristic of the lowest classes in Los Guandules and Zambrana (Tables 3.12 and 3.13). In the latter survey site, subsistence farming was an important aspect of household survival.

House type considers the general appearance and condition of the house, as well as the acquisition of certain consumer durables, such as radio, television, car or van, moped or motorbike, tricycle (often used by low-income traders or *chiriperos/as*), electric fan, cooker, refrigerator, telephone or video (Tables 3.3 and 3.14 to 3.16). Car ownership is an important indicator of higher class households. Moped or motorbike ownership is a status symbol among lower class Dominicans. A note was made of leisure pursuits and membership of social clubs or associations. On the basis of these variables, the type of household or standard of living was assessed. The appraisal of this characteristic is the most subjective - the standard of living was established from a national rather a neighbourhood perspective. A possible bias through repetitive coding of successive questionnaires from the same neighbourhood was avoided by randomly mixing questionnaires before coding. House quality and standard of living was evidently of a better condition or status in Gazcue than in the Los Guandules or Zambrana. The latter survey site had no electricity supply other than car batteries, though the standard of living could be judged at times higher than the low-income urban neighbourhood.

Table 3.14 House quality and standard of living among interviewees living in Gazcue, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
House Quality								
Excellent	7.0	3.0	-	-	-	-	10.0	3.3
Very good	-	20.0	11.0	-	1.0	-	32.0	12.3
Good	-	12.0	15.0	5.0	-	-	32.0	16.0
Average	-	-	24.0	2.0	-	-	26.0	29.3
Poor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17.0
Very poor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22.0
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.15 House quality and standard of living among interviewees living in Los Guandules, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
House Quality								
Excellent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3
Very good	-	-	2.0	1.0	-	-	3.0	12.3
Good	-	-	8.0	3.0	1.0	-	12.0	16.0
Average	-	-	-	10.0	22.0	5.0	37.0	29.3
Poor	-	-	-	3.0	27.0	-	30.0	17.0
Very poor	-	-	-	1.0	17.0	-	18.0	22.0
Total	-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.16 House quality and standard of living among interviewees living in Zambrana, according to class

House Quality	Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Excellent		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3
Very good		-	-	1.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	12.3
Good		-	-	-	4.0	-	-	4.0	16.0
Average		-	-	-	-	13.0	12.0	25.0	29.3
Poor		-	-	-	2.0	19.0	-	21.0	17.0
Very poor		-	-	-	-	28.0	20.0	48.0	22.0
Total		-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

An individual's level of formal education is a significant indicator of that person's class, though educational attainment may precede household formation and the establishment of class status. Patriarchal values have traditionally discouraged some women from completing formal education before entering a union or marriage. Thus, upper or middle-class women in some cases have received limited schooling. However, continuing education beyond secondary school is increasingly common among younger middle and upper-class women. A relatively low educational level may occasionally undermine a combined class index, especially for poorly educated interviewees in otherwise middle or upper-class households.

Higher levels of education are concentrated in the upper and middle classes (Tables 3.17 to 3.19). Nearly 80 percent of the upper and upper middle classes had attended

university or another form of further education, the vast majority of these living in Gazcue. Similarly, the majority of respondents who had completed secondary education were in the middle or upper classes and resided in Gazcue (Table 3.17). In contrast, over 70 percent of the two lowest classes had been unable to complete basic primary education (Tables 3.18 and 3.19). Only four respondents from these classes (2.3 percent of the combined lower and lower lower class groups) completed secondary education.

Table 3.17 Education level among interviewees in Gazcue, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Level of education								
University	7.0	26.0	18.0	-	-	-	51.0	19.7
Further education	-	4.0	5.0	-	-	-	9.0	3.3
Secondary	-	4.0	21.0	3.0	-	-	28.0	13.0
Uncompleted secondary	-	1.0	5.0	1.0	-	-	7.0	12.7
Primary	-	-	1.0	2.0	1.0	-	4.0	11.0
Uncompleted primary	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	30.0
None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10.3
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.18 Education level among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Level of education								
University	-	-	6.0	-	-	-	6.0	19.7
Further education	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3
Secondary	-	-	2.0	2.0	1.0	-	5.0	13.0
Uncompleted secondary	-	-	2.0	7.0	8.0	-	17.0	12.7
Primary	-	-	-	7.0	13.0	-	20.0	11.0
Uncompleted primary	-	-	-	2.0	35.0	1.0	26.0	30.0
None	-	-	-	-	10.0	4.0	14.0	10.3
Total	-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	33.3	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.19 Education level among interviewees in Zambrana, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Level of education								
University	-	-	-	2.0	-	-	2.0	19.7
Further education	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	3.3
Secondary	-	-	1.0	2.0	3.0	-	6.0	13.0
Uncompleted secondary	-	-	-	2.0	12.0	-	14.0	12.7
Primary	-	-	-	-	8.0	1.0	9.0	11.0
Uncompleted primary	-	-	-	-	32.0	19.0	51.0	30.0
None	-	-	-	-	5.0	12.0	17.0	10.3
Total	-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Skin colour and phenotype correlate with class. The ascription of colour by the interviewer is highly subjective; nevertheless, my present research illustrates the commonly held perception that the upper classes are lighter-skinned, the middle classes predominantly *mulato/a* and lower classes darker-skinned (Table 3.20). A study of class in Santo Domingo during the 1960s showed a similar relationship between skin colour and socio-economic status: 65 percent of the upper and middle classes were described by the interviewers as *blanco/a*, and 70 percent of the lower middle class described as *mestizo/a*.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Corten, A. and Corten, A. 1968 *Cambio social en Santo Domingo* Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto

Table 3.20 The author's description of the race of interviewees, according to class

% Race	Class	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>		0.7	3.0	4.3	0.3	1.3	-	9.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>		1.7	8.7	15.0	8.0	27.3	6.7	67.3
<i>Negro/a</i>		-	-	1.0	2.3	14.0	5.7	23.0
Total		2.3	11.7	20.3	10.7	42.7	12.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample (the three samples combined)

Source: Author's survey 1994

How does class influence perceptions of race, and does race affect an individual's socio-economic status? Many respondents of all classes considered both to be closely linked, in particular, light skin colour and upper class status. 'To be white is to have a profession' is a commonly heard phrase in the Dominican Republic, indicating greater social and economic opportunities for people with lighter-coloured skin. It also recognises that a *blanco/a* phenotype probably means that the individual already occupies a privileged position in society. One interviewee remarked, 'The rich people are *blancos blancos*', stressing that they stand out as the 'most white' in a predominantly *mulato/a* population. A middle class *mulato* resident of Gazcue commented, 'With white skin and straight hair, you have more job opportunities. The *negro* has always been downtrodden.' Another middle-class *blanco* suggested, 'The boss is always the little white guy.' Owners of large businesses were presumed to be white, and separated from the darker-coloured workforce: 'The boss is often *blanco*. He'll never hang around with the *negros*.' The

upper and middle classes were perceived to be more racist, even among their own ranks.

The upper and middle classes use predominantly lighter colour terminology to describe themselves, such as *blanco/a* and *trigueño/a*, as well as *indio/a* when qualified by lightening adjectives such as *claro/a* (Tables 3.21 to 3.23). The frequent use of *indio/a* among the lower middle, lower and lower lower classes is evident. These three classes account for four-fifths of those interviewees who described themselves as *indio/a*. It would appear paradoxical that the term *mulato/a* was used almost exclusively in the largely middle and upper-class neighbourhood of Gazcue (Table 3.21). *Moreno/a* is expressed to a greater extent among the lower classes of Los Guandules and Zambrana (Tables 3.22 and 3.23). The term is used less frequently in liberal anti-racist discourse than *mulato/a*.

Dominicans of established middle or upper-class status, and sure of their position in society, can afford, socially, to be more aware of, or explicit about, their African ancestry. Self-description as *negro/a* may be the result of a more liberal education and socialisation process among these more affluent groups. Race becomes an affordable declaration among the upper and middle classes - with a comfortable economic base, racial discrimination is less likely to prejudice employment and life chances.⁹¹

⁹¹ Waters, M. C. 1994 Ethnic and racial identities of second-generation black immigrants in New York City *International Migrant Review* 28, 4: 795-820, p. 801

Table 3.21 Self-described race among interviewees in Gazcue, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
<i>Blanco/a</i>	2.0	10.0	23.0	2.0	-	-	37.0	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>	1.0	6.0	7.0	3.0	-	-	17.0	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	3.0	4.0	-	-	-	7.0	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	4.0	2.0	-	-	-	6.0	2.7
<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	3.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>	2.0	6.0	6.0	-	1.0	-	15.0	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>	1.0	3.0	5.0	-	-	-	9.0	6.0
Other	1.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	-	-	8.0	5.0
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.22 Self-described race among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
<i>Blanco/a</i>	-	-	2.0	1.0	4.0	1.0	8.0	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>	-	-	4.0	13.0	49.0	4.0	70.0	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	-	1.0	2.0	5.0	-	8.0	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.7
<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	-	-	-	4.0	-	4.0	3.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	-	1.0	-	4.0	-	5.0	6.0
Other	-	-	2.0	2.0	1.0	-	5.0	5.0
Total	-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.23 Self-described race among interviewees in Zambrana, according to class

Race	Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
<i>Blanco/a</i>		-	-	-	1.0	3.0	-	4.0	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>		-	-	1.0	6.0	46.0	26.0	79.0	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>		-	-	-	-	21.0	-	2.0	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>		-	-	-	-	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.7
<i>Moreno/a</i>		-	-	-	-	3.0	3.0	6.0	3.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>		-	-	-	-	-	1.0	1.0	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>		-	-	-	-	4.0	-	4.0	6.0
Other		-	-	-	-	1.0	1.0	2.0	5.0
Total		-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

An individual's colour on her or his *cédula* is usually ascribed by the clerk at the government issuing office. The colour term used may be requested by the applicant, but this is not the norm. There is a tendency for upper class individuals to be ascribed lighter colours (Table 3.24). The issuing clerk automatically assumes that an affluent Dominican would be considered as *blanco/a* rather than *indio/a claro/a*. One upper middle class respondent said that she had to persuade the clerk not to place *blanca* on her *cédula*. She was not *blanca*, she argued, but the clerk had contested flirtatiously that with such beautiful fair skin, she must be *blanca*.

Blanco/a and *indio/a* accounted for 86 percent of the *cédulas* issued to upper,

upper middle and middle class interviewees, each accounting for approximately 43 percent of the total. *Indio/a* was the most popular term for the *cédulas* of lower class interviewees, making up 81 percent of the two lowest class categories. Among the middle classes, *indio/a* accounted for over half, and *blanco/a* for a third, of all *cédulas* issued.

Table 3.24 Skin colour stated on the identity card (*cédula*) of interviewees, according to class

Class % <i>Cédula</i>	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>	1.7	5.0	8.3	2.0	1.7	0.3	18.0
<i>Indio/a</i>	0.7	4.0	10.7	7.7	35.7	9.7	68.3
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	-	-	0.7	2.0	0.7	3.3
Other	-	2.0	0.7	-	0.3	-	3.0
Unsure/Do not have	-	0.7	0.7	1.3	3.0	1.7	7.3
Total	2.3	11.7	20.3	10.7	42.7	12.3	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Nearly 40 percent of the total sample perceive Dominican society as a predominantly *indio/a* population. The use of the term was more prevalent among the lower classes, in particular in the Zambrana sample (Tables 3.25 to 3.27). Although only eight respondents consider the majority of the Dominican population to be *blanco/a*, five of these were from the lowest two class groups. These respondents alluded to the continuing dominance of the lighter-skinned traditional ruling classes. Approximately a

quarter of those interviewed believed the population to be of mixed origin - *una mezcla*. Respondents who used terms such as *negro/a*, *mulato/a* and *moreno/a* to describe the Dominican population (23.6 percent of the sample) tended to be from the lower classes, though *mulato/a* was a popular term among the more liberal middle and upper classes of Gazcue (Table 3.25).

Table 3.25 Interviewees' perception of the race of the majority of Dominicans, according to class in Gazcue

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Race of the majority								
<i>Blanco/a</i>	-	1.0	1.0	-	-	-	2.0	3.0
<i>Indio/a</i>	2.0	6.0	14.0	3.0	-	-	23.0	38.8
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	2.0	5.0	8.0	2.0	1.0	-	18.0	10.0
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	1.0	3.0	-	-	-	4.0	2.0
<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	1.0	-	-	-	-	1.0	2.3
<i>Mulato/a</i>	3.0	8.0	9.0	-	-	-	20.0	12.0
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	4.0	3.0	1.0	-	-	8.0	9.3
<i>Ligado/a</i>	-	2.0	5.0	-	-	-	7.0	9.7
Other	-	7.0	9.0	1.0	-	-	17.0	13.0
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.26 Interviewees' perception of the race of the majority of Dominicans, according to class in Los Guandules

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
<i>Blanco/a</i>	-	-	1.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	6.0	3.0
<i>Indio/a</i>	-	-	2.0	4.0	26.0	2.0	34.0	38.8
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	-	-	4.0	5.0	-	9.0	10.0
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.0
<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	-	1.0	1.0	2.0	-	4.0	2.3
<i>Mulato/a</i>	-	-	1.0	4.0	5.0	-	12.0	12.0
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	-	1.0	2.0	10.0	-	13.0	9.3
<i>Ligado/a</i>	-	-	1.0	1.0	5.0	2.0	8.0	9.7
Other	-	-	3.0	1.0	10.0	-	14.0	13.0
Total	-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.27 Interviewees' perception of the race of the majority of Dominicans, according to class in Zambrana

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Race of the majority								
<i>Blanco/a</i>	-	-	-	-	1.0	-	1.0	3.0
<i>Indio/a</i>	-	-	1.0	5.0	34.0	19.0	59.0	38.8
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	-	-	-	3.0	-	3.0	10.0
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	-	-	-	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0
<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	-	-	-	2.0	-	2.0	2.3
<i>Mulato/a</i>	-	-	-	1.0	2.0	1.0	4.0	12.0
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	-	-	-	2.0	5.0	7.0	9.3
<i>Ligado/a</i>	-	-	-	-	12.0	2.0	14.0	9.7
Other	-	-	-	1.0	3.0	4.0	8.0	13.0
Total	-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

When questioned about the relative advantages or disadvantages of having white or black skin, nearly half of the sample believed that to be *negro/a* was a disadvantage in the Dominican Republic, a recognition which increased with the class status. Similarly, 46 percent believed a white skin to be advantageous, the highest proportion again being in the upper classes. This suggests that the perception of racial advantage or disadvantage is greater among the upper classes, either as a mark of their own prejudice or as a result of a greater awareness to the problems of racism in the Dominican Republic. However,

lower class *indios/as* or *mestizos/as* tended to be more aware of the disadvantages of dark skin in the Dominican Republic: ‘The *blanco* here discriminates against the *negro*... The *blancos* treat the *negros* like slaves.’

A distinction was often made by lower class interviewees between elite racism and their own antagonistic feelings towards Haiti. A lower-class respondent in Los Guandules, describing herself as *mestiza*, posited, ‘Real racism belongs to the upper classes. There’s racism here in Los Guandules, but its against Haitians.’ There was a far greater objection to the Haitian presence among the predominantly lower-class rural respondents compared to urban interviewees (Tables 3.28 to 3.30). The general distrust and fear of Haiti and Haitians is repeated across all classes, although the majority of urban dwellers in Gazcue and Los Guandules consider that Haitians who work in the Dominican Republic should be granted residency for the term of their employment. Respondents, however, emphasised that only those Haitian labourers necessary to the Dominican economy should be allowed to reside in the Dominican Republic. Many believed that attempts to formalise the Haitian presence through residency permits would be the most effective way to minimalise and monitor a controlled Haitian population in the country. Haitians without employment were not welcomed by the majority of interviewees; while some respondents professed their acceptance of Haitian labour in the Dominican Republic, comments expressed later during the interview signified their hostility.

Table 3.28 Opinion among interviewees in Gazcue concerning the appropriateness of granting residency to Haitians working in the Dominican Republic, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Opinion								
Agree to Haitian residency	5.0	13.0	25.0	5.0	1.0	-	49.0	46.7
Disagree to Haitian residency	1.0	18.0	21.0	2.0	-	-	42.0	46.3
Unsure	1.0	4.0	4.0	-	-	-	3.0	7.0
Total	7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.29 Opinion among interviewees in Los Guandules concerning the appropriateness of granting residency to Haitians working in the Dominican Republic, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Opinion								
Agree to Haitian residency	-	-	6.0	12.0	38.0	3.0	59.0	46.7
Disagree to Haitian residency	-	-	2.0	6.0	25.0	2.0	35.0	46.3
Unsure	-	-	2.0	-	4.0	-	6.0	7.0
Total	-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 3.30 Opinion among interviewees in Zambrana concerning the appropriateness of granting residency to Haitians working in the Dominican Republic, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Opinion								
Agree to Haitian residency	-	-	-	1.0	21.0	10.0	32.0	46.7
Disagree to Haitian residency	-	-	1.0	5.0	37.0	19.0	62.0	46.3
Unsure	-	-	-	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	7.0
Total	-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Race, class and the Dominican nation

Race and class differentiate as well as unite Dominicans within the social system.

Dominicanidad constitutes a national collectivity which is internally divided by race and class. First and second-generation Haitians in the Dominican Republic, as a racial and ethnic minority, hold a much lower social status than Dominicans, although they share similar lower class characteristics. They are a class apart, located outside *dominicanidad*.

Dominican *negros/as*, whilst not excluded, are perceived as marginal to the Dominican nation, contesting and negotiating the discriminatory light bias of *dominicanidad*.

Racism and nationalism form a focus of interest which displaces class inequalities from mainstream political and social agendas. The politicisation of racial identity has

been suggested as a means of negating the discriminatory ideals of the nation.⁹² The priority inclusion of multicultural and multiracial policies on the political agenda is designed to promote social equality. Race has been politicised in the Dominican Republic, but its politicisation has been in a manner which heightens its discriminatory value.

Racism is prevalent throughout all classes in Dominican society. Racial discrimination cannot be reduced to the outcome of class relations, because racism is not a necessary prerequisite of class exploitation. Race, like gender, however, often facilitates class-oriented oppression. Racism may cross-cut class relations, as exemplified by prejudice among the middle and lower classes towards middle-class *negros/as*. Racism, conversely, may be incorporated into class relations to further the interests of specific groups within the ruling elite, where racial supremacy comprises the privileged exploitation of, or access to, economic or political resources.

This chapter has illustrated the important role of racial identity in structuring Dominican society. Race sometimes strengthens class relations, at other times racial issues are antagonistic to class issues. Labour from Haiti reduces the costs of sugar production and restricts the effectiveness of trade unions; however, a large proportion of Dominicans across all classes resents the Haitian presence. The Dominican Republic is a class-structured society, where race often subverts class interests.

⁹² Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992

4 RACE AND ETHNICITY: GENDERED, DOMESTICATED AND SANCTIFIED

Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the Dominican Republic as a class-stratified society in which race is a significant marker of social status. This chapter studies the relation between gender and the perception of race, centring on the household as a principal locus for the formation of both. The domestic sphere is a key site for the expression of patriarchal culture, but it is also a location for the reproduction of racial stereotypes and the expression of Afro-syncretic beliefs, out of the view of more public Catholic worship. Consequently, aspects of race in everyday life are inherently gendered, domesticated and sanctified. The chapter begins with a theoretical consideration of patriarchy and culture, then, with reference to the survey material, discusses the contemporary issues of household structure, women's work, the aesthetics of sexuality and images of the body, and finally, the influence of religion in Dominican society.

Gender, cross-cut by race and class, refers to the socially unequal division of society into forms of masculinity and femininity, based on the biological differences between male and female.¹ Gender relations are social constructions, giving social significance to biological attributes. The impact of race cannot be added to gender analysis, and *vice versa*.² The categorisation and influence of race and gender relations

¹ Oakley, A. 1981 *Subject Women* London: Fontana, p. 41

² Maynard, H. 1994 'Race', gender and the concept of 'difference' in feminist thought. In Ashfar, H. and Maynard, M. (eds) 1994 *The Dynamics of 'Race' and Gender: some feminist interventions* London: Taylor and Francis, pp. 9-25, p. 13

are mutually constitutive, each operating within or around the other.³ Thus, any concept of race will be gendered, and any notion of gender racialised.

Patriarchy, class bias and racism overlap as forms of oppression. Patriarchy is defined as ‘a fluid and shifting set of social relations in which men oppress women, in which different men exercise varying degrees of power and control, and in which women resist in diverse ways.’⁴ Analysis cannot aggregate the variables of gender, class and race, though commonalities exist and reinforce the impact of each. Davis argues that sexism and racism are themselves deeply rooted in class oppression, though neither can be eradicated without destroying the dominant patriarchal system. Patriarchal structures uphold race and class prejudices and discrimination. Slavery has left its legacy in the formation of both race and gender relations. Men and women shared the race-based trauma of slavery, but African women suffered additionally through sexual exploitation.⁵ Racial terminology is frequently used in combination with the presuppositions inherent in a patriarchal culture.

The household, a unit of domestic reproduction and shelter, is a source of two contradictory currents. First, the domestic sphere is the location for the formation and reproduction of race and gender relations through the process of socialisation. Secondly, and conversely, the household is also a site of resistance to patriarchy and racism. Households incorporate complex social relations, which may adopt consensual or confrontational aspects at various times in differing situations.

³ Jackson, P. 1994 Black Male: advertising and the cultural politics of masculinity *Gender, Place and Culture* 1,1: 49-59, p.50

⁴ Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. 1992 Overcoming patriarchal constraints: the reconstruction of gender relations among Mexican immigrant women and men *Gender and Society* 6, 3: 393-415, p. 393

⁵ Davis, A. 1981 *Women, Race and Class* London: The Women's Press, p. 25

The household acts as 'a conduit for wider familial and gender ideologies', providing the context for the reproduction of patriarchal and racist culture.⁶ Theories of socialisation propose that gendered social and cultural attributes are formed principally during childhood, hence the importance of the household environment. Children acquire socially ascribed norms in the domestic arena, learning the appropriate behaviour for their sex. Acculturation to perceived adult roles occurs as boys help their fathers in the garage, or girls assist their mothers in domestic chores. Socialisation occurs not only in the household as a young child, but later through schooling and in the workplace. The domestic sphere, however, is a fundamental context. In a similar manner, racial ideas and values are expressed within the household and form part of the socialisation process. Perceptions of race and forms of xenophobia and racism are copied or understood from the social surroundings.

Members of many Dominican families vary significantly in terms of skin colour or phenotype. Thus, while racism is evident in Dominican society, race may not play a discriminatory role within the domestic sphere. However, race still is an important part of identity construction. The darkest child in a family is often known as *negrito/a* as a term of endearment; the underlying tones, however, are racist. The darkest child is singled out, isolated from the lighter siblings. Hooks argues that the family becomes a site of resistance for black women, providing solidarity against racism. Household structure, thus, mitigates the impact of racial discrimination and is not the prime cause of subordination as it is for white women.⁷ Structure and headship are central to the nature of household relations.

⁶ Chant, S. 1996 Gender, Urbanisation and Housing: issues and challenges for the 1990s *Environmental and Spatial Analysis* (London School of Economics) 32, p. 12

⁷ hooks, b. 1984 *Feminist Theory: from margin to center* Boston: South End Press

The household head is the person who gives most economic support to the family and who has the greatest responsibility in decision making.⁸ The traditional domestic code assumes headship to be male. Household structure, thus, is important for the formation of patriarchal and racial perceptions. The predominance of male household heads reproduces the patriarchal domestic structures. Women-headed households, however, erode the traditional norms of patriarchy in the domestic sphere. The established domestic code and the patriarchal culture of Dominican society are discussed in the following section.

Cultures of patriarchy

How does race influence gender analysis, and *vice versa*? Men and women face changing forms of inequality, which vary according to their racialised or gendered positionality. First, racial variation differentiates the experiences of women *vis-à-vis* those of men in the labour market; secondly, men and women of similar race will be exposed to differing forms of gender discrimination. Consequently, racism and patriarchy are not constant influences but vary according to time, place and context. Class relations also impinge on racial and gendered experiences. The women's liberation movement during the 1960s, for example, was initially a white middle class assault on patriarchal relations.⁹

Patriarchy has developed a variety of meanings. In Weberian analysis, it initially referred to a system of government in which societies were ruled by men

⁸ Guarnizo, L. E. 1995 Regresando a casa: clase, género y transformación del hogar entre migrantes dominicanos/as retornados/as *Género y Sociedad* 2, 3: 53-127, p. 62

⁹ Westwood, S. and Radcliffe, S. A. 1993 Gender, racism and the politics of identities. In Radcliffe, S. A. and Westwood, S. (eds) 1993 *'Viva' women and popular protest in Latin America* London: Routledge, pp. 1-29, p. 6

from their position as patriarchs.¹⁰ The concept now focuses on the domination of women by men. The dualist framework of analysis theorises patriarchy as an independent social system which exists alongside capitalism. Alternatively, the patriarchal structure is viewed as a by-product of the domination of capitalism over labour.¹¹ The former framework considers that both systems as equally important in determining gender relations; patriarchy provides a system of social control and order, while capitalism structures an economic system. The latter approach argues that class relations and the economic exploitation of one class by another are the central features of the social system. Capitalist relations determine gender relations; women as mothers and housewives provide cheaper labour by supporting and reproducing the family without receiving a wage. Capital therefore benefits from the unequal sexual division of labour within the household.

A psychoanalytical approach to patriarchy describes gender acquisition as a product of the unconscious, existing beyond the bounds of conscious manipulation. Chodorow focuses on the role of mothering as the central and constituting element in social organisation and reproduction of gender, which limits women's role in adult life to one which has a reduced status in patriarchal society.¹² Gender differentiation arises as a girl follows the nurturing role of her mother, while the boy, identifying with his father, adopts a less caring personality. The analysis provides an active attempt to resolve gender inequalities, but in addition to veering towards an essentialist view of the woman as mother, fails to address the social structures of patriarchy which devalue women.

¹⁰ Parkin, M. 1982 *Max Weber* London: Routledge, pp. 80-83

¹¹ Walby, S. 1990 *Theorizing Patriarchy* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 5-7

¹² Chodorow, N. 1978 *The Reproduction of Mothering: psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender* Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 3

Mitchell argues that patriarchy is entirely separate from the economic system. Gender inequality must therefore be addressed in terms of the unconscious, and cannot be confronted through relations of capital.¹³ This analysis suffers from the practicalities of restricting capitalist relations to concepts of the economy; patriarchal relations are clearly prevalent in the economic system. Psychoanalytical theories provoke interest in the significance of the unconscious, but provide difficulties of essentialism and universalism at the expense of tangibility and practical action, lacking the ability to deal with variable masculinities and femininities.

Walby stresses the importance of social structure for the definition of patriarchy, arguing that the concept should be analysed at different levels of abstraction, articulating with capitalism and racism. Six structures of patriarchy are suggested: 1) the patriarchal mode of production, 2) patriarchal relations in paid work, 3) patriarchal relations in the state, 4) male violence, 5) patriarchal relations in sexuality, and 6) patriarchal relations in cultural institutions.¹⁴ These structures influence each other and give rise to patriarchal practices that operate with the influences of capitalism and racism. The adoption of this sixfold analytical framework widens the lens of an essentialist or reductionist approach, allowing a range of social contexts, historical change and cultural variations to be incorporated in the study of gender relations.

This chapter focuses on the patriarchal structures of production, relations in the household and in paid work, and on the gendered expression of sexuality and cultural institutions. While not ignoring the significance of patriarchal relations in the

¹³ Mitchell, J. 1975 *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* Harmondsworth: Penguin

¹⁴ Walby 1990

state and male violence, the current research does not incorporate these aspects directly. Similarly, a systematic bias towards patriarchal interests in state policies and actions is acknowledged, but not investigated within the framework of the interviews undertaken.

Diverging from the framework of Walby, the distinction between the two main forms of patriarchy, private and public, is not followed. Private patriarchy is based on household production as the main site of women's oppression. Public patriarchy refers to the shared locations of the labour market and the state. This duality is difficult to support, given the overlap and interaction of their spheres of influence. The collective and individual experiences of public and private patriarchy further complicate a neat dichotomy; one will always be part of the other.

Patriarchal structures are culturally specific and change through time. Walby pays careful attention to public and private patriarchy in British history, so, her discussion must be understood in this context. She argues that patriarchy in westernised societies has shifted from the private sphere towards wider public realms. In contemporary Britain, for example, domesticity is less central to women's identities; notions of motherhood and fatherhood have become more flexible, weakening the sexual division of household labour. While progress in Dominican society is also evident over the last century, analyses of European or North American countries can only be transposed to other societies after careful revision. The influence of patriarchy is dependent on the historical and contemporary surroundings, forming part of the specific cultural context.

The domestic sphere is an important arena for the formation of patriarchal and race relations. Gender and race are constructed through the process of socialisation.

Culture, defined as a system, operates as ‘a set of ideas about one’s own and others’ distinctiveness that provide a basis for acting and interpreting others’ actions.’¹⁵ Patriarchy and perceptions of race, thus, are replicated by actions and ideas expressed among household members, who themselves reproduce popular cultural influences.

Popular culture shapes patriarchal and racial identities, values and their level of acceptability. Such broad leverage complicates an exact explanation of the term ‘popular.’ Is popular culture produced by the people, or merely approved and consumed by the people? Television often provides the basis for much popular entertainment, but is controlled by the media elite. Programmes reflect popular taste, but also condition choice. The tensions between choice, constraint, availability and access put the meanings of ‘popular’ to the test.

Subsumed within this context is the idea that popular culture represents mass, or, more specifically, class culture. Kipnis considers mass culture to be a coded form of class discourse.¹⁶ Popular culture serves as an instrument of capitalist culture, appropriating and transforming meaningful elements in society to support the dominant capitalist hegemony. Popular culture is therefore reactionary but not revolutionary, since it operates within the existing hegemonic framework. The main element embodied in these definitions of culture is shared experience. Culture represents a shared set of meanings or meaningful activities, the sharing of which establishes a collectivity or group identity. Identities are necessarily influenced by prevailing concepts of race and gender in languages, activities and cultural institutions.

¹⁵ Drummond, L. 1980 The cultural continuum: a theory of intersystems *Man* 15:352-374, p. 372

¹⁶ Kipnis, L. 1986 ‘Refunctioning’ reconsidered: towards a left popular culture. In MacCabe 1986, pp. 11-36, p.15

The variable experiences of masculinities and femininities are hidden by popular culture and the blunt definition of gender as a duality. Spender claims that languages are patriarchally structured.¹⁷ The colloquial register frequently voices a male bias; for example, the predominant use of 'he' or 'mankind' hides female existence. Languages employ expressive forms in which femininity is often conveyed by diminutive patterns of speech. Spender's analysis concentrates on the English language in which nouns lack gender, but a study specific to Spanish, for example, must take into account the significant use of masculine and feminine nouns and pronouns. The name of the most influential museum in the Dominican Republic remains unchallenged as *El Museo del Hombre Dominicano* - the Museum of Dominican Man. If language is perceived as expressing a patriarchal structure, then it would seem that a solution to the oppression of women would be to create a non-patriarchal language. Discourse analysis brings to light the importance of representation and questions the subliminal imagery of patriarchy, but tends to neglect the importance of the everyday political and economic realities through which patriarchal structures operate and are experienced.

The influences of race and gender in Dominican society are analysed in the following section from the everyday experiences of men and women in the three survey sites - at work, in the home, through sexuality and via religious beliefs. These relations are the changing outcome of the structures outlined above by Walby: the patriarchal mode of production, and patriarchal relations in paid work, in the state, male violence, in sexuality, and in cultural institutions.

¹⁷ Spender, D. 1980 *Man Made Language* London: Routledge

Household structure and the role of women

A popular Dominican children's song presents an image of women which reproduces in verse the social structures of patriarchy. The man sets out his requirements for a woman with whom he would consider marriage. The lyrics suggest that the ideal wife should be a wealthy widow, skilled at sewing and cooking.¹⁸ She must have all the necessary domestic skills to fulfil the role of a 'good housewife'. The repetition of such lyrics by young children indoctrinates and reproduces patriarchal structures during the formative years of social development. It encapsulates the conventional and widespread conception that domestic matters are women's issues. A group of supermarkets have been considering the creation of rest areas, 'as an alternative for husbands who become bored in the supermarket, while their wives buy the family shopping.'¹⁹ Women, it is argued, take much longer to buy the groceries; men spend more, but purchase rum, whisky and 'nibbles' to entertain guests at home.

Socialisation theory, while negating biological determinism, fails to explain gender relations adequately in several respects. First, the process does not account for the initial formation of gender identity, leaving the attributes of masculinities and femininities to be appropriated as gendered baggage during childhood. Secondly, the emphasis on socialisation during very early childhood underestimates later influences; the varying social implications of gender identity are experienced, and elicit reactions, in a variety of locations at various stages of life. Thirdly, the theory operates through standardised views of gender, limiting an explanation of the differing masculinities and femininities within similar social and historical circumstances. Finally,

¹⁸ Cited in Centro Dominicano de Estudios de la Educacion (CEDEE) 1990 *Mamá me mima, Papá trabaja* Santo Domingo: CEDEE, p. 27

¹⁹ *El Siglo* 26 September 1994

socialisation fails to emphasise notions of masculinity and power. Patriarchy is a side-product of socialised gender development; indeed, gender attributes attained through the lens of socialisation theory appear to be an inevitable outcome of passive acceptance.

Socialisation of gender and race must be considered beyond the domestic sphere and at work. The traditional domestic code locates women's work in the household, and subordinate to the male household head. Hartmann argues that the sexual division of labour is a crucial social structure which supports patriarchy.²⁰ The historical precedent of a male-dominated economy has meant that the majority of women have had to rely on their male partner's support, thus maintaining the relations of patriarchy. Despite relative numerical equality with men, the structures of patriarchy serve to marginalise women in many aspects of Dominican society. Women have increasingly been entering paid employment, but the degree of inequality between men and women with respect to remuneration, work conditions and opportunities for promotion have improved only slightly. Quantitative change has not been matched by qualitative improvement in employment. Women continue to experience greater levels of social, cultural, economic and political discrimination, evidence of which is outlined below.

The role of the woman as mother is critical to the social structures of patriarchy. Human capital theorists would argue that women's position in the family restricts involvement in the labour force due to a limited acquisition of necessary work skills, thus reducing the development of their human capital potential. The

²⁰ Hartmann, H. I. 1979 *Capitalism, patriarchy and job segregation by sex*. In Eisenstein, Z. R. (ed). 1979 *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 206-243

imposition of the mothering role, however, has become less dominant with the greater acceptability of female employment and smaller families.

The current annual national birth rate is 30.1 births per thousand inhabitants, and the average number of children born per woman is 3.3, ranging from 4.4 in the rural areas to 2.8 in the cities. Despite persistent differences between rural and urban areas, the birth rate is decreasing steadily - the average number of children born per woman during the early 1960s was 7.3.²¹ This reduction has been achieved through extensive family planning programmes. The majority of Dominican women now have access to methods of contraception, although the patriarchal relations of sexuality remain dominant in issues of male responsibility. Safe sex practices were frequently treated with scorn by male interviewees; the use of condoms often being seen as an infringement on male sexual enjoyment. Among sexually active adolescents a survey reported that 87 percent did not take precautions against contracting HIV-related illnesses.²² Family planning remains very much a 'women's issue' (*una cosa de mujer*) throughout Dominican society.

The type of union in which a woman is involved, in addition to her role as mother, conditions their position in a patriarchal society. A recent summary of survey material by Báez and Taulé provides useful information on the position of women in Dominican society during the 1980s and 1990s. Consensual union accounted for 28.2 percent of women's relationships in 1981; 24.5 percent were married, 32.0 percent were single and 5.9 percent were widowed. At the national scale, there has been a decline in consensual union and marriage, with decreases of around 4 percent since

²¹ Báez and Taulé 1993, pp. 7-8

²² Aizpun, I. 1994 'Como pinta la vida para las jefes de familia' *Rumbo* 31: 8-12, p.10

1960, accompanied by a rise in the level of divorce or separation from 1.9 percent in 1960 to 9.4 percent in 1981.²³ Overall, my sample concurs with the national averages. Fewer of the women interviewed, however, were single; the shortfall was counterbalanced by a greater proportion of married and divorced or separated women (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Union type for men and women in the three survey sites

%	Survey site	Gazcue women	Gazcue men	Los G. women	Los G. men	Zamb. women	Zamb. men	Total women	Total men
	Union type								
	Single	26.0	40.0	24.5	25.5	13.0	15.2	21.1	27.3
	Married	38.0	48.0	26.4	12.8	27.8	32.6	30.0	31.5
	Consensual union	2.0	-	39.6	57.4	38.9	37.0	27.4	30.8
	Widowed	16.0	4.0	-	-	3.7	8.6	6.4	4.2
	Divorced/separated	18.0	8.0	9.4	4.3	16.7	6.5	14.7	6.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Los G. - Los Guandules

Zamb. - Zambrana

Results from the survey sample illustrate the marked variance in union type according to socio-economic background. Consensual union accounted for two-thirds of partnerships in the lowest classes, particularly in Los Guandules (Tables 4.2 to 4.4). The predominance of consensual union among these classes is explained by the greater social acceptability of concubinage, and the potentially prohibitive cost of a

²³ Báez and Taulé 1993, p.118

formal marriage ceremony. Couples often stated that they were reluctant to formalise their partnership; they saw no immediate need if the relationship had been established for a significant period of time.

The middle classes have a high proportion of married interviewees, and correspondingly fewer consensual unions. In the Gazcue sample, virtually all couples were married, either by civil or religious wedding (Table 4.2). The older age of respondents in this neighbourhood is reflected in the high proportion (one tenth) of widows and widowers. Lower classes tend to marry or start living together at an earlier age, while the middle and upper classes increasingly delay marriage to complete further education or pursue a career.

A study in the 1960s of 440 residents in low income settlements in Santo Domingo indicates that there has been a substantial decrease in the number of marriages, and an increase in the frequency of consensual union. The survey showed that 49.4 percent of interviewees were in a consensual union, 45.1 percent were married, and 5.0 percent were either single, separated or divorced.²⁴ In my study, unmarried couples living together accounted for 48 percent and 38 percent of interviewees in Los Guandules and Zambrana respectively (Tables 4.3 and 4.4). The greater occurrence of formal marriages in Zambrana reflects the more conservative nature of rural society and the stronger influence of Catholic and Protestant churches in the locality. Marriage is of greater importance in rural areas as a mechanism for land acquisition and for the transfer of legal tenure.

The low proportion of single interviewees in Zambrana is accounted for by the greater reliance of rural households on family labour to survive in a subsistence

²⁴ Corten and Corten 1968, p. 59

economy (Table 4.4). The higher rates of divorced or separated women in Gazcue and Zambrana are difficult to explain conclusively, but are most likely due to the limits of sample size. In both locations, the women receive support through family ties. In Gazcue, the women are more likely to have spent most of their adult lives in the same area, or even the same house, and now live alone. The tendency to have larger families in rural areas means that the widowed women in Zambrana live predominantly with close family members and relatives in extended households.

Table 4.2 Union type among interviewees in Gazcue, according to class

Union type	Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single		2.0	9.0	18.0	4.0	-	-	33.0	24.0
Married		4.0	20.0	18.0	1.0	-	-	43.0	31.0
Consensual union		-	-	1.0	-	-	-	1.0	29.0
Widowed		1.0	1.0	6.0	2.0	-	-	10.0	5.3
Divorced/ separated		-	5.0	7.0	-	1.0	-	13.0	10.7
Total		7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 4.3 Union type among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to class

Union type	Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single		-	-	7.0	6.0	12.0	-	25.0	24.0
Married		-	-	2.0	7.0	10.0	2.0	21.0	31.0
Consensual union		-	-	1.0	4.0	40.0	3.0	48.0	29.0
Widowed		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3
Divorced/separated		-	-	-	1.0	5.0	-	6.0	10.7
Total		-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 4.4 Union type among interviewees in Zambrana, according to class

Union type	Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single		-	-	1.0	3.0	7.0	3.0	14.0	24.0
Married		-	-	-	3.0	20.0	7.0	30.0	31.0
Consensual union		-	-	-	1.0	23.0	14.0	38.0	29.0
Widowed		-	-	-	-	4.0	2.0	6.0	5.3
Divorced/separated		-	-	-	-	6.0	6.0	12.0	10.7
Total		-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	32.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

A comparison of the type of union and the race of an interviewee shows that Dominicans who describe themselves with lighter terminology are more likely to be married, reflecting the concentration of marriages in the middle and upper classes (Table 4.5). The predominance of *indio/a* as a category of racial self-description meant that, as expected, no correlation was evident between union type and race in Los Guandules and Zambrana (Tables 4.6 and 4.7). Racial preference, however, proves significant when interviewees' descriptions of their partners' race are examined.

Table 4.5 Union type among interviewees in Gazcue, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Union type	Race %	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single		10.0	7.0	3.0	2.0	-	5.0	3.0	3.0	33.0	24.0
Married		18.0	6.0	3.0	4.0	-	8.0	2.0	2.0	43.0	31.0
Consensual union		-	-	-	-	-	-	1.0	-	1.0	29.0
Widowed		6.0	-	-	-	1.0	-	1.0	2.0	10.0	5.3
Divorced/ separated		3.0	4.0	1.0	-	-	2.0	2.0	1.0	13.0	10.7
Total		37.0	17.0	7.0	6.0	1.0	15.0	9.0	8.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Blanc. - *blanco/a* *Trig.* - *trigueño/a* *Mor.* - *moreno/a*

Mest. - *mestizo/a* *Mul.* - *mulato/a*

Table 4.6 Union type among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Union type	Race %	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single		2.0	16.0	3.0	-	1.0	-	2.0	1.0	25.0	24.0
Married		4.0	13.0	1.0	-	-	-	-	2.0	21.0	31.0
Consensual union		2.0	37.0	3.0	-	2.0	-	3.0	1.0	48.0	29.0
Widowed		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3
Divorced/separated		-	4.0	-	-	1.0	-	-	1.0	6.0	10.7
Total		9.0	70.0	7.0	-	4.0	-	5.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Blanc. - *blanco/a* *Trig.* - *trigueño/a* *Mor.* - *moreno/a*

Mest. - *mestizo/a* *Mul.* - *mulato/a*

Table 4.7 Union type among interviewees in Zambrana, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Union type	Race %	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single		-	13.0	-	-	-	-	1.0	-	14.0	24.0
Married		2.0	22.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	-	30.0	31.0
Consensual union		1.0	30.0	-	-	3.0	-	2.0	2.0	38.0	29.0
Widowed		-	5.0	-	-	1.0	-	-	-	6.0	5.3
Divorced/separated		1.0	9.0	1.0	-	1.0	-	-	-	12.0	10.7
Total		4.0	79.0	2.0	2.0	6.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Blanc. - *blanco/a* *Trig.* - *trigueño/a* *Mor.* - *moreno/a*

Mest. - *mestizo/a* *Mul.* - *mulato/a*

Respondents were asked to describe the race of their partner, irrespective of whether they were married, in a consensual union, cohabiting or not; those without a current or previous partner described the race of a girlfriend or boyfriend. Racial endogamy is openly acknowledged. Interviewees tended to agree with the general strategy of 'marrying lighter,' or at least seeking a partner of similar colour. When questioned about marriage, over a third of the respondents across all classes in my survey sample, expressed the desire to marry lighter (*mejorar la raza* or *blanquearse*). Two-fifths of interviewees who described themselves as *moreno/a* and *negro/a* referred to their partners with the aesthetically lighter terms of *blanco/a*, *indio/a* or *mestizo/a* (Table 4.8). Given the *indio/a* majority, however, the opportunity to have a lighter partner is limited; when one marries lighter, the partner, by definition, marries darker - one third of respondents, both male and female, who declared themselves to be *blanco/a* described their partner using the darker term of *indio/a*.

Interviewees were asked to nominate the head of the household in which they lived, since household structure is an important factor which influences patriarchal relations. Between 1971 and 1991 woman-headed households in the Dominican Republic have increased from 19.6 to 25 percent of all households.²⁵ Woman-headed households are more numerous in urban than rural areas, accounting for 29.4 and 18.0 percent of urban and rural households respectively in 1991 - a result of a strong patriarchal culture and the traditional male dominance of land tenure.²⁶ Eighty percent of interviewees in the total sample lived in households where the head was male;

²⁵ Báez and Taulé 1993, p. 8

²⁶ Báez and Taulé 1993, p. 9

seventeen percent of households were headed by a woman, whether divorced, separated, widowed or single.

Table 4.8 Self-defined race among interviewees and their descriptions of their partner among the total survey sample

%	Race of partner Race of interviewee	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total
	<i>Blanco/a</i>	0.3	5.7	2.0	-	-	2.0	2.0	4.3	16.3
	<i>Indio/a</i>	2.3	38.0	0.7	0.7	1.3	1.0	3.3	8.0	55.3
	<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	0.3	2.7	-	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.3	5.7
	<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	-	0.7	1.7	-	-	-	0.3	2.7
	<i>Moreno/a</i>	-	1.7	0.3	-	0.7	-	0.3	0.7	3.7
	<i>Mulato/a</i>	0.3	-	0.3	-	-	4.0	-	0.7	5.3
	<i>Negro/a</i>	0.7	1.7	0.3	-	0.3	0.7	1.0	1.3	6.0
	Other	-	1.0	1.3	-	0.3	0.3	0.3	2.0	5.0
	Total	3.7	48.3	8.3	2.3	2.7	8.3	7.7	18.7	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Blanc. - *blanco/a* *Trig.* - *trigueño/a* *Mor* - *moreno/a*

Mest - *mestizo/a* *Mul.* - *mulato/a*

The relatively high proportion of women-headed households in the lower and middle classes is the outcome of high rates of divorce or separation, combined with the effects of male migration (Tables 4.9 and 4.11). There were relatively fewer woman-headed households in the rural sample, compared with the urban locations, which concurs with the national trend. Upper and upper-middle class households are headed predominantly by married men, though male headship is the most common in each sample site and across all class groups. In Gazcue, three-fifths of the households in the sample are headed by the husband where the union is based on a civil or religious

marriage (Table 4.9). Conversely, two-thirds of the households in Los Guandules are headed by the male partner in a consensual union (Table 4.10).

Table 4.9 Household head among interviewees in Gazcue, according to class

% Household head	Class	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N= 300
Single woman		-	4.0	16.0	3.0	1.0	-	24.0	17.0
Single man		1.0	2.0	5.0	2.0	-	-	10.0	7.3
Male partner in marriage		1.7	28.0	24.0	-	-	-	57.0	39.0
Male partner in consensual union		-	-	1.0	-	-	-	1.0	33.3
None*		1.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	-	-	8.0	3.3
Total		7.0	35.0	50.0	7.0	1.0	-	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

* no household head was evident or declared; for example, shared rental accommodation

Table 4.10 Household head among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to class

% Household head	Class	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single woman		-	-	3.0	1.0	8.0	-	12.0	17.0
Single man		-	-	-	2.0	1.0	-	3.0	7.3
Male partner in marriage		-	-	3.0	9.0	11.0	2.0	25.0	39.0
Male partner in consensual union		-	-	4.0	6.0	45.0	3.0	58.0	33.3
None		-	-	-	-	2.0	-	2.0	3.3
Total		-	-	10.0	18.0	67.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 4.11 Household head among interviewees in Zambrana, according to class

Class %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total	Total sample N= 300
Household head								
Single woman	-	-	-	1.0	6.0	9.0	15.0	17.0
Single man	-	-	-	-	6.0	3.0	9.0	7.3
Male partner in marriage	-	-	1.0	5.0	22.0	7.0	35.0	39.0
Male partner in consensual union	-	-	-	1.0	26.0	14.0	41.0	33.3
None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3
Total	-	-	1.0	7.0	60.0	21.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

There is no clear correlation between household headship and the race of interviewees. Self-description of race corresponds more directly to class. Upper and middle classes have a higher proportion of male household heads, describing themselves with lighter racial terminology (Tables 4.12 to 4.14). Interviewees in a household headed by the male partner in a consensual union will be more likely to describe themselves as *indio/a*, due to the predominance of this household type in the lower classes.

Table 4.12 Household head among interviewees in Gazcue, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Race % Household head	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single woman	11.0	4.0	2.0	-	-	2.0	4.0	1.0	24.0	17.0
Single man	3.0	3.0	-	-	1.0	3.0	-	-	9.0	7.3
Male partner in marriage	21.0	8.0	5.0	6.0	-	9.0	4.0	4.0	57.0	39.0
Male partner in consensual union	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.0	-	1.0	33.3
None*	2.0	2.0	-	-	-	1.0	-	3.0	9.0	3.3
Total	37.0	17.0	7.0	6.0	1.0	15.0	9.0	8.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

* no household head was evident or declared; for example, shared rental accommodation

Blanc. - *blanco/a* *Trig.* - *trigueño/a* *Mor.* - *moreno/a*

Mest. - *mestizo/a* *Mul.* - *mulato/a* (similarly for Table 4.13)

Table 4.13 Household head among interviewees in Los Guandules, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Race % Household head	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single woman	-	8.0	1.0	-	1.0	-	1.0	1.0	12.0	17.0
Single man	-	2.0	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	3.0	7.3
Male partner in marriage	3.0	17.0	3.0	-	-	-	-	2.0	25.0	39.0
Male partner in consensual union	4.0	42.0	3.0	-	3.0	-	4.0	2.0	58.0	33.3
None	1.0	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.0	3.3
Total	8.0	70.0	8.0	-	4.0	-	5.0	5.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 4.14 Household head among interviewees in Zambrana, according to the self-described race of the interviewee

Race % Household head	<i>Blanc.</i>	<i>Indio</i>	<i>Mest.</i>	<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Mul.</i>	<i>Negro</i>	Other	Total	Total sample N = 300
Single woman	1.0	12.0	1.0	-	1.0	-	-	-	15.0	17.0
Single man	-	8.0	-	-	1.0	-	-	-	9.0	7.3
Male partner in marriage	2.0	26.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.0	-	35.0	39.0
Male partner in consensual union	1.0	33.0	-	-	3.0	-	2.0	2.0	41.0	33.3
None	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.3
Total	4.0	79.0	2.0	2.0	6.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	100.0	100.0

N = 100

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Blanc. - *blanco/a* *Trig.* - *trigueño/a* *Mor.* *moreno/a*

Mest. - *mestizo/a* *Mul.* - *mulato/a*

The mean household size for the country is 4.6 persons, with little difference between rural and urban areas - 4.8 and 4.6 persons per household in 1991.²⁷ The corresponding figures for Gazcue, Los Guandules and Zambrana are 4.4, 5.1 and 5.5 persons per household respectively (Table 1.2). The advantages of larger household size in the lower-income areas include stronger extended family networks and the economies gained from pooling domestic resources. The mean size of women-headed households in each sample were no different from those of the location as a whole, with the exception of Gazcue, where there was a relatively higher proportion of widows living on their own.

²⁷ Báez and Taulé 1993, p. 9

The changing structure of households is a consequence of unstable economic conditions, marriage or union breakdown, and the increasing participation of women in the labour force, predominantly in the urban sphere. The following section analyses women's employment outside the household and considers its impact on the structures of patriarchy.

Work and the relations of patriarchy

The increasing economic activity of women outside the household is an additional factor which may weaken structures of patriarchy. Pessar has outlined the ways in which women's wage labour is changing traditional domestic codes.²⁸ First, the female domestic and male public sphere have merged. Secondly, ideas of the male-only breadwinner have been challenged. Thirdly, women's wages are a negotiating point for more equality in household labour. Finally, the growing number of women-headed households has meant has reduced the privileged position of nuclear families in the traditional domestic code.

Wage labour, however, is not always a liberating experience, nor does it necessarily weaken patriarchal structures. Women still confront gender inequalities and discrimination at work. Female headship may be not the result of choice, but an unplanned outcome. Too much emphasis on wage labour leads to the further devaluation of domestic work. The latter is not remunerated with wages, but it may be a source of status within the household and lessen the dominance of patriarchal relations.

²⁸ Pessar, P. R. 1995 En el hogar y en el trabajo: integración de la mujer inmigrante al discurso feminista *Género y Sociedad* 2, 3: 128-161, p. 138

Between 1981 and 1990, the female labour force of the Dominican Republic doubled from approximately a half to over one million workers.²⁹ The number of women described as economically active by the government census (which excludes many informal workers, students and women working in their own household) increased from 41 to 55 per hundred male workers. Despite this growth of female economic activity, unemployment among women has increased from 19.9 percent in 1981 to 35.1 percent in 1990; the result of a greater number of women seeking entry into the labour force. More household members are seeking employment to support the household economy as a result of economic recession and government austerity measures. The rate of economic activity for the total population over ten years old increased from 34.0 percent in 1981 to 43.2 percent in 1990.³⁰

Gender inequalities remain evident in the analysis of male and female occupational groups. Men are still three times as likely to be employers than women, who have a substantially lower probability of being self-employed (Table 4.15). Men have a higher likelihood of working as non-remunerated family workers when agricultural labour is taken into account. In terms of occupation type, women are more concentrated in manufacturing, commerce, restaurant and hotel work, community and personal services than men (Table 4.16).

²⁹ Báez and Taulé 1993, p. 119

³⁰ Báez and Taulé 1993, p. 10

Table 4.15 Distribution of the economically active population in the Dominican Republic, according to type of occupation and sex

%	Sex	Men	Women	Total
Occupational group				
Salaried worker		46.1	67.0	53.6
Employer		3.6	1.2	2.7
Self-employed		38.3	24.1	33.3
Non-remunerated family worker		10.6	6.2	9.0
Other		1.3	1.4	1.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		8,864	4,891	13,755

Source: Profamilia 1993 *Encuesta demográfica y de salud (Endesa-91)* Santo Domingo: Profamilia, p. 23

Table 4.16 Distribution of the economically active population, according to gender and location

%	Sample	Men	Women	Urban	Rural	Total
Economic sector						
Agriculture		36.2	5.5	5.4	56.2	25.3
Manufacturing		11.6	14.8	16.5	6.9	12.8
Commerce, restaurants, hotels		17.7	24.1	25.2	11.7	19.9
Construction		4.4	0.6	3.9	2.5	3.4
Transport and communications		5.2	1.0	4.9	1.8	3.7
Finance		2.2	3.4	3.9	0.8	2.7
Community services		10.2	17.8	17.5	5.8	12.9
Personal services		11.1	32.4	21.6	14.0	18.6
Other		0.8	0.4	0.9	0.3	0.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N		8,741	4,815	8,249	5,307	13,556

Source: Profamilia 1993, p. 25

The increase in female economic activity rates is partly due to the growth of foreign-owned light manufacturing industries in the expanding free trade zones. Women represent three quarters of free trade zone employees; almost a third of all workers employed in this type of manufacturing industry.³¹ A study of the impact of export manufacturing in the Dominican Republic indicates that women wage earners tend to have more negative attitudes to marriage, thus creating less stable partnerships. These workers, however, can expect greater help with domestic tasks from other members of the household, albeit women, and more control over resources.³²

The greatest numerical incorporation of women into the workforce over the last two decades has taken place in the tertiary sector. Duarte argues that the gain in tertiary sector employment has occurred principally through the increase in women employed as 'household workers', though employment in tourism has made a significant contribution.³³ Unskilled manual work is the most common source of employment for women in the three survey sites (Table 4.17). Respondents were asked to describe their main occupation, though several interviewees, especially among the lower classes, earned income from two or more jobs.

³¹ Báez and Taulé 1993, p.11

³² Finlay, B. 1989 *The Women of Azua: work and family in the Dominican Republic* New York: Praeger, p. 3

³³ Duarte, I. 1989 Household workers in the Dominican Republic: a question for the feminist movement. In Chaney, E. M. and Garcia, M. 1989 *Muchachas No More: household workers in Latin America and the Caribbean* pp. 197-219, p. 200

Table 4.17 Occupational groups of women and men in the three study sites

%	Survey site	Gazcue women	Gazcue men	Los G. women	Los G. men	Zamb. women	Zamb. men	Total women	Total men
Occupation									
Manager		-	2.0	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
Professional worker		16.0	28.0	-	2.1	-	-	5.1	10.5
Other non-manual worker		30.0	58.0	26.4	29.8	18.5	19.6	24.8	36.4
Skilled manual worker		-	10.0	-	6.4	1.9	-	0.6	5.6
Semi-skilled manual & personal service worker		20.0	-	18.9	12.8	3.7	4.3	14.0	5.6
Unskilled manual worker		32.0	-	54.7	48.9	68.5	8.9	52.2	18.9
Farmer		2.0	2.0	-	-	5.6	52.2	2.5	17.5
Agricultural worker		-	-	-	-	1.9	15.2	0.6	4.9
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

N = 300

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Los G. - Los Guandules

Zamb. - Zambrana

Tertiary non-manual work accounted for 88.0 percent of men's employment in the Gazcue sample, reflecting the middle class majority. A male bias occurs within the skilled manual, unskilled manual and agricultural occupational groups. Women, however, predominate in the occupational categories of semi-skilled manual and personal service and unskilled workers. Within the former occupational group women often worked as domestic servants, or, in Gazcue, were employed in one of several beauty or hairdressing salons. The predominance of unskilled manual labour as the

most common occupational group for women is a result of the prevalence of women working as non-remunerated workers in their own household.

Interviews in the three survey areas revealed a concentration of women's activities in their own households. From the total sample of women interviewed, 45.9 percent said that their principle occupation was as a 'housewife' or unwaged domestic worker in their own home. Only 2.5 percent described themselves as domestic servants. Rather than refute the importance of domestic service as a source of women's employment, the low figure obtained in the survey is more a result of the locations studied. In Zambrana, a remote rural location, the opportunities for employment as domestic servants were severely limited. No domestic servants were interviewed in Gazcue, though some lived in their employers' households. In Los Guandules, four percent of women were employed in domestic service as their main occupation, however, eleven percent occasionally worked in other households outside the neighbourhood.

The national census in 1981 indicated that domestic service, at 27 percent of the total, is proportionally the most important economic activity for women in the Dominican Republic; 96 percent of all household workers are female. Domestic servants earn among the lowest incomes in the country. Employers are currently entitled to combine cash with payment 'in kind', such as board and lodging, to bring the overall income of a household worker up to the national minimal wage. The minority of male domestic workers, however, still earn nearly three times as much as women.³⁴

³⁴ Báez and Taulé 1993, p.14

Duarte compares the characteristics of domestic service to a form of serfdom, the life of the worker dictated by the owner of the household.³⁵ The employee may be responsible to the 'mistress of the house', but more often than not, the power structure of the household will ultimately rest within a patriarchal framework. While domestic service is an important form of employment for women, it arguably serves only to reinforce the dominance of patriarchal social structures. The 'mistress of the house' is removed from domestic responsibilities, but she merely places another woman in a subordinate position without lessening the effects of patriarchy.

Census material rarely gives information concerning employment in the informal labour market due to its irregular status and the flexibility of definition; informal employment acts outside state regulation. Báez and Taulé suggest that an increasing concentration of women, 52.9 percent in 1983, are employed in the informal sector and domestic service.³⁶ These sectors have the lowest salaries and minimal legal protection. Male employment in the informal sector and domestic service remains at 39.1 percent of economically active men. Without a coherent definition of what the authors consider to be informal employment, these figures only serve to illustrate a broad trend - women's work continues to be concentrated in sectors characterised by low remuneration and employment vulnerability.

The traditional domestic code is challenged by the increasing numbers of women who have undertaken paid employment outside the home. The position of women workers still remains subordinate to that of men overall, but gender relations within the household have been modified. Changing daily routines, varying forms of

³⁵ Duarte 1989, p. 201

³⁶ Báez and Taulé 1993, p.14

household structure and the differing management or allocation of resources alter the domestic sphere in which gender roles are constructed and socialised. Are the shifting relations of patriarchy within the household and at work transforming gendered perceptions of race? The following section discusses the gendering of racial perception

Race, gender and images of the body

Darker-skinned women in the context of a highly racialised and patriarchal society would predictably suffer twice from racist and sexist subordination. The relationship between the two forms of discrimination was rarely established during interviews in the three sample sites. There is also little evidence from my survey that racial self-description varies on the basis of gender (Tables 4.18 and 4.19). Men and women in the lower classes describe themselves as *indio/a* to a similar extent. Men from the upper classes defined themselves as *blanco*, though a relatively high proportion of middle-class women described themselves as *blanca* (10.8 percent of all women in the sample). The relationship between race and gender, however, is more apparent when considered in the context of popular culture; specifically through the racialisation of sexuality.

Table 4. 18 Self-described race among women interviewees in the total sample, according to class

% Race	Class	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>		0.6	2.5	10.8	1.3	3.2	0.6	19.1
<i>Indio/a</i>		-	1.9	3.2	7.6	29.3	10.8	52.9
<i>Mestizo/a</i>		-	1.3	1.9	1.3	2.5	-	7.0
<i>Trigueño/a</i>		-	-	-	-	-	0.6	0.6
<i>Moreno/a</i>		-	-	-	0.6	3.2	1.3	5.1
<i>Mulato/a</i>		1.3	1.3	0.6	-	0.6	-	3.8
<i>Negro/a</i>		0.6	0.6	2.5	-	2.5	-	6.4
Other		-	1.3	0.6	1.3	1.9	-	5.1
Total		2.5	8.9	19.7	12.1	43.3	13.3	100.0

N = 157

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 4.19 Self-described race among men interviewees in the total sample, according to class

% Race	Class	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>		0.7	4.2	5.6	1.4	1.4	-	13.3
<i>Indio/a</i>		0.7	2.1	4.9	7.0	33.6	9.8	58.0
<i>Mestizo/a</i>		-	0.7	1.4	-	2.1	-	4.2
<i>Trigueño/a</i>		-	2.8	1.4	-	0.7	-	4.9
<i>Moreno/a</i>		-	-	-	-	1.4	-	1.4
<i>Mulato/a</i>		-	2.8	3.5	-	-	0.7	7.0
<i>Negro/a</i>		-	1.4	1.4	-	2.8	-	5.6
Other		0.7	0.7	2.8	0.7	-	0.7	5.6
Total		2.1	14.7	21.0	9.1	42.0	11.2	100.0

N = 143

All figures are rounded percentages of the total sample

Source: Author's survey 1994

Sexuality incorporates the aesthetics of the body through the lens of patriarchal relations and racial perceptions. Just as the personal is political, the body is sexualised and politicised. Brittan and Maynard emphasise the body as a site of oppression:

It is the sphere in which the consequences of oppression are most readily felt. How an individual experiences his or her body will depend, to a large degree, on the 'others' in the immediate environment, who continuously monitor and interpret his or her bodily processes. To an extent, the body is society's creature. It will live through the image of those who watch, nurture, punish, and reward it. The body becomes an 'it' when it is experienced as a thing among things.³⁷

Thus, sexual objectification turns a body into an 'it', but is this objectification a compulsory component of male and female sexual relationships? Brittan and Maynard argue that it is not. Sexual objectification is a historical result of the power relationship inherent in hierarchy, 'a social concept and practice, with its basis lying in the meaning given to the division of activities between men and women in society.'³⁸ An hierarchy was established as men began to value their work above that of women. The devaluation and appropriation of women's work extended to the body. Furthermore, heterosexuality set the parameters for male and female sexuality, the acceptable or popular sexuality. The body is politicised, sexually objectified with respect to the established political and social force of heterosexuality.

Given the dominant relations of patriarchy, sexual objectification tends to be focused on the female body in society. Walby suggests:

Abstinence from paid work is no longer such a central element of femininity. Overall there has been a shift in the discourse of femininity away from private

³⁷ Brittan, A. and Maynard, M. 1984 *Sexism, Racism and Oppression* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 219-220

³⁸ Brittan and Maynard 1984, p.220

domesticity towards more public aspects of sexual attractiveness to men, outside as well as inside the family.³⁹

It could be argued that a dominant form of femininity has always existed in the public domain, the aesthetics of feminine beauty vary across cultures. However, all societies socially construct beauty and create space for the exhibition or expectation of beauty in society.

A book of popular Dominican stories illustrates a common masculine conception of female beauty - blond hair, blue eyes, and white skin. One of the protagonists laments that he will stay celibate unless he finds what he considers to be the essence of beauty:

‘... I have an idea fixed here in my head, that I’ll never get myself a woman. I’ll not marry unless she’s blond, blue-eyed and beautiful; neither will I have lovers.’⁴⁰

The collection of narratives illustrates the prevalent sexual objectification of women by heterosexual men. Another story derides the non-aggressive sexuality of a young man when he fails to develop a sexual relationship with a woman who is attracted to him. His male companion, ridiculing the man for being too effeminate by calling him *el palomo*, ‘the dove’, advises him that a woman, like bread, must be ‘taken while hot’ since later on, no one will want her.⁴¹

Men in the Dominican Republic, as in all patriarchal societies, have greater sexual liberty with respect to the social acceptability of multiple relationships. It is not unusual for a man to have at least two current partners; *la mujer* and *la querida*. Women who maintain similar sexual relations face far greater social condemnation.

³⁹ Walby 1990, p.108

⁴⁰ Bautista Lopéz, B. 1995 *Diversión dominicana* Santo Domingo: Impresora VM, p.67

⁴¹ Bautista Lopéz 1995, p.73

The commonly used term, *el tiguere*, illustrates the reification of sexually active *machismo* or masculinity in the Dominican Republic. A Dominican male author celebrates the forms of *el tiguere*, a colloquial term for 'tiger' referring to a male scoundrel. He characterises *tigueres* as amorous, valiant, shrewd, tricky, suave or deceptive.⁴² All *tigueres* are most definitely heterosexual and born patriarchs. The opposite of *el tiguere* is *el pariqüayo*, a word invented by the author to describe a 'man without character.' The author aims to address a popular readership but is not entirely light hearted in his study; he wishes to make a social observation and unwittingly provides an example of the cultural acceptance and incorporation of patriarchal relations. First published in 1992, the book sold enough copies for a second edition to be published, and remains popular in Dominican book shops.

Gilmore argues that the cultural dominance of masculinity over femininity in the vast majority of societies finds its expression through the concept of the male as Impregnator-Protector-Provider.⁴³ Masculinity, he argues, is created via the competition between men to achieve these ideals in a patriarchal, heterosexual-dominated society. Gilmore's understanding of masculinity, and ultimately aspects of femininity, focuses specifically on sexuality. Sexuality is a key social structure in the production and maintenance of patriarchal relations. Conceptions of race are entwined with sexuality and beauty. Aesthetic values tend to discriminate against *negro/a* features, which are deemed ordinary or ugly. Aesthetics are defined variously in terms of perception by the senses, the appreciation of beauty or in accordance with the

⁴² Collado, L. 1992 *El tiguere dominicano* Santo Domingo: Editora Panamérica

⁴³ Gilmore, D. D. 1990 *Manhood in the Making: cultural concepts of masculinity* London: Yale University Press

principles of good taste.⁴⁴ The lighter the skin colour, the straighter the hair or the narrower the facial features, the greater the tendency to define beauty within these terms. A national television channel had two dark-skinned presenters for an evening programme. The station soon became known in popular conversation as the 'Channel of the Uglies'. 'Good taste' is conditioned by preference for lighter skin colour.

Employment advertisements seek potential employees of *buena presencia* or who are *bien parecida* or *aparente*. These solicitations for 'a good appearance' conform to the light colour bias, and are normally aimed at young women interested in secretarial or restaurant work. Advertisements for employment oriented towards men tend to use the term *dinámico*, suggesting that men are more likely to adapt to changing commercial needs or thrive in the rugged world of business.

Advertising has been described by Winship as a moment of suspension between production and consumption in the circulation of commodities.⁴⁵ Consumption itself is a process or moment of production since it reproduces the consumer. Consequently, advertising focuses on this instance of consumption - adverts suggest what or who we should be through the acquisition and consumption of the commodities represented. Successful advertising produces consumers, the adverts sell images of how to construct our relationships with the surrounding physical, cultural or emotional environments.

Sexually and racially-biased advertising, often overt, is commonly used in the Dominican media. A brand of Dominican rum has an established marketing campaign featuring light-skinned models with the slogan, *una cosa de hombres*; the bottle of

⁴⁴ Brown, L. 1994 (ed.) 1993 *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* volume one Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 34

⁴⁵ Winship, J. 1980 'Sexuality for sale.' In Hall, S. (ed). 1980 *Culture, Media, Language* London: Hutchinson, pp. 217-223, p. 217

rum and the woman are 'men's things'. The broadcast times for a new television commercial for the brand of rum were advertised in newspapers days before the commercials were due to be aired during the summer of 1994; the adverts were eagerly awaited by the Dominican male audience.⁴⁶ The *india clara* model was clothed in a transparent white shirt, playing a saxophone on a beach. The newspaper advertisements attempted to tease the reader with a photo of the model: 'You have to see it! It's sensual, it's daring... it's a man's thing.'

A widely-sold tonic for improving male sexual potency, *Fórmula Árabe*, reinforced the sexual, and racial, message of its market strategy during the summer of 1995. The packaging of the tonic has a photo of a muscular, bearded and tanned man squeezed into a pair of jeans, sporting a turban and standing in a sexually assertive pose. Between his straddled legs, clinging onto his thigh, and gazing upwards, sits a white model with long blond hair in a small white silk dress. A magazine advertisement for the product, striking by its overt display of sexuality, showed the naked front torso of a *blanca*, with two male hands reaching for her breasts from behind.⁴⁷ Race and sexuality sell products, but more specifically it is the image of a women's body, *blanca* or *india clara*, which sells in the Dominican Republic. The male body has not received as much advertising space as, for example, in Europe or North America.

Racial aesthetics are prevalent in the choice of partner. Partners are frequently described with lighter terminology to emphasise their aesthetic standing (Table 4.8). Every week, a national newspaper produces a colour supplement with photographs of

⁴⁶ *Listín Diario* 3 August 1994

⁴⁷ Advertised in *Rumbo* 8 August 1995

light-skinned women, often tourists, in swimwear on the beach. Many shots are taken using a zoom lens in a highly voyeuristic manner.⁴⁸ Very few women are aware that their photograph is being displayed in the national media to increase sales among the male heterosexual readership.

The white bias in beauty challenges the desirability of black sexuality. The contradiction is clear - popular male and female opinion reveres the beauty of the *blanco/a*, yet popular sexual myth imbues the *negro/a* or *mulata/o* with vigour and skilful prowess. Bastide outlines the sexual stereotypes which surround racial classification:

... the Dusky Venus hides the debasement of the black woman as a prostitute; and the Black Apollo is seeking revenge on the white man. It is not so much that love breaks down barriers and unites human beings as that racial ideologies extend their conflicts even into love.⁴⁹

Bastide describes miscegenation in terms of the 'bitterest sexual competition.'⁵⁰ Similarly, Fanon views the desire of dark-skinned women for lighter men as an attempt to obtain whiteness, to gain legitimacy and bear children in the 'white world.'⁵¹ Darker-skinned men's desire for white women, Fanon relates, is driven by the craving for revenge. The *negro/a* sexuality-*blanco/a* beauty dialectic is the basis for the success of the Dominican sex tourism industry. A Dominican tabloid newspaper ran a front page article on the alleged exodus to Europe of dark-skinned Dominicans with lighter-skinned European tourists, a product of casual and calculated holiday romance:

⁴⁸ 'En la playa.' In *El Siglo*

⁴⁹ Bastide, R. 1961 *Dusky Venus, Black Apollo* *Race* 3: 10-18, p. 18

⁵⁰ Bastide 1961, p. 13

⁵¹ Fanon, F. 1986 *Black Skin, White Masks* London: Pluto Press

Wow! Black Dominicans strolling through European capitals arm-in-arm with stunning blondes who are now their wives, thanks to Cupid's legendary arrow. These women came here, fell in love and took home their men.⁵²

Popular images portray *la negra* as lower class street sellers, prostitutes and single mothers.⁵³ Darker skin colour is associated with the erotic, but also with the more secretive and potent aspects of popular Afro-syncretic belief. *Brujería* and the magical powers of *vodú* are commonly associated with *negritud*, and Haiti.

Religion: racialised and gendered

Religion is a key institution which reinforces relations of patriarchy in Dominican society. The prevalence and powerful influence of Catholicism continues to reinforce gender inequality, strengthening social norms with religious and moral precepts. The household is an important location for the expression of Afro-syncretic beliefs, which are practised away from the public, and Catholic, gaze. A paradox of emotions exist among Dominican believers who are outwardly hostile to Haiti, yet inwardly subscribe to beliefs and superstitions which mirror Haitian *vodoun*. Gender relations in patriarchal Dominican society reinforce historical and contemporary images of *la raza dominicana* and support racist prejudice.

Ninety-two percent of the people interviewed by me professed Catholicism as their main form of religious belief, a figure concurrent with the national average.⁵⁴ This is more a public acknowledgement of the official state religion rather than a faithful reflection of active religious practice. People were more likely to criticise the

⁵² *El Nacional* 22 September 1994

⁵³ Castillo, L., Silié, R. and Hernández, P. 1974 *Réflexions sur la femme noire en République Dominicaine*. In Bastide, R. (ed.) 1974 *La femme de couleur en Amérique Latine* Paris: Éditions Anthropos, pp. 171-191, pp. 180-185

⁵⁴ Bell 1981, p. 239

Church, or to express no religious conviction if they lived in the middle-income neighbourhood of Gazcue, although there was no significant correlation between class and religious belief.

The Catholic Church is one of the most powerful institutions in the Dominican Republic. The close alliance between Church and state is evident through the high profile of religious leaders as mediators during election periods, and during the government celebrations in 1992 of the five hundredth anniversary of the 'discovery and evangelisation of the New World.'

The importance of the Church is reflected in its influence on patriarchal relations in society. The Church considers the nuclear family with a married male household head as the socially desirable norm. Men are expected to lead religious as well as familial matters; patriarchy receives a divine mandate which may be defended with Biblical authority. Daly argues that the Church has been fundamental in justifying the subordination of women as the second sex.⁵⁵ Virginity is considered as a prime virtue amongst unmarried women. It becomes the right of the man to initiate sexually his female partner when married, but the Church appears to be more tolerant of men's sexual infidelities or parallel sexual relationships. During 1992, an intense campaign by the Church forced the defeat of a motion in Congress which aimed to allow greater flexibility for abortion on medical grounds. Unable to support a successful campaign on medical issues alone, the Church used notions of moral condemnation - a vote for greater flexibility was a vote against religion. Women seeking abortion face not only legal punishment, but the guilt of divine censure.

⁵⁵ Daly, M. 1975 *The Church and the Second Sex* New York: Harper and Row

Nevertheless, women make up the majority of the Catholic congregation and, amongst interviewees in Gazcue, Los Guandules and Zambrana, are almost twice as likely as men to attend Church on a regular basis. Although excluded from the upper hierarchy of the Church, women are the main organisers of most popular religious activities. Men participate in religious ceremonies or celebrations, but do not maintain them.

González has studied the preparations for the *Carnaval* in Santiago, when the *lechones*, or devils, are let loose to run through the streets of the city on Ash Wednesday.⁵⁶ Whilst not an official part of the Easter celebrations, the Church engages in *Carnaval* as a popular cultural institution. The *lechones* are men dressed in colourful masks and bright clothing. The creation of such costumes takes much time, effort and expense, the latter increasingly limiting the participation of low income earners. Women usually assist in the production of costumes, but may not participate as *lechones* in the *Carnaval*. The most visibly important female role is that of the Queen of *Carnaval*, elected from amongst the daughters of the organisers. The family of the chosen Queen must pay for her dress and entourage, thus, restricting possible candidates to the higher-income, and usually lighter-skinned, groups.

Evangelism is an increasingly important influence in Caribbean societies. Mormon, Adventist and Pentecostal churches have established expanding missions throughout the Dominican Republic. However, they were not a significant influence amongst interviewees in the survey. Catholicism is undoubtedly the most influential and best organised religion, although syncretic religious practices may be found throughout Dominican society. The syncretic belief system is a synthesis of formal

⁵⁶ González, N. L. 1973 *El Carnaval en Santiago de los Caballeros Eme-Eme* 2,9: 80-95

Catholicism and *vodú*. Davis outlines similar religious manifestations in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.⁵⁷ The secrecy of *vodú* is strongly associated with Haitians and Dominicans with darker skin colour. The latter, however, it is commonly believed, cannot be possessed by spirits to the same extent. Religious difference symbolises racial difference, but the separation is as ambiguous as racial identity itself. The 'darker side' of religion correlates with skin colour in popular perception. In border regions it has been commonly believed that Haitian women could fly like the spirits.⁵⁸

In rural areas interviewees more readily discussed the influence of Dominican *vodú* and expressed their belief in *brujería* and *los santos* (the saints), referring frequently to elements of African-Christian syncretic religion. In the Zambrana region, *brujería* is more widely acknowledged as common practice, reflecting a strong influence of local *brujos/as* and local belief system. One *brujo* is well known in the area and regularly receives visitors from the provincial capital of Cotuí seeking spiritual advice on a variety of matters. These clients come from all social backgrounds; most noticeable were the richer clients who would arrive in expensive four-wheel-drive vehicles.

In general, however, a reticent attitude existed amongst interviewees to discuss *brujería*. Such beliefs were highly personal, open to ridicule by non-believers and discouraged by the Church, particularly in the urban areas. Unlike Haitian *vodoun*, the African-Christian syncretic belief in the Dominican Republic is hidden from general view, though the majority of the population share some form of belief in *los santos*.

⁵⁷ Davis, M. E. 1987 *La Otra Ciencia: el vodú dominicano como religion y medicina populares* Santo Domingo: Editoria Universitaria, p. 63

⁵⁸ Derby, L. 1994 Haitians, magic and money: *raza* and society in Haitian-Dominican borderlands 1900-1937 *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36, 3: 488-526, p. 519

The latter are saints of the Catholic Church whose religious characteristics and powers have become fused with African deities, a legacy from the period of slavery. Each saint represents certain emotions or is connected to an occasion, with specific prayers and offerings presented to him or her, usually at a small shrine in the home. Every believer will worship a patron saint, amongst a few others, for protection and spiritual guidance.

Given the antagonism at state and individual levels between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, *vodú* is generally perceived to be a Haitian vice - the black magic of an uncivilised, violent, dangerous African society. Many argue that *vodú* is purely a Haitian phenomenon, but studies have shown the close evolution and linkage between variants of *vodú* across the island.⁵⁹ *Vodú* is an island-wide phenomenon, with certain sites regarded as being of particular religious importance, such as Arcahaie in southern Haiti.⁶⁰ *Brujería* incorporates notions of fear and respect. Faith in *brujería* make take the form of advice with lottery numbers or in issues of love, to the more sinister, though no less common, *mal de ojo*, the casting of an 'evil eye'; often cited as the root cause of a strange or sudden illness. It is deemed to be the result of a malicious spell cast upon an opponent via the medium of the *brujo/a*.

Women play an important role in popular syncretic religion at all levels and functions. Spiritual leaders may be men or women, and the lack of gender bias is expressed in the importance ceded to the various spiritual categories. The Dominican pantheon consists of twenty-one divisions; five contain female figures - these are Legbá, Ogún, Guedé, Radá and India.⁶¹ Anaísa, for example, is the popular goddess of

⁵⁹ Ducoudray, F. S. 1975 El vudú nuestro no llegó de Haití: es Dominicano *¡Ahora!* 595: 16-19

⁶⁰ Krohn-Hansen, C. 1995 Magic, money and alterity among Dominicans *Social Anthropology* 3, 2: 129-146, p. 136

⁶¹ Albert Batista, C. 1993 *Mujer y esclavitud en Santo Domingo* Santo Domingo: CEDEE, p. 93

love, fond of drinking, dancing and perfumes.⁶² Formerly a prostitute, she is a specialist in matters of love. The Barón del Cementario is the most widely known *luá*, or god, in the Dominican Republic. He governs cemeteries, protecting bodies and helping the dead purge their sins. Both gods, Anaísa and the Barón, have their corresponding Catholic saints, Santa Ana and San Elías respectively, a portrait of whom would be placed in the home of devotees. The deities are from African and European religious traditions, having characteristics recognisable and sympathetic to their followers' needs. The gods are highly gendered entities, maintaining characteristics and stereotypes pertinent to the influences of contemporary society. Several saints, such as the Virgen de Regla and San Juan Bautista in Baní are represented as *negro/a*, though the majority are lighter-skinned.

Gender division is evident in instruments played during celebrations. Men play the various sizes of drum, which themselves are considered as sacred objects, since they summon the gods, while women play the tambourines. Religious associations may exhibit patriarchal relations in the allocation of posts - for example, the treasurer is often a man due to the traditional masculinisation of financial matters. Women normally prepare the food and make the arrangements for religious celebrations, whilst the men focus upon enjoying the social occasion.

The household is a primary locus for the socialisation of racial perceptions and patriarchal structures which differentially incorporate men and women into Dominican society. Religion and sexuality emphasise aspects of these inequalities, as

⁶² Deive, C. E. 1992 *Vodú y magia en Santo Domingo* Santo Domingo: Fundacion Cultural Dominicana, p.183

does nationality. The following chapter considers the importance of transnationalism on the changing nature of household structure and racial perception.

5 THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: A TRANSNATIONAL SOCIETY

Santo Domingo is a two-hour flight from Miami and three hours from New York. The Dominican Republic supplied more new migrants to New York City than any other country during the 1980s; over half a million Dominicans live in the United States.¹ How has an international migratory experience influenced Dominican perceptions of race? This chapter considers the effect of this two-way flow of people, capital and culture.

The Dominican Republic is a transnational society which increasingly relies on migrant remittances and commerce. The migration of Dominicans to the United States, in particular, has dramatically shaped Dominican society over the last three decades. The migratory experience heralds a wide range of changing economic, cultural and racial contexts. For many Dominicans in the United States, the adjustment to a new external identity of 'Black Hispanic' is difficult. The growth of Dominican neighbourhoods, such as Washington Heights in New York, establishes an enclave within which to reproduce cultural and social norms.

Dominican racial terminology, such as *indio/a*, *trigueño/a* or *blanco/a*, is transferred to the United States and duplicated, regardless of the more rigid classification of race in North American society. On return to the Dominican Republic, the migrant's racial identification is re-established. The influence of the migratory experience on perceptions of race, thus, appears to be limited.

¹ *New York Times* 30 March 1991

This chapter outlines contemporary theories of migration and the history of Dominican international migration since the 1960s. Dominican communities have become established in countries across the world, in Puerto Rico, Haiti, Venezuela, Spain and the Netherlands, for example, but the United States remains the most common destination. Two-thirds of the thirty-seven returned migrants who were interviewed in the present survey had migrated to the United States (Table 5.1). The characteristics and opinions of the returned migrants are analysed to support or challenge existing theories of Dominican migration. Returned migrants in the sample were relatively young, generally from urban backgrounds and the majority were middle class. Three-quarters of the sample resided in Gazcue, where the returnees were on average older than in the other two survey sites. All had migrated in order to improve employment opportunities, except for a few who went to study abroad.

Table 5.1 Details of returned migrants in the survey areas

Area in which migrant now resides	No.	Mean age	Class	Sex	Birthplace	Migration destination
Gazcue	27	45.2 years	Upper 4 Upper middle 13 Middle 9 Lower middle 1	Female 14 Male 13	Santo Domingo 12 Other urban 13 Rural 2	United States 24 Puerto Rico 1 Argentina 1 Spain 1
Los Guandules	7	29.7 years	Middle 2 Lower middle 1 Lower 3 Lower lower 1	Female 2 Male 5	Santo Domingo 5 Other urban 1 Rural 1	United States 4 Puerto Rico 2 Haiti 1
Zambrana	3	40.0 years	Lower middle 1 Lower 2	Male 3	Rural 3	United States 2 Haiti 1
Total	37	-	37	37	37	37

N = 37

Source: Author's survey 1994

Despite the prevalence of returned migrants in the Gazcue sample, the majority of interviewees in all the survey sites have family or relatives living outside the Dominican Republic (Table 5.2). The list of overseas contacts among interviewees is extensive, even within the more remote rural area of Zambrana.

Table 5.2 Countries outside the Dominican Republic where respondents have resident family and kin

Neighbourhood	Interviewees with family or kin outside the Dominican Republic	Country in which family or kin resides
Gazcue	70.0 %	Argentina, Venezuela, United States, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain
Los Guandules	63.0 %	Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Aruba, Curaçao, Saint Martin, Puerto Rico, United States, Canada, Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain, Netherlands
Zambrana	67.0 %	Argentina, Venezuela, Guatemala, Panama, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Saint Martin, Saint Thomas, United States, Switzerland, France, Spain, Netherlands, Greece

N = 300

Source: Author's survey 1994

International migrants are defined as those Dominicans who have lived outside the Dominican Republic for a substantial period, rather than temporary migrants on social, medical or business trips. While the focus of the chapter is migratory experience, even short-term visits overseas give the traveller alternative knowledge of different cultures which adds to the collective experience and external contacts of a

transnational community. Eighty-two respondents (27.3%) from the total sample had travelled outside the country (Table 5.3). This includes the thirty-seven respondents (12.3% of the total sample) who were returned migrants at the time of interview. A quarter expressed the intention or desire to return to the United States at some stage for family or employment reasons. The most popular destinations for travel were the United States and Puerto Rico, 86.6 and 53.7 percent respectively of the sample (N = 82) travelling to each country.

Table 5.3 Destinations of interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic

Destination	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic %*
NORTH AMERICA	86.6
United States	86.6
Canada	6.1
CARIBBEAN	64.6
Puerto Rico	53.7
Haiti	13.4
SOUTH AMERICAN MAINLAND	32.9
Venezuela	9.6
MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA	11.0
EUROPE	22.0
Spain	13.4
REST OF THE WORLD	2.4

N = 82

Source: Author's survey 1994

* Total percentages exceed 100% since many interviewees had travelled to more than one destination.

Due to the obvious issue of sensitivity, the question of the legality of a respondent's migration was not raised. Nevertheless, two returned migrants were content to give details of their respective undocumented journeys to Puerto Rico in an open launch and as a stowaway on a merchant ship. Some respondents were reluctant to mention their work experience overseas, due to a lack of legal documentation at the time of migration and during employment. Pérez found that 17 percent of a sample of Dominican migrants in New York had no legal documentation for their residence, though over a third had been living illegally in the United States at some point of their migrant history.² Georges' research concurs with these figures.³

The small size of the sample means that results and inferences may only be indicative of the three communities, rather than representative for Dominican society at large. A survey of 8,000 households in 1991 showed that 16.7 percent of the total sample had members who had previously lived overseas.⁴ There were more returned male migrants, though the small sample size restricts a detailed analysis of gender variation among migrants (Table 5.4). The sample therefore challenges the general consensus that women make up the majority of international migrants, but this may be a result of small sample size.⁵

The influence of the United States on Dominican society and the negligible impact of the transnational experience on racial perception among migrants and non-migrants are discussed in this chapter with reference to this sample group. The first

² Cited in Grasmuck, S. 1984 Immigration, ethnic stratification, and working class discipline: comparisons of documented and undocumented Dominicans *International Migration Review* 18, 3: 692-713, p. 693

³ Georges 1990, p. 41

⁴ Profamilia 1993 *Encuesta demográfica y de salud (Endesa-91)* Santo Domingo: Profamilia, p. 15

⁵ Wiarda, H. J. 1994 The economic effects of migration: the Dominican Republic. In Asch, J. 1994 *Emigration and its Effects on the Sending Country* Santa Monica: RAND, pp. 153-183, p. 162

section outlines current theories of international migration and relates them to the Dominican context. The history and the characteristics of Dominican international migration are then discussed. The development of the Dominican Republic as transnational society is analysed with reference to the changing migrant household structure and the significance of remittances. The penultimate section examines the limited impact that transnationalism, in particular the experience of Dominicans living in the United States, has upon the perception of race among migrant and non-migrant Dominicans. Finally, the influence of the United States in Dominican society is addressed with respect to transnationalism and *dominicanidad*.

Table 5.4 Sex and class of returned migrants from total sample

Class	Male	Female	Total
Upper	2	2	4
Upper middle	8	5	13
Middle	5	6	11
Lower middle	1	2	3
Lower	4	1	5
Lower lower	1	-	1
Total	21	16	37

N = 37

Source: Author's survey 1994

Theories of migration

Three main theoretical perspectives have been used to study the effects of migration on sending societies - equilibrium theory, historical-structuralism and economic

sociology.⁶ First, the neoliberal equilibrium theory adopts an optimistic approach to the effects of migration on sending regions, arguing that migration ultimately benefits poorer states by providing remittances, savings and an increased skill base when migrants return. Migration reduces unemployment in the sending society and helps to distribute capital from richer to poorer regions. Returned migrants are perceived as harbingers of modernity, facilitating the transition from traditional ways and values.

Secondly, the historical-structural approach considers the migration process in a less optimistic manner, arguing that it generally has a negative effect on the sending region. Pessar concludes her study of United States-bound migration from the Dominican Republic:

... the structure within which Dominican migration occurs is capital's requirement for a continuous stream of cheap, vulnerable labour and the needs of households to reproduce themselves at an historically and culturally prescribed level of maintenance.⁷

The migration process is understood in terms of the structural and historical development of the capitalist core and dependent periphery. Analysis of individual migratory experience is subsumed under the dominance of structural relations and the constraining influences of migration. The most productive members of a sending society are often those most likely to migrate, and those who migrate tend to invest only a small proportion of their savings or skills in the sending society.⁸ Their influence on consumer values encourages people to view national products as substandard. The desire for non-domestic products increases consumer imports and

⁶ Wood, C. H. 1982 Equilibrium and historical-structural perspectives on migration *International Migration Review* 16, 2: 298-319

⁷ Pessar, P. R. 1982 The role of households in the international migration and the case of U.S.-bound migration from the Dominican Republic *International Migration Review* 16, 2: 342-364, p. 360

⁸ Grasmuck, S. and Pessar, P. R. 1991 *Between Two Islands: Dominican international migration* Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 66

generates inflation. Increases in human capital, qualifications and skills gained during the migration process, are considered to be minimal since many migrants are employed in low-skilled, low-status occupations. In addition, skills learnt by migrants may not be applicable or relevant to those required in the sending society.

Studies of returned migrants in Puerto Rico have shown that former migrant status reduced the chances of obtaining and retaining employment on return to the island.⁹ The changing context of employment outweighed potential gains accrued during the migratory experience, though both studies analysed male migrants only.

A third approach to migration, economic sociology, combines elements of the two previous theories. Economic sociology focuses on the social environment for explanations of individual behaviour.¹⁰ Actions of the individual are embedded in the social surroundings, conditioned at the personal and societal level. Such an approach considers the migrant's individual position in the context of core-periphery and structural relations between sending and host societies. The effects of migration, and the subsequent return, vary according to the social and economic incorporation of migrants in their country of destination, in addition to the various relations and ties between the migrant, household and community.¹¹

Economic sociology offers a more complex explanation of the migratory process by considering the social context of the migrant in his or her surroundings.

⁹ Muschkin, C. G. 1993 Consequences of return migrant status for employment in Puerto Rico *International Migration Review* 27, 1: 79-102

Muschkin, C. G. and Myers, G. C. 1993 Return migrant status and income attainment in Puerto Rico *Social and Economic Studies* 42, 1: 149-170

¹⁰ Portes, A. 1995 Economic sociology and the sociology of immigration: a conceptual overview. In Portes, A. (ed). 1995 *The Economic Sociology of Immigration* New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 1-41

¹¹ Guarnizo, L. E. 1995 Regresando a casa: clase, género y transformación del hogar entre migrantes dominicanos/as retornados/as *Género y Sociedad* 2, 3: 53-127, p. 59

The community acts as the locus of study, but not the sole unit of analysis.¹²

Communities are... spatial precipitates of yet larger social relations, termini of worldwide economic, social, political and cultural patterns within which localities are embedded. They simultaneously exhibit patterns which are regionally rooted and also reflect the larger world.¹³

The community provides the social base or context for the highly variable outcomes of the migratory experience. Social embeddedness is a key concept, reaffirming the importance of the migrant community, in which 'individual profit-making is enmeshed in a dense grid of social expectations and reciprocal obligations.'¹⁴ The significance of the Dominican experience is the transnational nature of this grid of social and cultural interaction, which has increased in density since the 1960s.

Sites of emigration and immigration are dynamically interconnected through the two-way flow of people, capital and culture. Rural sending areas adopt aspects of urban and transnational cultures, while New York neighbourhoods become transformed into Dominican economic and cultural enclaves. Sutton describes the development of 'transnational socio-cultural systems' as a result of international migration in an increasingly globalised economy.¹⁵ She suggests that, 'As the lived experiences and identities of more and more people span two or more nations and boundaries between nation-states become blurred, what constitutes a meaningful social community has become respatialized across national boundaries.'¹⁶

¹² Georges, E. 1990 *The Making of a Transnational Community: migration, development and cultural change in the Dominican Republic* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 10

¹³ Ross, E. and Rapp, R. 1981 Sex and society: a research note from social history and anthropology *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23,1:51-72, pp. 58-59

¹⁴ Portes, A. and Guarnizo, L. E. 1991 Tropical capitalists: U.S.-bound immigration and small-enterprise development in the Dominican Republic. In Díaz-Briquets, S. and Weintraub, S. (eds) 1991 *Migration, Remittances, and Small Business Development: Mexico and Caribbean Basin countries* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 101-131, p. 104

¹⁵ Sutton, C. R. and Chaney, E. M. (eds) 1987 *Caribbean Life in New York City: sociocultural dimensions* Staten Island, New York: Center for Migration Studies

¹⁶ Sutton, C. R. 1992 Some thoughts on gendering and internationalizing our thinking about

The history of Dominican migration

The incorporation of the Dominican Republic into the periphery of the world economy in the late nineteenth century established the basis for the migration of Dominican labour overseas. The United States has been the major destination for Dominican migrants during the twentieth century, in particular, after the 1960s. International migration was limited during the era of Trujillo (1930-1961) with fewer than 10,000 Dominicans going to the United States during the 1950s. Trujillo restricted the migration of the national work force, in order to maintain maximum control over domestic labour.

Following the assassination of Trujillo, restrictions were lifted and the number of Dominicans migrating to the United States grew rapidly. Between 1960 and 1963, Dominican documented migration to the United States increased from just over 5,000 to 66,919.¹⁷ Migration was perceived by the Dominican government as a necessary and obvious safety valve to relieve social and economic pressures. Corresponding to the premises of equilibrium theory, the positive influence of migration for the development of the country were emphasised.

The domestic political situation promoted migration to the United States in 1966 and 1978; both years reflect political turning points, when a change of government provoked the emigration of political opponents. The number of legal visas issued in 1966 increased by 74.0 percent to 16,503, compared with 9,503 during 1965, the year of the April Revolution and subsequent invasion by the United States.¹⁸

transnational migrations. In Glick Schiller, N. , Basch, L. and Blanc-Szanton, C. (eds) 1992 Towards a transnational perspective on migration *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645, pp. 241-249, p. 242

¹⁷ Georges 1990, p. 37

¹⁸ Georges 1990, p. 39

Those who feared repression as a result of their opposition to the new United States-backed government paradoxically found themselves seeking exile in the Dominican community of New York. The PRD election victory in 1978 was another cause for politically-motivated migration. During that year, 19,458 Dominicans were admitted as residents to the United States. A deteriorating economy, the prospect of a more radical government and changing networks of patronage following three terms of PRSC government, induced a sixty percent increase in legal residency applications and approvals.¹⁹

Migration to the United States has continued to grow in scale and importance. Dominican nationals are now second only to Mexicans among Latin American nationals arriving in the United States - since the 1970s the number of immigrant and non-immigrant Dominicans arriving every year averages 150,000.²⁰ When assessing the scale of Dominican migration to the United States, the illegality or non-documentation of many arrivals must be taken into account. Between 1961 and 1981, 255,578 Dominican immigrants legally entered the United States. Legal migration from the Dominican Republic to the United States increased by 13.2 percent between 1993 and 1994 to 51,047.²¹ The importance of undocumented migration is clear if estimates of up to 1.5 million living in the United States today are to be believed. The figure probably lies at around 800,000.²² Whilst an exact total remains elusive, Dominican neighbourhoods are evidence of the scale of the migratory flow, especially

¹⁹ Georges 1990, p. 39

²⁰ Cosgrove, J. 1992 Remigration: the Dominican experience *Social Development Issues* 14: 101-120, p. 103

²¹ Herrera, R. 1995 Marea de emigrantes dominicanos a Estados Unidos *Rumbo* 85: 50-52, p. 50

²² Sørensen, N. N. 1997 Nueva York is just another Dominican capital Madrid es otro mundo: spatial practices and cultures of displacement among Dominican migrants in New York City and Madrid unpublished paper Copenhagen: Centre for Development Research, p. 4

in New York City, the destination for approximately ninety percent of Dominicans.²³ In 1990, 356,588 Dominicans lived in New York City.²⁴ Over a half of the Dominicans living in the city reside in the north Manhattan neighbourhood of Washington Heights - a highly visible enclave.²⁵ There are an estimated 20,000 Dominican-owned businesses in New York City, with Dominicans owning approximately seventy percent of the city's grocery stores or *bodegas*.²⁶

The relatively recent process of return migration to the Dominican Republic has attracted a growing amount of research on transnationalism.²⁷ The 'myth of return' does not apply to the transnational community.²⁸ The reality of re-migration or international commuting has become part of the Dominican migrant ethos; a national study of migrants indicates that a relatively high proportion of Dominicans return to the country - 39 percent at the time of the survey.²⁹ Duany confirms the strength of a return ideology in his research on the Dominican community in Washington Heights.

²³ Pessar, P. R. 1985 The role of gender in Dominican settlement in the United States. In Nash, J. C. and Safa, H. I. (eds) 1985 *Women and Change in Latin America* South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey, pp. 273-294, p. 288

²⁴ United States Bureau of the Census 1993 *1990 Census of Population: social and economic characteristics, New York* Washington: United States Department of Commerce

²⁵ Katznelson, I. 1981 *City Trenches: urban politics and the patterning of class in the United States* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Gilbertson, G. A. 1995 Women's labour and enclave employment: the case of Dominican and Colombian women in New York City *International Migration Review* 29, 3: 657-670

Duany 1994

²⁶ Portes and Guarnizo. In Díaz-Briquets 1991, p. 111

²⁷ Guarnizo, L. 1994 Los Dominicanyork: the making of a binational society *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 533: 70-86

Duany, J. 1994 Quisqueya on the Hudson: the transnational identity of Dominicans in Washington Heights Paper presented at the 19th Annual Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, Mérida, México, May 24-27, 1994

Georges 1990

²⁸ Anwar, M. 1979 *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain* London: Heinemann

Rubenstein, H. 1979 The return ideology in East Indian Migration *Papers in Anthropology* 20, 1: 21-38

Alum, R. A. and Moreno, J. A. 1978 A propósito de los dominicanos ausentes: un pueblo en transición *Estudios Sociales* 42: 127-133

²⁹ Ugalde, A. , Bean, F. and Cardenas, G. 1979 International migration from the Dominican Republic: findings from a national survey *International Migration Review* 13, 2: 235-257, p. 249

Two-thirds of respondents expressed a desire to go back to live in the Dominican Republic, and three-quarters had returned to visit at least twice during the previous five years.³⁰ Writing from the perspective of a Caribbean transnational migrant, Sánchez expresses the strength of this return ideology in the form of an open return air ticket:

... the open return trip ticket that certifies that in New York you are insured against the growth of roots that can only grow in your island, against the risk of being buried in an icy land unlike yours.³¹

Without the return ticket, the migrant becomes a trapped exile - physically alive, but culturally dead. Economic, social and cultural links between the sites of migration are the life-lines of the transnational community. Transnational identity engages the tension of assimilation into United States' culture with a continuing attachment to the Dominican homeland.

Migrant characteristics

A number of studies on the social composition and characteristics of the migrant flow have reached different conclusions concerning its origin and form. The analyses are derived mainly from regional samples, rather than from a national survey. Earlier studies assumed that most migrants were former peasant farmers, with small to medium-sized land-holdings, or rural proletarians.³² González studied the migratory experience of peasants from the Cibao, while Hendricks focused on the growing economic dependency on international migration in a rural highland settlement.³³ The

³⁰ Duany 1994, p. 33

³¹ Sánchez, L. R. 1987 *The Flying Bus*. In Rodríguez de Laguna 1987, pp. 17-25, p. 23

³² Sassen-Koob, S. 1979 *Formal and informal associations: Dominicans and Colombians in New York City* *International Migration Review* 8, 2: 314-332

³³ González, N. L. 1970 *Peasants' progress: Dominicans in New York* *Caribbean Studies* 10, 3: 154-

former suggests that the Cibao has reached saturation point with respect to peasant production. Key problems have been the division of land under inheritance laws into plots too small for efficient cultivation, the lack of modernised farming techniques due to limited capital and knowledge, and oscillating prices for agricultural products. Soils have been overworked, while deforestation has decreased fertility and increased rates of erosion.

Migration from rural areas in the Dominican Republic during the 1950s created an average annual urban population growth rate of 9 percent, almost double that of today.³⁴ Net migration from rural areas accounted for at least half of the urban population increase during that time. Relatively cheaper international flights and fewer travel restrictions have subsequently made emigration a real possibility for an increasing number of Dominicans.

Ugalde, Bean and Cardenas were the first to oppose the dominant view that Dominican migrants originated from rural areas.³⁵ Their analysis of the only national-level survey of 12,500 households in the Dominican Republic suggests that just 24 percent of all international migrants had rural origins. There is now general agreement that most migrants are from urban rather than rural areas, though many may have migrated initially from the countryside.³⁶ They tend also to come from the middle and lower middle classes, rather than from the lowest classes or least-skilled section of the labour market. While the reasons for migrating are most often cited as wage and

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Hendricks, G. 1974 *Dominican Diaspora: from the Dominican Republic to New York City - villagers in transition* New York: Teachers College Press

³⁴ González 1970, p. 155

³⁵ Ugalde, Bean and Cardenas 1979

³⁶ Preeg, E. H. 1985 Migration and Development in Hispaniola. In Pastor, R. A. (ed.) 1985 *Migration and Development in the Caribbean: the unexplored connection* Boulder: Westview Press, pp. 140-156, p. 148

profit-earning, migrants are less likely to have been unemployed than non-migrants. Georges suggests that the majority of migrants had jobs in the Dominican Republic and that the desire for higher earnings was a key motive for international migration.³⁷

Báez Evertsz and d'Oleo Ramírez characterise Dominican international migrants as members of the urban lower middle and working classes, while Bray emphasises a middle class origin.³⁸ The latter has suggested that a 'middle-class bottleneck' developed during the 1960s as a result of political discrimination and economic constraints experienced by the relatively well-educated Dominican middle class.³⁹ The economy did not meet the employment demands of this class, and political patronage frustrated those not aligned with government interests.

Bray challenges the dependency and orthodox economic theories which focus on migration originating from low-income rural areas. Dependency theory posits that the penetration of capital into rural areas results in the proletarianisation of subsistence farmers, creating a surplus labour pool which drives internal and international migration. Orthodox economic theory emphasises the forces of supply and demand, particularly with respect to wage differentials, thus suggesting that the rural labour force is likely to migrate in search of higher incomes.

In contrast to Bray, Piore contends that middle-class migration is transitional, thus, any 'bottlenecks' will be temporary.⁴⁰ The Dominican Republic, she argues, is a 'shift case.'⁴¹ Dominican migrants were originally from the urban middle class, but the

³⁷ Georges 1990, p. 45

³⁸ Báez Evertsz, F. and d'Oleo Ramírez, F. 1986 *La emigración de dominicanos a Estados Unidos: determinantes socio-económicos y consecuencias* Santo Domingo: Fundación Friedrich Ebert

³⁹ Bray 1984

⁴⁰ Piore, M. J. 1979 *Birds of Passage: migrant labour and industrial societies* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁴¹ Piore 1979, p. 137

contemporary flow now consists of rural and lower class migrants. My present research, however, shows that Dominican migration does not fit the 'class shift' model. Middle-class migration is an enduring feature of Dominican development.

Several studies have shown that international migrants from rural areas of the Dominican Republic originate primarily from the sector of 'medium and large farmers' or among the 'rural capitalists', many residing in urban areas before leaving for the United States.⁴² Given the varied range of research results concerning the composition of the migrant flow, it is feasible to propose that all levels of Dominican society are directly incorporated into the transnational community, except perhaps for the very low income groups. Grasmuck has suggested that migrant characteristics range between the categories of unskilled labour and professional workers. Only migrants from the lowest stratum are under-represented.⁴³

Over a half of the returned migrants interviewed in the three survey sites were professional or non-manual workers, though a quarter were unskilled labourers (Table 5.5). Respondents who had experience of overseas travel were over-represented in the higher status occupational groups. Unskilled manual workers were under-represented among returned migrants, despite accounting for over a quarter of the sample.

⁴² Pessar 1982

Bray, D. B. 1987 *The Dominican Exodus: origins, problems and solutions*. In Levine, B. B. (ed). 1987 *Caribbean Exodus* New York: Preager, pp. 152-170

⁴³ Grasmuck, S. 1984 Immigration, ethnic stratification, and native working class discipline: comparisons of documented and undocumented Dominicans *International Migration Review* 18, 3: 692-713

Table 5.5 Occupational group of returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and the total sample

Occupational group	Sample %	Returned migrants	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
Manager		-	1.2	0.0
Professional worker		24.3	23.1	7.7
Other non-manual worker		29.8	40.2	30.3
Skilled manual worker		8.1	4.9	3.0
Semi-skilled manual worker		5.4	8.6	10.0
Unskilled manual worker		27.0	18.3	36.3
Farmer		5.4	3.7	9.7
Agricultural worker		-	-	2.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

The predominance of upper and upper-middle-class migrants reflects the high academic attainment of the sample. Nearly a half of the returned migrants had attended university, and over three-quarters had completed secondary education - levels well above those of the total sample (Table 5.6). Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic similarly had reached levels of education well beyond those of the total sample. An unexpectedly high proportion of migrants (8.1 percent of the sample) had received no formal education. This anomaly is accounted for by the small sample size - the three interviewees who had no schooling were unskilled manual workers from Los Guandules and Zambrana.

Table 5.6 Education level of returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and the total sample

Level of education	Sample %	Returned migrants	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
University		48.7	50.0	19.7
Further education		8.1	9.8	3.3
Secondary		18.9	23.2	13.0
Uncompleted secondary		8.1	9.8	12.7
Primary		5.4	3.7	11.0
Uncompleted primary		2.7	2.4	30.0
None		8.1	1.1	10.3
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Returned migrants and interviewees who had travelled abroad were more likely to be single or married than for the sample as a whole. Very few returned migrants formed consensual unions, reflecting the middle and upper-class preference for civil or religious marriage (Table 5.7). Returned migrants were twice as likely to be widowed as the main sample group, though marginally less likely to be divorced or separated. The widowed migrants all made the decision to return following the death of their spouse in the United States.

Table 5.7 Union status of returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and the total sample

Union status	Sample %	Returned migrants	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
Single		32.4	34.1	24.0
Married		40.6	44.0	31.0
Consensual union		8.1	1.2	29.0
Widowed		10.8	8.5	5.3
Divorced or separated		8.1	12.2	10.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Influences of migration in the sending society

By the start of the 1990s, the impact of transnational migration was evident throughout Dominican society. International migrants made strong impressions not only as consumers and investors, but by influencing popular culture, the arts, music and media. The reaction of non-migrants to returnees in rural and urban areas also became more diverse, reflecting their perception, often grossly stereotyped, of North American lifestyles and influences.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the image of those who migrated to the United States was generally positive in the Dominican Republic. Migrants were perceived as pioneers, saving diligently for the return to the Dominican Republic and living frugal lives. Migration provided the possibility, or at least embodied an aspiration, to increase income earning and social standing, and to improve opportunities for dependants. International migration provided an outlet for the

movement of 'excess' population. The perception of emigration as a demographic and economic pressure valve was promoted by government indifference to stemming the flow.

Migration is a prominent theme in everyday life. An American visa or the journey to the United States is increasingly seen as necessary for personal advancement. A similar migrant syndrome has been observed by Reichert in Mexico, where relatively high dollar earnings in the United States encouraged more people to migrate, exacerbating imbalances by disintegrating rural economies and increasing dependence on migrant remittances.⁴⁴

As the 1970s progressed, an increasingly hostile reception was given to returned Dominican migrants. The positive image of the majority as honest and hardworking became tarnished. The ostentatious display of wealth by some returnees, combined with the growth of the drug trade among Dominicans in New York, sullied previous perceptions. Dominican migrants are now commonly associated with drug dealing. The head of the North Manhattan drug squad commented, 'It is unfair to assume that all Dominicans peddle drugs... although 18 months in the drug trade will earn you enough to go back to the Republic.'⁴⁵ Social problems in Dominican society were increasingly blamed on influences brought to the island from the United States.

During the 1990s, the non-migrant Dominican elite, who felt challenged by the younger migrant generation of *nuevos ricos*, promoted images of these migrants as villains, involved in illicit trading, generating inflation, crime, violence and drug problems in the Dominican Republic. Everyday language incorporates disparaging

⁴⁴ Reichert, J. S. 1981 The Migrant Syndrome: seasonal U.S. wage labour and rural development in Central Mexico *Human Organisation* 40, 1: 56-66

⁴⁵ *New York Times* 16 September 1991

epithets such as *dominicanyork* and *cadenu*. The latter term refers to the gold jewellery often worn by Dominicans who have lived or still reside in New York, the *dominicanyorks*. One returned migrant, interviewed during a separate study, had harsh words for *dominicanyorks*, whom she perceived to be wholly unlike the earlier generation of Dominican migrants. *Dominicanyorks* were:

... ill-educated Dominicans who emigrated to the United States and got drunk on that culture. They scraped around to make easy money and so spent it without any care. They live, dress and act to catch the attention of others. The *dominicanyorks* are discriminated against because of their scandalous behaviour and because they change quiet neighbourhoods for the worse.⁴⁶

Returned migrants face heightened alienation from the dominant class and earlier migrants.⁴⁷ Wealthy returnees have experienced social exclusion from businesses, associations, social clubs and schools. Paradoxically, returned migrants may have helped to reduce class polarisation in Dominican society by transferring capital through remittances and savings during the 1980s, when the urban middle class contracted as a result of a deteriorating national economy. Guarnizo suggests that the lower classes still admire returnees as successful adventurers who challenge the non-migrant traditional elite. This may be true at an individual level, but the negative image of the *dominicanyork* is evident across all class groups. Respondents in the present survey were united in their negative perception of what the term *dominicanyork* meant to them: 'bad news', 'drug peddlers' and 'crooks.' Many lamented the wealth inequality which they exemplified, combined with their apparent rejection or loss of *dominicanidad* - they were neither Dominican nor American.

⁴⁶ Bueno, L. 1995 Experiencias de migración de retorno de mujeres dominicanas: historias de vida de cinco mujeres *Género y Sociedad* 2, 3: 1-52, p. 24

⁴⁷ Guarnizo, L. 1993 *Going Home: class, gender and household transformation among Dominican returned migrants* Report prepared for the Commission for Hemispheric Migration and Refugee Policy Washington: Georgetown University, p. 40

The illegal or undocumented nature of many migrants' movements between the United States, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic has contributed to the negative image of *dominicanyorks*. To enter legally into the United States, a valid immigrant or temporary visitor's visa is required. The dominance of demand over supply has made the visa a potent icon and status symbol in Dominican society. There is a general saying: 'To have an American visa is to have a profession.' A returned migrant commented on the importance to her of having US residency status, and her misfortune at not 'getting' citizenship:

We kept our residents' visa, and I would have liked to get citizenship, but I didn't qualify for it because during my time living there, I visited here more than I remained there. My children won't forgive their dad for not getting residency for them. Both of them are mad to get away. For me citizenship is important - when you reach retirement age you can claim a pension.⁴⁸

Visas and United States' citizenship are highly valued commodities. A citizen has access to the benefits of welfare and pension programmes, and this provides a concrete basis for the establishment of a transnational household.

Popular folklore has evolved around methods of visa application. There have often been rumours which circulate in rural and urban areas concerning the latest scam or short cut in the application process. González describes the events of the alleged 'Day of Grace' in November 1966 when Thanksgiving and the anniversary of President Kennedy's assassination coincided.⁴⁹ The size of the queue for visa applications outside the American Consulate in Santo Domingo increased fivefold to over one thousand people, after a radio announcement reported rumours of the unrestricted issuing of visas. The importance of an American 'friend' putting in a

⁴⁸ Bueno 1995, p. 10

⁴⁹ González 1970, p. 163

good word for a visa applicant is also part of the visa folklore which illustrates the prominence of paternalism in Dominican culture. This notion is very much part of reality. González suggests that Dominicans with 'friends' at the United States Consulate managed to get visas.⁵⁰

Visas have become increasingly difficult to obtain, hence the dramatic rise of illegal migration. The difficulty of obtaining an immigrant visa in Santo Domingo has meant that many Dominicans apply for temporary visas and overstay the legal visiting period. Formal and informal businesses have responded to the demand for visas or illegal entry into the United States. Agents, brokers and lawyers have all gained financially through the aspirations of potential migrants. In Santo Domingo, a legal consultancy now advises clients specifically on how to obtain residency in the United States.⁵¹ Brokers, or *buscones*, arrange undocumented entries into the United States for aspirant migrants via Puerto Rico, making use of Puerto Ricans' US citizenship to pass through mainland migration control, with the aid of false Puerto Rican identity. The passage to Puerto Rico is usually by boat, or sometimes light aircraft, and Dominican newspapers regularly have reports of failed attempts, involving the deportation or death of aspirant migrants.⁵² Puerto Rico is the second most popular destination for legal and undocumented Dominican migrants, with about 60,000 Dominicans living there. Other undocumented entry routes to the United States is via Mexico or the US Virgin Islands.

The importance of migration in Dominican society is illustrated by the relative success of the country's two most recent films to gain international recognition. *El*

⁵⁰ González 1970, p. 164

⁵¹ *Hoy* 26 August 1995

⁵² *El Siglo* 2 September 1994

El Siglo 11 August 1995

Pasaje de Ida (1991) is based on the true story of a dozen Dominican stowaways who hid in the ballast tanks of a Puerto Rican ship, later drowning when the tanks were flooded. *Nueba Yol* (1995), the colloquial Dominican name for New York, recounts the life of Balbuena, a Dominican migrant, who struggles to find work, but eventually makes a successful return to the Dominican homeland. Heavy with stereotypes, the film attempts to portray the contradictions within a migrant's life - the support and demands of kin, the stresses placed upon Dominican family values, the limited opportunities for employment, the insecurity of undocumented status and the struggle to return.

These experiences have created a 'reactive cultural identity' among migrants.⁵³ When abroad, the cultural values of the society of origin become the dominant aspect of the migrant's identity. Conversely, on temporary or permanent return, values adopted from abroad become exalted by the migrant, yet the migrant is perceived as a foreigner in both societies. Bueno suggests this layering of identities preserves cultural values among Dominican migrants while in the United States.⁵⁴ Migrants aim to maintain something of their origins - among Dominicans one aspect that remains unchanged, and reacts against mainstream norms, is racial identification.

Implicit in the reactive identity of migrants is the underlying tension or conflict between different cultural or racial experiences and traditions. This discord provides an unstable basis for transnational identity. One Dominican writer expresses the stress of this experience and its importance for the perception of her own *dominicanidad*:

⁵³ Guarnizo 1993, p. 43

⁵⁴ Bueno 1995, p. 50

The New York experience, which was so crucial to my discovery of my Caribbean and racial identity, has made me a very, very critical person with respect to my own society. Things I never noticed before, I now see. Like racism, for example. Class differences. Santo Domingo is a very societally structured city. The situation of women is atrocious. I get almost rude about this because I can't stand the kind of sexist behaviour that exists in my country. And for that, you pay the price of ostracism. It's really hard. By dint of having lived in the United States, I am considered a "liberated woman," which means that the men feel they have a green light to harass me sexually while the women distrust me. That's the most painful part... And then you realise that you symbolize all the things that she has never been able to do, and perhaps never will; leave the country, study what she wants to.⁵⁵

The suffocating nature of patriarchy in the Dominican Republic is similarly evident in the writing of another Dominican woman, who has lived in the United States for over thirty years. The extract illustrates how the relationship between a young Dominican man and his female cousins is entirely dependent on the location and context:

When he's in the States, where he went to prep school and is now in college, he's one of us, our buddy. But back on the Island, he struts and turns macho, needling us with the unfair advantage being male here gives him.⁵⁶

Dominican patriarchal norms are subdued in the United States, but are revived on return to the homeland. Racial identity, however, is not only re-established when back in Dominican society, but arguably remains intact and active whilst outside the Dominican Republic.

An element of conservatism is present in the tense fusion of transnational identities. Georges agrees with Rhoades by suggesting that the social effect of migration is often conservative, or even preservative, promoting the traditional

⁵⁵ Vicioso, S. An oral history. In Heyck, D. L. D. 1994 *Barrios and Borderlands: cultures of latinos and latin@s in the U.S.* London: Routledge, pp. 270-275, p. 274

⁵⁶ Alvarez, J. 1991 *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* New York: Plume-Penguin, p. 127

structures of the country of origin.⁵⁷ Rhoades suggests that the cultural hearth of the homeland remains the social frame of reference against which the changing status and fortunes of migrants are measured. The sending community provides the social and economic template, though the effects of migration are the stimuli for change. The concept of a racial hearth is apt for the subsequent discussion of migration and race. González suggests that among Dominicans working in the United States, the importance of their class status on return to the Dominican Republic is of greater significance than their social standing in the United States.⁵⁸ This reaffirms the importance of the cultural hearth.

A Dominican newspaper suggested that returning migrants have transformed the Dominican class structure.⁵⁹ New forms of social segregation between migrants and the non-migrant population have been created as a result of different levels of education, income and cultural influences. In New York, Dominican migrants have established ethnic enclaves, reproducing the cultural and social 'baggage' brought over from the homeland. The development of transnational communities involves not only the transfer of people and culture, but the flow of capital.

Remittances

Remittances sent by migrants back to the Dominican Republic are crucial to the Dominican economy as a major source of foreign exchange and an aid to the balance of payments. Estimates placed the value of these remittances at between \$230 and

⁵⁷ Georges 1990, p. 248

Rhoades, R. 1978 Intra-European return migration and rural development: lessons from the Spanish case *Human Organization* 37, 2: 136-147

⁵⁸ González 1970, p. 167

⁵⁹ *El Siglo* 11 January 1994

\$280 million per year during the 1980s, equivalent to 10 percent of the Gross National Product, and a greater source of export earnings than the sugar industry.⁶⁰ By 1989, remittances equalled the sum of the three traditional exports from the Dominican Republic, sugar, coffee and tobacco.⁶¹ Only income generated by tourism challenges the importance of migrants' money. One interviewee succinctly argued that the majority of families in the Dominican Republic depend on work in the United States, outlining the growing dependence of the country on external contacts: 'The Dominican Republic is used to being dependent on other countries - the second capital is not Santiago, but New York.'

The impact of remittances increased during the 1990s as the Dominican economy has deteriorated. Georges studied a Dominican village in which one-third of the community's income was generated by remittances sent from the United States. Most of the money goes towards household consumption rather than investment, and remittances are sometimes sent on a regular basis as a dependable source of household income. González stresses that even after a migrant's death, the dependants may receive survivors' benefits from the social security system if the migrant had obtained United States citizenship.⁶²

Remittance cheques may be cashed informally, never going via the Central Bank to add to the country's dollar reserve. As a result, the exact influence and size of remittance capital is difficult to ascertain on a national basis. The International Labour Organization advises that although remittances selectively aid some families in the sending society, the net positive effects are debatable. Grasmuck's study of three

⁶⁰ Georges 1990, p. 236

⁶¹ Portes and Guarnizo 1991. In Díaz-Briquets 1991, p. 108

⁶² González 1970, p. 167

sending communities in the Dominican Republic suggests that remittances may provide temporary relief for individual families, but in general, migration has promoted a dependency on these payments which has undermined the productive base of communities.⁶³ Inequality among household incomes has increased, and highly unequal land tenure patterns have worsened in rural areas. Middle to large landholders are most likely to receive remittances, enabling them to cut-back on low-return investments in farming. The demand for occasional or seasonal labour, important for many low-income households, is then reduced.

Georges argues, however, that migration has had little effect on the class structure in her rural study area, and not led to the disorganisation of communities.⁶⁴ Remittances have maintained, rather than created, the middle class, since most migrants in her sample originated from privileged households.⁶⁵ Migration, thus, represents a 'holding strategy' for the middle strata. The movement of people and capital has undoubtedly allowed many middle-class families to maintain their social and economic position, but such a holding strategy neglects the dynamics of change inherent in a transnational community. Class structures and social status are changing under the influence of international migration. Perceptions of, and expectations among, returned migrants have modified Dominican society since the 1960s. A holding strategy has limited relevance for the variety of neighbourhoods in which the increased incomes of migrant households has improved the relative socio-economic standing of those households. An inherent outcome of a remittance-based local economy is the growing wealth disparity in sending communities, most noticeably at

⁶³ Grasmuck, S. 1984 The impact of emigration on national development: three sending communities in the Dominican Republic *Development and Change* 15: 381-403

⁶⁴ Georges 1990, p. 247

⁶⁵ Georges 1990, p. 246

the level of individual households.

Household transformation in the transnational community

Transnational migration has led to the formation of a special type of household, involving the spatial dispersion of the domestic unit across two or more countries and the creation of multinuclear families. The changing structure of migrant households causes tension when patriarchal norms are challenged. Pessar argues that the social mobility of a migrant is usually achieved at the level of the household rather than the individual.⁶⁶ Household structure is therefore an important factor for assessing the effect of transnationalism on gender relations.

Women are more likely to work beyond the domestic sphere if living outside the Dominican Republic, providing the basis for a relatively more independent lifestyle. In migrant or transnational households, relations of patriarchy may, thus, be less severe, since more women work outside the household and earn separate wages. Women, however, frequently lag behind men in occupational and economic attainment during the migration process.⁶⁷ They are also more likely to return due to family reasons, especially those concerning the education of children. The dynamism of a family functioning across national boundaries means that it is uncommon to find complete nuclear or extended family networks based permanently at either end of the migration stream, hence the prevalence of transnational families or multinuclear households.

Multinuclear family structure has helped to challenge traditional domestic

⁶⁶ Pessar 1985, p. 277

⁶⁷ Guarnizo 1993, p. 41

codes, though it has been viewed as a major cause of reduced family solidarity - one of the most reliable sources of social capital.⁶⁸ Stress may fracture familial bonds when expectations are placed on migrants to provide remittances for the extensive extended families, or when relatives are forced to care for non-migratory or returned family members. Gilbertson and Gurak argue that cyclical migration, the key dynamic of a transnational community, and the greater number of migrants who were single before migration, have produced higher rates of female headship at the sites of migration.⁶⁹ The interview sample was too small to test the significance of this generalisation. Two-thirds of the returned migrants who were interviewed expressed an intention to migrate again to the United States. The high proportion of interviewees in the total sample with relatives overseas exemplifies the importance of the transnational community to contemporary Dominican society (Table 5.2).

The majority of households with returned migrants were male-headed, though nearly a quarter were headed by single women - higher than the sample as a whole (Table 5.8). The over-representation of households headed by women with returned migrants is accounted for by the relative high proportion of widows in the migrant sample. Very few woman-headed households had respondent members who had travelled overseas, an indication of their lower household incomes.

⁶⁸ Guarnizo 1993, p. 35

⁶⁹ Gilbertson, G. and Gurak, G. T. 1992 Household transitions in the migrations of Dominicans and Colombians to New York *International Migration Review* 26, 1: 22-45, p. 42

Table 5.8 Status of household head for households with returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and for the total sample

Sample % Household head	Returned migrants	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
Single woman	24.4	6.1	17.0
Single man	10.8	25.6	7.3
Male partner in marriage	48.6	59.8	39.0
Male partner in consensual union	10.8	2.4	33.3
None	5.4	6.1	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

While the majority of returned migrants had relatives remaining abroad, the scope of research did not entail detailed questioning to identify multinuclear family structures. Almost two-thirds of the households in which returned migrants resided were nuclear, though this reflects the bias towards older, more affluent migrants who returned to retire in the neighbourhood of Gazcue (Table 5.9). A significant number of households included transgenerational members or adopted close friends, *hijos/as de crianza*.

Table 5.9 Structure of household units occupied by returned migrants, according to class

%	Class	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total
	Household structure							
	Male nuclear	8.1	29.7	16.2	-	8.1	2.7	64.8
	Female nuclear	-	2.7	8.1	2.7	2.7	-	16.2
	Male extended	-	-	-	2.7	-	-	2.7
	Female extended	-	2.7	2.7	-	-	-	5.4
	Male multinuclear	-	-	-	-	2.7	-	2.7
	Female multinuclear	-	-	2.7	-	-	-	2.7
	Female single	-	-	-	2.7	-	-	2.7
	None	2.7	-	-	-	-	-	2.7
	Total	10.8	35.1	29.7	8.1	13.5	2.7	100.0

N = 37

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

The return to the Dominican Republic for many female migrants has meant a regression to a repressive patriarchal system. Pessar's study showed that many Dominican women in the United States were reluctant to come back to the island.⁷⁰ In the United States, the women had more freedom to work and to travel independently. However, if the household income is sufficient, then women may be restricted by a male partner from wage working on return to Dominican society.

The relations of patriarchy often remain intact during the migration process. Women still tend to assume responsibility for child care and domestic tasks, acting out support roles essential for migration. Bueno emphasises the sacrifices that women

⁷⁰ Pessar 1985, p. 283

make for the family, working in productive and reproductive spheres to make re-migration possible.⁷¹ Women frequently leave the United States when their own position would be enhanced by staying. Alvarez describes the reluctance of a wife to return with her husband to Dominican society, but she remains unable to dissent openly:

But Laura had gotten used to the life here. She did not want to go back to the old country where, de la Torre or not, she was only a wife and mother (and a failed one at that, since she had never provided the required son). Better an independent nobody than a high-class houseslave. She did not come straight out and disagree with her husband's plans.⁷²

Transnationalism has clearly had an impact on gender relations. Its influence is less evident when perceptions of race are analysed, however.

Transnationalism and racial identity

Transnational migration has changed a range of migrant and non-migrant realities and expectations. Migrant household structures are shaped by transnationalism, incomes depend on remittances, and relations of patriarchy are often challenged. It would seem logical to extend the influence of change to a reappraisal of race. The dynamics of transnationalism, however, have so far failed to lead to a re-evaluation of racial awareness in Dominican society. The racial hearth remains the dominant reference for racial perception among migrants. A dichotomous racial structure in the United States has failed to have a noticeable impact on the perceptions of race among returned migrants. Observations from the present survey of returned migrants support this stasis of racial perception and challenge several contemporary writers who perceive a

⁷¹ Bueno 1995

⁷² Alvarez 1991, pp. 143-144

shift in Dominican racial identity. At an individual level, Vicioso expresses the impact that living in New York has made on her own racial identity:

In the United States, there is no space for fine distinctions of race, and one goes from being “*trigueño*” or “*indio*” to being “mulatto” or “black” or “Hispanic.” This was an excellent experience for me. From that point on, I discovered myself as a Caribbean *mulata* and adopted the black identity as a gesture of solidarity.⁷³

Moya Pons optimistically points to the ‘discovery of Dominican negritude’, arguing that the social discrimination experienced by thousands of Dominicans in the urban ghettos of New York made them aware of their real ‘racial constitution.’ Dominican migrants were able to share their experiences with Caribbean counterparts:

Their parochial outlook was expanded and they went back to Santo Domingo, their home towns outwardly and inwardly transformed in their thoughts, their clothes, their feelings, their language and their music. Now black is beginning to be beautiful in the Dominican Republic... The real discovery of black origins has been the result of the behaviour of the returning migrants who go back to their communities transformed into new social agents of modernity, capitalism, and racial emancipation.⁷⁴

After the end of the *trujillato*, and with more Dominicans migrating and gaining experience of life overseas, Moya Pons contends that long-standing racial ideologies were questioned, and in part, overturned. Thousands of Dominicans migrated to the United States at a time when issues of race and racism were being re-evaluated. Dominicans realised that, ‘they were descended from Spanish fathers and African mothers, and that half of a Dominican’s origins was not so different from those of a Haitian.’⁷⁵ But why did it take migration to New York for them to discover

⁷³ Vicioso 1994. In Heyck 1994, p. 272

⁷⁴ Moya Pons, F. 1981 Dominican National Identity and Return Migration unpublished paper Gainesville, Florida: Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, pp. 32-33

⁷⁵ Moya Pons, F. 1981 Modernización y cambios en la República Dominicana. In Vega, B. et al 1981 *Ensayos sobre cultura dominicana* Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, pp. 211-245. p.

this? The forced socialisation and the abrupt realities of a dichotomised racial classification allegedly necessitated a change in racial ideology.

Moya Pons argues that the discovery of Dominican negritude occurred in two different spheres. Firstly, during the second half of the 1960s, Dominicans were meeting other ethnic and racial groups within the civil rights movement. Secondly, professional and intellectual groups began to bring attention to the social alienation of Dominicans in the United States. While not sharing the optimistic opinion that returned migrants will themselves change racial perceptions, Jiménez predicts that attitudes will evolve through the liberalising influence of Dominican intellectuals, resident in the United States, who frequently publish, visit and lecture in the Dominican Republic.⁷⁶ The evolution of racial awareness would, thus, come from external sources, and from the ‘top down.’

Gradually, the myth that Dominicans are a white people with indian ancestry would give way to the understanding that the population was largely *mulato/a*. The long-standing *indio*-myth has no relevance in mainstream North American society; however, it has found a role in the reconstituted social and cultural environments of the transnational communities of Dominicans in New York. The very success of the Dominican social and cultural regenerative experience has reproduced racial norms, rather than dispelled them. In the 1990 census, 26 percent of New York’s Dominicans classified themselves as black. Most Dominicans considered themselves as white or ‘other.’⁷⁷ North American society was not made privy to the ‘other’ category of *indio/a*.

⁷⁶ Blas R. Jiménez interview 24 September 1995

⁷⁷ Duany 1994, p. 12

An analysis of returned migrants and those who had travelled abroad in the survey sample showed similarly entrenched views in their racial perceptions - 41.3 percent of returned migrants described themselves as *blanco/a* or *indio/a* (Table 5.10). Given the predominance of middle and upper classes in both samples, the over-representation of *blanco/a* as a self-description is not surprising (Table 5.11). A fifth of returned migrants described themselves as *indio/a*, fewer than the sample as a whole, but significant in the context of the bias towards the middle and upper classes. A reappraisal of racial identification, however, misleadingly appears evident among the returned migrants and interviewees who have had experience of travel outside the Dominican Republic. Twenty-seven percent of returned migrants described themselves as *mulato/a* or *negro/a*, and all were from the upper three classes (Table 5.11). The widespread change of racial perception is less apparent when the author's description of interviewees' race is assessed (Table 5.12).

While the difficulties and inaccuracies inherent in ascribing race are evident, this categorisation is used to illustrate cases where the author's description of race and the self-described race of the interviewee varied. Those respondents who defined themselves as *negro/a* or *mulato/a* were described as *mulato/a* by the author, and, as members of the middle and upper classes, were more likely to conform to the suggested 'discovery of negritude.' Racial awareness and expression is often the result of higher levels of education, or originates from a sympathetic liberal background where the possibility of racist rejection or abuse is limited. Evidence of the restricted renewal of racial identification among Dominican migrants is illustrated by five interviewees who had very dark skin colour, categorised by the author as *negro/a*, yet who described themselves as *blanco/a* or *indio/a*.

Table 5.10 Self-described race among returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and the total sample

Race	Sample %	Returned migrants	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
<i>Blanco/a</i>		29.7	36.6	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>		21.6	20.7	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>		10.8	7.3	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>		-	7.3	2.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>		16.2	12.2	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>		10.8	8.5	6.0
Other		10.8	7.3	8.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Table 5.11 Self-described race among returned migrants, according to class

Class Race %	Upper	Upper middle	Middle	Lower middle	Lower	Lower lower	Total
<i>Blanco/a</i>	5.4	10.8	10.8	2.7	-	-	29.7
<i>Indio/a</i>	-	5.4	2.7	2.7	8.1	2.7	21.6
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	5.4	5.4	-	-	-	10.8
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Mulato/a</i>	2.7	8.1	5.4	-	-	-	16.2
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	5.4	5.4	-	-	-	10.8
Other	2.7	-	-	2.7	5.4	-	10.8
Total	10.8	35.1	29.7	8.1	13.5	2.7	100.0

N = 37

Source: Author's survey 1994

Table 5.12 Self-described race among returned migrants, according to the author's description of race

Author's description %	<i>Blanco/a</i>	<i>Mulato/a</i>	<i>Negro/a</i>	Total
Self-description of race				
<i>Blanco/a</i>	18.9	8.1	2.7	29.7
<i>Indio/a</i>	-	10.8	10.8	21.6
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	-	3	2.7	10.8
<i>Mulato/a</i>	-	10.8	5.4	16.2
<i>Negro/a</i>	-	-	10.8	10.8
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	-	-	-	-
Other	2.7	8.1	-	10.8
Total	21.6	45.9	32.4	100.0

N = 37

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

The hypothesis that racial identity is expressed more intensely with ascending class contradicts the straight-line assimilation model. The latter explanation posits that the assimilation of migrants to the receiving society will increase with rising levels of income. Gans suggests that low-income groups may assimilate to a greater extent than more affluent migrants or second-generation migrants who have the opportunity to create their own ethnic niche.⁷⁸ As the second generation of Dominicans in New York establishes itself, the Dominican transnational community strengthens. Waters' study of ethnic and racial identities among adolescent second-generation Caribbean Americans in New York City suggests that the key factor for self-identification is a personal experience of racial discrimination.⁷⁹ Respondents frequently expressed the need to separate themselves from black or African Americans by defining themselves as immigrants or ethnic Americans, for example Dominican-Americans. Peer culture reproduces the stereotyping of the former as lazy, good-for-nothing and of a lower social status. 'The darker the skin, the louder the Spanish' is an often heard comment which relates to the desire of black Hispanics in New York to separate themselves from African Americans. Paradoxically, the dress, vocabulary and the 'cool pose' of the stereotypical young black American is copied as a desirable image by many young Hispanics, who aspire to black culture, but without the racial affirmation.⁸⁰

A respondent in a recent survey of female migrants summed up the problems of living in the United States. The evil of drugs and blackness were casually intertwined: 'There's black folk. There's drugs. You know.'⁸¹ Bueno comments that the Dominican migrants whom she interviewed tended to adopt racist stereotypes of

⁷⁸ Cited in Waters 1994, p. 800

⁷⁹ Waters 1994, p. 802

⁸⁰ Waters 1994, p. 812

⁸¹ Bueno 1995, p. 27

other groups, despite their own negative experiences of racism as immigrants. A respondent had problems in attending night school due to the make-up of the class: 'It was full of coloured people, and since everyone knows that blacks aren't very friendly I didn't want to go to the school.' Another classified the students in the school as 'Chinese, Americans and blacks', reinforcing the racial ideology that North Americans are white and that African Americans belong to a different society.⁸²

Gurak speculates that migrants from the Caribbean may be re-addressing the black-white racial dichotomy in the United States by importing a racial continuum.⁸³

A sorting of immigrants into 'slow' and 'fast' integration categories operates with the selection mechanism being primarily racial in nature. In some instances this may occur, but a reproduction of the racial hearth serves only to perpetuate existing racisms. Colour coding along a continuum may merely create a more expansive grading of racial prejudice.

Most migrants and those who had travelled overseas in the research sample, however, appeared to be more aware of the advantages that light skin colour afforded in Dominican society (Table 5.13). Several migrants expressed highly racist sentiments, despite, or perhaps because of, several years of living in New York. Old antagonisms with Haiti were quick to surface. A sixty-two year-old woman, waiting to re-migrate to New York, was quick to reject Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic: 'Each to their own place. I'm not giving away my nationality to anyone.' Despite the widespread desire to acquire United States' residency or citizenship, Dominican sovereignty is aggressively defended by migrants, most vigorously in the

⁸² Bueno 1995, p. 50

⁸³ Gurak, D. T 1987 Family formation and marital selectivity among Colombian and Dominican immigrants in New York City *International Migration Review* 21, 4: 275-298, p. 293

context of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic. Over a third of the returned migrants who were interviewed believed that Haitians should not be allowed any form of residency in the Dominican Republic (Table 5.14).

Table 5.13 Opinion among returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and the total sample concerning the influence of light skin colour in Dominican society

Influence of light skin	Sample %	Returned migrants	Interviewees who have travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
Advantage		67.6	62.2	46.0
Disadvantage		5.4	1.2	0.6
Neither		27.0	36.6	47.7
Unsure		-	-	5.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

Some respondents, however, were keen to trade Dominican nationality for the perceived opportunities of United States' citizenship. The national flag was a popular metaphor during conversations. A respondent suggested: 'The United States is the only hope for our country. We're only missing the flag here!' Another two interviewees expressed a strong conviction that the Dominican Republic should become a dependency of the United States like Puerto Rico. With thirteen aunts already working in the United States, a twenty-nine year-old resident from Los Guandules had no hesitation about migrating. He would burn the flag and never return to Santo Domingo if he had the chance: 'Here there's no future for anyone.'

Table 5.14 Opinion among returned migrants, interviewees who had travelled abroad and the total sample concerning the appropriateness of granting residency to Haitians working in the Dominican Republic

%	Sample	Returned migrants	Interviewees who had travelled outside the Dominican Republic	Total sample
Opinion on Haitian presence				
Agree to their presence		46.0	48.8	46.7
Do not agree		37.8	41.4	46.3
Unsure		16.2	9.8	7.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
N		37	82	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

All figures are rounded percentages of the sample

The influence of the United States

Despite emigration and travel by Dominicans to other parts of world, the United States remains the focus of the transnational community. Among the Dominican population of Madrid, where over half of the estimated 50,000 Dominicans in Spain live, there is a marked reluctance to assimilate. Notwithstanding the historical lure of *la Patria*, the Spanish motherland is not the chosen destination for the majority. During the 1970s, Dominican migrants to Spain were mainly students and members of the upper classes. They were more likely to settle than migrants today, who, according to a Dominican businessman in Madrid, are less attached to Spanish life and count their material success in dollars, the real mark of success:

Each peseta they earn, they change into dollars... They don't give any value to the peseta, they think it's worthless. Their goal is the dollar. For this reason I don't think they'll ever integrate. It's as if they do not trust the country.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Piña Contreras, G. 1995 Dominicanos en España: la tragedia de una inmigración *Rumbo* 94: 8-22, p. 10

Dominicans share a love-hate relationship with the United States in which Dominican culture and sovereignty is wagered against the materialism of American life. The latter pays a higher dividend for most aspirant migrants. The wealth of the United States compared with the Caribbean region is an overriding factor of people's perception of the country: 'It's the biggest power (*potencia*) that there is - with the most money in the world.' The dominance of the United States is overpowering: 'The United States is *una potencia*. They do what they want.'

North American living standards and comparisons with Dominican society fuel the transnational flow. Many interviewees were desperate to migrate or travel to the United States. A repeated comment was that Dominican culture was worth little or nothing in comparison with the real American or European culture. Alvarez describes the rejection of the homeland by four Dominican women growing up near Boston in the 1960s:

We began to develop a taste for the American teenage good life, and soon, Island was old hat, man. Island was the hair-and-nails crowd, chaperones and icky boys with all their macho strutting and unbuttoned shirts and hairy chests with gold chains and teensy gold crucifixes. By the end of a couple of years away from home, we had *more* than adjusted.⁸⁵

The contradiction will always remain between devouring American popular culture, yet blaming the United States for their country's problems. A middle-aged farmer in Zambrana, participating in a United States-funded agricultural scheme, envisaged the vampire-like qualities of North American interests in the country: 'I don't see it as good. The United States has become fat on the countries of the

⁸⁵ Alvarez 1991, pp. 108-109

Caribbean. It's sucked the blood of the people and discarded them.'

Concern over growing North American interests in the Dominican Republic has been evident since the last century. Many nineteenth-century critics were aware of the dangers of economic dependency. Persio C. Franco pointedly observed, 'If with the lands of the entire republic occurs what has occurred with those of San Pedro de Macorís, La Romana and Barahona, the Dominican Republic will be a myth.'⁸⁶ Dominican sovereignty was lost to the United States at the start of the twentieth century. The United States government assumed formal control over the country's finances in 1907, occupying the country from 1916 to 1924. This first military occupation led to the consolidation of the process of capitalist expansion in the country, and tied the Dominican economy firmly to the North American market. By the 1920s, 95 percent of the sugar production was exported to the United States and twelve United States-owned companies controlled three-quarters of the sugar-producing land.⁸⁷ Since the 1920s, over a half of all Dominican imports have come from the United States.⁸⁸

The Dominican language changed during the eight years of occupation as anglicised words entered everyday speech.⁸⁹ Baseball replaced cockfighting as the national sport. Urban elites began to follow North American music styles, but Moya Pons notes that some elements of society began to dance *merengue* more energetically

⁸⁶ Cited in Calder, B. 1981 The Dominican turn toward sugar *Caribbean Review* 10, 3: 18-21, 44-45, p. 20

⁸⁷ Castor, S. 1974 El impacto de la ocupación norteamericana en Haití (1915-1934) y en la República Dominicana (1916-1924). In Pierre-Charles, G. 1974 *Política y sociología en Haití y la República Dominicana* Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, pp. 42-64, p. 56

⁸⁸ Moya Pons, F. 1981 Modernización y cambios en la República Dominicana in Vega et al. 1981, pp. 211-245

⁸⁹ Calder, B. J. 1984 *The Impact of Intervention: the Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 241

as a sign of resistance to cultural infiltration by American styles.⁹⁰ The occupation of 1965 reinforced growing trends of cultural and economic dependency.

Today, *bachata* and *merengue* retain their dominance, but only just under the challenge of widespread American rock and pop. A key aspect to the maintenance of *merengue* as the dominant sound is the Spanish language and the fact that many *merengueros/as* have a large Hispanic following in the United States, often living there. Transnational commercialisation is maintaining the domestic and overseas strength of the national music, although the emergence of a *pop-merengue* fusion is evident.

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents in the present survey believed that the influence of the United States in the Dominican Republic was largely beneficial, with one fifth in opposition. The general reaction was one of passive acceptance of North American influence. A middle-aged salesman argued that Dominicans do not know their own island, 'We're always thinking about the other country.' Another interviewee enthusiastically suggested: 'There [in the United States], they have more peace. It's a blessed life. I would like to go one day - just imagine living there!' The dream of leaving the island and living in the United States is a potent force for reproduction of the transnational community. Alvarez, the Dominican novelist, describes Gladys, a Dominican maid dreaming of migrating to New York. Each icon on her small bedside altar represents a saint. A postcard of the Statue of Liberty, discarded by her employer, has special significance:

'This one is the powerful American Virgin.' Gladys handed me the card. 'She'll get me to New York, you'll see.'⁹¹

⁹⁰ Moya Pons 1981, p. 224

⁹¹ Alvarez 1991, p. 260

Capital is highly mobile, increasingly invested and accumulated on a world scale. Meanwhile, the international migration of labour is transnationalising or globalising Dominican society. The whole range of international relations, through migration, telecommunications, travel, business links, mass media and arts, provides an intense and frequent interchange of economic and cultural experiences. Returned migrants share family, friends and business contacts between two or more countries, whilst still maintaining strong social and cultural links with their country of origin:

Their social ethos is bi-national... national boundaries are nothing more than a legal requisite that hardly affects their social interactions. The obstacles that international frontiers symbolise serve only to heighten their status *vis-à-vis* non-migrants - that is to say, they have the distinction of being people with international experience and connections, who possess the opportunities of people with international experience and connections, who have the ability to travel to the exterior, characteristics which until recently were reserved for a very few of the dominant class.⁹²

Transnationalism is pulling Dominican society towards a United States-led global culture. The direction of change is predominantly outward-looking. A 54 year-old female publicist remarked during an interview in Gazcue: 'We've lost much of our *dominicanidad*. We've lost our Dominican identity. No Dominican nowadays wants to be part of this country.' Transnationalism establishes new social, cultural and economic contexts, but its influence is not universal. The perception and awareness of race, the racial hearth of Dominican society, remains one of the few aspects yet to be transformed by the development of a transnational community.

⁹² Guarnizo 1995, p. 75

6 RACE AND *LA NEGRITUD* IN DOMINICAN LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter analyses how race is expressed in modern Dominican poetry and prose, and in particular, the influence of black literature since the 1970s. It is argued in the following pages that the negation of blackness is shown not only by the limited production and poor reception of black literature in the Dominican Republic, but that much of the literature produced serves merely to reinforce racial stereotyping.

What can contemporary literature tell the researcher about Dominican attitudes to race? Poetry and prose which deal with issues of race reflect not only the style and character of the author, but are intimately connected to the context in which they were written. The narrative is shaped as much by social and cultural surroundings as by the personal influences of the writers themselves. Despite the potential for fictional exploration, the author writes within the limits of his or her experience. However much the imagination is employed, the basis of literary creation is formed from the writer's particular experience of life.

The written text, prose fiction or poetry, adds an alternative dimension to social research. Literature reveals factors which orthodox sources of history cannot reveal; the writer's description of society allows the researcher to glean information from intimate details of social conduct.¹ Kutzinski, for example, analyses Cuban literature at different points during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, identifying its importance for the

¹ Rutherford, J. 1971 *Mexican Society during the Revolution: a literary approach* Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 13

articulation of Cuban culture.² Any author's contribution may extend from the representation and description of social history and character to the literary production of popular cultural and political identities. Dominican writers have played an important part, particularly during the regime of Trujillo, in delimiting and outlining national and cultural values.³ Nationalist literature produced under the directive of the dictator made a significant contribution to the projection of *dominicanidad* as white, Hispanic and Catholic.

Leersen and Spiering claim that there are no neutral statements in literature: 'Literary texts invoke... frames of reference and patterns of assessment which are non-artistic in origin, which are determined by 'real-world' political or social attitudes.'⁴ Similarly, Belsey's outline of 'common sense' criticism assumes that all literary texts tell socially and culturally relevant truths about the period in which they were written, about the world in general or about human nature.⁵ Any text will inevitably express the individual insights and particular perceptions of the author, and reflect the environment in which she or he is writing.

Race cannot be lifted from the text as an isolated factor; racial expression is dependent on the surrounding social, political and cultural structures which influence the narrative and the material world:

... 'race' is not a discrete topic to be extracted from the body of the literary text in which it appears, and subjected to the examination of the critical specialist. Rather

² Kutzinski, V. M. 1993 *Sugar's Secrets: race and the erotics of Cuban nationalism* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia

³ Fernández Olmos, M. 1988 La narrativa dominicana contemporánea: en busca de una salida *Revista Iberoamericana* 54, 142: 73-87, p. 73

⁴ Leersen, J. T. and Spiering, H. 1991 *National Identity: symbol and representation* Amsterdam: Atlanta, p. 184

⁵ Belsey, C. 1980 *Critical Practice* London: Methuen, pp. 1-36

it is always embedded in the textual ground of narrative, and is frequently inextricable from such 'extraneous' determinants as class, gender and sexuality.⁶

The meaning of *la negritud* is discussed with reference to other literatures of the Spanish Caribbean. *La negritud* focuses on social meaning and sentiment, and developed from the earlier forms of *el negrismo*, which described physical characteristics and cultural attributes of the African Caribbean population.⁷ African Antillean poetry of the early twentieth century, despite its focus on African essentialism, did set an important precedent for Hispanic writers. Contemporary literature also owes much to the *negrista* movement which was predominant during the 1920s and early 1930s. The political and literary vanguards of the 1960s were important for establishing a wider interest in African Hispanic literature.

The term 'black literature' refers to writing which expresses the theme of black experience and which incorporates resistance to anti-black or anti-African sentiment. The use of generic categories such as black or African Hispanic literature is intended to suggest a type of literary output. Need black literature be written by black writers? The Dominican literary critic and author, Incháustegui Cabral, preferred not to use the term when referring to Dominican poetry, arguing that the impact of black poetry in the Dominican Republic was limited.⁸ Many writers in the domain of African Hispanic literature are neither black nor mulatto, which arguably, 'compromises the formation of an Afro-Hispanic literary canon, at least one based on race as a guarantor of cultural

⁶ Smith, P. J. 1992 *Representing the Other: 'race', text, and gender in Spanish and Spanish American narrative* Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 2

⁷ Candelier, B. R. 1977 *Lo popular y lo culto en la poesía dominicana* Santiago: Universidad Católica de Madre y Maestra, p. 278

⁸ Incháustegui Cabral, H. 1976 Los negros y las trigueñas en la poesía dominicana *Eme-Eme* 4, 24: 3-19, p. 3

authenticity.’⁹ Black or African Hispanic literature, however, is defined more by content, specifically those works which aim to challenge racism and the white bias in Caribbean societies. Writers of black literature do not have to be *negro/a* or *mulata/o*, yet their work should address issues salient for a black or African community. Thus, African Hispanic literature refers to texts written about, and not just for and by, people of African descent.¹⁰

Dominican literary output has been relatively poor in quality, and the literature of *la negritud* has not established a strong reputation in the Dominican Republic. A progressive black literary movement failed to emerge in the Dominican Republic; a result of the negation of African descent and ongoing Hispanic bias among intellectuals. The opening for contemporary radical debate has been limited, despite the death of Trujillo, by the accession to power and by the political repression of Balaguer.

Most Dominican writers originate from the lighter-skinned elite. Their work tends to reproduce romanticised, and often racist, stereotypes. Several Dominican *mulato* writers (most published authors have been male) maintain the traditional image of the *negro/a* in the Dominican Republic. Many modern Dominican writers reproduce idealised and misleading perceptions of the racial reality. Contemporary literature still reproduces stereotypical and biased images of Haiti and *la negritud*. The history of antagonism with Haiti, and the constant Dominican fear of being absorbed into the neighbouring country, are evident in the plethora of literary texts which emphatically differentiate the two nations.¹¹

⁹ Kutzinski, V. M. 1996 Afro-Hispanic American Literature. In González Echeverría, R. and Pupo-Walker, E. (eds) 1996 *The Cambridge History of Latin America Literature* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 164-194, p. 168

¹⁰ Lewis, M. A. 1983 *Afro-Hispanic Poetry, 1940-1980: from slavery to la negritud in South American verse* Colombia: University of Missouri Press, p. 3

¹¹ Incháustegui Cabral, H. 1973 La poesía de tema negro en Santo Domingo *Eme-Eme* 1, 5: 3-23, p. 13

The literary representation of race forms the focus of the chapter. The development of black writing and *la negritud* in the Dominican Republic is outlined initially. The prevalence of light-skinned Dominican authors and their ability to contribute to black literature is assessed, and the significance of colour noted in the following two sections. An analysis of Dominican poetry and prose published after 1973 makes up the central part of the chapter; this year marked the publication of two novels which address issues of anti-Haitianism and Black Power: *El presidente negro* (*The Black President*) by Manuel del Cabral and *El masacre se pasa a pie* (*You can cross the Massacre on foot*) by Freddy Prestol Castillo. Both novels sold well, but failed to establish a black literary canon. The poetry of Blas Jiménez is discussed in detail as a leading contemporary 'black voice' in Dominican literary circles. He is one of the few contemporary writers to have produced a coherent body of literature which focuses on race.

My analysis of contemporary poetry and prose centres on seven themes in black literature. First, African essentialism and the metaphor of the drum are repeatedly woven into the construction of *la negritud*. Secondly, Dominican writers frequently relate racial characteristics to the tropical environment; an emphasis on fertility also links the production and consumption of fruit to sexual imagery. Racialised images of the body are illustrated, and the importance of anti-Haitianism in Dominican literature is discussed with reference to selected poetry and *El masacre se pasa a pie*. The fifth topic addresses racial indecision and the difficulty of asserting a black identity within a society which rejects blackness. The limits of Black awareness form the sixth theme, referring specifically to *El negro presidente*. The novel describes an imaginary black president of

the United States and discusses issues of Black Power. The text, however, is littered with derogatory references to Haitian blacks. Finally, race is considered from an external perspective - that of the Dominican migrant. The final section of the chapter discusses the limits to expressing *negritud* in Dominican literature.

The following section describes the development of black literature in the Dominican Republic, noting its origins in the middle of the last century, and its subsequent failed progression as a literary canon.

Development of Dominican black writing

Dominican literature has been excluded, for the most part, from general anthologies of Caribbean and Hispanic American prose or verse. This continues to be true despite the substantial increase in Dominican publications, especially poetry, since the 1980s.¹² The limited prestige of Dominican literature beyond the national borders has been attributed to the reluctance of the country's intellectuals to assert a cultural affinity with the rest of the region.¹³ The Dominican intelligentsia suffers from an academic insularity of external and internal construction. Self-deprecation and pessimism has been the standard trait of many Hispanophile writers in the Dominican Republic.

Torres-Saillant posits a long-standing bifurcation of literature and criticism which has weakened Dominican literary impact outside the country. Nineteenth-century criticism, he argues, idealised the core of the Dominican population as culturally

¹² Ventura, M. 1987 Crece la actividad editorial en República Dominicana *¡Ahora!* 26, 1110: 58-60

¹³ Torres-Saillant, S. Dominican literature and its criticism: anatomy of a troubled identity. In Arnold, A. J., Rodríguez-Luis, J. and Dash, M. J. (eds) 1994 *A History of Caribbean Literature* two volumes Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 49-64, p. 50

European, white and upper-class; the texts themselves, however, were more responsive to the social and cultural actuality. Even when the literature affirmed Dominican culture, critics followed a Eurocentric tradition. Such a clear disjuncture between text and criticism is difficult to believe. Many writers were both critics and authors. Torres-Saillant, however, is correct to draw attention to the cultural and racial bias in the Dominican literary scene. The pessimism inherent in the literature of the Dominican Republic was a result of a resolute historical devotion to Spain; the island's cultural losses were believed to outweigh the achievements following the end of Spanish colonialism. Local texts were evaluated through the lens of fashionable imported criticism. This continuing reliance on external literary and critical styles has provoked the call for critics to uphold the Dominican literary tradition as legitimate in its own right.

At the root of the pessimism and frustration concerning the future of the Dominican nation lies a restricted exploration of the racial complex. The Dominican nation is hailed and eulogised, but in terms of a light or white aesthetic. Black literature has consistently failed to gain acceptance in the Dominican Republic. While writers such as Aimé Césaire stirred the awakening of black literature in the twentieth century Caribbean, a similar response in the Dominican Republic was not forthcoming.¹⁴ *La négritude* for Dominicans was a predicament to revoke rather than to herald. Coulthard explains that *la négritude*, first introduced in print by Césaire in *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Notebook from a return to the country of birth* 1947), was a response by

¹⁴ Césaire, A. 1956 *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* Paris: Présence Africaine

people of African ancestry to find a 'distinctive tonality' in the concert of world culture.¹⁵ The Dominican Republic plays out of tune with this global symphony.

The emergence of a black or African Dominican literature is difficult to discern. The 1920s black literary resurgence in the Caribbean and the United States, which also had its influence in Europe, failed to provoke a popular response in the Dominican Republic. Césaire's writings urged a revitalisation and re-evaluation of black culture outside the white European literary tradition. An African conscience and the sense of a black cultural heritage were developed through an emphasis on new rhythms and metrics.¹⁶ The 1930s saw the appearance of black literature in the Spanish Caribbean which was tied to a folkloric revival. The Cuban, Nicolás Guillén, the Puerto Rican, Luis Palés Matos, and to an extent the Dominican, Manuel del Cabral, can be credited as founders of *la poesía afrohispanoantillana*. The key criticism of del Cabral is that his *negros/as* were rarely Dominican. His black literature recounted the injustices of black oppression, but in a framework which continued to represent blacks as Haitian or African.

The popular late-nineteenth century poet, Juan Antonio Alix, has been considered a forerunner of black literature in the Dominican Republic; his poems often criticised Dominicans who tried to pass themselves off as white.¹⁷ In general, however, a Dominican literature of *la negritud* is more notable by its relative absence. Contemporary literature in the Dominican Republic has evolved from a historical background of physical insularity, slavery, colonialism, foreign occupation, authoritarianism and

¹⁵ Coulthard, G. R. 1962 *Race and Colour in Caribbean Literature* New York: Oxford University Press, p. 55

¹⁶ Candelier, B. R. 1974 Los valores negros en la poesía dominicana *Eme-Eme* 15: 29-66

¹⁷ Davis, J. J. 1988 Ritmo poético, negritud y dominicanidad *Revista Iberoamericana* 54, 142: 171-186

dependency. Anti-Haitianism motivates the preference for a white aesthetic, but literary styles have also developed as products of transculturation. European discourse was 'creolised' in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Caribbean, which created national versions of contemporary styles, such as neo-classicism, romanticism and Parnassianism.

The early nineteenth century literary scene in the Dominican Republic celebrated the Arcadian forces of nature, which led to *costumbrismo*, the extolling of local culture, customs, flora and fauna. Local colour and the bucolic evocation of a tropicalised Europe were the basis for literary exploration. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, indianist texts developed this rustic style. José Joaquín Pérez glorified the island's indigenous past in *Fantasías indígenas* (1877), whilst *Enriquillo* (1882) by Galván responded to the elite's desire to reject an African heritage in favour of a noble indigenous and Hispanic tradition. The end of the nineteenth century witnessed a growth of literature which focused on the Dominican nation.

Dominicanidad is dominated by a white or light aesthetic. Traditionally, the Dominican woman has been submissive, virginal and *blanca*, counterpoised with the potency of the *negra* or *mulata*, the antithesis of white purity.¹⁸ The rejection of the African element is illustrated by the juxtaposition of the virginal *blanca* with the sinful, sensual *negra* or *mulata*. The latter were never explicitly Dominican, but represented African or Haitian traits; influences which diverted the Dominican (man) from the path of godliness. A poem written by Francisco Muñoz del Monte, 'La mulata' (1849), typifies this perception:

Prayer is useless. She seduces and kills,
opens and closes the tomb of her pleasure.

¹⁸ Cocco de Filippis, D. 1988 *Sin otro profeta que su canta* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, p. 15

When the melody of a mournful bell
descends to the victim's grave
the cruel *mulata* lights her cigar
and goes to sacrifice another man for her pleasure.¹⁹

La mulata is described in vampire-like terms as a sexual predator, callously devouring her lover through sexual passion. The sacrificial terms suggest that her prey is ensnared by an exotic sensuality, helpless to resist the raw terms of conquest dictated by the dark-skinned female. The exotic lure of *la mulata* fatally tempts the white male to sin; prayer is futile, and white Catholicism impotent. 'La mulata' outlines the potential threat of the dark-skinned woman who reverses her sexually and racially submissive role and challenges the dominant (white) patriarchal structure. The sexual predation and conquest of the dark-skinned temptress inverts colonial roles; the white man is now the powerless victim, who is used then cast aside. Male erotic fantasy becomes his death-bed, while *la mulata* gains pleasure from her false compliance, celebrating another conquest with the taste of a phallic cigar.

The image of *la mulata* as seductress remains potent in contemporary Dominican and Hispanic American writing. Miscegenation, the biological threat to white power, spawned fear among the ruling class who believed that the white male would be destroyed and civilisation left ravaged by the overwhelming sexual savagery of *la mulata*. Early twentieth-century writing in the Dominican Republic edged in the direction of a

¹⁹ In Morales, J. L. 1976 *Poesía afroantillana y negrista: Puerto Rico, la República Dominicana y Cuba* Rio Piedras: Editora Universitaria, pp. 109-110

Plegaria inútil. Ella goza y mata,
abre y cerra la tumba a su querer.
Cuando al son de la lúgubre campana
a la fosa su víctima desciende
la cruel mulata su cigarro enciende
y a inmolar va otro hombre a su placer.

more sophisticated, self-aware *criollismo*. However, greater acknowledgement of racial miscegenation did little to re-focus literature away from the positive connotations of the white aesthetic. Light skin colour still suggested civilised behaviour and ‘classical’ beauty. Darker skin projected images of raw emotion and sexuality.

European styles were refashioned for the tropics, accompanied by continued social and cultural dependency. The Dominican Republic could not break from the traditional, Catholic, Hispanic matrix imprinted during the previous century. Unlike other parts of the Spanish Caribbean, *modernista* angst and the search for meaning in contemporary affairs did not sever ties with favoured metrics or lead to wide scale experimentation with differing rhythms. The expansion of the Dominican lexicon under *modernista* influences did, however, result in the creation of new styles in contemporary writing. Nevertheless, the evidence of a literary rejection of and revolt against Europe remains limited. The main foci of rejection suggested by Coulthard are not apparent in Dominican literature. Literature of rejection expressed the complaint that African Caribbean people were being constricted by the moulds of European thought, and claimed that European culture was failing. Traditional styles of Christianity were rejected, and direct attacks made upon the nature of European civilisation.²⁰

Francisco Domínguez Charro attempted to establish *la poesía trigueña* by focusing upon the process of *mulatización*.²¹ The euphemistic use of *trigueño/a*, ‘wheat-coloured’, enhances the light aesthetic by promoting a literary framework with a light bias. *Poema del llanto trigueño* (*Poem of the weeping trigueño* 1969) by Pedro Mir and

²⁰ Coulthard 1962, p. 52

²¹ Incháustegui Cabral 1976, p. 10

Yelidá (1942) by Tomás Hernández Franco, both prototypes for *la poesía trigueña*, focus away from the darker aesthetic. The former, *Yelidá*, has been hailed as an epic narrative in the Dominican Republic.²² The verses recount the story of the poem's namesake, the son of a Norwegian man and a Haitian woman. This 'good' looking, but wayward, *blanco* is seduced by the magical potions and sensuality of the dark-skinned woman. After the birth of *Yelidá*, his father dies and the Norwegian's soul returns to his homeland. The Norse gods set out to reclaim the white soul of his offspring, but arrive too late, for it has already been tainted by a sexual relationship with a black woman. Anti-Haitian sentiment frames the telling of the tale. The Haitian woman, and to some extent the errant Scandinavian, are portrayed as sinners, worshipping false gods and possessing weak morals. She is a destroyer of white souls, and thus, a threat to civilisation. His mortal self has erred, but his white soul must be saved. White purity confronts, and is defeated by, the 'darker', immoral side of human behaviour. *Yelidá* survives, but his *trigueño* soul is corrupted by the coarseness of Haiti, loitering across the border as an ever-present threat to the Dominican Republic.

The lack of a black literature in the Dominican Republic reflects societal mores and differs markedly from the situation elsewhere in the Caribbean. Black literary expression reveals its own insularities. A comparison of writing from Martinique, Jamaica, Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic illustrates similar, but differing, historical experiences. Dominicans writing on a black theme rarely perceive themselves to be direct descendants of African slaves, but assimilate the feelings of oppression and resistance to prejudice or injustice. Manuel del Cabral, a light-skinned writer, refused the

²² Hernández Franco, T. 1985 *Yelidá* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller

labels of *negrismo* or *poesía negra*. Coulthard cites one of his comments during an interview: 'There is a Negro raggie-taggle going round these countries, a rhetoric of colour resting on the physical basis of the word... Is there an American art? Is there a Negro poetry? I feel I must deny the existence of both.'²³

Del Cabral denies the existence of *la negritud*. He is quoted, in a later interview, as saying: 'I am stirred by human feelings, not race... Poetry with a black theme is not about colour, but about the human intensity which the poet is able to portray.'²⁴ The ideal aim of literature, he argues, should be the rejection of all social and cultural inequalities. Postcolonial suffering and relations of dependency link texts of resistance which, at first glance, address spatially and racially divergent groups. *La poesía negra* has been equated with the literary movement of *indigenismo* as a reaffirmation of positive racial identities. Each evolved as a response to an oppressive situation of cultural domination, and both exhibit a tendency to relate back, or look forward, to an era of liberation. White bias is considered the determining factor of oppression, synonymous with discrimination, economic exploitation and an alleged racial superiority.

White writing black; black righting white

Can a white writer understand black experience? To an extent, yes, provided that the black theme does not take on a patronising or racist quality. Nicolás Guillén, writing as a dark-skinned Cuban, experienced racism in a different manner from Manuel del Cabral or Luis Palés Matos, both of whom could be described as *blancos*. Guillén's writing is

²³ Coulthard 1962, p. 37

²⁴ Anonymous 1980 Entrevista con Manuel del Cabral: poesía negra y metafísica *Letra Grande* 1: 44-49, p. 45

informed by a different knowledge, but that does not make his work any more authentic than that of the other two authors. Even Guillén traded stereotypes of African Caribbean culture and created nonsensical Africanised neologisms.

However, some critics have suggested that only black writers can understand or are culturally equipped to express the black experience. Alcantara Almanazar argues that the externality of experience will always leave writers such as del Cabral outside an insight into *la negritud*:

... despite the human understanding which the poems contain, it should be recognised that del Cabral observes the problems from outside: he cannot arrive at the intensity of a René Depestre (1926) or a Jacques Roumain (1908-1944), who have lived the drama of *la negritud* for themselves.²⁵

Gayle proclaims that white writers are unable to portray or elucidate the black experience because they are culturally underdeveloped to do so.²⁶ In this sense, black literature is left to re-write the white bias which misrepresents African Caribbean culture. The positionality of the author is reflected in the similar debate which questions the capacity of a male writer to write about female experience. The primary gift of a good writer, however, is imagination; the ability to think hypothetically and place himself or herself in the situation of others. A significant proportion of literature with a black theme by light-skinned Dominicans unfortunately reproduces negative racial stereotypes.

Joaquín Balaguer, a light-skinned President and writer, has produced several anthologies which reinforce prejudice, rather than react against it. In 'Venus negra'

²⁵ Alcantara Almanzar, J. 1979 *Estudios de poesía dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Alfa y Omega, p. 167

²⁶ Gayle, Jr, A. 1971 Cultural strangulation: black literature and the white aesthetic. In Gayle, Jr, A. (ed.) 1971 *The Black Aesthetic* New York: Doubleday, pp. 39-46

(1941), Balaguer describes a dark-skinned woman whose beauty matches that of the goddess Venus, entrancing men who are vulnerable to her devastating sensuality:

Your beautiful mahogany-coloured body
holds the enchantment of a living statue,
which attracts and captivates us all
with its entrancing tropical perfume.

Always bewitching, stealing our hearts
your sensitive body of Cleopatra,
with its provocative sensuality,
Of a lounge and bedroom queen.

The delicate image of the God Helen,
from whose forms the sculpture arises,
fused by the fire of your dark skin,

appears more beautiful than its white form,
and you can occupy with full grace
a place at the side of the armless Venus.²⁷

La negra is described sensitively, yet the poem reproduces her within a stereotypical framework; her sensuality is exotic, provocative and captivating. *Negritud* places her on the edge of a world of magic, an exotic primitivism that lures men to her

²⁷ In Bisonó, P. 1994 *Lo mejor de la poesía amorosa dominicana* Santo Domingo: Ediciones: Cultural de Santo Domingo, pp. 5-6

Tu hermoso cuerpo de color caoba
tiene el encanto de una estatua viva,
que a todos nos atrae y nos cautiva
con su perfume tropical que arroba.

Siempre hechizante, el corazón nos roba
tu cuerpo de Cleopatra sensitiva,
con su sensualidad provocativa,
de reina del salón y del alcoba.

La fina imagen de la diosa Helena,
de cuyas formas la escultura arranca,
fundida al fuego de tu piel morena,

surge más bella que en su forma blanca,
y puedes ocupar con gracia plena
un sitio al lado de la Venus manca.

side. Balaguer establishes the juxtaposition of light-skinned beauty with a darker, irrepressible aspect of sexual attraction. The poet makes several classical references, in part recognising European beauty, but critically emphasising the danger of sexual temptation. The dark-skinned Cleopatra lured Antony to a fateful end, while Helen was the cause of a war which led to the downfall of Trojan civilisation.

The poetry of Balaguer is of interest given the overt racism of his politics as President of the Dominican Republic. 'Venus negra' was written only a few years after the massacre of thousands of Haitians and *negros/as* on the Dominican side of the border. Aspects of his poetry acknowledge the raw attraction of blackness, but the arousal of passion is a response to a primitive blackness, an overt threat to a susceptible white (male) civilisation.

Héctor J. Díaz, another light-skinned Dominican poet, also writes on a black theme in the context of raw black sensuality. The poem entitled 'Morena' (1934) correlates exotic sensuality with sin. His other poems, 'Amor oculto' ('Hidden love' 1940) and 'Beso imposible' ('Impossible kiss' 1940), stress similar desire-guilt complexes. In 'Morena', the woman feeds the poet's pleasure, satiating his desire for her 'dark flesh' of sugar, cinnamon and clove hues:

Sugar, cinnamon and clove
her dark flesh tastes
and idealises the sin
when surrendering to pleasure.

That afternoon in her bedroom,
lukewarm amphora of pleasure,
I drank the red lust
until my deep thirst was quenched...

More... Oh, things in life
that should not happen...

since that afternoon, friend.
We have not turned round to see.
For where you will walk lost
selling pleasure.²⁸

The poet consumes the women's sexuality; the first stanza portrays an image of eating and the second, that of drinking. The dark-skinned woman is a prostitute selling pleasure, but leaving her client guilt-ridden. The eroticism of the poet's encounter is framed by the context of darkness, guilt, sin and illicit sensuality.

The descriptions of *la negra* or *la mulata* in the poetry of Balaguer and Díaz project similar racial-sexual stereotypes and connotations of a 'dark' sexuality. The poets' shared backgrounds are typical of upper class Dominican society - a tradition of *blancura*, Catholicism and *Hispanidad*. Both poems are in the form of classical European sonnets, ignoring the Dominican style of *décima* or the black literary verse of *son*. Both reproduce the racist and sexist stereotypes of their cultural background, but this does not preclude all authors from writing 'outside' their own experience. Gates claims that not until he had stepped out of his experience as an African American into the second arena

²⁸ In Bisonó 1994, p. 38

Azúcar, canela y clavo
sabe su carne morena
y se idealiza el pecado
cuando al placer se entrega.

Aquella tarde en su alcoba,
tibia ánfora de placer,
bebí la lascivia roja
hasta saciar mi honda sed...

Mas... Oh cosas de la vida
que no deben suceder...
desde aquella tarde, amiga.
No nos hemos vuelto a ver.
Por donde andarás perdida
vendedora de placer.

of western or white experience, could he evaluate black literature.²⁹ The difference between these worlds enabled Gates to see the significance of black literature, but the difference has no resonance in the Dominican Republic.

The colour aesthetic

The colour aesthetic is a visual index, centred on the acceptance or renunciation of race and phenotype. Hoetink has developed a theory of the somatic norm image, a complex of physical characteristics which are accepted by a group as its norm and ideal. This image then becomes the yardstick of aesthetic evaluation, and the visual standard for the somatic characteristics of group membership.³⁰ Adherence to the group norm underlies the basis and strength of the colour aesthetic. Solaún and Kronus agree that the main aesthetic preference usually corresponds with the physical characteristics of the dominant group.³¹

The colour aesthetic in the Dominican Republic incorporates a strong white bias of positive characteristics juxtaposed with the negative portrayal of blackness. This aesthetic is also found in Latin American literature, similarly characterised by black phobia and the white aesthetic:

The association of the color black with ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality, Manichaeian metaphor, with the inferior, the archetype of the lowest order, and the color white with the opposite of these qualities partly explains the racist preconceptions and negative images of the black man projected - at times despite the author's good intentions - in much of the literature of the area.³²

²⁹ Gates, Jr, H. L. 1987 *Figures in Black: words, signs and the racial self* New York: Oxford University Press, pp. xvi-xvii

³⁰ Hoetink, H. 1967 *The Two Variants in Caribbean Race Relations: a contribution to the sociology of segmented societies*, p. 120

³¹ Solaún, M. and Kronus, S. 1970 *Discrimination Without Violence: miscegenation and racial conflict in Latin America* New York: John Wiley and Sons

³² Jackson, R. L. 1976 *Black Image in Latin American Literature* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, p. xiii

Jackson adds that somatic ostracism of blacks in parts of Latin America is even more severe than generally imagined. The dominant cultural heritage is that of a white or light racial consciousness - transmitted by a collective sentiment where black is equated with negative qualities. Arrendondo refers to the blight of colour aesthetics in Cuba which projects self-disdain among *negros/as*, and forces them to adhere to a light concept of beauty.³³

Mestizaje is described by Jackson as a fact of 'black experience.' He elucidates the variation of colour and phenotype not only in terms of racial and cultural fusion, but as the 'physical, spiritual, and cultural rape of black people.'³⁴ Jackson's thoughts originate from a dichotomised framework of race, and the oppression of black by white. He discusses *mestizaje* or *mulatización* as a form of ethnic lynching whereby the white population attempts to dilute a black presence through racial inter-marriage.³⁵ The immigration policy of *blanqueamiento* during the regime of Trujillo is similar. White immigration aimed to develop a pigmentocracy in which social status correlated with skin colour and body aesthetics.

The process of *mulatización* embodies a troublesome connotation in the Dominican Republic. A history of racial mixing does not imply an easing of somatic barriers. Given the historically forced or unequal nature of sexual relations between racial groups, evidence of miscegenation is ultimately a misguided indicator of racial tolerance. It heralds the demise of *dominicanidad*, and draws Dominicans nearer to the historical experiences of slavery, *la negritud* and the negative stigma attached to the dark aesthetic.

³³ Arrendondo, A. 1936 *El Negro en Cuba* Havana: Editorial Alfa

³⁴ Jackson 1976, p. 1

³⁵ Jackson 1976, p. 2

The colour spectrum of society is altered, but in a manner which simultaneously lightens dark skin and darkens light. Dominican authors fear a *mulato/a* future. The national fate is expressed by single-sided arguments which predict the extinction of the white population.

Contemporary poetry and prose

The contemporary analysis of verse and prose focuses upon work published during or after 1973. This year marked the publication of two texts which, given the right support, moment and time, could have established a burgeoning genre of black literature in the Dominican Republic. *El presidente negro* by Manuel del Cabral and *El Masacre se pasa a pie* by Freddy Prestol Castillo both failed to ride the tide of black power which had created a surge of African Caribbean cultural self-awareness elsewhere in the region.

Both publications received critical acclaim and sold well; literacy rates in the Dominican Republic are relatively high by regional and world standards.³⁶ However, the reading of prose fiction as a leisure pursuit tends to be restricted to the upper income groups.³⁷ Given that the most literate section of society tends to be lighter and more affluent, it is perhaps unsurprising that this group failed to support radical black politics.

The potential for the rise of a Dominican literature that expressed a reactive and positive racial aesthetic was nullified. Much of the so-called black literature in the

³⁶ Kidron, M. and Segal, R. 1995 *The State of the World Atlas* fifth edition Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 42-43. The adult illiteracy rate in the Dominican Republic was 25.8 percent for both men and women in the 1981 census. My survey, however, showed that women were more literate than men: 9.0 percent compared to 13.6 percent illiteracy rates respectively for the combined three samples. Very high rates of literacy in Gazcue (99 percent) reduced the mean level of illiteracy.

³⁷ Author's survey 1994: 21 percent of the combined sample listed reading as a favourite past-time; 79 percent of these interviewees were from the upper and middle classes.

Dominican Republic remains locked in the grid-iron of racial stereotype and stamped with a mimetic or patronising quality. The leitmotif of *la negritud* in Dominican literature suggests that *negras/os* tend not to be Dominican. Thus, black literature is a marginal, almost exotic, literary branch in the Dominican Republic. Blas Jiménez, perhaps the leading and most expressive writer on racial themes in the Dominican Republic, argues that he can only afford to produce black literature because he does not depend on writing for a living.³⁸ His established social status, in addition, allows him to write without fear of ostracism from the leading social and cultural circles.

Contemporary Dominican literature reproduces an established range of racial metaphors and images. Conceptions of *negritud*, beauty and Haiti appear to have changed little from the earlier work of Balaguer and Díaz. The following section outlines a series of themes expressed in Dominican poetry and prose which have been published since 1973 and which focus on race.

The innate rhythm of the drum

The Dominican literary critic, Candelier, portrays the beating of a drum as an essential icon of African Dominican identity. He reduces race in the Dominican Republic to the level of the fallacious triumvirate of African *negros*, Hispanic *blancos* and indigenous *indios*, while correlating biological characteristics with cultural traits.³⁹ In the same critique of *poesía negra*, Candelier emphasises the tambour, an often-used metaphor suggesting the primitive essentialism and natural rhythm of *la negritud*:

Bantu culture arrived in America with the drum of the black slaves, and that rural instrument was used not only to produce dance and rhythm - the ultimate expression of *la negritud* - but would reproduce - perhaps unnoticed by the

³⁸ Blas Jiménez interview 14 September 1995

³⁹ Candelier, B. R. 1974 Los valores negros en la poesía dominicana *Eme-Eme* 15: 29-66, p. 31

colonisers - the emotive language of black African lyrics. Many of the traditional creole poems attempted to discover its significance and to imitate that expressive sound.⁴⁰

Fanon states the importance of the drum beat: 'Only the Negro has the capacity to convey it, to decipher its meaning, its import.'⁴¹ Its resonance is a symbol of inner black strength and resistance; a prelude to revolution and liberation from racist oppression. Blas Jiménez employs the pounding of the tambour to conjure up a supposedly inherent African lyricism, echoing the chant of resistance and emancipation. 'Canto al abuelo desconocido' ('Song of the unknown uncle') celebrates the *cimarrones*, the runaway slaves who established their own communities in the highlands of the Dominican Republic:

Tam-tam tam-tam tam-tam
I can hear your drum
sounding through the mountains
tam-tam tam-tam tam-tam
as if it were your voice

A tam-tam a tam-tam
as words
as symbols
as a language of peace
as a sign of liberty.⁴²

⁴⁰ Candelier 1974, p. 42

⁴¹ Fanon, F. 1986 *Black Skin, White Masks* London: Pluto Press, p. 124

⁴² Jiménez, B. R. 1987 *Exigencias de un cimarrón (en sueños)* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, pp. 56-57

Tam-tam tam-tam tam-tam
puedo escuchar tu tambor
repicando entre los montes
tam-tam tam-tam tam-tam
como si fuera tu voz

Un tam-tam un tam-tam
como palabras
como símbolos
como lengua de paz
como señal de libertad

The sound of the tambour vibrates through the mountains, echoing the animated cry for freedom of *el negro cimarrón*, who broke his chains and fled from slavery. Jiménez urges contemporary Dominicans to beat off racism and celebrate *la negritud*. Dominicans, despite breaking the chains of slavery, remain bonded by colour.

Depestre outlines *cimarronaje cultural* in Caribbean literature, which he describes as an escape from dominant culture in order to construct a minority culture.⁴³ It represents ‘a form of resistance, and legitimate defence against the legacies and racist discourse of slavery, colonialism and imperialism.’⁴⁴ The Dominican experience after emancipation rejects this form of cultural upheaval. Dominicans did not want to flee from an Hispanic identity. Instead, their vehemence and energy were directed towards resisting Haitian influence.

Alfonso Torres combines sexuality, *cimarronaje* and this rhythmic force in a series of poems entitled ‘Amor cimarrón’ (*Cimarrón love* 1994). The tambour becomes a symbol for the ‘synthesis of races’, infusing vitality and passion through the veins of Antillean lovers:

I
Cimarrón love has the virtue
of carrying the blood of the tambour
love in the Antilles is *cimarrón*
synthesis of races.

...

III

...

Oh...!*Cimarrón* love in our veins
cause of this inexhaustible passion
keeper of islands and hurricanes

⁴³ Depestre, R. 1970 Problemas de la identidad del hombre negro en las literaturas antillanas *Casa de las Américas* 31: 51-59

⁴⁴ Depestre, R. 1977 Saludo y despedida a la negritud. In Moreno Fragnals, M. (ed.) 1977 *África en América Latina* Paris: UNESCO, pp. 337-362, p. 347

hotchpotch of flesh and skeletons.⁴⁵

Torres's poetry, written in the 1990s is laden with racial stereotypes akin to those of the nineteenth and early twentieth century romantics. His collected poems reinforce the image of the sensual, dark-skinned woman as an object of desire and aesthetic adoration. Alternatively, his verse espouses an essentialist vision of African Caribbean identity. The raw essence of *cimarronaje* permeates Dominican territory, as vital and irrepressible as the forces of nature.

Tony Pichardo produces a grittier drum beat. His collection of poetry is presented in bilingual format - Spanish and Haitian creole translations - and emphasises the shared history of Dominicans and Haitians. For both, he argues, the fiery beat of the tambour, (*el sonido del fuego vital*), symbolises an inner strength and passion which could fuel the co-development of both countries.⁴⁶ Pichardo suggests that the fire of resistance burns within every Dominican and Haitian who faces oppression, whether racial, cultural or economic. The ignition of this fire sparked the end of Haitian and Dominican dictatorships, and must now be rekindled for continued social and political change. Pichardo employs the well-

⁴⁵ Torres, A. 1994 *Arco iris de amor y de fuego* Santo Domingo: Impresos y Servicios, pp. 33-36

I
El amor cimarrón tiene la virtud
de portar sangre de tambor
es cimarrón el amor en las Antillas
síntesis de razas.

...

III

...

¡Oh...! amor cimarrón en nuestras venas
origen de esta pasión inagotable
dueño de islas y huracanes
amasijo de piernas y esqueletos.

⁴⁶ Pichardo, T. 1992 ... *Antes y después del fuego... Avan e apré difè a* Santo Domingo: Ediciones Ceedee, p. 13

worn symbol of the tambour, yet he re-directs his verse away from the romanticism that engulfs many contemporary Dominican writers, towards a pithy social realism.

Consuming tropical fertility

While the drum is as a metaphor for an African past, *negritud* and the tropical climate of the Caribbean are often related by environmental determinism in Dominican literature. Writers correlate the heat, sun and characteristics of the physical environment with racial traits. The fertility of the tropics conditions the female character in 'Mulata' (1994), a poem by Torres. Her fecundity is represented by a fruitful earthiness, and the omnipresent rhythm of the tambour:

A *cimarrón* spell
shakes her
beads of sweat
running off her body
like showers of fire
scorching the West.

mulata fruit of the earth
cry of the tambour in my ears
give a little of your rhythm
to my words
fertilise with your dreams
my destiny.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Torres 1994, pp. 53-54

Un hechizo cimarrón
la estremece
gotas de sudor
desprendidas de su cuerpo
como lluvia de fuego
queman el Occidente.

mulata fruto de la tierra
grito de tambor en mis oídos
dale un poco de tu ritmo
a mis palabras
fecundiza con tus sueños
mi destino.

The humidity and moisture of the Caribbean is expressed by the perspiring body. The poet juxtaposes the ripeness of her sexuality with the sinful side of desire. *La mulata* is skilled in witchcraft; African spirituality has the power to scold the economically developed, but culturally bereft, western world.

A poem by Carlos Lebrón Saviñón, also titled 'Mulata' (1980), similarly portrays dark-skinned women as fruit to be consumed. Coulthard has remarked upon the tendency of Caribbean writers to compare women with fruit and vegetables. He suggests that this tendency parallels nineteenth-century European lyricism which sought to make comparisons between the physical attributes of women and flowers.⁴⁸ European writers, though, arguably also employ food metaphors to convey desire or beauty. The substitution of foreign flora for local fruits or vegetables is not only an obvious literary ploy, but addresses an important symbolic difference. Flowers are generally looked at and appreciated, whereas fruit or vegetables are devoured to satiate a hunger or need. *La mulata* was an object to satisfy sensual and sexual gratification. Lebrón Saviñón combines this image with animalistic, predatory metaphors:

Your fever which intoxicates me further
the sweet bitterness
of alcohol.

But the drum resounds in your skin
Your rumba is a music which cries
in the mad torrent of your rivers.

But your tropical flesh devours
the ancestral stillness of my loathing.
Mulata of desire: when you pass,
you are the first
you are the loveable synthesis of races
frenzy of the panther

⁴⁸ Coulthard, G. R. 1962 *Race and Colour in Caribbean Literature* New York: Oxford University Press, p. 89

night and merengue-day and restless-rumba...⁴⁹

The *mulata* is described in terms of the stealth and physicality of a (black) panther, whose animal-like passions can turn to the frenzy of debauched sexual lust. Her body becomes a dangerous object of desire, devoured and drunk by the eyes of the poet-voyeur, yet her 'tropical flesh' holds the 'sweet bitterness' of guilt-ridden revelry.

Body aesthetics

Ideals of beauty and colour dominate Dominican literature with the theme of racial heritage. Jiménez, however, argues for the appreciation of African Dominican phenotype and colour in 'Pelo-pelo-pelo' ('Hair-hair-hair' 1987). The poem attempts to reverse the dominant attitude which prescribes that certain physical features such as tight curly hair should be considered as ugly or 'bad'. The poet stresses pride in every strand of his hair, and asserts contentment with his skin colour:

...
my hair
grows in my skin
like the skin of my grandfather
skin which gives pride
hair and skin
hair

⁴⁹ Lebrón Saviñón, C. 1985 *Canto iluminado* Santo Domingo: Editorial Cenepec, pp. 20-21

Que me emborracha más tu calentura
que la dulce amargura
del alcohol.

Pero en tu piel retumba la tambora.
Tu rumba es una música que llora
en el loco torrente de tus ríos.

Pero tu carne tropical devora
la quietud ancestral de mis hastíos.
Mulata del deseo: cuando pasas,
eres tú la primera
Eres amable síntesis de razas
frenesí de pantera
noche y día-merengue y rumba-inquieta...

my hair
curly strand
strand + strand + strand
creates my fine hair
a curly hair
an Afro hair
a hair of a *negro*
my hair⁵⁰

Repetition and the use of a dominant personal pronoun underline the hereditary nature of blackness, stressing the poet's pride in his familial ancestry. The racial aesthetic expressed in Dominican literature, however, is not usually that of radical Black Pride. More commonly, the metaphors construct colour within a traditional framework of racial perception.

Jiménez, one of the most radical of Dominican black writers, produces work, which even seen as a parody of reality, mimics the socio-sexual construction of race and fails to digress from existing stereotypes. This is clearest in a poem from his first collection, 'Negra No. 1' (1980); employing a repetitive and simple rhythm which suggests the beat of a drum:

Negra with the large breasts
negra with the firm buttocks

⁵⁰ Jiménez 1987, pp. 63-64

mi pelo
crece en mi piel
como en la piel del abuelo
piel que da orgullo
pelo y piel
pelo
mi pelo
filamento crespo
filamento + filamento + filamento
crea mi buen pelo
un pelo crespo
un pelo en afro
un pelo de negro
mi pelo

negra who cuts the cane
negra you really are sexy
negra with the large breasts
negra with the firm buttocks
negra who washes clothes
negra who fries the food
negra who bears many children
negra you really are sexy
negra with the large breasts
negra with the firm buttocks
when you walk slowly
one sees all the sweetness
of the cane which you have cut
in your bitter life
negra with the large breasts
negra with the firm buttocks.⁵¹

The large-breasted, firm-buttocked *negra* is imbued with the earthiness, fertility and raw sex appeal that is the trademark of much contemporary Dominican poetry. The bitterness of her racial oppression is only hinted at, in contrast to the sweet sugar cane which she cuts. Cutting cane, frying snacks and washing clothes are the stereotypical chores of the poor, dark-skinned woman. Jiménez conveys an aspect of social reality, but veils it with

⁵¹ Jiménez, B. R. 1980 *Aquí... otro español* Santo Domingo: Editora Incoco, p. 23

Negra de las tetas grandes
negra de las nalgas duras
negra que corta la caña
negra tú sí que eres chula
negra de las tetas grandes
negra de las nalgas duras
negra que lava la ropa
negra que hace la fritura
negra que da muchos hijos
negra tú sí que eres chula
negra de las tetas grandes
negra de las nalgas duras
cuando despacio caminas
se ve toda la dulzura
de la caña que a cortao
en tu vida de amargura
negra de las tetas grandes
negra de las nalgas duras.

heavily-worn sexual and racial clichés. Alternatively, one could argue that the poet employs ironic exaggeration in order to criticise these stereotypes in a subversive manner.

Haitians and Haiti

Dominican literature on *negritud* inevitably focuses on the neighbouring population of Haiti. Jiménez often ridicules the Dominican attitude which suggests that only Haitians are ‘real’ or quintessential *negras/os*. Dark-skinned Dominicans are frequently teased or insulted by being called Haitian. ‘Haitiano’ (1980) derides this discrimination:

You are Haitian
you are Haitian by being *negro*
you are *negro*
that makes you Haitian
not by birth
By being *negro*
You are *negro*
Negro is bad
Bad is Haitian
Negro is ugly
Ugly is Haitian
You are Haitian
By being *negro* you are Haitian ⁵²

⁵² Jiménez 1980, pp. 65-66

Eres Haitiano
eres haitiano por ser negro
eres negro
eso te hace haitiano
no por nacimiento
Por ser negro
Eres negro
Eres haitiano por ser negro
Negro es lo malo
Malo es lo haitiano
Negro es feo
Feo es haitiano
Eres haitiano
Por ser negro eres haitiano.

The poet taunts those Dominicans who equate *la negritud* with Haitian nationality, and he challenges the commonly espoused insult that Haitians and blackness are the epitome of ugliness. Dominicans, he argues, are black, so by that reason they must be all ugly as well.

Sherezada (Chiqui) Vicioso is a contemporary Dominican author who directly challenges traditional Dominican animosity towards Haiti. Her poem, entitled 'Haití' (1981), addresses the plight of the Haitian state. The black, virginal nation was violated, sexually and environmentally, by slavery and colonialism. A humiliated nascent state, left open to the vagaries of abuse by political powers, parallels the rape of black women in the context of (white) male sexual hegemony:

Haiti
I imagine you virginal
before pirate predecessors
removed your clothes of mahogany
and left you thus
with your breasts in the air
and your torn grass skirt
scarcely green,
timid brown.⁵³

Dominican writers' attacks on anti-Haitianism have become more vocal and politicised during the last fifty years, particularly since the massacre of 1937. *El masacre se pasa a pie*, by Freddy Prestol Castillo, is an eye-witness account of the Haitian

⁵³ In Cocco de Filippis 1988, pp. 111-112

Haití
te imagino virgen
antes de que piratas precursores
te quitaran tus vestidos de caoba
y te dejaran así
con tus senos redondos al aire
y tu falda de yerba desgarrada
apenas verde, marrón tímida.

massacre, written from notes made in the late 1930s, but not published until 1973.⁵⁴ The book was received well within the Dominican Republic, although the subject matter was judged controversial enough for the author to wait over three decades before publication. *El masacre se pasa a pie* has sold over 34,000 copies, a substantial amount, given that the majority of publications in the Dominican Republic do not exceed an initial print run of 1,000 copies.

The narrator-protagonist works in a Dominican border town, sent there by the government to preside as a provincial judge. Prestol Castillo was himself sent to Dajabón as a federal magistrate during Trujillo's regime. The story recounts the moral dilemma and ultimate cowardice of the young magistrate during the massacre of thousands of Haitian and dark-skinned Dominicans along the border region in 1937. The narrator is unable to face up to his responsibility to humanity and fails to react against the campaign of racial murder, although he knows that he should do so.

El masacre presents the tragedy of extreme nationalism and the atrocities of genocide. Prestol Castillo, though a potential political critic of Trujillo, expresses a strong anti-Haitian undertone and racist sentiment. Haitians are described consistently as primitive and savage aliens to Dominican civilisation, an ironic reversal of the barbarity of the Dominican-led massacre. Several characters in the novel refer to previous Haitian invasions and barbarity in order to legitimise the massacre.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Prestol Castillo, F. 1973 *El masacre se pasa a pie* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller. The title refers to the Massacre River which divides Haiti from the Dominican Republic. Many Haitians were forced to flee across this shallow river during the genocide.

⁵⁵ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 139

The author makes the tacit assumption of white supremacy, and presumes that the expulsion of Haitians from Dominican territory by some means was a self-evident necessity. Prestol Castillo suggests in an interview that though he considered the killings abhorrent, the outcome was a reassertion of Dominican nationality along the border region.⁵⁶ The massacre was a justifiable assertion of nationalism - it is argued that violent racism is more correctly a characteristic trait of Haitian history.⁵⁷

Haitians were deemed worthless, their humanity carried no weight in the profit and loss of Dominican agriculture. The narrator records the paltry sum offered by the Dominican government as compensation for Haitians killed in the massacre: 'A cow is worth more than a prisoner and a Haitian is worth less than a mango.'⁵⁸ The massacre destroyed a source of cheap labour, some of whom would work even for a sack of potatoes as payment. The reader suspects that Prestol Castillo harbours similar sentiments. Haitian labour was an unfortunate, but economically valid, requirement. He adopts a biological racism, characteristic of nineteenth and early twentieth century European thought:

The Haitian is the stalker of the night. And the best guide is the breeze. The noses of the Haitians appear to grasp the breeze in order to lead them to the stockyards, given away by their smell of dung, in the night... This primitive race reads an alphabet of smells.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Sommer, D. 1983 *One Master for Another: populism as patriarchal rhetoric in Dominican novels* Latham, Massachusetts: University Press of America, p. 182

⁵⁷ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 80

⁵⁸ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 73

⁵⁹ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 75

El haitiano es el caminante de la noche. Y el mejor guía es la brisa. Las narices de los haitianos parecen oprimir la brisa para que les diga dónde están los corrales, denunciados por el olor estiércol, en la noche. Un abecedario de los olores, que lee esta raza primitiva.

Haitians are described as a primitive race, prone to theft and guided by their sense of smell. Basic sensations govern their blunt, dangerous and animalistic tendencies: 'Haiti signifies hunger. Hunger knows no limits.'⁶⁰ The Haitians raided Dominican territory at night to steal or reclaim livestock and agricultural produce, but their stealth and thieving is seen as implicit, as natural and as dangerous as the night. Haitians belonged to the dark, and the darkness to Haiti: 'Haiti came at night... It was, night. It was, Haiti.'⁶¹

The narrator reproduces the long-standing fear of the Haitian revolutionary tradition, a delirious nightmare of Haitian revenge on whites. A Haitian labourer, facing death at the hands of drunken Dominican soldiers, screams:

"I want to drink blood! Blood! More blood...! The desire to drink with rum. Blood of white Spaniards! ... Give me blood, I want to wash my face with blood, in honour of the *negro* gods of Haiti."⁶²

In contrast to the brutality of the massacre and heathen lives of the Haitian population, the narrative describes the beauty and intelligence of the young Dominican teacher, Angela Vargas. The surrounding class of Haitian and Haitian-Dominican pupils stand in stark opposition to her virtues:

In this parish of ugliness the teacher was the contrast: she was beautiful. Here there was danger for a woman: to be a teacher, which is like saying that she was miserably poor, and to possess a beauty that could incite the sadism of any one of the savages who populated this distant territory. The girl was from the South and was barely twenty years old. She was the colour of cinnamon and had greenish eyes, beautiful black braids and the figure of a model in an aristocratic salon of a big city.

⁶⁰ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 78

Haití significa hambre. El hambre no sabe de límites.

⁶¹ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 126

Haití venía de noche... Era, la noche. Era, Haití

⁶² Prestol Castillo 1973, pp. 137-8

'¡Quiero beber sangre! ¡Sangre! ¡Más sangre!... La deseo beber con 'tafia.' ¡Sangre de blancos españoles!... Dadme sangre, deseo lavar mi rostro con sangre, en honra de los dioses negros de Haití.'

... she is also the only person here who knows that the *Dominican Republic* exists. 'What's that?...' the surprised residents of the place would say. They have only their miserable lives, like the lives of pigs, and lack any notion of the fatherland.⁶³

The assumed innocence and purity of the teacher is threatened by the Haitian presence. Prestol Castillo again posits his great fear of Haitian invasion, sexual and cultural, of all that is Dominican. Her beauty is enhanced by a faithful duty to *dominicanidad*. She reacts against the barbarity, whereas the protagonist, guilt-stricken and helplessly in love with her, is too weak to confront his cowardice. Her fortitude comes from that of the Dominican nation, her loyalty to *dominicanidad*. She survives, and he crumbles to nothing. Prestol Castillo fails to challenge racism just as the protagonist is unable to confront the realities of genocide and his own confused state of mind.

Identity and indecision

Black identity is seldom asserted in Dominican literature. The affirmation of *negritud* challenges the prevalent racial norms of *blancura* or *lo indio* and leads an element of self-doubt. Indecision, fear and the uncertainty about one's self are aptly expressed by Jiménez in 'Aquí' ('Here' 1980):

What am I?
negro, mulato, thick-lipped.
What am I?
Dominican, American, Antillean,
black African who feels the beat
a mad *negro* in a white world, a Spanish world.

⁶³ Prestol Castillo 1973, p. 64

En aquel paraje de fealdades la maestra era el contraste: era bonita. Aquí estaba el peligro por una mujer: ser maestra, que equivale casi a decir que es miserable, y poseer una belleza que incita el sadismo de cualquier bárbaro de los que pueblan esta tierra lejana. La muchacha era del Sur, con veinte años apenas. Tenía el color canela y ojos verdosos. Bellas trenzas negras y un cuerpo propio para modelo en una sala aristocrática de modas de una grande ciudad.

... es la única persona que sabe eso de que hay una *República Dominicana*. ¿Qué es eso... dirían los asombrados habitantes del paraje, que sólo tienen una vida mísera como la de los cerdos, sin noción de patria.

I search,
search for the tam-tam of my ancestors
I want to leave.⁶⁴

The poet seeks escape from a society in which his race is denied or deemed abnormal; yet the search for identity still refers to the essentialism of an African drum beat. 'Identidad' ('Identity' 1980), also by Jiménez, explodes the myth of indigenous ancestry as a racial smoke screen. All *indios/as* in the Dominican Republic share a variety of racial ancestries; African descent, however, is dominant:

Indio with the green eyes
son of Arab-*negro*
son of *blanco-negro*
tercerón, cuarterón, mulato.

Indio with the green eyes
son of Spaniard
son of Taino
son of *negro cimarrón.*⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Jiménez 1980, pp. 19-21

¿Qué soy?
Negro, Mulato, Bembón.
¿Qué soy?
Dominicano, americano, antillano,
negro africano que siento el bongó
un negro loco en un mundo blanco, mundo español.
Busco,
busco el tam-tam de mis antepasados
quiero salir.

⁶⁵ Jiménez 1980, p. 59

Indio de los ojos verdes
hijo de árabe-negro
hijo de blanco-negro
tercerón, cuarterón, mulato.

Indio de los ojos verdes
hijo de español
hijo de taíno
hijo de negro cimarrón.

Jiménez challenges the concept of the light aesthetic and the *indio* myth throughout his three collections of poetry. 'Indio claro', published in 1987, mocks those who try to 'lighten' their race through false terminology and challenges the weakness of their ill-founded prejudice. The rhetorical voice of the poet questions why anyone would want to be *negro/a*. If one Dominican asserts her or his *negritud*, then all Dominicans would have to follow:

Why do you want to be *negro*?
you are *indio*
indio claro
...
why do you want to be *negro*?
I cannot let you be it
because if you are *negro*
they will be *negros*
because if you are *negro*
I will be *negro*⁶⁶

The Dominican literature of *negritud* presents a portrait of self-denial and exclusion of reality. The Black Pride movement has failed to gain literary roots in the Dominican Republic; only Blas Jiménez has created a coherent body of work in recent times which addresses racial issues. His verse holds an optimistic outlook for a racially equitable future, but much hope remains shrouded in pessimism. He returns to the

⁶⁶ Jiménez 1987, pp. 100-101

¿Por qué quieres ser negro?
eres indio
indio claro
...
¿por qué quieres ser negro?
no puedo dejarte serlo
porque si eres negro
ellos serán negros
porque si eres negro
yo seré negro
porque si eres negro.

complexity of the Dominican racial matrix in 'Otra vez... aqui' ('Once again... here'
1984):

Among this Spanish people,
the *negro* dies
like the *indio*, by wanting to be *blanco*.

Among this Spanish people,
the *negro* civilises himself
with tones of various colours.

Among this Spanish people,
tears of the old *negro*
for the infant people: '*the negrito was born dead*'

Among this Spanish people,
people of suffering
one kills the *negro* on the outside, but he is born again within.⁶⁷

Jiménez suggests that the vitality of black rebirth is irrepressible, even through the living nightmare of racial 'death.' The final stanza points to an awakening of political and social energy which has failed to occur.

⁶⁷ Jiménez, B. R. 1984 *Caribe africano en despertar* Santo Domingo: Editora Nuevas Rutas, p. 54

En este pueblo español,
muere el negro
como indio, en querer ser blanco.

En este pueblo español,
civilízase el negro
con tonos de varios colores.

En este pueblo español,
lágrimas del viejo negro
por el pueblo bebé; '*el negrito nació muerto*'

En este pueblo español,
pueblo de los sufrimientos
se mata al negro por fuera, nace de nuevo por dentro.

Black awareness?

Manuel del Cabral, perhaps the best known of Dominican writers of black literature, awakened a limited response with a novel which combined *la negritud* and politics. *El presidente negro* was first published in 1973. The subject of the novel was unthinkable - a black president governing the United States. It is significant that del Cabral locates the novel in the United States; Black Power had no place in Dominican politics. Despite the focus on radical politics, *El presidente negro* breaks few of the moulds of Dominican literary style. Del Cabral uses well-established stereotypes and themes which do little to promote a reappraisal of black literature in the Dominican Republic. Instead, the narrative, while ostensibly addressing race relations and Black Liberation in the United States, employs a range of minor characters to provide derogatory images of Haiti.

The *negros/as* about whom del Cabral writes are seldom Dominican; yet critics have generously portrayed del Cabral as a spokesperson for literary *negritud* in Dominican society:

...the *negro* of Manuel del Cabral is a *negro* with tears who thinks, with sadness which demands reflection, with smiles which nourish our firm hope for social redemption, for human equality and the elimination of the injustices which torment humankind at all latitudes and among all races.⁶⁸

This type of criticism supports the whimsical, and at times patronising, rendition of black stereotypes which characterises Dominican literature. *El presidente negro* sustains this belief in a false and essentialist *negritud*.

The novel charts the rise and assassination of William Smith, the first black president of the United States, who supports the oppressed, the poor and the black

⁶⁸ Lantigua, J. R. 1989 Notas sobre la poesía de tema negro en Manuel del Cabral *Eme-Eme* 15, 82: 107-114. p.113

population, in their struggle against capitalism and unsympathetic modernising forces. Del Cabral includes numerous racial stereotypes and clichés in his writing. In the early stages of the novel he reverts to the environmental racism of the nineteenth century, describing how the black population of Harlem has been fortunate to overcome the cold New York climate, not their original 'geographical' climate, enabling them to sing and dance in the streets.⁶⁹

The protagonist is presented as a messianic figure. He sacrifices his own son, who has been kidnapped by the business mafia, to the causes of socialism and racial equality. His trustworthy and faithful assistant is Peter, a rock of consistency - the only white man who has his full confidence.⁷⁰ Peter himself is the son of an Irish immigrant and provides an obvious inversion of the white-benevolent-master and dutiful-black-servant tradition. Joe, the ill-fated mulatto son of the president and his former white girlfriend, is portrayed as the brilliant synthesis of two races, black and white.⁷¹ His father proposes a federal policy of racial inter-marriage to forge a new American nation; this, however, would contradict the narrator's earlier bizarre claim that:

the complexity of the mulatto is more complicated than that of the pure white and the pure black; he does not like being in between, perhaps so that he is not confused with being homosexual.⁷²

Among the background characters, two elderly black sages, Tic and Papá-Ciego, each possess spiritual powers which produce an otherworldliness. Perhaps the most wooden characterisation is reserved for the president's parents, Tom and Jane. Both are

⁶⁹ del Cabral, M. 1990 *El presidente negro* Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, p. 35

⁷⁰ del Cabral 1990, p. 91

⁷¹ del Cabral 1990, p. 184

⁷² del Cabral 1990, p. 23

... el complejo del mulato es más complicado que el del puro blanco y del negro puro; no le gusta estar entre dos aguas, quizá para que no lo confundan con el homosexual.

described as overwhelmed by the splendour of the White House, which offends their simple and humble spiritual beliefs. They continually express their unease to their son: 'Imagine now two savages out of control in this palace. We move like animals in a cage of luxury...'⁷³

The primitive nature of the parents' mentality is consistently described in the first sixty pages of the novel. Tom refuses to brush his teeth with toothpaste, since they, he argues, have always been white and that will remain the limit of his whiteness.⁷⁴ Jane, the blackness of her skin compared to the night and her teeth compared to the lightness of day, maintains a fatalistic view of their lives.⁷⁵ She argues that despite avoiding politics, her skin will always be political. The black population is, thus, fated to be subordinate to the whites. William promises, however, that class relations will one day transcend racial discrimination. Notwithstanding his attempts to institute a black state, the president then reverses his theory of self-imposed apartheid to claim: 'The word black... that's already a thing of the past.'⁷⁶ The confusion of the novel is exacerbated on the following page by the president's next statement to his mother: 'The black shouldn't let a white see him crying, he enjoys our pain, our skin nourishes his sadism.'⁷⁷

William, while travelling as a young man, was wrongly imprisoned in a Dominican jail by Trujillo. The Dominican dictator makes several appearances during the

⁷³ del Cabral 1990, p. 43

'Imagínate ahora dos salvajes sin control en este palacio. Nos movemos como animales en una jaula de lujo...'

⁷⁴ del Cabral 1990, p. 55

⁷⁵ del Cabral 1990, p. 53

⁷⁶ del Cabral 1990, p. 97

'La palabra negro... ya es cosa del pasado'

⁷⁷ del Cabral 1990, p. 98

'Que el negro no debiera mostrarle las lágrimas al blanco, él goza con nuestro dolor, nuestra piel alimenta su sadismo.'

novel in which he is portrayed as an evil simpleton. The narrative briefly criticises Dominican attitudes towards Haiti, but concentrates on describing the overt sexuality and immense fecundity of Haitian women. A barman recounts:

‘Here in Haiti... the women have sons under the trees, under the donkeys, in the corners, on the road, there is no place overlooked... If the rhythm of proliferation continues out of control like this in this country, the Haitian drama will return in several years with international significance.’⁷⁸

Del Cabral uses an indirect voice to repeat the perceived demographic and cultural threat of Haiti to the Dominican nation. Haitians, it is argued, survive their misery only through drug abuse and the omnipresent malignancy of *vodoun*. Whilst *El presidente negro* addresses themes of Black awareness, it does little to revoke existing prejudices against *negros/as* and Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

A view from outside

The appraisal so far points to the failure to establish a creditable literary tradition of *la negritud* within the Dominican Republic. Dominican writers living outside the Dominican Republic over the last two decades, such as Julia Alvarez, Chiqui Vicioso and Daisy Cocco de Filippis, have more directly addressed the racial prejudice of their compatriots. The external viewpoint and the experience of contemporary race relations in the United States have produced subtle assessments of the Dominican racial complex. The novel by Julia Alvarez, *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, is one such example which directly focuses on the influence of the migratory experience.

⁷⁸ del Cabral 1990, pp. 111-112

‘Aquí en Haití...las mujeres tienen hijos debajo los árboles, sobre los burros, en las esquinas, en el camino, no hay sitio previsto... Si el ritmo de proliferación se mantiene así desorbitado, en este país a la vuelta de algunos años el drama haitiano tomará proporciones de transcendencia internacional.’

The story recounts the history of four Dominican girls growing up with their family near Boston in the 1960s, describing their reactions to exile in the United States. Alvarez comments upon their return during summer vacations to the complexities of Dominican ethnicity, in stark contrast to the black-white dichotomy of North American society. Before their enforced political exile, the Garcia family were part of the lighter-skinned Dominican elite. On their arrival in the United States they became black immigrants who spoke Spanish. This was a catastrophic shock to the father who had indoctrinated his daughters with the importance of *hispanidad*, playfully holding them upside down and asking if they had the blood of the *Conquistadores* in their veins: ‘Then he puts her right side up and laughs a great big *Conquistador* laugh that comes all the way from the green, motherland hills of Spain.’⁷⁹ The father, later, expresses his racial prejudice after the birth of his grandson, which Alvarez recounts with subtle irony and ridicule:

During his two visits, the grandfather had stood guard by the crib all day, speaking to little Carlos. “Charles the Fifth; Charles Dickens; Prince Charles.” He enumerated the names of famous Charleses in order to stir up genetic ambition in the boy. “Charlemagne,” he cooed at him also, for the baby was large and big-boned with blond fuzz on his pale pink skin, and blue eyes just like his German father’s. All the grandfather’s Caribbean fondness for a male heir and for fair Nordic looks had surfaced. There was now good blood in the family against a future bad choice by one of its women.⁸⁰

After an initial reluctance to see his Dominican daughter marry an unknown German from outside the traditional elite, the father warms to the union. ‘Good blood’ transcends his class-based fears.

⁷⁹ Alvarez, J. 1991 *How The Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* New York: Plume-Penguin, p. 197

⁸⁰ Alvarez 1991, pp. 26-27

Alvarez describes a Haitian servant, known as Chucha, who formerly worked for the family whilst they lived in the Dominican Republic. The author describes her from the viewpoint of one of the young sisters:

There was this old lady, Chucha, who had worked in Mami's family forever and who had this face like someone had wrung it out after washing to get some of the black out of it. I mean, Chucha was super-wrinkled and Haitian blue-black, not Dominican *café-con-leche* black. She was real Haitian too and that's why she couldn't say certain words like the word for parsley...⁸¹

Alvarez projects an patronising image of the Haitian woman, loyal to her employers. She casts spells to protect them, her mysticism accepted as a benevolent form of *brujería*. Another maid, Pila, is also Haitian, but remains set-apart from the others: 'The light-skinned Dominican maids feared her, for Haiti was synonymous with voodoo.'⁸² Through the voice of the young sister, the farce of racially-constructed images of beauty are guilefully chided:

Nivea, the latest of our laundry maids, was "black-black": my mother always said it twice to darken the colour to full, matching strength. She'd been nicknamed Nivea after an American face cream her mother used to rub on her, hoping the milky white applications would lighten her baby's black skin.⁸³

Literature alone cannot pre-empt a radical re-evaluation of race in Dominican society, but the foundations of African Hispanic writing in the Dominican Republic is weak. Among contemporary authors, even the more sympathetic and enlightened writers maintain certain racial stereotypes which impede ambitions for a more equitable representation of race. The literature of *la negritud* in Dominican Republic has failed to

⁸¹ Alvarez 1991, p. 218

⁸² Alvarez 1991, p. 279

⁸³ Alvarez 1991, p. 260

contribute to a process of reducing racial discrimination. Can such a goal be achieved within the bounds of a racially or ethnically oriented literary canon?

Expressing *la negritud*

It is difficult to equate Dominican literature about *la negritud* with that of the region as a whole. Braithwaite has suggested four kinds of written tradition in the Caribbean: the rhetorical, the literature of African survival, the expression of Africa, and those works which seek a reconnection with Africa.⁸⁴ Few of these categories seem to fit the Dominican tradition. Black literature has been longer-lasting in the territories of the former British and French Caribbean, largely due to the stronger reaction to white colonialism. A key factor for the lacklustre response to *la negritud* in the Dominican Republic has been the officially accepted and pervasive anti-Haitian ideology in society.

La negritud has not had the revitalising literary impact so often described in other parts of the Americas. Lewis laconically attributes the limited impact of black literature in some instances to the 'positive emphasis upon the African cultural heritage in societies that quite often denied its value.'⁸⁵ The Dominican Republic is such an example. Lewis adds that when blackness at both the main social and linguistic levels becomes imbued with negativity, a tremendous amount of pressure to conform is exerted.⁸⁶ Why write black, when white is right?

Writers in the Dominican Republic found no intellectual or popular space for a black aesthetic, neither was the audience colour-blind. Acceptance would have meant

⁸⁴ Braithwaite, K. 1993 *Roots* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

⁸⁵ Lewis 1983, p. 4

⁸⁶ Lewis 1983, p. 6

acquiescence to the *négritude* and barbarity of Haiti, the natural antithesis to *dominicanidad*. Lewis describes an African Hispanic literary dichotomy that welds Hispanic language, style and technique on to an African conception of *negritud* and black Latin American culture.⁸⁷ This fusion joins the legacy of slavery with that of contemporary racial prejudice. Dominican society has avoided this literary synthesis.

The rejection of Hispanic culture in the Dominican Republic has been limited. Socially and culturally-engineered ignorance supports the myth of a benevolent Spanish colonial regime, outlined sardonically by Jiménez in 'Discriminación a la dominicana' (Discrimination Dominican-style 1984):

But
but slavery
slavery was not bad here.⁸⁸

Sarcastic disbelief is expressed that Hispanic civilisation could be associated with a barbarity similar to that experienced in Haiti.

Anti-Haitian feeling promoted the romance of an imagined European and indigenous history for the Dominican nation. Any foothold for an ensuing Afrocentric construction of the past was removed, in sharp contrast to the success of Jean Price-Mars's commentaries on Haiti and the work of Marcus Garvey in Harlem and Jamaica. *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (1927) by Mars was a direct revaluation and rehabilitation of African elements in Haitian life.⁸⁹ In the same vein as the writings of Garvey, Mars deemed African civilisation superior to the cultural barbarity of European societies.

⁸⁷ Lewis 1983, p. 179

⁸⁸ Jiménez 1984, p. 45

Pero
pero la esclavitud
la esclavitud no fue mala aquí.

⁸⁹ Price-Mars, J. 1973 *Ainsi parla l'oncle* Montreal: Lemiac

Reminiscences of a similar Black Arcadia in the Dominican Republic would have been tantamount to treason.

The literature of *la negritud* fronts a cosmetic myth, rather than addressing the prevalent racial hypocrisy and sham of ethnic tolerance. The racial, cultural and historical realities of black experience in the Dominican Republic are generally shrouded by racial mysticism and essentialism. *La negritud* still represents a cult of the dark exotic and glorifies a false innocent primitivism, which has been fashionable in European culture since the Renaissance, and notable among Latin American authors since the First World War.

Dominican literature with a black theme veers towards *africanización perpetua*, a phrase used first by Gastón Baquero, and repeated by Jackson, to describe the continuing representation of Africa as exotic; celebrating the crude physicality of the primitive.⁹⁰ The excessive focus on Africanness, echoed by the beat of the drum or fed by the fruits of plantation labour, tends to minimise the role of racism in maintaining an essentialist view of African culture. A tradition of caricature ‘has made the black a literary buffoon, a bongo-beating idiot mindlessly singing and dancing his way down through the centuries, all the while speaking a ‘broken tongue.’’⁹¹ Alternatively, the black female is represented as the bar temptress or salon seducer, an unintellectual sexual animal. Whilst many authors are no doubt well-meaning, most Dominican texts are apologetic, patronising or condescending. Manuel del Cabral described the character in ‘Este negro’ (‘This *negro*’ 1942) as a simpleton, a folkloric object in verse form:

Simple *negro*

⁹⁰ Jackson 1976, p. 40

⁹¹ Jackson 1976, p. 42

you who have
your life and the world
within your amulet.

From you,
arises only
the smoke of your pipe.

Neither the children,
nor the ass,
have your simplicity.⁹²

Black literature need not provoke a radical process of liberation or self-assertion nor appear as a confessional for white racism or black essentialism. Literature of *la negritud* in the Dominican Republic has been largely the preserve of light-skinned intellectuals, a game of stylisation and mimicry and a reaction against Haitian cultural influences. Jiménez's call for an appropriate black literature in his second collection of poems, *Caribe africano en despertar* (African Caribbean awakening) has yet to arouse sufficient writers or readers.

⁹² del Cabral 1976, p. 221

Negro simple,
tú que tienes
a tu vida y al mundo
dentro de un amuleto.

De ti,
sólo asciende
el humo de tu cachimbo.

Ni los niños,
ni el asno,
tienen tu sencillez.

7 RACE AND NATION IN DOMINICAN POLITICS

A fortnight before the second round of the Dominican presidential elections in June 1996, an opinion poll claimed that 9 percent of the electorate would not vote for the candidate of the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), Dr José Francisco Peña Gómez, because they believed that he was Haitian.¹ Eleven percent in the poll also said that race or colour would influence their vote, and 21 percent of those interviewed, who were supporters of the ruling Partido Reformista Social Cristiano (PRSC), affirmed that racial characteristics played an important part in their electoral choice.

Anti-Haitianism has a long history as the ideology of national cohesion and domination for the ruling Dominican elite, but, significantly, during the present decade, racism and nationalism have become the basis for a racist agenda in internal Dominican politics. Peña Gómez is dark-skinned and is alleged to have Haitian ancestry. In 1994, he was the main challenger to the long-standing white president, Dr Joaquín Balaguer, who, as a close aide to Trujillo, has had a major position in Dominican politics for over sixty years.² During the previous elections, in 1990, with the PRD in disarray, the presidential campaign of Peña Gómez was marginalised. The real battle was then fought between President Balaguer and Professor Juan Bosch. Victory fell to the former, amid the customary accusations of serious fraud.

The crucial juxtaposition of Haitian and Dominican nations in recent Dominican

¹ *Rumbo-Gallup* 11 June 1996

² Balaguer, now 90 years old, has been elected president seven times as leader of the PRSC from 1966 to 1978, and 1986 to 1996.

electioneering is discussed in the present chapter. The first section outlines the broad implications of nationalism and racism in Dominican politics. Anti-Haitianism under the regime of Trujillo, and two more recent theses by Joaquín Balaguer and Luis Julián Pérez are discussed in the context of this aggressive form of nationalism. The Dominican elections of 1994 and 1996 form the central section of the chapter; racist electioneering, anti-Haitianism as 'legitimised' racial politics, and the perceived threat of an international conspiracy against Dominican sovereignty are addressed in turn. Finally, the failure of Peña Gómez to confront the racialised nature of politics is considered, before concluding that race is likely to remain a key factor in Dominican political discourse.

Introduction: nationalism and racism

The assertion and protection of the national community, nationalism, is often a potent form of racism, manufacturing confrontation and alienation in society as the dominant by-products of cohesion. Solomos and Black argue that race is first and foremost a political concept.³ The racialisation of politics relates closely to the concept of nationalism. In Dominican politics, race and nation cannot be considered as isolated, unitary terms. Dominicans rarely speak of the *la nación dominicana*, they are far more likely to mention *la raza dominicana*. Race and nation are effectively entwined, *la nación* is a term seldom used in everyday language. The national territory is racial territory; national belonging denotes racial belonging.

Unlike political discourse in the United States, race in the Dominican Republic

³ Solomos, J. and Black, L. 1995 *Race, Politics and Social Change* London: Routledge, p. 29

incorporates overwhelming nationalist overtones. Dominican nationalism is politicised and racialised; nation and state form a political unity where state politics legitimise the politics of race. Despite highly racialised politics in the 1990s, there has been a lack of black or *negro/a* political mobilisation compared to the United States, which experienced the civil rights movements and urban uprisings of the 1960s and the emergence during the 1980s and 1990s of black and minority mobilisation. Black political consciousness was unlikely to take off in a country which ignored racism at the official level, and where racial identification generally negated an African heritage. Instead, racial political mobilisation in the Dominican Republic has focused on the rejection of Haiti and *negritud*, which were personified for many by the presidential candidacy of Peña Gómez.

Racism plays a fundamental part in Dominican politics, but does race transcend class influence? Writing about the Haitian political experience, James states:

The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental.⁴

Rex also believes that class is the major motivation for political action. Racial discrimination and conflict, he argues, can be explained by inequalities in the 'market situations' which fuel conflicts between indigenous workers and immigrants.⁵ Rex considers the special case of immigrants in society, placing their experience in terms of an underclass, rather than as a working class.⁶ Rex considers class from a Weberian

⁴ James, C. L. R. 1994 *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo revolution* London: Allison and Busby, p. 104

⁵ Rex, J. and Moore, R. 1967 *Race, Community and Conflict* London: Oxford University Press

⁶ Rex, J. 1973 *Race, Colonialism and the City* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 156

standpoint focusing upon relative access to resources. From a Marxist rather than Weberian perspective, Miles opposes race as a useful category since he views racism as integral to capital accumulation.⁷ Race, he argues, is always a component of the class dynamic, and is thus, an indirect medium for political action - it is an ideological effect, a mask hiding reality. For Miles, politics focused on ethnicity misjudges the central problematic of the class struggle.

Balibar describes the class system and nationalism as complexity reducers for political action, suggesting that the latter is now the principal complexity reducer in modern history.⁸ Nationalism is formed in opposition to class struggle, which is then repressed by the former - the two do not compensate one another under these terms. Balibar argues that nationalism takes the form of racism, yet creates a contradiction by stating that racism is determined by class as 'an institutionalisation of the hierarchies involved in the world-wide division of labour.'⁹ If nationalism opposes class struggle, then racism cannot be a class-based ideology. Neither does nationalism automatically repress class struggle, and it is false to equate racism with the latter. Racism, and thus nationalism, are expressions formed through ethnicity. By recognising the importance of race and nation for political action, Balibar inadvertently emphasises the significance of ethnicity. Anderson, too, gives racism a basis in class relations. He separates nationalism from racism by associating the latter with class, bloodlines and aristocracy.¹⁰ The

⁷ Miles, R. 1982 *Racism and Migrant Labour* London: Allen and Unwin

Miles, R. 1989 *Racism* London: Routledge

⁸ Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. 1991 *Race, Nation, Class: ambiguous identities* London: Verso, p. 182

⁹ Balibar and Wallerstein 1991, p. 6

¹⁰ Anderson, B. 1991 *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* London: Verso, p. 136

emphasis on racial lineage is, however, an important aspect which unites nationalism as a form of racism.

Other authors have given greater autonomy to race over class, arguing that the former is often the primary political force at work.¹¹ Gilroy suggests that race is the dominant factor of black experience in Britain.¹² Using a similar concept of race formation to Omi and Winant, Gilroy posits that racial meanings are continually struggled over in everyday settings. Castells, in a departure from earlier class-driven analysis, awakens to the importance of social movements led by non-class motivated political action.¹³

Race and nation have been the leading influences in Dominican political discourse during the 1990s, a marked transition from the class politics of the 1960s, the decade of the April Revolution. What has initiated this racialisation of electoral discourse? The key factor, coupled to economic stagnation, has been the presidential candidacy of Peña Gómez in a society primed for the explosion of anti-Haitianism. The last two decades have witnessed growing concern about Haitian immigration, the 'silent invasion', threatening the demise of *la raza dominicana*.

Barker's analysis of a new racism, focused on Britain in the 1980s and struggling to defend a mythical British or English way of life, is comparable to the racialisation of Dominican politics in the 1990s.¹⁴ Economic crisis, war with Argentina, and the

¹¹ Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982 *The Empire Strikes Back* London: Hutchinson
Keith, M. 1993 *Race, Riots and Policing: lore and disorder in a multi-racist society* London: UCL Press
Goldberg, D. T. 1993 *Racist Culture* Oxford: Blackwell

¹² Gilroy, P. 1987 'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack'. *the cultural politics of race and nation* London: Hutchinson

¹³ Castells, M. 1983 *The City and the Grassroots* London: Edward Arnold

¹⁴ Barker, M. 1981 *The New Racism: conservatives and the ideology of the tribe* London: Junction Books

challenges of expanding ethnic communities were a few of the fears fuelling the new racism in Britain. In the Dominican Republic, the United States' intervention in Haiti and the foreign condemnation of Dominican elections threatened from outside; Haitian immigration challenged from within.

Fanon describes the defence of a racialised nation as 'cultural racism.'¹⁵ Gilroy similarly regards new racism as a definition of race in terms of identity and culture, an attempt at legitimisation.¹⁶ Race becomes coded in the language of nation and culture, aimed at deflecting the negative accusations of racism. Nationalism in popular terms is admirable, but the censure of racism leaves a social scar. However, the language of nation invokes a hidden racial narrative. The issue of sovereignty, a key component in Dominican electoral campaigning, is a powerful weapon in the armoury of racial politics. Barker describes sovereignty as a 'kinship illusion', a sentiment of national homogeneity, or a national character, which implies a lineage of inheritance - nation and culture gain a pseudo-biological importance, a dangerous vestige of nineteenth century European racism.¹⁷

The racialised politics of the Dominican Republic also share a similarity with the increase of extremist right-wing politics and fascism over the last two decades in Europe. The Unión Nacionalista and the Frente Nacional Progresista are the two main Dominican nationalist parties which will be discussed below. The existence of extremist right-wing parties allows conservative parties to oppose them, implying their own anti-racism, while

¹⁵ Fanon, F. 1970 *Toward the African Revolution* Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 42

¹⁶ Gilroy 1987, p. 43

¹⁷ Barker 1981, p. 65

espousing similar policies in more palatable language.¹⁸ This more acceptable, yet racist, polity uses the facade of a legitimised xenophobia:

The form of theory into which such words as 'alien' have been placed, giving them wider and more explicit meaning, is a theory of xenophobia. The wish to exclude foreigners has been built into a theory capable of operating at different levels. At one level... The theory inhabits the language of political arguments. In those arguments ideas about the naturalness of xenophobia allow politicians to move between (selected) evidence and policy conclusions. The implicit concept acts as a 'bridge', allowing individual experiences, particular bits of information and evidence, to be theorized, given status and significance. Emotional responses now seem justified by their very 'naturalness.'¹⁹

Immigration plays a key role in changing or emphasising conceptions of race and the nation, and anti-immigration policies have been an important basis for the rise of nationalist parties in Europe.²⁰ Racist parties defend their policies in terms of the cultural incompatibility of immigrants with the national population.²¹

Racist political mobilisation is a response to the fear of social and economic change, the inadequacy of a section of the population to compete legitimately in a changing society. The politicisation of race and the scapegoating of racial groups provides a platform for the articulation of fears and the rejection of existing social and economic relations to emphasise the need to protect the interests of the nation. In a context of social and economic uncertainty, race and nation are potent myths in political discourse. Anti-Haitianism in twentieth century political discourse is discussed in the following section.

¹⁸ van Dijk, T. A. 1993 *Elite Discourse and Racism* London: Sage, p. 61

¹⁹ Barker 1981, p. 4

²⁰ Wrench, J. and Solomos, J. (eds) 1993 *Racism and Migration in Western Europe* Oxford: Berg

²¹ Fennema, M. 1995 Some theoretical problems and issues in comparison of anti-immigrant parties in Western Europe Revised version of a paper presented at 'Racist Parties in Europe: a new political family,' Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux, 27 April- 2 May 1995, p. 22

Twentieth-century anti-Haitianism: a political history

The context of Dominican elections during the present decade has been one of anti-Haitianism, fuelled by a growing concern over Haitian immigration and the demographic threat of a politically unstable neighbour. The border with Haiti has always been a highly contested and emotive physical entity in Dominican history. Policies similar to Trujillo's *dominicanización* of the borderlands have been consistently reproduced since the 1930s.

In the mid-1930s, Trujillo aimed to establish Dominican claims to border territory by blocking further Haitian occupation of the region and by fostering a stronger sense of Dominican identity. For over a century and a half before the Trujillo-Vincent agreement in 1936, there had been no mutually recognised border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The border population consisted of many *rayanos/as*, people of mixed Haitian and Dominican ethnicity. Many Dominicans in the border area spoke creole as their first language, were followers of *vodú*, adopted Haitian settlement and kinship patterns, and used the Haitian *gourde* as the unit of currency.²² Of great concern, was a purported 'darkening' of the population as more Haitians migrated to settle in the border provinces.

Trujillo feared the growing influence of Haitian culture in Dominican territory. The boundary agreement in 1936 established the foundation for a programme of *dominicanización*, but the most brutal example of this policy to reclaim the nation came a year later in the form of the previously mentioned massacre of up to 18,000 Haitians, and dark-skinned Dominicans, resident in the border zone. Continuing expulsions of Haitians were carried out by the Dominican military during the following decades, and an intense

²² Augelli, J. P. 1980 Nationalisation of the Dominican borderlands *Geographical Review* 70, 1: 19-35, p. 22

religious and educational campaign was pursued in the border areas. A select corps of Frontier Cultural Agents disseminated Dominican propaganda, and a network of highways was constructed to reduce physical and economic isolation from the rest of the country.²³ Houses were constructed in traditional Dominican styles, and agricultural colonies promoted. To 'lighten' the population, Trujillo attempted to encourage the resettlement of refugees from Eastern Europe, Italy and Japan in the Dominican borderlands.

The concerted programme of *dominicanización* lost momentum with the demise of Trujillo and the relative improvement of relations with Haiti at an official level. However, Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans are regularly deported from Dominican territory by the military, regardless of the legitimacy of their presence, and the concept of *dominicanización* remains a popular nationalist platform. Luis Julián Pérez, the leader of an extreme right-wing party, the Unión Nacionalista, published a book at the start of the present decade, defending the Haitian massacre in 1937 and advocating a contemporary campaign to defend the Dominican nation. His implicit agenda supported a strategy of ethnic cleansing not far removed from that of the *Trujillato*. Pérez undermines the legitimacy of Haiti as a state which evolved from a French colony founded on piracy and barbarity, suggesting that the island is intrinsically Spanish.²⁴ The uncivilised and savage origins of the Haitian nation are repeated in the sexual and racist overtones of the threat of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic: the 'passive penetration, repetitive and

²³ Augelli 1980, p. 27

²⁴ Pérez, L. J. 1990 *Santo Domingo frente al destino* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller, p. 9

incessant,' and the implied rape of a virginal, pure and blameless Dominican nation.²⁵

The romantic idyll of a Spanish past is resurrected in contrast to the brutality of the Haitian revolution. Pérez classes the latter as one of the most barbaric and sadistic crimes in American history, though he disregards the preceding two centuries of slavery.²⁶ Despite errant Spanish colonial rule, Dominicans have always opposed Haitians to defend and assert their *hispanidad*. Dominican society is:

... above all a community of Hispanic origin... its centuries old culture in a constant relation with European civilisation. [Dominicans] recovered their old status and became Spanish again, in spite of Spain... loyal to the sentiment of *hispanidad*.²⁷

The racism of Haitians towards *mulatos/as* dictates that co-operation between the two countries will always be impossible, especially, in Pérez' opinion, given the situation of complete incompatibility. He regurgitates a string of stereotypes which associate Haitians with witchcraft, AIDS, promiscuity, unemployment and an inability to understand birth control.²⁸ Pérez' text recommends the expulsion of all Haitians from Dominican territory, while failing to acknowledge that the Dominican government encouraged the majority of Haitians to migrate in the first place, and suggests that a temporary wall or fence should be erected to seal the border more effectively.²⁹ Far from dissociating his plans for *dominicanización* from those of Trujillo, he praises the regime's functionaries for their patriotism, arguing that the 1937 massacre was a repugnant but

²⁵ Pérez 1990, p. 11

²⁶ Pérez 1990, p. 49

²⁷ Pérez 1990, p. 29

²⁸ Pérez 1990, pp. 174-175

²⁹ Pérez 1990, p. 146

necessary action, and an inevitable consequence of Haitian aggression.³⁰

Despite such bigotry, Pérez attempts to separate his brand of nationalism from racism by suggesting that the racial, or aesthetic, differences between Haitians and Dominicans are not great enough to typify racial prejudice.³¹ Besides, he argues, racism is a Haitian problem resulting from the predominance of African heritage in Haiti and the ensuing ‘lower level of culture.’³² While the opinions of Pérez are extreme, it should be noted that he is the leader of a relatively well-known nationalist party which receives noticeable political coverage in the media, and the person to whom Balaguer dedicated a recent edition of his poetry.³³ The reason for the dedication is explained by reference to Balaguer’s best-selling book, which shares a similar concern for the destiny of the Dominican nation.

In 1983, Balaguer published *La isla al revés*, now in its seventh edition, in which he outlines the demographic threat from an expanding Haitian population, the echo of an imperialism which sought to subjugate the Hispanic population - ‘a plan directed against the independence of Santo Domingo and against the American population of Hispanic origin.’³⁴ Balaguer relies upon the scientific racism of the nineteenth century to explain the demographic explosion of the neighbouring country, listing three key factors:

a) the characteristic fecundity of the *negro*; b) the primitive conditions which single out the low social standard of a considerable part of the Haitian population, and c) the resistance to illnesses due to the strong physique of the *negro*.³⁵

³⁰ Pérez 1990, pp. 96-97

³¹ Pérez 1990, p. 131

³² Pérez 1990, p. 132

³³ *Ultima Hora* 30 August 1994

³⁴ Balaguer, J. 1993 *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino dominicano* Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, p. 33

³⁵ Balaguer 1993, p. 35

Using a Malthusian framework, Balaguer then elucidates the biological threat of Haiti on the basis of race:

... the *negro*, left to his instincts and without the limiting brake on reproduction that a relatively high standard of living imposes on all countries, multiplies at a speed almost comparable to that of plants.³⁶

Nearly half of the books listed in the bibliography were published in the nineteenth century, a third were published between 1900 and 1950, and none after 1979. *La isla al revés* is based heavily on an earlier work, *La realidad dominicana*, written when Balaguer was Foreign Minister to Trujillo, in order to explain the 1937 Haitian massacre.³⁷ Dore Cabral describes *La isla al revés* as a 'book of the past', but it contains the sentiments of a man who until recently was president of a modern Caribbean state.³⁸ At the time of publication, *La realidad dominicana* was an impressive text - original, coherent and representative of contemporary intellectual thought in the Dominican Republic.³⁹ *La isla al revés* is weaker, and less coherent. It is not just another edition of an historical text, but was published to confront present day issues within the context of a nationalist agenda.

The nation that Balaguer wishes to defend faces racial, cultural and moral peril from a the passive invasion by darker-skinned Haitians, who will destroy the roots of *hispanidad*:

³⁶ Balaguer 1993, p. 36

³⁷ Balaguer, J. 1947 *La realidad dominicana: semblanza de un país y de un régimen* Buenos Aires: Imprenta Hermanos Ferrari

³⁸ Dore Cabral, C. 1985 La inmigración haitiana y el componente racista de la cultura dominicana (apuntes para una crítica a *La isla al revés*) *Ciencia y Sociedad* 10, 1: 61-69, p. 63

³⁹ Cassá, R. 1984 *La Isla al Revés: entre la cuestión nacional y la cuestión social* unpublished conference paper Department of History and Anthropology at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, 2 October 1984

The immense wave of colour that daily invades Dominican territory, not only exposes Santo Domingo to the loss of its national character, but also corrupts its customs and lowers moral standards.⁴⁰

... the Hispanic language and tradition, for more than a century, were the only defensive barriers against the terrifying wave of colour and disintegrating force which had been invading Dominican territory in an interrupted, yet systematic manner, since 1795.⁴¹

Haitians put Dominican morality at risk. Both Pérez and Balaguer are concerned about the fatal attraction of Dominicans to Haitian dissolution, undermining traditional kinship, Christian values and irreversibly altering the ethnic make-up of the Dominican nation.⁴² The powerful stereotype of sexual promiscuity reiterated by Pérez, is employed by Balaguer to separate the two nations and to outline the pervasive menace of racial and cultural contamination: 'The clandestine penetration across land boundaries threatens to disintegrate the moral and ethnic values of Dominican families.'⁴³

Regardless of a nationalist discourse which focuses upon the alleged traumatic consequences of the growth of *la raza negra*, Balaguer denies, with Pérez, that racism ever existed in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁴ The only prejudice to which he concedes is religious, the defence of Catholicism. Fennema and Loewenthal observe that while the Haitian is always identified by the colour of his or her skin, and blackness is equated to Haitian origins, Dominicans are seldom referred to by Balaguer in racial terms.⁴⁵ He

⁴⁰ Balaguer 1993, p. 74

⁴¹ Balaguer 1993, p. 63

⁴² Balaguer 1993, p. 40

⁴³ Balaguer 1993, p. 156

⁴⁴ Balaguer 1993, p. 96

⁴⁵ Fennema, M. and Loewenthal, T. 1987 *La construcción de raza y nación en la República Dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, p. 51

defines the Dominican population as Spanish, and by implication white, although he admits that the majority are *mestizo/a*.⁴⁶ The town of Baní, situated to the south-west of the Dominican Republic, is selected as the 'flower of the Republic', because the population is 'somatically least blended' and the Spanish tradition supposedly remains intact.⁴⁷

Balaguer believes that the savagery of Haitian culture is at least in part due to economic distress and underdevelopment, which gives some credence to his surprising proposition, at the end of *La isla al revés*, that a federation on economic grounds might be established between the two countries for practical reasons of development.⁴⁸ This federation could extend, with restricted conditions, to the granting of dual citizenship.⁴⁹ This single, unexpanded statement would initially seem to undermine the previous two hundred pages of nationalist discourse, but the elusiveness of Balaguer's statement seeks merely to provoke discussion, aimed at reasserting the strength and dominance of the Dominican nation. The granting of severely limited rights of citizenship would be a calculated measure for political or economic development of greater benefit to the Dominican economy. The subordinate role of Haiti in the confederation remains implicit.⁵⁰

Nationality, in Balaguer's terms, can never be granted or exchanged, only inherited. Paradoxically, while Balaguer's writing points towards a tentative integration

⁴⁶ Balaguer 1993, p. 92

⁴⁷ Fennema and Loewenthal 1987, p. 61

⁴⁸ Fennema, M. forthcoming *Hispanidad and the construction of national identity in Santo Domingo*

⁴⁹ Balaguer 1993, p. 220

⁵⁰ Cassá, R. 1984 *La Isla al Revés: entre la cuestión nacional y la cuestión social* unpublished paper Santo Domingo: Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, p. 11

between the two states, the opponents of Peña Gómez castigate him for allegedly favouring the fusion of the island, an accusation which he vehemently denies. Anti-Haitianism is a virulent component of Dominican intellectual history, and Haiti lies at the foundation of Dominican nationalism.

Dominican electioneering in the 1990s: the politics of race

Electoral politics have had a controversial history in the Dominican Republic since the 1960s, after three decades of authoritarian rule under Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. The recent era has witnessed a series of closely fought, or more accurately fraudulent, election results (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Election results in the Dominican Republic since 1986

% Vote Political party	1986	1990	1994	1996 - 1st round	1996 - 2nd round
PRD	36.5	23.2	41.4	46.1	48.75
PRSC	41.6	35.5	42.4	15.3	-
PLD	18.4	33.8	13.2	38.4	51.25

Source: Junta Central Electoral

PRD - Partido Revolucionario Dominicano; PRSC - Partido Reformista Social Cristiano; PLD - Partido de la Liberación Dominicana

Dr Joaquín Balaguer has maintained power through fraudulent elections for the last thirty years, letting go of control, only after international pressure, for two terms between 1978 and 1986. The PRSC again accepted defeat in the 1996 presidential elections, which have been heralded by some as the first non-fraudulent elections in the country's history.

The focus of this section, and the key to understanding election campaigns in recent years, is the development of an intensely racialised political discourse. This has occurred most noticeably during the 1990s, when Peña Gómez became the presidential candidate for the PRD and leader of the main opposition party. Political campaigning developed tones of overt racism, and has been fuelled by anti-Haitianism and racist attitudes among the electorate. Peña Gómez had suffered racist slurs during the elections in 1982 as candidate to be mayor of Santo Domingo, but not to the same extent as he did in the 1994 and 1996 presidential election campaigns.

Race is politicised in the Dominican Republic, coded in the evocative language of culture and nation. The attack against Peña Gómez suggested that his Haitian ancestry made him an unsuitable, and potentially disloyal, candidate for the presidency of the Republic. A Gallup poll stated that 25 percent of those interviewed would not vote for Peña Gómez because he was 'violent and uncontrollable', his aggressive nature usually being linked to the assumed savagery of his Haitian heritage. Thirty-one percent of respondents, from another poll ten days before the second-round vote, believed that national sovereignty could be at risk if Peña Gómez became president.⁵¹ The main complaint against Peña Gómez' Haitian origins was that he would support a fusion of Haiti and the Dominican Republic to create a single state, resurrecting fears of nineteenth-century Haitian plans to make the island *une et indivisible*. Electoral campaigns indirectly, or overtly, insulted the *negritud* of Peña Gómez. Anti-Haitianism, legitimised by popular opinion, acts as a respectable nationalist shield for the racism

⁵¹ *Rumbo*-Gallup 19 June 1996

which pervades Dominican society, and rejects *negros/as* as suitable candidates for the presidency. One interviewee in Gazcue, a supporter of the PRD and Peña Gómez, was forced to lament, 'Here, nobody, ever, wants a black president.'

The stance of Peña Gómez in the face of the racist political agenda must be analysed and questioned. Many would argue that he failed to challenge the racist accusations of his opponents, frequently responding to blatant prejudice in a defensive manner, thus failing to tackle the 'legitimacy' of racism as a platform for party and personal politics. At times, his defensive, almost apologetic, response to racial antagonism suggested that he, too, was trapped in an anti-Haitian mentality, strengthening his *dominicanidad* by rejecting Haiti.

Threats to sovereignty have been a major issue in the Dominican Republic. The country has been occupied by foreign powers for a total of 35 years since 1822 - by Haiti between 1822 and 1844, Spain between 1861 and 1865, and twice by the United States, from 1916 to 1924 and 1965 to 1966. International agencies and foreign governments have had a significant input into Dominican affairs for most of the century. As late as 1940, the Dominican customs administrator was an American nominated by the United States president, a hangover from the 1910 American-Dominican Convention.

Fraudulent mandates and the exclusion of the majority of the population from state politics has meant that the Dominican political system has lacked credibility and legitimacy. Maríñez suggests that democratic transition in the Dominican Republic occurred with the election of the PRD government in 1978, yet every presidential election, except the most recent in 1996, has been accompanied by complaints of

fraudulent practice being lodged with the Junta Central Electoral.⁵² Espinal suggests that democratic development faced particular problems in the Dominican Republic, not only from a strong authoritarian political history, but also as a monocultural economy with a heavy dependence on the external market, combined with a low level of industrialisation and high unemployment.⁵³ Insularity and the fear of United States' intervention also placed pressures upon incipient democratic regimes.

The presidential elections in 1996 broke the mould of fraudulent elections following the widespread condemnation and political fiasco of the 1994 elections. In 1994, the main contenders for the presidency were Balaguer and Peña Gómez. Balaguer was adjudged to have won, but accusations of fraud threatened to paralyse the country amid popular discontent. An agreement was signed between the political parties which limited Balaguer's term of office to eighteen months, later extended to two years after political manoeuvring by the PRSC, with the proviso that the veteran *caudillo* could not stand for re-election.

Although the presidential mandate was changed, the results of the elections in May 1994 stood as calculated by the electoral board, the Junta Central Electoral, despite notable reservations among international observers at the elections and active opposition by non-governmental political groups. The scale of the fraud received international media coverage.⁵⁴ The PRD claimed that 150,000 opposition supporters were unable to vote, the

⁵² Maríñez, P. A. 1993 El proceso democrático en República Dominicana: algunos rasgos fundamentales *Estudios Sociales* 93: 27-39

⁵³ Espinal 1991. In Clarke 1991, p. 145

⁵⁴ *New York Times* 20 May 1994, editorial 'Mr Balaguer's Dubious Victory'
New York Times 6 August 1994

deception being committed by the Junta Central Electoral in favour of the PRSC.⁵⁵ The electoral board, three fifths of whom were appointed by Balaguer, gave victory to the PRSC, several weeks after the day of the election, by a marginal 22,000 votes. International observers from the Organisation of American States, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs agreed that opposition parties were disenfranchised, supporting the credibility of the claims to fraud.⁵⁶ Under a fortnight before the elections, observers were excluded from the offices of the electoral register for three days; one observer was expelled from the country without explanation. During these days the electronic archives of the voting lists were allegedly altered in the government's favour. Government supporters were given multiple voting rights, and opponents excluded from the electoral lists or intimidated. In several areas, dark-skinned Dominicans or Haitian-Dominicans with legitimate voting rights were prevented from entering ballot stations by the police or military, on the supposition that they would vote against the government. Similar intimidation allegedly occurred during the 1996 elections, but to a lesser degree.⁵⁷

The examples of fraudulent practice were many and varied in 1994. First, the Junta Central Electoral failed to display, publicly, electoral lists as required by law, and refused access to them for over a month after the elections. Secondly, due to the exclusion of thousands of voters, the electoral board agreed to extend voting hours from six o'clock to nine o'clock on the night of the election, but delayed issuing news of the

⁵⁵ Peña Gómez, J. F. and Alvarez Bogaert, F. 1994 *Anatomía del fraude electoral: testimonio preliminar* Santo Domingo: Editorial Gente, p. 5

⁵⁶ *El Nacional* 18 May 1994

⁵⁷ *Listín Diario* 16 May 1996.

extension until 10 minutes after the polls had closed. Few ballot stations re-opened, and many stations were kept closed by armed government supporters or by the police. Thirdly, the creation of a new electoral register fourteen months before the elections created a surplus 225,000 *cédulas* which were still unaccounted for at the time of the elections. Fourthly, abstention at presidential elections in the Dominican Republic is usually between 27 and 30 percent. In 1990, the abstention was 44 percent. In 1994, the Junta Central Electoral reported an abstention rate of 6.3 percent for the whole country, down to 4.5 percent in the interior. Finally, in eight of the twenty-nine provinces, more votes were cast than were registered on the electoral lists. Excess votes amounted to 23,135 in Espaillat, 4,700 in Montecristi, 4,225 in Monte Plata, giving a total of 36,553 votes. This amounted to over 14,000 votes more than the stated margin of victory. Despite this contradiction in the electoral board's own calculations, the election results were confirmed.

Presidential elections were held next in May 1996, involving a three-way battle between Jacinto Peynado of the PRSC, Peña Gómez of the PRD, and Leonel Fernández of the Partido de la Liberación Dominicana (PLD). Balaguer, barred from re-election, refused to support his party's candidate or to vote in the elections. Peña Gómez, despite gaining the greatest number of votes, failed to obtain a sufficient majority for outright victory under the revised constitution, and so entered a second round of elections with the runner-up, Leonel Fernández, in the following month. A pact between the PLD and the PRSC, sealed by a remarkable political reconciliation between Bosch and Balaguer, the respective party patriarchs and long-term opponents, gave victory to Leonel Fernández. International observers upheld the legitimacy of both rounds of elections. Whereas fraud

was not reported during the recent elections, racialised politics remained prevalent during both periods of electoral campaigning in 1994 and 1996. Racism during 1994 was perhaps more virulent, if only because the PRSC, without Balaguer in 1996, was never a major contender and failed to orchestrate a campaign on the same scale as during the previous election.

The political motives for Bosch and Balaguer to form the Frente Patriótico are easy to understand at the party level, but as an individual, Bosch had to overcome considerable personal grievances against Balaguer to accept any form of political contract. Political manoeuvring establishes neither true friends, nor real enemies. Fierce antagonists for over fifty years, Bosch was exiled while Balaguer governed through the years of the Trujillato, then denied non-fraudulent elections by Balaguer for the greater part of three decades. In 1990, Bosch failed to gain the presidency from Balaguer by a margin of 24,000 votes, a result of blatant electoral corruption. Peña Gómez and Bosch, the latter now 87 years old and suffering from Parkinson's disease, were close allies within the PRD until Bosch left and formed the PLD in 1973. It could be suggested that Bosch held a personal grudge against Peña Gómez and therefore wished to preclude him from the presidency. Perhaps Bosch was racially prejudiced against his former colleague. The latter remains unlikely, however, since Bosch dedicated his autobiographical account of the early 1960s to the young Peña Gómez:

To José Francisco Peña Gómez,
and through him,
to the youth of the people,
the seed of hope
for the Dominican nation.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Bosch, J. 1965 *The Unfinished Experiment: democracy in the Dominican Republic* London: Pall Mall

Nevertheless, Bosch's writing shows seeds of anti-Haitian sentiment. As president of the republic following the death of Trujillo, before being ousted after barely seven months by the military coup, Bosch was involved in bitter brinkmanship with François Duvalier, the Haitian dictator. Whilst Bosch's opposition to the Haitian dictatorship is understandable, his writing at times exhibits a derogatory view of the neighbouring country:

Haiti's presence on the western part of the island represents an amputation of the Dominican future... We Dominicans know that because Haiti is there, on the same island, we can never realise our full potential. We know that inevitably, because of the Haitian revolution, we will sooner or later be dragged down to our neighbour's level.⁵⁹

While political adversaries, Balaguer and Bosch seem to share a mutual distrust of Haiti. Corten suggests that the fear of Haitian influence, and the possible fusion of the island under Haitian dominance, prompted the agreement to block Peña Gómez from gaining the presidency:

... the campaign had been marked by anti-Haitianism, in particular after the recent formation of a patriotic front between the ex-president, Juan Bosch, and the President, Joaquín Balaguer. A front destined, they say, to avoid 'the country falling into the hands of non-Dominicans.'⁶⁰

An editorial in *The New York Times* criticised the racist campaign of the PRSC, also arguing that the pact with Bosch was based on misguided anti-Haitianism.⁶¹ The two *caudillos* joined forces to defend the Dominican nation. The naming of the political union as the Frente Patriótico itself assumed an aggressive defence of *la Patria*. As *blancos*,

Press, preface

⁵⁹ Bosch 1965, pp. 179-180

⁶⁰ Corten, A. 1996 Les elections dominicaines: des citoyens s'organisent comme observateurs unpublished paper, p. 3

⁶¹ *New York Times* 12 June 1996

both suggested, and feared as inevitable, the fate that would befall a light-skinned minority on an island where the first successful slave revolution occurred. Both, undoubtedly, were active participants in racialised politics.

The motives for the political alliance between Balaguer and Bosch may be questioned, but the outcome was clear. Peña Gómez will never be the president of the Dominican Republic in a political and social climate where racism is legitimised, and where Haitian influence remains the prime political scapegoat for Dominican politicians.

The Haitian context in contemporary politics

During 1994, the political crisis in Haiti became a major issue in the Dominican elections. Anti-Haitian sentiment was fuelled by fears of an exodus from a politically unstable neighbour, heightened at the time of United States' military intervention. Dominican sovereignty was deemed to be under threat. An imminent invasion of Haiti by the United States provoked fears of a Haitian 'avalanche.'⁶² Jacinto Peynado, then vice-president, voiced his concerns over health risks and the spread of AIDS if Haitians were allowed to flee to the Dominican Republic *en masse*.⁶³ The media reacted to a tense, expectant atmosphere at the border, describing as a stampede the relocation of several Dominican families who feared an influx of refugees.⁶⁴

The sovereignty issue was effectively used by opponents of Peña Gómez during the 1994 electoral campaign. His alleged sympathies for Haiti and a pact with the exiled

⁶² *Listín Diario* 1 August 1994

⁶³ *Hoy* 15 September 1994

⁶⁴ *Hoy* 17 September 1994

Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, were questioned, amid claims of an international conspiracy and foreign meddling in Dominican affairs. To vote for Peña Gómez, a woman in Gazcue argued, was effectively to hand over her *dominicanidad* to a Haitian president. A reputed plot existed to unite the island under a single government, and allegations of potential political treason by Peña Gómez received wide coverage in the Dominican media during the elections.⁶⁵ Balaguer's support for ongoing trade with Haiti, breaking an international embargo, gained limited attention until an editorial in *The New York Times* challenged the Dominican government.⁶⁶ International concern over the failure of the Haitian embargo, and the role of foreign observers during the 1994 elections, created the basis for Dominican claims of covert foreign interference in domestic affairs.

The economic and political embargo against the Haitian military government was decreed initially by the Organisation of American States in 1991. It was ratified and strengthened later that year by the United Nations after the September *coup d'état* in Haiti. The embargo terminated three years later, towards the end of the period of electoral crisis in the Dominican Republic, when United States troops occupied Haitian territory on 18 September, 1994. Corten supports the suggestion of a secret pact between Balaguer and the United States' government - Balaguer's assistance with enforcing the embargo, in return for recognition of his fraudulent election victory.⁶⁷ The Dominican government,

⁶⁵ *Listín Diario* 14 September 1994

⁶⁶ *New York Times* 24 May 1994

⁶⁷ Corten, A. 1994 The Dominican Republic Elections and the United Nations Embargo against Haiti. In Corten, A. and Andreu, F. 1994 *Haiti, The Dominican Republic and the United States* Institute of Latin American Studies Occasional Paper No. 6 London: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, pp. 3-20, p. 4

fully aware of the lucrative nature of embargo breaking, had previously ignored the international sanctions against trading with Haiti. According to Corten, vigorous international condemnation of the fraud was muted because the international community needed to solicit Dominican support for the Haitian embargo. By the end of May, the Dominican government, which always claimed that the embargo was inhumane, began to respect the sanctions, and attempted to restrict illicit trade across the border.

The Haitian embargo was imposed at sea by the United States. An agreement with the Haitian government of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1981, allowed the United States Coast Guard to intercept Haitians who fled the country by sea. Since October 1993, the aim of the newly imposed naval blockade was to restrict trade, but also to prevent thousands of Haitian refugees arriving on North American shores. In May 1994, the United States' President, Bill Clinton, ordered the summary repatriation of all Haitian 'boat people.' At the same time as the Haitian exodus, hundreds of Cubans were fleeing from Havana by boat, unimpeded by the government of Fidel Castro as part of a Cuban effort to pressure the United States' government into lifting trade restrictions.

The two situations differed in that the Cuban refugees were at first granted automatic political asylum, as had been customary for any Cuban who arrived in the United States as a refugee. This was in stark contrast to the thousands of Haitian refugees who faced immediate repatriation or internment in military camps, while their applications for asylum were processed. Immigration policy clearly favoured the lighter-skinned, and usually more wealthy, Cuban migrants. The privileged status of Cuban refugees was changed in August 1994, but only after forceful lobbying by the human and

civil rights lobby in the United States.⁶⁸

Following the demise of apartheid in South Africa, and with an active exiled Haitian president and community in New York, Corten argues that the Haitian political crisis was adopted as a symbolic weapon by the Congressional Black Caucus in the United States.⁶⁹ A hunger strike by the United States congressman Randall Robinson in May 1994, focused attention on Haiti and on Haitian-Dominican relations. The exploitation of Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic, which had already been brought to world-wide notice in 1979 by the Anti-Slavery Society in London, was re-emphasised by Americas Watch and the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees and Caribbean Rights in the United States. The Dominican government had carefully avoided commenting on the Haitian situation; it certainly did not welcome a revival of international interest.

Foreign accusations that the Dominican authorities were ignoring the international embargo elucidated an angry response from the government, who had so far made few comments about the political crisis of its neighbour. Peynado's retort to criticism in *The New York Times* that the land border with Haiti was an open trade route, which was blatantly obvious, was one of indignation. Nothing, he assured, could be further from the truth; such a statement was akin to accusing the United States of allowing Mexicans to migrate freely across its borders. The Dominican response equated products with people, deflecting the issue of economic sanctions to one of immigration policy. The editorial in *The New York Times* added further insult by undermining the legitimacy of Balaguer's

⁶⁸ *Listín Diario* 28 August 1994

⁶⁹ Corten and Andreu 1994, p. 9

election victory. Peynado rejected such carping, and criticised international observers for openly supporting Peña Gómez during the election.

Peña Gómez sidelined himself from the debate stirred up by the North American media. Potentially, it could be used to attack the Balaguer administration and to gain the open support of the foreign human and civil rights lobby. He was, however, aware of the pitfalls, both economic and political. He could neither offend the powerful Dominican business interests who had operated during the embargo, nor could he become associated with the radicalism of Haitian or African American black power movements. Without an adequate response, he would be seen simply as an agent of the United States' government. Several Dominicans interviewed in the study areas claimed that the United States favoured the candidacy of Peña Gómez for president because he shared similar political beliefs to Clinton. He would be, thus, more amenable to an internationally-backed fusion of Hispaniola.

There is little doubt that the United States has been a strong influence in Dominican society, increasingly playing the role of *el patrón* - a source of inspiration and consternation combined with an attitude of love and hate.⁷⁰ Bell describes the relationship thus:

... friendship toward the United States as a nation is nepotic-avuncular in character; and while Dominican "nephews" are happy enough when Uncle Sam gives them expensive Christmas and birthday presents, they do not like it when he talks to them like a Dutch uncle.⁷¹

The United States embassy in Santo Domingo has been described as the major

⁷⁰ Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, p. 134

⁷¹ Bell, I. 1981 *The Dominican Republic* Boulder: Westview Press, p. 250

hub of Dominican politics.⁷² A Dominican newspaper suggested sarcastically that Clinton should have signed the Pact for Democracy between Balaguer and Peña Gómez, the electoral compromise which ended the 1994 crisis.⁷³ North American influence is generally regarded as inevitable, yet fears surrounding the issue of sovereignty have been heightened since the Haitian intervention. In 1996, the United States government felt it necessary to assure the Dominican public of its strict neutrality in the election process.⁷⁴ Most governments, however, would be alarmed by the recent comments of a former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs in the Reagan administration who argued that Caribbean states have little more to offer than sand, and 'little to export but their populations... While a reversal to full colonial status may be a non-starter... a beneficial erosion of sovereignty should not be.' The countries of the Caribbean, he added, 'may well be best off accepting and trying to regularise American intervention - as several have now done with regard to the United States Coast Guard and Navy - in exchange for certain trade benefits.'⁷⁵

In the acceptance speech at the beginning of his eighth presidency in 1994, on the Day of Restoration, the day that marked the final withdrawal of Spanish rule 129 years earlier, Balaguer warned of foreign interference.⁷⁶ The ceremony in the National Assembly ended with the unusual singing of the Dominican national anthem. The dialogue of conspiracy and international meddling in the Dominican polity, *la injerencia*

⁷² Wiarda and Kryzanek 1992, p. 75

⁷³ *Ultima Hora* 11 August 1994

⁷⁴ *Listín Diario* 27 June 1996

⁷⁵ PeaceNet 1 July 1996 peacenet-info@igc.apc.org

⁷⁶ *Listín Diario* 17 August 1994

nacional, was already in full flow. Foreign influence was verbally challenged. The next day, a warning that all foreigners living in the Dominican Republic must have legal residency papers by the end of the month, or face deportation, was published in the national newspapers by Department of Migration.⁷⁷ A flurry of complaints in the media that foreign guides were overrunning Dominican tourism without legal permits was further evidence of anti-interventionist hysteria.⁷⁸

Nationalism and the international conspiracy

The nationalist dialogue supported by the PRSC aimed to deflect attention away from the feeling of unrest following the electoral fraud. Nationalism, the protagonists argued, would unite the electorate and humiliate Peña Gómez. A few days after the elections in 1994 the Unión Nacionalista was launched. Peña Gómez, as one of the vice-presidents of the International Socialist, had just sought foreign support for the PRD's accusations of disenfranchisement through fraud. The Unión Nacionalista is a small political group, but with influential access to the media, including a regular television programme, *La Hora de Consuelo*, which champions nationalist doctrine. The group backed Balaguer, but demanded a stronger defence of the nation and the rebuttal of foreign antagonism. The Haitian embargo, it was argued, was an attempt to force an exodus of refugees across the Dominican border, making the fusion of the two countries inevitable.

Why did the nationalists consider foreign powers to have conspiratorial interests in internal Dominican affairs? First, as mentioned above, the nationalist debate diverted

⁷⁷ *Última Hora* 11 August 1994

⁷⁸ *Última Hora* 15 May 1994

attention away from political corruption. Secondly, there was genuine concern over the increasing influence of the United States in Dominican politics and society. Thirdly, most nationalists were fervent anti-Haitianists. Overt racism, thus, could hide behind the shield of respectable nationalism.

Fennema notes that conspiracy theory is a fundamental element in far-right ideologies: 'In the extreme right discourse, however, the conspiracy is not just related to an acute danger, but to a perceived decadence, a decline of the nation.'⁷⁹ A belief in ethnic superiority or domination would arguably strengthen the nation, coagulating popular conviction:

... conspiracy theory is the poor man's [sic] social science: it replaces the invisible hand by a visible one, it replaces the counterintuitive law of unintended affects by plots and purposes of friends and foes, of heroes and scoundrels.⁸⁰

The notion of superiority popularises conspiratorial claims which act akin to Balibar's complexity reducers:

Conspiracy theory appeals precisely because it offers a simple explanation of complex and diverse political events. In the latter case, the emphasis is more on the psychological compensations to be gained from a belief in conspiracy theory. Thus, there could be a sense of superiority which comes from believing that one knows a hidden truth.⁸¹

The Unión Nacionalista is composed of a nucleus of right-wing intellectuals and business people who aim to provoke popular nationalist support. Their political agenda responds to the belief that the Dominican Republic is about to be overwhelmed by

⁷⁹ Fennema 1995, pp. 13-14

⁸⁰ Fennema 1995, p. 17

⁸¹ Cited in Fennema 1995, p. 18

Haitian migrants and North American politicians.

The leader of the Unión Nacionalista, Pérez, outlined his political agenda in the previously mentioned work, *Santo Domingo frente al destino*. Pérez claimed that the Dominican Republic was highly susceptible to external and internal forces which sought to take advantage and to unite Haiti and the Dominican Republic, or to annex them to the United States.⁸² Conspiracy was afoot. Pérez lamented the lack of a strong leader similar to Trujillo to defend *la raza dominicana*. Dominican democracy had already failed, he argued, and popular democracy merely misplaced power in wasteful, incapable hands.⁸³ Another leading nationalist, Pedro Manuel Casals Victoria, backed the argument for autocratic leadership in the Dominican Republic.⁸⁴ He warned that the Unión Nacionalista could take a combative role in Dominican politics, where democracy was clearly a lost cause. Both individuals, paradoxically, share a similar idea with Bosch, who projected the concept of a dictatorship with popular support. Developing states required direction and strong decision-making. In many ways, Balaguer had already filled this role for the previous three decades.

The Unión Nacionalista has an implicit anti-Haitian stance. Pérez deplores what he calls the 'suicidal tolerance' of the Dominican government to Haitian immigration.⁸⁵ Haitians were bleeding the nation dry, sapping the vitality of the nation like vampires. Haitians, he described, arrive looking ashen grey in the *bateyes*, but despite the harsh conditions, they have sufficiently better lives in the Dominican Republic which restores

⁸² Pérez 1990, p. 13

⁸³ Pérez 1990, p. 241

⁸⁴ Pedro Manuel Casals Victoria interview with the author 29 September 1994

⁸⁵ Pérez 1990, p. 266

them to their natural colour, '*negro brillante*.'

⁸⁶

A newspaper headline in August 1994 claimed that over a million Haitians were living in the Dominican Republic.⁸⁷ Most, including their children, were allegedly seeking Dominican citizenship, in the face of which Dominican government passivity was deemed inexplicable. The estimated resident Haitian population and citizenship claims were exaggerated. The Dominican military had been, and still does, round up Haitians and deport them, on frequent, if random, occasions. The newspaper article gave evidence of anti-Dominican violence in Haiti, whilst castigating the Haitian ambassador for his ostensibly inappropriate comments on state-sponsored brutality against Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

Following the 1994 election, another publication concurred with the Unión Nacionalista's version of the fraud and the role of foreign intervention.⁸⁸ North American aid, it argued, had established a state of dependency in which Dominicans had absolutely no faith in their country. The nation was increasingly impotent and without destiny, unless the nationalist vanguard could vanquish the degenerate forces. Behind this upbeat nationalist front lay a new pessimism which suggested the inevitable and constant threat of alien insurgency.⁸⁹

A few days after the election, the Unión Nacionalista made an immediate call for a show of national unity to reclaim respect for Dominican sovereignty. Each household

⁸⁶ Pérez 1990, p. 81

⁸⁷ *El Siglo* 26 January 1996

⁸⁸ Velázquez-Mainardi, M. A. 1994 *El fraude del fraude: una conjura internacional* Santo Domingo: Editora Tele-3

⁸⁹ Pérez 1990, p. 33

was asked to fly the Dominican flag outside their home.⁹⁰ The proposal received popular support across all class and race categories, with a greater show in the urban areas, most likely due to the supply and affordability of flags. Sceptics have argued that the flags had been bought in advance to celebrate Balaguer's victory; as a result of the electoral confusion a new cause had to be found, one that would also build support and credibility for the PRSC.⁹¹ The nationalist demonstration was a ploy to sell off unused merchandise. Sales of flags and nationalist paraphernalia boomed, making nationalism a highly profitable enterprise. Victor Grimaldi, a media specialist and spokesperson for the Frente Nacional Progresista, a nationalist group not unlike the Unión Nacionalista, supported the display of *dominicanidad*.⁹² He denied that the campaign was directed against Peña Gómez, whose problems, he argued, are genetic. Peña Gómez cannot, he suggested, escape the Haitian origins which dictate his mannerisms and volatile character, a sign of mental instability and psychosis. Grimaldi distributed nationalist baseball caps, which on closer inspection were 'Made in the USA' - somewhat of a paradox for a campaign sponsoring Dominican economic and political independence.

The nationalist rhetoric is riddled with contradictions. Nationalists stated that the invasion of Haiti by the United States showed monstrous disregard for 'our' Haitian allies. The nationalists, however, vehemently refused any assistance for the tens of thousands of Haitian refugees who might try to cross the border, spreading their social and economic ills in the Dominican Republic.⁹³ Pérez blames the United States as the root

⁹⁰ *Listín Diario* 22 May 1994

⁹¹ Frank Moya Pons interview with the author 29 September 1994

⁹² Victor Grimaldi interview with the author 27 September 1994

⁹³ *Hoy* 17 September 1994

cause of national decline; in particular with respect to the recruitment of Haitian labour by North American sugar mills in the Dominican Republic.⁹⁴ His prejudiced discourse, however, refuses to condemn the exploitative recruitment of *braceros* by the Dominican authorities, while repeatedly blaming the Haitian presence as the basis for Dominican problems.⁹⁵ Dominicans are forced to migrate to the United States, he alleges, because Haitians take up employment opportunities and lower wage levels in the Dominican Republic. Hypocrisy binds the nationalist thesis. The United States is criticised for the harsh repatriation of Dominicans, compelled to live at the margins of the law, and whose deportation increases Dominican unemployment and takes away crucial remittances.⁹⁶

Although less vitriolic, with no foreign intervention in Haiti or condemnation of electoral practices on which to concentrate, the 1996 elections were witness to further nationalist debate, again undermining Peña Gómez' suitability to be president. A few days after Peña Gómez polled the most votes in the first round, opponents called for the creation of a national front to preserve Dominican sovereignty.⁹⁷

Leonel Fernández criticised *The New York Times* for suggesting that the PLD-PRSC pact was an attempt to defeat a presidential candidate of Haitian origin. The Frente Nacional Progresista condemned such accusations as a mark of desperation among foreign supporters of Peña Gómez, and the Secretary General of the PRSC claimed that the editorial itself was part of an international campaign to discredit the Dominican

⁹⁴ Pérez 1990, p. 24

⁹⁵ Pérez 1990, p. 78

⁹⁶ Pérez 1990, pp. 105, 220-221

⁹⁷ *Hoy* 30 May 1996

Republic.⁹⁸ Dominican newspapers ran a series of articles voicing fears that the nation was in peril. Between the election rounds, Leonel Fernández campaigned for the creation of a nationalist programme, the Proyecto Nacional Dominicano. The ongoing nationalist crusade, however, cannot match the overt racism exhibited against Peña Gómez during the 1994 elections.

Peña Gómez: the failure to confront racism

The presidential elections of 1994 marked a watershed in the history of racialised politics in the Dominican Republic, but the signals had been evident since the first attempt by Peña Gómez to win the presidency. In 1992, research in the city of Santiago de los Caballeros produced results which suggested that sixty percent of the sample believed that the race of Peña Gómez would be a political disadvantage to him.⁹⁹ A newspaper article stated that race was a major handicap for Peña Gómez' political career; no Dominican could ignore that Haitian aggression and savagery has been confirmed by history. Haitians made up more than 10 percent of the Dominican population. Peña Gómez was himself an example of the current Haitian infiltration and usurpation at the very heart of the political system.¹⁰⁰

The 1994 defamatory campaign against Peña Gómez concentrated on his suspected Haitian parentage, emphasising the negatively perceived stereotypes of Haiti. A series of videos were shown on state-controlled television networks illustrating Peña

⁹⁸ *Hoy* 13 June 1996

⁹⁹ Howard 1993, p. 66

¹⁰⁰ *Hoy* 17 July 1992

Gómez as a hot-headed, irrational man, shouting and arguing at political meetings - alluding to his savagery and uncivilised behaviour. He was closely linked with *vodú*, alleging his irrationality and faith in the occult and non-Christian ways. One video showed him attending a faith-healing ceremony for the treatment of his bodyguard's tumour in 1983. A direct link was made to Haitian *vodú* and its perceived evils. This tack was maintained in the run-up to the following elections. A newspaper printed that Peña Gómez feared the ghost of Trujillo which allegedly stalks the National Palace, while the souls of Trujillo's political victims haunt those who enter.¹⁰¹ Peña Gómez is linked in the same article to the witches of San Juan de la Maguana, an area renown for the influence of *brujería*.

Faxes which were sent anonymously on 5 May. 1994 to every fax machine in Santo Domingo depicted Peña Gómez as a blood-thirsty and power-hungry Haitian savage. A series of eight racist cartoons stressed his desire to unite the island under Haitian control, his complicity with the evil powers of *vodú* and the exaggerated claim that his followers would burn the country if he failed to gain power. Overtly racist political fliers and posters were not acknowledged by the opposition parties, though the funding of aerial leaflet drops and printing costs would have been paid for from official coffers and by business interests. One set of leaflets, dropped by aeroplane over central Santo Domingo on the eve of the election, divided the island into two colours; the red of the PRSC in the Dominican Republic, versus the black, PRD-supporting Haiti. The threat of Haiti was made clear by the slogan underneath the map which implied that if Peña

¹⁰¹ *El Siglo* 26 July 1995

Gómez and the PRD won, Dominican sovereignty would be handed over to the Haitians: 'Your vote makes frontiers! It's nothing to do with skin colour, but with the intention of those who want to deceive you again. Vote PRSC.'

Other leaflets were posted by PRSC party activists throughout Santo Domingo - the election message was blunt. One flier suggested that although Balaguer is effectively blind, he was the only candidate who can see ahead in political terms. Jacobo Majluta, the candidate for the marginal Partido Revolucionario Independiente, received abuse for his Lebanese origins, and Peña Gómez was berated as ugly and Haitian. Many interviewees framed their aversion to Peña Gómez in racist aesthetic terms, he was too dark and too ugly to be president. A middle class woman said that the Haitian blood of Peña Gómez made him so ugly. Additional posters claimed that a vote for Peña Gómez represented a vote against the Dominican nation, Christianity and civilisation.

During the interview survey, few respondents clearly differentiated between Peña Gómez as a Haitian or *negro*. For the majority, the issues of *haitianidad* and *negritud* were inseparable, re-emphasising the fusion of race and nation in the concept of *la raza*. Seventy percent of interviewees believed that racism presented a problem for Peña Gómez' election as president (Tables 7.2 and 7.3). Ten percent of the sample, predominantly from the lower classes, were unsure or declined to comment on the influence of racism on Peña Gómez' political career. There is little variation of opinion between class groups or self-defined racial categories when the distribution of these characteristics is compared with the total sample. Individual responses, however, illustrate a pervasive racism, at the individual and societal level.

Table 7.2 Opinion among interviewees concerning the influence of racism on the presidential candidacy of Peña Gómez, according to class

Influence of racism % Class	Anti-Haitianism or anti- <i>negro</i> sentiment is a problem for Peña Gómez	Anti-Haitianism or anti- <i>negro</i> sentiment is not a problem for Peña Gómez	Unsure or no opinion expressed	Total sample
Upper	1.9	4.8	-	2.3
Upper middle	11.1	14.3	10.4	11.7
Middle	21.6	15.9	20.7	20.3
Lower middle	11.5	9.5	6.9	10.7
Lower	39.0	47.6	58.6	42.7
Lower lower	14.9	7.9	3.4	12.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	208	63	29	300

Source: Author's survey 1994

Respondents who described themselves as lighter skinned have a more negative opinion about the suitability of a president whom they perceive as Haitian. A middle class *negro* suggested that Dominicans were *negros claros*, and Haitians *negros oscuros*. Peña Gómez was evidently *negro oscuro*, and so could not be president. An *indio* respondent in Los Guandules argued that not even the *negros* supported Peña Gómez, 'You can't have a *negro* governing the *blancos*.' A *blanca* added, 'He thinks like a Haitian and will bring them all over here'; another *indio* agreed, 'He wants to bring the island together; we don't want him here because he's *negro*.' The conspiracy theory was proving fruitful for Peña Gómez' opponents. Such comments represented the popular undertone of interviewees' responses. An *india*, however, was more lenient towards Peña Gómez, at

the same time expressing her racial prejudice: ‘He is a *negro*, but in my mind , I think he is as human as us.’ In Gazcue, a middle-class *mestizo* suggested that there were problems with Peña Gómez’s Haitian descent, but that overall his heart was in the right place: ‘Yes, there are problems, but he has a ‘white soul’ (*una alma blanca*).’

Table 7.3 Opinion among interviewees concerning the influence of racism on the presidential candidacy of Peña Gómez, according to self-described race of interviewee

Influence of racism % Race	Anti-Haitianism or anti- <i>negro</i> sentiment is a problem for Peña Gómez	Anti-Haitianism or anti- <i>negro</i> sentiment is not a problem for Peña Gómez	Unsure or no opinion expressed	Total sample
<i>Blanco/a</i>	15.9	15.9	20.7	16.3
<i>Indio/a</i>	59.1	39.7	62.7	55.3
<i>Mestizo/a</i>	5.3	7.9	3.4	5.7
<i>Trigueño/a</i>	1.9	6.3	-	2.7
<i>Moreno/a</i>	2.9	7.9	-	3.7
<i>Mulato/a</i>	5.8	4.8	3.4	5.3
<i>Negro/a</i>	5.3	11.2	-	6.0
Other	3.8	6.3	10.4	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	208	63	29	300

Source: Author’s survey 1994

Peña Gómez himself has been denounced as a racist. Some see his three marriages to *blancas* as an expression of his own racial bias, but such an argument is itself based on racist sentiment. An interviewee who described his race as *mulato*, suggested that Peña

Gómez was racist because he tried to change his colour, through marriage and by denying his own heritage. This has been an important line of argument among opponents of Peña Gómez and among those who have noticed his consistent reluctance to confront allegations of racism.

Zaiter, illustrating an almost fanatical dislike for Peña Gómez, published a small volume which used newspaper articles to criticise his racism. He attempts to show that Peña Gómez aims to divide the country into *negro/a* and *blanco/a* racial groups, creating apartheid as an extension of his own racial inferiority complex. Peña Gómez, he argues, always surrounds himself with lighter-skinned colleagues and relatives. Peña Gómez exists in a personal world of racial contradiction; while rejecting his own race, he predicts election victory on the basis of race, 'because I understand that the Dominican has black behind the ear (*el negro detrás de las orejas*).'¹⁰² Peña Gómez criticises the white elite for having never done anything for the majority of Dominicans.

The impassioned denials of Haitian parentage resulted in Peña Gómez commissioning a biography, which painstakingly reconstructs his origins, repeatedly refuting any Haitian ancestry. The publication does little to convince the reader that Peña Gómez is himself not trapped in a framework of anti-Haitian phobia. Salmador, the biographer, reiterates the importance *ad nauseam* of Peña Gómez' real surname, Zarzuela.¹⁰³ As a baby, Peña Gómez was separated from his dark-skinned Dominican parents during the family's flight from the massacre of 1937. The family surname

¹⁰² Cited in Zaiter, R. 1993 *Peña: ¿leal o traidor?* Santo Domingo: Zaiter, p. 8

¹⁰³ Salmador, V. 1990 *José Francisco Peña Gómez* Madrid: Editora Gráfica 82, pp. 11, 51, 53, 54, 67-68, 122, 126, 158, 231-237

originates from descendants who served a Spanish landowner, Don Felipe Zarzuela Díez, during the seventeenth century. On emancipation it was common for favoured former slaves or employees to take the surname of their former master. Salmador stresses that Peña Gómez' beginnings were firmly rooted on the Spanish half of the island:

... the scandalous story that Peña Gómez has Haitian origins is untenable today... It is proven and documented... that he was born in La Loma del Flaco; that means his *dominicanidad* is without doubt, and that his *dominicanidad* is integral and global, not only physically by the known fact of his birth on Dominican soil, but also intellectually and innately.¹⁰⁴

He was brought up as an orphan by a Spaniard, Don Regino, 'of pure Castillian stock', and his Dominican wife, Doña Fermina. It was under their influence that Peña Gómez grew up as, 'a man spiritually saturated with Europe.'¹⁰⁵

Salmador, not content to emphasise only the Hispanic element of Peña Gómez' heritage, imbues his birthplace with important indigenous links. La Loma, 'in pre-Columbian times possessed rare splendour, since there was found one of the most important indigenous populations.'¹⁰⁶ It was also allegedly located on the original route of Columbus' arrival. A more recent historical work by Salmador, implies by its title that Peña Gómez is destined to assume his rightful place as president, following the lineage of the indigenous habitants - *La isla de Santo Domingo: desde los indios tainos hasta Peña Gómez*.¹⁰⁷

The reiteration of Peña Gómez' *dominicanidad* is usually defensive. The political

¹⁰⁴ Salmador 1990, p. 14

¹⁰⁵ Salmador 1990, p. 252

¹⁰⁶ Salmador 1990, p. 15

¹⁰⁷ Salmador, V. 1994 *La isla de Santo Domingo: desde los indios tainos hasta Peña Gómez* Santo Domingo: Editora de Colores

campaigning of the PRD is criticised in the same manner. Peña Gómez defends racist accusations with indignant personal histories, and rarely attacks the illegitimate core of racist party politics. Peña Gómez typically defends himself, thus:

'I am a passionate devotee of my party; a lover of my country; I carry the flag of my homeland and my *dominicanidad* etched on my heart and my innermost feelings... Nobody, absolutely nobody, is going to surpass me in my total, absolute and complete commitment to the service of my country and of my people. Likewise, nobody, absolutely nobody, will be able to accuse me to my face that the colour of my skin lessened the level of my commitment to *dominicanidad*, in which I am enveloped, in which I am saturated; and which in reality, when one feels like I feel, is more than skin colour or blood, since it is all the same skin and the same blood.'¹⁰⁸

During an interview with a journalist, Peña Gómez seems ashamed by the 'vulgar' lies which suggest that he, or his family, have Haitian origins, yet he denies that racial discrimination has affected him:

'One of the biggest lies which has been said about me is that I was born in Haiti. This is a vulgar lie... I do not consider that racial discrimination, as some believe, has been a major obstacle for me. I believe that there is another type of discrimination, more than discrimination, a type of social fear.'¹⁰⁹

Peña Gómez asserts that it is not racism, but fear which places barriers between people. Perhaps he is implying a class bias which prevents social mobility, regardless of race. In 1992, six percent of interviewees in Santiago de los Caballeros, believed that the colour of his skin and his socio-economic origins would be a source of electoral strength since his experience showed that a *negro* from outside the traditional elite circles could achieve political success.¹¹⁰ This aspect of social and political accomplishment was hardly

¹⁰⁸ Salmador 1990, p. 227

¹⁰⁹ *Última Hora* 15 May 1994

¹¹⁰ Howard 1993, p. 66

mentioned during the interviews undertaken in 1994. A middle-class, *blanco* interviewee respected Peña Gómez for his rise from a difficult and poor background, but would not vote for him because of his colour. Another lower-middle class respondent pointed out that Peña Gómez was not from the 'right' background to be president. Class played a limited role in the rejection of Peña Gómez. Racial perception visibly governed the electoral space.

Why does Peña Gómez not challenge racism? First, personal defamation is part of the art of politics. Within the matrix of a racist society, it would be unlikely that Peña Gómez could have expected to avoid racist abuse. He acknowledged that even members of his own party are racist. Presidential battles are fought at the personal level, and Peña Gómez' background presented an easy target for Dominican racial prejudices. It would have been impossible for him to reverse a century of anti-Haitianism, yet he made no attempt to demolish racist discourse as a legitimate basis for political practice.

Secondly, the PRD misjudged the political arena and failed to create a convincing anti-racist platform in the 1990s. Peña Gómez, too, was naïve in his assessment of electoral campaigning. A comment that he made in 1992 proved to be woefully wrong: '... it would not be easy to orchestrate and bring to a successful conclusion a political campaign based on race in the Dominican Republic.'¹¹¹

Thirdly, the emphasis on personalistic politics gave no political space for an effective and thorough anti-racism policy to flourish at the party level. No parties have displayed clear policies concerning citizenship or immigration, despite the key issue of

¹¹¹ *Ultima Hora* 28 July 1992

anti-Haitianism. Would such policies be too rigid or controversial, given the importance of Haitian labour for the economy? Any policy would be difficult to implement successfully and fairly, and therefore, could be a potential vote loser.

Beyond racialised politics?

Would anti-Haitianism be challenged under the presidency of Peña Gómez? The vehement denial of Haitian origins, and the need for Peña Gómez to distance himself politically from alleged Haitian sympathies, could arguably create a harsher anti-Haitian policy and an even less sympathetic approach. The *mulato*, 43 year-old Leonel Fernández, presented a more acceptable and less controversial figurehead.

Peña Gómez, with fears of ill-health, has expressed doubts over his continued participation in politics. It remains to be seen whether the politics of racism recede with his departure. Without him will the political scene, with a lighter-skinned president of *la nueva generación*, leave behind almost a decade of racialised politics? An opportunity has arisen to deracialise the personalism of Dominican politics. Allegations have recently connected Peña Gómez with the acceptance of drug money for campaign funds.¹¹² No mention of his Haitian origins were made. Perhaps these accusations indicate a move to deracialised attacks. Such a transition, however, appears unlikely. Leonel Fernández appointed two key figures in his new government from the nationalist movement. First, Marino Vincio Castillo was controversially nominated as president of the National Drug Control Council. He had previously initiated the allegations of Peña Gómez's links with

¹¹² *Listín Diario* 3 July 1996

drug money, but he also assisted the author of a previously mentioned nationalist text.¹¹³ Second, Victor Grimaldi, a leading nationalist, was designated as Permanent Ambassador to the Organisation of American States.¹¹⁴

Peña Gómez has recently made two of his most frank comments concerning racialised politics. He remarked that racism has succeeded in Dominican politics as a result of the Dominican belief that Haitians are the only true *negros*, despite the fact that 70 percent of Dominicans are *mulatos*.¹¹⁵ He had earlier claimed that the Dominican Republic was not ready for a black president. Even if he had been elected, he argued, the traditional elites would have reacted with violence, 'The country would be bathed in blood. Of this, I am convinced.'¹¹⁶ Racism will endure as a key text of Dominican political discourse, in which the Haitian context can never be underestimated. It remains ironic that the slogan adorning Peña Gómez's political posters is '*Vota Blanco.*' Vote white, the traditional colour of the PRD.

¹¹³ Velázquez-Mainardi 1994

¹¹⁴ *Listín Diario* 29 August 1996

¹¹⁵ *El Nacional* 26 August 1996

¹¹⁶ *Hoy* 5 July 1996

8 CONCLUSION: RACE AND ETHNICITY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

This thesis has analysed the representation of race in the Dominican Republic, specifically in relation to *la raza dominicana* and the concept of the nation. Racial ancestry and the proximity to Haiti underlie a pervasive racial prejudice which devalues the African influence in Dominican society. This concluding chapter summarises research findings and analyses established theories of race and ethnicity, judging their relevance to the Dominican context. Ethnicity is outlined as an integral concept through which race acts. The false concept of Dominican racial democracy is discussed, before finally suggesting that a government policy of multiculturalism provides the necessary first step towards a re-evaluation of race.

I have argued that racism is prevalent at all levels of Dominican society. Baud has recently surmised that ‘popular anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic might well be a great deal less virulent than the Dominican elite and many foreign observers have wanted us to believe.’¹ The results of my research and field work suggest otherwise; anti-Haitian feeling remains a malignant form of racism which is reproduced across all class groups and in every location. A national poll of 1,200 Dominicans undertaken at the time of my field research confirmed the prevalence of this sentiment: 51.2 percent of respondents did not want a close family member to marry a Haitian.²

¹ Baud, M. 1996 ‘Constitutionally white’: the forging of an identity in the Dominican Republic. In Oostindie, G. (ed.) 1996 *Ethnicity in the Caribbean* London: Macmillan, pp. 121-151, p. 145

² Dore Cabral, C. 1995 La población es más anti-haitiana que racista *Rumbo* 84: 8-12

My field research interviews were based on a sample of three hundred respondents in urban and rural locations. The size of this sample has low statistical limits of significance in relation to the total population, however, the survey was a good representation of the cultural plurality which is found at the national level. The Dominican Republic is a class-stratified society in which cultural pluralism exists. Cultural differences are expressed through the diversity of race, religious affiliation, household formation, nationality and gender roles. The impact of international migration differentiates families and individuals within a transnational household, in economic and cultural terms, from the non-migrant population. The majority of Dominicans are Catholic, yet Afro-syncretic beliefs extend across all class groups. Lower class Dominicans born of Haitian parentage in the Dominican Republic participate in the dominant culture, however, like Haitians, they are differentially incorporated into Dominican society on the basis of citizenship and race. A greater part of the Dominican population could be described as *mulato/a*, but a variety of racial identities exist within this broad colour ascription.

Torres-Saillant has argued that *negro/a* and *mulato/a* Dominicans passively tolerate the Eurocentrism of historical and contemporary Dominican discourse; African Dominicans do not see blackness as central to their racial awareness.³ Other racial terms are employed instead to describe racial identity. *Indio/a* is by far the most common and adaptable; flexible descriptions of colour and phenotype allow familial and social variations of race to be incorporated within a society where the light racial aesthetic is

³ Torres-Saillant. In *Minority Rights Group* 1995, p. 131

paramount. Despite the malleable nature of racial definition, everyday instances of prejudice and discrimination are evident and often overt. My research illustrated the pervasiveness of anti-Haitian and anti-*negro/a* attitudes among Dominicans. Derogatory images of *negritud* are common, as are racial myths which, for example, still urge mothers to drink milk of magnesia during pregnancy in order to lighten the colour of their offspring.⁴

The second chapter illustrated the close historical association of the Dominican Republic with Haiti, and emphasised the use of *indio/a* as a racial category which avoids the direct association of *dominicanidad* with *negritud*. The background for contemporary anti-Haitianism originated from the Haitian invasions and the subsequent occupation of Dominican territory in the first half of the nineteenth century. The regime of Trujillo did much to reinvigorate antagonism between the two countries and popularised the notion of a European and false indigenous ancestry, at the expense of African influence, among the Dominican population.

Haiti has been fundamental to the construction of Dominican nationality. The creation of a nation is often synonymous with the destruction, at least metaphorically, of its rivals.⁵ *La dominicanidad* is nourished by the negative portrayal of its neighbouring nation. The Dominican economy is dependent on Haiti in more tangible terms; as a trading partner since the colonial period, but more specifically to fulfil the labour requirements on Dominican sugar plantations from the beginning of the twentieth

⁴ Cordero, W. 1975 El tema negro y la discriminación racial en la República Dominicana *Ciencia* 2, 1: 151-162, p. 162

⁵ Smith, A. D. 1992 *Ethnicity and Nationalism*. In Smith, A. D. 1992 *Ethnicity and Nationalism* Leiden: E. J. Brill, pp. 1-4, p. 2

century. Similar to other societies reliant on an immigrant labour force, the presence of Haitian labour has produced two distinct strata of citizens and immigrants.⁶ The lower stratum of Haitians and Dominican-Haitians performs the function of a reserve army of labour, marginalised and ostracised from the rest of society.⁷

The third chapter illustrated the importance of race in a class-stratified Dominican society. Race sometimes strengthens class relations, at other times racial issues are antagonistic to class issues. Race further impinges on gender relations; the following chapter examined the household as a primary locus for the socialisation of racial perceptions and patriarchal structures which differentially incorporate men and women into Dominican society.

Relations of race, class and gender are in constant flux and depend on the context of their influence. Rapid changes are re-shaping these variables at the local and global level. With estimates of up to ten percent of the Dominican population living in the United States, international migration has transformed Dominican society. Transnationalism establishes new social, cultural and economic relations among Dominicans. Remittances usurp traditional patterns of class, which has led to the rapid creation of a new 'class' of migrants - the *dominicanyorks* - among whom the successful may trade low status employment in New York for the most comfortable material well-being on their return to the Dominican Republic. Race, however, remains one of the few

⁶ Castles, S. and Kosack, G. 1985 *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* second edition Oxford: Oxford University Press

⁷ Verrijp, A. 1994 Sin país, sin pueblo: posición y identidad de los dominico-haitianos en la República Dominicana unpublished paper Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen

Dore Cabral, C. 1987 Los dominicanos de origen haitiano y la segregación social en la República Dominicana *Estudios Sociales* 68: 57-80

aspects yet to be transformed by transnationalism. Race relations in the United States have had little impact on the formation of racial identity in the Dominican Republic. Dominicans migrants are categorised as Black Hispanics in the United States; a marked inversion of racial identity for those migrants who had considered themselves as *blanco/a* or *indio/a* while living in the Dominican Republic. Migrants, however, have not adopted North American racial terminology. On return to the Dominican Republic, the migrant's racial identification is re-established in the Dominican context. The influence of the migratory experience on perceptions of race, thus, appears to be limited.

The last two chapters assessed the representation of race in Dominican literature and domestic politics. Dominican literary production has largely been the preserve of light-skinned intellectuals, though this does not account for the limited extent of poetry or prose to address issues of race and nationality. The literature of *la negritud* in the Dominican Republic has not proceeded beyond the romantic stereotypes and stylised clichés which were prevalent at the start of the present century.

The penultimate chapter considered how political context structures the meaning of race. Race and nation have been the dominant issues on the agenda for the previous two elections. Dominican antagonism towards Haiti, and the reluctance by many Dominicans to elect a *negro* president, twice combined to stall the election campaign of Peña Gómez. The long-standing *blanco* president, Joaquín Balaguer, has been replaced by a younger *mulato*, Leonel Fernández; the latter has the opportunity to establish democracy as the norm in a deracialised political environment. The presidential candidacy of Peña Gómez undoubtedly enhanced the virulence of racist politics.

Racialised politics are likely to dominate during moments when it becomes politically expedient to resurrect traditional racial and national rivalries.

A 16 year-old interviewee from Los Guandules, a former stowaway on a ship to Puerto Rico, stated pointedly: 'I don't like my race as a Dominican [*mi raza para ser dominicano*]. It's not much fun for me. I want to get out.' The Dominican Republic has changed dramatically during the last three decades, since the end of the *trujillato* and the opening up of Dominican society to external cultural and economic influences. Dominicans are attempting to consolidate their identity with an outward glance towards the United States, which has replaced Spain as the new metropole.⁸ The traditional antagonism towards Haiti, however, remains intact. Both countries are weak states on the global stage; political antagonism and confrontation only weakens them further.⁹ In a context of increasing globalisation, local and regional conflict are severe drawbacks to external confidence, and hence, investment or development opportunities. A re-evaluation of race and ethnicity is a key step towards the maturation of more progressive intra-island relations.

Race

Previous conceptions of race have employed definitions which grouped people according to an alleged common biological origin, stressing the importance of descent. Given the Darwinian evolutionary law which states that no racial classification can be permanent, it

⁸ Yunén, R. E. 1993 André Corten y la debilidad del estado *Estudios Sociales* 93: 41-60, p. 47

⁹ Corten, A. 1989 *El estado débil: Haití y la República Dominicana* Santo Domingo: Editora Taller

has been recognised that a meaningful taxonomy of human beings is impossible. However, terms such as Negroid and Caucasoid still appear at times in text. Race has been defined biologically as a subspecies or species, culturally as a nation, or socially as a group sharing similar phenotypical features.

Contemporary discussions recognise that races do not exist as scientific entities. Races are formed subjectively by the translation of phenotypical variation into objective systems of differentiation.¹⁰ The objectivity of race centres on phenotype and colour both of which act as subjective signs for racial identification. Skin colour variation is the basis of the formation of racial categories:

Skin colour is a feature which varies along a continuous scale when measured by a light meter, but in social life it is used either as a discontinuous scale or a continuous variable in ordering social relations.¹¹

The categorisation of infinite phenotypical variation forms the basis for the aesthetic construction of race. Racial formation is not static. Phenotype and colour remain constant for the individual, but the interpretation and meaning of colour can vary. Therefore, a plurality of role signs creates various forms of racism, which differ according to the social and historical context.¹²

Rex has produced several accounts of what he calls 'race relations situations':

Race relations situations and problems... refer to situations in which one or more groups with distinct and identities and recognisable characteristics are forced by economic and political circumstances to live together in a society.¹³

¹⁰ Gilroy 1987, p. 38

¹¹ Banton, M. 1991 The race relations problematic *British Journal of Sociology* 42, 1: 115-130, p. 118

¹² Gilroy 1987, p. 38

¹³ Rex, J. 1983 *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* Second Edition London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 159

The situation, according to the interpretation of Rex, is marked by a high degree of conflict and hostility between groups bounded by ascriptive criteria. This conflictual concept of race centres on the competition between racial groups to gain access to status and power in society. Banton proposes that competition is the critical process shaping patterns of ethnic and racial relations.¹⁴ Consequently, *la raza dominicana* has developed as a result, rather than in spite of, the Haitian presence. Defining racial groups by the 'presence or absence of certain socially relevant abilities or characteristics', immediately associates race with a false binary concept of 'haves' and 'have-nots.'¹⁵

Racism has frequently been defined with respect to the dual notion of winners and losers, the fortunate and the ill-fated. Jackson defines racism as 'the attempt by a dominant group to exclude a subordinate group from the material and symbolic rewards of status and power.'¹⁶ He adds that 'racism need not have recourse to purely physical distinctions but can rest on the recognition of certain 'cultural' traits where these are thought to be an inherent and inviolable characteristic of particular social groups.'¹⁷ An individual is thus 'possessed' by her or his race as a matter of circumstance.

Racialisation describes the political and ideological processes by which people are identified by reference to their real or imagined phenotypical characteristics. Miles suggests that racialisation should be considered as a process, and racism more properly as

¹⁴ Banton, M. 1992 *Racial and Ethnic Competition* Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, p. 12

¹⁵ van den Berghe, P. L. 1979 *Race and Racism: a comparative perspective* New York: John Wiley, p. 11

¹⁶ Jackson, P. (ed). 1987 *Race and Racism* London: Unwin Hyman, p. 12

¹⁷ Jackson 1987. p. 12

the underlying ideology.¹⁸ Racialisation focuses on the conditions which cause social, economic and political processes to be racialised. Racism on the other hand was used only as an ideology after the start of the twentieth century.¹⁹ An ideology, he argues, is any discourse which represents a people or a society in a misleading or distorted way. Racist ideology attributes social meaning to phenotypical and/or genetic difference, and negatively evaluates characteristics of a group allegedly constituted by descent.

Racial discrimination, alternatively described as racialism, is the active expression of racism, aiming to deny members of certain groups equal access to limited and valued resources.²⁰ Prejudice, the motivation to discriminate against an individual or group, is defined as ‘the holding of derogatory attitudes about the members of a social group.’²¹ It has been proposed that people are prejudiced because their biases meet certain needs associated with their personalities.²² High levels of prejudice may be the result of an authoritarian personality, holding rigid beliefs and being intolerant of other racial or ethnic groups.

Tajfel suggested that social behaviour, and thus prejudice, fall somewhere along a continuum between behavioural extremes. He outlines the importance of distinguishing between inter-personal and inter-group behaviour, the former involving action as an

¹⁸ Miles, R. 1989 *Racism* London: Routledge, pp. 73-79

¹⁹ Miles 1989, p. 43

²⁰ Cashmere, E. (ed). 1995 *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations* third edition London: Routledge, p. 273

²¹ Brown, R. 1988 Intergroup relations. In Hewstone, M., Stroebe, W., Codol, J.-P. and Stephenson, G. M. (eds) 1988 *Introduction to Social Psychology* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 381-410, p. 385

²² Adorno, T. S. , Frenkel-Brunswick, E. , Levine, D. J. and Sanforo, R. N. 1950 *The Authoritarian Personality* London: Harper and Row

individual person, the latter as a group member.²³ There is general agreement that contact between social groups, without some form of co-operation or shared aims, will not reduce and may exacerbate inter-group prejudice.²⁴ Sherif analysed inter-group behaviour as a reflection of the objective interests of the in-group *vis-à-vis* out-groups.²⁵ His research showed that distinctiveness is often valued positively for the in-group, but negatively for the out-group. Individual identity is defined in terms of group affiliations; thus, the analysis of the in-group will be biased to favour a positive self-concept.²⁶

Racial prejudice, argues Parsons, has been concentrated more among the lower social classes. In the context of North American society, Parsons suggests that the concept of black inferiority fuels white working-class prejudice, providing 'a floor below which they cannot fall, that is, they cannot be identified with the lowest group of all, the blacks.'²⁷ While dark-skinned Dominicans, tend to be located among the lower status group in Dominican society, their position is somewhat relieved by the presence of the Haitian and Haitian-Dominican groups. However, my research suggests that racial prejudice exists to a similar extent throughout all social classes in the Dominican Republic. Haitians and Dominican *negros/as* experience racist abuse from groups at all socio-economic levels.

²³ Tajfel, H. 1978 *Differentiation Between Social Groups: studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* London: Academic Press

²⁴ Hewstone, M, and Brown, R. J. 1986 Contact is not enough: an intergroup perspective on the contact hypothesis. In Hewstone, M. and Brown, R. (eds) 1986 *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters* Oxford: Blackwell

²⁵ Sherif, M. 1966 *Group Conflict and Cooperation: their social psychology* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

²⁶ Brown 1988. In Hewstone, Stroebe, Codol and Stephenson 1988, p. 400

²⁷ Parsons, T. 1975 Some theoretical considerations on the nature and trends of change of ethnicity. In Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. P. (eds) 1975 *Ethnicity: theory and experience* London: Harvard University Press, pp. 53-83, p. 77

Colour and phenotype, from a racist perspective, are both visible and indelible marks of an individual's level of superiority or inferiority. The definition of racism in terms of relative inferiority or superiority, however, is not satisfactory. The dichotomy simplifies the complexity of everyday interaction. In what spheres do these power relations apply? It is often unclear whether inferior status refers to social, economic, political, or cultural relations, and with respect to which other individuals or groups in society.

Barker challenges the superiority/inferiority construction of race, and argues that those definitions which focus on this context of racism are misleading.²⁸ Racism, he believes, may take many forms in which biological or pseudo-biological groupings are designated as the outcome of social and historical processes. This inflation of the definition of racism by Barker causes some problems. Under these rubrics, sexism and gender bias could also be termed as forms of racism. Nevertheless, he makes an important contribution by claiming that racist emotions are frequently justified by an assumed 'naturalness.' Racism has become increasingly 'naturalised' and disguised in discussions of alleged cultural and national norms. Dominican antagonism towards Haiti is, thus, legitimised as a form of patriotism. Blaut comments on this sanitisation of racism in society, whereby general consensus suggests that racism abounds, yet few people are labelled as racists.²⁹ Cohen describes the 'perversions of inheritance' which establish the

²⁸ Barker 1981, p. 4

²⁹ Blaut, J. M. 1992 The theory of cultural racism *Antipode* 24: 289-299

significance of race and nation through common myths of descent and breeding codes.³⁰

These common myths cleanse popular racist beliefs and assumptions.

The potency of racism lies in its embeddedness as a perceived natural phenomenon. The seeming naturalness of race has given it a translatable, pseudo-scientific status. Those who suffer racist abuse tend ultimately to be perceived as the cause of the problem. Haitians bear the brunt of Dominican aggression, but dark-skinned Dominicans suffer similar racist insults or are treated as lower status citizens, somatically sidelined from authentic *dominicanidad*. Racist ideology portrays Haitians and dark-skinned Dominicans as victims of their own racial fate; both are trapped by the colour of their skin and their genetic history. Sympathy for the victim, however, is muted by the racist argument that Haitians induce antipathy towards themselves via allegedly innate cultural practices, such as *vodoun*, which are incompatible with Dominican society.

Gilroy comments on the oscillation between black as problem and black as victim.³¹ Race is de-historicised, removed from the context of contemporary discrimination, and established as an immutable biological and cultural standard. Hall suggests how racism is able to articulate with other ideologies in society, de-historicising its influence.³² Social relationships consequently become interpreted in racial terms; racism, removed from its specific historical context, perpetuates the deception.

³⁰ Cohen, P. 1988 The perversions of inheritance: studies in the making of multi-racist Britain. In Cohen, P. and Bains, H. S. 1993 *Multi-Racist Britain* London: Macmillan, pp. 9-118

³¹ Gilroy 1987, P. 11

³² Hall. In UNESCO 1980, p. 342

Ethnicity

An ethnic group relates to a collectivity of people who are conscious of having common origins, interests and shared experiences. This research has been concerned with race, that aspect of ethnicity informed by socially constructed issues of colour and phenotype. Race forms a subset of Dominican ethnicity; they are not synonymous. Anthias separates the concepts of race and ethnicity, focusing on the former term as a means of discriminating against social groups on the basis of biological or cultural immutability:

The racial categorisation is often, although not always, a mode of pursuing a project of inferiorisation, oppression and at times class subordination and exploitation. Ethnicity, on the other hand, relates to the identification of particular cultures, of ways of life or identity which are based on a historical notion of origin or fate, whether mythical or 'real.'³³

Racist discourse uses ethnic categories (which might be constructed around cultural, linguistic, territorial or supposed biological differences) to signify deterministic differences between individuals and groups.

Ethnicity is the feeling of belonging to a shared group linked to common grounds of race, territory, religion, language, aesthetics and kinship. It cannot be desegregated from its constituent components; the individual labelling of social categories falsely suggests the independence of their nature and effect, since their influences cross-cut and interact in the creation of ethnic identity. Van den Berghe suggests that race is socially defined on the basis of physical criteria, whereas definitions of ethnicity are informed by cultural criteria.³⁴ The significance of physical characteristics, however, is culturally

³³ Anthias, F. 1990 Race and class revisited conceptualising race and racisms *The Sociological Review* 38, 1: 19-42, p. 20

³⁴ van den Berghe 1979, pp. 9-10

defined.³⁵ Banton argues that the traditional separation of race relating to physical or biological traits and of ethnicity describing cultural characteristics oversimplifies social analysis.³⁶ A racial group may possess cultural institutions which shape its boundaries as well as race. Goldberg similarly stresses the close relationship between the two forms, suggesting that the term *ethnorace* is appropriate for instances where race takes on a significance in terms of ethnic identity.³⁷ The Haitian population in the Dominican Republic is discriminated against on the grounds of its allegedly different racial ancestry, nationality and cultural traits. To separate race and ethnicity through rigid frameworks is to miss the point of their inter-relations.

All people share a feeling of ethnicity, which should not be restricted to terms of minority status or marginality. It is misleading to assert that 'whereas 'race' stands for the attributions of one group, ethnic group stands for the creative response of a people who feel somehow marginal to the mainstream of society.'³⁸ Moreover, Banton is incorrect to formulate a conception of ethnicity and race where 'the former reflects the positive tendencies of identification and inclusion where the latter reflects the negative tendencies of dissociation and exclusion.'³⁹ The strict separation of positive/negative and inclusive/exclusive forces imposes a false dichotomy upon both concepts. Ethnic inclusivity/exclusivity establishes feelings of us and them, or 'we-ness' and 'they-ness.'⁴⁰

³⁵ Banton, M. 1991 The race relations problematic *British Journal of Sociology* 42, 1: 115-130, p. 125

³⁶ Banton 1992, p. 9

³⁷ Goldberg, D. T. 1992 The semantics of race *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, 4: 435-569, p. 554

³⁸ Cashmere 1995, p. 102

³⁹ Cashmere 1995, p. 103

⁴⁰ Ringer, B. B. and Lawless, E. R. 1989 *Race-Ethnicity and Society* New York: Routledge, p. 1

The strength of ethnicity lies at source in the subjective relevance it creates for ethnic group members.

Ethnicity can be a reactive concept, elicited and shaped by constraints on the social, economic and political opportunities for members of certain ethnic groups. Thus, some believe that ethnicity or race should be more politicised, to be used as a political instrument for anti-racism rather than being perceived as a cultural or social phenomenon. The effectiveness of an ethnic basis for political mobilisation comes from the premise that at its most general level, ethnicity involves belonging to a particular group and sharing its conditions of existence.⁴¹ Yuval-Davis and Anthias suggest that ethnicity cross-cuts gender and class divisions, but at the same time involves the positing of a similarity (on the inside) and a difference (from the outside) that may transcend these divisions.

Parsons also considers that the black-white dichotomy in the United States will be beneficial in the long-run, by radicalising issues of race and more effectively promoting concepts of racial equality.⁴² Emphasising Black politics, for example, implies the adoption of a strategic essentialism, by recognising the social construction of race, but using that essence or Blackness as a political lever to campaign for equality in society. The inherent contradiction of appropriating racial myths to dispel prejudice, however, is

⁴¹ Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N. 1992 *Racialized Boundaries: race, nation, gender, colour and class and the anti-racist struggle* London: Routledge, p. 8

⁴² Parsons 1975. In Glazer and Moynihan 1975, p. 73

troublesome. The study of race relations or the adoption of strategic essentialism leads along a dangerous path which ultimately perpetuates racial falsehoods.⁴³

Rather than perceive ethnic assertion solely with the attainment of equality, ethnicity is often expressed as an affirmation of achieved status. Ethnic status can become a symbol of middle class affordability, exhibited when the ethnic group members are less vulnerable in social, cultural and economic terms. In this manner, the visibility of ethnicity is a cultural and social response to the material conditions of group members. The middle class residents of Gazcue were relatively more willing to describe themselves as *mulato/a*, given their secure socio-economic position.

Nevertheless, across a wide range of changing economic and social conditions, ethnicity has grown as a term of reference and basis for identity and conflict.⁴⁴ Some authors would pronounce the demise of class, believing ethnicity to be a more fundamental form of stratification:

Ethnicity has become more salient because it can combine an interest with an affective tie. Ethnicity provides a tangible set of common identifications, for example, through language, food, music, names, when other social roles become more abstract and impersonal.⁴⁵

Bell emphasises the strategic salience of ethnic mobilisation, and gives three main reasons for the assertion of ethnicity. First, he credits its importance to an innate desire

⁴³ Jackson, P. and Penrose, J. 1993 Placing "race" and nation. In Jackson, P. and Penrose, J. (eds) 1993 *Constructions of Race, Place and Nation* London: University College London Press, pp. 1-23, p. 5

⁴⁴ Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. P. 1975 Introduction. In Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. P. (eds) 1975 *Ethnicity: theory and experience* London: Harvard University Press, pp. 1-26

⁴⁵ Bell, D. 1975 Ethnicity and social change. In Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. P. (eds) 1975 *Ethnicity: theory and experience* London: Harvard University Press, pp. 141-174, p. 169

for primordial anchorage. Secondly, he cites the break-up of traditional authority structure, and thirdly, expresses the greater political need for group organisation.⁴⁶

Will ethnic affiliation weaken or become more flexible if greater syncretism and ethnic mixing occurs as societies evolve? Increasing social status or access to power in society may provide the security to emphasise ethnic group membership without fear of provoking discrimination. Parsons concurs with the desocialisation theory of ethnic groups, initially proposed by Schneider.⁴⁷ The theory suggests that the growing homogeneity of ethnic groups, encourages exaggeration of the smaller, immutable differences in order to emphasise variations in group status. Although the cultural content of ethnic groups has become increasingly similar, the emotional significance of belonging to an ethnic group remains important.

It is useful to expand upon Tajfel's concept of a behavioural continuum to explain ethnicity in relation to the various forms of racism. Figure 8.1 illustrates how this continuum incorporates notions of ethnicity. Nationalism expresses a collective sentiment specifically belonging to a territory. The nation is the collective term for a population delimited by territorial claims, or an imagined community with an attachment to place. The work of Anderson has opened up new intellectual space for theories of nationalism, as has Smith's concept of *ethnie*, the 'myth-symbol complex' that surrounds and creates the ethnic origins of nations.⁴⁸ These ideas are juxtaposed to the belief that nations

⁴⁶ Bell, D. 1975 Ethnicity and social change. In Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. P. (eds) 1975 *Ethnicity: theory and experience* London: Harvard University Press, pp. 141-174, p. 171

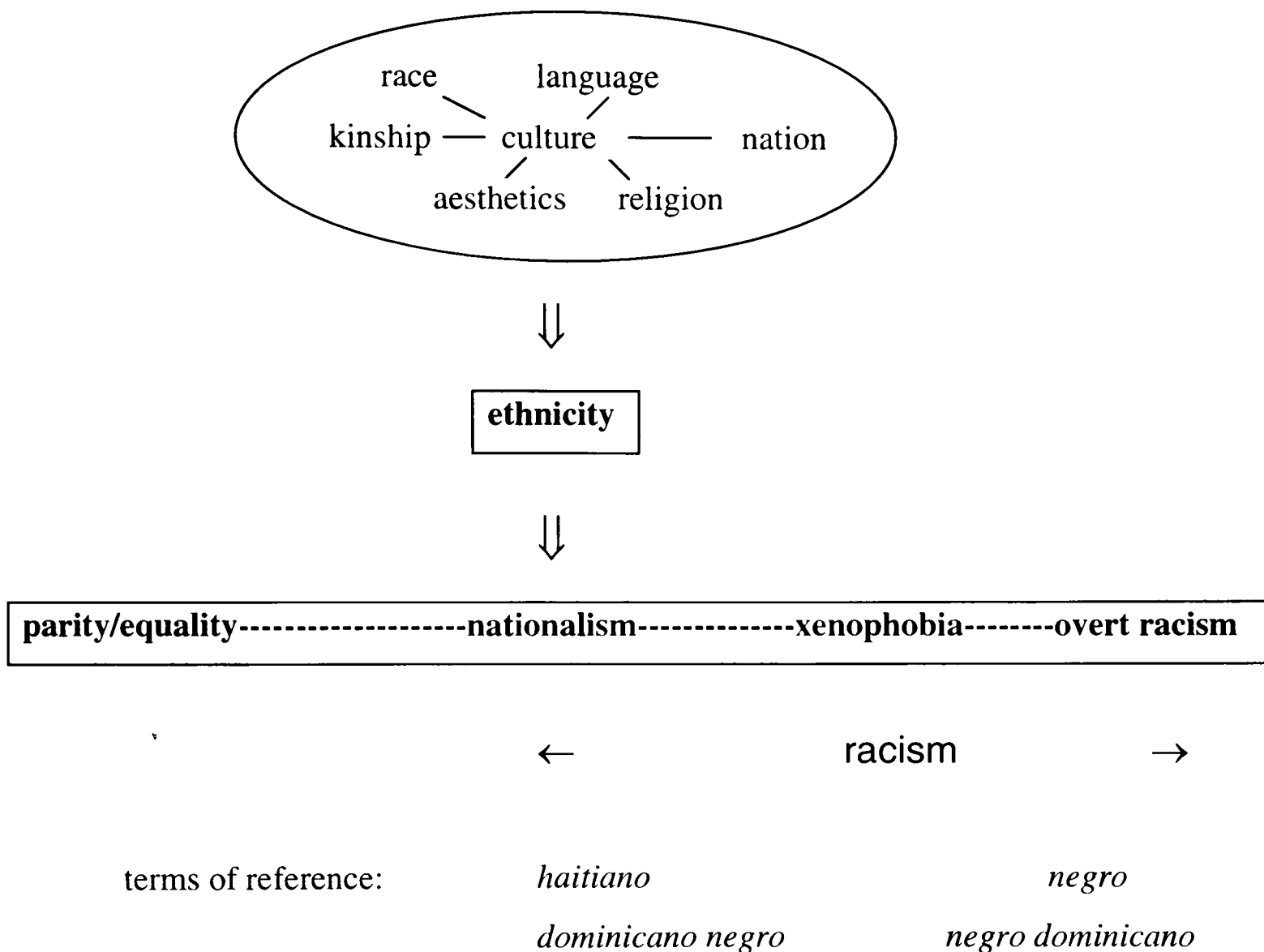
⁴⁷ Parsons. In Glazer and Moynihan 1975, pp. 66-67

⁴⁸ Smith, A. D. 1986 *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Anderson, B. 1991 *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* London: Verso

develop primarily from the prior establishment of centralised governments and state systems.⁴⁹

Figure 8.1 The equality-racism behavioural continuum



Ethnicity is a product of culture, an integral term which represents a shared set of meanings and meaningful activities experienced at the individual and group level. The work of Smith stresses the importance of cultural practice in shaping the relations of race and ethnicity:

⁴⁹ Zubaida, S. 1991 Theories of nationalism. In Littlejohn, G. et al 1991 *Power and the State* London: Croom Helm

...personal status, relations and conduct are always significantly qualified by race; and likewise, whatever the racial identity or difference among them, personal status and conduct are always heavily qualified - some might even say determined - by cultural practice.⁵⁰

Ethnicity is the expression of the overall affiliation to the shared set of social meanings, frequently considered separately in racial, national, religious, aesthetic, kin or linguistic terms, through which individual and group identities are created. Yuval-Davis and Anthias emphasise the variation of ethnic associations which are subverted and manipulated to become signifiers of racism. Racist prejudice and discrimination:

... can be directed against any ethnic collectivity which undergoes a process of racialisation. Therefore it is not just physical appearance, but also language, religion, clothing or any other cultural project which can be used as racist signifiers, as long as they come to be perceived as the identification of a separate human stock with an immutable heritage.⁵¹

The distinction made by Hall between overt and inferential racism is salient for the Dominican racial context.⁵² The latter form of racism is expressed by the nationalist terms of difference between Haitian or Dominican, terms which refer to apparently naturalised racial divisions, but inevitably are placed in a prejudicial framework. The former is a more openly racist statement which emphasises race above person. Emphasis on the word order of *dominicano/a negro/a* or *negro/a dominicano/a* subtly reflects this difference when the phrases are used derogatively. The first phrase refers to a Dominican

⁵⁰ Smith, M. G. 1984 *Culture, Race and Class in the Commonwealth Caribbean* Mona: University of the West Indies, p. 140

⁵¹ Anthias, F. and Yuval-Davis, N. 1992 *Racialized Boundaries: race, nation, gender, colour and class and the anti-racist struggle* London: Routledge, p. 155

⁵² Hall, S. 1990 The whites of their eyes. In Alvarado, M. and Thompson, J. O. 1990 *The Media Reader* London: British Film Institute, pp. 7-23. pp. 12-13

who is dark-skinned; the second reverses the role of adjective and noun to stress the racial identity of someone who is also Dominican.

Racism in the Dominican Republic, as elsewhere, is often tied to specific issues of immigration which are perceived through the prism of a racist ideology. Racism in the Dominican Republic castigates the presence of Haitian labour and devalues darker phenotypes, but also operates within itself. The ambiguity of race can turn the abuser into victim and *vice versa*.

Raza unites, race divides

Two processes have operated historically at popular and governmental level with respect to immigration policy. Firstly, one of *blanqueamiento* or whitening, either by encouraging European immigration, for example during the 1930s, or by maintaining a social and cultural light bias. Secondly, the propagation of the idea of the Haitian population as a threat to the Dominican nation.

The concept of *la raza dominicana* unites Dominicans against Haitians, but when perceived in terms of race, the same concept relegates dark-skinned Dominicans to the margins of an imaginary racial heartland. *La raza* inclusively combines race and nation, and the prejudices of overt and inferential racism. All forms of racism create societal division in synthesis or discordant with socio-economic differentiation, which together foment individual and group status. The impact of social cleavage varies between societies, groups and individuals; the levels of bias vary by degree rather by than nature. Despite the amalgam of motivations which serve to enlighten or occlude racial and class

awareness, the universality of their influence can only be derived by independent analysis:

At the risk of being tritely eclectic, we must conclude that class, race, and ethnicity are all types of social cleavage; that no matter how much they might overlap empirically, their analysis is impoverished by lumping them together; and that there is no *a priori* reason to expect one type to be more basic, more important, or more salient than the others.⁵³

Omi and Winant outline three clear paradigms in the literature on race: ethnicity-based, class-based and nation-based.⁵⁴ This proposal is, however, treated with caution. Race formation is not reducible to class formation, even when they become mutually entangled. Neither can class factors be dismissed in instances of overt racism, though its inclusion makes life difficult for the theorist.⁵⁵

Writers, such as Miles, insist that the essential relations in society are those of class, which have been overlaid by the distortions of racism as a historical complex, generated within and by capitalism. Race under this rubric should be banished as a false construction, nothing more than an ideological effect. Racism, it argues, is a product of particular struggles between capital and labour, an obvious example being migrant labour. An approach such as this, however, ignores the effects of popular and institutional racisms which draw together groups with different histories. Gilroy contests the reductionism of Miles by arguing:

⁵³ van den Berghe 1979, pp. xiv-xv

⁵⁴ Omi, M. and Winant, H. 1994 *Racial Formation in the United States: from the 1960s to the 1990s* Second Edition London: Routledge

⁵⁵ Gilroy 1987, p. 20

... 'race' can no longer be reduced to an effect of the economic antagonism arising from production, and class must be understood in terms qualified by the vitality of struggles articulated through 'race.'⁵⁶

It is from this stance that the Dominican racial complex is most profitably addressed. Hall adopts a class paradigm approach to race: social divisions based on race can be explained largely by economic processes, however, the importance of race is incorporated as the 'modality' through which class relations are experienced.⁵⁷ The study of race must be considered as historically specific, since each racism is reorganised and rearticulated with the changing relations of production.⁵⁸ What conditions make the ethnic or racial grouping of people socially pertinent? Why is racism articulated at certain historical disjunctures or stages of capitalism? In the case of colonialism, Hall views plantation slavery as the specific product of labour shortage which necessitated judicial racism, though he criticises a straightforward articulation between racism and capitalism.⁵⁹

Class relations alone cannot design the centre stage for societal dynamics. Populist politics of race and nation in the Dominican Republic emphasise the fact that class is not something created through economic friction alone. Class relations alone do not account for a political arena in which racism shadows much of the discourse. As Gilroy insists, class 'no longer has a monopoly of the political stage, if indeed it ever had one.'⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Gilroy 1987, p. 28

⁵⁷ Hall. In UNESCO 1980, p. 341

⁵⁸ Hall. In UNESCO 1980, pp. 336-337

⁵⁹ Hall. In UNESCO 1980, p. 338

⁶⁰ Gilroy 1987, p. 34

Can anti-racist politics rouse a Dominican social order, not only founded on racist pretences, but also grounded in class relations and a culture of patriarchy? The lack of anti-racist policy and grassroots organisations suggests not. Attempts to assert rights and claims for justice have been muted by the deeply embedded racism in Dominican society. These claims, however, do not challenge traditional hegemonies, but evoke a reappraisal of past and present anti-Haitianism.

Racism is continually denied at official and personal levels in the Dominican Republic. The government is able to legitimate the forceful repatriations of Haitian on economic grounds. The threat of Haitian immigration, implicitly assumed to be poor and *negro/a*, is exaggerated to mobilise political support. Claims of a crumbling social order and the defence of national character are common forms of anti-immigration rhetoric. Similar discourse was deployed by the Conservative government against immigration to the United Kingdom during the 1970s and 1980s.⁶¹ The interests of the nation must be protected from without and within - immigrants are deemed potentially malignant additions to the national body.

Right and left wing politicians in the Dominican Republic cultivate an established basis of 'us' and 'them', in order to protect the national community. Anti-immigrant sentiment is similar to the nationalist movements in contemporary western Europe. Solomos describes the European context of racial discourse as follows:

What has become increasingly clear in recent years is that racial discourses are rarely concerned only with the role of minority communities and cultures. They are also typically an attempt to define the characteristics of the dominant national

⁶¹ Solomos, J. 1989 *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* London: Macmillan, pp. 128-130

culture, and the ways in which these differ from those of racial and ethnic minorities.⁶²

The recent and continued rhetoric and discrimination against Haitians suggests that the Dominican President, Leonel Fernández, is unwilling or unable to quell the racist political discourse in the Dominican Republic. Dominican politics fit the agenda outlined by Solomos:

In neo-fascist-political discourses about race common sense images resonate with references to racial purity, cultural superiority or difference and the defence of the nation from the threat posed by immigration and racial mixing. The alien, the stranger, or the subhuman are the themes struck repeatedly.⁶³

Unlike the ebb and flow of support for racist political parties in western Europe, mainstream parties in the Dominican Republic have issued racist rhetoric as a consistent component of their manifestos for over four decades. All parties reject Haitian immigration, yet support the contracting of Haitian labour for the Dominican economy. Political and ideological discourses about race are entrenched in Dominican society, and therefore limit the possibility of radical reforms. Omi and Winant perceive all states to be inherently racial.⁶⁴ Every state sector, they argue, acts as a racial institution, although the impact of racism varies between these institutions over time. A comparison with other countries further reveals the discriminatory nature of race in Dominican society.

⁶² Solomos 1989, p. 128

⁶³ Solomos 1989, p. 132

⁶⁴ Omi and Winant 1994, p. 76

The hindrance of racial democracy

Dominican experience of race and ethnicity show similarities with other countries in the Caribbean and South America which are described as racial democracies. In countries such as Brazil and Venezuela, the predominance of populations which could be described as *mulato/a* has led to these societies being summarised as virtually free of racial prejudice or discrimination. The sociologist Gilberto Freyre portrayed Brazilian society in this way during the 1940s. His analysis of plantation society emphasised the positive contribution of Africans to the formation of Brazil, but argued that *mesticismo* symbolised a racial democracy which transcended class and provided an integrated Brazilian race.⁶⁵ Conversely, but still employing the concept of *mestizaje* or racial democracy, political discourse in Venezuela has focused on class antagonism during the present century, deflecting attention from racially discriminatory practices.⁶⁶

The myth of racial democracy, however, has been more a source of racial delusion than harmony. First, it relegates racism to a side issue. State ideologies in racial democracies fail to acknowledge racial discrimination, maintaining an official myth of racial equality. To discuss concepts of prejudice is paramount to admitting that colour bias exists. Accusations of racial discrimination are often greeted with dismay or superficial hurt pride.⁶⁷ In reality, the integral terms of *mulato/a*, *mestizo/a* and *indio/a* hide a racial hierarchy based on colour and phenotype in Brazilian, Venezuelan and

⁶⁵ Freyre, G. 1946 *The Masters and the Slaves: a study in the development of Brazilian civilisation* New York: Knopf

⁶⁶ Wright, W. A. 1990 *Café con Leche: race, class and national image in Venezuela* Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 11

⁶⁷ Dzidzienyo, A. 1979 The position of blacks in Brazilian society. In Dzidzienyo, A. and Casal, L. 1979 *The Position of Blacks in Brazilian and Cuban Society* London: Minority Rights Group, pp. 2-11, p. 3

Dominican societies. A vast array of colour terminology has currency in everyday language. Harris has outlined the referential ambiguity of the hundreds of terms used to describe colour and phenotype in Brazil.⁶⁸ Despite the considerable number and flexibility of terms, Sanjek notes that a proportion are recognisable as the most frequently used. He proceeds to demonstrate that skin colour and hair type are the primary variables enlisted for racial identification.⁶⁹ However, the different histories of Caribbean countries have encouraged a multiplicity of racial interpretations. A similar term may correspond to a markedly different racial identity from that expected by the observer.⁷⁰ Contemporary theorists such as Sollors have pointed to the context-dependent nature of race and ethnicity, describing them as ‘collective fictions that are continually reinvented.’⁷¹ These inventions or social constructions, nevertheless, are salient and active factors in modern societies. Racial and ethnic identities are more than just imagination, but the outcome of human interaction and historical reality.

The importance of colour aesthetics are illustrated by examples from Colombia and Nicaragua. Following field work in the Chocó region, Wade shows how race acts as an identifier through which Colombians distinguish an individual, and attach the appropriate social and cultural traits of his or her racial group. Race as a social marker is

⁶⁸ Harris, M. 1970 Referential ambiguity in the calculus of Brazilian racial identity *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 26, 1: 1-12

⁶⁹ Sanjek, R. 1971 Brazilian racial terms: some aspects of meaning and learning *American Anthropologist* 73: 1126-1144

⁷⁰ Hoetink 1985. In Mintz and Price 1985, p. 82

⁷¹ Sollors, W. (ed). 1989 *The Invention of Ethnicity* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. xi

consequently more ambiguous in the middle ranges of the colour continuum.⁷² Lancaster similarly attributes much importance to colour signs in Nicaraguan society:

... in everyday usage and for most purposes, color terms are *relational* terms. The relativity of this sort of usage turns on the intention of the speaker, comparative assessments, and shifting contexts.⁷³

Lancaster ultimately relates colour relations to power relations in society, where colour signs are used to naturalise inequalities within a social hierarchy in which race equates with class. A similar situation exists in the Dominican Republic.

There is a misleading tendency in *mulato/a* societies, outlined by Booth for the case of Cuba, to consider racism as being much less prevalent and milder than in North American countries.⁷⁴ This myth suggests that higher levels of social and cultural interaction in everyday life are more likely to create inter-racial friendship and marriage, thus, reducing levels of prejudice. The fallacy of racial democracy, however, is revealed when it is realised that Brazilian society, for example, also sustains high levels of racial inequality and persistent racism. Telles discusses the social transformations during the 1980s in Brazil which point to increasing segregation by race and by class whereby greater class segregation produces greater racial segregation.⁷⁵ Social interaction, he adds, is generally limited to low-income neighbourhoods, between the poor minority of *brancos/as* and the poor majority of *negros/as* and *mulatos/as*.

⁷² Wade, P. 1985 Race and class: the case of South American blacks *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 8, 2: 233-249, p. 240

⁷³ Lancaster, R. N. 1992 *Life is Hard: machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua* Oxford: University of California Press, p. 216

⁷⁴ Booth, D. 1976 Cuba, colour and the revolution *Science and Society* 11, 2: 129-172

⁷⁵ Telles, E. R. 1995 Race, class and space in Brazilian cities *Journal of International Urban and Rural Research* 19,3: 394-406, p. 396

The limited official recognition of racial prejudice has meant a corresponding lack of anti-racist legislation and mobilisation. Whereas Agier recounts a growing African-Brazilian movement in Bahia, similar activities are not evident in the Dominican Republic; nor can the incremental change in racial conceptions in the Dominican Republic be heralded to the extent that Winant suggests for the Brazilian context.⁷⁶ He proposes that ethnic issues are being re-evaluated in the context of shifting national, regional and global identities.⁷⁷

The incipient global process of cultural homogenisation, and the exposure of local or national cultures to new ethnicities have been the focus of increasing attention within the 'shifting frontier' of Latin American identities.⁷⁸ The poet, playwright and social commentator, Manuel Rueda, argues that the Dominican Republic, like many small states, faces a technological and cultural invasion which threatens to usurp the national 'essence.'⁷⁹ The development of ethnicity as a combination of local, regional and global influences arises from the more frequent and more expansive interaction of populations and ideas. Transnationalism, however, has yet to expand racial attitudes in Dominican society beyond those of the established norms. Zaiter suggests that Dominicans should face up to the racial reality of their African ancestry, focus away from historical antagonism towards Haiti, and incorporate themselves more actively in a collective Third World opposition to cultural dependency on the First World.⁸⁰ Rational policy

⁷⁶ Agier, M. 1995 Racism, culture and black identity in Brazil *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 14, 3: 245-264

⁷⁷ Winant, H. 1992 Rethinking race in Brazil *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, 1: 173-192

⁷⁸ Wilson 1995

⁷⁹ Rueda, M. 1985 Cultura dominicana y medios de comunicación *Ciencia y Sociedad* 10, 1: 70-77

⁸⁰ Zaiter, J. 1987 La identidad como fenómeno psico-social *Ciencia y Sociedad* 12, 4: 488-499, p. 497

intervention by the state, however, is the primary method by which to address racism at the national level.

Anti-racist policy and legislation in the Dominican Republic is virtually non-existent (other than in respect of employment), and never practised. The lack of anti-discrimination policies is partly due to the myth of racial democracy, which suggests that the most pressing needs are for economic or political reform. The subjectivity of race and the universality of racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic additionally hinder effective policy-making; Brazilian anti-racism movements face a similar challenge due to the lack of consensus as to what constitutes an act of racism.⁸¹ Anti-racist policy is necessary, but racial prejudice cannot be quickly washed away as a societal stain... 'nor can it be overcome, as a general virus in the social body, by a heavy dose of liberal inoculation.'⁸²

Multicolouring the nation: common-sense policy

Given the Dominican political climate, it is unlikely that a major reappraisal of the legislature incorporating racially sensitive policy reform will occur in the near future. There remains no clear basis for political action against racism, and neither is it deemed politically necessary to change policies in order to counter racial discrimination. Racism is central to social and political realities, but marginal to any notion of policy reform. Racist politics have been functional to the political system during recent election campaigns, although in the long run this may be playing with fire.

⁸¹ Winddance Twine, F. 1997 Mapping the terrain of Brazilian racism *Race and Class* 38, 3: 49-61, p. 49

⁸² Hall. In UNESCO 1980, p. 341

The instability and societal discord inherent in a racialised political and social system warrants an implicit recognition that racial equality is a common good. The most appropriate course to achieve this is to popularise anti-racism and to incorporate it as 'common sense.'⁸³ Popular democratic ideology and rational state intervention are the means by which anti-racist policy is disseminated. Hall describes the change from a struggle over the relations of representation (the absence, marginalisation and simplification of ethnic experience) to the politics of representation itself.⁸⁴ Once race is politicised from a positive anti-racist platform, as part of a government policy of multiculturalism, possibilities then exist for the common sense promotion of racial harmony.

Anti-racism should be common sense, but it is not. This is unsurprising, given the pervasive myth of the Dominican Republic as a racial democracy. However, the evidence suggesting that darker-skinned Dominicans face discrimination in the workplace, and at all social levels, needs to be recognised and addressed at policy level. Banton suggests that racial prejudice derives from the pressure felt by individuals to conform to the prevalent social standards.⁸⁵ Thus, group norms need to be challenged. A re-representation of the country's history in the media and via education could remove the sheen from the image of a noble indigenous and European heritage. Attempts are only

⁸³ Hall. In Alvarado and Thompson 1990, p. 8

⁸⁴ Hall, S. 1992 New ethnicities. In Donald, J. and Rattansi, A. (eds) 1992 *'Race', Culture and Difference* London: Sage, pp. 252-259, p. 253

⁸⁵ Banton, M. 1985 *Promoting Racial Harmony* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 130

slowly being made to remove derogatory images of Haitians and to rewrite the light bias in school history text books.⁸⁶

A popular democratic ideology of multiculturalism or multiracialism could provide the basis for effective anti-racist policy in the Dominican Republic. The former term is preferred since it addresses a range of cultural institutions and ethnic identities. *Mestizaje* is a form of multiculturalism, popularised yet not incorporated into government policy. Multiculturalism promotes policies acknowledging 'racial diversity while at the same time disavowing divisive social realities.'⁸⁷ The celebration of *mestizaje* as the cornerstone of a broad-based government agenda could lay the foundation for the equal recognition of various ancestries and ethnicities in Dominican society.

Recognition at the governmental level of racial difference and its contribution to *dominicanidad* is a crucial beginning to the promotion of multiculturalism. Kallendorf suggests that Dominicans are beginning to challenge previous European-oriented histories of the country in favour of non-romanticised accounts of the indigenous past.⁸⁸ Competent multicultural policy, however, requires a more radical reappraisal of the island's history, emphasising indigenous, European, Asian and African influences. Given that African Dominicans have not been excluded by law from a full participation in society, their situation is somewhat similar to that experienced by the population of

⁸⁶ Celsa Albert interview 25 September 1995

⁸⁷ Kutzinski 1993, p. 5

⁸⁸ Kallendorf, H. 1995 A myth rejected: the Noble Savage in Dominican dystopia *Journal of Latin America Studies* 27: 449-470

African descent in Central America.⁸⁹ African Dominicans, however, do not form a minority of the population.

Dominican-Haitians and Haitians in the Dominican Republic are discriminated against racially as a result of their, or their parents', nationality. Clear and fair guidelines are needed to establish their status as Dominican citizens or legal residents. A more constructive and documented approach would remove the stigma of Haitian illegality. The granting of citizenship to the offspring of legally-resident Haitians in the Dominican Republic, and establishing the legal status of legitimate migrants, are important issues. The more efficient regulation of immigration would weaken the perception of an incessant Haitian flow. The forceful repatriation of Haitian cane cutters reproduces the image of the Haitian as the usurper or the unwelcome invader. Revised contracting is required to ascertain the number of labourers required and to put an end to random expulsions. Above all, effective legislation to establish a multicultural framework is fundamentally lacking.

Racial harmony works for the common and public good. Anti-racism aims, thus, to exchange the negative presence of racism, for its positive absence. Racism devalues human relations: 'If racism brutalises and dehumanises its object, it also brutalises and dehumanises those who articulate it.'⁹⁰ Banton's critique of the success of the 'race relations industry' in the United Kingdom suggests that while many supported the governmental goal of 'equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an

⁸⁹ Minority Rights Group (ed.) 1996 *Afro-Central Americans: rediscovering the African heritage* London: Minority Rights Group, p. 33

⁹⁰ Miles 1989, p. 10

atmosphere of mutual tolerance', there existed a substantial amount of vagueness and uncertainty 'about the best means to the end.'⁹¹ This is just as true in the Dominican Republic where cursory agreement on the basic premises of anti-racism has failed to result in practical governmental action. As Blaut succinctly infers, the removal of the roots of racism will not eradicate prejudice. Dominicans must do even more than dig up the vine, but also disempower the hegemonic position of 'white bias', which legitimises racism and reproduces the legacy of racial discrimination in society.⁹²

⁹¹ Banton 1985, p. ix

⁹² Blaut, J. M. 1992 The theory of cultural racism *Antipode* 24: 289-299

Appendix A - Questionnaire

1. **¿Cuántos años lleva usted viviendo aquí?**

menos de 1 año	1
1 - 5	2
6 - 10	3
11 - 20	4
más de 20	5

2. **¿Dónde nació?**

aquí	1
en otra parte de la R.D. (especifique)	2
.....	
en otro país (especifique)	3
.....	

3. **¿Cuántos años tiene?**

menos de 15	1
15 - 30	2
31 - 45	3
46 - 60	4
más de 60	5

4. **¿Quién es el cabeza de familia en su hogar?**

5. **¿Cuál es su estado civil?**

soltero/a	1
casado/a - matrimonio civil (en el Registro)	2
casado/a - matrimonio religioso (con ceremonia religiosa)	3
pareja estable, no casada	4
divorciado/a	5
separado/a	6
viudo/a	7

6. **¿En qué trabaja usted?**

7. **¿Tiene usted otras ocupaciones?**

8. **Quisiera hacerle ahora algunas preguntas sobre las personas que viven en su casa.**

RELACIÓN CON ENTREVISTADO	SEXO	EDAD	ESTADO CIVIL	NIVEL DE ESCOLARIDAD	OCUPACIÓN
1. entrevistado/a					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					

9. **¿Durante cuántos meses trabajó usted en el año pasado?**
10. **¿Durante cuántos días trabajó usted en la semana pasada?**
11. **¿En la actualidad, a cuánto asciende aproximadamente su ingreso mensual?**
12. **Tomando en cuenta todas las personas que están viviendo en su casa actualmente, ¿Aproximadamente cuál fue el ingreso total de su familia en el último año?**
13. **La casa en que usted vive es...**
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| propia | 1 |
| alquilada | 2 |
| gratis (no pagan) | 3 |
| razón de la gratuidad | |
14. **El agua que llega a la casa es...**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| de pluma dentro de la casa | 1 |
| de pluma pública | 2 |
15. **¿Hay en su casa...?**
- | | Sí | No |
|-----------------|----|----|
| radio | 1 | 2 |
| televisión | 1 | 2 |
| carro/camioneta | 1 | 2 |
| motor | 1 | 2 |
| nevera | 1 | 2 |
| teléfono | 1 | 2 |
| abanico | 1 | 2 |
| estufa | 1 | 2 |
| triciclo | 1 | 2 |
| video | 1 | 2 |
16. **¿Sabe usted leer?**
- | | |
|----|---|
| Sí | 1 |
| No | 2 |
17. **¿Escribe usted?**
- | | |
|----|---|
| Sí | 1 |
| No | 2 |
18. **¿Cuál es su religión?**
- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| católica | 1 |
| protestante (especifique) | 2 |
| | |
| otra (especifique) | 3 |
| | |
| ninguna | 4 |
19. **¿Por qué es importante la religión en la vida dominicana?.....**

34. **¿Tiene usted la televisión de cable?** Sí 1
No 2
35. **¿Qué tipos de programas le gusta ver?**
36. **¿Habla usted inglés? ¿Cómo lo aprendió?**
37. **¿Ha viajado usted fuera del país? ¿A dónde y por qué?**
38. **Tomando en cuenta todas las personas que están viviendo en su casa actualmente, ¿Cuántas han ido a los Estados Unidos o a otro país? ¿Por qué?**
39. **¿Cree usted que los Estados Unidos tienen una influencia grande sobre la sociedad y la cultura dominicana?**
40. **¿Qué significa la educación para enseñar la cultura dominicana?**
41. **¿Cuál es la raza de la mayoría de la población dominicana?**
42. **¿Cuál es el color de su piel según su cédula?**
43. **¿Cómo describiría usted su raza?**
44. **¿Cómo describiría usted la raza de su pareja?**
45. **¿Piense ahora en su mejor amiga/o. Cómo describiría usted la raza de esa/e amiga/o?**
46. **¿Cree que hay ventajas o desventajas por el hecho de tener la piel blanca en la República Dominicana?**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ventajas | 1 |
| desventajas | 2 |
| ni ventajas ni desventajas | 3 |
| no sabe | 8 |
47. **¿Por qué?**
48. **¿Cree que hay ventajas o desventajas por el hecho de tener la piel negra en la República Dominicana?**
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ventajas | 1 |
| desventajas | 2 |
| ni ventajas ni desventajas | 3 |
| no sabe | 8 |
49. **¿Por qué?**

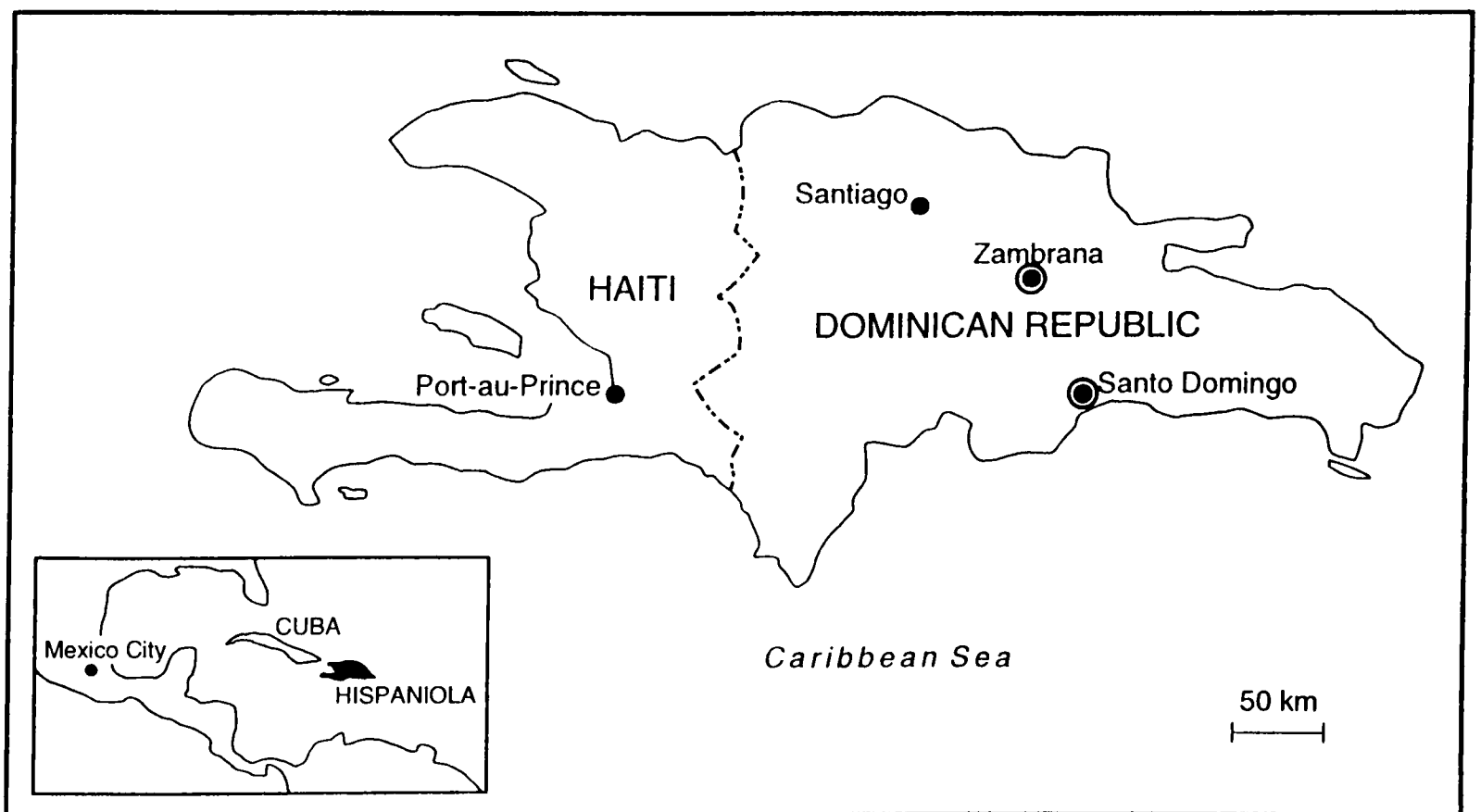
50. **¿Cree usted que el color de la piel del Doctor Peña Gómez tenía una influencia durante las últimas elecciones?**
51. **¿Qué opina usted de los haitianos que vienen a vivir y trabajar a la República Dominicana?**
52. **¿Que significa ser dominicano/a?**

Comentarios adicionales:

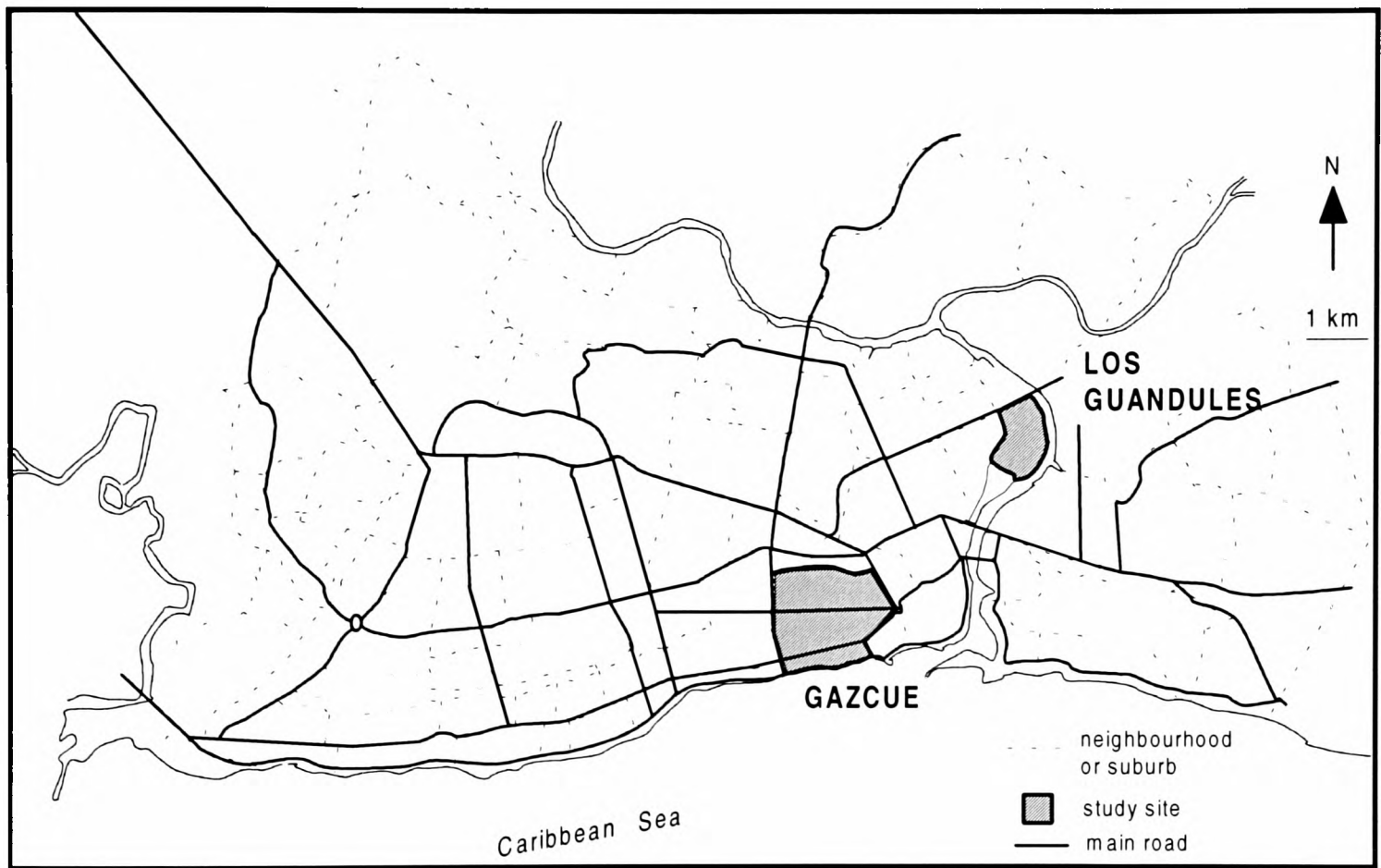
[color de la piel del/la entrevistado/a]

Appendix B - Location of survey sites

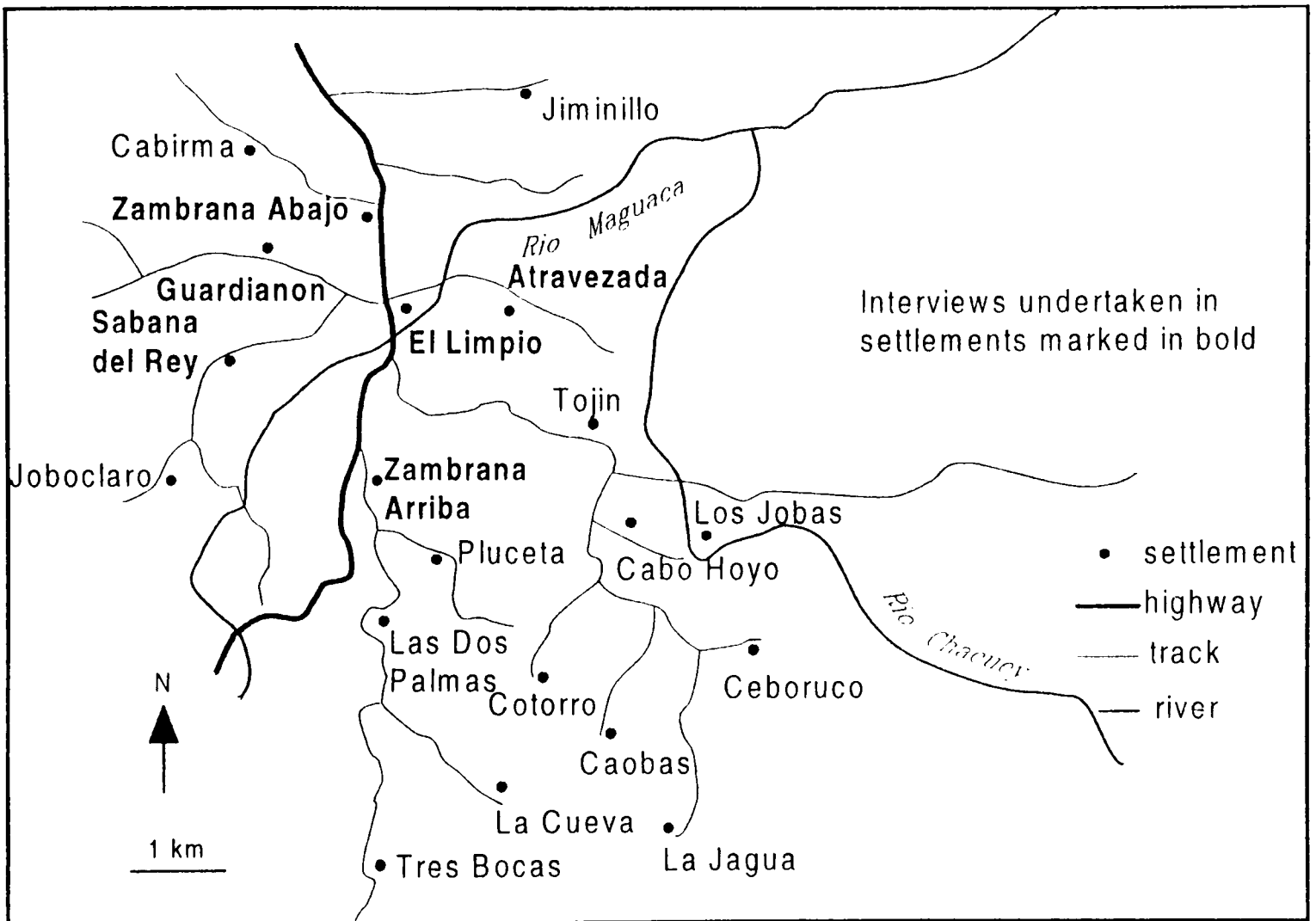
The Dominican Republic and Haiti



Santo Domingo: Gazcue and Los Guandules survey sites



Zambrana: location of survey site



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