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Unfreedom in Paradise: Examining Race, Citizenship, and Anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic

Kristen Ceiera Holmes

University of Miami, kristenc687@gmail.com

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

UNFREEDOM IN PARADISE: EXAMINING RACE, CITIZENSHIP, AND ANTI-
HAITIANISM IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

By

Kristen C. Holmes

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Coral Gables, Florida

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UNFREEDOM IN PARADISE: EXAMINING RACE, CITIZENSHIP, AND ANTI-
HAITIANISM IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Kristen C. Holmes

Approved:

Kate Ramsey, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of History

Terri A. Scandura, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Andrew Lynch, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of
Spanish and Latin American
Studies

Ann Brittain, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
of Anthropology

HOLMES, KRISTEN

(M.A., Latin American Studies)

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In the Dominican Republic, the memory of the Haitian conquest and annexation of the nation from 1822 until independence on February 27, 1844, along with the solidification of the anti-Haitian nationalist rhetoric of the 1920s and 30s, have fueled deep-seated animosity toward Haitians. Many Dominicans continue to hold strong anti-Haitian attitudes, and negative views of blackness pervade much of Dominican popular discourse, as well as ideas of beauty and social propriety.

Lamentably, these negative attitudes toward Haitianness, which has become synonymous with blackness and vice versa, have spread far beyond informal conversations in private households, permeating the political realm as well. Anti-Haitian attitudes have long guided government action and unofficial policy in the spheres of immigration, citizenship, and labor. Though the Dominican Constitution, prior to a 2010 reform, explicitly granted citizenship to all persons born on Dominican soil, persons of Haitian descent were routinely denied the right to citizenship, as well as the right to any forms of government-issued identification. As a result, even those born in the Dominican Republic endure the looming threat of being deported to a nation that, in some cases, they have never known.

Though the common occurrence of such grave injustice is well-known within the nation, most Dominicans are apathetic. The minority of Dominicans who oppose such immoral treatment are overpowered by the vociferous anti-Haitian majority who argue that those who fail to sympathize with their views are not only un-Dominican but anti-Dominican as well. With the majority of Dominicans holding such strong, vehemently-defended views on Haitian immigration, the minority opposition is often overlooked.

In this study, I will analyze information obtained from field observation and interviews with Haitian sugar cane cutters and Dominican intellectuals, as well as citizenship and immigration legislation, to provide readers with a more comprehensive view of the political, economic, and socio-cultural impact of racism and anti-Haitianism. As part of my analysis, I will examine the motivations behind and causes of contradictory citizenship and immigration policy and discriminatory interpretations of the law as it applies to Haitian-descended persons. Through this thesis, I aim to construct a new, more complex analysis of anti-Haitianism and racism to generate a more thorough understanding of contradictory Dominican immigration and citizenship policy and its impact within the Haitian-Dominican community.

Key words: citizenship, immigration, anti-Haitianism, racism, identity, Haitian-Dominican rights, sugar industry

Dedication

To my loving mother--for all of your sacrifice, your wisdom, your encouragement, and your undying support. You are an amazing mother, my inspiration, and the best friend I could ever ask for. Thank you for always believing in me and for being my rock, even when I was a thousand miles away. Without your love and guidance, I would not be who I am today.

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town of Los Llanos. His assistance was integral to my ability to conduct the field interviews necessary for this thesis. To Dr. Mildred Mata, I send my sincerest thanks for all of the invaluable references, knowledge, and experience that she shared with me.

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Chapter I Introduction

In the Dominican Republic, jobs ranging from landscaping, street vending, house cleaning, construction, and harvesting agricultural products depend heavily on cheap Haitian labor. Among the industries that rely most heavily on Haitian labor is the sugar industry. The harvesting of sugar was among the first jobs in the Dominican Republic to be performed virtually exclusively by Haitian labor. Although many critical areas of the Dominican economy rely on Haitian labor and, at times, Dominican immigration officials have even actively recruited cane cutters, or *braceros*, in Haiti, there remains a great deal of discrimination, oppression, and hostility towards persons of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic. Issues such as statelessness, unfair pay, lack of proper safety gear, lack of access to sanitary facilities, and the denial of pension rights for the elderly are just a few among those faced by Haitians and Haitian Dominican *braceros* in the Dominican Republic.

In this study, I will investigate the political and historical motivation behind and the legal, institutional, and social impact of Anti-Haitianist immigration legislation, citizenship practices, and human rights in present-day Dominican Republic. I will begin the study with a brief history of sugar production in the Dominican Republic and an investigation into the sugar industry's abuses. Then, I will present an analysis of the historical and political origins of racism and anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic and how these attitudes vary from region to region within the nation. Finally, I will discuss the progress made by those who oppose the unjust, discriminatory treatment of sugar plantation workers and other Haitian-descended persons in the Dominican Republic.

In this thesis, I will create a multi-dimensional analysis of the Haitian-Dominican conflict that challenges the homogenized representations that often prevail in the current literature. I will analyze both the institutions that create the framework for racism and human rights issues in the Dominican Republic and the sociocultural manifestations of anti-Haitianism. I will examine the aforementioned topics in dialogue with Pierre Bourdieu's theory on *habitus*¹ and the subjectivism of institutions and the maintenance of structures of power.

By combining analyses of distinct dimensions of this complex issue, I will explore the interconnectedness of the institutional and the social and how they interact to produce and maintain the status quo of anti-Haitian sentiment and discrimination on the part of Dominican officials. In this way, I aim to construct an analysis that presents a new angle of anti-Haitianism and its history, causes, and impacts that has, to my knowledge, yet to be explored. Moreover, I will also use this research to examine the many transformations that have taken place on the *batey* since the peak of scholarly interest in Haitian-Dominican relations and human rights in the Dominican Republic in the late 80s in to the 1990s's.

Presently in the Dominican Republic, persons of Haitian descent remain under the constant threat of deportation, regardless of their official legal status. The vast majority of Haitian workers have no form of official documentation yet much of the Dominican economy is built on their backs. It was not until the past year or so that *braceros* began receiving government-issued identification cards from their employers, but the real

¹ *Habitus* is a combination of the impact of one's lived experience on present behaviors and actions, ones appearance, language, and way of being (Bourdieu 1980)

impact of these IDs is questionable. In January 2010, this already precarious situation further deteriorated following the Constitutional reform enacted by President Leonel Fernández. Among the changes included in the reform were increasing the number of consecutive presidential terms for which one can run; banning abortion under all circumstances, even when the mother's health is at risk; and restricting the right to citizenship to those born to Dominican parents (NACLA 2011:1).

In prior Constitutions, the language was clear about granting citizenship on the basis of *jus soli*, or citizenship by birth. That is, all persons born on Dominican soil, regardless of their racial or ethnic background and regardless of the immigration status of their parents, would become citizens by virtue of having been born in the Dominican Republic. The only exception to this rule in prior constitutions was the “in transit” clause, which reads “...con la excepción de los hijos legítimos de los extranjeros residentes en el país en representación diplomática o los que están en tránsito en el.”/“with the exception of the legitimate children of foreign residents in the country as diplomats or those who are in transit” (Constitución de la República Dominicana 2002)

The “in transit” clause was constantly manipulated even well before the 2010 reforms came into effect (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 50). Nationalist, anti-Haitian political leaders distorted the meaning of the clause to include the children of undocumented Haitian immigrants, regardless of their birth on Dominican soil. In fact, officials have even undermined the law by applying this interpretation to those whose families have been in the Dominican Republic for generations. Although the new Constitution explicitly states “Son dominicanas y dominicanos: quienes gocen de la nacionalidad dominicana antes de entrar en vigencia esta constitución/ “The following

are Dominican: those who enjoyed the Dominican nationality prior to this Constitution coming into effect,” many Dominican officials continued to treat Haitian-descended persons as inherently ineligible for Dominican citizenship by virtue of their ethnic background (Constitución de la República Dominicana 2011). Furthermore, article 110 of the 2010 Constitution stipulates the following:

La ley sólo dispone y se aplica para porvenir. No tiene efecto retroactivo.... En ningún caso los poderes públicos o la ley podrán afectar o alterar la seguridad jurídica derivada de situaciones establecidas conforme a una legislación anterior. / The law only mandates and applies to the future. It does not have a retroactive effect... In no case will political leaders or the law have the ability to affect or change the juridical security derived from situations established in adherence to prior legislation.

Despite an explicit prohibition on retroactively applying the law, that is exactly what has happened. For example, children born to Haitian parents are routinely denied access to their birth certificates (Hanes 2010). This issue has rendered stateless many former Dominican citizens of Haitian descent. As a result, their lives have permanently disrupted their lives and their security within the Dominican territory has been jeopardized.

As a result of the aforementioned restriction of access to birth certificates for Dominican-born children of foreign parents, those who were recognized as citizens according to the 2010 Constitution were denied the rights and protections they were due because they were prevented from obtaining the documents necessary to prove their legal status. Without the ability to provide proof of citizenship, the Constitutional guarantee of such rights was nothing more than an empty promise. Prior to January 2010, without documents such as a birth certificate, a Dominican-born Haitian was treated in much the same way as an undocumented Haitian migrant. Ethnic background alone was

considered sufficient basis on which to assume that someone did not belong in the Dominican Republic, neither in a legal nor in a social sense. Moreover, a common practice in the Dominican Republic was and continues to be conducting sweeping immigration raids, indiscriminately expelling all persons of Haitian descent. As a result, many Haitian-Dominicans are unjustly “deported” to a country that is not their own and one that is, in many cases, completely unfamiliar to them (Martínez 1995: 51, Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 65-66). For those who *do* have documents, since no one is given an opportunity to gather their belongings, it is doubtful that they would be granted the chance to return home for their identification documents, if necessary (Martínez 1995: 51, Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 65-66).

Lamentably, before 2010, even ethnic Haitians born in the Dominican Republic, although guaranteed citizenship by the Constitution on the basis of *jus soli*, or citizenship by birthright, were systematically denied this right on the basis of their ethnicity. Only a small minority of the many Haitians born on Dominican soil were able to obtain their Dominican citizenship. As the Constitution now stands, the children and future generations of Haitian-Dominicans who managed to obtain Dominican citizenship will never have the opportunity to become Dominican citizens. Furthermore, since what the pre-2010 Constitution stated regarding citizenship by birth-right was constantly undermined by federal and local government officials, the extent to which these persons were truly citizens is questionable. As a result of the present retroactive application of the law as stated in the 2010 constitutional revision, even many of those previously considered citizens according to the letter of the law, will now be perpetually ineligible Dominican Citizenship. Moreover, although prior to the 2010 constitutional reform,

children of families who have lived in the Dominican Republic for two or even three generations often remained stateless, this type of injustice is now not only the norm, but the constitutional mandate.

Statelessness affects virtually all realms of life, barring those affected from pursuing schooling beyond the sixth grade, attending college, obtaining a marriage license, obtaining a driver's license, obtaining a passport or visa, signing legal contracts, cashing a check, and obtaining legal employment (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 49-50). Furthermore, statelessness renders its victims perpetually vulnerable to random deportation. Moreover, it also places them at considerable risk of oppression and abuses in the workplace as well as in their everyday dealings as they are not protected by the Dominican state and the Haitian government rarely, if ever, intervenes on their behalf. Without the protection of the Dominican state, stateless individuals of Haitian descent face a significantly increased risk of exploitation by others. As a result, they are much more likely to have to endure unfair pay, delayed payment on the job, failure to receive compensation for work or other services provided, extreme work conditions, or a denied right to a day of rest on the job. All of these injustices can and do face many Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic.

Beyond the many basic social functions that stateless persons are barred from, such as voting and obtaining marriage licenses and visas for travel, statelessness also denies those of Haitian descent of the right to move freely within the country without fear. If they happen to be traveling in the wrong area at the wrong time, they can have their lives changed in an instant through deportation regardless of their place of birth. If deported, they are taken to a country they may not even know and are ripped away from

their family and friends without warning and without the opportunity to inform them of the situation. Moreover, statelessness makes Haitians more vulnerable to other forms of exploitation beyond that which they face on the *batey*. Stateless persons, for example, are unable to sign legally binding contracts, thus, they do not have access to the security that such contracts provide. As a result, they may provide an entire day's worth of labor and never receive pay for their services because they have no proof that the services were provided. This is just one example among many potential exploitations to which the precarious position of statelessness opens the door.

In the event of fatal accidents, fatal illness, or murder, what happens to someone who has no recognized form of identification? Although in my field interviews police officers and a judge in Los Llanos all confirmed that undocumented persons have unrestricted access to the justice system, what becomes of incidents in which all involved parties are undocumented? These questions at present remain unanswered; nonetheless, it remains clear that statelessness opens the door to further rights abuses. For these and many other reasons, this dire situation merits immediate attention and profound reform.

Often, in the eyes of the Dominican immigration authorities, the minority of ethnic Haitians who manage to obtain Dominican citizenship are no different from their undocumented counterparts. In random immigration raids, simply having "Haitian-like" features or a Haitian accent is sufficient grounds for immigration authorities to deport someone to Haiti. These deportations generally occur without giving those to be deported the opportunity to phone friends or family members to inform them of the situation (Martínez 1995: 51, Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 65-66). They are

simply sent immediately to Haiti. Moreover, according to my field interviews, many Haitian-Dominicans no longer have family members or other contacts in Haiti (Michel).

Given the central role that Haitians play in the agricultural and construction sectors as well as in many other areas of the informal labor market, one can imagine that there is a sizeable Haitian-descended population in the Dominican Republic. Presently, however, there is no reliable census data on the number of Haitians in the Dominican Republic and many of the national estimates are ideologically motivated (Ferguson 2003: 8). Nationalist politicians tend to grossly exaggerate the figure in hopes of sparking outrage and rallying Dominicans toward their goal of protecting the nation from what they have coined “La Invasión Pacífica” or “The Peaceful Invasion.” La Invasión Pacífica is the Nationalist conspiracy theory that Haitians are covertly plotting to gradually re-take the eastern half of the island through immigration. Nationalists capitalize on this conspiracy theory to cultivate fear and defensiveness among the Dominican citizenry.

Despite the lack of reliable census data on the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic, there are estimates of the size of the Haitian population from other reliable sources. For example, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights estimates that in 1999, there were 500,000 to 700,000 Haitians living and working in the Dominican Republic (Ferguson 2003: 8). The Haitian Embassy in the Dominican Republic estimates that in 2001, there were 1.5 million Haitians in the nation (Ferguson 2003: 8). Human Rights Watch estimates a population of 1 million for the same year (Ferguson 2003: 8). Although inconsistent and unclear about whether they include Haitian Dominicans in addition to Haitian migrants, these figures can at least provide a

general idea of a relative population size. The overall population of the Dominican Republic in 2010 was 9.5 million (Hanes 2010). From these figures, one could estimate that Haitians composed about 13% of the population in 2010. As a point of comparison, this percentage is about the same as that of Black Americans in the United States.

From the aforementioned figures, one can see that persons of Haitian descent compose a significant portion of the nation's population. This community, regardless of the harsh discrimination it may face, is crucial to the security of the national economy. In much the same way that immigrant labor plays a critical role in the agricultural and construction sectors in the United States, Haitian labor is also a powerful engine behind the Dominican economy. Sugar, although no longer as powerful as in the past, remains one of the most important generators of national revenue and the harvesting of sugar cane is performed all but exclusively by Haitian labor (Martínez 1995: 52).

Chapter II Methodology

In conducting the research for this thesis, I focused my analysis on three *bateyes*, or sugar plantation labor compounds, in San Jose de Los Llanos, Dominican Republic. The *bateyes* were Cánepa, Contador and Sabana Tosa. San José de los Llanos was my case study location due to its centrality to the Dominican sugar industry. Los Llanos lies in the Dominican Republic's eastern region, the region with the nation's highest concentration of sugar plantations. Additionally, in Los Llanos, the legacy of the famous, or infamous, Father Christopher Hartley remains strong. Father Christopher is a Catholic priest who dedicated ten years to advocating for reform on the *bateyes* in Los Llanos. He pressured plantation owners for improvements such as access to running water and schooling, improved living conditions, increased freedom of movement, the right to seek outside work during the off-season, and even the right to quit their jobs. Furthermore, Father Christopher educated the *braceros* on their rights and also supported and encouraged human rights activism on the *batey*. For his outspokenness in the international arena about the abuses on Dominican *batey*, Father Christopher sparked intense hatred among many Dominicans and endured vicious attacks in the media, in addition to constant death threats. Through his persistence and collaboration with international NGO's, however, Father Christopher was able to secure running water in some *bateyes* and bring schools to others, in addition to securing the increased worker freedoms that he passionately vied for before incessant death threats eventually led to his departure. In addition, Father Christopher also managed to ensure the timely payment of wages. This particular advancement, however, only lasted during the time that Father Christopher was present.

In light of Father Christopher's impact on the *bateyes* of Los Llanos, today, the memories of the way things were remain vivid and there is a strong awareness of the progress that one can achieve through activism. There is also, however, a recognition that there remains great deal of work to be completed. As a result, the debate surrounding plantation worker rights, and necessarily their immigration rights as well, remains active. Moreover, human rights movements in the area also remain vibrant. In light of these characteristics, I found Los Llanos to be an ideal site for my research.

The Haitian-Dominican rights issue in the Dominican Republic has many distinct facets and each stems from an interaction among various factors. In light of this complexity, to produce a more comprehensive, dimensioned analysis, the methodology employed for this study capitalizes on the strengths of multiple research methods. Field observation was used to gain an understanding of relationships within the *batey* as well as the common struggles endured by the *bracero* community. The research was conducted in the off-season when temporary workers had returned to their respective homes in Haiti or the Dominican Republic and only permanent residents on the *bateyes* remained. Interviews were used to gain insight into how the individual experiences of the *braceros* differed. Each interview consisted of questions soliciting information regarding how the workers arrived on the *batey*, the circumstances that led to their arrival, how conditions on the *batey* have evolved in their time living and working there, as well as what issues remained to be resolved. Moreover, a number of questions solicited information regarding how new arrivals became integrated into the *batey* community, what roles were played by the other *bateyanos*, if any, as well as how new arrivals acquired Spanish. Furthermore, the interviews also solicited information regarding the amount of contact

workers have with family members outside the *batey*, in addition to information regarding ties with the Los Llanos community and access to education. Finally, there were also questions regarding crime on the *bateyes* as well as accessibility and effectiveness of the local justice system.

All interviews of *braceros* were conducted on the respective *bateyes*. However, since my research was conducted in the off-season, there were no Dominican guards or other authorities present during any of the interviews. For the protection of informants' identity, all of the informant names mentioned in this thesis are pseudonyms². The style of the interviews was informal, allowing for the informants to focus on the details they considered most important. Interviews took the form of a guided conversation, as opposed to a question and answer session. The goal was to begin with an opening question and to allow the informants to do the most speaking. During the interviews, I kept a list of core³ questions that I asked all informants, while maintaining a conversational interview style. If informants chose to highlight another topic that they found important, I allowed them to do so while simply guiding them into answering the questions on my list without necessarily asking them directly. As a result, each interview took on its own unique color, reflecting the individual experience of each informant. Multiple interviews, for example, described the types of the extra jobs that some *braceros* held, primarily in the off-season. Some of the interviews focused more on recent freedoms while interviews with the elderly tended to go more depth on differences between the *bateyes* under Trujillo compared to post-dictatorship conditions.

² Pseudonyms have been used in all cases in which first names only are used in the reference section

³ These questions are in Spanish and Haitian Creole in appendixes I and II, respectively

Prior to conducting interviews, I visited the *bateyes*, along with a team from a law office in San Pedro that works closely with the *braceros* in San José de Los Llanos on human rights issues. The team was led by Dr. Noemí Méndez, a former *batey* resident and lawyer who advocates for *batey* workers' rights. Among her achievements has been securing pensions for some of the elderly workers. Dr. Méndez's established relationship of trust with the *braceros* as well as her introducing me and explaining to everyone what I would be doing in the coming weeks increased the comfort level and openness among informants during the interviews.

Once I began conducting interviews, Dr. Méndez also connected me with her liaison, Alem, an ethnic Dominican and resident of Los Llanos. Alem, who is married to an ethnic Haitian woman, has long advocated for *bracero* rights in Los Llanos and is well-known, both in the town and in the *bateyes*. He accompanied me to all interviews as both a guide as well as someone with whom the informants already had an established relationship of trust. With the help of Dr. Méndez and Alem, I was able to quickly establish a rapport with the informants, and they much more willing to speak candidly.

Another component of my research was an analysis of immigration-related legislation and constitutional reform. Through this component, I have introduced a new dimension that, to my knowledge, has only been mentioned peripherally in past literature. I considered it crucial to emphasize Dominican immigration legislation and its many contradictions in this study. This analysis was realized through an examination of legislation and the evolution of the Constitution's treatment of immigration, culminating in the latest constitutional reform. By combining these elements I aim to facilitate a more dynamic understanding of an often oversimplified reality.

Chapter III “El picador es un perro”: Human Rights and the Unfree Freedoms of Today’s Dominican Sugar Plantation Labor System

In its infancy in 1884, the Dominican sugar industry relied chiefly on domestic labor. This pattern continued for the first two decades of operation (Martínez 1995: 37). However, since land ownership was fairly high among Dominicans—many had *conucos*, or small subsistence farms, with which they were able to provide for the basic nutritional needs for their families—few were willing to continue working in the cane fields as prices in the sugar market dropped. They began to feel that compensation for their labor was no longer commensurate with the intensity of the labor they performed. Plantation owners attempted to keep sugar prices low by refusing to raise wages in response to inflation, and the economic situation for Dominicans was not grave enough to justify toiling for long hours under the boiling sun in the cane fields for such meager pay (Martínez 1995: 37-38). The inability to attract domestic labor, then, led plantation owners to look beyond the nation’s borders for labor. When sugar prices on the international market began to plummet in the 1920s, the need to maintain cheap labor became even more pressing (Martínez 1995: 59).

As was the case in much of the Caribbean, jobs available harvesting sugar cane sparked various waves of immigration. In the Dominican Republic, the source of the labor remained within the Caribbean, primarily the British West Indies, whereas in the colonial sugar industry that existed elsewhere in the Caribbean, migrants from India, Indonesia, and China also came in pursuit of work in the cane fields (Martínez 1995: 34). The West Indian migrants who arrived to work in Dominican cane fields came to influence the culture of the East—the chief sugar-producing region in the nation—on

various cultural planes, particularly in the culinary realm. To this day, the region is known for its population of *cocolos*, or persons of West-Indian descent, and the influence they have had on regional culture. Not long after pursuing immigrant labor in West Indies, however, Dominican sugar plantation owners began turning to Haiti as a source of cheap labor (Martínez 1995: 35).

Although immigration from Haiti had already begun a few decades before the national sugar industry's rapid growth between 1875 and 1930, it was not until after looking to the Lesser Antilles as a source of labor that plantation owners began actively seeking *braceros* in Haiti (Moya Pons 1995: 367). In much the same way as with West Indian laborers, poverty and limited availability of work were sufficient conditions for maintaining a constant flow of labor from the neighboring nation. During this time, most workers migrated temporarily, solely for the purpose of working the harvest, following which they would return home.

Beginning in 1915, just before the U.S. invasion and occupation of both countries⁴, the Haitian and Dominican states made formal arrangements for laborers to be sent from Haiti to the Dominican Republic specifically to work the cane harvest (Martínez 1995: 41). The nature of this labor migration, however, remained undocumented (Martínez 1995: 41). Though labor migration to the *bateyes* from Haiti had already begun, during the U.S. occupations of Haiti from 1915 to 1934 and the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924, this migration expanded and the two nations began taking measures to regulate movement across the border (Martínez 1995: 33-34,

⁴ Haiti in 1915 and the Dominican Republic in 1916 (Moya Pons 1998:485)

41). After dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina ordered the 1937 massacre of an estimated 15,000 Haitians in the border region, official recruitment ceased, only to be reinstated in 1941 following diplomatic negotiations between the two nations (Martínez 1995: 44-45, Wucker 2000: 50, Ferguson 2003: 6).

The labor system on the Dominican sugar plantation system differs vastly from that of the rest of the Caribbean. Dominican sugar is primarily harvested by immigrant laborers from Haiti, some of whom are temporary migrants and others of whom have permanently settled in the country. This particular characteristic, however, is not what sets the Dominican sugar industry apart from its counterparts in other islands in the Caribbean. Cuba, for example, has a long history of relying on Haitian migrants to work the local sugar harvest as well. Some of these workers came to settle on the island, forming Haitian enclaves that have remained to the present-day.

What distinguishes the Dominican Republic from other Caribbean sugar economies involves both its historical evolution and the present state of living and working conditions for *braceros*. On the historical plane, the Dominican Republic entered the sugar industry relatively late in comparison to the rest of the Caribbean. The nation's venture into mass sugar production did not begin until *after* the abolition of slavery (Martínez 1995: 34). This history is very distinct from that of Haiti, France's "Pearl of the Antilles" which was, at its peak, the wealthiest colony in the New World. Although the Dominican sugar industry did not directly evolve from slavery, the vestiges of slavery seemed alive and well in the practices employed toward plantation workers, called *braceros*, until fairly recently. Even now, the physical *batey*—harvest and production technology, living conditions, sanitation services, etc-- remains suspended in

the days of old. Tools used for harvesting are rudimentary, at best, and *braceros* most often have no running water, no bathrooms, and no electricity (Martínez 1995: 11, 35, 70, 74). Such primitive technology and poor working conditions are in stark contrast to sugar production elsewhere.

Since the 1980s, Haitian and Haitian-descended *braceros* have often been brought from Haiti or from areas near the border under false pretenses and kept on a bus by armed force for the duration of the journey from the border to the sugar plantations, which were most often on the opposite end of the island (Martínez 1995: 52⁵). Although some migrants chose to migrate to the Dominican *bateyes* in search of work on their own volition, many were lured by false promises of high pay and office jobs, while for others, a sense that they had exhausted all of their options to earn a living in Haiti was sufficient motivation for the big move. For those who were recruited by the sugar companies for their labor, they were bused from the border to their respective *bateyes*. This drive took an average of five to six hours. Additionally, upon arrival to the *batey*, *braceros* were forced to live in small, single-open-room barracks on the *batey*, often sharing this small space with multiple workers. *Braceros* were expected to live, work, and conduct all of their activities within the confines of the *bateyes*. This expectation was enforced with the threat of violence.

Once on the plantation, the dwellings of new *braceros* were patrolled by armed guards. This patrolling continued until the guards felt that they had sufficiently established their force and made clear the seriousness of the physical repercussions for escape attempts (Martínez 1995: 10). Those who attempted to leave the *batey* for any reason, whether to permanently escape or to find other work were severely beaten. This

⁵ Field research conducted from 1985-1986 in Batey Yerba Buena

was even the case for those who left to find work on other *bateyes* on which conditions were or pay was slightly better. Furthermore, due to their precarious legal status, any persons of Haitian descent who left the *batey* were subject to arrest (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 39). Historically, Dominican sugar plantation owners have sought laborers among groups that were similarly constrained to the *batey* and separated from mainstream society in a various ways. That is, plantation owners have historically shown a preference for groups who, by virtue of social and economic factors, such as poverty and cultural differences, would be restricted to remaining on the periphery of Dominican society. In this way, options for survival beyond the *batey* were extremely limited (Martínez 1995: 34).

The coercion, threats of violence, and living conditions faced by *braceros* were reminiscent of the institution of African slave labor throughout the Americas. Even the technology available for the harvesting of sugar cane resembled, and continues to resemble, the rudimentary tools used in the distant past. Today, *braceros* are still not provided with even the most minimal proper safety gear such as safety goggles, gloves, protective boots, or even shoes. The use of this basic safety gear and other precautions are commonplace in the rest of the Caribbean sugar industry.

Cane cutting has no shortage of risks. The cane is harvested with swift, forceful blows of a machete and the flying bits of cane can easily cause severe eye damage. The leaves of the cane often cause cuts on the workers hands and bodies (Asté 2009). Without protective gloves, blisters and cuts are inevitable after a day of toiling from sun up to sundown. A lack of proper footgear or even a lack of any shoes at all also has its drawbacks. The feet become vulnerable to injury from swinging axes or from falling

cane, with its sharp, knife-like leaves (Aste 2009). Furthermore, improper or insufficient foot gear also leaves one's feet vulnerable to any small animals, such as snakes or mice that may find the tall grasses of the cane plants hospitable.

The story of how *braceros* arrive at the *batey* varies from person to person. In my field interviews, I learned that some *braceros* migrated alone in order to avoid drawing attention to themselves, while others traveled in small groups. Some, such as Moise, walked by foot from their homes in Haiti to a Dominican border town such as Dajabón. Others, however, were born elsewhere in the Dominican Republic and relocated to San José de Los Llanos in search of work on the *batey* (2011). Among those who walked to the border, some were required to pay a bribe to the guard at the border to cross, while others crossed for free with the assistance of a *buscón* who served as a recruiter on behalf of plantation owners.

One of my informants, Dominique, reported that he walked from Cape Haitien to the Dominican border city of Dajabón, where he arrived at the *batey* with the assistance of a *buscón* (2011). A *buscón* is an employee of the sugar company who seeks out Haitians in the border area to recruit Haitians as *braceros*. According to another informant, Miguel, there are both Haitian and Dominican *buscones* and they actually reside on the *batey*. *Buscones* receive money from the company in exchange for assisting Haitian migrants in illegally crossing the border into the Dominican Republic and placing them in a *batey* job (Miguel 2011). Those who arrive with *buscones* do not pay to cross the border as this expense is covered by the *batey* in exchange for the guarantee of sufficient labor to work the year's harvest (Dominique 2011, Miguel 2011, Roger 2011).

Some Haitians receive the assistance of *buscón* knowing that they will be working as a *bracero*. However, there are others, such as my informant Alexandre, who are led to believe that they will be working in one of the nation's many resorts (Alexandre 2011). Dominique shared that once he was with the *buscón*, he and other Haitian migrants seeking work in the Dominican Republic boarded a bus and were transported to their respective *bateyes*, some in San José de Los Llanos and some in Barahona, a sugar producing town in the South (2011). Many informants also reported that some Haitians who cross the border without the assistance of a *buscón* are obligated to pay a bribe to Dominican guards at the border in order to be permitted to cross (Martínez 1995: 9, Jean Robert 2011, Miguel 2011). Some *braceros* arrive at a given *batey* because they are brought there by the *buscón*, while others learn by word-of-mouth that a given *batey* is in need of workers.

As previously mentioned, the migratory experience differs for every *bracero*. Each *bracero* has his or her own unique story. Out of all of my field interviews, one interview with an elderly informant perhaps best encapsulated the harsh circumstances some migrants endure before even arriving to work the *batey*. Jean Robert, the mentioned informant, arrived in the Dominican Republic in 1960 (Jean Robert 2011). At the time, he did not have to pay; however, he asserted that this has since changed and that most persons who cross the border are obligated to pay a bribe to the guard to be permitted to do so (2011). Jean Robert migrated to the Dominican Republic alone in an effort to avoid drawing the attention of the guards at the border (2011). He walked three days from the Haitian-Dominican border to the capital of Santo Domingo. During those three days, he went without food and walked all day until nightfall, when he would sleep

in a tree until the next morning (2011). Once he arrived in the capital, he was able to catch a ride with a Dominican to Barahona, where he worked for six years before moving to Los Llanos to work on a local *batey* (2011).

With all of the abuses on the *batey* and the many hardships of migration, one may wonder why so many Haitians continue migrating to the *bateyes* for work. As my informant Michel put it, “In Haiti, it’s difficult because there’s nothing to do for money. There are no longer sugar refineries and with the refineries around, a lot of people at least had a place to live”⁶ (2011). In much of the Caribbean, job shortages are a serious concern. In the Dominican Republic, for example, I observed that many Dominicans live off of the remittances sent from family members living abroad. A lack of jobs often leads residents of both sides of the island to migrate elsewhere.

Although manual labor jobs in areas such as construction, agriculture, and landscaping abound, the pay for these jobs is not substantial enough to attract a Dominican labor force. An abundance of cheap Haitian labor keeps wages low for the mentioned occupations. However, if a lack of jobs is such a severe issue in the Dominican Republic, a fairly sparsely populated island compared to its Western neighbor, how much more pressure must Haitians feel to migrate in search of work. Based on figures provided by the CIA World Factbook, the Dominican Republic has a population of only about 200,000 more than Haiti, a fairly minimal difference; however, the size of the Dominican Republic is almost twice that of Haiti (United States Central Intelligence Agency 2011: 1). Moreover, one must bear in mind that these 2011 figures reflect the devastating impact of the January 2010 earthquake. In light of these factors, perhaps one can better understand what motivates many Haitians to migrate to the

⁶ All translations are mine unless otherwise noted

Dominican Republic in search of work on the *bateyes*. Although living and working on the *batey* is harsh and arduous, as Michel mentioned, at least they are guaranteed a place to live.

Although both living and labor conditions within the *batey* remain incredibly harsh and *braceros* continue fighting for humane treatment and reasonable pay, there have been considerable advancements since the slave-like system that prevailed into the late 90s. These advancements have taken place primarily as a result of the advocacy of foreign Catholic missionary priests Father Christopher Hartley in San José de los Llanos and Father Pedro Ruquoy in Barahona (Serrano 2007). Both missionaries served as activists for the rights of *braceros* nationwide. Father Hartley and Father Ruquoy capitalized upon their clout as foreigners to bring international attention to previously hidden human rights abuses on the *bateyes*. By encouraging *braceros* to assert their rights and protest, and by exposing the many injustices of the Dominican sugar industry to the international community, Father Hartley and Father Ruquoy mobilized *batey* workers and encouraged powerful NGOs and other foreign actors to pressure the Dominican state to improve the inhumane conditions and the harsh treatment of laborers on the *bateyes*.

Grassroots human rights movements also had a significant impact on the Haitian-Dominican Human Rights Movement. The largest of these movements was spearheaded by Solange “Sonia” Pierre, herself a Haitian-Dominican *bracero*. Much of the progress attained was secured primarily in areas dealing with freedom of movement, freedom of job choice, and education access. Pierre leads the Haitian-Dominican Women’s Rights Movement, or MUDHA as it is known by its Spanish acronym. Among the achievements

of the movement was bringing a citizenship case against the nation to the Inter-American Human Rights Court in 2005 (Open Society Foundations 2011). The Court ordered the Dominican Republic to grant citizenship to the two young girls involved in the case, both of whom were born to a Haitian father and a Dominican mother. This case garnered greater international support for the Haitian-Dominican citizenship cause and brought increased attention to the wide variety of abuses that were taking place on the nation's sugar plantations.

The Haitian and Haitian-Dominican Human Rights movement has secured significant advancements in numerous areas of *bracero* life; however, a great deal of work remains. A key achievement in the area of human rights for *braceros* in the nation's *bateyes* is that they no longer live under the constant threat of violence.

Braceros are free to leave the *batey* at their own will. This means that they are free to shop for goods in the less expensive *colmados*, or small corner markets. Moreover, the *colmados* that were once owned by sugar estate owners are now individually-owned by persons unaffiliated with the estate owners.

Nonetheless, increased freedom of movement has failed to eliminate the issue of expense. Many *braceros* cannot afford the fare to leave the *batey*. Thus, they have no other option than to pay the inflated prices in the *batey colmado*, or mini market. My informant, Evens, mentioned that one particular item was 18 pesos in a *colmado* in Los Llanos, but the one in the *batey* charged 26 pesos (Evens 2011). Furthermore, he also informed that those who were unable to leave the *batey* did not have access to fruits or vegetables since the main food items available in the *batey colmado* are rice, beans, flour,

sugar, and oil (Evens 2011). Beyond the food available in the *colmado*, I observed some *braceros* raising free-range chickens for consumption.

In addition to their increased freedom of movement, *braceros* are also free to pursue other jobs. They are no longer limited to work on a single *batey*, but are now able to pursue work on other *bateyes* or, as is commonly the case, pursue opportunities in other areas of agricultural work. Beyond cane cutting, there are many other realms of agricultural work, such as the harvesting of coffee, tomatoes, and rice which are also realized by a primarily Haitian labor force. Furthermore, workers are even free to pursue opportunities for self-employment as well.

During my fieldwork on the *bateyes* Contador, Cánepa, and Sabana Tosa, informants highlighted the frequent occurrence of women working in petty commerce. Most commonly, this petty commerce involved the sale of *pulga*, the second-hand clothing donated from the United States. In Santo Domingo, for example, there are certain areas full of table after table of Haitian women who have stations at which they sell *pulga* and other cheap apparel items. Among these items are often rubber slide-in sandals that are commonly worn by much of the poor and working class Haitian community in the Dominican Republic, as they are an affordable option in a country in which the poor commonly have to go without shoes in rural areas. Furthermore, one of my informants, Jenifer, told me that some women make regular trips to the capital of Santo Domingo, located about a two-hour ride away from my research site in Los Llanos, to purchase items which they then resell on the *batey* for a small profit (Jenifer 2011). Other *braceros*, still, are able to obtain jobs in non-agricultural sectors taking on positions such as maids for local businesses.

Although there are a variety of gender-specific jobs performed by women, there are also a few gender-specific jobs available to men. Perhaps the most common gender-specific job held by men is that of a *motoconchista*. For families or individuals who are able to afford a *motor*, or moped, often the father or son will use it to be a *motoconchista*, the driver of a sort of impromptu taxi. In rural areas of the Dominican Republic, the primary mode of daily transportation is the *motoconcho*, or a motorcycle-like moped, which serves as an alternative to the *carro concho* used in more metropolitan areas such as Santo Domingo and Santiago. A *carro concho* is a syndicated form of transportation that has a set circular route around a city, but no set stops.

The often well-worn 80's model Toyota and Nissan cars used as jitneys that often look like miracles on the road by the mere fact that they somehow manage to be in sufficient shape to make their rounds without breakdowns become even greater miracles because drivers are known to squeeze in as many riders as possible—generally two in the front passenger seat and as many as five adults in the back. *Motoconchos*, as the rural response to the *carro concho* can also, although less frequently, carry an entire family of four. They are less organized and simply make the rounds of their choice, picking up passengers as they see them. As the entrance to most *bateyes* is kilometers away from the town, *motoconchistas* often make their money by waiting at the entrance of the *batey* to transport those who can afford a ride from school or other places in town to their homes on the *batey*.

Though recent freedoms which permit *batey* residents to establish relationships and pursue work opportunities beyond the *batey* are significant, there are a number of factors that restrict most *bateyanos* from taking advantage of them. Income is a

considerable barrier for most. *Braceros* are paid a very small amount, especially in comparison to the intense physical exertion and long hours required of them. One particular *bracero*, Michel, reported earning 5,000 pesos monthly, which is the equivalent of about USD\$131 (2011). This would translate to about \$30 per week and about \$4.36 per day. Michel informed me of how much he yearned to visit his family in Haiti, but his earnings would never allow him to do so as the trip would cost about 3,000 to 4,000 pesos, about USD\$79 to USD\$105.

Rather than being paid by the hour, wages for cane cutters are kept low while production is kept high by maintaining a piece-rate system which pays workers by the ton of cane cut (Martínez 1995: 82, 91, 196). Often *braceros* do not have money to pay for sufficient food and despite toiling long hours, still lack the money for many basic necessities (Martínez 1995: 86, 201; Haney 2007). During my research, one informant stated in broken Spanish in a burst of frustration, “Picador es un perro. Picador no tengo nada”/ “A cane cutter is a dog. As a cane cutter, I have nothing” (Sebastien 2011). Sufficient food, drink, clothing, toiletries, and basic school supplies for children are difficult to come by. With paying for such basic necessities posing a considerable financial challenge for the average *bracero*, finding the means to leave the *batey* or leave San José de Los Llanos, the site of my field research, is a luxury. On a hot August day, I watch a teen returning to the entrance of one of the more distant *bateyes* attempting to haggle with a Haitian *motoconchista* to convince him to allow her to ride despite not having the full fare. After about five minutes of haggling, he refused and she was forced to walk kilometers in the merciless heat and humidity after having already walked from school to reach the entrance.

The issue of insufficient pay as an obstacle to freedom is further aggravated by inconsistent pay. During my field work, multiple *braceros* mentioned that failure to receive their pay in a timely manner was a common issue (Moise 2011). One worker, seventy-year old Jose Luis, recounted how he was told that his pension check was forgotten in the Capital and that he would have to somehow go there to pick up his check or wait for the next pay period. At seventy years old and battling a debilitating health condition, he was in no position to make the trip neither physically nor financially

Distance alone poses a considerable obstacle to a *bracero*'s ability to take advantage of fairly recent freedoms. Most *bateyes* are multiple kilometers from the town and leaving would require either a horse or money for *motoconcho* fare. The only other option is to walk the distance in the grueling heat and humidity, which would be a challenge for most people in general, but this task is made all the more difficult by the fact that many *braceros* are under nourished. Distance and cost make leaving the *batey* virtually impossible for older *braceros*. An elderly informant, Manuel, declared that, "Si no hay dinero pa' coger un motor si uno se enferma, se muere ahí"/ "If there's no money to catch a moped taxi if one gets sick, he/she will die there." This, unfortunately, is the reality, especially for the elderly. If they become ill and have no means to leave the *batey*, they must simply suffer through their ailments. Even those on the *bateyes* in San José de los Llanos who are fortunate enough to have pensions and food rations, have neither the money nor the physical capacity to leave the *batey*.

For those who are in school in the town and for those who hold jobs outside the *batey*, making the trip in and out of the *batey* can become quite expensive. Aside from the expense, for those who have no choice but to walk, the road out, besides being long,

is also treacherous to navigate. During the rainy season, the dusty, red dirt roads, which are riddled with potholes, become nothing more than thick, viscous mud and puddles that are often impossible to navigate with *motoconchos*. The mud becomes too thick and slippery and, if you are able to make it to the exit when the road is muddy, whether by foot, horse, or *motoconcho*, you leave covered in mud.

Leaving the *batey* on foot, even days after a rain, requires the removal of shoes because the thick mud sucks off any shoes--especially the sandals and flip flops worn by most *braceros*--worsening an already difficult journey. Walking barefoot also means walking over hard, jagged rocks that have become lodged into the road over time and struggling to maintain balance in the slippery mud. At times, these treacherous roads are even impossible to navigate with sport utility vehicles. As a result of the heavy rains during the rainy season, it is possible for roads to remain impassible for days. Workers, in many senses, then, remain trapped once they arrive to the *batey*.

The fare for the *guagua* , or public transportation van, from Los Llanos to San Pedro, which is only half way to the capital, is sixty pesos, or about USD\$1.59. This fare, however, does not include the fare to travel from the *batey* to get into town. Sick and in need of money for food and medications, José Luis was forced to wait for the next pay cycle before receiving his pension. Another retired informant, Manuel, expressed a similar concern, mentioning that sometimes a whole month and a half passes before he receives his monthly rations, and he has no choice but to wait. Lamentably, this type of utter disrespect for the rights of Haitian workers is all too common. However, due to their precarious legal status, most persons of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic remain vulnerable to such abuses by those who wish to take advantage of their situation.

Chapter IV Exploring the Legacy of Anti-Haitianism and the Rejection of Blackness

Race relations as they are today have been conditioned by a number of historical factors. Pierre Bourdieu theorizes that these very historical factors remain present in the collective mind, influencing behaviors and actions (Bourdieu 1980: 56). As Bourdieu contends, a nation's collective history becomes internalized as second nature and, as such, is forgotten as history, *per se* (Bourdieu 1980: 56). This collective history then becomes the nation's *habitus*, or the active presence of the past that has produced it (Bourdieu 1980: 56). Bourdieu also refers to *habitus* as "the presence of the past in [a] kind of false anticipation of the past" (1980: 62). To acknowledge the role of *habitus*, however, is not to discount the relevance of factors that are unique to today and the experiences of the present generation. Nonetheless, a failure to address the impact of these past experiences would be a disservice to this thesis and to the reader.

The many historical experiences within the Dominican Republic, therefore, remain present today, shaping the actions, perceptions, and ideas of the Dominican people. In fact, Bourdieu argues that "early experiences have particular weight because the *habitus* tends to ensure its own constancy and its defense against change..." (1980: 60-61). Among these influential experiences, Hoetink contends, is the socio-racial dynamic established under colonial rule. Hoetink argues that the type of economic development as well as slave-master relations have a strong influence on the construction of race and race relations in the Caribbean (Hoetink 1985: 62). In Santo Domingo, as previously mentioned, sugar production began after the abolition of slavery. The colonial economy depended on subsistence farming and cattle herding and, as a result, the need for slaves was minimal. The racial hierarchy that developed in Santo Domingo was

based on a color continuum in which subtle differences in physical attributes, such as skin color, hair texture, facial features, etc were “catalogued in an extensive vocabulary with all its social implications, but without any group striving after (or succeeding in) the maintenance of a strict endogamy, which might have created a clear separation from all others” (Hoetink 1985: 61).

In Saint-Domingue, the export-oriented economy based on sugar production required a large labor force. During the colonial era, the racial structure of Saint-Domingue was predominantly black slave majority and a small minority of whites of varying social class, in addition to minorities of free blacks and free coloreds, or mulattos. Within this societal structure, racial hierarchy also included a more direct involvement of socio-economic factors. In Saint-Domingue, a poor person of mixed race, for example, would not be considered a *mulâtre*, which, in addition to being a category marking mixed race, also implied the socio-economic label of “upper class” (Hoetink 1985: 63). In this sense, the type of economic activity greatly influenced the development of race relations in Hispaniola. Hoetink cautions, however, that although economic development appears to have a strong impact on the construction of race and on race relations, it is not the only factor (Hoetink 1985: 62).

Today in the Dominican Republic, labeling someone as Haitian is often used as an insult. While I was studying at a university in Santiago, Dominican Republic, for example, a darker skinned African-American peer told me that she was “accused” of being Haitian by numerous Dominican students and was treated harshly as a result (Sheri 2007). The other students accused her of lying about being Black American and cited her braids as proof that she was Haitian (Sheri 2007). I myself have heard Dominican

women say that braids are ugly and that they are only for Haitian girls. Essentially, classy, attractive women should never wear braids. In many areas of the Dominican Republic, the same is said of women wearing natural, unrelaxed or unstraightened curly hair. There appears to be a preoccupation in much of the Dominican Republic with creating a sharp separation between Hispanic, European-descended Dominicans and African-descended Haitians who are defined as racially inferior.

From the late 1800s into the 1960s, nationalist white elites, especially in the North-Central Cibao, forcefully promulgated ideas of national purity and pride, and anti-Haitianism formed the core of this particular brand of nationalism. As John Searle asserts in his theory on the construction of power and the legitimacy of institutions, the distinctive feature of institutional facts is that their existence is completely subjective—they only exist as a result of their collective recognition as existing (Tsohatzidis 2007: 2). Until the early 1900s, the primary challenge for Dominican Nationalists was that although Hispaniola was home to two separate nations, *fronterizos* or Dominicans residing in the border region, did not collectively recognize an abrupt line of separation between themselves and their western neighbors (Turits 1994: 163). Borders, no matter where they are, are created. There is nothing inherently Dominican about the land East of Haiti other than what Dominicans, and in turn the international community, assign to it. Thus, Nationalists viewed the fact that *fronterizos* failed to collectively acknowledge a clear cut, black and white separation between themselves and those on the Western side of the island as a serious threat to the cultural and political sovereignty of the Dominican nation and its people.

In response to the porousness of the border and the peaceable relationships between Haitians and Dominicans from about 1915 to 1930, Nationalists dedicated special attention to their Dominican compatriots residing near the border (Derby and Turits 2006: 140). Among the most prominent Nationalists who promulgated the idea of defining Dominican identity in direct opposition to all things Haitian were Manuel Arturo Peña Batlle and Joaquín Balaguer, both intellectuals and respected public figures (San Miguel 2005: 53). Peña Batlle and Balaguer in the 20th century, in addition to earlier Nationalists such as Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal and Américo Lugo, espoused a more culturally protectionist and aggressive construction of nationalism in which the nation was perceived as facing a constant risk of another Haitian invasion. This supposed invasion threatened all aspects of Dominican life—natural sovereignty, public health, as well as cultural, racial, and religious purity. In this view, presence of “the Haitian menace” in the national territory threatened to corrupt the national character and destroy Dominicanity as they knew it. The anti-Haitianist Nationalist argument delineated a stark dichotomy between the nation’s populations and their respective cultures—Haitians practice evil vodú, while Dominicans are good Catholics; Haitians speak Creole, while Dominicans speak Spanish; Haitians are black, while Dominicans are white and mulatto; Dominicans are descendants of Europeans, while Haiti, Haitians, and Haitian culture are seen as extensions of Africa (San Miguel 2005: 39). In short, as Pedro San Miguel, Professor of History at the University of Puerto Rico, asserts, the result of the anti-Haitianist Nationalist discourse was that the very definition of Dominican became “not Haitian.”

Through their scathingly racist and strongly anti-Haitian discourse, these Dominican intellectuals managed to equate Dominicaness, in and of itself, with necessarily being anti-Haitian (San Miguel 2005: 39). Nationalist elites achieved this goal by cultivating fears of a Haitian attempt to re-conquer the Eastern side of Hispaniola and unify the island under the Haitian state (San Miguel 2005: 79). This conspiracy for domination was coined *La Invasión Pacífica*, or the peaceful invasion. This name stems from the belief on the part of Dominican elites that Haitians were plotting to take over the island neither with arms nor soldiers, but through immigration (Moya Pons 1995: 201). As a result of this vehement, aggressively disseminated conspiracy theory, widespread defensiveness in the face of Haitian immigration became deeply integrated into the Dominican popular consciousness. As San Miguel contends, rapidly growing immigration rates evidenced the existence of “an ‘imperialist’ policy that was a continuation of the principle of the ‘indivisibility of the island’ promulgated by Toussaint in the late eighteenth century and carried on by the ‘invading hordes’ in the nineteenth” (San Miguel 2005: 53). Thus, increasing Haitian immigration was seen as a direct attack against national sovereignty in every sense. The remnants of this mentality remain strong in many sectors of Dominican society. Even today, for some, being Dominican necessarily entails being anti-Haitian (San Miguel 2005: 39, 53).

In response to this threat, Dominicans were called to defend the nation’s sovereignty and protect Dominican identity from “foreign influence,” which was understood to be synonymous with Haitian influence (San Miguel 2005: 125). Thus, all true Dominicans were expected to be outraged and to respond with boldness and courage, resorting to any means necessary to protect the nation and preserve the “purity” of

Dominican culture. A failure to respond with fervor was perceived not simply as indifference or weakness, but as Anti-Dominican (San Miguel 2005: 57). This was especially the case during the Trujillo regime from 1930 to 1961 (Martínez 1995: 6). Anyone who was unwilling to join the fight against foreign influence for the interest of a “clean” and “pure” Dominican Republic was considered deserving of meeting the same fate as the enemies themselves--expulsion, violence, or even death.

From this reactionary school of Nationalist doctrine Rafael Leonidas Trujillo emerged. Trujillo ruled with an iron fist from 1930 to 1961 (Diederich 2000: 13, 118-121). He consolidated his power by ordering the assassination of hundreds of his opponents within just his first year of office (Turits 2004: 2). While in power, Trujillo’s core policy consisted of expanding the state, promoting economic growth, and protecting peasants’ land rights from the threat of agricultural commercialization (Turits 2004: 12). All of these efforts were a part of Trujillo’s agenda to generate controlled modernization (Turits 2004: 12). Through his protection of land rights, in addition to his vision of economic growth and stability that depending on the peasants, as opposed to excluding them, Trujillo garnered strong support among the peasant class (Turits 2004: 12, 84, 88).

Prior to Trujillo’s rise to power, the Dominican elite viewed the peasants as obstacles to rather than generators of progress (Turits 2004: 150). As part of his vision of modernization, Trujillo gave peasants land, assisted them in modernizing their farming equipment, and required them to abandon their practices of free-range cattle raising and clearing new plots of land in exchange for a focus on intensive farming (Turits 2004: 11, 82). However, little did they know, they would later pay for this assistance with their political and economic freedom. They were expected to show support for the regime

through mass political demonstrations and were further expected to attend local meetings held by state officials in which they were required to learn about vagrancy and other laws (Turits 2004: 83). Trujillo, then, valued the peasant class for their labor and did not want to waste a drop of it. It was their labor, whether through farming or building and maintaining roads, that was critical to his vision of national modernization (Turits 2004: 12, 83). However, later in his regime, Trujillo betrayed the peasant class in pursuit of what he saw as a more profitable economic system.

Throughout his regime, Trujillo remained true to his deeply Nationalist roots and surrounded himself with other fervent Nationalists. During that time, Joaquín Balaguer was among the most respected Dominican scholars. Nationalist scholars, such as Balaguer and Peña Battle advocated for Trujillo and his policies, despite the brutality of his regime, in an effort to continue promulgating his purist Nationalist rhetoric (San Miguel 2005: 57). Trujillo, himself a passionate Nationalist and fervent anti-Haitianist, was outspoken about his views regarding the threat that Haitians in the Dominican Republic posed to the “purity” of the national character. Anti-Haitianism in the nation was deeply exacerbated under the Trujillo regime as a result (San Miguel 2005: 53). In fact, according to San Miguel, anti-Haitianism as well as a re-constructed ideology of Hispanophilia, were the two intellectual mainstays of the Trujillo regime (San Miguel 2005: 53).

The most brutal of Trujillo’s tactics for preserving the national cultural identity came in the form of his order to have the military murder all Haitians near the border in an effort to “dominicanize” the region (Martínez 1995: 44, Turits 2004: 163, San Miguel 2005: 92). Prior to the execution of the Massacre of 1937, the border was very porous

and relations between Haitians and Dominicans in the region were peaceable. In fact, because Port-au-Prince was such a large metropolitan center at the time, while the Eastern side of the island remained predominantly rural, Dominicans near the border often looked to Port-au-Prince for shopping, admiring its grand markets (Turits 2004: 147). In fact, in the 1920s-1930s, the Haitian gourde became the main currency in Western border region of the Dominican Republic (Hoetink 1985: 64). Trujillo's brutal effort to dominicanize the border region abruptly shattered the peaceful relations between border residents in both nations (San Miguel 2003: 53, Turits 2004: 163). The massacre resulted in the death of an estimated 25,000 Haitians who were mercilessly massacred with machetes (Martínez 1995: 44).

To carry out the operation, soldiers, along with the many civilians whom Trujillo ordered to perform the mass killing, utilized various tactics, such as phenotype identification and Spanish pronunciation to distinguish Haitians from Dominicans. This massacre, known popularly by a wide variety of names—La Masacre; El Corte, or The Cut Off; La Poda, The Pruning; or Operación Perejil—resulted in a permanent tone of suspicion and defensiveness toward Haitians in the border region and in the nation as a whole (Moya Pons 1995: 368-9; Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 20; San Miguel 2005: 57, 92). In fact, Moya Pons argues that, “In the following years, the Dominicanization of the frontier turned into a kind of crusade of national vindication to regain and bring once more under Dominican control those zones that had been lost more than a century before... (1995: 369). At the massacre's conclusion, thousands of Haitians had been murdered. There is no officially recognized figure, however estimates of the death toll ranges from around 12,000, as reported by President Ellie Lescot and

historian Jean Price-Mars to 17,000 per Joaquín Balaguer, the Dominican Republic's interim foreign Minister at the time of the massacre (Wucker 2000: 50). Generally, scholars believe that the toll fell somewhere in the range of 15,000 to 30,000 Haitians massacred (Philoctète 1989: 224, Cambeira 1997: 185, Wucker 2000: 50, Turits 2004: 146).

The enduring impact of this brutal massacre was the creation of a clear division between the two nations (Turits 2004: 163). It effectively served to establish hierarchy and social division as well as to put an end to the porousness of the border and to the peaceable relations that once existed (Turits 2004: 174). The Massacre of 1937, then, firmly consolidated the idea of Anti-Haitianism as part of Dominican national identity and of Dominican *nationalism* (Turits 2004: 169, 174, 178). A report in *La Nación*, a Dominican newspaper, depicts the attitude toward western border residents on the part of other Dominicans,

“The man on the frontier is learning to turn his back on the savage witchcraft of Haiti that until [1937] had regulated the rhythms of his life without any breath of nationalism and to offer himself, baptized by a new patriotic faith, to the wind and the sun of a land today suffused with...a regenerating sense of patriotic integration defined by a more knowledgeable concept of Dominican-ness” (2004: 179).

Thus, the goal of the massacre was both to “cleanse” the nation ethnically and culturally and to inculcate the only acceptable construction of nationalism in a very visceral and violent form that would be forever seared in the memories of Haitians and Dominicans residing on both sides of the border region. Following the massacre of thousands of

Haitians, Trujillo then finalized his work by repopulating the area with Dominicans in an attempt to curtail future Haitian migration and to protect the nation from future “usurpation” (Turits 2004: 153).

The name Operación Perejil originated from the fact that some of the executors of the massacre used the victim’s pronunciation of the word *perejil* to determine whether or not he or she was Haitian. Those who could not properly produce the “r” sound were Haitian since neither Haitian Creole nor French have such a sound (Cambeira 1997: 182). The result of phenotype-based judgments was that even some Dominicans were caught up in the whirlwind of vicious murders (Turits 2004: 6). The savagery of the massacre was so great that many of those who performed the killing felt such deeply conflicting emotions regarding the immorality of their actions that they drank heavily in an attempt to minimize the devastating emotional impact of their actions (Turits 2004: 167). Following this cruel atrocity, relations between the nations were completely transformed. Once peaceable relations in the border region rapidly shifted to widespread hatred of Haitians and use of Haitians as scapegoats for the nation’s problems.

A critical detail, however, is that during the massacre, Haitians working on Dominican *bateyes* were spared (Martínez 1995: 45, Moseley-Williams). In fact, the massacre occurred at the very peak of dependence on Haitian laborers for sugar production (Martínez 1995: 40-41). In light of this information, to spare the Haitians on the *bateyes* seems contrary to Trujillo’s Dominicanization program in every respect. However, this trend of exempting Haitian working on Dominican sugar plantations from waves of anti-Haitianist backlash has been common throughout Dominican. Although

there is an outward effort to purge the nation of “the Haitian problem,” there is also an inward recognition that the nation’s economy *needs* Haitian labor.

Cheap Haitian labor kept the sugar industry afloat when sugar prices on the international market plummeted in the 1920s (Martínez 1995: 59). Haitian labor allowed for a significantly higher margin of profitability in the sugar industry, just as it has in more recent times in the construction industry. Haitian migration, thus, benefitted and continues to benefit national industry, especially in the areas of export agriculture and construction. In this way, the elite profited from the very people whose presence in the Dominican Republic they were so vehemently against. Ironically, in the 1950’s Trujillo turned his back on the peasants who were the backbone of his regime, in an effort to direct his attention to export agriculture. As part of this shift in policy, Trujillo and the State took over most foreign-owned sugar estates and doubled sugar production by establishing new plantations (Martínez 1995: 47).

A deeper look into the Haitian-Dominican conflict reveals that it is not Haitians who are the problem; rather, the problem is the elite who refuse to provide adequate wages to support a Dominican workforce. Therefore, claims of an urgent need to expel undocumented Haitian immigrants because they are stealing jobs from Dominicans are based in faulty logic. This type of mismatch between behavior and social reality, according to Bourdieu’s theory, can also be explained by the *habitus* (1990: 62). In his theory, the nation’s historical *habitus* can also result in “the persistence of the effects of primary conditioning...for cases in which dispositions function out of phase and practices are ill-adapted to conditions that no longer obtain.” (1990: 62). In other words, the force of the nation’s *habitus*, in terms of lived experience, can also lead to the maintenance of

behaviors that do not adequately respond to present conditions. If the cheap labor provided by Haitians has allowed the nation's chief agro-export and overall largest income generator to survive Depression era commodity devaluation, anti-Haitianist attitudes and discriminatory practices are out of step with the fact that the nation's economic security is dependent on Haitian migrants. The true problem, then, was the elite who cared more about their profits than providing reasonable jobs for their people and further bolstering the domestic economy in doing so.

Anti-Haitianist ideologies are constructed not solely on the basis of race; rather they encompass a range of cultural factors as well. Maintaining the "purity" of Dominican culture is the primary goal of anti-Haitianists. They have constructed Dominicanness in inherent opposition to all things Haitian--race, ethnicity, religion, morality, sanitation, etc. In this discourse, Dominicans are constructed as white, European, and the epitome of the good Catholic. Haitians, however, are black, African, vodú practicing savages given to the wiles of the flesh. Furthermore, Haitians are constructed as spreaders of disease who must be kept out of the country in the interest of public health and the preservation of morality.

Nationalists insist that Haitians, if allowed to continue settling on the eastern side of the island, will corrupt Dominican culture with their vodú, poor hygiene, and licentiousness (San Miguel 2005: 26, 39, 60). This type of thinking remains vivid in the construction of the Haitian Revolution. The struggle for first and then independence has been popularly constructed as an embarrassingly chaotic, barbaric war in which "the savage destroyed the civilized" (Martínez-Vergne 2005: 95). In light of these views, many Dominicans argue that their tensions with Haitians are due to culture, as opposed to

race (Martínez-Vergne 2005: 96). As part of this desire to construct Dominican identity in opposition to Haitianness, racial discrimination has become a widespread issue. In my class at Pontificia Universidad Católica, a student from La Vega, a rural town in El Cibao, shared how upset her parents would be if she failed “keep the race pure” by marrying a light-skinned man (Elizabeth 2007). As is often mentioned in studies on race in the Dominican Republic, there is also a strong preoccupation with “performing whiteness” by straightening the hair.

In the Cibao, both women *and* men have all but an obsession with not only straight hair, but long, straight hair. Very few women are willing to cut their hair short, though short hair is generally acceptable in the East, for example. The hair texture prejudice is also very apparent in attitudes among men toward women. While I was studying abroad in the Dominican Republic, Black American exchange students joked with each other when our group arrived in San Pedro on an excursion because finally they were receiving the attention from males that they were accustomed to back home since the men in San Pedro tended to be less racist (Alisa 2007). Many female students observed that it was considerably more difficult to find dance partners in Santiago. The preoccupation with whiteness spans further into the realm of beauty beyond just relaxers and blowouts. This preoccupation also reaches into the sphere of hair color. In my personal communication with friends in the Dominican Republic, I have heard many women complement each other on their newly-black dyed hair because it “makes you look whiter,” and I have heard many Cibaëña women encourage one another to dye their hair black so that they look whiter (María 2007, Luz 2007).

To be clear, the type of preoccupation with race varies in intensity from region to region within the Dominican Republic. In the Central Cibao region, the population tends to be lighter-skinned, have straighter, softer hair, and look more approximate to the ideal of the fair-skinned *campesino cibaño*, the emblem of Dominicanness. The *campesino cibaño* is to Dominicans what the *jibaro* is to Puerto Ricans and the *guajiro* to Cubans (Martínez-Vergne 2005: 21). From the Central Cibao region the fierce Anti-Haitian discourse emanated to the rest of the nation by way of the Nationalists and was promulgated with particular intensity in the border region (San Miguel 2005: 65). In this region, the legacy of the early to mid-20th century Nationalists remains strong. Anti-Haitianism here is particularly intense, arguably the most intense in the nation.

Popular conversations about race are very commonplace in the Central Cibao region, as are racially-motivated acts of anti-Haitian violence, particularly in Santiago and in the border region (Apolinar 2011; Domínguez 2011; Feb 2, 2011). However, to say that everyone subscribes to anti-Haitian views would be misleading. Dominican scholars generally resist anti-Haitianism. These scholars appear to be a significant voice in the recent outcry for increased civility and human rights toward Haitian immigrants. In my experience, professors often establish early on that they will not tolerate anti-Haitian commentary in their classrooms. Although anti-Haitianism appears to decrease as one's level of education increases, this is not always the case. The fact that college professors feel a need to establish their intolerance for discriminatory comments in the classroom suggests that anti-Haitianism remains strong among young, college-educated Cibaños as well. In light of first-hand experience, a more likely explanation is that

scholars in the Humanities or in the Arts generally support increased tolerance toward Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans.

In the Eastern region of the nation, concerns with race are kept to a minimum. The majority of the population tends to be of medium to dark skin tone. There is also sizeable West Indian descended population, in addition to a large Haitian community and a small Black American population. In fact, the Samaná peninsula, part of the Eastern Cibao, is a unique case in point, having a sizable population descended from English-speaking African-Americans who settled in the region during Jim Crow under an agreement between the presidents of both nations. People in this region tend to be more nonchalant about displays of blackness. Although acceptance of blackness is much higher in the East, that is not to say that anti-Haitianism is not an issue. The same is true of Santo Domingo. In fact, beheadings of Haitians have been reported in Dominican newspapers on various occasions (*Diario Libre*, 2008, *Diario Libre* 2010, Florentino Duran 2010).

While conducting my field work in San Pedro in 2011, the cultural difference in terms of hair alone was stark. Having been to the Dominican Republic on four separate occasions and traveled all over, spending the bulk of my time in the North-Central Cibao region, I felt as though I was in a completely different country. Afros were commonplace and were not seen as physically unattractive. A woman with an afro, for example, could still attract a dance partner in a night club, something that would likely never happen in Santiago, the largest city in the Cibao region.

Additionally, I never heard about the incidents that were commonplace in Santiago in which people on the street hurled insults at women with kinky hair. In the

capital, Santo Domingo, the attitude seemed similar. At the malls, women with afros were common and people did not stop and stare or turn and gossip as they would be liable to do in other regions. Even among women who do not have afros, it is much more acceptable than in the Central Cibao to opt not to relax one's hair. In Santiago, however, Ashley, a Dominican and Black-American friend with tightly-coiled, soft, curly hair went to get her hair blown out to wear it straight for the trip home and was asked by a stylist if it was even possible to straighten her hair (Ashley 2007). The stylist then proceeded to forcefully suggest that she get a chemical relaxer to straighten her hair and insisted that she *needed* one (Ashley 2007).

The aforementioned incident, although common, is ironic, considering that most Dominicans have the same hair texture as my friend, so stylists are not unfamiliar with her hair type. They are more accustomed in the Central Cibao to relaxing curlier hair as opposed to leaving women with the option of wearing it either curly or straight as they please. This attitude has led to the widespread belief that curly hair is unkempt, unattractive, and unquestionably unacceptable for the workplace. Whereas the good hair-bad hair discourse is gradually dying out among U.S. Blacks, it remains quite common in the Central Cibao. Ironically, however, what some Black Americans refer to as "good hair," hair that resembles tightly-coiled yet soft biracial hair is exactly what Dominican women feel *needs* to be relaxed.

The South differs starkly from the Cibao in terms of race and the attitudes that surround it. The region is known for being predominantly *indio*, a Dominican racial category that serves as a sort of euphemism for saying black. To call someone black is considered offensive. In fact, to refer to oneself as black is considered offensive as well.

Black in the Dominican Republic is reserved for Haitians. Therefore, for a Black American to appropriate the racial category *negro* is considered strange because being *negro* is deplorable and is perceived as an insult. When I, a Black American, told people that I was *negra*, I was quickly corrected and told “Tú no eres negra; eres *india*.” Although the term “*india*” suggests indigenous origins in other areas in Latin America, it has no relation to indigenous culture or ancestry in the Dominican Republic. Rather, as previously mentioned the term is used to avoid acknowledging blackness, as the word “*negro*” or “*black*” is associated with Haitians and is considered an insult. In the South, there is a very high Haitian population, in addition to the aforementioned higher percentage of darker-skinned Dominicans. There is a clear sense that darker skin is more acceptable here than in the Central Cibao region. Dark-skinned women can still be considered attractive and it appears that there is much less hair texture discrimination among both sexes as well.

Nonetheless, this increased acceptance of certain manifestations of blackness has not resulted in the elimination of anti-Haitianism. There continues to be a sense of suspicion towards Haitians. Moreover, animosity toward Haitians remains in the area as well. Some Dominicans in the region believe that Haitians are stealing the few jobs that ethnic Dominicans have to choose from, and many cite the large Haitian population as a threat to the already precarious economic situation found in the poverty-stricken South.

Chapter V Officialized Racism, Statelessness, and the Construction of Identity

Though the language of the Dominican Constitution, prior to 2010, guaranteed citizenship to all persons born on Dominican soil, in practice, persons of Haitian descent born within Dominican borders have been and continue to be routinely denied the rights of citizenship. Additionally, in spite of the nation's role as a signatory state to treaties for the right of all children to citizenship and a name, children of Haitian descent are routinely denied official identification documents, such as birth certificates. Moreover, anyone who "looks" Haitian or has a Haitian-sounding surname, regardless of his or her constitutional to Dominican citizenship, is subject to the same arbitrary deportations as Haitian undocumented immigrants (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 20, 65).

Despite the many challenges facing persons of Haitian descent who are born in the Dominican Republic and wish to pursue Dominican citizenship, there are some who have managed to succeed. There are various factors that differentiated Haitian-Dominicans who managed to obtain citizenship from their peers who find themselves in similar situations. Among those who succeed in gaining access to Dominican citizenship, a key factor that aided them in doing so was having a Dominican parent, as this made their legal status more difficult to distort (Mata 2011). The 2010 Dominican Constitution clearly states that any child born to a Dominican parent, even outside of the country, is entitled to Dominican citizenship, if he or she chooses to pursue it. More specifically, in article 18, the Constitution explicitly states that among those who will be considered Dominican are "the sons and daughters of a Dominican mother *or* a Dominican father." In other words, the language of the Constitution unmistakably grants the same access to

citizenship to a child who has only one Dominican parent, regardless of the nationality of the non-Dominican parent, as to a child born to two Dominican parents.

Those who succeed in obtaining Dominican citizenship are generally more organized in the sense that they join forces with advocates and others facing the same injustice (Mata 2011). A key advantage that has allowed some persons to obtain Dominican citizenship and not others is that they manage to secure the benefit of legal assistance (Mata 2011). Having legal counsel to back one's demands gives greater legitimacy to the case and also provides otherwise disenfranchised persons with the tools and guidance necessary to navigate what often seems like an endless labyrinth when dealing with the law. In addition, for those labeled as undocumented immigrants, regardless of having been born on Dominican soil or not, government workers feel much less accountable to them and are more liable to simply push them aside and ignore their concerns. Adding anti-Haitianism into the equation, one can understand how the process of demanding one's citizenship rights can be daunting and even virtually impossible for the average person to pursue alone.

The issue of immigration in the Dominican Republic is fraught with profound contention that has generated fierce hostility and even violence. As the nation shares Hispaniola with Haiti, the principal focus of Dominican immigration law is migration from the neighboring land. Despite the close proximity of the two nations, their cultural and socioeconomic experiences are vastly divergent. To elucidate these differences, the literacy rate in the Dominican Republic is 87%, while the Haitian literacy rate is 52% (CIA World Factbook 2011). In terms of labor and employment, the unemployment rate in the Dominican Republic is 14.2% and, while high, Haiti's employment rate is so low

that over 2/3 of the labor force does not have a formal job, and over 80% of the Haitian population lives below the poverty line (CIA World Factbook 2011). The framing of the immigration debate in the Dominican Republic suggests that the most important difference in the eyes of many is racial (CIA World Factbook 2011). Over 90% of Haitians are considered black, while the Dominican population is over 70% mulatto (CIA World Factbook 2011). The legacy of the Trujillo dictatorial regime has scarred the nation and inflicted wounds that he suggested could only be healed by cleansing the nation of the so-called Haitian problem. This attitude led to a disdain toward a people who came to be a sort of black *Other* and re-constructed Dominican national identity as inherently defined in opposition to all things Haitian.

As previously mentioned, immigration has recently come to the legislative forefront in the Dominican Republic. However, little media attention has been given to the most recent of these changes, the amendment to the *jus soli* clause, or citizenship by birth on Dominican soil. In 2010, the Constitution was amended under the direction of President Leonel Fernández and among the amendments was to change the *jus soli* form of citizenship to *jus sanguini*. *Jus sanguini* grants citizenship solely on the basis of having a parent or parents who are also Dominican citizens. This new form of citizenship continues a long legacy of prejudice on the part of Dominican political leaders toward anyone of Haitian descent and serves to officialize the discriminatory practices that were already in existence prior to the 2010 Constitutional reform. In a nation with sizeable immigrant populations from places such as China and Lebanon, in addition to North American ex-pats, persons of Haitian descent are the only population who face such blatantly discriminatory treatment from those in power. This officialization of

discrimination against Haitian-descended persons, in a sense, is testament to the prior existence of such practices and the racist attitudes that produced them. As Bourdieu asserts, “Law does no more than symbolically consecrate—by rewording it in a form that renders it both eternal and universal—the structure of power relations” (1980: 132). The law, then, does not create attitudes and behaviors, *per se*. Rather, it is reflective of the status quo that already exists and serves to officialize a given pattern of behavior such that it is established as not only a possibility among many options, but as *the way*.

In the past, the interpretation of the law by government officials was generally carried out such that Haitians were inherently excluded from citizenship rights. That is, official discrimination was carried out on a discretionary basis by those acting in positions of power. A mandate for the application of such unjust practices was not explicitly written into the legislation. Now, however, persons of Haitian descent have been directly targeted because many, although rightfully Dominican under the *jus soli*, were never recognized officially as citizens. Furthermore, although the new Constitution clearly states that those who were already recognized as citizens would not be affected by the reform, activist Sonia Pierre reported in an interview that Dominican political leaders were using the new *jus sanguini* clause in the Constitution to retroactively revoke the citizenship of many Haitian-Dominicans (Hanes 2010).

In fact, Pierre reports that families who have been in the Dominican Republic for over seventy years are now being denied citizenship (Hanes 2004). She even mentioned that people born in the 1940s are also being retroactively stripped of their Dominican citizenship. There are families with as many as six generations of Dominican citizens who are all being left stateless because of the retroactive application of *jus sanguini*

citizenship (Hanes 2004). Although the Dominican legal system and constitutional framework previously appeared open towards and accepting of immigrants, actions on the ground revealed a highly aggressive and hostile policy carried out surreptitiously.

The deportation of those with Haitian-like features, such as darker skin, has disenfranchised Haitian-descended persons born on Dominican soil and denied them of their constitutional right to Dominican citizenship.

Following the 2010 Constitutional reforms, the issue of statelessness has become so grave that the Dominican government has been called before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to be questioned about the issue. Despite the increased international attention on the question of statelessness in the Dominican Republic, Dominican officials continue to blatantly deny that statelessness is an issue there. Prim Pajul, a Samaná senator, contended before the Commission that applying the label of statelessness to any situation in the Dominican Republic would be inaccurate (Hanes 2010). He further argues that the term does not apply because the affected populations are in transit and are required to register in the *Libro de Extranjería*, or foreign registry. Unfortunately, regardless of the reasons behind these practices and the utter denial of the grave issue of statelessness in the nation, it is undeniable that there has been a long history of discrimination against Haitians among Dominican hospital workers, immigration officials, and Civil Registry officials (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 51). Stories of the injustices committed against Haitian immigrants and Haitian Dominicans are known widely, whether witnessed first-hand, or reported in foreign newspapers, in human rights watch dog reports, or by word-of-mouth.

A Dominican hospital volunteer, Maribel, told me about pregnant Haitian women in hospitals being left to give birth in the waiting room since nurses and doctors ignore their presence because of their ethnic background (2007). Arbitrary immigration raids are commonly carried out to send persons of Haitian descent back to Haiti without giving them a chance to collect their belongings (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 65-66) or make phone calls to relatives. Furthermore, those carrying out these raids see no distinction between persons of Haitian descent born in the Dominican Republic and those who are Haitian nationals. Many Haitian-Dominicans who know no other land beyond the Dominican Republic are also targeted by these roundups.

In the Civil Registry, workers routinely refuse to provide birth certificates for persons of Haitian descent (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 51). This practice was common even before the 2010 Constitutional reforms denied access to citizenship for children of non-Dominican parents. When in doubt, Civil Registry workers use tactics such as rejecting those with “weird” or Haitian-sounding names or anyone with Haitian-like features (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 51). These seemingly small acts of discrimination have devastating, enduring consequences for their victims. Presenting a birth certificate is required to obtain a marriage certificate, divorce, enroll in post-middle-school education, enroll in a university, obtain a visa, or obtain or renew a visa or passport (Hanes 2010). Not having a birth certificate also prevents access to opportunities in the way of grants, scholarships, and legal employment. Birth certificates are required for citizenship as well. Even something as simple as activating a cell phone is difficult without documents because you are required to present your *cédula*, a plastic card that is the equivalent of a social security card with a driver’s license style photo.

Although they are born in the country and many are the second- or third-generation in the Dominican Republic, Haitian-Dominicans find themselves relegated to a precarious state no different from that of those who have arrived in the Dominican Republic illegally. In the eyes of Dominican officials in the Civil Registry and other areas of government-related work involving the interpretation of the law, those with Haitian ancestry will always be Haitian and are inherently ineligible for Dominican citizenship and Dominican cultural identification (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004: 51). For them, there is no such thing as and will never be a Haitian-Dominican. The two are innately incompatible. Although the idea of an inherent incompatibility between Dominican identity and Haitian ethnicity is not held by all Dominicans, there remains a significant sector of the population that continues to hold this belief.

The routine official discrimination against Haitian-Dominicans has severely restricted the opportunities for persons of Haitian descent to excel and successfully climb the social ladder. People in positions of authority on the local level often interpret the law in such a way that Haitians are barred from obtaining any forms of government-issued identification and are unable to obtain birth certificates. In the case that the applicant already has a Dominican birth certificate, many local officials in the Civil Registry enforce the law such that no Haitian can ever obtain a copy of his or her birth certificate as proof of citizenship. In fact, this discrimination has left them destined to struggle to merely get by. Haitian-Dominicans with Dominican citizenship who have managed to complete their education through the secondary level often have reached this point only to have the legitimacy of their citizenship questioned which prevents them from entering the university. This was the case for one woman, lawyer Sianni Jean

(Hanes 2010). While in the process of completing her legal degree, legislation prohibiting the release of birth certificates at the Civil Registry to children of foreigners prevented her from obtaining the documents necessary to graduate (Hanes 2010). Although she was born in the Dominican Republic prior to the 2010 constitutional changes, she was denied access to her birth certificate (Hanes 2010). Although she was able to complete her education thus far because of previous access to her legal documents, this was not the case on the last occasion (Hanes 2010). Jean's birth certificate request was her first attempt since the 2010 changes were enacted and this time she was denied access to her documents (Hanes 2010).

Sianni Jean is just one of many who have become a victim of an inconsistent, unjust application of the law when it comes to Haitian-Dominican citizenship. In fact, some may even consider Jean fortunate because she was able to complete her secondary education, which means that she was able to obtain her birth certificate to provide the proof of citizenship necessary to graduate from primary school (about 7th grade) *and* she was able to reach the level of higher education. Reaching this level of education, as the child of two Haitian *braceros* in the Dominican Republic is a feat in and of itself. Many Dominicans of Haitian descent are routinely denied a birth certificate in the first place and, thus, can never have the opportunity to study beyond what would be the equivalent of middle school in the United States educational system.

Some Dominican-born ethnic Haitians even managed to obtain birth certificates as a result of the Yean and Bosico vs. Dominican Republic court case. The Yean and Bosco case centered on birth certificate rights for two young girls, Dilcia Yean and Violeta Bosico, both of whom were born in the Dominican Republic to a Dominican

mother and a Haitian father. The case stems from the fact that in 1997, when the mothers of the two girls, aged 10 months and 12 years, respectively, sought to obtain the young girls' birth certificates at the Civil Registry, they were both denied them due to their daughters' Haitian ancestry.

The original case ended with Dominican authorities attempting to reach a settlement and giving the girls birth certificates. However, authorities rejected the idea that the actions on the part of Dominican local officials violated the young girls' human rights. As a result, the case was forwarded to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and began receiving a great deal of international media attention. This negative attention angered Dominican officials. They began to fear the impact the case could have on the tourism industry, a vital source of revenue for the island nation. On September 8, 2005, the *Yean and Bosico V. Dominican Republic* case was heard in the International Court of Human Rights. The case demanded citizenship rights for two young girls.

However, these birth certificates failed to result in equal treatment or equal access to opportunities. Although they did receive birth certificates, the children also had their names recorded in the *Libro de Extranjería*, or Foreign Registry, which rendered them ineligible for the citizenship that the Constitution, prior to 2010, guaranteed for all persons born in the national territory (Martínez *in progress*: 8). Even for those who managed to obtain Dominican citizenship, the battle is far from over. Being of Haitian descent means that whether you are a citizen or not, your legal status will remain in a perpetual limbo. You are still at the mercy of Dominican officials and their interpretation of the law, as opposed to the language of the law alone. They can and have decided, retroactively and without reason, to revoke the citizenship of persons of Haitian origin.

In fact, thousands of Haitians have seen their citizenship “provisionally” revoked pending an analysis to determine if their parents were Haitian nationals (Martínez *in progress*: 9). Such stories have made occasional appearances in the foreign media, especially in recent years. Foreign media is the primary source of information for stories of this nature as these stories rarely, if ever, make Dominican news.

As previously mentioned, Dominican attitudes toward Haitian immigration are not as homogeneous as some studies have tended to portray. Time has produced a growing sector of the population, generally members of more educated groups in society, who are against racial discrimination and inhumane treatment of Haitians. Educators and scholars in the Humanities tend to support the cause for Haitian and Haitian-Dominican rights, especially the right to humane, equal treatment. Perhaps the oldest supporter of Haitian and Haitian-Dominican rights is the Catholic Church.

Among those who consistently vie for the respectful treatment of Haitian immigrants, Dominican Catholic priests and other Catholic leaders are the first that come to mind. Catholic leaders have long stood up for the rights of Haitian migrants and their families. In times of intense backlash and violence against persons of Haitian descent, the Church has opened itself up as a refuge for victims and potential victims alike.

Priests in the border region have been known to bring large numbers of Haitian migrants into the church in hopes of providing a safe place for them until any threats of violence and hostility subsided. The Church has often declared publicly that the politics of immigration are not of their interest because in God’s eyes, there is no such thing as citizenship; rather, we are all human and, most importantly, we are all brothers and sisters. Many Church leaders thus contend that all human beings have an inalienable

right to protection and security, and that charity toward others includes helping one's neighbor, regardless of racial or ethnic differences. In their eyes, this means Dominicans should rise to the call of defending Haitians and their rights within the national territory.

Nonetheless, the anti-Haitianist sector of the population remains by far the most vocal. Fueled by strong emotions, nationalist passions, and purist rhetoric, certain sectors of the Dominican public remain virulently opposed to the Haitian presence within the national territory. In Santiago, attitudes toward Haitians tend to be much more hostile than in the East, for example, where the lion's share of the nation's sugar plantations is located. In the mid-1900s, when Haitians became the majority of the cane-cutting workforce, Santiagueros were much less accustomed to seeing Haitians since there were no *bateyes* in the area (Martínez 1995: 41). Today, however, it is primarily members of the Haitian community who performs jobs such as construction and landscaping in addition to working as street vendors of phone cards, ice cream, and popsicles. Recently, there has been a particularly hostile backlash against the Haitian community in Santiago. Fears of the spread of cholera in the nation following the earthquake in Haiti have significantly raised tensions in the area. These fears, coupled with a rising Haitian population in the area have greatly aggravated an already precarious situation. Mounting tensions and a sense of inaction on the part of officials have led many Santiago residents to take matters into their own hands.

In the Dominican Republic, there is a widespread sense of the ineffectiveness and unreliability of public officials and institutions. Dominicans have adapted to this issue and have learned to resolve serious matters themselves using the tools at their disposal. Newspaper articles reporting stories of citizens who have attacked, decapitated, or even

hanged robbers, rapists, murderers, and other criminals are not uncommon (*Diario Libre* 2008, *Diario Libre* 2009, Durán 2010). If those in power will not do their job to protect public safety, the people themselves feel a duty take charge and develop a plan to resolve issues with the resources at their disposal. As the popular Dominican saying goes, *siempre se resuelve*. This take-charge attitude was in no shortage on February 28, 2011 when the neighborhood boards of La Mina and San Jose, two neighborhoods in the south of Santiago, removed by force four hundred twenty undocumented Haitian immigrants (Diaz 2011, Taveras 2011). In the course of a week, the neighborhood boards forced out eight hundred Haitian immigrants. Beyond this already massive number, another group of Haitian immigrants chose to leave voluntarily for fear of being violently removed.

In spite of the precarious legal status of Dominican-born Haitians in the Dominican Republic and the loss of ties to their homeland that Haitian migrants experience, members of the *batey* community have adapted to their situation and adopted other means of negotiating identity. Language is one vehicle that *braceros* on the *bateyes* of Los Llanos utilize to perform and validate claims to Haitianness and Dominicanness under social conditions that often challenge their cultural authenticity, both as Haitians and as Dominicans.

Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* theory also addresses such socio-cultural elements of identity and cultural expression. This particular conceptualization of *habitus* includes elements such as appearance, thoughts, and expressions. Though *habitus* in a historical sense can be shared across a community, none of us is a machine, merely responding robotically as puppets directed only by our past experience. Rather, the *habitus* is also "the art of inventing," which allows for an infinite number of unpredictable thoughts and

behaviors (Bourdieu 1980: 55). Thus Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* does not intend to portray human behavior as entirely predictable and formulaic. Rather, Bourdieu asserts that "...the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions and actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production..." (Bourdieu 1980: 55). Haitian-descended *braceros*, thus, have utilized the tools at their disposal to re-construct ideas of Haitianness, Dominicanness, and cultural authenticity.

One way in which *bateyanos* retain a close connection to Haitian culture is through language. Among children on the *bateyes*, the vast majority are fully bilingual in Haitian Creole and Spanish. For those whose parents are monolingual in Haitian Creole, the children learn Spanish among their peers at school and on the *batey*, in addition to through formal classroom instruction. At the same time, when there are new arrivals from Haiti, referred to as *kongó*, *batey* residents take on the role of impromptu Spanish language instructors. In light of my field observation, learning Spanish seems to be a prized skill among *braceros*. Overall, however, the language that generally colors *batey* culture is Creole. Throughout the *batey*, neighbors can be heard speaking to one another in Creole, regardless of their place of birth.

Adults generally speak Creole amongst themselves on the *batey*. Their proficiency in Spanish is often considerably weaker than that of their Dominican-born children and their Spanish is frequently marked by a heavy Creole accent or the use of phonologically adapted borrowings of Spanish markers. An example of such borrowed markers is *buen* instead of *bueno*, in Spanish or *bien* in Creole. Furthermore, the use of similar loan words was common for terms related to agriculture. An example is the use

of the word *tchapyya* [chap.ya], an anglicism that enters *batey* Creole as a phonologically adapted borrowing of the Spanish adapted loan word "chapear," or "to chop." Carole, a *bracero* who arrived four years ago from Jacmel, used the aforementioned phrase "tchapyya kafe" to describe the work she did as a coffee harvester during the off-season (2011). These and other linguistic accommodations to the bilingual environment within the *batey* are fairly commonplace. When speaking Spanish, *batey* residents often employ Creole words that have been phonetically adapted to Spanish, while when speaking Spanish, the use of words phonetically adapted to Creole to facilitate pronunciation is also common. Many of the creolized Spanish loan words relate to agriculture, presumably as a result of frequent communication with plantation bosses, guards, and other Dominican employees on the *batey*.

Regardless of proficiency, however, whenever *batey* residents have matters to conduct in Spanish beyond the *batey*, they always have friends to serve as interpreters. In my interviews with a local judge and policemen, they all highlighted the fact that in the event of having to make a court appearance, members of the Haitian community will generally bring two or three friends along with them to serve as interpreters (Jiménez 2011, Joel 2011, Manuel 2011). In this sense, linguistic barriers are not a complete handicap for new arrivals and those who are less fluent in Spanish as there is a solid support system within the *batey* community. *Bracero* informants in my field research also highlighted the solid support system of fellow *bateyanos* available to assist those who are less fluent in Spanish in any way possible, whether it means teaching them Spanish or serving as an interpreter.

The fact that *batey* residents find it necessary to bring friends as interpreters is testament to the fact that despite the social bilingualism within the *batey*, a considerable proportion of the *batey* population remains strongly Creole-dominant. The likely reason for such a sizeable proportion of Creole-dominant bilinguals despite the growing population of highly-proficient, at least minimally formally educated Spanish speakers is the continuous flow of new arrivals from Haiti. If this pattern continues, even with increased access to formal education, the steady flow of Haitian migration to the *bateyes* suggests that the Creole-dominant proportion of the *batey* population in Los Llanos could remain at similar levels for the foreseeable future. In light of this, the current situation of unstable social bilingualism is likely to remain as well.

Being born in the Dominican Republic does not ensure a high level Spanish proficiency. Although virtually everyone is bilingual to some degree, the Spanish proficiency of the youth tends to be far superior to that of most adults. The older, Dominican-born population learned Spanish informally in the street and with other second language speakers since they did not have access to formal education as *batey* youth now do. As a result, the Haitian-Dominicans who acquired Spanish informally often retain similar markers of second language speech despite having been born in the Dominican Republic. Lack of formal education has a significant impact on the Spanish proficiency levels among middle-aged *braceros*.

Middle-aged Dominican-born informants provide a window into how the dynamic of the linguistic situation on the *batey* has evolved recently in light of new rights and freedoms, namely access to education and increased exposure to first language Spanish, both in the classroom and in the community in Los Llanos. One such informant was

Manuel, a retired *bracero* who was born in the Cibao region and grew up in La Romana in the East. Manuel, having lived all of his life in the Dominican Republic and fifty years on the *batey* in Los Llanos, was fluent in Spanish but his speech was still marked by a number of second language features, such as overuse of the preterit form in situations that call for the imperfect. He began his interview, for example, by saying “Cuando *‘taba* joven...” rather than “Cuando *era* joven.” Although he had never been to Haiti, he learned Creole at home and spoke it well.

Among Haitian-born informants, the elderly population demonstrated a high Spanish proficiency despite a heavy Creole accent. For example, Jean Robert arrived in the Dominican Republic from Haiti in 1960. Although he was very much Creole-dominant, he moved seamlessly between Spanish and Creole throughout his interview. Though the interview was conducted primarily in Haitian Creole, he consistently switched to Spanish by inserting certain words or phrases in Spanish. With this particular informant, it was also clear that he was accustomed to code-switching between the two languages.

The ability to speak Spanish seems to be a valued asset among *braceros*. Jean Pierre, a fairly recent arrival, insisted on speaking in Spanish in his interview despite his minimal competency in the language. Understanding his Spanish was a difficult task, but he insisted on taking advantage of the opportunity to use his Spanish. At one point in the interview, his friend even told him to just speak Creole because no one can understand his Spanish. Jean-Pierre, who had only lived on the *batey* for a few years, indexed Spanish as a prized symbol of solidarity, as a marker of membership in a new community and, although he was not as proficient as his peers, he demonstrated the high value placed

on learning Spanish as an emblem of membership within the *batey* community. Manuel's code switching also demonstrated this phenomenon since, although he also had a low Spanish proficiency, he regularly and seamlessly switched to Spanish for some words and phrases.

Amongst the *braceros*, language is also used as a form of performing Haitianness. In terms of maintaining connections to Haiti and Haitianness, *batey* youth and adults have retained many traditional songs commonly sung in Haiti and often sing them to pass the time when working or sing them to lift their spirits when they are down. On my initial visit to become familiarized with the *batey* and the workers, one woman began singing a song and within moments a small group assembled to sing with her. Below is a song one informant said they often sing in trying times.

Sa pòv genyen se sa l pòte nan mache/ sa yon manman genyen se sa k bay pitit li/
Mwen vin renmet lavi mwen nan men ou, Gran Mèt, ak tout renmen ou mete nan
kè nou/Tout sa nou genyen se gras a ou menm, Bondye/Fè kè nou kontan, kò nou
kouraj ou/Men pi bèl kado se nan ou menm li sòti/ ... (unintelligible)...pou tout
tan. (Marie Paule 2011)

What the poor man has is what he takes to the market/what a mother has is what
she gives her child/I come to place my life into your hands, God, with all of the
love you've placed in our hearts/All that we have is thanks to you, God/Make our
hearts happy, give our bodies your courage/But the most beautiful gift is from
you/... (unintelligible)...forever. (Marie Paule 2011)

Both the adults and the Dominican-born youth perform a variety of Haitian songs and stories in Creole. In this way, although many youth have never been to Haiti and are unlikely to go, they retain a connection to their Haitian identity through language and the cultural inheritances of their parents. Linguistically, the youth born in the Dominican Republic are generally fluent in both languages, but appear to identify most with Spanish. Though their parents may speak Spanish with a heavy Creole accent, *batey* youth

typically have an accent that is indistinguishable from that of their ethnic Dominican peers. Among the youth, code-switching is common in their communication amongst themselves; however, Spanish appears to predominate in their code-switching. As often occurs with children of migrant parents in the United States, Haitian-Dominican youth on the *bateyes* have likely come to identify more strongly with and have a greater proficiency in Spanish than prior generations since it is the sole language of communication in the classroom, the place where they spend the bulk of their days. Thus, *batey* youth appear to be Spanish-dominant bilinguals, while their parents are generally Creole-dominant.

At the same time however, there are different generations on the *batey* and, while there is a constant flow of new arrivals, there is also an elderly population that came to the Dominican Republic in search of work in their youth. This population is also fully fluent in both languages. In light of the constant Creole influence on monolingual new arrivals and the already existing Spanish-Creole bilingual population, age alone is not a determining factor in terms of levels of Spanish fluency. As the patterns are at the present time, there is a gap in which the middle-aged population is generally the group with the lowest level of Spanish fluency. The elderly have lived the majority of their lives on the *batey*, despite being born in Haiti, while the youth are generally born on the *batey*, while middle-aged persons are typically those who migrated to the cane fields later in life. Fluency levels depend not on age, but on the time spent living on the *batey* or in the Dominican Republic prior to arriving on the *batey*. Spanish-only Haitian-Dominicans are more common in the town, as opposed to within the *batey* community. Spanish monolingualism appears to be more common in the nation's interior region.

Chapter VI: Resistance and Advocacy: Working Toward Equality and Human Rights for Haitians and Haitian Dominicans in the Dominican Republic

Although negative sentiments toward Haitians in the Dominican Republic remain strong in certain sectors of the population, particularly in areas such as Santiago and the Northern border region, awareness about the impact of the recent Constitutional reform on citizenship is fairly limited (Mata 2010). Little coverage of this portion of the reform appeared in newspapers. When mentioned at all, newspaper writers typically made general, broad statements along the lines of “The Constitutional reform affected areas such as, x, y, and z” (Pérez Reyes 2009, López 2010). These articles then went into more detail on two or three of the reform areas, but rarely, if ever, was the issue of the reform’s impact on citizenship addressed in detail. Many articles failed to even mention citizenship as one of the affected parts of the Constitution (Pérez Reyes 2009, López 2010).

As is the case in many Latin American countries, the media primarily reflects the interest of an elite minority. Issues such as the restriction of access to citizenship are of little concern to this group, thus, this particular aspect of reform received little attention in most mainstream newspapers in the nation. Furthermore, one could also construe the reform of the Constitutional requirements for citizenship as simply business as usual. Since the majority of the population remains fervently opposed to the growing Haitian population in the Dominican territory, one could argue that such a story is not exactly eye-catching news for the average reader. Moreover, there was little detailed coverage of the Constitutional reform in print media at all. Although the reform was mentioned

frequently, most articles simply cited general areas affected by the reform, but hardly any went into substantial depth in terms of the specific nature of the reforms. When specifics were mentioned, there would be a list of perhaps five mentioned areas of reform and articles would address the specifics of how only one or two of the areas would be directly affected by the reform. Unfortunately, there seemed to be a systematic failure to analyze the implications of the citizenship aspect of the Constitutional reform.

Another issue in the background of the limited coverage of the citizenship reform is the persistent problem with a general lack of transparency in the realm of Dominican politics. In much of Latin America, there is a marked disconnect between the people and political leaders. Often this disconnect takes the form of a lack of access to information regarding the policy changes realized by those in power. In fact, the common reality is that information regarding political dealings is intentionally withheld in order to restrict the power of the people and limit their access to the state (Weyland 1998). The Dominican Republic is no exception to this regional trend in the area of political culture.

Limited attention given to citizenship issues in national print media is just one issue in a much larger puzzle. Media inattention coupled with a widespread sense of apathy toward politics and low civic-mindedness has led to a great deal of ignorance and disinformation regarding Haitian and Haitian-Dominican rights in the Dominican Republic (Mata 2011). As a result, many Dominicans are unaware of the legislation related to issues of citizenship and immigration that are under consideration for approval and whether or not such proposals are approved. There is also a similar lack of political consciousness in terms of knowledge of proposals for new legislation or changes to existing legislation (Mata 2011).

Though the mention of Haitian immigration in the Dominican Republic causes passions to rise among many sectors of society, crossing all age groups from young children to elderly adults, such visceral feelings of animosity cannot be assumed to mark the attitudes of all Dominicans. As previously mentioned, there is a slow, but perceptible shift occurring in terms of attitudes toward those of Haitian descent. Particularly, there seems to be more of a push for tolerance among university professors, especially those in the Humanities, as well as less negative attitudes among a small minority of the college student population in Santiago. Although they remain in the minority, there are some Dominicans who are against the harsh, unjust treatment of persons of Haitian descent. In fact, in recent years, more Dominicans have risen up as active advocates for Haitian and Haitian-Dominican rights.

In fact, a young Dominican, Laura Amelia Guzmán co-directed with her husband, Mexican director Israel Cárdenas, a compelling independent film that provided an unprecedented window into the reality of the Haitian and Haitian-Dominican community in the Dominican Republic while telling the story of a Haitian man who loses his job as a foreign language instructor in Santo Domingo (Cárdenas and Guzmán 2010). The film, *Jean Gentil*, chronicles everything from Haitian homelessness to the harsh nature of the construction jobs generally held by Haitians to the profoundly problematic issue of constructing Haitianness as a Spanish monolingual Haitian-Dominican (Cárdenas and Guzmán 2010). *Jean Gentil* utilizes powerful images and wisely selected, pithy dialogues to question the widespread apathy toward the many struggles faced by persons of Haitian descent, regardless of immigration status, in the Dominican Republic.

In addition to those who boldly challenge the status quo attitude of indifference toward Haitian-Dominican human rights issues, there are also numerous Dominican NGOs and other advocacy groups who work to ameliorate the grave injustices detailed in this thesis. Among them, perhaps the best-known organization is Movimiento de Mujeres Domínico-Haitianas (MUDHA), or Haitian-Dominican Women's Movement, founded by Haitian-Dominican former *batey* resident Solange 'Sonia' Pierre. Pierre has been a fearless, outspoken advocate for the rights of persons of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic.

As a result of Pierre's boldness, she has endured incessant verbal attacks, death threats, and even had her citizenship retroactively revoked due to her involvement in the well-known Yean and Bosico vs. Dominican Republic case, the precedent for Haitian-Dominican citizenship rights. Pierre was eventually forced to leave the nation in the interest of her personal safety; however, she is far from absent from national dialogue surrounding issues faced by her community. She continues to have an active role in debates related to immigration, human rights, citizenship, equality and justice in her community. In fact, she regularly travels back and forth between her New York home and the Dominican Republic and continues to work in conjunction with local advocates.

There are also a number of Haitian-Dominican rights organizations and rights efforts led by ethnic Dominicans. Dr. Noemí Méndez Castro, a San Pedro-based lawyer is an avid champion for *batey* workers' rights in San José de Los Llanos. She has maintained close ties with like-minded locals in the community in Los Llanos as well as workers in the many *bateyes* in Los Llanos and has served as a legal advocate for workers facing a multitude of injustices. For example, she has managed to secure pension for a

number of elderly Haitian *braceros* who are no longer physically able to work. As *braceros* receiving their retirement pensions was virtually unheard of in the past, this is a momentous achievement and has made a huge difference in the lives of the affected workers. Dr. Méndez, herself a former *batey* resident of *cocolo* descent, remains engaged in issues surrounding *batey* workers' rights and continues to make regular visits to the *bateyes* in Los Llanos, over an hour away (Méndez 2011).

Another Dominican-based organization is Centro Bonó in the capital, Santo Domingo. Centro Bonó is a multi-faceted organization that includes Instituto Filosófico Pedro Francisco Bonó, Centro de Estudios Sociales P. Juan Montalvo S.J., and Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados/as y Migrantes. Instituto Bonó is also affiliated with INTEC (Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo), where it offers a major in Humanities and Philosophy (Centro Bonó 2011). Through education, conferences, and cross-cultural collaboration, the organization seeks to promote cultural awareness and open-mindedness while cultivating a new generation of justice-seeking, service-minded leaders who will create a more inclusive vision of the nation and its future. Following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the Instituto organized an international, multi-lingual conference in Santo Domingo entitled Shared History, Shared Future: Converging Paths in the Haitian and Dominican Transborder Experience.

The conference addressed topics as wide-ranging as gender, sexuality, and family in migration, Border Identities, Afro-Dominicanidad, and even included art exhibits and poetry. The conference, in addition to engaging international scholars, included a list of respected guest speakers such as Dominican-American author Junot Díaz and Dominican Historian Frank Moya Pons. This effort required a considerable investment of time and

energy and is a reflection of a growing sector of Dominican society that seeks to promote understanding and mutual respect for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans and to replace the ignorance and hatred of the past.

There are also other organizations that work to directly facilitate equality and mutual respect between Haitians and Dominicans and peaceable relations between the two nations. In Dajabón in the northern part of the border region with Haiti, the NGO Centro Puente, or San Pon, as it is known in Haitian Creole, works toward harmonious relations between the two nations through a number of means, but arguably what makes the organization unique is its efforts to encourage collaboration between community leaders and political officials on both sides of the border and its efforts to teach community members to exercise their rights by facilitating increased involvement in all areas of socio-political life (Volens America 2011). Centro Puente also supports research and advocacy efforts both around the nation and around the globe and, through the help of the organization's coordinator, Mr. Arcadio Sosa, I was able to make the connections necessary to realize the field research for this thesis.

Within the Dominican Republic, there are also religious organizations that are working actively to combat bigotry and injustice. Among those organizations is Centro Dominicano de Asesoría y Servicios Legales (CEDAIL). CEDAIL, based in Santo Domingo, is a non-profit organization of the Episcopal Church that provides legal support for disenfranchised groups. They work very closely with Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans on the *bateyes* in Los Llanos and with Dr. Noemí Méndez who was employed with the organization prior to establishing her own firm. Furthermore, the organization provides both legal aid and services to facilitate fluency in the area of law

and justice among the nation's disenfranchised groups. The head of the organization, Mr. Pedro Ubiera, and his dedicated staff provided the structure and guidance for my field research in addition to providing me with a solid local network of support for my research. They have supported other U.S. college students on similar research projects in the past and are a strong force in the movement toward both promoting human rights literacy among disenfranchised groups and equipping scholars to do research with these groups, thus creating a multi-faceted strategy for combating their historical silencing.

Many international actors have also become involved in the Haitian-Dominican human rights movement. Fortunately, more and more of these efforts are taking a turn toward Haitian self-empowerment, as opposed to the more heavy-handed, top-down approaches employed by foreign advocates in the past. Among efforts realized by international organizations, perhaps the most recent is that of Tigú Guimarães of Brazil. Guimarães, a Brazilian photographer, director, and documentary filmmaker, has worked to document through photographs the joint effort of Centro Cultural de España and the Dominican Centro Caribeño de Cultura y Comunicación to create TV Bateyes. TV Bateyes aims to empower *batey* residents, especially youth, by providing them with the skills to use audio-visual communication as a tool for socio-cultural development (Centro Caribeño de Cultura y Comunicación). Young *bateyanos* are provided with audio/visual equipment and are encouraged to produce reports, interviews, skits, and more. The goal of the *TV Batey* project is to support *bateyanos* by promoting cultural diversity, strengthening identity and self-esteem and legitimizing local social organizations (Centro Caribeño de Cultura y Comunicación). The project is underway in three *bateyes* in the

province of Independencia, located in the Southwestern border region (Centro Caribeño de Cultura y Comunicación).

These and many other projects reveal the full complexity of Haitian-Dominican relations—there are ethnic Dominicans who oppose the abuses faced by those of Haitian origin in the Dominican Republic and many of them advocate for the basic rights and respect of all persons in the Dominican national territory. Though the strident shouts of anti-Haitianists attract more attention both domestically and internationally, there are critical movements advocating for change in various parts of the nation. Thus, in addition to addressing the discrimination struggles that persist, research on anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic ought to seek also to analyze the changes that resist the status-quo. In this way, scholars can better understand the problem as it exists today, rather than dealing with artificially constructed conditions that suggest a socio-culturally uniform, unchanging society.

Chapter VII Conclusion

Though the impression of much scholarship on Haitian-Dominican relations appears to suggest that anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic is about as Dominican as *la tambora*, the drum, and that such attitudes show no signs of changing, this view overlooks the subject's complexity. Tempting though it may be to simplify a living, evolving situation into clear-cut, black and white terms, real life is rarely so simple. In the years that I have been studying the Dominican Republic, I have observed vast regional and social differences in attitudes toward Haitians in the Dominican Republic. True though it may be that the lines along which these divisions in attitudes occur may not follow traditional socio-economic, racial, or even educational lines, there is a perceptible pattern in these attitudes, and there is a clear shift in certain sectors of Dominican society toward greater tolerance of and even activism for Haitians, Haitian-Dominicans, and their rights.

Although it is clear that anti-Haitianism and blatantly discriminatory practices remain an issue in the Dominican Republic, to overlook the progress and the efforts of the Dominicans who have been bold enough to go against the grain and support their Haitian brothers and sisters rather than close their eyes to the grave abuses and injustices they face on a regular basis would be a disservice to the scholarly community, to readers, and to the Haitian-Dominican rights movement. Disseminating research that depicts the full complexity and contradictions within the Haitian-Dominican conflict can serve as a uniting tool for those who hope to work toward eliminating such injustice. Misinformation, simply serves to create rifts in a community that could otherwise be uniting towards achieving a common goal.

As scholars, we must aim to make sense of the stereotypes held by members of our own society toward other groups. Moreover, we must also work to piece together the truth from distortions, striving always to create accurate, multi-dimensional analyses that are reflective of the reality. Although we may not be able to fully understand the reality of what we are studying and analysis may leave us with key questions for the scholarly community to continue striving to understand, maintaining such dialogue and seeking greater understanding is what is most important. Furthermore, though there have been a number of seminal works on the topic, many of the most respected works on Haitian-Dominican relations were written ten and even twenty years ago. Our duty as scholars is also to continue contributing to the available literature to remain abreast of critical shifts or developments that may have surfaced over time. My hope is that this work will serve to fill in the temporal gaps while allowing readers to see the reality of the Haitian-Dominican experience and the human rights struggle from a unique perspective that opens the window to understanding new dimensions of a widely studied issue.

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Appendix I

Hispaniola Island



source: <http://casasdeclair.com/about.html>



Dominican Republic Map - ©2008 Destination360

source: <http://www.destination360.com/caribbean/dominican-republic/map>



Source: <http://www.superhaitian.com/map-of-haiti.html>

Appendix II

Entrevista

1. ¿Cuál es su nombre completo?
2. ¿En qué año nació Ud.?
3. ¿Qué edad tiene Ud.?
4. ¿En qué lugar vive Ud.?
5. ¿Nació en ese lugar?
6. ¿Dónde nació entonces?
7. ¿Siempre ha vivido en ese lugar?
8. ¿Dónde más ha vivido?
9. ¿En qué lugar ha pasado más tiempo?
10. ¿Cuál es el nombre de su padre?
11. ¿Cuál es el nombre de su madre?
12. ¿Dónde viven sus padres?
13. ¿Dónde nacieron sus padres? Padre _____ Madre _____
14. ¿Cuántos años tienen? Padre _____ Madre _____
15. ¿Cuántos hermanos y hermanas tiene Ud.? Hembras _____ Varones _____
16. ¿Dónde viven sus hermanos y hermanas?
17. ¿Cuáles edades tienen sus hermanos y hermanas?
18. ¿Qué idioma(s) hablan ellos?
19. ¿Qué idioma(s) habla Ud.?
20. ¿Cuál idioma domina o habla mejor?
21. ¿Qué idioma se habla más entre sus familiares y amigos?

22. ¿Qué idioma se hablaba en su casa?
23. ¿Ud. se siente ser...Dominicano_____ Haitiano_____ Dominicano de ascendencia haitiana _____ ¿Por qué?
24. ¿En general, què Ud. cree que le hace a uno sentirse dominicano o haitiano? Por qué?
25. ¿Qué es lo que le gusta más de Santo Domingo?
26. ¿Qué es lo que menos le gusta?
27. ¿Tiene novio(a), compañero(a), esposo(a)?
28. ¿Tiene hijos?
29. ¿Está declarado?
30. ¿Qué tipo de documentos usa Ud. para identificarse? Cédula dominicana _____ Cédula haitiana _____ Pasaporte _____
31. ¿Cuándo fue la última vez que visitó Haití?

Appendix III

Entèvyu

1. Ki jan ou rele?
2. Nan ki ane ou te fèt?
3. Konben ane ou genyen?
4. Kote ou rete?
5. Ou te fèt la?
6. Ou toujou rete la?
7. Nan ki kote ou te rete pou plis tan?
8. Nan ki kote ou te pase plis tan ?
9. Ki jan papa ou rele ?
10. Ki jan manman ou rele ?
11. Kote paran ou rete ?
12. Kote paran ou te fèt ? Manman _____ Papa _____
13. Kote paran ou rete ?
14. Konben ane yo genyen ? Manman _____ Papa _____
15. Konben frè ak sè ou genyen ? femèl _____ mal _____
16. Kote frè ak sè ou rete ?
17. Konben ane gen frè ak sè ou ? Ki lang ou pale pi byen?
18. Ki lang yo pale?
19. Ki lang ou pale?
20. Ki lang ou pale plis ak fanmi ak zanmi ou?

21. Ki lang ou te pale nan lakay ou ?
22. Ou santi ou...Dominiken_____ Ayisyen_____ Dominiken ak zansèt ayisyen_____
- Pou kisa ?
23. An general, kisa ou kwè fè yon moun santi li dominiken oswa ayisyen ? Pou kisa ?
24. Kisa ou renmen plis nan San Domeng ?
25. Kisa ou renmen mwens ?
26. Eske ou gen menaj, esposo, oswa kamarad ?
27. Eske ou gen timoun?
28. Eske ou gen papyè?
29. Ki dokiman ou genyen pou idantifye ou menm? Kat didantite dominken _____
- Kat didantite ayisyen_____ Paspò_____
30. Kil è ou te ale ann Ayiti pou denyè fwa ?