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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

THE ABSENCE OF RACE IN DEMOCRATIC POLITICS:

THE CASE OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICAL SCIENCE

by

Gabriela Hoberman

2010

To: Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Gabriela Hoberman, and entitled *The Absence of Race in Democratic Politics: The Case of the Dominican Republic*, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Astrid Arraras

Marifeli Perez Stable

John F. Stack, Jr.

Eduardo A. Gamarra, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 26, 2010

The dissertation of Gabriela Hoberman is approved.

Dean Kenneth Furton
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University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2010

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DEDICATION

So many people have helped me in the process of writing this dissertation, without them, this study would not have been possible.

First, I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Pablo and my two children, Camila and Tomas. We came to the United States from Argentina to fulfill a dream, and my family's continuous support and encouragement have proved determinant in completing this work. Their unconditional strength and love have accompanied me every step of the way, throughout long nights and weekends that I deprived them of family time, but always counting on their belief in the quality of my work. For all that, I am eternally grateful. Pablo listened patiently to all my arguments and assumptions, providing me with productive and insightful feedback in all chapters, making me aware of grammatical errors and confusing statements. Camila and Tomas have been an oasis in challenging times throughout the process, providing me noticeable hints –as children usually do- on how to continue and never give up. I also dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Haydee. She has been a source of encouragement throughout the writing process, and helped me always to keep my horizons clear. Her support means a great deal to me and I truly appreciate it.

Finally, I acknowledge all my friends who in one way or another have been present in this process with their unconditional support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their support throughout this process, invaluable inspiration and enduring commitment.

Dr. John F. Stack, Jr. has been a source of encouragement to my work on race and ethnicity; his expertise, feedback and confidence in my capabilities have been determinant in the completion of this dissertation. I would like to thank Dr. Marifeli Perez Stable for her support and valuable expertise in issues on democratic governance in the Caribbean. Dr. Astrid Arraras has been extremely helpful in the process providing valuable insights in the conceptualization of democratic transitions, citizenship and political elites.

Dr. Eduardo A. Gamarra, my major professor, has been a great mentor and a vital source of inspiration throughout this dissertation. His valuable expertise in democratic governance, political regimes and nation-building in Latin America and the Caribbean were indispensable in writing this dissertation. His patience, support and criticism to refine my analysis have truly inspired my work and I really appreciate his guidance throughout this process. Finally, I would like to thank the expertise and insightful contributions of Dr. Richard S. Olson and Dr. Juan Pablo Sarmiento in the writing process. The effort and commitment in pursuing field research would not have been possible without the financial support of the Department of Politics and International Relations and the Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION
THE ABSENCE OF RACE IN DEMOCRATIC POLITICS: THE CASE OF
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

by

Gabriela Hoberman

Florida International University, 2010

Miami, Florida

Professor Eduardo A. Gamarra, Major Professor

This dissertation explores the relationship between race and democratization. Through the examination of the case of the Dominican Republic, this study challenges mainstream explanations of democratic transitions. At its core, this dissertation aims at calling attention to the absence of race and ethnic allegiances as explanatory variables of the democratic processes and debates in the region.

By focusing on structural variables, the analysis shies away from elite and actor-centered explanations that fall short in predicting the developments and outcomes of transitions. The central research questions of this study are: Why is there an absence of the treatment of race and ethnic allegiances during the democratic transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean? How has the absence of ethnic identities affected the nature and depth of democratic transitions?

Unlike previous explanations of democratic transitions, this dissertation argues that the absence of race in democratic transitions has been a deliberate attempt to perpetuate limited citizenship by political and economic elites. Findings reveal a difficulty to overcome nationalist discourses where limited citizenship has affected the quality of democracy. Original field research data for the study has been gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus groups conducted from October 2008 to December 2009 in the Dominican Republic.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| APRA..... | American Popular Revolutionary Alliance |
| AD..... | Democratic Action |
| CEA..... | Consejo Estatal del Azúcar |
| COPEI..... | Committee of Independent Electoral Political Organization |
| IMF..... | International Monetary Fund |
| LAIPOP..... | Latin American Public Opinion Project |
| MIDA..... | Movimiento de Integración Democrática |
| MINUSTAH..... | United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti |
| PLD..... | Dominican Liberation Party |
| PQD..... | Partido Quisqueyano Democrático |
| PR..... | Reformist Party |
| PRD..... | Dominican Revolutionary Party |
| PRSC..... | Social Christian Reformist Party |
| SJRM..... | Jesuit Refugees and Migrant Service |
| UCN..... | National Civic Union |

Chapter 1

Introduction

The major purpose of this dissertation is to study the absence of race and ethnic identity as major issues in the political debates that characterized democratic transitions and how this absence affected their nature and depth. To analyze these questions, the dissertation will explore the nature of the democratization processes in the Dominican Republic (1978-1996) as well as the resulting profound transformations in notions of citizenship, contested identities, and demands for participation. The central argument of this dissertation is that the absence of the treatment of race during the democratic transitions was a deliberate attempt to perpetuate a limited definition of citizenship by political and economic elites. The dissertation will challenge traditional accounts of democratic transitions in the region, which fall short when explaining the absence of the treatment of race from the political discourse in the democratic transitions. Indeed, this downplaying of race in the democratization process has garnered little scholarly attention, thereby preventing a more dynamic understanding of the nature of democratic transitions in both the Latin American and Caribbean region and the Dominican Republic.

The primary focus of the dissertation will be to offer a novel account of the relationship between race and democratization. By examining the

regional context of democratization and more precisely the Dominican case, the research will call attention to the deliberate deconstruction of racial discourses during the processes of democratization in the country. Specifically, the study of race—or, more accurately, the absence of race—during the early transitions to democracies in these countries represents a necessary point of departure for understanding the nature of the democratic processes. In other words, the purpose of the dissertation is to explain the conspicuous absence of race in the transitions to democracy and its consequences into the consolidation process of the Dominican Republic.

Significance and Contribution of the Study

The study is significant for four main reasons. The dissertation first will critique mainstream literature on democratic transitions and the absence of the treatment of race in the political agenda. By examining key explanatory variables proposed by the literature, the central aim of this study is to address the conscious attempt to dismiss debates on race and ethnic allegiances in the framework of democratization by political and economic elites in the Dominican Republic.

Second, the study seeks to develop an original theoretical framework from which to understand processes of democratization across regions with a more dynamic outlook. The study will suggest that the examination of racial

politics and contested identities during the early democratization process constituted an inescapable element of the democratic transitions.

Third, it will examine democratization processes in the region and more specifically how the Dominican transition downplayed the racial discourse in democratization processes. In the case of the Dominican Republic, the African heritage has been largely denied by constructing an artificial myth of Indian heritage.

Fourth, the dissertation will examine overlooked factors within the context of democratic transitions in the region. Although issues of ethnicity, racial politics and citizenship have been scrutinized since the mid-1990s, these components largely were excluded in examinations of early democratic transitions in Latin America.

Reexamining Democratic Transitions in the Region

This section examines the literature on democratic transitions as well as that of racial and ethnic identities. It focuses on four questions: 1) What have been the key explanatory factors in democratic transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean? 2) What line of argument has mainstream scholarship embraced in dealing with democratization processes? 3) How were racial and ethnic allegiances treated in the literature on transitions? 4) To what extent have structural factors been overlooked in the literature of democratization?

The salience of ethnic and racial allegiances in Latin America has increased significantly since the process of democratization began in the late 1970s and resulted in a transversal upsurge of ethnic and racial conflicts across both developed and developing countries. However, the question of race and democratization in Latin America has been obscured somewhat by notions of class and ideology. Such experiences indicate that ethnicity and racial identities are powerful sources of political and social mobilization. This review of the literature on ethnic identity, race, and democratization aims to explore the more contemporary work in this field, particularly that of Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2000), each of whom thoroughly discuss the salience of ethnic allegiances in their research on ethnic identity, citizenship, constitutional change, ethnic parties, and neoliberalism in the region.

Transitions to democracy have been a growing concern among scholars since the late 1970s. The establishment of democratic institutions after years of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes remains both a challenge and an opportunity for democratically elected governments. The democratization process in Latin America and the Caribbean has sparked a great deal of interest in mainstream literature, with a focus on the way in which political opening brought a reconfiguration of political, economic, and social actors in the region's dynamic. Although the countries of the region account for several models of transition, from authoritarian or dictatorial regimes to democratic ones, it is possible to encounter common threads through which unravel the

drivers of democratization from the late 1970s onwards. Without doubt, democratic transitions featured three indicators: an end to military governments, elimination of authoritarian processes, and the urgency to define the depositaries of political power. From the Southern Cone to Central American and Caribbean countries, these indicators were at the forefront of political and social struggles in the late 1970s.

Especially in the case of Latin American and Caribbean countries, several independent variables have been considered critical explanatory factors for the process of democratization. Among others, O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Malloy and Seligson (1987) and Linz and Stepan (1996) noted that political elites have been major players in the transitions to democracy in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Especially in the so-called pacted democracies, the roles played by these elites have been underscored over other explanatory variables, such as economic development, level of education, class structure, regional diffusion or contagion effect, and party system fragmentation. This dissertation aims to unveil the gap in the literature by examining central questions in the process of democratization. By emphasizing the roles and actions of political actors in regime change, scholars have missed the mark in examining more structural explanatory factors, such as the way in which the presence or absence of ethnic and racial identities have affected the nature of the democratization process.

Mainstream literature largely has explored the nature of the democratic transitions of the countries in the Southern Cone, especially Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Special attention was given to the nature of O'Donnell's "bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes" in Argentina and Brazil. Falling within O'Donnell's categorization of "transition by defeat of military regime,"¹ Argentina embarked in the early 1980s in the reconstitution of civil and political liberties, close civil control over the military and the redefinition of political parties. Examining the democratic transition in Argentina, Linz and Stepan note the internal division in the military after the defeat in the war as well as "free nature" of Argentine's transition in comparison to that of Brazil, Chile and Uruguay:

"...in these circumstances the political parties were able to refuse military overtures to enter into a pact. Three times the military made pact overtures, and three times the parties refused. This power relationship explains why the Argentine transition began with fewer agreed-upon restrictions by the political parties than in Brazil, Uruguay, or Chile. The parties did not accept an indirect presidential election as Brazilian parties did in 1985. The parties did not accept the exclusion of a major presidential candidate as they did in Uruguay. And the parties did not have to agree to begin government with key parts of the authoritarian regime's constitution still in effect as they did in Chile. Argentina had the only unacted and the

¹ Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 18-19. O'Donnell and Schmitter argue that every transition has been also the result of internal division in authoritarian regimes, especially between "hard-liners" and "soft-liners." In the case of Argentina, visible opposition forces in civil society leveraged the "decision to open." See O'Donnell and Schmitter, 20.

most classically free transition of our four South American cases...”²

Brazil experienced a lengthy and constrained transition featured by conspicuous influence of the military and the consequences of the debt crisis.³

Chile has been pointed out as one of the most remarkable examples of achieving a successful democratic transition into consolidation, especially in what concerns economic progress and improvement in social measures. With the country’s long-standing tradition of military power, Siavelis demonstrates that civilian control did not take hold immediately during the transition, but gathered momentum from the late 1990s.⁴

The democratic story for Central American countries, in spite of internal disparities, has involved the culmination of long-standing civil wars, which at times included foreign countries and the commitment to initiate a peace process that would allow for new democratic and constitutional governments. In regard to civil control over the military, Dominguez argues

² Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 193.

³ Ibid, 167-168.

⁴ Peter Siavelis, “Chile: The End of the Unfinished Transition,” in Jorge I. Dominguez and Michael Shifter (eds.) *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (3rd ed), 177-208, 326.

that high levels of criminality maintain the leverage of the military in political power.⁵

At the beginning of this section I acknowledged the rise of political parties during the democratic transitions as the main depositaries of political power after the collapse of military and authoritarian regimes in the region. This indicator reflects a varied outcome of results in the mentioned countries. After experiencing an initial leverage triggered by the persistent failure of military governments to achieve political, economic and, social progress, political parties entered a deep representation crisis. Many authors have signaled the impact of the disappearance of three main parties, the AD (Democratic Action), and the COPEI (Committee of Independent Electoral Political Organization) in Venezuela, and the APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) in Peru.⁶

The breakdown of political parties in the region was aggravated further by the crisis of representation and the demands for inclusion of relegated groups. Since the beginning of the democratic transitions in the region, countries have experienced the disappearance of historical parties; the reconfiguration of old parties into new alliances and the creation of political offerings challenging traditional parties.

⁵ Jorge I. Dominguez and Michael Shifter (eds.) (3rd ed.), *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 326.

⁶ Ibid, 336.

In Huntington's groundbreaking *The Third Wave*, democratic transitions are examined in range and depth, along with causal factors and independent variables of the three waves of democratization. Huntington defines a wave of democratization as "a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time."⁷ In analyzing the independent variables that have included the third wave, Huntington gives special attention to the problems associated with the legitimacy of authoritarian regimes, economic growth and development, changing doctrines of the Catholic Church, and leverage of external actors and international diffusion. Regarding the problem of legitimacy, Huntington considers three main variables: the fact that authoritarian regimes lack the capacity to overcome diminishing levels of political legitimacy that are usual in every regime, poor economic performance, and military defeats. In examining economic performance, Huntington acknowledges that broad economic development creates favorable conditions for democratization, yet the way in which wealth is created affects these conditions and may not contribute to democratic transitions in all cases.⁸

⁷ Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1993), 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 59-72.

Showing some contrast to conventional wisdom regarding democratic transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean, Hagopian and Mainwaring assert that economic development is a poor explanation for the democratization processes initiated in the late 1970s.⁹ In fact, they argue that the data collected from 1946 to 1977 demonstrate that democracies with slightly better economic positions have been more vulnerable to regime breakdown. Calling attention to the regional environment underscored by the authors as an overlooked factor in literature, they also acknowledge the commitment of political elites to democratization. Hagopian and Mainwaring also highlight the leverage of the third wave of democratization that, for the purpose of examining Latin America and the Caribbean, began in 1978. Over the course of that wave, not only was the duration of these transitions significantly longer (from 1978 to 1992) but the number of cases also increased dramatically (from three in 1977 to eighteen in 1991).¹⁰

In *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, O'Donnell and Schmitter define a transition as “the interval between one political regime and another.”¹¹ In keeping with their original intent to distinguish between liberalization and democratization, the authors focus on the problem of

⁹ Frances Hagopian and Scott P. Mainwaring, *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14.

¹⁰ Ibid, 19.

¹¹ O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 6.

legitimacy within the regime. Their well-known concepts relative to hard-liners and soft-liners and their roles within authoritarian regimes often have been considered critical in transitions to democracy in the region. In fact, the authors attribute a great deal of the breakdown of democratic regimes to the increasing cleavages between political hard-liners and soft-liners.¹²

Nevertheless, the core of their argument emphasizes the role of elites in negotiating pacts¹³ for the transition to take place. Although they acknowledge the mobilization of civil society during the transition, they underscore the fact that most transitions occur in a top-down fashion.

Therefore, structural factors such as ethnic identities, class structure, and race are left behind from the analysis as secondary factors.

In analyzing Bolivia's democratic transition, Malloy and Gamarra also rely on the role played by the elites, the inability of the military to ensure a more gradual transition, and the spread of social and political actors after decades of neopatrimonialism. However, among other authors, they acknowledge the fact that Bolivia's democratic transition was related to prior reformist strategies aimed at including diverse sectors of the population (1988: 206).

¹² Ibid, 19.

¹³ O'Donnell and Schmitter's classic definition of pact revolves around the idea of "an explicit, but not always publicly explicated or justified, agreement among a select set of actors which seeks to define (or, better, to redefine) rules governing the exercise of power on the basis of mutual guarantees for the 'vital interests' of those entering into it." In O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 37.

Linz and Stepan's *Problems of Democratic Transitions and Consolidation* examines extensively the circumstances and critical actors during the transitions, as well as the conditions to be met in order for democratic consolidation to take place. In this seminal volume, they focus on transitions and consolidations in Southern Europe, South America, and post-Communist Europe. By reexamining the explanatory variables that have been placed at the forefront to explain regime change, they conclude that although pacted transitions have provided much of the rule in transitions, differences can be found between authoritarian and totalitarian/sultanistic regimes. They emphasize that in the latter cases, the possibility of negotiation through pacts is minimized due to the constraints inherent in the political space.¹⁴ Considering O'Donnell's explanation of the impact of military defeat in provoking a transition to democracy, Linz and Stepan are reluctant to assume that this is a necessary condition. According to the authors, if such military defeat is not accompanied by a strong international commitment to establish democratic institutions, then it is unlikely that democratization will occur. Linz and Stepan take into consideration five critical variables that have influenced transitions to democracy. Among others, they discuss the question of "stateness," the nature of the previous regime (authoritarian, totalitarian, sultanistic, democratic, and post-

¹⁴ Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 52-54.

totalitarian); the previous leadership in nondemocratic regimes and international influences.¹⁵ Linz and Stepan focus primarily on institutional variables, avoiding the examination of more structural dimensions, such as the way in which race and ethnic allegiances may have affected the nature of these transitions.

Diamond examines the drivers of democratization by looking at some of the mainstream variables of transitions including economic development, economic performance, and international pressure. Diamond agrees with Huntington that economic development has been a major driver of democratization.¹⁶ Yet, Diamond considers that increases in national wealth are not an exclusive condition for generating a transition to democracy; rather, the transversal conditions generated by increases in national wealth play a determinant role in the path toward democratization. Among others, a few conditions stand out, such as higher levels of education, and a stable middle class that is autonomous from the state and active civil society.¹⁷ For Diamond, then, economic development must sweep over the economic dimension, namely the social and cultural dimension, to ensure successful pressure toward democratization. Diamond distinguishes between economic development and economic performance, pointing out that authoritarian

¹⁵ Linz and Stepan, xiv-xv.

¹⁶ Larry Diamond. "Universal Democracy?" *Policy Review Online*, (June-July 2003), No. 119, <<http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/3448571.html>>

¹⁷ Ibid

regimes have relied too often on successful economic performance to justify their rule. Whenever economic performance fails to meet the expectations of the citizens, its support tends to decline, and pressures for regime change eventually become apparent.

Although with some minor variations, the literature review suggests that conventional explanations were employed to examine democratic transitions in Latin America, among which some variables need to be considered: the role and commitment of political elites for democracy; economic development and performance; military defeat; the relationship between higher levels of education and the middle and urban classes; legitimacy issues and regional environment. If these explanations are considered comprehensive, then it appears the issues of race and ethnicity have been overlooked completely if not discarded from the analysis. Whether explaining why or how race was not a factor during transitions, or whether it is suggested that race was a means through which to establish a new concept of “nation” to fight a common authoritarian regime, it is noteworthy how the literature has avoided this pivotal issue.

Considering that it is at least questionable to speak of homogenous processes of democratization in the region, the literature reveals that a discussion of ethnic allegiances and race in the drawing of new citizenship approaches was dismissed by political and economic elites in the early transition period. As I have stated above, this discussion took place since the

1990s and was accompanied by the delineation of new constitutional reforms, decentralization and the introduction of representation quotas for ethnic minorities.

Finally, as an Argentine national I have experienced firsthand the military process in my country and the return to democracy in 1983 after the disastrous experience of the Falklands War with Great Britain in 1982. With the aim of contributing to the literature on democratization beyond the South American experience, this dissertation is geared toward the examination of transitions in the Caribbean to test whether or not similar explanations hold true. More specifically, considering that the democratization theme has been of utmost importance in the region, it is striking that ethnic and racial allegiances were omitted from the negotiation processes that took place during the early transitions. The following section will examine the democratization process in the Dominican Republic.

The Case of the Dominican Republic

The Dominican case is an extraordinary example to extrapolate the regional approach to democratization in the late 1970s and test whether or not the same logic applies to the first example of democratic transition in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

I have previously stated the central argument of this dissertation as the existence of a deliberate attempt to perpetuate a limited definition of

citizenship by political and economic elites by avoiding the treatment of race during the democratic transitions. In so doing, the Dominican case represents one of the most appealing cases in the region to investigate, considering the leverage of race and ethnic allegiances in Dominican society as well as in its construction of nation and citizenship. One need not look further to grasp the consequences of the island's colonial history, the twenty-two years of Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic and the fact that Dominican independence was going to be achieved not from a foreign colonial power, but from its neighbor Haiti. These three periods in time represent a sound indicator of the way in which race, class, ethnicity, nation, and citizenship became conflated in the reality of the island of Hispaniola.

Among the three common indicators found in Latin American and Caribbean transitions I mentioned the need to halt military regimes, the elimination of authoritarian processes, and the urgency to define the repositories of political power. The Dominican Republic in the late 1970s was undergoing the third uninterrupted term of Joaquin Balaguer, following earlier fraudulent elections that prevented any other party, particularly the PRD (Dominican Revolutionary Party), from attaining the presidency. The PRD in fact, refrained from participating in presidential elections in 1970 and 1974 because it claimed the elections would be rigged.

Although this dissertation deals with the Dominican democratic transition in depth in the following sections, it needs to be acknowledged

from the outset that the country did not experience a clear “pacted democracy” or a “democratic transition by collapse” as had been the case in Bolivia and Argentina. It is important to note that in the Dominican case, different political, economic, and social agents contributed to exert pressure on the political system to democratize. Internal demands met then with international intervention that prevented a new fraudulent election by the Balaguer regime. Nevertheless, the transition was not free of obstacles. The reluctance of the old regime -incarnated in the figure of Joaquin Balaguer- to transfer political power was being made clear when military forces entered the Central Electoral Headquarters and took possession of the ballot boxes corresponding to the National District.¹⁸ What followed this event was a complicated chain of events that included international pressure to continue the vote count; strong discourses by presidential candidate Antonio Guzman to engage the United States in Dominican affairs; and wide coverage by the world press to account for the challenges to democratize the Dominican Republic.

After almost two weeks of back and forth movements, the final vote count revealed that Balaguer was defeated by the PRD’s candidate Antonio Guzman by approximately 150,000 votes.¹⁹ Yet, it is important to point out

¹⁸ Michael J. Kryzaneck and Howard J. Wiarda, *The Politics of External Influence in the Dominican Republic* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 52.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 53.

how Balaguer was able to impose conditions on his exit by maintaining a strong hold of the Senate.

In a sense, the Dominican transition constituted an effort to democratize that shown the holistic nature, as well as the complexity, of the democratic process. It involved certain tacit agreements among different groups to put an end to Balaguer's authoritarian regime. At the same time, it represented the profound will of Dominican society to eliminate authoritarianism in the country, as well as all remains of military power in politics dating back to the Trujillo era. Finally, it engaged civil society in political participation by supporting the PRD as the party that would convey and articulate society's interests, expectations and demands from the bottom up.

A New Approach to Democratization

The literature on democratization evolved during the 1990s to a more concise focus on constitutional reforms, decentralization processes to empower local groups, and the inclusion of representation quotas for ethnic minorities. This literature approached democratization from the lens of the multidimensional spaces provided by political openings for historically oppressed populations, especially indigenous people. Hence, new definitions of citizenship were explored and novel variables considered in a more nuanced analysis of democratization processes in the region. Yet, these

approaches were not followed through by mainstream literature and represented isolated efforts to grasp the nature of regime change in Latin America and Caribbean countries.

As noted above, few authors have touched upon the issues of race and ethnic allegiances along the path to democratization. Hartlyn's discussion of the Dominican Republic's political experience yields a nuanced analysis of neo-patrimonialism, a multidimensional approach to transition and consolidation, and a rejection of culturalist explanations (such as Wiarda's Spanish colonial legacy) and imperialist arguments. In *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic* Hartlyn constructs his case in such a way that historical and cultural factors underlying the country's experience intermingle with political and institutional factors that have shaped the transition period. Hartlyn does a remarkable job of comparing three transitions that occurred in the Dominican Republic: the 1961-62 transition (the collapse of the Trujillo regime), the 1965-66 transition (military intervention), and the 1978 transition.²⁰ He identifies that among the three transitions, the one that occurred in 1978 presented the most suitable conditions for a transition to democracy. Although he places much of the emphasis on a transition negotiated from above by political elites with

²⁰ Jonathan Hartlyn, *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 128-131.

ample guarantees for the departing ruler, he also considers other variables that interact with this framework.

Interestingly, Hartlyn rejects the argument that the Dominican Republic initiated the transition in response to higher levels of modernization, education, a more urban population, and a more robust middle class. He argues that the atmosphere in 1978 presented the best conditions for the transition in three main realms: the nature of the prior authoritarian regime, the international context, and the way in which the transition took place.²¹ Hartlyn emphasizes the leverage associated with the nature of Balaguer's regime, in which an inchoate institutionalization was present in society that allowed for some level of involvement by political and social actors.²² The international context also appeared more propitious for democratic support in the region, where the United States favored a pro-democratic and human rights-oriented agenda. According to Hartlyn, in contrast to more repressive and restrictive regimes, neo-patrimonialism also played a role in leading to the democratic transition since the prior regime exhibited some tolerance regarding political opponents.²³

Van Cott explores constitutional transformations in Latin America. By not focusing exclusively on regime change (from authoritarian to democratic

²¹ Ibid, 128

²² Ibid, 129

²³ Ibid, 133

regimes), she explores societal and institutional changes that have been direct consequences of democratic transitions. These transformations, which occurred due to a combination of legitimacy crises, broader participation, and social mobilization, allowed for better inclusion of indigenous populations and ethnic minorities.²⁴ In analyzing the constitutional reforms that took place in the region during the late 1990s, Van Cott delineates the features of exclusionary regimes in Latin America rooted in the colonial experience. By acknowledging the leverage of a racial and class-based society in the period of colonial domination, she asserts that “national identities” were constructed by the dissolution of ethnic allegiances, which forced assimilation into a racial construction of ethnic superiority.²⁵ In analyzing constitutional transformation in Latin America, specifically in Bolivia and Colombia, Van Cott examines in depth the notions of state, citizenship, ethnicity, and racial construction as prior legacies to the democratization period. She develops a path-dependent historical account in which multicultural constitutions should serve the purpose of laying the foundations of an intercultural dialogue.²⁶

²⁴ Donna Lee Van Cott, *The Friendly Liquidation of the Past* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 4-10.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 2-3.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 279.

Yashar (2005) also investigates the redefinition of citizenship in the process of democratization. She argues that “unprecedented indigenous movements emerged throughout the Americas.”²⁷ Following the rebirth of ethnic allegiances, demands for neglected rights, mechanisms of inclusion, and wide and open participation in public agendas have become paradigms of every ethnic movement in Latin America. Yashar does not contest the idea that this development was more palpable in countries in which the ethnic makeup of the population was significantly important, such as Bolivia and Guatemala. Indeed, she argues that contemporary indigenous struggle is linked to the understanding of citizenship in a context of multiculturalism.²⁸

The redefinition of citizenship boundaries emerged through the quest for a more participatory democracy in the region, the basis for the construction of which revolved around certain factors that deserve more attention—namely, the fairness of institution; the acceptance of different forms of national, regional, ethnic, or religious identities; and the citizenry working together in order to participate in political processes “to promote public good and hold political authorities accountable.”²⁹ Yet, the question of race and democratization remains somewhat obscured in the analysis. What was the leverage of race in the democratic process? How did it translate in a

²⁷ Deborah J. Yashar. *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4.

²⁸ Yashar, 5

²⁹ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 175.

determinant source of mobilization in the post-democratic period? Why and with what specific purposes were racial and ethnic allegiances displaced in the political discourse during the democratic transitions?

Racial and Ethnic Allegiances

Ethnicity has been defined in many ways, emphasizing the primordial nature (asserting that ethnic allegiances are fixed relationships in which rational elements of ethnic loyalties were disregarded in favor of emotional/psychological attachments of kinship and common ancestry), looking at the constructed and situational character of ethnic allegiances, or examining the instrumental feature of ethnic identities, in which ethnicity results from the “efforts of individuals and groups mobilizing ethnic symbols in order to obtain access to social, political and material resources.”³⁰ Indeed, Smith’s definition of ethnicity presents a good conflation between primordialism and constructivism in which an ethnic group is:

“...a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasizes the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognized by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions. Such collectivities are doubly ‘historical’ in the sense that not only are historical memories essential to their continuance but each such ethnic group is the product of specific historical forces and is

³⁰ James McKay, “An Explanatory Synthesis of Primordial and Mobilizationist Approaches to Ethnic Phenomena,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5 (4), 1982, 399, 395-420.

therefore subject to historical change and dissolution...”³¹

Meanwhile, Van Cott (2006) argues that challenges for traditional political parties during the 1990s allowed for the rise of ethnic-based social movements in Latin America. Looking specifically to the Andean countries, Van Cott addresses the debate between race/ethnic identities and the quality of democracy in the region by acknowledging the crisis of representation shown in the limitation of political parties in providing meaningful mechanisms of inclusion and citizenship to non-elite groups.³² In dealing with democratic transitions, Van Cott claims that the literature on regime transitions and consolidations inadequately explains the poor and uneven quality of democracy.³³

Glazer and Moynihan emphasize the increasing significance of group distinctiveness and identity. Their hypothesis suggests that ethnic groups bring different norms to bear on similar contexts with different levels of success.³⁴ The authors emphasize the group differences in status. Furthermore, they contest the assertion that ethnicity becomes only a means of advancing interests, insisting that ethnic allegiances involve “more than

³¹ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 20.

³² Van Cott, 9.

³³ Van Cott, 5.

³⁴ Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds.). 1975. *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1975), 17.

interests,” thereby becoming more salient than class.³⁵ Yet, Glazer and Moynihan shy away from a strict primordialist viewpoint as they consider that the degree of ethnic allegiance may vary due to “accidental circumstances” that are the product of rapid changes and shifting identities.³⁶

Isaacs, on the other hand, ascribes to a more primordial approach to ethnic identities in which the making of a group identity involves body image, basic ties, language, and common descent. Isaacs defines basic group identity as “the set of endowments and identifications which every individual shares with others from the moment of birth by the chance of the family into which he is born at that given time in that given place.”³⁷

Howard argues that—although race, class and color have often have been conflated in the Caribbean—the Dominican society has two distinct stratification concepts. *Class* is a construction much easier to define—namely, as “a status negotiated between economic attainment and social standing”³⁸—whereas *race* is a more multifaceted phenomenon. Howard suggests that phenotypical differences serve as important social markers. Particularly in the case of the Caribbean, color represents the prevailing

³⁵ Ibid, 19.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Harold R. Isaacs. “Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe” in Glazer and Moynihan (eds.) *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 31.

³⁸ David Howard, *Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic*. (Oxford: Signal Books Limited, 2001), 50.

characteristic of phenotypical differences, becoming conflated with the social world, in which phenotypical differences usually correlate with levels of economic status and social mobility.³⁹ In the Dominican Republic, elites seem to reflect this conflation among race, color, and class, as elites tend to have lighter skin while darker-skinned Dominicans tend to have lower levels of social mobility. Howard underscores the fact that Dominicans largely have favored their Indian and European heritages instead of their African roots. In denying their African heritage, the majority of the Dominican population have rejected the term *mulatto*, preferring the term *indio* instead.⁴⁰

Other authors dealing with the evolution of the concept of race including Wade (1997), argue that racial categories, -understood within “definable physical characteristics” with notions of superiority of some races over the others-, are socially constructed, and respond to historical processes entrenched in the European colonization of foreign territories.⁴¹

In his groundbreaking volume on ethnic groups in conflict, Horowitz explores the meaning of ethnic allegiances, ethnicity, and group identity. He analyzes the basic markers of ethnicity and race, including color, language, and common descent and name attributes.⁴² Accepting the fact that these

³⁹ Howard, 54.

⁴⁰ Howard, 48-49.

⁴¹ Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (London: Pluto Press), 13-14.

⁴² Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 41-44.

markers take place in a fluid context, he argues that ethnicity prevails over class, asserting that the ideological factor present in ethnic parties favors loyalty in a much more mobilizing way than class does.⁴³

Following the same line of argument as Howard, Sagas argues that racism is an inseparable element of Dominican society, reflecting a conflation between race and social status.⁴⁴ Sagas acknowledges the unofficial racism toward the dark-skinned population in the Dominican Republic's immediate neighbor, Haiti (a nation in which blacks comprise up 95 percent of the population). Dominican elites utilized this antihaitianism to their advantage while using racial prejudices to halt the threats of disadvantaged groups in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁵ The ideology of racism and antihaitianism presents Haitians as an undesirable and barbaric population. Interestingly, Sagas shows how antihaitianism was imposed from above, having been built upon national-cultural prejudices.

Meanwhile, Thompson (2007) suggests that Bolivia's political vacuum stemming from a decline of political parties and organized trade union movements signaled the rise of ethnic forces with a distinctive radical ethnic discourse since the rise of Morales. In his analysis, Thompson emphasizes the

⁴³ Horowitz, 15.

⁴⁴ Ernesto Sagas, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 21.

⁴⁵ Sagas, 3-4.

Indian discourse for self-determination rather than the class-oriented discourse that has prevailed since the 1950s. In addition, Cusicanqui (1986)—a scholar of multiculturalism—argues that the neoliberalism of the 1990s eroded the basis of indigenous crafts and goods and this favored the upsurge of ethnic demands in Bolivia. Cusicanqui considers the katarista movement of the Altiplano to be the expression of the failure of the MNR homogenizing project of the 1950s. In this context, the social forces that emerged from the ill-conceived national project—which rejected cultural/social/ethnic heterogeneity in favor of a copycat model of Western societies—challenged the Bolivian political elites.

Perhaps the most famous scholar in distinguishing terms such as nation, state, and ethnonationalism is Walker Connor. In *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*,⁴⁶ Connor delineates the main features for understanding ethnicity as an emotionally and psychologically non-rational element that builds its power on the endogenous perceptions of a determined group of individuals. In his analysis, Connor emphasizes the way in which scholars missed the mark on the leverage of ethnicity, fueled by a misunderstanding of terms such as nation, state, and ethnicity.⁴⁷ Connor

⁴⁶ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁴⁷ Ibid 73-74, 98.

purports that the modernization process emphasized differences while strengthening existing ethnic cleavages.

Hartlyn analyzes the nature of democratic politics and neopatrimonialism in the Dominican Republic.⁴⁸ He deals with the independent leverage of political factors in the success or failure of the Dominican Republic's democratic transition by looking specifically at the factors that have constrained its consolidation. The new framework developed by Hartlyn rejects other culturalist (Wiarda, 1979) and economic explanations for the failure of democratic consolidation in the country. Hartlyn extensively develops the notion of neopatrimonialism as a feature of Dominican politics. He concludes noting the difficulties with which neopatrimonialism and democracy can coexist, often leading to either hybrid or unconsolidated regimes.⁴⁹

Looking at the case of Bolivia, Cardenas (2007) argues that the rise of ethnic identities, ultimately has replaced one type of exclusionary system with another exclusionary system. In analyzing Bolivia's reality, he claims that indigenous and communitarianism do not belong to the Bolivian vision of nation; rather, society and state are manipulated to install a sectarian ideological system. By examining the three main approaches to ethnic identities—*indigenismo*, *indianismo*, and *katarismo*—he analyzes Morales'

⁴⁸ Jonathan Hartlyn, *The Struggle for Democratic Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 15

current administration as one in which the indigenous are overvalued, serving to create a symbolic and cultural form of domination from an ethnocentric and Aymara vision. Other scholars on Bolivia, such as Jorge Lazarte (2007), delve in the different meanings assigned to multiculturalism and plurinationalism. Looking at contemporary Bolivia, Lazarte contends that the current consensus on ethnic diversity that has existed since the 1960s is being challenged by an excess of post-national differentialism in which “what is different” is being privileged. This leads to an important point of confusion as ethnicities become conflated with nations, thereby favoring the rise of ethnic, regional, and territorial cleavages.

In studying ethnicity and race in Latin America, it becomes difficult to clearly define terms that seem to have overlapping features. In unveiling the differences between racial and ethnic identifications Wade notes that in a general level, racial identities are constructed over phenotypes for the purpose of categorization and at the same time they are transmitted “through the blood,” while ethnicity that involves a cultural construction of belonging, is also transmitted from generations being the ancestral origin of great importance.⁵⁰ One of problem with ethnicity is that it has been defined in multiple ways, sometimes being confused with terms such as race, nation, and nationalism, among others.

Although some confusion still exists, scholars agree that conventional treatments of ethnicity underscore a common descent, a common history, and cultural practices believed to represent the central features of a group’s identity. Avoiding engaging in a discussion of whether primordialism, instrumentalism, or constructivism constitute a better framework in which to approach ethnicity, this dissertation aims to provide a clear distinction among these three different viewpoints while examining ethnic allegiances. Although primordialism emphasizes features such as common descent, language, common history and—varying according to scholars—certain physical characteristics from birth, instrumentalism underscores the artificial construct of ethnic identities, in which ethnic allegiances are fluid

⁵⁰ Wade, 21

and influenced by the historical, economic, and social processes in which they exist.⁵¹

The question of race involves trickier and more sensitive issues. Many scholars have suggested that, in contraposition to ethnic allegiances, race is frequently defined in opposition to other groups. Eriksen notes that authors such as Michael Banton claim that “ethnicity is generally more concerned with the identification of ‘us,’ while racism is more oriented to the categorization of ‘them’.”⁵²

Contemporary scholars agree that “there are no essential races.”⁵³ In other words, in the case of Latin America, racial categories are constructed over cultural and physical features of the individuals who belong to/identify with a certain group. In the Latin American and Caribbean context, state policies not only emphasized the superiority of a group’s blood, but use elements such as occupation, language, and dress to serve as markers of determined racial categorizations. Following the lead of Appelbaum, Macpherson, and Roseblatt, this study will posit that national identities in the region often have been constructed in racial terms, a process in which

⁵¹ Kanchan Chandra, “Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics,” *APSA-CP*, 12: 1, 7-8.

⁵² Thomas Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (2nd ed.) (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 137. Citation of Michael Banton 1983, 106.

⁵³ Sarah C. Chambers, “Little Middle Ground: The Instability of a Mestizo Identity in the Andes, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, eds. Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 32.

“diverse actors have ignored, expressed, appropriated, and transformed racial difference.”⁵⁴

Moving away from the eighteenth-century definition of race by Johann F. Blumenbach (who divided humanity into five distinct varieties), the combination of democratization forces and modernization have brought into question the validity of biologically determinist theories to explaining human differences. A new understanding of race speaks to a more fluid, malleable, and flexible perception of racial identities. Although racial categories still rely a great deal on “attributes grounded in biological differences,”⁵⁵ they are not by any means the sole expression of racial categorization in Latin America and the Caribbean. The distinction between the “scientific racism” of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and “cultural racism” also has been a major debate among scholars of race and ethnicity in the region.

Other views of race and ethnicity in Latin America acknowledge a contradictory relationship between homogeneity and diversity. By looking at the process of mestizaje, Wade points out two main characteristics: the importance of mestizaje as a democratic process aimed at racial harmony and mestizaje as a racist discourse in which whitening is the expression of

⁵⁴ Appelbaum, Nancy P., Macpherson, Anne S. and Roseblatt, Karin Alejandra, *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 2.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 12

progress. In addition, Wade notes that the idea of mestizaje in this context implies “sameness and hierarchical difference.”⁵⁶ As mentioned previously, the question of race persists as a means to differentiate one group from another. Although the self-definition of racial categories begins with identification within the group, it reinforces their power by distinguishing one from external groups.⁵⁷

Looking specifically at racial categories in the Andes, Chambers (2003) argues that—although racial ideologies have allowed for some diversity—they underscore the cleavage between indigenous and Spanish cultures, considering the former as backward and uncivilized. Interestingly, contrary to other places, miscegenation allowed for a variety of racial categories that blurred the initial race distinction between indigenous and Spanish cultures, from among which new categories such as *mulattos*, *zambos*, *moriscos*, and *mestizos* emerged (Chambers, 2003).

Theoretical Perspective

Democratic transitions lie at the core of Latin American literature. The wealth of attention that issues of democratization and democratic transitions have garnered since the third wave has surpassed all other topics of attention

⁵⁶ Peter Wade, “Race and Nation in Latin America,” in *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America*, ed. Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Mackpherson and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003): 263-264.

⁵⁷ Ibid

in mainstream political science. Despite many factors underscored as critical for democratic transitions, the racial component often has been neglected and dismissed from analyses on transitions.

Yashar (2005) and Van Cott (2000) focus on the relationship between ethnic identities, race, citizenship and democratization in Latin America. They argue that notions of citizenship, parties, and ethnic identities are intertwined. Yashar underscores that citizenship and ethnic narratives were tied to ancient practices of exclusion, vis-à-vis the state and within ethnic groups. Her focus is more on identity politics and citizenship regimes in the context of democratization and less on the effects of the racial rhetoric during the democratic process.⁵⁸

Huntington challenges modernization theory by noting that not always social modernization leads to political modernization. He argues that this argument is true for developing countries where indicators such as urbanization, literacy, income and industrialization did increased significantly, but where political modernization -understood in terms of political stability, democracy and integration- did not occur.⁵⁹ He further

⁵⁸ Yashar, 282

⁵⁹ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), 35.

notes that two elements proved critical in political modernization in developing countries, the notions of mobilization and participation.⁶⁰

Other authors, such as Smith (1991), Glazer and Moynihan (1975), and Horowitz (2000) explored the notion of race and ethnicity along historical and symbolic-cultural dynamics. Svampa focused on the effect of neoliberal reforms brought by the democratic transitions on ethnic identities. Arguing that the “market” was at the forefront of social relations becoming the hinge upon which inclusive mechanisms were put in place, indigenous communities were the most affected by this mechanism preventing their citizenship discourses to succeed (Svampa 2005). Along this same line of reasoning, Hartlyn (1998), Malloy (1988), and Sagas (2000) noted the clouded relationship between neopatrimonialism, race and democracy in the region.

The proposed research tackles the relative absence of race from the political discourse during democratic transitions. The racial rhetoric clouded by many other cleavages, including class and ideology, played a role in the democratization process and many of its outcomes.

This study builds upon the literature on democratic transitions as well as on race, ethnic identities, and multiculturalism. With the aim of introducing new interpretations of the usually neglected relationship between race and democratization, this study will broaden the understanding of democratic processes in the region.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 36

The dissertation will consist of five chapters and the conclusions. The first chapter of this dissertation lays out the central argument of this study stating that the conspicuous absence of race during the democratic transitions was a deliberate attempt to perpetuate a limited definition of citizenship by political and economic elites. It also examines mainstream scholarly work on democratic transitions and race in the region and identifies the model upon which this relationship will be examined. The second chapter investigates the colonial legacy of the island of Hispaniola, calling attention to the Haitian revolution and the Dominican independence. The section also deals with economic challenges in the island as well as the initial process of state formation. The third part analyzes the legacy of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, the path to democracy, and the race factor in the democratic transition. The fourth section examines the unobserved link of race and migration and the consequences of the absence of the treatment of race during the transition. More specifically, this section deals with racial prejudice and nationality in the Dominican Republic. The fifth section investigates political implications of race including strategic culture in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, construction of political representation, and public perceptions of Haitian nationals.

As an alternative to other explanations of democratic transitions, this dissertation will examine the way in which the racial discourse was absent in the Dominican Republic during the early process of democratization, when a

profound impact on the nature of these processes was palpable and facilitated the resurgence of ethnicity and race from the 1990s onwards. This approach also will suggest that race has been framed differently in the region, as shown in the aforementioned cases—whether as an internal construction of “the other” (i.e., Bolivia) or as an “external” construction (i.e., the Dominican Republic).

Research Questions and Assumptions

The specific research questions that will be proposed in this study are:

(1) How and why was race absent from the political discourse of the democratization process in the Dominican Republic? (2) How did the absence of the ethnic issue during the early stages of the transitions affect the nature and depth of the democratization process? The second question entails a much broader understanding of the relationship between race and democratization and aims to unveil unobserved implications of transitions in the region.

Based on these questions, the following assumptions will be postulated:

Assumption 1: Race was considered a dividing factor among groups united to fight a common “authoritarian” enemy during the early democratic transitions.

Assumption 2: Ethnic and racial factors were clouded by ideologies and class cleavages that perceived the racial question as a factor that would disappear as countries became more democratic.

Assumption 3: Democratization as spearheaded by the middle class political elite perceived race as secondary to the construction of a representative democracy where representation was political –i.e. through parties and not through race, class, or ethnicity.

Assumption 4: The construction of the notion of nation and citizenship had a profound impact on the exclusion of race as a dimension of a new democratic definition of citizenship.

Methodology

Design and instrumentation

This dissertation combines both qualitative and quantitative techniques in examining the case study of the Dominican Republic. Qualitative data for this dissertation will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with government officials, intellectuals, analysts and scholars as well as through focus groups, scholarly journals, books, and newspaper articles. Survey data also will be available for in-depth analysis. Original sources, including the Iberobarometro, Latinobarometro, and the Barometer of the Americas will be available for data analysis. Fieldwork will be conducted in different sites of the Dominican Republic.

In regard to research design, this dissertation will follow Pzeworski and Teune's most-different research design, in which similar outcomes are observed in the dependent variable (democratization) but different values are encountered on a varied range of independent variables, therefore, considering only those independent variables with similar values as possible explanatory factors (Pzeworski and Teune, 1970; Smith, 1995).

The case of the Dominican Republic has been chosen due to the conspicuous absence of the treatment of race during its incipient democratic transition. This absence is particularly notorious in a country where race has been a critical element in its historical development. In the case of the Dominican Republic, the construction of race is intrinsically related to the conformation of "dominicanness" vis-à-vis the influence/heritage of African descent.

The case of the Dominican Republic shows a longstanding intertwined relationship of race and class, both determinants of social and economic structure. These conditions—highly visible before the democratic transitions—have occupied a secondary place since the beginning of the democratization process in the region. The Dominican Republic initiated its transition in 1978 with the victory of the PRD over the twelve-year incumbent Joaquin Balaguer. This transition to democracy has been underscored as a "missed opportunity" for democracy (Hartlyn 1988).

The comparison of the Dominican and Bolivian cases is expected to be part of a broader research on race and democratization and will not be pursued in this dissertation. This future study is aimed at comparing the process of democratization through the lens of race and ethnicity, or put differently, through the absence of this issue in two countries certainly featured by the conflation of race, ethnicity, nation and citizenship. Three main factors have been determinant in relying on the Dominican case and temporarily putting on hold the Bolivian case. First, the challenges in obtaining necessary funding to carry out field research in both countries made it practically impossible to consider both cases for this dissertation. Second, the richness and deepness of the Dominican case merited a single case study, while postponing the comparative case with Bolivia for a second phase of research. Finally, there was the drive to move beyond the South American experience on democratization -highly featured by preexisting hierarchical military regimes- to the transitions in the Caribbean to test whether similar explanatory variables could be applied to the mentioned sub-regions.

Prior to the democratic transitions, both countries experienced what has been called neo-patrimonialism (Gamarra and Malloy 1988), which led to the reconfiguration of the state, networks of patronage with important leverage on subsequent democratic transitions, and problems encountered in the post-transition period.

Data analysis

Secondary data analysis for this dissertation will be conducted using SPSS Windows 17.0 statistical software. This analysis also will rely on a regular set of trackings and surveys on the Dominican Republic, as well as sophisticated focus groups and surveys that will allow testing of this original approach in a valid and reliable manner.

The study aims to shed light on the impact of racial politics on democratic transitions as a long-standing overlooked element in the process of democratization. To achieve this goal, the study will offer an original approach to understanding third-wave democratic transitions from a different angle, developing a multidimensional analysis built upon the Dominican experience. This approach will unfold in the fifth section of the dissertation, in which the assumptions put forth in the theoretical background will be examined.

Plan of the Study

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that the main argument of this dissertation was that the absence of the treatment of race during the democratic transitions was a deliberate attempt to perpetuate a limited definition of citizenship by political and economic elites.

The research questions proposed in the study are:

(1) How and why was race absent from the political discourse of the democratization process in the Dominican Republic?

(2) How did the absence of the racial and ethnic issue during the early stages of the transitions affect the nature and depth of the democratization process in the country?

In addition to that, a plan of the dissertation is explained below:

The introductory chapter will provide an extensive review of the literature on race and democratization. This conceptual review is aimed at pointing out how race and ethnic allegiances have been either dismissed or overlooked from the literature on transitions. The chapter examines the literature on transitions as well as its main explanatory variables at the regional level before addressing the Dominican case. By giving special attention to the literature on race, ethnic identities, and democratic transitions, this dissertation aims to explain why and how racial identities did not represent a factor of the political agenda and discourse during the democratization process. Indeed, this study is geared toward examining how the question of race shaped many of the outcomes of the mentioned transitions. The chapter addresses multiculturalism approaches, culturalist explanations, and neo-patrimonial approaches to the case of the Dominican Republic.

The second chapter provides an analysis of the history of the island of Hispaniola. It assesses the consequences of the Haitian revolution as well as the Dominican independence. By looking at the politics of race after independence, this chapter will take a close look to the economic challenges faced by the Dominican Republic in the incipient state formation process.

Chapter three is aimed at unveiling the legacies of the long-time dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. During this regime, the country embarked on the construction of the modern state in terms of political, economic, and social progress. This section also will look to the intellectual construction of antihaitian prejudice in the Dominican Republic and the legacy in contemporary politics. The chapter utilizes a multidimensional approach to analyze the politics of race in the aftermath of the downfall of the Trujillo regime, the convoluted quest for democracy, and the struggle of the PRD to achieve the Dominican presidency. Special attention will be given to the Dominican Republic's democratic transition of 1978. Analyzing the literature on racial politics in the Dominican Republic, this dissertation will provide evidence that race—usually clouded by the notion of class—has prevailed in the reinforcement of the concept of nation, thereby influencing the outcomes of the democratic process. By assessing the main approaches in ethnic identities—namely primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism—this dissertation focuses on the election of 1996, in which racial politics reached the highest point in Dominican history.

The fourth chapter assesses the linkage between race and migration. It delves into the historic development of migration in the island of Hispaniola, and how race, migration and nationality are conflated in the Dominican reality. More specifically, the chapter aims at identifying the consequences of the absence of the treatment of race during the initial democratic transition. In so doing, uncontrolled migration has been one of the most important consequences of the political agenda of the late 1970s. Here, the chapter analyzes the constitutional debate on *jus solis* and *jus sanguinis* as markers of nationality.

Chapter five examines the political implications of race, assessing how the Dominican Republic case study addresses the assumption and eventually respond to the proposed research questions. The underlined logic of the use of case studies is to provide a good description, which, is necessary especially in sciences where explanatory power is weak. Therefore, it is assumed that a good description is necessarily related to a good explanation.⁶¹ Special attention will be given to data from in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys and public opinion research done in the country. This section outlines the assumptions and subsequently test them vis-à-vis the sources of data available. Public perception surveys such as Iberobarometro and Latinobarometro will be complemented by trackings for the period under examination. This data analysis also will be enriched by semi-structured

⁶¹ Gary King, Robert A. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 44.

interviews conducted as field research in the Dominican Republic, with government officials, scholars, and analysts. The analysis will look at methodological problems in examining democratic transitions in the region and conclude with the implications of the overlooked leverage of race during the transitions by mainstream literature as well as its influence on the difficulties of the post-transition period in the Dominican Republic.

The concluding chapter summarizes the main findings of the dissertation and proposes a multidimensional approach to understand the absence of race during the democratic transitions as well as how this absence affected the nature of the democratization process. The study will conclude with suggestions for future work on democratization.

Chapter 2

The Island of Hispaniola

“[O]ne cannot possibly view or begin to understand Dominican history and culture without fully realizing or recognizing the intricately interwoven textures and threads flowing between the two neighboring cultures, Dominican and Haitian. Their evolving societies on the jointly shared island of Hispaniola have been quite intimately interconnected since the earliest periods in the island’s history...” (Alan Cambeira, Quisqueya la Bella: The Dominican Republic in Historical and Cultural Perspective (New York: Sharpe, 1997), 148

The Dominican Republic and Haiti share a troubled and complex history that has influenced each other’s formation of identity, nation, and state. The Dominican Republic has been the only country in the Latin American and Caribbean region that has achieved its independence not from a foreign colonial power, but rather from Haiti. This is a point that needs to be highlighted if the task is to examine Dominican-Haitian relations since colonial times up to the current state of affairs in the twenty-first century. This challenging endeavor needs to take into consideration political, historical, economic, and cultural factors that have driven the relations of both countries.

Although much has been written about Haiti and the Dominican Republic as cockfights that aim at a zero-sum game,⁶² the truth of the matter is that the relations of both countries have encountered periods of

⁶² Samuel Martinez, “Not a Cockfight, Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations,” *Latin American Perspectives*, 30, No. 3 (May 2003):16.

compromise, understanding, and cooperation that usually are downplayed or neglected in the literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Dominican-Haitian relations through certain elements and components that have prevailed historically between both nations.

First, the chapter will examine the Spanish and French settlements in the island of Hispaniola and the international treaties that marked the initial separation of both colonies. Second, the chapter will examine the consequences of the Haitian Revolution and further occupation of the Dominican Republic. A section of this chapter will assess the nature of the Dominican independence. Third, the chapter will address the economic differences between both sides of Hispaniola which led to a vibrant and agro exporter economy in the west side of the island (Haiti) and a limited and poor economy in the east (Dominican Republic). Finally, the chapter will analyze the features and challenges of state formation and nation building in the Dominican Republic.

The Colonial Legacy

The history of Haiti and the Dominican Republic is interconnected and has transited a path of complex relations and instances of cooperation.

Ernesto Sagas notes that “Haiti and the Dominican Republic are two nations

trapped by historical circumstances in a small Caribbean island.”⁶³ Silie highlights that 1492 marked a period of territorial appropriation by force, with the use of physical, moral and cultural resources that determined the destiny of native populations.⁶⁴ Indeed, he notes that what began as a conquest process was transformed quickly into colonization.

The island known today as Hispaniola was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Its original inhabitants were the Arawak Indians who called the island “Quizqueya.” As in many other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, most of the indigenous populations were decimated by French and Spanish colonists in their efforts to control the island. Fennema and Loewenthal argue that following the arrival of Colon to the island of Hispaniola, the indigenous population was around 400,000 people. Twenty-seven years later, in 1519, indigenous people numbered fewer than 3,000.⁶⁵ Noticeably, Haiti at the beginning was a flourishing colony protected by the French, who developed a well-known slave trade to produce sugar. This situation extended throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1777, the French colony of Saint-Domingue achieved official recognition by

⁶³ Ernesto Sagas, “An Apparent Contradiction? Popular Perceptions of Haiti and the Foreign Policy of the Dominican Republic,” 1994, <http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misc/topic/dominican/conception.htm>

⁶⁴ Rubén Silie, “1492: Descubrimiento. Encuentro. Invasión. Como calificar este hecho?,” *Ciencia y Sociedad*, XVII, No. 3, (Julio-Septiembre 1992): 246.

⁶⁵ Meindert Fennema and Troetje Loewenthal. *La Construcción de Raza y Nación en la Republica Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria-UASD, 1987), 14. See also Moya Pons, 1984, 29.

the Treaty of Aranjuez, which established the boundary between France and Spain in their colonies. Yet, as Krohn-Hansen notes, this recognition would last only until 1795.⁶⁶ In that year, Spain decided to cede the eastern colony of Santo Domingo to France. Páez Piantini highlights the Peace of Westfalia agreement in 1648 as the starting point of the diplomatic negotiations that later would affect the future of the Dominican Republic.⁶⁷ At the time, France was a key player at the international arena and was acquiring new territories and colonies. Later, the Treaty of Nimega brought to an end the war between Spain and France. However, the peace would not last long and both countries were engaged in a new war eleven years later. In 1689, France decided to invade the eastern part of the island of Hispaniola, controlled by Spain.⁶⁸ The Treaty of Aranjuez, signed in 1777, set the line of demarcation between the French and Spanish-controlled parts of Hispaniola. The demarcation consisted in a total of 221 pyramids from the beginning of the Dajabon River in the Atlantic Ocean and the mouth of the Pedernales River.⁶⁹

In assessing the Dominican and Haitian economies during the seventeenth century, Matibag highlights the fact that while the western part

⁶⁶ Christian Krohn-Hansen. *Political Authoritarianism in the Dominican Republic* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 22.

⁶⁷ William Páez Piantini, *Relaciones Dominico-Haitianas: 300 Años de Historia* (2nd. ed.) (Santo Domingo: Mediabyte, 2007), 29.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 32

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 36

of Hispaniola controlled by the French was undergoing a labor-intensive industry of sugar cultivation, the eastern part of the island experienced a much less advanced mode of economic production based on “cattle-raising and herding.”⁷⁰ Ernesto Sagas notes, however, that temporary periods of peace in Europe opened the way to the development “of trade between the two colonies,” especially of heads of cattle and European products, commerce that often avoided authorities’ control.⁷¹ The year 1795 signals a period in which the French were able to take power over the eastern part for a few years. On the other hand, the eastern part of the island dominated by the Spaniards was being left behind and faced challenging economic times.⁷² This period was featured by economic activity of survival concentrated in cattle farming and oriented toward the community.

The abandonment of the eastern part of the country, the absence of communication networks, and the lack of population marked an extremely restrictive economy directed toward the French colony of Saint-Domingue.⁷³

⁷⁰ Eugenio Matibag, *Haitian-Dominican Counterpoint* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 28.

⁷¹ Sagas, *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic*, 25.

⁷² Cross-Beras notes as a critical element of Dominican history, the inability of the Spaniards in fostering population settlements from the beginning of the colony until the end of the nineteenth century. Several issues determined these migratory movements outside the colony, including the discovery of the Aztec and Inca empires in Mexico and Peru, the longstanding attacks of European countries on this side of the island and the Haitian invasions. See Julio A. Cross-Beras, *Sociedad y Desarrollo en Republica Dominicana: 1844-1899* (Santo Domingo: Cenapec, 1984), 43-44.

⁷³ Cross- Beras, 44.

Here, it is important to keep in mind that the intra-island commerce between the French and the Spanish colonies was far from being official. In other words, Spain had not recognized the French colony, thus restricting commercial activities as well as attempting to defend its territory from illegal occupation. In talking about the opposing interests of both sides of the island, Matibag cites Moya Pons' perception that "it was a battle between the plantation and the ranch, between French colonial capitalism and the traditional Spanish system of land exploitation."⁷⁴ Cross-Beras points out that the Spanish colony was economically devastated after the Haitian war of independence, after which the prosperous French economy was destroyed. This marked the destruction of the main economic market for the Spanish colony as well as an imminent political menace for its survival.⁷⁵ Furthermore, in looking at the evolution of slavery in both colonies and the following revolution that ensued in the French-controlled part of the island, Matibag underscores the structural differences between slavery in the French and Spanish colonies. While the former slaves lacked of any kind of privileges that would allow them to buy their freedom, the eastern part of Hispaniola enjoyed more relaxed servitude conditions that would include the "possibility of buying their freedom."⁷⁶ Regarding the origin of slaves, it is important to

⁷⁴ Matibag, 26.

⁷⁵ Cross-Beras, 46.

⁷⁶ Matibag, 32.

address the differences between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. While most slaves in the western part of the island were brought from Africa to work in the intense-labor plantations, most slaves in the eastern part were born in the island.⁷⁷

The Haitian Revolution

The year 1804 marked the date of the creation of the first “black Republic” as well as the first declaration of independence from a foreign colonial power in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The events began in 1791, with the slave revolts, and the repression carried out by the white and “mulatto” population.⁷⁸ Fennema and Loewenthal identify three main factors in the success of the Haitian revolution: the struggle between the tenant of slaves white and mulatto, the support given by the colony of Santo Domingo to the rebel slaves (after the 1793 declaration of war by the French revolutionary government against Spain and Great Britain), and the leadership of Toussaint Louverture (who kept discipline among former slaves, deserters, and the war of “guerrillas”).⁷⁹ Following the slave revolt, the governor Sonthonax was forced to abolish slavery in the colony of Saint-Domingue in 1793. This action was followed for a while in all French colonies

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Fennema and Loewenthal, 19.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 20.

and Louverture became commander in chief of the French army in Saint-Domingue. Yet, this situation did not last long, and after the fall of Robespierre in 1794, slavery was reinstated in the colonies. Fennema and Loewenthal note, however, that Bonaparte was unable to reintroduce slavery in Saint-Domingue.⁸⁰ The situation had a quick turn, when in 1795 with the Treaty of Basilea, the Spanish part of the island of Hispaniola was ceded to France. The French government denied Louverture's request to occupy the eastern part of the country until 1800. Following the occupation by Louverture, who declared the island "one and indivisible," slavery was abolished in eastern Hispaniola. The attempts of Louverture to introduce agrarian reforms and a plantation economy were halted by the Napoleonic army that entered the island in 1802 and captured Louverture.⁸¹ Then, a critical actor who laid the foundations of what is now Haiti, Jean Francois Dessalines, repelled the French army and proclaimed the independence of Haiti and creation of the first black republic in the continent in 1804.

Fennema and Loewenthal cite two important articles of the 1805 Constitution that refer to the inability of foreign persons of white origin to obtain any kind of property as well as the establishment of Haitians under the general denomination of "black people."⁸² Immediately after this

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid, 21

⁸² Ibid. See also Price-Mars (1953:1, 52).

situation, came the invasions of Dessalines that would affect so negatively the perception of the Dominican people. In the same line of action of what Louverture attempted to achieve in Hispaniola -the unification and indivisibility of the island- Dessalines besieged Santo Domingo briefly but had to retreat for fear of new French invasions. While withdrawing his army, however, Dessalines issued an order to “burn cities, kill the men and take women and children as war prisoners to Haiti.”⁸³ Price-Mars underscores that Dessalines felt the same kind of animosity for the people in the east as the one he felt for the French invaders.⁸⁴

The Haitian revolution, as it was underscored elsewhere, notably was grounded in racial and cultural traits that divided the island from colonial times and that would endure in all the historical, social, and economic development of Hispaniola. Therefore, this process would generate, on one side of the island, the first black republic in the continent that would lay out racial grounds on its constitution of the nation-state, and on the other side of the island, a strong sense of antihaitianism and anti-abolitionist feelings grounded in the aspiration to regain the Hispanic and Christian legacy.

Haiti then became the first independent “black” republic in Latin America and the Caribbean. This act of independence by the western part of the island surely would generate concern among its neighbors. The nature

⁸³ Ibid, 21, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

⁸⁴ Ibid, Cit. of Price Mars (1953: 1, 97).

and features of the independence struggle and the violence it engendered spread fears that these kinds of behavior would affect the entire island of Hispaniola. After undergoing a long period of internal fractions and political struggle for political control, a light-skinned elite composed of mestizo population emerged as the key holders of political and economic power in the island.

The year 1822 is critical both for the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Since then, much of the current antihaitianism and perceptions of mutual distrust in the Dominican Republic and Haiti have sprung from the Haitian occupation of the neighboring country by Jean Pierre Boyer in 1822. This occupation of the eastern part of the island was seen by the population in the Dominican Republic as the realization of the Haitian principle of “one island, united and indivisible.”

Previous to the declaration of independence of the Dominican Republic in 1844, Dominicans had what has been called an “ephemeral independence,” which was a response and reaction by Dominicans to the lack of attention and abandonment by the Spaniards of the eastern part of the island. Yet, this attempt would not last as the Dominican Republic would be soon invaded and occupied by Haiti the following year.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura, OEI, “Informe Republica Dominicana,” <http://www.oei.es/cultura2/rdominicana/informe1.htm>

The Dominican Independence

It has been widely argued that the struggle for independence was mainly oriented to dismantle Louverture's plan to unite the island rather than against the Spanish colonial regime.⁸⁶ It is worth noting that Louverture's political project followed the well-recalled invasions of Dessalines and the occupation of Boyer in 1822.⁸⁷ This chain of events deepened the anti-Haitian narrative and nationalism. Mejia-Ricart argues that the Dominican national independence was carried out by a new generation that represented an incipient bourgeoisie to be consolidated later mainly as a product of an alliance of the "hateros" and the "madereros." According to Mejia-Ricart several factors weighted the balance in favor of a Dominican victory. Although patriotism and courage of the Dominican people proved determinant, the territory, access to resources, and lack of logistical support also were important factors in Haiti losing the Dominican territory.⁸⁸

Matibag underscores that "one nation's drive to gain independence and self-determination clashed with the other nation's resolve to secure the territorial integrity of the island."⁸⁹ He emphasizes that the process of

⁸⁶ Fennema and Loewenthal, 23.

⁸⁷ Interesting to note, is that Jean Pierre Boyer abolished for the second time (Toussaint Louverture did it in the first place) slavery in Santo Domingo, action that led to stark opposition in many sectors of society.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Matibag, 112.

Dominican independence was not an easy task, and that it took more than fifty years to consolidate it, from Toussaint Louverture's revolution of 1801 to Faustin Soulouque's last invasion of 1856.⁹⁰ Although none of them succeeded, Matibag highlights the increasing popularity of General Santana, who would become one of the fundamental Dominican caudillos that would hold power for several years in the newly established country. From that point onward, as many scholars have noted,⁹¹ the perception generally has been oriented to the fear that the west (Haiti) attempts to take over the east (Dominican Republic). These conception still fuel sentiments of antihaitianism fully ingrained in the Dominican Republic and serve the interests of elites in nurturing these narratives.

The Politics of Race and Prejudice after Independence

After 22 years of Haitian occupation, on February 27, 1844, Dominican groups declared the independence of the Dominican Republic. Yet, this independent movement meant for Haiti a weakness in its national security as the eastern part of the country was considered instrumental for its survival. Therefore, Haiti did not give up on the eastern part of the island for several years. Actually, the twelve years that followed the declaration of

⁹⁰ Ibid. Here, Matibag recalls the four Haitian invasions that featured the period from 1844 to 1856: the invasion of 1844, the invasion of 1845-9, the invasion of 1849-55 and the one of 1855-56. See Matibag, 112.

⁹¹ Fennema and Loewenthal, 23.

independence were marked by violence and unrest in which Haitian leaders tried to reoccupy the eastern part of Hispaniola. Sentiments of nationalism grew stronger as annexation attempts by Haitian leaders entrenched already existing anti-Haitian sentiments. These attempts of annexation led to many consequences, of which seeking the protection of foreign powers proved one of the most critical.

The rationale for this attitude was anchored on the perception that the Dominican Republic had a smaller population than its neighbor –thus being more vulnerable to intrusion attempts by Haiti- and the belief that the country still was unable to develop as an independent nation. After the declaration of independence, the Dominican Republic began the process of becoming a state, only to be consolidated with the thirty one years of Trujillo’s dictatorship. The immediate period after independence was featured by the dominance of two “caudillos,” Pedro Santana and Buenaventura Baez. Both cattle ranchers, they divided their leadership in the eastern part of the island for almost 40 years.⁹² Also during this period, the pressures from Haiti, still a predominant political and military force in the island throughout the century, became more and more intense.

The idea of achieving protection from a European state was considered as a means to stop Haitian ambitions in the eastern part of the country. Under the leadership of Santana, the Dominican Republic was re-annexed to

⁹² Krohn-Hansen, 23

Spain from 1861 to 1865.⁹³ Spanish dominance notably was contested in 1863, and after two years, the eastern part of Hispaniola re-achieved its independence. Following this period, three events featured the development of the Dominican Republic up to the beginning of the Trujillo rule in 1930: the rule of General Ulises Heureaux from 1882 to 1899, the incipient development of a modern sugar industry that set the foundations for the economic base of the country,⁹⁴ and the occupation by the United States from 1916 to 1924. Krohn-Hansen underscores that the first three decades of the twentieth century also featured internal political struggles between followers of two factions: the Jimenistas (followers of Juan Isidro Jimenez) and Horacistas (followers of Horacio Vazquez).⁹⁵

Haitian-Dominican relations have been characterized by perceptions of mutual distrust and intermittent periods of cooperation. The Trujillo era was signaled by cordial relations with Haitian governments. Even the 1937 massacre of the Haitian population in the Dominican Republic was settled by an agreement to pay an indemnity of \$750,000 to the Republic of Haiti. Later on, diplomatic relations between both countries featured agreements designed to regulate the importation of Haitians to work in the Dominican

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Krohn-Hansen, 24

⁹⁵ Ibid

sugar industry. These contracts continued to be in place until 1986.⁹⁶ The agreements coincided with a period in which the sugar industry was highly lucrative, and the relations with Haiti became a high priority for Trujillo. He also influenced Haitian politics as a means to deter Dominican exiles to utilize the neighboring country as a base of operation for rebellious activity. It is worth bearing in mind that Trujillo also had the ability to alter the balance of power in the island: while Haiti lost its economic brilliance characteristic of the nineteenth century the Dominican Republic was experiencing a flourishing development with a promising future.⁹⁷

According to Silie, relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic have been marked by conflict and confrontation from colonial times when the island of Hispaniola was at the forefront of metropolitan interests in the New World.⁹⁸ Silie, as well as many other authors, underscores the relevance of the Haitian occupation in 1822, determining much of the future developments between the two neighbors sharing the island of Hispaniola.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Year in which Jean-Claude Duvalier left Haiti.

⁹⁷ Ernesto Sagas attributes this reversal to two main causes: the rise of the Dominican population and Trujillo's development of the Dominican army. See "An Apparent Contradiction? Popular Perceptions of Haiti and the Foreign Policy of the Dominican Republic," 1994, <http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/misc/topic/dominican/conception.htm>

⁹⁸ Ruben Silie, "Aspectos y Variables de las Relaciones entre Republica Dominicana y Haiti," in *Revista Futuros*, III (9), 2005, 1.

⁹⁹ Ibid

The line of demarcation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic was established in the year 1929, eroding the chances of military struggle among both countries.

The Trujillo dictatorship (1930-1961) brought to the scene a new way of doing politics and managing national interests. On the one hand, and while the Duvalier dictatorship also was in place, Trujillo maintained cordial relations with Haiti in order to keep in place the contracts that allowed for a cheap workforce for the country's sugar plantations. This policy was maintained as a matter of national interest to pursue economic development in the Dominican Republic. On the other hand, Trujillo and his closest circle developed a profound anti-Haitian construct that would engrain firmly in Dominican society. This anti-Haitian ideology was composed of prejudice, fear, and distortion that aimed to warn about the way in which the Haitian population was convinced about taking over the eastern part of the island, i.e., the Dominican Republic.¹⁰⁰

The antihaitianism constructed during the Trujillo dictatorship has had such a long-lasting effect that it has endured until current times in the Dominican Republic, despite several actions carried out by Dominican leaders and governments oriented to ease the relations with Haiti. Trujillo was the mastermind of the construction of the ideology; however he was not alone. And many of his collaborators, such as Manuel Peña Battle, proved critical in

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

developing the pillars for this ideology. In a study by the Jesuit Service of Refugees and Migrants (SJRM) about opinions of racism in the Dominican Republic, Raymundo Gonzalez notes the role of the intellectuals in serving the Trujillista ideology. While stressing the common despise and neglect of everything black and Haitian, he stresses the differences between Balaguer and Peña Battle, as the intellectual masterminds of the Trujillo dictatorship. While Balaguer argued for a more biological view of ethnicity, where racial discrimination was ethnically/racially grounded, Peña Battle favored a cultural view, where discrimination was built upon ethnic and cultural features.¹⁰¹

If we take a closer look at the Trujillo dictatorship, it is clear that the anti-Haitian discourse was immerse in inspiring a sense of nationalism, where Trujillo, as the “father” of the country, appealed for unity and devotion to the country as well as to a sense of belongingness that would feature the core of the Dominican “nation.”

Pelegrin Castillo argues that Dominican independence has profoundly defined the relationship between both countries and halted Haitian ambitions in the Dominican Republic.¹⁰² Important to note for this author

¹⁰¹ Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 2005), 110. Interview with Raymundo Gonzales.

¹⁰² Newlink Research, “*Haiti-Dominican Republic Project*” (used by permission), Interview with Pelegrin Castillo (March 2009).

have been the American interventions in the island that encouraged the vision that the political center of Hispaniola, where the economic power and development emerged, was the Dominican Republic. According to Castillo, Haiti carries a vision of resentment and distrust as a product of the radical twist of the country since the Dominican independence in 1844. He also asserts that during the first American occupation, Haiti embraced a strong nationalism revolving around three fundamental values in the country: race-color, religion, and creole.¹⁰³ According to Castillo, this nationalism became fully engrained in the intellectual black movements of the 1920s and 1930s.

Andujar asserts that the treatment of race and ethnicity was absent during the independence period in 1844. Andujar posits the fact that although the American nations were founded with the blood and life of the black and freemen at the moment of defining national values, the population from black descent was not taken into consideration and most of the influence came from the Spanish tradition.¹⁰⁴

Looking at the treatment of race and ethnicity in the Dominican Republic, Wooding asserts that the situation has also been complicated because of the isolation of the country until the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship in 1961 and the perception of the so-called “Haitian threat” as

¹⁰³ Newlink Research, “*Haiti-Dominican Republic Project*” (used by permission), Interview with Pelegrin Castillo (March 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Carlos Andujar, held in December 2008 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

the first black republic since 1804.¹⁰⁵ While Martinez agrees with the existence of anti-Haitian sentiments in the Dominican society as a vital element of Dominican nationalism, he questions the lack of attention that has been given to the reasons and period in which anti-Haitian feelings became important.¹⁰⁶

Economic Challenges in the Island of Hispaniola

In looking at the economic challenges on the island of Hispaniola, Manigat argues that the Haitian economy always has relied on crops such as sugar and coffee. Indeed, he notes that Haiti has experienced since 1804 a population growth that has affected the country's ability to ensure enough production and income for its people. He also underscores the fact that the Haitian economy still remains in the power of a few families who control the import-export business, while the great majority is in poverty conditions.¹⁰⁷

The introduction of slavery in the island of Hispaniola in colonial times must not be overlooked and still remains a fundamental factor that helps explain the political economy of the colonies of Saint-Domingue (Haiti) and

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Bridget Wooding in September 2009, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Martínez, "Not a Cockfight, Rethinking Haitian-Dominican Relations," *Latin American Perspectives*, 30, No. 3, (May 2003): 82.

¹⁰⁷ Voice of America News, Interview with Leslie Manigat and Eduardo Gamarra, "Haiti and Dominican Republic Share the Island of Hispaniola but Little Else," *Voice of America News*, July 2, 2003, <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-a-2003-07-02-44-1.html>

Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic). When Christopher Columbus discovered Hispaniola in 1492, the island was inhabited by native and indigenous peoples. One century later, most of this population was decimated by the foreign countries that settled in the island. The introduction of slavery was a necessary means to obtain cheap labor to develop the sugar industry, which has endured as the most important industry throughout the centuries.¹⁰⁸ During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the cheapest labor was black labor. As Fennema and Loewenthal underscore, at the time, it was considered that the black African population were four times stronger than the native Indians and had no conditions to adopt the Christian faith.¹⁰⁹ Not only did black labor constitute the cheapest labor available, but in comparison to Indians and white people, black people were thought of as individuals suited for exploitation. As many authors have argued, the contributions of the black population in the sugar plantations both in Haiti and the Dominican Republic have been widely neglected. Williams argue that no economic progress could have been achieved without the black population labor in the sugar fields, positioning the territories from “pirates’ nests” to valuable colonies.¹¹⁰ Fennema and Loewenthal argue that slavery did not have much relevance in the colony in Santo Domingo, as a great part of the

¹⁰⁸ Eric Williams, *The Negro in the Caribbean*, (Brooklyn: A & B Books, 1994), 11.

¹⁰⁹ Fennema and Loewenthal, 14.

¹¹⁰ Williams, 12-13.

Spanish colonizers migrated to Mexico after the discovery of gold. This migration was accompanied by the decline of the sugar industry in the sixteenth century. In addition, pandemics affected the slaves' population during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.¹¹¹ Puig underscores that the main pillars of the sugar industry in the Dominican Republic have been people from Haitian descent.¹¹² It is worth noting that in the eighteenth century, Haiti accounted for half a million black slaves constituting almost 85 percent of the population of Saint-Domingue.¹¹³

Examining the political economy of both countries, most of the literature agrees that until the twentieth century, Haiti was a much richer and advanced economy in comparison to the Dominican Republic. Puig highlights the lack of population in the Dominican territory by the mid-nineteenth century, with about 100,000 people distributed unevenly around the country. In comparison, by the same date, Puig estimates that Haiti had some 500,000 people. However, and from the last quarter of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the Trujillo rule, the Dominican Republic was favored by expanding demands of sugar production. This was accompanied by an increase in global trade and an expanded demand for tropical

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Newlink Research, "*Haiti-Dominican Republic Project*" (used by permission), Interview with Max Puig (March 2009).

¹¹³ Krohn-Hansen, 22.

commodities. One of the major challenges for the country was to put in place the conditions for cheap labor that would help develop the sugar industry. The search for labor led to the importation of foreign workers from the Lesser Antilles called “Cocolos.”¹¹⁴ As has been widely acknowledged by the literature, the conditions under which these workers entered the island of Hispaniola were completely different from the labor conditions that would affect the Haitian population. The “Cocolos” were workers who came to the Dominican Republic with contracts to work for specific periods of time, and most returned to their home countries once the harvest was finished. Yet, it is worth noting that the use of “Cocolos” for the sugar industry declined during the U.S. occupation, to be replaced later by Haitian workers with the aim to reduce costs and increase profitability of the sugar industry.¹¹⁵

Puig talks about the differences throughout the years in the relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. According to Puig, the anti-Haitian prejudice can be devised through symbolic cases, and it is engrained in the Dominican collective conscience. This anti-Haitian prejudice can be summarized in all the damage inflicted to the country throughout centuries including the invasions by Dessalines and the prolonged occupation of Jean Pierre Boyer. Puig notes that the same kinds of prejudice take place on the other side of Hispaniola, where the 1937 massacre is still remembered

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Ibid

and vindicated as one of the main reasons Haiti should not abandon feelings of distrust and fear toward the Dominican Republic. He also notes that, surprisingly, after the massacre, new agreements were established between Trujillo (Dominican Republic) and Duvalier (Haiti) in order to keep alive the profitability of the sugar business. Therefore, the agreements of the sugar industry with the incorporation of “braceros” from Haiti to work in the “bateyes” in the Dominican Republic not only signified a positive relationship between two governments, but also implied considerable benefits for the companies involved in the business, as well as the army that regulated migratory movements in the Dominican Republic. In other terms, the agreements between both countries were a stabilizing factor that brought the island of Hispaniola to a period of good relations between both neighbors.

Regarding the current Dominican economy, Vega notes a shift to a service economy, with a decrease of commodities, agriculture, and cattle industry. The most important shift has been to the tourism industry as one of the most important factors of dynamism of the Dominican economy.¹¹⁶ In the same line of argument, Lozano underscores that the rise of the tourism sector

¹¹⁶ Bernardo Vega, “Republica Dominicana, Economía y Política al termino del siglo XX.” *Ciencia y Sociedad*, XVIII, No. 3 (Julio-Septiembre, 1993): 355-356.

was accompanied by a crisis in the sugar industry in the Dominican Republic, especially during the last quarter of the twentieth century.¹¹⁷

State Formation in the Dominican Republic

It is worth noting that the literature examining the political, economic, and social developments in the island of Hispaniola has not reached a consensus regarding the period and features of state formation in the Dominican Republic. What exists in the literature are contending assessments focusing on modes of accumulation, the emphasis on the market models vis-à-vis common interests based on collective consciousness and common descent.¹¹⁸ Betances argues that the “outline of a capitalist state first emerged in the Dominican Republic with the Ulises Heureaux dictatorship.”¹¹⁹ According to this author, it is with Heureaux that the state begins to “express the interests of an emerging bourgeoisie dependent on sugar planters and merchants.”¹²⁰ However, the formation of the nation was halted with the dependent mode of integration of the Dominican economy to the global market and the disintegration of the Heureaux’s dictatorship.

¹¹⁷ Wilfredo Lozano (in collaboration with Blanca Jimenez), “Las Relaciones Dominico-Haitianas: Entre la Cooperación y el Conflicto,” (Fundación Friedrich Ebert: Santo Domingo, 1995), 3.

¹¹⁸ Betances, 4.

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Ibid

Further control of U.S. sugar banks and corporations during the U.S. occupation made consolidation more difficult, and the process would resume its momentum with the beginning of the Trujillo dictatorship.

As Krohn-Hansen notes, the building and consolidation of the Dominican state during the twentieth century demanded “long-scale processes” that influenced both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and were highly rooted in the colonial history of the island of Hispaniola.¹²¹ There were three fundamental features of the Dominican Republic in colonial times. First, although it was highly admired after the first decades of colonization, the colony of Santo Domingo soon was abandoned to its own luck due to the discovery of more rich and effective resources in Mexico and Peru. Second, because of the lack of resources, the colony was unable to generate appropriate income to maintain its economy and had very little production for export. Third, the colony -in clear contraposition to what was happening in the colony of Saint-Domingue- experienced very slow demographic development. This situation put the eastern part of the island in vulnerable conditions until the mid-nineteenth century and increased the superiority of the Haitian army.

Looking at state formation in the Dominican Republic from 1844, the year the country achieved its independence, Betances asserts that obstacles to state formation after independence responded to “the fragmentation of the

¹²¹ Krohn-Hansen, 20

Dominican economy and the social composition of the dominant blocs.”¹²²

Here, Betances attributes the delay in state formation to the internal struggles between an agrarian and commercial bourgeoisie of the Cibao region and the declining dominance of the “hateros”¹²³ and mining exporters of the eastern and southern region.¹²⁴

When examining state formation and nation building in the Dominican Republic, there is a need to assess the kind of constitution the republic established after its independence, as well as the political institutions that began to take shape in the post-colonial period. Like many of the countries in the Latin American region that attempted to mirror the U.S. constitution in terms of established powers, rights, and institutions, the Dominican Republic and the group of liberal nationalists that carried out the independent period followed this same path. They included among other measures: the establishment of three independent powers (executive, legislative, and judicial) along with the creation of four ministries (Justice and Public Instruction, Interior and Police, Finance and Commerce, and War and Navy).¹²⁵ Yet, the principles established in the constitution would fall short in

¹²² Betances, 9.

¹²³ It is worth noting that the “hateros” were the main relevant actor in the Dominican economic activity throughout the colonial period up until the mid-nineteenth century. See Emelio Betances, 10.

¹²⁴ Betances, 9.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 19.

the Dominican political reality and soon revealed the manipulation of the “caudillos” that governed the country in the mid-nineteenth century.

Betances argues that it was during the Heureaux rule that the country was able to achieve an incipient “national unity” as well as a feasible bureaucracy.

Betances identifies two factors that affected the formation of the state: the country’s economic regionalism and the political fragmentation that featured the mentioned period.¹²⁶

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to address broadly the process of state formation and nation-building in the Dominican Republic. This task was approached from several angles, including the colonial period; the Haitian revolution and occupation of the Dominican Republic; the Dominican independence; the economic development of both colonies; and the context in which state formation and nation building began to take shape. As it has been suggested elsewhere, this task cannot be carried out without addressing the parallel political, social, and economic reality of its neighboring country, Haiti. Both countries have shared a complex history and still struggle -in the twenty-first century- to overcome multifaceted legacies. Historical processes are not linear and encounter in the Dominican-Haitian relationship a legacy of conflict and cooperation. Nevertheless, perception and nationalism on both

¹²⁶ Ibid, 21

sides of Hispaniola continue to be of critical importance in the history and development of both countries. This chapter argues that much of the process of state formation and nation building in the Dominican Republic has been grounded on racial factors that have shaped the life of Hispaniola. It is worthy to note, and often overlooked, that the Dominican Republic was the only country in the region to achieve its independence not from a foreign and powerful colonial power but from its immediate neighbor, Haiti. This fact no doubt has shaped the consequences and legacies of the post-colonial period. Yet, new light needs to be shed on these intricate centuries of experience in the island of Hispaniola to build and secure the trust missing in the history of both countries for so long.

Chapter 3

The Legacy of Trujillo

*“The vicinity of Haiti has been and continues to be the main problem of the Dominican Republic... But if the racial problem is of incalculable importance to all countries, to Santo Domingo, the matter takes on immense proportions, as upon it depends, the very existence of the nationality that has for over a century been struggling against a more prolific race...” (Joaquín Balaguer, *La Isla al Revés*, 1947), 99.¹²⁷*

This chapter examines the conditions that characterized the Dominican Republic in the late 1970s when it initiated its democratization process. The focus of this chapter is on the absence of race during both the initial transition and the post-transition periods.

During the early democratization process in Dominican Republic, race was not a major or even minor concern among the principal actors of the transition. This absence is especially surprising considering that the Dominican Republic has constructed much of its identity in contraposition to its closest neighbor, Haiti. Furthermore, the Dominican Republic is the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean that achieved its formal independence not from a colonial power but from its neighbor, Haiti.

As was discussed broadly in the previous chapter, race has been an important factor in the construction of *dominicanidad*, specifically beginning

¹²⁷ Joaquín Balaguer, *La Isla al Revés* (Santo Domingo: Editora Corripio, 2002), trans. Gabriela Hoberman, 99.

in the Trujillo dictatorship.¹²⁸ This construction was built upon two bedrocks, the veneration of the Hispanic culture and Catholicism as a key value of the Dominican nation. Trujillo's ideology featured a very strong anti-Haitian component (particularly since 1937), which labeled Haitians as inferiors to Dominicans because of Afro-French culture. The presence of Haitians in the country and Haiti as a neighbor were considered a threat to the Dominican nation.¹²⁹ The path to democracy in Dominican Republic cannot be understood without a brief overview of the Trujillo dictatorship, and its influence on the construction of nation, citizenship and "*dominicanness*."

Rafael Leónidas Trujillo became president of the Dominican Republic in 1930 following a coup that overthrew Horacio Vásquez. Trujillo, who was a member of the -U.S. created National Guard- assumed power following a long period of U.S. intervention (1916-1924). Trujillo embarked on a series of reforms oriented to instill in the Dominican society the notions of order, peace, and work. This trinity became the milestone of the Trujillo dictatorship until his assassination in 1961. Yet, this trinity was to be

¹²⁸ Trujillo came to power in 1930, after economic unrest and the illness of President Vazquez were followed by a revolution initiated in Santiago. At the time, Trujillo was the head of the Marine guard. Fearon and Laitin argue that electoral fraud determined that he won the election for president with more votes than eligible voters, tricking the rebels to whom he had offered support. See James Fearon and David Laitin, "Random Narrative: Dominican Republic," Stanford University, Random Narrative Dominican Republic, 3, <<http://www.stanford.edu/group/ethnic/Random%20Narratives/Dominican%20RepublicRN1.2.pdf>>

¹²⁹ Sagas, 45.

imposed on society not by incorporation of labor but through the exclusion of political participation and rights at all levels of the decision-making arena.

Trujillo's dictatorship cannot be understood without examining the profound pattern of repression toward any kind of dissent from political groups, factions, or organizations. Trujillo established a culture of fear and these sentiments became entrenched in the Dominican mindset. Rosario Espinal, who studied the discursive narrative of Rafael Trujillo along with the longstanding legacies of his dictatorship, emphasizes the relevance of the Trujillo dictatorship as a determinant period of Dominican politics and as a means to come to terms with the democratic present, in which authoritarian and democratic tendencies conflate in a complex reality.¹³⁰

Espinal asserts that the first years of the Trujillo dictatorship translated into a recovery process for the nation, in which the state –as paternal and authoritarian – played a critical role. The dictatorship centralized all political and economic power by including potent appeals to patriotism, nation and order. Both Trujillo's political discourse and his political decisions were aimed toward the recuperation of family values, education, the role of women, and the return to some kind of social order.

Espinal suggests that the formation of collective identities in Dominican Republic responded to the inclusion to society through work,

¹³⁰ Rosario Espinal, "Indagaciones Sobre el Discurso Trujillista y su Incidencia en la Política Dominicana," *Ciencia y Sociedad*, XII, No. 4 (Octubre-Diciembre 1987): 630.

order, and obedience.¹³¹ Many of Trujillo's practices resemble traditional characteristics of populist governments elsewhere in Latin America during the mid-twentieth century, in which two groups were pitted against each other, in terms of "the people" – who subscribed to the ideals of progress and order- and the "malavenidos" –who did not subscribed to Trujillo ideals.

In this sense, much of Trujillo's distinction resembles Peron's appeal to the "descamisados" and the "anti-patria" enemies. This complex mix of subordination to Trujillo's personal power, social order, and stark political repression were key elements of the dictatorship, especially during the first years. As Espinal suggests, the formation of collective identities revolved around the inclusion of actors with duties of work, peace, and order and the exclusion in all arenas of political participation and/or contestation.¹³²

Repression under Trujillo requires a full-fledged explanation to understand the Dominican transition to democracy in the late 1970s. He effectively eliminated all political dissidence with paramilitary squads and military action. Also, repression and the use of military force was a means to homogenize political interests that culminated with the formation of the Dominican Party created by Trujillo in 1931.¹³³ The party came to represent the birth of a new nationality with order, peace, and progress as the

¹³¹ Ibid, 632

¹³² Ibid, 636

¹³³ Ibid, 640

underlying bedrock. In short, the party became the mechanism through which Trujillo decided the condition of being “a good Dominican” by entering the party.

Trujillo’s grip over the Dominican Republic reached its peak in 1955 when he declared himself “Father of the New Patria” to celebrate his 25 years in power. Espinal points out that the 1930s marked the political centralization of the Dominican state, while the 1940s signaled the economic centralization of the country. The latter was marked by the nationalization of the financial market, the creation of the national currency (the Dominican peso), and the creation of the national banking system.¹³⁴ These policies were accompanied by an incipient strategy of import substitution industrialization,¹³⁵ following regional trends of the period.

The Trujillo era also was marked by the relations with its closest neighbor, Haiti. Key moments of his administration involved the frontier demarcation with Haiti, the massacre of Haitians in 1937, and the final accord of 1938 that marked the end of negotiations and the territorial demarcation. The 1937 massacre of Haitians on the Dominican side of the

¹³⁴ Ibid, 641-642.

¹³⁵ Import Substitution Industrialization is an economic policy that has been applied in Latin American countries from the 1930s through the 1980s. It was geared towards reducing foreign economic dependency from industrialized countries and increasing the performance of national industrialized products. One of the causes of this developmental model was the impact of the economic recession of the 1930s where industrialized countries limit the quota of primary products imports from Latin American countries. Raul Prebisch, the Argentine economist and Head during the 1950s of ECLAC, was one of the first to develop the ISI model for the Latin American region.

border¹³⁶ represents a critical juncture of Haitian-Dominican relations with longstanding legacies for immigration policies followed by the Dominican elites in the following period.

The massacre, inspired by historical and deep-seated racial prejudices, had the sole and only purpose of “lightening” the skin of Dominicans. Alternative explanations abound, including bordering cattle theft, plots engineered from Haiti, and stopping the migration of Haitian labor to the Dominican sugarcane industry.¹³⁷ The massacre left profound legacies for both sides of Hispaniola. In Haiti, it unfolded with the downfall of then President, Stenio Vincent, who failed to challenge the Dominican government over such a horrendous atrocity. In the Dominican Republic, the massacre reinforced the racial card played by Trujillo and his then interim foreign minister, Joaquin Balaguer, who would go on to play a central role in Dominican politics. The racial politics played in that period emphasized the differences “between the mulatto Spanish-speaking society in the Dominican Republic” and the black French/Creole-speaking society in Haiti. Stigmatization became a key strategy as Haitians were portrayed as

¹³⁶ Michele Wucker, “Democracy Comes to Hispaniola,” *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 13, 1996 (Fall) <http://www.jstor.org/pss/40209492>

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 82

“disease-ridden, morally deficient, lazy, and subject to demonic possession.”¹³⁸

Retrospectively, the Trujillo dictatorship can be divided into two different periods. The first twenty years represented a period in which Trujillo gained absolute power, control, and leadership over a country that had experienced tremendous political and economic turmoil during most of the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth century. During this period, Trujillo emerged as the “father” of a “divided and corrupted” Dominican society that needed his appeal and charisma to transit the path toward modernity. In other words, Trujillo became the means through which the ideals of peace, order, and justice were achieved. It also was the period in which every attempt at the political inclusion of “subordinate classes” was halted.¹³⁹ This situation was not meant to last forever; beginning in the 1940s; Dominican society experienced a more volatile political environment as socialist ideals emerged within the labor movement, thus generating social and political upheaval and a substantial increase in strikes.¹⁴⁰ Mariñez underscores the development approach carried out by Trujillo. In the 1930s

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Catherine Conaghan and Rosario Espinal, “Unlikely Transitions to Uncertain Regimes? Democracy without Compromise in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Oct. 1990): 558. For a discussion of the structure of the workforce and the weakness of unionism in the Dominican Republic see 558-559.

¹⁴⁰ Authors such as Conaghan and Espinal argue that much of the motive of Trujillo’s falling apart from the Dominican society was the inability to incorporate new social groups that emerged in the country due to processes such as industrialization. See Conaghan and Espinal, 559.

American investments controlled 85 percent of the industrial and manufacturing sectors and 93 percent of the sugar cane fields; by the time of the assassination of Trujillo, the Dominican state held a much firmer grip on its resources. American companies controlled only 42 percent of the industrial sector and 26 percent of the sugar industry.¹⁴¹ In other words, it could be argued that Trujillo engaged in a successful strategy to “Dominicanize” the economy and reduce foreign control over key sectors of it.

Trujillo embarked on a process of mirroring what has been called as a “perfect dictatorship,”¹⁴² favoring the creation of two new political parties (The National Democratic Party and the National Labor Party) for the election to be held in 1947. As these elections were manipulated to favor the Dominican Party led by Trujillo, his ultimate aim to gain international legitimacy as an active player in the realm of diplomatic relations emerged after the end of the World War II.¹⁴³ During this period, opposition forces began to organize both domestically and internationally. At the same time,

¹⁴¹ Pablo A. Mariñez, “El Proceso Democrático en Republica Dominicana: Algunos Rasgos Fundamentales,” *Estudios Sociales*, XXVI, No. 93, (Julio-Septiembre, 1993).

¹⁴² This term usually refers to a dictator who responds to a lack of legitimacy within a society by creating regular elections in the country, to give the impression of clean and regular elections, while it works as a ratification of the incumbent due to the lack of real political contestation. In a more contemporary note, scholars have argued that Mexico under the PRI administration followed what has been called as the ‘perfect dictatorship’ emphasizing the occurrence of regular elections at all levels of government. These elections had the sole purpose to gain legitimacy at the international level as well as create the sense that political contestation was taking place, although the results of all elections clearly were manipulated by the incumbent party to continue in power.

¹⁴³ Rosario Espinal, 642.

an incipient implementation of import substitution industrialization policies favored the expansion of urban and middle strata in Dominican society. Espinal asserts that the rise of the middle class through the process of industrialization in the Dominican Republic represented a point of fracture from the Trujillo dictatorship that later would play a key role in Trujillo's downfall.¹⁴⁴

Authoritarianism Revisited

Authoritarian politics did not end with the assassination of Trujillo in the early 1960s. The Dominican Republic entered into another twelve-year period, under Joaquin Balaguer, of an authoritarian, paternalistic, and highly restrictive way of governing. Espinal points out that prevailing social, economic, and political cleavage in the country explain the difficulties faced by Balaguer. These cleavages had to do mainly with a profound sense of disappointment and the failure of incipient projects forged by antitrujillista forces to begin anew in a society that had suffered thirty years of authoritarian rule.¹⁴⁵

Following the downfall of the Trujillo dictatorship, new political actors emerged with the goal of capturing new political spaces. These groups were in

¹⁴⁴ Conaghan and Espinal, 558.

¹⁴⁵ Flavio Darío Espinal, "Política, Constitución y Reforma: Avances y Obstrucciones de la Democratización Dominicana." *Ciencia y Sociedad*, XII, No. 2, (Abril – Junio, 1987), 233-235.

traditional urban sectors, less influenced by the politics of subservience so characteristic of the Trujillo administration and a key element in the subsequent Balaguer rule. These traditional urban sectors were extremely vulnerable to clientelism and neopatrimonialism. In fact, clientelism was one of the most significant features of the Trujillo regime and continues to be the characteristic that prevails in the Dominican Republic. It is within the framework of neopatrimonialism that authors such as Hartlyn chose to explain this long-standing phenomenon in Dominican politics.

This incipient transition that followed Trujillo's assassination gave way to a phase of political and social instability, as well as a lack of institutional framework, in which political actors attempted to impose their national projects. Espinal argues that the conditions to maintain a democratic state were not met at the time, specifically the imbalance between the level of mobilization, the institutional capacity to channel political and societal conflicts, and the lack of state coercion in regulating social demands.¹⁴⁶

Wiarda and Kryzanek emphasize that chaotic months followed the downfall of the Trujillo dictatorship. As usually happens when these kinds of leaders are gone, the Trujillo system remained in place for a while.¹⁴⁷ The

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 234

¹⁴⁷ Howard J. Wiarda, and Michael J. Kryzanek, *The Dominican Republic: A Caribbean Crucible* (2nd. ed.) (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 39.

international situation, however, did not remain the same. The United States made it very clear to Trujillo's heir, his son Ramfis Trujillo, as well as to Joaquin Balaguer –the so called “puppet president”¹⁴⁸ that in order to keep good relations with the U.S., some progress towards democracy was necessary. This condition undercut the aim of Trujillo heirs to perpetuate the political, social, and economic regime that had been characteristic during thirty-one years of dictatorship. The position of the United States was clear and the political and social turmoil in the country made it impossible to continue the Trujillo days. As the political heir of Trujillo, Joaquin Balaguer initiated some reforms that were perceived as the beginning of a political opening. These reforms included lifting the ban on political activity, allowing exiles to return to the country, the incipient formation of opposition parties, and, greater participation of labor and business associations. The incipient formation of opposition parties cannot be treated superficially. These moves set the foundations for a viable political force that, in the late 1970s, garnered widespread social support that laid the basis for the transition to representative democracy in a country historically convoluted with authoritarianism.

Three main political forces emerged to channel the opposition demands of the Dominican society. The National Civic Union (UCN) led by Viriato Fiallo garnered the support of the business community. The Dominican

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

Revolutionary Party (PRD), founded by Juan Bosch in exile¹⁴⁹ represented the ideals of a social-democratic party that had the conditions to emerge as a popular movement based on a clear mandate of social reform.¹⁵⁰ And as Wiarda and Kryzanek point out, the third force was represented by the “pro-Castro element” featuring a youth movement with a leaning toward the left called the Fourteenth of June Movement.¹⁵¹ Although the measures initiated by Balaguer, as well as the formation of other political spaces, gave birth to a new period in the Dominican society, the provisional government faced tremendous pressure by the U.S. as well as from the society. This led to the breakdown of the political heirs of the regime, with the exile of Trujillo’s son, who reportedly fled with more than \$90 million.

After Ramfis Trujillo disappeared from the national scene, Balaguer was forced to form a Council of State, a seven-man junta representing the main sectors of Dominican society, including the clergy, the business sector, leaders representing the UCN, and two surviving Trujillo assassins.¹⁵² The main commitment of this Council of State was the promise to hold elections before the end of 1962. The Council of State suffered both a military coup and a restoration coup that expelled Balaguer from the coalition. The second

¹⁴⁹ The Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) was founded in the early 1940’s by political exiles and had to remain two decades in ostracism until 1961, after Trujillo’s assassination, where it was able to organize and compete for national elections.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 40

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Ibid

Council of State had sounder participation of businessmen and conservatives in an organ backed by military units and with close ties to the U.S. The council experienced what has been dominant in the Dominican society, the contradiction and coexistence of authoritarian and democratic tendencies. In addition, political and economic forces found it difficult to coexist and factions within Dominican society began to fall apart, stemming from a general sense of distrust after the collapse of the Trujillo regime.

Revisiting “La Isla al Revés”

The book by Joaquin Balaguer represented in the Dominican Republic the incarnation of anti-Haitian ideology that began during the Trujillo dictatorship. Joaquin Balaguer and Manuel Peña Battle played determinant roles in masterminding the ideology that underpinned three decades of dictatorship regime under Trujillo. The leverage of *La Isla al Revés*, in terms of academic reach as well as in contributing to the way Dominicans understand their nationality, must not be undermined or overlooked. One of the traditional myths entrenched in the Dominican society, was the result of Balaguer’s insistence of the threat of a “peaceful invasion” by Haitian nationals. Joaquin Balaguer was a very influential personality on his own terms.

He remained a main actor of the Dominican political elite for almost a century, occupying official posts during the Trujillo regime that ranged from

chancellor to vice-president. He later occupied the presidency from 1960 to 1962, 1966 to 1978 and from 1986 to 1996, finally having to step down after an agreement was reached to claims of fraudulent elections. Until his death in 2002 at almost 100 years, he was critically involved in two main chapters of Dominican politics: that of a cruel and brutal dictatorship and the transition to democracy in the late 1970s. Balaguer is seen by many Dominicans as a political leader who was able to manage Dominican political destiny in a wise and controlled manner after the collapse of the Trujillato.¹⁵³ He also usually is referred to as a politician -in contrast to many of the contemporary political leaders in the Dominican Republic- who did not get involved in corruption and, most importantly, who died “poor.”¹⁵⁴ Reducing corruption remains one of the most important challenges of current Dominican politics. Balaguer’s “transparent aura” almost a decade after his death still holds tremendous leverage in the perception of Dominicans of their political leaders. Balaguer published *La Isla al Revés* in 1983,¹⁵⁵ eleven years before the most racist and fraudulent presidential campaign experienced by the country, which prevented Jose Francisco Peña Gomez, a politician of Haitian descent, from achieving the presidency.

¹⁵³ The word “Trujillato” is utilized to refer to the thirty-year period that lasted the dictatorship incarnated by Rafael Leónidas Trujillo (1930-1961) in the Dominican Republic.

¹⁵⁴ Focus groups conducted in the cities of Santo Domingo and La Romana, Dominican Republic, in September 2009.

¹⁵⁵ We need to note also that Balaguer’s “La Isla al Revés” was republished until 2003 and is part of mainstream lecture in Dominican politics.

Yri emphasizes that Balaguer was without doubt influenced by his past as the confidence man of the Trujillato.¹⁵⁶ In addition, he argues that the conformation of the “Dominican nation” under Trujillo revolving around the framework of a “pristine Hispanic heritage” is a “perpetual process” that still may be current in the country.¹⁵⁷

Joaquin Balaguer also was a prolific author in Dominican politics and an erudite scholar of the history of the island of Hispaniola. Broadly, *La Isla al Revés* deals with the history of Hispaniola, the differences between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and possible outcomes of a complicated shared history.¹⁵⁸ The notion of “inseparability” is the thread that connects this work and constitutes the quest of commonality between these very different countries.

According to Carlos Dore, Balaguer was an erudite intellectual; however, his credibility was undermined by practices that discredited him as a valuable political writer. He cites *La Isla al Revés* as a repetition of a book

¹⁵⁶ Jørgen Yri, “El Bárbaro Vago y la Isla Indivisible,” (Thesis, Universitet i Bergen, 2008), 50

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 61.

he had already written in the 1940s,¹⁵⁹ without even bothering to change the bibliographical notes.¹⁶⁰

La Isla al Revés sparked considerable attention in Dominican society as well as in the intellectual community. This work was a highly controversial effort geared toward inspiring fear of any Haitian penetration as an assured devaluation of Dominican national values, identity, and racial constitution. The book explicitly attempts to show a “whitened” population as an ideal model to follow, inciting clear-cut racial prejudice. It also conveys biological racism, while equalizing color and social condition. In other words, the white population is the superior and privileged race while the black population is the inferior and barbaric race. He emphasized the pristine Hispanic heritage of the community of Bani, founded by white people from the Canarys, as “the fleur of the races.”¹⁶¹ Dore Cabral criticizes “La Isla al Revés” by claiming that Balaguer manipulated Dominican history suggesting that Dominicans descend from pure Hispanic and indigenous antecessors.¹⁶² One of the main critiques is geared toward emphasizing the outdated

¹⁵⁹ Dialogo de la Lengua, Interview by Caridad Plaza with Carlos Dore Cabral and Marcio Veloz Maggiolo published in Quórum (Spring 2006), 14. The book these authors are referring to is *La Realidad Dominicana* by Joaquín Balaguer, published in 1939.

¹⁶⁰ Carlos Dore Cabral, Quórum, 143.

¹⁶¹ Marcio Veloz Maggiolo, Quórum, 143.

¹⁶² Carlos Dore Cabral, “La Inmigración Haitiana y el Componente Racista de la Cultura Dominicana (Apuntes para una crítica a la Isla al Revés),” *Ciencia y Sociedad*, X, No. 1, (Enero-Marzo, 1985), 63.

character of the arguments that serve Balaguer's work. Dore Cabral takes issue with scientific and historic perceptions of the creation and evolution of races that have been proven wrong since the late nineteenth century.

Another major critique points out that the bibliography supporting Balaguer's work has been completely overcome in terms of scientific and academic validity.¹⁶³

Balaguer's research revolves around three main arguments: the Hispanic and Christian descent of Dominican population, Haitian imperialism geared toward unifying the island under its dominance, and the threat that carries the acculturation of Haitian nationals in the Dominican Republic in terms of the evolution of "dominicanness." In the chapter that analyzes the current tendencies of Haitian imperialism, Balaguer affirms that:

"...Haiti does not constitute any longer a threat for Santo Domingo¹⁶⁴ for political reasons. But Haitian imperialism continues to be a hazard for our country, in greater degree, for biological reasons..."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Carlos Dore Cabral notes that out of the 60 books listed in the bibliography, 25 have been edited before the twentieth century, 20 citations previous to 1950, 2 before 1960, 3 previous to 1970, 4 have been published before 1980 and 6 do not have any date at all. See Carlos Dore Cabral, 63.

¹⁶⁴ It is worth noting that in "La Isla al Revés," Joaquín Balaguer refers to Santo Domingo, the capital of Dominican Republic, however, it has been widely accepted that he refers to the Dominican Republic as the whole nation.

¹⁶⁵ Joaquín Balaguer, *La Isla al Revés: Haití y el Destino Dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Corripio, 2002), 35, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

Balaguer puts forward the argument that Haitian nationals are unable to restrain themselves and have uncontrollable levels of reproduction, which makes them resemble vegetal species. This argument is highly entrenched in Dominican society. Focus groups conducted for this study reveal that most Dominicans claim that the pace of Haitian reproduction is much faster than Dominican reproduction, and this poses severe threats to the integrity of the Dominican population. This prejudice also has important consequences in education and health services, which often are noted as examples of how completely overwhelmed services are by the presence of Haitian nationals living in the country.¹⁶⁶ In the words of Balaguer:

“...the excess of population from Haiti, constitutes, an increasing threat for the Dominican Republic. This is so for a biological reason: black people, abandoned to their instincts and without the restraint that a relatively elevated level of life imposes on all countries in reproduction issues, is multiplied with rapidity almost similar to that of vegetal species. It is also for an economic reason: the territorial extension of Haiti is only 28,676 square kilometers, and the population has a trend to increase, in contraposition to what occurs in most of the other countries, with a faster rhythm than available supplies...”¹⁶⁷

Another major issue that concerned Balaguer was the denationalization of Santo Domingo expressed in the progressive deterioration of the Dominican population and in the moral and physical constitution of its inhabitants. To support his extremely controversial argument, Balaguer

¹⁶⁶ Focus groups conducted in the Dominican Republic during December 2008 and September 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Balaguer, *La Isla al Revés*, 36-37, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

claimed that daily contact with Haitian nationals, especially in the rural regions where Dominican farmers have a close contact with their Haitian neighbors resulted in the loosening of moral attitudes and traditional values characteristic of the Dominican population.

In the end, what was the contribution of Joaquin Balaguer's *La Isla al Revés*? Balaguer attempted to reaffirm the racial prejudice that provided the layers that constituted Dominican nationality in the early twentieth century. The book originally published in 1983 -well into the democratization process that the country began in the late 1970s- demonstrates the difficulties of overcoming the reality that includes Haitian nationals in the Dominican population. Balaguer warned of the threats that Haitians pose to the country, inculcating retrograde narratives involving the superiority of the races, all of which have been discarded for decades. Balaguer touched on issues that still persist in the Dominican imagination, and relate to its population with the use of well-entrenched structural values that Dominicans acquired at birth.

The PRD and the Politics of Intervention

The PRD was a party created in exile. For this particular feature, it carried many characteristics that made it unique. In spite of the ban on political forces during the Trujillo dictatorship, the PRD not only was able to garner support outside the country but also was strong enough to build grassroots organizations in many parts of the country. In addition, the party

represented the needs of more urban and rural masses. This characteristic projected the party as a national force. Furthermore, the party had in Juan Bosch a truly charismatic leader who was able to articulate the social demands that were to be put in place after the fall of Trujillo.

The party articulated an agenda of social reform and social justice. The triumph of the PRD in the elections of 1962 marked a determinant event in Dominican politics. The PRD was able to outperform the UCN led by Viriato Fallo by a 2 to 1 margin. Juan Bosch and the PRD did not have much time to deliver the outcomes he had promised during the campaign. And soon, it became notorious that many challenges would have to be overcome if the government was going to prove successful. Wiarda and Kryzanek argue that a political cocktail between different sectors entered into place, making the coup against Bosch inevitable. The business sector, the military and the Church were the main actors of the military coup that ousted Bosch in 1963.¹⁶⁸ This was accompanied by the notion that the Bosch government was a potential threat to stability in the country. Espinal adds to the societal fragmentation the unfavorable international conditions¹⁶⁹ that accelerated the overthrow of the PRD government. Wiarda and Kryzanek emphasize

¹⁶⁸ Wiarda and Kryzanek, 42.

¹⁶⁹ Rosario Espinal, "Dominican Republic: Electoralism, Pacts, and Clientelism in the Making of a Democratic Regime" in *Democracy in the Caribbean: Myths and Realities*, Carlene J. Edie (ed.) (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 146-161.

that anticommunism was the main issue that united all these sectors.¹⁷⁰ Yet, as many scholars have argued, the communist and Marxist elements in the Dominican Republic often were exaggerated and too weak to give credit to the versions that the country would become another Cuba. It may be argued that at the time, the conditions for democracy were not met, and neither the political forces nor the Dominican society were ready for the beginning of a democratic transition. Therefore, the period that opened in 1963 to 1965 was featured by political and social commotion, repression and instability.

After months of internal commotion and combat between the conservative military and the pro-Bosch so-called constitutional forces, the U.S. embassy began to play a decisive role as arbiter in the struggle, and clearly defined the rules of the game with strong leaning toward the conservative forces. Yet, the civil unrest reached its peak on April 28, 1965 when President Johnson ordered U.S. military forces to bring to an end the advance of the constitutionalist forces by the insertion of a huge reserve of troops into the country. The intervention had two main purposes from the U.S. perspective: prevent the formation of another “Cuba” in the Caribbean and show military strength to the North Vietnamese within a major buildup of U.S. forces in the region.¹⁷¹ The U.S. embassy wanted to prevent the return

¹⁷⁰ Wiarda and Kryzaneck, 42.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 44

of Bosch to the country, as well as the instauration of a leftist government that they sensed was invaded by communist ideology.

After the military maneuvers led by the U.S. troops to help organize the conservative and loyalist forces, and peacekeeping forces spread all over the country,¹⁷² the civil war was brought to an end on August 31, 1965, with a cease-fire arranged by Colonel Caamaño (constitutionalist) and General Antonio Imbert (conservative). Again, the U.S. government played the role of international guardian and arbiter by forcing the players to sign an institutional act of reconciliation.

The revolution of the 1963-1965 period evidenced the fragility of Dominican society and the dependence on the United States. The influence of the U.S. on the Dominican nation proved to be a difficult burden from which Dominicans could not escape in the short run.

Wiarda and Kryzanek make the argument that the Dominican Republic's revolution was "an unfinished revolution."¹⁷³ They assume that the revolution was unfinished as it was unable to solve the underlying problems of the country, especially those related to socioeconomic standing, such as poverty and social inequality. The "unfinished revolution," in Wiarda

¹⁷² Wiarda and Kryzanek point out that the U.S. attempted to give a more internationalist face to the occupation, by recruiting peacekeeping forces from other countries to "collaborate" in the stabilization of the country. See Wiarda and Kryzanek, 44.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 46

and Kryzanek's terms, revolved around a deep polarization in the Dominican society, based on socioeconomic crisis and political hostility.

The peace accord signed in 1965 brought the naming of a moderate, President García-Godoy, who was in charge of the highest office until the calling of new elections in 1966. This election again showed the relevance and leverage of political elites in a country heavily influenced by the United States. Here, the option was clear for the ruling conservative elites. Joaquin Balaguer, probably the most apt Trujillo puppet during the dictatorship, was not only the choice of the political elites but also of the U.S. embassy, which was eager to impede the election of Juan Bosch for the presidency.¹⁷⁴

The campaign largely favored Balaguer, as Bosch and his supporters constantly faced repression, threats and a climate of fear that aimed to halt his candidacy for the highest office. While Bosch had to stay in urban areas to prevent attacks, Balaguer spread his campaign all over the country, with a special focus on the peasant population. Although his aim was to distance himself from the Trujillo dictatorship, he proposed the same recipe for the return of stability to the country -peace, order, and reconstruction. Although the focus was not on work at this time, two key elements of Trujillo's trinity – peace and order- remained crucial in the Balaguer political campaign.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 46-47.

The Politics of Order

Balaguer won the 1966 presidential election with 57 percent of the vote to 39 percent for Bosch. Although Balaguer won by a landslide, Bosch's support in the election proved remarkable, in spite of the mounting repression and the climate of fear.

The new government had the immediate challenge to transit an orderly transition after three decades of dictatorship and an extended civil war. It also needed to articulate all disgruntled sectors of the society, deeply divided in internal struggles. The Balaguer administration brought a period of economic opening that gave rise to two key forces in Dominican society, an expansion of the middle class and a well-organized business sector. While emphasizing his nature of economic modernizer, Balaguer attempted to put some distance from the Trujillo legacy, although his political system remained similar to that of the dictator. These two forces managed to avoid direct control from the Dominican state, although upholding a continuous support from the government.¹⁷⁵

The power that Balaguer was able to concentrate was immense and had utmost discretion in every single sphere of power. The executive power was tremendously concentrated vis-à-vis the legislative and judicial powers.

¹⁷⁵ Flavio Darío Espinal, "Política, Constitución y Reforma," State protection policies came through the creation of a body of laws for the business and middle class sectors, comprising among others the Law 299 of incentive and industry protection; Law 153 of promotion and incentive of tourism development and Law 292 about financial societies that promote economic development, 238.

Yet, Balaguer was not Trujillo. This means that he understood that under the conditions in which he arrived to power and the international and national contexts, he would had to liberalize the economy¹⁷⁶ and create more spaces for society in order to remain in power. The kind of economic liberalization that Balaguer initiated gave the impulse to the political liberalization that would come some years ahead. In fact, Espinal acknowledges that the “privatization” of the economy allowed a more clear differentiation between state and civil society.¹⁷⁷

Economic and political power was not necessarily related under the Balaguer administration and a variation among political elites became possible. The rise of the middle class and business sectors also led to the delineation of “new rules of the game” in which these newly constituted forces demanded more accountability, participation and decision-making. Flavio Dario Espinal illustrates the cleavages and divisiveness of opposition forces during the Balaguer regime. First, the left was divided internally between the “hard” left, dedicated to the demonstration of force besides democratic means, and Bosch and his supporters, who rejected representative democracy and elections as a viable means to achieve power.¹⁷⁸ Second, the right

¹⁷⁶ This economic liberalization includes the expansion of state size, a focus on infrastructure and a revitalization of economic diversification through “state credit and investment.” See Conaghan and Espinal, 560.

¹⁷⁷ Flavio Dario Espinal, “Política, Constitución y Reforma,” 238.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

including the PQD and MIDA, advocated for constitutional reform to halt Balaguer's aims to get reelected and remain in office. Third, there was a severe rupture within the PRD -giving rise to leaders such as Jose Francisco Peña Gomez- which led in 1973 to the creation of an alternative political force, the PLD, with the exit of Juan Bosch. It was in this climate that the PRD decided from 1974 onwards to reengage in the democratic game by developing a sound campaign of civil and political rights, institutionalization of the state, social and economic reforms and participation of excluded groups.

The PRD also was greatly influenced by social democratic ideas and affiliated to the Internationalist Socialist adopting many of its core ideology. At the same time, the early 1970s were not as gentle with Balaguer as it has been the 1960s, and it was clear that both international and domestic conditions have changed. Domestically, Balaguer was losing support from his loyal base, the peasants and the rural poor. The disenchantment of this critical base of support along with the strengthening of middle and urban sectors with rising demands of participation and decentralization of decision-making processes, posed a serious challenge to the Balaguer regime. Lastly, the conformation of the PRD as a serious alternative force to the Reformist Party of Joaquin Balaguer made it even more difficult for a new militarized electoral process to occur in 1978.

The Path to Democracy

The elections in 1978 signaled the beginning of the democratic transition in the Dominican Republic.¹⁷⁹ The PRD defeated the Reformist Party led by Balaguer after twelve years in office. The balance of forces that had prevailed under Balaguer was broken.¹⁸⁰ The context in which this important victory took place involved a profound transformation of political forces and actors: a favorable international context marked by clear mandates of the Carter administration to support democracy in the region; a middle class that decided to engage in the democratic game by demanding more participation and decentralization of decision making processes; and an urge of individual and civil rights by the Dominican society.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, Conaghan and Espinal argue that the country faced some conditions that made it an unlikely democracy, for example the unfavorable socioeconomic conditions comprising a historical fragmentation of civil society, lack of mobilization of popular sectors, dependency on agricultural market, delay of industrialization and a lack of compromise of middle classes and working classes.¹⁸² Therefore, Conaghan and Espinal argue that the underlying

¹⁷⁹ Jonathan Hartlyn, "Crisis-ridden Elections (again) in the Dominican Republic: Neopatrimonialism, Presidentialism and Weak Electoral Oversight," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 36, No. 4 (Winter, 1994): 97

¹⁸⁰ Wilfredo Lozano. *Después de los Caudillos* (Santo Domingo: Flacso y Ediciones Librería La Trinitaria, 2002), 25.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 239.

¹⁸² Conaghan and Espinal, 554.

socioeconomic structures and the authoritarian political legacy had led to a “hybrid democratic-authoritarian” regime type featured by the basic rules of the democratic game (political contestation and fair elections) but filtered by fractures in the acceptance of democratic rules by the ruling elites.¹⁸³

Ramonina Brea points out that aligning with social democratic ideals made international and local analysts assume that a consensus would prevail in the new PRD presidency.¹⁸⁴ Yet, this perception would fall short and soon the democratic transition would unveil the intrinsic tensions to democratization, especially the legacy of authoritarianism. Brea argues that the PRD initially was a party committed to organize and mobilize the masses to achieve democracy and social and economic reform, but soon turned into a party fragmented by internal tendencies, clientelistic and informal relations.¹⁸⁵

If we are looking at the absence of the treatment of race during the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic, it is essential to identify the political and societal actors of the transition and the issues at stake during this process. Among these actors, Ramon Tejada Holguin identifies the PRD and the Reformist Party, the individual leaderships of Jose Francisco Peña

¹⁸³ Ibid, 555

¹⁸⁴ Ramonina Brea, “El Autoritarismo y el Proceso de Democratización en la Republica Dominicana,” *Ciencia y Sociedad*, XII, No. 2, (Abril-Junio, 1987):180.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 205

Gomez and Joaquin Balaguer, a sector of the military, the business sector, and civil society.¹⁸⁶ Other authors, such as Carlos Andujar include the United States as a critical actor in the democratic transition of 1978.¹⁸⁷ Yet, the discussion of the nature of the transition still is very much alive, and there is no consensus that this was a “pacted democracy” or that other processes were put in place that initiated the democratic regime in the Dominican Republic.

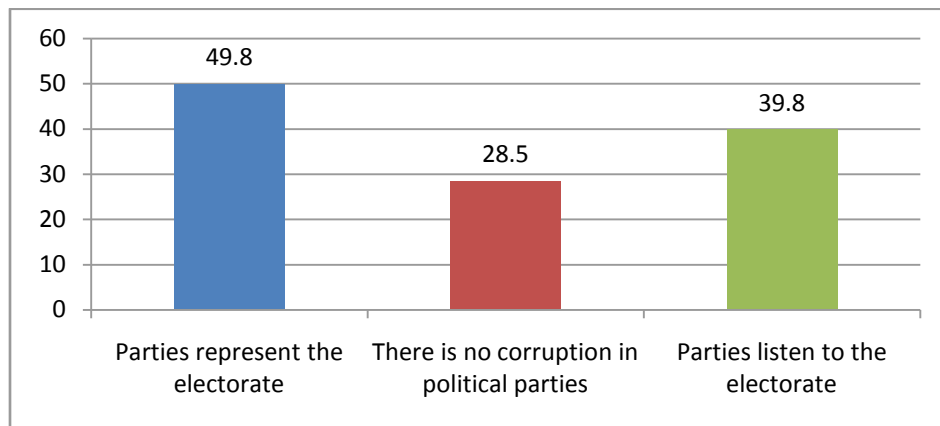
Ruben Silie underscores the need to differentiate between the transition per se and the transfer of power during the transition. In this respect, he points out that the transition was not a “pacted democracy” in a sense of a general consensus among political and social forces to bring closure to the Balaguer regime. This argument contradicts mainstream literature about democratic transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean, which emphasize the leverage of “pacts” among societal forces in laying the foundations of the democratic transition. The way in which Silie differentiates the transition per se and the transfer of power allows for a better understanding of the nature of the transition. Here, he acknowledges that the transfer of power certainly was “pacted,” especially with the “fallo

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Ramón Tejada Holguín, held in December 2008 in the Dominican Republic. Tejada Holguin makes the caveat that the business sector did not count at the time with a prominent leadership as it does today, being mostly absorbed by the Balaguer’s regime.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Carlos Andujar held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in September 2008.

histórico” in which the PRD presidency was traded off for control of the senate and the judiciary by Balaguer.¹⁸⁸

Figure 1. Perception of Dominican Political Parties



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org, *Cultura Política de la Democracia en Republica Dominicana, 2008: El Impacto de la Gobernabilidad*, 160

The victory of the PRD led to institutional advances such as the respect of the constitution, the instauration of a representative democracy and the restoration of the branches of power. Yet, as we have mentioned earlier, authoritarian and democratic tendencies often conflate in the Dominican experience. And this election was not the exception, when – through the so-called “Fallo histórico”- a new conformation of pact took place between elites, whereby the PRD turned over senate seats to Balaguer’s PR by giving him majority in the Senate and control of the Judicial power in

¹⁸⁸ Interview held with Ruben Silie in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in September 2008.

exchange for the presidency for the PRD. Although this move was more subtle than previous authoritarian measures, it meant a distortion of the popular will in a supposedly clean election.¹⁸⁹ Many scholars have pointed out that this particular feature made almost impossible most of the institutional reforms promised. Carlos Andujar points out that the Dominican transition was traumatic, in both in the ideological and political realms and that until today, the Trujillo legacy is very much alive and present in the institutions, political system, and society.¹⁹⁰ Ruben Silie emphasizes the role of the military in the downfall of the Balaguer regime, by withdrawing their support that gave legitimacy to the government.¹⁹¹

The Regional Context

The case of the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic is a benchmark that signals the beginning of transitions in Latin America. The region had been for decades a fertile land for military coups, dictatorships, and brutal civil war, especially in Central America.

O'Donnell and Schmitter have explained what is at the core of transitions, basically implying “a movement from something toward

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 240

¹⁹⁰ Interview held with Carlos Andujar in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in September 2008.

¹⁹¹ Interview held with Ruben Silie in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in September 2008.

something else.”¹⁹² They argue that this movement signified in the region a shift from authoritarian rule (with varied configuration, severity, longevity, etc.) to what it is called a political democracy.¹⁹³ This movement took place for the first time in the region in the Dominican Republic in 1978. As Jorge Dominguez underscores:

“...the Dominican Republic led the way when international intervention prevented an election fraud that had sought to extend President Joaquin Balaguer’s 12-year term in office, making way for the first opposition victory in a free presidential election under universal suffrage in that country’s history –and the start of Latin America’s transitions to democracy...”¹⁹⁴

As Dominguez points out, the country represented the first successful attempt for democratization in the region. We need to note, however, that the victory led by the PRD was not without problems, and was featured by active international pressure led by President Carter and the United States. Furthermore, Balaguer was able to keep a hold on the majority of the Senate by manipulating adverse results. This point of departure soon was followed by many countries in the region. Beginning with Ecuador and Peru, followed by Argentina and finally with Chile and Mexico, civilian presidents elected

¹⁹² O’Donnell and Schmitter, 65.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Jorge I. Dominguez and Michael Shifter (3rd ed.) *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 323.

democratically would put an end to authoritarian regimes.¹⁹⁵ This flourishing period in which civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights were regained by the population also accompanied by what many economists have called “the lost decade.”

This decade was featured by profound economic challenges with insurmountable levels of inflation. Dominguez stresses that it was the worst performance of Latin American economies since the times of the 1930s economic depression.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, these transitions to democracy brought discontent in the population in regard to corruption practices, accountability, and general performance. Year after year, regional surveys such as Latinobarometro¹⁹⁷ and Iberoarometro have shown data revealing ample levels of discontent and distrust in institutions and political parties.¹⁹⁸ Yet, Dominguez emphasizes the endurance of Latin American democracies in

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. He argues that this poor performance during the 1980s was later followed by severe financial panics in the region in Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay and Brazil. Later on, Argentine economy was severely affected in 2001 with the confiscation of deposits and the devaluation of the Argentine peso.

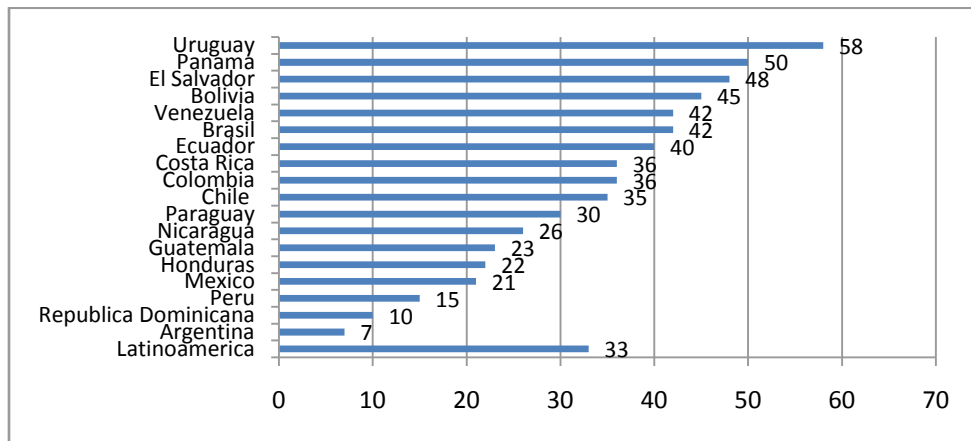
¹⁹⁷ The first surveys carried out by Latinobarometro in the region date back to 1995 in eight countries of Latin America. This selection is further expanded in 1996 to 17 countries and later, in 2004, is completed by the inclusion of the Dominican Republic (with the exception of Cuba).

¹⁹⁸ Latinobarometro (Corporación Latinobarometro, 1996-2009) and Iberoarometro (Consortio Iberoamericano de Empresas de Investigación de Mercados y Asesoramiento, CIMA, 1992-2009).

maintaining elected civilian presidents, in spite of traditional weak civilian control over the military.¹⁹⁹

Among the many indicators of democratic performance, the level of commitment of the government to the general well-being of the population and corruption practices that benefit small groups continue to provide sound data in the analysis of public perception of democracy. To the question posed by the 2009 Report of Latinobarometro whether people perceived that they were governed by powerful groups in their own benefit or whether they were governed for the well-being of the population (and only considering those who responded that they were governed in benefit of all the population), the data reveals high levels of discontent in the Dominican population.²⁰⁰

Figure 2. Level of Perception that the Country Is Governed for the Benefit of the Population



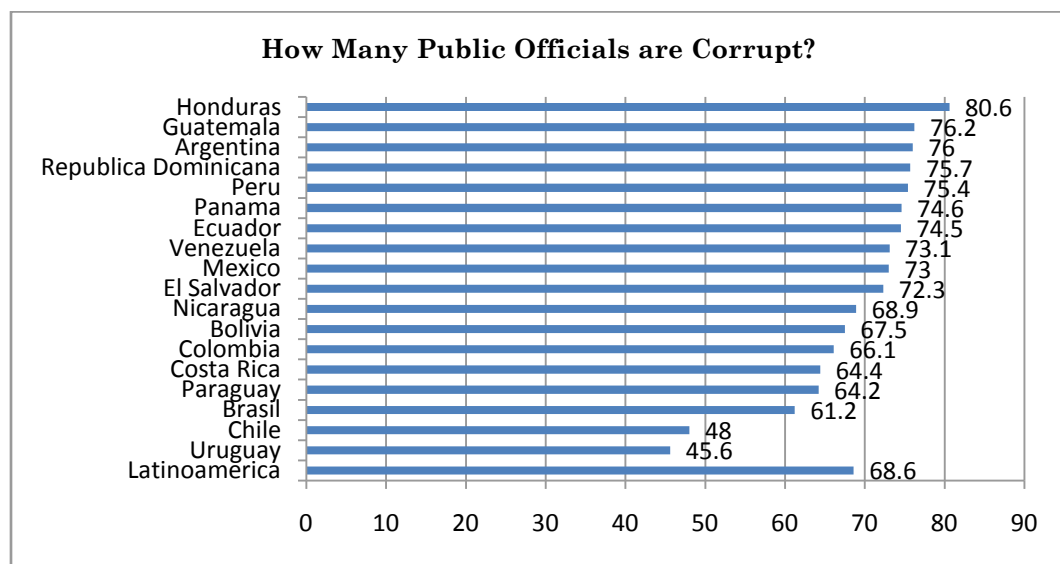
Source: *Latinobarometro 2009 Report*, 39

¹⁹⁹ Dominguez, 324-328.

²⁰⁰ Corporación Latinobarometro, "Latinobarometro 2009 Report," November, Santiago de Chile, 39, <http://www.latinobarometro.org/>

In regard to the perception of corruption, Latin American countries have consistently scored at very low levels. Especially informative has been the 2008 Report from Latinobarometro, asking how many public officers are corrupt from a sample of a hundred. Out of eighteen countries in the region, only two, Uruguay and Chile scored below the 50 percent, while the remaining countries estimated that more than 60-80 percent of public officers were corrupt.²⁰¹

Figure 3. Level of Corruption in Public Officials



Source: *Latinobarometro Report 2008*, 46

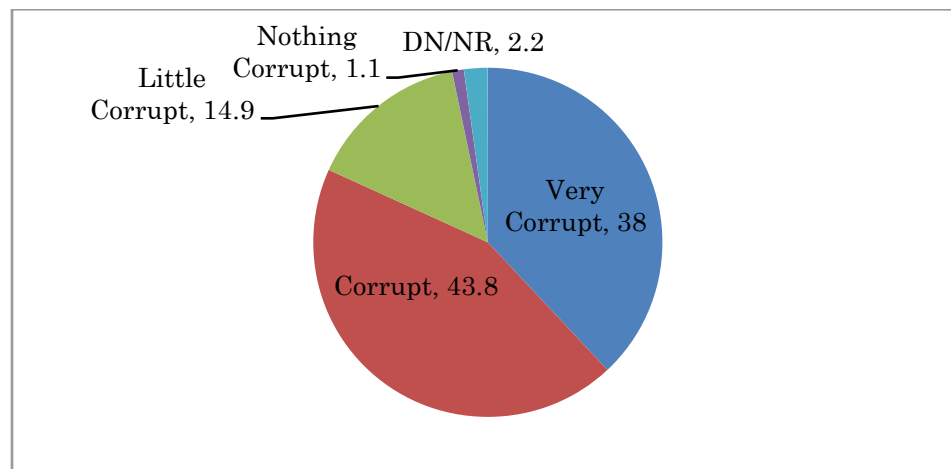
The Dominican Republic again scores higher than the average of Latin American countries, with a perception of corruption of 75.7 percent of

²⁰¹ Corporación Latinobarometro, "Latinobarometro 2008 Report," November, Santiago de Chile, 46, <http://www.latinobarometro.org/>

Dominican public officials. Levels of corruption remain one of the critical indicators of democratic performance. The data reveal that, regionally, corruption practices seem to be a deep-seated challenge for Latin American governments, except for Chile and Uruguay, and negatively impacts democratic performance in the region.

In clear congruence with the Latinobarometro Report, the Perception Study of Corruption in Households of Dominican Republic²⁰² notes that at least 81.8 percent of Dominicans believe that corruption is widespread in the country. This percentage reflects Dominicans who answered that the country is “corrupt” or “very corrupt.”

Figure 4. Corruption in the Dominican Republic

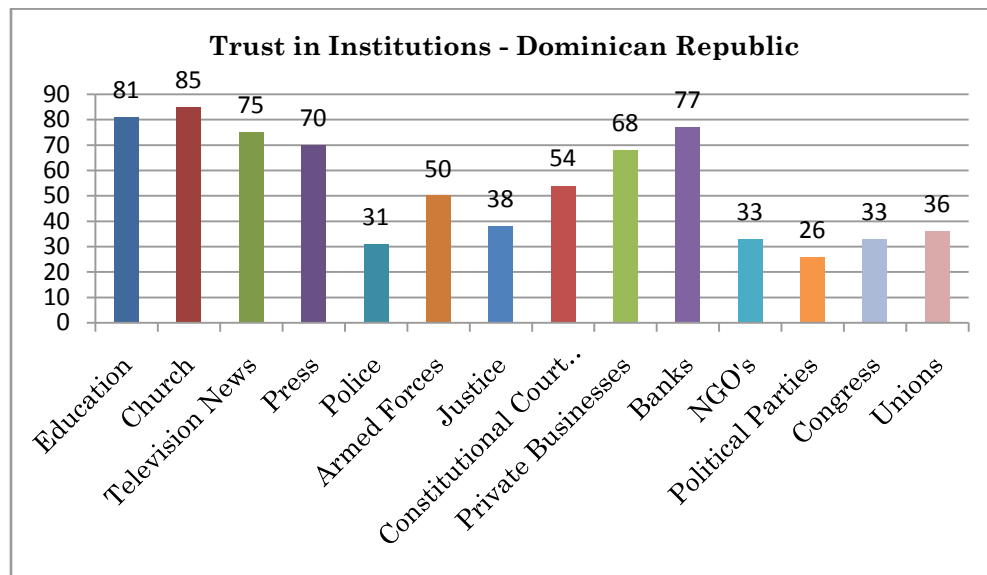


Source: *Estudio de Percepción de la Corrupción en Hogares de la Republica Dominicana* (Programa de Transparencia y Acción Ciudadana), December 2008, 3

²⁰² Programa de Transparencia y Acción Ciudadana, “Estudio de Percepción de la Corrupción en Hogares de la Republica Dominicana,” Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana, December 2008, www.anje.org/serve/listfile_download.aspx?id=1374&num=1

The table below show Dominican perception on institutions. In regard to the assessment of institutions, the data from Iberobarometro²⁰³ presents a varied picture, with Dominicans giving favorable scores to education, the Church, and the armed forces while giving poor scores to political parties and the legislative body.

Figure 5. Trust in Institutions



Source: *Barometro Iberoamericano 2009* (CIMA), 21-25

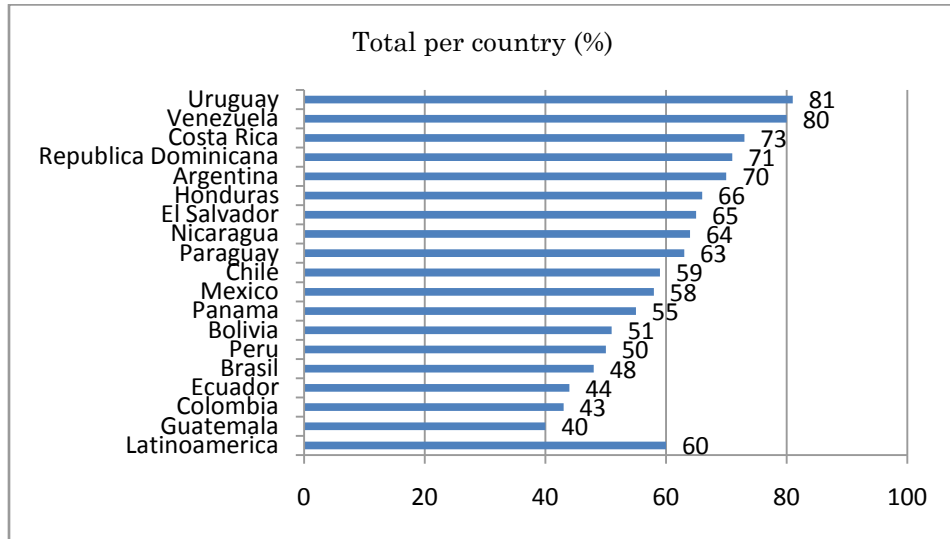
The data shown by Iberobarometro 2009 are interesting in many respects. First, it is noteworthy how Dominican Republic leads the regional

²⁰³ Consorcio Iberoamericano de Empresas de Investigación de Mercados y Asesoramiento (CIMA), “Iberoamerican Barometer of Governability 2009,” Bogotá, Colombia, <http://www.cimaiberoamerica.com/>. The Iberobarometro assesses population perception in the region since 1992. The 2009 Barometer of Governability examines 21 countries of Latin America and Iberoamérica as well as Hispanic population in the United States.

count in the perception of trust in the church, television news, press, private businesses and banks. As the table notes, Dominicans assess poorly political parties, Congress, NGOs, unions, and the police. Yet, as we noted elsewhere, trust in political parties has declined in the region since the transition to democracy and remains low for all countries examined. Putting this fact in perspective, the Dominican Republic scores third in the perception of trust in political parties right after Hispanics in the United States and Uruguay, with 34 percent and 30 percent, respectively. Hence, Dominicans still believe that political parties are able to canalize and mediate interests effectively in Dominican society.

We also need to acknowledge the role of parties in securing democratic transitions and move into more consolidated democracy. The institutionalization of parties, with highly organized structures and agendas, clearly has impacted the process of democratization. The recent 2009 Report by Latinobarometro stresses the relevance of political parties in the democratization process.

Figure 6. Perception that Democracy Cannot Exist Without Parties



Source: *Latinobarometro Report 2009*, 27

At first glance, the table shows the Dominican Republic scoring significantly higher than the average for Latin American countries, 11 points over the average of 60 percent for the region. The intrinsic association between political parties and democracy is therefore a strong value in Dominican society. This perception has remained strong despite areas of discontent that democracy and political competition may bring, for example, internal corruption in political parties, poor economic performance or little accountability of political actors. However, the data become more interesting when the survey broadens the analysis to assess whether democracy can exist without political parties and a legislative body.

Table 7. – Democracy Cannot Exist without Political Parties or National Congress

| Country | Without Political Parties (%) | | Without Congress or Parliament (%) | | Points of Increase / Added |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------------------------------------|------|----------------------------|
| | 2006 | 2009 | 2006 | 2009 | 2006 -2009 |
| Dominican Republic | 77 | 71 | 80 | 61 | -25 |
| Average Latin America | 58 | 60 | 55 | 57 | 4 |

Source: *Latinobarometro Report 2009*, 28

The data reveal that while support for the existence of political parties as a fundamental layer of the democratic system in the Dominican Republic remains high, scoring higher than the average of Latin American countries, the country has an opposite trend to that of the region. In other words, comparing data from 2006 and 2009, Dominicans are 6 percent less favorable to the perception that democracy cannot exist without political parties and 19 percent less favorable to the perception that democracy cannot exist without a Congress or Parliament. In both cases these trends are opposite to that of the average of Latin American countries, which in both cases reported an increase of two points (from 58 to 60 percent in regard to political parties and from 55 to 57 percent in regard to Congress or Parliament).²⁰⁴ The increasing negative perception of political parties and Congress in general, hence, must

²⁰⁴ Corporación Latinobarometro, “Latinobarometro Report 2009,” November, Santiago, Chile, 28, <<http://www.latinobarometro.org/>>

not be overlooked when assessing the evolution and current state of democracy in the Dominican Republic.

In a broader context and addressing the reliability of political parties in the region, Dominguez asserts that:

“...Parties are the most effective instruments to articulate and aggregate social, economic, and political demands; set priorities; and respond to those demands. Parties are key means to organize parliamentary politics to support or oppose the executive. Bargaining between parties reduces the intensity of acute conflicts and creates the political room for the rise and consolidation of “arbiter” institutions such as the courts...”²⁰⁵

As we will discuss further in the next section of this dissertation, political parties in the Dominican Republic have played an unequivocal role in the success of the democratic transition and the following consolidation process.

A Convoluted Quest for Democracy

The first government of the PRD led by Antonio Guzman made significant progress in respect to the institutionalization of civil and political rights and delineation of the “rules of game” as understood in a democratic regime. Nevertheless, it faced dissent within its own party and four years later, in 1982, Jorge Blanco was elected president for the PRD. Expectations were much higher in this second presidency of the PRD, as the party gained

²⁰⁵ Jorge I. Dominguez and Michael Shifter (ed.), *Constructing Democratic Governance in Latin America* (3rd. Ed), (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 329.

an absolute majority in both chambers of Congress. However, these expectations did not turn into reality and the party was seriously accountable for this. First, it has been acknowledged that the PRD was rapidly absorbed by the state, making it difficult to differentiate between both discourses, and soon engaged in authoritarian and paternalistic practices typical of the Dominican state.²⁰⁶ Second, there was a falling out between a party of the masses (PRD) and the Dominican society.

The distance between the masses and a political party that was able to canalize its social demands was caused by the “stigmatization” of every opposition force that emerged from the democratic game. This particular feature resembled Balaguer’s political action and raised serious doubts of the PRD’s capability to handle the democratic process without authoritarian practices.²⁰⁷

Table 8. Linkages between Citizens and Parties in the Americas

| | Voted in presidential election % | Voted in legislative election % | Difference in presidential/legislative vote | Sympathize % | Works for the party (total interviewees) % | Works for the party (only sympathizers) % |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------|--|---|
| México | 71.3 | 58.1 | 13.2 | 49.2 | 7.4 | 9.7 |
| Guatemala | 56.5 | 41.1 | 15.4 | 14.7 | 3.8 | 14.2 |
| El Salvador | 67.9 | 65.6 | 2.3 | 31.3 | 8.3 | 15.6 |
| Honduras | 82.5 | 70.3 | 12.2 | 44.2 | 19.9 | 27.3 |
| Nicaragua | 61.2 | 46.8 | 14.4 | 49.8 | 10.9 | 16.8 |
| Costa Rica | 70.8 | 92.7 | -21.9 | 36.2 | 11.2 | 19.6 |

²⁰⁶ Flavio Darío Espinal, “Política, Constitución y Reforma,” 242.

²⁰⁷ Particular attention deserves the civil revolt of April 1984 for the rising costs of food and the disproportionate repression carried out by the Dominican state.

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Panamá | 79.5 | 51.0 | 28.5 | 20.8 | 12.8 | 26.6 |
| Colombia | 60.2 | 46.5 | 13.7 | 28.6 | 11.7 | 25.2 |
| Ecuador | 83.8 | | | | 9.3 | |
| Bolivia | 90.9 | | | | | |
| Perú | 91.8 | 91.8 | 0 | 29.9 | 8.0 | 15.4 |
| Paraguay | 67.6 | | | | 12.1 | |
| Chile | 70.8 | 66.4 | 4.4 | 25.6 | 3.8 | 9.2 |
| Uruguay | 88.9 | | | 53.3 | 15.2 | 21.6 |
| Brasil | 84.1 | | | 34.1 | 14.0 | 23.8 |
| Venezuela | 76.8 | 29.8 | 47 | 32.5 | 13.2 | 26.8 |
| Republica Dominicana | 80.3 | 77.2 | 3.1 | 60.4 | 20.0 | 27.3 |
| Haití | 78.0 | 72.5 | 5.5 | 37.9 | 15.4 | 23.7 |
| Jamaica | 48.0 | 33.1 | 14.9 | 47.1 | 6.8 | 12.9 |
| Guyana | 78.1 | 56.8 | 21.3 | 19.5 | 10.1 | 22.5 |
| Canadá | 84.0 | | | 50.7 | | |
| Estados Unidos | 89.3 | | | 62.2 | | |
| Total Américas | 74.8 | 59.2 | | 37.1 | 11.3 | 20.01 |

Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org, *Barometer of the Americas 2006*, 55

The government of the PRD led by president Blanco was marked by corruption scandals that eroded one of the main bases of legitimacy that the party featured since the remarkable campaign of 1978. The implementation of a stabilization package promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also proved to have remarkable leverage in the decline of support of Blanco's government. By 1986, the party has lost much of its support, especially from the poor and middle classes, and, Joaquin Balaguer again became a viable option to solve the economic and political turmoil of the PRD governments.

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the initial period of the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic. The aim was to provide a

comprehensive analysis of the pacts, actors, movements, and agenda that were at the forefront of the democratic process in its initial period. It also dealt with the convoluted legacy of the Dominican history, stigmatized by the conflation of authoritarian and democratic tendencies.

The Race Factor and the Democratic Transition

In a country like the Dominican Republic, race has outlasted more than any other element and proved to be a critical factor in the constitution of the Dominican nation. Therefore, it seems surprising that the literature on democratic transitions, in general and in the Dominican case, has not dealt with the sudden absence of the treatment of race during the initial democratization of the country.

In order to understand the underlying factors of the initial transition we have to deal with the utilization of race during the Trujillo dictatorship and the Balaguer administration that followed.

Wilfredo Lozano argues that antihaitianism²⁰⁸ was a historical construct in the Dominican Republic. Yet, it is taken to new heights by the Trujillo dictatorship.²⁰⁹ During the regime, the intellectual and political elite

²⁰⁸ In its core, antihaitianism as a state-sponsored ideology from the Trujillo administration revolved around two main arguments: Dominicans as proud heirs of a glorious Hispanic Conquistadores and the courageous Taino Indians (Sagas: 1993, 2000) leading to a rejection of elements of an Afro-American heritage.

²⁰⁹ Several scholars agree with the notion that antihaitianism was not a creation of Trujillo. In this line of argument, Ernesto Sagas in *Race and politics in the Dominican Republic*, considers that antihaitianism was already a part of the Dominican culture. However, it is

became the most important articulator of this anti-Haitian discourse. Therefore, Lozano argues that this has been a historical construction. However, this construction has not molded into what we know today as antihaitianism until the rise of Trujillo. Trujillo is the one who was able to transmit this ideological and political antagonism to Dominicans as a requisite to assume Dominican identity. Yet, Lozano warns that although an obvious thread connects the historical construction with the contemporaneous view of the Haitian issue, both need not be conflated.

Lozano identifies two key builders of this anti-Haitian discourse:

Arturo Peña Battle was the ideological mastermind while Joaquin Balaguer constructed the political argumentation of antihaitianism. The ways in which Balaguer was able to build this discourse proved critical for the way elites began to view the Haitian issue in a contemporaneous key. Two were the argumentations that Balaguer articulated while this discourse remained in effect: first, the demographic problem, in which Balaguer created the perception that Haitians had prolific conditions of procreation while the Dominican Republic was still aiming for population policies granting high preferences for the white population. In this specific sense, the demographic problem was constructed as a great hazard and challenge to resolve if

with Trujillo that it is converted into “state-sponsored ideology”. See Sagas, *Race and Politics*, 46.

Dominicans wanted to preserve their national identity.²¹⁰ The second argument was related to the threat of cultural assimilation. Balaguer became the mastermind who warned against the dangers of the cultural, political and religious assimilation of Haitians into the Dominican identity. He was the one that articulated the idea of the threat of the Haitian invasion, the peaceful occupation and the obscure Haitian aim of uniting the two parts of the island into one. Here, Lozano presents a very appealing thesis that Balaguer did not enforce this discourse of the Trujillo dictatorship along his entire mandate, but rather when his political regime began to present signs of debilitation that put in danger his power of legitimacy. Therefore, while he maintained good and safe relations with Duvalier until the mid-1980s with the “braceros accords,” the anti-Haitian discourse did not prevail. However, when democratic contestations such as the one led by Jose Francisco Peña Gomez began to arise, this discourse became not only prevalent but also a key argument that rescued the intellectual discourse of the Trujillo dictatorship.

The construction of race by Trujillo is not a new creation and dates back to colonial times. In the Dominican Republic, much of the racial card is related to the perception and exultation of an exclusive Hispanic legacy instead of acknowledging an Afro-American legacy, which at the same time works as a key distinction from with the Haitian neighbors. Wooding

²¹⁰ Lozano shows that this demographic perception has been proved wrong and that Haitians have reproduction levels that equate half of Dominicans. Interview with Wilfredo Lozano held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 2008.

emphasizes the historical accent on the Hispanic legacy while pointing out that the crossing of variables of gender, class and ethnicity with the purpose of a consolidating of the democratic process is relatively new in the country.²¹¹

The absence of the treatment of race during the democratic transition is acknowledged by many scholars in the Dominican Republic. Ruben Silie emphasizes that the topic was not part of the agenda of intellectuals in the country. Silie understands this “forgotten factor” as a legacy of “trujillismo” in which the perception of social relations was constructed upon the negation of the Haitian neighbor. Therefore, the study of race or racial relations in the country would represent a contradiction to the Trujillo regime.²¹² Moreover, this legacy emphasized the Indian heritage vis-à-vis the afro-American legacy.

While the treatment of race during the early democratization period seems to be irrelevant to the construction of the democratic foundations in the Dominican Republic, there is a noticeable renaissance in the 1990s of race and ethnicity as key markers of the Dominican identity. According to Lozano, two factors led to this difference in the treatment of race in the country: 1) Jose Francisco Peña Gomez did not exist in 1978 as a palpable political

²¹¹ Interview with Brigitte Wooding held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 2008.

²¹² Interview with Ruben Silie held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 2008.

option. We have to recall here, that Peña Gomez was a leader of the PRD of Haitian decent²¹³; 2) Silie and Lozano stress the fact that although Bosch and Balaguer have strong and different points of view in many respects, they held a very similar position regarding the Haitian issue. Here, Bosch and Balaguer had a similar vision of the state, the first one within a democratic vein and the second one in an authoritarian vein; however, they considered that the Dominican society was unable to organize and thus the state had to build the society from the top down. However, in the 1990s and with Peña Gomez as a real option to take power democratically, the argument was the complete opposite. Peña Gomez believed that the construction of the state was a direct consequence of the organization of society; thus, what proved crucial for this leader was the foundation from the bottom up.²¹⁴ Lozano also provides an economic argument to explain the absence of the treatment of race during the democratic transition of 1978 and the resurgence of race as a factor in the 1990s. The argumentation line emphasizes the role of the state as an economic agent, specifically as a sugar plantation owner who did not encounter any benefits in mounting a race discourse at a time in which the

²¹³ It has been argued that Peña Gomez's parents had to escape the massacre of 1937 and left baby Peña Gomez orphan, event after which, the boy was adopted and raised by a Dominican family.

²¹⁴ Interview with Wilfredo Lozano held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, December 2008.

Haitians were providing the labor force for the economic production of the Dominican Republic.

The discourse of antihaitianism by the Dominican state leads to the problem of the Haitian immigration. Once the Haitian population leaves the sugar plantation –and at the same time the Dominican state concludes its reign as sole owner and administrator of sugar plantations- and immigrates to the cities, where it urbanizes, then the immigration is seen as not only an economic, but a political, social, cultural, and religious threat.²¹⁵

Conclusions

Much of the literature of transitions has completely overlooked the racial and ethnic issue as an underlying factor of a democratization process. We have learned in a contemporary view that the absence of the racial and ethnic debate in a transition in which new rules of the game are put in place and pacts and alliances are reshaped among sectors, has eroded social relations in the Dominican Republic. Moreover, it has had remarkable consequences in electoral politics that followed the country from the 1990s onward while preventing one of the most apt leaders of Dominican political history to become president.

Yet, in academic research, it seems unworthy to engage in counterfactual analysis. The question of what would have happened if the

²¹⁵ Ibid

racial and ethnic debate would have been present in the early transition remains still open.

Chapter 4

Race and Migration

“The erosion of Dominican national identity, steadily under way for more than a century through dealings with the worst of the Haitian population, has made worrying advances. Our racial origins and our tradition as a Spanish people must not stop us from recognizing that our nationality is in danger of disintegration if we do not take drastic measures against the threat to it from the proximity of the Haitian population.”
(Joaquín Balaguer, *La Isla al Revés*, 1984 quoted in James Ferguson’s *“Migration in the Caribbean: Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Beyond,”* *Minority Rights Group International*, 19)

Race and migration are inevitably interconnected in the historic legacy of the Dominican Republic. Both factors have underpinned historical relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and have engendered hostile and distrustful relations between the neighboring countries of Hispaniola. This chapter will address the patterns of migration of the island from the early twentieth century to the present time. It is important to understand the question of migration through the lens of race to grasp the consequences of the absence of the treatment of race during the democratization process in the Dominican Republic.

This chapter will argue that the omission of the subject and its avoidance in the Dominican democratic agenda in the late 1970s have played

an unequivocal role in the migration debate that currently affects both the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

With the aim of revisiting this connection, the chapter first will address the initial periods of foreign migration to the Dominican Republic during the early twentieth century American occupation of the island.

Second, the analysis will provide a political-economic context of the conditions upon which Haitian migration not only was accepted but also stimulated.

Third, the chapter will scrutinize how dictatorial governments in both countries transformed uncontrolled migration patterns into “cooperation agreements.”

Fourth, the chapter will analyze the long-standing equivocal attitude by Dominican governments in providing an acceptable solution for this challenge. Finally, the chapter will conclude with the debate between “jus sanguinis” and “jus solis” in the Dominican Constitution as well as the implications of the unobserved linkage between race and migration and its consequences on the Dominican-Haitian experience.

Previous chapters have scrutinized Haitian-Dominican relations since the initial colonization of Hispaniola by foreign powers, through the Haitian Declaration of Independence, the following Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic, and the Dominican Independence of 1844. In addition, the chapters have buttressed the complex context upon which both

neighboring countries carried out their state building processes. Finally, the chapters also have made clear the construction of deep prejudices among both societies, drawing upon differences in color, race, language, and cultural traits.

Through centuries of coexistence, the Dominican Republic and Haiti have experienced relations of stark conflict and smooth cooperation. The question of Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is a good example of the uneasy relations that feature the history of both countries, as well as its intrinsic relation to factors such as race, nation, culture, and socioeconomic conditions.

Migration as a Response to Economic Needs

The paradox in the island of Hispaniola, which often puzzles both historians and sociologists, is how a country like Haiti, with a booming economy during colonial times and well into the nineteenth century, would turn into the impoverished nation that we see today, beset by poverty, lacking of economic resources, and suffering from instability and structural and institutional weakness. Developing in a parallel but inverted fashion, the Dominican Republic turned from a solitary and abandoned colony of the Spanish Empire with surmounting levels of poverty to an institutionally stable country, with a promising economy –now based fully in services- with acceptable socio-economic conditions. This paradox has been addressed many

times by the literature, but more research needs to be done to provide a thoughtful and convincing argument regarding the decline of Haiti and the rise of the Dominican Republic. Many authors have underscored as a critical turn the Haitian revolution in 1804 and the international isolation that followed this important event. We must recall that Haiti became the one and sole nation that declared itself the first black republic in the region and this generated widespread prejudice in traditional elites who saw the newly independent country as a threat to the pursue of elites' interests.

Migration of Haitian workers to the Dominican Republic began in the early twentieth century during the U.S. occupation of the island. This new modality was in a great deal stimulated in great part by foreign owned (mostly American) sugar mills in the Dominican Republic that were in need of cheap labor to cut the cane on the sugar plantations. This economic activity, however, was far from being exclusively economic, and soon involved many other factors that had to be put in place in order for the system to work. The system that gave overall organization to the sugar industry was "the batey." It is then not surprising that Wooding and Moseley-Williams called "the bateyes" a country within another.²¹⁶ With the aim of providing a Caribbean context, Wooding and Moseley-Williams claim that the Haitian

²¹⁶ Bridget Wooding and Richard Moseley-Williams, "Inmigrantes haitianos y dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana en la Republica Dominicana," published by the Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (CID) and the Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), 2004, 42, http://www.espacinsular.org/IMG/Inmigrantes_haitianos.pdf

migration began in a wide sense after the colonization of 1492. Bearing in mind the extermination of indigenous populations, the region was settled with African slaves by the dominance of colonial powers, including Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, France and Great Britain.²¹⁷ Wooding and Moseley-Williams estimate that Haitian migration for the two following decades after 1919 involved approximately 5.000 Haitian workers (called “braceros”) per year.²¹⁸

Martinez notes that the initial decades of the twentieth century in Hispaniola showed a steady migration of workers from islands such as St. Kitts and Nevis, Antigua, Anguilla, St. Martin and Montserrat.²¹⁹ The contracts of these workers were negotiated mainly by particular plantations for the sugarcane harvest. A portion of these migrants did not return to their countries and decided to stay in Santo Domingo.²²⁰ Martinez highlights the fact that these West Indian workers came to be called by Dominicans as “cocolos” or “ingleses” regardless of whether they came from British, Dutch, French or Danish possessions.²²¹ The incorporation of “cocolos” to the sugar

²¹⁷ Ibid

²¹⁸ Ibid

²¹⁹ Samuel Martinez, “From Hidden Hand to Heavy Hand: Sugar, the State and Migrant Labor in Haiti and the Dominican Republic,” *Latin American Research Review*, 34, No. 1, (1999): 64, 57-84.

²²⁰ Ibid

²²¹ Ibid, Martinez also underscores that the origin of the term “cocolo” is still unknown.

industry was uneasy in the Dominican Republic. They faced challenges from Dominican elites and Dominican workers of the sugarcane plantations.²²²

It is worth mentioning that one of the critical factors driving cane growers and plantation owners was the need not only to have access to cheap labor but also to get workers easily disciplined for the sugarcane harvest. To them, an immigrant labor force had many advantages in this sense over the Dominican nationals. Martinez underscores that West Indians workers “could be obligated to work at night or on Sundays without overtime pay or left idle and hungry for days...”²²³ Although there is no consensus in the literature, most authors agree that by the 1910s, most Dominicans had abandoned the sugar industry.²²⁴

The Stimulation of Haitian Migration

Haitian immigration did not begin to take shape before the U.S. occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1916. At the time, sugar plantations were served by the immigrant labor of workers from the Lesser Antilles. The incorporation of “cocolos” in the sugar industry, however, proved determinant for the abandonment by Dominican workers of the sugarcane plantations. Silie underscores that these workers entered the Dominican Republic with

²²² Ibid

²²³ Ibid, 65

²²⁴ Ibid. See Bryan (1985:242).

some advantages regarding the following Haitian immigrants. First, they came with contracts endorsed by their colonial authority that granted them some kind of legal status²²⁵ in the country.²²⁶ Second, although they encountered some resistance from Dominican elites and Dominican sugarcane workers, they were not rejected by terms of race or ethnicity. Third, most of them returned to their home countries, and only small colonies decided to stay in Santo Domingo. After a few decades of “cocolo” immigration to work in the sugar plantations, cane growers began to stimulate Haitian labor as a source of cheaper labor as well as a more feasible solution to the high levels of man-force required to cut the cane in the extensive sugar plantations in the country.

There is no consensus regarding the number of Haitian workers entering the Dominican Republic before the U.S. occupation of 1916. Martinez observed that by the 1920s the number of Haitians and “cocolos” living on sugarcane plantations was nearly equal.²²⁷ This proportion only increased after that time and by the late 1920s, approximately 100,000 Haitian workers were living in the Dominican Republic.²²⁸ As mentioned

²²⁵ Martinez underscores that many of these workers had consular representation as British subjects; however, these status did not served well once they entered the sugar plantations. Martinez, 65. See Richardson 1983: 128.

²²⁶ Interview with Ruben Silie held in December 2008, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

²²⁷ Martinez, “From Hidden Hand to Heavy Hand,” 66. See also Castillo (1978:53).

²²⁸ Ibid

above, extreme poverty conditions were the underlying reasons for Haitian workers to enter the eastern part of Hispaniola. The deterioration of the bateyes' conditions also constituted a reason for the replacement of West Indian workers (cocolos) for Haitian workers. Cane growers played an unequivocal role in stimulating this new wave of immigration. Cheaper means of transportation, inexpensive labor wages and the possibility to discipline Haitian workers in desperate need of achieving basic living conditions became a mix for the success of a booming commodity in the country.

It is worth noting that the military U.S. military that occupied the island of Hispaniola²²⁹ institutionalized the workers' contracts for the sugar industry in 1919. Although there was an initial immigration of workers from the English-speaking Antilles called "cocolos," the great majority of workers following the earlier decades of the twentieth century for the Dominican sugar industry came from Haiti. As has been addressed elsewhere, among the main reasons that explain the flux of Haitian migration into the Dominican Republic were, on one part, extreme poverty, inequality and lack of opportunities, and on the other part, stable economic and social conditions in the Dominican Republic along with high levels of employment in the sugar industry. This explanation easily can be translated into numbers, as the report of Wooding and Moseley-Williams shows. Building upon data from the

²²⁹ The United States occupied the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924 and Haiti from 1915 to 1934.

World Bank (2002b and 2002c) and the Dominican Census (2002), the authors explain the insurmountable differences in social and economic indicators of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In brief, the Dominican Republic accounts for a GDP per capita four times higher than Haitians (US\$ 2230 to US\$480), and malnutrition and infant mortality is doubled in Haiti compared to the Dominican Republic (73 to 39 infant mortality and 17 to 6 in malnutrition, respectively).²³⁰

The U.S. occupation of Hispaniola, with overlapping time periods in Haiti (1915-1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924) no doubt represented an important point of departure of a further process of centralization that would lead to the Trujillo dictatorship in 1930 and the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti beginning in 1957. With the U.S. occupation and most sugar mills owned by American companies, it was clear that the military governments on both parts of Hispaniola would aim to have a stake in setting the conditions for the recruitment of “braceros” as well as the living conditions in the “bateyes.” As Martinez points out “the central government gained new powers as a result of fiscal reforms and the establishment of national constabularies under U.S. rule.”²³¹ Martinez criticizes the way in which the United States failed to implement advanced labor migration

²³⁰ According to data provided by the World Bank (2002b and 2002c) and the Dominican Census of 2002. Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 2004, 28.

²³¹ Martinez, 67

policies, mostly giving the power to the sugar industrialists to determine the most convenient labor solution.²³²

Economic and political cooperation in dictatorial political regimes

The mid-twentieth century on the island of Hispaniola was featured by a solid network of cooperation among the dictatorships of Francois Duvalier in Haiti and Rafael Leonidas Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. This chain of agreements began in 1952 with the major purpose to “institutionalize” Haitian labor in the sugar industry of the Dominican Republic. By these agreements, Haiti provided a determined number of “braceros”²³³ to the Dominican Republic in exchange for economic compensation that represented a considerable profit for the Haitian government. The agreements took place for three decades. Three actors were critical in setting the stage of the economic and social context during this “chain of exploitation”²³⁴: the sugar mills, the Dominican government and the Haitian government.²³⁵ It is worth mentioning that the agreements proved in the long run to be a source of

²³² Ibid

²³³ “Braceros” is the given name to Haitian people that enters the DR with the purpose to work in the sugar industry during the harvest to cut the sugarcane.

²³⁴ Wooding and Moseley-Williams refer to a “chain of exploitation” as the highly criticized and corrupt system of exploitation originated in 1952 with the infamous agreements between the Duvalier and Trujillo regimes to “contract” sugarcane workers. See Bridget Wooding and Richard Moseley-Williams, “Needed but Unwanted: Haitian Immigrants and Their Descendants in the Dominican Republic,” in *CIIR Briefing*, Catholic Institute for International Relations, 2004, 38.

²³⁵ Ibid

economic profit for both governments sharing the island of Hispaniola, instead of becoming a viable means for the unemployed Haitian population to further a promising life in the Dominican Republic. Most of the Haitian workers were deceived by both governments; they suffered exploitation conditions, lacked of social benefits, and were devoid of legal status that undermined their conditions as immigrants as well as workers.

Wooding and Moseley depict in depth how these agreements took place during at least three decades. First, Haitian workers were recruited as temporary workers through a wide variety of means including radio and trucks equipped with speakers that alerted the Haitian unemployed population to the promising labor conditions in the eastern part of the island. This call for “braceros” took place utilizing all government agencies in Haiti, including President Duvalier, government officials, as well as the well-known CEA²³⁶ (Consejo Estatal del Azucar) in the Dominican Republic. This well-organized contracting organization took into consideration a wide network of subcontractors, including Haitian officials, bureaucracies (renovation of contracts), medical examinations, consular fees, return travel fees, and expenditures by the Haitian Embassy in Santo Domingo.²³⁷

²³⁶ The CEA, Consejo Estatal del Azúcar (State Council of Sugar) was created by Law no. 7 of August 19, 1966. The purpose of the creation of this Council was give autonomy to a new body with the ability to centralize and effectively administer twelve sugar mills that have been previously under the control of the Trujillo administration. See http://www.cea.gov.do/historia/index_ant.htm

²³⁷ Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 40

Wooding and Moseley-Williams note that at least two conditions were not followed in these agreements: the medical examinations of the “braceros” and the return trip fees for Haitian workers to go back to their country.²³⁸ This chain of exploitation was further sophisticated and improved, and underlying corruption and exploitation became rampant in the “bateyes” in the Dominican Republic.

To bear in mind the importance of the labor contracts with the Dominican Republic, we need to consider the people involved, profit expected, and political actors in the agreements per year. Wooding and Moseley-Williams recall that these bilateral agreements were stipulated in American dollars to be paid to Haitian officers in reception points all along the Dominican-Haitian frontier.²³⁹ According to their report, the contract made in 1986 regulated the contracts of 19,000 “braceros” to work in the Dominican sugar industry, providing two million dollars compensation to the Haitian government.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Ibid

²³⁹ Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 40

²⁴⁰ In the report, Wooding and Moseley Williams note that this money was received by the Haitian ambassador on January 18 1986. However, it disappeared when baby doc flew the country in February 7, defaulting with the provision of Haitian workers to the Dominican Republic, and negatively affecting the harvest of 1986. See Wooding and Moseley Williams, 40.

Ferguson also has noted that the driving force behind Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic has been poverty.²⁴¹ Interestingly, Ferguson underscores that the underlying motive for Haitian migration still holds in current patterns of migration that may parallel migratory movements of the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁴² The structural poverty that affects the country show an average annual income of US\$ 500 per capita, as well as a majority of the population living in miserable poverty in rural communities. Many scholars have pointed out the social extremes that seem to be ingrained in this small country of eight million inhabitants. Extremes are shown not only in ethnic composition but also in access to economic resources. In regard to race and ethnicity, only 5 percent of the Haitian population is considered as white or mulatto, while the remaining 95 percent is considered black.²⁴³

In regard to access to economic resources, Ferguson notes that the small mixed-race minority, along with a small proportion of black families, hold the economic power and the international connections with former colonial powers such as France, as well as the U.S.²⁴⁴ It is not difficult to imagine then that the nature of inequality that prevails in the country is

²⁴¹ James Ferguson, "Migration in the Caribbean: Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Beyond," *Minority Rights Group International*, 8.

²⁴² Ibid

²⁴³ Ferguson, 9

²⁴⁴ Ibid

intrinsically related to the way race has influenced the economic and social patterns of the western side of Hispaniola. The history of poverty and social exclusion has been a reality in Haiti through periods of political instability.²⁴⁵

As discussed above, Haitian migration was stimulated by the rise of the sugar industry in the Dominican Republic in the early twentieth century. The international rise of the price of sugar introduced the necessity in Dominican elites to hire cheap labor in order to maintain the productivity. Haitian labor proved to be the cheapest labor available, and by the 1920s, Dominican sugar mills began to “contract”²⁴⁶ Haitian workers to cut the cane in the sugarcane harvest.

It is noteworthy that Haitian migration does not involve only the Dominican Republic, and that the Haitian diaspora has migrated to United States, France, Canada and other Caribbean countries.²⁴⁷ Yet, the destination of the largest Haitian migratory movement has been the Dominican Republic. Ferguson notes that this movement is complex and involves “voluntary and involuntary migration, long and short-term residence in the Dominican Republic, legal and illegal entry, smuggling, expulsions,

²⁴⁵ For a complete picture of the political instability that has haunted the country for decades see Ferguson , 8-9.

²⁴⁶ Needless to underscore is the inhuman conditions in which these Haitian workers were contracted, as well as the permanent abuses they experienced during their stay in the Dominican Republic.

²⁴⁷ Ferguson notes that according to the International Organization of Migration (IOM), the United States is home to 800,000 Haitians, France to 60,000 Haitians and Canada to 40,000 Haitians. See Ferguson, 9.

and a long history of human rights abuses.”²⁴⁸ Ferguson highlights two central paradoxes to the Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic: 1) the necessity of Haitian workers for the Dominican economy and 2) the conditions of poverty and deprivation. The first paradox regards the fact that while the cross-border trafficking has been and is stimulated by economic elites in the Dominican Republic, the Haitians still are considered a racial threat with insurmountable cultural differences by the Dominican population. This first paradox has been addressed by mainstream literature in Haitian-Dominican relations. However, Ferguson contributes to the literature by underscoring the fact that Haitians encounter worse forms of poverty and deprivation conditions in the eastern part of the island than the experienced in their home country, Haiti.²⁴⁹

This dissertation argues that migration patterns from Haiti to the Dominican Republic have changed since the early twentieth century. Although the first migratory flow of Haitian workers was oriented to the sugar industries, the beginning of the twenty-first century shows that this is no longer the case. The decline in the international price of sugar, as well as the reduction of importation quotas from the United States, greatly affected the Dominican economy and that nation had to diversify in order to regain productivity levels of previous decades. The Dominican economy turned into a

²⁴⁸ Ferguson, 9

²⁴⁹ Ibid

“services economy”²⁵⁰ in which construction, tourism, and non-traditional agriculture became the fundamental pillars of this economic turn. Therefore, as noted by Dominican scholars such as Silie and Segura in their seminal work *La Inmigración Haitiana*, Haitian labor began to be utilized in other economic activities, such as construction and tourism.

Keeping in mind that the previous flow of Haitian migrants crossed the border to work in the sugar harvest for temporary periods,²⁵¹ this new turn in the Dominican economy requires a worker population that holds a more permanent status. However, some organizations contest the assumption that the employment pattern has changed in the Dominican Republic.

Ferguson quotes findings by the International Human Rights Clinic at the University of California asserts that males illiterates in their late twenties are classic examples of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, and in spite of acknowledging changes in the agricultural sector since the end of the bilateral agreements as well as the strategies of privatization of the sugar industry, the employment pattern based on sugar cane harvest

²⁵⁰ The OECD defines services as “a diverse group of economic activities not directly associated with the manufacture of goods, mining or agriculture.” Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), “The Service Economy,” Business and Industry Policy Forum Series, 2000, 7.

²⁵¹ Although many Haitian workers decided to stay illegally or without legal status in the Dominican Republic for unlimited periods of time.

remains of important leverage in the country.²⁵² Yet, this study does not underestimate the complex nature of the composition of the Haitian migration, acknowledging the high numbers of Haitian males in the construction industry, manufacturing labor and street-salespersons.²⁵³

Yet, as Ferguson reminds us, the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic is not homogenous. Basic differences denote a wide majority of undocumented migrants devoid of any legal status and a small documented Haitian population, mostly based in urban settings.²⁵⁴

Looking at the economic reality of the Dominican Republic, one may argue that sugar has been the most important commodity since the late nineteenth century. The sugar industry was a fundamental source of profit during the U.S. occupation from 1916 to 1924. As we recalled elsewhere, it was in this period that a more formal and institutionalized recruitment of Haitian “braceros” to cut the sugar cane was implemented. In addition, U.S. corporations controlled at least half of the existing sugar mills with almost all

²⁵² Ferguson, 10. See also International Human Rights Law Clinic, “Unwelcome Guests: A Study of Expulsions of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian Descent from the Dominican Republic to Haiti,” Berkeley, University of California, 2002, 34, < http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Unwelcome_Guests.pdf >

²⁵³ International Human Rights Law Clinic, “Unwelcome Guests: A Study of Expulsions of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian Descent from the Dominican Republic to Haiti,” 34.

²⁵⁴ Ibid

production going to supply U.S. imports quotas.²⁵⁵ According to Ferguson, the number of Haitian workers who entered the Dominican Republic during the U.S. occupation did not diminish after 1924, showing a continuous migratory movement to the eastern part of Hispaniola.²⁵⁶

If we look at the distribution in the labor market of Dominicans and Haitians, we can grasp the underlying and sometimes evident race relations between these neighboring countries, harboring feelings of distrust, contempt and hostility. In the bateyes, Dominicans were employed in supervisory and higher skilled positions with better compensation. The perception that still holds today that Haitians were ill-suited for good jobs and suited only for cutting cane also was in place during the twentieth century. In addition, two modes of production distinguished both countries in the colonial period.

On one hand, a plantation-based economy that boosted Haitian production during its golden years with a well-functioning network of slavery set the foundation of the system. On the other hand, a hacienda mode of production existed in the Dominican Republic, based mostly on cattle ranching and farming, with a more flexible slavery network in which the slave could buy his own freedom.

²⁵⁵ Ferguson notes that by 1925, U.S. corporations controlled 11 sugar mills of the 21 sugar mills in the country. Also, 98% of exports were destined to supply U.S. imports quotas. See Ferguson, 10.

²⁵⁶ The official census of 1935 registered at least 50,000 Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. See Ferguson, 10.

Indeed, these differences did translate years after in the sugar mills of the Dominican Republic. Haitian workers did the hard, humiliating and poorly paid jobs, while most Dominicans refused to cut cane and were employed in higher-skilled jobs within the mills. The race divide also can be seen in the fact that Dominicans drawn from “the poorest sectors of rural society and darker-skinned, were forced by poverty to cut cane.”²⁵⁷

Migration as the Underlying Conundrum

Dominican governments have largely evaded the issue of Haitian migration to the country. There are many reasons for this attitude including a lack of political will to provide an acceptable solution for both parts involved in the controversy, a fear to upset economic elites of the country that depend on Haitian labor supply to further their economic activities, and the desire to avoid a national debate that certainly would incite racial divides in the country. It is important to bear in mind that since the 1980s there has been important international pressure on the way in which Dominicans handle Haitian workers in the bateyes and the sugar industry, calling into question human rights abuses and child labor practices, among others.

The pattern mentioned above has been largely followed by most Dominican governments since the return to the democratic regime in 1978 with the PRD defeat of Joaquin Balaguer. Yet, the Trujillo dictatorship and

²⁵⁷ Ferguson, 10. Ferguson notes that by 1970’s this minority was quickly outnumbered by Haitian “braceros.”

the Balaguer administration are important markers upon which to analyze how Haitian migration and the consequent race relations it engendered were managed. As noted elsewhere, the Trujillo dictatorship signaled an installment of anti-Haitian prejudice as a means to foster Dominican nationalism and with the aim of building the nation-state. The Dominican nation came to be identified with everything that was not Haitian. Therefore, “Dominicanness” was, in essence, a Hispanic, Spanish-speaking and Catholic society. With the aim of differentiating from the Haitian neighbors, Trujillo spread throughout the country a need for Dominicanization, -especially on the frontier-, to prevent the “Haitian enemy” from influencing and contaminating national values.²⁵⁸ Yet, as Ferguson reminds us, Trujillo was highly dependent upon supplies of Haitian workers. Ferguson interestingly addresses how Trujillo’s attitudes changed from the 1937 massacre to the mid-twentieth century, by which time he had taken over many of the sugar mills controlled by American and domestic owners.²⁵⁹

As we have said before, race and migration are clearly entwined in the Dominican reality. The historical, economic, social, and cultural narratives of Hispaniola show these issues at the forefront of the development of the Dominican nation-state and its identity. Nevertheless, in looking at Haitian

²⁵⁸ It is worth mentioning that Trujillo was successful for many years in its aim to strengthen the Dominican nation and their sense of belonging vis a vis the Haitian nation through fear and prejudice.

²⁵⁹ Ferguson, 10

migration to the Dominican Republic, one can omit dealing with the many facets that are impacted by the high influx of Haitians to the neighboring country. Among these facets, race is a significant facet, but by no means the only one. Looking at migratory patterns and domestic impacts, we need to address political, economic, social, racial, and cultural impacts and consequences.

Political impacts are related largely to civil and political rights, including the issue of nationality to Haitian residents and Dominicans born in the Dominican Republic to Haitian parents. The question of nationality, therefore, is the means through which political and civil rights are exercised, including getting access to education, health, social services, right to vote, and the like. As will be developed further in this chapter, the political facet encompasses the judicial debate regarding the appropriateness of “jus solis” as prescribed by the Dominican constitution, or “jus sanguinis.” In any case, we should bear in mind what has been considered a loophole in the Dominican constitution that makes it more difficult to discern the concept of a “person in transit” as the explanation for denying citizenship in the Dominican Republic. Economic impacts involve a manifold of actors, both in the Dominican Republic and in Haiti.

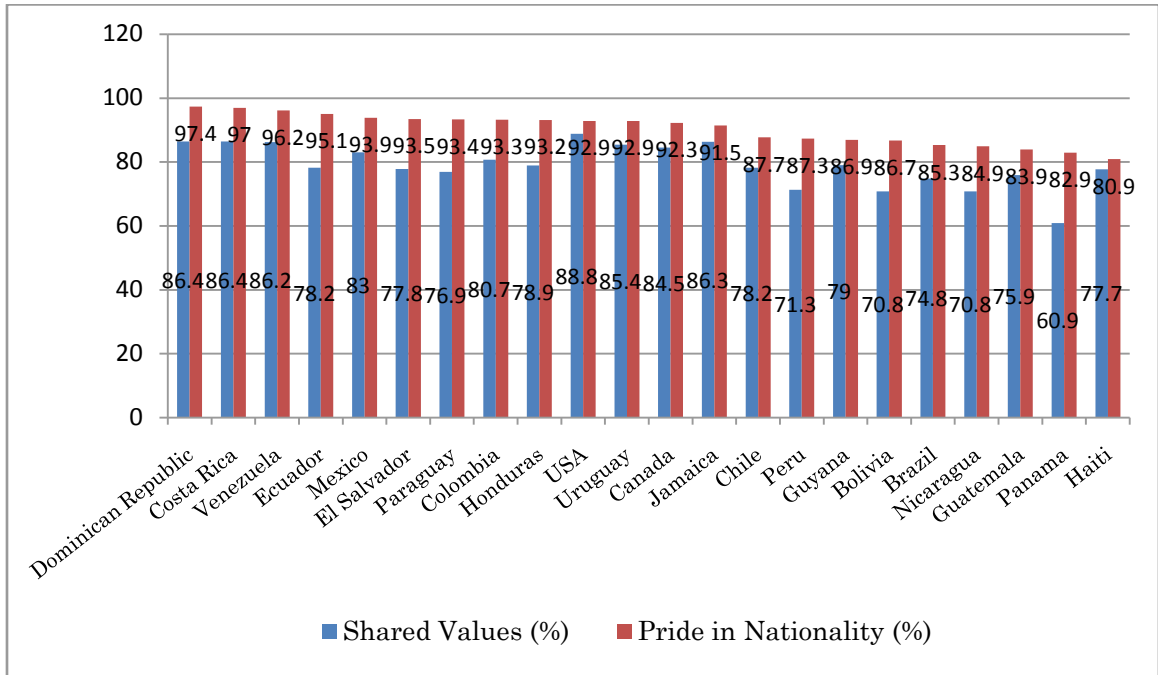
First and foremost, the business community in the Dominican Republic, especially in the sugar, construction, agriculture, and services sector, plays a major role in the impulse of Haitian immigration as a valuable

workforce, in terms of cheap labor as well as a more disciplined and laborious workforce than Dominicans nationals. This has been the case, since the beginning of the sugar industry in the country in the late nineteenth century, with the business community being one of the most ardent advocates for the introduction of Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic. Yet, this position has encountered sporadic contradictions with Dominican governments that attempted to regulate and control Haitian migration with no success.

Social impacts of the Haitian flux of migration to the Dominican Republic involve a wide variety of aspects, including processes of assimilation and acculturation to the Dominican identity, insertion of the foreign community in Dominican customs, and patterns of social interaction.

The race facet, considered of critical importance in this dissertation, plays a major role in the way Dominicans shape their identity vis-à-vis Haitian migration to the country. Both countries share a history of mutual distrust, racial divisiveness and ethnic stereotypes. The Dominican stereotype is deeply entrenched in its Hispanic, Catholic and Spanish-speaking legacy. Therefore, Dominicans define themselves in contraposition to Haiti, the latter understood as a country with African roots, influenced by rites such as voodoo and Creole-speaking.

Figure 9. Level of National Pride and Beliefs in Common Values (Average per country)



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org, *Barometer of the Americas Report 2006*, 207

Finally, the cultural facet involves the social interaction among Haitians and Dominicans, including intermarriages, cohabitation in Dominican neighborhoods, and the like. Thus, Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic has manifold impacts. It has an extended chain of actors, including business and economic elites, the Dominican and Haitian governments, civil society, the complex network of people who informally recruit Haitian workforce, the police, and the armed forces.

The Unobserved Link: Race and Migration

Jus Solis vs. Jus Sanguinis

The debate between the appropriateness of “jus solis” and “jus sanguinis” for non-nationals born in a different home country is not new.²⁶⁰ The discussion has nurtured constitutional debates all over the world and has given rise to constitutional precedents in countries that have experienced a high flux of Haitian immigration. Espinal reminds us of the importance of nationality for the legal implications of state decisions regarding of who is or is not Dominican.²⁶¹ The Dominican conundrum and the debate that has raged over the new Constitution stems from the 2005 decision of the Dominican Supreme Court to limit the “jus solis” already established in the original constitution, denying nationality to Dominicans born in the country to undocumented Haitian immigrants. This decision clearly challenged what had been established in the Dominican constitution, which considers that the principle that rules births in the country is that of “jus solis.”

The current heated debate over this issue also has led to aspirations to expand Dominican nationality to Dominican descendents abroad, therefore

²⁶⁰ *Jus solis* is a clause often included in Latin American constitutions which determines the citizenship principle in regard to the country of residence at the time of birth. On the other hand, *jus sanguinis* is a clause that favors the right to obtain the parents’ citizenship as determined by blood. This practice is utilized more often in Europe and Great Britain. See Wooding and Moseley-Williams, 52.

²⁶¹ Rosario Espinal, “Falacia sobre el Jus Solis y el Jus Sanguinis,” Clave Digital, May 12, 2009 <http://www.clavedigital.com/App_Pages/Opinion/Firmas.aspx?Id_Articulo=14354>

adducing “jus sanguinis” to the right to nationality.²⁶² The issue of “jus sanguinis” and “jus solis” is highly relevant to the Dominican reality. It regulates the right to nationality, as well as determining the ascription of an individual to certain culture, traits and “Dominicanness.” This is not a minor issue in a country where race and nation are so entwined vis-à-vis Haiti. Therefore, there is no doubt that any resolution regarding the right to nationality of children born to parents of Haitian descent becomes a question of national interest.

The recently proclaimed Dominican constitution stipulates both the principle of “jus sanguinis” and a restricted principle of “jus solis”, noting the exception of children born to diplomats residing in the country, to people in transit or to those who reside illegally in the country. The subject is treated in the Dominican Constitution, Chapter 5, Section I “On Nationality.”²⁶³ One conundrum relates to how one determines if a person is “in transit” in the Dominican Republic as a base to denying citizenship to newborns. History shows that government officials have relied largely on this aspect of the article to undermine the right of “jus solis” as a principle to grant citizenship. Therefore, children born in the Dominican Republic to parents of Haitian

²⁶² Ibid

²⁶³ Dominican Constitution, proclaimed in January 26th, 2010, Chapter 5, Section 1. Article 18 notes that nationality is granted to “persons born in the national territory, with the exception of the sons and daughters of foreign members of diplomatic and consular missions, foreign persons in transit or of those who reside illegally in Dominican territory. A foreign person is considered in transit when defined as such in Dominican laws,” trans. Gabriela Hoberman, <http://www.suprema.gov.do/codigos/Constitucion.pdf>

descent residing in the country for decades have been denied the right to obtain birth certificates as Dominicans.

Wooding reminds us that in the Dominican Republic, a “birth certificate has become the evidence of nationality for children who are born in the country.”²⁶⁴ Hence, the registration of a birth certificate also becomes a necessary means to carry out further civil actions and be eligible for rights and protections, such as obtaining a passport, protection against child labor and the like. This puzzle has resulted in literature on “statelessness” as a new status held by these children who cannot achieve Dominican citizenship or easily obtain Haitian citizenship.²⁶⁵

One of the core problems that Dominican governments have failed to address is the “stateless” conditions of many children of Haitian descent residing in the Dominican Republic. These children, although born to Dominican parents, are not considered Dominicans by the country’s law. This attitude has raised questions at the international level, not only from national governments but also from international agencies and non-governmental organizations. The “stateless” condition occurs when a person born in a country is not legally recognized as a national citizen because of national descent and origin. Therefore, race becomes a huge issue in a

²⁶⁴ Bridget Wooding, “Contesting Discrimination and Statelessness in the Dominican Republic,” www.fmreview.org/textOnlyContent/FMR/32/Wooding.doc, 1.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 1-3

country that has completely avoided dealing with the topic during its democratization path.

This chapter argues that the lack of treatment of race during the democratic transition has led to noteworthy consequences in Dominican life. Haitian migration flows to the country represent one example of the impact of race and ethnicity in the eastern part of the island. Therefore, migration and race become definitely become intermingled with economic, social, political, and legal consequences.

Most Dominican governments have reacted to Haitian migration with a series of deportations, that sometimes are periodic police actions to control illegal immigration and from time to time are tantamount to mass deportations of all Haitians residing in the Dominican Republic. In regard to public perception of Haitian workers living in the country, the long-standing racial divide still holds true and Haitians are perceived as “black people” ill-suited for high-skilled jobs that deprive Dominicans of job opportunities in their home country. Yet, the other side of the coin shows that many healthcare facilities of the Dominican Republic have been overwhelmed by Haitians generating anger and prejudice on the Dominican side. On top of this situation, economic elites in the country defend their right to “contract” Haitian workers as a way to access to cheap labor for the kind of jobs Dominicans are not willing to do. This complex picture only highlights the

core of the argument in looking at Dominican-Haitian relations over the last decades.

Looking more specifically to the political side of Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic, Lozano underscores that conservative elites have utilized the idea of the “Haitian threat” to the Dominican nation to weaken liberal elites.²⁶⁶ Assessing the success of this strategy, Lozano highlights how this racial construction did have notable political effects in three critical historical years of the Dominican experience: 1990, 1994, and 1996, in which Francisco Jose Peña Gomez, the most important leader of the PRD of Haitian descent, almost rose to power in 1994 and a political alliance was the only way to defeat him in 1996.²⁶⁷ Indeed, Lozano acknowledges in his analysis that the liberal forces in the country, instead of acting to include the immigration and racial issue in the political agenda of the democratization process, remained silent, thereby, weakening the consolidation of the Dominican democracy.²⁶⁸

In the same line of argumentation, this dissertation argues that the treatment of race as well as issues like the Haitian immigration, -which represents a connected consequence of the way in which race and nation have been constructed on the island of Hispaniola- have been notoriously absent

²⁶⁶ Wilfredo Lozano, *La Paradoja de las Migraciones: El Estado Dominicano frente a la Inmigración Haitiana* (Santo Domingo: Editorial Unibe, Flacso and SJRM, 2005), 17.

²⁶⁷ Ibid

²⁶⁸ Lozano, 18

from the political discourse that set the agenda during the early democratization process.

Digging into the groups that benefit most from racial prejudice against Haitians, priest Regino Martínez identifies the authorities, both military and civilian. According to Martínez, this complex network of “buscones” and “cambistas” often count with the support of some members of the military. This network goes even further and constitutes a permanent fraud of official norms, avoiding official customs control, where both Dominicans and Haitians are involved.²⁶⁹

According to Silie, the current ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Haiti, the treatment of the Haitian issue in the political Dominican context cannot escape the ideological imprint of the Trujillo dictatorship.²⁷⁰ Indeed, Silie underlines that up to the 1980s, Haitian immigration was treated by Dominican government officials as part of the process of “peaceful invasion” instead of looking at it as a migration phenomenon. According to Silie, this had two immediate consequences: first, the challenge in delineating an effective migratory policy, and second, the politicization of the Haitian issue. As we have mentioned often in this dissertation, this politicization to which

²⁶⁹ Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 2005), 148. Interview with Regino Martínez.

²⁷⁰ Ruben Silie, “Aspectos y Variables de las Relaciones entre República Dominicana y Haití,” *Revista Futuros*, III, no. 9, (2005): 6, <<http://www.revistafuturos.info>>

Silie refers was featured in the attacks and antihaitianism sentiments against Jose Francisco Peña Gomez, leader of the PRD, who was accused of promoting the unification of the island of Hispaniola and the Haitianization of the Dominican Republic.²⁷¹

The media also has been considered one of the main “keepers” of anti-Haitian prejudice in the Dominican Republic. Ernesto Sagas has investigated the role of the media in promoting and conveying racial prejudice in the wake of the political campaign of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez.²⁷² A thorough analysis of media outlets shows the power of the media in creating racial narratives in Dominican society, as well as perpetuating the issue of race as a unifying factor against the “invader” enemy. Regino Martinez also highlights that the media in the Dominican Republic has tremendous leverage and on occasion, stimulates much of the racial prejudice entrenched in Dominican society. Martinez highlights that the radio is the communication outlet with greatest reach in the Haitian-Dominican frontier.²⁷³ He further argues that caricatures in the daily *Listin* have a clear racial impact, generating “rejection, death and annulation.”²⁷⁴ A recent article published by the daily *Listin*, suggests that racial stereotypes still are relevant in Dominican society

²⁷¹ Ibid, 7.

²⁷² Sagas, 134-136.

²⁷³ Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 2005), 150. Interview with Raymundo Martínez.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 151.

and serve interest groups well. The article²⁷⁵ refers to the homicide of a farmer in Navarrete presumably by Haitians. It is interesting to note that the article reveals no formal charges against the three Haitians accused of killing the farmer;²⁷⁶ however, the title of the article implies the contrary. In addition, the article underestimates the role of a Dominican involved in the investigation. The article later reveals the difficulties affecting the community of La Joya, where residents have resorted to Migration to repatriate illegal Haitians living in the area. The article illustrates the entrenched racial perception of Haitians; while the Dominican farmer is shown as a white man lying in the floor, with his head full of blood, the presumed aggressors are portrayed as black people, utilizing both fire weapons and “machetes.”²⁷⁷ The continued use of racial stereotypes to portray the differences between Haitians and Dominicans has been a permanent feature in local Dominican media. Although more subtle in contemporary times, the power of the media still is relevant and contributes to racial perceptions –or the absence of them- in Dominican society.

²⁷⁵ Listin, “Acusan a Haitianos de Matar a un Agricultor en Navarrete,” by Ricardo Santana, April 12, 2009, Section La Republica, <http://www.listin.com.do/app/article.aspx?id=123728>

²⁷⁶ In fact, the article then reveals that three Haitians have been released in the investigation of a farmer in Navarrete.

²⁷⁷ The utilization of “machetes” in the illustration of Listin conveys different messages. First, the utilization of the machete implies the use of barbaric and outdated means; as well as a clear reference to the role of Haitians in the Dominican Republic as “picadores” of sugar cane in the Dominican fields.

Regarding the two main parties in the country, the incumbent PLD (Dominican Liberation Party) and the PRD (Dominican Revolutionary Party) are not far apart in their treatment of Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic. Both parties consider that there is an urgent need to give the situation a global and comprehensive solution. Indeed, they argue that the permanent immigration flux across the Dominican-Haitian border needs to be controlled and that the Dominican Republic cannot afford the considerable burden that Haitian immigration brings to its neighboring country. This consensus regarding Haitian immigration becomes clearer when one looks at the discussion of *jus solis* and *jus sanguinis*. Regarding the recent Constitutional Reform Project approved by the *Asamblea Revisora*, the right to nationality in the Dominican Republic is going to be achieved by both *jus sanguinis* and *jus solis*. We need to bear in mind, however, that these principles do not hold equal relevance in the Dominican Constitution, and the principle of “*jus sanguinis*” prevails in the reform over “*jus solis*.”

The decision to reform Article 16 of the previous Constitution sprang from an informal accord between the PLD and PRD leaders, President Leonel Fernandez and Miguel Vargas Maldonado, respectively. Scholars, representatives of civil society, and non-governmental organizations have soundly criticized the agreement for denying the right to nationality to long-time Haitian residents in the Dominican Republic (the article cannot be applied retroactively), as well for facilitating the right to nationality for

Dominicans living abroad. Considering the difficulties in resolving the Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic, we cannot shy away from the 285-04 Immigration Law, which still has not been implemented due to the lack of regulation by the executive branch. Both parties, therefore, show an unmistakable concordance in their respective positions to approach the immigration flux to the Dominican Republic.

The approved article still denies nationality to persons born to foreign diplomats in the country as well as to persons born to foreign persons in transit or residing illegally in the country. Again, the core of the problem is how “transit” is defined. The Article has been delineated in a way that favors the right to nationality to persons claiming *jus sanguinis* instead of those claiming *jus solis*. Therefore, the PLD and the PRD agree that granting nationality to persons of Haitian descent is, at the very least, a hazard to Dominican nationality. In other words, “Dominicanness” continues to be defined generally, as everything that is not from Haitian descent.

To those who have expected that the new constitution would bring fresh solutions to an ancient problem, deception has been the result of years of efforts to arrive at a comprehensive solution to the Haitian immigration problem. Moreover, looking from a historical comparative perspective, we can grasp that in regard to the construction of race and ethnicity and the sense of nation in the Dominican Republic, parties hold a national viewpoint that transcends party fractions and lines while adopting a common strategy. This

was true in 1994 when Balaguer's PRSC and the PLD agreed to unite to halt the vivid possibility of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez becoming president of the Dominican Republic.

We need to bear in mind that the mentioned article, although it considers the right to nationality by the two main mechanisms of *jus solis* and *jus sanguinis*, precludes the right to claim *jus sanguinis* for the children of diplomats residing in the country, as well as foreigners in transit and/or residing illegally in the Dominican Republic.

Espinal argues that both states, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, have responsibility for failing to solve the immigration conundrum that affects the neighboring countries of Hispaniola.²⁷⁸ On one hand, Haiti has proved inefficient in improving its conditions of poverty and corruption, thereby collaborating in the migration of its population in search of better living conditions. On the other hand, Haitian immigration has been promoted by the Dominican business sector and corrupt government officials, who benefit economically from this immigration to the Dominican Republic.²⁷⁹

In analyzing this reality, Espinal concludes that this responsibility is shouldered by both states, and this reality needs to be acknowledged if a comprehensive solution to this puzzle is going to be found. She even goes

²⁷⁸ Rosario Espinal, "Apartheid Constitucional Dominicano," *Las Principales*, <<http://www.lasprincipales.com/?c=122&a=3507>>

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*

further in the analysis, stating that the new constitution, while restricting the jus solis and excluding the possibility to achieve civil rights for persons with Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic, will result in a new form of “Dominican apartheid.”²⁸⁰ In the same line, Lozano argues that the business sector needs to accept responsibility for the way it utilizes Haitian labor and the Dominican state needs to regulate more efficiently the frontier between both countries.²⁸¹

Racial Prejudice and Nationality

The investigation of racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic is entwined with the Dominican identity and construction of nationality. When interviewed regarding racial prejudice in the country, Dominicans tend to agree that there is an extent of racial prejudice against Haitians, black Dominicans, and women. Raymundo Gonzalez claims that these prejudices have different tinctures; while Haitian prejudice is more visible, racial prejudice against women and black Dominicans are more subtle.²⁸² According to Gonzalez, the structure upon which racial prejudice is constructed is

²⁸⁰ Ibid

²⁸¹ Odalis Mejía, “La Migración Necesita un Acuerdo Inteligente y de Responsabilidad,” August 6, 2009, <<http://www.hoy.com.do/encuentro/2009/8/6/288374/La-migracion-necesita-un-acuerdo-inteligente-y-de-responsabilidad>>

²⁸² Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 2005), 99. Interview with Raymundo González.

related to the organization of society, uniting social condition with racial stereotype. In other words, as social inequity is related to economic structure, white people are associated with economic and political elites. Gonzalez explains the relation between racial prejudice and a poor social condition:

“...it has a historic character; the colonial economic structure was racial. The black person was at the same time the equivalent of a slave and the white person was the equivalent of the master, the master is now the businessmen, the owner of the business and the slave is the worker, the engine of the industry and the machinery. In other words, it is a structure that carries from the colony a racial base...”²⁸³

Stressing this form of continuity, Gonzalez emphasizes that the Trujillo dictatorship signals the benchmark where ruptures and continuities were re-signified in Dominican society. As mentioned elsewhere, the paradox of Trujillo’s dictatorship is that there are both a clearly defined pattern of discrimination (against Haitians and people of Haitian descent) and the construction of national unity. According to Gonzalez, this “prejudice re-signification” geared toward Haitians was the most important factor of the twentieth century.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Ibid, 106, trans. Gabriela Hoberman. Raymundo Gonzalez argues that Trujillo claimed that he was the one that emancipated the lower classes from the prejudice and condemnation by the oligarchy. He further argues that R. L. Trujillo as a “mulato” himself that made every attempt to whiten the Dominican population by emulating the white race and despising the African components of Dominicans, attempted to portray himself and the figure representing the Dominican society, without any class distinction. See Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), “*17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*,” 106-108.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

Delfina Alejo de Burgos,²⁸⁵ director of the Foundation for Development of the Dajabon Province (FUNDEPRODA) agrees with Gonzalez about the existence of racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic against the Haitian population. She notes, however, that there have been improvements in the way in which Dominicans deal with Haitian immigration. Noteworthy among these changes are the cultural exchanges between both populations living side by side in the Dominican-Haitian frontier.²⁸⁶

Racialised identities in the Dominican Republic as well as how racism underpins power have also been subjects of interest of mainstream literature.²⁸⁷ Noting the Dominican Republic and Haiti shared history of insularity, Howard asserts that:

“...race is created by attaching social and cultural significance to physical features or colour, and then by grouping individuals according to phenotype and appearance. Colour categories represent arbitrary ascriptions or imposed discontinuities along a continuous spectrum and play an important role in social definition and self-description, becoming a sign of cultural and social affiliation. Degrees of whiteness and blackness not only denote racialised distinctions but also allude to over-generalised European and African ancestries, hence cultural associations and assumed origins...”²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 2005), 131. Interview with Delfina Alejo de Burgos.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 137

²⁸⁷ David Howard, “Development , Racism and Discrimination in the Dominican Republic,” *Development in Practice*, 17, No. 6, (November 2007), 725, <http://pdfserve.informaworld.com/966305_783076156_783711012.pdf>

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 731

This study posits that the racial prejudice and the construction of nationality clearly were entwined during the Trujillo dictatorship and had a sort of continuity during the Balaguer regime. The way in which Dominicans define themselves neglecting their African roots is only one means through which national identity is forged in a country visible marked by historic struggles with its closest neighbor, Haiti. Trujillo masterminded Dominican national unity with the identification of a foreign enemy. The perpetuation of racial prejudice during the Balaguer regime was geared toward the continuation of the homogenization of the Dominican society. Hence, race became a dividing factor during the democratic transition and was obscured by class or ideological struggles. Finally, the cyclical repetition of history - now in the form of illegal migration of an impoverished nation to the Dominican Republic- now reveals that race still continues to leverage Dominican national identity.

Conclusions

As we can grasp well from the beginning of this chapter, Balaguer's initial quote still lives on in the Dominican consciousness. This chapter has attempted to show that nation, race, and migration have been entwined in the Dominican reality. It has been a feature than neither Dominicans nor Haitians had the chance to escape from. Therefore, trying to understand the absence of the treatment of race during the democratization period in the

Dominican Republic has led to the deepening of anti-Haitian sentiments toward the current flux of Haitian immigration in the country, as well as to the Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic with little or no ties to their home country.

The relationship between race and migration is complex. Looking at race as we have shown in previous chapters, it was linked directly to the construction of the Dominican nation-state, beginning with Trujillo in 1930. Trujillo utilized and promoted Dominican nationalism through the supremacy of three basic features: the Hispanic heritage (understood in terms of “whiteness”), Catholicism, and the Spanish language. It is not difficult to compare this three-pillar pyramid with that of its neighboring country, Haiti. On the other side of Hispaniola, the very first black republic constructed its national identity upon an opposite three-pillar pyramid: the African heritage (understood in terms of “blackness”), Creole, and French language. Yet, these differences in nation building do not fully account for the complexity that has characterized the relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Many authors have underscored that both countries underwent periods of stark confrontation and smooth cooperation. This chapter has shown that Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic clearly was promoted by the Dominican business sectors that found Haitian labor a valuable means to boost their sugar industry in the Dominican Republic.

Indeed, this economic activity was officially endorsed by the governments of Haiti and the Dominican Republic during the Trujillo and Duvalier dictatorships and represented a valuable source of income for both countries. Moreover, Haitian immigration continued to be promoted in the Dominican Republic for other industries, such as construction, agriculture and the service sector. This fact must not be overlooked and has to be analyzed in looking at the responsibilities of both parties in dealing with continued movements of people across borders on the island of Hispaniola.

The issue of migration, and its inescapable relationship with race, is at the core of the current debate in the Dominican Republic. A new reform of the Dominican Constitution has been approved, including new mechanisms to achieve Dominican nationality. This issue has opened a lively debate in the Dominican society, including government officials, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. A final agreement between the leading parties stipulated that Dominican nationality can be achieved through *jus solis* or *jus sanguinis*. However, the final article encountered strong opposition from scholars and civil groups who argue that, in reality, the article facilitates the achievement of Dominican nationality for the children of Dominicans living outside the country, while preventing Haitians living in the Dominican Republic or Dominicans of Haitian descent to ever achieve the Dominican nationality.

The debate over the status of persons living in the Dominican Republic with no access to political, social, and civil rights is likely to continue in the near future. A perception that Haitian immigration to the country represents a national threat to the Dominican Republic still is very much alive. Indeed, this sentiment proved to unite parties that disagree on almost every issue.

The link between race and migration remains strong in the Dominican Republic and has notable political effects. While no comprehensive solution is seen in the near future, the political effects will continue to challenge Dominican rule of law and the quality of its democracy.

Chapter 5

Political Implications of Race in the Dominican Republic

The absence of the treatment of race during the incipient democratic transition of the country in the late 1970s had important effects on the political system of the Dominican Republic. Also, the overexposure of racial prejudice and concerns during the decade of the 1990s made a significant imprint in both the Dominican society and its political path over the following periods. Race and ethnicity are primarily understood in the Dominican Republic in direct relation to the relationship with its immediate neighbor on the island of Hispaniola, Haiti.

The Dominican Republic is home to many immigrants, such as the Chinese, Colombian, and French communities. Strikingly, considering the relevance of the way race and ethnicity have played out in Dominican society, the treatment of race in the political agenda of the democratization process is an area that has been poorly explored by mainstream literature.

In light of the case study examined, the questions and assumptions postulated in Chapter 1 can be addressed.

The central research questions of this dissertation are: 1) Why is there an absence of the treatment of race and ethnic allegiances during the democratic transitions in Latin America? 2) How has the absence of ethnic identities affected the nature and depth of democratic transitions?

Four assumptions were offered as possible explanations to the posited research questions. This chapter will address each in detail.

Assumption 1: Race was a dividing factor among groups united to fight a common “authoritarian” enemy during the early democratic transitions.

When dealing with the absence of race and ethnic allegiances during the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic in the late 1970s, most interviewees, including government officials, experts, and representatives of civil society, agreed that race was not an issue to be treated during the democratic transition.²⁸⁹ After examining the legacies of the Trujillo dictatorship and the prolonged leadership of Joaquin Balaguer from 1966 to 1978, a myriad of actors related the political scenario to the common purpose of putting closure to years of authoritarianism in the Balaguer regime. Strikingly, race was not an issue during this incipient democratization period; thus, it was considered a “dividing factor” in the aim of deposing Joaquin Balaguer from the presidency of the Dominican Republic. The remarkable effort by both Trujillo and Balaguer during their tenure in office to avoid dealing with any issue that would threaten an already “homogenously constructed” society is worth noting. After the infamous “El

²⁸⁹ Focus groups held in Santo Domingo and La Romana, Dominican Republic, in December 2008 and September 2009.

Corte”²⁹⁰ under the direct order of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, the treatment of racial perceptions and prejudice was overlooked completely by the Dominican state.

Assumption 2: Ethnic and racial factors were clouded by ideologies and class cleavages that perceived the racial question as a factor that would disappear as countries became more democratic.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, race and ethnic allegiances have not disappeared in the country. This study posits that the avoidance of the treatment of race and ethnicity, and a limited definition of citizenship in the political agenda of the initial democratization period has had many consequences on the political path of the country and the challenges it currently faces.

Avoidance of the racial issue was a deliberate stance by successive Dominican governments since the return to democracy in 1978. The data gathered from in-depth interviews and focus groups reveal that there was a notorious avoidance of the issue by political and economic elites for the fear of touching delicate national interests that would bring high political costs to the parties willing to tackle the issue. This still remains true in the current government of President Leonel Fernandez, which has failed to design a coherent and comprehensive migratory policy to deal with Haitian nationals who enter the country illegally every day.

²⁹⁰ Name utilized to refer to the massacre ordered by Trujillo of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic in 1937.

Milton Ray Guevara,²⁹¹ a former PRD Senator, claimed in an interview with the author that the issue of race was not part of the political agenda at the end of the 1970s. He also stated that by 1978, Balaguer's regime had remained in power for twelve uninterrupted years, featuring a government with administrative corruption and political repression.²⁹²

Ray Guevara recalled that Balaguer was an honest political leader, yet he accepted corrupt practices within his circle of confidence, and adopted, a well-known slogan that "corruption did not enter the doors of his office."²⁹³ By the end of the Balaguer's regime, the country was desperate for a change, and the slogan at the time reflected this sentiment: "the change without violence." If a change without violence was to exist in the Dominican Republic, after a long period of authoritarian government as well as a thirty-one year experience of dictatorship, race was not even considered during this reunification of the country, as it was a factor that probably would cause cleavages, disagreement, and division. Ray Guevara underscores the contrast between Balaguer's core agenda and the new PRD agenda. While the PRSC centered its political agenda on the construction industry, low wages, and a successful clientelistic system, the PRD promoted in the late 1970s a change

²⁹¹ Interview with Milton Ray Guevara held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2009.

²⁹² Ray Guevara notes that many Dominican exiles could not return to the Dominican Republic during the Balaguer regime, as well as he underscores the practice of political prisoners.

²⁹³ Information gathered from the in-depth interview with Milton Ray Guevara, held on September 14th, 2009 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

based on investment in the areas of health, education, agriculture, and job creation, along with the strengthening of public liberties and human rights.

As mentioned above, this assumption suggests that ethnic factors were clouded by ideologies and class cleavages, with the belief that the racial factor would disappear as countries became more democratic. A counterpoint dialogue between Dore Cabral and Veloz Maggiolo placed the notion of ideology and race in the Dominican Republic at the forefront of the analysis. While comparing the literary and political efforts of Joaquin Balaguer and Juan Bosch, Veloz Maggiolo underscores that Bosch constructed a more profound and cohesive literary work than Balaguer. He posits that Bosch was ahead of his time, evolving from “a moderate left and then, after the coup, to more radical positions.”²⁹⁴ He also argues that Bosch was an ideologist who created the very first text of Dominican classes.²⁹⁵ Dore Cabral notes that Bosch was influenced greatly by Puerto Rican writer Eugenio Maria de Hostos, who brought the ideas of positivism to the Dominican Republic.²⁹⁶ Hence, Bosch became the first political leader to address the issue of social

²⁹⁴ Marcio Veloz Maggiolo, “Dialogo de la Lengua,” *Quórum: Revista de Pensamiento Iberoamericano*, 14, 2006, 142

²⁹⁵ Ibid

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 142. Dore Cabral notes that Bosch studied with professors formed by Hostos and later directed an edited book from Hostos in Cuba. Dore Cabral makes a parallelism between the modern thinking that Hostos fostered in the country to that played out by Juan Bosch in the 1960s. See *Dialogo de la Lengua*, 144.

classes without further intricacies, i.e. “machepas”²⁹⁷ to refer to the poor people and “tutumpotes” to refer to the rich classes. As Veloz Maggiolo notes, most of the population to whom Bosch’s discourse was geared in the 1960s involved illiterates as well as farmers from rural regions. Dore Cabral underscores that this change brought to a society still deeply divided between “Trujillistas” and “anti-Trujillistas,” a new understanding -especially for the young population- that what really was a stake was the dichotomy between rich and poor.²⁹⁸

A recent study of racism in the Dominican Republic that collected seventeen in-depth interviews with different personalities of the country puts the issue of race and prejudice at the forefront of the analysis. Carlos Esteban Deive argues that racial prejudice in the Dominican society is rooted in the colonial period, where African slavery was justified by claiming their apparent barbaric and inferior features.²⁹⁹ Racial prejudice in that period was illustrated in a myriad of examples, among which the following stand

²⁹⁷ In the same dialogue, Veloz Maggiolo contributes to Dore’s assessment by noting that the utilization of “hijo de machepa” by Juan Bosch responded to the need to refer to a person that nobody knows, while the utilization of “tutumpote” is generally used to refer to those holding power and economic resources.

²⁹⁸ Dore, *Quórum*, 144.

²⁹⁹ Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 2005), 31. Interview with Carlos Esteban Deive.

out: inability to run for public office, ban to participate in military organizations, lack of possibility to obtain graduate education, and the like.³⁰⁰

The absence of the treatment of race during the Dominican early democratic transition was going to be short-lived and proved to be in full blossom during the 1990s to halt the access of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez to the Dominican presidency. Ray Guevara recalls the fraud implemented in the year 1994 by the Balaguer regime:

“...it was a despicable and racist campaign against Jose Francisco Peña Gomez. Balaguer passed a decree that ordered Dominicans’ radios to play the national anthem at noon...it was obvious that this was against Peña Gomez (due to his Haitian origins), an immaculate man, more Dominican than all Dominican citizens. This country did not experience any other leader with such a grandeur in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He was an extraordinary leader, brilliant; with an integral education...He was a self-taught individual, learning French, Russian, German, Italian and English during his trips. He graduated in La Sorbonne, he was a visionary, and on top of all features, he was a democrat...”³⁰¹

Looking specifically to the groups that benefited from the racist campaign that targeted the candidacy of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez, Carlos Esteban Deives asserts that the powerful and rich classes benefitted most by preventing political access to a candidate with Haitian descent.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 31. Deive, however, notes that these measures did loosen a bit in Santo Domingo, and exceptions being made due to the fact that the white population was being outnumbered by the black and/or mulato population.

³⁰¹ Interview held with Milton Ray Guevara in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in September 2009.

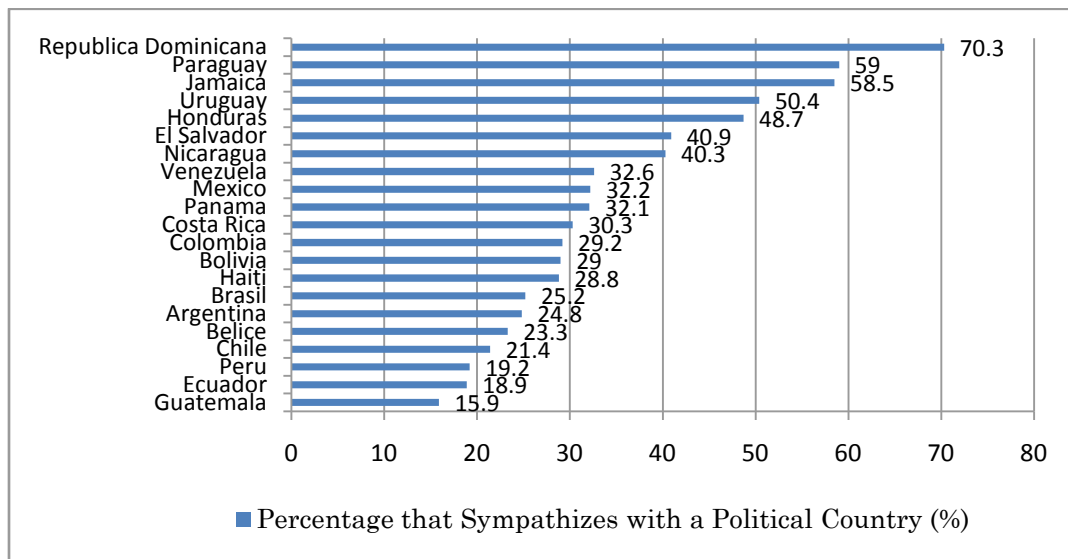
³⁰² Ibid, 32.

Assumption 3: Democratization as spearheaded by the middle class political elite perceived race as secondary to the construction of a representative democracy where representation was political –i.e. through parties- and not through race, class, or ethnicity.

The extensive qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews and focus groups in the country reveal that the democratization process in the Dominican Republic was spearheaded by a middle class political elite that understood the notion of representation in political terms, i.e., considering that parties were to play the determinant role in articulating and mediating interests in society.

According to the Barometer of the Americas 2008,³⁰³ the country has the highest percentage of society identification with a political party.

Figure 10. Percentage that Sympathizes with a Political Party

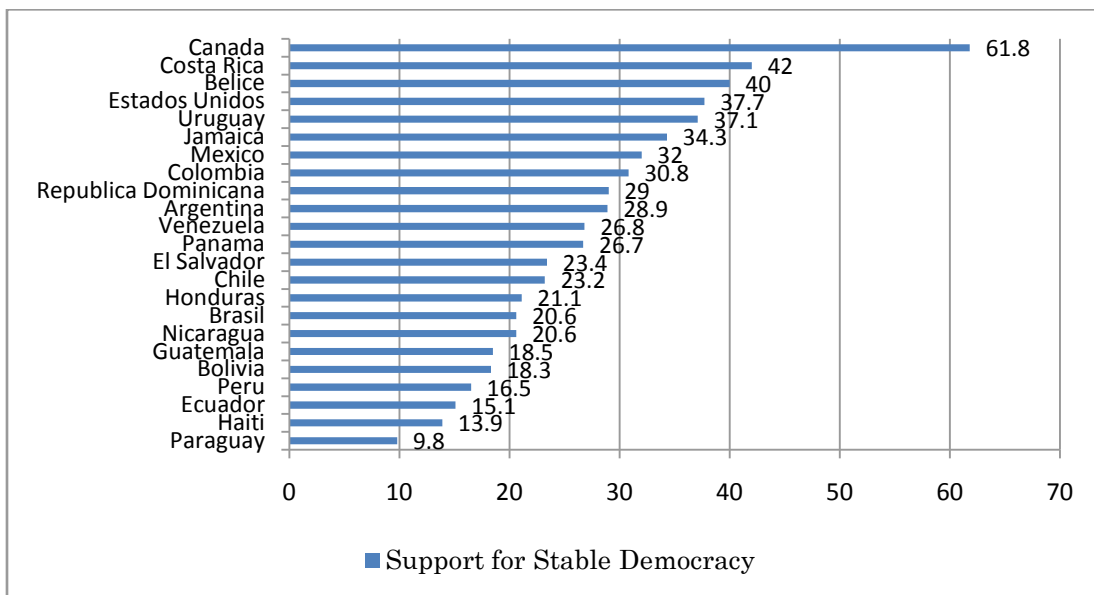


Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), <www.LapopSurveys.org>, *Barometer of the Americas 2008*, 147

³⁰³ The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), <www.LapopSurveys.org>, *Barometer of the Americas 2008*.

Political parties remain at the core of Dominican democracy. Espinal and Morgan argue that three factors lie at the forefront of parties' presence in the country: first, the entrenched mechanisms of electoral fraud purported by the Balaguer's regime following the downfall of the Trujillo dictatorship; second, the incipient democratization process that began in the late 1970s and continued throughout the 1980s where one aim was to strengthen the Dominican electoral system; and third, a nascent civil society that quickly developed the skills and mechanisms to advocate and help sustain a representative democracy, mainly through high levels of electoral participation.³⁰⁴

Figure 11. Support for Stable Democracy (LAC countries)



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), <www.LapopSurveys.org>, *Barometer of the Americas 2008*, 127

³⁰⁴ Rosario Espinal, Jana Morgan and Mitchel A. Seligson (ed. of the Series), "Political Culture of Democracy in Dominican Republic" (Barometer of the Americas, Latin American Public Opinion Project, 2008), 139.

Although support for stable democracy usually is low in Latin American and Caribbean countries, the Dominican Republic falls within the nine countries out of twenty-three countries surveyed in the region that show a medium-high support for stable democracy.

Dominican commitment to participate in electoral processes has remained high for decades in presidential elections (approximately 75 percent). Yet, this is not the case with congressional-municipal elections which are not held simultaneously to presidential elections, where the percentage of absenteeism reaches almost 50 percent.³⁰⁵ This has been one factor leading to the decision to converge the two electoral processes from 2012 onwards. The aim is to increase the level of electoral participation, while appealing to vote along party lines.

Espinal identifies a shift in party identification from the historical period of “solid party identification with caudillo type leaderships” (such as leading figures like Bosch, Balaguer, and Peña Gomez) to a co-participated patronage and clientelistic system.³⁰⁶ Another feature worth noting in the Dominican electoral system has been the political polarization that proved instrumental in both keeping political parties relevant as well as maintaining their dynamism as articulators of interests of the Dominican society.

³⁰⁵ Ibid

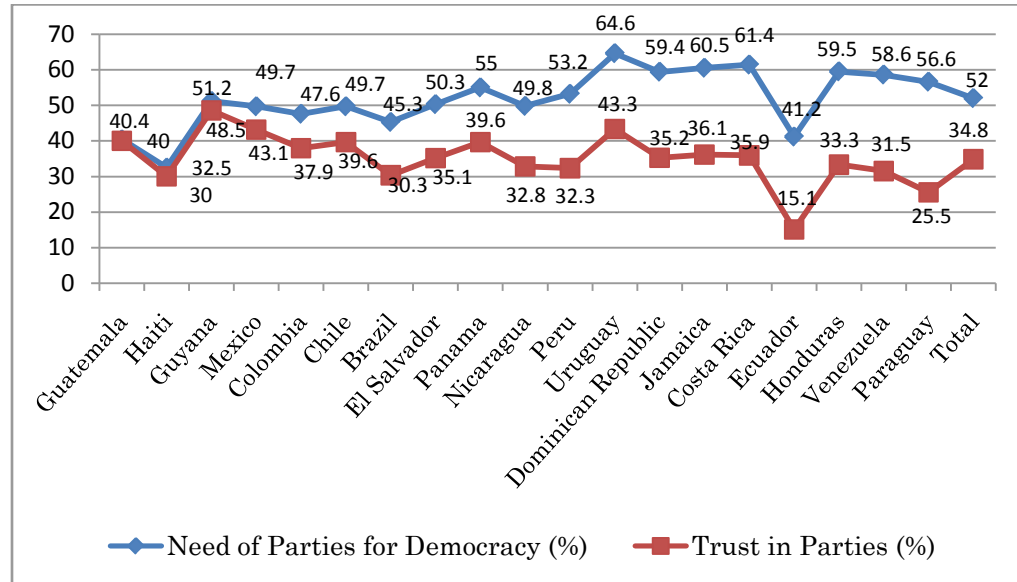
³⁰⁶ Ibid

Since the democratic transition of 1978, political parties continue to play a determinant role in the Dominican society. They are not only the articulators of society vis-à-vis the state, but also are critical players in the decision making process. Political parties in the Dominican Republic are featured by highly clientelistic practices, neopatrimonialism and internal corruption. Three parties, the PRD, PLD, and PRSC have become the axis around which Dominican politics conflated during at least five decades. The polarization in party preferences has been fueled by the charismatic leaderships of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez, Juan Bosch, and Joaquin Balaguer. Data drawn from the Barometer of the Americas 2008 note the opposite tendencies that have featured Dominican politics.³⁰⁷ Yet, Seligson et al. make the caveat of the shift from ideological opposing tendencies in the early transition to a model featured by “patronage and scarce programmatic differences.”³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ The downfall of the Trujillo regime led to a steady and increasing organization of political parties, as major actors of the Dominican society. Ideological viewpoints contributed to a polarized party system, the development of party loyalties and opposing tendencies. During twenty years (1966-1986), party struggle was featured by the leverage of the PRSC (Partido Reformista Socialcristiano) and the PRD (Partido Revolucionario Dominicano). The mid-80's reflected the increasing electoral weight of the PLD with an evolution from an ideological party (with the leadership of Juan Bosch) to a more centrist platform (with new leaderships, such as that of President Leonel Fernandez). See Jana Morgan, Rosario Espinal and Mitchell A. Seligson (Ed. General of the Series) “Political Culture of Democracy in Dominican Republic, 2008: The Impact of Governance,” 2009, 146.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, 140.

Figure 12. Necessity of Parties for Democracy and Level of Trust in Political Parties

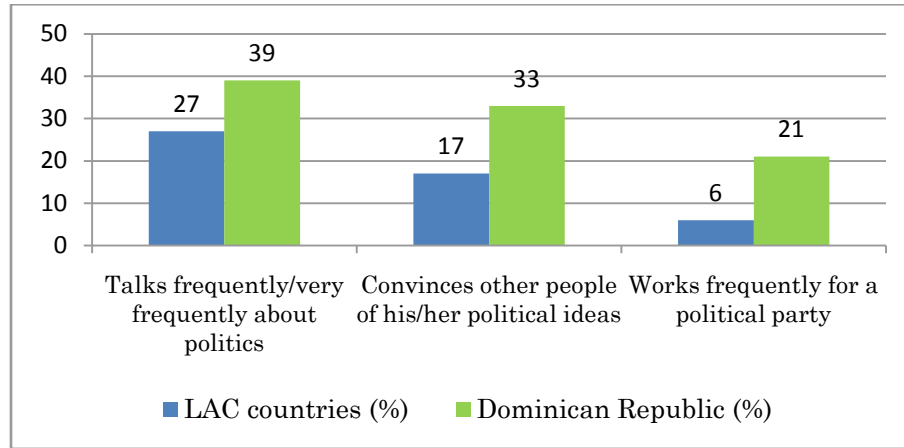


Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), <www.LapopSurveys.org>, *Barometer of the Americas 2006-2007*, 69

The absence of leaderships such as those of Bosch, Balaguer and Peña Gomez have transformed the internal composition of parties as well as their mechanisms of contestation in interparty struggles. Yet, it would be a mistake to assume that political parties have lost their path in being the clearest articulators of interests in society vis-à-vis the Dominican state. They not only have played a critical role in the success of one of the first democratic transitions in the region but also succeeded over the years in becoming the main channels of representative democracy. Moreover, authors such as Espinal note the politicized nature of Dominican society, whether as a means to express ideological preferences or as a means to develop

clientelistic networks scoring higher than the average of Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Figure 13. Level of Politicization of LAC countries and the Dominican Republic

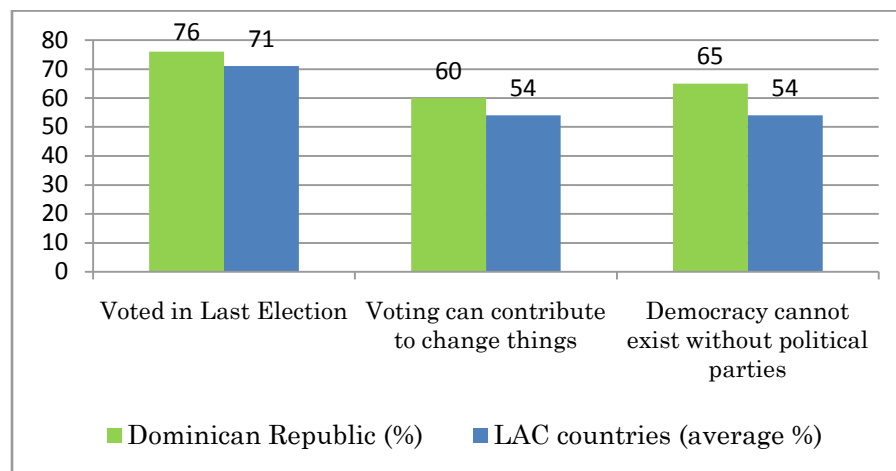


Source: Rosario Espinal, *Democracia Epiléptica en la Sociedad del Clic*, 44 (based on the Latinobarometro 2005 results).

These results reveal that political parties still play a determinant role in Dominican society. The data also show that the level of politicization based on participation, activism, and recruitment are at the core of the Dominican political structure led by the two main political parties of the country, the PRD and the PLD. Similar results can be found in regard to how Dominicans score higher than the average of Latin American countries in voting patterns. Latinobarometro 2005 analyzes trust in voting; the contribution of the vote in changing a state of affairs; and the possibility of a democracy without

political parties.³⁰⁹ These findings suggest that although satisfaction with the functioning of democracy still is low (43 percent) in the Dominican Republic and worst in the average Latin American countries (31 percent) the former still has strong support for the importance of voting to the democratic system as well as that of political parties for the functioning of democracy.³¹⁰

Figure 14. Voting Patterns (Dominican Republic and LAC countries)



Source: Rosario Espinal, *Democracia Epiléptica en la Sociedad del Clic*, 44. (based on Latinobarometro 2005 results)

Political Representation in Dominican Democracy

The question of representation has spearheaded many debates and different theories in the comparative literature. This assumption argues that

³⁰⁹ Rosario Espinal, *Democracia Epiléptica en la Sociedad del Clic*, (Santo Domingo: Editora Taina, 2006), 44.

³¹⁰ See Rosario Espinal, *Democracia*, 44-45, Cit. of Latinobarometro 2005.

democratization was spearheaded by the Dominican middle class, who understood that representation was political -through political parties- instead of built upon cleavages of race, class, or ethnicity. The fact that representation was political tintured much of the development of political parties in Dominican society. Yet, in order to understand why representation was political in the Dominican Republic, we need to lay out what representation is in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Maria A. Martinez argues, following mainstream literature in political theory, that the notion of representation can be viewed as the evolution of a different model of Greek democracy.³¹¹ Therefore, the idea of representation became an option to the complicated mechanisms of the Greek direct democracy, especially in more populated cities where direct participation was becoming more and more challenging. Martinez notes that representative democracy has undergone a series of structural changes since its inception, yet maintains some defining features: selection of representatives by the population; distinct levels of discretion held by representatives in their functions; freedom of expression and public opinion formation; and the use of deliberation and debate to reach decisions.³¹²

³¹¹ María Antonia Martínez, “La Representación Política y la Calidad de la Democracia,” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, 66, No. 4, (Octubre-Diciembre, 2004): 662.

³¹² *Ibid*, 662-663. Cit. of Manin (1998: 237-238).

Manin reminds us that the first phase of representative democracy is intrinsically linked to the spread of parliamentarism.³¹³ This period was featured by limited access to the right to vote, with only selected individuals considered citizens able to choose representatives. In this context of restricted vote, political parties emerged as weak organizations, devoid of institutional cohesiveness and temporal durability.³¹⁴ Martinez reflects on Manin's assertion that the key function of the representative in this period was to be the "man of confidence" instead of a means through which to convey the political will of the people.³¹⁵

Representative democracy, then, made a noteworthy shift during the enfranchising of different groups to have access to the vote. This process took place mainly from the last decades of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century. It was accompanied by great economic, social and political developments that demanded new mechanisms to incorporate new social classes to the political system.³¹⁶ With this new foundation of political parties as articulators of interests of disadvantaged classes, parties became more organized and stable. In contraposition to previous decades, when parties served the interests of the oligarchy and

³¹³ Ibid, 663. See also Manin (1998: 249).

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid. Citation of Manin (1998:249-50)

³¹⁶ Ibid, 664

where most of the population was unable to cast votes, political parties became the fundamental leg of new social movements and classes that demanded participation and inclusive mechanisms in traditional restrictive societies. One benchmark of this shift in political and social functions of political parties is World War II. Political representation then involved political competition based upon programmatic objectives, along with participation understood “as an expression of a group or class identity.”³¹⁷ From this period onwards, representative democracy began to be equated to the role of political parties, as strong institutionalized organizations competing in elections with programmatic agendas.³¹⁸

Martinez notes that this period is challenged by the late 1960s-early 1970s denominated crisis of political representation, where parties and electors became somewhat disconnected and the following factors became visible: parties’ attrition of legitimacy, lack of party identification, electoral volatility and decrease in political participation.³¹⁹

In the Dominican Republic however, the relationship of the citizenry with political parties shows some interesting twists. By the period when some countries were experiencing a “crisis of representation,” the Dominican Republic -perhaps lately due to its past of prolonged dictatorship and

³¹⁷ Ibid

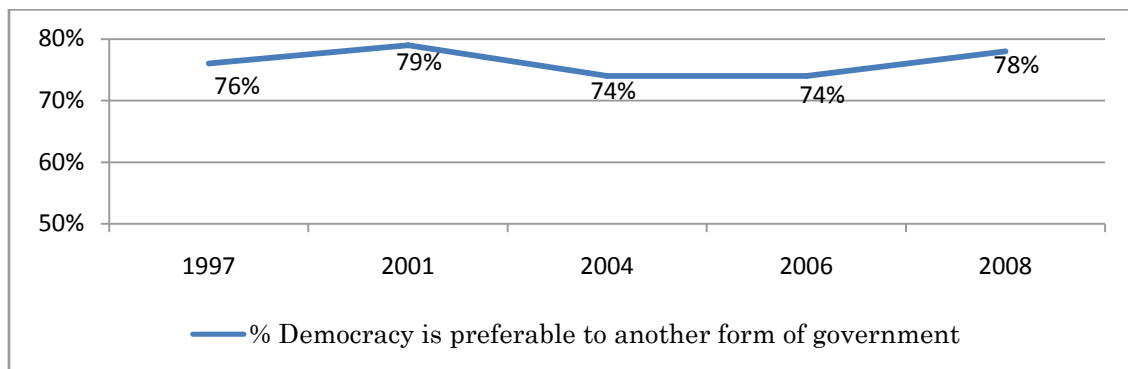
³¹⁸ Ibid. Citation of Thomassen (1994: 252).

³¹⁹ Martinez, 665.

authoritarianism- was undergoing a new revival of political parties. The late 1970s in the country represented the highest point in electorate and parties identification, along with noteworthy levels of political participation.

When speaking about democracy in the Dominican Republic, it is important to look closer at the findings and results of the LAPOP survey on political culture of democracy conducted in the Dominican Republic in 2008.³²⁰ In line with previous years, the findings show that 78 percent of interviewees in the 2008 survey edition consider that democracy is preferable to another form of government.³²¹

Figure 15. Is Democracy Preferable to Other Form of Government



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org, *Barometer of the Americas 2008*, 17

³²⁰ Jana Morgan and Rosario Espinal (General Series Editor Mitchell A. Seligson), “Political Culture of Democracy in Dominican Republic, 2008: The Impact of Governance,” 2009, The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.

³²¹ Ibid, 17

The data gathered by the Barometer of the Americas reveal that Dominicans maintain high levels of support for democracy over any other form of government. This trend has had little variation during the last decade, showing a four point increase from 2006 to 2008. The democratic transition of 1978 represented a point of departure for the return to democracy in Latin American countries and demonstrated a stable force for three decades.³²²

Regarding the Dominican Republic, Galvan asserts that racial prejudice affects democratization as a result of the imposition of a “model” whereby equality under plurality and diversity that feature democracy, are not accepted.³²³

Carlos Andujar refers to the impact of racial prejudice on the structure of political parties in the country by revealing that it is a national problem. Having inherited a conservative discourse regarding racial prejudice, political parties introduce it within their political discourse, whether as a political resource or a campaign instrument.³²⁴ Later, he continues developing how

³²² One caveat noted by the Espinal, Morgan and Seligson relates to the temporary interruption of the country’s institutional order in the 1994 electoral crisis due to the accusation of electoral fraud by the government of Joaquin Balaguer, upon which the government reduced its term from four to two years. See Espinal, Morgan and Seligson, 125, *The AmericasBarometer* by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.

³²³ Interview with Sergia Galvan, *Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM)*. 2005. *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 187.

³²⁴ *Ibid*

social cohesion, nationality and racial prejudice are intertwined in the Dominican reality:

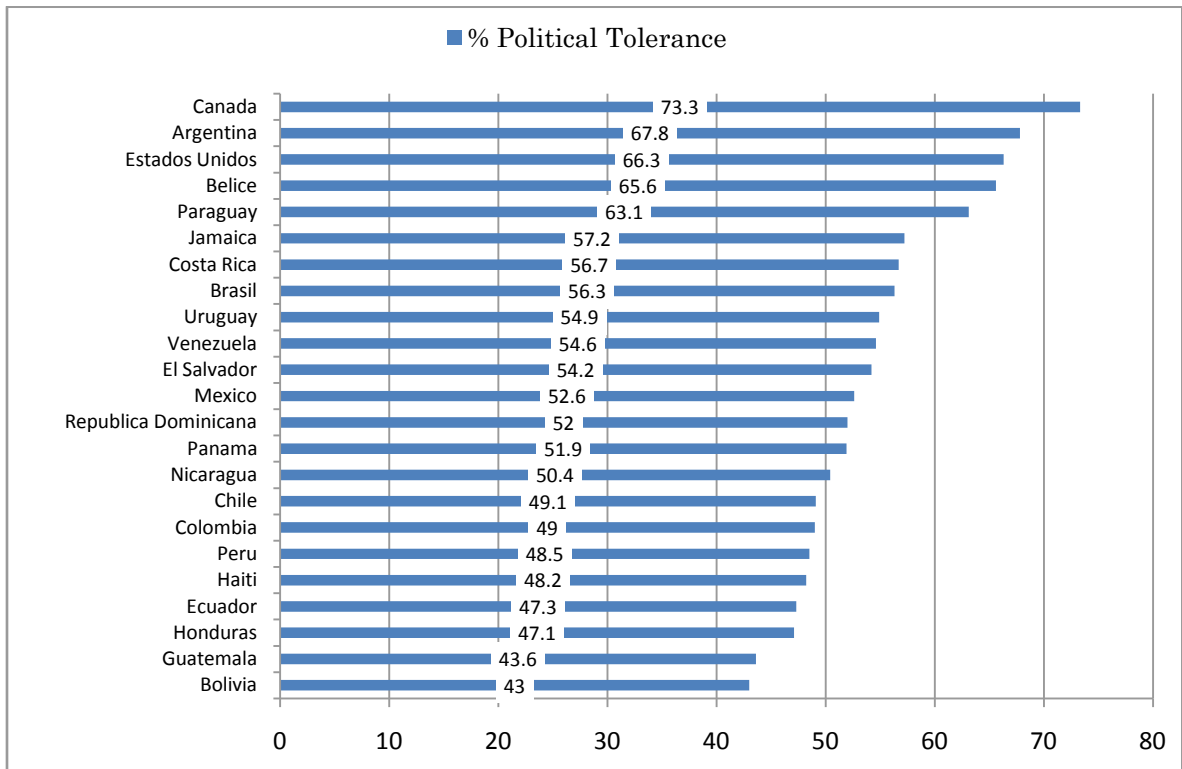
“...social cohesion from the sociological point of view...is part of the conformation of the nation. The construction of the nation appropriates the Haitian issue as a symbol of national cohesion. In other words, it is a well-developed value dealt with by the founders of the ideology of the Dominican state after 1844, to transform it into a cohesive axis...the Republic has to be cohesive around symbols and values...patriotic symbols are part of that and prejudice also was part, not of the patriotic symbols but rather of the ideology of the new nation. I think they used this element to perfection. Today, anti-Haitian prejudice is not a determinant factor of cohesion...I think today it is in the unconscious, forming part of the historic memory. Prejudice is present as a vector of cohesions, as it becomes part of national identity; we are Dominicans, but we are anti-Haitian, that principle still continues to exist in many Dominicans...”³²⁵

In dealing with the democratization process in the Dominican Republic, we need to look at the level of tolerance in the country. Seligson et al. developed a measure on the scale of inclusion (or political tolerance) looking at the following elements: the right to vote of people who do not have in higher consideration the form of government of the country; the right of these people to demonstrate peacefully with the purpose of expressing their viewpoints; the right of these people to seek public office; and the right of these people to pronounce discourses on television.

³²⁵ Interview with Carlos Andujar, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM). 2005. *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 246, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

The following table presents the findings of the measure of political tolerance in comparative perspective (23 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean).

Figure 16. Level of Political Tolerance



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org, *Political Culture of Democracy in Dominican Republic 2008*, 21

The comparative data assessing political tolerance in twenty-three countries of the region suggests that the Dominican Republic does not fare very well in levels of political tolerance. Although its score of 52 % reveals a slightly majority of the population showing moderate to high levels of political tolerance, the findings suggest that this majority is not remarkable.

Considering that the country was one of the first in the region to begin its democratization process, geared to promoting equality and inclusiveness in a political society that experienced different degrees of authoritarianism since the early twentieth century, the findings are not very promising. In fact they suggest that some authoritarianism has made an imprint in Dominican society that has affected the openness and tolerance of its polity.

Assumption 4: The construction of the notion of nation and citizenship had a profound impact on the exclusion of race as a dimension of a new democratic definition of citizenship.

Research on the construction of the Dominican nation and citizenship reveals greater contestation in the information and data gathered during the field research trips to the Dominican Republic. Non-governmental institutions, experts, and scholars working on issues of citizenship, migration, and race continue to warn about entrenched antihaitianism and racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic against its neighbor, Haiti. Many of these sectors argue that the Dominican Republic unwillingly has constructed its identity in contraposition to Haiti. In other words, *Dominicanness* comes to be whatever is not Haitian. This perception relates to the Dominican self-identification as a Catholic, Hispanic, and Spanish-speaking country in stark contraposition to Haiti, a country identified with voodoo religious practices, African descent and Creole-speaking language.

Yet, these assertions are simplifications of a highly complex and intricate reality.

One may wonder about the determinant factors in the Dominican nation-building process. Which have been the sectors promoting these kinds of divisions? What has been the role of the Dominican Republic in promoting the existence of an “external enemy” to reassure its nationalism? To what extent is the Haitian state responsible for depriving protection to Haitian nationals of protection to maintain the status quo? These are questions that have no easy answer, yet, we have to address them in order to avoid oversimplification in the analysis.

While acknowledging that the construction of nation in the Dominican Republic is linked historically to its relationship to Haiti, we have to identify different periods in regard to Dominican-Haitian relations. There is no doubt that Trujillo represented a benchmark in the construction of nation or “Dominicanness” through the utilization of a nationalistic discourse geared to reinforcing cultural, social, political, and ethnic patterns of the Dominican population. This discourse was later buttressed by the “Dominicanization” of the Dominican-Haitian border in order to prevent illegal immigration to the country and all types of intermingling between both populations.

In regard to racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic, Carlos Esteban Deives notes that racial prejudice has been clearly tied to anti-black

prejudice.³²⁶ Where the African ancestry is totally neglected and Indian heritage is venerated, black Dominicans are not able to come to terms with their own identity even in their official documents.³²⁷

Franklin Franco, a professor of history and sociology in the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo (UASD) affirms that racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic is manifested in daily life. Franco identifies three main reasons for the survival of racial prejudice in two centuries of history: the fact that the Dominican Republic obtained its independence from Haiti; the commitment of the Dominican state to maintain levels of racism, illustrated in its educative curricula; and the leverage of racism as an ideological trend with grassroots in Europe, the United States and Latin America.³²⁸

Although the area of education lies beyond the goals of this dissertation, it is worth noting how Franco associates racial prejudice with the way in which the educative curricula has been structured until recently. Indeed, he posits that in the mid-1990s, most textbooks in social studies and Dominican history clearly avoided the issue of slavery, illustrating a high level of racism in the education of the Dominican population. He also stresses

³²⁶ Interview with Carlos Esteban Deives, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM). 2005. *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 35.

³²⁷ As it becomes clear in the interview with Carlos Esteban Deives, Dominicans with African descent cannot identify themselves as black in their official documents, but as Indians.

³²⁸ Ibid

that education in the country historically has been run by the Dominican state, geared toward avoiding the black or African component in the constitution of the Dominican identity.³²⁹

As mentioned above, Haitian emigration to the Dominican Republic has been a critical factor in the relationship between the two countries of Hispaniola for centuries. The absence of the treatment of race during the early democratization of the country has carried many consequences, among which an increasing Haitian population living in the Dominican Republic represents a critical factor to be analyzed. Hence, it is critical to understand and investigate the Dominican perception of the Haitian presence in the country.

The Demometrica Barometer of 2005³³⁰ explored Dominican perceptions of Haitian presence in the country, with a focus on violent events, deportations and labor relations, among others. The data show that out of ten interviewees, eight believe that the entry of Haitians had increased during previous months. It is worth noting that in eight of ten interviewees, 34.2 % assert that this is a very harmful event and 44.9 % argue that is a harmful event for the Dominican Republic. Therefore, almost 80 % of the population considers that the Haitian immigration represents a damaging event for the Dominican Republic. This narrative is not new, however; it is built upon

³²⁹ Ibid, 65.

³³⁰ Demometrica Barometer, "La Emigracion Haitiana," June 2005, 3-4.

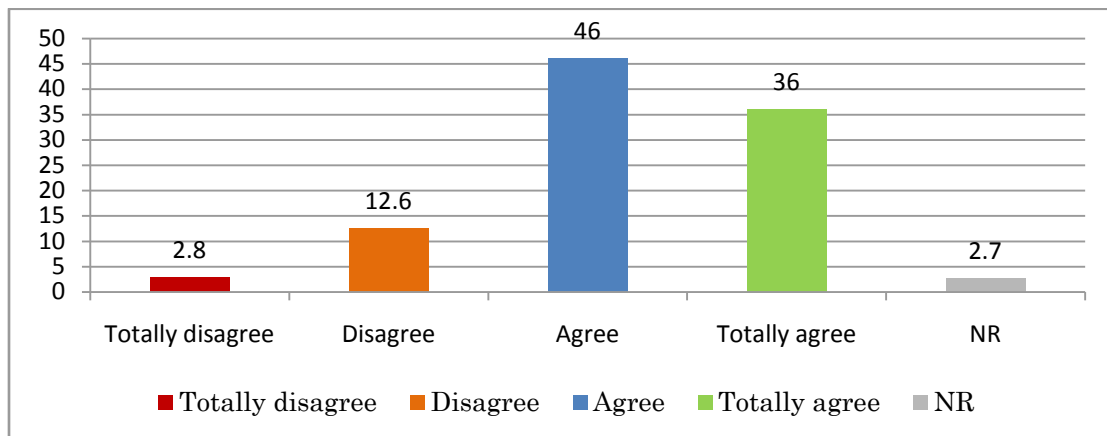
discourses of the Trujillo dictatorship as careful delineated theoretical assumptions during Balaguer's regime aimed at showing Haitian immigration as a direct threat to Dominican nationality and sovereignty, as well as a threat to a possible unification of the island of Hispaniola into one nation. Hence, racial prejudice that frame these perceptions include, first, the perceptions that Haitians "steal jobs from nationals" (59.3 %); followed by the belief that they "carry illnesses" (41.5 %) and that they "increase the levels of delinquency" (29.7 %).³³¹ Some regional differences can be found in these perceptions, however. The interviewees of the east and Santo Domingo are more prone to suggest that Haitians steal jobs from nationals while interviewees in Santiago and el Cibao were more prone to point out that Haitian people bring illnesses to the country.

The data also shows that at least 40 percent of the interviewees declare that they are aware of the last events of violence between Dominican and Haitian communities. As expected, the majority (52.4 %) believe that Haitians are responsible for these acts of violence, and 27.1 % understand that both Dominicans and Haitians are to blame in violent events. In regard to repatriations, a similar pattern can be viewed: 46.9 % of the interviewees said they are aware of the repatriations of Haitian population. However, when it comes to analyzing the acceptance/rejection of these kind of

³³¹ Ibid, 4

measures, 82 % are favorable to repatriations of Haitian people to their home countries (46 % are favorable and 36 % are very favorable).³³²

Figure 17. Position on Repatriation



Source: *Demometrica Barometer*, June 2005, 24

Dealing with the issue of repatriations, it is interesting how political parties' position in repatriations has evolved since last century. In 1991, Vega asserted that although Haitians have become more visible since the 1990s in diversified economic activities in the Dominican Republic, political parties have failed to address the Haitian issue in their political agendas:

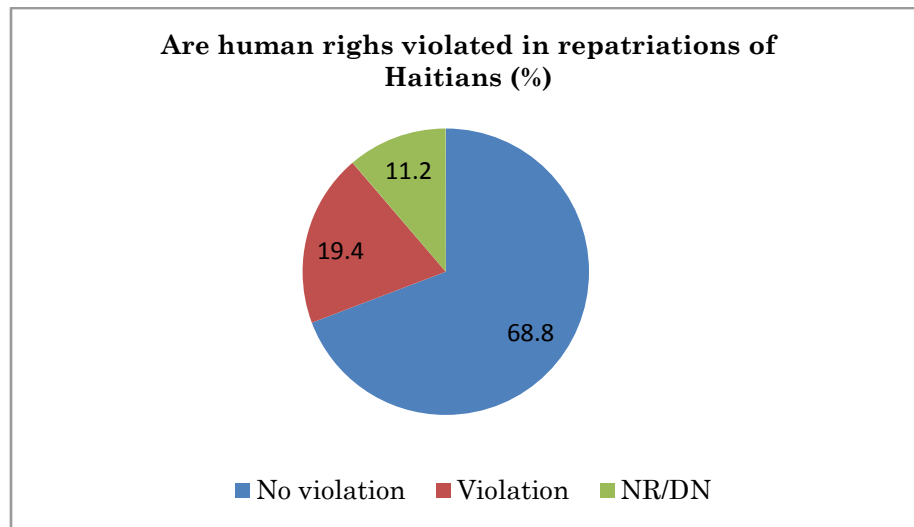
“...in spite of anterior expressions, political parties have not included the Haitian issue in their programs, platforms or electoral promises. At the ideological level, there is a strange but accepted agreement on the issue by the extreme right and the extreme left. Both sectors reject the repatriation of Haitians. The extreme right, responding to the need of cheap labor, diminishing further pressures for rises on wages. The extreme left, acting upon a humanitarian sentiment and also

³³² Ibid, 6

assuming that the Haitian presence could further contribute to their political objectives, stimulating destabilization in the country ...”³³³

The data also reveal that only 19.4 % of the Dominican interviewees consider that human rights are violated in the repatriations of Haitian people to their home countries. These data are relevant not only in understanding Dominican perceptions of Haitian immigrants, but also in unraveling entrenched prejudices in regard to race, ethnicity and color between both communities.

Figure 18. Human Rights Violated in Repatriations of Haitians



Source: *Demométrica Barometer*, June 2005, 27

³³³ Vega, Bernardo. *En la Década Perdida*, (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1991), 248, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

The question of repatriations has been widely discussed in the Dominican society. Repatriations by the Dominican government of illegal Haitian immigrants are one result of the absence of a mature treatment of race relations in the Dominican democratic process.

The information gathered in the focus groups and interviews held in the Dominican Republic³³⁴ in 2008-2009 suggests that there was a notorious absence of the treatment of race and ethnicity during the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic. Francisco Leonardo from the Servicio Jesuita de Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM) asserts that the issue of race was absent from the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic. While there is no clear consciousness of this absence, the gap in the political discourse and the agenda of political parties still is remarkable.³³⁵ Leonardo emphasizes the lack of a coherent national migratory policy that has endured from the incipient transition to the 1990s. Noting the role of the PRD in 1978 in challenging the political predominance of the PRSC from 1966 to 1978 - inculcating in the Dominican imagination the need of civil liberties and hope - the country experienced a stagnation of economic, social and cultural rights. The year 1984 was followed by a second consecutive mandate of the PRD with president Salvador Jorge Blanco. Leonardo stresses the impact of a civil

³³⁴ Focus groups and interviews held in Santo Domingo and La Romana, Dominican Republic, in September 2009.

³³⁵ Interview with Francisco Henry Leonardo, Servicio Jesuita de Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM), Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, held in September 2009.

revolt that erupted during Blanco's government, fueled by social, economic, and political unrest.³³⁶

The process of import substitution in the Dominican Republic, along with the international crisis of the sugar industry, sparked new reforms in the country. According to Leonardo, the international crisis of the sugar industry carried a diversification of Haitian immigration as new labor markets become attractive for this population.³³⁷

The new immigration –previously geographically limited and located in the “bateyes” - became more visible to the national population. The immigrants actively participate in the informal economy, in the industries of construction, agriculture and tourism spread throughout the country.³³⁸

It is very appealing to analyze the logic of migration in the Dominican Republic. Leonardo asserts that:

“...the politics of migration have been developed in the country within a framework of informality. We had in the country until august 16, 2004, a legislation dated back to 1939. This suggests the mismatch between the legal framework and the current context. During the first mandate of President Leonel Fernandez in 1997, a new debate arose regarding the necessity to adequate the legal framework to the new realities, by creating bilateral mechanisms, in which states, civil society and experts would have different levels of participation. After the failure of several proposes, during the government of

³³⁶ Ibid

³³⁷ Leonardo is referring to the shifts experienced in the traditional Haitian immigration for labors in the sugar cane fields to the ‘new Haitian immigration’ (term first used by Ruben Silie, Carlos Segura and Carlos Dore in la “Nueva Inmigración Haitiana”) more diversified in different economic activities, including construction, agriculture and tourism.

³³⁸ Ibid

Hipólito Mejía the new general law of migration 285-04 was promulgated. We have criticized this law, because we think some elements are unconstitutional, especially the way in which “transit” would be interpreted...³³⁹

Here, Leonardo refers to the national and international context that influenced the flux of Haitian immigration to the Dominican Republic. It is worth noting the impact of the collapse of the sugar industry in the late 1980s as well as its impact on the Haitian population.

In answer to the question of whether in the immediate future, 20 or 30 years, a similar situation of the racist and anti-Haitian campaign could be developed in the country, Leonardo begins from the outset by saying that the Dominican population is in its majority “mulata,” with a “white” and a “black” minority. The question for Leonardo refers to how the Dominican national identity has been forged in function of its relation with Haiti. Yet, he includes in the analysis several periods that often are overlooked in dealing with the conformation of the Dominican nation-state. First, he stresses the ephemeral independence, a brief period of negotiation with Jean P. Boyer, the Haitian occupation, the independence of 1844 and the consequent struggles of reconquest, and the struggle with the Spaniard state.

Finally, Leonardo stresses the imbalance between American and Dominican resources and the occupation of Dominican Republic by the U.S. He makes the case that if the country had not been tainted with prejudices

against Haiti, Dominicans should have been able to define its country's identity in relation to all the above mentioned events. Yet, the emphasis has been placed very strongly on the independence from Haiti and some historic loopholes have been avoided in the Dominican culture.

Coming to terms with the impact of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez, Leonardo asserts that Dominicans live in an identity crisis, where the "Afro" component is absent, both from the genetic angle as well as the psychological and cultural one. This crisis is a result of the conscience conflict in which Dominicans are pushed towards assuming a Hispanic and catholic identity.

Milton Ray Guevara considers though, that the fact that the definitive independence of the Dominican Republic was from Haiti carried a great deal of importance. The "ethnic problem" is understood in regard to the relationship to Haiti, obscuring the fact that the Dominican Republic has received immigration from several groups, including Cubans, Colombians, Chinese, French and the like. Yet, Ray Guevara agrees with Francisco Leonardo about in the lack of a coherent policy toward Haiti by Dominican governments, stressing the fact that Haitian immigration has been considered a pragmatic issue.

In an article published in the newspaper *Listin* in 1991 called "The Impossible Divorce,"³⁴⁰ Ray Guevara asserted that in the case of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, divorce was impossible, but separation was

³⁴⁰ Milton Ray Guevara, "The Impossible Divorce," *Listin Diario*, 1991.

obligatory. Hence, the Dominican Republic should strive for a state policy of cooperation regarding its closest neighbor. The current situation with uncontrolled migration, feeds the myth of the “peaceful invasion” in different areas, such as construction, tourism and agriculture, and the result is a deepening of tensions and negative perceptions. He further asserts that the Dominican Labor Code -in which he played a critical role as one of its authors- established that 80 % of the company’s payroll employees should be Dominican citizens, and only 20 % could be foreigners. Ray Guevara claims, as do many others, that this code is violated in all areas, except the industrial sector, where many employers challenge this normative by fostering Haitian immigration to keep wages low while increasing companies’ profit.³⁴¹

Leonardo argues that conservative sectors in Dominican society have promoted racial prejudice against Haitians and utilized it to its advantage. This prejudice is also grounded in the economic interests behind these attitudes, where these political sectors represent economic stakeholders of the sugar industry, foreign investment in agriculture, and tourism. While Haitian labor continues to provide higher margins of profit in all economic activities, there would be a high stake carried out by these sectors to maintain the status quo.

³⁴¹ Ray Guevara also notes the deactivation of the “Comisión Mixta,” as a sign of the disinterest on the issue of migration and race in the Dominican Republic. He underscores the necessity of improving coordination relations between both countries, with joint programs, especially in forestry and industrial plants. Interview with Milton Ray Guevara in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2009.

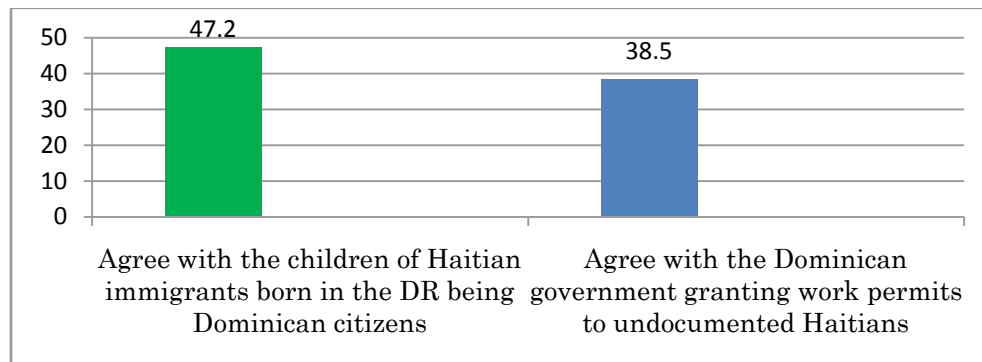
In response to the question whether one could say there are inclusive mechanisms in the Dominican Republic –or whether the country is democratic if a considerable part of the population living there Haitian immigrants are not visible- Leonardo highlights that the country has survived all kinds of turmoil selling to the Dominican society the myth of the “peaceful invasion.” Hence, when dealing with inclusive mechanisms in the eastern side of Hispaniola, high political costs and national interests could be at stake and rarely are utilized by the majority of the Dominican society. There is a lack of a truthful analysis in migratory politics, considering the costs of Haitian immigration as well as the advantages to Dominican society.

Looking at the political actors of the early democratization process, Leonardo asserts from the outset that the twelve year period that followed Balaguer’s government in 1966 was marred by soaring political instability. He argues that the first incipient attempt to establish democracy in the country took place in 1962 after the civil war. All the political forces that were forced out of power continued to develop strengths from the opposition during Balaguer’s regime. Leonardo stresses the political repression that fostered the aim for democracy and liberty in Dominican society. Among the actors, he identifies the international community (which was driven mainly by the international role and presence of the PRD), the discontent in the

population, the socioeconomic situation and the leadership of Antonio Guzmán as the articulator of the democratic change.³⁴²

Looking into the sentiments of antihaitianism and the way they served the consolidation of the Dominican state, Leonardo recognizes that in the Dominican Republic there is an anti-Haitian sentiment and a racial prejudice. On top of that situation, there is a loophole of the Dominican state in institutionalizing a coherent migratory policy, where issues of education, political participation, nationality and migration all become intermingled.

Figure 19. Attitudes Regarding the Rights of Haitians in the Dominican Republic



Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org, *Barometer of the Americas 2008 Report*, 176

Public Perception of Haitian Immigrants

The findings of LAPOP's survey for the Dominican Republic in 2008 show that the Dominican society is divided about whether Haitian

³⁴² Interview held with Francisco Henry Leonardo (Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes SJRM) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2009.

immigrants born in the Dominican Republic should be able to obtain the Dominican citizenship (47.2 %). The question regarding permits to undocumented Haitians granted by the Dominican government suggests, however, a slightly different perception. Opinions regarding the job market and the possibility of Haitian immigrants to obtain work permits imply a more sensitive issue. Hence, this question presumes that more than the majority of the Dominican society opposes granting work permits for undocumented Haitian immigrants. Yet, it is important to note that in the majority of the in-depth interviews, opinions and perceptions regarding the Haitian migration issue do not support LAPOP's 2008 findings.

The data reveal high levels of entrenched antihaitianism in Dominican society that lead to negative perceptions about the rights of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic. The qualitative analysis of the data collected suggests that at least two thirds of the population opposes the granting work permits to undocumented Haitians in the country as well as citizenship rights to children born to Haitian parents. Although this latter position has been widely contested by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and groups of civil society, the denial of citizenship rights of children born to Haitian parents has prevailed in the recent crafting of the new Constitution of the Dominican Republic. Sergia Galván, director of Colectiva Mujer y Salud in the Dominican Republic, criticizes the common view of conflating racism with racial prejudice. She

firmly asserts that racial prejudice must not be understood only as an expression of racism.³⁴³ Galván affirms that Dominican Republic has a deep-rooted racial prejudice, represented in life perspectives, ideal imageries, and the way in which corporeity and the idea of beauty and its ethno-racial referents are managed. Galván's understanding of racial prejudice is interesting, as she incorporates the psychological component of racism as a determinant of the way in which individuals relate, both at the group and individual levels. Galván takes a comprehensive approach to the analysis of racial prejudice, incorporating the labor market and the construction of identity.

Looking into the politics of racial prejudice and how they impacted the nature of the democratization period in the Dominican Republic, Galvan notes that:

“...if you ask why Peña Gomez, the most charismatic leader of the country, who had the power of the masses, the power of the population, never had access to real power. It was precisely for the racism. But that same leader used to say: “I am black but with a white soul”...there is little analysis in the issue of racism, and they do not question what they have to do with racial prejudice. All candidates of left-wing parties have attempted to “whiten” themselves in their campaign pictures...”³⁴⁴

³⁴³ Interview with Sergia Galván, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM). 2005. *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 179.

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 185-186, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

The issue of racial prejudice in the Dominican Republic is still a complex, multi-dimensional and intricate challenge that must be addressed to reach a healthy democracy in a country often besieged by internal struggles, international demands, and contested identities.

Strategic Culture in Hispaniola

In a very recent report, Gamarra and Fonseca³⁴⁵ analyze Haitian strategic culture, with a special emphasis in how it relates to its closest neighbor, the Dominican Republic. The report is built upon the SOUTHCOM definition of strategic culture as “the combination of internal and external influences and experiences –geographic, historical, cultural, economic, political, and military – that shape and influence the way a country understands its relationship to the rest of the world and how a state will behave in the international community.”³⁴⁶

The viewpoint of strategic culture is relevant to the study of the relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti as a framework for an understanding of the influence of racial and ethnic factors in the democratization process of both countries of Hispaniola. The report begins by noting that race and color are formative influences in the way Haiti defines

³⁴⁵ Eduardo Gamarra and Brian Fonseca. Workshop held in Miami on August 6, 2009, “Haitian Strategic Culture,” Florida International University (Applied Research Center).

³⁴⁶ Ibid

its strategic culture. The historical and cultural narratives of the country, including an overwhelmingly number of slaves in a flourishing plantation economy and the revolutionary violence that the country had to went through to achieve independence, led to a deep culture of anti-slavery advocacy and revolutionary change.³⁴⁷ Gamarra and Fonseca stress from the outset that race, color, and nationalism have been structural factors in the relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Regino Martinez, a priest working with Dominican and Haitian communities, highlights the spontaneous rejection to everything “black” as well as prejudice against a specific group, Haitians. Part of this rejection is rooted in the contradiction where black Dominicans do not consider themselves as “black,” and label themselves as Indian, with an ample variety of shades in between that clearly excludes that of blackness. Interestingly, Martinez blames not only the Dominican elite but also the Haitian elite in perpetuating this prejudice to their advantage.³⁴⁸ Looking to how Dominicans construe their identity, Regino Martinez argues that:

“There is a “dominicanness” of European and catholic identity that neglects and rejects everything all things black and African. I think that an ideological structure has been constructed to give roots and rationalize our identity...Our identity is defined negatively, I am not Haitian therefore, I am Dominican. What features me as a Dominican, what gives me

³⁴⁷ Ibid, 3

³⁴⁸ Interview with Regino Martínez, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM). 2005. *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 143.

identity as a Dominican, is not the fact of not being Haitian, are the values that we have cultivated...”³⁴⁹

And he later continues:

“...what divide us is not something external, what divide us from the Haitian people is the ideological frontier implanted from the top-down...the same necessities that affect the poor Haitian are experienced by the poor Dominican...A double moral has been created in Dominicans vis a vis the Haitian population. What does this mean? It means that I use them when they are necessary and I reject them when I don't need them anymore, and when there is a necessity of a shared identity, then, nothing can be done because we are different. And we need each other, both populations need each other. Haitians without Dominicans, nor Dominican without Haitians cannot reach anything. This is what the decision makers and leaders are not willing to understand...”³⁵⁰

According to Gamarra and Fonseca, a myriad of factors cut across this contested relationship including the persistent aim for the indivisibility of Hispaniola; the consequent twenty-two year domination rule of Haiti over the Dominican Republic; the striking fact that the latter, instead of gaining independence from a foreign colonial power did so from Haiti; racial attitudes and violent coexistence; and a steady Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic. Gamarra et al. assert that Haiti is a predatory state, and that Haitian elites have been the keepers of Haitian strategic culture, by the pursuit of “self-aggrandizement and unfettered self-interest.”³⁵¹ Looking into the economic elites of the Dominican Republic, a parallelism can be drawn, in

³⁴⁹ Ibid, 144, trans. Gabriela Hoberman.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, 145.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 4.

regard to the way in which these elites perpetuate themselves to pursue their self-interest. These elites have been the target of the attacks of non-governmental and international organizations on the issue of illegal Haitian immigration, blaming them of being the keepers of the status quo and failing to adapt to a more regulated migratory framework. Some scholars have criticized the role of elites in keeping Dominican salaries depressed, while hiring Haitian people, who often are willing to take harder jobs for meager salaries. Hence, elites carry a great deal of responsibility on both sides of Hispaniola. In an in-depth interview, Luis Alberto Reynoso, from the Association of Development of the Frontier Region, described the role of the elites in promoting racial prejudices against the population of the Dominican Republic.³⁵² He asserts that Haitians are taught in from very early education that Dominicans are the culprits of centuries of mistreatment and annexation of their territories.

Bearing in mind that currently Haiti currently is incapable of effectively exercising sovereignty over its national territory without the support of the international community, one must consider the burden that this places on its closest neighboring country. In looking at Haitian and Dominican relations, the study argues that in the process of nation-building of the Dominican Republic, two elements became critical to differentiate

³⁵² Interview with Luis Alberto Reynoso, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes (SJRM). 2005. *17 Opiniones sobre Racismo en Republica Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y Migrantes, 176.

themselves from anything Haitian: color and language.³⁵³ Events followed with the Trujillo regime, the “Dominicanization” of the frontier, the massacre of 1937, and the permanent migration of Haitian nationals to the Dominican Republic in pursuit of jobs, food, and stability.

Ray Guevara underscores the lack of institutions in Haiti. He suggests that this weakness of the Haitian state poses a threat to the Dominican Republic and that the latter is not able to absorb the burden. He points out the role of the international community and the need for Haitian elites to act responsibly in dealing with the problems the Haitian nation faces.³⁵⁴

Our fourth assumption suggested that the process of nation-building and citizenship had a profound impact of the exclusion of race as a dimension of a new democratic definition of citizenship. As we have noted elsewhere in this chapter, the construction of nation and what constitutes “Dominicanness” were a central feature of the Trujillo dictatorship. He was able to bring together national values, a sense of belongingness, common goals, and a new direction to Dominican society. These values were imposed from the top down in a way that did not tolerate any kind of dissent or deviation from what the state imposed. Hence, the identification of the Dominican Republic as a nation has been clearly linked to that period. Also, the issue of race become secondary and only serves the goal to differentiate

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Interview with Milton Ray Guevara held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2009.

the Dominican Republic from Haiti. Therefore, race became “homogenous” in a country clearly shaped by Haitian immigration, altering perceptions and attitudes vis-à-vis the incoming population. The transition in the late 1970s, however, promised a more inclusive and democratic understanding of citizenship. The incumbent PRD, the first governing party of the transition, came to power with the firm promise to achieve social and political equality, with the promotion of civil and political liberties. After assessing more than three decades following the transition, new challenges begin to arise if a new understanding of citizenship is to be achieved in the country. Yet, the findings have shown that still the notion of citizenship still is related to the neglect of the race issue as an integrative part of the life of Dominicans.

In other words, Dominicans still construct their nationality in contraposition to what they neglect themselves to be, rather than looking into what they really are. This explains, at least in part, why the Dominican political elite remain reluctant to provide a solid legal framework for the treatment of illegal immigration and for Haitians born in the Dominican Republic. Also, we need to acknowledge that the Haitian state does carry a burden by overlooking the fate of their nationals in their neighboring country. A complex variety of economic, social, and political interests has worked against political elites of both sides of Hispaniola to change the status quo.

Conclusions

This chapter tested the argument that the absence of the treatment of race and ethnic allegiances during the early democratic transition of the Dominican Republic impacted the nature of the democratization process in the country. The first assumption laid out in this dissertation argued that race was considered a dividing factor among groups united against a common authoritarian enemy during the early democratic transition.

Data extracted from interviews and focus groups in the Dominican Republic reveal that race was not even considered a “factor” in the democratic agenda of the late 1970s. This finding is somewhat surprising in a country characterized by entrenched racial relations not only vis-à-vis Haiti, its neighboring country, but also in terms of everything not considered white and Hispanic within the country.

How it is possible that the treatment of race was an absent factor during the initial democratic transition? In a country where insularity and geopolitical conditions so deeply configured racial and social divisiveness between Dominican Republic and Haiti, how did race become so underplayed by political and economic elites? All interviews and focus groups held in the Dominican Republic suggest that race was not important in the late 1970s. Several reasons account for this, including the need to eliminate authoritarian processes and to define the repositories of political power, i.e., political parties. Why did Dominican political and economic elites succeed in

their discourses pitting against Dominicans and Haitians in the Dominican Republic maintaining a limited definition of citizenship? If race and ethnicity were absent during the aforementioned period, how do we explain its resurgence in the 1990s against the leadership of Jose Francisco Peña Gomez?

This dissertation argues that not dealing with racial issues during the transition had numerous consequences in the post-transition or consolidation phase. One of the main consequences was an ill-designed migratory policy that followed democratization in the country, and resulted in serious challenges including issues such as nationality; citizenship; human, civil and political rights; and international demands regarding fair treatment to Haitian nationals.

The second assumption posited that ethnic and racial factors were clouded by ideologies and class cleavages that perceived the racial question as a factor that would disappear as countries became more democratic. Continuing the same line of argumentation of my first assumption, because ethnic allegiances and race were not even considered as relevant factors during the democratization processes, ideological and class cleavages became prominent in Dominican politics.

At the time that many countries in Latin America were undergoing repressive military governments and a period of an obscured civil society, the Dominican Republic became one of the first countries to embrace democracy

with a solid party system that would endure for decades. Hence, political parties became the main articulators of societal interests and the main keepers of representative democracy.

My third assumption was that democratization as spearheaded by the middle class political elite perceived race as secondary to the construction of a representative democracy where representation was political –i.e., through parties- and not through race, class or ethnicity. This observation is derived from the data and the analysis that democratization in the Dominican Republic was promoted by the middle class with a bottom-up approach. The peasantry also was involved in this process after breaking its alliance with the Balaguer regime, supporting the PRD, which became a party with a mass spectrum, able to garner support from very different sectors in Dominican society.

Democratization was driven by the middle class political elite who understood democracy through parties instead of race, class, or ethnicity. The country arrived to the democratic transition of 1978, with a triad of political parties that became for many years the articulators and mediators of Dominican society's interests. The PRD, the PLD, and the PRSC functioned until recently as a political triadic that disputed the support of Dominicans nationals. Only very recently, the Reformism (PRSC) has lost its base of support, leaving political contestation in a bipartisan model, the incumbent PLD and the PRD.

Finally, the fourth assumption claimed that the construction of the notion of nation and citizenship had a profound impact on the exclusion of race as a dimension of a new democratic definition of citizenship. The data reveals that Dominicans have constructed in many dimensions, their identity, vis-à-vis Haiti. The dictatorship incarnated by Rafael Leónidas Trujillo was the twentieth century's first attempt to provide a notion of "Dominicanness" in the country. As stated elsewhere, this "identity" was featured by Hispanic roots, Spanish-speaking language and Catholic heritage. However, this identity was imposed from above, geared toward unifying the country around core values against a constructed "foreign invader."

Of course, these notions of citizenship responded to the needs of the Trujillo regime, and involved no participation and mobilization of the Dominican's civil society. The state controlled everything in society, and all those who acted outside the reach of the state were considered dissidents and therefore, subject to repression and assassination. It is with the democratic transition of 1978, where a new democratic opening was beginning to be crafted by the actors involved in the process. Yet, we need to call the attention to the twenty-year period that began in 1978 and continued until the late 1990s. It is during the 1990s that we begin to see the consequences of the absence of the treatment of race and ethnic allegiances as part of the democratic agenda of the late 1970s. The 1990s represent the benchmark of a

“revival” of sentiments of antihaitianism and prejudice against not only Haitian immigrants in the country, but also Dominicans of Haitian descent.

The fraudulent 1994 presidential election in which Peña Gomez was the target of a dirty, anti-Haitian and racist campaign by Joaquin Balaguer stands out as a clear-cut example. This election has tainted Dominican politics for decades, and has had very important consequences including the reduction of Balaguer’s term to two years instead of four; the reform of the constitution, separate elections, administrative and financial independence and the creation of the Consejo Nacional de la Magistratura (which would elect the judges instead of them being designated by the senators).³⁵⁵

All in all, the most interesting finding is that in contrast to what was expected regarding the impact of the absence of race during the transition in a new definition of citizenship in the Dominican Republic, such a transformation did not occur. Put differently, Dominican society still constructs its identity narratives in a very similar fashion to that promoted by the Trujillato. This is not to say that authoritarian values still remain strong in Dominican society but it suggests that Haiti still constitutes a valid mirror from which to seek differentiation in terms of race and ethnicity. This assumption is grounded on the fact that Dominicans are still unable, with notable exceptions, to embrace their African ancestries and mixed descent in favor of a pure Hispanic and Indian heritage. Although mainstream

³⁵⁵ Interview with Milton Ray Guevara, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, September 2009.

scholarship has struggled to change these points of view, general perceptions are oriented toward an entrenched racial prejudice. This racial prejudice halted the formation of a new understanding of citizenship since the democratization period initiated in the late 1970s.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This dissertation opened with two main research objectives: to investigate the absence of race during the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic and to analyze the consequences of this absence in the following democratization period. This study identified a series of central assumptions that were focused on the impact of race, class, ideology, representativeness, ethnicity, and nation-building in the Dominican democratization process.

This concluding chapter revisits these assumptions, the findings of the study, and finally identifies future challenges for research on democratization.

This study tested the following assumptions:

- *Assumption 1:* Race was considered a dividing factor among groups united against a common “authoritarian” enemy during the early democratic transitions.
- *Assumption 2:* Ethnic and racial factors were obscured by more salient ideological disputes and evident class cleavages. Actors perceived the racial question as a factor that would disappear as countries became more democratic.

- Assumption 3: Democratization, as spearheaded by the middle class political elite, perceived race as a secondary issue to the construction of a representative democracy where representation was political –i.e. through parties- and not through race, class, or ethnicity.
- Assumption 4: The construction of the notion of nation and citizenship had a profound impact on the exclusion of race as a dimension of a new democratic definition of citizenship.

Findings

One of the general findings of this study is that the discussion of race was completely absent from the political agenda during the democratic transition of the Dominican Republic. Yet, in contrast to conventional wisdom, the reason for this absence does not seem related to the drive of Dominican society to fight a common authoritarian enemy and avoid divisions in society. Instead, the explanation rests with the underestimation of race and ethnicity during the Trujillato and Balaguer period that followed, in which the “homogenization” of the Dominican population led to the neglect of the issue of race as a structural layer of Dominican society. In other words, the treatment of race was manipulated by both governments as a valuable instrument for the constitution of a Dominican nationality separate and contrasting to Haiti. On the domestic political battlefield, race and ethnicity were ignored and underestimated during the early transition.

I assumed in this dissertation that ethnic and racial factors were clouded by class and ideological cleavages which perceived that racial issues would disappear as the country became more democratic. While the issues of race and ethnicity certainly were absent from the democratization agenda, the issue of class took the same path. As Dore argued, the notion of “class” was introduced into the Dominican political debate by Juan Bosch, who transformed the discussion between the so-called “Trujillistas” and “anti-Trujillistas” that prevailed following the assassination of the dictator. In the end, the key question in the national debate was which group held the economic resources and which group didn’t.³⁵⁶

The PRD, hence, became the party of the masses, the one that committed to reach all classes with a multi-oriented agenda, including social and political rights, education, health, transparency and equality. It was a political party inspired in years of political exile, with prominent international exposure through its relation with the social democratic Socialist International movement.

Joaquin Balaguer, who ruled the country for twelve years (1966-1978) until the political liberalization that occurred in 1978, became one the most prominent leaders of the twentieth century despite having been a major player in the Trujillo dictatorship, with active roles in different positions. Under Balaguer, the treatment of the racial narratives that were structural

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

to the construction of the Dominican nationality was not different than that under Trujillo. Following “el Corte,”³⁵⁷ Dominican civil society returned to its dormancy. Although race still constituted an obvious structural element of Dominican life, it was completely obscured, dismissed and denied by all principal social and political actors.

Trujillo and Balaguer succeeded in conveying the perception of an indigenous and Hispanic legacy, a firm cult to Catholicism, and the veneration of the Spanish language. Their discourse, initiated by Trujillo and later continued by Balaguer, was geared toward the ethnic homogenization of the Dominican society, dismissing and neglecting all elements that fell outside of what was considered normalcy. If we examine the second part of my second assumption which argues that racial factors would disappear as the country became more democratic, clearly this has yet to be the result of the democratization process of the Dominican Republic. Ethnicity and race are structural factors, entwined in a complex myriad of factors that intervened in the nation-building process of the country. The paradox of race in the Dominican Republic is that it was both everything and absent from the

³⁵⁷ This is the name by which the massacre of 1937 is known. As noted in earlier chapters, Trujillo ordered the assassination of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans with Haitian descent. This ruthless decision was allegedly enforced by Dominican soldiers who asked Haitians they encountered to pronounce the word “parsley”, a challenging word to pronounce for Franco-phones or Creole-speaking people. As has been the norm in other massacres worldwide, Dominican soldiers later explained that they had to get completely drunk to comply with the dictator’s orders. Although the numbers of victims of this horrible crime are still being contested, it is estimated that 6,000 people died in this massacre, including women and children. This number could have been much higher if Dominicans had not helped Haitians escaping from the military squads. See Bernardo Vega, *En la Década Perdida* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1991), 212-214.

Dominican reality after the late 1970s. Also, we need to understand that the Dominican Republic is a very clientelistic and neopatrimonial polity. And in a country where political actors engage in a zero-sum game, race and politics become conflated in the Dominican reality. One vivid experience was the racial tint that invaded the electoral campaign of 1994, impeding the access to the presidency for Jose Francisco Peña Gomez. When no major issues could be raised against a qualified and charismatic candidate, the major source of attacks centered on his Haitian descent. On the other hand, and as every politician in the country, Peña Gomez was surrounded in the campaign by numerous rumors, involving international ties to illegal networks as well as the attacks on his Haitian origins. We need to recall here that the Haitian prejudice against Peña Gomez was grounded on the fact that his biological parents were Haitians (some have even claimed that his parents were assassinated during Trujillo's massacre in 1937). Looking at constitutional constraints to run for office for Dominicans of Haitian descent, the Dominican Constitution stipulated that children born to foreigners "in transit" are not Dominicans and cannot run for any office. As mentioned in earlier chapters, this issue has sparked a heated debate on what is considered to be "in transit," especially for Dominicans of Haitian descent and children born in the Dominican Republic who may never have lived or visited Haiti. It must also be acknowledged that mulattos and light-skinned Dominican blacks have served as presidents of the Dominican Republic, including Ulises Heureaux,

Rafael Trujillo, and even Leonel Fernandez. Yet, all three neglected their mixed descent and considered themselves to be “Indian.” This self-identification speaks of the difficulty of Dominicans to transcend nationalistic discourses put in place during the Trujillato that neglect any kind of African descent in the Dominican population. For the 1994 election, Peña Gomez was in a favorable position to win the presidential bid, as well-documented public opinion polls showed at the time. But it appears that the underlying issue in the 1994 presidential election was not about eliminating a black man from achieving office but more about preventing a person of direct Haitian ancestry from reaching the presidency.

Assumption three suggested that democratization in the Dominican Republic was spearheaded by a middle class political elite who understood that representative democracy was political -through parties- where race, class, and ethnicity played a secondary role. Chapter 5 dealt extensively with the democratization process in the Dominican Republic, the historical role and leverage of political parties, and how party identification shaped the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy in the late 1970s. Dominicans agree on the crucial role of political parties in the Dominican reality.³⁵⁸ Parties became critical for laying the foundations of the democratic experience, both at the institutional and informal arenas.

³⁵⁸ Focus groups held on September 2009 in Santo Domingo and La Romana, Dominican Republic.

At the institutional level, parties were the main articulators of societal interests. In a society still deeply affected by the downfall of the Trujillato experience, political parties contributed to the framework for an orderly transition for the Dominican society. In regard to the informal arena, parties become the unequivocal ground for contested interests, recruitment and propaganda diffusion. In this context; race, ethnicity, and class were completely obscured by the ascendancy of political parties, and representative democracy came to be understood as political contestation by parties institutionally organized to convey and articulate society's interests. In fact, considering the zero-sum nature of Dominican politics and the high stakes during the 1994-96 period it could be argued that the interests were oriented not only to prevent a person of direct Haitian ancestry from reaching the presidency but also to halt the PRD from returning to office.³⁵⁹

Finally, my fourth assumption claimed that the construction of nation and citizenship had a deep impact on the exclusion of race as a dimension of a new democratic definition of citizenship. Here, the research reveals mixed results. The nation-building process initiated under the Trujillato in which a particular notion of nation and citizenship was delineated, was a framework

³⁵⁹ The PRD lost an important opportunity in 1978 to deliver its campaign promises. On the one hand, the Guzman administration ended up with a veil of suspicion on corruption charges, and President Guzman committed suicide in his office. On the other hand, president Salvador Jorge Blanco faced many social and economic challenges which debilitated his administration. Also, his government was filled with corruption scandals and he ended up in jail on corruption charges. These missed opportunities gave space to the reelection of Joaquin Balaguer in 1986.

that eluded the notion of race and ethnicity for the purpose of homogenizing the Dominican population. Yet, race became relevant to draw what “Dominicanness” meant externally; in other words, in contrast to the Haitian neighbor. This perception of nation and citizenship, -or to put differently-, who belongs and who doesn’t, has not changed dramatically since the downfall of the Trujillo regime. This is not to say that the Dominican Republic still revolves around a pervasive racial prejudice against the Haitian population living in the country. It implies that in the end, democratization has done little to expand citizenship in the Dominican Republic.

To some extent, the fact that Haitians are part of the permanent landscape in industries such as agriculture, construction, tourism, and more as street salespeople has made the race component more visible in the Dominican Republic. So far, it has been impossible to fully control the flow of illegal immigrants, and yet, as in the U.S., there is a strong sense that the only way to target undocumented Haitians is to go after employers who hire them. This connects with the central argument of this dissertation that argues that the absence of race during the democratic transition responds to vested political and economic interests to prevent more democratic citizenship regimes. The issue of children born to Haitian parents in the Dominican Republic is still unsolved and remains confusing under the new

Constitution of the Dominican Republic, which has gone in effect since January 2010.

The Dominican experience highlights how the failure to design and apply a coherent migratory policy resulted in the very large presence of individuals born in the Dominican Republic of Haitian descent, who are vulnerable and do not belong to either Haiti nor the Dominican Republic. This state of affairs not only deprives these sectors from civil, political, economic, and social rights but also works against the development of a more mature and inclusive democracy in the Dominican Republic. This situation has been ignited by contradictory forces such as a business sector that profits from a large, cheap, disciplined and available labor force, and neo-nationalists groups³⁶⁰ that provide a nationalistic ideological framework that hides racial prejudice but whose aim is to eliminate all Haitian presence in the country.

In the final analysis, both Haiti and the Dominican Republic carry the burden of encountering solutions to end networks of corruption throughout the border, strengthen their institutional channels, and apply consistent migratory policies to smooth the democratic process and enhance the quality of living of their respective populations.

³⁶⁰ Carlos Dore Cabral defines neo-nationalists as a group of individuals, including intellectuals, lawyers, politicians, communicators and members of civic organizations, unified around the idea that Haiti's proximity and migratory process is the main threat for the Dominican Republic. See Carlos Dore Cabral. 2006. "*Lo Nuevo y lo Viejo en la Inmigración Haitiana.*" GLOBAL, 3, (8) (Enero- Febrero), 5-10.

Implications of the Study

This dissertation has many implications for the study of race and democratization in Latin America and the Caribbean and elsewhere. Democratic transitions in the region have sparked a great deal of attention since the 1970s. Yet, explanations have been focused on elite dynamics, economic development, diffusion effect, regime collapse and foreign intervention. Mainstream literature has come short in achieving a multi-dimensional approach to democratization. With the aim of filling part of this gap, this study has demonstrated that race and ethnicity, - structural factors of every society-, have been overlooked in the democratic debates. This absence has affected both the negotiating terms of the transition as well as the expansion of citizenship.

The theoretical and empirical findings have shown that the cost of overlooking such important factors have negatively impacted the nature of democracy in the Dominican Republic. In fact, the findings demonstrated that democratization has had mixed results in the region. These processes revolved around three main drivers: eliminate military governments, halt authoritarian processes and identify the repositories of power (political parties). The focus on elite-centered approaches has precluded a broader understanding of transitions as well as the post-transition or consolidation periods. The findings from the Dominican Republic should contribute to other

studies on race and democratization and raise important theoretical research questions for students of democratization.

Future Research

This study has shown that democratization has done little to expand citizenship in the Dominican Republic. Political and economic elites have challenged democratizing processes by maintaining a limited definition of citizenship since the beginning of the democratization period. The research demonstrates that race was absent from the democratic debate during the transition period. In contrast to conventional wisdom, the findings show that the reasons for this absence were not a result of the need to eliminate authoritarian processes in the country.

The research suggests that both the Dominican and Haitian states carry the burden of ill-designed migratory policies that led to an unprotected migration that has multiple consequences.

An obvious limitation of the research has been the lack of consistent quantitative data regarding the impact of race on democracy. Race has been overlooked by mainstream literature as an independent variable in the process of democratization and needs to be taken into account as one of the structural layers of democratic transitions.

Future lines of inquiry should delve into cross-national studies across the Latin American region and elsewhere. Especially appealing is the

comparison with reverse nation-building, where race and ethnicity determined the pace of the democratic transition in heterogeneous societies. It also would be interesting to examine comparative studies in countries where the racial phenomenon is not only African Diaspora populations. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, the countries in the Andes with a large presence of indigenous groups are appealing cases to investigate the impact of race on democratization. Cross-regionally, this research could be expanded with a study of the absence of race in the democratization process of European countries, looking at why other issues prevailed and were addressed long before the question of race and ethnic allegiances became a major issue.

Postscript

On January 12, 2010 at 16.53 in the afternoon a devastating earthquake category 7.0 in the Richter scale left in ruins the capital city of Haiti, Port-Au-Prince and its outskirts. The seismic hazard is difficult to perceive because of the long period of seismic silence between one event of great magnitude and other, in the case of Haiti, this period exceeds between 150 and 200 years.

This event of natural characteristics overlaps with conditions of extreme vulnerability, as a result of high levels of exposure and extreme poverty in Haiti. The event took by surprise not only the international community but also the inhabitants of the center-west of the Island of Hispaniola, who have to struggle daily to survive in a country with a fragile and inchoate institutionalism, rampant corruption and an absence of basic livelihoods.

The Haitian State has been frequently considered a predatory state, condemning the Haitian population to a permanent condition of despair, poverty and inequity. Yet, the nation has endured and developed to a surprising level of resilience that allowed it to survive, developing a sense of belonging as well as maintaining an identity as a nation, with profound values transmitted from generations to generations since 1804, year in which they declared as the first “black” republic in the American continent.

The devastating January, 12 earthquake took place during the publication phase of this study. The location and magnitude of the impact not only in Haiti, but specifically in the Dominican Republic, led to include this last section in the study. More specifically, this section is aimed at examining at the possible repercussions of this devastating natural event in the way race is shaped in the Island of Hispaniola within the democratization context of the Dominican Republic.

In spite of the unquestionable dimension of the event, the collapse of the information systems and the focalization of attention in providing response to the victims, weeks after the earthquake, there are no certain facts that would allow to a clear estimation of the damage.

The earthquake left an incalculable human loss. Prime Minister Jean Max Bellerive estimates the death toll in more than 212,000,³⁶¹ without taking into account the bodies still beneath the rubble, and the bodies buried by families. In terms of economic damage, it is estimated that the disaster event impacted at least the equivalent of the 70% of the Haitian GDP, affecting not only the capital and outskirts but also extending the damage into the rest of the country.

³⁶¹ Listin, "Los Muertos Se Cifran Ya en 212.000," Section Las Mundiales, February 5, 2010, <http://www.listindiario.com/app/article.aspx?id=130532>. The Prime Minister notes that over a million people are now homeless due to the impact of the disaster; this number could increase up to two million if we take into consideration the population living in the streets prior to the earthquake on January 12, 2010.

Two weeks after the seismic event, rescue efforts were halted and the attention turned its focus to humanitarian aid, access to clean water, health attention and improvised refuges that garner all the attention of the poor Haitian institutionalism and the overwhelming presence of the international community (also affected by the earthquake). Serious security and coordination deficiencies persist, limiting the mentioned efforts, aimed still to the response and early rehabilitation.

It is not surprising then, that the Haitian earthquake has created a series of consequences of multiple dimensions in the Dominican Republic, raising scenarios that have not yet been sufficiently examined.

As the results of the focus groups have shown in previous chapters of this study, Dominicans perceived that health and education services were overwhelmed in the country due to the Haitian presence. The January 12 disaster event collapsed the demand for these services in Port-Au-Prince, at the time where all capabilities were devastated in the urban center of the country. Therefore, Dominican Republic became the immediate option of reception of a great number of sick people, orphan children and Haitians who in this circumstance see a short term solution to respond to its perishable humanitarian necessities and a unique opportunity to cross the border, abandoning the scene of a devastated country and taking advantage of more relaxed migratory controls.

Following three weeks after the January 12, earthquake, preliminary data reveals that at least 35,000 people³⁶² have cross the border into Dominican Republic. Having into consideration that some of them will return to Haiti, others, will probably stay in the Dominican Republic in the quest of better opportunities. The migratory issue with a complex history in the island of Hispaniola will increase the demographic burden in the Dominican Republic. Migratory movements, legal and illegal are likely to generate an overwhelming burden on the already compromised migratory system. It is often estimated that between 700,000 and 1,000,000 Haitian people live in the Dominican Republic. We need to note that certain economic and political elites have been widely benefitted from this labor in diverse economic sectors, often willing to work for poor salaries and being easier to follow directions, in comparison to local labor.

On the other hand, the Dominican state has demonstrated a limited capacity (or a lack of will) to provide a comprehensive solution to the access of nationality for the Haitian population and its descendants. Consecutive governments from the democratic transition of 1978 have avoided dealing with the issue responsibly, halting the extension of civil, political and economic rights to a population of great leverage in the country's development.

³⁶² Preliminary estimates and data from the Ministry of Police and Interior, Dominican Republic.

Therefore, the disaster event that devastated Haiti transcends the frontier and touches very sensitive issues adding to the already complex coexistence of both countries of Hispaniola. It is worth noting that the Dominican Republic has responded rapidly and effectively in providing humanitarian aid, collaborating in Haiti with health and emergency management personnel. It has also opened in Dominican territory all hospitals and emergency centers to the Haitians in need. President Leonel Fernandez was the first president to visit the affected area and the country served as center of operations both for international aid as well as logistic distribution of resources.

In addition, Dominican Republic hosted the Summit for the Reconstruction of Haiti, event that convoked presidents of all over the world to design possible reconstruction scenarios for Haiti. More recently, Dominicans have reinforced their military forces in the border to avoid massive and uncontrolled migrations in Dominican territory. It is not surprising that the old fear of the “peaceful invasion” historically entrenched in Dominican society since the era of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo and Joaquin Balaguer, could become exacerbated by sectors of Dominican society, interested in maintain and strengthen racist attitudes against the population of the neighboring country. Taking it to an extreme, neo-nationalists sector could inflame the discourse of the “threat” of a transformation of Dominican

racial composition, in regard to color and physical appearance, reviving apocryphal precepts of the scientific racism of the nineteenth century.

It is worth noting that the immense reconstruction effort for Haiti does not depend solely on the international community but also in the Haitian population. In a recent interview, the Chief of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), Edmond Mulet, emphasized the need to modify the way in which the international community has been working in Haiti, and at the same time stressed the fact that Haitians need to assume their responsibilities.³⁶³

Among the main challenges affecting the international community, the following stand out: lack of coordination, difficulty in reaching effectively resources, and the great number of non-governmental organizations that act in isolation, avoiding the little coordination mechanisms in place and contributing to the crisis of information.³⁶⁴

It is evident that the reconstruction of Haiti is a matter of great importance for the national interests of the Dominican Republic. In addition to the humanitarian support there is a clear intention to contribute to the stabilization of the country, reducing the dimensions of the exodus. An example of this has been the agreement on January 21st, between President

³⁶³ Listin, “Jefe ONU en Haití Reclama a Comunidad Internacional Cambios en Forma de Trabajar Allí”, Section Las Mundiales, February 4, 2010
<<http://www.listin.com.do/app/article.aspx?id=130405>>

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

Preval and the Dominican government to receive one hundred and fifty Dominican soldiers to reinforce the humanitarian corridor that unites the capital cities of Port-Au-Prince and Santo Domingo.³⁶⁵ In a recent interview regarding the commitment of the international community and Dominican Republic with the Haitian situation, Carlos Morales Troncoso, Secretary of State of External Relations, noted that:

“...We have to convene that Haiti was already, a pressure cooker before the earthquake. Now, that pressure cooker has exploded. The pressure in the Dominican-Haitian border is greater than ever as the humanitarian crisis in Port-Au-Prince inexorably extends to the eastern part of the island...”³⁶⁶

In concordance with the results of the interviews and focus groups conducted for this study which found that Dominicans perceived the Haitian situation as a “burden” on Dominicans shoulders, Morales Troncoso continues emphasizing the limitations of the Dominican Republic in regard to its humanitarian aid capabilities and recalls the need of a firm and sustained international commitment with Haiti:

“...the Dominican Republic will respond as it has always did with its occidental neighbor, with all of its heart and with the hands open. But we are conscious that neither our heart nor our hands are sufficiently big to deal with the problems that Haiti faces. There is a need of the world’s help but also there is a need of a new international commitment of help for the days ahead,

³⁶⁵ Clave Digital, “R.D. Coordina con la ONU el Despliegue de sus Tropas en Haití,” National Section, February 4, 2010 http://www.clavedigital.com/App_Pages/Noticias/Noticias.aspx?Id_Articulo=27547

³⁶⁶ Listin, “La Respuesta a la Tragedia Ocurrida en Haití el 12 de enero,” Section Points of View, February 5, 2010, <http://www.listindiario.com/app/article.aspx?id=130516>

when the magnitude of the problems in Haiti turned less evident...”³⁶⁷

Yet, there are sectors in the Dominican Republic that believe in the need to actively participate in the reconstruction of the country to contribute to a future of political, economic and social stability; other groups, specifically political and economic elites, depend on the Haitian labor, which is not only uncontrolled (in general terms) but also does not possess the mechanism to access neither to the Dominican nationality nor to a more inclusive citizenship within the context of democratization.

In addition, it should be emphasized that the earthquake occurred two weeks prior to the proclamation of the new Dominican Constitution. Although this event may be considered a mere coincidence, its analysis must not be overlooked in the months ahead. The new Constitution proclaimed on January 26th, 2010 was set to combine the judicial doctrines of “jus solis” and “jus sanguinis.” Yet, the final redaction of the nationality clause, however, does not openly recognize the right to access the Dominican nationality to people with Haitian descent, for being in “transit” status. This issue has been discussed in previous chapters, and had generated a heated debate among organizations of Dominican civil society, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. Taking into consideration the impact of the migratory movement from Haiti into Dominican territory, the new

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

Constitution imposes new barriers to the legalization of migratory status process and leaves the children with Haitian descent, with an undetermined situation that prevents their future development.

The Dominican state has today, a unique opportunity to deal responsibly with the migration dilemma, -historically postponed since the initiation of the transition-, putting in practice mechanisms aimed at eliminating racial perceptions that hurt the quality of Dominican democracy.

Today Haiti is on the brink. The reconstruction not only relies upon international humanitarian aid (including Dominican Republic) to reach its physical recovery, but also depends on the firm and sustained decision to construct the necessary bases to re-create a Haitian state. A state not only with the power to hold the legitimate use of force but also a Haitian state in conditions to generate work, resources and development opportunities for a population decimated for years of failed policies, administrative disarray and natural disasters. Finally, a self-sufficient state; institutionally solid; where all the rights of the Haitian population are fully respected.

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Publications and Presentations

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- “Los Procesos de Cambio y los Movimientos Sociales,” Review on John Crabtree and Laurence Whitehead “Unresolved Tensions, Bolivia Past and Present (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008) in CELAEP, *Revista Latinoamericana de Política Comparada*, Vol. II, 2009.
- “Politics of Dealignment and Ethnic Parties in Bolivia,” presented at the annual meeting of the 66th MPSA Annual National Conference, Palmer House Hotel, Hilton, Chicago, Il, April 3-6, 2008.
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