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The Providence Dominican Community:
Some Aspects of Immigration and Ethnicity
Benjamin Bailey

Relevant and Recent History of the DR

What is now the DR was a Spanish colony that was ceded to France by the 1795 treaty of Basel and then subsequently taken over by leaders of the Haitian revolution. It reverted to Spanish control in 1809, but Haiti took it over again and ruled from 1822-1844, when a republic was established. Due to disorder, the Dominican leader Santana tried to make the DR a province of Spain in 1861, but there was opposition. In 1865, Baez negotiated a treaty of annexation with the U.S. which the Dominican leaders approved but the US Senate didn't approve. The chaos continued under various dictators, and Theodore Roosevelt arranged a U.S. customs receivership in 1905. U.S. marines occupied the island from 1916-1924, and the customs receivership ended in 1941. The dictator Rafael Trujillo--trained by US marines--ruled from 1930 to 1961 when he was assassinated. After various coups and an election, civil war broke out in 1965. US troops once again went in, and the Organization of American States negotiated a cease fire and arranged an election. Balaguer, one of Trujillo's buddies, then ruled until 1996 except for one stretch of 8 years (1978-1986). Balaguer so blatantly stole the 1994 election that he agreed to new elections after 2 years rather than serving the full 4-year term, and the candidate he supported won. Balaguer (in his 90's and long blind) is currently (5/2000) one of 2 candidates in a run-off for President.

A common thread of this history is the impact of external forces, first in Europe, then in the US. Just as the Cold War and US war in Vietnam can be directly linked to Cambodian refugees ending up in Providence, the history of US-Dominican relations over the last 100 years is related to Dominican migration today. This colonial relationship is very different from the one with Portugal, which was itself a colonizer.

Dominican Immigration

There was little emigration under the Trujillo dictatorship. In 1960, for example, 756 Dominicans (officially) entered the US. In 1965, in contrast, there were 9,504, and

the numbers grew from there. People I've heard of or met who came before 1960 have been from the elite, and I've read that political opponents of Trujillo sometimes got out before 1960. This is commensurate with Grasmuck & Pessar's (1996:283) finding, based on 1990 census data, that 27.1% of US-born Dominicans over age 25 were college graduates. Those individuals who were born in the US by the mid-1960's were the children of the elite who had gotten out by the mid-1960's, and they were thus likely to attend college at a relatively high rate.

Dominican migration to the United States through the early 1980's was part of a more general process of internal migration, urbanization, and culture change in the Dominican Republic itself. The first waves of migrants to America who were born outside of the three largest Dominican cities had commonly migrated internally and resided in those cities for many years before migration to the United States, and, upon return, concentrated in those cities, particularly Santo Domingo (e.g. Ugalde et al 1979, Guarnizo 199x). The population grew rapidly and urbanized rapidly after 1960. The population was about 3 million in 1960, about 6.3 million in 1985, and about 7.5 million in the mid-90's. The capital, Santo Domingo, now has about one-third of the total population, and it has more than tripled in size since the 1960's.

Dominican migrants starting in the late 1960's were overwhelmingly urban and from relatively youthful, skilled, and educated sectors of Dominicans society, i.e. the lower-middle and middle-class. Bray (1984) links this pattern to an agricultural export driven economy that could not employ the growing urban, educated middle class. (Although Dominican immigrants have been more educated than the Dominican population as a whole, overall levels of education in the DR are much lower, so immigrants on average are *not* well educated by US standards. In the DR, 7.9% of the population over age 25 have completed college, and 41.5% have finished high school. In the US, in contrast, the numbers are 20.3% and 75.2% (Grasmuck & Pessar 1996).

Economic decline in the DR throughout 1980's broadened sources of immigration: less skilled urbanites as well as more middle-class professionals (who could not get ahead there) and individuals from more rural areas (who could use family reunification or other social network forms of capital to emigrate) became more common. According to Pessar (1995:5), unemployment in the DR was higher in the early 1990's

than the early 1970's, and inflation-adjusted per capita income in the DR had dropped over the 20-year period.

More recently, the economy has turned around. A US-educated and largely US-raised Dominican, Leonel Fernandez, was elected in 1996. He privatized industry and invited foreign investment which has been huge (doubled in 1999 to 1.3 billion). The economy expanded by 8.3% in 1999 and 7.1% in 1998, making it one of the world's fastest growing economies. Such a shift from stagnation and decline to fast growth is surely affecting migration patterns by now (including return- and circular-migration).

The INS gives these figures for Dominican immigration to the US:

1971-1980	148,135 (averaging ca. 14,800/year)
1981-1990	252,035 (averaging ca. 25, 200/year)

1986	26 175
1987	24 858
1988	27 189
1989	26 723

1990	42 195
1991	41 405
1992	41 969
1993	45 420
1994	51 189
1995	38 512
1996	39 604

The period 1990-1996 averaged almost 43 thousand per year, and each year during this period was heavier than the heaviest year during the late 1980's. Although it has its roots in the 1960's, particularly in NYC, the Dominican community is a recent and growing one.

According to the INS, 17,761 of the 39,604 immigrants from the DR in 1996 entered under special “preferences”. 17,415 of these preferences were for family reunification, and 346 were for employment-based preferences. (This heavy weighting of family reunification vs. special skills is sharply different than Portugal in 1996. Portugal had 875 use family reunification in 1996 while 1,004 used employment-based preferences.) (I’m not sure how the other 22,000 Dominicans entered in 1996--perhaps under the normal, post-1965 annual hemispheric quota?)

Because so many Dominican immigrants to the US use the 1965 Family Reunification Act, there are ready-made familial social networks and supports in the receiving society. Family ties--which have historically been important in migration processes are thus *structurally built into* the migration process, from the top-down, for many Dominicans.

In the 1990 census, 520,151 people in the US identified themselves as having Dominican ancestry, and 347,858 of these reported being born in the DR, making about 1/3 of the census-counted community US-born. In 1990, 68.9% of Dominicans were in NY, 11.1% in New Jersey, 6.4% in Florida, and 5.1% in Massachusetts (consultants have described the MA population as concentrated in Lowell and Lynn with some in Jamaica Plain). Providence was ca. 1.5% of the total Dominican population in the US. Dominicans in NJ are concentrated near NYC. Putting the figures for NJ and NY together means that about 80% of the Dominicans are in the NY metropolitan area.

Providence has been dubbed a “secondary” enclave, separate from the primary enclave (NYC) and it’s immediately surrounding secondary ones (in NJ and Nassau-Suffolk NY) (Funkhouser and Ramos 1993). Using 1980 census data, Funkhouser and Ramos found that Dominican migrants with the most resources tend to end up in Puerto Rico and areas of the US outside the enclaves; migrants to the primary enclaves have the least English, education, and resources; and migrants to the secondary enclaves such as Providence, RI (as defined by 1980 census data) have levels of resources between those of the managers/professionals outside of the enclave and the less-skilled migrants to the primary enclaves. (Much has changed since 1980--the economic crises in the DR led to out-migration of wider swaths of society; the NY community is so large that there may now be more opportunities for professionals there; and the satellite enclaves such as Boston, Lynn, and Providence have grown enough that they may more resemble the

primary enclaves than they did in 1980). Given the huge size of the metropolitan New York community, it is not surprising that many Dominicans in Providence once resided in NYC, many have relatives and friends there, and many live there after living in Providence, or move to other enclaves. The dominance of New York as the destination of Dominican immigrants is reflected in the island use of the term Nueva York (Nueba Yol in Dominican Spanish) to refer to the US more generally.

There is also significant undocumented immigration, but no one knows how much (an analysis of 1980 census and INS data suggested that 11% were undocumented (Grasmuck & Pessar 1996:281)). The most common methods of unofficial migration have been overstaying tourist visas or entering with false/borrowed documents. Both of these methods require resources: only established individuals with bank accounts or property and family in the DR are issued tourist visas, and borrowing documents requires money or social capital, so the undocumented are not necessarily the most marginalized, as undocumented Central Americans/Mexicans often are in the Southwest. Those with fewer resources have travelled to Puerto Rico by *yola*, rickety motorized fishing launches, braving rough and shark-infested waters of the Mona Passage.

Return and Circular Migration

The proximity of the Dominican Republic to the Eastern US and the ease of travel has encouraged return and circular migration between the Dominican Republic. This relative ease of movement of people, ideas, and products between countries facilitates what Guarnizo (1994) calls a binational society, i.e. a group whose economic, cultural, and family lives span both countries. Although the family is often conceptualized partly in terms of co-residence it is common for Dominican migrant nuclear families to be divided between the two countries for periods of time. Numerous researchers have provided case histories of the socially and geographically elaborate living arrangements of Dominican migrants and their families (e.g. Hendricks 1974, Georges 1990, Grasmuck & Pessar 1991, Garrison & Weiss 1987). Husbands and wives may live apart for years with some children in the United States and others in the Dominican Republic, or parents may leave children with grandparents or siblings for varying periods of time in one country or the other.

In a 1981 survey of Santiago, the second-largest city in the Dominican Republic, Grasmuck and Pessar (1991:67) found that in addition to the seventeen percent of households that had at least one member living in the United States (households that had moved in their entirety were not counted), eleven percent of households had at least one member who had returned from living in the United States. These numbers would be much larger now, given the greatly increased rates of migration in the late 1980's and early 1990's.

While migration conjures up images of one permanent move from one country to another, Dominican migration is often contingent. Even individuals and families who see themselves making a permanent move, end up back in the other country, e.g. they go back to the DR for family or cultural reasons, or they can't financially sustain themselves after return-migration, so they once again move back to the US. We have seen some of this inter-country mobility in our sample as well as intra- and inter-city US movement.

The titles of books and dissertations on Dominican migration from the 1990's suggest its binational/transnational character: *The Making of a Transnational Community* (Georges 1990), *Between Two Islands* (Grasmuck & Pessar 1991), and *One Country in Two* (Guarnizo 1992). Dominican immigrants have not only a) changed communities in the US, and b) been changed as individuals by the experience of migration, they have c) functioned as "agents of transformation" in the Dominican Republic through large-scale return migration of individuals with new notions of class, race, and expectations of the public sector (Moya Pons 1996). This transformation is symbolized by US-raised Leonel Fernandez's election as president.

Providence community

The recognized founding member of the Dominican community is Josephina ("Doña Fefa") Rosario. She emigrated to NYC in 1949 at the age of 23, joining her sister there. She married a Puerto Rican and they moved to CT then RI (in the 1950's?), working in restaurants (he was a chef). (The Catholic Diocese says that substantial numbers of Puerto Ricans began arriving in the late 1950's as migrant farmworkers, working at nurseries in Barrington, South County, and the Newport area.) The Rosario house (145 Chester Ave.) became an entry point for Dominicans. She put up curtains to partition off parts of the apartment for new arrivals and made trips to NYC to purchase

Caribbean foods. People who arrived in the mid-1960's recall that there might be five families staying in the apartment at any given time, and there was abundant work in restaurants, jewelry factories, and textile mills. The owner of the factory where Rosario worked in the mid-1960's created an entire night shift to accommodate the incoming Dominicans. In 1969 she opened a bodega "Fefa's Market" on Broad St. across from Roger Williams' Park (still the main thoroughfare of Dominican retail business) and opened a restaurant next door. There were no Spanish clubs at the time, so Latin musicians from NYC would play in rented halls (similar to the Cambodian situation in the 1990's when they rent spaces ad hoc) and the restaurant would open after the performances.

According to ProJo census data (reported in the ProJo 11/17/96 and 5/22/99) the Hispanic population of RI was about 8000 in 1970, jumped to over 31,000 in 1980, reached 45,652 in the 1990 census, and was projected to hit 70,000 by the 2000 census. Various community leaders argue that the actual number is 1/4 to 1/3 higher.

Dominicans:

From 1990 census:

As of 1990, the Providence population was 81% foreign-born. Nationwide was 68% foreign-born, making Providence more of a recent destination (nationwide figures are dominated by the NY area, which has a much longer established community).

Providence population: 7973

Foreign-born RI population: 6408

Foreign-born arriving 1980-1990: 3835 (59.8% of foreign-born)

Foreign-born arriving before 1980: 2573 (40.2 %)

From 1980 census:

Foreign-born arriving 1970-1980: 1203

Foreign-born arriving 1960-1969: 690

Foreign-born arriving before 1960: 12

Approximation of percentage of foreign-born arriving before 1970: 11%

According to 1990 census data, the Dominican unemployment rate in Providence was 17.4%, 38.5% of households were below the federal poverty line, and the median household income was \$17,533. According to these data 57.4% of those who were employed were in “Manufacturing.”

Co-ethnics:

Dominican immigrants in Providence vary dramatically from Portuguese immigrants and Cambodian refugees in that they encounter a large local, and huge national, population of co-ethnics (who are not from the same country as they are). This co-ethnic population makes possible social categories (Hispanic/Latino) and a linguistic community that are different from those available to other refugees/immigrants. While Cambodians may be grouped with other refugees (Vietnamese/Laotians/Hmong) as Southeast Asians, or with other groups as “Asians”, they share no mutually intelligible language with these other groups. Hispanics/Latinos share not only a common immigrant language but also a common heritage of specifically Spanish colonization and rule, (including Catholicism as an important thread in society), and, more recently, US economic and sometimes political domination.

This common ethnolinguistic heritage, reinforced through the category Hispanic (including, for many, exclusion from the category White) in the US, allows outmarriage from the national group (Dominicans) while remaining within the co-ethnic/co-lingual category (Hispanic).

In terms of the state Hispanic, population (concentrated in the Providence metro area, with a smaller group in Woonsocket) from the 1990 census:

Dominicans 8 902

Puerto Ricans 8 366

Colombians 4 617 (concentrated in Central Falls, began arriving in the 1960’s to work in textiles; Medellin a textile center there)

Guatemalans 3 463
 Mexicans 1 994

The city of Providence had (1990 census):

Dominicans 7 973
 Puerto Ricans 6 074
 Guatemalans 2991

Contiguous census tracts 2 (Washington Park), 1, 14, 4, 3, 5, and 13 had the most Dominicans, in that order. For Puerto Ricans, the most populous tracts were 2, 14, 3, 13, 1, and 4, in that order. For Guatemalans the most populous were 14, 3, and 19 (S. of Atwells Ave in the West End). Concentrations of Dominicans were thus in Washington Park, southern South Providence, Elmwood and the southern/eastern parts of the West End.

	Census Tract							
	2	1	14	4	3	5	13	19
D	2061	910	759	722	620	574	348	104
PR	768	315	634	303	611	218	357	
G	21	161	594	31	537	0	404	485

In Providence, “Spanish” is a label not only for a language, but for ethnic/racial identities, music, and food (markets advertise “Spanish and American Food”).

Dominicans share considerable social history with Puerto Ricans, in particular, who are the second largest Providence group. Both the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico are Spanish-speaking Caribbean islands with mixed European and African populations and similar histories of Spanish colonialism, sugar-based economies, and economic development on the periphery. There are huge communities of both Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in greater New York. Among the differences relevant to migrants are the

much greater poverty of the Dominican Republic, higher Dominican proportion of African heritage, longer history of Puerto Rican migration to the mainland, and U.S. citizenship of Puerto Ricans.

In the larger US context, the large numbers of residents/migrants from Latin America¹--make such category labels as Spanish/Hispanic/Latino widely recognized, both popularly and officially, and readily available. Because this category is a(n ethno)linguistic one, it is easily united by telecommunications and print media [see the media section below]. While the largest immigrant linguistic group between 1900 and 1930 was Italian-speakers, they represented only 19% of the total flow of immigrants during that time. In the first two decades of the post-1970 influx, Spanish speakers--from a variety of countries--accounted for over 38% of the total flow of immigrants (Massey 199x).

This “Spanish” community has more vitality (e.g. through churches, media, political clout, businesses, etc.) than a community composed solely of Dominicans would have, simply through sheer size. The vitality of the community, in turn, has important implications for second-generation immigrants. It results in a world with its own institutions that is parallel to the anglophone one, increasing opportunities for 2nd generation socialization among co-ethnics, which increases language learning/maintenance, respect for “Spanish” cultural values and institutions, the availability of a Spanish identity, and even employment opportunities within the ethnolinguistic community. Without such a large and vital community, first-generation parents can seem even more out of touch with the American reality faced by the second generation than they typically do in enclaves.

The vitality of this community--reinforced by a steady stream of new-comers and visits to the island--connects young Dominicans to their parents’ language, culture, and history in ways that are not available to young Cambodians and not as available as a separate, vibrant world in-itself for young Portuguese.

Phenotype/Race

¹Mexicans, concentrated in the Southwest and West, are by far the largest immigrant group in the US. They accounted for 21.6% of the foreign-born persons counted in the 1990 census, four times as many as from the next largest source country, the Philippines.

The 1981 census in the Dominican Republic categorized 11% of the population as *negro* (black-colored), 73% as *indio* (indian-colored), and 16% as *blanco* (white colored). The term *indio* is used to refer to phenotypes that Americans would associate with African *and* European descent. Because of the positive value of Whiteness in the Hispanic Caribbean, and because color judgments depend not just on phenotype but money and education, these percentages are likely weighted toward the white end of the spectrum. There are many Dominicans who count as “white” in the DR who are not perceived as White in many US contexts.

There is a correlation between color and class in the DR: the poor and very poor are disproportionately dark; the oligarchy are white; and the upper class are disproportionately white. The middle- and lower-middle classes vary in phenotype, partly by geography. One would assume that the immigrant stream to the US would be lighter than the overall population because the poor (disproportionately dark) don’t have the means to emigrate. In the 1990 census, about 50% of the Dominican in NYC categorized their race as “other”, about 25% as White, and about 25% as Black. [It’s hard to know what these choices mean in terms of actual phenotypes and how people describe themselves.]

For more on Dominican immigrant ethnic/racial identity see my articles for *International Migration Review* and *Language in Society* on shared files, and also on shared files:

Itzigsohn, Jose & Carlos Dore-Cabral. forthcoming. Competing Identities? Race, Ethnicity and Panethnicity Among Dominicans in the United States. *Sociological Forum*..

Business presence in Providence

Dominicans have been singled out by both the Providence Journal-Bulletin and Mayor Cianci for their revitalization of major streets through their entrepreneurial presence and opening of small businesses. Elmwood, Cranston, Manton, and particularly, Broad St. are lined with Hispanic businesses, many of them Dominican. The size and vitality of the (business) community has supported the *Directorio Hispano*, a Spanish language yellow pages, for 10 years. Jose Itzigsohn (Brown Sociology) estimates that there are 180 business in the Directorio that are surely Hispanic owned. The Directorio

listed over 1000 businesses by 1996, illustrating that non-Hispanic businesses (from law offices to pizza delivery places) are reaching out to potential Hispanic customers in Spanish. (Oversized display ads for lawyers comprise 30 of the 194 pages!). Many professional offices advertise that they speak Spanish, hiring bilingual office personnel to translate/interpret.

Of the approximately 200 businesses on Broad St., about 100 are Hispanic-owned, the majority by Dominicans (Itzigsohn, from the Main Street project). Broad St. is home to Dominican-owned food markets, international telephone calling centers, Spanish/Dominican CD and cassette stores, liquor stores, remittance wiring services, travel agents, freight and courier services, accountants, clothing boutiques, nightclubs, botanicas ['herbal/alternative medicine shops'], employment agencies, beauty salons, etc.

Many of these businesses serve transnational functions: connecting people to the island with telecommunications; shipping cars and personal good to or from the island; getting money to relatives in the DR; buying plane tickets for new immigrants or visiting the island; providing showcases for Dominican music groups touring from NYC or the island. These transnational functions--involving the two-way flow of goods, people, and ideas--make the Dominican community (and business community) particularly distinct from the Cambodian one. In the mid-1990's a NY-DR freight ship service added Providence to its route to handle the cars, etc. going down to the island and to bring products from the island back to Providence. The ease of travel, shipping, and telecommunications link immigrant communities to sending ones in ways that did not occur with the 1880-1920 migration and that do not occur in the Cambodian community.

Dominican consultants are proud of this business presence and they see it as evidence of their entrepreneurial spirit. Several community leaders have said that the most financially successful members of the community are successful business owners. The professions have not yet been a path to success for Dominicans in Providence. There were only two Dominican lawyers (Angel and ?? Taveras, a nephew and his uncle, although they're the same age; Angel is running for the Senate) and one Dominican doctor (Jose Polanco) in early 2000 in Rhode Island, all three US-raised/educated.

Dominican and Hispanic Community Organizations

Churches

In 1999 there were over 10 Catholic Churches with Spanish Mass, and about 19 churches, mostly Evangelical, but also 7th Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others, with Spanish services. While some of the evangelical groups occupy store-front type buildings, Catholic services take place in a well-established group of churches. The urban, working-class neighborhoods occupied by Hispanic immigrants were once largely occupied by Irish, Italians, and French-Canadians, early groups of Catholic immigrants. (Rhode Island remains the only Catholic state.) For some churches, beginning Spanish-language masses and reaching out to the Hispanic community were the only ways for the churches to maintain congregations as the Providence population shrank and these earlier Catholic groups left their former neighborhoods. In several cases, priests learned Spanish in order to do this, and at least one broadcasts Spanish-language mass over the radio (1220) on Sundays. In October 1999, the Church added six Hispanic deacons, joining the 2 existing ones (there is a third non-Hispanic who is bilingual), giving a total of 10 out of 96 in the diocese (2 Bolivian, Guatemalan, 2 PR, 2 DR, Colombian, El Salvador) (the new ones are 2 PR, Colombian, DR, El Salvador, Guatemalan). The deacons are ordained members of the clergy but can be married. They can officiate at baptisms, funerals, and weddings. They assist the pastors and do charitable works with the communities. As demographics shift, deacons are assigned to new churches in neighborhoods, e.g. Mt. Pleasant (Blessed Sacrament), that had few Hispanics until recently. Immigrant Spanish speakers not only occupy existing Catholic Churches, they transform their practices. At St. Michael's, for example, conga drums sometimes accompany the choir.

Some of these churches do religious education classes for teen-agers and children in Spanish, which can have an effect on individuals' Spanish language (exposing them to reading and writing with Biblical texts) and on their socialization into the Spanish Catholic community. Many English-dominant high school students told me that they go to Church in Spanish and pray in Spanish even though their English is much stronger than their Spanish.

Sports Leagues

The Hispanic world in Providence, separate from, and parallel to the English one, is particularly evident in sports leagues. The Hispanic Softball Association involves 150-200 people in a summer league; there are occasional trips of the best teams or all-star teams for goodwill games to the DR. The Hispanic Basketball Association involves about 100 people, including not only players, but coaches, scorekeepers, referees, etc. Reaching into middle childhood is the Roberto Clemente Little League (a nicely eclectic name: combining the name of a legendary Puerto Rican pro baseball star and the standard label for the US institution), which involves about 150? kids at three different age levels, 9-10, 11-12, and 13-16. In addition to playing games against each other, these teams play friendship games against Hispanic teams in NYC. This adds to the web of relationships among Hispanics in the two cities and reinforces a sense of Hispanic distinctiveness and identity. Pablo Torribio runs both the little league and the Hispanic Bowling League, which involves 60-70 adults at various levels.

Erwin Torres was trying to start Hispanic table tennis in the fall of 1999. Torres is the Dominican government's representative for sports in Providence. He wants to develop Dominican teams and talent to eventually represent the DR in sports, e.g. in the Pan American games. NYC already has Juegos Patrios for US Dominicans, a kind of national games for Dominicans to develop talent across sports. In 2000, Torres published a book about the history of a basketball league founded in Santiago, DR in 1981.

Club Juan Pablo Duarte (named after the Dominican hero of the 1844 independence from Haiti), a social club, sponsors a Dominican/Spanish domino league and sometimes a volleyball league. There is a Providence Soccer League (Jeffrey Vargas) in both winter and summer, but few Dominicans play in it (primarily Guatemalans and Colombians?) (an interesting question: why don't Caribbean Hispanics play soccer? their Latin neighbors, e.g. Colombia and Guatemala do, and their non-Latin Caribbean neighbors, e.g. Jamaica, do).

Political/School Representation

Dominicans have significant political representation compared to Cambodians, particularly if non-Dominican Hispanic representatives are seen as representing Dominican interests. Mayor Cianci, for example, has varying numbers of aides, two of

whom are usually Hispanic. (Cianci recently has had 2 Blacks, 2 Hispanics, 2 Whites, and 1 Cambodian. Currently (5/2000) he has no Hispanics--a Dominican, Carlos Lopez, left and his other Hispanic aide, Olga Shirzadi, a US-born Guatemalan, moved to the position of EEO officer.)

At the level of City Council, there is one Hispanic, Puerto Rican Luis Aponte, Ward 10, out of 13 members. At the state level, there is one representative, Panamanian Anastasia Williams of Providence. Victor Capellan narrowly lost in two elections for state rep, both times to African American-identified candidates with Portuguese (i.e. Cape Verdean) last names. Latinos are currently (Summer 2000) running for a wider range of seats than they ever have before, including US Senate (Angel Taveras) and State Senate (Juan Pichardo).

Of 469 Providence City Police in Spring 2000, 24 were Hispanic (3 Female, 21 Male), including one recently promoted to sergeant, Colon of Colombia. Victor Capellan estimated that six of these 24 Hispanics were Dominican. Henry Remolina (1/2 Colombian, 1/2 Dominican) worked in the (heavily Latino) West End and David Tejada worked at the Elmwood substation on Broad St., in the heart of the business district.

Three of the nine Providence school board members are Hispanic: Dominican Bienvenido Garcia, Guatemalan Olga Noguera, and NY Puerto Rican Juan Lopez. Members of the school board are appointed by Cianci--so he has given significant representation to Hispanics.

There are five Hispanic principals (out of 44) and four assistant principals (out of 35) within the school system now. As principals there are Jorge Alvarez (Cuban) is at Perry MS, Tomas Ramirez (DR) is at Greene, Socorro Gomez-Potter (Mexican) is at Lima, Erick Irizaray is at Laurel Hill Ave., and Hortensia Emmanuel (sp?) is at Robert Bailey. (Maria Torres is Cape Verdean but married to an Hispanic and speaks Spanish fluently....) In contrast, there is only one Cambodian, a Vice Principal at Nathan Bishop.

At the elementary level, 50 out of 877 teachers (5.7%) are Hispanic. At the secondary level, 41 out of 838 teachers (4.9%) are Hispanic. Among teaching assistants, 94 out of 530 (17.7%) are Hispanic (teaching assistants are overwhelmingly in K-3). These numbers are low compared to the student population (about 44% Hispanic at the elementary level), but much higher than the Cambodian (and other SE Asian) representation.

And, of course, the new superintendent is Hispanic. This is enormous penetration into the school system compared to Cambodians. Dominicans not only gain a voice as part of a “Hispanic” group, they are able to reap the fruits of the struggles of earlier Latino immigrants and citizens, particularly Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968, for example, was specifically triggered by low achievement of Mexican Americans in Texas, but it has resulted in a huge Spanish/English bilingual education system that Dominicans have inherited in Providence and elsewhere.

Dominican/Hispanic penetration into the school system has significant effects on access of families to teachers and administrators. Because of bilingual education, for example, there are commonly Spanish speaking teachers and teaching assistants who can deal directly with parents or serve as intermediaries for Spanish speaking families in their contacts with non-Spanish speaking principals, teachers, and administrators.

According to Dr. DeRobbio, the head of Human Resources in the Providence School Department, there have been no specifically *bilingual* clerical/administrative job descriptions in the district. Recent language in the contract with the clerical workers union that would have allowed future positions to specify bilingual ability was voted down by the rank-and-file. Positions are advertised and interviews are done centrally, and clerks/administrators are then assigned more-or-less randomly to schools. Thus a school like Leviton Fortes, which is 70% percent Hispanic, does not have an Hispanic in the office (but they do have an Anglo secretary who can reportedly speak Spanish). New hires typically come from a pool of long-term subs, emulating the traditional Providence practice for teacher hiring and rewarding of seniority and loyalty, both through the union and in terms of patronage.

Organizations:

The main Latino advocacy organization in Providence is CHISPA, which grew out of the Hispanic Social Service Association, which was founded in 1987. Jose Gonzalez (of School Dept.) and Olga Noguera (of School Board) were among those involved at the beginning. The organization was renamed to CHiSPA about the time that

it moved to a permanent home in the 1990's in the Juanita Sanchez Center, an Elmwood Ave. building named after a local Dominican activist who died prematurely (of cancer?).

Current projects at CHiSPA include:

- 1) Promotores del Salud (RI Dept of Health funding)
- 2) Leadership Development Initiative (sponsored by the "Campaign for Human Development", a Catholic Church program)
- 3) The Bridge School (Providence School Department)
- 4) RiteCare Outreach (RI Dept of Human Services)
- 5) various Policy and Social Services (Community Development Bloc Grant from the City of Providence, and some unrestricted funds)

In Spring 2000, only 5 of the 36 active board/staff/volunteer members of CHiSPA were Dominican, but the organization was seen as significantly Dominican because it was headed by Victor Capellan. Capellan is well-known for having twice narrowly lost races for a state representative seat, the first time in his mid-20's on a last-minute, shoe-string campaign.

He is also known as the (former) director (1994-9) of Quisqueya en Accion, a Dominican youth organization that has engaged teen-agers and college students in ethnic pride and community organizing activities. Quisqueya en Accion was started in 1987 and produced the first annual Dominican Festival in Providence in 1988, celebrating Dominican Independence Day but more generally, Dominican presence and pride in Providence. In the last few years the festival has drawn up to 10 thousand people, and people come from other states to it. Local groups, ranging in age from children to adults, do folk and popular Dominican dancing, and internationally known Dominican music groups come. Vendors sell Dominican flag shirts, bandannas, banners, etc., which teenagers wear to school and adorn their walls with. Dominican American high school students often point to the celebration as a symbol of being Dominican. While it is considered a *Dominican* festival, announcers specifically welcome other Hispanic groups in RI, and Puerto Ricans, for example, wear Puerto Rican flags on their clothes and wave PR flags. This pan-ethnic activity does not occur at Cambodian New Years or Portuguese festivities (which don't highlight co-membership with Cape Verdeans).

Progreso Latino is a well-known advocacy agency, but their programs and staff are based in Central Falls, and it has historically been a Colombian organization because

of Central Falls demographic history. Pan-Hispanic organizations such as CHISPA and Progreso Latino are not linguistically divided the way that SE Asian organizations such as SEDC are, where the Vietnamese director, Joseph Le, cannot communicate with the majority of the Southeast Asian in Providence except in English.

Because of the size of the Dominican community and their on-going migration, any agencies/non-profits that do ESL/citizenship/immigration generally deal with many Dominicans. The Vice-Director at International Institute estimated that 90% of their clients in their adult Ed programs (ESL, citizenship, ESL for work, and job training) were Hispanic, and 3/4 of the Hispanics were Dominicans. Thus, of the 700 adults served by these education programs, nearly half are Dominican.

The Genesis Center is located in the same building as SEDC (on Potters Ave.) and has a reputation for working with SE Asians, but the Director (Sally Gabb) reported that ca. 65% of their 350 adult students each year were Hispanic, with Dominicans and Guatemalans being the largest Hispanic groups. In addition to their ESL programs and citizenship classes they do a food service training program. In the summer they have done a youth program for mid-teen's, reaching about 14 kids, primarily Latino. They have also run some parenting classes that bring parents and children together, compare US and other parenting styles, and teach parents about what to expect from schools.

Club Juan Pablo Duarte (100 Niagara St.) is about 10 years old and has over 100 members. It's a social club--it holds weddings and birthdays. To become a member one must be recommended? Most members are Dominican, with some Puerto Rican members. It has been described to me as a place where first-generation adults play dominoes and talk Dominican Republic politics. Their softball team is almost all adult immigrants. Blas Duran is the President.

The mutual aid associations like SEDC and CHiSPA are basically conduits from the public sector, ways of tapping into public moneys to address needs of the communities. In a sense they are like sub-contractors for the Providence School Department, the RI Department of Health, etc. delivering services to populations that the entrenched bureaucracies would have a hard time reaching. This seems like a shift from earlier waves of immigration, in which mutual aid associations drew more (or solely) on group-internal resources. The expansion of social services has perhaps made publicly available resources dwarf those available within communities, turning ethnic leaders

partly into grant writers. The ability of leaders of such organizations as CHiSPA and SEDC to help their communities rests not so much on their charisma and support *within* the community, but rather on their ability to broker relations with the wider society and bureaucracies *outside* of the community.

Media:

The shared language background of Latinos in the US makes it possible to reach huge audiences and create an imagined US Hispanic/Latino community. Benedict Anderson argued that print media were a basis for creating/imagining a national identity in (19th century SE Asia?). Radio, television, print media, and music play a huge role in creating a community out of US Latinos from all different backgrounds. Mexican immigrants in LA as well as Dominicans in Providence (the females, at least), for example, watch Venezuelan soap operas and Miami-Cuban produced shows. Univision, the largest Spanish language television network more than doubled its affiliated stations and cable providers in the 1980's, and then doubled again in the 1990's to over 900, reaching over 90% of Spanish speaking households in the United States. In Providence there are currently two full-time Spanish stations: Univision (which can be received via cable or UHF at 27 out of Boston) and a local programmer (channel 50) that just switched over to full-time Spanish programming in the Spring of 2000. There is also Spanish programming sporadically on other cable and UHF stations. The TV's in Dominican households I've visited are generally tuned to Univision if first-generation adults are in the room.

There are generally anywhere from 2-4 Spanish language radio stations in Providence. One operates in the mornings on FM as a non-profit. The most stable AM station (1100, El Poder), is owned by the well-off Dominican Mendez family. A representative at the station said they had been on the air about 5 years. These stations are typically on in the Dominican homes and workplaces I've visited if first-generation adults are present. These stations advertise the local businesses, including job announcements for positions that bill themselves as not requiring English.

The radio stations are also a showcase for Dominican music, i.e. merengue and bachata. Merengue, which gained international popularity in the 1990's, is a particular point of pride for many Dominicans. Unlike Cambodian and Portuguese youth,

Dominicans have a form of popular music and dance that is well-known in the second generation and popular among *other* groups. Merengue is an island Dominican form, but the headquarters for big-time merengue are in NYC, making contemporary versions an increasingly Dominican-American form. Authors of two recent ethnomusicological books on merengue and bachata are at Brown (Paul Austerlitz: *Merengue: Dominican Music and Dominican Identity*; and Deborah Pacini-Hernandez: *Bachata: A Social History of Dominican Popular Music*). Connected to Dominican music are the Spanish clubs--Internationals, Tropical, Las Palmas and others along Broadway--that book well-known Dominican and other Spanish language acts. By late adolescence, Spanish clubs are attractive venues for Dominican youth, combining urban US excitement with Dominican/Spanish heritage in ways that have no parallel for Cambodian and Portuguese youth.

Spanish readers have two or more local weekly/monthly newspapers (including *Presencia en Español* and *Providence en Español*; others come and go) and others from Boston. The English-language *ProJo* includes a page in Spanish once a week with news of Hispanic sports leagues, stories on local Hispanic communities, issues, and organizations, and some syndicated columns. When national and international periodicals are included, the selection of Spanish language material is large. At Sanchez Market on Broad St., they have multiple newspapers from the Dominican Republic (including *El Nacional*, *Listin Diario*, *Hoy*) and Puerto Rico (including *Ocero*), which can be bought on the day of publication. The magazine selection includes magazines for the US market, e.g. the bilingual *Estylo*, magazines from Latin countries, US magazines in Spanish for Latin markets (*Vanidades* [Vanity Fair], *People en Español*, *Glamour en Español*), and all sorts of special interest music and sports magazines in Spanish (including a professional wrestling magazine!) The demand for Spanish-language materials--and the intertwined literacy of the Spanish-speaking community--can connect Dominican children to in-home and community literacy practices to which Cambodian children are not exposed to nearly the same degree.

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