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"They Say We're Expendable:" Race, Nation, and Citizenship in the Dominican Republic.

Edlin Veras
University of South Florida

"They Say We're Expendable:" Race, Nation, and Citizenship in the Dominican Republic

by

Edlin Veras

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Major Professor: Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Aranda, Ph.D.
Beatriz Padilla, Ph.D.
Kimberly Simmons, Ph.D.

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Dedication

For you, Mom. We did it. I hope I made you proud.

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Table of Contents

Abstract

In 2013, new Dominican legislation left approximately a quarter-million Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent at risk of being undocumented and/or stateless in the Dominican Republic. While the histories of racial and ethnic tensions between the Dominican Republic are well-studied, few qualitative works have explored how these harsh migration policies impact Haitians' everyday experiences. In my dissertation, I sought to understand: 1) How day-to-day experiences of racialization practices shape the lives of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, and 2) investigate how migration policies impact Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent's quality of life. I tend to these questions by employing ethnographic observations and focus group and semi-structured interviews with 67 Haitian descendants living in the Dominican Republic. Findings suggest that anti-Blackness and anti-Haitianness remain central the social and legal practices that continue to marginalize Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic. These findings are indicative of broader migration trends of exploitation and reveal the inextricable connection between phenotype, legislation, and citizenship in the Americas.

Introduction

"…we're the same, it's only our body that's Black; we have the same blood. God created us all pure, and because of God we are different colors. But to Dominicans, Haitians are worthless."-Edward, 54

Edward, an undocumented migrant from Haiti, implicates the 'anti-Haitian racism' (Childers 2020) Haitians experience in the Dominican Republic. His allusion to both race, "body that's Black" and "Haitians" also suggests that their marginalization is a function of both phenotype, dark skin, and country of origin/culture, Haiti. For Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, who have historically been discriminated against, the last decade has proved to be particularly difficult as legislation has further relegated them to the margins of society (Rivera 2015, Sidanius, Peña, and Sawyer 2001, Torres-Saillant 1998). My work explores the mechanisms of exclusion that have perpetually devalued Haitian descendants. In doing so, I highlight both the social and institutionalized means through which Haitians are systematically excluded from society.

In 2014, Amnesty International dubbed Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic 'ghost' citizens (Amnesty.org). The moniker was a result of 2013 Constitutional Amendments that rendered thousands of Haitian descendants undocumented and left upwards of 300,000 at risk of statelessness (Shipley 2015). The ruling effectively eliminated jus soli, or birthright citizenship, by deciding that those born to parents with an irregular status were to be considered migrants "in transit" and therefore ineligible for Dominican Citizenship. Most concerning, however, was that the new constitutional Amendments were to be applied

retroactively to anyone born in the country to 'irregular' parents (parents without documentation) since 1929 (Childers 2020).

The court ruling also reignited the contentious and complicated history between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In what has already been a tumultuous Dominican-Haitian relationship, long-standing prejudices were (re)created anew over the last decade as Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, struggle for social and legal inclusion in a hostile Dominican society (Ricourt 2016). The impact of the constitutional reinterpretations (re)institutionalized anti-Haitian racism and gave rise to increased xenophobic and anti-Haitian sentiment. In response, and under the guise of patriotism, the Dominican government and select citizens engaged in mass deportations, violent hate crimes, flag burnings, and lynchings that have also been exacerbated by recent presidential elections over the last few years (Childers 2020, Eller 2016).

Of Haitians currently in the Dominican Republic, Amnesty International also reported that only 13,500 people of so-called "Group A," (irregular/undocumented migrants not born in the Dominican Republic) out of an official estimate of 61,000 individuals, were able to access some sort of Dominican identity document proving their Dominican nationality" (2017). Similarly, of the 6,545—of 61,000—who were able to apply under "Group B" (Dominican-born residents who failed to register), none have been known to become naturalized citizens (Amnesty international 2015). Together, rapid migrant flows, coupled with xenophobic legislation, enforces nation-building stances that continue to juxtapose Dominicanness and Haitianness. The macro-legal processes affect the perception and identification of those living in the Dominican Republic (Wooding 2009). And, although not the first time the Dominican Republic has encouraged a series of mass Haitian exodus (Ellen 2016), it may be the first to be attempted on such a large

sweeping, and particularly retroactive scale. It is important to note that such efforts conflict with international precedents. Since the mid-20th, century international law has encouraged nation-states to provide pathways to nationality, statehood, and citizenship and has vehemently opposed de-nationalizing inhabitants (Balurte 2017), making the Dominican Republic an outlier in the North American continent.

This dissertation investigates the lived experiences of 67 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic. I especially consider how their ethnoracial identities, racialization, documented status, and living conditions—living in bateyes impact contribute to their struggles. Bateyes are characterized as neighborhoods created specifically to house agricultural workers on or near former sugarcane plantations and were largely operational in the mid to late 1900s. Today, bateyes are marked by their: segregation, dense living arrangements, poor infrastructure, and poverty. I explore the day-to-day process of racialization, understandings of racial categories, and how the Dominican state enforces their subjugation, and the implications of such subjugation on Haitian peoples. To date, this is only one of a few studies on Haitian migrants living in the Dominican Republic since the harsh regularization policies of 2013 that stripped many Dominican-born Haitian migrants of their citizenship (see Childers 2020).

While unique, due to the storied history between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, the stories shared with me are indicative of broader migration trends and the inextricable connection between color and citizenship in the Americas. And as many studies frequently explore the difficulties racial, ethnic minority, and immigrant groups face, fewer consider how all three can be targeted and ostracized by the state and its respective actors. This project seeks to examine the ongoing conflict over Dominican citizenship and, reveals how the complexities of race, ethnicity,

phenotype, and nationality intersect, resulting in harsh structural, physical, and social outcomes for Haitian ethnics living in sugarcane communities in the Dominican Republic. As such, my work contributes to growing bodies of literature in race, immigration, global anti-blackness, and (racial) capitalism.

Due in part to the proximity of the two nations and the large, mostly unregulated, 'porous' border Haitians are the largest non-Dominican descendant ethnic group in the Dominican Republic. They represent over 80% of all migrant-descendants and approximately 5% of the entire population in the country (Childers 2020). While Haitian migration, both formal and informal, stems back centuries, the 2010 earthquake in Haiti contributed to the largest recent influx of Haitian immigrants. It is estimated that nearly forty percent (38.6%) of Haitians currently in the Dominican Republic emigrated between 2010 and 2012. This is over half of all that migrated before 2010. In other words, this two-year period represents that both in proportion and in absolute terms, the sheer number of Haitian migrants entering the Dominican Republic is the most pronounced in the last century. This is in part, because the Dominican government opened its borders and received large numbers of Haitians, and with the 'help' of NGO's and other charitable organizations attempted to provide relief to Haitians fleeing destruction caused by the earthquake. Their welcome, however, was later denounced as Dominican nationalist proclaimed that Haitians were utilizing too many of the country's precious resources (Lau 2010).

Haitians' notable presence in the Dominican Republic has also revived nationalist rhetoric of an unsubstantiated 'passive invasion' from the western third of the island. Fueled by nationalist propaganda harkening back to the 1800s, when newly independent Haiti defeated France and assumed control of the entire island of Hispaniola (Ellen 2016), contemporary Haitian migrants are perceived as 'invaders' seeking to annex the Dominican Republic and

reoccupy the island (Silvio-Torres 2006). Leading up to, and through independence in 1844, the

Dominican elite has espoused anti-Haitian rhetoric in an effort to thwart any Haitian

sympathizers (Turtis 1999). The result of such efforts are have been repurposed employed by

politicians for their respective platforms where that Haitian migrants is juxtaposed against

Dominincan soverienty (Mayes 2014, Paulino 2016).

The perception of Haitian migrants, and subsequent quality of context of reception, which

Portes and Borocz outline as the: "stance of host governments, employers, the surrounding native

population and the characteristics of pre-existing communities" (1989 p 618) continue to shape

Haitians lived realities. And although, commerce like the semi-formal markets along the border

were and remain common practice, and generally recognized as positive (Derby 1994), the

perception that Haitians are utilizing resources that ought to be reserved for Dominicans and are

carriers of diseases like cholera and HIV have increased nativist racial and ethnic hostility

throughout the country (Tappero and Tauxe 2011).

Taken together, the historical and present conditions of Haitians in the Dominican

Republic make this study particularly novel for two reasons. First, this study highlights

inequalities among generally understudied peoples—Haitian descendant Dominicans. While

studies on Dominican identity and their immigration are fairly common, interdisciplinary

scholars, anthropologists, and historians have produced the bulk of this research (Duaney 1998,

Torres-Saillant 1999, Levit 2001). Fewer sociologists have explored Haitian-descendant

communities in the Dominican Republic post the 2013 constitutional amendments (for recent

notable exceptions see Childers 2020). One of the major gaps in the current body of research is

the process by which Haitian-descendent Dominicans 1) come to identify racially and how they

understand race and racial categories, 2) how they have managed their 'illegality', and 3) how they resist respective power structure(s).

Second, Haitians in the Dominican Republic offers a unique intellectual perspective through which to explore theoretical contestations in the sociology of race, and the sociology of immigration respectively. That is, race paradigms that primarily explore exclusion, and immigration paradigms that emphasize mechanisms of inclusion (Valdez and Ortiz 2017). Instead, because of the 'racial fluidity' in the Dominican Republic, the site also necessitates the convergence of race and ethnicity paradigms where phenotype is as important as perceived cultural differences. As such, Haitians living in bateyes serve as a microcosm for the amalgamation of race, ethnicity, nationality, and phenotype, and urge us to consider their interconnectivity in ways few other locales can recreate. Accordingly, where scholars of race and scholars of ethnicity who are each often critiqued for their inadequate treatment racial or ethnic characteristics, respectively, bateyes necessitate their union to fully understand these phenomena. Given these, intellectual, legal and structural considerations, this ethnographic project endeavors towards more robust conceptual models of race and ethnicity that center the state and respective actors in maintaining the country's ethnoracial status quo, one in which anti-Blackness and anti-Haitianness are maligned.

Methodological Overview

In the wake of a decade including recent migration influx and constitutional amendments, three questions drive my research inquiry: In what ways are Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent racialized in the Dominican Republic? What are the macro-to-micro-level practices and processes by which Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent experience illegality? And finally, what are the impacts of misdocumentation among Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian

descent? I define misdocumentation as the series of state-sanctioned de jure and de facto policies and practices that make documentation impractical or impossible to attain and/or maintain. Importantly, this concept builds on existing immigration scholarship work to describe the processual mechanisms through which 'liminality' (Menjivar 2006) and 'deportability' (De Genova 2013) are socially constructed, legally inscribed, and later exercised. However, rather than discuss a migrants' state of being, a proverbial limbo oscillating between legal and illegal, misdocumentation exposes the state's roll in effectively targeting and ultimately maintaining individuals in a state of precarity.

In exploring these interrelated phenomena, over the course of approximately four months I completed 60 semi-structured in-depth interviews, facilitated one 7-person focus group, and conducted ethnographic observations. All interviews were conducted in or around respondents' homes at a place of their choosing. In these interviews, I sought to get to know members of the respective community and engaged respondents in broad questions of their lives: their journeys to the Dominican Republic, how they came to live where they do, and about families letting them steer the conversation while I probed and guided as appropriate. I sought to understand how they made sense of their current condition, that from an outsider's perspective, often looked bleak— poverty, food insecurity, and over-policing. Their rich responses and sheer longevity in these conditions, however, not only highlighted the ubiquitous nature of systemic racism, but also underscored their resilience and ingenuity.

My 60 interviews were split evenly among three distinct bateyes that I will call *Batey Unidad, Batey Cueva, Villa Cielo*. My field sites were conveniently located, over a 4-mile stretch just off of a main road and approximately ten minutes driving distance from the two farthest sites, Batey Unidad and Villa Cielo. Since of Summer 2017, as part of recurring undergraduate

study abroad trips, I had visited each of these communities and had developed friendly relationships with key community contacts on three separate trips to the Dominican Republic. Each trip served the purpose of familiarizing me with the layout and feel of the community, and also helped locals get used to seeing, interacting, and speaking with me. As with my study abroad experiences, during my research I lived in a nearby, mostly Dominican and comparatively more advanced, neighborhood; only a short motorbike or taxi ride away from each of the bateyes. 'Advanced', here simply means that the general infrastructure, access to water, and electricity were relatively more stable in my host community than the bateyes in which I conducted my research. The decision was not an easy one, and only came after conferring with a respected community doctor and liaison did I make the decision to not stay overnight where I conducted my research for general health and resource concerns.

Inclusion criteria was relatively broad and all who were: over the age of 18, had at least one Haitian parent, and resided in a batey were eligible participants for my research study. Interviews were conducted primarily in Spanish, as most respondents were bilingual and had either learned the Spanish language after years of living in the Dominican Republic, or since birth as they simultaneously learned Haitian Creole. The two interviews conducted in Haitian Creole were assisted by a community contact, that would translate where necessary. Interviews were audio recorded, were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically. I relied on both inductive and deductive analytic techniques to code and analyze my interviews, including processual and axial coding (Charmaz 2006, Saldano 2014).

Positionality

My stake in this research is multifaceted, ongoing, and complicated. As a light-skinned Black man, as an American, as someone with Dominican ancestry, and as someone deeply

invested in racial equity I had to reckon with my racial and ethnic identity that largely ran counter to my experiences in the United States. I was referred to as *gringo* and *blanco* or *blanquito* for my light skin and features—white. In the U.S., I certainly benefit from my light skin, citizenship, gender, and education (among other markers). My race and ethnicity, however, are not typically advantageous and in fact have often been the source of discriminatory experiences more times than I can count. But I was not in the U.S., as I was quickly made aware, and in the Dominican Republic, my gender, ascribed race, and nationality, catapulted me to, arguably the among the most advantageous positions in society—a highly educated 'white' American with relative affluence and upward mobility compared to locals.

This newfound status, one between privilege and marginality, is common among qualitative researchers (Lofland and Lofland 2006), where credibility and approachability (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman 2017) are integral aspects of the social research process (Weis 1994). These realities, however, also influence not only how researchers engage with their respective communities, but also if and how members of said communities engage with us. Ultimately the performative choices we and they make, impact our research in ways that are often beneficial. For me this meant having to be hyperaware of my Western biases and upbringing. Above all while in the Dominican Republic, I was conspicuously foreign and was largely treated as such, especially among people who were not very familiar with me. My appearance, from the way I styled my beard to the clothes and shoes that I wore, to the lightness of my skin, and 'fine features, people *knew* I was not *really from* the Dominican Republic.

I was (painfully) American, something I have never truly identified with, although is fact by virtue of my birth and, to large extent, culture. In fact, even when I did try to lean on my Dominican ancestry to establish rapport, a necessary component of ethnographic research

(Dunlap and Johnson 1989, Glesne 1989) with Dominicans of Haitian descent, by claiming that I was Dominican or demonstrating my familiarity with local customs, I was quickly, and often, reminded, if not scolded that I was "not Dominican!" and even though I had "roots here" that my parents are Dominican, but *I* was American. It was a chilling experience. And in those moments I recall feeling selfish—audacious even. Claiming a Dominicanidad, that perhaps in their eyes seemed unearned. Selfish because, although I was raised in a Dominican household, I am far more inculcated in American ways and traditions, am more comfortable speaking English among other things. Some seemingly meaningless things, like choosing to use a fork for most meals over a spoon, or not knowing to sit as expected on the back of taxi motorbike—these marked me as distinctly foreign.

For my respondents, whose efforts to be recognized as 'legal' residents or citizens have lasted years, here I was, light-skinned, white, American, fresh off of a plane, with no Dominican documentation (like many of them), claiming to be the very thing many are seeking, Dominican. The reality was, and is, that in many respects, linguistically and culturally for example, they *are* more culturally Dominican with more meaningful ties to the island than I could imagine—some living there for well over 50 years.

Notwithstanding, my foreignness also worked in my favor. Because key members of each of the communities vouched for me through my numerous visits in the years leading up to my dissertation research, people *knew* I was safe, was there to do no harm, and approachable (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman 2017). In a pragmatic sense, my Americanness was also advantageous when I was hospitalized with a mosquito virus, my university medical insurance landed me a top-floor room service and the best care available in the facility—which my host communities affectionally joked was for 'VIP' or people 'con dinero.'

Socially, and most pertinent, precisely because I was foreign my respondents seemed to feel a need to over-explain just about everything. In fact, even though the majority of my family hails from, and still resides, in a small-town approximately 45 minutes from where I conducted my interviews, their assumptions about my explicit foreignness gave me the latitude to ask about seemingly trivial questions from a place likely perceived as ignorance, what ethnographers have called *acceptable incompetence* (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman 2017). As such, respondents went into elaborate details about mundane events or topics, simply because they believed that my American frame of reference would not understand if explained in simple terms. I could ask them as a naïve American, what these interesting terms I had been hearing meant, like "pelo bueno" or "pelo malo" for example, as if I had never heard them before. To which most respondents launched into various scenarios, definitions, and analyses of the politics of hair hierarchies with the assumption that it is likely the first time I came across this information. My accented speech also raised suspicion about my ability to comprehend Spanish. This too, worked in my favor as someone who grew up speaking and hearing the Spanish of this particular region. Thus, I am not only intimately familiar with Dominican Spanish, I am also familiar with that region's dialect and idiosyncrasies. And although my Spanish is far less than perfect, during my exchanges, and when in dialogue, respondents were over-explaining in terms a child could understand, where their stories were told without any assumptions that I might know what *should* be implied. Which also opened the door for me to ask for clarification throughout. Interestingly, although my pronunciations were not as precise as they could have been, and the slang that I had learned growing up was now-outdated, some mannerisms, and idioms did convince them that while I was not '*really*' Dominican, Dominican (Simmons 2009), that I at least knew about the culture. It was in many of these organic group conversations where

I would say something with distinctive tonality, in a way only Dominicans say, that garnered some credibility; like dropping the "er" of a word and replacing it with an "ay" sound.

There were several instances, where my positionality was *not* as beneficial, however. Because of my phenotype, conducting interviews in bateyes where the vast majority of residents had brown and deep brown skin tones, I could never really 'blend in' as someone coded as 'white.' And while, that had its advantages, as mentioned above, this also means that my presence was always noticeable and therefore had the potential influence interactions community might have had with each other if it were not for my conspicuous presence. In a quick diversion from an interview question, one of my respondents used me as an example to illustrate the important relationship between color and immigration: "I mean look where you're seated, if immigration comes right now, even though you don't have any documents, they see me and right away, they'll ask for my papers. Why? Because [of] color." My color was often brought up as a reference point, an exception, or a point of analysis to deconstruct the complexities of race, "there are a lot of Haitians your color" some would retort attempting to explain how phenotype did not always correspond to race.

Most conflicting, however, was the rampant anti-Black practices and sentiments espoused by both respondents and members of my host community. Both parties I heard some of the most explicitly anti-Black comments I have ever heard, which signaled to me that many participants are not only impacted by, but also perpetuate, sweeping white supremacist ideologies. Commentary included accusations of Black inferiority about members of the same family, and especially directed at those with Haitian ancestry. In my host family for example, verbally abusing her 5- or 6-year-old granddaughter, because as she describes it, she was "dirty," "misbehaved," "monkey-like" and "crazy," all traits she 'inherited' from her Haitian father. The

persistent disdain for Blackness were rearticulations of broader white supremacist ideals. The same people making these racist remarks were visually African descendant with dark skin, curly or coily hair, full lips and broad noses—in other words, Black. Their sentiments, however, are best understood as the sheer salience and pervasiveness of anti-Blackness rather than representations of internalized hatred.

Organization of the Dissertation

My perspective in the United States also undoubtedly informs my research. Lofland and Lofland refer to one's biography as an invaluable tool for sociological inquiry (1994). My individual story provides an invaluable lens that invites me to echo what many scholars have before me: "'make problematic' in our research matters that are problematic in our lives" (Lofland and Lofland 1994, 13). I bring my experiences into my field research as tools to view the social world while also not reifying the very concepts I am seeking to expose. This meant knowing where and how to probe wherever regarding questions of discrimination, that seemed clear to me given my upbringing in the United States, but were not always considered such to respondents. Finally, upon leaving, I was left, and am still reconciling that while our work is important, it is never really quite enough and rarely brings the change we seek to redress and that even the most robust or profound work still often lacks the pragmatic outcomes we desire. And so, when an elder looks me in my eyes and asks, "what are you going to do to help us?" I'm left speechless in that very moment.

My dissertation is organized as three stand-alone chapters, each informed by distinct yet interrelated conceptual and theoretical frameworks. In chapter one, I argue that Haitian descendants rely on both nationality and continuum racial schemas to discuss and contextualize race, but turn to and aspects of 'observed race' ethnoracial schemas, especially where perceived

'nationality' or 'race' is unclear to racialize peers (Roth 2012, Freeman et al 2000). Chapter 2, emphasizes the role of the state as an active participant in the misdocumentation of Haitian migrants vis a vis excessive bureaucracy, surveillance, and discretionary mechanisms as part of larger systemic exclusion. Chapter 3, offers new perspectives on current debates on 'modern-day' slavery and coerced labor and its intricate connection to the migration and law. Because I seek to expose and draw connections between everyday interactions and the role of the state, I situate my investigation into the lives Haitians descendants in critical race theory perspectives. Specifically, I draw from a global critical race and racism framework (Christian 2019), that situates race and racism as byproducts: 1) that are hierarchal and sustained through relational racial fields across different countries, 2) are ingrained in both local and global multilayer structures, and 3) sustain hierarchies between blackness and whiteness (2019). Theories of global racialized labor (Bonachich and Wilson 2008) implicate white supremacy, and is useful to understand how labor exploitation in the Dominican Republic has been, and continues to be a racialized endeavor.

<div align="center">Chapter 1: "El Haitiano Se Conocen Por Las Orejas"</div>

In the first empirical chapter, "El Haitiano Se Conoce Por La Oreja" (Haitians are known by their ears), I demonstrate how processes of racialization are ongoing reiterative practices that rely on both visual and audio markers to determine one's 'race' and by extension assumptions about legality and citizenship. I rely primarily on the concept of *racial schemas* (Roth 2012) to underscore my respondents' "understanding of what races are and which ones exist" (p 13). I highlight the salience of colorism, the hyper-focus on phenotype (Simmons 2009, Sidanius 2001), historic understandings of 'race,' and the extent to which linguistic racialization all function as a means to 'racially dissect' peers (Candelario 2000, Sims 2016, Newman 2019).

That is, use particular phenotypic markers to identify one another as more or less of a particular racial or ethnic category. The results and analysis for this chapter draw primarily from interview responses that center or highlight race and racialization including but not limited to: "What comes to mind when you hear the word race?"; "If someone were to ask you about your race, how would you respond?" "Have you ever been confused for another race? Why do you think that is?" "If two people come up to you, without them speaking, can you tell which one is Haitian and Dominican?" and "In my short time here, I have heard people talk about so-called good hair and bad hair, what does this mean?" While I intentionally posed and probed for respondents to speak about their understanding of race and ethnicity, they frequently mentioned it on their own to highlight their persecution. Statements included "Dominicans don't want anything to do with us Blacks (or Haitians)" others spoke about collective experiences among *negros,* which they often used interchangeably with Haitian.

Overall, Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent drew from a variety, often conflicting, racial schemas when explaining how they understood their race, how they discussed racialization, and how they related to their Dominican counterparts. Anti-black ideologies underscored many respondents' answers as they pulled from broader anti-Black rhetoric to make their distinctions specifically as it related to perceptions about phenotype. Ultimately, even for those that are Dominican-born and documented, their phenotype *and* language proficiency either mitigated or exacerbated Haitian and Dominicans of Haitian descents' experiences with ethnoracism, discrimination based on phenotypic and ethnic markers (Aranda Rebollo-Gil 2004), and the whether or not they can, even just situationally, ascend from a second-class citizenship status. This work takes seriously Roth's (2016) contention that there are 'multiple dimensions' of race. Such that, while observed race, including phenotype, is an important start in understanding

social stratification process, interaction-based race, like determining one's level of fluency or witnessing a disticinct cultural expression. (Hans 2017), especially in a locale like the Dominican Republic, is especially important. This perspective continues to disrupt mutually exclusive approaches to race and or immigration scholarship and highlights the gray areas between race *and* ethnicity.

Chapter 2:"A mi me llevaron seis veces"

In my second chapter, "A mi me llevaron seis veces" (they have taken me [to Haiti] six times) I turn my attention to documentation, deportation, and family dynamics, and explore how anti-Black and anti-Haitian policies foster liminal statuses for families, oftentimes despite documentation. I show how rather than simply being apolitically 'undocumented' a state not having documentation, I propose that Haitian descendants are instead *misdocumentated*. Situated in a critical race theory perspective and informed by concepts of liminal legality (Menjivar 2006), alien citizenship (Ngai 2004), and illegality (Degenova 2002, 2013), *misdocumentation* is the orchestrated de jure and de facto tactics of the state that make migrants' regularization impractical or impossible to secure and maintain. Specifically, those seeking documentation are met with state-sanctioned obstacles regarding: 1) bureaucracy, 2) ethnoracial surveillance, and, 3) discretionary power by agents of the state, that complicate or otherwise outright deny migrants mechanisms for inclusion in society. *Misdocumentation*, then, as a corrective allows us to account for interviewees perceptions of the Dominican government and places the onus on restrictive xenophobic policies and practices identified by the interviewees rather than a seemingly neutral condition of being 'undocumented.'

Data for this chapter focused primarily over questions regarding respondents' and family members' documentation, or lack thereof, and their trials and tribulations attaining said

paperwork including questions: "Can you tell me about the last time you went to go see about your papers?; What has been the most difficult obstacle attaining your paperwork?; and "What could be done to make you're the process of regularization easier? Overall, Haitians' liminal status are a result of their racialization discussed in chapter one, that when coupled with documented status, ultimately served as vehicle for state and interpersonal surveillance, marginalization, punishment, and deportation.

Chapter 3: "Esclavo, peor que esclavo"

The third chapter, "esclavo, peor que esclavo!" (Slave, Worse Than a Slave!), utilizes a critical race theory framework to argue that regularization policies and interpersonal discrimination relegate Haitians to perpetual servitude to the Dominican state. I situate this work in theories of globalized labor and ongoing sociological debates of slavery and forced labor (Bales 2004, Patterson 2012, Butler 2015). While I draw from all participants in my sample, I pay particular attention to a subset of my sample, 39 retired agricultural workers, sugarcane cutters, whose journey to and time in the Dominican Republic is shaped by the sugarcane industry. I informed by broad economic push/pull theories of migration and concepts like 'context of reception' (Portes and Borocz 1989). I show how documentation, and 'misdocumentation', from chapter 2, welcome migrants' presence and participation in the formal economy so long as the state is the primary financial beneficiary.

I find that the fall of the sugarcane industry in the early 2000s coupled with regularization policies, now continue deny long-time sugarcane workers' their due pension. These policies also limit formal job opportunities leaving Haitians especially susceptible to exploitation in informal labor markets where Dominicans can, and often do, withhold wages under the threat of deportation. Questions in this chapter are centered on 1) migrants journey/motivation to the

Dominican Republic, 2) their labor conditions while working the sugar cane plantation, and 3)

the extent of their contemporary labor opportunities. Results suggest that Haitian migrants no

longer forced to work the sugarcane plantations under the threat of imprisonment as was the

norm, are now left to fend for themselves in informal markets where employment is sparse,

absent of benefits, and pay is never guaranteed.

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Chapter 1: El Haitiano Se Conoce Por Las Orejas

Introduction
> *"(laughs) Ah, I don't really know. Haitians, are Black, Dominicans are Black, Americans are Black. All folks have Black people. Dominicans have Black people, Haitians have Black people; there are Americans that are Black just like me! There are Black Africans, Black Jamaicans…"*-Louisa, 70 undocumented Haitian migrant.

Laughing bashfully, Louisa, a long-time resident of Batey Unidad, shares in her raspy voice, that although she can distinguish different 'races' it can be difficult because "all folks have Black people." Responses like hers were common and spoke to broader paradoxes in respondents' understanding and definition(s) of race and racialization in bateyes. Although many of the topics and questions I sought to understand had grave implications, no matter how serious or sad my interviews became, questions of racial distinction were always met with levity. "Yes" and "of course" many would quip as if I had asked a silly, if not, notoriously obvious question. In the same breath, interviewees followed their kneejerk retort with a host of seemingly contradictory qualifiers: "simply look at their skin color, but you can't always tell by color." or "ears, you can always tell by their ears!" they would say excitedly grabbing their ears. I am interested in these nuances and what processes they go through to arrive at seemingly arbitrary, yet ever-germane, racial distinctions.

My curiosity rests not simply on a fixation of Black phenotype(s), but on the implications of such micro-distinctions. Stated differently, what we look like matters in a social world that tends (and often succeeds) to malign Black people globally (Mills, 1997, Bashi 2010). And for many, including my respondents, these minute processes of racialization and racial othering can be the difference between inclusion and exclusion, freedom or detention, and even life and death.

This project explores Haitians' contemporary ideas about race and how they come to understand racialization practices in the Dominican Republic. Ultimately, I argue, that Haitian descendants rely on both nationality and continuum racial schemas to discuss and contextualize race, but turn to interaction-based observed race *ethnoracial schemas*, where perceived 'nationality' or 'race' is unclear to racialize peers.

As I discuss respondents' understandings of race-making, it is important to first acknowledge the contexts through which people living in the Dominican Republic, both Haitians and Dominicans, come to racialize one another. The largest and one of a few dual-nation islands in the Caribbean, Hispaniola is home to over 20 million inhabitants, split relatively evenly between Haiti (11.5) million) that comprises 1/3 of the island's land mass to the west, and the remaining 2/3 of Dominican Republic (10.5 million) to the east (Fradera and Schidt-Nowara 2013). The Caribbean island as a whole is notable for its unique history with the African diaspora that has earned it recognition as an 'ancient colony' and the 'cradle of Blackness' in the Americas (Torres-Saillant 2003, Mintz 2008).

The titles come as a result of two polarizing feats. Hispaniola was the first site of disembarkation for enslaved Africans in the Transatlantic Slave Trade circa 1502, and also the home to the first sovereign Black republic in the Western Hemisphere when mostly African-born captives rose and eventually succeeded against then-world-superpower France for independence in 1804 (Eller 2016). Hispaniola is at once oddly unique in those two ways, but also reproachably familiar to other countries in the Americas as anti-Black racism and racial stratification remain permanent fixtures in contemporary society (Torres-Saillant 1998, Simmons 2009, Childers 2020). In the spectrum from Spanish and French slavery to Haitian independence lies an equally complex, and deeply troubling racial history of mass deportations, genocide, and

social exclusion of Haitians at the among people, many would argue, are racially and culturally similar (Wooding 2004, Roorda 1996, Simmons 2009). However, as a social construct, race and racial categories vary widely contingent upon each region's socio-historic and geopolitical climates, and the ideologies about the differences between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is stark.

In what follows, I survey the development of racial categories and ideologies in Latin America, highlighting dominant themes and differences across the region to contextualize the case of Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

Mestizaje

Race in Spanish, French, and Portuguese Latin America is generally categorized by nationalistic identity, Black and indigenous erasure, and notions of mestizaje, or mixedness (Martinez-Echazabal 1998). Of Latin American race relations, Wade (2008), succinctly writes that Latin American elites: "saw their black and indigenous populations as inferior and their large mestizo populations as a burden" and that it was "up to the whiter populations to lead nations into modernity" (p 180). In the view of white elites, a modern country was one free of racism, governed by nationalistic pride as opposed to racially discrete groups as seen in the U.S. and Europe (Miller 2009). Brazil and Mexico's 20th century 'racial democracy' (Iberian exceptionalism) and 'cosmic race' respectively, are among the most pronounced ideologies that relied on exaggerated depictions of admixture or mestizaje, undermined the significance of race post-slavery, and both denied and condemned racism (Sidanius et al 2001, Martinez-Echazabal 1998, Bailey 2004). As a result, scholars argue, these countries vindicated themselves of racism, noting that national pride and miscegenation have rid them of race-based discrimination (Telles 2014).

The reality, however, suggests that even as these countries decried racial prejudice and discrimination, upheld racial inequality and ushered blanquiamento movements to whiten or lighten their respective populations. Attempts to 'purify,' 'cleanse,' or otherwise whiten their population relied on legislation and social practices, like favorable immigration policies for European countries and marriage patterns and practices that rewarded people for marrying lighter (Wade 2004, Golash-Boza 2010, Telles 2014). And while the nuances of whitening efforts vary from one country to the next, indigeneity and Africanness have been historically dejected and marginalized statuses throughout Latin America in favor of lighter, presumably more European ancestry and appearance (Pena 2005, England 2010, French 2014, Castro et al 2015). Scholars and activists have since challenged the alleged absence of racism in Latin America, and recent studies on race and/or phenotype-based discrimination reveals that it remains true that the more 'African' or 'Black' one is perceived phenotypically, the lower one is regarded, worse one is treated, and the more limited their life chances (Dixon and Telles 2018, Monk 2016, Bashi 2010).

Dominican Republic and Haiti

In the case of the Dominican Republic, whitening movements, colloquially referred to as 'mejorando la raza,' or 'improving/bettering the race' in Spanish-speaking Latin America (Rahier, 2003, Godreau et al 2008, Rivera 2015), took form in 19th and 20th centuries (Ricourt 2016, Eller 2016). White elites, eager to make their sovereignty internationally known, sought to thwart: early-1800 re-invasions from Haiti to the west, multiple mid-1800 Spanish annexation attempts, and two early-1900 U.S. occupations (Mayes 2014, Eller 2016). In doing so, they reimagined themselves as a mixed, albeit mostly European, country (Mayes 2014, Simmons 2009). Perhaps no clearer example of Dominican Republic's attempt to 'mejorar la raza' exists

than the draconian rule of Rafael Trujillo, who is often credited with institutionalizing 'anti-Haitianismo' and anti-Blackness (Howard 2001, Roorda 1997, Dreby 1994).

Dictator Trujillo ruled mercilessly from 1931 until his eventual assassination in 1962, and is responsible for the implementation of the so-called '*indio*' census racial category to signal mixedness and indigeneity and distance the country from its African ancestry (Simmons 2010, Paulino 2016). The 'indio' racial reference, harkens to the native population of Hispaniola, victim to the genocidal Spanish campaign at the turn of the 15th century, where upwards of 90% of the population was killed from 1493-1521 (Irvin 2000). Trujillo, dubbed the "rabid dog of the region," (Roorda 1996 p 304) drew international disdain throughout the 20th century for sponsoring mass deportations and killings of Haitians, while simultaneously imparting favorable European migration and land access rights (Turtis 1997, Paulino 2006). The Trujillo regime is increasingly conceptualized as the impetus for anti-Haitian racism, where Haiti is imagined, and later institutionalized, as backward, Black, and African in contrast to a modern and European Dominican Republic (Dreby 1994, Torres-Saillant 2003, Paulino 2006).

Haiti, on the other hand, rather than being a 'mixed' country, has established itself as a Black nation since independence in 1804, and deemed as one of, if not the birthplace of Black nationalism (Alexander 2012, Fanning 2007, Truillot 1995). Beyond the literal proportion of Black population at over 90%, the country also maintains connections and acknowledgements of African heritage, including Haitian Creole language structure, cuisine, music and perhaps most famously Vodou, all with clear traceable ties to West Africa (Mintz 2003, Apter 2002). Certainly, race, but more importantly color tensions exist in Haiti, as is true throughout the Americas, with those of lighter complexion generally afforded greater social and political mobility (Truillot 1995). Once in the Dominican Republic these tensions are exacerbated via

xenophobic policies, anti-Black discrimination manifest as intraracial and intraethnic

discrimination, or what Childers coins as anti-Haitian racism (2020).

Racialization

Haitian or Dominican Racialization, however, is not simply about what people look like,

but also the associations and attributes ascribed to each groups' other characteristics (Barot and

Bird 2001, Price 2012, Hans 2016, Khoshneviss 2019). Common definitions of racialization

typically include the magnification of difference, real or imagined, and subsequent meanings and

values attached to discretely categorized social groups beyond phenotype including: culture,

religion, and documentation/migration status to name a few (Winant 1994, Grosfuegel 2004,

Omi and Winant 2014, Hans 2016,). Such differences become the basis for racial/ethnic

minority's prejudice and discrimination. Work on the racialization of migrants, reveals that

oftentimes irrespective of their phenotype, ethnic groups become racialized subjects (Wimmer

2008). In international contexts, terms like Muslim, Arab, and Hispanic become racialized

ethnicities where ideas about the respective groups culture, religion, nation(s) of origin, are

reimagined often creating stereotypical expectations regarding appearance and behavior and

'legality' (Alcoff 2004, Wimmer 2008, Selod and Embrick 2013).

The racialization of Black Caribbean immigrants, like Haitians, especially those

migrating to the Global North, is compounded by their race, where many go from being in the

racial majority, to being both numerical and social minorities in their respective host countries

(Waters 1994, Wilson 1999). Haitian migrants have formed notable enclaves in the U.S.,

Canada, and France through rich interpersonal networks and enclaves (Aranda et al, 2014).

Haitians migrating to the Dominican Republic face similar challenges, and although the

Dominican Republic as a whole has significant African ancestry (Torres-Saillant 1998, Mayes

2016, Ricourt 2016), the racialization of Haitians as explicitly African, poor, and belonging to a failed nation-state leaves many in a state of perpetual otherness, even second and third generation Dominicans of Haitian descent (Mayes 2014, Roorda 1996, Martinez 1995, Childers 2020). As such, Haitians are often the subject of international ridicule, pity, and aid as the poorest country in the Western hemisphere (Dupoy 2014).

Haitians' otherness was especially pronounced in 2010, following a 7.0 magnitude earthquake, Balaji (2011) argued that North American and European relief efforts depicted Haiti and its inhabitants as a Black, distraught child-like country in need of white aid. Similarly, as tens of thousands of Haitians sought refuge in the Dominican Republic after such catastrophic damage, Dominicans claimed that the stress on their resources, criminal justice and healthcare systems, were unilaterally based on Haitian presence in the country (Maresson 2010, Lund et al 2015). And again in 2014, when reinterpretation of the Dominican constitution effectively ended *jus soli,* birthright citizenship, leaving tens of thousands of Haitians at risk of statelessness (Blake 2014).

<center>Racial Dissection</center>

While conceptualizations of racialization often note that skin color is the most obvious form of racialization, other phenotypic markers including hair, eyes, lips, and nose are equally as important, and (Roth 2016, Alcoff 1999, Mills 1997). And, although scientific studies of skin color, namely colorism studies, have given primacy to skin color increasingly scholars note the salience of hair in determining people's identity (Sims 2016, Candelario 2000, Cruz-Janson 2001, Robinson 2011, Hordge-Freeman 2015. Newman's (2019) use of 'racial dissection' to investigate the micro-level processes by which racially or ethnically ambiguous mixed-race people are identified is yet another part of racialization. Newman argues that in the absence of

'clear' physical attributes, like skin color, peers will racially dissect one another to determine one's race or ethnicity. Newman explains: "the identification of specific features" are used "to discern…mixedness…appearance" (2019 p. 117). In this way, one's skin in combination with other racialized features presumably allows others to distinguish racial groups from one another in addition to what racial groups constitute one's racial composition. In this way, a person with very light or fair skin, can still be racialized as non-white or Black based on other features, like lips or nose (Sims 2016).

And although ideas of and about racial mixedness are different in Latin America than in many parts of North America, even countries that avoid hypo-descent legislation participate in racial dissection. Consider Brazil, largely touted as one of the most 'racially mixed' places in the Americas, and how up to 100 terms exist to differentiate one another with distinct names for slight differences in phenotypic appearance (Telles 2004). The Dominican Republic is no different where two people with the same skin color can have different ethnoracial categorizations if their hair texture is significantly different (Ricourt 2016, Mayes 2014, Simmons 2012, Candelario 2007). The term 'jabao' for instance, typically refers to someone with lighter skin than someone who is someone considered prieto/negro/moreno and also has coarse, tightly coiled, or Afro-textured hair (Candelario 2000, Duany 2006). This is unlike someone who is considered *indio mulatto* (mixed race) or *moreno* (varied shades of light or dark brown) who may or may not necessarily have afro-textured hair. These nuances allow for Dominicans, especially dark-skinned Dominicans to differentiate and socially lighten themselves while continually representing themselves as distinctly non-Black and distinctly non-Haitian (Candelario 2007, Martinez 2003).

Language and Ethnoracism

In addition to phenotype, Haitian descendant's language, French and Haitian Creole, are also racialized. Spanish is the national language for the Dominican Republic, and those who do not speak the language, are instantly regarded as foreigners or other. Aranda and Rebollo-Gil (2004) maintain that ethnoracism best explains discriminatory behaviors "when racial markers such as skin color, hair texture, and eye shape are not enough" instead "ethnoracial markers such as language, accent, culture, and national origin serve as proxies" of racial stratification (926). That is, in addition to phenotypic displays like skin and hair, linguistic markers contribute to the disproportionate treatment of non-white groups. Their work specifically highlighted the experiences of Latinx in general and Puerto Ricans in particular, concluding that even those who might be 'white-passing', experience ethnoracism as qualified by cultural markers of otherness, like Spanish-speaking or accented English.

Similarly, Alcof (2003) notes that ethnorace also encompasses "groups who have both ethnic and racialized characteristics, who are a historical people with customs and conventions developed out of collective agency, but who are also identified and identifiable by bodily morphology that allows for both group affinity as well as group exclusion and denigration" (122). Childers' (2020) study on Dominicans of Haitian descent found that skin color and language were among the most important features, noting that for those whose 'speech did not fail them' nativism was presumed. In other words, for Haitian descendants living in the Dominican Republic, where their skin and other features were undiscernible, speaking Spanish, and Speaking it well provided them social benefits as they, if only temporarily, were not seen as 'other.'

Together, the racialization of Haitians, based on historic, phenotypic, and cultural context perpetuate anti-Haitianism. And while Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic mirrors the Haitian diaspora in the Global North in many ways, it differs substantially in that the migration is from one developing country to another, and to a country with significant African ancestry. As a result, where as a mostly European descendant country might find it easier to racially or ethnically identify people of Haitian descent based on skin color alone, or 'lump' them in with Black Americans, in a predominantly Black country like the Dominican Republic (Torres-Saillant, 1998), to racially demarcate groups requires much more nuance and (hyper-attention) to other phenotypic and ethnic/cultural ques (Childers 2020, Simmons 2009, Dreby 1994).

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In this section I discuss which theoretical and conceptual frameworks inform this chapter. First, my work presumes as Wendy Roth suggests (2016), that race is a multidimensional concept. That is, race, rather than a singular attribute or categorization, can be, and often is, experienced, discussed, and researched across five dimensions each with different yet interrelated outcomes: *racial identity* (subjective self-identification), *racial self-classification* (institutionally limited racial categories e.g. census/immigration form); *observed race* (race others believe you to be), *reflected race (*race you believe others assume you to be), *phenotype* (racial appearance), and *racial ancestry* (compiled racial groups). In the case of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, as presented below, respondents define and use race in a multitude of conflicting sometimes contradictory ways that highlight the relationship between their perceptions of race, its connection to immigration, and admixture. Approaching the study racial inequalities from multidimensional perspectives also begins account for discrepancies between

how social scientists demarcate race and ethnicity, how 'race' is used and understood colloquially and the various was race and ethnicity are contextual and region specific.

<center>Racial and Ethnoracial Schemas</center>

Theoretically, I draw from two distinct interrelated concepts, racial schemas and bodily capital. Roth's (2012) *racial schemas,* "the bundle of racial categories and the set of rules for what they mean, how they ordered, and how we apply them to oneself and others" to explore how the various dimensions of race are understood among Haitian descendants (p 12). In her work on Dominican and Puerto Rican migrants in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico and the Dominincan Republic, Roth offers three distinct racial schemas: *continuum racial schemas*, which gives primacy to phenotype and intermediate racial designations; *nationality racial schema*, based primarily on nation of origin (Dominican, Mexican, Puerto Rican) or panethnic labels (Latinx, Hispanic etc); and U.S. racial schemas, largely predicated on binary hypodescent and or institutionalized categories. The latter, while important, is less relevant in my study of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic. The former two, however, lay the foundation and provide a framework to understand the multiple dimensions of race among dynamic migrant multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-color populations like found in the Dominican Republic broadly, and among Haitians and Dominicans of descent living in bateyes, specifically.

I extend Roth's *racial schemas,* developed from having respondents categorize photographs based on their respective understanding of race, to include an interactional or interpersonal perspective. Building from ethnoracism (Aranda and Rebollo-Gil 2004) the discrimination racial/ethnic minorities face on account of their cultural displays including language, and bodily capital, the perceived value of features including skin color and hair, I

introduce *ethnoracial schemas*. I define *ethnoracial schemas* as the process by which individuals are racialized by their phenotypic, linguistic, and cultural markers including attire, hair texture and style, and accent. Unlike, nationality racial schemas where individuals rely on nation-based ascriptions, or *continuum racial schemas* that relies on country's respective color categories, *ethnoracial schemas* provides a micro-level account of racialization that treats race as a reiterative experiential practice, vis-à-vis an observed race dimension, rather than a one-time event.

Methods Overview: Sites and Relevance

In this section I provide an overview of my methodological approach, including relevant demographic information and the importance of the selected research sites. In exploring lives of Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic and their experiences with racialization, I sought to understand: 1) How policies as well as day-to-day experiences shape notions of race and racialization among Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent. And 2) In what ways are their understandings and practices of racialization shaped by anti-Black and anti-Haitian ideologies? I tended to these questions by employing ethnographic observations focus group and semi-structured interviews with 67 Haitian descendants living in three different, geographically proximal, bateyes: Batey Unidad, Batey Castillo, and Villa Cielo. All respondents were 18 years of age or older, currently lived in a batey, and hadat least one Haitian parent.

Bateyes are ethnic enclaves on demarcated government neighborhoods located on or near former sugarcane plantations. The communities stem from now-defunct bilateral agreements to recruit temporary agricultural workers from Haiti to the Dominican Republic in the mid-20th century, with the understanding that Haitians would repatriate at the conclusion of their respective crop's, usually sugar, season. A few centrally located barracks are ubiquitous in

bateyes. Barracks are still owned by the government and have been 'gifted,' usually by word of mouth, to former sugarcane cutters and can be revoked at anytime. Bateyes are typically marked by their basal home structures, wood planks, and zinc sheet metal and *colmados* (a shop ranging from full-on groceries to convenient snacks and miscellaneous goods i.e. soap, detergent, beer) either from someone's house or as a standalone shop. As a research site, bateyes are unique for their dense populations, de facto segregation, and the primary destinations for recent Haitian migrants. Of the estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, most take up residence in one of the over 500 bateyes scattered throughout the island, varying anywhere in size from 50 to over 5,000.

Bateyes also vary in standard of living. While some bateyes, nearly reach parity with the 'average' Dominican way of life, the vast majority of bateyes are dilapidated, with precarious infrastructure, limited electricity, plumbing, and running water (Childers 2020, Simmons 2010). Each of the three bateyes I visited, which I will call, Batey Unidad, Batey Castillo, and Villa Cielo varied slightly in their composition in size and feel ranging from approximately 1,200 to 5,000 inhabitants. All three were relatively homogenous with community leader estimates suggesting between 85-95% Haitian with the other 15-5% being Dominican (proportions which will differ slightly by region and rurality).

Sample: Criteria and Descriptive Statistics

With the help of key community contacts, I was able to secure 60 individual interviews, spread evenly across each batey: 20 from Batey Cueva, 20 from Villa Cielo, and the remaining 20 and seven-person focus group from Batey Unidad. Inclusion criteria was broad, limiting participants to Haitian ancestry (at least one Haitian parent), residence in one of the three bateyes, and be 18 years of age or older. Respondents average age was 41 and ranged from 18 to

91. Respondents were 'unambiguously Black,' meaning their phenotypic features including afro-textured hair, deep brown skin, and facial features suggested visible African ancestry. All also identified as such using terms: *moreno/a*, *negro/a*, *prieto/a*, and *noir* (Haitian Creole word for 'black') understood to be variations of brown or dark(er) brown skin or simply 'black' in the Dominican Republic (Duaney 2006, Candelario 2007, Childers 2020).

Most of my respondents were men at 64% (43/67). The vast majority, 77% were migrants and Haitian-born (52/67), and noted that they were unemployed or unable work at the time of respective interview 67% (45/67). Interestingly, while some were employed, even those with jobs did not have steady or reliable income, mostly due to the fact that the attainable jobs were situational, temporary, seasonal or subject to immigration raids. Those that answered definitively on how much they made when they 'could find' work, reported anywhere from $3,000-16,000 DOM (at the time, approximately 60 to 307 U.S. dollars) every two weeks, with the most frequently quoted figure of $6,000 (115 U.S. dollars). Finally, nearly half of all respondents were undocumented at about 50% (33/67), just three had permanent residency, or *cedulas*, but without the right to vote and only five had full Dominican citizenship with the right to vote. The remaining 26 had temporary documentation that, at the time of their interviews, was to expire in one year or less from the 2018 regularization plan that sought to transition 'migrants' and non-citizens to some sort of 'legal' or documented status (it is likely that they completely undocumented now given the onset of the pandemic that has decreased major government institutions including immigration services). See tables below for detailed breakdown of sample.

Findings

I now turn to my findings where I sought to answer how Hattian descendant come to understand and racial categories and their modalities for identifying one another. Haitians and

Dominicans of Haitian descent drew from a variety, often conflicting, racial schemas when explaining how they understood their race, how they discussed racialization, and how they related to their Dominican counterparts. Anti-black ideologies underscored many respondents' answers as they pulled from broader anti-Black rhetoric to make their distinctions specifically as it related to perceptions about phenotype. In all instances however, none of the racial discourse was 'fixed' or static and changed, sometimes several times in a single response. The first theme, 'Discourses on Race' highlights how migrants transition from nationality-based schemas to continuum schemas often conflating, or using interchangeably terms like nation, race, and concepts like race, ethnicity, and nationality that are often treated as discrete in social science research (Valdez and Golash-Boza 2016). Accordingly, when presenting my results, I use their terminology of such terms even though it does not align or follow conventional social science practices. Second, respondents' understanding of racial schemas was also informed by knowledge, or lack thereof, of African history and/or ancestry in Hispaniola. Those with knowledge of African ancestry, often by word of mouth, also relied on nationality (Africano) schemas but also reverted to skin or phenotype as justifications. Finally, respondent noted the importance of non-phenotypic racial makers, like language, and the extent to which that facilitated ethnoracial 'passing.'

<div align="center">Discourses on Race</div>

More often than not when I asked respondents what came to mind when they heard the word race, many responded initially with 'family' and ancestry, and nationality with fewer referring explicitly to phenotype. In fact, although all respondents referred to themselves as 'moreno,' 'negro,' or 'prieto' in reference to others ('nosotros los negros'), few explicitly cited their own 'race' as 'Black' instead opting for nationalistic terminology, irrespective of actual

citizenship or nationality. That is, most of my respondents evoked *nationality schemas*, whether or not they were nationals, of either Haiti or the Dominican Republic, or not. Discourses about race

When I asked 27-year old Carolina, a tall slender undocumented woman, save a birth certificate, Dominican-born woman who identified as both Dominican and Haitian, what came to mind when she hears the word race, she shared: "Race…What comes to mind is my nation. That is, my Haitian race" she said in perfect Dominican Spanish, "I mean I consider it my race because it's just a question of *sangre* (blood), that's it." Carolina's initial response ties race to ancestry framed through a nationality racial schemas and although she identifies as both Dominican and Haitian throughout the interview, she states that her race is Haitian because of her lineage. Also, important to note, although she uses the term 'nation' to talk about her race, she has no 'legal' or institutional ties to Haiti beyond her parentage, as she's never had any documentation from Haiti, never visited and mentioned not having any desire to go. Carolina is effectively stateless, beyond a birth certificate that allowed her to attend primary school as a child, and has no other documentation or 'legal' affiliation to either the Dominican or Haitian state. Both of which suggests, that race and Haitianness for, Carolina is not at all predicated on any legal affiliation but on culture and ancestry, or 'sangre.'

Carolina is not alone in her ancestry-based definition of 'race.' Lufiz, a 56 year-old Haitian-born migrant, dressed like many of the younger men in the community, sporting a tilted baseball cap slightly to the side, baggy jean shorts, worn flip flops, and brightly colored graphic shirt eagerly responds, "Race? Family!—Haitian, Dominican, African, American, are all different—they are different" he says in heavily accented Spanish while pointing to imaginary groups of people in a line in front of us as he names different 'racial' groups: "that one [is]

Haitian, that one's Dominican, that one's American, that, that one's African, and so they all have their different names. All [of them] have names." Like Carolina, Lufiz references nationality racial schemas alluding to lineage or ancestry, and even an entire continent as he made reference the African race. His conceptualization and Carolina, race is first understood in nationalistic and ancestral ways. This is relatively common in Latin America and Caribbean countries where nation of origin becomes one's primary means of identification. And although they do see themselves as Black and acknowledge a connection to other Black people, when asked about race most respondents defaulted to ancestry initially.

There were however, respondents in smaller numbers, like Lela, who referred to phenotype primarily when discussing race. Sitting at the dinner table in a dimly lit living room dining area, I waited for Lela to come inside from hanging clothes on wire connecting to her neighbor's home a few feet away. It was Thursday, which meant that there is running water today in the community. It also means women will be washing clothes, mostly by hand, for a few hours from morning until about noon. Her house, like about half of the others in *this* community, was made of cinder block with thick wooden beams in the center holding up zinc sheet metal roofs that was also the ceiling. In bateyes, the somewhat unspoken 'quality' of homes is derived from: whether it's made of *block* or wood, how clean it is, and the furniture. Lela's home was among the higher rated because it *de block* (made of cinder block), she had a solid wood dining table, and was very tidy. The rooms were parted with bed sheets and it was clear that the large wooden table was centerpiece of the home. I waited as her two children fussed over the PlayStation 2. Her and Roberto came inside, and she ordered her two young boys to turn the volume down on the TV, so we could talk. When I ask her about race she takes a moment to think before she responds:

"Well race, let me see if I can explain. He (points to Roberto) is my race. Because, when we're prieto, they say "ah you two are of the same race because he is prieto." But sometimes they're confused because there are *Dominicanos prieto* (dark-skinned/Black Dominicans) and Haitianos blanco (white or very light-skinned Haitians)"

Dominican-born, Lela, 25, uses her friend with a similar dark brown complexion to illustrate her point that sometimes *prietos* are lumped together as racial group because of their phenotypic similarities—their dark skin. This is consistent with *continuum racial schemas* that emphasizes phenotypic differences, like dark skin. She then qualifies her statement that sometimes people make mistakes "because there are Black Dominicans and white Haitians." This qualifier is important, because although she notes that Black people can be considered the same race, she also notes that those who mistake Black Dominicans and Black Haitians as the same race are "confused" suggesting that Black Haitians and Black Dominicans ought not to be lumped together as the same 'race' despite their phenotypic similarities. In this instance then, Lela begins in a continuum racial schema that highlights how phenotype is used as a marker to distinguish different racial groups, and also suggests that just because two people are Black does not mean they are of the same race and could just be 'confused' alluding at the salience of ethnic difference therefore shifting to a *nationality schema*. And, while she does not go on to explicitly state say that the two are mutually exclusive, she does provide opposing examples in 'Black Dominicans' and 'white Haitians' to perhaps to show how irrespective of phenotype people can be of the same race alluding to, although not utilizing a *nationality racial schema*. Together, Lufiz, Carolina, and Lela's, definitions of 'race' do not fit squarely in either continuum or

nationality schema, and representative of how interviewees often vacillated from one schema to another.

The African Race and Haitian Origins

As noted above, respondents understood their race in a myriad of ways including family, ancestry, phenotype, and nation of origin. In this section I present responses that relied primarily on their understanding of the African diaspora as an integral aspect of their own racial identities and racialization. Interestingly, a smaller number reported never knowing, hearing, or connecting their own lineage to Africa or African ancestry at all. This is not uncommon among Black populations throughout the Americas who either have never learned about the role of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in their own historical trajectories, or were weary of what they have heard. For those that did, however, like 22-year old Jigrena, when I asked her "if someone were to ask you what your race was, what would you say?" she sat across from me in a plastic lawn chair in an alley between her father's home and the neighboring weatring a black tank top and denim shorts, the slim, soft-spoken Dominican-born woman, quickly said that she considered herself, "*Africana Haitiana*" (an African-Haitian woman). When I asked what led her to pick both *Africana* and *Haitiana*, she simply stated "porque somos negros" (because we're Black). For Jigrena, her justifications for choosing both *Africana Haitiana* stem from the fact that she views herself as a Black woman and utilizes both pan-ethnic (African) and nationality-based (Haitian) racial schema in her self-identification because she *is* Black. References to Africa, like Jigrena's underscored a Black identity or phenotype and connected that to Africa indicative of a diasporic identity.

Others like Jean Charles relied on dichotomous iterations of race of Black and white, but were less certain of their African ancestry. At 64 years old, Jean Charles, born in the rural

Haitian countryside had been in the Dominican Republic since his mid-to-late twenties, and still lived in the building he did upon arriving to work the sugarcane fields in the late 80s. We sat at the entrance to his home, a 10-foot by 10-foot corner room of an old barracks, only secured by a deteriorating orange-colored wooden door and rusted padlock. It was customary for homes to be brightly colored: yellows, greens, pink, and red were among the most common I saw. He sat on his stoop, a single-step entrance to his dim room, wearing a light gray collared shirt with dark gray pants rolled up neatly just under the knee with no shoes or socks. About a foot or so in front of him sat a large repurposed empty tin can of paint, filled with burnt charcoal, which he later shared was where he cooked his meals, mostly rice. I sat on the ground next to him for the duration of our interview. Our immediate surroundings, much like some of the responses to race were conflicting. As the last building in the back of Villa Cielo, his backdrop was a beautiful, seemingly endless sea of lush green vegetation as far as one could see that only ended to meet the bright blue clear sky what looked like several dozens of miles away. After his initial apprehension subsided, Jean Charles revealed to be a charismatic light-hearted God-fearing man, a point which he was sure to remind me. When I asked Jean Charles 64, a devout Christian, about the origins of Haitians he gingerly stated:

> "The Haitian race, people used to say back in the day, because you know I don't know much—I don't know about this stuff; and the bible doesn't tell me anything about the Haitian or Dominican race, the bible doesn't explain stuff like that. But—and when I was in school over there in Haiti, I remember a book I read in Haiti that said there were two races, the white race and the black race. I learned that in Haiti. But I couldn't say where the Haitian race or the Dominican race

comes from, I couldn't tell you that. But for me, in my opinion the Haitian race

comes from Africa, its African. That's what people in the past have said, "the

Haitian race is African." Because Duvalier, the one who was president of Haiti, is

from Africa, you see? That's it (wipes hands)…and the Dominican race, they

come from Spain, Spain. That's it, that's all I know (wipes hands and laughs

hard).

Jean Charles stopped attending school in the seventh grade, now largely relied on his bible for

knowledge on how to lead his life. He seems unsure of Haitian origins, but believes, or at least

considers that there are two races white and Black, and that the Haitian race is from Africa, and

presumably Black. He references Haiti's infamous former president François Duvalier, also

known as 'Papa Doc,' as being 'African' which to him also proves that Haitians are, like Papa

Doc, African. Comments like Jean Charles,' with some historical inconsistencies were

common—Duvalier for example was born in Haiti, and is not *from* Africa, at least recently.

Others, still hesitant to take particular stance on this question, many self-doubting and suspicious

of what others had told them or what they learned in school.

Destin, 62, also born in Haiti, responded in a similar fashion "I can't say for sure because

I don't *know*" when asked 'y de donde piensas que vienen los raizes Haitianos?' (and where do

you think Haitian roots/ancestry comes from?), he continued leaning on nationality racial

schemas, "But I *think* the [Haitian] race comes from Africans" humbly offering his suggestion.

Comments like these suggest that even though unsure, many Haitians have at minimum, some

diasporic understanding of their African descent which, as I will show below influences

processes of racialization.

There were others with confident responses to the question of Haitian origins and used both continuum and nationality racial schemas simultaneously and paradoxically. When I asked, Wilben, 44, where Haitians come from he excitedly responded: "I know for me, not all Haitians, but for me, I come *directly* from the Jamaican and African race; I am *pure*, *pure* African" he says proudly emphatically annunciating 'pure' each time then leaning back in his plastic white lawn chair as if to signal that he's shared some important information and there's nothing left to say on the matter. He continues:

> "…in the past there were three nations. That's I've heard from elders, three nations: white, there was the red race, the white race, and the Black race. But the white race is French and Spanish. We come from two—African and Dominican. We come from African and Dominican. But I don't know. I get it, but I never talk about [it] because Dominicans would kill for bringing it up. They don't want to know that they come from those nations. Because when there were Spanish, they had to get a lot of Africans, and the Africans came to work as slaves. The Spanish and African mixed, and that's how I know I am pure African. I can't be Dominican or white. Because Haitians, even if they have white skin, their true race is pure, *pure* African." (sic)

Wilben is visibly excited to talk to me about this gesturing with his hands shifting in his chair frequently. He is tall, standing 3 or 4 inches over six feet, very dark-skinned and slim, sporting a weathered white tank-top, black shorts and flip-flops with his free-form locs in a loose bun now leaning more and more to the side as his animated responses continue. He notes that he is absolutely certain about his "Jamaican and African" race, and has even been confused as

Jamaican in the Dominican Republic later in the interview. For Wilben, there is little separation between race, ethnicity, and nation as he employs both nationality and continuum racial schemas weaving in and out of: African, Jamaican, Haitian, Black, red, and white ethnoracial categories. And while he alludes to phenotype when noting the three original "nations" 'red,' 'white,' and 'Black' he ultimately gives the most salience to African ancestry, concluding that even white Haitians' "true race is…*pure* African." It is unclear if for Wilben which racial schema he subscribes to more, it is clear however, that his African ancestry is salient in his understanding it is one that is distinct from white, French, or Spanish.

The most telling example of the obvious *nationality racial schemas* referencing Africa, was one of Emmanuel's deportation experiences. At 74, years old, Emmanuel had lived in the Dominican Republic for over fifty years. He was particularly slim and average height, such that even his well-fitting clothes looked baggy. He wore jeans with a belt that nearly wrapped around his waist twice, a long sleeve plaid shirt rolled up at the elbows partly buttoned, and black worn dress shoes that appeared tanner and grayer from the dust of the gravel. Emmanuel, insisted we had the interview in his home, which I suspect was in part to show off his beautiful fully-furnished home, and as was customary among interviewees, offer overwhelmingly warm hospitality.

The short two- or three-minute walk over to Emmanuel's home from Fernando's, the eldest in the community and common hangout spot, also revealed his wavering gait, which he attributed to decades on the sugarcane plantation. He was one of nearly 40 former sugarcane workers I had interviewed while in the Dominican Republic who had issues with Dominican migration. When I asked him what he had heard about *raices Haitianos* (Haitian roots), he replied: "my father used to tell us that we are a race directly from Africa. And supposedly they

brought Haitians to Haiti." Like many others, Emmanuel had heard from word of mouth that he descends from Africa and that Haitians were brought to Haiti, though did not clarify by whom. He went on to explain a story about a day he was being deported on the back of a truck en-route to Haiti:

> "They're saying "why don't they take us to Africa?" Haitians are Africans—of the African race. To explain it better, this one time immigration was taking us to Haiti and one of them [fellow Haitian detainees] said "better off taking us to Africa because we are from the African race"

Emmanuel used his deportation story to illustrate to me how he, and apparently other Haitians understand their African roots. Rather than returning the detainees to Haiti, guards are "better off" taking them to Africa suggests that not only do some Haitians understand the diaspora, but also show a certain affinity toward the African continent as a place where they are 'from.'

Features, Anti-Blackness, and Linguistic Passing

Not all references to Africa however, were positive or showed affinity or connectedness to the diaspora. In fact, respondents sometimes evoked over-arching anti-black and anti-Haitian ideologies to explain differences between groups—whether based on appearance, language, or something else. Here, respondents vacillated from essentializing which 'racial' groups have particular features, continuum racial schemas, to ascribing said features to a singular group, nationality racial schemas. In doing so, respondents also highlighted the explicit and implicit value, or capital associated with features and respective ethnicities. In what follows I describe how bodily capital is facilitated through their racial schemas.

In addition to their general understanding of race, I also asked respondents to describe their perception of racialized features. When prompted to explain to me, an outsider, if he could

explain "what others meant when they said so-called *pelo bueno y pelo malo* (good hair and bad hair)?," Michel, a 59 year-old very dark-skinned man, with temporary documentation, was quick to answer: "The nation that has bad hair is us. Haitians that have good hair come from the French race" he assured me in calm methodic tone. Here nation, as referenced above, is used synonymously with 'race' and has nothing at all to do, necessarily, with nation of origin or nationality but with lineage. Michel essentializes what *types* of hair correspond to the Haitian or French 'race' and also signals he's aware of some connection between Haiti's former colonizer. He goes on to explain: "Africa, *el Haitiano puro* (the pure Haitian) has the same hair Africans do. We are part of the African race, too." His use of the word 'too' here also reinforces what respondents like Jigrena, highlighted earlier when she identified as an *Africana Haitiana* (African Haitian). He continues, "The African race has much more uglier people than we do, you hear me?" inflecting his voice as if to try to convince me:

> "They [Africans] have bad hair. All Africans have bad hair, they don't have good hair. Dominicans from France also have good hair, and so do you. Your American—or French hair is very soft. And us, from my dad's side have soft hair *y son fino* (have thinner noses, less full lips, and less curly hair) because they're from the French race. I know Africans have bad hair—and a lot of Dominicans, too."

Michel's position on *pelo bueno y pelo malo* (good hair and bad hair), is premised on notions of 'racial' purity that ultimately determines one's racial features. *Puro Haitianos* (pure Haitians), without French ancestry have African hair, and *all* Africans have bad hair. Those with French

lineage (*raza Frances)*, have good hair. According to Michel, Africans' bodily capital is less advantageous, as all Africans have bad hair and are 'uglier' than Haitians.

Other respondents did not draw such strict distinctions when it came to hair. However, even nuanced discussions about hair relied on essentialized stereotypes about racial groups and desirability filtered through racial schemas. When asked the same questions about *pelo bueno y pelo malo* (good hair and bad hair), Yoslin and Lela's slightly nuanced approaches challenged yet reinforced Michel's comments:

"Bad hair doesn't just exist in Haitians. Because my grandfather, he's a man with good hair, he has *good* hair that's curly (draws curls in the air with her index finger), I mean *good good*, like Dominicans. There are a lot of people in my family that are like that. For example, my cousin that has kids here, twelve (chuckles), a lot of them have bad hair. But the last one, his hair came out like *un Chino*! (slaps table and bursts into laughter) yes like *un Chino*, he's got *good* hair (stresses voice)"-Yoslin

"…there are some Dominicans that have hair like Haitians. And sometimes there are Haitians that have hair *better* than Dominicans. And there are Dominicans that are *uglier* than Haitians (laughs). Yes! There are beautiful Haitians, prettier than even some Dominicans. You wouldn't be able to tell the difference!"-Lela

In Michel, Yoslin and Lela's responses, the reference group for beauty and desirable features, bodily capital is non-Haitian and non-African. Lela's phrase 'even prettier than' reveals that their exists what she perceives to be an incongruence in society's expectations in what she is

saying—Haitians are not expected to be beautiful, and perhaps especially not when compared to Dominicans. In this way my respondents read and explain bodily capital through the lens of broader anti-Black ideologies that depict Blackness as ugly and the antithesis to beauty.

Indeed, although nuances in both racial schemas and bodily capital were common, respondents' allusion to white Haitians and Black Dominicans for example, still all respondents suggested that they could still determine one race from another. And because I read so many of the people I interviewed and saw in and out of the bateyes were of clear African descent, I was also eager to learn how they distinguished one another racially. Most that expressed that they could distinguish racial groups gave simplistic answers that rather than represent the process of racialization. Gilda, 39, suggested that she could always tell, explaining: "the only thing [I need to see] is skin color. You can always tell; Africano negro, Haitiano negro, and Dominicano amarillo, Americano blanco, like that" (Black African, Black Haitian, and yellow Dominican, and white American). These statements were common, and is indicative of respondents' confidence in differentiating racial/ethnic groups in the Dominican Republic and their initial reliance on continuum racial schemas skin color as primary signifier.

On the other hand, Alex's complicated response to how one distinguishes one racial group from another, namely Haitians and Dominicans, better captured the nuances of race and racialization in the Dominican Republic, and when nationality and continuum schemas in and of themselves are insufficient. Alex explained:

> "By the ears. For example, Dominicans (laughs and puts hands behinds ears to flare them outward) they stick out more than Hatians' [ears]. Because look, its like this, the majority are *castizo* (mixed Haitian and Dominican), so to identify a pure Haitian you have to be really attentive to that, you know what I mean?"

Alex's immediate response is to highlight ears and the extent to which people in the Dominican Republic racially dissection one another by gauging the size and protrusion of one's ears. He explains that because so many Haitians are *castizo* mixed (mixture of any two races but used colloquially here to refer to individuals with one Haitian and one Dominican parent), he warns that one has to be especially attuned to their other features, like language. He continues:

> "Because there are a lot of pure Haitians that look just like Dominicans, and pure Dominicans that have ears just like Haitians. What happens, is that it's not all of them, not all of them…because you know there are some Haitians that speak Spanish and English really well, know what I mean? So, if you go by ears alone you won't always be right because there are a lot of Dominicans that have small ears."

Ultimately, Alex concedes that phenotype "ears alone" is not a good way to gauge one's racial group. According to him, however, among those with similar skin colors, ears do, however, provide another marker to make first assumptions about racial designations, but cannot be confirmed alone. Alex then shifts toward *ethnoracial schemas* to account for the fact that some Haitians "speak Spanish and English really well" limiting the effectiveness of both *continuum racial schemas* and *nationality racial schemas*.

Others, like Dominican-born Terrence, who spoke native Spanish himself, used a broader combination of racial schemas, but ultimately confessed that the best way to distinguish was by language or *ethnoracial schemas*. When I asked him how he might distinguish two 'razas diferente' (different races) he says he depends on "skin color…ears, nose, and hair" to help him distinguish but is most concerned with hearing people speak. In a similar fashion, Jeffery, a 21-year-old, and only one of handful high school graduates in my sample, shared that "…you can't tell by color, but by language. Because there are some Haitians that speak Spanish but not that

fluently, and that's how I know because I can hear them." For both Jefferey and Terrence, visual racial cues do not suffice, and instead via *ethnoracial schemas* they tend to rely on language proficiency to ultimately categorize others as Dominican or Haitian, especially when phenotypic markers are 'unclear.'

Carolina and Darlin's experiences with 'racial passing' due to their language abilities were among the most elaborate examples of how language functions as a racializing marker, but also reinforced perceptions of what Spanish-speaking Dominicans ought to look like. When probed about whether they had been misidentified the two Dominican-born women shared:

"Yes of course (laughs) [I've been confused as another race]. For example, I speak Spanish very well, I don't know if you've noticed, even though I have *piel morena* (brown skin), on occasion when people here me speak Spanish and later [Haitian] Creole, they are surprised and tell me 'I thought you were Dominican.' Because I have such a good handle on the Spanish language sometimes they confuse me for a Dominican because of the way I talk".-Carolina

"Yes a bunch of times. A lot of times when I go out and they hear me speaking, they'll (Dominicans) say "Are you Haitian?" and I say "Yes I'm Haitian" and they say "you are *not* Haitian" and [I say] "What are you talking about I am Haitian.' I am, why do you ask?" And they say because I "don't look it." How don't I look it, *soy prieta*?! *Soy prieta* and not all Haitians are Black. Because there are a lot of Haitians that are *blanco blanco*...And they say, 'It's not because of that, it's your behavior, your speech and the way your express yourself.' And I tell them, "well, I'm not Dominican I'm Haitian."-Darlin

Both Carolina and Darlin, both of whom where dark-skinned and very dark-skinned respectively, have the relative advantage of having learned Spanish from birth, as opposed to the majority of my respondents who were Haitian-born (77%) and often had discernable accents and grammatical limitations. This allows them to 'pass' as non-Haitian Dominicans in select interactions. In both examples, onlookers question their Haitian ancestry or simply racialize them as non-Haitian Dominicans because of their linguistic abilities. Here *ethnoracial schemas* best captures how the Spanish language functions as a racializing marker, and in these instances, even overrides phenotypic characteristics of "piel morena" and "prieta." In both examples, being able to speak Spanish well in spite of their dark skin, *piel morena* and *prieta*, highlights their perceived inconsistencies where *only* Dominicans can speak Spanish. Indeed, this example complicates continuum and nationality racial schemas, and brings to the fore the salience of both phenotypic *and* non-phenotypic racialization practices. Consequently, for other respondents, who may not be able to be perceived as non-Haitian their racialization as Haitian leaves them vulnerable to harassment and mistreatment.

Discussion

This chapter explored Haitians' contemporary ideas about race and how they come to understand racialization practices in the Dominican Republic. I utilized an extended racial schemas framework to explore how Haitians came to categorize themselves and others. In addition to nationality and racial schemas, I offered *ethnoracial schemas*, to capture how individuals also pull from other non-phenotypic cues to racialize others, namely assumptions about language.

My findings suggest Haitian descents living in the Dominican Republic rely on both nationality or continuum racial schemas (Roth 2012) when discussing race. These findings are

consistent with work on migrants and non-migrants racialized experiences in their respective

countries who engage in both schemas dependent upon context, person they are speaking with,

and whether or not they are referring to themselves or someone else (Duaney 2006, O'Brien

2008, Roth 2012, Cobas et al 2015). Like previous studies, respondents sometimes used both

simultaneously and/or inconsistently revealing how racialization is a process-based phenomenon.

Three major themes emerged from Haitian descendants' responses to their understanding of race

and racialization. First, respondents presented conflicting definitions and understandings through

their discourses on race. However, the majority of respondents defined race through one

following: *familia* familial, biological/ancestral (*sangre)*, phenotypic (*prieta/o, negra/o,*

morena/o) or nationalistic ways (*Haitiano, Dominicano, Americano, Africano*). In invoking any

of these racial understandings, respondents gave primacy to nationality racial schemas dependent

upon how . Second, respondents broader understanding of race was also informed by their

knowledge, or lack thereof, of African history and/or ancestry in Hispaniola. Those with

knowledge of African ancestry, often by word of mouth, also relied on nationality (Africano)

schemas but also reverted to skin or phenotype as justifications, 'porque somos negros.'

However, my findings depart from other studies that explore the impact of language in

racialization practices. Haitians living in the Dominican Republic also employ what I term,

ethnoracial schemas, the process by which individuals are racialized by their phenotypic,

linguistic, and cultural markers including attire, hair texture and style, and accent. Indeed, other

studies have explored the role of language discriminatory outcomes. These studies have found

that race and language intimately tied to one another, can reproduce social stratification, limit life

chances, and used to create ethnoracial boundaries (Flores and Rosa 2015, Aranda and Rebollo-

Gil 2004, Baiely 2002). With respect to racial schemas however, fewer studies have explored

how individuals observed race is later impacted by linguistic markers of fluency or non-fluency, via interaction-based observed race. In a country where racial categories are not always clearly demarcated, language becomes an important racial tool or part of individual racial schemas, an *ethnoracial schema*, to delineate 'racial' groups.

These findings contribute to how we understand processes of racialization. Rather than a static observed race ascription, this study reveals how the micro-level processes of racialization are interaction-based. This is particularly dangerous when one considers how the consequences of such practices reinforce ethnoracial stratification and, as I will show in chapter two, increase the likelihood of discrimination, detention, and deportation. This work also a growing body of work challenging the disparities between how race, ethnicity, and nationality are used as distinctly discrete categories in the social sciences, when in reality many in the global south, and all in my study, do not think of them in those ways, especially when racializing one another. (see also O'brian 2008, Flores-Gonzalez 2017). Indeed, Africa is not a racial, ethnic, or national category, yet is used frequently in terms of 'raza Africana' by my respondents. Surely, discrete terms provide the basis for analytical rigor, but also fall short depending on what aspect(s) of racial outcomes one is exploring (Roth 2016).

In chapter 2, I discuss the structural implications of micro-level racialization processes discussed above. Specifically, I demonstrate how racialization is intimately tied to discrimination, documentation, and deportation. I engage sociological literature on theories of immigration and of migrants, like contexts of reception and liminal legality to expose micro, meso, and macro forms of anti-Haitian racism.

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Chapter 2: "A Mi Me Llevaron Seis Veces" (They've taken me [to Haiti] six times)

"…from three to four in the morning they get to knocking on doors "boom boom boom" (taps plastic chair with nails to imitate sound). "Immigration! Open the door! Your papers!?" If you don't have any, they take you." -Benson 56, Undocumented Haitian migrant

As one of many neighbors and passerby's eavesdropping on my interview, Benson finally commits and takes a seat to insert himself into our conversation. After a few moments listening to his friend talk about the last immigration raid in the community, he interrupts. Benson describes the raids as sudden, abrupt, and a fact of life as they often come in the early morning hours to catch residents off guard. There is an eerie normalcy with which respondents talk about raids, arrests, and deportation. In many instances, there is little distinction in tone whether one is talking about going to the market, going to school, or having to scramble into the jungle *cuande viene migracion* (when immigration comes). This is in part, because Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic have grown to understand and function under constant surveillance and are under the perpetual threat of detention and deportation and, as one respondent lamented on deportation, "asi es la vida" (such is life).

While I focused on the intricacies and breadth of racialization strategies in the Dominican Republic in the previous chapter, here I turn my attention to documentation, deportation, and power structures, to explore how anti-Black and anti-Haitian policies *misdocument* family members. In this chapter, I show how the state's vested interest in maintaining and enforcing their migratory laws impact Haitian descendants, that rather than being simply 'undocumented,' are instead actively *misdocumented* by the state and respective actors. I define *misdocumentation* as part of larger system of exclusion, the: de jure and de facto tactics of the state that make

regularization impractical or impossible to secure and maintain. The main tenets of *misdocumentation:* are bureaucracy, surveillance, and discretion. Bureaucracy refers to the complicated and expensive barriers that prevent migrants from achieving documentation; surveillance captures the targeted efforts by law and immigrant enforcement that not only seek but detain, arrest, and deport undesired groups; and discretion refers to the individual choice and rationalizations that agents of the state make in their induvial interactions with actual and/or suspected migrants in their official capacities. I argue this corrective accounts for interviewees' perceptions of the Dominican government and places the onus on restrictive xenophobic policies and practices identified by respondents rather than a supposedly apolitical condition of being 'undocumented.' Accordingly, I contend that Haitians' liminal status is a result of their racialization (discussed in chapter one), that also makes them more vulnerable to *misdocumentation* 'justifies' state-enacted violence including interpersonal surveillance, marginalization, punishment, and deportation.

In what follows, I provide an overview Haitian migration and Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic. I pay particular attention to migrant trends and legislation in the last decade including the 2010 earthquake and 2013 constitutional amendments. I then situate my research query, comparing and employing theories of liminality and citizenship where I introduce the concept of *misdocumentation*, undergirded by liminal statelessness. I demonstrate that racialization processes are reproduced and maintained by institutional processes that perpetually block Dominicans of Haitian descent from regularization. This chapter highlights the role of the State and affiliate State actors in preventing Haitian descendants from securing documentation making the tasks impractical or otherwise impossible to obtain.

Introduction: Haitian Migration to the Dominican Republic

The international attention the Dominican Republic has received in last few years regarding human rights abuses and citizenship is actually several decades in the making. The 224-mile border that separates Haiti and the Dominican Republic is readily described as 'porous' due to the ebb and flow of people, culture, and currency at the border (Bartlett 2012, Paulino 2016, Derby 1994). And, although migration to and from present-day Haiti and Dominican Republic dates to their respective colonial periods, the 2010 7.0 magnitude earthquake has accounted for a majority for recent influx of migration. Experts estimate the earthquake led to approximately 230,000 deaths and left over one million displaced, many "leaving Port-au-Prince for unaffected rural areas, such as the Dominican Republic" as well as other places throughout Latin America (Magresson and Taft-Morales 2010 p. 1).

The Dominican government opened its borders and received large numbers of Haitian refugees and with the 'help' of NGO's and other charitable organizations attempted to provide relief to families fleeing destruction and despair (Lau 2010). Nearly forty percent (38.6%) of Haitians currently in the Dominican Republic emigrated between 2010 and 2012, suggesting that post-earthquake migration accounts for the bulk of the Haitian population. Currently, Haitian migrants far outnumber any other migrant and non-Dominican ethnic group in the Dominican Republic accounting between 80-87% of the total migrant population, and approximately 4-5% of all peoples living in the Dominican Republic (Oficina Nacional de Estadistica 2013, United Nations Database 2015). Their notable presence, however has been met with hostility throughout the country resulting in nationalistic and xenophobic demonstrations and protests including violent clashes, destruction, and Haitian flag-burning demanding that Haitians be returned to their country (Childers 2020).

The Haitian presence has also revived an unsubstantiated belief in a so-called 'passive invasion' from the western third of the island. The rhetoric, stemming from the perceived threat of Haitian re-occupation of the island of Hispaniola dating back to early 19th century political strife (Turtis 2002), has been created anew perhaps most famously by Ramfis Trujillo, grandson of the infamous dictator Rafael Trujillo. In the months leading to the eventual 2020 election (in which the dictator's grandson was not successful), Ramfis Trujillo gained a large following and political and traction with nationalists. Ramfis Trujillo's rhetoric, imbued with racist misinformation, largely called for increased regulation and militarization at the border to ward off so-called 'invading Haitians.' In a recent publicized interview, the then-presidential candidate, Ramfis Trujillo, grossly overestimated that nearly three million Haitians live in the Dominican Republic illegally" he continued, "yes thirty percent of our ten million population" (Interview with Fuente Bayly, 2019). While, exact numbers of Haitians in the Dominican Republic is unclear, given rural and batey communities, Trujillo's estimate nearly triples the most generous estimates of one million and is more than five times official counts by the United Nations (see also Crouse 2010). Indeed, his racist and xenophobic scapegoating is a common fear-inducing tactic commonly used against migrant groups to justify their persecution. The inaccurate, misleading, and racist rhetoric has only fueled public concerns about the Haitian presence in the Dominican Republic.

Struggle for Documentation & 2013 Constitutional Amendments

These tensions were realized in 2013 when the Dominican Republic courts reinterpreted their policies of children born to persons "in transit" effectively dismantling *jus soli* (birthright citizenship) clause precedents, with Ruling TC 168-13. The amendment called for a Civil Registry to identify all those individuals inscribed irregularly—in other words, an effort to "audit

the status of those born after June 21, 1929" (Shipley 2015 464). Following the ruling, tensions

along the border were reignited coupled with a series of voluntary, coerced, and forced

deportations of Haitian descendants (Matibag and Downing-Matibag 2010, Ellen 2016). Under

international scrutiny, then-president of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina called for an

18-month moratorium from deportations in December of 2013, to provide those affected the

opportunity to demonstrate "unquestionable ties" which he defined as "having a native relative,

owning property, studying or working in the Dominican Republic, and speaking Spanish"

(Shipley 2015, 468) with strict requirements to become regularized. Still, 37% of all Haitian

descendants living in the Dominican Republic are without birth certificates (United Nations

Population Fund DR 2019).

Although much of the Dominican national rhetoric espouses that the state's concern is

not with Haitians migrants per se, but instead with upholding scrupulous immigration policies

and national sovereignty (Matibag-Downing-Matibag 2011, Ricourt 2016), anti-Haitian stigmas

are not ameliorated with documentation, or proof of Dominicanidad. Bartlett et al suggests

"[p]ossession of legal documents, alone, is not sufficient….passports and visas are ignored or

selectively interpreted depending upon how the agent of the state reads other raced and classed

signs, such as skin color and dress, as well as the social context" (2011 594). Margerin et al

(2011) summarizes the importance of documented status on the livelihood of people in the

Dominican Republic: "access to a national identity card, as is the case in the Dominican

Republic, lack of an identity card prevents the realization of a whole series of rights. Without

identity documents, these persons were deprived of their rights to an education, housing, health,

and freedom of movement" (11). In response restrictive xenophobic policies it is not unlikely for

Haitians, including those with Dominican-born children, to bribe Dominican state officials for

birth certificates or other documentation in order to access public goods (Gregory 2007), that inadvertently increasing their chances for state persecution.

Many of these challenges are exacerbated when the population is from a batey community due to their relative isolation, social exclusion, and various legal and extra-legal obstacles including spontaneous raids. De facto residential segregation, whether by rurality or via bateyes leaves those perceived as Haitian at risk for violence and exploitation. Although the violence and risk of imprisonment is generally not as prominent as it once was, members of bateyes still feel trapped and without the proper resources (Childers 2020). In an interview with Open Democracy, a non-profit organization whose primary focus is global human rights, Junior a 22 year-old migrant laborer from Haiti explains: "We can leave, so we are free. But when one does this job he is like a slave, a prisoner, because without money he can't go wherever he wants. He has to stay and pay debts at the shop ... and then the job has to be finished" (2017). Outside the perimeter of the plantation "they [Haitians] were also outside the law" (Catholic Institute for International Relations 2004 39) leaving Haitian descendants few viable routes for a quality of life compared to their Dominican counterparts. The continued human rights abuses have not gone unnoticed, and as we will see, have largely been predicated on rigid (re)constructions of citizenship and targeted policies.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In a globalized world, the importance of documentation cannot be overstated. In what follows I provide an overview of the rise in ideological and legal support for states' citizenship as well as the sociological framing that exposes migrants' unjust treatment in respective host societies. In light of politicians, activists, and researchers have long established the importance of national belonging, statehood, and citizenship status (Gordon 1964, Portes 1993, Menjivar 2002).

Indeed, at least since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) protected citizenship status became cause of international concern following the atrocities of World War II (Mutua 2002, Freeman 2007). In response to the mass genocide of over six million Jews and war-time displacement, the global community, mostly white Western powers, quickly established and adopted the UDHR as a set of aspirational principles intended to guide respective country's governance. It followed then, that each nation state's responsibility to its people—its citizens and inhabitants—was to ensure and protect newly declared universal 'human rights,' namely one's ability to lead dignified lives free of persecution and a realized citizenship, or pathway to citizenship (Freeman 2002). Citizenship and statehood, in turn, became legal mechanisms for alleged protection under the law that nation states are expected to uphold. For Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, whose citizenship opportunities are limited, denied, or otherwise impossible to attain in the Dominican Republic, their existence is one negatively impacted by the law and free of protection from injustices by the state. In the following sections I survey relevant literature on conceptualizations of documentation, citizenship, and statehood and discuss which theoretical iterations are best suited to explore the lives of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic.

Liminal Legalities and Citizenship

Migrating from one country to another is imbued with obstacles. In addition to interpersonal discrimination Haitians and other migrants face on account of phenotype (Bashi and McDaniel 1997, Duaney 2006, Wooding 2009), gender (Basok and Piper 2012, Childers 2020), and culture (Ricourt 2016), transplants and their descendants face severe structural limitations (Wooding 2009, Shipley 2015, Childers 2020). Structural challenges for migrant groups often spans the entire immigration experience, from incoming policy discrepancies on

who is and is not allowed to migrate from one country to another, to difficult pathways to documentation and interpersonal discrimination (Fitzgerald and Cooks-MartinBrown 2013). Research on immigrant populations has traditionally conceptualized migrants' documentation as a dichotomous phenomenon; migrants who are documented and those who are not documented (Menjivar 2006). These works have revealed how lack of documentation impacts one's overall standard of living and prospects of upward mobility resulting in negative outcomes including: education attainment, employment, and health (Asad and Clair 2018).

Critical works have sought to disentangle binary depictions of documented/ undocumented groups lived experiences. Menjivar's (2006) seminal work on 'liminal legality' highlights an 'in between' status amongst those who are documented ('legal') and those who are not ('illegal'), noting that countries blur "boundaries of legality and illegality to create gray areas of incertitude, with the potential to affect broader issues of citizenship and belonging" (p 1002). Accordingly, migrants who are with or without documentation live in what many have called a 'legal limbo,' and 'permanent temporariness' in the straddling of two positions (Bailey 2002, Mountz et al 2002).

The impact on migrant and their families is rarely uniform. Undocumentedness fosters hardships for families as the constant threat of surveillance and subsequence hyper-vigilance often results in inequitable distribution of responsibilities in 'mixed-status' families (Medina and Menjivar 2015, Aranda and Vaquera 2015). In absence legitimate means to acquire resources, families may rely on the individual(s) with documentation, including children to tend to family's needs (Abrego 2019). And, for children, Torres and Wicks (2014) content some statuses are better described as 'liminal citizenship' referring to the ways in which undocumented youth are still sometimes granted 'temporary rights' like that of other 'citizens' through institutions like

primary school. Specifically, k-12 functions as a set of temporary pseudo-protective institutions

that, through requiring children to attend school, grants children de facto citizen-like privileges—

in education. The legal protective statuses of k-12, however, are short-lived such that transition

from these institutions and into adulthood leaves one particularly vulnerable to a host of new

social and juridical challenges and responsibilities that accentuate the limits of being

undocumented (Gonzalez 2011). The same is true in the Dominican Republic, where a birth

certificate will (often) allow one to advance through public educations systems up to through

high school, only to deny opportunities for higher education (Childers 2020).

As the largest migrant group in the Dominican Republic, Haitians and their descendants face

all of these challenges. In the most recent work on Haitians and their descendants living in

bateyes, legislation, hyper-policing, and expensive and confusing regularization procedures

facilitate liminal legality (Childers 2020). Liminal legality can represent a state of being that is

neither document or undocumented but instead is ambiguous and has characteristics of both

(Menjivar 2006). Of their precarious conditions, Childers (2020) suggests that for Haitians

liminal legality has three particular characteristics:

> 1) Haitians (both Haitian and Dominican-born) are "subject to financial barriers that hinder
> their ability to access legal that could protect them from deportation" 2) "governments
> monitor continued ability to [re] document one's presence in the country…in the Book of
> Foreigners" and 3) Haitians "are vulnerable to private and public entities that that make
> decisions based on their own interests." (p 82-83)

Childers' three-prong framework provides useful foundation from which to conceptualize a

robust processual exclusion of migrants in general, and Haitians in particular that leads to their

misdocumentation based on their racialization and subsequent exclusion at the micro, meso, and

macro level. In the next section I detail how the Haitian experience is best described as liminal statelessness as opposed to liminal legality, and expound on my concept of *misdocumentation* and its utility in reframing the state's role in Haitian marginalization.

<div align="center">'Liminal Statelessness,' Illegality, and Misdocumentation</div>

I draw from Turner's (2017) theory of denizenship and Lori's (2017) concept of 'precarious citizenship' to coin *precarious denizenship*. The former situates denizenship as the result of eroding citizenry in democratic societies coupled with an interest in maintaining second-class statuses among certain groups, namely people of so-called immigrant stock. Relatedly, precarious citizenship refers to individuals who, as the result of states' unwillingness to resolve larger migration issues, create 'ad hoc' categories of people that are "unable to gain or access secure citizenship rights" (Lori 2017 p 3). I contend that while both provide a useful conceptual base from which to understand obstacles migrants and their descendants encounter in their respective host nation, they fail to address how race in the Americas, especially for indigenous and African descendant peoples, has historically and contemporary been inextricably tied to citizenship ascription. As such, I coin *precarious denizenship* to center the role of phenotype in nation-making projects.

Precarious denizenship highlights the precarity, or incertitude between statelessness and non-statelessness, a state-enforced condition that centers the idea of a 'citizen' as not only a codified status, but one that is also predicated on phenotypic assumptions of what a citizen of a given country 'typically,' or in the case of national projects, 'ought' to look like. *Precarious denizenship* then, considers individuals who are beyond the racialized scope of what a particular citizen is expected to look like in addition to the legal challenges faced on account of their immigration or ancestry. Of this phenomenon, referred to as alien citizenship, Ngai (2006) writes

that for these individuals: "citizenship is suspect, if not denied, on account of the racialized identity…making nationality a kind of racial trait" that subsequently facilitates "the nullification of the rights of citizenship" (2521-2522). In the Dominican Republic, national ideologies of the elite ruling class have historically positioned Haitians in opposition to Dominicans (Torres-Saillant 2006), such that even multigenerational Dominican-born Haitians descendants living in the Dominican Republic feel like, and are often treated as, foreigners in their own country (Childers 2020).

Previous research on migrant groups' legal challenges have revealed important findings and can be surmised in the following ways (also see Table 1): liminal legality, highlights 'the gray areas' between documented/undocumented, liminal citizenship captures intermediate statuses between citizens and non-citizens, liminal statelessness describes the "gray areas between citizenship and statelessness" (Parsons and Lareniuk 2017 p 1). While useful, each of the aforementioned concepts fail to capture the experiences of Haitian descendants living in the Dominican Republic for three primary reasons. First, liminal legality, the original concept from which the others are defined, is situated within a segmented assimilation theory perspective. Premised on the assumption that the children of migrants shed their customs and norms and adopt the majority culture of the respective host country. And, while some are able to do so, assimilation is 'segmented' for some because of their phenotypic characteristics that may prevent upward mobility or parity with native citizens. For Haitian descendants, and particularly those in my study, their Blackness permanently marks them as other.

Menjivar's original article is oddly devoid of race and its connection to documentation or lack thereof. In fact, the article in which liminal legality is coined, fails to even mention the word "race" at all. Instead, in describing how 'liminal legality' intersects with other forms of

stratification Menjivar writes: "liminal legality" not only overshadows the potential gains of individuals' higher levels of human capital but also exacerbates the effects of other systems of stratification, such as those based on social class, gender, and ethnicity" (1009). While it is undoubtedly true that living in the 'gray areas' of 'legality' compounds other structural barriers, the omission of race leaves potential important intersections unexplored. This is curious given that the citizenship, and perceived humanity for that matter, in the Americas has long been tied to phenotype. Second, liminal legality is migrant centric and presumes that belonging is primarily a legal ascription, and thus devoid of any treatment of race. Decentering race from citizenship, ignores a significant factor in one's relation to their respective nation state and presumes that individuals can in fact reach parity with their native peers by achieving documentation or citizenship, where Ngai's (2004) alien citizen suggests otherwise, making us questions whether full realized citizenship is even a possibility.

The lived experiences of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, is perhaps better described as *precarious denizenship*. This term is most appropriate for Haitians living in the Dominican Republic for three primary reasons. First, one must consider that the Dominican Republic's legislation, both historically but particularly in the last decade has: recently rescinded *jus soli* birthright nationality, retroactively stripped many Dominicans of Haitian descent of their citizenship/nationality, and subsequently not provided effective means toward statehood (Ellen 2016, Childers 2020). As such, the Haitian and Dominicans of Haitian contingency is comprised of those who have had their citizenship/status revoked, and their once-valid documentation invalidated, and fostered conditions for generational statelessness as a result of the rescindment of jus soli citizenship.

Second, in addition to the seldom obtained (full citizenship) *cedula*, that legally grants its owner all rights afforded to Dominicans, a second *cedula* with the words 'no vota' (no vote) is also issued to migrants (Shipley 2015). Although the latter, 'no vota' *cedula* makes one 'documented' and offers protection from deportation, general freedom of movement, access to higher education, options to open a bank account in select establishments, it also renders its disenfranchised and politically voiceless. Third, anti-Haitian racism relegates Haitians, including non-migrant Dominicans of Haitian descent, as perpetual foreigners—even those who are native-born, native Spanish-speaking Dominicans and 'full' citizens under the law (Childers 2020). 'Actual' documented status, in many instances, is irrelevant, because Haitians, whether documented or undocumented, citizen or non-citizen, are treated as 'alien citizens,' individuals whose citizenship will always be suspect and thus subject to racist/xenophobic questioning due to their phenotypic ethnoracial characteristics (Ngai 2006).

Precarious denizenship then is indicative of Haitians' experiences because, as the policies and social practices reveal, assumptions of the Haitian 'non-citizen' is standard—even for those who are in fact 'full' Dominican citizens. As such the spectrum from statelessness to non-statelessness represents those who are truly stateless—without documentation—and those who are non-stateless whether through: temporary visas, permanent residency, labor documentation, and citizenship but still receive second-class status in society. This perspective explicitly accounts for the rampant anti-Haitian racism and socio-legal mechanisms through which even legally ascribed categories (citizen, permanent resident, documented) are not uniformly realized, acknowledged, or observed by the Dominican state and its enforcers (Wooding 2009, Ricourt 2016, Childers 2020).

It follows that individuals live in a state of *precarious denizenship* between statelessness and non-statelessness because they are or have been *misdocumented*. I define *misdocumentation* as the de jure and de facto macro, meso, and micro-level process by which state-backed practices, policies, and state actors foster conditions that make regularization impractical or impossible to attain. I argue this corrective centers migrants' experiences and anti-black racism by: 1) accounting for specific legislation that facilitates these experiences, 2) captures interviewees' perceptions of the Dominican government, and 3) rightfully placing the onus on the state's restrictive xenophobic scope and impact. This builds on the work of De Genova, and his concepts of illegality and Border Spectacles (2002, 2013). De Genova's two major assertions suggest that "illegality" ought to be treated as a socially constructed category, and one that is ideologically established by the Border Spectacle, where migrant labor is acquired whilst simultaneously promulgating a fear of excessive 'illegal' migration. Of this phenomena, De Genova (2013 p 1181) asserts:

> "Such discursive formations must be understood to be complexes of both language and image, of rhetoric, text and subtext, accusation and insinuation, as well as the visual grammar that upholds and enhances the iconicity of particular fetishized figures of 'illegal immigration'."

Illegality, as socially constructed, provides the nation state with the tools to create the urgency and profile of and for undesirable migrant groups. These efforts ultimately justify their exclusion and persecution in respective societies. And where illegality, ensures the ideological foundational support necessary to accomplish this, *misdocumentation* highlights the process by which these ideologies are exercised. *Misdocuemntation* moves beyond the ideology and explicates the pragmatic tactics the state sanctions to fulfill the nation states nationalist

endeavors. The main tenets of *misdocumentation:* are bureaucracy, surveillance, and discretion. Bureaucracy refers to the complicated and expensive barriers that prevent migrants from achieving documentation; surveillance captures the targeted efforts by law and immigrant enforcement that not only seek but detain, arrest, and deport undesired groups; and discretion refers to the individual choice and rationalizations that agents of the state make in their induvial interactions with actual and/or suspected migrants in their official capacities.

I see parallels with different yet intimately related social problems of voting both within and beyond the Caribbean context. As a useful comparison, I contend for example, that it is more accurate to categorize African Americans barred from voting via tactics like Black Codes, mob violence, and imprisonment as peoples who were (and are) 'disenfranchised' rather than non-voters. While both are technically are 'non-voters', the latter is ahistorical and willfully inattentive to white supremacy and power and the nation states' role in maintaining social order. Similarly, rather than describe a peoples who are simply undocumented—an adjective for people without documents—I suggest instead that their documents were actively: revoked, destroyed, disappeared, and otherwise made inaccessible, resulting in their *misdocumentation*.

In the following sections, I rely on responses from 60 interviewees to outline how Haitians living in the Dominican Republic experience *precarious denizenship* by way of *misdocumentation*. The results for this chapter draw specifically from intimate stories shared with me about trials and tribulations of how individuals manage a marginalized existence. From their responses I center and highlight general sentiments regarding their documentation, their own or family's obstacles obtaining documents, and their attempts to rectify, resist, or embrace their respective situations. Some of the questions included but were not limited to: "Can you tell me about an experience you have had *con migracion*," "Do you remember the last immigration

raid here? What happened and what did you do?" "What has your process been like trying to get your *papeles*?" "What do you think should be done for Haitians trying to get their papers?"

Methods and Select Descriptive Statistics

With the help of key community contacts, I was able to secure 60 individual interviews, spread evenly across each batey: 20 from Batey Cueva, 20 from Villa Cielo, and the remaining 20 interviews, and seven-person focus group from Batey Unidad. Inclusion criteria was relatively broad, and I only required respondents have Haitian ancestry (at least one Haitian parent as determined by them), currently reside in one of the three bateyes, and be 18 years of age or older. Respondents average age was 41 and ranged from 18 to 91. Respondents were 'unambiguously Black,' meaning their phenotypic features including afro-textured hair, deep brown skin, and facial features suggested visible African ancestry. All also identified as such using terms: *moreno/a, negro/a, prieto/a,* and *noir* (Haitian Creole word for 'black') understood to be variations of brown or dark(er) brown skin or simply 'black' in the Dominican Republic (Duaney 2006, Candelario 2007, Childers 2020).

Most of my respondents were men at 64% (43/67). The vast majority, 77%, were migrants and Haitian-born (52/67), and noted that they were unemployed or unable work at the time of respective interview 67% (45/67). Interestingly, while some were employed, even those with jobs did not have steady or reliable income, mostly due to the fact that the attainable jobs were situational, temporary, seasonal or subject to (intentionally orchestrated) immigration raids. Those that answered definitively on how much they made when they 'could find' work, reported anywhere from $3,000-16,000 DOM (at the time, approximately $60 to $307 U.S. dollars) every two weeks, with the most frequently quoted figure of about $6,000 (115 U.S. dollars). Finally,

nearly half of all respondents were undocumented at about 50% (33/67), just three had permanent residency, or *cedulas*, but without the right to vote and only five had full Dominican citizenship with the right to vote. The remaining 26 had temporary documentation that, at the time of their interviews, was to expire in one year or less from the 2018 regularization plan that sought to transition 'migrants' and non-citizens to some sort of 'legal' or documented status (it is likely that they completely undocumented now given the onset of the pandemic that has decreased major government institutions including immigration services).

Findings

Through the process of *misducmentation*, Haitians I interviewed became *precarious denizens*, semi-permanent inhabitants of the Dominican Republic, whose racial, ethnic, and juridical position leave them susceptible to exploitation, deportation, limited access to statehood, and ultimately denial of human rights. While the state's *misdocumentation* of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent is a multifacted endeavor, spanning macro, meso, and micro power structures. My analysis is informed by Childers' (2020) ethnography that identified: Finances, government surveillance, and public/private entities as primary factors affecting the lives of Haitian descendants. I show how *misdocumentaiton* occurs at each own respective level of interaction: Legislation (Macro), Financial Prospects (meso), and Individual actor's Discretion (micro). Importantly, virtually all respondents indicated that issues Haitian descendants face was unjust, unequivocally 'wrong,' and rooted in racism because "los Dominicanos no quieren saber de nosotros Haitianos" (Dominicans don't want anything to do with us). Ultimately, *misdocumentation*, the totality of all processes involved preventing someone from securing *papeles* including the legal and extra-legal practices, made the process of regularization impractical or impossible altogether resulting in *precarious denizenship*.

Indeed, at the national level, public ideologies, the creation of illegality, and legislation about pathways to citizenship inadvertently disproportionately impact Haitians who constitute more than 85% of all migrant groups in the Dominican Republic. Constitutional reinterpretation and eventual passage of law T-168-13 in 2013 and the subsequent installation of the 'Book of Foreigners' left Haitians descendants scrambling to find their place in an increasingly hostile and legally confusing Anti-Haitian society. The state's efforts sought to account for documented and (newly) undocumented migrants. As such, macro-level *misdocumentation* meant that the law first invalidated the once-valid documentation of Haitians by reinterpreting jus soli citizenship and migrants "in transit" such that anyone born between 1923 and 2010 to 'irregular' parents was not granted Dominican citizenship. Subsequent policies also detailed a series of confusing and expensive multi-step process toward documentation including registration in the National Book of Foreigners. For many of my respondents, their *misdocumentaiton* consisted of ongoing, confusing, incoherent, and ultimately fruitless encounters with government agencies undergirded by widespread anti-Haitian racism and ideologies that, rather provide a solution toward documentation, instead fostered despair and suspicion in the Dominican government's intentions.

The Haitian Law: Bureaucracy and Misdocumentation

Jigrena is a vibrant, Dominican-born 23-year-old woman and high school graduate (1 of 8 in sample), is one of many that offered her opinion (without being directly asked) on precisely why the Dominican government does not want Haitians to get their *papeles*. We sat in a dimly lit dining area in her father's home, illuminated only by the fledgling sun light forcing its way in from the open front door and a single yellowing light-bulb hanging from a crude wire running to the zinc ceiling. She slouched in her chair wearing a white shirt and denim skirt with her

forearms out in front of her on the table. Where her relatively small stature might initially casts doubt on her age, her confident diction and wit was reminiscent of someone much her senior:

> "Because you know the president here is racist. He doesn't want Haitians to have *papeles*. It's the Dominicans that are racist with their papers, and they don't want to give Haitians *ni un papel*, none! They think that if a Haitian gets un *papel* they can become…a senator or presidential candidate. But Dominicans don't want Haitians to advance. They always want Haitians under them—not advancing. And *that's* why they don't want to give Haitians *papeles*."

Jigrena's comments capture sentiments held by the majority of my respondents, that racism is the norm within the Dominican state and among Dominican people. Many also suggested, like Jigrena, that in addition to the difficulties simply attaining documents, that Dominicans did not want them to secure *papeles* and in fact preferred for Haitians to remain struggling or "under them"—stagnant with little means for upward mobility or status change and "not advancing." This highlighted my respondents' perceptions of Haitian-Dominican relations, or what nearly every single participant surmised as the general notion the Dominicans "que no quieren saber de Haitianos." Alex, 44, now living in the Dominican Republic for fifteen years, explains the extent to which anti-Haitian racism exists in the Dominican Republic, stating that Dominicans are so racist that:

> "…they don't even want you *near* them. They're the people that don't even want you *by* them, that hate you—they're racist. For example, if you asked them for a cup of water those racists would rather die than give you one"

Jigrena and Alex's comments are indicative of how participants begin to explain how their current condition is shaped by anti-Haitian racism. As Alex declared, one can imagine that if Dominicans are purportedly willing to die before giving up a cup of water, they are much less likely to allow Haitians to access *papeles*. The importance of documents, like a cedula for example, cannot be understated. It is the single most important document a person can possess in in the Dominican Republic. It is the equivalent of government photo identification card, like driver's license, *and* a social security card in one. The card grants access to just about every social service available in the country including banks, land rights, school, and medical treatment.

On this particular visit to *La Cueva*, many members of the community had, over the past one or two days traveled to *La Capital* (the capital city, Santo Domingo) to inquire about their documentation. Community members relayed to me that the sizeable trip consisted of over 20 community residents from *La Cueava* and was the result of the organizing efforts to collectively rent a bus and fit as many as could afford to go on the four and half our trek (each direction, nine hours total). The trip is usually about $700-800 DOM (approximately $14-16 US dollars) without the costs of food or water. Consequently, many were unable to make the trip because of the costs alone. By way of comparison, many of the respondents' rent was between $1000 and $2000 DOM ($20-40 US). A bus ride to *La Capital* that can cost upwards of 70% monthly rent, seems less appealing when the trip consistently yields discouraging or obsolete results. While some cited financial reasons why they did not attempt to make the trip, others opted not to go because in their view it was a waste of time and money that usually never improved their situation.

Those willing to endure the costs and time expressed disenchantment, despair, and exhaustion in a broken system. When I asked Wilson, a 65-year-old migrant who had first came to the Dominican Republic in 1979 to work as a *picador de cana* (sugarcane cutter), having now-lived in the Dominican Republic since his late twenties, about his *papeles*, he immediately excused himself. I waited in a white plastic lawn chair just outside his home. After a short moment he quickly shuffled out of his home and brought his documents out to me. Whenever I broached the topic of documentation, or *papeles*, those that had *some* form of identification, expired, valid, or otherwise, were ready, and often eager to display them even though I never explicitly asked to see them. One respondent even came out with an organized manila folder as evidence of his long history of documentation. This attention to detail and heightened sense of urgency is in part due to the fact that it is required by law for everyone in the country to have a form of identification on their person at all times—a reality that is even more pronounced for my respondents who are conspicuously racialized as 'Haitian' and thus automatically assumed to be foreign, 'illegal,' and even criminal. Therefore, the ability to produce documents at a moment's notice can mean the difference between imprisonment and freedom—though not always.

Wilson sits down across from me and hands me two documents. Both, terribly worn identification cards with poorly lit photographs of Wilson in the upper left corner. They were *ingenio* (sugar mill company) issued identification cards from his time working on the plantations, one was plastic, the other an ever-flimsy piece of paper with a rusting staple struggling to secure his headshot in place. "I see this expired in 99' and the other one in 88" I point out. "*This* one is to get *another* document" he quickly responds pointing to then handing me a folded 8" by 11" sheet of white paper with his name, case number, next appointment date in hastily written in blue ink. He, and dozens of others who were able to make the trip had received

identical sheets of paper from *La Capital*. "I'll bring this to *La Capital* to get my documents" he

assured me. I asked him to explain that process to me, and about his experiences going to *La*

Capital in the past. His response is far less reassuring:

> "Every day, they tell you something different and they send you off with another piece of
>
> paper. Then you come back, and they give you *another* piece of paper. To this day, I
>
> haven't been able to get anything"

The monotony and exhaustion are palpable on Wilson's voice. He expresses his disenchantment

in a system that has him going back and forth getting paper after paper with seemingly no

resolve in sight. This in spite of the Dominican government contractual agreements to tend to

agricultural workers' legal needs including a right to pension (Childers 2020, Eller 2016).

Wilson is effectively *misdocumented,* stuck in a series of cyclical processes by no fault of his

own. Legislation enforced at the national and local levels ensure an arduous pathway toward

regularization. In between appointments, like his that was schedule for the following month, he

is not only at increased risk of immigration raids, imprisonment, and deportation, but also

ineligible to open bank account, take out a bank/state loan, or receive government assistance.

Phenotype and *80isdocumentation*, then facilitates a state of *precarious denizenship* for Wilson.

His dark skin, thick Creole accent, and Afrocentric features also means he is read as 'Haitian,' a

fact of life in Dominican society that also means even if he was a natural-born or naturalized

Dominican citizen, his embodied reality is juxtaposed against what society believes Dominicans

ought to look like—not like a Haitian, ultimately relegating to a to denizenship.

Like Wilson, Destin, 62, had returned from *La Capital* recently, and although he was more optimistic about the consequences of not having any valid documentation. When I asked him about if he ever worried about immigration, he confidently responded:

> "I've never had any problems with immigration. If they come to arrest me, I just go without a struggle. The paper I just got from *La Capital*, I'll just show them this, and when it expires I'll simply get another…but the thing that makes it difficult is that all papers expire and I have to find a way to get money to get another *papel*. I wish I had something stable so I wouldn't have to get another *papel*."

Although Destin does not express concerns with immigration or detainment, he finds the process of having to constantly renew costly and difficult. And while the national regularization plan for migrants, at face value, offers an avenue toward regularization, migrants like Destin are *misdocumented* as a result of the legally manated, frequent and expensive renewals of papers that are impractical for men and women that systematically excluded from the job market with limited employability. In this way, they live in a consistent state of precarity as individuals who reside between statelessness and denizenship.

Others, however, like Anthony, 60, born and raised in the Dominican Republic with 'full' Dominican citizenship highlights yet another aspect of troublesome legislation that brings to the fore Haitian descendants' precarious condition:

> "When that Haitian law (T 168-13) came, people really started to ask about *papeles*. You could have papel de alcalde, papel de la junta vecino, you can have seven *papeles* from Dominicans witnesses that know you, have a Dominican *cedula*."

Even Anthony, who has only known life in the Dominican Republic is racially profiled as non-native and frequently asked to produce *papeles* by police and immigration officers. In 2013, when the Dominican government passed what Anthony referred to as the "Haitian law" the state required all non-citizens born before April 18th, 2007 to 'irregular' parents—institutionally recognized as 'Group B'—to petition for naturalization by either showing doctor-verified proof of live birth from a hospital or private clinic or seven witnesses who must vouch for and have their documentation notarized. Among the most arbitrary mandates, those who were either not born in hospitals or were not given documentation at birth, must have an act of notary from seven Dominican citizens, a sworn statement from the person who received the child, and an affidavit from family members. In addition, applicants must provide a photo copy of the witnesses' *cedulas*—yet another cost. Witnesses, however, need not actually witness the birth of the child, and so many Haitian descendants instead depend on friendships in and around their community to complete their application.

Anthony warns, applicants that choose, or are limited to this route as their only viable option toward naturalization are subject to the mercy of local Dominicans to vouch on their behalf and entrust them with their most prized document, their *cedula*, such that "if the Dominican doesn't have a good heart, they won't give you their *cedula* to make photocopies to bring over there [to the junto central]." The intricacies of *misdocumentation*, then, ties legislation at the national level (macro), requirements to renew and have seven witnesses, to the interpersonal (micro) in seeking seven witnesses, where a Dominican that holds anti-Haitian values may be less inclined to act as a witness. Thus, national policy and citizens, to a lesser

extent, *misdocument* Haitians by deciding who can and cannot become a citizen/regularized contributing to their precarious denizenship.

Surveillance and Misdocumentation

Financial issues were only part of the battle, state organized racialized surveillance also targeted. This pointed ethnoracial surveillance serves the primary functions of policing those perceived as Black, assumed Haitian and therefore illegal, to stop, arrest, and deport them. The collateral consequences of which limits earning potential, making applying for documentation increasingly difficult if not impossible. In addition to policy driven bureaucracy, institutions of the state also hinder pathways to documentation via targeted racialized surveillance. Caste, who had been in the Dominican Republic for nearly 30 years working in agriculture and construction, finds it difficult to make a living. We sat just outside his home in plastic lawn chairs. He was stoic and soft-spoken. He had a large raised scar across the top of his head from an attempted robbery a few years ago and was eager to show me other stab wounds nears his stomach he suffered at the hands of Dominicans. After I learned that he had never been documented in his nearly 30 years in the country, I asked him if he ever planned to apply. He took a deep breath and responded:

> "Yeah it's tough right now. I don't have any papers to get by. I don't leave my neighborhood. I only walk to my house. If I do leave my neighborhood, I have to go through the jungle because I don't have any papers. Look, to walk the street by the beach is beautiful, but it's always "where are you papers, moreno?"…I'm scared and don't leave my house…they've taken me [to Haiti] six times"

Due to sweeping legislation, Caste would need to register as a foreigner to become regularized, but cannot afford to pay, and worse, he is scared to even leave his home because skin color/phenotype, 'moreno', marks him as Haitian, he is thus subject to targeted stops, questioning and arrests and deportation. In this way, he is misdocumentated by the consequences of hyper surveillance that effectively makes him a prisoner in his own home and strips him of any earning potential.

While Caste's example suggests that batey communities can have a protective component, targeted racialized surveillance means that Police officers often abuse their powers and act as an extension of immigration. When I asked Alex, who'd been in the Dominican Republic for approximately 20 years if he had had any run ins with law enforcement. He quickly responded:

> "You don't even have to do anything for police to take you. Every day they come and take someone. From right here! Just like that "let's go get in [the truck]. If you have money they will let you go right away, if not, they take you over to immigration—that's how it is."

Alex details that police often arrest and extort individuals perceived as Haitians irrespective of documentation. Moreover, as enforcers of the state, Alex's experience also suggests that police and immigration seem to work in tandem such that even staying in their neighborhoods is not safe. The hyper surveillance of 84isdocumentation then also requires that individuals live in constant fear of harassment because of their racialized appearance and neighborhood.

Being Black is just one aspect of targeted surveillance, indeed living in a batey increased one's likelihood of being racialized as Haitian, especially among those with brown or deep brown skin as all my respondents had.   Perhaps the best example of targeted surveillance, is that of Carolina. The 27 year old was born and raised in the Dominican Republic and has been attempting to become regularized since she was 18.   After learning she'd been after her documents for nearly a decade, I asked if she'd had any problems with immigration... She shares:

> "…the last time they came into my home I had a partner that didn't have any papers and neither do I, but they only took him. It was three in the morning…the immigration officer said to me "I don't understand how you Dominican women live with Haitians." He confused me for Dominican because of how I talk and didn't even ask for my papers, so they only took him."

Here we see how living in a batey marked her community and her household as "Haitian" and thus subject to immigration raids at 3 in the morning. In practice however, racialization is far more complex. Carolina identifies and is phenotypically identifiable as Black. She has deep brown skin and afro-textured hair and features. And would visually be identified as Haitian in the Dominican Republic. However, after hearing her speak, the immigration officer de-racialized as Haitian and assumed her to be a Black Dominican and did not even inquire about her documented status. And while, as an undocumented person she was legally eligible for deportation, her Spanish saved her. Here we see how Haitianness specifically as determined by

both racial markers, dark skin, and ethnic markers language, are targeted for surveillance in the Dominican Republic.

Discretion and Misdocumentation

Legislation-required paperwork, associated financial costs, and surveillance, however, are only a segment of *86isdocumentation*. As a state-backed processual endeavor, *86isdocumentation* functions at every level of interaction—bueraucaracy, surveillance and discretion. For the latter, Individual actors, including agents of the state, use their discretion in ways that contribute to Haitians' state of precarity. This section highlights Dominicans' active discretionary roles in Haitian marginalization.

Not all *86isdocumentation* was outwardly, or blatantly, malicious. Ginetta, 30, born and raised in the Dominican Republic, explains how a clerical mistake upon registering for he *carnet,* has now impacted her ability to get her six Dominican-born children regularized. When I asked her about her plans about getting her children documented:

> "I'm in the process of doing that now…and now a lawyer is working on fixing them for
> me because my names weren't right to take to the [office in] Puerto Plata…They didn't
> write my names correctly. Because they wrote '*Y-inetta'* (over annunciates), and my
> name is '*G-inetta'*…as of now the lawyer hasn't charged me because he's got to get it
> fixed first."

Ginetta's *midocumentation,* intentional or not, has grave implications for her entire family. As noted above, women are doubly burdened with registering, caring, and securing paperwork for their children, and a simple mistake of one letter, a 'Y' instead of a 'G' has proven to be

devastating, and potentially deadly for six children. Mistakes like these are common, however, and while Ginetta, has some highs-school education (equivalent of 10th grade), many of my participants are illiterate or marginally illiterate which raises concerns about the frequency of (and intent) such happenings and their ability to address them. It was not uncommon, for example for me to see a single person with different names on the troves of documents they would eagerly show me, especially among the eldest in my sample, nor was it uncommon for individuals who did not know how to read or write to mark their signature: "XXX."

Others were far less optimistic of Dominican intuitions and intent. Jefferey, who, on more than one occasion had been "randomly" stopped, questioned, and searched by police in the last month, did not hold back sharing thoughts on immigration. Visibly frustrated about having to work construction of necessity to supplement his work as a translator and not leading the life he wanted, he shared:

> "Immigration is supposed to be for everyone. It's not. Immigration is just for Haitians bro. Immigration is…they're looking for *morenos*. Look, every *gringo* can walk around no problem, immigration will walk right past them because they're looking for Haitians to deport them."

Not unlike other participants, over two times his age, Jefferey alludes to what Athony referred to as the 'Haitian law(s)' that disproportionately targets and maligns Haitians. He also, identifies how race is central to Haitians' experience noting that other migrant, 'gringos' (white foreigners) in particular, fare better that *morenos* (Black peoples), because they are not who immigration was created for. Thus, just as *precarious denizenship* is predicated on the racialized assumptions

of who is, and who is not a citizen, white foreigners are protected by virtue of presumed non-Haitian.

Interestingly, even though all respondents were technically at some risk of being deported by virtue of living in a batey, being Black, and being of Haitian descent, not all felt they were immediately at risk. This varied greatly by age and gender, however. Men under fifty years of age were particularly concerned with getting deported, while women young and old, and older men were seemingly less concerned. For women, who rarely left their bateyes at all, traditional gender roles tending to the children and the home left them less exposed and less likely to be stopped, questioned, and detained. Conversely, younger men, who often left bateyes "to walk the streets" in search of work were at increased risk of visibility, were perceived more threatening, and were more likely than women to report negative or violent interactions with police and immigration. These culmination of negative interpersonal experiences with immigration, particularly with home raids, demonstrates constituents of the states' micro-level processes of *88isdocumentation*.

A wealth of insight and eager to speak, Analyse is one of three activists in my sample (of which I am aware) that spoke powerfully about these interactions. Her mother, Louisa, 71, opted out of our interview a bit early to go rest and unbeknownst to me, Analyse was happily next in line. She lived with her mother in *ingenio*-owned barracks, an approximately 10 by10-foot room with concrete floors, a wooden door, a small fridge covered by a series of cast aluminum pots, and two plastic lawn chairs for furniture. I enjoyed an occasional breeze with my back toward the open entrance. Analyse, 23, the oldest of four, was dark-skinned short in stature with a small belly showing just shy of her 6ᵗʰ months of pregnancy. She was one of the few women I interviewed who did not wear her hair in a bun but in a 'natural' style. She sat perpendicular to

me, wearing a black t-shirt and denim skirt with one arm on the other unused chair and spoke with a confident even tone, indicative of someone who was used to speaking in front of others. I asked her a broad question about the difficulties of not having documents. She quickly pivoted referring to a recent immigration raid about 'a week and a half ago' and shared:

"a lot of people had their documents, they still got arrested. They (immigration officers) would destroy them (the detainees' documents), and say that they didn't have any. They came in houses, not knowing if people were home or sleep or clothed, they'd break the door and steal things—like phones, or they would take money. And they would say things like "if you give me $2000, I won't arrest you." People, that I know for sure have documentation had their rights violated. And a lot of them were born here in the Dominican Republic, even though they don't have documentation—they are Dominican."

Analyse immediately redirected my question, making it clear that even documentation did not serve as a protective measure for Haitians. Detainees' homes were regularly pillaged, documents destroyed and/or ignored, and officers extorted Haitians for money. Thus, while *89isdocumentation* may begin at the national legislative level (macro), interpersonal confrontations with individual actors of the state, like immigration officers, also facilitates Haitians' social and material exclusion through blatant anti-Haitian racism, abuse of power, and discretion.

Immigration raids in the middle of the night are not the only cause of concern however. Yoslin 42, shares a similar sentiment about immigration officer discretion, and is still among the most optimistic of my respondents. She reassures me that she herself has never had any negative

experiences with *migracion,* and by the grace God she was able to secure birth certificates for her sons. However, now that nearly all of her sons are over the age of 18, her and her husband worry about their five sons who are 17, 19, 20, 21, and 23 because they are no longer in school, they must find employment outside of the relative safety of school and the batey. All five are documented, as Dominican-born Haitian descendants with birth certificates, but lack identification cards—a requirement for anyone over the age of eighteen. Of her concerns, she explains a recent altercation one of her sons had:

> "If I see immigration over there, he's got to hide—if the, the chief of immigration comes, he's got to hide. Because he doesn't have papers, and if he shows this [holds up birth certificate] they'll rip it right from his hands and tear it up. They ripped his from his hands. The reason they break it is because they think its false…That happens a lot here, simply because [the birth certificate] has no photograph, and everyone over 18 is supposed to have a cedula—they just don't want to give them *to us*."

Yoslin's examples illuminates how even Haitians with some form of documentation become *misdocumented* by and, in the case of her middle son, left without any documents whatsoever. In this way, someone who was documented (at least partially), becomes completely stripped of any documents and at an increased risk of state violence including detainment, arrest, and deportation. This example not only demonstrates how individual discretion actually exacerbates Haitians experiences, but also illustrates how the lay person, an individual employed by the state, has the authority to 'police' others' livelihood and facilitate their *precarious denizenship* marking a clear connection between macro-level legislation that allows migration raids and stop

and frisks, and micro-level interactions that reinforce Haitian *91isdocumentation* and

marginalization.

Discussion

Haitians in the Dominican Republic exist in a constant state of precarity. Rather than

being recognized as Dominican nationals or Dominican citizens, Haitians' lived experiences are

more accurately that of *precarious denizens*, racialized individuals who exist between

statelessness and non-statelessness. These challenges are molded by a tripartite system of

91isdocumentation where policies, institutions, and individuals enforce Haitian marginalization

vis a vis legislation, financial barriers, and individual discretion. I defined *91isdocumentation* as

the multifacted de jure and de facto processes by which state-backed practices and policies foster

conditions that make regularization impractical or impossible to attain. I argue this corrective

accounts for interviewees' perceptions of the Dominican government and places the onus on

restrictive xenophobic policies and practices identified by respondents rather than a supposedly

apolitical condition of being 'undocumented.' Accordingly, I contend that Haitians' current

status is a result of their racialization (discussed in chapter one), that when coupled with

91isdocumentation 'justifies' state-enacted violence including interpersonal surveillance,

marginalization, punishment, and deportation. My efforts sought to shed light on the direct

connection between policy and individual discretion of state actors.

M*isdocumentation*, as implemented in the Dominican Republic, is a set sweeping cyclical

practices that make attaining documents impractically expensive or otherwise impossible to

attain. Consider how Haitians *misdocumentaion* limited education and job opportunities, while

limited job opportunities decreased Haitians ability to pay to renew or regularize their status.

Throughout my interviews, I was cited anywhere from $20,000-30,000 DOM (what was then

equivalent to approximately $385 to $575 USD) to acquire a *carnet*. While these prices may not seem overly burdensome at a glance, contextually one has to consider that the majority of those to which I spoke, and Haitians more broadly throughout the Dominican Republic, are more likely to be: unemployed, temporarily employed, and underpaid when employed (if compensated at all for their labor).

Conservatively, using the highest reported income in my sample and the lowest regularization quote of $16,000 (bi weekly about $32,000 DOM monthly) and $20,000, respectively, Haitians seeking to regularize their *papeles* will pay over 60% of their monthly income. The reality is much bleaker when I use the most frequently cited monthly pay of $12,000 DOM, which would mean that even the lowest estimates of $20,000 DOM respondents would need nearly two full months of pay to cover the costs of regularizing their papers per person. And while, the quoted costs for regularization was not always consistent across participants, the challenges of not having steady documentation or means to pay always proved to be a burden regardless.

Importantly, this work contributes to sociological research of race, immigration, and colorism by identifying important connections between phenotype, racialization, and citizenship. In the case of Haitians, national legislation subjects document seekers to an excessively burdensome and bureaucratic process that renders them unable to become regularized. And while their phenotype, dark skin and Afrocentric features, may be the initial motivation for targeting by the state, their cultural attributes, including name and language (fluency), exacerbates their persecution. Specifically, my work underscores how *92isdocumentation* is made possible through the institutionalization of ethnicity vis a vis discriminatory treatment for non-Spanish sounding names and accentism. Names and surnames often serve as critical data points for

agents of the state (Gerhard and Hans 2009, Gaddis 2019) and their discretionary power. Names that are presumed to be of Spanish origin, as opposed to those perceived to be of French origin, are more likely to be targeted for discrimination. The supreme court case the led to the 2013 reinterpretation of the Dominican Constitution, began, in part because Dominican-born youth of Haitian descent were denied birth certificates because of their names (Wooding 2014).

In addition, during raids, or any number of civilians' interactions with state officials Haitian descendents are also subject to accentism (Romos-Rivas et al 2021). For those with 'non-native' accents, Dominican Spanish, are marked explicitly as other, Haitian, 'illegal.' Accented speech has long been associated with discriminatory practices and is especially true for those who are belong to minority groups. As discussed in chapter one, however, because both Dominicans and Haitians can be of virtually any color or shade, many defer to language to make their final determination. So much so, that undocumented Haitian descendants with limited or no accent, can 'pass' and be perceived as Dominican such that their documentation is not questioned—as was the case with Carolina and her partner. These phenomena are specific to Haitians in many respects. Others with accented Spanish who are native or primarily English-speaking, for example, might have a different set of experiences. Native speakers of Haitian and/or Creole who speak accented Spanish have a particular Francophone-esque sounding Spanish, where letters like the Spanish rolling 'r' has a distinct sound. Such targeting is not different than the institutionalization of ethnicity during the 1937 Parsley Massacre, where individuals who could not 'properly' pronounce *perijil* where slain (Ayuso 2011). Future works could explore the connection between race, phenotype, language, and citizenship and continue bridging divides between race and ethnicity paradigms.

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Chapter 3: "Esclavo peor que esclavo!"

"By 1975, sugar and its by-products accounted for 65 percent of the merchandise exports from the country…" (Chardon 1984)

"…Because before, a sugarcane cutter was a piece of gold—a diamond…in that time, a sugarcane cutter was a very important person because they maintained the growth of the sugarcane industry."-Antonio, 61, Citizen

Antonio, born and raised in the Dominican Republic is one a few 'full' citizens in my sample. Meaning, not only does he have a *cedula*, his is indistinguishable from that of any other Dominican complete with voting rights. He was born to Haitian parents and quite literally grew up on the *ingenio*, (sugar mill and/or plantation)—his mother a cook and his father in the fields. He recalls memories as early as five or six fetching water for his father and his colleagues as they labored (at least) twelve-hour days under the unforgiving Caribbean sun. Antonio continued working on the plantation well into his adulthood until the eventual decline of the industry in early 2000s. At the height of his parents' tenure on the plantation, he notes the importance, and even respect, Haitians had earned for their role in the economy, likening their value in the eyes of the Dominican Republic, to that of "gold" or "a diamond." Going as far as noting that Haitians were sometimes even gifted cattle and small plots of land for their service. Their deference however, was rare, fleeting, and contingent upon 1) the growing (and now-defunct) sugarcane industry, and 2) their ability and or willingness to produce—even if it that 'willingness' meant by force under the threat of physical violence and death.

Introduction

Up to this point, I have focused primarily on how Haitian descendants' experiences anti-Black racism and anti-Haitian practices with regard to legislation and subsequent access to documentation. All of which, renders Haitian descendants marginalized throughout the Dominican Republic. In this chapter, I situate my analyses on theories of global racialized labor (Bonachich and Wilson 2008) and white supremacy to show how labor exploitation in the Dominican Republic has been, and continues to be a racialized endeavor. I draw from my concept of misdocumentation, from chapter two, to reveal how Haitian descendants' treatment in the country is also an institutionalized function of their race and their ethnicity. I suggest that Haitians, and former sugarcane cutters in particular, are part of a permanent working class relegated to perpetual servitude to the Dominican state. Ultimately, I contend that current practices in their extremes, function not only as a form of coerced labor, but begin to encroach the spectrum of modern slavery, that as Bales (2004) maintains, is not based 'ownership' of another person—for that is illegal, but rather exploitation of those most vulnerable, weak, and deprived. Haitian descendants' orchestrated depravity and constant state of precarity, due to the ways in which they are racialized and systematically excluded from viable economic and political access, has historically lent itself to violent enslavement and contemporary exploitable labor.

In what follows I discuss the steep rise and sharp decline of the sugarcane industry exploring how migration and subsequent forced Haitian labor has evolved from coerced physical violence to legal and de facto maneuvers. While previous works have noted the slave-like conditions of sugarcane plantations throughout the Caribbean and Latin America in the 20th century (Baud, 1982, Martinez 1999), here I also explore how the states responsible enact, and in

many ways reinforce, notions of Black inferiority and racialized capitalism. My contention also challenges Bales' (1999, 2004) sweeping assertion that 'modern-day slavery' and coerced labor is not predicated on race or ethnicity but rather an economic-based condition of vulnerability. I contend that for Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic that: 1) race and racism have been central to their exploitation and their country's immigration laws, and 2), like Thomas (2017), suggests, immigration laws are integral to facilitating coerced labor, and by extension a semblance of modern-day slavery.

I do not make the case that exploited Haitian laborers are currently enslaved. I am however, asserting that their tenure in the Dominican Republic while working the sugarcane fields, as I will show, was modern-day slavery based on their racial and ethnic difference and that this, in addition to their current exploitation, is a result immigration laws that exposed them to exploitability. I rely especially on the narratives of 39 of the 67 from my sample, the majority of which are over the age of 50, and have spent significant time in the country as *picadores* (sugarcane cutters)—or what many described "como esclavos" (like slaves). Their experiences provide a unique opportunity to investigate the role of immigration, supposed immigration reform, and the conditions that continue make anti-Blackness and racialized Haitian labor a fixture in Dominican society.

<center>Sugar and the State</center>

As compared to other colonized Caribbean, nations, the Dominican Republic's role in the sugarcane industry was miniscule. The country never reached the heights of former colonies, like present-day countries Haiti, Jamaica, or even Spanish-ruled Cuba. And although the earliest sugarcane plantations sprouted in the early 1500s in the Dominican Republic with 2,000 enslaved Africans, by 1650 its mass-production stopped completely until its resurgence in the

late 19th century into the 21st (Legrand 1995, Martinez 1999). Still, the role of sugarcane in shaping ethnic and racial landscapes cannot be ignored. From constitutional legislation to individual prejudice and discrimination, the sugarcane industry greatly influenced, and still shapes current social stratification in the Dominican Republic. And, in the attempted balancing of intense Dominican nationalism through the Trujillo era, subsequent anti-Haitianism, and capitalist expansion, sugarcane has remained among the most powerful organizing factors in society, where race, servitude, and labor are the rule of the land.

Sugar in Hispaniola (Colonial Imperialism)

The importance of sugar spanned several countries throughout the Caribbean. On the western third of the island of Hispaniola, sugar was once the most profitable cash-crop in the so-called 'New World' (Dupoy 1985). For centuries enslaved Africans endured the harsh elements of the Caribbean under threat of violence in service to colonial powers including France and Spain. Officially recognized in 1697 as Saint Domingue, present day Haiti, was the single largest supplier of sugar and the most lucrative colony under France's reign (Stein 1980, Dupoy 1985). In the span of nearly century, by 1789, sugar produced in Saint Domingue accounted for nearly as much as all the English colonies' exports combined (Truillot 1982). Santo Domingo, present day, Dominican Republic, by comparison was far less profitable as a colony. Primarily a cattle producing colony, the Dominican Republic was slow to etch its way into sugar exports as a major contender (Legrand 1995).

As the sugar industry in the Caribbean region was declining, "between 1875 and 1930" Santo Domingo ultimately established "mechanized sugar factories and extensive plantations of sugarcane" throughout the country (Martinez 1999). The breadth and importance of sugar in the realized industrialization of the Dominican Republic during this time cannot be understated. At

the height of production, sugarcane: supported nearly 30% of the entire Dominican population; accounted for 68% of industrial employment and 65% of all exports cementing the enterprise as a staple in the Dominican economy, at times accounting for as much as 15% of the Dominican Republic's fertile land use (Chadron 1982). To put in perspective, sugar in the Dominican Republic grew from a modest annual export of 7,000 tons in 1880s to over 550,000 tons by 1950s, most going to Canada, England, and France (Legrand 1995).

To support their ambitious enterprise, and in lieu of enslavement, that, at this point had been or was in the process of being abolished throughout Latin America (Eller 2016), the Dominican Republic turned first turned to local poor and rural Dominicans for labor. After a series of strikes by disgruntled locals, the sugar industry explicitly sought "external sources of labor to assemble a labor force whose access to the island's productive resources could be artificially restricted" (Chadron 1982 p 62). This marked an important shift from employing native Dominicans to outward recruitment efforts from neighboring afro-Caribbean nations including but not limited to: "St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, Antigua, Montserrat, and St. Martin" (Martinez 1999, 64). However, by 1930, Haitians represented 90% of the sugarcane workforce, firmly establishing Haitianness with sugarcane labor (Chadron 1982, Castillo 1981).

<center>The State and Haitian Ambivalence</center>

The rise of Trujillo era Dictatorship in the 1930s drastically changed the Dominican sugarcane industry. Up until about 1950s most sugarcane plantations were private and owned by foreign entities including countries like Canada and the U.S.. By mid-20th century government taxes on private sugarcane plantations were so high, and ultimately unprofitable, that foreign companies sold their plantations to the Dominican state (Ferguson 2003). At the same time, Trujillo era provisions sought Haitian labor through bilateral agreements with the Haitian

government (Baud 1982). This occurred alongside increasingly strict non-white immigration policies. In an aptly titled report *Needed but Unwanted*, Wooding and Mosely-Williams (2004), detail the complex histories of Haitian labor migration and presence in the Dominican Republic, particularly as it pertains to those living in bateyes. The recruitment of *picadores* or *braceros* was extremely regulated, and profitable, in and of itself. Both Haitian and Dominican dictators "extended and entrenched the roles played by their respective governments channeling Haitian labor toward Dominican sugar estates" (Martinez 1999 p 67). In fact, at one point, the fees associated with recruitment and emigration was Haiti's single highest source of internal revenue, such that the selling and receiving Haitian labor was incentivized (Moral 1961).

Like Haitians ushered to the Dominican sugar estates, all migrants entering new host countries encounter varying degrees of incorporation ranging from the very laws that govern their stay (Portes and Rumbaut 1990; 2001, Portes and Zhou 1993), to accompanying nativist and or racist anti-immigrant sentiments (Massey and Sanchez 2010, Wilson 2000). Or as Grosfoguel (1999) surmises "the state policies toward a specific migrant group, the reaction/perceptions of the public opinion, and the presence or absence of an ethnic community" (p 234). For Haitians, this meant rigid, yet relatively welcoming migration laws for those who were set to work the plantations through a set of confusing, conflicting, and ultimately unscrupulous series of government guest worker arrangements. In the 1950s the Dominican government agreement promised the Haitian government "1 to 2 million dollars annually…in exchange for 15,000 workers" (Childers 2020) all of which were to be granted wages, housing, and insurance. This began the normalization of Haitian agricultural labor at the institutional level.

Sugar in the Dominican Republic

In practice, however, few of the agreed upon stipulations of the guest worker programs were ever honored (Martinez 1999, Wooding 2010, Childers 2020). Instead, *bateyes*, the communities surrounding the sugarcane plantations originally intended to house temporary workers, transitioned into permanent homes. Then, as is true today, *bateyes* are among the most dilapidated and underdeveloped places to live in the Dominican Republic (Childers 2020, Simmons 2010). In 1982, with the decline of the Haitian dictatorship, the once government-regulated sugarcane recruitment programs became primarily run by sugarcane plantations themselves. The new-found relative autonomy granted sugarcane plantations, who already frequently ignored government regulations, more control over Haitian movement and the ability to the curtail their rights (Martinez 1999). The already vulnerable migrant group became increasingly subject to harsher living and labor conditions resulting in what many scholars and activists have argued was akin to slavery (Bernier 2003, Martinez 1999, 2012).

Modern-Day Slavery and Forced Labor

Haitians living in the Dominican Republic were not and are not legally owned property. Their exploitation however, has raised international concern. Indeed, few scholars, if any, would propose that slavery as we have known to exist from the 15th century into the 19th century persists today. And in fact, only a small contingency of scholars suggest that the use of the word 'slavery' to describe an extra-legal practice is impractical and ahistorical considering that slavery as it existed for several centuries was a codified institutionally and is now illegal (see Davidson 2015, Patterson 2012, and Paiva 2005). Notwithstanding, this perspective is a minority position and most researchers contend that while chattel slavery as a system of exploitation is likely obsolete in contemporary society, modern-day slavery exists and is widespread in the form(s) of

human trafficking and extreme commodification of people (Issa 2017). Broadly, Thomas (2013) asserts, that the term 'modern-day slavery' has been used "to describe abusive practices happening all over the world, ranging from forced labor and debt bondage to, especially, trafficking in persons" (p 3).

The practice and scope of modern-day slavery is believed to impact millions of people globally. International efforts to restrict its reach has resulted in collaborative efforts including various non-profit groups (Free the Slaves, Anti-slavery International), conferences, and human rights legislation. January 2012 and 2013, were dubbed "National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in the United States and in 2015 the United Kingdom passed the Modern Slavery Act signaling widespread efforts to end slavery (Thomas 2013 Phillips 2019). And while the exact number of those impacted is highly contested, even considered 'dubious,' some conservative estimates suggest that there are approximately 27 million enslaved people worldwide, through formal and informal mechanisms in both rural and urban towns and cities throughout the world (Bales 2004). Among the most common include debt bondage and informal adoptions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean including those held in domestic servitude as *restavecs* in Haiti, *criação* in Brazil, or in *criadazgos* in Latin America broadly (Bales 2004, Lopez-Cordova 2013, Issa 2017, Hordge-Freeman 2022).

Slavery scholar Kevin Bales (2004) contends that so-called 'Old Slavery' and 'New Slavery' differ in at least seven substantial ways. According to Bales, 'Old Slavery' could generally characterized by: legal ownership, high purchase cost, low profits, scarcity of potential slaves, long-term relationships, maintenance of chattel, and the importance of ethnic difference. Conversely, for 'New Slavery' those attributes generally do not hold true. I take particular issue, as have others (see Patterson, 2012, in Legal Understanding of Slavery), with Bales' (2004)

assertion of the minimal effect of racial or ethnic in influencing modern-day slavery. Conversley, Patterson, has a much more narrow view of slavery—centered on a peculiar violence enacted on the body, and also contends racial domination is still a tacit element of slavery. Bales, in search of a 'predictive validity' and universal definition of slavery, suggests the *threat* of violence is enough and that race and ethnicity matter very little. He has since clarified his claim adding that "while important," ethnoracial difference "could no longer be seen as the *ultimate* defining characteristic of eligibility to enslavement found in some societies in the past" (2012 p 4, emphasis mine). Universal, or 'ideal types' are useful for categorization and even for policy. At the same time, they miss particularities of regions and targeted violence on African descendants in the Americas, where race, and Blackness in particular were (and remain) integral aspects of social, material, and legal life. The experiences Haitian sugarcane cutters, as well as other Afro-Caribbean (migrant) populations, might begin to highlight these very particularities.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framing

In either case, I am less concerned with 'proving' whether or not ethnoracial categories are the 'ultimate defining characteristics' of modern-day slavery universally. I do however, seek to establish that race *and* ethnicity were central components of modern-day slavery in the Dominican Republic, specifically. For the purposes of this investigation, we will use both Bales' and Patterson definitions of slavery and its tenets. Bales writes that slavery is:

> "the control of one person (the slave) by another (the slaveholder or slaveholders). This control transfers agency, freedom of movement, access to the body, and labor and its product and benefits to the slaveholder…control is exercised through violence and its threat"

He goes on to explain that at its most basic, slavery is: "radical diminution in the exercise of free will; it is a loss of personal liberty" (2013 p 13). Patterson also offers that an integral aspect of slavery is its "natal alienation," the intentional dismemberment of kinship ties (1982). These definitions of slavery, as I will show in subsequent sections, not only applied to Haitian sugarcane cutters throughout the 20th century, but is also a position that is foundationally influenced by and based upon immigration law in their current state. Works on race, ethnicity, and phenotype (colorism) and its negative impact on social stratification cannot be ignored, particularly in the Americas. And while 'race' or 'ethnicity' may not be a defining factor in other countries that are largely racially homogenous, like India, to use Bales' example, in the Americas, forced and coerced Black and non-white labor has been the norm for half a millennium continued through immigration law.

Social Stratification: An Ideological and Legal Tradition

In this tradition, I draw first from Charles Mills and his concept of the racial contract (1999). The racial contract situates human relations, broadly speaking, as a global polity in which whites have sought to seize and maintain power through the creation of white supremacy. The racial contract then, is the proverbial collection of philosophies, laws, and actions that categorize and stratify people by arbitrary racial categories. Non-white racial groups, then, are subject to colonization, genocide, and enslavement in the name of modernity and progress as individuals who 'need' white-led scaffolding to emerge from their brutish status (Mills 1999, Smith 2006). Although Mills' assertions center the role of European countries, equally as important is global implementation of global white supremacy, that, even in non-European contexts has infiltrated social life. This has proven to be be true in the Dominican Republic, where white, primarily

Spanish-descendent elites have crafted meticulous, albeit ahistorical, ideologies of a non-Black, non-African country (Torres-Saillant 1998, Candelario 2008, Paulino 2016). Although the country as a whole did not subscribe to such historical inaccuracies, the overarching anti-Black ideologies became institutionalized through the Trujillo dictatorship (Roorda 1999, Derby 1994) that: carried out mass expulsions and genocides against (Black) Haitians, codified identity categories introducing 'Indio,' and subsequent migration legislation cementing them as explicitly other (Simmons 2008, Ricourt 2016, Childers 2020).

Second, in addition to the ideological framing offered by Mills, I situate my work in a critical race theory (CRT) perspective. As a legal tradition, CRT scholars' point of departure is that racism, as an organizing tool in society, is endemic, central, and ordinary in contemporary societies (Stafanic and Delgado 2001). I would add that these sentiments perhaps are even more pronounced in former slave-holding societies, like the Americas, for example, where such precedents for such stratification have long been established and ingrained into the social and juridcal fabric of a country. CRT scholars suggest that the state and its all its governing tactics, namely policy and legislation, are key factors in, not only institutionalizing differential life chances among racial groups, but also maintaining them through rigid law and immigration enforcement that the a given society's ethnoracial hierarchy (De Genova 2002). As is relevant for the investigation into the lived experiences of Haitian descendants living in the Dominican Republic, the history of the sugar and labor outline above, in addition to Trujillo's mandated identification cards are one such example where social conventions and codified law had, and still have, a direct impact on one's social standing.

Racialized Migrant Labor

Considering Bales' definition, and the history of anti-Haitian racism in the Dominican Republic, it is imperative then to also consider the role of the process of 'creating' a slave or other permanent sources of labor and how that has historically been inextricable from capitalist goals and outcomes. As Grosfoguel notes, that global colonial and racial hierarchies have "existed since the formation of the capitalist world-system in the in the sixteenth-century" (1999 p 410). In the case of Hispaniola, the (Black) racialization of slavery in the "New World" is often (largely unduly, for he was simply one of many elites at the time) credited to Bartolome de las Casas (Brady 1966), a Spanish historian and priest, who in the 16th century infamously penned "if we could get licenses to bring a few dozen Negro Slaves form Spain or Africa, they [the slave masters in Hispaniola] suggested 'it would go better with the Indians" (quoted from Clayton, 2009, p. 1528).

De las Casas' plea is among the most notable documented sources specifically asking for enslavement of Black laborers in the Americas and an important precedent not only for Hispaniola, but for other Spanish colonies of the time that were still enslaving, at far lower numbers non-Black: Mediterranean and North African peasants: from the likes of Canary Islands, Greece, and Morocco for example. In 1550, the Spanish Crown had committed to send approximately 13,000 enslaved Africans to the Spanish Caribbean, and by the end of 16th century, over 130,000 had made the voyage from Africa to Spanish colonies. The tradition likening Blackness with slavery was solidified by 1580, "multiethnic pattern of slavery ended" and slaves were explicitly sought from the Senegambian and Kongo regions (Landers 2008 p 348). Similar adjustments were made by other colonial powers where enslaved African labor became the standard.

As the push for emancipation grew throughout the 19th century and growing interest in the ideals for 'human rights' took hold, slavery, and especially chattel slavery grew increasingly taboo. By mid-20th century, international law 'outlawed' slavery worldwide (Freeman 2007). Scholars and activists have since sought to explain how, in the absence of legal codified enslavement, such exploitative labor practices have endured. Increasingly, many have turning to respective state's roles in maintaining exploitative labor practices and modern-day slavery vis a vis migration. Many of these perspectives are also tied to larger critiques of world-systems approaches to globalization that have too often excluded race and gender from analyses (Grosfoguel 2002, Thomas 2013). For Hispaniola, again in the absence of chattel slavery, Martinez (1999) posits, that the Dominican Republic has been unique to other countries in the region with similar agriculture production potential.

Where as many countries (very) slowly transitioned into various forms of free wage labor post-emancipation, in "the case of Dominican sugar…state involvement seems to have covered the same ground but largely in reverse order, from something resembling free wage labor to a government-managed system of semicoerced exploitation." (1999 p 59). Martinez's keen observation of what he calls cases of 'unfreedom,' highlights the role of immigration in maintaining a vulnerable labor supply—one that is particularly more vulnerable than even poor citizens (Grosfoguel 1999). He also alludes to the —but falls short of naming Blackness, and specifically race *and* ethnicity as organizing tools in the "government-managed system" of exploitation.

In this vein, I call on Bonacich and Wilson (2008), and their treatment of transnational migration as part of global capitalism under white supremacy through what they contend is the 'racialization of labor.' Taking an international approach, comparing the likes of Apartheid in

South Africa, South American migrants in the United States, and Black Americans in the U.S. South, Bonacich and Wilson (2008) maintain that through the racialization of labor, whites reap the benefits of their capitalist projects by employing workers of color for minimal or no wages at all. Thomas takes this further, convincingly arguing that immigration laws are largely responsible for modern-day slavery for they provide the institutionalized punishment often leveraged against migrant and other vulnerable workers—threat of arrest, deportation, etc (2013), and "invariably…trafficked persons were bound by some version of control related to their immigration status" (p 43, see also Weitzer 2015).

Together, these frameworks provide the tools to highlight how Black labor has historically and contemporarily been controlled through practices directly and indirectly influenced by immigration policies. For Haitian sugarcane cutters, their previous conditions undoubtedly meet contemporary definitions of slavery as: individuals controlled by someone else through the use of physical violence or threat of violence, and the benefits of labor any labor benefit the slaveholder, which in their case was the centralized Dominican sugarcane industry (Bales 2004).

Methods

In exploring lives of Haitian descendants in the Dominican Republic and their experiences with racialization, I sought to understand: 1) How policies as well as day-to-day experiences shape notions of race and racialization among Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent. And 2) In what ways are their understandings and practices of racialization shaped by anti-Black and anti-Haitian ideologies? I tended to these questions by employing ethnographic observations focus group and semi-structured interviews with 67 Haitian descendants living in three different, geographically proximal, bateyes: Batey Unidad, Batey Cueva, and Villa Cielo. I only required

respondents be 18 years of age or older, currently live in a batey, and have at least one Haitian parent.

Bateyes are ethnic enclaves on demarcated government neighborhoods located on or near former sugarcane plantations. The communities stem from now-defunct bilateral agreements to recruit temporary agricultural workers from Haiti to the Dominican Republic in the mid-20th century, with the understanding that Haitians would repatriate at the conclusion of their respective crop's, usually sugar, season. A few centrally located barracks are ubiquitous in bateyes. Barracks are still owned by the government and have been 'gifted,' usually by word of mouth, to former sugarcane cutters and can be revoked at anytime. Bateyes are typically marked by their basal home structures, wood planks, and zinc sheet metal and *colmados* (a shop ranging from full-on groceries to convenient snacks and miscellaneous goods i.e. soap, detergent, beer) either from someone's house or as a standalone shop. As a research site, bateyes are unique for their dense populations, de facto segregation, and the primary destinations for recent Haitian migrants. Of the estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, most take up residence in one of the over 500 bateyes scattered throughout the island, varying anywhere in size from 50 to over 5,000.

Bateyes also vary in standard of living. While some bateyes, nearly reach parity with the 'average' Dominican way of life, the vast majority of bateyes are dilapidated, with precarious infrastructure, limited electricity, plumbing, and running water (Childers 2020, Simmons 2010). Each of the three bateyes I visited, which I will call, Batey Unidad, Batey Castillo, and Villa Cielo varied slightly in their composition in size and feel ranging from approximately 1,200 to 5,000 inhabitants. All three were relatively homogenous with community leader estimates

suggesting between 85-95% Haitian with the other 15-5% being Dominican (proportions which will differ slightly by region and rurality).

To explore the detailed racialization experiences of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic, I used qualitative techniques including in-depth interviews focus groups, and ethnographic observations. In-depth interviews are excellent tools for learning about personal histories and potentially sensitive information. This is distinct from informal interviews and focus groups in that they often solicit "very personal matters" including: the self, lived experience, values, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge" and perspectives (Johnson 2002, p. 104). This is invaluable insight considering my research questions touched on notions of belonging, exclusion and experiences with discrimination. I also conducted a two-hour semi-structured focus group a focus group interview of 7 men—all of which were Haitian-born migrants and former sugarcane workers. Focus groups, with an ideal number between 5-8 are useful for capturing 'local' sentiments, and provide useful 'semi-public' information, like that what life is like living in a batey (Grudens-Schuck et al 2004). They also allow for relatively organic conversations among participants and can disrupt power dynamics (researcher/participant) (McLafferty 2004).

The single focus group and 60 interviews were conducted primarily in Spanish, as most respondents were bilingual and had either learned the Spanish language after years of living in the Dominican Republic, or since birth as they simultaneously learned Haitian Creole. Only three interviews were conducted to completion in Creole with the help of community contact that would translate the questions I asked in Spanish, if I was unable to in ask them in Creole, as well as any of the interviewees responses that I did not understand into Spanish as well. All interviews recorded in their entirety and transcribed verbatim in Spanish or Creole where

appropriate. Interviews averaged approximately 45 minutes, with the exception of the focus group that went just over two hours. I analyzed my data by reviewing all transcripts in qualitative coding software Dedoose. Next, I conducted a line-by-line coding analysis (Charmaz 2014). I incorporated both deductive and inductive techniques to 1) capture common themes already identified in previous studies, and 2) to allow the data to reveal uncommon or new themes. For first cycle coding I employed mostly descriptive codes to generate relevant topical sections or statements. I then reexamined these and coded for concept coding capturing interviewees responses to being racialized, detained, and their daily life. Some concepts codes included: *ethnic/racial passing, racial pride, abuse, justice, negative experiences with the state*. Finally, I employ pattern coding to highlight patterns and themes among respondents to better understand the types or thematic reoccurring experiences respondents shared. I then compared deductive pattern codes like 'xenophobic experiences' with processes of 'being confused as another race,' for example, until I reached 'theoretical saturation' (Charmaz 2014).

In my results I share experiences that were most common and indicative of broader trends as well as important dissents to show the breadth of experiences among Haitian descendants living in the Dominican Republic. The results for this paper draw primarily from responses that center or their experiences working and living on the bateyes: "Can you tell me about a typical day working in a batey?"; "How did you come to the Dominican Republic, can you tell me about that?"; "What kinds of things motivated to come to the Dominican Republic"; "Can you tell me about some of your most memorable moments living/working in a Batey?"; "How would you describe the relationship between Haitian workers and Dominican guards?"

Overview: Sites and Descriptive Statistics

The lived experiences of all 67 respondents inform my body of work. Yet for this chapter in particular, I specifically highlight the experiences of 39 former sugarcane plantation workers, through 32 individual interviews and one seven-person focus group with retired *picadores*. While both men and women worked in or on sugarcane plantations, the majority of those that worked in the fields were men. Of the subset of 39, that were explicitly affiliated with the sugarcane plantation, only four (4/39) were women, and they all primarily worked in domestic capacities as cooks with only one noting that she also cut and planted cane. This is not to suggest that women did not participate agriculturally as may have been common in other bateyes, but their presence in the fields was less prominent, likely due, to a combination of traditional gender roles coupled with Dominican recruitment efforts that specifically targeted men, usually in their late teens and early twenties. This also means, however, that this work does not underscore the gendered nature of human trafficking and enslavement that Black and non-white women are particularly subject to worldwide (Butler 2015)—and in the Dominican Republic (Wooding 2011, Murray 2020). Of the 24 women in my sub-sample, only one explicitly mentioned being trafficked at the age of 12 into sex work. While it is certainly possible that there were more in my sample, only one woman explicitly revealed that as part of her experience. Finally, the majority, 37 of 39, of the *picadores* were born in Haiti and now, on average were approximately 64 years old; having been recruited in their late teens to mid-thirties, most had been in the country now for well over 30 years, a significant time of which was spent laboring in the cane fields. In what follows, I present their experiences in the fields at the decline of the sugarcane industry.

Findings

From the moment they begin their trek to the Dominican Republic, Haitian agricultural workers were met with obstacles. Most reported coming to the Dominican Republic out of dire financial necessity, fleeing political persecution, or tricked into a taking an allegedly lucrative job and are ultimately never willing nor capable to return to Haiti again. Upon arriving they quickly realized that all they believed about economic opportunities was largely untrue and their ability to return to Haiti was increasingly out of reach, if not completely impossible. Loneliness, abuse, and resilience characterize the lives of former sugarcane cutters, many of whom are estranged from their families in Haiti, stuck living in the Dominican Republic, a country that has taken so much of their finite time and bodies and has given so little in return.

Throughout the entirety of my interviews, respondents remind me time and time again, that their current condition is the result of exploitative practices centered around the rise and fall of the sugarcane industry and subsequent legal obstacles. Of which I highlight three distinct mechanisms through which the state is culpable in Haitian exploitation: First, their journey to the Dominican Republic facilitated by state efforts to actively recruit Haitian workers; second, the process of enslavement through the use of violence and stripping of physical autonomy; and third, the suspended state of precarity vis a vis *misdocumentation* that makes securing owed monies (contractually guaranteed pension) impractical if not impossible altogether.

Journey to the Dominican Republic

Here I detail how Haitians' journey to the Dominican Republic, whether formally recruited or informally migrated, feature the state as key actor in both enslaving them and maintaining them in servitude. And, as noted above, because sugar was once such a profitable business, Haitians were heavily sought after to meet the growing labor demands. The *picadores*

would recall their stories, some coming as formal agricultural recruits, others, informally 'por el monte' (through the jungle). *Buscadores (*recruiters), some Haitian some Dominican others of mixed lineage, would present them opportunities to work with false promises of: high earning potential, cattle, pension, and means to consistently earn money to be able to support family that many left behind in Haiti. Recruitment for *la zafra,* (the sugarcane harvest season) generally began in the months leading into December as the bulk sugarcane plantation labor generally lasted five months from December through May. Their recruitment, motivation for a better life, and general vulnerability signals the first step en-route to their eventual enslavement.

This was true for John Charles, who had now lived in the Dominican Republic for nearly forty years and migrated both formally and informally.

> "I've been here 39 years, I came here in 1982. [The] first time I came on a bus. But the first time that I came I had a passport—its expired now. So, the other times I went through the jungle to come here…During that time they charged like 1500 or 2000 pesos, now its 5000, 4000s, but at that time it was like 1500…I came to look for work…The first job I had was *de picador* right here in Villa Cielo"

For most, like John Charles, the need for employment was among the most common motivators to migrate to the Dominican Republic. And it was this very economic desperation that made them especially vulnerable to exploitation. Others explained how their journey to the Dominican Republic was also tied to active recruitment from the Dominican government. A source of frustration for many respondents as the seemingly contradictory national sentiment simultaneously promulgated both recruitment *and* deportation:

"…the president from here (Dominican Republic) and over there (Haiti)—the one from

here he says "I want 100 Haitians." And the president from over there sends 100

Haitians. And then when the *zafra* (harvest season) comes, they go recruit. A lot of them

left [to Haiti]. But the majority stayed here because they couldn't go back to their

country."-Lufiz, 54

"It was the Dominican government that recruited Haitian workers to bring them here to

the Dominican Republic--the group I came with. The group I came with, it was the

Dominican government itself [that] went to Haiti [and] recruited us to bring us here to the

Dominican Republic to labor cutting cane for the Dominican state…I cut cane for 46

years."-Fernando, 91

Edmond, on the other hand, 62, local *alcalde* (equivalent of mayor/neighborhood leader) who

migrated in from Haiti 1973, was among the one or two respondents that generally held positive

sentiments bout the Dominican Republic, and one of 8 that had full citizenship in my sample.

Indeed, he is an outlier, who is also relatively well-off compared to the rest of my sample as a

well-respected leader in his community. He is the proud owner of three homes, none of which

are made wood but of [cinder] block—a point of pride which he was sure to remind me—and

two local businesses including a dance hall, where we had our one-on-one interview. He was

very-dark-skinned, sporting a black tank-top denim shorts and sandals that barely hung on to his

feet. He sat confidently in his chair, taking up as much space as possible, leaned back with his

ankles interlocked. I remember being shocked when he told me his age, he appeared at least a

decade younger and particularly healthy as compared to many other cane cutters around his age as he was nowhere near as slender.

During the duration of our interview he assured and re-assured me time and time again he could get me anything I needed, because, as he said it, he was the "boss of all of this" (raising his open down-facing palm eye-level circular motion alluding to the entirety of Villa Cielo). While his income or status did not necessarily situate him in a 'higher class,' that is, did not protect him from anti-Haitian discrimination over his neighbors, his overall quality of life, given his homes and business certainly did. He generally maintained, as is common among some migrants groups, that if you stay out of trouble, and work hard, you can have what he called "a beautiful life," of which, he himself is self-proclaimed prime example. Ironically, even the very stories he happily shared with me, were imbued with exploitative practices from the onset. When I asked him about his journey to the Dominican Republic, he like many others gave me the exact date, "I came here the 24th of July in 1973" he said calmly, before he continued:

> "They came to look for us at my house (in Haiti)—[we were] young, young kids, a
> group…they brought us over on a bus. I was a kid, 16 years old. A man named Leito
> came for us…He was *castizo,* because he was Haitian and Dominican, he spoke both
> languages. When there was still cane here, he came and brought us from over there
> [Haiti]…so he came and got us to work. He didn't lie, he told us it was to cut cane, that's
> it, because that was the only job that there was at that time (laughs)…We never returned,
> we stayed and had our families here."

Edmond, who quite literally devoted his entire adult life to cutting cane in the Dominican Republic, was *recruited* alongside his peers, as a child. He has a positive outlook on his experience, and is thankful for the quality of life he has been able to achieve. Notwithstanding, it does not negate the fact that he was actively, not to mention formerly, recruited via a state-sanctioned program as a minor. He was subsequently brought into a foreign country to work 12-hour days in horrid living conditions. Having only achieved a seventh-grade education with limited job prospects in a rural southern village in his native country, his desperation left him vulnerable to appealing opportunities in the cane fields.

His relative success has given him a widely uncommon perspective as well. One that countered virtually all of my interviews regarding perceived abuse and exploitation on the sugar plantations and at the hands of Dominican guards. When I asked him to how he would reflect on his time as a *picador,* and Haitian and Dominican relationships with guards he attempts to persuade me, and in a sort of armchair lecture-style prose begins:

> "The man who works can maintain his family…that's how cane is…its your fortitude that matters. It's not that they (Dominican guards) abuse anyone, its *you*, *yourself* that poisons your mind. A lot of people don't think that…That's the problem, if you don't want to be fashionable and you don't want to have money—you'll be dirty and suffer and work little. If you [want to] have money, you want a pretty wife, you have to work hard, that's how it is."

All other respondents, whether they themselves were mistreated or not, did not take this position. It is likely that his relative success, his leadership position, and generally good health impact this differing opinion.

Forced Labor: Slave-Like Condition

All respondents came to the Dominican Republic 'voluntarily.' Indeed, some were fleeing persecution, financial destitution, or simply seeking a better life, but none were physically taken by force. It is what happens to them after reaching the plantations that facilitates their enslavement. Haitian recruitment was just the beginning, and as I will show in this section, *ingenio* (sugar mills/plantations) customs and respective actors ensured that their newly secured laborers were maximized for the state's profit and unable to leave. I will expose the day-to-day working conditions of the plantations where the threat and use of violence was ubiquitous to the process of enslavement. And as I will show, for those of whom violence was not enacted directly, baring witness to others' suffering or peers' mysterious 'disappearances' (understood by respondents as murder) was deterrence enough to control, maintain, and enslave. As scholars, activists, and legislators continue to ruminate, debate, and wrestle with definitions of slavery, I instead highlight Bales' provocative retort: "Who might be best positioned to understand the lived experience of those in contemporary slavery?" (Bales 2012 p 1). A question that is best answered by those still living that *have* experienced it. Of which: *Los Viejos* who have been stripped of their political voice, dignity, freedom of movement, and forced into labor, are uniquely positioned to comment.

While the individual details of my respondents' experiences differed in some respects, forced labor and the mechanisms of its enforcement were standard. Claud, having been in the

Dominican Republic since the early 70s, deeply reflects on a memorable exchange with a plantation guard:

> "One day I sent my wife to the city to look for [new] opportunities. I stayed home with our two kids. When the captain came to this batey he came with guards and took one of my kids by the hand and the other from my arms. I stood in the doorway. He asked me, "what are you doing here why aren't you in field?" I told him I had to watch my kids. He hit me with his rifle and I almost knocked over my daughter. Then he grabs me by the collar of my shirt-ripping it and pulls me in truck to take me to jail. I stayed there without any food or water. To this day, I give thanks to God; if I hadn't been watching my kids I'd be dead right now."

Claud's experience was representive of the p*icadores* who were simply not allowed to rest. Before dusk, cane cutters were obligated to be in the fields and any deviation to that was punishable. Claud's experience is indicative of the expectations held of cane cutters who were given two options: labor or face violence. Claud believes he would have died that day was it not for the presence of his two children, highlighting the precarity of their everyday existence and importance such that

At first utterance of the word 'slavery' by one of my respondents I was admittedly taken aback. Such a powerful and loaded word is not typically used loosely. The first time the word came up was in my focus group with seven men. There were friends and retired *picadores*, whom lived in Batey Cueva. My community contact had spread the word about me wanting to do a focus group with sugarcane cutters. In a few short days, I had a group of seven eager men (aged 56, 62, 64, 68, 69, 74, and 87) ready to speak about their experiences. We convened in a

'community center,' a small one-story multi-function building that served as the community's primary school, health clinic, and arts and crafts leisure space. Even with its manual-poor bucket-to-flush toilet, its tile floors and finished dry walls easily made it the most developed building in the whole neighborhood.

We met mid-day and sat in a dim room with a single, conspicuously noisy, oscillating stand-up fan; a failed attempt to escape the sweltering heat of the Caribbean. We sat in a small class-room, children's art adorning the walls, and beads of sweat adorning our faces. Overall, the men dressed similarly. Loose shirts, most tucked in with denim or khaki bottoms and old baseball caps to protect from the sun when outside—most caps featured American sports teams interestingly enough. All but one wore pants, Litme, whose right leg had been amputated at the knee from an accident on sugarcane fields decades ago, wore shorts as it was more comfortable for him. The toll on the rest of their physical bodies was equally as conspicuous. Their hands were mangled, nailbeds mostly gone, palms calloused, missing parts or whole fingers altogether, and others with irreversible eye damage or complete blindness. Of the latter, Litme commented was a result of:

> "…owners [that] would burn the cane so we would cut faster—with more enthusiasm. Because if it *all* burned it would be ruined… the ash from the flames would get in our eyes, on our clothes…now thousands of Haitians are blind from the plantation, including those two (points to two other participants in focus group)."

This level of transparency and candor is indicative of how the rest of our focus group interview would unravel fraught with tense cross-chatter conversations, careful overexplaining, levity and laughter—often alongside stories of misery and suffering (Goldstein 2003).

Our semi-circle sitting arrangement, got tighter and smaller as we grew more comfortable

and the group discussion intensified, and respondents were readily cutting one another off and/or

finishing each other's sentences. It was not long at all, about 15 minutes, before Gabriel, 68,

unprompted, named their condition as that of slavery. When I asked the group to explain their

process of coming to the Dominican Republic, Gabriel, the most talkative of the bunch after

Ezekial, jumped in, affectionately cutting off one of his peers:

> "I was in Haiti living in poverty, and the president of Haiti, when I was over there, made
>
> a deal and the president of Haiti sold Haitians as slaves to Balaguer (then-Dominican
>
> president) to come cut cane. Since then, we have been: suffering, mistreated, cursed,
>
> going hungry."

Gabriel's voice is passionate, excitable, and audibly weathered—his words are clear and

deliberate but labored. For him, the enslavement of Haitians happened long before they even

reached the plantations. *Picadores'* enslavement begins with legal bi-lateral agreements between

Duvalier and Balaguer, that like Dominican recruitment efforts is a state-backed sanctioned

process. For Gabriel, the (largely estranged) Haitian government has also facilitated their sell

into enslavement, by offering their labor, relegating them to misery and suffering. Others later

chime in not only *naming* their experience slavery, but detailing the brutal daily regiment:

> "You know cutting sugarcane is a difficult job, it kills. When you get out sometimes you
>
> don't even have the strength to bathe…going hungry. And tomorrow, all over again
>
> early—with, or without rain." -Ezekiel

"Every day, every day cutting cane going hungry, from 4 in the morning until 6 at night in the cane fields. When you finish you only have enough energy to go to sleep. And they (plantation guards) come to the door at (taps chair with nails to imitate door-knocking) "let's go, let's go, let's go" at three in the morning until seven at night—until 9 at night. *Working, working* without rest! Like a slave. *Just* like a slave." -Jose

Comments like Jose's about the particulars of working the cane fields powerfully resonated with the group. The men responded in verbal and non-verbal affirmations. Some nodding their head "mhmm," "Yep, that's how it is," or other non-word affirmations in solidarity. To Jose's claim of the harsh conditions, Ezekiel, Gabriel, and Jimmy, in one of the more impassioned series of responses added:

Ezekiel: "That's why we get old before our time."

Gabriel: "Without even a piece of bread!"

Ezekiel: "Bread? What are you talking about, bread? Just a gallon of water, that's it!"

Jimmy: "Sometimes you don't even drink water!"

All: (laugh)

Ezekiel: "That's how we are here in this country, enslaved. You [would] see a slave in that time. We went through hard times."

It was a beautiful, and admittedly saddening, show of solidarity that these men held with one another. At the same time, their mutual validations of one another also revealed the pervasiveness and breadth of slavery among Haitians. Because, while all 7 men live in Villa Cielo currently, many worked throughout the entire country moving from one plantation to the next over the course of 20, 30, or 40 years. That is, their time in the country has spanned various regions and countless plantations and have still yielded similar experiences over space and time indicating that their experiences may not be exceptions, but rather the rule of plantations nationwide. Even if that is not the case, they all also deeply relate to one another through the commonalities of their shared experiences of hunger and exploitation in the sugarcane fields they all explicitly identify as slavery.

Yonel, 76, in a separate one on one interview, after spending over 30 years in the country, captures a similar sentiment:

> "Look, I got here in 79' in this country. And the job I did, was the only job available—cutting cane. Sometimes you go into the field in the morning with a gallon of water, sometimes you might also get a piece of bread. Sometimes!...Going hungry. Sometimes you leave the cane fields hungry, and have to go back and cut while hungry, too. You experience a lot of misery. I've gone through this whole country, Montellano, Union, Romana, Baraguana, Madre Vieja, on plantations cutting cane. It's that there were no [other] jobs, but to cut cane only—we (Haitians) always cut cane."

Yonel's remark highlights the perceived normalization of Haitians explicitly as *picadores*. It was, as virtually all my respondents revealed "the only job available" to them *and* one that they

were forced to do. Importantly, allowing migrants (formal and informal) the opportunity, that is the legal right to: enter, live, and work in the country, was the the very same legal framework that allowed for them to be exploited.

The complete disregard for Haitian life, that is, the commodified Haitian producer, relied on formal and informal labor migration that would supply a steady flow of workers. The state's role in in facilitating the continuous flow relied on *ingenio (*sugar mill*)*-issued identification cards, or *cedulas*, that assigned workers to a particular *batey*. Those *cedulas* functioned as de facto work visas that allowed Haitians to remain in the country so long as they were on the property of their assigned *ingenios*. Anyone, that violated those regulations could be formally sanctioned by *ingenio* officials, employees of the state, via imprisonment or deportation. And also informally, through beatings and murders—again by employees of the state.

Violence and Limited Movement

In order to keep Haitians' level of productivity noted above and limit their movement, the government-operated plantations, and by extension government employees, resorted to violence to hold Haitians in bondage. The Dominican state, then, without having to 'own' Haitians as property were able to hold them against their will and force them to labor through imprisonment and depravity. Violence ranged from 'short' 8-hour stints in jail, to physical beatings, and, as many respondents alluded to, murder. Josef, 70, who had proclaimed to have cut cane all the way up until 2004, lamented that in over 40 years of living and laboring in the Dominican Republic, he has nothing to show for his efforts. He does however, still have vivid memories of his time in the fields and keenly recalls how guards treated him:

"Sometimes they'd abuse people. If you don't want to cut one day, they'll arrest you. That's what they do. I was arrested like five times because I didn't want to cut cane. If I took one day to sit and rest they'll come get me to cut, and if I tell them "I'm not going to cut today" they'd put me in jail. Five times! That's how it is. Tomorrow (the day after arrest) they'd let you out to go cut—obligated to cut. That's how it was in that time."

For Josef, and countless other *picadores* like him, their literal freedom was contingent on their willingness to work, to produce. And in that way, they were not free at all. Their physical bodies were subject to control, where their only autonomy existed between the time they got off work and the time they were required to begin working again. The state via legal and extra-legal measures ensured that Haitians only cut cane. Yet, like was true of s

"You weren't allowed to eat not a single cane. If they see you, there'd be a guard in the sugarcane fields—the camp. And if they catch you eating cane, or if they see you coming back from the fields they would grab your machete and if they saw nectar [on your blade]— on your head is where they would hit you. With the flat side of a machete they'd hit you…All that, I saw it. I saw it because I was raised right *here*."-Anthony 60

If the beatings, imprisonment, and threats were not enough to control Haitian cane cutters, others were murdered, with the understanding that the acts were inconsequential. The majority of respondents' stories were gut wrenching, but the talk of death and murder, which even though I had known occurred, was still among the most difficult set of stories to hear.

As communicated to me, Haitians were solely commodities of the state sanctioned sugar plantations. That is, commodities worth only as much as they could produce and always expendable. To this end, their enslavement was both state-sponsored and enforced. And, because their labor *was* always replaceable, they could recruit more, there was little interest in maintaining them healthy, happy, or even alive. Of all my individual interviews, Fernando's was the most emotionally difficult. Fernando, having been recruited by the Dominican government at the age of 20 from Haiti to work sugarcane plantations, has lived in the Dominican Republic for 71 years. He is the eldest in Batey Cueva among a large contingency of former sugarcane cutters colloquially knowns as *Los Viejos* (the old men) who have given their lives in labor to the Dominican Republic.

Fernando is well known and loved by the community. He seems to know everyone's story and they know his. The cement slab in front of his home, scattered with a few, but never enough, plastic lawn chairs, was a regular hangout spot for me and many of his peers. He is a captivating speaker, endlessly charismatic and fluent in French, Spanish and Haitian Creole, languages he ebbs in and out of when speaking with me. His resoluteness and levity, however, also betrayed his immediate material condition. He wore faded grey dress pants held up by a belt noticeably struggling to remain intact with an off-white half-tucked sporadically buttoned shirt that hid a few of his grey chest hairs, and wore leather shoes with no socks that hugged his feet. He sat squarely in front of me, his deep-brown skin draped in clothes several-sizes too big, legs crossed one over the other as he peered back at me with intentional and welcoming eyes. I had asked him to explain what he meant by *abuso* (abuse), a term he frequently alluded to in his time in the Dominican Republic working the cane fields, to which he responded:

"There were times when the Dominican (guards) would burn the cane fields and beat the Haitians harshly. Sometimes they would burn the cane fields, and Haitians would suffer the consequences—with beatings! Because [if] the cane fields were dirty and had a lot of vines, it won't cut well, and they blame Haitians for burning the fields, but it was the captain of the plantation that burned the fields himself. And they went and rounded up all the Haitians to get rid of them and kill them in a place called Guayubin, on the way to Dajabon—Haitians aren't worth anything."

Because, as a capitalist project, the goal of the state was solely to maximize profits, Haitians perceived 'replaceability,' left them susceptible to perpetual mistreatment at the hands of Dominican guards. Many times, under the guise of being 'deported,' respondents shared that their peers their friends were killed and buried in secret or buried in remote areas of the jungle. Destin, 62, even claims that he's found "human bones in the field" in his time in the Dominican Republic.

So common was the mistreatment and murders of sugarcane workers, that Dominicans created a Haitian-specific epithet. As our focus group transitioned from their stories of migrating to the Dominican Republic, to their daily sugarcane duties, I asked them about the dynamic with Dominican guards and what kinds of relationships they had with them. Gabriel, barely let me finish my question before he began:

"Listen, before, you know what they used to call us *picadores?* Cepa Cepa, Dominicans used to call us that. Look, when they find a Haitian *picador* that's not on his cane cutting duties, they'd kill him secretly. They killed so many Haitians, but there's always [more] Haitians, that's why they call us cepa, because another one is 'born' again. That's why

they call us cepa." (cepa is an umbrella term for part of a plant(s) connected to the root and usually underground)!

I was stunned, and visibly so. He did not hesitate. Gabriel very calmly and plainly stated that Haitians were being killed for not doing their assigned duties. Haitians were, effectively, better off dead for the Dominican Republic if they were not producing in the eyes of Dominican guards. A brief silence followed Gabriel's response, as I attempted to process, and before I could follow up with another question, Yonel, who seemed to notice how shook and confused I was, further explained: "It's like a nick-name, '*c-e-p-a*'" he says to me slowly, as if trying to explain something complex to a child overenunciating the last word. It took Yonel longer than most others to insert himself into our conversation. At 56 years old, he was the second youngest in the focus group, yet still spent considerable time on plantations. He continued:

"Look, you plant a plantain tree, right, you know how many will sprout? Haitians are cepa, you can kill them and more will sprout. It means when you kill a Haitian, there are thousands more—there will be more, they're cepas. You can plant corn, and four or five more will sprout; that's what they do with us. Yeah, I have to tell it to you like it is. That's why they call us "cepa, cepa, cepa!" (said quickly and energetically as if calling out to people in the distance; group laughs)".

Their laugh, and other laughs around similarly dark or crass topics not functioned as resistance and solidarity (see the role of humor as resistance Goldstein 2006), but also highlighted how ubiquitous these sentiments are among Haitians who have worked all throughout the country.

Fixed Working Class: Pension and Misdocumentation

In addition to recruitment efforts and the use of violence, *Los Viejos* face the added challenge of documentation, and more urgently, the documents required for the government to allocate their long-due pension. Their lack of documentation also leaves susceptible to further exploitation. Vis a vis *misdocumentation,* the state, proves once again, to be a key factor in the social and material stratification that Haitians must endure in the Dominican Republic. Consider, that of the 39 sugarcane cutters in my sample, only 6 had jobs, and only 2 had permanent documentation. Their utility, to the Dominican Republic's , is as Edward describe, waning. Of *Los Viejos',* experiences he laments that they were: "Cursed, hungry…fucking struggling." And were treated differently based solely on their ability to work. He continued:

> "And when you're in good health, you're working, to the bosses, captains, guards, you're human. You're good to go, you have energy. But when you're not feeling well, [they would say] "You're of no use, go lay down in your house" (scrunches face and does shewing away motion).

Edward vividly describes how Haitians would be disregarded and be shewed away if they were not able to work, again confirming the notion that they were only as valuable as they could produce, even alluding to Haitians' perceived humanity contingent as contigent on their status of they were able to work.

It is precisely these sentiments that has left *Los Viejos* particularly vulnerable to state control long after their time in the sugarcane fields. Due to their aging bodies, lingering injuries from the cane fields, and chronic ailments most retired sugarcane cutters are physically unable to work. Jimmy, 69, is one of 4 men in my sample suffering from cane-related blindness. And

without proper documentation, he is unable to seek medical attention. In what he describes as his current suffering, Jimmy explains:

> "It was the cane that left me like this. That's why I'm blind. Listen, they (the sugar mill) left me without a cent to get operated. It was just my *paisanos* (friends/peers) here in the batey that sent me to the hospital. Because the government is not looking out for anyone. All these injuries I have, this one, that one. There are some days that we'll go—five, six, seven days pass without food."

The decline of sugarcane industry, physical ailments as a result of working the fields, has left Jimmy in destitute poverty sometimes experiences days without food. And because the state has misdocumented him, and countless other Haitian descendants, he is not eligible to collect the pension that is owed to him for several decades of labor on sugarcane plantations. Jimmy, like others, is stagnant. Like other retired sugarcane cutters, many have spent years seeking the proper combination of documents that will regularize their status and make the eligible for their decades-owed pensions. Fed up and frustrated with the inefficiency of the system Joseph, 80,

> "I came through immigration to cut cane. I've been to 16 different *ingenios* cutting cane, cleaning cane. And now there are no more *ingenios*. There aren't any left. Everyday [I was in] all the *ingenios,* I'm there cutting cane, cleaning cane, everyday sweating, and they don't give us anything. They don't give us our severance—our pension—to anyone.

Retired *picadores,* like Joseph, are strategically permitted from attaining documents through, as I described in chapter 2, the process of *misdocumentation*. As part of larger system of exclusion, *misdocumentation* is the: de jure and de facto tactics of the state that make regularization impractical or impossible to secure and maintain.

   Misdocumentation, then, is the unjust political action, one that invariably upholds ethnoracial hierarchies and renders targeted populations exploitable. Emmanuel and Fernando discuss the process they have undergone and subsequent struggles with attempting to secure their documentation and owed pension:

> "The process is like this, you have to over there [to the capital] to get a paper. But you *have* to go to the capital, to get *each* of them. I have been going for four years back and fourth! Supposedly to get our pensions. I've spent four years going to the capital and every time they just tell you lies and they don't give you anything. To this day, they haven't given us anything. To the capital back and forth and back."-Emmanuel
>
> "I, look at me, these are my quotes. I have 42 quotes (proof of owed money) to my name. The paper, I've taken it back and forth, it's impossible. And they can't tell me anything definitively for my pension, today. To date, I have 57 years, I have 56, here cutting cane in service--. And now I can't work and don't have my pension." -Fernando

Central to *misdocumentation* is the circuitous bureaucratic process, an often expensive seemingly endless barrage of having to provide document after document. Many retired cane cutters have spent years, as many as seven, after their pension. As they get older and their earning potential decreases and their ability to accrue enough money for transportation to *La Capital* (four hours

away) and necessary documentation becomes bleaker. Those that can find work do so at an

increased risk of deportation as they lack documentation, are at risk of facing blatant employer

discrimination and little opportunities for recourse. Lufiz, 54, discusses the inequity that exists

among blue collar jobs:

"If a job is worth 60,000 pesos he'll call a Haitian because he doesn't want to pay

60,000…he'll tell the Haitian "I'll give you 10,000 pesos for this job." And I *have* to take it,

you know why? Because this is not my country."

Haitians marginalization has historically left them the worst jobs in the country. And for

migrants, and former sugarcane cutters like Lufiz, most are forced into the most arduous of jobs.

Discussion

I have explored how the state has been crucial in enslaving Haitian migrants as well as

maintaining them in a constant state of depravity. I also contended that this phenomenon is one

predicated, on a long-established precedent of the racialization of labor, informed by the

centuries of Black enslavement in the Americas, and reinforced by policies that

disproportionately target Haitians. That is, the institutionalization of their race race *and* ethnicity

as Haitian migrants left vulnerable and subject to labor exploitation by the state. As a series of

interconnected state institutions, through Haitian recruitment, plantation violence and labor

conditions, as well as withholding of payment via *misoducmentation*, Haitians once enslaved, are

continually dominated by the legacy of the Dominican sugarcane enterprise. I sought to

challenge leading scholars on definitions of contemporary slavery that do not account for racism,

noting that extreme labor exploitation is invariably tied to and indeed facilitates abuse.

Ultimately, I presented a case for Haitians enslavement during the sugarcane era, and how their current condition encroaches modern-day slavery by relegating them to a fixed underclass with limited pragmatic or viable means of upward mobility and self-determination.

Haitian labor remains a staple in the Dominican economy. Consider that although 67% of my entire sample reported being unemployed or unable to work at the time of our interview, when they were employed (as well as those who were currently employed) they were disproportionately in blue collar jobs including agriculture, livestock, and most notably construction. This represents larger trends throughout the country where one in five working Haitians work in construction, and over half, 53%, of all construction workers in the Dominican Republic are of Haitian descendant. In these instances, Haitians are the 'cheap' (and sometimes free) alternatives to hiring Dominicans. As was frequently the case with the sugarcane industry, Haitians are still often underpaid, if paid at all. In an eerily similar process, Haitians continue to literally enrich and industrialize a country from which they are systemically excluded. Replicating in many ways, a fixed working-class group that exchanged sugarcane for cinder blocks.

Without any source of income for sustenance or compensation for their decades of labor, Haitians are left to wither and die. Their current condition is the result of an orchestrated depravity of which capitalism was, and remains, the ultimate goal. Mbembe (2002), prophetically wrote that "the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (p 11). In this tradition, Haitian's very sovereignty remains in question. Once dubbed 'cepa' for their perceived expendability, not only were their physical bodies disposable, their movement limited by surveillance, but their

migrant status also meant they were also politically voiceless. It follows, according to Mbembe

(2002), then that the sovereignty lies in the expressions "free and equal" peoples who are

"capable of self-understanding, self-consciousness, and self-representation" (13). Of the latter,

retired cane cutters have none. They are instead continually dependent on an exploitative system.

Joseph, in midst of a defeated exhale proclaims: "We're almost dead and they still don't' want to

give us anything" referring to the government that has not allowed them to retrieve their due

payments. Ultimately, this research seeks to underscore the inextricable link between the state,

migration, and racialized labor and contributes to ongoing debates of modern-day slavery and

coerced exploitation that persists worldwide.

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Conclusion

At the onset of this project, I sought to explore how Dominicans of Haitian descent were identifying in the Dominican Republic. I was eager to interrogate to what extent their phenotype and legislation impacted these negotiations. Once in the field, these questions of individual identification, while important, largely faded. Instead, notions of interpersonal racialization and socio-political structural challenges became the foci. Both revealing the continued anti-Blackness and anti-Haitian sentiments that have long-existed in the Dominican Republic. Indeed, the Dominican Republic is a well-studied locale where questions of race (Candelario 2008, Simmons 2009, Dreby 1994, Ricourt 2016), migratory regulations (Ellen 2016, Howard 2016), and labor exploitation (Childers 2020, Wooding and Mosely-Williams 2004) have been thoroughly explored. However, despite international humanitarian attention in the last decade, with the exception of one (Childers 2020), there have been no ethnographic accounts of Haitians lived experiences since the harsh regularization policies of 2013 that left so many Haitian descendants at risk of statelessness. In my dissertation, I sought to explore the lived realities of Haitian descendants who have, for a long time, survived in the margins of the Dominican Republic as victims of mass deportations, violence, and unjust treatment in the legal system.

Objectives and Contributions:

Sociologically, I sought to add to growing bodies of literature that take seriously the role of both race *and* ethnicity and its inextricable historical, and contemporary, connection to citizenship. That is, exploring ways to account for the role one's phenotype plays in access to, or

realization of (full) citizenship, in addition to how ethnicity, or perceived ethnicity and/or country of origin, also provides its own set of challenges for those seeking to be included in society. In the latter chapters, I sought to highlight the role of race in immigration law and contribute to modes of migrant incorporation and contentious debates on modern-day slavery.

Chapter 1

In chapter one I relied on the theories racial schemas (Roth 2012) to explore the day-to-day interpersonal mechanisms of racially identifying ethnoracial groups like 'Haitians' from 'Dominicans' and comparisons between 'Black' and 'white.' Most pertinent in this chapter is discovering what racial, ethnic, and cultural markers were most relevant in the determinations of ethnoracial groups. Here I tended to micro-level interactions and the degree to which individuals primarily employed observed race, continuum schema, or interaction-based observed race. The results for this chapter draw primarily from responses that center or highlight race and racialization including but not limited to: "What comes to mind when you hear the word race?"; "How would you describe your race?" "If someone were to ask you about your race, how would you respond?" "Have you ever been confused for another race? Why do you think that is?" "If two different people come up to you, without them speaking, how can you tell which one is Haitian and Dominican?" Findings suggest that, due in large part to inconsistency in identifying individuals by phenotype alone, when others' observed race was not enough, respondents relied on cultural cues, most notably (accented) speech to determine each other's race. Theoretically, ethnoracial schemas, advances racial schemas, by filtering racial interactions through an interactive component of race and racial categories. That is, where racial schemas was largely, although not exclusively, appearance-based, ethnoracial schemas is both observed and

interactional--language, and holistically accounts for communities where ethnoracial categories are more difficult to distinguish. In doing so, ethnoracial schemas also provides a tool to bridge racial and ethnic paradigms that too often theoretically and conceptually distinct despite their connection in our daily lives.

Chapter 2:

In chapter two, *"A Mi Me Llevaron Seis Veces"* (They Have Taken Me [To Haiti] Six Times), I sought to emphasize the role of the state, as an active participant in the marginalization of Haitian descendants. Taking a critical race theory approach, this chapter highlights the role of the Dominican government and subsequent state-driven obstacles that render Haitian descendants precarious denizens by way of: 1) excessive bureaucracy, 2) ethnoracial surveillance, and, 3) discretionary acts by agents of the state, that undermine or otherwise outright deny migrants mechanisms for inclusion in society. *Misdocumentation,* then, as a corrective allows us to account for interviewees perceptions of the Dominican government and places the onus on restrictive xenophobic policies and practices identified by the interviewees rather than a seemingly neutral condition or state of being 'undocumented.' Participant's report feeling stuck in a circuitous process; a seemingly endless cycle of attaining, renewing, demonstrating (to government), and paying for documents. Misdocumentation provides the tools necessary to highlight the mechanisms by which Haitian descendants experience what some scholars call 'legal violence' (Menjivar and Abrego 2012), where each modality—bureaucratic, surveillance, and discretion, all function to exclude Haitians from society contributes to the collection of practices that undermine and indeed limit realization of one's dignity. Conceptually, misdocumentation connects the critical perspective, that is social construction of De Genova's

'illegality' and Menjivars 'legal violence' by underscoring the functional practices of policies that facilitate inequality. De Genova (2006), maintains that rather than taking for granted the 'illegality' or law-breaking status of undocumented peoples, he insists scholars examine how these are intentionally, socially, and legally constructed designations for punishment. Similarly, legal violence, is the symbolic and legal effect of said constructions that "can potentially obstruct and derail immigrants' paths of incorporation" (Menjivar and Abrego 2012 p 1383). Misdocumentation, highlights the mechanisms by which legal violence is enacted. The pragmatic approach, lends itself to practical solutions based on the understanding and evaluating the shortcomings of a nation states' practices—the bueracracy of the necessary paperwork, the surveillance of targeted communities, and the

Chapter 3:

Chapter three, *"Esclavo, Peor Que Esclavo"* (Slave, Worse Than A Slave), I focus primarily on a subset of my sample, 39 retired sugarcane cutters, and their experiences with enslavement through the latter half of the 20th century, and subsequent legal challenges in present-day that continue to exploit Haitian labor where possible. Using my concept of misdocumentation developed in chapter two, I explore how their enslavement via multifaceted government tactics including: recruitment, labor enforcement, and misdocumentation has enslaved Haitians in the past and continues to relegate them to roles of perpetual servitude today. This, like what was argued in chapter 2, is also a result of anti-Black and anti-Haitian precedents that maintain the fixture of Black labor, even without the formal institution of slavery. Instead, it is in part, due to the institution of immigration subjects Haitians to vulnerable conditions, where they can be underpaid, or even unpaid, with little consequence.

Policy Implications:

There are several policy implications that would begin to remedy the challenges Haitian descendants currently face in the Dominican Republic. The obvious solution would be to provide a quick, accessible, streamline pathway toward documentation and/or citizenship that is free of unnecessary obstacles and caters to the group most impacted in the Dominican Republic, Haitian descendants. In an even more ambitious scenario, an audit of the said pathways to citizenship/documentation to highlight the weaknesses and deficiencies would also start to address the, often, rift between policy and practice.

I will outline three policy implications that, based on my findings, would provide immediate (albeit not total) relief for Haitians communities throughout the Dominican Republic. First, and arguably most pressing for future generations, is the re-installment birth right citizenship. Ruling T-186-13, has proven to be devastating not only for individuals, but often times for entire families that are dependent on one another to provide documentation to authenticate next of kin. As respondents shared, often times their Dominican-born children were unable to secure documentation because their parents were not able to so. The impact of such generational consequences cannot be understated. Haitian descendant youth without documentation are ineligible for higher education, and many have trouble even just attending, and certainly completing, high school. This chain-like reaction can consume entire families as it limits their earning potential and leaves entire families susceptible to raids and other xenophobic mistreatment.

In the face of international scrutiny and countless accusations of human rights violations, the Dominican government enacted immigration reform that sought to remedy 2013 legislation

and ultimately create a pathway toward regularization. While some Haitians descendants were able to benefit from the 2014 law, it was certainly not nearly enough, and also came with its own set of challenges. The second policy initiative has to do with the costs associated with becoming documented and re-documented, as they are among the greatest challenges Haitian descendants/migrants face. Respondents regularly quoted anywhere from 5,000 to 30,000 pesos in costs associated with securing/renewing documents. For a population that is living in poverty with limited job prospects (often because they lack documentation), 5,000-30,000 is impractical. Annual and bi-annual renewal in the so-called 'Book of Foreigners' is yet another cost that many respondents cannot meet. In fact, many individuals become undocumented simply because they cannot afford to pay to renew their documents. The indigent, then, are effectively punished for being poor in a country in which they have resided and worked for decades but will not pay them livable (and owed) wages.

Finally, beyond costs, the arbitrary requirements to 'prove' one's Dominican birth must be substantially reformulated. Among these, arguably ridiculous, requirements are the need to acquire seven witnesses certifying one's birth, a letter to comment on one's character. Nearly 40% of all Haitians currently residing in the Dominican Republic are without birth certificates. And 2014 reforms have not made the process any easier and in fact has created more obstacles. Moreover, because it is so common for Haitians to be born at home or community clinics where their birth certificates might be difficult to attain and/or authenticate, the need to rely on their Dominican counterparts as witnesses, rather than create a pathway to citizenship or regularization in reality. Therefore, in the absence of reinstating jus soli, or birthright citizenship, eliminating arbitrary requirements such as seven witnesses, the government must provide a

program that can account for individuals who might not have either funds or other means of 'proving' their Dominicanidad.

Activism and Resistance:

Like all forms of oppression, the struggles Haitian migrants face have been confronted with oppositional resistance and organizing. Grassroots movements throughout the country have organized in attempts to meet the demands of those most impacted. *Reconoci.do,* is among the most popular movements in the Dominican Republic, they self-describe as an independent civic network "made up mainly of Dominicans of Haitian descent" that promote "human rights" with the goal of integrating Dominicans of Haitian descent into society and equal protection under the law. As a collective, *Reconoci.do* host educational forums on African heritage of Hispaniola, protests, and advice to those seeking regularization. This is similar to the longer-established organization, Dominican-Haitian Women's Movement (MUDHA). Founder, Sonia Pierre, a Dominican woman of Haitian descent, and the plaintiff from which the court ruling to rescind jus soli citizenship originated (on the basis of her Haitian-sounding last name) created the organization with efforts to promote human rights and the rights of Haitian women living in batey communities. Finally, Dominican@ Por Derecho, has since at least 2010, offered similar services, yet as an international component with a thinktank based in the Santo Domingo, but with remote contributors in the U.S. and elsewhere. Together these organizations are part of larger movements that embrace Blackness, a multicultural Dominican Republic, and promote human rights that appeals to global initiatives.

Broader Implications, Limitations, and Future Research:

In many ways, the Haitians in the Dominican Republic are an especially unique case. In another, Haitian descendants are simply a microcosm for the breadth of anti-Blackness (and general anti-immigrant) in the Americas. Their legal, political, and interpersonal challenges including individual-level discrimination and partial or second-class citizenship is indicative of the state of many African descendants in North, Central, and South America. Dominicans in Puerto Rico, Afro-Caribbeans in Panama, all face, or have faced similar struggles of anti-Black, anti-immigrant discrimination, with Afro-Caribbeans actually also stripped of their right to citizenship several times throughout the 20th century. In an increasingly globalized, and globalizing, world we must begin to acknowledge the similarities, learn from the differences, so that we can address the ethnoracial injustices as they have, and likely will, continue to endure.

Like all works, this project had its share of limitations. Most notably, was language. While I was able to communicate effectively and thoroughly with all respondents, many were not native Spanish-speakers, and naturally, it is possible that there were ideas lost in translation. Even in safeguarding against these possibilities, by conferring with key contacts that spoke both Haitian Creole and Spanish since birth, interviews were certainly impacted because they were primarily completed in Spanish. In addition, the relatively short amount of time spent in the field, just under four months, did not lend itself to traditional ethnographic approaches that are often over a year long. I plan to return to the Dominican Republic in the near future for follow-up and supplemental interviews. Future interviews will also begin to capture the physiological and health-related affects of COVID-19, as those without documents are not eligible for vaccines.

My sample was also disproportionately men, missing important opportunities to explore the ways in which migration and labor uniquely impact women, including, as I alluded to earlier, how many can be victims of sex trafficking facilitated, in part, by immigration legislation. Also in regards to sample, because my sample was relatively homogenous in terms of 'class status,' I was not able to highlight how differences in income or standard of living, like not living in a batey for example, might influence Haitian descendants ability to access documentation or become regularized. How might middle or upper middle class Haitians' experiences with documentation differ from that in my sample? Future studies might be able to address how descendants who came through the agricultural recruitment might differ from those that came through alternative means or with more social capital. My sample was also homogenous in terms of race and skin tone—that is to say that everyone was read as unambiguously black in the Dominican Republic. Future studies could explore how Black Haitians with light and very light skin might fare when compared to their darker skinned counterparts. Finally, there are other Black migrants in the Dominican Republic, including Black Americans, and other Afro-Caribbeans, future studies might do well to explore how and where their experiences converge and diverge.