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The Integration of Foreign-Born Dominicans in Spain and the United States 1990-2011: Historical, Spatial, & Racial Considerations

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Abstract

Dramatically shifting immigration patterns, incentives, and origins in the Atlantic have diminished opportunities for Dominican immigrant communities to integrate into traditional host nations like the United States, but created opportunities in emerging host nations such as Spain. Yet, the lingering impacts of the Great Recession and racial segregation have sustained or aggravated inequities in both nations. An immigrant generation cohort method analysis of integration trends between native populations and foreign-born Dominicans in the United States and Spain from 1990 to 2011 confirm persistent or increasingly segregated experiences in education, employment, and urban areas. However, as a result of greater cultural likeness and fewer barriers to the benefits of regularized legal status Dominican immigrants overall enjoy greater parity in educational, occupational, and neighborhood attainment with native populations in Spain compared to the United States, with the exception of highly uneven unemployment rates due to Spain's susceptible social market economy and underdeveloped migratory networks.

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Introduction

The immigration landscape in the Atlantic has transformed dramatically between the 20th and 21st Centuries as movements of people have intensified, diversified, and even changed directions entirely. Historically, Europe had been a major source of immigration to the Americas, but as time has passed its role has reversed. Political and economic upheaval in the Latin America has upended dominant immigration patterns and origins, burdening traditional host nations like the United States with unrelenting population growth and unprecedented demographic shifts. In an attempt to limit the pace of these changes, the U.S. has progressively tightened its borders, redirecting Latin American emigration to emerging receiving nations like Spain. These major changes over the course of several decades are best illustrated by the Dominican diaspora whose two largest communities abroad are presently found in the United States and Spain. However, due to various influential historical, cultural, political, and economic differences, the U.S. and Spain have offered vastly different opportunities for integration to their Dominican immigrant communities.

This research analyzes how multiple contextual variables unique to the U.S. and Spain have invited or hindered integration by comparing the degree to which the two largest communities of Dominicans abroad have or have failed to gradually attain the socioeconomic and residential status of native populations from 1990 to 2011 using the immigrant generation cohort method. As a result of very low rates of undocumented legal status and the lack of a language barrier, Dominican immigrants overall enjoy greater parity in educational, occupational, and neighborhood attainment with native populations in Spain compared to the United States. The only exception to the superior integration trends of foreign-born Dominicans

in Spain over the U.S. are large inequities in unemployment rates due to Spain's generous social safety net and its nascent immigrant communities.

The value of this research lies in its multi-variate observation, measurement, and comparison of integration trends. This is accomplished by deliberately choosing to study Dominican integration in distinct national and urban contexts over time by tracking their educational, occupational, and residential parity to native populations. The detailed approach not only considers regional, historical, socioeconomic, and spatial implications of integration, but also ethnic/racial ones. In doing so, contextual and historically specific advantages and disadvantages to integration, in addition to the barriers erected by elevated segregation of immigrants of significant African descent and the localization of socioeconomic inequities in urban neighborhoods are expanded upon. Lastly, of particular importance and relevance to this research is its consideration of the vulnerability of immigrant communities and their integration to host societies in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Taking all of these variables into account this research provides a much more comprehensive picture of the present experiences and future trajectory of Dominican immigrant communities in the United States and Spain.

A brief summary of the evolution of previous academic input on the topic of integration and the necessity of incorporating spatial indicators, stratifying outcomes by race, and tracking mobility over time will initiate the discussion. What follows is an in depth comparison of the historic and contextual characteristics of the United States, Spain, and the immigration from the Dominican Republic they have sustained which set them apart. Finally, the socioeconomic and spatial analyses will quantify improving integration trends or lack thereof of Dominican immigrants in Spain and the United States and draw connections to the specific variables that have encouraged or discouraged persisting disparities between native and foreign populations.

Primary Resources & Limitations

The articles, reports, and data points used to conduct and supplement this research come from a diversity of academic and institutional sources. Many of them are originally written in Spanish and are authored by Hispanic scholars while others are published in English and authored or financed by international organizations such as the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), national entities such as the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) and the U.S. Census Bureau, smaller institutions such as the US2010 Project, in addition to a variety of academic journals and other published sources. They cover an array of topics relating to the Dominican diaspora including media and culture, socioeconomic analyses, national history, residential segregation, ethnic/racial identity, immigration policy, etc. Lastly, not only do these sources speak on and take from the experience of Dominican immigrants, but also from a variety of transatlantic contexts and narratives allowing for a richer comparative and comprehensive study of integration. This research however, will focus primarily on socioeconomic and spatial characteristics of foreign-born Dominicans who have emigrated to and reside in the United States, Spain, and their major urban areas.

In regards to the quantitative data employed throughout this project, my research relies heavily upon the census level data made most easily accessible by the United States and Spanish governments. Almost all the statistics and percentages utilized in the following sections are derived from the two national sources, which vary greatly in terms of regularity and detail. In regards to the former, the INE does not publish or conduct comprehensive data collection studies as frequently as the U.S. Census Bureau, which constrained this research from utilizing the most updated information available. Thus, the data utilized spans from the years 1990 to 2011 since decennial population reports are conducted by the Census Bureau at the beginning of every new

decade, while in Spain they are completed by the INE exactly one year after. Furthermore, in the case of Spain and their national data collection, the available government reports and studies lack sorely in terms of reporting on a plethora of socioeconomic indicators. Therefore, extensive regional comparisons by variables such as income, poverty rates, health coverage, and tenancy were not feasible. For these reasons, the temporal study of residential segregation in Spain is incomplete and inconsistent compared to the other three socioeconomic analyses, spanning only from the years 2004 to 2009.

The lack of detailed variables also meant a constraint on the preferred scope of the study groups, particularly in regards to demographic characteristics like race and ethnicity, which are not self-reported in official Spanish statistics (Galeano 2014). Thus, native population groups are defined as all native-born Spaniards or native-born Americans without stratifying by race and immigrant groups consist of only foreign-born Dominicans and when explicitly mentioned, individuals born in other foreign nations. The only exception to the lack of ethnic/racial stratification is in the discussion of residential segregation in American cities and ethnic segregation in Spanish cities. These constraints, although limiting, prove helpful when considering the linguistic barriers separating native-born African Americans and Dominican immigrants as well as the United States' more extensive history as a host nation in comparison to Spain's.

Overall, in comparison to domestic statistical information from the Dominican Republic, the data sources from destination countries is much more reliable and available in order to approximate the experiences of Dominican immigrants living abroad. But as always, it is crucial to consider the limits of data collected via methods such as censuses, surveys, and registries whose processes are still susceptible to errors and irregularities (Polanco *et al*, 2018). Lastly,

statistically significant causation cannot be accurately established, but rather correlation is argued via the methods and variables applied in this research.

Literature Review & Methodology

The study of integration, as the term I chose to employ throughout my research, has not always been conceived in the same sense, nor using the same word, by academic contributors who find themselves in the same field, especially as time has progressed. In the literature from the early half of the twentieth century and before, the term most widely used instead of integration was assimilation. This specific term brings with it an uncomfortable past and rhetoric which Alba and Nee summarize very succinctly in the introduction of their book *Remaking the American Mainstream*, “Since the 1960s it has been seen in a mostly negative light, as an ethnocentric and patronizing imposition on minority peoples struggling to retain their cultural and ethnic integrity” (Alba & Nee, 2003). This prognosis of the older conception of assimilation and the controversial social theories it inspired alludes to many of the critical elements of the novel trajectory of this field of study that not only they, but many other contemporary thinkers and I endorse. Over time, the cultural distinctiveness of immigrants and other minorities would become acknowledged and celebrated, rather than discouraged. An example of this was the U.S. in the sixties, which not only initiated an era of unprecedented immigration in terms of ethnic makeup, but also brought with it a widespread consciousness of the significance and value of the country’s historic and increasing diversity via landmark ethnic/racial-equality legislation. This social pressure and shifting policies strengthened an ideological opposition against the simplistic assimilation theories from before which firmly believed in an inevitable generational alignment with the dominant White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture or the creation of a disjointed

minority underclass (Alba & Nee, 2003). These previous pessimistic and reductionist understandings of immigrant assimilation have continued to unravel as distinctions between traditional and contemporary immigration patterns and economic shifts have been addressed, leading to an evolved approach to and discussion of the topic. In many ways, the personal challenge of assimilation has become a collective project of integration of which the responsibility is mutually shared by both native citizens/institutions and foreign-born communities.

Rather than focusing on an immigrant communities' ability to culturally mirror the mainstream, the lens now concentrates on their socioeconomic status over time. This present approach to the study of integration is held by intellectuals such as Tomás Jiménez who believes that integration can be measured by tracking generational outcomes of immigrants in educational attainment, professional occupations, homeownership, and other indicators (Jiménez 2011). What authors like him and others are attempting to track rather than assimilation is intergenerational mobility. While there are many methodological frameworks out there in the literature that are employed to conduct this temporal analysis, I believe the immigrant generation cohort method developed by Park and Myers is the most comprehensive. In summary, the methodology boils down to comparing individuals along socioeconomic measures who belong to specific ethno-racial groups and a specified age group in adulthood from a later decade, or second generation, to those with matching characteristics from an earlier decade, or first generation. (Park & Myers 2010). Inherent to this analytical approach to measuring integration, is its emphasis on tracking the progress or underperformance of distinct immigrant communities in relation to themselves, rather than just the native mainstream. This is important because as many academics assert in their work, integration achieved through upwards and equitable

intergenerational mobility is very different from simple assimilation. Assimilating refers to immigrant groups and their sole responsibility to adapt and excel while integration concerns itself with how national institutions are integral in responding to the existing needs and gaps in a multicultural society. In short, integration is a mutual project between natives and foreigners which encourages generational mobility, but also societal parity. The data from multiple studies exemplify this theoretical distinction across multiple indicators and immigrant groups. In their article “Intergenerational Mobility in The Post-1965 Immigration Era,” Park and Myers “observe that second-generation [black immigrants] have achieved intergenerational mobility relative to their parents’ achievement of homeownership, but they remain with the lowest homeownership rates of all second-generation young adults” (Park & Myers 2010). Therefore, although upward mobility maybe constant for all groups in a variety of outcomes, persistent disparities can persist between racial/ethnic groups and are structurally detrimental to a truly integrated society.

While researchers such as those aforementioned hold many of the same assumptions in their methodology and overall approach to the topic, they fail to account for two possible confounding variables. The title of Logan and Turner’s report “*Hispanics in the United States: Not Only Mexicans*,” reveals the first variable, the immense diversity within the immigrant Hispanic community. This diversity is multifaceted in many respects, in terms of ethnicity there are multiple sending nations that fall under the general umbrella of Hispanic, among them, so called “New Latino” groups such as Salvadorians, Dominicans, and Guatemalans who have now reached more than a million members and continue to quickly grow (Logan & Turner 2013). This shift in ethnic origins coupled with noticeable gaps in various socioeconomic outcomes makes obvious the need in the literature to acknowledge the plurality of the immigration experience in the Hispanic community. Cross-national studies on Latin American integration,

like that of Connor and Massey, have addressed some of these disparities and their larger impact in particular on Caribbean communities who are often of mixed African origins (Connor & Massey, 2010).

Lastly, the final variable that other research has lacked is adding a spatial element to their analysis. Although much of the literature finds that in comparison to the average White-American adult, unfavorable inequities in most socioeconomic indicators affect Black and Brown individuals more commonly, it rarely explores the physical concentration of these inequities. I have chosen to explore one dimension of segregation proposed by Duncan and Duncan known as the index of dissimilarity. This index is measured on a scale from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating greater levels of segregation. The index of dissimilarity reveals the degree to which the distribution of two populations in all delineated spatial sections, most commonly census tracts, is skewed in comparison to their total proportion of the entire geographic area's population (Duncan & Duncan 1955). Altogether, in my research I intend to combine all of these theoretical and methodological approaches I have mentioned thus far, in addition to a transnational comparison between foreign-born Dominican communities in the United States and Spain.

Most of the studies in the literature tend to analyze integration through a single and very broad case study such as in the context of the United States as a whole or using very general study groups such as Hispanics. What these studies fail to acknowledge is the immense diversity that exists in the Hispanic community as well as their unique motivations for, timing of, and experiences of migrating which makes the task of measuring integration very nuanced. In choosing to compare Dominican immigration to and their settlement in the United States and

Spain, as well as their urban neighborhoods across successive generations, this research will explore the racial/ethnic, temporal, spatial, and regional implications of integration.

Case Studies

For most of its modern history, the Dominican Republic attracted more inflow, immigrants, than outflow, emigrants, recruiting labor from Haiti and the surrounding Caribbean to work in its dominant agriculture economy. However, times have changed as important political and economic shifts in the last two centuries have redirected the country's path. Presently, an estimated 1.3 million Dominicans reside outside of the country as the movement of people has moved in the opposite direction. Thus, with immigrants representing 4% of the island's population and emigrants representing more than 12%, the Dominican Republic has ultimately become a net emigration country (OECD 2017). The two primary destinations for Dominicans living abroad today are the United States followed by Spain. According to OECD estimates, the majority of emigrants, about 72% of the entire stock, currently live in the United States and more than 11% of which are in Spain. Yet, it has not always been the case that Dominicans made the leap across the Atlantic to Europe. Originally, Venezuela and Puerto Rico, after the U.S., outpaced Spain when it came to receiving Dominican emigrants, but since the late eighties, this steady flow of people began to spread out towards Europe (OECD 2017). The literature cites a few common explanations for why so many Dominicans have made the decision to leave their country of origin, but from the sixties until today, some of those push and pull factors as well as destinations have changed.

Undeniably, the pivotal point in the island's history is related to tumultuous Cold War era politics from the past century. The event that catalyzed sizable and regular migration out of the

Dominican Republic was the fall of Trujillo's overbearing dictatorship and subsequent flawed experimentation with democracy in the sixties weakened by a coup, a civil war, and foreign sponsorship of authoritarianism from the United States (Cabral & Faxes, 2004). Their troublesome past and this instability stoked from the inside and out would facilitate the mass relocation North of eventually more than a million Dominicans. Rather than the often cited passing of the liberal Immigration Reform Act of 1965 as the central cause of increasing migration, it was the intense pressure of Latin American and primarily Dominican dissent on questionable United States meddling which forced their hand. In an attempt to maintain favorable relations with the Caribbean country and the wider region, in addition to curbing public insurrection, Dominican emigration was encouraged via a revamping of the U.S. consular infrastructure making it capable of processing tens of thousands of visa applications per year (Hoffnung-Garskof 2004). While Puerto Rico remained an important transit country before arriving in the United States, Venezuela's oil boom economy of the seventies invited migration from all over Latin America (OECD 2017). Thus, the initial cause behind the historically unprecedented exodus of Dominicans from their island to other parts of the world was as a result of tumultuous political unrest in the region characteristic of the sixties. Nevertheless, what would continue to propel migration into the following century were mostly regional and international economic incentives.

In the Americas, there were multiple economic disincentives in the aftermath of the sixties and seventies that would coalesce with growing opportunities in Europe, specifically Spain. To begin with, when oil prices tanked worldwide in the eighties, it would mark the end of Venezuela's rapid enrichment via oil revenue and also damage its appeal as an economically prosperous host nation (OECD 2017). While other Latin American economies alike were

suffering from ballooning debt and stalling growth, Spain was embarking on a very different path. Increased employment precariousness, particularly in rural areas in the Southwestern part of the Dominican Republic as the agro-export sector declined was relieved by a burgeoning demand in domestic services from strong economic performance benefitting middle and high class Spanish families (Pimentel 2001). In effect, Spain's transition to democracy, increasing openness, and subsequent economic surge coupled with poor economic restructuring in the Dominican Republic in the eighties led to a resulting spike in immigration to Spain (Fitzpatrick 2013). Even though the size of Dominican immigrant communities in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and the United States were larger in 1990, growth rates outpacing all three nations in the following decades would eventually tip the scales. Between the years 1990 and 2000, the percent increase in Dominican transplants to Spain was 144% and 241% from 2000 to 2010 which would swell the Dominican immigrant population in Spain to over 100,000 in just two decades (OECD 2017). Overall, Spain's relatively novel emergence in the global arena as a prominent host nation pales in comparison to the United States' long history. This fact alone can explain some of the key divergences in migration characteristics of Dominicans in North America and those in Europe that make the United States and Spain interesting case studies to compare.

In reaction to their unique immigration experiences, Spain and the United States since the end of the twentieth century display key differences in the restrictiveness of their immigration policies. Early on, mass migration from Latin America to the United States was relatively open, yet over subsequent decades began to prove more difficult as increasingly restrictive policies erected more and more barriers. As admission and naturalization processes to the U.S. tightened from the late eighties into the early 2000s, Spain's nascent immigration system allowed for visa-less entry and unchecked tourism alongside extremely friendly family reunification and status

regularization practices (Pimentel 2001). What results are vast disparities in the rate of documentation, especially among Latin American migrants. While successive legalization programs have granted many immigrants regularized status in Spain, the absence of an amnesty in the U.S. since 1986 has left millions in undocumented status (Connor & Massey, 2010). Not only do Dominican immigrants in Spain enjoy more favorable migration law or policy, in another Spanish-speaking nation they also benefit from cultural similarity. Unlike in the United States, where they must grow accustomed to a different native tongue from their own, in Spain they arrive equipped with cultural capital at their disposal. Even in the face of recent evidence that immigrants from the second half of the 20th Century are learning English more quickly than those that came before them, Dominicans lag behind other Spanish-speaking immigrant communities residing in the United States (Alba & Nee, 2003).

However, on the other hand, the Dominican communities found in the United States settled and established themselves decades before their compatriots that made the trip to Spain. Since many of them were the first to leave the island in large numbers, those who had easier access to the means materially and legally relocated to the United States first. Therefore, when comparing initial migrations, many Dominicans who reside in the U.S. are professionals and political migrants while those who traveled to Spain are mostly less-skilled and less-educated economic migrants (Cabral & Faxas, 2004). These initial disparities stemming from the country of origin have an important effect on the opportunities of insertion and mobility the new arrivals are capable of in both receiving nations, who also present their own contextual barriers.

Initial Analysis

Among the greatest barriers to integration recent immigrants to the U.S. face are extremely restrictive immigration policies and cultural differences. This reality could not be any more salient in the case of Hispanic migrants who number in the millions of those who are undocumented and live in very socio-economically and racially segregated neighborhoods. However, it must be mentioned that the impact of these barriers on different ethnicities in the Hispanic community vary considerably. For example, Mexicans account for a little less than half of the entire undocumented population of immigrants in the United States (Passel & Cohn 2020). While in the case of Hispanic migrants from the Caribbean like Puerto Rico and Cuba, Puerto Ricans are all born citizens while almost 60% of Cubans are naturalized citizens (Rusin *et al*, 2015). Similar to their Caribbean counterparts, Dominicans in comparison to the rest of the immigrant Hispanic population since 1990 to 2010 experience higher rates of naturalization and more improvement over time. From 1990 to 2010, Dominicans' rate of naturalization grew from 27% to almost 48%, while for all Hispanics it grew only from 26% to 32%. In terms of naturalization rates in the United States, Dominicans are over-performing, but in a transnational perspective, they are solely lagging behind those residing in Spain. The rate of naturalization from 1991 to 2011 actually decreased from 55.6% to 44.1% which would suggest a negative trend, but is in reaction to massive influxes of immigrants throughout the 2000s (Polanco *et al*, 2018). When factoring in the most recent estimates of documentation in Spain and the U.S., Dominicans are naturalized at a rate of almost 60%, while just 50% have been naturalized in the United States due to more restrictive immigration laws (Zong & Batalova, 2018). In addition to streamlined citizenship pathways, the majority of Dominican immigrants in Spain also enjoy legal access to the labor market and the financial system via residence and registry cards (OECD

2017). This consistently high level of regularized legal status among Dominican migrants and shared by other ethnic communities alike in Spain is not found in the United States, where more than 100,000 Dominicans are experiencing undocumented status (Zong & Batalova, 2018). These disparities often lead to significant differences in patterns and processes of integration.

Uneven rates of naturalization and undocumented status in between both host nations are further exacerbated by language barriers, especially in the case of Dominican immigrants in the United States. Among Spanish-speaking immigrant communities from 1990 to 2010, Dominicans older than 5 years of age who speak English “less than very well” improved from 68.8% to 65.6%. This improvement nevertheless underperforms compared to all Hispanics whose English proficiency in 1990 was greater than that of Dominicans in 2010 and improved more over the same two decades. Negative outcomes in legal status and English proficiency can be influential in many other forms of underperformance such as depreciated wages and decreased occupational mobility (Connor & Massey, 2010). The outcomes of Dominican-born immigrants in Spain and the U.S. across four specific indicators will be analyzed and discussed in the following sections. Utilizing the cohort method laid out by Alba and Nee in combination with a trans-national comparison as conducted by Connor and Massey, comparisons will be drawn between both case studies and the respective gaps in socioeconomic outcomes between native and immigrant populations over the same two decades for matching age/ethnic groups from 1990 to 2011.

Educational Attainment

The first of the four socioeconomic indicators which will be addressed is educational attainment, specifically those who are at least 25 years of age and have reached some level of

university or post-graduate studies. This particular level of schooling was chosen because census data at the national level in Spain is stratified without specifying for high school completion rates as is done in the US. The three levels of attainment in Spain in order are primary, secondary, and tertiary. Tertiary school attainment is equivalent to any level of university/graduate studies past all grade school levels and is most easily comparable to the higher educational system in the United States. Beginning with trends in the U.S., both foreign-born Dominicans and native-born American citizens saw increases in their college educated populations. Yet, native-born Americans experienced larger overall increases from 46.4% in 1990 to 59.3% in 2010 compared to a positive change of 22.3% to 34.9% among Dominican immigrants during the same years. In effect, although over time there appears to be positive trends, the higher education gap has in actuality slightly widened. The story in Spain meanwhile, is slightly more complex.

While the higher education gap shrunk between the native-born Spanish foreign-born Dominican populations, from 1991 to 2011, those who reached some level of university/graduate studies fell for Dominicans, but grew for Spanish natives. More precisely, the higher educational attainment for Dominicans dropped from 18.8% to 14.8%, on the other hand, for native-born Spanish citizens their percentages went up from 8.8% to 20.3%. The opposing trends in educational outcomes suggests that as the Dominican immigrant population grew exponentially between 1991 and 2011, multiplying by more than twenty times, their average attainment suffered as more economically-motivated compatriots made the trip across the Atlantic. Following the general migrant trends from the Dominican Republic since the sixties, contemporary immigrants come from more underserved and rural areas of the island and on average are less-educated and greatly outnumber previous politically-motivated migrant waves

(Cabral & Faxas, 2004). In contrast, the impact was much smaller in the U.S. where the Dominican population grew at a much slower rate, multiplying less than three times between 1990 and 2010 (Polanco *et al.*, 2018). Meanwhile, the segment of the native-born Spanish population of at least 25 years of age who reached some level of college/graduate studies grew. In summary, the numbers reflect a much healthier educational gap between Spanish study groups than what is found in the United States, but sheds much doubt on total parity being achieved in the future.

It is yet to be seen if these specific educational attainment gaps will hold constant in the face of continuous economic instability. Evidence shows that Spain's nascent second generation of young Dominicans, who represent part of the fastest growing components of Spain's population aged 18 and younger, forgo continuing their studies past legally mandated secondary levels for employment in low-skilled occupations at comparatively higher rates than other comparable immigrant groups and even native Spaniards (Fitzpatrick 2013). Additionally, growing political animosity against immigrants in both regions of the world will certainly create barriers to future endeavors of educational equity. Both of these developments will certainly have an impact in other arenas such as the labor market. In the next section, the most widely-held occupations of native-born and foreign-born immigrant populations will be analyzed. In light of higher overall educational attainment in the United States, but a larger gap between study groups than found in Spain, it will be interesting to see how these outcomes will translate into occupational opportunities.

Occupational Attainment

The top two occupations by share of the total civilian labor force who are at least 16 years of age between the years 1990 and 2011 is the second socioeconomic indicator of interest for this research. The reporting in the Spanish census from 1991 contains substantial data gaps, but still allows for ample cross-national and temporal analysis. The holes in available occupational data in Spain during the 1991 decennial census is observed by the 52% of Dominican immigrants and 31.9% of native-born Spaniards whose occupation was recorded as “not applicable.” Subsequently, the next two most commonly reported occupations by proportion for foreign-born Dominicans in Spain in 1991 were 16% in service roles and 10.2% in professional/technical roles, while for native-born Spaniards they were 15.6% in construction/transportation roles and 10% in service positions. Two decades later, the service industry would eventually dominate the native and immigrant labor force in Spain. So much so that by 2011, 35.4% of foreign-born Dominicans and 19.6% of native-born Spaniards were employed in service sector jobs. The second largest employer for both groups the same year respectively was: 35% in elementary positions and 17.5% in professional occupations. In terms of employment in the service industry, from 1991 to 2011, the share of the working population for both study groups came from behind to eventually becoming the largest employer. Either group’s second largest industry employer differs in 2011 however. Dominican immigrants went from filling professional roles to mostly occupying elementary ones as more native Spaniards found employment in increasingly more professional positions. The professionalization of Spaniards and the opposite process among Dominicans in Spain runs parallel to their educational attainment outcomes over the same two decades which improved for the former and worsened

among the latter. In the United States, gains in educational attainment ran contrary to occupational mobility for Dominican immigrants.

In a similar manner, in the United States from 1990 to 2010, the employment of native-born Americans has become more professionalized, while those of foreign-born Dominicans has become less-skilled. According to census data from 1990, Dominican immigrants in the U.S. were most employed in the construction/transport industry followed by the tech/admin/sales support sector: 31.3% and 23.5% respectively. By 2010, 35.2% of foreign-born Dominicans were employed in the service sector and 27.5% in the construction/transport industry. By contrast, the lowest-skilled and most common occupation among native-born Americans initially were tech/admin/sales support roles. In 1990 they accounted for 32.3% of the active work force and by 2010 decreased to 26.4%. As for managerial/professional positions, their share of the labor force grew from 1990 to 2010; 27.3% to 37.4% respectively. What these distributions for both study groups in the United States suggest is that despite strong improvements in higher educational outcomes across the board, Dominicans are being employed more often in less-skilled work over time as native-born Americans have experienced upward mobility in both aspects. These developments in the labor market point towards very different experiences of the Great Recession, between natives and immigrants and also in different countries and economies.

While native populations in both Spain and the U.S. have been cementing their place in the upper rungs of occupations since the nineties, only Spaniards continue to be employed in large numbers in immigrant-dominated jobs such as those in the service industry. This larger parity in occupations in addition to educational attainment with the immigrant population is reminiscent of a more integrated society, even if it is underperforming in relation to the United States whose economic recovery since the financial crisis has come earlier and faster.

Additionally, the growing incorporation of Spanish women as well as uniquely high activity rates of Latina women in the workforce, who make up more than half of the immigrant population, explain the higher concentration of occupations in certain industries (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón 2012). To that point, considering that the well-being of a country is most accurately assessed by paying close attention to its most under-represented populations, the topic of unemployment is very relevant. Just as underemployment plays out differently for immigrants in liberal market economies like the U.S. and social market economies such as Spain, so too does unemployment.

Unemployment Rates

It is crucial to point out that nearing the end of the two decades in question, a massive financial recession rattled the globe. Therefore, rising instances of unemployment was the norm, especially for Latino immigrants in both countries, who lost twice as many jobs as the total employed population between 2008 and 2011 (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón 2012). Of all the study groups in both Spain and the United States, only the unemployment rate for Dominican immigrants in the U.S. improved between 1990 and 2010 from 15.4% to 13.1%. This relative improvement however, was more of a sluggish recovery. In New York City, where almost 75% of Dominicans lived at the time, the combination of a national recession and accelerating influxes of immigration in the early-nineties resulted in unemployment rates reaching as high as 17 and 19 percent in the Dominican community (Rivera-Batiz 2002). Even as the unemployment rate for native-born Americans worsened during the same time frame, at no point was it greater than 11% nationally or locally. As the effects of the global recession set in in the late 2000s, it became clear that Spain as a whole fared much worse than the United States.

Where liberal market economies like the U.S. encourage underemployment in immigrant populations, social market economies such as Spain allow more unemployment (Alba & Foner 2014). For example, the jobless rate for Dominican immigrants in the U.S. by 2010 reached the same level of unemployment that Dominican immigrants in Spain experienced nineteen years earlier at just over 13%. Yet, this is in part because of the specific years that are being analyzed which magnify Spain's economic contraction which was felt well through 2010, while the U.S. had been recovering since the first half of 2009 (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón 2012). Nevertheless, by 2011, native-born Spaniards were facing 17.3% unemployment up from 6.8% in 1991. Worst of all, the unemployment rate for foreign-born Dominicans in Spain was surpassing 40% the same year. The gap in joblessness between study groups in Spain widened dramatically, while it shrunk in the United States. These differences in economic performance may be attributed to the fact that in Spain, native-born and foreign-born populations compete more regularly for the same types of employment because of educational, occupational, and cultural likeness. Furthermore, sustained migration to Spain and return migration from the U.S. throughout the first years of the Great Recession can partly explain differences in unemployment rates for immigrant groups (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón, 2012). In general, because of a mix of cultural and legal advantages that exist in Spain, barriers to entering the labor market legally are scarce and encourage Dominican immigrants to migrate even in times of economic crisis. Whereas unemployment is absolutely debilitating to immigrants in the United States, in Spain the welfare state provides some relief benefits. According to data, even spaces such as urban neighborhoods, like unemployment benefits, are more commonly shared by natives and foreigners in Spain than in the United States.

Residential Segregation

Until now, the analysis of quantitative and two-dimensional outcomes has been conducted almost exclusively at the national level in both host countries. In addition, the previous data points were scrutinized according to the immigrant generation cohort method which is characterized by its temporal component. Due to a lack of data sources on the nineties in Spain, the same methodology cannot be applied fully to the urban-area level comparative analysis of residential segregation. Regardless, these barriers actually benefit the spatial analysis because the burgeoning Dominican-national population of the 2000s acts in ameliorating the index of dissimilarity's sensitivity to small population size (Echazarra 2010). Existing statistical research on the topic stemming from the early 2000s on Spanish cities and the nineties on American metro-areas have observed generally positive trends. In terms of indices of dissimilarity for non-Hispanic whites in U.S. metro areas between the years 1990 to 2010, the average index of dissimilarity from all other racial groups and Hispanics went from 0.52 to 0.45 (Iceland & Sharp 2013). In other words, the percentage of racial/ethnic minorities that would have to move neighborhoods to achieve perfect integration has declined over time. Progressive spatial integration of Spanish cities is exemplified by declining indices of dissimilarity between native Spaniards and foreign-born immigrants. From 2004 to 2009, Spaniards living in the country's most populous urban areas on average are living in urban neighborhoods that more accurately represent the city's overall populations of native Spaniards and foreigners with indices of dissimilarity falling from 0.30 to 0.28 (Domínguez Mujica 2010). Overall, majority populations in Spain experience consistently low to moderate levels of segregation, while those populations in the U.S. experience moderate to high levels of segregation (Iceland & Sharp

2013). When taking into consideration the changing demographic make-up of neighborhoods stratified by racial/ethnic groups however, the overall picture becomes less promising.

In U.S. metro areas, the indices of dissimilarity of non-Hispanic Whites to the Hispanic population between the years 1990 and 2010 actually increased from 0.42 to 0.44, as their integration with Hispanics worsened. While the segregation of non-Hispanic whites to all other minority groups has improved in the United States, the opposite appears to be true for Hispanics. It appears to be a slightly different story for Spain's six major Latin American groups who make part of the ten largest immigrant populations in the nation: Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Colombians, Argentinians, Bolivians, and Dominicans. According to the average indices of dissimilarity of these six Latin American immigrant groups to native Spaniards in the country's three largest cities, their urban neighborhoods from 2004 to 2011 have become more representative of their city's total racial/ethnic diversity. By the numbers, their average index of dissimilarity in 2004 was approximately 0.43 and dropped to 0.35 in 2011. While segregation between native Spaniards has improved with all immigrant groups over time, as well as Latin Americans, the latter remain less integrated than the average despite cultural likeness. As for Dominicans, their segregation is even more pronounced within the Hispanic/Latino immigrant community in both Spain and the United States. In Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia their average indices of dissimilarity in 2004 was 0.57 and 0.46 in 2011, meaning almost half of Dominican immigrants would still have to relocate to fully integrate Spain's three largest metropolitan areas. Although the indices of dissimilarity to non-Hispanic whites for Dominicans in U.S. metro areas have also fallen between the years 1990 and 2010 from 0.80 to 0.70, their segregation remains much more prevalent as about 70% of Dominicans would have to move to fully integrate urban neighborhoods in the United States. It is evident after a trans-national comparison that the

segregation of racial/ethnic minorities, especially Dominicans, is more widespread and acute in the United States over time. In addition, Dominicans in both nations, who are more likely to identify as being of African descent than other Latin American immigrants, experience more segregation (Freeman 1999). Their particular experience is such that in the U.S. it is more comparable to that of non-Hispanic blacks, the most segregated minority in the United States, while in Spain the levels of segregation Dominicans face is worse than other non-Spanish speaking immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia solely as a consequence of their African heritage.

Despite relative improvement from the nineties and early-2000s, there are reasons to be hypercritical of the spatial trends. For one, the continued influence of race over the way cities are populated is indisputable and worrying. To the point that persistently high levels of segregation of minorities of African descent, particularly in U.S. cities has been described as the “ghettoization” of urban areas (Cabral & Faxas, 2004). Secondly, there is empirical evidence which suggests that continual population growth of minority groups in U.S. and Spanish cities, rather than changing attitudes towards immigrants are diversifying, but not necessarily integrating urban neighborhoods (Logan 2011; Echezarra 2010). Most of all, persistent levels of moderate to high segregation in cities across both nations not only means a lack of integration, but disparities in neighborhood quality that are detrimental to positive intergenerational mobility, the key to fostering societal equity.

Neighborhood Inequities

There are a variety of socioeconomic indicators used when assessing the quality of neighborhoods. In studies published in the United States, income and educational attainment are

regularly used to measure the quality of neighborhoods. According to Logan and Turner, among Hispanics and in relation to non-Hispanic whites, Dominicans in the U.S. live in the second least-educated, behind Mexicans, and the poorest neighborhoods. To be clear, in the words of the authors of the article, “these are not characteristics of Hispanics in these neighborhoods, but rather the average for all residents” (Logan & Turner 2013). Thus, not only are foreign-born Dominicans on average less-educated, work less-skilled jobs, and experience worse unemployment rates than native non-Hispanic whites in the United States, but are also segregated to under-resourced neighborhoods who have a hard time funding local public services. Across many of the same indicators such as occupational and educational attainment, Dominican immigrants in Spain are also underperforming in comparison to the native population.

In reference to the topic of segregation and its relationship with neighborhood quality, Spanish academic commentary concentrates mainly on measures such as density and centralization. When it comes to the density of urban neighborhoods in Madrid, where the largest proportions of Dominicans live in Spain, their neighborhoods are tied with Ecuadorians as the densest not only in comparison to Spaniards, but all other major immigrant groups. Surprisingly though, their centralization, or distance from the urban center, is much better than native Spaniards living in the Madrid metro area (Echazarra 2010). Yet, this higher quality of centralization may be explained away by the most common jobs held by many Dominican women, the majority of the immigrant group’s labor force, who live where they work as domestic servants in Spanish households. As a result, their optimal location in cities such as Madrid is undermined by the precariousness of their economic status in terms of their tenancy (Domínguez Mujica 2010). On top of that, high instances of Dominican women involved in

prostitution reinforces harmful perceptions of the entire immigrant group leading to further social exclusion, and in some cases violence against domestic workers (Fitzpatrick 2013). Thus, even seemingly advantageous traits like increased centralization are easily overshadowed or at times punished.

There is also evidence of upward mobility failing to translate into integration in the U.S., where Hispanics with above-average incomes continue to live in neighborhoods with fewer resources than non-Hispanic whites with below-average incomes (Logan 2011). In general, it is more common to the immigrant experience to work lower-skilled jobs in the country of destination than in their country of origin simply because of crossing a border, ultimately negatively impacting their social mobility (Aysa-Lastra & Cachón, 2012). In summary, Dominican immigrants in Spain and in the United States are residentially segregated regardless of their incoming or generational socioeconomic poverty or wealth. Their urban neighborhoods are more likely to be of worse quality which negatively impact quality of life and access to adequate public services, severely limiting opportunities for upward mobility and integration. All of these examples and others lead this research towards the conclusion that ethnicity and specifically race, continue to hinder integration on both sides of the Atlantic.

Conclusion

The Dominican Republic's ties to the United States and to Spain are not only economic and political in nature, but also historic. From the Spanish inquisition, to the U.S. occupations of the island, these nations have undeniably left their mark on the Caribbean island and its people. Now, their impact and role has modernized as more than a million Dominicans have immigrated to the U.S. and Spain since the sixties. Initially, many Dominicans left in search of political

refuge in the United States, but as time has gone by, immigrant flows have increasingly been propelled by economic insecurity and redirected to Spain in response to hardening immigration policies. Presently, poor economic prospects which originally plagued the Dominican Republic are troubling the U.S and Spain in the wake of the Great Recession. In many cases, the brunt of the global financial crises has fallen on the shoulders of Dominican immigrants because of their vulnerability as newcomers and ethnic, especially racial minorities. Persistent and growing disparities between native populations and foreign-born Dominicans in both host countries confirm segregated experiences in education, labor, and urban neighborhoods. However, Dominican immigrants in Spain overall enjoy greater educational, occupational, and residential parity with the native population compared to the U.S. because of greater cultural similarity to society and active support from the state. The only exception to the greater integration of foreign-born Dominicans in Spain, are large inequities in unemployment rates due to a lack of established migratory networks, continuously high rates of immigration, and a social, rather than a liberal market economy characteristic of the United States.

In the arena of educational attainment for instance, foreign-born Dominicans in the U.S. fell further behind after two decades in comparison to native-born Americans as gaps in higher education between them grew to 24.4% in 2010. In the meantime, gaps between native Spaniards and Dominican immigrants grew smaller, settling at 5.5% by 2011 despite having lost representation in colleges and universities since 1990 due to growing numbers of economically-motivated immigration from rural areas of the Dominican Republic. As for occupational attainment, Dominican immigrants in both host nations have become more underemployed over time as their shares in low-skilled job sectors, particularly in the service industry, have expanded while native populations have enjoyed progressive professionalization. However, there are two

influential factors at play which draw sharp distinctions between widening labor disparities in the United States and Spain. Firstly, increasing professionalization coincided with unprecedented rates of labor participation by native Spanish women, resulting in larger parity with Dominican immigrants because the service sector remained an important employer of expanding foreign and domestic labor forces. Secondly, Dominican immigrants in the United States have failed to translate improving rates in university enrollment into greater representation in the professional job sector over time, which reveal serious barriers to intergenerational mobility unique to foreign-born Dominicans in the U.S. labor market. Lastly, Spanish and American urban areas residentially segregate foreign-born Dominicans more than other Latinos and at more similar rates to the most heavily segregated minority populations, those of African descent, in both nation. Nevertheless, even as residential segregation is declining in both American and Spanish cities, the rate of the decline varies as does the severity of the segregation. The reduction in segregation of Dominican immigrants to non-Hispanic whites in U.S. metro areas over two decades was equal to declining rates observed in Spanish cities over just a six-year period. Despite general improvements, the intensity of segregation in urban neighborhoods remained influential in both nations: moderate in Spain and high in the United States.

In summary, upon analyzing socioeconomic and spatial indicators over time and comparing changing disparities between native and foreign populations transnationally, it is evident that Dominican immigrants are an especially vulnerable population, especially in the United States and to a lesser degree in Spain. Like other immigrant communities, their skills are undervalued, concentrating them in the lowest-skilled job industries and are subsequently the first to be let go in the event of economic crisis. Yet, unlike many other immigrant communities, foreign-born Dominicans are among the most racially segregated populations living in some of

the poorest, least-educated, and overcrowded urban neighborhoods. Their surroundings both residential and societal have actively worked against the integration of future generations by stunting intergenerational mobility, only widening existing disparities with natives and other minorities. Barriers produced by undocumented status, culture, and race have further magnified disparities in the United States despite educating their Dominican immigrant community better and employing them at higher rates than in Spain over two decades. Ultimately, this underscores the harsh reality that upward mobility alone is insignificant if accessibility to quality schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods remains persistently and disproportionately uneven. In light of increasingly dire circumstances as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic, one can only imagine what the consequences of existing disparities will be and if they will reveal others in healthcare, remote learning, and other essential services.

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