

THE
TRANSNATIONAL
VILLAGERS

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For my mother and father

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The Historical Context

Though large-scale migration from the Dominican Republic is relatively recent, its causes are deeply rooted in Dominican economic and political development. The U.S. government has dominated Dominican politics since the late 1800s. During much of the 1900s, as the Dominican state grew more and more indebted to its U.S. creditors, the United States actually took control of the country's government or managed its affairs from afar. Much of the country's land and commercial agricultural activities came under U.S. jurisdiction. U.S. economic, political, and cultural quasi-colonization of the republic throughout its history and the patterns of land tenure, commercial agriculture, and industrial development that ensued sowed the seeds of large-scale migration long before it began.

The Historical Roots of Migration

Christopher Columbus knew he had found gold when he arrived on the island of Hispaniola because of the beautiful ornaments the Tiano Indians who greeted him wore. Most of the island's indigenous inhabitants soon died after being forced by Columbus and his men to work in the gold mines. By 1508 only 60,000 survived out of an estimated population of 400,000 (Moya Pons 1995). By 1519, following a smallpox epidemic, the population had declined even further. Depleted gold deposits sent many earlier colonists back to Spain or on to Mex-

For a more in-depth account of Dominican history see Moya Pons (1995), Hoetink (1982), Wiarda and Kryzaniek (1982), Black (1986), Betances and Spalding (1996), Betances (1995), and Torres-Saillant and Hernández (1998).

ico in search of silver. The remaining settlers dedicated themselves to sugarcane production and raising cattle. In 1520 they began importing African slaves to help them, replacing the decimated indigenous labor force.

Though the island's economy initially flourished, Spain's preference for Havana as a trading port and the restrictions it placed on commerce reversed these early gains. In addition, Protestant ideas from Holland and England "infiltrated" the island due to rampant piracy throughout the Caribbean. To reassert their control and to "protect" the primarily Catholic colonists from heresy, the Spanish forced those living in the northern and western regions of the island to move to Santo Domingo. These *devastaciones* greatly impoverished many settlers because they lost their livelihoods when their cattle died along the way. They also left the northwestern part of Hispaniola severely underpopulated and vulnerable to outside attack.

When hostilities over colonial territories between Spain and Holland erupted in 1621, the French and English sided with the Dutch. This weakened Spain's position, making it unable to prevent English and French adventurers from landing on the island's northern coast. Thus began a two-century-long struggle between the French and Spanish for control over Hispaniola. Both Spanish and French colonists lived poorly during this period. Most traders avoided Santo Domingo because of danger from Dutch sailors during the Thirty Years' War (1618–48). Cuba and Puerto Rico replaced the island as strategic points in Spain's Caribbean defense. Hispaniola's poor shipping facilities also discouraged production. Conditions improved in 1679 when France and Spain made peace. Trade expanded, as did the number of French settlers. By 1681 the French greatly outnumbered the fifteen hundred Spanish families on the island and had plans to continue their expansion (Moya Pons 1995). In fact, in 1680, French colonial governors requested that a boundary be established between the two territories. The Peace of Ryswick, signed in 1697, created a formal partition dividing Hispaniola into two distinct colonial spheres.

The French, however, remained unsatisfied. To prevent further expansion and to repopulate the island, the Spanish encouraged Canary Islanders to migrate to Hispaniola. They founded the Hato de Santa Ana, later renamed Miraflores, in 1730. In 1762, a second group, numbering 292 immigrants, arrived at Sabana de Baní, where they estab-

lished the town of Baní the following year. People from the western part of the island near St. Michel de L'Atalaya also settled in the area (Franjul 1991). These first inhabitants traded salt, *resina del guayacán*, and precious woods, such as cedar and *caoba*, to the lower Netherland Antilles.

In 1804, when the French colony Saint Domingue became the newly independent Haiti, the Spanish still controlled Santo Domingo. Its residents faced rampant poverty and severe population declines. To help them defend themselves against the French, who wanted to reclaim their former territories, the new Haitian leaders were determined to unify the island. Some groups in Santo Domingo supported unification with Haiti. Others were more interested in gaining independence from Spain. In 1821 these pro-independence groups came together under the leadership of Licenciado Núñez de Cáceres, who proclaimed El Estado Independiente del Haití Español. Cáceres planned eventually to unite the newly independent state with Simón Bolívar's proposed South American union.

Despite his initial support for the new Dominican state, Haitian President Boyer had other intentions. He wrote to Núñez de Cáceres, arguing it was impossible to have two separate countries on the same small island. A unified Haitian Republic was the only way to preserve independence. Núñez de Cáceres knew he could not win. Boyer had won the support of large numbers of mulattos in Santo Domingo by promising to give them land and to abolish taxes. The ruling class also opposed Núñez de Cáceres because he had deposed the Spanish. He wrote to Boyer in 1822, accepting the protection of the Republic of Haiti and recommending to residents of Haití Español that the new Haitian rulers be received peacefully.

Despite promises of friendship, President Boyer arrived in Santo Domingo with 12,000 troops. Problems arose quickly. The Dominicans resented changes in land-ownership laws imposed upon them by the Haitians. They also resented being forced to cultivate cacao, sugarcane, and cotton commercially. Most Dominicans wanted to continue as subsistence farmers or to pursue more profitable activities such as ranching or tobacco farming. Religious leaders also opposed the occupation because Haitian leaders had confiscated church lands. The Haitians soon maintained power only by sheer force. In 1838 a group of Dominicans established a secret society called La Trinitaria to cre-

ate a new, separate country on the eastern part of the island. They proclaimed their independence on February 27, 1844, soon after President Boyer's overthrow.

The ways in which Dominican leaders countered Haitian opposition to their independence set the tone for the new republic. The liberal faction of the Trinitarios wanted to go on the offensive against a possible Haitian occupation, while the conservative faction thought they should seek support from France to avoid such an invasion. A major rift split the group, with the conservatives eventually gaining control of the presidency and the army. General Santana was elected president of the new republic on November 13, 1844. The new country's constitution established a democratic government but also allowed its president to "freely organize the army and navy, mobilize the national troops, and consequently be able to give all orders, decisions, and decrees which are fitting, without being subject to any responsibility" (Moya Pons 1995, 163). This marriage between partial democracy and authoritarianism, which was consummated at the republic's birth, has remained strong throughout its history.

A second key factor defining Dominican nationhood is that it emerged from a rebellion against a harsh Haitian occupation, leaving Dominicans with an enduring sense of hatred and distrust toward their neighbors. The Dominican national identity that evolved is, in many ways, an anti-identity. It arose in such strong opposition to Haitianness that even today many Dominicans define themselves as what Haitians are not (Cassá et al. 1986). Though the majority of Dominicans have mixed African and Spanish blood, they strongly reject a black racial identity. This is particularly true among Banilejos.¹ Because the Canary Islanders who originally settled the area resisted intermarriage with their black neighbors for generations, Banilejos tend to be lighter-skinned than Dominicans in other parts of the country. Miraflores are generally quite proud of this and have fought to preserve their "whiteness" by pressuring villagers not to marry those who are darker-skinned.

A third element shaping the kind of country the Dominican Republic became was its leaders' strong commitment to making sure that history did not repeat itself. Almost immediately following independence, the Dominican government sought protection from foreign powers to ensure that a second Haitian occupation did not occur. Do-

minican post-independence history is, in large part, a search for a foreign guardian. When the United States assumed this role in the early 1900s, migration's roots were established.

The new country faced an uphill economic battle. The economy in the northern part of the country revolved around tobacco production. The economy in the south was based on lumber exports. The two regions functioned like separate countries because there were no roads connecting them. Because there were so few funds in the public treasury for such improvements, President Santana began printing money, though it had little value. By 1859, the government had issued money at least 33 times (Moya Pons 1995). Santana's economic troubles led to political unrest. In 1857 northern growers and dealers revolted against an economic devaluation they felt was particularly biased against them.

Though Santana was able to restore order, the overwhelming difficulties he faced prompted him to seek foreign aid. A former French consul informed him that if he failed to accept unification with Haiti, the United States would annex the country or Haiti would occupy the republic by force. Santana knew that the U.S. adventurer William Walker had already seized control of Nicaragua.² He became even more fearful when a group of U.S. explorers landed on a part of the island rich in guano deposits and claimed it for their nation. Though Santana reestablished sovereignty, he realized that the United States coveted much of his territory. He asked Spain to establish a political and military protectorate over the country to preserve Dominican independence.

Tensions arose almost immediately following the Spanish annexation in 1861. The Spanish did not redeem the Dominican currency as they had promised. They required Dominican planters to "lend" their mules and oxen to the Spanish military. They tried to limit foreign trade in ways that benefited Spain. Anti-Spanish sentiment among merchants, *campesinos*, landowners, and the military eventually led to the Restoration War of 1863, which reestablished Dominican independence. Sovereignty and economic self-sufficiency, however, would always prove elusive, as would political unity. Politics had basically become a contest between two factions. The large landowners, who raised cattle and cut wood in the south, supported General Buenaventura Báez, a rich property owner and mahogany exporter from Azúa. The cultivators and merchants in the north, who favored indus-

trial development and trade, supported General Santana. In 1879, after more than 50 uprisings and 20 changes in government, Báez took power (Moya Pons 1995).

The enormous debt Báez faced when he took office immediately crippled his government. To alleviate this, he negotiated with the United States to sell Samaná Bay, strategically located on the country's northern coast. When it became clear that an immediate agreement would not be forthcoming, Báez arranged for an interim loan with a European speculator. He accepted such a high rate of interest that he literally mortgaged the country to a British firm. These monies enabled him to run the government while he waited for the U.S. Congress to approve what had now become a plan to annex the entire republic.

Both Dominican and U.S. groups opposed this. Though Báez eventually won support from the Dominican people, the U.S. Senate rejected the proposal in 1871. Nevertheless, the country's continued indebtedness, fears for its sovereignty, and dependence on external resources for economic growth set the stage for foreign investors' long-term dominance over Dominican economic affairs. Sugar planters from Cuba were among the earliest arrivals (Georges 1990). Soon European, Puerto Ricans, and U.S. financiers arrived in search of new investment opportunities, establishing large-scale enterprises aimed at the world market. In the south, foreigners acquired huge tracts of land for sugar cultivation. The peasants they displaced supplied what became an increasingly proletarianized labor force, whose members worked alongside migrants from the British territories in the Caribbean and Haiti. A new local elite emerged as land values and world sugar prices rose (Hoetink 1982; Georges 1990).

U.S. interests quickly dominated. At the end of the nineteenth century, large portions of major economic sectors had been sold or leased to U.S. companies to alleviate the debt burden. Under Ulises Heureaux, a dictator in power between 1886 and 1899, a group of U.S. investors called the Santo Domingo Improvement Company lent the Dominican government \$1.25 million (Moya Pons 1995). By 1893, the country owed 17 million pesos, which was several times its national budget. Heureaux also allowed the Clyde Steam Lines Company to establish a monopoly over freight and passenger transport between Santo Domingo and New York.

By 1904 the Dominican government was under increasing pressure from European creditors to make debt payments it could not meet. At

the same time, U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt wanted to prevent European expansion in the region. In September of that year, the U.S. secretary of state persuaded the Dominican government to allow the United States to take charge of its customs agency and to assume control of the collection and distribution of all customs receipts. Dominican leaders also agreed they would not alter their customs duty rates without U.S. government consent. By sanctioning this arrangement, Dominican leaders granted the United States unprecedented power over the country's financial and administrative affairs, a role that only continued to grow. Under Juan Isidro Jiménez, who took office in 1914, the State Department requested that a U.S. comptroller be formally appointed. When the Dominican Congress refused, the United States imposed one by force. In 1916, when his critics threatened to remove him through impeachment, U.S. leaders, who considered this a coup d'état, landed the marines in Santo Domingo and quickly sent troops throughout the country.

The eight-year U.S. occupation that followed irrevocably incorporated the republic into the system of global economic relations. When capitalist economic relations penetrate less-developed countries, they initiate social processes that encourage people to move (Portes and Walton 1981; Sassen 1991; Castells 1989). As commercial crops are substituted for subsistence production, the resulting economic and social consolidation weakens traditional land tenure systems. Mechanized production diminishes the need for manual labor and creates a mobile labor force. The insecticides, fertilizers, and machines that produce higher yields at lower costs push smaller, noncapitalist farmers out of the market. The substitution of cash crops for staples means that farmers are no longer producing for their own consumption and thus become dependent upon imported food stuffs. And the introduction of material and cultural goods from more advanced societies whets the appetite of consumers, who feel they need more money to satisfy these desires (Massey et al. 1993).

The U.S. occupation set all these processes in motion. Land consolidation begun earlier in the century advanced considerably, creating large numbers of landless peasants. The Land Registration Act of 1920 consolidated U.S. control of commercial agriculture, particularly in sugar production (Calder 1984; Del Castillo and Cordero 1980). By 1924 sugar companies controlled almost a quarter of the country's agricultural land; 80 percent of these were controlled by U.S. interests

(Glejeses 1978). This accelerated the expansion of a plantation economy that was dangerously dependent on the world sugar market. Restrictions imposed on European investment also increased dependence on the United States, which became the principal supplier of industrial and food imports. This hurt local producers, who could not compete with products imported into the country virtually duty-free. Moya Pons (1995) estimates that incipient industrialization begun before 1916 was set back twenty years as a result. The occupation also marked the rise of U.S. cultural influences. From then on, English words penetrated the language, baseball replaced cockfighting as the national sport, and U.S. music became a sign of good taste among the urban elite.

Major public works projects supported by the U.S. government brought formerly disconnected parts of the country into communication with one another. Rural producers could now sell their goods more easily in urban areas. Miraflores had always been something of a way station on the shipping route between Baní and Santo Domingo. Farmers sending crops to the capital had to pass through Miraflores on their way to the harbor. Goods from the city, sent back on the boats that returned, went through the village on their way to Baní. The highway constructed between Baní and Santo Domingo during the U.S. occupation irrevocably connected Miraflores to urban commercial life. Mail service and sanitation improved. Education became a government priority. These efforts dampened the power of local political bosses and paved the way for a more centralized politics (Black 1986).

The Dominican Republic remained a U.S. protectorate even after the United States withdrew its forces in 1924. Though Dominican officials regained control of the administration of their own citizens, the U.S. government still reserved the right to control customs and authorize increases in the public debt. As Moya Pons writes, "From this time on, the exercise of sovereignty would be understood by Dominican leaders as always conditioned by U.S. foreign policy" (1995, 339).

In 1930, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, a young general who had risen to commander in chief of the Dominican Army, took control of the Dominican presidency by force and began an oppressive, dictatorial rule that lasted for the next 31 years. Trujillo successfully transformed the Dominican economy from one primarily dependent on subsistence agriculture to one based on industrial growth. He also accumulated tremendous personal wealth in the process.

Trujillo pursued industrialization through import substitution, using indigenous raw materials to produce goods for the domestic market and decrease the country's reliance on imports. To reduce foreign economic domination, he built his own sugar mills and used state and personal funds to buy back most of the foreign mills operating in the country. He also created new industries or took control of existing ones. These enterprises flourished because they were protected from foreign competition and labor unrest and because they received special concessions and tax exemptions from the government. Trujillo also instilled a strong sense of national identity and pride among the Dominican people. By standing up to foreign interests and demonstrating that Dominican companies could succeed on their own, he made Dominicans feel that their country could "sit at the table of nations" for the first time (Derby 1994).

Trujillo presented himself to the Dominican public as the restorer of economic autonomy. In 1941 he finally regained control over the Dominican Customs Office, though all monies collected still had to be deposited in the National City Bank of New York. By 1947 the government had paid off its creditors in full. Though Trujillo succeeded in diminishing the country's economic dependence on the United States, he still relied heavily on its leaders for political backing. U.S. politicians were well aware that Trujillo used repression and force to remain in power, but they generally turned a blind eye, as evidenced by President Franklin Roosevelt's statement, "Trujillo is an S.O.B. but he is our S.O.B." (Eric Williams as cited in Bosch 1983, 7).

The root causes of migration were firmly established during the Trujillo era. Dependency theorists highlight the role of external factors, such as foreign capital and unequal terms of trade between developed and developing societies, in precipitating migration flows (Cassá 1982; Vincens 1982). But external dependency encourages rather than causes migration. Internal, institutional factors, such as the ways in which government policy favored a select group of industrialists and the economic development strategies that emerged from these class-state alliances, also accounted for migration in the Dominican case (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

According to Grasmuck and Pessar (1991), migration began in response to social and economic changes brought about by the reorganization of the sugar industry under Trujillo. During the U.S. occupation of 1916–24, the government expropriated considerable tracts of

land and devoted them to sugar production. Output increased significantly and was used almost entirely for export. The intensified concentration of land holdings weakened local subsistence agriculture and created a mobile labor force that depended on the sugar *centrales*, or mills, for seasonal income and employment. The government dedicated most of its resources toward modernizing production in its export sectors while agricultural production generally remained inefficient and undercapitalized.

Trujillo used his position and power to capture control of large sectors of the sugar industry. He personally controlled nearly two-thirds of all sugar production by the time he was assassinated in 1961. He also established a monopoly on the commercialization of cacao and coffee. Export earnings from these crops also increased during the 1940s and 1950s, benefiting an expanding agro-export sector and a rural petty bourgeoisie (Sharpe 1977). Landholdings devoted to these export crops also expanded in response to rising export prices.

The high proportion of rural land devoted to sugar and other export crops negatively affected other kinds of agricultural production. One percent of the farm owners controlled more than half of the total farmland in 1960 (Clausner 1973). Land scarcities and limited access to credit meant that production of important food crops declined during the 1950s. Since the labor required for export-crop production was less than that needed to grow ordinary food crops, the agrarian labor surplus increased.

Under Trujillo, the Dominican economy gradually evolved from one based primarily on agriculture to one based on low-level industrialization. Because there was little competition, most of the enterprises that developed were monopolistic, poorly run, and unproductive. Industrialization was also accomplished without participation by a national bourgeoisie. Trujillo applied tariffs, tax exemptions, and government subsidies to benefit a select group of friends. The scope of his control was astounding. Almost 35 percent of all cultivated land, more than 25 percent of all livestock, most of the rice production, and 12 out of 17 sugar refineries belonged to Trujillo (Bosch 1983). At the time of his death, he controlled nearly 80 percent of the country's industrial production and his firms employed 45 percent of the country's active labor force (Moya Pons 1995). Dominicans could not obtain food, shoes, clothing, or shelter without in some way benefiting either Trujillo or one of his family members.

Under Trujillo, Baní's economy revolved around coffee production in the hills to the north of the city and sugar and short-cycle *frutos menores*, such as tomatoes, plantains, bananas, papaya, and peppers, in the coastal plains near Miraflores. These crops had become the economic mainstays of the village in the early 1900s, when irrigation techniques were first introduced. Onions and *cebollines* brought to the area by the French in the mid-1800s were particularly important.³ Since plantains, *bacalao*, and *cebollines* were staples of the Dominican diet, market demand was high. The largest privately owned farm in the area, El Carbonal, produced for the commercial market. There were also four or five smaller landowning families in Miraflores who constituted the local elite. Most Mirafloresños, however, owned no land. They worked as either sharecroppers or day laborers for this landowning group or they were employed by the *intermediarios*, or middlemen, who bought up local production to sell on the national market.

By the late 1950s the Dominican economic miracle began to fade. Declining sugar prices hurt the economy, which still revolved around sugar production. Because Trujillo kept wages low, Dominicans had only so much disposable income. Their limited purchasing power constrained domestic market growth (Cassá 1979). There was also increasing opposition to the almost daily torture and killing of political prisoners. As economic conditions deteriorated and the regime's critics grew more vocal, U.S. leaders feared that a Communist takeover, similar to that in Cuba, was imminent. By 1960, when President Kennedy took office, the U.S. government withdrew its support from Trujillo. He was assassinated in 1961.

A period of political turmoil followed. A U.S.-backed provisional government was organized to hold presidential elections. A progressive leader, Professor Juan Bosch, was elected in 1963, and a democratic constitution was ratified. Seven months later, a group of military officers ousted Bosch from office and formed an unstable alliance with large landowners, industrialists, and international trade merchants to replace him. In April 1965, a military faction called the *Constitutionalist*s broke from the alliance and tried to reinstate Bosch. Their rebellion quickly escalated into a popular uprising. Four days later, 40,000 U.S. marines landed in Santo Domingo to prevent an "almost certain" Communist revolution.

Prior to the 1960s, few people migrated from the Dominican Republic. Trujillo severely restricted movement out of the country, fear-

ing his opponents would organize against him from abroad. He also sought to restrict the flow of information entering the country from places like Venezuela or Cuba, where authoritarian regimes had been deposed (Georges 1990). Those individuals who did migrate tended to be well off and from the northern Cibao region. During the first part of the 1960s, migration to the United States increased from a yearly average of almost 1,000 persons during the 1950s to nearly 10,000 persons per year (INS 1970). The first migrants left fearing President Bosch's left-leaning policies, while later migrants feared the instability that plagued the country after his defeat.

The overthrow of the Bosch government, the civil unrest that followed, and the subsequent U.S. intervention created a pool of potentially volatile antigovernment opponents. To prevent these individuals from further increasing instability, the U.S. government allowed more people to enter the United States. Migration was intended to act as a political safety valve that would weaken opposition and stabilize the Dominican political scene (Castro 1985; Mitchell 1992). Most of these individuals went to New York City.

The first significant wave to migrate to the United States were political refugees. Once migration began, though, it was further encouraged by the economic development strategies pursued by the two governments that followed. Both failed to modernize agriculture and continued to exclude labor from the benefits of increased industrialization, creating a growing but frustrated middle class. Migration provided a needed complement to the Dominican government's policies, because without it, a great deal of unrest might have occurred (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

Elections sponsored by the United States in 1966 installed Joaquín Balaguer, Trujillo's former presidential secretary. His rule, which lasted from 1966 to 1978, has been called "Trujillismo without Trujillo" because of the strong continuities between the two regimes (Black 1986). Like Trujillo, Balaguer enjoyed strong support from the military, the civil bureaucracy, and a small group of emerging industrialists, and he maintained power through repression and fear. He also pursued economic development through import substitution (Espinal 1994). He introduced protectionist measures, tariffs, tax exemptions, and eased access to credit to promote industrial development. In addition, he encouraged growth by increasing public-sector employment, by

launching large public works projects such as highway and public housing construction, and by securing international loans.

At first, high prices for export commodities, strong foreign investment, and increased government spending resulted in high rates of economic growth. The gross domestic product (GDP) grew an average of 11 percent per year between 1969 and 1974 (Guarnizo 1992). These measures, however, did not translate into long-term job creation. Overall efficiency declined between 1970 and 1977 (Vedovato 1986). Most foreign investment went toward industries requiring more capital than labor. Inflation rose while wages remained stagnant. Balaguer strongly repressed those who challenged his approach.

Though nearly half of the Dominican labor force still worked in rural areas in 1970, Balaguer pursued policies that favored urban workers. The price controls he imposed on agricultural products, and the terms of exchange he established, hurt rural producers (Lozano 1985). Agriculture's contribution to the GDP declined from 26 percent to 12 percent between 1965 and 1978 (Vincens 1982). The concentration of landownership also increased. By 1971, 14 percent of the country's landholders owned 79 percent of all lands, while 70 percent of the population occupied 12 percent of the arable land (Boin and Serullé 1980). Since population growth rates were high, the sons of these small landowners inherited plots of land that were not large enough to support their families. These factors triggered a rural exodus to the cities. Between 1965 and 1984, the rural population decreased from 65 to 45 percent of the total population (World Bank 1986). Rural employment also decreased from about 46 percent of the population in 1970 to 24 percent by 1981. At the same time, an urban middle class was emerging as a result of increased professionalism and the growth of certain service-sector jobs. These individuals had consumption aspirations and expectations about their future social mobility that social and economic conditions would prevent them from realizing (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

Import-substitution-led development is often accompanied by high unemployment rates and income inequalities. The Dominican case was no exception. Because most of the industrial growth occurred in sectors requiring more capital than labor, there were too few jobs for those who migrated to the city. An estimated 20 percent of Santo Domingo's labor force was unemployed in 1973. A mismatch between

employment supply and demand ensued. Even educated individuals who found jobs earned salaries barely higher than those earned by manual laborers. Real wages for laborers also decreased.

Dominican migration grew steadily during this period. It rose from 9,250 in 1968 (after an initial high of 16,503 in 1966) to 13,858 in 1973 (INS 1980). This sustained exodus complemented the capital-intensive industrialization strategy that Balaguer pursued, relieving some of the pressure that large numbers of unemployed workers would have put on the system had they stayed behind (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). Rapid urbanization threatened to weaken Balaguer's political base, since much of his electoral support came from rural areas. By allowing relatively high rates of migration, particularly from urban areas, the government exported potential sources of political opposition and was able to remain in power for twelve years (Mitchell 1992).

In 1978, tired of Balaguer's repressive policies and their diminishing economic gains, the Dominican public elected the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD) candidate, Antonio Guzmán, in what most consider to be the country's first democratic election. During his first two years in office, Guzmán introduced a number of economic and political reforms. He liberalized the political climate, allowing a number of new labor organizations and unions to be established. He raised the minimum salary. He also created numerous public-sector jobs to decrease unemployment and stimulate consumption. Between 1979 and 1982 the number of government employees grew by 72,000 (Espinal 1987).

Despite these efforts, the PRD's first term coincided with the Dominican Republic's worst economic crisis in years. Balaguer's strategy of financing industrial growth with export earnings proved untenable for the PRD because of declining sugar prices, increasing debt obligations, and rising oil prices and interest rates in the early 1980s (Torres-Saillant and Hernández 1998). By 1982, conditions had deteriorated to such an extent that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed an austerity plan to decrease government spending as a condition for providing assistance. The structural adjustment policies put in place were designed to curtail imports and reorient the country's traditional base toward tourism, service-sector employment, and export processing zones, where goods are manufactured duty-free for sale outside the country.

These strategies narrowed Dominicans' employment opportunities

even further. The gross domestic product declined to an average of 1.6 percent between 1980 and 1988. During the PRD's second administration, under President Jorge Blanco, real salaries declined by 22 percent (IDB 1987). Official unemployment rose from 24 percent in 1970 to 30 percent in 1988. According to some estimates, 45 to 60 percent of the workforce in the 1980s was employed in domestic service work or in the informal sector, which is made up of micro-enterprises or small-scale manufacturing firms operating outside legal and regulatory review (Kleinekathoefer 1987). Though international export prices continued to decline, and the government received repeated warnings to diversify its export base, the PRD made little effort to implement such policies. The state sugar bureaucracy had provided too many powerful people with too many benefits. Thus, under President Blanco, the state continued to rely on the sugar industry as its principal engine of economic growth and to allow continuous increases in food imports (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991).

The government's financial policies also stimulated migration. While exports continued to be priced according to the dollar, imports were priced according to a "parallel market" that fluctuated but was normally higher. This meant that Dominican real wages declined considerably, particularly in relation to the value of the dollar. According to Grasmuck and Pessar (1991), by 1987 the minimum monthly salary for a full-time job in the United States was six times higher than what one could earn in the Dominican Republic.

Further frustration and economic strain prompted the Dominican public to reelect Balaguer in 1986. Under his leadership the government finally moved the economy away from its dependence on traditional exports. During the 1990s, export processing zones (EPZs) and tourism became two of its most important industries. Revenues from tourism increased from \$368.2 million in 1985 to roughly \$1.1 billion in 1992. Between 1980 and 1988, firms in the EPZs drove up the country's exports from \$117 million to \$517 million. These gains are fragile and continue to be driven by forces located outside the republic. Sixty-three percent of the EPZ industries are owned by U.S. companies who do not pay taxes (Betances 1995). In 1993, more than 60 percent of the workers were women who received an average hourly wage of 50 cents. Though export earnings increased, the Dominican economy remained stagnant at an average growth rate of 1.1 percent (Safa 1995).

When President Leonel Fernández took office in 1996, he intro-

duced a bold reform package aimed at creating a market-oriented economy that could compete internationally. He proposed a devaluation of the peso, income tax cuts, a 50 percent increase in the sales tax, and a reduction in import tariffs. Though many of these reforms stalled in the legislature, the economy grew vigorously between 1997 and 1998. The estimated GDP real growth rate for 1998 was 7 percent. The service sector accounted for 56 percent of the GDP (as estimated in 1996), followed by industry (25%), and agriculture (19%). Following tourism, sugar processing, ferronickel and gold mining, textiles, cement, and tobacco constituted the country's strongest industries (www.cia.gov).

Migrants have become a key force in the Dominican economy. The \$796 million in remittances migrants sent in 1995 surpassed all industries, except for tourism, as sources of foreign exchange (*Migration News* 1998). The \$1.4 billion migrants remitted in 1999 was more than half the government's operating budget (Hart 2000). These figures do not include the significant sums of money that migrants send back through informal channels or personally carry back to the island. They also do not reflect the money migrants spend on vacation trips, consumer goods, houses, lands, and businesses, nor how they stimulate growth in particular economic sectors, such as the construction industry, when they return to live on the island. According to Carlos Dore, a close adviser to former President Fernández, migrants "are the sine qua non for Dominican macro-economic stability, including monetary exchange rates, the balance of trade, international monetary reserves, and the national balance of payment" (Guarnizo 1997, 7). The country's political and economic fortunes still depend primarily on events in the United States. As one Miraflores put it, "When the U.S. sneezes, we catch a cold," a relationship unlikely to change under new PRD President Hipólito Mejía.

A Profile of Migrant Miraflores and the Context That Receives Them

Migration from the Dominican Republic grew rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s.⁴ Because anthropologists who were studying rural areas conducted much of the earliest research, it was assumed that migrants were small-to-medium-sized landholding peasants or rural proletarians (Sassen-Koob 1978).⁵ Ugalde, Bean, and Cárdenas (1979)

first challenged this view when their analysis of the 1974 Diagnóstico Nacional Study revealed that although 53 percent of the Dominican population resided in rural areas, only 24 percent of international migrants left from rural parts of the country (Georges 1990). A number of subsequent studies confirmed that most Dominican migrants come from urban areas.⁶

Once begun, migration broadened to include a wide cross section of Dominican society. While relatively educated, middle-class individuals left during the 1960s and 1970s, during the two decades that followed, less-skilled workers and highly skilled professionals also migrated. A 1991 national survey revealed that nearly 21 percent of urban households had migrant members, compared to 11 percent from rural areas. Migrants tended to come from better-off families and from better-off regions of the country. Households with incomes of more than 3,000 pesos per month had two times more migrants than those with lower incomes. Better-educated groups also tended to migrate more. Forty-eight percent of the households with migrants had household heads who had secondary or university education, while only 11.5 percent had heads with no education or who had not completed primary school (Profamilia 1992).

Nonmigrants reported high levels of dependence on remittances. According to a 1992 survey conducted in the Dominican capital, 77 percent of the households had at least one relative in the United States; 27 percent received financial support once a month from a migrant family member (Lozano 1992). Return migration was also fairly common. Warren (1988) estimated that 24 percent of the Dominicans who went to the United States between 1960 and 1980 returned to live and work on the island. In 1991 the return rate was estimated at 29 percent; and more individuals returned to cities (33%) than to rural areas (17%) (Profamilia 1992).

Migration from Miraflores grew in response to the same economic and political factors that precipitated outflows throughout the country. Declines in the prices of sugar and coffee on the world market hurt the local economy. The demand for *cebollines* decreased as Dominican dietary patterns shifted toward other foods. In addition, a severe drought in 1975 and a hurricane in 1981 decimated crop yields and left some land uncultivable. Apart from farming, there were few other job opportunities in the area. As a result, in 1994, more than one-third (35%) of all households in Miraflores said they had no income-

earning members. Among those who did work, 12 percent owned their own businesses,⁷ while 17 percent worked in stores, offices, government, or in sales. Fewer than ten villagers found jobs at the canning factory or export processing zone located near Baní. Instead, the majority worked as agricultural day laborers or in land-rental/sharecropping arrangements (35%). Fewer than 20 percent of the households in the village owned their own land. Of these, most held small parcels, or *minifundios*, ranging from one to fifty hectares.⁸

Not surprisingly, more than 75 percent of the Mirafloresños who migrated said they did so for economic reasons. The first to leave were the more educated, better-off members of the community as Ernesto, a thirty-nine-year-old return migrant, described:

I went because I was married, I had a son, and I was eighteen years old. I was studying, but I didn't have a job. I thought, I know the Cárdenas are there, I can try it out, make some money, and come back in a few years to start a business. I knew it would be hard, but I thought they will help me and it's worth the risk. I went and came back after a year. I didn't like it there, but then I couldn't get used to living in Miraflores again. So when the World Series was coming up and I wanted to see it, I went back again, and this time I ended up staying eighteen years.

Social networks played an important role in migration's spread. Most Mirafloresños trace their journey back to one individual who they say is responsible for setting the network-building process in motion. Jaime Cárdenas first came to Baní when Trujillo was in power. In those days Trujillo controlled commercial shoe production on the island. To ensure a captive market, the dictator made it illegal to go barefoot and set the fine for doing so higher than the price of shoes. Don Jaime opened his own shoe factory in Baní to cater to the provincial market. Despite his success, he was ostracized by the city's elite. After his first marriage ended in scandal he moved to Miraflores, where he built a large home and began a new family. He became popular among his new neighbors, and among young people in particular, because he generously supported the village baseball team. When his factory eventually went bankrupt, he migrated to Boston with his children and encouraged some of the young men he knew to follow him there. Many of the first to go stayed at the Cárdenas' apartment when they arrived.

When I first got to Boston in the early 1970s, there were four or five other people there. The first night I got there I went to Cárdenas' house. He was

not there, but his daughter, María del Carmen, said that I could stay there for a few days until I found a room. I did until I got a job packing oranges and I rented a basement room there on Mozart Street. Then María del Carmen was supervisor for a cleaning company and she got me a job cleaning buildings downtown. (Jorge, 41, return migrant, Miraflores)

As more village members settled and found work in Boston, a network of connections between Miraflores and Jamaica Plain deepened and spread. New migrants followed more easily. Early migrants helped those who came later to find work, as Jorge described:

Finally I got a job at a factory making shoulder pads. At first it was just me and the owner. Then eventually we grew and I became supervisor. Since there was a lot of work, every time someone came from Miraflores, I would bring them over there and give them a job. I was supervisor for thirteen years.

Since 1970, migration from Miraflores to Boston has grown steadily.⁹ Unlike other country-of-origin groups, who move first to urban centers before migrating across borders, nearly all Mirafloresños traveled directly to the United States (96%). More than three-quarters went to Boston, while 12 percent went to New York.

Boston has always been an important point of entry for new immigrants, who have long been attracted to its manufacturing and commercial opportunities. Between the Civil War and World War II, most of the city's foreign-born came from Ireland, Canada, and Italy. The Boston Brahmins, or the well-established Protestant power elite, did not welcome them warmly. In one striking example, after the Irish community had begun to establish itself, the Catholic Archdiocese initiated construction of a new cathedral, which was to be as large as Westminster Abbey. The Protestant majority objected so strongly to this display of power by these Catholic "upstarts" that the city's leaders built an elevated subway line directly across from the completed structure (Shand-Tucci 1998). Subsequent migrants created their own economic niches and political organizations to circumvent the resistance they encountered. Their legacy of ethnic neighborhoods, and the residential segregation that characterized the city as a result, still persists.

The first Latinos to migrate to New England on a large scale were Puerto Ricans. In the 1940s, the Migration Division of the Department of Labor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Massachusetts Department of Employment Security agreed to recruit farm laborers to work in the apple orchards, cranberry bogs, and vegetable

farms to the south and west of Boston. Migration grew as individual farmers paid their employees \$10 a head and plane fare to bring additional workers to Massachusetts. After the growing season ended, some relocated to the city in search of factory employment. Many settled in Boston's South End.

During the 1960s, urban renewal and subsequent gentrification pushed Latinos out of the South End into other neighborhoods. Newly arriving Dominicans found homes in Jamaica Plain, following on the coattails of the Cubans who had already settled in that area. Jamaica Plain had traditionally been home to the city's Irish immigrants. Those who flourished lived in the large mansions along the edge of Jamaica Pond. Their working-class counterparts settled in the triple-decker-lined streets closer to the elevated subway line.

In 1999, an estimated 921,883 persons of Dominican ancestry resided in the United States, up from 521,151 in 1990. Table 3 compares their basic demographic characteristics with those of other major racial and ethnic groups in the United States between 1996 and 1999 (see Appendix A for all tables). Dominicans are slightly younger. Along with African Americans, they are less likely to be married. Table 4 reveals that nearly 60 percent of all the Dominicans in the United States were foreign-born. Slightly less than 20 percent had become U.S. citizens, while 40 percent had not naturalized. The majority were recent arrivals; more than two-thirds came between 1980 and 1999. As of 1999, the Dominican Republic ranked twelfth among those countries sending the largest numbers of immigrants to the United States. Dominicans were also among the most residentially concentrated groups. Nearly 70 percent (68.9%) migrated to New York State, with 65 percent settling in New York City (U.S. Census 1992). As table 5 shows, between 1996 and 1999, more than 80 percent lived in the mid-Atlantic region. The next-largest concentrations of Dominicans resided in the South Atlantic region, particularly Miami (10%), and in the New England region (5%) (CPS 1996–99). Few Dominicans owned their homes, as table 6 reveals. During the 1996–99 period, over three-quarters rented their places of residence.

Three major changes have swept the greater Boston metropolitan area since Miraflores first arrived. The first is demographic. In 1950 minority residents constituted only 5.3 percent of the city's population. By 1990 41 percent of the city's 574,283 residents were racial minorities, including 11 percent Hispanics.¹⁰ Puerto Ricans were the

largest Latino group (42%) while Dominicans made up 13% of the city's Latino population.

Despite this heightened ethnic diversity, racial and ethnic relations remain strained.¹¹ Residential segregation has been stubbornly persistent. Boston is the fourteenth most residentially segregated city in the country. Both black-white and Hispanic-white residential segregation continues at levels at or above those of other major American cities (Bluestone and Stevenson 1998).

The spatial reorganization of production is the second major change that has occurred in the region. Much of Boston's population and many of its economic enterprises relocated outside the city's boundaries between 1950 and 1990. The overall population declined from 800,000 to 560,000. Much of Boston's manufacturing base also moved to the suburbs or left the region altogether. Retailers followed their customers. As a result, the urban core lost jobs and experienced declines in wholesale and retail trade while these activities increased in the areas surrounding the city. City officials also dedicated significant resources toward creating a "new Boston" that physically reflected the modern, streamlined character of the new high-tech activities spearheading the city's economic growth. New hotels and office buildings replaced much of the low-cost housing formerly available downtown. Even Boston's Combat Zone, the last bastion of adult entertainment and urban decay, has been slowly eradicated. As a result, there are fewer jobs and affordable housing for newly arriving immigrants.

The most dramatic change in the past three decades has been the economic shift from manufacturing to high-tech and service industries. This story, though familiar throughout the country, was particularly dramatic in Boston. The proportion of those employed nationally in nondurable manufacturing, such as textiles and apparel, declined from 14 to 7 percent between 1950 and 1990, while in the greater Boston metropolitan area, these numbers decreased by 16 percent. The 1970s recession also reduced the manufacturing sector considerably. About one-fifth of jobs lost involved unskilled labor (Harrison 1988). Suffolk County lost 50 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 1965 and 1987¹² (Falcón 1993).

The high-tech industrial growth that later propelled the state toward the "Massachusetts Miracle" of the 1980s sidestepped many Latinos (Osterman 1990). While Boston gained 80,000 jobs for workers with at least some college education between 1970 and 1980, jobs for

workers with only a high school diploma or less declined by 125,000 (Kasarda 1989). Miraflores, and Dominicans in general, did not have the education or the skills to succeed in this new economy. As table 7 highlights, only 5 percent of all Dominicans had graduated from college between 1996 and 1999, compared to 16 and 24 percent among whites and Asians, respectively. In 1990 fairly high numbers of Dominicans (52%) classified themselves as speaking English "not well" or "not at all" (U.S. Census 1992).

As a consequence, most Dominicans faced significant barriers to entry in the labor force. They could not get well-paying, stable jobs. In general, as table 8 indicates, they fared somewhat less well than African Americans, Native Americans, and non-Dominican Hispanics, and poorly compared to whites and Asians. Dominicans were less likely to find full-time employment and were less likely to be self-employed than these other groups. The majority of Dominicans were employed in service-sector jobs (28 percent) or in manufacturing (30 percent), as shown in table 9 (for tables, see Appendix A). Table 10, which shows work experience by industry, reveals that relatively large numbers of Dominicans were also employed in retail trade.

Because their occupational and language skills did not fit well with the current labor market, and because the kinds of jobs they got paid poorly and offered few opportunities for advancement, almost 40 percent of all Dominicans lived below the poverty level. As table 11 shows, 23 percent of all Dominican households received public assistance between 1996 and 1999.

This general profile holds true for Miraflores.¹³ In 1994, nearly half held only part-time jobs. Slightly more than one-quarter worked in manufacturing, and more than a third worked in low-level jobs in the service sector. The majority cleaned office buildings at night. A small group worked in small businesses that were generally Dominican-owned.

Despite their incorporation into low-wage jobs, Miraflores assumed increasing responsibility for supporting their nonmigrant family members. Almost 60 percent of the households in Miraflores received some of their monthly income from those in the United States. For nearly 40 percent of those households, remittances constituted between 75 and 100 percent of their income. In contrast, only 31 percent of the households earned their money entirely in the Dominican Republic.

These high levels of economic dependence reinforce migrants' and nonmigrants' ties to one another. They remained in close touch. More than half of the villagers spoke by phone to their relatives in Boston at least once, if not twice, a month. Telephone contacts have risen considerably since 1994 because new phone cards now make calling much cheaper. Nearly three-quarters of those who migrated returned home to visit; more than half had been back to Miraflores between two and four times. In fact, few Miraflores indicated a desire to remain permanently in the United States. More than 80 percent left intending to return to the island. In nearly a quarter of the households, at least one person had returned to live; in 5 percent, two migrants had come back. Though the majority of the community entered the United States without the necessary visa, by 1994, 73 percent were legal residents; fewer than 1 percent had become U.S. citizens.

Miraflores' economic and social marginalization in the United States, nonmigrants' high levels of economic dependence on those who have migrated, and their frequent levels of contact with one another are just some of the factors creating this transnational village and making it likely to endure. The social remittances migrants introduce to those remaining behind also play a critical role in transnational-village creation and perpetuation. They are the focus of the next chapter.