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Dominicans in the United States: A Socioeconomic Profile, 2000

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About the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute Research Monograph

The CUNY Dominican Studies Institute Research Monograph, a publication of the CUNY Dominican Studies Institute, publishes scholarly research on the experience of people who trace their ancestry to the Dominican Republic.

About CUNY Dominican Studies Institute

Founded in 1992 and housed at The City College of New York, the Dominican Studies Institute of the City University of New York (CUNY DSI) is the nation's first, university-based research institute devoted to the study of people of Dominican descent in the United States and other parts of the world. CUNY DSI's mission is to produce and disseminate research and scholarship about Dominicans, and about the Dominican Republic itself. The Institute houses the Dominican Archives and the Dominican Library, the first and only institutions in the United States collecting primary and secondary source material about Dominicans. CUNY DSI is the locus for a community of scholars, including doctoral fellows, in the field of Dominican Studies, and sponsors multidisciplinary research projects. The Institute organizes lectures, conferences, and exhibitions that are open to the public.

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Main Findings

This research report presents the first detailed study of the socio-economic status of the Dominican population of the United States. Using information recently provided by the 2000 U.S. Census of Population, the study concludes that:

1. The Dominican population in the United States rose from 520,121 in 1990 to 1,041,910 in 2000, making it the fourth-largest Hispanic/Latino group in the United States, after Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. It is estimated that, at current population growth rates, the Dominican population will overtake the Cuban population before the year 2010, making it the third largest Hispanic/Latino population in the country.
2. The major source of Dominican growth continues to be immigration. Between 1990 and 2000, close to 300,000 Dominicans migrated to the United States on a net basis.
3. Besides substantial immigration, the Dominican population born in the United States rose sharply in the 1990s. There were 394,914 Dominicans born in the U.S. residing in the country in 2000. This constitutes one out of every three Dominicans.
4. The largest concentration of Dominicans continues to be located in the state of New York, but there has been a significant spread to other states in the last decade. The state of New York was host to 617,901 Dominicans in 2000; followed by New Jersey, with 136,529; Florida, with 98,410; Massachusetts, with 69,502; Rhode Island, with 24,588; Pennsylvania (13,667); and Connecticut (12,830). There were also budding Dominican communities in almost every region of the country, from Alaska to Hawaii.
5. New York City continues to dominate the location of Dominicans in the United States. The Dominican population of New York rose from 332,713 to 554,638 between 1990 and 2000. Dominicans are currently the second largest Hispanic/Latino population of New York, following Puerto Ricans. But the Puerto

Rican population in the City declined substantially in the last decade. If current population growth trends continue, Dominicans will overtake Puerto Ricans as the largest Hispanic/Latino population of the City within the next ten years.

6. The greatest concentration of Dominicans in New York continues to be in Manhattan, where one out of every three Dominicans in the City resided in 2000. But just as the population has spread throughout the country, Dominican New Yorkers have also spread throughout the City. The Dominican population in the Bronx is now almost as large as that in Manhattan, with 32.7 percent of all Dominicans. There has also been substantial growth in Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island.
7. The expanding Dominican population outside New York City has reduced the proportion of Dominicans in the City from 73.4 percent in 1980 to 65.1 percent in 1990 and 53.2 percent in 2000. Following New York City, there are major Dominican populations in the City of Lawrence (Massachusetts), where 22,111 Dominicans reside, the City of Paterson (New Jersey), with 19,977 Dominicans, Providence (Rhode Island), with 19,915 Dominicans, and Boston (Massachusetts), with 19,061 Dominicans. The cities of Jersey City, Passaic, Perth Amboy and Union City in New Jersey also have substantial Dominican populations, as do the City of Yonkers in New York, and Miami in Florida. Many other cities all over the country have smaller, but rapidly growing Dominican populations.
8. The mean annual per-capita household income of the Dominican population in the United States was \$11,065 in the year 1999. This was about half the per-capita income of the average household in the country that year. It was also significantly lower than the per-capita income of the Black/African American population and even slightly lower than the income of the average Latino household.
9. There is substantial variability in the socio-economic status of Dominicans in various parts of the United States. Among the

most populous states, Dominicans in Florida had the highest per-capita household income, equal to \$12,886 in the year 1999. By contrast, Dominicans in Rhode Island had the lowest average per-capita income, equal to \$8,560 in the year 1999.

10. In New York City, the average per-capita income of Dominicans was below the average for the United States. The poverty rate of 32 percent among Dominican New Yorkers was the highest of the major racial and ethnic groups in New York. The overall poverty rate in New York in 1999 was 19.1 percent, while it was 29.7 percent for the overall Hispanic/Latino population.
11. A high proportion of Dominican families in poverty consist of female-headed families, with no spouse present. In 2000, as much as 38.2 percent of Dominicans in New York lived in this type of family, compared to 22.1 percent for the overall City. Close to half of Dominican female-headed families in New York City were poor, more than twice the poverty rate for other households.
12. Despite the low relative socioeconomic status of Dominicans in New York City, their income displayed significant growth in the 1990s, rising by close to 16 percent in the decade (adjusted for inflation). The overall increase of per-capita income in the City in the decade was 9.2 percent, but both the Black/African American population and the overall Hispanic/Latino population in the City had lower income growth rates. The White population in the City displayed a growth of over 20 percent in per-capita income.
13. The labor force participation rate of Dominicans is lower than that for the rest of the population. In 2000, it was approximately 64 percent for men and 53.1 percent for women. The figures for the overall U.S. workforce are 72.7 percent and 58.5 percent, for men and women, respectively.
14. The unemployment rate of Dominican women and men in 2000 greatly exceeded that of the overall labor force in the United States. In 2000, Dominican men had an unemployment rate of

- 7.8 percent, compared to an overall unemployment rate of 3.9 percent for men in the country. Among women, the Dominican unemployment rate was 10.7 percent in 2000, compared to 4.1 percent in the country overall.
15. Despite the comparatively high unemployment rates of Dominicans, these rates declined sharply between 1990 and 2000. In New York City, for instance, the male and female unemployment rates among Dominicans were 15.7 percent and 18.4 percent, respectively, in 1990. These dropped to 8.9 percent and 13.1 percent by 2000.
 16. The comparatively high unemployment rates of Dominicans in New York City are connected to a painful long-term switch in the employment of the Dominican labor force from manufacturing to other sectors. In 1980, close to half of the Dominican workforce was employed in manufacturing. This declined to 25.7 percent in 1990 and to 12.4 percent in 2000.
 17. The Dominican labor force is very young and mostly unskilled. Only 17.3 percent of Dominicans in the United States have managerial, professional and technical occupations, about half the proportion for the overall United States. As a result, the average earnings of Dominican men and women are substantially lower than those of other workers in the nation.
 18. The overall educational attainment of Dominicans in the United States is among the lowest in the country. In 2000, 49 percent of Dominicans 25 years of age or older had not completed high school and only 10.6 percent had completed college. By contrast, less than 20 percent of the American population had not completed high school in 2000, and 24.4 percent had finished college.
 19. But the educational situation of Dominicans varies enormously when decomposed by immigrant status. Although the educational attainment of Dominican immigrants is very low, the situation for U.S.-born Dominicans is sharply different.
 20. The Dominican second-generation in the United States has educational indicators that suggest a remarkable acquisition of

human capital over the last 20 years. This differs from the overall situation of U.S.-born Hispanics/Latinos, whose educational indicators are substantially worse than those for Dominicans. In 2000, close to 60 percent of all Dominicans born in the United States with 25 years of age or older had received some college education, with 21.9 percent completing a college education. By contrast, among U.S.-born Mexicans, only 13.3 percent had completed college, and 12.1 percent of U.S.-born Puerto Ricans had finished college.

21. The explosive increase of the educational attainment of U.S.-born Dominicans is reflected in the experience of Dominican New Yorkers. For U.S.-born Dominicans in New York, the proportion who attained some college education rose from 31.7 percent in 1980 to 42.8 percent in 1990, and to 55.1 percent in 2000.
22. Dominicans have school enrollment rates that are higher than those for other minority groups. In New York City, Dominican high school retention rates are substantially higher than for the overall Hispanic/Latino population, and for women, they approach the average New York City high school retention rate.
23. There were 111,553 Dominican children enrolled in the New York City public school system. This constitutes 10.4 percent of the New York City school student body in 2000. Among public college students in New York City, 8.5 percent are Dominicans, exceeding the proportion among Puerto Ricans, which was 7.7 percent in 2000.

This report presents a mixed picture of the Dominican population of the United States. On the one hand, Dominicans have among the lowest per-capita income in the country, comparatively low labor force participation rates, high unemployment rates, and low earnings. On the other hand, Dominican income and employment indicators did improve significantly in the 1990s, and the Dominican second-generation appears to be accumulating vast amounts of human capital, increasing its educational attainment very rapidly. Therefore, despite

facing considerable challenges in its remarkable growth during the last twenty years, the prospects for the future look bright for Dominicans in the U.S.

Introduction

The number of Dominicans in the United States doubled in the 1990s, from slightly over half a million in 1990 to over one million in 2000. By comparison, the overall population of the United States increased by only 12.3 percent between 1990 and 2000. Dominicans now constitute the fourth largest Hispanic/Latino group in the United States, following Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans. By the end of the decade, the number of Dominicans is expected to surpass Cubans, thus becoming the third largest Hispanic/Latino population in the United States.

In spite of the growing numbers and visibility of Dominicans in the United States, relatively little systematic information is available about their current socioeconomic status. There exist detailed studies including information on the Dominican community in the U.S. up to the early 1990s [see Hendricks (1974), Ugalde, Bean and Cárdenas (1979), Gurak (1982), Grasmuck and Pessar (1991), and Torres-Saillant and Hernández (1998)]. There are also recent ethnographic studies sampling segments of the Dominican population, particularly the Washington Heights community [Waldinger (1986), Pessar (1987), Portes and Guarnizo (1991), and Duany (1994)]. There are, finally, comprehensive surveys of Dominican New Yorkers [see Hernández and Rivera-Batiz (1997), and Hernández, Rivera-Batiz and Agodini (1995)]. But there is no recent profile of the overall Dominican population in the United States, particularly looking at its situation in 2000.

Providing a comprehensive study of the socioeconomic status of the overall Dominican population of the United States at the beginning of a new millennium is essential. Firstly, existing accounts of the situation of Dominicans often focus exclusively on New York. In the past, this has been a natural outcome of the overwhelming concentration of Dominicans in the City. In 1980, for example, three out of four Dominicans in the U.S. resided in New York. But this has changed. By the year 2000, the Dominican population in New York accounted for about half of Dominicans in the United States.

The increased complexity of the Dominican experience in the United States is not only geographical, but also generational. In the past, studies of Dominicans focused almost exclusively on analyzing immigrants. This reflected the predominance of those born in the Dominican Republic within the community. But this has also changed. A rapidly-growing second generation is becoming a major force. In 2000, one out of every three Dominicans in the United States was born in the U.S.

What do these changes imply about the situation of the Dominican population in the United States? Do Dominicans in New York differ from Dominicans settling in other parts of the country, such as Florida or New Jersey? Is the growing second-generation performing better in the labor market than their parents did? This research report presents data on the socioeconomic status of the Dominican population using recently-released data from the 2000 U.S. Census of Population. In particular, we use the 1 percent and 5 percent Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). These data are supplemented with information provided by earlier Censuses, in providing a survey of the demographics, labor market outcomes, poverty and household economic status of Dominicans as we enter the new millennium.

1. Counting the Dominican Population

How are Dominicans in the U.S. counted? Who is considered to be Dominican? As with other ethnic groups, the number of Dominicans in the U.S. is an estimate, based on the instruments used to collect demographic information in the nation.

This study measures the number of Dominicans in the U.S. based on the information provided by the U.S. Census of Population. Each decade, the Census enumerates the population of the United States and its various racial and ethnic groups. Table 1 shows the official Census count of the Dominican population of the United States for the period of 1980 to 2000. According to official figures, the Dominican population rose from 170,817 in 1980 to 511,297 in 1990 and to 799,768 in 2000.

Table 1: Dominican Population Residing in the U.S., 1980-2000

Year	Official Census Population Count
1980	170,817
1990	511,297
2000	799,768

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 1980 Summary Tape File 4, 1990 Summary Tape File 3, 2000 Summary Tape File 4.

Although these figures reflect substantial growth, there are strong reasons to suspect that the official Census enumeration for 2000 represents a severe undercount of the Dominican population residing in the U.S. at that time. The reason for this undercount is associated with changes introduced in the 2000 Census questionnaire used to identify the Dominican population.

Since 1970, the U.S. Census has included a separate question intended to allow individuals to self-identify as Hispanic or Latino. As part of this question, persons can select among several choices. In 1970, the choices were: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American, and Other Spanish Origin or Descent, and in 1980, the groups were: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban and Other Spanish/Hispanic. Note that these categories do not allow persons to identify themselves explicitly

as Dominican, but only as “Other Spanish/Hispanic.” The 1990 Census improved on this by including not only the Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other Hispanic categories but also allowing persons to write-in the Hispanic group they form part of, if they had chosen the “Other Hispanic” category. To illustrate this, the questionnaire included several examples of Hispanic groups people could write into their forms: Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and Spaniard. This, of course, helped persons understand that they could explicitly write-in Dominican as their Hispanic group in the Census questionnaire, a vast improvement over previous Census in measuring the Dominican population in the United States. In 2000, the Census included the traditional categories of Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban/Other Hispanic, and also allowed persons to write-in their specific Hispanic group. Unfortunately, in contrast to the 1990 Census, no examples of specific Hispanic groups appeared in the questionnaire. As a result, and in contrast to the 1990 Census, although anyone could write-in “Dominican” as their “Other Hispanic” group, there were no instructions telling them they were allowed to write-in “Dominican” or any other specific group, for that matter. In reality, many people who marked the “Other Hispanic/Latino” category did not write-in any specific Hispanic identity and the Census did not include them as part of the Dominican population of the United States.

The result of these changes in the Census questionnaire is a serious undercount of Dominicans in the United States. A number of experts have noted this issue and have adjusted the official Census figures by estimating the number of Dominicans who categorized themselves as “Other Hispanic” but did not specify their specific identity [see Logan (2002)]. In this study, we follow this strategy, in order to produce a more reliable estimate of the Dominican population of the United States in 2000. More specifically, we follow closely the methodology used by Cresce and Ramirez (2003).

To identify the Dominican population of the United States, we included the following groups:

1. Persons who self-identified, writing-in “Dominican” in the Census questionnaire.
2. Persons who self-identified as “Other Hispanic” and did not write-in any specific Hispanic category, but:
 - declared their place of birth to be the Dominican Republic, or
 - declared their first or second ancestry to be Dominican.

The data sets used to implement these adjustments were the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing Public Use Microdata Samples, released by the U.S. Department of Commerce in August and September 2003.

Table 2 shows the official and revised estimates of the Dominican population of the United States. We estimate that, in April 2000, a total of 1,041,910 Dominicans resided in the United States. This means that the official Census figures present an undercount of 242,142 Dominicans in the year 2000.

Table 2: Dominican Population Residing in the U.S., 1980-2000

Categories	Dominican Population of the United States, 2000
Official Census Count (A)	799,768
Revised Estimate (B)	1,041,910
Difference (B - A)	242,142

Source: Official count: 2000 Summary Tape File 4; Revised estimate: Author’s tabulations, based on 2000 PUMS.

It should be emphasized that this adjusted population figure is still based on the number of persons who did complete Census questionnaires. An additional undercount may be the result of the fact that the Census generally fails to identify significant portions of the minority populations residing in large metropolitan areas. It is estimated that the 1990 Census failed to count as much as 5 percent of the Hispanic population in the country. A variety of efforts were indeed made by the 2000 Census takers to reduce this undercount. As a result, it is estimated that the 2000 Census missed 0.7 percent of the Hispanic population.

There is also the fact that some undocumented immigrants stay away from Census takers and may not be officially counted by the Census. Among the Dominican population, however, this may not constitute a major issue. The estimates of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service are that in 2000 there were 91,000 undocumented Dominican migrants residing in the United States, compared to 46,000 in 1990. Since a substantial fraction of undocumented immigrants are indeed counted by the Census, it is not clear that a serious Dominican undercount exists based on immigration status.

2. Growth and Distribution of Dominicans in the U.S.

Based on our estimates, the Dominican population residing in the United States doubled between 1990 and 2000, from close to half a million to slightly over a million people. This rapid growth has made Dominicans the fourth largest Hispanic/Latino population of the United States.

As Table 3 depicts, Dominicans now follow Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans as the fourth largest Hispanic group in the nation. In fact, if current population growth rates continue, by the end of the present decade, Dominicans will easily overtake Cubans, becoming the third largest Hispanic/Latino group in the United States.

Table 3: The Largest Hispanic/Latino Populations in the U.S., 2000

Hispanic/Latino Populations	Population
Mexican	20,900,102
Puerto Rican	3,403,510
Cuban	1,249,820
Dominican	1,041,910
Salvadorean	997,862
Colombian	655,090

Source: Official count for Mexicans, Puerto Rican and Cuban; authors' tabulations for Dominicans, Salvadorians and Colombians.

The major source of the rapid Dominican population growth in the United States in recent years remains immigration. As Table 4 shows, there were 1,041,910 Dominicans residing in the U.S. in 2000. Of these, 695,996 were born outside of the United States, including 297,190 immigrants who entered the country between 1990 to 2000.

But Table 4 also makes clear that the Dominican population born in the United States is also rising sharply. In the year 2000, there were 345,914 Dominicans who were born in the United States. This represents one out of every three Dominicans. In fact, close to half of the Dominican population growth in the 1990s is due to the natural increase of U.S.-born Dominicans.

The rise of U.S.-born Dominicans is a new pattern that we anticipate will continue in the coming decade. The growth of a substantial second —and third— generation is clearly one of the priorities in the agenda of both academic researchers and policy-makers. Later sections will provide a demographic profile of U.S.-born Dominicans and —given their young mean age— their educational prospects.

Table 4: Dominican Immigrants Residing in the U.S., 2000		
Categories	2000 Number	% of Total
Total Dominicans	1,041,910	100.0%
Born in the United States	345,914	33.2%
Immigrants	695,996	66.8%
Arrived 1990 to 2000	297,190	—
Arrived 1980 to 1989	225,502	—
Arrived Before 1980	173,304	—

Source: 2000 U.S. Census of Population, 5% PUMS, authors’ tabulations.

The largest concentration of Dominicans continues to be located in the state of New York, but the Census data shows a significant spread into other states. Table 5 presents the states with the largest Dominican population in 2000. Close to 60 percent of all Dominicans resided in New York State that year, down from approximately 70 percent in 1990. Following New York is New Jersey, which accounts for close to 13 percent of the Dominican population. Significant populations also exist in Florida and Massachusetts, followed by Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and a multitude of other states —from Texas to Maryland— with budding Dominican communities.

Table 5: Geographical Distribution of Dominicans by State, 1990-2000				
State	1990 Number	% of Total	2000 Number	% of Total
Total	511,297	100.0%	1,041,910	100.0%
New York	357,868	69.9	617,901	59.3
New Jersey	52,807	10.4	136,529	13.1
Florida	34,268	6.7	98,410	9.4
Continue...				

State	1990 Number	% of Total	2000 Number	% of Total
Massachusetts	30,177	5.9	69,502	6.7
Rhode Island	9,374	1.8	24,588	2.4
Pennsylvania	3,687	0.7	13,667	1.3
Connecticut	3,946	0.8	12,830	1.2
Other States	19,170	3.8	68,483	6.6

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Population, PUMS, authors' tabulations.

The growing geographical dispersal of Dominicans is also displayed by their rising presence in a number of major cities across the country. Table 6 shows the top cities of Dominican concentration in 2000.

Table 6: Top Cities of Dominican Concentration, 2000

Cities	1990 Pop.	2000 Pop.
New York City, NY	332,713	554,638
Lawrence City, MA	11,095	22,111
Paterson City, NJ	8,750	19,977
Providence City, RI	8,138	19,915
Boston City, MA	8,102	19,061
Jersey City, NJ	5,779	12,598
Passaic City, NJ	6,422	12,481
Perth Amboy City, NJ	5,272	11,431
Yonkers City, NY	3,788	10,223
Union City, NJ	5,390	10,205
Miami City, FL	5,786	9,473

Source: 1990 Census (STF4) and 2000 Census, authors' tabulations.

New York City continues to be the top location, with 554,638 Dominicans residing in the Big Apple. This is followed by the City of Lawrence in Massachusetts, which houses 22,111 Dominicans, the City of Paterson in New Jersey, where 19,977 Dominicans reside, Providence City, with approximately the same population, and Boston, with 19,061. Other cities with major concentrations include Jersey City, Perth Amboy and Union City in New Jersey, Yonkers City in New York, and Miami City in Florida.

The City of New York accounts for the greatest population of Dominicans in the U.S. But, as Table 7 shows, while the Dominican population in New York City has been growing quickly, the population residing outside New York has been rising faster. The percentage of all Dominicans in the U.S. located in New York City declined from 73.4 percent in 1980 to 53.2 percent in 2000.

The number of Dominicans in New York City rose by 221,925 between 1990 and 2000. In absolute value, this was the largest population gain of any single, major ethnic and racial group in New York during the nineties. The Mexican population had a much higher population growth rate, close to 200 percent, but they had a much smaller population base, rising from 61,722 in 1990 to 186,872 in 2000, which amounts to an increase of 125,150 persons, just over half of the population increase of Dominicans.

Table 7: The Dominican Population in the U.S. and New York City			
Time Series	United States Number	New York City Number	New York as % of U.S.
1980	170,817	125,380	73.4%
1990	511,297	332,713	65.1%
2000	1,041,910	554,638	53.2%

Source: See Tables 1 and 2.

Table 8: The Population of New York City, 1990-2000		
Population Group	Number in 1990	Number in 2000
Dominicans	332,713	554,638
New York City Overall	7,322,564	8,008,278
Non-Hispanic White	3,163,125	2,801,267
Non-Hispanic Black	1,847,049	1,962,154
Non-Hispanic Asian	489,851	783,058
Hispanic/Latino	1,783,511	2,160,554
Puerto Ricans	896,763	789,172
Mexican	61,722	186,872

Source: Table 2 and New York City Department of City Planning, *NYC2000: Results from the 2000 Census, Asian and Hispanic Subgroups*, Spring 2002.

Table 8 shows the population distribution of the various major racial and ethnic groups in New York. With over half-a million people, Dominicans are currently the second largest Hispanic/Latino population in New York City, following Puerto Ricans. However, since the Puerto Rican population has been declining in recent years, while the Dominican population continues to climb rapidly, the estimates are that—at current growth rates—Dominicans will become the largest Hispanic/Latino group in New York City within the next ten years.

Table 9 decomposes Dominican New Yorkers according to borough of residence. Although Manhattan continues to be the area of greatest concentration of Dominicans, with 33.5 percent of the New York City population residing there, the nineties saw a major spreading of Dominicans into other parts of the City. The Bronx, in particular, grew sharply as an area of Dominican settlement and now rivals Manhattan as the borough of New York with most Dominicans. In 2000, the Bronx was host to 181,400 Dominicans, compared to 185,808 in Manhattan.

Table 9: The Dominican Population of New York City, By Borough

City Borough	Number	% of Total in 1990	Number	% of Total in 2000
Manhattan	136,696	41.1%	185,808	33.5%
The Bronx	87,261	26.2	181,450	32.7
Queens	52,309	15.7	95,267	17.2
Brooklyn	55,301	16.6	89,567	16.1
Staten Island	1,146	0.4	2,545	0.5
Total	332,713	100.0	554,638	100.0

Source: NYC Dept. of City Planning, *Socioeconomic Profiles*, City of New York, March 1993; and NYC Dept. of City Planning, *NYC2000: Results from the 2000 Census, Asian and Hispanic Subgroups*, Spring 2002. The 2000 numbers are adjusted for the Census undercount.

Within Manhattan, the overwhelming focus of location is the Washington Heights/Inwood area. In the Bronx, there are large settlements in Morris Heights, Highbridge, Univ. Heights, Morris Heights, the Concourse, Fordham, Bedford Park and Marble Hill.

These concentrations in Manhattan and the Bronx are followed by a number of communities in Queens, another borough of high Dominican growth in the 1990s, and Brooklyn. The largest concentration in Queens is located in Corona, while in Brooklyn, the significant areas are Williamsburg, Bushwick, Sunset Park and Cypress Hills.

3. The Socioeconomic Status of Dominicans

What is the current socioeconomic status of the Dominican population in the United States? How does it compare with that of other groups in the country?

Most experts utilize mean household income in comparing the average standard of living of various groups in the population. But in inter-group comparisons, one should consider the fact that the number of people residing in a household may vary across groups. Because of this variability, two households with identical income may have widely different standards of living. If one household has ten persons living in it while the other has only three, the standard of living is much higher in the latter. In order to adjust for differences in household size, economists usually divide household income by the number of persons in the household to compute per-capita household income. This adjustment is important because there is great variability in the average number of persons per household across the various groups considered. In 2000, the average household size among Dominicans in the United States was 3.6, but for the overall United States it was lower, equal to 2.6.

Table 10: Per-Capita Income in the U.S., By Race/Ethnicity	
Race/Ethnicity	Mean Annual Household Income Per-Capita, 1999
Dominican Population	\$11,065
United States Average	22,086
Non-Hispanic White Population	25,187
Non-Hispanic Black Population	14,516
Non-Hispanic Asian Population	22,260
Hispanic/Latino Population	12,483

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS, authors' tabulations.

Table 10 presents the differences in annual household income per-capita prevailing in the United States in 1999. Note that the income differentials between the population of Dominican ethnicity and the rest of the population are substantial. In 1999, Dominicans had an

annual household income per-capita of \$11,065, which was about half of the per-capita income of the average household in the country. The gap is slightly lower when compared to the overall Latino/Hispanic population, whose mean per-capita income in 2000 was \$12,483.

The socioeconomic status of Dominicans varies dramatically by geography. Table 11 presents the average annual household income per-capita of Dominicans in the states with the largest Dominican communities. As can be seen, Florida displays the highest income, with \$12,886, and Rhode Island the lowest, with \$8,560. This represents tremendous inequality: the average income of Dominicans in Florida is 50 percent higher than that of Dominicans in Rhode Island.

Table 11 shows that Dominicans in New York State have a per-capita income that is somewhat below the average for the United States. Since the great majority of Dominicans in New York State are located in New York City, this indicator applies to them as well.

Table 11: The Per-Capita Income of Dominicans in the U.S., By State	
State	Mean Annual Household Income Per-Capita, 1999
Dominican Population in U.S.	\$11,065
Florida	12,886
New Jersey	11,980
New York	10,173
Massachusetts	10,147
Rhode Island	8,560

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS, authors' tabulations.

Table 12 shows the annual income per-capita of the major racial and ethnic groups in New York City. The mean per-capita income of Dominicans in 1999 was \$10,032, which is the lowest per-capita income among all the major racial and ethnic groups in New York City. Compared to the average for New York City, Dominican per-capita income was less than half. Even among Hispanics/Latinos, the per-capita income of Dominicans was 25 percent lower than the average for Hispanics/Latinos in New York.

The comparatively low income of Dominican New Yorkers is reflected in high poverty rates. Poverty status is determined by comparing the income of the family where the person lives with an income threshold measuring the amount of financial resources that a family needs in order to purchase a basic, minimum food budget. This threshold varies with the number of persons in the family, number of children, and age of family members. For instance, the average income threshold for a family consisting of two adults with one child is \$13,410 for 1999, but for a family of two adults and three children, the threshold rises to \$19,882. The poverty rate is the percentage of persons living in families with income below the poverty income threshold.

Table 12: Socioeconomic Status of Dominicans in New York City, 2000

Population Group	Mean Annual Household Income Per-Capita, 1999	Poverty Rate (%)
Dominican New Yorkers, overall	\$10,032	32.0%
New York City Average	24,010	19.1
Non-Hispanic White Population	37,391	9.7
Non-Hispanic Black Population	15,367	23.6
Non-Hispanic Asian Population	19,533	18.2
Hispanic/Latino Population	12,500	29.7

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

Table 12 shows that Dominicans have the highest poverty rates of the groups presented. About one out of every three Dominicans in New York City lived in households with income under the poverty line. The overall poverty rate in the City was 19.1 percent and among Hispanics/Latinos in general it was close to 30 percent.

Although the socioeconomic status of Dominican New Yorkers in 2000 was lower compared to others in the City, the situation back in 1990 was substantially worse. Indeed, Dominicans displayed a significant increase in income in the 1990s.

Table 13 displays the changes in the socioeconomic status of New Yorkers in the 1990s, showing the average per-capita household income in 1989 and 1999. The 1989 figures have been adjusted for inflation

(converted into their 1999 dollar equivalent), so that they can be compared to the 1999 data.

Table 13 shows that Dominicans had a 16 percent increase in income in the 1990s, compared to a 9.2 percent increase for the New York City population overall. Still, Dominican income gains pale in comparison to those of the non-Hispanic White population, whose income per-capita increased by over 20 percent in the 1990s. By 1999, the White population of New York City had per-capita income that was almost four times that of Dominicans.

Table 13: Changes in Socioeconomic Status, New York City, 2000			
Population Group	Per-Capita Household Income, 1989	Per-Capita Household Income, 1999	% Change 1989-1999
Dominicans	\$8,659	\$10,032	15.9%
New York City	21,991	24,010	9.2%
Non-Hisp. White	31,026	37,391	20.5%
Non-Hisp. Black	14,573	15,367	5.4%
Non-Hisp. Asian	18,189	19,533	7.4%
Hispanic/Latino	11,515	12,500	8.6%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, 5% PUMS. The data for 1989 has been adjusted for inflation and converted into 1989 dollars.

The income growth of Dominican New Yorkers in the nineties was accompanied by a drop in poverty rates. The poverty rate of Dominicans in New York declined from 36.3 percent in 1989 to 32 percent in 1999. By contrast, the poverty rate in the City of New York increased from 16.9 percent in 1989 to 19.1 percent in 1999.

Despite the progress in the 1990s, the low income and high poverty rates still facing many Dominicans, in New York City and elsewhere, represents a serious challenge.

In New York City, the economy has gone through severe cycles of boom and bust over the last three decades. These cycles have affected minority populations much more acutely than other groups. For instance, beginning in late 1989 and lasting until 1993, New York City lost hundreds of thousands of jobs to a recession that by many accounts

was the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s. After 1993, the City's economic pace remained slow compared to the rest of the nation, with unemployment still hovering above the 10 percent level as late as 1997. Only at the end of the decade was the nation's economic acceleration fully transmitted into sharply lower unemployment rates. By the early 2000s, unemployment had declined below 5 percent in the City, only to rise sharply again in response to the September 11th aftermath and the economy's recession. It is for this reason that the long-run impact of the economic progress of the 1990s discussed earlier is yet to be determined.

4. Demographic Factors and Socioeconomic Status

What explains the lower socioeconomic status of Dominicans compared to the average New Yorker? In our analysis below, two sets of forces are presented. Firstly, demographic factors, such as age, family structure and immigration, are analyzed. Secondly, labor market forces are discussed, including labor force participation, unemployment and earnings. This analysis leads to a discussion of the role of educational attainment in explaining differences in economic outcomes. We then examine in detail current educational indicators among Dominicans, and specify the prospects facing the second generation of Dominicans in the U.S.

One possible set of explanations for the high poverty rates among Dominicans is demographic. The age structure of a population, for instance, makes a significant difference in terms of income: except for the very old, as individuals age, they generally have greater income. As a result, if the average age of a population is less than that of other groups, its average income may be lower and poverty rates higher.

Table 14 shows the age distribution of the U.S. and New York City populations, by race and ethnicity. The overall Dominican population in the U.S. has a median age of about 30 years, as do New York City Dominicans. This is substantially lower than the average age in the United States, equal to 35.4 years, as well as in New York City, where the median age is 34.4 years. The young age of Dominicans partly explains their lower income since, as noted above, labor market rewards are positively correlated with age, seniority and on-the-job experience.

Table 14: The Median Age of Dominicans in the United States, 2000		
Population Group	United States	New York City
Dominican Population	29.6	29.9
Total Population	35.4	34.4
Non-Hispanic White Population	38.6	40.6
Continue...		

Population Group	United States	New York City
Non-Hispanic Black Population	29.9	32.6
Non-Hispanic Asian Population	33.1	34.0
Hispanic/Latino Population	26.0	29.4

Source: 2000 Census, Summary File Tape 4.

A second set of forces explaining the comparatively high poverty levels among Dominicans is related to gender and marital status. Because of the drastically lower income received by women in the labor market, families headed by separated or divorced women, as well as single women with children, tend to have lower income and higher poverty than married couple families.

Table 15: Female-Headed Families in the U.S. and New York City, 2000. Expressed as a % of all families

Population Group	United States	New York City
Dominican Population	32.5%	38.2%
Total Population	13.3%	22.1%
Non-Hispanic White Population	9.6	9.1
Non-Hispanic Black Population	35.6	40.0
Non-Hispanic Asian Population	8.9	8.1
Hispanic/Latino Population	17.1	32.0

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

The proportion of persons living in such families is substantially higher among Dominicans. Table 15 presents the proportion of persons living in families headed by women, with no spouse present, for the major racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Among Dominicans in the United States, 32.5 percent live in female-headed families. The proportion is higher for Dominican New Yorkers, 38.2 percent of whom live in this type of household. These figures are substantially higher than those for the overall population, although they remain lower than those for Black/African Americans.

A high proportion of the Dominican population under poverty consists of female-headed families. Consider the case of New York City.

Table 16 decomposes poverty rates for families headed by women, with no spouse present, and for other households, which are largely married couple families. The poverty rate among Dominican female-headed families in New York in 2000 was 46.2 percent, more than twice the poverty rate facing other households. This gap exists not only for Dominicans, but also for most other groups in the population, particularly those with lower average income levels.

Table 16: Poverty and Female-Headed Families, New York City, 2000.
Proportion of persons living under poverty line

Population Group	Female-Headed Families	Other Households
Dominican Population	46.2%	22.8%
Total Population	34.9%	14.3%
Non-Hispanic White Population	15.4	9.1
Non-Hispanic Black Population	33.7	16.1
Non-Hispanic Asian Population	19.0	18.1
Hispanic/Latino Population	46.6	21.2

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

Another major demographic force among Dominican New Yorkers is the large fraction of recent immigrants in the population. This is significant because there exist substantial income differences between recent immigrants and the rest of the population. Largely, this is the result of the difficulties encountered by labor market newcomers, as they enter and adjust to the American economy and society. Consider, for instance, the income of Dominican immigrants who entered the U.S. between 1995 and 2000. The annual per-capita household income of these migrants in 1999 was \$9,377. By comparison, the per-capita income of immigrants who moved to the U.S. before 1990 was equal to \$12,556 in the year 1999, close to one-third higher. These figures imply that the gap between the income of Dominicans and other groups presented earlier may be partly related to the much larger proportion of recent immigrants among Dominicans compared to other groups.

At the same time, the data show that Dominican immigrants exhibit substantially lower income than other immigrants. This suggests that other economic forces are compounding demographic factors in influencing the social and economic status of Dominicans. The next section examines the basic labor market changes in the Dominican population occurring between 1990 and 2000. We study labor force participation rates, unemployment, industry and occupational distributions.

5. The Labor Market Situation of the Dominican Population

The lower income and higher poverty rates facing the Dominican population in 2000, compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the United States, can be explained in large part by the labor market challenges encountered by Dominicans. The key labor market outcomes to analyze include: (1) labor force participation, (2) employment or unemployment rate of those persons who are in the labor force, and (3) earnings received by those who are employed. We examine how these variables changed between 1990 and 2000, both for Dominicans as well as for the overall population of the United States.

5.1. Labor Force Participation and Unemployment

Table 17 presents U.S. labor force participation rates in 2000, decomposed by race/ethnicity and gender. For both men and women, the labor force participation rate among Dominicans lies below that of the overall population of the United States.

The proportion of Dominican men participating in the labor force (employed or unemployed) was approximately 64 percent, quite below the overall participation rate in the nation of 72.7 percent. Among Dominican women, 53.1 percent were participating in the labor market in 2000, compared to 58.5 percent among non-Hispanic White women.

Table 17: Labor Force Participation Rates in the United States, 2000. Persons 16 years of age or older

Population Group	Labor Force Participation Rate Male	(%) Female
Dominican Population	64.0%	53.1%
United States overall	72.7	58.5
Non-Hispanic White	73.8	58.8
Non-Hispanic Black	65.8	60.7
Non-Hispanic Asian	71.8	57.5
Hispanic/Latino	71.4	53.5

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

Dominican labor force participation rates are lower in New York City than in the rest of the nation. This may partly explain the comparatively lower income of Dominican New Yorkers.

Table 18 presents the labor force participation rates of Dominicans and other racial and ethnic groups in New York City in 2000. The labor force participation rate among Dominican men in New York was 60.9 percent in the year 2000, while that of women was 49.1 percent, both significantly below the corresponding figures for U.S. Dominicans. But as can be seen from Table 18, labor force participation is lower in New York for every group in the City, not just Dominicans.

Table 18: Labor Force Participation Rates in New York City, 2000. Persons 16 years of age or older		
Population Group	Labor Force Participation Rate Male	(%) Female
Dominican Population	60.9%	49.1%
United States overall	66.9	53.5
Non-Hispanic White	69.3	54.5
Non-Hispanic Black	62.8	57.2
Non-Hispanic Asian	70.3	53.7
Hispanic/Latino	64.2	48.3

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

Compounding the comparatively lower labor force participation rates of Dominicans, compared to the rest of the population, the trend has been for participation rates for men to decline over time. In New York City, for example, the labor force participation rate of Dominican men declined from 75.6 percent in 1980 to 73.1 percent in 1990 and, as Table 18 shows, to 60.9 percent in 2000. For Dominican women, labor force participation rates in New York have remained relatively stable over time, rising slightly from 47.3 percent in 1980 to 49.1 percent in 1990 and remaining at the latter level in 2000.

The drop in labor force participation rates among Dominican men is shared by other groups in the City and has coincided with a period of sustained, high unemployment lasting from the late 1980s and into

the mid 1990s. The sustained, stressful labor market conditions during this time period led many workers suffering from long-term unemployment to drop out of the labor force. As a result, labor force participation declined for all major groups in the City, including Dominicans.

Table 19 displays the proportion of the labor force that was unemployed in 2000, for various ethnic/racial groups in the United States. The data are decomposed by gender. As the data show, the unemployment rate of Dominicans was about twice the overall U.S. unemployment rate of 4 percent. However, there is a distinct gender gap, with unemployment among women much higher than among men. For Dominican men, the unemployment rate in 2000 was 7.8 percent, compared to 10.7 percent among women.

Table 19: Unemployment Rates in the United States, 2000. Persons 16 years of age or older in the labor force

Population Group	Unemployment Rate Male	(%) Female
Dominican Population	7.8%	10.7%
United States overall	3.9	4.1
Non-Hispanic White	2.8	3.0
Non-Hispanic Black	8.1	7.6
Non-Hispanic Asian	3.2	3.7
Hispanic/Latino	5.4	7.6

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

The unemployment situation was worse in New York City, where—as we mentioned earlier—labor market conditions were more sluggish to recover from the severe recession in the early 1990s. Table 20 show unemployment rates in New York City, both in 2000 and one decade earlier, in 1990.

The unemployment rate among male Dominican New Yorkers was approximately 9 percent in 2000, and among women it was 13.1 percent. Both of these rates are several percentage points higher than the Dominican unemployment rates in the rest of the country. This situation, as Table 20 presents, held for all major racial and ethnic groups in the City.

Table 20: Unemployment Rates in New York City, 1990 and 2000. Persons 16 years of age or older				
Population Group	Unemployment Rate (%)			
	Male		Female	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Dominican	15.7	8.9	18.4	13.1
New York City	8.7	5.5	8.1	6.5
Non-Hispanic White	5.5	3.2	4.9	3.4
Non-Hispanic Black	14.3	9.4	10.9	8.6
Hispanic	12.4	7.5	13.6	10.9

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population, 5% PUMS.

Despite the comparatively high unemployment rates faced by all workers in New York City in the year 2000, compared to the rest of the nation, the situation in 2000 was substantially better than in 1990. In 1990, New York was in the midst of a recession, while in 2000 the City was in the tail end of a period of economic boom.

Table 20 presents the changes in unemployment rates in New York City between 1990 and 2000. It shows that unemployment rates in the City had declined from over 8 percent in 1990 to about 6 percent in 2000. These lower unemployment rates cut across both gender and race/ethnicity. However, the relative gaps between men and women and among the various racial and ethnic groups remained unchanged. Women had significantly higher unemployment rates than men in New York in 2000, and minority populations also had sharply higher unemployment rates when compared to White Americans.

The drop in unemployment between 1990 and 2000 contributed to the rise in income noted earlier. But the continuing high unemployment rates faced by Dominicans compared to other New Yorkers, particularly in New York City, constitute one of the most significant barriers to economic progress for this population, as well for as other ethnic and racial minorities.

What explains the substantially higher unemployment rates of Dominican workers? Table 21 shows how some of the determinants of unemployment affected Dominicans in the U.S. labor market. Higher

unemployment rates are significantly linked to educational attainment (the lower the educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of unemployment), English language proficiency (the lower the proficiency, the greater the likelihood of unemployment), recency of migration (the more recent the migrant, the higher the likelihood of unemployment), and the age of the person (the younger the worker, the higher the unemployment).

Table 21: The Determinants of Unemployment, 2000. Dominicans in the labor force (United States)

Categories	Unemployment Rate
Educational Attainment	
Less than High School	12.1%
High School	8.6
Some College	7.9
College or More	4.1
Migrant Status	
Between 1995 and 2000	12.1%
Between 1990 and 1994	10.2
Before 1990	8.5
Age	
16-19	24.3%
20-29	10.5
30-39	7.2
40-49	7.5
Speaks English Language	
Very well	9.1%
Not well	9.7
Not at all	10.9

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, *2000 Census of Population and Housing. 5% PUMS.*

As Table 21 shows, the unemployment rate prevailing among Dominicans with less than a high school education was 12.1 percent, compared to a 7.9 percent unemployment rate among those who had completed high school and had some college education, and 4.1 percent for college graduates. Similarly, for Dominicans aged 16 to 19 years of

age, 24.3 percent were unemployed, compared to a 10.5 percent unemployment rate among persons aged 20 to 29, and 7.2 percent among Dominicans aged 30 to 39. Among immigrants, those who migrated between 1995 and 2000 had an unemployment rate of 12.1 percent, but those who had arrived before 1990 had an unemployment rate of 8.5 percent.

The variables just discussed—which involve worker characteristics—explain part of the employment challenge facing Dominicans in the labor force. But additional forces need to be introduced to examine the higher unemployment rates prevailing in New York City.

There is a second phenomenon that has also impacted the Dominican population more than others, particularly in New York City. During the 1990s, the number of manufacturing jobs in New York City declined sharply, as the economy continued its restructuring from manufacturing to services. Between 1989 and 1995, for instance, manufacturing employment declined by close to 90,000 jobs on a net basis. This led to a collapse of industrial-type employment opportunities. As a consequence, groups with a high proportion of manufacturing employment in their labor force were disproportionately affected by this restructuring. What is the role of manufacturing employment among the Dominican population?

Table 22 presents the industrial composition of the labor force in New York City in 2000, compared to the Dominican labor force. The data reflect the sector of employment of persons in the labor force in 2000. For persons employed, this is their actual employment at the time of interview in 2000. For unemployed persons, it represents the industry of their last job.

The Dominican population had a significant over-representation of persons employed in manufacturing in 2000. A total of 12.4 percent of the Dominican labor force was employed in manufacturing in 1990. This compares to only 6.6 percent among the overall New York City population. But what is more significant is that this proportion declined sharply in the 1990s.

Table 22: The Industrial Distribution of Employment in New York City, 2000. Persons in the labor force

Categories	Proportion of New York City Labor Force	Proportion of Dominican Labor Force
Agriculture, Forestry and Mining	0.1%	0.1%
Construction	4.3	3.8
Manufacturing	6.6	12.4
Transport, Utilities and Communications	8.3	8.6
Trade	12.1	19.0
Finance, Insurance Real Estate	11.4	7.0
Service Sector	52.7	46.9
Public Administration	4.5	2.2

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000 U.S. Census of Population, 5% PUMS.

Table 23 shows the changes in the share of manufacturing in the industry of the New York City labor force, as well as the Dominican workforce. In 1980, manufacturing accounted for 18 percent of employment in New York. This dropped to 12.1 percent in 1990 and 6.6 percent in 2000. But manufacturing has been a sector of great importance for Dominican employment. In 1980, as much as 48.6 percent (almost half) of the Dominican labor force was employed in manufacturing. This declined to 25.7 percent in 1990 and to 12.4 percent in 2000. The collapse of manufacturing as an industry in New York left tens of thousands of Dominican workers temporarily unemployed in the 1980s and 1990s, and has been a source of continuing economic distress in the City, particularly among Dominican women.

Table 23: The Decline of Manufacturing in New York City. Persons in the labor force

Share of Labor Force	1980	1990	2000
Proportion of NYC Labor Force	18.0%	12.1%	6.6%
Proportion of Dominican Labor Force	48.6	25.7	12.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000 U.S. Census of Population, 5% PUMS.

5.2. Occupation and Earnings

Labor force and employment rates are essential in determining the access of workers into the labor market. But once a job is obtained, income —and socioeconomic status— is directly connected to the type of occupation one is employed at. And compared to the rest of the population, the Dominican labor force has a greater share of unskilled, blue-collar occupations.

Table 24 shows the occupational distribution of the labor force in New York City in 1997, decomposed by the major racial and ethnic groups examined in this paper. As can be seen, 17.3 percent of the Dominican labor force was in managerial, professional and technical occupations compared to almost twice, 33.6 percent, for the overall United States labor force. At the same time, the proportion of the Dominican labor force employed as production, transportation and materials moving occupations was 23.7 percent in 2000, much higher than the average for the United States, which was 14.8 percent.

Table 24: Occupational Distribution of the Labor Force. Persons in the labor force		
Occupation	United States	Dominican
Managerial/Professional/Technical	33.6%	17.3%
Sales and Office Support	26.7	26.0
Service Workers	14.8	25.1
Farming, Forestry and Fishing	0.7	0.3
Construction, Extraction and Maintenance	9.4	7.6
Production, Transportation and Materials Moving	14.8	23.7

Source: 2000 Census, Summary File 4.

The less-skilled occupations obtained by Dominican workers explain to a large extent their low relative earnings. This is clearly seen in the case of New York City. Table 25 presents the annual median earnings of Dominicans in 2000, compared with those of other groups of workers in the City. As can be seen, the average annual earnings of Dominican were the lowest of all the groups examined in Table 25.

For Dominican men, annual earnings in 1999 were on average equal to \$18,589, substantially below those of the overall New York City male worker population, whose median earnings were \$29,155 in 1999. Among Dominican women, the annual earnings of \$12,923 in 1999 were about half those for women overall, whose earnings were \$24,469.

Table 25: The Annual Earnings of Workers in New York City, 1999. Employed persons 16 years of age or older

Population Group	Median Annual Earnings	
	Male	Female
Dominican	\$18,589	\$12,923
New York City	29,155	24,469
Non-Hispanic White	41,717	31,488
Non-Hispanic Black	26,220	24,882
Hispanic	20,938	16,300

Source: 2000 Census, Summary File 4.

The wide gap in earnings between Dominican workers and the average worker in New York City helps explain the socioeconomic disparity noted earlier. Combined with the higher unemployment rates of Dominicans, these two forces explain to a large extent the comparatively high poverty of Dominicans in New York.

As with unemployment rates, there are a variety of forces influencing earnings, including age (experience), immigrant status, English proficiency, disability status, etc. But key among these variables are age and educational attainment.

The age structure of a population makes a significant difference in terms of salaries: except for the very old, as workers age, their labor market experience is rewarded with increased earnings. As a result, if the average age of a group is lower, as in the case of Dominicans, its average income may also be lower.

Table 26 presents the overall link between age and earnings in New York City. The annual wages and salaries of full-time workers shown in this table rise sharply with age. For the labor force aged 16 to 19 years of age, annual earnings in 1999 were equal to \$19,576. This rises to

\$27,476 for workers aged 20 to 24. For the age group 25 to 34, earnings increase to \$50,694, and so on for older age groups. Only when workers reach the 55 to 64 years of age bracket does their income decline, compared to younger cohorts.

Table 26: Age and the Earnings of Workers in New York City, 1999. Annual Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers 16 years of age or older	
Age Group	Average Annual Earnings (1999)
16 to 19	\$19,576
20 to 24	27,476
25 to 34	50,694
35 to 44	61,653
45 to 54	62,545
55 to 64	61,998

Source: 2000 Census, 1% PUMS, authors' tabulations.

The Dominican population is relatively young. As a result, it has a much higher share of young workers. This partly explains the lower Dominican earnings in Table 25.

But the most critical variable explaining earnings is educational attainment. There is strong positive correlation between earnings and schooling. Higher educational attainment raises worker productivity and leads to increased wages. Education is also used by employers as a screening device, with less-educated workers out-ranked by more-educated workers in the rationing of entry-level jobs and higher-paying promotions. This is illustrated by Table 27, which shows the annual wage and salary income of full-time, year-round workers in New York City in 1999. The average earnings of workers with no high school diploma vary in the range of \$20,000- \$30,000. But those with a high school diploma had average annual earnings of \$36,161. For workers with a college degree the annual earnings rise to \$70,564.

Given the critical importance of education in determining earnings, the next section examines the educational attainment of Dominicans.

Table 27: The Economic returns to Education in New York City, 1999. Annual Earnings of Full-Time, Year-Round Workers, 16 years of age or older

Educational Attainment	Average Annual Earnings (1999)
Elementary/Middle School	\$25,306
Some High School	29,871
High School Diploma or Equivalent	36,161
Some College	45,261
College Degree	70,564
More than College	100,754

Source: 2000 Census, 1% PUMS, authors' tabulations.

6. The Educational Attainment of Dominicans in New York City

Table 28 presents the educational outcomes of the Dominican population in the United States in 2000, compared to the overall population of the country. Note that the Dominican population had the highest proportion of persons who had not completed high school. A total of 49.0 percent of the Dominican population in the U.S. with 25 years of age or older had not completed high school in 2000.

Table 28: The Educational Status of the U.S. Population, 2000. Persons 25 years of age or older

Population Group	Percentage of the Population with:			
	Less than High School	High School	Some College	College or More
Dominicans	49.0%	20.5%	19.9%	10.6%
United States	19.6	28.6	27.4	24.4
Non-Hisp. White	14.5	30.0	28.5	27.0
Non-Hisp. Black	27.4	29.7	28.4	14.5
Non-Hisp. Asian	18.9	16.3	21.4	43.4
Hispanic	47.5	22.1	19.9	10.5

Source: 2000 Census. Summary Tape File 4.

In contrast, for the U.S. overall, less than 20 percent of the population 25 years of age or older had not completed high school in 2000. In terms of college education, only 10.6 percent of Dominicans 25 years of age or older had in fact completed college, compared to 24.4 percent for the overall U.S. population.

Table 28 shows the comparatively low level of schooling of the overall Dominican population. Table 29 decomposes the population into those born in the United States and those born outside the country. This table shows very clearly that although the immigrant Dominican community has low relative levels of schooling, this is not the case with U.S.-born Dominicans.

In fact, Dominicans born in the United States have made remarkable educational progress. The figures in Tables 28 and 29 indicate that U.S.-born Dominicans have a high school completion rate that slightly exceeds the average for the United States. In 2000, only 19.4 percent of U.S.-born Dominicans 25 years of age or older had not completed high school, while the corresponding figure for the overall United States is 19.6 percent.

Table 29: The Educational Status of the Dominican Population, 2000. Persons 25 years of age or older				
Population Group	Percentage of U.S. Dominicans with:			
	Less than High School	High School	Some College	College or More
Overall Dominican Population	49.0%	20.5%	19.9%	10.6%
Immigrant Dominicans	51.7	20.5	18.3	9.5
Born in the United States	19.4	21.0	37.7	21.9

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

Table 30 compares the educational attainment of the Hispanic/Latino second and older generations, decomposed into the major ethnic groups in that population. Only U.S.-born Cubans, whose parental socioeconomic status widely exceeded that of immigrant Dominicans, have greater schooling than U.S.-born Dominicans. For instance, the proportion of U.S.-born Dominicans with a college degree is equal to 21.9 percent, compared to 13.3 percent for U.S.-born Mexicans, 12.1 percent for U.S.-born Puerto Ricans, and 36.2 percent for Cubans.

This national pattern also applies to New York City. Table 31 presents the educational attainment of Dominicans in New York City, decomposed for U.S.-born persons and immigrants. The table shows that U.S.-born Dominicans have substantially greater schooling than immigrant Dominicans. It also shows a dramatic picture of educational progress. Both immigrants and U.S.-born Dominicans display improved educational indicators. But the progress among U.S.-born

Dominicans is impressive. In 1980, the proportion of U.S.-born Dominicans with 25 years of age or older who had attained college education (with or without completing it) was 31.7 percent. By 1990, the percentage had increased to 42.8 percent. And by 2000, the proportion was equal to 55.1 percent.

Table 30: The Educational Status of Hispanics/Latinos Born in the U.S. Persons 25 years of age or older, 2000

Population Group	Percentage of U.S.-Born Hispanics with:			
	Less than High School	High School	Some College	College or More
Latinos overall	31.4	27.6	27.7	13.2
Dominicans	19.4	21.0	37.7	21.9
Cuban	14.6	18.3	30.9	36.2
Mexican	31.2	28.4	28.1	13.3
Puerto Rican	36.6	26.3	25.0	12.1

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

Table 31: The Educational Status of Dominican New Yorkers. Persons 25 years of age or older, 1980-2000

Population Group	Percentage of U.S.-Born Hispanics with:			
	Less than High School	High School	Some College	College or More
All, 1980 U.S.-born Immigrants	72.0	16.5	7.7	3.8
	35.0	33.3	15.0	16.7
	72.7	16.2	7.6	3.5
All, 1990 U.S.-born Immigrants	61.5	18.0	14.4	6.1
	33.9	23.3	28.5	14.3
	62.4	17.8	14.0	5.8
All, 2000 U.S.-born Immigrants	52.8	19.1	19.0	9.1
	23.7	21.3	35.4	19.7
	55.6	18.9	17.4	8.1

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS.

6.1. Increased Enrollment in Public Schools

The sharply higher schooling indicators of the Dominican adult population suggest an increased participation of this group in the American educational system. In New York City, this increased participation

is combined with an exploding population growth, which is leading to a sharp increase in the number of Dominican school-age children.

In 2000, 24.2 percent of the Dominican population in New York City was in the 6 to 18 years age range. This represents 134,222 children and teenagers. Since the overwhelming proportion of Dominicans attending schools is enrolled in public schools (over 90 percent), they represent a significant, and rising, force in the public school system of New York.

There were 1,072,628 students enrolled in the New York City public primary and secondary school system in 2000. Table 32 shows the distribution of these children on the basis of race and ethnicity. Hispanics/Latinos constituted the largest group, accounting for 37.3 percent of all students enrolled in the public school system. They were followed by Black/African American students, which composed 36.1 percent of those in the system. White children accounted for 16.1 percent, and Asian and other students for 10.5 percent.

Table 32: Enrollment in the Public School System of New York City, 2000		
Population Group	Enrollment, Fall 2000	Percentage of Total
Total Student Population	1,072,628	100.0%
Hispanic/Latino Population	400,090	37.3
Puerto Rican	143,732	13.4
Dominican	111,553	10.4
Mexican	34,324	3.2
Non-Hispanic White	387,220	36.1
Non-Hispanic Black	172,693	16.1
Non-Hispanic Asian and other	112,625	10.5

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS; 2002 Digest of Education Statistics.

Among Hispanics, Table 32 shows that Puerto Ricans were the largest group, composing 13.4 percent of all students in New York City public schools. Dominicans were the second largest Hispanic group, accounting for 10.4 percent of all students. We thus estimate that a total of 111,553 Dominicans were enrolled in New York City public schools.

In line with our earlier findings, we also find that Dominican children have school retention rates that compare favorably with those of other minority children. Table 33 displays the enrollment rates of children and teenagers in various age groups. Enrollment rates remain high for all groups until the 18-21 age range. For this group, Dominicans have enrollment rates that are substantially higher than the average for Hispanics/Latinos. For female Dominicans in the 18-21 age range, the proportion enrolled in school/college in 2000 was 61.2 percent, which is very close to the City average enrollment rate of 63.4 percent for this age group. For Hispanic women overall, the enrollment rate is substantially lower, equal to 53.7 percent.

The strong participation of Dominicans in the public education system of New York system is also reflected in the college population. In 2000, as much as 8.5 percent of the New York City public college student population was Dominican, exceeding the 7.7 percent of that population that was Puerto Rican.

Table 33: School/College Enrollment Rates in New York City, 2000						
Age Group (Years)	Enrollment Rate					
	New York		Hispanic		Dominican	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
6-11	98.3	98.3	98.1	98.3	97.8	98.3
12-14	98.3	98.4	98.0	97.5	98.3	98.1
15-17	94.4	95.4	90.7	93.2	95.0	94.6
18-21	57.8	63.4	43.0	53.7	50.8	62.2

Source: 2000 Census, 5% PUMS; 2002 Digest of Education Statistics.

At City University of New York, there were 35,863 undergraduate students in Fall 2001 who identified themselves as being of Caribbean origin. Of these students, 30.6 percent—or 10,974—were Dominican, followed by Puerto Rican students, who composed 22.3 percent of the Caribbean student population. A large fraction of these students are female. Among Dominican undergraduates at City University in Fall 2002 (whose number was 11,214), 67.4 percent were women. A large

fraction, 57 percent, worked, with 42.7 percent employed 20 hours a week or more. And 77 percent of Dominican undergraduates at CUNY graduated from a New York City public high school, the highest percentage among all racial and ethnic groups in the City University system. A total of 63 percent of all Dominican undergraduates at CUNY came from households with annual income below \$20,000. The corresponding proportion for the overall undergraduate CUNY population was 39 percent.

Conclusion

This report has provided the first comprehensive analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic status of Dominicans in the United States, the fourth largest Hispanic/Latino population in the nation.

The Dominican population in the United States rose from 520,121 in 1990 to 1,041,910 in 2000. At current population growth rates, the Dominican population will overtake the Cuban population before the year 2010, making Dominicans the third largest Hispanic/Latino population in the country, following Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.

The major source of Dominican growth has been immigration. But the Dominican population born in the United States rose sharply in the 1990s. There were 394,914 Dominicans born in the U.S. residing in the country in 2000. This constitutes one out of every three Dominicans.

The largest concentration of Dominicans continues to be located in the state of New York, but there has been a significant spread to other states in the last decade. The state of New York was host to 617,901 Dominicans in 2000, followed by New Jersey (with 136,529), Florida (98,410), Massachusetts (69,502), Rhode Island (24,588), Pennsylvania (13,667), and Connecticut (12,830). There were also budding Dominican communities in almost every region of the country, from Alaska to Hawaii.

New York City continues to dominate the location of Dominicans in the United States. The Dominican population of New York rose from 332,713 to 554,638 between 1990 and 2000. Dominicans are currently the second largest Hispanic/Latino population of New York, following Puerto Ricans. But the Puerto Rican population in the City declined substantially in the last decade. If current population growth trends continue, Dominicans will overtake Puerto Ricans as the largest Hispanic/Latino population of the City within the next ten years.

The expanding Dominican population outside New York City has reduced the proportion of Dominicans in the City from 73.4 percent in 1980 to 65.1 percent in 1990 and 53.2 percent in 2000. Following New York City, there are major Dominican populations in the City

of Lawrence (Massachusetts), the City of Paterson (New Jersey), Providence (Rhode Island), and Boston (Massachusetts). The cities of Jersey City, Passaic, Perth Amboy and Union City in New Jersey also have substantial Dominican populations, as do the City of Yonkers in New York, and Miami in Florida. Many other cities all over the country have smaller, but rapidly growing Dominican populations.

The mean annual per-capita household income of the Dominican population in the United States was \$11,065 in the year 1999. This was about half the per-capita income of the average household in the country that year. It was also significantly lower than the per-capita income of the Black/African American population and even slightly lower than the income of the average Hispanic/Latino household. But there is substantial variability in the socioeconomic status of Dominicans in various parts of the United States. Among the most populous states, Dominicans in Florida had the highest per-capita household income, equal to \$12,886 in the year 1999. By contrast, Dominicans in Rhode Island had the lowest average per-capita income, equal to \$8,560 in the year 1999.

In New York City, the average per-capita income of Dominicans was below the average for the United States. The poverty rate of 32 percent among Dominican New Yorkers was the highest of the major racial and ethnic groups in New York. The overall poverty rate in New York in 1999 was 19.1 percent, while it was 29.7 percent for the overall Hispanic/Latino population.

A high proportion of Dominican families in poverty consist of female-headed families, with no spouse present. In 2000, as much as 38.2 percent of Dominicans in New York lived in this type of family, compared to 22.1 percent for the overall City population. Close to half of Dominican female-headed families in New York City were poor, more than twice the poverty rate for other households.

Despite the low relative socioeconomic status of Dominicans in New York City, their income displayed significant growth in the 1990s, rising by close to 16 percent in the decade (adjusted for inflation). The overall increase of per-capita income in the City in the decade was

9.2 percent, but both the Black/African American population and the overall Hispanic/Latino population in the City had lower income growth rates. The White population in the City displayed a growth of over 20 percent in per-capita income.

The labor force participation rate of Dominicans is lower than that for the rest of the population. In 2000, it was approximately 64 percent for men and 53.1 percent for women. The figures for the overall U.S. workforce are 72.7 percent and 58.5 percent, for men and women, respectively.

The unemployment rate of Dominican women and men in 2000 greatly exceeded that of the overall labor force in the United States. In 2000, Dominican men had an unemployment rate of 7.8 percent, compared to an overall unemployment rate of 3.9 percent for men in the country. Among women, the Dominican unemployment rate was 10.7 percent in 2000, compared to 4.1 percent in the country overall.

Despite the comparatively high unemployment rates of Dominicans, these rates declined sharply between 1990 and 2000. In New York City, for instance, the male and female unemployment rates among Dominicans were 15.7 percent and 18.4 percent, respectively, in 1990. These dropped to 8.9 percent and 13.1 percent by 2000.

The Dominican labor force is very young and mostly unskilled. Only 17.3 percent of Dominicans in the United States have managerial, professional and technical occupations, about half the proportion for the overall United States. As a result, the average earnings of Dominican men and women are substantially lower than those of other workers in the nation.

The overall educational attainment of Dominicans in the United States is among the lowest in the country. In 2000, 49 percent of Dominicans 25 years of age or older had not completed high school and only 10.6 percent had completed college. By contrast, less than 20 percent of the American population had not completed high school in 2000, and 24.4 percent had finished college.

But the educational situation of Dominicans varies enormously when decomposed by immigrant status. Although the educational attainment

of Dominican immigrants is very low, the situation for U.S.-born Dominicans is sharply different. The Dominican second-generation in the United States has educational indicators that suggest a remarkable acquisition of human capital over the last 20 years. This differs from the overall situation of U.S.-born Hispanics/Latinos, whose educational indicators are substantially worse than those for Dominicans.

The explosive increase of the educational attainment of U.S.-born Dominicans is reflected in the experience of Dominican New Yorkers. For U.S.-born Dominicans in New York, the proportion who attained some college education rose from 31.7 percent in 1980 to 42.8 percent in 1990, and to 55.1 percent in 2000.

Dominicans have substantially higher enrollment rates—at both the high school and college levels—than other minority groups. In New York City, Dominican high school retention rates are substantially higher than for the overall Hispanic/Latino population, and for women, they approach the overall, average New York City high school retention rate.

This report has presented information gathered by the last decennial U.S. Census of Population. Although released over the last few months, the data was collected in the year 2000. There have been significant changes since that time. The New York City economy continued to grow rapidly until mid-2001, causing a further reduction of the unemployment rate prevailing in early 2000, which hovered above 6 percent. On May 2001, the city had achieved a 4.9 percent unemployment rate, the lowest rate since 1988. Since then, however, unemployment has steadily climbed. Both the economy-wide recession and the after-effects of September 11th led to a collapse of the earlier boom. Just in the months of October and November 2001, New York City lost close to one hundred thousand jobs. By early 2003, the unemployment rate had climbed to around 9 percent. There are no comprehensive data available yet to determine the impact of these events on the Dominican population. Judging by the effects of the last recession in the early 1990s, however, the impact of the current economic slump will be magnified among those with low skills. Indeed, the brunt of the short-

term adjustments made by many service, transportation and commerce sectors in New York after September 11th were borne by relatively unskilled laborers. A study released in November 2001 showed that the top 7 occupations affected by the recession after September 11th included: waiters and waitresses, cleaning and maintenance workers, retail sales persons, food preparation workers, cashiers, housekeeping workers, and fast food servers [as reported by Eaton and Wyatt (2001)]. This was followed by smaller losses in more-skilled occupations, such as general managers, top executives, sales supervisors and service supervisors. Given the labor market niche of Dominicans in New York, which targets low-skilled jobs in the service industry, manufacturing, and transportation sectors, one can predict that the impact of the economic slowdown over the last two years has been serious. Still, even though the short-term economic situation does not appear promising, it is clear that once the reconstruction of the World Trade Center site begins and the recovery of the American economy from its current sluggish conditions occur, employment and income prospects can reverse their current trends.

More important perhaps is the picture obtained from the broad strides made by the Dominican second-generation in the educational arena. The accumulation of human capital displayed by U.S.-born Dominicans is bound to bring a long-term economic bonanza to this population. Given the challenges that have faced these youngsters and their families, one can only but be optimistic on the resiliency of Dominicans in seeking the sometimes elusive American dream.

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