

PART ONE: THE PLACES

Planners are intensely involved with the local. Our milieu is the neighborhood, the city, the region; we focus our energy and attention and understanding on the problems that confront us in particular places. However, many of the forces shaping these places are not local. In fact, many of our places are themselves not strictly local; they are intimately bound—by cultural, political, social, and economic ties—to other specific places. They could not survive otherwise. Indeed, in the words of one observer, our places have become “increasingly phantasmagoric: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them.”¹

A migration is one kind of flow that connects places, and it is often embedded in and productive of other ties. In beginning to understand both the Dominican immigration to Lawrence and some of the defining characteristics of Dominican life there, it is necessary to look first at the two places, the island and the City, and the web of larger ties that bind them. Pessar (1982) captures part of this when she notes that “international migration is an historical relationship of economic interdependence between ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ societies. It is more than the migrant stream that links the sending and receiving societies.” While Pessar focuses explicitly on “the unequal system of exchange of commodities, capital and labor” connecting core and periphery², Sassen (1988) provides a broader formulation: “[u]nderstanding why a migration began entails an examination of conditions promoting outmigration in countries of origin and the formation of objective and subjective linkages with receiving countries that make such migration feasible.”

Thus, in the following two chapters I will explore some of the political and economic changes affecting both the Dominican Republic and Lawrence. Partially, this involves understanding the position of both places in the context of a changing global economic system, in order to draw out how “[i]mmigrants and immigration levels are directly related to the globalization of the economy... people... migrate in search of economic opportunities.”³ Of course, as we shall see, there are a number of other equally important factors shaping the Dominican immigration flow, including the 1965 liberalization of immigration laws, which eliminated the use of national origin, race, or ancestry as a basis for admittance to the U.S., and facilitated reunification of families split by the immigration process—not to mention the political and military influence the United States has traditionally exercised over the island.

¹ Anthony Giddens, quoted in Hannerz (p.25).

² “Core” and “periphery” are, roughly speaking, more evocative terms for “developed” and “developing” nations.

³ Laws, 1998. I should note that it is not the purpose of this thesis to dip its dainty toes into the raging debate about globalization—does it exist, is it something new, etc. For our purposes, “globalization” may be said to refer to certain changes (occurring over roughly the last 35 years) in the pace, focus, and organization of worldwide economic activity, characterized by: the deregulation of capital markets and increasingly “free” flow of private investment capital into and out of various national economies; the geographic dispersal and fragmentation of production processes, such that regions are characterized more by the stage than the type of industry they support; the liberalization of trade laws, including the formation of several multilateral trade agreements (e.g., NAFTA), and the expansion of consumer markets; the rise of the transnational corporation as the dominant economic institution, accompanied by the growing role of foreign direct investment (FDI) in diverse national economies; and the central importance of advances in information, communications, and transportation technologies, which function as both facilitators of all these other forms of change and products themselves.

Nevertheless, as Sassen notes:

The current migration to the United States shares a number of general traits with earlier migration phases. But it is also predicated on specific conditions that arise out of the re-organization of the world economy over the last [three] decades... The overall result was the formation of a transnational space within which the circulation of workers can be regarded as one of several flows, including capital, goods, services, and information... the fact that not all countries became large-scale senders of migrants points to the need for specifying the manner in which countries are incorporated into this transnational space... [and] whether there are specific kinds of linkages between the U.S. and those countries that become major senders of immigrants to the U.S.

The exploration of these factors provides an important complement to more traditional explanations of immigration, including conditions of poverty, unemployment, overpopulation, or economic stagnation in sending countries, presence of economic opportunities in destination countries, and liberalization of immigration laws and quotas—none of which adequately explains the Dominican influx to Lawrence. For example, poverty and unemployment were endemic to the Dominican Republic long before large-scale emigration from that country began (Sassen, 1988; Betances, 1995; Black, 1986; Bray, 1987; Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). In addition, many Dominicans came to Lawrence at a time when socioeconomic conditions in the City were going from bad to worse, and when the U.S. was actually tightening immigration controls in the mid-1980s.⁴ Moreover, as Sassen points out, “The major immigrant-sending countries are among the leading recipients of jobs lost in the U.S. and of U.S. foreign direct investment in labor-intensive manufacturing and service activities” (1988, p.16). This is certainly true for the Dominican Republic—which, as we shall see, has been a leading destination for U.S. multinational corporations. Ironically (in light of the flight of textile and garment industries from Lawrence), a large number of these firms are in the garment industry.

Hamilton and Chinchilla, in writing of the Mexican and Central American migration experiences, also emphasize the context of “transnational flows of capital, trade, and technology” (1996, p.195) that not only disrupt traditional economies⁵ in the sending countries, but also change conditions in “core” areas in ways that both intensify the need for migrant or immigrant labor, and problematize the reception of these new populations by native residents and workers. In relation to the Dominican influx to Lawrence, this means we cannot simply consider the historic role that immigrant labor has played in manufacturing industries. We also have to realize the newer dynamics at work. In one manifestation, dying industries in so-called obsolete locations⁶ like Lawrence, struggling with keener global competition, have essentially “imported”

⁴ It is important to note here however that Dominican immigration to the U.S. in general began about 15 years earlier, and was greatly facilitated by the 1965 immigration reform. It is also important to note that the reasons why a migration continues are in some ways distinct from the reasons why it began; as we shall see in Chapter Four, the role of family ties in perpetuating the “migration chain” cannot be underestimated.

⁵ “Traditional economies” can refer to the indigenous economy of a developing nation, usually characterized by small and medium-scale agriculture.

⁶ This characterization often refers to the physical infrastructure (for example, Lawrence’s enormous multi-story red brick mill buildings) now deemed unsuitable for current manufacturing needs.

cheap immigrant labor as an alternative to shelling out the capital required (but unavailable) for foreign direct investment (exporting production, as it were). In another manifestation, many growing and competitive industries—as is certainly true for many of those in the greater Lawrence region—have restructured their production processes such that they can segment their labor demand, creating a core of more highly skilled, stable, permanent jobs, and using temp agencies or subcontracting to respond to seasonal fluctuations in product demand or fill lower-skilled positions (Piore, 1979). Finally, observers of economic restructuring often point to the growing polarization of jobs available (and consequently, the workforce)⁷. While the City itself, unsurprisingly, has had little luck in capitalizing on the high-tech and specialized service boom in the region (and the nation), it has experienced a growth in certain segments of the service sector, such as low-end business services—the necessary underbelly of the much-vaunted clean information economy. While many of these jobs are ones native workers refuse to fill, that does not diminish the resentment they often feel about these changes, which finds a convenient scapegoat in newcomers to the area.

What were the conditions in both places that helped make this immigration possible? What were the institutions and actions that facilitated and perpetuated the process?

⁷ Fernandez Kelly, 1989; Knox, 1998; Laws, 1998; Sassen, 1988.

CHAPTER ONE THE ISLAND

Colonization and Caudillismo

The Dominican Republic encompasses, roughly, the eastern two-thirds of the Island of Hispaniola, which lies between Cuba to the west and Puerto Rico to the east in the Caribbean Sea. Spanish colonization of the "New World" got off to an inauspicious but prophetic beginning on the Island when Cristobal Colon landed there in 1492. During the next sixty years the Spanish settlers managed to exterminate the indigenous Taino Indian population (which numbered approximately one million) through an ingenious combination of forced labor, land and food seizure, physical abuse, and disease (Haggerty, 1991).

The entire Island remained a Spanish colony (called Santo Domingo¹) until 1697, when the eastern third was ceded to France and became the plantation colony of Haiti. During the 1700s Santo Domingo flourished due to revived trade among the Spanish colonies, and "both immigration and importation of slaves increased... the population of the colony... [was] approximately 125,000 in 1790... about 40,000 were white landowners, about 25,000 were black or mulatto freedmen, and about 60,000 were slaves" (Haggerty, 1991)².

The next sixty years were tumultuous ones. France gained control of the colony in the late 1790s, only to lose it again to Spain in 1809; in 1821 Santo Domingans declared their independence from Spain. The newly independent Haitian Republic took this opportunity to invade Santo Domingo, which remained under Haitian rule for the next 22 years. Many see the antipathy felt today by many Dominicans towards Haitians as having its roots in this occupation (intermingled with lingering racial prejudice). On February 27, 1844, due in part to the leadership of national hero Juan Pablo Duarte, Dominicans declared their independence.

¹ Many Dominicans still refer to the entire Island as Santo Domingo, although technically that is just the name of the capital city now.

² In contrast, Haiti at this time had about 30,000 white landowners, 27,000 freedmen, and over half a million slaves, accounting for the greater African heritage of the Haitian people.

*Nosotros le decimos
transculturación... eso no
viene desde ahora, eso viene
de antes de Cristóbal Colón.
Nosotros le tenemos un
sinónimo: "Complejo de
Guacaganarí." Guacaganarí
fue uno de los cinco caciques
que habitaban la isla cuando
llegó Colón... Cuando Colón
llegó, lo veían como dioses...
Guacaganarí entregó parte de
su territorio con tal de que
ellos lo ayudaran a luchar
contra los demás caciques.
Nosotros siempre hemos tenido
ese complejo... te voy a decir
Complejo de Guacaganarí
cuando tú quieres ser o cuando
tú quieres dar para que te
ayuden pero entregando parte
de lo tuyo. Eso sucede cuando
tú te crias aquí te crias de
pequeño. Entonces tú tienes
costumbres que no la tienen en
el país... las costumbres que
tienes aquí las pones en
práctica allá.³*

³ Interview, 3/5/99 (Woman, early 40s, teacher, here several years).

The Dominican Republic (DR) has had for most of its history an agricultural export economy, with sugar, tobacco, cacao, coffee, timber, and cattle assuming varying degrees of importance under varying degrees of local and foreign merchant and landowner control. The sugar planter class that developed in the DR in the late 1800s—and was later displaced by foreign (mostly U.S.) corporate takeover and consolidation—was largely composed of Cuban, Italian, German, Puerto Rican, and North American immigrants, further creolizing Dominican society (Betances, 1995). In the years following independence, a succession of *caudillos* (“men on horseback,” or strongmen: usually military leaders or members of the political or economic elite) struggled for power in the country, forming various alliances with local merchant and agrarian elites, as well as with emerging U.S. interests in the Caribbean Basin.

Neo-Colonization and Dictatorship

By the early 1900s, increasing foreign debt (mostly to the U.S.), and growing political instability that threatened the interests of U.S. sugar corporations and banks (which by this time had almost complete control of these sectors of the economy), induced the U.S. to establish a customs receivership in the DR in 1905, initiate the Dominican-American Convention of 1907, which turned the nation into a “semiprotectorate of the United States” (Betances, 1995), and finally undertake a military occupation of the Island from 1916 to 1924.

In attempting to establish a government that was both strong internally and responsive to U.S. interests, the U.S. emphasized the creation of a strong national military apparatus that eventually paved the way for the rise to power of Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Perhaps the most effective and brutal dictator in the history of the Dominican Republic, Trujillo—or the Benefactor, as he liked to be known—lost little time in putting his U.S.-Marine training to good use in concentrating military, political, and economic power in the hands of himself and a few hundred of his closest friends and relatives. During his thirty-year reign, he was responsible for the imprisonment, torture, and murder of thousands of political opponents, including the famous Mirabal sisters. At the same time, he and his cronies came to control (directly or indirectly) over half the economic assets of the country (Black, 1986).

Life in the Dominican Republic. We were a big family. We were ten brothers and sisters... my father used to work independent. Then he was part of one of the political parties... but after a while my father didn't agree with things that they were doing... Also, Trujillo wanted to kill him... he had killed one of my uncles. Then my father decided he wanted to go out of the country for a while. That was like in the 1960s. After that, 1964 we had a civil war, and we moved from the capital... to another town after the war, and let me tell you, wars are really sad. I remember I was about six years old at the time, and we had to go away from my mother because they wanted to kill my father. We had to go to a small town where we had an uncle. My mother was working in the city with my grandfather and one of my oldest brothers, and after the war it was like the city was devastated...⁴

⁴ Interview, 4/8/99 (Woman, early 40s, teacher, 25 years in the U.S. (NY first)).

Interestingly, in spite of Trujillo's well-known brutality and rapaciousness, some older Dominicans I spoke with in Lawrence revealed ambivalent feelings about him. While they deplored his excesses, they noted that Trujillo had been remarkably able to diminish U.S. control over the Island and restore a measure of sovereignty to the nation (however flawed). One person credited Trujillo with instilling a strong sense of Dominican national identity and pride in the Island's citizens, and another cited the public safety benefits of the law-and-order atmosphere that prevailed for much of his regime.

After the Benefactor: Political Origins of Migration

The assassination of Trujillo in 1961⁵ proved the catalyst for what has become a massive Dominican out-migration during the last four decades. As emigration was severely restricted during Trujillo's reign (another manifestation of his desire for complete control over Dominican life), some of this was only natural and is attributable to pent-up demand. Less directly, however, Trujillo's death sparked a number of political struggles and ideological turmoil in the Republic—turmoil that the U.S. feared might crystallize into revolution. One of the primary responses of the U.S. government to this ticklish situation in the early 1960s was to streamline and facilitate out-migration for those who wished to leave, in order to release some of the political pressure building in the streets of Santo Domingo (Mitchell, 1992).

As the decade progressed, an interim government gave way to the elected constitutionalist government of Juan Bosch, a left-leaning Dominican historian and writer who returned from exile in Cuba to lead a populist party, the Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), that called for a new constitution based on democratic rights for the working class, more egalitarian land ownership, and indigenous control of industry. This administration lasted all of seven months before falling to a U.S.-backed coup by members of the military and the merchant and banker class. Widespread political unrest continued and in 1965 the country erupted in civil war between the pro-Bosch Constitutionalists and the military-backed traditional elites. Predictably, the U.S.

⁵ Ironically, although Trujillo was in many ways adept at securing U.S. support for his regime, especially by positioning himself as "the hemisphere's foremost anti-communist," this strategy eventually failed to serve him. It was U.S. fears that his dictatorship might finally spark a popular communist revolt (especially after Cuba) that led to CIA collaboration with his assassins.

Hay diferentes Dominicanos aquí que andan en diferentes horizontes. Cada uno con su causa. La causa mía ... en mi país yo participé en una contienda bélica... Entonces luego de participar en la guerra civil, los que participamos que hicimos frente a los que estaban contra el pueblo tuvimos que vernos en la obligación de emigrar contra nuestra voluntad... la guerra que se hizo ahí fue cuando derrotaron la constitución del año 1963... La República Dominicana, con tal que la democracia se mantuviera, en el '65 se llegó a practicar la revolución que era lo que se buscaba. El retorno a la constitución del '63 y ahí fue que vinieron los choques de los golpistas... que nos sacan a los pueblos y de los militares liberales. Yo participé con los militares liberales, y los otros eran de la parte de los corruptos de los que todavía siguen explotando al pueblo y siguen acabando con... todos los bienes del país⁶.

⁶ Interview, 3/2/99 (Man, late 50s, 21 years in the City, citizen).

intervened and initiated its second twentieth-century military occupation of the DR. Following the U.S.-mediated election of former Trujillo advisor and wily political survivor Joaquin Balaguer, “radical elements of the working and middle-class were implicitly offered the choices of migration or ‘disappearance’” (Bray, 1984). A number of the first Dominican “settlers” of Lawrence in fact belonged to this “radical” group, and still expressed sorrow and anger at the outcome of these events and the subsequent direction of the country.

In fact, as Bray (1984) notes, the political motives for emigrating become clear with a glance at yearly emigration figures (see table), which show an increase not just after 1965, but after other major election years as well. This reasoning is corroborated by stories from many of my interviewees regarding the necessity of having political connections in order to get a good job—or sometimes any job. Many cited their (or a parent’s) lack of membership in the party of the moment, and the subsequent lack of employment opportunity as a major impetus to emigrate—forming a sort of political economy of emigration.

Back to Business

Balaguer’s job was to make the Island safe for foreign investment, and indeed several of my informants expressed quite strongly that Balaguer was in some ways worse than Trujillo; certainly his regime began with similar practices of repression, political terror, and corruption—albeit the benefits of this were spread slightly more widely among the ruling class. Under his rule, an import substitution sector⁷ was established by the state in the early 1970s, but met with limited success. Through his and subsequent administrations, the country moved toward an economic development model based on export processing zones (EPZs, also known as free trade zones⁸), tourism, and banking; Gulf-Western, Nestle, Falconbridge, Alcoa, Philip Morris, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Shell were among the major North American transnational corporations that began investing heavily in the

⁷ Refers to an economic development strategy in which a region tries to produce internally those goods and services it had been in the practice of importing.

⁸ These zones are a common strategy for bringing foreign investment capital into a nation. Typically they offer investors tax incentives and freedom from certain state regulations and tariffs in return for significant job creation.

Table 1
Early Migration From
the Dominican Republic

Year	Emigrants
1961	3,045
1962	4,603
1963	10,683
1964	7,537
1965	9,504
1966	16,503
1967	11,514
1968	9,250
1969	10,670
1970	10,807
1971	12,624
1972	10,670
1973	13,858
1974	15,680
1975	14,066
*1976	15,088
1977	11,655
1978	19,458
1979	17,519
1980	17,245

Years in Bold are Election Years
Adapted from Bray, 1984 and
Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991.
(Immigration and Naturalization
Service Data)

* 1976 includes an additional 3
month period due to changes in
INS enumeration periods.

DR at this time. These foreign corporations soon controlled the leading sectors of the Island's economy (Betances 1995).

In the early 1980s, the U.S. drastically cut their sugar quotas from the DR and agricultural employment plummeted, deepening an economic crisis that culminated in International Monetary Fund intervention, currency devaluation (1983), and economic restructuring. Currency devaluation sent Dominican wages into a nose-dive, which made the country extremely attractive to foreign investment and stimulated a massive expansion of export manufacturing in the EPZs, growing rural-to-urban migration stimulated by capital-intensive, large-scale agricultural development, enormous growth in the tourism industry, and the informalization of much economic activity, especially within the capital. *Tricicleros*, or street vendors, became a common sight in Santo Domingo, and odd-jobbing increased. During the 1980s:

- Manufacturing exports grew over 300% (the textile and garment industries comprise 36% of EPZ employment);
- The real minimum wage declined over 60%, making Dominican labor among the cheapest in the Caribbean (average monthly wages were US \$67.20 in 1987);
- Unemployment grew to 27% (lower for men, higher for women);
- Self-employment rose over 35%;
- Income inequality widened, such that the richest 10% of the population received two-thirds of all income;
- Female labor force participation increased from 9.3% in 1960 to 38% in 1990;
- In 1992, the DR had the world's 4th largest EPZ economy.

(Safa, 1995; Ferran and Pessar, 1991; Lozano, 1997; Portes et. al. 1997, Gereffi, 1996).

The Dominican government followed a policy of providing tax holidays, tariff exemption, labor repression, and profit repatriation for the foreign—mostly U.S.-owned—transnational corporations operating in the EPZs. The U.S. also instituted its Caribbean Basin Initiative, a policy that allowed duty-free treatment of exports, excluding textiles, apparel (except if made with U.S.-manufactured cloth), oil, and petroleum. As a result, export processing contributes less to Dominican GDP than sugar production (this after the closing of six state-owned sugar factories following the U.S. quota reduction) (Safa, 1995), and creates almost no supply or

En el sentido de trabajo las zonas francas fueron y son una salvación para la República Dominicana porque involucra una gran cantidad de personas trabajando directamente. Indirectamente entonces hay otra gran cantidad de personas que están ligadas a este proyecto porque los que van los jueves y viernes a venderles a los trabajan dinamizan la economía entre el trabajador y el vendedor... Por otra parte, no se permite que los trabajadores tengan un sindicato...⁹

En cuanto a las zonas francas, eso lo que es: un desastre. Eso es lo que se llama una aduana paralela que tiene el gobierno allá... Aduana, que con el pretexto de que la mercancía que llevan va de que exonerada porque va para la zona franca, pero mentira. Eso es para evadir los impuestos son de ellos mismos... Ahí van los contrabandos... Son mafias organizadas.¹⁰

⁹ Interview, 3/8/99 (Man, 40s, one year in City, factory worker (professor in the DR)).

¹⁰ Interview, 3/2/99 (see note 6).

demand linkages or technology transfer to the indigenous economy. Locally-owned smaller export industries (in tobacco, cacao, sugar, coffee, etc.) were steadily eroded by the reduction in import tariffs mandated by IMF policies. Moreover, several studies have documented the high turnover in EPZ firms that prefer a docile (mostly female) workforce and are in a position to fire troublesome workers easily, as well as the role of agricultural transnationals in appropriating land and resources formerly sustaining a class of small farmers (Kowalewski, 1983; Safa 1995; Black, 1986; Sassen, 1988).

Who Feels the Squeeze?

It was said about the great wave of immigrants who came to America on steamships at the turn of the century that the cowardly stayed home and the weak died on the way... In fact for more than a century, immigration has been a process by which America skims the cream of other nations' human capital. (Briggs and Moore, 1994:143)

It is by now a truism in migration studies to say that it is rarely the poorest of the poor, or those who are unemployed in their home country, who migrate¹¹. Observers of earlier migration from the Dominican Republic have demonstrated fairly convincingly that many migrants came from urban, middle-class backgrounds, with a somewhat lesser percentage hailing from the rural petty bourgeoisie (Bray, Grasmuck and Pessar, Portes). The reasons for this propensity are manifold. For example, the development trajectory of export agriculture in the northern Cibao Valley has resulted in an increasing concentration of land in a diminishing number of hands, exacerbating class polarization in the region. Many middle-class households who were squeezed out and in danger of becoming proletarianized (forced to work as wage laborers on others' large holdings) chose migration instead, both to the cities and abroad if they could (Bray, 1987).¹²

¹¹ This statement, and the quote above, is not to say that those who remain behind are less able, but that migration often requires financial, social, and informational resources that the very poor are unlikely to possess.

¹² Ironically, most of these migrants to the U.S. are absorbed into the low-wage, "proletarian" manufacturing and services sector. Bray makes an important distinction when he notes that many of these migrants are "adopting a proletarian strategy," not becoming proletarianized. In some sense what they do in the U.S. is merely a means to secure enough money to re-amass landholdings back home.

[L]a injusticia social... está presente, quizás desde la llegada de los españoles... Una desigualdad social muy marcada, una brecha entre un grupo social y otro cada vez mayor, y yo pertenezco a ese gran grupo que tiene poca cosa en material por la mala distribución de la riqueza... donde más del 90% del pueblo dominicano no tiene con qué desenvolver la situación económica decentemente; y un grupo muy minoritario tiene la mayor cantidad de riqueza concentrada en sus manos... Uno trata de permanecer en su país, luego esto no es posible porque se cierran las puertas en muchos lugares. En mi caso, ya con la formación académica que [tengo], uno se encuentra que no puede desarrollar lo que uno conoce... porque si uno no pertenece al partido que está gobernando en ese momento, no puede estar en un puesto o cargo donde uno pueda aportar lo que uno conoce.¹³

¹³ Interview, 3/8/99 (see note 9).

In addition, export-oriented industrialization, combined with certain government employment policies, actually led to an enormous expansion of the Dominican middle class starting in the 1970s (as measured by both employment growth in managerial and professional occupations, and increased enrollment in higher education) (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991). However, employment growth (which later stagnated) was not sufficient to absorb this growing sector. Moreover, evidence from my interviews indicates that the necessity of having a *commadre* or *compadre*—a “godmother” or “godfather” with social or political connections—in order to get certain jobs or advance in a career continued unabated. Indeed, Portes (1990) argues, “*relative*, not absolute deprivation lies at the core of most contemporary migration... [these are] the groups for whom the gap between aspirations and local realities is most poignant.”

Still the Middle Class?

At this point it is worth mentioning Michael Piore’s argument that a labor migration like the Dominican one which draws primarily at the beginning from the aspiring middle class will eventually shift to a more rural flow, as has been the case in Puerto Rico (Piore, 1979). While the Dominican migration to the United States does not completely follow the “birds of passage” model (for example, in its initiatory and ongoing political elements), it does appear that Piore’s prediction has some validity. While I was able to interview very few people from more rural and less-educated backgrounds, this was due to time constraints and difficulty of access. Most of my interviewees, several of whom worked in local factories in the area, felt that the majority of Dominicans entering Lawrence now belonged to the rural working poor, specifically from the Cibao Valley; many of these migrants have low levels of education and literacy. It may well be that, as Piore speculates, the institutional and social structures that emerge around migration over time facilitate the increasing absorption of rural populations into the flow (Piore, 1979), perhaps aided by the family reunification mechanism of U.S. immigration policy. However, as Bray (1987) argues, the inequitable opportunity structures, marked by patronage and corruption, which have survived for much of Dominican history (and may even be exacerbated by dependent capitalist development), seem to ensure the middle class’ continuing participation in, if not domination of, the migration flow.¹⁴

¹⁴ This perspective is supported by many informants as well.

I was in my best economical situation ever when I left the Dominican Republic... My wife had been working in the past government... She was personal aide to one of the ministers. She was working for the PRD...when they leave the power and came Balaguer, Balaguer took her away and she felt very disappointed... and she told me, "Why don't we move to the United States for a couple of years"... Twenty or more years ago no more people can travel from the Dominican Republic to the United States because it was very expensive... Long time ago, our poor class was really poor and they had no facility to emigrate... the only ones that emigrated were mostly people from the middle-upper classes but now we have a really straight base of poor people in a more harsh situation... it is now easier and cheaper for them to emigrate.¹⁵

¹⁵ Interview, 2/11/99 (Man, 50s, teacher (trained as engineer), 12 years in the City).

“Cultural-Ideological Links”¹⁶

To return for a moment to the role of multinational firms in this process, it is important to point out that these corporations serve not only to disrupt the traditional economy of the Republic, aggravating poverty, unemployment, and social polarization, but also to create awareness of and linkages to life in the U.S., creating a path toward perceived opportunity that once blazed is not so easily blocked. While some migrants are those who worked directly for a U.S. firm in the free trade zones and became to a certain degree Americanized through their experience there, foreign direct investment and the penetration it implies of the local Dominican market (one interviewee referred to the capital as “Franchise City USA”¹⁷) can act more subtly as “a structure that creates certain conditions for emigration to emerge as an option” (Sassen, 1988); or as Piore (1979) elegantly puts it:

the same institutional ties between regions or countries that facilitate population movements also facilitate the movement of jobs and capital in the other direction... the implantation of industry in the underdeveloped regions must serve to expand the horizons of the native population and is quite possibly a critical factor in the development of a conception of the world that accords a place within the recognized job hierarchy to the kinds of employment the migrants find abroad.

Moreover, the weakness and vulnerability of organized labor in the DR noted by some authors (Betances, 1995; Safa, 1995), is probably in some ways exacerbated and reinforced by the role of migration in creating a sense of another option. Labor militancy is not worth it if you have the possibility of migrating to a better situation, and migration becomes more attractive in the face of poor working conditions. As we shall see in later chapters, a version of this unpleasant catch-22 prevails in Lawrence as well.

The Other Side of Profit Repatriation

A final key point in this chapter deals with the critical importance of remittances—money sent back home by immigrants—to the Dominican economy. In the face of declining opportunities at home, many Dominican families have become deeply invested in migration; one study (Lozano, 1997) found that 75% of Dominican families in

Before I came to the United States I was working for a Western trading company in the free zone in San Pedro. It was a company that was assembling women's clothing. I worked there as a production engineer, and then for maybe six, seven months before I came I was the assistant manager... Also, I was going to Universidad... I was in my second year of mechanical engineering... I came, and after you get to the United States, one thing I wasn't ready for was for the frustration of dealing with people... I had to be 23, 24. The thing is that I knew some English. I thought I knew enough to handle myself. I was working in an American company. You wouldn't know it was in the Dominican Republic; all the managers and when I had to call the States was in English. But now you find out that you don't know enough English to deal with people who speak English¹⁸.

¹⁶ Sassen, 1988

¹⁷ Interview, 1/28/99 (Woman, late 20s, nonprofit staff).

¹⁸ Interview, 2/12/99 (Man, 40s, here 20+ years, professional).

several Santo Domingo neighborhoods had a family member abroad, and over 25% of these families were receiving remittances that constituted almost half their annual income. In 1993 remittances from the U.S. to the D.R. totaled nearly \$1 billion and served as the second-largest source of international dollar earnings for the country (Betances, 1995); in contrast, the EPZs (which employed 142,300 Dominicans in 1992, less than half the Dominican workforce abroad) netted \$300 million toward the balance of payments (in 1992) (Gereffi, 1996). This staggering total has ensured that the Dominican government has a stake in supporting the continued migration process as well. While foreign multinationals are busy repatriating the enormous profits they derive from the free trade zones to banks in the United States, Canada, and Asia, Dominican migrants are also busily countering that capital flow with an opposite one of their own, as the dollars earned in American jobs are sent back to feed families, buy coveted consumer goods, and purchase land and houses in the Dominican Republic.

Maintaining the Connection

Remittances are but one of the ties migrants forge between the new country and the old. In fact, as most Dominicans—like the majority of other immigrants, from the Italians and the Polish in the early 1900s to the Mexicans today—enter the U.S. with the idea that their stay here is a temporary one, multiple connections—political, social, and economic—are often maintained. As we shall see in coming chapters, that dream of returning is not so easily realized. Nevertheless, it gives rise to a whole set of practices that in some sense stand in for the permanent return envisioned, and can take different forms depending on the social class, occupation, and stage in the life course of an individual. As Thomas-Hope (1985) notes, “The migration pattern that evolved in the Caribbean and became well-established was not usually seen as a means of severing relationships with the homeland and family, but rather as extending Island opportunities and circumventing the constraints to upward mobility imposed by the system at home.”

Conclusion

A history of U.S. political and economic intervention into the Dominican Republic, including two military occupations during the 20th century and a strong American corporate presence, has led some authors to characterize the DR as a “semicolonial” state, and has engendered numerous linkages

No es como dice la gente, no, ustedes nada más vienen aquí a trabajar y se llevan los dólares para sus países... si yo me pongo a acusar, o si alguien se pone a acusar, Estados Unidos saldrá perdiendo. Porque no son uno, ni dos, ni tres los países donde los Estados Unidos se ha metido, y no solamente le lleva el dinero, deja el país a que sálese quien pueda... o sea que no es una cosa de que ustedes vienen y se llevan... Cuando tú intervienes militarmente en un sitio... tú estás cojiendo de allí para traer para acá; son muchos los países en que eso ha ocurrido. Y esa es una visión que a muchos amigos norteamericanos yo le hago ver. No es solamente que tú digas que yo hago esto, bueno, yo tengo familias allá que yo tengo que mantener también, o por lo menos ayudarlos; yo no los voy a dejar morir. Tengo que enviarles dólares y cuando voy tengo que llevar dólares para poder sobrevivir allí.¹⁹

¹⁹ Interview, 3/5/99 (Man, 40s, union member, Malden Mills).

between the two nations. What happens when the semi-colonized start semi-colonizing back? The next chapter will set the stage for this by taking a closer look at the City of Lawrence, a recent “Dominican colony”²⁰ in Massachusetts.

²⁰ Interview, 3/1/99 (Man, former Constitutionalist (supporter of Juan Bosch—see Chapter Two), 24 years in Lawrence).

CHAPTER TWO

THE CITY

Ironies

Taking into consideration the traditional rivalry between Lowell and Lawrence and my own fierce attachment to the latter City, I will nevertheless begin to talk about Lawrence by referring to Lowell, which one author has described as representing “in microcosm the intertwining of the industrialization process and immigration in the United States” (Kolack, 1983)¹. As I discussed both profit repatriation and remittances in Chapter One, it might be interesting to compare that dynamic with this observation of the immigrants working in the Lowell mills of the early 1900s: “these newcomers, first entirely Irish, later French Canadians from the Provinces, were treated precisely as if they were part of the machinery which ground out the millions being produced for the rich managers and millowners who spent the money not in Lowell but in New York, Boston, Paris, and London.”² As the same sort of “domestic profit repatriation” practices³ applied in Lawrence (where, for example, mill owner William Wood built beautiful homes for himself and his family, and a model village for his managers, in the neighboring upper-class town of North Andover), this observation can help us understand the role the City—at the intertwined levels of its infrastructure and residents—has always played within a capitalist system of production⁴. In this chapter I will begin to trace this intertwining through both industrialization and *de*industrialization in the City (and the region, known as the Merrimack Valley), as well as looking at the character of immigrant life in the City.

The Usual Statistics

As a City whose *raison d'être* was the textile industry, once-booming Lawrence has never fully recovered from the manufacturing flight that devastated many Northeastern

¹ These words, of course, just as easily could have been written about Lawrence.

² Cardinal O'Connell, quoted in Kolack, 1983.

³ Tempered by the occasional philanthropic project, like a public library.

⁴ Current native indignation at Dominican remittance levels in Lawrence ignores the dollars that have always flowed out of the City to the same mill owners for whom their parents and grandparents labored (not to mention the hefty remittances sent by those parents and grandparents to families in the Old Country, a point I will return to later).

American Dreams in the Immigrant City

*They [material things] are part of the American dream you are following... I would like to hope that you do not think that I have put these things in the first place but they are part of the dream you are following. Because when you come to this country you think that you will be living the way you have seen in the films, in the pictures, in the magazines, and everything. And what are these things? They are a car, an expensive place where to live, a new house with good modern inner systems, with air-conditioner, in the summer to have vacation. Isn't that the American way of living?*⁵

⁵ Interview, 2/11/99 (Man, 50s, teacher (trained as engineer), 12 years in the City).

industrial cities. Lawrence (as the oft-quoted statistics go) is the 23rd poorest city in the United States, with the lowest per capita income in Massachusetts and unemployment levels that consistently hover at twice the regional, Commonwealth, and national rates. Its high school recently lost accreditation, and resident education levels fall well below Commonwealth averages. Home-ownership rates are 35% citywide, and about 1/3 that in the mostly Latino north side, where vacant lots and boarded-up buildings bear mute testimony to the arson wave that flamed through the City in the early 1990s. The Lawrence population is also substantially younger than the Massachusetts average.

Table 2.1 Income and Poverty, Lawrence and MA

	Lawrence	Massachusetts
Median Household Income	\$21,085	\$30,932
Per Capita Income	\$ 9,686	\$17,224
Latino Per Capita Income	\$ 5,425	
Poverty Rate	27.5%	8.9%
Latino Poverty Rate	45%	36.7%
Latinos as % of Total Poor	70%	

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Lawrence has been bleeding manufacturing jobs since textile and shoe producers began moving to the non-union South in the 1920s (interestingly, this trend coincided with the beginning of major U.S. restrictions on immigration). The process intensified in the late 1960s, as more manufacturers moved offshore—to countries like the Dominican Republic—again seeking lower-wage labor. Lawrence was not alone in this experience; as Muller (1993) notes, “by the 1960s, with factories relocating first to other parts of the country and then overseas, most cities experienced a sharp decline in their manufacturing fortunes. Hardest hit were apparel, textile, shoes, furniture, and electronics” (p.120). Between 1969 and 1988 the City lost nearly half of its manufacturing jobs (from nearly 18,000 down to 9,000) (Borges-Mendez, 1993, p.149). The City was also hard hit by the recession of the early 1990s, again losing over 5,000 jobs, or 20% of its employment base; about 2,000 of these jobs were in the manufacturing sector (Andors *et al.*, 1998)⁶.

As much of the U.S. moves into a “post-industrial” economy, Lawrence's economy is still an amazing 35% manufacturing-

⁶ I love citing myself.

Table 2.2 Unemployment Rates, 1993 to 1997: Lawrence vs. MA

Year	Lawrence	MA
1993	13.4%	6.9%
1994	12.4%	6.0%
1995	10.1%	5.4%
1996	9.3%	4.3%
1997	8.8%	4.0%

Source: Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training

Una de las cosas es que el dominicano ha inmigrado más a Lawrence que fue la tranquilidad... tú sabes que Lawrence es pequeño y está fuera de las grandes urbes. Se parece más a nuestros barrios, a nuestro pueblo, los muchachos pueden jugar en las calles, pueden estar fuera de su casa hasta tarde, sobre todo en el verano, eso no puede suceder en otras ciudades. Entonces la tranquilidad es lo que siempre atrae para que nosotros vengamos a vivir para acá.⁷

⁷ Interview, 3/5/99 (Woman, early 40s, teacher, here several years).

based, and has remained so for the past ten years, through recession and (mild) recovery. Less than half of these jobs are now in the textile industry; a substantial portion are concentrated in paper and plastic production, metal fabrication, and warehousing/ distribution—a common re-use for mill space that does not meet the single-tier space needs of modern manufacturing. While the City has also lost jobs in FIRE⁸ and trade, growing sectors include health services (anchored by a well-regarded regional hospital) and low-end business services such as janitorial and security (Andors *et al.*, 1998). As we shall see later, the City is also home to a fairly vital small business sector featuring a sizable number of Dominican entrepreneurs. Dominicans in Lawrence own a plethora of restaurants, travel agencies, clothing stores, hair salons, *bodegas* (corner stores) and multi-service centers⁹.

There is some evidence that Lawrence residents are filling regional manufacturing jobs as well. In 1990, according to the Census, only 40% of Lawrence residents worked in the City; another 36% worked in the region. Conversations with three local temporary employment agencies of varying sizes—most of whom work with a majority Latino population—indicate that a number of Lawrence's residents are serving the temporary and seasonal laborforce needs of manufacturers in North Andover, Haverhill, Wilmington, and other neighboring towns and cities. This is a phenomenon which I will return to later.

Table 2.3 1996 Industry Mix: Lawrence vs. Massachusetts

Industry	1996 % of Total Employment (Private Profit/ Nonprofit)	
	Lawrence	Mass.
Agriculture	0.14%	0.75%
Construction	2%	3.5%
Manufacturing	36%	17%
Transportation and Public Utilities	3%	5%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16%	27%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2%	8%
Services	41%	39%

Source: MA Division of Employment and Training, ES-202 Series

⁸ Finance, insurance, and real estate.

⁹ Multi-service centers are businesses that provide a variety of financial and accounting services, including facilities for phoning and sending money abroad. Their ubiquitous presence on the north side of the City is one indication of the volume of remittances emanating from Lawrence.

Es duro cuando tú vienes sin saber un idioma. Empecé a trabajar en una factoría donde fabrican zapatos. Esa fue mi primer experiencia de trabajo aquí... después de eso me fui a otro trabajo que era de un laundry... Estuve ahí un promedio de seis años... Empecé ahí a trabajar en esa cosiendo, reparando las ropas y ahí mismo comencé a vender ropa entre mis compañeras de trabajo. Hice una clientela grande. I went to New York y después decidí instalarme aquí... hay personas que tienen mucho más tiempo que yo y no se han podido independizar. Trabajan todavía en factoría... Cualquiera que sea, es muy diferente cuando tú estás en una factoría. Trabajando en línea. Hay muchas personas que han venido aquí y han podido progresar pero la gran mayoría no es tan fácil.¹⁰

¹⁰ Interview, 2/17/99 (Woman, 40s, business owner, 16 years in Lawrence).

Within the City, there is often tension between the older Anglo residents (who dominate city government and politics) and the newer Latino residents, over issues as diverse as bilingual education, residency requirements for municipal jobs, and political participation. For example, the U.S. Justice Department has been called in several times to monitor elections and prevent discrimination against Latino voters, and is currently suing the City for unfair election practices. I think it is safe to say that this tension and the ensuing political struggles have at least some of their roots in the economic situation engendered by a confluence of factors. As Sassen (1988) points out, "the 1965 liberalization of U.S. immigration policy [was] but one instance of a whole series of policies... that had the effect of internationalizing the country's economy." The sudden influx of new immigrants after four decades of relative isolation (during which immigration became a colorful part of the City's past), combined with a drastic reduction in, and degradation of, local manufacturing jobs, did not breed native tolerance and understanding. Even if many of the remaining jobs were ones that native workers would not want—numerous authors have emphatically refuted the myth that immigrants "steal" jobs from natives (Bonilla, 1993; Borjas, 1990; Moore, 1994; Muller, 1993; Piore, 1979; Portes, 1981; Sassen, 1995)—it still was not easy to see them go to newcomers¹¹.

An International City

In 1912 the Merrimack Valley had the highest proportion of foreign-born residents in the United States (Kolack, 1983). A good number of those immigrants resided in Lawrence, which since its inception has been populated by successive waves of immigrants come to work in the mills and factories¹². The Irish were the first, followed by French Canadians, Englishmen, and Germans in the late 1800s, Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Syrians around the turn of the century and early 1900s, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in the mid-late 1900s, and most recently Vietnamese and Cambodians. The City is now predominantly Latino.

¹¹ In fact, Muller points out that immigration often tends to have both an employment multiplier and a job redistribution effect, as new arrivals take lower wage, lower skill jobs, and shift natives upward.

¹² In addition to fleeing conditions of poverty or environmental hardship in their native lands, some of these workers were lured to Lawrence by mill company posters and advertisements in their native lands (Cole, 1964). Indeed, Piore (1979) argues that many labor migrations begin because of recruitment on the part of employers.

**Table 2.4 Lawrence
Foreign Born Population,
1910 (Selected Groups)**

Country of Birth	Population in 1910
Total Pop.	85,892
<i>Ireland</i>	5,943
<i>England</i>	5,659
<i>Scotland</i>	1,336
<i>Canada</i>	9,498
<i>Germany</i>	2,301
<i>Russia</i>	4,366
<i>France</i>	788
<i>Italy</i>	6,693
<i>Turkey</i>	2,077
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	41,319
<i>% Foreign</i>	48%

Source: Cole, 1964 p.209

**Table 2.5
Lawrence: Ancestry of
Selected Groups, 1990**

Ancestry	1990
Total Pop.	70,027
<i>Arabic</i>	1,525
<i>Dominican</i>	10,870
<i>English</i>	2,397
<i>French</i>	5,105
<i>Fr. Canadian</i>	4,251
<i>German</i>	1,601
<i>Irish</i>	6,193
<i>Italian</i>	6,645
<i>Puerto Rican</i>	14,661
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	14,673
<i>% Foreign</i>	21%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

From its inception, Lawrence was in many ways highly integrated into an international economy, powered by immigrant labor to produce textiles for both the American and European market. The City's motto was, "We weave the world's worsteds," and it was at one time considered "the leading worsted center in America," (Cole 1964) home to the enormous Arlington, Wood, Atlantic, Pacific, Pemberton, Washington, and Ayer Mills. In 1878, two-thirds of the total factory workforce was foreign-born. In 1912 Lawrence was the site of a famous labor uprising known as the Bread and Roses Strike, an event that was partially organized by the International Workers of the World and owed a substantial debt to the influence of Italian anarchists (Cole, 1964).

Continuities: The City Repeats Itself

A look back at the City's first seventy-five years of existence is a fascinating lesson not only in "the more things change, the more they stay the same" worldview, but also some of its nuances—the realization that as Hannerz (1996) puts it, "in large part, change is made up of other people's continuities, quite suddenly coming up close to us as well, without necessarily being fully understood, or fully accepted" (p.25). As Cole (1964) assiduously documents, the increasing diversity of the Immigrant City paved the way for repeated cycles of ethnic and religious conflict as each previous group, fearful of its own still-tentative position in the City's political and economic structure (and often forgetful of its own experience at the bottom of the pile), turned upon the next.¹³ Thus, the one-time "noisy rabble" (p.40) of "shanty Irish" complained of French-Canadian behavior that would "shame a community of savages," (p.58) and the French-Canadians in their turn condemned the "drink-frenzied foreigners" and lingering "old country habits" (p.90) among the Italian.

The City demonstrates other continuities as well. The same high rates of illiteracy, combined with a lack of fluency in English, that trouble school teachers and nonprofit agency staff in Lawrence today plagued the City at the turn of the century. Substandard housing, arson, malnutrition, and overcrowding (especially in North Lawrence) were common, along with unstable employment—the mills often halted or reduced production, depending the vagaries of the market—

¹³ With this melodramatic characterization I do not mean to imply that these attitudes were uniform throughout the City; indeed Cole cites a number of examples of different groups speaking out on the need for tolerance.

A lot of people had to go to work whatever kind of job they can get. It's hard... Not everybody has the opportunity to pick and choose what they deserve... I went to college, it was not easy, it was a lot of input from my family. I sacrificed a lot of my time with my kids and my husband because I needed to go to school and study. I think I need to get what I deserve to get... I heard people saying the Italian were here and they made it through. The Irish people were here and they made it through. Now the Hispanic people are here and they get welfare. They get welfare, some people, but most people are working... They're paying taxes, they're raising a family.¹⁴

¹⁴ Interview, 4/8/99 (Woman, 40s, teacher, community leader).

and low wages. In 1875, "the average Lawrence wage of \$400 a year was far below the state average of \$476" (Cole, 1964) (in 1875 dollars).

Longing for Home: The Other Side of the American Dream

Tú añoras lo que no tienes—cuando lo tienes, no es como pensabas. (You yearn for what you do not have—when you have it, it is not what you were thinking.)¹⁵

In 1884 the Cunard Line charged only \$15 for steerage passage to Ireland from Boston. The Irish, not content with individual trips, formed an excursion club to raise money for a group voyage. Italians often went home for the winter to participate in festivals and to avoid the cold as well as to see their families. And Canadians, not facing the dangers of an ocean voyage, were frequent visitors...by 1912... [h]alf of the French-Canadians, a quarter of the English, and a sixth of the Germans and Irish had visited their old homes. (Cole, 1964:100)

Yearning for the old country is nothing new in Lawrence. While it is popular among many older residents in the City to speak of "the Spanish" as a transient population, apt to return home at a moment's notice, the increasing—and increasingly rooted—Dominican population of the City belies that assumption. The transiency stereotype ignores the complexity of ways that the Dominicans, in startlingly similarity to the Irish, French-Canadians, Syrians, and Italians before them, have chosen to maintain connections to their homelands (as we shall see in part two). Relief funds for those at home suffering destitution or disaster, financial contributions, advocacy, and volunteer work in support of political movements (e.g. Irish home rule, Armenian independence from Turkey) and parties, and remittances were all part of life in the City; indeed, in 1910, "money orders issued in Lawrence for sending money abroad amounted to \$150,000 a year" (Cole, 1964) (figure is in 1910 dollars).

Of course, many Dominicans do return to the Island, even after years in the City. The Irish, French-Canadian, Italians, and other earlier immigrants all made permanent returns as well, often when work in the mills was scarce (Cole, 1964).

¹⁵ Interview 4/28/99 (Woman, 40s, business owner, here 30 years).

*If you think that for immigrants is hard, I let you know that to come back will be harder... when you go back to your country you find out that it is a sad situation. Time is not waiting for you to come back and has changed your place, has changed your neighborhood, moved the people you used to meet... When you have to come back you have to go to the same social and economic level which is harder now because things have changed, life costs more... you go with the idea that you will find all of your friends waiting for you in the same place where you used to meet them and you'll not find anybody... they are in another way of living, they are in a different environment... sometimes you feel isolated, no? You feel a kind of loneliness in your heart.*¹⁶

¹⁶ Interview, 2/11/99 (Man, 50s, teacher (trained as engineer), 12 years in the City).

But the difference between what one *expects* in terms of duration of stay in the receiving country and what actually winds up happening cannot be emphasized enough, as my informants mentioned over and over. As Piore (1979) points out, a defining characteristic of many temporary migrations is that they tend to turn into permanent settlements as a community becomes established in the host country, and strong social networks ensure a continuing stream of new members. Moreover, as we shall see in part two, those who return often come back again, realizing that changes both in themselves and back home often made the yearned-for Island a dream indeed.

Workers of the World?

In spite of its legendary status among labor organizers as the site of the Bread and Roses strike, Lawrence has historically had a fairly weak union presence. Cole notes that, "unions in Lawrence had never been able to organize more than a tenth of the city's workers at any one time before 1912. The very absence of unionism was one of the reasons why William Wood, President of the American Woolen Company, built the Wood Mill in Lawrence in 1905" (p.177), and it is still one of the reasons companies have come to the City during the last thirty years¹⁷. Organizing efforts have no doubt been complicated by the difficulties of communicating across culture and language among fragmented ethnic groups (interestingly, Cole documents how the successful Bread and Roses organizers coordinated their efforts along ethnic lines, organizing within groups before bringing all together). Ambivalent relationships between older and newer residents also confound this process. On one hand, more settled groups may be more likely to take a conservative stance and disapprove of labor militancy among newer groups; on the other, newer groups are often used to sabotage the advocacy and security of more settled groups¹⁸.

Immigrant Labor Today

Between 1970 and 1990, the net population increase in the United States due to immigration is estimated at 10 to 12

¹⁷ Interview, Chet Sidell, President/ Owner of KGR Industries, February 1998.

¹⁸ One interviewee recounted how one manager in a factory in which she had worked wanted her to report any talk of unionizing among other workers to him.

*El rico no quiere que el
pobre aprenda, porque ya
eso le trae problemas a él.
Cuando un pobre logra abrir
los ojos, cuando logra ir a la
escuela y aprender y dice, ah,
pero tú estabas abusando de
mí... a ellos no les conviene
que el progrese... Mientras el
pueblo sea más ignorante y
mantenerlo en la ignorancia lo
podrán explotar siempre,
toda su vida... Pero, si eso no
ocurriría, por ejemplo con
los programas de Acción
Afirmativa, es un programa
que ha ayudado a muchos
latinos... Si esos programas
desaparecen, eso es como
decírles, dejame mantenerte
en la oscuridad para que tú
no aprendas y yo puedo
seguir abusando de tí. Eso es
todo lo que los políticos están
haciendo... mantente oscura,
que yo seré tu luz. Pero yo
seré tu luz, pero no te a
llegar mucha luz tampoco
[laughter]... te va a llegar un
reflejito de luz para que tú
digas, oiga, así es la luz...¹⁹*

¹⁹ Interview, 3/5/99 (Man, 40s, union member, Malden Mills).

million people (including undocumented immigration); this represents over 25% of the overall population gain in the U.S. Over 4/5 of these immigrants settle in metropolitan areas, and most locate in central cities. Moreover, "of the nation's largest cities, only two, San Diego and Phoenix, retained a solid [?], non-Hispanic white majority in 1990... in all but Detroit and Philadelphia, Hispanics comprise a fifth or more of the population" (Muller, 1993). Thus, the demographic shift in Lawrence (see Table 2.6) mirrors the "Latinization" of cities nationwide. The inclusion of raw numbers in the table also allows us to notice the white flight from the City that accompanied Latino immigration.

Table 2.6: Demographic Change in Lawrence, 1970-1990

Population	1970		1980		1990	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	65,930	99%	51,371	81%	38,401	55%
Black	682	1%	865	1%	1,195	2%
Asian/NA/Other			643	1%	1,374	2%
Latino	2,327	3%	10,296	16%	29,237	42%
Puerto Rican	1,019	2%	5,726	9%	14,661	21%
Dominican					10,870	15%
Other					3,706	5%
Total	66,915		63,175		70,207	
Total Latinos 5+ yrs. Old	1,890		7,667		25,423	
Resided Abroad 5 Yrs. Ago	793	42%	1,321	17%	6,023	24%
Outside Region (SMSA)	150	8%	1,332	17%	3,450	14%

Source: Borges-Mendez, 1992; U.S. Census 1990

In this section I will look at how these newcomers fit into the Lawrence economy, drawing first on Borges-Mendez (1993) to note that, not surprisingly, "Latino immigrants in Massachusetts manufacturing have been a main source of tractable labor in secondary²⁰, unskilled, low-paying jobs at the bottom of the occupational ladder" (p.104). To put this phenomenon in context, Borges-Mendez argues that there have been changes in the structure, labor processes, and human-resources management practices of both large and small firms in the Commonwealth. Some of these trends include:

- The decline of traditional manufacturing industries such as textile and shoe production;
- The expansion of the service sector [at both the high end (e.g., financial and legal services) and the low end (e.g., domestic workers, janitorial services)];
- The high-tech *re*-industrialization of the state's economy [especially in sectors connected to the "information society," like electronics and instruments production];
- The modernization of technologies and processes of production, accompanied by the diversification of products, services, and markets;

²⁰ The secondary labor market usually refers to jobs that are low wage, less stable and secure, and lack employment contracts, health and vacation benefits, union membership, or the means for advancement.

- The use of out-sourcing and vertical disintegration²¹;
- The segmentation of labor strategies, including the use of “employment at will” for both the low-skilled and seasonal elements of production.²²

Unfortunately, the best of these tendencies (which all have ambivalent results in terms of both jobs and wages), such as technological innovation and high-tech development, have not been followed by Lawrence firms. Instead, the disturbing evidence from the City indicates that for dying traditional industries, Latinos provide “the necessary cheap labor to ride the decline... permitt[ing] firms to continue operating without any major investments in technology, job training, and development” (p.114). Even in those industries insulated from or competitive in the larger economy, job opportunities are limited: “Latinos are heavily used in labor-intensive, small- and mid-size manufacturing firms to staff unskilled and semi-skilled jobs that pay low wages and offer little prospect for wage increases, training, advancement, and job development” (p.107). Furthermore, in light of the aforementioned role of temporary agencies in the Lawrence labor market—some of whom work with hundreds of employees weekly and anywhere from five to over 50 firms in the region—it appears plausible that many of the City’s Latinos are staffing the uncertain end of firm needs in other towns as well. My conversations with temporary agency staff and workers, as well as other interviewees, would support this²³.

As Borges-Mendez points out, the trends mentioned above (which are part of a larger global economic restructuring) affect not only the relationships between “core” and “periphery” nations (or regions) but also the relationships

²¹ This refers to a firm’s process of separating out the different elements of their total production process—from research and development to manufacture to assembly—often locating different stages in different physical locations (e.g. R&D near an urban/ university center and assembly in a branch plant in a rural area), or subcontracting entire phases (with other, smaller firms or individuals—e.g. homework in the garment industry).

²² As Piore (1979) notes, what manufacturers essentially do is divide the demand for both their product and the labor used to produce it into stable and unstable portions; capital investments and skilled workers are then worth the risk for the stable part, while the unstable part remains a labor-intensive process.

²³ Conversations, Merrimack Minority Employment, 4/5/99; Tandem, 4/26/99; Staffing Group, 4/26/99.

*El Dominicano es muy trabajador... donde pueda ganarse el dinero va. Nosotros decimos allá tú sabes que el peso de nosotros, el valor de un peso es un Duarte que es nuestro principal héroe nacional. Entonces nosotros decimos: “Donde Duarte esté nosotros lo buscamos.” Aquí tendríamos que decir: “Donde esté Washington nosotros lo buscamos”. Entonces podemos trabajar en cualquier parte. La mayoría trabaja en factoría, otros trabajan en restaurantes como cocineros, como lavadores de platos, otros limpiando en las escuelas, en compañías de limpieza... Entonces tú no podrías decirle a uno del campo que está haciendo el mismo trabajo que tú que aunque no tenga la misma preparación tú eres recogedor de basura. Entonces tú tienes que unirte y tienes que mirarlo parejo.*²⁴

²⁴ Interview, 3/5/99 (Woman, early 40s, teacher, here several years).

between firms within the core itself; this in turn affects the employment and opportunity structures that immigrants enter into the the receiving country.²⁵ For example, as declining basic manufacturers bank on cheap immigrant labor, they need a reliable supply. A very common method of ensuring this is doing recruitment through current employees, often offering a "headhunter's fee"²⁶ (as one interviewee put it) to those who refer friends and family members to the company. Several informants mentioned this as a common practice thirty years ago, and other evidence indicates that this practice still exists²⁷. As Borges-Mendez points out, while this can lead to quick employment for the newcomer, it often traps him/her in a dead-end situation that delays or reduces access to other opportunities.

It is important to note that low-wage, low-skill jobs are also a function of growth sectors in an economy, not just declining ones. High-tech and specialized service sectors generate low-wage jobs both directly, through their occupational structure (e.g., services to buildings accompany high-end office development), and indirectly, through the ancillary sectors (restaurants, cleaning services) and consumption patterns of high-end workers (Sassen, 1988). Thus, low-wage, low-skill workers from the City (where service sector employment has grown steadily since the late 1960s) service the underbelly of the booming high-tech Merrimack Valley and Route 128 region. Through the many ramifications of its history as an industrial city and a mill town—including, for example, by far the highest regional concentration of affordable rental housing (Stevenson, 1992)—Lawrence has effectively become a ghetto of low-wage, low-skill jobs and workers indispensable to the regional and global economy.

Segueways...

This, however, is not all the City is—not by a long shot. As we continue into Part Two of our story, I hope to complicate the picture just painted by turning your attention, now firmly grounded in these two places, to the people moving between them.

²⁵ In fact, one executive in a multinational corporation with substantial holdings in the Dominican Republic called it (with no prompting on my part) the "internationalization or globalization of both the supply and demand for labor" (Email Communication, Mike Tagney of Colgate, 3/15/99).

²⁶ Interview, 1/28/99.

²⁷ Personal communication, Tamar Kotelchuck, 4/26/99.

I worked at ITT for about five-and-a-half years and I held some other part-time jobs as I was working there... I progressed to different levels, made more money as I went along. I was taking computer classes and to pay that I was working for a temporary company, Office Specialists. They used to send me to different places, and they sent me to this... one place and when I got there the supervisor called me and said-- he gave me some explanation, but he said, "What I want you to do is clean the bathroom." I looked at him, I thought for a second, and then I said this is not for me, I didn't come here to clean bathrooms, but after a couple of minutes I said I came here to work. So I went to the bathroom and I started singing merengues and dancing by myself and cleaning the bathroom and he was so amazed and surprised...²⁸

²⁸ Interview, 2/12/99 (Man, 40s, here 20+ years, professional).