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Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration

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The Immigrant Experiences of Dominican and Mexican Women in the 1990s

Crossing Class, Racial, and Gender Boundaries or Temporary Work Spaces in New York City

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On an average day in New York City, more unemployed Dominican males are observed on street corners today than ten years ago. Mexican males, on the other hand, ostensibly vulnerable as new arrivals, are visible at work. This comparison offers a more positive picture than the one observed among the women. In New York City, Mexican and Dominican women are largely invisible, working in the shadows of servitude. A decade ago, by contrast, many women worked in manufacturing, with spouses and other males, including other ethnic and native groups. These differences raise questions about the significance of class, race, and gender in the integration and segregation of new immigrant groups within the service labor market of New York City.

In this essay I explore these differences, focusing in particular on the process of work integration among Dominican and Mexican women who arrived in New York City during the 1990s. I examine the role of networks in the immigration, settlement, and work integration of these two groups, as well as the mediating effects of gender and household structures, both before immigration and upon arrival in New York City. I argue that the relocation of numerous immigrant Dominican families into segregated work and housing structures has increased their marginalization and racialization within New York City, with more negative consequences for the women. By contrast, the widespread and rapid integration of Mexicans within the service sector contributes to the perception of Mexicans as a "hard working," preferred, and "ethnicized" group. This characterization that contrasts with the past, racialized work integration experience of Mexicans in other parts of the United States, particularly the Southwest (Montejano 1997).[1] More precisely, I suggest that immigration type, race, and ethnic networks as well as household

structures differentially affect the resources available to the women upon arrival. Changes in service sector jobs and in the racial and ethnic composition of employers in New York City during the past decade combine to affect the type of integration immigrant women experience today as well as the *problematized* and *racialized* perception of the group in the 1990s.

In the first section of this essay, I compare the pre-migration experiences of Dominican and Mexican women, with attention to differences in class and gender structures that mediate the immigration, settlement, and work integration process. In the second section, I analyze the Dominican and Mexican settlement patterns and their implications for the type of work opportunities and racial and/or ethnic relations the women experience in New York City. In the third section, I explore the impact of employers on the general integration of the two groups and the role of gender and race in the selection of workers. Throughout the essay, I emphasize the factors and processes affecting the *racialization* or *ethnicization* of these two immigrant groups.

This essay is informed by and contributes to the literature on the immigrant adjustment experience of post-1965, Latino groups in New York City, specifically among members of the third cohort of Dominican and Mexican nationals arriving during the 1990s. It offers insight on the working conditions immigrant groups now confront within the changing service labor markets, especially in sectors attracting mostly women (Sassen 1984, 1991, 2003; Fernandez-Kelly and Garcia 1997; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 2001, 2003; Menjivar 2003). It also contributes to the literature on the role of gender, ethnicity, and network structures among Latino immigrants (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 2001, 2003; Waldinger 1986, 2001; Smith 2002); as well as to the nascent and limited literature on the role of race, ethnicity and identity formation among Latino and Caribbean groups in New York City (Rodriguez 1991, 2000; Cordero-Guzman, Grosfoguel and Smith 2001).

Data were gathered during the fall of 1999 and summer of 2002, using both ethnographic and survey methods, in four different neighborhoods of New York City where many Dominican and Mexican immigrant families have settled in the past ten years. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of eighty-six women selected according to years of residence in the United States, family composition, and previous work experience in the service sector. Additional information was gathered among thirty key informants, including employers and housing officials, drawn retroactively from a representative list of housing and employment sites identified by women participating in the study. Information on the women's spouses/partners was gathered mainly from the women's narratives but also from a number of male informants and from the spouse/partners.

PRE-MIGRATION FACTORS AFFECTING THE IMMIGRATION AND INITIAL INTEGRATION OF THE WOMEN IN NEW YORK CITY

Three major factors influence the immigration of Mexican and Dominican women to New York City: the economic conditions within the household in the country of origin; the transnational networks and the social and material capital they offer; and, the gender relations they sustain *before* emigrating. Dominican and Mexican women often describe their immigration as a desperate response to both economic and emotional constraints within their households. But their responses also illustrate how class shapes their decisions and expectations about the migration to New York City, as the following narratives indicate:

> I came to New York not just for material needs. I thought, here one can move up, save money, realize one's dream! In the spring of 1993, German was unemployed. I noticed the economic situation was getting worse. My husband was not an educated man, but I loved him. I told him, wait until I get my feet in NYC, German, just wait and see how we get out of this. . . . I told him that if my sisters and brothers had done well there, why not me with a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] degree? I remember seeing people, in return, in my neighborhood filled with jewels . . . looking good. I remember my sisters sending us money to buy the house where I used to live with my mother. . . . I'd figured with a degree I can even go further. . . . My sister has always looked out for us; she helped me come to NYC with an arranged marriage with a Puerto Rican man. (42-year-old Dominican woman, ex-professional)

> He was irresponsible. My mother advised me to come to NYC so we could work and pay the bills that he owed. I was afraid if he came alone that he would abandon us. (30-year-old Mexican woman, pink-collar worker)

> I think I came here with very favorable conditions. Other persons, Mexicans as well as others, have a lot more difficulties. I think the young Mexican kids have the greatest problems here. . . . But, some of the Dominican kids I see in school, their fathers are in jail. (31-year-old Mexican woman, au pair worker)

These three women's different class backgrounds and pre-existing gender relations conditioned the perceptions and expectations of their migration and the level of agency exercised in the decision to emigrate. Tables 3.1 and 3.2, which present the pre-migration household and class composition for all the women, illustrate that more Mexican than Dominican women lived with a spouse or partner prior to their migration and also had lower levels of education. Dominican women also had smaller families. Seven percent had no

Table 3.1. Pre-Migratory Demographics

	Dominicans N=45 %	Mexicans N=41 %	Total Sample N=86 %
Age			
18 to 28	31.8	55.0	44.1
29 or older	68.2	45.0	55.9
Household Structure			
Lived spouse/partner	54.5	78.0	65.9
Lived alone	45.5	22.0	34.1
Number of Children			
0	7.1	0	4.0
1–2	45.2	48.2	46.7
3–4	38.1	39.4	38.7
5 or more	9.6	12.1	10.6
Level of Education			
None	4.5	12.8	8.4
K–8	15.9	51.3	32.5
9–12	52.3	23.1	38.6
12 or more	27.3	12.8	20.5

Source: N. Fuentes's dissertation data, New York survey, 1999–2002.

children in the household and only 9.6 percent had five or more children, compared with 12.1 percent of Mexican women. Significantly, more Mexican than Dominican women said that their spouse or partner was the one who decided that they should migrate to the United States while significantly more Dominican than Mexican women cited family pressures, or their own decisions, as the main reason for migration. Women with more education and work experience frequently decided to emigrate despite family responsibilities and spouses/partners' mandates. Indeed, declining gender relations were often the catalyst for the departure of women in both groups, irrespective of who took the decision or arranged the migration.

Table 3.2. Who Decided to Migrate to the United States

	Dominicans N=45 %	Mexicans N=41 %	Total Sample N=86 %
Respondent	48.9	43.9	46.5
Spouse/Partner	28.9	46.3	37.2
Family	22.2	9.8	16.3

Source: N. Fuentes's dissertation data, New York survey, 1999–2002.

Beyond household and gender structures, class differences also shaped the women's divergent *gendered* networks facilitating immigration. This is partly illustrated in the different geographic locations of these networks (see table 3.3) and analysis of the qualitative data. Forty-six percent of Dominican women relied on female-based links for help with the immigration, while 63 percent of Mexican women came to New York City aided by a spouse/partner, or his connections. These pre-migration differences affected the type of settlement as well as different access to work information upon arrival to New York City.

Another pre-migration difference between these two groups is found in the racial and class composition of the women.[2] Two-thirds of Dominican women came from urban centers, and from a diversified laboring class. Similarly, seven out of ten Dominican women in the sample exhibited distinctive Afro-Caribbean phenotypes. This contrasts with the class and racial composition of earlier waves of Dominican migrants who were mostly *criollos or* Cibaeños, composed of nonurban entrepreneurs, landed elites, and politically displaced individuals (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; personal reports of community representatives from earlier cohorts). By contrast, more than half of the Mexican women came from the agricultural sectors of the *Mixteca Baja*, composed of three contiguous Mexican states, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Guerrero (see also Smith 2001, 2006). These groups have distinctively visible Mesoamerican, or indigenous phenotypes. These racial and class differences have implications for the type of work and racial or ethnic integration both groups of women experience in New York City. In particular, these differences help employers and housing officials draw clear distinctions between the two groups in the selection of workers and tenants.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS: HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES AND NETWORK LINKS

Rather than following the immigrant settlement trajectories predicted by the Chicago school of sociology (Gordon 1964), Dominicans and Mexicans who arrived in New York City in the 1990s have by-passed ethnic enclaves to settle in residential and racialized areas amidst other majority and minority groups. However, as discussed above, the settlement patterns for both groups have been fueled by different family and gender structures, as well as divergent network links.

Table 3.3 and further analysis of both the survey and the qualitative data illuminate the different locations and breadth of the network links that help both groups of women with immigration and settlement within New York

Table 3.3. Immigrant Network Links of Dominican and Mexican Women

	Dominicans N=46 %	*Mexicans N=30 %*	*Total Sample N=76 %*
Washington Heights	30	13	23
East Bronx	39	23	33
East/West Harlem	20	27	23
Queens	0	26	10
PR/Mexico	11	3	8
Other	0	8	3

Source: N. Fuentes' dissertation data, New York survey, 1999–2002.

City. While the network links of Dominican women consist of mostly females, concentrated in the East Bronx (39 percent), Washington Heights (30 percent) and East or West Harlem (20 percent), Mexican women relied mainly on spouses/partners and male relatives. The majority of these links are located in Queens (26 percent), East or West Harlem (27 percent) and "other locations" or suburban areas (10 percent). In addition, further analysis of the network data indicates that the locations of "receiving" networks among Mexican groups in the 1990s has affected the more scattered housing integration paths of Mexican than Dominican women.

Finally, the data also suggest that although the networks of both groups included mostly co-ethnics with low levels of education and social capital, Mexican women found work more quickly than Dominican women, often within a month after arrival.[3] This may be attributed to the different class backgrounds of the women and to the spread of spouses/partners' networks, with greater access to jobs in different service sectors of the city. Another finding of the housing data is that Mexicans tend to move faster than Dominicans from inner-city and "group-living" arrangements. In addition, group-living arrangements among Mexican women increased network size and wider access to different work opportunities. Co-ethnic group-living arrangements also seem to help buffer the risks of poverty during the first years of settlement, or while living within areas that are economically and/or racially isolated.

In sum, the more scattered settlement experience of Mexican women contrasts with that of Dominicans due to both structural and group characteristics that have influenced the integration of both ethnic groups since the previous decade. For example, before the 1990s, most Dominican immigrants resided in Washington Heights and West Harlem, alongside diversified racial and class groups, including entrepreneurs, merchants, and private residents. In addition, during the 1980s, the main source of work integration for the group

was within the garment district of lower Manhattan. Similarly, before the 1990s Mexican immigrants were not in New York City in significant numbers and their settlement was scattered and shaped by the needs of a mostly male immigrant population (see Smith 2001). Both the type of settlement and the type of work integration experienced before the 1990s kept Dominicans culturally and economically insulated from impoverished and racialized groups. However, both labor market and demographic changes in the city have altered the group's settlement trajectories as well as network structures, affecting more the racial and class isolation of the working poor, increasingly consisting of single, head of household women living in public or government subsidized housing.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate interrelated changes in the immigration and residence patterns of Dominican and Mexican groups in New York City between 1990 and 2000. Interestingly, the number of Dominicans settling in New York City declined at the same time that the number of Mexicans increased. More significantly, rather than the newly arriving immigrants settling directly within traditional ethnic communities, a growing number of Dominicans in the 1990s directly arrived or relocated within areas in New York City with close to 70 percent minority concentration (Logan 2002). By contrast, the number of Mexicans settling in areas previously settled by the most

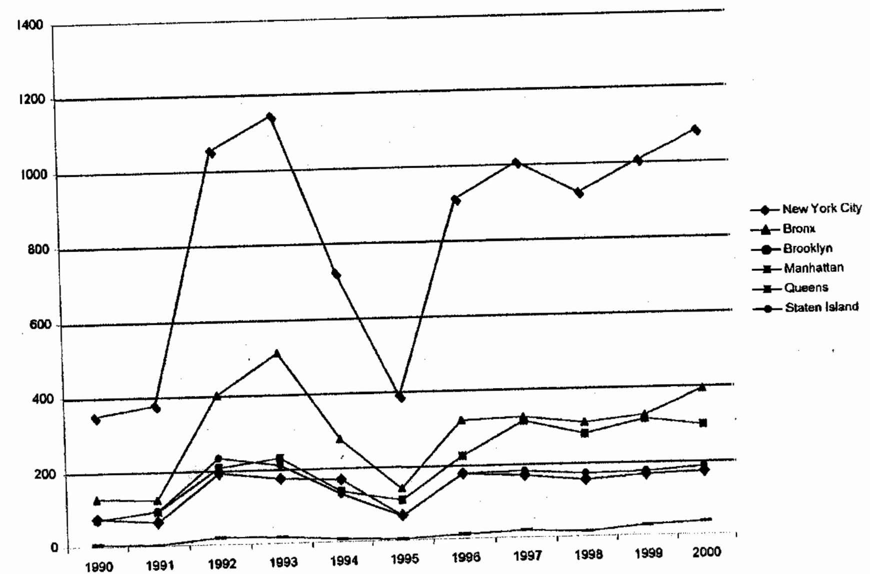

Figure 3.1. Total Numbers of Mexican Immigrants Arriving in New York City, 1990–2000
Source: Computed by author, using data from the U.S. Bureau of Census, through Columbia University's Info-Share data set for New York City.

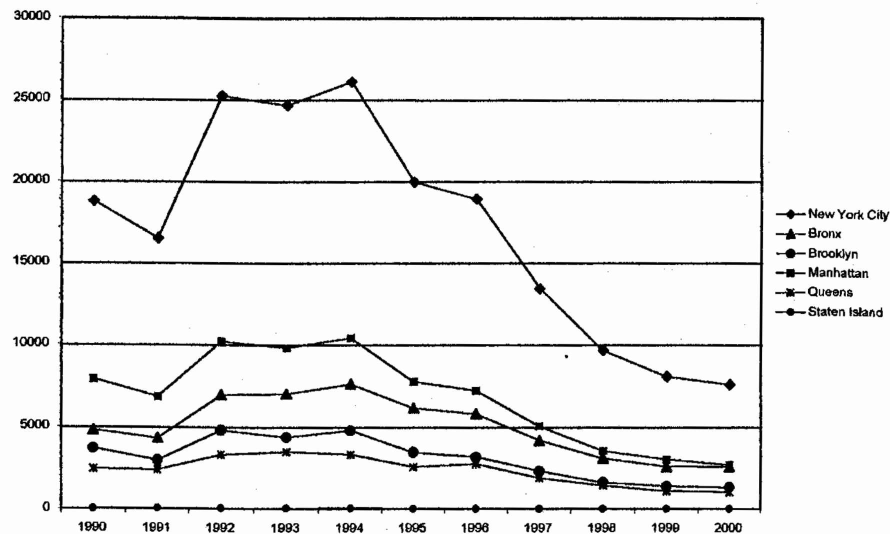

Figure 3.2. Total Numbers of Dominican Immigrants Arriving in New York City, 1990–2000.
Source: Computed by author, using data from the U.S. Bureau of Census, through Columbia University's Info-Share data set for New York City.

successful Dominicans (such as in Manhattan and Queens) has increased from 137 to 400 percent. Analysis of the 2000 Census housing data further illustrate that in the 1990s Dominicans faced the highest index of neighborhood segregation, with an isolation score of 73.7 percent. The index of segregation for Mexicans and other immigrant Latinos, by contrast, was 45.5 percent (Logan 2002).[4] This corroborates with my finding on the divergent integration paths that Dominican and Mexican women experienced in the 1990s in New York City as a result of larger changes at the structural and the group level.

Another factor contributing to the segregated settlement experience of Dominican women is related to changes in the gender composition of the Dominican and Mexican immigrant groups. For example, during the last three decades, women have comprised the majority among Dominican immigrants to the United States (Castro and Boswell 2002), especially within traditional destination centers like New York. Furthermore, the parallel immigration boom in Manhattan of Latinos, Caribbean Blacks, Asians, and European groups affected housing market rates within immigrant settlements. Many of these new non-immigrant groups have settled and competed for housing within traditional immigrant and minority communities (Miyares and Gowen 1998; Rosenbaum and Friedman 2001).

A significant indicator of the different integration experiences of Mexican and Dominican immigrant women appears in the group's pattern of racial segregation in housing. Although two-thirds of all respondents (66 percent) rent apartments from white landlords, Mexicans are more widely integrated as 53 percent rent from whites, 19 percent from Asians, and 25 percent from Latino landlords. While 80 percent of Dominican women rent from white landlords, only 2.4 percent rent from Asians and 16.7 percent from other Latinos. However, their overrepresentation among white landlords gives a distorted picture, as most of their dwellings are located in areas with the highest racial and class segregation (Logan 2002), where most buildings are owned and operated by "absent" landlords. This reduces the likelihood of Dominicans to develop contacts or networks with white landlords. Overall, and consistent with earlier research (Massey and Denton 1993; Rosenbaum and Friedman 2001), landlords prefer renting to immigrant, Latino groups than to African Americans and Puerto Ricans. However, my research indicates that single women with children are the least desirable tenants, given their association with welfare and/or lower incomes. Overall, the preference among landlords is for Mexican single males or nuclear families. Conversations with a number of superintendents and real estate agents confirm a preference for Mexican tenants in neighborhoods traditionally occupied by immigrants and minority groups in the city:

> Landlords or people in this neighborhood do not want to rent to Dominicans because they are loud; always on the streets; . . . sell drugs. . . . The women are too aggressive and problematic for landlords; they complain and call on you [the housing department] for most things. (Puerto Rican superintendent, East Harlem, Manhattan)

Even within the traditional Dominican community of Washington Heights, some landlords have contracted real estate agents to find tenants from specific class and racial backgrounds. Their view is that bringing in "outsiders" as tenants is necessary to resurrect the "old" quality of the neighborhood. Dominicans and other middle-class Latinos from previous immigrant cohorts, like Cubans who owned apartments in the area for the past thirty years, have also devised strategies to rent rooms within their apartments to meet increased rental fees and hold on to their apartments. One of these strategies has been to openly reserve rentals for Mexicans and Ecuadorians, but also increasingly for white, middle-, and upper-class professionals, including students affiliated with hospitals and universities in the vicinity.

> The problem is that the people that used to live here before used to bring their families, and their friends, and before you know the whole place was vandalized. The management has changed everything. . . . You have nothing to worry

> [about]. The place is now secured . . . and drugs have never been an issue in this building. I am glad you [referring to a professor friend that accompanied me during the interview] work with the hospital [she meant the university]. . . . They have . . . um, good jobs. (Dominican superintendent, 1970s cohort, Washington Heights, Manhattan)

The *problematized* perception of recent waves of Dominicans by members of earlier cohorts is illustrated in the previous narratives. However, conversation with supers and building managers indicate that this perception extends to the larger majority and is also affirmed by the presence of different tenants, like Mexicans and Yuppies, from inversely related class and racial backgrounds but who are willing to pay the higher rental fees. As a consequence, Mexicans are preferred tenants for room rentals and middle-class whites for apartment leases. Mexicans too are viewed as nonthreatening, *absent* and *silent tenants*, despite complaints about their shared-living arrangements and violation of occupancy codes. Many of the Latino superintendents joked about the "people in this country living more like Mexicans," which is a sardonic yet compassionate expression for the "overworked" Mexican male.

Beyond the problematized perception of Dominicans held by some landlords and informants, Dominican women more than Mexicans face the brunt of gender and class discrimination in housing as a result of contrasting living arrangements and family structures between the two groups in the 1990s. For example, analysis of household and family structures reveals that while 63 percent of Mexican households included three or more working adults, 75 percent of Dominican women live in households usually alone. Unlike the majority of Mexican women who can count on a spouse/partner or his links of support to find and rent an apartment/room, three-quarters of Dominican women rent apartments on their own, usually with the help of a female family/friend or broker/agencies, but many times as a result of public assistance eligibility. Although Mexican women tend to experience harsher living conditions due mainly to "group living arrangements" and crowding, these arrangements increase the web of job links and also pool resources from the group within the home and tend to deter poverty or homelessness.

Group-living arrangements were mainly prevalent among Mexican households, especially among the undocumented and/or the recently arrived. Paradoxically, despite the benefits of group living arrangements for deterring poverty and social isolation, crowded conditions tend to negatively affect gender relations and family structures. As the following narrative illustrates, many times these arrangements increase the risk of abuse for women and children:

> We arrived at 112th Street, on the West Side. We lived with eight other men! In the floor, we all used to sleep at night; even the bathtub was occupied. I remember holding myself until the morning, with pain and all, but I could not ask to go to the bathroom. This year was the most horrible experience. Two of the men used to make me feel really uncomfortable [being the only woman there]. This man was scarier; he was related to my husband. . . . He was the one that tried to molest me. I told my husband and, he told me there was nothing he could do for now. We needed to save money and get out. I suffered a lot.

Group living and "over crowding" arrangements provide both benefits and liabilities for both Mexican and Dominican immigrant groups with undocumented immigrant status.[5] The restructuring of affordable and public housing in New York City (Rosenbaum and Friedman 2001) also affects immigrants, and the living arrangements and housing choices of the poor. Equally, undocumented status results in more deplorable living conditions and increases the risk of exploitation by landlords and employers among both groups of women.

Further analysis of the housing data reveals that close to 30 percent of Dominicans, compared with 22 percent of Mexican women, had experienced some form of housing instability, including homelessness. Among single heads of household, twice as many Dominicans as Mexicans had exchanged sex for a place to live or spend the night. More troubling, the single head of household and the undocumented tend to share similar economic and housing risks, but undocumented and isolated women have the greatest risks of experiencing poverty, homelessness, and abuse. Overall, Dominican women experience higher levels of housing instability and racial and class segregation than do Mexican women, as Dominicans on public assistance are many times forced to relocate into cheaper public and government subsidized housing within racially and class-isolated areas. These housing changes also affect the women's future life chances and the integration and public perception of the group in general in New York City.

THE PROCESSES OF WORK INTEGRATION

Divergent household structures and housing locations also impact the networks and work possibilities of Dominican and Mexican women in New York City. Analysis of the survey and the women's narrative data compare the origins of the links that both groups of women used to find work in the 1990s. The data show that Dominican women are, from the start, at a greater disadvantage than Mexican women in the process of work integration upon

arrival to New York City since most of their network links consist of women and other individuals with lower levels of education or work experience in the lower rungs of the economy, usually within co-ethnic groups. The following narratives illustrate a pattern of women-centered network origins found more among Dominicans than among Mexican women:

> My grandmother used to live in NYC. She sent me the money for the ticket. She had a Section 8 apartment and, you know, she needed someone to help with the bills in the house; but she helped me; she used to save her "centavitos" [pennies]. . . . I grew up with my grandmother. . . . I used to work in D.R. in a factory, en Zona Franca {duty free industrial zone]. I worked eight hours a day. I used to make 300 [DR] pesos a week. I left because I was coming to New York. Before this I used to work in a pawn shop; I was the cashier, doing the bookkeeping and some paperwork. (29-year-old Dominican woman, domestic worker)

> I came because I did not make enough money and knew I would get a job in New York. My sister had a beauty salon in the Bronx. She helped me with the money for the trip. I worked for her for a while but things did not work out for us. I ended up working in a discotheque in New Jersey for almost a year. I used to work in the bathroom from 4 p.m. to closing hours, which could be between 2, 3, [or] 6 a.m. I used to fight the sleep. I worked in the bathroom assisting women, but in reality I had to check people did not smoke, you know, drugs. . . . The owner was Puerto Rican. (36-year-old Dominican woman, ex-university student, restaurant worker)

These accounts can be contrasted with the experiences of Mexican women who relied mostly on spouses/partners or their links to help with the immigration, the initial settlement and work integration.[6] This is illustrated in the following narratives:

> Here we all work. . . . My husband came first. He arranged everything for me and the kids to come. He got me a job in the same factory where he works, packing telephone cables in New Jersey. He came first, and then he sent for me. It has not been easy. We had to pay $2,000 for the "cross-over," so we both needed to work. (26-year-old Mexican woman, factory worker)

> My husband got a job in a restaurant. My brother in-law helped the two of us to get work in this restaurant in the Bronx. He washed dishes, I cleaned shrimps all day! Now that I have my little daughter, he doesn't want me to work. . . . I came with my husband, my aunt and my kids to New York. My husband had to sell his [goat] herd and borrow $6,000 from his brothers in the U.S. to pay the crossing fees of the coyotes. (21-year-old Mexican woman, ex-restaurant worker)

The wider reach of Mexicans' spouse/partner networks in New York City, both within minority and majority neighborhoods, increases the probability for better economic integration for the women. However, the immigrant work integration story needs to be understood in the context of broader changes in the labor market and its impact on the two immigrant groups. For example, in the past decade the pattern of niche formation and work concentration among Mexicans has expanded while the economic integration of most post-1965 immigrants has lagged behind those from earlier cohorts. (Logan 2002; Waldinger 2001). Since the 1980s, the pattern of work integration for Dominicans changed from concentration in manufacturing and the apparel industries to nonunionized, seasonal jobs in the lower rungs of the service economy (Sassen 1984, 1991, 2003; Waldinger 2001). Paradoxically, my data suggest that while the number of more educated and skilled Dominican women has increased among immigrants in New York City, a greater number of Dominicans is concentrated in the service sector, with a change from 34 to 62 percent.[7] Despite higher education and prior, pre-migration, work experiences they face declining work and housing opportunities. This corroborates Saskia Sassen's (1991, 2003) observation that as immigration increases, the "concentrated" pool of laborers available for cheaper wages increases the proletarization and feminization of the service sector. My findings point to the inclusion of ex-skilled and ex-professional women among the new immigrant proletariat. Consequently, many of the professional and previously skilled Dominican and Mexican women in my study have experienced downward occupational mobility.

The work integration of males reveals a more interesting story and points to a troubling economic and racial isolation gap observed more between the genders than between the groups. The Mexican male story, in particular, helps validate the *more ethnicized* integration that the group in general experiences in New York City compared to that of *problematized* Dominicans. Analysis of census data on the labor market distribution of both groups reveals that in the 1990s, 57 percent of Mexicans (versus 62 percent of Dominicans) concentrated in the service sector. The data also illustrate that Mexican males hold better-paying jobs than Dominicans, as 30 percent work as "operators, fabricators and handlers," jobs with higher skills, compared with only 22 percent of Dominicans in similar positions. Only within professional and managerial jobs do Dominicans rank just above 2 percent. However, the census data include both past and new cohorts of immigrants, making it difficult to determine whether the Dominicans doing better in professional jobs arrived in New York City during the 1990s. Waldinger (1996, 2001) has compared the niche concentration of immigrant groups, including Dominicans and Mexicans, between the 1970s and the 1990s. Although census data is missing for

the niche concentration of Mexicans in New York City during the 1970s and 1980s, Waldinger's findings provide a picture of the higher levels of niche concentration and work integration of the group in the 1990s. His data further reveal a niche concentration of 70 percent for Mexicans compared with less than 50 percent for Dominicans, predominantly in manufacturing and the garment sector.[8]

Beyond these structural changes, *gendered* network structures in the 1990s have increased women's work and class segregation. Table 3.4 summarizes the initial jobs the two groups of women obtained in New York City. The first job in New York City for Mexican women tends to be either in a factory (53 percent) or the domestic sector (20 percent). Although Dominicans tend to be more widely distributed in jobs within domestic service (11 percent), restaurants (22 percent), or other services (24 percent), these are usually concentrated within co-ethnic businesses or within businesses catering mostly to co-ethnics or native-born racial minorities. As table 3.4 illustrates, both groups of women tend to work in jobs within the lower rungs of the service sector. For example, while no Mexican woman is listed in the job category for "other services," close to one-third of Dominican women work in these jobs, usually older women who have lived in New York City for five or more years. Most "other services" jobs included women as home-attendants and beauticians, caring either for the infirm and/or seniors, mainly in Spanish- speaking homes in the city or catering to a mostly minority clientele, including mostly racialized groups.

JOB TYPES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Unlike the highly visible Mexican male worker who can be found in restaurants, construction sites, or green-grocery shops, the shadowed locations and

Table 3.4. Migrant Women's First Job Found

	Dominicans *N=43* %	*Mexicans* *N=41* %	*Total Sample* *N=84* %
Type of Work Found			
No Job	2.2	12.5	7.1
Domestic	11.1	20.0	15.3
Restaurant	22.2	2.5	12.9
Factory	22.2	52.5	36.5
Other Services	24.4	0	12.9
Self-employed	17.9	12.5	15.3

Source: N. Fuentes's dissertation data, New York survey, 1999–2002.

poorer work conditions of Dominican and Mexican women is mediated by the nature of the jobs available to them. Among these, the worst form of work and racial segregation is experienced by women working as home-care or home-health attendants and domestics. One thirty-six-year-old, Dominican single mother confided that the isolation she felt working in the bathroom of a discotheque in New Jersey checking for the use of drugs was preferable to the isolation felt working as a home attendant, where her only social interaction within a twenty-four-hour, six-days-a-week shift was with the infirmed or physically challenged Latina or African American persons in her care.

In addition, analysis of the women's weekly wages illustrates that both Dominican and Mexican women earn the lowest of salaries among the gender groups. This pattern is evident in table 3.5. The top part of the table illustrates that most Dominican and Mexican women concentrate in jobs with wages between $100 and $200 per week. However, although not statistically significant, there is an apparent pattern of more Mexican women than Dominicans earning higher wages as salaries increase from $300 to $500 per week. Ironically, the jobs that offer Dominican women weekly wages comparable to the better paid jobs of Mexican women are found either in home health-care or within beauty parlors. These jobs usually cater exclusively to clients consisting of co-ethnics, or native minority, mostly African American and immigrant, Caribbean Black women. These jobs expose Dominican women only to the culture of racialized minority groups, while the integration of Mexican women within family-owned, business

Table 3.5. Weekly Wages for the Women and Spouses/Partners

	Dominicans *N=45* %	*Mexicans* *N=41* %	*Total Sample* *N=86* %
Women's Wages			
$100–$200	62.2	67.6	64.6
$200–$300	24.4	20.6	22.8
$300–$400	8.9	5.9	7.6
$400–$500	2.2	5.9	3.8
$500+	2.2	0.0	1.3
Husbands/Partner Wages			
$100–$200	0	9.8	4.7
$200–$300	22.2	17.1	19.8
$300–$400	8.9	17.1	12.8
$400–$500	6.7	14.6	10.5
$500+	6.7	12.2	9.3

Source: N. Fuentes's dissertation data, New York survey, 1999–2002.

establishments in the cities or suburbs exposes them to other ethnics and whites, including a growing number of Asians. Although these jobs offer poor working conditions, they expose Mexican women to majority groups, or the middle class (see Menjivar 2003 for related findings in Los Angeles).

The survey data equally reveal that the first jobs obtained by Mexican males are concentrated in restaurants (22 percent), factories (12.2 percent), and in other services (7.3 percent). Unlike Mexican women, a growing percent of Mexican males work in "other services," in such jobs as sub-chefs, bartenders, meat cutters, and carpentry, or in private and public-sponsored construction projects. These jobs provide opportunity for training and for access to a wider web of links. Analysis of interviews among employers reveals that Mexican males, more than the women, work in establishments where they get "perks" as well as opportunities to learn the language and legal sponsorship by employers for them and/or their families.

Another difference in the working conditions of men and women is found at the bottom part of table 3.5. The data illustrate that more Dominican males than Mexicans are unemployed or are reported without weekly wages. Also, although initially more Mexican males earn lower weekly wages than Dominican males, usually in the $100–200 wage category, years of residence seem to increase average weekly wages more among Mexicans than Dominicans. For example, 17.1 percent of Mexicans earn $300 a week compared with only 8.9 percent of Dominicans. As the wages increase, the pattern is more consistent. Twice as many Mexican males earn weekly wages of $400–500 and above than do Dominican males, 14.6 and 6.7 percent, respectively. Most notably, three times as many Mexican than Dominican males earn weekly wages of $400–500. Interestingly, gender differences become more significant, the higher the wages.

Finally, the different work trajectories of both ethnic groups in New York City is affected by the racial and ethnic ideologies that employers have of both groups, as the following narrative indicates:

> The Mexican labor force can be identified from other groups. For me, the difference is as stark as Irish from Chinese. . . . In the Southwest Mexicans are as noticeable as the elephant in the living room! Within the restaurant industry, Asians, like the Chinese, and even Polish workers, are preferred, just like Mexicans. These groups are perceived as motivated. . . . Dominicans and Puerto Ricans have been here for generations, this makes it more complicated. It seems that these groups have an edge with the main culture, one which has also been fueled by the media. (restaurant owner and ex-graduate student, West Village, Manhattan)

As this narrative and discussion with employers illustrate, employers' awareness of the past history of Mexican migrant labor in other parts of the United States increases the desirability of these workers within specific work sectors, such as in restaurant and construction sectors. Building on research by Smith (2002) and Chin (1998), I explore the process of worker selection among employers and the role of race, ethnicity, and gender. The findings suggest that employers assign separate tasks to male and female workers, but that ethnicity and race play a crucial role in their selection. I asked an employer in Queens whether he had ever helped or sponsored workers.

> Yeah, some of them, they ask me for money. I can't help all of them. I gave one [Mexican worker] $10,000 to help him buy a house, and then he gave it back to me little by little. And, let me tell you something: Some workers, they deserve it, some of them, they don't deserve it. Some of these I tell you 'cause I have a lot of experience. . . . See people who helped me in the past, I see them like a God. People I help, they see me like God too. . . . You need people to trust you and you need to keep a clear face [meaning, you must be honest and truthful to the friendship]. (Greek, restaurant owner, Queens)

The segregation of women within different work sectors in the service economy is affected by preferences for male workers by employers, many of whom are immigrants of working-class backgrounds with rigid attitudes about the functions and inclusion of women at work. The following factory owner, the son of Asian immigrants in New York City, feels that women's physical characteristics limit their inclusion in certain "male" jobs, even within the service sector.

> In this job we need guys to do the lifting and the women to do the arrangements, so they don't work together. The women do the sorting, organize the merchandise from the boxes and help prepare boxes with orders . . . you know, this requires women's hands. The men, they are quick and strong, I need men to handle the boxes and the trucks, the deliveries. These guys are diligent, honest. (Chinese-American employer, garment district, Manhattan)

A restaurant owner, the son of immigrants, has reassessed his views about the hiring of women and their effectiveness to work in his restaurant, as his business has grown from a family-run establishment to a mid-sized, fast-paced establishment.

> His sister is a very good cook. She was the backbone [strength] of the floor when I first started. But now my business is too large. We don't work here like you see on TV . . . we are really fast, this is a really fast establishment. These jobs are not for women. I [have kept] only Edwin's mother, who is a porter. She cleans and supervises that everything is in its place. (Restaurant owner, Bronx)

These *gendered* ideologies further the segregation of immigrant men and women within the service, labor markets and limit the integration of women within jobs with potentials for higher wages, social mobility and access to wider network links. Despite these gendered labor market segregation, the only workers present in the Asian establishments I visited, were Mexicans and Asian immigrants, including women. There were no visible Dominican workers within Asian establishments, especially among green grocers.

Another significant factor contributing to the *ethnic* integration of Mexicans as opposed to the more *racialized* experience of Dominicans is illustrated by employers' preference for hiring workers, irrespective of gender, from outside the neighborhood. My interview with another restaurant owner in the southeast Bronx illustrates the emphasis on "trust" in the selection of workers as well as the tendency to see workers as different from himself. His views also indicate the poorer images of Latino workers in general.

> Q. You have to watch them [workers] for a little while?
> Well, I like to test them. I give them an opportunity to either hang or choke themselves. It's very easy in this industry. And, also, another important quality, this one that they can't have, is alcoholism. . . . The Latinos love to drink, especially Mexicans. . . . They have a problem drinking. Every single one of them. Don't let anybody tell you different. Every single one. They're terrible. (restaurant owner, second-generation ethnic white)

Another restaurant employer, also the son of ethnic white immigrants, who runs a butcher shop in the east/south Bronx in a neighborhood that is 70 percent minority, had this to say about "trust":

> Yes. . . . I tend to hire through recommendations. Rarely have I hired someone in seventeen years who has come by looking for a job. . . . I also hold into higher consideration if the worker doing the recommendation is one of my good workers. . . . Workers are hard to recruit for this business because not everyone is suited for this job. Not all my workers can handle the machines.

This employer as well as the majority of others I spoke with admitted to never having hired an African American, Puerto Rican, or Dominican, despite the fact that his clientele is largely Spanish-speaking and his business is situated in a mostly Puerto Rican, African American, Dominican, and Italian neighborhood. Mexicans comprise the majority of his seventeen employees; the rest are Italian immigrants. It is possible to suggest that the closer employers are to poor and racialized groups, the more they construct spatial and ideological boundaries to remove themselves from them, by hiring "outsiders." They justify their actions as a result of having to accommodate their clients' needs; but, I find that the justification employers use in the selection and sorting of manual workers in New York City is guided by racial and class biases ingrained in the American culture of race relations. These ideologies, I believe, serve to continue to reproduce the class and racial divides that America has experienced since its inception and that now is being reproduced among newer immigrant groups, with greater negative consequences for non-white, immigrant women.

CONCLUSION

The data in this essay address three growing bodies of knowledge about immigration and racial formation. The first is encapsulated in the context of the reception/immigrant adjustment model (Portes 1996; Salinger 2001). This model suggests that class and ethnicity, as well as the opportunities provided by the context of reception, determine the integration of immigrant groups. It assumes that ethnic groups will help each other to obtain jobs through a process of ethnic *solidarity* and *re-enforceable trust* between workers and employers (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). The restructuring of the economy in New York presents an opportunity to see under what circumstances ethnic "niches" are created or become obsolete, especially in relation to the gender and skill-level of new immigrant workers. My data reveal that race, household, and gender structures significantly affect the process of work integration among Latino groups. Analysis of census data as well as the existing literature also reveals that the restructuring of the economy has negatively affected more Dominican than Mexican workers. These changes have serious consequences for the type of network and work sectors where immigrant women find employment. Data from my study further reveal the poorer conditions and the class and gender segregation that Dominican immigrant women face at work today compared to the experiences of previous cohorts (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Carnegie 1997–2000). Finally, different work integration trajectories contribute to higher class and racial isolation among Dominican than among Mexican women.

The second theoretical framework is the concept of spatial assimilation or integration of immigrant groups, first outlined by the Chicago School and extended recently by Alba and Nee (2003). This model predicts that immigrants follow a spatial trajectory: first-generation waves concentrate in the inner city within an ethnic community while successive generations, or the offspring of

the immigrants, will gradually integrate within suburban and middle-class neighborhoods. My data show that Mexican immigrants in the 1990s are bypassing the classical predictions of spatial integration among the first generation. They arrived directly into diversified city-wide and suburban neighborhoods, crossing racial and class boundaries not open to other minority, racial groups. By contrast, Dominicans in the 1990s experience a more accelerated form of spatial integration, but unlike Mexicans or previous cohorts, this now takes place within marginalized and racialized communities of the inner city. Their experience is similar to that experienced by impoverished and racialized African American and Puerto Rican women in New York City. Economic and housing market restructuring makes it impossible for Dominican women to compete for market-rate apartments within traditional areas of reception or ethnic enclaves. This new form I call *racialized, spatial integration* is an adaptation of the model of segmented assimilation advanced by both Portes (1996) and Wilson (1996) in relation to the fate of the second generation and racialized, minority groups. However, these new forms of *racialized* integration have consequences for the type of work opportunities and racial integration of the first and future waves of immigrant groups within the host society.

A third body of knowledge addressed by this study is rooted in racial formation theories (Rodriguez 1991, 2000; Montejano 1997; Omi and Winant 1994). My data reveal that racial and class factors affected by segregated network structures explain the more marginalized and racialized immigrant experience of Dominicans, especially for working poor women. The 2000 Census portrays close to one million Latinos who identify as black (Logan 2002). The socioeconomic profile of these individuals is similar to that of inner-city minorities. The data from this study confirm that Dominicans who tend to identify as black usually live next to racialized and marginalized groups and experience not only higher poverty but also racial and class isolation from other Dominicans.

This essay argues that gender structures and relations also contribute to the type of racial or ethnic integration Latino immigrants may experience. Within public housing, it is harder for women and families to reconstruct their gender relations and family structures, as the nature of public housing and welfare dictates that families remain poor in order to continue to qualify for rent subsidies or public help. This affects Dominican women, who are forced to remain as single mothers and/or as "public charges," carrying more of the racial and poverty stigma than males.

Finally, the class-spatial model developed by Wilson (1987, 1996) suggests that the disappearance of jobs and the concentration of poor and marginalized Dominican women within inner-city structures will further separate Dominicans from society. This will result in the formation of another, *racialized,* Latino underclass in New York City who will be forced to assimilate to the culture of isolated and racialized minority groups. By contrast, Mexicans, with their distinctive, non-black, "in-between" racial characteristics and their more vulnerable immigrant and class position will continue to experience preferential treatment by employers. Despite the exploitation of Mexicans, their experience points to their possible integration as an allied *ethnicized* hard-working minority and should have more positive effects on the fate of the second generation. These findings attest to the fluid aspect of race and ethnicity and the significant role of the new service economy in the making and reproduction of racial and class divides in New York City.

NOTES

1. I refer to *marginalization* as the gradual economic and social decline, usually accompanied by economic stagnation, experienced by immigrants due to a combination of structural and individual causes. See for example Rodriguez (1991) and Mahler (1995). Similarly, *racialization* conveys the multiple confounding effects of marginalization, racial and class isolation, and public problematization that poor, African Americans and Puerto Ricans experienced in Chicago during the 1980s, as a direct consequence of larger structural and demographic changes in the service economy (see Wilson's work [1987, 1996]). Finally, I use *ethnicization* to describe a process where the immigrant group's imported social capital, including entrepreneurial experience, and in some instances, whiteness, or non-black physiognomy, contributes to the groups' access and acceptance within majority sectors that facilitate the gradual and successful integration of immigrants, even if segmented, into allied, ethnic, minority groups. See Portes (1996), Waldinger (2001), Alba and Nee (2003), and Montejano (1997).

2. The questionnaire was designed with a racial classification checklist, where women were classified as having either Afro-Caribbean or *criollo* phenotypes. Criollo phenotypes included individuals with the racial intermixing of Europeans and native, Indigenous, or Meso-American groups.

3. Social capital, as applied by Portes (1996), refers to the ability of a group to gain access to certain resources by having access or membership in a social network or larger social structures. (See Waldinger 2001: 313.)

4. Logan's model of segregation at the census tract level can be obtained at the Lewis Mumford Center website: mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/data.html. The index ranges from 0 to 100. A value of 60 or above is very high. Among Dominicans, it means that 73.7 percent will have to move out of the tracts where they live in order to be more evenly distributed among majority groups; or, conversely, an equal number of non-Dominicans will have to move within the Dominican settlement tracts.

5. However, in the 1990s, new research demonstrates that home-sharing or "group-living" appears to be more prevalent among natives, including middle-class groups, than it was assumed (Ahrentzen 2003).

6. The marital status and family structures are strikingly different, with close to 50 percent of Dominican women living in households as single mothers while only 25 percent of Mexicans live as single mothers.

7. The national figure for Dominicans in the service sectors is half of that found among New Yorkers, with 33.2 versus 62 percent. This may reflect the larger percentage and concentration of Dominicans in NYC. See Castro and Boswell (2002) for national data analysis.

8. I rely here on Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) and Roger Waldinger's (1986) cogent survey data among Dominican workers in the NYC labor market. My own information gathering efforts for this and earlier cohorts among Dominicans is limited since the U.S. Census clustered them under "other Hispanics" prior to the 1990s.

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Josh DeWind, Program Director, and Jennifer Holdaway, Associate Director, International Migration Program, Social Science Research Council

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