



Making it to the finish line: educational resilience among Dominican women of Haitian descent

Ida Salusky & Mary Tull

To cite this article: Ida Salusky & Mary Tull (2024) Making it to the finish line: educational resilience among Dominican women of Haitian descent, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 27:2, 251-269, DOI: [10.1080/13613324.2021.1924131](https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1924131)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1924131>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 11 Jun 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 2119



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Making it to the finish line: educational resilience among Dominican women of Haitian descent

Ida Salusky  and Mary Tull

Department of Psychology, DePaul University, Chicago, IL, USA

ABSTRACT

Dominican-born children of Haitian descent are frequently excluded from the public education system in the Dominican Republic. Barriers to participation include poverty, discriminatory government policies, and structural barriers within school settings. Females of Haitian descent face additional barriers due to gender discrimination. The current study used modified grounded theory to analyze qualitative interviews from 32 Dominican females of Haitian descent to explore factors that promote and impede educational resilience. Barriers to school participation included: the economics of school integration and persistence, poor cultural and learning climate within school, and limited structural supports for female students who want to pursue education while pregnant, or raising children. Factors described as promoting educational resilience included: successfully balancing work and study from an early age, having supportive social networks, and holding strong beliefs about the future value of education. Findings challenge and inform dominant discourses about factors that impede and support educational resilience.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 29 February 2020
Accepted 16 April 2021

KEYWORDS

Educational inequality;
educational resilience;
persistence; social support;
young motherhood

Introduction

Access to primary and secondary education is considered a fundamental human right (UNESCO 2016). Higher levels of formal education are widely acknowledged as critical to promoting: greater access to economic resources, better health and improved psychological wellbeing (Rihani 2006; Schillinger et al. 2006). The Dominican Republic (DR) is signatory to international treaties committing to equal access to education for all children, but education has historically been denied to Dominican born children of Haitian descent (Kim 2013; Wigginton 2010). Even when children perceived to be of Haitian descent access public schools, widespread disparities still exist (Bartlett 2012; Giliberti 2013; Schoenholtz et al. 2014; Shoaff 2017; Wigginton 2010).

Within the DR, systematic and institutional discrimination towards Haitians and their descendants has been maintained through laws, cultural institutions and physical segregation into communities called bateyes¹ (Jesuit Refugee Services 2004). One method of exclusion involves denying children of Haitian descent birth certificates, as individuals without a birth certificate cannot attend public schools, regardless of any legitimate claim to

CONTACT Ida Salusky  isalusky@depaul.edu

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

citizenship (Jesuit Refugee Services 2004; Kristensen and Wooding 2013). Accessing documentation can be particularly difficult due to arbitrary enforcement of laws, lack of public awareness about navigating agencies, and corrupt officials (Petoziello, Hintzen, and Gonzalez Dias 2014; Schoenholtz et al. 2014). Further, documentation status is not static for those perceived to be of Haitian descent. There are many documented cases of children receiving Dominican birth certificates, only to have them arbitrarily rescinded (Jesuit Refugee Services 2004; Kristensen and Wooding 2013).

Lack of documentation can result in being denied entry to public school, which can lead to attrition and dropout (Nonoyama-Tarumi, Loaiza, and Engle 2010), or being denied the right to sit for national exams (Prueba Nacional) that are required to progress through the secondary education system² (Bartlett 2012; Wigginton 2010). Students may not sit for these exams (in the 8th and 12th grades) without a certified birth certificate, or a national identity card. Thus, even after entering primary school, Dominican youth of Haitian descent may be unable to access high school education, or a diploma due to lack of documentation (Bartlett 2012; Shoaff 2017; Wigginton 2010).

When youth of Haitian descent do gain entry to public schools, they are more likely to enter school late, attend the lowest resourced schools, and encounter anti-Haitianism and colorism from peers and teachers (Bartlett 2012; Gómez and Nieto 2014). Literacy and formal education are closely linked to cultural and power structures, and public schools teach cultural values. Dominican public schools emphasize national identity in ways that signal Haitian experiences and history as inferior (e.g. blackness as inconsistent with Dominican identity) (Bartlett 2012; Giliberti 2013). As a consequence, anti-Haitianism and colorism are deeply embedded within public school settings.

Dominican females of Haitian descent face additional gendered barriers to accessing and persisting through public education (Gómez and Nieto 2014; Petoziello, Hintzen, and Gonzalez Dias 2014). Cultural attitudes like machismo and preferential treatment of men and boys means that girls are often relied upon over male children to provide domestic labor, which can impact school participation (Stromquist 2014). Adolescent girls who become pregnant prior to secondary school completion are frequently pushed out of classrooms due to misguided beliefs about pregnancy contagion (Diario Libre 2013). Statistics confirm girls in the DR are less likely to be enrolled in primary school compared to boys, and between ages 10–18 matriculate into the public-school system at lower rates than male students (Oficina Nacional de Estadística 2016). Despite significant structural barriers, the burden for completing secondary school is placed on females (Guzman and Cruz 2009) who are blamed by family members and the larger society when they do not graduate (Salusky *forthcoming*).

Given multiple barriers to secondary school completion that females of Haitian descent experience, high dropout rates are unsurprising. Nonetheless, some persist and eventually complete secondary school. Understanding the conditions that promote persistence through secondary school is an important first step to developing locally relevant interventions.

Theoretical Framework

When faced with significant adversity, resilience is a person's capacity 'to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources'

(Ungar 2008, 225). Resilience focuses on strengths rather than deficits, with risk and adaptation as essential components (Luthar and Zelazo 2003). Resilience research seeks to identify locally and culturally congruent protective factors that allow positive adjustment to adverse circumstances (Luthar 2006; Ungar 2008). It should be noted that criticism has emerged about GRIT, a concept related to resilience (Denby 2016). GRIT involves the idea that some individuals hold intense focus and persistence towards a particular goal. The controversy surrounding GRIT focuses on the inference that if someone does not display resilience and persistence under highly adverse circumstances they, individually, are to blame rather than larger structural systems that often work systematically to oppress marginalized groups. We do not endorse or prescribe to the idea that people should be expected achieve socially proscribed milestones (e.g. high school completion) in the face of systemic oppression or racism. Rather, we adopt Ungar's (2008) definition of resilience which focuses on how individuals negotiate resources that they can reasonably access.

Recent research has examined how resilience manifests in lower and middle income, non-industrialized and non-Westernized societies (Luthar 2006; Masten 2014a; Ungar 2008). Ungar et al. (2007) undertook an 11-country study of adolescent resilience. His research team found there are global and culturally specific processes involved in resilience reflecting the particular culture and context of a given community. In other words, 'different contexts and cultures provide access to different processes associated with resilience as it is defined locally (Ungar, Ghazinour, and Richter 2013, 348).' Even where common resilience factors and processes exist, interpreted meaning of these experiences may differ depending on culture and context (Masten 2014b).

Resilience research in low and middle-income settings has yet to explore processes promoting education persistence (i.e. educational resilience) in the face of chronic adversity, including poverty, gender violence, and systemic discrimination. More broadly, very little research has examined processes underlying education persistence as an outcome in the face of chronic adversity (Hlatshwayo and Vally 2014).

Within the critical race theory literature, the concept of cultural wealth suggests some processes that may promote educational resilience. Yosso (2005) argues that students of color have unique bodies of knowledge and skills that facilitate resilience within educational settings designed for exclusion. This cultural wealth is embodied within six types of cultural capital: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant. Aspirational capital involves individuals maintaining hopes and dreams in the face of significant structural barriers. Navigational capital refers to the ability to maneuver through institutions created to exclude groups or classes of people (i.e. the Dominican education system, which both symbolically and physically excludes people of Haitian descent). Social capital refers to people and relationships that provide emotional and instrumental support when navigating systems, like schools and government bureaucracies. Linguistic capital includes the cognitive flexibility and social skills that come with the ability to navigate multiple languages. Familial capital involves the history, memory and cultural intuition that one gains through an extended kinship network. Finally, resistant capital involves the knowledge and skills that allows individuals and groups to resist oppression over time. The cultural wealth held within these forms of cultural capital may individually or collectively allow historically oppressed and marginalized students to enact educational resilience over time (Yosso 2005).

In U.S. settings, researchers have examined factors that promote educational persistence for low-income, ethnic minority youth in communities experiencing high rates of violence. For example, Evans et al. (2012) and Hughes et al. (2006) both found positive racial socialization mitigated negative effects of racism on educational persistence for African American youth. This and other similar work highlight that even in the face of significant structural adversity there are ways to support young people in pursuit of education. Understanding processes that promote resilience is an important step in understanding the interactive processes that help students persevere despite experiencing educational adversity.

Study Rationale

To date, there is limited published research on the educational trajectories of females of Haitian descent facing multiple systemic barriers to educational participation in the DR. Such research is critical because identifying within group differences can illuminate protective factors that promote educational resilience. It is also important to understand whether typically identified risk factors for low-graduation rates (e.g. pregnancy, lack of interest, motivation) truly drive the phenomenon for females of Haitian descent.

In this study, we sought to understand how Dominican females of Haitian descent narrate their educational experiences, including barriers and supports they encountered when trying to persist through school. Our research questions are 1) *What barriers to educational participation do females of Haitian descent describe*; 2) *What supports allow females of Haitian descent to persist in school* and 3) *What do educational trajectories look like for females of Haitian descent born and raised in two segregated communities (bateyes).*

Methods

Authors' Positionality

Ida Salusky: I am a bi-racial woman, not of Dominican descent who has worked with the two batey communities involved in this study since 2002. My community engagement has ranged from volunteer adult literacy facilitator, program manager for an international non-profit organization to international researcher. In addition, I have taken on the more informal roles in Chiquita and Sonrisa leveraging the various privileges I carry within Dominican society to help community members and friends access resources like basic healthcare, legal assistance and documentation that are all too frequently denied residents of the bateyes. As a result, my relationships with many of the participants are multilayered and do not strictly fit into a researcher-participant box. I have also been a neighbor, negotiator and continue to have close friendships within both communities. Prior to data analysis, I anticipated that participants who lacked Dominican birth certificates/documentation as children would be less likely to have completed either their eighth grade or high school equivalency in adulthood. Likewise, going into this study I believed that pregnancy was a factor, but not by itself a causal reason for adolescents and young adults leaving school.

Mary Tull: I am feminist-oriented white woman who is not a heritage Spanish speaker had no contact with participants in this study and had not previously worked with any communities in the Dominican Republic. I did have simultaneous exposure to a different dataset with the same population. I conducted intensive readings on historical, political, and social

developments regarding the position of women of Haitian descent in the DR prior to and throughout data analysis. I expected to find some discussion of discrimination and structural constraints to educational access. Being a non-native Spanish speaker, I frequently consulted with the first author to ensure full understanding of the data.

Data for the current study come from a larger ethnographic project examining rites of passage to adult identity for three generations of females of Haitian descent living in the DR. Ethnographic fieldwork took place during 2012–2013 when the first author lived in one batey for a 10-month period. Personal relationships and past work as a literacy facilitator and community advocate provided the first author with entry into both communities.

Communities

Research was conducted in two bateyes, Chiquito and Sonrisa, located near a major city (approximately 60-minute drive). Chiquito is the more urban of the two communities, located at the edges of a military town. Sonrisa is geographically more isolated. Sonrisa is estimated to have approximately 5000 inhabitants, whereas Chiquito is inhabited by about 1,500 people. The overwhelming majority of individuals in these bateyes live in poverty and many are stateless. Both bateyes are primarily inhabited by Haitian immigrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent (Salusky 2013, *forthcoming*).

Participants

A total of 32 women participated in the current study. All participants interviewed were born in the DR but reported having Haitian ancestry. The mean age of participants was 26 years with an age range of 15–56. Five participants lived in Chiquito and 27 resided in Sonrisa. All participants spoke Spanish. Participants included women with educational experiences ranging from never formally attending school in childhood to studying at the university level. We chose participants with a diverse breath of experiences in the public-school system to examine how educational trajectories unfold overtime.

Procedures

The larger study protocol called for dyadic interviews of mothers and their adolescent daughters as well as elder females. The first author spent two months identifying potential dyads before recruitment. Once the first author saturated her networks within each community, a key informant (community health worker) from Sonrisa helped identify remaining participants. The first author approached participants directly, explained the study purpose and that she would likely interview another family member. Interested participants then agreed upon a place and time to meet to conduct the consent process and interview. Interviews were conducted in Spanish by the first author and digitally recorded. All participants received \$450RD, the equivalent to the cost of the daily main meal for a family of six. Interviews ranged from 50 minutes to two hours. The first author and two U.S. bilingual transcriptionists transcribed interviews. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

Interview Protocol

The first author developed a semi-structured interview guide with goal of understanding pathways to adult identity for females of Haitian descent living in batey communities. Participants were guided through a life history interview. Relevant questions to the current study focused on salient experiences related to education. All participants were asked about their memories of school, what they liked and disliked about school, and relationships with peers and teachers. Participants who had left school without completing their high school degree and participants who reported never attending school as children were probed about the circumstances that led to these outcomes. Example questions include: ‘Tell me about what you liked and disliked about school?’ and ‘What was your relationship like with teachers/other students?’ The interview guide was translated into Spanish by the first author and back translated by a bilingual Spanish-English speaker. The study was approved by University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana Institutional Review Board.

Analysis

We were broadly interested in understanding circumstances that led to different educational outcomes for a poor and marginalized population. We also acknowledge that dichotomizing participants based on educational outcomes (i.e. graduating or not graduating) might result in missing factors that support emerging educational resiliency. Thus, participants were divided into two broad groups for analysis: graduates ($n = 12$) and non-graduates ($n = 20$). These categories reflect differences between participants who had graduated high school at interview and passed the national exam and those who had not. We also conducted a sub-analysis of non-graduates based on the traditionally expected age for high school graduation (18 or 19), with younger non-graduates in one group ($n = 12$, those under age 20) and older non-graduates in another group ($n = 8$, those age 20 and older). We present these sub-groups where there meaningful differences to note between non-graduates in each sub-group. We also provide follow-up data on all original non-graduates as of December 2018, to present data on emerging educational resilience.

Modified grounded theory was used to study emergent data from interviews (Charmaz 2006). We approached this work from a constructivist standpoint, acknowledging engagement in an interpretive narrative process from which we developed a codebook using in-vivo coding. Transcripts were open coded by the first author, and then these codes were refined, revised, and confirmed through focused coding. Data was then analyzed and compared between our three groups by the first and second author. To provide a validity check on the data and its interpretation, the first author met individually with five participants to discuss analysis and findings and to invite a conversation about discrepancies or issues participants saw within the presentation of the data. No concerns were brought up related to educational experiences and trajectories.

Results

Participants discussed two main barriers to school participation: economic factors that impact school integration and persistence and structural barriers that exist within schools. Participants also described three supports that promote persistence through

secondary school: the ability to balance the need to work and study, having supportive social networks and specific beliefs about the future benefits of formal education.

Barriers to School Persistence

Economics of School Integration and Persistence

Late Enrollment. Timing of school entrance is one critical factor in determining later educational outcomes. Virtually all high school graduates and younger non-graduates reported entering public school for the first time between ages five and six (the traditional age of entry). Both graduates who were enrolled in school late discussed being raised by a single mother who traveled to support the family. As a result, Filomena (age 21) and Ana (age 27) had to follow their caregiver, which led to late enrollment and sporadic attendance throughout childhood. In contrast, half of older non-graduates reported delays to school entry. These participants discussed either being enrolled in school for the first time after age eight, or never attending school as children. They described a number of economic reasons for this outcome. Esperanza (56, non-graduate) explained her mother never enrolled her in school because she was her family's only daughter and was kept out of school to help run the household.

Esperanza: I was always at home. When they came to offer schooling, everyone was registering their kids, they came to talk to her [mother] and she said no, that she was not going to send us to school . . . I was the only female in the house and she would say 'who is going to wash, who is going to clean the house?'

Participants across all three groups described lifelong experiences related to poverty, with distinctions in the degree and impact of economic hardship on school enrollment. Entering school late sets up a child to experience further delays in education. The mean age of first childbirth in the DR is 20 (UN DESA 2013). In our study sample, seven of the 12 participants who graduated from high school reported having at least one child prior to graduation and the mean age of first pregnancy was 19. Delays in secondary school enrollment creates a situation where the traditionally sanctioned time to begin a family bumps up against secondary school completion.

Transportation. Transportation was cited as a major barrier to school completion for both high school graduates and older non-graduates in batey Sonrisa. The community is approximately three miles from the closest town, creating a transportation barrier for many participants. Currently, only first through eighth grade are offered in Sonrisa and historically classes were only offered through fifth grade. This means that high school attendance requires travel into the adjacent town and historically the school district would assign students from the batey to night classes. Half of high school graduates and a third of older non-graduates from Sonrisa discussed transportation related issues impacting their studies. Often, high school graduates from Sonrisa missed several years of school specifically because of transportation issues. Participants described several barriers to studying: classes taking place at night, the long distance and expense to pay a motorcycle taxi, and safety concerns. Celia (31, graduate) was approximately 17 or 18 when she completed 8th grade and was eligible to enter high school. Celia did not have to financially support her family, was not married and did not have children. She reported

enjoying school in her youth. She specifically attributed stopping-out of high school to dangers associated with traveling in and out of the community at night.

Celia: I had to stop when I was in eighth grade . . . because they [batey school] did not offer eighth grade. I had to go to town. In town they did not offer [class] in the day. Instead, it was the night high school and the trip was very dangerous because they [thieves] attacked motorcycle taxis . . . They [taxis/passengers] would be killed. People were scared to go to town to study.

Celia eventually returned to school when she able to access weekend programs. Almost a decade passed between her original stop-out and returning to school.

It is notable that none of the 10 younger non-graduates from Sonrisa cited transportation as a barrier to school completion. This was likely the result of two initiatives: a state sponsored extension school for weekend study and an initiative by the municipal government to provide free transportation to and from the weekend extension program. The experiences with transportation of both graduates and non-graduates highlight the ways that structural issues can impede the exercise of educational resiliency.

Documentation. A quarter of participants who graduated high school reported that, although they were born in the DR, they experienced difficulties getting either a birth certificate, or identity card at age 18. These women found themselves at an impasse when they either reached the eighth or twelfth grade. Each of these participants experienced significant delays in school progress because of their documentation status. For example, the Haitian born parents of Laura (18, graduate) obtained a Dominican birth certificate for her early in life. Later, when Laura turned 18 and attempted to get an identity card the government refused to recognize her birth certificate and issue her documentation. Laura had taken her eighth-grade national exam using the name and birth certificate she was issued at birth. When denied an adult identity card, Laura was forced to either live as an undocumented person in her country of birth, or have a Dominican born woman declare her under a new name. Laura successfully solicited a new birth certificate and was issued a Dominican identity card under a new name. As a consequence, she lost her secondary school records under her birth name. Laura had to repeat high school under her new identity. When interviewed, Laura was approaching the end of 12th grade. She had been denied an identity card under her birth name and she knew that her hard won academic record was no longer her own and that she likely would be unable to sit for the national exam and graduate from high school. Laura described how her performance and motivation in school dramatically changed when she realized graduation was unlikely.

Laura: I always got along well with my teachers and right now I don't like school because I am terribly unmotivated.

Interviewer: Is that because you don't know if you will be able to take the Prueba Nacional because of documentation?

Laura: Yes. I study, but I don't study like I use to study before, because in the first semester I was always up to date, I would do my homework, I always worried about doing the work. But now I am careless, everything for me is the same.

In contrast, most non-graduates did not report documentation impacting school participation. For our participants, documentation is one of many potential challenges that can stall, or entirely stop secondary school study. Once an individual lacks documentation they may never be able to enroll in public secondary school, or may be allowed to attend for some years, only to be prohibited from promotion once they reach eighth or twelfth grade.

Structural Barriers within School

Learning difficulties and a lack of support to address them also emerged as a barrier to school progress. Only a couple of graduates discussed experiencing difficulty with academic content. In both cases, this led to failing a grade, delaying academic progress. Both participants explained that when they became discouraged, they had access to cultural wealth via social capital, which helped to address motivation and learning difficulties. Filomena (21, graduate) did not have the opportunity to study as a child. In her early teens Filomena's older sister enrolled her in the sixth grade, although she had not completed lower level classes. Filomena reported that she worked hard and was discouraged when she failed sixth grade.

Filomena: When I failed sixth grade I told my sister, 'I am not going to study'. At that time I did not want to anymore. So much work . . . I spent studying and they took me out [failed me]. She [sister] said to me, 'No, get to studying, because there will come a time when you will finish'. She gave me motivation.

Although teachers and administrators did not recognize that Filomena needed to complete remedial coursework to master basic skills, her sister provided emotional and instrumental support that helped her to persist and try a different school setting until she was able to master necessary skills to progress through higher grade levels. For graduates who reported failing classes, difficulties were mainly ascribed to external factors, like inconsistent school attendance. It is notable that participants who ultimately graduated did not experience learning difficulties they could not overcome on their own with time and the ability to focus on school.

In contrast, most non-graduates reported academic challenges. Half of younger non-graduates and all older non-graduates reported failing at least one grade. School failure was attributed to academic difficulties, either with the actual content of learning, or finding school 'boring'. Challenges with learning impacted participants' literal and psychological ability to succeed in school. Marilyn (31, non-graduate) did not report ever being held back, but she was only enrolled in school for a couple years as a child because she 'was hard headed and did not learn anything and then stopped going to school'.

No graduates reported experiencing interpersonal issues with teachers, which is notable considering the factors that can lead to failing grades and dropout. Yet, about half of the non-graduates discussed struggles with teachers who they found unsupportive, overly strict, intimidating, or overwhelmed. Maria (42, non-graduate) recalled, 'I had a very strict professor. I was scared of him . . . I was really scared of him and would panic. Everyone from the class was scared of him.' For Maria, strict discipline and rote teaching methods provoked anxiety to the point of panic. Even more frequently than fear, participants discussed school authorities unfairly punishing students without cause. Fortuna (18, non-graduate) discussed how she would occasionally find herself on the wrong side of teachers despite being a quiet adolescent who didn't socialize with other

students in her class. ‘I had a problem with a professor because someone else told her gossip. I hardly talked to anyone in my class . . . I told the professor it wasn’t true and the professor punished me [alone] . . . and I received my punishment even though I knew that I had not done anything.’

Non-graduates also discussed lack of infrastructure and resources, such as multiple grade levels being held in a single classroom, as a significant challenge to learning. Nina (15 non-graduate) described overcrowded classrooms where the number of students and differing learning levels meant teachers had limited time to dedicate to individual needs. ‘Over there in [community] they would hold three grade levels in one class room, all those kids . . . we were so cramped.’ The lack of infrastructure and resources can create substantial challenges for students who may have underlying learning difficulties or need individualized attention to master academic content. This combined with teachers who are perceived as intimidating, apathetic, or otherwise unapproachable creates significant risk for stop-out and dropout. Students who either persist under these conditions, or are willing to engage in public school later in life demonstrate significant perseverance, motivation and willingness to approach a past experience in a new way.

Pregnancy and Childbirth as One of Many Complicating Factors. Pregnancy appears to have impacted school progression for each cohort differently. As Table 1 shows, only two participants who had graduated high school and one older non-graduate reported that pregnancy and childbirth impacted their educational trajectory. Both women discussed having a child as *one* factor in their decision to stop-out of school. For example, Veronica, a 29-year-old graduate, never failed a grade yet had to stop-out when she passed 8th grade because high school was not offered in Sonrisa and she could not afford the cost associated with daily travel outside the batey to attend night classes. Veronica married at age 18 and wanted to continue studying, but she took a year off so her husband could finish his last year of high school. The goal was for Veronica to return to school once her husband finished. By the time he completed high school, she was pregnant with their first child and waited to enroll in high school until after the child’s birth. After this, school enrollment and attendance was punctuated by pauses during subsequent pregnancies. Veronica said, ‘when I got pregnant [second child] I experienced really bad morning sickness. I would get tired and I could not think in school and I decided to leave’. Although marriage and pregnancy affected timing of secondary school completion, Veronica experienced setbacks well before marriage and demonstrated resilience in eventually completing high school after having three children.

In contrast, just under half of younger non-graduates reported that pregnancy or childbirth interrupted their education. One participant reported she had stopped attending school due to morning sickness. The remaining participants described institutional

Table 1. Pregnancy/childbirth impacting school progression.

	Pregnancy/childbirth reported to impact academic progression	No report of pregnancy impacting academic progression	Total
High school graduates	2	10	12
Non-graduates under 20	5	7	12
Non-graduates over 19	1	7	8

barriers to studying once they became pregnant or gave birth. For example, school officials told Isabel (18, non-graduate) she could no longer attend weekday classes once they became aware of her pregnancy.

Isabel: I left because the school did not allow married students or anything like that. I finished [8th grade] by going on Saturdays.

Interviewer: They told you had to go on Saturdays when you got married?

Isabel: Yes, they told me that.

Isabel was under 18 when she became pregnant; at the time students could only enroll in the state sponsored weekend program once they reached age 18. For a period of time, Isabel was effectively left without an educational pathway. Although it is technically illegal to deny pregnant students access to public school in the DR, individual school administrators enforce arbitrary standards for admitting and excluding students, including pregnancy, or having children. School officials do not exclude male students who are known to have fathered children. Inhospitable administrators and lack of transportation to alternative programs impacted non-graduate young mothers' and their ability to persist with studies even when childcare care and personal desire existed.

Supports that Promote Persistence

Balancing the Need to Work and Study from an Early Age

Once attending school, participants discussed complex realities around the role of work and education. Dominican labor laws prohibit paid work for anyone under age 15 and there are significant restrictions on the types of work that youth under 17 can legally perform (UNICEF 2004). Nonetheless, early work histories are a common theme among participants and impacted school trajectories in different ways. For some, including those who eventually completed high school, access to some form of employment was critical to paying for costs associated with school, such as supplies, uniforms, tuition fees, and transportation. Participants who worked inside their communities reported the least disruption to schooling. A number of participants discussed styling hair, working as nail technicians, and selling food, gasoline and lottery tickets to generate income from within the community. Participants with early work histories and who were employed outside their communities typically worked in domestic service. Mariana (22, graduate) began live-in domestic service at age 12 to support her education and provide financial relief to her mother who was raising several children. Although her employer paid little, Mariana considered herself lucky because she was enrolled in school and allowed to consistently attend (an agreement not honored by all employers).

Mariana: I went with [employer] to work. I worked Monday to Saturday. I told her 'I am in sixth grade, I am studying, but I need work' and she told me 'That's fine. I will register you in school.' I would wake up early, do the household chores and at 1:30pm I would have everything ready and I would go to school . . . I was grateful . . . There are a lot of employers that hire you and then they want you to only be in the house serving them.

Ana (27, graduate) also reported engaging in paid domestic work from age 12. Ana was able to study Saturdays using proceeds from her domestic job. 'I worked and the woman [employer] gave me permission to study on Saturdays. That is how I paid my studies.'

Although domestic work at age 12 is extremely problematic and Mariana and Ana were grossly underpaid, neither reported being harassed, assaulted, or expected to work exhausting hours. Mariana and Ana benefited from their employer's willingness allow them to study. This in combination with Mariana's intrinsic motivation and ability to quickly master school material allowed her to graduate at age 19. She displayed resilience in her ability to thrive despite having to engage in child labor and negotiate the competing demands of work and study from an early age. Although Ana took longer to graduate because of late enrollment, an abusive relationship and the birth of her first child, she too was able to leverage early paid labor to access school. In the context of extreme poverty, work, particularly if it takes place within the community and under the eye of primary caregivers and kinship networks can provide critical instrumental support girls and young women need to participate in the public-school system.

Supportive Social Networks

Participants discussed social capital, having instrumental and emotional support, as essential resources in pursuing education. Social capital was typically discussed in terms of kinship networks extending beyond biological parents. Half of participants who graduated from high school and went on to pass the national exam discussed receiving different forms of social capital allowing them to pursue formal education. At times support was financial, for example, a family member helping connect a participant to a job so she could afford school materials (Bela, 29, graduate), a close friend assisting with childcare to ensure a participant could attend class (Ana, 27, graduate), or a faith leader helping navigate the legal system to obtain documentation (Filomena, 21, graduate). For others, support was more emotional, and involved emphasizing the importance of education (Adriana, 33, graduate) or connecting participants to educational resources. Celia (31, graduate) discussed feeling discouraged and a friend motivating her to return to school when an accessible opportunity emerged:

They [government] started to offer eighth grade during the day in town and then high school, but then when you leave your studies it's like you lose motivation and when they began eighth grade I had lost motivation. It was after, a friend of mine counseled me and I got into the program.

The social capital participants reported took different forms, but generally assisted them in balancing different parts of their lives, including education. Non-graduates reported less support. For younger non-graduate participants, support was described in relation to pregnancy and childcare, particularly teachers accommodating pregnancy. Juliana, a 17-year-old non-graduate, was attending a weekend extension program when she became pregnant with her first child. She discussed how teachers worked with her when pregnancy related illnesses left her unable to attend class. 'They [teachers] treated me good all the time when I was pregnant. When I got morning sickness, I missed [a few classes] and I would send an excuse.' It is not uncommon for pregnant students and mothers to be told they must attend all regularly scheduled classes/exams or risk failing. That Juliana's teachers excused absences due to pregnancy illness represents an unusual accommodation. Although small, these types of accommodations allowed participants to complete coursework and not have to repeat grades due to pregnancy.

Specific Beliefs about the Future Benefits of Formal Education

A notable distinction among participants who persist through challenges of public secondary education is how they discussed the short and long-term benefits of formal education. Most participants who graduated from high school discussed different goals they believed school completion could help them attain. Yosso (2005) refers to the ability to maintain goals and hope in the face of systemic barriers as aspirational capital. For example, participants cited a particular career goal motivating them to finish, like becoming a professor (Celia, 31, graduate), clinical psychologist (Bela, 29, graduate), nurse (Elisa, 34, graduate), or computer technician (Mariana, 22, graduate). Celia, discussed how community support helped motivate her to aspire towards her career trajectory.

When you all [first author] came I said “Me a teacher? No!” It surprised me. Then I said “well, if the community wants me to be the teacher, then I will be a teacher”. This wasn’t in my head. After it was. Thank god because . . . I said “if I am teaching, I also must study. And that is when I enrolled in high school and finished.

For Celia, completing her education was tied to specific beliefs about being a good model for her literacy students.

Participants who endorsed aspirational capital may have more future oriented perspectives that motivated school persistence despite structural barriers. Another component of long-term goals was the desire for financial security for themselves and their families, which half of high school graduates discussed as a motivation to finish school. These participants made a direct connection between educational attainment and providing for their families and ‘not need[ing] to rely on a husband for financial survival’ (Cecilia, 31, graduate). Half of graduates also discussed general benefits to education for themselves and other women. Ana (27, graduate), when responding to a question about qualities of a mature adult, stated an adult woman ‘has studied and is capable [has work skills].’

Half of younger non-graduates reported academic goals, such as specific careers including school psychologist, or secretary. Other participants articulated beliefs that finishing school would help with their career prospects and ability to sustain themselves.

Flor (18, non-graduate): Yes, there is a polytechnic here in [town], and I want to do a nursing, a gastronomy, and baking [certificate]. If the one in gastronomy doesn’t work for me, if I don’t find a job in that, then I will do nursing or baking . . . I want some options.

Post Interview Progress

Some participants who had not graduated high school at the time of interview subsequently did complete their high school degree as of December 2018. As shown in Table 2, post-interview graduates confirm the narratives of participants who completed high school at the time of the study. Poor females of Haitian descent experience non-linear educational

Table 2. Degree completion totals.

	High school diploma earned as of 2018	No high school diploma as of 2018	Total
Non-graduates over 19	2	6	8
Non-graduates under 20	5	7	12

trajectories and systemic barriers that often result in additional years needed to achieve educational goals. The fact that participants well into their 40s are completing secondary school suggests some younger non-graduates represent an emerging group of high school graduates. This highlights the persistence and educational resilience many participants demonstrate despite multiple intersecting barriers.

Discussion

The current study extends the literature on educational disparities in the DR, and identifies factors promoting educational resilience, including cultural wealth, in the context of systemic adversity. Multiple issues have cumulative effects on both access and progress through school for females of Haitian descent. Our findings challenge some traditionally identified risk factors for secondary school dropout – the economics of poverty, lack of supports within schools and pregnancy as an intersecting and multiplicative factor. Findings also offer initial insights into how some female students' access educational opportunities over multiple years and how patterns traditionally identified as dropout may more accurately represent educational stop-outs. Importantly, our findings highlight how different forms of cultural wealth like aspirational and social capital help engender educational resilience in the context of structural discrimination and racism.

Poverty is an underlying factor in much of the adversity our participants experienced. Across all three groups, participants described lifelong experiences related to poverty, with distinctions in degree and impact of economic hardship on school enrollment and consistent attendance. Economics makes participants vulnerable to late enrollment, unsafe travel to and from school, and exiting school prematurely. Although previous work in diverse settings demonstrates how economics and concomitant issues impact educational outcomes (Libório and Ungar 2010; Nonoyama-Tarumi, Loaiza, and Engle 2010), our findings demonstrate unexpected influences regarding childhood labor. For a majority of participants who graduated, paid work outside the home prior to age 18 played a critical role in subsidizing school costs. This is consistent with nascent theory examining how child work in low and middle-income countries can be part of resilience processes. Libório and Ungar (2010) argue that, in resource poor contexts, work may afford children alternative routes to securing psychosocial resources needed for development. Many of our participants directly tied performing paid labor to school participation, and many engaged in child labor were self-employed within the community. This provided a layer of protection because of the presence of caregivers and kinship networks. Others worked outside the community, particularly in domestic service. Although the jobs paid little, participants described employers as educational allies if they were willing to allow regular school attendance and provide a relatively safe working environment.

Poverty alone did not account for barriers to formal education. Some participants discussed experiencing racial and ethnic discrimination in accessing and persisting in school. For Dominican born participants denied birth certificates, available financial resources and depth of social networks often determined whether this issue could be rectified. Obtaining a birth certificate as an adolescent or adult can be cost prohibitive and requires both social and navigational capital to maneuver complex and arbitrary bureaucratic systems (Bartlett 2012; Schoenholtz et al. 2014). Even if a participant secured documentation, years of school were typically lost.

Gaining access to school does not ensure adequate support and fair treatment in the classroom. Some participants discussed poor treatment and substandard conditions once in school. Although, these experiences are not exclusive to students of Haitian descent (Maron 2019), they disproportionately affect them (UNICEF 2013). Participants who did not persist in school often reported academic difficulties and a lack of support to help navigate learning. This raises important questions about whether some children who fail multiple grades and ultimately leave school have learning needs that under-resourced school systems cannot meet. Schools serving the study communities do not offer testing for learning disabilities. Students who are unable to learn or perform under suboptimal conditions get pushed out of school.

Discourse on poverty and educational attainment typically frames adolescent pregnancy and motherhood as a causal factor for attrition at the secondary level (Shoaff 2017). The narratives of multiple generations of females of Haitian descent living in bateyes tell a more complex story about the impact of pregnancy and childbirth on educational trajectories. Although pregnancy can cause delays in school, potentially for multiple years, this occurred most frequently in our sample because *adult* women age 18 or over became pregnant for the first time *before* completing high school. The average age of first pregnancy in the DR is 20 (UN DESA 2013) and Dominican girls enter primary school at later ages than boys (Oficina Nacional de Estadística 2016). Delays in schooling prior to late adolescence and early adulthood sets most females of Haitian descent on a course to be in secondary school years after they should have graduated, and at a time when many seek to begin a family (Murphy-Graham and Leal 2014). That so many participants persisted in secondary school after having children suggests motherhood is not itself a risk factor for dropout. Rather, social capital, or lack thereof, may determine whether female students continue pursuing education after pregnancy. Participants, particularly those who were past their mid-twenties, demonstrated educational resilience in adulthood. For some this meant attending extension degree programs or participating in remedial literacy programs to attain basic skills. In all cases, participants found the time, means and rallied the motivation for study in the midst of daily struggle for survival. This challenges the hegemonic discourse of young motherhood as a risk for negative life outcomes in the resilience literature (Masten 2014b) and illustrates the examining resilience within specific cultural contexts (Ungar et al. 2007).

Although there is some recognition of institutional and systemic barriers impeding educational attainment in the DR, young women still disproportionately receive the onus of responsibility for educational outcomes (Guzman and Cruz 2009). Our findings demonstrate that even in the context of systemic disenfranchisement, women of Haitian descent demonstrate educational resilience. Yosso's (2005) cultural wealth framework provides insight into the types of capital that promote educational resilience in the face of significant adversity. Participants who successfully graduated from high school almost universally reported having access to social capital either through extended kinship networks or other community relationships. Social capital facilitated instrumental support to pay for school fees, access documentation and pay for school transportation. Social capital also involved emotional support, which participants discussed as critical to persisting in academic pursuits when they failed grades or had to repeat coursework due to lack of documentation. A majority of participants who endeavored to study, sometimes over multiple decades of adulthood, also described aspirational capital – having hopes and goals that might seem out of reach given lived conditions. Educational and

professional dreams can foster intrinsic motivation needed to work towards high school graduation over extended periods of time. Ultimately, participants who persist in secondary education display both navigational and resistant capital. Entering the Dominican public secondary school system, and persisting through it, requires people of Haitian descent to maneuver through an institutional structure that was designed to exclude them. In doing so, students of Haitian descent must resist both overt and subtle forms of discrimination to maintain their humanity and psychological wellbeing, while trying to achieve educational goals.

Postscript

Since original data collection several legislative changes have taken place that will likely create additional challenges to educational resilience for females of Haitian descent. In September 2013, the Dominican Supreme Court passed a constitutional amendment retroactively revoking citizenship to anyone whose maternal ancestry could be traced to a Haitian immigrant who entered the DR since 1929 (Kristensen and Wooding 2013). This law is the latest overt manifestation of the Dominican government's effort to exclude and marginalize not only Haitians, but anyone born on Dominican soil with traceable Haitian ancestry. One outcome is that documentation has become logistically much more difficult to access for non-infants. The enforcement of this law will perpetuate barriers to public education for Dominican born people.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, our data are only a snapshot of challenges facing our participants. However, the relatively large number of interviews enabled us to identify nuances within the DR context. Second, we did not specifically probe about classroom environments, learning supports, or learning difficulties that could have impacted academic attainment. Nevertheless, we did encourage participants to share salient experiences about their learning. Third, it is possible that older participants underreported school conflict relative to younger participants because of a recency effect. However, the age variation in our study sample allowed for assessing a broader range of barriers and supports than was possible with only a younger sample.

Conclusions

These narratives by poor women of Haitian descent, in the DR, illustrate how persistence is a manifestation of educational resilience. For many participants, educational resilience was a non-linear process that required overcoming multiple intersecting challenges across contexts. Those most successful were able to balance work and study at an early age, had supportive social networks, and held strong beliefs about the future value of education that sustained their persistence.

Notes

1. Bateyes are communities historically associated with the sugarcane industry. They were designed to provide temporary shelter for seasonal labor brought from Haiti to the Dominican Republic to harvest sugar cane. Overtime, the bateyes have become permanent settlements, many of which still are not recognized by municipal governments. As a result, they are typically overcrowded communities that lack basic infrastructure like potable water and garbage collection.
2. Individual public secondary schools enforce different rules around documentation requirements for entry. In some cases, students are barred altogether from ever attending public schools because they lack a Dominican birth certificate. Other schools, led by more sympathetic administrators, will allow undocumented students to attend for a period of time or up until eighth grade. Upon reaching eighth grade, a birth certificate (for those under age 18) is required for sit for a national exam necessary to enter high school. If a student is 18 or older when they reach eighth grade, they must provide a national identity card to sit for the national exam. Many people with Dominican birth certificates are denied national identity cards upon turning 18. In this way, a person may find themselves locked out of the public education system at multiple points in time.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the participants who generously shared their time and stories with us. Additionally, we thank Dr. Jacob Tebes for his thoughtful suggestions and insights during the development and writing of this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the Ruth Landes Memorial Research Fund [Dissertation Fellowship].

ORCID

Ida Salusky  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4868-9807>

References

- Bartlett, L. 2012. "South-South Migration and Education: The Case of People of Haitian Descent Born in the Dominican Republic." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 42 (3): 393–414. doi:10.1080/03057925.2011.633738.
- Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Denby, D. 2016. "The Limits of 'GRIT'." *The New Yorker*, June 21. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-limits-of-grit>
- Diario Libre. 2013. "Discriminan en las escuelas a las menores embarazadas." *Diario Libre Actualidad*, April 8. <https://www.diariolibre.com/actualidad/discriminan-en-las-escuelas-a-las-menores-embarzadas-ODDL388969>

- Evans, A. B., M. Banergee, R. Meyer, A. Aldana, M. Foust, and S. Rowley. 2012. "Racial Socialization as a Mechanism for Positive Development among African American Youth." *Child Development Perspectives* 6 (3): 251–257. doi:[10.1111/j.1750-8606.2011.00226.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2011.00226.x).
- Giliberti, L. 2013. "Sistema educativo, jóvenes y desigualdades sociales: Un estudio sobre la escuela dominicana." *Revista Latinoamericana en Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud* 11 (1): 151–162.
- Gómez, M. M., and C. C. Nieto. 2014. *Vidas truncadas: Estudio sociológico sobre el impacto de la falta de documentos de identidad en la escolaridad de menores de ascendencia haitiana en República Dominicana. El caso de San Pedro de Macoris*. Santo Domingo: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales.
- Guzman, R. M., and C. Cruz. 2009. *Niños, niñas, y adolescentes fuera del sistema educativo en la República Dominicana*. Santiago: Grupo de Consultoría Pareto.
- Hlatshwayo, M., and S. Vally. 2014. "Violence, Resilience and Solidarity: The Right to Education for Child Migrants in South Africa." *School Psychology International* 35 (3): 266–279. doi:[10.1177/0143034313511004](https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034313511004).
- Hughes, D., J. Rodrigues, E. P. Smith, D. J. Johnson, H. C. Stevenson, and P. Spicer. 2006. "Parents' Ethnic-Racial Socialization Practices: A Review of Research and Directions for Future Study." *Developmental Psychology* 42 (5): 747–770. doi:[10.1037/0012-1649.42.5.747](https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.42.5.747).
- Jesuit Refugee Services. 2004. *Inmigrantes haitianos y dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana en la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo: Jesuit Refugee Services.
- Kim, E. 2013. "Smaller Steps Towards Progress in the Dominican Republic: Securing Equal Access to Education for Dominico-Haitian Children." *Boston University International Law Journal* 31 (163): 163–198.
- Kristensen, K., and B. Wooding. 2013. "Haiti/Dominican Republic: Upholding the Rights of Immigrants and Their Descendants." <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/172091/273b4770daf48a18c60d724a641f0470.pdf>
- Libório, R. M., and M. Ungar. 2010. "Children's Labour as a Risky Pathways to Resilience: Children's Growth in Contexts of Poor Resources." *Psicologia: Reflexão E Crítica* 23 (2): 232–242.
- Luthar, S. S., and L. B. Zelazo. 2003. "Research on Resilience: An Integrative Review." In *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*, edited by S. S. Luthar, 510–549. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Luthar, S. S. 2006. "Resilience in Development: A Synthesis of Research across Five Decades." In *Developmental Psychopathology: Risk, Disorder, and Adaptation*, edited by D. Cicchetti and D. J. Cohen, 739–795. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Maron, L. 2019. "Under the Cloak of Professionalism: Covert Racism in Teacher Education." *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 22 (3): 319–337. doi:[10.1080/13613324.2018.1468748](https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1468748).
- Masten, A. 2014a. "Global Perspectives on Resilience in Children and Youth." *Child Development* 85 (1): 6–20. doi:[10.1111/cdev.12205](https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12205).
- Masten, A. 2014b. *Ordinary Magic: Resilience in Development*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Murphy-Graham, E., and G. Leal. 2014. "Child Marriage, Agency and Schooling in Rural Honduras." *Comparative Education Review* 59 (1): 24–49. doi:[10.1086/679013](https://doi.org/10.1086/679013).
- Nonoyama-Tarumi, Y., E. Loaiza, and P. Engle. 2010. "Late Entry into Primary School in Developing Societies: Findings from Cross-National Household Surveys." *International Review of Education* 56 (1): 103–125. doi:[10.1007/s11159-010-9151-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-010-9151-2).
- Oficina Nacional de Estadística of the Dominican Republic. 2016. "Cantidad de estudiantes matriculados a inicio del año escolar por sector y sexo, según edad, año lectivo 2014–2015." July 20. Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadística. <https://www.one.gob.do/sociales/educacion>
- Petozziello, A. J., A. Hintzen, and J. C. Gonzalez Dias. 2014. *Genero y el riesgo de apatridia para la población de ascendencia haitiana en los bateyes de la República Dominicana*. Santo Domingo, República Dominicana: Centro para la Observación Migratoria y el Desarrollo en el Caribe (OBMICA).

- Rihani, M. A. 2006. "Keeping the Promise: Five Benefits of Girls' Secondary Education." *Academy for Educational Development*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED500794.pdf>
- Salusky, I. 2013. "The Meaning of Motherhood: Adolescent Childbearing and Its Significance for Poor Dominican Females of Haitian Descent." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 28 (5): 591–614. doi:10.1177/0743558413487589.
- Salusky, I. forthcoming. "Traveling a Hard Road: Rites of Passage to Adulthood for Females of Haitian Descent in the Dominican Republic." *Journal of Adolescent Research*.
- Schillinger, D., L. R. Barton, A. J. Karter, F. Wang, and N. Adler. 2006. "Does Literacy Mediate the Relationship between Education and Health Outcomes? A Study of Low-Income Population with Diabetes." *Public Health Reports* 212 (3): 245–254. doi:10.1177/003335490612100305.
- Schoenholtz, A., L. Brunner, R. Celorio, and I. Kysel. 2014. *Dejado atrás: Como la apatridia en la República Dominicana limita el acceso a la educación de los niños*. Washington, DC: Instituto de derechos humanos, Georgetown Law.
- Shoaff, J. L. 2017. *Borders of Visibility: Haitian Migrant Women and the Dominican Nation-State*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Stromquist, N. P. 2014. "Out-of-School Children: Why Gender Matters". *Paper commissioned for Fixing the Broken Promise of Education for All: Findings from the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children*. Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).
- Ungar, M. 2008. "Resilience across Cultures." *The British Journal of Social Work* 38 (2): 218–235. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcl343.
- Ungar, M., M. Brown, L. Liebenberg, R. Othman, W. M. Kwong, M. Armstrong, and J. Gilgun. 2007. "Unique Pathways to Resilience across Cultures." *Adolescence* 42 (166): 287–310.
- Ungar, M., M. Ghazinour, and J. Richter. 2013. "Annual Research Review: What Is Resilience within the Social Ecology of Human Development." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 54 (4): 348–366. doi:10.1111/jcpp.12025.
- UNICEF. 2004. "Boys and Girls of School-Going Age." https://www.unicef.org/children_9504.html
- UNICEF. 2013. "At a Glance: Dominican Republic." https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/dominican_republic_statistics.html#117
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2016. "Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning." *UNESCO Digital Library*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2013. "World Fertility Report 2012." New York: United Nations publication.
- Wigginton, S. 2010. "Blackness as a Barrier to Citizenship and Education: Situating the Example of Dilcia Yean and Violeta Bosico." *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 5 (2): 163–170. doi:10.1177/1746197910370727.
- Yosso, T. J. 2005. "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8 (1): 69–91. doi:10.1080/1361332052000341006.