

Anti-Blackness: Identifying What it Means to Be Dominican

Delilah Garcia

November 30th, 2017

Anti-Blackness in Dominican Culture

By looking at the history, culture, and political climate of the Dominican Republic, this project explores how views and attitudes of anti-blackness within the people and descendants of the Dominican Republic affect their identity and their sense of self, how this is changing, and what still needs to be done.

The Discussion

Special Thanks to:

Rhemmy De La Rosa, *President*

Ismelisa Rivas, *Vice President*

Michael Soto, *Parliamentarian*

A small group discussion was held between three members of the *Sociedad Estudiantil Dominicana* here at Rutgers University, to discuss their views, experiences and feelings about the anti-blackness amongst Dominicans.

I asked them a list of ten questions, although different/new questions and topics came up within the discussion.

History

- War between the Dominican Republic and Haiti
- Dictator Trujillo's influence in the 1930's

Culture

- Negative/Positive connotations and meanings
- How music plays a part
- Beauty and Hair
- African Influence

Politics

- The Deportation of Haitians in the Dominican Republic

Identity

- Dominican is who you are, not what you are
- Accepting ourselves

Afro-Latina Realness and a Changing Nation

Miss Rizos - Carolina Conteras has brought change to the Dominican Republic when she opened up the first curly haired Salon in the capital Santo Domingo.

Afro-Latina/Dominican bloggers, like *MonicaStyleMuse*, are using social media to change the ideals of what a 'Latina' is suppose to look like.

Women's Leadership starts with accepting and loving yourself entirely.

The Next Generation

During the discussion, it was brought up a couple of times how our views as younger individuals are different from our parents' (the older generation) view on blackness and how we are more accepting of ourselves.

Education and ignorance within the Dominican Republic, as well as in the United States, was also brought up. It was mentioned how many Dominicans, both on the island and in the states, do not learn about their own African ancestry, and so they only go based off what they hear from others.

For future Leadership Scholars, or Afro-Latinos in general, the next focus should be on educating those who might not be exposed to their own cultural ancestry.

The Importance of Personal Narratives

While my project was done on a small scale, it brought to light how young Dominicans think about their cultural identity in terms of race, or even, how they might not think about it.

It is important to speak and reflect on one's own experiences as it brings an understanding to a certain topic, as well as being able to relate to those similar to you. It also brings these important issues to light and brings about an awareness.

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